



## EU CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

### *Fourth Semiannual Newsletter* Summer 2010

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### **DIRECTOR'S NOTE**

Dear EU Studies Community,

Welcome to the fourth semiannual newsletter of the European Union Center of Excellence at the University of California, Berkeley. In this issue we bring you three essays on diverse topics concerning the EU and EU policy-making. Dr. Melanie Morisse-Schilbach is a Research Fellow and Lecturer at the Institute for Political Sciences, TU Dresden, and was a visiting scholar at the Institute of European Studies in AY 2009-10. In her article she examines Germany's response to the Greek bailout and euro crisis, and argues that Germany is renegeing on its role as 'benign hegemon' of Europe. Two essays follow, by EUCE student fellowship recipients Nilgun Bayraktar of the Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies, and Betsy Carter of the Department of Political Science. Ms. Carter provides a summary of her dissertation entitled "The Politics of Wine Production in France and Italy," and describes the research she plans on conducting in summer 2010. Ms. Bayraktar presents an excerpt from her dissertation "Art against the Current: Geo-politics of Mobility and Migration in Post-Socialist Europe," in which she analyzes a video piece by Berlin-Istanbul based artist Esra Ersen.

In spring 2010 we supported interdisciplinary conferences and workshops addressing a wide range of themes designed to advance academic and public understanding of the European Union. These included a workshop examining the implications of population, economics, and integration impacts on immigration policies in the EU and US; comparative social-cultural perspectives on food movements in the US and the EU; the EU's contribution to Nation-building in South Asia; and the Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the EU. In March 2010 the Center held its second annual teacher workshop, focusing this year on migration and labor in the European Union. During the spring semester we also hosted visiting scholars and dignitaries who delivered lectures on such diverse topics as the priorities of the Spanish European Union presidency, the EU reflection group on the future of Europe; immigrant integration in European schools; and multicultural debates in Europe.

As always, we invite you to visit our website at <http://eucenter.berkeley.edu/> for the latest up-to-date information about EU Center activities and research and funding opportunities. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the EU Center directly by e-mail at [eucenter@berkeley.edu](mailto:eucenter@berkeley.edu) <<mailto:eucenter@berkeley.edu>> or by phone on (510) 643-4558. We look forward to seeing you at our next upcoming events!

Beverly Crawford  
Co-director

Jeffrey Pennington  
Co-director

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## **ACH DEUTSCHLAND! GREECE, THE EURO CRISIS AND BENIGN HEGEMONY**

*Melanie Morisse-Schilbach, Visiting Scholar, Institute of European Studies, UC Berkeley, Research Fellow and Lecturer, Institute for Political Sciences, TU Dresden*

### **Introduction**

In his “Ach Europa! – Wahrnehmungen aus sieben Ländern“<sup>1</sup> – the German author, poet and Europeanist *par cœur* Hans Magnus Enzensberger published a series of investigative travelogues about seven European countries and their political cultures: Hungary, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Poland, Portugal, Norway . Europe, so the idea went, is much better to discover and to ‘feel’ when approaching its soul from its rims rather than from its power center. This is the reason why he deliberately excluded Britain, Germany

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<sup>1</sup> Enzensberger, Hans Magnus, 1987: Ach Europa! Wahrnehmungen aus sieben Länder, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp (engl). Europe, Europe, Pantheon New York, 1989).

and France from the series. For him, Europe is not about an office or an institution or about power, Europe, instead, “is the best place to be in the world. It has a much richer future than codified languages of the treaties”.<sup>2</sup> Commenting on the recent developments in Europe, he expresses his angry and disappointment. “Europe is a great achievement but they are messing it up. (...) it is anti-European, because they antagonize people without any reason for doing. (...) it is a rolling back on liberties which we have acquired.”

Germany, unfortunately, has become a major player in this gamble of “antagonizing” Europe, the Europe of ordinary people and political elites alike. The Greek bailout (and the shameful bashing of Greeks in the popular German press, particularly the BILD-Zeitung<sup>3</sup>), the Euro turmoil and the crisis management among the EU member states all reveal that ‘messing Europe up’ is nowadays a (intended?) consequence of German EU policy (or should we say non-policy?). Never before throughout the history of European integration is the destiny of EU-Europe so closely linked to the future of Germany’s general commitment in Europe. The current crisis of Europe is for most of it a crisis of Germany in Europe, the biggest (in terms of population and economic strength) and most influential member states within the EU. Thus, instead of sighing “Ach Europa!” as the German journalist Christoph Schwennicke, referring to Enzensberger, recently did,<sup>4</sup> “Ach Deutschland!” might be the better sigh to describe feelings about the state of the art of the EU in general and - closely enmeshed to that - of Germany as its power plant of the past in particular.

Much has been written about Germany in Europe.<sup>5</sup> Most commentators, journalists, academics and politicians were always in agreement on the fact that the only possible way to tame post-world war II Germany had been to link it as closely as possible to its European partners by the intermediary of multilateral institutions. At the same time, it became also clear to European leaders of that time (except Britons maybe), that the only way to benefit from these close linkages to former enemy Germany was – paradoxically - to let it become strong and powerful once again (at least in economic terms). France, in that respect, as the nation in Europe that suffered most from the insatiable hunger for territorial conquest of its neighbor East of the Rhine, took an admirable step when it decided to link its own destiny to that of the re-emerging powerful

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<sup>2</sup> The Guardian May, 15 2010.

<sup>3</sup> In a series of lurid articles published in February and March 2010 the mass circulation daily BILD blamed Greeks of being lazy and able to retire in their early 50s and having wasted billions of Euros transferred to them by virtue of the European funds for structural adjustment and regional development: Surprisingly, none of our well educated and intellectually sophisticated politicians currently in power in Germany were smart enough to condemn and bash these embarrassing attacks against Greece.

<sup>4</sup> Spiegel Online May 11, 2010

<sup>5</sup> See among others Banchoff, Thomas, 1999: German identity and European Integration, in: European Journal of International relations 5, 3, 259-289.; Bulmer, Simon J.; Charlie Jeffrey and William E. Paterson (eds.), 2000: Germany’s European Diplomacy. Shaping the Regional Milieu, Manchester: Manchester University Press.; Harnisch, Sebastian and Hanns W. Maull (eds.), 2001: Germany as a Civilian Power? The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic, Manchester: Manchester University Press; Douglas Webber (ed.), 2001: New Europe, New Germany, Old Foreign Policy? German Foreign Policy Since Unification, London: Frank Cass.

West Germany. On the whole, European leaders deliberately accepted and explicitly pushed (with the help of the US) for another kind of German dominance in Europe. What they gained from that risky strategy was economic wealth on the one hand, and the certitude that Germany would relinquish its sovereignty to them, on the other. They “bought” control over post war Germany by allowing it to regain strength and power. Germany, so to speak, became a hegemon by default, a status granted by its former enemies. Unfortunately, Germany nowadays is on its way to lose this comfortable position as benign leader and legitimate power in EU-Europe, not so much because others are rejecting its leadership or denying fellowship, but because it deliberately took wrong political choices. Reestablishing Germany as a benign hegemon in European monetary cooperation, however, is the best way to serve the interests of both, Germany and the EU.

### **EMU, Greece and the Euro crisis: consequences of losing Germany as a benign hegemon**

What does the current crisis tell us about the hegemon Germany? The Greece and Euro crisis reached its tipping point in January 2010 when Greece tried to raise funds to pay down some of its 53 billion euro deficit. Investors, for this time, forced the government to pay an annual interest rate of more than 6 percent on bonds that will mature in five years. This financial shock arose out of a period of waves of downgrading Greece’s credit rating by the end of 2009 to BBB minus, determined by the two leading international rating agencies Standard & Poor’s and Fitch. As a consequence, a threatening bailout of Greece also attacked the euro zone member states Portugal, Spain and Italy, leading to a massive and rapid devaluation of the euro against the US dollar. In order to stem market panic the Euro bloc states edged towards emergency guarantees and the regions turned to the European leader in monetary and economic affairs, Germany, by hoping that the stability of the euro could be provided by a strong and decisive commitment by the hegemon. “The Germans are the only ones with deep pockets”, one expert in European monetary cooperation has been quoted as saying.<sup>6</sup> In fact, everyone expected to see Germany - with the assistance of France - taking over the leadership in crisis management. In other words, the European partners and also the EU institutions were ready to accept Germany as a leader in solving the issue, in opening its pockets by offering Greece guarantees and in calming down market fever. Thus, the Greece crisis comprises an ideal-type like playing field for a benign hegemon to act accordingly.

But quite the opposite happened: from the very beginning of the crisis, Berlin had been mostly silent and reluctant on the matter. The reason for this non-hegemonic behavior was, according to one source, tactics: the German government wanted to put pressure on Greece at a time when Greek civil servants opposed severe cutbacks that the government had promised in order to rein its giant budget deficit. But these tactics rapidly became the strategy of the day: apart from this astonishing silence and reluctance, Germany, finally, after having decided to act, did so mainly in a unilateral way (another surprise for all, its European partners, journalists and academics alike). Among those unilateralist actions is the call for a treaty change to allow the expulsion of errant euro members, the wish to see Greece’s problems solved within the hands of the IMF, not of

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<sup>6</sup> The New York Times, February 11, 2010. “Germany, Forced to Buoy Greece, Rues Euro Shift”

the EMU, its reluctance and awkwardness about the 750 billion euro EU safety net for the single currency and last but not least, the unilateral decision to ban naked short selling. Thus, in German European politics unilateral temptation isn't the exemption anymore but the rule in times of crisis. It might be too early to assess the causes of this unilateralism but it seems plausible to argue that the declining German economy<sup>7</sup>, the growing budget deficit<sup>8</sup> and a severe program of austerity upon which the German government had to decide when the Greece/Euro crisis emerged<sup>9</sup> all led to this unilateral action. Furthermore, the fact that Germany preferred to see the Greece crisis solved by the IMF rather than the EMU might be a sign that the German government, indeed, mistrusts the EMU's institutional settings and does not believe in the power of the EU institutions to solve the problem; that, in other words, the institutional setting of the EMU is perceived as too weak to serve German interests. The German government does not want to act within and throughout the EMU because it mistrusts the complex and merely controllable decision-making process.

However, the consequences of this strategy of non-commitment and unilateralism are severe: all actions, decided under domestic political (regional elections in North-Rhine Westphalia) and legal pressure (Germany's Constitutional Court decision on Europe and the Lisbon treaty) have seriously contributed to the crisis of the markets and to a confidence and solidarity crisis among the EU member states. When Germany agreed to contribute to a bailout fund Europe's economic problems were far worse, and Germany and others had to pay much more cash. Merkel delayed a financial rescue for Greece until contagion began spreading to other countries, especially Spain and Portugal. In fact, Germany's reluctance and caution over a bailout for Greece, helped to turn a crisis of Greek debt into one that destabilized the entire euro zone. Similarly, Berlin's sudden unilateral ban on certain speculative trades provoked exactly the kind of market turmoil it was meant to stop.<sup>10</sup> But Germany's unilateralism and isolationist temptations – some would even say autism – have far more consequences than economic damages for the Euro and the budget situation in many European member states: it damages the image of the EU as a community of solidarity and questions the quality of the EU to be a credible and powerful actor in economic affairs at the global scale. But mostly they provoke damages for Germany and its role as benign hegemon: Many commentators believe that

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<sup>7</sup> In February 2010, Germany lost for the first time its position and most cherished title, world export champion, to China, reinforcing already existing feelings of being in decline economically. The New York Times February 11, 2010. "Germany, Forced to Buoy Greece, Rues Euro Shift".

<sup>8</sup> The projected budget deficit reaches US \$ 118 billion in 2010, the highest deficit ever in post world war II Germany.

<sup>9</sup> Following the recommendation of the "Föderalismuskommission" in 2008 and according to art. 143 d (1) of the German Constitution (Grundgesetz), governments are forced to control and consolidate the federal budget deficit by reducing instruments of credit borrowing ("Schuldenbremse"). Analysts are worried about the negative consequences of deep spending cuts in Germany. German austerity program might cripple nascent recovery and also Germany's own prosperity. See The New York Times May, 26 2010. "Germany vs. Europe".

<sup>10</sup> The New York Times, May 31, 2010. "Defending the Euro Is More Than an Economic Issue".

we are witnessing the end of Germany's consensus-driven approach to Europe, which meant working in lockstep with other members. Nowadays, Germany follows an every-man-for-himself attitude. Its partners fear that the country is now affirming its national interest and imposing its (unilateral non-European) will on the rest of the EU. Germany, so to speak, is becoming a more "normal" EU member states, defending its national interest like any other country.<sup>11</sup> The consequence is that its European partners do not take its leadership in monetary and economic affairs for granted anymore; they do not accept to be reigned by a hegemon.

### **Doomed to lead in (monetary) Europe: why Germany ought to be a benign hegemon**

But what does it mean to be "normal" in the case of Germany and what is the "national interest" of Germany in Europe? Germany can not behave like a "normal" country in Europe due to its overwhelming economic and monetary power. This exceptional structural power forces Germany to be a hegemonic power and leader, there isn't any other choice. Historically, it can not become a "normal" country because there is still mistrust and resentment throughout its European allies and partners as the Greek crisis has shown. As long as there are these feelings and disharmonic attitudes in EU-Europe, Germany would lose legitimacy and credibility in order to shape Europe's future for its own fate and for the good of Europe – two ideological power factors of a benign hegemon. What should Germany do? It should, of course, fight for strong multilateral institutions! This, at least, is what theory expects a benign hegemon would do.<sup>12</sup> In that sense, Germany, as Barry Eichengreen argues<sup>13</sup> has benefited enormously from the creation of the euro. And it should now repay for it. Eichengreen also suggests that the government should push for strong institutions, i.e. an emergency lending facility, more political integration in EMU, a fiscal support and a more accountable European Central Bank. In general, he sees the role of Germany as that of a Trojan horse that leads Europe toward deeper political integration in monetary and economic affairs. Are we witnessing such a strong support of Germany for strong European institutions in EMU? There are some doubts.

In general, the euro crisis has shown that 'Europe' has to be a constant rather than a variable in German policy. For Germany, Europe is not negotiable, neither for its own fate nor for the fate of Europe. Historically it is still Germany's duty to serve Europe regardless of anti-European polemics emerging out of the mass media, the broader public or political oppositions at the extreme rims.<sup>14</sup> If German political elites would explicitly

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<sup>11</sup> Time, Thursday, May, 27. „How to Stop the Euro Crisis: Brussels vs. Berlin”.

<sup>12</sup> Crawford, Beverly, 2007: Power and German Foreign Policy. Embedded Hegemony in Europe, London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 15-16.

<sup>13</sup> Eichengreen, Barry, 2010: Europe's Trojan Horse, Project-syndicate, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/eichengreen14/English> (17 June 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, nowadays, anti-Europeanists also come out of the centre of the two biggest popular political parties, the social-democrats of SPD and the Christian Democrats of CDU. Also gone are those days in which the Genschers and Kinkels of the liberal party FDP made of the party the party of Europeanists in Germany.

decide in favour of Europe, to have a European reflex so to speak, and to accept leadership in Europe and be able to explain the benefits and costs of leadership, German voters would accept the burden. If, however, German elites continue to play the domestic card when it comes time to decide on painful issues in European politics, then it will come as no surprise to see the German broader public drifting further apart from the idea of Europe. Unfortunately, it was the Schröder-Fischer government that linked its European politics so closely to domestic affairs. Since then, the rationale for political elites seems to be the following: it is easier to be against Europe and to act unilaterally than to be with Europe and to act multilaterally. Europe does not have a lobby in German politics! Acting multilaterally always needs the willingness to fight for the better argument, to spend more time to convince people, to be more patient and to have staying power. It is, in other words, the more costly political choice. This is all the more evident because the complexity and diversity of the EU project led to what scholars call diffusion and dilution of power.<sup>15</sup> Apparently, German political and diplomatic elites are badly equipped to lead in this panoply of institutions, or to maintain, in other words, the leadership role by reigning within and throughout institutions. France and Great Britain are much better equipped in that sense.<sup>16</sup> However, leading in institutional day-today politics might need general political support. Unfortunately, since the Schröder-Fischer government, political elites in Germany have been choosing wrong political choices: they do not recognize that leadership in Europe is the only way for a benign hegemon to gain as much from Europe in the future as it benefited from it in the past. The national interest of the benign hegemon Germany must still be to think European first and national thereafter.

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## **THE POLITICS OF WINE PRODUCTION**

*Betsy Carter, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Political Science, UC Berkeley*

Understanding how and why similar wine regulation creates different market outcomes in different national contexts is of critical importance to EU politics. Wine has been under the regulatory jurisdiction of the EU since it was subsumed under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 1973, and in August 2009 control of protected designations of origins—the main regulatory mechanism for quality wine—passed from a national level policy to the auspices of the European Union. Despite the fact that France and Italy have nominally identical wine regulation, the two countries are responding

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<sup>15</sup> Le Gloannec, Anne-Marie, 2001: Germany's Power and the Weakening of States in a Globalised World: Deconstructing a Paradox, Cahiers Européennes de Science Po, No. 3, Paris: Institut de Sciences Politiques.

<sup>16</sup> See on that issue Morisse-Schilbach, Melanie, 2006: Diplomatie und Europäische Außenpolitik. Europäisierungseffekte im Kontext von Intergouvernementalismus am Beispiel von Frankreich und Großbritannien, Baden-Baden: Nomos.

differently to today's market challenges. This raises the questions: how does regulation interact with different national contexts? What shapes how countries compete? And what power does the EU have to enhance the competitiveness of national markets?

Comparative French and Italian wine markets provides an ideal lens through which to understand not only the limits and benefits of changes in wine policy, but also to shed light on the broader limits and benefits of policy change and market adaptation. My dissertation, "The Politics of Wine Production in France and Italy", considers how and why similar wine regulation leads to different market outcomes in the two countries. I explore the observed differences in the structure of the wine market by a historical analysis of the social groups underlying the sectors—specifically industry actors, consumers, and the state. The current position of France as a supply-led producer and of Italy as a demand-driven producer emerged as a result of the timing and origin of the regulation; the strength of the state to enforce regulation and subsequently shift consumer preferences and producer incentives; and the local political landscape. In my dissertation, I argue that regulation is subsumed into the social and political context in which it operates. Local histories and networks of cooperation will shape the prism through which the regulation must pass.

My research indicates the different market outcomes we observe today in France and Italy are linked to the different origins and timing of their wine regulation. Specifically, French wine regulation was crafted and implemented in response to wine fraud, and the subsequent decline of French wine quality. The "unintended consequence" of the policy response to market decline-- the protected designation of origin model—was higher market value for regulated French wine. The geographic-based quality wine regulation, which built upon local best practice and specified which grapes could be grown, how they could be pruned, blended, and aged, provided a defined "taste" that was associated with particular geographic areas, thus increasing revenues for producers within this state-protected regulation. This regulation—the *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*--restructured economic incentives and strengthened local level cooperation, resulting in strong shared geographic brands. The shared geographic brands enabled even small farmers to produce profitably, with the place of origin and government-backed guarantees of "traditional best practice" replacing typical brands.

Italians adopted geographic-based wine regulation to replicate the economic success experienced by French producers. Specifically, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture introduced geographic-based regulation as a way to add an additional "brand" to Italian wine makers and to enhance their market visibility and, hence, their market value. In Italy, where regulation developed much later and where government guarantees were not sufficient to change the behavior of local consumers and thus to increase domestic wine prices, farms consolidated and large brands developed to provide quality guarantees. This led to the emergence of different market objectives and different local political power structures between the two countries. Large producers are less dependent upon the power of the appellation to provide a guarantee of quality; small French producers are more dependent on the power of the appellation.

As small firms are more dependent upon the guarantee afforded by appellation regulation, and Italian producers are more dependent upon subtly shifting taste to meet international demand, the impact of these different market structures is a French wine market that is ultimately more regulated and less flexible than its Italian counterpart. And



the difference in how the two wine markets function has implications for the expected consequences of the new EU wine regulatory changes. Specifically, I expect the movement from the nation state level to the EU level will, rather than causing a convergence between the national systems of wine production, exacerbate the differences in the ways that they compete. One important change in wine regulation is Article 47, which stipulates that quality control moves from the jurisdiction of producers to the purview of an independent review body. The effect of Article 47 on the Italian case should be to further entrench flexibility and increase the volume of less regulated wine, as Italian wine producers will face a choice of producing according to tradition under the protection of the appellation or producing to the market under the strength of their brand. Successful branded producers will leave the appellation if the appellation prioritizes traditional production over market responsiveness. In France, the legislation would be expected to reinforce quality production, as lower-quality producers who had formerly been included in the appellation due to the social position of the producer in the community would be forced to improve quality to receive the AOC guarantee. In both cases, the legislation will produce different market outcomes.

This summer, with the support of the EU Center at Berkeley, I will be conducting additional dissertation research for my French case study at *L'Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique* (INRA) in Montpellier, France. Montpellier is in the heart of the traditional bulk wine-producing region of the Languedoc, where the wine sector is currently undergoing acute regulatory restructuring. My work will consist of data collection and interviews with wine-makers, policy makers, and industry leaders as I seek to explain the dialectical evolution between market evolution and local agricultural politics in this region in transition. Explaining the dynamic between the market and politics is critical if we aim to understand how new regulatory initiatives will truly reshape market incentives—the market is not a blank slate of atomized actors, but instead a complex, changing entity whose rules, dynamics, and histories give shape to the social contexts the market operates within.

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## **FROM TRANSIT MIGRATION TO INTEGRATION: EUROPEAN MIGRANCY AND DIVERSITY IN ESRA ERSEN'S VIDEO WORKS**

*Nilgun Bayraktar, Ph.D. Candidate. Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies (with a Designated Emphasis in Film Studies and Gender, Women and Sexuality)*

In my dissertation, titled *Art against the Current: Geo-politics of Mobility and Migration in Post-Socialist Europe*, I investigate socially engaged video and film works which address issues of space, place, and identity in contemporary Europe. I focus on the ways in which artistic practice negotiates and critiques complex *mobilities* and *moorings* conditioned by gender, ethnicity, and class, as well as the expansion of neoliberal capitalism and governance. The sites and objects of my project require deploying an

integrated methodology combining close textual analysis of films and videos with archival and ethnographic research. I will work primarily in Istanbul and Berlin, with frequent excursions to other sites/cities such as Vienna, Kassel, Cologne, Zurich, and Paris. After advancing to candidacy in May 2008, I spent six months (January-June 2009) traveling through these cities and also living in some in order to do archival work in various galleries and museums. I also conducted interviews with 25 artists about their artistic practices and political positionalities, in particular with regards to migration and mobility in Europe. With the aid of a Dissertation Grant from the European Union Center of Excellence, I now have the opportunity to continue my research in the key sites of artistic and cultural production in Turkey and Southern Europe.

The following is an excerpt taken from one of my chapters. It provides a brief analysis of one video piece:

This chapter examines three video installations by Berlin-Istanbul based artist Esra Ersen, exploring the changing topography of migration in Europe from the mid-1990s onwards with a specific focus on transit migration, asylum seeking, and migratory citizenship. Produced for Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, Istanbul, *Brothers and Sisters* (2003) centers on a group of undocumented African migrants living in the inner cities of Istanbul with the hope of moving on to a Western European country. *If you could speak Swedish* (2001), developed for Moderna Museet Projekt, Stockholm, concerns a group of migrants and refugees who study Swedish at a language school in one of the suburbs of Stockholm. It interrogates the process of learning a new language under the policies of the state towards the integration of ethnic minorities. *Parachutist in Third Floor, Birds in Laundry* (2005), composed of a three channel video installation and six paintings in a public housing unit in the “foreigners quarter” Holma, is a product of an artist-in-residency program in Malmö, Sweden. The work is based on interviews with a group of migrants living in the housing blocks once planned for Swedish working class families in the 1960s. It focuses on the issues of integration, assimilation, urban segregation, and the functioning of social democracy in Sweden. This chapter shows that in Ersen’s work, Europe emerges in its diversity and heterogeneity: as a territorial site of disciplinary practices, a borderland, an imaginary space, a desired destiny, a site of urban segregation, and a refugee camp. And the changing regime of border control appears interdependent with what Papadopoulos et.al define as “fluid, streamlined, clandestine, multi-directional, multipositional and context-dependent forms of mobility.”<sup>17</sup>

Ersen’s artistic practice defies categorization. Her artistic practice journeys through photography, video, performance, and site-specific work; and her works are often times outcomes of an extended period of research, interviews, and participant observation. For *Brothers and Sisters* Ersen accompanied a number of undocumented African immigrants over a period of six months, and became acquainted with their world. The video depicts the everyday lives of a group of transit migrants living in the notorious

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<sup>17</sup> Dimitris Papadopoulos. et.al., *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (London, Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2008), 163.

neighborhood Tarlabasi. Part of the Beyoglu sub-province of Istanbul Tarlabasi has recently been under the impact of massive gentrification projects..

*Brothers and Sisters* calls attention to the interplay between vast networks of transit migration and market-driven gentrification of urban space, and produces an alternative mapping of Istanbul through the gaze of a group of transit migrants. It depicts the ways in which the transitory and illegalized status of migrants from West and Sub-Saharan Africa affects their use of Istanbul's diverse cityscapes. For example, since their status in Turkey is illegal and the hope of moving to a Western European country does not cease, these migrants do not allow themselves to become integrated into the texture of local life. They prefer instead to spend time in sites of non-place, like McDonalds or shopping malls. Ersen's video also brings up issues around the paradoxical situations resulting from the legal procedures and discrimination that migrants encounter in social life. Thus *Brothers and Sisters* suggests that the diverse, unstable, non-linear, and flexible trajectories of migrants illustrate the emergence of a 'highly precarious transit zone' in Istanbul. In that sense, the video underscores the *urban* dimension of *transit* migration by alluding to the fact that Istanbul's cityscapes are part of a larger network connecting the physical nodes of transit routes where migrants frequently stop-over for an indeterminate period of time.

*Brothers and Sisters* is composed of episodes, most of which depict male subjects in places that are defined by certain forms of masculinity; places such as *kahvehane* (male-only coffee/tea shop), boxing gyms, and soccer fields. Significantly, the video shows women only in interior places, indicating both the spatialisation of gender and the gendering of space. The video opens with a low angle shot of the façade of an architectural landmark of Istanbul, the Haydarpasa Train Station, captured with incessantly agitated camera movements. As the camera tilts down with a traditional Turkish song playing in the background-- recalling old Turkish films of the 1950s and 1960s—an inserted text explains: "Steve from Somali stands at the seaward gate of the main train station that holds most memorable scenes of old Turkish movies when immigrants from rural regions face for the first time the big city in front of Haydarpasa train station's gate." As the text moves from right to left on the screen, we see a frontal long shot of a group of black men wearing contemporary clothes and looking around aimlessly. The text continues to explain: "Steve is deceived by a guy who takes his money in order to take him illegally to Hamburg. The boat leaves him at the port of Haydarpasa instead of Hamburg, standing in front of the station building constructed by a German architect a century ago. He still thinks he arrived at the European city he so long dreamt of." The camera discontinuously circles around the group of black men as we see a medium shot of a Turkish family, whose outfits recall those worn by rural migrants to the city, curiously watching the re-enactment of the arrival of those African migrants. The place, Haydarpasa Train Station, is especially evocative for the audiences of old Turkish films, who have seen numerous scenes depicting newly arrived rural immigrants to the city whose streets are "paved with gold" (a famous line of Turkish cinema), standing on the steps of this same landmark station. In those scenes rural immigrants with wooden suitcases in their hands and with hope for a better life gaze into/ the city with admiration and fear; seeing a place that "symbolizes Western values, with endless

opportunities and a high standard of living.”<sup>18</sup> The opening scene of *Brothers and Sisters* dislocates a landmark architectural sign of Istanbul from its familiar histories and turns it into a performative, unstable location. It intertwines different forms of migration of different scales (rural to urban, Africa to Europe) and different socio-historical specificities, underscoring the intersection of diverse mobilities at sites of transportation infrastructure.

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## EVENTS: SPRING 2010

Monday, February 8

“Cold War on the Home Front: Consumption as Propaganda in Marshall Plan Europe”

Greg Castillo

*Associate Professor of Architecture, UC Berkeley*

Wednesday, February 17

Panel presentation : “How the Media tells the News: Five European Perspectives”

Ayla Albayrak, *Freelance Journalist, Turkey; Correspondent for Helsinging Sanomat*;  
Luc Ihaddadene, *Freelance Journalist, France (Le Monde, La Croix, Le Nouvel Observateur, Okapi)*; Aude Lorriaux, *Field Reporter for L'Est Républicain; Intern, Le Monde, AFP (World Wide French Press Agency), La Croix*; Mary O’Hara, *Staff writer for social affairs, The Guardian, London and Alistair Cooke Fulbright Scholar*; Stefano Valentino, *Euroreporter. eu*

Friday, February 26

“Mitigating Global Warming Through Art - Exploring the Importance of Music for the Change of Lifestyles”

Maximilian Mayer

*Research Fellow and Lecturer at the Center for Global Studies, Bonn University*

March 6, 2010

2nd Annual Teacher Workshop on the European Union: “Migration and Labor in the EU: a Roadmap for the Future?”

Tuesday, March 9

“Priorities of the Spanish European Union Presidency in the First Semester of 2010”

D. Manuel Pradas Romani

*Consul General, Consulate General of Spain in San Francisco*

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<sup>18</sup> Nermin Saybasili, “Tarlabasi: ‘Another World’ in the City,” in *B-Zone: Becoming Europe and Beyond* (Berlin: KW: Institute for Contemporary Art, 2005)

March 17, 2010

“Islam and Homosexuality in the West”

Boris Dittrich

*Dutch Politician and Advocacy Director in LGBT rights for Human Rights Watch*

March 29-30, 2010

Conference: Population, Integration and Law: Implications for Immigration Policy

March 31, 2010

“Democratization through Science? International Institutions, Epistemic Communities, and Political Change”

Dr. Melanie Morisse-Schilbach

*Institute for Political Sciences, University of Dresden, Germany*

April 1

"Europe 2.0: The bumpy road to sustainable integration: Lessons from the EU reflection group on the Future of Europe"

Kalypso Nicolaidis

*Professor of International Relations and Director of the European Studies Centre at [Oxford University](#)*

Friday, April 2

Panel Discussion: “Food, Culture and Identity in a Global Society”

Darra Goldstein

*Francis Christopher Oakley Third Century Professor of Russian at Williams College and founding editor of "Gastronomica: The Journal of Food"*

Barry Glassner

*Professor of Sociology and Executive Vice Provost at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles*

Wednesday, April 7

“Successful and Genuine Failures: France and Germany in the History of ‘Multi-Speed’ European Political Integration”

Douglas Webber

*Professor of Political Science, INSEAD, France*

Tuesday, April 20

“Immigrant Incorporation and Identity: Schooling the Second Generation in Europe”

Daniel Faas

*Assistant Professor in Sociology at Trinity College, Dublin*

April 9

“The Political Economy of Financial Reform”

John Eatwell

*President of Queens' College, Cambridge*

Wednesday, April 21

“How Europe is Changing. The Multicultural Debate in Europe”

Kader Abdolah

*Dutch-Iranian Writer*

April 28-30, 2010

Conference: Nationhood and Nation-building in South Asia

April 30

Conference: “Food: History and Culture in the West”

May 3

“India-EU Strategic Partnership”

Ummu Salma Bava

*Chairperson & Professor of European Studies Centre for European Studies School of  
International Studies Jawaharal Nehru University New Delhi-110067 INDIA &  
Associate Fellow ASIA SOCIETY, New York*