Public Lecture Series Spring 2015
Paradigmatic Perspectives on Migration and Mobility
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Thursday, 28 May 2015
Re-Thinking Europe from Its Contested Borders
Prof. Regina Römhild
Department of European Ethnology, Humboldt University of Berlin

18:15 – 19:45 h, University of Neuchatel, Rue Abraham Louis Breguet 1, Lecture Hall 301

Abstract
The view from a Western, European, national “center” towards migrants as its “ethnic Other” has a long and still prevailing legacy in popular discourse and political governance. This construction has been and still is effective in producing the distinctive hierarchy of national majorities and ethnic minorities, which constitutes the modern, biopolitically sovereign European nation-state.

However, an increasing contradiction between the political self-representation of European societies and their pluralized realities on the ground is making itself felt. The long-term dynamics of transnational migration, and the ongoing battles at external and internal borders of Europe increasingly force their way to public attention. Currently, the lethal realities at the Mediterranean borders and the visible presence of refugees irritate consistent images of a “Fortress Europe”. And, the everyday experience of multiple and intersecting diversities cuts across the distinctions between “migrants” and “native citizens” and thus subverts the image of national dominance and sovereignty in European societies.
Building on more recent debates on “conviviality” and “cosmopolitanism” the lecture reflects this impact of migration as “cosmopolitization from below”, and therefore highlights a productive disordering of exclusive social arrangements and a re-evaluation of “liminal spaces”. The lecture aims at a critical “Europeanization” of the research agenda of migration studies by focusing on the postcolonial genealogies, global entanglements, and contestations of European borders – as ongoing mobilities inform, pluralize and displace the realities on the ground.

Curriculum Vitae
Since 2009, Regina Römhild has been a cultural anthropologist and Professor of European Ethnology at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Before, she was Assistant Professor at the Institute of Sociology, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich (2007–2009), and at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology, Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt a.M. (2000–2006). She co-directed the transdisciplinary research project Transit Migration (2003–2006) and co-curated the related collective exhibition Projekt Migration in Cologne (2005). Her main research interests are processes of Europeanization in postcolonial, global perspective; anti- and postcolonial global entanglements of Eastern Europe; border studies; migration and the cosmopolitization of society; urban anthropology, anthropology of the Mediterranean, political anthropology.

Selected Publications