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## **NORFACE Migration Research programme**

*What the Programme is about*

# Rationale and aim of NORFACE research programme



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Significant body of existing research; but

- Fragmented, and not cumulative or coherent
- Nationally oriented - tends not to look comparatively
- Tied to specific policy agendas
- Overly specialised
- Methodologically often not “state of the art”
- Hence, the **aim:**  
**To raise the level of European research to address issues of migration with a major integrated, and synergetic research programme.**



## Principal objectives :

- To promote excellent disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and comparative research on migration
- To make use of the “natural laboratory“ of European knowledge and experience
- To promote excellence and capacity building for research on migration in partner countries
- To develop understanding, and promote research – based knowledge and insight into migration



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# Some advantages of a cross-European research programme



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Opportunity for:

- Systematic comparison of different structures and developments of migration, integration, conflict, cohesion.
- Systematic investigation of different “regimes”, historical traditions, institutional regulations, cultural traditions etc
- Systematic testing of the stability of mechanisms in varying national and cultural conditions
- Comparisons with “traditional” countries of international immigration.



## Approaches (i)

Hitherto, migration research dominated by national public concerns and policies, hence scope now for research programme in which projects:

- **place migration within frame of general processes and mechanisms**
- **use conceptual and theoretical perspectives of different disciplines**
- **develop theory-based criteria for defining, operationalizing and identifying phenomena rather than taking them for granted**



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## Approaches (ii)

(programme should include projects which)

- **adopt analytic approaches which translate social problems into social scientific research questions**
- **facilitate comparative research**
- **accommodate multi-level approaches – individual, social and societal**
- **include time-referenced studies**



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# Structure of programme

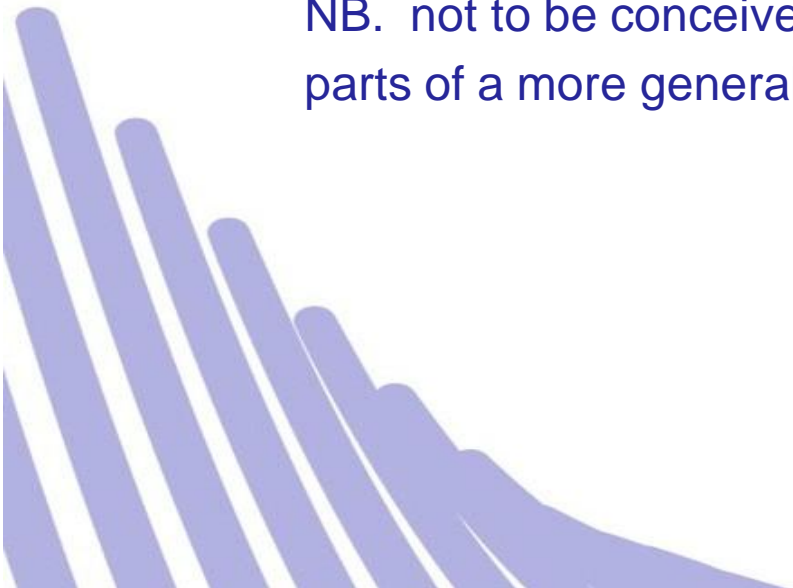
Three research themes:

- 1. Causes and consequences of migration**
- 2. Integration**
- 3. Conflict and cohesion**

NB. not to be conceived as separate phenomena, but as parts of a more general social process



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## Research themes:

### 1. Causes and consequences of migration

- Range of different European experience and expertise on migration issues, but national pictures are seldom put together.
- Developments in technology, transport, communications have lead to new trends and trajectories of migrants and individual decision making.
- Questions of size of migration flows, the motives and characteristics of migrants, as well as long term behaviour
- Issues of illegal migration, trafficking, smuggling
- Consequences for receiving countries (e.g. on education system, economy and labour market, public services, welfare systems etc)
- Consequences for sending countries (ditto)



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# Research questions (examples, 1):

## 1. Causes and consequences of migration)



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- How many international migrants are coming to European countries?
- Where are they coming from?
- What are their characteristics; and how long are they likely to stay for?
- What contribution will international migrants make to populations, labour force, age profile?
- How do different countries address these issues?



## Research questions (examples, 2):

### 1. Causes and consequences of migration (b)

- How do migrants become citizens?
- What are the underlying processes of emergence and change in transnational migration?
- How do they change over time, and over generations?
- How are transnational relationships abandoned in favour of integration?
- How do different countries address this issue etc?
- How do immigrants become citizens in different countries?



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## Research themes: 2. Integration

- Different cultural, structural, interactional, and emotional dimensions of social integration -
- Interaction of these dimensions and influence by institutions and conditions, native population, already existing ethnic groups.
- Changes over individual life cycles and inter-generationally
- Civil society and political dimensions



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# Research questions (examples, 1):

## 2. Integration



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- What are the *consequences* of migration for receiving countries –  
on, for example,
  - residential mixing?
  - labour markets?
  - economic mechanisms of integration?
  - children's experiences?
  - inter-marriage and cohabitation etc?
- What and where are there ethnic inequalities in education and labour markets?



## Research questions (examples, 2): 2. Integration

- Are there systematic differences across Europe?
- Is there discrimination within schools?
- Do teachers have different expectations and behaviour for different groups?
- Are there special problems in school/work transition?
- What are the ethnic “penalties” in labour markets?



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# Research questions (examples):

## 2. Integration

- What are the determinants and processes of inter-ethnic relations – on topics such as opportunity structures; friendship networks; ethnic segregation; housing?
- What is the relationship of civic rights and naturalization to social integration?
- How and why do patterns of social and political participation differ?
- What is the role of identities?



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## Research themes :

### 3. Cohesion and conflict

- Issues of discrimination, exclusion, intimidation, violence towards individuals who are different are widely recognised
- High economic costs and risks to social cohesion
- Social identities a factor in this
- Hence major interest in conflict and cohesion as a specific form of group relationship.
- Issues of formation and maintenance of ethnic groups
- Explanations needed at individual, meso and macro –level
- Need to track dynamics of conflict and cohesion over time



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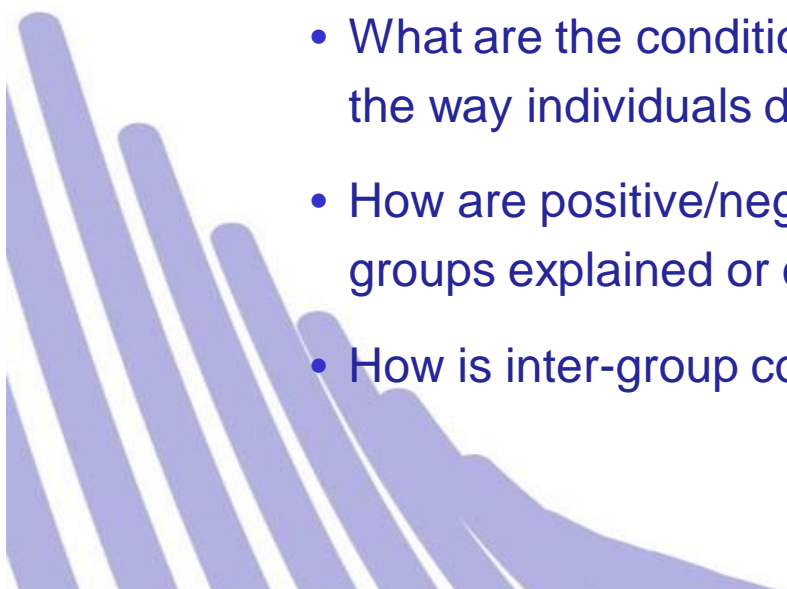
## Research questions (examples):

### 3. Cohesion and conflict

- How are social identities created, maintained, and changed?
- How are hybrid or complex identities generated?
- How do changes occur in relationships and interactions between social groups (migrants and hosts or different migrant groups)
- What are the conditions and processes that impact on the way individuals deal with inter-group difference?
- How are positive/negative relations between social groups explained or changed?
- How is inter-group contact depicted in the mass media?



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# Funding

- 13 national social science research funding agencies contribute to “common pot” (€22.8 million)
- Funding agency contributions based on formula
- Possibility of additional support from EU Framework Programme
- Funding decisions based solely on scientific grounds
- No expectation of national *juste retour*



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