Forced Migration and Everyday Bordering Practices in Europe

- Workshop Abstracts -

1) A Racialised Critique of the Concept of Forced Migration

Natalia Cintra, University of Southampton

Abstract: Although it is not new amongst 'forced migration scholars' to critically engage with and study the limits of the many categories incorporated within the more ample definition of 'forced migration', the conceptualisation of 'forced migration' itself is however not as sufficiently addressed or critiqued in existing literature. Drawing mainly from Aurora Vergara Figueroa's critique of the field, and Tendayi Achiume's demonstration of the historical connections that underpin people's movements between former colonies and metropoles, as well as decolonial and afropessimistic theories, this paper aims to address this, and provide a critique of the fundamental limits of the concept of forced migration when looking at it from a racialised perspective. I specifically argue that centring on 'race' as a lens to read mobility dynamics opens up avenues to see the inherent limitations of the concept of forced migration, the racialised effects of such limitations, and new frameworks that allow such failures to be overcome. I do so by drawing on three displacement phenomena that help to illustrate the theoretical critique I aim to develop: the movement of West and Central Africans to Brazil, the displacement of Haitians in Latin America, and the protracted mobility of indigenous Venezuelans, the Warao, both within and beyond their own country.

2) Beyond Borders: Everyday Experiences and Bordering Practices among Palestinian Refugees and Migrants in Greece

Wael Sarsour, University of Crete

This paper examines the social integration of Palestinian refugees and migrants in Greece through the intersecting lenses of migration governance, everyday bordering, and the human consequences of migration and integration policies. It moves beyond an understanding of borders as exclusively territorial mechanisms of control and explores how bordering practices extend into the institutional and social spaces in which refugees and migrants seek to establish their everyday lives. Drawing on qualitative research on the social integration of Arab refugees and migrants in Greece, with particular emphasis on Palestinian refugees and migrants, the paper examines the multidimensional processes through which inclusion and exclusion are experienced and negotiated. The analysis considers the significance of language, social and cultural factors, social isolation and marginalisation, as well as migrants' experiences within key domains of social life, including education, healthcare, employment, social relations, and participation in Greek society. The paper situates these experiences within the broader context of European and national migration governance, focusing particularly on the relationship between formal policy frameworks and their implementation in everyday contexts. It argues that the effects of migration policies cannot be fully understood through formal border controls alone. Rather, migration governance acquires an everyday dimension through institutional arrangements, administrative practices, and social interactions that shape migrants' access to social institutions, services, and opportunities for participation. By bringing the study of social integration into dialogue with the concept of everyday bordering, the paper highlights how processes of inclusion and exclusion may extend beyond the territorial border. The experiences of Palestinian refugees and migrants in Greece provide an empirical perspective for examining the human consequences of migration policies and the ways in which broader structures of migration governance are encountered and negotiated in everyday life. The

paper contributes to the study of forced migration by connecting macro-level migration governance with the micro-level experiences of refugees and migrants, while highlighting the importance of examining not only where borders are located, but also how bordering practices are experienced within contemporary European societies.

3) Perspectives from the Field

Iorgos Karagiannis, MSF

MSF, based on its operational experience will present a brief analysis (using also indicative examples) on how the applied EU and Greek policies impacted humanitarian conditions of the asylum seekers, refugees and migrants within the recent years. We will briefly analyze the humanitarian cost of deterrence policies, the gradual descent in essential care provision and the accelerated harm to those in absolute need. Focus will be of course in the policies, administrative practice and laws regulating healthcare and basic rights

4) "Beyond Borders: The Role of the Centre for Migrant Integration in Supporting Inclusion and Access to Services in Chania"

Eleni Zervoudaki, Poumpini Glymidaki, Zenia Zetseva, Municipality of Chania

This presentation introduces the services and activities of the Migrant Integration Center (KEM) of the Municipality of Chania, highlighting its role in supporting migrants and refugees in their everyday lives. It outlines the Center's services, including information and guidance on administrative procedures, support in accessing public services and social benefits and referrals to relevant institutions and community resources. Particular emphasis is placed on the Center's community-based activities, which promote social inclusion, intercultural dialogue, active participation and interaction among people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Through workshops, awareness-raising initiatives and collaborative actions with local organisations and services, the KEM seeks to strengthen social connections and facilitate access to opportunities and rights. The presentation highlights how local initiatives and practical support can contribute to more inclusive communities and respond to the everyday challenges experienced by migrant and refugee populations in Chania.

5) AI, Age Assessment and the Algorithmic Racialised and Slow Violence

Ingi Iusmen, University of Southampton

Thousands of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) arrive without documents at the UK border and are misclassified as adults. No age assessment method can accurately determine chronological age, yet recently the Home Office has decided to deploy AI technology (Facial Age Estimation-FAE) to determine the age of undocumented young migrants at the border. By drawing on qualitative empirical data, official document analysis, along with critical analysis of the proposed AI technology for age assessment, the paper asks whether AI can improve age assessment for UASC. We argue that FAE applied to age assessment will generate algorithmic racialised and slow violence for UASC in three ways. First, it will institutionalise the machine-drive bias, second the children's rights will be violated

due to the AI decision-making black box, and third, the proposed deployment of AI generates blurred accountability and judicial remedy mechanisms for children misclassified as adults.

6) Sorting Asylum Seekers Out: The Impact Of Digital Technologies On Screening, Accelerated And Border Asylum Procedure

Gaia Romeo, Center for Critical Computational Studies, Goethe University Frankfurt

In June 2026, the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum fully entered into application. One of the main novelties of the Pact is the introduction of mandatory screening, accelerated and border asylum procedures. These procedures – which are already implemented by some EU countries - entail that asylum seekers are very quickly sorted into different categories, corresponding to different paths of inclusion or exclusion. For example, they may be deemed as vulnerable, as a potential threat to national security or as coming from a 'safe country of origin'; or as suitable for relocation or deportation. At the same time, EU countries are increasingly developing and testing new types of digital technologies - often powered by AI - to streamline decisions that are taken in this context. These technologies include software allowing to check documents, detect frauds, check applicants' mobile phone data, conduct risk assessments or assesses whether applicants are telling the 'truth' in relation to their name, story, dialect etc. This research project aims to understand and explain how the use of digital technologies affects – and is affected by - this categorisation process, and hence the inclusion and exclusion of asylum seekers arriving at EU borders. Theoretically, it builds on practice theory (Bueger 2014, Eggeling 2025) and interpretive policy implementation analysis (Yanow 2000), as well as on and science and technology studies focusing on infrastructure (Winner 1980) platforms and their affordances (Davis and Chouinard 2016; Plantin et al. 2018) and the intersection of infrastructure and categorisation (Bowker and Star 2008).

7) Synergic Security Discourse and Constructing the Great Replacement on the Gram: Artificial Intelligence, Migration and Conspiracy Theories on Instagram

Joseph Dowing, Aston University

The literature on AI slop does little to address its potential security impacts. This paper seeks to fill this gap and contribute to debates about security and population-replacement conspiracy theories by analysing 300 AI slop content on Instagram. Using a qualitative approach (Appnography), it identifies four kinds of replacement conspiracy theories depicted in these videos: replacement by Islam; replacement by Indians; the "white mirror" of ethnic homogeneity as a covert means of depicting replacement; and replacement by LGBT values. It also outlines the rich, multimodal visual and audio ways that these great replacement conspiracy theories (GRCTs) are depicted. This highlights the way that AI slop can give new life to old replacement tropes, but also create new ones. It raises important questions about AI and reconceptualising it not as banal but as something that can be used to spread xenophobic messages and possibly contribute to radicalisation.

8) Confronting Methodological Nationalism: Critical Reflections on Migration and Refugee Research in Greece (1990 - 2026)

Alexandra Zavvou, University of Crete

Since the 1990s, the critique of methodological nationalism has underpinned transnational migration studies in the US and Western Europe, yet its specific elaboration within Greek migration scholarship remains under-examined. This chapter traces the development of migration studies in Greece from the early 1990s, a period of transition into an immigration destination country, to the present era defined by overlapping “crises” and structural reconfigurations of the EU border an asylum regime. Through a critical review of Greek and international literature, I identify three analytical moves for confronting methodological nationalism: (1) a transnational focus, which challenged "integration" paradigms by highlighting cross-border socio-cultural fields and fluid migrant trajectories; (2) a critical reframing of citizenship, which decoupled political agency and belonging from formal state status; and (3) a rescaled analysis of the "Europeanisation" of border and asylum governance, viewed as supra-national assemblage rather than a strictly domestic matter. The chapter maps key areas of enquiry and major shifts in migration research, showing how scholarship tracks changing socio-economic and geopolitical realities and engages with the complexity of Greece as a Mediterranean borderland.

9) Distancing Asylum Seekers: Organisational Discretion in Access to Asylum and Its Contestation

Alice Lacchei, University of Bologna

While migration scholarship has extensively examined territorial barriers to asylum access, such as pushbacks, pullbacks, and externalization, less attention has been paid to administrative practices that, once individuals are within a state’s territory, impede the formalization of asylum claims. These practices are crucial to understanding how bordering is enacted in everyday asylum governance. Drawing on empirical data from the ERC StG ACCESS project, including desk research and semistructured interviews, this article examines administrative discretion in the formalization of asylum claims and how it is contested in Italy and Greece. Building on street-level bureaucracy scholarship and contributions from forced migration research, the article examines how competent administrations regulate access through rationing, delays, referrals, and other organisational practices. These practices are analysed as forms of “moving away from the client”, through which frontline administrations limit direct engagement, manage demand, and redistribute responsibility through analogical and digital discretion, including appointment rationing and reliance on private actors or online procedures. The analysis further examines how these practices create distance between asylum seekers and the administrations responsible for receiving their claims, and how this distance becomes a site of contestation for legal intermediaries. It asks whether and in what forms such contestation shapes organisational discretion, and how frontline administrations adapt, reproduce, or transform existing practices in response to these challenges.

10) Free or Forced? The Role of Migrant Women in Assisted Reproductive Technologies

Katerina Glyniadaki, University of Southampton & Angelos Angelou, Panteion University

Greece is one of Europe’s main entry points for irregular migrants, as well as one of Europe’s top medical tourism destinations and ‘fertility hubs’. In the growing field of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART), Greece has a liberal legal framework, allowing for a wide array of services, including egg donation and surrogacy. Some frame this as Greece’s ‘competitive advantage’, and a magnet for international medical tourists. Yet, this view

overlooks the potential exploitation of women who provide reproductive labour as egg donors or surrogates, most of whom are migrant women from third countries. Interestingly, whilst only altruistic surrogacy is allowed, records show very high supply of ‘altruism’ by women from ex-Soviet countries. This raises the question of how Greek ART policies are being implemented on the ground, and what the unintended consequences are on vulnerable migrant women. This research tackles this question. To do so, it uses semi-structured interviews with legal and medical professionals in the ART field to shed light on policy implementation on the ground. It also uses legal document analysis to shed light on the ‘logic’ behind the laws. This study draws from and contributes towards the literature of public administration and street-level bureaucracy, as well as the literature of the sociology of gender and the commodification of women’s bodies.