**Migration: Facts, Representation, Stories**

**MODULE DESCRIPTION AND GUIDELINES FOR THE INSTRUCTOR**

The module is divided into three sections: Facts and Figures; Representations of Migration; Stories and Experiences. The whole module can provide a general overview on migration issues, exploring macro- and micro-level scales of analysis from multiple perspectives. However, all sections (and the relative activities within them) can also be implemented separately, according to the specific learning needs or strategies. Each section lasts about two to three hours and contains three sub-sections or activities that generally aim at presenting and critically analysing facts, representations or experiences of migration. At the end of each activity, some suggestions to implement the topic in class will be provided, in order to encourage critical analysis, inspire self-reflections and stimulate group discussion.

These sections are explored below.

***Facts and Figures***

The first section will present and critically discuss the main definitions and reasons of migration, and will offer empirical data to provide a general, overarching understanding of migration and asylum issues at the global and European levels. The aim of this section is threefold: 1) to understand migration as a complex social phenomenon and thus to provide tools to start disassembling and critically analysing this complexity; 2) to grasp the legal, social and political consequences of labelling people as “migrant” or “refugee”; 3) to debunk some myths and misconceptions about migration through facts and data. Several learning methods will be employed, namely brainstorming activities, critical policy analysis, quizzes, group activities, and debates. The specific activities are outlined below.

**Activity: Who is a migrant/refugee?**

In this first activity, particular emphasis is placed on the labelling of migrants and refugees, as well as on the legal, social and political implications of such definitions. First of all, learners will collect their ideas on who a migrant is. After the brainstorming, the official definition of ‘migrant’ will be provided (S1, slide 5) and discussed. The discussion should not simply focus on the legitimacy of such a definition, but should critically look at its problematics and implications, investigating how and why the definition of ‘migrant’ is not accepted universally and is de facto impossible (see slide notes for guidance).

The same activity can be replicated with the word ‘refugee’. After an initial brainstorming on the term, the official definition from the UNHCR can be provided (S1, slides 7-8) and discussed. Similarly, the discussion can focus on how the term ‘refugee’, far from being universally recognised by states, is socially and politically negotiated, mediated and even contested (see slide notes for guidance). If possible, the results of the two brainstorming activities can be shown together at the end of the exercise, in order to analyse similarities and differences in the outcomes.

Following these initial activities, learners can discuss how and why international institutions and organisations often provide such definitions in a clear-cut way (S1, slide 9), but in reality it is difficult to distinguish between them. In this case, the excerpt by De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli can help guide the discussion (S1, slides 10-12). The discussion can therefore focus on not only who decides upon these definitions, but also what are the social and political implications for the people affected to be defined as (legal or illegal) migrant, asylum seekers, or refugees. The latter question can either be discussed in class, or left open for learners as homework, in order for them to properly research the implications of such definitions, and their potential similarities or differences across countries.

**Activity: Why do people migrate?**

This activity explores the main reasons underlying migration movements, allowing to critically analyse the migration theory on push/pull factors.

Through an initial brainstorming, teachers can collect and discuss learners’ ideas on why people migrate. The discussion can focus on the difficulty to distinguish between the reasons to migrate and on the potential accumulation of such reasons, in order to critically investigate not only the theoretical framework on push/pull factors but also the practical implications of such motives on the everyday lives of people. The text excerpt from Yaro can guide the discussion (annex “push and pull factors”).

The second part of the activity can look at how different reasons might lead to different categorisations of people and, in turn, reinforce certain stereotypes or representations of migration. In this way, the activity can reconnect to the first one, further evaluating the role of labelling people on the move, as well as to the second section on the representation of migration, thus beginning to look at the role that media, legal and political discourses might have on such categorisations. In particular, learners can first discuss the picture “The lexicon of global migration” (S1, slide 13), in order to explore how language not only can drive our understanding of migration and asylum, but can also construct stereotypes and misconceptions that have social and political implications on people. Afterwards, learners can discuss some of the terms from the IOM Glossary on Migration defining people on the move (S2, slides 4-5), critically looking at the distinctions or similarities among them, at the potential reasons for having so many definitions, as well as the origins and developments of such definitions (thinking for example at the laws and policies, the political discourses, and the media representation). If the situation allows, both discussions can also focus on how race and class relations tend to affect or reinforce stereotypes on migration, as well as to generate different, practical impacts on people on the move.

**Activity: H5P Drag the words “Why do people migrate”? (optional)**

As an optional activity students can be asked to conduct the drag the words activity “Why do people migrate” which allows to repeat and engage with different definitions in connection to people on the move. The H5P activity needs can be included in the respective eLearning environment so that students can access it directly within the course.

**Activity: H5P Migration quiz**

The quiz draws upon the fact that the European population has not only a generally negative attitude towards (ethnically and culturally different) migrants but also a wrong overall picture about migration itself. For example, most people tend to overestimate the number of migrants in their country or to claim that Europe hosts the majority of refugees at the global level. For this reason, the quiz is not intended to test learners’ knowledge about migration but aims instead at 1) debunking persistent myths and misconceptions about migration and asylum at the global and European levels; 2) kick-starting a fruitful and data-driven debate about migration; 3) reconnecting to the second section of the module, by discussing the role of the media and the political establishment in constructing and spreading such perceptions of migration. In this respect, every question of the quiz can be critically discussed, looking at how perceptions and misconceptions might affect the answers. The quiz has been prepared as an H5P activity that can be incorporated in the course directly. The lecturer can share the screen and the quiz can be conducted together or students can do it by themselves/in small groups followed by a discussion in plenum.

As a way to conclude the quiz and the whole section, teachers can ask students (in groups of 3-4) to choose a specific country and elaborate a report on facts and figures about migration and asylum in relation to that country. Alternatively, learners can be asked to develop alternative quiz questions that can be implemented in their classes according to the specific student group they are dealing with. In this way, not only can teachers provide different country specificities in terms of definitions and sources, but they can also assess the sources they use and how they use or present them.

***Representations of Migration***

After having analysed some basic facts and figures about migration at the global and European levels, the second section looks at how migration is represented in legal, political and media discourses, with particular attention to the European and national contexts. The aim of this section is threefold: 1) to examine the potential difference or discrepancies between such representations and the main facts and figures discussed in the previous section; 2) to critically grasp the interrelations between such discourses, i.e. to investigate how the representation of migration in the media can affect the political discourse and therefore guide the implementation of specific policies; 3) to understand the legal, social and political repercussions of such representations on the community as well as on migrants themselves.

This section employs a variety of learning methods, such as critical policy analysis, critical discourse analysis, analysis of texts, pictures and videos, production of media pieces, and debates. Like the previous one, it contains three main sub-sections with different activities that can be implemented together or separately. Suggestions will be provided to allow students to create their own learning material and implement it in class. These sub-sections are described below.

***Laws and policies***

The first sub-section concerns the examination of the legal discourse on migration, and contains three different activities that involve the analysis of texts, policies and videos.

**Activity: text analysis “The Legal Production of Mexican/Migrant ‘Illegality’”**

The first activity consists in the analysis of a journal text by Nicholas De Genova, entitled “The Legal Production of Mexican/Migrant ‘Illegality’”, whose excerpt is available through the annex “laws and policies” (cf. S2, slide 6). The aim of this activity is twofold: 1) to critically analyse the meaning of the word “illegality” in relation to migration movements, and in particular how migrant illegality as “produced” by migration policies; 2) to critically investigate the creation and evolution of the main migration policies in western countries. While the author discusses the historical evolution of migration policies in the USA and their implications for Mexican migration, an interesting follow-up exercise could consist in the examination of the main migration policies in Europe or in a specific country, to assess similarities or differences with the US case. This exercise, which can be done in groups of 3-4 learners, can indeed represent a good way not only to critically investigate how migration policies in specific countries have evolved, but also to understand the repercussions on migration movements and on their increasing “illegalisation”.

**Activity: Analysis of European migration policies and jurisdiction**

Still related to the concept of “illegality”, the second activity looks at a specific case study, namely the trial of a migrant accused, according to a Greek court, of being a smuggler. In this respect, learners (individually or in group) can, first, collect information on European and Greek migration and asylum policies and, second, analyse the words of the judge – available through annex “laws and policies” (cf. S2, slide 7). In order to facilitate the process of collection of migration policies, the teacher can suggest that learners have a look at AIDA website or at the outputs produced in the framework of RESPOND Migration Project. Final questions to discuss the case study and conclude the exercise can concern learners’ feelings on the story, as well as their perceptions and analyses on how European policies have affected migration movements to Europe.

**Activity: Video analysis**

The third activity (S2, slide 8) concerns another case study, in particular the shipwreck of a migrant boat in the Mediterranean Sea on April 12, 2015. This time, however, learners will be asked to analyse a [video](https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/death-by-rescue-the-lethal-effects-of-non-assistance-at-sea) by Forensic Architecture research group, entitled “Death by Rescue” (slide 35), and discuss in small groups of 3-4 people how European migration and border management policies have affected migration movements to Europe and the Search and Rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea. In order to further deepen the discussion on such themes, learners can also read the relative [report](https://deathbyrescue.org/) and integrate their knowledge on European migration policies in the debate.

As follow-up or homework, learners can be asked to think of, discuss, and prepare some activities for their classes that further deepen the idea and practice of “illegality”, comparing for example the values of the European Union as expressed in the main treaties and the policies and practices implemented in the management of migration movements.

***Political discourse***

The second subsection looks at the political discourse on migration, and contains two different exercises that involve the analysis of political slogans and texts.

**Activity: examination of political slogans**

In the first activity, learners will be asked to look at and critically examine some political slogans and posts from different political parties of different political orientations across Europe (S2, slides 9-13). The teacher can ask students to analyse the similarities or differences between the posters, paying particular attention to the message they attempt to convey, the modalities through which they convey it (e.g. the potential use of pictures or particular graphics), and the potential target groups. During the debate, the discussion can also focus on the specific words that such posters employ (such as illegality, security, borders), and the particular meaning they acquire in the political discourse. In the case of “illegality”, the teacher can also draw the learners’ attention to the text of De Genova (see previous section), in order to see how this word is (mis)used in the political debate.

**Activity: debate of political statements**

In the second activity, more emphasis is placed on the debate of political ideas among learners. In this case, teachers can ask learners (even in small groups of two) to collect three statements by politicians in relation to migration and asylum. Once the statements are collected, the teacher reads them out loud, and ask learners to agree or disagree with such statements, dividing them in the room according to their position. The teacher, who then acts as moderator, allows learners to debate each statement and to switch side whenever they change opinions (asking them to motivate their reasons). At the end of the session, the teacher can ask learners how they felt during the activity, in particular when they had to take a stance or change their opinion, and how they can implement this activity in their class (perhaps even using distance teaching methods).

***Media representation***

The last subsection will specifically look at how migration is represented in the media, as well as at the impact of such representations on migrants and people. It contains three different activities that will allow learners to explore the role of media in representing migration through the analysis of images, text and videos.

**Activity: Image analysis**

The first activity concerns indeed the analysis of five different images related to migration (S2, slides 14-18). The teacher can show these images to the class, asking learners to express their feelings and discuss their immediate reaction about them. Afterwards the discussion can concern how the different feelings, emotions, and reactions connected to the images are actually related to the same situation, i.e. the living conditions of migrants in Patras (Greece). In this respect, teachers can invite learners to reflect on how the same situation can be portrayed differently in the media, using different materials and conveying different and, in some cases, opposing messages. As an alternative, the H5P image slider can be incorporated in the eLearning platform and can be used as a tool for individual reflection or can build the basis of an essay.

**Activity: Commentary**

In the second activity, learners should, as a preparation for the session at home, read the [ERUM report](https://projects.uni-foundation.eu/erum/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/07/ERUM-IO1-Subreport-UV_final2.pdf) on the Sea Watch case (in particular, the sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4), and then watch the relative [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FJquPlVsRg) on the disembarkation of migrants from the ship (S2, slide 19). After that, in class, the teacher divides the class in three groups and asks each of them to write a commentary or a short article about the video.

In so doing, each group should be appointed with a different writing style: the first group should focus on the inhumanity of the situation (migration plight, securitisation, etc.), the second group should remain relatively neutral about the situation, presenting the main facts as they observe them, while the third should express resentment towards migrants and NGOs, with a generally negative view on migration movements. When the commentaries are ready, one representative of each group reads them out loud in front of the class.

The following debate at the end of the session can focus not only on learners’ feelings in doing the activity, but also on how the same news can be reported in different ways, changing our perspectives on the issue. As a follow-up exercise, the teacher can ask learners to read and discuss some newspaper articles (either from the ERUM report or from other events), in order to collect and analyse the main facts and policies related to that event, explore similarities and differences in the way different newspapers portray the same event, and potentially debunk mis- or disinformation in the media.

**Activity: Text analysis**

The third activity is concerned with the analysis of written texts. In this case, the teacher asks learners to read three excerpts from three different sources – available via annex “media representation examples” (cf. S2, slide 20). Afterwards, the teacher divides the class in three groups and asks each of them to discuss the excerpts, focusing in particular on the dominant attitudes towards migrants and migration in the texts, the words or phrases that the writers use to heighten emotional impact, and the impressions that these articles might have on the public opinion. To conclude, learners can reflect on the role of media in representing migration and in orientating public opinion towards specific stances. Alternatively, as a homework, teachers can ask learners to collect information or article excerpts about a specific event (from reliable and non-reliable sources, as well as from both commentaries and reports), analyse the excerpts collected, and discuss the similarities and differences in presenting the news, looking in particular at how less reliable websites construct and spread the information.

**Meta level for future teachers – students reflecting their future role as teachers in class:**

As a way to conclude the whole session, teachers can invite learners to create their own lesson material regarding the representation of controversial topics in legal, political, or media discourses, and/or to discuss how they will teach or implement the activities in their classes according to the specific target groups. Particular emphasis can be placed in the analysis and debunking of mis- and dis-information on migration in the media and in the political discourse, focusing not only on how such discourses are created and reproduced, but also what the effects of spreading mis- and dis-information can be. In order to compare or connect these discourses with facts and figures, learners can also use the previous H5P quiz/sources they had to implement at the end of session 1.

***Stories and Experiences***

The last session will explore the micro level, looking in particular at individual stories and experiences of migration, and at how they can shape our understanding of migration. In this respect, it will complete the module, integrating the macro level analysis of migration through the examination of facts and figures and the meso level examination of the representation of migration in legal, political and media discourses.

The whole session aims at reflecting upon the importance of life stories in narrating migration, promoting the self-identification of learners with migrants’ stories as a way to better understand migration challenges and experiences. Besides, it also aims at critically assessing the social construction of terms like identity and nationalism, and how they might shape and affect our understanding of migration.

Even in this session, a variety of learning methods will be employed, from self-reflective activities to the analysis of biographical life histories, the analysis of texts, pictures and videos, the production of written outputs, and debate activities. Suggestions will also be provided on how students can create their own learning material and implement it in class. The section is divided into three sub-sections with different activities, which are described below.

***We all come from somewhere!***

Through the critical exploration of personal and collective identities, this subsection aims to achieve a double purpose: 1) to provide a (very broad) historical understanding on migration, 2) to analyse the social construction of concepts such as identity and nationalism, as well as their social and political implications (such as the creation of an “us” and its artificial division with a similarly constructed “them”).

Activity: video analysis

The session starts with the analysis of a [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyaEQEmt5ls) on “The DNA journey” (S3, slide 4), which shows how the participants of a research project find their ancestral, foreign roots through the DNA test. After the video, the teacher can ask learners specific questions on their feelings and perceptions during the video, as well as more general questions on how nationalism can influence our sense of belonging and identity. In particular, some questions can concern the main factors that shape our identity, and how these put us in relation (or conflict) with others. The discussion can also regard migration through history, in particular whether we can talk about “migrants” before the development of nation states and borders. This allows learners to explore and understand not only the historical role of nation states in shaping and developing their citizens’ identities, but also the more recent construction of migration as a political issue.

**Activity: Self-reflection of own identity**

After the video, the teacher can explore issues of belonging and identity further, by asking learners to think about and write down 8-10 aspects that define their identity (S3, slide 5). Such aspects can be not only about nationality, ethnic origin, class, religion, gender, or sexuality but also about job, music, interests, hobby, politics, sport, and so on. Once learners have done this, the teacher can ask them to reflect upon those aspects that they wrote down, for example by thinking about whether those characteristics have changed through time, whether learners chose them or they were born with them, and whether and how those aspects have developed over time. To further deepen the discussion, the teacher can also ask learners whether those aspects are social constructs or inherent and fixed, and what they mean for them and for others (for example, how can nationality affect their identity, or how much are people judged by their individual identity and/or by the group that they belong to).

In order to facilitate learners’ reflection on their own identity and the following discussion, teachers can ask them to move around the class to respond to the questions provided in slide 5 (where the teacher has previously hung some posters on the wall with the main categories related to identity, namely nationality, class, race, ethnic origin, religion, etc.) or to fill the table (if the activity is carried out online) available as annex “the part of my identity that” (cf. S3, slide 6). As a way to conclude the activity, a short [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViDtnfQ9FHc) on intersectionality (S3, slide 7) can be shown to the class and discussed, in order to explore how such aspects of our identity are interrelated and can often provide bases for discrimination.

***Migration letters***

**Activity: analysis and discussion of text samples**

This second subsection regards the critical analysis of migration letters and the production of a short text about migration. To start with, the teacher can ask the class to read the letters provided through the annex “migration letters” (cf. S3, slide 8). Afterwards, he/she can divide the class in three groups and ask each of them to focus on the main topics or concerns of each letter, and on the impressions that these letters give about life as a migrant in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To conclude the discussion, the teacher can ask learners to identify similarities and differences between the experiences of the migrants in the letters and the potential experiences of migrants today.

**Activity: Imaginary migratory experiences**

After the discussion, the teacher can ask learners to write their own letter or diary about their imaginary migratory experiences (S3, slide 9). First, learners should choose a country of origin and destination, collecting basic information about them (if they choose to write their letter from the past, some historical information is required). Then, they should write a letter to their imaginary relative or a diary entry to describe a situation or narrate an event, focusing in particular on why they decided to leave their home country, why they chose that country of destination, and the experiences they had along the journey or when they settled. At the end, learners are asked to present their letter or diary in front of the class. The concluding discussion can focus not only on the similarities and differences between the letters/diaries, but also on the general experiences of migration.

***The luggage***

**Activity: The luggage**

This last subsection aims more concretely at relating learners with the stories and experiences of migrants through the analysis of specific migration objects. In the first part, the teacher can ask learners to read the three stories provided on S3, slide 10, discussing their first impressions or the potential significance of those objects for migrants. After the discussion, the teacher asks learners to create their own luggage, following the story provided in S3, slide 11. At the end of the activity, learners present the chosen objects in front of the class, discussing – with the teacher acting as moderator – the similarities or differences between them, as well as the relative importance of such objects for them.

**Activity: Passport check**

Another way to conclude the discussion on migrants’ objects and on the privileges or obstacles related to migration is a reflection on the most important document needed for travelling, i.e. the passport. In this activity, the teacher can ask learners to select a passport from the [passport index website](https://www.passportindex.org/) and check the countries where that passport could bring them without visa. While learners can randomly select their passport, ideally the passports chosen should represent both developed and developing countries. After the selection, learners, under the supervision of the teacher, should compare the results and discuss the similarities or differences between passports, the potential reasons behind them, and the repercussions on people on the move. If the teacher carries out some preparatory work on the requirements to get a visa in their (developed) country, the discussion can also focus on the virtual impossibility for a person from a developing country to enter a developed country, thus reinforcing the mechanisms of “illegality” shown in the second session. Alternatively, the discussion can focus on the specific privileges that a person in a developed country has in the act of migrating vis-à-vis people from developing countries.

**Meta level for future teachers – students reflecting their future role as teachers in class:**

As a way to conclude the session, teachers can invite learners to create their own lesson material regarding the experiences of migration and/or to discuss how they will teach or implement the activities in their classes. In particular, teachers can ask learners to reflect on which stories are usually told or known in the media and why, in order to reconnect with previous activities implemented in session 2. In the development of their learning materials, learners should also think critically on what kind of stories they want to portray or discuss and how, to avoid a representation of migrants as criminals and/or victims. Besides, they can also discuss how such activities can be targeted for different student groups.

**Extra-activity**

In order to conclude the module with a positive message, the teacher can show learners a migration [success story](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lk9vP62EiL8) (or he/she can ask them to read the [whole story](https://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/stories/from-migrant-farmer-to-future-teacher/) instead – see S3, slide 12). The following discussion can focus on learners’ impressions about the video and – if adopting a more critical perspective – on certain difficulties connected to migration movements (labour exploitation, difficulties to integrate socially, language problems, financial issues, etc.). However, the video can also be taken as a starting point to discuss not only the individual determination of certain migrants in their attempt to achieve a personal goal, but also the social contributions that migrants can bring to the society, as well as the possibilities for constructing other, alternative representations of migration.

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