



International Conference

Re-framing the Migrant Situation in Europe. Critical Issues in Policy-Making and Cross-disciplinary Approaches

Organisers: Inter Alia - University of Peloponnese

Dates: February 28th - March 1st, 2019

Venue: University of Peloponnese

Working language: English

Keynote speaker: Patrick Taran, President of Global Migration Policy Associates

Context

The current migrant and refugee situation in Europe has widened and deepened the discourse and research by scholars, policy makers, not-for-profit organisations and other stakeholders especially in EU member states that in the past years have been receiving and accommodating a growing number of third country nationals. These inputs are rightfully utilised in the decision-making processes and it can be argued that some progress has been achieved in the field of EU policy. Legal tools and guidelines have been put in place, strategic plans and good practices have been created; all these constitute a potentially effective framework for the integration of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. However, due to the dynamic circumstances in Europe, defined by growing inequalities across and among member states, narrowing trust in institutions, crises and changing demographics, the debate on migration is placed in a politically charged context with embedded positions. This undermines the production of new ideas and sustainable solutions that could facilitate the satisfaction of migrants' needs, the utilisation of their potentials and the integration in the new setting. Thus, next to the existing discourse, it is important to launch a parallel discussion based on: a. the concept of mutual progress for migrant populations and hosting societies in the EU and b. issues that intersect with migration and play a crucial role in people's and communities' lives.



Panel discussions

1. Aspects of the EU's Legal Framework on Migration

Third Country Nationals: Legal Framework, Challenges and Integration Policies.

Description

The EU legislation describes in detail all standardised procedures that Member States have to follow as far as the reception, identification, integration, deportation, or "assisted voluntary return" of Third Country Nationals, are concerned. A series of legal stages and statuses are in place with a view to protect these groups and lift various forms of exclusion against them. However, in practice, specific socioeconomic and political conditions that prevail each time, obstruct the implementation or incorporation of the EU legislation by Member States, leading to the stigmatisation and discrimination of Third Country Nationals. Taking into consideration the recent EU policies and guidelines for TCNs and focusing on specific case studies, the panel will discuss the ways in which socioeconomic and political specificities in Member States affect the implementation of both the EU legislation and integration policies.

2. Female Migration

Women migrants and refugees: Facing gender-specific challenges in navigating daily life at every stage of the migration experience

Description

Autonomous female migration constitutes a distinct feature of recent migrant waves. The majority of women, coming from countries involved in war, as well as from countries where oppressive intersex relations are a commonplace, are forced to take matters into their own hands and respond to crucial circumstances for themselves and their families under extreme conditions. The personal dynamics and potentials possessed or unleashed during their journey, contrast sharply with most female refugees' lives upon arrival to Europe that are usually defined by discrimination, inertia, repetitiveness and disenfranchisement. This panel aims to look into approaches and practices for supporting integration of female refugees and at the same time retouch the discussions on gender relations in EU member states and discuss how they are reflected in migration policies.



3. Migration and Spatial Dynamics

Beyond the Technical Perception of Space: Understanding the Ways Migration Dynamics Are Challenging and Are Being Challenged by Spatial Patterns and Policies.

Description

Migration routes and concentrations are created within spatial patterns, and, simultaneously, have a diachronic impact in (re)shaping space and creating socio-spatial geographies. Apart from inherently different regional patterns between North-Western and Southern European countries, increased and diversified flows and routes interact with different spatial dynamics in national and sub-national levels. In this context, the migration agenda needs to target broader spatial entities: urban areas, larger and smaller, but also rural areas, islands and country borders, where mobile migrant communities have shaped temporary(?) hubs upon transition. The focus of this panel moves beyond targeting migration merely as an urban “problem”, linked to abandonment, economic decline, criminality, and therefore, of migrant residential areas as ghettos. Questions are posed regarding shelter and alternative housing opportunities for increasing numbers of migrants, access to public space services/amenities and transportation, rights to social infrastructure, integration and security for constantly mobile migrant populations.

4. Migration and the European Economies

Charting the Effects from the Migrant Inflow for European Economies

Description

The root causes of the ongoing European crisis constitute the theme of a complex debate that is researched across disciplines and levels of analysis. Still, the main manifestations of the crisis in the socioeconomic sphere are rather apparent and concurred - limited competitiveness, inequalities within and among member states, demographic deficit. Increased migrant inflows is duly integrated in this debate particularly in relation to social security systems, changing demographics and the quantity, quality and conditions of labour offer and demand of European countries. And while cost-benefit calculations do not go well with the Union’s professed role as a political community of values, it is also true that it reflects a series of crucial issues to which diverse audiences can relate. At the same time, it is essential that the asserted economic effects of



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migrant inflow are exemplified and policy lines that result from them are articulated and discussed.