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UNH Anthropology Professor Receives Grants to Study Immigration in Manchester and Germany

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Nina Glick Schiller, associate professor of anthropology at the University of New Hampshire, will spend the next seven months in Germany studying immigration thanks to a 1941 Professorship award and a Sidore Fellowship.

Schiller was given an appointment at the prestigious Max Planck Institute for Ethnology and will conduct her research in Halle, Germany, a city of about 230,000.

"This is the first step in a larger project that will compare immigrant settlement and long-distance nationalism in Halle, Germany, and Manchester, New Hampshire, two small cities that are just beginning to incorporate immigrants and refugees," says Schiller. "Both places are doing this without an established network of immigrant services. Citizens of these cities see themselves as a relatively homogenous population, which means that people who do not speak the language or are different in appearance, dress or customs stand out."

In addition, Schiller says both the United States and Germany believe that each person should have only one nation-state.

"Most of the immigrant populations people have looked at have been in big cities," she says. "Scholars don't know much about other places, but it is important. Manchester is a city built by immigration, but it's not remembered that way. And if you go to eastern Germany and say you want to study migration, the

people there will say there are no immigrants, only refugees and foreign students.

"I've been interested in migration all my life," she adds. "My grandparents were immigrants from Russia and Poland. In elementary school I wrote a paper on my grandmother, and my dissertation looked at Haitian immigration.

"New Hampshire is particularly fascinating because if a family came from Ireland and settled in Boston, their Irish traditions and customs remained very much a part of who they were. If cousins went to New Hampshire, however, they became a Yankee," Schiller says.

Schiller, who is the founding editor of "Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power" and coordinator of the Race, Culture and Power minor at UNH, will spend her time in Germany visiting churches, school systems, press, and local officials to see how they present and see the issues.

When she returns to conduct research in New Hampshire, Schiller said she will involve her students.

"I love working hands-on with students," she says, "and I never teach the same class twice because it's always evolving. There is a definite relationship between scholarship and what I'm teaching. The more I'm involved in cutting-edge research, the more exciting my courses are."

As part of the Sidore fellowship, Schiller designed a course to be taught in spring of 2002 called "Roots and Routes." It will look at family histories and contemporary global migration.

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