

# MAKING THE MOST OF MIGRATION: THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES

23 May 2014, Universitaire Stichting, Brussels, Belgium

Immigration flows have rapidly changed the structure of Western European societies. Countries have become more ethnically and culturally diverse, while migration also has an important impact on the functioning of the labour market in Western Europe. In the social sciences, one can observe a rapid boom in the quantity of studies devoted to migration and social diversity. What is striking, however, is that this research is strongly fragmented. While some researchers mainly focus their efforts on the political or cultural effects of migration, others pay more attention to economic considerations or questions of inequality and integration. Often, however, there is very little interaction between these various academic approaches. The goal of this one-day international conference is to bring together these approaches to the study of immigration and diversity.

The theoretical perspective is that if we want to arrive at a comprehensive assessment of the economic and social costs and benefits of immigration, it is important to take these different perspectives into account. While it can be assumed that the societal benefits of immigration are mainly concentrated on the functioning of the labour market, it might be expected that the societal costs of increasing diversity will be situated mainly at the level of social cohesion and social capital within society. Not just for the host society, however, immigration entails costs and benefits, but also for the individual. While the expectation is that individuals will gain by the experience of immigration in terms of their economic position, it can also be expected that their social network position could be damaged as a result of the uprooting and discrimination that is often connected to the immigration experience.

Although self-evidently we do not wish to claim that these widely diverging costs and benefits of immigration can be directly compared, we do assume that it is important to combine these perspectives if we want to arrive at a more comprehensive assessment of the effects of immigration, both for Western European societies as a whole, as for immigrants themselves. To what extent do the economic benefits of moving to a new country add up to a positive balance, taking into account the devaluation of acquired skills in a new context, the loss of social contacts left behind, the adjustment to a new culture, and the experience of discrimination?

The conference will consist of two parts: the first part are plenary presentations of leading scholars in the field, and for the second part we invite researchers to present and discuss their recent work in parallel sessions.

## Confirmed Speakers

- *Frank van Tubergen (Utrecht University)* "The Social Networks of Immigrant Children in Europe"
- *Martin Ruhs (Oxford University)* "The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labour Migration"
- *Michael Samers (University of Kentucky)* "Survival in the City: How do Young Immigrants in France make a living?"
- *Thomas Liebig (OECD, Paris)* "OECD Indicators, and the Fiscal Impact of Migration on Host societies"

## Themes

Potential topics for submissions might include, but are not limited to:

- Migration policies
- Integration policies
- Fiscal impact of migration
- Diversity and social cohesion/social capital
- Segregation in schools/neighbourhoods
- Attitudes toward migration/integration among natives
- Anti-immigrant agenda of (populist) political parties
- Refugees, labour and family migrants, and highly skilled migrants
- The children of immigrants
- Economic integration
- Socio-cultural integration
- Perceived discrimination
- Remittances and transnational families/networks
- Ethnic and national identification

## Submission of Abstracts

Paper submissions – including a title, name and contact details of the author(s)/presenter(s), and an abstract of max. 200 words – can be sent to: [Thomas.deVroome@soc.kuleuven.be](mailto:Thomas.deVroome@soc.kuleuven.be). The submission deadline is March 15, 2014. Authors will receive confirmation of their participation before April 1, 2014. We envision a closed workshop format with ca. 30 participants, with the aim of having sufficient time for discussion, and the opportunity to publish a selection of the presented papers.

## Registration

Registration is open from March 15, 2014: [Greet.Louw@soc.kuleuven.be](mailto:Greet.Louw@soc.kuleuven.be). Participation is free but registration is appreciated.

For more information on the key note speakers and a detailed program:

[www.soc.kuleuven.be/citizenship-migration](http://www.soc.kuleuven.be/citizenship-migration) or [Thomas.deVroome@soc.kuleuven.be](mailto:Thomas.deVroome@soc.kuleuven.be)

## Date and Venue

Friday May 23, 2014

Universitaire Stichting,

Egmontstraat 11, Brussels (Belgium)