Public Lecture

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Thursday, 17 October 2019
Between Insecurity and Reflexivity: Migrant Agency in Times of Social Change

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Prof. Anna Amelina, University of Cottbus

Discussants: Mihaela Nedelcu and Yvonne Riaño, University of Neuchâtel

18:15 – 19:45 h
Location: University of Neuchâtel, Avenue du 1er-Mars 26, Room B32
Abstract
Differentiating between categories of social practice and categories of scientific analysis remains one of the key challenges of current migration research. In addressing this challenge, the talk introduces the concept of “doing migration,” which pays attention to daily routines of boundary-making (interactive, organizational, institutional) between “majorities” and (mobile) “minorities.” According to this concept, “agency” is understood as individual and collective reflections of (non-)institutional knowledge about dominant societal boundary-making between “migrants” and “non-migrants.” The talk illuminates this understanding of agency using an ongoing empirical study of self-support migrant initiatives that emerged in Germany in and after the “long summer of migration 2015.” Interviews conducted as part of this study show that (forced) migrants do not necessarily accept dominant societal attributions, and that some of their self-support initiatives even try to dissolve the boundaries between “we” and “Other” and challenge dominant ways of “doing migration.”

Curriculum Vitae
Anna Amelina is a Professor for Intercultural Studies at Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg and UNESCO Chair for Heritage Studies. Her research areas are transnational migration studies, cultural sociology, gender and intersectionality, cross-border social inequalities and European studies. She is currently the head of a research centre on “Migration, Conflict and Social Change” (MIKOWA) at the University of Cottbus-Senftenberg.

Selected Publications