



# UBC Centre for Migration Studies

## Fall 2020 Newsletter

[website] [WWW.MIGRATION.UBC.CA](http://WWW.MIGRATION.UBC.CA)

# UBC Migration is now the Centre for Migration Studies

Dear Colleagues and Friends of UBC Migration,

We are thrilled to announce the inauguration of the UBC Centre for Migration Studies. The Centre will provide an intellectual and inclusive home for UBC migration and mobility scholars from many different disciplines. As an independent institutional unit within the Faculty of Arts—and as the only centre of its kind in Western Canada—the Centre for Migration Studies will promote cutting-edge research, graduate training and public outreach on issues of global human mobility. The Centre will support interdisciplinary collaborations between researchers, community partners and policy makers in order to advance our understanding of global migration and to mobilize knowledge for evidence-informed policies and practices.

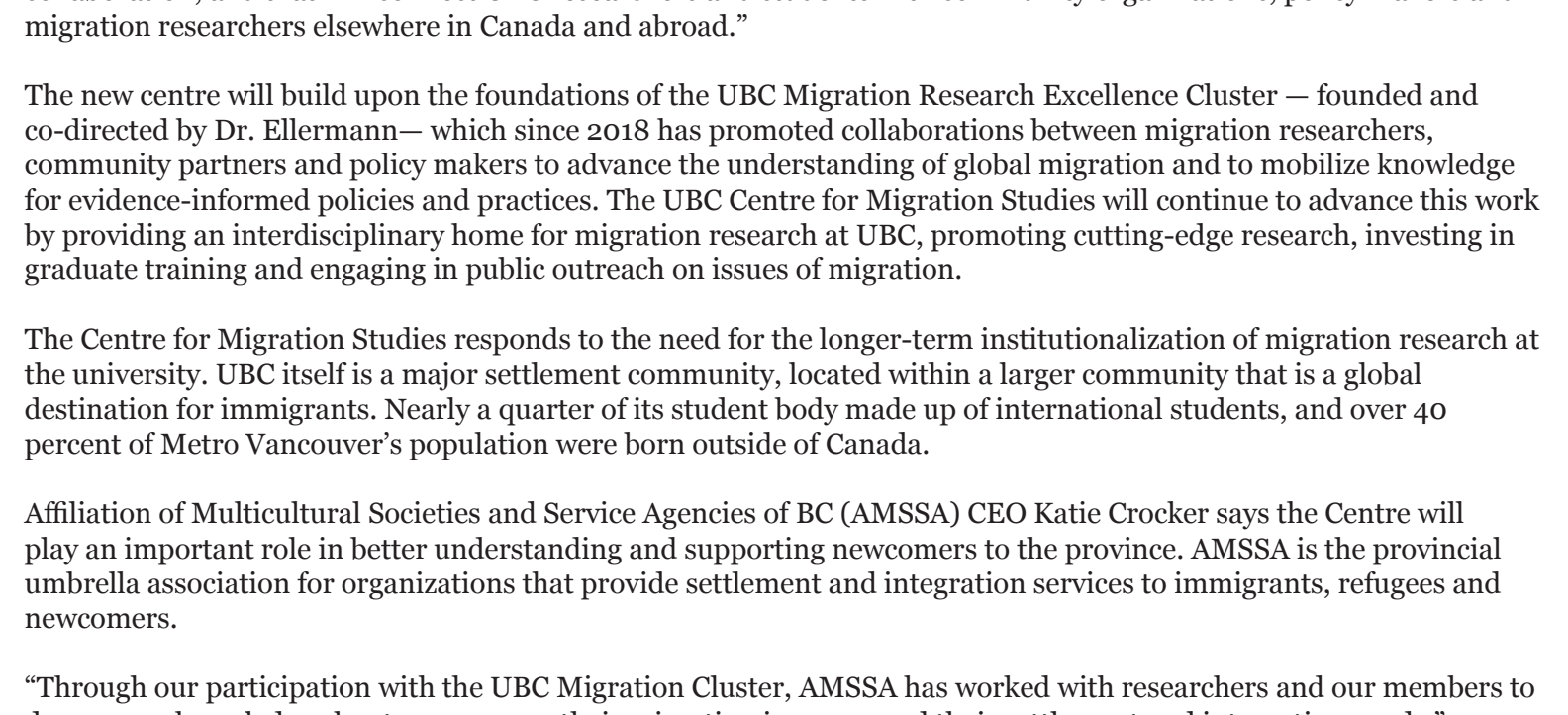
Borne out of the UBC Migration Research Excellence Cluster, the Centre has a growing membership of over 60 UBC faculty, 60 UBC graduate students, 11 local community partners, two institutional partners in the US and Canada, as well as many more migration scholars beyond UBC.

The Centre for Migration Studies is generously supported by the UBC Faculty of Arts, the Departments of Political Science, Sociology, Geography, Anthropology, and the Peter A. Allard School of Law, with additional support provided by Excellence Funds from the Office of the Vice-President of Research and Innovation.

As we transition into a full-fledged Migration Centre in the coming months, there will be many exciting changes but our commitment to advancing our understanding of migration will remain unchanged, as will our dedication to establishing connections across disciplinary and institutional boundaries. We are thankful to all of you for your guidance, inspiration, time and energy over these past three years as we have grown from being an informal network of migration enthusiasts to Cluster Collaborators, and to now having our own institutional home. Our achievement would be incomplete without your support.

Follow us on Twitter at @UBCMigration for more updates and announcements!

And read the official announcement of the UBC Centre for Migration Studies from the UBC Faculty of Arts below.



## New UBC Centre for Migration Studies aims to be a global leader in migration research

A new interdisciplinary UBC Centre for Migration Studies will support innovative migration research, knowledge mobilization and teaching and learning, at UBC and internationally. Based in the Faculty of Arts and led by Dr. Antje Ellermann, the Centre will be the first migration research centre of its kind in Western Canada.

"The UBC Centre for Migration Studies will be an intellectual and inclusive home for UBC migration and mobility scholars from many different disciplines," says Dr. Ellermann. "I envision it as a place that will nurture learning and collaboration, and that will connect UBC researchers and students with community organizations, policy makers and migration researchers elsewhere in Canada and abroad."

The new centre will build upon the foundations of the UBC Migration Research Excellence Cluster — founded and co-directed by Dr. Ellermann — which since 2018 has promoted collaborations between migration researchers, community partners and policy makers to advance the understanding of global migration and to mobilize knowledge for evidence-informed policies and practices. The UBC Centre for Migration Studies will continue to advance this work by providing an interdisciplinary home for migration research at UBC, promoting cutting-edge research, investing in graduate training and engaging in public outreach on issues of migration.

The Centre for Migration Studies responds to the need for the longer-term institutionalization of migration research at the university. UBC itself is a major settlement community, located within a larger community that is a global destination for immigrants. Nearly a quarter of its student body made up of international students, and over 40 percent of Metro Vancouver's population were born outside of Canada.

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA) CEO Katie Crocker says the Centre will play an important role in better understanding and supporting newcomers to the province. AMSSA is the provincial umbrella association for organizations that provide settlement and integration services to immigrants, refugees and newcomers.

"Through our participation with the UBC Migration Cluster, AMSSA has worked with researchers and our members to deepen our knowledge about newcomers, their migration journeys and their settlement and integration needs," says Crocker. "The UBC Centre for Migration Studies will continue to bring the importance of newcomers in British Columbia to the forefront, acknowledging that newcomer settlement and integration is key to our economy, that humanitarian migration is our legal and ethical responsibility and that families are the heart of our communities."

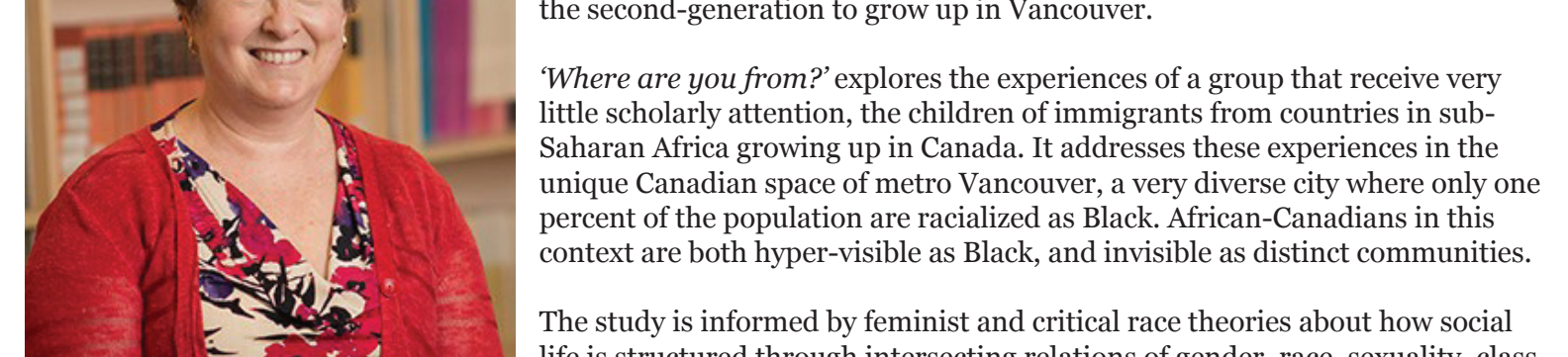
The UBC Centre for Migration Studies is the first interdisciplinary Centre created under a new Faculty of Arts policy that seeks to encourage and support collaborations between units across the Faculty. "It's a clear example of what can be achieved when excellent researchers come together around a timely, public-facing and unifying intellectual theme like migration," says Dr. Brett Eaton, Associate Dean of Research & Graduate Studies, UBC Faculty of Arts.

"The Centre will serve as an intellectual home for a large and active community of scholars from a wide range of humanities and social science disciplines at UBC, and we expect that it will foster additional national and international research collaborations," says Dr. Eaton. "Perhaps more importantly, it will strengthen the links between our academic community and local, provincial and federal governments and NGOs who work on issues of migration."

During its first year, the Centre will be focused on facilitating new research collaborations, offering training opportunities and continuing dialogue about UBC's role in immigrant selection and settlement. Over the Centre's initial five-year term, Dr. Ellermann's goals include certifying with the President's Excellence Chair in Global Migration, establishing a Migration Studies graduate certificate for MA and PhD students, and carrying out a strategic plan focused on catalyzing research, mobilizing knowledge and enhancing interdisciplinary and policy-engaged teaching and learning.

"My goal is to build a global reputation for UBC as a place of migration and mobility research that is not only cutting edge academically, but also socially and politically relevant," says Dr. Ellermann.

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RESEARCH PROJECTS  
FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES  
AND MORE

## Faculty Feature

### Book Q&A with Gillian Creese

#### Professor, UBC Sociology Associate Dean of Arts, Faculty and Equity Institute of Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice

### 'Where are you from?' Growing up African-Canadian in Vancouver

University of Toronto Press

**What are the major themes and takeaways in 'Where are you from?' Growing up African-Canadian in Vancouver?**

This book explores how second-generation African-Canadians navigate multiple identities as African, Black, and as Canadian, how identities are affected by racism and racial micro-aggressions such as the common query, "Where are you from?", and how such encounters shape belonging in one's own home town.

When participants were asked how they identify themselves, almost everyone began that discussion by observing that people always ask them where they are from. Participants grew up in metro Vancouver, so they speak with local accents that should suggest local origins. They are not dressed any differently than other residents their age. So why are they so often asked where they come from? Participants recognize that this question is a racialized micro aggression, a statement that they do not belong here, and as such, this question has come to frame their identities. Some participants said if other people don't recognize that I come from here, then I can't really be Canadian so that is not part of my identity. These participants identified as African or by their parents' national origin even if they were born in Canada or have no memories of ever living anywhere else. Other participants said because people keep asking me where I am from I will only identify as Canadian and insist that others recognize that I am at home. These participants would simply refuse to tell strangers or casual acquaintances about their parents' origins and would only provide a local origin. Another group of participants adopted hyphenated identities as African-Canadian (or Nigerian-Canadian, Somali-Canadian etc.) and would insist, at the same time, "but I grew up here." This is a powerful example of how racialized micro aggressions shape belonging for second-generation African-Canadians, and hence "where are you from?" became the title of the book.

The book takes an intersectional approach that explores how processes of racialization are fundamentally gendered and sexualized, just as heterosexual gender relations are shaped by racialized differences. As a result, African-Canadian men and women growing up in Vancouver have very different experiences.

Another key theme in the book is recognizing the importance of place and the impact of the size of immigrant communities — in this case a very small, ethnogenous, and hyper visible community — to better understand settlement experiences in Canada. Vancouver is an ethnically diverse metropolis where half the population are immigrants, nearly half identify as people of colour, but only one percent of residents are African descent or racialized as Black. That makes growing up African-Canadian in Vancouver very different than in Toronto or Montreal.

**Where would you situate 'Where are you from?' in the larger field of Migration Studies? How do you see it contributing to contemporary debates?**

My earlier research, *The New African Diaspora in Vancouver: Migration, Exclusion and Belonging* (University of Toronto Press, 2011), addressed the experiences of first-generation migrants from countries in sub-Saharan Africa who are creating a new and diverse African community in metro Vancouver. Most participants experienced downward mobility, with educational and professional credentials that were not recognized by local employers, discrimination against African-English accents, and considerable anti-Black racism. Parents routinely said that it was all worth it if their children are accepted as Canadians who do not face these barriers. At the same time, parents worried that their children might lose their African identity in Canada. This book addresses African immigrant parents' concerns by examining what it is like for the second-generation to grow up in Vancouver.

*'Where are you from?'* explores the experiences of a group that receive very little scholarly attention, the children of immigrants from countries in sub-Saharan Africa growing up in Canada. It addresses these experiences in the unique Canadian space of metro Vancouver, a very diverse city where only one percent of the population are racialized as Black. African-Canadians in this context are both hyper-visible as Black, and invisible as distinct communities.

The study is informed by feminist and critical race theories about how social life is structured through intersecting relations of gender, race, sexuality, class and place. It explores gender differences among women and men as they pursue educational and career goals, develop friendships and romantic relationships, and navigate public spaces. The book considers how these gender differences are racialized, and how racialized constructions of Blackness have gender specific dimensions in Canada. Research participants shared commonalities that derived from their parents' origins in Africa, being racialized as Black, identifying as heterosexual, and having low to modest family incomes combined with high levels of educational cultural capital. At the same time, gender differences were significant. In elementary and high school, women recall often being quite isolated and developing a very small group of friends, while images of Black masculinity in popular culture contributed to most men being extremely popular and 'cool' in high school. These gender differences continue in adulthood, with Black men constituting objects of heterosexual desire well beyond the African-Canadian community, while most women participants remained single and partners were almost all adult migrants from Africa. As adults, men are most likely to be subject to intense surveillance in public spaces and harassed by authorities. Men and women navigate careers, higher education, and different social situations in the context of the hyper visibility of being Black in Vancouver, and the micro aggressions and racism that challenges recognition of their capabilities, character, and belonging as Canadians.

**What was the research process like for 'Where are you from?' Were there any methodological challenges?**

The study uses purposive sampling and qualitative methods of in-depth interviews. This approach makes it possible to highlight research participants' own words to unearth their 'situated knowings' and describe their diverse experiences of growing up and being young adults in Vancouver. Drawing on extensive quotations from interviews helps to place second-generation African-Canadians at the centre of the research narrative. As a researcher who is an 'outsider' to the community, a white woman with long-standing research and personal relationships within the local African community, speaking alongside rather than for participants forms a critical element of an anti-oppressive methodology.

Unlike most research on the second-generation in different immigrant communities, this study addresses different life stages, exploring changing experiences in childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. The book also explores differences between the Canadian-born in the second-generation, and the 1.5-generation born abroad but largely raised in Canada, although I find far more similarities than differences.

**Do you have any future plans to build on your findings?**

I am working with a team on a large national project across six provinces that will examine access to postsecondary education among African refugee youth in Canada. We know that both refugee youth and Black youth face additional barriers in Canadian schools, and this study will explore supports available in high schools and communities, and strategies of resilience that young men and women have developed. I am working with community research assistants in the settlement sector to conduct interviews. We were in the process of scheduling interviews in March when everything was shut down, and I look forward to getting back to this project whenever we are able to conduct face-to-face interviews. I am also part of a research group planning to examine immigrants' employment experiences in B.C. during COVID 19, and a partnership grant on strategies of resilience among sub-Saharan African immigrants in several Canadian cities.



## Teaching a migration-related course this academic year?

SEND US A SYLLABUS AT [admin.migration@ubc.ca](mailto:admin.migration@ubc.ca)  
FOR INCLUSION ON OUR RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES WEBPAGE

## Delaisse wins 2020 IRCC National Essay Challenge

Anne-Cécile Delaisse, doctoral student in the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, and UBC Centre for Migration Studies collaborator, is one of seven winners of the 2020 National Essay Challenge hosted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Her essay presents findings from a SSHRC-funded study led by Dr. Suzanne Huot examining the role of community spaces in the social participation of French-speaking immigrants and refugees in Metro Vancouver's Francophone minority communities. This award includes a monetary prize and the opportunity to present her work to IRCC officials at an upcoming Research Matters event.

*Anne-Cécile Delaisse, doctorante dans le département de la santé de l'activité humaine et d'ergothérapie, et collaboratrice de UBC Centre for Migration Studies, est une des sept gagnants du concours national d'essai 2020 organisé par Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada. Son essai présente les résultats d'une étude financée par le CRSH et dirigée par Dre. Suzanne Huot examinant le rôle des espaces communautaires dans la participation sociale des immigrants et réfugiés d'expression française dans les communautés francophones en situation minoritaire du Grand Vancouver. Ce prix comprend une récompense financière et l'opportunité de présenter son travail devant des représentants d'IRCC lors de l'un des événements Recherche en point de mire.*

## BORDERING THE PANDEMIC

### COVID-19, IMMIGRATION AND EMERGENCY

an online talk by  
**ASHA KAUSHAL & BETHANY HASTIE**  
ASSISTANT PROFESSORS, UBC ALLARD SCHOOL OF LAW

DEC 1 Tuesday December 1, 2020 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.



## Upcoming (Online) Events at the UBC Centre for Migration Studies

**Friday, February 19, 2021**  
**Claudia Moatti (University of Southern California)**  
"On the Road: Mobility and Social Differentiation"  
\* co-sponsored by UBC Department of Classical, Near Eastern, and Religious Studies

**Friday, February 26, 2021**  
**Susanne Wessendorf (Coventry University)**  
"Social Exclusion, Symbolic Boundaries and Convivial Labour in East London's Context of Ongoing Immigration"  
\* co-sponsored by UBC Department of Anthropology

**Monday, March 29, 2021**  
**Grace Peña Delgado (University of California-Santa Cruz)**  
"Mexico's New Slavery: A Critique of Neo-Abolitionism to Combat Human Trafficking (la trata de personas)"

**Thursday, April 8, 2021**  
**Regina Römhild (Humboldt University)**  
"Other Europeans in Moments of Post-Otherness"  
\* co-sponsored by UBC Institute for European Studies

**Additional Events (Titles and Abstracts Coming Soon):**

**Friday, January 29, 2021**  
Nicholas De Genova (University of Houston)

**Wednesday, February 10, 2021**  
Denise Spitzer (University of Alberta)

**Thursday March 4, 2021**  
Nikhar Galkwad (Columbia University)

**Monday, March 8, 2021**  
Audrey Macklin (University of Toronto)



## Punjabi Studies Oral History Program at UBC proceeds through two grant-funded projects

What began back in 2010, with a trial grant from the UBC Centre for Community Engaged Learning, continues to gain momentum today, despite the challenges of conducting research during a pandemic.

The Punjabi Studies Oral History Program at UBC has been articulated through the designs and discussions that have emerged in Dr. Anne Murphy's (UBC Asian Studies) fourth-year seminars, like ASLA 475- Documenting Punjabi Canada. And it has provided undergraduates with valuable research experience, allowing them to undertake and document in-depth interviews related to the history of the "Punjabi language in BC and the lives and activities of the people who made it happen, focusing on teachers and institutions where Punjabi has been taught, and on writers who have written in the language and built institutions to support Punjabi language and literature." Though the Punjabi Oral History Program was initiated to focus on the cultural production of the Punjabi language in BC, it has expanded to investigate the broader aspects of Punjabi heritage in the region.

Such an expansion is illustrated in the two grant-funded projects that currently help sustain the program. The first is a Punjabi Studies Oral History Research and Program Development Project, 2019-2021, provided by the UBC Office of the Vice-President for Research and Innovation through their Program for Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE) program. This project is also part of Murphy's larger, five-year SSHRC Insight Grant on Modern Punjabi Language and Literature Across Borders (2017-2022). A second project, entitled "Caste in Canada: The Unheard Stories of Dalit Canadians" is funded through a SSHRC Partnership Engagement Grant, with additional support from the UBC Centre for India and South Asia Research, The Poetic Justice Foundation, and the Chetna Association of Canada.

Both projects feature undergraduate students serving as oral history interviewers. While training is currently underway, everyone is eager to return to research once COVID-19 protocols allow.

## SSHRC Grant to fund Graphic Narratives of Migration workshop

A SSHRC Connection Grant has been awarded to Antje Ellermann (UBC Centre of Migration Studies Director), Frederik Kohler (University of East Anglia American Studies), Mireille Paquet (Concordia University Political Science), and Sarah Leavitt (UBC Creative Writing) for a workshop entitled "Graphic Narratives of Migration." The workshop will bring together migration scholars from across the social sciences and humanities at UBC with a team of graphic artists to help create migration narratives in comics form. The workshop is supported with matching funds from the Centre for Migration Studies.

## Refugees and Borders

### Remapping the World We Think We Know



## Recent Publications from Centre Members

**Print**

**Shan, H. (2020).** "Knowledge 'transfer' as sociocultural and sociomaterial practice: Immigrants expanding engagement practices in Canada," *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 11(3).

Research on migration and knowledge transfer predominantly focuses on expatriate and return migrants, who are acclaimed for transferring knowledge from the west to the rest of the world. Not only does the literature reinforce the west as the epistemic centre, but it conjures a realist image of knowledge as an objective thing. To interrupt these images, this paper examines the knowledge transfer experiences of 22 immigrant engineers in Canada. Theoretically, it posits knowledge transfer as an effect of immigrants' enrolment in sociocultural and sociomaterial practices within professions. Empirically, it pinpoints three ways in which immigrants help expand engineering practices, i.e., assembling knowledge, mobilizing the capacity of learning to learn, and negotiating being and becoming. The process of transfer, as accounted by research respondents, is enabled through access to epistemic and boundary objects, reception of peer professionals, and the rise of (niche) needs. This paper draws on a narrative case study.

**Audio / Visual**

**UBC Centre for Migration Studies. (2020).** "Global migration: COVID-19 and beyond." *Global Migration Podcast*.

The first season of the UBC Centre for Migration Studies' *Global Migration Podcast* wrapped up in August 2020. The full season, archived on our COVID-19 Initiatives webpage, explores migration during the time of COVID-19 and brings together a diverse array of experts (faculty, grad students, community organizers, policy analysts and practitioners) to discuss the many ways the outbreak of the novel coronavirus is transforming global migration. Major themes include the pandemic's impact on international education, temporary foreign workers and critical supply chains, immigrant services, and the legal implications of closed borders for asylum seekers and refugees.

## CALL for NEWS

We invite all members of the Centre for Migration Studies to send in news items for inclusion in our next newsletter. We look forward to receiving news about new publications, professional appointments, or other honors, conferences / workshops organized, and major grants received.

Please include "member news" in the subject line of your email. We look forward to hearing from you!

email to: [admin.migration@ubc.ca](mailto:admin.migration@ubc.ca)

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[ Contact the UBC Centre for Migration Studies ]

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