

---

# Suitcases: a Comment on Voluntary Travel Vs Necessary Dislocation

Sylvia Kouveli\*<sup>1</sup> and Violetta Tsitsiliani\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Independent Author – Greece

## Abstract

Since the Neolithic age, with the invention of the wheel and the first sailing vessels, humans have been moving around; traveling. Since our predecessors, we have travelled out of necessity, for religion, commerce, enlightenment and finally for pleasure, bringing along with us from as much as heavy chests with our entire household to as little as the mere contents of our pockets. Freedom of choice, or the absence of disabling conditions for an individual, could be reflected in the type, size and contents of one's luggage.

Photographs have the capacity to reveal the circumstances of one's travel. We aim to analyze the social significance of suitcases (Domenico Secondulfo, 1997: 33) and comment on the underlying values.

Photographs of travelers in Greek ports shall be used as a means to examine the semiotics of suitcases. The photographic inventory (Collier and Collier 1986: 45) depicts various ports in Greece. These ports constitute a common space, used likewise by a tourist, a marine worker, a migrant and a refugee. This common space holds a different myth for each user, although the use is the same for all: travel. The essential difference lies in that of choice or need to travel through this port.

We shall focus on the suitcase firstly as a signifier, and secondly as a connotation for demonstrating a conscious choice of what you carry with you, to highlight the differences and similarities seen in travel by choice or by need.

**Keywords:** suitcase, travel, dislocation, luggage, photography, port, Greece, semiology, immigration, leisure, baggage, choice, need, freedom

---

\*Speaker