

Review of Olivier Clochard's conference

What is Migrinter ?

It is a research center that depends on the Poitiers Human sciences University and the CNRS (National Center for science research). It is based on the work of geography –researchers and young doctoral students. It is located on the Poitiers university campus.

What was the conference about?

How do border controls change in Europe and which incidences do they have on migrants?

Number of international migrants today according to Olivier Clochard

There are about 250 millions international migrants, who correspond to 3 % of the global population. But the number of migrants was bigger at the beginning of the century as it represented 6 % of the global population

What debates around numbers ?

Today, the population thinks that flow is increasing : it is refered to as mass migration. While this is not true, even if a flow of migrants (due to the Syrian conflict) arriving in 2015 overran Europe. There is a big difference between what is said by politicians and field reality of site even if we must conceal local problems.

1-Why migrants being confined is a problem :

An example to present : the retention center in Cyprus.

Cyprus is an island which welcomes a high proportion of foreign workers who come from Bangladesh, India, Iran and Irak.

Morteza is an Iranian migrant who ran away from his country in 2007 because of the war and who asked the Cypriot government for protection. The duration of the stay authorized by the European Union law is 18 months long, but Morteza largely exceeded this length as he stayed 4 years. It's often the case.

Migrants often endure bad living conditions, they suffer from :

- lack of space.
- lack of cleanliness
- absence of communication with the outside world (cell phones are unusable/ impossible to recharge)
- no access to the yard
- basic food but completed with donations from field policemen who are not insensitive to their fate.

He was moved many times because he showed rebellious. Once released, he still had to report himself to the police station. He sent many mails especially to the Cypriot Ministry of Interior to obtain his papers. His mails remained unanswered.

The role of the actor researcher

Olivier clochard helped this migrant letting the press and the Cypriot authorities know about his situation to which hastened his release. Indeed, the law on the limited residence permit which allowed migrants to stay 18 months wasn't respected. So the governments was afraid of being prosecuted.

2-Evolution of detention centers in France

The number of involved people in France and how they are welcome:

600 to 700 000 are people locked because they don't own a residence permit.

Examples of detention centers were given:

the ARENC in Marseille (the first detention center in Europe) which, in 1963, welcomed Algerian communities (after the end of the war in 1962) is replaced today by the center of Canet, still in Marseille.

The conditions of welcome still aren't good, but they are different from one country to another.

How did these centers evolve?

Many detention centers appeared since 2013 : there are some in Bordeaux, Tours, Angers...

➔ What do we learn from mapmaking on migrations ?

- ✚ The migrants' flow is visible : the roads that migrants use to travel show the globalization of migratory flows. However, these flows are less easy to represent than the goods' flows as they vary more because they are more controlled.

- ✚ The migratory balance varies from a country to another : Spain records a negative migratory balance (there are more people who leave the country than people who come into the country)

- ✚ The 2011 Arab springs (revolts in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Libya...) showed that most of the favorite destinations were not necessarily the European countries as migrants preferred countries in north-east Africa.

- ✚ Maps Olivier Clochard realized also reveal they are more and more barriers, borders, or walls like for example in the Spanish cities of Ceuta and of Melilla in Morocco which are surrounded with barbed wire. Spain not belonging to Schengen anymore, migrants yearn on these two as they only have to cross the Gibraltar strait.

Conclusion : Opposition between rich and poor countries...

Why isn't it relevant to distinguish refugees from economic migrants?

It isn't relevant because very often, departures are motivated by many reasons at the same time :

- To have better living conditions
- To escape the war,
- To protect one's life
- To join one's family...

It is hard to establish some categories. Moreover, only wealthy people can afford to leave their country because the trip remains expensive and is only reserved to a lucky few.

Mignaloux's elected officials' involvement in migrants reception :

What was most surprising and touching in their testimonies?

- how they describe the motivation of the migrants to get involved in our society (how they want to learn French for instance)
- the kindness they show to migrants
- the friendly relationships they build with migrants
- how they insist the relationships they have with migrants made them better.