 

School of Economic and Regional Studies

Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies

***Culture–Borders–Gender/*LΑB**

***Ethnography Club-CBG/LAB***

***Club for the Study of Borders, Culture, and Diversity-CBG/LAB***

**ETHNOGRAFEIN**

***Critical dialogues, epistemological challenges,***

***field experiences, creative texts***

*The online seminars series ETHNOGRAFEIN, since its inception in the spring of 2021, aims to contribute to a critical and interdisciplinary discussion about the theory and practice of ethnography, the epistemology of research, the significance of embodied experience, and also the modes of dissemination of the anthropological knowledge produced to both academic and non-academic audiences. The anthropological endeavour, both as a mode of research practice and a form of political writing, is based on the fundamental epistemological premises of critical evaluation, empathy, reflection, and self-referentiality and highlights the significance of a multifaceted analysis for the understanding of the local to the global.*

**Organisation and coordination: Fotini Tsibiridou – Ioannis Manos – Eleni Sideri**

**"Borders and boundaries revisited:**

**Anthropological perspectives and public engagement"**

**October 2023 – April 2024**



Performance oikade (Aleksandros Plomaritis)

[provided by Dr. Christina Grammatikopoulou]

The 4th period of the ETHNOGRAFEIN online seminars, starting in October 2023 with the title "**Borders and boundaries revisited: Anthropological perspectives and public engagement**", sets the study of geopolitical borders as its point of departure to examine the diverse phenomena and processes that abound in the contemporary state border regions and have multilevel consequences for the border populations.

By definition, studying borders and boundaries involves exploring the relationship between the 'inside' and the 'outside', or the "Self" and the "Other". However, this is not a study of clear-cut dichotomies but an analysis of the interplay of multiple, multilevel, coexisting, but not necessarily interconnected processes. Boundaries are configured and take shape within a historically determined frame. They are subject to transformations in socio-political and economic contexts and are characterised by institutionally organised asymmetrical power relations. The complex making of borders and boundaries often emerges as a continuous interaction between mobility and enclosure, communication, coexistence, exchange, interaction, sameness and otherness, separation, exclusion, segmentation, connection and disconnection.

The anthropological study of geopolitical borders and their populations by anthropology was systematised in the mid-1990s. It was initially based on two paradigms: the study of the USA-Mexico and European borders. Nowadays, analysing social phenomena and cultural processes concerning borders and boundaries transcends disciplinary boundaries. Novel approaches such as the crοsslocations framework and the current discussion on decolonising methods and epistemologies have expanded the analytical and conceptual significance of the concepts of border and boundary. New methodological and interpretative tools have been created to study politics, trans-border mobility, materiality, transnationalism, topologies and genealogies of migration and refugeeness, border economics, and nation-state policies concerning spatial and cultural diversity, minority rights, and performative culture.

Based on detailed explorations of ethnographic research and anthropological insights, the 4th cycle of the ETHNOGRAFEIN online seminars critically examines the theoretical, epistemological and methodological complexities surrounding the study of geopolitical borders and their imposed dichotomies. Moreover, it discusses anthropology's potential to bring forth the subtleties of human voices often overshadowed by macro narratives and create an inclusive, comprehensive dialogue in the public sphere that demonstrates the multiplicity of lived experiences.

Attendance certificates will be given to participants who register in the form below

**Google form:** <https://forms.gle/69hMA5zH6Ji6nGtF7>

**The seminars are held on Mondays from 16:00-18:00**

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Seminar Platform**: ZOOM**

Link  [**https://zoom.us/j/8364531775?pwd=OVg3YVZlbmVCYWs3S0JYcEFGYlV1QT09**](https://zoom.us/j/8364531775?pwd=OVg3YVZlbmVCYWs3S0JYcEFGYlV1QT09)  
Meeting ID: 836 453 1775     Passcode: KB2JKa

**"Borders and boundaries revisited:**

**Anthropological perspectives and public engagement"**

**Program**

**(October 2023 - April 2024)**

**30 October 2023**

*"****The Spirit of the Convention and the Letter of the Colony: Refugees defining States in a British Overseas Territory"***

**Olga Dimitriou**

Professor in Political Anthropology, Durham Global Security Institute,

School of Government and International Affairs, UK

**13 November 2023**

***"Animal Crosslocations: more than human encounters with European border regimes"*** **Sarah Green**

Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Helsinki, Finland

**4 December 2023**

***"Borders, Paradox and Power"***

**Yiannis Papadakis**

Professor of Social Anthropology at the Department of Social and Political Sciences, University of Cyprus

**22 January 2024**

***"To be announced soon"***

**Sissy Theodosiou**

Associate Professor of Social Anthropology, Dep. of Music Studies, University of Ioannina

**12 February 2024**

***"Everyday Diplomacy and Crossing Boundaries: Case of Georgia"***

### Ketevan Gurchiani

### Professor of Anthropology, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

### 26 February 2024

***" Transgressing Realities: Desire and Borders in Southern Balkans"***

**Rozita Dimova**

Social Anthropologist, professor, Prof. Dr. Rozita Dimova, Institute for Advanced Studies (iASK), Kőszeg Center for Interdisciplinary and Advanced Studies, University of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje

**11 March 2024**

***“The Georgian-Russian Border: Perspectives from the Periphery”***

**Florian Muehlfried**

Professor for social anthropology at Ilia State University (Georgia)

**1 April 2024**

***"ΝΕΑ ΜΟΔΑ-НОВА МОДА-NEW FASHION:***

***Materialities, cultural performances and crosslocations***

***on the border between Greece and North Macedonia"***

**Ιoannis Manos**

Associate Professor, Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia

**15 April 2024**

***"Actions from below and exit from the Cypriot liminality"***

**Pafsanias Karathanasis**

PhD in Social Anthropology

**Abstracts - CVs**

**30/10/2023 Olga Dimitriou: *The Spirit of the Convention and the Letter of the Colony: Refugees defining States in a British Overseas Territory***

Whereas asylum policy is predicated on the assumption that states define refugees, this paper examines how refugees define states. Through the legal case of refugees stranded on a British military base in Cyprus since 1998, I show how refugees and the states that grant them or deny them protection become co-constitutive. The processes involved in judicial activism delineate the modalities through which sovereign governance and refugee agency operate. I argue that modalities of sovereignty (colonialism, exceptionalism, and diplomacy) interact with modalities of agency (protest, vulnerability, and endurance) to redefine issues of refugee protection, state sovereignty, and externalisation of migration management. The case shows the risks that denial of protection entails for states and not just refugees. Methodologically, I propose that a nuanced, ground-level understanding of the role of law in activism allows us a clearer view to these imbrications of sovereign governance and agency, and thus to the ambivalent and multivalent aspects of activism.

**Olga Demetriou** joined the Durham Global Security Institute at the School in 2018 and has been its Programme Director since 2019. She has trained in social anthropology and has led projects on minority rights, gender, displacement, and refugeehood, for the last two decades.Her current interests focus on activism in refugee reception sites in the Mediterranean, specifically in Spain, Italy, Greece and Cyprus.

She has authored two monographs, *Capricious Borders: Minority, Population and Counter-Conduct between Greece and Turkey* (Berghahn, 2013/2017) and *Refugeehood and the Post Conflict Subject: Reconsidering Minor Losses* (SUNY Press, 2018). She was previously affiliated with PRIO, the University of Cyprus, and Amnesty International, where she was the organisation's researcher on Greece and Cyprus.

**13/11/2023** **Sarah Green: *Animal Crosslocations: more than human encounters with European border regimes***

In March 2021, a giant container ship got stuck in the Suez Canal, blocking traffic for six days. Twenty ships that could not pass were transporting livestock. Live animal transport has quadrupled over the last fifty years, with the EU becoming the global leader in that trade: more than two billion animals are transported across borders annually. International airports and sea ports have veterinary services and quarantine facilities.

While all that is going on, wild boar numbers have massively increased across the European region, and they wander across borders at will, triggering suspicions that the people on the other side of the border are somehow causing the problem. Elsewhere, the barbed wire and fences that were put up in parts of the European hinterlands in 2015 in efforts to discourage human migrants were ensnaring many wild animals that normally crossed these regions to do whatever they needed to do.

Then there are the many and various visitor animals, often called invasive species, such as lion fish in the Mediterranean, parakeets in Madrid and Canada geese just about everywhere: they are also border crossers, who sometimes attract the deadly phrase, "invasive species." And finally, there are trillions of microbes, some of them pathogens (SARS, MERS, Ebola, Dengue, SARS-CoV2, etc), that accompany many animals, including the humans, across these borderlands and across bodily borders; they sometimes cause serious consternation for people. This presentation will take an overview of the encounters between more than human entities human borders as a means to think otherwise about the implications of current border transformations.

**Sarah Green** is professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Helsinki. She is a specialist on the anthropology of space, place, borders and location. Her regional focus has been Europe, the Mediterranean, the Balkans, Greece and the UK. In recent years, she led an ERC Advanced Grant project called Crosslocations, which experimented with what ethnography would look like if 'the field' was understood as a place of overlapping connections with, and separations from, other places: a dynamic and relational understanding of location, one with many crosscutting borders, rather than as a fixed place with fixed borders. Her own part of this project involved studying the way that nonhuman entities encounter human borders: livestock, wild animals and microbes. This talk is based on that research.

**4/12/2023** **Yiannis Papadakis: Borders, Paradox and Power**

Border studies have grappled with, on the one hand, the need for the use of common themes or concepts while, on the other, the need for contextual specificity. Borders are sites that embody different potentialities: division and contact, conflict and cooperation, security and anxiety, creativity and oppression, among others. In short, they are sites of the paradoxical. Paradox, it is argued, is the common overarching conceptual characteristic of borders but which specific potentialities are embodied in a border and what prevails as a result of the ensuing power struggles requires contextual specificity.

Cyprus, a divided island lying on various border lines, partly inside and partly outside the EU, presents a useful socio-political space in order to illustrate this argument by outlining the specific paradoxical aspects of its own border and the results of the ensuing power struggles.

**Yiannis Papadakis** is Professor of Social Anthropology at the Department of Social and Political Sciences, University of Cyprus. He is author of *Echoes from the Dead Zone: Across the Cyprus Divide* (I. B. Tauris, 2005, also translated in Greek and Turkish), co-editor of *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History and an Island in Conflict* (Indiana University Press, 2006) and *Cypriot Cinemas: Memory, Conflict and Identity in the Margins of Europe* (Bloomsbury, 2014), and editor of a 2006 special issue of *Postcolonial Studies* on Cyprus, among others. His published work has focused on ethnic conflict, borders, nationalism, history education, cinema, post-colonialism, migration and cemeteries. His recent work engages with issues of migration and social democracy in Denmark and the comparative study of cemeteries in Cyprus, Denmark and currently Japan

**22/1/2024** **Theodosiou Sissy:**

**12/2/2024**  **Ketevan Gurchiani:  *Everyday Diplomacy and Crossing Boundaries: Case of Georgia***

In her talk Ketevan Gurchiani analyzes the practices of boundary crossings that are shaped by everyday diplomacy. Based on an example from a village, she discusses how religion, the main dividing line between groups, becomes a site of boundary crossings. The research shows how everyday peace is constantly reaffirmed through the tradition of inviting Muslim godparents to baptize Christian children. These practices also find their continuation in urban milieus. The city provides religious and non-religious buffer zones where dividing lines are easily blurred. The talk explores tactics people employ in their everyday lives to allow for peaceful coexistence, but also imbalances this kind of everyday diplomacy entails.

**Ketevan Gurchiani** is a professor of anthropology at Ilia State University in Tbilisi, Georgia. She is particularly interested in the domesticated and non-domesticated nature of the city, materiality and religion, and informal practices of resistance. Ketevan Gurchiani is also involved in research projects that focus on diversity, migration, and peace practices. Her most recent publications include A Gallery of Ghosts: Death and Burial in Lands Marked by Trauma, Material Religion (with Catherine Wanner, Zuzanna Bogumił, Sergei Shtyrkov) and Die verborgene Macht der Bäume. Urbaner Widerstand in Tiflis. In: Verdeckter Widerstand in demokratischen Gesellschaften in Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie und Sozialphilosophie (2022)

**26/2/2024** **Rozita Dimova: *Transgressing Realities: Desire and Borders in Southern Balkans***

In my presentation, I explore the productive role of borders in the Southern Balkans, specifically focusing on hotel-casinos and beauty consumption practices in the Greece-North Macedonia border region. Gamblers who frequent Macedonian casinos use gaming as a means to break free from rigid class constraints imposed by their rural backgrounds in Northern Greece. Financial privilege allows them special treatment, turning gambling into an escape that enables them to reinvent themselves within a new reality. For urban consumers from Thessaloniki, the border provides access to affordable beauty services in Gevgelija, which enables them to reclaim their femininity and middle-class status. This raises questions about how crossing the border influences gender and class perceptions, and intersects with other consumer elements like luxury, comfort, and status, all of which contribute to redefinition and transgression of their “old” selves.

**Rozita Dimova,** PhD (Stanford, 2004) is a Social Anthropologist with a distinguished record of achievements, including the prestigious Robert Texture Award for Outstanding Creativity in Anthropology. Rozita has held research positions at prominent institutions, including the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle (2003-2006), Free and Humboldt Universities in Berlin (2007-2015), and served as an Associate Professor in Southeast European Studies at Ghent University in Belgium (2013-2020). A Founding and Permanent Board Member at the Center for Advanced and Interdisciplinary Research at the University Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, North Macedonia, Rozita is currently also a Research Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Kőszeg, Hungary. Her research portfolio includes materiality, consumerism and aesthetics, ethno-nationalism, borders and migration studies. A prolific author, Rozita is the author of the monographs, *Ethno-Baroque: Materiality, Aesthetics, and Conflict in Modern-day Macedonia* (Berghahn, 2013) and *Border Porosities: Movements of People, Objects, and Ideas in the Southern Balkans* (Manchester University Press, 2021).

**11/3/2024** **Florian Muehlfried: The Georgian-Russian Border: Perspectives from the Periphery**

In my presentation, I will trace the transformation of the border between Georgia and Russia from soft to hard based on the example of the Georgian highland region Tusheti. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the border region was managed flexibly and “from below”. This was followed by an internationalisation of border guarding and attempts to its spiritual fortification. These three phases of border guarding can be related to three different models of the state, and of being a citizen.

**Florian Mühlfried** is a Professor of Social Anthropology at Ilia State University. His publications include the monographs Mistrust: A Global Perspective (2019) and Being a State and States of Being in Highland Georgia (2014), the edited volume Mistrust: Ethnographic Approximwations (2018), as well as the co-edited volumes Sacred Places, Emerging Spaces: Religious Pluralism in the Post-Soviet Caucasus (2018) and Exploring the Edge of Empire: Soviet Era Anthropology in the Caucasus and Central Asia (2011).

**1/4/2024 Ioannis Manos: *ΝΕΑ ΜΟΔΑ-НОВА МОДА-NEW FASHION: Materialities, cultural performances and crosslocations on the border between Greece and North Macedonia***

The regions of Florina (Φλώρινα) and Bitola (Битола), situated along the border between Greece and North Macedonia, constitute border locations where various and simultaneous economic, political, cultural, and social processes coincide. Amidst these processes, hegemonic discourses with different temporalities collide, various social practices with significant material implications are articulated, and multiple communities are constructed, signified, and experienced. These processes manifest across multiple fields of action and interact with each other or coexist concurrently in the same geographical space without necessarily being interlinked. This presentation uses the Florina and Bitola frontier region to explore the interplay between cultural performances and geopolitical borders.

This borderland is approached as a crosslocation, where different classificatory logics and asymmetric forms of power compete to impose their meanings on the significance and value of a place. While the two regions are politically and economically separated by distinct border regimes, including those between nation-states, EU boundaries, and the Schengen zone, they are also geographically, culturally, and historically interconnected. The presentation draws upon ethnographic material to discuss how border populations dynamically and actively produce varied experiences of the place through cultural performances, including language, dance, song, and music.

**Ioannis Manos** (imanos@uom.edu.gr) is an Associate Professor of Social Anthropology of the Balkans at the Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece. He studied History and Archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Social Anthropology in Hamburg, Germany and Sussex, Great Britain. He holds a Certificate in Social Research Methods from the Graduate School of Social Sciences of the University of Sussex. He has worked as a Full Time Visiting Research Fellow at the Sussex European Institute. He is the Europe regional editor of the journal Teaching Anthropology (Royal Anthropological Institute, London). He is also a founding member of the academic network on Anthropology and the Balkans "Border Crossings", a member of the Advisory Board and co-editor of its publication series. His research interests focus on SE Europe and include borders and border regions, dance and music as performative aspects of culture, nationalism and ethnicity, politics of culture and difference, migration, human and minority rights, educational structures and processes, the teaching of anthropology and the epistemology and methodology of research. His publications include chapters and articles in Greek and English edited volumes, journals and conference proceedings, and co-editing of Greek and English edited volumes.

**15/4/2024**  **Pafsanias Karathanasis : *Actions from below and exit from the Cypriot liminality***

The presentation draws on my ongoing research experience in the divided Cypriot capital, which aspires to add a piece to our understanding of the otherwise complex Cyprus Problem. Focusing on the Cypriot division, and on the boundaries that it creates, it examines the ways in which social subjects attempt to cope with the official restrictions. These can be social, political or geographical, but they are also expressed as restrictions to the development of the imagination for a different future. Following contemporary anthropological approaches to the concept of liminality, the analysis begins from the old town of Nicosia, a liminal urban space - next to the Green Line - and attempts to place the processes taking place there in a broader context of analysis of Cypriot society within the conditions created by the controlled reconnection of the two sides after 2003. Drawing on a spatial analysis of political and cultural activities situated in the geographical and symbolic in-between, it attempts to approach the continuation of Cypriot division as the maintenance of an uncertain and precarious in-between state and proposes an interpretation of these activities as examples of efforts aimed at exiting the prolonged Cypriot liminality; efforts, that is, aimed at 'life in Cyprus without the Cyprus Problem', even if its official solution never comes.

**Pafsanias Karathanasis** holds a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of the Aegean. His research interests include the anthropology of space and cities, visual culture, and political anthropology. Specifically, he is concerned with urban cultures and contested spaces in cities and border areas. He has conducted research on urban practices such as street art, public art, and activism, and has conducted participant observation with political and artistic groups active in Athens, and in the borderscapes of Mytilene and Nicosia. His articles have been published in academic journals and edited volumes, and he has participated in international conferences in Greece and abroad, and in the organization and scientific curation of panel discussions at conferences and festivals. He has collaborated as a postdoctoral researcher with the University of the Aegean, Panteion University, and the University of Amsterdam, as a lecturer with the University of Macedonia, as a coordinator of academic and educational activities with the Athens Ethnographic Film Festival-Ethnofest and he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Social Anthropologists of Greece-SKAE.