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The Migration-Mobility Nexus

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Université de Neuchâtel

Core Course #6

“Studying Evolving Regimes of (Im)Mobility in Times of Crisis”

7 December 2023

University of Neuchâtel

Doctoral students are asked to register [here](#) until **5 December 2023**

 **Swiss National
Science Foundation**

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Core Course #6 “Studying Evolving Regimes of (Im)Mobility in Times of Crisis”

This Core Course is part of the second block of the Doctoral Program of the nccr – on the move (Introduction to theories and concepts, module-related). All doctoral students of Module III enrolled in the Certificate in Migration and Mobility Studies are expected to attend. Other members of the NCCR community are welcome to attend.

General Description

This course aims to discuss conceptual, methodological, and practical challenges in the study of evolving regimes of (im)mobility in times of crisis. After a brief introduction to regime perspectives in migration, border and mobility studies, the lectures focus on 1) street-level bureaucrats and other networked actors, 2) migrants’ journeys and their ‘entangled mobilities’, as well as 3) digital infra-structures and their contested socio-technical emergence. In doing so, the course introduces three different entry points for regime analyses, which illustrate how diverse empirical fields can be opened up for critical scrutiny through this perspective. Throughout the course, students will gain detailed insights into practical research conducted through the lens of migration and mobility regimes and will be encouraged to relate their own research to these contributions.

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](#).

Date and Place

The course takes place on Thursday 7 December at the University of Neuchâtel, Rue Abram-Louis Breguet 2, room 2.310 and on [Webex](#).

Doctoral students and interested NCCR Fellows are asked to register [here](#) until 5 December 2023.

Timetable

- 10:15 *Studying Evolving Regimes of (Im)Mobility in Times of Crisis: Introduction*
Simon Noori, University of Neuchâtel
- 10:30 *Migration regime, “crisis” and street-level work*
Lisa Marie Borrelli, HES-SO Valais-Wallis
- 12:00 Lunch Break
- 13:30 *Interrupted journeys of migrants with precarious legal status: What can their ‘entangled mobilities’ teach us about the European migration regime?*
Anna Wyss, University of Bern
- 15:00 Coffee Break
- 15:30 *Data matters: Tracing the contested socio-technical emergence of digital mobility regimes*
Simon Noori, University of Neuchâtel

Migration regime, “crisis” and street-level work

Lisa Marie Borrelli, Assistant Professor, HES-SO Valais-Wallis

Abstract

The objective of this session is to understand the diverse and manifold actors that shape the migration and border regime, including state actors, non-state actors, activists and non-citizens themselves. The goal is to understand the networked constellation in a regime that disadvantages non-citizens to often drastic extends and to be able to understand the relation between some of the actors engaged in migration governance. Together, we will explore the role of different actors, and more specifically analyse the so called ‘street-level’ bureaucracy and frontline workers who are in charge of policy implementation that is often complex. This session explores the key actors that shape policies, their discretion, dilemmas and the tensions that arise between the various players in the field.

Compulsory Readings

Cuttitta, Paolo, Jana Häberlein and Polly Pallister-Wilkins. 2020. Various Actors: The Border Death Regime. In: Border Deaths: Causes, Dynamics and Consequences of Migration-related Mortality, edited by Paolo Cuttitta and Tamara Last. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 35-51.

Borrelli, Lisa Marie. 2022. Should (S)he Stay or Should (S)he Go? – Street-level Suspicion and the Construction of the ‘(Un)deserving Migrant’. *Geopolitics* 27 (4), 1093-1116.

DOI: [10.1080/14650045.2020.1814257](https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2020.1814257)

Additional Reading

Heller, Charles and Lorenzo Pezzani. 2016. Ebbing and Flowing: The EU’s Shifting Practices of (Non-) Assistance and Bordering in a Time of Crisis. *Near Futures Online* 1 “Europe at a Crossroads”: https://nearfuturesonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Heller_Pezzani_Ebbing_2016.pdf.

Interrupted journeys of migrants with precarious legal status: What can their ‘entangled mobilities’ teach us about the European migration regime?

Anna Wyss, Senior Researcher, University of Bern

Abstract

Migrants’ interrupted journeys can be a useful entry point to study processes of migratisation, racialisation and socio-legal marginalisation but also people’s everyday resistance at the background of repressive migration regimes. Anna Wyss conducted multi-sited ethnographic research with men holding a precarious legal status who seek to find ways to legalise their stay in different European countries. Applying a critical mobilities perspectives, a focus on journeys allows researchers to pay attention to the different kinds of ‘entangled mobilities’ (Wyss and Dahinden 2022) that are relevant for these ongoing journeys and to critically engage with the ways legal and political categories shape migrants’ navigation of the European migration regime. During the discussion, participants are encouraged to reflect on their own PhD project and whether the presented approach(es) can be productive for it (e.g., to focus on how mobilities are entangled and/or to focus on the ‘making of migration’).

Compulsory Reading

Scheel, Stephan, and Martina Tazzioli. 2022. ‘Who Is a Migrant? Abandoning the Nation-State Point of View in the Study of Migration’. *Migration Politics* 1 (002). DOI: [10.21468/MigPol.1.1.002](https://doi.org/10.21468/MigPol.1.1.002).

Wyss, Anna. 2022. Conclusion: Endurance and Exhaustion. In: *Navigating the European Migration Regime. Male Migrants, Interrupted Journeys and Precarious Lives*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, 150-163. <https://bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/navigating-the-european-migration-regime>.

Additional Reading

Dahinden, Janine. 2016. ‘A Plea for the ‘De-Migranticization’ of Research on Migration and Integration’. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39 (13), 2207-2225. DOI: [10.1080/01419870.2015.1124129](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1124129).

Schapendonk, Joris. 2020. *Finding Ways Through Eurospace: West African Movers Re-Viewing Europe from the Inside*. Berghahn Books.

Wyss, Anna, and Janine Dahinden. 2022. ‘Disentangling Entangled Mobilities: Reflections on Forms of Knowledge Production within Migration Studies’. *Comparative Migration Studies* 10 (1), 33. DOI: [10.1186/s40878-022-00309-w](https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-022-00309-w).

Data matters: Tracing the contested socio-technical emergence of digital mobility regimes

Simon Noori, Senior Researcher, University of Neuchâtel

Abstract

Cross-border movements are increasingly governed and controlled by digital means, ranging from fingerprint scanners and facial recognition technologies via tracking apps and algorithmic profiling to large-scale biometric databases. This trend to datafication is widely discussed in critical migration and border studies, but researchers rarely ask how the underlying technologies are developed in the first place and whether they actually work as promised. Consequently, the question of how mobility regimes are practically reconfigured in the age of digitization often remains unanswered.

In this session, I will give insights into my ethnographic research in which I have traced the contested emergence of one particular scheme of digital border control currently under construction in the EU: the Entry-Exit System (EES) for biometric registration of third-country nationals. Inspired by ethnographic strands of border regime analysis, I show how I studied this system's development in situ and in actu by following its political negotiations, its technical development, and its practical testing. Eventually, I will demonstrate how the regime perspective helped me to work out both the shifting rationalities of evolving digital mobility regimes and the socio-technical controversies that inevitably underlie them.

Compulsory Reading

Sontowski, Simon. 2018. Speed, timing and duration: contested temporalities, techno-political controversies and the emergence of the EU's smart border. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44 (16), 2730-2746. DOI: [10.1080/1369183X.2017.1401512](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1401512).

Additional Reading

Leese, Matthias, Simon Noori and Stephan Scheel. 2022. Data Matters: The Politics and Practices of Digital Border and Migration Management. *Geopolitics* 27 (1), 5-25.

DOI: [10.1080/14650045.2021.1940538](https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2021.1940538).