



Public Lecture at the Neuchâtel Graduate Conference

—
Tuesday, 11 July 2023

**A Global Network of Scholars? The Geographical Concentration
of Institutes in Migration Studies and its Implications**

—
Lorenzo Piccoli, European University Institute

17:00 – 17:45 h

This lecture will be held in person at the University of Neuchâtel, Avenue du 1er-Mars 26, room C46,
on WEBEX ([link](#)), as well as live-streamed on the nccr – on the move YouTube channel ([link](#)).

Abstract

The study of international migration and responses to it has experienced rapid growth in the last three decades: an institutionalization of migration studies. This presentation identifies and specifies infrastructural and semantic elements of institutionalization by establishing a global Directory of Migration Research Institutions identifying 282 institutes focused on migration research that were operative between 1945 and 2020. We observe a clear geographical concentration in the Americas and Europe and find that most institutes are in countries with higher economic development (GDP) and net immigration (not emigration). Using this evidence, we suggest that the institutionalization of migration studies is driven by concerns and ideas produced in high-income 'destination' countries. We thus show that uneven knowledge production in migration studies is not only caused by exclusive categories, language, or journal policies, but also by a structural problem at an earlier stage: because of fewer resources invested in the creation of institutionalized academic knowledge structures, lower income countries have fewer possibilities to shape the semantic features of the field of migration studies, by which we mean the identification of subjects of interest, concepts, narratives, and priorities.

About the Speaker

Lorenzo Piccoli leads the work of the Migration Policy Centre on teaching and training together with the School of Transnational Governance. He has previously worked as Scientific Coordinator of the Swiss National Center of Competence in Research for Migration and Mobility Studies (2019 - 2021) and as Research Associate at the Global Citizenship Observatory (2018 - 2021). His research focuses on issues of inequality around migration governance and has been featured in several international media, including Radio France International, Radio Svizzera Italiana, The Guardian, and The Washington Post.