



*Performativities of (dis)location:
Sheltering practices and migration research in México's southern border*

Cesar E. Merlín-Escorza | Radboud University

This presentation shares new insights from the project *Bordering, Sheltering, Navigating: Performativity along Two Pathways of Irregular Migration*, drawing on fieldwork experiences between April and August 2021. The project takes an (auto)ethnographic perspective, to analyze the impact that a diversity of discourses and the way these are performed has on the daily practices of a non-governmental organization “sheltering” migrant people seeking or denied refuge in México’s southern border. The presentation focuses on additions to and critical reformulations of the notion of “(dis)location” (Merlín-Escorza, Davids and Schapendonk, 2020), a process that describes how shelters are produced by the permanent inward and outward mobility of various people. Previous analyses showed how migrants’ trajectories are reshaped by the social interactions within the shelter and the community around it as people navigate wider processes of displacement, being at once in place at the shelter and on their way to somewhere else. From this point, the presentation delves into the relations between migrant people and voluntary workers to unpack their complexities, adding two elements to the (dis)location process: continuity and rupture.