



Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren e.V. | ZMO |
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Call for Papers for the Workshop

Lost and gained on the way: Placing "Transit" migration in Europe, Africa and Asia

13-14 May 2019
Leibniz Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin

Convenors: Hilal Alkan and Katharina Lange

Within the national order of things, as Liisa Malkki aptly named more than two decades ago, certain places are marked only as transit points for certain groups of people. Within their borders, it is not possible for categorically unwanted newcomers to establish stable lives and secure residence. Within the migration literature and policy documents they are defined as places where migrants spend only a limited time on their way to their desired destination, to which hopes for a better future are attached. However, as much as the term transit/transitory connotes being on the move and in-between places, these transit places (cities, countries, detention centres, refugee camps) often turn into the exact opposite, where feelings of being stuck prevail. In such "transit" nodes migrants, refugees, exiles live in a protracted displacement situation while they hold on to desires about future and make do with the limited resources they have access to. Hence they wait but this is active waiting, as Cathrine Brun suggests.

This workshop aims to bring together scholars whose work explores what migrants do in the so-called transit. The focus is on what is lost (shattered, left behind, deliberately destroyed, accidentally lost) and gained (built, created, initiated, cultivated and accrued). The scholarly literature on protracted displacement has so far been more concerned with losses: documents, IDs, social connections, habitual spaces, mother tongues, and, most important of all, homes, with all their attached meanings, belongings and security. Yet, on their temporally and spatially long ways migrants also actively accrue things and build lives in dialogue with the uncertainties that surround them. While children lose their mother tongues, they gain proficiency in other languages; while documents of vital importance get lost, new ones are created or forged; while homes are being left behind and become sources of nostalgia, new ones in their images are created; while social ties are shattered, new people come together and establish support networks. Therefore, maybe more than anything, migration routes are home to constant remaking and innovative work in the face of all sorts of destructive forces (of the states, legal barriers, armies, militias, labour

conditions...etc.). It is the aim of this workshop to explore this work of losing and gaining undertaken by migrants as active agents who are trying to improve their own lives and the lives of others.

The geographical focus of the workshop is on Europe, Asia and Africa, including the Middle East. While papers on migration to Europe are welcome, we particularly encourage scholars working on the migration contexts within Asia and Africa to apply, given that the greatest number of the displaced reside not in Europe but in these two continents. The workshop is open to contributions from all disciplines in social sciences and humanities.

Please send your 300 words abstracts to hilal.alkan.zeybek@zmo.de by January 15, 2019. All selected participants will then be asked to submit their full papers by April 15, 2019. Due to considerations of a prospective publication, we will only accept unpublished works based on original research. Funds are available to cover travel and accommodation costs of a limited number of participants.

For questions you can contact Katharina Lange (langekatharina@web.de) and Hilal Alkan (hilal.alkan.zeybek@zmo.de) via email.