



Image & Imagination - Portraying Mobility in the Mediterranean

**An International Seminar hosted by
The Danish Institute, Damascus, August 30-31, 2008**

What is the role and function of images and imaginations in stimulating migration and mobility around the Mediterranean? And how can we use images and cultural imaginations in understanding and explaining the forces and desires behind migration and mobility?

These are the two main questions we would like to address in this two-day seminar in Damascus. The intention of the seminar is to bring together a small group of researchers from different academic fields, working with images and imaginations in relation to questions of mobility.

Mobility in and around the Mediterranean can be related to the economic and cultural globalization, which has simultaneously lead to a reshaping of cross-national economic integration at different levels, as well as new forms of mobility and regionalization. These changes have challenged the classical divisions of the Mediterranean. Differences in the manifestations of social conflicts or cultural expressions can today be attributed to this new global space, which both include transgressions and reinforcements of physical and cultural borders. Only in this sense can the idea of the Mediterranean be thought of as a paradigmatic case of mobility in the age of globalization.

Within this framework new research strategies have been adopted, which, apart from the written text, rely on visual materials such as pictures, films and video. These approaches offer new descriptions and understandings of the ideological constructions and social imaginary that shape our visions of the social world. By focusing on images of space (cities, borders, camps, deserts, seas), social actors (women, men, children, youngsters, elders), movement (commuting, migration, displacement, refuge, exile), and travel (pilgrimage, tourism), they provide a critical vision of how images and imaginations contribute to the social construction of knowledge, while also questioning this particular type of knowledge production.

We invite papers from researchers working with images and mobility within, *inter alia*, sociology, anthropology, geography, migration studies, area studies, media studies, cultural studies and visual culture. Send proposals or abstracts by email attachment to Natalia Ribas Mateos (ESOMI-IFPO) mazo@arquired.es or Mikkel Eskjær (Danish Institute, Damascus) Mikkel.Eskjaer@gmail.com, no later than July 1st, 2008.

The seminar is organised around paper presentations and discussions and will take place in the informal settings of The Danish Institute in the middle of the Old Suq of Damascus.

Participation, seminar materials and meals are free. The seminar can provide accommodation at The Danish Institute and IFPO for a limited number of participants. Other expenses will not be covered.

The Seminar is hosted and co-sponsored by The Danish Institute in Damascus; IFPO (Institut Français de Proche-Orient) Damascus; Instituto Cervantes, Damascus; ESOMI (Team of International Migration Studies, La Coruña, Spain).

For information about The Danish Institute in Damascus, please visit:

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