

**CENTER FOR THE UNDERSTANDING  
OF SOCIAL PROCESSES (MAPS)  
REDRAWING THE BOUNDARIES  
OF THE SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEUCHÂTEL**

**AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTER  
FOR THE STUDY OF THE CIRCULATION  
OF PERSONS, WEALTH AND KNOWLEDGE**

The Center for the Understanding of Social Processes (MAPS) is a unique interdisciplinary center for the social sciences in Switzerland. It is based on the postulate that the mobility and anchoring of social phenomena constitute a fundamental issue for the social sciences today. On this basis, it offers an innovative interdisciplinary program of research and teaching.

## A RESEARCH CENTER

Affiliated scholars conduct research on a wide range of themes, drawing on the synergies between the five institutes that make up the MAPS. Based on a variety of methods and analytical perspectives, our research activities all focus in one way or another on the circulation of persons, knowledge and wealth. Some examples include the transnationalization of social phenomena and the concomitant rise of new ethnicities; politics of security; new forms of social inequality; the production of 'otherness' in times of globalization; the creation of new urban spaces, their interconnections and the forms of heritage urban spaces invent to preserve their 'identities'; new experiences of mobility, or the legal regulation of the mobility of persons. In the same vein, the MAPS recently initiated an original research hub in the area of social innovation, a key issue for the development of the social sciences seeking to develop new paradigms for communicating research to both international audiences and to the local publics with which the University of Neuchâtel maintains a dialogue.

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

The MAPS leads the Center of Excellence "Migration and Mobility"<sup>1</sup> which brings together Swiss experts working on the circulation of persons, making the University of Neuchâtel a national and international center of reference and a privileged point of contact for political stakeholders in the area of migration and mobility policy. The flagship research project of this Center of Competence is the newly awarded Swiss National Science Foundation's National Center for Competence in Research (NCCR) "On the move"<sup>2</sup>, directed by the Swiss Forum for Migration Studies (SFM). This vast research program investigates contemporary forms of migration and mobility applying broad interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives. Finally, the MAPS is associated with the Center for Migration Law<sup>3</sup>, an interdisciplinary center bringing together the universities of Bern, Neuchâtel and Fribourg (BENEFRI) to tackle key issues in migration law from an integrative social science perspective.

## MULTIPLE COLLABORATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

The MAPS regularly organizes international conferences and is engaged in numerous collaborations with cultural, social, educational and political institutions at the local, national and international levels (exhibitions, debates, collaboration with schools and city governments active in the areas of social welfare, health and disability).

<sup>1</sup> **Migration and Mobility:**  
[http://www2.unine.ch/centres-of-excellence/page-35187\\_fr.html](http://www2.unine.ch/centres-of-excellence/page-35187_fr.html)

<sup>2</sup> **NCCR – on the move:**  
<http://nccr-onthemove.ch/home/>

<sup>3</sup> **Center for Migration Law:**  
[http://www2.unine.ch/ius-migration/page-10143\\_fr.html](http://www2.unine.ch/ius-migration/page-10143_fr.html)

## AN INTERDISCIPLINARY MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

The MAPS offers a Master of Social Sciences (MA ScS) which provides advanced training in the disciplinary areas constituting the MAPS while simultaneously familiarizing students with the richness of interdisciplinary analysis. The Master is composed of two elements: first, a common core of theoretical, thematic and methods courses central to all the disciplines represented by the MAPS; second, a disciplinary orientation in one or two of five represented disciplines within the MAPS: social anthropology (with an emphasis on cultural institutions, development and the environment); human geography (particularly, the geography of global contemporary issues); migration and citizenship (the mobility of persons; social and political integration); psychology and education (the circulation of knowledge between persons and generations); sociology (economic transformations and social inequality). The MA ScS aims to train students in the methods and theories necessary for in-depth analysis of contemporary societies and the challenges they entail (inequality, education, migration, multiculturalism, urbanization).

## PHD TRAINING

The MAPS contributes to the training of PhD students in collaboration with other Swiss universities: the University Conference of Western Switzerland (CUSO) and European partners in the areas of anthropology, cultural psychology, gender studies, geography, migration studies and sociology).

## IN 2015, THE MAPS INCLUDES

- - - 5 institutes: anthropology, geography, psychology and education, Swiss Forum for Migration and Population studies (SFM), sociology and the laboratory for transnational studies and social processes
- - - 14 professors
- - - 70 entering MA students every year (more than 220 students in total)
- - - 90 doctoral students working on research related to the themes of the MAPS
- - - over 10 million CHF in research contracts, grants and awards

**For additional information:**  
[www2.unine.ch/maps](http://www2.unine.ch/maps)  
[maps.info@unine.ch](mailto:maps.info@unine.ch)