



Border-making as World-making: Mobility, Space, and Subjectivity in the Black Mediterranean

Speaker: Dr Leslie Gross-Wyrtzen
Yale University

Chair: Dr Miles Kenney-Lazar
Department of Geography, NUS

Date/Time: Friday, 3 March 2023, 3.30pm

Place: AS2-02-03, Earth Lab

Abstract

Over the past two decades, European anxieties regarding postcolonial and especially African migrations have spurred the development and expansion of the EU “externalized border,” which enlists neighboring countries to contain undesirable migrants beyond European territory. An early partner, Morocco leverages its cooperation in the EU’s project of bordering in exchange for economic and geopolitical advantages, as well as the opportunity to distinguish its own emigrant population from “less desirable” migrants further south. Based on ethnographic research among West and Central African migrants in Morocco since 2016, this talk analyzes how the transnational, EurAfrican border works to contain migrant people beyond European territory and how race is central to its operations at multiple scales. Bringing postcolonial and Black geographies into conversation with critical border studies, I argue that the EurAfrican border is a world-making project, producing spaces and subjects of belonging and exclusion through racial regimes of im/mobility and violent expropriations. Black migrants’ racial displacement from dominant geographies enables the growth of the border industry and give rise to emergent African diasporas and spatial imaginaries that constitute the Black Mediterranean. Attending to the experiences of migrants en/countering the border en route or stuck in place recuperates the Global South-ness of the Black Mediterranean, decentering Euro- or Americentric accounts of race, politics, and belonging.

About the Speaker



Leslie Gross-Wyrtzen is a lecturer at the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies and affiliated faculty in Anthropology and the Center for Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration at Yale University. A political geographer (PhD Clark Univ, 2020), her work focuses on the relationship between borders, race, and political economy between Africa and Europe. Her current book project, *Bordering Blackness: Race, Violence and the Political Economy of Migration*, was funded by the National Science Foundation, Fulbright-Hays, and fellowships at Yale. She also published or has forthcoming articles in *EPD: Society and Space*, *The Journal of North African Studies*, *ACME: A Journal of Critical Geography*, and *Geoforum*. She is a member of the Doctors within Borders research group (Glasgow University and Lancaster University) and the Carceral Geographies working group of the RGS-IBG, and a former instructor with Yale’s Prison Education Initiative.

ADMISSION IS FREE – ALL ARE WELCOME

CONVENORS:  [Prof Henry Yeung](#)  [Prof Lu Xi Xi](#)  [Prof Elaine Ho](#)  [Dr Miles Kenney-Lazar](#)

ENQUIRIES: Sakinah – 65163559