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Black Sea Currents: Migration and cosmopolitan dynamics in two post-Imperial cities, Odessa and Istanbul
End of year report for 2008

A new type of globalised market-place has arisen in post-socialist Europe and Asia in the last 15 years. Using the example of the '7th Kilometre' market near Odessa, we argue that the political and economic conditions that give rise to these vast markets, where goods are sold from shipping containers, can be compared with mediaeval fairs. More generally they can be understood as a kind of hereotopia (Foucault), being mirrors and subversive locales in relation to the adjacent city. A focus for migrant activity, the research has shown how and why such a market becomes the object of a power struggle between the state, the city and the migrant market traders themselves.

The research in Istanbul has shown that attitudes towards minorities are in constant shift and re-negotiation in the face of current inter-state conflicts in the Middle East. Navaro-Yashin's research has illustrated that Istanbulis' relations with their built and lived, material environment is shaped and informed by public discourses about minorities.

A comparative case study of two groups in Odessa, new labour migrants/refugees from Afghanistan and the old community of the Ukrainian Gypsies, has allowed us to conceptualise the ways in which inward-looking sensibilities of diasporic groups coexist with highly valued social skills and knowledge of how to engage with various "others" in the city, and with which "others" to engage.

The project has also investigated new forms of employment and experience of Odessan sailors. Experiences of a new international work environment have created novel forms of self-identification and ideas about migration.

The research is progressing very well in both Odessa and Istanbul. Fieldwork has been carried out as planned (except for Professor's Humphrey research in autumn 2008, delayed due to illness). The following studies are in hand from our research assistants 1. Case study of Turkish migrants to Odessa. 2. Historical study of Black Sea shipping from the port of Odessa in the Soviet period, including sociality on board and in ports. 3. Interviews with contemporary sailors from Odessa. 4. Study of shipping and port-life in Istanbul. 5. Study of Tarlabasi neighbourhood, Istanbul, and the relation of new migrants with dwellings left behind by the exiled minorities.

Plans for the photographic exhibition, to be held in Odessa, Cambridge and Istanbul are in hand.

The project workshop planned for 2008 took place according to plan. Members of the project have given papers and/or attended several seminars and workshops. The arrangements for the international conference planned for 2009 have been set in train.

The project has resulted in several publications, with others in preparations. The planned edited volume mentioned in the application will develop from the international conference