



## **Public Lecture**

—

**Thursday, 24 September 2020**

**Hostile Environments: The History and Consequences of  
Deterrence as Migration Control**

—

**Prof. Michael Collyer, University of Sussex**

**Discussant: Lisa Marie Borrelli, University of Neuchâtel**

18:15 – 19:45 h

Location: University of Neuchâtel, Avenue du 1er-Mars 26, Room C46.

The Public Lecture will be streamed online on the nccr – on the move YouTube channel.

## Abstract

As UK Home Secretary, Theresa May determined that the creation of a 'hostile environment' should become an explicit objective of the UK migration policy. This has become shorthand for a particular approach to migration control, although far from originating in 2013, the idea has become part of political orthodoxy in migration control around the world over the past few decades. This includes approaches to contain or 'warehouse' refugees and those to prevent access to wealthier states as well as control of migrants once they have reached particular territories. These policies must fulfill a contradictory set of objectives. Harming migrants who have already arrived is not the principal aim of these policies, indeed in some cases, it must be explicitly avoided. The logic of the hostile environment is to reassure public opinion that action is being taken and deter future migrants who have yet to arrive or even leave. The policies are therefore targeted at the unknowable figure of the potential migrant. The contradictory objectives and uncertain focus of the hostile environment mean that it is inevitably poorly targeted and unintended consequences are common. These include the *displacement* of migrants to increasingly dangerous routes, the *filtering* of migrants, so that profiles change and *immobility*, ensuring many other remain in uncertain conditions elsewhere, in addition to the development of a more *toxic environment*, which may start to deter those migrants who are considered to be more desirable. The response to this hostility is weak and uncertain but may be seen in the growing attention to practices of sanctuaries.

## Curriculum Vitae

Michael Collyer is a political geographer with an interest in the relationships between people on the move and state institutions. His research is particularly focusing on situations where that relationship is problematic, as it is for forced or undocumented migrants. In 2012-13 he was Fulbright Scholar at the University of Washington in Seattle and in 2015-16 he was Visiting Professor at the University of Wellington, New Zealand. He has also held visiting positions at Universities in Egypt, Morocco, and Sri Lanka. He regularly undertakes consultancies for UN agencies, the European Commission and national governments. His research has been funded by a range of organizations and he currently directs Migrants on the Margins, the Royal Geographical Society's flagship Field Research Programme. His most recent books are *Migration* (2017) in Routledge's Key Introductions to Geography series (with Michael Samers) and the edited volume *Emigration Nations. The Politics and Policies of Emigrant Engagement* (Palgrave, 2014). He is on the steering committee of Sanctuary on Sea, an umbrella group of refugee and migrants' rights organizations in Brighton

## Selected Publications

- Collyer, M., Hinger, S. and Schweitzer, R. (2020). Politics of (dis)Integration – An Introduction. In: Hinger, S. and Schweitzer, R. (eds), *Politics of (Dis)Integration*. Springer, 1-18.
- Collyer, M. (2020). Border Work: Frames, Barriers and Disingenuous Development. In: Bastia and Skeldon, R. (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Migration and Development*.
- Collyer, M. (2019). From Preventive to Repressive: The Changing Use of Development and Humanitarianism to Control Migration. In: *Handbook on Critical Geographies of Migration*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 170-187.
- Morrice, L., Tip, L.K., Brown, R. and Collyer, M. (2019). Resettled Refugee Youth and Education: Aspiration and Reality, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1-18.
- Collyer, M. (2018). *Paying to Go: Deportability as Development*. In: Khosravi, S. (ed), *After Deportation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 105-125