



Call for Papers

13th International Conference

Thursday 13 June to Saturday 15 June 2013

Basle / Switzerland

“Migration and Urbanity”

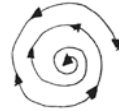
Organizers

- Institute for Integration and Participation, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, School of Social Work (Switzerland)
- Institute for Regional and Migration Research - IRM (Trier, Germany)
- Centre de Documentation sur les Migrations Humaines CDMH (Dudelange, Luxembourg)
- University of Klagenfurt, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Dept. of Intercultural Education (Klagenfurt, Austria)

Mobility spurred by migration has been a constitutive factor powering the development of cities since time immemorial. Industrialization in the 19th and 20th century and the emergence of huge labor markets in urban centers became a key force driving regional migration into cities, in particular from rural regions, and cross-border international migration of workers seeking a more secure basis for their livelihood. In the course of industrialization, segregated workers' neighborhoods arose in the cities, where migrants concentrated, a number eking out a bare existence under desolate conditions. Over the course of centuries, cities in Europe have been marked and distinctively shaped by different migration movements. In this context, labor migration after WW II was only a new phase in which there was lasting significant change, especially in the cities and the larger metro areas and conurbations. In a basic sense, urban development and urbanity are thus inconceivable without migration. Urban histories are histories of migration, where migrants become visible acting and shaping urban space as new ethnic minorities. However, the presence of migrants in the cities is often viewed through a negative prism. This is because more generally, what is perceived and interpreted as problematic is only the influx of migrants and changes in working-class districts that were already identified as purported problem neighborhoods; now they fall into disrepute as 'districts for foreigners,' and are slapped with labels such as ghettos, ethnic colonies or parallel societies. They are often deemed to be lost territories in the urban landscape. Negative attributions have often stigmatized the urban neighborhoods marked by a large presence of migrants, and their residents were frequently shunted to the social periphery, while other urban processes of segregation were overlooked.

This perspective shaped the political, legal, scientific and journalistic approach to dealing with migrants, and thus impacted on their social and psychological positioning in urban space. The product of this (mis)perception is that the constitutive positive nexus between migration and urbanization is overlooked, and the potential that migration movements offer for urban life fails to be recognized. Although other perspectives for describing the life situation of migrants in urban areas are conceivable, in public discourses we tend to find ourselves confronted with a normalizing perspective. In recent decades, this way of seeing phenomena has given rise to stereotypy in perception, the “danger of a single story,”] where almost exclusively, the dominant images are solely of a problematic and non-integrated migration. Social conditions, political circumstances and social contexts are generally ignored, as are also the everyday realities in the lives of migrant groups locally. On the whole, such debates sketch an extremely dark picture of urban life and would appear to allow little latitude for a more differentiated description of realities on the ground.

By contrast, a look at urban realities shows that – largely for structural reasons -- parallel societies cannot exist here. That is because urban spaces and structures motivate and even force people, in differing ways and different contexts, into encounters of exchange, whether interacting in the marketplace, at school, at work, on the street, the neighborhood, on the block. But they also make it



possible to find and carve out niches and to reshape spaces. Thus, much only becomes really visible if eyes are opened to see what is actually happening. For example, how certain neighborhoods began to move and shift to a more dynamic level as migrants settled there, how migrants and post-migrant individuals and groups try to organize their lives in the cities under the impress of legal and political barriers. And how neglected urban spaces are transformed and brought to new life, reinvigorated by their residents. Quite different forms and actors in transnational economies come into being, as well as post-migration scenes, places and cultures that view themselves as antagonistic to the mainstream and the pressures to adapt, but which are considered a part of the avantgarde in urban space. Likewise, everyday cultures and associations arise, marked by solidarity, mutual support, situated in neighborhoods and in what appear on the surface to be hidden networks and spaces. Cities and urban neighborhoods form the concrete places where the economic and political dynamism of local and global processes repeatedly intermingle anew, within transitional and intermediate spaces and places, at the local grassroots level – a spatiality shaped by individuals of different social backgrounds and positionings, which at the same time provide a margin for the unfolding of multifarious strategies for living. However, such places and spaces are always overlaid and entangled with diverse social and societal processes of inclusion, exclusion and norming, also acting to shape the possibilities for action of the actors.

The conference seeks to look at the relation between migration and urbanity from an array of different disciplinary perspectives, including social work, sociology, geography, the educational sciences, music, literature, language and literature studies, anthropology and history, and their description, discussion and reflection in different contexts. Proposals can be submitted on questions in the following thematic areas, exploring both theoretical and empirical aspects:

- Theoretical and historical perspectives on migration and urbanity
- Urban planning and urban development in the context of migration societies
- Life and strategies for living in marginalized urban neighborhoods
- Politics in the context of integration, marginalization and participation
- Post-migrant scenes, spaces and cultures of support ...
- Social and symbolic processes of inclusion and exclusion in urban space
- Intersectional discrimination and forms of empowerment in urban spaces and cultures
- Migration and urbanity in cultures of memory

Researchers interested in presenting a paper are requested to submit an abstract of maximum 500 words with paper title, brief bio data and contact address (e-mail, telephone and postal address). Please make use of the online form at www.irm-trier.de to submit your abstract and personal data.

Proposal submission deadline is 30 December 2012

Applicants will be contacted and informed of a decision by 10 February 2013

Conference languages: German and English

Information and contact at: www.irm-trier.de; Tagung2013@irm-trier.de



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