

Call for Papers

International Conference at RWTH Aachen University

March 17-18, 2011

organised by the research network „The labour market integration of highly skilled migrant women“, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, RWTH Aachen University and Hamburg University of Technology on the topic

Going global? (Highly) skilled migrants and societal participation

In current discussions about globalisation processes, highly skilled migration is perceived as a new phenomenon that is often seen as a resource for nation states and their economies. At the same time it has also become a research topic in social sciences. International organisations such as IOM and OECD, in particular, have put forward a perspective on highly skilled migration in the logic of exploitation, in the sense of resources which need to be managed. Similarly, the EU as a supranational association of states as well as its affiliated states are meanwhile conceiving themselves as economies which compete internationally for specialists. This discussion refers predominantly to university graduates who are specialised in certain tasks in the field of science and technology. These graduates are geographically mobile and move within the context of international corporations and corresponding networks.

However, other groups of migrants have proved to be larger, and it can be estimated that they also contribute to highly skilled migration, even though they do not migrate via the immigration rules for highly skilled people. Since the discontinuation of recruitment of migrant labour in 1973, family-related migration has been the dominant way of migration to Western European states, similar to historically grown immigration states such as the U.S. Among these migrants there are also people with professional training. In addition, migrants of the second generation contribute to the highly skilled. Still, they are often faced with stereotyped ascriptions and other mechanisms of exclusion, making it difficult for them to integrate into the labour market and to find an occupation that matches their skills and qualifications. Hence, social and welfare institutions on the national level are challenged to improve the chances of migrants to participate fully in labour and society.

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In social sciences an orientation towards processes of transnational socialisation implies therefore, *first*, to conceptualise social mobility across the borders of the national state as well as to research these processes empirically. Particularly with the EU as supranational association, new migration processes and motivations are emerging as challenge for the social sciences which need to be met. In addition, labour migration has to be redefined, taking (highly) skilled migration into consideration. Many migrants associate migration with (further) qualifications and professional careers. *Second*, a social analytical perspective requires the inclusion of all (highly) qualified migrants – not only those migrants who belong to the relatively small group of transnational *high potentials* but also those who are already part of the society of the destination country. This perspective differs from an economic approach, which defines highly skilled migration exclusively in connection with the demand of markets.

This conference deals with the situation of (highly) skilled migrants and their participation in labour and society. Different modes of (highly) skilled migration, including various ways of migration as well as different groups of migrants are to be considered. Papers representing various focuses and a wide range of research on highly skilled migrants are welcomed.

Possible topics for papers include, but are not limited to, the following:

1) (Highly) skilled migration at the intersection of migration and gender studies

Migration of the (highly) skilled under the decided consideration of gender has remained an issue quite underexposed in migration studies. As a matter of fact, migration of the highly skilled is strongly structured by gender and gender relations – an example for this is the low proportion of visas granted to highly skilled women. In Germany, for example, this proportion was roughly 12 percent in 2007. In gender studies, although research regarding migration makes up an important branch, (highly) skilled migration is insufficiently considered. Matters of migration are prevalingly researched in the context of jobs with low qualification requirements, and only rarely with regard to qualification or employment which accords to a person's qualification.

2) Family-related migration of the (highly) skilled

Family-related migration as a way of migration of (highly) skilled has as yet been insufficiently dealt with. Which possibilities of participation in labour and society result from this mode of migration? How does family-related migration affect specific types of integration? How are families and family relations redefined by migration processes?

3) (Highly) Skilled migration as a new type of labour migration and the transformation of labour

In what ways is migration shaped also by professional goals, additional to the desire for social mobility? Which types of social participation result from this kind of migration? To what extent do migrants experience new job requirements in terms of more personalised functions, subjectification, and the delimitation of labour?

4) The role of the state and international organizations in the establishment of markets

How do supranational organisations and other types of global exchange create new markets where migrants can offer their labour power across the borders of the nation state? What kinds of markets for what types of work emerge? What are the roles of international organisations such as IOM, OECD and others in this process? What modes of qualification recognition and what qualification programs for (highly) skilled people exist internationally?

5) Mobility of scientists

In comparison with other professional careers, access of highly skilled migrants to the academic labour market at universities follows its own logic. To what extent do particular conditions of access to the scientific field arise from the generally high degree of mobility in science? What barriers and what kinds of alleviation do scientist migrants experience? What influences do 'gender' and 'ethnicity' as categories of differentiation have on the integration process?

The language of the conference will be English.

Submission of abstracts

Please submit an abstract of your planned presentation containing 500 words maximum, and stating the title of your presentation, your name, institutional affiliation as well as full contact data by **30th September 2010**.

Abstracts are subject to review. Abstract acceptance will be communicated via email by 1st November 2010.

Abstracts should be emailed to the conveners:

Dr. Ingrid Jungwirth: ingrid.jungwirth@sowi.hu-berlin.de

Project management and project coordination
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Department of Social Sciences

Dr. Andrea Wolffram: Andrea.Wolffram@igad.rwth-aachen.de

Project management
RWTH Aachen University
Integration Team - Human Resources, Gender and Diversity Management (IGaD)

Dr. Grit Grigoleit: grit.grigoleit@tu-harburg.de

Hamburg University of Technology
Department Work – Gender – Technology