The everyday experiences of young refugees and asylum seekers in public spaces, the case of Amsterdam

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Project description
This project aims to understand refugee youth’s daily encounters in public space and their senses of inclusion/exclusion and belonging. Conceptualising urban public space as a contested, sensorial space of encounter (Wilson 2011, Wise & Noble 2016) and bordering/exclusion (Madanipour 2011, Wacquant 2010), we further ask how novel forms of cultural and arts-based engagement can be developed that foster senses of migrant belonging and that are responsive to multi-local, sensorial geographies (cf. Casey 2001). We will not limit our analysis to formal spaces designed for encounters, but also study other relevant meeting spaces for refugee youth and the encounters taking place therein. As such this research considers what new spaces for urban citizenship can possibly emerge in the city and the role these play in European integration. We will work collaboratively and transnationally with local cultural organisations and other relevant organisations) to explore refugee youth’s reworking of public space and to develop more inclusive urban citizenries. Exhibitions and conferences will be organised in the context of the CRP to initiate discussions around the remaking of histories and the meaning of public space herein. We focus on these three layers of representation of public space for refugee youth, asking four key questions:

1. What role can cultural and arts initiatives play in the lives of refugee youth and in promoting their sense of belonging in the city?
2. What role do public spaces play in the lives of refugee youth and how do they experience and negotiate inclusion and exclusion in public space?
3. How do refugee youth interact with arrival infrastructures and how do these interactions impact on the different kinds of public spaces that emerge?
4. How do refugee youth represent their own stories of home-making (both before, during and after the process of migration/arrival)?

Description of the assistant’s activities within the project:
- Help with the daily organization of the research project
- Collect and summarize literature on refugee youth, public space and belonging
- Assist with the media and document analysis around refugee youth in Amsterdam
- Help with the preparation of fieldwork with refugee youth in Amsterdam that consists of mental mapping, digital storytelling, walk along interviews.
- Assist in organizing cultural output based on the research
Job requirements
- Dutch and English speaking
- Interest in qualitative research methods, refugees and youth