



CONFERENCE

**Changing discourses of migration –
categories, faith-based interpretations
and innovative practices**

November 23, 2018
Catholic University Mainz



SYNOPSIS

"Today's world demands that you be a protagonist of history, because life is always beautiful when we choose to live it fully, when we choose to leave a mark."

Pope Francis, WYD 2016, Kraków

During the past centuries and decades, wars and areas of violent conflict have produced high numbers of migration flows. Seen through the lens of a state, migrants were labelled with features and characteristics in order to categorize them into legal entities. Although often forced by their environments and social contexts, migrants went through a process of empowerment in the past decades and started to see themselves less as victims of their contexts and circumstances but, rather, as autonomous agents.

The changing environments that forced people to move as well as the changing driving forces of the people themselves began to dissolve established legal categories and migration patterns became increasingly diversified or 'mixed'.¹ Migration caused by various kinds of serious human rights violations or armed conflicts may, however, overlap with other reasons. These reasons include poverty, environmental degradation, poor governance and increasing levels of corruption. Major static legal categories and their rationale became increasingly blurred, while at the same time people qualifying for international protection increased in numbers. Who counts as 'migrant' or as 'refugee' is once more on the political agendas and became a topos in heated public discourses.

1 Vollmer, B. (2016) New narratives from the EU external border – humane refoulement? *Geopolitics* 21(3): 717-41.

Facing increasingly complex and diffused debates at political and public level, we seem to lose track and at the same time we might stand at a crossroads. Societies and political landscapes are changing. Newly constructed narratives seem to dominate the migration discourse and navigate parts of various social spheres producing new labels, categorizations and stigmatisations.

At this one-day international conference we would like to revisit these changing landscapes and contemplate future and alternative narratives. We aim to identify and discuss changing landscapes of migration categories, its developments and its potential challenges in the critical areas of climate change, poverty and hunger, and “illegality” of migration, while facing matters of reception as well as societal resonances.

After the keynote talk, and in the light of discursive shifts and present global issues discussed in a first panel, a second panel shall frame these discussions in the context of faith-based perspectives and interpretations posing the question of how to learn from such a cross-referential inter- or transreligious angle. A third panel shall subsequently discuss potential translations of such faith-based narratives into practice. Panellists will present on-going innovative projects and initiatives. These, and further emerging alternative narratives across all panels on which we can be prospectively build on, aim to critically question current regimes categorizing and stigmatizing human beings.

Prof. Dr. Bastian Vollmer

Catholic University Mainz

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

9.15 | **Welcoming**

Prof. Dr. Martin Klose and Prof. Dr. Bastian Vollmer
Catholic University Mainz

9.30-10.45 | **Keynote**

"Contemporary Migration: the opportunities beyond the challenges", Fr. Fabio Baggio, Pope Francis Section Migrants & Refugees, The Vatican

10.45-11.00 | **Coffee break**

11.00-12.30 | **Panel 1**

Revisiting categories of migration, considering changing discourses and facing global issues

Chair: **Prof. Dr. Bastian Vollmer**
Catholic University Mainz

- **Fr. Fabio Baggio**
Pope Francis Section Migrants & Refugees, The Vatican
- **Dr. Olaf Kleist**
University of Osnabrück
- **Dr. Norbert Cyrus**
Europa-University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)
- **Sieun Lee**
International Organization for Migration, Geneva
- **Jorge Nuño Mayer**
Caritas Europe, Brussels

12.30-13.15 | **Lunch**

13.15-14.45 | **Panel 2**

Migration narratives and faith-based interpretations – What is “migration” and what is “refuge”?

Chair: **Dr. Frank van der Velden**

Diocese of Limburg

- **Prof. Dr. Armina Omerika**
Goethe-University, Frankfurt a. M.
- **Prof. Dr. Frederek Musall**
Center for Jewish Studies Heidelberg
- **Dr. Tobias Keßler**
Sankt Georgen Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology

14.45-15.00 | **Coffee break**

15.00-15.15 | **Welcoming and note**

Bishop Prof. Dr. Peter Kohlgraf

Diocese of Mainz

15.15-16.30 | **Panel 3**

The future of an inter-faith dialogue and innovative practices – What are the challenges and opportunities?

Chair: **Prof. Dr. Sophie Krossa**

Catholic University Mainz

- **Iman Al Nassre**
Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Studienwerk, Berlin
- **Marie Luise Trocholepczy**
Marienschule, Offenbach
- **Julia Wolter**
Abrahamisches Forum, Darmstadt
- **Songül Yasar**
Salam e.V., Frankfurt am Main

16.30-16.45 | **Closing of the conference**

Prof. Dr. Bastian Vollmer

16.45 | **End of conference and reception**

VENUE

Katholische Hochschule Mainz |
Catholic University Mainz
Saarstraße 3 | 55122 Mainz

REGISTRATION / CONTACT

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Please register until October 30, 2018

There is no conference fee.
Travel and accomodation costs are not covered.

