

CALL FOR PAPERS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

MIGRANT DESCENDANTS AND “HOMELAND RETURNS”: IDENTITY, BELONGING AND TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY

May 21 - 22, 2015

Institute of Social Sciences (ICS), University of Lisbon, Portugal

Invited keynote speakers: **Anastasia Christou** (Associate Professor of Sociology, School of Law, Middlesex University, UK); **Tracey Reynolds** (Professor of Social Sciences Department of History, Politics and Social Sciences, University of Greenwich, UK); **Russell King** (Professor of Geography, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex, UK); **Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade** (Emeritus Professor of Sociology, CEMRI-Universidade Aberta, Portugal).

Within migrant and transnational studies, the descendants of migrants often hold complex and ambiguous views of home and identity, resulting in a basic questioning of where these individuals belong. Such complexity and ambiguity is further stressed upon returning to the ancestral homeland. For example, a returning migrant descendant may be confronted with a dramatically changing social-cultural landscape, where their previously imagined ethno-cultural ideals, or those inherited from their parents, imbibed via mass media or gestated during previous short-term visits to the ancestral homeland, may prove to have been non-existent or distortions of present day reality. Consequently, questions of ethno-cultural definitions arise, driven by the multiple relations and negotiations that emerge in the context of migrant return and in the process of maintaining transnational linkages. We are here in the midst of a mobility modality that exists in a new kind of social space, crossing cultural fields that often question previously stable notions. The return itself often ends up challenging, translating, (re)defining, narrating and (re)constructing new meanings of ‘who these individuals are’ in connection to ‘where they are’.

Taking into consideration theoretical and methodological variations as a strategy for conceptual development as related to the research context of *migrant descendants* and research theme of *return*, the conference welcomes papers with differing empirically structured perspectives from different scientific areas that:

- 1) Scrutinise the often multiple and changing identities migrant descendants are confronted with upon returning to their ancestral homelands. Given that the positioning of such (return) migrants is often one of ‘cultural transients’, setting themselves in transnational spaces (e.g. home, host and local) defined by such repertoires as an inherited and transmitted ethnic or national culture (nostalgic and often folkloric), the society born into and the society found upon return to the ancestral homeland, the conference sets out to analyse the intercultural identification bricolages constructed from the cultural elements returnees negotiate with and within, from both the sending and receiving countries.
- 2) Study strategies of integration, analysing how these individuals go about inserting themselves socially, culturally, professionally and spiritually, into the ‘new’ society. Key to this integration analysis is the ‘warmth of the welcome’ (or lack thereof) on the part of the host society, and how this may lead individuals to adopt alternative strategies, abandoning original objectives and idealizations.
- 3) Examine transnationalism as a central theoretical base of analysis, assuming that return does not constitute the end of a migration cycle but instead is part and parcel of a circular system of social, cultural and economic relationships, and exchanges between countries, cultures and societies. Observe the role of transnational practices and orientations in an attempt to decipher what sort of capital is to be gained from maintaining such practices and orientations and to what extent and degree this locates the migrant in and in-between the countries in question, taking into consideration transnational capital as a resource to be weighed when needed.

Papers are welcome that seek to present current research on frameworks related to these topics and other issues related to the overarching themes of the conference.

ABSTRACTS (200-250 words) should be sent to jmssardinha@gmail.com (João Sardinha), david.cairns@iscte.pt (David Cairns) and afonosofia@gmail.com (Sofia Afonso) by **March 20th, 2015**. Notification of acceptance will be sent by **March, 27th, 2015**.

The conference is convened by **João Sardinha** (CEMRI-UAAb), **David Cairns** (CIES-IUL) and **Sofia Afonso** (CEHUM-UM) within the context of the research project "REPOR: Luso-Descendant ‘Returnees’ in Portugal: Identity, Belonging and Transnationalism" (PTDC/ATP-GEO/4567/2012) coordinated by **João Sardinha**.

For more information see: <http://www.repor.pt/index.php/en/>

No registration fee will be charged.

