

Kick-off Meeting of the ENLIGHT Thematic Network IMAGINE: Interdisciplinary Migration Network for Equitable Future

Göttingen ([Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal](#)), 19.-21. March 2025

<https://uni-goettingen.de/enlight-imagine>

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Wednesday, 19. March 2025

16:00 - 17:30	Keynote Lecture: “How to Do Migration Studies in These Dark Times“
	Reception
19:30 – 21:30	Film Screening: “Caravan“ Venue: Lumière, Geismar Landstr. 19

Thursday, 20. March 2025

09:30 – 09:45	“Welcome and Introduction”
09:45 – 11:15	Roundtable: “(Legal) Uncertainty as a Site/Tool of Control and Space of Resistance?”
11:45 – 13:15	Panel “Colonial / Imperial Continuities in Migration Law and Memory”
	Lunch break
14:45 – 16:15	Panel: “Memory Practices, Illiberalism and War”
17:15 – 18:45	Online Event Series “Border Regimes on the Move - On the Reorganization of Europe, Migration and Labor Ten Years after the Summer of Migration”: “How Migration Policies Reproduce Center and Periphery Relations”
	Joint Dinner Venue: Kartoffelhaus, Goethe-Allee 8

Friday, 21. March 2025

09:00 – 10:30	Panel: “Illiberal Continuities in Migration Governance: The Border-Authoritarian-Nexus”
11:00 – 12:30	Roundtable “Critical Migration Studies: Resisting the Dual Assault on Migration and Knowledge Production”
12:30 – 13:00	“Concluding Session”
	Lunch break
13:45 – 15:00	“Internal Network Meeting for ETN Network Members”

Wednesday, 19. March 2025

16:00-17:30 Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal	
<i>Keynote Lecture</i>	
“How to Do Migration Studies in These Dark Times“	
<u>Speaker:</u> Shahram Khosravi (Stockholm University)	<u>Chair:</u> Reza Bayat (University of Göttingen)

Reception
Alte Mensa, Stadtlabor

19:30-21:30 Lumière
<i>Film Screening. Educational Preview. Admission is free.</i>
“Caravan“
<p>Welcome to Vienna, a city in the heart of Europe that four young men want to call home. Fawad, Marwand, Najib and Samim - supported by debut director Lucy Ashton - film themselves as they try to establish their lives, navigate growing up between cultures, and grapple with the complexities of a duplicitous, and sometimes mistrustful, Europe. Together they experience Austria’s acceptance of Fawad and Samim, and rejection of Marwand and Najib - who hide, and ultimately flee. While navigating the tricky relationship between their cameras and their stories, the young men weave a powerful tale of friendship and hope.</p> <p>Afterwards, there will be an opportunity to talk to Wasil Faizi, who worked on the film with the protagonists as a mentor and translator.</p>

Thursday, 20. March 2025

“Welcome and Introduction”

09:30 – 09:45
Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal

Roundtable

“(Legal) Uncertainty as a Site/Tool of Control and Space of Resistance?”

09:45 – 11:15
Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal

Speakers:

Sebastian Benedikt (University of Göttingen)
Maud Martens (University of Ghent)
Reem Mussa (University of Bern)
N.N.

Chair:

Anna Wyss (University of Bern)
Julija Kekstaite (University of Ghent)

This roundtable explores how (legal) uncertainty operates both as a space/tool of repression and control within violent migration regimes as well as a site for modes of possible resistance. Across the EU, Member States that are ruled by both right- and left-wing political parties increasingly ignore judgments by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) that challenge migration policies, thus rendering the law a highly ambivalent instrument to ensure protection. Instead, the threat of being subjected to racialised border violence – regardless of its legality – is actively used to exhaust unwanted border-crossers and their supporters. As violence and resistance are co-constituted, the acts of resistance, too, are fundamentally shaped by uncertainty. They go against powerful structures but do not necessarily escape reproducing them. Moreover, they lack a clear view of what an alternative world might look like. In this roundtable we explore the role that uncertainty plays in perpetuating border regimes and what political and practical implications it has on how we think about resistance and hope (or lack of) in current migrant solidarity struggles.

Key Questions for Discussion:

1. Leveraging and Navigating Precarity and Uncertainty: How do migrants and resistance movements (?) adapt to uncertain and shifting border regimes, navigating legal and bureaucratic precarity and ambiguities? How does uncertainty shape acts of resistance within migrant solidarity movements? To what extent can resistance to border regimes avoid reproducing the power structures they aim to dismantle? To what extent is the legal regime still a space used for counter-struggles.
2. Epistemological Opportunities and Limits for Resistance: Can the climate of (legal) uncertainty be both an opportunity and a limitation for resistance? Perhaps the law has

never been a site of protection to begin with. What kind of epistemologies and relations then could emerge from these struggles?

3. Imagining Alternative Futures: In the face of a pervasive lack of promise for a better future, how can solidarity movements sustain hope and momentum? How can uncertainty as an ontological condition of our times be leveraged as a space for new beginnings and the creation of alternative forms of political life?

11:45 – 13:15

Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal

Panel

“Colonial / Imperial Continuities in Migration Law and Memory”

Speakers:

Julija Kekstaite (University of Ghent)

Renata De Figueiredo Summa (University of Groningen)

Rossella Marino (University of Groningen)

Jeanette den Toonder (University of Groningen)

Chair:

Senka Neuman-Stanivukovic
(University of Groningen)

This panel builds on Gutierrez Rodriguez's (2018) concept of the “coloniality of migration” to explore how human mobility is shaped by intersecting and enduring dynamics of imperialism and coloniality. Drawing on critical scholarship that uncovers the entanglement of colonial and imperial hierarchies in migration and border regimes, we focus on the domains of law and memory. We examine how coloniality and imperialism persist in legal practices and memory narratives, shaping the migrant subject through race, gender, or class hierarchies. We seek to unlearn histories, narratives and legal frameworks that uphold the coloniality of migration, asking key questions about what constitutes an evidence, what are archival records and what it means to witness in migration contexts.

Lunch

Alte Mensa, Stadtlabor

14:45 – 16:15

Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal

Panel

“Memory Practices, Illiberalism and War”

Speakers:

Maryam Adjam (University of Uppsala)

Chair:



<p>Leena Käosaar (University of Tartu) Anna Louise Weßling (University of Göttingen/Friedland Museum) Elo-Hanna Seljamaa (University of Tartu)</p>	<p>Jeanette den Toonder (University of Groningen)</p>
<p>This panel investigates the multifaceted dynamics of memory practices within the contexts of migration, governance, and conflict, emphasizing their intersections with illiberalism and war. It critically examines how individual, social, and cultural memories are shaped, contested, and mobilized in response to political, social, and technological developments. Through an interdisciplinary lens, the panel addresses three core themes.</p> <p>First, it explores the politics of memory in migration, interrogating how migrants remember and narrate displacement through personal and collective stories, the role of trauma in shaping these narratives, and the mechanisms—such as oral histories, rituals, and digital platforms—that preserve or transform such memories. It questions how host societies engage with migrant memories, from mobilization and marginalization to erasure, and examines how securitized political contexts and established narratives of past migrations influence the memorialization of contemporary movements.</p> <p>Second, the panel delves into memory governance, identity, and belonging, analyzing the impact of laws mandating specific historical interpretations and how marginalized groups resist state-imposed narratives. It highlights the role of hybrid memories in challenging static notions of nationhood and belonging while addressing how divergent memories of war and migration intersect with rising xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment.</p> <p>Finally, the panel reflects on the ethics and methodologies of studying contested memories in migratory contexts.</p>	

<p style="text-align: right;">17:15 – 18:45 Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal</p>	
<p><i>Online Event Series, “Border Regimes on the Move - On the Reorganization of Europe, Migration and Labor Ten Years after the Summer of Migration”</i></p>	
<p>“How Migration Policies Reproduce Center and Periphery Relations”</p>	
<p><u>Speakers:</u></p> <p>Manuela Boatcă (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg) Marta Stojić Mitrović (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb)</p>	<p><u>Chair:</u></p> <p>Sabine Hess (University of Göttingen)</p>
<p>What dynamics characterize border regimes and migration conditions ten years after the “summer of migration”? In view of the ongoing migration debate, it is urgently necessary to ask ourselves this question. In an attempt to find answers, we are taking a broad European perspective in this series of events. We want to discuss the dynamics of the political and economic preconditions of European migration policy. We assume that these dynamics are shaped by transnational and European center-periphery relations. We understand the border and migration regime both as the result and motor of geopolitics on the European continent</p>	



and as a catalyst for the recomposition of migration. What is essential here is the tension between the so-called free movement of goods and labor and border closures.

So what economic and political redefinitions of a “fluid Eastern European zone” (Balibar) can be observed? How is the economic division of labor and hierarchy between Western and Central Europe's center and periphery changing, not least after Russia's war against Ukraine? What role do valorization, land grabbing and the further development of (Eastern) European peripheral and poverty zones play here? How is the organization of borders within the EU and beyond developing on this basis? What new-old social, economic, racialized inclusions and exclusions of EU citizens and third-country nationals can be observed? Does the post-2015 border and migration regime work with racist differentiation, in which some groups can now be thought of as “white” or “whiter”, while others are confronted with an intensifying practice of exclusion and racist attacks in the context of a definition as “non-Europeans”?

By discussing these questions, we want to make a contribution to the ongoing debate on the connection between border regimes and racism or the racist re-centering of the European project, as it is also being driven by growing right-wing populist movements across Europe. The central aim is to explore how the tension between the recruitment of (migrant) labor in the context of extremely segmented labor markets and jobs on the one hand and isolation and deportation on the other can be explained and how it will develop in the future.

The online event series is organized by the Centre for Global Migration Studies and the Sociological Research Institute Göttingen between March and November 2025. The program can be found at: <https://uni-goettingen.de/en/694576.html>

Joint Dinner

Kartoffelhaus, Goethe-Allee 8

Please note: Due to limitations in funding, starters, one dish and one drink will be financed from the ENLIGHT budget. We appreciate it that you cover additional drinks and deserts yourself.

Friday, 21. March 2025

09:00 – 10:30

Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal

Panel

“Illiberal Continuities in Migration Governance: The Border-Authoritarian-Nexus”

Speakers:

Guilherme Pedro (University of Groningen)
Sabine Hess (University of Göttingen)
Svenja Schurade/Selmar Krug (University of Göttingen)
Anna Amelina (BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg)

Chair:

Robin Vandevordt (University of Ghent)

This panel aims to understand the ways in which state policies of migration control relate to the world-wide authoritarian transformation and right-populist overtake of nominally liberal-democratic politics. While critical theory in both legal and migration studies, has focused a great deal on the state’s “right to exclude”, on racial segregation and gender discrimination, or on rights violations and violence against migrants in several stages of their journey, the precise, empirically grounded, correlation of genderization/racialization of migrant populations and the work the border regime does in this regard seems lacking. Whereas the border regime was always conceptualized in Critical Border Studies as a regime of differentiated citizenship and different conceptualizations such as the notion of “border spectacle” pointed to the very fact, that the border is as much a regime of “migration management” as it has an internal performative dimension only recently there is an increasing interest in studying the nexus between (racialized) border policies and authoritarian modes of governance and worldwide earth slide shift to right-populist politics.

Whereas research on right-wing populism, authoritarianism, or the far-right clearly shows that migration is the main primer, the task of a critical research agenda that can look beyond the radicalization of xenophobic discourses is to debunk the new grammar of ‘political moderation’ on border restrictions. This grammar reveals a huge, however hidden, impact of the neoconservative agenda in the ideological spectrum of traditional party politics as it naturalizes and normalizes highly restrictive border regimes on the grounds that the securitarian concerns of electorates are ‘normal’. This section thus explores the nexus between the authoritarian transformation of European politics and European migration, asylum, border policies and practices from an empirical, ethnographic and discursive perspective.

How do they reinforce each other? What role does the border and its spectacularization play in right-wing populist politics and the authoritarian transformation? What are the main discursive drivers, narrative tropes, imaginaries, practices or affects and what are the main



strategies by different actors to forge and build this nexus? And with which effects and internal consequences?

From a democratic-theory perspective, what exactly is the legitimacy of democratic states in policing their borders in ways that are either openly violent like the recent deportations carried out by the Trump administration or at least constitute a form of coercion over subjects who are barred from the territory? How – and to whom – are the migration policies of border control accountable? Is the people – those who are already here – the only ‘legitimizing audience’ of democracy? And is this prioritizing of citizens over non-citizens an inevitability of democratically elected governments regardless of populism? And what happens in these countries where right-populist parties are already in power? How are migration policies and democratic rules of the game (such as the rule of law) changing, with which effects?

How do migrants navigate these shifts, changing political-moral-legal landscapes? Do migrants who find themselves in that situation claim and practice a moral right to protest?

The panel invites papers that address one or more of these questions also with the aim to start a comparative debate on the different modes, policies, practices and their effects.

11:00 – 12:30

Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal

Roundtable

“Critical Migration Studies: Resisting the Dual Assault on Migration and Knowledge Production“

Speakers:

Emina Buzinkic (Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb)

Sabine Hess (University of Göttingen)

Tilman Lanz (University of Groningen)

Robin Vandevordt (University of Ghent)

Anna Wyss (University of Bern)

Elo-Hanna Seljamaa (University of Tartu)

Chair:

Shahram Khosravi (Stockholm University)

This roundtable discussion invites participants to engage in a collaborative reflection on the praxis of critical knowledge production about migration amid the polycrisis and the erosion of the liberal democratic order. Illiberalism, while not new to the European migration regime, has become further embedded in the EU’s institutional order through the New Pact on Migration and the proliferation of bordering practices, normalizing far-right discourses. Xenophobia and racism are increasingly acceptable in the core spheres of democracy–institutions, media, and universities.

The mainstreaming of illiberalism directly undermines critical migration research. Despite the prominence gained by migration research including its efforts to challenge violent crisis governance and securitization narratives, European policies remain rooted in the already debunked push-and-pull doctrine. There is a growing risk that what Stierl (2022) refers to as

migration knowledge hype will continue to serve harmful policy agendas against the principles of academic freedoms and integrity.

Simultaneously, we are confronting a dual attack on both migration and knowledge production. The criminalization of migration solidarity takes place in conjunction with the shrinking of spaces for critical migration scholarship. The renationalization of universities, coupled with anti-intellectualist attacks on the humanities and social sciences as "woke ideologies," the casualization of academic labour, and crackdowns on student activism, profoundly undermine the production of critical knowledge in migration research.

These simultaneous forms of repression highlight the interlinked dynamics of the crackdown on migration and migration studies. We aim to explore how these attacks reshape our positionalities as scholars and the role of critical scholarship, that brings together migration, gender, race and other justice struggles, social movements, decoloniality, and more, across varying geographies and times.

12:30 - 13:00

Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal

"Concluding Session"

Lunch

Alte Mensa, Stadtlabor

13:45 - 15:00

Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal

"Internal Meeting for ETN Imagine Network Members"

List of participants

Name	University
Reem Mussa	Bern
Anna Wyss	Bern
Soline Ballet	Ghent
Marlies Casier	Ghent
Hannah Grondelaers	Ghent
Julija Kekstaite	Ghent
Ine Lietaert	Ghent
Rossella Marino	Ghent
Maud Martens	Ghent
Robin Vandevordt	Ghent
Reza Bayat	Göttingen
Sebastian Benedikt	Göttingen
Andrea Bogner	Göttingen
Jelka Günther	Göttingen
Sabine Hess	Göttingen
Ahmet Hilmi	Göttingen
Christian Hinrichs	Göttingen
Lars Klein	Göttingen
Selmar Krug	Göttingen
Alexander-Kenneth Nagel	Göttingen
Piritta Kleiner	Göttingen
Svenja Schurade	Göttingen
Anna Louise Weßling	Göttingen, Museum Friedland
...and others	Göttingen
Alina Achenbach	Groningen
Jonas Bornemann	Groningen
Jeanette den Toonder	Groningen
Guilherme Pedro	Groningen
Tilman Lanz	Groningen
Senka Neuman-Stanivukovic	Groningen
Renata De Figueiredo Summa	Groningen
Leena Käosaar	Tartu
Elo-Hanna Seljamaa	Tartu
Shahram Khosravi	Stockholm

Maryam Adjam	Uppsala
Emina Buzinkic	Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb
Anna Amelina	BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg

General Information

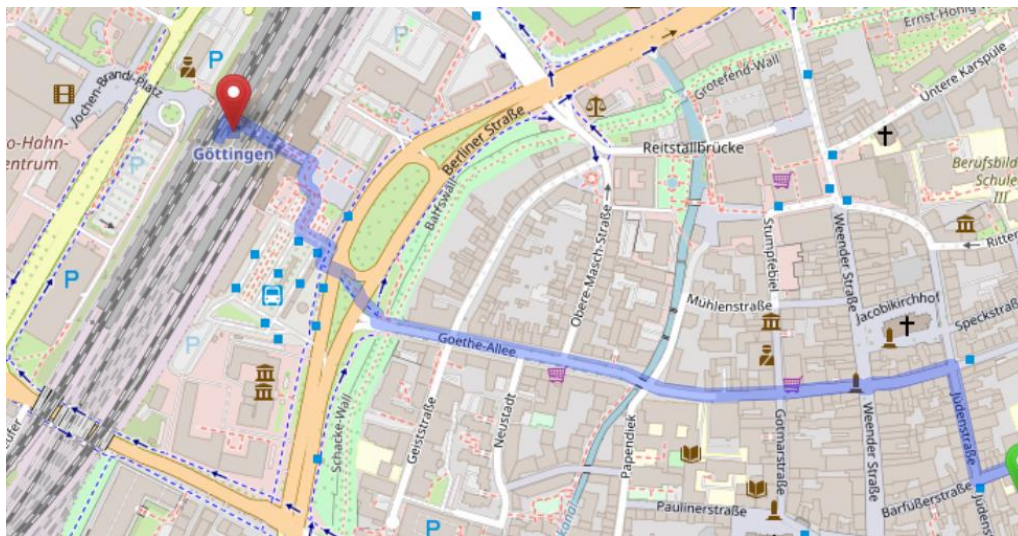
Contact during your stay in Göttingen

You can contact **Jelka Günther** via phone or whatsapp in case of any urgent questions during the time of your stay (travel delays etc.): 0049 175 8332417.

Venues

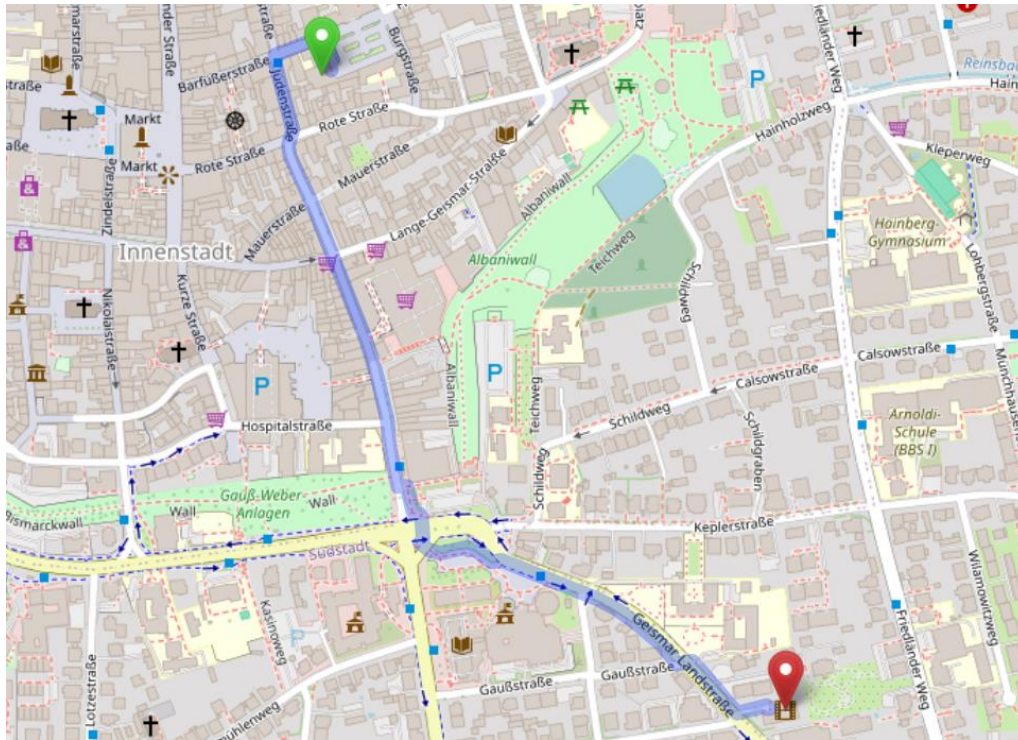
Alte Mensa, Hannah-Vogt-Saal & Stadtlabor (Wilhelmsplatz 3, 37073 Göttingen)

Directions: From the train station in Göttingen it is 15 mins walk to reach the meeting's the venue.



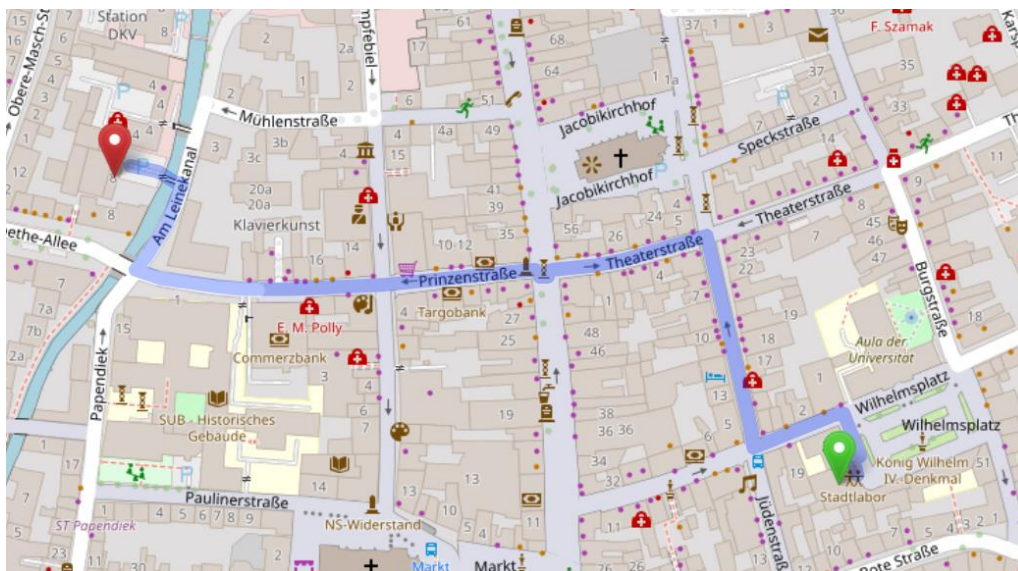
Lumière Cinema (Geismar Landstr. 19, 37073 Göttingen)

Directions: From the Alte Mensa it is a 15 mins walk to the cinema Lumière.



Kartoffelhaus (Goethe-Allee 8, 37073 Göttingen)

Directions: From the Alte Mensa it is a 8 mins walk to the restaurant Kartoffelhaus.



Accommodation

We made hotel reservations for your stay in Göttingen. Please refer to your personal invitation for the name of your hotel.

Hotel Central (Jüdenstraße 12, 37073 Göttingen)

00 49 551 57157

<https://www.hotel-central.com/>

Hotel Stadt Hannover (Goethe-Allee 21, 37073 Göttingen)

00 49 551 547960

<https://www.hotelstadthannover.de/>

Hotel Holiday Inn (Carl-Zeiss-Straße 1, 37081 Göttingen)

00 49 551 507660

<https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/de/de/gottingen/zeugt/hoteldetail>