

"International Migration Politics and Policies in Europe and the U.S.: Gender and class Perspectives"

Organized by the Institut Wallon de l'Évaluation, de la Prospective et de la Statistique (IWEPS), the research center METICES of the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD)

Université Libre de Bruxelles, 28-29 April 2015

Venue: Institut de Sociologie
Salle Dupréel (1st Level), Avenue Jeanne 44
1050 Bruxelles (Belgium)

The United Nations statistics reveal that the number of immigrants around the world has increased by 50 percent in the last two decades from 154.2 million in 1990 to 231.5 million in 2013. During the same period, female migration has increased by 47 percent, from 75.6 million to 111.2 million. Today almost one out of two international migrants are female (48 percent). The same statistical source shows that 42 percent of the world's migrants live in just two regions: European Union (22 percent) and the United States (20 percent). Given that the cross-border mobility of workers is conditioned to a large extent by receiving countries' admission policies, it is difficult to predict, with certainty, future migration flows. However, many observers consider that the trend will intensify in the years to come.

The recent tragic odyssey of thousands migrants, who tried to cross the Mediterranean Sea seeking refuge and protection in the European Union, remind policy makers, stakeholders, and citizens the urgency and the need to address humanely and democratically one the 21st century major social issue.

With future demographic and environmental challenges, and as main destinations of international migrants, the European Union and the United States should be prepared to face the rapid influx of new immigrants. In this context, efforts to enhance our understanding of the politics and policies of international migration will provide valuable insights to policymakers in these regions and well-documented knowledge to media and the whole population. The conference jointly organized by the the Institut Wallon de l'Évaluation, de la Prospective et de la Statistique (IWEPS), the research Center METICES at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), and the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies (CCIS) at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) is a step towards this direction.

The conference objectives are to identify the specificities of the EU and USA migration policies with a special focus on their gender and social impact, and to promote dialogue between European and US scholars, on different aspects of international migration.

The topics of the conference, which will be held in English and French, include: politics of ethnicity in immigration policy, refugee and asylum policy, irregular immigration, skilled migration, and attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. The gendered and economic dimensions and the comparison between Europe and the United States will receive special attention. We aim to highlight gender and class inequality in international migration processes.

The conference will address the main following questions:

- How can fundamental rights and equality be guaranteed for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and ethnic minorities?
- How can gender equality be achieved in immigration policies?
- What are the driving forces of undocumented immigration?
- What are the human and social costs of undocumented migrants?
- What is the impact of high-skilled migration “brain drain” on the origin countries? What are the stakes and the potential solutions to “brain waste”?
- What are the stereotypes and clichés regarding immigration leading to discrimination against immigrants and their descendants?
- How racialized and xenophobic stereotypes, representations, and attitudes can be countered?

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