Call for Papers

12th International Conference
Thursday 14th June – Saturday 16th June 2012
Centre de Documentation sur les Migrations Humaines (Dudelange/Luxembourg)

"Migration und Demokratie/Migration and Democracy"

Organizers
- Centre de Documentation sur les Migrations Humaines CDMH (Dudelange, Luxemburg)
- Institute for Regional and Migration Research IRM (Trier, Germany)
- Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Intercultural Education (Klagenfurt, Austria)
- Institute of Integration and Participation at the School of Social Work FHNW (Olten, Switzerland)

In democratic societies, decision-making is based on the political and social participation of their members. As a normative reference, democracy implies a demand that all individuals be able to realize their destiny while bing responsible for their own choices. Hence, the decision about who is a member of a society and accordingly, who can take part in its decision-making, is a central problem in democratic societies. In modern nation-states, citizenship is governed by laws that define who is allowed to participate politically; For the most part, migrants are excluded from political decision-making processes. At the same time, the question arises to what extent political affiliation qua citizenship is sufficient to allow appropriate participation in democratic societies. Despite the liberal granting of citizenship to migrants, as the example of France, for instance, shows, social and cultural distinctions still operate that can lead to their devaluation and exclusion. Do societies now also need new strategies for social and cultural equality alongside political participation in order to enforce democracy in its institutional as well as extra-institutional forms?

While European nation-states have governed access to citizenship very differently from and have not envisioned themselves as immigration societies, this represents a core component of the socio-cultural self-image of typical immigration nations such as Australia, Canada and the United States. This difference is a serious one: Where societies lack a self-understanding of being immigration societies, migration is perceived as a special case. In contrast, where it constitutes an important part of the national self-image, migration is socially and politically self-evident. Social and political consequences arise for the design of migration policies.

In recent years, the relationship between migration and democracy has been characterized by contradictions: On the one hand, migration policies are increasingly adjusted to the needs of the labour market; i. e. migration is judged favourably and supported if an economic demand can thereby be met. This is apparent, for instance, in discussions regarding the demand for skilled labour and the shortage of nurses. On the other hand, migration is regarded as a special case politically, which we see where immigration and settlement are made difficult despite labour market demands, and where border control measures are tightened. In addition, populism is growing in many European countries, directed against immigration and the naturalisation of migrants. Thus, popular votes on the ban on building minarets and deporting delinquent foreigners obtained a majority in Switzerland. From this point of view, majority rule is a democratic form of decision-making that can be criticised with respect to the legal rights of minorities. Here, alternative interpretations of the democratic communal life beyond institutionalised democracies are at risk of disappearing from view.

Against the background of these disparate developments, questions arise about the meaning and effects of migration for democratic societies and the implications of different democratic demands for migration societies: What different kinds of development appear in this context? Of what importance are the missing participation rights of migrants in democratic societies? In migration societies, individual and collective rights often compete with each other – how do democratic societies address these contradictions? What religious matters and topics have gained political and social importance in recent years? How important is the gender gap in the context of migration and democracy? How is political participation to be improved at all political levels and what developments are discernible in different societies? What concepts of democracy are articulated in migration policy? How are populist tendencies to be interpreted vis-à-vis migration in democratic societies?

This conference will discuss the relationship between migration and democracy. We invite proposals for papers on the following topics:

- Theoretical perspectives on democracy and migration
- Empirical findings concerning social marginalisation and participation of migrants
- Objectives and legitimacy of migration policies in democratic societies
- Political and social rights of migrants and minorities in democratic societies
- Citizenship law, civil society and migration: New perspectives on political participation?
- Resistance and political involvement by migrants and (self-)organisation by migrants as a democratic form of articulation
- Migration and democracy in memory cultures

If you are interested in presenting, we kindly ask you to submit a short summary (500 words max.) with the title of your paper, a short biographical notice and a contact address (e-mail, telephone, and postal address). **Please use the online-form on www.irm-trier.de**

Deadline for proposals: 30th of December 2011
Feedback by the program committee: 10th of February 2012

Conference languages: German and English
Information and contact: www.irm-trier.de; Tagung2012@irm-trier.de

Members of the program committee
- Yasemin Ahi, IRM, Istanbul (Turkey)
- Philipp Eigenmann, IRM and University of Zurich (Switzerland)
- Dr. Thomas Geisen, IRM and Institute of Integration and Participation at the School of Social Work FHNW (Switzerland)
- Prof. Dr. Markus Ottersbach, University of Applied Sciences Cologne (Germany)
- Ass. Prof. Dr. Ulla Peters, IRM and University of Luxemburg (Luxemburg)
- Dr. Christine Riegel, University of Education Freiburg (Germany)
- Antoinette Reuter, Centre de Documentation sur les Migrations Humaines CDMH (Luxemburg)
- Prof. Dr. Karin Elinor Sauer, Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (Germany)
- Tobias Studer, IRM and Institute of Integration and Participation at the School of Social Work FHNW (Switzerland)
- Lisa Weiller, IRM, Winterthur (Switzerland)
- Prof. Dr. Erol Yildiz, Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Intercultural Education (Austria)