

# PLACING MEMORIES: AGEING LABOUR MIGRANTS IN VIENNA

Monika Palmberger, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna (Principal Investigator)  
Ayşe Çağlar, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna (Co-applicant and Project Mentor)

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## Scientific Advisors and Research Partners

Mette Louise Berg, University of Oxford, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society  
Nancy Foner, Department of Sociology, City University of New York  
Katy Gardner, Department of Anthropology, London School of Economics  
Daniel Hiebert, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia  
Christiane Hintermann, Department of Geography and Regional Research, University of Vienna  
Christoph Reinprecht, Department of Sociology, University of Vienna  
Heidemarie Uhl, Institute of Culture Studies and Theatre History, Austrian Academy of Sciences  
Steven Vertovec, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen  
Brenda Yeoh, Department of Geography, National University of Singapore



## Objective I

Document and analyse (transnational) memory places, places triggering memories as well as spaces providing room for remembering in order to reveal widely unstudied histories of labour migrants ("Gastarbeiter") as part of Austria's history.

## Leading Question

Which places are important for Vienna's ageing labour migrants when positioning themselves towards their multi-locale past and when locating themselves in Vienna?



## Objective II

Identify specific characteristics of mnemonic practices and memory places in the context of migration, multi-locality and transnationalism.

## Leading Question

How do places enhance and shape the production of narratives of the past? What are the specifics of place as a mnemonic device in the context of migration and multi-locality?



## PROJECT SUMMARY

### Placing Memories: Ageing Labour Migrants in Vienna

Austria's so-called "guest workers" (Gastarbeiter), who immigrated from former Yugoslavia and Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s, are now reaching retirement age. In Vienna, where the majority of them have settled, one-third of the population 55 years and older will soon be first-generation migrants. Although these labour migrants have shaped Vienna for more than half a century, their histories and vital contribution to Austria's post-WWII economic success are not collected and commemorated and have not become a part of Austria's national collective memory. By locating and analysing ageing labour migrants' memory places, this study explores how these histories are remembered outside of national commemoration practices.

This study will probe into the nature of mnemonic practices in an ethnically diverse context and will explore the role of place as a mnemonic device in the context of migration, ageing and multi-locality. Thus, this study on ageing migrants facilitates a discussion of memory, migration, and place – three research fields that have not yet been systematically studied in their interrelation. This is achieved via a mix of innovative qualitative methods including memory-guided city walks, semi-structured narrative interviews and participant observation. The ageing labour migrants' memory places are expected to inherit a transnational dimension reflecting the migrants' mobility and their multi-locale past.

In order to capture this transnational dimension in its full capacity, I will accompany a select number of informants to their country of origin. This approach penetrates the still-persistent concentration on memory and place within a tight national framework. This study will trigger novel empirical findings on ageing labour migrants and will provide ample opportunity for developing theoretical insights in the interdisciplinary fields of migration studies, memory studies, anthropology of ageing and the intersection of said fields.

MEMORY & MIGRATION & IDENTITY & AGEING & PLACE

