

Migration and Political Engagement: Abstracts

This workshop will be centred around the political engagement of migrant populations. We will discuss the ways in which people who have crossed borders are politically engaged in their home and hostland contexts, as well as in transnational or global political spaces. We ask what determines the forms and contents of their political acts, what intended or unintended impacts they have on homelands, hostlands and on migrants themselves as individuals or communities. We will also discuss instances of silence, passivity or disengagement among migrant populations and seek to interrogate these. As the act of crossing borders has taken on new significance in a global political context which is increasingly dominated by new populisms and nationalist agendas, the intersection between migration and politics is a field in flux. In light of this, the aim of the workshop is to share research findings and set new research agendas which advance our understanding this key intersection. The outcome of the workshop will be a special issue edited by Dr Olga Onuch, Dr Sorana Toma, and Dr Cathy Wilcock which will be submitted to one of the leading migration journals, for example, International Migration Review, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Global Networks, Migration Studies. The last session of the workshop will be a roundtable discussing ways forward for the special issue and possible collaborative or individual articles.

Loyalty at times of discontent

Evelyn Ersanilli and Dominique Jolivet, *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*

Abstract: Hirschman (1970) describes three options for those who are discontent: exit, voice and loyalty. Research on migration using this framework focuses on why people choose to exit (migrate) and on the combinations of “exit and voice” and “exit and loyalty” in transnational social spaces. Much less research is done on those who stay. Stayers are assumed to be less discontent than migrants. However, some stayers are similarly discontent as migrants but lack the means to exit (Carling 2002, Lubkemann 2008), while others prefer to stay to keep the location-specific insider advantages (Fischer et al. 1998, Fischer and Malmberg 2001, Werner and Barcus 2009). Few studies have looked at the role of loyalty to the country or society of birth in the decision to stay at times of discontent. In this paper we use data collected in 2011 for the EUMAGINE project to explore motives of stayers in Ukraine and Morocco. In each country, 2000 respondents were asked about their satisfaction with the formal social protection resources in their country of residence (including education, health care and social assistance), their life satisfaction and their socio-economic condition. They were furthermore asked whether or not they would travel to Europe if they were handed papers to do so and why (not). In our analyses we compare the level of discontent of those who would and those who would not take the opportunity to go to Europe and explore their motives for (not) taking this (hypothetical) opportunity. A preliminary finding is that for Ukrainian respondents loyalty to the country is a dominant motive to remain in Ukraine.

Carling, Jørgen. 2002. "Migration in the Age of Involuntary Immobility: Theoretical Reflections and Cape Verdean Experiences." *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* 28(1):5-42.

Fischer, Peter A, Gunnar Malmberg, Einar Holm and Thomas Straubhaar. 1998. "Why Do People Stay? The Insider Advantages Approach: Empirical Evidence from Swedish Labor Markets."

Fischer, Peter A and Gunnar Malmberg. 2001. "Settled People Don't Move: On Life Course and (Im-) Mobility in Sweden." *International journal of population geography* 7(5):357-71.

Lubkemann, Stephen C. 2008. "Involuntary Immobility: On a Theoretical Invisibility in Forced Migration Studies." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21(4):454-75.

Werner, Cynthia and Holly R Barcus. 2009. "Mobility and Immobility in a Transnational Context: Changing Views of Migration among the Kazakh Diaspora in Mongolia." *Migration Letters* 6(1):49.

Bio: Evelyn Ersanilli is an assistant professor in Sociology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. She has a PhD in Sociology from that same university and an MSc in Interdisciplinary Social Sciences from Utrecht University. Previously she worked as a Senior Researcher at the WZB Berlin Social Science Research Centre, and a Research Officer and Departmental Lecturer on the MSc in Migration Studies at the University of Oxford. Her research interests are immigration and integration policies, immigrant integration, citizenship, identity, migrant families, and migration policy formation. Her articles have been published in leading journals such as International Migration Review, Journal of Ethnic and Migration studies and West European Politics.

Bio: Dominique Jolivet holds a Master's degree in Foreign Languages Applied to International Business and Trading (Université de Nantes, France) with a specialization in International Business Negotiation (Université François Rabelais of Tours, France) and a Master's degree in Migration Studies, Development and Social Intervention (Universidad de Almería, Spain). She is research officer at the International Migration Institute (University of Oxford), where she has been involved in several projects (EUMAGINE, THEMIS, Mobility in the African Great Lakes and MobileWelfare). Her research interests include the dynamic effect of inequality on the meanings of migration and immobility; transforming cultures of migration; changing migration aspirations; and onward migration processes.

Understanding migrant politics using 'diaspora' as an analytical lens: A case study of UK Sudanese activism campaigns

Cathy Wilcock, *University of Manchester*

Abstract: As people move into global political spaces, politics has been transnationalised to the extent that it is 'becoming increasingly difficult to understand political outcomes solely by looking at actors within the state' (Lyons and Mandaville 2012: 2, 5). Historically, the political acts performed by migrant communities *vis-à-vis* their homelands are related, but different, to the activism ongoing in homeland contexts. In seeking to understand this disjuncture, various studies have taken account of the practical and experiential changes associated with

migration and demonstrated their influence on migrant politics. For example, we know that political and discursive opportunity structures in the hostland, changing homeland contexts, and the socio-psychological changes occurring with migration, all shape the politics of migrant communities. In addition to these approaches, there are a small number of studies which examine migrant politics using diaspora theory, which takes as its starting point the globalised patterns of belonging and identification produced by migrants. 'Diaspora' in this case, is not only the object of study, but an analytical approach. Analysing migrant political mobilisations as diasporic mobilisations has shed light on migrant politics as expressions of belonging, both to homeland and hostland contexts. This paper contributes to the diasporic approach by offering a more systematic analysis of what we understand as 'diasporic identification' than currently exists in this literature. It offers a framework of diasporic identity which can include both sincere and strategic processes of identification and belonging. It develops this position through examining the case of Sudanese political activists who are resident in the UK. The paper analyses the various types of diasporic identifications made by Sudanese communities in the UK and shows how these identifications have shaped their political ideas and behaviours.

Lyons, Terrence, and Peter Mandaville, eds. 2012. *Politics from Afar: Transnational Diasporas and Networks*. London: Hurst Publishers.

Bio: Cathy Wilcock is the co-ordinator and postdoctoral researcher for the University of Manchester Migration Lab. She was awarded her Masters and PhD by the Global Development Institute at the University of Manchester and also holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Edinburgh. Her research interests centre around migration, identities and political activism and her doctoral thesis focused on the roles of Sudanese diaspora activists in Sudanese peacebuilding.

'The infiltrator' versus 'the refugee': exploring new forms of solidarity and their limitations within the Israeli asylum regime and beyond

Tanja R. Müller, *University of Manchester*

Abstract: A number of years before the contemporary 'refugee crisis' in Europe, a country on the continent's imagined fringes, Israel, perceived by many then refugees as 'the Europe we can walk to', experienced an unprecedented movement of non-Jewish refugees from Eritrea and Sudan. In fact, in terms of media and public representations, and political responses, the whole scale of the contemporary European response, from Budapest to Berlin, could be observed in sharp focus in the reaction of different sections of Israeli society, from hostile rejection to warm welcome. This paper interrogates both dynamics based on fieldwork in Tel Aviv and subsequent analysis of media representations in Germany. It argues that while indeed new forms of solidarity have emerged, the majority of responses across the whole spectrum has been shaped by similar perceptions of the 'stranger' as a projection of either people's hate and fear, or an urge to 'do good' that in essence represents a version of the white-saviour-complex. The latter easily turns to the former once the 'deserving stranger' acts in ways that contradict certain normative settings. New forms of sustained solidarity have emerged mainly in spaces where professional expertise guided engagement with refugees and migrants, or where people literally

welcomed refugees into their homes and lives, and it is here that new conceptions of citizenship that transcend a global order that enforces divisions between 'them' and 'us' has come to the fore. These dynamics raise some important questions about volunteering and its impact on public perceptions and welcoming cultures.

Bio: Dr Tanja R. Müller is Senior Lecturer in Development Studies at the Global Development Institute, and a founding member of the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute as well as a co-founder of the Manchester Migration Lab. She is the author of *The Making of Elite Women. Revolution and Nation Building in Eritrea* (Brill, 2005) and *Legacies of Socialist Solidarity – East Germany in Mozambique* (Lexington, 2014). Her most recent work interrogates activist citizenship as a politics of resistance among refugee populations in urban contexts, as well as celebrity humanitarianism, the visual representation of 'development', and the increasing lack of 'ground truth' in relation to the Global South. She is also co-researcher on an ESRC-funded project that interrogates peacekeeping operations in the Horn of Africa.

Dynamics of 'Exit' and 'Voice': Examining the relationship between international migration and political protest with a focus on Eastern Europe

Olga Onuch, *University of Manchester* & Sorana Toma *ENSAE–Laboratoire de Sociologie Quantitative*

Abstract: International migration and mass-mobilization are two of the leading topics on the global agenda for politicians, the media, and academics. Increasingly large numbers of people are living away from their countries of origin, confronting governments with the need to better manage migration. At the same time we witness a rise in mass-protests around the world: in the EU (in crisis-hit Spain and Greece, but not only), in the Middle East & Northern Africa (in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Israel) as well as in Eastern Europe (most recently in Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine). Finally, there is the surprising combination of the two effects, when diasporas coordinate mass protests in host countries against political and economic elites in their country of origin (in Egypt, Moldova, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine and many others). This wealth of recent examples contrasts with the paucity of academic research: aside from the seminal theoretical work by Hirschman (1970; 1978; 1993) and a few empirical applications it inspired, migration and protest have rarely been studied together. In "Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States" (1970), Hirschman argued that individuals dissatisfied with their organization (or state) may try to improve their situation by "exiting" that organization (state) or by "voicing" their discontent from within. "Exit" and "voice" are thus different *alternative* reactions to discontent (Pfaff and Kim 2003). However, he also saw them as highly *interdependent*, engaged in a see-saw relationship: the capacity for "voice" is undercut by an easily available, low-cost "exit". This paper argues there is a need for a more systematic examination the dynamic interrelationship between international migration ("exit") and mass-mobilization ("voice"). Hirschman's model no longer corresponds to the realities of the two processes, while rigorous empirical studies apt of theoretical developments are so far rare. After reviewing the sociological and political science literature attempting to link the two

phenomena, this paper identifies several mechanisms of interaction and develops a set of empirical research questions aimed at testing these.

Bio: Sorana Toma is an Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Center for Economics, Sociology and Statistics (CREST) at the ENSAE—Université Paris-Saclay in France. She is also an associate researcher at the International Migration Institute at the University of Oxford. Her research interests include international migration, immigrant assimilation, and residential segregation, with a geographical focus on Africa. Sorana obtained her MSc and PhD degrees in Sociology from the University of Oxford in Great Britain. Her recent publications appeared in the *International Migration Review*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Population Space and Place*, among others. She is a member of the editorial board of Oxford Development Studies and a reviewer for development, migration, and sociology academic journals. Her professional memberships include the Population Association of America (PAA) and the European Association for Population Studies (EAPS).

Bio: Dr. Olga Onuch (DPhil Oxon), is an Assistant Professor (Lecturer) in Politics at the University of Manchester and an Associate Fellow, at Nuffield College, at the University of Oxford. She is also a Visiting Professor at the Davis Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University (2016-2017). Onuch specialises in the comparative study of protest politics, political behaviour and institutions, in democratising states in Latin America and Eastern Europe. She is a leading scholar on protest politics in Ukraine she led the Ukrainian Protest Project in 2013 (funded by the British Academy) and was a Co-I in the Ukraine Crisis Election Panel Survey in 2014 (funded by the National Science Foundation). One of a few scholars who focus their analysis on the micro-foundations of mass protest participation in the two regions, Onuch analyses the mechanisms of mobilisation in her book: *Mapping Mass Mobilisations* (Palgrave 2014). In her other published and forthcoming research she has explored the role of social media in motivating and mobilizing protest participants, the significance of cross-class/cross-cleavage coalitions in increasing the likelihood of protest success, the phenomenon of post-protest polarization, as well as, the relationship between protest and electoral populism. She is the Co-I of an ongoing project together with Dr. Sorana Toma on "The Dynamic Relationship Between Protest and Migration." Onuch's regional expertise, in combination with a comparative focus, has allowed her to engage with a larger audience. Her research has been highlighted on the BBC World Service, Al Jazeera English TV, National Public Radio, Radio Free Europe, The Washington Post, The Guardian, AFP, and El País).

Voice & Exit after Socialism

Amelia Abercrombie, *University of Manchester*

Abstract: This paper assesses perceived causality of the sudden migration of a number of Roma from Kosovo in Autumn 2014. Based on ethnographic research among those who were soon to leave, and those who stayed behind, I ask how people's perceptions of the choices open to them are shaped by the trajectories of their lives. Simultaneous to these migrations were large political protests in Kosovo, attended primarily by young Albanian men. This led me to question why some people respond to problems in the country by

protesting, while others emigrate. I frame this in terms of Hirschman's (1970) discussion of voice and exit, which posits that responses to dissatisfaction, despair and decline in services can be understood primarily in terms of voice and exit, where exit is a response to economic decline, while protest is political. Within this framework I argue that while the causes of both protests and migration are never solely economic or political (in fact the two are indivisible), at an ethnographic level this division is pervasive. The Roma I worked with perceived the problems in their daily lives to be economic ones, while protesters were responding to political problems, arguing that the difference in the way living standards are perceived by the two groups leads to a difference in response. Urban Roma are typical postsocialist subjects in that they understand their current predicament in terms of a loss of stable employment, and of entitlements, and thus as primarily an economic decline. Albanians on the other hand lacked many of the advantages of the socialist period, and were severely restricted in the nineties. As such the current situation is not seen in terms of economic decline, but rather betrayal and mismanagement by the post war political elites. Therefore the two groups respond to what is essentially the same problem, extreme political and economic mismanagement (by Kosovar and international politicians alike), in two very different ways. For Roma, this experience of economic decline, and the conception of economic forces as natural, beyond control, leads to the conclusion that exit is the best way to secure a better future. For Albanians on the other hand the perception of problems as being of a political nature, as being man-made, means they can be changed, which as such opens the possibility of protest.

Hirschman, A.O., 1970. *Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states* (Vol. 25). Harvard university press.

Bio: My BA was in Serbian, Croatian and East European Studies from SSEES, UCL in 2008, including a year abroad at Belgrade University. I also taught English during this period. In 2009 I worked as a volunteer English teacher and care worker in Chisinau, Moldava, learning some Russian. In 2011 I completed a 2 year MRes programme at SSEES, with Romanian language. My dissertation focused on Roma understandings of history. I also took evening classes in Albanian. In 2011 I started work as a support worker for people with learning disabilities, and also took evening classes in Turkish. Since 2012 I have been on a PhD programme at the University of Manchester. I am based in the Anthropology department, with a second supervisor from Linguistics. My PhD focuses on multilingualism among Roma in Prizren, Kosovo and I completed a year and a half of fieldwork there. I have submitted and am currently waiting for my viva.

Political spheres of transnational activism: merging social movements and migration theories

Larisa Lara, *University of Paris VII and the University of Liège*

Abstract: Migration theorists have analysed diaspora mobilisation largely focusing on three main features, the roles of the homeland, the hostland and the diaspora acting as a collective and relatively homogenous social group (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, Müller-Funk 2016). On the other hand, social movement theorists looking at migrant mobilisation, portray migrants as agents engaging in politics with the aim to gain rights and improve their

precarious living situation in their hostland (Varela Huerta 2008). This scholarship emphasises the instrumental and identity reasons that inspire migrants to engage in political activism, predominately in their receiving society (Klandermans, Van der Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg 2008). Both the literature on migration and on social movements have contributed to the better understanding of the initiation, development and success or eventual decline of political activism. Nevertheless, there are several theoretical gaps in each literature that can be covered by transferring some analytical tools from the other. On the one hand, the migration literature is particularly silent about the repertoires of contention and the personal motivations, resources, and strategies that feed transnational political movements. On the other hand, the social movements literature does not pay enough attention to the social impact that the migration experience and diasporic collective identity have on transnational movements. In this essay, I aim to develop a framework to analyse transnational political activism in times of an ongoing conflict using key elements from both literatures. I merge elements of migration and social movements theories in order to recognise the role of migrants as rational and emotional individuals engaging in transnational protests concerning the politics of their country of origin. I also consider the role of international political regimes, emigration and immigration policies, and the constitution of a diaspora aiming to act collectively from abroad. To do so, this essay argues that migrants engaging in a conflict situation in their homeland interact and make use of five different interconnected and interdependent spheres of political activism: the transnational, the diaspora, the hostland, the homeland and the individual. These five political spheres manage to capture the complexity of the different phases of political engagement, the motivations and political opportunities sustaining the movements, the geographical spaces where protestors interact and the predominant role of emotions and subjectivity animating transnational political activism.

Bio: Larisa Lara Guerrero is a PhD Candidate in the field of Migration and Political Sciences, under the joint supervision of the University of Paris VII and the University of Liège. She studied International Relations at the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education in Mexico City and at the Paris Institute of Political Studies as an undergraduate (2011). She holds a Master of Sciences in Migration Studies from the University of Oxford (2013) and a Master of Arts in Conflict, Security and Development from King's College London (2014). Her research currently focuses on emigration policies, the role of diasporas in conflict zones, and political transnationalism. In her PhD dissertation, she intends to explore the transnational and political mobilisation of the Mexican migrants established in Paris and Brussels. She works as teaching assistant in Sciences Po Paris for the Master in International Security and for the University of Liège for the Master program in Immigration Studies.

Political engagement of migrants: Being “logically and emotionally invested” in the Egyptian struggle

Helen Underhill, *University of Manchester*

Abstract: In a global political context of populist and nationalist agendas, migrant populations are increasingly recognised as important actors in the political development of both their host and homelands. While the interest in diaspora politics has explored how and

why various migrant communities choose to participate in, or withdraw from, politics, significant gaps remain in understanding the implications of political engagement on the migrants themselves. Departing from rational theories of social movements, this paper examines the effects of engaging in revolutionary struggle on migrants' understandings of politics and their role in creating social and political change. Drawing on reflections from UK based Egyptians who participated in the Egyptian revolution since 2011, the study examines the intersections of becoming logically and emotionally invested in political change. Through cultural and cognitive dimensions of social movement theory, the article reflects on the emotional battery (Jasper 2007) of migrants' political engagement. The article argues that migrants' political engagement is a cyclical process where the terrain of knowledge and emotion intersect: political engagement is shaped by emotional and logical dynamics that lead to new understandings that shapes further action. This study contributes to a growing body of research into the role of migrants in processes of political change. It also progresses the conceptualisation of social movements through a specific examination of the implications of social movement participation on activists themselves.

Bio: Helen Underhill graduated with a degree in Linguistics and worked as an adventure travel tour guide before training to be a teacher. After almost a decade in secondary education, she began to formalize her interests in the various intersections of learning, development, political activism and social change through research. Particularly inspired by her travels in the MENA region and the affinity gained for Egypt during this time, her PhD research examined learning in social movements related to the Egyptian uprising of 2011, particularly among migrants. Helen's current research agenda examines development and humanitarianism education, and continues political learning in struggles for social change.

Remitting free trade? Remittances and preferential trade agreements

David Doyle, *University of Oxford*

Abstract: Only now are we beginning to uncover the effect of remittances on politics in countries dependent on these capital inflows. In this paper, I argue that countries that receive large inflows of remittances will be more likely to sign trade agreements with the countries where these remittances originate, in comparison to all other countries. This effect will operate through a number of complimentary causal channels. Firstly, large inflows of both social and financial remittances to family members left behind in the country of origin will affect the political preferences of those that receive them. It will increase their consumption power and heighten their demand for consumer goods. It will also increase their support for market friendly and free trade parties. These dynamics will lead to an increase in imports into remittance receiving countries and to an increase in the number of trade agreements that these countries will sign. The countries that they sign these agreements with will primarily be those from where the remittances originate. Remittance networks will reduce the transaction and information costs associated with trade agreements. The end result: remittances will lead to greater global trade integration. A host of statistical models, including tests that address the endogeneity of remittances, provide support for this causal chain.

Bio: David Doyle is an Associate Professor of Politics in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford, and a Fellow of St Hugh's College. He is a member of the Latin American Centre. His general research and teaching interests include comparative politics and comparative political economy. He is currently working on a number of projects, including work on the political economy of remittances across Latin America, and a project on labour informality and taxation in Latin America. His research has appeared in journals such as the American Political Science Review, the Journal of Politics, the British Journal of Political Science, Comparative Political Studies, Legislative Studies Quarterly, Political Research Quarterly, and the Journal of Public Policy, among others.

'How immigrants' experience of repression in the homeland influence their political participation in a host country: The case of Iranian immigrants in the Western Europe'

Ali Honari, *Vrije Universities Amsterdam*

Abstract: The political turbulence in the Middle East and North Africa, the civil war in Syria and Iraq led to a significant increase in the number of immigrants with experience of repression in Western Europe. However, there is an important knowledge gap regarding the interrelationship of repression and political participation of immigrants. Some studies show that immigrants from politically repressive countries have been adopting a cautious and reluctant attitude towards political participation in their host country. However, these studies neglect the fact that individuals, even embedded within similar structural contexts, experience repression differently. This paper fills this gap by examining the individual level effect of experience of repression on political participation of immigrants from politically repressive countries. We used data from an online survey (N=935) amongst Iranian immigrants in eight Western European countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK). Our findings highlight the crucial role of 'experience of repression' in both institutionalized and noninstitutionalized political participation. We found that immigrants from a repressive country who immigrated because of political reasons tend to differ in comparison with people who migrated for non-political reasons. They participate in political activities more frequently and in a broader range of forms. Our findings have important implications for scholars who study political participation of immigrants. We extend the current literature on political participation of immigrants by considering both institutionalized and contentious forms of political participation, and by integrating the perspective of repression studies.

Bio: Ali Honari is a PhD candidate in sociology at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. His research is concentrated on "The dynamics of off- and online political participation under repression" in the context of the Iranian Green Movement between two elections (2009-2013). Using unique data from three waves of online surveys as well as qualitative interviews with Iranian activists inside Iran and in diaspora, his study focuses on how people respond to state repression. Ali holds an MA in Sociology in the Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences at the Interuniversity Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS) at the University of Groningen. His MA thesis

was concerned with the role of risk in online activism. Ali's primary research interests include social movements, repression, political participation, social network analysis, online activism, and the Iranian diaspora.

Remittances, crime, and protest against crime in Mexico

Sandra Ley *CIDE*, Covadonga Meseguer *LSE*, Eduardo Ibarra *LSE*

Abstract: In our paper, we explore the role of emigrants in financing contentious political activities against crime in Mexico. The recent wave of crime in Mexico has caused high numbers of internal and international displacements. Using original data against crime and protest in Mexico at the sub-national level in the years 2006-2012, we test whether the reception of remittances produces political disengagement among those that receive them or whether, in contrast, the reception of remittances has spurred protest against crime. We find that the reception of remittances has been associated with lower levels in protest activities in states that receive very low and very high inflows of remittances. We find the same pattern concerning the emergence of vigilante organizations. In other words, we find that remittances can have both an engagement and a disengagement effect that depends on the quantity received. The paper contributes to an expanding research agenda on the political consequences of remittances.

Bio: Cova Meseguer joined the LSE International Relations Department as Senior Lecturer in September 2013. She introduces herself here: I have recently embarked on a new, exciting research project entitled 'Politics and Migration in Out-Migration Countries'. In this project, I examine the political impact of out-migration in sending countries. Whereas much research has been undertaken on the political economy of trade, finance, and foreign direct investment, much less attention has been paid to the political economy of international migration. It is only recently that political scientists working in international political economy and comparative political economy have started to look into how migrants exert voice and into the consequences of their out-migration. Is migrants' involvement with their homelands a factor that improves local governance? Do migrants transmit democratic values besides monetary remittances? Do remittances weaken the power of clientelistic exchanges and facilitate political change? What is the relationship between democracy, autocracy, and outmigration?

Refugees and citizens: understanding Eritrean refugees' ambivalence towards homeland politics

Milena Belloni, *University of Antwerp*

Abstract: This article revisits ambivalence as a protracted state which does not simply develop as a result of the migration experience, but stems from overlapping levels of normative inconsistency. Drawing from my ethnography of Eritreans' everyday life in the homeland and abroad, I analyse their ambivalent feelings of patriotism and disenchantment as a consequence of political, social and cultural contradictions. These are embedded in their context of departure and are further complicated by their role as "political refugees". My

informants' ambivalence stems from them embodying more than one role (i.e. patriots, family breadwinners, modern men and women; refugees and citizens); from contradictory expectations pertaining to the same role (i.e. young citizens in Eritrea); and from clashing implications of being members of two different social systems (i.e. the destination country and the country of origin). Thus, Eritreans' political loyalties and actions are characterised by a state of ambivalence throughout their migration process. Despite its peculiar characteristics, this case study sheds light on the complexity of ambivalence, as more than a temporary condition, for migrants and refugees in particular. In the current scenario of emigrant states' transnational governance, protracted ambivalence is likely to mark the attitudes of an increasing number of people on the move as both refugees *from* and citizens *of* their country of origin.

Bio: Milena Belloni is post-doctoral researcher at the Centre for Migration and Integration Studies, University of Antwerp. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan and Italy, her work examines the moral, emotional and social aspects of forced migration towards Europe. Among her most significant publications are "Refugees as gamblers" in the *Journal of Migrant and Refugee Studies* and "Learning how to squat" in the *Journal of Refugee Studies*. Her monograph "Cosmologies of Destinations" is under publication with the University of California Press.

Political engagement of Eritreans abroad: in defence of the revolution or in search of justice?

Nicola Hirt, *GIGA, Hamburg*

Abstract: Diaspora communities are by no means homogenous groups, but reflect the rifts and frictions of their homeland societies. Accordingly, the fabric of the Eritrean diaspora stands in stark contrast to the forcibly homogenized society in Eritrea, which according to the government consists of "one people, one heart". Eritreans abroad can be roughly divided into active government supporters, who perceive Eritrea as a shining example of a revolutionary nation that resists all sorts of external challenges, and anti-government activists who regard the Eritrean regime as a perpetrator of crimes against humanity. In addition, there is a passive majority that wants to stay out of "the dirty game" of politics. The Eritrean government is actively involved in transnational strategies to mobilize the diaspora politically, and more importantly, use it as a permanent source of cash. The aim of this article is to provide an overview of pro- and anti-government diaspora activities in recent years. It seeks to explore the motives of Eritreans residing in democratic societies to either raise their voices in favour of the homeland regime, to work for its downfall, or to remain passive.

Bio: Nicole Hirt is a political scientist and an independent researcher focusing on the Horn of Africa, specifically on Eritrea. Her current research interests include transnational mechanisms of governance and the persistence of authoritarian rule. She is associated with the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies in Hamburg, Germany.

Chairs, discussants and other delegates

Silvia Galandini, Laurence Lessard-Phillips, Jonathan Leif Basilio, Michelle Obeid,
Madeleine Reeves, Gabriele Restelli, Tamara West