



New Perspectives to Research on Transnational Migration: Identifying Methodological Problems and Solutions

International Workshop 29-30 April 2010, Bielefeld University (Germany)

The classic theories of migration presuppose that social and symbolic linkages of migrants to their countries of origin are sources of disintegration and conflicts in the countries of destination. Such an approach implies a correspondence between the social and territorial space. Our workshop calls this methodological assumption into question and takes a closer look at the communicative construction of territorial units within the process of international migration. Accordingly, it starts with a discussion on methodological implications of transnational approach to migration. The aim of this debate is to identify classical gaps within empirical research procedures, which on the one hand tend to homogenize mobile and non-mobile populations and, on the other, presuppose territorial limitations of empirical studies. Questioning the traditional research limitations we will discuss new research methodologies, among others cosmopolitan approach, multi-sited and global ethnography methods – just to name a few. Nevertheless, the reference to innovative methods and methodologies opens up new problems within empirical research on transnational migration. This is why, the additional aim of the workshop will be the identification of new weaknesses within the empirical research on transnational migration and the interlocution of possible solutions. The major topics of interest will include qualitative methodologies and methods of social research which refer to:

- The advantages of multi-sited ethnography for research on transnational migrations,
- The use of scale approach for research on strategies of geographic mobility,
- New techniques of methodological reflexivity providing insights on power relations within the research process,
- Methods enabling the reconstruction of transcultural experiences of mobile and non-mobile populations,
- New approach to design of empirical research fields,
- The use of comparative designs for research on transnational migration.

This workshop is supported by the Institute for World Society Studies (Bielefeld University) and the Centre on Migration, Citizenship and Development (COMCAD, Bielefeld University). Conveners are Dr. Anna Amelina (COMCAD) and Devrimsel D. Nergiz (Bielefeld University, BGHS). For additional information please contact Dr. Anna Amelina (e-Mail: anna.amelina@uni-bielefeld.de).

Workshop Schedule

29 April (Thursday) Location: Bielefeld University (Room: A2-125)

Till 15.30 – Arrival of Participants

16.00 – 16.15

- **Welcome** (Anna Amelina and Devrimsel D. Nergiz)

16.15-18.30

Questioning Methodological Nationalism by Comparative Research Design and Mixed Methods

(Chair and Discussant: *Margit Fauser*, Bielefeld University)

- *Moving Mixed Methods Beyond Methodological Nationalism? Potential Benefits and Important Challenges of Integration Quantitative Methods into Research on Transnational Labour Market Relations* (Kenneth Horvath, University of Vienna, Austria, and Sanna Markkanen, University of Cambridge, UK)
- *Spatially Weighted Context Data as a Strategy to Overcome Methodological Nationalism in Comparative Survey Research* (Guy Elcheroth, University of Lausanne, Switzerland)
- *Methodological Nationalism, Migrants, and the Production of Blind Spots in Representative Survey Research: Lessons Learned From a Swiss Working Group* (Francesco Laganà, University of Lausanne, Switzerland)
- *How to ‘Catch’ Floating Populations? The Use of Mixed Methods to Understand Romanian Transnationalism as a Cultural-Economic Practice* (Bruno Meeus, Geoinstitute, Leuven, Belgium)

19.00 Workshop Dinner

30 April (Friday) Location: Bielefeld University (Room: A2-125)

9.30-12.00

Constructing Fields: Insights from Global and Multi-sited Ethnography

(Chair and Discussant: *Devrimsel D. Nergiz*, Bielefeld University)

- *What Is ‘The Field’ for an Analyst and for an Actor: Theoretical and Methodological Implications* (Rano Turaeva, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany and Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Netherlands)
- *Transnational Migrants in Europe: Stigmatization, Juridicization and Trade Union Activism* (Bruno Dupeyron, University of Regina, Canada)
- *Virtual Migrant Communities: ‘Orkut’ and the Brazilian Case* (Mieke Schrooten, The Research Centre for Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities, Leuven, Belgium)

- *Following the Interactions: Taking into Account Translocal Dimensions and Cross-Level/Multi-Dimensional Links in Ethnographic Fieldwork* (Gilberto Rescher, Bielefeld University)

11.00-11.15 Coffee Break

12.00-13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 14.00 Questioning the Research: How to Improve the Reflexivity?

(Chair and Discussant: *Anna Amelina*, Bielefeld University)

- *Power, Reflexivity and Qualitative Research with Ethnic Minority Groups* (Chiatali Das, Queens University Belfast, Ireland)
- *Transnational Dynamics in Researching Migrants: Self-Reflexivity and Boundary Drawing in Fieldwork* (Kyoko Shinozaki, Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Mainz, Germany)

14.00 – 15.00 Concluding Remarks

- Eva Gerharz (Bielefeld University) and Anna Amelina (Bielefeld University)