



RC-31 Newsletter, Spring 2021

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The Covid19 pandemic constitutes a potential turning point for international migration/mobility patterns and regimes. The question is: which way will things turn?

It's not hard to find reasons to predict that migration opportunities will diminish considerably. Policy-makers might prove reluctant to lift travel & immigration restrictions. Economic recession could reduce employment opportunities in typical destination countries. Some types of migrants (students, perhaps) might have lower appetites for risk. Some observers are happy to make predictions that extrapolate from current situations along these lines. An oft-heard trope is that "everything has changed" – an idea that plausibly applies to international migration.

I'm usually not all that interested in making predictions – but I will happily comment on those made by others. What strikes me about pessimistic predictions regarding migration is that they seem to operate mainly at the "surface" level. Sociologists of migration are usually more inclined to focus on (deeper?) structural features.

If we really thought that migration opportunities will remain significantly lower on a semi-permanent basis, we would have to believe that certain things have *really* changed. Some types of employers would have to shift their hiring preferences in quite a radical way: instead of turning to "cheaper" and often more pliable immigrant labour,

they'd have to be willing to meet the demands of citizens. A recession doesn't strike me as a good conjuncture for that sort of shift (even if employers wanted to make it).

On the "supply" side as well, many people around the world now face circumstances that will likely increase (rather than decreasing) their motivation to move. A key aspect of the current situation is that some migrants have been sent "home", with a significant loss of remittance income for families and states in the origin country. Will they simply accept it? For how long? Another salient development is the rise in xenophobia and outright racism – e.g. abusive and violent actions targeting Asian-Americans. But perhaps rejection by "natives" in the destination will mean only that immigrants will face more difficult situations – and instead of staying home on that basis, they will have worse experiences. For some it's probably not a dramatic transformation: even in pre-covid times many immigrants already had to endure quite a lot.

We could also ask: to what extent has the state been transformed by the pandemic, in ways that connect to migration? Some aspects of state capacity have no doubt increased, and perhaps those capacities can be turned towards enforcement activities connected to undocumented immigrants. But the core structural challenges associated with undocumented immigration remain: limited resources for enforcement, lack of support from key social sectors, etc. And of course policies about immigration are never just policies about immigration – to "control migration", states have to act effectively in a broad range of other social/economic/political spheres. I don't see a lot of "structural transformation" at the moment; many states are clearly in a short-term reactive mode.

An easy prediction to offer is that we'll need more nuance than is suggested by "everything has changed".

On a different note, I'd like to express my appreciation to those who participated in the ISA Forum in February. It was mostly a very successful event, in my view – some very interesting sessions, including our keynote. The on-line format has some real advantages (including accessibility), though I'm sure we all hope to be able to meet face-to-face again. ISA is currently discussing the timing and format of our next World Congress – I expect we will see an outcome soon.

Finally, please make sure you read the section of this newsletter announcing the winners of our publication prizes (and of course the rest of the newsletter as well).

David Bartram
President, RC31
University of Leicester
d.bartram@le.ac.uk



RC31 PUBLICATION AWARDS

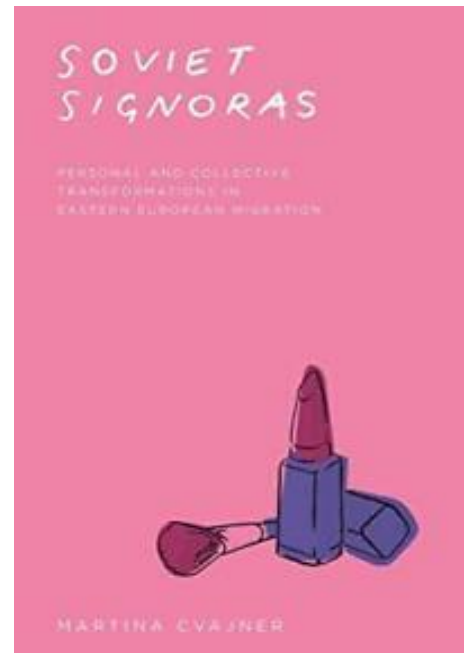
The RC31 board is very pleased to communicate the results of our publication awards round for works published by members in 2018/2019 (as announced at the business meeting during the Forum).

For “**best book**” the award goes to:

Martina Cvajner (University of Trento): *Soviet Signoras: Personal and Collective Transformations in Eastern European Migration*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (2019). Link to publisher: [link](#)

Across the Western world, the air is filled with talk of immigration. The changes brought by immigration have triggered a renewed fervor for isolationism able to shutter political traditions and party systems. So often absent from these conversations on migration are however the actual stories and experiences of the migrants themselves. In fact, migration does not simply transport people. It also changes them deeply. Enter Martina Cvajner’s *Soviet Signoras*, a far-reaching ethnographic study of two decades in the lives of women who migrated to northern Italy from several former Soviet republics.

Cvajner details the personal and collective changes brought about by the experience of migration for these women: from the first hours arriving in a new country with no friends, relatives, or existing support networks, to later remaking themselves for their new environment. In response to their traumatic displacement, the women of *Soviet Signoras*—nearly all of whom found work in their new Western homes as elder care givers—refashioned themselves in highly sexualized, materialistic, and intentionally conspicuous ways. Cvajner’s focus on overt sexuality and materialism is far from sensationalist, though. By zeroing in on these elements of personal identity, she reveals previously unexplored sides of the social psychology of migration, coloring our contemporary discussion with complex shades of humanity.



For “**best article**”, the award goes to:

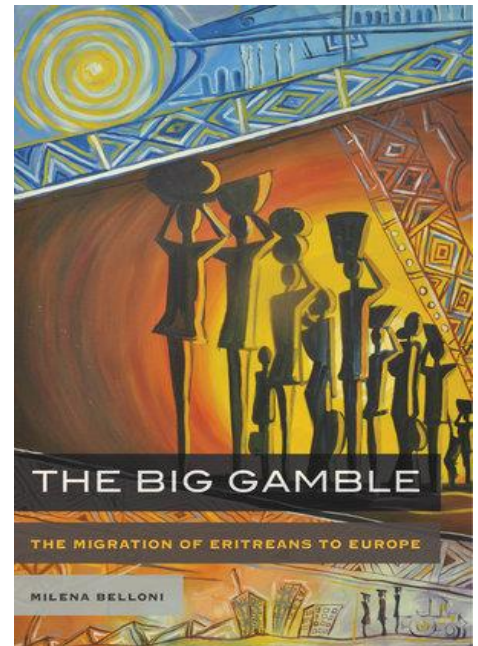
Deisy Del Real (University of Southern California): “Toxic Ties: The Reproduction of Legal Violence within Mixed-Status Intimate Partners, Relatives, and Friends.” *International Migration Review* 53(2): 548–570, 2019. Link to article: [link](#)

This article introduces the concept of toxic ties to analyze how relationships between documented and undocumented people are impacted by governmental policies that sanction legal violence and unevenly distribute legal rights, protections, and benefits. Toxic ties are relationships in which a documented person abuses, exploits, or demeans his/her undocumented partners, relatives, or friends. Drawing on interviews with undocumented and U.S.-born young adults in southern California, the article shows that as relationships between documented and undocumented people turn toxic, the resulting toxic ties reproduce legal violence in everyday life. Future research should further explore how toxic ties affect migrants’ life outcomes.

The board also gave an “honourable mention” to an additional book submission:

Milena Belloni (University of Antwerp): *The Big Gamble: The Migration of Eritreans to Europe*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019. Link to publisher: [link](#)

Tens of thousands of Eritreans make perilous voyages across Africa and the Mediterranean Sea every year. Why do they risk their lives to reach European countries where so many more hardships await them? By visiting family homes in Eritrea and living with refugees in camps and urban peripheries across Ethiopia, Sudan, and Italy, Milena Belloni untangles the reasons behind one of the most under-researched refugee populations today. Balancing encounters with refugees and their families, smugglers, and visa officers, *The Big Gamble* contributes to ongoing debates about blurred boundaries between forced and voluntary migration, the complications of transnational marriages, the social matrix of smuggling, and the role of family expectations, emotions, and values in migrants’ choices of destinations.



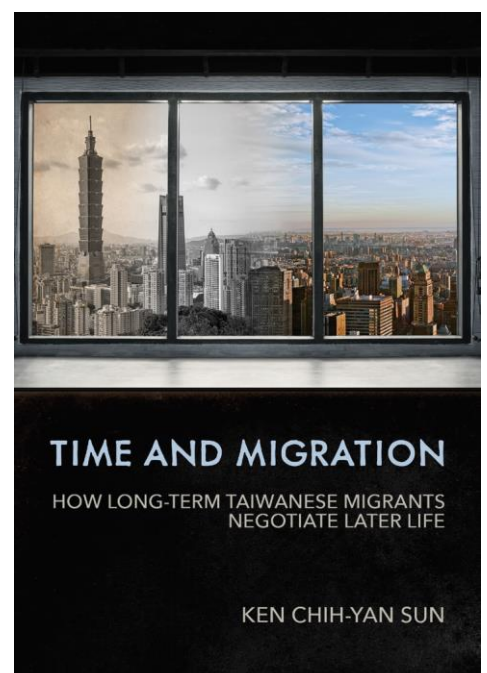
Congratulations to Martina, Deisy, and Milena! We warmly encourage members to read their work; we are confident you will find it very rewarding. We intend to continue with this bi-annual awards program; details for submissions for the next round will be circulated to members in due course.



MEMBERS’ NEW BOOKS

Sun, Ken Chih-Yan. 2021. Time and Migration: How Long-Term Taiwanese Migrants Negotiate Later-Life. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Based on longitudinal ethnographic work on migration between the US and Taiwan, *Time and Migration* interrogates how long-term immigrants negotiate their needs as they grow older and how transnational migration shapes later-life transitions. Ken Chih-Yan Sun develops the concept of a “temporalities of migration” to examine the interaction between space, place, and time. He demonstrates how long-term settlement in the United States, coupled with changing homeland contexts, has inspired aging immigrants and returnees to rethink their sense of social belonging, remake intimate relations, and negotiate opportunities and constraints across borders. The interplay between migration and time shapes the ways aging migrant populations reassess and reconstruct relationships with their children, spouses, grandchildren, community members, and home, as well as host societies. Aging, Sun argues, is a global issue, and must be reconsidered in a cross-border environment.





RECENT ARTICLES/CHAPTERS

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- Boccagni, P. & Vargas-Silva, C. 2021. Feeling at home across time and place: A study of Ecuadorians in three European cities. *Population, Space and Place*, online-first. DOI 10.1002/psp.2431
- Busse-Cárdenas, E. 2021. Long Live Peru! Dancing national identity in a hostile context in the U.S. *Latino Studies*, 19(1), 114-120. DOI: 10.1057/s41276-021-00282-y
- Carvalho, J. & Ruedin, D. 2020. The Positions Mainstream Left Parties Adopt on Immigration: A Crosscutting Cleavage? *Party Politics*, 26(4), 379-389. DOI:10.1177/1354068818780533
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PhDs

Susanne Schultz, “Failed” Migratory Adventures? Malian Men Facing Conditions Post Deportation in Southern Mali. Bielefeld University (supervisors: Thomas Faist & Dorothea Schulz)

Mengyao Zhao, The impact of internal migration on labor market outcomes of college graduates in China. Bielefeld University (supervisors: Thomas Faist & Yasemin Soysal)



MEMBERS’ OTHER ACTIVITIES

Elahie, E. & Gomes, S. Everyday survival in the southern Caribbean. [The Sociological Review's blog post](#)

Sarradell, O. *REFUGE-ED Project. Effective practices in education, mental health and psychosocial support for the integration of refugee children*. H2020 European Project (2021-2024). The project is led by Dr.Teresa Sordé (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

Sarradell, O. and Ainhoa F. *UNIROMA. Roma in Spanish universities: difficulties and actions to overcome them*. MINISTERIO DE CIENCIA, INNOVACIÓN Y UNIVERSIDADES, Spanish Government (2019-2021). The project funded by the Spanish government RTD programme



CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND OTHER CALLS

“1st International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Spatial Methods” (“SMUS Conference”)

The “Global Center of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability” (GCSMUS) together with the Research Committee on “Logic and Methodology in Sociology” (RC33) of the “International Sociology Association” (ISA) and the Research Network “Quantitative Methods” (RN21) of the European Sociology Association” (ESA) will organize a “1st International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Spatial Methods” (“SMUS Conference”) which will at the same time be the “1st RC33 Regional Conference – Africa: Botswana” from Thursday 23.09 – Sunday 26.09.2021, hosted by the University of Botswana in Gaborone, Botswana. Given the current challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference will convene entirely **online**.

The conference aims at promoting a global dialogue on methods and should attract methodologists from all over the world and all social and spatial sciences. It will enable scholars to get in contact with methodologists from various disciplines all over the world and to deepen discussions with researchers from various methodological angles. Scholars of all social and spatial sciences and other scholars who are interested in methodological discussions are invited to submit a paper to any sessions of the conference.

All papers have to address a methodological problem. Information about the session and all other sessions can be found [here](#).

Nina Baur, Manuea Boatcă, Fraya Frehse and Johanna Hoerning (Germany and Brazil) invite you to submit an abstract for the session “**Decolonizing Social Science Methodology – Overcoming Positivism and Constructivism**”.

Submission of Papers

All sessions have to comply with the conference organization rules. If you want to present a paper, please submit your abstract via the official conference website: <https://gcsmus.org> until 31.05.2021. You will be informed by 31.07.2021, if your proposed paper has been accepted for presentation at the conference.

For further information, please see the conference website (<https://gcsmus.org> and www.mes.tu-berlin.de/spatialmethods) or contact the session organizers, Nina Baur, Manuea Boatcă, Fraya Frehse and Johanna Hoerning (nina.baur@tu-berlin.de; manuela.boatca@soziologie.uni-freiburg.de; fraya@usp.br; johanna.hoerning@tu-berlin.de).

10th GESIS Summer School

In 2021 we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the **GESIS Summer School** – Europe’s leading summer school in survey methodology, research design, and data collection.

It will take place from **28 July to 20 August 2021** – conducted again online as a virtual summer school. Scheduled are four short courses and ten one-week courses. Seven courses are new or have been completely redesigned.

For all relevant information including the full program and detailed course descriptions visit www.gesis.org/summerschool

ECTS & Scholarships

Thanks to our cooperation with the [Center for Doctoral Studies in Social and Behavioral Sciences \(CDSS\)](#) at the University of Mannheim, participants can obtain a certificate acknowledging a workload worth 4 ECTS credit points per one-week course (24h or 30h of virtual class time). More information [on our website](#).

Thanks to our cooperation with the [Institute of Sociology and Social Psychology \(ISS\)](#) at the University of Cologne, [scholarships](#) (fee waivers) are available to Summer School participants who do not hold German citizenship and are living outside of Germany, sponsored by the [German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\)](#). Find a [Call for Applications on our website](#).

Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration

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Politics, Perils and Privileges: Immobilities in the Time of Global Pandemics

When the COVID-19 global pandemic struck in early 2020, governments around the world reacted by closing international and national state borders, banning or restricting international and interstate travel, and resorting to enforced lockdowns and curfews. The economic and social impacts of these sudden restrictions in movements have been devastating with the lived experiences of everyone impacted. The employed became unemployed, industries whose entire business models are dependent on human interactions such as tourism, hospitality and entertainment collapsed, supply chains were disrupted, remote working and studying became the norm, families were separated from each other and professional and education opportunities were lost. People around the world frustrated by the impact the pandemic has had on them, and by the systemic and new inequalities that emerged, voiced their anger through street protests and in the online space with the pandemic fuelling both extreme right wing and left wing fervour. The rapid move to the online space to conduct almost every kind of human activity meant a complete

reliance on the digital resulting in new kinds of inequalities and challenges. The rise of the digital in the time of forced immobilities has also created completely new opportunities born out of necessity. While mobility was once the life blood for human and individual necessity, progress and advancement, immobility has shown itself to create perils and privileges never really realised. For example, workers not required to be 'on site' are able to set up home offices to work from home.

This special issue thus asks the questions:

How has immobility affected the once mobile?

What old and new inequalities have resulted as consequences of restricted or banned human movements?

What political movements are being created because of forced immobility?

How have communities responded to forced immobility and to the once mobile?

What are the impacts of immobility on migrants and migration?

What are the relationships between the digital and immobility?

Timeline

Abstracts due: **September 2021**

Full papers due: **December 2021**

Please get in touch with the *Transitions* editors if you have any questions in the meantime:

Principal Editor:

Catherine Gomes, RMIT University, Australia catherine.gomes@rmit.edu.au

Editors:

Peidong Yang, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
y.peidong@gmail.com

Michel Baas, Max Planck Institute, Germany michielbaas@yahoo.com

Reviews Editor:

Helena Hof, University of Zurich, Switzerland helena.hof@aoi.uzh.ch



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Visit the [RC-31 web site](#).

MEMBERSHIP dues are \$20 for a four-year
period: to join, visit the ISA web site [here](#).

SUBMIT YOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS!

(Not only announcements – there is also
scope for longer pieces in the form of
op-eds, etc.)

Send submissions for the next issue to

Oshrat Hochman:

Oshrat.hochman@gesis.org