



Networking unit Paradigm shift (NUPS), TU Berlin

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Working group of the Pre-Conference-Process of IMCB22



Research brief No. 1

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“Technological developments, migration and the future of work”

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What is a research brief and what does it stands for?

A research brief is less than a policy note and more than an individual expression of research interest. It brings together the knowledge of this working group. It aims to think outside the box and promotes interdisciplinary thought. It delineates future lines of research and explains why these are relevant to society. The researchers worked together on the different paragraphs of the research brief. It first (a) sketches the main ambivalences within the current discourse, (b) gives insight into the current research of the working group, and (c) reflects upon the “to-dos” of future research as the authors envision them.

About the pre-working group, forthcoming webinars

This working group, set up as part of the pre-conference-process of IMCB22, is discussing the interrelations between new technologies, migration and the future of work. Not only are mobility patterns changing, digitalisation and new technologies have become important drivers of transformation of labour markets and the way we work. This first research brief gives an insight into the work of the members of the working group and reflects their ideas about salient research questions. The working group has organized five webinars that will take place in the coming three months. Those webinars are open to the public. Please find here more detailed information:

Date	Title	Content	Speakers
18.05.2022 12.00 – 13.00 h CEST	New technologies, migration and the future of work	This webinar concentrates on the ways new technologies shape the future of work, especially so in sectors that depend on migrant work. Increasingly platforms, digital tools of recruitment coordinate and direct workers. Social media and mobile commons structure information and change routines as well as practices not only of migrant workers, but also for segments that rely on international exchange. Automatic decision making, based on algorithms, increasingly shape matching mechanisms that integrate migrants into specific segments of the labour market. On a global scale, platformisation allows companies to ‘employ’ a flexible, yet precarious workforce for instance within the service industry such as food and groceries delivering, cleaning and waiter services. Also, on a seemingly	Astrid Ziebarth , (German Marshall Fund), Presents a concise mapping of international approaches and tools on the crossroad of digitalization, migration and the future of work. Prof. Dr. Ching Lin Pang (KU Leuven/Antwerpen) emphasises the role of social media and the great firewall for the educational sector (international students) Dr. Magnus Andersen (Aalborg University) on migrants and digital platform work)

		individual or local scale international students increasingly are making use of digital sources and of open access media, preparing for a more digital working life. Our webinar focusses on such tendencies of restructuring. It gives an insight into the relationship between the new technologies, the future of work and migration. We present insights into different segments of the labour market.	Discussant: Prof. Dr. Martin Bak Jørgensen (Aalborg University) Chair: Prof. Dr. Felicitas Hillmann (NUPS)
Link: https://tu-berlin.zoom.us/j/66821962412?pwd=WEFnQmlyZTBQWGoyNUtPKzBRcmZTdDz09 Meeting ID: 668 2196 2412, Passcode: 230314			

Webinars in June 2022

Date	Title	Content	Speakers
07.06.2022 13.00 – 14.00 h CEST	Nurturing future industries: issuing visa for digital nomads and cheering reverse remittances	<p>A large spectrum of online resources provide an emerging global cast of mobile workers with digital resources – everything from finding the right visa for their purposes to booking accommodation and coworking spaces. This way, mostly western professionals, such as IT-workers, writers and marketing specialists work remotely in countries that allow for better living conditions, provide leisure time events, and facilitate connection with peer workers, all at a fraction of the cost they might pay in their home countries. To accommodate this fraction of “digital nomads”, which has increased during the pandemic despite lockdowns and travel bans, many countries have scrambled to build (legal) infrastructure which will attract their movement. At the same time, closely related questions of social policies for these foreigners remain ambiguous: for example health protection, taxation, worker protection. In theory, these nomads will spend their comparatively high-spending-power salaries in the local economy, thereby compensating economic losses suffered due to lack of regular tourism flows – a theory which is supported by groups such as the OECD and the Islands Economic Cooperation Forum. However, these attempts to harvest “reverse remittances” as foreigners spend money in the local economy go along with issues such as transnational gentrification, rising expenses for locals, and elite spaces which exclude the local population.</p>	<p>Prof. Dr. Beverly Yuen Thompson (Siena College, New York) presents her book <i>Digital Nomads Living on the Margins: Remote-Working Laptop Entrepreneurs in the Gig Economy</i> .</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Daniel Cockayne (University of Waterloo) speaks on the economic function and discursive practice of sharing in the digital ‘on demand’ economy</p> <p>Commenting:</p> <p>Prof. Dr Margaret Walton-Roberts (Wilfrid Laurier University, Toronto)</p> <p>Chair: Prof. Dr. Felicitas Hillmann (NUPS)</p>
Link: https://tu-berlin.zoom.us/j/63542932669?pwd=MU44SINsMFpaZmVJdXhjb2VraTVjUT09 Meeting ID: 635 4293 2669, Passcode: 703814			

Nr. 5

Date	Title	Content	Speakers
23.06.2022 15.00 – 16.00 h CEST	Refugee entrepreneurship - voices of migration-led re-generation	<p>Integration has two essential pillars – education and employment. However, for many years the existence of migrant economies has been played down both in public and in social policies. Neglecting the self-governing economies of migrant entrepreneurs as an important element of our economies undercuts the potential innovations that come along with them. Especially with the many refugees coming from the Ukraine, it is time to rethink the opportunities that self-employment offers for fully-fledged labour market integration.</p> <p>In our webinar we shed light on the role of migrant entrepreneurship not only for migrants, but also for the labour market and society as a whole.</p>	<p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Natalie Schtefunyk, project "Bab Maria Helps" (Bremen), initiated by a Ukrainian businesswoman. Lilia Galarza Orcada, "nouranour" project (Witten) enabling social and economic participation IQ Network, Migrant Economies Unit (Nürnberg) (tbc) <p>Commenting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Libuse Cerna (Bremen) will comment on the two projects. <p>Chair: Prof. Dr. Felicitas Hillmann (NUPS)</p>
<p>Link: https://tu-berlin.zoom.us/j/61569131482?pwd=SVdsQWVmZ2tTUHZlOFIIMkxNeDB4dz09 Meeting ID: 615 6913 1482, Passcode: 966468</p>			

Date	Title	Content	Speakers
28.06.2022 15.00 – 16.00 h CEST	Remote work and return migration: Can ICTs motivate return migration?	<p>Many western societies face population decline and, as a result, will face workforce shortages in various sectors of their labour markets. Pro-natality policies normally fail and cannot reverse the trend of shrinking. The solution must be found in migration, that is, in persuading people to migrate to the country with a declining population, whether these people are members of the national diaspora who have previously emigrated or citizens of other countries. Our webinar points to such changes and discusses related strategies of remote work and ICT.</p>	<p>Speakers:</p> <p>Agnese Lace, Providus – Centre for Public Policy, Riga, Latvia</p> <p>Dr. Dejan Valentinčič, State Secretary, State Secretary for Slovenian Abroad & Research Institute of American Slovenian Education Foundation ASEF</p> <p>Dr. Caroline Hornstein-Tomic, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Zagreb</p> <p>Commenting:</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Howard Duncan, Carleton University</p> <p>Chair: Prof. Dr. Felicitas Hillmann (NUPS, TU Berlin)</p>
<p>Link: https://tu-berlin.zoom.us/j/61205536352?pwd=SDNRTXpuckdkUWWhuNlhCZExqYjVnZz09 Meeting ID: 612 0553 6352, Passcode: 484697</p>			

Webinar in July 2022

Date	Title	Content	Speakers
18.07.2022 16.00 – 17.00 CEST	Technology, Food & Migration	<p>In the 1970ties, Moroccan women were recruited as temporary migrant workers to come to the Netherlands to peel shrimps. Since, the women stay home in Morocco; the shrimps are shipped to them for processing and shipped back for consumption in western Europe or for export to elsewhere. In the 2020ties a machine is developed to peel the shrimps. This technological change has a pricetag, thus the industries preferred practice remains to transport the shrimps to Morocco for processing. For now. With costs of fuel for transportation on the rise, this preference may shift. We foresee similar shifts: for glass houses it is no longer profitable to heat up and produce strawberries in January, in fisheries one cannot reach deeper waters.</p> <p>These are but some examples of the interaction between three drivers of change towards more sustainable economies: migration, technology, and (the costs of) globalised food production practices.</p> <p>The purpose of this webinar is mapping: we bring forward exemplary cases that illustrate future societal dilemmas at the intersection of technology, food, and migration.</p>	<p>Prof. Dr. Karin Astrid Siegmann, Erasmus University Rotterdam.</p> <p>Dr. Aneesh Chauhan, Wageningen University.</p> <p>N.N. on agriculture and migrant work</p> <p>Commenting: Prof. Dr. Tesseltje de Lange, Nijmegen University</p> <p>Chair: Prof. Dr. Felicitas Hillmann (NUPS)</p>
<p>Link Hillmann, https://tu-berlin.zoom.us/j/62966094550?pwd=ZVZPOWNrTVJ4UzBHVkg3ZVVtclg5QT09 Meeting ID: 629 6609 4550, Passcode: 208260</p>			

A Debate at the Starting Block: Speaking about technological change, the future of work and migration

There is no doubt that technological change is transforming labour markets worldwide and thus also alters migration patterns. New technologies lead to the creation of jobs and changes in work requirements. The differentiation between movable (vs. non-movable) jobs has significant consequences for mobility patterns as well as the emergence of transnational labour markets. But technological progress also implies job losses in some segments of the labour markets. This, in turn, can cause people to move elsewhere. Additionally, the lack of technological progress in many countries of origin may make out-migration attractive. Further, entangled legal infrastructure(s) of technological change, labour markets and mobility are increasingly relevant – at present we see a predominance of “trial-and-error” approaches of the various actors engaged. Yet, legal infrastructure may both cause and facilitate as well as hinder people to move into regular jobs. It can simultaneously encourage and discourage employers to engage migrants in non-precarious ways. While writing this research brief the situation in Ukraine with its millions of refugees fleeing towards Western countries illustrates in a dramatic way the interwovenness of technologies and legal infrastructures. A fast and sustainable integration into the various administrative systems, the fight against disinformation, and fake news in social networks are only the tip of the iceberg of an ongoing digitalization of our societies and their institutions.

Technological change especially affects labour markets and social policies regarding the way we “do” work. In different societies, cultures, and world regions, (new) technologies shape routines and work

processes to different degrees and in different ways. This has implications for the value and applicability of migrants' qualifications and skills and, in turn, for their social integration in firms and societies.

At present we observe a growing imbalance between those who actively develop and seek to implement new technologies (including enterprises such as Google, Microsoft, etc., as well as national governments), and those who can mainly react to existing technologies and are forced to integrate technological change into their daily working routines (workers and various groups of society in general, but often migrants who are employed in jobs vulnerable to substitution). Even though we see somewhat of a gap arising between the producers and the consumers of new technologies, our knowledge of the potentials and risks of such new technologies tends to be dominated by the technology-producing community. Already today, research often depends on data that is gathered for marketing purposes rather than for scientific research. Furthermore, the spectrum of our knowledge on the consequences of digitalization and new technologies for mobile labour and migrants' lives is rather limited, as is our understanding of matching tools or algorithms for selected segments of the labour market or, more in general, for the delegation of decision-making-processes.

The acceptance of such blind spots in research may give rise to serious dangers for our welfare-states: if we have no information for the societal risks and potentials of digitalization, it is difficult to set up proper policies. We must know which questions should be asked and which strands of knowledge should be explored. For now, all research on the impacts of digitalization on work and migration is at the starting block – and so is this working group that concentrates on the future of work and migration-related developments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a variety of research programs have been set up and first results are expected to be generated within the coming months.

Without going into the details of the debate, the current discourse seems to be characterized by at least five ambivalences: first, there is a gap in the perception of the impact of technologies on migrant work in general. Second, there is a lack of standardized definitions of artificial intelligence and socio-technical systems. Third, we do not have a normative compass to understand what global dynamics could mean on the local scale and along which criteria we should regulate the dynamics of change. Fourth, interdisciplinary research is missing, silo-thinking still prevails – there is the need to connect the different strands of research (e.g. technological inventions with social innovation). Fifth, contextualized and comparative research is missing, case studies on selected sectors of the labour market still have to come.

While the above reflections take changes in technology as a starting point to examine implications for the field of labour and migration patterns/migrants, they do not ignore that migration/migrants, in turn, may affect technological change. Thinking about and conceptualizing the various interlinkages between technological progress and migration is an overarching goal of this working group.

In our working group we see four salient lines of research, which we sketch briefly in the following:

- Migrants and social media use, diaspora, digital nomads, and job qualification
- New technologies and migration management
- Glocal labour markets (care chains, gendered transnationalism)
- Matching into the welfare state, urban realities

Please note: A special issue on “**New technologies, migration and the future of work**” with the open-access journal *Glocalism* is organised by NUPS. Please find the call for papers here: <https://glocalismjournal.org/cfp-2022-3-new-technologies-migration-and-the-future-of-work/>.

Migrants and social media use, diaspora, digital nomads, and job qualification

With the increased digitalization of everyday life by means of online platforms, messenger services, and digital tools, the impact on migration and migrants has gained salience in manifold ways. On the one side migrants, especially younger ones, rely on digital tools to access new places and labour markets – often funnelling into a plethora of migrant industries and recruitment practises. In many countries of the global south, digitalisation has connected remote places and allowed for an altered communication beyond local and national institutions, offering new horizons for many citizens. On the other side, actors in the places of arrival make use of social media to negotiate new orders of belonging and concession, or, in contrast, to mobilize against immigration/immigrants. This way, digitalisation has become part of what some call the battleground of multi-level governance.

Digital restructuring almost certainly touches upon the segments of the labour market which are dominated by migrant work – yet we have little systematic knowledge of those spaces. For example, we see migrants that start repairing technologies, e.g. cell phones, or migrants that can do their delivery work only through the command of new technologies in the "gig economy". It is digital technology that allows diasporas to span across continents and families to sustain themselves via remittances and international financial brokerage. In addition, transnational peers produce new, digitalised forms of social capital and tap educational resources in other countries to pursue an international career or, at least, to pursue international ambitions in work and training. We see that the new technologies link family members across countries, as is the case in the Ukrainian war in this moment, and in doing so create solidarity networks or sometimes become subject to censorship through firewalls as well as parallel and decoupled digital systems.

Until now, little attention has been paid to the negotiation of the digital restructuring of migrant labour markets within welfare states, nor to the changing role of transnational peer relationships and mobility trajectories concerning educational prospects, digital learning, and minority representation. For example, with the development of digital educational material the expectation of more equal access to education has been perpetuated. But practise shows that social inequality is playing out even more strongly in these digital models than in traditional methods. We see a need to research the ways of exclusion which come along with the digitalization of education, as well as a need to focus on the role of digitalized migrant lives and working conditions.

We also understand that, in concurrence with growing geopolitical tensions leading to fragmentation and decoupling an increasing number of countries, we witness restrictive firewalls blocking western platforms in countries including China, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Egypt, and Vietnam. Here, censorship of Western social media poses a great challenge for migrants caught between different platform systems, e.g. African students in China straddling western and Chinese platforms and searching for ways to overcome the "Great Firewall".

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New technologies and migration management

From the outset, migrants have been recruited either via channels of legal, controlled admission or more informally through social networks. Such networks provide services and information for migrants in the place of origin, during transit, and in the place of arrival. New mobility regimes that have emerged since the 90s, with their introduction of more speedy socio-technical systems, have changed the ways in which mobilities are processed and directed. These technologies tend to exacerbate existing global inequalities. In addition to the reinforcement of the digital divide, they have changed the rhythm of movement and have invoked new modes of control worldwide.

Depending on the standpoint of the observer, these technologies have been framed either as border regimes/securitization or as migration management. While the role of the new technologies for the enhancement of border control is broadly and vividly discussed, issues of work remained in the background of research. This especially holds true for workers in informal segments of the labour market – little is known about the means of access to agricultural work or the service economy. Increasingly, WhatsApp groups and mobile commons structure information and routines of migrant work, often lowering standards and putting pressure on workers (e.g. through drones, management software and “intelligent clothing”). On the other hand, transversal solidarities, such as grassroots unions, would be unthinkable without new technologies.

Finally, smart technologies in connection with border control raise questions around the impacts of identification technologies, artificial intelligence, digital identities, and biometrics on the lives of migrants. Automated decision-making in migration and refugee policies, as well as algorithm-based selection, contains the general risk that decision makers do not fully understand the mechanisms involved and that the complexity of migratory action is boiled down to prefabricated, standardized formats which are not suited for the heterogeneity of individual cases. Furthermore, the actual and potential impact on the lives of migrants themselves is likely be overlooked. Accordingly, the use of such technologies raises important ethical questions. There is the additional danger of (dis-)information through digitalization, as well as the potential opportunity for the creation of transversal solidarities between marginalized groups.

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Glocal labour markets (care chains, gendered transnationalism)

For the future of labour markets in many industrialised countries, the regulation of migration will be decisive. In these countries, an ageing workforce often calls for a rebalancing through the import of semi-skilled, skilled, and highly-skilled workers. Inherent gaps in segments of the labour market will thus be entangled with new pacts on migration and asylum, which will challenge national courts as well as new European directives on the labour market integration of third country nationals. “Migration partnerships” within and beyond the UN system will increase the already blurred boundaries between the public and private sector and feed into multi-level, complex systems that are characterized by highly uneven mobilities. Policies of “Doors open – doors closed” work differently for different layers of the labour markets and for different professions. In the meantime, some sending countries, such as Vietnam, have started changing their strategies regarding migration to align with their needs. In this case, the focus is no longer set on sending many migrants to ensure socio-economic development at home, but is instead shifted towards the export of highly-skilled workers that would be able to bring in even larger remittances to make the country more internationally competitive. Circulation, the exchange of knowledge, and technological capacities upon return are embedded into a poverty-reducing policy. State and private educational schemes aim at the expectation of the younger generations to be trained rather for a global market than for selected destinations – making ongoing bilateral efforts questionable. Also here, social media platforms are among the most important recruitment channels because they offer a global reach regarding skilled work. The workers no longer depend on official, state-provided information, but can proactively search through social networks for potential jobs. Meanwhile, the sending countries face a dilemma as they are simultaneously confronted with an ageing population and a lack of specialized workers and an immediate need for money flowing in from abroad.

We further notice that empirical analysis on sectors that are traditionally filled with migrant workers reveal that some sectors are highly gendered, especially in low-wage professions (domestic work and care, garment manufacturing, agriculture), and that bilateral regulations may be followed by precarious or temporary work situations, e. g. for women (such as in the Kafala system or the generation of foreign currency reserves through remittances).

The institutional architecture of cross-border regulation of worker mobility as well as return migration is still characterized by gaps and inconsistencies. Such deterritorialization of national labour market policies (and social policies) is particularly prominent in the nursing sector and other economies of care. A focused study on the governance of labour in this sphere may show us how global social policies are formed out of transnational markets and regulatory forces, including systems to ensure the portability of rights and entitlements. For example, the field of care and health is still imagined as being a national issue or a public good – even though in reality it is highly globalised, with transnationally circulating patients, professionals and products. It is a field in which the transformative character of mobilities at various scales can be observed in full effect. It is also a field in which automatization and the use of new technologies contribute massively to the dynamics of global social inequalities. Precarious work and life situations of migrants can, in turn, be perpetuated or magnified by the increased demands on workers resulting from technological progress. One of the consequences are social and vocational integration setbacks or failures – dynamics that still too often remain below the radar and fail to feed back into policy-making processes.

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Matching into the welfare state, urban realities

“Nations talk, cities act” is a common saying amongst urban scholars. With cross-border and primarily global issues (such as climate change, migration and pandemics) regulations on the national state have proven to be somewhat dysfunctional when it comes to its traditional spheres of power. It comes as no surprise that we see cities re-organising themselves with the help of transnational networks of exchange and initiatives that circulate best-practise policies. New solidarity networks such as *Sanctuary Cities* and *Seebrücke* connect cities all over the world. At the same time cities are seen as targets of global policies on migration and the implementation of global expectations such as formulated in the SDGs. Thus, In the multi-level game of responsibility for migration and integration, cities within different national and global contexts have varying leverage on how to deal with social inclusion and labour market integration in practise. However, no matter the context, labour-related services are inherently based in cities and towns. The urban has gained momentum in the discourses on migration and the future of work- and consequently on migration-related social policies. Glocal assemblages – composed of shifting power-laden relationships between private and public actors, local initiatives, and resources – increasingly put pressure on traditional constellations of local governance.

In addition, approaches inspired by methodological nationalism fail when it comes to the imagination of future local social policies. In the fuzzy and contradictory situation on the ground, often-multi-scalar apparatuses dealing with local immigration issues have started to make use of biopolitical rationalities and technologies that rely on the processing of big data. One of the motivations for using these methods is to overcome a series of control gaps that result from the situation of manifold governance and politically contradictory decision-making. For instance, concerning the issue of migration management, municipalities have started to use digital technologies to speed up processes of decision-making – for the sake of the bureaucracies, but also for the sake of the migrants waiting in line for a decision about their request. Often, “matching”- tools are used: to match workers with employers, to find the next free place in an asylum centre for a person in need, to issue employment bans, or to check whether educational training resources are available elsewhere. These possibly Janus-faced developments in the governance of migration on the city level deserve our further research attention. They raise ethical questions about social justice and, empirically, call for a better understanding of the social processes they set in motion.

We claim that the “urban” deserves special attention when speaking about the relationship between new technologies, the future of work and migration. Many of the activities of digitalized economy and e-commerce need concrete spaces such as urban economies as well as of marginalised work force, as often fulfilled by the migrant population (e.g. moonlight work such as delivery services or other stand-by positions). Not only the labour markets are changing. The cities themselves transform as the emerging dominance of online platforms for many segments of the economy pose serious threats to social mobility and the empowerment of migrants. Established segregation and fragmentation within cities, for example in the form of arrival neighbourhoods, may be reinforced. Established hierarchies between cities might be called into question. The “urban” expresses the “spatial” and thus needs interdisciplinary research to be understood.

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