

## Call for Papers



### Contested Borderscapes

### Transnational Geographies vis-à-vis Fortress Europe

September 28 - October 1, 2017

International Conference

Mytilene, Lesvos (Greece)

University of the Aegean

Invisible Cities Research Team

Urban Geography & Planning Laboratory

Department of Geography

Population Movements Laboratory

<http://www.contested-borderscapes.net>

**Extension of CfP deadline March 31, 2017**

## Introduction

*European member states are signatories to the Geneva Convention Related to the Status of Refugees.*

*Human rights and dignity are respected in detention centres across Europe.*

*An electrified fence was built to protect the nation-state from illegal intruders.*

*Traffickers are responsible for deaths by drowning in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas.*

*Deportations are voluntary returns.*

*Turkey is a safe country.*

*War is peace.*

*Freedom is slavery.*

*Ignorance is strength.*

In 2016, Oxford English Dictionary declared “post-truth” the word of the year. In this Orwellian moment, the movement of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants across the increasingly militarised borders of Europe have instigated a socio-spatial debate about the limits of human rights, national sovereignties, continental values, precipitating and contributing to the ongoing condition of European crises. Although in the era of globalisation borders constitute porous passages for capital and commodities, at the same time they have hardened and ossified as “new enclosures” seeking to immobilise migrant and refugee populations. Fortress Europe emerges as a complex of new state control mechanisms, freshly erected border fences, newly built detention centres and improvised refugee camps; together, these technologies of migration management aim at the criminalisation, classification, stigmatisation, and biopolitical control of moving populations, fomented by xenophobic politics, and managed by humanitarian subcontractors. In this hostile climate, people on the move contest European border regimes, peripheries, and cityscapes by claiming spatial justice and political visibility while creating a nexus of emerging common spaces. They are joined by activists defending their right to movement, who are engaged in efforts to “welcome refugees” into a shrinking and contested public sphere, into alternative and self-organised social spaces, responding to the humanitarian crises wrought by militarism, violence, and structural adjustment with solidarity, stemming from a larger vision of sharing in each other’s struggles for survival and social transformation.

The island of Lesbos is a space of multiple histories of refugee passage, now reinvented as a “hot spot” in the contemporary European regime of migration management, but also reimagined by people who live there as a space of social solidarity with migrant struggles. It thus constitutes one epicentre, or “contested borderscape” of Fortress Europe, and a place where we might learn from local struggles and movements against its murderous politics. If, over the past year, the shores and seaways of Lesbos (“Lesbos”) gained international visibility as the backdrop to untold human suffering, loss, and survival, the purpose of gathering here is not to consume it as a spectacle; instead, we seek to learn from how people here have responded to, and organised in the urgency of what has become mediatised as “the refugee crisis.” The main aim of this international conference is to create a space of critical reflection in which academics, artists, and activists from different disciplines, backgrounds, and locations, can strategise, organise, and analyse the social landscapes of border-spaces such as this, and their reverberations for anti-border politics elsewhere.

We welcome proposals for various kinds of interventions, including, but not limited to: presentations of formal academic papers falling under one of the following five themes; brief provocations leading to open discussions; performance lectures; installations; exhibitions or screenings of visual work (e.g., film, photography, etc.); workshops (sharing practical knowledge, working through a particular idea or problem, teaching a methodology, approach, or framework). We wish to emphasise multidirectional discussion and open debate of contested—rather than “settled”—issues, as opposed to unidirectional knowledge transmission by institutionally acknowledged academic experts. As such, the conference will open with a plenary of local activists, and will culminate in a general assembly of all participants, mapping possibilities for future collaboration and exchange across and beyond Fortress Europe.

# Topics

## Track 1: The notion of the border

- Borderlands, borderscapes, borderlines, border regimes
- Borders and nomadism, diaspora, travel, heterotopias, and otherness
- In-between spaces, hybrid spaces, and threshold spaces vis-à-vis border fortification, militarisation, enclaves, ghettos, walling urbanism, state territories
- Bridging political, social, national, gender, religion and identity borders, boundaries and communities
- No borders, open borders, and border-crossing struggles, movements, and activism

## Track 2: Migrants' commoning practices

- Autonomy of migration and transnationalism
- Mobile common space; strategies and practices for survival, struggle, solidarity, networking, communication, mutual aid of the moving populations.
- Collective and sharing practices in migrants' informal settlements and camps
- Social solidarity, connections between the social struggles of the locals and the migrants; social philanthropy, humanitarianism, volunteering and NGO's industry
- Migrants' social centres, squatted buildings, and self-organised housing projects

## Track 3: New intersectional enclosures

- New enclosure policies, forced displacement, dispossession and grabbing of the means of production and reproduction, permanence of so-called primitive accumulation
- Class aspects of immigration, cheap workforce, surplus reserved army of unemployment
- Emergence of nationalistic-racist-fascist rhetoric and practice, (for instance, racist locals' committees, the role of church and media)

- Gendered aspects of immigration (women, lgbtq+, sexism, gendered violence, pregnancy)
- Age aspects of immigration (children and elderly people)
- Disability and immigration
- Cultural re-appropriation of moving populations
- Slavery, trafficking, human organs' trafficking

#### **Track 4: State and Hyperstate migrant policies**

- Fortress Europe, detention centers, hot spots, relocation policies, new border fences
- Law geographies, divisions between refugees and immigrants, criminalization and illegalization of border crossing, the right to citizenship and asylum
- Fear policies, xenophobia and biopolitics
- Health geographies, biosecurity and border controls
- Neocolonialism, geopolitics and war

#### **Track 5: Representations and communication**

- Cultural representations of the Other
- Landscape and representations of the Other
- Newcomers – new ideas – new cultural relations
- Art and multicultural representations
- Newcomers and e-books, e-sharing, horizontal e-actions
- Other history, other museum, oral history of newcomers

## **Submission Procedure**

We welcome proposals for various kinds of interventions, including, but not limited to: presentations of formal academic papers; brief provocations leading to open discussions; performance lectures; installations; exhibitions or screenings of visual work (e.g., film, photography, etc.); workshops (sharing practical knowledge, working through a particular idea or problem, teaching a methodology, approach, or framework).

Interested contributors are invited to submit by 1 March 2017 an abstract of maximum 500 words. Abstracts should include: title, keywords, track name, name of the author(s), name of the presenter, affiliation and full contact details (please fill the submission form, [link](#)). Authors will be notified by March 20, 2017, about the status of their proposals. There are no fees but we do not have funds to cover travel expenses. The organisers expect an edited volume to result from the gathering. Questions can be directed to [contestborders@gmail.com](mailto:contestborders@gmail.com).

## **Important Dates**

Abstracts Submission Deadline: March 31, 2017

Notification of Acceptance: April 20, 2017

Conference: Mytilene, Department of Geography, University of the Aegean, September 28 – October 1, 2017

## **Inquiries**

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