



IMISCOE SC REFLEXIVITIES IN MIGRATION STUDIES

CALL FOR CONFERENCE CONTRIBUTIONS

Migration Studies and Social Theory: Problematizing Ontologies, De-Centering Migration

14-15 September 2023, University of Tübingen, Germany

Organizers: **Iva Dodevska** (Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier & Charles University), **Stefan Manser-Egli** (University of Neuchâtel), **Boris Nieswand** (University of Tübingen), **Anja Weiß** (University of Duisburg-Essen)

Deadline for abstract submissions: 15 February 2023

Increased reflexivity in migration research (e.g. in regard to the construction of social categories like 'migrant', 'refugee' or 'migration background') has changed the focus and identity of migration studies. Since migration-related differences are no longer seen as 'natural', it seems less self-evident and legitimate to treat migration or migrants as an exception to 'normal sedentary life'. Thus, migration and migration studies are *de-centered*. Relativizing and complexifying difference draws attention to the ordinariness of migrations and migrants in many realms of social life. In consequence, migration studies cease to differ from other fields of social research. How can de-centering transform the 'epistemic object' of migration studies in a manner that pushes migration studies forward, i.e. out of its sociological niche in order to mainstream 'the migration question'? How can we both de-migranticize migration studies and migranticize social theory?

Following this line of thinking, this conference revisits the question of what migration studies can and should achieve after the reflexive turn. It aims at bringing together research perspectives that do not marginalise mobile, legally excluded, and symbolically othered populations but ask for the role they – and the research on them – play in the reproduction and/or contestation of social order(s). We aim to bring together and discuss conceptual foci and research results that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of society of which migration and mobility are integral. As we take stock of how the reflexive turn has transformed the ways 'migration' is researched, we hope to open a way towards novel theory-making beyond groupism and migrant exceptionalism. **We are especially interested in whether and how we can build theory by bringing reflexive migration research in dialogue with wider social theories. Therefore, theoretical and conceptual contributions, especially in their connection with empirical research (design), are especially encouraged.** We welcome contributions that address the following and related questions:

- How can we approach migration-related phenomena from the vantage point of more general social theories?
- What kind of theoretical or methodological innovations did the reflexive turn stimulate or should stimulate in the future?

- How do these depart from both mainstream 'Migration Studies' and more general social research to produce knowledge that neither exceptionalises nor invisibilises 'migrants' and human mobility?
- How can the circulation of concepts, thoughts and approaches between social theory and migration studies lead to theoretical innovation?
- Which ontologies inform our reflexive critiques? How do they relate to each other?
- What is the relationship of reflexive migration scholarship to the 'critical lenses' on society? What does reflexivity add to critical research, and how can the two be distinguished?

Format: We aim for a conference where brief presentations will be followed by in-depth discussions. To facilitate fruitful exchange, the distribution of short papers (3-5 pages) in advance of the conference is strongly encouraged.

Abstracts submission: Abstracts of no more than 250 words should be sent to iva.dodevska@ff.cuni.cz and stefan.manser-egli@unine.ch by **15 February 2023**. Please include "CONFERENCE DE-CENTERING MIGRATION" in the subject of the email. Results of the selection will be communicated by the end of March 2023.

Funding: Limited financial support is available to cover travel and accommodation costs for participants who are not able to secure institutional funding. Please indicate in your email whether you'd like to be considered for this.

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