Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS)
University of Osnabrück, Germany

International Workshop, 13 November 2010

Disciplining Global Movements
Migration Management and its Discontents

Call for papers

'Migration management' has become a catch word to refer to a wide range of new initiatives pertaining to migration and mobility. A core feature of the 'international migration management agenda' is the recognition of migration and cross-border mobility as 'normal' processes, and hence the calls to go beyond the mere 'control' of human mobility. It is believed that migration, if 'managed' in a properly and orderly manner, can be turned from a 'problem' to a beneficial process – according to the so-called 'triple win' objective, in which migration would serve the interests of all: sending and receiving countries, as well as migrants themselves. In this respect, 'Migration management' implies 'pro-active' policies that address the multifaceted dimensions of migration – such as labour, development, human rights, security, health, etc. It also conveys the idea that governments are not alone in governing migration issues, but that they are to cooperate with each other, as well as with other actors (including notably intergovernmental agencies, international and non-governmental organisations, think tanks and experts).

Yet, despite the burgeoning of the concept, very little is known on what 'migration management' is actually about. Existing studies are largely situated at the level of advocacy (investigating what could or should be done rather than what is actually taking place), or at the level of 'from above' analyses of the institutional, political or legal implications of migration management (with little empirical focus on concrete developments). Moreover, publications on these issues are largely policy-driven and little room is therefore left for critical and independent thinking on the political implications of 'migration management'.

We therefore invite contributions that analyse, in a critical manner, the issues raised by so-called 'migration management' initiatives, including:

(1) The **rhetoric and narratives** developed by 'international migration managers': migration management is characterised by a range of new discourses and worldviews, developed by IGOs, experts or think tanks. These contribute to reshape contemporary migration debates and the issues they tackle, including the 'migration-development nexus', 'circular' or 'temporary' migration, human trafficking, 'illegal' or 'transit' migration, border management, readmission and return programmes, etc. While not necessarily new, these topics are given renewed attention and function as predefined concepts and fields of activities, which can be used by different actors in different regions - thereby leading to possible convergences in practices and to a 'globalisation' of migration debates and policies.

(2) The **key actors** of migration management: these include IGOs, NGOs, supranational actors such as the European Commission, specialized agencies (such as Frontex), think tanks, and individual experts (both local and foreign-based). Functioning as 'spin doctors' or 'service-providers', these actors provide expertise; inform and shape decisions; develop programmes on behalf of governments; and even directly implement policies – thus enabling an externalisation (or outsourcing) and even an exterritorialisation of migration politics. While these actors are embedded in states' strategies and priorities (through their funding practices notably), they nevertheless promote their own views of how migration should be addressed among governments, in order to secure their institutional existence or expansion. This points to the existence of multiple sources of policy options, and to possible competition between them. In consequence, this also questions the ability of 'migration management' actors to go beyond the interests of Western states and to develop a genuinely global approach to migration.

(3) The **practices and (local) consequences** of migration management: Examples of 'migration management' practices include counter-trafficking efforts; training of civil servants in transit and sending countries in fields such as irregular migration and border control; development of migration policies in countries lacking strategies in the field (or not considering migration as a key priority), under the auspices of foreign-based experts and organizations; return migration and readmission programmes, either forced or voluntary; and development-focused projects aiming at enhancing the positive or so-called 'development-friendly' impact of migrants, diasporas and remittances on regions of origin. A key characteristic of these practices is their multi-level and multi-actor nature, whereby local actors work with international stakeholders in designing and implementing policies. This leads to complex on-the-ground relations between domestic actors and foreign-based and globally-active institutions, and to equally complex interplays between their respective strategies and interests. We think that it is critical to explore both these practices as well as their outcomes, including their (un)intended consequences in the places and territories where 'migration management' is implemented.

IMIS-Executive Board: Prof. Dr. Michael Bommes, Apl. Prof. Dr. Jochen Oltmer, Prof. Dr. Andreas Pott
www.imis.uni-osnabrueck.de

- 2 -

(4) The **political and ideological foundations** of migration management initiatives: Notions such as migration 'management' or 'governance' (along with others such as 'best practices') are to a large extent characterised by their apolitical and explicitly technocratic nature. Policies would not result from political choices, but from 'technical' considerations and informal decision-making processes on the most appropriate and successful way of addressing migration. The apparently consensual nature of many 'migration management' objectives also contributes to this depolitisation: indeed, who is in favour of disorderly migration, trafficking abuses or underdevelopment?

(5) The **relation between migration management and control**: While calling for 'proactive' migration policies in a post-control fashion, 'migration management' initiatives also convey normative assumptions of how actors (including migrants) should 'behave'. In the ideal world of 'migration management', governments in sending and transit countries cooperate with destination states, IGOs and experts to adopt policies that take into account the interests of all; 'good' migrants are well-informed, respectful of the law, flexible to market needs, ready to circulate and eager to contribute to the development of their home country; researchers develop policy-relevant knowledge to inform migration policies; NGOs contribute to migrants' rights and well-being through properly steered activities; diasporas take 'development-friendly' initiatives with the help of intergovernmental and governmental agencies. These normative guidelines on who should do what, and how, thus relate to new and subtle forms of control, in which the steering of migration is not confined to the field of police or security, but penetrates other domains of social life.

(6) The **nexus between knowledge-production and policy-making**: a central argument in 'migration management' discourses is the need to better document migration issues (through better data collection for example), and to ground migration policies in such knowledge. This raises the issue of researchers' and experts' role in this process, as they may be requested to produce 'policy-relevant' knowledge, in a contact in which funding is increasingly connected to policy priorities. This also points to the existence and function of non-academic sources of knowledge (think tanks, consultants, etc.).

Contributions from a wide range of regions and disciplines (law, political science, geography, anthropology or sociology) are welcomed. Abstracts (up to 500 words) should be sent to:

Martin GEIGER (martin.geiger@uni-osnabrueck.de), or

Antoine PÉCOUD (antoinepecoud@hotmail.com) not later than **31 May 2010**.

Notification of acceptation will be sent out **in June**.

The deadline to submit full papers will be **1 October 2010**.

Papers presented at the workshop will be considered for publication in a special issue of a journal or an edited volume.

This workshop will form part of a two-days-event discussing "The new politics of international mobility".
Further information and the overall programme of this event will be provided shortly:
http://www.imis.uni-osnabrueck.de/VERANSTALTUNG/imisveranstaltung.html

IMIS-Executive Board: Prof. Dr. Michael Bommes, Apl. Prof. Dr. Jochen Oltmer, Prof. Dr. Andreas Pott
www.imis.uni-osnabrueck.de

- 3 -