

Digital migration management as “alterity processing”. Evidence from the European border(s)

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Prof. Pelizza’s lecture at the “Borders and Migration in Digital Times” Summer School will map current developments in the digital management of migration in Europe and introduce the notion of “Alterity Processing” as the data infrastructures, knowledge practices, and bureaucratic procedures through which populations unknown to European actors are translated into “European-legible” identities.

How are people on the move enacted by the interplay of multifarious data systems used at the European border? How do “migrants”, “refugees”, “irregulars” come into being through the mediation of data infrastructures that are often interoperable? Beyond easy assumptions, how are stereotypes de facto built through classifications that silence most aspects of people’s identities? Drawing on research data collected since 2017 at diverse locations throughout Europe in the context of the Processing Citizenship research program (<http://processingcitizenship.eu>), Pelizza’s lecture analyzes the data infrastructures used to classify people caught at the borders. It will focus on the biometric translation of people and bodies into data, as well as on the data models underpinning national and supra-national information systems used to identify and sort third country nationals trying to enter Europe.

All in all, this lecture will uncover the sociotechnical and classificatory mechanisms that bring to the enactment of people on the move as alterity, and will show possible direction in which “things could be otherwise”.