

# Researching the "Refugee Crisis": ethical challenges, responsibilities and opportunities.

*Insights from the EVI-MED project (and more...)*

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# EVI-MED - Constructing an evidence base of contemporary Mediterranean migrations

- ESRC-funded, 2-year research project (2015-2017)
- **Middlesex University team:** Brad Blitz, Eleonore Kofman, Alessio D'Angelo, Nicola Montagna, Martin Baldwin-Edwards
- **Partner organisations:** Borderline Sicilia, Greek Council for Refugees, People for Change (and a number of local stakeholders and universities)
- **Key objectives:**
  - Analyzing the 'reception systems' in the three countries.
  - Examining the profiles, experiences and plans of individual migrants
  - Exchange of practice and networking among practitioners.

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- Data (2016-2017):
  - **Questionnaires** Administered to ‘mixed-flow’ recently arrived migrants and refugees hosted by the national reception systems in:
    - Sicily – 400 questionnaires
    - Greece – 300 questionnaires
    - Malta – 50 questionnaires
  - Over 50 in-depth **interviews** with:
    - Individual migrants
    - NGOs and local policy-makers
    - Practitioners and other stakeholders

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- Examples of Research outputs:
  - D'Angelo, A. (2019) Italy: the 'illegality factory'? Theory and practice of refugees' reception in Sicily, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45:12
  - D'Angelo, A. (2018): "Refugees' reception in Italy: past and present of a humanitarian crisis". In: *Refugees on the move, Focus on International Migration*, n° 5, CER-Migracions, Barcelona
  - Kofman, E. (2019). Gendered mobilities and vulnerabilities: refugee journeys to and in Europe, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45:12
  - Several dissemination and knowledge exchange **events** with stakeholder and practitioners in Italy and Greece (2016-2018)

## **Who are the participants?**

Migrants; but also local NGOs, practitioners, and other stakeholders; who are also gatekeepers. Issues of access and power-relations.

## **What affects the content of interviews?**

Context, participants' understanding about the interviews, and what they think they are expected to say; issues of trust; 'rehearsed interviews'.

## **Why is it that migrants participate in research?**

Voluntary (?) participation. Expectations about impact. Willingness to share.

## **When is the right time to “capture testimony”?**

e.g. we targeted participants who were ‘recently’ arrived.  
Testimony requires empowerment.

## **Who is going to use/benefit from the interviews?**

Many risks if reading them out of context (including e.g. politicisation).

There is a responsibility to ‘give back’ (to individuals, civil society, etc.).

## **The role of researchers**

Giving voice through analysis and interpretation.

Defining and framing ‘migrants’ and e.g. ‘vulnerability’

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