

Bremen, April 17, 2008

**International Conference:  
Towards new geographies of migration? Transnational Spaces, immigrant  
entrepreneurship and development as builders of changed social and spatial  
organization in Europe**

26 / 27 September 2008, Bremen, conference centre "Teerhof" University of Bremen.

### Introduction

The workshop aims at bringing together academics in the field of migration research who dedicate their research especially to new forms of migratory strategies that transcend more traditional ideas of social and spatial organization of labour market organization. Here especially the research on transnational migration stands in this tradition to overcome static perceptions of migration processes. Until now the focus of transnational migration research has strongly been on the change of migrants as individuals and their changing identities. Also the question of migration and development became a hot topic in migration research – even if there is for many migrant groups only little empirical research available. Internationally comparative data is absolutely missing, with the exception of the topic of remittances. Another strongly researched example for the realization or implementation of economic transnational fields are transnational ethnic entrepreneurs and migrants using transnational ties for their economic activities.

We argue that over the past two decades, within changing macroeconomic settings and alongside mostly more restrictive immigration policies, migrants *had* to find such new opportunities – and the incorporation of the transnational field turned out to be one of those opportunities for some groups of migrants. New spatial arrangements as transnational migration transformed into a resource on its own. Such opportunities arose in a variety of fields: political organization and diasporas, global production chains on the global and the national setting, on the local level as immigrant entrepreneurship, knowledge networks of academics and transnational entrepreneurship – all of them innovative forms of social and spatial organization.

This workshop seeks to broaden this perspective and gives weight to an interpretation that sees migration as well as an outcome of international power relations on one hand and migrant agency on the other hand, generating new spatial arrangements (on the local, the national, the global level). Embedded in processes of globalization and restructuring, migrants are often able to introduce social and economic change in certain, often weak sectors and spaces of society. We interpret migrants as one pushing force in the process of rescaling and migration functioning as a definitory power for social and spatial organization in Europe. We argue that new patterns of regionalisation have not been traced sufficiently by conventional migration research – as social sciences often are blind for the spatial component of social development.

Thus the special interest of the symposium is on the exploration of new transnational hierarchies and how they do translate into social and economic change on various spatial levels. The presentation of empirical research with a spatial focus is explicitly invited. Of special concern during the symposium are questions on:

- Immigrant **work strategies** and networks, including informal employment work arrangements and their interdependence with new forms of migration. Here we want to work out how these strategies differ between the first generation immigrants, their dependants, and those migrants that arrive newly in the developed countries, e.g. students, asylum seekers, migrants within special work programmes, or irregular migrants, and thus have very different legal and informal access to the labour market.
- Institutional **transnational hierarchies as produced by the diaspora and (migrant) organizations** which are of relevance for **spatial and social development** in migration processes. We want to reflect on the importance of networks for transnational migration processes as well as on their influence in the regionalisation of migrants' settlement and migration flows, both between countries of origin and countries of destination, within the countries of destination as well as within the urban agglomerations where the majority of the migrants settle. A special focus is thus on the institutional role of both emigration and immigration countries.
- **Gendered forms** of transnational organization. Here we want to share research results on the participation of women in transnational migratory processes – still an under-researched field of knowledge. Does the participation of women differ from transnational migratory processes practiced by men in any way? To what extent do spatial migratory patterns and strategies of women and men differ and which gendered forms of labour market integration and community organization?

Questions on the co-operation and development of migrants and their countries of origin can be a cross-cutting issue during the presentations.

The conference is funded by the DFG. The language of the conference is English. Presented papers are foreseen for publication in a reviewed journal of Geography or Sociology. We appreciate applications from all realms of social sciences, geography, political sciences and ethnology.

Please send in abstracts (length max. 300 words) until **June, 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008**, please send your abstract to: Dipl. Geogr. Katharina Goethe, Fachbereich 08 Sozialwissenschaften, Bibliothekstr. 1, 28359 Bremen, kgoethe@uni-bremen.de. For further information please contact Prof. Dr. Felicitas Hillmann: hillmann@uni-bremen.de or see our webpage: [www.geographie.uni-bremen.de](http://www.geographie.uni-bremen.de).