

Call for Contributions:

Infrastructures of Care

Spaces of Displacement and Refuge

1 February 2019

The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, London



H. Tayob, 2014-2015, Cape Town.



I. Katz, 2015-2016, The Jungle (Calais)

Organizers:

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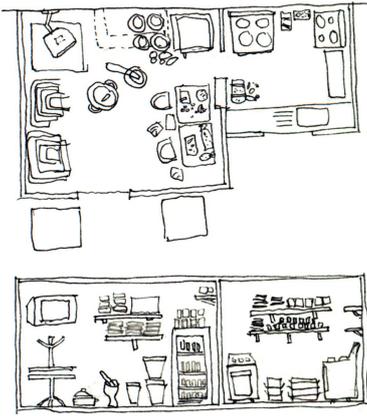
Dr Irit Katz (Cities Programme, LSE and University of Cambridge)

Dr Giovanna Astolfo (Development Planning Unit, UCL)

Infrastructures of Care is a symposium and exhibition at The Bartlett School of Architecture. We are inviting abstracts for 15-minute talks as well as visual/ spatial propositions for an accompanying exhibition. We aim to foster a conversation which brings together academics, activists, NGOs and spatial practitioners on questions of *infrastructures of care* relating to forced migration. The aim is to explore the various spatial, material, human, and humanitarian entanglements of provision created *for* and *by* displaced people.

Experiences of forced displacement and migration are profoundly shaped by the places where people find refuge and support. While the refugee camp dominates spatial studies and was considered a primary site of relief, today around 60% of the world's forcibly displaced live in urban areas and the city has been recognised as a particularly important host to refugees. In addition, as more than 80% of refugees live in developing countries, humanitarian concerns of protection and support are closely entangled with the social, political, and economic contexts of local populations. The broad array of formalised and informal spaces of displacement and refuge often destabilise the dichotomy between the city and camp and the meaning of concepts such as shelter and relief. This in turn suggests a re-thinking of how figures such as the forced migrant and the aid worker are understood. While foregrounding the role of space, this initiative takes as a starting point the *infrastructures of care* which are varyingly understood as spatial, human, material and institutional mechanisms of support and agency, as well as of control and restriction.

While infrastructures are usually conceived as physical and technical systems according to normative and modernist understandings, this has been challenged in recent years with particular reference to the global south. Infrastructures are now also recognised as part of broader political, economic, social, material and spatial processes, both formal and informal, affected by factors within and beyond national borders (Simone 2004, Gandy 2005, de Boeck 2012, Chattopadhyay 2012, Larkin 2013, Amin 2014, Easterling 2014). Following these interpretations, we argue for recognising the entanglement of physical, human, legal, humanitarian, and other infrastructures of care and relief created both *for* and *by* forced migrants. For example, we understand spaces such as camps created by humanitarian agencies as well as urban and para-urban informal and formalised spatial appropriations set up by refugees themselves, as parts of infrastructures of care for displaced populations.



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Furthermore, while “care” is often understood as overwhelmingly positive, we argue for a more nuanced interpretation which acknowledges the associated layers of support, vulnerability, control, and in some cases coercion, related to this term (see *Casualties of Care*, Ticktin 2011). We simultaneously suggest that certain forms of care and associated sustenance are not necessarily reducible to, or exhausted by mechanisms of control (hooks 1990, Hartman 2016) and further recognise that the labour of care is often highly gendered, and significantly devalued, while being explicitly imbricated in politics. *Infrastructures of care* can therefore be understood across scales and spatial forms, in relation to the intimacies of daily life and at the level of broader legal, economic, humanitarian and state planning systems.

In referring to infrastructures of care, we are hoping to draw out the systemic nature of institutions, mechanisms and agents that facilitate, enable and hinder relief for forcedly displaced people (Xiang and Lindquist 2014). We call for theoretical, methodological, empirical, visual and spatial provocations on the question of infrastructures of care, including work which questions relationships of labour, race and gender, in the facilitation, construction and appropriation of spaces of/ by/ for displaced populations. We do not see these categories as exhaustive and invite proposals which challenge and contest their boundaries. Proposals are invited in the form of an abstract of up to 300 words and images of up to 5 MB.

The deadline is **7 December 2018**.

Abstracts are to be submitted to infrastructuresofcare@gmail.com

Participation is free. While lunch and refreshments will be provided, we will not be able to cover additional costs such as travel and accommodation.

