

Innovative Methods of Research

By

Ayse Caglar, Giorgio Grappi, Lydia Potts,
Saima Farhad, Sandro Mezzadra *

In 2020, Calcutta Research Group organised a two-day Teachers' Workshop on "Research Methodology and Syllabus Making in Migration and Forced Migration Studies". Lydia Potts, Saima Farhad, Sandro Mezzadra and Giorgio Grappi and Ayse Caglar participated online in a roundtable titled "Innovative Methods of Research" that discussed, as the title clearly indicates, was a discussion centred around the relatively new thematic approaches to migration studies for researchers and faculty. The discussion was moderated by Lydia Potts while Saima Farhad responded to the panellists. The following is a transcript of the discussion, edited only for grammar, otherwise, unchanged.

Lydia Potts: Greetings to all! It is really a pleasure and an honour to moderate this session. Our first presenter is Sandro Mezzadra, who is a Professor of Political Theory at the University of Bologna in Italy and also an adjunct at the University for Culture and Society of Western Sydney in Australia. Sandro Mezzadra has done research on issues of globalisation, migration, capitalism, as well as on postcolonial criticism. And his latest books include *Border as Method or The Multiplication of Labour*, *The Politics of Operations: Excavating Contemporary Capitalism*, etc. I would expect Prof. Mezzadra to speak about his book *Border as Method*.

Sandro Mezzadra: Thank you very much. It is always a pleasure to be with you in Kolkata, although only virtually. And yes, we will talk about the *Border as*

*Ayse Caglar, Professor, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna, Austria. Email: ayse.caglar@univie.ac.at; caglar@iwim.at.

Giorgio Grappi, Researcher, Department of the Arts, University of Bologna, Italy. Email: giorgio.grappi@unibo.it.

Lydia Potts, Professor, School of Linguistics and Cultural Studies, and European Masters in Migration and Intercultural Relations, Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany. Email: lydia.potts@uol.de.

Saima Farhad, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Kashmir, India. Email: saimafarhad@uok.edu.in

Sandro Mezzadra, Professor of Political Philosophy, Department of the Arts, University of Bologna, Italy, Email: sandro.mezzadra@unibo.it.

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Method. Let me say that both *Border as Method* or *The Multiplication of Labour* and *The Politics of Operations* are books that I co-authored with my friend Brett Nielsen, who is also a good friend of the Calcutta Research Group. And as far as *Border as Method* is concerned, I think it is important to stress at the very beginning that it's a book born out of struggle, which means out of our involvement in the struggles of migration in different parts of the world in the early 90s. I will limit myself to four points and then I hope we will have time to discuss. The first point has to do with the very notion of border that is often considered, according to its cartographic representation, as a margin. In the *Border as Method*, we challenge this idea of the border as a margin. We rather contend that the border is a privileged epistemic point of view on global processes. When we started to be interested in borders, in the early 1990s, as I was saying, there was a widespread image of globalisation, an image nicely encapsulated by the title of a book by Kenichi Omae, *A Borderless World*. And the idea was precisely that globalisation was reducing the relevance of borders and even challenging their very existence. From our point of view, that is, of course, part of a wider critical debate, the opposite is true. Globalisation, global processes are structurally linked with a multiplication of borders. And this is the reason why borders are privileged points of view on global processes, on global conflicts, on the tensions surrounding global processes. This means in a very concrete way that what happens, for instance, in the Mediterranean, around the European maritime frontier, or in the Bay of Bengal, is not marginal. It's something strategically important for the shape of global processes. And what happens in the Mediterranean or in the Bay of Bengal is something that we try to grasp in the book through the notion of border struggles, of struggles around the topic of mobility and borders. I come to my second point. It is important to carefully analyse what I was calling before the multiplication of borders in the framework of global processes. But to this multiplication, a process of heterogenisation, which means profound transformations of the very institute of borders, corresponds. And this leads us to emphasise the relevance of a panoply of internal borders. In the debate within critical border studies, we argue that there is a need to go beyond a unilateral focus on international borders, even to understand the operations of international borders. And I think that the current pandemic has given us a lot of arguments to further develop this point. Since in the current pandemic, we have witnessed a kind of medical hygienic reinforcement of international borders, but at the same time, a proliferation of internal borders that became apparent, for instance, in India, with the massive exodus of internal borders from metropolitan centres to the countryside. And I hope we will have time to talk more about borders in the current conjunction. A third point. In critical border studies over the last twenty years, the main approaches have emphasised the relevance of legal and political concepts in order to understand current operations of borders. Of course, we analyse legal and political developments of border regimes, but we contend that there is a need to develop a critique of the political economy of borders. A critique of the political economy of borders implies, on the one hand, a focus on the way in which borders, in their heterogeneity, concur to frame contemporary capitalism at the level of the world market. On the other hand,

what is important for us is to look at the roles, at the paramount roles, that borders play in the production of labour power and, of course, of the subjects that are bearers, to put it with Marx, of labour power. A fourth and last point—writing *Border as Method*, we have come to strategically alter the title of a famous book by James Scott, and we have contended that there is a need to see like a migrant, to develop a migrant gaze in order to look at borders and to grasp the complexity of the operations of borders. This is the attempt we make in the book—we prioritise movement when we look at borders, even when we look at walls, even when we look at fortress Europe. This is something that is in line with the development over the last twenty years of a specific critical approach to migration, which means the autonomy of migration. Seeing like a migrant is for us, I repeat, a crucial methodological point. A crucial methodological point that has important theoretical and political implications, which means that seeing like a migrant allows us to underscore not only the relevance of what we can call necropolitical devices in the operations of borders, but also a political potential. A political potential that is connected with the challenge of migration, the stubbornness of a challenge that migrants pose to borders in many parts of the world. To international borders, but also to the panoply of internal borders that I was mentioning before.

Lydia Potts: Thank you very much. That was perfect. Not only in terms of time, but I also think it was a very concise introduction to *Border as Method*. I would now like to give the floor to Giorgio Grappi, who is also based at the University of Bologna. Dr. Grappi is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Political and Social Sciences in Bologna. He is also a researcher in the “Logistics as Global Governance” project, on labour software and infrastructures along the New Silk Road, which is run by the University of Western Sydney in Australia. He is also a very engaged researcher and has quite a number of publications to his name. Giorgio, the floor is yours now for your intervention.

Giorgio Grappi: Thank you! I also begin by saying that I am really happy to be here together with the friends of Calcutta Research Group. I miss them all. It’s a long time we can’t meet in person, but I take the opportunity of this Workshop to say hello and also to greet all the participants to this Workshop. In my intervention, I have been somehow asked to reflect on the nexus between militant research and migration studies. I think that this suggestion came also from the fact that I study migration, it’s part of my research, but I am also engaged with migration. It had probably started before as an activist rather than as a scholar. The two issues are strictly related to me. In this intervention, I will try to reflect also on this link, starting from some questions that are: How can we understand the position of migration in today’s world? How can then research help us in understanding this position? What does it mean to be critical or militant in studying migration? Let me say that I could quote most of the things that Sandro just mentioned, so I take it as a background also for my intervention. Let me begin with a phrase used by Étienne Balibar more than twenty years ago when he was discussing the Saint-Papier movement in France.

He argued that what we owe to the Saint-Papier is the reversal of the political discourse about illegality, the showing of the emergence of it as the modern proletariat, and the revelation of institutional racism and the transnational dimension of social transformation. I think in this way, Balibar invited us to think of the politics of migration as a sort of problem of proletarian politics rather than just of definitions about who are migrants. Here, proletariat is meant as something different than working class in sociological terms, pointing at a political subject that aims at going beyond the reproduction of the conditions of its existence. We can start from here by recognising that migrants' problems are more often problems of working and living in a world of extremely precarious conditions, dominated by the global dimension of capital than just issues of solidarity or humanitarian help. And this also invites us to think about the fact that struggling against discrimination and racism should be somehow related to this global dimension of capital. And to quote Balibar again, immigration poses also a problem, the problem of its economic causes and the transformation within the history of capitalism, and the political effects of their struggle. He also observes that majority of migrant workers are employed at the time in assembly lines, construction sites, public works, places where labour power is extensively exploited and utilised with a frightening speed and accelerated turnover. These are words taken from another text on 1972, a particular time for struggles of migrants in France, but we can make a parallel between these occupations where today labour is intensely exploited and frightening speed and requires accelerated turnover. One of these sectors is logistics that was also mentioned in the introduction in this one of the fields of research where I am engaged and also that has produced some innovative methods to quote the title of the workshop—to read migration today. Broadly speaking, logistics has to do with mobility and its conditions and the way mobility is organised, but as a discipline of global production chains, logistics is also the logic of contemporary capitalism. Seeing through logistics means thus connecting the analysis of the politics of migration with a critical look at the framework of power exploitation and insubordination in which struggles within capitalism happen and asking what kind of implication emerged for an understanding of migration today. In discussing the practices of mobility in China during the pandemic, Biao Xiang observes that the focus on migration has shifted from how migrants move and explore to how they are moved. This means that the intimate relation between migration and labour market is increasingly expressed in the fact that the control of labour in the working site is in a way supplemented or sometimes even substituted by the control of transnational mobility. If on the one hand this tendency revealed the fantasy of migration policies that respond to what has been named as logistification of migration policies and emphasise the need to organise migration from origin to destination, on the other hand this focus on how migrants are moved to which we can add how migrants are allowed to move which determines the conditions of their regularity, irregularity, irregularisation and deportability has distanced the discussion of migration policies from the reality of how migration move. This distance is one of the elements that allows policymakers across the globe but also many migration scholars to separate the view of migration from the

violent effects of migration laws and border policies as Sandro also mentioned as well from the structural role of migration policies as a component of the governance of labour on a global scale. Logistics is thus a way to look at different dimensions of this nexus, to see how migrating people themselves build up their own logistics infrastructures, to look at how border regimes are shaped by logistics and techniques that are taken from logistics and to see how the logistification of the migration regime is related to changes in the mobility paradigm which itself is shaping the broader transformations of work today. And let me just mention that many migrant workers are also involved in logistics across the globe and in specific positions within the logistics industry that are mainly warehouses. A second point in my presentation deals with an element that I see as included in this picture that is that of understanding institutional racism, a term that has been discussed in different ways. Let me just briefly recall a critique that was made by Sara Ahmed to the way in which institutions themselves recognise institutional racism. She analysed the Macpherson Report drafted in UK in 1999 where institutional racism is defined as the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In this way institutions are 'racist' because they fail to do something. The presumption is that racism is a sort of distortion and institutions, by recognising that there are issues, it's like if they say: "okay we are racist and this is the way for us to stop to be racist". A different way to understand institutional racism is that that originated within the struggles of the black power movement where institutional racism points at what we can call systemic racism which is something different than the result of a failure. Institutional racism, in this way, marks the active role of institutions in defining specific conditions, positions and hierarchies within society and this is produced by varying degrees of institutional intervention. We have laws, defining documents, legal statuses, we have treatments of specific conditions lived by migrants or their denial in relation for example to housing, receptions etc. We have the production of international agreements and schemes that try to direct mobility within the needs of the labour market, but we also have violent interventions against migrants raising their voice or occupying the public space with the production of extreme vulnerability by police means at the border or inside territories. This produces social divisions and segmentations along the line that are institutionally reinforced, and they contribute to the reproduction of the materiality of racism. The specific legal conditions of migrants or their isolation produced by the non-recognition of the same treatment as other members of society contributes to their positioning in the lower segment of the labour market and this positioning in turn marks them as separate from others. The lenses of logistics help us in unravelling the way in which institutional racism is a product of different often incoherent schemes that bring together institutional actors, private employers and social actors that are at times unaware of the systemic role of their actions. Let me just mention the way in which integration schemes for refugees and asylum seekers in Europe after 2015 have led to the production of a reservoir of extremely flexible labour force to be employed just in time in the logistics warehouses in peak moment or when actions or strikes often lead by other migrants erupt and I come to the

last point of my intervention that deals directly with the critical or militant stance of research. Some years ago in reflecting on militant research I described some problems related to it as a militant research conundrum, raising some questions which are the following—is militant research a category or a concept to be applied to the work of the researcher or is it something else that applies to the realm of politics and organising? and then how can militancy relate with research when one takes into account that research is a particular form of labour largely precarious but also highly institutionalised? and then how do we deal with the outcome of research which is namely communicable knowledge discourses concept interpretations that are often included in the elaboration of governance measures? and then lastly how do we pose it to a researcher vis-à-vis migrants and the social politics of migrations? This remains an open question to me. Militancy is, literally speaking, the act of being active in support of a cause so the question would be to what cause the militant research wants to contribute to. To come back to my initial quote from Balibar, I just want to mention how in discussing the role of immigration within imperialism in the 70s, he was raising two issues—the need to go beyond a double opportunism, the fetishisation of migration as a true proletariat, something that today we can sometimes see in, for example, celebrations of the subjectivity of migrants or nomadic subjects, and another danger that of crystallising the division between migrants and the others, and leaving migrants to their fate on one hand, or on the other hand, just posing problems of economic, social inequality, only calling for the betterment of condition for disadvantage, but leaving those separations within society the same. Following the previous discussion, my position is that migration scholars should be, or at least in my understanding, on the side of migrants in their daily struggle to escape the conditions imposed upon them by institutional racism, by the nexus between institutional racism and exploitation. There is a sort of goal of constantly refusing normalisation of research as just an element in the production of knowledge that is used to reproduce this nexus. The challenge is that of acting against the very condition that produced the separation of destiny between migrants and others. This means not just to think about the common interests of workers as a whole in old fashioned terms but always try to put at the centre the nexus between the specificity of migrant conditions and the role they play inside the social relations of production. The other side of the coin, which is the most relevant one, is that this recognition should lead us to recognize migrant struggles as crucial in the struggles at large against exploitation and the conditions of oppression. The recognition that the tension between the category of the worker and that of migrant bridges any narrow demarcation between the workplace and broader social terrains. Migrants with the wide spectrum of claims related to living conditions alter what we could call the micro systems of struggle that exist within society and in working places. And they remind us that the conditions of social reproduction are internal to the relations of production within capitalism. I conclude just by saying that the pandemic, as Ranabir Samaddar has argued in his treatment of the pandemic in India, had shed light on the appealing policies and practices with regard to labour in general and migrant labour in particular. These questions appear to me even more urgent than ever. Thank you!

Lydia Potts: Yeah, thank you very much, Giorgio, for this explanation of the nexus between militant research and migration studies. Our next presenter is Prof. Ayse Caglar from the University of Vienna in Austria. Ayse Caglar has many distinguished appointments, but I would just like to mention her latest books. There is one in German from 2019 on urban protest revolt in the neoliberal city. Then there are two that were published in English, *Migrants and Citymaking*, *Dispossession, Displacement and Urban Regeneration*, which she co-authored with Nina Glick Schiller. And one that's a bit older from 2011, *Locating Migration, Rescaling Cities and Migrants*. This book is co-edited with Nina Glick Schiller. And Ayse Caglar has written many book chapters and journal articles on migration. So, she is in a very prominent position to introduce us to new methods in migration studies.

Ayse Caglar: Thank you very much for your generous introduction. And I am really happy to be part of this panel and to be together with Sandro. I was asked to talk about the urban question being a migration question. I am very glad to do so. I think the urban question has always been a question of migration, that we cannot think of cities without various forms of migration and migrant labour. In fact, if we were to simply follow Brecht in his famous poem, “Questions from a Worker Who Reads” which starts with the question: “Who built Thebes of the seven gates?” and continues to ask about those who erected the triumphal arches of Great Rome and about those who cooked the feast for the victors? And ask ourselves: Who built the cities? Who enabled the running of the services, logistics? Who maintains and cleans the offices? hospitals? Who works in the construction and especially in the infrastructure projects that are crucial for urban growth? We will quickly find the displaced and dispossessed migrant labour at the heart of cities, together with any other kind of dispossessed labour. And it is almost, that is why I think it is almost impossible to think of city making without migration and migrant labour. But today, this is even more so, especially because cities are up front in the generation of wealth, within the neoliberal ordering of economy, because they are strategic sites for regimes of accumulation, as centres of trade, investment and innovation. They became the locus and focus of power. Many cities utilise “entrepreneurial strategies” to enhance their competitive advantage to accrue capital and power. They utilise such strategies in pursuit of greater local, national and global connectedness, so as to be able to generate growth, wealth and power. Migrant labour is crucial to the processes of restructuring of capital, state and territoriality, which are acted out in the city as reordering the urban spaces, regimes of value and above all of urban governance. Cities are not only major sites of hyper-commodified land, sites of extraction, mainly based on rent and logistical nodes, they are also crucial sites for new forms of servicing, new place-based services, which are central to the logistics industry, economic and financial sectors. Within this neoliberal reordering, cities require flexible, easily disposable, increasingly informalised labour in variegated forms of legal, economic and legal standing and rights. It is in variegated forms of dispossession. Labour that is fractured in terms of its social, economic and legal

standing and rights is at the heart of these cities' growth-based economies. This is the migrant labour which the bordering regimes multiply, dispossess in various ways and continue to fracture through frontier policies, which are crucial for the governance of migrants and labour. In that sense, I am lucky to talk after Sandro, as I do not need to develop this point, but just build on his perspective on border as a method in the multiplication of labour. These multiplication processes are essential not only for the production and the circulation of labour in particular forms, but to keep labour disposable, dispossessed and most importantly simultaneously mobile but also space bound. This is inherent to capitalism and even more so for neoliberal cities. Without this kind of form of labour, it is very difficult to imagine the functioning of the neoliberal cities. In that sense, cities act as the frontiers of migration in the real sense of the term. I think it is important to note that what we see here is not only the multiplying differentiation of labour, but this variegated migrant labour is juxtaposed on differentiated spaces of neoliberal cities that are fractured by a plethora of zoning and varying social, economic and legal regulations in terms of rights, working conditions, tax regulations, etc., you name it. So, we have the juxtaposition of dual, a double fracturing processes, that is to say juxtaposition of multiplied labour to differentially regulated city spaces and territory, and that is very much the neoliberal territoriality. This is crucial, I think, in making urban question, a question of migration, migrant governance in the context of urban politics and urban governance. However, having said that though migrants are crucial to the city making process as labour, I do not think that their location in these processes could be reduced to labour. In addition to the centrality of migrant labour to the accumulation of capital in and through urban restructuring, migrants definitely become part of multiscalar financial, cultural, commercial and politicised religious networks in multiple ways. They take up multiple social, economic and political positions as a resident, taxpayer, student, debtor, moneylender, tenant, landlord, household member, official and activist. Their subjectivities entail, actually, there is not a kind of a homogeneity of their subjectivities, and they are situated, and the cities provide the ground for that kind of multiplication of those subjectivities. Thus, in order to capture the ways migrants can be understood as actors of making and remaking of the city, it is important to focus on migrants' emplacement in various domains of the cities as agents contributing to the city's repositioning, reconnection efforts within a particular geometry of a given time. Neoliberal urban regeneration and most importantly its paradoxes shape the value regimes in the cities. It entails processes of, as we know that, as I said, accumulation, dispossession, but also the revaluation, processes of revaluation in the form of both valorisation and devaluation of city spaces, population segments and particular periods of cities' pasts and related practices. The interrelations, I think, between the repositioning of the city through urban regeneration, restructuring and the emplacement of migrants within these processes are part of, or it would be useful to look at it as part of this revaluation processes that entail, as I said, different spaces, actors and institutions. These processes of urban restructuring and migrant emplacement are in fact mutually constitutive of each other. So,

the argument here is that we cannot think of the migrants' positioning and subjectivities and also the city making without looking at their relationship to each other. The regeneration processes in each city we have studied in our book that you have kindly referred to were intertwined with incentives to revalue property, particularly city spaces, local histories, as well as particular segments of the population, sometimes involving migrants. In each city, migrants, but also some minorities, acquired an increased value in relation to these revaluation processes that are connected to accumulation of wealth and power at a particular historical conjunction. In different cities, we found that, for example, migrants were integral to the processes fuelled by the real estate and international subprime mortgage industry. They served as real estate and mortgage brokers, and as city residents who redeveloped property, stabilised neighbourhoods, took out subprime mortgages, and also suffered foreclosures with the collapse of the property market. In a similar fashion, migrants and refugees revalued the ageing housing stock or stored value in decaying houses; apartments, by simply occupying them and became part of the financialisation of housing and property markets, as much as they contributed to the construction sector, infrastructure projects, logistic industries, service sector, which are crucial for the neoliberal city. So, their positioning was multiple. In several places, migrants and refugees became the ground through which property developers were able to access, and one should never forget, those developers are usually within the public-private partnerships, where the cities, municipalities are also part of it, to access funding, federal funding, or supranational funding, as well as to power institutions of various scale. Migrants became the actors and subjects of the plans, mechanisms, narratives of urban development, real estate, and property revaluation strategies. So, by facilitating cities to reach the power-laden networks of multiple institutions, migrants became city makers in multifarious ways beyond migrant labour. So, in a similar fashion, I think, migrants also became part of the cultural industries in connection to capital and urban restructuring strategies of cities, geared to establish and enhance their competitive work in order to attract capital and access funds, national, but again, international and supranational. As soon as cultural industries became part of the re and devaluation processes, acted out in and through urban regeneration, they opened possibilities and spaces for migrants and refugees to be located within the institutions and networks of cultural production, namely in music, literature, film, theatre production, and their circulation. What happens, how they captured these positions and made use of them and made it part of their political projects, is a different story. And it is, of course, done, and there is that kind of, you see the autonomy of migration functioning actually there, but I'm talking about the perceived spaces of it. For example, in one of the cities we have worked, we have seen very clearly that the neoliberal restructuring of the city has depended heavily on urban development projects within which migrants' presence played an important role in reaching out to the cultural institutions' funds, which in turn were important to perform the suitability of the city for investment and capital flows. Migrants and particular kind of artistic production and architecture, also, connected to them became desirable within the image of the city. Here I am not saying that

we need to approach these productions and practices from within an instrumental logic, but we need to situate their valorisation within the broader dynamics of cities and the location of migrants in them at a given time. In order to understand the processes of revaluation and devaluation processes, in short, the value regimes of the neoliberal order of the cities, it might be useful to approach these dynamics from the perspective of the colonial and racial logic of capitalism, namely from the perspective of coloniality of power. Coloniality of power reminds us that the legitimising and naturalising narratives of racialised, culturalized, and gendered differences are fundamental for the appropriation and the dispossessive processes underlying capital accumulation. Thus, we need to analyse both processes in relation to each other. Most importantly, this is true not only for dehumanisation and demonisation narratives of appropriation, but also for the valorisation of particular spaces, practices, groups and pasts, which are also part of those appropriations. So, both forms of valorisation and devaluation processes, especially in relation to migrants and refugees take place simultaneously. I think this is important as part of the neoliberal city strategies and dynamics of accruing capital and power. I am arguing that we might think of the new presence of migrants in artistic networks and city imaginaries in relation to the increasing presence and importance of cultural industries in neoliberal cities. Let me come to my last point. Such an approach, I think, this coloniality of power perspective, enables us to situate the migrants in the city making processes in another form. This is, in a way, a call to embark on an analysis of the political economy of cities' cultural industries and of the location of migrants in them. Here, I am also including scholarships as part of that kind of cultural industry too. The dynamics of cultural institutions and practices and the cultural reach of cities in their given temporality, but also the location of migrants and refugees, which is often ambiguous, selective, and contradictory, might become, I think, more legible in relation to the dynamics of restructuring processes. The proliferation and valorisation of migrant and refugee literature and artistic productions could be situated within this frame. Again, this is not being against their proliferation and increasing presence and visibility and or saying anything against their content and equality. But it is about situating these productions and their actors within the neoliberal city's regimes of value.

Lydia Potts: So, in a way, connecting the first two presentations by looking at it from the perspective of the urban context, I would now like to give the floor to our discussant Dr. Saima Farhad. Saima Farhad teaches at the University of Kashmir, and she is interested especially in research on everyday life, resilience, disaster, gender, conflict, food security, and media representation. And she has several book chapters, journal articles on media conflict and marginalisation, on the making of a disaster, conflict, intractability, and governance contradictions in Kashmir. So, Saima, the floor is yours.

Saima Fahad: Since morning, we have been listening to such fascinating and rich sessions. And starting from the feminist methodologies, archival research, and quantitative research, and it is kind of summing up in this session with the

keyword innovation. Even though each session since morning dealt with epistemological and methodological innovation at various levels, this session complexifies and problematises the idea of borders, migratory pathways, the researcher-participant-activist interface. Borders emerge as contested sites, as zones of exclusions, as sites of transition, or as lived, and as sites of research alongside the various contextual difficulties. In the first paper, the point on seeing like a migrant was particularly interesting, as it gels with my disciplinary background in social work and focuses on empathetic understanding. However, seeing like a migrant would also have to take into account helping the migrant realise and articulate the possibility of realising his or her rights in the next step. It connects to the discussions on militant research and the struggle against structures which promote, create systems of suffering and exclusion and exploitation. As Grappi explained, there are many areas where logistification affects the paradigms for understanding migration and migrant experiences. And institutional racism or systemic institutional exclusions towards migrants came to fore in complex ways in the pandemic experience, in the ways migrant labour moved, were treated or quarantined, as well as in the association of migration and the pandemic on markers of religion in India. It also means that not just government and private actors, but media discourses also promote institutional racism for militant research or activist research, identification and countering of such racist and exclusionary discourses is a critical area. However, in a context like India today, such research on the migrant has to tread a careful balance, particularly as exclusionary and majoritarian regimes hold sway. From social work, the do-no-harm approach or the do-no-harm principle can be an important principle for critical militant research. As in the third paper, it identifies a complex urban milieu where city making and disposition operates side by side. Within the dynamic, migrant labour is centrally placed in logistics, services, etc. But it is easily dispensable. Clearly in the Indian context, the so-called illegal Bangladeshi migrant is a part of many sector services in many cities. At one hand, he or she is an intruder in idealised nationalist urban geography. But on the other hand, he or she, through the law of paid informed labour is tolerated but not spoken of. So, clearly, we need a new type of politics or new methodologies to deal with such contexts, at least one which is not silent, but not overtly confrontational rather innovative, tactical and long term. So, this is how I have summed up three papers.

Lydia Potts: El Sayed El Sehami would like Sandro to explain more on the notion of seeing borders as a migrant. What is the methodological productiveness of this to migration research? So, Sandro, would you elaborate on this?

Sandro Mezzadra: Yes, I am happy to do that. Moreover, this is a point that Saima also touched upon. She was saying that seeing like a migrant would also necessarily imply helping them to get their rights. And I completely agree. This is maybe one of the implications of what Brett and I call “seeing like a migrant”. More generally, I think there is a need to be aware of the fact that borders are not neutral. That the border takes a different shape depending on the side from

which you look at the border. And if you look at the border from the point of view of people on the move, you see something that you don't see if you remain focused on border control. Just take the instance of a border wall. If your gaze is focused on the wall itself, you see fixity. You see rigidity. If you look at the wall from the point of view of migrants, you immediately start to look for ways to circumvent and cross the wall. So, the wall is not anymore so fixed and rigid. It takes a different shape. But regarding my society, I think it is important to look at the border from the point of view of migrants. Not focusing only on international borders, but rather on the panoply of borders that circumscribe and shape migrant experience also in our cities. And I think that the picture of migration, to put it shortly, that you get this way is significantly different from other pictures of migration. I just conclude by saying that seeing like a migrant is, of course, a metaphor. We cannot see like migrants if we are not migrants. And we have to keep this important distinction in mind. It is a question of methodology, but it is also a question of ethics of research. So, you always have to inhabit this gap.

Lydia Potts: Yes, Sandro, this leads to the question from Indy Frieden, who is pointing out that, for example, in Mexico, political activity is forbidden for non-nationals or non-citizens. And that is the case in many countries. So, a political act for especially irregular migrants always carries the risk of being arrested by police or border police. So how can we as scholars study and understand the political agency of migrants and refugees without putting politically active migrants and refugees, their activities and strategies in danger? And I would like to give this question first to Giorgio, because that was his starting point—the bridge of activism and scholarly activity. So, Giorgio, would you like to comment on this?

Giorgio Grappi: Yeah, I can try to comment on this. The first thing that came to my mind relating to Mexico is to put together this information that we get with the experiences we have seen, especially in last years, in recent years, of mass migration movement within Mexico in the forms of the caravan that can be seen as a collective answer to both the explicit forbidden to organise politically, but also the informal forms of violence that they have to face while crossing Mexico, both from the police and from private gangs or other groups. So, I think that somehow these collective forms of action show the strategies that migrants can enact. And in this, the role of people in solidarity with them in organising the marches, in supporting the marches has been, I think, a very important logistical support. But I want to stress that for migrants, besides any formal limitation to their political agency, political agency is always a risk. This leads me, for example, to think of the recent struggles we have seen in Italy, in the logistic sectors, led by migrants, enacting road blockades that are a peculiar form of struggle within logistics to stop circulation. And of course, blockades are at the limit of what is legal or illegal. And for migrants to enact a road blockade is always, even if it is a regular migrant, even if he is entitled to struggle, a way to expose himself to retaliation, for example, by the police, because a criminal offence can lead to the losing of residence permit, and then became

irregular, and then being exposed to the risk of deportation. And this is something that happened with the officers, also threatening migrants with this. It's something that we hear in migrant struggles, the fact that their legal condition is used as a way to try to limit their own action. But again, I think that we should somehow maybe recognise that there is a link, but also a gap between what we could call the formal capacity of migrant struggles to gain something in terms of rights, or documents, or housing, or whatever they are claiming, and the capacity to gain some form of a political capacity or political power. If we think, for example, to the Saint-Papier movement going on in France right now, this is going on for, okay, many years, but the last phase for weeks and months, with mass demonstrations. If we look to what this demonstration obtained in terms of what they claim, they obtained nothing. They have been evicted from camps, informal camps. They have not obtained regularisation. But it is also clear that they have, I think, obtained a form of capacity of being present in the public space, and affirm their presence, and overcome the sort of isolation that what we are calling institutional racism imposed upon them. I think that there is also the need to recognise these different dimensions of what migrant movements and migrant struggles can gain, and to recognise that showing up for migrants is also always, I think, a way to communicate and to challenge this kind of isolation, and this kind of pushing them to the margin of political activity. And regarding what can we do in order to support this, I think, firstly, to recognise that this is the case, and the different ways migrants use to struggle and claim, are not just actions by desperate people in need of help, but are political actions that call for activists and people that want to support or be in solidarity to find ways to organise together and sometimes to leave the preconceptions that social movements have in mind or the researchers have in mind and try to see how to help, to empower those movements and actions.

Ayse Caglar: Okay, because I think this is very important not to think only that it is that they are not allowed to this kind and what they do, this kind of movement and the protest or politics. I think this is very important to look at the kind of ruptures, cracks, the people when they engage and express a voice or act from the positions that they are not entitled to. And they actually introduce a crack into the order of the governance. And I think this is very important to see where the migrants and “non-migrant”, when they become claimants for social justice movements. And these challenge the heart of the ordering of the society, the social and then the political order. And that's why I think it is very important to underline the point that also Giorgio was bringing up. When Saint-Papier supports EU citizen Romas claim to be asylum seekers, it is just like in kind of an oxymoron, but that is they are EU citizens. They want to be asylum seekers in a cave, and they get support from Saint-Papier. I think this is a very important political act which goes beyond those categories. I just wanted to add that. Thank you.

Lydia Potts: So, there are several questions to you, Ayse. There are questions from Justina Salanska. Justina starts by mentioning that it is not enough to look at the cities from neoliberal perspectives, as that seems to be limiting for

migrants and for the cities. So, her first question is: Is the neoliberal growth the ultimate aim of the city? In many European cities it was replaced with sustainable growth and social cohesion. Her second question is: How would you describe migrants' emplacements in cities through the prism of sustainable growth? And then there's also a question from Lydis Gabouvan, and you were her Professor at CEU. So, she would like you to talk about how you understand the future of migration in the city post-Covid-19. Would there be an attempt at reducing the movements of people by populist regimes, but not only? So Ayse, the floor is yours again.

Ayse Caglar: Thank you very much. Of course, it would be limiting in terms of locating the migrants in making an urban question as only in relation to the neoliberal cities. But this is that I was just particularly underlining what we know about the location of migrants in the city making becomes much more accentuated and proliferated in a particular way. That is why I think it is very important to look how they become in terms of the financialisation of those cities too. In terms of thinking that the cities which go for social cohesiveness and for sustainability, I would be very hesitant to put them in terms of in Europe, certain kinds of cities as being aspiring to reproduce a kind of a sustainable growth and cohesiveness. I would like to make it clear at the beginning that cities have never been cohesive places. Cities are antagonistic sites also. So, imagining a city under cohesion and we know what it does or how it situates in scholarship, but also in popular imaginaries, how this kind of an approach situates migrants. Once we take the city as cohesive, as if a unified entity, and what it does to the migrants and migration in terms of scholarship discourse, but also politics and governance, I think I will be very wary about taking this model as operating as if the cities were cohesive and it would be an alternative to a kind of neoliberal cities. It is in a way, right now, I am not trying to fetishise neoliberalism, but in terms of the way that the cities are located in the economies and in terms of the state imaginaries and in relation to growth, I don't think that we could easily find that kind of alternatives right now under sustainability. I would also say that goes to that far that this cohesive idea of cities, actually is a political statement that denies in a way the conflicts and then the antagonistic dynamics in the cities which have always been a part of it. It's a different kind of way of looking at it. I think it was very important to underline what also Giorgio was saying, but also Sandro was saying that the Covid in a way changes certain, might introduce certain kinds of dynamics, but what Covid did is actually that showed the existing fault lines in a very strong way despite all sorts of cause of those kind of restrictions, mobility restrictions, border closures and temporary workers or everywhere that the seasonal workers were exempt. There were always groups of labour and very often the migrant labour was very much exempt for that. So definitely it might introduce some different kinds of regulations to mobility, but I am not seeing that Covid actually stopping any kind of mobility. This enabling kind of mobility also simultaneously bounding people to particular spaces is very inherent to the workings of capitalism.

Lydia Potts: Thank you, Aysel! So, there are three questions left that I should forward to you. But before I do that, I would like to make a remark that you might want to comment on. For me, these three presentations that we have heard this morning were excellent explorations of the methodology of research. So, the inner logic of research and they were closely connected very importantly to epistemic dimensions. I am wondering if you would agree that in order to look at the full set of innovative research methods, we would need to ask: What are the empirical tools or what does that mean for empirical tools that we are using? To what extent can and should these tools be innovative? And I am thinking about, for example, visual methods, poetry and music, theatre and all these potential instruments of research that would also maybe connect with what Sandro pointed out, that seeing like a migrant is a metaphor, but maybe these research methods would allow us to dig deeper in this regard. So, that would be my comment. And now I would like to connect it with the remaining questions from our audience. So, there was Zeynel Amak who was pointing out, the question remains, can the subaltern speak? And then a question from Lydis Gabovan to all presenters: “My first question is about militant research, whether this concept could also include a collaborative aspect, e.g. the arts and social sciences, such as using theatre as a reflection and call to action, like the theatre play *Lampedusa* by Anders Lustgarten?” And there is a question from Anna Sotelo. She asks: “Prof. Mezzadra explained that there is a need to see the world like a migrant. However, is it possible that international migrants become gradually independent of its causes, like a living organism? And in that sense, could we say that the site of migrants shifts from an individual vision to a social group and a vision as the site of the social perspective of migrants?” So, I would suggest that our panellists now each have two minutes or so to conclude the session with final statements, hopefully also answering these questions. Sandro, would you start again?

Sandro Mezzadra: Sure. I think that this phrase, “seeing like a migrant” has struck the imagination of many people. I want to emphasise that it is a metaphor, because I acknowledge the continuous relevance of the question asked by Gayatri Spivak more than thirty years ago, “Can the subaltern speak?” So, you must remain aware of the fact that it is a metaphor because otherwise you kind of expropriate the subjectivity of migrants without being migrants. You play a tricky and even dangerous politics of representation to go back to the central issue of the intervention by Gayatri Spivak. As I was saying before, there is a gap. You want to see like a migrant, but you never forget that you are not a migrant. And it is precisely in this gap that you have to play, encountering migrants, listening to migrants. Because as Gayatri Spivak very well knows, subaltern speaks. Even colonialism was not able to take from the subaltern, the capacity to speak. The point is the way in which the words of subaltern are kind of worked and manipulated by scholars, by critical scholars, even by revolutionary activists. So, I repeat, you always have to remain aware of that. And this has a lot to do with Lydia’s remark regarding the empirical tools. I am engaged in activism and research projects in the Mediterranean, which are the empirical tools that allow me to listen to the words of migrants challenging the

European border regime in the Mediterranean. They must be some kind of innovative tools. And we would need a whole session to start to talk about this important question. And then the remark on international migrants becoming social subjects. I totally agree. In a way, also this question has to do with what I was saying about the metaphor of seeing migrants and about Gayatri Spivak's question. The point is that migrants are every day in the process of becoming a social subject. When you meet migrants in these rubber boats in the Mediterranean in precarious situations, but you immediately realise that there are social connections among them. That you are not confronted simply with individuals or even families. That there is this dynamic of becoming a social subject or think of the caravans across Mexico that Giorgio was mentioning before. There is a very nice notion that is circulating a lot in Mexico in the debate on caravans, i.e., "*acuerpamiento*" (gathering of bodies). The emergence of a collective body. So, these are all very important kinds of processes that are already underway.

Lydia Potts: Giorgio, would you like to have some final remarks?

Giorgio Grappi: Yes. I pick up from the point where Sandro stopped. I mean, the word that he was using about the collective body. Because I think this is important. And it's what I also tried to stress before. By saying that there is a formal dimension of emancipation that is put in this way. But there is another dimension that is maybe more political. That has to do with this coming together of a collective body. That, of course, in the case of the caravan is extremely visible. And has to go to direct confrontation and physical risks. But this collective body emerges, I think, also in other ways that are less visible. But where migrants show up together to speak out, to tell what they need, what they want. And most of the time, in being part also of these actions, I think that they speak out about conditions in which, of course, there is a difference between us, in this case, and them. But these differences speak about the way in which the society we live in, the economic system we live in, the production system we live in, is built and works. So, they speak out to everybody. Not just in terms of generally speaking about rights or this kind of thing.

Lydia Potts: I would request Ayse to give some concluding remarks.

Ayse Caglar: Thank you very much. I will pick up two points. In terms of what you had brought out and different for those kinds of different tools, in terms of visual, in terms of music, poetry, and whether that kind of instrument. And what today, I mean, how do we situate those ones? And I would like to connect it to the metaphor that Sandro was talking about and link it to my talk too but way of putting a question mark. Because I think they are very important in the sense of being open modes. That especially in relation to the scholarship, that they actually defy putting closures in terms of there is an openness in including art for any kinds of narratives. Why am I saying this? Because this question that came in relation to "seeing like a migrant," "can the subaltern speak" is really a question about the politics of representation. And it takes us to the question of

voice and how to situate the voices in multiple ways of mediation. Because then it is a question about whether or not we have unmediated voices. All the voices are mediated. So, but it is related to the question of that not being. So, against reifying, against mystifying, these methods also now that within the cultural industries that I was talking about, entail the danger of co-opting and mystifying and reifying and commercialising as migrant ways of seeing or being. But because if we keep that, it is not being but becoming. And in terms of construction and elaboration of subjectivities, always being in flux, then I think these methods, these kinds of instruments would be useful despite my worry about the possibilities of co-optation. And they become now the new modes of representation of migrancy. And I think it is very important to go beyond that.

Lydia Potts: Ayse, I think these were wonderful concluding sentences. I would like to thank all the panellists. I think today's discussion really compliments the theme of the Workshop. I would also like to thank the discussant and the audience who put in very interesting questions. And I do think one might think of a follow-up to this session in terms of a switch from methodology to methods and then explore maybe more in depth what does all this, what you highlighted today mean actually in the field and for methods. Thank you all for such an enriching and engaging discussion. Thanks to IWM Vienna for collaborating with us for this Teachers' Workshop, which is a part of CRG's program in Migration and Forced Migration Studies supported by the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) Vienna.

Thank you again so much!

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The transcription has been prepared by Anannya Das. She holds an MA in English from the University of Calcutta, Kolkata, India and is currently researching the oral and cultural histories of the Partition of India. Anannya may be reached at anannyadas05@gmail.com. The transcript has been edited by Debashree Chakraborty. Debashree is a Research Associate at CRG who may be reached at debasbree@mcr.ac.in.