Leaving Europe

Alternative Routes of Out/Upward Mobility

Call for papers

Place & Date:

KU Leuven, Belgium, September 13-14, 2018

Keynote Speakers

Ayse Caglar (University of Vienna)

Ghassan Hage (The University of Melbourne)

Outline

Who is leaving Europe today and why? With few exceptions, social science scholarship has not paid much attention to contemporary forms of European *emigration*. Western Europe has traditionally featured as a major (colonial) center of economic, political and cultural influence in the world, and thus as a core *destination* for all sorts of immigrant and capital flows.

When European emigration is addressed, it is often through the image of the privileged 'expat' (Fechter & Walsh 2013). While some historical work has been done on 'troubled' publics within colonial migration currents from Europe to the 'New World' (Oxley 1996), less frequent are more contemporary studies on mobile pathways of subaltern 'success' (Reitz 1999) that apply a similarly *global* scope to human mobility. Recently, scholars have started to look at intra-European migration circuits following the economic and financial crisis (Lafleur & Stanek 2017), not least by focusing on 'ethnographies of austerity' (Knight & Stewart 2016), yet, when notions of 'home' (Boccagni 2017) are involved in relation to emerging 'migratory dispositions' (Kalir 2005), Europe remains often studied as an endpoint rather than a site of departure. Some scholarship has started exploring the idea of *leaving Europe* in relation to the German-Turkish community (Sari & Alkan 2016). However, while

innovative some of this work portrays it as a bifurcated 'return to roots' (King & Kilinc 2014). Furthermore, literature on European emigration is mainly premised on such ideas as individual choice, professional strategies, cosmopolitan openness to the world, or the search for (lifestyle) adventure, rather than evoking modes of structural necessity or wider existential concerns. Indeed, anthropological notions like 'waithood' (Honwana 2012), which stand in direct relation to the workings of societal space, have been applied traditionally to explain peripheral revolt and/or emigration ('push') from 'developing' countries to the West. Others, however, have started pioneering the ways in which 'stuckedness' (Hage 2009), or the existential feeling of 'going nowhere', entails in fact a more *global* experience that is structurally tied into the social condition of permanent crisis, urging us in turn to explore further its relationality with modes of migration.

Following the global financial downturn of the late 2000s and ongoing anti-social EU integration processes (Bernaciak 2015), the trope of 'crisis' (Vigh 2008) has been circulating widely in Europe, both as an unequally distributed *lived* reality (decreasing social/class mobility), and as an ideological category that obscures the intricacies of global finance capitalism. In the meantime, many EU Member States are scenery of heated political debates on national belonging, illustrating what Duyvendak (2011) calls the 'crisis of home', or Darling (2014) conceives as 'domopolitics'. Hereby, immigrant populations in general, and established ethno-religious minorities like Maghrebi-Muslims in particular, seem increasingly questioned in their national loyalty and even their 'rights' of residence (Norton 2013). For some of these affected publics, especially tertiary educated (skilled) youths that aspire mobility into the middle class, Europe appears to signify increasingly a site of relative precarity, social friction and discriminatory modes of abjection (e.g. xenophobia, racism, Islamophobia). The position of Europe in the global landscape of migration is changing, both from a material perspective (flows) and an ideational one (perception/attraction). One such example is the gradual reconfiguration of migratory routes and mobility aspirations from Maghreb countries to North America (Canada, US) rather than primarily Europe. Therefore, Europe can no longer be considered solely as a destination, but needs to be researched and theorized as a site of transit/departure/emigration too.

With this conference we invite scholars to engage with the idea of 'decentering/provincializing' Europe (Chakrabarty 2007) in an effort to 'decolonize' (Grosfoguel 2007) migration studies. Questions that concern us are the following.

(1) How does the current political climate in Europe and the West, centered on public concerns over immigration and national belonging, shape novel aspirations to emigrate, both from the part of majoritarian publics as well as minorities? What is known about migratory sentiments of 'exiting' (Van Hear 2014) European space? How do such mobilities actually play out, both

in terms of their geographical patterns as well as their segmentations (circular, staged, permanent etc.)? What sort of material and social 'infrastructures' (Xiang & Lindquist 2014) do these migrations then draw on, and in what sort of 'regimes of mobility' (Glick Schiller & Salazar 2013) are they ultimately embedded?

(2) To what extent do such 'decentered' emigrations call for a critical reconsideration of such traditional concepts as 'integration', or, for that matter, academic agendas that feature 'second & third generations'? How can we move beyond the 'homeland' vs. 'country of residence' binary, and actually account for encountered complexities in the field? Why does so much scholarship imagine that minorities in the West can only 'return' while majoritarian publics can roam the world as 'expats'? Why are specific minorities in Western Europe, that are born and raised there, often denied 'Europeaness'/'nativity'?

(3) What does 'home' mean? This ill-defined notion is found everywhere today, be it in various shades in popular sentiment, media discourse or political rhetoric. How can we explain increasing concerns of not 'feeling at home', raised both by majority publics (e.g. Pegida) as well as minorities? How and why does this highly subjective, yet seemingly fundamental, emotion change so drastically over time? In this respect, how does mobility reshape 'home' over time; how do people look back at (their previous condition in) Europe from a (spatial and time-bound) distance?

(4) What is 'Europe' today? To what extent do these new/alternative forms of European *emigration* challenge dominant (scholarly and public) ideas about both 'Europe' (as center, destination etc.) and 'Europeaness' (*demos, ethnos, terra*) – who can lay claim? How can post-colonial critique inform us historically of the teleology of a contemporary 'Europe' in the making?

More precisely, during this two-day conference, we would like to bring together scholars that approach European (and Western) countries not merely as destinations for migrants but rather as contexts of departure too, be it of EU nationals or third country nationals resident in Europe (transit). In doing so, this conference aims to cater for more polycentric approaches on human mobility in migration studies. We welcome contributions that address the following tracks of enquiry:

- Historical, ethnographic, or other social-scientific investigations of European (and Western) emigration flows, be it forms of reverse migration (to so-called countries of origin) or detailing altogether novel migratory pathways.

- Accounts of emerging migration aspirations, desires and/or strategies of 'exit' in European Member States (and the West), be it of people already on-the-move or those that (are still forced/choosing to) stay put.
- Papers that focus specifically on the contemporary whereabouts of un/ease (un/homeliness or *un/heimlichkeit*) of 'second and third generation immigrant' minorities in Europe, with non-EU backgrounds and/or of 'Muslim' signature (e.g. Maghrebi, Arab, Turkish, Balkan, Iranian, Pakistani, Afghani). Studies that unpack the ways in which such 'hyper-visible' minorities navigate an increasingly politicized and racialized 'home' context.
- Cases of secondary/onward emigration of migrants living in Europe and currently reorienting their projects to destinations outside of the EU (e.g. US, Canada, GCC, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore).
- Analytical accounts on global, national, and local infrastructures and regimes of mobility, in which flows of European migration are embedded.
- Ethnographic accounts on home-making processes by European nationals in global cities outside the EU, and their signifying practices of distinction overseas (class, race, gender, privilege regimes, social mobility, status performance etc.)

Conference venue and organization

The conference is organized by KU Leuven's Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Center (IMMRC), with the collaboration of the Center for Ethnic and Migration Studies (CEDEM) of the University of Liège, and the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) of the University of Amsterdam. The conference will be held in Belgium, at the premises of KU Leuven in the city of Leuven on September 13-14, 2018. Keynote lectures will be given by prof. dr. Ayse Caglar (University of Vienna) and prof. dr. Ghassan Hage (University of Melbourne)

Conference Organizers: Jaafar Alloul, Jeremy Mandin

Academic Committee: Nadia Fadil (KUL), Karel Arnaut (KUL), Jean-Michel Lafleur (ULG), Annelies Moors (UvA)

Application

Candidates are asked to submit an extended abstract (800 words max, 500 words min) of their contribution by **March 1st, 2018.** The abstract needs to include a brief presentation of the main topic(s), shed light on the empirical material(s), and allude to the theoretical groundings on which it is

built. Applicants will receive news about their selection by the end of March, 2018. Participants will be expected to provide an extensive draft (3000-5000 words) prior to the conference, by August 31, 2018. The event is conceived as a preparation for a journal special issue. Therefore, we can only select original materials that have not been published previously.

All applications have to be sent by **March 1st, 2018** to the following two contact addresses:

Jaafar Alloul: Jaafar.Alloul@kuleuven.be

Jérémy Mandin: Jeremy.Mandin@kuleuven.be

Questions?

For any further practical questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the two organizers listed above

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