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Introduction

AMIS is an interdisciplinary centre for migration research based at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Copenhagen. The centre was established 2013 in order to make migration a strategic research priority at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen. AMIS offers an interdisciplinary two-year master's degree programme in *Advanced migration studies*.

Combining a diversity of social sciences and humanities approaches, including history, ethnology, religion, philosophy, sociolinguistics, literary studies and the arts, to the theory and practice of migration, the Centre's research focuses on moving populations and mobility practices as well as irregularized and forced migration.

The primary aims of AMIS include:

- promoting excellent research within social sciences and humanities approaches to migration
- stimulating and facilitating cooperation among researchers at the Faculty of Humanities engaging in the study of migration
- providing a forum in which research projects and papers can be developed, discussed and improved
- stimulating national and international research cooperation on migration, and hosting talks, conferences, roundtables and book-launches
- addressing issues of migration for which there is significant societal interest
- further developing the master's degree programme in advanced migration studies.

**AMIS - CENTRE FOR ADVANCED
MIGRATION STUDIES**

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Highlights 2020

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- From 2019-2020 AMIS has attracted a total amount of **7.319.918 DKK** external research funding including the VELUX HUMpraxis project *Boundary Work*, which is initiated in a unique cooperation between Danish Red Cross, DRC Danish Refugee Council, Centre for Advanced Migration Studies (AMIS) at University of Copenhagen and University College Absalon.
- AMIS organized the event *Writing against Fences*, a conversation with Behrouz Boochani and Omid Tofighian, on acts of resistance during detention. The event was moderated by AMIS-guest researcher postdoc Annika Lindberg and included AMIS associate prof. Zachary Whyte as discussant. The event attracted more than 100 online participants from all the world including our own AMIS students' cohort being present on campus.
- AMIS launched its very first workshop for staff and students on *Writing Migration*, initiated and co-organized by AMIS postdoc Martin Ledstrup. The aim of the workshop was to focus on the current state of academic writing and propose alternative ways to write, relying on flavorful style and personal voice and included writing exercises based on a shared reading of Juliana Delgado Lopera's 2020 novel *Fiebre Tropical*. The event was highly successful, with great feedback from participants and will be continued in one form, or the other.
- AMIS co-organised the 7th AMIS-MIM Masters conference on Migration studies presenting current PhD projects in the Øresund region, on 3 December 2020, in which AMIS PhD students Cecilie Odgaard Jakobsen and Mirjam Wajsberg organized a panel. AMIS postdoc Katrine Sypli Kohl was discussant for one of the keynote presenters, Jacob Lind whereas Marlene Paulin Kristensen (PhD from Ethnology, UCPH) was the other keynote speaker.
- An international (online) AMIS lecture with Dr. Paolo Gaibazzi, on West African post-slavery and liminal diasporic egalitarianism, was organized by Associate professor Lotte Pelckmans.

AMIS organization

Since 2019 Associate professor Marie Sandberg (SAXO) is Head of centre, supported by centre coordinator Maria Frantzoulis and the AMIS steering group. The steering group is called for four meetings and one internal full-day seminar annually, and it consists of a staff representative from each of the departments of the Faculty of Humanities: Margit Warburg (ToRS), Anders Michelsen (IKK), Martha Sif Karrebæk (NORS), Trine Øland (MEF), and from 2020 Georg Wink replacing Pia

Schwarz-Lausten (EnGeRom). An international advisory group has been appointed at the time of establishing the centre 2014.

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In 2020, the AMIS staff group consisted of 13 members including 1 visiting postdoc, 1 guest PhD student, 1 external lecturer. Since Nov 1st 2020 AMIS is hosting Associate prof. Martin Lemberg Pedersen's H2020 ADMIGOV work-packages. Two AMIS postdocs were promoted from postdoc to Associate professor level (temporary contract): Nina Grønlykke Mollerup and Lotte Pelckmans. AMIS staff supervises (co-supervises a total of 4 PhD students, internally (Cecilie Odgaard Jakobsen) and externally. AMIS staff meetings are held every Wednesday throughout the year, including internal lectures and brown bag presentations by team members, guest researchers and affiliated researchers from the Faculty of Humanities and UCPH.

2020 has been devoted to the development of an AMIS centre strategy (see attachment 1), which was also the main theme for the yearly AMIS Internal Seminar, held in August 2020 together with AMIS staff and advisory group. Further, the Centre has organized an external funding workshop, which will be a recurring event along with SAXO research support and HUM research support meetings.

Research

Over the past years AMIS has attracted and hosted a number of excellent research projects funded by private as well as public foundations such as the Danish Research Council, the Velux Foundations and H2020. Between 2019-2020 the centre has attracted a total amount of **7.319.918 DKK** external research funding including international postdoc bench fees (see attachment 2) covering the following grantors: VELUX Foundations (HUMpraxis), DFF (FSE Forskningsophold i udlandet), DFF (Sapere Aude, subproject), Vetenskapsrådet (International Postdoc, bench fee), Global Challenge Research Fund (UK), Swiss National Science Foundation: Early Postdoc Mobility (bench fee). As per Feb 2021 a total of 8 externally funded research projects are based at and/or hosted by AMIS:

- CAMP – The Carceral Mobilities Project (PI Simon Turner, DFF)
- DIGINAUTS – Migrants' Digital Practices in/of the European Border Regime (co-PI Marie Sandberg, Velux Foundations)
- REMOTE RELOCATIONS: Work, Precarity and the Inclusion of Newcomers on Lolland (Co-PI Zachary Whyte, DFF)
- EVERYDAY HUMANITARIANISM (Participating researcher, Simon Turner).
- PROTRACTED RURAL DISPLACEMENTS: Forced Internal Migration and Slavery Mobilisations in Mali and its Diaspora (Co-PI Lotte Pelckmans, Global Challenge Research Fund, UK)
- ARCHIVING THE FUTURE: Re-Collections of Syria in War and Peace (Participating researcher Nina Grønlykke Mollerup, DFF Sapere Aude)
- ADMIGOV (co-PI Martin Lemberg-Pedersen, H2020)

- BOUNDARY WORK – New Interfaces between State and Civil Society: Volunteers and Refugees in a Self-Support and Repatriation Context (PI Marie Sandberg, VELUX HUMpraxis)

Affiliated projects: INTERPRETING: Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Challenges in Interpreting Encounters in the Danish Public Sector (PI AMIS Steering group member Martha Sif Karrebæk, NoRS), RESTORE: Refugees' stories and stories about refugees: Crafting new narratives of the Danish welfare state, (PI AMIS Steering group member, Trine Øland (MEF).

In 2020 AMIS staff and affiliates applied for an amount of 21.332.604 DKK external research funding, including two Marie Curie Scholarships to be supervised by Associate prof. Simon Turner respectively Assoc. Prof. Zachary Whyte with AMIS director Marie Sandberg. In 2019 the total grant amount applied for was 11.830.852 DKK. Both of these amounts bear witness to a very high and still rising level of research application activity among AMIS staff and affiliated colleagues. The centre is in close dialogue with HUM research support on future H2020 applications and it is a continued goal to attract MC scholars to the centre.

The Covid-19 situation has affected several of the research projects at the Centre, especially those committing to fieldwork investigations through 2020. Especially our younger scholars are facing challenges working from home and missing out on the everyday working environment at AMIS. We aim for maintaining contact and collegial support during weekly online meetings and AMIS events organized online but this is an attention point, and we look forward to picking up on face-to-face encounters again.

Publications and public dissemination

During 2020 AMIS staff, including visiting research staff, has published a total of 33 research publications in internationally renowned, peer reviewed journals and book series, for an overview <https://amis.ku.dk/publications/>. Please see a small selection of publications highlighted below. As these figures show, the AMIS group presents a very active research environment with a high publication rate. Further, AMIS staff held 20 conference presentations at international conferences (online) and gave 23 national/international talks. AMIS staff and visiting fellows have had a total of 14 public outreach entries covering Danish national newspapers and media (such as Information, Kr. Dagblad, Politiken, P1 and POV International), as well as international media platforms in relation to ongoing research projects (Sweden, The Netherlands, Mali).

Guest scholars and international networks

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AMIS attracts a flow of excellent visiting researchers and guest PhD students, and each year the centre receives several applications from international postdocs and PhD students as well as tenured staff. In 2019 Valentine Ibeka from the University of New Zealand joined AMIS as a guest PhD researcher, in 2020 we have had the pleasure of welcoming Annika Lindberg, international postdoc through the Swiss Research Foundation, and since the past semesters Mirjam Wajsberg, guest PhD researcher from University of Radboud has contributed to the centre's activities. Furthermore, AMIS is well connected with several international research networks of which the most important are:

- IMISCOE, the state of the art international network for migration research, represented by Marie Sandberg as a member of the board of directors
- Nordic Migration Research, the largest research network for Nordic migration scholars, represented in the board by AMIS associate professor Zachary Whyte as vice-chair.
- EuMIGS, Erasmus+, represented by associate professor Simon Turner.
- In 2020 associate professor Simon Turner was promoted from member of the editorial board to co-editor of *Journal of Refugee Studies*.

Master of Arts in Advanced Migration Studies

The Master of Arts in Advanced Migration Studies is an intrinsic part of the Centre's activities, and a continued strengthening of the integration between research and education is a leitmotif of AMIS. Research projects are presented and discussed with students in the program and are usually assigned 1-2 research interns. Each semester, we organize one didactical seminar for AMIS teachers in collaboration with TEACH, on e.g. diversity in the international classroom, and how to develop a good discussion forum through establishing a code of conduct. This year the focus has been on online teaching formats.

The AMIS alumni network *amisan* was established 2019 and has successfully developed into a very active network. In December *amisan* published a diversity survey <http://amisan.org/reports/> on the AMIS course literature, which has been thoroughly discussed with AMIS staff during internal meetings in December 2020 and January 2021. A further open event is planned for 2021.

Activities plan 2021

Activity plans for 2021 includes a more active integration of the International Advisory board into AMIS' work, along with a strengthening of cooperation with practice partners and NGO's such as Danish Red Cross and Danish Refugee Council (please see appendix 1, AMIS Centre Strategy). The production of a promotion video in collaboration with MOOT productions is planned together with the preparation of

an AMIS Welcome Pack for new students, the latter will be organized in cooperation with *amisan* alumni network. A range of AMIS events are already planned, such as an AMIS Lecture with Dr. Samuli Schielke author of the award-winning book *Migrant Dreams*, organized by Associate Prof. Nina Grønlykke Møllerup and postdoc Martin Ledstrup, and an AMIS seminar on the newly proposed legislation proposal to export asylum responsibility to camps outside Europe: A research-based discussion, organized by associate prof. Martin Lemberg-Pedersen. Furthermore, a cross-faculty platform for migration research at UCPH has been launched, organized in cooperation with cross-faculty partners by Associate prof. Simon Turner.

Conclusion

Building from a solid foundation and establishing phase since 2014, AMIS has consolidated itself as a vibrant research environment which attracts excellent research projects within the international field of migration studies. We place great value on the close integration with our international Master of Arts in *Advanced Migration Studies* and with the continued efforts of our excellent research team at the centre, we trust that AMIS will continue its positioning as a very strong centre for international migration research within the humanities at UCPH.



Marie Sandberg, Associate professor, Director

Copenhagen, 22 February 2021

Publications highlights

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(for a full overview, please see www.amis.ku.dk/research)

- As part of the DIGINAUTS project, Associate Professor **Nina Grønlykke Møllerup** has published the contribution: “Perilous Navigation. Knowledge Making with and without Digital Practices during Irregularized Migration to Öresund”, *Social Analysis*, Volume 64, Issue 3, Autumn 2020, 95–112. doi:10.3167/sa.2020.640306
<https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/social-analysis/64/3/sa640306.xml>

Abstract: This article explores navigation when knowing is intrinsically difficult. It looks at how irregularized migrants know during their perilous trips to and through Europe, focusing particularly on the significance of digital practices on these journeys. Based on retrospective ethnographic fieldwork conducted with Syrian refugees in and around the Danish-Swedish borderland, the article seeks to engage with digital migration studies, arguing that an understanding of irregularized migrants’ navigation, whether with or without digital practices, must involve the emplacement and embodiment of knowledge. Second, the article brings experiences of instability and danger into the anthropological theorization of knowing in order to explore the shifting positions and capabilities of knowing bodies.

- **Turner, Simon 2020:** Hope against hope: Changing emotions in the Burundian crisis. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Online publications 10 September 2020, vol 26 issue 4. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.13364>

Abstract: Through the lens of Burundians who have been displaced by the recent crisis in Burundi and their anticipations of possible futures for themselves and their country, expressed in the emotions of hope, anxiety, and despair, this article explores the shift from a situation characterized by upheaval towards the crystallization of authoritarian rule in Burundi. Drawing on ethnographic research amongst Burundian refugees in Rwanda, I examine how these individuals negotiate such uncertain and unpredictable circumstances as well as how emotions of hope, anxiety, and despair change accordingly. I argue that the political closure in Burundi has produced a gradual shift from productive anxiety in the Kierkegaardian sense towards despair and a feeling of existential closure. In such situations, when uncertainty gives way to a certainty

that there are no futures, the present becomes detached from the flow of time and decisions become impossible to make. The Burundians in Rwanda can only live for the moment and hope against hope, often evoking a distinction between their hopelessness as human beings and the hope that they are compelled to have as Christians.

- **Sandberg, M. and Andersen, D.J.**, 2020. Europe Trouble: Welcome Culture and the Disruption of the European Border Regime. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 10(4), pp.1–9. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.388>

***Abstract:** As a result of the Helping Hands Research Network, financed by the Danish Research Council (DFF/6107-00111), led by Marie Sandberg (PI) and Dorte J. Andersen (co-PI), this NJMR special issue takes as its point of departure the volunteer practices connected to informal refugee reception during and after the refugee arrivals to Europe in 2015. Yet the special issue moves beyond this ‘moment of crisis’ by relating it to more established and continuous practices of solidarity and civil society participation. The authors in this special issue thereby emphasise what is at stake in the mobilisation of European citizens into self-made refugee helpers, or everyday humanitarians.*

- Sandberg, M. and Andersen, D.J.**, 2020. Precarious Citizenship and Melancholic Longing: On the Value of Volunteering after the Refugee Arrivals to Europe 2015. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 10(4), pp.41–56. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.357>

***Abstract:** Based on fieldwork conducted in 2018 among volunteers who participated in the refugee reception at Copenhagen and Flensburg central train stations during the ‘summer of welcome’ in Europe 2015, this article examines tensions between volunteers’ retrospective accounts of acting upon a pronounced humanitarian crisis (‘the refugee crisis’) and the existential crisis, when the state of urgency has moved elsewhere. Based on the volunteers’ recollections, we argue that the practices of volunteering enacted different registers of doing good, which gave rise to a (momentary) Europe-wide civil society by ‘doing the right thing’, yet also created a paradoxical longing for this particular sociality of civil society action interlinked with crisis. We designate this longing the melancholy of volunteering as it announces an ungrievable loss of the sociality presupposed by crisis. These tensions between being able to do good and the*

melancholy of volunteering enables us to envision European civil society as a troubled topos for political participation.

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- **Bjarnesen, J., Turner, S. 2020:** Invisibility in African Displacements: From Structural Marginalization to Strategies of Avoidance. Edited by Jesper Bjarnesen, Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala and Simon Turner, Advanced Migration Studies, Copenhagen. Zed Books, Africa Now series. October 2020. <https://www.zedbooks.net/shop/book/invisibility-in-african-displacements/>

***Abstract:** ‘Invisibility in African Displacements’ offers a series of case studies that explore the intricate ways in which African migrants are marginalised and excluded from public discourse; not only in Europe, but in migrant-receiving contexts across the globe. What tends to be either ignored or demonised in public debates on African migration are the deliberate strategies of avoidance or assimilation that migrants make use of, in order to gain access to the destinations or opportunities they seek, or to remain below the radar of restrictive governance regimes. AMIS associate prof. Lotte Pelckmans has written a chapter in the book on: “Fugitive emplacements: mobility as discontent by wahaya concubine women with slave status in the transnational borderlands of Niger–Nigeria, 1960–2016”.*