Writing Through Fences. AMIS hosted the event on 2 October 2020: Featuring associate professor, writer and journalist Behrouz Boochani and lecturer and researcher Omid Tofighian, both being with us online all the way from New Zealand and Australia, respectively.

Dear AMIS Newsletter subscriber

Welcome to the AMIS Winter Newsletter 2020! Despite the fact that the global pandemic is still very much with us, we were lucky enough to be able to do 100% on campus teaching for the first part of the semester. Coming to the end of the semester, and followed by a brief period of teaching the hyflex mode (half capacity of class rooms on campus; half of the class taught online), we have now moved into full online mode due to still rising infection rates. Thanks to all AMIS staff and students for your patience and willingness to find innovative and creative ways to get through these difficult circumstances!

With this Newsletter we are happy to welcome Martin Lemberg-Pedersen to AMIS, who will be hosting his H2020 Admigov project, and Georg Wink as a new steering group member representing Engerom. I will use this opportunity to warmly thank Pia Schwarz-Lausten for serving the AMIS steering group since 2013.

Some further highlights: During this fall we have hosted the event Writing against Fences, a conversation with Behrouz Boochani and Omid Tofighian, which was a moving, and also a hopeful experience, as it reminded us about love, joy and humour as acts of resistance during detention. This event attracted more than 100 online
participants from all the world including our own AMIS students’ cohort being present on campus.

AMIS has launched its very first workshop for staff and students on Writing Migration, initiated by AMIS postdoc Martin Ledstrup. Learning from that experience, I think it is clear that whether we are academics, authors, activists we should all be humbly aware how skill-full writing can turn into powerful tools for changing the world.

Let’s hope we can soon be able to stamp out the virus, and that the new year will bring more face-to-face encounters in our everyday life at the university. Meanwhile, I wish you all the best energies to get by and a very Happy Christmas.

Marie Sandberg, AMIS Director

1. New AMIS people – Welcome to Martin Lemberg-Pedersen.
2. New AMIS steering group member – Welcome to Georg Wink, Engerom.
3. AMIS research interns.
4. New AMIS research project: Boundary work. New interfaces between state and civil society: Volunteerism and refugees in a self-support and repatriation context, funded by VELUX HUMpraxis.
5. 7th AMIS-MIM Masters conference on Migration studies: Current PhD projects in the Øresund region, 3 December 2020.
7. New publications.

Picture: Writing Migration – AMIS workshop

1. New AMIS people

Welcome to Martin Lemberg-Pedersen.
Martin is associate professor, and has a PhD in philosophy from University of Copenhagen. He is specialised in European border control practices and its political-economic and humanitarian consequences. He has done visiting fellowships at Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford University, Harokopio University Athens, and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. He is a member of the EU Horizon 2020 funded project Advancing Alternative Migration Governance (ADMIGOV), and a board member in Nordic Migration Research. His recent publications have appeared in Journal of Borderlands Studies, Citizenship Studies, Global Affairs, Questions of International Law, Energy Policy and Nordic Journal of Applied Ethics.

From 1 November 2020 AMIS will be hosting Martin’s H2020 ADMIGOV work packages.

About ADMIGOV: The project aims to promote an alternative migration governance model and takes seriously the principles laid out in the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (2015), the New York Declaration (2016) and later UN documents. ADMIGOV studies how alternative approaches to migration governance can be better designed and put into practice. However, rather than proposing a top-down study of existing migration policies, ADMIGOV studies the reality of existing policies and practices on the ground to improve migration governance in line with the principles set out by the UN. This is the unique analytical feature of ADMIGOV. We bring together analyses of migration governance in practice and in key times and spaces and relate these analyses to the key structuring principles of migration governance as laid out by the UN. This is done to better understand the current gaps between principles and practices and in order to provide insights and recommendations for migration governance in the future. You can read more on the project and the work-packages here: the ADMIGOV homepage.

See the newly launched WP1 report The political economy of entry governance through the link.

2. New AMIS steering group member

Welcome to Georg Wink. Georg will be replacing Pia Schwartz-Lausten as representative for Engerom. Georg is associate professor of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies, and his research profile concerns migrant literature and transculturality within Latin America. More info: visit Access Georg Wink’s profile through this link.

We look very much forward to cooperating with Georg!

3. New AMIS research interns
Bjorn Bisha is a third semester MA student with AMIS and is currently working as a research intern on the INTERPRETING project led by Martha Sif Karrebæk. Bjorn participates in the transcription and data analysis of interpreter mediated encounters in the Danish public sector (police, court and health care system). He is also involved in the planning and execution of stakeholder meetings in cooperation with the rest of the team. Bjorn holds a BA in Anthropology and International Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Leah Durst-Lee is a third semester MA students with AMIS and is currently working as a research intern at the protracted rural displacements project hosted by Lotte Pelckmans. Leah will be working on the intersections of modern and descent based slavery in relation to both historical and contemporary forms of displacement. Leah contributes to the legal training manual and curates a literature review, assist with publications and create materials to communicate the research project with the public (i.e. blog, Facebook, website).

Leah earned her BA in Sociology and Anthropology from Loyola University - Chicago, where she was awarded a research fellowship with the Center for Urban Research and Learning to work on urban issue research projects, such as food access, collective organising, housing, and domestic violence. Leah was the recipient of the Kale Williams Award for Exceptional Work in Promoting Human Rights and Social Justice.

4. New AMIS research project (VELUX FONDEN)

‘Boundary work’ – nye grænseflader mellem stat, civilsamfund og flygtninge i en selvforsørgelses- og hjemrejsekontext (Boundary work. New interfaces between state and civil society: Volunteerism and refugees in a self-support and repatriation context), which has been granted the amount of 6,212,824 DKK through the VELUX HUMpraxis programme.

The purpose of the project is to reduce the social vulnerability of refugees through creating new knowledge and enhancing the agency of refugees in a strengthened collaboration between New AMIS research project (VELUX FONDEN) refugees, civil society actors and social workers.

The project is initiated in a unique cooperation between Danish Red Cross, DRC Danish Refugee Council, Centre for Advanced Migration Studies (AMIS) at the University of Copenhagen and the University College Absalon.

Visit the project homepage of "Boundary work" - refugees, volunteers, and the state-civil society nexus in the new repatriation regime at the University of Copenhagen.

5. The 7th AMIS-MIM Masters Conference on Migration studies
Current PhD projects in the Øresund region, was held on 3 December 2020. Learn more through this link: Masters conference on Migration studies

The annual conference was organised in joint collaboration between Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM), Malmö University and Centre for Advanced Migration Studies (AMIS), University of Copenhagen. This year the conference focused on current PhD projects in Migration studies in the Øresund region. The aim of the conference was to provide an opportunity for master’s students to learn about recently finished and ongoing PhD projects and for students at different levels to interact. Keynotes: Marlene Paulin Kristensen and Jacob Lind, presentations by Cecilie Odgaard Jakobsen, Mirjam Wajsberg, Johan Ekstedt, Eline Wærp og Hilda Gustafsson

6. AMIS reads – book recommendations

AMIS visiting fellow, postdoc Annika Lindberg recommends:

Boochani, Behrouz. 2018. No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison. Pan Macmillan Australia Pty, Limited

No Friend but the Mountains provides a horrifying, first-hand account of Boochani’s six years in Australia’s offshore prison on Manus island, where he was forcibly detained for having sought asylum. The book defies categorisation: it is a product - and a testimony - of a site of state violence, where creative writing is an act of political resistance. Boochani wrote it while imprisoned, using WhatsApp messages on smuggled phones, and the text was filed and translated into English by Omid Tofighian. It offers unique insights into the brutality of Australia’s immigration detention regime, which is part of the government’s deterrence-oriented approach to people seeking protection and which systematically violates their rights and dignity for symbolic political purposes. Yet Boochani shows how this dehumanisation is not an anomaly but a product of Australia’s colonial imaginary and the widespread racist and anti-immigrant sentiments that permeate its politics and society. The book contains a sharp political commentary and theorisation about border violence, making it a must-read for anyone interested in understanding the logics and operation of contemporary border regimes. Meanwhile, Boochani’s use of poetry and and unique narrative style, rooted in Kurdish
Associate professor, Nina Grønlykke Mollerup & postdoc, Martin Ledstrup are reading:


*Migrant Dreams* is Samuli Schielle’s vivid story of the dreams that inspire Egyptian workers’ imagination about migration and the good life as well as the realities they meet. Exploring his encounters over several years with workers who move back and forth between rural Egypt and the Arab Gulf, this beautifully written ethnography is one the richest accounts of the imaginaries and experiences of migration we have come about.

7. New publications


‘Invisibility in African Displacements’ offers a series of case studies that explore the intricate ways in which African migrants are marginalised and excluded from public discourse; not only in Europe, but in migrant-receiving contexts across the globe. What tends to be either ignored or demonised in public debates on African migration are the deliberate strategies of avoidance or assimilation that migrants make use of, in order to gain access to the destinations or opportunities they seek, or to remain below the radar of restrictive governance regimes.


**Häyhtiö, Sofia, Annika Lindberg, Anna Lundberg & Elisabet Rundqvist 2020.** "Frihetsberövade människor i coronakrisen". Available in Swedish.

The report is based on a survey in Swedish migration-related detention centres, conducted in spring 2020. It scrutinises how Swedish migration authorities have treated detained migrants during the ongoing pandemic.

An English summary of the report has been published at Border Criminologies:


The chapter is part of an edited volume on the encounters between people seeking asylum and welfare bureaucracies in Northern Europe. The entire book is available open access on manchesteropenhive.com


As part of the DIGINAUTS project, Associate Professor Nina Grønlykke Mollerup has published the contribution:


As a result of the Helping Hands Research Network, financed by the Danish Research Council (DFF/6107-00111), led by Marie Sandberg (PI) and Dorte J. Andersen (co-PI), this NJMR special issue takes as its point of departure the volunteer practices connected to informal refugee reception during and after the refugee arrivals to Europe in 2015. Yet the special issue moves beyond this ‘moment of crisis’ by relating it to more established and continuous practices of solidarity and civil society participation. The authors in this special issue thereby emphasise what is at stake in the mobilisation of European citizens into self-made refugee helpers, or what we suggest to call everyday humanitarians.


Sandberg, Marie 2020: Retrospective ethnographies. Twisting moments of researching commemorative practices among volunteers after the refugee arrivals to Europe 2015, in: Lähdesmäki, Tuuli et al. (eds.): *Challenges and Solutions in Ethnographic Research*. Ethnography with a Twist, London: Routledge.


Zaklina Rajovic, AMIS student, published an article in the Danish newspaper Information (in Danish):

Annika Lindberg & Shahram Khosravi discuss deportation processes in ‘Migrationssnack’ (in Swedish).

AMIS Centre Strategy. In August AMIS staff and steering group met in order to discuss a new strategy for the centre. Lively discussions, walk and talks and some lovely food made the day. From the left: Annika Lindberg, Katrine Syppli Kohl, Marie Sandberg, Zachary Whyte, Martin Ledstrup, Maria Frantzoulis, Cecilie Odgaard Jakobsen, Manpreet Kaur Janeja, Simon Turner, Martha Sif Karrebæk, Mirjam Wajsberg, Tore Holst, Margit Warburg, Lotte Pelckmans

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