

Migration

*XII International Interdisciplinary Seminar
Economics track*

Barcelona, 1st – 6th January 2010

Until the current financial and economic crisis erupted and with it concerns over the impact it will have on society, many people were worried about the effect that high levels of immigration would have. Although these concerns have not gone away they are no longer so dominant. One of the consequences of the financial crisis is that some of the migration flows, especially from countries which have recently entered the EU to older member states, have been reversed. This though is likely to be a temporary phenomena as sooner or later economies should recover while birth rates seem unlikely to and so there will be a renewed demand in the 'older' nations for younger workers.

Migration therefore continues to be an important topic within economics, but it is not just an economic question but a profoundly social and human question and one that is at the heart of debates about development, the environment and human rights.

Migrants, generally, move from regions of less development to greater development. This has effects on both the country of origin and the receiving country. As migrants tend to be younger and more dynamic their home country is losing the very people that it can least afford to lose, especially if it has spent valuable resources training them as doctors or nurses. What responsibilities do the receiving countries have to prevent such a 'brain drain' from poorer countries or to ensure that the poorer countries benefit from it as well? What impact do the migrants have on the receiving countries and what responsibilities do they have to conform to the local culture and social norms?

Environmentalists foresee that one of the effects of climate change will be an increase in environmental migrants from countries most affected by these changes. These are expected to be those currently living in low lying regions, such as Bangladesh, that will end up under water and parts of Africa which even now have harsh agricultural conditions which will only get worse. Are these scenarios inevitable? What can be done to reduce the effects of climate change on these poorer countries and who should pay?

What rights do migrants have? Should they depend on why they have migrated, for example, for economic, political or environmental reasons? Where is the balance between the rights of the migrant and the rights of the indigenous population?

Migration is normally considered in terms of movements across international borders. However, countries can also experience significant internal migration, for rural areas to urban areas or from less to more prosperous areas. What can and should governments do to stop or redirect such population flows?

The 2010 economics interdisciplinary seminar will be taking place in Barcelona, Spain. Spain has experienced significant levels of immigration both from Latin America and from North Africa. It is therefore an ideal location for university students to get together to discuss the topic of migration.

Call for contributions and possible topics

Papers will be welcome on any topic relating to migration but particularly those which tackle the following questions:

- Why do people migrate: economic, political and social reasons?
- What rights have people to migrate in order to better themselves? Should families be allowed to be reunited in the new country once one member has settled there?
- Do migrants benefit the host nation?
- What responsibilities do migrants have towards their host country and the existing population?
- What responsibilities does the indigenous population have towards migrants?
- If immigrants are needed to make up for a lack of young workers should countries be trying to increase their own birth rates instead of taking in more and more migrants?
- Should countries welcome migrants with open arms or should they apply quotas, and if so on what basis?
- To what extent will migration change the social, cultural and religious landscape in Europe and what might be the consequences of such changes?
- How much impact will environmental change have on migration levels?
- Is rural to urban migration of benefit to developing countries?

Organizing committee

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Organizing and sponsoring entities

Fondazione RUI (Milano)

Fondazione Pellicano (Lugano)

Thomas More Institute (TMI, London)

Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies (IIS, Amsterdam, Geneva, Zürich)

The seminar will take place at:

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Accommodation:

The cost for 5 full days residence and all meals is 200 Eu.