

has the honor to invite you to the public defense of the PhD thesis of

René Kreichauf

to obtain the degree of Doctor of Sciences

Title of the PhD thesis:

Forced Migration Spaces: The Spatial Negotiation of Asylum in European and U.S. Cities

Promotors:

Prof. dr. Bas van Heur (VUB)

Prof. dr. Markus Kienschner (Freie Universität Berlin)

The defense will take place on

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 2pm.

The defense can be followed through a live stream. Contact Rene.Kreichauf@vub.be for the streaming link and more information.

Members of the jury

Prof. dr. David Bassens (VUB, chair)

Prof. dr. Ilke Adam (VUB, secretary)

Dr. Eva Swyngedouw (VUB)

Dr. Serena D'Agostino (VUB)

Prof. dr. Mara Sidney (Rutgers University, USA)

Prof. dr. Elizabeth Cullen Dunn (Indiana University, USA)

Curriculum vitae

René Kreichauf studied Urban Planning at Technische Universität Berlin and Urban Studies at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Universität Wien, Københavns Universitet, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Between 2016 and 2020, Kreichauf has been a FWO fellow at the Cosmopolis Centre for Urban Research (VUB) and an associated Ph.D. student of the Graduate School of North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. His fellowship included visiting researcher positions at the Global Urban Studies Program (Rutgers University—Newark) and Baruch College (The City University of New York). His publication and research activities focus on the arrival of forced migrants in European and U.S. cities, urban transformation trends, declining cities, small town studies, and social-spatial inequalities.

Abstract of the PhD research

Forced migration is a spatial experience. It can include physical displacement in the home country, border crossings, and asylum procedures involving reception, dispersal, waiting in camps, and residency restrictions; but also place-making and settlement practices. In all cases, patterns of space can both constrain and enable migration processes. The U.S. and EU have implemented various spatial technologies to control, channel, and prevent forced migrants from entering territories to seek protection. Many procedures have also been internalized within the territory of individual states; ultimately shifting asylum policies and bordering practices to the urban scale. Simultaneously, forced migrants have been moving to cities more rapidly than in past decades. Using cases from U.S. and European cities, in this thesis I analyze the spatial production related to asylum in cities as landscapes and tools of power, in which the negotiations between interlinked but often divergent legal, political, social and economic actors, and institutions, and logics facilitate and condition the arrival and life of forced migrants in urban areas. In particular, I consider dispersal, detention, camps, refugee housing, migrant economies, and neighborhoods in order to uncover the complex and paradoxical purposes, developments, and power struggles of and within these forced migration spaces. This includes the way they are weaved into and contested in the urban fabric, as well as their similarities and differences in various national and local contexts. My analysis elucidates the sovereign and economic ambitions to manage and exploit forced migrants through space—including elements of violence—as well as the attempts of forced migrants to access urban life and pursue their migratory projects. The simultaneity of inclusion and exclusion, as well as the interplay of gaining and losing power, makes space a migration experience as well: one that is characterized by movement, stagnation, fragmentation, and displacement.