

Panel Proposal:
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Migrations across the Mediterranean: Popular Uprisings, Imperial Legacies, and the Right to Move

Workshop Directors:

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Discussant:

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Submitted to the conference:

MIGRANTS: COMMUNITIES, BORDERS, MEMORIES, CONFLICTS
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Department of Political and Social Sciences
Department of Humanities
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Panel Abstract

Just five years ago, the Arab uprisings erupted as popular movements for “bread, freedom, and social justice.” After a short-lived period of optimism, the region is currently experiencing a massive movement of people fleeing poverty, persecution, and violence and the many effects of a cluster of failed states. Migration has been occurring largely within national borders and to neighboring countries in the region. More recently, the direction has been shifting across the Mediterranean, the pathway to Europe. People from all walks of life, but especially youth and young families, are embarking on the perilous sea and overland journey. The purpose of this panel is to investigate the migration issue from the two sides of the Mediterranean with a particular focus on children and youth, human/citizenship rights, and memory, and their implications for educational policy, social policy, and global governance.

As the crossings of refugees across the Mediterranean have been increasing exponentially in the past three years, the spectre of colonialism is returning to haunt Europe with a vengeance. The European Union’s fortress policy with respect to denial of visas and travel opportunities is compelling immigrants to pursue some of the most hazardous routes to flee their country and reach Europe. They (or rather their boats) are now the declared targets of a recent EU effort in the wake of the April 2015 tragedies when, in not more than a week, at the time of writing (April 2015), around 1,100 people including children and toddlers, drowned off the Libyan coast in what was dubbed the biggest tragedy in the Mediterranean since WWII. This

partly results from the barriers erected by the same 'old continent' through its fortress and nationalistic policies.¹

The Geneva Convention allows for possible instances of "irregularity" in recognition of situations that lead to "forced migration." This necessitates a call for policies that should be international, rather than national (so much for the 'receding' of the nation state in a time of intensified globalization), since we are dealing with international, global phenomena. It is goods that generally circulate freely and not people especially from the South (and neither goods from certain people from the South). It is part of a global imperial system as a result of which some people are accorded the right to move freely and exchange their goods in the process while others are left stranded or forced to risk life and limb as victims of the 'human waste disposal industry' (Zygmunt Bauman).

For those fortunate enough to land safely in Europe, a different set of challenges come to the fore, beginning with issue of legal status. Possible solutions include issuing international humanitarian visas to ensure that people can safely exercise their right to asylum. There is also the matter of "integration" into the host society, to their schools, neighbourhoods, public spaces and services, and questions around how social policies can adapt to accommodate and absorb new refugee populations in contexts where xenophobia, limited resources, and weak political will are often the norms.

Given these sets of conditions, the proposed panel invites papers that:

- (1) Examine the issues of refugees in Europe from a social policy perspective, taking into consideration issues around education and legal status;
- (2) Reevaluate questions and definitions of "citizenship" and "global citizenship" and push further ways of thinking outside the nation state model;
- (3) Highlight the stories of the migrants themselves, situating their lives and struggles in larger political and geopolitical contexts;
- (4) Examine the role memories of homeland and citizenship experiences play in shaping the aspirations of migrants;
- (5) Contribute to understanding, and to be able to contribute to solution at policy level to the human tragedy of mass migration, with a focus on the Mediterranean (European Union and the Middle East and North Africa);
- (6) Look at the intersections between the Arab uprisings, conflicts in Syria, Libya, Iraq, and other parts of the region, and ways they spill across borders and seas.

- (7) Evaluate migration, politics of representation and the carceral state.

Director Bios

Linda Herrera is professor in the Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership (EPOL) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and director of the Global Studies in Education program. Her most recent books include *Wired Citizenship: Youth Learning and Activism in the Middle East* (Edited, Routledge, 2014) and *Revolution in the Age of Social Media: The Egyptian Popular Insurrection and the Internet* (Verso, 2014).

Peter Mayo is Professor and Head of the Department of Arts, Open Communities and Adult Education at the University of Malta, Malta. He is also a member of the Collegio Docenti for the doctoral research programme in Educational Sciences and Continuing Education at the Università degli Studi di Verona and faculty member of the Global Centre for Advanced Studies. He edits a book series on ‘international issues in adult education’ for Sense Publishers and co-edits another book series (with Anne Hickling Hudson and Antonia Darder), on Postcolonial Studies in Education, for Palgrave-Macmillan. With Anne Hickling Hudson and Milosh Raykov, he edits the refereed journal, *Postcolonial Directions in Education*. In 2011 he was given the Comparative International Education Society (CIES) Higher Education SIG award for best published research article on Higher Education from an international and comparative perspective. His latest books include *Hegemony and Education under Neoliberalism. Insights from Gramsci* (single authored, Routledge, 2015), *Lorenzo Milani, the School of Barbiana and the Struggle for Social Justice* (co-authored with Federico Batini and Alessio Surian, Peter Lang, 2014) and *International Critical Pedagogy Reader* (co-edited with Antonia Darder and João Paraskeva, Routledge, 2015).

Discussant

André Elias Mazawi is professor, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. He is interested in the impact of geopolitics on educational policies in the Arab region, and the ways through which such dynamics shape the organization of schooling and higher education governance, and questions of citizenship and affiliation. With Ronald G. Sultana, he co-edited *Education and the Arab ‘World’: Political Projects, Struggles, and Geometries of Power* (Routledge, 2010).

Publication Plans

We intend to pursue two paths of publication: The first is to co- author a short book that addresses the questions above.

Secondly, Linda Herrera plans to either make a documentary, or/and publish video interviews on a website she is constructing called, “Democracy Dialogue” on issues related to migration and citizenship.

¹ These policies serve to pit workers against workers on the basis of ethnicity and national origins, despite the right to asylum affirmed by the 1951 Geneva Convention. In this context, Foucault’s notion of the ‘carceral society’ and Henry Giroux’s related notion of the ‘carceral state’ as well as Giorgio Agamben’s notion of the ‘state of exception’ become relevant as points of reference.