

January 28, 2015

## **Transdisciplinary Workshop – Call for Papers and Posters**

### **Embodied Experience of Transnational Movements: Historical Trajectories and Contemporary Dynamics**

**Date:** 17 July 2015

**Venue:** Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology (BGHS), Bielefeld, Germany

The increasingly erratic and multi-directional movement of individuals across state borders has marked bodies in historically ascribed and discursively constructed ways. These individuals are sometimes understood as the very embodiment of transnational movement. With the ascendance of Foucauldian, phenomenological, and feminist research, and the concomitant recognition of the body in social theory and cultural history, bodies in movement or moving bodies have been described as raced, classed, gendered, Othered, subjectivated or disciplined. However, the focus on the relationship between bodies and movement has paradoxically revealed little about the embodied experience of movement itself. Pressing questions about the shifting modes of embodiment – such as how the body has been embodied in border-crossing spaces of entities other than, yet including, nation-states, or how traversing such boundaries has constituted a particular experience of embodiment – have as yet to be addressed in both migration studies and diaspora studies.

The body and experiences of embodiment are layered and multifaceted. They are situated at the level of human subjective experience, human relations, social formation, institutional organizations, cultural processes, society, and history (Waskul and Vannini 2006). At the juncture of these themes, this workshop intends to recognize, examine, and unsettle these bodily understandings/categories of moving individuals by re-scripting bodily experiences in a transnational, i.e. multilayered, regiment of border-crossings. Since the body cannot be separated from its lived experience, a focus is needed on embodiment – or a corporeal mode of inhabiting the world – of various, at times contested and overlapping, spatial scales.

Our understanding of the transnational as a research perspective takes into account various scales or units of analysis, process, and practice involving spatial movements of bodies that transcend state borders. It can also refer to networks and the simultaneous ties and relations that cross state boundaries and disregard their authority. The term transnational highlights processes and institutions that are no longer routinely associated with the state. This stands in marked contrast to

the ideological orientation of methodological nationalism, which approaches the study of social and historical processes as if they were contained within the borders of individual nation-states and posits bodies in movement or moving bodies as introducing diversity into the territory of a nation-state. It is equally important for us to recognize and analyse the movements of moving/moved bodies who do not identify with any given nation-state, and instead consider themselves members of other, smaller or larger, spatial entities. After all, in Laura Doyle's words, with the 'transnational turn,' researchers might find their way to "the ground zero of nations: their transnational production" (2010). Invoking a transnational outlook therefore promises much for the investigation of the body. We hope to reveal otherwise overlooked movements of bodies within wide and narrow circuits of labour, citizenship, identity formation, knowledge, and capital across times, places, and contexts.

Based on these observations, the workshop aims to advocate expansion and multiplication of the scales of analysis in exploring the nexus of the transnational, movement, and the body. In other words, we seek to investigate how bodies have not only moved through, but have also been moved by cross-border spaces, while taking into consideration historical contexts and social, economic, and political processes.

The following questions will guide us through the workshop:

- How has movement been connected to understandings and implications of 'the body' and 'the transnational' in various contexts?
- How can the body be researched in particular contexts both as the object and scale of study?
- How has placing body questions at the forefront intersected with a perspective that advances and has as its starting point a world without borders, examining the borders that emerge at particular historical moments?
- In what ways has the body defied, resisted or changed the course of human movement?
- And how has the body – as the most immediate scale known to mankind – enacted itself in relation to the 'transnational' scales through which it moves, is imagined, and is experienced?

### Conveners:

Mahshid Mayar, doctoral researcher, Department of History, Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology

Cleovi Mosuela, doctoral researcher, Department of Sociology, Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology

### Keynote Lecture:

- Dr. Kristin Kastner

Institut für Ethnologie Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

### Welcome Address:

- Prof. Dr. Thomas Faist

Faculty of Sociology Bielefeld University

### Application:

We invite the submission of **proposals for papers and posters** from researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds. This may include scholars in transnational history, social and cultural history, migration studies, sociology, anthropology, postcolonial studies, and cultural studies. Participants interested in either paper or poster presentation should submit an abstract of about 250 words and a one-page CV to the workshop organizers: Mahshid Mayar [[mahshid.mayar@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:mahshid.mayar@uni-bielefeld.de)] and Cleovi Mosuela [[cleovi.mosuela@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:cleovi.mosuela@uni-bielefeld.de)]. Please indicate whether you will need financial support for travel and accommodation.

**We accept proposals until 15 March 2015.**

Proposers will be notified by mid-April 2014. Accepted papers will be due one month prior to the workshop date, i.e., **17 June 2015**.

As regards accepted posters, abstracts must be formatted into a poster which may include graphs, tables, and charts. Poster presenters must print their own posters and bring them to the workshop. Detailed instructions and technical specifications will follow the notice of acceptance.