

Mobility – Migration: confusing terms, varying regional relevance, conflicting policies?

In the framework of the National Centre for Competence in Research North-South (<http://www.north-south.unibe.ch/>) funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation, a shared Postdoc position of the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute and the Institute of Geography, University of Zurich, is open.

Postdoc position in Human Geography or Migration Studies

Working place: Basel, Switzerland

Remuneration: According to the salary scheme of the Swiss National Science Foundation

Duration: Negotiable: 7 months to 14 months (100% - 50% engagement, max. possible is 9 full months), starting date either 1st November 2010 or 1st April 2011

Conditions:

- PhD degree in human geography (related to migration/mobility) or migration studies
- Publication record including peer-reviewed articles
- Working experience related to migration/mobility in developing and/or transition countries
- Excellency in English, written and spoken; working knowledge in French and/or Russian is an asset
- Good skills in qualitative research
- Proven ability to work with colleagues from other disciplines
- Willingness to travel internationally (approx. 15% of total assignment)

Applicants are invited to send by mail:

1. Letter of motivation
2. Curriculum vitae
3. Copies of main diplomas
4. Names and addresses of two reference persons
5. Copies of two own key publications

To:

Dr. Esther Schelling, Swiss Tropical and Public Institute, PO Box, CH-4002 Basel, Switzerland, or by email to esther.schelling@unibas.ch, Tel. +41 61 284 81 63

And

Dr. Susan Thieme, Department of Geography, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 190, 8057 Zurich, Switzerland, susan.thieme@geo.uzh.ch, Tel. +41 44 63 55147

Deadline for submission:

17. September 2010

Only complete applications are accepted.

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Rationale

National and international policy makers and development organisations see a huge potential in migration as strategy to reduce poverty and promote development in the countries of origin. However, academics also see the risks of ignoring individual or large-scale factors that can limit contributions of migrants to overall development. Newer mobility paradigms either emphasise the sustainable use of resources or are related to achievements of modern lifestyle. Recently, ‘motility’ was introduced to the academic debate as the link between spatial and social mobility with a focus on inequality. Although the terms migration and mobility are widely used, definitions, differences and interlinkages remain fuzzy. Furthermore, interlinkages of mobilities and migration have hardly been looked at in a comparative manner in developing and transition country contexts.

This research on migration and mobility builds on previous NCCR North-South research: migration and development in South and Central Asia and pastoralists’ mobility and access to natural resources and services in West Africa and Central Asia.

Goal and objectives

The overall goal is: By better understanding regional mobility patterns and perceived priorities regarding mobility in migration policy making, we contribute i) to enhance regional policy debates on mobility and migration and ii) to theoretical and empirical debates on mobility and migration by specifically making use of comparative regional analysis between West Africa, South- and Central Asia and Switzerland.

The specific objectives are the following:

- 1) To describe and compare main mobility patterns in regions based on literature review, NCCR findings, and interviews with key informants
- 2) To outline the different connotations, associations and perceptions of the role of mobility – migration in development and its debates and policy
- 3) To evaluate if main commonalities or differences in regional migration and mobility patterns are reflected in the global debate and vice versa if the global debate is taken up at regional level.

The project should contribute to ongoing theoretical debates and especially make visible findings from the South in a rather Northern driven academic debate.

Approach

The main principles of this study are: i) central are the regional perspectives (vs. the global perspective), ii) its focus is on the most vulnerable to exclusion to basic rights, iii) it is comparative between different regions, and iv) it will validate previous results obtained in the NCCR North-South.

The project will be led by a postdoc. She/he will be backstopped by senior researchers and assisted in the regions by project collaborators. After a broad literature review, comparative studies are set up between Côte d’Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, and Switzerland.

In all regions, we will triangulate migration - mobility with i) policy reading, ii) official reports and statistics, and iii) interviews with key resource people from the public and

private sectors. The qualitative data from the interviews are analysed firstly within regions, e.g. public vs. private, international vs. national. Secondly, commonalities and marked differences between regions are identified. Thirdly, regional perceptions, policies and regulations are compared to the international policy and research discourses. Lastly, we evaluate how the regional perspectives and definitions relate to the international perspective to identify missing topics in the academic and policy debates on poverty reduction, development (including the fulfilment of the MDGs), mobilities and migration. Vice versa, the global perspective is compared to the regional perspectives.

Output:

Peer-reviewed articles and a policy brief will be submitted.

Outcome:

- Synthesizing existing migration and mobility research of the NCCR North-South.
- The major outcome of the project is the gained insight on interlinkages between migration and mobility as well as societal inequality and change, which will allow a more critical reading of the migration and development debate. This enhances the regional policy debates on mobility and migration and contributes to theoretical and empirical debates on mobility - migration by specifically making use of comparative regional analysis.