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Workshop 15

***Hospitality and Transnational Migration in Europe
and the Mediterranean Middle East & North Africa***

directed by

Heidrun Friese

CRIA, EHESS
Paris, France

<mailto:hfriese@gmx.net>

Sandro Mezzadra

Dipartimento di Politica
University of Bologna
Bologna, Italy

<mailto:mezzadra@spbo.unnibo.it>

Workshop abstract

Migrants coming from or crossing Middle Eastern or North African countries increasingly arrive at the Mediterranean borders of Europe and put forward urgent questions for social and political thought as well as for European policies. The workshop proposes to relate these various forms of migration to the multifarious practices, notions and spaces of hospitality and aims at crosscutting conventional disciplinary divides and at uniting fields of enquiry that have been separated in current discursive architectures. Combining empirical insights and analytical tools from anthropology, cultural studies, social theory and political philosophy, innovative frameworks for the analysis of ('undocumented') migration to Europe, the Mediterranean Middle East and North Africa will be addressed. By questioning conventional concepts and divides, 'places of transition' that allow for mutual exchange as well as 'sites of rupture' that sustain exclusion and neglect both in MENA countries as well as at the Mediterranean borders of Europe will be under critical scrutiny. Given the focus of the workshop, we especially encourage papers that engage with migration and practices of hospitality in MENA countries.

Workshop description

The workshop aims at relating the various forms of migration to the multifarious and historically changing practices, notions and spaces of hospitality both in MENA countries and (Mediterranean) Europe. The languages and gestures of hospitality allow 'individuals and families from different places (as well as cities and states) to socialize and to render mutual services' (Gotman, 1997:5; 2001). Hospitality however, creates an – asymmetrical – social bond and a difference between those who give and those who take and involves the complex relations between reciprocity, obligation and debt on one hand and altruism and generosity on the other. The notion of hospitality entails a double meaning and refers both to the guest and to the enemy (*hostis* and *hospis*), it refers to exchange, alliance and a shared place, as well as to hostility, rejection, mistrust and demarcation.

In order to gain a more adequate understanding of one of the most vital questions of our time, namely how to welcome migrants and refugees, the workshop will employ insights from different fields of inquiry and yet critically engage with familiar dichotomies that characterize 'classical' and current reasoning. ***Social and cultural*** theory addressed the ambivalent relationship between host and guest with respect to both the manifold practices of hospitality and its connections to social cosmologies, symbols, moral conceptions, political institutions and legal arrangements that - despite all differences - have a joint sociological background and arrange the spaces of hosts and hosted: the stranger is relegated to an ambivalent space oscillating between solidarity and hostility, between outside and inside, the public and the private, the sacred and the profane, s/he is assigned a space between social proximity and distance, between integration and exclusion. Accordingly, the diverse practices of hospitality have been understood as processes which order ambivalences in an effort to place the unknown within the socio-cultural geography and to bridle antagonism and hostility.

Historically, hospitality has been considered as a religious and ethical duty, a sacred commandment of charity and generosity to assign strangers an albeit ambivalent place in the community (a prescription shared by the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions). With the development of the modern nation-state, these ethical obligations have been inscribed into the procedures of public political deliberation and legal institutions that determine rights and duties and the social spaces of aliens, residents and citizens. Therefore, current ***philosophical debates*** and theories of justice focus on the 'rights of others' (Benhabib, 2004; Sassen, 1999), on the tensions between the demand of unconditional hospitality (Derrida/Dufourmantelle, 1997), an absolute ethical requirement to host the stranger on the one hand and the political and legal limitations on the other (Friese, 2004). These concepts are tied to notions of justice which question social, cultural or national borders and undermine the conventional congruence of citizenship, territory and nation that make up modern nation states, or – on the contrary – affirm the rights of political communities to deliberate about the contents and the extent of the universal duty to reciprocal aid (Bauböck, 2001; Bauböck/Rundell, 1998; Pogge, 2001; Rawls, 1999; Walzer, 1983).

The workshop relates to these debates and encourages contributions that engage with the different languages of hospitality in current and historical migrational contexts that connect the Middle East, North Africa and the European shores of the Mediterranean. The design of the workshop looks for innovative contributions that bridge different strands of social and political thought and link cultural notions of hospitality to notions of space and modes of emplacement. Notions of space and place, relate in complex ways to social theory, political philosophy and ethics. In ***political philosophy***, 'space' has conventionally and most predictably been inscribed in the axiomatic divides between the public and the private, that which is common and that which belongs to the most intimate.

Accordingly, the versions of liberalism and communitarism have given extensive emphasis on public space. For John Rawls the objective circumstances of justice include the coexistence of individuals on a definite geographical territory and Jürgen Habermas' normative ideal of public discourse and communicative action which is to achieve rational consensus, is irretrievably linked to the existence of a public sphere as the privileged site of political negotiation. In *social theory*, the relation between space and sociability, between social imaginaries, cosmologies, social structure and the (symbolic) orders of space have been addressed. Concepts of space thus, have been tied to the various practices of emplacement in everyday-life, to the ways it structures action and allows for social encounter or on the contrary prescribes isolation, seclusion and hideaways, and the practices of (symbolic) signification and the bonding of people that need specific places have been evidenced.

In recent times, the erasure of borders has been emphasized. With increasing transnational mobility, forced or voluntary displacement of people in postcolonial and 'postnational' constellations (Habermas, 1998), the familiar congruence of culture and space has been replaced by a reasoning that emphasizes blurred borders and intersections. Concepts such as 'transnationalism', 'travelling cultures', or 'dislocation' indicate the loss of place as a dominant metaphor for culture and aim at undermining primordialist and essentializing versions of the community-place equalization. Articulations of community are reformulated by diasporic perspectives of exile, dispossession, displacement and adaptation advocating uncertain, hybrid 'contact zones', 'routes' instead of 'roots' (Clifford, 1997).

Yet, despite the emphasis on deterritorialization, displacement, homelessness and the irreversible destruction of localities and territories, the growing uniformity of significant places and sites on a global scale – the 'Global City' (Sassen, 1991) – and the elimination of distinct particularities, the importance of place is reasserted. Currently, renewed versions of geopolitics, the relations between space, *nomos* and non-places, such as the camp come into view (Agamben, 1995; Diken/Bagge Laustsen, 2005). A long ignored dimension of social and political theory is being reaffirmed together with the powerful politics of space and territory, demarcation and setting boundaries which lead to (extraterritorial) 'transit processing centers', gated communities, urban apartheid and new ghettos both in Europe and MENA countries.

The workshop engages with questions that take on especial urgency. In the twentieth century, the interconnections between local and (trans)national powers has reached a historically unparalleled degree and thus, the various tensions and conflicts between socio-cultural localization and globalization came into view. On one hand, the transnational movement of people weaken borders, on the other hand boundaries are currently be re-affirmed by new nationalisms and localisms that shape the concrete forms of hospitality. Given the crisis of modern systems of welfare and in an atmosphere of growing resentment and xenophobia, pressing questions emerged how contemporary democratic states should implement the requirements of hospitality that recommend to host refugees and migrants. The question of national and local borders, of membership, inclusion and exclusion gains a particular political and social significance and is currently being discussed in terms of 'fortress Europe' or 'new nomadism'. These pressing questions are on the European political agenda and are implemented in various European policies.

The notions under consideration harbour a variety of tensions. With regard to the political dimension, they entail tensions between *polis* and *oikos*, the public and the private, that which is commonly shared and that which belongs to the most intimate. They foster tensions between inclusion and exclusion, between universalism and particularity, the requirements of citizenship and the (moral) obligations of a community, impartial principles of right and particularistic, spaced and bounded

policies, and thus, between classical liberalism and (multi)culturalism (Kymlicka, 1995, 2001). With regard to ethics, what is involved are the quest for the recognition of particularity and the duty to host an Other. What is at stake thus, is the development of a 'politics of hospitality' that *opens* spaces and forms of exchange that *allow* for mutual obligation, engagement and civic participation.

Within this broader context, we are looking for papers that engage – both theoretically and empirically – with this field of inquiry and relate different forms of migration to the multiple languages, practices and social institutions of hospitality. Given the transdisciplinary design of the workshop, papers from different disciplines will be highly welcomed. MENA countries will be at the center of our attention as they significantly contribute to migrational movements as well as they harbour particular cultural notions of hospitality, provide specific routes, places and (in)formal networks and infrastructures to host migrants and refugees on their way to Europe – contributions from these countries and proposals that engage with the relation between hospitality and migration in MENA countries therefore, are especially encouraged.

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Directors' individual paper abstracts

Relating Hospitality and Migration

Heidrun Friese

Adopting a historical perspective, the paper will first, critically engage with the different notions and socio-cultural practices of hospitality that have been evidenced especially by (empirical) anthropological and sociological inquiry and analysis in the circum-Mediterranean regions (such as Abou-Said, Depaule). In a second step, it will engage with the various ambivalences and ambiguities that inhabit these practices and the – more or less formal and institutionalised – requirements to host strangers, refugees and to granting asylum. The paper will finally, indicate both the challenges as well as the potentialities of relating the multifarious languages and institutions of hospitality to (past and current) forms of migration, its various 'routes' and spaces that involve the Middle East, North African as well as European Mediterranean countries.

'The Politics of Hospitality' and Migration

joint paper by Heidrun Friese and Sandro Mezzadra

Being the island of Lampedusa the example, the paper examines the principles and practices that are to exclude or incorporate ('undocumented') immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers into the European communities and will focus on the relations that the - historically changing – notions of hospitality entail to current politics of spacing and emplacement. Historically, and despite the ambivalences that characterize its gestures, hospitality has been a (private) religious and ethical duty that demanded charity and generosity. With the development of the modern nation-state however, such duties became increasingly inscribed into the norms and procedures of organized and public solidarity and into the national and international legal system that order citizenship, (political) membership and belonging on one hand and the precarious status and the specific places assigned to the 'alien', on the other. The paper thus, will critically analyse current 'politics of hospitality', its forms and inherent tensions.