SESSION: Refugee regimes, questions of integration and the challenges of communication

Rasuly-Paleczek, Gabriele (Refugee Outreach and Research Network, Vienna, AUT)

Contact: gabriele.rasuly@univie.ac.at

From medical to legal issues, each host state draws a path to be followed and, from the state perspective, following this path or straying from it is supposedly what separates those who integrate from the undesirable rest. Refugee regimes are thus complex mechanisms informed by structural measurements to drive refugees to fit in. Yet, refugee regimes are also heavily informed by political motivations, and "fitting in" does not depend exclusively on following the rules. Thus, "integration" and legal status are quite different from each other.

Contemporary anthropology has shown that integration is not a linear approach, but a much more dynamic and complex process, significantly because it is inherently intertwined with politics. The very adage stating that "if one wills, one will make it" may be best interpreted as a neoliberal axiom associated with the Global North, which many refugees associate with a sublime land of hope. Therefore, many refugees arrive hopeful of the opportunities they will have, only to be frustrated with what they find. Frustration, allied with desperation, highlights fear; and displacement and feeling out-of-place, gives rise to chronic suspicion. Thinking of coping strategies as a solution has also proven problematic, given that some coping often leads to more insecurity. These social processes become particularly strong in times of political turmoil such as contemporarily, especially given the current rise of neonationalism in Europe and beyond, potentializing insecurity among refugees.

In light of the above discussion, this session seeks to address the relation between structural (i.e. legal, medical, technical) and political motivations in the making of contemporary refugee policy and how host societies and refugees engage refugee regimes. The role of different forms of communication (among refugees or between refugees and host state, NGOs, volunteers, researchers, and others) and information exchange (such as bureaucratic documentation, gossip, rumors and language classes) is particularly relevant towards this end. In sum, how are social processes connecting to different forms of communication, and how are they affecting refugee policies and refugee agency?

POSTER PRESENTATION:

Afghans without borders: mobility as a political act
Monsutti, Alessandro (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, CHE)

This paper follows Thomas Faist's invitation to analyse the prominence that migration issues have acquired in European and North American political discourses and public perceptions. It situates mobility, beyond usual dichotomies between voluntary and forced migration, in the increasing global landscape of exclusion that characterizes today's world. It proposes as a working hypothesis that mobility can be seen as a testimony of the immorality of the global polity and as a political act subverting classical forms of state territoriality and contesting the distribution of wealth. This general point is illustrated with ethnographic vignettes on Afghans on the island of Lesbos, the port of entry in Europe for many of them, in Friuli, on the northeastern border of Italy, and finally in the jungle of Calais, where many candidates to asylum ended up in very precarious living conditions.

Fragmented journeys and social relations: young Afghans on the move towards Europe
Lønning, Moa Nyamwathi (-, Tromsø, NOR)

The fragmented journeys to Europe characteristic of the migration of many young Afghans demonstrate the important role played by social relations in terms of assistance, information and skills. They also makes evident the role that may be played by people not on the move. Fellow travellers and others encountered during the journey are part of the resources and support mechanisms young Afghans on the move may draw on. However, social relations are also part of the risks they face. This is a result of the nature of the journey and the disparity between needs and available resources. Though they need not be, this can make relations fragile and utility oriented. There is thus an inherent duality to these. Yet, the journey necessitates interaction, and simultaneously interdependency and independence. It may also solidify ties into long-lasting friendships which span across time and space. This paper is on the experiences of the journeys to and within Europe focusing on the role of social relations and is based on fieldwork in Norway and in Greece.

Stay, return or move on: Syrian migration aspirations in a context of forced migration and the role of imaginations about Europe
Müller-Funk, Lea (University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam)

Clear-cut typologies opposing forced and voluntary migration often assume that forced migrants do not have migration aspirations but simply flee from a situation of danger without agency where to. This working paper challenges this idea by assuming that refugees' attempts to flee to a certain country are usually preceded by imaginations (Said 1978; Mai 2004; Gregory 1994) about possible destination countries. These imaginations not only contribute to refugees' decisions where to

seek asylum but also have an effect on how refugees experience realities when they arrive in the destination country. This working paper hence asks: What is the relation between Syrians' living standards in Turkey and Lebanon, their imaginations of possible destination countries (including Europe), and their migration aspirations? Based on a mixed-method approach combining a survey in four localities in Lebanon and Turkey (n=800) and 40 semi-directive interviews, the paper focuses on imaginations of Europe, but also includes their reflections on staying in Lebanon and Turkey and a possible return to Syria in comparison and distinguishes between the perspectives of those who intend to migrate to Europe and those who do not. The paper advances a series of theoretical thoughts: It questions the clear-cut distinction between forced and voluntary migration, problematizes the term 'transit country' by focussing on two perceived 'transit countries' and highlights the role of imaginations, emotions and temporality in refugees' decision-making.

Problems of 'Immobility' among Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in Austria
Rasuly-Paleczek, Gabriele (Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vienna, AUT)

Many Afghan refugees and asylum seekers are repeatedly confronted with long periods of waiting, either waiting for their first interview, or waiting for pending decisions on their asylum status. They often find themselves in a constant state of immobility in the physical as all as in the social sense. Using anthropological approaches highlighting the issue of immobility and waiting (e.g. Bourdieu 2000, Turner 1969, Hage (2009), Khan (2013) and Khosravi (2014) this presentation will explore how Afghan refugees and asylum seekers deal with this state of immobility and waiting and how the latter effects their current life in Austria.

Integration through place-making? How refugees coping the feeling out-of-place with place-making strategies in a middle-sized town in Sweden
Böge, Rozalie (University of Vienna, Wien, AUT); Giritli Nygren, Katarina (Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, SWE); Nyhlén, Sara (Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, SWE)

Drawing on the theoretical concepts of home, place making and senses of belonging, the aim with my presentation is to explore how new refugee residents are part of producing the town-space as a place they feel connected and belonged to. Using participatory visual methodologies, that I have called 'walk-along-mapping photo-elicitation method', offers the presentation insights into the structure of spatial practices by revealing the subjects' various degrees and types of engagement in and with the environment, and the ways in which their new place of residence are articulated through its (dis)connection to their individual stories. For this proposition, I use findings from a project of mine realized during my time as an intern at the Mid Sweden University. The project was centred on walking and photographing conducted with three refugees who had guided me through a middle-sized town in Sweden. Inspired by Robertson et al. (2016), have I used pictures taken by the participants during the city walks in order to put more emphasis on the participants' ways of seeing, understanding and experiencing their surroundings. The aim of my project was further, to explore the ways in which refugees interact with the spatial possibilities that the middle-sized town in Sweden presents and how the refugees position themselves and the spatial and/or city environment within the integration process they are experiencing. I am arguing that the routes, and the pictures taken during them, together with the interviews, tell narratives by the new residents which emphasize strategies of re-making town-space as a place of home.

From Basic Services to Housing Integration: Housing Biographies and Housing Reality of Refugees from Afghanistan in Austria as Reflected in Social Network Theory
Kohlbacher, Josef (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, W, AUT)

Based on Mark Granovetter's theory of the "Strength of Weak Ties" (1973), this paper investigates the relevance of social contacts and networks in individual housing integration as an important aspect of structural integration. The sample of 64 interviews conducted in 2017 with refugees from Afghanistan proves that the primary stages of housing integration mainly take place within social networks, which can either be interethnic or based on one's own ethnic community in particular. However, there are manifold challenges on the way to finding one's own home in Austria. The structure and features of personal networks determine the modes of housing integration to a high degree. Many refugees find accommodation in the informal sector of the housing market through relatives, friends and ethnic communities. NGOs provide support in the housing market segment organized by the civil society, within their capabilities.
The analysis compares the housing-related expectations and housing hunting strategies of the Afghan refugees with their real individual and familial housing integration. Their preferences towards living in rural or urban spaces and the determinants for these preferences are also taken into consideration. The study shows that many housing biographies have typical characteristics, though there are significant differences between small rural communities on the one hand and the Viennese agglomeration on the other hand. The empirical data pool shows that an informal housing market segment for refugees with typical mechanisms has developed primarily in Vienna.

Forced migration and its impact on the employment of Syrian young women in Lebanon
Menhem, Suzanne (Lebanese University, Rabieh, LBN)

After the breakout of the Syrian war in 2011 and the ensuing crisis, thousands of Syrian refugees and their families (came) to Lebanon. According to UNHCR statistics for 2015 the number of Syrian refugees registered were 1 200 000. It should be noted that these refugees are not residing in camps of their own, but are distributed in towns and cities and therefore engage with

Lebanese society. The result of this asylum is their relentless search for work and a salary that is less to what the Lebanese worker receives.

The integration of Syrians in the Lebanese labor market is not new. The Syrian workers was previously employed "in the construction and agriculture sectors. After the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990, the Syrian labor force expanded from their former sectors into the industrial sector as well as the tourism services sector of hotels and restaurants.

Previously, many Lebanese employed Syrian girls in domestic service and in agriculture, but this reality changed with the Lebanese civil war due, on one hand, to the instability of the security situation and (on the other hand) to the change in the Syrian mentality.

The security occurrences that hit Syrian society since 2011 has led to the forced migration of Syrians, in general, and of "children, women and youth in particular".

This paper studies the employment of young Syrian women in Lebanon through the hypothesis of social and economic changes.

It will raise the problematic of the employment of young Syrian women and their emergence in the Lebanese labor market.

The employment of young Syrian women into the Lebanese labor market is not something new. Most of them had left schooling in Syria in order to start work while others continued to work in the professions in which they worked in Syria. In addition, within this group of young women who had worked in Syria and who then started a new type of employment in Lebanon.

This reality, created by the Syrian crisis, raises a number of central questions: the arrival of these young women in Lebanon; their preparations for entering Lebanon's formal and informal labor market and their involvement within; the basic occupations and conditions in which they work, their relationship with the Lebanese employer, and their interaction with both the Lebanese and Syrian employees and the socio-economic results of this youth work.

Methodologically, in addition to the literature review, field work will be carried out to include firstly, an exploratory observation and secondly, a semi-structured interview on a sample of 20 young Syrian women, on how they see themselves before and after their forced migration, and their future hopes in terms of education, specifically the training that is required.

A qualitative analysis (qualitative approach) will be adopted with regard to data analysis.

The study will also show changes in their living conditions, education and employment through the adoption of policies that can improve the situation of young women in the future and to propose recommendations and strategies to the concerned collaborators (Ministry, NGO, associations...).

Afghan Refugees in Austria - Challenges of Social Integration
Röhm, Mona (Institut für Stadt- und Regionalforschung, ÖAW, Wien, AUT); Lehner, Marie (Institut für Stadt- und Regionalforschung, ÖAW, Wien, AUT)

Based on a sample of 98 interviews with Afghan refugees and 30 experts that were conducted in the framework of two research projects – both starting in 2017 – this presentation will focus on the challenges of social integration. In our paper we argue that social relations are rather embedded in structural integration processes than being separated from such "steps of integration". Based on our empirical data we will demonstrate how Afghan refugees engage in social interaction and what challenges they face when doing so.

Exploring perceptions and experiences of recent Afghan migrants from a gender perspective
Fischer, Carolin (Université de Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel, AUT); Wyss, Anna (Unversité de Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel, CHE)

This paper focuses on the gendered perceptions and experiences of Afghans who arrived to Germany and Switzerland in recent years. From 2011 onwards, a rise in Afghan asylum applications has been coinciding with new migration trends following the Syrian crisis. Gender is a significant demographic fact as the majority of recent Afghan arrivals in Europe are men. This gender imbalance places these Afghans in a contradictory position as they both embody the potential for development in Afghanistan and a threat to European societies with their gendered identities. The migration and development paradigm charges migrants with the duty to develop their countries of origin. At the same time, Afghans in Europe are currently viewed with suspicion by virtue of being men, Muslim, predominantly young and predominantly single. This paper adopts an intersectional approach and draws on qualitative interview data to explore the consequences of such gendered tensions. It examines how the desires of Afghan migrants for their present and future selves are affected, often adversely, by state policy and the way they are perceived by and incorporated into receiving societies and transnational social networks. It is argued that the interaction of recently arrived Afghan migrants with their host societies and the migration policy in place is shaped by both their perceptions as threats and their assumed duty to contribute to the development of Afghanistan.

The Situation of Elderly Refugees from Syria in Vienna
Bauer-Amin, Sabine (ISA, 1020, AUT)

What does it need to start a life in a new country after leaving war and violence? In Austria, many organizations, governmental and non-governmental, try to lay out a path to facilitate this transition for refugees. However, the focus often lies on the acquisition of language and the integration into the labor-market. These hence, are tailored for people who are instantly ready to work and adapt to new environments and language. These measures are built on a model of work-migration and do not take into consideration the specifications of refuge. Even lesser is it up to date with the new demographic forms of refuge that the country has witnesses within the last years, when the people arriving were not only healthy and young men, but people who need time to cope with their past and present, whole families, children and elderly. How does especially the last group of elderly refugees experience their presence in Austria? What are their particular challenges? What further repercussions do their situations have on their family lives? Literature on elderly refugees states that they suffer more from the separation with their home country, family and social context, than younger ones (Bolzmann et al. 2008). Often, they suffer of professional dequalification and have limited chances on the local job market as well as hard times acquiring a new language and adapting to new societies. Given their age, they are often not included in the government programs, since they are not employable on the labor-market, neither capable of quickly acquiring language skills. In addition, also non-governmental or private initiatives often focus on engaging young adults into civil society rather than focusing on the specific situation of elderlies. This often results in issues of loneliness, boredom, homesickness and feeling forgotten. This contribution will be based on interviews and fieldwork situations with elderly people from Syria that were conducted within a broader research project on refugees in Austria. The data will be analysed biographically and scrutinized according to the named questions. This presentation aims to show the situation and perspectives, as well as the scope for agency for the group in question.

Conceptions of Well-being among Arab refugees in Vienna
schiocchet, Leonardo (ISA, Vienna, AUT)

This presentation discusses preliminary results from my current research among Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Vienna. As data is still being collected and analysis only begun, the presentation will focus on discussing a tentative frame to explore different conceptions of what is called in English "wellbeing", and how the interaction between host state (Austria), humanitarianism, and refugees may cause a conceptual attrition that, in turn, generate hindrances to the refugees' settlement in Austria.

While wellbeing may be best translated in Arabic as 'afya (عاف ية – health) as both terms potentially address not just the body, but the psyche, my Arab refugee interlocutors have been expressing what Europeans call depression and trauma in different ways that, in turn, entail different overcoming strategies rather than identifying these as symptoms of illness and turn to medicalization. While a couple of my interlocutors expressed having psychological distress (ذ ف س ة ازمة), most others expressed ghurba (غرب ة - which, in this context means, among other things, feeling disenfranchised), having their selves tired (تـ ع بانة), ذ فسـ ي \ذ فسي) and being without capacity/power (and in this case, motivation) (قـ درة) to act upon their lives and upon the world. Besides, the term "settlement" in Arabic (اس ت قرار) is associated with habitation and residency, but also steadiness (in this case, security), and agency (as the root of the term implies decision, or resolution). Therefore, not having power to act, having ones' self tired, or being disenfranchised greatly affect my interlocutors' chances of feeling settled in Austria. These feelings of being settled (or not) are the counterpart to what in turn has been discussed in Europe under the rubric of "integration" (in Arabic - اندماج). If integration is a two-ways route, as it has been expressed among humanitarians, then looking at how Arab refugees understand, express and manage wellbeing becomes imperative research.

Bare Life: Policy Response to the Influx of Rohingya Refugee in Bangladesh
Khatun, Sayema (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Milwaukee, USA)

410,000 Rohingya, a Muslim minority community in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, fled to Bangladesh after the recent military crackdown in September, 2017 in their home state of Rakhine (Wall Street Journal September 21, 2017). The human-rights groups reports accused the Myanmar military of carrying out mass killing. Nevertheless, Myanmar de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi, denied the "clearance operations" by the militray. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) termed this institutionalized violence as a textbook case of 'ethnic cleansing' and others mentioned it as 'persecution' or 'genocide'. UNICEF said the children, 58 percent of the nearly 600,000 Rohingya Muslims, who have fled violence are seeing a "hell on earth" in the Refugee camps of Bangladesh. Aid groups have warned of a humanitarian catastrophe in the camps. The Rohingyas have been subject to a long history of systemic abuse since 1942, has been disenfranchised by the 'Myanmar Citizenship Law 1982'. Scholars claims to trace the Rohingya history in Myanmar since eighth to twelfth century (Ibrahim, 2018; Bahar, 2010). The UNHCR described the Rohingya situation as the "world's fastest growing refugee crisis". The evolution of refugee policy of the host country Bangladesh has been taking place through the agency of state and non-state actors in a complex social process, involving bureaucracy and institutional structure deciding life and death of thousands of Rohingya. Engaging with the work of Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Akhil Gupta, I view the huge number of death as "Thanatopolitics" and find Agamben's idea of 'bare life' useful analytical tool (Gupta, 2012; p. 6) for understanding this industrial scale death (Foucault, 1990; 137). I consider it as the general outcome of the state policy mostly of the country of origin, of the host country, and finally, of the non-state and transnational agencies involved in this international issue. Paradoxically, Gupta (2012) restated that, the camp, therefore, is not only a space where citizens are stripped off their rights and rendered into bare life, but also potentially a place from which the painstaking restoration of those rights becomes feasible. Broadening this insight to the context of Rohingya refugee camps, I assume Rohingya refugee camps as potential place from where a restoration of human rights can begin.

My **broad research question** is: How are the policies for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh evolving locally and globally for long lasting and meaningful resolution of this global crisis? I have broken down the above question into three specific pieces: 1. What are the concrete policies emerging for tackling the evolving situation of ensuing humanitarian catastrophe? 2. What is the nature of state/non-state engagement in this regard? 3. How the meaningful and long-lasting resolution have been sought through the policy formulation and practice. I am adopting an ethnographic approach tracing policy connections between different organizational and everyday worlds of the policy community. I am to conduct an ethnographic field research in Dhaka, Bangladesh from June-August 2018 to examine the state and non-state engagement in the policy process to deal with a worst human misery on the earth today and write my analysis.

Statelessness in the Context of Migration to the European Union. The Production and Negotiation of Statelessness in State-institutions of European Member States.
Reitter, Victoria (Universitätslehrgänge, AUT)

Among the world's refugee population many thousand persons do not possess any nationality. In my dissertation project, I take statelessness as a starting point to follow up on research about the inclusionary and exclusionary dimensions of citizenship and to question claims about post-national forms of membership out of a sociological perspective. Following an empirical explorative research approach, the aim is to investigate the meso level in this context: the production and negotiation of statelessness in state-institutions of European member states. The increased emergence of statelessness is believed to shape current practices and yet, not much is known about the applied standards to determine and deal with statelessness. The lack of specific legal criteria may provoke the emergence of inconsistent practices which in turn have an influence on the outcomes. However, the introduction of statelessness determination procedures suggested by the UNHCR, intended to secure basic human rights, further regularize the conditions for membership and may consequently even increase the marginalization of those people who do not meet the specified requirements. My contribution for this workshop consists of an overview of the current state of multi-disciplinary research on statelessness and citizenship and an outline of the research design for the planned dissertation project. Keywords: statelessness, inclusion, exclusion, citizenship, membership

Integration challenges from the refugees perspective
Dinca, Melinda (West University of Timisoara, Romania, Timisoara, ROU)

Although Romania is not on the map of Mediterranean routes, refugees are described as an *issue* that exceeds the possibilities of the institutional capacity. The solution came from the primacy of international treaties and European unitary policies that protects refugees from the unilateral influence of the state. (Barker, 2015) Moreover, receiving states are responsible for integration, positive measures, legal aid and economic security for refugees. (Puggioni, 2016) However, the role of states in securing international protection means protecting against persecution and threats that endanger the lives of refugees, but also social integration, legal assistance and economic security for refugees.

The methodological approach inspired by ethnomethodology uses participatory observation, is oriented towards interviewee's priorities, and seeks to give voice to the refugees that often remain hidden in other forms of data collection.

The findings shows how the legal framework and refugee protection practices work in everyday life. On departure, the main sources of support for the migrant are the family, savings and personal networks. Along their fleeing, other facilitators join: international protection bodies, border security institutions, and informal guides for ilegal migrants. At the destination, migrants receive institutional support from the civil servants and human rights activists in their struggle legaly clarifying the situation, overcoming crisis, family reunification and their efforts to start a new life.