

# Swiss Network of young Migration Scholars

## *Annual Report 2014*

### Foreword

It is with great pleasure that the executive committee hereby presents the first annual report of our association, the Swiss Network of young Migration Scholars. Having been founded on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014, the first year of the association has been a year of important developments. This report provides an overview of the activities undertaken so far by the association as a whole, by the different working groups, and by the executive committee. These activities were aimed at

- a) providing tools for communicating within the association, with potential new members, and with a wider interested audience,
- b) fostering exchange on a personal and research level, and
- c) initiating cooperation with research partners.

The report also informs about the financial situation 2014/2015 and ends with an outlook on ideas and projects for the nearer future.

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## 1. Activities

### 1.1. Association

In the first year, much time and energy has been spent on getting the association up and running on a formal and technical level. At the same time, we were able to organize several events in order to get to know each other better and to learn more about the research projects and interests of our members.

Our founding assembly on **14<sup>th</sup> August 2014** was followed by a welcome apéro and a restaurant dinner in order to get to know each other and create first links and contacts for further cooperation among members. 19 persons attended the founding assembly and became founding members.

Given that the idea for the founding of the association arose at the doctoral students' seminar of the Center for Migration Law (CDM) in 2013, we took advantage of last year's doctoral students' gathering on **27-29 November 2014** in Muntelier-Loewenberg to further inform about, and advertise, our association and to reach out to potential new members. This event was attended by around two dozen participants.

The association's first get-together, organized on **6<sup>th</sup> February 2015**, was designed to welcome new members and to learn more about individual projects and research interests of our members. First, current projects were presented and new projects were proposed. Then a "speed research" took place (a gathering similar to "speed dating", but with the aim of providing for an exchange about research interest in three minutes). This fostered contacts and research exchange and proved to be tremendously entertaining. The get-together also gave birth to a third working group – "Ciné-Migration" (please see below, Working Groups and Activities). The event was attended by around 30 persons.

Finally, on **19<sup>th</sup> June 2015** the first event targeting a wider audience took place: the screening of a migration related movie at the Heitere Fahne, Bern, followed by a discussion with two members of our association (please see below, Groups and Activities, Ciné-Migration). Around 30 persons, members and non-members of our association, attended this event.

### 1.2. Working Groups and Activities

Just after the creation of the association, two already existing working groups were incorporated into the association, one on "abuse in the field of asylum" and another on "vulnerability". These two groups are run by members of the newly created association and consist of association members as well as other doctoral students from Swiss universities. A third working group was launched after the first get-together in February 2015, the "Ciné-Migration".

### 1.2.1. “Abuse”

After a workshop held during the CDM doctoral seminar in 2013, members of this group published a first interdisciplinary article on the notion of abuse in the context of asylum.<sup>1</sup> Further to this article, it was decided to expand the research and publish it in form of a collective publication. This last year has been dedicated to creating a comprehensive book structure and to conceptualizing the necessary work on a substantive as well as formal level. Potential authors have been contacted, potential publishing houses and financial donors have been identified and first contacts have been initiated. Besides, the group has prepared a proposal for the upcoming doctoral seminar of the CDM in order to present the publication project to a larger group of researchers for feedback, with the aim of recruiting further potential authors and finding supporters among research experts and their institutions. A confirmation of the proposal is expected for September 2015.

### 1.2.2. “Vulnerability”

This group's work was launched in the course of a brainstorming round in December 2014. After further exchange on an informal basis between the members, it has been decided to submit a proposal for a research seminar to the “CUSO droit”, called “*Entre autonomie et vulnérabilité: regards croisés sur les migrations*”. A confirmation regarding funding is expected by November 2015. The proposed research seminar is planned to take place in May 2016 with around 20 participants, consisting of doctoral students and invited experts who gather to discuss the notion of “vulnerability” in the context of migration studies.

### 1.2.3. “Ciné-Migration”

The idea of creating a group dedicated to organizing screenings and short debates about migration arose during the CDM doctoral seminar in 2014. But it was not until the first get-together event in February 2015 that it really kicked off, when a number of members expressed their interest in creating such a group.

While we held some meetings to think through and conceptualize what we were aiming for, our first event was the outcome of inputs that came from different sides: Sascha Finger saw the documentary “Becky’s Journey” and made contact with the film maker Sine Plambech; Laura Rezzonico approached Heitere Fahne where the idea was picked up enthusiastically; Tiphaine Robert designed the flyer ; information was sent to more than 450 different experts on migration throughout Switzerland ; eventually Anne-Cécile Leyvraz helped organizing the event on stage.

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<sup>1</sup> See Nula Frej, Teresia Gordzielik, Anne-Cécile Leyvraz, Clément de Senarclens et Robin Stünzi: La lutte contre les abus dans le domaine de l’asile: émergence et développement d’un discours structurant le droit d’asile suisse, in: Jusletter 17.3.2014.

Becky's Journey is a film about migration, sex work and human trafficking seen from the perspective of a young woman called Becky. Becky tells her story in her own words, a fascinating alternative take on migration for the purposes of sex work that is not heard in the mainstream press.

Additionally, we had the honor to have the active participation of two members, Nula Frei and Sascha Finger, who briefly set the terms of the debate and engaged with the questions of about 30 participants.

### 1.3. Executive Committee Responsibilities and Activities

As the executive body of the association, the executive committee was responsible for various formal aspects regarding the running of the association. The board met nearly once a month in person and via skype to discuss and decide on formal and substantive issues. Responsibilities within the board were divided as follows:

Chairperson	Nula Frei
Finances	Sascha Finger and Nula Frei
Website	Anne-Cecile Leyvraz, Stephanie Motz, Laure Sandoz and Sascha Finger
Internal communication	Teresia Gordzielik
Twitter	Robin Stünzi (in charge, Twitter shift), Nula Frei, Stephanie Motz and Teresia Gordzielik (Twitter shifts)
Working Group "Ciné-Migration"	Anne-Cécile Leyvraz and Sascha Finger
Working Group "Vulnerability"	Nula Frei and Nesa Zimmermann (external)
Working Group "Abuse"	Anne-Cécile Leyvraz and Teresia Gordzielik

Sonia Lopez, who was elected as a board member at the founding assembly, left the board in December 2014 for personal reasons.

As can be seen from the above-mentioned responsibilities, the board was concerned with numerous formal tasks regarding the running of an association such as opening and administering a bank account, designing a logo and templates, designing, further developing and maintaining the association's website, creating and maintaining a Twitter account. Besides, the board prepared the meeting at the CDM doctoral seminar in November 2014, and organized the three first get-togethers including the speed research, the 2015 fall event (which will be held in late September 2015)

and the General Assembly. It further initiated the working group “Ciné-Migration” and was concerned with the progress of the working groups. At the same time the board informed interested persons and new members about the work within the association and next steps.

Finally, the board created links and further deepened those already existing with research institutions such as the National Center for Competence in Research – On the move (NCCR – on the move) and the Center for Migration Law (CDM).

## 2. Some Facts and Figures on...

### 2.1. ... Members

The association was founded by 19 persons. These founding members were 17 PhD students, one post-doc researcher and one associate professor. The members came from different universities, different disciplines and different language regions of Switzerland. The association has grown considerably since its beginning and consisted of 31 members as of 31 July 2015.

A number of members are organized in the three working groups with seven members participating in the project “Abuse”, seven members participating in the project “Vulnerability” and six members participating in the project “Ciné-Migration”.

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.

### 2.2. ... Finances<sup>2</sup>

in CHF	expenses	revenues
administration of website	87.00	
Speed Research (6th February)	185.10	
administration of bank account	1.60	
membership fees		890.00
<b>total revenues and expenses</b>	<b>273.70</b>	<b>890.00</b>
<b>surplus of revenues or expenses</b>		<b>616.30</b>

<sup>2</sup> Covering the period from 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014 to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

### 3. Outlook

For the second year, the association will focus more on contents, i.e. on further developing research projects with the aim of creating outputs and informing our audience about these outputs.

On an external level, we plan to intensify cooperation with institutions such as NCCR-On the Move, CDM and CUSO droit, as well as with renowned researchers in the field of migration studies. The planned participation in the CDM's doctoral seminar as well as the event programmed at the end of the doctoral seminar will assist in this undertaking.

On an internal level, we want to propose a thematic topic for the upcoming year (or years) that will help to center the groups' work, the individual work of members and eventually the work of the association as a whole on a selected annual theme.

Apart from this, the association is and will be dedicated to providing social and content-related events for its members and for people interested in becoming members. For this reason, we want to hold a summer/fall and a winter/spring event on a regular basis providing for an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas in a formal setting (e.g. with invited experts) and informally.

Finally, members and the executive committee do not lack further ideas for collaboration, research, and communication etc. We would love to set up an open-access online journal or create new working groups on exciting topics. We hope that the development of our association will help to realize these various projects in the nearer future.

*Bern, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015*