

The African Migration and Mobility Working Group Presents

A “Method Workshop” on the Science, Art, and Politics of Mapping Borders

Philippe Rekacewicz, Geographer and Journalist

Laia Soto-Bermant, Anthropologist

Olivier Walther, Geographer

April 8, 3:00-5:00pm, Grinter 471, University of Florida

This method workshop’s objectives are two folds. First, bring scholars whose research interest entails the production and use of maps as methodological and graphic tools of data analysis. The guest speakers of this workshop have all research agendas involving the mapping of physical borders and/or social boundaries.

Olivier Walter’s presentation will focus on cross-border trading and political violence in West Africa. His previous and current research uses the mapping of social network across national and regional borders. He has produced impressive maps of cross-border social networks in the Sahel-Sahara contact zones that could be in contrast and/or in dialogue with Philippe Rekacewicz’ creative maps of the new regimes of global mobility that bring forth both the artistic and political dimensions of mapping borders. Laia Soto Bermant’s case study of the Spanish enclave of Melilla draws an ethnographic map of social boundaries dividing the Christian and Muslim communities of the enclave. The fact that Melilla, like many enclaves and islands in the southern European border, has becoming a focus point of the EU strategy of fighting clandestine migration, makes us wonder how to apply Philippe and Olivier’s mapping methods in understanding social boundaries in small places. A discussion between Philippe and Laia can be productive in terms of their interest in different scales, a more global and encompassing for Philippe and a more local but replaced in a historical perspective for Laia.

The second objective is to discuss beyond the individual research of three speakers, the methods underpinning their research. With Philippe’s creative and innovative method of mapping leading the way, Olivier’s combination of mapping and social analysis giving another set of mapping methods, and Laia’s ethnographic methods of mapping highlighting the role of people in making places. We hope to steer the discussion to pragmatic ways of using heuristically the methods of mapping in the studies of African migrations and mobilities.

Program

3:00 to 3:30: Olivier Walther. “Mapping trade and conflict networks”

3:45-4:30: Philippe Rekacewicz and Laia Soto Bermant. “Mapping physical borders versus mapping social boundaries.”

4:30-5:00: Discussion