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Introducing movements. Das Journal für kritische Migrations- und Grenzregimeforschung

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Introducing movements

Journal for Critical Migration and Border Studies

Editorial Board movements

Research on migration has flourished in the last decade and has become an integral part of social sciences and the humanities in general. Working groups on migration exist in almost every discipline, research projects on migration proliferate and a growing number of conferences, workshops, book series, special issues and papers contribute to a migration studies boom. Beyond that, governmental authorities increasingly call for practical and applicable knowledge on migration and integration processes on a large scale. But despite this boom, scientific journals that speak to this topic are scarce — and even less common are journals that allow for critical reflections on migration studies' knowledge production itself, at least in German-speaking academia. Launching the first issue of *movements* — *Journal for Critical Migration and Border Studies*, we intend to fill this gap and try to foster interdisciplinary migration and border studies which critically address the attempts to control and govern movements of migration and at the same time self-reflexively intervene in the knowledge production on migration. In this vein, *movements* aims to strengthen critical social research that attempts to develop both an adequate understanding of the complex, heterogeneous and powerful realities of migration and a critique of the current forms of governing it.

Thus, the name of the journal is programmatic in a threefold manner: Firstly, *movements* takes into account cross-border movements, which tend to regularly but unexpectedly elude the foreseen pathways and corridors in an interplay of autonomy and control. Secondly, *movements* examines migration as a social movement, because border crossings are always part of wider struggles for political, economic and juridical participation, on the one hand; and challenge both the national segregation of the world and the capitalistic exploitation of migrants' labor force, on the other. Thirdly, *movements* aims to set in motion migration studies, which has for too long examined migrants themselves as

the main problem, instead of questioning the political, economic and juridical conditions that bring migration and borders into being in the first place.

We are very much convinced, that within this context there is a great need for a permanent forum for critical knowledge production that offers a platform for theoretical and political debates, to present research results and alternative perspectives far beyond applied, affirmative, ethnicizing and integrationist concepts. Thus, *movements* opens up a space for a wide range of theoretical concepts, methodological approaches and textual practices, which at least share an opposition to the interdisciplinary tradition of objectivication, naturalization and problematization of migration with respect to ethnicism, racism and methodological nationalism. Against this backdrop, *movements* asks for academic, activist and artistic research that takes the actuality of migration as a driving force of each society into account and declares its solidarity with migrants' struggles.

movements builds upon numerous projects and initiatives that tried to develop critical forms of knowledge production in the last decade. The journal is closely linked to the *Network of Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies* (kritnet), which was founded in 2008 in order to strengthen critical migration and border studies within German-speaking academia. *movements* draws on *kritnet*'s scientific, cultural and artistic experiences and expertise and offers a new forum to this network. Beyond that, it builds on the experience of several publications (Hess/Kasperek 2010; Heimeshoff et al. 2013), interventions (kritnet 2010; 2011; 2013; 2015) and periodic conferences that established structures of productive collaboration.

The rationale behind the founding of *kritnet* — and now again of the journal *movements* — was shaped by the characteristics and conjunctures of the knowledge field of migration itself. Starting as 'Gastarbeiterforschung', continuing as 'Ausländerforschung' and finally being caught in the traps of the integration paradigm, migration studies' mainstream was always quick and eager to provide the categories through which societies and cultures were easily naturalized and governed as national containers. Meanwhile, it also contributed to the othering of all subjectivities that transgressed national and sedentary ways of existence, exposing them to all forms of exploitation and deprivation of rights. Despite this legacy — and with a considerable delay — the trans- and post-national state of the art eventually found its way into German-speaking migration studies. Theoretical concepts and methodological approaches like hybridity, cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, transculturalism and diversity paved the way for new ways of doing critical migration research.

movements wants to foster these approaches; but we are also convinced, that they still have to be pushed forward. Hence, we need to strengthen accounts that develop a critique of power, states and capitalism with regard to migration and border regimes and that pose questions of citizenship, gender and intersectionality, postcolonialism, class and power relations, racism, post-migration and critical whiteness. These perspectives have in common that they address inequality and exclusion as socioeconomic, cultural and political effects and as stakes in political and social movements' struggles. Furthermore, they all stress the importance of self-reflexivity in order to scrutinize the role migration studies plays in the production of migration as an object of governance. Last but not least, these approaches share a focus on the agency, desires and the surplus cross-border movements constantly bring to the fore as well as on the countless voices of migration that have already challenged their adjustment and subjugation for a long time.

Scientifically advanced migration and border studies cannot ignore these theoretical insights and the corresponding political achievements. Although we agree on this orientation, we are fully aware that we have to argue continuously about the theories and methodologies that should be applied for this endeavor — both within this journal and within interdisciplinary migration and border studies in general. Thus, we conceive *movements* as an open project, which tries to work on new ways of knowledge production and calls for critical dialogue and participation. We invite scholars from all disciplines to work on critical approaches and concepts that take the perspective of migration both seriously and as the central starting point of critical research.

Our ideas of fostering different forms of knowledge production require calling into question conventional ways of scientific publication and distribution. Thus, *movements* is deliberately published as an open access journal, making use of the Creative Commons License BY-NC-ND. We also call into question and challenge the legitimacy and appropriateness of traditional quality assurance mechanisms of scientific publishing. We are convinced that the common review and ranking mechanisms are plagued by disincentives and weaknesses, which do not guarantee an increasing quality, especially not for qualitative empirical research. Thus, we adopt a collaborative review mechanism in which every double blind peer-review is complemented by a transparent and open discussion of each submitted paper between the editorial board and the author in question. In doing so, we build on our positive experiences with collaborative knowledge production within the *kritnet* network. In particular, we want to strengthen such practices in an academic environment increasingly characterized by neoliberalization and individualization. Moreover, we believe

that it is helpful to report on our research process already in its early stages so as to make the conditions and circumstances of our knowledge production transparent. Making public the approaches, empirical results and discussions already during the research process should be common practice of scientific work, instead of disregarding such attempts as irrelevant. In this sense, besides scientific papers, *movements* also encompasses sections for conceptual and methodological reflections, political statements, interventions and debates as well as interviews and book reviews.

The respective issues of *movements* will mainly address key themes. While the first issue is dedicated to the European border regime, the second issue will focus on the recent, mostly self-organized refugee struggles across Europe. The following issues will all be announced by a Call for Papers (addressing anti-racism, EU citizenship and anti-ziganism, and knowledge production within the border regime). Submissions of papers that do not correspond to these special issues but nevertheless speak to the overarching aims of movements are also welcome at any time.

Editorial Board *movements*, May 2015

- URL: <http://movements-journal.org>
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