Making Race and Health in Migration and Development

**Veranstalter** Leipzig Lab Global Health

**Veranstaltungsort** Universität Leipzig

**Termin** 07.05.2020 12:00 Uhr - 08.05.2020 17:00 Uhr

Workshop at the University of Leipzig, May 5–7, 2020

In 2013, the New York Times lamented the “health toll of immigration.” According to this narrative, formerly healthy immigrants—the article was talking about Hispanics, the largest group of immigrants in the US—were getting sick in the United States due to their changed consumption habits. Studies had shown that the longer they lived in the US, the shorter their statistical life span became. As an explanation, the studies suggested that, once in the US, Mexican immigrants switched from their “traditional Mexican foods like cactus and beans,” high in fiber and low in meat, to an American fare of giant hamburgers and fried chicken—because it was now available and affordable. Consequently, obesity and diabetes rates increased among immigrants and shortened their life span. The article highlighted how the changed food choices of Mexican immigrants made them sick.

Such a newspaper story fits seamlessly into contemporary narratives of migration from countries of the global South to the global North. These narrative frames re-establish racial boundaries by depicting people from supposedly underdeveloped societies who struggle with life in industrialized and technological nations. Simultaneously, these narratives negotiate notions of health and belonging: By pitting traditional lifestyles against modern consumption habits, they not only determine what can be considered as a healthy diet but also flag health as a result of proper choices by responsible individuals in a society.

Notions of racial difference and bodily health are mutually constitutive. This workshop explores the making and unmaking of race and health in globalization.
processes between the nineteenth century and the present day. Drawing upon newer research in postcolonial studies and dis/ability studies, the workshop aims to analyze health, migration, racialization and transculturation as historically contingent, fluid, and intersecting phenomena. In particular, the workshop analyzes the entanglements of race and health in migration and development in the 19th and 20th century by asking how health discourses and practices contributed to create racial boundaries, how racist concepts shaped notions of health, and how these discourses continue to be mutually constitutive to migration, citizenship, and belonging.

The workshop is funded by the Forum for the Study of the Global Condition.

For the workshop, please register with nina.mackert(at)uni-leipzig(dot)de. The keynote is open to the public.

**Kontakt**

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Zum Veranstaltungsprogramm (PDF)