

# EuMIGS Lecture Series 2024

## Sociology of the sociological position: Biography, subjectivity and reflexivity in migration studies

Mondays from 12:15 to 14:00

Online on Teams: Links for the lectures on the detailed program below

28 October 2024	<p><b>Introductory session</b></p> <p><b>Asuncion FRESNOZA</b> (Free University Brussels (ULB)): <i>Materiality, sociality and temporality of investigator-participant relations. Reflexive insights from a migrant woman researcher</i></p>
11 November 2024	<p><b>Positionality and its implications for the research process</b></p> <p><b>Johan Ekstedt</b> (Malmö University): <i>From Caseworker to Researcher. Navigating Interviews with Asylum Caseworkers</i></p> <p><b>Mira Hazzaa</b>, (Osnabrück University): <i>"I am telling you this, because you are one of us." Navigating Power Dynamics in Migration Research. Ethical Reflections, Experiential Insights, and the Importance of Personal Self-Reflection.</i></p>
25 November 2024	<p><b>Reflecting on the relation between research and the researcher biography</b></p> <p><b>Kyoko Shinozaki</b>, (University of Salzburg): <i>Un-/learning of privilege. Autobiographical reflections on why internationalization is a necessity</i></p> <p><b>Marco Martiniello</b>, (University of Liège): <i>The roots and evolution of an atypical academic career</i></p>
09 December 2024	<p><b>Research and the researcher's subjectivity</b></p> <p><b>Alessandra Polidori</b>, (University of Neuchâtel): <i>A complex relationship. the bond between the researcher and his/her research object.</i></p> <p><b>Claudia Tazreiter</b>, (Linköping University): <i>On Positionality in Migration Studies. Ethical and methodological considerations.</i></p>

## EUMIGS Lecture Series 2024

**Introductory session**

Monday 28/10/2024 – 12:15-14:00

Join online: [EuMIGS Lecture 28/10](#)**Materiality, sociality and temporality of investigator-participant relations: reflexive insights from a migrant woman researcher****Asuncion FRESNOZA** (LAMC, Free University Brussels (ULB))

**Abstract:** The importance of researchers' reflexivity and positionality has been highlighted in the social sciences in recent years not only to reach an objective distance in Bourdieusian sense but also to identify the limitations of one's research. How do the multiple identities of investigators (i.e., social scientists) influence the research process, including the power dynamics between them and their study participants? Drawing from my long-time research experiences in Western Europe and Asia, I provide in this lecture some reflexive but agentic insights regarding my positionality mainly as a migrant woman researcher. I argue that such reflexivity is only meaningful if the following three dimensions are taken into account: materiality, sociality and temporality of investigator-participant relations. The material dimension suggests that objects and tools used during fieldwork can impact investigator-participant relations and shape data collection. The social dimension helps identify the actors directly or indirectly influencing investigators' research processes. Finally, the temporal dimension brings to the fore the changing power dynamics during different stages of the research process. All these dimensions unveil the link among subjectivity, positionality and reflexivity.

**I - Positionality and its implications for the research process**

Monday 11/11/2024 – 12:15 – 14:00

Join Online: [EuMIGS Lecture 11/11](#)**From Caseworker to Researcher. Navigating Interviews with Asylum Caseworkers****Johan Ekstedt** (Malmö University)

**Abstract:** The lecture examines the unique challenges and insights gained from conducting research in a field where the researcher has prior professional experience. Drawing from my background as a caseworker with the Swedish Migration Agency and the International Organization for Migration, I will explore how my personal history influenced my approach to interviewing asylum caseworkers. This presentation will share practical examples from my fieldwork, illustrating how shared experiences with interviewees can both facilitate and complicate the research process. The talk will address the importance of reflexivity in acknowledging one's biases and how this awareness can enhance the depth and authenticity of qualitative research. Additionally, the session will discuss the possibilities and risks associated with researching topics one has previously worked in, such as gaining deeper insights versus the potential for bias. By reflecting on specific encounters and the dynamics of these interviews, the session aims to provide valuable insights for researchers navigating similar professional transitions, highlighting the nuanced ways in which personal and professional backgrounds shape the production of knowledge in migration studies.

**"I am telling you this, because you are one of us." Navigating Power Dynamics in Migration Research. Ethical Reflections, Experiential Insights, and the Importance of Personal Self-Reflection.**

**Mira Hazzaa** (Osnabrück University's Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS))

**Abstract:** In this presentation, we delve into the critical role of reflexivity in qualitative research, drawing from my experiences conducting interviews for my dissertation with Syrian men of refugee background in Germany. Reflexivity necessitates ongoing self-reflection to recognize and mitigate biases, ensuring the credibility and ethical integrity of the research process and outcomes. By sharing insights and challenges encountered in my research, the aim is to stimulate personal reflection among students on their own stance and subjectivity. Emphasizing transparency and self-awareness, practical strategies for integrating reflexivity into qualitative research are discussed to foster robust and authentic findings. Ultimately, this lecture aims to inspire and support students in embarking on their own reflexive journeys in research.

## **II - Reflecting on the relation between research and the researcher biography**

Monday 25/11/2024 – 12:15-14:00

Join online: [EuMIGS Lecture 25/11](#)

**Un-/learning of privilege. Autobiographical reflections on why internationalization is a necessity**

**Kyoko Shinozaki** (University of Salzburg)

**Abstract:** In higher education policies as well as scholarship, the internationalization of higher education institutions (HEIs) has been an important topic. Internationalization in this context has primarily been seen as something desirable and positive: International mobility experience is expected to enhance social and cultural capital, helping young people to bolster their future careers. Experience abroad compels us to leave a comfort zone, leading up to personal and academic maturity in multiple ways. However, the celebratory discourse around internationalization is increasingly under scrutiny, among other reasons because it has neglected issues of inequality, such as racism and institutional Whiteness, leading to affective injuries. Coupled with surging rightwing populism and the ongoing trend of neoliberalization of HEIs, it is high time to re-envision internationalization. This chapter tells a "braided narrative" which links my account of key persons, moments, and values which are formative of my scholarship in Migration Studies and Sociology in the past all the way through to the present day. I trace back my own migration/mobility trajectories in Japan, the USA, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria through a lens of reflexive, feminist migration scholarship. In telling my journey, I place special emphasis on the process of learning and unlearning privileges, which initially appear simply given and taken-for-granted. As I will explain, such privileges are not only experienced by individuals such as myself (as a student or a scholar), but deeply tied to social and cultural institutions, including HEIs themselves. Internationalization generally, and international mobility in particular, has great potential to set in motion a process of un/learning privilege, which, as I will argue, can be best supported by a more caring and inclusive university leadership.

**The roots and evolution of an atypical academic career****Marco Martiniello** (CEDEM, Liège University)

**Abstract:** I grew up in a poor working-class but multicultural neighborhood. The trigger that started my interest in migration happened before an oral examination with the professor of political economy at the university. When he heard my name, his reaction was as follows “what are you doing here with such a name?”. Beyond the immediate shock, I managed to pass the exam, but I started to think deeply about what the professor had said. I decided to specialize on migration and integration.

This was the beginning of what would become a full career in ethnic and migration studies that I will discuss in the presentation. I was lucky enough to win a PhD fellowship to enroll in the PhD program at the European University Institute in Florence (EUI), in “my country”. There I quickly found out that I was more comfortable with the international students at EUI and with the Senegalese immigrants in Florence. I was a privileged other, but I was definitely an “other” in Italy.

After the thesis I went back to Belgium where I managed to find a spot in academia with the mission I gave to myself to develop migration and ethnic studies in Belgium. I will reflect on that career very often pursued in other countries (USA, UK, Italy, Sweden, France) and on how my research also impacted my own identity and positioning in society.

**III - Research and the researcher's subjectivity**

Monday 09/12/2024 – 12:15-14:00

Join online: [EuMIGS Lecture 09/12](#)**A complex relationship. the bond between the researcher and his/her research object****Alessandra Polidori** (University of Neuchâtel)

**Abstract:** The connection between the researcher and his/her research topic is especially significant in the social sciences, where they engage with diverse contexts and situations that are closely tied to the realities they study. Moreover, the choice of a topic is often connected with researcher's own experiences, interests, and background. It is then crucial to engage in self-reflexivity —a process that enables researchers to examine the factors, both personal and external, that have shaped their choice of study area, methodology, and approach. In this lesson, we will explore the purpose and importance of reflexivity in research and, using Bourdieu's theoretical tools, seek to understand the various decisions involved in defining and conducting research.

**On Positionality in Migration Studies. Ethical and methodological considerations****Claudia Tazreiter**, (Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity and Society (REMESO), Linköping University)

**Abstract:** In this seminar we consider the author/researcher in the field of critical migration studies/critical race studies, and how the author/researcher considers and works with their own biography and positionality in interaction with migrants/refugees. We will consider the subject of research in traditional social science research and contrast this with the approach of co-researcher or collaborator in distinction. In order to delve into the ethical and methodological dilemmas researchers face, Australia's carceral archipelago of refugee detention in remote sites is explored. We will briefly examine this policy regime, focusing on the lived experience through the voices of refugees themselves and in collaborations they have built over the years of their detention, to reclaim their autonomy through knowledge production.

## EuMIGS Lecture Series 2024

### Reading list

All Pdf files can be downloaded here: <https://dox.uliege.be/index.php/s/rGOBPPB47fep0TD>

### Introductory session

- Fresnoza, A., 2023 (with H. Cheung). Temporal contextuality of agentic intersectional positionalities: nuancing power relations in the ethnography of minority migrant women. *Qualitative Research*. Open access: <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941231179153>
- Fresnoza A. 2022. Homestay, sleepover, and commensality: three intimate methods in the study of "mixed" families. *Genealogy*, 6(2), 34. Open access: <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy6020034>
- Fresnoza A. 2016. Auto-positionnement contextuel dans une étude transnationale : expériences de terrain en France et aux Philippines. In C. Gutron and V. Legrand (eds.), *Eprouver l'alterité. Les défis de l'enquête de terrain*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses universitaires de Louvain, pp. 89-102.

### I - Positionality and its implications for the research process

- Ekstedt, Johan, (2023) "Bureaucratic configuration and discretion in asylum case processing: the case of the EUAA in Greece." *Comparative Migration Studies* 11.1 : 22
- Sereke, W. B. (2023). 'Are you a refugee like us? Oh then we have hope!' Affective discursive encounters in doing insider Other research. *Migration Studies*, 12 (3), pp. 1-20

### II - Reflecting on the relation between research and the researcher biography

- Shinozaki, K. (2024). Un-/learning of privilege: Autobiographical reflections on why internationalization is a necessity. In A. Freyberg-Inan (Ed.), *Why Higher Education Must Be International* Lexington Books.
- Martiniello, Marco (2024), "From "second-generation immigrant" to sociologist of migration", in, Gemignani, Marco; Hernandez-Albujar, Yolanda and Sladkova, Jana (Eds.) *Migrant Scholars Researching Migration. Reflexivity, Subjectivity and Biography in Research*, New-York, Routledge, pp. 194-202

### III - Research and the researcher's subjectivity

- Bourdieu P., (2004), *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, University of Chicago Press, pp. 85-115.
- Behrouz Boochani & Claudia Tazreiter (2019) 'Notes on exile: Behrouz Boochani in conversation with Claudia Tazreiter', *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, 25:3, 370-375, DOI: 10.1080/1323238X.2019.1685768
- Tofighian, Omid, et. al. (2022) 'Performance as Intersectional Resistance: Power, Polyphony and Processes of Abolition', *Humanities*, 11(28) <https://doi.org/10.3390/h11010028>