

# ABSTRACTS

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► **Giacomo Orsini**, Ghent university

## **Mediterranean *Bordering(s)*: a genealogical view on cross-border relations in Lampedusa, Melilla and the Strait of Gibraltar**

The functioning of international borders transforms through time and depending on contextual political, social and economic relations. Designed to mark the territorial limits of people's belonging, border' power to (re)produce inclusion and exclusion transcends their geographical (and relative) fixity. In fact, specific border managements generate/generate from different bordering practices - that are, ways in which caesuras are drawn between populations, groups, identities and ultimately, people (Yval Davis et al. 2019). This lecture provides a 20th century overview on everyday bordering(s) practices in three of the most iconic border(is)lands of the EU governance of contemporary migration in the Mediterranean – i.e., Melilla and Morocco, Lampedusa and Tunisia, and Gibraltar and Spain/Morocco. From a genealogical perspective, the scope is to offer a genealogy local cross-border life allowing to go “beyond” the spectacle of the border (De Genova 2015) and the prolonged (so-called) “migration crisis” which is reproduced from these extremely visible spots of Europe's external border.

► **Umar Ryad**, University of Leuven

## **Arab Muslims in interwar Europe**

The presentation will focus on the Arab and Muslim presence in Europe during the interwar period and World War II, which has been mostly dealt with as part of Middle-Eastern and Asian history, colonial studies or briefly as related to European migration history. We briefly look at the impact of Muslim and Arab nationalist and intellectual émigrés as a *histoire croisée* (entangled history) with the socio-political and trans-cultural context of Europe itself. This historical episode of Muslim and Arab networks and activities ceased by the end of World War II, and re-emerged with the arrival of guest workers in early 1960s.

► **Joanna Musiatewicz**, University of Warsaw

## **"I Do Not Sympathise with Them nor Am I Prejudiced against Them": Europe and Europeans through the Eyes of Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq**

Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (1804–1887) is ranked among the most prominent and at the same time the most controversial representatives of nineteenth-century Arab cultural modernism. During his long and adventurous life, he travelled extensively up and down the Mediterranean and Western Europe, earning his living as a language instructor, translator and editor for various wealthy and powerful patrons. Born into a Maronite family in the Ottoman Syria, as a young man, he associated himself with the British and American Protestant missionaries and fled his homeland for fear of persecution as well as due to his personal rebellion against the clergy. For about three decades he shuttled between Egypt, Malta, England and France, and – after becoming Muslim in his fifties – spent the rest of his life in Tunis and Istanbul successively. Because of his conversions, occurring under unclear and disturbing circumstances, he may be considered both a Christian and a Muslim, an insider and outsider almost everywhere he dwelled. This complex identity, alongside his challenging personality, engendered an ambiguous attitude towards Europe that can be traced in Al-Shidyaq's literary legacy. The paper aims to reconstruct the image of Europe drawn by Al-Shidyaq on the pages of his travelogue (*Guidebook on the Situation in Malta and Unveiling the Hidden Treasures of Arts and Sciences in Europe*, 1866/1867) and autobiographical novel (*Leg over Leg*, 1855), following through the entangled relations between the nineteenth-century European reality and Al-Shidyaq's sensitivity, as they affected his life significantly.

► **Catherine Wilson**, Radboud University Nijmegen

## **Editing "Alinacha's Dream": Facilitating stories and including voices through the making of a book**

Many of the projects that are dear to us arise serendipitously during research. In many cases, however, these side projects unexpectedly shake up the way in which we view academia and do science. They make us critically reflect on our epistemological practices and ethical dilemmas. Such is the case with the book project Alinacha's Dream.

Alinacha's Dream is the story of a young Tanzanian man, Bori, who grew up in the slums of Dar es Salaam and dreamt of emigrating to Europe. His personal story triggered my curiosity and "Alinacha's Dream" is the materialization of his journey into a book. It is a story of emigration from Tanzania, through Turkey, Greece, North Macedonia, Serbia, Romania, Hungary, The Netherlands to Germany – and back. His journey started prior to, but also took place during, the 2015 migration crisis.

Based on a biographical approach that respects the voice of the author, this paper focusses not on the story, nor on the product, but rather on the process of creating a book together. It does so on three levels. First, there is the interpersonal level between the co-creators of the book. How do we deal with our different positionalities and intrinsic hierarchies that shape our relationship? And how do these come to life during our conversations and negotiations about the book? What can we learn from bottlenecks and potential disagreements? With regards to the communication channel itself, is WhatsApp an adequate platform to have fruitful discussions? The second level is found amongst colleagues, at the level of the institutions and projects. Why is it so difficult to convince colleagues about the value of this work? The third and final level is more abstract, it touches upon the reflections around the creation of knowledge (epistemological practices) and the role of scholars in a more engaged academy. Furthermore it might illuminate upon the ontology of academia. Why should it at all be engaged and if so, how do we deal with objectivity?

► **Andrius Marcinkevičius**, Institute of Sociology at Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences

## **The Social Adaptation of Russian Immigrants in Lithuania: Between Historical Experiences and Modern Challenges**

This paper aims to discuss experiences of the social adaptation of Russians in Lithuania who are representing a heterogeneous ethnic group which was formed in the period of the last three centuries by a couple of different waves of mass migration from Russia to Lithuania and other countries of Europe: 1) migration of Old Believers to Grand Duchy of Lithuania because of religious persecutions in Russia after Patriarch Nikons's reforms and schism of Russian Orthodox Church (the end of 17th century-18th century); 2) migration of Russians to Lithuania due to political persecutions after October Revolution, Civil War and establishment of the Bolshevik regime in Russia (since 1917 till 1939); 3) arrival of many thousands of Russian and Russian-speaking migrants from Russia to Lithuania in the Soviet period (1940–1990) as a result of politics of Russification. Although the process of adaptation to life in Lithuania of all these groups of Russian immigrants took place in different historical and political circumstances, it also contained common features. Moreover, the case of Russians in Lithuania could serve as an example of successful and negative adaptation experiences that are relevant for many contemporary migrants of various ethnic origins and from different countries. For example, problems related to legal status, education, linguistic and cultural adoption to dominant ethnic group, integration to labor market as well as attitudes of society toward various social groups (including migrants) could be identified as a connecting thread between the experiences of immigrants of different periods and generations.