Trust and Mistrust in Deportation-Related Activism in Finland

Abstract:
This talk examines how asylum seekers’ deportability in Finland is profoundly impacted by and performed as discourses and practices of social and institutional trust. Here, trust is conceived as a discursively created emotion and practice that is based on the relations between the trustor and the trustee. Even though trust is often referred to in the deportation scholarship, it is rarely examined either explicitly or theoretically. This is surprising since questions of trust and mistrust are essential not only for the creation of the ‘culture of disbelief’ associated with deportation, but also for the establishment of new networks of trust in deportation activism. This talk investigates the kinds of spaces of (mis)trust that are created as a result of deportation or the threat thereof. From an analytical standpoint, activists’ institutional (mis)trust of the authorities involved in deportations (e.g. the police, Immigration Service) are examined and activists’ social (mis)trust in other activists and activist networks are analysed as well. The empirical data includes qualitative interviews with pro-asylum and anti-deportation volunteers/activists in Finland. The lecture is based on the on-going research project “Action-oriented research on asylum seekers’ deportability” (ARADE, Migration Institute of Finland/Academy of Finland, 2018-2021).