



Public Lecture Series

Tuesday, 12 November 2024

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Coercion and Displacement in the Refugee System

David Scott FitzGerald, University of California San Diego

Discussant: Mihaela Nedelcu, University of Neuchâtel, nccr – on the move

18:00 – 19:30 h

This talk will be held in person at the University of Neuchâtel, Espace Tilo-Frey 1, room R.E.48, and on WEBEX ([link](#)).

Abstract

What explains forced migration? The answers are fragmented. Conflict studies examine the logic of violence that prompts some people to flee, but refugees who have left their places of origin fall off the radar screen unless they are implicated in further violence or post-conflict reconstruction. Policy-oriented refugee studies take as their starting point people who have already crossed an international border to seek sanctuary, but these studies often pay little attention to those who cannot leave. International migration studies have highly developed theories of labor migration but have been slow to integrate insights of economically driven movement with flight from violence and persecution. By contrast, the systems approach focuses on the connections among stages of displacement in different countries to illuminate what the silos inadvertently conceal. A longitudinal case study of one extended Syrian family in multiple countries reveals how household decision-making interacts with policies across the globe.

Short Biography

David Scott FitzGerald is Theodore E. Gildred Chair in U.S.-Mexican Relations, Professor of Sociology at the University of California San Diego. His research analyzes refugee, migration, and citizenship policies in countries of origin, transit, and destination, as well as the experiences of people on the move. FitzGerald's books include *The Refugee System: A Sociological Approach* (Polity Press 2023), *Refuge beyond Reach: How Rich Democracies Repel Asylum Seekers* (Oxford University Press 2019), *Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas* (Harvard University Press 2014), and *Nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration* (University of California Press 2009). His seven co-edited books include six volumes on Mexican migration to the United States and *Immigrant California: Understanding the Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Policy* (Stanford University Press 2021). His work has been recognized with the American Sociological Association's (ASA) Distinguished Scholarly Book Award and Midwest Sociological Society Distinguished Book Award; ten awards from sections of the ASA, American Political Science Association, and International Studies Association; and the ASA International Migration Section Award for Public Sociology.