



LIMINAL SPACES is a joint research project with partners in Morocco (Mohammed V University Rabat), Egypt (Prof. Randa Aboubakr) and Palestine (A. M. Qattan Foundation).

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PROJECT SUMMARY

The follow-up project of Spaces of Participation (2014-2017) is dedicated to the investigation of 'Liminal Spaces'. By this we mean transitional spaces at the threshold of political, social or cultural transformation. We analyse how knowledge is produced in response to these changes. The case studies from Morocco, Egypt, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Germany will investigate various instances of such spaces and engage with the fleeting nature of participatory moments, especially in the on-going (and often authoritarian) transformations.

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LIMINAL SPACES

as Sites of Socio-Cultural Transformation
and Knowledge Production in the
Arab World

ZMO projects

Ulrike Freitag: Changing Spaces of Art and Culture:
Liminal Participatory Moments in an Era of Transformation

Sarah Jurkiewicz: Liminal Spaces of Arab Refugees in Berlin:
Space-Making Practices and Knowledge Production

Affiliated projects

Fadma Ait Mous: Artists and Whistleblowers in Morocco:
Performing Citizenship Between Virtual and Physical Spaces

Suaad Al Ghafal: Liminal Spaces and Collapse of Order in Libya:
Martyrs' Square as a Central Site of Transformation in Tripoli
from 2011 onward

Azzurra Sarnataro: Migration Processes as Trajectories of Life.
Understanding Gender Roles and Migration Dispersal Policies
in Local Contexts

Dorota Woroniecka-Krzyżanowska: Liminality, Urban
Governance and Forced Displacement: the Case of Duhok
in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

PROJECT TEAMS

Egyptian team (Randa Aboubakr, Menna Mansy, Dina Oleimy)

Independent Cultural Production as Liminal Sites of Engagement

During the past two decades in Egypt, there has been noticeable expansion of independent cultural production by individual and collective actors, reflecting non-politicized citizens' increasing desire for venues of self-representation within a public sphere heavily policed and dissected by the authorities. The requirements of a new order transform the nature of participation in these venues, affecting the way actors position themselves, as well as the kind of knowledge produced. This trend peaked during the uprising in 2011, is now undergoing transformations reflecting subtle negotiations with those in power and can be witnessed particularly in the digital realm, in terms of low or zero budget collectives and projects characterized by their independence from both state funding/support and capitalist sponsorship. Social media being relatively new to the Egyptian public sphere with an as yet vaguely defined role in social and political interaction, these actors operate in a situation of transition, rendering the knowledge produced and their own identities transient. Such actors operate through novel configurations of activism in social media and can also be classified as having no status or rank, since they are mostly anonymous. The project investigates several cases of this citizen media production, that is, content generated by ordinary (non-professional) users in the digital realm produced by cartoonists, digital/graphic artists, writers/bloggers and translators, where actors are engaged in social and political expression and debate both overtly and covertly, giving their commentaries outside known channels of engagements and constructing 'narratives' that do not conform to public narratives.

Moroccan team (Mokhtar El Harras, Hicham Ait Mansour, Houda Duali, Majda Frandi, Rania Hanin)

Investigating Liminal Migrant Spaces in Morocco

For decades, Morocco has been a country of emigration to Europe. However, for about a decade and in the context of political, economic and demographic changes, Morocco has progressively become a transit country and a destination for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and, to a lesser extent, Syrian refugees. While borders have closed, migrant flows from sub-Saharan Africa have not diminished, resulting in a gradual accumulation of 'in-transit' migrants in the border zones of Morocco and other North African countries. Migrants in a globalized cross-national movement create a new space where the departure space is intertwined with the arrival space. The notion of 'in-between' situations has both epistemic and empirical relevance for studying spaces of migration in Morocco.

The project attempts to investigate liminality in its physical, social and cultural terms. While more and more migrants become lawful residents, the concept of liminality is still relevant in terms of social and cultural forms. Three concepts are central to this research: social liminality, cultural negotiation and social resources.

The investigation focuses on the following set of questions: How do migrants describe the 'in-between' situation they experience in all the above-mentioned dimensions? What are the social practices and the shared experiences used to cope with liminality? How do they use social resources (family, religion, network of friends, neighbours, etc.) to negotiate the transition and achieve a social and emotional balance? How do immigrants reconstruct their new space of residence? What does liminality mean in spaces shaped by transnational mobility, strong international investments and neoliberal economic policies?

Palestinian team (Yazid Anani, Farah Deek, Yasmeen Qadan, Abed Shabane)

Actions of Solidarity in Liminal Spaces: The Case of Alternative Social Spaces in Palestine

The three-year project addresses processes of solidarity within alternative, unfunded, self-organized social initiatives in Palestine that can be looked upon as spaces of liminality. The first year probes deductively into the notion of solidarity as a contemporary, socially induced process that seeks to combat the poor services delivered by the current political and economic structures in Palestine under Israeli occupation. Solidarity is perceived as autonomous social processes that strengthen resilience in uncertain political times. The second year questions inductively the notion of solidarity within liminal spaces and its forms, practices and definitions. 10 unfunded, self-organized social initiatives in Palestine that work between literature, farming, arts and culture will be researched. Nonetheless, the concept of liminality and its conditions will be scrutinized accordingly in these initiatives. The third year is set to analyse material from the first and second year, draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Funded by:



Project partners:

