

**International Academic Conference: Refugees, Borders and Membership
Malmö University, 24-26 Oct 2018**

**Workshop proposal:
“Researching norms and values in the field of migration and refugee studies”**

Convenors:

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Prof. Dr. Andreas Niederberger, University of Duisburg-Essen
Dr. Brigitte Suter, Malmö University

Values define how societies look upon themselves. However, while this seems to be important to their self-understanding and, hence, their behaviour and expectation towards newcomers, there is often an absence of awareness of these values, and their enabling or, on the other hand, constraining and excluding function. Moreover, different values often compete with each other in a society, and take on shifting priority: those promoted by European institutions, those considered as collective and societal, those pertaining to specific nations or ideologies; and those considered personal. Talk of European values, for example, is in many cases vague and references to them often primarily aim at discrediting political opponents or decisions at the European and member state level. At the same time, there is a need for stabilisation and cohesion on various societal levels in Europe on the basis of common norms and values in order to find appropriate solutions to the multiple crises it faces, especially given growing tensions in the context of the so-called refugee-crisis.

As a field, migration and refugee studies have a long history of studying immigrant integration into societies of nation states, and into cities and neighbourhoods. However, such research has largely been oblivious of values and norms. Supposedly this is because the concept of values, and its related normative categories of norms and rights, seem to belong to a specific discipline (philosophy, political science). Nevertheless, values and norms have since long been debated in national politics on immigration, both explicitly and implicitly. As such, they have not only shaped immigration and integration policy profoundly, but also the lived experience of immigrant and societal integration.

This workshop addresses the question on how to study this field and how to create fruitful debates between already existing lines of research in migration studies and philosophers interested in the significance of norms and/or values in the broader migration and integration context. How do we get from the normative to the empirical and vice versa? How do we accommodate narratives of lived experiences with wider normative questions? How do we get into a conversation across disciplines? Or how do we approach these questions from an interdisciplinary perspective?

This workshop invites contributions particularly – *but not exclusively* – on the following topics:

- Value agents (i.e. formal *and informal* groups and institutions mediating values) on various levels in society; their motivation, activities and target groups
- Policy processes; for example, the implementation of shared values into policies
- Public and political debates; for example, current and past dominating values, their shifting positions and their relation to wider political-economic processes

- The potential significance of fundamental values like gender equality, humanitarianism/hospitality and religious pluralism in various European societies and/or translocal social spheres?
- Diversity in a cosmopolitan and/or a nationalist Europe

The workshop invites 6-10 papers that show a range of different approaches to the study of values and norms in migration. Ideally, the presentations would, in different sessions, address normative, methodological or thematic concerns. This workshop is organised in the framework of the recently funded H2020 project “NoVaMigra – Norms and Values in the European Migration and Refugee Crisis” (2018-21), and serves to open up the academic discussion.

Interested scholars should send an abstract (incl. title) of 200-300 words to Johanna Gördemann (johanna.goerdemann@uni-due.de) and Brigitte Suter (brigitte.suter@mau.se) no later than **23 April 2018**. We will communicate our decision by mid-June at the latest.

Link to the conference:

<https://www.mah.se/nyheter/kalender/international-conference-refugees-borders-and-membership/>