

## **“Imagining migration anew: organisational framing of life course and transnational mobilities”**

Panel at the 3rd Transmobilities-Development Conference  
“Life Phases Matter: New Imaginaries of Transnational Mobilities”  
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What does it mean to imagine migration anew? We suggest beginning with a critical engagement with social scientific imaginaries of migration. In the second step, we invite contributors to scrutinize how these imaginaries intersect with how organisations imagine migrants.

Conventional migration scholarship developed its theories and methodologies based on the emblematic migrant figure (cf. “emblematic migratory figures” (Kofman 2013)) – male, young and arriving from ‘developing regions’ to work in the global north. We suggest that social scientific assumptions about (labour) migration intersect with receiving society’s (individuals’ and organisations’) normative assumption about migrants, and thus they enforce and stabilize social knowledge production. In turn, for a long time scholars and organizational actors neglected female and other genders, youth and unemployed, retirees and non-working spouses and their life-trajectories within and across nation-state spaces. They thus missed to develop a life-course perspective on migration. While this gap is slowly closing and research on migration of children (ex. transnational adoptions, unaccompanied minors), youth (ex. international students), women (ex. professionals, commuters), queers (ex. life-style migrants or asylum seekers) or retirees (mostly from global north to global south) has begun to provide valuable insights into the life conditions of these groups, we still lack comparative research across life-phases, groups and geographical spaces, and in particular studies of a longitudinal character.

If at all focused on life-course, conventional integration/assimilation-oriented research has thus far addressed migrants’ transitions from a current/previous life phase to the next, comparing groups mainly along their ethnicity/place of origin/citizenship. Yet life phases are not necessarily a linear process. Extant literature has also failed to establish if life-phase-specific factors as well as organisational logics that structure life-course work differently for different ethnic groups or migrants and non-migrants, and if that is the case, why it is so. Furthermore, it is worth noting that in both migration studies and life-course studies, main emphasis is placed on macro conditions or on individuals, leaving the role of organisations in shaping the lives/life-course of migrants aside.

Developing a new imaginary of migration thus requires a few conceptual movements. We ask the contributors to focus on one aspect of such a shift in particular. Drawing on the achievements of life-course research, we invite scholars to shed light on how organisations shape life-course of migrants, and if they do so differently for migrants and non-migrants. Key issues here include institutional racism/discrimination, workings of border control agencies, health and retirement insurance, education and public administration, which enable, constrain and re-shape spatial and social mobility. Importantly, the new imaginary of migration needs to be truly transnational in order to avoid researching migrants’ life course entirely within a single nation-state.

We invite contributions dealing with one or more - but are not limited to - the following aspects:

- critical engagements, inspired by life-course approaches, with the discourses/logics of various organisations related to migrants' patterns of integration and transnational mobility;
- analysing 'emblematic migrant figure' in practices of organisations, as well as their normative underpinnings (ex. neoliberalism), and/or identifying practices which successfully work with alternative imaginaries;
- seeking mutual impacts of organisational and social scientific imaginaries of (transnational) (im)mobilities;
- implementing life-course approaches in migration studies (thus focusing on time, context, process and meanings), and applying a comparative and transnational lens on migration and integration trajectories of migrants across their life-phases, while demonstrating how these depend on organizational praxis;
- adapting a longitudinal (in particular qualitative and mixed-method) approach to study life trajectories of (transnational) migrants, highlighting the workings of organisations in how they unfold;
- addressing discontinuities and non-linearities of migrations and integration trajectories (including multiple migrations) related to the workings of organisations.

Please submit abstracts (max. 250 words) to Kyoko Shinozaki ([kyoko.shinozaki@sbg.ac.at](mailto:kyoko.shinozaki@sbg.ac.at)) and Magdalena Nowicka ([magdalena.nowicka@hu-berlin.de](mailto:magdalena.nowicka@hu-berlin.de)) by Monday, 8th October 2018.

The conference will take place at Utrecht University. Registration for the conference is free-of-charge. Participants are expected to cover their own travel and accommodation costs.