Acts, Actors and Encounters: Mobility and Security in and beyond Europe

Mercure Parkside Hotel, (Orchard Room) Woughton on the Green, Milton Keynes, MK6 3LR

Wednesday 19th March 2014, 10:45 – 16:30

ABSTRACTS

Naturalisation and citizenship in contemporary Europe from the bottom-up – research proposal

Steve Garner & Eleni Andreouli

The objective of this research project is to trace the journey of new naturalising European citizens to the acquisition of citizenship, but with the focus on prioritising how they make sense of this process. While there are numerous studies examining the political theories of citizenship; how people exercise the rights accruing through the status of citizen; how people encounter obstacles in exercising these rights; and the legal frameworks within which citizenship is granted, there is relatively little work capturing the acquisition of citizenship from the bottom up.

What is envisaged is a comparative project, with partners from around the EU, looking at:
- The mechanisms & rationale for the elements of the citizenship acquisition process. There should be elements of this story that are specific to each country’s history, but also others that are common to all.
- A comparison of tests, their implementation and arrangements around it (how they are administered and marked, for example); materials for tests; ceremonies, etc. We hope to involve studies of countries that do not make use of tests and ceremonies as points of comparison.
- The practicalities: financial costs, and time taken from arrival in the country until passport in hand. How much does it cost, and how long does it take to become a naturalised citizen – not in theory but in practice?
- The emotional dimensions: how do new citizens feel about the process of naturalisation at different stages?
- What is at stake for the new citizens, and for the other actors, such as civil servants involved in administering the process? In what way is the new citizens’ sense of belonging impacted by this process?

Methods: Nothing is definite but they will be largely qualitative, consisting of a mixture of ethnography; interview and visual (with the research respondents producing visual images about their journey).

Outcomes:
- Papers; a special issue of a journal. Possibly edited collection.
- Academic conference.
- Practitioners’ workshop, aimed at relevant state and civil society organisations.
- EU network of interested researchers
References


Enacting Refugees: Little political nothings and the determination of refugee status in Brazil

Bruno Magalhaes

See paper attached

Enacting European Citizen – new & old narratives on belonging and integration.

Kesi Mahendran

Ever since the idea of European Citizenship found expression towards the end of the 20th century in the Maastricht Treaty (1992), there has been much debate about both its practical and discursive political potential. Frustratingly for advocates of more borderless cosmopolitan notions of citizenship, the Lisbon Treaty (2007) maintains the position that ‘Every national of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. Citizenship of the Union shall be additional to national citizenship and shall not replace it’. This paper reports on a dialogical comparative study into citizen conceptualisation of European Citizenship. 76 interviews in Dublin, Dusseldorf, Glasgow, Gothenburg and London; demonstrate that such conceptions rest not only on the polity of the respective member-states but also, critically, on degree and nature of mobility. The paper builds on an earlier study in Edinburgh and Stockholm, where a narrative analysis of European Citizenship revealed it’s temporal, contingent and emergent properties. Mobile EU migrants enacted canonical narratives such as freedom through mobility and participation in the grand project. In contrast non-mobile citizens, non-labour migrants and non-EU migrants, employed counter narratives of remoteness, resistance and detachment (Mahendran under review). Both studies employ a ‘Migration-Mobility Continuum’ (Mahendran 2013) ranging from serial migration to generational non-mobility which effectively reveals how intra and extra-European mobility - creates critical boundaries when enacting European Citizenship. This paper, concentrates on an outsider narrative and a becoming narrative which are shown to be vital to understanding the limits and potential to enact European Citizenship. An emergent shared social representation of the ‘European’ is revealed to be playing a divisive role in who is able to claim the full benefits of European Citizenship. In conclusion, it asks, are some citizens, settled within the European Union, destined to stay outside of this supranational project?

Biometric Rebordering and the Contested Politics of Illegality

Stephan Scheel

This project investigates the impact of biometric border controls on the contested politics of illegality. The project’s central premise is that illegality is not reducible to a juridical status, but rather resembles a multifarious and contested condition that is constantly (re)negotiated in conflictive encounters between migrants and sometimes surprising actors, including police-offers, landlords, employers or teachers. Through the study of these encounters the project engages the following two, interrelated research questions: First, how do different modes of implementation of biometric border controls inside the Schengen area effect the prospects and conditions of migrants to live as ‘illegals’ in Europe? Second, how do ‘illegal’ migrants negotiate and compromise the objective of biometric border controls to increase the number of deportations? The Visa Information System (VIS) offers a perfect case study to investigate these questions. For one objective of this biometric database is to facilitate the re-identification and deportation of ‘visa-overstayers’, who account for the majority of ‘illegal’ migrants in Europe. Yet, the technological
capacity of the VIS to facilitate deportations may be compromised, not only by bad quality of data, but also by collisions between the European deportation regime, the human rights regime and citizenship regimes of migrants’ alleged countries of origin. These regime-collisions are triggered by migrants’ refusal to cooperate in the preparation of their deportation. Previous research indicates, moreover, that how the VIS is implemented inside the Schengen area varies not only across member states, but also from one city to the next due to varying national migration legislations and local institutional arrangements. To unearth how differences in implementation play themselves out in migrants’ encounters with migration control authorities, the project will study these encounters in six cities in the three following member states: Germany, France and Italy.

The modalities of Iranian Soft Power - from rhetoric to (re)action

Eddie Wastnidge

Since the revolution in 1979, Iran has had an image problem in the West. This is in part due to the hangover from revolutionary excess and a non-conformist foreign policy outlook that saw allegations of state support for international terrorism aimed at Tehran. Therefore the Islamic Republic has attempted, through various avenues, to rectify this image problem – an articulation of this can be found in attempts at advancing its cultural diplomacy since the late 1990s, through both shifting rhetoric at the international level, and practical activities ‘on the ground’.

Starting at the rhetorical level, this piece demonstrates how the promulgation of former president (1997-2005) Khatami’s Dialogue among Civilisations concept can be interpreted as an exercise in soft power projection. It will explore how Khatami presented a form of ‘cultural foreign policy’ firmly rooted in a perception of Iranian civilisational weight and standing - the ‘acting out’ of which was important for Iran’s international standing at the time. This is contrasted with the soft power elements found in the public diplomacy of Khatami’s successors Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hassan Rouhani.

The paper then moves on to explore the nuts and bolts of Iranian soft power projection on the ground, examining the work of Iran’s ‘Islamic Culture and Research Organisation’ (ICRO) – essentially an Iranian equivalent of the British Council or Confucius Institute - through its network of Iranian cultural centres abroad.

Through exploring how different concepts/ideas are performed in Iran’s foreign relations, this paper contends the Islamic republic’s motives should not only be contextualised within the oft-sensationalised, material or ‘hard’ aspects of its foreign policy, but also within the desire to project its cultural reach through pragmatic means that avoid confrontation.


Vron Ware

During the last decade more than 700 European soldiers have been killed on military missions in the NATO-led ISAF operation in Afghanistan. In this war universal international values, rather than national territory, are said to be at stake. As the fallen soldiers are brought home, however, gendered representations of heroism are actualized and grief and compassion are rooted in national narratives. Recognized international institutions and principles of human rights appear insufficient to carry the symbolic weight of legitimizing these deaths.

The aim of this project is to investigate how deaths of European soldiers on international missions are politically handled and given societal meanings and justifications. The project compares five countries (Estonia, Germany, Italy, Sweden, UK) and is based on studies of the media, parliamentary debates and official commemoration practices. Two overarching questions are explored: 1) How do the losses in Afghanistan reshape relations between war, national identity and gender? 2) In what ways do the (re)construction of national identities following the deaths influence democratic discussions and practices?