https://e-erim.ief.hr/?locale=en

e-ERIM

Archive

An Online Network of Keywords of the European Irregularised Migration Regime at the Periphery of the EU

Generated on 27/11/2026

Impressum

ISBN 978-953-8518-36-2

Editors: Marijana Hameršak, Iva Pleše and Tea Škokić

Conception: Marijana Hameršak, Bojan Mucko, Mojca Piškor, Iva Pleše and Tea Škokić

Graphic design and computer programming: Slobodna domena Zadruga za otvoreni kod i dizajn

Translation and proofreading: Juraj Šutej and authors

Contributions on e-ERIM were created between 2022 and 2025. Publication dates for individual keywords are provided at the end of each contribution.

The online platform e-ERIM is the result of the research project ERIM - The European Irregularized Migration Regime at the Periphery of the EU: from Ethnography to Keywords of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research funded by The Croatian Science Foundation.

Publisher: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb





Content

A Call to the Police?
Aggressive Humanism
Ambiguous Loss
Antibožiček and the Role of Anthropology in the Field
Appropriation
Assisted Voluntary Return
At the Bus Station in Bihać
Autonomy of Migration
Backpack
Balkan Circuit
Balkan Corridor
Balkan Route
Border Deaths
Border Inequalities
Borderscape
Breaking and Entering, Lighting Fires in Buildings, Abandoning Property
Bubo and Endi
Buffer Zone
Candy
Cartographic Assemblage: The River and Borders
Chain translation and intercultural mediation
Coercion
Counter-corridor
Counter-memorialization
Criminalization of Solidarity
Crimmigration
Cutting Down Forests
Detention
Disappeared
Discrimination and Racialization on the Bus
Distribution Tent
Distro
Dublin
Emptiness
ERIM Ethnographic Research Map
ERIM Map of Border Deaths
EU’s Zoned Borderscapes
Explosive Remnants of War
Fair Distribution
Fences, Walls and Wires at State Borders
Fences, Walls and Wires in the Interior
Fence, Wall, Wire
Field Diary and Field Notes
Fingerprint
Forest Cameras
Forest
Game
Garbage
Gender Dimension of Refugeehood
Gestapo Wire Fence
Global South
Graves
Grief Activism
halo this is border
History of Border Deaths
Humanitarian Industry
Humanitarian Power

Humanitarian Space
Humanitarian Exception
Irregularized Migration
Krnjača
Ladders
Letter from a Hiker
Lipa Camp
Lipa Protest
Loaded Exclusionary Questions
Long Summer of Migration
Madina Hussiny
Map of Causes of Death
Map of Grave Inscriptions
Map of Grave Locations
Map of Grave Markers
Map of Grave Markers Materials
Map of R*’s Journey from Tunisia
Maritime Cemetery
Migration Industry
Migration Regime
Missing or Disappeared
Mobile Commons
Mobile Detention
Mobile Phone
Movable Fences or Gates
Onion
Origins of Migrant Detention
Pablo
Paromlin
Party in the Afghan Squat
Photoanxiety
Photo-memory
Porin
Profiling in the Corridor
Protest against Detention in Postojna
Pullback
Pushback
Pushback maps
Pushing Corpses Along the Kolpa River
Rafting Down the Kolpa River
Railway station from another perspective - audio tour
Refugeehood
Rescue Operations
Resettlement
Resilience Humanitarianism
Restaurant of Hospitality in Bihać
Riace
Riverscapes
Roda Tent
Schengen
Securitization
Seven Days Paper
SIA
Slavonski Brod Camp
Solidarity
Soup for the Border!
Suffering of Animals on Wires
Survivors
Survivors of Violence

Switch It up a Little, My Friend
Šid
Taxi
Teeth on the Move
The Path Along the Wire
Thirteen Holes in the Wire Fence
Tickets to the World
Traces in the Forest
Transit
Transit as a Lived Experience
Un-grateful Migrant
Unknowns in the Marking and Maintenance of Graves
UNO
Velika Kladuša
Vučjak
Weaponized Landscape
Western Balkans
WhatsApp from Lipa
When the Sava Grew Turbid
Wild Animals
Authors

A Call to the Police?

Julija Budič

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-klic-na-policijo-p?locale=en

Aggressive Humanism

Marijana Hameršak

At the end of 2019, shortly after the European Commission gave Croatia the green light to join the **Schengen Area**, the Welcome Initiative set up two billboards next by the roadside in the Dalmatian town of Cista Provo featuring a photo of a severely injured young man: his face contorted in pain, his upper teeth missing, covering his eyes with a hand wrapped in a bloody bandage. The billboards were placed close to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, in a place reserved for artistic interventions in public space using large billboards. They remained a roadside fixture for several weeks, receiving some national media coverage in agency news. However, this higher visibility did not lead to public reactions and discussions.



Croatia full of torture. Cista Provo, Croatia, October 2019. Photo: Boris Šitum

By appropriating the tourist slogan “Welcome to Croatia” and paraphrasing the slogan “Croatia full of life” into “Croatia full of torture”, the billboards stood in stark contrast to the official state and promotional discourses relating to the **pushbacks** that are routinely carried at Croatian state borders out in secret. In other words, the (anti)slogans printed over a deformed male face were used to highlight the discrepancy between the openness of Croatian borders, as the borders of a European tourist destination, and their closedness, as the external borders of the EU. Thus, as pointed out in the statement addressed to the public, these billboards were aimed to convey “that the truth of refugees and migrants who are at the receiving end of police repression every day is stronger and louder than batons, flashing police lights and cells” and that “the people who suffer blows, insults and curses, who have come to know pain, hunger and fear, give a more credible account of our country than worn-out tourist slogans”.

Aside from the violence at the borders, the protest billboards also critically addressed the dominant victimization policies involved in the representation of violence at the borders, placing at its representation center an injured young man whose photo does not invite viewers to identify with him, nor does it automatically elicit empathy. Due to their politically engaging and non-conformist radical criticism of the violence of the European migration control regime, these billboards can also be seen as a kind of aggressive humanism in the sense of provocative, radically critical artistic and activist interventions aimed against repressive policies and practices, which seek to evoke strong reactions from the public (cf. von Bieberstein and Evren 2016).

The term aggressive humanism, which appeared sporadically in different meanings in philosophical, literary criticism and related literature during the 20th century, was given a more precise meaning in this century when it was linked to migration by the Zentrum für Politische Schönheit (Center for Political Beauty), a German art-activist group which brings together artists, intellectuals, scientists, etc. In the group’s text which could be categorized as a manifesto of aggressive humanism, the Center for Political Beauty uses the examples of the persecution of Jews in the Second World War and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina as starting points and promotes the idea that the dissemination of information about suffering and crimes cannot stop atrocities by itself, nor can it initiate a successful resistance. “Ultimately neither information nor images were able to curtail the horror of genocide,” the text states. The Center for Political Beauty is critical of the contemporary activist scene in Germany and the general impotence of activist interventions in democratic societies, and thus advocates the politics and poetics of aggressive humanism, which breaks with the

benevolent and non-conflicting nature of humanism's placing the human at the center of political, activist and artistic activity. Through radical and critical action-based art (*Aktionskunst*), the Center for Political Beauty strives to bring the passion and force found in political activists of past generations back to the political and public scene. Their interventions include the notable and controversial multi-location operation *Die Toten kommen* (The Dead are Coming, 2015), which was performed as a reaction to the fact that contemporary Western societies lack interest in the border violence and **border deaths**.



This content is only available in the online edition of e-ERIM. View it at:
https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-aggresive-humanism-p?locale=en

Certain **counter-memorialization** practices and **grief-activism** actions on the **Balkan route** correspond with aggressive humanism to a greater or lesser extent. The actions of naming the **Madina Hussiny** Square in Zagreb, which were carried out in memory of a six-year-old Afghan girl who died during a pushback from Croatia to Serbia, and the memorial canvas for those who died at Croatian borders, Prijelaz / The Passage, are both expressions of mourning and protest against pushbacks and violence at Croatian borders.

10/3/2022

References

von Bieberstein, Alice and Erdem Evren. 2016. “From Aggressive Humanism to Improper Mourning. Burying the Victims of Europe's Border Regime in Berlin”. *Social Research* 83/2:453-479.

Ambiguous Loss

Marijana Hameršak

Pauline Boss, who introduced the term into literature, differentiates two basic kinds of ambiguous loss. “In the first type, people are perceived by family members as *physically absent* but psychologically present, because it’s unclear whether they are dead or alive. Missing soldiers and kidnapped children illustrate this type of loss in its catastrophic form. More everyday occurrences include losses within divorced and adoptive families, where a parent or child is viewed as absent or missing. In the second type of ambiguous loss, a person is perceived as physically present but psychologically absent. This condition is illustrated in the extreme by people with Alzheimer’s disease, addictions, and other chronic mental illnesses” (Boss 2000: 8-9). Research into **irregularized migration** usually addresses the first type of ambiguous loss (De León 2015: 274-279; Mirto et al. 2020). In this context, ambiguous loss refers to the incomplete or uncertain loss of a loved one accompanied by feelings of hope and sadness. Torn between these ambivalent feelings, families and other loved ones, especially when it comes to persons **dissapeared** in migration, wait for news and dread receiving it, often also experiencing administrative agony related to matters of inheritance, adoption of children and other issues (Mirto et al. 2020: 109).

The other type of loss that Boss discusses, when a person is physically present, but psychologically absent, is becoming increasingly visible on the **Balkan route** as well. It is rooted in border violence and the generally difficult living conditions of people on the move, as is the case with Khobeib Ben Khoder, a thirty-two-year-old from Tunisia whom everyone “called Ali”. According to the words of activist Nawal Soufi reported by journalist Ivana Perić, the Croatian police intercepted Ali during one of his attempts to cross Croatian territory, “and took off his shoes. It was winter. He was barefooted and they banished him. He walked for hours in the snow, and when he arrived back in Bosnia, doctors concluded that both of his legs should be amputated. From that moment on, he suffered a lot, he spent months by himself, in the migrant camp. He didn’t want to talk to anyone. He didn’t even eat”. Even his mother, who came to Bosnia and Herzegovina to try to convince him to undergo amputation, which in his case was the only way to avoid death, was unsuccessful. Ali did not hear her nor anyone else. Those who knew him say that *he only thought about how he would go to the game again and finally succeed* (see **game**). After months of psychological and physical agony, Ali died on 24 September 2019, in a hospital in Bihać. The official cause of death was gangrene, but in reality he died of **pushback**.

13/4/2022

References

Boss, Pauline. 2000. *Ambiguous Loss. Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

De León, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves. Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Mirto, Giorgia, Simon Robins, Karina Horsti, Pamela J. Prickett, Deborah Ruiz Verduzco and Victor Toom. 2020. “Mourning Missing Migrants. Ambiguous Loss and the Grief Strangers”. In *Border Deaths. Causes, Dynamics and Consequences of Migration-related Mortality*. Paolo Cuttitta and Tamara Last, eds. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 103-116.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-ambiguous-loss-p?locale=en

Antibožiček and the Role of Anthropology in the Field

Liza Guštin

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-antibozicek-in-vloga-antropologije-na-terenu-p?locale=en

Appropriation

Marijana Hameršak, Uršula Lipovec Čebron, Jelka Zorn

What the authorities pejoratively call “abuses”, for example, relating to the asylum or visa system, from the perspective of the **autonomy of migration** is recognized as the appropriation of elements of the asylum system (accommodation facilities, corresponding administrative status, etc.) or employment or study visas for the purposes of realizing movement. In addition to the appropriation of places and means of transport, such as public or abandoned areas and buildings, mountain and forest roads, or protection systems, the already mentioned asylum system or concepts such as vulnerability and the institution of marriage, work and the like, we can also talk about the appropriation of means of migration control.

Stephan Scheel (2019) analyzed the notion of appropriation in detail, ethnographically relating it to the embodied practices of appropriation of the visa system and the related technological solutions and frameworks. Appropriation practices, according to Scheel (2019: 92-96 et passim), arise both in reaction to and in support of control systems and the security apparatus in general. In reaction, because the security apparatus limits mobility and thus emboldens practices that oppose it, but also in support, because this apparatus, due to its heterogeneity and complexity, depends precisely on the actions of those whose mobility it tries to control. More importantly, they can use its heterogeneity and complexity to their advantage and migrate, despite the fact that this is precisely the action that it is designed to prevent. In other words, appropriation is inextricably connected to migration control and implies a clandestine, as imperceptible as possible, recoding of means and practices of control through apparent compliance. As such, it is necessarily ambivalent. Furthermore, it is also political, as it directly questions the efficacy and legitimacy of institutionalized forms of authority.

Appropriation and **mobile commons** are also at the center of contemporary literary representations of migration, especially when it comes to texts that criticize the repressive migration control regime and practices such as **detention** and deportation through irony and sarcasm, as is the case in the novels *Two Blankets, Three Sheets* by Rodaan Al Galidi (2016) or *Sangue giusto* by Francesca Melandri (2017).

19/12/2022

References

Scheel, Stephan. 2019. *Autonomy of Migration? Appropriating Mobility within Biometric Border Regimes.* London and New York: Routledge.

Assisted Voluntary Return

Teodora Jovanović

When I spoke with Sara about what happens after an asylum claim is rejected, as hers was, we discussed return and deportations. After an asylum request is denied, people receive a decision that stipulates they have to leave the country, which is “just a piece of paper,” she explained. “There’s no real deportation,” I remarked. “No, no, no, here [in Serbia] there’s nothing for deportation, only IOM, if someone applies for return,” she said. IOM stands for the International Organization for Migration. This organization implements Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programs along the **Balkan route** and globally. While IOM is the main actor implementing these programs on a global level, the programs are also organized under different names in various countries, particularly when carried out by other governmental or non-governmental organizations.

In assisted voluntary return programs, people on the move are provided with financial support to return to the countries they left. This typically includes one-way plane tickets and some cash intended to help people get by. These programs are primarily offered to people whose asylum claims have been rejected. However, campaigns have also targeted those still in the asylum process, as well as individuals outside the asylum system—those whose stay has been irregularized and who originate from non-European countries. Posters with information in multiple languages on how to contact IOM for financial assistance to return to the countries they fled—and from where they embarked on a difficult journey toward Europe—are often seen in asylum centers, camps, and **detention** facilities along the Balkan route. Sponsored ads promoting voluntary return programs also appear on social media feeds of people on the move. For these campaigns, IOM uses the testimonies of migrants themselves, who explain how these programs “helped” them. The question *Want to go home?*, one of the campaign’s main slogans, suggests that home cannot be where the person currently is. AVRR posters prominently feature racialized subjects—women wearing hijabs, people with darker skin, even smiling children.

Although physical force is not used in assisted voluntary returns, they often represent the final step before **forced** deportation—in countries where deportations are actually carried out. In some countries where deportations are not carried out, such as Serbia, voluntary return is a practical substitute for deportation, nas Sara’s account illustrates. Precisely because it is the last available option, Martin Sökefeld (2020) notes that the “voluntariness” of voluntary return is highly questionable.

Voluntary return is presented as an alternative to classic, essentially forced, deportations. The term “voluntary” is built into the very name of such programs to construct them as the opposite of forced return. The emphasis on “voluntariness” masks the structural violence of the European **migration regime** and the fact that options for remaining are extremely limited. The migrants’ “free choice” is placed at the forefront—in the sense that they are supposedly deciding on their own whether to return or not (Cleton and Chauvin 2020). In other words, when people whose presence on European soil has been systematically irregularized sign up for voluntary return, they are not doing so out of genuine “free choice,” but because they are running out of options. A reading of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum makes it clear that the EU has no intention of easing the stay or integration of migrants—instead, it will increasingly invest in so-called “voluntary” return programs. Assisted voluntary return programs are a paradigmatic example of liberal violence (cf. Isakjee et al. 2020). So-called voluntary returns cannot officially be interpreted as forced movement “backward,” but they serve as evidence that current asylum, border, and migration policies rely on insidious tactics to prevent human mobility toward Europe—all under the frameworks of liberal-democratic governance.

16/12/2023

References

Cleton, Laura and Sébastien Chauvin. 2020. “Performing Freedom in the Dutch Deportation Regime. Bureaucratic Persuasion and the Enforcement of ‘Voluntary Return’”. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46/1: 297-313.

Isakjee, Arshad, Thom Davies, Jelena Obradović-Wochnik and Karolína Augustová. 2020. “Liberal Violence and the Racial Borders of the European Union”. *Antipode* 52/6: 1751-1773.

Sökefeld, Martin. 2020. “Forced Migration, the Other Way Round? The Politics of Deporting Afghans from Germany”. In *Forced Migration and Conflict-Induced Displacement. Impacts and Prospective Responses*. Muhammad Makki, Aizah Azam, Syed Ali Akash i Faryal Khan, eds. Islamabad: NUST Press, 1-20.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-asistirani-dobrovoljni-povratak-p?locale=en

At the Bus Station in Bihać

Jan Grah



Bihać bus station, 26 March 2022. Photo: Dagmar Nared

Bihać is the capital of the Una-Sana Canton, located in the north-west of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are many people on the move in the city, trying to continue their journey towards the west, but due to strict border policies, they are often returned (cf. **pushback**) to the city or to **camps** in the surrounding area. They are moving not only towards the EU border, but away from it as well – towards Sarajevo, albeit not voluntarily, but due to circumstance.

Unlike the **game**, they travel to Sarajevo by bus from the station in Bihać, where they buy a ticket for 50 Bosnia and Herzegovina convertible marks. My interlocutors, two migrants from Pakistan and a group of five migrants from India, to whom I spoke in the car park behind the station, said that they had returned from the game the same day or the day before and were waiting for a bus to Sarajevo, where they would receive medical care, food and clothing. They will use this visit to gather strength for their return to the canton and a new opportunity to go on the game. They arrive in Sarajevo, traveling away from the EU border, without any problems, while the route back to Bihać, i.e., back towards the border, causes more problems. The direction of movement therefore plays an important role. But the border has many meanings, and they are changing. The borders of politico-economic entities are no longer at the outer boundaries of territories, but are, in a small way, scattered everywhere where the movement of information, people and things is happening and is controlled (Balibar 2002: 71).

The two migrants from Pakistan were waiting for the bus on the lawn next to the car park, sleeping in sleeping bags, with rubbish lying around them. They looked tired but welcomed me and my colleague very nicely. Only one spoke, saying that he had been forcibly returned the day before and was now waiting to be taken to Sarajevo. The migrants from India were in a good mood and accepted our invitation to talk, but they were not very talkative.

According to a person who helps people on the move in solidarity, migrants can buy a ticket to Bihać in Sarajevo for the same price, but they are not told that migrants are forbidden to use public transport in the Una-Sana canton. On 19 August 2020, the authorities of the canton of Una-Sana adopted a decision banning the entry and transport of migrants to this territory. This is more a ban on types of transport from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina rather than within the canton itself. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the authorities imposed certain restrictions, most of which were justified, but at the same time the situation was also used as an excuse to further restrict people on the move (Mlinarević and Ahmetašević 2022: 11). Nevertheless, it is hard to ignore the question: how can you take money from someone and sell them a ticket, knowing that they are unlikely to reach their destination? It is also striking that this ban is still in force today, even though the various restrictions due to the pandemic are no longer perceptible in the city, and that the police turn a blind eye to the deal and do not criminalise this type of 'assistance.' Also, as journalist Selma Boračić-Mršo writes, the implemented measures raise the question of the consistency of the decrees themselves with the legislation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2018, she notes, two police checks were carried out at two entrances to the Una-Sana canton. One was set up in Ključ, a municipality in the north-west of the country, and the other in Bosanska Otoka, a town 22 km from Bihać. These police officers

refuse and prevent migrants from entering the canton on a daily basis.

Travelling from Sarajevo towards the Una-Sana canton, they are stopped in Ključ, on the border of the canton. According to the mentioned volunteer, these passengers are racially profiled by their darker complexion and, despite having valid tickets, are ordered off the bus. There, they are shown a remote trail, at the end of which they are met by a driver who, for a fee of course, takes them to their destination. Although none of my interlocutors mentioned that they personally crossed this internal border, they said that they had heard several stories similar to the one mentioned by the person who helps migrants in solidarity. It was the first time that the interlocutors from India were waiting for a bus to Sarajevo, as they had only been in B&H for one week, coming from Serbia, and were returned from the game for the first time on that day. The destination of their migration, as well as the destination of our interlocutors from Pakistan, was Italy.



Una-Sana Canton, Bihać, Ključ and Sarajevo in BiH. Map interventions made by Jan Grah

Leaving the canton does not present a problem (Boračić-Mršo 2020). This movement, of course, is towards the interior of B&H, while returning to the canton is much more difficult. First and foremost, as Balibar writes, the issue involves modes of inclusion and exclusion in the spheres of bureaucracy and power relations, as well as relations of communication and cooperation (Balibar 2002: 72).

The police cooperate with the IOM (International Organisation for Migration) and allow migrant minors and families with children, which belong to risk groups, to enter the canton (Boračić-Mršo 2020).

At this point, I can only hope that my interlocutors have gathered strength and received help in Sarajevo, and, above all, have returned to the canton successfully without any major complications.

6/7/2022

References

Balibar, Etienne. 2002. “World Borders, Political Borders”. *PMLA. Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 117/1: 68-78.

Boračić-Mršo, Selima. 2020. “Prvi dan novih zabrana za migrante u Unsko-sanskom kantonu”. *Radio Slobodna Evropa.*

Mlinarević Gorana in Ahmetašević Nidžara. 2022. *People on the Move in BiH 2019-2021. In between. (Un)welcome to no Man's Land.* Sarajevo and Thessaloniki: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship, and Ethnic Minorities, thaught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

Autonomy of Migration

Marijana Hameršak, Uršula Lipovec Čebron, Jelka Zorn

The term autonomy of migration, introduced by Yann Moulier-Boutang (cf. Moulier-Boutang and Garson 1984, see. interview), saw widespread affirmation at the turn of the century through the activities and postulates of anti-racist pro-migrant groups and movements (e.g. Frassanito Network or Kanak Attak), and afterwards through the works of researchers such as Sandro Mezzadra (2006) or the authors contributing to the TRANSIT MIGRATION project (2002-2006): Manuela Bojadžijev, Sabine Hess, Serhat Karakayali and Vassilis S. Tsianos. The works of these authors were promptly recognized in the Balkan route region as well, primarily in the Slovenian context (Bojadžijev 2009; Mezzadra and Rigo 2004; cf. Lipovec Čebron and Zorn 2016), and a decade later they were integrated into the interpretations of the **long summer of migration**, the **Balkan corridor** and the period that followed (Bužinkić and Hameršak 2018; Hameršak et al. 2020; Kurnik 2019; Kurnik and Razsa 2020; Lipovec Čebron and Pistotnik 2016; Stojić Mitrović et al. 2020, etc.), as well as in research into several recent cases of local "exodus", especially the one from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Majstorović 2021), and its convergence with transnational migrant movements leading through Bosnia and Herzegovina (Majstorović 2022).

In the heterogeneous research field of autonomy of migration, which is continuously redefined in response to criticism and new field and theoretical insights, several meanings of autonomy are accepted. Autonomy from the phrase autonomy of migration primarily refers to autonomy in relation to the idea of push and pull factors, **coercion**, labor market demands, migration control and other traditional frameworks for understanding migration. Migration, in this approach, is not unambiguously and without exception determined by some external structure. They have a logic of their own, their own motivations and their own trajectories (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013: 184). Moreover, according to Dimitris Papadopoulos, Niamh Stephenson and Vassilis Tsianos, migration is a "constitutive force" of sovereignty, politics, architecture and border practice, but also more broadly, of different forms of sociality, new relationships, forms and practices (2008: 202; cf. Mezzadra 2011; TRANSIT MIGRATION Forschungsgruppe 2007 and others).

Autonomy in the approach to the autonomy of migration is not inherent in migration itself, but it is a result of the "relation of irreconcilable conflict between migration and attempts to control it" (Scheel 2019: 81). Of course, this is not a binary conflict between migrants on the one hand, and control on the other, but a conflict that includes different actors and forces that are in opposition and negotiate with each other and within themselves. In this context, for example, as elaborated by Stephan Scheel (2019), the visa system can be both a means of control, as well as a tool for its avoidance. This dynamic, fragmentary and processual nature of autonomy of migration was sometimes terminologically emphasized in works not necessarily related to the approach itself, and in which autonomy was explicitly designated as the relative autonomy of migration (e.g. Castles and Miller 1998: 283; Buckel et al. 2020: 61).

In a kind of response to early criticisms that the autonomy of migration homogenizes heterogeneous migrant experiences (Sharma 2009), research into the autonomy of migration has often focused on migrant experiences and practices while relying on ethnographic approaches. Today, ethnography is recognized as a privileged methodological option of the autonomy of migration, and the **irregularization of migration** and the practices of irregular migrants in general as its privileged thematic points (Mezzadra 2011: 122). Irregularization, i.e. the production of irregularity, is not exclusively approached as a result of state actions, nor is it exclusively linked to mechanisms of exclusion from society, the legal order, from the territory, etc. Instead, it is interpreted while keeping in mind the production of different (non-)citizen statuses and related subjects of labour, as a result of differential inclusion and procedures that create different formats of exploitation of labor and workers through different modalities of entering the country and different administrative statuses (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013: 183). In line with the perspective of the autonomy of migration, migrant movements and migrant struggles are also recognized as constitutive factors of irregularization. To put it simply, there would be no irregular migration if people, despite prohibitions and controls, did not cross borders. By circumventing or **appropriating** means of migration control and the prioritization of humanitarian needs (e.g. categorizing vulnerabilities), investing significant financial resources, risking lives and health, and developing and using **mobile commons** such as knowledge of routes and crossing points or methods to receive assistance and protection while on the journey, people migrate regardless of state efforts to prevent them from doing so. In the words of an asylum seeker who was placed in the Asylum Home in Ljubljana in early 2002: *Once a person decides to go where they want to go – no visa or border can stop them, they can only make it difficult* (Lipovec Čebron and Zorn 2016: 62). Or, as phrased, worthy of a newspaper article title, by a young man with whom we spoke in late October 2018 in an improvised camp at the edge of **Velika Kladuša**: *No matter how much they stop us, turn us back and beat us, we will cross this border, even if we have to dig a tunnel all the way to Italy.* In conversations with people on the move at different "stations" of the **Balkan route**, we easily recognized autonomy both in the temporal dimension, as the migrants were the ones deciding for themselves when to move on, i.e., when they would go on the **game**, as well as in the spatial dimension, as they could choose the path or direction of movement for themselves, to a certain extent. However, in the field, we could also clearly see how the autonomy of movement and decision-making became more limited and modified the closer they were to the countries of the European Union, where the precarious autonomy from the borders is replaced by the desire to control virtually every aspect of migration.

Approaches that rely on the autonomy of migration are often criticized for neglecting the repressive aspects of border control. While responding to these criticisms, Papadopoulos and Tsianos point out that it is unquestionable that migration is shaped by:

> Harsh, often deadly, realities of control. However, the point is migration is not just responding to them. Rather it creates new realities that allow migrants to exercise their own mobility against or beyond existing control. In this sense, the autonomy of migration thesis is about training our senses to see movement before capital (but not independent from it) and mobility before control (but not as disconnected from it) (2013: 184).

When looking at the issue from this perspective, border control mechanisms and systems are constantly being changed and adapted to unauthorized and also ever-changing, always-new migrant practices (Hess 2010). On the micro level, adaptations are manifested in the daily modifications of interventions at the borders and elsewhere, in new places and ways of control that incorporate features of migrant practices that they try to control or prevent. The Balkan corridor, which imitated an autonomous, self-organized migrant movement with its changing itineraries and constant improvisation (Hameršak and Pleše 2018: 16-21), is an example of systems developed for the purpose of controlling migrant movements taking over the characteristics of those same movements. A somewhat more abstract example is the increasing emphasis on controlling routes, or the shift from border control to movement control, which the literature refers to as “acknowledging the power of migrants’ itineraries” (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015: 905-906).

The approach of autonomy of migration has a pronounced political dimension. In addition to the political aspect of migration, the autonomy of migration is also interested in the possibilities of political intervention and transformation of current policies. By crossing borders they are forbidden to cross, migrants position themselves as “political subjects by self-authorising themselves to take what border and citizenship regimes deprive them of, without and instead of claiming it from someone” (Scheel 2019: 214). Therefore, even the smallest movement or just a hint or desire to move can in totality (and historical extension) “result in political moments, events, and acts that can be central to understanding ruptures in social and political life” (Nyers 2015: 26-27). The mentioned notions, however, do not imply that the autonomy of migration necessarily romanticizes and glorifies migrant practices, which is an accusation often and incidentally directed at it (cf. Scheel 2019: 49-55). In the words of Mezzadra: “The proponents of the autonomy of migration approach do not in any way contend that (irregular or regular) migrants can be thought of as a kind of avant-garde or as revolutionary subjects. Rather, such an approach locates the analysis of irregularity within a wider analytical framework that examines the transformations of contemporary capitalism” (2011: 137).

The autonomy of migration, despite its imprecise, perhaps even tendentious name, as well as the abstractness and occasional vagueness of its starting points, is recognized as important due to its terminological apparatus (e.g. the already mentioned appropriation, mobile commons) and its specific, dynamic and action-oriented perspective, i.e. because it encourages another kind of “gaze” (Mezzadra 2011: 121). The focus of that gaze, which “transforms perspectives on migration into perspectives of migration” (Bojadžijev 2009: 134), is on migration and migrant practices. Simply put, just as **humanitarianism** primarily views migration and migrants through the concepts of suffering, oppression and victimhood, the matrix of autonomy of migration sees them from the perspective of constant migrant struggles, negotiations, resistance and protests, which are one of the privileged sub-themes in the field (Stierl et al. 2022). Within this framework, state borders become the site of social and political disputes, and often the futile struggle of states to maintain their territorial sovereignty and the monopoly on deciding which movements are legitimate, and which are not (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015: 898). In short, the autonomy of migration replaces the border as a place of materialization of the norm with the border as a place of struggle or “the border as a method”, as termed in the title of the formative book in the field of autonomy of migration written by Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013).

10/12/2022

References

Bojadžijev, Manuela. 2009. “Boji migracij in gibanje za globalno pravičnost”. *Časopis za kritiko znanosti, domišljijo in novo antropologijo* 238: 133-137. Prijevod Barbara Beznec.

Buckel, Sonja, Fabian Georgi, John Kannankulam and Jens Wissel. 2020. “Europski granični režim u krizi. Teorija, metode i analize kritičkog istraživanja Europe”. *3k: kapital, klasa, kritika* 6/6: 27-119. Translate Stipe Ćurković.

Bužinkić, Emina and Marijana Hameršak, ur. 2018. *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor: Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu.

Casas-Cortes, Maribel, Sebastian Cobarrubias and John Pickles. 2015. “Riding Routes and Itinerant Borders. Autonomy of Migration and Border Externalization”. *Antipode* 47/4: 894-914.

Castles, Stephen and Mark J. Miller. 1998. *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World.* Houndmills and London: Macmillan.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. “Confined in Movement: The Croatian Section of the Balkan Corridor”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor: Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb), Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu, 9-41.

Hameršak, Marijana, Sabine Hess, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović, eds. 2020. “Frontier Within”. *movements: Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 5/1 (special issue).

Hess, Sabine. 2010. “The Invention of 'Transit Migration'. Theoretical and Methodological Considerations on Illegal Migration in Europe’s Southeastern Border Region”. *Ethnologia Balkanica* 14: 129-146.

Kurnik, Andrej. 2019. “Migracija onkraj pravnega diskurza. Politična subjektiviteta migracije in skupki mobilnosti”. *Časopis za kritiko znanosti, domišljijo in novo antropologijo* 47/278: 9-27.

Kurnik, Andrej and Maple Razsa. 2020. “Reappropriating The Balkan Route. Mobility Struggles and Joint-Agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* 52: 7-23.

Lipovec Čebron, Uršula and Jelka Zorn. 2016. “Avtonomija in nadzor migracij v evropskih ‘tamponskih conah’”. *Dve domovini* / *Two Homelands* 43: 61-75.

Lipovec Čebron, Uršula and Sara Pistotnik. 2016. “Balkanska migracijska pot. Od upora na mejah do striptiza humanizma”. *Časopis* za *kritiko znanosti, domišljijo in novo antropologijo* 44/264 (poseban broj).

Majstorović, Danijela. 2021. *Discourse and Affect in Post-socialist Bosnia and Herzegovina: Peripheral Selves.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Majstorović, Danijela. 2022. “Rethinking Migrant Figures and Solidarity from the Peripheral Borderland of Bosnia and Herzegovina”. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* (online preprint).

Mezzadra, Sandro. 2006. *Diritto di fuga. Migrazioni, cittadinanza, globalizzazione.* Verona: Ombre Corte.

Mezzadra Sandro. 2011. “The Gaze of Autonomy. Capitalism, Migration, and Social Struggles”. In *The Contested Politics of Mobility. Borderzones and Irregularity*. Vicky Squire, ed. London: Routledge, pp 121-142. Translated by Rodrigo Nunes.

Mezzadra, Sandro and Brett Neilson. 2013. *Border as Method, or the Multiplication of Labour.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Mezzadra, Sandro and Enrica Rigo. 2004. “Evropa migrantov”. *Časopis* za *kritiko znanosti, domišljijo in novo antropologijo* 32/217-218: 162-175. Translated by Mirt Komel.

Moulier-Boutang, Yann and Jean-Pierre Garson. 1984. “Major Obstacles to Control of Irregular Migrations. Prerequisites to Policy”. *International Migration Review* 18/3: 579-592.

Nyers, Peter. 2015. “Migrant Citizenships and Autonomous Mobilities”. *Migration, Mobility, & Displacement* 1/1: 23-39.

Papadopoulos, Dimitris and Vassilis S. Tsianos. 2013. “After Citizenship. Autonomy of Migration, Organisational Ontology and Mobile Commons”. *Citizenship Studies* 17/2: 178-196.

Papadopoulos, Dimitris; Niamh Stephenson and Vassilis Tsianos. 2008. *Escape Routes. Control and Subversion in 21st Century.* London: Pluto.

Scheel, Stephan. 2019. *Autonomy of Migration? Appropriating Mobility within Biometric Border Regimes.* London and New York: Routledge.

Sharma, Nandita. 2009. “Escape Artists. Migrants and the Politics of Naming”. *Subjectivity* 29/1: 467-476.

Stierl, Maurice, Manuela Bojadzijev, Nicholas De Genova, Julia Eckert, Shahram Khosravi, Clara Lecadet, Federica Mazzara, Anne McNevin and Peter Nyers. 2022. “Struggle” (*Minor Keywords of Political Theory*. *Migration as a Critical Standpoint. A Collaborative Project of Collective Writing*. Nicholas De Genova and Martina Tazzioli, eds.). *Environment and Planning C* 40/4: 781-875.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta, Nidžara Ahmetašević, Barbara Beznec and Andrej Kurnik. 2020. *The Dark Sides of Europeanisation. Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EUropean Border Regime.* Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung for Southeast Europe.

TRANSIT MIGRATION Forschungsgruppe, ur. 2007. *Turbulente Ränder. Neue Perspektiven auf Migration an den Grenzen Europas.* Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-autonomija-migracija-p?locale=en

Backpack

Ivana Budimir, Barbara Kuna, Sara Pekić

A backpack is an item closely associated with travel, used to store primarily personal and essential items during journeys. Its distinct characteristic is the way it is worn on the back. Due to its size and the nature of travel, especially **irregularized migration**, it is primarily used to carry basic travel necessities such as socks, certain food items (e.g., **onions**), sleeping bags, and similar essentials that facilitate easier movement (cf. Judzińska and Sendyka 2022: 7-16).

A backpack, like many other objects in various contexts, including migration, can serve a dual purpose - as an object of practical and emotional value (Povrzanović Frykman 2010: 47). It can carry material objects primarily for practical use, but, as we learn from other migration contexts, it can also contain items of an intimate nature, such as love letters (cf. De León 2015: 10) or bracelets. They can also be aide-mémoires (Marcoux according to Povrzanović Frykman 2010: 49) - “objects that help preserve the consistency and continuity of memory” (Povrzanović Frykman 2010: 49). However, caution is necessary to avoid “slipping” into objectification and dehumanization of the people we are writing about.

In this text, we will discuss a backpack found on the road from Trieste to the hinterland, near the village of Boršt, with the Italian name Sant'Antonio in Bosco, close to the border with Slovenia, right next to a narrow, winding road and a family house. Hidden migrant routes passed through this area throughout the 20th century, as we learned from the locals and lecturers during a student field workshop, during which this text was created. At first glance, the dark blue backpack by the road on dry, yellow leaves near the stairs leading from the **forest** to the road did not seem special in any way. It was a medium-sized backpack, turned upside down, with white letters spelling “Perth College” on the front, featuring two large compartments and a smaller one, as well as mesh pockets for bottles on both sides. Was the backpack truly from the eponymous college in Australia, or was the inscription arbitrary, a sign of another fast fashion industry product? Judging by appearances, it had been discarded, like so many others we had seen in the forest near the border. The backpack had mimetically blended with nature while simultaneously standing out. Abandoned, like roadside **garbage**, it seemed untouched, although it certainly had not been. Animals had touched it, maybe even moved it, and insects and larvae had taken up residence. In our uncertainty, we observed the backpack, wondering if it belonged to a person on the move. The intense smell of human sweat, reminiscent of long and arduous journeys, hiking, and hiding from main roads, was the first clear sign that it was a backpack abandoned after such a journey. We wondered if we would touch it if we were there as tourists or casual passersby (De León and Hameršak 2022: 244), rather than on a student research expedition. We examined, searched, and photographed the backpack and its contents with the idea of contributing to the documentation of irregularized migration, recognizing and recording traces of hidden movements in space – archaeological evidence that someone had indeed passed this way and left a mark behind (Judzińska and Sendyka 2022: 3).



Abandoned backpack by the roadside to Boršt, 24 March 2023. Photo: Ivana Budimir

The backpack, as an abandoned artifact with documentary value, symbolizes the arduous migrant journey but also the severed connection between a person and an object. Our initial emotional reaction to the backpack was minimal, but our discomfort and surprise were apparent. We spent some time in silence, standing over the backpack. Our position when examining the backpack was clear – we were individuals who had come to the “scene,” and we attributed various meanings to the object we encountered, assuming that “on transnational journeys, objects are not only present but are often of crucial importance” (Povrzanović Frykman 2010: 46).

The movement of people is inevitably linked to the movement of things, and negotiating meanings de facto implies communication with objects and through them (cf. Povrzanović Frykman 2010: 43-44). In the abandoned backpack on the Italian-Slovenian border, we found items from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, previous game points. Next to the backpack was a discarded piece of paper wrapping from Puma socks. Based on the contents of the backpack and the experience gained from “visiting” places where people on the move gathered in Trieste and its surroundings, we easily deduced that the backpack could have belonged to a young man. We assumed it was discarded because it was no longer needed near the end of the journey, close to Trieste, and might even have represented an “identification mark,” a potential threat, a sign by which the police could recognize an “illegal” migrant, according to William Walters (2015: 476). Considering that the backpack appeared untouched for a long time, worn down by the influence of weather conditions, we questioned the symbolism of the backpack in that area. Therefore, not only had its owner discarded it, but the local residents had also, paradoxically, abandoned it. They hadn't thrown it away, as one might expect for roadside trash, but left it where it had likely been discarded.



Receipt from the abandoned backpack, 24 March 2023. Photo: Marijana Hameršak

The receipt we found in the abandoned backpack by the roadside might not seem special at first glance. However, it was not only a part of the backpack's contents but also a source of information about items purchased for the journey, some of which were still in the backpack when we found it, at least in traces or parts of the packaging, while others were probably consumed, discarded, or lost. The receipt paints a picture of the backpack's owner, who, like many of us, indulged in minor vices in addition to needing sources of quick energy for the journey. The receipt predominantly lists sweets, along with two different brands of energy drinks, a two-liter bottle of Karlovačko beer, and Marlboro Red cigarettes. It was precisely because beer was listed on the receipt that we questioned whether we had correctly assessed it as a backpack used during the journey. We wondered if there was room for beer on such a trip and realized that consuming alcoholic beverages did not necessarily mean that a person was not on a journey; it only implied certain assumptions about the journey and the people traveling. Some of these assumptions related to our perception of the journey as challenging, as well as to the abstention from alcohol for religious reasons. We found parts of some items from the receipt in the backpack, including Snickers bar wrappers and the paper packaging holding four Red Bull cans.

Out of the ten items, half were sweets: Tops cookies, Snickers bars, Nutella biscuits, Jimmy chocolate, and Napolitanke wafers. Only two items on the receipt were non-food items: cigarettes and a bag. What we could conclude was that these were small items that served as a kind of power-up, helping a person endure a long and potentially difficult journey more easily. The place of purchase was Konzum, on Trg Ante Starčevića, in the underpass of the Main Zagreb Railway Station, which was bustling with people in **transit** due to changes in migration policies at the end of 2022. The store's address on the receipt confirmed our initial assumption that it was a migrant's backpack.

We left the place where we found the discarded backpack with more open questions than answers. We tried to rethink them in subsequent discussions and in this text.

18/07/2023

Translated by Sara Pekić

References

De León, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves. Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press. Photographs by Michael Wells.

De León, Jason and Marijana Hameršak. 2022. “Interview with Jason De León”. *Etnološka tribina* 52/45: 238-249.

Judzińska, Natalia and Roma Sendyka. 2022. “The Crisis at the Polish-Belarusian Border. Sites and Things”. *Sprawy Narodowościowe: Seria nowa* 54: 1-35.

Povrzanović Frykman, Maja. 2010. “Materijalne prakse bivanja i pripadanja u transnacionalnim društvenim prostorima”. *Studia ethnologica Croatica* 22/1: 39-60.

Walters, William. 2015. “Migration, Vehicles, and Politics. Three Theses on Viapolitics”. *European Journal of Social Theory* 18/4: 469-488.

Notes

The text resulted from student research field workshops in Trieste and Ljubljana in the spring of 2023, organized by the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana and the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb.

Balkan Circuit

Marta Stojić Mitrović

After the closure of the formalized migration **corridor** in 2016, a non-linear, fragmented, often circular movement has become a dominant characteristic of migration movements in the Balkans. The movement is founded on constant attempts to continue the journey or to stay anchored at a certain location, despite efforts from the border regime to prevent such actions with its system of **pushbacks**, **pullbacks**, readmissions, the Dublin Regulation, etc. In contrast to the stereotypical representation of the **Balkan route** as unidirectional, the phrase the Balkan circuit or circle emphasizes the existence of much more complex forms of movement across the Western Balkan states to the European Union and back. The **Western Balkan** borderscape is crisscrossed by amenable, multidirectional and often capillary migration routes. These routes, which in many different ways cut through the territories of national states and the borders between them, are the product of increasingly intensive securitarian practices.

The concept does not refer to the circulation of people on the move exclusively, but also to the circulation of other actors in the migration processes, police officers, humanitarian organizations, activists, which are traversing from one location to another in accordance with the dynamics of migration movements and the political responses to them. Besides people, knowledge, solidarity practices, techniques and technologies of surveillance and movement control, protocols of reception, diverse narratives, etc. also go round the Balkan circuit, contributing to the complex picture of the peripheral, Western Balkan borderscape (Stojić Mitrović and Vilenica 2019).

1/7/2022

References

Stojić Mitrović, Marta and Ana Vilenica. 2019. “Enforcing and Disrupting Circular Movement in an EU Borderscape. Housingscaping in Serbia”. *Citizenship Studies* 23/6: 540-558.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-balkanski-kruzni-tok-p?locale=en

Balkan Corridor

Marta Stojić Mitrović, Jelka Zorn, Drago Župarić-Iljić

The formal establishment of the migration corridor in late summer 2015 came as the climax of a **long summer of migration**, when the countries along the Balkan route officially joined efforts to facilitate the transit of people on the move from Greece to Austria and Germany. This collaboration involved various activities, from simplifying administrative regulations for entry and transit, organizing transportation and waiting areas, to enhancing cooperation among the states along the route. Although the terms “Balkan route” and “Balkan corridor” carry multiple meanings and differ from one another, in public discourse they have been equated to such an extent that the closure of the corridor created the impression that the **Balkan route** itself had also been shut down.

The Balkan corridor developed gradually, as states and their administrations absorbed and intensified practices that had already been autonomously carried out by a wide variety of actors, from Turkey to Central Europe. These practices, not initiated by the states, emerged spontaneously, from below, as local action—through resistance, conflict, and negotiation—participating in the creation of an informal corridor that allowed for faster movement, thus penetrating the repressive border regime. These developments showed that political, social, and economic dynamics at the regional level can have an unexpected impact on the European migration and **border regime**.

In the spring of 2015, people on the move in Serbia mentioned the existence of organized bus transportation from Thessaloniki and Athens to the border with North Macedonia, where an increasing number of people were crossing the border. Since North Macedonia enforced a strict policy of penalizing drivers who were found to be transporting undocumented people, people on the move opted to travel on foot, following the railway tracks, mostly at night, in order to avoid detection. In late April 2015, 14 people lost their lives when they were struck by a train. In response to this tragedy, a Facebook group titled Help the Refugees in Macedonia was formed, where citizens of North Macedonia, activists from Greece, Serbia, and other countries, along with people on the move themselves, began exchanging information and coordinating support—ranging from food and shelter to medical assistance. Civil society organizations successfully pressured Macedonian authorities to legalize motorized transit for this group: in June 2015, a 72-hour stay permit was granted after the group expressed their intention to seek asylum (Beznec et al. 2016).

In Serbia, in May 2015, youth from Preševo, gathered in the informal network *Youth for Refugees*, began regularly assisting people arriving from the Tabanovce area. To prevent **taxi drivers** transporting people on the move from Miratovac to Preševo (and beyond) from charging unrealistic and significantly inflated prices, volunteers initiated talks with international organizations such as UNHCR and Doctors Without Borders to find a way to organize free transport. UNHCR initially managed to arrange transportation by off-road vehicles from the border for people with limited mobility, children, pregnant women, the elderly, and the sick. Later, when North Macedonia amended its law that allowed transit and organized railway transport from Gevgelija to Tabanovce, it also secured bus transportation for all (Stojić Mitrović 2021). In the spring of 2015, Hungary decided to start building a border **fence** to block entry and transit through its territory, while in the south, North Macedonia was announcing the legalization of transit to facilitate it. In response, Serbia, through a government decision, formed a working group to address the issue of mixed migration flows. The regulation of movement was accelerated by new capacities, temporary registration centers at the entry points to Macedonia (Preševo, June-July 2015) and Bulgaria (Dimitrovgrad, November 2015), enabling fast and unhindered transportation by buses and taxis to the north (carried out, unlike other countries in the corridor, by private carriers).

The announcement of the completion of Hungary’s border fence led to a marked acceleration of movement in August and September 2015. The completion of the fence and the closure of the border on September 16 were followed by protests. Serbian state officials, together with people on the move, stood in front of the gates, seeking shelter from tear gas and water cannons and assisting the injured. On the same day, transportation was organized from the Hungarian border and the south toward Croatia. In the period that followed, Serbia established transit-reception centers at the so-called exit points along the Croatian border (**Šid** Station, Principovac, and Adaševci) to provide short-term reception, where people on the move waited to continue their journeys. This redirection of the main route from Hungary toward Croatia, along with organized transport through Croatia and Slovenia to Austria, marked the beginning of formal international coordination of the Balkan migration corridor. This was also a period of intensified police cooperation, primarily through the exchange of information, expertise, and field coordination (joint patrols from different countries, controls, juxtaposed controls, harmonization of administrative forms, etc.), and of closer alignment between Western Balkan states and the EU, which provided political and financial incentives to control migration (Stojić Mitrović 2021).

Croatia had a different experience with the formalization of the corridor (e.g., Župarić-Iljić and Valenta 2019; Bužinkić and Hameršak 2018). After Hungary began gradually closing its border with Serbia on 15 September 2015, the route shifted toward Croatia. The following day, media already reported that several thousand people had entered through the “green border,” moving from the direction of Šid toward Tovarnik. Unlike Serbia, the Croatian state took on a dominant role in regulating movement from the very beginning. The state’s temporary, ad hoc solutions were oriented toward establishing an operational and logistical system that aimed to maintain full control over the entry, transit, and exit of people on the move across Croatian territory toward the next transfer and transit point within the corridor, toward Slovenia and onward to Western European countries. By mid-September 2015, following the first mass arrivals of people on the move in Croatia, buses were organized in Tovarnik to transport people to designated locations, where Croatian police directed them onto trains with scheduled travel routes toward Hungarian and Slovenian authorities, who would then take over.

In parallel with this form of strictly controlled transit, transportation was also organized to registration centers in Ježevo, Zagreb, Čepin, Beli Manastir, and elsewhere (Hameršak and Pleše 2018). Shortly after the first large-scale entries, on 20 September 2015, the Opatovac reception center, i.e. Camp Opatovac, was opened with a capacity of up to 5000 people. The plan was to bring individuals entering Croatia at Tovarnik, Bapska, and other unmarked crossings along the eastern border to Opatovac, where they would be registered, accommodated for no more than 48 hours, and then transported by train further toward Hungary, and partially toward

Slovenia. At the same time, numerous smaller groups of self-organized citizens began supporting people on the move at the Zagreb railway station, near the green border crossing at Bapska, and on the bridge at Ključ Brdovečki. During this period, the first larger volunteer and activist associations were also formed, including the Welcome Initiative and Are You Syrious?. However, after Hungary closed its border with Croatia in mid-October 2015, preparations started for adapting and opening a new camp. On 3 November 2015, the **Winter Reception and Transit Center** near Slavonski Brod was opened, and the Opatovac Center ceased operations. The new camp was completely fenced-off, with no possibility of free movement, and divided into multiple sectors, with a total capacity of 5000 people (Župarić-Iljić and Valenta 2019). With the opening of the Slavonski Brod camp, the systematic practice of a securitized, controlled, and humanitarianized corridor for the rapid transit of people on the move continued, stretching from Idomeni in northern Greece to Šentilj in northern Slovenia. At one point, an agreement was even reached among the chiefs of police from countries along the Balkan route to use a unified certificate, issued in Gevgelija, which would be valid from the North Macedonian-Greek border all the way to Austria.

Slovenia's inclusion in the corridor followed a somewhat different dynamic. As in Croatia, movement was strictly controlled, and this segment of the route also functioned as a form of **mobile detention** for people on the move. On 18 September 2015, a large group of people on the move were stranded between Croatia and Slovenia, at the Rigonce–Harmica and Obrežje–Bregana border crossings. Every few hours, new groups of around a thousand people arrived. The police held people at the border, even at night, for several days. At first, no formal organization was present, and there was no organized distribution of food or clothing; self-organized activists could access the stranded people only occasionally (Lunaček Brumen and Meh 2016: 29). What unfolded, both in real time and through media coverage, was a "spectacle at the border" (De Genova 2002), a carefully staged enactment of exclusion. It was a spectacle of selection of people, a display of police power, the withholding of information, and imprisonment in the open. At the same time, borders became visible as spaces of negotiation, resistance, and **solidarity**.

Over time, the provision of aid became institutionalized: large heated tents were set up in Dobova and Šentilj, with regular food distribution and access to medical care (Lunaček Brumen and Meh 2016: 29). Humanitarian assistance was fully taken over by aid organizations under the coordination of Civil Protection, which had received an official mandate from the state. Volunteers were granted access only through humanitarian organizations and under their terms. It is important to note that even before the formal establishment of the corridor, in August 2015, the Antiracist Front Without Borders (Protirasistična fronta brez meja) emerged in Ljubljana, an informal network of collectives that initially organized several "Refugees Welcome" demonstrations. Soon after, they began traveling to the borders to meet newly arriving people and distribute humanitarian aid, eventually opening their spaces and collectives to refugees. In the former squat of the Autonomous Factory Rog (Avtonomna tovarna Rog), they organized welcome evenings with refugees and offered space for self-organization (Pistotnik et al. 2016: 105–6). Migrant collectives such as Embassy Rog and Second Home, as well as the knitting group No Border Craft, were formed during this period, all operating out of the former Autonomous Factory Rog.

With the implementation of refugee **profiling** along the Balkan corridor in November 2015, the corridor remained open only to so-called **SIA** nationals: those from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Over time, access to the corridor was restricted further: first excluding Afghans, and later other groups as well, including Syrians from the Damascus region, or those whose documents issued in Greece listed January 1 as their birth date (Beznec et al. 2016; Stojić Mitrović 2021).

Just as the corridor did not emerge overnight, it did not end abruptly either. The entry into force of the EU–Turkey agreement, adopted on 18 March 2016, is commonly regarded as its formal conclusion. However, state-organized transit had already been suspended several days earlier. In contrast to its formation, which was driven from below, the dismantling of the corridor was imposed from above. Accordingly, while the corridor had developed from the south toward the north and west, its closure unfolded in the opposite direction: from Austria, through Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia, down to North Macedonia. The full closure of the camp in Slavonski Brod took place in mid-April 2016, which marked the official end of the Balkan corridor. Even after the corridor was dismantled, people on the move continued to arrive in Zagreb and Ljubljana, albeit through much more expensive, slower, and significantly more dangerous routes. The consequences of the corridor continued to be felt for months, and even years, after its closure. Western European states deported hundreds of people, who had reached these countries via the corridor, back to Croatia under the **Dublin Regulation**. This mass movement in reverse soon became known as the reverse Balkan route, or the **counter-corridor**.

During its formation and duration, the corridor formally brought together countries that were otherwise bound by complex and often strained relationships: former Yugoslav republics, EU Member States, candidate countries, Schengen states, and aspirants to Schengen accession. These differences ceased to function as stumbling blocks in pursuit of a shared goal and interest: to ensure the fastest and smoothest possible transit, with minimal delays. Although the term humanitarian corridor was frequently invoked in media discourse, the corridor involved the suppression of freedom of movement, the **forced** routing of people along predetermined paths and means of transport, and the exclusion of certain individuals often based on racial profiling disguised as linguistic testing. Through techniques and technologies of **humanitarian exception**, the corridor gradually evolved into an increasingly effective security apparatus for managing and repressing unwanted mobility. As Zoppi and Puleri (2021) emphasize, the order of things on the Balkan route underwent a profound and irreversible transformation following the corridor's closure. It did not return to its earlier form: a relatively spontaneous, overland, and significantly less dangerous smuggling passage to the EU (particularly when compared to sea routes). Instead, it crystallized into the kind of space it remains today—surveilled and securitized, marked by border control, militarization, and human suffering.

20/10/2023

References

Beznec, Barbara, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2016. *Governing the Balkan Route. Macedonia, Serbia and the European*

Border Regime. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe.

Bužinkić, Emina and Marijana Hameršak, eds. 2018. *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu.

De Genova, Nicholas. 2002. “Migrant ‘Illegality’ and Deportability in Everyday Life”. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 419-447.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. “Confined in Movement. The Croatian Section of the Balkan Corridor”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context*. Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and Munich: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 9-41.

Lunaček Brumen, Sarah and Ela Meh. 2016. “'Vzpon in padec' koridorja. Nekaj refleksij o spremembah na balkanski migracijski poti od poletja 2015”. *Časopis za kritiko znanosti, domišljijo in novo antropologijo 44/*264: 21-45.

Pistotnik, Sara, Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Nina Kozinc. 2016. “'Ta prostor je postal *naš*, skupen prostor. To je zame cilj Fronte'. Intervju z aktivistkama in aktivistom Protirasistične fronte brez meja”. *Časopis za kritiko znanosti, domišljijo in novo antropologijo* 44/264: 99-118.

Zoppi, Marco and Marco Puleri. 2021. “The Balkan Route (and Its Afterlife). The New Normal in the European Politics of Migration”. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 24/3: 576-593.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta. 2021. *Evropski granični režim i eksternalizacija kontrole granica EU. Srbija na balkanskoj migracijskoj ruti*. Beograd: Etnografski institut SANU.

Župarić-Iljić, Drago and Marko Valenta. 2019. “Opportunistic Humanitarianism and Securitization Discomfort Along the Balkan Corridor: The Croatian Experience”. In *Refugee Protection and Civil Society in Europe*. Margit Feischmidt, Ludger Pries and Celine Cantat, eds. New York: Springer International Publishing, 129-160.

Balkan Route

Marta Stojić Mitrović

The term “Balkan route” is used to geographically localize and segment the movement between Southwest Asia and Europe. Depending on the broader registers in which it is used, the term takes on different meanings, from technical ones, emphasizing geographical positioning, direction or items (i.e. objects, knowledge, people, money, etc.), to political ones, emphasizing the specific relations within and between the Balkan states, as well as with other collective political subjects, such as the EU, and criminological ones, which format the Balkan route as an object of increased police interest and a place of development and implementation of securitarian practices, as well as cultural ones, which incorporates the Balkan Route into the stereotypical representations of the Balkans. These registers of meaning and their elements are opposed, interwoven and complement each other, thereby creating simplified, ahistorical, de-contextualized imageries of the Balkan route, ready to be instrumentalized in concrete socio-political interactions. Thus, the term Balkan route refers to different things depending on who is using it and in which context.

Although today we geographically associate the Balkan route with a unidirectional, primarily migratory movement from Turkey and Greece, through the countries of the former Yugoslavia to Austria or Italy, its topology is far from uniform. In different periods, in relation to different objects and directions of movement of those objects, it encompassed the territories of different states. Moreover, in certain articulations it even excluded what we today, due to normalization of viewing the Balkan route through the prism of migration movements in 2015, usually mean by this term. For example, in its report from 2008, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime described the Balkan route and mentioned the so-called northern direction, which completely omits Greece and the countries of the former Yugoslavia, and includes Afghanistan – Pakistan/Iran – Turkey – Bulgaria – Romania – Hungary or Ukraine – Slovakia or Poland – Austria or Germany (UNODC 2008: 61).

The term Balkan route comes from police and security service circles, where it was used exclusively in the context of two-way smuggling of narcotics and weapons (UNODC 2008). The movement of people, i.e. migration, started to rival drugs and weapons as items moving along the Balkan route during the 1990s. People primarily from the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but Iraq as well, fleeing wars and difficult political and economic situations, were moving towards the countries of the European Union, which influenced a more radical coordinated securitization of the European migration policy (Strategy 1998; Hess and Kasparek 2022) and the fledgling idea of establishing the concept of the route as one of the central objects (but also tools) of migration control and governance (Hess and Kasparek 2022; Hameršak et al. 2020). This period was marked by the first discursive formation of the Balkan route as a unidirectional migration route, and the Balkan countries emerged as the dominant countries of origin or **transit** for people on the move, especially those who, in their destination countries, are most often administratively categorized as asylum seekers and refugees. However, the term Balkan route continued to be mentioned almost exclusively in professional discourses, i.e. it was used by the police, security services, politicians, humanitarian and other civil sector organizations. The situation practically remained the same until 2015 and the **long summer of migration**, when the term entered the broader public discourse directly from the securitarian one: the former Frontex, today’s European Border and Coast Guard Agency, identified the so-called Western Balkan migration route as one of the five main migration routes leading to the countries of Western and Central Europe, and one of the two land migration routes.

The securitarian-criminological register through which the Balkan route is observed is intertwined with the perceptions and discourses about the Balkans as a disordered, chaotic, linguistically and, above all, politically fragmented space, crisscrossed with closed borders of states born in bloody ethno-national conflicts from formerly economically and politically more powerful complex political entities (Riedler and Stefanov 2021). These representations are reflected in the relationship between two contemporary collectivized political subjects, the EU and the **Western Balkans**, which are in asymmetric and antagonistic relations. These cultural, political and criminological registers interwoven in the context of paternalistic neo-colonialism saw intensified migration movements from Greece and Turkey to the countries of Central Europe during 2015. A specific image of the Balkan route emerged in the media at that time, portrayed as a synecdoche for the so-called refugee/migration crisis, which is dominated by images of long lines of people walking through the fields and roads of the Balkan states, people in parks, crowded train carriages, people trying to board trains, etc. In the public discourse, the Balkan route and the extra-legal formalized migration corridor, which was formed at the end of the summer of 2015 and enabled an internationally coordinated and state-organized reception and transit of people from the Greek-North Macedonian border, through Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia to Austria and further, were practically merged into a single concept. The discursive combining of the route and the corridor went to such an extent that it lead to a misconclusion that the closure of the corridor meant the Balkan route was closed as well, i.e. that the agreement between the European Union and Turkey, which entered into force on 18 March 2016, resulted in a complete cessation of migration from that direction, and further by land to Central and Western Europe (Obradovic-Wochnik and Stojić Mitrović 2016).

During the period of the gradual closure of the corridor, which started with the introduction of **profiling** in November 2015, a new wave of securitization happened at the external southeastern land borders of the European Union. This new wave of securitization was manifested in stricter border controls, the erection of fences, an increase in the number of border services, introduction of new technologies, usage of dogs, drones, smart fences etc. In addition to physical obstacles, practices such as **pushbacks**, arbitrary detention and restriction of freedom of movement, etc. were applied, as well as changes in laws or their interpretations which legalized such repressive practices (Stojić Mitrović et al. 2020). The denial of asylum rights and other forms of protection became more widespread, criminal codes related to illegal entry and stay in the territory of countries were tightened, as well as the provisions for offering assistance to people whose stay is not legally regulated (this represents the **criminalization of solidarity**). In the coming years, and especially from 2018, when Bosnia and Herzegovina became its dominant section, the Balkan route again entered the focus of wider public discourse. However, this time the dominant images were not of the unidirectional hypertransit, lines of people and movement, but images of people being stuck, camps, poor living conditions, violence, **forced** circulation (Stojić Mitrović et al. 2020). In the public discourse, this is paradoxically presented as a consequence of the traditionally poor management of migration

(and other sectors) in the Balkan states. In this covert externalization, the influence of the EU and individual Member States, using their position of power and conditioning the Balkan states in various ways by instrumentalizing their tenuous economic and political situation, while in fact financing and directing this management, remains in the background.

Contrary to the increasing invisibility of migration movements along the Balkan route, they are in fact becoming more and more spread out, as people constantly try to find new paths to their desired destination. In addition to forced stay, as a consequence of their incapability to continue the journey, the situation is marked by **forced** movement, changing direction, returning, circling, repeated border crossings, searching for new, often riskier ways to advance. This is why it is becoming technically more difficult to speak of the Balkan route, and people in academic circles have resorted to using the term the **Balkan circuit**, which, as a product of securitization practices, but also in resistance to them, is becoming the dominant form of migration movements following the closure of the formalized corridor. Thus, the Balkan route is becoming more of a dead end, and, instead of an antechamber, a kind of back yard of the **zoned** European Union used to corral unwanted people on the move (Stojić Mitrović et al. 2020).

10/7/2022

References

Hameršak, Marijana, Sabine Hess, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2020. "The Forging of the Balkan Route. Contextualizing the Border Regime in the EU Periphery". *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 5/1: 9-29.

Hess, Sabine and Bernd Kasparek. 2022. "Historicizing the Balkan Route. Governing Migration through Mobility". In *Viapolitics. Borders, Migration, and the Power of Locomotion*. William Walters, Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani, eds. Durham: Duke University Press, 183-207.

Obradovic-Wochnik, Jelena and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2016. "The Hidden Costs of Closed Borders for Migrants Stuck in Serbia". *The Conversation.*

Riedler, Florian and Nenad Stefanov. 2021. "Bordering and Mobility as an Approach to the History of the Balkan Route". In *The Balkan Route. Historical Transformations from Via Militaris to Autoput*. Florian Riedler and Nenad Stefanov, eds. Berlin etc.: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 1-20.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta, Nidžara Ahmetašević, Barbara Beznec and Andrej Kurnik. 2020. *The Dark Sides of Europeanisation. Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EUropean Border Regime*. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung for Southeast Europe.

Strategy Paper on Immigration and Asylum Policy.1998. 9809/98 CK4 27 ASIM 170.

UNODC, 2008. *Crime and its Impact on the Balkans and Affected Countries*.

Border Deaths

Marijana Hameršak

Border deaths, or as they are also called, migrant deaths and deaths in migration (see **disappeared**), are fatal outcome of the discrepancy between exclusionary migration policies and people's need to migrate. Definitions of the term itself, as summarized by Tamara Last (2020: 21), vary depending on a whole range of elements, including whether the concept of the border is associated with direct **transit** and crossing of external state borders, or stems from a broader understanding of the concepts of transit and the border. In other words, it depends whether the definitions focus on the deceased attempting to clandestinely cross near the border line, on fences, walls, wires, on ships and **detention** facilities near the border, as well as on "natural" borders like the Sahara desert in Africa or the Sonoran desert in North America, but also forests in Lika, the Alps, or Podlasie on the border between Poland and Belarus, in the depths of the Mediterranean Sea or the English Channel, as well as rivers like the Sava, Drina, Kupa, Una, or Maritsa/Evros, or if they also consider deaths far from state borders. According to the 4D Database and the ERIM **map** of deaths at the borders along the **Balkan route**, people in transit also die deep within territories, in cars, containers, and refrigerated trucks, on roads and highways, on railway tracks and railway stations, in mountains, rivers, swamps, and forests deep within countries. In transit, which is not evident from the map itself since it shows specific locations rather than routes, people can die at an unknown point along an oceanic journey that spans thousands of kilometers. For example, in Rijeka in Croatia in 2000, two men were found dead in the refrigerated compartments of a cargo ship. They boarded the ship in Ecuador, thinking they were heading to the United States, but after twenty-four days of sailing, the ship brought them to the port of Rijeka (*Novi list*, 11 April 2000, cf. **history of border deaths**). Twenty years later, seven men from Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco, including a nineteen-year-old, hid in freight containers at the railway station in **Šid**, Serbia, hoping to cross into Croatia or another European Union country. However, the containers were transferred to an ocean-going ship in Rijeka, which, three months later, arrived in Paraguay via Argentina with their bodies, of which, according to the statement of the competent public prosecutor, "only hair and bones remained."

In addition to dispersed borders that today, as formulated by Étienne Balibar, "are no longer situated at the borders at all, in the geographico-politico-administrative sense" but are "in fact elsewhere, wherever selective controls are to be found" (2002: 84), border deaths in broader approaches are associated with diffused forms of transit and multi-year, even multi-decade, nonlinear movements (cf. Tsianos et al. 2009) in various border zones. Thus, the mentioned UNITED list of border deaths includes deaths in detention, police stations, in hate attacks on camps, in fires in abandoned houses, warehouses, or factories, during deportation and after deportation, months and years after crossing the border, deaths due to the effects of harsh living conditions, illness and addiction, inadequate medical care, lack of protection of state institutions (judiciary, police, etc.), due to fear of detention or deportation, and more. In the broadest sense, border deaths are premature deaths of individuals whose movement or residence is not approved or has been irregularized (cf. Last 2020: 21). In this context, border deaths also encompass suicides and murders, such as conflicts between migrants or smuggling groups. They also include the death of twenty-eight-year-old Moroccan Ahmed H. during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic – when camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina became detention centers overnight (cf. Hameršak and Stojić Mitrović 2021) – as he suffocated while attempting to pass through the camp fence in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina so he could take a shower.

The question of defining border deaths goes beyond the academic inclination towards the use of precise definitions. It has a pronounced political dimension. The focus of narrower definitions on deaths at state and supranational external borders, in addition to the actual number of deaths, also conceals the responsibility of states and other actors involved in shaping and implementing deadly migration policies. Narrower definitions ultimately, as seen, for example, in the framework of the documentation project *Missing Migrants* of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), contribute to depoliticization, and sometimes even to the integration of deaths into migration management and border control systems. As demonstrated by Charles Heller and Antoine Pécoud (2019), the IOM project, which is gaining importance due to its media visibility, places the smallest number of deaths in Europe, as it does not include deaths in detention centers, during deportation, or deaths generally related to irregularized status (e.g., working in the black market or the unavailability of medical care) into border deaths. At the same time, it geographically associates the highest mortality with the Mediterranean Sea. IOM "thus avoids cases that would entail a criticism of state practices. This strategy is in line with IOM's general refusal to blame its member states, an attitude that distinguishes this organization from other UN agencies: the UNHCR, for instance, regularly criticizes states that fail to respect the key principles contained in the Geneva Convention on refugees." (Heller and Pécoud 2019: 491). Putting aside critically intoned, yet still rare, research journalism pieces that approach border deaths, in the regional context, from the perspective of life stories and political responsibility for the loss of lives, invisible deaths and denied grief, media coverage continues to be dominated by reports where border deaths, in crisis mode and from a limited perspective, are presented as accidents resulting from ruthless traffickers, harsh nature, and even migrants' recklessness (for the Croatian context, cf. Popović et al. 2022: 65). In these formulaic reports, as summarized by Paolo Cuttitta, two key features of spectacularization or border spectacle are found: "the victim (the poor migrant, whose life is put at risk) and the perpetrator (the callous smuggler or heinous trafficker)" (Cuttitta 2020: 10). In other words, border control actions are framed as **rescue operations**, a form of preventing border deaths, rather than their generator.

In contrast to this spectacularized visibility, border deaths are almost invisible in official statistics (e.g., Dearden et al. 2020: 55; cf. also Pécoud 2020). In accordance with standardized patterns and instructions (cf. *Priručnik*: 2011: 24), which do not classify them as a separate category, they are most often incorporated into official statistics as violent deaths resulting from accidents, i.e., deaths due to falls, drowning, transportation accidents, and similar incidents. In this context, deaths due to or during **pushbacks**, such as the death of **Madina Hussiny** at the Croatian-Serbian border in 2017, or the deaths of eleven people, including eight children, near the Greek island of Farmakonisi in 2014, are classified as accidents. Some border deaths are officially classified as natural deaths, i.e. deaths caused by illness. However, even natural deaths in the migration context often depend, at least indirectly, on external causes (linked to violent deaths) or human action. A heart attack on the journey, after extreme physical exertion, walking in the snow or in harsh sunlight, is classified as a natural death, but at the same time, it is easily recognized as a direct consequence of

irregularization of migration. The death of Khobeib Ben Khoder from Tunisia, who everyone called Ali, as highlighted in Ivana Perić's article title, is recorded as a natural death. After the Croatian police made him walk barefoot in the snow back to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ali returned to the camp in Bihać, where he lived in agony for months, refusing to have both of his legs amputated, moving with more and more difficulty, literally losing parts of his legs, until he died, officially from the consequences of gangrene, but in reality from the consequences of the pushback, in a local hospital.

Border deaths are an integral element of contemporary border management (e.g., Squire 2017). They are, as Martina Tazzioli (2015: 5) wrote, an inevitable consequence – not an unexpected side effect – of migration policies, primarily the visa regime, as openly stated by the Croatian Minister of the Interior, Davor Božinović, while commenting on the verdict of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Madina Hussiny's death: "Until this issue is resolved at the EU level, no one can guarantee that an incident will not occur." This, as Boris Pavelić emphasized, was a message from the highest levels of government that Europe had "started to count on" incidents at the borders, including deaths, that they had "calculated them" into their policies. Relying on various racialized forms of violence (cf. Gündoğdu 2022: 21), a portion of the population is denied the right to live in the name of the right to control the border. In our world, crossing the border is forbidden for some, while it goes without question for others. Some are sent to their death, while others are allowed to routinely cross borders. In this sense, border deaths can be discussed as, using the terms of Maurizio Albahari (2015), crimes of peace, as administratively and institutionally supported forms of violence that serve to maintain the existing social system.

Border deaths are rarely the result of direct violence, the use of firearms, rubber bullets, batons, tear gas, as was the case in the massacre at Melilla in June of 2022, or in the incident in February of 2014, when the Spanish Civil Guard attempted to prevent hundreds of migrants from swimming to Ceuta, the other Spanish enclave, by using tear gas and rubber bullets, resulting in at least fifteen fatalities. Therefore, they are primarily associated with the concept of structural violence (cf. Cuttitta 2020: 11; Weber and Pickering 2011: 93-118; Squire 2017). This violence, unlike direct violence, lacks clearly identifiable perpetrators, but operates "silently and invisibly," as part of everyday patterns (Galtung 1969: 173) in the form of criminalization of assistance, movement, existence, and through delegating violence to others, nature, unfortunate circumstances, force majeure, or other states, far from the centers in whose name it is carried out. The current visa regime and border control system, with fences and other types of material and non-material obstacles, redirect people on the move along the Balkan route (based on data published on the *4D Database* website) to the roofs of trains, the undercarriages of buses and trucks, into containers and refrigerated holds, into karst terrain and minefields, or into **weaponized landscapes**, **forests**, mountains, and numerous rivers. These locations, in the context of migration, become deadly even when they otherwise are not, as in the case of the Dragonja River on the border between Slovenia and Croatia. The deliberate or indirect exposure to dangers and nature (cf. De León 2015; Schindel 2020) is reinforced by passivity, i.e., inaction, abandonment, non-rescue, as precisely elaborated in the case known as *The Left to Die Boat* from 2011 from the Mediterranean context. It involves a non-spectacular form of covert, liberal violence (Isakjee et al. 2020) or slow violence (Nixon 2013) that acts gradually, away from view, dispersed in time and space, with outcomes that can also be fatal, even deadly. In the context of the contemporary migration regime, this "spatialized slow violence," to use a term from Estela Schindel (2022), is not so much aimed at stopping people on the move as it is at delivering them to nature or zones of non-protection.

31/1/2024.



#Troglas, Madina Hussiny

The video is available in the online edition of e-ERIM:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCQWgaeLiEs

References

Albahari, Maurizio. 2015. *Crimes of Peace. Mediterranean Migrations at the World's Deadliest Border.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Balibar, Étienne. 2002. *Politics and the Other Scene.* London: Verso. Translated by Christine Jones, James Swenson and Chris Turner.

Cuttitta, Paolo. 2020. "Preface. The Increasing Focus on Border Deaths". In *Border Deaths. Causes, Dynamics and Consequences of Migration-related Mortality.* Paolo Cuttitta and Tamara Last, eds. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 9-20.

De León, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves. Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail.* Photographs by Michael Wells. Oakland: University of California Press.

Dearden, Kate, Tamara Last and Craig Spencer. 2020. "Mortality and Border Deaths Data. Key Challenges and Ways Forward". In *Border Deaths. Causes, Dynamics and Consequences of Migration-related Mortality.* Paolo Cuttitta and Tamara Last, eds. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 53-70.

Galtung, Johan. 1969. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research". *Journal of Peace Research* 6/3: 167-191.

Gündoğdu, Ayte. 2022. “Border Deaths as Forced Disappearances. Frantz Fanon and the Outline of Critical Phenomenology”. *Puncta: Journal of Critical Phenomenology* 5/3: 12-41.

Hameršak, Marijana and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2021. “Pandemija koronavirusne bolezni in procesi omejevanja na Hrvaškem in v Srbiji”. *Glasnik Slovenskega etnološkega društva* 61/2: 39-44.

Heller, Charles and Antoine Pécoud. 2019. “Counting Migrants’ Deaths at the Border. From Civil Society Counterstatistics to (Inter)Governmental Recuperation”. *American Behavioral Scientist* 64/4: 1-21.

Isakjee, Arshad, Thom Davies, Jelena Obradović-Wochnik and Karolína Augustová. 2020. “Liberal Violence and the Racial Borders of the European Union”. *Antipode* 52/6: 1751-1773.

Last, Tamara. 2020. “Introduction. A State-of-the-Art Exposition on Border Deaths”. In *Border Deaths. Causes, Dynamics and Consequences of Migration-related Mortality.* Paolo Cuttitta and Tamara Last, eds. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 21-33.

Nixon, Rob. 2013. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Pécoud, Antoine. 2020. “Death at the Border. Revisiting the Debate in Light of the Euro-Mediterranean Migration Crisis”. *American Behavioral Scientist* 64/4: 379-388.

Popović, Helena, Kruno Kardov and Drago Župarić-Iljić. 2022. *Medijske reprezentacije migracija. Diskurzivne konstrukcije migranata, izbjeglica i tražitelja azila u hrvatskim medijima*. Zagreb: Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade Republike Hrvatske.

Priručnik o popunjavanju potvrde o smrti. 2011. Zagreb: Ministarstvo zdravstva i socijalne skrbi i Hrvatski zavod za javno zdravstvo.

Schindel, Estela. 2020. “Deaths and Disappearances in Migration to Europe. Exploring the Uses of a Transnationalized Category”. *American Behavioural Scientist* 64/4: 389-407.

Schindel, Estela. 2022. “Death by ‘Nature’. The European Border Regime and the Spatial Production of Slow Violence”. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space C* 40/2: 428-446.

Squire, Vicki. 2017. “Governing Migration through Death in Europe and the US. Identification, Burial and the Crisis of Modern Humanism”. *European Journal of International Relations* 23/3: 513-532.

Tsianos, Vassilis, Sabine Hess and Serhat Karakayali. 2009. *Transnational Migration. Theory and Method of an Ethnographic Analysis of Border Regimes*. (Working Paper 55). Sussex: University of Sussex, Sussex Centre for Migration Research.

Weber, Leanne and Sharon Pickering. 2011. *Globalization and Borders. Death at the Global Frontier.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-border-deaths-p?locale=en

Border Inequalities

Morgane Dujmovic

Nestling between the Velebit massif and Mount Dinara, which forms the border between Croatia and Bosnia, the Croatian Lika region reveals its high karst plateaux in the muted light of spring. Honey and cheese stalls alternate with herds of racy cows and horses. There's also a bear sanctuary where nature-loving volunteers from France and Austria try their hand, alongside tourists from all over the world who flock to visit the famous Plitvice Waterfalls and Lakes National Park, a world-renowned UNESCO World Heritage Site welcoming over a million visitors every year. Only the many ruined farms give the landscape a sombre note, reminding us that it was on this stretch of the border that one of the fiercest episodes of the Serbo-Croat war was played out, from 1991 to 1995. In the calm that has returned, who could suspect that these high mountains are still the scene of violent and sometimes deadly hand-to-hand combat?

My gaze lingers on the Dinara and I set off along the banks of the Korana River. The number of Croatian border police vehicles increases as I head towards Bosnia-Herzegovina, as do the checks. Near Plitvice Park, the police simply check the identity of travellers and ask them where they are going. Names are sometimes written down on a piece of paper to keep track of people and vehicles that have already been checked: border controls must not get in the way of this early tourist season.



The Lika plateau towards Plitvice and Bihać, April 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic

I make my way up the mountain, approaching the pass that marks the border at Ličko Petrovo Selo (Croatia) / Izačić (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Here, the border police vans cross each other with greater intensity, some stationary, others on duty. A policeman

patrols one of the countless derelict buildings – the property of the Serb populations who lived there before the military Operation Storm to reconquer the Krajina. Through the openings in the collapsed walls, I can already guess that some of today's exiles might be taking refuge there. But the effects of the sordid cat-and-mouse game that takes place at nightfall are only felt once the mountain pass has been crossed, on the Bosnian side.

The **game** is the cynical name given over the last few years to the constantly reinvented attempts to cross borders and join the European Union (EU). The Bosnian canton of Una-Sana has become one of the theaters of this *game* since the closure of the formalized **Balkan corridor** in 2015-2016 (Bužinkić and Hameršak 2018; Dujmovic 2016; Dujmovic 2019; Bacon 2022). Located in the extreme north-west of Bosnia, this region represents one of the most direct routes from the southern Balkans to the **Schengen** area. From 2017 onwards, with the reinforcement of the Serbian-Hungarian and Serbian-Croatian borders, exiles on the **Balkan routes** were more clearly oriented towards Una Sana, from where they could hope to reach Slovenia, about one hundred kilometres away.

Since Croatia joined the Schengen area on 1 January, 2023, land and sea controls have been lifted with Slovenia, Hungary and Italy, while airport controls were eased on March 26. This theoretical free movement area is just on the other side of the mountain that can be seen from Bihać, the administrative centre of the canton.



The mountains towards Croatia, from the bridge over the Una at Bihać, April 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic

Over the last twenty years, Croatia's application to join the EU and then Schengen implied a drastic increase in the resources allocated to fortifying the Bosnian-Croatian border, in terms of human, technological and financial resources (Dujmovic 2019). On the Bosnian side, the regions bordering Croatia have thus become one of the priority areas for migration control upstream of Schengen: the EU deploys devices to consolidate a filtering buffer-zone, designed to separate the wheat from the chaff – i.e. migration deemed acceptable from that deemed undesirable. This filtering function has been applied to the entire Balkan peninsula since the 2000s, as shown in 2015 the map “The Balkan buffer-zone” (Dujmovic 2015). This process of externalization is exerted under constant political and financial pressure in the context of Bosnia-Herzegovina's application to join the EU – whose candidate status was confirmed by the European Council in December 2022, almost seven years after the Bosnian authorities applied for membership, on 15 February, 2016.

In the canton of Una-Sana, the “buffer-zone” function attributed to Bosnia-Herzegovina is based on the specific geography of the region: this semi-enclave in the shape of a pocket forms a veritable bottleneck for people whose journey is stopped there. This strategic use of space is comparable to what was observed as early as 2015 in the Roya Valley (see the map “Vallée de la Roya: un terrain de chasse meurtrier dans l'espace Schengen” by Morgane Dujmovic and Thibaud Duffey 2017). As can be seen at other EU borders that are kept closed, in Bihać it is common to see groups walking along the road for the fifteen kilometres that separate the town from the border crossing point of Izačić, either because they've just been turned back by the Croatian police, or because they're heading for the border to try a new game.



Izačić, towards the Croatian border point visible in the background, April 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic

In the town of Bihać, residents have been witnessing repressive strategies to push these exiles out of Croatia and fix them in the canton for seven years now. The high point was reached in 2018, in terms of border crossings and violence: according to figures compiled by IOM in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the level of detected entries was 24,067 in 2018, 30 times higher than the previous year (755 in 2017). A shopkeeper in Bihać recalls in a conversation in April 2024:

> Until Covid, it was really tough, as people were sleeping all over the place around the town, in the forest, in places that weren't suitable at all. We saw a lot of people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kurds, blacks from African countries too, and often families with very young children. We ourselves can only understand people fleeing countries at war or having to live in camps: we lived through the war, four years of siege in Bihać.

The rhetoric of openness and compassion intersects with local discontent: the discontent, for example, that led to the closure in October 2020 of the Bira camp, which until then had been located in the centre of Bihać. At the height of the management of the Covid-19 pandemic, some of the people housed there were transferred to another camp located 27 kilometres from the town, in a remote rural environment well away from the Croatian border (Fernier 2022: 4-5). In spring 2024, this was the only official accommodation for single men: only families and minors were accepted in the city, in the Borići camp known among exiles as “the family camp”. The transformation of this former student residence into a camp has mobilised a European budget of one million euros, both for its reconstruction and its operation since 2018, according to the figures provided by the EU delegation in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the inauguration of the building's final facade works in July 2022.



Borići Family camp in Bihać, May 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic

The Borići camp is planted in a pine **forest** that gives it its name (*borova šuma*, in Bosnian) and its facade was refurbished in the summer of 2022; this peaceful atmosphere almost makes forget the anxiety that is replayed every day for the people housed there. Although categorised as “vulnerable” by humanitarian institutions and organisations, these isolated women, families and children are subjected to violent *refoulement* every time they make an abortive attempt to cross the mountains into Croatia. For those who have already tried the crossing, the camp is a place of eternal flashbacks, a temporary but fragile respite, as the senses are entirely turned towards the prospect of a new attempt. One of the families I met there had a member recovering from an injury sustained on the Balkan routes; for them the time for crossing the border had not come, “not tonight”.



“Not tonight”, facing the mountains towards Croatia, May 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic

I set off again in the direction of the **Lipa camp**. Along the banks of the river Una, the tourist signs are a reminder that this region which is synonymous with dull anxiety for some, is a place of discovery and fun for others. In the Una national park, as on the Croatian side, private *apartmani* are filling up for “the season”, while the first groups of tourists are revelling in the spring atmosphere at the water sports sites and waterfalls.

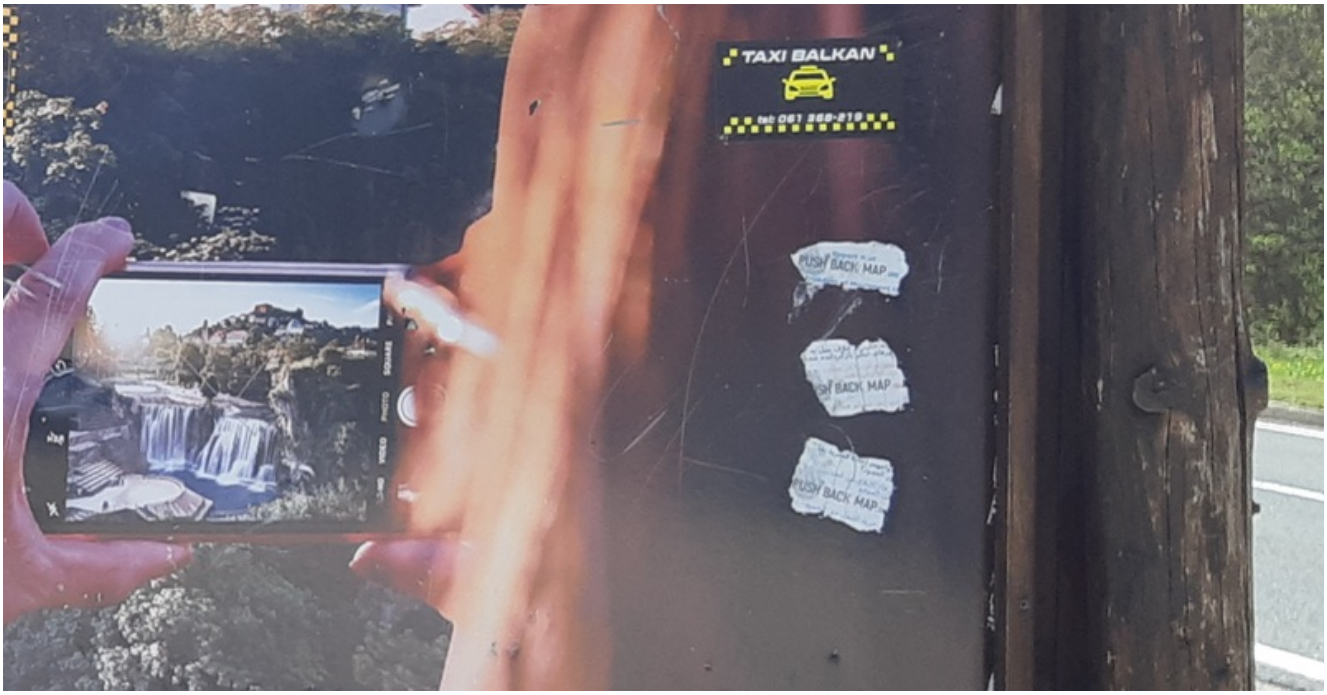
Within the Bosnian Ministry of Security, the Service for Foreigner's Affairs (SPS/SFA) has clearly stated its intention to reconcile this freedom of movement with European standards of migration control. In recent years, Bihać and the canton of Una-Sana have thus

become one of the many border areas in the world where a “bipolar differentiation” is taking shape (Sassen 2010), between the world of desired, tourist and profitable migration, and that of undesirable migration, made up essentially of people from the Middle East, Asia and Africa fleeing violence, war, persecution or untenable socio-economic situations.

A few subtle signs of these profound inequalities in mobility stand out in the idyllic landscape... At the last junction leading to the Lipa camp, on the roadside tourist signage, stickers indicate the omnipresence of **taxis** and the existence of a **pushback map**.



Tourist signs along the access road to the Lipa camp, April 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic



Tourist signage, details, April 2024, Morgane Dujmovic

19/9/2025

This text is taken from the series of portfolio articles “Rivers are deadly if you're not on the right side” previously published on Mediapart, Le Courrier des Balkans, visioncarto.net and Migreurop. This series of portfolio articles is the result of field research carried out in the spring of 2024 in several South-East European countries: Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. This publication is sent to all interlocutors met in the field. To preserve their anonymity, the exiled people are referred to here by a randomly assigned letter, with their consent.

The author would like to thank the exiled people she met on these roads and along these rivers, the people from the collectives, associations, universities and institutions with whom she spoke, as well as Louis Fernier, Romain Kosellek, Eva Ottavy, Elsa Putelat and Marijana Hameršak for their invaluable contributions prior to and during this field mission.

References

Bacon, Lucie. 2022. *La fabrique du parcours migratoire sur la route des Balkans. Co-construction des récits et écritures (carto)graphiques*. PhD Dissertation. Université de Poitiers.

Bužinkić, Emina and Marijana Hameršak, eds. 2018. *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor: Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Zagreb: Zagreb and Munich: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V.

Dujmovic, Morgane. 2015. “The Balkan buffer-zone”. *Migreurop/closethecamps.org.*

Dujmovic, Morgane. 2016. “Balkans, du corridor au cul-de-sac”. *Plein droit* 111/4: 23-26.

Dujmovic, Morgane. 2019. *Une géographie sociale critique du contrôle migratoire en Croatie: ancrages et mirages d'un dispositif”.* PhD Dissertation. Aix-Marseille Univ.

Dujmovic, Morgane i Thibaud Duffey. 2017. “Vallée de la Roya: un terrain de chasse meurtrier dans l'espace Schengen”. In *Migreurop. Atlas des migrants en Europe. Approches critiques des politiques migratoires*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Fernier, Louis. 2022. *Camp de réfugié-e-s de Lipa*. Paris: Observatoire des Camps de Réfugié-e-s.

Sassen, Saskia. 2010. “Villes entre vieilles frontières et nouvelles clôtures du capital”. *Multitudes* 4/43: 50-59.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-nejdnakosti-na-granicama-p?locale=en

Borderscape

Marta Stojić Mitrović

Available only in Serbian.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-granicni-pejzaz-p?locale=en

Breaking and Entering, Lighting Fires in Buildings, Abandoning Property

Špela Prinčič

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-vlamljanje-kurjenje-v-objektih-puscanje-odpadkov-p?locale=en

Bubo and Endi

Iva Pleše

Bubo and Endi are two police dogs from the border police station Imotski used in one of the newspaper reports, numerous in recent times, on the police operations at the Croatian state borders, for the purpose of promoting the suppression of **illegal migration**. The title of the report, “Dogs Bubo and Endi Protect the Croatian Border with Bosnia and Herzegovina from Migrants”, signals a clear positioning of, on one side, individualized dogs with their own names (cf. **Pablo**), a type of domesticated animals usually shown exceptional affection, which in this case help the police officers in protecting the border (cf. **Candy**), and, on the opposing side, a general noun referring to a homogeneously represented group from which the border should be protected. The police dogs from Imotski represent animal, to some extent anthropomorphized, border guards, and thus belong to a repertoire of animalistic elements used in the production of discourses directed against migration, which, in addition to anthropomorphisms, also use zoomorphisms, among other things (cf. **wild animals**).

10/5/2022

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-bubo-i-endi-p?locale=en

Buffer Zone

Teodora Jovanović, Marta Stojić Mitrović

Available only in Serbian.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-zona-prigu-scaron-enja-p?locale=en

Candy

Iva Pleše

A gift from God, a world phenomenon, a source of fear and trepidation, an expert on illegals, the pride of the Croatian police, these are some of the expressions used in the media for a mixed-breed dog that wandered into the Bajakovo border crossing at the end of 2016 and was named Candy by the local policemen. The dog, without any previous training, was used in discovering **illegal migrants** hidden in trucks. For these services, Candy earned a medal that was placed around her neck by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Davor Božinović, in the Vatroslav Lisinski concert hall in Zagreb at the celebration of the Croatian Police Day in 2017. The PR move of using sympathy and affection for animals and a personified figure to promote border police activities proved to be successful: media comments ranged from expressions of benevolence to delight and completely omitted mentions of those who had to hide in the truck, more specifically, that these were people who found themselves in this situation because of hardship, not some explosive devices or drugs sniffed out by police dogs. In addition to thunderous applause during the awarding of the medal, the dog Candy (and thus indirectly the Croatian police) also earned compliments on social networks such as “little darling” or “smart girl” and wishes for a “successful and long career”. The shrewdness of the PR service of the Croatian Police is revealed by a comment from a reader who not only finds nothing dehumanizing in this situation, but, on the contrary, says: “Such a nice story, I'm glad that there is still some humanity and love in people”. According to police officers, Candy also knew how to precisely recognize migrants, as she distinguished them from, for instance, truck drivers “from the same region”. One of the “theories” offered as an explanation for this, which further dehumanizes and demonizes, even profiles people on the move by “species”, is that “migrants beat her up and now she somehow senses their fear, adrenaline, smell or something”. This is a case of using animalistic (and, in a broader sense, naturalistic) elements in the production of anti-migrant discourses (cf. **wild animals**) but also of using nature/animals as a weapon in the fight against illegalized migration (cf. **weaponized landscape**).

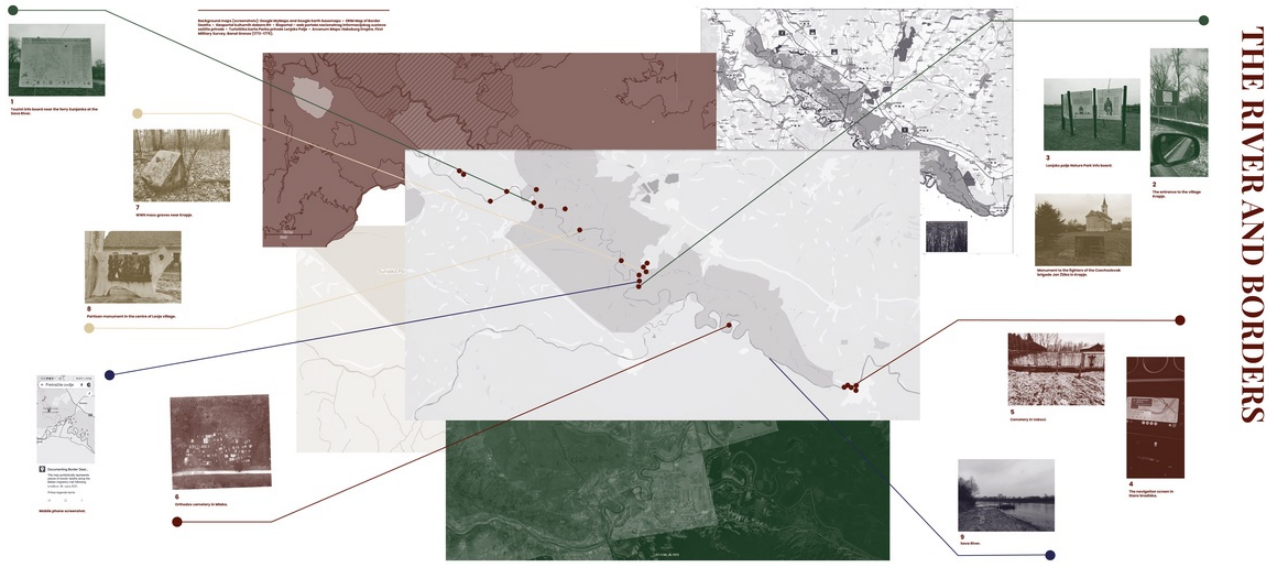
1/3/2022

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-candy-p?locale=en

Cartographic Assemblage: The River and Borders

Sanja Horvatinčić, Marijana Hameršak

On 14th February 2025, while revisiting several documented border deaths burial sites, we visited the area between Sisak and Stara Gradiška, following the Sava River, toward the Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina border—today's external EU and Schengen border. Our field notes, composed of cartographic assemblage as well as written and visual traces, unravel the multitude of coexisting layers which constitute this region. These layers remain invisible in the hypercartographic reality of GIS. They include: dilapidated tourist infrastructure favouring the heritage of the Military Frontier regime; silencing and erasure of human remains and traces of historical and ongoing regimes of oppression, exclusion and violence; the sidelined traces of this region's emancipatory narratives of solidarity and resistance along and across the river's divides. Our notes pinpoint selected locations mapped upon the accumulated cartographic materials we used to navigate this river-border landscape. Fieldwork photos are colour-coded to indicate some thematic connections we identified among them: tourist information signs (green), WWII sites (beige), and sites related to clandestine migration (brown-red).



Cartographic assemblage (for full resolution, scroll to Gallery). Maja Kolar, Sanja Horvatinčić and Marijana Hameršak, 2025.

1 Dilapidated tourist info board for the project Bicycle for Tourism Without Frontiers (BIKE 4 TWF), located by the main road near the ferry Sunjanka at the Sava River.

The map on the info panel shows six roads in Lonjsko Polje Nature Park and their connection to the cycling route leading to Kozara National Park in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The panel informs visitors that the project was developed under the EU IPA Programme for Cross-Border co-operation Croatia—Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007-2013, with a disclaimer: “The content of this info panel does not reflect the positions of the European Union”.

2 The entrance to the village Krapje marked by the logo of the European Heritage Days.

The official European Heritage Days website declares its mission as: “a joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, putting new cultural assets on view and opening up historical buildings normally closed to the public. The cultural events highlight local skills and traditions, architecture and works of art, but the broader aim is to bring citizens together in harmony even though there are differences in cultures and languages.” One of EHD’s aims is to “counter racism and xenophobia and encourage greater tolerance in Europe and beyond the national borders.”

3 Lonjsko polje Nature Park info board at the beginning of The Borderers’ Route (*Staza graničara*) featuring information about the history of the Military Frontier and a drawing of the *graničar* with a rifle dressed in military attire.

The panel informs the visitors of the Nature Park: “The Frontier protected Europe from the inroads of would-be conquerors, and at the same time was a cordon-sanitaire guarding the continent from disease. However, it was still open for trade, industry and cultural exchange even if controlled. Dotted along it were fortifications with watchtowers and chardaks sentry posts on stilts [set up in 18th and 19th c.]. But even more than the fortifications, it was protected by the swamps, forests and rivers, which were integrated into military strategy.”

4 The navigation screen shows our way back from the Slavonian Borderers' Coast in Stara Gradiška.

In the opposite direction indicated by the navigation, there is a bridge and border crossing point between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The queuing of cars and detailed border controls of buses entering the EU are hallmarks of this border-crossing bridge. This bridge was a strategic point during the 1990s war. Largely ineffective UN forces from Nepal were stationed there, and it served as a major escape route for civilians. In recent years, undocumented travelers, refugees, and other migrants have used the new bridge—which has been under construction for years and is located a few kilometers away—for their clandestine crossing.

5 The cemetery in Uskoci, near Stara Gradiška.

Three wooden crosses leaning against the cemetery fence in village Uskoci—each bearing N. N. instead of names—mark the final resting places of three men, migrants who died in an attempt to cross to Croatia, EU. Their bodies were found in or close to the Sava River near Uskoci in 2022 and 2024. The first 2024 finding was made the day after our initial visit to the cemetery in January of the same year. According to local historical records and memory, Uskoci was “founded by refugees from Bosnia in the 18th century, fleeing the Turks—hence the name Uskoci, from uskočiti [to jump in/flee]”.

6 Aerial photograph of the Orthodox cemetery in Mlaka, provided during a visit to the area in 2022.

There are six graves at the Orthodox cemetery in Mlaka, situated at the margins of the graveyard and numbered separately. The oldest grave dates to 2019 and belongs to an unidentified man found in the Sava River. Three graves hold the remains of unidentified men recovered from the Sava River in March 2021. Bones found in the area in 2023 were interred alongside them. In summer 2024, another unidentified man who drowned in the Sava River was also buried there. In times of flooding, like during our last visit to the area, Mlaka and the cemetery in Mlaka cannot be accessed by road. During the Second World War, the Ustasha from the nearby concentration camp Jasenovac killed or forcibly displaced almost all residents from Mlaka, predominantly Orthodox Serbs. Many of them were interned and killed or died as far as Norway, in German forced labour camps. Because of this, Mlaka and the nearby village of Jablanac are sometimes called “disappeared villages”.

7 Location of mass graves at Camp I Krapje, the first camp established in 1941 within the Ustasha Jasenovac concentration camp system.

Mass graves were documented and commemorated with memorial plaques and a monument in 1967. In the 1990s, the concrete sculpture was demolished and the plaques went missing. Despite its formal protection as a cultural property of the Republic of Croatia (Z-7329), the site has remained demolished ever since and has been completely neglected. The area is currently used for extracting wood from the forest, with horse dung scattered across the mass graves. When we inquired with the Conservation office about responsibility for the mass grave and memorial's condition, their response revealed legal and administrative contradictions designed to shift responsibility and shield heritage institutions from accountability.

8 Monument in the park next to the Catholic church in the centre of Lonja village.

Compared to many other Partisan monuments in the area, this one is in relatively good condition. Designed by the sculptor Nikola Kečanin, it was unveiled in 1964. The monument features a relief depicting an unusual historical scene: crossing a river in boats and transporting supplies. Part of the text on the monument reads: “During the People’s Liberation Struggle, communists and patriots of Posavina built an ‘invisible’ bridge across the river, connecting Slavonian partisans with partisans of Bosnia, Banija, Lika and Kordun, and strengthening brotherhood and unity.”

9 The Sava River is the longest river in Croatia.

It flows through Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. The Sava River is also a border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina along certain stretches. In the early 2000s, dozens of people in transit lost their lives while attempting to cross it clandestinely. In recent years, people have once again attempted crossing the river, resulting in the loss of numerous lives, dozens of graves along the riverbanks, and countless disappearances.

8/12/2025

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-kolaz-rijeka-i-granice-p?locale=en

Chain translation and intercultural mediation

Luka Kropivnik

Chain translation is a form of translation in which a text is translated from a second or third language into the target language. Klaus Roth (1998) describes chain translation as the translation of texts that have been previously translated into the target language from the author to the researcher in three or four languages. These types of translations are common in written texts as well as in the oral transmission of narratives (Roth 1998: 252).

During student fieldwork on the **Balkan migration route** in Bihać, one such example was described to me by Anela, who was involved in registering a child born to a family en route in the civil registry. It was necessary to register the newborn in the civil registry, as this is the only way to prove that the child formally exists, thus avoiding the situation in which the child would become stateless. When the parents arrived at the registrar, they had to get a court interpreter and, as no court interpreter in Bosnia and Herzegovina can translate from Pashto, they had to hire an English court interpreter. As none of the family with the newborn spoke English, they brought another migrant who spoke both Pashto and English to the registrar, in addition to the volunteer. So, the family told the English-speaking migrant, or translator as Anela called him, what they wanted in Pashto, he translated it into English, and the court interpreter was supposed to translate into Bosnian. However, the court interpreter did not understand “migrant English”, as Anela called the language used by migrants and locals to communicate with each other, and the translation into Bosnian was impossible. It is worth pointing out that the family communicated easily in English with the locals and volunteers through chain translation, but in front of the registrar, the court interpreter could not perform his role because he did not understand this kind of English. Anela stepped in and translated what they said, as she understood their English and was translating directly into Bosnian.

The interpretation provided by Anela at the registrar could be called ad-hoc interpretation. Ad-hoc interpreters are persons who are not qualified to interpret, and who have only a partial command of the language of the user of a service, as well as of the dominant language of the society or the common language of the environment (Kocijančič Pokorn 2019: 36). This form of interpretation is case-specific, and is only done when necessary (Kocijančič Pokorn 2019: 36). Anela's interpretation was useful for the desired outcome when the need arose. It should be noted, however, that she was not qualified to do so. At this point, we should also note the issue of intercultural mediation, which proved to be more practical than official interpretation in the case presented. Indeed, intercultural mediation in Slovenia presupposes professionally trained, certified individuals who are familiar with the background of the people on the move and ensure successful communication with the institutions (Škraban and Lipovec Čebron 2021: 18). Margalit Cohen-Emerique defines the work of intercultural mediators in terms of the types of tasks they are expected to perform. Her definition includes four types. The first is related to the function of facilitating contact, more specifically facilitating communication and understanding between the two parties. In addition to interpreting, this type of mediation also includes providing information, accompanying users and helping them find their way around the system. The second type allows for the clarification of misunderstandings, resentments and tensions, which are not only the result of ignorance of the different cultural codes and values of others, but also of prejudices and stereotypes (Cohen-Emerique 2007: 11-12).

Referring again to the above example, it can be deduced that when the volunteer was trying to translate the messages at the registrar's office, she was in fact acting more as a intercultural mediator. In this context, we should point out that several of our interlocutors in the field had learnt English on the migrant route. Individual local people – supporters of people on the move – learned English when the migrants arrived in their area. It is worth pointing out that this is not a form of English that can be compared to the English language norm, but a form of language that would probably be rated at a basic level (A1/A2) in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Some individuals thus have a limited vocabulary, essential for everyday communication. It would be premature to claim that individuals in the area have developed their own linguistic code during their journey, but it is safe to say that individuals are incorporating words from their first languages into English. Individuals who spend more time with them thus understand this communication more easily than someone who has systematically learned English in the school system.

This is where the important advantage of intercultural mediation comes into play, which also considers the background of a community, which of course must not be homogenised, but can nevertheless derive some cultural characteristics that may be more familiar to the intercultural mediator than to the official interpreter. In the situation presented, the chain transmission of information, even if things were lost in translation, served the ultimate purpose – registering the child in the civil registry. However, we should also be aware of the pitfalls of omitting information in a chain translation, for example in the health sector, etc. The impact of language barriers in formal situations can lead to migrants being treated differently. Institutional unresponsiveness to such language barriers can exacerbate racist attitudes towards migrants and ethnic minorities (Lipovec Čebron 2021: 2).

1/7/2022

References

Cohen-Emerique, Margalit. 2007. “Intercultural Mediators. Bridges of Identities”. *Interculture* 153: 7-22.

Kocijančič Pokorn, Nike. 2019. “Reševanje jezikovnih ovir v slovenskem zdravstvu. Analiza stanja”. In *Večjezično zdravje. Komunikacijske strategije in večkulturni stiki s tujejezičnimi bolniki v slovenskem zdravstvenem sistemu*. Nike Kocijančič Pokorn and Uršula Lipovec Čebron, eds. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba FF, 30-48.

Lipovec Čebron, Uršula. 2021. “Language as a Trigger for Racism. Language Barriers at Healthcare Institutions in Slovenia”. *Social Sciences* 10/4: 125.

Roth, Klaus. 1998. “Crossing Boundaries. The Translation and Cultural Adaptation of Folk Narratives”. *Fabula* 39/3-4: 243-255.

Škraban, Juš and Uršula Lipovec Čebron. 2021. *Medkulturna mediacija in zdravstvo v Sloveniji*. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship, and Ethnic Minorities, thaught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-verizni-prevod-in-medkulturna-mediacija-p?locale=en

Coercion

Teodora Jovanović

Coercion represents one of the central concepts in the modern understanding of different types of migration. Divisions into different types of migration have been politicized and used in order to manage and control migration (Faist 2018; Malkki 1995; Scheel et al. 2015). One such division is the categorization into forced and voluntary migration. For this division, the issues of coercion and choice are essential. This division is based on the motivation to migrate and it is assumed that some people migrate voluntarily, usually in search of a better and economically more secure life, while others are forced to leave their homeland by circumstances. Coercion, therefore, represents a driving force, a structure, a set of external circumstances, outside the individual and independent of personal choice.

Refugeehood is often equated with forced migration. Refugees are presented as victims of circumstances, violence and structures, as people who had no choice but to leave a certain territory. The process of forming the conceptual category of **refugee** is closely related to the institutionalization of the refugee as a legal category, as defined in the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees from 1951 and the accompanying 1967 New York Protocol (Malkki 1995).

During the 1990s, migration studies developed the idea that forced and voluntary migration should not be viewed as a binary opposition, but as a continuum or spectrum (Van Hear 1998). Although the framework of this idea still includes a classification of people and their motivations for displacement into categories somewhere along a continuum, it represents a step towards the reconstruction of the basic division. It follows that elements of coercion and choice can exist in both types of migration, that the boundaries between forced and voluntary movements are often blurred, and that in practice the motives for emigration are often intertwined (Turton 2003). Also, coercion does not have to refer only to movement. **Immobility** can also be forced on someone, in the sense that people are forced into staying in a certain territory (Lubkemann 2008). Another theoretical step towards deconstructing the understanding of migration exclusively through the division into forced and voluntary migration is the approach of the **autonomy of migration** (e.g. Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias and Pickles 2015; Mezzadra 2011). As part of this approach, migration is seen as a creative force or driving force, rather than a mere consequence or object of force.

People on the move are also exposed to different forms of coercion during their journey, after the initial moment when they leave a certain territory. The more or less visible coercion at state borders is manifested in various border control mechanisms, in which a significant role is played not only by states, but also by private companies (Bloom and Risse 2014). The **securitization** of migration leads to different types of coercion. Thus, the physical and structural violence against people on the move, which is carried out at the EU external borders in the name of securitization of migration, produces various forms of forced movement and immobility. Deportations can also be categorized as forced movements (Gibney 2013). Some authors also recognize coercion in **assisted voluntary return** programs (Sökefeld 2020).

In the context of the Balkan border regime, we can identify forced movements and immobility that people on the move face during their journey to EU countries (Jovanović 2021). We can witness **pushbacks**, deportations, readmissions and involuntary relocations to camps as specific forms of forced movements. Forced immobility also includes the practice of encampment, keeping people on the move in various detention centers, camps, reception and asylum centers, but also in facilities that people on the move have occupied themselves. The Balkans, as one of the European **buffer zones**, also provide an opportunity to examine the mutual effect of securitization and the autonomy of migration (Lipovec Čebron and Zorn 2016). This is where we can see that coercion and violence (in the context of migration) are not connected only with the reasons for emigrating from the countries of the **Global South**, but that, for people on the move, they continue to be a part of life along the external and internal borders of Europe.

1/3/2022

References

Bloom, Tendayi and Verena Risse. 2014. “Examining Hidden Coercion at State Borders. Why Carrier Sanctions Cannot Be Justified”. *Ethics & Global Politics* 7/2: 65-82.

Casas-Cortes, Maribel, Sebastian Cobarrubias and John Pickles. 2015. “Riding Routes and Itinerant Borders. Autonomy of Migration and Border Externalization”. *Antipode* 47/4: 894-914.

Faist, Thomas. 2018. “The Moral Polity of Forced Migration”. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41/3: 412-423.

Gibney, Matthew J. 2013. “Is Deportation a Form of Forced Migration?”. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 32/2: 116-129.

Jovanović, Teodora. 2021. “Forced (Im)Mobilities *En Route*. ‘Justified’ Violence of the Border Regime in Balkans”. *Glasnik Etnografskog instituta SANU* 69/2: 433-455.

Lipovec Čebron, Uršula and Jelka Zorn. 2016. “Avtonomija in nadzor migracij v evropskih ‘tamponskih conah’”. *Dve domovini* 43/1: 61-75.

Lubkemann, Stephen C. 2008. “Involuntary Immobility. On a Theoretical Invisibility in Forced Migration Studies”. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21/4: 454-475.

Malkki, Liisa H. 1995. “Refugees and Exile. From 'Refugee Studies' to the National Order of Things”. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24/1: 495-523.

Mezzadra, Sandro. 2011. “The Gaze of Autonomy. Capitalism, Migration and Social Struggles”. In *The Contested Politics of Mobility. Borderzones and Irregularity*. Vicki Squire, ed. London: Routledge, 121-143. Translated by Rodrigo Nunes.

Scheel, Stephan, Glenda Garelli and Martina Tazzioli. 2015. “Politics of Protection”. *New Keywords. Migration and Borders.* Nicholas De Genova, Sandro Mezzadra and John Pickles, eds. *Cultural Studies* 29/1: 70-73.

Sökefeld, Martin. 2020. “Forced Migration, the Other Way Round? The Politics of Deporting Afghans from Germany”. In *Forced Migration and Conflict-Induced Displacement. Impacts and Prospective Responses*. Muhammad Makki, Aizah Azam, Syed Ali Akash and Faryal Khan, eds. Islamabad: NUST Press, 1-20.

Turton, David. 2003. “Conceptualising Forced Migration”. *RSC Working Paper 12.* Oxford: Refugee Studies Centre, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford.

Van Hear, Nicholas. 1998. *New Diasporas. The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities*. London: UCL Press.

Counter-corridor

Marijana Hameršak, Iva Pleše

The introduction of **profiling** refugees along the Balkan corridor in November 2015 consequently led to establishing the reverse direction of movement, also called the counter-corridor (Hameršak and Pleše 2017). Those who were not allowed to continue along the corridor to the west, who were returned to the previous country by police forces along the corridor, moved backwards along the counter-corridor, towards the east. The Austrian police returned people to Slovenia, the Slovenian police returned people to Croatia, and the Croatian police returned people to Serbia, establishing a pattern of **pushbacks** that, after the closure of the corridor, would become a mass everyday occurrence on the borders in question. This reverse direction of movement was active in the corridor until the complete closure of the borders for refugees in March 2016, and was characterized by constant improvisation and changes of direction, and only partially, sometimes not even that, overlapped with the route of the corridor to the west.

As shown by reports from that period, refugees were returned to the preceding country of transit in different ways, in secret, more or less (in)formally, in groups or individually. Readmission procedures were sometimes initiated, and sometimes groups of people were simply left at border crossings or along the border, from where they were expelled with physical violence to the preceding country along the route of the corridor. In some cases, people returned to the border between Slovenia and Croatia were taken by the Croatian police to the Zagreb railway station, sometimes they were taken to the **Reception Center for Asylum Seekers in Zagreb**, and sometimes to the **Slavonski Brod camp** or to Serbia. In other instances, they would be sent again, together with other refugees, along the corridor towards the west, after a new registration and "repairing" their identity (cf. Hameršak and Pleše 2017: 27).

While the corridor was still active, Western European countries, primarily Germany, Austria and Switzerland, established another type of mass backward movement based on the Dublin Regulation. This movement was soon called the Balkan route reversed, and was used to deport hundreds of refugees, who reached those countries via the corridor, to Croatia after many months had passed from the closure of the corridor.

First published 10/4/2022. Revision 19/11/2023

References

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. "Confined in Movement. The Croatian Section of the Balkan Corridor". In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and Munich: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 9-41.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-kontrakoridor-p?locale=en

Counter-memorialization

Marijana Hameršak

Counter-memorialization refers to processes of memorializing losses that are not recognized as worthy of remembrance by the dominant political framework. These losses are, moreover, the product of that very same framework. Maurice Stierl (2016) introduced the concept of counter-memorialization in the discussion on forms of **grief-activism**, grief and protesting against the human casualties of border control. Taking into consideration the analysis of several recent European activist commemorations of **border deaths** on the one hand, and theoretical considerations about the political potential of counter-hegemonic commemorative practices on the other, Stierl sees counter-memorialization as a form of "merging of grief for particular and general losses with a radical critique of the EUropean border regime" (2016: 184). For instance, the memorial portraits on the Memorial Page of the Transbalkan Solidarity collective were published "in honor of all the deceased, women, men and children, who died while residing, settling in or migrating to Europe by land or sea", and as a call for "justice for every life lost and taken, for every drowning, for every detention and camp confinement, every bullet fired, every **pushback**, torture, beating and starvation that led to a human dying!" The focus is on grief for the victims of a concealed crime embedded in the social order, which can take the form of **aggressive humanism**.

Counter-memorials, analogous with the concept of a memorial (Young 2006), include divergent commemorative practices, from digital memorials, to actions in public spaces and material objects, monuments, e.g., when talking in the context of the south-eastern borders of the EU, from the aforementioned Memorial Page, to actions commemorating the death of **Madina Hussiny** in Zagreb in December, and the memorial textile artwork *Prijelaz / The Passage*.

15/4/2022

References

Stierl, Maurice. 2016. "Contestations in Death. The Role of Grief in Migration Struggles". *Citizenship Studies* 20/2: 173-191.

Young, James. 2006. "Tekstura sjećanja". In *Kultura pamćenja i historija.* Maja Brkljačić and Sandra Plenda, eds. Zagreb: Golden Marketing, Tehnička knjiga, 197-216.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/kontramemorijalizacija?locale=en

Criminalization of Solidarity

Romana Pozniak

The expression “crimes of solidarity”, currently popular among human rights organizations, refers to the problem of prosecuting the “facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence of migrants” in the European Union (Tazzioli 2018: 4). Guided by the same principle, Article 53 of the Croatian *Aliens Act* prescribes that: “It is prohibited to assist [...] a third-country national in illegal crossing of the state border, in transiting across the state territory [...], and in his illegal stay. Exceptions to the ban on helping **irregularized persons** include **saving lives**, providing emergency medical and humanitarian aid and other humanitarian reasons, provided that “assistance in illegal stay” does not prevent “measures which are to be taken for ensuring return”. These stipulations are problematic primarily because they criminalize systematic, effective aid, and allow only necessary, biopolitical aid – that which keeps migrants alive, while also participating in the migration control regime, denying them civil rights, and contributing to human rights violations. Furthermore, when we take into account that the police, through direct and indirect action, endangers the lives of people on the move, these legal restrictions are also paradoxical. If there is a justified suspicion that the police/state services are expelling migrants to Bosnia and Herzegovina or Serbia and exposing them to suffering and physical violence, thus endangering their lives, aren’t we obliged by law to react without the risk of punishment?

In the context of the European border regime there have been a number of attempts to criminalize **solidarity**, and one of the more significant cases involves the arrest of the captain of Sea-Watch 3, Carola Rackete, due to an unauthorized docking in Lampedusa in 2019 with forty rescued migrants on board. In the local context, examples range from verbal threats and intimidation of male and female volunteers, and even court verdicts against volunteers, and in one case, a partner of an activist and former employee of the organization Are You Syrious (AYS) having his asylum status revoked. The activist was intimidated by the police by sending her parents “a hearing summons based on a suspicion that she was involved in obtaining an ‘illegal’ power of attorney for the family” of the deceased **Madina Hussiny** and threats of arrest. The case of Dragan Umičević is particularly important, as Umičević was a volunteer who tried to help the Hussiny family, but, as reported by the media, “a misdemeanor charge was filed against him for allegedly assisting in the illegal crossing of the state border”, and the Ministry of the Interior was also seeking imprisonment, a fine of 230,000 HRK, and a ban on the Are You Syrious organization. The misdemeanor court sentenced Umičević to a fine of 60,000 HRK, an amount that was later raised, according to the same source, through “civic solidarity”, i.e., a fund-raising campaign initiated by AYS.

The criminalization of solidarity is one of the strategies employed by the migration control regime. When discussing this regime, we generally refer to the policies and practices that do not have a universal origin and are not always coordinated with each other; however, the externalization and control of refugee and irregularized movement is certainly a goal on which most actors and creators of migration policies agree. In this sense, encouraging empathy, aid and, especially, resistance, within the framework of state and international management, is twisted in meaning and presented as a security problem – encouraging “illegal migration” – instead of as resistance to “European apartheid” (Balibar 2004). In this specific context of the institutionalization and normalization of violence against people on the move, the practices of solidarity “from below”, whether we are talking about its humanitarian, legal or protest form, figure as drivers of the transformation of current power regimes that create and perpetuate social and geopolitical hierarchies and dismiss the possibility of equal mobility.

24/5/2023

References

Balibar, Étienne. 2004. *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship?* New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Translated by James Swenson.

Tazzioli, Martina. 2018. “Crimes of Solidarity. Migration and Containment through Rescue”. *Radical Philosophy* 2.01: 4-10.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/kriminalizacija-solidarnosti-4ea45ffd-00f2-4e7f-9b8f-7ffe71ed5ea1?locale=en

Crimmigration

Tea Škokić

The term crimmigration was invented for the phenomenon of convergence of two areas within the American legal system – immigration law and criminal justice – in immigration policies. Juliet Stumpf (2006), who coined the term, sees it as part of membership theory, which provides decision-makers with a tool and justification to exclude individuals from society by denying them the civil right to vote or reside in the US. New immigrants, as well as those residing in the USA for a long time and who have a visa, green card or are waiting on a citizenship decision, fall under a combination of immigration and criminal law. More specifically, they can be deported from the US for any criminal offense or abuse of any program involving public benefits. A court can also deport a person if an immigration officer determines that the person poses a risk to public or national security. Since the beginning of the 2000s, when the crimmigration approach intensified, this has resulted in a large number of deportations, refused or revoked work and student visas, and people detained in **detention centers**. According to data from the Department of Homeland Security, 185,884 people were deported from the USA in 2020, and 122,233 were detained. César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández believes that this represents the continuation of separating desirable from undesirable newcomers and racial profiling, but, in contrast to the open xenophobia and racism of earlier times, apparently neutral rhetoric and laws that punish criminal activities are being used today (2014: 1457). However, managing migration and profiling (racially) desirable and undesirable refugees through the criminal justice system and crime control is not reserved exclusively for the US. Over the last decade, researchers of migrations have noted an increasing number of criminal and administrative proceedings against migrants and people or organizations helping them in the countries of the European Union, and they call this phenomenon the criminalization of migration, or the **criminalization of solidarity** when it pertains to people offering help (e.g. Kogovšek Šalamon 2017; Palidda 2011; Provera 2015; van der Woude et al. 2017; Zorn 2014; 2021). Penalties, in the form of prison sentences, placement in detention centers, financial penalties or deportation, can be imposed in certain EU countries for irregular entry into the country and residing in it, for helping people to irregularly enter and reside in a country, for employing an irregular migrant, renting accommodation to an irregular migrant, for not reporting irregular migrants (cf. Provera 2015: 38-43). Certain forms of crimmigration practices are spreading to countries outside the EU through the externalization of border control, so even non-EU countries along the **Balkan route** resort to applying criminal law and prison sentences in certain segments of their immigration laws (Kogovšek Šalamon 2019).

10/4/2022

References

García Hernández, César Cuahtémoc. 2014. “Creating Crimmigration”. *BYU Law Review* 2013 (2013-2014)/6: 1457-1516.

Kogovšek Šalamon, Neža. 2017. “Mass Migration, Crimmigration and Defiance. The Case of the Humanitarian Corridor”. *Southeastern Europe* 41: 251–275.

Kogovšek Šalamon, Neža. 2019. “The Role of the Conditionality of EU Membership in Migrant Criminalization in the Western Balkans”. *Dve domovini* 49: 69-86.

Palidda, Salvatore. 2011. “A Review of the Principal European Countries”. In *Racial Criminalization of Migrants in the 21st Century*. Salvatore Palidda, ed. Farnham: Ashgate, 23-30.

Provera, Mark. 2015. *The Criminalisation of Irregular Migration in the European Union.* CEPS Liberty and Security in Europe 80/2015.

Stumpf, Juliet. 2006. “The Crimmigration Crisis. Immigrants, Crime, and Sovereign Power”. *American University Law Review* 56/2: 367-419.

van der Woude, Maartje, Vanessa Barker, Joanne van der Leun. 2017. “Crimmigration in Europe”. *European Journal of Criminology* 14/1: 3-6.

Zorn, Jelka. 2014. “‘No Border, No Nation, Stop Deportation’. Protest against Immigration Control as Empowerment”. *Critical and Radical Social Work* 2/2: 175–192.

Zorn, Jelka. 2021. “Nasilne meje, varnostnizacija in kriminalizacija solidarnosti”. *Socialno delo* 60/2: 167-180.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-krimigracija-p-b0f995ea-c1bd-439f-bd14-9ed6277e1de6?locale=en

Cutting Down Forests

Iva Pleše, Marijana Hameršak

In the context of migrant movement, cutting down **forests**, which is usually related to the practice of silviculture, defined as "the art and science of manipulating forest vegetation to enhance forest growth and establish new forest stands and wildlife habitat", is used as an anti-migrant intervention in the natural landscape for the purported purpose of defending borders. Aside from cutting down willows and other vegetation along the Una River on the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the media paid most attention to the felling of the forest on Plješevica, which, as part of the so-called integrated border management, was carried out by the state forest management company (Hrvatske šume) under orders from the Ministry of the Interior. This operation left a large *pljeśiva* (bald) line in the mountain, visible both from the air and from the foot of the mountain. The goal of creating such a clear space is to stop the movement of migrants or, according to a government report from 2018, to contribute "to the visibility of the state border (...) and the operational efficiency of technical equipment (especially thermal imaging systems), and the responsiveness of border police in combating illegal migration". Although the felling of trees like the one at Plješevica, from an ecological perspective, most likely "disrupts forest management and reduces the future value of the forest", it is not legally considered an anti-environmental act and devastation of the forest given the institutions that implement these actions and their purpose. According to the *Forest Act*, forests and forest lands owned by the Republic of Croatia can be excluded from a forest management area for "the purpose of state border control or ensuring the visibility of the border line" at the request of the "central body responsible for internal affairs". Cutting down forests in the context of **irregularized migration** can be seen as one of the elements of **weaponized landscapes** (Hameršak and Pleše 2021), and from a historical perspective, it can be seen as a successor to operations which involved removing all vegetation, in this case done in the context of an armed conflict, in the forest areas of Gorski Kotar, which were directed against the activities of the partisans and conducted by the Italian administration during the Second World War (cf. Klepac 1997: 53). Going further back in history, in the border area between Slavonia and the Ottoman Empire, the method of cutting in ("zasjeka") was used (Andrić 2017: 73), also associated with tree felling in order to prevent passage. However, this method was not meant to create "empty space", but to place the cut trees as obstacles on forest roads.

5/3/2022

References

Andrić, Stanko. 2017. "Šuma Garavica i 'ničija zemlja' na slavonsko-turskom pograničju u 16. i 17. stoljeću". In *Slavonske šume kroz povijest*. Dinko Župan and Robert Skenderović, eds. Slavonski Brod: Hrvatski institut za povijest, Podružnica za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje, 61-117.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2021. "*Forest, forest, forest. Sometimes we sleep. Walking, sleep, aalking, sleep. It's dangerous on this way*. Weaponized Migration Landscapes at the Outskirts of the EU". *Etnološka tribina* 51/44: 204-221.

Klepac, Dušan. 1997. *Iz šumarske povijesti Gorskoga kotara u sadašnjost*. Zagreb: Hrvatske šume.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/sjeca-sume?locale=en

Detention

Jelka Zorn, Marijana Hameršak

Available only in Slovenian.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/detencija-migranta-migrantk?locale=en

Disappeared

Marijana Hameršak

Despite constant surveillance and focus on the border, **border deaths** are often invisible, as emphasized by the first systematic studies on the phenomenon (Weber and Pickering 2011: 52). As part of illegalized, clandestine routes through isolated areas without people, many of these deaths will likely remain hidden or unknown forever. Especially since the reporting of an accident or death on the journey can lead to detention and deportation, as was the case for a group of Algerians who, in March 2019, were first detained in Croatia after reporting the fall and death of a group member, and later expelled to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the Mediterranean Sea, the deceased often disappear without a trace, even though their deaths are not necessarily hidden (Albahari 2015: 114). On the other hand, in **forests**, rivers, deserts, and other mostly inaccessible terrains that are destructive to the bodies of the deceased, people die without a trace and far from sight (cf. **history of border deaths**). In Croatia, officially, one migrant died because of a mine, but those familiar with the issue presume, as we learned during one of the field researches, that there are "who knows how many. When someone is killed by a mine, they're not easy to find. And because of the animals as well." Exposed to specific temperature conditions, animals, sunk to the bottom of rivers or caves, the bodies of the deceased disintegrate over time and disappear. These missing persons can be considered victims of what Jason De León refers to as necroviolence, which is performed and produced through the specific treatment of the deceased's body — primarily through neglect in this particular context — "that is perceived to be offensive, sacrilegious, or inhumane by the perpetrator, the victim (and her or his cultural group), or both" (2015: 69). This is a historically well-known and variable form of violence in which the deceased, as Creon decreed for Polynices, is denied grave and funeral rites. In the words of Sophocles' *Antigone*, Creon called the following for Polynices: "let him lie unburied, his body devoured by birds and by dogs and mangled for the seeing."

The fear of death, which visibly and invisibly permeates the preparations and attempts at the **game** (Augustová 2021: 210-212), intertwines with the fear of disappearance (Kobelinsky 2017, according to Schindel 2020a: 393) and death which is unknown, a life that is not mourned, and a body that is not buried. For families and loved ones, a disappearance signifies an **ambiguous loss**. Torn between hope and despair, awaiting news of the missing person while also fearing it (cf. Boss 2000: 8-9), they have to deal with administrative agonies, unresolved family and property-law ramifications (Mirto et al. 2020: 109), helpless to initiate legal steps without the bodies: seeking investigation and accountability for the deceased.

At the same time, many, if not most, of the found bodies remain unidentified (cf. Dearden et al. 2020: 57; Cattaneo et al. 2023; Tapella et al. 2016: 57). In Europe, the identification process is further complicated by the lack of established national and international procedures for connecting the physical existence (the body) and civil register data (the name), the search for missing persons and their relatives, as well as protocols for systematically collecting, storing, and comparing data on found bodies and missing individuals (cf. Cattaneo et al. 2023). Identification, officially, in a narrower sense, is carried out by the police and depends on a whole range of circumstances and actors. For example, it may depend on how the death occurred, whether a witness can testify to the identity of the victim, can the identity be determined based on personal documents found with the deceased person, or if DNA or fingerprint analysis is required, and so on. In practice, however, the events that unfold from the moment a disappearance is reported is much more complex. For refugees and other migrants who go missing in transit, procedures that are almost automatically initiated for missing citizens, such as publishing a "profile" on the National Missing Persons Database website, initiating a "search," informing the entire operational police force, checking with other agencies, conducting interviews with anyone who might have useful information about the missing person, and similar measures, are started, if at all, only with additional efforts. The invisibility and exclusion that followed refugees and other migrants in life are also carried into death (Kovras and Robins 2016). From this perspective, the chaotic and challenging postmortem itineraries, as well as the prolonged and often inconclusive identifications, are revealed as a consequence and continuation of illegalization. In 2022, one of the "erased" residents of Slovenia was buried six long months after his death, as his sixty years of life and the testimonies of his friends and acquaintances were not sufficient to confirm his identity in the view of state services. His identity had to be determined through DNA analysis.

In the absence of clearly defined and functional procedures, identification in practice depends on the knowledge, competence, power, understanding or lack of understanding of individuals employed in the police, hospitals, local government companies, public prosecutors' offices, etc. It also depends on the agility and policies of national and local communities and institutions, individuals, and organizations, as well as the location where the person died. In some Croatian municipalities and counties, almost all deceased individuals are identified, while in others, none are identified. International and cross-sector cooperation is almost nonexistent. On some borders, such as the U.S.-Mexico border, functional procedures have been established due to the efforts of families and experts (e.g., Colibrí Center for Human Rights). Meanwhile, for incidents such as the shipwrecks in the Mediterranean in October 2013, protocols used for identifying disaster victims were tried and adapted (cf. Cattaneo et al. 2023: 150-151).

Identification, and especially repatriation (returning the body to the country of origin), heavily depend on the economic fortune of the deceased person's family. It also depends on whether a family member can physically come to the country where the person died, contact the police and other services. Additionally, the process is influenced by the agility, policies, and interests of the embassies of the country of origin, as well as the connectedness and presence of communities from the originating country in the country where the death occurred or in its vicinity. Paradoxically, regulations for the protection, collection, and sharing of personal data, the focus on DNA samples and comparisons, as well as the efficiency of services (in the case of quick burials), can, in practice, hinder or even prevent identification (cf. Cattaneo et al. 2023; Perl 2016: 204). Therefore, as Ville Laakkonen emphasizes (2022: 4), instead of talking about the *unidentification* of the deceased in migration, we can talk about *institutionalized non-identification*.

People who disappeared and died at the borders, as well as other forms of border violence, such as pushbacks, have recently been linked to directly or indirectly state-organized disappearances, primarily with the *desaparecidos* — people who disappeared, were kidnapped, and killed in the second half of the 20th century in Latin America (Azarova et al. 2022: 136, 139-140; Distretti 2020;

Schindel 2020b: 37). Thus, key places for seeking justice for the missing in Latin America are transferred into the migrant context, i.e. the differences between seeking justice for the deceased and the missing. Disappearance is a crime that persists as long as the missing person remains unfound, or until their death is discovered and declared (Schindel 2020a: 393). States are responsible for providing answers about the disappeared, whether they died and how they died, and they should be held accountable for this (Schindel 2020a: 392). The *International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance* from 2006 defines a criminal framework under which enforced disappearance "constitutes a crime and, in certain circumstances defined in international law, a crime against humanity". It is essential that states are not at the center of this framework, as in international law, nor individuals, as in the human rights framework, but rather families and possibly friends as" a close unit of mutual care." This is crucial because it aligns with the normative premise in accordance with the lived experiences of many migrants (Azarova et al. 2022: 138).

Today, actors such as the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) or the OHCHR Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) (cf. Citroni 2017) include persons who died or went missing at the border within their agenda, expanding the field of potential political and legal interventions (Schindel 2020a: 399). At the same time, there is a proposal for the redefinition of the term so it would connect the missing and deceased at the borders with "social disappearances," which share common traits with enforced disappearances. These include "absence, invisibility, lack of representation, the impossibility of being put into words or being named" (Gatti 2020: 56). Social disappearances can ultimately have similar effects to enforced disappearances, but unlike enforced disappearances, they are not the result of state persecution directed at individuals. Instead, they affect entire social groups and are based on practices of abandonment and erasure, complete exclusion from the political and legal order, social protection, and frameworks of belonging (Schindel 2020b). Socially disappeared individuals are *truncated individuals, bodies separated from their names, names cut off from their history, and stripped of its citizenship papers* (Gatti 2020: 47-48). These are groups and individuals whose existence is ignored and denied by states, both in life and in death. They are, in the terminology of Achille Mbembe (2003: 40), the living dead, or, as bodies still alive, as Samir Karim refers to himself and other inhabitants of a Dutch asylum center in the novel *Two Blankets, Three Sheets* by Rodaan Al Galidi (2020: 131).

17/07/2023

References

Al Galidi, Rodaan. 2020. *Two Blankets, Three Sheets, a Towell, s Pillow, and a Pillowchase.* New York, London, Amsterdam: World Editions. Translated by Jonathan Reeder.

Albahari, Maurizio. 2015. *Crimes of Peace. Mediterranean Migrations at the World's Deadliest Border.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Augustová, Karoliná. 2021. "Photovoice as a Research Tool of the 'Game' Along the 'Balkan Route'". In *Visual Methodology in Migration Studies*. Karolina Nikielska-Sekula and Amandine Desille, eds. Cham: Springer, 197-215.

Azarova, Valentina, Amanda Danson Brown and Itamar Mann. 2022. "The Enforced Disappearance of Migrants". *Boston University International Law Journal* 40/1: 133-204.

Boss, Pauline. 2000. *Ambiguous Loss. Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Cattaneo, Cristina, Danilo De Angelis, Debora Mazzarelli, Davide Porta, Pasquale Poppa, Giulia Caccia, Maria Elisa D'Amico, Cecilia Siccardi, Carlo Previderè, Barbara Bertoglio, Morris Tidball-Binz, Douglas Ubelaker, Vittorio Piscitelli and Silvana Riccio. 2023 "The Rights of Migrants to the Identification of their Dead. An Attempt at an Identification Strategy from Italy". *International Journal of Legal Medicine* 137/1:145-156.

Citroni, Gabriella. 2017. "The First Attempts in Mexico and Central America to Address the Phenomenon of Missing and Disappeared Migrants". *International Review of the Red Cross* 99/2: 735-757.

De León, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves. Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Dearden, Kate, Tamara Last and Craig Spencer. 2020. "Mortality and Border Deaths. Data Key Challenges and Ways Forward". In *Border Deaths. Causes, Dynamics and Consequences of Migration-related Mortality*. Paolo Cuttitta and Tamara Last, eds. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 53-70.

Distretti, Emilio. 2020. "Enforced Disappearances and Border Deaths Along the Migrant Trail". In *Border Deaths. Causes, Dynamics and Consequences of Migration-related Mortality.* Paolo Cuttitta and Tamara Last, eds. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 117-130.

Gatti, Gabriel. 2020. "The Social Disappearences". *Dossiers, Forum Transregionale Studien* 1: 45-61.

Kovras, Iosif and Simon Robins. 2016. "Death as the Border. Managing Missing Migrants and Unidentified Bodies at the EU's Mediterranean Frontier". *Political Geography* 55: 40-49.

Laakkonen, Ville. 2022. "Deaths, Disappearances, Borders. Migrant Disappearability as a Technology of Deterrence". *Political Geography* 99: 1-9.

Mbembe, Achille. 2003. "Necropolitics". *Public Culture* 15/1:1-40. Translated by Libby Meintjes.

Mirto, Giorgia, Simon Robins, Karina Horsti, Pamela J. Prickett, Deborah Ruiz Verduzco i Victor Toom. 2020. "Mourning Missing Migrants. Ambiguous Loss and the Grief Strangers". In *Border Deaths. Causes, Dynamics and Consequences of Migration-related*

Mortality. Paolo Cuttitta and Tamara Last, eds. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 103-116.

Perl, Gerhild. 2016. “Uncertain Belongings. Absent Mourning, Burial, and Post-mortem Repatriations at the External Border of the EU in Spain”. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37/2: 195-209.

Schindel, Estela. 2020a. “Deaths and Disappearances in Migration to Europe. Exploring the Uses of a Transnationalized Category”. *American Behavioral Scientists* 64/4: 389-407.

Schindel, Estela. 2020b. “Mobility and Disappearance. Transregional Threads, Historical Resonances”. *Dossiers, Forum Transregionale Studien* 1: 17-44.

Tapella, Amelie, Giorgia Mirto and Tamara Last. 2016. “*Deaths at the Border.* From Institutional Carelessness to Private Concern. Research Notes from Italy”. *InTransformazione* 5/1: 57-64.

Weber, Leanne and Sharon Pickering. 2011. *Globalization and Borders. Death at the Global Frontier.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-nestali-p-71ed93df-ba29-4e37-bd5f-5f17e480e52c?locale=en

Discrimination and Racialization on the Bus

Robin Tigran Keršmanc

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-diskriminacija-in-rasizacija-na-avtobusu-p?locale=en

Distribution Tent

Tea Škokić

The distribution tent in the **Slavonski Brod camp** was, in certain periods of its existence, a place refugees had to pass through after completing police registration. International and local humanitarian, religious and non-governmental organizations, agencies and associations, as well as the police, worked and collaborated in the tent.

The distribution tent in this camp was characterized by a specific circulation, brought about by the fact that most of the people passed through it to collect necessary supplies between leaving and boarding trains. This circular route was also evident in the design of the tent, which had an entrance on one side and an exit on the other, and its organization suggested a rapid flow and adhering to the humanitarian principle of **fair distribution** of food, clothing and footwear and hygiene items to the refugees.

During the several months of its existence, its purpose changed spontaneously and sporadically, from a space with a rapid flow of refugees being handed donations over a fence, to a place of diverse and multidirectional verbal and non-verbal communication, narratives and emotions between people who need help and those who distribute it in the rudimentary form of material things. This change was also reflected by the interior appearance of the tent, which at times resembled a store with shelves and hangers, and volunteers who, like experienced salespeople, tried to recognize the needs of refugees and provide them with service. Thus, the distribution tent provided a semblance of normality and the impression of a bazaar, with (limited) free choice and selection of donated goods (Škokić and Jambrešić Kirin 2017).



Distribution Tent, 18 – 21 January 2016 Photo: Tea Škokić



Distribution Tent, 5 – 7 February 2016 Photo: Tea Škokić



Distribution Tent, 11 – 14 February 2016 Photo: Tea Škokić

While the freedom of movement for refugees, as well as most of the volunteers, was limited and even completely curtailed in the rest of the camp, the distribution tent, where used or new clothes and shoes, hygiene packages for women, basic packages for small children and blankets and tea were distributed, was a place where people could move and spend time somewhat more freely and where volunteers and refugees could communicate. This is where volunteers could see if someone needed medical help or refer them to the tent managed by UNICEF and the association RODA, the so-called **Roda tent**, where mothers could feed and change their children. The tent also contained a fenced off section intended for family reunions with printed photos of **disappeared** and lost family members or friends. The distribution tent was also the site of occasional disputes between humanitarian organizations, primarily between the organization in charge of running the official warehouse providing clothes and shoes to the tent, and a smaller volunteer organization that managed the warehouse of non-governmental organizations. The disputes revolved around the quality and suitability of the clothes and shoes being distributed. Tensions were caused by the lack of clothing in appropriate sizes, especially the lack of footwear, unclear criteria for when and what is brought from the warehouse, unsorted goods which were inadequate for the winter season, torn, tattered and dirty clothes from the official warehouse, and the efforts of the Croatian Red Cross and UNHCR, being the largest organizations operating in the tent, to separate their donations and prevent volunteers from other organizations from sharing them.

5/3/2022

References

Škokić, Tea and Renata Jambrešić Kirin. 2017. “The Shopping Center of Abnormal Normality. Ethnography of the Distribution Tent in the Refugee Camp in Slavonski Brod”. *Narodna umjetnost* 54/1: 129-146.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-distribucijski-scaron-ator-p?locale=en

Distro

Bojan Mucko

I joined the international group of volunteers gathered in Bihać (for the first time) in December 2020. The primary work activity of this self-organized collective is the daily distribution of humanitarian aid to people on the move who live outside the official migrant camps as homeless people. At the end of 2020, according to the volunteers' estimate, there were around two thousand people living outside official camps in the area of the Una-Sana Canton. The typology of the shelters housing the young Afghans and Pakistanis I met varied from unfinished or abandoned houses to empty factories. International volunteers call these improvised shelters squats, and "distro" became the established term and a frequently used abbreviation for distribution.

Given the criminalization of providing systematic humanitarian aid outside the camps, the volunteer work of unofficial, self-organized humanitarian initiatives in the area of the Una-Sana Canton has to be organized tactically and subversively. In order to maintain concealment, distro was conducted only at night, but the working day of the collective started in the morning, at nine o'clock, with coordinating during a group breakfast. Preparations for distro while preparing oatmeal, toasting bread, brewing coffee. The *Habibi* team (cf. **party in the Afghan squat**), consisting of five people seated in armchairs and a couch arrayed around a low table in the living room. Everyone with a bowl in their hands and a laptop on their knees. The computers are powered up and the plan for the day is reviewed. The playing field between the legitimate and the legal, the criminal and the criminalized, the regular and the irregularized.

One part of the team is in charge of contacting several hundred people via a messenger account opened exclusively for communication with people on the move in the area of Bihać. The work picks up from where it was left at the end of the previous day. Individuals and groups in need contact us, and the conversation usually continues with "hello brother, how can we help you? how many people are you? can you send us your location?". The amount of food and the type of clothing requested are agreed upon or negotiated in a few sentences. The link to the location of their squat and other information is copied into a table. When it is filled with data for the first twenty groups (i.e., for about two hundred people), the daily distro route is organized based on the most practical connection between all the necessary locations. Based on the obtained distances between the points on the route, the exact meeting time with each group is determined. After finally settling on the daily route, pins with the location and time of the meeting are sent to people on the move.

Due to possible police controls, the squats themselves are never visited. People on the move are met at distro points. The internal map of Bihać contains all the territorial knowledge of the volunteers. Around a hundred squats in Bihać and the surrounding area have been mapped, and each individual squat location on the map has several corresponding distro points. Each has its own, usually descriptive name, and *noir* elements are common, such as: *spooky industry, dog street, scary railway, construction site, corner spot, black hole.* Individual map locations are marked with black icons with white skeleton heads, and an explanation is provided in the map key. These are *burnedspots* – distro points where volunteers were seen by locals or intercepted by the police. To be seen – therefore – is to be burned.

While one part of the team deals with correspondence, the other goes shopping. After the list of packages is prepared and the groceries obtained, the collective packing in the warehouse begins. The prepared groceries are grouped in white plastic bags (purchased at the local chain store, Bingo). In an ironic coincidence, the bags feature a framed advertising slogan: "HERE FOR YOU, EVERY DAY". A bag with groceries for fewer than 5 people is called a *half bag*. A *full bag* is a bag with groceries for a group of 5 to 10 people. Once filled, the half bag is tied, while the full bag is left open for easier organization during distribution. *Non Food Items* (NFI), i.e. clothes and shoes, are placed in black garbage bags. The prepared food packages are placed in blue Ikea bags (big bags with practical handles) and loaded into the van. The HERE FOR YOU, EVERY DAY bags are kept in the back seat, and the NFI is stored at the bottom of the van.

The distro is done after nightfall. A new point is reached every fifteen minutes, and the entire distro process lasts around two hours. Arriving at the location (in the middle of the field). The van is parked so that its right side is better protected, because the back door cannot be opened, leaving only the side door usable, and the whole action takes place in front of it.

Turning off the headlights. Turning on the cabin light. The person in the passenger seat checks the spreadsheet on their **mobile** to see which group they are supposed to meet. Silhouettes of people can be seen emerging from the dark of the gravel roads – the representatives of the groups are coming. The person in the passenger seat checks the name of the person picking up the packages on their mobile phone and looks for the designation of the corresponding NFI bag in the spreadsheet. The distro has to be done quickly. If the group consists of, say, 15 people, one tied (half) and one open (full) bag is automatically taken from the white pile on the seat. One person is handed the food, and another person from the group is usually handed a black NFI bag.

The van used for my first distro didn't have a handbrake, the battery was in poor condition, the gearshift could barely be moved into reverse with both hands, it had a hole in the floor, a cracked windshield and a broken back door. The side door had no handle and could only be opened with a special technique, and the rear seats were not completely attached to the body of the vehicle. Sergej, who knew how to best maneuver the van, was driving, and I was in the passenger seat.

Sergej's favorite place on the map is *spooky industry*. He recalled his first experience with that location. "I remember driving there with Felix – it was my first distro. We would always go at night, and it was winter at that time. It really looked abandoned – there was a building with three, four floors, and those suicidal dogs were there as well. It's dark outside, and suddenly four or five dogs run in front of the van and you think to yourself: 'What the fuck is this?' That was scary in itself, then we drove past some trucks and industrial plants, going further and further, and then Felix says: 'Okay, this is our stop; turn off the lights'. And then you sit in the dark for some people to come. I don't know – from its name to the atmosphere – it's like a scene from a mob movie. You could use that place to get rid of a dead body (and anything else)."

10/5/2022

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/distro?locale=en

Dublin

Marijana Hameršak, Teodora Jovanović

For many, the first association when hearing “Dublin” is the city in Ireland, which is not necessarily the case for asylum seekers, humanitarian workers, human rights activists, and others engaged in the asylum system. They use the term “Dublin” for deportations, euphemistically termed Dublin transfers, from one European Union Member State to another. The term stems from the *Dublin Convention*, an agreement among EU states about the distribution of asylum juridistictions signed in Dublin in 1990. This convention, which came into force in 1997, was replaced by the *Dublin Regulation* adopted in 2003, known as Dublin II, which itself was replaced in 2013 by the new *Dublin Regulation* or Dublin III, which will certainly not be the last one. According to the Dublin Regulation, the responsibility for processing asylum claims lies with the Member State in which the asylum seeker first entered. This means that countries that are located on the EU's external borders bear exclusive responsibility for those who enter the European Union by land and sea routes. If a person seeks asylum in a country that is not the first country of entry (e.g., Germany or Austria), according to the Dublin Regulation, he or she may be **forcibly** and involuntarily returned to the country of first entry or presumed first entry (e.g., Croatia), with the possibility of being returned to a country where the person has never been, examples of which we discovered during field research.



Dublin documentation along the migratory pathways, Rigonce, Slovenia, 30/9/2023. Photo: Marijana Hameršak

The Dublin Regulation is one of the five legislative pillars of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Together with Eurodac, the EU fingerprint database of asylum seekers or, as it is also known, the EU digital border (Kuster and Tsianos 2016), it is one of the CEAS cornerstones (Kasparek 2016: 62). Since the *Eurodac Regulation* came into force in 2015, national police forces and Europol have been authorized to use the Eurodac biometric fingerprint database to prevent, detect, or investigate terrorist acts or other criminal activities (Vavoula 2015: 252), thereby labelling asylum seekers as potential criminals or terrorists. This assumption aligns with other assumptions about asylum seekers as individuals who falsely represent themselves or who seek to exploit the international protection system in some way. Nominally, Dublin prevents abuses of the asylum system, but in reality, it prevents asylum seekers from choosing their place of refuge based on familial and friendly ties, information about opportunities for regularizing their status, working conditions, access to healthcare, and more. The choice of destination country within the Dublin framework is redefined as exploitation or abuse of the asylum system, pejoratively termed “asylum shopping.” Envisaged as a mechanism to prevent so-called secondary movements, Dublin fosters hypermobility among potential or former asylum seekers and refugees “trapped in transit” (Picozza 2017a: 239), or “lives in transit” (Fontanari 2018). Among numerous examples, we highlight Dublin deportations from Switzerland to Croatia in 2023, where, as articulated by the Swiss activists we contacted, “by the end of August, 157 people were transferred to Croatia, many of them families. All families we know of left Croatia shortly afterwards, either returning to Switzerland or moving to another country.”

The focus of Dublin on peripheral countries comes from its background as an extension of the **Schengen** system of open internal borders and strictly controlled external borders of Europe. This historical link between Dublin and Schengen is recognized today in the inclusion of four non-EU countries—Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland—in both frameworks. Linking asylum jurisdiction with the geographic location of EU Member States shapes specific moral and political geographies within the EU. Dublin, like Schengen, can be understood as a tool of internal externalization or the shifting of border control activities from central EU states to its periphery (Cobarrubias et al. 2023: 7). The responsibility of the country to conduct asylum procedures should “motivate” countries at the outskirts of the EU to tighten border controls. The fact that this does not happen, or at least not to the expected extent and with the expected results, leads to another round of blame between North and South, as well as West and East, for incompetence, disinterest, inefficiency, etc. (cf. Rozakou 2017: 44).

Countries, despite the threat of numerous Dublin deportations and asylum claims—in a manner described by Bernd Kasparek (2016) as a “tacit” complicity or mimetic approach to migrant movements—ignore, tolerate, and even facilitate **transit** in different ways. Efforts are being made to revise this situation through amendments and enhancements to the already complex and extensive Dublin legislative framework, as well as agreements about “burden-sharing” programs such as **relocation** or defining monetary compensations for states unwilling to participate, as envisaged in negotiations over the final form of the *New Pact on Migration and Asylum*. Dublin, as well as these practices, reveals a “Eurocentric view of refugees and asylum seekers as objects of control and/or charitable intervention,” which hinders their abilities of making autonomous decisions, such as choosing a host country (Picozza

2017b: 84). Such Eurocentric understandings, according to some authors (Juss 2013: 310), have parallels with population management in former colonies, from which the majority of asylum seekers originate today. As emphasized by Kasparek, seen from the perspective of **migration regime**, Dublin can not be reduced to halted or return mobility, but includes disempowering the migrant population and the social practice of exclusionary inclusion (Kasparek 2016: 68). From this perspective, Dublin is recognized as a spatial metonymy, a synonym for taking and erasing fingerprints, for cycles and years of waiting, hiding, fleeing, family separation, deportations of only some family members, empty and full flights organized specifically for this purpose, or regular flights. In other words, Dublin could be understood as a legal fence, an administrative wall between core and peripheral states. Dublin is the statements, decisions, appeals, and responses, piles of documents accumulated over years in personal files that testify with their thickness to the endless labyrinths of Dublin administration.

In a broader sense, Dublin is a metaphor for the production of illegality, deportability, and refugeehood within the European Union. Dublin results in forced movements within Europe, which can be said to produce intra-European refugees, if we accept the definition of refugees as forcibly displaced persons (cf. De Genova et al. 2018: 246). Dublin is a legal framework that keeps asylum seekers in constant uncertainty, interweaving legality and illegality, arrivals and departures, threats of deportation, returns and escapes.

The idea of a safe third country, meaning a country that is neither the country of origin nor the country where the person currently resides, but the country through which someone has arrived (Collinson 1996) is the core idea of Dublin. According to Dublin, asylum seekers who entered the EU through this “safe” country should be returned there. However, not all European countries are absolutely safe, nor safe for everyone, nor in every respect. Therefore, the concept of a safe third country can be labeled as a legal fiction (Juss 2013: 312). Two fundamental Dublin principles mentioned in the literature are also legal fiction (cf. Picozza 2017a: 234). The first is that all signatory states have equal standards of protection, and the same life standards, and the second is that each of them can be entered physically illegally from outside of EU, so that the distribution of asylum burdens can be equal. Asymmetries in power, interests, and means, when it comes to the asylum system, manifest through differences in reception conditions, the number of protections granted, the number of deportations, the labor market, the organization of the health and education systems, as well as states’ interest in accepting refugees.

All countries should participate in uploading fingerprints into Eurodac, just as all asylum seekers should apply for asylum in the country of first entry and give fingerprints there. However, in practice, both states and potential asylum seekers resist these imperatives in various ways. For instance, during the **long summer of migration**, most countries along the transit route did not register asylum seekers, or at least not consistently and in accordance with the legal framework (Rozakou 2017). States at the external border are sometimes more inclined towards tolerating transit than processing asylum requests, thus in practice subverting Dublin. Survivors rescued at sea who refuse to give fingerprints upon arrival in Lampedusa by collectively burning or otherwise destroying their fingertips, or people on the **Balkan route** who refuse to apply for asylum even at the cost of another night sleeping rough or **pushback**, are also examples of resistance to Dublin. There are numerous examples of collective organizing by asylum seekers who are under threat of Dublin. The most known are probably in Germany (e.g., Lampedusa in Hamburg). Recently, there have been ongoing protests in Switzerland and Slovenia against Dublin deportations to Croatia. Dublin has been continuously challenged not only on streets, publicly and covertly, but also in courts across Europe for over a decade, usually focusing on deficiencies in individual countries, starting with Greece. Dublin deportations to Greece were suspended in 2011 following a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights (M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece), and in 2016, in line with the general erosion of protection standards, the European Commission recommended deactivating the suspension. A series of European courts, from Germany to Switzerland, have challenged Dublin returns to Croatia due to the risk of collective expulsions (pushbacks).

While the **Balkan corridor** was still active, Western European countries, primarily Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, sporadically conducted Dublin deportations to Croatia. In 2016, these deportations became so massive that they were referred to as the “Balkan route reversed” (cf. **counter-corridor**). Ahmad Shamieh from the outskirts of Damascus was among the thousands awaiting Dublin deportations to Croatia that year. Like many others, he found himself in endless legal and political mazes of deportability (Zorn 2021: 5). Ahmad had been in different countries, constantly moving back and forth. He applied for asylum in Slovenia, but he was entitled to Dublin instead to asylum. Croatia, not Slovenia, was deemed responsible for his asylum request. Appeals followed in various courts, along with protest actions. Ultimately, Ahmad was not deported to Croatia. As Jelka Zorn concludes in her article describing and interpreting Ahmad’s anti-Dublin struggle, if deportation is a site of sovereign enactment, resisting deportation is a struggle against the raw power of the state. Such a struggle requires spaces “defined by practices of autonomy, solidarity and freedom as never given as a substance of rights, but always fought for” (2021: 12). Spaces and communities are essential for this struggle. Ahmad Shamieh and other asylum seekers mobilize communities and constitute themselves as political subjects in the fight for their rights despite the lack of status or basic rights.

30/11/2023

References

Cobarrubias, Sebastian, Paolo Cuttitta, Maribel Casas-Cortés, Martin Lemberg-Pedersen, Nora El Qadim, Beste İşleyen, Shoshana Fine, Caterina Giusa and Charles Heller. 2023. “Interventions on the Concept of Externalisation in Migration and Border Studies”. *Political Geography* 105: 102911.

Collinson, Sarah. 1996. “Visa Requirements, Carrier Sanctions, 'Safe Third Countries' and 'Readmission'. The Development of an Asylum 'Buffer Zone' in Europe”. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 21/1: 76-90.

De Genova, Nicholas, Glenda Garelli and Martina Tazzioli. 2018. “Autonomy of Asylum? The Autonomy of Migration Undoing the Refugee Crisis Script”. *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 117: 239-265.

Fontanari, Elena. 2018. *Lives in Transit. An Ethnographic Study of Refugees' Subjectivity across European Borders*. London and New York: Routledge.

Juss, Satvinder S. 2013. "The Post-Colonial Refugee, Dublin II, and the End of Non-Refoulement". *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 20: 307-335.

Kasparek, Bernd. 2016. "Complementing Schengen. The Dublin System and the European Border and Migration Regime". In *Migration Policy and Practice. Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship*. Harald Bauder and Christian Matheis, eds. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 59-78.

Kuster, Brigitta and VasilisTsianos. 2016. "How to Liquefy a Body on the Move. Eurodac and the Making of the European Digital Border". In *EU Borders and Shifting Internal Security. Technology, Externalization and Accountability*. Raphael Bossong and Helena Carrapico, eds. Cham: Springer, 45-63.

Picozza, Fiorenza. 2017a. "Dubliners. Unthinking Displacement, Illegality, and Refugeeness within Europe's Geographies of Asylum". In *The Borders of "Europe". Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering*. Nicholas De Genova, ed. Durham: Duke University Press, 233-254.

Picozza, Fiorenza. 2017b. "Dublin on the Move. Transit and Mobility across Europe's Geographies of Asylum". *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 3/1: 71-88.

Rozakou, Katerina. 2017. "Nonrecording the "European refugee crisis" in Greece. Navigating through Irregular Bureaucracy". *Focaal* 77: 36-49.

Vavoula, Niovi. 2015. "The Recast Eurodac Regulation. Are Asylum Seekers Treated as Suspected Criminals?". In *Seeking Asylum in the European Union. Selected Protection Issues Raised by the Second Phase of the Common European Asylum System*. Céline Bauloz, Meltem Ineli-Ciger, Sarah Singer and Vladislava Stoyanova, eds. Leiden: Brill, 247-275.

Zorn, Jelka. 2021. "The Case of Ahmad Shamieh's Campaign against Dublin Deportation. Embodiment of Political Violence and Community Care". *Social Sciences* 10/5: 154.

Emptiness

Richard Lee Peragine

It is not unlikely that the word emptiness might come to mind in relation to Bosnia and Herzegovina. While just an intuition, an immediate first impression, emptiness has nevertheless been applied as a fertile coordinate to portray the hardships and contradictions of post-war Bosnia (Kurtović 2020; Henig 2020; Hromadžić 2015). Emptiness, following this intuition, is evidently not empty: it is not a pure void, but the result of specific historical conditions; a motile and layered emptiness. Lingering somewhere between the concrete and the abstract, emptiness retains a rich conceptual and analytical ambiguity; it is potentially a coordinate for critical research, a figure. Whether to refer to the consistent state of abandonment and ruination of the built environment across the country, or to its seemingly “pristine” and “wild” natural features—arguably some of the few that remain in Continental Europe—emptiness seems to aptly capture Bosnia’s post-socialist, transitional landscape.



Plješevica, September 2023. Photo: Richard Lee Peragine

For Larisa Kurtović, who writes about post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, emptiness “mark[s] a difference from the way things were and will be, from the way things are and we imagine they ought to be” (2020: 6). Emptiness, ruins and rubble, exposing such a gap, distance or difference, are bearers of negativity and a stirring potentiality. Indeed, the figure of emptiness prefigures a space of absence, loss or lack-of; but, we should add, it also indicates the untapped bounties of nature—as the name for an independent entity rejected and denied today by capitalism’s dominant anaturalism; an empty nature which can be destroyed and remade at will (Neyrat 2019). Resorting to the term emptiness to describe space thus is far from neutral. Since the incipient stages of Western capitalist modernity, the conflation between emptiness and space has been a condition for putatively-free spatial appropriations, enclosures

and thus manifold forms of extraction, thereby relegating nature and nonhuman forms of existence to a subordinate ontological position. This empty and appropriable presence moreover legitimises violence enacted against the many racialised figures assigned to the non-white Other that inhabits such a supposedly blank, uninhabited space (Henni 2022). The figure of emptiness therefore recalls other geographical tropes such as deserts, swamps, forests, or islands, which have been turned into images or narratives by specific regimes with the goal of enabling violent spatial politics, all the while shaping and often limiting how we approach the world. In this sense, emptiness is trans-scalar and trans-historical, although eminently situated; its character proper to both built and natural environments.



Dom Penzionera, Bihać, September 2023. Photo: Richard Lee Peragine

Whether empty factories, warehouses and unfinished public buildings, houses in ruins and vacant *vikendice*, or tumbledown infrastructure, such an architectural emptiness provides concrete evidence of the thirty-odd years of structural abandonment and organized inaction that have contributed, in the post-socialist transition, to the government of populations within and outside the order of the State. In doing so, the Transition—as an ideological-teleological narrative of redemption through the integration within the liberal-democratic, Eurowestern world—has left in place structures of domination and regulation for mostly exogenous or crony accumulation (Horvat and Štiks 2015). This architectural emptiness is therefore neither incidental nor unproductive, but part and parcel of the logic of capital that promotes the Transition's extractive environment. It is, in fact, left for the most part unaddressed: a structural planning inconsistency, handed down by the post-war convoluted form of government, which emerges, for instance, in inter-entity lack of cooperation, inter-cantonal gaps and overlaps in planning tools, or pre-war stalled privatisation processes and property disputes, whose very legislative framework actually hinders most resolutions. Forms of abandonment and ruination in the built environment of the Transition moreover play an active role in determining and organizing the type of operations put in place by migration management. In the context of the so-called **Balkan route**, in fact, spatial forms of emptiness have been both pursued by migrant people headed for Fortress Europe, as a space for refuge and shelter, as well as negated, as a consequence, by coalitions of national and supra-national authorities through evictions, policing, **fences**, walls and wires.

In general, natural features such as choppy seas, rushing rivers, primary forests and karstic mountains, or even the scarce presence of human settlements and infrastructure due to these geo-physical features, have been co-opted and weaponised against **illegal(ised)** migration (Hameršak and Pleše 2021). Cutting down forests, strategizing on the presence of **explosive remnants of war** or strong riverine currents have in fact shaped hostile, deadly border environments (Badano et al. 2023; Walters et al. 2022). Operated through the appropriation of the supposedly empty space of Nature, these forms of weaponization in themselves concur to border violence. Weaponization operationalises nonhuman environments against bare life, by casting migrant and refugee people into specific environments of exception. Emptiness—as the name for spatial forms of abandonment and ruination—has coincided with the space of the sovereign ban and, in this sense, points toward a more-than-human biopolitics (Smith 2011) or specific form of geontopower (Povinelli 2016). The environment is thus not simply a backdrop of bordering practices but is itself operationalised by way of the weaponization of its geo-physical features; co-opted in order to deter, thwart and animalize illegal(ised) migration (Vaughan-Williams 2015; Sakr 2018); causing the debilitation (Puar 2017) and **death** of migrant people, while entrenching Bosnia's extractive environment.

Therefore, the management of the Transition in Bosnia intersects with the tactics of migration management, highlighting “the accountability of ‘broader geopolitical games’ played by the EU and the different governments involved in the region on [migrants’] own lives and bodies” (Minca and Collins 2021: 10). Emptiness, in this sense, also brings to the fore a geopolitical logic and strategy. Within this discourse, Bosnia and the **Western Balkans** constitute part of a “geo-racial frontier” (Rexhepi 2023) between a White Christian Europe and its Others: “a strategic spatial sedimentation of racial difference” (Rexhepi 2023: 9); the creation of an empty buffer space in and through which the Eurowestern world now extends its past imperial and colonial frontiers into the biopolitical management of non-white populations.

Like other areas in the geographies of capitalism, such a frontier logic, which is currently imposed, above all, through the externalisation of EU borders, also functions toward the definition of repositories of raw materials, reserves of unskilled or highly-educated cheap labour, dumping sites for extra-territorial detention or for toxicity through waste trafficking and lax environmental standards. Emptiness contextualises the Balkan route within the longer project of EU-integration of the Western Balkans. In fact, EU-accession plans and instruments, for instance the IPA, entice Bosnia and the rest of the Western Balkan Six into committing to state reform, while setting institutional requirements, standards and conditions which entrench the asymmetries of this very frontier logic; above all, those emerging from the current border regime. Since the end of the war, border security in fact has comprised one of the key ambits of reform and supervised implementation in Bosnia’s EU-accession process (Jansen 2023). Concomitantly, this geopolitics regarding the extraterritorial externalisation of the EUropean border regime, or other highlighted aspects intrinsic to the geo-racial frontier, provides opportunities for the ethno-nationalist agendas of regional governments to reach internal economic and political interests (Hameršak et al. 2020). The Transition thus incorporates and entrenches Bosnia, and the Western Balkans, into a semi-peripheral condition: preserving the power of former socialist élites; acting as a laboratory for Euro-Atlantic governance; eternally postponing a confrontation with the consequences of the Transition itself, while reaping the profit for capitalist cores and transnational financial debt institutions. Through this frontier logic—and the parallel definition of an extra-territorial empty space—the Balkans are projected as a “badland” or “powder keg”, in light of a supposedly wild spatial character and violent anthropological essence: an empty space of non-white Others.

As a central tenet of migration management along the Balkan route, the weaponization of emptiness, either of built or natural environments, in other words, falls under the rubric of this geopolitical project of governance. It renders evident a co-implication between migration management and the management of the Transition, thus exposing the concrete entanglements in space between coloniality and the EU-integration process, deindustrialisation and privatisation processes, past and current forced (e)migration. The management of the Transition, we might suggest, has been erected upon the management of emptiness, bringing to the fore “an unfamiliar logic of governance” (Dzenovska 2020: 14) of contemporary capitalism that sheds light on the intersections between the weaponized use of space and more-than-human biopolitical governance; between the current border regime and contemporary extractive capitalism.

24/9/2024

References

Badano, Riccardo, Tomas Percival and Susan Schuppli. 2023. *Border Environments*. Berlin: Spector Books.

Dzenovska, Dace. 2020. “Emptiness. Capitalism without People in the Latvian Countryside”. *American Ethnologist* 47: 10-26.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2021. “Weaponized Migration Landscapes at the Outskirts of the European Union”. *Etnološka tribina* 51/44: 204-221.

Hameršak, Marijana, Sabine Hess, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2020. “The Forging of the Balkan Route. Contextualizing the Border Regime in the EU Periphery”. *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 5/1: 9-29.

Henig, David. 2020. “Emptiness and Deadly Environments”. *Fieldsights*.

Henni, Samia, ed. 2022. *Deserts Are Not Empty.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Horvat, Srećko and Igor Štiks, eds. 2015. *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism. Radical Politics After Yugoslavia.* New York and London: Verso Books.

Hromadžić, Azra. 2015. *Citizens of an Empty Nation. Youth and State-Making in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Jansen, Stef. 2023. “How Bosnia and Herzegovina Was Bordered. The Supervised Making of a Border/Mobility Assemblage in the European Semiperiphery”. *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 71/2: 190-209.

Kurtović, Larisa. 2020. “When the 'People' Leave. On the Limits of Nationalist (Bio)Politics in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina.” *Nationalities Papers* 1–20.

Minca, Claudio and Jessica Collins. 2021. “The Game. Or, ‘the making of migration’ along the Balkan Route”. *Political Geography* 91.

Neyrat, Frédéric. 2019. *The Unconstructable Earth. An Ecology of Separation*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Povinelli, Elizabeth A. 2016. *Geontologies. A Requiem to Late Liberalism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Puar, Jasbir. 2017. *The Right to Maim. Debility, Capacity, Disability*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Rexhepi, Piro. 2023. *White Enclosures. Racial Capitalism and Coloniality along the Balkan Route*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Sakr, Rita. 2018. “The more-than-human refugee journey. Hassan Blasim’s short stories”. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 54/6: 766-780.

Smith, Mick. 2011. *Against Ecological Sovereignty. Ethics, Biopolitics, and Saving the Natural World.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

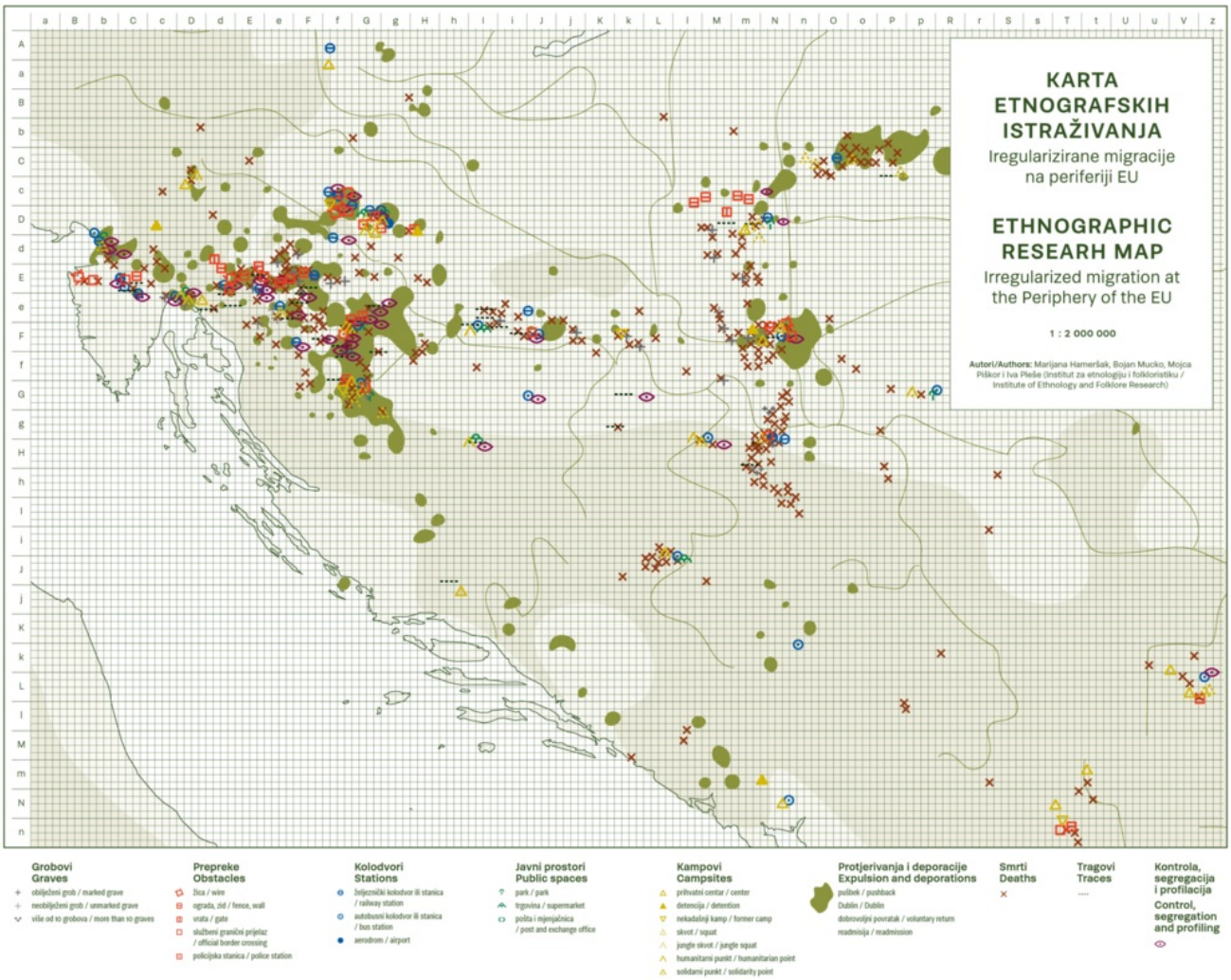
Vaughan-Williams, Nick. 2015. *Europe’s Border Crisis. Biopolitical Security and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Walters, William, Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani. 2022. *Viapolitics. Borders, Migration, and the Power of Locomotion*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-p-8cd3a666-a462-404f-9cc3-10737d7749dc?locale=en

ERIM Ethnographic Research Map

Marijana Hameršak, Bojan Mucko, Mojca Piškor, Iva Pleše



Map design: Studio Hrvatin

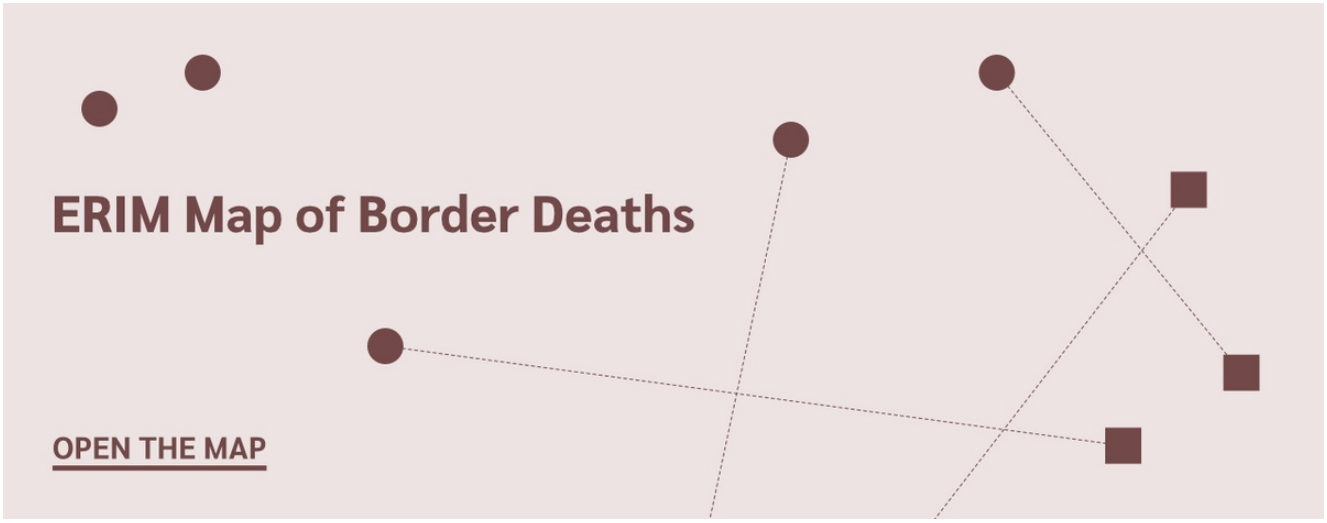
The map points to the locations visited or identified by the researchers involved in the project *ERIM – European Regime of Irregularized Migration at the Periphery of the European Union: From Ethnography to Keywords* (2020–2024). Evoking some familiar elements of ethnological cartography, the map presents sites of racialized social segregation and the production of desirable and undesirable existences. The map was initially created and displayed as part of the exhibition *Travelers* of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb.

10/12/2025

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-karta-erim-ovih-etnografskih-istrazivanja-p?locale=en

ERIM Map of Border Deaths

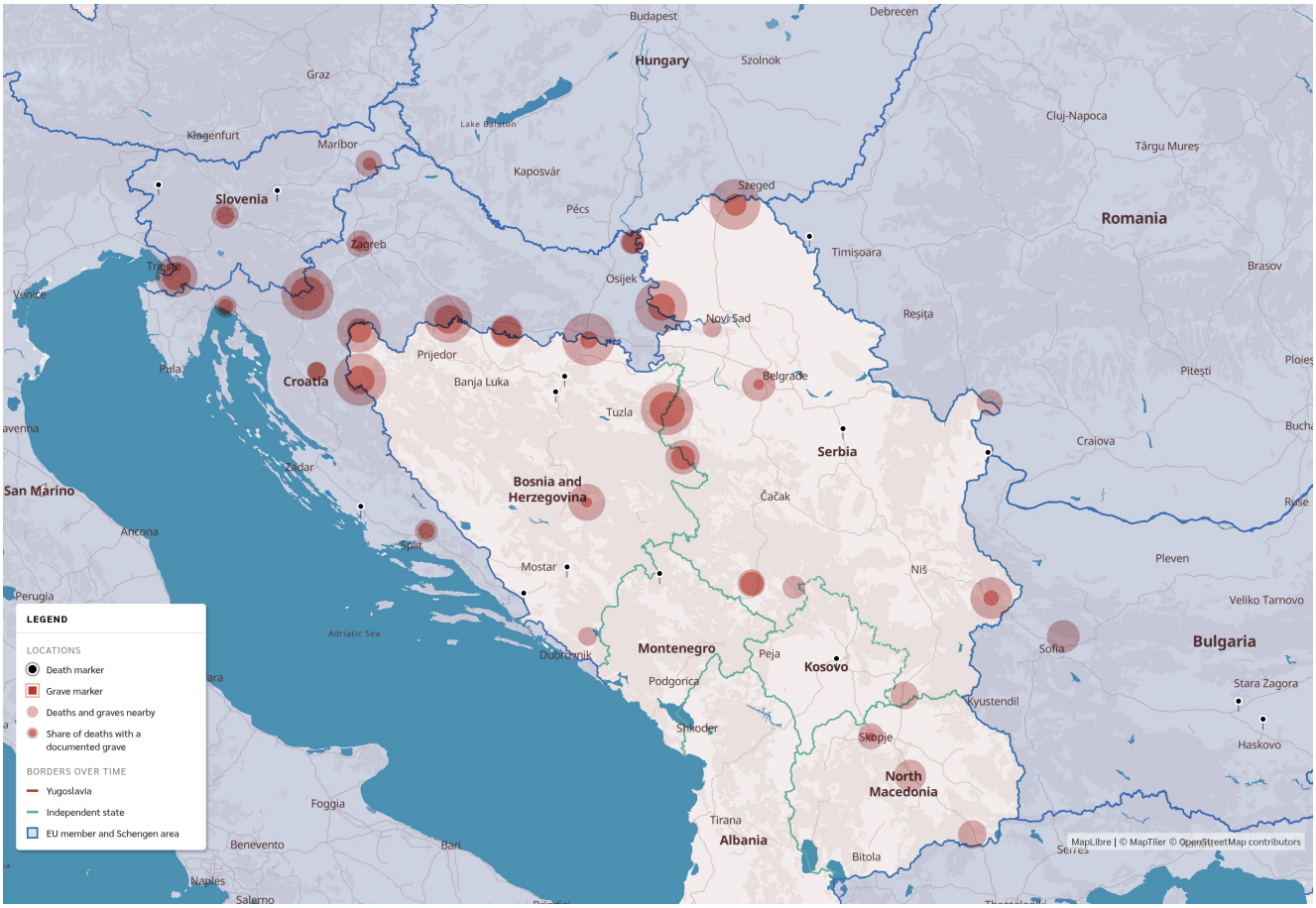
Marijana Hameršak



First published 17/10/2024. Revisions 16/10/2026.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-karta-smrti-na-granici-p?locale=en

ERIM Map of Border Deaths



Map as of 20.10.2026. This interactive map is only available in the online edition of e-ERIM. View it at: https://e-erim.ief.hr/prostorni-prikaz?locale=en

EU’s Zoned Borderscapes

Marta Stojić Mitrović

The central political, economic and social space of the European Union is based on the concept of an “area of freedom, security and justice”, which is defined in opposition to what lies outside of it, and what could endanger it. The physical borders of that area become a place for the spectacularization of this antagonistic relationship, while the repression against everyday human mobility from the outside is transformed into the primary civil securitarian technique for the production of belonging and autolegitimization of the right to control entry and residence. In principle, membership in the area of freedom, security and justice is not final: if a country accepts the required principles, amends its legislation and introduces appropriate institutional practices, it can become a member, if the current members give their approval. Sectors in which changes need to be made are sorted into chapters and sections, and a detailed evaluation is carried out, both at regular intervals as well as in certain key phases. A positive evaluation usually entails new opportunities for economic and political cooperation. This process appears to be technocratic, objective and rational. It is presented as a road that an interested country must undergo in order to enter the area of freedom, security and justice. Therefore, people (goods, money, information, etc.) are not the only objects whose movement is controlled, but, in a figurative sense, countries are also moving towards the EU.

The borderscape of the EU composed of concentric circles was explicitly formulated in 1998, during the Austrian presidency of the Council of the European Union, when the draft strategy on immigration and asylum policy was presented. This document (Strategy 1998) establishes an image of the world in which more than half of the Earth is divided into concentric regions with different operational roles in the control of borders and migration movements towards the EU. Without hesitation, the EU should use all available means, political and economic pressure, to influence countries to implement migration control. Or, as stated in the document:

> 60. Here, a model of concentric circles of migration policy could replace that of “fortress Europe”. For obvious reasons, the Schengen States currently lay down highly intensive control measures. Their neighbours (essentially the associated States and perhaps also the Mediterranean area) should gradually be linked into a similar system which should be brought increasingly in line with the first circle’s standards, particularly with regard to visa, border control and readmission policies. A third circle of States (CIS area, Turkey and North Africa) will then concentrate primarily on transit checks and combating facilitator networks, and a fourth circle (Middle East, China, black Africa) on eliminating push factors.
>
> 61. In the system as a whole, meeting the obligations arising in each respective role should have positive consequences, just as failure to meet them should have negative consequences for the country concerned: for example, the second circle must meet Schengen standards as a precondition for EU membership; for the third circle, intensified economic cooperation is linked to the fulfilment of their obligations; and for the fourth circle, the extent of development aid granted can be assessed on that basis (Strategy 1998).

The peripheries, which gradually spread out from the center, become so-called buffer zones, or, more precisely, **tampon zones** (cf. Stojić Mitrović 2021).

The complex dynamics of absorbing states into the European border regime through processes of **externalization** result in the creation of differential, hierarchical, non-spatial zones which reflect asymmetric political relations. From a Eurocentric perspective, a zoned world enables not only the technical outsourcing of movement control and the removal of unwanted people on the move from services, administration, and ultimately the streets, but also creates an image in which borderscapes outside the EU are transformed into tampon zones in which different governing rules are possible: unlimited administrative detention, violence, deportations and various other practices that are interpreted, like the borderscapes themselves, through their property of liminality. These spaces are usually the scenes of practices whose creation and implementation are actively or tacitly endorsed by the EU, for which the EU denies any responsibility: these practices are associated with nation states, not the EU. At the same time, borderscapes cut through the borders and territories of real nation-states, and do not cover a defined space.

1/6/2022

References

Strategy Paper on Immigration and Asylum Policy. 1998. 9809/98 CK4 27 ASIM 170.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta. 2021. *Evropski granični režim i eksternalizacija kontrole granica EU. Srbija na balkanskoj migracijskoj ruti.* Beograd: Etnografski institut SANU.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-evropske-granicne-zone-p?locale=en

Explosive Remnants of War

Richard Lee Peragine

In September 2021, EUFOR published updated mine-contamination maps that show the location across Bosnian national territory of explosive remnants of war (ERWs), such as minefields, cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance. This cartography documents the proximity of unexploded military weapons to former and current migrant encampments and routes; in the Una-Sana Canton, for instance: the quasi-abandoned hamlet of Bosanska Bojna, the landfill beneath **Vučjak** camp, the outskirts of Bihać, Mount Plješevica, as well as slopes, areas along and around beaten migration trails. Despite joint efforts by BHMAC (Bosnia's Mine-Action Centre) and international landmine-monitoring centres, the *Gorska Služba Spašavanja* (GSS), aid organisations such as the Red Cross, and autonomous solidarity networks, to inform migrant and refugee people of the presence of ERWs, in March 2021 one Pakistani man **died** and four more people were injured in an explosion, while walking in the forests around Saborsko, Croatia, 50 kilometres north of Bihać. The victim had set off a landmine.

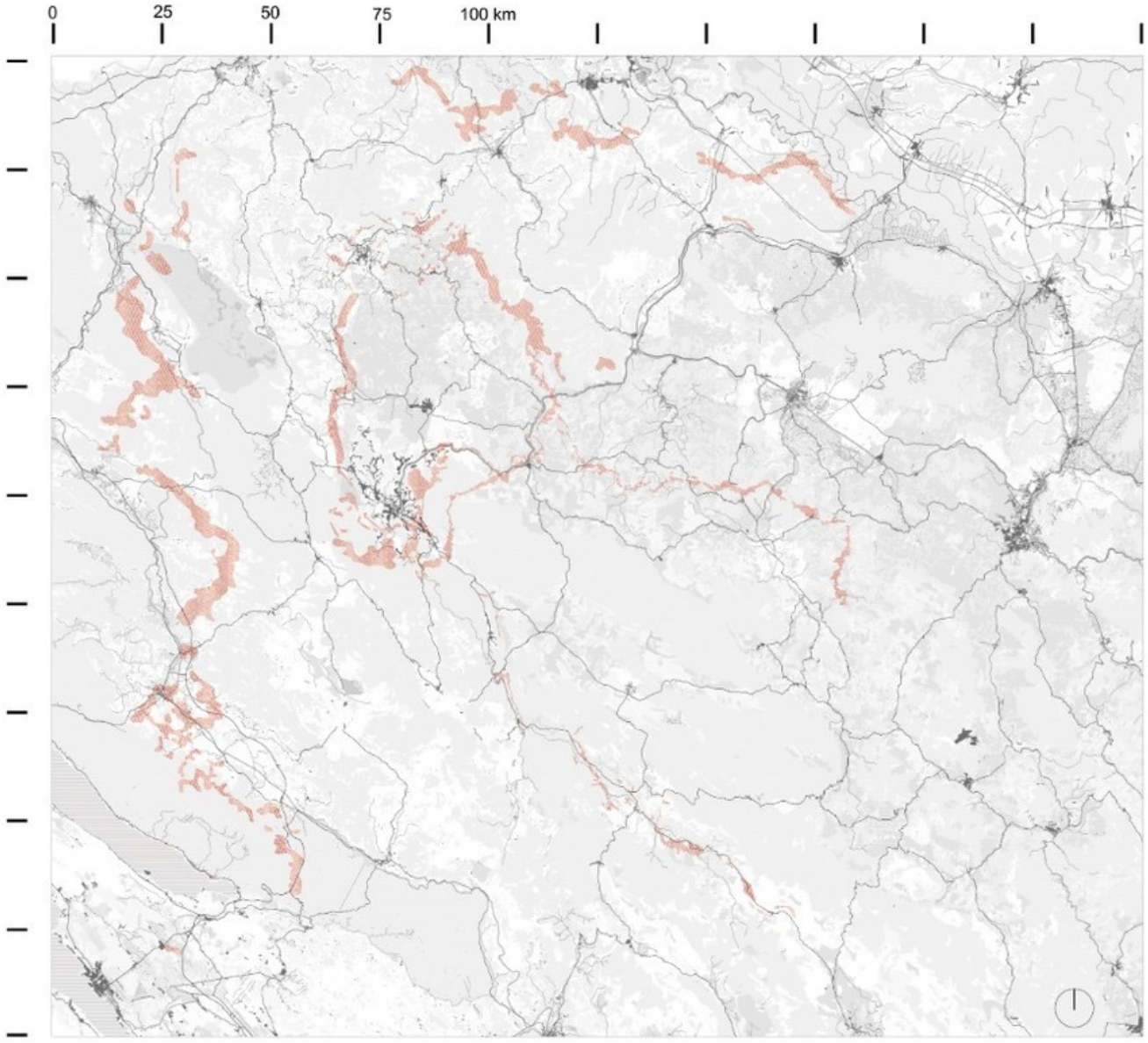


Explosive Remnants of War, 2023. Photo: Aladin Barjektarević, BHMAC Bihać

In the uncanny reemergence of a war-time form of toxic **weaponization** of space, this death brings to the fore how explosive remnants of war was a means to prevent the return of displaced communities to their homes, and thus an essential tactic in the campaigns of ethnic violence from 1992 to 1995, that is: "a systematic policy of 'cleansing the ground' (*čišćenje terena*), often translated as ethnic cleansing (*etničko čišćenje*), designed to clear the landscape of all those labelled as the Other" (Berman 2003: 273). The violent and long-term clearing of the Other is a constitutive aim of the weaponization of the environment in its many forms: denying the very conditions and means of life, literally subtracting space and rendering terrain inaccessible for many years after the end of war-time violence. ERWs constitute a long-term condition, an active form of **emptiness** which "offers a powerful lens for localizing the effect of late modern warfare, and for attending ethnographically to what living around such deadly environments entails" (Henig 2020).

The death of one migrant in Saborsko is in fact a reminder of the enduring militarisation of this territory that local communities have had to endure since the 1990s and has caused in Bosnia alone 1781 casualties, either deaths (624 people) or severe injuries or maiming, since the end of the conflict. War-time soil-contamination in the country is concentrated along the 1100-km-long and 4-km-wide Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) that separates the Federation of BiH, the Republika Srpska and the Brčko District from one another. Areas around the IEBL therefore have priority when it comes to demining operations. But non-IEBL swathes of land are, at times, just as contaminated. The presence of multiple confrontation lines, as well as the rapid and continuous changes to them that occurred in the fighting, have made soils in the Una-Sana Canton (USK) some of the worse affected by ERW-pollution today. In April 2022, BHMAC officials had it that mine-suspected areas in USK amounted to 93 km2, that is, 3% of cantonal territory: the third largest

extent in the FBiH by canton, and almost half of the total quantity contaminating the RS.



ERW mark Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2024. Photo: Federico Uliana and Richard Peragine

Since 1995, men from deprived rural areas—the milieu of the poor—have been the main victims, since they rely on surrounding land to fulfil basic needs, such as collecting firewood and carrying out agricultural work. Most incidents take place in spring and autumn when the land is tilled and households stock up on firewood. Indirect victims such as other family members are then forced into the same patterns of radical indeterminacy (Henig 2016; 2019), having to provide for the same necessities either in the same way or via other, often insufficient, means. The mere presence of landmines hinders social and economic development, endangers housing and livestock, land use and infrastructure, such as roads, power lines, and irrigation systems. It is one of several obstacles to Bosnia's structural economic issues since the war and, due to lack of funds and political conditions, corresponds to a form of systematic inaction that leaves shares of the population—including understaffed and underequipped BHMAC workers—to confront an everyday form of indeterminacy.

Extreme geo-climatic events, such as floods and landslides, add to this indeterminate condition, by displacing mapped ERWs and upsetting years of mine action, as was the case during the 2014 South-European floods. This structural and lethal unpredictability is moreover likely to surface more frequently in light of the increased incidence of extreme events in the Anthropocene.

This toxic indeterminacy today gravely imperils migrant people as well. On Plješevica, as well as on other routes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia or Kosovo, the threat of ERWs further obstacles border crossings on foot, off beaten tracks and so out-of-sight, thereby restricting movements to better-known routes and smuggling lines. Bypassing main infrastructure and moving through forests to remain undetected, people walking stretches of the Balkan route have fewer chances of noticing the red signs warning about the dangers of ERW contamination, which are most often put up where the edges of woods or fields come up against the fringes of towns and the side of roads. The decision to rest overnight in a forest, in such a case, potentially leads to inadvertently entering a

contaminated zone.

ERWs from previous bargaining over territory and targeted at the Enemy have been funnelling migrant Others into prescript movement patterns, making undetected, if not unscathed, movements even less likely. All the more so when coupled with karstic and hostile geophysical terrain, ERWs have thus acted as a deterrent to **illegal(ised)** crossings: an indirect bordering practice that has funnelled migration routes into more restricted movement patterns, allowing pushback violence to operate in specific areas, instead of along the entirety of the over 900-km-long land border between Bosnia and Croatia. ERWs are part of the broader more-than-human biopolitical project of weaponization of emptiness. This legacy of war is one of many factors to create an indeterminate and toxic environment that enables extractive logics to persist, affecting both the livelihoods and environments in which citizen and migrant lives unfold.

24/9/2024

References

Berman, David M. 2003. “Calling The Wandering Souls. A Journey through the Heartland of Ethnic Cleansing”. *War, Literature and the Arts* 15/1-2: 267-282.

Henig, David. 2016. “Fragments of Village Life and the Rough Ground of the Political in Post-War BiH”. In *Negotiating Social Relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Stef Jansen, Čarna Brković and Vanja Čelebičić, eds. London: Routledge, 46-59.

Henig, David. 2019. “Living on the Frontline. Indeterminacy, Value, and Military Waste in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina”. *Anthropological Quarterly* 92/1: 85-110.

Henig, David. 2020. “Emptiness and Deadly Environments”. *Fieldsights*.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-p-e1d3ea4b-8859-4899-bb78-6a040ecddc40?locale=en

Fair Distribution

Tea Škokić

The humanitarian idea of equitable distribution of aid to all those who need it relies on the concept of fairness as an objective and measurable category and assumes a universal moral horizon for those who provide and those who receive aid. Anthropologically speaking, fairness is a subjective category because, although it is socially shaped, it largely depends on the moral attitudes of individuals, and in the case of humanitarian aid, on the providers' arbitrary judgments of who needs what and in what quantities. Barbara Harrell-Bond argues that we rely too much on 'fairness' as a distributive measure and calls for the language of fairness to be replaced with the language of dignity (2002). By this, Harrell-Bond means that it is more important to respect the dignity of refugees than the fair distribution of aid, which, in more concrete terms, means that the attitude of aid providers towards refugees must not be paternalistic and infantilizing, that they should not be treated as members of the community who do not deserve to be trusted, or, on the other hand, as people who should be happy with inadequate contents in food packages. The asymmetric power relationship between the recipient and the provider of humanitarian aid is further strengthened by equating the concepts of fairness and equality (Van Arsdale and Nockerts 2008). In practice, this means that a humanitarian organization, and quite often the humanitarian worker themself, distributes aid with the assumption that all persons who seek aid or a group of such people are in the same position and have the same needs, so it distributes aid equally, even though, objectively, their positions to obtain aid and needs are different, so the distribution is unfair. Thus, for example, in the **camp in Slavonski Brod**, when the corridor through which refugees traveled through Croatia was first being established, everyone was given the same packages with food (a can of food, water, bread).

The concept of fairness is often associated with the humanitarian principle of impartiality, which the international Red Cross describes as one that is devoid of the burden of prejudices related to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political stance, as well as the concept of equity, which assumes that despite differences, everyone should receive the same aid. However, even when aid providers are aware that the needs of refugees differ, unfair situations still often occur, such as when blankets were distributed several times to elderly people and families during their passage through the **Balkan corridor**, while young males were continuously left without them.

Considering that the practice of fair distribution is often, in addition to the concepts of fairness and equality, influenced by the criteria of effectiveness, some scientists are developing mathematical models in order to measure fairness as fairly as possible – the so-called fairness metrics (cf., e.g., Anaya-Arenas et al. 2018).

15/3/2022

References

Anaya-Arenas, Ana María, Angel Ruiz and Jacques Renaud. 2018. "Importance of Fairness in Humanitarian Relief Distribution". *Production Planning & Control* 29/14: 1145-1157.

Harrell-Bond, Barbara. 2002. "Can Humanitarian Work with Refugees Be Humane?" *Human Rights Quarterly* 24/1: 51-85.

Van Arsdale, Peter W. and Regina Nockerts A. 2008. "A Theory of Obligation". *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance.*

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-pravedna-distribucija-p?locale=en

Fences, Walls and Wires at State Borders

Iva Pleše

In early spring of 2019, after starting from Bihać, walking through the snow for days and swimming across the almost frozen Kupa River, three young Moroccans found themselves in front of a “four to five meter high steel fence with barbed wire on the top”. The first to climb the barrier cut his hand on the wire, while the other two managed to cross it without injury. However, armed police officers were waiting for them on the other side.

The fence, part of which, according to one of the reports on **pushbacks**, is described here in brief, is only one of the numerous and multiplying obstacles on the external borders of local and other territories. The fence in question is located at the state border between Slovenia and Croatia, largely placed in nature so that, as an element of the fencing/walling/wiring system for anti-migrant purposes, it would form part of the **weaponized landscape**. Injuries resulting from the wire, which is called barbed wire in this case, although it is more likely to be the even more dangerous razor wire, are also only some of the injuries that people on the move are exposed to when attempting to cross borders (cf. **game**).

Apart from the aforementioned Slovenian-Croatian barrier, others were also erected at these borders. The Hungarian barrier towards Serbia was erected (Korte 2022) before the Slovenian one, and the barrier towards Croatia was added later. At that time, Austria started to build a barrier towards Slovenia. Bulgaria started building a barrier towards Turkey in 2014, as did Greece two years prior. After the Hungarian barrier, Macedonia started building one towards Greece, a new Hungarian one towards Serbia was also erected, parallel to the first one, and Serbia began construction on one towards Macedonia. These barriers erected in connection with the **Balkan route** were preceded or followed by other contemporary European barriers, such as the Spanish barrier towards Morocco, the Lithuanian and Latvian barriers with Belarus, the British-French barrier in Calais, the Polish barrier towards Belarus, etc. Whether they were EU, intra-EU, i.e. **Schengen**, intra-Schengen or “only” European barriers, all of them are simply parts of “world” fences, walls and wires quickly erected in recent years and decades, and primarily – although other, anti-terrorist and anti-smuggling, reasons were cited as well – as protection from migrants (cf. e.g. Vallet 2019). Thus, the primary reason for the barriers related to the Balkan route is openly stated as defense against migrants. After all, although they were brought up as ideas before (Beznec et al. 2016: 40-41), the construction of external fences, walls and wires in this region began in the summer of 2015, which was interpreted, cynically, as a “construction response” to the “wave of illegal migrants” or as a “way to cope with the ongoing refugee crisis” (Sicurella 2017).

These barriers, referred to in the media as barbed fences and barbed wires, border fences, walls made from barbed wire, wire fences and razor wires, differ significantly from each other in terms of technical characteristics, i.e. the material used, complexity and overall physical form. They are composed of a whole spectrum of obstacles, from technologically very simple ones to sophisticated ones, from wire in coils simply thrown on the ground or stuck on metal poles, to panel fences with or without wires at the top and at the base, and the so-called smart, SF or high-tech Hungarian fence, as it is, due to its method of construction, materials and components such as heat sensors, electric shocks, cameras and speakers (cf. Kallius 2017), called by the media.

One of the common characteristics of these various types of barriers is their constant openness to changes, additions, reinforcements and extensions. For example, the Slovenian barrier towards Croatia that was first widely announced to be demolished in the spring of 2022, in connection with political changes in Slovenia, with the demolition starting and stopping during the summer of the same year, has been upgraded several times over the years until finally – although this is not known precisely to the public, supposedly for the sake of protection from smugglers – it reached a length of about 200 kilometers, around one third of the entire length of the border between Slovenia and Croatia. In addition to being extended, the barriers are also doubled up, such as the Hungarian one towards Serbia in 2017. In the summer of 2022, the media reported that Hungary would once again upgrade its existing barrier towards Serbia, making it higher. This case is also an example of frequent associations of border barriers with different types of announcements, about their installation or removal, warnings, threats, offers and related discourses.

Barriers related to the Balkan route are placed in different locations, taking into account, among other things, the position of the border in relation to populated areas. While some are erected only where no so-called natural borders exist, such as the Hungarian barrier towards Croatia, others are placed right next to them, for example, along the already mentioned Kupa river on the Slovenian-Croatian border. In addition, different types of barriers are erected on different terrain: locations that are allegedly less used for illegal crossings on the Hungarian border were planned to feature a simpler type of barrier, and where crossing attempts are more frequent, another, more efficient type of barrier was planned.

In some places, border barriers are placed far from settlements and erected in inaccessible or at least less visited parts of the landscape, and in others they are located very close to settlements or visited locales. For instance, in some parts of Hungary, along its borders with Croatia and Serbia, barriers are placed “in the middle of the field”, in a landscape with no natural obstacles, so they can only be seen by zooming in on photos taken from a distance, which makes the border visible. In order to reach these obstacles, one has to make a certain effort, because the fields are located far from the road, as well as from the places where people live, work or stay. Thus, even those living in their relative vicinity do not necessarily know exactly where the barriers are placed and how to reach them, as a local woman in Kneževi Vinogradi told us during one of ERIM’s research interviews in May 2022.



The Hungarian barrier “in the middle of the field”. Bački Breg, 16 May 2022. Photo: Marijana Hameršak

Some barriers are placed in the immediate vicinity of locations where people gather, but are not clearly visible at first glance. The river bank near Brod na Kupi, a popular bathing location during the summer, is separated at the Slovenian side by a wire, which, however, has almost been overgrown by the vegetation on the river bank on the Slovenian side, and thus is only noticed later, sometimes not at all. The example of the wire found in the river is a testament to the violent and grotesque integration of certain barriers into nature.



Bathing site near Brod na Kupi. Left: Beach and forest by the river. Right: Forest by the river in close-up, with the wire visible. 12 August 2019. Photo: Iva Pleše

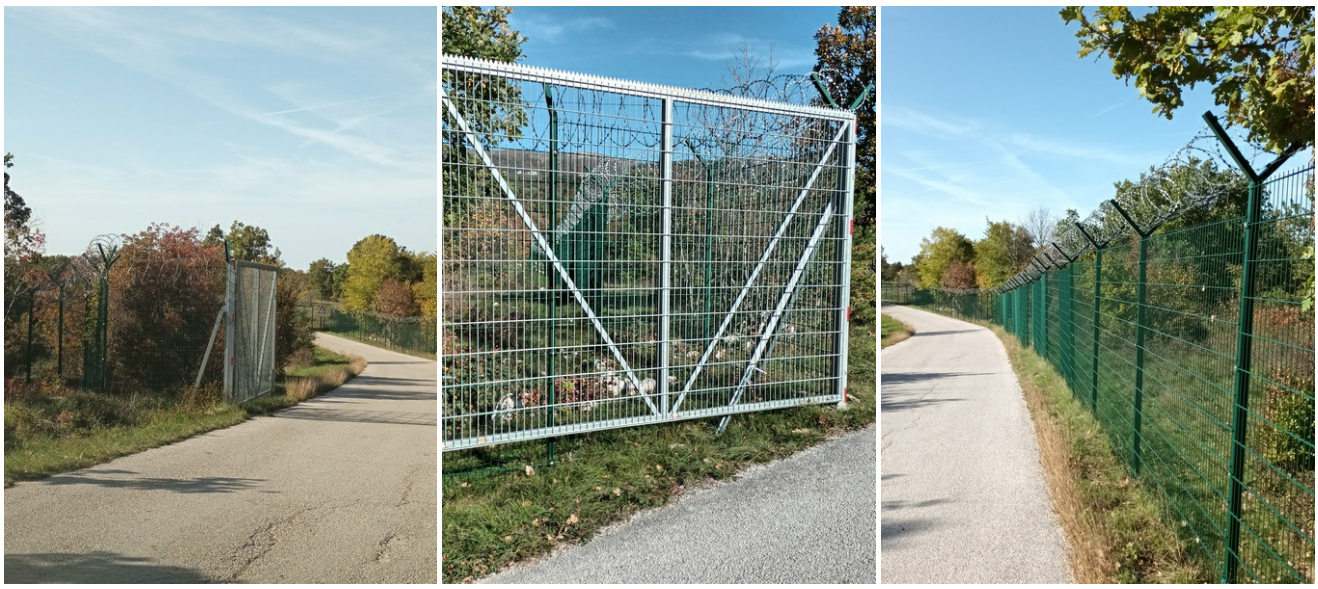
Local knowledge about fences, walls and wires depends not only on their proximity or distance from a place where people live or gather, but also on the existential or some other interest of the people who live in those areas. For example, the residents of Preševo near the Serbian-Macedonian border, who researchers spoke to in June 2020, mostly did not even know that Serbia was erecting a barrier towards North Macedonia. On the other hand, in Miratovac, a village located ten kilometers from Preševo towards the border, the situation was completely different, as land was taken from the residents there, allegedly without compensation, in order to erect the barrier. In addition, the barrier affected their daily lives by making it difficult for them to reach the land that was now on the other side of the “fenced” border (klikAktiv 2021). While referring to the barriers erected near them in various media articles, people in

different locations talk about the negative impact on the local economy, primarily tourism, or on leisure activities. However, some are also, even if they do not point to the benefits of barriers and the controls associated with them, at least less critical of fencing, such as the owner of a camp next to Kupa in the border area of Slovenia and Croatia, who compared the erection of a barrier on the external border of Slovenia to building a fence around a house or with fences in cities that surround factories for protection. Accepting the barrier as an inevitability and its integration into normal activities is clearly visible in certain Slovenian border areas towards Croatia, where there are “plenty of open doors in the wire”, and where “people walk their dogs”, while policemen lubricate the latches on the doors or “take care of the fence”, as one of the ERIM researchers wrote in her field notes in late spring 2022. Researchers gathered around the Fencing Borders project, which visually, aurally and in other ways documents the barriers erected along the borders in these areas, try to convey the grotesque atmosphere which arises when the wire is combined with everyday life in a short video entitled “Birthday by the fence”.

In addition to places far from the official border crossings, fences, wires and walls are also erected at the border crossings themselves or near them, and smaller, protective fences against an inrush, as they are called in the documents, are also used in these places, i.e. **movable fences/doors**. Barriers at the borders are also similar to Jersey walls (concrete blocks) and related obstacles which block only certain points on the borders, more precisely roads and gravel roads, or bridges, and, in a broader sense, barriers at the border also include cleared areas such as the one created by **cutting down the forest** on Plješivica. In various locations, bridges that were built to connect (cf. Riman and Škiljan 2018: 433-434) now feature barriers that give a strong sense of separation and stop movement.



Suspension bridge in Čedanj, Gorski Kotar. Left: Inscription on the plaque commemorating the construction of the bridge in 1957. Right: Wire on the bridge. Čedanj, 14 August 2019. Photo: Iva Pleše



Slum/Rakitovec border crossing at the Croatian-Slovenian border. Left and center: Open movable fence/gate near the border crossing. Right: Fence with wire on top, placed along both sides of the road leading to the border crossing. Slum, 31 October 2022. Photo: Iva Pleše

In addition to the fact that, as mentioned earlier, the barriers are upgraded and their numbers increase, they can also be moved after they have been installed or are still being planned, for example closer to a river or further away from a river. They are also removed, for instance, the wire placed near the village of Žuniči along the Slovenian-Croatian border on the Kupa river was removed before the summer of 2018, due to, according to hearsay, the injuries to people on the move at that location, as the river is relatively shallow there, leading to people trying to cross at that point. However, they would often get cut on the barrier, so they had to be taken care of. So, on the one hand, the wire did not stop crossings across the river and the border, and on the other hand, it created additional problems for Slovenian services, so they removed it.

As could be seen from the description of crossing the barrier on the Kupa river given earlier, the physical barriers at the borders have been strengthened, for example, with surveillance cameras and drones, officially or unofficially, with manpower, but also with animals. For example, one media report mentions a small group of well-armed and publicly financed Hungarian rangers who patrol “the forests in search of migrants coming across the border with Serbia”. The documentary film *Žica* (Wire) by Tiha Dugac shows a Slovenian family who guard the border on their own initiative and whose adult members sneak under the wire to check if someone is camped on the other side, near the wire, waiting to cross over to the Slovenian side. Unlike humans, who can act independently, animals become border guards with the help of humans. In May 2022, members of the No Name Kitchen collective published posts on social networks describing the injuries of migrants caused not by the wire itself, but coming from dogs near the barrier, which were unleashed by two border police officers on the Hungarian side when they saw them. This description speaks to barriers that are “supported” by both humans and animals. At the same time, **animals** as victims is one of the recurring themes of local discourses related to fences and wires.

In addition to the already mentioned role of border barriers in physically harming those who try to cross them, we should also emphasize the susceptibility of these barriers to different migrant circumvention strategies (cf. Vallet 2019) which include, organized independently or by smugglers (cf. Beznec et al. 2016: 50-51), cutting the wire, jumping over obstacles as described at the beginning of the text, digging tunnels, crawling under wires, using ladders, digging holes (klikAktiv 2021) or finding terrain with no barriers because, for example, they are harder to erect at certain locations. This also reveals the danger of the terrain that people on the move have to traverse if they choose this route, as noted in one of ERIM’s research interviews in the spring of 2022 in Gorski Kotar, related to crossings over the Kupa: “They go where there is no wire, and those places are dangerous, steep, fast”.

Finally, fences, walls and wires play a role in initiating actions, protests and discourses contrary to those characterized by fortifications, borders, supposed defense and violence. In this sense, this ending will include an act of such resistance, in which a rendition of the globally famous song Clandestino is dedicated to *illegals*, performed by LeZbor, differing from the original lyrics, but following their meaning with a text that highlights the fence, wall or wire as an essential feature of the European attitude towards people on the move and talks about *razor wire on all sides, across the sea and the Balkans... they chase us like dogs, but we must*

press on / your fortress Europe is countless steps away / we dream only of one thing, to live as people / Moroccan illegal / Pakistani illegal / Syrian illegal / solidarity – crime!

16/1/2023

References

Beznec, Barbara, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2016. *Governing the Balkan Route. Macedonia, Serbia and the European Border Regime*. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe.

Kallius, Annastiina. 2017. “The Speaking Fence”. *Anthropology Now* 9/3: 16-23.

klikAktiv. 2021. “Border Fence at the Serbian-Macedonian Border”. Beograd: klikAktiv.

Korte, Kristina. 2022. “'Who is the Animal in the Zoo?'. Fencing In and Fencing Out at the Hungarian-Serbian Border. A Qualitative Case Study”. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 37/3: 453-474.

Riman, Barbara and Filip Škiljan. 2018. “Rijeka i planina, granica i ljudi. Studija slučaja života pograničnog stanovništva Donjekupske doline i Žumberačkog gorja”. *Historijski zbornik* 71/2: 401-439.

Sicurella, Federico Giulio. 2017. “The Language of Walls Along the Balkan Route”. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*.

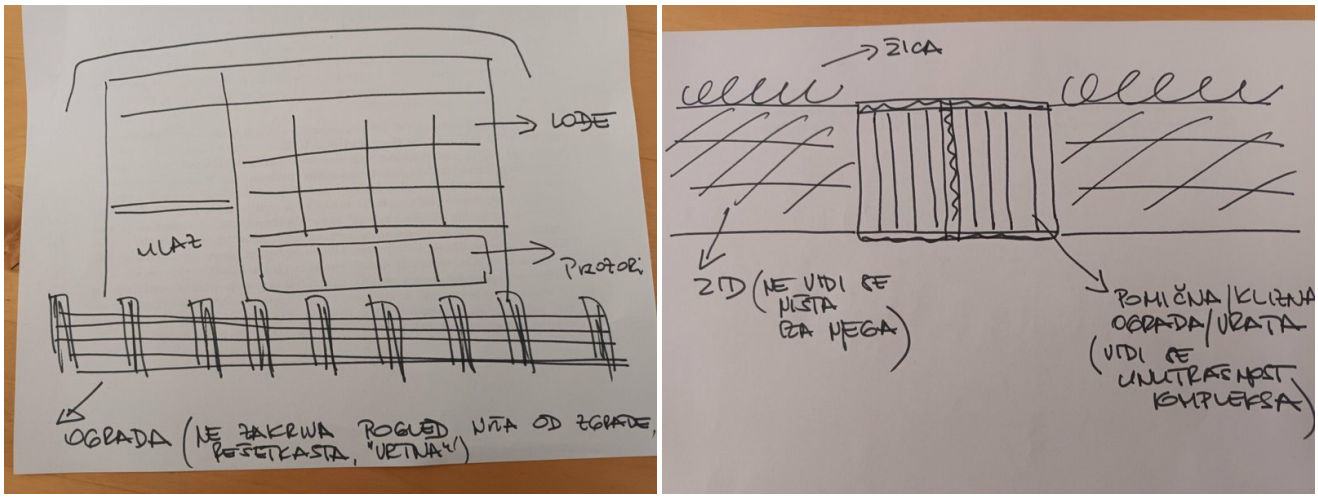
Vallet, Elisabeth. 2019. “Border Walls and the Illusion of Deterrence”. In *Open Borders. In Defense of Free Movement*. Reece Jones, ed. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 156-168.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-ograde-zidovi-i-zice-na-drzavnim-granicama-p?locale=en

Fences, Walls and Wires in the Interior

Iva Pleše

The system for monitoring the movement of migrants, in addition to **barriers on external borders of territories**, also includes barriers erected inside a territory that surround and intersect **detention** centers, shelters for asylum seekers, as well as places that are less obviously connected with **irregularized migration**. All such enclosed spaces can be seen as part of interiorized borders materialized in the form of different types of barriers that represent obstacles of varying degrees to those for whom they are intended. One such barrier is the one erected around **Porin**, the shelter for asylum seekers in Zagreb, which, despite its emphasized function of separation, could be described as a minor obstacle, or a more symbolic one when compared to the barrier around, for example, the **Ježevo** detention center, considering that it mostly does not prevent, although it directs, the exit of people from the shelter and entry into it. The barrier at Ježevo, in combination with other elements of the detention and surveillance system, prevents those imprisoned within it from exiting and communicating – although not necessarily all communication (cf. **Protest against Detention in Postojna**) – with the physical environment of the center. The barrier that surrounds, under the official name, the Reception Centre for Foreigners in Ježevo (in a technical sense, it is actually a wall surrounding the complex, with a wire on top, and a movable metal fence/gate for entry and exit) evokes the image of certain state-border barriers, those along the external borders of a territory, with solid foundations and impenetrable properties. However, during certain periods, even the barrier around Porin, apart from dividing the area of the shelter from its surroundings and making it visually and in other ways distinctive, was, in combination with the rules regarding freedom of movement, very restrictive, precisely at the time – although it was planned beforehand – when it was built, at the beginning and during the COVID-19 epidemic (cf. Grubiša 2022: 6-8; Perić 2020).



A sketch of the fence at Porin (left) and the wall around Ježevo (right), December 2022. Author and photo: Iva Pleše

Large or small obstacles within a territory also include barriers around and inside other reception centers or camps in these areas, both recent ones and those erected during the **long summer of migration**, for example, the barriers in the **distribution tent** in the **camp in Slavonski Brod**, which separated the workers of humanitarian organizations and volunteers from the people on the move (Petrović 2018: 53), or those which, in combination with the police, acted as boundaries for the lines of people waiting (Škokić and Jambrešić Kirin 2018: 93). The camp in Slavonski Brod, as well as other camps and related areas, such as the reception center in Dobova, were not only surrounded by barriers, but barriers were also densely scattered within them (cf. Hameršak and Pleše 2018).



The camp in Slavonski Brod. Fences. 1 March 2016. Photo: Marijana Hameršak



The camp in Slavonski Brod, fences in the distribution tent. Left: Before the arrival of the train. Photo: Tea Škokić. Right: The fence during transit, between the volunteers and people on the move. 1 March 2016. Photo: Marijana Hameršak

Barriers within the territory erected because of migrants can also be found in less expected places, such as in Belgrade parks where, at the time of the closure of the **Balkan corridor**, plastic orange mesh barriers were placed around grassy areas in order to prevent migrants from accessing places to rest, and thus, along with other measures, to move them away from the city center (Beznec et al. 2016: 58). One recent barrier is the one along the so-called **humanitarian station** set up by the City of Zagreb at the end of 2022, near the main railway station, right next to the ruinous Paromlin building. The fence was old and obviously dangerous, patched together from various materials and parts, which is now used for this new function of separating people on the move from the "rest" of the city, in a tent dwelling which was to be used only during the day. The barrier, together with a plainclothes policeman, as we witnessed in mid-December 2022, also stops people who are not irregularized migrants from entering the space squeezed between the fence and Paromlin, with its two tents, several parked cars, muddy ground around the tent and a menacing ruin right next to it.



The humanitarian station near Paromlin, Zagreb, December 2022 / January 2023. Photo: Iva Pleše and Mojca Piškor.

Although, in contrast to physical obstacles along state borders which are relatively well covered in the media, but mostly not

presented in more complex terms, fences within territories, those that are and especially those that are not part of the space officially designated for irregular migrants, are less written about and discussed, they are, as can be inferred from the examples stated above, definitely present and effective. They are referred to by the boy from *Material Fatigue* who, while traveling along one of the migration routes around Europe, after crossing the fence around a detention center and leaving a blanket with a printed inventory number on the barbed fence, tries to reach an unnamed city in the north: *A fence. Fences everywhere; He had never seen so many fences before; Europe, it's made up from corridors, overpasses, warehouses – and above all fences* (Šindelka 2019: 8; 10; 28). Many of these barriers, it should be added, were not set up specifically for people on the move, but only in the experience of clandestine irregularized movement do they become real obstacles, like an overpass or a highway that needs to be covertly and dangerously crossed in order to, for instance, continue the journey through the **forest**. In this sense – preventing or hindering the movement of undesirables – fences in the interior of the territory do not differ from fences and other obstacles at state and other external, EU or Schengen borders, placed or erected specifically for people on the move.

16/1/2023

References

Beznec, Barbara, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2016. *Governing the Balkan Route. Macedonia, Serbia and the European Border Regime*. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe.

Grubiša, Iva. 2022. "From Prison to Refuge and Back: The Interplay of Imprisonment and Creating a Sense of Home in the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers". *Journal of Borderlands Studies*.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. "Winter Reception and Transit Center in the Republic of Croatia: An Ethnographic Research in the Slavonski Brod Refugee Camp". In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor: Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (Zagreb), Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb), Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V. (München), 109-142.

Perić, Ivana. 2020. "Ograda više, posao manje". *Radnička prava*.

Petrović, Duško. 2018. "Humanitarian Exceptionalism: Normalization of Suspension of Law in Camp and Corridor". In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor: Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (Zagreb), Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb), Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V. (München), 43-62.

Šindelka, Marek. 2019. *Zamor materijala*. Zagreb: Ljevak. Translated by Sanja Milićević Armada.

Škokić, Tea and Renata Jambrešić Kirin. 2018. "The Shopping Center of Abnormal Normality: Ethnography of the Distribution Tent in the Refugee Camp in Slavonski Brod". In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor: Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (Zagreb), Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb), Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V. (München), 87-107.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-ograde-zidovi-i-zice-unutar-drzavnih-granica-p?locale=en

Fence, Wall, Wire

Iva Pleše, Mojca Piškor, Tea Škokić

Fence, wall and wire are words used in the context of illegal migration for physical obstacles at the borders. These objects, simple or complex, are used or built primarily to block the passage, entrance or exit from one place to another, and, although their origins lie in the distant past, in the modern high-tech age they form elements of a wider system of control and monitoring of movement. This system, in addition to barriers at national and supranational borders, also includes barriers, perhaps less obvious, located within a certain territory. All these obstacles, both those **within a territory**, which form internalized borders, and those **along its borders**, but also outside them, related to the externalization of borders, can be seen as a spectrum or a series of obstacles that are interconnected in numerous ways (cf. **movable fences**).

In addition to the fact that, from this perspective, the firm boundary between *internal* and *external* barriers is erased, the boundary between the terms used for these barriers is also erased in a certain way. Fence, wall and wire are often used as synonyms in the sense of a physical barrier, regardless of their material composition, for instance, in the phrases Hungarian wall or Hungarian fence and Slovenian fence or Slovenian wire. However, the use of a single one of these terms can signal that the barrier in question is of a specific type. In that case, a wall would be an obstacle that is made by masonry, i.e. built of solid material: brick, stone, concrete, etc., a fence would be a metal or some other barrier that is not made by masonry, and a wire would refer to an obstacle that consists only or primarily of the material from which it got its name: barbed or razor wire. However, these are often combinations of several materials and methods of construction, and an example would be one of the numerous internal fences, the one erected for the Ježevo detention center near Zagreb. Also, from a diachronic perspective, we can talk about the evolution of barriers: wire (in the narrow sense) is replaced by a fence (e.g. on the Slovenian-Croatian border) which becomes stronger and more impenetrable, in some cases by adding another barrier (stronger and smarter) to an already existing one (weaker), so that together they form a whole which is also patrolled by the police (on the Hungarian-Serbian border). The barrier on the Hungarian-Serbian border is also called a wall, with associations to the Berlin and other walls, which evokes greater strength and impermeability compared to a fence.

Physical characteristics, such as types of materials, height and width of barriers, their upgrades of various types, etc., do not only point to the degree of strength and impenetrability of both external and internal barriers and their appearance in the wider environment, but also to the different levels of financial resources spent on their construction and erection, which is often connected with suspicions of corruption. Fences, walls and wires, together with various highly sophisticated technological and other solutions for border surveillance, **detention** and so-called reception centers and other facilities, are part of a growing and profitable industry (cf. Akkerman 2019) associated with **securitization** and border militarization (cf. **migration industry**). Although the European Union is very committed to such securitization, it refuses, at least for now and at least for more recent external barriers, to finance “barbed wires and walls” from its funds, certainly in part due to their symbolic effect (cf. Sicurella 2018). At the same time, the funds very generously finance (cf., e.g., Akkerman 2019) every other possible means and method for defending and monitoring different types of borders, in addition to political and other means of support for such endeavors.

Modern border fences, walls and wires, as well as those that almost immediately preceded them, from the Cold War period, are a kind of continuation of ramparts and other fortification obstacles in a peacetime context, and, although outside the military and war context, are connected with concepts from so-called defensive construction, used by various anti-immigrant campaigns in their presentations, such as the one called the Hrvatski bedem (Croatian Rampart). In public discourse, we can even see the use of terms with associations to the bulwark of Christendom, such as *antemurale migrantis*, or calls for barbed wire and machine gun nests as a defense against illegal migrants, where they are not present. Following the pompous announcements of the disappearance of borders at the global level, connected with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the promise of a global future without borders, this region – whose experience of the fall of the Wall, and due to its overlap with war and the emergence of new divisions, was different and more complex (cf. Čolović 2009) – can also be the grounds for a discussion on new borders and their constructions, and, on a global level, about the “new age of walls” (Leuenberger 2019) or, in analogy with the “new world order”, about a “new wall order” (Novosseloff, according to Vallet 2019).

Although the basic function of physical barriers in the migration context is the prevention of illegal crossings, entry and exit, i.e. movement, they are presented in critical literature less often, or not at all, as an effective means of stopping migration, and more as a means used in internal and external political, economic, financial, sovereignty, identity and similar, national and post-national disputes (cf. Brown 2017; Korte 2022; Vallet 2019). Moreover, their ineffectiveness in preventing migration is often emphasized: They do not stop but redirect movements that find new, often more dangerous, routes and paths and also encourage and strengthen smuggling activities and networks (Vallett 2019; cf. Beznec et al. 2016: 50, 54). Nevertheless, from a narrow homeland-territorial and time-limited point of view, certain barriers have been shown to be effective, evident, for example, in the case of closing the Hungarian border shared with Serbia by constructing a fence in 2015, when the movement of migrants from Hungary was redirected to Croatia. Also, even though border regimes may be ineffective overall, material barriers have a real, physical effect, from cuts on bodies and broken legs, to **deaths** caused by dangerous new routes forced on people on the move (cf. De León 2015), but also to death on the obstacles themselves. Unlike, for instance, the fences around the EU enclaves on the African continent, which are also directly fatal, the barriers on the Balkan route have been shown to be indirectly fatal – when people on the move avoid them and die in rivers, on mountains or in trucks. Those apparently less dangerous obstacles in the interior of a territory can also be deadly, even directly: “In Velika Kladuša, a young Moroccan, Ahmed H., tried to enter the Miral reception center (because he wanted to take a shower), and he suffocated and died while trying to pass through the fence erected around the center” (Perić 2021). In this light, the presentation of modern border and other fences, walls and wires as *defensive* elements seems particularly grotesque. By defending territory from the entry of undesirables, outside the context of military and war, fences, walls and wires, in combination with other securitization and militarization means and practices, expose those who seek refuge to unfavorable conditions and suffering and thus push them to their death (cf. **weaponized landscape**) by which, instead of being defensive, they in fact function as offensive means.

16/1/2023

References

Akkerman, Mark. 2019. *The Business of Building Walls*. s. l.: Transnational Institute, Stop Wapenhandel and Centre Delàs.

Beznec, Barbara, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2016. *Governing the Balkan Route. Macedonia, Serbia and the European Border Regime*. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe.

Brown, Wendy. 2017. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. New York: Zone Books.

Čolović, Ivan, ed. 2009. *Zid je mrtav, živeli zidovi. Pad Berlinskog zida i raspad Jugoslavije*. Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek.

De León, Jason 2015. *The Land of Open Graves. Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Korte, Kristina. 2022. "'Who is the Animal in the Zoo?'. Fencing In and Fencing Out at the Hungarian-Serbian Border. A Qualitative Case Study". *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 37/3: 453-474.

Leuenberger, Christine. 2019. "Crumbling Walls and Mass Migration in the Twenty-First Century". In *Open Borders. In Defense of Free Movement*. Reece Jones, ed. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 177-190.

Perić, Ivana. 2021. "Sveto trojstvo ograde, žilet žice i granice". *Kulturpunkt.hr*.

Sicurella, Federico Giulio. 2018. "The Language of Walls Along the Balkan Route". *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 16/1-2: 57-75.

Vallet, Elisabeth. 2019. "Border Walls and the Illusion of Deterrence". In *Open Borders. In Defense of Free Movement*. Reece Jones, ed. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 156-168.

Field Diary and Field Notes

Teodora Jovanović

In ethnographic research, taking notes is part of the work process. When going out into the field, whether that field is at a physically distant location or “near home”, ethnographers observe, reflect, participate and influence the fragments of the researched reality that they record in different ways and in different media. A field diary is one of the methodological tools for such recording, more precisely, for recording our experience and presence in the field which often, like other field, text or other notes, remains invisible to readers of published papers.

The boundaries between individual ways of recording or types of field notes are not firm and unequivocal (cf., e.g., Sanjek 1990), so, for example, someone will refer to something as a field diary, while others would refer to that same thing as field notes; someone will refer to all of their notes from the field as field notes or a field diary, and others will clearly separate one from the other. For instance, one may differentiate more extensive and reflective descriptions and observations written down at the end of a day spent in the field from short observations, bullets, keywords, etc. taken from conversations or even interviews written in the moment or shortly thereafter. In addition, while some researchers consider field notes to be textual records on paper, in a notebook or computer, and use them as the primary way of recording fieldwork, others tend to primarily take photos, record video or sound, draw, sketch or collect objects (cf., e.g., Andersen et al. 2020), which can also, in a broader sense, be covered by the term field notes or field diary. Although field notes can be published independently, in integral form or inserted into academic texts, they are still primarily sketches, reminders, templates, sources for writing academic papers, texts that are not intended for publication (e.g. Malinowski’s diary) and researchers write them for themselves or they may share them with colleagues.

As in other ethnographic research contexts, writing a field diary or field notes is an indispensable part of fieldwork in researching **illegal migration**, of course, with certain particularities, such as a more pronounced fear of losing such notes due to potential “very tangible existential repercussions for all those involved” related to the “securitarian and repressive framework of migration management”, as discussed in the paper written in the context of research into the **Balkan corridor** (Hameršak and Pleše 2018: 137). The same context yielded a paper that uses field notes as an autoethnographic testimony of a personal experience of research volunteering in a refugee camp, but also as a “contribution to the practice of thick description” of one of the central points of that camp (Jambrešić Kirin and Škokić 2018: 89). Azra Hromadžić’s text (2020), published as a contribution to an issue of the *movements* journal and dealing with the border regime in the Balkans, is an example of publishing field notes on the so-called migrant crisis in Bihać (Bosnia and Herzegovina). In her text, Hromadžić combines photographs and ethnographic descriptions (places, situations, observations and conversations) with anthropological literature and analytical reflections. She uses the term “notes” to refer to field notes about Bihać, to the associative expression of impressions related to the events surrounding the researcher of which she is a part.

As part of ERIM’s field research, collaborators keep field diaries and notes, whose fragments are presented here, both in their original or almost original form, without any emphasized analytical interpretation (see **party**), and along with their contextualization and interpretation, as a kind of supplement to the primary text of an entry (see **Šid**).

10/3/2022

References

Andersen, Astrid Oberborbeck, Anne Line Dalsgård, Mette Lind Kusk, Maria Nielsen, Cecilie Rubow and Mikkel Rytter, eds. 2020. *Anthropology Inside Out. Fieldworkers Taking Notes.* Canon Pyon: Sean Kingston Publishing.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. “Winter Reception and Transit Center in the Republic of Croatia. An Ethnographic Research in the Slavonski Brod Refugee Camp”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in Croatian Context*. Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and Munich: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 109-142.

Hromadžić, Azra. 2020. “Notes from the Field. 'Migrant Crisis' in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina”. *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 5/1: 163-180.

Sanjek, Roger, ed. 1990. *Fieldnotes. The Makings of Anthropology*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Škokić, Tea and Renata Jambrešić Kirin. 2017. “The Shopping Center of Abnormal Normality. Ethnography of the Distribution Tent in the Refugee Camp in Slavonski Brod”. *Narodna umjetnost* 54/1: 129-146.

Fingerprint

Zarja Rustja

In the late 1990s, a revolution began in the field of biometrics which led to a new primary means of security access and, in some cases, as a replacement for older identification technologies (Maguire 2009: 9). Biometrics refers to the technology of measuring, analyzing, and processing unique biological and behavioral characteristics, such as fingerprints, retinal and iris scans, facial patterns, hand geometry, and body odor. It can be used for identifying or recognizing individuals, as well as for self-identification or verifying whether a person is who they claim to be (Ajana 2013).

People holding passports from European Union countries encounter this technology daily, although we usually pay little attention to it. For people coming from the **Global South**, however, it carries much greater significance. Something as seemingly ordinary as a fingerprint often becomes the key that determines whether they will be allowed entry into a particular country—and thus the possibility to apply for international protection—or whether they will be detained in a transit center, with many forcibly returned (see **detention** and **pushbacks**).

Since the 1990s, the European Union has sought to establish a unified system for international protection among its Member States, leading to the development of the Common European Asylum System. This system includes a supranational mechanism for determining which country is responsible for processing an asylum application (Hubman 2017: 6). The cornerstone of this mechanism is the **Dublin Regulation**, which stipulates that only one Member State can be fully responsible for each asylum claim—typically, the first EU country a person enters and applies for asylum in. One of the first steps following an asylum application is the collection of the applicant's fingerprints. These fingerprints are then checked against several databases, most importantly Eurodac, a system that stores the digital fingerprints of all individuals over the age of 14 who apply for asylum in any EU country. The fingerprints are compared with existing entries in the central database, which is responsible for storing and matching new fingerprints against those previously collected (Ajana 2013). The aim of this procedure is to determine whether the person has already attempted to claim asylum elsewhere. If their fingerprints match an existing record, they may be deported to the country where they first applied.

During fieldwork carried out as part of a course on the anthropology of migration in Trieste and its surroundings in late March 2023, fingerprints were a recurring topic of discussion. In interviews with asylum seekers at the refugee reception center in Prosek (Italian: Prosecco), every single respondent at some point described their experience of fingerprinting. In each story, experiences of violence at borders—at the hands of police or other state authorities—were mentioned, as well as feelings of fear and anxiety. It was clear that fingerprinting was a deeply negative experience, for some perhaps even traumatic. This became particularly evident when I paid closer attention to the words people used: rather than saying, "They took my fingerprints," every respondent, without exception, said, "They took my fingers" or "They have my fingers." While this phrasing might be attributed to their limited proficiency in English, I believe there is more to it. Listening to their accounts, it seemed to me that—consciously or unconsciously—they were expressing that a part of their body, a part of themselves, had been taken by the police and was still held by them. I began to reflect on what the act of fingerprinting truly means for their sense of identity and self.

When considering the use of biometric data for migration management and control, it is essential to account for how people themselves interpret and make sense of these practices. Among the authorities that use this technology, there is a strong belief that biometric data can provide indisputable proof of a person's identity and, by extension, be used to accuse or convict individuals who contradict their biometric records. Through checking whether someone's fingerprints have multiple "hits," Eurodac can reconstruct the trajectory of a person's movement across EU Member States, and this information can be used to verify the credibility of their account during a substantive interview which is a part of the asylum application process. The legal weight of biometric data as evidence lies in its perceived objectivity: fingerprint matches are not only used to identify someone but to confirm their very sameness (Metcalfe 2022: 54). However, a fingerprint can be seen as a one-dimensional representation of a person—based solely on biometric data—excluding the individual's full complexity: their story, their experiences, their history. As Philippa Metcalfe argues, there is a fundamental gap between a fingerprint and the richness of a person's self-concept (2022: 55).

At this point, it is worth noting that fingerprinting citizens is only permitted under specific circumstances: when issuing biometric IDs or passports, during border crossings, or in the case of serious criminal offenses that warrant detention. In the context of the European migration regime, however, fingerprinting has become normalized and routinized across most EU countries. This form of biometric control plays a key role in the criminalization of people on the move, framing them as inherently suspicious or associated with illegality. It reinforces a broader discourse of **securitization** rooted in fear, distrust, and suspicion (Ajana 2013). Migration is often framed as a security threat, prompting responses based on control and punishment—deterrence, prevention, detention, and deportation have become the dominant political responses. These practices, alongside the merging of criminal and administrative law, contribute to what is known as **crimmigration** (Kogovšek Šalamon 2017).

However, fingerprinting should also be examined from the perspective of the **autonomy of migration**. The fact remains: people continue to move regardless of the controls imposed upon them. These controls are, on one hand, tools of surveillance, and on the other, prompts for evasion. One strategy used by people on the move relates directly to fingerprinting. During fieldwork, I heard accounts from interviewees describing how some individuals—fearful of being deported—burned, stitched, or even poured acid on their fingertips after being fingerprinted. Similar cases are reported by other researchers. For example, Jonathan P. Aus (2006) describes asylum seekers in Sweden who resorted to such practices as early as Eurodac's first year of operation. Aus cites a member of the Swedish Migration Board who reported "scars from knives and razors, or entire [fingerprint] patterns that are entirely destroyed because they've used acid or some other kind of product to destroy their hands" (2006: 13).

It is clear that the destruction of fingerprints in response to the Eurodac system has been happening since its inception. These actions

should not be dismissed as mere self-injury; rather, they represent acts of bodily resistance—self-harm as a survival strategy. And how do law enforcement agencies respond? In Norway, for example, authorities attempted to address the issue through deterrence measures, including direct detention (Aus 2006: 13). As with many European policy practices, we see that actions unrelated to migration are not criminalized, while the same acts—when carried out by people on the move—are treated as criminal offenses, often leading to deprivation of liberty.

Although fingerprints are something all human beings share, within migration policies and practices they are used to monitor, classify, and criminalize people on the move. Instead of listening to a person's story, struggles, and experiences, a single square centimeter of skin becomes the deciding factor in determining their fate.

25/6/2024

References

Ajana, Btihaj. 2013. "Asylum, Identity Management and Biometric Control". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 264: 576-595.

Aus, Jonathan P. 2006. "Eurodac. A Solution Looking for a Problem?" *European Integration online Papers* 10.

Hubman, Manja. 2017. *Pristojnost države, da odloča o prošnji za mednarodno zaščito*. Ljubljana: Pravna fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani (magistrsko delo).

Kogovšek Šalamon, Neža. 2017. "Mass Migration, Crimmigration and Defiance". *Southeastern Europe* 41: 251-275.

Maguire, Mark. 2009. "The Birth of Biometric Security". *Anthropology Today* 25/2: 9-14.

Metcalfe, Philippa. 2022. "Autonomy of Migration and the Radical Imagination. Exploring Alternative Imaginaries within a Biometric Border". *Geopolitics* 27/1: 47-69.

Notes

The text was written within the course Anthropology of Migration, thaught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Ambrož Kvartič, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-prstno-odtis-p?locale=en

Forest Cameras

Iva Pleše, Marijana Hameršak

Describing their encounters with the police in the forest or the moments that immediately preceded them, people on the move mention cameras and similar devices for recording and monitoring, as documented in reports about pushbacks. Croatian media also refer to cameras in forests, both static and mobile, day/night, thermal imaging, i.e., infrared, binocular versions, with gyroscopic stabilizers, short or long range, as well as other visual-technological means used to monitor and capture people on the move. Publicly available decisions on the allocation of resources from European funds intended for border control, as well as the promotional activities of the Ministry of the Interior, also refer to such devices. However, aside from the cameras installed in forests and other areas or those used precisely for the purpose of monitoring the border, other cameras are also used for this purpose, for instance, those placed by hunters to monitor the movement of game or local forestry services for purposes of fire protection, preventing timber theft and disposal of bulk waste. Although such cameras should not be used for "classic surveillance" nor "control of people's movement", their recordings are also used in a kind of unofficial and unauthorized movement control. In addition, videos from private phones circulating on social networks, in which people on the move are caught while resting or passing by, contribute to the impression of mass surveillance, spontaneous and from below, of the movement of migrants across a territory. Thus, cameras and other related technological means, along with, for example, **cutting down trees** or placing concrete blocks to block roads and forest paths, play a role in constructing the **forest** as a hostile and dangerous environment for people on the move, as a **weaponized landscape** used for controlling unwanted migration (Hameršak and Pleše 2021).

30/4/2022

References

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2021. "*Forest, forest, forest. Sometimes we sleep. Walking, sleep, walking, sleep. It's dangerous on this way.* Weaponized Migration Landscapes at the Outskirts of the EU". *Etnološka tribina* 51/44: 204-221.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-kamere-p?locale=en

Forest

Iva Pleše, Marijana Hameršak

Forests are a prominent natural landscape for migrant movements in countries on the **Balkan route**. The forested areas of these countries are used by migrants to clandestinely move towards the centers of the European Union (for example, through Gorski Kotar in Croatia), as well as places where, when their movement is halted, they erect temporary shelters (for example, in the vicinity of Bihać and Velika Kladuša in Bosnia and Herzegovina, near the border with Croatia). These forests can differ from each other, aside from their natural characteristics, narrow geographic locations or degrees of anthropization, in terms of their roles in migrant movement. While forest shelters and improvised settlements (so-called jungle camps) outside the European Union borders are places from which people go on the **game**, or its starting point, the forest landscapes inside the European Union borders, which cut across the territory, are spaces where the game, or its central phase, takes place and should be passed imperceptibly and as fast as possible. The forest as a migrant landscape therefore has the role of providing protection: it, along with all the dangers present in the more or less wild nature, enables people on the move to travel (to some extent) unnoticed or offers them a (harsh) refuge, a place where they can temporarily reside, removed from the settlements where they are not welcome. Aside from the fact that the forest can be presented as an aid in migrant movements, it can also be approached as an element that participates in the deterrence of migrants and the creation and maintenance of the (European Union) border control regime (**weaponized landscape**). In this sense, the forest is also a place of suffering and struggle in nature, a place of surveillance (using **cameras** and other technical devices), encounters with the police and police interception, capture, violence, and expulsions or **pushbacks**, which are well documented, for example, in the border area of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (cf. Hameršak and Pleše 2021).

5/3/2022

References

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2021. “*Forest, forest, forest. Sometimes we sleep. Walking, sleep, walking, sleep. It’s dangerous on this way.* Weaponized Migration Landscapes at the Outskirts of the EU”. *Etnološka tribina* 51/44: 204-221.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-scaron-uma-p?locale=en

Game

Bojan Mucko, Iva Pleše, Tea Škokić

The term game has been used on the **Balkan route** for the past few years, in the period following the closure of the **corridor** that temporarily replaced the previously criminalized and dangerous individual border crossings, and its closure meant the recriminalization of **irregularized** crossings. This criminalization, in addition to increasing securitization as well as violence against refugees at the borders, is certainly closely related to the emergence of the game both as a practice and as a term, i.e. with the perception of crossing the border as a sort of repetitive game with barriers and difficulties that need to be overcome and levels that need to be passed in that game.

The term game is used equally by refugees, volunteers and workers of informal local and international humanitarian organizations, as well as smugglers. Today, this informal term, whose history of being taken from a non-migratory context, no matter how recent it may be, is not easy to determine exactly, and has found its way into the vocabulary of humanitarian organizations, local authorities in areas where refugee camps are located, and journalists dealing with irregularized migration in the Balkans.

Asif, a young man from Pakistan to whom we spoke in spring of 2022 in Bihać, described what the game means to him:

For others, it is very difficult, but for us – it's like a game. When someone plays a game, he will either win or lose – some make it to Italy, but we always lose. If someone plays a game on their phone and always loses, they won't delete the app, they'll always try to win anyway, always try to win. It's the same for us – we don't want to go back to Pakistan – we want to win and one day we will.



Left side of frame – the Plješivica mountain, some of the people on the move travel across it to go on the game through Croatia. Right side of frame – a ruined house where some of our interlocutors lived while preparing for the game. Bihać, spring 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

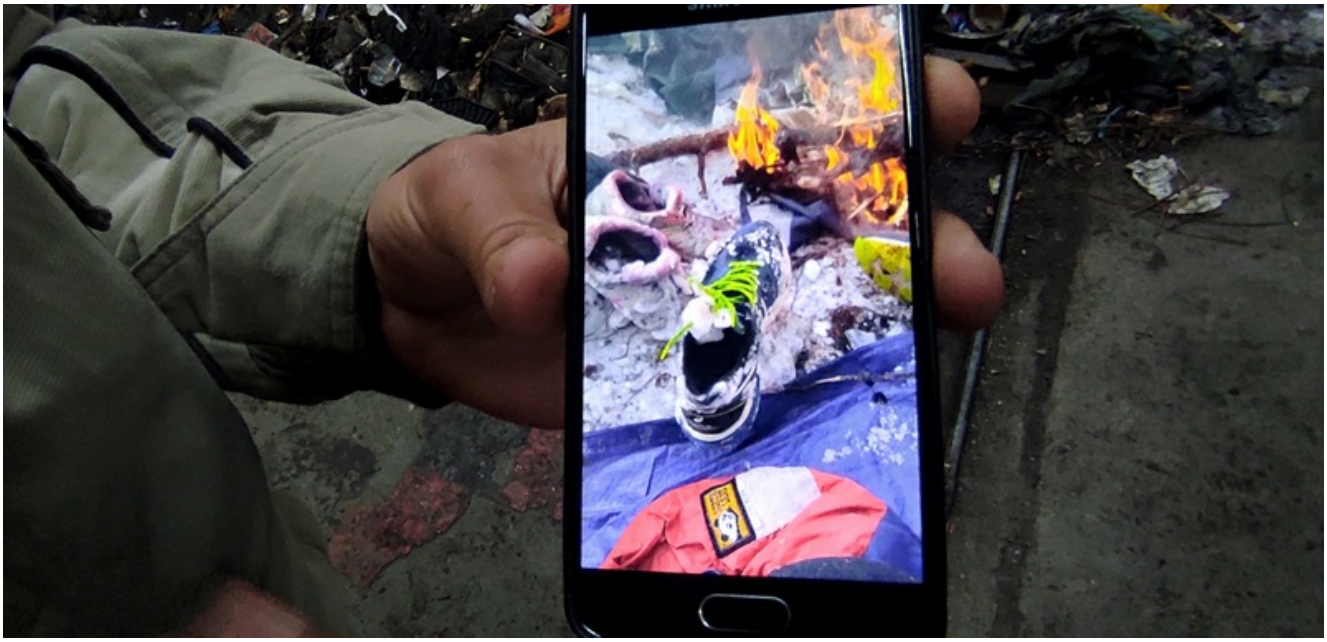
Contemporary gamification of irregularized migrations, implied by the use of the word game for attempted and successful border crossings, is to some extent based on the sociological meaning of gamification, which on the one hand refers to the deliberate and conscious use of game elements in a non-game context, and on the other hand to the fact that "reality is becoming more gameful" and as such enables the acquisition of various skills, such as those related to problem solving or organization, developing motivation and commitment to a goal, as well as "creativity, playfulness, engagement, and overall positive growth and happiness" (Hamari 2019). Although in a completely different context, where it would be not only difficult but also extremely cynical to talk about overall positive growth and happiness, some gamification elements, i.e. the positive and intentional inclusion of game elements into everyday life in order to encourage participation and positive cognitive change or changes in behavior (Hamari 2019), are certainly important for understanding the game as an illegalized border crossing on the Balkan route. In this sense, the use of the word game could be seen as a seductive euphemism that encourages participation in a dangerous undertaking, but it is also a form of smuggling manipulation that presents the dangerous act of crossing borders as a game. In any case, while for some of the people on the move this is a word that denotes a (dangerous and difficult) attempt to cross the border, but is not related to additional game or gamer connotations, for others it also has these kinds of meanings, and could probably be interpreted as a form of consciously making the difficult and life-threatening migration seem easier, conceptually and in other manners (cf. Augustová 2021: 203).



A group of people on the move go on the game. Bihać, December 2020. Still from a video note. Photo: Bojan Mucko

In game language, for many people on the move, entering Europe is possible only illegally, in this case through the Balkan countries, which requires strategy and tactics in outwitting a technologically far superior opponent, while the result is unpredictable until the very end. In addition, people on the move are also in a position of potential human prey, which is another association with games, with the role of predators being played by border police officers, and in some cases by self-organized anti-migrant groups such as the Styrian Guard in Slovenia, border patrols in Bulgaria or people's patrols in Serbia. Although the asymmetry of power relations between the refugees and the various national police forces (which they encounter on their journey) mirrors the asymmetry of the distribution of power between the global North and **South**, from the perspective of the people forced to the game – it is naturalized as one of the many characteristics of this surreal game.

The naturalization is evident from our conversation with Zia, an Afghan with whom we spoke in early 2021 during his stay in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian migrant **camp Lipa**: "We will never give up. We will go on – that is our way. We will eventually succeed, and when we get to Italy – it will be better there. This is the gaming season. They [the police] do their job, but we have our way." Conversations with many interlocutors in a similar position to Zia's leave the impression that, from the perspective of people on the move, the outcome of the game does not depend as much on the (im)penetrability of the borders themselves or on the competence of the players, as it does on a logic of a higher order. Conversations about the future game and arrival at the desired destination are often concluded with "inshallah", "God willing".



Frozen tennis shoes – a scene from the game through Croatia. Bihać, spring 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

Claudio Minca and Jessica Collins conceptualize the game as a "spatial tactic" "based on a specific informal geography comprised of information travelling through social media, smuggling networks, makeshift and institutional refugee camps, and informal routes across the mountains, rivers and fields of the region" (2021). These two authors believe that the term game reflects a sense of pride that migrants feel equally if they successfully cross the border, as well as if they survive a **pushback**. "The practices related to The

Game ultimately reveal the extraordinary determination of the refugees to create interstices, invisible networks and ‘holes in the walls’ that allow them, despite the difficulties, to challenge the border politics in the region.” In this outwitting competition between people on the move and the repressive apparatus, the game is also an expression of autonomous managing one’s own migratory movement (cf. **autonomy of migration**) and a disciplinary technique (Minca and Collins 2021) of irregularized movement expressed in the cruelty of the journey itself, but also in the violence that people on the move suffer due to pushbacks.

Waiting for favorable conditions to go to the game is an integral part of the mission, as it is understood in gaming culture as “a quest [...] that a [...] character, party, or group of characters may complete in order to gain a reward”. Waiting implies aligning parameters on many levels, from adapting to the season and waiting for the weather forecast, to coordinating with smugglers and members of the group with which the departure is planned. Fixed, general rules, however, do not exist – the scenario involves constant improvisation and adaptation to local circumstances, and the social, temporal and spatial context of an individual game. Given that the journey of people on the move often takes place through difficult, even dangerous terrain (cf. **weaponized landscape**), mountains and through **forests**, spring and summer are, according to interlocutors from Asif’s group, more favorable for departure due to the denser foliage that means less visibility. This time of year is certainly more favorable for crossings because of the terrain, which is easier to traverse with no snow or cold. Some groups of migrants self-organize when going on the game, while others try to cross borders with the help of smugglers, and some individuals decide to go on the game on their own. There are different types of games with regard to the method of movement, so names such as *walk game, truck game, taxi game, train game, container game* are common. Unlike the above expressions that belong to the English language, in conversations about the game, expressions that belong to the languages of the game participants are also used, and they also use them when they talk about the game in English. Thus, *khod andaz* is a game that a migrant goes on alone, it is a self-organizational game, and the literal translation from Urdu would mean “own style”. *Guarantee game* is a more expensive version of the game in which a smuggler (at least nominally) guarantees arrival at the desired location.



Improvised shelter in the woods – a scene from the game through Croatia. Bihać, spring 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

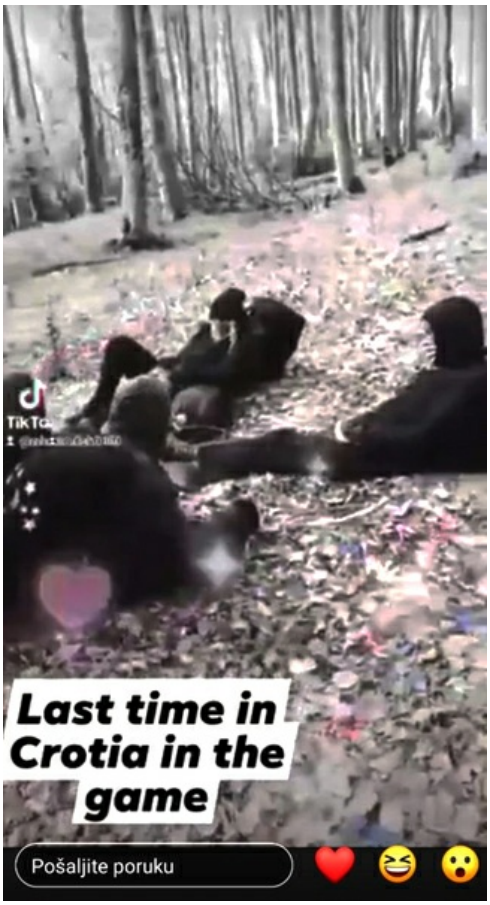
Preparations for the game involve obtaining basic camping equipment (such as **backpacks**, sleeping bags and portable phone chargers), shoes (sports sneakers for easier running through the woods), sports clothes and food necessary for staying in the extreme outdoors conditions for several days or even weeks. Equipment and food are obtained either through humanitarian donations with the help of local and international pro-migrant organizations, or purchased with their own funds. Both methods benefit the economy of the locale from which people go on the game. Local shop owners are also familiar with the concept of the game and the need for people on the move to be equipped for it, as evidenced by the name of the store *GAME SHOP*, opened in one of the containers inside the temporary camp Lipa. The list of food that is bought for the game (the list is variable and subject to improvisation) includes bread, water, candy and **onions**, as well as energy drinks, ketchup and mayonnaise, which, according to some of our interlocutors, they use because of the practicality of the plastic packaging, which lets them quickly squeeze the contents onto the bread while walking, everywhere, even in the forest. The field insight related to these two food items clarifies reports in the media from June 2020, when Amnesty International, based on insights of the Danish Refugee Council, after certain foreign and local media did the same, notified the public about one of the cases of extreme violence by the Croatian police against refugees, which included smearing ketchup, mayonnaise and sugar on their hair. In its statement, the Ministry of the Interior rejects “the idea that a Croatian police officer would do such a thing, or have a motive for doing it” and wonders what the symbolism of smearing people with ketchup, mayonnaise and

sugar would be. The key to the “riddle” is precisely that there is no symbolism involved – ketchup and mayonnaise are part of *game food*, and the modest means of survival found among refugees had been transformed into an ad-hoc means of humiliation by the sadistic act.

For the game, as well as for the entire journey, a key instrument – along with way signs, shelters, safe houses and knowledge about the route in general (cf. **mobile commons**) is the **mobile phone**. The multifunctionality of this handy device enables navigation using GPS technology and offline use of maps to move and choose the safest routes, to avoid natural hazards, as well as for tactical outmaneuvering with the police.

In an interesting methodological process of participatory visual recording of the game, researcher Karolína Augustová asked her interlocutors to take photographs of the situations and details that best describe their experience related to the game. Among other things, they recorded the consequences of pushbacks in their photographs, and Augustová notes that fear and abuse, imprisonment and violence are the fundamental experiences captured in the photos (2021: 208). Our interlocutor Tamanna described her own experiences of pushbacks, one of which was particularly violent and traumatic, when the Slovenian police did not want to help her treat an injury sustained during the game, and a Croatian policeman deliberately additionally injured her foot. She and her husband successfully passed through Croatia on their thirtieth game. Pushbacks and the game, as this example shows, are the reality of everyday life for thousands of people on the move.

On social networks or in private messages, arrival at the desired destination is sometimes marked with *game over*. However, for all those who manage to pass the game, reaching their final destination also means the beginning of a new, equally demanding game, building a life in a new environment, or the beginning of a new cycle of returns and new attempts at crossings, i.e. new games.



A scene from the game from Croatia, shared on a social network. Spring 2021. Screenshot. Photo: Bojan Mucko

29/12/2022

References

Augustová, Karolína. 2021. “Photovoice as a Research Tool of the 'Game' Along the 'Balkan Route'”. In *Visual Methodology in Migration Studies. New Possibilities, Theoretical Implications, and Ethical Questions*. Karolina Nikielska-Sekula and Amandine Desille, eds. Cham: Springer, 197-215.

Hamari, Juho. 2019. “Gamification”. In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. George Ritzer and Chris Rojek, eds. Malden etc.: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Minca, Claudio and Jessica Collins. 2021. “The Game. Or, ‘the Making of Migration’ along the Balkan Route”. *Political Geography* 91:1-11.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-gejm-p-2307ccc9-f8c2-44b8-a3e1-609ccc46f44c?locale=en

Garbage

Igor Petričević

Perceptions of unwanted migrants are often based on narratives about pollution and garbage (Petričević 2022: 110) and associated with fears of health threats (Župarić-Iljić and Gregurović 2013). These narratives range from those stating that large numbers of migrants are “uncultured” and leave garbage in local environments, to extremely xenophobic remarks that label migrants as “garbage” that contaminates the community.

Ideas about pollution and dirt are based on material, as well as symbolic foundations. Mary Douglas (1966) introduced the most influential conceptualization of the impure as dangerous, where pollution is linked to the cultural cosmology of a particular social order. To define something as dirty requires classifying the phenomenon, its borders and margins. Dirt disturbs the balance and order, people marked as dirty are considered dangerous and immoral, and often create the need for ritual purification of the social structure after certain boundaries are transgressed. Such classifications most often follow individuals and groups that are structurally ambivalent, perceived as anomalies in the social order, or between different social statuses. In his analysis of rites of passage, Victor Turner (1969) developed the concept of liminality (from Latin *limen*) and emphasized that liminal individuals are marked as polluting, and consequently dangerous.

Liisa Malkki (1995) argues that, in the national order of things, **refugeehood** is an aberration of categories and a zone of pollution. According to John Scanlan (2005: 182), each act of differentiation produces garbage, something that does not fit into the imagined structure and order. Mass migrations, refugeehood and other types of population movements intensify anxieties related to pollution and the construction of physical and cultural borders (Dürr and Jaffe 2010: 6). Bridget Anderson (2017) emphasizes that discourses regarding asylum seekers often contain metaphors of vermin and invasion, associated with waste, large numbers and representing a threat to our home. Metaphors play an important role because they mediate between logical categories and emotions. Anderson reminds us that foreigners and other marginal subjects have been associated with animals, parasites and non-vital life forms throughout history. In line with these metaphors, perceptions of infestation can lead to real extermination practices. Anderson also notes that the etymological origin of the English word “exterminate” is “to put beyond the boundary.”

The material and symbolic dimension of garbage also contains a strong affective component, and garbage, as well as those labeled as “garbage,” is often accompanied by feelings of disgust. While analyzing cultural politics of emotions, Sara Ahmed (2004: 86) notes that “[t]o be disgusted is after all *to be affected by what one has rejected*”. Through disgust, “bodies ‘recoil’” from their proximity (Ahmed 2004: 80).. Disgust is a feeling that combines a physical experience with emotional strength and moral judgment, and as such maintains the boundaries of the self and marks boundaries, or creates them, in the material and social world (Durham 2011: 135). Furthermore, disgust is often directed towards lower classes in the social hierarchy (Durham 2011: 32). A similar way of thinking is also present in the concept of “emic places” by Zygmunt Bauman, who argues that such places often “vomit” those that are considered strange and foreign (Bauman 2000: 101). Sociocultural boundaries are strengthened by external influences, which can disrupt established social relations and hierarchies, being considered invasive threats that will contaminate the “pure” ethnonational entity (Dürr and Jaffe 2010: 6). Consequently, the desire to remove “foreign” dangerous elements can also lead to “ethnic cleansing” aimed at restoring the supposed state of peace and homogeneity of the community present before the arrival of Others.

18/11/2022

References

Ahmed, Sara. 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*. New York: Routledge.

Anderson, Bridget. 2017. “The Politics of Pests. Immigration and the Invasive Other”. *Social Research. An International Quarterly* 84/1: 7-28.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.* New York and Washington: Praeger.

Durham, Deborah. 2011. “Disgust and the Anthropological Imagination”. *Ethnos* 76/2: 131-156.

Dürr, Eveline and Rivke Jaffe. 2010. *Urban Pollution. Cultural Meanings, Social Practices*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Malkki, Liisa H. 1995. “Refugees and Exile. From 'Refugee Studies' to the National Order of Things”. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 495-523.

Petričević, Igor. 2022. *Beyond Transit. Precarious Emplacement and the Wavering Reception of Migrants in the City of Zagreb*. Doctoral Dissertation. Stockholm University.

Scanlan, John. 2005. *On Garbage*. London: Reaktion Books.

Turner, Victor. 1969. *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*. New Brunswick and London: Aldine Transaction.

Župarić-Iljić, Drago and Margareta Gregurović. 2013. “Stavovi studenata prema tražiteljima azila u Republici Hrvatskoj”. *Društvena istraživanja* 22/1: 41-62.

Gender Dimension of Refugeehood

Tea Škokić

In the literature, the gender dimension of **refugeehood** is primarily associated with the female experience. Since the 1970s, UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations have been trying to recognize the special needs of refugee women. However, policies focused on the vulnerability of refugee women with regard to sexual and gender-based violence, primarily in the camps, have been formed only during the last thirty years. In 1985, UNHCR adopted its first resolution on refugee women, in 1991 it issued a guide with specific instructions on how to treat refugee women, and finally in 2008 it included the following in its mission: "UNHCR [has] the responsibility to promote gender equality and work towards the elimination of violence against women and girls of concern as integral parts of our protection mandate" (for information on UNHCR documents and more broadly on historical trends, cf. Bhabha 2004).

Despite this, numerous reports from the field demonstrate that, in practice, the protection of women (including girls) depends on the personal views and biases of humanitarian workers and social services, as they define vulnerable groups (women, children, LGBT persons) and what is gender-based violence (violence in the family, wife beating, forced marriages, rape) from situation to situation. On the other hand, the introduction of the gender aspect into the research of refugee experience, as well as into concrete humanitarian aid, has become another form of binary categorizations which already existed in understandings of migration – such as whether it is legal or illegal, regular or irregular, etc. (for information on taxonomy and binary categorization of mobility, cf. Gerard 2014: 1-27). In addition, the separation of the gender category contributed to an essentialized and universalizing image of "women as victims": passive, dependent on male members of their community, without access to rights and almost inseparable from children (Grabska 2011). The feminization of vulnerability has in turn shaped the image of the "ideal refugee woman" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2010) and "gender performativity" (Nasser-Eddin 2017) in creating the ideal refugee image. This creation is not politically neutral, as argued by Doreen Indra (1987), but is linked to the image of refugees we construct, which is deeply political and related to our notions of gender roles.

Thus, researchers, policy makers and humanitarian workers are faced with the question of how to cover and adequately respond to the specific female refugee experience without unwittingly resorting to stereotypes, without generalizing that the experience of a single refugee woman represents the experience of all refugee women (cf., e.g., Crawley 2001 for information on gender experiences and representations of female asylum seekers).

One of the approaches in the ethnographic research of refugees is personally oriented ethnography, with the goal to affirm the gender dimension as a constitutive element of migration, a dimension that often shapes and determines the practices of "survival" in the conditions of "abnormal everyday life". The research questions include how gender shapes the refugee experience, but also how it affects the "performativity" of gender, how gender affects decision-making, from the decision to undergo the journey to a series of decisions that women make during **transit**, especially in the circumstances of the complete **securitization** of migration and penalization of refugees (Gerard 2014). Women's aspirations and perceptions of the future are examined, their preparedness to survive the present and at what cost, how gender shapes the experience of space, movement, changing environments and cultures, as well as family relationships (cf., e.g., Kisić 2019). Some researchers with a feminist background are often interested in whether the narratives of refugee women show that displacement and the refugee experience, in addition to having devastating consequences for individuals and families, also create opportunities for (re)building and (re)negotiating gender and other social relations (Grabska 2011; for information on ambivalent views on the emancipation of refugee women cf., e.g., Dremel 2018). The feminist aspect of researching the gender dimension of refugeehood tries to take into account, in addition to gender, other identities such as race, class or age, as well as cultural, political and economic differences, and even those of time and geography in the context of the duration of migration and places where migrations occur (for information on the feminist approach and intersectional analysis cf., e.g., Carastathis et al. 2018).

5/3/2022

References

Bhabha, Jacqueline. 2004. "Demography and Rights. Women, Children and Access to Asylum". *International Journal of Refugee Law* 16/2: 227-243.

Carastathis, Anna, Natalie Kouri-Towe, Gada Mahrouse and Leila Whitley. 2018. "Introduction". *Refuge* 34/1: 3-15.

Crawley, Heaven. 2001. *Refugees and Gender, Law and Process*. Bristol: Jordan Publishing Limited.

Dremel, Anita. 2018. "Rod u istraživanjima transnacionalnih migracija". In *Sudbina otvorenih granica*. Antun Šundalić, Krunoslav Zmaić, Tihana Sudarić, Željko Pavić, Dejan Janković, Anita Dremel and Nataša Krivokapić, eds. Osijek: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena. 2010. "'Ideal' Refugee Women and Gender Equality Mainstreaming in the Sahrawi Refugee Camps. 'Good Practice' for Whom?" *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 29/2: 64-84.

Gerard, Alison. 2014. *The Securitization of Migration and Refugee Women*. London: Routledge.

Grabska, Katarzyna. 2011. "Constructing 'Modern Gendered Civilised' Women and Men. Gender Mainstreaming in Refugee Camps". *Gender & Development* 19/1: 81-93.

Indra, Doreen. 1987. "Gender. A Key Dimension of the Refugee Experience". *Refuge. Canada's Journal on* Refugees 6/3: 3-4.

Kisić, Mia. 2019. “Gender in Refuge. Women’s Lives, Spaces and Everyday Experiences in Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Uganda”. *Genero. A Journal of Feminist Theory and Cultural Studies* 23: 41-76.

Nasser-Eddin, Nof. 2017. “Gender Performativity in Diaspora. Syrian Refugee Women in the UK”. In *A Gendered Approach to the Syrian Refugee Crisis*. Jane Freedman, Zeynep Kivilcim and Nurcan Özgür Baklacıoğlu, eds. London: Routledge, 142-154.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-strong-rodna-dimenzija-prisilnih-migracija-strong-p?locale=en

Gestapo Wire Fence

Valentino Jovanovič Horvat

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-gestapo-mreza-p?locale=en

Global South

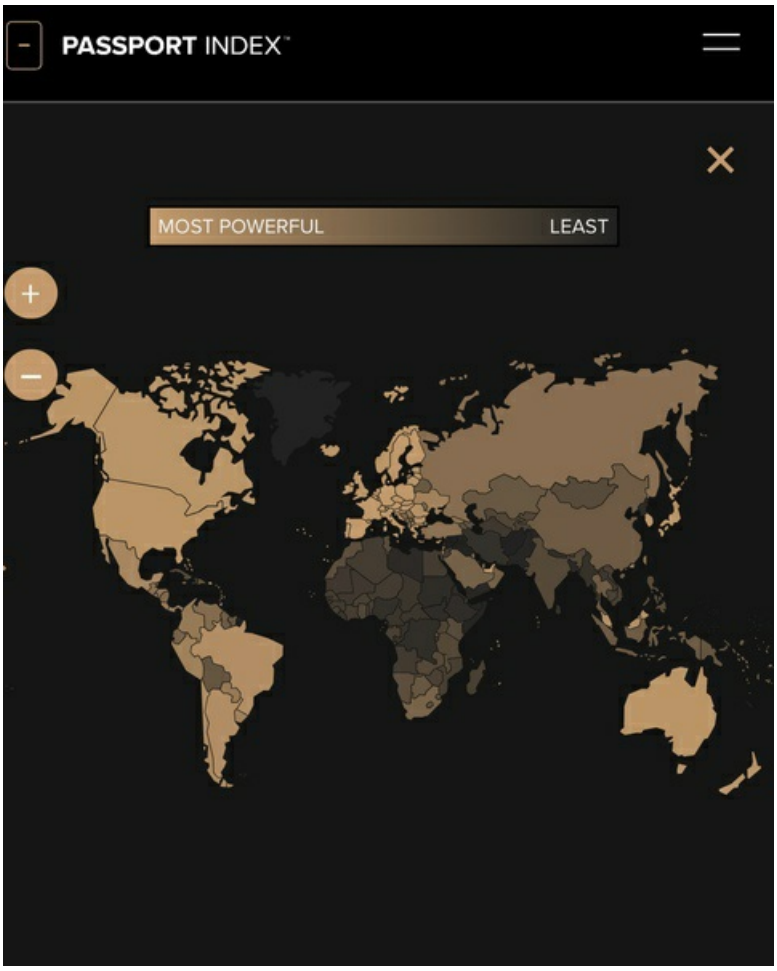
Teodora Jovanović, Romana Pozniak

Although the term Global South has been widely used in recent years, even appearing in the names of various projects, academic departments, etc. (Haug et al. 2021), it is an ambivalent term, primarily economic in nature. While it has the potential to resist global power relations, it risks perpetuating the image of the “underdeveloped South” and, consequently, the perception of migrants/refugees/asylum seekers/people on the move as potentially dangerous and inferior subjects. The term began to be used more intensively after the fall of the Berlin Wall, at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. It primarily appears in development and international relations studies, most often as a replacement for the term Third World, which lost its original geopolitical meaning with the collapse of socialism in Europe at the end of the 20th century and the subsequent disintegration of the so-called Second World (cf. e.g., Escobar 1995). The term was coined by American political activist and writer Carl Oglesby in 1969. Today, it is used as a sort of euphemism and politically more neutral variant for terms marked by developmental and postcolonial discourse, such as “developing countries,” “underdeveloped countries,” “low-income countries,” etc.

The Global South, however, is not equivalent to the geographical area of the southern hemisphere. Most of the countries in the Global South are located in the northern hemisphere, while countries such as Australia and New Zealand, despite being in the southern hemisphere, socioeconomically belong to the “developed” Global North. The Brandt Line, a geographical illustration of the division between the “rich North” and the “poor South” proposed in the 1980s by former German Chancellor Willy Brandt, and still in use today (cf. Haug et al. 2021: 1928), runs between the USA and Mexico, across the top of North Africa and Southwest Asia, then rises towards China and Mongolia, and finally descends, bypassing Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. However, according to this division, the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, excluding Iraq (Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq, and the UAE), as well as places like Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea, are located in the “South,” although economically they belong to the “North” (cf. Sajeed 2020). Interestingly, the United Nations' Finance Center for South-South Cooperation (FCFSSC) list includes Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Singapore, and also lists Bosnia and Herzegovina as the only Balkan country not in the European Union. Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro are not considered part of the Global South according to the FCFSSC list. Therefore, different classifications, in the form of lists, charts, maps, and numbers, differently define what belongs to the Global South and according to what principles. As Alina Sajeed (2020) points out, due to the “partial access to political and economic structures of the North,” Southeast European countries occupy a liminal position in global power relations. However, similar logic applies to many other areas and countries that, according to the described division, are placed in the Global North, including all of Eastern Europe and post-socialist states (Müller 2020), as well as all areas of neo-colonial exploitation and structural precarity in the Global North, such as regions predominantly inhabited by migrants/refugees/asylum seekers/people on the move, socially marginalized groups, indigenous populations, etc. (Sajeed 2020).

Furthermore, the term Global South was coined primarily in economic terms. As such, it appears to be devoid of the political connotations associated with terms like “the East” (linked to Orientalism) or “the Third World” (linked to colonialism). However, its usage risks perpetuating a depoliticized view of the unequal distribution of global power, as well as the associated movements from the Global South to the Global North. Catherine Besteman (2020) describes the efforts of Global North countries to defend against the mobility of people from the Global South as militarized global apartheid. Movement from Global South countries to the Global North is criminalized through a series of measures, policies, and practices. The geopolitical power relations are reflected in mobility regimes, as seen in passport indexes such as the Global Passport Index and the Henley Passport Index. These indexes clearly show that the countries with the weakest passports – those whose citizens need visas for the majority of other countries – are precisely the regions of the Global South from which asylum seekers and **irregularized** migrants on the **Balkan route** originate: Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Yemen, etc. Nevertheless, it is necessary to move away from Western-centric perspectives that posit migration from the Global South to the North as the norm (Nawyn 2016: 166). Not everyone goes, nor does everyone want to go to the “rich North.” Additionally, a significant portion of refugee movements occurs within the countries of the Global South. According to the latest UNHCR statistics, only 36% of the world’s refugees are in Europe, and of the total 110 million displaced persons, over 62 million are internally displaced, 20% are in the sub-Saharan region of Africa, and 10% are in Turkey.

Despite the ambiguity and lack of systemic analysis of the meaning and function of the term Global South (Haug et al. 2021: 1926) – as well as the fact that it is characterized by racialized, (post)colonial relations and, consequently, the problem of the interventionist stance of Western countries that still base their economic and political power on resources and cheap labor from the Global South (Sajeed 2020) – this term also appears in the context of resistance to the global distribution of power (Sud and Sánchez-Ancochea 2022: 1125). This is demonstrated by a series of protests against the “theft of the commons” and the “undermining of democratic institutions,” whereby the Global South simultaneously symbolizes a turn towards a global regime of neoliberalism, but also the possibility of social transformation (Sajed 2020).



Global Passport Power Rank 2024, January 2024. Figure taken from *Global Passport Index*: https://www.passportindex.org/byRank.php

4/1/2024

References

Besteman, Catherine. 2020. *Militarized Global Apartheid*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Escobar, Arturo. 1995. *Encountering Development. The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Haug, Sebastian, Jacqueline Braveboy-Wagner and Günther Maihold. 2021. “The 'Global South' in the Study of World Politics. Examining a Meta Category”. *Third World Quarterly* 42/9: 1923-1944.

Müller, Martin. 2020. “In Search of the Global East. Thinking between North and South”. *Geopolitics* 25/3: 734-755.

Nawyn, Stephanie J. 2016. “New Directions for Research on Migration in the Global South”. *International Journal of Sociology* 46/3: 163-168.

Sajed, Alina. 2020. “From the Third World to the Global South”. *E-International Relations.*

Sud, Nikita and Diego Sánchez-Ancochea. 2022. “Southern Discomfort. Interrogating the Category of the Global South”. *Development and Change* 53/6: 1123-1150.

Graves

Marijana Hameršak, Sanja Horvatinčić

Illegalized travelers from Asia and Africa, fleeing toward destinations in Europe, hide on train roofs, in the undercarriages of buses and trucks, or inside containers and refrigerated cargo holds in order to avoid border controls, police patrols, fences, and other material or symbolic barriers—as well as deportation and **detention**. They seek passage through karst terrain and minefields, or through **weaponized landscapes**, **forests**, mountains, and numerous rivers. Some are lost while they look, wait and hope for their chance to finally cross another border. Their premature, violent **deaths** are the result of contemporary bordering, racialized exclusion and persecution.
Many of those that die at the borders are never found (**disappeared**). If death is reported to authorities or bodies are found, a series of different procedures are carried out, after which the deceased are either repatriated or, as stipulated by law, laid to rest in graves in local cemeteries within the municipalities where they are found.
These graves are among the few local material traces of the lives, escapes, and deaths of people who opposed and confronted the borders that were closed for them.

Graves of those who died along borders and because of borders are, if we speak about Croatia and neighbouring countries, **scattered** along roads, places of persecution, and those very borders. Often invisible, located at the margins of cemeteries, **marked** in various ways, with different **materials** or not at all, solitary or clustered together, often **anonymous**, these burial sites are markers of lives cut short, violent borders, and posthumous marginalization. Maintained, with permanent tombstones or simply modestly decorated with flowers or other tokens of care, these graves can also be places of coming together, thoughtfulness, and mourning.

Documenting and mapping those graves belong to a broader effort of tracing border deaths, a work done mainly through a transnational network of activists, scholars and others who work with and around those material traces, as a way of defying the persistent
erasure of migrants' lives, and demonstrating the brutalities of the contemporary European border regime.
Mapping the graves is not just a documentary method that could eventually help families, community members, local communities, activists, and researchers, while the practice also supports acts of commemoration and pursuits of justice. Spatial representation of death enhances our perception of geographies of violence, **death causes,** losses, and traces, while the accompanying categorizations, where "unknown" is prevalent or among the most frequent designations, point not only to the features of these traces, but also to their opacity.

8/12/2025

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-grobovi-p?locale=en

Grief Activism

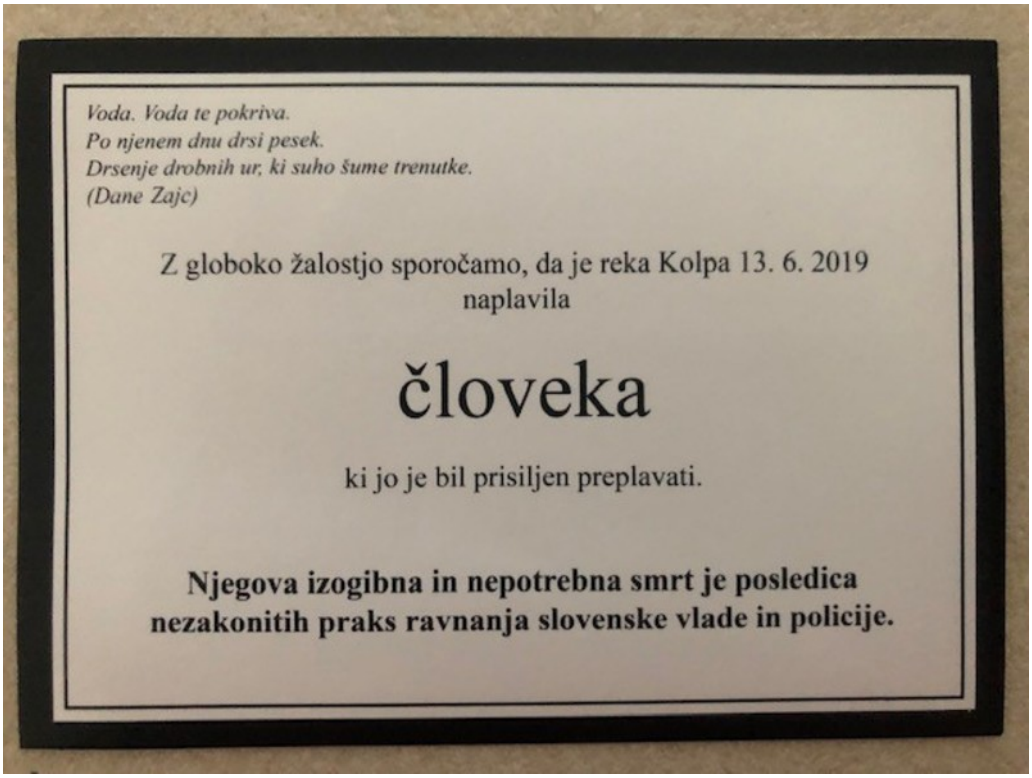
Marijana Hameršak

Grief activism, according to Maurice Stierl (2016), the author of the term, includes **counter-memorialization** practices dedicated to those who **died at the borders** that bring together different actors: activists, artists, journalists, academics, members of the wider community and families, friends and acquaintances of the deceased. Stierl speaks of grief activism as a "transformative political practice that can foster relationalities and communities in opposition to a politics of division, abandonment and necropolitical violence on which EUrope's border regime thrives" (Stierl 2016: 174). The examples he cites and analyzes deal with activist commemorations for those who died in the **Mediterranean**, which, as Stierl emphasizes, in contrast to the political spectacularization and instrumentalization of border deaths, strive to create a space of sharing, togetherness and grief as part of interconnected political struggles and which imply failures and non-recognition.



Commemoration for people who died in the Mediterranean, Palermo, 17 September 2021.
Photo: Bojan Mucko

Local and transnational activist groups along the **Balkan route** publicly commemorate people who died at the borders in different ways: by creating and distributing obituary flyers for those who died in the Kupa River (Ljubljana, 2019), visiting **graves** (Črnomelj, Infokolpa, 2019), creating a digital memorial (e.g. the Memorial Page of the Transbalkan Solidarity organization), a moving memorial textile artwork (Prijelaz / The Passage) and others.



Obituary flyer for people who died at borders, Ljubljana, 2019. Photo: Jelka Zorn

Grief activism, as a collective practice, is realized through mutual cooperation between individuals and different communities, often

even in the form of participatory actions that intend to involve the general public. For instance, the second anniversary of the death of **Madina Hussiny**, a girl from Afghanistan who died at the end of 2017 during a **pushback** from Croatia to Serbia, was commemorated by an action in which passers-by, at the invitation of activists, raised a plaque model of a street sign with the title Madina Hussiny Square. The raising of the plaque was organized, as stated in the call to the action, so that activists, supporters, and everyone willing to do so could “support the request of the initiative, raise their voice against injustice and demand that the square bearing her name serve as an everlasting reminder that no one and no nation-state, government, military force, economy or political regime has the right to determine whose life is worth living and whose is not.”



Commemorating the second anniversary of the death of Madina Hussiny, Trg Republike Hrvatske, Zagreb, 21 November 2019. Source: Initiative for the Madina Hussiny Square

1/5/2022

References

Stierl, Maurice. 2016. “Contestations in Death. The Role of Grief in Migration Struggles”. *Citizenship Studies* 20/2: 173-191.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-grief-activism-p?locale=en

halo this is border

ERIM znanstveno-istraživački projekt



This content is only available in the online edition of e-ERIM. View it at:
https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-hallo-this-is-border-p?locale=en

4/3/2022

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-hallo-this-is-border-p?locale=en

History of Border Deaths

Marijana Hameršak

There have always been deaths at borders and because of borders. According to one version of the legend about the founding of Rome, Romulus killed Remus because he leaped over a furrow that was meant to mark the boundaries of the future city. “So should perish anyone who leaps over my walls” (Zamarovský 1985: 296), declared Romulus when the walls were only simple traces in the earth. In addition to direct conflicts over territories — during conquests, battles, and wars — people have also died because of borders and at borders while fleeing. In the first half of the 20th century, crossing the border was the only safe option for many “enemies” of the Nazi regime: Jews, homosexuals, communists, and others. Some were caught by the police of the countries they were fleeing in their attempts to escape across the border, while others were stopped by the police of the countries where they had hoped for refuge while trying to cross the border. According to Lisa Fittko, who helped Walter Benjamin, among others, cross the French Pyrenees, Benjamin took his own life with morphine tablets after Spanish border guards refused him entry into their country based on yet another new and soon-to-be-repealed order “in that age of new orders” (Fittko 2021: 148). According to the findings of the coroner, Benjamin died from a stroke (Taussig 2006: 3), which is why the circumstances of his death remain murky to this day. However, there is no question that crossing the border was a matter of life and death for him. Crossing the border he was forbidden to cross was his only way to avoid hiding, imprisonment, deportation to a camp, and death.

European borders continued to claim lives even after World War II. Armed border guards, and of course, **fences, wires, and walls**, among which the Berlin Wall held a special place, along with people killed while attempting to cross it, were and remain the building blocks of the bipolar Cold War image of the world based on the antagonism between the liberal, open West and the communist, closed East. In practice, however, from the mid-1960s, just a few years after the construction of the Berlin Wall began, Western European countries actively started working on closing their borders and “shrinking” immigration options (Comte 2018: 76-109; Sciortino 2004: 26-28), a commitment they continue to pursue to this day. After France introduced additional conditions for crossing the border for citizens from its former colonies in 1972 due to labor market tensions (Comte 2018: 108), those who could not meet these conditions were left with only illegal routes. Some of these routes came through Yugoslavia, which, as one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement during those years, liberalized border crossings through agreements and cooperation plans (economic, technological, cultural, scientific, etc.) with member states from the Movement. This also included the abolition of the visa regime for citizens of numerous African, Asian, and Latin American countries. After arriving in Yugoslavia by plane, some of them clandestinely continued further west, through Austria or Italy. This is how in 1973 near Trieste, just a few kilometers from the border with Italy, four young men from Mali and Mauritania died of hypothermia and exhaustion. They were buried in the presence of relatives and numerous locals at the cemetery in the village of Boršt / Sant'Antonio in Bosco, where their **graves** with the names Somil Dibya Mibaye (born 1948), Bakari Traore (born 1948), Seydou Dembele (born 1951), and Mamadou Niakhate (born 1954) still exist today.



Cemetery in Boršt / Sant'Antonio in Bosco, 24. 3. 2023. Photo: Marijana Hameršak

Given that the deaths near Trieste are directly related to limiting options for regular entry into France, they can also be considered the earliest deaths of the modern **European migration regime** and its associated **irregularization of migration** (De Genova 2002). However, activists and non-governmental organizations, followed by media and researchers in Europe and the United States, only began documenting (cf. the List of Refugee Deaths, published by the UNITED for Intercultural Action network since 1993) and analyzing (cf. Cornelius 2001) **border deaths** from the 1990s onward. Initiated in response to increasingly restrictive migration policies that contradicted the proclaimed post-Cold War myth of a world without borders, these first academic, activist, and media responses were focused on the contemporary situation and needs. This has remained one of the fundamental characteristics of understanding deaths at the borders to this day. Even today, research and critiques of border deaths continue to focus on Western states and their immediate surroundings (Central America, North Africa, and, in Eurocentric terms, the Middle East). A historical perspective, if applied at all, often does not go further back than the 1990s, as seen in the d@b Database created as part of the University of Amsterdam’s *Human Costs of Border Control* project or the map Border Kills (1993-2020), illustrating how the Mediterranean has become a **maritime cemetery** over several decades (cf. Ritaine 2015, according to Pécoud 2020: 380).

Furthermore, documenting border deaths – due to the weak or unreliable engagement of states, international agencies, and organizations – still often relies on logistically and emotionally difficult connections with various actors and communities. It involves the intertwining of activist, artistic, commemorative, legislative, and research efforts.

10/6/2023



Nada Čok, reportaža o smrtima kod Trsta 1973. godine / reportage on the 1973 migrant deaths near Trieste (RAI TG Regione FVG, 23 Oct 2016, '13:00-).

The video is available in the online edition of e-ERIM:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZqU3PECURY

References

Comte, Emmanuel. 2018. *The History of the European Migration Regime. Germany's Strategic Hegemony*. Oxon: Routledge.

Cornelius, Wayne A. 2001. “Death at the Border. Efficacy and Unintended Consequences of US Immigration Control Policy.” *Population and Development Review* 27/4: 661-685.

De Genova, Nicholas. 2002. “Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life”. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 419-447.

Fittko, Lisa. 2021. *Moj put preko Pireneja. Uspomene 1940–1941*. Zagreb: TIM Press. Translated by Nadežda Čačinovič.

Pécoud, Antoine. 2020. “Death at the Border. Revisiting the Debate in Light of the Euro-Mediterranean Migration Crisis”. *American Behavioral Scientist* 64/4: 379-388.

Sciortino, Giuseppe. 2004. “Between Phantoms and Necessary Evils. Some Critical Points in the Study of Irregular Migrations to Western Europe”. *IMIS-Beiträge* 24: 17-43.

Taussig, Michael T. 2006. *Walter Benjamin’s Grave*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Zamarovský, Vojtech. 1985. *Junaci antičkih mitova. Leksikon grčke i rimske mitologije.* Zagreb: Školska knjiga. Translated by Mirko i Predrag Jirsak.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-povijest-smrti-na-granicama-p?locale=en

Humanitarian Industry

Romana Pozniak

Although **humanitarianism** is often associated with individual charity work, organizations and associations for providing aid started to appear in the 19th century with the establishing of charitable societies and philanthropic foundations, and the most significant event in the history of the humanitarian field is the establishment of the International Red Cross in 1863 (Barnett 2011; Taithe 2015). In the context of the establishment of the United Nations and the creation of a legal-normative framework for human rights and humanitarianism in the mid-20th century, humanitarian work was becoming increasingly professional.

In addition to the tendency of Western countries to intervene in war and post-war environments, the spread of liberalism after the Cold War also encouraged the so-called aid industry and its growth in terms of geographical presence, the number of organizations and agencies involved, and funding opportunities (Duffield 2012: 476). The humanitarian sector, which had primarily dealt with crisis situations, expanded its activities to include socioeconomic development, democratization, and even nation-building (Barnett 2005 and 2011).

Increased funding, the proliferation of work done by humanitarian organizations, the projectification of humanitarianism and increasingly strict conditions set by donors for applying and implementing projects are just some of the aspects of the "transformation of humanitarianism" in the 1990s (Barnett 2005). Due to the significant increase in the number of organizations, the specification of activities for new and existing organizations, as well as the development of an entire network of national and international, and for-profit and non-profit actors involved in the organization of humanitarian care in various ways, the academic literature has, since the 2000s, started to discuss this phenomenon in terms of "aid industry," i.e., a business (Duffield 2012; Weiss 2013). In an earlier development phase of this sector, Thomas Haskell warned about the connection between humanitarianism and capitalism (1985). The importance of the relationship between these two phenomena in society is also indicated by the term "disaster capitalism," which refers to the instrumentalization of crises, where private interests are promoted and a transnational capitalist class benefits from other people's suffering (Schuller 2008: 20-21).

Bureaucratization and standardization, as part of the neoliberal operating mode, have led to competition among humanitarian aid organizations. In addition to designing attractive projects to attract donors, organizations began to focus on technocratic solutions for crisis management, typically reserved for the business sector. According to Paolo Cuttitta, the marketization of the process of adopting public policies stems from the "tendency of political actors to obscure the political character of politics and to present policy-making as a neutral, necessary and indisputable process" (2018: 634). This connects the marketization and depoliticization of public policies, and the same logic can be applied to the field of humanitarianism, where the imperative of technocratic problem-solving and the commodification of humanitarian aid contributed to concealing the political goals of donors. In contrast to the assumed politicization, this contributed to the depoliticization of the humanitarian sector, which underscores the fact that humanitarianism is an ambivalent field of activity (cf., e.g., Pozniak 2019).

Part of the humanitarian industry can also be interpreted as a segment of the broader **migration industry**. In the literature, the well-known and empirically and theoretically conceived cooperation between humanitarian and securitarian policies is especially prominent in the relationship between the humanitarian and migration industry (cf., e.g., De Lauri 2018; Pallister-Wilkins 2015 and 2017; Walters 2011). For instance, this relationship is manifested, on the one hand, in national and international investments in technology for the protection of border regimes and, on the other hand, in the neutral attitude of many humanitarian organizations regarding restrictive migration policies, as well as in their indirect involvement in the adoption of the same policies from which migrants seek protection and help.

According to data, for example, from 2017, the humanitarian industry employed around 570,000 people, which is more than a one hundred percent increase when compared to data from 2010, when around 210,000 employees worked in the humanitarian sector (Walker et al. 2010). Although the humanitarian sector employs a large number of local residents, it is a popular international profession for the highly educated Western elite. This includes, as Antonio De Lauri warns, a pronounced migration movement driven by economic factors from the donor countries, i.e. from the Global North, to the **Global South** (2016: 5). While the media mainly focus on migration from the Global South to the Global North, and present an image of an invasion of poor and dangerous residents, the mobility of humanitarians is not widely discussed, nor are its consequences, among which De Lauri includes the "creation of parallel economic systems, increases in the cost of primary goods, exacerbation of the gap between those involved in humanitarianism and those excluded" (2016: 6). In addition, the humanitarian industry encourages precarious work and, despite well-paid jobs, most often offers short-term and/or consulting contracts, which is accompanied by a high turnover rate of employees and collaborators (Roth 2015: 47).

In recent years, the humanitarian sector has seen a significant increase in funding. For instance, Doctors Without Borders quadrupled its annual budget from around 421 million euros in 2004 to 1.6 billion euros in 2019. The financial growth of the humanitarian industry is also evident from the fact that aid allocated to Yemen in 2018 ($5 billion) was more than the total spent on humanitarian assistance worldwide in 1995 ($4.6 billion), or from the increase in the World Food Programme's budget, which in 1997 amounted to $1.2 billion and increased seven times by 2019.

Although the term humanitarian industry was used primarily in critical interpretations of high-ranking organizations and international humanitarian interventions, it can also be applied in local contexts, even for the activities of smaller or local organizations. For instance, the refugee camp opened in **Slavonski Brod** in 2015, during the **corridor** period, employed local people, and some local and international organizations expanded their field of activity, were granted new projects, funds and employees. The former head of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Tvrtko Barun stated that JRS grew from two employees in Croatia to 45 employees in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo in the period 2014-2020. Jobs were also created in other non-governmental organizations,

including those that initially operated as independent civic initiatives.

NGO-ization, i.e. the transformation of local humanitarian initiatives into non-governmental organizations, should not be surprising, considering that they are somewhat forced to formalize their activities in order to be able to collect and distribute humanitarian aid due to statutory regulations. This and similar phenomena were discussed in the context of the development of the civil sector in the post-war and post-socialist environment of the 1990s and early 2000s (cf., e.g., Bagić 2006; Baker 2014; Stubbs 2001 and 2012). In order to procure financial and other resources for the salaries of employees, compensation for food and transportation of volunteers, collection of humanitarian aid, and work on the protection of human rights in general, non-governmental organizations are forced to function in accordance with the trends and policies of donors and the non-profit market. By standing in for ruined public services and promoting volunteerism, humanitarian organizations are subject to neoliberal trends and imperatives such as individualization and deinstitutionalization of care, or self-responsibility and the imperative of the entrepreneurial self (cf. Bröckling 2015; Gorz 2015; Muehlebach 2012; Sandri 2018). However, what distinguishes local organizations from established humanitarian agencies is how they practice and articulate the principle of work divided between humanitarian work (which is considered apolitical) and work that is political by nature and for which they practice activism, looking to stand in **solidarity** with people on the move. Although they operate as part of the humanitarian industry, this does not necessarily invalidate the politically engaged stance of certain local organizations, as they can cooperate, and often do, with donors that support distributing humanitarian aid, but also engage in advocacy against, say, **pushbacks**. This position enables their members, volunteers and workers to “repoliticize” (Cuttitta 2018; Sinatti 2019) humanitarianism, to avoid (completely) succumbing to the technocratic nature of the humanitarian business while providing aid, and to approach aid work from a political, and not only humanitarian perspective. Ultimately, this is why we can look at the humanitarian industry as a network of different relationships, positions, practices and actors (private donors, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, states, small and large companies, corporations, foundations and even informal associations) that directly or indirectly includes people of different experience, political and professional positions.

30/10/2022

References

Barnett, Michael. 2005. “Humanitarianism Transformed.” *Perspectives on Politics* 3/4: 723-740.

Barnett, Michael. 2011. *Empire of Humanity. A History of Humanitarianism.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Bagić, Aida. 2006. “Talking about Donors. Women's Organizing in Post-Yugoslav Countries”. In *Ethnographies of Aid. Exploring Development Texts and Encounters*. Jeremy Gould and Henrik Secher Marcussen, eds. New York: New York University Press, 199-226.

Baker, Catherine. 2014. “The Local Workforce of International Intervention in the Yugoslav Successor States. ‘Precariat’ or ‘Projectariat’? Towards an Agenda for Future Research”. *International Peacekeeping* 21/1: 91-106.

Bröckling, Ulrich. 2016. *The Entrepreneurial Self. Fabricating a New Type of Subject.* London etc.: Sage.

Cuttitta, Paolo. 2018. “Repoliticization Through Search and Rescue? Humanitarian NGOs and Migration Management in the Central Mediterranean”. *Geopolitics* 23/3: 632-660.

De Lauri, Antonio. 2016. “Introduction”. In *The Politics of Humanitarianism. Power, Ideology and Aid*. Antonio De Lauri, ed. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1-16.

De Lauri, Antonio. 2018. “Humanitarian Borders. The Merging of Rescue with Security and Control”. *CMI Brief* 11.

Duffield, Mark. 2012. “Challenging Environments. Danger, Resilience and the Aid Industry”. *Security Dialogue* 43/5: 475-492.

Gorz, André. 2015. *Nematerijalni rad. Spoznaja, vrijednost i kapital*. Zagreb: Tim Press. Translated by Rade Kalanj.

Haskell, Thomas. 1985. “Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility. Part 1”. *The American Historical Review* 90/2: 339–361.

Muehlebach, Andrea. 2012. *The Moral Neoliberal. Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Pallister-Wilkins, Polly. 2015. “The Humanitarian Politics of European Border Policing. Frontex and Border Police in Evros”. *International Political Sociology* 9/1: 53–69.

Pallister-Wilkins, Polly. 2017. “Humanitarian Rescue/Sovereign Capture and the Policing of Possible Responses to Violent Borders”. *Global Policy* 8: 19-24.

Pozniak, Romana. 2019. “Pomoć ili biznis? Transformacija humanitarnog rada u slavonskobrodskom kampu za izbjeglice”. *Studia Ethnologica Croatica* 31/1: 49-66.

Roth, Silke. 2015. *The Paradoxes of Aid Work. Passionate Professionals*. London and New York: Routledge.

Sandri, Elisa. 2018. “‘Volunteer Humanitarianism’. Volunteers and Humanitarian Aid in the Jungle Refugee Camp of Calais”. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44/1: 65-80.

Sinatti, Giulia. 2019. “Humanitarianism as Politics. Civil Support Initiatives for Migrants in Milan’s Hub”. *Social Inclusion* 7/2: 139-148.

Stubbs, Paul. 2001. “New Times? Towards a Political Economy of 'Civil Society' in Contemporary Croatia”. *Narodna umjetnost* 38/1: 89-103.

Stubbs, Paul. 2012. “Networks, Organizations, Movements. Narratives and Shapes of Three Waves of Activism in Croatia”. *Polemos* 15/2: 11-32.

Schuller, Mark. 2008. “Deconstructing the Disaster after the Disaster. Conceptualizing Disaster Capitalism”. In *Capitalizing on Catastrophe. Neoliberal Strategies in Disaster Reconstruction*. Nandini Gunewardena and Mark Schuller, eds. Lanham etc.: Altamira Press, 17-27.

Taithe, Bertrand. 2015. “Humanitarian History?” In *Routledge Companion to Humanitarian Action*. Roger Mac Ginty and Jenny H. Peterson, eds. London and New York: Routledge, 62-73.

Walker, Peter, Karen Hein, Catherine Russ, Greg Bertleff and Dan Caspersz. 2010. “A Blueprint for Professionalizing Humanitarian Assistance”. *Health Affairs* 29/12: 2223-2230.

Walters, William. 2011. “Foucault and Frontiers. Notes on the Birth of the Humanitarian Border”. In *Governmentality. Current Issues and Future Challenges*. Ulrich Bröckling, Susanne Krasmann and Thomas Lemke, eds. New York and London: Routledge, 138-164.

Weiss, Thomas G. 2013. *Humanitarian Business*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Humanitarian Power

Duško Petrović

Starting from Foucault's thesis that modern political power "guarantee[s] an individual's continued existence" and wages war in the name of life (Foucault 1978: 137), many authors interpret humanitarianism as simultaneously caring and authoritative, divided into two seemingly opposing goals: supervision and care (cf., e.g., Andersson 2014; Fassin 2005). Such securitarian-humanitarian logic stems from humanitarian power, and can be detected in many refugee policies today. Humanitarian power, as could be observed on the example of the **Balkan refugee corridor**, uses a specific management technology that, on the one hand, takes care of the primary needs of migrants and refugees, is sensitive to physical suffering, lack of food, water, cold weather, illness and physical deficiencies, the needs of the family and children. On the other hand, it ensures and supervises the movement of people, supervises the security of space related to movements and detentions, is sensitive to risks, outbursts of violence, unforeseen events, it records, categorizes, closes, detains, documents and counts (Petrović 2018: 51). The ruling powers are not the only ones participating in this kind of management, they are joined by various national and local humanitarian organizations, social groups, and even individuals. As the example of the Balkan refugee corridor from 2015/2016 shows, it often takes place beyond the law or the territory of states and enables the capillary expansion of power to all those involved in the **humanitarian space**.

5/5/2022

References

Andersson, Ruben. 2014. *Illegality, Inc. Clandenstine Migration and the Buissnes of Bordering of Europe*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Fassin, Didier. 2005. "Compassion and Repression. The Moral Economy of Immigration Policies in France." *Cultural Anthropology* 20/3: 362–87.

Foucault, Michel. 1978. *The History of Sexuality. Volume I. An Introduction.* New York: Pantheon Books. Translated by Robert Hurley.

Petrović, Duško. 2018. "Humanitarian Exceptionalism. Normalization of Suspension of Law in Camp and Corridor". In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and Munich: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 43-63.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/humanitarno-izuzece-humanitarna-moc?locale=en

Humanitarian Space

Duško Petrović

Humanitarian space could be defined as an element of modern political technology, or biopolitical technology in the Foucaultian sense (1978), whose primary goal is, on the one hand, the supervision and care for bodies and their biological processes, and on the other, the supervision of security and the establishment of order, and, in the context of migration, the confinement and segregation of refugee and migrant groups. In that space, sympathy and care are mixed with authority and dosed cruelty, which sometimes manifests itself as violence, but more often as indifference, indolence, distance. This kind of humanitarian space could be seen in the formalized, internationally coordinated **Balkan refugee corridor** used by states to more fully exercise control over the movement of people during the refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016, when, among other things, as a result of Croatia's agreement with Slovenia and Serbia, a special railway line was introduced, connecting **Šid** with Dobova via the **camp in Slavonski Brod**. The humanitarian space of the corridor was a space with special status, beyond the usual social and legal frameworks, and was created by the application of **humanitarian power**. The space was marked by several important features: 1. It spanned the borders and territories of sovereign states; 2. Special systems of rules, management, supervision and enhanced control that are not common in the so-called normal social space were in force within the space; 3. It was defined as a temporary one-way flow in which rights were partially and temporarily suspended (cf. **humanitarian exception**), more precisely, the legal status of most people was unclear; 4. It was dominated by care for bodies (health, nutrition, physical suffering and pain) and the life of groups and individuals; 5. It was established for the purpose of humanitarian care, but also for supervision and the establishment of order (cf. Petrović 2018).

5/5/2022

References

Foucault, Michel. 1978. *The History of Sexuality. Volume I. An Introduction.* New York: Pantheon Books. Translated by Robert Hurley.

Petrović, Duško. 2018. "Humanitarian Exceptionalism. Normalization of Suspension of Law in Camp and Corridor". In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and Munich: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 43-63.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-humanitarni-prostor-p?locale=en

Humanitarian Exception

Duško Petrović

Humanitarian exception is a partial or complete suspension of rights, or a state of legal uncertainty, which occurs through the creation of a special **humanitarian space**, outside, on the borders or within a territory regulated by law, by the application of **humanitarian power**. In the contemporary context, as shown by Didier Fassin and Paula Vasquez (2005) for the humanitarian state of emergency, it is a common occurrence and a part of legitimate state policies which suspend the legal order of a state for a certain length of time and in a certain area, or render it ambivalent. Humanitarian exception can also come from the application of securitarian-humanitarian policies aimed at exerting control over **irregularized migration**. Such an exception was in force in the territories of several states in which the *ad-hoc* organized and internationally regulated **Balkan refugee corridor** was active in 2015 and 2016 (Petrović 2018). The humanitarian exception in the Balkan corridor was reflected, among other things, in the fact that its formation and purpose – the **transit** and **detention** of migrants – had no basis in the legislation of the European Union, nor in national legislation (cf., e.g., Kogovšek Šalamon 2016).

3/5/2022

References

Fassin, Didier and Vasquez, Paula. 2005. “Humanitarian Exception as the Rule. The Political Theology of the 1999 Tragedia in Venezuela”. *American Ethnologist* 32/3: 389-405.

Kogovšek Šalamon, Neža. 2016. “Legal Implications of ‘Humanitarian Corridor’”. In *Razor-Wired. Reflections on Migration Movements through Slovenia in 2015*. Neža Kogovšek Šalamon and Veronika Bajt, eds. Ljubljana: Peace Institute, 39–49.

Petrović, Duško. 2018. “Humanitarian Exceptionalism. Normalization of Suspension of Law in Camp and Corridor”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and Munich: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 43-63.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-humanitarno-izuzece-p?locale=en

Irregularized Migration

Marijana Hameršak

The term “irregular migration” entered wide use at the turn of the 21st century, as part of the expansion of the neoliberal discourse prone to euphemisms (cf. Ryznar 2017: 312), fostered by numerous criticisms of the terms illegal migration and especially illegal migrant (cf. UNHCR). In Serbia, for example, the term has not come into wide usage, while in others, such as Croatia, where it is used in two linguistic forms (“irregular” [iregularne] and “nonregular” [neregularne] migration), it became more accepted and used more frequently, including in reports of the Ombudswoman, civil society organizations' policy documents and academic papers (e.g. Petrović and Pozniak 2014). Under the influence of spreading anti-migrant discourses, the inertia of the media or as part of communication strategies that normalize exclusions, expulsions (**pushbacks**), and, in general, the expansion of border violence, after the closure of the **Balkan corridor**, the term started to recede more and more in the Croatian context, being replaced by terms such as illegal migrants and illegal or unlawful migration.

Although “irregular migration” entered the field as a corrective, even euphemistic term, this expression is also burdened with negative connotations that are reflected even at the level of its definitions. Irregular migration is usually defined negatively, as “migration that takes place without appropriate (administrative) approvals, i.e., migration carried out by people who do not have valid approvals to enter or reside in a territory” (Stojić Mitrović 2016: 45). Irregular migration is also defined as external in relation to the established order, as, stated in the glossary of the European Commission, migration that takes place “outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries”.

The notion of irregular migration in the literature stems from the idea of irregularity as “a condition that is *produced* through various processes of (ir)regularization” (Squire 2011: 5), i.e., as a product of a series of practices, agreements, disputes and conflicts. The use a passive past participle (*irregularized*) as an adjective instead of a simple adjective form (*irregular*) emphasizes the departure from the normative and established use of the term and affirms the constructivist perspective according to which irregular migration is not a socially and culturally neutral phenomenon bounded by stable and clear boundaries, and reducible to the question of the legal status of a person’s residence or the legality of their crossing the border. Accordingly, irregularized migration studies analytically focuses on the ways in which certain mobilities are constructed and lived as irregular. The concept of illegalized migration is also used in the literature (e. g. Bauder 2013; De Genova 2002) in a similar sense.

The more and more prevalent illegalization of migration is considered (e.g. Squire 2011) a part of the **securitization** and criminalization of migration, primarily the entry, but also residence and work, and the associated multiplication of borders that divide cross-border mobilities into categories of desirable and undesirable, productive and threatening. As pointed out by Yolande Jansen, Robin Celikates and Joost de Bloois, in the introduction to the book *The Irregularization of Migration in Contemporary Europe*, “the proliferation of borders increasingly goes hand in hand with the normalization of the idea that migration is irregular — as are the lives of those who attempt to cross borders — and should be regulated and managed in the most stringent ways” (2015: ix). Jansen, Celikates and de Bloois, building their arguments based on ideas from other authors, emphasize the connection between the irregularization of migration and economic liberalization and the opening of free flows of work, goods and money in the context of a globalized economy.

2/4/2022

References

Bauder, Harald. 2013. “Why We Should Use the Term Illegalized Immigrant”. *RCIS Research Brief* 1. Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement. Ryerson University.

De Genova, Nicholas P. 2002. “Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life”. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 419-447.

Jansen, Yolande, Robin Celikates and Joost de Bloois. 2015. “Introduction”. In *The Irregularization of Migration in Contemporary Europe. Detention, Deportation, Drowning.* Yolande Jansen, Robin Celikates and Joost de Bloois, eds. London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield, ix–xxvi.

Petrović, Duško and Romana Pozniak. 2014. “Tražitelji azila kao prijetnja”. *Studia ethnologica Croatica* 26: 47-72.

Ryznar, Anera 2017. “Neoliberal Discourse and Rhetoric in Croatian Higher Education”. In *The Cultural Life of Capitalism in Yugoslavia. (Post)Socialism and Its Other.* Dijana Jelača, Maša Kolanović and Danijela Lugarić, eds. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 303-322.

Squire, Vicki. 2011. “The Contested Politics of Mobility. Politicizing Mobility, Mobilizing Politics”. In *The Contested Politics of Mobility. Borderzones and Irregularity. Vicki Squire*, ed. London: Routledge, 1-25.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta. 2016. *Azil i neregularne migracije u Srbiji na početku XXI veka. Kulturne paradigme.* Dissertation. University of Belgrade.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/iregularizirane-migracije?locale=en

Krnjača

Teodora Jovanović

Asylum Center Krnjača, or simply Krnjača, is undoubtedly one of the most well-known camps in Serbia. It is located in the eponymous neighborhood on the outskirts of Belgrade, in the Palilula municipality. The camp is relatively easy to reach by public transport in Belgrade – by bus departing from one of the central city hubs. The bus takes 15 to 20 minutes to reach the stop near the camp. A narrow road leads to the camp and a Roma settlement. The Roma settlement and the Krnjača Asylum Center are located next to each other, separated only by a fence.

Asylum Center Krnjača was established within a settlement that belongs to Preduzeće Ivan Milutinović (PIM), a company known in Yugoslavia for constructing waterways. The settlement consists of 16 barracks which were once used to house the company's workers. Since 1992, the barracks have been rented to the Commissariat for Refugees (KIRS). This organization had just been established at that time. The barracks were used for the accommodation of refugees/internally displaced persons affected by the wars in the former Yugoslavia. According to the KIRS website, the settlement has also been used to accommodate asylum seekers from the **Global South** since 2014. From 2014 to 2016, the camp housed both "old" and "new" refugees. The "old" refugees, often called "our" refugees because of their ethnicity, are those from the former Yugoslavia; in contrast, the "new" refugees come from other regions. The last of the "old" refugees left Krnjača in 2016 when they moved into new apartments in a Belgrade neighborhood, financed by EU funds. KIRS is responsible for managing Krnjača, other camps in Serbia, and the care of "old" refugees.

In recent years, Krnjača has primarily accommodated asylum seekers and "vulnerable groups" (such as women, children, and those who are injured or ill). With several barracks in the camp, it is possible to somewhat categorize residents by nationality—e.g., grouping Afghans with Afghans, Syrians with Syrians, and Burundians with Burundians. The number of people and their countries of origin fluctuate. For instance, in 2023, some Russians were accommodated in the camp, while in 2021 and 2022, there was a significant presence of Burundians due to Serbia's visa-free policy with Burundi. The camp has a maximum capacity of 1,000 people.

Krnjača has a ghetto-like atmosphere—it is close to a major urban center but remains isolated. It accommodates a diverse range of populations and various "shadowy" activities occur there, from prostitution to arrangements for crossing borders. Nevertheless, there is a semblance of order and a presence of humanitarian security actors. There is no official store in the camp, so residents buy what they need from the surrounding neighborhood. Entry and exit from the camp are restricted in the evenings and at night. The camp provides breakfast, lunch, and dinner. KIRS and NGO workers are in constant interaction, sitting together, drinking coffee, exchanging information and gossip, addressing pressing issues, and following a routine. Typically, a camp resident assists them.

Several primary schools are located near the camp. Since 2016, children from the camp have started attending these schools, and some children from the nearby Roma settlement have been enrolled as well. NGOs organized transportation to the schools. Framed within the discourse of "inclusion," the official integration of camp children into the Serbian education system added some purpose to the daily lives of camp residents and their prolonged waiting for a new beginning. The parents I spoke with during my visits to Krnjača in 2017 and 2018 were proud of how quickly their children were learning Serbian. Although they envisioned their future elsewhere, in Western European countries, they believed it was beneficial for their children to spend time with other kids at school (Jovanović 2019). On the other hand, some parents were dissatisfied with the outcome, as their children experienced unpleasant situations.

Like in other camps (see **Porin**), waiting is a central feature of daily life in Krnjača. **Transit as lived experience** is marked by a sense of indefinite stasis for people on the move. Some wait for asylum decisions, others for their onward journey, and some for both. While waiting, residents recover from their arduous journeys, send their children to school, participate in workshops, occupational activities and research, read books, play sports (e.g., cricket and billiards), assist KIRS to obtain benefits (such as extra clothing or cash cards), communicate with family and friends via video calls, socialize, debate, drink coffee and tea, and smoke cigarettes.

As Iva Grubiša (2022) points out, the camp is experienced as something between a temporary "home" and a "prison." My interlocutors did not describe the camps as "prisons." On the contrary, some individuals reported feeling freer in Krnjača than in other camps and in other countries. However, recent research conducted in Krnjača reveals that some residents do describe this camp as a "prison" (Collins et al. 2022). This study also conceptualizes the Krnjača camp as a "custodian institution." By using the concept of "custodianship," the authors aim to merge the dynamics of "control" and "care" into a single term, highlighting how the management of life is implemented rather than defining what it is. Krnjača oscillates between leniency (e.g., tolerating returns after a failed **game**) and containment (e.g., when the military was deployed during the COVID-19 state of emergency to guard the camp, and mobility was explicitly restricted). One of my interlocutors described Krnjača as a "zoo." During my research, I also spoke with individuals who managed to leave Krnjača and continue their lives in rented apartments. For them, this undoubtedly came as a significant relief and a major step forward.



The road to the Roma settlement and the Asylum Center Krnjača, 2018. Photo: Teodora Jovanović



The entrance to the Roma settlement next to the camp, 2023. Photo: Teodora Jovanović



The entrance to the Asylum Center Krnjača, 2023. Photo: Teodora Jovanović

8/1/2024

References

Collins, Jessica, Claudio Minca i Richard Carter-White. 2022. “The Camp as a Custodian Institution. The Case of Krnjača Asylum Centre, Belgrade, Serbia”. *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*.

Grubiša, Iva. 2022. “From Prison to Refuge and Back. The Interplay of Imprisonment and Creating a Sense of Home in the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers”. *Journal of Borderlands Studies 38/2*: 211-228.

Jovanović, Teodora. 2019. “Formal Education of Asylum Seeker Children in Belgrade, Serbia. Expanded Meaning of Social Inclusion”. *Social Sciences* 8/7: 211.

Ladders

Teodora Jovanović

Ladders are objects used in attempts to climb over **fences, walls, wire**, or other physical barriers at borders. In the context of illegalized migration, ladders symbolize resourcefulness, resilience, and the necessity of exposing oneself to risk. These objects are used at various borders around the world, including borders with high physical barriers along the **Balkan route**, such as the one between Serbia and Hungary.

Seemingly trivial, objects have the power to influence human experience. Materiality is a lens through which we can observe relationships, both social and those that people establish with objects (Miller 2005). The concept of ladders is often used as a metaphor for class mobility. A ladder made of aluminum or wood can be used to change a light bulb in an apartment, paint a wall, reach something at a height, or perform any handyman job. It can also be used to climb over a border fence intended to prevent entry into a territory.

Ordinary, everyday objects, such as ladders, acquire different meanings and purposes when encountered at borders. These “trivial” objects—which at first glance have nothing to do with borders and migration—can construct and deconstruct borders, make them stronger or weaker, and create alternative, often non-verbal knowledge (Kurki 2020). Researching the role of these objects helps us understand the physical act of crossing a border. For instance, Jason De León (2013) studied objects left behind in the desert along the Mexico-US border, revealing much about how suffering has become normalized in the process of crossing on foot. The experience of using ladders is physical, tangible, risky, and non-verbal.

I observed ladders used as tools for border crossing, or as part of **game** equipment, piled up during a visit to a camp in Sombor in 2021. Ladders are traded there. People labeled as “smugglers” – who may also be workers trying to pay for their own journey – sell ladders to their companions at prices several times higher than those in official stores, and they set them up on fences. The ladders used for the game at the Serbian-Hungarian border are extendable fire ladders. They can be seen in a photograph taken by the NGO Klikaktiv in a squat:



Horgoš, 2021. Photo: Klikaktiv

At the end of a music video in Arabic, filmed at the Serbian-Hungarian border, there is a scene depicting the crossing of the border using ladders, followed by police cars chasing the trespassers. In Serbian media, this video was described as an advertisement for a prominent smuggler. The title of the video, or the trap song, is حارق (pronounced /hāreq/), a term connected to حراقة (pronounced /harāqa/), which has become a metaphor for illegalized migration as the activity of “burning borders” (M'charek 2020). The content of the video and the song's lyrics imply that ladders are one of the tools used to “burn” the EU's fortified borders, with the smugglers being the ones who hold the matches.

Ladders are potentially dangerous objects even in a household. They are always approached with caution. In the context of illegalized border crossings, the danger is significantly greater, as evidenced by a Klikaktiv post from 21 January 2021.

> FROM THE FIELD
>
> While working with refugees, we noticed that some of the most common injuries they encounter when trying to cross borders are leg injuries. These injuries happen to them while jumping the fence - when they are in a hurry, they are in fear or they are being chased by the police, so they do not have enough time to go down the fence more or less carefully.
>
> However, there is another reason why fractures and sprains of the legs, feet and ankles are so common. To make the whole story more understandable, we give you a brief insight into what a part of the border crossing between Serbia and Hungary looks like. In front of the fence itself, there is a barbed wire on the ground through which the refugees break

> through crawling, covered with blankets or sleeping bags, so that the wire would not cut them. After being dragged through the several meters long barbed wire trap as soldiers in the movies, two fences await them. Both are about four meters high and are also wrapped in layers of barbed wire at the top. The distance between the two fences - the patrol zone - is so large that only two police jeeps can pass in the passage. In order to cross those two fences, people pay the smugglers large amounts of money so that they can set the ladder for them to cross one and the other fence at the right time. Many people from the refugee population set out on a journey with a very limited amount of money and very often do not have the money to pay for crossing the entire fence or are saving money for the further journey. In that case, they decide to pay money to cross the first fence and to climb to the top of the second fence, from which they will then jump in the hope that they will be able to land on the ground without major injuries. There are whole groups of people who get ladders for climbing and descending from the first fence from the smugglers, while only one ladder for climbing is set for the second fence, and there is no ladder for descending, because they are not paid. Then there is a jump awaiting for all of them. This causes severe injuries that will follow most people throughout their lives, because they are usually not treated in time and, above all, not treated well enough medically.

Climbing up ladders, descending down ladders, and jumping from fences when there are no ladders—these are body techniques at the border. The body techniques that migrants learn en route are unique to the context of illegalized border crossings. They are shaped by a complex network that includes border enforcement practices, the environment, migrant material culture, smugglers and other factors (De León 2013: 329). Ladders serve as an element of the subversive activity of “burning borders” and are also an element of violence at the borders. Serious physical injuries can occur if the risks and body techniques of using ladders are not mastered.

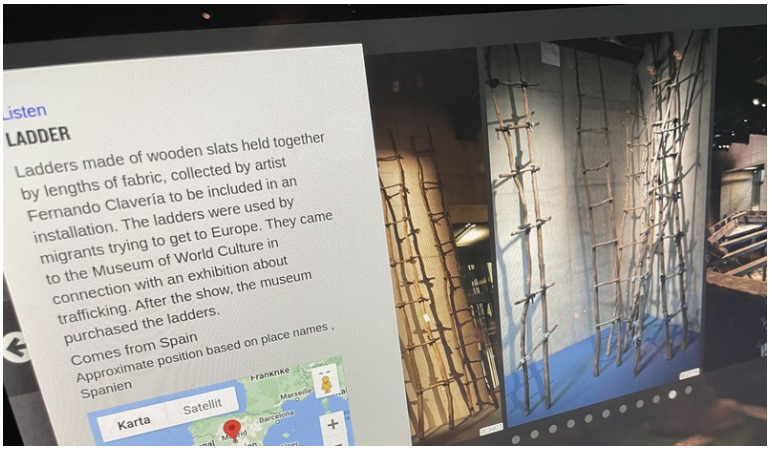
In 2022, it was mentioned that Hungary would extend the fence on the border with Serbia by one meter. The Klikaktiv team recorded a comment on this topic from a young man from Morocco in a post from 12th August 2022:

> If they extend the fence by one meter, we will extend the ladders by one meter, too.

This highlighted quote points to the ongoing cat-and-mouse game between people on the move and border authorities. It is a form of struggle interpreted through the lens of **autonomy of migration**. Ladders could be understood as a type of **mobile commons** that people create and use in migration despite efforts by authorities to stop them, but also as “commodities” traded among them.

Wooden ladders are often used at the border between Mexico and the USA. Several long wooden ladders used for crossing the border from Africa into European territory (Ceuta and Melilla) were collected and displayed at the Museum of World Culture (Gothenburg, Sweden). These ladders served as inspiration for this text.

Ladders materialize the idea that fences cannot stop migration; they only foster creativity, increase crossing costs, and intensify the risks for those forced to climb over them.





Exhibition “Crossroads”, Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg, 2023.
Photo: Teodora Jovanović

13/9/2023

Lady MIRO ft @dadlee - Hare9 حارق [Official Music Video]
The video is available in the online edition of e-ERIM:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZdhUs8QWWGw

References

De León, Jason. 2013. “Undocumented Migration, Use Wear, and the Materiality of Habitual Suffering in the Sonoran Desert”. *Journal of Material Culture* 18/4: 321-345.

Kurki, Tuulikki. 2020. “Materialized Narratives of Border. Articulating the Unspeakable through Everyday Objects.” In *A Research Agenda for Border Studies.* James W. Scott, ed. Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 129-144.

M'charek, Amade. 2020. “*Harraga*. Burning Borders, Navigating Colonialism”. *The Sociological Review Monographs* 68/2: 418-434.

Miller, Daniel, ed. 2005. *Materiality*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Letter from a Hiker

Iva Pleše

In June 2019, the H-Alter portal published a text, signed as a “letter from a hiker”, in which the events at the mountain lodge on Risnjak, related to the passage of a group of refugees through that part of Gorski Kotar, were described and commented on in the first person from the position of an observer and witness. The area in question, a **weaponized landscape**, is a section of the **Balkan route** used by people on the move to reach other countries of the European Union. From the letter, we learn that several of them, who stopped by the lodge late at night to take a break and ask for water, were attacked by members of special police forces who were posted at the lodge and the surrounding **forests** at that time and tasked with *guarding them from refugees*, as the manager of the lodge explained to the gathered hikers. In addition to the actions of police officers, armed and “in full combat gear”, towards people who were “bare-handed, thirsty and hungry, wandering for days on mountains they are not familiar with”, the author of the letter was horrified by the reaction of those present and the justification of violence against people: “Only then did I feel a chill, (...) when I saw how the narrative focus (...) began to shift from what we had witnessed – the needless violence against refugees asking for water – to the argument that they were dangerous beasts” (cf. **wild animals**). The letter from a hiker is an example of the public reaction from a so-called ordinary observer to the actions of the police against people on the move – actions which, according to available reports, are often a prologue to **pushbacks** – rare both at that time and today not (only) because such actions were mostly hidden from direct insight, but also because of a kind of normalization of such operations. The letter from a hiker had a significant public reach, but the reaction from the competent authorities could be characterized as nonchalant, to say the least, while the letter itself was published at a time when the violence and cruelty of the policies aimed at refugees and other migrants were not publicly evident nor normalized to the extent they would become in the following months and years.

1/6/2022

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-pismo-planinara-p?locale=en

Lipa Camp

Morgane Dujmovic

As I approach the Lipa camp, one word springs to mind: lunar. In addition to the remoteness from the town, access is made difficult by a winding track almost 3 kilometres long, a series of potholes through the mountains leading to an uninhabited plateau. In front of the camp, the desert atmosphere contrasts with the architecture of **fenced** enclosures and the video-surveillance system overlooking it. The omnipresent signs forbidding entry and the taking of photographs are reinforced by the language repeated by all the members of the police security force, who warn that “the entire camp is video-protected”.



Arrival in Lipa, April 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic

The desire to isolate exiles is palpable here; it is in line with the interests of the Bosnian and Croatian police, who thus keep men at a distance from the border, with a view to dissuading them from undertaking the **game**. For the municipal authorities, the removal from living areas is an assumed strategy, as the Lipa camp has periodically been used to evacuate exiles from abandoned buildings in the town, as the mayor of Bihać announced in the spring of 2021: “There are still places where migrants are staying (...) which we will also empty, clean and seal in the coming days”.

Furthermore, the camp's location is in line with the expectations of the EU, which has financed its infrastructure and operation through its program EU support to Migration and Border Management in BIH. Lipa is part of a series of camps set up in Bosnia-Herzegovina between 2018 and 2021, along with those in Bira, Sedra and Miral (since closed), and those in Borići, Ušivak and Blažuj, still in operation in spring 2024. The European grant that financed these Temporary Reception Centers (TRC, as they are officially known) totaled 100 million euros in expenditure over the years, asccoring to the IOM press release). The sum is regularly used as a sledgehammer argument to put pressure on the Bosnian authorities. As one can read from Migreurop report *Endless Exiles*, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, for example, in January 2021 seized on this financial argument to urge the Bihać and Una Sana authorities to get the Bira camp up and running again.



Temporary Reception Centre Lipa, April 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic

In practice, however, these funds have been allocated to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a UN agency and partner of the EU, which has been given the task of coordinating and managing the camps as part of the “Inter-Agency Migration Response” strategy. IOM has thus captured the bulk of funding from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for migration management and border control, establishing itself as a key partner in these areas (Ahmetašević et al. 2023). However, this configuration has changed since 2021: in line with the European Commission's objectives, which Bosnia-Herzegovina is reminded of in the Commission’s monitoring reports for its accession to EU (Ahmetašević et al. 2023: 48-57), the IOM is now moving towards what it calls a “plan for a transition to a state-owned migration response”– a formula that leaves little doubt about the previous interventionist strategy.

With the view to a handover to the Ministry of National Security, management of the Lipa camp has been transferred since November 2021 to the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (*Služba za poslove sa strancima*, better known in the field by its English acronym SFA). As one of the Service's officials put it in conversation in April 2024: “Lipa is the first center to be managed entirely by national institutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and represents a kind of pilot project in the transition plan expected by the EU and IOM”. In 2021, the EU financed the construction of a dedicated detention area, transforming Lipa into a “Multi-purpose Reception and Identification Centre”, as formulated in the Commission’s monitoring report for the year 2022. This explains the tension that leads to restricting access to the camp, and the pressure not to provide information to outsiders – according to several words collected from exiles encamped there, in the spring of 2024.

This is why geographer Louis Fernier has used a spatial reconstruction method in order to map the living space of the camp, based on evacuation plans and testimonies (Fernier and Dujmovic 2023).



Reconstitution of the Lipa camp plan, 2023, Louis Fernier, Nelly Martin and Luuk Slegers

In 2023, the people encamped at Lipa spoke of relatively good conditions, compared with camps in other countries (hence the term “VIP” camp on Louis Fernier's map). However, the remoteness of the camp, coupled with the inadequate resources of daily life, then contributed to what he analysed in his thesis as “spatial offenses” against exiles. Referring to the work of geographer Michel Lussault, “spatial offenses” encompass situations in which actors feel they no longer control distances, and are victims of intrusion or isolation.

In spring 2024, the words collected about poor living conditions are more numerous and vehement. Despite the rather clement accommodation conditions at this time (between 348 and 603 people registered at Lipa, for a capacity of 1,512 beds), exiles seem to lack everything in the camps that the EU and its delegation in Bosnia-Herzegovina pride themselves on funding. These words contrast with the “good-natured” atmosphere described in the IOM's fortnightly reports.

Inside the Lipa camp, the contrast is all the more striking given that the EU logo is everywhere, alongside those of the IOM and the dozen or so NGOs authorized to intervene in the camp to guarantee minimum reception conditions (cf. **humanitarian Industry**). As S* explains: “The doctor only comes for an hour on Mondays and an hour on Thursdays. If someone is about to die, what are they going to do?” Such descriptions echo the opinions of many local observers: indeed, these precarious housing conditions motivate the regular presence in the field of collectives such as No Name Kitchen, whose volunteers try to make up for the shortage of foodstuffs or so-called Non Food Items (clothing, hygiene kits, etc.) (cf. **distro**).

The access road to the camp is another evocative symbol of this contrast. On this dusty, cracked, unmaintained road, visitors come across all-terrain vehicles and vans emblazoned with the EU logo. The latter are the result of expensive donations: in particular, black all-terrain vehicles worth 370,000 euros were donated in March 2023 to the Directorate for the Coordination of Police Forces (which

took over responsibility for camp security the previous year), representing a donation of 725,000 Bosnian Convertible Marks from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) project. Moreover, in the mark of the project: “Special Measures to Support the Response to the Refugee and Migrant Situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina Phase III”, white pickups and vans were donated in February 2024 to the Border Police to “support operational actions in regional offices”, like the one in Bihać, worth 500,000 euros.

On the other hand, segregation and destitution represent good opportunities for some local shopkeepers. Several stores are tolerated on the wasteland adjoining the camp: necessary for the encamped people, the products sold there are also appreciated by the police officers who come there daily to buy bread, cigarettes... Several derelict sheds suggest an important past activity; among these is the trace of a store with a cynical name: The Game Shop.



Game shop Lipa, April 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic



Lipa markets, April 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic

In the main private shop still in operation, one can find everything for the game: warm clothing and walking boots for men; sleeping bags; and SIM cards that can only be used for internet in Croatia, Slovenia and Italy. One of the salesmen describes the profits made

locally from migrants in the following words in April 2024:

> People here are generally not happy about the migrants' presence, they accuse them of the slightest theft or criminal act. But at the same time, the locals make a big business out of it. Just imagine, if you think of the sales, the accommodation, the **taxis**!

19/9/2025

This text is taken from the series of portfolio articles "Rivers are deadly if you're not on the right side" previously published on Mediapart, Le Courrier des Balkans, visioncarto.net and Migreurop. This series of portfolio articles is the result of field research carried out in the spring of 2024 in several South-East European countries: Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. This publication is sent to all interlocutors met in the field. To preserve their anonymity, the exiled people are referred to here by a randomly assigned letter, with their consent.

Author would like to thank the exiled people she met on these roads and along these rivers, the people from the collectives, associations, universities and institutions with whom she spoke, as well as Louis Fernier, Romain Kosellek, Eva Ottavy, Elsa Putelat and Marijana Hameršak for their invaluable contributions prior to and during this field mission.

References

Ahmetašević, Nidžara, Manja Petrovska, Sophie-Anne Bisiaux and Lorenz Naegeli. 2023. *Repackaging Imperialism: The EU – IOM Border Regime in the Balkans.* Amsterdam: Transnational Institute.

Fernier, Louis and Morgane Dujmovic. 2023. "Frontières violentes, recherches à risque: s'engager par le mouvement". Valenciennes: CNFG Conference Paper.

Lipa Protest

Bojan Mucko

The Lipa camp is a “reception center” for people on the move, opened in the spring of 2020 in the Una-Sana Canton during the COVID-19 pandemic. The camp was erected and operationalized through the coordination of cantonal and state structures of Bosnia and Herzegovina and their international partners – the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with funding primarily from the European Commission. Initially, the management of the camp was entrusted to the IOM. It is located in an isolated area on the edge of the Una National Park, near a village emptied during the war in the 1990s, after which the camp was named. At the opening of the camp, the head of the canton presented it as the result of a two-year effort “to relocate migrants from the urban parts of Bihać, the municipality of **Velika Kladuša**, and other municipalities and cities to uninhabited areas.” However, local activists emphasized that these relocations were carried out forcibly and that such ghettoization of people on the move was a consequence of anti-migrant policies concealed as anti-pandemic measures (cf. Ahmetašević 2020). Additionally, the period of camp management from April to December 2020 was marked by numerous contentious arguments between local authorities and the IOM, on the one hand, and cantonal and state levels of government, on the other. The camp was constructed as a temporary, tent solution in a location beyond the reach of water and electrical networks, and the IOM expected infrastructural interventions from local authorities which would facilitate its transformation from a tent camp into a container camp equipped for the winter conditions in the middle of the **forest**.

Given that the investments were not realized by winter, the international administration of the IOM decided to hand over responsibility to local authorities and dismantle the camp. Consequently, on 20 December 2020, Lipa was temporarily closed despite the lack of any sustainable alternative accommodation for the people who had been residing there. The main international actor for refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina essentially left around 1,200 people to fend for themselves in the forest, approximately a six-hour walk from urban infrastructure. As columns of people left the camp, carrying all their belongings in **backpacks** and plastic bags, the camp was already being dismantled. Amid these events, a fire broke out, quickly engulfing the tent section of the camp. In the following days, authorities demonstrated how unprepared they were to deal with the situation. Plans to relocate the residents to either old locations (Bira camp in Bihać) or new ones (the former barracks in Bradina) were thwarted by anti-migrant protests from the local population. At one point, former camp residents were loaded onto about twenty buses under police supervision. The buses, due to protests at the destination points, never departed. Consequently, people were forced to spend the night in the buses. After that, without any real solution, they were once again left to face the elements. Many returned to the partially dismantled and partially burned camp, starting to squat in the remnants of the fire-damaged administrative and hygiene containers. On the first day of 2021, some of the residents trapped in the post-apocalyptic ruins of the camp organized a hunger strike.

These events occurred during the time when I joined the humanitarian work of a pro-migrant international collective operating in Bihać (see **distro**). When the protest began, I was in Zagreb. An international volunteer, who had been in Bihać for months and whom I had met as a member of the collective, contacted me with a proposal to connect me with one of the people on strike in the camp, who wanted to share his perspective with the media. After a brief exchange of messages, we arranged a video call for the next morning.

My phone rang while I was in the office. I answered the WhatsApp video call, expecting to see the face of my interlocutor on the other side. Instead, the screen was filled with the faces and bodies of a mass of men standing tightly packed in front of white containers, looking straight at me. I turned on the phone’s speaker, and the loud chanting of the strikers filled the narrow office space. First, I heard the voice of someone rhythmically and loudly shouting a sentence:

> EU save our lives!

It was immediately echoed by the entire collective following the same rhythm:

> **EU save our lives!**

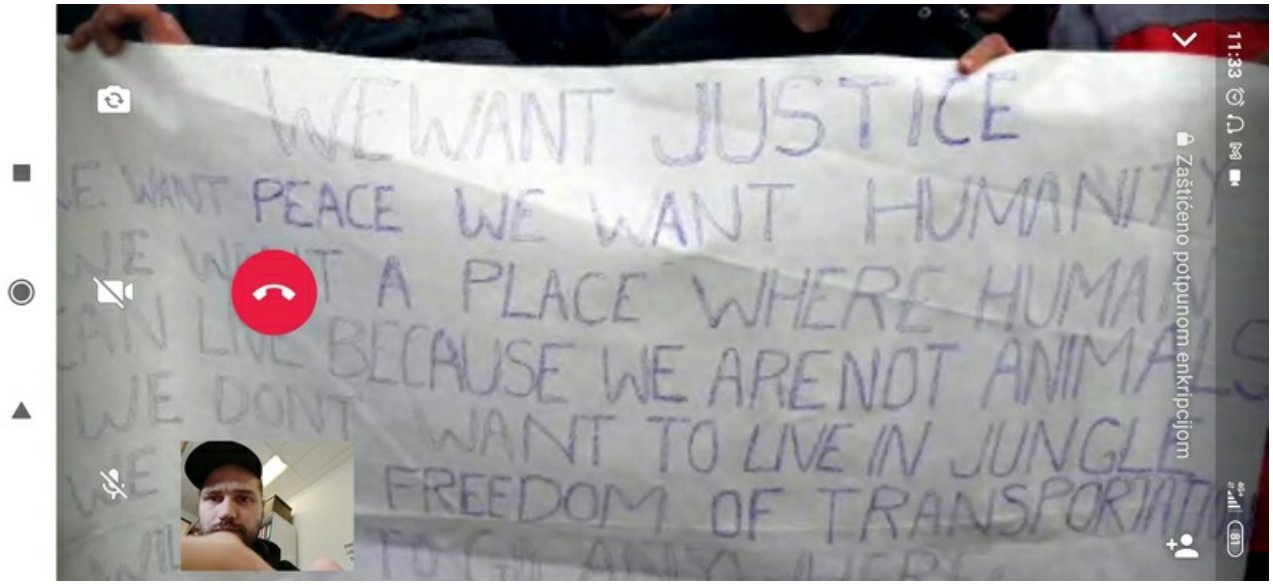
The chanting continued in the same manner for several minutes:

> We want justice! **We want justice!** We want justice! **We want justice!** We want justice! **We want justice!** We want justice! **We want justice!** We want freedom! **We want freedom!** We don't want food, we want justice! **We don't want food, we want justice!** EU save our lives! **EU save our lives!** EU save our lives! **EU save our lives!** EU save our lives! **EU save our lives!** We want justice! **We want justice!** We want justice! **We want justice!** We want justice! **We want justice!** We want peace! **We want peace!** We want peace! **We want peace!** We want peace! **We want peace!** We want peace! **We want peace!** We don't want this place! **We don't want this place!** We don't want this place! **We don't want this place!** We don't want this place! **We don't want this place!** We don't want this place! **We don't want this place!** EU save our lives! **EU save our lives!** EU save our lives! **EU save our lives!**

During this time, as the office resonated with the rhythm of the protest, I sat at my desk, holding the screen filled with the protesting crowd in my hands. Since I was unprepared for the situation but felt the need to document the events I was witnessing, I had to improvise. Every few seconds during the call, I would take a screenshot of my phone.



In the lower left corner of the screenshot, right in line with the banners, there was an open window showing my face with the office in the background.



Two spatial perspectives are thus present in the same picture. The view of the camp is captured by the rear camera of the phone in Lipa, while the view of the office is captured by the front camera of my phone. Consequently, the picture encompasses two different dimensions of the **migration regime**: the protest dimension and the academic dimension.



The video call abruptly disconnected, without warning. I felt as though I had been struck square in the face – dislocated, privileged, addressed, unprepared, useless, claustrophobic, and crumpled.



I typed a message thanking them for the call and expressing support for the protest. The reply I received read:

> Just now the policeman saw me so I cut off the call.

We continued messaging and agreed to try to speak again later when my interlocutor could talk. Based on the conversation that took place half an hour later, video materials were created and published in the note **“WhatsApp from Lipa”**. These video materials depict the daily life of people on the move trapped in the post-apocalyptic ruins of the camp from an insider’s perspective and also convey the political demands of the hunger strikers directed at the European Union. The hunger strike ended on 5 January 2021, and a new container camp equipped for winter conditions was officially opened at the same location a whole eleven months after the fire, in November 2021.

12/12/2023

References

Ahmetašević, Nidžara. 2020. *Ljudi u pokretu bez ljudskih prava. Izbjeglice i migranti u Bosni i Hercegovini bez ljudskih prava*. Sarajevo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/protest-u-lipi?locale=en

Loaded Exclusionary Questions

Marijana Hameršak

Selection and exclusion of refugees from the **Balkan corridor**, i.e. the **profiling in the corridor**, which at first was nominally carried out according to the country of origin, quickly started to include other seemingly fixed and objective, but in reality provisional criteria such as the region of origin, refugee itinerary, etc. In this system of ad hoc “checks” which was primarily aimed at reducing the number of people in the corridor, an important role – in addition to racial profiling and quick, improvised language and cultural selection tests – was played by misleading, loaded questions about the conditions and reasons for coming to Europe, especially used by the police of the countries along the corridor during the last months of the corridor. For instance, in January 2016, in response to questions from the Slovenian police about the reasons for leaving their home country (which had to be Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan, cf. **SIA**) and their expectations from the receiving country (which, as agreed among the countries along the corridor, had to be Austria or Germany), migrants had to mention that they were fleeing the war and seeking international protection and nothing else, while the questions that followed, about plans to reunite with other family members, continuing their studies, or getting a job, had to be answered in the negative. Otherwise, their answers related to the war and the destination were evaluated as irrelevant or untrue, and they were excluded from the corridor. Twenty-two-year-old Eman from Syria described the translator and the interrogation in the camp in Dobova in February 2016, after which she was returned (cf. **pushback**) to Croatia:

> He also wanted to know the reason why I was going to Germany, apart from the war in Syria. I replied that my husband has a residence permit there. Then, he divided us into two groups. One went on, and the other was returned to Slavonski Brod. I was in the second group.

This kind of questions, like loaded questions which Croatian law expressly prohibits, were intended to “confuse the interviewee” and call into question their credibility (*Pravni leksikon* [Legal Lexicon] 2007). Given that their loaded nature was based on the fact that practices and responses that are not otherwise mutually exclusive (seeking international protection and family reunification, continuing education, employment, etc.) were defined as exclusionary, they can be more precisely referred to as loaded exclusionary questions.

13. 1. 2023.

References

Pravni leksikon. 2007. Vladimir Pezo, ed. Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-kapciozna-pitanja-p?locale=en

Long Summer of Migration

Marijana Hameršak

The mass and visible movement of refugees and other migrants in 2015 through Greece, Macedonia, Serbia towards the European Union and countries like Austria, Germany or Sweden is called different names, most often the (European) migrant or refugee crisis. In addition to these both personalizing and threatening terms (New Keywords 2016: 16-22), the term humanitarian crisis was also used at the time, which, having in mind the mobilization potential of humanitarian discourse, was promoted by non-governmental organizations active in the field of asylum and human rights. With Balkanist connotations to a degree, the movement in question, as well as the events surrounding it, is sometimes, as noted in the literature (Hess and Kasparek 2022; Minca and Collins 2021: 2), simply called the **Balkan route**.

Bernd Kasparek and Marc Speer (2015) introduced the term “the long summer of migration” in an article in which they summarize the events and tendencies that culminated in the September march of thousands of refugees from the Keleti railway station in Budapest towards Austria and the opening of the Austrian and German borders for them also. By mobilizing the phrase long summer, the metaphor of the long summer as a period of change and upheaval, the authors designate the migrant movements as turning points and potentially formative in the long term. The term “long summer of migration”, instead of the threat and destruction implicit in the term crisis, refers to the freed mobility and broad social **solidarity** during those months, the relative suspension of controls along the routes of mass migrant movement, and the relatively free crossing of external, internal and **externalized** borders of the EU on these routes.

Almost exemplifying the ideas about the **autonomy of migration**, during the long summer of migration, borders, ideas and positions within the **European migration regime**, and the EU itself, were collapsing and reshaping under the force of human mobility. However, after Hungary closed its borders to refugees in September 2015, redirecting their movement to Croatia, the long summer of migration transitioned into the “great autumn of migration” (Hameršak and Pleše 2018: 109), in which the independent, in a way self-organized migration movement was funneled into a **corridor**, i.e. **mobile detention**, with **profiling** and **pushbacks** quickly becoming an integral part of it.

First published: 10/6/2022. Revisions: 15/9/2023



John Domokos. 2015. We Walk Together
The video is available in the online edition of e-ERIM:
https://cdn.theguardian.tv/mainwebsite/2015/10/06/150909WeWalkTogether_desk.mp4

References

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. “Winter Reception and Transit Center in the Republic of Croatia. An Ethnographic View of the Slavonski Brod Refugee Camp”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context*. Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb: Zagreb and München: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 109-142.

Hess, Sabine and Bernd Kasparek. 2022. “Historicizing the Balkan Route. Governing Migration through Mobility”. In *Viapolitics. Borders, Migration, and the Power of Locomotion*. William Walters, Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani, eds. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 183-207.

Kasparek, Bernd and Marc Speer. 2015. “Of Hope. Hungary and the Long Summer of Migration”. bordermonitoring.eu. Translated byElena Buck.

Minca, Claudio and Jessica Collins. 2021. “The Game. Or, 'the Making of Migration' along the Balkan Route”. *Political Geography* 91: 1-11.

New Keywords Collective. 2016. “Europe/Crisis. New Keywords of ‘the Crisis’ in and of ‘Europe’”. *Near Futures Online. Europe at a Crossroads* 1.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-dugo-ljeto-migracije-p?locale=en

Madina Hussiny

Marijana Hameršak

According to Aleksandra, a volunteer in the refugee camp in Sofia, where Madina Hussiny (Hosseini, Husseni), a girl from Afghanistan who was at most five or six years old when she **died** on the Croatian-Serbian border during **the pushback** from Croatia, lived for several months in 2016 with her large family: *The biography of someone who hasn't even lived their life can't actually be written.* The milestones of life's journey, intimate and socially recognized struggles and achievements, everything that makes up the essence of a biography, are actually the privilege of those who had the opportunity to live, grow up, grow old. Madina had no such chance. Madina was at most five or six years old when she lost her life on the Croatian-Serbian border at the end of 2017.

The biography that follows covers only the last stops of Madina's journey from Afghanistan, through Iran and Turkey to Europe. In addition to the summary of events of the night in which she tragically died, the biography contains the impressions she left on employees and volunteers in the facilities for collective accommodation on the peripheries of the European Union. It is based on information from the media, court rulings and reports, as well as interviews conducted in 2021 with Aleksandra, Andrijana, Jovana, Francesca, Katerina, Margarita and Silvia who met Madina in Bulgaria and Serbia, in the camps where, according to the interviews quoted here in italics, *bed sheets can be a luxury*, and *torn furniture* comes standard.

They remember Madina as *tiny, really tiny, small, with a big head* and *large, curious eyes that were something really special*. They remember her as *very beautiful, very sweet, with a slightly round face, chubby* and *with a big smile and wonderful eyes, with curly, very curly hair, quite black and quite thick*, and a skin that was *darker, olive*, and with a *Sherpa hairstyle, which slowly grew out*. They emphasize Madina's special, *sweet voice*, similar to the *voice of a very small child who does not yet know how to pronounce all the words*. They remember her as an *extremely cheerful girl* who radiated happiness. As summed up by Jovana, who met Madina at the camp in Bogovađa, Serbia: *It's as if she carried some sort of joy. She stood out with that kind of joy, and just by being in a room she changed its atmosphere.* Aleksandra specifically remembered how disappointed and unhappy Madina was when she couldn't go on a trip with the other children from the camp because she was too young. Silvia and Francesca, who saw her every day at the camp in Bogovađa, remember Madina's pride and happiness when she found some kittens, but also the sadness and disappointment she felt because she could not keep them.

Aleksandra, as well as Silvia and Francesca to a certain extent, remember that Madina was inseparable from her slightly older sister, and that volunteers and employees often *confused* them for one another, because the two of them *looked alike, with the same hair color, the same hairstyle, similar height and build*. Andrijana, who occasionally came to the camp in Bogovađa, primarily remembers Madina in the company of her younger brother, who also looked *a lot like her, and they were close in age as well*. She remembers how she *took him by the hand and imitated the way adults take care of children, she took his hand, then started talking as if she was warning him about something, like she was scolding him*.

Madina, according to our interlocutors' memories of her, was always in a *group of other children of a similar age*, with whom, in the words of Jovana, *she played around the camp*. Sometimes she used to *hang out* with them in front of the classroom doors or on the windows in the camp in Sofia, waiting for the arrival of volunteers, calling them: *Teacher! Teacher!* or *We are here! We want to go to medresa, medresa!* In Bogovađa, they also used to yell out: *Caritas! Caritas!* because of the words printed on the volunteers' T-shirts. Silvia jokingly states that Madina was the *worst child of all the children there, of all the little rascals*, as she called them. *She was impossible to deal with and unbearable. She didn't follow any rules, because she's very small and very cute, so it goes without saying that she can do whatever she wants.* In short, Madina was *very active, restless, hyperactive, always running and jumping*, she was generally *delighted with physical contact*, even ready for *physical confrontations with other children*.

She always wanted to participate in everything, in all activities in the camp. In addition to some Bulgarian and Serbian, she also learned English, which, as Francesca summed up, she *could follow, but of course she didn't speak very well.* Francesca recalls: *How she talks to us, a kind of child-like English, but English.* The famous photo of Madina shown below was taken after one such activity at the camp in Bogovađa, with her looking straight into our eyes, playfully sticking out her tongue, arms and body in motion. In that photo, Madina is wearing *her black Star Wars T-shirt* and was photographed by Silvia on a *sunny, summer day* after a water coloring workshop attended by *many children*. Francesca recollects how she *took them all to wash their hands on the ground floor, to a shared bathroom and toilet. All of them were dirty and I know the photo was taken at the moment when they all came out of that toilet together.* Madina, as Silvia remembers, simply ran out, along with two other children she always spent time with, the same two she was with when she found the kittens.



Madina Hussiny. Bogovađa, Summer of 2017. Photo: Silvia Maraone

In the camp in Sofia, Madina socialized with other children her age every day and in the *classroom* which was always *quite noisy*. About twenty children were usually in the classroom, and Margarita and Katerina remember that Madina especially loved the dressing room corner, where she would dress up as a *princess*. Aleksandra also remembers Madina in that little corner, in *a very big princess dress*. *It wasn't meant for her age. It was very big. She could barely walk in it. It piled up under her feet*, but she was happy and kept on saying: *Teacher, teacher*. She also mentions that Madina loved dolls. And reading. *There was a book,* Shark in the Park by the British children's writer Nick Sharatt, which Aleksandra read to the children every day, and they *loved to repeat after her*. Madina also liked to listen to her *read the book and repeat after her*. The classroom was a place for play, drawing, singing. This is where Madina probably drew the colorful hearts on the *messages* for Bulgarian citizens that Margarita and other volunteers distributed in Sofia on World Refugee Day in 2016.



Message from Madina Hussiny, World Refugee Day campaign, Sofia, summer of 2016. Photo: unknown author. Refugee Project archive

Aleksandra remembers Madina in a *purple jacket* that was *big for her, too big for her, always unbuttoned*. She *was always running around in that jacket that was always unbuttoned*. The photos at the beginning of the video about the organization of the camp in

Sofia show Madina in such a jacket around the one minute mark, with a hood over her head and a big scarf around her neck, the way she was described in interviews: small, with wide-open eyes full of questions. Jovana, who occasionally came to Bogovađa, also remembers Madina in a *cyclamen-colored coat* and in general *in those kinds of colors* she wore. Jovana, however, also remembers that same *coat, jacket* covered Madina's *dead body* when they returned it to her parents *just like that, so cruelly, harshly*. When Francesca saw *Madina for the last time*, at the camp in Belgrade where the family was getting ready for *the game*, Madina was *wearing that pink jacket, like in that photo that you sometimes see on the Internet. I think it might be the last photo of her*, Francesca concludes.



Madina Hussiny, Serbia, winter 2017. Photo: unknown author

Madina went on the **game** on November 21, 2017, with her mother and five siblings. An hour after they clandestinely crossed the border between Serbia and Croatia in the afternoon, they were intercepted by the police. Madina's mother, as she stated in the complaint she sent to the ombudswoman through Doctors Without Borders, asked the Croatian police for asylum for herself and her underage children. However, they told her that they had to return to Serbia. They told them to come to Croatia again next month. The mother then started begging the policemen to let them at least spend the night in Croatia, because the children were exhausted, but they ignored her pleas. After some time, a police vehicle arrived and transported them to the border, to a place next to the railway line near Tovarnik, which at the time was already known as the place where the Croatian police bring people they pushed back to Serbia. The policemen then ordered them to go back to Serbia, to Šid by following the railway line. Shortly thereafter, the train that knocked Madina down came. The ambulance doctors who arrived at the railway station in Tovarnik, where the police brought Madina after the accident, could only declare Madina's death at twenty-one hours and ten minutes. Madina's body was kept in Croatia, while the family was deported to Serbia the same night. The body was subsequently sent to Serbia and handed over to the family. Madina was buried in Šid, where she still rests to this day.

The responsibility for Madina's death was investigated by the Ombudswoman, the State Attorney's Office, at the Municipal Court in Vukovar, the County Court in Osijek, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia and, finally, at the European Court of Human Rights. However, justice for Madina has not been served to this day. Those responsible for her death have not been identified nor punished.

Madina has become a symbol of harsh migrant routes going through Croatia and neighbouring countries, a symbol of border deaths, but also of resistance to policies that imply and produce such deaths. The first anniversary of Madina's death was marked by the renaming of Republic of Croatia Square in Zagreb to Madina Hussiny Square. This action, as well as other **counter-memorialization** actions in the following years, was aimed at determining who is responsible for Madina's death and for all those who were persecuted and died at the borders and in the name of borders. The renaming was used to demand, as stated in the leaflets, swift responsibility for the committed act, for the irretrievably lost life and the system that produces such deaths (cf. **grief activism**). The third anniversary of Madina's death was commemorated by a giant graphic novel titled *Madina* by Ena Jurov, exhibited at the Square of the Victims of Fascism in Zagreb, and on the fourth anniversary, the initiative Zagreb City Refuge submitted a request to the city authority and the Committee for Naming Neighborhoods, Streets and Squares of the Zagreb City Assembly to have the name Madina Hussiny included in the pool of names from which public areas for the area of the City of Zagreb are named.



Commemorating the first anniversary of Madina Hussiny’s death. Trg Republike, Zagreb, 21 November 2018 Photo: Initiative for the Madina Hussiny Square

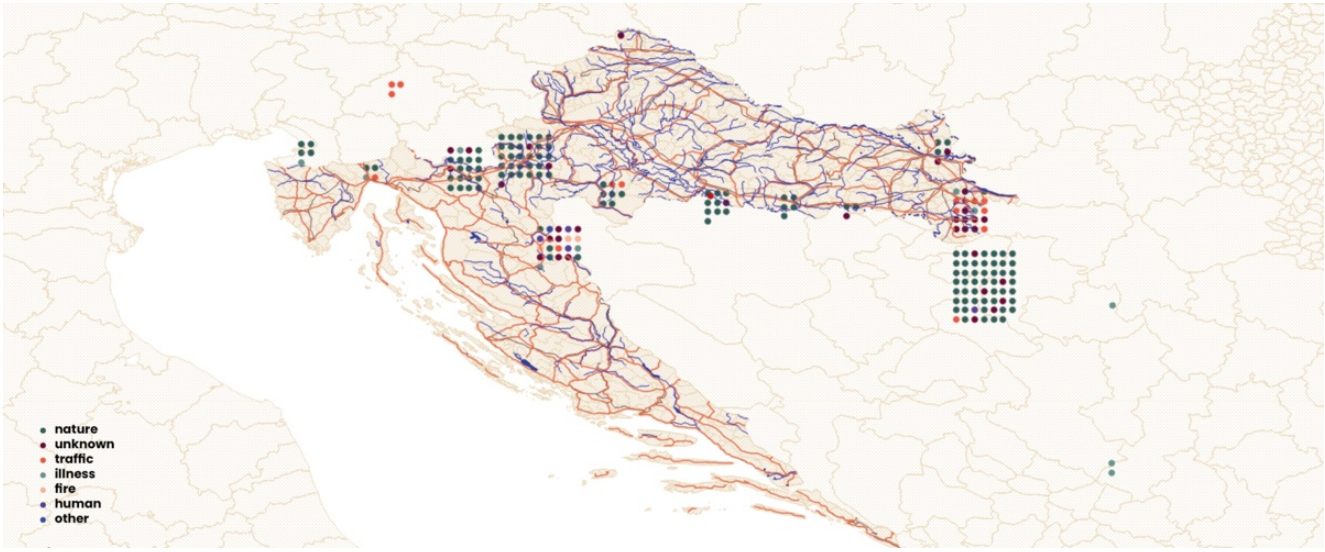
6/4/2022

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-madina-hussiny-p?locale=en

Map of Causes of Death

Marijana Hameršak, Sanja Horvatinčić

Border deaths are an integral element of contemporary European border controls. They are not an unexpected side effect, but rather the inevitable element of current migration policies, primarily the visa regime. Border deaths are rarely the result of direct violence, the use of firearms, rubber bullets, batons, tear gas etc. More often violence is outsourced to nature or assigned to an individual's health condition, traffic, or fire. Suffocation, drowning, freezing, or heart attack during the journey, often following extreme physical exertion, are all fatal outcomes of attempts to evade migration controls or being stuck in waiting areas along the EU border. Even when the cause of death is induced by people, those held responsible are rarely representatives of state authorities. More often it is a case of suicide or of death caused by another migrant, a local resident, a smuggler etc.



Causes of Death, 2025. Maja Kolar, Sanja Horvatinčić and Marijana Hameršak

The map provides a rough outline of specific border death **graves** geographies formed from the perspective of the causes of death. It shows that the burial sites of those killed by traffic-related accidents are concentrated along the land border between Croatia and Serbia known as Corridor X, one of the most important pan-European transport corridors connecting Central Europe with the southeastern part of the continent and extending further towards the Middle East and Asia. On the map, those who died due to natural forces predominate, which is partly related to the numerous people who died precisely because of this cause, but also because all the unidentified deceased—many of whom lost their lives by drowning—are buried in the country of **transit**.

This map is part of a series of visualizations of data on migrant graves in Croatia and surrounding countries. For other maps, see: **Map of Grave Inscriptions**, **Map of Grave Locations**, **Map of Grave Markers** and **Map of Grave Markers Materials**.

***

Border death burial sites marked on this map have been identified based on media reports, personal accounts, data requests to different institutions, and field visits to cemeteries. For complementary data about border deaths, see the **ERIM Map of Border Deaths** and the 4D database. Information sources for each burial site shown on the map are provided alongside each location in a dataset available here. The dataset includes several graves outside Croatia that fall beyond the geographic scope of this set of visualizations. The locations of individual graves were recorded using a mobile phone GPS, which may result in slight coordinate variations even for exact positions. These GPS coordinates were then integrated into a GIS (Geographic Information System) tool to produce the maps. For the spatial visualizations, QGIS (open-source mapping software) and professional design software were used to create the maps. Geographic data was obtained from multiple sources including OpenStreetMap, The Humanitarian Data Exchange, and DIVA-GIS.

Documenting border deaths and burial sites was one of the research strands of the international research project *ERIM, The European Regime of Irregularized Migration at the Periphery of the EU: From Ethnography to Keywords*, coordinated by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb from 2020 to 2024. Following the project's completion, the work has been continued by several former project associates and others.

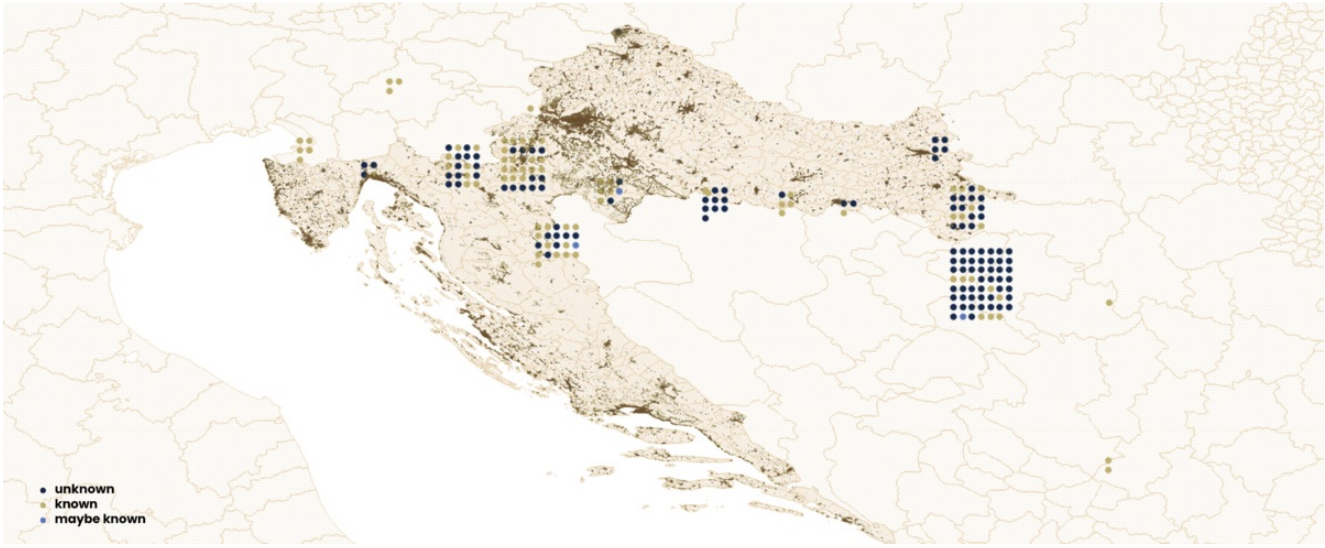
8/12/2025

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-karta-uzoraka-smrti-p?locale=en

Map of Grave Inscriptions

Marijana Hameršak, Sanja Horvatinčić

Many of the found bodies remain unidentified, which can be seen as a continuation of the illegalization enacted during the lifetime of the
deceased. Accordingly, many **graves** of the deceased at the borders are marked with the inscription “N. N.”. The N. N. could be a son, father, daughter, mother, sister, or a brother who is being sought after by their loved ones. Instead, he or she is nomen nescio. They are missing bodies without names, anonymous, often drowning victims; such graves are found along border rivers like the Sava, Danube, and Kupa/Kolpa.
However, not all burial sites without names or marked as N. N. are necessarily graves of people whose identity is unknown. In some cases, the person was identified after burial or their name is known, for example from a camp record, but not officially confirmed. Yet the grave is still marked as that of an unknown person. Sometimes the identity of the deceased is known, as in the case of exhumed graves, but we do not know it. Knowing or not knowing of the name is blurred, entangled in border opacities additionally reinforced by the remoteness of the graves from urban centers and even inhabited areas, as shown on the map below.



Names on Graves, 2025. Maja Kolar, Sanja Horvatinčić and Marijana Hameršak

This map is part of a series of visualizations of data on migrant graves in Croatia and surrounding countries. For other maps, see: **Map of Grave Locations**, **Map of Causes of Death**, **Map of Grave Markers** and **Map of Grave Markers Materials**.

***

Border death burial sites marked on this map have been identified based on media reports, personal accounts, data requests to different institutions, and field visits to cemeteries. For complementary data about **border deaths**, see the **ERIM Map of Border Deaths** and the the 4D database. Information sources for each burial site shown on the map are provided alongside each location in a dataset available here. The dataset includes several graves outside Croatia that fall beyond the geographic scope of this set of visualizations. The locations of individual graves were recorded using a mobile phone GPS, which may result in slight coordinate variations even for exact positions. These GPS coordinates were then integrated into a GIS (Geographic Information System) tool to produce the maps. For the spatial visualizations, QGIS (open-source mapping software) and professional design software were used to create the maps. Geographic data was obtained from multiple sources including OpenStreetMap, The Humanitarian Data Exchange, and DIVA-GIS.

Documenting border deaths and burial sites was one of the research strands of the international research project *ERIM, The European Regime of Irregularized Migration at the Periphery of the EU: From Ethnography to Keywords*, coordinated by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb from 2020 to 2024. Following the project's completion, the work has been continued by several former project associates and others.

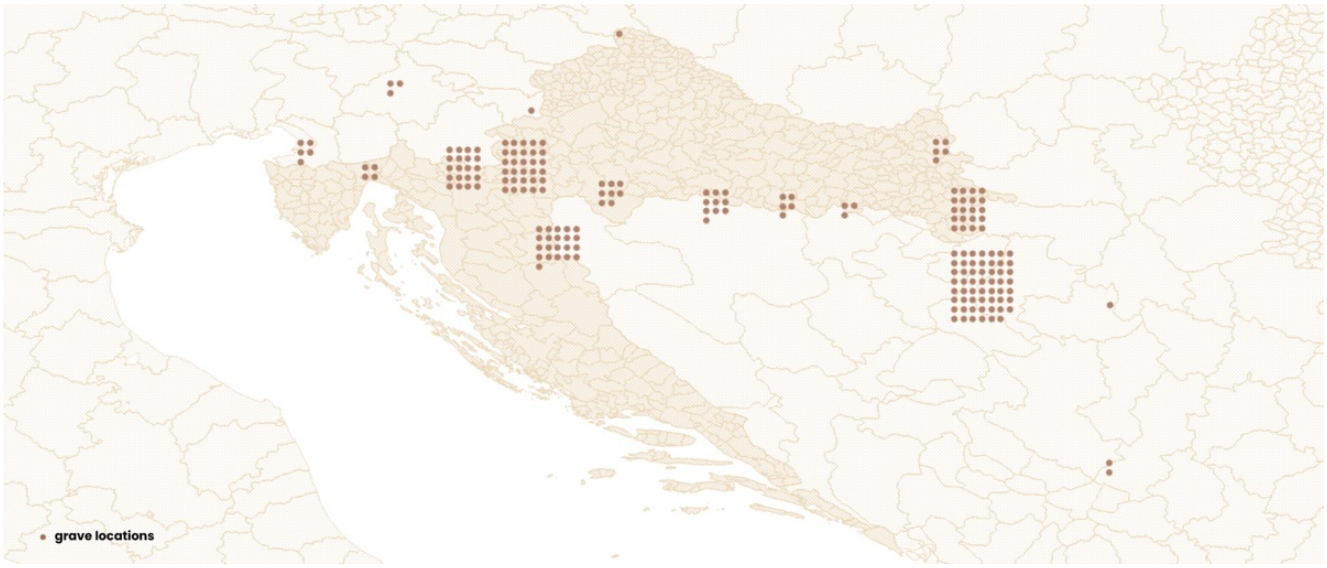
8/12/2025

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-karta-imena-na-grobovima-p?locale=en

Map of Grave Locations

Marijana Hameršak, Sanja Horvatinčić

Graves of **people who died** while attempting to escape persecution and border controls are scattered throughout **transit** countries.

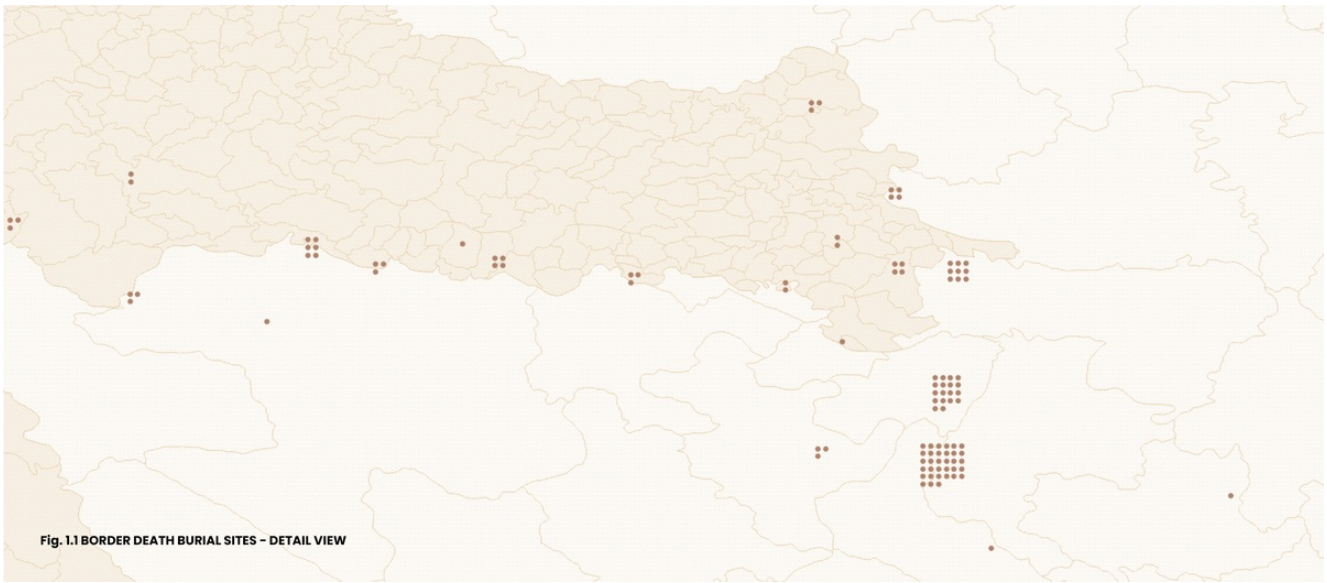


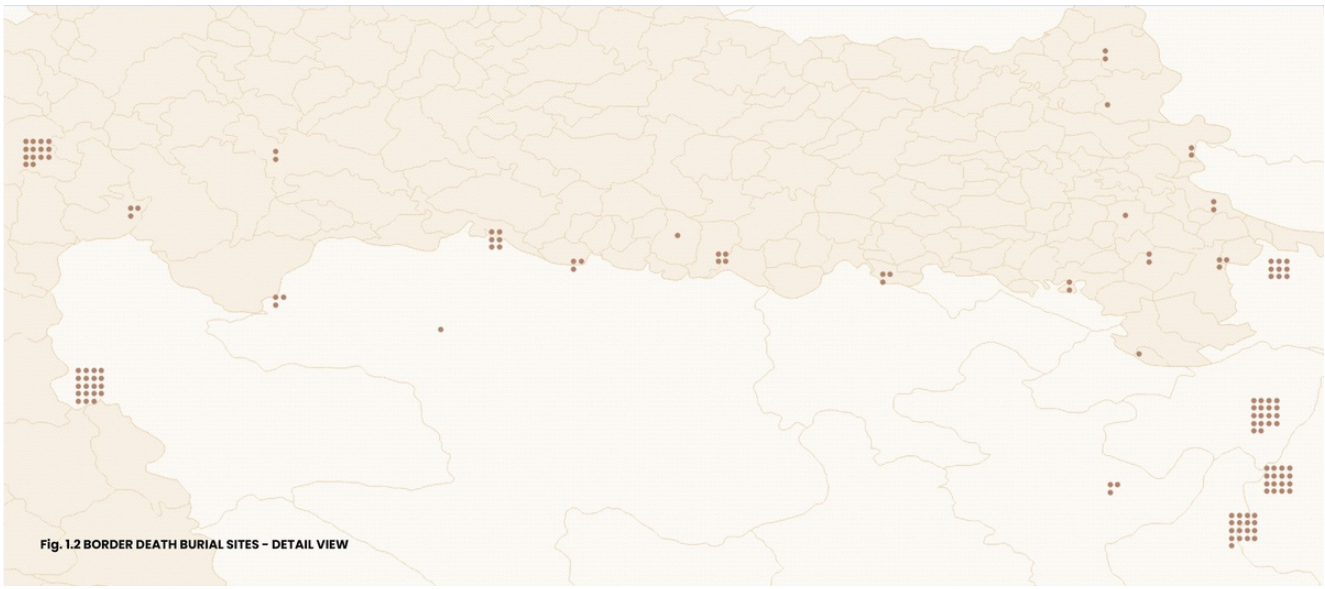
Grave Locations, 2025. Maja Kolar, Sanja Horvatinčić and Marijana Hameršak

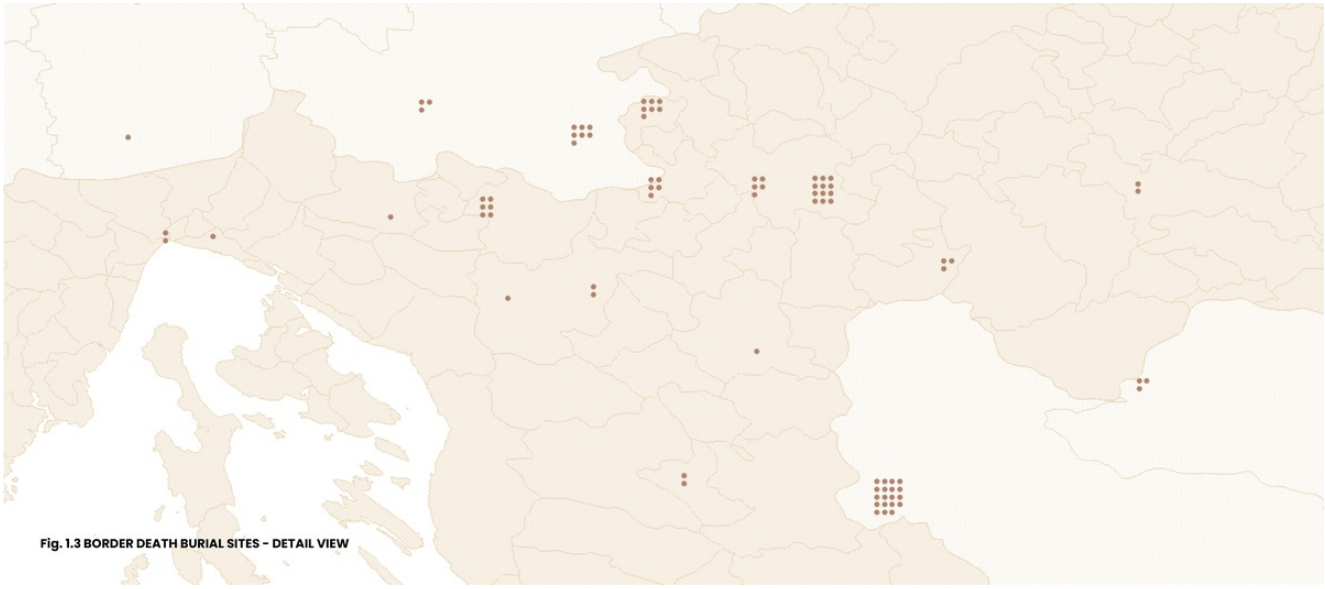
Graves are often in remote areas, closer or further away from the state borders, generally at the margins of the perimeters of local cemeteries, which themselves are often marginalized—abandoned or belonging to shrinking minority communities living in rural areas. The graves thus remain nearly invisible in the physical landscape, while local residents are usually unaware of their existence. However, when marked on a map, their spatial distribution and concentration reveal that **border-related deaths** are not isolated incidents, but an integral part of the current border regime. Moreover, in some cases—particularly where there is a higher concentration of unidentified graves, as seen in several locations on this map—one can even speak of mass graves. The aggregations in this spatial data visualization frequently connect graves situated on both sides of the border, thereby transgressing a boundary that, ultimately, was the very cause of death for those interred there. What remains imperceptible to the algorithm behind the visualization tools may prove fatal to those compelled to cross that border in secrecy.

Areas with a higher density of graves (and cemeteries) appear as point clusters on the map. To address overlapping points, we applied point displacement—a QGIS visualization and rendering technique that slightly offsets overlapping features to make each individual grave site visible, rather than combining them into aggregate counts. While this method reduces spatial precision, it preserves the visibility of individual graves and better conveys the scale of burials in different areas.

To better illustrate spatial patterns in high-density areas, we created detailed inset maps focusing on three key areas: border regions between Croatia-Serbia and Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the territory spanning from the Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina border eastward to the Croatia-Slovenia border westward.







1.1-1.3. Detail Views of Grave Locations, 2025. Maja Kolar, Sanja Horvatinčić and Marijana Hameršak

Even at these detailed scales, some closely situated burial sites, due to their proximity, remain visually merged although they are located at different cemeteries—such as distinct cemeteries in Loznica and Karlovac, and some cemetery clusters along the rivers Kupa and Sava. Therefore below is a list of all identified cemeteries:

CROATIA Bilje • Dalj, Dalj Orthodox cemetery • Delnice • Donja Bebrina, Klakar/ Old Cemetery • Donje Prilišće • Gunja, Gunja Muslim Cemetery • Jasenak, Stara crkva Orthodox Cemetery • Karlovac, Jamadol City Cemetery • Karlovac, Sveta Doroteja Cemetery • Karlovac, Jamadol • Kneževi Vinogradi, Kneževi Vinogradi Catholic Cemetery • Kunići Ribnički • Lipa • Lužani • Matulji • Mlaka • Moravice, Sveta Tereza Cemetery • Nijemci • Ogulin, Sveti Jakov City Cemetery • Otok • Popović Brdo • Privlaka • Reštovo • Rijeka, Drenova City Cemetery • Siče • Sisak, Viktorovac City Cemetery • Skakavac • Slavonski Brod, Slavonski Brod City Cemetery • Slunj • Staro Petrovo Selo • Štitar • Štrigova • Topusko • Tovarnik • Uskoci • Vinkovci, Vinkovci City Cemetery • Vrhovine • Vukova Gorica • Vukovar, Dubrava New Cemetery • Žakanje BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA Bihać, Humci City Cemetery • Bijeljina, Hase City Cemetery • Bratunac • Golubić, Golubić New Cemetery • Kozarac, Kamičani • Novi Grad, City Muslim Cemetery • Novi Grad, Prekosanje, Prekosanje New Cemetery • Tuzla, Čaklovići Gornji Muslim Cemetery • Velika Obarska • Zvornik SERBIA Lajkovac • Loznica, Loznica City Cemetery • Loznica, Loznica Muslim Cemetery • Sjenica, Baruthana Cemetery • Šid, Šid New Cemetery • Tutin, Kleće Muslim Cemetery SLOVENIA Brežice • Črnomelj, Vojna Vas Cemetery • Ilirska Bistrica • Izola • Kočevje • Ljubljana, Žale Cemetery • Metlika, Rosalnice Cemetery ITALY Trieste, Boršt / Sant'Antonio in Bosco NORTH MACEDONIA Skopje, Butel

These maps are part of a series of visualizations of data on migrant graves in Croatia and surrounding countries. For other maps, see: **Map of Grave Inscriptions**, **Map of Causes of Death**, **Map of Grave Markers** and **Map of Grave Markers Materials**.

***

Border death burial sites marked on this map have been identified based on media reports, personal accounts, data requests to different institutions, and field visits to cemeteries. For complementary data about border deaths, see the **ERIM Map of Border Deaths** and the 4D database. Information sources for each burial site shown on the map are provided alongside each location in a

dataset available here. The dataset includes several graves outside Croatia that fall beyond the geographic scope of this set of visualizations. The locations of individual graves were recorded using a mobile phone GPS, which may result in slight coordinate variations even for exact positions. These GPS coordinates were then integrated into a GIS (Geographic Information System) tool to produce the maps. For the spatial visualizations, QGIS (open-source mapping software) and professional design software were used to create the maps. Geographic data was obtained from multiple sources including OpenStreetMap, The Humanitarian Data Exchange, and DIVA-GIS.

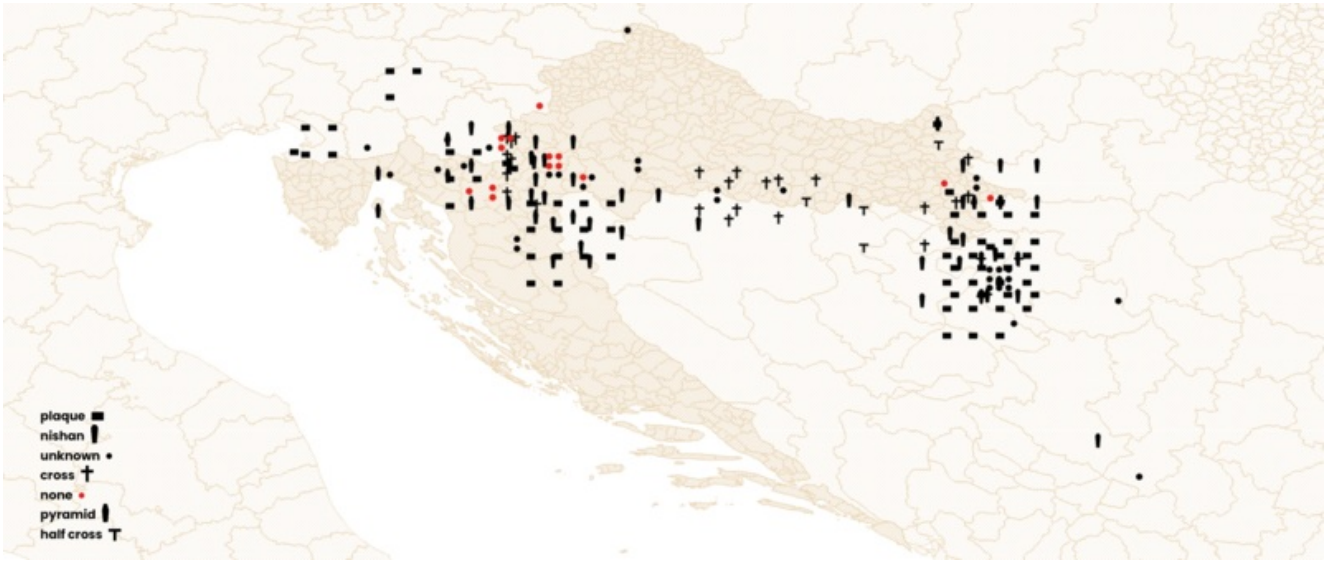
Documenting border deaths and burial sites was one of the research strands of the international research project *ERIM, The European Regime of Irregularized Migration at the Periphery of the EU: From Ethnography to Keywords*, coordinated by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb from 2020 to 2024. Following the project's completion, the work has been continued by several former project associates and others.

8/12/2025

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-karta-lokacija-grobova-p?locale=en

Map of Grave Markers

Marijana Hameršak, Sanja Horvatinčić



Grave Markers, 2025. Maja Kolar, Sanja Horvatinčić and Marijana Hameršak

The forms of grave markers reflect local practices and the ways in which **border deaths** are integrated into them. Our categorization of grave markers is not based on some standardized sepulchral terminology or classification, but on local names and reasoning used to distinguish among various types—or rather functions—of grave markers. The same grave marker shape can have a different name depending on the immediate sepulchral context. In multiconfessional cemeteries a distinction is made between the “pyramid” (*piramida*), a religiously neutral grave marker with an elongated form and a pyramidal top, and the “nishan” (*nišan, bašluk*), a religious grave marker with the same elongated shape, but which also displays engraved or painted Islamic symbols such as a crescent and star. In the religiously homogeneous, Muslim, or Orthodox cemeteries, the same form, with or without its distinctive Islamic symbols, indicates a “nishan,” i.e., a standard, traditional Muslim grave marker.

A substantial number of **graves** are left unmarked. Unmarked graves are burial sites without a marker or at least without an element that can be recognized as a symbolic marker. Broken pieces of marble used for the graves of three unidentified drowning victims in the Kupa/Kolpa River are recognized as physical grave markers, but not as symbolic markers, and are therefore categorized as “none,” meaning unmarked, on this map.

In urban multi-confessional cemeteries, the grave markers of those who died at the borders are often distinctively in the shape of pyramids, plaques, or nishans, whereas the grave markers in smaller, rural cemeteries tend to match those of the majority of other graves: crosses or nishans. The distribution of markers on the map is therefore telling of the religious traditions in local cemeteries, with most crosses in Christian-dominated areas such as Posavina. However, it is important to acknowledge that these patterns are historically contingent and multilayered, since the grave markers not only deteriorate and disappear over time, but also, in some instances, transform from non-religious to religious and *vice versa*.

This map is part of a series of visualizations of data on migrant graves in Croatia and surrounding countries. For other maps, see: **Map of Grave Locations**, **Map of Causes of Death**, **Map of Grave Inscriptions** and **Map of Grave Markers Materials**.

***

Border death burial sites marked on this map have been identified based on media reports, personal accounts, data requests to different institutions, and field visits to cemeteries. For complementary data about border deaths, see the **ERIM Map of Border Deaths** and the 4D database. Information sources for each burial site shown on the map are provided alongside each location in a dataset available here. The dataset includes several graves outside Croatia that fall beyond the geographic scope of this set of visualizations. The locations of individual graves were recorded using a mobile phone GPS, which may result in slight coordinate variations even for exact positions. These GPS coordinates were then integrated into a GIS (Geographic Information System) tool to produce the maps. For the spatial visualizations, QGIS (open-source mapping software) and professional design software were used to create the maps. Geographic data was obtained from multiple sources including OpenStreetMap, The Humanitarian Data Exchange, and DIVA-GIS.

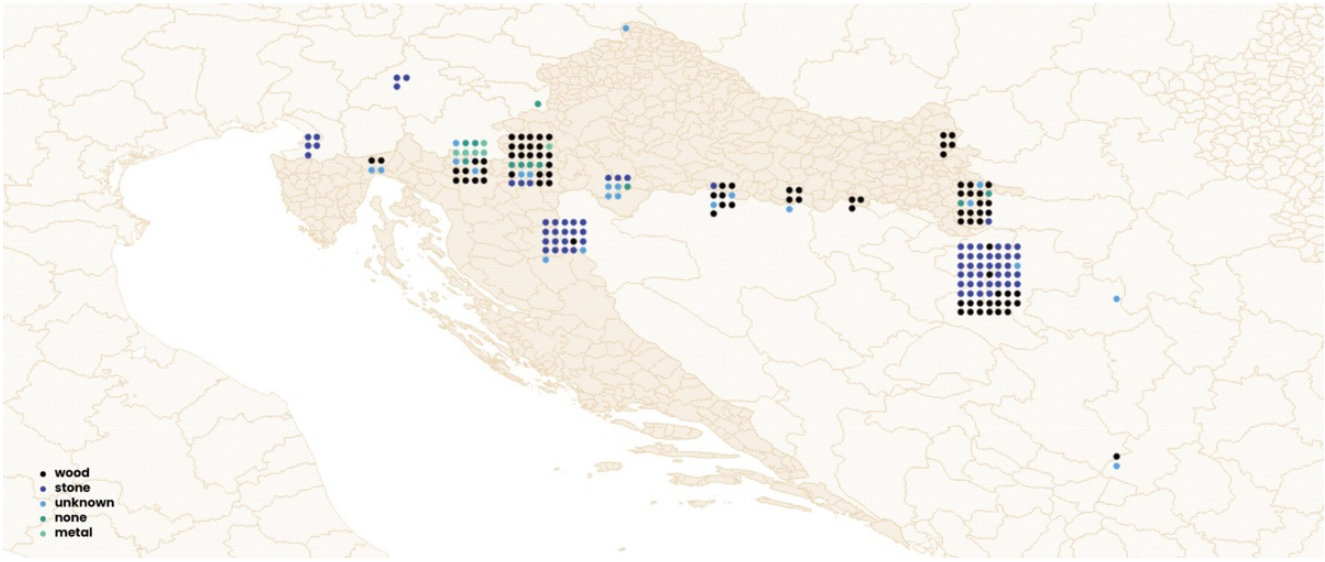
Documenting border deaths and burial sites was one of the research strands of the international research project *ERIM, The European Regime of Irregularized Migration at the Periphery of the EU: From Ethnography to Keywords*, coordinated by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb from 2020 to 2024. Following the project's completion, the work has been continued by several former project associates and others.

8/12/2025

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-oznake-na-grobovima-p?locale=en

Map of Grave Markers Materials

Marijana Hameršak, Sanja Horvatinčić



Grave Markers Materials, 2025. Maja Kolar, Sanja Horvatinčić and Marijana Hameršak

It is not only the form and symbols, but also the material of grave markers that can indicate the attitude toward the **deceased** by those who buried them. In most local traditions, the social prestige, wealth, or power of individuals tends to be associated with the material qualities used for their graves—their size, type of material, and aesthetic qualities—indicating the value and durability of social remembrance. In sepulchral traditions that favor durable materials such as stone or various hard metals (bronze, iron, etc.), the predominance of wooden grave markers clearly signals temporariness and ephemerality. Wooden markers decay over time, and the graves they once marked become unmarked and forgotten. The map clearly shows how, in some contexts like Bosnia and Herzegovina, more durable materials dominate, while in others, such as Croatia, they are entirely absent. Additionally, planted flowers or artificial bouquets, placed by local residents can also serve as less ephemeral markers of memory, signaling affection, and care.

This map is part of a series of visualizations of data on migrant graves in Croatia and surrounding countries. For other maps, see: **Map of Grave Inscriptions**, **Map of Grave Locations**, **Map of Causes of Death** and **Map of Grave Markers**.

***

Border death burial sites marked on this map have been identified based on media reports, personal accounts, data requests to different institutions, and field visits to cemeteries. For complementary data about border deaths, see the **ERIM Map of Border Deaths** and the 4D database. Information sources for each burial site shown on the map are provided alongside each location in a dataset available here. The dataset includes several graves outside Croatia that fall beyond the geographic scope of this set of visualizations. The locations of individual graves were recorded using a mobile phone GPS, which may result in slight coordinate variations even for exact positions. These GPS coordinates were then integrated into a GIS (Geographic Information System) tool to produce the maps. For the spatial visualizations, QGIS (open-source mapping software) and professional design software were used to create the maps. Geographic data was obtained from multiple sources including OpenStreetMap, The Humanitarian Data Exchange, and DIVA-GIS.

Documenting border deaths and burial sites was one of the research strands of the international research project *ERIM, The European Regime of Irregularized Migration at the Periphery of the EU: From Ethnography to Keywords*, coordinated by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb from 2020 to 2024. Following the project's completion, the work has been continued by several former project associates and others.

8/12/2025

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-karta-materijala-nadgrobnih-obiljezja-p?locale=en

Map of R*’s Journey from Tunisia

Morgane Dujmovic

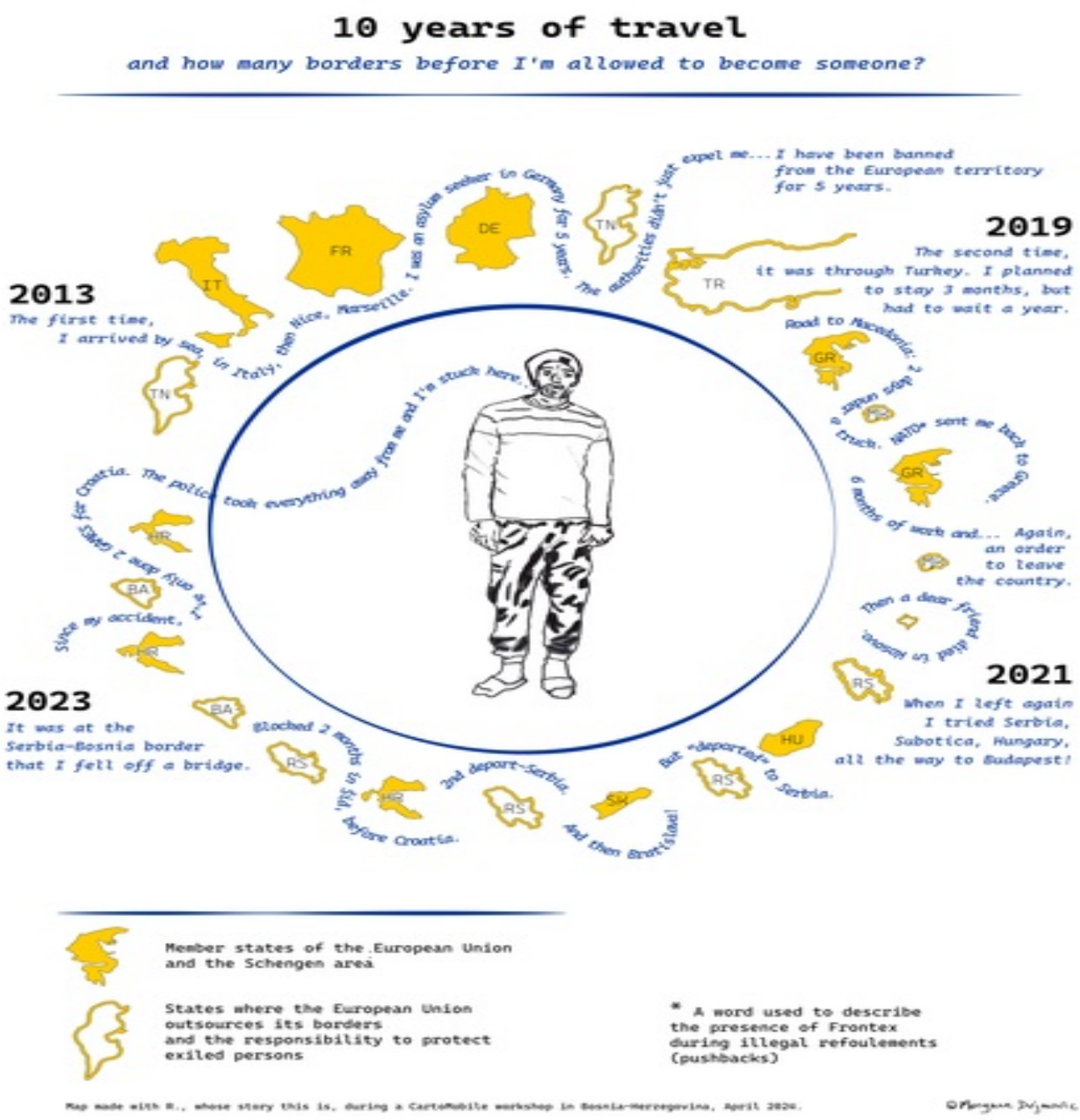
I sought to give an account of the gradual border violence other than in the words of the researcher, which tend to neutralize violence to objectify it. The methodology I employ in the field aims to facilitate the expression of narratives and knowledge derived from the experience of borders.

My approach is to include people in the representation of their journey, through participatory mapping workshops. Beyond traditional social science methods of observation and interviewing, this proposal allows drafting an emotional and experiential cartography of European borders.

When imposed by the violence of the border context (lack of intimate space, evictions, shelter deprivation), these workshops take place in a converted vehicle (the CartoMobile), designed as a space for respite, creation and work, better suited to self-expression and intellectual reflection. With this mobile research laboratory, my aim is to include exiled people in the representation of their own narrative, where migration policies encourage them to be sidelined, invisibilized and silenced.

Since 2022, this approach has given rise to a traveling exhibition and the emergence of an art-science collective bringing together cartographers and some sixty exiled people in the Balkans, on the French borders and in the central Mediterranean.

In the spring of 2024, I took the CartoMobile to the outskirts of the **Lipa** and Borići camps. It welcomed several people, all affected by gradual institutional violence during their journey to Europe. The cartographic work I undertook with R* illustrates his journey from Tunisia to Bosnia-Herzegovina, attempting to adopt his gaze, to approach the sensitive dimension of his experience. The resulting narrative map bears the title of a quotation from R*: “Ten years of travel, and how many borders before I have the right to become someone?” In R*’s map below, all quotations have been translated from French by the author.



R*s map, 2024, R* and Morgane Dujmovic

R*'s individual journey reflects macro realities. Like J* and X*, this is not his first time in Europe: in 2013, he left Tunisia following the Arab Spring, to reach Italy by sea, then France and Germany. Five years passed before his asylum application was rejected and he was deported back to Tunisia with a five-year ban.

R* set off again in 2019, this time via Turkey. This was the beginning of a series of deportations across seven countries in south-eastern Europe. Over the course of this five-year journey, until our meeting in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the map shows how the border gradually thickens and the journey fragments, seeking new routes through EU member states (Greece, Hungary, Slovakia and Croatia), or non-member states that apply the border control measures promoted by the former (North Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina). This stage of the journey reveals the “cascading” border that can be experienced when approaching the EU, when one is engaged on roads made illegal.

R*'s testimony is also among those that question the role of Frontex, the agency being mentioned as responsible for illegal and violent *refoulements* at two stages of the journey (at the North Macedonian-Greek and Croatian-Bosnian borders).

From R*'s perspective, the border experience can be understood on several levels. In addition to geopolitical and administrative barriers, there are physical, geographical and individual borders: on the one hand, the Mediterranean Sea, the Balkan mountains, **forests** and border rivers, such as the one he accidentally fell into in 2023; on the other, his own body, whose capacities have deteriorated since that accident and his hospitalization of several months. This is partly how R* explained his difficulties in undertaking the **game** to Croatia (two attempts in one year).

The fact that he considers himself “stuck” in Bosnia-Herzegovina is also the effect of the tightened control arrangements at the Bosnian-Croatian border, in view of the whole journey:

> I left 10 years ago, I've crossed more than 10 countries. I've been stuck here in Bosnia for 10 months. Finally, I was stopped here at the Croatian border. Of all the borders, Croatia is the most difficult.

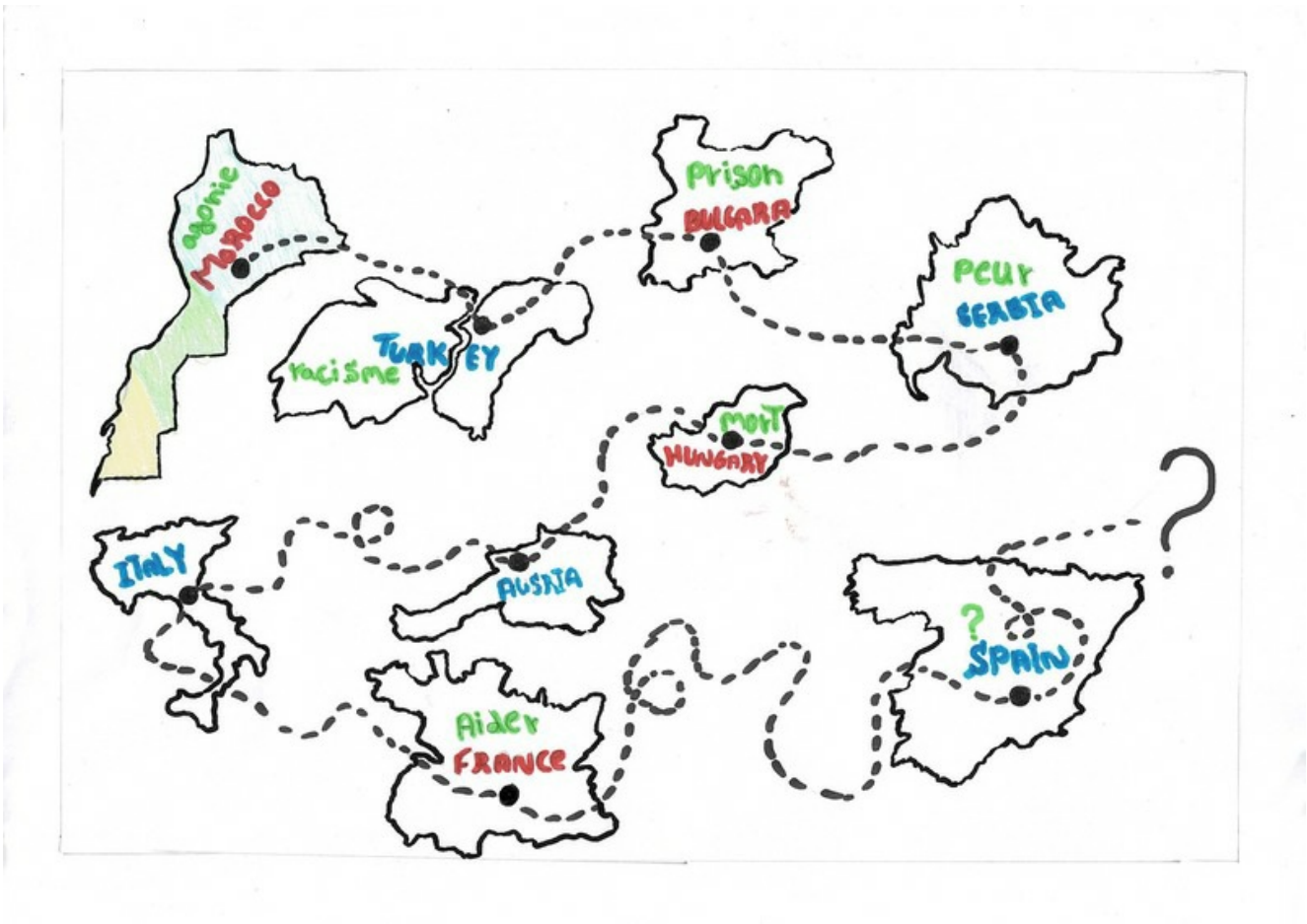
However, the words that accompanied the mapping process reflect his lucidity about the dissuasive function of indiscriminate police violence: “They hit a lot to scare us, to prevent us from crossing the border again. But they're afraid of terrorists, not people like us”.

With R*, our graphic choices sought to convey this retrospective experience. That of a body affected by the hardships of travel, at the centre of the map. That of a border that imprisons, hence the circular arrangement of the countries crossed. That of a journey fragmented by multiple expulsions, rendered by the dislocation of spatial landmarks. That of a sticky, omnipresent and insidious illegality, in the image of the snatches of experience that wind their way through. That of long, cyclical time, of the game's eternal recommencement. And finally, that of an uncertain and misunderstood condition, as reflected in his question: “How many borders [do I have to cross] before I have the right to become someone?”

On the scale of journeys lasting several years, border violence permeates memories as much as future prospects. B* deplores the fact that his little brother's legs bear the scars of the long journey from Syria through the Balkans. H* describes how his health has plummeted since his confinement in Serbia, showing me the anti-anxiety medication given to him in the Lipa camp: “I used to be fit, very sporty, and now: cigarettes, psychologist, medication”. As for E*, he talks at length about his condition as a black man in the Balkans, since his arrival on an island on the Greek-Turkish border.

The physical and psychological impacts of Balkan journeys continue to be observed across time and distance, for example in those who later reach the French-Italian border, as testified by the work of Médecins du monde in Briançon.

In the map below, made at the Terrasses Solidaires Refuge in Briançon in 2023, Marouane has recomposed his **Balkan route** experience by associating an emotion or key word with each country he crossed: agony [*agonie*, in French], for Morocco, racism [*racisme*] in Turkey, fear [*peur*] in Serbia and **death** [*mort*], in Hungary. More generally, when exiled people escape from the Balkans, their retrospective account takes shape of of a veritable “journey of death” (Courtois 2023).



Map of Marouane's Balkan route, made retrospectively in Briançon, 2023, Marouane and Morgane Dujmovic

While these stories of border violence are singular, they are recurrent enough to be significant and instructive. The huge amount of the testimonies reveals the experience of a “mobile” border, a “borderity” that is exercised along the way, with little discernment (Amilhat Szary and Giraut 2015). Several authors have shown that violence is an integral and structural part of the border, either as a means of asserting the State (Jones 2016), or as a means of depriving people of certain resources (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013).

From the accounts of R* and the other people I met at the Bosnian-Croatian border, I understand that this deprivation targets personal achievements and fairly simple life projects, in the face of which the warlike geostrategy deployed by the EU seems disproportionate.

Finally, testimonies from the Balkans lead to the chilling realization that physical and psychological violence have become part of the border control strategies of several European states, supported in this by the EU. The border filter no longer operates so much on the level of rights linked to status (since these rights are massively violated), but on each individual's ability to survive this institutionalized violence.

Those who emerge unscathed are the **survivors of the violence** of the European border.

10/11/2025

This text is taken from the series of portfolio articles “Rivers are deadly if you're not on the right side” previously published on Mediapart, Le Courrier des Balkans, visioncarto.net and Migreurop. This series of portfolio articles is the result of field research carried out in the spring of 2024 in several South-East European countries: Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. This publication is sent to all interlocutors met in the field. To preserve their anonymity, the exiled people are referred to here by a randomly assigned letter, with their consent.

Author would like to thank the exiled people she met on these roads and along these rivers, the people from the collectives, associations, universities and institutions with whom she spoke, as well as Louis Fernier, Romain Kosellek, Eva Ottavy, Elsa Putelat and Marijana Hameršak for their invaluable contributions prior to and during this field mission.

References

Amilhat Szary, Anne-Laure and Frédéric Giraut. 2015. *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Courtois, Maïa. 2023. “Après “le voyage de la mort”, les Terrasses de Briançon offrent un répit aux exilés”. *Infomigrants.net*.

Mezzadra, Sandro and Brett Neilson. 2013. *Border as Method, or the Multiplication of Labor*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Reece, Jones. 2016. *Violent Borders. Refugees and the Right to Move*. London and New York: Verso.

Maritime Cemetery

Marijana Hameršak

Activists (e.g. No Border Spain) and researchers (e.g. Khosravi 2007) have been referring to the Mediterranean Sea as a graveyard or cemetery for refugees and other migrants from the turn of the century. The surface of the Mediterranean Sea includes floating boats with people who are fleeing, boats left to die, as the title of a famous reconstruction of an abandoned ship reads (Forensic Oceanography Left to Die Boat), while countless dead rest in its depths. Although the media often present summary numbers of **deaths** in the Mediterranean, accurate data on border deaths, including deaths in the Mediterranean, do not exist. The many unknown deaths, but also the many **disappeared**, call into question "the image of the Mediterranean as a 'transparent' sea, bringing to the fore the patchy visibility that is at play and the presence of shadow zones" (Tazzioli 2015: 5).

For those who, due to the currently active border control regime (visa system, penalties for carriers, etc.) cannot use regular air, sea or land routes, the Mediterranean Sea is the gateway to Europe, but also a maritime cemetery on the way to Europe. As they buy life jackets in Turkish coastal cities, they are "preparing for escape and death at the same time", as formulated by Harith Salman (2019: 8), who himself was forced to cross the Aegean Sea after he was denied entry into the EU first at the airport in Zagreb, and then in Bucharest. Due to the denial and criminalization of providing assistance at sea, the impossibility of docking in ports, **pushbacks**, **detentions** and other techniques to deter and control migration, as well as inadequate vessels and the conditions on vessels used for irregularized crossings, the Mediterranean Sea has been the site of unprecedented "crimes of peace" for decades (Albahari 2015), a **weaponized landscape** in which crossing a distance of several kilometers at sea, under favorable weather conditions, even in the vicinity of other vessels, can be deadly.

Deaths at the Mediterranean and the Mediterranean as a maritime cemetery are the subject of contemporary artistic production, from theater, for example, Lina Prosa's play Lampedusa Beach (translated into Croatian by Iva Grgić Maroević, directed by Senka Bulić, acted by Nina Violić, Hotel Bulić Theater) to children's literature and the graphic novel *Zenobia* by writer Morten Dürr and illustrator Lars Horneman, which was also promptly translated into Croatian.

5/5/2022

References

Albahari, Maurizio. 2015. *Crimes of Peace. Mediterranean Migrations at the World's Deadliest Border.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Khosravi, Shahram. 2007. "The 'Illegal' Traveller. An Auto-ethnography of Borders". *Social Anthropology / Anthropologie Sociale* 15/3: 321-334.

Salman, Harith. 2019. *Unknown Reality. The True Story in Europe.* s. l.: self published.

Tazzioli, Martina. 2015. "The Politics of Counting and the Scene of Rescue. Border Deaths in the Mediterranean". *Radical Philosophy* 192.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-maritime-cemetery-p?locale=en

Migration Industry

Drago Župarić-Iljić

Migration industry is a term that can have multiple meanings related to migration phenomena and processes. It can include various aspects of the migration infrastructure and **migration regime**, both material and virtual, and various individual and collective actors, roles and structures (Nyberg Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013). On the one hand, it refers to migrations that are seen as safe, orderly, voluntary and legal, and on the other hand, those that are perceived as involuntary and irregular/**irregularized** and illegal. The term comes from research on international migration in the period from the 1970s until today, when it was used for primarily designating the facilitation of migration by various actors that connect countries of origin with destinations. In later conceptualizations, the meaning of the term was extended to social dynamics and infrastructural elements that connect countries of origin and destinations through formal, legal and informal, unlawful practices of all actors participating in the act of migration, whether they initiate it, facilitate it or try to control it (Hernández-León 2005).

Ninna Nyberg Sørensen and Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen claim that “immigration policies, labor market structures, visa requirements, border controls, etc., almost always remain an essential backdrop for understanding how [...] migration industry actors emerge and function” (2013: 11). These actors include any person who provides various services to facilitate the mobility of people across international borders, and are primarily motivated by financial gain. This includes employers, lenders, renters, accommodation and transport service providers, travel agencies, smugglers and traffickers. But it also indirectly involves creators and implementers of public policies such as social workers, cultural mediators, educators and others, journalists and other media workers, researchers, legal professionals, lawyers and judges, other officials from the executive government, etc.

The parallel with the entrepreneurial and more broadly understood economic sphere, including manufacturing or today’s high-tech machine production, is not accidental, because the migration industry also includes business subjects such as IT and high-tech companies that develop systems used for border surveillance, produce biometric technology for control and monitoring, construct sophisticated digital services for recording and reporting in case of unauthorized movement and similar technologies. In this sense, we can also talk in terms of the industry or industries of border regimes, which are leaning towards a physical and often militarized, but also digitalized border control and managing mobility and the so-called migration crises in the same manner, and include actors who establish and serve places of immobilization within territories, such as **detention** centers, and persons who implement and facilitate deportations. While criticizing what he calls the “illegality industry”, Ruben Andersson (2016) notes that the European approach to migration management emphasizes the financial, political and social costs of achieving border security. Given the “illegalization” of migration, there are attempts to justify the management by rigid measures of migration and border regimes in the eyes of the domestic public by presenting migration as a national and international risk and threat, which requires the mentioned costs of their suppression.

Tanya Golash-Boza (2009: 296) writes about the “immigration industrial complex” which she defines as “public and private sector interests in the criminalization of undocumented migration, immigration law enforcement, and the promotion of ‘anti-illegal’ rhetoric”. The migration industry acts so that it either encourages or restricts, shapes, facilitates, supports or hinders migration, as well as the resources and services associated with it, but also in the context of pre-migration and post-migration phenomena and processes. In a programmatic sense, the migration industry can include migration management, border and migration control (a purpose served by **Frontex**, for example), and the **rescue** industry and politics of **humanitarianism** industry (Nyberg Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen 2013: 6). Therefore, an entire spectrum of the migration industry belongs to the **humanitarian industry**, which includes, for example, people who create and implement humanitarian assistance measures in the **relocation** industry. Deanna Dadusc and Pierpaolo Mudu (2020) use the term “humanitarian industrial complex” to refer to international and national institutions and NGOs that, through activities in the public and private sectors, participate in many aspects of selecting and regulating the movement of migrants, as well as in promoting charitable and humanitarian rhetoric established on the principles of urgency and assistance. In this manner, the humanitarian industry actually abets the security industry in disciplining, controlling and subordinating migrants and depoliticizing their position, but also in the **criminalization of solidarity** and cooperation aimed at the emancipation of migrants and their own agency.

This is precisely why one of the criticisms of this concept or approach argues that it often omits the perspective of the migrants themselves in the entire migration industry, focusing on various social, political, economic and other structures that manage and control various forms of (im)mobility (Schapendonk 2018). Migrant social networks are an indispensable part of the migration industry due to transnational family ties and relationships, the potential role of social networks of migrant groups in the process of smuggling, or due to sending remittances, levels of political organization, etc.

Research on migration in the context of Southeast Europe, especially the **Balkan corridor**, was, in relation to the migration industry, focused on the technocratic practices of national and international actors, the management of mobility within the corridor and the wider border regime, as well as the delicate balancing act between security and humanitarian policies (cf. Beznec et al. 2016; Kogovšek Šalamon and Bajt 2016), and on examples of humanitarian, solidarity and resistance practices in certain reception-transit sections of the corridor (cf. Hameršak and Pleše 2018; Škokić and Jambrešić Kirin 2017). One of the studies (Stojić Mitrović et al. 2020) focuses on examples of management and irregularization of migration, the operation of the border regime, and the establishment of new infrastructural means of control in the post-corridor period. Romana Pozniak (2020), using Mark Duffield’s term “aid industry”, analyzes the humanitarian aid industry within the refugee camps in Croatia.

The role of academic structures, business consulting entities such as think-thanks, experts and analysts is often problematized, with these actors also participating in the migration industry by creating and circulating knowledge and recommendations on various aspects of migration, which can have a normative, prescriptive dimension. However, their starting points, especially those from the perspective of anthropology such as critical studies of borders and critical studies of humanitarianism, try to reflect their own research

experiences, moral responsibility and positions of power in relation to the topic, research participants, the reach of academic knowledge and the potential for social change.

4/2/2022

References

Andersson, Ruben. 2016. “Europe's Failed ‘Fight’ against Irregular Migration. Ethnographic Notes on a Counterproductive Industry”. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42/7: 1055-1075.

Beznec, Barbara, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2016. *Governing the Balkan Route. Macedonia, Serbia and European Border Regime*. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe.

Dadusc, Deanna and Pierpaolo Mudu. 2020. “Care without Control. The Humanitarian Industrial Complex and the Criminalisation of Solidarity”. *Geopolitics*.

Golash-Boza, Tanya. 2009. “The Immigration Industrial Complex. Why We Enforce Immigration Policies Destined to Fail”. *Sociology Compass* 3/2: 295-309.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. “Winter Reception and Transit Center in the Republic of Croatia. An Ethnographic Research in the Slavonski Brod Refugee Camp”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in Croatian Context*. Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and Munich: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Centar za mirovne studije, Fakultet političkih znanosti - CEDIM, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 109-142.

Hernández-León, Rubén. 2005. “The Migration Industry in the Mexico-US Migratory System”. *UCLA: California Center for Population Research*.

Kogovšek Šalamon, Neža and Veronika Bajt, eds. 2016. *Razor-wired. Reflections on Migration Movements through Slovenia in 2015*. Ljubljana: Mirovni Inštitut.

Nyberg Sørensen, Ninna and Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen. 2013. “Introduction”. In *The Migration Industry and the Commercialization of International Migration.* Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen and Ninna Nyberg Sørensen, eds. New York: Routledge, 1-23.

Pozniak, Romana. 2020. “Affective Labor within the Local Humanitarian Workscape”. *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 5/1: 55-73.

Schapendonk, Joris. 2018. “Navigating the Migration Industry. Migrants Moving Through an African-European Web of Facilitation/Control”. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44/4: 663-679.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta, Nidžara Ahmetašević, Barbara Beznec and Andrej Kurnik. 2020. *Dark Sides of Europeanisation. Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Border Regime*. Beograd and Ljubljana: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and Inštitut Časopis za kritiko znanosti.

Škokić, Tea and Renata Jambrešić Kirin. 2017. “The Shopping Center of Abnormal Normality. Ethnography of the Distribution Tent in the Refugee Camp in Slavonski Brod”. *Narodna umjetnost* 54/1: 129-146.

Migration Regime

Marijana Hameršak

In everyday speech, the term “regime” is often used in a pejorative sense and is associated with repressive forms of government. However, in less marked uses and in accordance with its etymology (Fr. *régime* from Lat. *regimen*, government), the term “regime” is connected to the concepts of government and rule in general, but also more broadly to the system of rules, regulations, measures (e.g. study regime), and also to ways of life (e.g. work regime, diet regime), all of which are meanings that are more or less present in the otherwise heterogeneous usage of this term in social sciences and humanities during the 20th century. In the decades of its extensive, but only rarely carefully elaborated use in various disciplines and traditions, different semantic fields and levels were associated with this term, from the externalist macro-level in political science research of international relations, through the internalist meso-level of research and development of migration and other politics, to the critical-theory micro-level and ethnographic research of migration practices, values or perceptions (Rass and Wolff 2018; cf. Cvajner et al. 2018: 68-69).

The term or conceptual field “migration regime”, as summarized by Christoph Rass and Frank Wolff (2018: 25), came into use at the end of the 1960s in the natural sciences, primarily biology and physics, where it was used to denote the “migratory habits” of animals and the changing patterns of particle movements. In the meaning of patterns of movement, it also took hold in geography, where it was soon displaced by the term “system”. When the bloc-division of the world collapsed and migration started being viewed as a complex, multi-layered social phenomenon that cannot be understood in terms of push and pull factors, the term “migration regime” became commonplace in various disciplines, from sociology and political science, to anthropology, in which, however, it often circulated without additional clarifications and without engaging in interdisciplinary dialogue (Rass and Wolff 2018: 42).

Divergent meanings and genealogies of the concept of regime can also be observed within the same branches of migration research. For instance, some critical researchers introduced the term “regime” in critical migration studies, while referring to critical theory and the works of Michel Foucault (e.g. Hess and Kasparek 2017: 60), while some refer to the works of Klaus Dieter Wolf and the regime theory developed in the research of international relations (e.g., Tsianos and Karakayali 2010: 375). Today, within the same perspective, parallel references are made to different regimes, ranging from border regimes (Hess and Kasparek 2017) and deportation regimes (e.g., De Genova and Peutz 2010) to search and rescue regimes (e.g., Andersson 2014), whereby the term regime is most often used in its singular form, as a signifier of broader social formations that encompass larger spatial and temporal sections.

Moving on from the dissimilarity between the different origins and uses of the term, the term migration regime in critical migration studies signals a decentralized understanding of power, plurality of actors and practices, and a focus on understanding the complexity and heterogeneity of migration (cf. Cvajner et al. 2018). Combining this understanding of the term with the principles of the (relative) **autonomy of migration** (e.g., Moulier-Boutang and Garson 1984), the approaches in question tend to include the perspective of migration, but also an explicit critique of repressive migration processes and practices (cf., e.g., Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Papadopoulos et al. 2008). In the context of critical migration research, the migration regime is therefore not understood as an organized system related to the actions of the state, powerful individuals or groups, but as an assemblage of complex, changing and heterogeneous practices and discourses of different “actors whose practices relate to each other but are not ordered in the form of a central logic or rationality” (Tsianos et al. 2009: 2). In other words, in such a situation, the actors and practices of migration control enter into different relationships with the actors and practices of those who try to evade this control, and the same can be said for the actors and practices focused on the construction of borders in relation to those who contribute to the disintegration of those borders through their actions. Border police officers, humanitarian workers, migrants, smugglers, refugees, drivers, activists, journalists, academics and others are not only elements of the regime, but are its actors, shaping it through multi-level heterogeneous interactions and constant negotiations (conflicts, acceptances, adaptations, reversals, etc.), as particularly plainly illustrated by the events related to the 2015 “crisis”. Then, in reaction to the mass transcontinental migrant movement immune to the “standard” methods of border control at that time, a temporary humanitarian transit corridor was established along the Balkans and the countries of the former Yugoslavia, a corridor that enabled hundreds of thousands of people to travel relatively quickly and safely to the center of Europe. The **Balkan corridor** was not, as is often presented, just a humanitarian formation dedicated to the facilitation of migration. Its important function, in accordance with the two-fold humanitarian-security orientation of modern migration management, was also isolation, discipline, atomization, and ultimately reduction of movement. Movement along the corridor was halted when almost complete and coordinated control over the people in the corridor was established from Macedonia to Slovenia, not when there was no longer any humanitarian need for it (Hameršak and Pleše 2018). In March 2016, on the day the borders along the corridor were closed, around 12,000 people from so-called third countries were located in front of the closed border fence in Idomeni, Greece. Struggling in harsh living conditions at the border, these people spent weeks waiting for the opening of the borders that remain closed to them to this day.

3/4/2022

References

Andersson, Ruben. 2014. *Illegality, Inc. Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe.* Oakland: University of California Press.

Cvajner, Martina, Gabriela Echeverría and Giuseppe Sciortino. 2018. “What Do We Talk When We Talk About Migration Regimes? The Diverse Theoretical Roots of an Increasingly Popular Concept”. In *Was ist ein Migrationsregime? What Is a Migration Regime?* Andreas Pott, Christoph Rass and Frank Wolff, eds. Wiesbaden: Springer, 65-79.

De Genova, Nicholas and Nathalie Peutz, eds. 2010. *The Deportation Regime. Sovereignty, Space and the Freedom of Movement.*

Durham: Duke University Press.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. “Confined in Movement. The Croatian Section of the Balkan Corridor”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and München: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 9-41.

Hess, Sabine and Bernd Kasparek. 2017. “Under Control? Or Border (as) Conflict. Reflections on the European Border Regime”. *Social Inclusion* 5/3: 58-68.

Mezzadra, Sandro and Brett Neilson. 2013. *Border as Method, or, The Multiplication of Labour.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Moulier-Boutang, Yann and Jean-Pierre Garson. 1984. “Major Obstacles to Control of Irregular Migrations. Prerequisites to Policy”. *International Migration Review* 18/3: 579-592.

Papadopoulos, Dimitris, Niamh Stephenson and Vassilis Tsianos. 2008. *Escape Routes. Control and Subversion in the 21th Century.* London: Pluto.

Rass, Christoph and Frank Wolff. 2018. “What is a Migration Regime? Genealogical Approach and Methodological Proposal”. U *Was ist ein Migrationsregime? What Is a Migration Regime?* Andreas Pott, Christoph Rass and Frank Wolff, eds. Wiesbaden: Springer, 19-64.

Tsianos, Vassilis and Serhat Karakayali. 2010. “Transnational Migration and the Emergence of the European Border Regime. An Ethnographic Analysis”. *European Journal of Social Theory* 13/3: 373-387.

Tsianos, Vassilis, Sabine Hess and Serhat Karakayali. 2009. “Transnational Migration. Theory and Method of an Ethnographic Analysis of Border Regimes”. *University of Sussex Working Paper* 55. University of Sussex Sussex. Centre for Migration Research.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/rezim-migracija?locale=en

Missing or Disappeared

Katarina Dolničar

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-pogresani-ali-izginuli-p?locale=en

Mobile Commons

Marijana Hameršak, Uršula Lipovec Čebron, Jelka Zorn

Mobile commons are alternative, shared knowledge and affective relationships, various forms of support and care that facilitate self-organization for people on the move (cf. **autonomy of migration**) while moving, but also when finding their way in places of temporary residence (cf. **game**). According to the authors of the term Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2013: 191-192), they include the following: knowledge of mobility (how to travel, which route to take, with what equipment, at what time of day and year, with whom and how to communicate, who can you rely on directly or remotely while on the move, etc.), infrastructure of connectivity (social networks, smartphones, knowledge of groups, pages, online maps, etc.), informal economy (how to find a free lawyer, doctor or dentist, how to receive money from abroad, how to find transport, smugglers, etc.), communities of justice (solidarity networks, local activist groups, political organizations, etc.), and, most importantly, politics of care, i.e. friendship, trust, help, etc. Mobile commons are constantly modified, disappearing and being amended, and their list is always expanding, depending on the needs that arise in the hectic, but collaborative environment defining migration.

Cooperative action, information sharing, and mutual aid and support that form the foundations for mobile commons do not depend on the goodwill of those involved or on some sort of migrant-supposed innate solidarity, but on the characteristics of migration itself. For instance, Reece Jones (2016), in the introduction to his book *Violent Borders*, describes an attempt made by seven young Moroccans to cross into Spanish territory hidden in a bus, despite X-ray checks being conducted on each bus. The seven young men hid under the hood and in the undercarriage of the bus, hoping that, because there were several of them, at least one of them would remain invisible to the scanners at the border, the border police and dogs, and thus enter Spain. A similar example involves jumping the fence in Melilla en masse, at the Spanish enclave in Africa. As demonstrated in the film *The Land Between* (directed by David Fedele, 2014), hundreds of people self-organize and join together in a joint rush for the fence so that at least a few could manage to cross it, escape the Moroccan police and apply for asylum on the Spanish side.

As a layered phenomenon defined by numerous factors, people, other beings and things; migration, Papadopoulos and Tsianos emphasize, can be initiated and reproduced only “through reciprocity, and reciprocity between migrants means the multiplication of access to mobility for others. Multiplying access is the gift economy of migration. This is the world of the mobile commons.” (2013: 190). It is, in short, “the organizational ontology” of people on the move (Papadopoulous and Tsianos 2013: 179) and “a *common*, based on customary knowledge born out of the socialities of migrants themselves and others who support them” (Trimikliniotis et al. 2015: 54). Yacou, a migrant from Mali and the protagonist of the mentioned film *The Land Between*, greets “all the clandestines of the world”. Mobile commons also grow out of a “we” that, Papadoupolos and Tsianos believe, is often not even recognized or called as such, but it can nevertheless recode or even interrupt the logic of border control (2013: 190).

19/12/2022

References

Jones, Reece. 2016. *Violent Borders. Refugees and the Right to Move.* London and New York: Verso.

Papadopoulos, Dimitris and Vassilis S. Tsianos. 2013. “After Citizenship. Autonomy of Migration, Organisational Ontology and Mobile Commons”. *Citizenship Studies* 17/2: 178-196.

Trimikliniotis, Nicos, Dimitris Parsanoglou and Vassilis S. Tsianos. 2015. *Mobile Commons, Migrant Digitalities and the Right to the City.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-mobilna-zajednicka-dobra-p?locale=en

Mobile Detention

Marijana Hameršak, Iva Pleše

The **Balkan corridor**, which was established in the fall of 2015 as a response to the **long summer of migration** and the autonomous mass movement of **refugees** from Greece to the center of Europe, from Croatia further west, functioned not only as one of the forms of "governing mobility through mobility" (Tazzioli 2020) but also as a special type of **detention**. From the time when the movement was redirected towards Croatia, and especially with the opening of the **camp in Slavonski Brod** and the establishment of a special line from **Šid** in Serbia to Dobova in Slovenia and further on towards Austria (Lunaček Brumen and Meh 2016; Hameršak and Pleše 2018; Roth et al. 2020), the mass movement of migrants was isolated from the surrounding territory, and it was no longer possible to join the movement independently after its flow left Serbia, nor to leave it except in extraordinary cases (for hospitalization, an asylum application, etc.). Thus, the western section of the corridor is sometimes described as a mobile detention in which **profiling** was conducted and which consisted, on the one hand, of locked trains, buses and convoys escorted and directed by the police with the assistance of humanitarian actors and, on the other hand, of newly established transit camps where refugees were registered (Hameršak and Pleše 2017: 28). Like many other elements of the corridor, this detention had no basis in national nor international legal frameworks (Kogovšek Šalamon 2016: 44-47), and it can also be understood as a specific mobile linear type of an interiorized border of the **European migration regime** (Hameršak and Pleše 2018: 25).



The Winter Reception and Transit Center in Slavonski Brod, 1/3/2016. Photo: Marijana Hameršak

5/3/2022

References

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. "Confined in Movement. The Croatian Section of the Balkan Corridor". In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and München: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 9-41.

Kogovšek Šalamon, Neža. 2016. "Legal Implications of 'Humanitarian Corridor'". In *Razor-Wired. Reflections on Migration Movements through Slovenia in 2015.* Neža Kogovšek Šalamon and Veronika Bajt, eds. Ljubljana: Peace Institute, 39-49.

Lunaček Brumen, Sarah and Ela Meh. 2016. "'Vzpon in padec' koridorja. Nekaj refleksij o spremembah na balkanski migracijski poti od poletja 2015". *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* 44/264: 21-45.

Roth, Birgit, Petra Leschanz and Sylvia Altenbacher. 2020. *Border Crossing Spielfeld. Grenzerfahrungen. Border(line) Experience*. Graz: Südwind-Verlag Graz.

Tazzioli, Martina. 2020. "Governing Migrant Mobility through Mobility. Containment and Dispersal at the Internal Frontiers of Europe". *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 38/1: 3-19.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-mobilna-detencija-p?locale=en

Mobile Phone

Bojan Mucko

A few hours after I settled in Bihać in December 2020, in the attic apartment of a house on the outskirts of the city with six other international volunteers from a pro-migrant collective I had just joined (cf. **distro**), someone loudly knocked on the door. Due to the strict control of Croatian borders and the normalized practice of **pushbacks**, people on the move were forced to avoid populated areas and travel clandestinely through **forests** and mountains while passing through the Croatian section of the **Balkan route**. Their daily lives were completely invisible to the general public. Images with criminalizing effects were prevalent among the few media representations of migrations during that period, in line with national and European **securitization** policies. One photograph particularly stuck in my memory from a news piece about the Ministry of Internal Affairs' new surveillance equipment intended to "prevent illegal crossings by migrants." The nighttime photograph showed a group of eight people, zoomed in from a great distance, like prey. The distant, targeted people (captured) in motion across an abstract, open space were tightly huddled together and completely depersonalized, reduced to white outlines on a black background. Along with demonstrating new surveillance power and the extreme objectification of people on the move, the image also reinforced the illusion of their separation—as if they were in a dimension parallel to the everyday life of news readers who were learning about the hunt for "illegal migrants."



View of Plješivica. Bihać, January 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

When I heard the knock, I was in the hallway, closest to the door, so I opened it spontaneously. I saw six young men in their twenties and thirties standing in the dark in front of the door, on the staircase with a view of the mountainous outlines of the monumental Plješivica behind them. The one with the widest smile among them was the first to extend his hand and greet me with: "Hello brother, how are you doing?". That was when I met Javed, Raja, Bilal, Usman, and others from one of the improvised tent squats in the area. They lived beyond the reach of the city's infrastructure, in a field at the foot of Plješivica that stretched all the way to our house, and like every few days, they had come for their phones. They charged them in a small room near the entrance, on a shelf amidst a sea of power cables. Our apartment was their nearest access point to electricity, and the volunteers helped them with charging even though gatherings in the yard were prohibited (as one of the anti-pandemic measures active at that time). Just a few kilometers further north, on the other side of the Croatian border, such an encounter would have been practically unimaginable to me at the end of 2020.



Phone charging. Bihać, winter 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

Unlike the faceless outlines targeted by thermal imaging cameras, the young men, just like the news readers, were quite individualized, each marked by their own personal contexts, biographies, and projections of the future. The mobile phones they came to collect were, to me, like a bridge from the world of media representations to the world of “field” reality and neighborly interactions. And those same mobile phones were essential tools, necessary for navigating their daily challenges.



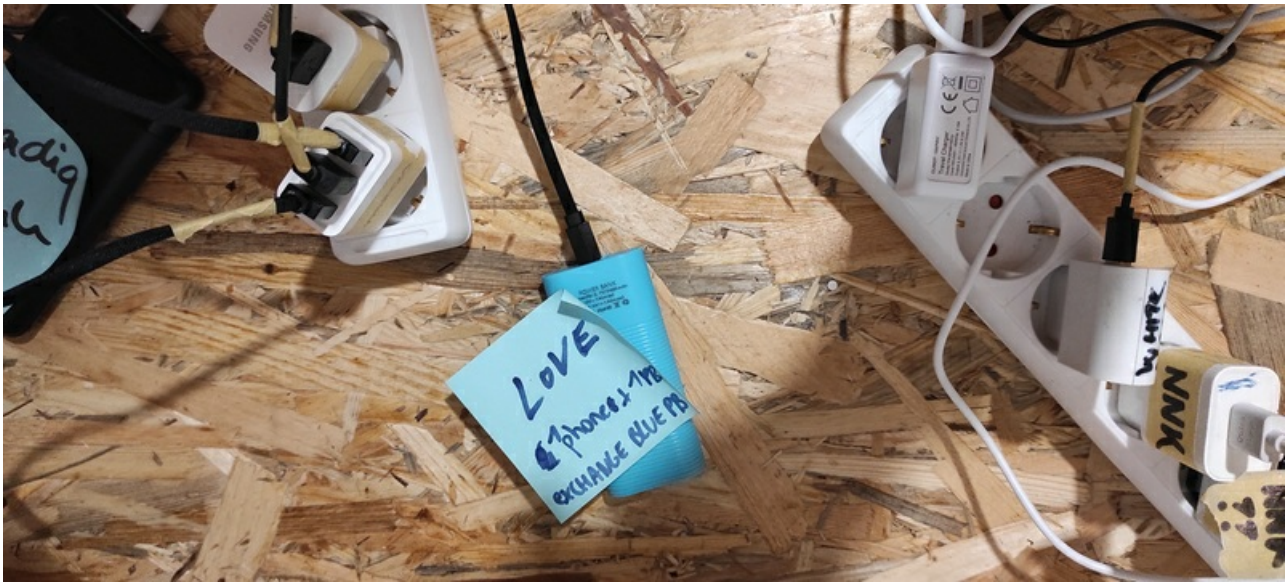
Power banks protected with improvised means. Bihać, winter 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

Elisabeth Eide’s interlocutors in her research conducted in Norway with asylum seekers noted that the most valuable part of their mobile possessions was the mobile phone (2020: 72). Eide interprets the smartphone as a basic logistical tool for confronting the precarious living conditions of people on the move, analytically dividing general precariousness into three phases (2020: 77). The first phase relates to the period before the journey, the context from which individuals flee or leave. The second phase involves the journey to European destinations, and the third phase pertains to life upon arrival in the new environment. In the pre-departure phase, the mobile phone primarily serves as a communication and organizational tool for planning the route, purchasing tickets for various means of transport, and communicating with people close to them, as well as with smugglers, who are often reached through advertisements on social media. During the journey itself, these device functions are further refined to improve safety in unpredictable situations in unfamiliar terrain (Eide 2020: 71). Offline map applications and GPS navigation are used in choosing the safest routes, helping to avoid natural dangers and tactically outsmart actors of the regulatory and repressive apparatus of the migration control regime. Upon reaching a European destination, the functions of the mobile phone shift towards exploring the new social environment, obtaining information about the national asylum system and current administrative processes, mastering a new language, and establishing new and maintaining old contacts. Throughout all stages of the journey, the mobile phone also functions as a personalized archive of memories stored in various media, providing access to identity-important content such as music or films, and generally to the (media-mediated) information through which individuals acquire transnational knowledge and competencies (Eide 2020: 78).



Tea in a squat with an Afghan playlist. Bihać, winter 2021. Photo Bojan Mucko

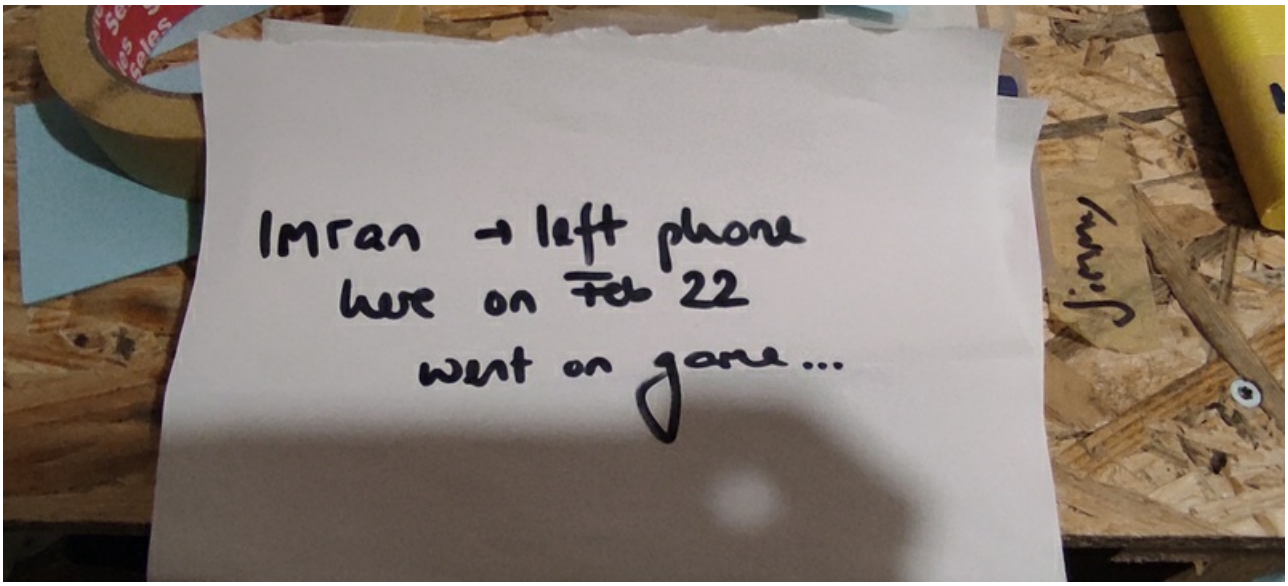
Hundreds of groups and individuals stranded in Bihać, outside official camps, in dilapidated buildings and tent shelters, like Javed and his friends, found various ways to charge their mobile phones. Their options were generally limited to using outlets available in public spaces such as bus stations, cafes, shops, and shopping centers. Like my housemates, and many other more or less visible local and international helpers, charged their phones in their hallways and living rooms out of solidarity. Our shelf became increasingly complex: new power cables and outlets sprouted, and we labeled the constantly changing phones with names for easier identification. As the friendships between the volunteers and the people from the squats deepened daily, the name labels sometimes evolved into a form of communication – they became small greeting notes or cards wishing luck for the **game**, handed over along with the fully charged phone.



Personalized messages with the charging phones. Bihać, winter 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

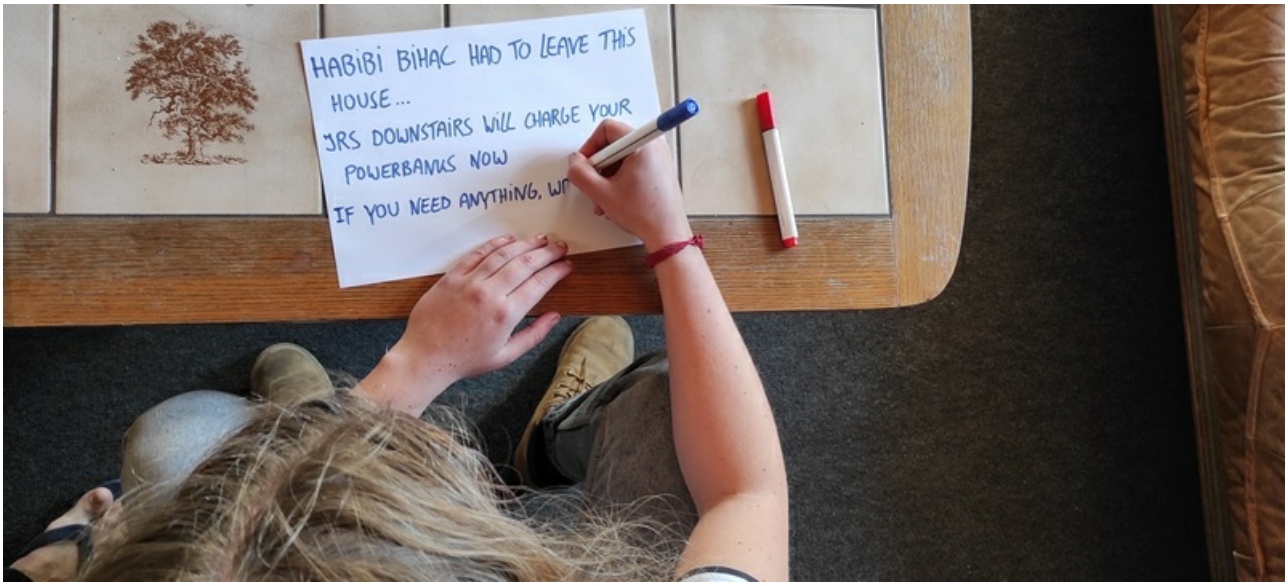
However, when the game through Croatia would end with a pushback, people would mostly return without their mobile phones. It was known that Croatian police regularly either stole or destroyed mobile phones, with their selection criteria being market-based. As recounted by numerous interlocutors based on their experiences – an expensive phone would go directly into the police officer's pocket (gesture of inserting an object with the right hand into the left inner pocket of a jacket), and a cheap one under the police boot (gesture of smashing a device with the sole of the boot). Whether it was theft or destruction, for people on the move, it meant the same thing – the loss of their most valuable personal belonging necessary for navigating their precarious everyday life at all stages of the journey. For this very reason – knowing that there were high chances of another pushback, individuals traveling in groups began leaving their phones and other small electronic devices with us for safekeeping before embarking on the game, despite the reduced number of phones making the journey more difficult for the group. If the journey to Europe was successful, the phones left in Bihać would find new owners (cf. **mobile commons** and **autonomy of migration**), but if it ended with a pushback, they would be waiting on the shelf. After days or weeks of wandering through forests and encounters with the police, which often (along with physical and psychological violence) involved the confiscation or destruction of all movable property, the mobile phone provided the necessary tools to reconnect with the world from which they were being pushed out with every pushback: contacts with family and friends, apps,

playlists, movies, personal photos, and videos preserved from police brutality on a palm-sized device (along with Bluetooth speakers charged for a party).



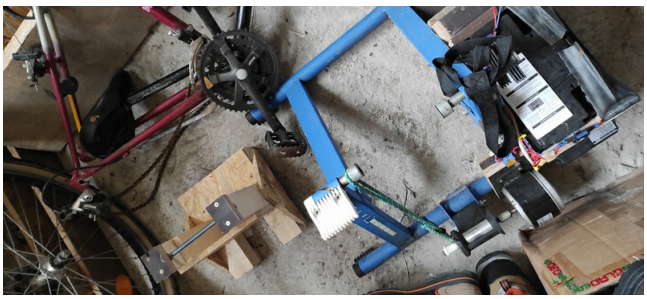
Note. Bihać, winter 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

When the volunteer collective was moving out of the attic apartment on the outskirts of the city, we arranged with the international humanitarian organization, whose offices were on the ground floor of the same house, to take over the practice of charging mobile phones. We left a message with new instructions for our friends on the outside of the door they were already used to knocking on. The organization on the ground floor, in line with their more formal mode of operation compared to the collective, decided to build a self-service charging station – with lockers under lock and key on the ground floor, on the exterior staircase of the house. With the introduction of keys, the poetic notes with good wishes attached to the phones disappeared as well.



Goodbye letter from the volunteers. Bihać, spring 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

Although smartphones have been in widespread use since the second half of the 2000s, research into the role of mobile phones in refugee daily life has gained significance with the so-called “Syrian refugee crisis” and the broader mass movement of people towards Europe during 2015 and 2016, as these transcontinental migrations of such proportions are the first to occur in the digital age (cf. Alencar 2020: 9). The democratization of GPS technology and the possibility of mobile access to social networks and various other applications have enabled greater autonomy for people on the move from smuggling structures (Alencar 2020: 4). Alongside these positive aspects, the use of mobile phones also brings a number of ambivalences. As Amanda Alencar points out, different border control mechanisms, such as satellite technology, drones, and motion detectors, rely precisely on tracking mobile phones: “GPS apps can be used by state officials, traffickers, and smugglers to track refugees’ movements, meaning that the same tools that some have cited as critical to their journey may also make them vulnerable to arrest and abduction” (2023).




Donation from Luxembourg: machine for phone charging powered by legs. Una-Sana canton, summer 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

Mobile phones are thus relied upon by differently positioned and mutually antagonistic actors within the migration regime marked by radical oppositions. While the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), for example, advocates for the digital inclusion of people on the move, enabling their integration into the social life of their destination (at least nominally), while police forces regularly destroy or steal the very tools crucial for this type of inclusion. On several occasions in the field, I even heard rumors about two Croatian police officers who allegedly returned stolen phones into circulation. Supposedly, they sold bags full of stolen devices to resellers at the Bihać market. There, on the outskirts of the city, by the bypass near the railway tracks, the phones were then bought back by those who needed them the most—the original owners from whom they had been stolen.

Nina Khamsy conducts research on the role of smartphones in the everyday lives of people from Afghanistan navigating the Balkan route. She views participants in social research as "part of a multidimensional field which is now both multi-sited and multi-modal" (Khamsy 2022: 267). Here, multimodality refers primarily to the intertwining of virtual and physical networks and spaces, as well as the spontaneous production and exchange of audiovisual content during social interactions in the field. Khamsy warns that the normalization of violence forces us to constantly reevaluate our role in "knowledge production in this (mine)field" (Khamsy 2022: 267). In my own multimodal ethnographic research on migration regimes, focusing on the coexistence of people on the move and international volunteers, I also relied on my phone as a primary tool for navigating a daily life marked by the criminalization of solidarity and normalized violence. In an environment that demanded constant discretion, this handy, pocket-sized device replaced a voice recorder, camera, map, laptop, pen, and notebook.

For people on the move, trapped not only on the Balkan route but also in camps around the world, living in conditions whose brutality is hidden by local authorities from the international public, the mobile phone takes on additional significance—it becomes a tool of citizen journalism (cf. Allan 2013) which opens a communication channel to the world from below, from within the camp itself. Sally Hayden conveys the testimonies of silenced detainees in the notorious Libyan camp Dhar-el-Jebel, who speak about the invaluable role of mobile phones carefully hidden from the guards: "Receiving messages from journalists and activists outside was 'like a candle in the night'" (2022). Announcements of deaths concealed in the camp, published on social networks, were often the first information about the fatalities for the families of the deceased. The world-famous book *No Friend but the Mountains*, written by Kurdish-Iranian journalist and activist Behrouz Boochani during his detention in Australian custody, was also composed through WhatsApp correspondence with a friend outside the camp.

In one of the field episodes, a mobile phone enabled me to contact hunger strikers in the recently burned **Lipa camp**, resulting in audio-visual materials consolidated under the terms **Protest in Lipa** and **WhatsApp from Lipa**. On other occasions, I used my mobile phone to record diary notes from the gatherings with the people whose phones we were charging (cf. **party in the Afghan squat**).

29/12/2023

References

Alencar, Amanda. 2020. "Mobile Communication and Refugees. An Analytical Review of Academic Literature". *Sociology Compass* 14: 8.

Alencar, Amanda. 2023. "Technology Can Be Transformative for Refugees, but It Can Also Hold Them Back". *Migration Policy Institute*.

Allan, Stuart. 2013. *Citizen Witnessing. Key Concepts in Journalism*. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press.

Eide, Elisabeth. 2020. "Mobile Flight. Refugees and the Importance of Cell Phones". *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 10/2: 67-81.

Khamsy, Nina. 2022. "Mobile Phones on Mobile Fields. Co-producing Knowledge about Migration and Violence". *Antropologia Pubblica* 8/1: 261-268.

Hayden, Sally. 2022. "For Refugees in Detention Camps, Smartphones Are a Lifeline". *Wired*.

Movable Fences or Gates

Iva Pleše

Unlike Slovenia, Hungary and Serbia, Croatia has not erected a **fence, wall or wire** on its borders to its eastern or southern neighbors. One of the reasons for this is, allegedly, the relationship between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, its neighbor and the country with which Croatia shares its longest border. This relationship is presented, in the prime minister's speech before the European Parliament, in two fundamentally different ways, as a relationship "between friendly countries and peoples" and as a relationship between Croatia and "the area inhabited by Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina". However, even though Croatia has not erected fences or wires on its borders, for whatever reason, it still uses a type of movable fence for combating unwanted migrants. The object in question is a fence or a gate, as it is referred to by the terms in official documents, which are placed at the border crossings, at only one point, not along the border. The first such Croatian movable fence on the border with a neighboring country was installed at the Batina/Bezdan border crossing, shared with Serbia, back in the summer of 2016 "in order to prevent a possible attempt to illegally enter the Republic of Croatia" and due to "a stronger influx of migrants". At the time, the Ministry of the Interior referred to the Batina fence as technical obstacles placed as a precaution, and which "can be activated, if necessary and in accordance with the security situation, in order to completely block the bridge, i.e., the road leading to the mentioned crossing". Three years later, in June 2019, the same kind of barrier was erected at the Maljevac border crossing, on the bridge leading from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatian territory, also as a means of defense against migrants. The barrier was described as a movable metal fence, a protective fence against an inrush, as it is called in official documents, in order to, according to the Ministry of the Interior, prevent the violent intrusion of migrants without the need to bring in a large number of police officers or set up other obstacles, all this because of the experience from the previous fall "when the migrants at that crossing [...] tried to forcibly enter the territory of the Republic of Croatia several times". The characterization of that attempt to enter Croatia as violent, which was emphasized as the justification for erecting the technical barrier, was connected with the complete decontextualization of that event, which was also presented in the media as an attack on the Croatian border, even though it was actually a protest and a request for passage that had "special symbolic weight" precisely because it happened at one of the official border crossings.

The foundations for installing barriers similar to the one at the Maljevac/**Velika Kladuša** border crossing were also made at the Gejkovac/Drmaljevo and Pašin Potok/Zagrad border crossings at that time, as stated on the Ministry of the Interior's website, which also explains that the movable physical barrier, i.e. the fence at the Maljevac border crossing, was set in accordance with what is stated in the "EU Schengen Catalogue for External Borders Control, Removal and Readmission", that "border crossings and the immediate surrounding area should be technically monitored" and that border crossings, "as a rule, should be divided by a fence". The same technical obstacle, referred to in the documents as a gate to block the road, was placed, for example, at the Ličko Petrovo Selo/Izačić border crossing. All of these, as well as other similar obstacles, were part of the preparations for Croatia's accession to the **Schengen Area**, and although their symbolic meanings are not as clear at first glance as those related to the **barriers erected along the borders**, they can be likened to them in various ways. When talking about one such fence erected not along the border, but at select points along the border, the one erected at the Maljevac border crossing, an activist from the Zagreb Centre for Peace Studies concludes that even this kind of "fence, like wire, is the face of violence."

16/1/2023

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-pomicne-ograde-p?locale=en

Onion

Evelina Soršak

I never paid much attention to onion, not until the fieldwork we did in Bihać in March 2022, which was part of the subject *Contemporary Migration, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities.* I was struck by the fact that onion is one of the main components of so-called game food, food that migrants take with them on their journey. This journey, also called the **game**, is long, exhausting and dangerous. Despite the very difficult conditions and the **pushbacks** carried out by the Croatian police and other police forces, migrants have enough hope and willpower to repeat the game as many times as necessary to reach their goal. A lot of thought goes into what food they will take with them on the game. The most common food they take is bread, but onions are also an indispensable element in every “game food,” as they call it. Why exactly is onion so ubiquitous?

I came across onions on my first day of fieldwork in Bihać, which ended at the so-called Baba Shop, a small shop that supplies food and basic necessities to both the local population and people on the move. The shopkeeper is nicknamed “Baba” by the migrants, and he sympathizes with them and helps them in solidarity. The shop offers phones charging and first aid to people returning from pushbacks, such as a bag of clothes and medicine. He is like a father to them in Bosnia, which is why they call him Baba. The word “Baba” means father in one of the languages spoken by the migrants. I was surprised that onions are some of the food taken to the game. During a later conversation at the shop with Safi, a twenty-four-year-old migrant from Pakistan, I learned that onions are actually the most important food on the route.

The food they take on their journey, so-called game food, consists of onions, bread, ketchup, mayonnaise, energy chocolate bars and drinks and water. Safi said that they take several loaves of bread on their journey, which they press together tightly. They also take one to two kilograms of onions. A backpack with food and important items for the journey can weigh up to twenty kilograms. Onions, along with bread, are the main staple and are almost always eaten with bread. I learned from various conversations that migrants cut onions and eat them with bread, adding ketchup or mayonnaise for better taste. They often eat raw onions, with no other food. This generally happens when bread goes stale.

Nineteen-year-old Aziz from Pakistan tells me that he doesn’t mind the taste of onion, and that he even likes it. It reminds him of the taste of lemon*, which is strong but still good.* I also learned from other conversations that most people don't mind the taste of onion and that they like it. When asked why they take onions on the game, almost all interlocutors answered that it is a good food for traveling and that it gives them energy. Most of them also mentioned the healing effects of onions, namely that onions are healthy, strong, that they give them energy, that they are good for the stomach and for eyesight. A very common reason given by my interlocutors was that onions last a very long time on the route and do not spoil. From the conversations I learned that the most important aspect of onions as part of game food is its practicality, but I believe that the aspect of habits may also be important.

Onions on the game seem to be a matter of course for them. Most people I talked to smiled when I mentioned the word *onion* because it represents something familiar to them and common on the game. All the young men I talked to take the same food and the same amount of items on their journey, which shows a certain uniformity. Perhaps they take onions because others take them too. Since we were in Bihać for only a short time, I can’t claim that everyone takes the same food to the game.

The diet of the people on the move I talked to in Bihać had changed a lot since the beginning of their journey. On the route, they eat food that is most convenient for them, which can withstand long distances and which gives them energy. Despite the fact that their eating habits have changed due to migration, they retain a strong memory of the food they used to eat. There is indeed a strong connection between food and memory (Mintz and Du Bois 2002: 107).

In a strictly realistic sense, eating can be defined as an activity performed by humans due to their need for energy. Nevertheless, eating is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept, with social, psychological, physiological and symbolic dimensions (Holtzman 2006: 362). The dimension of memory can be even stronger. Memory often refers to a set of very different processes and dynamics that can be understood in different ways, including the nostalgia that certain foods can evoke (Holtzman 2006: 362). Sutton (2000, 2001) notes how tasting food is a particularly intense and persuasive medium for memory, which is not only cognitive but also emotional and physical (Holtzman 2006: 365). In communities with a migrant experience, food is very important for remembering the environment in which they used to live. At the same time, food is also known to act as a catalyst for important political, economic and social changes (Holtzman 2006: 364).

During my conversations with migrants, I realized that onions are a food that was valued even in their originating countries. They already ate onions in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but they were prepared differently. What onions mean to them has also changed. Onions, formerly used to prepare various dishes and considered an intermediate element or only one part of a meal, have now become the main meal on the road. Onions are also used when cooking in squats, during the waiting periods between games. For the people I talked to, raw onions had become the most important ingredient on the menu. However, in our conversations, I did not think to ask whether it was customary to use raw onions as a takeaway dish where they grew up.

In Urdu, onions are called pîvaz (پیپر) (pronounced /pi:'vɑ:z/). Aabis, a thirty-one-year-old migrant from Afghanistan, described what onions are like in Afghanistan and Pakistan:

> This country onion no good. In Pakistan, Afganistan onion is very good. There is water very good. This Pakistan, Afganistan, this water, when this onion grow is very good because of water. Powerful water /.../ very tasteful this onion, very good onion, very tasty and powerful because of weather and water. This onion here no good. Here is no tasty.

He also said that he remembered the dishes prepared with onions and that these dishes were very tasty. He described a dish involving frying onions and dough, I assume this dish is similar to pie. He also remembered dishes where onions and yoghurt are

mixed, fried onions and butter, as well as onions and milk. He also said that sometimes he tried to prepare dishes from Afghanistan.



Onion in the Game Shop in **Camp Lipa**. Bihać, 26 March 2022. Photo: Evelina Soršak

8/6/2022

References

Holtzman, Jon D. 2006. "Food and Memory". *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35: 361-378.

Mintz, Sidney W. and Christine M. Du Bois. 2002. "The Anthropology of Food and Eating". *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 99-119.

Sutton, David. 2000. "Whole Foods. Revitalization through Everyday Synesthetic Experience". *Anthropology and Humanism* 25/2: 120-130.

Sutton, David. 2001. *Remembrance of Repasts. An Anthropology of Food and Memory*. London: Berg.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship, and Ethnic Minorities, thaught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-cebula-p?locale=en

Origins of Migrant Detention

Jelka Zorn, Marijana Hameršak

Available only in Slovenian.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-izviri-detencije-migrantov-p?locale=en

Pablo

Iva Pleše

Pablo is a fox that lived near the mountain lodge in Risnjak in the summer of 2019. The author of the **Letter from a Hiker**, in his text entitled “On the Side of the Beast”, compared the way in which the visitors of Risnjak, and even the members of the special forces who stayed there at that time, treated the fox with sympathy, in contrast with their treatment of people on the move, in order to point out the bizarre nature of their attitudes: “One special forces officer was enthusiastically telling us how he gave Pablo a meat breakfast one morning, then spread a pâté on a piece of bread that Pablo licked off, and how he also recorded a nice video of that interaction. Listening to these stories, watching this man, who also hunts refugees, feeding an already well-fed fox with such zeal and consideration, I couldn’t help but think – even a fox has the right to a name and all the humanity that comes with being named. At the same time, refugees are generally not seen as people, not even as living beings, but as a nuisance that needs to be removed, at best”. Thus, Pablo, along with other representatives from the animal world (cf. **Candy**; **wild animals**), became associated with **irregularized migrations**, and the note about him highlighted the contrast, which can be seen in other examples from the public media space (**Bubo and Endi**), between, on the one hand, the individualization of animals and, on the other hand, the dehumanization and deindividualization of people on the move.

1/3/2022

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-pablo-p?locale=en

Paromlin

Romana Pozniak

In the spring of 2022, after five years of systematic expulsions and **pushbacks** at the Croatian borders (e.g., Davies et al. 2023), a significantly larger number of people on the move began passing through the city of Zagreb and other places in Croatia located on the **Balkan migration route**. In the fall of 2022, the facilitation of transit had already taken on humanitarian-securitarian contours, including a self-organized humanitarian point in Rijeka, raids at the main railway station in Zagreb, and a humanitarian station in front of the former Paromlin (steam mill) factory in Zagreb.

As a place for short stays and a boarding station for trains heading towards Rijeka and areas near the Slovenian border, the space around the Zagreb railway station became a frequent transit and stopping point for people on the move. With a simultaneous increase in the number of "foreign workers," tourists, and residents of the reception center for people who apply for international protection, **Porin**, who also frequently passed through the station or spent time in its immediate vicinity, the main railway station in the summer of 2022 gave the impression of a completely new urban center. It spatialized the harsh dichotomy between the image of a cosmopolitan, intercultural European Union and its policy of systematic illegalization and precarization of people from the **Global South** attempting to migrate to Europe by various routes.

In contrast to the reaction of state institutions, local residents, and civil initiatives to the refugee corridor in 2015 and 2016, the increased transit in 2022 was not characterized by the standardized format of care and control such as refugee camps and securitarian-humanitarian corridors. Instead, Croatian authorities issued return decisions in large numbers, soon to be called **seven days paper**, and checked whether racially profiled people on the move in trains, buses, and public places had these documents with them and detained them if they did not (Pozniak 2023). Many were forced to use abandoned spaces near the main railway station as overnight shelters, such as the building of Zagrebačka Banka, the Paromlin factory, or the space of the former store near the station, known as Diskont.

Despite the fact that the green-left coalition *Možemo* is in power in Zagreb, city services responded a whole six months after the start of the mass issuing of return decisions and the increased presence of people near the main railway station. At the end of November 2022, just a few days before the opening of the Advent Zagreb event, the Zagreb city administration opened a humanitarian station near Paromlin. Although Paromlin, as an industrial architectural monument, is listed as a protected cultural good in the Register of Cultural Goods, it is a highly neglected object that, due to its dilapidated appearance and potential danger, evokes fear and discomfort among many passersby. After being damaged in a fire in 1988, the Paromlin building partially collapsed due to what the media reported as "prolonged neglect and lack of maintenance." Following this, "without the approval of the Ministry of Culture, the former city administration, led by Milan Bandić, demolished the chimney, which was also protected." According to the latest data, the building is set to undergo a complete renovation costing 80 million euros as part of the project "City Library of the City of Zagreb and socio-cultural center at the Paromlin location." This was confirmed by the deputy mayor in a promotional video, stating that "after decades of neglect of the most representative city space [including the Paromlin factory building and the Zagrebačka Banka building], this city administration has taken on its refurbishment."

In addition to being an unprotected space where the façade could easily collapse, the establishment of humanitarian infrastructure in the shadows of the city's hustle and bustle—at a location very close to the city center and the railway station, yet hidden from public view—right at the time of the Christmas festival, suggests that it was not only a humanitarian measure but also an effort to remove or redirect migrants to less visible parts of the city center (Pozniak 2023: 256).

The latter is confirmed by the deputy mayor's remarks at the station's opening, stating that "the location was chosen very carefully, away from the main city thoroughfares, yet close to the main influx of migrants." This is further supported by the fact that, in the fall of that year, the police began turning people away from King Tomislav Square, known as Tomislavac. Previously, not only had their presence there been tacitly allowed, but by issuing return orders (and, according to field data, directing people on the move to the main railway station), the police had facilitated their movement and stay on public spaces near the Zagreb station. Additionally, the preparations for the ice rink on Tomislavac as part of the Christmas festivities in November 2022, and the opening of the humanitarian station at the end of the same month, suggest that the space was being cleared to ensure the Advent festival could take place without any issues (Pozniak 2023).

The humanitarian station consisted of two heated tents – one for gathering migrants and another where food was distributed – and a sanitary container. It did not offer overnight accommodation but was designed, according to the representatives of the City Red Cross Society, as a place for short-term, daytime relief. It was surrounded by a wire fence, and as Red Cross workers told my colleagues and me, two police officers usually stood at the entrance, along with a plainclothes policeman in a car parked nearby. Although the station was primarily intended for individuals in Zagreb with return orders, we were told their documents were not checked and that the station welcomed everyone, including local homeless people. However, volunteers, researchers, journalists, and other visitors needed special permission to enter. I described my somewhat bizarre experience of entering the station with colleagues in a **field note**:

> First, as we approached the entrance, a police officer greeted us with his annoyed honking from his black Golf after we had passed through the entrance gate of the station. He then got out of the car, waving his hands excitedly and insisting that we could not enter (asking where we were going, if we had permission, etc.). A security guard, who emerged from his car parked in another position, asked if everything was okay, behaving somewhat protectively towards us. The police officer went to fetch the Red Cross workers, and after a brief discussion, because we were not on the list, the Red Cross people called their boss and finally got approval to let us in (13 December 2022).

Later, we learned that the police officers were on a break, which is why there was no one at the entrance at that moment. We also

discovered from our conversations that the City Red Cross, which managed the station, had two cots available for emergencies, as well as additional beds and tents in storage that could be used if requested by the city administration. Clothing was not distributed due to logistical problems and issues with scabies, but also because it was “not requested.” Food was distributed once a day, with 150 meals being served. The number of visitors per day was measured by the number of food portions distributed, with the highest number of daily visitors being 170. However, it is important to note that sometimes the same people probably came for food multiple times a day. Additionally, the Red Cross sometimes had dry food packages to go, which consisted of canned fish, pâté, and sometimes bread. The daily operating costs of the station were around 10,000 HRK (heating the tents, water, food, etc.), and medical assistance was provided by the nearby health center in Kruge.

During our conversation, we were under the impression that our interlocutors felt it was important to emphasize that the (dehumanizing) conditions at the station were not (solely) the responsibility of the Red Cross but also of the city administration, and that they were performing their duties according to their respective responsibilities and jurisdictions. When we asked about the collapse risk of the façade of the building in front of which the tents were erected, they admitted that the situation was far from ideal but emphasized that structural engineers had checked the condition of the Paromlin building and approved their work at that location. Ultimately, the station was closed after two months of operation, on 26 January 2023, due to, according to official data, a significantly lower number of visitors since the beginning of the year and Croatia’s entry into the **Schengen Area**. However, the situation in Rijeka indicated that the number of people passing through Croatia had not decreased; rather, people on the move were no longer passing through Zagreb as frequently.

Due to its environment and location in the city of Zagreb, the scarce content of humanitarian aid, and the timing of its opening just before the Christmas festival, the Paromlin humanitarian station can be considered a reflection of the intersection of several policies. On one hand, Croatian authorities, primarily the Ministry of the Interior, sought to control the movement of migrants through temporal management techniques in the form of seven-day papers (see Pozniak 2023). On the other hand, the Zagreb city administration, which aimed to provide support to people on the move in principle, responded six months later, just before the start of Advent. It relied on short-term infrastructure and an externalized public care system, i.e., humanitarian actors and temporary, mostly unsustainable, and ineffectual humanitarian solutions. Thus, the humanitarian station, opened in the shadow of the post-industrial ruination of Paromlin, mirrored the seemingly contradictory but essentially complementary relationship between the tactical policy of the left-green city administration and the state migration management regime. Their ultimate goal was not to ensure long-term social support for people in transit, but quite the opposite, the discreet humanitarian-temporal facilitation of their departure from Croatian territory.

18/12/2023

References

Davies, Thom, Arshad Isakjee and Jelena Obradovic-Wochnik. 2023. “Epistemic Borderwork. Violent Pushbacks, Refugees, and the Politics of Knowledge at the EU Border”. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 113/1: 169-188.

Pozniak, Romana. 2023. “Temporalnost humanitarne skrbi. Politike upravljanja vremenom u režimu migracija”. *Narodna umjetnost* 60/2: 243-262.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-paromlin-p?locale=en

Party in the Afghan Squat

Bojan Mucko



This content is only available in the online edition of e-ERIM. View it at:
https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/party?locale=en

At the end of December 2020, after three months of volunteering, Dana's last weekend in Bihać was approaching. That Friday evening was the last chance for us five volunteers to go to a party at a nearby squat. With the Afghans. The good ones, someone added, not the ones with knives. The guys invite us all the time, every time they leave their **cell phones** for charging – all of us as the *Habibi* team (see **distro**) – but maybe Dana most of all. As agreed, we bought two chickens, made a salad, and I (as usual) cooked some improvised rice with ingredients found in our fridge. We also took some plates and put them all in two blue Ikea bags, used for carrying packages prepared for distro to the van. After a few minutes of driving, we turned onto a gravel road. After driving through an overgrown field on a muddy road for about two kilometers, we parked in complete darkness in front of a dilapidated industrial or maybe a former warehouse building. It consisted of a huge hall with only the concrete foundation and the bare blue structural frame remaining. We turned on our lamps and grabbed the blue bags from the van. Sergej and Dana knew the way. Everything was overgrown with tall vegetation, except for the white surfaces of the foundation, with sporadic plants emerging from them. We walked along that concrete clearing through a tall, blue, hollow frame which looked surreal against the backdrop of the night sky, like an unfinished computer 3D render. We were greeted by cheerful, friendly voices coming from the other side of the frame. After exiting the hall, a ruin of a small, one-story brick house where our hosts lived could be seen to the right, probably a former office that was attached to the hall.

The guys met us at the door and came out to greet us. We all hugged each other in turn, the five of us and ten of them. First a warm, gentle hug with the right hand, then a handshake. A welcoming laughter and the quiet, joyful festivity of meeting in the middle of a dark field. Their temporary home was protected by gravel hills overgrown with weeds. The diffuse, bluish lights of the city broke through the fog, and the orange light of the fire flickered and beckoned from within. There was a feeling of security, as if the whole scene was protected by some transparent, impenetrable shield. The home we entered through the wide open door was reduced to its bare walls. There was a hole in the wall in the place of a former window, immediately to the left of the entrance to the first of two small rooms. Sleeping bags and personal belongings were neatly arranged along the edges of the room, and clean, soft, gray patterned blankets covered the floor. Following the example set by our hosts, we took off our shoes and sat together on the floor, in a large circle around the fire lit in a dilapidated, improvised metal stove in the middle of the room. Nisar spoke English the best, and he also seemed to be the oldest. In any case, he was in charge in a way. He assumed the role of master of ceremonies and, with a charming smile, asked us to introduce ourselves by name and origin. Sergej from Germany sat furthest from him, then, from right to left, Dana from the USA, Louise from France, Fabian from Belgium, and me from Croatia. All of us in that circle, at the moment of introduction, became national representatives. At the mention of Croatia, everyone paused for a moment, and I used my prepared line with a bad apology for my nationality in stand-up comedy style. The line was met, just like in previous similar situations, with a slight smile, but Nisar, who was sitting right next to me, addressed me pensively: "I don't mean to judge you or anything, but do you maybe know why they beat us like that?"

He posed the question without any emotion, looking me directly in the eyes, as if he simply needed help in solving a puzzle he had been thinking about for a long time. The fire illuminated only the right side of his face, just enough so that the scars on his eyebrows and temples became forever seared in my memory. The blue-eyed boy sitting a little bit behind me carried the same ones, and so did the others. The similar positions and appearances of the lines created a scary impression of a signature. Lines three or four centimeters in length cut diagonally across the eyebrows. An encounter with the Croatian police recorded on the body. But that was not the main topic of conversation, only an incidental detail that was not fussed about, it was simply presented as a fact. As if the warm, friendly atmosphere of the small festivity, which they decided to organize for us that evening, was more important to them than the brutality of their everyday life.

11/4/2022

Photoanxiety

Dagmar Nared

A researcher and a participant will act in a completely different way when a camera is introduced to the field. This was obvious in my ethnographic fieldwork with refugees in **Bihać**, at the **Balkan route** created a new emotion – photoanxiety.

The first reason for the photographers' uneasiness lies in European law, which illegalizes the existence of refugees on European soil. The European Union created an inhuman system through "the rule of law." Namely, the **Dublin Regulation** enables countries to hold the country through which a particular migrant first entered the European Union responsible for the migrant in question (EU-lex, 2013). European countries can return migrants to other countries, if there are **fingerprints** or other proof of a migrant's existence in another EU country or a safe third country. It often happens that the Dublin Regulation is abused, such as instances where migrants are returned to a safe third country during the asylum procedure. Authorities usually use fingerprints as proof during these procedures, however, photographs can also act as proof, although less commonly. Thus, public dissemination of photographs showing the faces of people on the move is discouraged, as it can be potentially harmful. As a result, ethnographic photography on the field in Bihać was different: instead of faces, I wanted to photograph something that I could immediately publish, without potentially causing anyone any harm.



Living environment, food, and shadows. Bihać, March 2022. Photo: Dagmar Nared

In this context, the rules of photography are completely bent. Ethnographic photography is seen as a pragmatic and abstract result of what was seen (Collier and Collier 1986). However, due to the context, we cannot photograph the abstract nor the pragmatic. We end up trying to photograph anything that is not a face – shadows, shoes, living spaces. This is contrary to the rules of photography, where we try to portrait people by focusing on their eyes. This is not possible in our given situation.

The reworked rules of photography and the uneasiness on the field further heighten the invisibility experienced by people on the move. In his essay *Icons of Becoming* (2014), Christian Vium argues that the path of a migrant is one of becoming nobody. A person becomes a non-person, they are stripped of their own subjectivity by the European authorities. They become Agamben's notion of *homo sacer*, where the person's existence is banned by law and may even be killed without any legal consequences (Agamben 1998). People on the move become *homo sacer* in this context – many of their deaths go unreported, police brutality is tolerated, while helping migrants is criminalized. The migrants' specific position was also easily noticeable in Bihać. The policemen never even glanced at me when I was photographing a protest in the centre of Bihać, while on the very same day the security guards in Camp Borići, a refugee camp in Bihać, observed me the entire time I was in the vicinity. This type of photography, focusing on homo sacer, and its perpetuated invisibility, further creates and enhances the emotion of photoanxiety.



Refugees in front of refugee camp Borići. Bihać, March 2022. Photo: Dagmar Nared

The emotion of photoanxiety can also decrease in two contexts. First, it is influenced by the degree of trust established with the people on the move. This was obvious in a non-governmental organization (NGO) that works with people on the move, just outside of town and has already created a safe environment for them.

At first, I wanted to photograph some people, but they were clearly uncomfortable, even when I explained that I would not photograph their faces. Photoanxiety was present both on mine and their side. But it almost completely disappeared when we started to work together around the NGO's house. I still felt a degree of photoanxiety, even when two Afghan friends wanted me to take pictures of them ("we don't allow you to take photographs of our asses!"). Moreover, I was aware of my responsibility of not abusing their trust, as emphasized by many ethnographic ethical guidelines (Cox et al. 2014: 12). I was happy I gained their trust and it made my work easier, however, I could not escape the feeling that my camera is a dangerous tool that could be used against them.




Building and Built Trust. Photo: Dagmar Nared

The second context in which photoanxiety may be diminished is the process of editing the photos. Migrants are often imperceptible, but the camera may make them visible and noticeable again, Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2008) argue. Vium (2014) extends this argument even further – it is not only about the visibility of the subject, but rather the aestheticization of it. He gives an example of his own process of editing photos of people on the move: bring up the saturation, add grain for a touch of drama. This is how one communicates the migrants' position in the EU. However, my experiences tell a somewhat different story: the aestheticization of migrant photography is merely another dimension of a relationship between a photographer and people on the move. Photoanxiety does not disappear once I put my camera down. During the editing process, we once again feel the emotion of photoanxiety. We once again see the parallel and obscure differences between our and their reality. Looking back at my own editing process, at first I created an extremely bright photo, which I do not think is a coincidence. Colour helped in dealing with the crude reality. In other words, aestheticization is a way to face photoanxiety post-festum.



Photo editing process. Bihać, March 2022. Photo: Dagmar Nared

Photoanxiety is an emotion created in the particular context of photographing people on the move and their realities. The context, in which we find ourselves in, is specific and cruel due to the European law and the strains it puts on photographing *homo sacer*. If a camera can capture everything that you otherwise wouldn't, this situation creates a situation where you try to capture absolutely anything. We chase shadows, instead of eyes.



To Italy. Bihać, March 2022. Photo: Dagmar Nared

16/8/2022

References

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life.* Stanford: Stanford University Press. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen

Collier, John and Malcolm Collier. 1986. *Visual Anthropology. Photography as a Research Method.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Cox, Susan, Sarah Drew, Marilys Guillemin, Catherine Howell, Deborah Warr and Jenny Waycott. 2014. *Guidelines for Ethical Visual Research Methods*. Melbourne: The University of Melbourne.

Papadopoulos, Dimitris and Vassilis Tsianos. 2008. “The Autonomy of Migration. The Animals of Undocumented Mobility”. In *Deleuzian Encounters. Studies in Contemporary Social Issues*. Anna Hickey-Moody and Peta Malins, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 223-234.

Vium, Christian. 2014. “Icons of Becoming. Documenting Undocumented Migration from West Africa to Europe”. *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 54/213-214: 217-240.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship, and Ethnic Minorities, thaught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

Photo-memory

Eva Hohnec

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Anthropology of Migrations, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Ambrož Kvartič, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-fotospomin-p?locale=en

Porin

Iva Grubiša

Officially, the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers in Zagreb, colloquially and widely known as Porin, is the larger of the two reception centers of this type in Croatia, and can accommodate up to 600 people (the other, much smaller center, with a capacity of 100 people, is located in Kutina). The center was opened in 2011, and its vernacular name Porin comes from the hotel of the same name which operated in this building until the center was opened. It is under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, with the Croatian Red Cross acting as the main partner of the Ministry in the day-to-day management of the center. Porin is an open-type reception center, which means that people staying there with the status of asylum seekers can leave and enter it relatively freely, while respecting the curfew prohibiting exits and entries between 11 pm and 6 am. This, among other things, distinguishes it from **detention** centers or **camps** where people on the move do not have the option to leave. On the other hand, its highly administrative and security structure and organization, the fact that only persons with the status of asylum seekers are allowed to stay, as well as the fact that the building possesses a relatively adequate infrastructure for housing people (e.g. rooms with bathrooms), and offers organized meals, set it apart from “wild camps”, such as **Vučjak** in Bihać in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The number of people staying in the center, as well as their countries of origin, vary depending on global geopolitical events and the routes that are passable to people on the move. Porin briefly reached its maximum capacity after the closure of the **Balkan corridor** in the fall of 2016, while in recent years, it has mostly been operating significantly below its full capacity. Before the **long summer of migration** in 2015, asylum seekers often came from Africa, while the number of applicants from Asia (primarily Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran) has increased significantly since 2015. After the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, it is interesting to note that people who fled Ukraine in 2022 were not placed in Porin (different accommodation facilities, different statuses, rights and acceptance conditions were provided for them), while on the other hand, people coming from Russia stayed in Porin with the status of asylum seekers.

Porin is located on the southeastern edge of Zagreb and administratively belongs to the Hrelić Local Board, although its residents, as well as employees, volunteers, representatives of non-governmental organizations, activists and other actors, are more likely to place it in the adjacent neighborhood of Dugave on their mental map of Zagreb. The center is located on the edge of the residential part of the neighborhood: it is surrounded by smaller residential buildings on its north side, while the Zagreb marshalling yard stretches along the southern end of the shelter. The Prudinec landfill in Jakuševac is located a little further, around three kilometers to the east of Porin (cf. **garbage**). In addition to defining it spatially, these characteristics are also important for the experience of the people it houses, so the first associations of Porin are often noise and waking up during the night because of the marshalling yard and the stench that often, especially during the warmer months, wafts to the center from Jakuševac.

Another physical characteristic has strongly influenced impressions of Porin. A barbed wire **fence** was erected around the center in March 2020. The Ministry of the Interior offered the explanation that the fence was erected solely to protect the people housed in Porin, especially children, from traffic, since the main entrance/exit is located next to a road and a parking lot. However, although the fence did not change the characteristics of Porin as an open center, the erection itself, and especially the period in which its construction took place, in March 2020, when the coronavirus epidemic in the Republic of Croatia was declared and the lockdown was imposed, had a strong impact on the impressions of people who were situated in Porin at that time, and some began to perceive it more like a prison.

Assessments of the perception of (in)security and risk have always been part of everyday life in Porin. On the one hand, we are talking about the significant security infrastructure and techniques of the Ministry of the Interior (Pozniak and Petrović 2014). For example, in addition to the aforementioned fence, a video surveillance system has been set up, iron grates are placed on the staircase between the floors (which are generally completely open, and would be locked in the event of a riot), and the entry/exit of residents from the building is recorded with magnetic cards. On the other hand, the perception of risk and insecurity also comes from outside, mostly from people who live near the center. While residents of the Dugave neighborhood generally seldom interact with people housed in Porin (Brnardić et al. 2015), they often perceive them as a threat (Pozniak and Petrović 2014), and their attitudes towards the asylum seekers from Porin often vary between compassion and concern, and fear and xenophobia (Petričević 2022).

The length of stay in Porin varies greatly and depends on many factors. Many leave Porin after a few days or weeks and do not wait for their claims in Croatia to be resolved. For others, who wait for a decision on the approval or rejection of asylum, the stay lasts significantly longer (although its duration is always very indefinite), from ten months to three or more years in some cases.

Waiting, more precisely, waiting for an unknown amount of time, is one of the most salient characteristics of life in Porin, much like other facilities with similar functions (Grubiša 2022; Altin and Minca 2017; Michalon 2013). People in Porin know that the center is only a temporary station, regardless of the conditions and with what legally assigned statuses they will leave, but they do not know how long this temporary stay will last. Since it often lasts longer than a year, they frequently describe their stay in Porin as a period of being stuck in time (Jefferson et al. 2019) or as a feeling of “hanging” between two lives, as one of the interviewees for my doctoral research described it after living for more than three years in Porin:

> Sometimes, it [Porin] makes one feel like you are in prison. And now that we are in the apartment, I feel the difference between while we were there and now. I feel like, like I am now in Croatia, actually. To be honest. There in Porin, I felt like I’m still hanging. Like our life is not complete, and we are not free people. Like we are stuck in something!

Although waiting is the main fixture in the lives of Porin’s residents, it should not be written off as passive space and time. Its residents remain active actors, adapting to new circumstances, resisting having their identities reduced to passive asylum seekers, and, despite numerous structural limitations, they strive to ensure meaningful everyday lives for themselves and their families (Fontanari 2019; Dudley 2011). In the context of life in Porin, this is manifested, among other things, in the frequent practice of

arranging rooms according to their needs and wishes (bringing in new furniture and reorganizing the rooms, painting and decorating the walls...) which transforms the cold and hostile spaces devoid of meaning into their own, filled places with multiple meanings, which some even call home. Porin, therefore, is not a mere non-place (Augé 2001), but a continuously constructed, negotiated and disputed place. Its physical space and infrastructure, written and unwritten rules and norms, as well as its employees, but also its inhabitants, all actively participate in its transformations, social production and construction (Grubiša 2022).

5/2/2023

References

Altin, Roberta and Claudio Minca. 2017. “The Ambivalent Camp. Mobility and Excess in a Quasi-carceral Italian Asylum Seekers Hospitality Centre”. In *Carceral Mobilities. Interrogating Movement in Incarceration*. Jennifer Turner and Kimberley Peters, eds. London and New York: Routledge, 30-43.

Augé, Marc. 2001. *Nemjesta. Uvod u moguću antropologiju supermoderniteta*. Karlovac: Naklada Društva arhitekata, građevinara i geodeta. Translated by Vlatka Valentić.

Brnardić, Sunčica, Emina Bužinkić, Mitre Georgiev, Julija Kranjec, Sara Lalić, Cvijeta Senta and Tea Vidović. 2015. *Izazovi integracije – izvještaj za 2014. godinu*. Zagreb: Centar za mirovne studije.

Dudley, Sandra. 2011. “Feeling at Home. Producing and Consuming Things in Karenni Refugee Camps on the Thai-Burma Border”. *Population, Space and Place* 17: 742-755.

Fontanari, Elena. 2019. *Lives in Transit. An Ethnographic Study of Refugees’ Subjectivity across European Borders*. London: Routledge.

Grubiša, Iva. 2022. “From Prison to Refuge and Back. The Interplay of Imprisonment and Creating a Sense of Home in the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers”. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*.

Jefferson, Andrew, Simon Turner and Steffen Jensen. 2019. “Introduction. On Stuckness and Sites of Confinement”. *Ethnos. Journal of Anthropology* 84/1: 1-13.

Michalon, Bénédicte. 2013. “Mobility and Power in Detention. The Management of Internal Movement and Governmental Mobility in Romania”. In *Carceral Spaces. Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention*. Dominique Moran, Nick Gill and Deirdre Conlon, eds. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 37-55.

Petričević, Igor. 2022. *Beyond Transit. Precarious Emplacement and the Wavering Reception of Migrants in the City of Zagreb*. Dissertation. Stockholm University.

Pozniak, Romana and Duško Petrović. 2014. “Tražitelji azila kao prijetnja”. *Studia ethnologica Croatica* 26: 47-72.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-porin-prihvatili-scaron-te-za-trazitelje-azila-u-zagrebu-p?locale=en

Profiling in the Corridor

Marijana Hameršak, Iva Pleše

Shortly after the **long summer of migration** in 2015 and the establishment of state-tolerated or organized transit of **refugees** to central EU countries, countries along the **Balkan corridor** started to perform refugee selection as they distinguished "refugees from economic migrants", a practice sometimes even officially called profiling in Croatia. According to reports from organizations present in the field, the profiling in the **camp in Slavonski Brod** started on 18 November 2015, when 110 people, mostly men from countries such as Lebanon, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Morocco, Somalia and the Ivory Coast, were singled out and prevented from boarding the next train for Slovenia. On the other hand, the profiling started a few days earlier in Slovenia, when the police in the camp in Dobova singled out 71 men from Morocco and sent them to detention in Postojna (cf. Hameršak and Pleše 2018: 21).

When it was introduced, profiling implied the exclusion of anyone who does not come from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq (see **SIA**), but over time it became more and more restrictive. The heads of police services of Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia held a joint meeting in February 2016 and concluded that "the migration flow along the Western Balkans route has to be reduced to the greatest possible extent". Afterwards, people from Afghanistan were also no longer allowed to move through the corridor. In practice, profiling relied on selection according to available documents, country, region or place of origin or transit, appearance and skin color, linguistic and geographic *ad hoc* testing, **loaded exclusionary questions**, intimidation and violence (Banich et al. 2016a and 2016b). As a result of this increasingly rigorous and, at the same time, highly improvised selection of people, more and more refugees moved along the **counter-corridor**, while the number of people moving along the corridor to the west continuously decreased, thus creating the conditions for halting that direction of movement without major incidents (cf. Beznec et al. 2016: 49). Profiling, in addition, led to the separation of families or stratification among refugees. Filtering based on countries of origin generated a hierarchization of **refugees** and internal polarization among those who traveled along the corridor, dividing them into "us, the real refugees and others", a sentiment expressed by a young man from Syria in the camp in Slavonski Brod, interjecting while we spoke with another young man from Afghanistan.

23/4/2022

References

Banich, Selma, Lukas Gerbig and Adrienne Homberger. 2016a. *Report on Systemic Police Violence and Push-Backs against Non-SIA People Conducted by Croatian Authorities.*

Banich, Selma, Sunčica Brnardić, Marijana Hameršak, Sara Kekuš, Iva Marčetić, Mojca Piškor and Magda Sindičić. 2016b. *Izvješće o sustavnom kršenju ljudskih prava u zatvorenim dijelovima Zimskog prihvatno-tranzitnog centra u Slavonskom Brodu, od strane hrvatskih vlasti.*

Beznec, Barbara, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2016. *Governing the Balkan Route. Macedonia, Serbia and the European Border Regime.* Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. "Confined in Movement. The Croatian Section of the Balkan Corridor". In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and München: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 9-41.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-profilacija-u-koridoru-p?locale=en

Protest against Detention in Postojna

Uršula Lipovec Čebron, Jelka Zorn

In August 2020, various anti-racist groups, together with local residents, organized a protest in front of the Foreigners Centre in Veliki Otok near Postojna. Although the Centre is situated near the entrance of the Postojna Cave—a site visited by large crowds every year—it remains largely invisible to most residents.

This, however, was not always the case. The predecessor of the current Foreigners Centre and the Asylum Centre was the Transit Centre for Foreigners, which, since 1991, was located in the central part of Ljubljana (at 166 Celovška Road in the Šiška district). Its central location allowed researchers, activists, and the media to closely monitor its operations. Under pressure from the European Union, the facility was split in 2000 into two separate institutions: a completely closed Foreigners Centre on the outskirts of Postojna, and a semi-open Asylum Centre on the outskirts of Ljubljana.

This spatial separation is not coincidental, but rather a reflection of European migration policy, which differentiates between “refugees” and “illegal migrants”—a distinction that provides governments with justification for the increased repression of the latter (Zorn 2006). It is also no coincidence that both institutions have been relegated to marginal, industrial zones in their respective cities, areas often associated with landfills and bulk waste disposal sites—spaces where, along with other forms of waste, “human waste” is discarded (Bauman 2003).



Foreigners Center, Postojna. Photo: Luka Cjuha (Dnevnik, 14/10/2022.)

In these spaces of exclusion, anti-racist protests play a crucial role by exposing to the public the conditions in which people are detained and by expressing **solidarity** with them. The first major protest in front of the Foreigners Centre, demanding its closure, took place on July 22, 2006. It was organized in collaboration with activists from the No Border Camp. On that occasion, the police held four participants and slightly injured three journalists from Radio Marš.

In the years that followed, other protest actions took place, among them a notable protest concert by the multinational orchestra Etno HISTeRIA, which performed in front of the Centre on July 17, 2013. With music, the orchestra denounced the inhumane practice of detaining people and called for the Centre’s closure. As they stated in their public declaration:
”Musicians from twenty countries around the world strongly oppose the treatment of migrants as inferior beings, as non-humans! No one in this world is illegal! We demand the immediate closure of the Foreigners Centre in Postojna!”

The protest on August 25, 2020 was held in support of detainees on hunger strike. Among those detained were many asylum seekers who opposed their incarceration and the illegalisation of their status, while also drawing attention to the inadequate living conditions within the Centre. They demanded treatment in accordance with international standards of protection.

When we, the protesters, attempted to approach the Centre in order to speak with the people held behind bars, the police did not allow us to do so. As a result, we had to shout our questions at the top of our lungs, and they shouted their responses back. Many words were lost or distorted in the chain of translation—from Arabic to English to Slovene and back again—but we managed to record some of them.

What follows are fragments of conversations with people at a distance, spoken through bars and across a police cordon. The dialogue is presented in the form in which it occurred—a mixture of cries, exclamations, and the participation of many voices. We first spoke with people housed in the rear wing of the Centre building, and later with a group staying in makeshift shelters in an abandoned

warehouse.

Conversation with people housed in rooms in the rear wing of the Foreigners Centre:

– Is anyone sick?

– Yes, people are sick. Asthma, diabetes, kidney problems.

– Has a doctor come?

– No doctor has been here for a month. They give the same pill to everyone—painkillers, given by the police. There's a man here who's very ill; he's been here for eight months. He's very sick.

– Do the police give sleeping pills, sedatives?

– Yes, they regularly hand out sedatives. We don't have shampoo, soap for washing, or cleaning supplies to clean the rooms. There are 13 of us in one room.

Conversation with people housed in two containers in an abandoned warehouse:

– There's one room with 22 people in it. The other has 25. One toilet per room.

– Have you been to the Asylum Home in Ljubljana?

– Most of us applied for asylum; we were in the Asylum Centre in Ljubljana. Some have been here for three months. I've been here for two.

– Does anyone have health problems?

– Yes—there's asthma, and some have attempted suicide.

– What's the hardest thing for you?

– That they took our phones and we can't call home, can't call our families. Now the police are threatening us.

– What's happening—are the police threatening you now?

– The police are in our room right now, threatening us, beating us. [Communication is interrupted, shouting is heard, then the voices return.] There are women and children here. One child is two years old, another is three. The women don't have sanitary pads. This is not a camp—it's a brutal prison. The food here is for dogs, not for people. The bread is a week old. All these people... this is not a life.

– What are the police doing?

– Beating us, threatening us.

– Even now?

– Yes, even now. Every now and then they beat us and threaten us. There are sick people here, but there's no medicine, no doctor. A doctor came a month ago—exactly one month ago. They just give out painkillers. The same pills for everyone.

– What about sedatives?

– They put something in the food, so we get tired and sleep all day.

– What else do the police do?

– They beat us. Just now they told me to shut up. When I came here from Croatia, they beat me for an hour, set dogs on me. Now they want to deport me back to Croatia. Usually they deport after one month—I've been here for two. I'd rather go home. There are rats and insects in the room—they bite, and you itch all over. It's very hard to be here.

– What else is difficult?

*– Twenty-five people in one room—you wait 10, 20, even 30 minutes to use the toilet. The police refuse to speak English, they mock us, insult us, beat us. We want nothing more than freedom—*حرية *houria*.

The word حرية – houria (freedom) gradually echoed among the protesters on both sides of the fence at the Foreigners Centre. In addition to chanting "Freedom for all," we raised our voices and shouted: حرية houria, حرية houria.

22/1/2024

References

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2003. *Wasted Lives. Modernity and Its Outcasts*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Zorn, Jelka. 2006. "Od izjeme do norme. Centri za tujce, pridrževanje in deportacije". *Časopis za kritiko znanosti, domišljijo in novo antropologijo* 34/226: 54-73.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-protest-against-detention-p?locale=en

Pullback

Marta Stojić Mitrović, Marijana Hameršak

Pullback is a term used for the practice of pulling people on the move back, away from the borders they wish to cross. In a UN report from 2018, pullbacks are defined as operations that "are designed to physically prevent migrants from leaving the territory of their State of origin or a transit State (retaining State), or to forcibly return them to that territory, before they can reach the jurisdiction of their destination State". This means that, unlike the **pushback**, which is carried out when a person effectively crosses the border, pullbacks take place before that.

The term was created as a counterpart to the term "pushback", and similarly to it, it was initially associated with sea crossings. In this sense, pullbacks refer to intercepting and towing ships, primarily in the Mediterranean. Frontex refers to the combination of pushbacks (performed by EU agencies) and pullbacks (which are then performed by Turkey after being prompted by the EU) as a "prevention of departure".

Through a system of various agreements and programs and other forms of cooperation and exchange, the European Union formally includes countries located on the other side of its external borders in the implementation of pullbacks. As in other cases where the control of migration movements is externalized, states which are not members of the European Union are promised, among other things, political and economic privileges, primarily closer relations with the EU and significant financial incentives. Pullback, from a legal perspective, is also referred to as "refoulement by proxy" (Forensic Oceanography 2018). By encouraging and directly supporting pullbacks, the EU delegates the violation of the prohibition of non-refoulement, a fundamental principle in refugee law and "which, due to its importance, is considered part of customary international law", to countries outside the EU (Lalić Novak 2015: 367). Thus, the EU and Italy, despite the available information on torture and inhumane treatment conducted by the Libyan authorities and (para)militias towards people on the move, continuously encourage Libya to carry out pullbacks and provide assistance to do so through various agreements, among which the agreement from 2017 is especially significant, as well as through equipment, technical support, educational and coordination mechanisms (Forensic Oceanography 2018). In accordance with the Turkey-EU agreement in which Turkey, among other things, pledged to take "any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes", pullbacks continue to be a reality in the Aegean Sea today.

Pullbacks are not limited to maritime borders alone. We can witness them at the protests of people on the move at border crossings. For example, in October 2018, in connection with a protest at the border crossing between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the media reported: "The police of Bosnia and Herzegovina intervened at the Maljevac border crossing by moving a large group of migrants away from the border crossing, resulting in several people injured during the operation." The police forces of states which are not members of the EU are the ones physically preventing people on the move at EU border crossings from even approaching the border police of an EU Member State in order to request asylum within the legal framework.

During pullbacks, the police forces of the countries on both sides of the border frequently act in close operational cooperation and exchange information, tasks and personnel, including the engagement of police officers from EU Member States to operate with different mandates on the territories of neighboring non-EU states. The Croatian police, on the basis of a bilateral agreement between Croatia and Serbia in the period when the organized transit of refugees to Austria and Germany was in place, **profiled** people on the move at the railway station in **Šid** in Serbia, thus acting outside of Croatian territory, and prevented some people from entering the train and continuing their movement towards Croatia.

In addition to the direct interaction of EU countries with non-EU countries, effective pullbacks also occur through the "deliberate creation of passive circumstances" that lead to it, including, among other things, the effect of **weaponized landscapes**. For instance, Sea-Watch filed a legal claim against Frontex for deliberately withholding information about a ship in distress within the Maltese search and rescue zone: although the rescue ship *Sea-Watch 3* was the closest one to it, Frontex did not inform them, resulting in the Libyan coast guard eventually intercepting the ship in distress and returning it to the shores of Libya.

In a broader sense, the term pullback can be used to describe the actions of official actors (e.g., the police, army, etc.), but also of informal groups, aimed at physically displacing people on the move away from the border, preventing or making it difficult for them to cross it and exit their current country in the desired direction. In this sense, the operations of relocating people on the move from Ventimiglia and Como to the south of Italy (Tazzioli 2020) or from Calais to the interior of France, which means turning them away from the locations used for crossing borders into France and Great Britain, respectively, could also be understood as pullbacks. In the Balkans, Serbia can serve as an exemplary case, since police and gendarmerie units, i.e. special police forces, often carry out actions where they physically displace people on the move away from the northern borders of Serbia, thereby making it difficult for them to try to cross into EU countries and the **Schengen Area**. They usually take people to camps located deeper inside the territory of Serbia, even in the very south of the country. Pullbacks in Serbia are also carried out by informal anti-migrant groups (parapolice forces), who patrol border regions and improvised settlements in which people on the move reside, harassing them, robbing them, destroying their belongings, and even in some cases directly threatening them with violence and endangering their health and life, thus forcing them to retreat deeper into the country's territory. In the Serbian context, pullbacks are interpreted as a way of maintaining public order and peace, which are supposedly threatened by the unbound presence of people on the move, but also as an attempt by the state to eliminate "parallel structures" for reception of people on the move, i.e. any form that is not under the direct control of the state and its camp system. Therefore, the camp system can be seen as a passive instrument for pullbacks. A typical example is the request of the European Commission not to open camps for people on the move in Bosnia and Herzegovina that would be near the EU borders.

6/7/2022

References

Forensic Oceanography (Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani). 2018. *Mare Clausum. Italy and the EU's Undeclared Operation to Stem Migration across the Mediterranean.*

Lalić Novak, Goranka. 2015. "Načelo zabrane vraćanja i pristup sustavu azila. Dva lica iste kovanice". *Migracijske i etničke teme* 31/3: 365-385.

Tazzioli, Martina. 2020. "Governing Migrant Mobility Through Mobility. Containment and Dispersal at the Internal Frontiers of Europe". *Environment and Planning C. Politics and Space* 38/1: 3-19.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-pulbek-p?locale=en

Pushback

Marijana Hameršak, Bojan Mucko

Pushbacks, or push-backs, are expulsions of non-citizens, refugees and other migrants, most often to a neighboring country. They are **forced** backward movements carried out with minimal or no administrative procedure, or in a combination of formal and informal actions, orders and incidents, relying on means and techniques of control, surveillance, capture and detainment, even including extensive use of force, physical and other violence, weapons, nature as a **weaponized landscape**, etc. Pushbacks are carried out by the police, the military or other state security authorities with assistance from various actors, from local residents who report encounters with people on the move to the police, to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, formerly known as Frontex, which, for example, operates informally in Greece with the same mission, to private vessels hired by the Maltese government to divert ships with refugees and other migrants. The term entered use in Croatian during the period when the **Balkan corridor** was active, with the first reports on the **profiling** and expulsion of refugees from the corridor.

Pushbacks can be the topic of social disputes and continuous media spectacularization of the border, as is the case with Croatia or Greece (cf., e.g., Graf 2021; Popović et al. 2022), but also almost normalized when it comes to pushbacks from Hungary (cf. weekly reports of the Welcome! Initiative). While pushbacks in Hungary are carried out in the name of preserving national homogeneity and sovereignty (cf., e.g., Rajaram 2016) through newly adopted legal provisions (which allow pushbacks within an eight-kilometer radius from the border), in Croatia, they are generally executed in secret, usually at night, in secluded locations on the green border and in the name of controlling the EU's external border, which is how Croatia proves its readiness to join the **Schengen** area, and for which it receives abundant financial, logistical and political support from the most important bodies of the European Union (cf. Augustová and Sapoch 2020; Isakjee et al. 2020).

Countries, as shown by the examples of Greece and Croatia (Popović et al. 2022: 71, 137-138), can deny testimonies, documents, recordings and reports about pushbacks. Another approach is normalizing pushbacks, thereby integrating them into the security discourse and legislative framework, while also not shying away from fabricating legal fiction and euphemisms. According to official communications, the Croatian police do not carry out mass and forceful expulsions at the green border, but rather, as worded by the Schengen Borders Code, possibly *discourages* people from entry, as some other police forces apply readmissions (Italian *riamissione*), returns (Italian *respingimento*, Slovenian *vračanja*), refusal of entry / refusal at the border (Spanish *denegación de entrada / rechazo en frontera*) and other forms of expulsion that more or less overlap with pushbacks.



Photo collage from Bihać. Traces of pushback on a migrant's body and a border line carved into the landscape. Winter 2021. Photo: Bojan Mucko

Today, despite the fact that it is not a legal term, the word "pushback" is more frequently used in official communication, for example, in documents of the Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia or in committee meetings of the Croatian Parliament. Debates in the European Parliament have referred to pushbacks for a long time now, as well as discussions in the United Nations since recently. In these and related institutional frameworks, pushbacks are questioned and condemned for violating the prohibition of collective expulsion (cf. the *European Convention on Human Rights*), as the crime of enforced disappearance, which is in certain circumstances defined as the crime against humanity (cf. the *Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance*), for violating the principle of *non-refoulement* from the *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, denying the right to asylum, rights to life, rights of appeal, prohibitions against torture and inhumane treatment and other issues (cf. Keady-Tabbal and Mann 2021). From this perspective, pushback can also be seen as a euphemism, as a term that directly describes the manner and direction of forced movement, but which also obscures its causes and consequences. With the idea to use a term that is not necessarily part of the legal register, here we opt for its orthographic domestication, as in *pušbek,* or translation of the English term "pushbacks" using semantically and historically burdensome terms such as *protjerivanja* in the Croatian or *wywózki* in the Polish context. People on the move we spoke to rarely used the term "pushback." Instead, when communicating in English, they usually used the verb "deport," thus updating the term that was phased out of European legal nomenclature after the Second World War and the millions of people deported to death (cf. Kamto 2006: 244).

Pushback, in addition to denial (included in understanding pushbacks as a denial to enter the country), also implies physical pushing and shoving, and it was sometimes translated in the media as such, albeit very rarely, in Croatia, Serbia and the region or some EU documents. After all, the term entered the field of migration and **refugeehood** through reports on pushing ships and boats carrying

Vietnamese refugees away from the territorial waters of Southeast Asian countries in the 1970s (Grant 1979). During the 2000s, Italy and Malta started increasingly resorting to similar practices, pushing or towing refugee ships away from their shores, such as a pushback from 2005 described by Daniel from Eritrea with the following words: “The Maltese boat brought a rope. They tied it to our boat and towed us. After two hours as the sun was going down the Maltese boat changed direction and took us to Libya.” Since then, pushbacks have been continuously documented on the Greek-Turkish border, as well as on the borders between Spain and Morocco in Ceuta and Melilla (Karamanidou and Kasparek 2022: 21), and since the 2010s on the borders of Serbia and Bulgaria. Since the reactivation of border controls following the **long summer of migration**, pushbacks have been carried out on the French-Italian, Hungarian-Serbian, Croatian-Serbian borders and other borders along the corridor (cf. Karamanidou and Kasparek 2022: 16-17). Since 2018 and the diversion of movement to Bosnia and Herzegovina, pushbacks have intensified along its border with Croatia and on the Slovenian-Croatian border, as well as, somewhat later, on the borders of Austria and Italy with Slovenia. At the same time, countries on the Mediterranean Sea increasingly resort to **pullbacks** and strategies of ignoring vessels in distress (cf. **maritime cemetery**).

Recent forensic reconstructions of pushbacks carried out in the **forests** at the Poland-Belarus border, or on the Marica/Evros river on the border between Greece and Turkey, analytically dissect the events while separating and visualizing the pushback elements in these contexts. In the Croatian context, these elements include interception (on the road, on a train, in a bus, in an asylum center, in the forest, etc.) which can also take the form of capture (cf. **letter from a hiker**), which uses numerous technological means (cf. **forest cameras**, heartbeat detectors, drones, helicopters, ships, fences, etc.) and animals, primarily dogs (cf. **Candy** and **Bubo and Endi**), as well as immobilization and imprisonment (cf. **detention**) in police stations, but also in other places, and returning people to the border in police cars or unmarked white vans with no fresh air supply or with alternating heating and cooling. In addition to these cases, according to many articles, reports and testimonies we have heard, we should note the destruction and theft of property (**mobile phones**, chargers, money, documents, **backpacks**, clothes, shoes, etc.), humiliation and insults, stripping clothes, slapping, beating, shooting weapons (into the air, a car), and shoving people down slopes, into rivers, etc. Since the start of these incidents being systematically documented for Croatia in 2016 (cf. Hameršak 2021, cf. links published in the Open Letter of the CMS), pushbacks have become more and more common, and even more brutal. Aside from the mentioned forms of violence, today pushbacks are associated with sexual violence, including rape. Pushbacks indirectly and directly cause **border deaths**, including the death of **Madina Hussiny**, a girl from Afghanistan, who died during a pushback.



This content is only available in the online edition of e-ERIM. View it at:
https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-pu-scaron-bek-p?locale=en

As shown by various maps and reports, pushbacks are not unique to the countries at the “*limes* of the EU” (Andrijasevic and Walters 2010: 992), but are used as a technology for border control all over the world. In addition, although the media may leave a different impression, they are not limited by the number of people they affect, nor by the locations where they take place. Pushback can be the routine expulsion of one person over the green border, but also of hundreds or even thousands of people, as a pushback from 2016 involved North Macedonia banishing more than 1,500 people into Greece. Moreover, a pushback can start near the border line or deep within the national territory (cf. BVMN map) and can end in a neighboring country, or even in a neighboring country of a neighboring country, as well as a country in which the person in question had never set foot in beforehand. A few months after we met four-year-old Amir and his father in Bihać in the summer of 2018, the Croatian police banished them across the green border to Serbia, even though they had never been there before. The term chain pushback is sometimes used for successive pushbacks that run across several borders, for example from Austria to Slovenia, from Slovenia to Croatia, from Croatia to Serbia or to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Specifically related to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the complex relations between its internal, municipal, cantonal and entity borders, the literature sometimes refers to internal pushbacks (cf. Mlinarević and Ahmetašević 2019: 31).

Finally, pushbacks are not sporadic incidents, but “forms of systemic violence against refugees” (Bužinkić and Avon 2020). As Lena Karamanidou and Bernd Kasparek (2022) point out, they are not simply aberrations from the laws and values of the European Union that could be prevented through the rule of law and respect for human rights. Pushbacks are normalized border management technologies inherent in the Westphalian border system and embedded in the racialized, violent border regimes of liberal nation states (Karamanidou and Kasparek 2022: 14). Ultimately, they are a specific form of control and management of movement with movement (cf. Tazzioli 2017; Garelli and Tazzioli 2018), more precisely, with forced backward movement. However, they do not stop the movement in the long run. On the contrary, people on the move are almost forced to undertake new movements after pushbacks, a new attempt to cross the border or a new **game**, when discussing the **Balkan route** context. They can decide to go on a new game on the same day, or spend weeks or months in preparation. The game, as well as those that come after, can end in a pushback, which people on the move count in the high double digits, just as they count the number of games. Thus, pushbacks are repetitive, like the game of which they are a part (cf. Jovanović 2021: 446), and they often result in hypermobility and chaotic, constant circulation of people in a very limited territory, as if they were contained in movement (see **pushbacks maps; map of R*’s journey from Tunisia** and **Balkan circuit**). At the same time, in order to avoid new pushbacks, people on the move try to **appropriate** elements of the same migration management system to which pushbacks belong. One such tactic involves a gender and age division of the group and a *game* with multiple phases that starts with the transition of groups that are systemically labeled as vulnerable (women and children) and which enables a subsequent attempt at “family reunification” with other members of the group. This type of tactical

invention implies taking over categories from the spectrum of **vulnerability** in order to subvert the system and continue the movement, even at the high cost of indefinite waiting, being stuck and family separation.

Firts published: 19/11/2022. Revisions: 16/5/2023; 26/5/2023; 13/5/2024.



Border Violence Monitoring recordings , 2018
The video is available in the online edition of e-ERIM:
http://www.borderviolence.eu/wp-content/uploads/bvm_4_klein.mp4?_=1

References

Andrijasevic, Rutvica and William Walters. 2010. “The International Organization for Migration and the International Government of Borders”. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28/6: 977-999.

Augustová, Karolína and John Sapoch. 2020. “Border Violence as Border Deterrence. Condensed Analysis of Violent Push-Backs from the Ground”. *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 5/1: 219-231.

Bužinkić, Emina and Maddalena Avon. 2020. “Pushback as Technology of Crimmigration”. In *Causes and Consequences of Migrant Criminalization.* Neža Kogovšek Šalamon, ed. Cham: Springer, 157-170.

Garelli, Glenda and Martina Tazzioli. 2018. “The Biopolitical Warfare on Migrants. EU Naval Force and NATO Operations of Migration Government in the Mediterranean”. *Critical Military Studies* 4/2: 181-200.

Graf, Laura. 2021. “Pushbacks dokumentieren. Ungehorsame Beobachtungen von Grenzgewalt auf der Balkanroute”. In *Kämpfe um Migrationspolitik seit 2015*. Sonja Buckel, Laura Graf, Judith Kopp, Neva Löw and Maximilian Pichl, eds. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 93-124.

Grant, Bruce. 1979. *The Boat People.* New York: Penguin.

Hameršak, Marijana. 2021. “Between Supporting and Reporting. Grassroots Textual Responses to the Pushbacks at the Fringes of EU”. *Intersections: EEJSP* 7/2: 49-72.

Isakjee, Arshad, Thom Davies, Jelena Obradović-Wochnik i Karolína Augustová. 2020. “Liberal Violence and the Racial Borders of the European Union”. *Antipode* 52/6: 1751-1773.

Jovanović, Teodora. 2021. “Forced (Im)Mobilities En Route. ‘Justified’ Violence of the Border Regime in Balkans”. *Glasnik Etnografskog instituta SANU* 69/2: 433-455.

Kamto, Maurice. 2006. “Second Report on the Expulsion of Aliens. Report of the Special Rapporteur of the International Law Commission”. Geneva: UN.

Karamanidou, Lena and Bernd Kasparek. 2022. “From Exception to Extra-Legal Normality. Pushbacks and Racist State Violence against People Crossing the Greek–Turkish Land Border”. *State Crime Journal* 11/1: 12-32.

Keady-Tabbal, Niamh and Itamar Mann. 2021. “'Pushbacks' as Euphemism”. *EJIL:Talk! Blog of the European Journal of International Law.*

Mlinarević, Gorana and Nidžara Ahmetašević. 2019. *People on the Move in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018. Stuck in the Corridors to the EU*. Sarajevo: Heinrich Böll Stiftung.

Popović, Helena, Kruno Kardov and Drago Župarić-Iljić. 2022. *Medijske reprezentacije migracija. Diskurzivne konstrukcije migranata, izbjeglica i tražitelja azila u hrvatskim medijima*. Zagreb: Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade Republike Hrvatske.

Rajaram, Prem Kumar. 2016. “Whose Migration Crisis?”. *Intersections: EEJSP* 2/4: 5-10.

Tazzioli, Martina. 2017. “Containment Through Mobility at the Internal Frontiers of Europe”. *Border Criminologies Blog.*

Pushback maps

Morgane Dujmovic

In April 2024, when I set up my research device in front of the Lipa and Borići camps, my presence generated a word-of-mouth reaction, as someone identified as a writer specialised in border issues. People encamped there came to meet me to tell me about their **game** – according to the name given to the repeated attempts to cross the border, often followed by *refoulement*. From these numerous testimonies, a unanimous phrase emerged: “Police of Croatia: problem!”

The inhabitants of Bihać are at outposts to observe the repressive practices of the Croatian police. **Taxi drivers**, in particular, are regularly contacted after pushbacks, to take people from the place of *refoulement* or **pushback** (usually an isolated area in the **forest** or mountains), to the town of Bihać or the **Lipa camp**. As one of the drivers I met in Lipa explained:

We help them, it's for money, but we help them. They have enormous problems crossing the border. The Croatian police beat them up, take their money and phones and send them dogs. I've seen this violence first-hand.

Of the twenty-four exiles I met in Lipa, twenty-three had already tried to cross to Croatia. Most were on their fifth or sixth failed crossing; one had tried 26 times. During their refoulement, none of these people had received a copy of any document. This was the case for H*, R*, T* or U*, who did not even see a single written document during their *refoulement*. This is also the case for B*, who explains that he “signed a lot of papers, without understanding anything because they were in Croatian”.

The reason is simple: a large proportion of these deportations are carried out illegally. They even take place outside the frameworks built up over the last twenty years to organize expulsions, such as readmission agreements. The latter have proliferated under the impetus of European institutions in order to enable the rapid removal of a person to a state in which he or she has merely been staying or transiting.

The rationale behind the signature of readmission agreements is to enable accelerated state-to-state removals from an EU Member State to a non-EU Balkan State (of their own nationals or third-country nationals). In addition, the model promoted in the follow-up to EU applications encourages Balkan states to sign readmission agreements with third states from which many exiled persons originate. Pakistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, have concluded a readmission agreement in November 2020, effective since July 2021, as mentioned in a Commission's staff working document.

Readmission procedures are, however, subject to minimum procedural guarantees - in particular, receiving a written decision on the grounds for removal, being informed of one's rights and being able to understand the decision in a known language.

The recorded illegal removals go even further: they openly violate the *European Convention on Human Rights* (which prohibits collective expulsions on motives which are not individualized) and the 1951 *Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, which alone should guarantee the principle of *non-refoulement*. According to this principle, states are prohibited from returning an individual to a country where his or her life or freedom is seriously threatened – i.e., if the individual is at risk of persecution, torture or degrading treatment on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. *Non-refoulement* implies that all requests for asylum must be registered, and that the person making the request must be protected while his or her application is examined.

This text is included in the *acquis communautaire* and secondary legislation on asylum, with which both European institutions and Member States must comply. Nonetheless asylum requests expressed in Croatian border regions are not taken into account, as all testimonies concur in affirming. People seeking protection are well aware of this, and many have experienced it first-hand during their own *refoulement*: the aim of the game at this border is not simply to enter Croatian territory, but to reach the capital, Zagreb, where current practices are reputed to be more respectful of the right to asylum.

B*, a young Syrian who had just been turned back to Bihać despite his request for asylum to the Croatian police, put it simply: it is *“a strange game, a completely crazy game!”.* When we met, he was stunned by the idea that an institution could act so openly illegally on European soil.

A word has become widespread to describe the increasingly frequent refoulements carried out outside the legal framework: *pushback*. Its variation, “*to get* pushedback”, has also become commonplace. The Balkan-based Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) estimates that the term first appeared with the mass illegal returns from Croatia and Hungary to Serbia from 2016 onwards, when the official Balkan migration corridor closed (Bužinkić and Hameršak 2018; Dujmovic 2016). More generally, pushbacks are used in all chain removals from Austria to the southern Balkans – as documented notably by the *Push Back Alarm Austria* initiative from 2021. Illegal refoulements have also been widely observed at the internal borders of the **Schengen area**: in France, the Association nationale d'assistance aux frontières pour les étrangers (Anafé) publishes numerous reports on the subject, notably on the French-Spanish border. At the French-Italian border in particular, the recurrent practice of illegal pushbacks led to a ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union on 21 September, 2023. This ruling was echoed in a decision by the French Council of State on 2 February, 2024, clarifying the procedures for carrying out removals to Italy, followed by a framework decision issued by the French Ombudsman on 26 April, 2024, after a two-year investigation at the French-Italian border.

The corollary of pushbacks is the outpouring of violence made possible by the absence of rights. There have been countless reports by researchers (Robert 2021), associations (No Name Kitchen 2023; Amnesty International 2024) and institutions such as the United Nations documenting the violence perpetrated by police forces in the Balkan states, particularly since 2016 and the closure of the formal Balkan corridor. Now, the thousands of stories collected add up to a sum. Those compiled by the BVMN network can be consulted in an online database and an open-access *Black Book of Pushbacks*, a veritable painstaking effort to reconstruct the sequence of events and their massive nature. The first *Black Book*, published in 2020, listed 12,000 cases of violence, depicted on

1,500 pages; the second edition of the *Black Book*, published two years later, in 2022, counted 25,000 cases on 3,000 pages of description (more than double).

The map below spatializes these acts of violence and attempts to reveal, behind the numbers, the individuality of the people who gave their testimony – whose identities are anonymized by the drawing.



Bearing witness: solidarity in voice and deed, 2022, Morgane Dujmovic

Data for Italy and Slovenia are not shown on this map, although it should be noted that violence is also recorded there. A case of violence counted is likely to concern the same person, if that person has been violated during different *refoulements* (multiple counts). This map was originally published in Migreurop's atlas (4th edition), published in 2022.

Detailed testimonies, compiled by BVMN according to a precise methodology, report various types of violence: insults; beatings; blows and injuries; theft, confiscation and destruction of property; dog attacks; armed threats; mutilation. Some practices are particularly inventive: intimidation and humiliation, such as marking people with a cross of red paint on the head, or forced undressing. They also deliberately endanger people by forcing them to swim out to sea or into icy rivers.

Testimonies go as far as allegations of rape and torture, which have been relayed by Amnesty International, among others, and taken up in court rulings. For example, in January 2021, the Court of Rome issued a judgment in favour of a claimant who had been subjected to illegal chain-removal between Italy, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, based on the testimony he had given to BVMN and the report of Italian NGO ASGI which details the nature of the violence perpetrated by the Croatian police. In addition, BVMN carries out a monitoring of pushback litigation. This work by civil society volunteers, has become a necessity for documenting the facts, in the absence of any investigation by the public authorities.

10/11/2025

This text is taken from the series of portfolio articles “Rivers are deadly if you're not on the right side” previously published on Mediapart, Le Courrier des Balkans, visioncarto.net and Migreurop. This series of portfolio articles is the result of field research carried out in the spring of 2024 in several South-East European countries: Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. This publication is sent to all interlocutors met in the field. To preserve their anonymity, the exiled people are referred to here by a randomly assigned letter, with their consent.

Author would like to thank the exiled people she met on these roads and along these rivers, the people from the collectives, associations, universities and institutions with whom she spoke, as well as Louis Fernier, Romain Kosellek, Eva Ottavy, Elsa Putelat and Marijana Hameršak for their invaluable contributions prior to and during this field mission.

References

Bužinkić, Emina and Marijana Hameršak, eds. 2018. *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context.* Zagreb: Zagreb and Munich: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V.

Dujmovic, Morgane. 2016. “Balkans, du corridor au cul-de-sac”. *Plein droit* 111/4: 23-26.

Migreurop, Casella and Colombeau Sara, ed. 2022. *Atlas des migrations dans le monde. Libertés de circulation, frontières,* inégalités. 4th edition. Paris: Armand Colin.

Robert, Harold. 2021. “Frontières. Le 'game' des exilé·es, mythe de Sisyphe contemporain”. *Visionscarto.net*.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-karte-pusbekova-p?locale=en

Pushing Corpses Along the Kolpa River

Katja Čakić

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-potiskanje-trupel-po-kolpi-p?locale=en

Rafting Down the Kolpa River

Aneja Kralj

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-spust-po-kolpi-p?locale=en

Railway station from another perspective - audio tour

Bojan Mucko, Romana Pozniak

This ethnographic walk, instructed by an audio narration, is designed to introduce participants to migration movements in/through Croatia, focusing on the zone of public space gravitating around the Main Railway Station in Zagreb and the space of everyday life of people on the move. It relates particularly to the period of flexibilization of **transit** from mid-2022 to mid-2023 which has occurred after years of intensive police violence. Audio-tour was created on the basis of field notes of researchers gathered by the project *European Irregularized Migration Regime at the Periphery of the EU: from Ethnography to Keywords* (ERIM). Historical, observational-interpretive and phenomenological perspectives are intertwined in a multi-layered narrative. It is conceptualized in the same time as a form of presentation of the research insights and as a tool for independent ethnographic research of public space.



The tour has two connected parts; first part starts at the location 1 – plateau in front of the post office at the main railway station (Glavni kolodvor), right next to the steam engine “Crna Katica”.

Second part starts at location 2 – Trg kralja Tomislava, around the monument of King Tomislav on the horse (one-minute walk from the first location).

There is an **audio track** designed for each part/location which enables individualized or group walk, instructed by an audio narration, without physical presence of the tour guide.

Attached below you can find **two audio files** and a **tour handout** with instructions. We kindly ask you to download the files on your phones, or you can open them directly from the attachment.

Please bring and use headphones.

5/9/2024

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-kolodvor-iz-druge-perspektive-audio-tura-p?locale=en

Refugeehood

Duško Petrović, Drago Župarić-Iljić

Available only in Croatian.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-izbjeglica-izbjegli-scaron-tvo-p?locale=en

Rescue Operations

Marijana Hameršak, Romana Pozniak

In places where crossing the border to the Global North is a matter of life and **death** for thousands of people, a special kind of border is created. This border, which William Walters calls a humanitarian border (2011: 138), is characterized by the parallel, even synergistic, action of securitarian and humanitarian logic, and rescue operations constitute one of its integral parts.

For decades, various activist and state, technopolitical operations, vessels and crews focused on saving the lives of refugees and other migrants have been operating on the Mediterranean Sea (see **maritime cemetery**), which is, for many, a symbol of the humanitarian border. The most famous such undertaking is the military-humanitarian operation Mare Nostrum, initiated by the Italian government in 2013, which introduced saving lives into the mandate of border control missions (Cuttitta 2018: 638). Mare Nostrum was succeeded by Frontex's (today: Border and Coast Guard Agency) operation Triton, much less supported in terms of finances, equipment and personnel, focused on rescuing those who were already close to their goal in the northern part of the Mediterranean. Frontex justified keeping Triton's vessels close to the Italian coast with the following argument, which speaks volumes about the twisted priorities of this operation. Had the people crossing the Mediterranean been rescued closer to the Libyan coast, it could be expected that more people would have been saved, but this would lead to a decrease in the cost, duration and danger of the migration, and ultimately to an increase in the number of **irregularized** crossings (Frontex, according to Cusumano 2019: 11). Thus, Triton and similar operations, in accordance with the principles of organized hypocrisy, carried out a "relatively limited number of search and rescue operations, prioritizing border control and anti-smuggling tasks" (Cusumano 2019: 4). In addition to state, military and similar actors, rescue operations in the Mediterranean are simultaneously carried out by activists, and even "regular citizens" who, united in various groups, form a self-organized, as Maurice Stierl (2018) terms it, humanitarian fleet. Some of them, such as the Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS), continued the tradition of apolitical, to some extent close cooperation with the authorities, while the majority, including Sea-Watch and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), tried to not only act independently, but also to shed light on the illegalities, violence, avoiding and ignoring calls for rescue, which is why they were subjected to criminalization (cf. Stierl 2018).

Unlike rescue operations in the Mediterranean, saving lives in countries on the **Balkan route** is generally not carried out as part of rescue operations focused on refugees and other migrants, but are incorporated into national civil protection systems, and are, in the case of emergencies in nature, performed on "'inaccessible', 'rough,' 'hilly' and 'wooded' terrain, even in locations with 'mines', in harsh, cold weather" (Popović et al. 2022: 67) based on individual reports. In contrast to self-organized life-saving actions in the Mediterranean, non-governmental organizations, activist groups and individuals on the Balkan migration route deal with rescue only indirectly and sporadically. In these instances, the people on the move whose lives are threatened are referred to state rescue services, as was the case in the rescue of a "twenty-two-year-old migrant from Afghanistan" after the local Protection and Rescue Service in Pljevlja was contacted by an "activist from the non-governmental sector." One such example points to, in addition to the mediating role of activists in state-coordinated rescue operations, the two-fold responsibility of state actors and services – their responsibility for endangering life and their responsibility for saving it – the action was initiated after a member of a non-governmental organization from Belgrade received a call for help from a family of seven banished into a forest near the Serbian-Bulgarian border, immediately after they were issued decisions on the intention to initiate asylum applications in Serbia (Stojić Mitrović et al. 2020: 52-53).

In non-EU countries, such as Montenegro, Serbia or Bosnia and Herzegovina, where everyday life and the movement of people on the move have been significantly less criminalized for years, which meant they were not exposed to dangerous situations or death as often, news about saving lives is not presented in the media to the same extent and are not part of the strategy of humanitarianization of border control, for which Croatia is an extreme example. The Croatian police regularly issue detailed public announcements on the rescues and publishes press releases and media articles with such information in a dedicated section on its website. Headlines such as "42 Migrants Found Near Novska, Saved at the Last Minute from Suffocating" or "Dramatic Rescue: Migrants Stuck in Deep Snow, Police Officers Carry Hypothermic Children in Their Arms" in the tried and tested tradition of combining compassion with repression (Fassin 2005) add a "humanitarian note" to a context otherwise shaped almost exclusively as an issue of security (Hameršak and Pleše 2021). They introduce news about their rescue into the discursive field hitherto focused on the capture of migrants, and sometimes make it difficult to conclude whether the incident is actually a capture operation that is presented as a rescue operation, i.e., a rescue/capture, which is an expression sometimes used in the literature (e.g. Fontanari et al. 2022: 75).



Photo: Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, 16 January 2019

In this context, rescue operations, as Maurizio Albahari (2015) noted for such actions in the Mediterranean, are presented as individual spectacles, isolated, one-time events in the discourse and in the media. That is additionally emphasized in news reports about rescue operations that are already spectacularized at the location where they take place, such as the rescue operation on the Dragonja River

on the Croatian-Slovenian border during the winter of 2021, when hundreds of police officers and other people from both sides of the border searched for a little girl, in actuality for her body, who disappeared in the river during the night. In these kinds of news reports, people on the move are portrayed as victims who need the help of others. They are exhausted and hypothermic, and the police officers help them, saving them from danger, nourishing them with drinks and food, and even carrying them in their arms to doctors and ambulances when necessary. Numerous articles “in which the police ‘rescues’ cold, tired, exhausted women, sometimes pregnant, as the brave police saviors ‘carry them in their arms’ and even help them give birth in the forest” mobilize the archetypal categories of women and men, in which men are “dynamic, active, they move, and women are static, passive and vulnerable, they stand still in place” (Popović et al. 2022: 11).



Photo: Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, 22 October 2021

In short, by spectacularization, victimization and individualization of guilt, reports on rescue operations ultimately skillfully conceal that the border control system, the visa regime and restrictive migration policies generally force people on the move to hide in nature or in means of transport, that this system consciously and deliberately leaves them in danger, even exposes them to it, as well as the fact that, in the end, their saviors are the same people they flee and from whom they hide. A certain number of cases also leave the impression that they are literally aimed at production of media events or presenting rescue operations as media events. For example, in the days following the release of another series of videos and other evidence of routine and violent pushbacks from Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the media reported on the rescue of migrants, families with children near Mrežnica and Topusko. Similarly, the reaction to the Human Rights Watch report was published on the Ministry of the Interior’s website on the same day as a report stating that “even today, thanks to the quick reaction of the Croatian police, a family of five was taken care of” in the area of Korenica. Along with emphasizing the care and efficiency of Croatian police officers, the text states that the police checks all reports from non-governmental organizations, despite the fact that they “usually do not contain enough information for a criminal investigation” and despite the fact that “when investigating allegations from the accusations thus far,” there have been several cases involving “false reporting.” Thus, it is no surprise that, in a turn of events, some media recognize the police playing politics and boasting in press releases about rescue operations, which they point out to their readers in the editorial elements, primarily with lines above the headlines such as Police Brags About Rescuing Migrants: Polish Couple Crams 12 of Them into Camper, Another 19 Found near Jasenovac or Police Boasts: Six Exhausted Migrants Rescued in Forest near Plješevica.



Photo: Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, 7 August 2019

The idea that this is a strategic heroization and humanitarianization of the police is also supported by the practice of combining news about rescue operations with police press releases, such as a news report from the beginning of 2019, which ends with the following appeal, mirroring the Call to organizations operating in states along the so-called Balkan Route published a month earlier: “to inform migrants on the rules of legal entry into the Republic of Croatia, to warn them of the danger, hazard and uncertainty of such a journey

and to dissuade them from such intentions, in order to prevent possible injuries, freezing and severe suffering of illegal migrants."

Finally, the police and its representatives also directly refer to rescue operations when reacting to new accusations or evidence of border violence, especially those coming from abroad. Responding to an article published by The Guardian on violent pushbacks, beatings and sexual abuse on Croatia's borders, the Croatian Minister of the Interior underlined that the media making the accusations "never, interestingly, said anything about how the Croatian police acts humanely" (cf. also presentations at the session of the parliamentary Committee on Human and National Minority Rights). He expressed similar points at a press conference addressing the verdict against Croatia for the death of **Madina Hussiny**:

> You yourself, at least some of you, have reported on the many times the Croatian police rescued migrants who had drowned or would have drowned in rivers. How many times have Croatian police officers carried pregnant women and children to the nearest medical institutions, which then provided them with health care and help. I always try, and will always continue doing so, as long as I hold this position, to point out the fact that Croatian police officers act in accordance with the law. And they act in a humanitarian and humane way.

The political and media landscape described in broad strokes in this text, in which rescue operations have a prominent place, generally lacks questions on the relationship between the Schengen and visa systems and drownings at the Slovenian-Croatian, Schengen border, but also at the borders between Croatia and its neighboring non-EU countries. These questions ask why people on the move even have to hide in vans, trucks and forests? Why do they have to move during the night and through snow, and cross rivers over waterfalls instead of bridges? Media articles about rescue operations mostly do not touch on these questions, nor do they try to answer them. Quite the contrary, as noted by Pallister-Wilkins (2017) in relation to rescue operations in the Mediterranean, they implicitly or explicitly mobilize narratives of self-responsibility or, ultimately, the irresponsibility of migrants who embarked on such a dangerous journey alone or with their families, found reckless and greedy smugglers who packed them into cars and vans, or got into a boat by themselves or in an organized operation, moved through forests and minefields, knowing that there was a very real possibility that they would die on their journey because of the Balkan winter, deep snow, numerous rivers, forests, landslides and other hazards.

In short, the European Union and its Member States react to the contradictory demands to simultaneously save lives and reduce the number of border crossings – which, for countries on its external border, is underscored by the possibility of activating the **Dublin Regulation** and subsequent mass deportations of rescued persons who continue their journey to other European Union countries – by spectacularizing humanitarianism and the border in the form of rescuing distant foreigners, on the one hand, and continuous efforts to keep foreigners at a distance in the long term, on the other (Pallister-Wilkins 2020: 997). Rescue, as pointed out by Tazzioli (2015), does not imply salvation at all, because it can be followed by cycles of expulsion, **pushbacks** or **pullbacks**, **detentions** or waiting.

11/11/2022

References

Albahari, Maurizio. 2015. *Crimes of Peace. Mediterranean Migrations at the World's Deadliest Border.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Cusumano, Eugenio. 2019. "Migrant Rescue as Organized Hypocrisy. EU Maritime Missions Offshore Libya between Humanitarianism and Border Control". *Cooperation and Conflict* 54/1: 3-24.

Cuttitta, Paolo. 2018. "Repoliticization Through Search and Rescue? Humanitarian NGOs and Migration Management in the Central Mediterranean". *Geopolitics* 23/3: 632-660.

Fassin, Didier and Paula Vasquez. 2005. "Humanitarian Exception as the Rule. The Political Theology of the 1999 Tragedia in Venezuela". *American Ethnologist* 32/3: 389-405.

Fontanari, Elena, Stephan Scheel, Vicki Squire and Martina Tazzioli. 2022. "Refuge". In *Minor Keywords of Political Theory. Migration as a Critical Standpoint. A Collaborative Project of Collective Writing.* Nicholas De Genova and Martina Tazzioli, eds. Special issue of *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 40/4: 73-89.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2021. "Forest, forest, forest. Sometimes we sleep. Walking, sleep, walking, sleep. It's dangerous on this way. Weaponized Migration Landscapes at the Outskirts of the European Union". *Etnološka tribina* 51/44: 204-221.

Pallister-Wilkins, Polly. 2017. "Humanitarian Rescue/Sovereign Capture and the Policing of Possible Responses to Violent Borders". *Global Policy* 8/S1: 19-24.

Pallister-Wilkins, Polly. 2020. "Hotspots and the Geographies of Humanitarianism". *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 38/3: 991-1008.

Popović, Helena, Kruno Kardov and Drago Župarić-Iljić. 2022. *Medijske reprezentacije migracija. Diskurzivne konstrukcije migranata, izbjeglica i tražitelja azila u hrvatskim medijima*. Zagreb: Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade Republike Hrvatske.

Stierl, Maurice. 2018. "A Fleet of Mediterranean Border Humanitarians". *Antipode* 50/3: 704-724.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta, Nidžara Ahmetašević, Barbara Beznec and Andrej Kurnik. 2020. *The Dark Sides of Europeanisation. Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EUropean Border Regime*. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung for Southeast Europe.

Tazzioli, Martina. 2015. "The Politics of Counting and the Scene of Rescue". *Radical Philosophy* 192: 2-6.

Walters, William. 2011. “Foucault and Frontiers. Notes on the Birth of the Humanitarian Border”. In *Governmentality. Current Issues and Future Challenges.* Ulrich Bröckling, Susanne Krasmann and Thomas Lemke, eds. London: Routledge, 138-164.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-saving-lives-p?locale=en

Resettlement

Drago Župarić-Iljić

Available only in Croatian.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/preseljenje?locale=en

Resilience Humanitarianism

Romana Pozniak

Although humanitarianism is a broad term that encompasses different interpretations and practices of aid, so-called classical humanitarianism (Hilhorst 2018), whose meaning and principles of action were created in Western liberal countries, is associated with action in emergency situations. These situations mainly involve the intervention of international organizations and their characteristic standardization of humanitarian work (Hilhorst 2018). Apart from clearly distinguishing “crisis” from “normal” situations, the classical paradigm of humanitarian action exacerbates and reproduces the asymmetric power relationship between those who provide aid and victims, creating the image of the ideal victim: passive, helpless and obedient. This is one of the principal reasons why humanitarianism has been considerably criticized in the literature (cf. Malkki 1996; Harrell-Bond 2002; Fassin 2012).

The classical paradigm dominated the field of humanitarian work until the end of the 20th century; however, in recent decades it has been gradually and partially replaced by a paradigm that Dorothea Hilhorst (2018) calls “resilience humanitarianism.” One of the most important factors, but not the only one, that prompted this transformation are the more robust connections between development agencies, i.e. organizations involved in designing and managing political and economic processes in post-war and post-crisis environments, and organizations providing aid in immediate crises. More precisely, the approach and scope of these two groups are more connected, which ultimately leads to developing a new approach to humanitarianism aimed at shifting the focus to the people who receive aid and encouraging them to become resilient and become more independent. Given that, since the beginnings of its modern, liberal variant (cf. Barnett 2011, Rozakou 2020), humanitarianism has been embroiled in disputes on the role and purpose of humanitarian organizations, instead of dividing it into classic humanitarianism and resilience humanitarianism, it is more apt to discuss directions and ideas that most often overlap, and whose application depends on conditions, type of organization, context, etc. (Hilhorst 2018).

Along with the work of development and humanitarian organizations being more connected, the creation of this new variant of humanitarianism – which Mark Duffield (2019) calls post-humanitarianism, highlighting how it is conditioned by information technologies – was influenced by a change in the perception of crises and crisis management. Unlike the earlier interpretation of crisis as something located outside society, in late-stage capitalism, crises are starting to be interpreted as an integral part of everyday life. The techniques used for managing these situations are moved to the level of individuals, and priority is given to developing internal resilience, adaptability and elasticity in order to successfully anticipate risks, accept changes and recover from suffering (Duffield 2012 and 2019).

As stated by Hilhorst (2018), the increasing continuity between “crisis” and “normality” can also be found in UN reports, which begin to perceive crisis as a new normality. For instance, the World Humanitarian Summit held in 2016 emphasized the importance of combining humanitarian action with development and peace-building programs, while the Global Compact on Refugees (2018) – in an effort to provide a framework of possible solutions and methods for managing “refugee crises” – noted the importance of encouraging resilience in persons seeking/receiving protection, as well as the possibility of finding solutions in local contexts and in so-called third countries (Hilhorst 2018: 6). In addition to the fact that the Global Compact on Refugees (2018), as well as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018), encourages the externalization of migration policies, by promoting the independence of refugees it directly or indirectly calls upon neoliberal imperatives, such as self-entrepreneurship, which place responsibility for dealing with perilous and extraordinary circumstances, the immediate quality of life, and even the realization of **refugee status**, on the person in search of protection.

This “post-social humanitarian regime” (Duffield 2019: 19) is a consequence of a wider social situation and does not only refer to the structures of managing precarious, displaced, **irregularized** and other populations. General uncertainty, suspense and disintegration of the social sphere (Rose 1996) – primarily the collapse of publicly available and free social, healthcare and educational services – are becoming common aspects of contemporary society, even norms that determine the possibilities of personal and professional activity. In this context, everyone is expected to improve their capacities in terms of resilience, adaptability and elasticity in order to become resistant to crisis situations. The imperative of the “entrepreneurial self” (Bröckling 2016) contributes to the normalization of extraordinary situations by steering individuals and populations to persistent improvement, with constant risk prediction and adaptation to uncertain professional and life circumstances. In this sense, the goals of humanitarianism are no longer aimed at controlling emergency situations, but at optimizing the behavior of populations and individuals affected by them (Duffield 2019: 21).

In addition to Mark Duffield, the term post-humanitarianism is also used by Lilie Chouliaraki (2013 and 2021) in her analysis of media reporting on humanitarian issues. She notes the transformation of scenes of “the pain of others” (Sontag 2005) – a kind of photorealism that was previously used to elicit sympathy among viewers/readers – into scenes of self-sacrificing humanitarians, idealistic donors who serve as moral role models for citizens of the Global North. Shifting attention from the pain of others to the “western actor” is a consequence of the so-called sympathy fatigue and skepticism that occurs with constant exposure to “iconographies of suffering” (Chouliaraki 2021: 424). However, by focusing on the activities and responsiveness of western actors, the post-humanitarian representation only deepened the gap between “helpers” and “victims” (“us” and “them”), and transformed the earlier “morality of pity” into the individualized morality of the postmodern citizen, which continues to obfuscate structural causes of suffering (Chouliaraki 2021: 426).

When looking at the practices of the refugee regime, patterns of post-humanitarianism can be seen in the integration activities of local and international organizations. In an interview conducted as part of dissertation research (Pozniak 2022), one interlocutor, in charge of the integration of persons under international protection at that time, referred to the difficulties in “adjusting the viewpoints” of persons who received international protection without questioning the very concept of integration, nor the assumption that refugees should adapt to the system, and not the other way around:

> This was a really demanding job, not as much in contact with them, but rather in adjusting their viewpoints and perception of the system of the Republic of Croatia. In other words, integration. They came here to integrate. I had to correct them in certain codes, but the biggest problem I had was with domestic institutions.

In addition to equating integration to "correcting" the behavior of persons under international protection, this fragment illustrates the complex relationship between the normalization of the image of obedient and adaptable refugees and the criticism of the missing and/or deficient state and local infrastructure that was a factor in the work of this employee. During the conversation, the same interlocutor stated that he knew that his words might sound "callous," but that this was an "operating mode" that had helped him overcome the difficult moments that come with humanitarian work. He also added:

> Another thing, these people are pretty much, by nature, inert and not really interested in working on a regular basis, like eight hours a day. These are people who are used to a casual lifestyle, used to the fact that time is absolutely irrelevant. There have been several situations where they would be hired, but they said they had various diseases. If they get a job, they lose their welfare rights, they lose the right to housing and become an even bigger local problem.

From his criticism of the resourcefulness of refugees, such as retaining the right to social assistance by avoiding work, we can infer that this worker tried to encourage the self-realization of refugees as obedient, but self-responsible subjects. Thus, it seems as though the goal of post-humanitarian integration is the creation of a diligent and obedient workforce that is independent, proactive and resilient to the extent set by support programs: seemingly flexible, but still disciplined, humble and grateful in the optimal use of its capacities. Therefore, unless they are combined with diligence and obedience, resourcefulness and proactivity (preferred characteristics of the neoliberal subject), paradoxically, do not fit the profile of the ideal victim.

Resilience humanitarianism did not, therefore, reject the idea of passive and obedient victims, but added new characteristics to the existing image. The habitus of the ideal refugee now includes the ambivalent figure of a disciplined but resilient refugee who establishes an optimal balance between passivity and proactivity, helplessness and the imperative of the entrepreneurial self.

5/11/2022

References

Barnett, Michael. 2011. *Empire of Humanity. A History of Humanitarianism.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Bröckling, Ulrich. 2016. *The Entrepreneurial Self. Fabricating a New Type of Subject.* London etc.: Sage.

Chouliaraki, Lilie. 2013. *The Ironic Spectactor. Solidarity in the Age of Post-Humanitarianism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Chouliaraki, Lilie. 2021. "Post-humanitarianism. Solidarity as Lifestyle Politics". In *Routledge Handbook of Humanitarian Communication.* Lilie Chouliaraki and Anne Vestergaard, eds. London and New York: Routledge. 421-435.

Duffield, Mark. 2012. "Challenging Environments. Danger, Resilience and the Aid Industry". *Security Dialogue* 43/5: 475-492.

Duffield, Mark. 2019. "Post-Humanitarianism. Governing Precarity through Adaptive Design". *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs* 1/1: 15–27.

Fassin, Didier. 2012. *Humanitarian Reason. A Moral History of the Present.* Berkeley etc.: University of California Press. Translated by Rachel Gomme.

Harrell-Bond, Barbara. 2002. "Can Humanitarian Work with Refugees Be Humane?". *Human Rights Quarterly* 24/1: 51–85.

Hilhorst, Dorothea. 2018. "Classical Humanitarianism and Resilience Humanitarianism. Making Sense of Two Brands of Humanitarian Action". *Journal of International Humanitarian Action* 3/15: 1-12.

Malkki, Liisa H. 1996. "Speechless Emissaries. Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization". *Cultural Anthropology* 11/3: 377-404.

Pozniak, Romana. 2022. *Humanitarni rad u kontekstu izbjeglištva i migracija u posttranzicijskoj Hrvatskoj.* PhD thesis. Filozofski fakultet Sevučilišta u Zagrebu.

Rose, Nikolas. 1996. "The Death of the Social? Re-figuring the Territory of Government". *Economy and Society* 25/3: 327-356.

Rozakou, Katerina. 2020. "Voluntary Work". In *Humanitarianism. Keywords*. Antonio De Lauri, ed. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 228-230.

Sontag, Susan. 2005. *Prizori tuđeg stradanja*. Zagreb: Algoritam. Translated by Božica Jakovlev.

Restaurant of Hospitality in Bihać

Meta Poklukar

For several years now, **Bihać** has been relegated to a backdrop on the **Balkan migrant route**. People on the move who are illegalized face many obstacles in exercising rights within the countries in which they currently reside. One of the consequences of illegalization is also the reduced right of access to spaces that are open to citizens. For people on the move, the premises are divided into those they are allowed to enter and those they are not. During the short student fieldwork in Bihać undertaken by students of ethnology and cultural anthropology in March 2022, I noticed various places, mostly parks and abandoned buildings, where we can meet people on the move, but when we enter the city center and look around, we will very rarely, if ever, see people on the move sitting in a crowd of people, drinking coffee or eating lunch. The reason for this is not only their poor financial situation, but exclusion from society as well.

On our first day in Bihać, during fieldwork, we heard different stories from the local population about how solidarity is criminalized and that officially they are not allowed to help migrants by giving them clothes, food, or any other form of help, because the police would issue them a fine. As noted by Uršula Lipovec Čebron, Tina Ivnik and Eva Fekonja (2019), even in **Velika Kladuša**, which is located in the same canton in western Bosnia, hospitality was followed by closing access to migrants. Their analysis showed that this was strongly influenced by the **criminalization of solidarity**. The signs “Foreigners without documents are forbidden to enter” began to appear in cafes and restaurants, some institutions installed bars on their windows, and the doors of some shops remain locked until the employees are sure of who is standing in front of them (Lipovec Čebron et al. 2019: 150).

I did not notice the mentioned kinds of practices in Bihać, but I heard about a restaurant in Bihać where migrants are welcome, so I went there to check whether this was true. I noticed a separate area in the restaurant with a few chairs and tables. I did not see anyone sitting there. I asked the waiter did they really welcome migrants and what was the reaction for other residents. He answered:

> Yes, it's true, why not, since we're all human, he also allows me to come to the restaurant and order. We are not interested in what others think, when large numbers of migrants started arriving, the owner of the restaurant decided that as long as no one makes trouble and they keep their quarrels outside, there is no problem.

From further conversation with the waiter, it was clear that they don’t have problems with the locals who come to the restaurant because of welcoming migrants in the restaurant. On the contrary, some have become friends with them and occasionally chat, drink and eat with them. While sitting in the restaurant, I noticed two younger migrants sitting at a table with two locals. They greeted each other with a hug, smiled, and made many other gestures while sitting together. Other people in the restaurant did not turn around nor reacted in any other way to what was happening, which means that the gathering is not unusual. The space is filled with positive and friendly energy. The waiter came up to me and said: “You see, they are also sitting with the locals, we are all people here and all friends, if that bothers anyone, we don't need such people here.” He showed me the room behind the archway and explained that migrants could stay there without ordering anything, as the room was made especially for them. “Sometimes they order something, and sometimes we also bring them some soup on the house.”



The restaurant. Bihać, 26 March 2022. Photo: Meta Poklukar

The area separated by the arch is large and it contains a few tables and chairs. One wall is completely covered by a window facing the street. I also noticed a Pakistani flag in the corner and the waiter later pointed it out. “We want them to feel at home and accepted,” he told me.

Later, the waiter explained how people on the move had became his friends and that he also had many contacts from those who managed to reach their destination, they called him and asked how was he doing. He told me an anecdote about how someone couldn't pay, but he told him that it was fine, that he would cover it from his salary. He was going to the **game** the next day and promised to pay him back when he reached his destination. When he succeeded, he transferred twice the amount owed to him through an online bank. The waiter said that he himself had been a migrant as a child because of the war, and that this was perhaps the reason he had more understanding for their situation. It is evident that the practice of **solidarity** forged friendships. “I have kept in touch with some of them, we talk to each other every now and then, they also check how I and my family are doing.”

I asked the waiter how did the police act because of the possible criminalization of solidarity, given their openness to welcoming migrants into the restaurant.

> In principle, we don't have any major problems with the police, unless there are riots between them. When they see the police outside, we warn the migrants to go through the back exit and avoid them. Sometimes we give them a few marks so that they don't give us a fine, but in principle we don't have problems often. Other restaurants also don't call the police or give us trouble, why would they, everyone can make their own decisions. Sometimes we hear some comments on the street, but we ignore it.

The waiter’s discomfort when talking about how the police handle these cases was noticable, although he did mention that bribes were often given to the police. The other two waiters didn't even want to discuss it, they just said that they didn't have any problems. Due to our time in Bihać being short, it is difficult to precisely ascertain the relations and agreements between the police and the restaurant, as the locals and volunteers clearly expressed that the criminalization of hospitality and tighter control of local authorities is taking place in Bihać. For Jelka Zorn (2021: 174), solidarity means building a community based on the values of anti-racism and in an autonomous way (without the state, market relations and large humanitarian organizations).

The next day, when I returned to the restaurant, I saw three young men sitting in the area reserved for migrants. I decided to join them. I greeted them and when I asked if I could join them, they offered me a chair without hesitation. I asked them if they would like something to drink, and they smiled and answered me by asking if I would like something to drink, that they were the ones ordering here. After talking for a while about where they were from, where they were staying, how long they had been on the road, I asked them if this was really the only restaurant they could visit. Most of them answered that it was, the youngest told me that, because he was here as a minor, he had friends here and had no problems with where he could go, but the others were not welcome anywhere.

> We hang out here a lot, especially in winter when it's cold outside. We used to have another space, the kitchen, where volunteers also came, but recently it was closed by the police, so we can no longer cook there. Once we prepared more than fifty chapatis for the other migrants and volunteers. Really. (he showed me a video of a room with a large stove, a counter and shaped dough)

During our conversation, more than ten people were present in the space, and none of them gave me the feeling that I didn't belong there. Everyone greeted me with a smile and a handshake and talked to me. After a while, the waiter brought Coca-Cola for everyone at the table. When I told the waiter that I would pay, he laughed and told me no, that he ordered it and that he would pay. That's when I realized that it's better to let them pay for my drink since I'm a guest and it would be rude of me to refuse. I also got the impression that this was their space and therefore a matter of dignity to have me as their guest. I felt a little uneasy because I believed I'm better off financially and should be the one paying, but I started to understand. I started to understand the journey a little bit, the relationships they develop while going through it, and how they were deprived of many opportunities to express themselves and their hospitality. Then I gladly accepted the role of guest. I think a lot about this space as the only one they currently have on this journey while living in Bihać. With all the dehumanization that they experience at the hands of the police, this is a space that allows them to feel normal and human. Socializing in a room with a fellow human being, ordering a drink and paying for it, a normal everyday occurrence. Something that, at least for a moment, allows a person to relax and not think about what they are forced to face in the future.

10/6/2022

References

Lipovec Čebron, Uršula, Tina Ivnik and Eva Fekonja. 2019. “Migracije in gostoljubje. Kriminalizacija gostoljubja v Veliki Kladuši”. *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* 47/278: 135-161.

Zorn, Jelka. 2021. “Nasilne meje, varnostnizacija in kriminalizacija solidarnosti”. *Revija za socialno delo* 60/2: 167-180.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship, and Ethnic Minorities, thaught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-gostoljubna-restavracija-v-bihacu-p?locale=en

Riace

Jelka Zorn

Domenico Lucano, the mayor of the Riace municipality in the south of Italy, was **criminalized** for his policy of solidarity with refugees. In 1998, a program welcoming migrants was implemented in a sparsely populated and mostly deserted town, referred to in the literature as the “Riace model” (Driel 2020). This action was initiated after around 300 Kurdish refugees landed on the Ionian coast. The locals accepted these refugees and have since established a program of settling migrants in abandoned houses and their vocational training with local artisans. This led to the revitalization of the town, the migrants and the locals formed a community, and the local school was saved from closing, as families also moved to Riace. While most cities tried to stop migrants from moving in, Riace welcomed them. The community and the left-wing mayor Lucano have received several international awards, including the Dresden Peace Prize. In October 2018 (shortly after the right-wing government including Matteo Salvini took office), Domenico Lucano was arrested and detained by the financial police on charges of encouraging illegal migration, embezzlement and fraud. In September 2021, he was sentenced to 13 years in prison. This persecution is a racist attack on the idea of living together in peace. This case is only one of 158 criminal proceedings against physical persons and 16 against NGOs in the EU from 2015 to April 2019 (Vosyliūtė and Conte 2019: 6).

10/12/2022

References

Driel, Ester. 2020. “Refugee Settlement and the Revival of Local Communities. Lessons from the Riace Mode”. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 25/2: 149-173.

Vosyliūtė, Lina and Carmine Conte. 2019. *Crackdown on NGOs and Volunteers Helping Refugees and Other Migrants*. ReSoma.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/riace-mesto-dobrodoslice?locale=en

Riverscapes

Mirna Šolić

The term “riverscape” originates in freshwater ecology (Cooper at al. 2018; Haslam 2008), whereby it is used to describe complex and constantly evolving ecosystems formed by rivers and their natural environments, with the addition of human involvement in these processes, “a blend between the natural and the human” (Haslam 2008: 9). From there the term wended its way to arts, ecocritical and cultural studies-oriented scholarship and “liquid turn” in arts and humanities, with recognition of the significance of rivers and riverscapes in nation building (Cusack 2010), constructions of identity and hydropolitics (e.g., Boast 2020; Murphy and Rivero 2018). However, there has been very little research on the significance of riverscapes in the narratives of migration, except for Katelyn Knox’s article on significance of imperial riverine environments in the French context (Knox 2016) and Mirna Šolić’s study of riverscapes in narratives of migration (2025).

There are several reasons at play as to why riverscapes are overlooked in narratives of migration. Rivers, unlike seas, are not sites of media-induced spectacles (e.g., Mazzara 2016), the riverine crossings are not widely seen as destabilising the idea of Europe. Instead, rivers and riverscapes are sites of invisible, or rather slow violence, to use Rob Nixon’s term pointing to the existence of acts of violence and violent environments beyond media’s attention, described as “slow moving and long in the making, disasters that are anonymous and that scar nobody” (Nixon 2011: 3). Another reason is an absence of “Mediterranean discursiveness,” a narrow view of the Mediterranean “plaguing the literature, all description and repetition” (Matvejević 1999: 12), even more powerfully disseminated across media and popular culture (Matvejević 1999: 12; see also Kovačević 2019), which cannot be applied to rivers.

In this respect, Tricia Cusack’s suggestion that “every river has its narratives, and some have acquired dominant national meanings through the medium of riverscapes” (2010: 2) mirrors Étienne Balibar’s notion of polysemic nature of borders, and Chiara Brambilla’s consideration of borderscapes as possible sites of contact and exchange (2015). As it appears in literary and cinematic depictions of riverscapes in the context of migration, riverscapes are specific eco-political environments in which the situation of “crisis” is portrayed within a more intimate setting (Šolić 2025). Here, migrations are perceived on the background of changes they instigate in local communities, and local communities’ responses to migration based on their lived experience of (often traumatic) history and political changes.

Rivers feature as prominent parts of treacherous landscapes/crossings on the **Balkan route**, such as the Evros, the Kupa, and the Korana River, with deaths by drowning and casualties reported in media and investigated on film (e.g., Krikellis 2022;Ršumović 2024). However, with perhaps the exception of the Rio Grande and the heavily politicised US-Mexican border, riverine environments largely remain unrecognised or anonymous sites of violence, torture and dying even though similarly to **seas** and **forests** (Hameršak and Pleše 2021), rivers have become **weaponized landscapes** of suffering and violence on the European Union borders and more globally.

5/2/2025

References

Boast, Hannah. 2020. *Hydrofictions. Water, Power and Politics in Israeli and Palestinian Literature.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Brambilla, Chiara. 2015. “Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept”. *Geopolitics* 20/1: 14-34.

Cooper, Malcolm, Shamik Chakraborty and Abhik Chakraborty. 2018. *Rivers and Society. Landscapes, Governance and Livelihoods.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Cusack, Tricia. 2010. *Riverscapes and National Identities.* New York: Syracuse University Press.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2021. “Forest, Forest, Forest. Sometimes We Sleep, Walking, Sleep. It’s Dangerous on This Way. Weaponized Migration Landscapes at the Outskirts of the European Union”. *Etnološka tribina* 51/44: 204-221.

Haslam, Sylvia M. 2008. *The Riverscape and the River.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Knox, Katelyn E. 2016. “‘Tributary Histories’ Flowing into National Waterways. European Rivers in Sub-Saharan African Immigration Literature”. *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 23/2: 201-219.

Kovačević, Nataša. 2019. “Dissolving into the Sea. Cinematic Migrants and the Problem of Agency”. *Postcolonial Studies* 10/4: 428-445.

Krikellis, Chris. 2022. *Souls of a River.* Ekome; Plaesion Film.

Mazzara, Federica. 2016. “Subverting the Narrative of the Lampedusa Borderscape”. *Crossings (Bristol)* 7/2: 135-147.

Murphy, Jeanie, and Elizabeth G. Rivero. 2018. *The Image of the River in Latin/o American Literature. Written in the Water*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ršumović, Vuk. 2024. *Dwelling Among the Gods.* 2024 Baboon Production.

Šolić, Mirna. 2025. “'Neither Here, nor There'. Riverscapes in Films on Migration”. *Modern Languages Open* 1/3: 1-14.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-p-d1d055ec-e257-48c9-85b8-5df812e134d9?locale=en

Roda Tent

Tea Škokić

The association Parents in Action (“Roditelji u akciji” – Roda, “Stork” in Croatian) was actively involved in the Opatovac and **Slavonski Brod** camps with the primary task of providing support for infant and young child feeding in emergencies (IYCF-E). Given their ongoing activities in promoting breastfeeding, their work in the camps focused on supporting breastfeeding for women on the move, as well as a range of other activities to help mothers with infants and young children in **transit** along the **Balkan corridor**.

Initially, three Mother and Baby Centers were established in the Slavonski Brod camp in three different sectors: two managed by UNICEF and one by Save the Children, with the medical humanitarian organization MAGNA moving their doctors between these centers. It soon became clear that this method of operation was impractical in terms of time and manpower. When Roda joined these organizations, a single center was established, in a heated tent, which we volunteers who were familiar with Roda’s work called “Roda Tent.” The tent, donated by CARE, was set up next to the **distribution tent** where most people arriving at the camp were directed, facilitating triage for IYCF-E. Volunteers conducted quick assessments in the distribution tent to identify which pregnant women or mothers with young children needed medical support, a breastfeeding corner or breastfeeding support, diaper changing, hygiene, or clothing for children up to two years old (see Jelušić 2017: 45). The tent itself was divided by screens into three sections where the mentioned activities took place, while the fourth section, the so-called waiting room, was a place where women waited for their turn, and older children and some male family members waited for the mother and baby. As the proportion of women arriving with children at the camp increased at the end of 2015, the need for a quiet corner where they could feed and especially breastfeed their children became more pronounced. At the same time, the rapid pace of transit prevented more extensive counseling on feeding and breastfeeding support, as well as the preparation of powdered formula milk and the sterilization of bottles. However, mothers who breastfed in the Roda Tent received about thirty minutes of peace to feed their child and rest while the volunteers and staff changed the baby. Those whose children were fed by formula received a new bottle and pre-made adapted milk in liquid form, packed in cartons, and could be given a cup for milk, provided by Save the Children (Jelušić 2017: 42).

During my volunteer work in the distribution tent, I often held small children for the women who carried them in their arms while they received clothes, shoes, and hygiene items that were being distributed. I do not recall a single situation where someone did not hand me their child, which I would use as an opportunity to invite them to the Roda Tent. Some women accepted gladly, while others declined, probably out of fear of being separated from other family members. Outside the Roda Tent, you could often see male family members waiting, sometimes impatiently, and on a few occasions, they asked me to tell their wives to hurry up, as, in their opinion, they had perhaps stayed too long in the warm tent.

Changing the diapers of hypothermic children and replacing their wet and travel-soiled clothes allowed the volunteers and staff in the Mother and Baby Center to assess whether a child needed medical attention. This was particularly frustrating when a child was sick and the parents refused to stay in the camp (cf., e.g., Jelušić 2017: 16; 18). The Roda Tent provided continuous care, 24 hours a day, and according to the manual, it was staffed by employed breastfeeding advisors and volunteers, employed assistants responsible for clothing and hygiene, and others who helped in the Mother and Baby Center and the distribution tent (Jelušić 2017: 40).

Based on the experiences gathered from working in the Opatovac and Slavonski Brod camps, Roda published the manual *Support for Breastfeeding and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies* (Jelušić 2017). In addition to a chronological account of their activities in the camps, the manual lists missed opportunities and difficulties faced by staff and volunteers, as well as successes that can inform future actions in crisis situations. Moreover, the manual includes a series of statements from collaborators of organizations that were active in the Mother and Baby Center. These statements can be read as testimonies to the arduous journeys many refugees endured, as well as efforts to advocate for and support breastfeeding as one of the few links between the refugees’ and “normal” lives.



Mother and Baby Center, Slavonski Brod, December 2015. Photo taken from the manual *Support for breastfeeding and young child feeding in emergencies*

15/12/2023

References

Jelušić, Renata. 2017. *Support for Breastfeeding and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies. Experiences Gained during the Migrant and Refugee Crisis in Croatia in 2015 and 2016.* Zagreb: Roda.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-rodin-scaron-ator-p?locale=en

Schengen

Marijana Hameršak, Marta Stojić Mitrović

Schengen is the name for the project of abolishing border controls between the central European states and introducing enhanced border controls on the European periphery. It is used as a spatial metonymy for the Schengen acquis and related documents, systems, and practices: *Schengen Agreement, Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement, Schengen Borders Code, the Schengen Information System* (SIS), the area it covers, short-stay visas, and more. In addition to this official, legally defined terminology, unofficial terms such as the Schengen Area, Schengen visa, Schengen border, Schengen instrument, or Schengen state are also circulated in the media and everyday speech. The EU terminological database IATE contains other less known terms, such as Schengen ID, Schengen alert, Schengen cycle, and even Schengen bus.

Schengen terms in the form of negations are particularly interesting, such as the term non-Schengen visa, which was informally used for visas for EU countries that were not a part of the Schengen Area (Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, and, until recently, Croatia). Besides, some terms intentionally mobilize the Schengen imaginary, as a brand that guarantees the establishment of adequate regulation and evaluation systems (origin and quality of goods and finances, compliance with standards, or people's identity) and control of movement. One such term is small or mini Schengen, which was used to name the alliance of **Western Balkan** states that, as quirk of fate, were themselves listed on the so-called Black Schengen or Black Schengen list not so long ago. The latter is another Schengen term referring to the list of countries whose citizens needed visas to enter the Schengen Area in the 2000s.

Schengen owes its name to the village where in 1985 Germany (then West Germany, or the Federal Republic of Germany), France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands signed an agreement to gradually abolish border controls at their borders. The agreement was actually signed on the boat Princesse Marie-Astrid, near Schengen, on the section of the Moselle River that is at the tripoint of Germany, Luxembourg, and France, a location of distinct symbolism for the new "post-national" approach to border control (Zaiotti 2011: 4). Schengen originated outside the framework of the European Union, then the European Economic Community, into which it was subsequently implemented during the 1990s and 2000s through treaties, agreements, and meetings, sometimes also named after geographical locations, such as as the *Treaty of Amsterdam* or the *Treaty of Lisbon*.

The implementation of Schengen into the EU, which was one of its goals from the beginning, was accompanied by debates and disputes, but also with the Schengenization of the Union, instead of the expected Europeanization of Schengen (Zaiotti 2011: 153). As a model established multilaterally and from the top down, bypassing mechanisms of democratic control, *a posteriori* and basically in a fluid and non-binding way included in the EU (Votoupalová 2020), Schengen continuously spills over its own physical and legal boundaries, simultaneously ensuring and perpetually threatening the cultural, political, and spatial coherence of the EU. One of the results of the subsequent implementation of Schengen into the European Union is that the EU, as William Walters noted in the early days of Schengen (2002: 567), does not have a single border that can be said to define a unified administrative space.

The Schengen Area, which is currently several times larger than it was in 1995, when the first seven European countries began implementing the agreement to abolish border controls, still does not encompass all EU member states, while it includes several non-EU countries. Furthermore, Schengen covers areas of its influence, or more precisely, areas dependent on it. In line with the externalization tendency of Schengen as an EU internal externalization project along the center-periphery line (Cobarrubias et al. 2023), Schengen mechanisms are applied outside the Schengen Area of free movement. Parts of the Schengen acquis, finances, and practices spill over into non-Schengen EU countries through prolonged, almost never-ending accession processes to Schengen, as was the case with Croatia. Schengen mechanisms and methods have recently been increasingly extended to non-EU countries, exemplified by recent agreements between Frontex, the EU and Schengen border guard agency, with North Macedonia, Albania, and Serbia.



Border crossing Prilišće/Žuniči, 29 September 2023. Photo: Marijana Hameršak

According to Schengen's logic, strict controls of external borders are a prerequisite for freedom of movement within the Schengen Area, or in other words, the price of abolishing internal border is tight external-border controls. Schengen in fact amplifies the experience of the border for countries, communities, and individuals at and beyond the external border. Therefore, it is described with metaphors like Fortress Europe and the New Iron Curtain. Furthermore, this logic has generated an increasing focus on joint control of external borders, the establishment and growth of Frontex, and the creation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), processes that have been loaded with divergent political options, interests, and positions of EU Member States for decades. At the same time, control of internal borders has never really been abolished, but rather relocated inside states through complex and decentralized state and suprastate measures and practices, material, digital, legal, and other systems and tools of movement control, from Eurodac to **Dublin** and **fingerprinting**, from public transportation checks near the border, through regular stops at gas stations close to the border, to **detention** centers, which create a "sort of constantly changing and frightening *live trap for the undesirables*" (Hameršak and Pleše 2018: 9).

The Schengen Area officially has two goals: "Opening up internal borders is one side of the Schengen coin. The other is ensuring the safety of its citizens. This involves tightening and applying uniform criteria on controls on non-Schengen nationals entering the EU at the common external border, developing cooperation between border guards, national police and judicial authorities and using sophisticated information-exchange systems. "The first goal, the abolition of internal borders, which was the driving force behind the entire project and is still a key achievement and symbol of the EU for many of its residents, is now, as this quote shows, reduced to a self-evident and secondary aspect of Schengen, while the second, security aspect, is given much more space (cf. Guild 2001). This conflict between the desire for free, neoliberal, global circulation of goods, services, and capital on the one hand, and biopolitical control of people on the other, is also referred to in the literature as the control dilemma or the double imperative of Schengenland, as Sabine Hess and Bernd Kasparek (2017: 51) remind us. By emphasizing security over freedom, Schengen has, to say the least, a negative impact on neighboring countries and non-EU nationals, states on the external border, the perception and practice of human rights, equality, justice, **solidarity**, security, sovereignty, and borders in the EU, as already extensively elaborated in academic literature (Votoupalová 2020).



Border crossing Prilišće/Žuniči, 29/9/2023. Photo: Marijana Hameršak

Schengen has often been described in terms of a break with Westphalian borders or as a form of a post-national border that "does not seem to inhabit the terrain of classical geopolitics, of states against states, and of war and peace" (Walters 2002: 564). Schengen borders are more legally defined than physical and fixed to territory. They are inclined towards criminalization of migration (cf. e.g., Guild and Bigo 2010). Therefore, irregular or **irregularized** migrants have a prominent place in the Schengen landscape. They are "*both* the alleged 'cause' of the need for tougher measures and the performative 'effect' of those very measures" (Vaughan-Williams 2015: 20). In other words, in public discourse, Schengen borders are primarily framed as protection from security threats latently personalized in racialized figures of Muslims and non-white people (Walters 2002: 570) who are, moreover, recently militarized through discourses about hybrid warfare, i.e., pressures and interventions by Turkey and Belarus done by sending and directing refugees towards EU borders (cf. İşleyen and Karadağ 2023). This direction of renationalizing Schengen borders or subordinating them to national interests and imperatives can also be observed within Schengen. Since the **long summer of migration** 2015, member states have continuously or periodically, often in coordination as in the fall of 2023, introduced border controls at internal borders. These unsystematic controls can be carried out on everyone moving through a certain area (Popescu 2015). In the search for a few migrants, thousands of vehicles are checked. Besides intensifying surveillance over the general population and its movement, these controls also have other consequences, such as the normalization of racial profiling and irregularization in general. The recent wave of introducing controls at internal borders in 2023 had, somewhat like a similar practice in 2015 (Guild et al. 2015), elements of a showcase exercise with extensive media and daily political outreach. Here, Schengen was used strategically, as a tool of foreign policy relations, a means of polarizing voters, spectacularization of borders and the work of border police, and normalizing the perception of migration as a problem.

The spectacle of Schengen controls discursively places the risk beyond Schengen's borders, while identifying people coming from outside as a disruptive factor. Schengen simultaneously implies that maximum control of those who are already inside (i.e., citizens and residents of states within the Schengen Area) has been established. Foreigners who provide enough relevant data, by biometric passports or documentation submitted for a visa, for example, gain the right to access this area. Since control criteria are met *a priori*, daily checks within the Schengen Area become redundant. To be able to move within the Schengen Area, people must first agree to surveillance, making "freedom of movement" another rhetorical play of the security regime. Seen from this angle, it is clear that the aforementioned fundamental dilemma or double imperative of the Schengen Area in fact does not exist.

21/11/2023

References

Cobarrubias, Sebastian, Paolo Cuttitta, Maribel Casas-Cortés, Martin Lemberg-Pedersen, Nora El Qadim, Beste İşleyen, Shoshana Fine, Caterina Giusa and Charles Heller. 2023. "Interventions on the Concept of Externalisation in Migration and Border Studies". *Political Geography* 105: 102911.

Guild, Elspeth. 2001. *Moving the Borders of Europe*. Nijmegen: Faculteit der Rechtsgeleerdheid.

Guild, Elspeth and Didier Bigo. 2010. "The Transformation of European Border Controls". U *Extraterritorial Immigration Control*. Bernard Ryan and Valsamis Mitsilegas, eds. Leiden: Brill, 252-273.

Guild, Elspeth, Evelien Brouwer, Kees Groenendijk and Sergio Carrera. 2015. "What is Happening to the Schengen Border?" *CEPS Paper in Liberty and Security in Europe* 86.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. "Confined in Movement. The Croatian Section of the Balkan Corridor". In Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in Croatian Context. Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and München: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political

Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 9-41.

Hess, Sabine and Bernd Kasparek. 2017. “De- and Restabilising Schengen. The European Border Regime After the Summer of Migration”. *Cuadernos Europeos de Deusto* 56: 47-77.

İşleyen, Beste and Sibel Karadağ. 2023. “Engineered Migration at the Greek–Turkish Border. A Spectacle of Violence and Humanitarian Space”. *Security and Dialogue* 54/5.

Popescu, Gabriel. 2015. “Controlling Mobility. Embodying Borders*”.* In *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders*. Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Frédéric Giraut, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 100-115.

Vaughan-Williams, Nick. 2015. *Europe’s Border Crisis. Biopolitical Security and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Votoupalová, Markéta. 2020. “Schengen Cooperation. What Scholars Make of It”. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 35/3: 403-423.

Walters, William. 2002. “Mapping Schengenland. Denaturalizing the Border”. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20/5: 561-580.

Zaiotti, Ruben. 2011. *Cultures of Border Control. Schengen and the Evolution of European Frontiers*. Chicago i London: The University of Chicago Press.

Securitization

Jelka Zorn

Since the 1980s, the field of migration has been dominated by police governance, security discourses, and control techniques—in a word, securitization. Securitization is a discourse and system of measures that excludes a particular category of people from society by defining them as a threat—for example, to cultural values, social benefits, public safety, the labor market, or health (Huysmans 2000: 711). Securitization is a form of structural violence and operates through racism.

Jef Huysmans, who had presented his ideas before the 2001 terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York, linked securitization to the nationalism of the welfare state. Since the 1970s, full employment in Western Europe has no longer been taken for granted, and there has been an increasing number of violations of workers' rights. From that point on, migrants and asylum seekers have been increasingly seen not as comrades in the labor struggle, but as illegitimate recipients of social rights. Their demands for safe employment and equal rights have also been rendered illegitimate. These rights have come to be seen as pull factors for migrants to the EU, and in this context, the term "fake" refugees has gained traction—referring to migrants allegedly exploiting the asylum system to find employment and use welfare services (Huysmans 2000: 767).

In the past two decades, securitization has become linked to anti-terrorist discourse, which is used to demonize those seeking international protection and other migrants (see Pozniak and Petrović 2014). Securitization manifests as the systematic restriction of freedom of movement and the ability to apply for asylum. Particularly problematic state measures in the area of securitization include: administrative **detention**, **pushbacks**, deportations, Eurocentric procedures for international protection, segregation of asylum seekers in asylum centers, prohibition of employment during the first 9 months of the asylum process, and the conditioning of social and labor rights on knowledge of the language of the country where protection or another status has been granted.

These measures appear to be aimed at "protecting" the domestic population, but in reality, securitization represents the strengthening of racism and the role of the police in dealing with refugees and migrants, who thereby come to be perceived as a security problem by the public (Zorn 2021).

10/12/2022

References

Huysmans, Jef. 2000. "The European Union and the Securitization of Migration". *Journal of Common Market Studies* 38/5: 751-777.

Pozniak, Romana and Duško Petrović. 2014. "Tražitelji azila kao prijetnja". *Studia ethnologica Croatica* 26/1: 47-72.

Zorn, Jelka. 2021. "Nasilne meje, varnostnizacija in kriminalizacija solidarnosti". *Socialno delo* 60/2: 167-180.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/varnostnizacija?locale=en

Seven Days Paper

Marijana Hameršak

“Seven days paper” is the colloquial term for documents regulating transit through Croatia in 2022 and 2023. During this period, which does not yet have a specific name but could be called the shadow corridor period in analogy with the **Balkan corridor**, more than a hundred thousand refugees and other migrants passed through Croatia using various documents. The oldest of these documents, the return decision, was in effect for seven days, and thus activists, humanitarian workers, refugees, and other migrants often generically referred to them collectively as “seven days paper”. The return decision is designed and legally defined as part of the deportation infrastructure: its first, nominally voluntary stage. In other words, it is an administrative framework for self-deportation, as Hamza, who was detained in Ježevo in the spring of 2016, described his formally voluntary return to Iraq.

Historically, the seven days paper is akin to the Greek *harti*, another type of return decision, but with a longer duration (six months or a month), from the **long summer of migration** (e.g., Rozakou 2017: 37-38; Rydzewski 2024) and variations of this document in the countries along the **Balkan route**. In the summer of 2015, North Macedonia introduced amendments to its asylum act that “allowed the use of public transport for persons who had illegally entered the country by issuing a 72-hour certificate, modeled after the document that certified that a person expressed intention to seek asylum in Serbia” (Stojić Mitrović 2021: 102). The shared migration regulation strategy with the “72-hours paper – first introduced by Serbia and later adopted by Macedonia – substantially contributed to the establishment of the formalized corridor in the south of the Balkan route in early autumn 2015” (Beznec et al. 2016: 61). In Croatia, movement within the corridor was also regulated by a return decision, at least until the end of 2015, specifically a decision on voluntary departure from the Republic of Croatia within seven days (*Aliens Act,* Narodne novine 11/13, Article 113) while refugees were defined as a *third-country national in the return procedure*. Due to the speed of transit at that time, which left little room for the creation of **mobile commons**, knowledge about the journey itself, and due to the circumstance that the so-called registration of refugees in the corridor in Croatia was conducted in parts of the **Slavonski Brod camp** to which most employees and volunteers were denied access (Hameršak and Pleše 2017: 108-111), the document or documents issued in Croatia for transit purposes at that time were not the subject of conversations and discussions, nor did they receive a colloquial name comparable to those mentioned here.

The expansion of the functions and competencies of the return decision in the Croatian context has not always been aimed at tolerating or facilitating transit. After the corridor was closed in 2016, the return decision became an important administrative part of the implementation and concealment of the scale of **pushbacks**. At the time, Croatian police, for instance, at police stations formally issued return decisions to people intercepted in transit, but did not hand them over. Subsequently, they were pushed back across the green border into Serbia. As detailed in a letter from the Ombudswoman to the State Attorney’s Office in 2018, after being escorted to a police station near the border:

> Foreigners who have been issued **return decisions** and given a deadline to leave Croatia were, in subsequent police actions, deprived of their liberty without legal basis. They are then transported in police vehicles (police vans, and even buses!) to the jurisdiction of another police administration, which does not have the necessary documentation regarding their reception and cannot provide information. This represents a violation of international and national regulations governing deprivation of liberty, and certainly calls into question the motivations behind such actions (emphasis by M. H.).

After years of such practices, which led to the invisibilization of migrant movements and the expansion of violence at the borders, return decisions began to be used in the spring of 2022 as documents for the temporary decriminalization of migrant movements towards the West. As Romana Pozniak (2023: 254) formulated, return decisions temporarily, albeit very arbitrarily, “regularized” the status of people on the move. This change undoubtedly came from above, simultaneously with changes in neighboring countries (Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, and Italy also tolerated or facilitated transit during this period) or in some form of a domino effect incomprehensible to outsiders. The return decision went from being an instrument for backward movement and deportation to once again serving as an instrument for forward movement and transit.

The return decision in issue is based on the Croatian *Aliens Act* (Narodne novine 133/20, 114/22, 151/22), which stipulates that a person “who is staying illegally in the Republic of Croatia” “shall leave the [European Economic Area]” within the designated time limit. According to the act, this period cannot be less than seven days and no longer than thirty days. In this context, it was regularly seven days, as referenced in the document’s informal name.

After the meeting of interior ministers in March 2023, and concurrently with the implementation of the reform of the Schengen Information System (SIS), which made return decisions issued in one Member State visible to all Member States, the Croatian police began to issue return decisions much less frequently. Instead, they started to massively conduct registrations and issue documents called registration certificates. This document is based on the Act on International and Temporary Protection (Narodne novine 70/15, 127/17, 33/23). According to the accompanying ordinance (Narodne novine 85/16, Article 3), it “proves that a third-country nationals or stateless person is registered in the Information System of the Ministry of the Interior [...] as an asylum seeker in the Republic of Croatia.”

In addition to requiring registration in the information system, or, in other words, **fingerprinting** (which was not necessarily part of the return decision procedure), the registration certificate differed from the return decision in terms of “duration.” It regulated transit only until the end of the following day from the date it was issued. By then, the registered person was supposed to, as stated in the certificates we saw, “report to the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers, Sarajevska 41, Zagreb,” i.e., **Porin**. Months after the registration certificate became the dominant form of regulating transit through Croatia, some people on the move and activists continued to refer to the transit document as *seven days paper*. Additionally, terms like *stay paper*, *permit of stay in Croatia*,

registration paper, or simply *paper* were still in use. In reports on pushbacks, the term *quitte* was mentioned, but we did not encounter it in our personal exchanges. During controls and routine profiling on trains and buses, which were frequent but primarily performative during this period, police officers would ask passengers for *documents* or *papers*. From brief conversations with people in transit and their behavior during these controls—automatically pulling out folded, freshly printed white papers from bags and pockets without unfolding them, as if the content was secondary—it was clear that many of them were not aware of the content of the document they had, especially if the police had given them a registration certificate, as it was issued only in Croatian, unlike the return decision, which had to be multilingual. This means many did not know the potential long-term consequences of transit with such documents: deportation under the **Dublin** Regulation upon arrival in another EU country, activation of the Schengen Information System, etc. Numerous discarded, often torn-up return decisions or registration certificates seen along the green borders at crossing points into Slovenia (e.g., Harmica/Rigonce or Buzet/Rakitovac) and Italy (Socerb/Dolina) were paper trails of attempts to avoid immediate threats: readmission to Croatia, **detention** in the country of arrival, etc. Some people on the move avoided transit with the seven days paper for the same reason, and in 2023, fake seven days papers appeared, used to “invisibly” transit through Croatia.



Waiting for return decisions to be issued, Zagreb, 10 November 2022. Photo: Marijana Hameršak

During this period, everyone involved—migrants and refugees, government representatives and police, as well as others such as transport providers, landlords, and hotels—used and perceived the return decisions and registration certificates as documents that temporarily decriminalized the movement of the undesirable. Transit through Croatia nor longer primarily involved clandestine movement and hiding. Instead, it took place on public transportation, such as trains, buses, and **taxis**, relying on existing public transit infrastructure (train station waiting rooms, toilets, etc.), nearby public facilities and areas (parks, public fountains, etc.), abandoned buildings (Banka and Diskont in Zagreb), as well as accommodation in hotels and hostels, and private rooms. In addition, humanitarian infrastructure was established in response to this movement in Rijeka and briefly in Zagreb (see **Paromlin**). In the same period, pushbacks became less frequent and were concentrated at the border (Ombudswoman 2023: 200 and ECRE 2022: 25-29), especially in the areas of Banija and Kordun. The journey from Bosnia and Herzegovina or Serbia to Italy again began to be measured in days, rather than years. However, in the late autumn of 2023, in response to reactions from central EU states, the reactivation of controls at internal Schengen borders, and other events that are difficult to single out at this moment, transit was once again predominantly criminalized and halted. News of deaths in rivers within the Schengen area and brutal pushbacks at external borders became increasingly common again.

Unlike various *laissez-passer* documents, transit visas, and other types of passes, including the so-called Nansen passport (cf., e.g., Long 2013), which allowed hundreds of refugees between the two World Wars to travel to places where they, by their own assessment, had better conditions for continuing their lives, the seven days paper was recognized as a transit document only in the second step, through practice. This is not an anomaly of the system, but an integral dimension of its functioning, as can be clearly seen from a comparative perspective. For instance, the Greek asylum seeker status certificate (the so-called *roz karta*) was in widespread use as a stay permit or residence permit, as discussed by Heath Cabot (2012), or consider the practices of non-registration of migrants in Greece during the long summer of migration, as described by Katerina Rozakou (2017). Rozakou emphasizes that ethnographic research on bureaucratic procedures at borders shows that these techniques of governance and population regulation are embedded in the social and cultural environment, constantly changing, questionable, and chaotic. In this context, documents in which illegality and legality interweave acquire unexpected meanings, while the fantasy of bureaucratic control remains intact (Rozakou 2017: 39-46). From this perspective, the seven days paper is recognized as a materialization and one of the tools of the “tacit agreement” (Kasparek 2016) between migratory movements and states at the external border of **Schengen** and the EU. Moreover, as Rozakou concludes (2017: 46), false or pseudo-bureaucratic procedures prove to be a crucial element in maintaining the state and the state apparatus, at least when it comes to the European **migration regime**, and are accepted by all

involved, despite the fact that they are recognized as departing from the bureaucratic framework and nominal order.

15/12/2023

References

Beznec, Barbara, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2016. *Governing the Balkan Route. Macedonia, Serbia and the European Border Regime.* Belgrade: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe.

Cabot, Heath. 2012. “The Governance of Things. Documenting Limbo in the Greek Asylum Procedure”. *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 35/1: 11-29.

ECRE. 2022. *Country Report. Croatia.*

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2017. “Zimski prihvatno-tranzitni centar Republike Hrvatske. Etnografsko istraživanje u slavonskobrodskom kampu za izbjeglice”. In *Kamp, koridor, granica. Studije izbjeglištva u suvremenom hrvatskom kontekstu*. Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Centar za mirovne studije, Fakultet političkih znanosti – Centar za istraživanje etničnosti, državljanstva i migracija, 101-132.

Kasparek, Bernd. 2016. “Complementing Schengen. The Dublin System and the European Border and Migration Regime”. In *Migration Policy and Practice. Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship*. Harald Bauder and Christian Matheis, eds. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 59-78.

Long, Katy. 2013. “When Refugees Stopped being Migrants. Movement, Labour and Humanitarian Protection”. *Migration Studies* 1/1: 4-26.

Pozniak, Romana. 2023. “Temporalnost humanitarne skrbi. Politike upravljanja vremenom u režimu migracija”. *Narodna umjetnost* 60/2: 243-262.

Ombudswoman 2023. *Izvješće pučke pravobraniteljice za 2022. Analiza stanja ljudskih prava i jednakosti u Hrvatskoj*

Rozakou, Katerina. 2017. “Nonrecording the ’European Refugee Crisis’ in Greece. Navigating through Irregular Bureaucracy”. *Focaal* 77: 36-49.

Rydzewski, Robert. 2024. *The Balkan Route. Hope, Migration and Europeanisation in Liminal Spaces.* Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta. 2021. *Evropski granični režim i eksternalizacija kontrole granica EU. Srbija na balkanskoj migracijskoj ruti.* Belgrade: Etnografski institut SANU.

SIA

Marijana Hameršak, Mojca Piškor

Contemporary technocratic discourses, including those related to the **migration** or **humanitarian industry**, are saturated with abbreviations or, more precisely, acronyms, including shorthand for different groups of people – from TA (“tražitelj azila”) for asylum seekers in Croatian to POM for *People on the Move* in English. In a vein similar to the abbreviation OTM for *Other than Mexicans* used by the US border police (De León 2015: 109), during the period of the **Balkan corridor**, the phrase SIA was used in formal and informal communication for citizens of Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. This abbreviation came into use in November 2015, along with **profiling** and separating people into those who were allowed to continue their movement through the corridor – primarily citizens of Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, i.e. SIA – and the rest, who were referred to by the abbreviation “ne-SIA” or “non-SIA”, and who were excluded from the corridor and/or returned to the previous country via the **counter-corridor**. Over time, profiling in the corridor became more and more rigorous, and the prohibition of further movement gradually affected an increasing number of people, until ultimately, right before the complete closure of the corridor in March 2016, it officially also applied to people from Afghanistan.

The first activist reports on **pushbacks** in the corridor emphasized that profiling and distinguishing between SIA and non-SIA refugees was contrary to international refugee law, which stipulates that requests for international protection must be considered individually and regardless of the country of origin of asylum seekers. Separating people into those coming from SIA and non-SIA countries in the corridor, on the other hand, created a division into real and fake, legitimate and illegitimate migrants and refugees. Because of this division, some refugees coming from, for example, Iran presented themselves as citizens of Afghanistan in the hope that they would be able to continue their movement along the corridor (see **mobile commons** and **appropriation**).

The division into SIA and non-SIA was not, as one might expect, primarily based on humanitarian reasons, but instead followed the logic of numbers. The most numerous groups (those coming from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan) were allowed into the corridor so that the others could be separated more easily and excluded without major disturbance. For instance, refugees from Eritrea, as warned by Bernd Kasparek (2016), were not allowed to pass and apply for international protection, even though the approval rate of their asylum requests in the EU member states was extremely high at that time, exceeding 75% in some of them, which was later recognized also at the level of priority groups of the **resettlement** programme, which was activated after the corridor was closed.

After the profiling in the corridor began to be carried out more intensely and by using **loaded exclusionary questions**, the distinction between SIA and non-SIA in certain transit camps also materialized in a spatial manner. At the end of February 2016, in the reception tent at the Dobova camp, refugees were fenced off according to their country of origin. This practice also had an operational role, since they were referred to the registration procedure following the spatial arrangement in the reception tent. Syrians were the first in line, while “others” came last, and as the number of those registered to continue the journey grew, due to the daily quotas introduced by the countries at that time, registration was increasingly being reduced to a prelude to pushbacks and an effective mechanism for exclusion from the corridor. The cruelty of this segregation regime is further underlined by the fact that the smaller tent, for those excluded from further movement, was located next to the large tent, meant for the people who were allowed to continue their journey. Both tents were located right next to the location from which buses carried people designated as SIA further into Europe.



Dobova Camp – on the left: Torn and discarded Iranian passport (7 December 2015, Photo: Mojca Piškor), on the right: Note from the camp (24 February 2016, Author and photo: Marijana Hameršak)

19/12/2022

References

De León, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves. Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-sia-p?locale=en

Slavonski Brod Camp

Tea Škokić

https://e-erim.ief.hrhttps://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/sid?locale=hrhttps://e-erim.ief.hrhttps://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/sid?locale=hrAfter the camp in Opatovac, which operated from September to November 2015, the Winter Reception and Transit Centre of the Republic of Croatia was opened in early November of the same year in a settlement near Slavonski Brod, the industrial zone Bjeliš, the camp was colloquially known as the Slavonski Brod camp. The Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, Ranko Ostojić, announced the camp as a temporary refuge for refugees in transit from Serbia through Croatia, on the section of the **Balkan route** established by the agreement between the interior ministers of Croatia and Serbia. The agreement stipulated that refugees from **Šid** in Serbia would enter Croatia by train, briefly stop at the camp in Slavonski Brod, and then continue by train to Dobova in Slovenia. According to official statements, the camp was intended to ensure better organization of transit and automated registration of migrants and refugees.

According to descriptions accompanying photographs taken during the first fifteen or so days of the camp's operation, which were published by the Croatian government on its official website, the camp was divided into six sectors. These sectors housed tents for triage and medical assistance, as well as the Red Cross tent that provided a service for finding missing family members and psychosocial support. The camp also contained military tents, although they were out of sight of volunteers and staff, a tent mess hall for volunteers and employees, and an NGO warehouse managed by the German humanitarian organization Intereuropean Human Aid Association (IHA). There were also tents designated for waiting for family members who had been separated during their journey, as well as tents with about twenty beds, and tents with a capacity of a thousand beds. Offices for non-governmental, intergovernmental, and other organizations operating in the camp were located in containers, and heated cabins were provided for families with children. Containers also included bathrooms, and mobile toilets were placed at several points. At the official entrance to the camp, used by everyone except refugees, there was a main brick building where the police were stationed, while other solid structures housed the infirmary under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health and the Red Cross warehouse.

The camp was situated on a 40,000 square meter area within the business premises of INA, a Croatian oil company. The advantages of the location, as stated by the mentioned minister, included existing solid structures and a railway track within the complex where the camp was being established. He explained that this spatial organization would facilitate the transportation of refugees and ensure that the local community would not be adversely affected by their presence: “So, from the border directly to the camp, registration, accommodation, assistance with everything needed, possible medical aid, and then transit towards Schengen.” Official statements and political declarations, even before the camp was established, justified this transit logic with the intention that Croatia would not become a so-called hotspot, or a place where refugees would stay for an extended period. Indeed, the layout of tents and containers in the camp suggested quick, almost circular movement of people: the arrival of the train at the platform, directing people to the registration tents where the police conducted checks, entered their data into the information system, and issued certain documents, then passing through the **distribution tent** where humanitarian supplies were provided and food and water were distributed at its exit, and finally back to the platform where people were boarded onto the train for Slovenia.



Aerial view of the camp, Winter Reception and Transit Center in Slavonski Brod, 13 November 2015. Photo source: Vlada HR

However, the **corridor** established in the described manner was “completely isolated from the surrounding territory it passed through and largely separated from its legal system, population, etc.” and was recognized as “a state-organized mass transfer of people from one border to the other” (Hameršak and Pleše 2018a: 20) and an internationally agreed plan to control and slow down the route. Additionally, the layout and content of the camp changed over time, and reports from certain NGOs as well as research insights indicated that during the five months of the camp’s operation, people were **profiled** and unlawfully incarcerated and **detained**. One such detention in the corresponding sector of the Slavonski Brod camp was documented by researchers:

> police directed some of them to the sector on the opposite side of the camp [from the registration tent and the path towards the distribution tent and the train], to the deserted route where they were watched only by a UNHCR representative. According available information, 21 110 persons, mostly men from countries such as Lebanon, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Morocco, Somalia and Ivory Coast, were separated and directed to this sector, which they left the same day (Hameršak and Pleše 2018a: 26).

Later, some of the isolated and detained individuals were kept for several days in a special part of the camp, which, depending on the period of its operation, was sometimes closed and sometimes open to volunteers. Such actions were systematically hidden, kept quiet, and concealed, with no mention of them in the official statements from the Ministry of Interior, nor in media, volunteer, and other reports from and about the camp. Instead, the information came from activist-collected testimonies of “people who had been returned to Serbia after segregation and confinement in Slavonski Brod” (Hameršak and Pleše 2018a: 27). Profiling conducted by the Croatian police sometimes began as early as Šid, on the territory of another country, when certain people were removed from the train based on the police’s assessment of their non-affiliation, for example, to the **SIA** group. Besides arriving by train, people were also brought to the camp by vans and other means. Some were boarded on trains to Slovenia, while others were sent back to Serbia, sometimes even on foot in the middle of winter.

Thus, in addition to its humanitarian function of aid distribution, the camp also served a securitarian function, with the control mechanisms implemented by the Ministry of the Interior aligning with the internationally agreed management of the Balkan corridor as a “mobile form of contemporary humanitarian-securitarian migration management regime, based on territorial and administrative externalization and internalization of border controls, and declaratively depoliticized policies of humanitarian protection” (Hameršak and Pleše 2018b: 110). These security mechanisms encompassed not only people in transit but also volunteers and humanitarian workers. This often caused tensions among the organizations operating in the camp, which had different understandings of the principles of humanitarian work. Some perceived it as an apolitical activity of providing aid, while others insisted on the political or activist component of their work, which included advocacy for migrants’ rights and freedoms (cf. **humanitarian industry**). In addition to the mentioned organizations like the Red Cross and IHA, the camp also hosted intergovernmental organizations and UN agencies (IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR), as well as international and local NGOs such as Caritas, Samaritan’s Purse, Save the Children, CARE, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Medical Humanitarian Organization Magna, Volunteer Center Slavonski Brod, Croatian Professional Association of Court Interpreters, Roda Association, Center for Peace Studies, and others. The distribution tent, as the central meeting point for NGO volunteers with Red Cross and UNHCR workers and volunteers, was often the site of “negotiations and consultations as to which clothing items were lacking, who was allowed to visit whose part of the tent and give out whose donation, as to the (lack of) compliance with the rules agreed upon in the morning briefings between the coordinators and leaders of NGOs and the CRS [Croatian Red Cross], as to how amicable and helpful one should be towards the refugees” (Škokić and Jambrešić Kirin 2018: 94).

In the camp, about a hundred workers, mostly from Slavonski Brod, were employed through public works programs at minimum wage. As noted by Romana Pozniak, due to the presence of a large number of volunteers and humanitarian workers in Slavonski Brod, the camp should also be analyzed from an economic and financial perspective.

> The total number of humanitarian workers from November of 2015 to March of 2016 (when the Balkan corridor was closed) ranged from 200 to 300 daily. […] These people rented hotel rooms, apartments and houses in the city and, logically, used local services and visited local establishments. During that brief time, the refugee camp, although characterised by highly precarious employment, offered financial gain and a “livelier” social life (Pozniak 2019: 77-78).

However, as local workers employed through public works programs complained to us, they were not entitled to receive clothing and footwear, not even work attire, which refugees received, despite some coming to work dressed inappropriately for winter conditions. This is an example of the absurdity of humanitarianism (Škokić and Jambrešić Kirin 2018: 98). On the other hand, the financial benefits to the city somewhat countered the arguments of protesters who, prior to the opening of the camp, opposed its existence with the claim that “our” homeless and poor should be cared for first and that migrants were being fed while people in Slavonia were starving. The livelier social life, apart from increased spending in cafes and restaurants, also meant events such as the implementation of the Interkultura program: a place for encounters of culture, dialogue, and **solidarity**, which was carried out by the Center for Peace Studies and the Welcome Initiative in cooperation with the Taste of Home (Okus doma) cooperative and the City Library, or with the Volunteer Center Slavonski Brod and the Ivana Brlić Mažuranić kindergarten.

Despite the fact that the camp was visible and significant to the local population during its short duration, its placement on the outskirts of the city, away from the “urban view” of the residents of Slavonski Brod, and its spatial isolation by fences and the river as a natural barrier, characterize it as a space of exception for those disrupting the national order of things (Turner 2016: 139). At the Slavonski Brod camp, as the only stopping point in the corridor, the arrival of 374,148 people was officially recorded. The last train arrived at the camp on 5 March 2016, with about 250 people, and the camp was officially closed on 15 April, a few days after the last refugees who had been detained there were relocated.

12/12/2023

References

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018a. “Confined in Movement: The Croatian Section of the Balkan Corridor”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor: Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context*. Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and Munich: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 9-41.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018b. “Winter Reception and Transit Center in the Republic of Croatia: An Ethnographic Research in the Slavonski Brod Refugee Camp”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context*. Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 109-142.

Pozniak, Romana. 2019. “Aid or Business? The Transformation of Humanitarian Work in the Refugee Camp in Slavonski Brod”. *Studia ethnologica Croatica* 31/1: 67-86.

Škokić, Tea and Renata Jambrešić Kirin. 2018. “The Shopping Center of Abnormal Normality. Ethnography of the Distribution Tent in the Refugee Camp in Slavonski Brod”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context*. Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and Munich: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 87-107.

Turner, Simon. 2016. “What Is a Refugee Camp? Explorations of the Limits and Effects of the Camp”. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29/2: 139-148.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-kamp-slavonski-brod-p?locale=en

Solidarity

Romana Pozniak

Although today it appears in different, sometimes even contradictory forms, solidarity primarily refers to a connection based on shared experiences, responsibilities and interests (Rozakou 2020: 197). One of the more prominent interpretations of solidarity is Durkheim's division into mechanical and organic solidarity, elaborated in *The Division of Labour in Society* from 1893: The former implies traditional forms of mutual support as found in religious communities, family, neighbourhood relationships, etc., while the latter relates to social cohesion resulting from the "diversification and the complex division of labor that characterizes modern societies" (Rozakou 2020: 197). In this regard, Aafke Komter (2005) points out three processes that determine the practices and meaning of the term in the contemporary context: individualization, diversification and globalization. According to the author, individualization occurs due to modernization, which encourages the weakening of influence and ties within the family, neighborhoods and church. Diversification, on the other hand, leads to the disintegration of stable, common identities and beliefs, people withdrawing into themselves and realizing their personal needs, and thus to increasing insecurity in the wider social context. Ultimately, globalization, due to its interwoven nature, opens up space for new ways of acting and forms of solidarity (Komter 2005: 170-171).

The interpretation offered by Helge Schwiertz and Helen Schwenken (2020) relies on this idea of the potential of globalization in achieving social change. As key problems in today's understanding of solidarity, they point out the association of this term with national, state and territorial entities, a current trend in public and political discourse, which excludes a number of social groups and models of social cohesiveness. Noting that it is currently clearer than ever that citizens and "noncitizens", people on the move and more-or-less static persons and groups "are connected through the division of labour in global capitalism" (2020: 413), Schwiertz and Schwenken find transformative social potential in civil initiatives that show solidarity with people on the move, people who do not fit into the nationally rooted perspectives of citizenship. This means that these initiatives operate beyond the institutional form of solidarity and practice what the authors call "inclusive solidarity" (2020: 406). It should be emphasized that in activist and academic circles, solidarity is often used with the aim of distinguishing organizations and actions that are primarily associated with **humanitarianism**, a system defined by hierarchical power relations between "recipients" and "providers" of aid, from organizations and actions that are based on mutual support, equality and civic activism. This distinctive imperative especially applies to groups and organizations that deal with **rescue operations** at sea and distributing aid to people on the move and undocumented migrants in spite of bans and legal obstacles, and who do not agree to the usual state and international funding schemes for non-governmental organizations (cf. Cuttitta 2018; Mezzadra 2020; Ambrosini 2022). However, it is well-known that, in the contemporary **border regime**, the difference between solidarity and humanitarianism is not entirely clear (Mezzadra 2020) and that certain interpretations of solidarity also risk the reproduction of hierarchical and exclusive discourses and policies (Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020: 406).

Bearing in mind the overlap between these two terms, different interpretations of solidarity, but also the warnings about the problem of its romanticization (Papataxiarchis 2016), we can recognize several ways in which solidarity appears and the ways it is used and co-opted in the migration context. The first among them is of a political-administrative nature, and relates to the use of solidarity as a mechanism for distributing responsibility in the scheme of managing migration movements in state and international frameworks. In the preamble of the Treaty on European Union "there is talk of 'solidarity' among the 'peoples' who are signatories" (Brunkhorst 2005: 1). In relation to security, and therefore migration policy, the Treaty states that "the Union shall conduct, define and implement a common foreign and security policy, based on the development of *mutual political solidarity* among Member States" (Article 24, paragraph 2, emphasis by author). While solidarity with migrants is rarely articulated at the level of the European Union, as this would mean that its citizens truly share social welfare and other state protection mechanisms with migrants, the focus is mainly on solidarity understood in the form of a relationship of reciprocity between national Member States, framed by the synergy of security and migration policies (Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020: 409). During the last few years, even decades, there have been more and more calls to "ease" the burden on the countries situated at the external borders of the EU, which are exposed to a large number of migrant arrivals and asylum requests due to their geographical position. While referring to the dispute between countries at the EU external borders with their "concerns [...] that migratory pressures will exceed their capacities" and other Member States with concerns that, if the procedures at the external borders are not adhered to, their asylum, integration or return systems will not be able to cope with a possible increase in the influx of migrants, the European Union proposes a mechanism of "effective solidarity" in its New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The emphasis on a coordinated approach to migration management and improving the system for distinguishing "credible" from "non-credible" asylum seekers (cf. Bakalović 2013) – and thus also on the mechanism of effective "distribution of responsibility" – underscores the trends of securitization and "managerialisation" of migration policies (Andrijasevic and Walters 2010), while the mentioned proposal, as warned by activists, "is dominated by giving priority to repatriation and deportation". This technocratic, administrative solidarity among EU countries is often used as a mechanism for controlling, monitoring and restricting migration movements. By reducing solidarity to a mechanism of bureaucratic reciprocity, the migration policy of the European Union indirectly approves the practices of detention and expulsion of refugees and people on the move, as evidenced by the continued practice and intensification of **pushbacks** in recent years, as well as a series of appeals by human rights groups and reports of border violence.

Despite efforts to co-opt the term, it is still primarily associated with the work of solidarity groups and initiatives that can be interpreted in terms of "solidarity humanitarianism" – a term that Katerina Rozakou (2017) uses to describe the work of self-organized groups in Greece engaging in humanitarian work and who do not belong to the official humanitarian sector (cf. also Fechter and Schwittay 2019). Initiatives established during and after the mass refugee transit in Croatia were joined – or started – by citizens dissatisfied with the response of the state, international organizations, and the Croatian Red Cross, and who, in addition to providing assistance, tried to oppose the commodification of suffering and inertia of traditional humanitarian actors (cf. Pozniak 2022). The regime of humanitarianism generally creates an image of refugees as passive and helpless victims who do not have the capacity to take care of themselves, and autonomy and self-reliance are perceived as characteristics of "dangerous" and "fake" asylum seekers (Ticktin 2016). The **humanitarian industry** deftly relies on the idea of refugees as inferior subjects (Kuljić 2016) and uses it as a

means to commodify suffering and, consequently, for its own financial gain. In contrast, solidarity implies an equal relationship that does not impose life decisions, behavior and other standards common in humanitarianism (Dadusc and Mudu 2022). If we take into account that during the **Balkan corridor** in 2015 and 2016, states failed to guarantee social rights to refugees and that humanitarian and legal mechanisms proved to be deficient, to say the least, "solidarity from below", as a form of support provided by citizens and civil society organizations, served as a supplement or substitute for the state welfare system (Schwiertz and Schwenken 2020: 410).

It is worth mentioning the role of solidarity in the organization of protest actions such as for **Madina Hussiny**, a six-year-old girl who **died** when a train hit her during a pushback from Croatia to Serbia (see **counter-memorialization** and **grief activism**), as well as the request of the Zagreb City-Refuge initiative to name a street, square or children's playground in the public space of the city of Zagreb after her. This includes workshops for making banners Krojimo za noćni marš [Sewing for the Night March] and the Prijelaz/The Passage memorial canvases, which were designed and led by selma banich with the Women to Women collective, as well as a series of appeals by the Transbalkanska solidarnost [Transbalkan Solidarity] and Zagreb City-Refuge initiatives. In the latter cases, we can look at solidarity as the driving force behind civil actions that are not part of continuous programs of aid organizations and whose goal is to pave the way for political action and emancipation in which, in the words of the workshop organizer, nothing will be "politically presupposed".

Finally, an indispensable part of the conceptual and empirical familiarization with the term solidarity is the problem of **criminalization of solidarity**.

24/5/2023

References

Ambrosini, Maurizio. 2022. "Humanitarian Help and Refugees. De-Bordering Solidarity as a Contentious Issue". *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*.

Andrijasevic, Rutvica and William Walters. 2010. "The International Organization for Migration and the International Government of Borders". *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28/6: 977-999.

Bakalović, Vanja. 2013. "Razlikuje li Kvalifikacijska direktiva vjerodostojne od nevjerodostojnih izbjeglica?" In *Prvih deset godina razvoja sustava azila u Hrvatskoj (s osvrtom na sustave azila u regiji)*. Drago Župarić-Iljić, ed. Zagreb: Institut za migracije i narodnosti, Centar za mirovne studije and Kuća ljudskih prava, 63-79.

Brunkhorst, Hauke. 2005. *Solidarity. From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community*. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press. Translated by Jeffrey Flynn.

Cuttitta, Paolo. 2018. "Repoliticization Through Search and Rescue? Humanitarian NGOs and Migration Management in the Central Mediterranean". *Geopolitics* 23/3: 632-660.

Dadusc, Deanna and Pierpaolo Mudu. 2022. "Care without Control. The Humanitarian Industrial Complex and the Criminalisation of Solidarity". *Geopolitics* 27/4: 1205-1230.

Fechter, Anne-Meike and Anke Schwittay. 2019. "Citizen Aid. Grassroots Interventions in Development and Humanitarianism". *Third World Quarterly* 40/10: 1769-1780.

Komter, Aafke E. 2005. *Social Solidarity and the Gift*. Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Kuljić, Todor. 2016. "Altruizam, filantropija i humanizam. Pojmovnoistorijski aspekti solidarnosti". *Sociologija* 58/4: 525-551.

Mezzadra, Sandro. 2020. "Abolitionist Vistas of the Human. Border Struggles, Migration and Freedom of Movement". *Citizenship Studies* 24/4: 424-440.

Papataxiarchis, Evthymios. 2016. "Unwrapping Solidarity? Society Reborn in Austerity". *Social Anthropology* 24/2: 205-210.

Pozniak, Romana. 2022. *Humanitarni rad u kontekstu izbjeglištva i migracija u posttranzicijskoj Hrvatskoj*. Doctoral Dissertation. Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.

Rozakou, Katerina. 2017. "Solidarity Humanitarianism. The Blurred Boundaries of Humanitarianism in Greece". *Allegra Lab*.

Rozakou, Katerina. 2020. "Solidarity". In *Humanitarianism. Keywords*. Antonio De Lauri, ed. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 197-199.

Schwiertz, Helge and Helen Schwenken. 2020. "Introduction. Inclusive Solidarity and Citizenship along Migratory Routes in Europe and the Americas". *Citizenship Studies* 24/4: 405-423.

Ticktin, Miriam. 2016. "Thinking Beyond Humanitarian Borders". *Social Research* 83/2: 255-271.

Soup for the Border!

Joanna Urbańska

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-juho-na-mejo-p?locale=en

Suffering of Animals on Wires

Iva Pleše

Animals being victims is one of the recurring themes in local discourses related to **fences and wires**, especially those along the Hungarian-Croatian and Slovenian-Croatian borders. For a time, after the installation of these barriers in 2015, the media often reported on the suffering of wild animals that became entangled in the wire and died, and for whom the fence also “blocked their natural pathways and migration” and thus endangered their ability to feed and reproduce. The professional literature also notes that border barriers have an extremely negative effect on wild animal populations, and not only in the aspects visible at first glance, their deaths on the wires themselves, the obstruction of movement and changes in animal behavior, but also in terms of long-term genetic changes and reduced vitality of animal populations due to their limited movement (Safner et al. 2021). A paper dealing with the direct impact of only one of the border barriers in the local area, the one between Hungary and Croatia, on wild animals and on the connectivity of habitats, cites 64 wild animals: deer, roe deer, and wild boar; found entangled or killed “due to razor wire fence” in the period from the installation of the barrier in September 2015 until the end of 2017 (Safner et al. 2021: 276; cf. also Linnell et al. 2016). In relation to the animals and the locations with the barriers, the literature also mentions the impossibility of rescuing wild animals that have become entangled in the wire because it is not placed on the border line itself, but, for example, a few meters into the territory of another country, in this case Hungary in relation to Croatia. In addition to animals, border barriers also directly affect landscapes and play a part in their transformations, turning “public spaces and nature” into “impenetrable zones” (Perić 2021). And while the negative impact of erecting fences on the animal world is certainly great and important, it is also, when compared to the impact of the practice on people on the move – and to some extent in accordance with different discourses of animal themes (cf. **wild animals**; **Candy**; **Pablo**) – extremely emphasized and perpetuated. When looking at the Slovenian-Croatian border, the same could be said about the impact of erecting fences on the lives of the local population: Although it is justified to bring attention to this issue, it sometimes completely ignores what fences, walls and wires do to people on the move.

16/1/2023

References

Linnell John D. C., Arie Trouwborst, Luigi Boitani, Petra Kaczensky, Djuro Huber, Slaven Reljic, Josip Kusak, Aleksandra Majic, Tomaz Skrbinsek, Hubert Potocnik, Matt W. Hayward, E. J. Milner-Gulland, Bayarbaatar Buuveibaatar, Kirk A. Olson, Lkhagvasuren Badamjav, Richard Bischof, Steffen Zuther and Urs Breitenmoser. 2016. “Border Security Fencing and Wildlife. The End of the Transboundary Paradigm in Eurasia”. *PLoS Biology* 14/6.

Perić, Ivana. 2021. “Sveto trojstvo ograde, žilet žice i granice”. *Kulturpunkt.hr*.

Safner, Toni, Ana Gracanin, Ivan Gligora, Boštjan Pokorny, Katarina Flajšman, Marco Apollonio and Nikica Šprem. 2021. “State Border Fences as a Threat to Habitat Connectivity. A Case Study from South-Eastern Europe”. *Šumarski list* 154/5-6: 269-278.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-stradanje-zivotinja-na-zici-p?locale=en

Survivors

Marijana Hameršak

As some authors warn (Cuttitta et al. 2020: 37), the term “survivor”, due to its focus on biological life and the value of life in itself, can be a tool for the humanitarianization and symbolic inferiorization of people on the move, similar to the terms irregular or **illegal migrant**. This term, however, goes beyond its literal level of meaning since it explicitly defines **irregularized** migration routes as dangerous and deadly, indirectly calling out those responsible for them. Aside from that, the survivors are direct or indirect witnesses, actors of the production and transmission of knowledge about the events they survived. As highlighted by Giorgio Agamben in his discussion on memory, remembrance and witnessing of Auschwitz, a survivor is a witness in the sense of the Latin *superstes*, one who survived and “experienced an event from beginning to end”, as opposed to a witness who is an outside observer of an event or conflict (Lat. *testis*) (Agamben 2008: 12). Apart from appealing to institutions and organizations for the protection of human rights, survivors today testify publicly, even in courts, about the persecution and torture at Croatian borders.

2/7/2022

References

Agamben, Giorgio. 2008. *Ono što ostaje od Auschwitza. Arhiv i svjedok. Homo sacer III.* Zagreb: Izdanja Antibarbarus. Translated by Mario Kopić.

Cuttitta, Paolo, Jana Häberlein and Polly Pallister-Wilkins. 2020. “Various Actors. The Border Death Regime”. In *Border Deaths. Causes, Dynamics and Consequences of Migration-related Mortality*. Paolo Cuttitta and Tamara Last, eds. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 35-51.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-survivors-p?locale=en

Survivors of Violence

Morgane Dujmovic

Dismissal, refusal, expulsion, *refoulement* or **pushbacks**... Words cannot express the indelible imprint of these experiences of violence. Nor can numbers measure the impact of these inhuman and degrading practices. But in the presence of the people it affects, this widespread violence takes on a consistency: that of the countless traces left by pushbacks on bodies and in traumatic narratives.

In Borići and **Lipa**, everyone carries with them, or on them, a story of physical or psychological violence endured. M* has an injured leg from his last attempt to enter Croatia, and can no longer afford to walk, in the absence of proper examination and care. For T*, his life's work and dreams were shattered at the Croatian border: “My boxing career came to an end because the Croatian police injured my right and left knees”. His mental strength enables him to put things into perspective: “There are those who have become completely unable to walk, and this continues to happen here in Bosnia”. F* says he has suffered violence at the hands of the Croatian police, which he doesn't allow himself to detail. E* explains that music gives him the strength not to go mad.

Far from the miserabilist or victimizing portrayals – which would have us believe that people who are violently repressed are victims by nature, when in fact they are victims of clearly identifiable legislation, systems and practices (Fassin 2023) – it is important to take the time to ask a simple question: who are the people targeted by such violence?

“Here, you could write a book about everyone”. As R*, one of the men I met in Lipa, suggests, migratory journeys are rich and plural. The routes differ, whether you come from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, North Africa or sub-Saharan Africa. The socio-economic profiles range from the unemployed, to students, to the qualified; in Lipa, you'll find a cook, an economist, an engineer, a musician, a professional boxer... The **taxi** drivers know it well: “Among them, you'll find highly educated people, graduates, even professors”. These multiple experiences show that it is pointless to compare the reasons for departure: people flee wars as much as persecutions, or social and political contexts that make a decent life impossible.

Another disturbing trend is that many of the people blocked in the Una-Sana Canton have already spent time in EU member states, sometimes for several years, before new physical and administrative barriers were erected. These are the result of tougher legislation introduced with the construction of the **Schengen area** in the 2000s. Control is now exercised upstream of the Schengen area, from the moment a Schengen visa application is submitted in the country of departure; it then extends to all transit countries, where EU-funded control systems are outsourced; finally, administrative barriers are put in place following forced returns to the country of origin, for example via bans from European territory.

J* tells me that he lived legally in France in the 1990s, where part of his family still lives, before returning to Tunisia; to make the same journey again twenty years later, he had to take an illegal route through Turkey, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, where he is now at a standstill. For his part, X* was able to work for two years in Italy after leaving Morocco; he was then deported to Serbia, from where he resumed his journey towards Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro, where I met him before he in turn joined one of the IOM camps in Bosnia.

These stories illustrate that people caught in the “buffer-zone” of the Balkan borders are subject to a gradual process of **irregularization** or illegalization” (Bauder 2013; Akoka 2017). As Steffen Mau (2023) rightly writes, a “cascade of borders” stands in front of those who take the **Balkan routes**. But this demultiplied border operates beyond the Balkan space: it is “embedded in a supra-regional constellation” and integrated into EU border and migration management – or, more precisely, reactivated in the Balkans by the EU.

People caught up in these extended border meshes experience cumulative, gradual violence. Beyond its administrative, filtering function, the Balkan “buffer-zone” fulfils a biopolitical, degrading function: if people categorized as undesirables don't give up, they arrive in Europe increasingly destroyed by the crossing.

10/11/2025

This text is taken from the series of portfolio articles “Rivers are deadly if you're not on the right side” previously published on Mediapart, Le Courrier des Balkans, visioncarto.net and Migreurop. This series of portfolio articles is the result of field research carried out in the spring of 2024 in several South-East European countries: Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. This publication is sent to all interlocutors met in the field. To preserve their anonymity, the exiled people are referred to here by a randomly assigned letter, with their consent.

Author would like to thank the exiled people she met on these roads and along these rivers, the people from the collectives, associations, universities and institutions with whom she spoke, as well as Louis Fernier, Romain Kosellek, Eva Ottavy, Elsa Putelat and Marijana Hameršak for their invaluable contributions prior to and during this field mission.

References

Akoka Karen. 2017. “Refugees and Migrants”. In *The Atlas of Migration in Europe. A Critical Geography of Migration Policies*, Migreurop. Clochard Olivier, ed. Paris: Armand Colin, 18.

Bauder, Harald. 2013. “Why we should use the term illegalized immigrant”. *RCIS Research Brief* 1. Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement. Ryerson University.

Fassin, Didier. 2023. *Les épreuves de la frontière (3)*. Lecture at the Collège de France on April 19, 2023.

Mau, Steffen. 2023. *La réinvention de la frontière au XXIe siècle***.** Translated by Christophe Lucchese. Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-nasilje-i-prezivjeli-p?locale=en

Switch It up a Little, My Friend

Tea Škokić

In September 2015, during the mass movement of refugees who tried to enter Croatia from Serbia and move on to other western countries of the European Union, Croatia briefly closed the Bajakovo border crossing for transport vehicles, which led to a heavy congestion in the border area between Croatia and Serbia.

The Croatian government considered the temporary closure of the border crossing a warning to Serbia due to, they believed, Serbia directing refugees to pass exclusively through Croatia. The Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia and the head of the Headquarters for the Coordination of Activities Related to the Arrival of Migrants in the Republic of Croatia, Ranko Ostojić, explained that not a single migrant was crossing the Serbian-Hungarian border and that this was a case of an "organized operation of transporting refugees directly to Croatia". Reacting to these events, Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić immediately announced an extraordinary session of the Serbian government and imposed a deadline for Croatia to open the border, otherwise Serbia would introduce countermeasures "that will affect Croatia more than us". Zoran Milanović, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia at the time, reacted to Vučić's statement, claiming that the temporary closure of the Bajakovo border crossing for transport vehicles was a clear message to Serbia that it must send refugees to other countries as well.

> I am not calling out Serbia, but I will tell them to tone it down a bit and to – as that joke goes – switch it up a little, my friend! So, send some of it up to Hungary and to Romania, send it to Croatia. We'll send it in all directions, and then go to Brussels – where Vučić and his crew won't be present – to talk about handling this thing at the source, which is Turkey and Greece, which is important. I hold conversations, in a normal and constructive, civilized tone, with the ones in the most difficult position, which are Austria and Germany, and Slovenia, who is in a slightly better position. But who is making the most noise? The ones that are nothing more than a corridor. (...) We're not idiots here, we can see what they're trying to do. We can see what they're trying to do and what kind of deal they have with Budapest. Come on lads, loosen up a bit, we'll sort everything out. Croatia can take on thousands of people, and will do so in the role of a corridor. We're organized, to the horror of our political opponents who hate the fact that everything has not fallen apart. But, they have to send this in other directions. Because we cannot and will not accept 20,000 people in two days (Al Jazeera Balkans 2015).

During the few days that the border crossing was closed, the verbal conflict between the Prime Ministers of both countries continued, with some ministers also getting involved, and the argument was followed by most of the media. Although many commented on Milanović's "switch it up a little, my friend", only a few Croatian and Serbian news sites, which themselves tend to engage in such discourse, recognized the racist joke behind the phrase because he called the refugees "it" and because, in their view, he was referring to a joke disparaging black people. In addition, parodies with the phrase "switch it up a little, my friend" appeared, but they emphasized the pointless nature of the debate and made fun of the characters of both prime ministers.

4/5/2022



Ultimate fight Milanović vs. Vučić

The video is available in the online edition of e-ERIM:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCH8nmVDOx0&ab_channel=MKArtStudio; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31MRgjo6mOc

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-scaron-araj-malo-brate-p?locale=en

Šid

Teodora Jovanović

Šid is a city and the center of the municipality of the same name in the Srem District, located in the northern part of the Republic of Serbia within the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. Šid is located in the immediate vicinity of the **border** between Serbia and Croatia, which also places it on the external border of the European Union in the **Western Balkans**.

Šid and its surroundings were significantly affected by the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the war during the 1990s, when populations were "exchanged" across both sides of the border, established at that time between Serbia and Croatia. Population "exchanges" were done with the goal of ethnic homogenization. Today, people from the countries of the **Global South** pass through and stay in Šid. Narratives about **refugees** from the 1990s intertwine with narratives regarding the movement witnessed by the population of Šid and its surroundings today (Jovanović et al. 2023).

After the state-organized humanitarian corridor was redirected from the border with Hungary onto the border with Croatia in September 2015, Šid became the central hub of the **Balkan route** and **corridor**. Three transit and reception centers were opened in the municipality of Šid at that time: Šid – Stanica (in the center of the city of Šid), Adaševci (near the Batrovci border crossing) and Principovac (which is located right at the border crossing of the same name; a section of its yard is located on the territory of Croatia), managed by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia (Komesarijat za izbeglice i migracije Republike Srbije – KIRS). With the official closure of the corridor in March of 2016, crossing the border between Serbia and Croatia became completely **irregularized** for people on the move. Three reception centers remained open as places of encampment (Agier 2016), **humanitarian exception** (Petrović 2018), detention and transit of people on the move.

Despite the closure of the corridor, people continued to cross the border between Serbia and Croatia. Such developments show that (thanks to the efforts of people on the move) the external borders of the EU are not "hermetically sealed", but partially permeable. While, on the other hand, there are numerous efforts to "protect" the EU's external border from people on the move, as demonstrated by the reports of activists present in Šid. Those reports contain testimonies about violence perpetrated against people on the move, with a special focus on **pushbacks** (Are You Syrious? and Welcome Initiative! 2017; Border Violence Monitoring Network 2019, 2020).

Field diary note, surroundings of Šid, September 2020.

> **TAXI** DRIVER
>
> He talked about migrants without fear or hatred. He says that he sometimes drives families, that some of them are really nice and that he doesn't charge them much more than others. He says that the transport of migrants does not count as smuggling, because he is not allowed to ask anyone for their ID, what they plan to do or where they are going next. The police once even told him to drive people straight to the center of a border town in the vicinity of Šid, not to leave them at the entrance. Migrants are willing to pay a lot, but no one can guarantee them they will get where they want. They can easily enter Croatia, but then they catch them and send them back, break their phones, beat them, sometimes steal their money. He says that they can only get across with help from someone from Croatia. They try to pass through the **forest**. He talked about how at first it seems as though they know nothing, that they are grungy, but that they know how to take care of themselves and use technology very well. They say that they know the forest better than the locals.

30/3/2022

References

Are You Syrious? and Welcome Initiative! 2017. *Izvještaj o nezakonitim i nasilnim protjerivanjima izbjeglica iz Republike Hrvatske*. Zagreb.

Agier, Michel. 2016. *Borderlands. Towards an Anthropology of the Cosmopolitan Condition*. Cambridge: Polity.

Border Violence Monitoring Network. 2019. *New Yearly Report on Torture of Asylum Seekers by Croatian Authorities at EU External Borders. Special Reports.*

Border Violence Monitoring Network. 2020. *Balkan Region Report – April/May 2020. Illegal Push-Backs and Border Violence Reports*.

Jovanović, Teodora, Katarina Mitrović and Ildiko Erdei. 2023. "Moving while Waiting for the Future. Mobility and Education in Šid, Serbia". *Journal of Borderland Studies* 38/2: 229-246.

Petrović, Duško. 2018. "Humanitarian Exceptionalism. Normalization of Suspension of Law in Camp and Corridor". In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in Croatian Context.* Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and München: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Centre for Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V., 43-63.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/sid?locale=en

Taxi

Morgane Dujmovic

In **Lipa camp**, there is a steady stream of taxis taking turns to transport the encamped men to the centre of Bihać. “It's non-stop work, 24 hours a day”, as one of them told me in April 2024. Trips into town are frequent, to get supplies, to see relatives in the family camp, or to try the **game**. There are always one to five cars waiting to be filled: each journey costs 20 euros, so travellers try to get together to share the cost. In front of the camp, taxi business cards carpet the dirt floor.



Lipa taxis, April 2024. Photo: Morgane Dujmovic

Some drivers make no secret of the fact that they generate a very lucrative business and “use migrants for money”, in the words of one of them. Another, more measured, describes at length a not-so-profitable and rather risky business:

> The fuel, the times when you don't end up in the right place, in the end you just break even. (...) Five or six years ago, if you took someone in your vehicle even as far as the bus stop, let alone to the border, they could arrest you and put you in prison; that was the case for my colleague, and I had a trial. This is the only place where they can lock you up for trafficking without you even having crossed a border!

The Bosnian legal framework has in fact made it possible to penalize the transport of illegal migrants, resulting in several prison sentences for taxi drivers. It has also largely contributed to **criminalizing** any type of aid given to exiles outside the channels of the authorities' partner humanitarian organizations: spontaneous actions by the local population and distributions organized by unauthorized NGOs have been repressed in various ways (administrative barriers, prosecutions, confiscation of passports, expulsion of foreign volunteers). In its 2022 report *Accused of Solidarity: A Report on Incidents of Criminalisation*, the Border Violence Monitoring Network reported various cases of criminalization targeting its members the previous year.

Recently, the transport of exiled persons has been governed by a decree which seems to regulate the ban in a more flexible way: transport is only tolerated in the context of the professional activity of a taxi, and the amount of the financial fine remains low enough for the activity to be considered profitable (around a hundred euros). As a result, more and more residents of Bihać have recently taken up this activity, with over a hundred new taxi licences issued by the end of 2023, as reported on the newswire on refugees of the website *Courrier des Balkans*.

In spite of local utilitarianism, the cordial atmosphere between some of the men encamped in Lipa and the drivers lends credence to the empathetic words I gathered: “We help them, it's for money, but we help them. They have enormous problems crossing the border. The Croatian police beat them up, take their money and **cell phones** and set dogs on them. I've seen this violence first-hand”.

Indeed, exiles who have been rejected at the border by the Croatian police and want to reach the official camp at Lipa have to get there on their own: either after a two-day walk, or by calling these drivers, who sometimes accept payment for their journey (around 100 euros) at a later date.

Like most of the inhabitants of Bihać, the taxi drivers thus find themselves in outposts to observe the repressive practices of the Croatian police, and the EU's control strategy on its south-eastern borders.

19/9/2025

This text is taken from the series of portfolio articles “Rivers are deadly if you're not on the right side” previously published on Mediapart, Le Courrier des Balkans, visionscarto.net and Migreurop. This series of portfolio articles is the result of field research carried out in the spring of 2024 in several South-East European countries: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. This publication is sent to all interlocutors met in the field. To preserve their anonymity, the exiled people are referred to here by a randomly assigned letter, with their consent.

The author would like to thank the exiled people she met on these roads and along these rivers, the people from the collectives, associations, universities and institutions with whom she spoke, as well as Louis Fernier, Romain Kosellek, Eva Ottavy, Elsa Putelat and Marijana Hameršak for their invaluable contributions prior to and during this field mission.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-taksi-p?locale=en

Teeth on the Move

Tisa Kučan Lah

For people on the move, teeth can also be a reason for stigmatization, as local residents do not recognize any problems with access to running water or toothbrushes on the migrants' journey. Sarah Horton and Judith C. Barker point to this in their text, using the example of Mexican migrants in the United States. Their oral health is affected by several factors, and one of the most important is the fact that many Mexican migrants do not have access to health insurance because they work in low-paid jobs, mostly as fieldworkers (Horton and Barker 2009: 788). As noted by Sarah Horton and Judith C. Barker (2009), migrants are thus seen as people with common health problems, including oral diseases, which some US residents associate with poor oral hygiene and "backwardness." That is why, in the US, hygiene has become an important criterion for health workers in determining the "suitability" of candidates for citizenship. Children are also stigmatized because of oral diseases, as demonstrated in the case of a group of children from Mexico, described by their school doctor as problematic due to oral diseases.

The student fieldwork undertaken in **Bihać** in March 2022 was my first experience of researching how migrants lived. But I certainly didn't expect that my attention would be drawn to their teeth. I began to think about them because of the statements from volunteers and the local population. I found their fascination with the teeth of migrants and their amazement at the whiteness of their teeth interesting. One of the local interlocutors even mentioned teeth when talking about why she herself helps people on the move, something along the lines of "how could I not help them, look at that smile and those beautiful white teeth." Based on such statements, I decided to pay more attention to this topic. The teeth, however, quickly told a much bigger story.

From observing the migrants we met during our stay in Bihać, I realized that "beautiful" and healthy teeth are important to them. Among their **garbage** and on the floors around squats, I noticed a large amount of toothbrush wrappers and empty toothpaste tubes, which indicated their frequent use. Unfortunately, I didn't have many opportunities to talk about teeth in the field itself. Nevertheless, the topic came up a few times, for example in a conversation with an eighteen-year-old Pakistani who has been stuck on the border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia for three years ago. Sha. (referred to by the abbreviation "Sha." for the purpose of protecting personal data) was cordial and optimistic, and above all he liked to talk about his friends, which he found among the people on the move, the volunteers and the local population. His friends represent an important support network for him and help him in his daily life. Among other forms of help, they provide him with the opportunity to practice good hygiene and thus the conditions for brushing his teeth. Sha. lives in a so-called **jungle squat**, in one of the dilapidated buildings, where a large group of people live at the same time. Our interlocutor lives in a squat with seven other people. Since these are dilapidated buildings, they do not have access to running water, so he brushes his teeth at his friends' houses, or brings a canister of water to his squat. He fills these canisters at his friends' houses, or volunteers deliver the canisters to him. He also emphasized that brushing his teeth is very important to him, which is why, on average, he brushes them three times a day. It could be argued that for Sha., in a way, brushing his teeth means preserving his dignity and resisting the severe structural obstacles that people encounter along their journey.

In addition to hygiene, he also takes care of his teeth by eating a healthy diet. For example, he tries to avoid sugary foods. However, Sha. mentioned that he loves chocolate too much to give it up for the sake of his teeth. He also added that his friends, especially other migrants he met on the journey, often reprimand him not to eat so much sugary food because he has to take care of his teeth. According to him, three of his teeth had to be pulled out because of this habit, despite the fact that he is only eighteen years old. Dental health problems for people on the move can also be related to the experience of migration itself. The unavailability of medical assistance can also be a big problem, which is discussed in the following paragraph.

In their work, which is based on field research carried out in Slovenia, Jaka Matičič and Urška Živkovič claim that dental problems are "the most common health problems reported by applicants for international protection, and one of the biggest challenges in providing adequate dental services is communication" (Matičič and Živkovič 2017: 30). They state that there are many reasons behind the frequent oral diseases, including inadequate nutrition. They also note that migrants without a regulated status, asylum seekers and other immigrants without a formalized employment relationship in Slovenia are only entitled to emergency dental care: "which in practice means that the diseased tooth is either extracted or is otherwise ground, but without a filling. An open tooth represents further possibilities for toothache and general poor health of the applicant" (Matičič and Živkovič 2017: 30).

They highlight this issue as the reason why migrants, or in this case, applicants for international protection, often do not seek dental care:

> They know that they will receive nothing but pain pills until the pain is so bad that they have to have their tooth pulled out. In Slovenia, the health insurance of applicants for international protection only covers life-threatening conditions. Dental problems, however, regardless of their cause or level of pain, are treated in the same way: "It's always the same story. The dentist opens and cleans the tooth, makes a temporary filling, which falls out after a few days. When the pain returns, you visit the dentist again, and in the end that tooth is pulled out" (Matičič and Živkovič 2017: 30).

In Bihać, one of the local supporters of people on the move mentioned a dental office that offers help to people on the move even with less urgent dental ailments. They justify this by saying that they "take the Hippocratic Oath seriously."

Teeth also tell us about the migration experience of Ahmad, an asylum seeker in Slovenia. His teeth had to be extracted as a result of a ten-year search for asylum and five years of legal battles against deportation from Slovenia. Ahmad's story is presented to us in an article by Jelka Zorn, linking Ahmad's dental problems with stress and trauma resulting from the experience of migration and the threat of deportation (Zorn 2021: 11). According to Zorn, his teeth were presented as evidence in court, in a lawsuit against the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants filed because his rights as an asylum seeker were curtailed, as they prevented him from staying in an asylum center. At the same time, Ahmad's teeth also serve as a small reminder of the **solidarity** that migrants sometimes receive on their journey. His friends collected money for a new prosthesis, which a dentist implanted for

free.

During my research, teeth turned out to be a much more important topic than it seemed at first glance. They tell us more about the person and their life and migration experience. The need for urgent medical assistance and stigmatization based on teeth also reveal a lot about the society in which an individual finds themselves. Thus, teeth can really tell a lot of stories.

8/6/2022

References

Horton, Sarah and Judith C. Barker. 2009. "'Stains' on their Self-discipline. Public Health, Hygiene, and the Disciplining of Undocumented Immigrant Parents in the Nation's Internal Borderlands". *American Ethnologist* 36/4: 784-798.

Matičič, Jaka and Urška Živkovič. 2017. "Poročila socialnih delavcev iz terena". In *Zdravstvena obravnava prosilcev za mednarodno zaščito.* Helena Liberšar, ed. Ljubljana: Slovenska filantropija, 18-31.

Zorn, Jelka. 2021. "The Case of Ahmad Shamieh's Campaign against Dublin Deportation. Embodiment of Political Violence and Community Care". *Social Sciences* 10/5: 154.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship, and Ethnic Minorities, thaught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-zobje-na-poti-p?locale=en

The Path Along the Wire

Lia Gerkman

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Anthropology of Migrations, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Ambrož Kvartič, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-pot-ob-zici-p?locale=en

Thirteen Holes in the Wire Fence

Uršula Lipovec Čebron

Available only in Slovenian.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-13-lukenj-v-zicnati-ograji-p?locale=en

Tickets to the World

Nataša Roter

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-vstopnice-v-svet-p?locale=en

Traces in the Forest

Hana Konjedic

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Anthropology of Migrations, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Ambrož Kvartič, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-sledi-v-gozdu-p?locale=en

Transit

Teodora Jovanović, Marta Stojić Mitrović

Available only in Serbian.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-tranzit-tranzitnost-p?locale=en

Transit as a Lived Experience

Teodora Jovanović

Anthropological research on **transit** has increasingly focused on the experience of prolonged waiting and the circular movement of people on the move.

Conversations with people on the move who are currently in Serbia offer us a partial insight into their lived experience of transit. Through their narratives, the temporal dimension of transit figures far more prominently than the spatial dimension. These narratives are filled with testimonies of waiting, being stuck, and coming to a standstill.

Field note, interview with Hamid and Nadira, asylum center in Serbia, April 2018

> Generally, no, they don't want to stay here, even though their children go to school. They want to move on. Hamid says that Serbs are good people ("Serbian public is all good"). It's a good country, but they want to move on. I ask where. To Germany? He says Alman (Alman is Germany in Farsi, they explain to me). He says, "Germany, France, or another country." I ask if they were aware when they arrived that the borders were closed. Hamid says they knew they were closed but had heard that there was a list for Hungary. I say that it's not just Hungary that's closed. Nadira explains they left because of a bad situation in Afghanistan. I ask: "So, does that mean you knew the Hungarian border was closed, but not the others?" They say no, that's not it. They knew, but hoped they'd still be able to cross. When they arrived, there was a list for Hungary, and a few people were allowed through each day. Now, it's harder to cross the border. Now Hungary lets through one family per week. When they came, it was one family per day. Now it's one family per week. I nod, because at that time, they really were letting more people through than now. I ask how one gets on the list, and whether people pay to get on it. They say that when they arrived at the center, they heard that some people were paying to get on the list. Now they're not sure if that's true. But they hope their turn will come, to be that one family per week. A year ago, people were paying for it. The interpreter asks Nadira if she's tired. She nods.

This field note shows that the couple in the conversation does not have a clear destination, but that their goals change depending on external opportunities, obstacles, and self-initiated border-crossing attempts. Their prolonged stay in Serbia is a consequence of their inability to continue their journey. Initially, Serbia was meant to be just a stopover before the anticipated crossing into Hungary. However, they have now been living in the camp for almost two years, and their children have started school. Due to their inability to get on the "list" for entry into Hungary, they are forced to remain in Serbia. Transit is no longer a temporary and fleeting state, but has become a much more enduring condition for them.

The following examples illustrate how transit is linked to the experience of waiting. Elham is a citizen of Iran who arrived in Serbia during the period of visa liberalization between the Republic of Serbia and the Islamic Republic of Iran. This regime allowed Iranian citizens to travel to Serbia without a visa, and some of them applied for asylum, while others continued their journey toward other European countries. Elham spent several years waiting—that is, in transit—in Turkey.

Field note, interview with Elham, asylum center in Serbia, May 2019

> I ask him whether he knew when he came to Serbia with a visa that he would stay here, or if he thought he would go elsewhere. He says no: "I come to Serbia, I wait on, I wait... Because I don't know. Serbian people like people from Turkey, because it's very different. I wait. I didn't want to go to every country. Because I'm tired. Because I waited five years in Turkey, unfortunately." I say, "So, you want to stay here for a while." "Yes. I went to one of the camps, then I came here." I ask, "Why did you change camps? Did you have a problem?" He says the police transferred him because he told the police and the Commissariat: "*I will stay in Serbia, I want asylum in Serbia.* That is legal in Serbia, for everyone. They change your camp." He further explained that the first center he arrived at was a reception—or transit—center, but the one he is in now is an asylum center, which is why he was transferred.

Here, he pointed out the difference between two types of centers, or camps. In Serbia, there are two types of centers managed by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia (a government body responsible for reception). The first are asylum centers. The second are reception centers, which were referred to as transit centers during the existence of the **Balkan corridor**, but after the corridor was shut down, they became camps for longer-term accommodation. There are more reception (transit) centers than asylum centers. This division between the two types of official camps in Serbia clearly shows that transit has been institutionalized. When a person applies for asylum, as Elham did, they are transferred to an asylum center. Although there is a general practice of placing asylum seekers in asylum centers, while those who have not applied for asylum are housed in reception (transit) centers, there are exceptions. Interlocutors described the asylum process as long, uncertain, and inaccessible:

> I asked them about our asylum, they said "you must wait."

Field research has shown that even people who receive asylum in Serbia often continue their journey. Refugee status or subsidiary protection leaves people in a precarious position, which is why many choose to seek their future elsewhere.

15/9/2023

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-tranzit-kao-zivljeno-iskustvo-p?locale=en

Un-grateful Migrant

Oliwia Magdalena Prusek

In April 2024 during our fieldwork in Bela Krajina, I and a couple of colleagues were, after previous arrangements, invited to one of the local non-governmental organizations. Even though the main focus of our research was the Slovenian-Croatian border, that day we talked with two women from Ukraine who found refuge in the Bela Krajina region. Their resettlement occurred as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Anastasiya, a woman from the south of Ukraine, came to Bela Krajina shortly after the beginning of the Russian invasion, in March 2022. Slovenia was her first destination choice because her family members reside here. Anastasiya talked with us exclusively in Slovenian, emphasizing her efforts to learn this language: “I try to participate in every course in the Slovenian language I am eligible for. I took many of them already because it was important to learn the language. I study a lot”. She went on describing her current working situation:

> Now I work in a kitchen, and I mostly take care of cooking. I am satisfied with my job, but it is hard sometimes. Above all, I am very happy I can legally work in Slovenia. I am grateful for such a warm greeting, and I see my work as an act of helping and paying back for the support and kindness I received. If I cannot do much to help, I want at least to work well for Slovenia to show that I am thankful. (...) Back in Ukraine, my husband also worked in a kitchen. At that time, I promised myself never to follow in his footsteps because imagining myself in front of the enormous kitchen pots and appliances was impossible. I always laughed a bit at his job and now it is my job. (...) I have a Russian colleague at work. I know our co-workers were wondering how we were going to get along. To their surprise, we understand each other very well. I remember that once she exclaimed: “I am from Metlika, not from Russia!” (...) I am integrated well into the community. Me and my children speak Slovenian and have local friends. I appreciate my life here, even though it is way different than how it was in Ukraine.

Alona, the other woman from Ukraine, moved to Bela Krajina in April 2022 because of her husband who had been employed in the region before the war in Ukraine. She recently finished an educational programme at a Ukrainian university and works online for a corporation. Alona also talked with us in Slovenian, explaining her family situation:

> My family is still in Ukraine. In Bela Krajina, it is me, my son, and my husband. My son is in kindergarten, and I am proud of how well he is doing. We are happy with the Slovenian kindergarten and the diverse activities it offers. (...) I also attended various Slovenian courses and many different meetings and events organized by the local associations. I feel integrated with and welcomed by the locals. I do not have much to complain about. I agree [with Anastasiya, O.P.] that Slovenians are good people. I have not met an unfriendly Slovenian yet.

From this and other conversations with Anastasiya and Alona, it was clear that both women were underlining their feelings of gratefulness towards Slovenians and the Slovenian state. When listening to them I asked myself: is it possible that the received benefits and help somehow trigger the feeling of gratitude and of being indebted? During the conversation, no criticism of Slovenia or Slovenians was expressed. They portrayed their reception in Bela Krajina with very bright colours, focusing only on the positive aspects of their life in Slovenia. Both spoke highly of the locals and highlighted the kindness they encountered. Especially when talking to Anastasiya it was evident that she wanted to emphasize how integrated she is in the local environment and how much she strives to thank the Slovenian people. The only downside she mentioned was the complicated paperwork in the country. The conversation revealed a certain pattern of behaviour.

Fred R. Berger (1975) indicated two main factors influencing the feeling of gratitude: the value a particular gesture holds for the recipient and the degree of sacrifice in making the gesture. In the case of migrants, gratitude might often feel like an obligation.

Who is a *grateful migrant*? Kaja Jenssen Rathe describes a sort of unwritten contract between a migrant and a host country: “The ‘host’ has provided ‘a home, an education, and a future’, and in return, it is the duty of the ‘guest’ to ‘be humble and grateful’—presumably forever” (2023: 250). The most striking conclusion drawn from this quote is that the figure of a *grateful migrant* is a migrant individual with a debt to pay - a debt coming solely from their circumstances. Following Rathe (2023), migrant indebtedness does not always result just from being grateful but is frequently imposed by the country’s locals. This perpetuates further the cycle of dependence and marginalization. In turn, to find out what it means to be an ungrateful migrant, one does not have to look far. For instance, the headline published in the Slovenian right-wing journal, Demokracija.si (2020) goes as follows: “This is gratitude! A migrant, to whom Serbia provides free food and shelter, vandalized a public facility with a stick”. Citing a similar example from Poland, published on right-wing Rzeczpospolita.pl (2023): “Mentzen: Where is the gratitude of Ukrainians? They took advantage of the Polish government's foolishness”. Releases like this one imply that a migrant displaying deviant, antisocial behaviour is automatically assigned the “ungrateful” label. This specific discourse targets migrant persons and aims to discipline and position them on the societal ladder.

The words “grateful” and “migrant” create one consistent phrase solely because of the nature of migrations. For gratitude to be true, it should not be imposed or forced; it shall come from the heart. As well as genuine **solidarity** does not aim to create debt.

24/6/2024

References

Berger, Fred R. 1975. “Gratitude”. *Ethics* 85/4: 298–309.

Jenssen Rathe, Kaja. 2023. “Forever Foreigners.The Temporality of Immigrant Indebtedness”. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 54/3: 249-264.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-p?locale=en

Unknowns in the Marking and Maintenance of Graves

Pia Krampl

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-neznanke-pri-obelezevanju-in-urejanju-grobov-p?locale=en

UNO

Kaja Cassiopeia Kraner

Available only in Slovenian.

Notes

The text was written within the course Anthropology of Migrations, taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Ambrož Kvartič, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-uno-p?locale=en

Velika Kladuša

Uršula Lipovec Čebron

Velika Kladuša has been inscribed on the map of the **Balkan migration route** since 2018, when it became one of the key stops for illegalised people on their way to northern countries. The town, with around 45 000 inhabitants and located in the extreme north-west of Bosnia and Herzegovina, right next to the border with Croatia, has been confronted with the presence of a large number of people on the move – waiting for a favourable moment to cross the border and go on the **game**, and those who have been forcibly and illegally returned to the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Croatian authorities (see **pushback**).

Some of the people moving through Velika Kladuša could previously access the Miral camp (cf. **camp**), which was run by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). In this camp, as well as in others in Bosnia and Herzegovina, people on the move were exposed to inadequate living conditions, lack of sanitation and health care. Many people were denied access to the camp (either because it was too crowded or due to various arbitrary criteria, often including ethnicity) or did not want to stay there for various reasons, and often lived in abandoned buildings in Velika Kladuša – **squats** that they set up as emergency shelter.

The presence of a large number of illegalised persons represents a new milestone in the unusual history of Velika Kladuša (Lipovec Čebron et al. 2019). The area was the site of the "centuries-old border" between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire, also constructed as the border between East and West. After WWII, in 1950, the town of Velika Kladuša was part of the "Cazinska buna" (the Cazin Rebellion), the only organized peasant revolt against the communist authorities in Yugoslavia, which had introduced unpopular measures in this area (Kržišnik Bukić 1993). The uprising was met with harsh countermeasures by the authorities, which caused the gradual deterioration of this area in the following decades, including several episodes of discrimination against its inhabitants (Kržišnik Bukić 2017: 234–235). During the most recent Balkan war, Velika Kladuša also played an unusual role, as the city became the scene of an armed struggle among Muslims. Fikret Abdić, the central figure in the Agrokomerc banking scandal that traumatised Yugoslavia in 1987, declared the Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia in 1993 and set up camps in Velika Kladuša to imprison those who opposed the establishment of the Autonomous Province (Brstovšek 2020). The fact that he held this position represents a tangible continuity with the wartime period in this region.

Today, the historically burdened and economically underprivileged town faces a multitude of people on the move and has seen multi-faceted tensions arise between the spontaneous hospitality of the local population on one side and the increasingly repressive policies of the European Union and restrictive local measures that **criminalize** not only people on the move, but also all forms of **solidarity** with them on the other (Lipovec Čebron et al. 2019).

5/3/2022

References

Brstovšek, Andrej. 2020. "Še en vojni zločinec bi rad postal politik". Dnevnik, 26. 5. 2020.

Kržišnik Bukić, Vera. 1993. *Cazinska buna: 1950.* Ljubljana: Self-published.

Kržišnik Bukić, Vera. 2017. "Kmečko uporništvo kot fenomen komunističnih družb in Cazinska buna leta 1950". In *Leukhup! Kmečko uporništvo v obdobju predmoderne – zgodovina, vzporednice, (re)prezentacije*. Sašo Jerše, ed. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, Posavski muzej Brežice and Zgodovinski inštitut Milka Kosa ZRC SAZU, 223-236.

Lipovec Čebron, Uršula, Tina Ivnik and Eva Fekonja. 2019. "Migracije in gostoljubje. Kriminalizacija gostoljubja v Veliki Kladuši". *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* 47/278: 135-161.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/velika-kladusa?locale=en

Vučjak

Romana Pozniak

Also known as the “wild camp”, “nightmare camp” and “Jungle camp”, Vučjak was one of those areas that cause a number of controversies in public, media and political discourse. When a former landfill in the vicinity of Bihać, next to the village of Vučjak, was “repurposed” to serve as a refugee camp, it was clear to any person with any knowledge of recent migration events on the European periphery that the multi-layered internal and external political controversies explicitly related to migration policies, and implicitly to the political reality of post-Dayton-Agreement Bosnia and Herzegovina, had reached their peak, while “humanitarian-security management” (Hameršak and Pleše 2018: 110) reached its lowest point.

The violence on the Croatian borders and the increasing prevalence of **pushbacks** since 2017 had contributed to a significant increase in the number of people on the move in the Una-Sana Canton, especially in the areas of Bihać and **Velika Kladuša**. In 2019, the police of Bosnia and Herzegovina started to introduce stricter measures for people on the move and to criminalize migration from the **Global South**, evident from the fact that a curfew was imposed for migrants only, from ten in the evening to six in the morning, which the local government in Bihać interpreted as a measure to prevent crime that allegedly increased with the arrival and presence of migrants (Mlinarević and Ahmetašević 2022: 27). Along with the declared increase in the crime rate, images of overcrowded camps and their alarming hygienic conditions, the life of many people on the move in post-industrial ruins – pushed into homelessness by the impermeability and cruelty of the European border regime – and the lack of political coordination at the governmental level in Bosnia and Herzegovina were used as arguments by the city of Bihać and the Una-Sana Canton (USC) to forbid movement to people on the move, to “remove” them from the public space of the city of Bihać and to transport them or organize a march to Vučjak.

The conditions in the camp itself, the competition between cantonal and state authorities, the reaction of international organizations and the European Union, and sensationalist media reporting allow us to identify Vučjak as a heterotopia (Foucault 1986, cf. also Agier 2019), a spatial and temporal vacuum intended for “human waste” (Bauman 2004) – the unwanted bodies of the Global South – which, despite multiple and sometimes incompatible policies of the European border regime, reflects the common viewpoint of most European institutions of power: that migrants are not welcome here. Michel Foucault defines heterotopias as a kind of “counter-sites” which simultaneously represent, juxtapose, and distort the meanings of all other places in society and culture (1986: 24). The landfill in the vicinity of Bihać, kilometres away from urban infrastructure and surrounded by minefields, is both a parallel world for unwanted migrants and a reflection of the contemporary socio-political reality, one that, despite the raft of legal instruments in the field of **refugeehood** and human rights protection, enables and allows the creation of such places – landfills of human waste – located close to European centers or their margins, but remote enough so as not to disturb the daily life of their inhabitants.

While Croatia accused Bosnia and Herzegovina and the authorities of the Una-Sana Canton of deliberately opening the camp just a few kilometers from its borders, thus encouraging people on the move to “illegally” cross into the Republic of Croatia, international humanitarian organizations strongly condemned the living conditions in Vučjak and refused to participate in the humanitarian organization of the camp, while the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, appeared in the media several times, calling for the immediate closure of Vučjak, stressing that “the area of the camp is unacceptable for the life of migrants” and that, if it were not closed, the people in it would “start dying”. In addition to being placed on a former landfill, Vučjak had no drinking water supply, electricity, heating or sanitary containers, and the migrants lived, as described by one of the Red Cross volunteers, in “mouldy, leaking, overcrowded” tents. Two or four policemen were usually stationed at the entrance to the camp, food was distributed twice a day, and the situation in the camp is best illustrated by the fact that local doctors refused to work there, stating they cannot be responsible for other people’s lives in such conditions (Mlinarević and Ahmetašević 2022: 27). According to local media, around six hundred, and according to other sources, around seven hundred people were placed in about fifty tents on Vučjak.

The specificities of Vučjak, which, in addition to the mentioned characteristics, make it a heterotopic place, include the fact that it was neither a refugee camp like those managed by international humanitarian organizations in the Global South, nor a reception center like the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers in Zagreb (see **Porin**), nor was it a self-organized squat, like those found in border, mountain, rural and urban areas on migrant routes (cf. Agier 2019). In contrast, it was a camp opened at the initiative of the local government with the Red Cross as the only permanently present humanitarian organization that coordinated the erection of tents and the distribution of food with minimal financial support, as the camp manager repeatedly emphasized to me and my colleagues during a field visit to Vučjak in the summer of 2019. Arising at the “intersection of near and far violences,” as described by Azra Hromadžić, and the “historically rooted sense of disappointment [of the citizens of Bihać] in the Bosnian government and the world/Europe ‘that keeps on looking’” (2020: 179), Vučjak was only one of the many “official” jungle camps or wild camps – improvised, tent settlements – formed by local authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (other such camps include the former Trnovi near Velika Kladuša and the still active **Lipa**, also in the vicinity of Bihać).

The scenes from Vučjak are difficult to describe. Blankets and pillows jutted out from under the white tents (donations from the Turkish Red Crescent) erected on the muddy, recently cleared landfill, and along with the shoes and summer flip-flops neatly arranged in front of the tent entrances and the occasional group of people making bread on open fires, they illustrated the efforts of the residents to humanize that space, if that was even possible. When I asked one of the volunteers why she was walking around the camp with a loud speaker playing heavy metal, she said that she was trying to raise people’s morale and mood, but in all probability she was only adding to the bizarreness of the place. A participant in my doctoral research (Pozniak 2022), who visited Vučjak as a humanitarian worker for some time, commented on the Red Cross’s responsibility for the conditions in that camp:

> Actually, they kind of follow that story from their mandate, that they have to represent, which is simply to help anyone in need. That camp would have happened with or without the Red Cross. Maybe it would be called by another name and located somewhere else. These were all political games regarding the opening of that camp, just as they are now, regarding the closing and opening of camps. They wanted to move migrants away from the city center. The state

organized it without any knowledge of anything, without any thought and, well, it is what it is.

As a controversial place, Vučjak, with its appearance, position and conditions, contributed to the accumulation of negative meanings about refugee movements and to creating an image of migrants as a threat, which is confirmed by media headlines such as “Migrants in Camp Vučjak Attack Police: They Lay under a Truck and Wanted To Come to Croatia” or “Camp Vučjak To Be Demolished and Set on Fire: Will Migrants Try To Cross the Croatian Border En Masse Tonight?”. Ultimately, it can be said that the camp served its purpose in a political sense, since the fear and outrage experienced and demonstrated by the majority of its visitors, volunteers, media and representatives of European institutions certainly influenced or, at least, accelerated the decision to transfer the migrants from Vučjak to Blažuj, a camp in the vicinity of Sarajevo erected in former barracks, which, in combination with containers and tents, could accommodate 2400 single men (Mlinarević and Ahmetašević 2022: 28). In mid-December 2019, after six months of operation, Vučjak was closed, and most of the migrants were transferred to the Blažuj and Ušivak camps, which partially, perhaps only ostensibly and temporarily, achieved the intent of Bihać to decentralize the responsibility for migration and the accommodation of people on the move in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As a symbol of violence and the policy of expulsion, the fragmented responsibility of local, cantonal and state authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina combined with the responsibility of the European Union and the ambivalent international humanitarian regime – which condemned the conditions in Vučjak, while almost simultaneously managing camps in Velika Kladuša and Bihać whose conditions were also criticized – Vučjak remains one of the most explicit examples of how political disputes create, reproduce and instrumentalize refugeehood and **irregular** movements. Its heterotopic nature did not consist only of the materialization of the space for “human waste”, but also in the saturation of local, national and global power politics beyond the humanitarian-security alliance which is characteristic in **migration regimes**.

22/12/2022.

References

Agier, Michel. 2019. “Camps, Encampments, and Occupations. From the Heterotopia to the Urban Subject”. *Ethnos* 84/1: 14-26.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2004. *Wasted Lives. Modernity and its Outcasts*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1986. “Of Other Spaces”. *Diacritics* 16/1: 22-27. Translated by Jay Miskowiec.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2018. “Winter Reception and Transit Center in the Republic of Croatia: An Ethnographic Research in the Slavonski Brod Refugee Camp”. In *Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor. Camps, Routes and Borders in the Croatian Context*. Emina Bužinkić and Marijana Hameršak, eds. Zagreb and Munich; Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (Zagreb), Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb), Faculty of Political Science University of Zagreb – Centre for Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, bordermonitoring.eu e.V. (München), 109-142.

Hromadžić, Azra. 2020. “Notes from the Field. 'Migrant Crisis' in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina”. *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 5/1: 163-180.

Mlinarević, Gorana and Nidžara Ahmetašević. 2022. *People on the Move in BiH 2019-2021. In Between. (Un)welcome to No Man's Land.* Sarajevo and Thessaloniki: Heinrich Böll Stiftung.

Pozniak, Romana. 2022. *Humanitarni rad u kontekstu izbjeglištva i migracija u posttranzicijskoj Hrvatskoj.* Doctoral Dissertation. Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-vucjak-p-eecf5d19-52ad-4cf5-ab6a-efc977ccda6b?locale=en

Weaponized Landscape

Iva Pleše, Marijana Hameršak

The term “weaponized landscape” and its variants are used in, apart from research approaches to military and war topics, the context of migration research to refer to the natural landscape being used as a weapon in the fight against **illegal migration** (cf., e.g., De León 2015). This natural landscape is used as a means of deterring migrants by being “armed”, for example with surveillance cameras or police forces with weapons, or is used in its “natural” form as an instrument against migrants, as a weapon, or a (potentially) dangerous environment for people on the move. The chains of responsibility held by individuals, politics and societies for the suffering of refugees and other migrants in such an environment, i.e. in nature, are hidden, as Estela Schindel (2022) summarizes, behind the widely accepted “de-historicized and de-politicized construction of ‘nature’” which connects the deaths and suffering with supposedly neutral natural elements such as terrain configuration, weather conditions, plant cover, wild animals, etc. There is no reflection on the reasons why migrants are in nature in the first place, nor on the fact that people on the move are consciously and deliberately pushed into these environments with policies of exclusion, control and obstruction of other possible paths. This “directing” of irregularized migrants towards potentially dangerous natural landscapes is important for the weaponized landscape concept. In Croatia and neighboring countries on the **Balkan route**, prominent weaponized landscapes include **forests** (Hameršak and Pleše 2021), **rivers** and mountains, while elsewhere they consist of deserts (De León 2015), other mountains (Del Biaggio et al. 2020), seas (e.g. Albahari 2015) or archipelagos (e.g. Mountz 2017).

1/3/2022

References

Albahari, Maurizio. 2015. *Crimes of Peace. Mediterranean Migrations at the World’s Deadliest Border.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

De León, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves. Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail.* Oakland: University of California Press.

Del Biaggio, Cristina, Leila Giannetto and Camille Noûs, eds. 2020. Refugiées et montagne / Refugees and Mountain. *Journal of Alpine Research / Revue de géographie alpine*, special issue, 108-2.

Hameršak, Marijana and Iva Pleše. 2021. “*Forest, forest, forest. Sometimes we sleep. Walking, sleep, walking, sleep. It’s dangerous on this way*. Weaponized Migration Landscapes at the Outskirts of the EU”. *Etnološka tribina* 51/44: 204-221.

Mountz, Alison. 2017. “Shrinking Spaces of Asylum. Vanishing Points where Geography is Used to Inhibit and Undermine Access to Asylum”. *Australian Journal of Human Rights* 19/3: 29-50.

Schindel, Estela. 2022. “Death by 'Nature'. The European Border Regime and the Spatial Production of Slow Violence”. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 40/2: 428-446.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/suma-kao-naoruzani-migrantski-krajolik?locale=en

Western Balkans

Marta Stojić Mitrović

The term Western Balkans was introduced into political discourse, as well as other discourses, during the 1990s “as a kind of euphemism for the term *Balkans*, which had negative connotations and with which most of the states created on the territory of Yugoslavia did not want to be associated” (Petrović 2012: 22-23). The term was created by the EU, using the formula “Yugoslavia minus Slovenia plus Albania”, and the states it refers to are not related based on some common historical, geographical or other cohesive characteristic, but on the fact that they are not a part of the EU. As Tanja Petrović points out: “The question of what the *western Balkans* are can only be answered if we flip it around using negation, and ask what the *western Balkans are not*. The answer is obvious – they are not the European Union” (Petrović 2012: 25).

This pseudo-geographical and pseudo-technocratic designation, promoted since 1999 and especially during the Stabilization and Association Process, was supposed to overcome the problems of existing ethno-national denominations and divisions, and to unite the quarreling, impoverished and deeply corrupt states into a single entity on which the EU would implement its neighborhood and enlargement policy. Further formalization of the Western Balkans as a separate geopolitical space occurred at the 2003 Summit in Thessaloniki, which “cemented” the so-called European future for the Western Balkans states or determined their so-called European direction of development (Stojić Mitrović 2021: 51; cf. Hameršak et al. 2020). In processes aimed at political stabilization, economic liberalization and possible EU membership, the EU adopts a paternalistic, civilizationist and neo-colonial attitude based on conceptualizations of the Balkans as “anti-civilization, the alter ego and the dark side within” Europe (Todorova 1994: 482).

One of the first goals which emerged from the Thessaloniki Summit was visa liberalization, which facilitated the movement of citizens of the Western Balkans states into the EU. In return, the Western Balkans states had to establish control over movement towards the EU, which in practice primarily meant that they had to effectively control the movement of their own citizens, who still make up a significant part of asylum seekers in the EU, through stricter border controls and by accepting readmission obligations. The liberalization of visas was a regional process. Each country in the Western Balkans was given a so-called roadmap for liberalization, which:

were almost identical, but they took into account the specific situation in each country, with regard to the sense of existing legislation and practice. The roadmaps defined the prerequisites stipulated by the European Commission and which the “Western Balkans” country in question should adopt so that visa-free entry of its citizens into the Schengen zone could be considered. The conditions ranged from purely technical issues, such as issuing machine-readable passports with the gradual introduction of biometric data (including fingerprints), to the adoption and implementation of a number of laws and international conventions, and finally to very broad issues such as progress in the fight against organized crime, corruption and illegal migration (Stojić Mitrović 2021: 52; cf. Stojić Mitrović 2014).

As the number of non-citizens or citizens of so-called third countries which entered the EU from the territories of the Western Balkans increased, while the number of asylum seekers from the region decreased, the focus of migration policies shifted and are now increasingly directed at the integration of the Western Balkans into the European border regime. The integration is continuously evaluated through assessments of the transformation and implementation of legislation and the institutional framework, cooperation with European institutions, regional cooperation, harmonization of visa policies, etc., which is why different Western Balkans states are in different stages of integration into the European border regime.

In the complex imaginary of the European border regime, the Western Balkans represent one of the external borders of the EU which is surrounded by EU Member States. Much like other **borderscapes**, in the process of integration into the European border regime, the Western Balkans are being molded as a complex transnational and fundamentally alienated space, with their institutions implementing EU policy, their nation-state borders being guarded for the EU, and their nation-state territories being turned into spaces for detaining people on the move outside the EU.

In short, in relation to the EU, the Western Balkans function as a collectivized political subject, while in the European border regime they function as an operational **buffer zone**, an **externalized border** of the EU, whose purpose is to “dampen” unwanted movements towards the EU through increased control, channeling, repression of movement and detention of people on the move on its territory and by directing them away from the EU (see **pullback**, Stojić Mitrović et al. 2020). Presenting accession to the EU as a strategic interest, giving away sovereignty over the borders and territories of the Western Balkans states to the EU and its policies, institutions, and officials, was normalized. For example, during the negotiations of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and Serbia (and North Macedonia), the EU requested that Frontex officials be granted immunity in relation to the administrative, civil and criminal jurisdiction of the Republic of Serbia (Stojić Mitrović 2021: 55).

The dependence of the Western Balkans on the EU is not only generative, in the sense that it was created by the EU for certain purposes, but is also economic by nature. The EU heavily finances the countries of the Western Balkans so that they reform themselves in accordance with EU requirements and perform the tasks delegated from the EU. However, even though the inclusion of the Western Balkans in the European border regime is clearly EUcentric, as the Western Balkans states have no say in the fundamental direction of the European migration policy, and, moreover, they renounce sovereignty over their borders and territories, their voice can certainly be heard when it comes to the actual implementation of those policies. The implementation of the European migration policy is turned into an instrument for achieving other political and economic goals, and decisions such as where to build a camp and where not to, which countries will need visas and which will not, become means of political pressure. In addition, financial resources from the EU lead to the creation of jobs in the securitarian and humanitarian sectors and the improvement of infrastructure, from roads in locations where camps are situated, to the expansion of electrical and mobile networks, etc. “By showing that they are reliable partners capable of fulfilling demanding tasks, the Western Balkans states are slowly improving their international political

position” (Stojić Mitrović 2021: 55).

4/5/2022

References

Hameršak, Marijana, Sabine Hess, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović. 2020. “The Forging of the Balkan Route. Contextualizing the Border Regime in the EU Periphery”. *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* 5/1: 9-29.

Petrović, Tanja. 2012. *YUROPA. Jugoslovensko nasleđe i politike budućnosti u postjugoslovenskim društvima*. Beograd: Fabrika knjiga.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta. 2014. “Serbian Migration Policy Concerning Irregular Migration and Asylum in the Context of the EU Integration Process”. *Etnoantropološki problemi* 9/4: 67-82.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta. 2021. *Evropski granični režim i eksternalizacija kontrole granica EU. Srbija na balkanskoj migracijskoj ruti.* Beograd: Etnografski institut SANU.

Stojić Mitrović, Marta, Nidžara Ahmetašević, Barbara Beznec and Andrej Kurnik. 2020. *The Dark Sides of Europeanisation. Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EUropean Border Regime*. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung for Southeast Europe.

Todorova, Maria. 1994. “The Balkans. From Discovery to Invention”. *Slavic Review* 53/2: 453-482.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-zapadni-balkan-p?locale=en

WhatsApp from Lipa

Bojan Mucko

Camp Lipa burned down on 23 December 2020, a few days after I returned from field research in Bihać which I conducted with a team of volunteers from one of the international, humanitarian, grassroots organizations present in the area of the Una-Sana Canton. The hunger strike undertaken by the people on the move who were left at the location of the former camp in Lipa without alternative accommodation began on New Year's Day, 1 January 2021. On 4 January, a Swiss volunteer in charge of communication for the humanitarian team in Bihać put me in touch with a young Pakistani from the camp. This person wanted to send his statement about the situation in Lipa to the international media. It was Monday morning and I was in the office. My phone rang – a WhatsApp video call request. I answered it, and the screen immediately showed a live broadcast of a protest – a mass of young people in the burned-down camp were chanting and holding banners written on styrofoam boards. The call was not long and it ended abruptly and the person who initiated it messaged me that he hung up because of a policeman who was watching him suspiciously. He asked me if we could talk again in half an hour. I put my cell phone on the table and prepared my camera. When the phone rang, representatives of the hunger strike group appeared on the screen, ready to make a media statement. The owner of the **phone** remained behind the camera. The first video is a recording of our conversation. I stayed in touch with the owner of the phone who, in order to remain anonymous, chose the name Eddie.



This content is only available in the online edition of e-ERIM. View it at:
https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/lipa-strajk-gladu?locale=en

Eddie subsequently sent me the video materials used in the two videos below. In the first video, we can see the interaction between the interviewed people on the move and journalists taking statements about the strike, and in the second video, scenes from everyday life in the Lipa camp.



This content is only available in the online edition of e-ERIM. View it at:
https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/lipa-strajk-gladu?locale=en



This content is only available in the online edition of e-ERIM. View it at:
https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/lipa-strajk-gladu?locale=en

There is also a link to a shorter version of the first WhatsApp video, which, accompanied by an additional introductory text, was published by the organization No Name Kitchen on its YouTube channel.

2/3/2022



Testimony from Lipa (Bosnia Herzegovina) - 4th day of hunger strike - No Name Kitchen feat. @Eddie

The video is available in the online edition of e-ERIM:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1S_QltJsMs&ab_channel=NoNameKitchen

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/lipa-strajk-gladu?locale=en

When the Sava Grew Turbid

Drago Župarić-Iljić

Available only in Croatian.

https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/p-strong-sava-se-je-zamutila-strong-p?locale=en

Wild Animals

Iva Pleše

In addition to being part of the forest's **weaponized landscape** and potentially physically dangerous for people on the move, wild animals have also been occasional elements of the pejorative public repertoire of expressions related to **irregularized migration** in recent years. Within this repertoire they hold various positions in relation to people on the move, primarily as elements of comparisons, but also as other linguistic figures. Animalistic comparisons and metaphors are common in migration discourse, not only illegal migration, and they, as well as similar metaphors and other linguistic expressions, are the subject of a focused study by corpus linguistics, critical discourse analyses and related research (cf., e.g., Mujagić and Berberović 2019; Santa Ana 2002), which in different media contexts identify explicit or implicit connections between migrants and animalistic or some other elements such as natural forces, with predominantly negative connotations. In the Croatian media, we can note, related specifically to wild animals: an ironic comparison of living conditions in migrant camps and improvised bear dwellings, and a mocking comparison of the physical abilities of humans and bears; the formulaic practice in which people on the move, indirectly and in an apparently value-neutral way, are presented as hunting game; relating people on the move to wolves, badgers and wild boars, the use of verbs such as *ravaging* and *ravening* (*pustošiti* and *harati)*, which express destructive action; a comparison of temporary and harmless traces, such as footprints in the mud, left in nature by wild animals for whom "these forests" *are home,* and, in contrast, traces harmful to nature – discarded clothes, cans and beverage cartons – left behind by "uninvited strangers"; and finally statements that portray the dangers posed by animals to local people as minor when compared to the dangers posed by people on the move.

The latter issue, in terms of discourse related to wild animals that emphasizes the danger of people on the move (cf. **Letter from a Hiker**), is connected to a photograph of three young men posing next to the carcass of a bear, taken, it seems, somewhere in Croatia and published on social networks. The photo is interpreted so that the wild animal is seen as a victim, with the aim, as it can be inferred, of emphasizing the danger posed to local people, and not only wild animals, by migrants. Although, according to experts, it is "much more likely" that the people in the photo "came across the bear carcass in the forest, rather than that they killed the bear themselves", some so-called fringe websites presented them as bear-killers and used the photograph posted to social media in order to paint the migrants passing through Croatia as "armed and extremely dangerous". Migrants who move in groups through the **forests** of Gorski Kotar, "rob hikers" and "passers-by" and are all "armed, with melee weapons or firearms", are also brought up in the context of the already mentioned explicit comparison of the dangers posed by animals and by people on the move.

The direct or indirect comparisons between migrants and wild animals do not occur, as one would assume, only on so-called fringe websites and similar internet pages, but in other media as well, in a seemingly more subtle way, under the guise of neutral reporting on events or columnist commentary. Thus, for example, an animalistic analogy, this time relating to snakes, which on the one hand devalues people on the move, as well as those who stand in solidarity with them, and on the other hand portrays them as extremely dangerous, was used in a text from 2018 in one of the most prominent national media and which elicited a wide response, published under the title "Petting Vipers and Inviting Migrants". Utilizing this and similar uses of language that dehumanize people on the move in various ways, including animalistic or naturalistic metaphors, comparisons or allusions (cf. e.g. Esses et al. 2013) (cf. **Candy**; **Switch It up a Little, My Friend**), different actors, to varying degrees, participate in the production of verbal violence and anti-migrant discourses, which then serve as a preparation and a kind of social justification for the exclusion of undesirables and extra-verbal, i.e. physical and other violence against them (cf. e.g. Baider and Kopytowska 2017) (cf. **pushback**).

5/6/2022

References

Baider, Fabienne and Monika Kopytowska. 2017. "Conceptualising the Other. Online Discourses on the Current Refugee Crisis in Cyprus and in Poland". *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 13/2: 203–233.

Esses, Victoria M., Stelian Medianu and Andrea S. Lawson. 2013. "Uncertainty, Threat, and the Role of the Media in Promoting the Dehumanization of Immigrants and Refugees". *Journal of Social Issues* 69/3: 518–536.

Mujagić, Mersina and Sanja Berberović. 2019. "The Immigrants are Animals Metaphor as a Deliberate Metaphor in British and Bosnian-Herzegovinian Media". ExELL 7/1: 22-51.

Santa Ana, Otto. 2002. *Brown Tide Rising. Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Authors

Ivana Budimir is completing graduate studies in anthropology and ethnology and cultural anthropology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. Areas of her interest are the anthropology of migration, urban anthropology and the anthropology of violence and conflict. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of student-research workshops in Trieste and Ljubljana organized by the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, and the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb.

Morgane Dujmovic is a geographer and political scientist at the CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique) in France. She is a member of Pacte laboratory (Grenoble-Alpes University), TELEMMe (Aix-Marseille University), Institut Convergences Migrations (Paris) and the Euro-African network Migreurop. She has been working on border and migration in the Balkan, at the French-Italian and French-Spanish borders and in the Central Mediterranean. She notably develops creative and participatory methods with people on the move (the CartoMobile project).

Lia Gerkman studies ethnology and cultural anthropology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Anthropology of Migration (taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Ambrož Kvartič) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Jan Grah is a Germanist and Russianist who is finishing his two-subject master's degree in German language and literature, and ethnology and cultural anthropology at the University of Ljubljana. He is particularly interested in medical anthropology and German linguistics. He wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities (taught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Iva Grubiša is an assistant at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. She is writing a dissertation on the processes of creating a home and contemporary refugee experiences in Zagreb.

Marijana Hameršak received her doctorate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. She works at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. She has published the books *Pričalice: o povijesti djetinjstva i bajke* (Pričalice: on History of Childhood and Fairy Tales, 2011), *Uvod u dječju književnost* (Introduction to Children's Literature, with Dubravka Zima, 2015) and *Frakture dječje književnosti: od slikovnica do lektire, od Agrama do El Shatta* (Fractures of the Children's Literature, 2021). She is the co-editor of three anthologies: *Folkloristička čitanka* (Folklore Studies Reader, with Suzana Marjanić, 2010), *Proizvodnja baštine: kritičke studije o nematerijalnoj kulturi* (Heritage Production: Critical Studies in Intangible Culture, with Iva Pleše and Ana-Marija Vukušić, 2013) and *Kamp, koridor, granica: studije izbjeglištva u suvremenom hrvatskom kontekstu* (Formation and Disintegration of the Balkan Refugee Corridor: Camps, Routes and Borders in Croatian Context, with Emina Bužinkić, 2017, English translation 2018). Together with Barbara Beznec, Sabine Hess, Andrej Kurnik, Marc Speer and Marta Stojić Mitrović, she edited a special issue of the journal *movements: Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* (2020) titled *Frontier within: the European Border Regime in the Balkans*.

Eva Hohnec studies ethnology and cultural anthropology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Anthropology of Migration (taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Ambrož Kvartič) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Sanja Horvatinčić is a research associate at the Institute of Art History in Zagreb. Her research focuses on modern memorial sculpture and architecture, as well as the production of history through cultural practices in socialist Yugoslavia. Her approach to heritage draws on critical, interdisciplinary readings of the contemporary potential of memorial structures, practices and concepts.

Teodora Jovanović is a doctoral student at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade. She is employed at the Ethnographic Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade. Her interests lie in the fields of refugeeship and forced migration and she is working on a dissertation on asylum seekers from Iran in Serbia.

Hana Konjedic is a student of ethnology and cultural anthropology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Currently, she is most interested in the field of visual anthropology – the use of film, photography and sound as a research tool. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Anthropology of Migration (taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Ambrož Kvartič) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Kaja Cassiopeja Kraner studies ethnology and cultural anthropology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Anthropology of Migration (taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Ambrož Kvartič) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Luka Kropivnik is a graduate Russianist and Slovenist. He is completing his master's degree in Slovene studies and history, as well as ethnology and cultural anthropology and comparative literature at the University of Ljubljana. He is particularly interested in contemporary Slovenian literature, didactics of literature and international migration. He wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities (taught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Tisa Kučan Lah is a first-year master's student enrolled in the CREOLE program – Cultural Differences and Transnational Processes, at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Ljubljana. As part of her studies, she is particularly interested in medical anthropology. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and

Ethnic Minorities (taught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Uršula Lipovec Čebron received her doctorate at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana. She works at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Arts. She has written the books *Krožere zdravja in bolezni: tradicionalne in komplementarne medicine v Istri* (Cycles of Health and Disease: Traditional and Complementary Medicine in Istria, 2008) and *Medkulturna mediacija in zdravstvo v Sloveniji* (Intercultural Mediation and Health in Slovenia, with Juš Škraban, 2021). With Jelka Zorn, she edited the anthologies *Zgodbe izbrisanih prebivalcev* (Stories of the Erased, 2011, Croatian translation 2013) and *Once Upon an Erasure: from Citizens to Illegal Residents in Republic of Slovenia* (2007), and the anthology *Večjezično zdravje* (Multilingual Health, 2019) with Nike K. Pokorn. With Sara Pistotnik, she edited a special issue of *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* (Journal for the Critique of Science) titled *Balkanska migracijska pot* (Balkan Migration Route, 2016).

Bojan Mucko is a doctoral student at the University of Zadar. He works at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. His interests include multimodal approaches in researching the European migration regime.

Dagmar Nared is a master's degree student in ethnology and cultural anthropology at the University of Ljubljana. She completed her bachelor's and master's studies in sociology at the universities of Ljubljana and Oxford. Her interests lie in gender and emotions in anthropology and the possibilities of transmitting experiences through visual media. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities (taught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Sara Pekić is completing graduate studies in ethnology and cultural anthropology and English language and literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. She is interested in postcolonial theories, identity and trauma. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of student-research workshops in Trieste and Ljubljana organized by the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Ljubljana and the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb.

Richard Lee Peragine received his doctorate at the Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST), Polytechnic of Turin, Italy in 2024. His doctoral work looks at the relationship between sovereignty and the figure of emptiness in the northwesternmost corner of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a way to address the ethics of the project of architecture.

Igor Petričević is a doctoral student at Stockholm University. After completing his undergraduate studies in anthropology and sociology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, he graduated in social and cultural anthropology and European studies at the University of Leuven. He is interested in urban anthropology, anthropology of migration, and other areas.

Duško Petrović received his doctorate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. He works at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. He is the author of the book *Izbjeglištvo u suvremenom svijetu: od političkoteorijskih utemeljenja do biopolitičkih ishoda* (Contemporary Refugees: From Political-theoretical Foundations to Biopolitical Outcomes, 2016).

Mojca Piškor received her doctorate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. She works at the Department of Musicology of the Academy of Music in Zagreb. Her area of academic interest includes traditional and popular music of the Western and non-Western world; topics related to the nexus of music, sound and policies (racial imagination, gender), the intersection of various types of music and their discourse, the relationship between music and space, and the acoustemological aspects of the use of music as a means of torture in camps.

Iva Pleše received her doctorate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. She works at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. She is the author of the book *Pismo, poruka, mejl: etnografija korespondencije* (Letter, message, e-mail: the ethnography of correspondence, 2014) and co-editor of two anthologies: *Etnografije interneta* (Ethnographies of the Internet, with Reana Senjković, 2004) and *Proizvodnja baštine: kritičke studije o nematerijalnoj kulturi* (Heritage Production: Critical Studies in Intangible Culture, with Marijana Hameršak and Ana-Marija Vukušić, 2013).

Meta Poklukar graduated in ethnology and cultural anthropology at the University of Ljubljana with a thesis on drag performance and continued with her master's studies. Her interests vary from sensory anthropology to alpinism. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities (taught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Romana Pozniak received her doctorate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. She works at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. Her academic interests include topics from political anthropology and the anthropology of humanitarianism, focusing on conceptualizations of humanitarian work in non-profit organizations.

Oliwia Magdalena Prusek is a student in the joint Master's degree CREOLE program – Cultural Differences and Transnational Processes. She is interested in linguistic anthropology and the functioning of language in society. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities (taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Dagmar Nared) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Zarja Rustja studies ethnology and cultural anthropology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Her research interests are related to social issues, in particular gender issues. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Anthropology of Migration (taught by Uršula Lipovec Čebron and Ambrož Kvartič) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Evelina Soršak is a graduate sociologist and historian and is completing the first year of her master's degree in ethnology and

cultural anthropology at the University of Ljubljana. She is particularly interested in the anthropology of religion and medical anthropology. She wrote the text for e-ERIM as part of the course Contemporary Migrations, Citizenship and Ethnic Minorities (taught by Ana Sarah Lunaček Brumen and Uršula Lipovec Čebron) at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Marta Stojić Mitrović received her doctorate at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade in 2016. She is employed at the Ethnographic Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade. She has co-authored the studies *Governing the Balkan Route: Macedonia, Serbia and the European Border Regime* (with Barbara Beznec and Marc Speer, 2016) and *Dark Sides of Europeanization: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Border Regime* (with Nidžara Ahmetašević, Barbara Beznec and Andrej Kurnik, 2021), and wrote the book *Evropski granični režim i eksternalizacija kontrole granica EU: Srbija na balkanskoj migracijskoj ruti* (The European Border Regime And Externalization of EU Border Control. Serbia on the Balkan Migration Route, 2021). Together with Marijana Hameršak, Barbara Beznec, Sabine Hess, Andrej Kurnik and Marc Speer, she edited a special issue of the journal *movements: Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* (2020) titled *Frontier within: the European Border Regime in the Balkans*.

Tea Škokić received her doctorate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. She works at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. She has published two books, *Ljubavni kod: ljubav i seksualnost između tradicije i znanosti* (Love code: Love and sexuality between tradition and science, 2011) and *Polutani dugog trajanja: balkanistički diskursi* (Bastards of long duration. Balkanist discourses, with Andrea Matošević, 2014). She has co-edited the collections *Između roda i naroda: etnološke i folklorističke studije* (Between Gender and Nation, with Renata Jambrešić Kirin, 2004), *Split i drugi: kulturnoantropološki i kulturnostudijski prilozi* (The City of Split and Others: Essays in Cultural Anthropology and Cultural Studies, with Ines Prica, 2007), *Horror, porno, ennui: kulturne prakse postsocijalizma* (Horror, porno, ennui: Cultural Practices of Post-socialism, with Ines Prica, 2011) and *Stranputice humanistike* (Bypaths of Humanities, with Ozren Biti and Petar Bagarić, 2017).

Mirna Šolić is a senior lecturer in Comparative Literature at the University of Glasgow. Her research lies at the intersection of migration and displacement studies and the environmental humanities. Her current work explores literary, cinematic and visual representations of rivers across the Balkans and Central Europe as sites of entanglements between nature and different cultural discourses, including migration (rivers on migration routes). She is also a co-director of ArtsLab on Migration and Displacement, a platform for exploration of arts-based approaches to contentious issues.

Jelka Zorn received her doctorate at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana. She works at the Faculty of Social Work of the University of Ljubljana. She has co-authored the books *Izbrisani: organizirana nedolžnost in politike izključevanja* (The Erased: Organized Innocence and the Politics of Exclusion, with Jasminka Dedić and Vlasta Jalušić, 2003) and *Brazgotine izbrisa: prispevek h kritičnemu razumevanju izbrisa iz registra stalnega prebivalstva Republike Slovenije* (The Scars of the Erasure, with Neža Kogovšek Šalamon et al., 2010). With Uršula Lipovec Čebron, she edited the anthologies *Zgodbe izbrisanih prebivalcev* (Stories of the Erased, 2011, Croatian translation 2013) and *Once Upon an Erasure: from Citizens to Illegal Residents in Republic of Slovenia* (2007).

Drago Župarić-Iljić received his doctorate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. He works at the Department of Sociology of the University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. He has edited the collections *Nacionalne manjine kao faktor stabilnosti u međunarodnim odnosima Hrvatske i Srbije* (National minorities as a stability factor in international relations of Croatia and Serbia, with Dragutin Babić, 2010), *Prvih deset godina razvoja sustava azila u Hrvatskoj* (The first ten years of development of the asylum system in Croatia, 2013) and *Contemporary Migration Trends and Flows on the Territory of Southeast Europe* (with Marijeta Rajković Iveta and Petra Kelemen, 2018). He has co-authored the books *Nacionalne manjine u Zagrebu: položaj i perspektive* (National minorities in Zagreb: position and perspectives, with Dragutin Babić and Filip Škiljan, 2011) and *Izazovi integracije izbjeglica u hrvatsko društvo: stavovi građana i pripremljenost lokalnih zajednica* (Challenges of Integrating Refugees into Croatian Society: Attitudes of Citizens and the Readiness of Local Communities, with Dean Ajduković et al., 2019, English edition 2019).