



Public Lecture Series Spring 2015

Paradigmatic Perspectives on Migration and Mobility

—

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

- 2014 (co-ed. Labor Migration). *Vom Rand ins Zentrum. Perspektiven für eine kritische Migrationsforschung*. Berlin: Panama.
- 2013 (co-ed. Sebastian Conrad & Shalini Randeria). *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*. 2., erweiterte Aufl. Frankfurt a.M., New York: Campus.
- 2013 (with Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung). The Post-Other as Avantgarde. In: Daniel Baker & Maria Hlavajova (eds.). *We Roma. A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*. Amsterdam: Valiz.
- 2013 (with Michael Westrich). Kosmopolitismus an der Grenze. Der Mittelmeerraum als Laboratorium für transversalen Gemeinsinn. In: *Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*, H.2., 85–98.
- 2012 (co-ed. Michael Heinlein, Cordula Kropp et al.). *Futures of Modernity. Challenges for cosmopolitical thought and practice*. Bielefeld: Transcript.
- 2012. Across Social Categories and European Boundaries. Transnational mobilities and interculturality in the Greek Mediterranean. In: Antonio Miguel Nogues Pedregal (ed.), *Culture and Society in Tourism Contexts*. Bingley: Emerald, 141–158.
- 2007 (with Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe). *Turbulente Ränder. Neue Perspektiven auf Migration an den Grenzen Europas*. Bielefeld: Transcript.
- 2005 (co-ed. Aytac Eryilmaz, Marion von Osten et al.). *Projekt Migration*. Köln: DuMont.
- 2000 (co-ed. Ina-Maria Greverus & Gisela Welz). *Anthropological Journal on European Cultures 9/2: The Mediterraneans. Transborder Movements and Diasporas*.
- 1998. *Die Macht des Ethnischen: Grenzfall Russlanddeutsche*. Frankfurt a.M., New York: Lang.