

2016 FALL METRANS RESEARCH SEMINAR

December 6, 2016

Reception* 5:00PM to 5:30 PM

Presentation 5:30PM to 6:30 PM

CSULB SPA Building - Room 208

RSVP to Royce De Rivera at

royce.derivera-sa@csulb.edu by

Noon, December 2, 2016

***Dinner Included**

The Aspirations and Practices of Port Connectivity in Global Tangier

Presented by Janell Rothenberg,

Ph.D. in Sociocultural Anthropology, UCLA

Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute for Middle East Studies, GWU

Opened in 2007 at the closest point between Africa and Europe, the Tangier Med Port is a logistics infrastructure built to support both physical and metaphorical connections between Morocco and the world. Physically, the port is transforming Morocco's historic crossroads on the Strait of Gibraltar into a global logistics hub, where goods movement is mediated between multiple vessels, cargoes, and destinations. Metaphorically, the port is viewed as the most compelling public symbol of the current King Mohammed VI and his efforts since 1999 to build a more "global" and "modern" kingdom. Indeed, the mega-port has already altered Morocco's connections to the larger world of commodity circulation and how commodities move in and out of the Mediterranean. This impact is quantified in Morocco's rising rank on the UN Liner Shipping Connectivity Index of countries by number of maritime connections. From the time Tangier Med opened in 2007, Morocco has risen from 82nd place on this index in 2007 to 16th place in 2015. In this talk, I ask how this quantifiable



impact of rising port connectivity is mediated through the everyday aspirations and practices of Moroccan actors. Based on ethnographic research conducted at the port and its related industries between 2008 and 2012, this talk draws on a larger, book project about (1) how local logistics actors shape global commodity circulation and (2) how an historic port region is reshaped by logistics. In so doing, this project advances the ethnographic study of both the transnational processes of economic life in the Middle East and North Africa and the logistics infrastructures changing the shores of the Global South more widely. In conclusion, I describe my agenda for an anthropology of logistics that can contribute an ethnographic voice to public debates on the future of freight movement.

Janell Rothenberg is a Visiting Professor of Anthropology at Carleton College. She obtained her PhD in sociocultural anthropology from the University of California at Los Angeles during which time she conducted over two years of field research in the Moroccan logistics and transport sector. Based on this research, her book manuscript, "Making Morocco's Mega-Port," is now under contract with Indiana University Press. She completed the GLS certificate at CITT in 2010.