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**Statelessness in the Context of Migration to the European Union: The Production and Negotiation of Statelessness in State Institutions of European Member States**

The European Union is experiencing a significant increase in the numbers of stateless persons, which among other reasons can be attributed to the high immigration figures of recent years. Statelessness, as a social phenomenon that is constantly (re-)produced, is a fundamental challenge for Europe and beyond in the 21st century with regard to the ongoing refugee movements and continuing political instability in many regions of the world. In my dissertation project, I take statelessness as a starting point to follow up on research about the inclusionary and exclusionary dimensions of citizenship and to question claims about post-national forms of membership from a sociological perspective.

Following an empirical explorative research approach, the aim is to investigate the meso level in this context: the production and negotiation of statelessness in state institutions of European member states. The increased emergence of statelessness is believed to shape current practices, and yet not much is known about the standards applied to determine and deal with statelessness. Regulations are implemented by frontline public service employees in state institutions, i.e. street-level bureaucrats, who, through direct interactions with clients, have relative autonomy and the capacity to shape public policy through discretionary decision-making (Lipsky 2010). The lack of specific legal criteria may provoke the emergence of inconsistent practices and facilitate the application of discretionary standards in state institutions, which in turn influence the outcomes and consequences. Thus, the UNHCR calls for the introduction of statelessness determination procedures (SDPs), which are supposed to guarantee the application of consistent criteria for determining statelessness according to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

Increasing the organization and regulation of membership conditions in social systems triggers a heightened vulnerability at the margins (Arendt 1973; Goodin 1996), e.g. the lack of membership to any state in a world system organized in separate nation-states that have a shared interest in exclusion (Staples 2012). However, the introduction of SDPs suggested by the UNHCR, intended to facilitate the determination of statelessness and thus securing basic human rights, further regularize the conditions for membership and non-membership and may consequently even increase the marginalization and vulnerability of those persons who do not meet the specified requirements.

My contribution to this conference consists of an overview of the current state of multidisciplinary research on statelessness and citizenship and an outline of the research design for the upcoming data collection in the course of my dissertation project.