

SOLROUTES



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INTERMEDIATE
CONFERENCE

Station 5.
*De-borderlands:
naming, gendering,
infrastructuring
freedom of movement*

***BOOK of
ABSTRACTS***





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*De-borderlands:
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Book of Abstracts.

NAMING



Presenter(s): **Angela Curina**

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**INVISIBLE SOLIDARITY
IN THE REGIME OF DISAPPEARABILITY: EPISTEMIC
AND NEOCOLONIAL VIOLENCE IN DIASPORIC
MOVEMENTS FROM SENEGAL**

[ABSTRACT]

With this abstract, I propose some reflections on the relationship between the invisible solidarities surrounding illegalized departures from Casamance (Senegal) and the necropolitical framework (Mbembe, 2016) of the «spectral objectivity of capitalist culture» (Taussig, 1993) in which these departures are embedded. By “invisible solidarity”, I refer to the magical practices performed by communities before, during, and after taking the pirogue. In a context where shipwrecks, death, and ghosts are ordinary presences (Queirolo Palmas, Rahola, 2025), this ordinary violence suggests that «there is something to do» (Gordon, 2022). The regime of disappearability (Laakkonen, 2022) not only produces the conditions for a “visible invisibility,” where individuals are constantly subjected to «[the] threat of dying without anyone knowing it» (ibid), but also establishes a regime of suspicion (Sayad, 2002), with the aim of identifying “potential migrants” by various actors. While some studies have emphasized the importance of «consider mystico-religious influences on migrants’ imaginaries and how they understood and analysed risk, their own fate, luck and what actions needed to be taken to mitigate risk» (Deshingkar, Gueye, 2022), I will instead focus on the relations of power in which such cultural practices are inscribed, and on the gap produced by the dialectic of visibility and invisibility in the regime of disappearability.

In this framework, magical practices surrounding departures will be viewed – following De Martino’s (2002) perspective – as «an organic system of vital defence techniques [...] against the risk of not being in the world at those critical moments of existence in which that civilisation feels that history is protruding» (ibid, p. 111). Thus, the analysis moves away from the realm of belief and into the realm of practices of reintegration, resubjection and agency in a renewed necropolitical order where extroversion of desire (Mbembe 2018) and colonization of the imaginary (Gruzinski, 1994; Mbembe, 2024; Xavier, 2018) are means of the epistemic violence (Spivak, 2004) and of the capitalistic – and perhaps European – witchcraft (Pignarre, Stengers, 2016).

The starting point, therefore, will be some ethnographic notes on practices heard during a brief period of fieldwork in Senegal, which hinted at the presence of magic in departure rituals. For this reason, these reflections are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather preliminary lines of investigation to frame cultural practices, which in this case have to do with magic, within a broader political-economic context. Magic and magical objects will be considered as strategies and instruments of agency, although included within an economy of solidarity in the regime of (im)mobility. How can communities deal with a history that is protruding? What kind of solidarity (and whose) can be visible, and what kind, instead, must remain interstitial in order to exist?

[BIO]

Angela Curina is a PhD student in Social Sciences at the University of Genoa. She has worked on Moroccan diaspora and post-colonial migration. She currently deals with medicalization and prisons looking through the intersections of care and control policies and epistemologies and watching the mobility of bordering and othering. On this topic, she worked in Italy, France, Morocco and Bolivia, using methodologies from anthropology and critical pedagogical theory. With the ERC SOLROUTES research group, she works on the Atlantic route, solidarity and the relationship between visibility, invisibility and necropolitics.

Presenter(s): **Camilla Macciani**
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TAKING SOUTHERN ITALY'S RURAL INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AS A STANDPOINT TO EXPLORE THE MULTIFARIOUS MEANINGS OF MIGRANT SOLIDARITY

[ABSTRACT]

In the past decades, following the progressive influence of post-colonial studies on scholarly research on migration (Mellino 2012, Mezzadra 2008), words and expressions commonly used to describe migration have been reconceptualized to better grasp the experience of people on the move and overcome the methodological nationalism characterizing migration studies (Casas Cortes et al. 2014). As part of this debate, the multifaceted meaning held by the concept of solidarity has been explored, suggesting the use of an “uneasy” definition of solidarity, going beyond its moral conceptualization (Bonnin et al. 2025). This perspective calls for a stretching of the meaning of solidarity in order to also include actions and figures that, while central to the infrastructure of unauthorized migration, do not operate following a purely altruistic drive. While this framework has primarily been used to explore the experiences of migrants in transit, its theoretical relevance also extends to interpreting the experiences of ‘settled’ migrants living in areas characterized by postcolonial fractures.

Building on five years of ethnographic and militant research in Borgo Mezzanone and Torretta Antonacci, two of Italy's largest rural informal settlements, the present paper intends to contribute to this debate by exploring the ambivalent and multifarious meanings of solidarity in the context of migrant farmworkers' rural informal settlements. While not located on a geographical border, these settlements configure themselves as an “agricultural frontier” part of the borderland (Fravega and Queirolo 2022), sharing many similarities with border zones, both in terms of infrastructures of control, segregation and racialization, as well as in terms of practices of resistance, self-organization and solidarity.

The present contribution suggests investigating the ambivalence inherent to informal settlements as being at the same time places of exploitation and refuge, by exploring the multiple and contrasting ways in which they are defined by those who inhabit them. For one thing, looking at naming practices involving the very structure and geography of informal settlements will allow us to go beyond their characterization as “non-places” (Augé 1995), often employed by institutional actors and civil society (Flai-Cgil 2024). For another thing, investigating the discursive practices used by migrant farmworkers to describe forms of solidarity and self-organization taking place in the context of informal settlements will permit further expanding on the idea of “solidarity at large” (Bonnin et al. 2025), while questioning the coloniality inherent to distinctions between supposedly altruistic and “impure” solidarity (ibid.) mobilized by various political collectives, unions and NGOs operating in the area.

[BIO]

Camilla Macciani is a post-doctoral research fellow in sociology at the University of Bergamo. She obtained her PhD from the University of Calabria in September 2024, with a dissertation exploring the forms of oppression and resistance of racialized migrant farmworkers living in the province of Foggia through the lens of racial capitalism. From 2019 to 2024, she has been living in the province of Foggia, where she has conducted her PhD research while actively participating in different ways in migrant farmworkers' self-organization and contributing to the creation of a legal drop-in centre in the informal settlement of Torretta Antonacci. Her research interests include migration and border studies, agriculture, racial capitalism, and labour studies.

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**THE WORDS OF EXPERIENCE: GRASPING
THE DISCURSIVE DIMENSION OF MIGRATORY
ONTOLOGY – THE CASE OF SUB-SAHARAN
MOBILITIES IN MOROCCO**

[ABSTRACT]

This paper draws on extensive ethnographic fieldwork conducted among Sub-Saharan African migrants attempting to reach Europe irregularly via Morocco. It focuses on the vernaculars developed and mobilized by migrants—their words, discursive practices, and the multiple social and symbolic functions these terms serve. Rather than treating language as a only a medium, the study explores how migrants articulate a migratory ontology through speech: a way of being, sensing, and navigating the world that takes form in and through movement. In doing so, it seeks to illuminate a shared lexicon of mobility—the discursive dimension of their « common mobile » (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013)—emerging from their lived experiences.

This emergent vocabulary operates across several domains: Self-defined identity, which resists the identity-making practices imposed by the state (Bourdieu) and its formal or informal agents (e.g., adventurer vs. illegal). Border-crossing tactics, where terms like pointcheck describe discreet, small-group crossings, in contrast to mass attacks, which involve collective action.

Social relations and their fragilities, reflected in terms like noka, used to name a traitor or someone undermining group solidarity.

Habiting the border, where expressions such as ghetto refer to makeshift homes within informal settlements, while forest or jungle denote the campements themselves.

These terms often originate in West African urban vernaculars but cross linguistic and national boundaries, adapting along migratory routes. They travel with the migrants, structuring and narrating their trajectories. For instance, in southern Morocco, an informal encampment in the desert—later destroyed—was referred to by its inhabitants as the forest...

Born in and through the journey, these words serve emblematic, cryptic, and sometimes ludic functions (Calvet, 2013). They reflect the inventiveness and agency of migrants throughout their passage. Focusing on this vocabulary provides a lens for challenging dominant regimes of control—regimes that often begin with the act of naming itself.

[BIO]

Ayoub El Arraf PhD candidate in sociology, University of Strasbourg Interdisciplinary Laboratory for Cultural Studies (LinCS, UMR 7069) Research interests: Migration, Borders, Makeshift Campements, Critical Border studies, Morocco, Spain, Europe.

Presenter(s): **Irene Peano**

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**ON BLACKNESS AS METHOD:
BROTHER/SISTER-HOOD AND SOLIDARITIES
IN ITALY'S ENCAMPMENT ARCHIPELAGO**

[ABSTRACT]

The paper will build on thirteen years of engaged research and militancy with and in support of migrants living in Italian agribusiness encampments (with a special focus on the district of Foggia, the Plain of Gioia Tauro and, to a lesser extent, the district of Saluzzo). It starts from a critical appraisal of the use and abuse of the notion and practice of solidarity, in the context of a growing spectacularisation that has invested migrants who live in in/formal settlements (where the boundary between formality and informality is ever shifting and labile). The riots that broke out in the town of Rosarno (district of Reggio Calabria) in January 2010, and the wildcat strike in which over 400 migrant farmworkers participated in the summer of 2011 in Nardò (district of Lecce), brought to light the condition of those living and working in Italy's agroindustrial districts in the new millennium, across national and international arenas.

These moments of collective struggle, and the further experiences of self-organisation to which they gave rise up until the present, have been countered by several attempts to defuse their potential, through initiatives (led by trade unions, NGOs and political organisations) that have denied migrants their subjectivity and autonomy, pitting them as passive victims or, at best, silent followers in moments of spectacularized and pacified denunciation that capitalize on conditions of structural, racist violence. In these cases, when solidarity is flagged it is emptied of its meaning, employed as foil for attitudes infused by paternalism, and manipulated to deflect the radical potential of migrants' anger and frustration, also leading to, or reinforcing, their disillusionment and mistrust towards external subjects claiming to support them. These silencing mechanisms have been reflected also in the lack of recognition of several moments of protest and strike, in which migrants had a leading role, and which I and other comrades have been accompanying since 2012.

Without wishing to exempt these latter processes from criticism and self-reflexivity, I would like to claim an understanding and a practice of solidarity that is based on mutual processes of learning, on radical openness and on the construction of languages and practices of collective struggle that must constantly question pre-conceived interpretations and forms of action. At the same time, building on this notion of solidarity, I want to approach the forms of everyday mutualism that characterize migrants' living and work-spaces across the encampment archipelago through the lens of Blackness as method, as it has been worked through by several thinkers and members of the Beyond Inhabitation Lab, of which I am also a member. Relations of conviviality and support, in the encampment archipelago and beyond, are conceptualised by its inhabitants by means of kin-making (most often as horizontal brother/sister-hood, but at times also marking hierarchies by means of seniority). While never exempt from conflict and sometimes inflected with asymmetries and dependencies, these relations are veritable infrastructures of care unfolding in the interstices of spaces of negation, abjection, inhabitability and segregation operating by means of racist logics. Blackness in this sense does not denote a stable identity but a means of relating and making things possible otherwise, within and against capture.

[BIO]

Irene Peano received a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge (2011). She held post-doctoral positions at the University of Bologna (including a Marie-Curie Intra-European Fellowship) and a

visiting professorship at the University of Bucharest's Research Centre.

For more than 15 years she has been carrying out research on the exploitation of migrant labour, with a focus on sexual and farm work, and on forms of resistance to migration and labour regimes, conducting extensive fieldwork in Nigeria, Italy and Romania. Such research has entailed the active support of collective forms of organisation and struggle.

More recently, she has been researching the genealogies of forms of mobility containment and the development of agribusiness in Italy's agro-industrial districts, by means of in depth archival and oral-history research. She has been assistant researcher at ICS-ULisboa since 2021, after having worked at the same institute as a member of the ERC project "The Colour of Labor: the racialized lives of migrants (led by Cristiana Bastos), since 2017.



Presenter(s): **Joma Thomé**
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“I am not a migrant, I am discovering and conquering”. ETHNOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS INTO DISCURSIVE PRACTICES OF MAGHREBI MIGRANTS ON THE GREEN ROUTE.

[ABSTRACT]

This paper explores discursive practices and emic vocabularies of speaking about mobility and trajectories from the perspective of harraga (ḥarrāga), North African migrants, along the so-called “Green Route” (the “Balkan Route”) en route to Western Europe. Drawing from multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation and ethnographic interviews in Bosnia-Herzegovina and various European cities, the paper lays out (some of) the meanings harraga ascribe to their journeys by foregrounding their naming practices. Their multi-faceted narratives oscillate between understanding their journeys on a continuum between adventure and horror trip, as well as their roles between international citizens and those who act outside the law. Their naming practices for the “Green Route” are distinctly different from the sea route which is rooted in the natural and geographical difference between both routes, but also in the Maghrebi history of mobility, journeying, and the hijra (religious pilgrimage to Mecca). I argue in particular for drawing on the historical and semantic richness of the term harrag(a) itself which has not been sufficiently explored in academic literature on mobility and migration. Most academic literature places the emergence of the “phenomenon” of harraga in the 1990s or early 2000s (Arab 2007; Pandolfo 2007; Khaled 2013; Mnasri 2023), following the largely presentist bias of framing “irregular” migration towards Europe as a recent “phenomenon”. However, it is important to differentiate that while the naming of harraga/l-hrig (the act of migrating “clandestinely”) established in colloquial Darija in the Maghreb in the 1990s, the practice itself is not new, as shown by M’Charek (2020), Benhadda (2025), and Garnaoui and Sakhi (2024).

The colloquial double meaning of harrag as both the one who is mobile and crosses borders (“the migrant”) and the one who facilitates the act of crossing borders (“the smuggler”) widely expands and goes beyond established definitions and discourses as well as migrant-smuggler dichotomies, and provokes a more nuanced understanding of solidarity, resistance, and agency. In fact, this double meaning offers the potential to open up novel and ethnography-informed debates about mobility and migration beyond narrow epistemological foundations that tend to focus on discourses such as “irregularisation”, “risk management”, and “smuggling victims”.

Further, in this paper, I mobilise the rihla (Ar. journey) as a an ‘infrastructure of imagination’ that not only organises meaning of the migration journey and modes of travelling but also places it in a historical continuity of rihla practices, thus, providing a sort of historical legitimacy. The rihla originates in the practice of travelling from the Western edge of the Islamic umma to the centre and origin of the Islamic religion in the Hijaz area, specifically the cities of Mecca and Medina. As these travellers used to write extensive reports and books about their travels, these developed into its own “travel-writing” genre, the ‘Rihla’, that combines spiritual, educational, and sociological elements, and auto-ethnographic observations. These travels served as a way of connecting with others and Islamic knowledge within the umma, but also to improve one’s self-understanding by understanding the differences between oneself and the others and their practices one encounters during the travels (El Moudden 1990). These ‘Rihla’ texts were “encyclopedic in character” (1990, 74) and provided an astonishing amount of details with the intention to not only share observations and events but also to provide detailed advice for future pilgrims. For instance, knowledge was supplied on ecology, wells as water stations en route, weather conditions, and common practices such as market guides on converting merchandise (including slaves) into coin for purchasing necessary

commodities for the journeys.

By embedding my analysis of current naming practices with historical continuities, and by examining how harraga interpret, navigate, and emotionally engage with the “Green Route”, this article challenges Global North discourses and narratives of travelling, journeying and being mobile, in general, and specifically, the question of who has the right to be mobile and how.

[BIO]

Joma Thomé is a PhD candidate at the Fulda Graduate Centre of Social Sciences, Fulda University. She holds a Master’s in Human Rights (Fulda University), and Bachelor degrees in Adventure Tourism Management (Munster Technological University) and Outdoor Education (Atlantic Technological University). Her doctoral thesis is a multi-sited ethnography on the lived experience of “illegalised” migrants from the Maghreb on the so-called “Balkan Route”. Joma’s research focuses on bottom-up understandings of mobility and migration, critical border studies, border violence(s), biopolitical technologies, and self-organisation practices by “illegalised migrants”. She currently teaches at the Department of Social and Cultural Sciences of Fulda University.



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NAMING, CONNECTING, MAPPING. CO-CONSTRUCTING MIGRANT HETERO-GLOSSARIES

[ABSTRACT]

This article stems from a long-standing ethnographic engagement initiated in response to the arrival of significant numbers of young migrants transiting along the Central Mediterranean route and arriving in Palermo. Since 2012, thousands of them have joined the classrooms of the School of Italian Language for Foreigners (ItaStra) at the University of Palermo. Within this space of encounter, an ongoing project has emerged, intertwining sociolinguistic research, teaching practice, and social activism.

In its initial phase (2016–2021), which involved hundreds of young Sub-Saharan individuals, shared imaginaries and forms of knowledge emerged strongly-generated and circulated by these young people within and beyond the spaces of ItaStra. The narratives collected-co-constructed in both guided and spontaneous interactional contexts-oppose the dominant discourse on “unauthorized migration” and are rooted in the multilingual resources of our interlocutors, understood not only as expressive tools but as constitutive elements of their counter-narrative power.

Within this framework, using ethnographic methods and open-ended interviews, a set of terms and ethnotexts (cf. Paternostro & Sottile 2010) was collected-focused on spaces of segregation and the actors who benefit from movement along the Central Mediterranean route (cf. D'Agostino 2021). The resulting multilingual glossary originates from oral naming practices across various semantic fields, among which the term *coxeur* is particularly significant. It offers a complex vision of migration that highlights familial and friendship networks, and recognizes the enunciative power of individuals on the move—who resist the dominant narrative that frames migration solely through the lens of organized illegality, structured around binary oppositions such as ‘migrant’/‘smuggler’/‘trafficker’, ‘economic migrant’/‘refugee’ and so on. Over the years, many aspects have evolved—both within the research group (comprising university teachers and Ph.D. students in linguistics) and in the profiles, trajectories, and experiences of those arriving in Palermo. A particularly noteworthy shift occurred in 2021, when Tunisia emerged as a principal country of departure along the Central Mediterranean route. This geopolitical change has reshaped the ecology of mobility and, in turn, the linguistic and discursive landscapes through which solidarity networks and self-organized forms of resistance are constituted. Yet, the relative novelty of this configuration and the lack of comprehensive documentation present specific methodological challenges for the researcher-observer. Parallel transformations have occurred within the national reception infrastructure (the SAI system) and among grassroots actors offering informal support and advocacy.

Against this backdrop, the present contribution seeks to examine emerging naming practices that arise within migrant narratives and interactions, conceptualized as tools for identifying autonomous enunciative spaces and for narrating a reality marked by flux and unpredictability. This focus marks a new phase of research, oriented toward collecting new terms and ethno-texts to capture the specificity of the most recent migratory experiences, in their linguistic, geographical, and social complexity. This is a methodologically dense undertaking, further complicated by the evolution of discursive practices increasingly mediated by digital channels, which generate new communicative contexts, new forms of knowledge, and new connections (cf. D'Agostino & Mocciaro 2021; Farina 2024).

Throughout all phases of the project, ethical/methodological reflexivity as well as an ongoing experimentation of data collection models and tools that also support self-awareness and voice-taking

practices for all participants remains central. In this direction, participatory methods plays a central role—such as language workshops integrating images, speech, and movement—fostering not only linguistic learning/teaching programs but also the reactivation of prior repertoires and resources. Above all, the goal is to create spaces where interaction and listening authentically connect all involved participants and gain the dignity of a social testimony—deliberately subverting contexts in which others decide what migrant people should say, in which language, and with which words.

[BIO]

Mari D'Agostino is Full Professor of Italian Linguistics at the University of Palermo, where she directs the School of Italian Language for Foreigners (ItaStra) and is Principal Investigator of the PRIN 2022 project “Young New Migrants and Italian as a Non-Native Language between Spontaneous and Guided Learning.” Her work addresses theories of linguistic variation, the sociolinguistic repertoire of contemporary Italy, and the documentation of migratory multilingualism. Recent publications include “Sociolinguistica dell'Italia contemporanea” (with Giuseppe Paternostro, *Il Mulino*, 2025) and “Noi che siamo passati dalla Libia. Giovani in viaggio fra alfabeti e multilinguismo” (*Il Mulino*, 2021).

Clelia Farina is a PhD candidate in Linguistics at the University of Palermo. Her research documents both spontaneous and guided learning of Italian as an additional language and the development of reading-writing skills among newly arrived plurilingual young people in Palermo from North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. Her interests include grassroots writing practices, societal multilingualism, and the theory and practice of teaching multilingual learners with emerging literacy.



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**DOING BARZAKH.
NAMING THE TENSION AND THE SUSPENSION IN
THE BORDERLANDS IN NORTHERN MOROCCO.
*An ethnography and an artistic creation contribute
to question on solidarity and freedom of movement***

[ABSTRACT]

The international research project “Houdoud- Frontiers” intends to explore the mobility of bodies, memories and imaginary and aims to create opportunities of dialogue between young researchers in social sciences and young artists in visual arts and performing arts, either from Morocco or from elsewhere but working on contemporary Morocco.

Having participated to the different phases of this project as a member of the scientific committee of Houdoud – Frontiers, but also as a participant observer and a mentor during the workshops, I would like to focus my attention to a couple of projects, the first by an anthropologist and the second by an artist (a theater director and a performer). They both focus on the borderland on the shores of Northern Morocco and they explore, in different ways, the migrants’ daily living experiences, their risks in the border regime, their act of waiting and their original modes of solidarity among them, but also among themselves and the inhabitants. They make us familiar with their words, their idioms and their ways of naming practices, suggesting us how all these can be epistemic traces of solidarity in motion. So, we gradually find ourselves to discover how the mobile subjects define their daily experiences and their trajectories. In the recent years, some of the places from where the migrants try to cross the Mediterranean towards Europe are called Barzakh, a word used in the Coran to evoke a state of transition between death and resurrection, hell and paradise, a sort of limbo, a condition of waiting (Archer, 2017).

Doing Barzakh, Making boza is how migrants name the act of burning the border (Bajalia, 2021, 2023; Maher, 2016). The modes of acting and being in these borderlands (Agier, 2016) are deeply modified by the modes of crossing the spaces in the border, in terms of social spaces and material spaces. Within this framework, both this artistic creation and this ethnography bring us to focus on a relational and processual approach that deeply questions our ways of naming the freedom of movement, borderlands and solidarity. We gradually come to consider alternative infrastructures as battlegrounds where several modes of solidarities and informal networks promoted by migrants are a contestation and a reaction to the border regime; we come to comprehend how solidarity can act as powerful energy opening possibilities and helping to face daily constraints.

Finally, we also question about the importance of approaches anchored to ethnographies and creative and original research formats, as they are able to give voice to the situated knowledge of migrants and to let us come closer to their intimacy, their multiple and hidden languages and their daily practices in the borderlands (Gandolfi, 2025). By doing so, these kinds of approaches appear very precious to rethink critically the ways of naming contemporary mobility, as well as the complex and unfolding nexus between solidarity and freedom of movement.

[BIO]

Paola Gandolfi Associate Professor of Transnational Migrations and Arts, Transnational Migrations and Educational Experimentations, Anthropology of the Arab countries of the Mediterranean, in the Department

of Human and Social Sciences of the University of Bergamo.

Among her many publications, “Noi Migranti. Per una poetica della relazione” (2018); Prefazione a “I sentieri dell’indisciplina” (Ksikes, 2024); “Tra altrove e aldilà: immaginare l’Europa dal Marocco. Regimi di controllo dei confini, movimento di corpi e immaginari mobili ”(2025).

Since 2019, she is member of the Scientific Committee of the International Research Project “Houdoud/ Frontieres” Pour une fertilisations des savoirs entre arts et recherche. A research project which consists of fieldworks, international conferences, cultural events and workshops aimed to experiment a dialogue between ethnographical practices and artistic practices. Research item: La mobilité des corps, des memoires , des imaginaires. HEM University of Rabat, University Mohamed V of Rabat, Chair Fatima Mernissi, University of Bordeaux.



Presenter(s): **Sara Bonfanti**
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**REFUGEE HOSTING AS RELATIONAL
INFRASTRUCTURE. NAMING AND NEGOTIATING
SOLIDARITY IN FAITH-BASED PRIVATE
SPONSORSHIPS**

[ABSTRACT]

In recent years, humanitarian corridors have been celebrated as “safe and legal pathways” for refugees in Europe. Yet, beyond policy frameworks, these initiatives—rooted in transnational agreements among Christian organizations (e.g., Comunità di Sant’Egidio, Chiesa Valdese, Caritas, and equivalents in France and Germany)—rely on local relational infrastructures that reconfigure the meaning and practice of solidarity. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews with asylum seekers, volunteer sponsors, and institutional actors across Italy, France, and Germany, this paper explores how “private sponsorship” is experienced and enacted at the micro level.

The analysis focuses on how hospitality is framed not only as a moral duty but also as an affective and bureaucratic practice that both empowers and disciplines. Migrants’ and sponsors’ emic terms for the relationships they build—ranging from “new family” to “moral debt”—reveal tensions between gift and obligation, care and control, solidarity and asymmetry. These findings resonate with Martani’s (2023) critique of hospitality as an ambivalent social bond, and Boccagni’s (2021) notion of “relational infrastructure” as a key analytical lens for refugee reception.

This contribution speaks to both the naming and infrastructuring of solidarity: it examines the moral vocabularies used by different actors and highlights how solidarity becomes embedded in informal but powerful arrangements of care, surveillance, and support. It ultimately invites reflection on the (de) politicising effects of religious and familial framings of refugee hosting.

[BIO]

Sara Bonfanti is a social anthropologist specialized in migration and religion, kinship and care. She conducts multi-sited ethnography with South Asian diasporas in Europe and has recently focused on asylum governance and grassroots hosting initiatives. She collaborated as post-doc fellow within the ERC project HOMInG (2017–2020), contributing to *Ethnographies of Home and Mobility* (Routledge, 2021) and *Finding Home in Europe* (Berghahn, 2023). Currently affiliated with the University of Genoa, and lecturing at the University of Milan, her ethnography bridges academic inquiry, public engagement, and activist scholarship.

Presenter(s): **Sophie Bava**

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LA NAISSANCE D'UN MARCHÉ RELIGIEUX DE LA MIGRATION : ENTRE SOLIDARITÉS, NOUVELLES THÉOLOGIES ET CONTRÔLE.

[ABSTRACT]

Au Maroc, à la suite de l'installation croissante de migrants d'origine subsaharienne depuis les années 2000 et la fermeture des frontières européennes, les organisations confessionnelles ont été redynamisées et les acteurs religieux – en particulier chrétiens – ont endossé de nouveaux rôles.

Ce faisant, ces acteurs ont intégré une véritable « industrie migratoire » et se sont retrouvés dans une position ambiguë : s'ils proposent bien une ressource spirituelle et matérielle pour les migrants, du fait de leur légitimité religieuse, ils peuvent par le choix des programmes de financement participer à renforcer un marché du contrôle, de la sédentarité et du retour dans le gouvernement international des mobilités africaines.

Nous interrogerons la redynamisation du paysage chrétiens du Maroc, les nouveaux acteurs, les formations et toute cette fabrique des solidarités par le bas qui est assez étonnante, au regard du projet religieux et humanitaire plus global du christianisme, et du Maroc au sein du gouvernement mondial (et intra africain) des mobilités.

[BIO]

Sophie Bava is a socio-anthropologist at the IRD, AMU-LPED.

She is Scientific Advisor to the Knowledge Community 'Migrations' to the CEO of the IRD, Coordinator of the Movida International Laboratory, Co-Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Afrique(s) en Mouvement*, and Africa-Mediterranean Project Manager at the SoMuM Institute.

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**SITUATED SOLIDARITIES AND EPISTEMIC
BORDERLANDS:
RETHINKING RESEARCH FROM WITHIN THE
BORDER REGIME**

[ABSTRACT]

This paper interrogates the complex positionalities of precarious researchers working critically on migration management and border externalization from within institutional and national contexts that operate as both internal and external borderlands of the European migration and border regime. In so doing the paper aims to discuss the intersection between knowledge production and solidarity, exploring to which extent the latter could be named and grounded in this standpoint. Scholars in such sites-like Italy and Turkey-are often deeply entangled in the very systems they seek to critique: positioned close to displaced communities and humanitarian infrastructures, frequently engaged in political struggles for freedom of movement, while simultaneously reliant on research economies that extract value, legitimacy, and funding from the governance of migration. As such, our work is shaped not only by proximity to border violence, but also by shared precarity and the epistemic advantages afforded by our location within the academic-migration-industrial complex.

Drawing on some of our respective (auto)ethnographic engagements-one between Italy and the Gambia, examining the post-asylum relationalities and externalization policies; the other in Turkey, tracing the everyday lives of Syrians under temporary protection regime and the pressures of return-oriented rhetoric and policies-we explore how research conducted from these zones of entanglement can offer conceptual insights into the politics of solidarity, without reproducing the hierarchies it seeks to unsettle.

Rather than offering positionality as a confessional reflexive gesture, we use it here as conceptual leverage to interrogate the uneven and complex terrains of knowledge production and the contradictions of solidarity within migration studies. We draw on border as method (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) to situate our field sites and the multiple ways in which we are implicated in them not just as objects of analysis, but as vantage points from which to retheorize borders as epistemic, institutional, and ethical formations. At the same time, we engage the notion of ethical entrapment to describe how researchers become enmeshed in moral and political tensions that are not fully resolvable through reflexivity alone.

In so doing the intervention wants to take seriously the imperative to center migrant standpoints while simultaneously asking how this centering operates when scholars-especially those located in EU borderlandss-are structurally authorized to narrate, interpret, and mediate migrant experiences in ways migrants themselves often are not. Rather than speaking for or with, we interrogate how scholarly authority is constructed through proximity to migration, and how solidarity itself could become a contested, and potentially troubled scholarly resource.

In reflecting on these epistemic dimensions, we ask what forms of accountable, situated solidarity might be possible for researchers whose knowledge is formed within-yet not reducible to-the logics of the border regime. From our respective positions within Europe's borderlands, we propose a mode of critical engagement that foregrounds entanglement, asymmetry, differential proximity, and the limits of scholarly authority as conditions for rethinking the ethics and politics of migration research.

[BIO]

Viola Castellano is a social anthropologist working as a Senior Research Associate at the Chair of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Bayreuth. Her research interests focus on how inequalities

are reproduced through welfare, asylum and migration policies in the US and Europe and West Africa. Currently she is exploring border externalization in the Gambia working collaboratively with Gambians on the move and conducting a study-up ethnography with European and international organizations. Her publication have appeared in journals as *Anthropological Theory*, *Focaal* and *City and Society*, while her monographic volume was published in 2023 by Berghahn Books.

Ezgi Güler recently received a Junior Fellowship from the Centre of International Excellence “Alexander von Humboldt” at the University of Bayreuth, where she is currently undertaking a research stay. She holds a Ph.D. in Social and Political Sciences from the European University Institute in Florence. Her research interests span urban studies, gender and sexuality, migration, sex work, structural violence, and research methodologies. Her work has been published in *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *FocaalBlog*, *Palgrave Macmillan*, and *SAGE Publishing*.





Station 5.
*De-borderlands:
naming, gendering,
infrastructuring
freedom of movement*

Book of Abstracts.

GENDERING



Presenter(s): **Agnese Pacciardi**
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NEGOTIATING BORDER VIOLENCE: RESISTANCE AND SOLIDARITY IN SENEGAL

[ABSTRACT]

Over the past two decades, Senegal has become a key transit hub for West African migrants en route to Europe. This has prompted intensified migration cooperation between the European Union and Senegal, including the externalisation of European borders through both overt security measures, such as the deployment of Frontex, and more covert strategies involving development projects, humanitarian discourse, and policy frameworks aimed at curbing migration. In response, an increasing number of Senegalese civil society organisations have emerged, engaging with and resisting the shifting landscape of migration governance and humanitarianism.

Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork conducted across Senegal between 2023 and 2024, and grounded in critical border studies and social movement theory, this paper examines two distinct strategies of resistance and solidarity.

It focuses on two civil society initiatives: The Caravan of the Missing and two Women's Collectives.

The former, primarily led by former migrants and male human rights activists, embodies a more masculinist approach to no-border activism, marked by public protest, direct confrontation with state institutions, and demands for accountability from both Senegalese and European authorities. In contrast, the Women's Collectives, formed by mothers and wives who have lost loved ones at sea, mobilise around grief and absence. Their activism often takes place in domestic and community spaces, where private mourning is transformed into quiet yet powerful political action.

By comparing these male-led and female-led initiatives, this paper explores gendered practices of solidarity and resistance in the context of border violence. It offers a theorisation of solidarity that is grounded in lived experience, and that extends beyond overt opposition to state power to include everyday acts of care, endurance, and collective memory. In doing so, it sheds light on the diverse and often overlooked forms of political engagement that emerge at the intersection of migration, loss, and activism.

[BIO]

Agnese Pacciardi is a PhD researcher at the Department of Political Science, focusing on borders, mobility, and security through critical lenses. Her research primarily delves into European external migration management in North and West Africa, exploring the impacts and implications of these policies. Additionally, she is an active member of the feminist collective Fundación Luvo, dedicated to promoting emancipatory pedagogies and anti-racism through writing and educational initiatives. Her work has been published in *Geopolitics*, the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Environment and Planning C*, *European Security*, *Critical Studies on Security*.

Presenter(s):

Marzia Bona and **Ida Motteran**

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EVERYDAY SOLIDARITIES AND GENDERED EXPERIENCES OF HOUSING PRECARITY

[ABSTRACT]

For the second conference axis, “Gendering solidarity”, this contribution explores the nexus between housing precarity and the lived experiences of gendered subjects. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in a housing facility located in the rural, bilingual, and border region of South Tyrol in Northern Italy, the paper investigates how prolonged uncertainty shapes intimacies and gendered solidarities among cohabiting migrant residents.

We frame housing exclusion as a manifestation of borders’ materiality (Lancione 2023) –persisting well beyond the moment of arrival and formal recognition of status. The case study focuses on a housing facility managed by a social cooperative that occupies a hybrid position in the reception system: neither fully public nor entirely autonomous, it functions as a “third step” in the accommodation pathway. The facility hosts a heterogeneous mix of residents–single individuals, couples, families, older and younger people–who co-manage shared spaces and negotiate rules that diverge from standard institutional reception models. Stays are open-ended and loosely tied to individual “empowerment” projects (Miles et al. 2024), often centred on language acquisition (particularly salient in this bilingual region) and economic autonomy.

Housing precarity extends the temporalities of waiting, foregrounding the multifaceted nature of border and “the intersubjective constructions of internalised boundaries within social contexts” (degli Uberti 2019). In this liminal space (Cacciotti, 2024), distinctions between forced and voluntary migration become blurred (De Haas, 2021), making room for alternative forms of recognition and solidarity to emerge. These may be grounded in shared origins, language, gender, or demographic affinities—for example, solidarity among families sharing childcare responsibilities.

The analysis unfolds along two interrelated strands:

1. Gendered experiences of housing precarity: How do men, women, and families navigate living conditions marked by unclear rules, ambiguous rights, and temporariness? How are caregiving, intimacy, and emotional wellbeing affected by such instability? Particular attention is given to how domestic space can become a site where gendered violence is reproduced, silenced, or resisted.
2. Emergent solidarities within housing precarity: Building on recent literature that questions dichotomies between forced and voluntary migration (De Haas, 2021), the paper explores how shared experiences of waiting foster gendered and relational forms of solidarity. These often take shape through informal support systems based on gender, age, family configuration, or common language.

Methodologically, the study is grounded in immersive ethnographic fieldwork, including a period of residence in the facility, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews with residents, staff, volunteers, and former inhabitants. Enabling methods such as walking interviews and photovoice captured the embodied experience of inhabiting the facility and its rural surroundings. The research adopts an intersectional perspective and critically reflects on the researcher’s positionality, particularly in relation to imaginaries and practices of inhabiting (Veness 1993).

By centring everyday life in a marginal, semi-formal housing setting, this contribution offers insights into how migrants navigate the tension between autonomy and control—and how solidarity becomes both a survival strategy and a mode of resistance in rural peripheries.

[BIO]

Marzia Bona is a researcher at the Institute for Regional Development and the Centre for Migration and Diversities at Eurac Research in South Tyrol, Italy. With a background in political science and human rights, her work focuses on migration, housing, and local development, particularly in rural and mountain areas. She is currently working in the SERIGO project, exploring the role of social and solidarity economy initiatives in addressing housing exclusion among migrants in small and medium-sized towns. Her research adopts an intersectional and ethnographic approach, with a strong focus on place-based experiences, gendered dynamics, and solidarity practices. She is particularly interested in how migrants inhabit, contest, and reshape marginalised rural spaces.

Ida Motteran is a Junior Researcher at the Institute for Regional Development and the Center for Migration and Societal Change of Eurac Research. They studied sociology and political science between Ireland (University College Dublin) and Italy (Università di Trento). Their research focuses on housing rights and the financialisation of social housing, with an intersectional and critical approach to urban and rural transformations. They are also interested in the interrelations between feminism and queer studies and, increasingly, the notion of place-making and public spaces. Ida is now working on the housing access and pathways of people with a migratory background within the HEU project SERIGO.



Presenter(s): **Cemile Gizem Dinçer**
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NAVIGATING BORDERS, CULTIVATING SOLIDARITY: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON IRANIAN REFUGEE WOMEN'S SOLIDARITY PRACTICES IN TURKEY

[ABSTRACT]

Turkey is a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, but due to its specific 'geographical limitation', it grants refugee status only to asylum seekers from member countries of the Council of Europe. Individuals from non-European countries who apply for international protection are granted only "conditional refugee status", which only allows for a temporary stay in Turkey until their resettlement and restricting their access to basic rights and often leaving them trapped in the country for many years. Amid this uncertainty, refugee women face gendered violence, exploitation, and everyday bordering practices – yet they also actively cultivate solidarity and resistance.

Building on feminist ethnographic research with Iranian refugee women in Turkey, I focus on their everyday practices and examine how refugee women cultivate forms of solidarity and develop individual and collective tools of resistance under conditions of control, surveillance, and violence. Women continuously navigate, negotiate, and resist various bordering mechanisms in their daily lives to claim their lives.

By linking solidarity with resistance, I argue that these acts of resisting, negotiating, and navigating borders are inherently collective, sustained through solidarity networks they build with one another, grounded in shared knowledge, experiences, and mutual care. Refugee women not only circulate and share existing knowledge but also actively produce new forms of collective knowledge, care, and support.

By centering solidarity among refugee women and approaching it from a feminist perspective, I aim to show how practices of mutual care and solidarity shape and transform the meaning of resistance, agency, and everyday life under bordering regimes.

[BIO]

Cemile Gizem Dinçer Postdoctoral Associate, Boston University, Center on Forced Displacement, Boston, USA. I am a feminist researcher focusing on gender and migration. For over a decade, I have worked on projects related to borders, asylum, and gender, while actively participating in feminist and migrant solidarity groups. I received my Sociology PhD from Middle East Technical University, Turkey, in 2022, and I am currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Center on Forced Displacement at Boston University. My research interests include borders, deportation, sexuality, migrant labor, and solidarity practices among refugees and activist groups.

My recent work has appeared in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2025.2474620>, where I focus on the waiting experiences of refugee women in Turkey.

Presenter(s): **Ilaria Bilancetti**
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**MOBILITY AS A RESOURCE IN THE TRANSITION
TO ADULthood AND A CHANNEL OF
INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY:
lights and shadows within Egyptian masculine kin
circuits in Milan.**

[ABSTRACT]

In Egyptian peripheral areas, the urge for financial security is perceived before the age of legal maturity, as gender norms require young men to carry the costs of marriage and become the family breadwinner. Due to a progressive deterioration of state schools and shortage of rewarding job prospects, early mobility has become for many a resource for the transition into adulthood, a necessary step in the life-cycle and the ultimate strategy for self-realization. Mobile ambitions include intergenerational mutuality, as Egyptian boys' sense of wellbeing is intrinsically bounded with the wellbeing of their parents and siblings. In this context, the prestige deriving from being the migrant of the family and the prime agent of collective upward mobility, represents a decisive motivation for youths to face borders and work hard.

In Italy, Egyptian nationals count by far the highest number of unaccompanied foreign minors (UFMs). Many flee from randomly assigned reception structures and move toward the metropolitan city of Milan, where the largest Egyptian diaspora in Europe resides. There, they can rely on the support of relatives and take advantage of working opportunities within their network of co-nationals. Political discourses concerning migrant minors, tend to undermine the crucial role that families exercise in youths' trajectories -both at the moment of departure and arrival, as the legal category of UFMs is constructed around notions of 'loneliness' and "vulnerability." Foreign minors, for the fact of being 'unaccompanied' by their parents, are not free-roaming children in a foreign country; rather, they may rely on relatives responsible of facilitating their staying and adaptation. Kinship networks abroad are influential and operative before the moment of departure, as they represent a trigger to migration and source of security for families.

The presentation brings the ethnographic case of Egyptian youths who move to Milan to reach their uncles and cousins, after a period of staying in reception structures. Whether relatives function as a source of support or abuse constitute an issue that requires empirical exploration, as kin solidarity holds a controverse nature in migratory contexts: it facilitates information brokerage and recruitment but also the rise of forms of control and exploitation that hide behind false promises and informal agreements. Based on field data, the study confirms that kinship networks provide a dynamic reservoir of material and emotional resources that enable youths' to safely navigate in a foreign country and reproduce a sense of belonging based on shared values. However, it also exposes how kin relatedness generates pressure to comply with families' instructions and conform with culturally situated gender norms. Youths' migratory projects reflect both generational aspirations and family obligations, while diverse trajectories intersect through kin circuits in the practical attempt to meet social expectations of financial success.

By adopting an intersectional approach to mobility, the study sheds lights on the nuances of kins' male solidarity, stressing on the tension between cultural capital and material necessities as potential sources of rivalry, as it generates conflicting positionalities within transnational families.

[BIO]

Ilaria Bilancetti PhD candidate in "Analysis of Social and Economic Processes" at the Department of Sociology and Social Research of the University of Milan-Bicocca. She has an interdisciplinary academic

background in development studies and social anthropology, matured between Italy and the UK. Her early research interests focused on labour and gender in the MENA region, where she lived for some years working for NGOs. She has experience working in the Italian reception system (SAI) and she is currently conducting ethnographic research on Egyptian youths in Milan, with a specific focus on the social role that the Egyptian diaspora exercise on their transitions to adulthood. The research is situated within the field of Youth Studies, adopting a transnational and intersectional approach to mobility.





Station 5.
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INFRASTRUCTURING



Presenter(s): **Chiara Martini**
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EVERYDAY ALLIANCES AND THE MAKING OF SOLIDARITY INFRASTRUCTURES IN THE BALKANS BORDERLANDS.

[ABSTRACT]

The paper examines the relational dynamics within grassroots solidarity initiatives and their role in addressing the violence and fragmentation associated with the European border regime. The analysis focuses on two peripheral yet geopolitically significant border regions, - the Una-Sana Canton in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the southeastern frontier between Bulgaria and Turkey -, and it is based on extended and engaged ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2022 and 2024, following the trajectories of people on the move across the Western Balkans, along with the networks of solidarity that accompany and support them. It explores how migrants, activists, volunteers, and local organizations interact with and respond to border policies shaped by externalization, structural violence, and the erosion of formal protection mechanisms.

In these sites, institutions are frequently missing, dysfunctional, or openly antagonistic. Against this backdrop, the sustenance and mobility of people on the move increasingly rely on self-organized, people-driven infrastructures of support. These initiatives are rooted in practical support, reciprocity, transversal alliances, and everyday interpersonal relations—emerging as vital alternatives to the violence and abandonment of bordering processes. Despite the growing criminalization of both migration and solidarity, such networks have managed to sustain relational ties across local, national, and transnational spheres—though often under unstable and precarious conditions. These connections foster everyday sustenance and cultivate situated communities built on mutual recognition and shared responsibility, operating independently of institutional frameworks.

Employing AbdouMalik Simone's conceptualization of "people as infrastructure" (2004), the article reinterprets infrastructure not as static or technical but as relational, mobile, and socio-material configurations essential to daily life. While Simone's work is grounded in urban contexts—highlighting how those marginalized from the formal economy constitute themselves as infrastructure by navigating complex and shifting urban assemblages—this paper extends the concept to border spaces. In these contexts, the capacity to navigate and negotiate constantly shifting configurations of danger, aid, surveillance, and control is not only essential to everyday sustenance but to mobility itself. The paper argues that in border zones, infrastructures forged through solidarity are not merely supporting structures for surviving abandonment, but dynamic relational mechanisms that enable movement, shelter, information exchange, and protection. This analytical shift from city to border reveals the broader applicability of Simone's framework to zones of transit, irregularity, precarity, and exclusion.

The analysis places particular emphasis on the interpersonal and inter-group relations that sustain these solidarity practices. Rather than being rooted in shared identities, these ties evolve through interactions among diverse actors navigating violent and exclusionary environments. Following Featherstone (2012), solidarity is understood here as a process of creating connections across difference, often in contingent, improvised, and precarious contexts. Such relational encounters serve not only as mechanisms of support

but as generative spaces where unforeseen alliances and social formations take shape. Therefore, the paper argues that in spaces where mobility is criminalized and access to rights is unevenly distributed, relationships—whether forged locally or transnationally—constitute both the conditions and conduits through which solidarity is enacted. These ties form infrastructural webs that counter fragmentation and challenge prevailing border mechanisms by linking people across differences.

[BIO]

Chiara Martini is a PhD candidate in Sociology and Methodology of Social Research at the University of Milan. Since 2018, she has been engaged in research, activism, and volunteer work in support of people on the move across Italy and the Western Balkans.

Her doctoral project explores bordering processes and grassroots border solidarities along the Balkan Routes, with a particular focus on Greece, Bulgaria, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

She has presented her work at various international conferences, and her research has been published in several peer-reviewed journals. Her research interests include critical border and migration studies, social movements and solidarity, mobility, and urban studies.



Presenter(s): **Mashudu Salifu**
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**BECOMING THE ROAD:
MIGRANT-MADE INFRASTRUCTURES AND THE
CORRIDOR OF VIOLENT TRANSIT.**

[ABSTRACT]

"Sometimes we do not know exactly where we are going—we just move." These words, shared by Kajale, a Gambian migrant now living on El Hierro, distil the collective experience of countless others navigating the Western Mediterranean–Atlantic and Balkan migration corridors. These journeys do not follow fixed paths—they are shaped by hunger, prayer, fear, and fragile hope passed by hand across borders and camps. In these fractured terrains, migrants do not just travel; they become the infrastructure of movement itself.

This paper introduces the concept of the Corridor of Violent Transit to understand migration routes from Sudan, Somalia, Gambia, Senegal, Mali to the Canary Islands, and from Afghanistan through Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatia—not as linear paths but as recursive geographies of abandonment, resistance, and solidarity. Drawing on Mbembe's (2003) necropolitics, we argue these corridors function as transnational deathscapes, where African, Middle Eastern, and European states co-produce violent spaces—deserts, seas, forests, and detention zones—designed not to welcome or reject but to delay, deplete, and erase.

Within these zones, migrants create survival infrastructures like shared SIM cards, rotating shelters, encrypted voice notes, and boats without captains. These affective, improvised systems are built through collective intelligence as the state withdraws. As Papadopoulos & Tsianos (2013) and Sheller (2018) note, these are paradoxical zones of mobility justice, where autonomy and exposure coexist.

This study employs critical cartography and patchwork ethnography (Günel et al., 2020; Przybylski, 2021), based on fieldwork in the Canary Islands and the Bosnia and Herzegovina–Croatia corridor. It includes participant observation and interviews with migrants, local officials, civil society, and humanitarian workers. In the Canary Islands, we volunteered daily with civil organisations and the Red Cross in registering and transferring irregular migrants from El Hierro to Tenerife. In Croatia, we encountered two silent, shivering minors whom the police had found alone the night before in a muddy forest. Their fathers had left to oppose the violent border and never returned. The children were caught between states, abandoned by policy, and sustained only by endurance. In their eyes, there was no panic, only waiting and waiting for survival.

Narratives like theirs, or Najmudin's story of crossing the Melilla fence thirty-nine times before taking a cayuco to El Hierro, are not exceptions. Nor is Kajale's vow: "If they take me back, I will try again—by boat, by bike, by anything else." These testimonies serve as living maps—cartographies of refusal, where migrants challenge a violent geography not by remaining still, but by moving repeatedly. They demonstrate how repetition, not resignation, becomes a strategy for survival, and how migrants constantly reconfigure space against a regime designed to erase them. This paper contributes to the SOLROUTES axis on infrastructuring solidarity by demonstrating how migrants resist disappearance through remaking space. Confronting necropolitical borders, they build fragile yet potent networks of solidarity. In this context, survival becomes a form of resistance, and movement constitutes the infrastructure of life.

[BIO]

Martin Bak Jørgensen is Professor in Processes of Migration at DEMOS at the Department for Culture and Learning, Aalborg University, Denmark. He works within the fields of political sociology and political geography. He has published the books *Solidarity Without Borders: Gramscian Perspectives on Migration and Civil Society Alliances* (Pluto Press, 2016) and *Solidarity and the "Refugee Crisis" in Europe* (Palgrave, 2019), both co-authored with Óscar García Agustín. With Carl-Ulrik Schierup he co-edited the books *Politics of Precarity* (2016) and *Contending Global Apartheid* (2022) both with Brill. He has published articles in journals like *Internal Migration Review*, *Critical Sociology*, and the *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0104-8543>

Mashudu Salifu is a PhD Fellow at the Doctoral School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University in Denmark. He is part of the DEMOS research group and is affiliated with the Enacting Citizenship and Solidarity in Europe "From Below" (ECSEuro) project. He holds an MA in Culture, Communication, and Globalisation, and an MSc in Development and International Relations from Aalborg University. His research focuses on migration corridors, solidarity infrastructures, and urban responses to global crises. His recent publications include: "From the Ghettos to the Camps: Interrelational Solidarity between Housing and Migration Regimes in Denmark" (with Bernhardt, Buconjic, and Jørgensen) in *Framing Solidarities in Times of Multiple Crises* (Palgrave, 2025), and "Immigrant Inclusion and Municipalism in a Danish Context" (with Martin Bak Jørgensen) in *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies* (2025). These studies examine how municipalities challenge exclusionary national policies by employing municipalism, care, and inclusive citizenship. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9890-7003>

Tomislav Pušić is a PhD Fellow at Aalborg University's Doctoral School of Social Sciences and Humanities and a member of the DEMOS research group, which focuses on studying democracy from an interdisciplinary perspective. His research, situated within the CORRIDORS project, examines migration corridors formed through grassroots solidarity across Eastern and Southeastern Europe. His ethnographic fieldwork focuses on urban sanctuary and migrant agencies in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, and Ukraine. He holds an MA in Culture, Communication, and Globalisation, specialising in migration and social movements. <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-5547-1145>

Presenter(s): **Nagehan Uskan**
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VISUAL INFRASTRUCTURES OF SOLIDARITY: MIGRANT-LED VIDEO-ACTIVISM AGAINST PUSHBACKS IN LESVOS

[ABSTRACT]

This presentation explores how collective video-making can function as a form of visual infrastructure that sustains subaltern and abolitionist solidarities in the context of migration. It focuses on the work of Kino, a grassroots, migrant-led video-activist collective founded in 2018 on the island of Lesbos. As a co-founder and active participant in this collective, I draw on a collaborative and embedded research position that is both methodological and political.

Kino emerged as a response to the misrepresentation and erasure of autonomous migrant experiences within dominant media narratives. By producing and circulating videos grounded in their own perspectives, the collective has sought to build self-organised infrastructures of resistance. Over the past seven years, Kino has produced a series of short films addressing everyday life in Moria camp, women's solidarity in refugee camps, LGBTQ+ migrants' struggles, and the illegal pushbacks in the Aegean Sea. Often silenced or distorted in mainstream discourses on migration, these issues are brought to the fore through acts of visual self-representation.

The presentation focuses specifically on the 2022 short film *What is a Pushback?*, which was produced collectively during the workshop *Visual Storytelling as Resistance* on Lesbos Island, with the participation of migrants, activists, students and NGO workers. The film was created using found footage sourced from dominant frames, surveillance cameras, and media channels and re-assembled through a co-editing process. Narratives for this research were gathered through the audio recording of a semi-structured assembly involving participants who have experienced pushbacks firsthand and engaged in the production process. The workshop and the filmmaking served both as a site of production and a space for political reflection, where participants discussed and redefined the politics of visual resistance and video making as action, in relation to the violence of European border regimes.

This study examines how found footage originating within dominant visual and surveillance frameworks can be subverted and transformed into images of action, through the lens of Farocki's concept of the operational image and Flusser's theory of the technical image. This analytical lens highlights the ways in which grassroots video production can transform visual material into a counter-infrastructure of resistance capable of challenging dominant discourses and producing alternative forms of knowledge and solidarity from below.

[BIO]

Nagehan Uskan is a sociologist, documentary filmmaker, and activist. Her work lies at the intersection of the sociology of film, film as activism, and filmmaking in exile. As a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer, she has held positions at the University of Fribourg, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Off University and İzmir University of Economics. Her scholarly work extends into collective, art-based research projects that use video making as a tool. She is a co-writer of *Multilingual Dictionary: Living Together in a Refugee Camp* and *I Escaped to My Future*, both produced as part of the *Beyond Social Cohesion: Global Repertoires of Living Together (RePLITO)* project supported by Berlin University Alliance. Uskan is also a co-founder and member of Kino, a grassroots migrant video collective in Lesbos Island that has produced various works including *Natives of the New World*, *Khalas (Silence)*, *What is a Pushback?*, and the award-winning *Me Too*. She is currently the project partner of a British Academy project hosted by the King's College London.

Presenter(s): **Spyros Galinos**
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INFRASTRUCTURES OF CRIMINALISATION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOLIDARITY: MONITORING TRIALS OF ALLEGED SMUGGLERS IN THE AEGEAN

[ABSTRACT]

This paper draws on a trial monitoring project by CPT–Aegean Migrant Solidarity, focused on the systemic criminalisation of refugees and migrants accused of human smuggling in Greece, particularly on the island of Lesbos. Many of those prosecuted—often young asylum seekers—are charged simply for steering boats across the Aegean Sea and face punitive legal proceedings that reflect deeper entanglements between border enforcement, judicial institutions, and deterrence policies.

Conceptualising the Greek legal system as part of the broader migration control infrastructure, the paper highlights recurring patterns of due process violations, inadequate legal defence, and disproportionate sentencing, as also evidenced in recent studies such as *A legal vacuum* (Borderline Europe, 2023).

These legal mechanisms shift the burden of migration governance onto individuals, producing a spectacle of punishment that upholds the EU's securitised border regime while complicating or suppressing expressions of solidarity. We argue that CPT's monitoring practices constitute subaltern solidarity infrastructures: informal, grassroots forms of resistance that confront state violence through documentation, support, and transnational advocacy.

Trial monitoring is framed as a form of abolitionist solidarity—not aimed at reform, but at challenging the legitimacy of a system that criminalises mobility and weaponises legality. Our methodology involves in-person trial observation throughout 2024–2025 in Lesbos and other Aegean locations. Observers attend court hearings, record procedural irregularities, and provide support to defendants and their families, creating counter-infrastructures grounded in presence, witnessing, and resistance.

[BIO]

Spyros Galinos is a researcher-activist based in the Aegean islands, working at the intersection of migration studies, border violence, and solidarity infrastructures. His research explores the full spectrum of migration control regimes—from hard infrastructures such as border policing, detention, and surveillance, to soft mechanisms like the criminalisation of migration through legal narratives and public discourse. He focuses particularly on the evolving border-industrial complex across the Aegean.

His work includes trial observation, critical legal analysis, and community-based documentation of state violence. Spyros collaborates closely with CPT–Aegean Migrant Solidarity, Legal Centre Lesbos, and other transnational networks challenging the EU's securitised migration regime. His academic and activist practice aims to expose and contest the infrastructures of control, while contributing to subaltern and abolitionist forms of solidarity rooted in grassroots resistance and collective care.

Presenter(s): **Jules Soupault**
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THE CRIMINALIZATION OF SOLIDARITY ACROSS THE EUROPEAN BORDER REGIME

[ABSTRACT]

This article discusses the complementarity between the criminalization of solidarity and the “externalization” of European borders. Both have been widely documented and discussed; however, they are often discussed independently. This dislocation can be problematic, for example, when considering how efforts to decriminalize solidarity at the EU level could unintentionally increase the EU’s pressure on non-member states already implicated in the European border regime.

At the same time, scholars working on solidarity and externalization have critiqued the pitfalls of presentism and EU-centrism, calling for contextualizing and situating EU policies in the longue durée history of European colonial empires, without denying the agency of the non-European actors in the development and maintenance of borders (Tazzioli and Walters 2019; Cobarrubias and Lemberg-Pedersen 2025; Gross-Wyrtzen and El Yacoubi 2024).

To participate in this discussion, I treated law as infrastructure that shapes both the conditions of mobility and solidarity, and the relations between states. The first dimension refers to how legal infrastructures shape what types of mobility and solidarity are (im)possible, while the latter invites thinking of the circulation of legal frameworks across jurisdictions and their articulation with pre-existing legal structures (Cowen 2023; Raeymaekers 2024; Vergnano 2021).

The findings are based on data from 84 countries that are either EU member states or Frontex “partners.” Though not exhaustive, given that the EU’s border interventions operate beyond Frontex, this selection offers an entry point in a border regime broader than the EU. For each state, I collected the legal provisions that criminalize the facilitation of entry, exit, or stay, along with the relevant exemptions and aggravating factors. These were then organized into sub-categories to enable comparative and relational analysis across jurisdictions.

My contribution is twofold: it allows for mapping out the space in which solidarities are criminalized at the scale of Frontex’s interventions and reveals the dynamic relations across legal regimes within this space. The central argument is that, rather than being in tension or separated, the internal and external logics of the EU’s border regime are interconnected and complement each other. While at the scale of a state, the adoption of exemptions or aggravating factors can be explained by the vitality of solidarity struggles or, conversely, by their repression, having a comprehensive dataset enables a systematic understanding of how the European border regime functions as a whole, and the multi-modal production of infrastructure of border control.

[BIO]

My name is **Jules Soupault** (he/him), I am a PhD candidate at the University of Victoria (Canada) and a research fellow at the Borders in Globalization. My doctoral dissertation aims to examine the politics of abolition in the context of “integrated” borders and the specific obstacles posed by these borders to the possibility of organizing, resisting, and building alternatives to policing, surveillance, detention and deportation. I use a mixed-method approach, which is primarily made necessary by an intention to do non-state-centric research while also avoiding participation in the surveillance of the movements I align with. In addition to the abolitionist literature and critical border studies, I am influenced by critical geography, decolonial theory, and racial capitalism studies, which help me think of the fragmented yet intensely connected spaces of (b)ordering and their history.

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