



## Contested Borderscapes

### Transnational Geographies vis-à-vis Fortress Europe

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University of the Aegean

*Invisible Cities Research Team*

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*Urban Geography & Planning Laboratory*

*Population Movements Laboratory*

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# 01. calling

## Contested Borderscapes

### Transnational Geographies vis-à-vis Fortress Europe

#### Introduction

*European member states are signatories to the Geneva Convention Related to the Status of Refugees.*

*Human rights and dignity are respected in detention centres across Europe.*

*An electrified fence was built to protect the nation-state from illegal intruders.*

*Traffickers are responsible for deaths by drowning in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas.*

*Deportations are voluntary returns.*

*Turkey is a safe country.*

*War is peace.*

*Freedom is slavery.*

*Ignorance is strength.*

In 2016, Oxford English Dictionary declared “post-truth” the word of the year. In this Orwellian moment, the movement of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants across the increasingly militarised borders of Europe have instigated a socio-spatial debate about the limits of human rights, national sovereignties, continental values, precipitating and contributing to the ongoing condition of European crises. Although in the era of globalisation borders constitute porous passages for capital and commodities, at the same time they have hardened and ossified as “new enclosures” seeking to immobilise migrant and refugee populations. Fortress Europe emerges as a complex of new state control mechanisms, freshly erected border fences, newly built detention centres and improvised refugee camps; together, these technologies of migration management aim at the criminalisation, classification, stigmatisation, and biopolitical control of moving populations, fomented by xenophobic politics, and managed by humanitarian subcontractors. In this hostile climate, people on the move contest European border regimes, peripheries, and cityscapes by claiming spatial justice and political visibility while creating a nexus of emerging common spaces. They are joined by activists defending their right to movement, who are engaged in efforts to “welcome refugees” into a shrinking and contested public sphere, into alternative and self-organised social spaces, responding to the humanitarian crises wrought by militarism, violence, and structural adjustment with solidarity, stemming from a larger vision of sharing in each other’s struggles for survival and social transformation.

The island of Lesbos is a space of multiple histories of refugee passage, now reinvented as a “hot spot” in the contemporary European regime of migration management, but also reimagined by people who live there as a space of social solidarity with migrant struggles. It thus constitutes one epicentre, or “contested borderscape” of Fortress Europe, and a place where we might learn from local struggles and movements against its murderous politics. If, over the past year, the shores and seaways of Lesbos (“Lesbos”) gained international visibility as the backdrop to untold human suffering, loss, and survival, the purpose of gathering here is not to consume it as a spectacle; instead, we seek to learn from how people here have responded to, and organised in the urgency of what has become mediatised as “the refugee crisis.” The main aim of this international conference is to create a space of critical reflection in which academics, artists, and activists from different disciplines, backgrounds, and locations, can strategise, organise, and analyse the social landscapes of border-spaces such as this, and their reverberations for anti-border politics elsewhere.

We welcome proposals for various kinds of interventions, including, but not limited to: presentations of formal academic papers falling under one of the following five themes; brief provocations leading to open discussions; performance lectures; installations; exhibitions or screenings of visual work (e.g., film, photography, etc.); workshops (sharing practical knowledge, working through a particular idea or problem, teaching a methodology, approach, or framework). We wish to emphasise multidirectional discussion and open debate of contested—rather than “settled”—issues, as opposed to unidirectional knowledge transmission by institutionally acknowledged academic experts. As such, the conference will open with a plenary of local activists, and will culminate in a general assembly of all participants, mapping possibilities for future collaboration and exchange across and beyond Fortress Europe.

## **Topics**

### **Track 1: The notion of the border**

- Borderlands, borderscapes, borderlines, border regimes
- Borders and nomadism, diaspora, travel, heterotopias, and otherness
- In-between spaces, hybrid spaces, and threshold spaces vis-à-vis border fortification, militarisation, enclaves, ghettos, walling urbanism, state territories
- Bridging political, social, national, gender, religion and identity borders, boundaries and communities
- No borders, open borders, and border-crossing struggles, movements, and activism

### **Track 2: Migrants’ commoning practices**

- Autonomy of migration and transnationalism

- Mobile common space; strategies and practices for survival, struggle, solidarity, networking, communication, mutual aid of the moving populations.
- Collective and sharing practices in migrants' informal settlements and camps
- Social solidarity, connections between the social struggles of the locals and the migrants; social philanthropy, humanitarianism, volunteering and NGO's industry
- Migrants' social centres, squatted buildings, and self-organised housing projects

### **Track 3: New intersectional enclosures**

- New enclosure policies, forced displacement, dispossession and grabbing of the means of production and reproduction, permanence of so-called primitive accumulation
- Class aspects of immigration, cheap workforce, surplus reserved army of unemployment
- Emergence of nationalistic-racist-fascist rhetoric and practice, (for instance, racist locals' committees, the role of church and media)
- Gendered aspects of immigration (women, lgbtq+, sexism, gendered violence, pregnancy)
- Age aspects of immigration (children and elderly people)
- Disability and immigration
- Cultural re-appropriation of moving populations
- Slavery, trafficking, human organs' trafficking

### **Track 4: State and Hyperstate migrant policies**

- Fortress Europe, detention centers, hot spots, relocation policies, new border fences
- Law geographies, divisions between refugees and immigrants, criminalization and illegalization of border crossing, the right to citizenship and asylum
- Fear policies, xenophobia and biopolitics

- Health geographies, biosecurity and border controls
- Neocolonialism, geopolitics and war

**Track 5: Representations and communication**

- Cultural representations of the Other
- Landscape and representations of the Other
- Newcomers – new ideas – new cultural relations
- Art and multicultural representations
- Newcomers and e-books, e-sharing, horizontal e-actions
- Other history, other museum, oral history of newcomers

## **02. abstracts**

## Camp as a Threshold Institution

Isshaq Albarbary

### Abstract

When we think about refugee camps one of the most common image that comes in our mind is an aggregation of tents. However after more than sixty years since their establishment camps are constituted today by a completely different setting, tents have been first reinforced and readapted with vertical walls, later substituted with shelters, and subsequently new concrete houses have been built, making the camp a complex urban space.

What exists is a gap between the image that we have in our mind when we think and talk about refugee camps and the actual reality of camps today, that force us to be confronted with something that we can hardly understand: camps are not anymore made of fragile structures but they are not cities either. Cities have a series of public institutions that organize, manage and control the inhabitants' life. In the camp today, UNRWA, plays an important role in providing services, but doe not intervene in the administration of the camp. The camp, as we know, has developed its own form of social and political life. We lack the right vocabulary to describe this new condition as the prolonged exceptionality of the camp condition has produced different social, spatial and political structures. The Finiq, the institution that is hosting us today is a clear example of this contemporary condition. Built by the camp community at the highest point of a hill previously occupied by a military base, the Al-Feniq Cultural Center today contains a women's gym, a guesthouse, a common kitchen, a wedding hall, and the Edward Said Library. It definitively does not like a tent.



## **Tools for self-organization at the borders of research and action**

**Panayotis Antoniadis**

NetHood

### **Abstract**

This work explores the borders between research and action through the use of self-organization tools as boundary objects for the collaboration between researchers of different disciplines, and between researchers and activists. The overall approach is in principle transdisciplinary based on "everyday language" and a problem-solving perspective, with the aim to create an inclusive narrative and long-term collaborations between diverse groups that blurs the borders between research and action for the benefit of both. The analysis is based on the design and deployment of two specific tools in the context of the refugee crisis, the FLOSS platform Openki (in Zurich) and DIY networking and community networks (in different European cities), and recent efforts to apply these tools in Greece and more specifically in the refugee squats spread in the centre of Athens. First, the Openki platform developed --an open-source tool for local and self-organized knowledge exchange-- is conceived as the foundation for mediating non-commercial education opportunities, and aims to simplify the organization of a "peer-to-peer" sharing of knowledge. Openki is aware that technology alone is not enough to achieve this goal, and thus is playing the role more of a social-Hub than a technical lab, aiming to provide a meeting point and cafe-type space that has the potential to bridge two worlds. Co-located with the Autonomous School Zurich supports diverse educational and cultural activities for everyone both for undocumented refugees, the socially excluded and all other interested people, including language courses like German, Spanish, Arabic, English, Mathematics and Computing courses like Java programming and Gimp, but also Yoga and theatre courses, and more. The attempt to use Openki in the so-called edusquats project in Athens is an interesting on-going process that provides useful input on the discussion around the difficulties to deploy open source tools in real-life projects that involve people with limited technical skills and different priorities. Second, wireless community networks have played a key role in provide free Internet access for refugees in different countries. Activists from Berlin (Freifunk.net), Catalonia (guifi.net), Italy (ninux.net), and Argentina (Altermundi) have recently visited Athens to provide technical knowledge and inspiration for the recently started initiative Exarcheia Net. This contact between experts from abroad and local activists, many of which engaging for the first time with the concept of DIY networking, included three events of different type: a panel at the Universe 2017 conference, a public event at the Nosotros and a technical workshop on the libremesh firmware at hackerspace.gr. Together with invited activists from these groups we will

discuss the lessons learned from these experiences, the challenges of such knowledge transfer processes and the role of technology both as a tool and as a “boundary” object between different actors (researchers, activists, citizens, and non-citizens).

# **Ethics of volunteering with migrants: voluntary work inside the ‘disciplinary humanitarianism’ of large reception centers**

**Maurizio Artero**

Gran Sasso Science Institute – PhD Candidate

## **Abstract**

As Saskia Sassen (2013) has asserted, cities can become a strategic site for those who ‘lack power’: the city can become a refuge and the space where this ‘powerlessness’ turn into complexity enabling the powerless to make a history and to make the political. Moreover, the city is the setting where a new ethic and new possibilities for creating a site of connection.

This global connectivity can generate a culture of cosmopolitan connectivity, an ethos of solidarity and rights growing as a local response to global problems. Based on combating racism, protecting the rights of undocumented residents, fostering intercultural dialogue and commitment to the ‘Other’, this ethos can express the call for the unconditional hospitality (the Law of hospitality) that opposes the laws of hospitality operated by the domopolitics of the state. In other words, it can express those unconditional practices of hospitality that are necessary in order to create the ‘city of refuge’ (Derrida 2001).

This paper wants to explore the ethics of solidarity in the city. It focuses on whether and how the urban context can favour the voluntary work towards asylum seekers and migrants from the citizens. The paper is based on researching volunteers’ work towards asylum seekers in Milan. In particular, it scrutinizes the volunteers’ involvement inside large ‘second reception’ centers (the so-called CAS- Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria) in order to compare the work of the operators and volunteers’ participation. In this way, its aim is to discuss the role of the voluntary work inside some of the most evident governmental spaces of migration management, its contribution to the disengagement of the state and local administrations from the provision of services, if its ethics and practices concur with the one put in place by this ‘internal borders’, and if volunteers’ vision distance from the humanitarianism express by institutions and operators.

This research conducted makes use of participant and non-participant observation, collection and analysis of expert interviews with staff members of reception centers where the voluntary activities are conducted, and administration and analysis of questionnaire and face-to-face interviews with volunteers. Participant and non-participant observation.

## **Space as an affective palimpsest: Critical locations of refuge in different times of crisis**

**Eirini Avramopoulou**

Social Anthropologist, British School at Athens

### **Abstract**

How can we understand the notion of finding ‘refuge’, as this changes historically and as part of the changing shape of crisis politics? More than that, what is the relation between the materiality of space, the ghosts of war and exile, and the experiences of contemporary displacement and confinement caused by the new realities of refugeeness? Drawing from anthropological research conducted in the summer of 2016 and 2017 regarding the condensed historicity of trauma on the Greek island of Leros, this paper addresses the intertwining of the traces of war and exile with the current affective manifestations of empathy and xenophobia, as well as the hope and despair that define the everyday life of a small Dodecanese island situated across the Turkish coastline.

A site for hosting the needs of one of Italy’s larger naval bases in the Mediterranean Sea till the end of the Second World War and an exile island for political dissenters during the Greek military junta of 1967–74, Leros was denounced later as the “island of the outcasts,” “human storage” and the “the guilty secret of Europe” because of the inhumane psychiatric treatment that many of the patients of the mental hospital of Lepida received since it started functioning in 1958. The 2015 decision to build a refugee ‘hot spot’ (camp) in the area of Lepida once again touched upon past traumas at a time when more than 38,000 refugees were passing through the island and when many refugees had to face the ‘geographical restrictions’ implemented after the European-Turkish agreement and the closing down of the European borders.

Under such loaded historical, social and political circumstances and while following traces that mark the past as present in the most uncanny ways in the everyday life of both the islanders and the refugees, this paper seeks to understand space as an affective palimpsest that mirrors elements that are spread out in time. Drawing from personal experiences as a volunteer at a shelter for refugees, but also from interviews and life histories of Lerians, this paper argues that the study of history and space help us to understand the production of “subjects of/in crisis”, and of critical subjectivities, when uprootedness, confinement and waiting partake in the circulation of the desire to make life sustainable and when politics of solidarity, at times, fail to question acts of philanthropy and neocolonial ideologies still present in any encounter with suffering and alterity.

## Edges of Europe

**Nishat Awan**

University of Sheffield

### **Abstract**

This is a proposal for an exhibition, whose first iteration took place at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, UK in Nov 2016 <http://www.ysp.co.uk/exhibitions/nishat-awan>. The exhibition consists of a series of video interviews as well as hand drawn maps by migrants tracing their journeys towards Europe. While for Europeans the so-called 'refugee crisis' remains an issue for and at the edge of Europe, migrant lives have many other important nodes and points. The exhibition explores this geography that includes a post-Soviet market at the edge of Odessa, Ukraine, an important point in the journey for those travelling from Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the more familiar setting of the main square in the Aksaray neighbourhood of Istanbul, Turkey, which is an important node for Syrians and others.

The exhibition produces a visual counter-geography of this fluid borderscape, with curtains tracing the edge of the Mediterranean and Black Seas that not only mark the edge of Europe but also of its hospitality. Videos are projected on to the curtains, creating a distortion effect that references the migrant lives, which have become similarly distorted due to the effects of structural inequalities and border regimes.

For the conference the exhibition would be reimagined as a portable structure that creates a mobile screen with curtains on to which to project the videos. More details on the original exhibition can be found here:

<http://www.topologicalatlas.net/hotglue/migrantnarratives>

## Topological Atlas: Mapping contemporary borderscapes

**Nishat Awan**

University of Sheffield

### Abstract

We live today in a world that is too disjointed, especially in relation to the discourse around migration. We cannot see the totality either through the obscuring of truth by governments or by biased media promoting a particular argument. We also live in a time of visual overload. In the discourse around migration and the so-called 'refugee crisis', we are surrounded by large numbers of images available on the net and social media, but increasingly also computationally derived visualisations of large scale data. These are being used more frequently in both academic research and data journalism and yet the ethics of the use of such images and visualisations remain under discussed.

In an era of fake news, the image itself is questioned. In art and architecture practice images have been used to convey our complicity in the deaths of migrants (for example in the film, *Exodus*) or are used as an investigative tool in what has been termed a forensic approach (Weizman). How might we mobilise the ubiquity of the image not as a tool for proving guilt or complicity but as a method that allows us to work with the problem of the disjointedness of information, in order to produce visual narratives and counter geographies that allow us to glimpse, if only momentarily, a version of a bigger picture.

I will discuss these issues in relation to a project working with Pakistani and Afghani migrants in Istanbul and Odessa, as well as a new project that follows a migrant trajectory from Balochistan in Pakistan towards Europe. In both of these projects topology is used as a conceptual framework and methodology to work with mappings and visualisations that produce 'seamless transitions' from the space of the migrant to the security apparatus that creates barriers to her movement.

There will also be an accompanying exhibition that consists of a series of video interviews as well as hand drawn maps by migrants tracing their journeys towards Europe. While for Europeans the so-called 'refugee crisis' remains an issue for and at the edge of Europe, migrant lives have many other important nodes and points. The exhibition explores this geography that includes a post-Soviet market at the edge of Odessa, Ukraine, an important point in the journey for those travelling from Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the more familiar setting of the main square in the Aksaray neighbourhood of Istanbul, Turkey, which is an important node for Syrians and others.

# **En route to fortress Europe: refugees and asylum seekers' common strategies and struggles**

**José Azoh Barry**

Investigación & Acción, A.C., Mexico

## **Abstract**

The bloc of 28 countries in Europe known as the EU is subjected to a migrant crisis which highlights an opposition of humanitarianism and globalization to border securitization in defense of protectionism and western values. Thousands of people have perished in their attempt to make it to the EU, and such a fate requires significant attention instead of indifference. In seeking to address “commoning practices”, this contribution looks at the strategies, and struggles of refugees and asylum seekers in their migratory attempt to reach fortress Europe. It is based on quantitative and qualitative data derived from diverse secondary sources focused on migrants’ countries of origins in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe as well. There is a variety of terms and definitions used to refer to and distinguish persons in situation of migration, originating from distinct troubled contexts at diverse scales. However, they have key common grounds, strategies and practices for their survival. They enter through southern Europe risking their lives, face border struggles and avoid fingerprinting, defy a cold weather under tents or in squatted buildings, whilst heading for wealthier nations of their preference as a final destination. As a result, their numbers have been increasing steadily, reaching a peak in 2015 with more than a million, and most of them being Syrians and Afghans. If all EU countries are not affected the same way by an overwhelming presence, stemming the flow is a shared concern. Legal frameworks, likewise borders tightening, and routes closure are intended at curbing ceaseless influx and mass arrivals. In line with anti-migration politics, they progression more difficult and riskier. Nevertheless, on their way, migrants meet intervening opportunities consisting of helping hands that provide for their basic needs with the supply of food, beverages, blankets, warm clothing. This is an interesting point in terms of solidarity, compassion and empathy. However, this kind of help is fragile and weakening because volunteers are self-funding, and more isolated than widespread, therefore inclined to shrink. Furthermore, retaliation is taken against them for defying and resisting the laws in the books. In some countries, transporting, housing, offering safe passage to irregular migrants is punishable. On the other hand, intervening obstacles jeopardize their journey. As denounced by migrants as victims, and human rights organizations, abuses are perpetrated at human-made borders by officials in the Balkans, specifically physical aggressions, dog attacks (police canine units), shoeless push backs, and robbery. Mutual aid occurs in acquiring food items in public markets, cooking and sharing meals, but also does

competition over a scarce resource such as hot water, much-needed in winter to have a warm shower. Humanitarianism and social solidarity vis-a-vis moving populations are paramount. However, regardless of the failure or success of agreements made with Turkey and Libya in order to deter further arrivals, a major presence of pull factors likely to counterbalance the push ones within MENA and other countries, is an alternative way of responding to and understanding legitimate aspirations and determinations that are costly.



## **En route to fortress Europe: refugees and asylum seekers' common strategies and struggles**

**Ezgi Bakçay**

**Eda Yiğit**

### **Abstract**

“Who has the right to represent?” “Is the representation always a kind of violence?” “How to represent violence?” “How to create new regime of presentation?” The importance of the aim to make the refugees visible and audible into the public discourse is obvious. But the burning question; “how to represent the pain without abusing the human tragedy?” has to be considered seriously and sincerely. We would like to try to propose a visual, audible and practical experience area to discuss this crucial questions of our age.

# **Towards the Cityscapes of Solidarity and Resistance?**

## **Exercising the Radical Imagination in the European Cities after the Border Closure**

**Mina Baginova**

### **Abstract**

What does it mean for the people on the move to live in a city after the closure of European borders and the so-called Balkan route used by the people on the move to cross to Western Europe? How do people on the move cope and live in the European cities with a knowledge that, after a traitorous journey to Europe, the borders they had attempted to cross and possibilities of lives in peace have been indefinitely closed to them? How the local population reacts to the indefinite presence of the refugees within the context of their own historical, social and political reality? This article examines these lived experiences of both the refugees and asylum seekers stranded in Europe without any solution provided by the European governments, and the local population originally residing in the changing cities. More specifically, the article focuses on and compares the experiences of the refugees and the locals in the capitals of Athens, Greece and Belgrade, Serbia and the experiments of practising solidarity and resistance against the dominant political narrative of othering and divide-making. Theoretically, the article analyzes the concept of radical imagination as the very driving force and conscious collective labour of efforts and experiments of living together across differences and the mutual capacity to politically conceptualize the struggles of the refugees and the locals as now inherently intertwined. Furthermore, by examining the joined mobilizations, collective efforts to improve the conditions of each other lives and narratives from the solidarity squats and socio-cultural centres, the article explores practices of solidarity and resistance and their potential of re-imagining another futures. The article draws on ethnographic research gathered during the fieldwork conducted in Greece and Serbia in 2016.

## **TRANS | MIGRANCY: there is no there there, nor here here**

**Selma Banich**

**Merve Bedir**

**Ana Dana Beroš**

**Matija Kralj**

### **Abstract**

Contemporary migrations are characterised by stratification and diversity. The imperative of mobility, compatible with the imperative of work flexibility, forces territorial migrations of precarious workers which are simultaneous to the wanderings and detentions of illegalized migrants and refugees. These simultaneous processes of global movements of people, goods and capital reinscribe identities over many territories of various nation-states and form transnational cultures. However, prevalent discourses on human migration portray migrants as key figures in the abolition of the nation-state and geopolitical borders, by their claim of human rights to free movement, spatial justice and political visibility. Transnational migration towards the industrialized countries of the West, as a form of (post)colonial backlash, is still not fully recognized as a labour market regulatory tool. There is a variety of transmigrants – nomadic, circulatory, refugee, settler – who are all participating, willingly or not, in the light infantry of global capitalism. The ambivalent condition of a transmigrant is represented, on the one hand, as a symbolic figure of fearism responsible for the (un)conscious production of fear on others. On the other, victimising discourses portray migrants as human beings invariably in need to be cared for. The manifold inplacement of transmigrants as opposed to forced displacement, strengthened through their capacity of building polyvalent relationships with immediate surroundings and with what is left behind, shows that migrant subjects skillfully activate transterritorial adaptation processes. Transmigrancy, therefore, does not depend exclusively on the negation of the political, today's walled-off borders of Europe, but rather on the activation of the mechanisms of otherness, which are equally present in the countries of arrival and departure. Perhaps the experience of being a transmigrant is a special quality of those who know multiple languages and cultures as well as techniques to ease uncertainties, tensions and violent situations. Perhaps transmigrants, as bearers of financial, social and cultural capital – potential creators of new social meanings and values – are trusted to be new global leaders, diplomats, and strategists. Perhaps transmigrancy is not a story about those who belong nowhere but of those who belong everywhere.

## humanKINDER presents The Welcome Tent

**Emma Barrett Palmer**

**Sparky Palmer**

### **Abstract**

The Welcome Tent is an ex-army catering tent, repurposed from war to peace. A space where everyone is welcome, where chai tea is served, where food is shared, music is played and stories are told.

Born out of an initial meeting in Calais, this is an organic and transient collective of humanKINDER people, committed to working towards social justice and cultural innovation in the real world.

From August 2017 The Welcome Tent will be on a culinary adventure around Europe, symbolically contesting the imposed border regimes and BREXIT, and connecting communities that are welcoming people seeking refuge. We will use multi-media to document #RecipesofHope, human stories that shed light on dark times, with support from Palestinian Michel Moushabeck, founder of US based Interlink Publishing.

The Welcome Tent will co-host exhibitions, workshops, discussions and collaborations that celebrate global culture – local producers with international flavours. We believe that the universal languages of food, music, art and poetry can be a catalyst for global community building: where governments are building walls, the humanKINDER collective wants to build bridges using universal languages.

In August 2017, our European journey will start with a launch event at The Angel Microbrewery in Nottingham, UK, where we will hear live performances from:

Ted Hughes Award 2017 Winning Poet Hollie McNish <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJX5XHnONTI>

Gulwali Passarlay, Afghan Child Refugee turned author and TedX speaker <https://gulwalipassarlay.wordpress.com/>

Hamsa Mounif, Musician from Syrian Orchestra <http://www.hamsa-mounif.com/>

Laxmi Hussain, Resident artist at The Welcome Tent, <http://www.thislakshmi.com/>

In September we will travel to the Rethink Activism Festival in Aarhus, Denmark, part of the

European Capital of Culture and will co-host bread making workshops, speakers and a shared meal with Sager der Samler, Abdullah Alsmaeel and the global community from Den Nye Havn <https://www.facebook.com/dennyehavn/>. Our journey will continue around Europe with collaborations in The Netherlands at the Dutch Design Festival, in Germany with Kitchen on the Run, in Switzerland with Wasted Basel and more to be confirmed.

This lecture via Skype will

- share the story of The Welcome Tent so far using multi media sources
- will detail a theoretical framework from Reframing Migration in 2016, a collaboration between Social Innovation Lab Kent <http://humankinder.uk/social-innovation-lab-kent/> and the Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability network ([www.desisnetwork.org](http://www.desisnetwork.org)) identifying cases of migration as social innovation
- will share findings from the recent Reframing Migration: Scotland (Jan – April 2017) working with IRISS Innovation and Research in Scottish Social Services [www.iriss.org.uk](http://www.iriss.org.uk) to better understand systemic challenges in the field of migration and how Social Workers' professional practice can be adapted to best support the needs of refugee and asylum seeking communities in Scotland We would like to use this lecture as an opportunity to invite people to participate in The Welcome Tent in Greece later in the year.

## **Behind the fence: The construction of everyday life by the forced migrants in Greece.**

**Maria - Nerina Boursinou**

PhD, University of Leicester

### **Abstract**

Already before the summer of 2015, Greece has been a country of reception for the thousands of (forced) migrants who crossed its sea and land frontiers driven away from their home countries for a plethora of different reasons. The closure of northern borders in Idomeni signalled a change for the migration/refugee issue as Greece shifted from a country of transit to a more permanent destination. Soon after that, (forced) migrants found themselves trapped behind wired fences and required to 'make do' within makeshift/official Refugee Camps and Immigration Detention Centres scattered throughout the country.

My study seeks to explore 'access and use of Information Communication Technologies within refugee camps, immigration detention and self-organised housing squats for refugees'. I take a multi-sited ethnographic approach in which the concept of everyday life and the politics of space are central. Specifically, through observations, informal talks and semi-structured interviews I aim to understand if (and if so, how) the experience of everyday is linked with the particularities of each space and whether this can have an effect in the uses of digital media by forced migrants. My research focuses on a country that has been and continues to be one of the main entrances to Europe for migrants and refugees and comes to join other timely academic (and journalistic) efforts which deal with the living conditions of the migrant/ refugee population from an everyday life perspective. Moreover, it hopes to make an addition to research that highlights the importance of safe and quality internet provision for migrants/refugees by showing the variety of uses and its importance to the people's survival and well-being. Finally, it wishes to contribute to the emerging body of literature that touches and bring to the forefront the issue of immigration detention, from a critical point of view.

In the 'Contested Borderscapes' conference, I wish to present preliminary fieldwork data in order to show a) how (forced) migrants construct their daily life within the abovementioned spaces, b) their communication practices while in there, c) the ways in which they negotiate their agency online/offline as well as potential acts of resistance. Ultimately, this research argues in favour of the significance of internet, not as a luxury but rather as a paramount necessity for people on the move/in transit. It also argues towards the dismissal of the camp and immigration detention, both as logics and in their material form. Instead it will discuss whether political spaces such as housing squats for refugees have the ability to operate as

models of alternative residence for (forced) migrants, by creating a more hospitable environment that allows and promotes empowerment.

# **Governance responses to the “refugee crisis” at the gate of Europe: The case of Lesbos**

**Alexandra Bousiou**

University of Gothenburg

**Andrea Spehar**

University of Gothenburg

## **Abstract**

During 2015 more than one million migrants reached Europe across the Mediterranean. The vast majority of these people arrived through the Greek border islands of the Aegean and more than half million entered through the island of Lesbos. This paper focuses on how local, national and European governmental authorities responded on features related to ‘current refugee crisis’ in its multi-level setting. The EU Commission’s Agenda on Migration (May 2015) outlines as a priority action the creation of five hotspots in the Aegean islands (Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos). To understand the role of local authorities in their responses to refugee crisis, we will focus on the policy networks and governance approaches in relation with other public, private and NGO stakeholders. For that aim we developed a conceptual frame to understand the policy networks and governance approaches in its multi-level setting. The method of analysis includes a review of public documents and semi structured interviews with policy makers in the regional and the local level. Our main findings point to the discontent at the local level due to the fact that they undertook an unequally large burden in the management of the crisis without having any power over influencing the related policies. In order to contravene the imposed framework the local authorities of Lesbos developed different strategies of pushing their agendas to the national government and the EU.



## Berlin Fence Memorial

**Benjamin Busch**

Weissensee School of Art, Berlin

### Abstract

To what extent is “refugee” a universal category? The 1951 Refugee Convention endorsed a single definition of the term “refugee,” but it only gained universal coverage in 1967 when its restriction to refugees of European origin was lifted. Fifty years later, the category “refugee” is haunted by the ghost of its (white) European past. What similarities are there between East German refugees and displaced Palestinians today? What differences are there between European refugees during WWII and Syrian refugees fleeing war today? My contribution to *Contested Borderscapes* challenges the universal category “refugee,” revealing implicit cultural and ideological assumptions that privilege nationalistic narratives surrounding refugees over others.

The speculative design project Berlin Fence Memorial serves as a provocation for critical thought, discussion, and action in public space. Flyers for the Berlin Fence Memorial have been circulated since November 9th, 2014, the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, including at the site of the Berlin Wall Memorial, whose own flyer served as inspiration for the project. The Berlin Fence Memorial flyer replaces the Berlin Wall Memorial flyer’s historical images of East German refugees and the Berlin Wall with new images of African refugees and migrants and the EU border fence in Melilla, Spain. A critical (but also playful) text elaborates (in English and German) on the complex situation today’s refugees face entering the EU and maintains the category “refugee” despite ethnic and cultural differences. The flyer calls for public lectures, discussions, concerts, and exhibitions, as well as an educational program including seminars, project days, and talks with witnesses who have experienced “contemporary border-related events.” Until today, the project remains speculative, a visualization of a yet-to-be-realized memorial commemorating the fall of the EU border fence. The project might be interpreted as naïve or even cynical, but it is much more interesting to see it more as a proposition for a future without borders, an actual post-border stance visualized (and potentially materialized) in the present.

A short presentation of the Berlin Fence Memorial may serve as a basis for an open discussion of, among other topics: the critical use of the category “refugee” in reference to contemporary as well as historical refugees; the use of artistic re-appropriation of institutional forms to interrogate sedimented narratives; and the potential of speculative, aesthetic interventions in public space more generally. Alternatively, the project could serve as a basis for a workshop in which the idea of the Berlin Fence Memorial is worked through as a possible framework for the

dialectical integration of alternative narratives, which pertain to the present more than the past, into dominant, always-already biased narratives surrounding refugees.

## **Politics of the Uncertainty. The Hotspot approach and the reshaping of EU migration management**

**Carlo Caprioglio**

Roma Tre University

**Francesco Ferri**

ASGI – Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione

**Lucia Gennari**

ASGI – Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione

### **Abstract**

Following the introduction of the European Agenda on migration 2015, we are witnesses of a deep reorganization of the EU policies of border control and management. In this regard, Italy offers a privileged insight to understand this on-going process which includes the use of a variety of governmental “apparatus”, as detention facilities, technological control devices, interconnected databases etc.. In this light, the presentation seeks to analyze, from both juridical and theoretical perspectives, the implementation of the so called “Hotspot approach” in Southern Italy. Indeed, with their dual nature of “crisis areas” and “selective procedures”, hotspots lie at the heart of the mentioned process.

International literature has highlighted, in several respects, the key role played by the “regulation of time” in the EU policies: different regimes of circulation (Bigo, 2006), the target of anticipation (Adams, 2009), temporal governance (Rouvroy, 2010).

Nevertheless, the governance of “time” is central in the Hotspot policy too and it is no coincidence that in Italy “Hotspots” are officially defined as a “procedure”. From a theoretical perspective, “procedure” is a concept that refers to the “regulation of time”. Applied to the migration management, it means the control of the access to the recognition of rights or – at the opposite – to the expulsion proceedings. Although, in the Hotspots' case, this concept seems to necessarily require a “territorial dimension”: in this perspective, Hotspot unveils the essential relationship between time and territory entailed in all the dispositifs of border control and management.

As a case study, the presentation will focus on the Hotspot area settled in Taranto, in Puglia region, that shows several “peculiarities”. Above all, the transformation of his original function of migrants' selection on the basis of differential juridical statutes (asylum seeker/irregular migrant) that seems to be exceeded by a new one that doesn't take in any consideration the element of statute. In fact, in the last year, almost two thirds of the Hotspot's detainees were

both documented or undocumented migrants caught in Northern Italy and forced to be fingerprinted for a second or third time. Often, migrants are left outside of the area after this “re-identification” procedure, thus increasing a deep sense of uncertainty. The research shows an “illusory irrationality” of the practices carried out in the Hotspot area of Taranto. The production of “uncertainty” seems to be their only common feature. If the principle of “legal certainty” is the corner stone of the legal systems of western democracies, at the opposite, “uncertainty” seems to be the key of the relation between public power and “aliens”.

Several scholars has deepen the concept of “uncertainty”: as central issue for contemporary governance (Aradau and van Munster, 2011) or as a constant of migrants' life (Hasselberg, 2016). Starting from this body of literature, the presentation seeks to investigate the idea of the “politics of the uncertainty” and to understand the actual migration policies as a technique of domination and “government” through the production of radical “uncertainty”.

The presentation is part of a fieldwork activity in the area of Taranto, started in 2016 and still on-going.

## **Facing Crisis: Queer Representations Against the Backdrop of Athens**

**Anna Carastathis**

Feminist Researchers Against Borders (Athens)

**Myrto Tsilimpounidi**

Institute of Sociology (Bratislava)

### **Abstract**

In this presentation, we will reflect on our 'Facing Crisis' photography workshop, to be held in Athens (Greece) in June 2018 in collaboration with LGBTQI+ refugees, migrants, and local activists. The aim of the workshops is to engage people in collective acts of self-representation through portraiture—people who have been rendered entirely invisible in hegemonic, heteronormative discourses of the 'refugee crisis' in Greece, Europe, and globally, because their lives, desires, and embodiments do not fit the narrative of the 'deserving refugee,' understood in terms of what Gayatri Spivak has called "reproductive heteronormativity": "the para-reasonable assumption that producing children by male-female coupling gives meaning to any life," "the oldest, biggest sustaining institution in the world, a tacit globaliser" that reproduces itself through "war and rape" (Spivak in Mookherjee, 2012: 125). Our participants are survivors of war and gendered violence, in their intersecting manifestations, understood not as 'exceptional' crises, but as the systemic underpinnings of global capitalism. Rather than simply offering a counter-narrative of 'inclusion' to hegemonic and activist responses to the multiple, overlapping, declared and undeclared crises that converge in the urban space of Athens, the workshops intervene in embodied ways in the ways that such responses reproduce representational violence in rendering certain subject positions unthinkable, untranslatable, and, ultimately, unlivable. They are motivated by a desire for 'queer coalitions' (Cohen, 1997; Carastathis, 2013); for living and working together across and against axes of power and lines of belonging constituting a 'bordered reality' (Spathopoulou & Carastathis, n.d.) which criminalises movements across space that contest the nation-state system. Through that system, and the continental project of securitisation that has produced Europe as a 'Fortress', Greece has been transformed into a site of 'containment' (Tsilimpounidi et al., 2017), trapping more than 60,000 refugees on its islands and mainland, the majority of whom are made to live in segregated camps outside urban centres and in detention centres awaiting their relocation to 'Europe' or their deportation, or their country of 'origin' or of exile (e.g., Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran). The workshop, 'Facing Crisis', is based on the premises of participatory photography methodologies (cf. PhotoVoice, East London); it will take place over the period of a week in June 12-18, 2017 at

Green Park, an occupied social centre in Athens. The participants (LGBTQI+ refugees, migrants, and local activists—who may themselves have a migration background) will (1) engage in a series of talks about issues of representation, migration, and intersectionality; (2) gain technical knowledge of framing and portrait photography, and (3) then undertake a series of practice sessions with disposable cameras. We also propose exhibiting the images at the Contested Borderscapes conference (in a public space in the centre of Mytilene or at the premises of the Aegean University).

# **Mental maps of asylum seekers: spaces of im/mobility, individual strategies, practices and politics of mobility in the “refugee crisis”**

**Sílvia Cardoso**

IGOT-ICS (Institute of Geography and Space Planning/ Institute of Social Sciences), University of Lisbon

## **Abstract**

I work on im/mobility trajectories of asylum seekers – mental maps and geographies of desire. My proposal is to present some ethnographical results of ongoing fieldwork with recently arrived and already installed refugees in Portugal to grasp the processes and practices of refugee reception and its entanglement with different actors’ subjectivities regarding their representations of im/mobility related to their life projects through mental maps of their journeys (which include in-between spaces, borderscapes as well as the encounter between migrant’s life projects and the European border regime).

Particularly, I work on the trajectories of those migrants who already obtained the refugee status and arrived in Portugal as part of a shared quota between European countries. As well as on the comparison between the latest and those refugees already installed in the country before 2015, to confront different political moments.

Portugal is in a position of a case-study of exception among southern European countries: although its peripheral position related to migratory routes, and regarding migrants’ desires and life projects, being the country, in the context of European Union, which registered less asylum requests prior to the “refugee crisis”, it constitutes an exemplary case of openness and governmental willingness to refugee reception.

In fact, the Portuguese government showed the highest availability to receive refugees when comparing absolute and relative quota numbers between the EU countries willing to respond to the “German call” for redistribution. This government willingness was mirrored in/by a mainstream media positive feedback to this reception impetus and in the mobilization of a civil society movement that culminated in the creation of a network of different agents (from religious organizations to NGOs), working together with municipalities, to mobilize resources for refugee installation. But what kind of structured opportunities to reconstruct their lives do they encounter? What about the subjectivities involved in these process: from the refugee’s desires and representations about mobility and their life projects to the underlying racisms in Portuguese society?

Subjectivity is operationalized as a fundamental dimension of analysis to understand the atomized agency of individuals encountering with a particular asylum system and/or with a border regime (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013); as well as to grasp how subjects are subjected to power and are at the same time imbued with it (Butler, 1997).

Following Schapendonk's concept of an 'ethnography of trajectories' (2012), these trajectories are (re)constructed through mental maps, followed by the oral and/or written narratives. The concept of trajectory is operationalized as a unity of analysis and the analytical focus, allowing not only to grasp the individual experience but also to frame the moving strategies of migrants as one of many aspects that affect the trajectory. This processual and relational perspective enables the creation of a dynamic analysis framework of trajectories, articulating the micro, meso and macro levels of the politics of mobility. As I am interested in representations of mobility and their changing role throughout the process of migration, I work, as well, on and with memory as a process that actively re-elaborates the subjects' representations.



## No way

### Codesign Research Studio

#### Abstract

Codesign Research Studio(CoRS) is a non-profit research group consisting of architects Jelena Miljanovic, Leni Ellburg, Markus Höbling and Helena CervinEllqvist. Using the architect's tools CoRS aims to show the journey to and through Europe. CoRS works in the gap between practice and academia. With the project No Way CoRS is mapping the spatial consequences of the laws that hinder migrants and refugees from getting to Europe safely and in legal ways.

During the past years a series of walls and fences have been erected around the EU, hindering the safe passage for refugees and migrants. As a consequence, series of temporary and/or illegal spaces are being created, these spaces are the focus of CoRS' work. CoRS is looking into the migrant routes to Europe as a sequence of spaces in order to create a greater understanding of the spatial, and in the end humanitarian, effects of building Fort Europe. The long term goal is to create awareness about the consequences of the laws that hinder migrants from getting to Europe safely.

Through building border fortifications and making transportation companies responsible for not bringing migrants on their vehicles the safe and legal routes to Europe are closing off. A far more treacherous journey is forced upon migrants wishing to go to Europe. This work exposes the relationship between these routes, the formal and the informal, and the different ways the spaces and the time spent in them affects the body and the mind. The research is mainly based on interviews with people who have come to Sweden as refugees, this has been complemented by statistics and close-reading of laws and conventions. From the interviews we have transformed the informants' stories into graphic material making certain aspects of the stories understandable and even measurable. Through sequences, sections cut through the journey, one is helped in understanding the spaces of which the informants speak. In using close-ups of certain situations and conditions we show in detail how the asylum and border policies in the EU create inhuman or even antihuman spaces. This material is currently being translated into a series of interventions in Stockholm's public space, complemented by an audio walk.

In contributing to Contested borderscapes it is our belief that this can be done either as an exhibition of the visual material, a recreation of the audiowalks and/or some of the installations or a lecture/discussion about the work we do in Codesign Research Studio.

# **Ecologies of Migration: Metabolic Borderscapes and Relational Architectures**

**Ramón Córdova González**

Graduate student in Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, TU-Delft

**Heidi Sohn**

Associate Professor Architecture Theory, Faculty of Architecture, TU-Delft

## **Abstract**

The phenomenon of migration is a fundamental concept to evolutionary biology, population studies, and life sciences. It is uncontested common knowledge that migration is an indispensable factor to propel difference and change, thus ensuring genetic variation among populations, and ultimately evolution for all life forms. For most species migration is the rule, not the exception. Yet, when referring to human migration, the discussions suddenly turn highly controversial. Underpinning the expected arguments that tie these discussions to human exceptionalism and speciesism, one encounters the deeply rooted links of sedentarism to diverse projects of State formation, the construction of society and its cultural and territorial arrangements into bounded, legible schemes and models. Arguably, a narrowing vision, which simultaneously claims to capture and organize an otherwise complex and messy reality, is a necessary and effective frame to focus on particular forms of knowledge over and against others. Nevertheless, as is increasingly evident, such narrow frames not only simplify, but also reduce reality, offering static, fixed and schematic falsifications of it, removed as it were, from the actual phenomena to which they allude. Human migration is especially prone to the effects of such simplification, leading to a reduced understanding of the migration phenomenon itself, the multiple agents that shape it, and their relationality as constitutive of a milieu, or metabolism. When liberated from the grasp of conventionally reductive and simplifying frames, migration and its agents reveal their intricate participation in an ecology that not only engenders the becoming of form, space, matter and subjectivity, but which also shapes specifically human practices and relations. Other discursive schemes (of subject formation) that allow us to think and act creatively and critically in relation to migration are paramount. In short, understanding migration as a complex assemblage driven by desire and other, previously unseen forces is to regard it as a process of becoming. Seen from this angle, concepts conventionally associated to human migration –from migrating subjects, territories, borders, to structures and systems-, become fields of latent potentiality and productive possibilities. It is at this juncture when we may begin exercising different forms of nomadic thought when dealing with migration. The proposed paper contribution will depart from the premise that different theoretical and discursive frameworks are necessary to rethink and act upon the very urgent

problem of human migration from a metabolic, relational and systemic point of view. By approaching contemporary human migration through the encounter of population thinking, intensive thinking and topological thinking, attempts are made to recalibrate the reach of the spatial disciplines and material practices, in particular architecture. The focus of analysis and spatial intervention will be placed on a specific territory in the southern border of Mexico, which conventionally has received far less attention than its northern counterpart, but where the phenomenon of migration nonetheless plays a decisive role in the production of the milieu. The paper will conclude with the presentation of the different parameters -and their relations -, of the design proposal that resulted from this investigation.

# Refugees Social Movements and Solidarity Networks in The Netherlands

**Deanna Dadusc**

University of Brighton

## Abstract

This paper is based on the author's experiences with the 'We Are Here' movement and the squatting movements in The Netherlands, and it seeks to discuss the potentialities and the challenges emerging by their synergy between solidarity networks, and to analyse the responses of local governments, often criminalising or co-opting these struggles.

The current modes of government of the global condition of forced migrants and refugees is twofold: on the one hand European governments are responding by implementing security measures, fortifying borders and expanding migrants detention centres; on the other hand NGOs and charities approached the situation as a humanitarian problem, thereby helping migrants but also often victimising these populations. Both approaches are keeping the condition of refugees and undocumented migrants in a 'state of exception' and frame it as 'an emergency problem to be fixed'. This dismisses the necessity of a global political change to the politics of borders, as much as the capacity of refugees to articulate and produce social and political responses.

In the last few years, across Europe, groups of refugees and undocumented migrants have been organizing themselves to resist the current migration regime and the politics of borders. Local activists have been supporting migrants struggles by constituting networks of solidarity aimed at resisting mechanisms of both 'crimmigration' and victimisation. Documented activists and squatters have not simply been supporting or helping migrants to survive, but have been acting in solidarity with migrants without imposing agendas, while migrants themselves voice their needs and organise these spaces.

The encounter and synergy between these movements entailed the creation of common and autonomous spaces where life can be experienced beyond 'exception' and 'emergency' and where 'no border' politics are enacted. Through squatting undocumented migrants are able to resist borders not only as physical spaces, but as everyday practices and social relations.

However, these struggles are fought from different standpoints. On the one hand, for undocumented activists the political aim is to obtain "papers for all", and to be included in the system of rights. This often leads to a mode of struggle that leads to negotiations with the government, legal battles, and political compromises. On the other hand, for activists that have the privilege of being documented, the aim is often to create a world with "no papers at all",

where one's life is not defined and confined by the possession or lack of documents. These different strategies are determined by different perspectives, but they do not exclude one another. Rather, they need to go hand-in-hand to achieve both short-term solutions and long-term transformation to the migration regime and the border system.

## Religious Engagements along the Turkish-Syrian Border

**Secil Dagtas**

University of Waterloo

### Abstract

Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011, over 2.9 million Syrians have sought protection in Turkey, making it the country with the highest number of refugees in the world today. As many of these refugees currently seek asylum in Western countries, the border politics of the Turkish state have become matters of increasing international concern. Scholarly work examining the border politics of asylum has mainly focused on the policy effects on refugee life and debated the agency of refugees as important social actors in the situated relations that constitute institutional forces. Yet little work has thoroughly examined the religious ties that refugees establish with locals after they cross the borders. In the Middle East, where asylum policies rely more heavily on a combination of local responses and bilateral agreements than their Western counterparts, social relations organized around religion often go beyond the authoritative practices that circumscribe them, and determine displaced people's decisions to settle or move on.

This paper addresses the central role religion takes in shaping Middle Eastern border politics in the absence of structured legal asylum mechanisms. My data derives from extended fieldwork in Turkey's southern province of Hatay near the Syrian border, which currently hosts over 400,000 Syrian refugees in its towns and villages, and another 20,000 in five refugee camps. I use participant observation and ethnographic interviews to examine the social relations between these refugees and Turkey's religious minorities who live along the border, specifically the Arabic speaking Alawis and Orthodox Christians of Hatay. My findings indicate that unlike in many others places where Syrians have arrived, the category of "the Syrian refugee" in Hatay does not denote a unified identity marked by national citizenship. Instead, this category embodies multiple positionalities organized around religion and negotiated through social interaction—with people emphasizing certain aspects of their religion over others depending on the interaction context. I investigate these negotiations in depth to address how religious ties both sustain and constrain refugees in their processes of displacement, migration, and integration in the Middle Eastern borderlands. Ultimately, my analysis aims to offer an alternative account of border politics, one that approaches borders as spatiotemporal sites of negotiation not only between local communities and states, but also between people differentiated on the basis of their religion and citizenship.

## Metatopia/Ontohacking Workshop – Metamedialab

**Jaime del Val**

Reverso & Metabody Institute, Spain

### Abstract

Performances presenting the result of the Metatopia-Ontohacking workshop, a co-creation process with Refugees, as in-between space of plural, indeterminate behaviours challenging algorithmic borders in big data Culture.

METATOPIA is an architectural paradigm of indeterminate space, enacted as a nomadic, interactive & performative environment for outdoors & indoors spaces that merges dynamic physical & digital architectures, with 3D and multisensory immersion, focusing on indeterminacy, unpredictability and open-ended relation to bodies and surrounding environment, an indeterminate space of emergent behaviours and movements that defies prediction and control in the Big Data Era.

METATOPIA proposes a reflection on the role of embodiment in the Big Data era where increasing prediction and modulation of behaviours occurs by reducing the complexity of gesture to calculable elements, inducing expressive homogenisation while affording unprecedented control. Metatopia environments propose to reintroduce the full spectrum of embodied expression highlighting indeterminacy and empowering people to recuperate public space and the body as resistance to the ways in which current media tend to invade or erase these transforming them into hipercontrol spaces.

METATOPIA is based on the novel Flexinamics techniques developed by Reverso in the European project METABODY, based on flexible and dynamic structures, a concept of wearable architecture that blurs the boundaries of body and environment, with flexibility of all components and the constant physical dynamism and mutation of the modules. It consists both of bare physical structures connected to bodies, and of embedded systems of micromotors, sensors and other embedded systems as well as of associated movement techniques: architecture conceived as emergent and indeterminate movement relations.

METATOPIA is a swarm of intra-active, intelligent, nomadic architectures in urban spaces or indoors, an Occupy 2.0 or “refugee camp” for the new digital world order: embodied spaces of indeterminacy as resistance in Big Data and Hypercontrol society, a new distributed life-form.

METATOPIA proposes a novel format called metaformance, hybrid of installation and performance, focusing on the perceptual experience of the participant, in a move away from established spectacular formats, while challenging traditional accounts of robotics, VR and AI. Metatopia proposes the notion of Metagaming, a concept of interactive multisensory platforms across the physical and digital for outdoors and indoors involving full body interaction, non-goal

oriented activity, non-quantifiable and non-competitive play, favoring diversity of gestural interactions, embodied and non-verbal communication and away from the aesthetics of simulation and control. Metatopia evolves in always new site-specific and body-specific versions to be elaborated in each city and country.



## Metatopia/Ontohacking Workshop – Metamedialab

**Jaime del Val**

Reverso & Metabody Institute, Spain

### Abstract

How to generate nomadic in-between spaces that challenge algorithmic borders of behavioural categorisation? How to foster behavioural indeterminacy as creative force and condition of plurality in the Big Data era and the culture of Hipercontrol? The workshop will explore techniques for building such spaces, including movement techniques, building of flexinamic structures, and enacting of interactive environments in urban spaces as co-creation platform: metatopias as indeterminate nomadic spaces created by the bodies moving, elaborated through a hacking of ontological aspects of media and the way these shape perception.

Metamedialab is an itinerant citizen lab, part of the International Metabody Forum, which so far has taken place in 27 cities of 18 countries, whose aim is to explore and elaborate minoritarian perceptions, a laboratory of research into the ways in which media shape societies not so much at the level of content but of their very structures, particularly in terms of how they organise perception. This is what is called metamedia: the thinking of the very frameworks and perceptual structures mobilised by media. The lab has the role of highlighting existing minoritarian perceptual ecologies of diverse social milieus and minorities, as well as experimentating with new ones.

Ontohacking implies a critical reinvention of perceptual structures, which alters the way bodies move, relate and constitute social ecologies. The focus is on developing indeterminate perceptual ecologies where different kinds of people, including neurodiverse and diversly abled people can project and further elaborate their cognitive worlds, proposing therapies for the environment and its rigid alignments rather than attempting to normalise the individual.

Ontohacking workshop content:

#### 1. Ontohacking Theoretical Practices:

- Metamedia: the way media structure perception
- 1. Genealogy of perception.
  - Ontology of information:
    - 1. Embodied nature of information:
    - 2. Algoricene – form, pattern, movement
  - Movement ontologies
  - Ontohacking: the critical redefinition of perceptual structures

1. aesthetics, politics, ethics, ecology

2. Ontohacking / Metaformance Practices:

- Clinamics/disalignments – movement techniques based on proprioception and microperceptions.
- Flexinamics – physical flexible and dynamic architecture modules as body extension
- Amorphogenesis – non representation VR and amorphous digital intra-active environments
- Microsexes – cameras on the skin and electronically processed voice for a body without anatomy

## **Algorithmic borders and Post-biopolitical control.**

### **Integration, assimilation, anticipation, modulation: New threats to plurality in the Algoricene**

**Jaime del Val**

Reverso & Metabody Institute, Spain

#### **Abstract**

In the Big Data Era new threats to plurality and cultural difference emerge as strategies of preemption and modulation of behaviour of the human and nonhuman acquire increasing sophistication in algorithmic and Big Data environments. Preemption, anticipation and modulation strategies thus further problematise the already precarious situation of integration politics and the tendency to assimilate plurality rather than let it flourish. This post-biopolitical control regime, increasingly managed by autonomous algorithmic systems, focuses on the capture and capitalisation of emergent behaviours, down to the minutest unconscious gestures thus expanding older disciplinary notions of population control into a new wave of hyper-racism where biometrics explodes the horizon of quantification and categorisation of bodies and behaviours.

The presentation will study the ontology and genealogy of such hypercontrol environments, their invisible architectures stemming from the rationalisation of sensibility enacted since the Renaissance, proposing that we inhabit the Algoricene, an era in which movements tend to be organised in algorithmic patterns of repeatable commands and calculable trajectories and geometries. These frameworks of perceptual organisation (more than the content of perception) are proposed as the ontological frameworks underlying colonial and neocolonial politics of bordermaking on bodies and territories. The notion of the border is thus ontologically redefined as happening in dynamic processes of information systems categorising our movements: algorithmic borders.

At the same time the project will propose to highlight other minoritarian perceptual ecologies focusing not on the content of expression but on the larger and distributed, embodied and technological infrastructures and architectures, the perceptual ecology at large. The research will focus on the situation of people living in precarious, nomadic situations particularly refugees in Lesbos, who are particularly vulnerable to all the strata of erasure of plurality, from assimilation and integration, to anticipation and modulation. Strategies for a more plural inter/intra-action will be explored. This will involve an experiential exploration and co-creation through the workshops and installation-performances (metaformances) of the intra-active environments Metatopia, as in-between spaces, metatopias rather than heterotopias, spaces

emerging from the body and movement that may be enacted in nomadic interventions, fostering a behavioural indeterminacy that may challenge the increasing tendency to categorise identities and actions in the attempt to capitalise and control our most minimal gestures.

## Riace. The Laboratory of a New European Identity?

Anna Di Giusto

### Abstract

My research deals with the microreality of Riace, a little town in Calabria, become in the last years a laboratory of something more than an ordinary integration process. To define this phenomenon, we can use the neologism “intelligration”: if integration and melting pot are hinged on an economic-centric subjectivity, based on the contractual relationship and focused on cultural assimilation in separated spaces, intelligration means that the other is invited to be part of a fabric which must be recovered (Ricca 2010). This way, the pressure on the borders by worldwide migration flows becomes an opportunity for the local rebirth. Migrants are called to translate themselves into physical and symbolic spaces of the country landing (Sedda 2003).

In 1998 this village welcomed a boat with Kurdish refugees: from that moment everything changed, and many migrants has arrived from all around the world: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ghana, Mali, Togo, Nigeria, Somalia, these are just some of the countries of origin of the new inhabitants of Riace. This region has been plagued for centuries by emigration, but now lots of migrants are being accepted in the human and demotic fabric. Here they can have a house, a job, education and health care (Bennis 2009). The major's goal was to redeem depopulated buildings, engaging a transformation prospect marked by intercultural coexistence (Guarracino 2016).

This is a successful attempt to naturalize globalization, starting from the ancestral predisposition to reception that people of the South of Italy have inherited from archetypal Greek ancestors and Basilian monasticism (Aria 2008). As it is demonstrated by the authors cited, convinced by this example, the region Calabria has signed a law after the intuition of Riace's mayor, funding each project of refugees' reception which aims to promote handcrafted production, local traditions, responsible tourism and solidarity economy (Zolin 2015).

My research aims to understand the role played by cultural identities in this meeting: if Calabrian culture is the instrument that encourages refugees to ward off painful memories, and to plunge themselves into a totally new tradition; in a long-term perspective is it possible to think about a new identity not only for these refugees, but for natives too?

Through field interviews in Riace and in the neighboring towns, I try to answer to this question. Very important for my research it was the study of the young students' situation, mostly from migrant families. The study may be useful to review the ministerial school programs, not only in Italy but in Europe, to be able to create a real school for the future European citizens.

# Human after all. A participative web-project as resistance to migration control

**Morgane Dujmovic**

PhD student in Social Geography, TELEMMe Institute, Assistant lecturer at Aix-Marseille Université

## Abstract

In a video posted in October 2016 on Aljazeera's website, Zygmunt Bauman explains how individuals embody precariousness throughout contemporary forced migration. This "precarization on the move" is mostly due to constraints set by migration control and surveillance dispositif on the migratory paths, while the magnifying glass of the "crises" rhetoric casts the light on "migration management" priorities rather than on human realities, generally made invisible. The processes of dehumanizing, segregating, assigning and illegalizing are repeated by mainstream communication on migration – in discourses, media and institutional infographic and mapping -- which deeply affects common representations.

My project began with a classical PhD research. It is becoming a collective web-platform aiming at using the web to narrate concrete experiences of people under control. Far from the idea that precarious migrants are necessarily in a situation of deprivation ("homeless", "undocumented", "without means"...), I introduce the reverse notions of "resources" and "experiences" acquired through migrating. Although they are deprived of their own space, time and mobility, migrants in precariousness deploy thorough relational, computational and geographical knowledge and know-how that strengthen their means and tactics of resistances. The representations of "victim", "subaltern" or "passive" migrants can be challenged if we focus on their role as actors developing various and innovative forms of expressions and struggles.

This web-project is designed as a counter-dispositif at the crossroad of research, transmedia storytelling, artistic, digital and migratory practices. In this frame, migrants are neither passive "informants" nor "interviewees" but take an active part in the project. Therefore I aspire to seek funds for remunerating the team of migrants who will co-construct the materials, design and translation to Arabic and Farsi. The tools combine classical research material (gray literature, fieldwork notes, biographical narratives, photographs) as well as sensitive and inter-textual material (progressive, animated and drawn maps, drawings, paintings, embroidery, song lyrics, music, video clips, exhibitions). Three sections are planned in the website architecture: an interactive web-documentary based on critical cartography; a resource center linking web archives (institutional websites, Facebook pages, blogs...); an internal database connected to an interface of dynamic cartography (accessible for uninitiated users who will be able to make their own maps). The website is conceived as a tool for dissemination of the results of research

towards students, pupils, civil society and internet users at large, but it also provides content that can be useful for people on their migratory paths.

My proposal is to include the presentation of this project in a wider round-table on the visualisation of migrants' experiences. Do we have a role to communicate on these narratives as researchers, activists, teachers, and human after all? What terminologies should we use to describe contemporary migration realities? How can we give voice to the people who are invisibilized by migration policies? How crossing art, digital practices and research experiences and methodologies can contribute to these goals? I am longing to meet people and exchange about similar projects and interests in order to think for pooling resources on a wider scale.

## Crossings

**Bikem Ekberzade**

Photojournalist / Author

### Abstract

"Crossings is a cross-platform, multi-lingual artistic intervention, and the final leg of photojournalist Bikem Ekberzade's documentary photography project The Refugee Project, which she has been working on since 1997. It is a culmination of decades of work on forced migration and people who have been forced to migrate during or post-crises. It challenges the notion of borders, while telling short anecdotes from real life experiences, and reflects upon what people face when they finally think they arrive in a safe country.

Crossings, much different than its source, The Refugee Project, is an intervention to break the catatonia of our psyche in the face of constant bombardment of related and unrelated visuals, news, information. It is not a documentary project, but it is based on one. So everything we hear or read in it is a fact. Unlike the rest of the project where there is a multitude of photographs, Crossings portrays a single photo, one of a deflated dinghy washed ashore on a rocky formation somewhere in the Aegean.

Although Crossings talk about people, their experiences, their lives, the photo doesn't have a single person in it."

I initially designed Crossings as a wall print, to be printed on a large, empty wall in a public space/square with heavy pedestrian traffic where people could read a portion of the text and take that thought with them throughout the day. However as situation in Istanbul changed with safety becoming an concern, Crossings also had to change format, and thus became mobile.

For the time being, as the situation warranted it, I decided to keep it digital, although a print version, is still heavily desired. Starting in Turkey we developed a "live reading" version of the text, which turned into an approximately 15 minute performance. In this format we managed to carry Crossings across the border to Europe, with one reading in Ireland, and one during Manifesta in Zurich. The readings are done with two people of opposing genders. It is preferable that they are not professional actors or persons with on stage training. Crossings doesn't need to be acted. Plain reading of the text proves to be effective enough. The reading is followed by a short introduction of the intervention and followed by a Q&A session. Overall practice runs approximately an hour and a half.

For Contested Borderscapes, considering limitations on budget, I propose to bring to Lesvos the video-art version of it, as opposed to a live reading, in both Turkish and English (or only in English, and/or maybe German – finished versions. We can use all three languages depending on space and resources. The installation is quiet flexible and adapts per availability.) This version



of the installation would require only projectors, and in one or multiple parts of the island, in empty spaces and in different languages. We can let Crossings run in a loop. Should you believe it would be effective we can also work on a Greek version of the text- although timewise it maybe challenging.

# **Freedom of movement struggles and border abolition : solidarity, anarchist politics and decoloniality**

**James Ellison**

**Travis van Isacker**

## **Abstract**

In light of the recent intensification of Europe's war on those who move to and through its territory without permission, this paper explores a reading of anarchist politics and decoloniality as the foundation for understanding contemporary border regimes and freedom of movement struggles.

Drawing upon years of organising experience with no borders affiliated group in Calais, France, our paper is positioned at the crossroads between border abolitionism, anarchist politics and decolonial thinking. Beginning with an analysis of the contribution made to freedom of movement struggles by anarchist forms of counter-power organizing, decolonial thinking then provides a critical perspective on how border regimes function, reminding us of what structures of violence our practices of solidarity must avoid recreating.

Anarchist politics, as a practical and theoretical conjunction, has been an important driving force for many autonomous solidarity groups responding to the "refugee crisis" within Europe. Its fundamental opposition to state sovereignty and violence, along with its desire for the creation of a society without borders has been powerfully enacted along flight routes through Europe. Whilst an anarchist politics of solidarity offers a foundation for freedom of movement struggles and border abolitionism, it is left lacking in some respects, particularly when considered in conjunction with the politics of decoloniality..

Decoloniality takes as its starting point the subjective experiences of the colonized, and the violence they suffered, physical, psychological and epistemic, during European colonial expansion. This perspective understand violence against those "othered" (for example through race, gender, and religion) to be constitutive to the European project, rather than coincidental with it. Casting the "refugee crisis" in this light has far reaching implications. It places these forced migrations into the history of resource extraction and political intervention to benefit European interests at the expense of colonized people. It reveals Europe's borders as mechanisms of violent exclusion; part of a continuing project of (neo)colonialism which protect capital accumulated through exploitation. It also highlights the hypocrisy of Europe's relationship to freedom, human rights, and hospitality.

Taking these ideas seriously requires critical reflection on our solidarity practices that work to undermine and undo these borders. Specifically, care must be taken to not reproduce the same structural violence, nor categories of exclusion, which the state employs. We must also adapt our theoretical frames for how we understand these movements, as well as political action. This is an (un)learning that has to take place alongside Europe's "others" at its borders. Border abolition then appears at this nexus as a two-fold process, both territorial and interpersonal. It is only through continually acting against hierarchies, both formal and informal, that borders, geopolitical and interpersonal, are challenged.

# **Rethinking urban boundaries from the margins: practices of spatial transgressions among Palestinians and Syrians in Beirut**

**Stefano Fogliata**

University of Bergamo/ Lebanese American University

## **Abstract**

Since social or migrant networks have become quite dominant in sociological understanding of transnational migrations, one might get the impression that migrants are unproblematically connected across the globe without the impediment of distance and borders (Samers, 2010: 35). This tendency thus risks eclipsing the intertwined impacts of space, borders and legal documents.

In this situation, the status of stateless persons represents traits of exceptionality that urge scholars to reconsider mobility and its own socio-juridical implications at socio-political level as well as the dimension of the “representative ideoscape” (Coutin, 2003).

Palestinians fleeing Syria have actually been subjected to specific and arbitrary restrictive border policies in the region. Excluding policies do not actually run out once crossed the national borders: arbitrary visa regulations, detentions held at the checkpoints and refolement practices thus duplicate the normative hierarchical spatiality beyond the international border crossing experience. In this sense, borders turn into pervasive discriminatory spaces of power performativity in and beyond fixed territories, which are enduringly crossed by stateless persons (Lundsfryd Heide-Jørgensen, 2014).

Inspired by scholars’ work on potentials of locality in elucidating transnational phenomena and dynamics (Levitt, 2003), Palestinian camps in Lebanon turn into meaningful micro-territorial units overlapping with national state intensity of its meaningful presence in a continuous body of bounded territory (Balibar, 1991). The production of locality in these urban formations faces the related problems of displaced and deterritorialized populations, of state policies that restrict neighbourhoods as context producers, and of local subjects who cannot be anything other than national citizens (Appadurai, 1996)

Starting from these premises, the paper analyses how forced multiple displacements and protracted exile in the case of Palestinian refugees from Syria reshape the relationship between mobility and deterritorialization around national boundaries and international borders. In this context, how do Palestinians from Syria navigate an adverse outside system by reorganizing the camps through the mobilisation of new transnational and translocal networks?

Mainly grounded on an on-going research conducted since 2014 around Lebanon border crossings and in Palestinian camps, my fieldwork mainly focuses on Bourj el Barajneh camp and its interconnectivities with the Beirut southern suburbs. In this area, Hezbollah acts as a para-state pervading the public landscapes, organizing spaces, controlling movements through a hyper-visible multi-level presence. The nexus between legal vulnerability and mobility practices is thus transcended through common elusively practices of “taking the space” grounded on translocal informal networks. I argue that transnational discourses and mobility practices in locality effectively contest international gaps in protection, national securitization policies and arbitrary measures by local non-state actors.

My research thus investigates how refugees living in camps experience different scales of mobility and develop a wide range of practices that extends beyond the camp's boundaries, exploring how imperceptible and hyper-mobile tactics of existence re-elaborate Palestinian refugee camps into “meaningful places of spatial transgression and elusive contestation”. By looking at how refugees manage to organize several places around the camp as a whole territory, I argue that translocal and transnational networks contribute to reshape the boundaries between the camps and the city.

# Contesting borders: global refugees, dispossession and solidarity

**Marianna Fotaki**

University of Warwick

**Felicita Tramontana**

University of Warwick

**Ajnesh Prasad**

University of Mexico

**Alexis Bushnell**

Queens University Belfast

**Haneen Salameh**

lawyer and gender activist

**Conor Kenny**

MSF

## Abstract

Forced migration is not a new phenomenon while the dispossessed and needy are often met with rejection and difference on the part of those who could help (Stonebridge, 2016). Yet in many cases networks of volunteers and local communities join forces to address the most urgent needs of the newly arrived refugees. For some, these initiatives embody the universal values of humanitarianism and international citizenship and reject the state's claim to a monopoly of concern and care, in the face of what is perceived as manifest incapacity or negligence (Foucault, 1979). Other have rejected them as 'the short lived carnivalesque explosions of solidarity and care that are triggered by media images of successive spectacular tragedies in the migrants unending saga' (Bauman, 2016: 80).

The issues of refugee and migrants' protection are linked to economic and social development. The financial crisis and the neoliberal forms of governance characterized by growing transnational expulsions (Sassen, 2013) have an impact on both, the states and populations' responses within and outside their national state boundaries. This has for instance led to a decreasing solidarity with uprooted people and a higher exploitability of migrants in conditions of deregulatory globalization, and crisis (Cholewinski and Taran, 2009). Often the economic threat is collapsed with security threats (Long, 2012) that leads to a further and an even more aggressive reaffirmation of the national borders.

Drawing on various experiences from various transnational settings the panel will propose to discuss the notion of solidarity initiatives emerging in the conditions of economic crisis, in the context of ever-increasing the dispossession and expulsion of different groups of local populations. Participants from different disciplines will consider borders/enclosures as a societal issue and a new paradigmatic shift affecting those who are directly involved that is, those who prevent the entry for various intruders/police borders and different categories of migrants, undesirables, seasonal 'illegal' workers, mixed migrants forced migrants and refugees. The idea is to approach the topic from a transdisciplinary perspective while involving activists and academics working in different sites and contexts.

Specifically, researchers looking at cross-border labor issues from Mexico, lawyer and gender activists from Palestine, activists working in Greece to secure safe passage of minors to the UK, historian from Italy examining 17th century migrations in the Eastern Mediterranean along with an Irish medic working with Medecins sans Frontiers off the coast of Libya, a feminist researcher looking at issues of migration from a relational ethics perspective and a human rights legal scholar focusing on spaces of detention and exclusion will debate the following issues:

- How the idea of refugees and migrants as threat that needs to be contained at the outer boarder of European Union functions performatively?
- And how it shapes (and perhaps limits) transnational solidarity responses towards them across redefined boarder/spaces?
- Means of resisting, redefining and reimagining solidarity in the neoliberal wastelands

# Survival And Predation In The Everyday Political Economy Of The Refugee Emergency In Lesvos

Anja Franck

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## Abstract

The humanitarian emergency that has unfolded in the Island of Lesvos over the past couple of years has echoed in media outlets the world over. Images of refugees in over-crowded rubber dinghies landing on the northern beaches and the appalling conditions in different reception and detention camps across the island have come to symbolize the European Union's fundamental failure in handling the so-called 'refugee crisis'. In the Island of Lesvos the initial stages of this refugee emergency (the spring and summer of 2015) were characterized by a significant lack of resources and smaller local initiatives to aid and shelter arriving refugees. But with the mobilization of the international rescue industry and the deployment of European security apparatus over the autumn of 2015, the island soon saw the arrival of thousands of volunteers and solidarity workers, aid, rescue and security professionals. Drawing upon interviews with local residents, public servants and decision-makers, business owners and their associations, volunteers, NGOs and international agencies across the island during 2015 and 2016, the following paper examines the political economy – or what could perhaps be termed the 'disaster capitalism' – that developed in Lesvos in the wake of the refugee emergency and its particular response. The paper shows how this 'disaster capitalism' involved a broad variety of actors – ranging from small-scale local businesses that were able to tap in to markets providing essential services and infrastructure for arriving refugees, volunteers, aid and security professionals to large international rescue and aid organizations, banks and security companies. Whereas these actors have varying objectives (from sheer profit seeking to solidarity), the following paper suggests that we can understand the 'extraction of value' in relation to the emergency using Ruben Anderson's notion of a 'predatory bio-economy'. In this economy the migrant and refugee body and life is essentially what is commoditized – and 'the extraction of value' then is 'from the very vitality – and, above all, misery – of human life itself' (Anderson 2016, 1). What is important about this conceptualization, the paper argues, is that it helps us explain the logic according to which actors in this economy (are sometimes forced to) operate – as security functions are outsourced to G4S, Western Union open offices in reception camps, NGOs become suppliers to detention facilities and selfies with refugee children become part of crowdfunding campaigns. Through this, the concept also helps us bring forward what is actually



at stake in securitizing migration and outsourcing key functions of rescue operations, immigration control, refugee reception, detention etc. to private as well as commercial interests.

## **Border displacement and ambiguous discourses on human rights at the EU South-Western frontier**

**Lorena Gazzotti**

Centre of Development Studies, POLIS, University of Cambridge

### **Abstract**

Since King Mohammed VI announced a “radically new, human right based policy” in 2013, a new discourse on migrants’ human rights has emerged in and on Morocco. The announcement of the new migration policy stood in stark contrasts with Morocco’s previous strategy of migration control. In fact, since the mid 2000s widespread concern had been expressed about the violent treatment of migrants by Moroccan police forces at the Southern EU border, as witnessed in reports published by Médecins Sans Frontières in 2005, 2010 and 2013. Morocco’s new migration policy and the new related discourse on migrants’ rights have been warmly welcomed and generously financial supported by International Organisations and donors.

The turn in Morocco’s migration policy has undeniably brought progress in migrants’ living situation. Migrants’ expulsions at the border with Algeria and police raids in most Moroccan cities have been discontinued. However, as journalists and activists have already denounced, this mainstream discourse on human rights in Morocco neglects the ongoing abuses of migrants’ rights perpetrated in the Northern regions of Morocco. Police violence, arbitrary arrests and internal refoulement are still practiced by Moroccan police forces to “decompress” the border with the EU, especially close to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. In these areas, humanitarian projects providing relief to migrants in distress have been ongoing since the mid 2000s.

One of the most explicit examples of this contradicting discourse is the political representation of the border city of Tangier. Although the city is well known for the continuous arrests and abuses of migrants’ rights, especially in the neighbourhood of Boukhalef, documents have been produced in the frameworks of donors-funded projects which point at Tangier as a case study for migrants’ integration.

I argue that that this process is part of the broader political construction of Morocco as a migrant-receiving country in the Mediterranean migration scenario. On the one hand, this recategorisation speaks to Morocco’s will to reinforce international relations with the rest of Africa as well as to the country’s attempt to further consolidate its political position as a key partner in Migration control cooperation vis-à-vis the EU and its member states. On the other hand, this also points to an evolution of the EU externalisation strategy. In fact, the support provided by the EU and its member states to the new migration policy is instrumental to the

recognition of Morocco as a safe country for migrants and asylum seekers. This process gives rise to a further assimilation of Morocco within the EU border space and a complementary political displacement of the EU Southern border from the North of Morocco to Subsaharan Africa.

Building on fieldwork conducted in 2016, my contribution will investigate this process, building on literature on border externalisation and politics of humanitarianism and development.

# Shifting borders: the relegation of the rule of law and the right to move

**Francesca Genduso**

University of Palermo

## **Abstract**

The interaction between nationality and mobility has become essential to determine the exercise of civil rights within society. The inner and outer barriers of the states work as a selective mechanism for the creation of a hierarchy of membership, class, and race. The border constitutes a threshold, an interstitial space between inside and outside; crossing it entails a change of status and the assumption of another identity. However, the way it works is masked by its flattening: in the official representations on the map, border becomes a simple line. As a consequence, nation-states can create different spaces to which access is allowed for certain categories of citizens: this process entails the restraint of the citizenship and the right to freely move, which has increasingly become a privilege for the few.

Nowadays, migrants seem to be the new excluded-included category from the administrative and legal apparatus of nations. For one hand, they are excluded because of their legal status that qualify them as “half” citizens or as completely invisible people, in the case of so-called illegal and clandestine migrants. Thus, their participation in the civic life of the countries in which they dwell is partially or totally absent. For the other hand, migrants are included, or rather trapped, within the political control system: their position is therefore only apparently in contradiction with the law-abiding system of Western democracies. Indeed, migrants are the first subjects of a political system that tends to place them in an in-between space of inclusion and exclusion, legality and illegality: their existence is located at the intersection of visible and invisible borders, political and legal barriers.

All categorizations are more nuanced in this undefined threshold, making it shifty the distinction between inside and outside and between rule of law and lawlessness. The same existence of migrants establishes a sort of proliferation of the borders of law and national belonging in the European states. In this respect, the attempt to deconstruct the identification between borders and territorial boundaries acquires a crucial importance. The efficacy and validity of borders are not effective just at the limits between one state and another, but also at the center of the territories themselves, or even beyond them. An immediate example of this are the agreements on immigration signed by Italy and Libya through which the Italian government delegate Libya to

control migratory flows in North Africa to forbid the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea. In doing so, Italy has effectively extended its sphere of influence beyond its national borders.

For these reasons, borders assume an absolute centrality within the state system, due to their role of control and creation of different scopes of legitimacy. Therefore, it is more useful to think of the border not as a simple line between nation-states, but as a moving mechanism that operates within the same territory, condemning to immobility some subjects. By questioning the relationship between center and margins it will be possible to think in an alternative way to border and its processes of “exclusive inclusion”.

# Contested Gazes. Towards a critical topography of border visual representations

**Chiara Giubilaro**

University of Milano-Bicocca

## Abstract

Talking about his working experience in Lesbos, AFP photographer Aris Messinis declared: “The most shocking thing for me about covering this story is that you constantly realize that you’re not in a warzone. That you’re working in a place where there is peace. But the emotions that you’re capturing with your lens are the same.” Since at least 1992, European border regimes have progressively transformed the Mediterranean in the unstable ground of a low-intensity war (De Genova 2013), where the dominant policies of regulated mobility and differential surveillance have been continuously challenged by bodies struggling for their fundamental right to move (Squire 2011; Hyndman 2012). As Messinis’ analogy confirms, this conflict involves also the field of visual representation and its forcible effects on perception and responsiveness. If representation is the leading domain in which practices of humanization and dehumanization are perennially produced (Butler 2004), then it becomes crucial to analyse the production of images and tease out the inextricable relationship between socio-political and visual norms.

This paper aims at investigating how European photographers have contributed to construct the visual frame of the Mediterranean border and which ethical and political issues are at stake in this peculiar scopic regime (Jay 1987). Un-framing the spectacle of migration that we witness day after day means not only looking at what constitutes and regulates the visual field, but also asking questions about the structures of power, its concrete manifestations, and the various strategies it uses to define who counts as human and who does not or not entirely. In order to question the transparency of visual representation and seek to unveil the processes underlying it, we will critically analyse the works three professional photographers carried out in Lesbos in 2015 and the visual performances their pictures are likely to elicit and authorize on the viewer. In the attempt to produce a critical topography of the gaze, we will raise the following questions: how do frames select, organize and control the field of visibility with its forcible effects on the construction of Mediterranean border regimes today? Under what political conditions do they operate? What are the effects of framing on the politics of affect? And, above all, what place is assigned to life, death and the body in the contemporary aesthetics of migration?

# Possibilities of first-person narratives in the struggle against xenophobia

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**Özlem Sarıyıldız**

Utopicture Collective

## Abstract

Since 2015, the world has faced the highest human displacement after the WWII. While Turkey has been a destination and transition country for migrants since the 1990s, its migratory patterns have changed after it has had more than 2 million Syrians in the past six years. Dissociated from other migrant groups in Turkey, the status for the Syrians is defined under a temporary protection which considered migration as temporary, and paved a way to define Syrians as “guests” of the society. This language not only triggers racism and xenophobia, but also prevents the implication of rights-based politics by making refugee rights contingent upon a state’s benevolence. ‘Benevolent’ state’s declaration of the possibility of the guests' becoming citizens, after 6 years, resulted with an increase in the political polarization in Turkey. Mainstream media keep publishing news, representing Syrians in Turkey as mere numbers, using a criminalizing language for some occurrences, reviving nationalism via promoting ill-informed, misinformed news on Syrian’s rights, which give rise to the xenophobia against the Syrians and expanding its scope within the society.

Within the given circumstances, there are two significant points which we would like to bring into discussion 1) the importance of developing anti-racist struggle that challenges existing discourses reclaiming the political subject position of the refugees 2) the necessity of first-person narratives in different media platforms to change/challenge the existing discourses. However, the dilemmas of “struggle for migrants” and “struggle with migrants” is still a valid discussion in relation to the above mentioned points. How do we have to deal with the very debatable issue of representation, in audiovisual and other activist practices? Do activists have the right to speak in the name of refugees in order to struggle against racism in the public? What kind of experiences are created by the encounters between these movements? How do telling the migration experiences of refugees or representing a personal story counter with public opinion? What are the possibilities of spreading the words or the stories of migrants in wider networks without falling into mainstream discourses and channels without damaging the

refugees subject positions? This workshop aims to tackle with those questions collectively. Rather than arguing any settled answers, we make an open-call to people who would like to discuss, share their experiences and explore new ways for both activism, video-activism, and other forms of artistic production. We believe that these questions will provide us to re-think on activism, video-activism, the tricky track of 'representation' alternatives of networking and distribution, in particular.

In addition to the workshop, we propose a video-exhibition of "WelcomeToTurkey" video-portrait series ([welcometoturkey.info](http://welcometoturkey.info)), which is a collective effort that intends to listen to the stories of the Syrians living in Turkey through their very own words. By weaving the actual everyday life images of the Syrians living in Turkey with their own words, WelcomeToTurkey video-portrait series explores new ways of being a part of self-representation and self-reflection. Starting with the discomfort on the dominant representation of the refugees; it attempts to make a contribution to the struggle against the increasing xenophobia, whereas it never claims to "represent" the Syrians living in Turkey, but attempts to uproot the negative stereotyping about them.



**“We took over by force what was not given to us civilly”.**

## **Refugees claim their right to housing in a 1936 squatting incident in Mytilene**

**Dimitra Glenti**

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### **Abstract**

The present paper aims at providing an insight into the practice of mass and organized squatting in the context of a refugee housing crisis through a historical perspective. Part of an empirical research, it focuses on a specific episode that illuminates the viewpoint of the squatters and the meanings that they attribute to their action as part of a never-ending struggle to proper housing.

The incident takes place at Mytilene in February 1936 and specifically in Lagada settlement when a group of 85 refugee families living in nearby shanties occupy the newly-built and aimed to be sold houses in one night. Squatting and other unlawful practices such as arbitrary constructions of dwellings and even churches are not rare among the Minor Asia refugees that flooded Greek cities and the countryside since 1922. The overwhelming number of the newcomers shook the already impoverished by the war-effort country in almost every aspect - socially, politically and financially- bringing along an acute housing problem that the state was unable to address. In the beginning such individual self-regulatory housing practices were often met by a silent tolerance or even consent from the Greek authorities. They were seen as a way of alleviating the problem and relieving the order-threatening tensions. Later on, as the responsible Ministry started to implement the rehabilitation program by building permanent urban and rural settlements, such phenomena were seen as defiance towards the state's power and were linked to specific political spaces -namely the communist party. Such is the impressive case of simultaneous occupation in three refugee settlements of Athens (Nea Ionia, Kaisariani and Vryonas) that ended up in a violent confrontation with the army.

This research is based on a local communist newspaper of the time, where we read letters of the squatters that reveal an inside viewpoint on the refugee housing adventure. The anonymous writers of these letters justify their actions by reversing the unlawfulness towards the state's practices, oriented by a mixture of neglect, profit and repression. In addition to the restoration of justice, squatting is considered as a moment of action that ruptures a long period of passivity and enables the squatters to take matters into their own hands. A discourse analysis can decipher the role of squatting as a practice of resistance that reclaims the refugees' long

deprived agency. In the context of a political and financial turmoil, an acute housing crisis, the “threat of communism” and the strategical significance of land ownership this vivid but rarely heard voice provides us with an entering point to an interesting, underexplored and currently relevant phenomenon.

## Exile, Refugee, Proletarian

Joseph Grim Feinberg

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### Abstract

In this presentation I will reflect on the significance of the notion of the border for political theory, with a focus on how borders, and people's supposed belonging on one or another side of them, conceptually separate citizens from non-citizens. Drawing on philosophical conceptions of exclusion, such as Bataille's notion of the heterogeneous, Rancière's notion of "the part without a part," and Agamben's notion of the "state of exception," I will argue for a revision of established categories of political thought. Whereas the modern Western tradition of political theory has typically presupposed as its starting point the notion of an empowered, civilized, civically responsible citizen, I will ask how these traditional political categories might be reshaped if looked at, instead, from the perspective of disenfranchised non-citizens.

In the first part of the presentation I will critically examine dominant political discourse, with a focus on liberal theories of civil society that hold up integration and multiculturalism as values, but which nonetheless approach these issues from the standpoint of the citizen who is already established within a given polity. On the basis of this critical analysis, I will argue that although migration and disenfranchisement have been conditions of social life since the birth of ancient Greek political thought, and again since the appropriation of ancient Greek categories in the modern West, political ideas are too often grounded in concepts that either ignore the existence of non-citizens or consider their situation secondary, a question to be addressed after the fundamental questions of establishing a polity have been resolved. I argue for placing questions of migration and disenfranchisement at the center of democratic and emancipatory political thought.

In the second part of the presentation, I will shift from the analysis of established categories of civic politics, as they appear in influential contemporary political theories, to a more speculative philosophical reflection on what alternative categories of politics might be developed, in order to approach politics from the point of view of the non-citizen—politics as seen from "outside" the polity. To this end, I will propose that we consider the meaning of varying non-citizen subject positions: from the figure of the exile, who is typically understood to be oriented toward a lost home; to the refugee, who is said to aspire toward a new home; and to the proletarian, who—as conceptualized by the young Marx—is the embodiment of exclusion and nationlessness and aspires only to a universal home that includes all of humanity. Each of these figures, I suggest, offers its own way of reframing political discourse and debates over the proper scope and aim of politics.

## **We (?)**

**Sara Guagnini**

**Marieke Mamarazzi**

**Britt Myren**

Critical thinkers based in the Netherlands

### **Abstract**

We (?) involves meeting with people, listening, conversing, reading and critical looking that acknowledges the paradoxes of borders(1). Thinking through and across borders, We (?) raises questions of human rights: where, when and how the boundaries of rights lie with geopolitical, sociocultural, economic and biophysical issues? How can We(?) overcome such issues? Beyond a language of pity and denied rights, what can We(?) bring into play?

We (?) has been conceived as a research, artistic and curatorial project, as well as a call for action in line with the mission of the conference, and comprises the presentation of our participant observations, the making and screening of a short and provocative documentary, and a public debate aimed towards the elaboration of a manifesto for borders We (?) recognizes that borders have dehumanized people. Nonetheless, We (?) does not aim at their dissolution, but rather their evolution and revitalization. For it, We (?) shows the human faces of borders, and tell their stories, which would otherwise remain only the unknown consequences of sheer happenings. It will take place in cities such as Amsterdam, Den Haag, Rotterdam and Leiden across the Netherlands, and all the way to the island of Lesbos in Greece, connecting participants in both locations.

We (?)’s observations introduce the results of discussions and critical engagement surrounding the notion of borders in terms of discursive social and spatial practices of many kinds by contextualizing them with historical terms and real-life scenarios from the Netherlands.

In our opinion, The Netherlands is an inspiring context. It is renowned to be a multicultural society, with about the 30% of population of migrant background, and to be a destination of arrive for thousands of asylum seekers. Particularly, We (?) will report the voices of both citizens and newcomers to shed light on some of the social struggles at stake in the current historical moment that are not always easy to grasp in concrete processes such as post-colonialism, social, cultural, political and/or armed conflicts, climate change, human rights paradoxes and more generally, neoliberal globalisation. What can be learnt?

As a provocative documentary, We (?) assembles flexible and participative interviews with the participants of our project. Every participant will be asked to play with the notion of borders and to give his/her own account of building bridges.

In this context, We (?) asks dazzling terms, slogans, objects, drawings, readings, practices and performances that allows participants to speak for their own struggles and to contribute to the construction of new connections within the social struggles concerned with issues of borders, in order to call into question the different layers of subjectivity - beyond the nation-states.

The same is expected of the public at the conference, who is invited to 'journey' with us through the questions and challenges posed by our interviewees and public debate following the screening.

By doing so, We(?) opens the possibility to bridge diverse social struggles within the context of borders, yet beyond national limits.

In addition, it will be a creative and productive occasion to establish new synergies and bridges between research and practical application of academic work within the field of fine arts, social sciences and humanities.

We(?) will end by drafting a terms for a manifesto for borders.

# **From Café Terecht to the Just People collective: reflections on/from the borders of geography, social change and antiauthoritarian practices in Nijmegen, The Netherlands**

**Dustin Gordon**

Radboud University, Nijmegen, NL

## **Abstract**

Two years of collective local action and community building, informed by anarchist principles and shared experiences with authorities, ranging from struggles for decolonizing the university and free education, to EU border regimes and “refugee reception”, are calling for reflection for further community engagement, focus, un- and re-learning, and the building of broad coalitions across axes of oppression and fragmentation, cross-border regional solidarity networks and support structures. In 2015, occupation/ “utilization” of former Law faculty cafeteria took place as alternative spatial practice/ free space, and as local manifestation of international student movement, which enabled unplanned encounters, dialogues and projects through disrupting pre-determined routes and routines on campus. Next to the intention of socio-spatial counter-fragmentation, the practice involved a departure from a politics of demand to a politics of practice, demonstrated as feasible and living alternatives. In 2016, direct action and building of mutual-aid support structures took place in response to the opening of the largest “refugee reception center” in the Netherlands (3000 people), which changed the terms of conversation and engagement from pre-mediated, top-down voluntarism/humanitarianism toward informal, horizontal, eye-to-eye practical solidarity, not only as a most direct form of intervention but as means towards building friendships and relations while unlearning categories of division, conditioning and othering. Both 'projects' emerged out of situational urgency in experimental and open-ended fashion, with emphasis on learning from practice (learning by doing), rather than vice versa, through modern/colonial notions of planning, as in pre-conceived plans of action in need of implementation. Emphasis will be on how Café Terecht and the community that grew out of it allowed for the quick response to opening of “refugee reception center”. Critical reflections will center around questions of privilege, ideological diversity, and issues of fluctuation of people's presence and commitment to a place of transit.

# **The struggle to become visible – Commoning practices in a migrants’ informal settlement on the South-eastern Aegean Sea**

**Dionysios Gouvias**

Associate Professor of Education Policy,  
Department of Pre-school Education and Educational Design,  
University of the Aegean

## **Abstract**

From the summer of 2015 some of the Aegean Islands (mainly Lesbos, Chios, Kos, Leros, Samos) have received a huge influx of refugees, which by far exceeded existing capabilities in reception and hospitality. After last March’s EU-Turkey deal, the influx of migrants and/or refugees has fallen considerably (compared to 2015), but the situation regarding the living conditions of migrants/refugees has not improved. Under the deal, migrants arriving in Greece are now expected to be sent back to Turkey if they do not apply for asylum or their claim is rejected. That, in combination with the increasing anti-immigration rhetoric in some EU countries of the Central and Eastern Europe, and the ensuing tightening of the EU border controls, started to create a sense of an “entrapment” of the migrants/refugees inside the Greek territory. At the same time the drastic cuts in funding of food and health programs by international organizations (e.g. the United Nations High Commission for Refugees) or national agencies and local authorities, and the tightening of security around refugee camps, have gradually discouraged solidarity groups and NGOs from working with migrants/refugees, and decreased the originally very generous influx of supplies, worsening that way their already critical situation.

In the face of the above problems, migrants/refugees seem to respond with attempts to self-organize and collectively respond to everyday needs (e.g. by cooking their own meals, or setting up informal educational structures inside the temporary settlements). We will present such an example from the informal refugee camp in the city of Rhodes, where migrants/refugees started, for over a year (starting in November 2016) to complain about the quality of the food provided to them by various “humanitarian” groups, coordinated by the Municipality of Rhodes, and finally to prepare their own meals around the clock. The methodology is based on an ethnographic approach to the refugee’s own experience, through the organization of focus-groups in May and June 2017, in which migrants/refugees have been called to reflect on a number of issues regarding their living standards in the camp (quantity and quality of food, of amenities and of humanitarian assistance provided), and their relation to the state agencies (Coast Guard, Police, Asylum Offices) and local authorities (Municipal & Regional), as well as to

various of the representatives of the “civil society” (social philanthropists, volunteers, NGO’s, professional and scientific bodies etc.). More specifically, there were asked to comment on issues such as:

- the EU migration policies
- the distinction between "eligible refugees" and "deportable economic migrants"
- their personal experience from entering to Greece, and from living in –or close to—the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs)
- the social networks they have managed to establish during their stay in this country
- their level of trust for the various people they come across, or have to deal with
- their opinion about the socio-economic situation in Greece, and their goals for the future
- the reasons that pushed them to self-organize
- possible proposals for improvement of their efforts.



## Border controls as enclosures, Camps as growth machines

**Panos Hatziprokiou**

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### Abstract

Critical understandings of the expanding apparatus of migration control and evolving border regimes have, among others, highlighted the functions of controls in producing certain types of workers (flexible, unprotected, adaptable) and in regulating the timing this “reserve army” will enter the (re)productive sphere in (deregulated) labour markets. This echoes the Marxian analysis of primitive accumulation (and its subsequent reprising as a process immanent to capitalism and thus ongoing) and the crucial role of enclosures. Notwithstanding the truth such an understanding may hold at times of neoliberal globalisation in crisis, it still offers only a partial picture missing a number of dimensions. One such dimension might be, for instance, the instrumental role of the short-sighted views and self-interested actions of populist right-wing politicians in the devalued political systems of “liberal democracies”. Another, the neglect of the “supply side”, that is, the complex set of (varying) factors rendering people mobile at a first place. At the intersections of all three explanations lies the self-feeding mechanism of a diverse, multi-layered and multifaceted migration “industry”.

Reflecting on the ongoing experience and “experiment” of camps in Greece, this intervention hopes to take the form of a brief provocation intending to share questions rather than provide definite answers, in an open discussion. As such, it will begin by an overview of key arguments in critical migration theory such as those briefed above, before drawing some questions through specific examples only to open the floor for a broader debate. Central to these will be the hypothesis that the aforementioned “migration industry” may not solely be limited to the instruments, stakeholders and finances of the control apparatus itself, but extends to a variety of actors beyond it: private or state, individual or collective, local or transnational, formal or informal.

These actors cross-cut in various ways, but among others they appear to also come together and interplay in a number of (socio-economic) networks instigating forms of “development” and stimulating “market” at multiple scales: from networks of food production and distribution catering for camp populations to makers and resellers of tents or containers; from transport and tourist industries to local housing markets; and from informal economic arrangements built around camp life to employment for NGOs operating in camps. Examples will be drawn from the cases of Lesvos, Eidomeni, Thessaloniki and beyond, in order to wonder whether camps in Greece (have) function(ed) as a form of “business clusters” extracting profit out of what is conventionally seen as a “burden” in crisis-ridden local economies. After all, historical enclosures have been at the heart of primitive accumulation, not only producing a reserve army

of labour, but also privatising and commercialising the means of production at large. If camps are to be understood as contemporary enclosures, then they do not only serve forging a precarious labour force but also fostering growth and employment in the wider economy. Needless to note beforehand that not all actors have an equal standing in this process, which after all takes place at the back of mobile subjects themselves.

## **Border towns in Europe**

**Kristina Ilieva**

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### **Abstract**

Border regions in Europe have been a pivotal space for the constitution and contestation of the figure of the migrant, as manifested with the Syrian conflict. Townspeople at the borders of Europe have been amongst the first to formulate popular discourses about the Syrian refugee, one of the most politicised migrant figures at present. At the same time, border towns often serve as the first encounter of asylum seekers crossing the border, shaping a locality of intense identity negotiation. The paper looks at how townspeople perceive, relate to, construct, negotiate and contest the figure of the Syrian refugee through the lenses of national identity and local politics of nationhood. The main question it deals with is how migration is framed at the border of Europe.

The paper draws on findings from an ongoing fieldwork in Harmanli, a town in the southern border of Bulgaria with Turkey. I will be bringing out the findings in relation to the ways in which the Syrian refugee is understood in the dynamics of everyday nationhood (Billig, 1995; Skey, 2011). I will explore typologies, such as those of 'friends of refugees' and the 'anti-refugee' protesters, which negotiate the ways in which the identity of migrants as well as of locals is changing.

# **Constructing the ‘foreigner’: Discourses of suspicion embedded in bordering practices**

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**Sarah Philipson Isaac**

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## **Abstract**

In this paper, our main aim is to explore the link between how the ‘foreigner’ is constructed as criminal and militarized in the border spaces at the outskirts of European Union, as well as applied in the nation state context through policing and internal controls of foreigners. Engaging with the Balibar notion of ‘borders everywhere’, we explore bordering as a political resource, in the line with the idea that “no political border is ever the mere boundary of two states” (Balibar 2002: 79). We approach the subject in the following manners: first, we explore the construction of ‘suspicion’ through a collection of newspapers images during the so-called “long summer of migration” in 2015. By doing this we point to the ways in which images play a powerful role in feeding into discourses of “othering” and policing certain bodies. Second, we bring forward much needed insights in the direct practices of internal controls of foreigners, done by the police within nation state contexts. Drawing on eleven in-depth interviews with border and civic police officers operating in Sweden, we delineate how the ‘foreigner’ is (re)produced through the practices of policing bodies. Border management is not simply a question of geopolitical policing and “disciplining of the movement of bodies across mapped space” (Amoore 2006: 337), but should more appropriately be understood in terms of biopolitics. These disciplining practices are constructed within ethnified, classed and gendered typologies that render certain non-white bodies as pre-determined suspicious subjects. Our method combines visual analysis and interviews in order to expose the continuities in which these violent practices operate.

# The Mediterranean Sea Cemetery. Wet Ontology of the Unnamed

Ilona Jurkonytė

## Abstract

My research focuses on changes of bordering regimes and how film production is entangled with the manifestations of powers that can be attributed to a complex phenomenon of border. I analyze how film is interdependent on politics of place. Following Balibar's insights in "Europe as Borderland" (2009) and extending it further into film industry sphere, I consider film as one of the instruments and locus where bordering manifests in multiple ways.

I reveal how Gianfranco Rosi's film "Fire at Sea" (2016) participates in the process of dispersing the phenomena of border, how film covers up, exposes and as well enhances the effect of border heterogeneity and other bordering effects.

The film "Fire at Sea" depicts and constructs the semi-territorialized Mediterranean Sea as the space of political power contestation through the clash of different temporalities. I claim that the social construction of the ocean in "Fire at Sea" works against revealing the bordering regime. It enhances the effect of border heterogeneity and covers up the Eurocentric bordering institutions under the discourses of "help" and "rescue".

By intersecting Neilson's and Mezzadra's (2013) border as method with Steinberg's (2001, 2015) wet ontology I propose a theoretical framework for questions addressing the disruption and identification of constitutive aspects of neoliberal order, that provides the possibility of premise for different politics and different take on the national, the regional and the transnational in film studies. Invoking border as method into my analysis, I seek to grasp how the changing dynamics among state, capital, geophysical conditions are reflected and further established in film.

## Design Unlikely Futures and The 'Jungle'

Liam Healy

Jimmy Loizeau

### Abstract

Since 2015 Design Unlikely Futures (DUF) have been developing collaborative and participatory practices for documenting 'The Jungle': an unofficial camp that existed on wasteland outside Calais in Northern France. Until its demolition in November 2016 the camp provided temporary refuge to a population of up to 10,000 people. DUF are now developing ethnographic, topographic and cartographic 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 2000) with residents and their self built architectures through participatory processes and tools.

A bespoke tandem bicycle with built in cameras was deployed prior to the camp's demolition, generating new opportunities to understand lived experiences of the camp while challenging the dynamics of researcher and researched. The bicycle brought residents, volunteers, and even riot police 'into play' and facilitated an intimate access to the camp. Turning cameras inwards towards its riders, the bicycle strove to co-author documentation and representation of this population in transit. We are continuing to edit and produce films with residents we met in the camp.

Not recognised as a refugee camp it was offered little to no state aid, instead UK government sponsored walls and fences were erected. Despite demanding conditions in the camp, the stark difference in these architectures reveals self-organisation of the camp through resilience and creativity in opposition to state sanctioned 'container/containment-architecture'. In the lifetime of the camp, residents and volunteers constructed DIY infrastructures: housing, shops/cafes, legal centres, churches and mosques. Simultaneously media coverage and political rhetoric depicted the residents as "swarms" or "waves" of non-people in a non-space.

Where disasters and humanitarian crisis' unfold globally, dominant problem-solving, 'firmative' approaches look to design 'back to normal' and to enable 'business as usual' (Uncertain Commons 2013). This approach however, does not fully respond to populations existing in an extended state of emergency and requires more nuanced interventions than typically associated with design and speculative practice.

To date our interventions have started exploring how we can learn from, engage with and communicate the overlooked everyday narratives and textures of this and other camps and their residents.

# **Asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities : the notion of vulnerability, non-refoulement and current challenges under the new Asylum System**

**Emmanouil Kalaintzis**

## **Abstract**

The European Asylum System package is currently under negotiation in the European Parliament, the Council, after the initial proposal of the European Commission to recast or revisit the legislation. Prominently the standards for the qualifications Regulation, which is the substantial part, the Dublin Regulation, which is the competence setting part, the Asylum Procedures Regulation of the legislation as they currently stand in draft have introduced questionable proposals. The compatibility of the proposed provisions should be examined under the prism of the EU ratification of the Convention of the rights of persons with disabilities and its effect according to the 216 par. TFEU to the European legal order.

The EU having denied to accede to the ECHR, is still bound by the connection the substantial normative content of rights in the Charter of the EU entails, the Geneva Convention and the CRPD there are questions that arise concerning the applicability of international law norms within the EU legal order, in particular relating to those instruments and their role in checking the compatibility of the proposals contained in the revision package.

We will try to argue that disability should be taken into account when examining an asylum claim as a residual supportive ground for those holding a main valid claim under the new Asylum System despite what is proposed. Also, try to argue that although special procedure is not provided for persons with disabilities that do not hold a substantiated claim of prosecution, protection should be afforded under the principle of the non-refoulement.

Thus we would have to indicate how the dialogue between the CJEU and the ECtHR on the field and the reluctance of the former to assume the role of a refugee court, have influenced the above research question. There is profound divergence in the yardsticks both Courts are willing to uphold. We are clearly entering into a new era of refugee and migration policies where Europe is going to be the epicenter, which will trigger challenges to grow both in recurrence and level of difficulty. The effort of the EU to materialize an impediment to halt migratory flows, outsource the reception responsibility, add externalized element in the EU border management and allot migration policies implementation. Those elements along with the deterrence at all cost policy followed by the Union indicate that the premonition for the erosion of the protection as the first scapegoat of the "closed gates" attitude is going to be materialized gradually over a short period.

This interesting intersection of the protection of persons that fall under a double standard that could serve as grounds for discrimination, whilst also the one status could affect the substantiation of the other. More specifically the normative content of the principle of non-refoulement under article 3 of the ECHR has been extended since *N. v. UK* to contain maltreatment of persons with incurable sexually transmitted diseases (i.e. HIV/AIDS). Notably the accumulation of legal bases of 3, 8 and 14 of the ECHR has progressively added a social dimension to the protection afforded by the Convention which should be allowed to infiltrate the Union's standards. Our argument will be based on the volatile nature of the notion of disability (including functional limitations) therefore we could infer that those categories of people should be afforded protection by any means both in substance and at minimum the right to "remain".

The paper examines the intersection of those difficult questions, answering questions of hierarchy of norms, junctures of legal orders and legal regimes on the field of migration.

Methodology: analysis of the legislative framework in force, jurisprudence of European and international judicial and quasi-judicial mechanisms, interviews of NGOs and other relevant stakeholders and the practice of national administrative practice, European institutions (DG Home) and Parliament's Rapporteur in LIBE(Tanja Fajon) and Shadow Rapporteur (Barbara Spinnelli).



# Port cities as borderscapes and heterotopias: The case of

## Piraeus

### Pafsanias Karathanasis

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### Abstract

Piraeus is a port city that, throughout its history, has functioned as one of the main entrances and exits to Athens or, more broadly, to Greece. Piraeus, therefore, is a gate and, as such, it can be considered as an ephemeral field where diverse people, cultures, stories and trajectories intersect; a place where diverse Otherness meet, both spatially and temporally. More than that, we argue that Piraeus, even if geographically is located far away of the Greek borders, has been more than once manifested as a field where the border extends itself, bringing otherness from the periphery to the center.

Beginning with the recent case of the unofficial refugee camp in Piraeus' western side of the port (2015-2016), the paper firstly explores ethnographically the ways in which such intense events create in-between spaces that can evolve into heterotopias; into excluded spaces of the Other within the landscape of a port city. Following a theoretical perspective that incorporates the anthropological idea of the liminality of the 'in-between' as well as the spatial idea of heterotopia, we argue that port-cities can be seen as extended borderscapes. Secondly, following an interdisciplinary approach, the paper seeks the spatial expressions of the condition of heterotopias through cases of refugeeness and migration throughout different historical times of the 19th and 20th centuries, as detected in different descriptions, such as historical accounts, public discourses and interviews. So, the paper attempts to go back in other times of intense refugee presence in the city, which had as a result the urban development of certain areas, but also, in times of Greek migration that marked the lives of numerous people, offering a wider perspective on Piraeus as borderscape. Thirdly, the paper will offer a mapping of the multiplicity of relations, between the Other(s) and those already in place, which tend to generate heterotopic situations. Specifically, we will focus on how these relations are expressed spatially, in different historical times, which means how they are manifested both geographically and symbolically. Using a methodology of multiple descriptions the mapping is further visualized through the system of a map and a table: the map is an image of the geographical terrain, where we note references to physical locations, as we detect them in the collected descriptions. In this way, we can see the geographical shape of the borderscape as created through the intersection of the different layers of relationships. The table consists of the

references to the diverse descriptions cited in chronological order, combined with their symbolic properties. The connection between the visualization of the map and the table allows a comparative and historical understanding of Piraeus as borderscape.

# Inside Perspectives of Refugees on the Process of Border-Crossing

**Alexandra Koptyaeva**

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## Abstract

The impossibility to continue the way to Europe because of the closed borders is the sorrowful reality the thousands of refugees are faced with in Greece now, being trapped in a country that currently serves as a 'precarious transit zone' as a result of the recent migration policies. In this context, smuggling serves as an alternative for those who happen to be on the 'wrong side' of the border and need to flee from the place of origin for the purpose of own safety. Some authors analyze smuggler networks using the concepts of trust, security and available information, arguing that the choosing methods highly depend on the context: the circumstances under which the country of origin was left, and the amount of money the person had with him. A fascinating research was conducted by Liempt, who studied this process in the Netherlands from the "inside perspective": he tried to track the traces used by immigrants who claimed asylum in Holland; as a result, he described the ways of border crossing and the types of smuggling, as well as the cost of the journey and methods of payment [Liempt, I. van 2007]. In the ethnographic fieldwork that was conducted in one of the refugee centers in Athens from January to August 2017, I aimed to collect the stories of those who came to Greece through smugglers to understand what do people who have the personal experience of smuggling think about it. What are the traces tracked by refugees and the border crossing strategies used on the way to Greece? What are the reasons behind choosing a particular smuggler, and is it possible to draw the 'smuggler's portrait' from the perspective of smuggled refugees? How are the borders perceived by those who already have an experience in its illegal crossings? These are the main questions current work aims to explore.

# Refugees Depicted in Comics. Documentation and Artistic Activism

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## Abstract

The mass movement of populations from Asia and Africa to the West in recent years has introduced into public debate new coinages and metonyms such as 'migration flows', 'illegal immigrants'

and 'hot spots'. On the other hand, the inability and unwillingness of European states to welcome and functionally integrate refugees into their societies have led to a number of humanitarian crises that are crying for a solution. The need to fill the gaps in the welfare state structures has resulted in the development of a number of solidarity and hospitality structures, of which institutional and extra-institutional artistic interventions form part. The activated artistic reflexes have transmuted, among other things, into people-focused works on the refugee issue that attempt to galvanize individual citizens and the constitutional state into action. The evident goal of the dozens of comics – some just a few pages, others longer – created in the last decade about refugees is to let it be known what caused these people to migrate so that the European public may become more aware of the problem, may be moved by their plight and become part of the solution. Moreover, an undeclared yet self-evident aim is to narrate and illustrate the journey of the people who fled their homelands and in adverse conditions have sought refuge in Europe, to record their arrival and adjustment during the transitional stage of changing countries, to monitor and convey their, usually illegal, passage from one country to another, and to demonstrate the non-existent state assistance. Yet these works do not constitute journalistic articles, reports, eyewitness accounts or documentary evidence. They are works of art with an innate fictional element and do not turn their back on their artistic content.

Besides using various typological, design and narrational criteria to collect, record and classify the comics created, publicised, exhibited and published in recent years about the refugee crisis and the immigration situation in Europe, this project also aims to study the ways and methods adopted by the artists in connection with how true to life the particular comics are. For the most

part, the works are grounded in modern reality and are either the result of primary research and evidence collected by the creators themselves, or the outcome of access to and the study of eyewitness accounts provided to third parties, which are then transcribed, adapted and rendered in the language of comics. And although such works can be considered part of the broad and distinct trend of modern alternative comics that deal with biographies, autobiographies, journalism, documentary evidence and eyewitness accounts, there are also those works that are fictional products, in the sense that they are not drawn from specific eyewitness accounts but are instead based on the prevailing and widespread knowledge of events stemming from the media, literature, movies and so on. Lastly, the interpretation of these works may gain educational and instructional value and use in schools, universities, local societies and communities, with the aim of putting an end to the phenomena of xenophobia, racism and intolerance.

## Whose safety? Debating the “safe countries” discourses

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### **Abstract**

In the past 7 years, crisis has been a word characterizing the public debates in Europe. While discourses concerning economic crisis fluctuated between threat and resolution, another ‘crisis’ knocked at Europe’s doors: the “refugee crisis”. This recent crisis is hegemonically described more as a crisis that Europe (or the West in general) is facing, rather than actually acknowledging the causes that urge these numbers of people to flee their homelands and what they go through on their way.

While “refugees welcome” and other initiatives tried to ameliorate (some of) the difficulties refugees faced during their move to Europe, national decisions of border closures and a constantly shifting terrain of EU regulations further complicated the overall situation. This legal-political terrain concerns rights of movement and resettlement but, significantly, it is structured around discourses concerning safety as well as divisions among those seeking refuge. In the context of an economic crisis and growing Islamophobia, these discourses of safety result in multiple divisions among ‘deserving’ and ‘un-deserving’ Others; among ‘deserving asylum-seekers’ and ‘undeserving migrants’ mostly based on changing categorizations of what consists a ‘safe’ place of origin.

The recent agreements concerning the new definitions of “safe countries” have strongly been contested by human rights groups who see them as violating the terms of human rights protection. Through another ‘gaze’, one may also identify a further distinction within them: the safety of the European citizen vis-à-vis the safety of non-Western Other. This presentation tries to unravel the differentiated attributes of safety and the re-definition of the ‘rightful’ subject of rights. It does so, by juxtaposing the EU re-definitions of ‘safe countries’ (in this presentation focusing particularly on the case of Afghanistan), with travel and security warnings for the specific countries from the respective governmental authorities and reports from human rights organizations on the ground. Through this it aims to unpack relations of power and domination embedded in the recent EU regulations concerning asylum and, more implicitly, in the debates about rightful subjects and about safety in Europe.

# **Performing borders everywhere: an ethnography of displacement, exclusion and resistance in modern Athens**

**Maria Kenti Kranidioti**

Durham University

## **Abstract**

The present paper examines the performance, construction and deconstruction of geographical, ideological, material and immaterial borders as a result of the European response to forced displacement in 2016. Based on original ethnographic material collected in Greece, I intend to discuss the micro-politics of border performance and border-crossing in the makeshift camp of Piraeus, the official camp of Scaramangas, and solidarity spaces in Exarheia (Athens). Starting from a brief presentation of how border-performing has been at the heart of European response to forced displacement, I will explain the role of material and intangible borders in the creation of multiple states of exception within Greece. The paper will elaborate on the relationship between borders and humanitarian aid provision and on counter-hegemonic practices of border-crossing as a result of emerging camp sociality. Before spatio-temporally extending my research to solidarity spaces and boundaries outside the camp, I also wish to discuss the notion of gendered refugeeness. I will interrogate the role of the veil as a barrier that facilitates rather than inhibits Muslim women's agency in these new structures they find themselves. The veil, I will argue, not only permits geographical mobility but also enables the performance of one's culture within these shifting socialities. Finally, the complex, multi-directional relationship between 'bordering', 'border-crossing' and 'border resistance' will be revealed in ethnographic instances of squats and other solidarity spaces in the inner city. Numerous refugees found shelter in self-organised squats in Exarheia, a neighbourhood in central Athens, itself considered 'exceptional' and somewhat 'shielded' from state violence. Within the virtually entrenched space of Exarheia –a traditional hub of 'internal' political 'enemies', dissidents and 'dangerous citizens'– counter-hegemonic discourses of border-resistance grow out of political legacies deeply rooted in the post-second world war history of the city. This paper aims to bring together material and immaterial narratives of bordering and border disobedience and to demonstrate the complex relationship between them. Special emphasis will be placed in the spatial qualities of memory and urban historicity in an attempt to showcase the role of materiality in the production and performance of technologies of power and resistance.

# **The History of Contraband Trade in the Borderlands between Turkey-Iran and Iraq in 20th Century**

**Turan Keskin**

## **Abstract**

The geographical triangle of Turkish-Iranian and Iraqi borderlands has been one of the most controversial parts of the whole Middle East in terms of the history of boundary making. However, the State of Iraq was founded after the World War I and split these borderlands between three nation states, the conflictual nature of the territory emerged during the 19th century. From the first decades of this century both states embarked upon centralization processes which required fixed and meticulously determined boundaries. Besides the scientific mapping of the geography as a representation of the modern state, the people of these borderlands were forced to recognize the new boundaries and obey their requirements which meant them the obstruction of the illicit cross-border activities. The making of the boundaries allowed the central states to increase their capacities in the peripheries by imposing institutional and administrative arrangements across their territories. The indigenous Kurdish tribes which mostly made their livelihood by herd breeding through the plains and pastures of this hinterland were one of the actors experienced the very first impacts of the new boundaries. These local agents had their own agendas, practices and life styles in sustaining their lives all along the borders. The prevalent conditions of the borderlands which were already geographically challenging and the lack of capacity of the both states in effectively penetrating them left the locals with a margin of movement free of intervention.

After the World War I, newly emerged states -Turkish Republic and Iraq- and Iran began to control these territories. Although the capacities of these modern states significantly augmented through their newly shaped boundaries, people of these borderlands found the ways of by-passing the fixed boundaries. By the emerging of the Ottoman-Iranian boundaries from the second half of the 19th century, after the delimitation and the demarcation process by a series of commissions, people living in these territories displayed resistance to the forced settlements, conscriptions and avoided paying new taxes to the state officials. Moreover, people traveled with their herds through the plains and plateaus of Iran and Ottoman Empire. In this manner, tribes often violated the constructed borders in the case that they felt the coercion and got annoyed with the surveillance capacity of their state. During the 20th contraband trade has become one of the most important means of livelihood of the inhabitants of the settlements straddling the borders. In Turkish part of the borderland, especially during the periods of high tariffs and strict controls of import substitution era, borderland people tended to meet their daily consumption with the smuggled and cheap goods. In this presentation, I would analyze the history of contraband trade in the Turkish-Iranian and Iraqi borderlands.



# **Kurdistan in a Refugee Camp: The Kurdish Refugees’ Experience of Belonging, Nationhood and Suffering in Greece**

## **Mehmet Kurt**

Newton Advanced Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Queen Mary University of London and a documentary film maker

## **Abstract**

The Middle East has recently witnessed the most intense political violence, civil and proxy wars, insurgencies, sectarian divide and conflict. As the biggest stateless nation living between Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran, the Kurds have been subjected to all sort of discrimination, violence and assimilation policies in the 20th century. The Kurds living in Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran have been drastically affected by the waves of violence as the Kurdish land has become the forefront and battleground of the conflict in the last decade. Nearly a million Kurd have fled their homeland to seek refuge, safety and security in surrounding countries as well as European countries as a final destination. Greece, on the other hand, has become the first destination for many Kurds who seek an opportunity for a better life.

Based on one month participant observation, in-depth interviews and visual anthropological work in Kurdish refugee camp in Lavrio/Greece in November 2016, this paper presents a visual representation of Kurdistan in the refugee camp via a selection of photographs documenting the daily life conditions of refugees. It documents and argues that the Kurdish refugees and asylum seekers share a common ground of nationhood through their experience of discrimination, citizenship and violence in their home countries. Moreover, Kurdish refugees are developing stronger notion of belonging and identity at the intersection of their confrontation with the Kurds from other countries, as they did not have the opportunity to interact with the Kurds from their neighbour countries due to the nation-state borders dividing their historical and cultural land. Within this regard, the visual paper will represent images from the daily life in the camp, as well as from the Kurdish national celebration event. It will argue how violence, suffering, border crossing experience and hope for a better life have created a common ground and united members of a stateless nation in a refugee camp.

## **Barbed Wire & Bulldozers**

**Ernest Larsen**

Independent filmmaker/writer

**Sherry Millner**

City University of New York, Staten Island

### **Abstract**

Two events/two actions:

First:

While police keep their distance, anarchists, during a demonstration (early February, 2015) at a migrant detention center in Xanthi, Greece, in the early days of the (first) Syriza government, fraternize across an eight-foot wall, and a double-layer of razor wire and barbed wire with dozens of excited prisoners. This previously unheard-of, previously impermissible, moment turns out to be no more than a temporary breakthrough.

Second:

Two days after the No Border encampment at Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, police attack and evict the self-organized migrant/activist housing squat Orfanotrofeio in the middle of the night on July 27, 2016. That morning bulldozers turn the orphanage building into rubble, burying tons of pharmaceuticals and other supplies. This second attack, also licensed by the (second) Syriza government, aims to prevent re-occupation of the shelter by the migrant families and their supporters.

Implications investigated in a two-part digital video essay, currently in post-production, under the title *Barbed Wire and Bulldozers*, these two events provoke wide-ranging inquiries into the politics of the forces arrayed to arrest and prevent movement, into the technologies that enable these forces, including the histories and deployment of barbed wire (invented in the U.S.), as phenomena of enclosure, as well as the inventive persistence of resistance(s), migrant agency and perception of commonality.

Proposal

We (my collaborator Sherry Millner and I, with the support of comrades in Thessaloniki) propose a screening with discussion of the issues and the terms/forms of representation or anti-representation of *Barbed Wire and Bulldozers*.

Contested Borderscapes: Transnational Geographies vis-à-vis Fortress Europe  
Mytilene, September 28-October 1, 2017

For one account of the No Border events last July see:

[www.academia.edu/30426806/Flipping\\_a\\_Coin](http://www.academia.edu/30426806/Flipping_a_Coin)

(also serialized in three parts in [e-fluxconversations.com](http://e-fluxconversations.com))

# Thinking through the Transmediterranean. Could this 'ship' transgress the imperial epistemic divides between 'self' and 'other'?

Anna Lauenstein

## Abstract

An „imperial cartography“ (Coronil) divides and classifies the world by geopolitical categories of 'west' and 'east', 'north' and 'south', 'west' and the 'rest' (Hall; Lewis & Wigen). Orders of knowledge are structured by these imperial divides of 'self' and 'other'. This becomes evident in the mirrored arrangement of anthropology and sociology: the former for the 'unmodern', the latter for the 'modern'. Due to the ambivalent position of Greece and the Mediterranean within geopolitical imaginations between the 'west' and the 'rest', a reflexive and critical view on the orders and hierarchies of anthropological knowledge was challenged and achieved by Mediterranean anthropologists since the 1980s (i. a. Argyrou; Dubisch; Herzfeld). The powerful epistemic divides between 'self' and 'other' are produced by the Mediterranean even though they appear blurred and constructed. Albera and Blok wrote: „The Mediterranean remains intermediate between 'here' and 'there', between 'us' and 'non-us'.“ Following this ambivalent position and its reflexive potential, the question arises whether there are developments towards overcoming these epistemic divides: Are there developments that show ways towards non-imperial geopolitical categories and cartographies (Coronil)? Thinking through the Transmediterranean – could this be an opportunity to construct epistemic orders that do not follow the powerful political, military and juridical divisions and consequently not reproducing them? Epistemic orders that instead are influenced by what happens despite, or because, of the borders imposed by the EU-border regime. Within the development of transnational research frames there is a „transoceanic turn“ as most famous Gilroy's „Black Atlantic“. However, the Trans-/Mediterranean does not seem to come up here. Etymologically (lat. Mediterraneum: in the middle of earths) it is not far to seek in the search for orders beyond divides grounded on fixed territorial traits. Could the Mediterranean or Transmediterranean be conceptualized in the sense of Appadurai's „process geography“ and therefore follow the mobilities and interweavings that exist between established regionalizations (Randeiria & Römheld)?

To initiate the discussion, I propose a lecture to present my current research on possible productions of space that no longer fixes the Mediterranean area to a cordon sanitaire that should keep away the 'others' of Europe from its 'center'. Thereafter, I invite activists, artists and scientists interested in this question to an open exchange to map the existence and vision of a possible Trans-/Mediterranean.

My research is based on interviews with cultural anthropologists and their cosmologies. The theoretical framework is built upon post- and decolonial informed Critical Migration and Border Studies, Reflexive Mediterranean Anthropology and Critical Europeanization Studies with its approach of „Decentering Europe“. Some of the relevant concepts discussed are Iain Chambers „Postcolonial Sea“, based on historical and current interweavings, and Regina Römhild's „Reflexive Mediterranzianization“ looking at the intersections of tourist and migrant imaginations and their potential in sketching possible futures of other Europes.

(Besides a discussion in words I'm also open to a visual/poetic language which could also lead to a short common visual field study.)

## **Borders and shifting hinterlands in Mediterranean islands: Lesvos and Corsica at the turn of the millennium**

**Lila Leontidou**

University of Peloponnese

### **Abstract**

There are important differences in border hierarchies between the mainland and the islands. At the turn of the millennium we conducted a comparative research project in several European borders, including the mainland and three islands, among which in this lecture we will compare Lesvos, the island of the Aegean archipelago, with Corsica, the large island off the coast of France. There were important similarities but also differences between boundaries and borders in these two Mediterranean islands, with respect to their establishment, transformation, permeability, nature of border cultures, and especially shifting hinterlands on either side of the border with their 'parent' nation and beyond. In this paper we will compare the two islands on the basis of findings after a series of institutional interviews conducted at the turn of the millennium. The material and the methods on which the paper is based will be presented in the full text, because otherwise we would exceed the 500 word limit for the abstract!

Going back in the history of Lesvos, we discover a series of phases in the development of the island, which came to marginalize it over the 19th and early 20th century by cutting it off from the Asia Minor coast, which was its hinterland for centuries. Changes in the demarcation of the border affected the local economy and shifted the hinterland of Lesvos from the Turkish coast, but no alternative was provided within the Greek nation state. So the island became gradually isolated and the feeling of insularity set in.

In our comparative research project, we ventured to report that, with notable exceptions such as the Prefect and other agents, there was nevertheless a hope in the island, that contacts with the nearby coast would be resumed in the context of globalisation and EU integration. However, Lesvos remains a marginal region on the periphery of Greece and away from major European or national development corridors. During the debt crisis in Greece, the island has lost hope for a hinterland. The residents have become ambivalent against core regions of Greece and Europe and against globalisation, while the border with Turkey is undeniably present, too, and not friendly anymore.

The feeling of insularity in Lesvos is also present in Corsica, but here the adaptation is more aggressive, bordering on dismissal of the mainland and even tourist flows. The proverbial Corsican autonomist movements underline the strong antithesis to mainland France. The other

side of the border is less contested than in Lesvos, because of the lack of diachronic closeness and rivalries between Corsica, Sardegna and mainland Italy. The distance between Corsica and Italy is half of that with France, and this makes a difference in the way the neighbours are seen and visualized.

The research project presented here has not extended to the present century and cannot give any findings for the population movements after the crisis of the 2010s. Boat migrants and desperate refugees keep filling the proverbial hotspots of the islands, especially Lesvos, bringing about cataclysmic changes in the wider region.

## Broken Chords Can Sing A Little

**Isabel Lima**

Teesside University, UK

### **Abstract**

This presentation will discuss how participatory artworks have the potential to disrupt mainstream narratives regarding asylum seekers and refugees in the UK by using ancient Greek theatre and myth. Focusing on the particular context of Middlesbrough, two participatory artworks were developed in collaboration with host and emerging communities, Episode 1: The Birds (2016) and Episode 2: Gresham's Wooden Horse (2017). These works intend to explore the potential of artworks as sites of resistance against the consequences of living under the UK's Immigration Acts and policies which aim at creating a hostile environment for unwanted immigrants in the UK.

The works use ancient Greek theatre and myth as a symbolic language to question and reimagine representations of otherness, place-making and belonging. This is achieved through the making of 'objects as mediators'. The discussion will focus on a video and a sculpture as such objects. These objects cease to be a static representation of a 'real' thing, becoming instead a vehicle to meaning and memory making, individually and collectively, contributing to the creation of counter-narratives of refugee experiences. Standing in for a number of fluid entities such as people, places and events, these objects become a Third Space, where tensions are not resolved but exposed and sustained in order to imagine and enact new possible ways of moving forward even in disagreement.



# The refugee crisis through Sophocles' eyes: re-imagining heterotopias, body politics, subversion and Otherness

**Katerina Liontou**

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**Maria Pansidou**

University of Malta

## Abstract

The continuous influx of refugee populations from Syria towards the West has given emergence to a number of socio-political subjects, and particularly to issues of cultural representation of the refugees as the Other; being represented as inherently non-canonical bodies, Orientalised, victimised, diseased, and contaminated, the collective body of the refugee populations can be seen as denominator of change in the cultural representation of canonicity and the current socio-spatial regimes of inclusion/exclusion on the borders of South-eastern Europe. The presence of refugees, asylum seekers and dead bodies washed ashore on the threshold of Europe are calling for a reconfiguration of border policies and practices.

In their route to Europe, Lesvos stands as their main passage, while at the same time it is also presented as a contact zone between the East and the West, civilization and savagery, normalcy and Otherness. Islands have perennially appeared within literary and cultural texts as locations of unexplored mystery, quarantine, containing often borders in flux, and fostering narratives of otherness, abjection and exile. Being vested with such qualities, islands are presented as the battleground in which a number of binaries can manifest themselves: centre/periphery, health/disease, canonicity/ monstrosity, free-flowing/controlled. Michel Foucault's notion of heterotopias explains how islands can function as counter-sites; they "are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted." (Foucault 24)

This paper seeks to reimagine Lesvos as a refugee heterotopia, by drawing parallels between it and the island of Lemnos in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. Bitten by the poisonous snake after stepping accidentally on the sacred ground of Chryse's shrine, Philoctetes' foot gets infected and his screams of agony become unbearable to the Greek commanders who leave him stranded on the island for years. His diseased body becomes a contested heterotopia, where binaries converge to reveal a deeper conflict between the polis and the traumatised individual. Philoctetes is marooned on the island of Lemnos, which serves as his exile. The *erēmia* (desolate place,

wilderness) juxtaposes with the polis; practices of exclusion/inclusion and surveillance seem to be enacted there.

Juxtaposing a literary topos (Lemnos) with a geographical one (Lesvos), allows us to examine the concept of borders and exiles through time. The refugee body, tortured, exiled, Orientalized and victimized threatens neoliberal politics, the same way as Philoctetes' body subverts the principles of normalcy as it is perceived in the context of the Homeric epics. Both islands are sites marked by the harrowing presence of diseased, non-canonical bodies, which are abandoned there; at the same time, both islands serve as places of incarceration and surveillance, containment and exile. Lemnos is portrayed as an eremitic space, the quintessential crisis heterotopia, which hosts Philoctetes' gangrenous body, while Lesvos with its detention camps, hot spots and the regulated movement of the refugee influxes protects Europe from the Other. Therefore, both of them become sites where disease threatens to upturn the political regime and destabilise the identities of the "canonical characters." Bodies and islands, both in the play and in reality, are inscribed with meaning and are converted to floating signifiers, where identity is not anchored and others threaten to violate its borders.

## **Humanitarian practices: the emergency that Lesvos was under or imposed upon**

**Nadina Livaditi**

### **Abstract**

Lesvos has been an important entry point of refugees into Greece and Europe. Located at the crossroad between Europe and the Middle East, we see the issues related the neighbouring of states and border relations being particularly prominent in Lesvos. For the island and its inhabitants, the notion of 'borders' is not an abstract term but one which is part of their everyday life experiences.

From summer to autumn 2015, an average of approximately 5000 refugees were arriving at the shores of Lesvos on a daily basis. The state was unable to respond to the magnitude of needs that this situation brought. At the same time, however, the assistance that was being provided by the rapidly solidarity movement from all parts of the world was immediate and of crucial significance. During the autumn months, a humanitarian response was urgently developed by local and international NGOs which arrived in Lesvos, with the consent of the Greek government, to implement a range of "emergency programs" in areas such as shoreline rescues, medical aid and shelter similar to those carried out in war zones; thus confirming the emergency that Lesvos was under or imposed upon.

Most of the these aid programs aimed at the provision of care and support and had as a common point of reference the lives of the subjects they targeted. They addressed the everyday life experiences and hardship of the refugees through the Western concept of 'humanitarianism', superimposing their bodies and selves using regulatory practices and provisions related to health, the notion of home, education etc. –in a Western-centered approach. This did not even attempt to take into account the implications related to the suspension of the others' cultural identities and pre-assumed that the others must de facto adapt to the new prevailing cultural context that is hosting them.

While practices across the NGOs and the main humanitarian actors vary, there is in parallel a cross-cutting assumption within the humanitarian agenda that treats the Other on the basis of pitifulness and as a priori weak and vulnerable, depriving him of his political attributes and producing individual colonised geographies.

# The Role of Collective Insurgent Practices of Refugees in Making Future Cities

**Sara Maani**

University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

## **Abstract**

The objective: The three axis of the question, hence “refugees”, “urbanism” and “insurgent practices” have been yet explored more two by two; while there are works on the questions of “insurgency and city”, “refugees and city”, and “refugees and insurgency”, this paper poses the question on how methodologically it would be possible to explore the three axis of the question as an integrated issue, therefore to be able to theorize the urban aspects of refugee issue and to theorize it through understanding the agency of refugees. The significance: The refugee issue of recent years is represented as a state of emergency and the response to it as a humanitarian cause. Such frame has created, on one hand, a victim-villain binary in which the refugee deserves the help if shows his wounds (Fassin, 2005) and not the subjectivity; on the other hand, it has reduced the possibility of any architectural and urban response to the issue to quick technocratic solutions. The significance of a research which pose the urban question and the agency as a part of refugee question lies in how academics theorize the question, how practitioners such as policy makers, urban planners, and urban designers plan, design and make policies and how activists devise campaigns to influence such plans and policies.

The questions: (1) spatial dimensions of insurgent practices of refugees, (2) the alternative that these practices suggest in the use and perception of space, (3) the role of these micro resistances, negotiations, cooperation, fights, and citizenship practices in redefining the urban space. Methodology: to answer these questions, I suggest to take a step back and look at the top-down aspects as well. Therefore, the research would have three main parts. A top-down perspective which investigates the politics of refugees’ accommodation and, methodologically, is based on the aerial and cartographic approach of planetary urbanism. A bottom-up perspective which investigates the collective insurgent practices of refugees and is based on ethnographic approach, everyday practices and grounded postcolonial theories.

I suggest that such research would move between a conceptual analysis and an empirical situated comparative case studies to study the refugees’ accommodation systems in various metropolitan areas. In each metropolitan area, it can study an example of a concentrated accommodation model (reception facilities, processing hubs, hospitality centers, refugee camps, hot spots, etc.) and an example of a dispersal accommodation (hostels, apartments, family houses, etc.).

Research program:

Part I. Politics of refugees' accommodation (top-down perspective) a. Geographies of refugees' accommodation structures b. Analysis of spatial typologies and configurations of accommodation structures c. Territorial analysis of accommodation structures

Part II. collective insurgent practices of refugees in confronting these politics (Bottom-up perspective) a. Governance aspects b. Spatial aspects

Part III. Analysis of the relationship between the two perspectives

# **Borders and Boundaries in Greek Literature: The case of Minor Asia**

**Maria Margariti**

## **Abstract**

The role of arts, that have a mimetic relationship to the world such as literature, is transformed and achieves today greater significance. Fictional discourse has gained the force of persuasion. Nowadays, reality itself has become “a plural word.” “Words build the world” claims Professor Bertrand Westphal, who has developed a new method for literary analysis with emphasis on the spatial dimension examining the relationship between the fictional world that literature creates, and the real world/space.

This paper refers to Elias Venezis and Dido Sotiriou' s literary work, both refugees from Smyrne and Ayvalic, inspired by the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922 and describing their happy daily life in their homeland as well as their experience in their new country.

Through their work we will examine the notion of the Asia Minor''s space as homeland for the Greeks and its economic- social relationship to Greece and the islands of the Aegean, the notion of nation, state and borders and finally the settlement of newcomers refugees in a new country.

## **Human Side Project**

**Meltingpot**

**Andrea Panico**

**Elena Prestt**

### **Abstract**

Human Side Project is a project funded by a group of lawyers, doctors and photographers with the specific aim to register abuses suffered by migrants on European internal borders: limitations of personal freedom, illtreatments, physical and psychological torture, violations of asylum law and procedural safeguards. We have been active in Italy (Ventimiglia), Serbia (Belgrade and Subotica), Greece (Idomeni, Eko Camp) and Turkey (South-eastern border). In order to raise social awareness on this topic, we organize public presentations, advocacy campaigns and draft reports.

We would like to share a work that we have prepared in cooperation with Melting Pot Europe ([www.meltingpot.org](http://www.meltingpot.org)) and the campaign #overthefortress, that sums up some memories that we have collected in Belgrade (Serbia), in Idomeni (Greece) and in Ventimiglia (Italy).

The work is composed by 4 short video interviews to people that we met and a report on the abuses recorded that aims to analyse the illegal methods of border control and the legal obstacles created to obstacle secondary movements inside europe.

Two of the interviews were recorded in Belgrade. The first one is the direct narration of all the abuses that an afghan man had to suffer during his journey, and the prosecution that he had suffered in his country. The second one, instead is the story of a young Afghan boy who was returned from France to Bulgaria in application of Dublin Reg. and was facing again the hell of the Balkan route. Then, the third video is about a Syrian family who was pushed back from Macedonia to Greece, and the fourth one is about the story of a Sudanese man who has suffered ill treatment in Italy during identification procedure and on french-italian border.

The report will present these interviews (and some other cases) within the current framework of border control policy. It will analyze how the methods of control have been changing with the closure of the borders and their impact in terms of abuses on migrants.

## **Spaces of resistance: structural forces and migrants’ everyday lives in the port/border area of Patras**

**Marco Mogiani**

SOAS, University of London

### **Abstract**

Over the past 40 years the global political and economic restructuring has played an outstanding role in the reconfiguration of state institutions and borders. Far from creating a “borderless world”, the advent of neoliberal globalisation has paved the way for the proliferation of borders throughout our societies. Borders and bordering practices have increasingly moved away from nation states’ external lines and reproduced with different scales and intensity within and outside the national territory, through policies, institutions and bureaucratic procedures. Borders have been incessantly erected or dismantled, relocated, externalised and privatised from above, as well as negotiated, contested and resisted from below and within. These continuous and sometimes overlapping processes have prompted scholars and activists to claim that borders are actually everywhere.

The changing meanings and functions of borders have led to the coinage of new concepts (from bordering to borderscapes and borderwork – see the works of Brambilla, Cooper, Perkins, and Rumford, for example) aiming at capturing the multifarious manifestations of borders, their repercussions on the bodies of migrants, and the practices of contestation and resistance performed by border subjects. This renovated ontological approach has allowed researchers to explore the different declinations that bordering practices have assumed in different contexts. However, in placing increasing attention to the personal experiences of border subjects, it has also tended, on the one hand, to lose sight of the structural conditions that produce borders in the first place and, on the other, to romanticise, and thus depoliticise, the agency of migration. Although recognising the paramount role of ethnographic research in unveiling the contextual and situated histories of each border, the paper argues that greater emphasis should be placed on re-evaluate the political-economic forces driving the process of bordering, and the inherently political acts of contestation and resistance employed by migrants.

Taking insights from empirical research, the paper assesses the impact of neoliberal practices and securitisation measures on the spatial transformation of the border/port area of Patras, third most populated city and third most important harbour in Greece. Driven by capitalist and logistical developments, since the 1990s its port has undergone a process of expansion, while strengthening its security measures. Over the same period, hundreds of migrants have come to occupy different abandoned spaces (railway stations, buildings and, more recently, factories) in the proximity of the port, in the attempt to reach Italy and the rest of Europe via clandestine



routes. The paper will place particular attention on the squatted factories, seemingly inhospitable places that migrants have turned into spaces of resistance through solidarity, networking, mutual assistance, and art. Focusing on the migrants' re-appropriation of spaces and times in juxtaposition with the neoliberal "time-space compression", the paper will investigate the migrants' everyday practices of negotiation, contestation and resistance against bordering measures, eventually arguing that borders are "meeting points" where structural multi-scalar forces and individual actions continuously meet and reproduce.

# Indicators and valuations technologies: on sociotechnical borders and solidarity in Europe

**Fredy Mora-Gómez**

Postdoctoral researcher. Department of Thematic Studies, Linköping University, Sweden

## Abstract

Two of the recent migration policy areas broadly defined by the EU Home Affairs Office are concerned with promoting a strong common asylum policy across member states and securing borders. At least two strategies have been developed as part of these policy areas: 1) the establishment of relocation quotas of refugees across EU countries and 2) the use of assessment forms to process applications from asylum seekers. About the first strategy, a distribution key for relocation in 2015 was proposed by the EU Commission based on “objective, quantifiable and verifiable criteria” (RRF May 2015). The key used weighting factors like a) the size of the population (40%), b) total GDP (40%), and c) unemployment rate (10%) of every country as indicators of their economic capacity to integrate refugees. An additional criterion consisted of the average number of asylum applications and the number of resettled refugees per 1 million inhabitants from 2010 to 2014 (10%). This key was used to establish the relocation of 160.000 refugees between 2016 and 2018. With regard to the processing of asylum applications, the assessment of those applications seeks to determine “whether the applicants could reasonably be expected to avail themselves of the protection of another country where they could assert citizenship”(CEAS 2014). Hence, protocols like the Revised Qualification Directive, the Revised Dublin Regulation and the Revised Reception Conditions Directive have dictated the economic and technical guidelines for assessing nearly 1.300.000 asylum applications between 2015 and 2016.

Building on a previous case study in Colombia, this work studies the public configuration of migration indicators (e.g. relocation quotas) and the assemblage of asylum application indicators in Europe. To do this, I propose to trace how devices of valuation (assessment protocols, calculations) produce those indicators, enact bordering practices, and produce spaces of hybridization. Borders are understood here as relational sociomaterial arrangements that exceed walls and fences extending themselves towards bureaucratic, assessment and follow-up procedures. Besides being outcomes of quantification, indicators are also framed in this project as devices that materialise and legitimise migration and bordering policies.

This work offers potential interdisciplinary links to approach the sociomateriality of borders, valuation technologies and their co-production with states and people in mobility. Drawing on STS and relational approaches to statehood inspired in Actor-Network Theory, this project suggests that the public uses of indicators also reconfigure narratives of statehood in different

countries of Europe. The sociotechnical production of solidarity towards migration is a crucial part of these emerging state narratives. Hence, solidarity in its administrative version, becomes a form of statehood widely produced by devices of valuation and management of populations; these devices demand further sociological and critical analysis.

## The inconspicuous contraband

Leena Naqvi

### Abstract

Food impacts the everyday life of everyone. It is about sustenance and pleasure; about sociability and showing and receiving love. Food is often the the first step for an immigrant community to begin to integrate its culture in a new homeland and is a language everyone speaks and understands.

It is continually astonishing as to how under-represented food and flavours are, how they have been quietly transgressing borders, races and beliefs and how incredibly similar and yet at the same time, totally diverse they are across cultures. It therefore becomes even more relevant to understand migration, food history, regional diets and historical trade patterns. It becomes pertinent to understand that we are familiar with a particular concept because we embraced it years ago and opened ourselves to integrate as well.

Picking from Nietzsche's principles, 'we only know what we make', it follows that if the method of making is limited, then so will be the knowledge. When we draw borders, physical or virtual, via fences or policies, we essentially put a halt to the organic exchange and growth of cities and societies and henceforth to food and flavours.

In the small university city of Umeå (population: 120,000) in Northern Sweden, 'the EAT project' is an active documentation process of the oral histories of migrant women from all over the world, and vastly different cultures, who find themselves in the city as visitors, students, housewives and professionals. The project brings to fore these women, each with a story to tell and a recipe to share from their homeland. During the course of these interviews and food workshops these women have held, they have shared what brought them to the city, what they miss, they talk of food nostalgia and often the lack of availability of ingredients. The EAT project is an informal mapping of the social connections of female migrants in Umeå, how they are using food to integrate and develop their social connections, and how, slowly and steadily food cultures and acceptances are changing. The food workshops are also a reminder to the participants of how cross border movement has made it possible for them to have a delicacy like Baklava in Sweden, with wheat from Asia, pistachios from Iran, sugar which made its way to Sweden only 150 years ago and most importantly, the knowledge of an immigrant who has carried the recipe and the memories of flavours & aromas across the seas. The ingredients are magnificent on their own, but when they come together, they create new exciting flavours.

The intended/proposed food installation for the course of this conference hopes to create an interactive performance that draws connections between food, stories and movements.

# Architectures of Deportation: The Shining Example of Vorderberg

**Andreas Oberprantacher**

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## **Abstract**

As Wendy Brown argues in her essay *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (2010), current efforts of investing in new "walls" – at the margins of Europe, North America, or Israel, but also in other parts of the world – are paradoxical to the extent that such material fortifications are "icons" of the erosion of the nation-state's sovereignty rather than of its consolidation (see Brown 2010, 24). Considering such contradictions that are explored also by other scholars like Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson in *Border as Method* (2013, 167-204) or the research group *Transit Migration* (2007), for example, it is thus imperative to comprehend the proliferating significance of deportation maneuvers in the context of a "post-Westphalian" arrangement of changing governmental interests.

In my paper I will trace some of the most striking features of the global effort to generate "deportable populations" (see Peutz/de Genova 2010, 6; Golas-Boza 2015) while focusing on a local architectural paradigm: the deportation center named Vorderberg, situated in the Austrian state of Styria. This European "prestige" project is a remarkable case for unfolding and visualizing some of the complications of contemporary border regimes, because unlike many other grim edifices it was planned as a "transparent" building that should not be discernible from its surroundings. In fact, this detention center looks like an ordinary suburban housing project from the outside, while on the inside the detainees are managed in a sophisticated postliberal style that involves also the multinational security services company G4S. In other words, the case of Vorderberg exemplifies in a captivating architectural fashion how basic taxonomies reflecting the traditional State's logic (inner/outer, politics/economics, public/private, prison/camp, etc.) are blurred by a building that serves as a local relay station in the circuits of globalization.

In view of this shining example how deportation "works" these days, my paper will be organized as a tour through an architectural borderscape that appears to be homely while administrating homelessness.

# **The Notion of Border: Nusaybin City; A Case of Urban Warfare**

**Mezra Öner**

Urban Planner, Mardin Artuklu University, Master Program, Architecture Faculty

**Yıldız Tahtacı**

Urban Planner, Mardin Artuklu University, Master Program, Architecture Faculty

## **Abstract**

Nusaybin is a city close to Syrian border in Turkey. Between 2015-2016 with the curfew during the on-going urban warfare in the city, 65 000 inhabitants displaced and most of house and workplaces damaged. Afterwards, the policy of 'risk area' for a part of the city has taken by Ministry of Urbanism and Environment. According that six neighbourhoods have been enclosed with fences and demolishing has begun in these sites. The topic of this paper focuses on the interaction between urban warfare and nation of border within the urban space and its spatial consequences.

Interviews with the citizens on the field were taken, regional damage assessment reports, policy decisions taken by the authorities, projects for Nusaybin after urban warfare and related literatures were analysed in this study. The paper aims to present the process and near outcomes of a border city Nusaybin in context of nationhood, migration and border conflict in the perspectives of urban planning and spatial environment.

## **Borders - Refugee drama in public campaigns, experiences of crossborder-interdisciplinary work**

**Ethem Özgüven**

Istanbul Bilgi University

**Petra Holzer**

BIFED – Bozcaada International Festival of Ecological Documentary, Karşı Sanat Çalışmaları

### **Abstract**

Route

2008: Lesvos. 3000 refugees a year crossing in the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Lesvos. Hundreds of them drowning. An ever increasing human tragedy. Activists and lawyers are working on both sides of the Sea to smoothen the invisible catastrophe. Looking at the Sea is looking at a drama.

2012 – the numbers of refugees are rising – the number of deaths at the Sea as well. The Aegean Sea of Death.

2015 – every night of October 3000 people crossing the Sea to Lesvos.

2017 – a never ending stream still hoping to find peace on the other side.

In the summer of 2008 we met and decided to work on campaigns to render the invisibility of the refugees into the public discourse. Activists, lawyers and artists started working together creating campaigns for the public to get to know the size of the problem and to realize that there are human beings looking for peace and safety. After the campaign “Do you see the refugees” a part of the public started to grasp the drama behind the sheer hopelessness of people ready to cross the sea in plastic boats in the dark of the night. After the increase of Syrian refugees in the area visibility was not the case anymore. Through the years working in that field the questions and problems to solve changed. However, the main questions about ethics remained. How to work on visibility without abusing the persons in need? The inflation of documentaries on refugees in the last 5 years showed also that this question is more important than ever.

We propose an exhibition of the past campaigns and a new one for summer 2017.

In the exhibition there will be a selection of posters and post-cards of the previous campaigns and a video installation consisting of videos from 2017. The videos will be shot in abandoned places where refugees lived during their flight towards safety. The spaces will be without the refugees but with their left over objects or everyday objects. The stations will be Syria, Turkey, Greece and Germany – shot by different artists in situ. A brochure with texts about the visibility, ethical abuse and the experience pre-Syria will be available at the exhibition space.



# The Representation of Refugees in Visual Arts: A critical approach

**Maria Papanikolaou**

Athens-based artist. Doctoral Candidate at the Athens School of Fine Arts/Visiting Scholar NYU

## **Abstract**

In recent years refugees have become the focus of the contemporary art in Greece and abroad. From the photo of the acclaimed Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei in Lesbos to the anonymous urban art pieces in Athens, refugees are represented through numerous and diverse artistic languages, including installations, performances, photography, murals, street art, graffiti, participatory art and community-based art. The aspirations of these artists vary as well. Many aspire to simply express themselves on the concurrent refugee issue through their artworks, others attempt to raise awareness and others seek to create dialogue and explore the dynamic relationship between art, society and public space in order to effect social change. These art practices keep, however, raising questions regarding issues of political engagement, “ethics” of documentation, visual representation and reenactment. How is the “refugee crisis” documented by the visual artists, and how are the refugees represented in these artworks? Are they depicted as victims or heroes, guests or citizens, human beings or objects? What images and profiles do these artworks generate? What are the “ethics” in representing shock, pain and suffering?

## Socio-spatial Integration: A two layered process

**Asimina Paraskevopoulou**

PhD Candidate, the Bartlett Development Planning Unit, University College London, Architect Engineer & Urban Planner

### **Abstract**

This article addresses the state's response to the "European Refugee Crisis" at the Greek mainland, by exploring the relationship among the geographical location of government-led refugee camps and opportunities of inclusion for refugees and asylum seekers. Taking the official Ministerial Decision N. 11.1/6343 of December 2014 as a starting point, we examine inclusion and integration processes in regards to social, economic and cultural perspective and their spatial manifestation.

Within this rhetoric, the geographical location of the official refugees sites in the mainland of Greece, rather than promoting inclusion, reinforces social segregation through state control. As Delaney asserts territory is deployed as "a means of controlling 'what is inside' by limiting access or excluding others" (2005: 19). Thus, refugee sites located at the peripheries of urban and rural areas define territories of the 'other'. The invisible 'other', settled in remote, poorly connected and accessible locations, who however is perceived in his/her full social existence in the state's policies. The "politics of invisibility", as explored by Rozakou (2012), manifest and are reproduced in space through territorial exclusion.

Drawing on our field work in refugee settings in Attica we revisit the concept of border, both visible and invisible, that underpins operations on refugee sites and state migrant policies and connect the claims for social justice and political visibility to spatial/territorial visibility.

Specifically, by identifying structures that inhabitants have developed within but also beyond the camp, we argue that although the refugee sites are disconnected from the city centres, lacking of connectivity to urban/rural centers, access to social services and administrative centers, informal ongoing integration processes are in place. Thus, networks connecting camp life to the social structure and city life are created, producing an urban open system (Sennett 2006), where borders are perceived as membranes, rather than boundaries. Membranes which allow for interaction between physical creation and social behavior, and thus a bottom-up space is produced through common places of exchange (economic networks) between the refugees and host community. Being in a process of rebuilding their lost identity and individuality, people have built connections to the city and created working places and business opportunities within and beyond the camp.

At the same time, state led responses to integration move towards housing refugees within the urban fabric. Those vary from renting hotel rooms (UNHCR), individual apartments (PRAXIS,

ARSIS), collective apartment buildings (Solidarity Now, CRS) to hosting refugees in Greek families (Solidarity Now) but also dedicated centres (day-centre, drop-in centre etc.). This illustrates a move aiming towards spatial visibility which nonetheless if considered unilateral will fail to attain its aspiration.

Do the above refugee led and formal led processes of inclusion illustrate a two layered system operating in a porous manner? How should this process of spatial integration be addressed? Should this be dealt at a national scale or should we move into the empirical ground reality as it becomes more concrete (localised, networked, sustained)?

# **State Responses to Cross-Border Activism on the Western-Balkans Route to Europe: Between Criminalization and Cooperation**

**Zuzana Pavelková**

M.A. Human Rights Candidate, LEGS'17, Central European University Budapest

## **Abstract**

Ever since the beginning of summer 2015, volunteers, human rights activists and humanitarian workers have been vital in providing assistance to refugees entering Europe on the Western Balkans route. The civil society, often composed of independent volunteers organizing themselves in loose networks, has been for months filling the protection gap the states have proven unable or unwilling to cover. State responses towards border activism remained, however, ambiguous, oscillating between cooperation, attempts at accommodation into existing state structures and, at times, also criminalization.

While border activism, let alone refugee activism, is not a new phenomenon, the nature of the events on the Western Balkans route and the magnitude and variety of the civil society responses to it generated new legal issues and, in the perspective of the states, amplified the need for policy response and regulation. Relying on theories of social movements, migrant activism or mobile commons, social sciences appear well-equipped to analyse border activism(s) and look into how states define and, potentially, shrink the operating space for the newly emerging non-state agents. For good reasons, legal scholars and practitioners seem to have focused primarily on issues relating to the criminalization of refugees, leaving persons engaging with refugees out of their scope of attention. Meanwhile, as the criminalisation of assistance en route may have a long-term chilling effect on the civilian response to the “refugee crisis,” such distinction seems no longer desirable.

The thesis attempts at filling the void by providing a comparative analysis of human rights obligations of states with regard to newly emerging humanitarian non-state actors under the ambits of international law, EU law, as well as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR).

In particular, the thesis is interested in human rights compliance of state responses relating to acts amounting to assistance in irregular border crossing. In the context of a humanitarian crisis, are states free to criminalize volunteers assisting refugees to cross the national borders or does international human rights law require to grant humanitarian exceptions from the general criminalization scheme? Consulting the standards laid down in the UN Smuggling Protocol and

the EU Facilitation Directive, the thesis identifies potential legal gaps and uncertainties with regard to acts of “humanitarian smuggling.” It inquires whether such can be closed from the perspective of the ECHR insofar as this may require the Council of Europe member states to strike a fair balance between criminalizing trafficking on one hand and allowing for exceptions in cases of “humanitarian smuggling” on the other. The thesis thus adds to the existing scholarship by providing a so-far missing analysis of the validity of the concept of “humanitarian smuggling” from the point of view of a regional human rights mechanism.

## **Grasping enclosure's strategies: a workshop to open up border practices in Southern and Eastern Europe**

**Marta Perez**

Duke University Madrid / Residencia de Investigación Museo Reina Sofía

**Irene Rodríguez Newey**

Madrid Salud

### **Abstract**

How Fortress Europe incarnates itself in diverse local contexts and, within them, in different artifacts (walls, racial profiling practices, camps, detention centers, databases, border externalization, xenophobic discourses, etc)? This workshop aims to bring together academics, activists, and artists from different EU member states to discuss the materiality of Fortress Europe. EU borders are commonly represented as a totalizing effort to keep poor and precarious populations out. At the same time, the porous character of borders is commonly mentioned within exercises to deconstruct other notions, such as the nation-state, or EU identity. However, we can look at this porous character from another point of view: its creative capacity to develop new strategies of enclosure to adapt itself to shifts in human mobility; its potential for learning and sharing enclosure strategies, and for adapting them to local contexts; its flexibility to cope with advancements and changes in migration, understood as a social movement. If, as academics, activists, artists, and citizens, our aim is to foster theories and practices that open up borders, we must take into account this extremely creative aspect of enclosure strategies of the politics of borders within the European context. The workshop is, in sum, a space to build collective knowledge to find similarities and differences, connections and disconnections among the different declinations of the EU border regime in each local context. We will ask ourselves questions like the following: what are the links between strategies of immobilization in Ceuta and Melilla, and in Lesbos? What has the EU-Turkey deal borrowed from the EU-Morocco agreements? The workshop will also discuss and collect struggle's strategies, with the aim to contribute to existing networks that do not separate analysis from action: it is a tool to produce another truth about the border and to organize radical action against its violence.

## **The Politics of Humanitarianism and Security in Lesbos: crafting a safe space**

**Evie Papada**

Loughborough University

**Antonis Vradis**

Loughborough University

### **Abstract**

During 2015, the island of Lesbos had emerged as one of the key areas in which the so called migration crisis played out. This article discusses short distance mobility and immobility of migrants arriving at the island of Lesbos. Looking at the activities of international humanitarian agencies and informal volunteer groups in the context of providing assistance, it interrogates the emergence of spatial temporalities that arise out of the humanitarian imperative of care and control. Focusing on two distinct locations, the arrival point at the beach of Skala Sikamnias and the registration point of Moria, this paper juxtaposes the ways in which migrants and activist initiatives negotiate their space on the island with the concurrent development and sophistication of the registration apparatus and proliferation of humanitarian assistance in the same space. The study is based on ethnographic observations and semi structured interviews carried out with activists and humanitarian workers during October -December 2015 on the island of Lesbos. Using the lens of the governmentality, the article analyses emerging practices of activist solidarity alongside traditional humanitarian responses to emergencies as resulting from the spatial processes of the shifting EU borders. Finally, it offers new insight into the relationship between humanitarian and security practices away from the liquid world of SAR operations and into the organization of a ground humanitarian response.

## **In between: space, time and social liminality in migration**

**Pauline Poulain**

### **Abstract**

Waiting time during the process of migration is socially, temporally and spatially liminal. It leads people in migration to a disintegration but also to the construction of a new identity each time they get to a new place. They are caught between two countries, between their personality and the idea that the humanitarian associations have towards them (“victims”, “foreigners” and so on). After such a journey, which is not over, how can they start over surrounded by the constraints, the enslavement and the precariousness of their situation?

The main difficulty is to survive to the temporal enslavement: their journey takes a lot of time and they can not follow up the rapidity of the rest of the world's life. They are pushing themselves to go as fast as possible because they are getting older and older and not accomplishing anything in comparison to their family, friends, to the rest of the world. Time is pressuring everyone in occidental societies, therefore, they are not excluded from this obligation to move forward even when they can not. They are submissive to the institutional (when they want to receive food donations or simply have their shower) or natural temporalities (the weather is a main clincher when they get to decide whether they should go try or not to go inside a truck). They always have to face the waiting.

The observed individuals were also confronted to a spatial liminality. Indeed, they were living in a squat, inside the city of Caen close enough from the city centre but also far enough so the inhabitants could not see them. The squat was a place for outsiders who could perfectly fit in the city when needed. They found their place in the squat but also in the city and appropriate them at their liking. The most difficult part was going out and move on when they decided they could not stay longer. Those people were stuck out of time and out of space.

This study was about a group of Iranian men living in a squat in Caen, trying to trespass the borders from Ouistreham's harbour, to get to England. It has last for 6 months from February to August 2016. The inhabitants of the squat arrived in January 2016 after the dismantling of Calais' camp, called the “Jungle”, in North of France. Most of them did not arrive from there but decided to go to Caen following the smugglers and seeing what was happening up to the north. At its climax, the squat hosted over 120 Iranian men. Today, all of them have left the city.



## The Accountability Model: Building Autonomous Health

### Power Makes us Sick

#### Abstract

Power Makes us Sick (PMS) is a feminist collective researching autonomous health care practices and networks. PMS investigates the ways that our mental, physical, and social health is impacted by imbalances in and abuses of power. We can see that mobility, forced or otherwise, is an increasingly common aspect of life in the anthropocene. PMS is motivated to develop free tools of solidarity, resistance, and sabotage responding to these conditions and informed by a deep concern for planetary well-being. PMS is forming an accountability model of health that can function multi-locally, without place-based fixity or institutional support.

This model for health - mental, physical, and social - is a tool that can be used by anyone, anywhere. It is informed by the integrated model of health implemented by the clinic at Bio.me in Thessaloniki, the mental health questionnaire developed by the Icarus Project in NYC, and the theoretical frameworks arising from our research. Our model is structured as a triage system helping participants develop a wide picture of health, first through a longform interview, followed by periodic 'check-ins' or urgent calls with the committed group. Here, 'health practitioners' are understood simply as those who share the responsibility of one another's health. This means that accountability works in all directions, and the 'team' is composed of 'health practitioners' and the 'care seeker'. Following the long interview, a 'health card' is generated that serves as an evolving health record, moving with the care seeker. Through long-term support and awareness of individual and social patterns, the 'team' connects with local resources, reproduces health-based consultation practices, and builds solidarity through processes of mutual exposure. By making the notion of 'health practitioner' more inclusive, we validate and recognize the various forms of unwaged carework already offered to the care seeker.

Our research in different cultural contexts helps us better understand the successes and challenges that groups face when attempting to take care of one another without state interference or limitation. We have been working in Thessaloniki, Athens, New York City, Buenos Aires, and Berlin, and are conducting research among care seekers elsewhere. We are excited to come to Lesbos to further our investigation and share our in-process model with conference participants in the form of a workshop.

In this 90-minute workshop we will (1) introduce PMS' overall project, (2) have a facilitated discussion with participants focusing on relevant vocabulary (3) introduce PMS' accountability model for health (4) workshop the model and (5) get feedback and input from participants and share our resources.

In the facilitated discussion, we'll expand our mutual understanding of illness and health beyond the dominant clinical domain. In our follow-up, we want to understand what participants feel is useful to them, and what is lacking. We also want to understand what elements of the model feel crucial, and what elements groups would prefer to independently determine in local contexts. At the close of the workshop, we will share our resources and invite participants to become a part of our long-term accountability model.

## **Were those who didn't drown saved?\*: Examining new enclosure policies (\*paraphrase of Primo Levi's book: "The Drowned and the Saved")**

**Timokleia Psallidaki**

### **Abstract**

Already since the first months of 2015, the mass movement of migrants and refugees to the mainland of Europe, was addressed and represented as extreme "state of emergency", which implicitly imposed the need of a management policy of the refugee flows and, therefore, required the necessity of their "normalization". Practically, this process of "normalization" began with the gradual sealing of Balkan borders based on nationalities (November 2015), continued with the definition of the "eligible" nationalities for the relocation scheme and culminated with the implementation of the E.U.-Turkey Agreement. This was the time that islands from reception points turned into detention centers and Greece from a country-passage was converted into country-manager of Europe's population, into border-guard of its racial purity, and, hence, into a place where thousands of refugees and migrants are trapped.

A key component of this "normalization" process is the continuous classification of the incoming population by constantly changing ways. All these negotiations of borders were not simply based on the "migrant/refugee" dichotomy; they were largely and constantly (re)constructing the content of this dichotomy by creating multiple understandings of its terms. In other words, all these changes in the management of European borders, were not merely defining the geographical area of seeking asylum, but they were rather reformulating the very concept of "refugee". Namely, they gradually shrunk the meaning of the term "refugee" by including the characteristics that describe the migration of the "desirable intruders", such as nationality, marital status, economic status, gender, health condition etc. Thus, although refugee definition is still considered as legally binding according to numerous of international conventions, in fact it constitutes a concept "under construction" that depends on geographical negotiations and political practices.

Experiencing the eastern borders/islands at this spatio-temporal context of the so-called "refugee crisis", I witnessed the reality of an ever changing environment, which was re-affirming the fluidity of the concepts of "refugee", "migrant", "exception", "border" and "emergency". My presentation will focus on the ongoing migration management policies at the borders and on the operation of the Hot Spots, which constitute the invisible places of the implementation of the E.U. – Turkey deal. Hot Spot is conceived, here, as a "threshold" between legality and

illegality (as presented by Agamben) with multiple discipline mechanisms. Specifically, considering these places as the new forms of biopolitical classification of space, I will attempt to examine: how they implicitly reformulate the “migrant/refugee” dichotomy, how they produce a vast variety of borders on migrants’ and refugees’ bodies and how they construct identities, “naturalizing” in some cases the characteristics of those considered “unnecessarily” present.

# The Volunteer-Refugee Encounter in the Management of 'Camps': Reflections from Paris and Chios

**Kavita Ramakrishnan**

University of East Anglia

**Ludek Stavinoha**

University of East Anglia

## **Abstract**

In the context of Europe's rapidly unfolding refugee 'crisis', relatively little has been said about the role of volunteers in humanitarian assistance - from food and clothing distribution, provision of sleeping bags and emergency housing, to legal and medical aid - and, in some cases, more radical interventions vis-à-vis refugees. In this paper, we draw attention to the networks of volunteers who are crucial to maintaining and sustaining refugee 'camps': in the case of Chios, the formal Souda and Vial camps, and in Paris, the formal transit 'bubble' camp in Porte de La Chapelle and the informal sleeping arrangements nearby. Based on interviews with volunteers and refugees from both sites, we explore how volunteer teams negotiate organizational tensions with the state, NGOs, and each other, when providing humanitarian aid or engaging in acts of solidarity and making overt political demands from the state that may incorporate but also clash with bottom-up perspectives from refugees.

We theorize three aspects of grassroots efforts we have seen across Paris and Chios: 1) the emergent place-based politics of particular clothing and food distribution sites; 2) the paradigms underpinning volunteer knowledge and practices; and 3) the support of clandestine refugee movement within and across borders. We argue that these aspects offer initial understandings of the 'encounter' between volunteers and refugees and challenge how we define and delineate humanitarianism.

# **Frictions and articulations in Catalonia's migrant rights movement: the case of "Casa Nostra Casa Vostra" campaign**

**Álvaro Ramírez-March**

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

**Marisela Montengro**

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

## **Abstract**

In 2015, the Spanish Government signed to receive 17337 asylum seekers coming from Greece and Italy (El mundo, 2015). Up to February 2017, only 1034 have arrived to Spain, 474 of them to Catalonia. This fact is the starting point of the big media campaign "Casa Nostra, Casa Vostra" (Our house, your house), a frame under which different stakeholders in Catalonia participated in a wide call to the Catalan institutions to overcome the limitations of regional power regarding the Asylum procedure, currently a central Spanish state competence, and "welcome refugees". Successfully mobilizing the catalan society across all its territory, the closing action of the campaign -the demonstration that took place February 17th 2017- was according to the organizers "Europe's biggest demonstration to call for the reception of refugees".

In this paper, departing from the analysis of this campaign, we discuss the configuration of specific subject positions and the tensions that emerge in their articulation under current Border Regimes, the ways in which the notions of citizenship and belonging are assigned and that solidarity is displayed. Our analysis seeks to inquire to what extent this media campaign is actually disrupting -or not- actual biopolitical and necropolitical logics, being the overall purpose to figure out ways in which broad critical coalitions can be sustained inside and beyond Fortress Europe.

To do so, we depart from multi-situated strand (Marcus, 1995), drawing on ethnographic data produced through participation in different scenarios relevant to the constitution of what has been called "the refugee crisis": a) different activist spaces in Greece; b) Calais' "Jungle" and c) migrant solidarity initiatives at Barcelona. In order to deepen the analysis on subject position construction and tensions around articulation efforts, a set of Narrative Productions (Balasch y Montenegro, 2003) have been co-produced with different stakeholders at Barcelona.

A subject position that is been strongly enacted in the campaign "Casa nostra, casa vostra" is that of Catalan solidary citizen. Current institutions and grassroots independence movements engage in the solidarity discourse in reference to a superior progressiveness - and willingness to

“welcome refugees” - of the region in comparison to the rest of the Spanish state. We understand this in relation to ongoing debates that reflect on the self-centeredness nature of solidarity with distant others (Chouliaraki, 2011) and the framing of the situation as a crisis (Pallister-Wilkins, 2017), a matter of humanitarian concern (Stierl, 2017).

Nevertheless and at the same time, the very idea of crisis is challenged by sanspapier and refugee groups already living in Catalonia, who understood the campaign as an opportunity to visibilize their historical demands. From this subject position the differentiation refugee/migrant is problematized; and the shortcomings and malfunctions of the Spanish Asylum System is condemned. Moreover, this position puts forward a critical perspective that denounces the instrumentalization, misrepresentation and underrepresentation of migrants and asylum seekers/refugees in the public discourse.

Solidarity thus can take different and contradictory meanings, sometimes reinforcing bordering logics, further defining the two sides of a solidary relationship.

# **The Hauntology of Asylum: Aliens, Specters and Ghost Towns in Europe**

**Lorenzo Rinelli**

Temple University

## **Abstract**

Based on ongoing ethnographic work in Riace which is part of the mafia-torn region of Calabria in Italy, this paper engages the much-celebrated project of migrant resettlement in abandoned or depopulated ghost towns and the various ways in which it re-imagines European responses to the clandestine flow of people across the Mediterranean. While these resettlement efforts have generated considerable silence on the varied conditions of asylum-seeking and statelessness in Europe, it also inspires us to imagine the age-old idea of the City of Refuge, hospitality, and humanitarian government, while inviting us to reflect on a new idea of city and collective life. In this paper, I look at how Riace presents an ambiguous and even haunted scene where, we witness new discourses asylum and resettlement intersecting with and sometimes departing from national imaginaries, and practices like organized crime, seasonal labor, or prostitution which are often taken to exemplify the Southern Question in the era of mass migration. Recognizing intersection of new and old discourses on asylum-seeking in this re-invigorated ghost-town, the paper engages questions of refugee agency and visions of a new Europe where the dislocation of the Global South creates new borders that simultaneously interrogate and invigorate the idea of European citizenship, nationalism, humanitarianism, and city to come.



## **Reshaping the border. Informal zones of concentration as a ground for migrants' agency**

**Maria Rocco**

Sapienza, Università di Roma

### **Abstract**

As devices of production and ordering of space, borders are an essential instrument of sovereignty, political and economical power. Some border regions are sites of increasingly intensified governmental activity which controls, stratifies, channels and filters migratory flows, restricting so called 'irregular' migration (Squire, 2011).

Even though border policies have shaped and then progressively reduced the possibility of 'regular' access to fenced territories, migrants strategies of movement constantly interact with and challenge control. Channels of mobility are generated through trans-local networks, which also function as a highly structured informal system of support that create local life environments, defined here as informal zones of concentration (Sciurba, 2009).

Starting from the concept of 'autonomy of migration' as a social and political movement (Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2008) this paper is aimed at discussing those informal zones of concentration as 'gray spaces' (Yiftachel, 2009), whose negotiation deconstructs and reassembles power relations at the border.

I will draw on a fieldwork in the Spain-Morocco borderzone as a paradigmatic site to analyze the interaction between the creative tactics of migrants' on the move and the governmental tools put in place by EU to filter the flow of people towards its territory. I especially focus on how border externalization measures affect the territorial arrangement of the area and the spatial strategies through which transit migrants confront and actively transform it. The focus on spatiality intends to draw attention to how space becomes the ground for struggle and contestation, not only of actual border policies, but also of citizenship as exclusionary institution.

The settlement in informal, hidden places is the spatial component of a broader strategy of intentional invisibilization (Marconi, 2010) and of other strategies of (r)existence that migrants adopt, being in constant fear of violence, internment and deportation. The sharing of space reduces the vulnerability of individuals, facilitates collective organization and provides access to a supportive network, making borders porous.

'Gray' spaces are neither integrated nor eliminated, but exist partially outside the gaze of authorities, in a tacitly recognized mutual misunderstanding.

If the lack of official recognition on one hand creates problems of accountability and arbitrariness of rules, providing authorities with a tool to legalize, criminalize, incorporate or evict people according to convenience, on the other hand they are a site whose relative openness allows mobilizations for rights not possible at the state level and in official 'white' spaces. Strategies of sheer survival, as well as strategies of permanence in and crossing of territories, become the ground for migrant's political claims in which irregularity itself is contested, through the act of movement (Rygiel, 2011).

Grey spaces is a central element in building, and thus also deconstructing, incorporation in local societies and connections with solidarity networks, enabling the emergence of migrants' political agency and escaping dominant narratives of criminalization and victimization. They are sites of potential political transformation, that disarticulate and deterritorialize aspects of citizenship (Syri, 2012), enabling migrants as political subjects who engage in practices of citizenship that shift the common understanding of the participation to a political community, beyond status and membership.

## **“The Coldest Summer” and other “post-truth” Stories**

**Evi (Evangelia) Sampanikou**

Associate Professor, University of the Aegean

### **Abstract**

The paper is about the impact of the so-called “refugee crisis” amongst the several European crises on contemporary art and more specifically on the art of comics and graphic novels. The presentation focuses first on the comics album “The Coldest Summer”, published in 2016 by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, composed of three stories that illustrate refugees’ narratives. The designers (Yiorgos Tragakis, Thanasis Petrou, Dimitra Adamopoulou) give their own account of the visual, graphic, transformation of the narratives, according to the realistic or more abstract scripts written on the original stories.

Apart from the above mentioned, the trilogy of comics, which were created by Benjamin Dix and illustrator Lindsay Pollock, narrating the stories of three refugees, Khalid, Mohammad and Hasko, were published online by The Guardian on their website and are also examined in this paper. Examples of other artistic media (e.g. painting) investigating the same issue can also be mentioned additionally.

Finally, “Madaya Mom”, a free digital graphic story created by ABC News and Marvel Comics (both owned by Disney), also published in 2016, illustrated by Dalibor Talajić, telling the true story of an anonymous Syrian mother struggling to survive, and also stories like the one created by Karrie Fransman on the story of a teenager refugee, will also be discussed in the paper.

The above mentioned works are examined via a series of interdisciplinary tools used in visual narrative METHODOLOGIES, starting from the Panofsky iconological approach and afterwards: psychoanalysis, semiotics, social history of art, feminist art history and feminist studies and finally constructivism, Kemp’s methodology of the aesthetics of perception and Jacques Derrida version of deconstruction.

## **The Dislocated Identities In A Floating World: The Iranian Queer Refugees In The Waiting Room**

**Gonca Sahin**

### **Abstract**

Oppressive regimes across the world continue to be a source of persecution for their own nationals. Iran is one of the very first among the regimes forcing their nationals to flee. Every year, more and more Iranian nationals leave their country on the ground that they hold onto a particular identity or affiliation or group that become target of the regime's oppression. Although the ultimate destination they desire for is the North America most of the time, the first station inevitably becomes Turkey for almost all the Iranian nationals with a claim to international protection as the European Union has recently increased its harsh measures to prevent the flow of migrants from Africa and Asia to the continent. Among the Iranian nationals arriving to Turkey as the candidates for a refugee status, the queer Iranians have begun to increasingly take a significant share. Turkey often becomes the first station that most Iranian queers arrive although they are not provided with a long-term solution in Turkey as Turkey signed the Geneva Convention with a geographical limitation. The case of the Iranian queer refugees in Turkey awaiting for resettlement provides an interesting example to discuss the tripartite relationship among place, identity and mobility. All these discussions bring us to revisit the questions: in what ways and to what extent does the movement of the Iranian queer refugees affect the nature of their identity formation? Do we see a pattern of identity construction which is characterized by a shift from a place-based identity to a mobile and dislocated identity? How do the Iranian queer refugees experience the identity construction in flux? How does the transnational space as a theoretical construct help us to understand the processes of identity formation in the Iranian queer refugees?

## **The alternative and solidarity economies of refugees: building the commons of the mobile populations**

**Christina Sakali**

Dr, Dept of International and European Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki. Member of the Research team on the commons and social and solidarity economy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

### **Abstract**

Introduction: In times of crisis, the urgencies created by the circumstances can lead to the expansion of solidarity boundaries and the exploration of new ways of creative resistances. As part of such a process, in the last eight years of the economic crisis we experienced in Greece and other countries, the emergence of new models of economic and social organisation that are exploring various types of alternatives to the free market competitive economy. They are interested in the democratization of work relations, they encourage participation and inclusion, and they care for the social well-being of the people who participate in the transactions. Parallel to that blossoming of the movement referred to as solidarity and cooperative economy, the solidarity response to the current large-scale movement of refugee populations has been continuously expanding and enriching both the migrant solidarity and solidarity economy movements, creating important bridges, synergies and interconnections between the two.

Main hypothesis: As a result of such interconnectedness, new initiatives such as no border solidarity kitchens, housing squats for refugees, family hospitality networks, performing art projects, self-organised media collectives, communal vegetable gardens, social activity centres, school and knowledge sharing projects, craft-making collectives, women spaces, fablabs and makerspaces, as well as cooperative initiatives for the self-organisation and integration of refugees in the surrounding communities, are now evidencing the endless expansion of solidarity boundaries and the ever expanding possibilities of solidarity 'spaces'. These alternative and solidarity 'economies' are being developed by refugees in collaboration with the migrant solidarity movement and they make up of spaces where solidarity is being exercised, learned, expanded and reproduced collectively, as a continuous and evolving process, creating what we can call the 'solidarity commons of the mobile populations'.

Research objective, methodology and main sections: This research and paper propose to investigate the recent and in the process of evolving alternative and solidarity 'economies' of refugees, as well as the processes through which the commons of the mobile populations are being collectively developed. It will be based on specific case studies from the area of Thessaloniki where the migrant solidarity movement has been especially strong in the period

2014-2016, seeking to discover how these practices have contributed to the empowerment of refugee communities and the transformation of economic relations through solidarity, democratization and participation, rendering mobile populations as the subjects of personal and social change. The research project will also seek to explore the links and synergies between the solidarity economies of refugees and the wider solidarity economy flourishing in Greece amidst the economic crisis, as well as the extent and the ways through which they feed each other to create a legacy or stock of solidarity practices that can be used collectively for future needs, when they arise. The main sections of the presentation will include an introduction with some basic information and data, a timeline of the migrant solidarity movement in the area of Thessaloniki, a presentation of the case studies and their contribution to the topic and finally the conclusions drawn from the research.

# **There are plenty of colors in between black and white. A contrapuntal perspective on current migration movements**

**Frauke Schacht**

PhD-student at the University of Innsbruck

## **Abstract**

This presentation is based on my Master thesis named “There are plenty of colors in between black and white”, submitted in 2016 at the University of Innsbruck. The starting point of this qualitative research is the current public, medial and political discourse on and about global refugee- and migration movements in Europe. Within the narrative sphere of attribution from the outside- as far as my scientific hypothesis is concerned- the conceptualization of refugees is conducted depicting them as social as well as politico-legal constructions. This group of individuals is therefore either stigmatized as victims or perpetrators.

In this context, refugees’ perspectives and personal accounts are widely marginalized and therefore made invisible in accordance with (Eurocentric) meta-narratives.

Opposed to this conventional point of view, this paper makes a plea favoring an alternative, contra punctual perspective, emphasizing the complex realms of experience and survival strategies of individuals who have fled their home surroundings.

Therefore, deconstructing the dichotomous construction of the concept of refugees (victims/perpetrators) is a central aim, alongside the implication of a protagonist-based perspective, accentuating their specific realities of life as well as strategies of action and self-positioning.

Consequently, this presentation is based on a twofold strategy, deconstructing societal construction processes of the notion of refugees by means of revealing underlying hegemonial knowledge and well-established power structures on the one hand, and with the aid of contra punctual premises on the other, giving the subaltern a voice.

This contribution highlights that the categorization of refugees has to be looked at as part of a system of representation and perception, being constantly dominated by politico-legal as well as public and medial discursive elements. Within this hegemonic discourse a specific knowledge of the “others” is generated, mostly ranging in between their victimization or criminalization. In this context these proceedings may be called “organized disintegration” of people who have fled their homes, strongly aggravating their participation in society.

Simultaneously, this contribution offers an alternative (contra punctual) approach to reading refugees’ narratives by means of outlining an exemplary biography. In this context survival

strategy before and after fleeing alike become the focus of attention, as to illustrate their ways of dealing with their situation. On the other hand, results of these interviews reveal that aforementioned attributions as victims or offenders can be circumvent subversively by placing emphasis on their very action potential as well as regarding this potential as a resource.

This article sees itself as a plea for the recognition of versatile realities of life with regard to people who have fled their homes. Therefore, it aims at offering an alternative view to the rather one-sided discourse about refugees, taking on a perspective of the fleeing itself instead. As a result, thinking afresh the entire scientific field of migration and fleeing is possible, understanding it as a force both socially formative and socially moving force.



# Humanitarian media intervention: doing free/open infrastructures in times of forced migration

**Tim Schütz**

University of Bremen, Germany

## **Abstract**

In the wake of increased forced migration towards Europe, journalistic as well as scholarly attention has turned towards the role media play for refugees. These writings and studies for the large part focus on media coverage of forced migration (and its politics) as well as on media usage, such as the possible effects of digital connectivity through social media that are supposed to support refugees in their daily struggles. A lot less analytical and empirical effort, however, has been put into investigating the way media and communication infrastructures actually emerge in refugee accommodations. That is to say, the ways in which digital connectivity emerges and is configured in practice by diverse actors in these environments remain understudied.

The research brought forth in this presentation aims to deepen our understandings of the entanglements of forced migration and digital connectivity by presenting findings from a study of the Freifunk ('free wireless') initiative in Germany. Founded in the early 2000s Freifunk is a grassroots initiative establishing, supporting and maintaining free mesh networks that provide an alternative to commercial internet providers. Since the so-called migrant crisis in 2015, Freifunk members have expanded their engagement related to alternative wireless infrastructures to include refugee accommodations. This is of particular interest because of governmental institutions' lack of commitment in this context. Despite the United Nation's (UN) declaration that access to the internet is a human right and the German constitutional court's ruling that every citizen has the right to internet access the communication rights and needs of refugees were (and still are) far from being on top of the German government's priority list. The data presented in the talk is based on qualitative research that took place between May 2015 and March 2016: including interviews with Freifunk members (actively involved in installing wireless internet at refugee centers), the management of a short-term shelter, a social worker at an underage refugee accommodation and a representative of the city management in Bremen, Germany; and participant observation at Freifunk's bi-weekly meeting at the Hackerspace Bremen, as well as long-term accommodation for underage refugees and at a short-term shelter for refugees in Bremen.

Through narrative accounts of the installation processes that include Freifunk activists as well as the accommodation management and employees, the study renders visible the actors, objects and practices of “doing (media and communication) infrastructure” that configure refugees’ digital connectivity in these concrete environments. In line with growing scholarship on how media and information infrastructures come into being through sociomaterial practices, the study focuses on the varying instances of negotiation, configuration and maintenance that take place around Freifunk’s engagement in refugee accommodations. To a larger extent, the paper shows how in the context of refugee centers alternative open source infrastructures become intertwined with privatized, state infrastructures and migrant practices, opening possible ways for more egalitarian and/or re-imaginings and redistribution of communication rights. Here, the presentation offers the opportunity to discuss similar activist practices on Lesbos and Greece, where wireless infrastructure itself has a strong history countering austerity.

## **Sanctuary: Reimagining Borders in U.S. Cities**

**Jennifer Scott**

Louisiana State University

**Alejandro Caceres**

Grassroots Leadership

### **Abstract**

The border security and immigration enforcement policy agenda of the United States of America as outlined in three Executive Orders issued in January 2017 reimagines the concepts of “border” and “security” in both physical and metaphorical terms. By creating new borders within communities inside national borders through increasing surveillance, reifying those borders by dissolving boundaries between federal and local enforcement officials, and by reconstructing a physical border in the South, the new agenda dramatically changes the politics and costs of migration. People who live in the U.S. undocumented, or those without “legal” authorization to reside in the country, without crossing the border again, find themselves in a differently contested and increasingly unwelcoming space.

U.S. cities and communities within cities are confronting this reconstruction of borders by doing their own reimagining. Using city policies, cities are drawing their own lines to determine the boundaries of their citizenry. Using the unbounded space created by faith, the new sanctuary movement uses the physical space of the church and faith based institution to define safe havens to protect individuals and families. Across the Ocean similar politics are reimagining the European landscape. Building on and adding to the U.S. experience, Europe is broadly responding to migration by attempting to erect and reify new and existing borders.

This facilitated discussion will include and rely on interviews with immigrants who have crossed the national border and activists who are participating in the New Sanctuary movement in the U.S. It will engage the European experience as a new lens through which to understand the newly imagined borders in the U.S. The discussion will offer analysis and ideas about how to support immigrant communities in new eras of enforcement, as well as challenge the multiple understandings of the border itself. It aims to generate a dialogue about migration that goes beyond borders and create a space for discussion on how working across national and physical boundaries can again reimagine the conversation.

## Fixing ruptures in the neighborhood

Katerina Sidiropulu Janku

Jan Kurka

### Abstract

Lesbos has always been a place of moved and ever changing history of inhabitants and political affiliations. Second half of the 20th century *mélanged* this already complicated spawn with massive growth of tourism. Local inhabitants now have to face other “hybrid users of the space/place” – the refugees and clients of international network of smugglers in one person. The political borders determine creating the social boundaries, the pragmatic process of looking after arriving people’s basic existential needs strengthens the existing structures that might as well deepen the potential ruptures between locals and newcomers. Therefore I am focusing on less political category rooted in the day-to-day life of a space/place, the one of neighborhood.

My discursive intervention aims to operate in the chosen space of one neighborhood (the New Urbanism movement defines a neighborhood as a space that a person can walk through in 5 minutes) that is, or ever was since Spring 2015, also a buffer of transporting zone of the refugees on their way of a new life. I plan to realize the biographic interview with at least one local and one hybrid-user grandparent (to bring memory in game) about their understanding of using the space/place of chosen neighborhood. The recognition of Lesbos, fitting neighborhood and possible participants will be realized online before our arrival. The main focus of interview and observation process will be at the forms of microcitizenship (that Ryan Centner defines as ways of realizing people’s needs in shared space) and ruptures (in people’s lives as well as the space/place they inhabit and use).

Being an ethnographic sociologist with an experience of PAR I might use some other methods of creating a dialogue. I understand dialogue as a form of bridging boundaries on individual, social and structural level. I will be, alongside with local (in long-term and short-term meaning) people looking for the ways of rather civic than emotional debate about the issue of refugees income, as well as invite them into the creative process. The emotions will be welcomed into the creative process as an ingredient to work with reflexively, not the determinative principal leading the process. At the end I will be, in cooperation with local witnesses (long-term as well as short-term) looking for the socio-logical transfigurations of ruptures in the neighborhood. Based on that, the workshop “fixing the ruptures” will take place in the conference venue, with some of the local participants or accompanied by the photo documentation of our short intervention on spot.

## Nomad Experiences Lab

### Beril Sönmez

Phd Student, Member of “Refugees -we are- Neighbors” Solidariy Network

### Abstract

We, as the volunteers of “Refugees, We Are, Neighbors” Solidarity Network, have been working to build solidarity between the old immigrants of the city and new refugees since November 2015 in Istanbul within the current environment of human rights crisis. Gradual increase of refugee mobility throughout the world after Syrian Civil War has led to an inevitable rethinking process for migration policies. With drawing attention to this matter, the solidarity network aims to extend and strengthen relations through shared experiences of the inhabitants of neighborhoods.

This workshop will enable a common ground for solidarity practices from all over the world. With a collaborative framework, this workshop’s main focus will be to create a mutual learning dialogue about the reflections on policies, ongoing refugee struggles and solidarity practices. Our focal points are:

- providing a face to face discussion opportunity for innovative and multicultural communication paths among diverse groups of participants
- opening up new threads of thought for cultivating new approaches and methods

## You, the "Other"! Capitalism, Migration and Wasted Lives

**Joana Sousa Ribeiro**

Researcher at the Center of Social Studies (CES-UC) and PhD Candidate in Sociology, Economic Faculty,  
University of Coimbra, Portugal

### **Abstract**

In the age of displacement (Sassen, 2014), it is impossible to understand the myriad processes of migration without its interconnections with the dynamics of global capitalism. Indeed, the compression of time and space (Harvey, 1989), which characterised the post-fordist societies, is becoming a requirement for the circulation of goods, services but also people. However, the commodification of labour that this trend states cannot ignore the frame of (geo)political divisions. In a time when national (bio)politics converge with international de-protection of displaced people, regulatory instruments (such as international conventions, bilateral agreements, codes of international labour recruitment) tend to play a secondary role. Additionally, the devaluation of certain spatialities, knowledges and human dramas (Santos, 2000) are a condition for the self-proficiency of the capitalist system, the creation of a “surplus population”, being them refugees, “irregular” migrants, `Eurozone refugees` or the precariat (Standing, 2014) migrant. Thus, different dimensions of `wasted lives` (Bauman, 2004) could explain the real nature of the current crisis, a crisis of `humanitarian reason` (Fassin, 2011).

This paper seeks to distinguish these different `spheres of human wastage` in line with a critical analysis of the (re)production of boundaries and/or borders and its processes of otherness construction and differentiation (along gender, nationalities, migratory and colonial experiences, culture and religion).

# **“We run to the border when the whole city runs”: Migrants at, through and beyond the uneasy borderlands governing “Greece”**

**Aila Spathopoulou**

Kings College University London, department of Geography

## **Abstract**

In my current research, I examine how the “hotspot” regime is being imposed and resisted in the context of where I am placed right now (which politically might be constructed as “Greece,” the “Greek islands,” the “Aegean crossing,” the aqueous “Greek-Turkish border”, “southeastern Europe”, “the external border of Europe,” “the european periphery,” or the “eastern Mediterranean”. Specifically, this project engages in the ways in which Greece is being conceptualized and constructed as a huge hotspot at the edge of “Europe” and the proliferation of hotspots within the Greek territory, as migrants move from and to the official hotspots on the islands. Drawing on ongoing conversations, participant observations and discourse analysis, conducted in Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros, Kos and Athens, I study the hotspot regime governing Greece from the perspective of what I call the island-mainland dialectic, that is, how the hotspots are situated in a transportation network and that there is continual circulation between them and the mainland: of migrants to the mainland, of humanitarian workers and volunteers, of doctors, of EU officials. Studying the hotspot regime from the analytical angle of the island-mainland dialectic, specifically, a): newly arriving migrants’ on the islands and b): established migrants’ residing on the islands and Athens, mobility within Greece, particularly, from island to island, from island to mainland and vice versa and how they interconnect spatially and temporally, offers new insights into how Greece has become a space of proliferative hotspots and how Greece itself is being perceived and constructed as a huge hotspot at the edge of “Europe”.

In this paper, I am particularly interested in how the category of the “economic migrant” is being imposed, assumed and challenge by Pakistani migrants at the hotspots on the islands. by focusing on the category of the ‘economic migrant’ I map out Pakistani migrants’ individual, and, also collective experiences of Greece, a space that has been conceptualized by governmental actors and academics alike, as a huge hotspot at the edge of “Europe”, a Greece that is burning. In this way, I hope to show, the interconnections between the islands and mainland, not only from the aspect of mobility (for example, how ‘established’ Pakistani migrants move from the mainland to the islands in order to work in the low paid jobs of the tourist and agricultural sector but also in the past particularly to escape from the racist attacks of the fascist Golden

Dawn supporters and police raids in the urban cities) but also how the process of criminalization of the “economic migrant” as we see taking place by/within the hotspot, cannot be thought separately from the already existing construction of the Pakistani migrant as a racial subject/category on the Greek mainland. Thus, I ask, how are certain racial categories produced within the context of the hotspots and how in turn do these categories relate to already established conceptions and normalizations of certain migrant populations in Greece? In which ways do migrants adopt, experience and challenge such categorizations and their particular “order of things”?



## **Politicized Spaces: Turkey as a Safe Zone in the Limbo**

**Nail Tanrioven**

Erciyes University – Department of International Relations

**Nazli USTA**

Erciyes University – Department of International Relations

### **Abstract**

Frontiers—politicized spaces or zones, especially in international relations—have been mostly replaced by the idea and practice of borders that mark or co-constitute 'differences.' Frontiers, historically, have been zones of blurry 'identities' in between the Self and the Other. Recently, Europe, finding itself in the midst of the Syrian refugee crisis—hence, with its malfunctioning borders—re-located the refugees in Turkey which was 'announced' as a safe zone. This paper, argues that the 'temporary-function' of Turkey as a safe zone resembles the practice of frontier where, historically, 'contested identities' have been located. It's a form of representation of the Other that engender exclusion and inclusion. Therefore, the current practice is likely to be a critical juncture in EU-Turkey relations as it might generate a process of re-consideration of the 'demarcations between Europe and 'the safe zone.' In other words, the practice of safe zone within the borders of Turkey is not only a practical political or security solution for/of Europe but also a practice of 'otherization' through which 'Fortress Europe' is being redefined. In understanding the issue of demarcations through politicized spaces and the re-creation of the otherness, the discourse of the European media via leading Greek news sources is analyzed to show how Turkey is re-constructed as a zone in-between Europe and its Other. It is shown that the Greek media implied responsibility of Turkey in keeping the European borders secure, which is ideally expected from the in-group members, while Turkey was declared as a safe zone at the doorsteps of Europe, which signals, at least, partial otherness.

## **Counter-Mapping Workshop: Resisting Precarity and Reactionary Closure in a ‘No Border’ Europe**

**Alessandro Tiberio**

University of California, Berkeley

### **Abstract**

The walling up of borders in ‘Fortress Europe’ is constantly reproduced through deeply racialized and gendered desires for the protection of a stable, safe, secure and ultimately ‘immunized’ European space, both at the scale of the EU or of the nation-state and at the scale of the self. In this sense, the widespread perception of a state of economic ‘precarity’ among young unemployed or precariously employed Europeans at least since the 2008 economic crisis has been politicized by populist far-right propaganda to justify the natural necessity of the walling and immunization of ‘Europe’ against virulent and threatening invading outsiders, sealing off the othered, outside space of the ‘non-European’. Yet, especially if we understand economic precarization as a process that brings EU citizens and asylum seekers alike to a state of insecurity also on a physical and psychological level, although in very different ways, how could one learn to produce alternatives to such newly-hegemonic conception of European borders?

Settled although temporary and precarious ‘commoned spaces’ shared by European citizens and asylum seekers in the EU, including squats, activists’ centers and collective gardens, represent the ‘other spaces’ or heterotopias where Europe struggles to re-cognize itself in, but that at the same time allow for challenges to the hegemonic culture of border closure in monolithic ‘Europe’ to emerge. In these spaces it has become increasingly important to understand on one hand how daily practices of individual and collective border renegotiation had been made possible in and through everyday life, and on the other how new challenges had emerged given our very different conditions of precarity, especially between EU citizens and asylum seekers in the EU. I am then proposing here a workshop based on exercises of ‘mad map’ drawing (a form of mental mapping that I have adopted from the radical mental-health collective Icarus, of which I have been part of for years in Oakland, California), where subjects would be asked to physically map their own conditions of precarity and ways to cope with them, have proven particularly useful to understand how different experiences, perceptions and understanding of ‘precarity’ on a personal level may allow alternative and counter-hegemonic renegotiations of ‘European’ borders.

By discussing together such material, I thus intend to propose a way to rethink how it may be possible to produce alternatives to the walling up of an idealized 'European' space on the ground by actually fighting historically produced and naturalized reactionary tendencies in our own and in our new collective politics, ultimately defying the taken-for-granted conception of walling-up as a natural necessity in times of 'crisis'.

## **Contribution of genuine militant activism of individuals involved in research to their work**

**Esfandyar Torkaman Rad**

### **Abstract**

This lecture is about the provisions and contributions of a documentary film to an academic research concerning how the two could also turn into political activism.

It talks about a previous experience of a documentary-film-making workshop where a group of people including the author made a documentary film about a squat of Iranian migrants in Caen, France. This experience was achieved by a mixed work of research, and social and political activism in parallel.

My presence in this squat was mainly to perform a set of militant activities which in turn permitted me to make a friendly human relationship with the inhabitants. This relationship was hugely beneficial for the documentary as it allowed the individuals involved to trust the situation and be comfortable in front of the cameras.

So the principal context is that how it makes a difference if a research/film/reportage is made by an activist/militant researcher/film maker/ journalist who is not there solely for the purpose of the research, but rather by means of his/her activism. Therefore the primary question of the lecture is that what are the differences between a research/film “about” social and political activism with a research/film which is a type of social and political activism in itself.

## **Safe and Legal Passages to Europe: the case of humanitarian corridors to Italy**

**Susanna Trotta**

Independent researcher

### **Abstract**

The work presented here focuses on the humanitarian corridors initiative set up in Italy by three Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) - the Federation of Protestant Churches, the Waldensian Church and the catholic Community of Sant'Egidio - in collaboration with the Italian Ministries of Interior and of Foreign Affairs. The initiative is legally based on Article 25 of EC Regulation 810/2009, which introduced an exceptional type of visa with limited territorial validity. Once selected in Lebanon by the FBOs and their partner organisations, the beneficiaries are then transferred safely and legally to Italy. The costs of the programme (transfer, reception etc.) are entirely covered through the organisations' and their networks' resources. The Italian authorities have agreed to issue a total of 1,000 humanitarian visas between January 2016 and December 2017, and the programme might be extended in 2018.

This study provides an opportunity to discuss the role of local and faith-based organisations in shaping policies aimed at extending protection. In fact, the programme's target group openly and purposefully differs from that of many governmental initiatives and of resettlement programmes, as there are no restrictions regarding the beneficiaries' nationality, and they do not need to have been granted refugee status prior to departure (the asylum application is filed in Italy upon arrival).

Moreover, the Community of Sant'Egidio and the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI) have recently secured a second set of 500 visas through a new agreement with the Italian authorities, according to which the beneficiaries will be transferred from Ethiopia. This development is of particular interest to the conference's discussions, as the inclusion of beneficiaries from countries such as Eritrea, Somalia or South Sudan could be seen as challenging the general distinction between 'real' and 'bogus' refugees, the second category often being conflated with that of 'economic migrants' who, according to this 'hierarchy of deserving', would not need, nor deserve, protection.

Another important element emerging from this analysis is that the implementation of reception processes is highly heterogeneous and considerably differs from the state-run system, creating an interesting space for re-negotiation and experimentation of possible alternatives. In these regards, this study analyses the different motivations and practices of the FBOs and their members, and how they mobilise material and immaterial resources within their own and other non-Christian faith communities, and in the wider civil society.

This research was carried out in the summer of 2016 using semi-structured interviews, participant observation and primary text analysis. Participants included FBO members, governmental officials and activists. It has involved an intersectional consideration of how factors such as gender, age, health status and religious (non) affiliation might influence the participants' orientations and experiences. This work hopes to contribute to the conference by focusing on the roles played by non-state actors (faith-based in particular) within migration policy processes, in particular as regards their implications in terms of challenging hierarchical categorisations of refugees and migrants, exploring alternatives to regular reception systems, and creating safe and legal ways to cross the border into Fortress Europe.

# You can not evict a movement. Mobile common spaces in Northern Greece during 2016

**Haris Tsavdaroglou**

Dr Urban Planner, School of Architecture, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

## **Abstract**

A noticeable body of literature is currently emerging, exploring aspects of social philanthropy, NGOs' activities and State immigration policies related to the ongoing refugee crisis (Gabiam, 2012; Ihlen, et al 2015; Reimann, 2006). However, there is little attempt to research how the refugees themselves self-organize and enact the production of seemingly anonymous, however highly personal and collective common spaces. The paper aims to fill this gap.

Following the recent spatial approaches on "commons" and "enclosures" (Dellenbaugh, et al 2015; Harvey, 2012; Stavrides, 2016) as well as the autonomous Marxist approach on "mobile commons" (De Genova, et al. 2015; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013; Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2013) I aim to compare and contrast refugee led solidarity common spaces with State-run migrant policies.

The paper focuses empirically on Greece, which is situated at the epicentre of the refugee crisis, and on Idomeni and Thessaloniki in particular, the former is the main exit point in the North and the latter is the city with the highest ratio of refugees per residents across the EU (1 million residents and more than 26.000 newcomers in summer 2016).

On March 2016, following a gradual restriction of access to the Balkan route based on ethnic origin criteria, the border between Greece and F.Y.R.O.M. was closed for all third-country migrants. In the aftermath of this closure, over 60.000 refugees have suddenly become trapped in Greece, the one third of them in the borderscape of Idomeni. Consequently it was established an informal makeshift settlement where almost 20.000 people sought to survive in appalling and precarious conditions, against the cold, the illnesses, the psychosocial distress, the lack of food, energy and water supplies. The vast majority of the refugees along with solidarity groups create their own forms of life, organization and struggle; hence the former "non place" of Idomeni was transformed to a hybrid mobile "common space". On the 20th of March 2016, following the implementation of the EU-Turkey deal, Greek police evacuated the makeshift settlement of Idomeni and the refugees relocated in twenty-one camps-reception centers around the city of Thessaloniki. At the same time during the winter-spring of 2016 refugees' solidarity groups occupied empty buildings in the urban core of Thessaloniki and transform already existing squats into housing projects for hundreds newcomers. Collective kitchens, kindergartens, food, medicine and clothes stores set up in the self-managed and self-financed

structures. The occupied refugee shelters, managed as commons through participatory processes, locals and refugees take decisions together; they recognize each other's culture and customs and overcome preconceptions and stereotypes. Moreover in July 2016 it was organized a transnational No Border Camp in Thessaloniki city center, where activists from all around Mediterranean and Europe come together with migrants in a self-organized, horizontal and direct-democratic gathering. Two days after the No Border Camp police evacuated three refugee squats, however new social struggles emerged in the State-run camps.

Following the background context, in this paper, which is based in militant and participatory action research, I explore how the newcomers challenge the existing socio-spatial power relations and produce unique and porous common spaces, spaces in movement and threshold spaces.



## **New mappings of borders & migrations in Lesvos: assemblages of enclosures & commons**

**Naya Tselepi**

Dr. Geographer, University of the Aegean

### **Abstract**

The recent massive movements of populations from Middle East and Africa to Europe are largely represented as a facet of the contemporary crisis. This discourse has been variously used to justify certain forms of European border and migration politics, interventions and management; firstly, the establishment of the new border control agencies (Eurosur, Frontex etc.) and the biopolitical mechanism of the 'hotspot' centers and secondly, the new agreements with countries outside the European territory (eg. the 03/2016 EU-Turkey border control agreement). At the same time, these migrations are disrupting the national and European notion and practice of 'border' and also motivating multiple expressions of solidarity and struggles.

Contributing to this idea, the paper draws from the reality of Lesvos island from the summer 2015 until today. As part of the south-eastern European borders, Lesvos provides the space for various conceptualizations and practices of borders and migrations. Recently performing as a 'hotspot' but also acting as a space of global solidarity and local struggles, the case of Lesvos raises multiple reflections on various topics: the new European logics of border and migration control; the role of the Greek state; the nexus of institutions, organizations, movements etc.; the migrants' and refugees' exclusions and struggles; the impact on local communities; the migrants-locals common practices and acts and mostly, the manifold entanglements of the above.

This paper reflects on these increasingly complicated relations using the methodology of assemblages on the theoretical approaches of enclosures and commons. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari's work I argue that assemblage thinking is necessary for a novel understanding of enclosures and commons, as it contributes to the empirical reality of the contemporary governance of migration; the material and expressive aspects of migration policies, as well as, of solidarity; the opening of the macro-micro dimensions of migration and; the identification of various transformations, complexes and contingencies. Thus, in this paper enclosures are understood as a predominant logic and technology of governing mobile populations, segregating and othering them as illegal, as well as, human-made, social and political processes 'located' in a number of symbols, discourses and practices. In the same logic, the commons are understood as practices and acts of commoning that bring together resources, communities and relations, as well as, representations, everyday life and praxes.

Overall, the paper re-maps various paradigms of borders and migrations in Lesvos via the methodology of assemblages of enclosures and commons, arguing that this theoretical and methodological tool opens up a horizon for experimental ways of common thinking and acting which have the potential to disrupt representations, bordering practices and the politics of control. Above all, it gives rise to a symbiosis of everyday practices, emotions, praxes and contingencies, always open to the 'new-comer'.

# **Reclaiming the City through Migrant Habitats: Towards the right to a liveable city- Auto construction processes and vernacular architectural technics**

**Merve Tuba Tanok**

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**Soner Torlak**

Phd Student (Political Science), University of Ankara, Ankara

## **Abstract**

The right to transform the city by their residents within their own daily lives and hereby, creating a space that also let them to transform their selves, in other words to 're-claiming the city' (Harvey, 2008) as a right to city is make and re-make the city and ourselves. This notion refers to ruled, deprived, oppressed ones' right to live in the city with dignity and humanly against activities of sovereigns in order to build and organize spaces according to their own needs.

Space and life doubtlessly can't be thought independently from each other. Effects of physical conditions on social and individual life and also on social and individual psychology cannot be ignored. Therefore construction of migrants' housing right is not only a solution of a physical problem, also must be considered as the most important practical step of a multidimensional change.

When problematic physical conditions that migrants have been located in, wherever they managed to access, is considered, also the problem of social and spatial integration (into already problematic society and city), to build the housing right with alternative (collective and auto-) construction processes that eliminates radical construction monopolies and any type of financial flow effect, maintain its importance in the context of right to the city/liveable habitat also as a positive transformation example for entire problematic neoliberal city structure.

Auto-construction indicates also the construction of a new life and reconstruction of self-reliance of a community that has lost its social, spatial, identity roots and integration to society or more precisely integration of the society to migrants' community. Because claim of migrants' integration with society also has to be discussed within a perspective that aims consideration of problematic structure of urban society.

In order to provide migrants' – all around the world who lives in container structures, in tents or in prison alike buildings as happens in Izmir- Harmandali Repatriation Centre- access to a sustainable-ecological and humanitarian built environment, taking advantage of collective power and the architectural heritage of mankind is essential. Here what we underline by saying vernacular architectural technics and auto construction processes refers to organization of the construction of auto sufficient and bioclimatic units in which natural, easily accessible, healthy, sustainable and cheap materials that belongs to the local like earth and stone and removable energy sources in building scales are used, where rain water collection methods are applied, energy conservation is considered.

Hereby the aim of this paper is to discuss possible construction processes that implicates in migrants in order to provide their own housing rights in the context of reclaiming city as a right to city. Within this objective, in this paper, vernacular architectural technics and examples – which historically empowers ability of auto-construction by usage of natural, local, cheap material and low tech applications for energy saving- is foregrounded as executer of construction of housing right within a collective construction process that purified from intervention of radical construction monopolies, for a liveable habitat. Reconstruction of a new life is highly associated with the construction of the built environment, architecture of enjoyment for a convivial society is not just for immigrants for all those who lives in same city. Real integration can be realized by transformation of the entire social structure through spatial conditions by transformation of migrants as a passivated community into the activated one. In other words, from 'object' to 'subject'. This kind of practice also gives the opportunity and sense for reconstruction of their home town after war, the most important thing can be given to a defeated and transformed into needy-indigent community is consciousness of the power they have to change and produce.

# A New Reserve Army of Unemployment: Syrian Migrants in Turkey

Çağla Ünlütürk Ulutaş

University of Pamukkale

## Abstract

As Turkey received the highest number of Syrian refugees, undocumented refugees have been living in most provinces of the country. Meanwhile, employment of refugees living outside the camps has created a set of different problems. Until recently, legal limitations left the refugees with no option but to participate in the informal labour market in order to earn their living. As Turkish public officials realized the necessity of providing refugees with legal employment opportunities, the new immigration regulation allowed the refugees to work legally in Turkey. However, the potential impact of the new regulation has been curbed by the limitations it prescribes, stratified structure of the labour markets, and discrimination. Therefore, the bulk of Syrian workforce is still unemployed and the others remain primarily within the informal market. An informal employment agency, operating under the name of Rizik Foundation, has been established in Sanliurfa; within two years it has received 20,000 applications and facilitated the employment of 4000 refugees within the informal labour market. Undoubtedly, immigration has different effects on large industrialized cities of western Turkey -like Istanbul, Bursa, and, Izmir- than it has on small border towns. But even among these border towns, its impact varies depending on local socio-economic dynamics. The unemployment rates of border provinces except in Gaziantep and Kilis that received most refugees rised dramatically. Some recent studies report that, most refugees earn far less than the minimum wage while working more than eight hours. Consequently, a strong competition between Syrian and Turkish labour force has developed. According to the research of Erdogan (2014), 56.1% of the Turkish public, support the proposition "Syrians are taking away our jobs", while in the border provinces the support increases to 68.9 %.

In the scope of this study, I will share the results of the qualitative research which is conducted with the Syrian labour living in Denizli. In Denizli which is a global textile city, manufacturing goods for most of the well known brands, 7986 documented Syrian migrants are living. Although it is known that most of the Syrian workers are working informally in these factories, there is no academic research study concerning this situation. Most of the academic resaerch studies regarding Syrian migrants are conducted in the borders cities as well as the biggest cities of Turkey such as İstanbul and Ankara. I will analyse the job search methods, wages, working

conditions, turn over rates of the Syrian workers in Turkey. I will also look for the answers of such questions as: Is the perception of Turkish citizens that asylum seekers are stealing jobs matched by data? Are Syrians simply substituting local workforce or are they filling a newly created niche in Denizli labour market.

# The border multiple: pluralizing the spatial dimensions of contested borderscapes

**Eva van Gemert**

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## Abstract

The concept of borderscape has been crucial in bringing space back into the study and politics of borders. While classic studies of ‘the border’ remained trapped in an imaginary of outlines and inlands, subsequent ‘bordering’ approaches studied processes of in- and exclusion in disconnection from their spatial embedding. The concept of borderscape not only called critical attention to the spatially extended landscapes of borders, but also to the interrelated practices of bordering that shape and traverse these landscapes over time. Most poignantly, the concept of borderscape has helped problematize and, in a sense, explode a naturalized and statist vision of borderlines, showing the multiplicity of practices that shape the border as space.

However, despite all the valuable work that the concept of borderscape enables, we argue that its spatialization remains tied to one specific type of space. Instead of centralizing the line as the border’s defining spatiality, the borderscapes concept foregrounds the terrains and lay-outs of zones at the perimeters of sovereign inlands as objects of study.

In this paper, we aim to bring back the borderline into the study of borderscapes. But instead of reducing the border to this line, our goal is to further pluralize the spatial dimensions of the borderscape, of which the line forms one type among many. We do so, first, through a systematic discussion of the multiplicity of spaces implicated in borderscapes, i.e. the line, the area, the site, the frontier, and the network. Second, we empirically analyse the spatial dimensions of current European migration policies that govern unauthorized mobility. Defined as authorities’ attempts to control borders and regulate migrants’ search for a better life, these policies offer an important exemplar of the various spatial dimensions at stake in the scaping of borders.

Exploring this multiplicity – both theoretically and empirically – not only helps to understand how borderscapes work, but also how they become contested. Most importantly, the borderline is not merely an ideological construct to be critiqued and contradicted through the articulation of borderscapes, but forms in itself a moment in the unfolding of borderscapes that might serve counter-hegemonic purposes. When analysing migration politics through a spatially pluralized concept of borderscape, it becomes apparent that control over migration does not consist in

states' effective reduction of heterogeneous scapes into coherent lines. In fact, border regimes operate more or less effectively precisely insofar as it remains possible to shift between spatial dimensions. The fact that the borderline can never be drawn definitely is not a deficit but a constructive feature of contested borderscapes. Likewise, those engaged in struggles over migration and migrants' lives do so along a plurality of spatial dimensions and can only hope to shape borderscapes insofar as they intervene in the full spectrum of their spatial unfolding.



## **In between war and solidarity. The liminal commons of the Platanos self-organized refugee camp**

**Angelos Varvarousis**

ICTA/UAB

### **Abstract**

Despite the attention that the ongoing refugee crisis gained in the incipient literature regarding the multiple faces of the global crisis, scant attention has been paid to the bottom up solidarity practices that emerged out of it. This paper focuses on the self-organized refugee camp of Platanos on Lesbos Island and it tries to link some of its organizational aspects with the broad discussion around the commons. The research is partially based on participant observation but mostly on a careful reconstruction of the history of the camp through a series of 12 in depth interviews and dozens of informal discussions throughout my prolonged stay on the island of Lesbos that lasted over 10-months.

My argument is that by approaching the self-organized refugee camps as instances of commoning, we can advance our knowledge in some of the more perennial debates that traverse this discussion and we can shed new light in a series of pertinent research questions.

How and why new commons emerge and sustain themselves, what the motivations of the commoners are and, also, how those “emergency” commons handle the dynamics of closure and openness in the process of making and sustaining new forms of living together?

Through the study of Platanos, this study aspires to challenge and expand the existing knowledge on commons for some issues that lie at the core of the respecting literature; the notion of benefit, which in the majority of the accounts is strictly linked to an economic reasoning, and the notion of trust, which is primarily linked to the homogeneity of the community of the commoners and the process of creating a rigid collective identity.

I argue that liminality, the condition of in-betweenness, lies at the very heart of this pattern of commoning and it constitutes, simultaneously, its main strength and weakness. But from where does this liminality stem and how does it manifest on the ground?

First, migrants are by definition in a liminal state as they experienced an enforced displacement that cannot only be associated with the undeniable psychosocial traumas, but also, with a deep crisis in their identity. They literally live in between a past yet to pass and a future still to come.

Second, the thousands western individuals who rushed to participate in Platanos, were neither only professional humanitarian NGO workers driven by economic benefit and technocratic efficiency, nor only middle-class westerners driven by a sentiment of guiltiness and a duty of

compassion to a suffering fellow “human being”. On the contrary, many of them, coming from many parts of the world that have been also affected by crisis, are also in a liminal condition and their act of participation is linked with this loss of identity and expresses their agony to re-orient their lives.

Third, the common space of Platanos is loaded, both practically and symbolically, with a liminal status. Being at the margins of the country, it functions as gateway between a war zone and the ‘orderly world’. It is a place that epitomizes a “broken past” but also the possibility of freedom.

Fourth, the production of the common space in Platanos was not the outcome of the activity of a fixed community. On the contrary, it was an in-between space available to be marked – if not possessed – by anybody operating on it.

## **Hard(ish) Answers to Eas(il)y Asked Questions: Thinking through facts of migration in Serbia on so called Balkan route**

**Ana Vilenica**

London South Bank University

### **Abstract**

This paper is a continuation of our (Nebojsa Milikic, Tadej Kurepa, Ana Vilenica) efforts to tackle important and rather acute questions posed by the local, regional and European public facing increased migration from the Middle East and Africa into Europe. We proposed answers to such questions through our activist work and experience (informed by struggles globally), numerous theoretical considerations, as well as activities during the “Man on the road” seminars (2014, 2015 KC Rex, Belgrade), in a wall newspaper pinned onto the walls and fences (2016). These questions remain relevant and acutely present.

I plan to expand on the connections between Serbia’s policy on migration and the ongoing urban development of the Belgrade’s Sava waterfront. I will examine the lack of capacities of Let’s not Drown Belgrade civic activists in addressing state violence against the migrants, through ideological confusion rooted in material conditions and narratives constructing the current post-socialist condition.

The area around the central bus and railway stations, affected by the Belgrade Waterfront mega development project, became a gathering point for migrants traveling on the so called Balkan route. During 2016, in two different locations, the illegalised migrants who chose to resist Serbia’s securitized humanitarianism, squatted the area’s emptied, mainly publicly owned buildings as temporary accommodation.

For several months, the migrants and local solidarity activists ran self-managed spaces as daily strategies of refusal, despite the harsh conditions. I will analyse ideological narratives and cultural constructs used by the state as an excuse for forced evictions of the squatted buildings—part of new urban structural violence in Serbia masked as an attempt to turn Belgrade into a “new European capital.”

I will show why and how, in the light of this land grab, the official narrative of migrant self-help housing constructed it as a paradigm of communal waste and a source of disease, not only unsafe for Belgrade citizens, but also as an obstacle to development. I will speak about progressive criminalization of migrants as the unwanted surplus human presence, against the backdrop of Serbia’s preparations for the EU membership. Not only does this criminalisation deprive the migrants of any prospect of a decent life, it brings out the hidden acceptance of yet another criminalisation. The marginalised local inhabitants of the Sava waterfront area have also

been constructed as the unwanted surplus humans, evicted and turned into a sub-legal, invisible demographic. These 'wretched of Serbia,' just like the migrants, cannot afford to respect the law precisely because they can't afford to own property.

The point at which urban, civic activism in Serbia, such as the Let's not Drown Belgrade movement encounters the migrants and the wretched is the point of complicity with neoliberal politics. Serbian civic movement cannot even attempt to articulate answers until it begins to understand its post-socialist condition; until it realises the urgency of uniting the struggle for the right to the city with the struggle for decent housing for everyone, the struggle for common goods with the fight for unconditional freedom of movement or of staying put.

# **The bureaucratic production of dystopia in Border Procedures in the context of a ‘hot-spot’**

**Aimilia Voulvouli**

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

## **Abstract**

The bureaucracy of asylum is as any other bureaucratic process full of inconsistencies, ambiguities and contradictions. In the context of a ‘state of exception’, enforced by practices that transcend the rule of law (EU-Turkey deal, Border procedures etc) these aspects become more detectable and visible revealing a condition of impossibility. The aim of this paper is to describe the ‘asylum condition’ in the context of Border Procedures as these have been amended after the common statement between EU and Turkey regarding the migrant crisis in March 2016. The paper is drawing on six months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in one of the designated ‘hot-spots’ of a border region in Greece about the duties of asylum case-workers implementing the so-called Border Procedures defined by the EU-Turkey common statement of March 2016. The paper will try to depict the impossibilities that extent from language barriers to legal deficiencies and irrational decision drafting that render the already unbearable material condition of the hot-spot a dystopic bureaucratic product too.

## Natural Rite

**Daria Voyloshnikova**

University of Fribourg

### Abstract

Intrinsic in human societies, borders are, at the same time, put in question, negotiated, fought, transferred and abolished. Premising with the classification of shocks that the institute of state border has come under due to transnational dynamics and with an outline of respective adaptations of the border areas, the paper will examine the effects of movements rhythmically stitching transborder space (in a Swyngedouwian perspective): from transhumance and shuttle trading to nomadic fishery and passe-partouts, all crossing different types of discrete boundaries, these practices constitute modern forms of licit border contestation. In large part, such phenomena are self-organizing, involve multiple types of actors and produce those who have won the right to dwell borderless, feel exterritorial and inhabit the transboundary. Between the two cases brought for the sake of illustrative analysis, where survival needs canalize Weenhayek fisherman across the bureaucracies and Transcarpatia pastoral initiative gains grassroots support, both differences and similarities in the effects produced are found, just to be incorporated in a way to understand border solidity, mutations and the (trans)border-space overlay formation.

## LitBridge-Connecting Cultures through Literature

Sofia Vyzantiadou

### Abstract

A bridge connects places and people when something holds them apart, it is a pathway to progress and a structure that spares an existing gap. This is the main idea based on which project LitBridge was designed. Living in a country where cross-cultural encounters increase due to the refugee crisis, we are witnessing greater conflicts based on such loaded concepts as “Cultural Diversity” and “Multiculturalism”. How can literature and storytelling be used to bring cultures together and promote understanding among people with diverse cultural background? This is the question we will try to answer using the example of this pilot project implemented in 1 primary school and in refugee relocation structures with groups of children aged 8-12. This project tried to open a dialogue and create a framework of connectedness between the two groups: primary school students and refugee children who haven’t been into school yet, with a main goal to work towards social inclusion. Through the use of refugee literature and interactive activities based on literary texts children were able to empathise and personalise human rights and values that otherwise seemed abstract to them. With the use of multicultural literature they were able to explore their own as well as other cultural identities. Children from both groups produced different types of texts (fantasy stories, descriptions, letters, poems etc.) illustrated them and bound them to create their own books. Students were able to communicate their message of empathy and realise their own responsibility to welcome those children. Syrian children were given voice. The two groups started interacting by exchanging stories, texts, gifts, illustrations. In the end an exhibition of the handmade books, an anthology of their texts titled “Hand to Hand”, and an animation film whose script, pictures and voices were given by the children, was presented in the International Book Fair of Thessaloniki. In this paper I explore different examples and techniques used to achieve the objectives mentioned above and the results of the evaluation of the whole process.

## There is no other

Georgia - Yulie Tzirou

### Abstract

I am one of the many anonymous volunteers who in recent years responded to the increase of refugee flows cooking almost every day, handing out clothes and blankets that were brought from our homes or the homes of friends, and finally in December 2012 "occupying" PIKPA, a space that was in the past a children's camp run by the municipality of Mytilene.

We converted this space to a shelter and home for vulnerable groups of refugees but not only. All these years PIKPA for us was part of our family: we took care of food and heating, we took people to hospital when someone was sick or had a new baby born, and we fought to get PIKPA's children go to state schools. We celebrated birthdays, weddings and births, and said goodbyes to our friends when the much desired reunion with their families in Europe was granted.

In the winter of 2016 our island became internationally known, not for the blue Aegean waters but for the corpses of young children and their mothers that were washed up on our shores. It was then that hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the bombs of war passed from Lesbos within a few months.

PIKPA, became a center of action for hundreds of volunteers that were cooking daily over 2000 meals for these people and were distributing thousands of items that we were receiving as donations: food, clothing, personal hygiene items, sleeping bags, tents, etc.

Together, refugees and volunteers created and improved the spaces and living conditions in PIKPA which became truly a global solidarity village, a space where everyone ended it with the best part of his/her soul.

Before these horrific days I used to love the expression through the black and white truth of photographic art. My favorite subject was human existence, from birth to the decay which prepares death and from love to loneliness.

During this winter my camera was "mobilized" for the social media of PIKPA.

In my photos I didn't want to do art or reportage. Most of the times there was no time to think about the geometrical balance of the image, the balance of form and content, or even the technical part of the shooting and get the distance of the observer which is necessary for my photographic look.

These pictures are scenes from our everyday life in PIKPA. They are commemorative photos of one more year in our "family" album. And, as in all family albums, there are many special



moments where everything stops. Not waiting for their photographic imprinting but simply revealing the true quality of our lives in PIKPA.

I participate with my photos in Contested Borderscapes, testifying another look from the one that was so much published last year: photographic reportage that had turned the human suffering into a product.

# **Visual and Material displays of Migration Histor(ies) in Museums/Exhibitions in Germany. Case Study: Greek 'GastarbeiterInnen' in BRD. Towards collaborative museum work with immigration actors**

**Christos Zisis**

Doctoral Candidate, Institute of Cult. Anthropology, Hamburg University

## **Abstract**

In my research, with the use of ethnographic-oriented methods I will try to explore stereotypes, challenges and possibilities on displaying such a terminal experience and multiplayer phenomenon as migration, in both its historical and up to date socio-economic dimensions in museum and Heritage sites. Additionally, I delve into issues of symbolic and material borders produced by actors of national/diaspora identities, perceptions of memory and 'homeland'.

Particularly, my on-going 'multi-sided ethnography' with various actors of my examined case study (post-war Greek migration in BRD) in the cities of Berlin, Hamburg, Munich can be placed in an effort to explore this on-going critical dialogue between oral-histories, testimonies, social memories, materiality, objects as 'mnemonic devices' (Jones 2010) and archive - be it official of unofficial documents- in its multiple layers and formats, and how these various 'voices' and agencies from both, unofficial and official sources, resonate with museum practice and displays regarding that often under-represented historical period.

Through this notion of a 'polyphonic' and 'polyprism' archive, or a 'Heter-archiv' it will be possible to describe spherically and comprehend 'the multiple materialities of migrant worlds' (Basu, Coleman 2008), as well as enhance the notion of a dialogue-driven museum (Harrison, 2013), thus activating the 'affective' qualities of Heritage (ibid.).

Finally, this project, aiming to disrupt the authority of monolithic, linear and national-hegemonic curatorial narratives can be placed in the on-going public discussion on the 'shift of perspective' of the current topic of 'migrations' in Germany. Such a critical 'paradigm shift' can be anchored and implemented in the context of museographical practice and cultural heritage in Germany.

# **“Managing” uncertainty- Georgian domestic workers in Greece**

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## **Abstract**

Since the middle of the 1990s thousands of Georgian women migrate to Greece, mainly to Athens and Thessaloniki. Unlike migrants from Asia and Africa, who want to reach Western Europe, Greece remains the final destination for Georgian female migrants. Most of them are engaged in the live-in or live-out domestic branch; care for the elderly, babysitting, housekeeping and cleaning are their main tasks. Poverty and social problems caused by the ongoing transformation process in Georgia, forced or encouraged women to get into the ‘female migration chain’ towards the EU.

Looking at the life trajectories of Georgian women in Greece, I focus on the meaning migrant women give to their transnational life in Greece, the financial investments and their daily practices of care work. In this light moralities and values enter into the field of my interests. Migration with its multiple facets is the expression of the negotiation of trans-local moralities - a lasting experience that shapes women’s political standing and the general worldview. And this furthermore has to be considered with the peculiarities of the life trajectories of Georgian women, who in a patriarchal society sustained the living of the household after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the characteristics of the domestic branch, most Georgian women are engaged with.

After years of migration some domestic migrants from Georgia have managed to regularize their status in Greece. Nevertheless, the access to social welfare is marginal, since social insurance is issued temporarily – a characteristic of low-paid domestic work and it does not cover unemployment money and pensions for the majority. The structure in which migrants find themselves has a decisive impact on the way migrants act within the community and towards the outer world. Thus experienced inequality, marginalization, and illegality forms part of the migration experience in Thessaloniki. We should not ignore this precised encounter with the Greek structure, since Thessaloniki appears as an interface between the Caucasus and the EU. A certain space, which offers a living and earning, even without a status, due to its informal economy. Strict border regimes could not stop the inflow of Georgian migrants throughout the last 20 years. Since the existence of ties to Greek Georgians “Pontians”, who had settled to Greece in the beginning and middle of the 90th, have been crucial for getting into the undocumented female migration chain to Greece. From a Georgian perspective, insurmountable borders do only exist where the length of social networks end. All over the

world social networks have a crucial function in the direction of the migration stream and the border crossing practice. Social networking can't be stopped or controlled by any European regime and within its powerful role they challenge European border regimes.