

Migration Research Group Annual Report 2023/24

The Migration Research Group

The [Migration Research Group](#) (MRG) - an interdisciplinary network embedded in the Faculty of Social Sciences - exists to create a positive environment for migration research at the University of Sheffield (TUoS). It is currently led by three co-directors from different departments (Dr Aneta Piekut (Sheffield Methods Institute), Dr Lucy Mayblin (Sociological Studies) and Dr Patricia Nabuco Martuscelli (Politics and International Relations) with support from a PhD student assistant (Lucy Potter). MRG has a membership of over 100 academics from across the social sciences and humanities at TUoS and beyond.

Through its different activities and network approach, the MRG has contributed to create a collaborative and inclusive research culture open to any staff or student and aiming to construct, with its members, an diverse and inclusive environment to discuss migration and mobility at the Faculty of Social Science as part of the [One University pillar](#). The different spaces and activities to think together allow the MRG to contribute to the [Research pillar](#) by proposing innovative and interdisciplinary research of excellence, grant applications and public engagement and impact opportunities beyond the University environment. The MRG has been consolidating an inclusive and supportive space for PGRs students, another essential part of the Research pillar at TUoS. You can read some of the [testimonials](#) from MRG members and partners on how MRG contributes to building a supportive research culture.

Budget

In the 2023/24 academic year, the MRG received a faculty budget, totalling £15,000 for the year, topped up by funding for administrative support from the Department of Sociological Studies (approx. £6,000).

2023/24 in review

1) MRG Seminars

This academic year the MRG has held 20 seminars, panels and round table discussions (a mix of in person, online and hybrid), with 40 speakers. Events had between 15 and 60 attendees. Our Seminar programme aims to have speakers from different disciplines, methodological and theoretical perspectives, geographical locations including valuing voices from the Global South.



This year we have collaborated with the Journalism School, Information School, the School of Education, Sociological Studies, Politics and International Relations, and the School of

East Asian Studies on specific events led by the priorities of migration scholars in those departments. For a complete list of the MRG events please, see [here](#).

2) Annual Lecture: Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the MRG

Our inaugural annual lecture will take place in June 2024 (the first since 2017), with Professor Vicki Squire from Warwick University speaking, introduced by Prof. Majella Kilkey, a founding director of the MRG, in the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the network. More information [here](#).

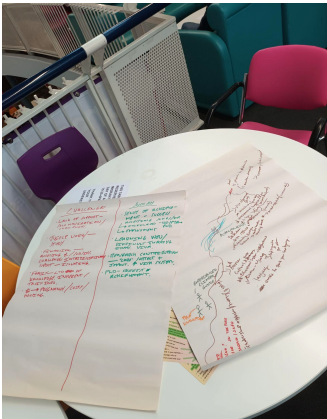
3) Knowledge Exchange and Impact

3.1) Community Study Day

We organised our annual Community Study Day in April, a space to share knowledge across academic disciplines, community partners, activists, NGOs, asylum seekers, refugees, and others (such as lawyers). This year the day was focussed on the theme of labour market access for people in the asylum system. This was a collaboration with City of Sanctuary and the Lift the Ban campaign in Sheffield and was attended by 50 people. Our annual community study days are a way to connect and contribute to the local community of Sheffield.



3.2) Other knowledge exchange activities with local partners



On 31st October 2023, the MRG together with the journalist and activist Livia Barreira and the Student Union (SU) participated in the National Day of Mobilisation on Visa Fees as part of the campaign organised by the Migration Voice Organisation. At TUoS the full day of events included contributions from academics, students, university staff, migrant activists, and local organisations and groups such as South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Group (SYMAAG), South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice (SYRLJ), The City of Sanctuary Sheffield (CoSS), The University of Sanctuary and Chile 50 years of Solidarity in conducting discussions, teaching-outs, games and other activities.

Many MRG members are also engaged with different external partners and stakeholders and proposed different events as part of the Festival of the Mind 2023, SY Integration Festival 2023, Festival of Debate 2024, and Migration Matters Festival 2024. We have members collaborating with local partners in knowledge exchange activities such as Aneta Piekut's

event “Blurring the Edges”, and collaborations with City of Sanctuary, VVIYD, SYMAAG, and the Brazilian Consulate in London for example.

4) Connected outcomes: MRG blogs

The MRG webpage has also published blog posts to share the research project, results and conference presentations of MRG members (including PGRs). This year, we also received contributions from external scholars which reflect the recognition of the MRG as a place of production and dissemination of excellence research on migration, mobility and borders. You can read all blog posts [here](#).

5) Support for PGR Students

Support for PGRs is central to our network. In addition to the monthly ‘Borders and Bordering’ reading group we have organised 4 PGR masterclasses run by external speakers, held a PGR writing retreat, and we have created different spaces for Sheffield PGRs to present their work. For example, at the [CDT Annual Symposium](#), and a mini series of 9 PhD students presenting across 3 seminar events where they have the chance to receive feedback and questions. This year we have been able to fund a PGR Migration Studies conference (taking place in June 2024), which we hope to be able to deliver annually. 72 paper submissions were made for the June conference from universities around the world including Nepal, India, Australia, USA, Kenya, Morocco, Uganda, Switzerland, Sweden, Indonesia, Singapore and Ireland.

The poster is for the 'Migration & Border Regimes: (Im)mobilities, Temporalities & Categorisations' conference. It is a 'Call for Papers' for the 'Postgraduate Conference 2024' organized by the 'Migration Research Group' at the 'University of Sheffield'. The conference is on 'Thursday 27th June 2024' at 'The Wave, University of Sheffield'. The theme is to reflect on migration and border regimes. It invites abstracts (250 words) from PGRs and ECRs. A QR code is provided for submission, with a deadline of '22nd Feb'. Contact information for enquiries is also listed.

PGR students in our network have also received funding for a new PGR Migration Network (£500 from the White Rose DTP), which the MRG hopes to support internally in the future.

6) Funding

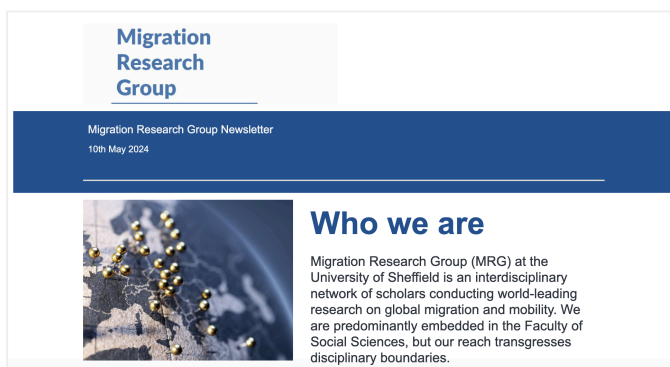
In addition to our core funding, we have been successful in securing additional funds to extend the work of the MRG. We have received £6,500 from the Department of Sociological Studies to fund operational support for the running of the network. We were successful in a competitive competition for White Rose network funding ‘The UK-Rwanda Partnership as the ‘Death of Asylum’: Offshoring, Externalisation and Resistance’. This £15,000 grant supports a network between MRG members and scholars at the universities of York and Leeds to meet three times per year for discussions on the theme of asylum and offshoring.

One University Fund: MRG supported Dr Rebecca Murray (Sociological Studies) and Dr Patricia Nabuco Martuscelli (Politics) to successfully apply for £7,038 as part of the Faculty of Social Science One University funding for the project “Seeking Sanctuary in Higher Education”. The project will co-produce a series of creative resources with project researchers who have sought sanctuary. The resources will support staff and students in guaranteeing that the University is a safe and welcoming place for people seeking sanctuary.

Public Engagement Fund: Dr. Patricia Nabuco Martuscelli and Livia Barreira (journalist, writer, producer and founder of Living in Sheffield, an online platform that independently supports diversity in Sheffield) secured funding (£2,760) from the the Public Engagement Development Fund to develop an MRG project “**The Living in Sheffield Podcast: building bridges between female migrants and scholars**” This project will produce a 4-episode podcast connecting the stories of migrant women living in Sheffield and the research on migration produced here at the University of Sheffield. The podcast will be distributed via the University of Sheffield Player.

7) Networking activities and community building

We have held three networking coffee mornings. Externally, we are members of [Yorkshire and Humber Migration Research Network](#) and sit on the IMISCOE Board of Directors and IMISCOE Springer Editorial Committee. [IMISCOE](#) is the largest international network of scholars in the field of migration. The network currently consists of 68 research institutes from different countries providing a unique platform for scholars to initiate international collaborations. Sheffield’s PhD students benefit from training opportunities via IMISCOE PhD Network, PhD Summer/Winter School and the PhD Academy, and all Sheffield MRG members can join thematic research clusters which run workshops and collaborate around research bids/initiatives, and they pay reduced fees for the IMISCOE conferences.



Our weekly newsletter is sent out to 194 recipients, we have 11.5K followers on Twitter/X, and our newly established YouTube Channel is building our profile with recordings from our online events that can be freely accessed to anyone in the world.

Vision

Our ambition is to continue to engage with scholars and practitioners of migration, mobility and border studies in Sheffield and beyond. After a period of operational consolidation and building an active community, in the 2024/2025 academic year we plan to develop an MRG strategic plan for the next 3 years together with MRG members and the community partners we work with. We will seek to develop a sustainable model for MRG Visiting Fellows and MRG Community Fellows for local and international academic researchers and practitioners working with migrants. We also aim to strengthen the support to the PGRs at the University of Sheffield working on migration and mobility topics and engage more students with the network. Finally, we hope our network approach will continue to translate into other research outcomes such as publications, grant applications, KE and Impact outcomes and creative materials to impact discussions on migration, mobility and borders.

Lucy Mayblin, Patricia Nabuco Martuscelli, Aneta Piekut, MRG Co-Directors

13 May 2024, Sheffield