

Call for Abstracts

CHALLENGING THE POLITICAL BEYOND AND ACROSS BORDERS: POSSIBILITIES AND TENSIONS OF MIGRANTS' AND SOLIDARITY STRUGGLES

**Central European University's
Center for Policy Studies
Department of Gender Studies
Doctoral School of Political Science, International Relations and Public Policy
Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology**

We are welcoming abstracts for a Workshop on 'Challenging the Political Beyond and Across Borders: Possibilities and Tensions of Migrants' and Solidarity Struggles' to be held on **November 17-18, 2016** at the **Central European University** in Budapest. This workshop aims at critically engaging with migration scholarship and at challenging dehistoricizing and depoliticizing discourses of 'migration crisis'. It sets out to develop collective reflections on mobility regimes and on migrants as political actors in relation to migration-related politics and beyond. It is particularly interested in migrants' struggles as connected to other realms of contentious political and economic activities and within broader historical contexts. It also wishes to explore the possibilities, tensions and limitations enacted by migrant solidarity and joint struggles, and their potential to efficiently contest dominant representations of migrants and mobility.

In recent years, scholarly studies focusing on migrant struggles and particularly on the way in which migrants resist and subvert increasingly marginalizing immigration and border policies have burgeoned. This development mirrors the upsurge in political mobilization of refugees, illegalized migrants and solidarity activists across the world. From the European Union and its borders to the North American and Australian contexts but also, and importantly, countries of the Global South, collective actions by and in support of refugees and migrants have multiplied and adopted a variety of forms including marches, workers and hunger strikes and occupations. This has been heralded by critical migration studies scholars as the advent of new forms of being political, where migrants, due to the challenge they pose to the territorial-bounded conception of politics, open space for politics that are no more defined in relation to the state-nation-citizen nexus.

The recent migratory movements due, but not limited to, war in Syria have been represented in the media, political, activist and scholarly debate as a crisis. The deployment of a discourse of crisis by states as well as at times solidarity and humanitarian actors has produced representations of migrants' mobility as exceptional and has called for emergency interventions. In doing so, it has contributed to the depoliticization and dehistoricization of people's mobility. While exclusionary discourses have dominated the debate, there has also been a substantial amount of solidarity initiatives ranging from providing material support to people on the move to engaging in civil disobedience by facilitating migrant movement across borders. Exclusionary discourses coupled with calls for solidarity have highlighted tensions, contradictions but also continuities within the transit and host societies and brought questions regarding the right to mobility, the production and contestation of political norms, the possibility for non-state centric understandings of political actors and the possibilities and prospects of solidarity to the heart of debates around migration. To what extent have solidarity acts challenged, disrupted and/or confirmed the dominant representations of migrants and migration?

This workshop sets out to go beyond recent discourses of migration crisis and related debates in order to reflect collectively on migrants as political actors both in relation to migration related politics and beyond, particularly in relation to other realms of contentious political and economic struggles. It also aims at challenging dehistoricizing narratives of migration and calls for interpreting current migration movements in relation to the history of migration and as a response

to geopolitical and economic processes. We set out to explore the political role and implication of migrants beyond their categorisation as migrants and beyond seeing their struggles as temporal, and through their involvement in a range of other political and social movements. This allows questioning both depoliticising policy perspectives focusing on migrants as victims in need of assistance or threats in need of containment as well as scholarship approaching migrant struggles only from the perspective of border and migration related activities. We therefore welcome presentations that examine different aspects of migrants' contentious practices, as well as the limits of migrant and solidarity political actions, within or in relation to broader contexts.

We are particularly (but not exclusively) interested in the following themes:

- **Intersections of Migrants' Political Struggles:** Migrants as politically active in a range of struggles, including labour movements, trade unions, feminist movements, LGBTQI+ movements, housing movements, anti-austerity struggles and so on.
- **Prospects and Problems of Joint Struggles:** What possibilities are opened up through migrant/non-migrant solidarity groups and what tensions may arise from such encounters?
- **Solidarity, Inclusiveness and Limitations:** Is solidarity an inclusive term? If not, whom does it target in any particular context? Do non-migrant solidarity movements challenge or reproduce exclusionary discourses and under which conditions?
- **Contradictions and Tensions between Self-Determination and Autonomous Struggles:** How do various forms of activism and political engagements centered around the freedom of movement and the dissolution of borders relate to political perspectives built around national determination and/or ethnic mobilization?
- **Common Marginalizations and Mobilization:** What are the possibilities and limitations of producing and enacting solidarities across and between various marginalised groups?
- **Identity-based Politics and Solidarity:** How do different forms of identity-based politics, including political and ideological affiliations and non-state based forms of belonging such as religious belonging, work together? What are the tensions running through different understandings and forms of solidarity and what are the limits of their inclusiveness?
- Contributions focusing on contexts from **the Global South** as well as **historical perspectives** on migration and solidarity are highly welcome.

To apply, please send an abstract of your proposed contribution and a short biography to challengingthepolitical2016@gmail.com **by September 10, 2016**. Abstracts should aim to provide a substantial description of the argument in up to 1.5 pages.

The ultimate aim of the workshop is to contribute to debates in migration scholarship and culminate in an edited book or a Special Issue based on the papers that will be submitted and presented. Details will be discussed during the workshop.

Funds will be available for travel and accommodation for participants.

For further questions, please contact challengingthepolitical2016@gmail.com.

Important Dates:

Deadline for abstract submission: September 10, 2016

Notification of acceptance: September 20, 2016

Deadline for submission of draft version of the paper: October 30, 2016

Workshop dates: November 17-18, 2016