

Oxford, 18/1/2008

IMISCOE Conference

**(Irregular) Transit Migration in the European space:
Theory, Politics and Research Methodology**

**18-20 April 2008
Koc University, Istanbul (Sariyer)**

Theory, Politics, Research Methodology and Ethics

Transit migration is usually identified with migration through the neighbouring countries of destination countries. It is often observed in Europe, Central and North America, South East Asia and South Africa, however this particular conference concentrates on Europe.

During the 1990s, and particularly from a European Union perspective, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania and the Balkan countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania) were considered 'transit countries'. Since then, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Turkey, and Ukraine have been identified, but also countries such as Mauritania and Mali. Also EU countries, such as Germany, Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Spain are transited by migrants heading for other destinations.

Russia is another major destination country and its neighbouring countries such as Azerbaijan are transited by migrants. Simultaneously, Russia itself is transited by migrants on their way to Western Europe.

Transit migration stands for mixed flows and consists of refugees, labour migrants and other types of migrants. Calculations as to the extent of the phenomenon range from a moderate 100,000 per annum to implausible estimates of several million.

Transit migration causes considerable political concerns. These are mostly related to weak migration controls in countries on the fringes of Europe, to some irregular features of this type of migration, the role of human smuggling in such processes but also to the death toll and human and refugee rights aspects.

The concept of transit migration entered the policy agenda during the 1990s. It is a highly politicised concept which has gained enormous political power. For instance, it is used to re-brand de facto settlers (e.g. Sudanese in Egypt) as people who are expected to leave. States identified with transit migration face considerable pressure from the major receiving countries and are expected to prevent this type of through migration. The issue of irregular transit migration is indeed at the centre of politics identified with the externalisation and internationalisation of EU migration control.

Early research was triggered mostly by political concerns and was commissioned or conducted by intergovernmental organisations. Such research was of often biased nature, based on normative assumptions, suggestive in its approaches and resulted in scientifically dissatisfying reports.

Initially, the concept was derived from patterns relating to a very specific historical period, the collapse of communist regimes, when immigrants in these countries suddenly lost their status and were looking for alternatives. There is neither a definition in international law nor a commonly agreed scientific definition of transit migration. Thus, the concept is as politicised as it is vague and blurred. Transit migration is confused with, for example, immigration, with extended journeys and complex trajectories, with secondary or on-migration and with smuggling and irregular migration. Finally, the concept disguises both complex decision-making of migrants and the inherent asylum-migration nexus.

This conference aims to address empirical gaps, problematic methodologies, blurred concepts and lack of definition and by inviting participants to provide an appropriate typology, a theory of transit migration, reliable data and rigid methodologies. Experts from various disciplines studying this phenomenon from both the sending, transit and receiving countries' perspective are invited.

The conference shall address the following micro and macro **theoretical issues**:

- *Conditions determining transit migration.*

The following aspects will be explored: (1) the extent to which restrictive policies and the legal and normative systems (e.g. lack of access to asylum determination procedures, lack of permission to work) shape migration flows, (2) the consequences of poor economic opportunities in first country of arrival and (3) reasons why migrants strategically respond to the conditions found in their first country of arrival.

- *Understanding transit migration in the context of migration transition.*

We aim to distinguish between immigration, transit migration and secondary migration; to what extent transit migration is turning out to be immigration and whether transit migration could be a manifestation of the onset of a migration transition from an emigration to an immigration country.

- *Understanding migration to low and medium income countries.*

Migration to low and medium income countries (e.g. Ukraine, Turkey, Algeria) is of increasing significance; this challenges both classical economic assumptions and according perceptions that only high income countries are quasi natural destinations of international migrants.

- *Understanding dynamic interaction of different migration systems.*

It is hypothesised that transit migration is facilitated by overlapping migration systems and occurs in countries where trans-Saharan, North African, Middle-Eastern or post-Soviet systems meet trans-Mediterranean, Balkan and trans-Carpathian systems.

- *Migration frontiers.*

Transit migration, as it could be hypothesised, complements the ageing frontier separating North (EU, Russia) and South (Africa, South Asia) and the net migration frontier distinguishing between positive and negative net migration countries.

- *The Relevance of Smuggling and Migration Industries*

Smuggling plays a crucial role in irregular transit migration. Understanding the link between legal and illegal services, comparing smuggling in various regions, and comparing various means along land and sea borders will assist in the development of a theory of human smuggling.

A range of **methodological issues** will be addressed:

- *Shaping typology and suggesting a robust definition.*

Shaping typologies requires rigid comparison of various cases. Time dimension, migration trajectory and purposes as well as decision making processes shall be taken into account.

- *Research methodologies.*

Previous research was sometimes based upon suggestive questionnaires. Instead, methods shall be discussed that enable to distinguish between migration dreams and actual migration processes. Finally, we need methods to testing migrants' intentions.

- *Discussing methods for measuring transit migration.*

Numerous figures of varying quality circulate. These shall be collected, assessed in quality and comparability and an ideal method developed. Finally, the extent of the phenomenon shall be established.

- *Research ethics.*

Transit migrants are in an often precarious and vulnerable position and might not disclose their true plans. Methods shall be discussed to study transit migration in a scientifically sound and ethically responsible manner. Secondly, academic studies should not be confused with (police) investigations and according ethics are required guiding both research and publication.

Some **political implications** will be discussed:

- *Transit migration impacts on the international relations of all affected countries, thus, implications for managing transit migration shall be explored.*
- *Access to labour markets and social services.*

If it is true that national regulations limiting migrants' legal access to labour markets and to social services are another cause forcing migrants into on-migration this could lead to according calls for reform.

- *Access to refugee determination processes in developing countries.*

So far it has been found that transit migration is sometimes caused by difficulties in obtaining refugee status which compels forced migrants to move on to safer destinations.

- *Protection gaps in international migration.*

As yet, there is no separate international agreement or law addressing vulnerability of transit migrants.

Further and **broader themes** running through this phenomenon are:

- Irregularity and illegality in migration processes;
- Flexibility, precariousness and insecurity.

Organisers

- Dr Franck Düvell (principle organiser), Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford.
- Prof. Ahmet Icduygu, Department for International Relations, Migration Research Programme (MiReKoc), Koc University, Istanbul.
- Aysem Biric Karacay, MiReKoc, Koc University, Istanbul.
- Dr Hein de Haas, International Migration Institute (IMI), Oxford.
- Dr Ferruccio Pastore, Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), Rome.
- Prof Irina Molodikova, Central European University, Budapest.
- Dr Ilse van Liempt, Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES), Amsterdam University.
- Dr Michael Collyer, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex.

Format

- It will be a two day conference; we will have 8 sessions and 22 papers (for a complete list of invited contributors see the programme below and appendix 2);
- We have invited participants from three communities, the English-, French- and Russian speaking community, this is as unique as challenging. We will provide simultaneous

interpretation throughout the conference though not during the side events (lunch, dinner, and excursion). We will also seek additional funding for translating all papers into English, though success is not guaranteed. Nevertheless, all paper givers are requested to provide an English abstract of 2-3 pages.

- We aim at a mix of empirical papers, country reports and case studies, framed by some comparative, theoretical and methodological papers.
- Furthermore, we will be able to accommodate another 40 participants though no funding can be provided.

Location and Date

- The conference will be held at Koc University in Istanbul (Sariyer), the venue is located at the northern-most end of the Bosphorus and near to the Black Sea.
- Friday, 18 to Saturday 19 April 2008 (on Sunday, 20 April, there will be an excursion).

Funding and Costs

- The conference is supported by the EU-funded network of Excellence on International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion (MISCOE).
- Further participants are required to pay a fee of Euro 50 per day which includes interpretation, conference material, tea/coffee and lunch breaks; conference dinners are paid separately.
- The excursion, planned for the third day, is optional; unfortunately, no funding can be provided neither for an extra night in the hotel nor the journey.
- Interested MISCOE PhD students are encouraged to apply for according mobility funds.

Travel and Accommodation

- Ideally, you will arrive 17 April, departure will be 20 April, respectively 21 for those who take part in the excursion.
- Invited experts will be provide with accommodation at Fuat Pasha hotel, Istanbul (Sariyer), near the conference venue; travel between hotel, conference and all other locations will be arranged. All other participants arrange own travel and accommodation though Biriz Karacay, Koc University (atokat@ku.edu.tr) will assist with this.
- Nearer to the date we will provide you with all the necessary details about your journey, the hotel, meeting places etc.

Excursion

- A one-day excursion (optional) is planned for Sunday, 20 April which will take us from Istanbul to the Turkish-Greek border, famous irregular transit migration, where senior border guards will be met.

Publication

- All abstracts and papers will be uploaded on the following webpage (http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/events/future_conferences_events.shtml).
- We aim to produce three publications,
 - (1) a special issue of an international journal,
 - (2) an edited book,
 - (3) an IMISCOE policy paper.
- Editorial committee: Düvell, de Haas (principal editors), Pastore, Icduygu, Molodikova and van Liempt.

Deadlines

- **Registration for experts** **20 November**
- **Application for further participants** **22 February 2008**

Draft Schedule of Conference

18 April 2008				
9.00-9.30	Welcome			
	<i>Icduzgu/Karacay, Duvell/van Liempt, de Haas, Molodikova, Pastore</i>			
9.30-10.30	Key note			
	<i>Düvell</i>			
Coffee break				
11.00-12.30	The post-Soviet Transit Migration Space I			
	Chair	Azerbaijan	Ukraine	Russia
	<i>Molodikova</i>	<i>Junusov</i>	<i>Malinovska</i>	<i>Ivakhnyuk</i>
Lunch				
14-15.30	The post-Soviet Transit Migration Space and into EU II			
	Chair	Moldova	Hungary	Portugal
	<i>De Haas</i>	<i>Mosneaga</i>	<i>Molodikova</i>	<i>Baganha</i>
Coffee break				
16.00-17.30	Theory and Methodology I			
	Chair	Comparison	Quantitative Aspects	Methodology
	<i>Icduygu</i>	<i>Zajonchkovskaya</i>	<i>Futo</i>	<i>Hess</i>
19.30 Dinner				
19 April 2008				
9.00-13.30	The Eastern Mediterranean Transit Migration Space			
	Chair	Turkey	Cyprus	Greece
	<i>Triandafyllidou</i>	<i>Icduygu</i>	<i>Trimikliniotis</i>	<i>Baldwin-Edwards</i>
Coffee break				
11.00-12.30	The Northern African Transit Migration Space I			
	Chair	Egypt	Algeria, Tunisia, Libya	Malta
	<i>Pastore</i>	<i>Al-Sharmani</i>	<i>Bensaad</i>	<i>Mainwaring</i>
Lunch				
14.00-15.30	The Northern African Transit Migration Space II			
	Chair	Mali/Senegal	Morocco	Spain
	<i>Collyer</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Alioua</i>	<i>Arango</i>
Coffee break				
16.00-17.30	Theory and Methodology II			
	Chair	Smuggling	Categorisation	Politics
	<i>Düvell</i>	<i>van Liempt/Bilger</i>	<i>de Haas</i>	<i>Pastore</i>
17.30-18.00	Summary and Closing			
	Future plans/publication		Excursion	
	<i>Duvell/de Haas</i>		<i>Icduygu/Karacay</i>	
20.00 Dinner				
20 April 2008				
8.00-20.00	Excursion to Turkish-Greek border (optional)			

Template: Introduction/Research question: 5min; presentation: 20 min; discussion: 20 min
Yellow: country report; **Green:** Comparison, methodology, theory, **Grey:** Business, **Brown:** Break

Appendix : Participants

Steering Committee

Franck Düvell (principle organiser)
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Further contributors

Arif Junusov

Institute of Peace and Democracy, Department of Conflictology and Migration, Baku, Azerbaijan

Theme: Transit migration through Azerbaijan and of Azeris through other countries

Olena Malinovska

National Institute for International Security Problems, Kiev, Ukraine

Theme: Transit Migration in Ukraine and its neighbouring countries

Irina Ivakhnyuk

Lomonosov State University, Department of Population Studies, Moscow, Russia

Theme: Transit migration through Russia

Valeriu Mosneaga

Theme: Transit migration of Moldovans through various countries

Maria Baganha

Coimbra University, Portugal

Theme: A sending country's perspective: transiting the EU with the help of a migration industry

Zanna Zajonchkovska

Academy of Science, Center for Migration Research, Moscow, Russia

Theme: Transit Migration in Post-Soviet Migration space: a comparative perspective

Peter Futo

Corvinus University Budapest, Institute for Sociology and Social Policy, Budapest, Hungary.

Theme: Quantitative Research in Transit Migration

Sabine Hess

Institute of European Ethnology, Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich, Germany

Theme: Research practice, methodologies and ethics

Anna Triandafyllidou

Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) and Democritus University of Thrace, Athens, Greece

Chair

Nikos Trimikliniotis

Intercollege, Cyprus

Theme: Migration and Transit from Turkish to EU Cyprus

Aspasia Papadopoulou-Kourkoula (paper only)

Planet S.A., Athens, Greece/Belgium

Politics/Sociology

Theme: Transit migration through Greece

Martin Baldwin-Edwards

Mediterranean Migration Observatory, Panteion University; ICMPD

Theme: Transit migration through Greece

Mulki Al Sharmani

American University (ACU), Cairo, Egypt

Theme: Egypt as a transit country

Ali Bensaad
Université de Provence, Aix-Marseille, France
Transit migration through Algeria, Tunisia and Libya

Cetta Mainwaring
Centre for Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, UK.
Theme: Transit migrants on Malta

Papa Demba Fall
Institut fondamental d'Afrique noire, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal.
Theme: Mixed flows in West Africa

Mehdi Alioua
Université de Toulouse/CIRUS-CER, France
Sub-Saharan transit migration, Morocco
Sociology
Theme: Transit migration through Morocco

Ilse van Liempt
IMES, Amsterdam University, Netherlands
Theme: Human Smuggling: a theoretical perspective (with Bilger)

Veronika Bilger
International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Vienna, Austria
Theme: Human Smuggling: a theoretical perspective (with van Liempt)

Further participants

Up to another 40 participants will be permitted. Please see the separate call at www.compas.ox.ac.uk