

## Abstracts

### Migration Industries and Transnational Governance of Queer Migration in Turkey

Between September 2017 and April 2020, I conducted an 18-month long multi-sited ethnography with queer refugees and local, international and transnational organizations in four cities of Turkey; Istanbul, Ankara, Eskişehir and Yalova. In total I interviewed 108 informants; 57 workers from 22 different organizations and 51 queer refugees from 5 different countries. It became a regular topic of conversation with my informants to discuss how “everybody wants a piece of the cake”. “The cake” my interlocutors were referring to is the increasing flow of funds, in the form of projects, from international and transnational organizations into Turkey, especially after the arrival of Syrian refugees in 2011. Many local non-governmental organizations with which I had interviews either were established after 2011 with a specific aim to work with refugees[2] or shifted their operational activities to refugee-related projects even though they did not work with refugees prior to 2011. My research scrutinizes two aspects of the increasing flows of funds for refugees; how funds are ‘localized’ within the Turkish economy and how social policies of international and transnational funding organizations ‘migrate’ to Turkey via the funds and create new subjectivities by interacting with the local actors such as local NGOs or local migration authorities. In other words, I scrutinize the process through which the NGO industrial complex in Turkey has established close relations with transnational migration industries in governing refugees. The economic ties with transnational migration industries in the form of refugee-related project funding also transforms refugee governance in the localities I research. For example, no national law in Turkey defines sexuality and gender identity as a legal ground for seeking asylum. Yet, international and transnational funding organizations regard LGBT refugees in Turkey as vulnerable and formulate the projects accordingly. UNHCR, through the help of local NGOs, provide financial assistance to transgender refugees. UNFPA has funded three local LGBT NGOs to implement a project that provides legal and psycho-social assistance to LGBT refugees and people living with HIV. Within a legal system where LGBT refugees are not recognized, transnational funding opens up a space in which social policies for LGBT refugees become possible in the localities of Turkey. When local migration authorities refuse to serve LGBT refugees, such NGOs mediate their access to rights and justice systems. Finally, my research also scrutinizes the tensions that arise when local laws and policies clash with the aims and scopes of the projects funded by transnational organizations. The clash, I hope to show, brings about new subjectivities for LGBT refugees as well as NGO workers and local migration officials.



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