

Labour migration in Europe.
Changing policies - changing organizations - changing people.

International workshop at the University of Konstanz, Germany

06.05. – 08.05.2015

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During the last decade, in almost all European countries the regulation of labour migration has undergone significant changes. The planned workshop focuses on changes that have taken place on the policy level, in the organization of labour migration, and in the profile of intra-European migrants. It aims at both identifying and empirically analyzing new developments in the field of labour migration and at further theorizing the research field by applying theoretical approaches on policy change and organizational change to the study of labour migration.

Since the turn of the century, labour migration has regained importance as a policy field in Europe. Until the year 2000, following the formal recruitment stops enacted by most traditional immigration states in the first half of the 1970s, international flows for labour were significantly reduced. Since 2000, however, European countries have rediscovered labour migration as a policy field and have established new policies aiming at attracting highly-skilled migrants to Europe. These changes in the field of labour migration have been reinforced - and sometimes counteracted - by the financial and economic crisis that started in 2008. On the one hand, the crisis has led to reduced migration flows and to the (re)establishment of more restrictive labour migration policies. However, the crisis has also encouraged new forms of mobility and has generated new migration patterns and flows. Migration from Mediterranean countries to European labour markets less hit by the crisis has significantly increased. This might entail new patterns of integration and transnational practices that are still to be investigated.

Furthermore, while the policy changes that started before and during the crisis are still in full swing, another new dimension of labour migration regulation has increasingly gained importance. As an example, in the German case, it has become clear that new policies and legal changes alone do not have the desired effect of attracting labour migrants. For this reason, changes on the administrative and organizational level have been introduced. Although in other European countries the trend towards developing new policies of attraction is less pronounced, the question of how administrative factors and organizational

cultures influence migration decisions of the highly-skilled is of growing importance for the European societies.

Against this background, the workshop aims at analyzing the developments outlined above with the help of theoretical approaches on policy change, organizational change and on changes in migration and integration regimes. Why do policies change, and under which conditions do organizations undergo significant processes of transformation? On these questions, a large number of sometimes conflicting approaches exist, focusing on the importance of structures versus actors or the interaction of these two dimensions and stressing different variables such as institutions, framings or ideas. On organizational change, too, a variety of explanation models exists, pointing out the role of material or normative adaptational pressures from the outside, but also focusing on the role of ideas and cultures and on attitudes of actors within organizations. The contributions to the workshop will reflect on the reasons for change in the field of labour migration by using these, and other relevant, theoretical approaches. They will also discuss new forms of intra-European mobility in the light of existing migration and integration theories and debate the explanatory value of these theories regarding the emergence of new patterns of migration and integration.

Contributions should address one of the following topics:

Changing policies

This part of the workshop invites contributions that focus on the preconditions and forms of changes on the policy level. Which changes have taken place in European labour migration policies during the last years, and what accounts for significant, i.e. third order changes (Hall 1993) in labour migration policies? Which processes of convergence can be observed in the European countries, and how can they be explained? Which role do both the European Union and the sub-national level play in the various national contexts? How has the economic crisis affected labour migration policies in Europe and what will be the medium and long-term effects of the crisis on the regulation of labour migration?

Changing organizations and administrations

This panel focuses on the administrative and organizational dimension of labour migration policies, and on the activities and policies of state and non-state actors such as embassies in sending countries, aliens' offices, international offices of universities, and companies. How is the administration of labour migration (differently) organized both in European countries and in sending countries? What role does the administrative structure of labour migration policies (i.e. visa policies, systems of residence and work permits, aliens' offices involved)

play in encouraging (or preventing) labour migration? Which role does cross-national learning play in the establishment of new organizational and administrative approaches? For the German case, what does the much used concept of a ‘welcoming culture’ mean on an empirical level?

Changing people

This panel will focus on the changing profile of labour migrants in Europe today and aims at assessing new trends of mobility and the new group of migrants that has emerged during the last years. Which new forms of intra-EU mobility have emerged during the last years and in the context of the ongoing economic crisis in Europe? What are the quantitative and socio-economic dimensions of migration processes related to the economic crisis? How do these new forms of mobility affect the labour markets and economies in both sending and receiving countries? What are the social and professional experiences of new migrants in the receiving countries? Which new, possibly transnational patterns of integration and migration regimes do these new forms of migration generate?

The workshop will take place from 06.05. - 08.05.2015 at the University of Konstanz. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered. If you are interested in presenting a paper, please send an abstract (300-500 words) and a short CV by 01.12.2014 to:

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