

ISA ONLINE GUEST LECTURE & ROR-N LECTURE

FORCED MIGRATION TO, IN AND FROM THE ISLAND

CONTESTED MOBILITIES AND NEGOTIATIONS OF BELONGING IN MALTA

SARAH NIMFÜHR*Postdoc Researcher*

On the way from Africa to Europe, the islands in the Mediterranean can be understood as migratory stepping-stones into the Schengen area, linking them with the idea of mobility. However, Malta is not necessarily a desired destination for refugees, as their mobilities are restricted by the island state in various ways. This applies in particular to rejected asylum seekers who, due to various legal and practical factors, cannot be deported or leave the island state in a regulated manner. Non-deportable refugees are in a legal grey area, as they are usually denied a formal legal status leading to limited access to employment, basic services and medical care for several years. Through practices of physical separation, impediment of social participation and denial of rights, the island state is experienced by refugees as an open-air prison. However, they find ways to navigate the system governing their physical and social immobilities.

Between 2015-2018 Sarah Nimführ accompanied non-deportable refugees in their daily life in Malta and followed them on their further ways within the EU border regime. The talk will give insight into contested (im) mobilities and negotiations of belonging. Movements on and from the island as well as reciprocal influences between political discourse, migration control strategies and migrant practices are focused.



Sarah Nimführ is currently university lecturer at the Department of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology at Karl-Franzens-University of Graz and at the Chair of European Ethnology at the University of Wuerzburg. She holds a MA in Empirical Cultural Studies and Educational Sciences from the University of Tuebingen and a PhD in European Ethnology from the University of Vienna (OeAW-DOC-Fellowship). Her primary research interests are critical migration studies, engaged anthropology, Island Studies, and transnational memory cultures. She is currently working on a post-doc project dealing with transgenerational memory practices of Jewish exile in Sosúa/Dominican Republic. Recent publication: "Contesting profit structures. Rejected asylum seekers between modern slavery and autonomy", together with Jorinde Bijl. In: McGuirk, Siobhán/Pine, Adrienne (Eds.): *Asylum for sale. Profit and protest in the migration industry*. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2020: 295–306.

Please register for this online event by sending an email to eva-maria.knoll@oeaw.ac.at.

