



*AUC International Conference on Research in African Challenges (ICRAC)*

*Track H: Economies of Poverty*

SUB-TRACK H4: ECONOMIES OF POVERTY AND MIGRATION: COLONIALITY AND MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

**Chair: Dr. Gerda Heck, Ilka Eickhof**

**Co-chair: Dr. Loren B. Landau**

Africa is often depicted as a continent of mass migration and displacement caused by poverty, violent conflict and environmental stress. Accounts of extreme poverty, starvation, warfare and environmental aggravation reinforce a notion of African misery (de Haas and Flahaux 2016).

This sub track aims to bring together researchers and scholars from different disciplines, approaches, backgrounds, and experiences working on the complex and manifold relationships of poverty, migration, and their economies. The track discusses and questions two interconnected strands of thought regarding the economies of poverty and migration.

On the one hand, we aim to scrutinize conventional interpretations of African migration, and explore developmental approaches and policy drivers of programs and strategies. While some migration scholars focus on the assumption of a poverty-driven African emigration out of the continent, which is also considered to be a result of failure of development (see Collier 2013), there exist a growing body of research on contemporary African migration that sheds light on the diversity of migration movements, motivations, background and migrant profiles (Bredeloup & Pliez 2005, de Haas and Flahaux 2016, Schielke & Graw 2012). Migration - intra- and transnational, voluntary, forced, impelled, seasonal, etc. - can be a tool to escape (relative, absolute, monetary, multidimensional, etc.) poverty and is often driven by the hope for well-being and improved living standard, it can also open new vulnerabilities and difficulties including the production of hierarchical categories of migrants and refugees through migration policies.

On the other hand, the track wants to investigate local, and international-funded poverty alleviation programs in Africa and other new programs of distribution, evaluating their success and sustainability. Do these programs provide sufficient support to alleviate the problems its targeted population is facing on the local levels? Or do these structures, based on aid, stabilize a system that hinders the interference of it, and hence enables the perpetuation of structural inequality? What exactly is the outcome of these programs? And how do migrants



and refugees navigate these new emerging migration infrastructures? How do they make use of it? What kind of conflicts, negotiations, rivalries, but also new collaborations, emerge?

We draw on Ruben Andersson (2014), who sees these emerging migration industries in the global South not as a homogeneous field of actors, but rather as a networked entity in which objectives sometimes oppose each other and roles overlap. And we want to discuss the contemporary articulations of the interactions between the economy, nation-states, non-governmental organizations and the movement of people.

This track will invite international researchers to critically reflect on migration politics and programs of poverty alleviation in Africa and their implications in regards to local and international migration governance, the management of transnational migration movements and its link to poverty alleviation programs.

As such, we invite proposals that address, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Questioning conventional assumptions on the relationship between poverty and migration in Africa
- Migration and poverty alleviation programs that see refugees as labor market participants.
- Relationships between neoliberalism, poverty alleviation and migration
- Gender, poverty alleviation and migration
- International programs addressing the root causes of migration
- Postcolonial and/or decolonial critiques

#### References:

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Collier, Paul. 2013. *Exodus: how migration is changing our world*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Graw, Knut & Samuli Schielke. 2012. *The Global Horizon: Migratory Expectations in Africa and the Middle East*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Bredeloup, Sylvie & Olivier Pliez. 2005. Migrations entre les deux rives du Sahara [Migrations between the two sides of the Sahara.] [Special Issue on trans-Saharan migration]. *Autrepart*, 4(36). doi:10.3917/autr.036.0043.

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## **Biographies**

**Dr. Gerda Heck** has a shared position as assistant professor in the Department of Sociology, Egyptology and Anthropology and the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) at The American University in Cairo. Prior to this, she held positions at the University of Cologne, the European Viadrina University Frankfurt/Oder, the Georg August University Göttingen, and at the Weissensee School of Arts in Berlin (Germany). Her academic work and research focus on migration and border regimes, urban studies, transnational migration, migrant networks and self-organizing, religion and new concepts of citizenship. She has conducted research in Germany, Brazil, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Morocco, Turkey and the USA. Apart from her own research projects, she has participated in various international research projects. From 2010 to 2013, she was a postdoctoral fellow in the international and interdisciplinary research project, Global Prayers – Redemption and Liberation in the City. In 2016, she conducted research in Turkey within the scope of the international research project, Transit Migration 2: A Research Project on the De- and Re-Stabilizations of the European Border Regime. She is a member of kritnet: Network for Critical Migration- and Border-Regime Research.

**Ilka Eickhof** joined the sociology unit in 2017. Before coming to AUC, she was a PhD researcher and lecturer at NVIC Cairo (2014-2017), a research associate and lecturer at the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies at Freie University Berlin, and worked at the 'Haus der Kulturen der Welt' in Berlin (2009-2011). Her PhD in which she analyzes Northern European cultural institutions in Cairo 2011-2015 in regards to development aid, the notion of the gift, neoliberal labor structures and the perpetuation of social inequality through European foreign cultural politics is anchored at the department for social anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. The research aims at taking a closer look at the structures and frameworks of intervention and regulation in and through the cultural field, scrutinizing the approach and self-representation of dominant European cultural institutions in Cairo, and how their work is negotiated on the ground. Eickhof holds an MA (HONS) in Islamic Studies, Sociology, and Modern History (2009).

**Loren B. Landau** is the Director of the African Center for Migration and Society (ACMS) (formerly Forced Migration Studies Programme, FMSP) at Wits University in Johannesburg, South Africa. With a background in political science and development studies, his work focuses on human mobility, development, and sovereignty. Completed projects focused on Immigration, Transit and Urban Transformation: A Comparative Study of Post-Apartheid Migration and Urbanisation in Lubumbashi, Maputo, and Johannesburg (2006-2009) being part of an research programme on “International Migration, Territorial Recomposition and Development in Africa” funded by the French Department of Foreign Affairs and coordinated by the French Institute of Research for Development. In late 2010, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom approved funding for a research consortium entitled: ‘Migrating out of Poverty’. Coordinated by the University of Sussex, the consortium has five core partners including the ACMS.



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Loren Landau published numerous articles on immigration issues, his latest book came out in 2008 *The Humanitarian Hangover: Displacement, Aid and Transformation in Western Tanzania*. (Johannesburg: Wits University Press)