



ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ
Institutul de Cercetare a
Calității Vieții



Facing a New "Age of Migration"? Methodological Challenges, Conceptual Questions, Political Entanglements
ESA RN 35 “Sociology of Migration” – Midterm Conference

1–2 September 2016
Bucharest

Organizers: ESA RN 35 “Sociology of Migration, Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy and the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest

Keynote:

Prof. Bridget Anderson

Professor of Migration and Citizenship, and Research Director of COMPAS

In the midst of intense public debates and political discussions on migration, ESA Research Network 35 “Sociology of Migration”¹ announces its third mid-term conference, to be held from 1 to 2 September 2016 in Bucharest.

The main theme of the Conference will be to reflect on the question of whether or not European countries are currently facing a “new” age of migration and on the methodological and conceptual challenges posed to migration research within the current developments. Thematically, this conference will bring together various analytical and methodological approaches in refugee and migration studies.

Studies on the refugee question, on extremism and racism as well as studies involving longitudinal and/or comparative analyses focusing on the European context are particularly welcome, as are papers which analyse everyday practices and strategies of action and resistance of refugees and migrants and their families. We particularly invite papers that reflect upon, as well as examinations of the complex political entanglements of migration scholarship.

Our aim is to provide a platform for those who have already met at earlier conferences to continue our discussions, and to invite other scholars to join us in this endeavour.

This conference will have a strong focus on dialogue. Hence, papers that draw links to and/or reflect upon their relation to ongoing scholarly and public debates will be given priority.

Our midterm conference will cover the following issue areas:

¹ Please find a detailed description of Research Network 35 at http://www.europeansociology.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=259&Itemid=181.

1. Sociological diagnoses of the current situation – from political discourses to migrant agency:

We welcome papers that present contemporary studies focussing on the refugee “crisis” including the perception of refugees and migrants, consequences of shifting policies, racism and social change in Europe, effects on migrants’ lives and practices and linkages between extremisms, success of far-right wing parties and Islamist tendencies to migration. We specifically invite papers that draw links between different conceptual fields, for example by ‘evaluating’ policies from below: How are migrant’s affected by the intensification of the current political and public debates?

2. Methodological challenges – from epistemological debate to travelling methodologies:

Methodologically, the field migration studies is broad and very diverse. We encourage submissions of methodological papers that reflect on the implications of different epistemological perspectives and the concrete pros and cons of specific methodological approaches. Among others, we are interested in evaluations of current challenges for quantitative migration research. How can, e.g., administrative data be used for academic purposes? How do we evaluate their quality and the ways in which they are used? What can researchers in the European context learn from methodologies that have been developed and applied in other settings?

3. Theoretical legacies and blind spots – from methodological nationalism to receiving country bias:

In the face of current developments, migration research needs to discuss its conceptual and analytical toolkit. How do our forms of construing, problematizing and researching migration relate to orders of mobility, power, and inequality? Have we managed to overcome methodological nationalism? Or are our accounts still structured by dominant political notions and problem understandings - e.g. in what de Haas has called a receiving country bias in migration research?

4. Sociological self-reflection: One of the pressing conundrums that migration researchers are faced with is: How can sociologists become or remain relevant without becoming part of the very system they criticise? We particularly invite papers that combine self-reflexive and critical accounts of past and ongoing research with suggestions for future scholarly activity.

The deadline for submission of abstracts (max. 200 words) and brief biographical notes is March 1 2016. Please send your documents to karin.peters@wur.nl. Decisions will be communicated by March 21 2016.

Organisation:

No fees will be charged, but you will need to pay for your own travel and accommodation. Information on hotels and hostels close to the conference venue will be communicated to all participants in due course.