



## SESSION ABSTRACT

### Moving Bodies, moving boundaries

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**Abstract:** In this panel we explore the conjunctions between moving bodies and shifting boundaries as well as the perception, enactment and agency thereof. We consider the shared movements of bodies as vitally contesting the concept of „bounded selves“ and other common dualities such as action/re-action and activity/passivity. We rather take moving bodies as sensing bodies, giving way to new ways of experiencing and relating to the self, the world and the in-betweens. We are interested in the interrelations of personal and more-than-personal movements that might include other people, beings, things and imaginations. Exploring „sensing“ as a collective, yet frictional experience, we are interested in the interlinks to larger social, cultural and political processes of belonging, being and sensing in the world.

We consider proprioception as going beyond an indrawn process, but equally including an environmental, atmospheric dimension entangling perceptions of the „inside“ and „outside“. The embeddedness of bodies is essential for their potentialities, experiences and knowledge of motility. In this vein, kinesthetic experiences have the capability to question embodied concepts of the self and collective, space and time, truth and reality, gender and identity, the synergetic and conflictual, the aesthetic, appropriate, „normal“ and much more.

We invite scholars to explore how various boundaries are challenged, contested, pushed back, stretched, extended, re-framed, transcended or simply accepted in their respective research fields of moving bodies. The corporeal moving might be orchestrated or improvised, routinised or exceptional, based on tradition or striving for innovation, motivated aesthetically or politically, enacted materially or virtually, as part of a protest rally or a staged performance – all the diverse settings enable the emergence of particular movements of both, bodies and boundaries.

We welcome contributions that present fresh empirical material, reflections on methodical approaches and analytical considerations on the topic.

## SESSION SCHEDULE

### Tuesday, September 27, 2022 | Slot 4 | Room 1

*Imad Gebrael & Lena Møller Christensen: When Shadowplays Shadow Place: Embodied Affects and Migrant Agencies in Sonnenallee, Berlin*

*Deniz Daser: The Bodily Scope of Migration: Central American Health Outcomes on the Northward Trail*

*Eslam Mohamed: Ambiguity of Nubians' Position in Egypt Upon their Displacement*

*Klaudia Kosicińska: The Azerbaijani community of Georgia: borders, mobility, and practices after the pandemic*

### Wednesday, September 28, 2022 | Slot 5 | Room 1

*Dokyung Joo: Reproduction and readaptation of dancing bodies*

*Anna Bloom Christen: Walking Together: Methodological Perspectives on a Paradigmatic Social Phenomenon in the Racialized Space of Post-Apartheid South Africa*

*Zuzana Rendek: Un/veiled bodies and changing boundaries*

*Friederike Hesselmann: Resisting Movement as a Domestic Care Worker in Spain*

## SESSION PAPERS

### When Shadowplays Shadow Place: Embodied Affects and Migrant Agencies in Sonnenallee, Berlin

Imad Gebrael. Lena Møller Christensen

*"What do you long for most of all?"*

*For my life, for my shadow on the ground. My shadow on a street I know well. I long for every little detail of my life. Longing is what tires me the most". (Sonnenallee - The Podcast, episode 1: Bassam Dawood)*

To long for too long is a state of omnipresence in migrant experiences. A longing for the foreseeability of one's shadow, for familiarity in the alien. Our shadow journeys with us throughout life like a confidante we can never truly know or trust. Shadows, inseparable from their moving bodies, are contingent on the omnipresence of power relations.

In our contribution, we define Shadowplay as the multitude of creative negotiations occurring between the social and the sensed/affective, producing possible or impossible agencies in relation to power structures.

Through collaborative ethnographic research in Sonnenallee—a street in Berlin—, we engage with embodied, affective, and sensed negotiations of migrant hierarchies. This ethnographic journey forms a part of our doctoral projects: *"Negotiations of Arab-Arab Identifications in Sonnenallee"* and *"Morality and Responsivity Among Young Muslim*

*Men. A Case Study from Berlin-Neukölln*". Our findings highlight the agencies of the individuals and communities we encounter as well as our own shadows. Within this framework, fragmented beings, temporalities, and spatialities assert themselves, making for a multitude of embodied negotiations formed by—and—in the street. The latter is a process we attempt to sensibly describe as it transcends a play of light and form into spatiotemporal experiences of longing: sticky, resistant, (im)patient, porous, and at times opaque.

How does the analytical spectrum of Shadowplay center playful, sensory, and improvised embodied negotiations through daily occurrences in Sonnenallee? How do urban migrant mobilities produce hierarchies anew? And finally, how can Shadowplay—as an analytical concept—inform reflexive research on collective living, moving, and sensing?

### **The Bodily Scope of Migration: Central American Health Outcomes on the Northward Trail**

Deniz Daser

For many of the Central Americans fleeing endemic poverty, political corruption, violent crime, and climate change-induced droughts and severe weather events, insecurity is a lived condition from homeland to (potential) settlement in the United States. Add to that an ever-expanding surveillance infrastructure and thickening of the securitized US-Mexico border and the very act of leaving arguably becomes political in its assertion of the right to dignified life. In this paper I draw upon long-term fieldwork to examine how the embodied effects on migrant health (e.g. hunger, thirst, injury, heat exhaustion, overwork, protracted awareness of dangerous and risky surroundings, etc.) on the migrant trail manifest in multiple ways. The unlivability of life under racial capitalism in countries like Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador and the subsequent response from militarized border controls and immigration enforcement that permeates everyday life for migrants transform the act of leaving. Northward mobility becomes an embodied assertion of presence – with its attendant insecurities and injuries – that constantly echo the consequences of US empire. In this sense, the moving body necessarily shifts boundaries as it affirms, "I live. I survive. I move."

### **Ambiguity of Nubians' Position in Egypt Upon their Displacement**

Eslam Mohamed,

This article reflects on the history of the displacement of Nubians in Egypt that resulted from the construction of Aswan High Dam in 1963 under the Nasserist Pan-Arabist regime. I argue that in Nubian consciousness, the Dam represent a border barrier separating them from their ancestral lands. Analyzing the exclusion of Nubians, this article explores the reaction of Nubians toward the discriminatory treatment they face from government and ordinary Egyptian people. The paper examines the defense mechanism developed by Nubians of forming several Nubian associations in Cairo and Alexandria as well as abroad, for representing them and saving their community from isolation by the Egyptian hegemonic culture. These associations provide charity for the displaced Nubians in their resettlement villages in south Egypt. The article argues that the associations demonstrate how Nubians occupy an ambiguous position as the Egyptian government neither treats them as citizens nor as immigrants.

## **The Azerbaijani community of Georgia: borders, mobility, and practices after the pandemic**

Klaudia Kosicińska

Marneuli district in Georgia is a borderland area in the Kvemo Kartli region, situated close to the border with Azerbaijan and Armenia in southeast Georgia. The Azerbaijanis are the largest minority there, which leads to local strategies for maintaining peaceful interethnic relations and produces unique phenomena, making the location particularly interesting for research.

The border is a material phenomenon of division between states, still negotiated and as in the context of Georgia, contested as exemplified by the pandemic and armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the perimeters between community (boundaries) and the state (Barth 1969). The border between Georgia and Azerbaijan suddenly changed its dimension after the outbreak of first a pandemic and then the war in Nagorno-Karabakh. What does it mean for local inhabitants, Azerbaijanis of Georgia?

The aim of the proposed abstract is to answer this question by showing current mobility patterns and translocal practices.

References (selected):

Barth Fredrik, 1969, Introduction, in: F. Barth (red.) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Levitt Peggy, Nina Glick-Schiller, 2004, Conceptualizing Simultaneity. A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society, "International Migration Review", Vol. 38, No. 3, 1004-1039.

Pelkmans Mathijs, 2006, *Defending the border: Identity, Religion, and Modernity in the Republic of Georgia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

## **Reproduction and readaptation of dancing bodies**

Dokyung Joo

This presentation examines how bodily experience, especially dancing has maintained and changed among "Chaoxianzu" when they came back to Korea. Chaoxianzu, or Korean ethnic minority in China moved from Korean peninsula to northeastern China in early 20th century. They are moving back or returning to Korea since 1990s after the end of cold war. In Korea, they are extending and reproducing bodily experiences derived from both China and Korea. Square dancing (Gwangchangwu) and social dancing, which is very popular and common in China, is practiced at the empty space under the bridge or private dance hall in Korea due to lack of public square and inappropriateness to dance at a public space. Dancing traditions they brought from Korea to China are again practiced after their return to Korea. While the custom of dancing at rituals like wedding ceremony, birthday party or festivals almost vanished in Korea, they are still handing down the traditional custom of dancing. In Chaoxianzu festivals in Korea, where many dancing performances are done, they break the rule that the audience should stay seated while performing and dance at the front. To them, the venue is conceived more as a party place rather than a theater. Chaoxianzu is also trying to readapt to Korea. A dancing club I am doing participant-observation recently began Korean dance genre. Chaoxianzu dance has fast tempo, light

movements of staccato rhythm, and rectilinear motion, which is exactly the opposite from Korean dance – slow tempo, deep and continuing movements, and curvilinear motion. Club members feel it difficult to change habits they are used to and try to correct bodily motion. There also occurs the change of aesthetics – Korean dance is perceived as elegant, graceful, and of high-class. This change reflects customs of Chaoxianzu is changing by setting Korea as a standard.

### **Walking Together: Methodological Perspectives on a Paradigmatic Social Phenomenon in the Racialized Space of Post-Apartheid South Africa**

Anna Bloom Christen

Walking together is a seemingly unassuming and common way to socialize in public space. We tend to take it for granted. At the same time, its particular manner of performance embodies context-specific norms of interaction. This tension between the assumed universality of this social practice and its local character becomes especially apparent in a place permeated by racial segregation.

This talk reflects upon norms of walking together in the highly racialized public space of post-apartheid South Africa. Dwelling on extensive fieldwork with members of the first generation born into post-apartheid South Africa – also known as the “Born Free” generation” – I discuss how specific styles of group walking both embody and respond to the legacy of racial suppression and division, offering an account of its function as a shared act of resistance against segregated public space.

On a methodological level, I call into question the epistemological benefits of walking together as a research tool. The talk uses the lens of an everyday practice – walking – that encompasses both participation and observation to interrogate the status of testimonial evidence as foundational to ethnography.

Both lines of inquiry – the ethnographic interpretation of pedestrian encounters in South Africa and the methodological reflection on walking together as a research tool – will be discussed as a matter of sensory, bodily experience. I will argue that if going for a walk with someone is to count as a shared, communicative action with the epistemic benefits advertised by participant observation (as numerous recent publications suggest), then this shared experience has to work in the service of acknowledging the *difference* in experiencing racialized public space as well

### **Un/veiled bodies and changing boundaries**

Zuzana Rendek

Hijab or other form of veiling is the most visible sign of religious identity. It situates its bearers in the space of belongings, natural solidarity and collectivity, group membership; it should protect them from the eyes of men. In Western societies, however, the headscarf does not fulfill such a function; on the contrary, it confronts them with their otherness and build boundaries. In Western perceptions was hijab transformed into a negative stereotype. (Busnioc, Buzoianu, Buzoianu, 2015) According to Abu Lughod (2013), Muslim women are thus portrayed as victims or as terrorists. Veiling makes them visible and puts Muslim women under double pressure. They are under pressure from their own community to "protect their bodies" and at the same time are perceived as oppressed by Western society. The reasons for wearing the headscarf of Muslim women are different from those evoked by the West, i.e.

submission to the male dominant society. My goal is to spread the range of meanings that young Muslim women attach to the headscarf in the Czech Republic, how they construct their identities and what consequences the practice of wearing hijab in the religious community and in Czech society has. And how do those who do not wear the headscarf negotiate their religious identity? I created the data based on semi-structured interviews.

### **Resisting Movement as a Domestic Care Worker in Spain**

Friederike Hesselmann,

This paper explores the corporeal movement of Latin American domestic workers in Madrid. Drawing on poststructuralist conceptions of embodied power as well as feminist perspectives on affective resistance, movement is analyzed as a discursive reproduction of labour expectations. Subsequently, it is argued that non-movement, or the refusal to move, should be understood as an act of resistance against unjust or exploitative work environments.

In Spain, reproductive care work is largely outsourced and performed by young, female migrants from Latin American countries. A lack of legal protection as well as historically embedded colonial power relations result in precarious and oftentimes unsafe labour conditions. The result of intensive ethnographic fieldwork in Madrid shows how these conditions are affected by movement. As „Internas“, the employees live with their employers. Due to this, migrant domestic workers' movements are highly controlled and oftentimes supervised. They are expected to always be „on the move“ for their job and its emotional components. Following Foucault, Abu-Lughod, and Scott, it is argued that a lack of movement during their work; whilst, simultaneously, moving during their time off, is an everyday act of resistance against their Spanish employers.