

Twenty Years of 'Reflexive' Migration Studies: Approaches, Application and New Challenges

A joint initiative of the IMISCOE Standing Committee Reflexivities in Migration Studies and the nccr – on the move.

Blog Series Editors: Aldina Camenisch, Janine Dahinden and Robin Stünzi

About the Blog Series

Research about migration has historically been largely shaped – and is arguably still dominated – by a western-, state- and immigration-centered perspective. One of the early challenges of this perspective was Wimmer's and Glick Schiller's seminal article 'Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Science', published twenty years ago in 2002. Their plea to overcome "the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world" (2002: 302) stands for the advent of what is now generally framed as 'critical' or 'reflexive' Migration Studies.

The diverse debates in this field address not only methodological nationalism but also other problematic features (e.g. the 'ethnic lens') that frame mobile humans as problematic and migration as exceptional. A growing number of scholars furthermore criticize the geopolitics of knowledge production in Migration Studies, for example by examining the researchers' positionalities or exposing the colorblindness or postcoloniality of migration research in Europe. In order not to reproduce essentialist views and hegemonic power relations, reflexive migration researchers have proposed participatory methods as well as called for a 'mobility turn' (Sheller and Urry) to approach mobility in more comprehensive ways, or for the "de-migrantization" of migration research (Dahinden) that scrutinizes the assumption of the a priori difference between migrants and non-migrants which often informs research in this field.

This blog series takes the twentieth anniversary of Glick Schiller's and Wimmer's article as an opportunity for a 'tour d'horizon' of the insights and impact of these varied, yet related challenges to traditional migration research, but also of the potential shortcomings or pitfalls of a 'critical' or 'reflexive' approach to migration and mobility. Contributions to this series may address the development of the field at large, zoom in on specific conceptual debates or methodological approaches, or reflect on individual experiences. Blog posts could also examine the impact of reflexive migration studies on certain disciplines or discuss the operationalization of the rather theoretical 'reflexive' considerations in qualitative or quantitative research. Equally welcome are contributions challenging certain assumptions widely shared in 'critical' / 'reflexive' approaches to migration and mobility, or that raise hitherto little considered issues. We are particularly interested in the submission of early-career (and minoritized) scholars.

Blog Propositions

If you would like to contribute to this blog series, please send a proposal of max. 200 words to the three editors: aldina.camenisch@unine.ch, janine.dahinden@unine.ch and robin.stunzi@unine.ch.

The **deadline for submissions is 27 February 2022**. The selection of accepted contributions will be completed by mid-March and the submission of contributions (expected length up to 6'000 characters incl. spaces) will be due from mid-April onwards.