



The 3rd International Conference
Mediterranean Crossings: Rotating the Politics of Migration in the Mediterranean Space
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Morocco, Agadir.

The Mediterranean space has historically been at the crossroad of cultural and civilizational encounter. Mobility across this pivotal intersectional and intercontinental contact zone resulted in intercultural richness, an intermix between Phoenician, Roman, Byzantine, and Arabo-Amazigh traces, and in a substantial philosophical and intellectual legacy. Not to romanticize the Mediterranean as a completely undisturbed and thriving space as it has also witnessed instances of misconception, stereotypes, conflict, and prejudice that marred its history. Yet, this space has undeniably been intricately woven through a process of exchange and mutual influence fueled by mobility and migration. Since the early 1990s, the Mediterranean has become a turbulent zone, a zone of uncertainty, risk, illegality, securitization, militarization, and death. Mediterranean mobility appears to have reached a deadlock, with all governments of the region engaging in collective efforts to suppress mobility; therefore, pushing migrants towards fugitivity and irregularity. The securitization of the EU borders since the early 1990s has made mobility across the Mediterranean more costly, perilous and deadlier than ever before. However, it has failed to deter thousands of dreamers from embarking on perilous journeys to reach the European Eldorado. Ironically, the illimitation of internal European borders went in parallel with fortification of external borders. The ideals of liberal capitalism emphasizing the free movement of ideas, products, services, and people seem to apply only to the rich, and not the poor. Hence, the repression of irregular migration was parallel with policies facilitating the inflow of tourists, international students and business people. These favorable conditions were even sweetened through fast-tracks to citizenship through investment schemes. Even more ironic is the fact that the same policies that sought to restrict the inflow of poor, uneducated youth were used to scoop up the best of the best in African societies, through selective migration schemes, therefore furthering inequalities and further delaying development in Africa. These policies, despite their atrocious spillover effects, have not achieved their primary aim, which is to curb African mobility towards the EU.

Recognizing this failure, the European efforts aimed to externalize borders and outsource unpleasant tasks to transit countries. As a result, the EU initiated a series of bilateral and

multilateral cooperation agreements under various frameworks including mobility management, safe mobility, counterterrorism, but with a singular objective: utilizing economically disadvantaged transit states as a buffer zone. Yet, these frameworks of cooperation have proven to have limitations as transit countries are often encouraged by the inflows of funds, but discouraged by the responsibility over the deaths and injuries suffered by migrants while operationalizing the so-called border control operations. European border externalization strategy has proven costly for all cooperating transit states. The success of migration control operations, often marked by violence and coercion, frequently results in international criticism, which poses a significant nuisance for these countries that are heavily invested in maintaining a positive global image. Curbing the outflow of transit migration also leads to an increase in the numbers of migrants, leading to social frictions, and in various cases violent xenophobic attacks, as was the case various times in Tunisia, Libya and Morocco.

The increasing securitization continues to produce the opposite of its intended affects. It has not hindered mobility but only made it riskier, deadlier and more costly. The Mediterranean Sea has turned into a huge graveyard for irregular migrants with over 50,000 cases of documented deaths so far. In addition, the securitization has increased reliance on smuggling networks that often engage in violence against migrants. Oddly, states are invested in exaggerating the spread and influence of these networks as they serve as a convenient scapegoat to blame for the recurrent migrant tragedies. Migrant smuggling networks suitably fit within a narrative that casts the migrants as victims, the smugglers as villains and the state as the heroic savior. The oftentimes ignored elephant in the room is the responsibility of the state in causing deaths while operationalizing border controls, and also in creating the conditions that lead to the flourishing of human trafficking and migrant smuggling networks.

In brief, the prospects and politics of mobility in the Mediterranean are perplexing and thought-provoking challenges. Source countries are resorting to increased securitization and use of radical and inhumane solutions as in cramping migrants in vessels, or camps. The rise of Right-wing radical parties in countries such as France, Italy, Netherlands, and Sweden reflects an increasing popular quest for swift and radical solutions for a perceived threat. Transit countries are unwilling to undertake the EU's undesirable tasks and often weaponize migration for larger geopolitical goals. Emigration countries share a responsibility, as they continue to fail in capitalizing on the inflow of remittance to promoted national development. This conundrum therefore forces us to ask various questions with regards to:

1. In what ways do these policies contribute to shaping the overall experiences of individuals and the characteristics of cities and places?
2. What can be learned from the current experience of anti-migration both in the EU and its partner transit states?
3. Is it possible to envision a sustainable and humane framework to manage cross Mediterranean mobility`

The current situation of cross-Mediterranean mobility and its impact on societies, policies and cities is highly disconcerting. However, the need for sustainable framework cannot be overstated. As we continue to get into the age of migration and anti-migration, it is important to envision alternative approaches. The upcoming conference therefore aims to serve as a venue for collective thinking about Mediterranean mobility. It seeks to bring together researchers and scholar from various fields including but not limited to public policy analysis, political sciences,

sociology, cultural studies, and migration studies to unravel this complex challenge. We envision that the issue could be best approached in an organized manner by focusing on the following themes, namely, policies, people and places.

Policies:

- Policies and Governance Structures in Home, Transit and Host countries.
- Migration Securitization and criminalization.
- Discourses on Migration policy.
- Issues of citizenship eligibility and human rights.

People:

- Migrant Creativity, Resilience, and Agency
- Migration Narratives, Migrant personal stories, and Official Discourses.
- Gendered Experiences and Border Crossings.
- Grassroot migrant Groups and Transnational Groups.
- Vulnerable groups, Children and unaccompanied minors, ethnic minorities.

Places:

- Urbanization and migration.
- Borderland Communities and migration
- Heritage and cultural identities in Migratory contexts.
- (Socio)linguistic interactions: local languages vs. migratory groups' languages.

Interdisciplinary Insights: Under this section we highly welcome panels from diverse academic backgrounds under themes such as the following:

- Remittance and local/national development,
- Representation in media and arts,
- Climate change and mobility.
- Healthcare access and migrant communities.
- Historical perspectives on migration.
- Education and migrant community empowerment. (Issues of access, syllabi, language, and cultural identity).
- Conflict-induced mobility in the Mediterranean space.
- Corporate and social responsibility in the context of migration.

Submissions:

Scholars are kindly invited to submit their contribution for the above thematic sessions. Scholars not participating in the pre-set themes of people, places, and policies are highly encouraged to submit proposals for new sessions consisting of three or more presentations. We also welcome the submission of non-academic materials relating to mobility including art, phototherapy, films and other relevant forms.

Contribution can be submitted to the following: **mobileidentities@gmail.com**

Key Deadlines:

Abstract/Panel Submission Deadline: 15 August, 2024

Notification of Abstract Submission: 15 September, 2024

Conference Date: 7-8-9 November, 2024

Publication

The current call is a continuation of a tradition initiated through two past international conferences on mobile identity 1 and 2. The past conference proceedings have been published with respected international publishers. We are currently considering various venues of publication and will contact participants with further details at a later date.

Participation Fees:

To ensure the smooth organization of the conference, there will be a participation fee covering various elements such as technical support, conference materials, certificates of attendance, and coffee breaks.

Students: 90 Dollars.

Academics and Researchers: 110 Dollars.

Note: Registration fees are to be paid at the registration desk on the conference day. The fees will be reduced or canceled depending on the availability of funding.

Conference Coordinators

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Keynote Speakers

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