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. (2018): “Refugees’reception in Italy: past and present of a humanitarian crisis”. In: Refugees on the move, Focus on International Migration, nº 5, CER-Migracions, Barcelona
  
  
  • 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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