

nccr →
on the move

National Center of Competence in Research—
The Migration-Mobility Nexus

nccr-onthemove.ch

unine
Université de Neuchâtel

Core Course #2 “Theories and Concepts on Mobility and Transnationalism”

24 March 2023

University of Neuchâtel

Doctoral students are asked to register [here](#) until 17 March 2023

 **Swiss National
Science Foundation**

The National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs)
are a funding scheme of the Swiss National Science Foundation

Core Course #2 “Theories and Concepts on Mobility and Transnationalism”

This Core Course is part of the first block of the Doctoral Program of the nccr – on the move (Introduction to theories and concepts). All doctoral students enrolled in the Certificate in Migration and Mobility Studies are expected to attend.

General Description

This Core Course presents the context of emergence and ongoing scientific debates related to two key concepts in the field of migration and mobility studies: mobility and transnationalism. In the morning, Ola Söderström and Francisco Klauser (both University of Neuchâtel, Project Leaders nccr – on the move) will present the trajectory of the concept of mobility and discuss their own analytical frames for the study of mobilities and its control. In the afternoon, Mihaela Nedelcu (University of Neuchâtel, Project Leader nccr – on the move) and Anna Amelina (Brandenburg University of Technology, International Advisory Board nccr – on the move) will present the main conceptual and methodological tools developed in the framework of transnational migration research and explore new avenues for expanding its critical knowledge potential in the field of migration studies.

Requirements

Doctoral students are expected to read the compulsory texts since they will be discussed during the course. The compulsory readings (pdf) can be downloaded [here](#). For the morning session on mobility, participants are expected to prepare replies to the questions spelled out at the bottom of page 4.

Date and Place

The course takes place on Friday 24 March 2023 at the University of Neuchâtel, Rue Abram-Louis Breguet 2, room 2.310.

Doctoral students are asked to register [here](#) until 17 March 2023.

Timetable

- 09:00 *Turning Back to the Mobility Turn*
Ola Söderström, University of Neuchâtel
- 09:45 *Mobilities, Power & Data: “Discipline” and “Security” in the Policy Response to COVID-19*
Francisco Klauser, University of Neuchâtel
- 10:30 Coffee Break
- 11:00 *How Do You Frame and Analyze Mobilities?*
Exchange between Ola Söderström and Francisco Klauser
- 11:30 *How Do These Presentations Relate to Your Own Work?*
Discussion with the participants
- 12:30 Lunch Break
- 13:30 *Transnational Migration Research: Key Concepts and Current Debates*
Mihaela Nedelcu, University of Neuchâtel
- 15:00 Coffee Break
- 15:15 *Expanding the Critical Knowledge Potential of Transnational Migration Research: How to Analyze Cross-Border Linkages, Hierarchies and Colonialities*
Anna Amelina, Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg
- 17:00 Final Apéro

Turning Back to the Mobility Turn

Prof. Ola Söderström, University of Neuchâtel

Abstract

Once upon a time, in 2006, a series of scholars in the social sciences launched a (loud) call for a 'mobilities turn' and a 'new mobilities paradigm'. This was orchestrated together with the launch of a new journal, aptly entitled *Mobilities*. I will use this moment in the recent history of the social sciences as a linchpin in a presentation where I first briefly discuss the trajectory of the concept of mobility in the social sciences, from the German sociology of the late 19th century to the debates around the mobility turn in the 2000s. I then discuss the merits, shortcomings and legacy of the mobility turn and suggest an analytical frame for the study of mobilities. I will use some of my own research on mobile urban policies, critical mobilities and the datafication of mobility governance to ground my arguments.

Mobilities, Power & Data : “Discipline” and “Security” in the Policy Response to COVID-19

Prof. Francisco Klauser, University of Neuchâtel

Abstract

The presentation is divided into two main parts. The first part operationalizes Michel Foucault's distinction between “discipline” and “security” as an analytical toolbox through which to study differing, data-driven logics of control of mobility (and immobility) in the present-day world. The second part then draws upon this conceptual vocabulary to discuss three complementary logics of crisis management and control that were combined in the fight against COVID-19 in Switzerland. These refer to (1) border and access control; (2) the monitoring of people and objects on the move and (3) to the internal organization and monitoring of specific spatial enclaves. More generally speaking, the presentation argues, the three spatial logics of crisis management and control offer an exploratory framework to study the power dynamics involved in the articulation of differing degrees and modalities of closure and openness, as we see it in the context of infectious disease (and elsewhere...).

Compulsory Reading

Cresswell, Tim (2010) 'Towards a politics of mobility', *Environment and Planning D*, Vol. 28, Issue 1, Pages 17-31.

Additional Requirement

As the presentations will be followed by a discussion, participants are asked to come to the session with replies to the following questions: what type of movement are you studying? how do you generally categorize it (as migration, mobility or something else)? How do you analytically approach it or unpack it?

Transnational Migration Research: Key Concepts and Current Debates

Prof. Mihaela Nedelcu, University of Neuchâtel

Abstract

In migration studies, the transnational turn has started in early nineties when migration scholars adopted an analytical lens focusing on various cross-border ties, activities and interactions, instead of migration processes within solely destination or origin countries. What becomes visible when conceiving (im)migrants as transmigrants? What are the main conceptual and methodological tools for observing and analyzing transnationality within migration processes? What lessons have been learned from transnational migration research for advancing the understanding of cross-border dynamics within contemporary societies?

The lecture starts with an overview of key concepts of the transnational approach (e.g. transnational networks, transnational communities, transnational social spaces and fields, transnational ways of being and of belonging). Then, it discusses how these conceptual lenses allow for putting in evidence, for instance, complex processes of deterritorialization and multiple embeddedness, and forms of dual/multiple belonging and participation. In addition, it stresses the contribution of transnational migration studies to the critic of methodological nationalism. Finally, based on empirical examples, this talk invites to a reflexive discussion about the heuristic value of the transnational approach beyond the research field of transnational migration.

Compulsory Reading

Levitt, Peggy and Nina Glick Schiller (2004). "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society". *The International Migration Review*, 38 (3), pp. 1002-1039.

Additional Requirement

Nedelcu, Mihaela (2013). "(Re)thinking Transnationalism and Integration in the Digital Era: A Shift Towards Cosmopolitanism in the Study of International Migrations", in Söderström, Ola et al., "Critical Mobilities", PPU & Routledge, pp. 153-175.

Tedeschi, Miriam, Ekaterina Vorobeva, and Jussi S. Jauhiainen (2020). "Transnationalism: current debates and new perspectives". *GeoJournal*, 87, pp. 603–619.

Wimmer, Andreas and Nina Glick Schiller (2002). "Methodological nationalism and the study of migration". *European Journal of Sociology*, 43 (2), pp. 217-240.

Expanding the Critical Knowledge Potential of Transnational Migration Research: How to Analyze Cross-Border Linkages, Hierarchies and Colonialities

Prof. Anna Amelina, Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg

Abstract

What concepts of current reflexive migration studies provide the most important criticisms of nation state-centered migration and integration research? To address this question, the proposed talk brings together critical impulses from transnational migration research, intersectional theories, and post- and decolonial approaches.

The first part provides an overview of transnational studies in migration, focusing on the micro-level (biographies), meso-level (families, kinship, etc.) and macro-level (labor markets, migration regimes) of analysis. It identifies transnational studies' central critical inquiries into methodologically nationalist research and gives insights into methodological strategies for limiting its biases. The second part addresses the question of how to advance transnational migration studies by means of intersectional theories. It suggests considering the interplay of gendering, racialization and class-related hierarchizations in analyses of 'migration' and 'integration' in institutional and non-institutional settings. This second part of the presentation will allow us to question the gender-blind elements that still exist in migration research and to identify methodological pathways for gender-sensitive and intersectional research strategies. The third part of the presentation focuses on approaches to embed transnational migration research into the analysis of wider and long-term societal dynamics, including postcolonial and postsocialist transformations. Inspecting the invitations to decolonize migration research and using the transnational perspective, this part suggests analyzing transnational linkages between the sending and receiving settings of migration as potentially embedded in the intersection of different forms of coloniality (e.g. [post]colonial, neocolonial, [post]socialist). The talk concludes by identifying central elements of the above-mentioned research strands and summarizing their added value for empirical migration studies.

Compulsory Reading

Amelina, Anna (2022). "Knowledge production for whom? Doing migrations, colonialities and stand-points in non-hegemonic migration research". *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1-23.

Additional Requirement

Amelina, Anna & Kenneth Horvath (2020). "Regimes of Intersection: Facing the Manifold Interplays of Discourses, Institutions, and Inequalities in the Regulation of Migration". *Migration Letters*, 17 (4), 487-497.

Lutz, Helma & Anna Amelina (2021). "Gender in Migration Studies: From Feminist Legacies to Intersectional, Post-and Decolonial Prospects". *Zeitschrift für Migrationsforschung*, 1(1), 55-73.