

Atlas of Thresholds: Spatial Narrative of Displacement

The continuous wars and conflicts combined with climate change, energy resources, and inequitable financial systems resulted in displaced populations spreading through different parts of the world, especially from the global south to the global north. According to UNCHR, 70.8 million people so far have been forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human right violations. Moreover, just in 2017, 4,4 million people sought protection abroad. These numbers prove that displacement is a more complex phenomenon that should be investigated concerning its political nature. To begin with, movement of displaced population across the international border(s) bring forth a more complex and comprehensible meaning to the concept of the border by the crossing act. Also, space can be lived, conceived, and perceived not only when it is fixed and stable, but also when it is movable and temporal. However, spatial strategies toward forced migration and refugees mostly seem to coincide with power relations. By exclusion or isolation from wider society, refugee narrative is built upon either on the humanitarian aids or the temporary solutions. The focal point of displacement and forced migration studies should be reconsidered because it is not isolated, uprooted or arrival environments that express and symbolize a person's being and consciousness, but the common ground—including movement, journey and the stops along the way. Within this context, the research seeks to investigate the spatiality of forced movements and liminal phases by examining the mobility of border, its spatiotemporal constructions, and multiple formations throughout the journey of the refugee. Trying to expose political subjectivity of refugees and movement as a political act through spatial investigation, the time and space between arrival and uprooted living environment will be investigated. Critical mapping techniques and processes will be discussed to constitute a spatial narrative relying on both quantitative and qualitative data retrieved from Gaziantep and Izmir (cities of so-called transition country-Turkey), and they will be put into effect to represent the facts on the ground. At the intersection of migration, mapping, and border studies, there will be two additional parts of this research: an online platform to collect data and an "atlas" to contain that data. This process will include refugees and non-profit organization related to refugees. Undertaken by groups and networks, with feedback coming in from larger numbers of people, the result might be a process of creating a "common" territory from encountering difference/others. Hence, the participation of refugees is crucial in the research process. Even though atlases have been seen as a valuable source that provides information for the whole world, their content as maps, graphics, diagrams in various scales represents the world in terms of territorial divisions defined by nation-state borders. Thus, the main aim of the atlas is searching for "other" ways of documentation of displacement of beings/places/borders, which can also be understood as "suspended" in "betwixt and between" and trying to answer these questions: How data will be presented in relation with space, how a map/collection of maps can define a surface in interaction with its actors, and how multiple readings for the maps and their intended subjects can be produced?