



Call for contributions

Online workshop and network creation

Freedom of Movement? Intra-EU Regimes of Migration, Labour and Social Reproduction

24 September 2021

While the European migration and border regime shows its most violent face at its external borders, over the past years the right to free movement within the European Union has become more and more contested. The figure of the 'poverty migrant' has been in the midst of EU-wide conflicts around (de-)Europeanisation and a subject of moral panic for local politics, where EU migrants are often racialised in urban security spectacles. In Germany, the new policy field of 'poverty migration from south-eastern Europe' problematised mobile EU citizens in precarious living and working conditions as unwanted migrants. The German government excluded 'economically inactive' EU citizens from social services and waged a war against so-called 'benefit fraud'. Meanwhile, many EU citizens continue to navigate ever more insecure working situations and livelihoods - often through transnational practices and participation in highly fragmented social worlds.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has shed some light on the hyper-exploitative practices that migrants - predominantly from Eastern Europe - face in the meat industry, on asparagus farms and in private households. While this led to legal initiatives such as the ban of subcontracting in the meat industry, media coverage amplified narratives of victimisation and need in which migrant workers figured as passive victims that are not considered as part of German society. In competing accounts, their bodies have been pathologised as bringing infection while their mobility has been scandalised as economically opportunistic and morally reprehensible. In reality, migrants need to negotiate multiple positionalities and intersecting attachments, not only as workers, but also as carers, affective beings, homemakers, etc. - which can often produce conflicting or hard to reconcile obligations and aspirations.

Intra-EU migration remains a relatively under-explored topic in academia. Scholars have voiced the need for developing new theoretical approaches and conceptual standpoints, however, current efforts to shed light on the controversies surrounding intra-EU regimes of migration, labour and social reproduction continue to be separated by disciplinary boundaries, conceptual and methodological demarcations, as well as language competencies.

The aim of this workshop is to create space for an intellectual exchange and the production of new theoretical and discursive avenues around intra-European regimes of migration, labour and social reproduction. The specific focus is on conflicts around Union citizenship and the European right to free movement as part of a highly stratified and contested system of legal statuses and practices. We would also like to explore the possibilities around going beyond this one-time encounter and putting together a lasting platform by picking up on existing and emerging networks.

As a framework for the workshop we suggest the following (but not exhaustive) set of questions:

- What is the current state of research on intra-EU migration regimes when it comes to shifts in research questions, methodologies, theoretical frameworks, etc? What is the value of drawing on recent debates in border, postsocialist, postcolonial and critical race studies, social reproduction theory and/or intersectional and feminist approaches for understanding the asymmetrical power relations that mark today's mobilities within the EU?
- With intra-EU migration as an analytical lens, what can we learn about current societal dynamics, such as the precarisation of labour, the fragmentation of social security, the proliferation of racialised and ethnicised categories of difference but also new forms of resistance and emancipatory struggles?
- What changes have occurred in the organisation of mobility, labour and social reproduction in the context of coalescing recent crises and their economic, social and health effects (2008 economic recession, Covid-19 health and economic crisis, etc.)?

As well as papers on completed research, this one-day, online workshop is open to participants who would like to discuss work in progress or present short interventions in an informal and supportive environment. We ask for short abstracts and/or expressions of interest (200 words) to be sent by **1 August 2021** to **Lisa Riedner** (lisa.riedner@uni-a.de) and **Polina Manolova** (polina.manolova@uni-tuebingen.de).

The workshop will take place online and will be recorded (subject to participants agreement). The workshop is co-organized by University of Augsburg and University of Tübingen.