



*“Contesting Migration” conference  
23-24 June 2025, Durham*

**Mobilization Dynamics in Refugee Reception Locations:  
Approaches and Methods to studying Migration-related Contestations**

At a time when political debate seems to tackle migration as an electoral issue carrying the highest of stakes across various national contexts, the need to understand the dynamics behind migration-related mobilization is greater than ever. Going beyond the focus on national contexts, this conference examines migration-related contestation at the local level, focusing on the dynamics unfolding between multiple actors mobilizing around the governance of migration. This ‘localist’ perspective provides a bridge between political anthropology and comparative politics approaches, enabling a nuanced, complex and pluralist understanding of migration-related contestation and the multiple processes at play in refugee reception sites.

The conference aims to discuss findings of political ethnography research in European reception locations and to place these findings in conversation with work carried out on related themes in Europe and beyond. Focused on the political dynamics that unfold in these locations between pro- and anti-migration activists, the conference interrogates methodological approaches to qualitative research on migration-related contestation.

The conference addresses issues such as:

- The mobilization of pro- and anti-migrant groups, networks and organizations in refugee reception sites and their complex relations
- Comparative insights from political ethnographies at the fault-lines of North-South migration trajectories
- Themes emerging from the study of such dynamics and their relevance in a rapidly changing landscape of migration governance
- Methodological approaches to studying political contestation at the granular level and via ethnographic methods
- Epistemological questions relating to ethnographic proximity to, and immersion in anti-migrant groups and networks

The conference is organised by the ESRC-funded project “Contesting Migration” and supported by the Durham Global Security Institute.

Organisers:

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## Conference Programme:

**23 June 2025**

11:00 – 11:30 Arrivals and coffee

11:30 – 1:30 Contesting Migration: Findings from Spain, Italy and Greece

*A Comparative Approach to Pro- and Anti- Migration Mobilisations in Mediterranean Reception Sites*

**Olga Demetriou**, Durham University and **Antonis Ellinas**, University of Cyprus

*Spain: Ceuta and Melilla*

**Bernardo Lopez Marin**, Durham University

*Italy: Lampedusa and Trieste*

**Janina Pescinski**, Durham University

*Greece and Cyprus: Evros, Chios and Nicosia*

**Maria Kenti Kranidioti**, University of Cyprus

*Greece: Lesvos and Samos*

**Theodoros Kouros**, Cyprus University of Technology

1:30 – 2:30 Lunch

2:30 – 4:30 Contesting Migration: The view from neighbouring states

*Tunisia/Libya: State policies as ‘borderline (dis)orders’: the enforcement of immobility as experienced from the Tunisian-Libyan frontier*

**Chiara Pagano**, University of Graz

*Slovenia/Italy: Contesting Migration at the Border: The mobilization of pro and anti-immigrant groups in the border area of Trieste*

**Chiara Milan**, Scuola Normale Superiore

*Morocco/Spain: A sociology of cross locations: Inquiries and fieldwork*

**Natalia Ribas-Mateos**, Autonomous University of Barcelona

*Complexities and risks of engaging in migration research and activism in Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia*

**Gianmaria Lenti**, La Trobe University

**24 June 2025**

10:00 – 10:30 Coffee

10:30 – 12:30 The Political Ethnography of Contestation: Approaches to studying the Far Right

*Varieties of Ethnography in the Study of the Far Right*

**Antonis Ellinas**, University of Cyprus and **Olga Demetriou**, Durham University

*Constitutional futures and the ethnography of youth participation in far/right politics in post-estallido Santiago, Chile*

**Elena Miltiades**, Roskilde University

*Ethnography of the Far Right*

**Sabine Volk**, University of Tübingen

“We are not far-right but we are right so far”: Pro- and anti-migrant related contestations in the North-East of the island of Ireland

**Chiara Magliacane**, University of Turin

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch

1:30 – 3:30 Mobilizing, Protesting, Countering: Studying Migration Contestations across Time

*Hiding, Accelerating, and Legitimizing: How the U.S. Far Right Uses Migration-Related Contestations*

**Kathleen Blee**, University of Pittsburgh

*The Italian Lega between welfare chauvinism and institutional racism: a local case study*

**Elisa Bellé**, University of Glasgow

*Who deserves compassion? The ambiguities and dilemmas of volunteering in the ‘Refugees Welcome’ movement*

**Pierre Monforte**, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, University of Leicester

*A Pressure Cooker We Knew Would Explode: Peripheral Italy Between Race-based Murders, Neo-Fascism, and Suppression*

**Marta Panighel**, University of Turin

3:30 – 4:00 Break

4:00 – 5:00 *Closing Roundtable: Themes Emerging*