

FEMINIST AUTONOMOUS CENTRE FOR RESEARCH

FEMINIST
NO
BORDERS
SUMMERSCHOOL #5

DATES

15-18/6/2022

THEMES

ABOLITION/
COVID
BORDERS/
POSITIONALITY

NODES

PALERMO/HERAKLION/
BERLIN/ATHENS-VIRTUAL

OPEN CALL

UNTIL 9/4/22

FEMINISTRESEARCH.ORG

Fifth Annual
Feminist No Borders Summer School
15–18 June 2022

Palermo/Heraklion/Berlin/Virtual

Deadline for expression of interest:
9 April 2022

Themes

Abolition

COVID borders/bordering through COVID
Positionality in research and activism

The annual feminist no borders summer school provides a space of encounter, mutual learning, and inspiration for researchers, activists, artists, and members of community organisations to exchange experiences, strategies, and struggles across and against borders. We seek to displace the hegemony of academia as the primary location from which knowledge is produced and distributed. It's an antiracist, abolitionist feminist space that seeks to challenge the division between knowledge and practice and to intervene in the dominant ways in which borders are reproduced in academia, media, and humanitarianism. In the summer school, we practise alternative ways of learning, listening, and speaking to each other, prefiguring political communities through which we'd like to struggle.

This year, the summer school will take place over four days in three physical locations: Palermo, Heraklion, and Berlin. There will also be a virtual node to facilitate the participation of those who are prevented from travelling due to the border regime (as well as other barriers). Each day, we will meet both within each node as well as hybridly, to enable conversations and exchange across these locations, and to connect our struggles in different localities.

Schedule *times in UTC+3*

Wednesday 15 June

7-8:30 pm: Opening Assembly (hybrid)

Thursday 16 June: Abolition

11-2 pm: Morning Session (in each local/virtual node)

5-7 pm: Roundtable (hybrid)

On the first day of the summer school, we focus on the relationship between prison abolition and border abolition from a feminist perspective. Whilst the US debates on prison abolition critically link the continuum between colonial violence, slavery, prisons, and bordering, in European contexts there seem to be a need to discuss these entanglements further. The criminalisation and imprisonment of people who defy borders, either by crossing them or by supporting border crossers, has become a key bordering technique. The law and the so-called 'criminal justice system' have historically been key sites of racist and patriarchal oppression, and, as such, key sites of struggle. In the context of no-border struggles, however, appeals to the law, to the discourse of human rights, as well as to the *illegality* of state practices seem to go unquestioned.

The questions that arise, then, are:

- To what extent can we demand states and other authorities to "protect people", to "respect rights" and to 'respect the law', when state formations are founded on violence and oppression?
- Is the abolition of the state and of other forms of oppression a precondition for the abolition of borders and prisons?
- Can we reconcile the legal system, on the one hand, with a practice and vision oriented towards border abolition, on the other?
- Is it possible to use the law, the discourse of rights and appeals to illegality of state practices as a tactical element rather than an end-goal in our struggles?
- Is the use of the law a necessary and relevant tool when its formation, construction and application are intrinsic to State's institutions? Could other sets of "principles" or "rights" be more relevant?

- How to think about accountability when it comes to state and corporate violence, from an abolitionist perspective?
- How do we put into practice a feminist abolitionist analysis of the continuum of violence of colonialism, prisons, and borders, and how do we navigate inevitable contradictions?

Friday 17 June: COVID borders/bordering through COVID

11-2 pm: Morning Session (in each local/virtual node)

5-7 pm: Roundtable (hybrid)

On Day 2, we focus on how the management of the pandemic crisis has become a pretext for rebordering projects and installing harsher divisions amongst the global population. From the various locations in which we are based, we have witnessed the pretextual use of the pandemic to ramp up the prisonification process: for instance, on the islands and the mainland in Greece, the government continually applies discriminatory regulations confining people forced to live in camps to a perpetual lockdown, while intensifying racial profiling and criminalisation of people racialised as migrants by police in urban centres on the pretext of pandemic controls; In Italy, for racialized populations crossing borders, quarantine has been conflated with detention, as in the “quarantine ships.” The use of detention under the guise of quarantine becomes a practice through which to obstruct people from accessing the asylum services and applying for asylum. This amounts to denying them the right to asylum and, further, exposing them to violent deportations in the form of push-backs. All of the above point to the ways in which, through the naturalisation of race, pandemic management operates as migration management, which has led to construction of new borders and the intensification of already existing ones. A global regime of vaccine apartheid has reinforced the violent border regime and the forms of inequality, exploitation, and marginalisation it reproduces.

We will reflect on the following questions:

- What are the new borders that have been installed on the pretext of pandemic controls and how can activists mobilise against them in times of social isolation, distancing, and segregation?

- How can we struggle for the right to asylum and international protection without reproducing notions of deservingness and falling into paternalistic conceptualisations of vulnerability?
- How have claims to protection become an excuse to enact violence during the pandemic?
- How can we engage in a feminist critique of bordering that reveals how border violence draws upon scripts of gendered violence and thereby make links between border abuse and domestic abuse?
- How can we resist the prisonification projects, while at the same time challenging fascist opposition to such projects?
- How may we generate feminist resistances to bordering and control of mobility through the pandemic that starts from the location of our bodies?

Saturday 18 June: Positionality in research and activism

11-2 pm: Morning Session (in each local/virtual node)

5-7 pm: Roundtable (hybrid)

7:30-8:30 pm: Closing Assembly (hybrid)

On Day 3, we focus on the intersection of research with activism. We look more specifically at the ethical challenges of doing research within and with activist groups interrogating the positionality(ies) of the researcher. We offer constructive reflections on the intentionality of activist research by asking the very basic question: when does research become extractivist? There are plenty of examples where research has gone wrong when it comes to activism. Cases of broken ties with activist communities due to breach of trust, lack of transparency, knowledge expropriation and co-optation have been documented in research with migrants and/or Indigenous environmental activists in recent years. Along these lines, experiences of gendered violence and sexual harassment in research processes have been heard multiple times. These are issues that put in jeopardy research itself where also fundamental questions of voice, ownership and authorship need to be fully addressed. On the one hand, we need to reconsider the multiple hierarchies within academic research that may not be in line with political values of horizontality, autonomy, and self-determination in no borders activism. On the other hand, we need to acknowledge the various examples of researchers who apply refusal as a methodological tactic

to protect communities as well as an ethical commitment to decolonise research. Lastly, we will also reflect on the geopolitical positionality of research driven by funding bodies and academic institutions of the Global North towards minoritised communities and individuals.

The questions on which we will focus include:

- Can we, indeed, claim the existence of activist research? What are the challenges to overcome the boundaries between “research” and “activism”?
- How, as researchers, can we ethically engage in activist spaces and/or movements and avoid co-optation and knowledge extractivism?
- What are the methodological tools through which we can conduct a horizontal, inclusive and decolonial research that aligns with the activist values of participating communities?
- What are the challenges for addressing pluriversality in research with all voices being equally (re)presented? How do we overcome issues of authorship within collaborative processes of research?
- What should be the mechanisms to call out gendered violence and sexual harassment in research processes? How do we form a complaint?
- How can we challenge the knowledge factories, i.e. academic institutions and funding bodies of the Global North, to decolonise their approach to research outputs (eg. “production” of papers, research excellence frameworks, divisions between researchers and “researched”)?

Format

There will be four nodes, with virtual connections between them:

- Palermo, Sicily, Italy (capped at 20 participants)
- Heraklion, Crete, Greece (capped at 20 participants)
- Berlin, Germany (capped at 20 participants)
- Virtual node (capped at 20 participants), which will be run from FAC research in Athens.

The virtual node is meant to accommodate people who cannot travel to the physical locations due to bordering and visa

regimes, as well as other barriers to mobility and meeting in person.

All the morning sessions will take place in person in the 3 local nodes (physical locations) and online in the virtual node. The afternoon sessions require online participation from all groups. The opening assembly is a space for every participant to introduce themselves; and the closing assembly is to think together about next steps and interventions.

Visas

If you need support with a visa application, we can provide an invitation letter.

Covid-19 Policy

Each local node will make sure that in-presence activities are organised in order to keep people safe from Covid-19, according to the needs and regulations of the time and place where the meetings will take place, as well as according to participants' accessibility needs.

Fees

The organisation of the Feminist No Borders Summer School is a work of love and all organisers and invited participants volunteer their time. This is how there are no tuition fees to attend this summer school. What we kindly ask all participants is to:

(1) [become members of FAC](#), this will allow us to keep the physical space of the Feminist Autonomous Centre for research in Athens open at a time where the battle over public and community space has, once again, become strategically important in the city centre, and

(2) make a solidarity contribution, which will be distributed to the community organisations involved in the summer school, in order to support their actions in the struggle against borders.

For each, there is a sliding scale from €0 to €200, according to your capacity. If you have an institutional affiliation and have

access to funding, please choose a higher scale of membership and solidarity contribution.

The summer school is an antiracist, feminist LGBTQI+ affirmative space and the participation of trans, intersex, non-binary, queer, lesbian, bisexual, and gay people is encouraged. No TERFS! Prior to sending an expression of interest, please read and commit to our [code of contact](#).

Important dates

Deadline for expression of interest: 9 April 2022

The call closes at 11.59 pm (utc+3) on this date and we cannot accept any late applications.

Notification of acceptance: 3 May 2022

Everyone who sends an expression of interest will be notified of the selection outcome by this date.

Registration deadline: 16 May 2022

Participants should send an email confirming registration, FAC membership and solidarity contribution by 11.59 (utc+3).

Final programme circulated to participants: 23 May 2022

Detailed programme and useful information will be sent to all registered participants by this date.

Summer School takes place: 15-18 June 2022

We look forward to our four days together in Palermo, Heraklion, Berlin, and virtually (from Athens)!

[Apply](#)

For more information, please e-mail:
summerschool@feministresearch.org