

**ESA RN35 MIDTERM CONFERENCE “SOCIOLOGY  
OF MIGRATION” BUCHAREST, 1–2 SEPTEMBER 2016**

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On 1–2 September, Bucharest hosted the International Conference *Facing a New “Age of Migration?” Methodological Challenges, Conceptual Questions, Political Entanglements*, which was organized by ESA RN 35 “Sociology of Migration”, The Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy (ICCV), The Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest (FSAS), and The Research Institute of the University of Bucharest (ICUB). The conference created the space for discussions attended by 107 registered participants from universities and research centres from Germany, Italy, France, Spain, UK, Norway, Slovakia, Latvia, Switzerland, Ireland, Austria, Sweden, Hungary, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Croatia and Romania. The two days of the conference were opened by two keynote speeches given by Bridget Anderson and Michael Collyer, and followed by seven sections of papers, a book presentation and Raffaella Greco Tonegutti’s review of EU financed migration programme. The event was put in place by the organizers as a response to the current visibility of various types of migration (refugees, highly skilled, contract workers, etc.), and it was meant to be open to the academic public, to all those interested in mobility across borders, regardless of their formal statute as presenters or members in the aforementioned institutions.

**Keynote speeches: from epistemology and migrant subjectivities to the politics of mobility**

The plenary speeches that opened the two conference days were held by prestigious researchers in the field of migration studies, Bridget Anderson, Professor of Migration and Citizenship, as well as Research Director of the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford, and Michael Collyer, Reader in Geography at the University of Sussex, and recipient of numerous research grants from international institutions.

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Both speeches focused on contrasts and inequality connected to migration, and on methodological issues in making migrants the subjects of research/ policies, by drawing on examples from contemporary migration, such as the refugee crisis.

The first conference day began with Michael Collyer's presentation, *No Foreign Land. Border Politics, Migrant Subjectivities, Research Epistemologies*. The speaker used as conceptual tools the border and political subjectivity to look into the 2013 regularisation of refugees in Morocco, arguing for the recognitions of migrants as autonomous subjects which can and should inform policies.

The activities of the second day of the conference were prefaced by another thoughtful presentation, *How Fragile is the World: migration and the politics of mobility*, delivered by Bridget Anderson. Some of the key topics that were touched upon in the speech were: questioning the 'migrant' concept, the connection between migration and citizenship, with a special emphasis on the statuses of migrants and differentiated citizens, and also the future of the migration scholarship.

### **Session 1: Borders, refugee crisis and migration policies**

In the social and political context of the discussions about the "refugee crisis", the conference's longest session was the first one, which was focused on *Borders, refugee crisis and migration policies* and comprised of 17 papers.

The first subdivision was chaired by Laura Moroşanu from the University of Sussex, UK, and gathered together presentations on discourses and images on migrants as found on the Internet, the written press or governmental campaigns with analysis on aspects such as discrimination, differences and anti-immigration discourses about immigrants and refugees. Karin Peters (Wageningen University, Netherlands) and Maria Xenitidou (University of Surrey, UK) presented their analysis on weblogs focused on the refugee crisis and Anna Amelina (Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany) continued with a discussion about regulation practices of the European mobility, and was followed by the ethnographic study of Rachel Waerniers and Lesley Hustinx from the Ghent University in Belgium. Mona Simu (RIQL) talked about the written press, Eszter Kill (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary) made an analysis of the campaign against immigration in Hungary and Francesco Cerchiaro (University of Padova, Italy) closed the subdivision with a presentation on mixed couples.

Margit Fauser (Bielefeld University, Germany) was the chair of the second subdivision. The topics discussed covered: conceptual reflections on borders (Mădălina Manea, University of Bucharest), the role of non-state actors in constructing borders (Abby Peterson, University of Gothenburg, Sweden), official documents on the second generation in Italy (Michael Eve, Enrico Gargiulo and Maria Perino of the University of Eastern Piedmont, Italy), deportation of the Malians (Susanne Schultz, University Bielefeld, Germany) and the impact of the refugee crisis on economic immigration policies (Nella Popović, University of Zagreb, Croatia).

The last subdivision was chaired by Karin Peters (Wageningen University, Netherlands). The final papers in the session dealt with comparative studies, the key word being policies: their impact on interethnic interaction (Julia Dahlvik, the Austrian Academy of Sciences), migrant child care (Janina Glaeser, Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany/France), political discourses (Belén Fernández-Suárez, University of Coruna, Spain), asylum seekers in Germany (Hanne Wiegel from Wageningen University, Netherlands), and demographic changes (Susanne Schultz, Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany).

### **Session 2: Highly skilled migration**

Chaired by Radu Dragoş from the Institute for East and Southeast European Studies in Germany, the second session was dedicated to "Highly skilled migration". The presentation "Romania's Medical Exodus. Evidence from LinkedIn Data" (Alina Botezat and Lucian Doru Botezat, (CIDER, Romania/Germany)) confirms the data official statistics provide on the main destinations chosen by Romanian physicians. The paper signed by Robert D. Reisz, Cristian Pânzaru and Claudiu Ciprian Dirina (West University of Timisoara, Romania) on the "Brain Drain Migration through Romanian Academics" compared data in 2000 and 2013 on the emigration intention of academics.

### **Session 3: Focus on temporary migration**

The conference included presentations on the data obtained as part of three international Horizon2020 and FP7 research projects on migration. The third session presented five papers with a "Focus on temporary migration" (RN 35 and FP7 Temper", part of them developed within the FP7 TEMPER project<sup>1</sup>).

The session opened with Michael Collyer's paper which gave insights on stakeholders' assessments of temporary migration projects employed in the European Union, in the context of the economic crisis, based on data collected through an online questionnaire conducted as part of the Temper project. Amparo González Ferrer (from CSIC, Spain), who also chaired the session, developed a theoretic assessment regarding the determinants of return migration in the case of multiple categories of migrants (economic migrants, refugees) from Europe and Africa. Tatiana Eremenko (CSIC; INED, Spain/France) provided an analysis on datasets from Morocco and different destination countries on return and current migrants that offers information on the probability to return for migrants with various demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The session also included two presentations on high skilled migration: Sorana Toma (ENSAE – CREST, France) and Maria Villares-Varela (University of Birmingham, UK) focused on Indian academics' movement and the role of policies and Hector Cebolla Boado (UNED,

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the TEMPER project, visit <http://www.temperproject.eu/>.

Spain) discussed the factors that shape policies in four countries (France, Italy, Spain and the UK), by using data from Eurostat, OECD and Temper research.

#### **Session 4: Quantitative data and their use**

The fourth session of the conference brought together papers in which the analyses were based on quantitative methodologies. *Quantitative data and their use* comprised six presentations chaired by Paula Tufiş (University of Bucharest, Romania), and took place in the first day of the conference.

In the first presentation, *Political Integration of Immigrants: Insights from Comparing to Stayers, Not Only to Natives*, David Bartram used European Social Survey data and focused on the political integration of migrants, with a comparative perspective. The labour market integration of migrants and its contextual specificities was discussed by Wouter Zwysen and Neli Demireva, both from the University of Essex, UK. The effects of ageing on the migration sentiments in Europe (Justyna Salamońska, European University Institute), the determinants of anti-immigrant sentiments at the individual level in Romania (Ionela Vlase, Lucian Blaga University, and Ana Maria Preoteasa, RIQL), methodological aspects related to the census and labour force surveys and the comparability of the resulting types of data (Georgiana Ivan, Eurostat/European Commission), and the Deaths at the borders Database (Tamara Last, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and Ignacio Urquijo, MATIP network; NGO Karibu; CDCDI, Spain/Romania) were among the topics under discussion.

#### **Session 5: Unobserved Flows**

Mihaela Nedelcu (Institute of Sociology, University of Neuchâtel) was chair for the fifth session, dedicated to the study of *Unobserved Flows* and programmed in the event's first day. The debates were catalysed by two presentations in which topics such as the European migration, German citizens' migration to Turkey, social identification, mobility, privilege and power were invoked and analysed.

In the first presentation, *Migrants of privilege in reverse geographies of power: Germans in Turkey*, Margit Fauser (Bielefeld University) brings forward the matter of "reversed geographies of power" when analysing the re-settlement of former Turkish immigrants to Germany in their origin country. Going further, Claire Cosquer (Sciences Po/Observatoire Sociologique du Changement) shifts the discussion towards European migration, analysing French expats in Abu Dhabi, framing it in reference to the majority of migration studies focused on immigration in Europe.

#### **Session 6: Origin country, migration and transnationalism**

The sixth and last general session of the conference, *Origin country, migration and transnationalism*, chaired by Monica Roman (The Bucharest University of Economic Studies) took place in the afternoon of September 2<sup>nd</sup>, and consisted of six

presentations constituted around concepts such as transnationalism/transnational networks, resources for migration, civic participation or entrepreneurship at the origin.

The first presenter, Mihaela Nedelcu, discussed copresence practices and transnational orientations of migrants in a digitalized context, invoking perspectives centred on cosmopolitanism (*Studying Migration through a Cosmopolitanism Lens: Copresence and Migrant Transnationalism in the Digital Age*). The bivalent space, across national borders, is replaced by a focus on the origin, brought by the second presentation, *Migration and entrepreneurship in the origin countries*. The case of Romania, delivered by Anatolie Coşciug (University of Bielefeld; Babeş-Bolyai University), and Remus Anghel (Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities; Babeş-Bolyai University). In the third presentation, using qualitative data from a multi-ethnic community, Ovidiu Oltean (Babeş-Bolyai University) discusses the concept of Saxonness as a resource for upgrading one's personal status. The fourth paper employs quantitative analysis in order to explain voter turnout among emigrants and is authored by Irina Ciornei (University of Bern) and Eva Østergaard-Nielsen (Autonomous University of Barcelona). The following presentation explores the linkages between the characteristics of Romanian emigration and the profiles of migrant associations by destination (Alexandra Deliu and Elena Tudor, RIQL). In the last discussion of this session, Ana Bleahu (University of Bucharest) examines the characteristics of the transnational network of Gypsies and the resources and mechanisms used for its perpetuation and growth.

### **Session 7: Youth migration**

One of the key challenges in the new age of migration is youth migration, its incentives, ways of unfolding and consequences. This context prompted the organizers to allocate a section to the presentation of research results in the area of young people's migration. The participants to this section were researchers in YMOBILITY and MOVE projects. Both projects are focused on youth migration and are funded under the HORIZON 2020 programme framework.

YMOBILITY – *Maximising opportunities for individuals, labour markets and regions in Europe* aims at identifying and analysing a typology of youth mobility, determinants of migration and of non-migration, the way in which migration goes about (motives, channels and sources of information), potential consequences for individuals and regions, implications for policies in migration and other policy areas. Studies are carried out in nine countries (Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Italy, Ireland, Spain, Germany, the UK, and Sweden) which form three categories, based on their similarities and differences regarding the characteristics of youth migration flows departing from or arriving in those countries, and their economic contexts<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the YMOBILITY project, visit <http://www.ymobility.eu>.

MOVE – *Mapping mobility – pathways, institutions and structural effects of youth mobility in Europe* inquires about the benefits of youth migration for socio-economic development, as well as development of individual migrants. More specifically, the project is interested in mobility patterns and their relation to different forms of mobility, the interplay between structure and agency in migration experiences, consequences of the migration experience for the individual's life and position on the labour market and for national economies<sup>3</sup>.

Being a joint section dedicated to the two projects, it offered not only a chance for the dissemination of preliminary results of the projects, but also a comparative context in which researchers which work on youth mobility in Europe with the aim of making policy recommendations met and could discuss challenges and opportunities pertaining to data, methodology of research and potential use of results.

The topics of presentations were circumscribed to the area of mobility of young people for studies and/or employment, with the papers investigating, among other things, migration intentions and its determinants (Allan Williams et al. – YMOBILITY), the process of taking the decision to migrate (Allan Williams and Vladimir Balaz – YMOBILITY), migration behaviour with its macro-level determinants (Dabasi-Halász et al. – MOVE), ways of getting into employment as a migrant (Ardic et al. – MOVE) and narratives of young migrants which show how migration is combining with the transition to adulthood (Laura Moroşanu and Alexandra Bulat – YMOBILITY).

### **Thematic Programme financed by the European Commission**

Raffaella Greco Tonegutti from the European Commission made a presentation on the *Migration Research in the EU Framework Programme – Research into Migration and Mobility*. Emphasising the importance of the relationship between research and policy making, she talked about the thematic lines financed by the European Commission which are relevant for the field of migration studies and how these programmes can be accessed by institutions and researchers. On the backdrop of concerns about the current migration crisis and related issues, migration became a more prominent topic on the agenda of the Commission's DG Research and Innovation.

### **Book Presentation**

The first day of the conference concluded with the presentation of the book *Romanians in Western Europe. Migration, Status Dilemmas, and Transnational Connections* authored by Remus Gabriel Anghel. The author's study, concerned with social prestige of migrants abroad was discussed by invited guests Irina Ciornei and Laura Moroşanu.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on the MOVE project, visit <http://move-project.eu>.

### **ESA RN 35 “Sociology of Migration” – Midterm Conference: an Invitation to Dialogue**

The variety of perspectives in analysing migration, brought together in this conference, made it a valuable resource for those interested in this phenomenon, scholars, decision makers and students alike. The topics, ranging from methodological issues, broad quantitative inquiries to very specific case studies provided places of discussion suited for the complexities and challenges of nowadays mobility. The organizers were very happy to welcome speakers from diverse backgrounds. The more experienced researchers, with clearly defined research areas, some of whom had previously met on different occasions, could give a sense of continuity to discussions. At the same time, the event was open for young researchers interested in migration topics, who could benefit from the interactions during the sessions, as well as at the informal meetings.