



Swiss Network of young Migration Scholars

Annual Report 2016/2017

Summary

Communication has been a key term in the third year of existence of the Network. In various forms a communicative approach guided the step-by-step fulfilment of the various objectives set for the year 2016/2017.

Our association strengthened the communication towards and within the members through the organization of regular social gatherings, the creation of a newsletter, the Yammer platform and the redesign of the website. Focus was also on put on the expectations of members regarding the Network in order to adapt strategies and events – e.g. through speed research dating.

Further, projects “Fakten statt Mythen/Des Faits plutôt que des mythes”, “Asylum abuse” and “Ciné-Migration/On the mov(i)e” enabled us to communicate to a broader audience beyond the usual members. These on-going projects have also been fruitful to further develop our network with external actors and institutions. In addition, they constitute powerful tools to operate as a public resource.

2016/2017 was inevitably also a time to look at what has been achieved in three years of existence. The result is promising: the existing projects have grown successfully and the Network has developed strong resources to encourage projects to come. Thanks to the exchanges and inputs, the association can grow with a fresh and promising outlook for the coming years.

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1. Activities

1.1. Association

In its third year of existence, our association organised several activities and events that not only reinforced interconnections between the members but also enlarged our network by addressing a broader audience.

The administrative year started on 22nd September 2016 with the general assembly. It was followed by a discussion by Prof. Tobias Eule that opened interesting avenues for reflection on our strategy and goals. It further enabled the members to share their perspectives on how to further develop our activities.

On 25th November, the association organized its traditional aperitif at the doctoral meeting of the Centre for Migration Law. As usual, this get-together enabled new migration scholars to inform themselves about our association and reinforced the connections between the members.

On January 30th 2017, the executive committee invited the members to a strategy meeting moderated by Raphaël Rey in order to deepen the ongoing reflection on the future of the association and take decisions on concrete action.

Following this meeting, the executive committee created a Yammer group in order to offer a platform to the members for sharing information and ideas in an interactive way. The executive committee also started to regularly publish a newsletter and to invite the members to join them for a drink after their meetings in order to strengthen information exchange and support networking.

Another pleasing activity was the revival of the working group “Ciné-Migration” and the organisation of a series of three movies in collaboration with the NCCR on the move and Cinématte in Bern. Each of the screening on 3rd of April, 22nd of May and 8th of June were followed by a discussion with invited guests.

Finally, our members have continued to actively write for the blog “Fakten statt Mythen” in collaboration with the Swiss Refugee Council. Thanks to this collaboration, articles that deconstruct the myths associated with migration and asylum continue to be published online every week.

1.2. Working Groups and Activities

1.2.1. Collective inter-disciplinary publication on « Asylum abuse »

In 2016-2017, the project of a collective inter-disciplinary publication addressing the notion and role of abuse in the sphere of asylum in Switzerland has made substantial progress. After the call for contributions in April 2016 the working group “Abuse” decided that the project has sufficient prospect of being realized and should be continued. Based on the proposals the Working Group did a first selection and refined the focus of the contributions as well as the structure during fall 2016. In spring 2017, the Working Group has received the first drafts of the contributions. The deadline for the remaining contributions is in July 2017. Currently the Working Group is reviewing the first drafts and identifying possible experts for the peer review. On 29 September 2017 the editors and the authors will hold a workshop during which the contributions shall be discussed, the common motives clarified and the structure finalized.

1.2.2. Fakten statt Mythen – Des faits plutôt que des mythes

The blog project “Fakten statt Mythen – Des faits plutôt que des mythes” is already in its second year of existence. On a weekly basis, authors from the Swiss Network of young Migration Scholars and the Swiss Refugee Council (SFH/OSAR) write short and simple articles with the ambition to deconstruct and rectify public myths about asylum. The articles are published every Wednesday on the website of the Swiss Refugee Council (www.fluechtlingshilfe.ch/fakten-statt-mythen). As of the end of June 2017,



90 articles have been published. Besides the 13 authors from the Swiss Refugee Council, about 20 members of the Swiss Network of Young Migration Scholars already contributed to this project and wrote an article. The feedback on social media and among the public has been very positive and promising. Several authors have been contacted by journalists after their articles appeared.

1.2.3. Ciné-Migration / On the mov(i)e

The Ciné Migration Group has been particularly active this year as its members managed to organize the series “on the mov(i)e – a film series on migration” constituting of five movies at the Cinématte in Bern. Between April 2017 and November 2017 movies showing different aspects of migration will be aired. A funding request was successfully addressed to the nccr – on the move to cover the expenses of this ambitious project involving the screenings and discussions with invited guests. It started on 3rd of April 2017 with “Io sto con la sposa”, an Italian film which addresses the topic of migration control (the Dublin mechanism in particular) in an original and critical way. It triggered interesting discussions between a public of more than 40 people and the two experts invited: Simon Sontowski, doctoral candidate in human geography at the University of Zurich and volunteer at Alarmphone Schweiz, and Constantin Hruschka, head of Protection at the Swiss Refugee Council. The second screening took place on 22nd May 2017 with “Drachenfutter”, a 1987 West German film which enabled the public to discuss the economic and social integration of asylum seekers together with our experts, Harika Yilmaz, from the Autonome Schule in Zürich and Daniel Auer, doctoral candidate at the nccr – on the move from the University of Lausanne. On the 8th of June, we organized the screening of “der Wille zum Mitgestalten”, a Swiss movie about the motivations and trajectories of immigrants engaged in politics and elected at the local level. A stimulating discussion followed the movie with Stefanie Kurt, Post-doc researcher at the nccr – on the move from the University of Neuchâtel and Hasim Sancar, elected at the Berner Grosser Rat, who also makes an appearance in the movie.

The organization of these three screenings was a success despite a relatively smaller audience for the third movie. We expect a more important attendance for the last screenings of our series, namely “Raving Iran” on 21 September 2017 and “L’Escale” on the 5th October 2017.

Special thanks have to be directed towards the NCCR, which supported the project with significant financial funding.

1.3. Executive Committee Responsibilities and Activities

The executive committee is responsible for various organisational and formal aspects regarding the association. Executive committee members meet every two months in person or alternatively via Skype.

The executive committee is currently composed of the following persons:

- Nula Frei (chairperson)
- Sascha Finger
- Anne Kneer
- Robin Stünzi
- Barbara von Rütte
- Anne-Cécile Leyvraz
- Lisa Borrelli
- Nesa Zimmermann
- Laure Sandoz

Stephanie Motz, Teresia Gordzielik and Katarina Stigwall left the executive committee at the end of the administrative year 2015-2016 and three new members were elected during the 2016 General Assembly: Nesa Zimmermann, Barbara von Rütte and Lisa Borrelli. We thank the leaving board members for their commitment and welcome the new team!

During the year 2015-2016, the executive committee had several discussions on how to better define their responsibilities and where to set their priorities. The strategy meeting helped clarifying these questions. In general, the executive committee is responsible for ensuring the association's well-functioning in accordance to its goals, which are:

- To provide a platform for cooperation, discussion and exchange for Migration Scholars
- To disseminate information and share opportunities regarding Migration Studies Research
- To organize gatherings for academics within the Migration Studies Research
- To function as a public resource on Migration Studies Research.

To this aim, the executive committee has developed several tools and activities in order to reinforce internal and external communication, networking activities and the association's further development. Concretely, the executive committee's main tasks should therefore consist in coordinating and managing the following tools and activities:

Internal communication:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailing list • Newsletter • Yammer platform
External communication:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Activity reports • Twitter account • Blog "Fakten statt Mythen" (in collaboration with the Swiss Refugee Council) • Flyers
Networking activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and institutional support for members' projects and working groups • Organisation of regular get-togethers
Development of the association:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of the association's finances • Contact with new members • Collaboration with other institutions (e.g. Swiss Refugee Council, NCCR on the move, Centre for Migration Law, CUSO droit)

These different tools and activities aim to provide a motivating and supporting environment to the members, in order to enable them to collaborate and develop projects together, as well as engage with and communicate their expertise to a broader audience.

2. Some Facts and Figures on...

2.1. ... Members

The association has grown 2016/2017 and consists of 40 members as of 30 June 2017. Members are PhD students, post-doc researchers and one associate professor. They come from different Universities such as Geneva, Neuchâtel, Fribourg, Lucerne, Berne, Zurich, Basel or St. Gallen, as well as different disciplines such as law, anthropology, sociology, geography or history. Further, an international atmosphere is created, as members come from three different language regions of Switzerland and other European Member States.

A number of members are organized in the three working groups with six members participating in the project "Abuse", five members participating in the ciné-Migration and about ten members participating as authors in the blog project "Fakten statt Mythen".

With the objective of promoting members' research activities and thereby creating better visibility and transparency of their activities as well as of those of the association, each interested member provided a member profile on our website. In addition, the association created a yammer group with the aim to provide quick and easy accessible information and connection possibilities. With the email-list, the website and the yammer group, the association can provide diverse possibilities to communicate.

2.2. ... Finances¹

in CHF	expenses	revenues
Balance from the previous year		2040.45
NCCR Contribution		1000.00
Membership Fees		1175.00
Aperitif General Assembly (22.9.2016)	250.00	
Aperitif CDM Doctoral Seminar (25.11.2016)	176.90	
Gifts for leaving board members	95.15	
Total Revenues and Expenses	522.05	4215.45
Balance		3693.40

3. Outlook

In its fourth year of existence, the association will pursue its activities by ameliorating the already existing tools and by actively encouraging the development of projects and collaborations among the members. We will stay committed to our aim of providing a platform for exchange and networking for our members and will therefore continue to organise gatherings and social events. We will also reinforce internal online communication on Yammer and through the newsletter. In addition, we will continue to function as a public resource on Migration Studies Research by regularly sharing our expertise on the blog "Fakten statt Mythen", by informing about migration issues on our website and twitter account and by organising public events. In particular, the working group "ciné-migration" has already planned several movie screenings and discussions for the coming months.

¹ Covering the period from 15th July 2016 to 30^h June 2017.



During the strategy meeting, several members expressed the wish that the association organise more regular get-togethers within the network. This demand encouraged us to revise our strategy: while the executive committee organised several large-scale activities directed at a broad audience during the association's first years of existence, we will now focus on less ambitious but more regular networking activities for the members.

In contrast, we hope that these regular meetings will encourage the members to collaborate more actively together. From a financial perspective, we are now starting to accumulate reserves. Hence we are becoming able to support our members more substantially and will therefore actively encourage them to develop projects within the association. To do so, we need to clarify our funding strategy and to more actively communicate the possibility for members to get financial support. We also need to discuss with the different institutions collaborating with us (NCCR on the move, Center for Migration Law, CUSO droit, Swiss Refugee Council) how to involve them in this support scheme.

In sum, the coming year will be a year of professionalization of the association during which we aim to build upon existing structures and to develop further tools to support our members' projects. We count on all the members' motivation and energy in order to make the coming year an even greater success.

Bern, 18th July 2017