Tuesday, 24 May 2016
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Prof. Andreas Wimmer
Lieber Professor of Sociology and Political Philosophy, Columbia University, New York

10.00 – 12.00 h
University of Neuchatel, Faculty of Arts, 2000 Neuchatel, Place-Louis-Agassiz 1, Room RN.08

This Lecture is co-organized by the Maison d’analyse des processus sociaux (MAPS) and the nccr – on the move.

Abstract
This lecture critically explores one aspect of mainstream migration research: to aggregate individual level data into country-of-origin groups to interpret results (as when second generation “Italians” are compared with “former Yugoslavians”). This combines with the usual practice in survey research to oversample smaller country-of-origin groups in order to be able to later generalize across origin groups. We show that other modes of aggregating individual data, by parents occupation (e.g.
peasant versus banker) or by migration path (e.g. refugee versus family reunification), capture
differences in integration trajectories of the second generation equally well. This is shown using data
from a large scale survey from Southern California. Much of the standard interpretation of migration
trajectories therefore rests on the unreflected power of common sense and politico-ethnic categories,
of assuming that “Italians” must differ from “Yugoslavians”.

Curriculum Vitae
Andreas Wimmer’s research focuses on a long-term and globally comparative perspective to nation
building and formation, on how individuals and groups draw ethnic and racial boundaries, and on
political conflicts and wars resulting from these processes. Using new methods and data, he continues
the old search for historical patterns of nationalism, ethnic and racial boundary-making and political
conflicts that repeat across contexts and times. He has pursued this agenda across the disciplinary
fields of sociology, political science, and social anthropology and through various styles of inquiry:
field research in Oaxaca (Mexico) and Iraq, comparative historical analysis, quantitative cross-national
research, network studies, formal modeling, the analysis of large-scale survey data, as well as policy-
oriented research. Since 2015, Wimmer has been the Lieber Professor of Sociology and Political
Philosophy at Columbia University in the city of New York. He previously taught at Princeton, UCLA,
Bonn, Neuchatel, and Zurich.

Selected Publications

– Wimmer, Andreas (2013): Waves of war: nationalism, state formation, and ethnic exclusion in the
modern world. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Oxford University Press.
Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften
Netzwerkstrukturen in drei schweizerischen Immigrantenquartieren”, in: Zeitschrift für Soziologie
Nation state formation, migration and the social sciences”, in: Global Networks. A Journal of