



Donnerstag, 15. Juni 2023 / Thursday, 15 June 2023

13.45 – 15.15h Workshops Nachhaltigkeit / Sustainability

Workshop 3 Daniel William Szabo *Extraordinary Decisions® Network-Derived Social Capital as a Survival Strategy on Routes Through the Sahara Desert (English)*

Institution: Griffith University

Place: Brisbane, Australia

Abstract

This paper examines how migrants have sought to develop and use network social capital as a survival strategy on high-risk migration routes. It focuses on the Sahara Desert context, which has been increasingly marked by intensified enforcement and risk to migrants amid an externalisation of border policy by the European Union, acting with African Union transit and sending states. The paper draws on original field research involving interviews with 101 migrants who had the experience of travelling high-risk migration routes through the Sahara Desert. It also draws on interviews with 16 humanitarian organisation staff members working with migrants in these regions. Respondents identified several factors driving efforts to develop or use existing networks and derived forms of social capital from them that were central to their survival strategy. Leading factors included having limited resources, having no contacts at the intended destinations, lacking knowledge of migration routes, travelling alone and vulnerability to authorities, human smugglers and other actors. Each of these factors spurs them to develop or draw on existing networks, including forming groups, humanitarian organisations, human smugglers, informal labour networks, enlisting the support of kinship connections and, increasingly, social networking Apps. This paper thus makes a potentially significant contribution to the understanding of migrant agency, challenging some still-prevailing views of migrants as primarily threats or victims. It also situates their exercise of agency within the broader empirical and theoretical framework of the increasing securitised migration by states and their growing extraterritorial enforcement efforts. Including states working in concert through supranational organisations such as the European Union. It works to advance understanding of the full implications of such policies while providing a fine-grained counter-narrative on them from migrants' contextually situated perspectives.

CV

I am a PhD Candidate and Sessional Tutor at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. My research involves original fieldwork with interviews of 101 migrants who had experience travelling high-risk migration routes through the Sahara Desert and 16 staff members from the humanitarian sector working with migrants in the region. An investigation into how individuals have sought to derive social capital through networks in an environment of increasing securitised migration and barriers to migrant integration by States. Daniel's research expands the scholarship on high-risk migration, strengthens humanitarian responses, and supports better protection policies.

In addition to roles at Griffith University, I am a civil servant and part of the communications team with Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) at the Global Data Institute, which is part of the Deputy Director General for Operations at the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM). Activities involving DTM monitor and track displacement and migration flows in over seventy countries. Whereas IOM is the leading intergovernmental organisation in migration, providing humanitarian assistance to migrants in various displacement contexts.