



**Colloquium Series**

**Sociology of Transnationalization**

**“Environmental Degradation and Climate Change: Voice, Exit or Quiescence”**

**Farming as More than a Livelihood Strategy. The Complex Link Between Climate Change, Agriculture and International Migration in Zacatecas, Mexico**

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**University of Bielefeld**

The potential influence that climate change might have on human migration has been addressed by a growing number of theoretical reflections and empirical case studies over the past two to three decades. One obstacle that empirical research faces in studying this relationship is the indirect effect of climate change on human lives – and potentially on migration decisions – which is difficult to measure and also not directly perceived by members of the society under study. Declining yield output is sometimes used as a proxy to gain insights about potential outmigration from drought-prone or flooded agricultural areas. Based on qualitative research in rural areas in Zacatecas, Mexico in 2008 and 2018, I show the complexity of the link between climate change, subsistence farming and migration. Farming changes its meaning for people during their life course, and its importance depends on the socio-economic status of different parts of the society. In addition, aspirations to migrate to the U.S. depend on structural conditions, such as the migration history of the village and changing border protection measures, but also on individual factors, such as age, gender and personal preferences. These findings highlight some important methodological challenges in disentangling the relationship between climate change and migration.

**Wednesday, 9th October 2024**

**16:15 – 17:45 c.t.**

**Room: X-B2-103**

**Further information:**

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\*Dr. Kerstin Schmidt is currently involved in several research projects at the School for Public Health, Bielefeld University. She is also interested in social categorisation processes of migrants from a sociological perspective. Previously, at the Faculty of Sociology at Bielefeld University, she was a post-doctoral researcher in international collaborative research projects focusing mobility

between Europe and Asia, migration and climate change, and youth mobility in Europe. She also taught and supervised BA and MA students in migration sociology. Kerstin's PhD (Sussex University, UK 2012) developed a conceptual and methodological approach to the climate change-migration nexus based on qualitative empirical fieldwork in Mexico.