



# MINORITY EXPERIENCES AND EUROPEAN NARRATIVES: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives

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## Ali Ali: Tackling the Borders of what Matters: Solidarity, community and political engagement in the mundanity of queerhood in exile

This text is based on ethnographic fieldwork in gender-political communities in Helsinki. It narrates experiences of people whose state-authorized residence in Finland is recognized (or sought to be recognized) based on the need for protection due to sexuality-based othering and discrimination in communities of origin. I begin with categorizational narratives that are evoked by the subject to make sense of belonging to a given community (queer, multicultural, Finnish/European) and non-belonging to another (e.g. community of origin). Then, I look into transcendatory possibilities of affinity and alliance that break with normative/restrictive structures of identification and othering/exclusion. Following Laren Berlant's notions of contingency between affections in mundane sociality and political rationality, I foreground affectual narratives to show how affections in their intimacy inform a politically-significant collective world-making. In that regard, I draw on Ahmed's arguments on the constitutiveness of emotions in forming collectives and political alliances. However, instead of looking for a static story or norm of alliance, I follow, Judith Butler's notion that injury, or "dislocation from privilege" can catalyze newer, more livable and less violent of understanding of self-hood and community. Moreover, I draw on Haraway's arguments on kin and community: Making kin (community) is a wild process that breaks with normative paradigms of kin. It entails heterodox possibilities that transcend normative notions of belonging and categorization, but at the same time are faithful and mindful to what makes kin valuable, cherished and pursued: a sensible sense of belonging and affinity where vulnerability is recognized and violence is minimized. I argue that the precarity of exiled queerhood might entail strategic, but possibly complacent, investment in norms of racialized othering (to communities of origin and to fellow-exiles) in a way that precludes consideration to unjust structures of vulnerability in the



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desired society of settlement. However, the realm of precarity opens up to (re)consideration and contestations of the norms of the idealized desired (Finnish/European/multicultural) community, and brings into significance new forms of alliance that value precarious experiences as informative and reformative to understandings of community and what makes a community desired and worth belonging in the first place.

### **Manuela Boatca: Minority Report: Coloniality of Memory and Forgotten Europes in the Longue Durée**

The 2002 dystopian movie 'Minority Report' alerted us to a not-too-distant future in which crimes would be reliably predicted by prescient humans with increased cognitive capacities, or "pre-cogs". The reliability was however only warranted when systematically disregarding the minority report among the pre-cogs, the one that told a different story about the context, the causes, and the outcome of the series of events under investigation than the majority estimate. In this talk, I use the notion of the minority report to draw attention to the systematical occlusion of minority experiences – those of people and regions racialized as non-European, non-White and non-Western – from narratives of Europe and Europeanness. I argue that a focus on the minor formations of today's Europe – its overseas countries and territories and outermost regions, from the Caribbean to the Indian Ocean, decisively unsettle Europe's prevailing self-definition as continental, white, and Christian and the dominant E.U. discourse. I discuss how, in the context of multiple and unequal Europes located on the continent, the EU's overseas territories are constantly produced as "forgotten Europe" – the minority report regularly missing from Europe's self-representation and modernity's checklist. At the same, the minority report is far from minor in significance or consequence: it is the result of the coloniality of memory – the systematic omission of enduring colonial ties from public discourse *on* Europe and the systematic avoidance of any overarching classification of current colonial territories as regions *of* Europe. I end by discussing how the minor can become theory in a larger project of creolizing Europe.

### **Jakub Crcha: The hierarchy of (in)visibility of European violence; how does the project of Modern Europe construct its narratives of violence and administration**

This paper is a presentation of a larger project I am currently working on investigating the relationship between violence and the project of Modern Europe.

Why are certain forms of contemporary European administration exempted from critique on the basis of their violence? And why do many more escape the definition of violence altogether? Why do we, as European citizens allegedly passionately invested in the values of democracy, so easily accept the necessity of radical forms of oppression, violence, exclusion, etc. as an inherent part of the reproduction of everyday life? Not only when it comes to the most spectacular instances of racialised bodies drowned and detained, but also with regards to the mundane forms of violence occurring on a quotidian basis in an intimate proximity to our lives. With these questions (or rather disturbing observations) in mind, I posit that what is at play is more than a simple case of ignorance, detachment, or apathy. Rather I think that there are processes of structural and historical



construction of a particular subjectivity that profoundly shapes the way in which violence figures in modern European governance and life-style.

I argue that this acceptance of radical politics of violence as a part of modern European governance is a result of a long process dating back at least to the end of World War II. A process that involves an active politics of writing European history in the wake of fascism and that gives rise to the epistemic and moral foundation for what we could today call the ‘modern Europe’. In this project I argue that the writing of history of European violence (and the perpetual construction of the relationship between Europe and violence) plays a significant role in how today objectively (that is, empirically observable) violent politics is framed in neutral administrative terms. One of the sites of this occurrence is the shifting dividing line between the European *proper* and the non-European where different subjectivities (as well as sensitivities) constitute the politicised points of difference between the two.

This project locates three moments of rupture in the history of Modern Europe (defeat of fascism, decolonisation, the collapse of state-socialism) and analyses the way in which they were incorporated into the narrative of modern Europe. The broad argument of the project is that these moments of European reckoning with the three historical ruptures can tell us a lot about how the tenuous moral regime of modern Europe--one incorporating spaces of lavish freedom for some and sites of radical administrative violence for others--became not only acceptable, but a desirable political imaginary.

### **Costanza Curro and Olga Zeveleva: Becoming a European prisoner: Penal reforms and European belonging in Georgia and Estonia**

Prison reforms have been an essential part of European inclusion processes followed by many post-socialist countries since the end of the Soviet Union. These societies have approached ‘Europe’ not only in terms of conformity with its political, economic and legal standards, but also as integration into common narratives of Europeanness. When it comes to crime and punishment, such narratives largely mirror the Council of Europe’s Prison Rules (which both countries have officially adopted). Besides condemning the degrading treatment of prisoners, these rules emphasize the rehabilitative role of imprisonment and the related need for prisoners to live in a healthy environment and be engaged in meaningful activities to facilitate their return into society (CoE 2006).

Drawing upon interviews with former prisoners, NGOs and prison authorities, as well as on reports and news from various organizations and media, we discuss prison reforms in Georgia and Estonia as different and similar paths to European citizenship at the legal and political but also cultural and discursive level. Georgia and Estonia have inherited from the Soviet Union a prison system in which prisoners lived communally in barracks and interacted more or less freely (Piacentini & Slade 2015). For both countries, becoming ‘European’ entailed shifting to cell-based infrastructures, which, while being more respectful of inmates’ privacy and safety, also enhance prison authorities’ control and curtails the influence of informal hierarchies. In Georgia, such reforms are linked to crime reduction but also to human rights violations. Prison subculture is resilient across the penal system. In Estonia, radical transformations of prisons have led to a sharp decline in informal governance. However, the Russian-speaking minority is overrepresented among inmates, reflecting

wider trends of discrimination in the country. Prisoners' perspectives on European aspirations pursued through these reforms are also ambivalent. While the 'European system' arguably offers better conditions 'inside' and higher chances of reintegration 'outside', many prisoners lament the loss of the culture of commonality and solidarity enabled by the previous collective organization of space and time. We analyse this complex scenario from a perspective of multilayered 'minoritiness'. On the one hand, the quest for inclusion from the peripheries of Europe (in spite of differences between Georgia and Estonia) generates minoritized narratives of European belonging to adapt to the mainstream centre – EU institutions and their regulations. On the other hand, these images of Europeanness are challenged by prisoners' narratives, in which European 'carceral citizenship' (Turner 2012) deepens marginalization and isolation.

### **Mercédesz Czimbalmos: Sexual and Gender Minorities among the Foreign Origin Population in Finland**

The purpose of this paper is to present preliminary findings of a research on experiences of gender and sexual minorities among the foreign populations in Finland. While the gendering of migration has been studied since the early 1990s, queer migration has only recently gained academic interest (Mole 2018). Most research on the field of LGBTQ+ migration pertains to the context of the United States, Canada, Latin America and occasionally, Asia (see e.g. Eng 1997; Manalansan 2006; Mai & King 2009; Luibhéid 2008; Luibhéid & Cantú 2009; Lee & Brotman 2011; Cheney et al. 2017). Significantly less research has been conducted on the topic in Europe, and there are immense gaps in the available studies on the topic in the Finnish context. Despite the recent legal changes in Finland, such as the changes made to the Equality Act, the Non-Discrimination Act and the Equal Marriage Act, there are still obvious shortcomings in the legislation, e.g. the shortcomings of the Trans Law, or the lack of a third official gender in official documentation – which also limits the research on gender minorities significantly. Existing studies about gender and sexual minorities of immigrant or foreign backgrounds in Finland point out that individuals who are members of several minority groups often experience discrimination or harassment. However, the root of these experiences may be unclear, as these phenomena can be rooted in several aspects of including e.g. gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic background identities (Lepola 2018; Puumalainen 2018). The aim of the research is to study how distinctive social power relations mutually construct each other and to facilitate the understanding of the inclusions and exclusions that members of the studied population may experience in Finland. The research applies a mixed-method approach, with underpinnings from community-based participatory research. The main material of the research consists of focus group interviews with key stakeholders that support gender and sexual minorities and individual interviews with members of the studied population. The material is to be analyzed through the framework of intersectionality, which provides a broad way in theorizing gender in relation to other constructions of self-hood and identity (Vuola 2019), and thus allows for the exploration of the complexities of diversity within the studied groups possible from various dimensions (Bowleg 2008). The research is part of the *Manifold More* project of the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare (THL).

## **Mehrnoosh Farzamfar: Securing Europe by Eroding the Right to Seek Asylum: A Slippery Slope Fallacy**

Throughout their experiences and narratives, various groups of minorities have been shaping different identities of Europe. Amongst these, perhaps the story of asylum seekers and refugees have been one of the most marginalised one, especially nowadays that asylum seekers are perceived to be a threat to the safety and security of Europe. The 9/11 attacks and subsequent terrorist incidents in Europe have created a ‘slippery slope fallacy’ in determining the direction of Europe towards asylum seekers. In other words, considering the racist nature of far-right politics in Europe, these incidents have given a *façade* of security to different European actors, in order to strip off the most basic and fundamental human right of asylum seekers, namely ‘the right to seek asylum’.

In today’s narratives of Europe, we keep hearing about ‘asylums’ and ‘refugees’, without noticing that these terms and their implications make a world of differences to those, who had to flee their countries of origin, due to persecution and unrest. In this paper, I start the discussion with the fact that the term ‘refugee’ is much younger than the concept and practice of ‘asylum’ in European history. It is, indeed, in the human nature to fear threats, which might endanger their lives and safety; either we fight back, or when unable, we escape to find a safe haven. Keeping this natural need in mind, I argue that the concept of security is nothing new to the practice of asylum seeking. By a short historical reading of the creation and formation of the right to seek asylum, we see that the concept of security has found its way to the practice of asylum and the refugee legal framework from the very beginning.

As of today, Europe is struggling to find *quasi-legal* ways to prevent asylum seekers from getting access to its territory, and using the notion of ‘internal security’ as a *façade* is serving Europe with this purpose. This claim could be illustrated in the jurisprudences of the European Court of Human Rights (the ECtHR) and the Court of Justice of the European Union (the CJEU), respectively with regard to protecting the right to seek asylum and prohibition against *refoulement*. Through these case analyses, this paper concludes that the current European asylum policies and practices are indeed impairing the fundamental nature of the right to seek asylum and substituting the customary norm of *non-refoulement* with the political agenda of *non-entrée*.

## **Marie-Claire Foblets: Minority protection in European countries – four reasons to call into question perspectives inherited from the past**

Minority protection in Europe has deep roots in its history, going back to the Edict of Nantes. Today, however, the question arises whether the existing protections still suffice to do justice to the new communities living in an increasingly plural Europe. In this paper, we will identify four reasons to critically assess the mechanisms inherited from the past.

1. The law in force often still reflects the quest(s) for equilibrium inherited from the past, and so current law more often than not gives priority to the protection of the rights of historical minorities present in the country.
2. The demographic changes resulting from increasing waves of migration have profoundly changed the situation.
3. The ‘new’ minorities do not yet participate to a demographically proportionate degree in democratic discussions, and in particular when it comes to

deciding about the laws that affect them. 4. Last but not least, Often, the courts are called upon to decide on matters of minority protection, but judges cannot go beyond what the existing legislation allows them to do.

I will elaborate on each of these four reasons in the paper.

### **Abdullah Sencer Gozubenli: The Autonomy of Gagauzia: From the Struggle for Identity into a Proxy for Euroscepticism?**

As most of separatist regimes that emerged in the post-Soviet space in the early 1990s are alive to date, some of multi-ethnic unitary states with territorially concentrated ethnic minorities responded to ethnic minorities' demands by granting flexible ethnic-territorial autonomy (e.g. Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova). With Russia's forcible annexation of the autonomous Ukrainian region of Crimea, where the largely ethnic-Russian population voted to secede from Ukraine during political conflict between the pro-Western interim government in Kyiv and the pro-Russian opposition in March 2014, the academic community again has turned its attention to territorially concentrated ethnic Russian/Russophone minorities' relations with kin-state in the region. Moldova, the first post-Soviet country to experiment with asymmetrical devolution as a solution to ethnic problems, have faced two secessionist confrontations with territorially concentrated ethnic minorities, ended with an ethnic-territorial autonomy (Gagauzia) and a frozen conflict (Transnistria), under an ongoing highly tense and politicized linguistic atmosphere that external actors engaged in.

Moldova's only de facto autonomous administration Gagauzia (Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia/Gagauz Yeri) is populated primarily by Gagauz (84% of its population according to the 2014 Moldovan census) Turkic-speaking Orthodox-Christian ethno-cultural community. Although Gagauz people speak Gagauz language as a mother tongue that is mutually intelligible with standard Turkish, they also use Russian (either as a first or second language), as opposed to Moldovan (Romanian) in communicating with their compatriots. Gagauzia, unlike the unrecognized de facto Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic/Transnistria, avoided war following the breakup of the Soviet Union. Yet, the region continues to see ethnic mobilization involving external actors at the two ends of the spectrum (the West and the East) with political mobilization involving domestic political actors at the two ends of the spectrum (pro-Western and pro-Russian). On the other hand, the conflict between de facto neighbor Russia and neighboring Ukraine in February 2014 led to sharpen the existing polarization in Moldovan society. While two hostile camps pro-Western and pro-Russian arose, polarized ethnic minorities became more vulnerable to penetration by external actors. This paper aims to analyse the contradiction between Gagauzia's state of mind of preserving the Gagauz ethno-culture and the current status of a sword of Damocles over the European future of its politically divided unitary state in the post-Soviet space.

### **Ruth Illman: Minority Experiences among Finnish Jewry: An Ethnographic Account**

This paper presents preliminary findings from the ongoing research project "Being, knowing and doing Jewish: A new analytic approach to vernacular religion", conducted at Åbo Akademi



University since 2018. The aim of the project is to ethnographically examine everyday Jewish life in Finland, focusing on experiences of knowing, being and doing “Jewish” among members of this small and well-established but highly diverse minority group, including mainstream adherents, the deeply engaged, the critically secular and the thoroughly indifferent. Within the project, an analytic model based on the theoretical framework of *vernacular religion* (Bowman & Valk 2012) is developed to capture the complex image of minority experiences in a structured framework sensitive to historical data and cultural context but also individual narratives and nuances. The project serves to make Jewish experiences visible in the international research on vernacular religion, where it has so far been only marginally represented.

Today, increasing migration, urbanisation and secularisation contest and reshape traditional boundaries of belonging. Static values and conceptions of identity give way to more flexible subjective positions accommodating a broad set of religious, secular and cultural influences. This holds true also for the Jewish minority in Finland, and the ethnographic data generated within the project (archival material and 101 in-depth interviews) display the complexities of Jewishness today, in line with recent international scholarship that highlights the often contested and re-interpreted nature of Jewish identifications and practices (Ochs 2007, Popkin 2015). To capture this broad image, the project traces traditional and historical interpretations of Jewishness in Finland as well as contemporary, Jewishly perceived practices, which may be hybrid, secular and subjectively appropriated.

Vernacular religion does not constitute a separate, clearly distinguished aspect of people's lives. Rather, it is acted out in various ways as part of everyday life and emerges as a relevant component of life in different ways for different individuals, often situationally (Illman & Czimbalmos 2020). Longstanding established minority communities seldom advocate a total rejection of the surrounding culture but rather 'creatively straddle both worlds' (Kupari & Vuola 2020). This is illustrated by the ethnography, where vernacular Judaism in Finland comes out as all but monolithic. It is colourful and changing, formed by an abundance of trivial and crucial choices relating to everyday life, dependent on religious and ethical judgement but also economic and social circumstances, habits and chance.

### **Daria Krivonos: “The West available” and hierarchies of globality in migration**

In this presentation, I analyse young post-Soviet migrants' imaginaries of the “West” in the context of migration and propose a synthetic concept of “the West available” to understand their migratory imagination. Drawing on ethnographic research among young Russian-speaking migrants in Helsinki and young Ukrainian migrants in Warsaw, I analyse how my interlocutors' imaginaries of a more “modern” and cosmopolitan lifestyle in the West work as a driving force of migration. The West as representing modernity and globality is narrated as a spatial and temporal formation. Young post-Soviet people's imagination of the West and the ways they act upon their dreams and imaginaries are conditioned by global inequality regimes and hierarchies that attribute little value to post-socialism and the East of Europe, yet provide few channels to make their place in the modern and the West possible. Within these global taxonomies and imaginary geographies, the East of Europe seems to be always stuck in the past while the rest of the world has further moved on to globality. I then show how within this regime of value, migration to Finland and Poland enabled by the bus



infrastructure and more flexible visa regimes make these countries into the “West available”, that is, the location where globality and modernity is available to and reachable by my research interlocutors. These migration imaginaries open up the vision of the West as a contested and hierarchically graded space and brings a more nuanced understanding of the “West and the rest” distinction.

### **Olivia Maury: Politics of presence against legal temporariness**

The contemporary mode of capital accumulation simultaneously fragments and unifies spaces and labour (Gago 2017; Tsing 2015; Mezzadra and Neilson 2019). Temporal borders articulated both as time constraints in residence permits and arising as effects of the permit in migrants’ everyday lives facilitate momentary inclusion of migrants as precarious labour force under the capitalist productive fabric. Moreover, the temporal workings of the EU border regime point to the logic of the coloniality of migration (Gutiérrez Rodriguez 2018), as it produces hierarchised differences between nationalities, for example through the EU negative/positive list to designate those in need of a visa (negative) for entering the Schengen area (Council regulation EC No. 539/2001). While these EU policies do not explicitly operate within a matrix of racial difference, the connection between nationality and migrants’ rights produce hierarchies building on the foundation of racialized notions of the ‘Other’. Temporal borders entrenched in colonial duress engender temporal effects in the migrants’ quotidian lives, influencing their possibilities of moving across borders and engaging in paid work (Maury 2020).

As analytical focus against legal temporariness and lived temporal insecurity, I propose an analysis of the everyday politics of presence. This inquiry incorporates a combination of Marxist feminist scholarship on social reproduction with analytical perspectives on temporal migration control. Drawing on interview data with holders of temporary residence permits in Finland, I examine the labour invested in renewing the increasingly time-limited residence permits and meeting the associated immigration requirements as an important aspect of quotidian reproduction of life. The paper contributes to the development of novel conceptualisations of migrant presence despite legal temporariness by analytically enhancing the creative capacities of migrants in struggling to secure a legal status and shaping their everyday lives.

### **Shachi Mokashi: ‘Containment’ in Modern European Imagination and Governance**

By looking at the concept of ‘containment’, my paper seeks to understand the mechanisms through which the European Union reframes explicitly racialised and exclusionary processes as concerns of security and ‘everyday’ politics. What political and discursive processes are necessary for this reframing?

Conceptualising ‘containment’ as a set of practices and strategies aimed at immobilising a person—physically, and therefore, politically—my paper will argue that the European Union consistently makes and remakes space to ‘fix’ racialised bodies within certain geographies of violence and legality.



While the refugee camp is the most obvious contemporary manifestation; I look further: spaces of containment, constructed, operated, reconfigured by the European Union, exist in the forms of detention and ‘holding’ camps across Europe; and as externalisation and militarisation projects across the African continent—predominantly in Northern Africa. The refugee camps on European soil have been thoroughly rationalised; but moving geographically further than these spaces, the radical restructuring of landscapes *around* the European Union to contain populations and flows demonstrates the various processes through which political and exclusionary practices are *made* into the questions of security and ‘mundane’ governance. While looking at these as contemporary processes, my paper will situate their origins in European history. Tracing the genealogy from the colony to the ‘camp’, my paper embeds the containment of racialised bodies into the core of European colonial desire and rationality.

European security, defence, and economic policies are relentlessly engaged in re-orienting the geographical, economic, and political landscapes of areas around the European Union. My concern with this paper is to illustrate that modern Europe *continues* to operationalise these strategies against particular groups it deems necessary to govern—reproducing and reinforcing the idea of a governable, racialised body. This paper attempts to understand how these spaces of containment—across Europe and the African continent—operate and to what extent they cause further distress and displacement in the areas they are constructed in. To what extent are they fatal to the issue of forced displacement as a whole?

My paper hopes to contribute to the literature of minority, racialisation, and decolonial studies by critiquing the exclusionary politics of the European Union and the machinery it constructs and utilises for this purpose.

### **Sanna Mustasaari: Affective constructions of justice: ISIS-families and the law in the Finnish public debate**

The paper examines the political process and public debate in Finland concerning the 11 Finnish women and 33 children who were held captive in the refugee camp of Al-Hol in north-east Syria, during the unfolding of a humanitarian catastrophe. The adopted approach assumes as a starting point that affects and emotions are social and cultural practices, rather than merely psychological states, that produce meaning and attach value to particular bodies and individuals (Ahmed 2014; Scheers 2012). Affects also define legal contexts through spatial notions and distinctions regarding the belonging of the other’s body, an operation to which Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy (2019) refer to as ‘bordering’.

The paper studies the role of affect in the processes of meaning-making and constructing justice in these debates and argues that a non-belonging and essentially non-Finnish identity was affectively constructed to the mothers, who were depicted as ‘converts’ and ‘jihadists’. Furthermore, emotions such as compassion were mobilised in the process with ambiguous outcomes. On the one hand, reference to compassion served the conservative agenda of attaching rights to worthiness, on the other hand reference to compassion towards the figure of the innocent child served to isolate the children from their mothers. It is argued that the process of bordering was essentially an affective one, in which the individuals in Al-Hol were constructed as outsiders, which assisted in the mainstreaming of the



policies of the populist radical right. In the legal context, the affectively constructed identities of the mothers as non-belonging were relevant to how the issue of rights and legal obligations of the state became perceived as something belonging to the realm of national law or international law.

The analysis draws on material consisting of the minutes of the Plenary Debates of the Parliament, in which the issue of ISIS families was brought up; newspaper and tabloid articles, together with documentary films; and news and debate programmes produced by the Finnish public service broadcasting company YLE. The material was collected as part of the Academy of Finland Postdoctoral research project on transnational childhoods and related state practices in the field of child welfare.

### **Laurence Prempain: They are “part of our world and yet distinct from the rest of us” The Roma people: forgotten Resistance fighters of the Second World War**

This proposal of communication is in line with an ongoing HERA project entitled Bestrom. Beyond stereotypes. Cultural exchanges and the Romani contribution to European public spaces.

<https://bestrom.org/>

The Bestrom project (University of Seville, Jagellonian University of Cracow, University of Liverpool and University of Helsinki) explores the cultural contribution to Europe’s public space/s of its Romani minorities (Roma, Sinti, Manouche, Gitanos, and others). The project aims at considering them as agents in the processes of building shared European commons and identities. Approaching them as active subjects of cultural production, the research goes beyond scholarship that treats “Gypsies” as passive objects of othering.

As member of the Finnish team of the project, I will present Bestrom and develop on one of my research questions. Why Romani people are the forgotten Resistance fighters of the Second World War's narratives? I will investigate this topic through the specific case of France easily applicable to European narratives.

Michael Stewart stated that Romani people are “part of our world and yet distinct from the rest of us” (Stewart 1997, 12). The anthropologist adopted the perspective reflecting on the “other” that a priori leaves aside these populations and prevent them from being included in the narratives of Resistance. I go beyond this excluding stance and reflect on the motives that explain why stories of Romani resistance are little known. It prompts us to ask ourselves, on the one hand, why historians of the resistance have neglected them, and on the other hand, what place this history has in the lives of the Roma. In the course of my presentation, I will evoke the lack of sources and posit that examining the story of Roma resistance during the Second World War calls for the use of our imaginations to see the spaces in which resistance was possible and to fill in the gaps in the archives.



## **Laura Sumari: Attaching meanings to Europe in discussion with sub-Saharan African migrants and refugees**

In research and literature, Europe has for the most part of history, been defined and described by Europeans – from the inside and against ‘others’ who are, through various borders and boundaries, at least imagined or preferred to be located on the outside. Dominant narratives of Europe easily overlook historical and contemporary oppressions, which have had a major role to play in the construction of the Europe of today.

People give meanings to themselves, their lives and the world around them in relation to places and connections and relations between them. On one hand, these meanings impact on how places are experienced. On the other hand, by manifesting themselves in our lived experiences and impressions, places continuously gain new meanings, remaking them through networks and connections with multiple elsewhere. Thus, all people who think and talk about Europe can contribute to the construction of the idea of Europe.

This paper investigates what kind of meanings Black migrants and refugees in and from sub-Saharan Africa give to Europe based on their imagination and experiences, and what kind of narratives of Europe emerge through these meanings. What do these meanings and narratives attached to Europe actually tell about Europe?

The paper builds on ethnographic research material gathered by conducting multi-sited fieldwork in Kenya, Ethiopia, Cyprus, Italy and Finland between 2018-2020 through participant observation and interviewing refugees and migrants with experiences of irregularity. The paper aims at bringing forth a multiplicity of accounts on how Europe is narrated by the interlocutors of the research, and thus, participating in the construction of more nuanced ideas and narratives of Europe.

## **Ioana Tistea: ‘Ain’t I also a migrant?’ Whiteness, coloniality, and migrant ‘integration’. An autoethnographic drama**

This article joins a growing body of auto/ethnographic research exploring Eastern European experiences with whiteness in the Nordic space. Specifically, it makes visible the reproduction of whiteness and coloniality of knowledge in Finnish migrant ‘integration’ policy, practice, and research, based on my embodied experiences as a migrant and researcher from Romania. While examinations of policy and practices highlight many issues with ‘integration’, they focus little on how knowledge about ‘integration’ is produced and on how migrants and researchers themselves as knowing subjects are constituted through ‘integration’ policy and research, and how to destabilize established modes of knowing or performing research. I address these issues with an autoethnographic drama (or ethnodrama) that challenges what counts as valid knowledge and valid ways of knowing, and who is considered as a legitimate knowing subject in migrant ‘integration’ contexts. The ethnodrama explores if and how whiteness may be a (self-)colonizing category which might be reproduced by unreflexively equating migratism from a white social positioning with racism. I wrote the script for the ethnodrama based on my embodied experiences of attending the integration training as a migrant from Romania living in Finland, interviews with teachers working in the integration training, my job practice in a reception center for asylum seekers, and earlier stages



of my PhD studies. I performed previous versions of the ethnodrama in a lecture and in a conference presentation, thus opening possibilities for epistemic collaboration with audiences, whose feedback informs the ethnodrama's current version. The article therefore makes the invisible (whiteness and coloniality) visible through embodiment, affects, and discomfort with established ways of knowing.

### **Kaius Tuori: Minority narratives and human rights in the alt-right visions of “white genocide”**

This paper addresses the uses of minority and human rights language in the expression of visions of various alt-right theories of threats to white supremacy in Europe. From the so-called replacement theories to colonizing narratives and ultimately to apocalyptic visions of “white genocide”, the authors of these theories have embraced concepts and theories from minority studies and human rights to further their agenda. While not subtle or accurate, they nevertheless illustrate a growing literacy of the concepts of minority and minority rights, even if they are employed to justify and legitimate repression and hate directed towards migrants and minorities. The purpose of this paper is to analyze these narratives through their conceptions of community and to illustrate how the concept of community, from the national to the European, has multifarious connotations from ethnicity to culture. The sources of the paper are publications in different alt-right outlets, from both near-mainstream parties to more marginal groups. In the analysis, these visions are compared with both nationalistic theories as well as theories of the nation by Nazi and Fascist thinkers.

### **Roman Urbanowicz: European Narratives, Disenfranchised Orientalism, and Quests for Dignified Modernity in the North-West of Belarus**

The presentation examines rural Polish communities in the North-West of Belarus, and particularly the navigation of various vernacular visions of dignity, complexly positioned within the geopolitical arrangements, being shaped by civilisational rivalries between the West and the East, unfolding against the backdrop of long-lasting marginalisation and uneven power-dynamics, competing national narratives, and exacerbating living standards discrepancies that develop between different states at the edge of Europe.

In my presentation I demonstrate how uneven power relations of institutionally arranged moralities of local, ethnic, national and ‘civilisational’ belonging affect the positioning of local actors as well as the social life of variously arranged notions of orientalism and unworthy governance. In so doing, I engage critically engaging with literature on the state, moral self-making and Europeaness. I draw on 12-month long ethnographic research conducted in the region.

The whole situation of 80 years of disenfranchisement and overt repressions, experienced by Polish communities in the Soviet and later independent Belarus, was often put by my interlocutors in ‘civilisational’ context, given that the political divides go along such lines (between the East and the West). This produces many notions of different paces of development, differently allocated notions of collective and personal dignity, contested moral belongings, and unjust civilisational dislocations, all enrooted in the rhetoric of intimate superiority. Simply put, history of



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marginalisation was often conceptualised as separation from natural civilizational belonging, and malevolent actors (Soviet authorities and their successors) were framed by orientalist visions of historical rivalry over the frontiers of Western civilisation. Henceforth, individual struggles for long denied collective dignity are deeply enrooted in such ontologised geopolitical divisions.

Moral contours of such struggles are shaped by mobilisation against the malevolent agencies of their 'own' yet civilisationally alien ('Bolshevik', 'Russian') state, underpinned by the historical tensions between the Belarusian state and local community (and indeed, by the recent surge of state terror in the country). Such antagonism is also fuelled by vastly uneven infrastructural promises of the two neighbouring countries and their respective civilizational projects (the 'European' one of Poland and the quasi-Soviet one of Belarus). Competing visions of welfare, dignified subjectivity and modernity, embedded in conflictual geopolitical trajectories, only aggravate the burden of navigation of problematically exclusive personal potentialities, relying on the double state-structures. Indeed, these are very different power relations that are typically described in postcolonial theory which sees everything in binaries, and these are the complex moral and historical underpinnings of such imbrication that I engage with.

### **Huub van Baar: The European Roma and their Search for Representational Space: Claiming History and Challenging the Borders of Europe**

For long and like Europe's Jews, Blacks and Muslims, the European Roma have been considered as a non-European minority against whom Europe defined itself, perceiving and representing them in European cultures, histories and societies along Orientalizing, racializing and securitizing lines as an existential threat to European 'stability', 'security', 'civilization', 'progress' and 'order'. Yet, particularly since the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and the correlated redefining of the European Union, we have been able to observe an increasing 'Europeanization of the representation of the Roma'. Following this Europeanization, Roma have been represented and have represented themselves not only as a European rather than non-European minority, but they have also and substantially been homogenized as one more or less coherent minority group and approached as the subjects of various large-scale, Europe-wide development interventions, which are, at least 'officially', dedicated to improving the position, situation and sociopolitical participation of Roma throughout Europe, based on their consideration as human and minority rights subjects.

In my keynote address, I will reflect on the meaning and implication of this ongoing process of Europeanizing Roma representations and on how Roma themselves have been implicated ambiguously in this heterogeneous process. Indeed, this process has not been without serious ambiguities, some of which I will discuss in greater detail to show both the scope and the challenges for Roma to contribute to reimagining Europe and critically addressing how the category of 'Europeanness' has been mobilized for various purposes, including for excluding Roma from what and whom Europe is supposed to be.

I will discuss two prominent ways in which Roma have addressed and challenged the idea of Europe or, better, prominent ideas of Europe and its multiple history and memory. First, by discussing mobility from the point of view of its autonomy, I will explain why and how we could



consider the ways in which particularly Central and Eastern European Roma have exercised their right to mobility as a challenge to the idea of Europe as a free and traversable space, as it has been conceived in the EU's foundational Treaty of Maastricht and legally materialized in the EU right to free movement. I will show how the production of Roma as irregular European citizens has simultaneously revealed the way in which European mobility has been problematically governed along the lines of race, class, gender and nationality.

Second, I will discuss how, over the last few decades, Roma have increasingly confronted Europe with its 'memory problem' through actively producing new critical imageries of Europe. New memoryscapes have been developed at formerly neglected national as well as global memorial sites, such as at the Auschwitz memorial in Poland, while Roma artists have been included in key international art exhibitions, such as the Venice biennale, and have established own exhibition spaces and scenes, most notably in Berlin and Budapest. On the basis of what Katie Trumpener, in her seminal 1992 article about the position of Roma in European history and culture, has defined as the 'European memory problem', I will explain that this problem involves much more than the long neglect and lack of recognition of Roma as the victims of persecution and genocidal violence. This problem is fundamentally about the possibilities to claim history and memory. I will argue that the ways in which Roma have attempted to challenge mainstream ideas about mobility and Europeanness are, in the end, about the search for a representational space in European culture and society that is critical of a long European history of neglect, racialization and exclusion of minoritized groups.

### **Margriet van der Waal: The magical creation of citizens? Magic lantern slides, European settler colonialism and the creation of minority citizens**

This contribution investigates the issue of European settler narratives in the form of colonial archives and asks whose concern these archives are today (especially also in the context of digitization of archives) and how they may be understood in the context of "decolonizing" Europe. The questions are provoked by a collection of glass "lantern slides" about South Africa, stored in an archive of a Dutch cultural foundation and recently digitized. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century audiences across Europe were enticed by these "lantern slides" that were projected as part of spirited "lantern lectures" on a wide range of topics and issues – from the dangers of alcohol to the "exotic" life of others in far-away countries. The recent digitization process of these fragile glass plates offers an invitation to examine not only a relatively little-known archive containing information about 20<sup>th</sup> century cultural relations between the Netherlands and South Africa (oftentimes described as "kinship ties"), but also to start looking at these images and screening practices as part of a wider-spread European imperial project that extended well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In my contribution to this seminar on minority experiences, I will focus on this specific collection of Dutch slides held in a private archive in order to investigate the extent to which one might rethink the Dutch-Afrikaner/South African relationship anew as part of a broader narrative about European settler colonialism.

I will investigate this specific case of fragile, cultural heritage as instrument that constructed a particular narrative of European (minority, but privileged) identity both in Europe and in South Africa, and that, although special historical links existed between the two countries – the so-called special "kinship" ties between the Netherlands and the white, minority population of South Africa –



these ties might be reconsidered beyond the borders of these particular nations as being part of complex transnational European colonial practices, strategies and narratives that produced Europe's empires and created a specific category of European settler citizens (white, minority, but politically powerful) outside of Europe.

### **Craig Willis: Identifying contemporary aims of minority communities at the European Union level through the lens of the Minority SafePack Initiative**

The ongoing process of the Minority SafePack Initiative (MSPI) is the one of the most high-profile example of minority activism on a European Union level, organised and funded by minority organisations through the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN). Although other monitoring mechanisms such as the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of Minorities (ACFC) take into consideration the views of minority organisations in their reporting, the organisation's aims and the ACFC's recommendations are always on a national level. Analysis of the MSPI allows the collective voice of minority communities and their organisations across the EU to be understood in terms of a set of common aims, which formed this successful (in terms of signatures collected) EU citizens' initiative campaign. Although the precise aims expressed through the MSPI are linked to relevant EU legislation and competence, this paper dissects the campaign and manifesto to identify the broad aims of the initiative. These are summarised into: living in homeland, learning in mother tongue, preservation and development of identity and culture, and aiming for equality, as well as the overall intention to improve societal cohesion within Member States and across the EU. These aims demonstrate the common issues FUEN member organisations find continue to be a priority, for which they were willing to campaign together and collect signatures amongst EU citizens, within, across and beyond minority communities. In this sense, the paper highlights how minorities are telling their story across the EU, at an institutional and grassroots level, calling for a pact between minority and majority populations.

