

## **International Workshop**



# **Migration, Citizenship, and Transnational Identities: Comparative Perspectives**

**Host:**

**Centre for the Study of Ethnocultural Diversity  
(ACSED)**

**Acadia University  
Wolfville, Nova Scotia  
Canada**

**October 7–9, 2010**

(FINAL DRAFT)

### **Workshop Goals:**

This event brings together scholars from Canada and six other countries in the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East to confront one of the most pressing global phenomena: the often marginal situation of migrants in an increasingly complex transnational environment. An absence of comparative scholarship still plagues migration studies, as most studies still document the experiences of migrants in isolated flows. Yet the global dispersion of labor migrants, the rise of diasporic communities, and the expansion of transnational practices all show the need for scholars to look at migrant experiences no longer as singular flows but instead to develop comparative frameworks for understanding migration and settlement. The pressing question is: how do we best approach comparative migration studies? This intensive workshop brings together engaged scholars from around the world to consider the need for comparative cultural and historical perspectives to better develop social policy concerning migration. Many of the workshop participants are members of leading research centres in the field, and come together with a goal of building a lasting network of collaboration among centres that study and celebrate ethnocultural diversity.

Workshop Participants:

**Stephen Ahern**, Centre for the Study of Ethnocultural Diversity, Acadia University (CANADA)

**Ruth Amir**, Political Science, Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel (ISRAEL)

**Joaquín Arango**, Center for the Study of Migration and Citizenship, Universidad Complutense de Madrid (SPAIN)

**Yvon Le Bot**, Centre d'Analyse et d'Intervention Sociologiques, CNRS/EHESS (FRANCE)

**Susie Bringham**, Education, Mount Saint Vincent University (CANADA)

**Alexandra Dobrowolsky**, Political Science, Saint Mary's University (CANADA)

**Terry Gibbs**, Centre for International Studies, Cape Breton University (CANADA)

**Danièle Joly**, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick (UK)

**Philip Marfleet**, Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees & Belonging, University of East London (UK)

**Marta Núñez Sarmiento**, Center for Studies of International Migrations, University of Havana (CUBA)

**Mark Westmoreland**, Anthropology, American University in Cairo (EGYPT)

Steering Committee:

**Jim Sacouman, Rachel Brickner, Jamie Whidden, James Brittain, Stephen Ahern**

Workshop Observers:

**Research Associates**, Centre for the Study of Ethnocultural Diversity, Acadia University

**Senior Students**, Course: SOCIOLOGY 2113 – Issues in Developing Societies, Acadia University



We are grateful for the generous support we have received from our sponsors.

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Major sponsor:



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada



P R O G R A M

**Thursday, Oct 7** GARDEN ROOM, K.C. IRVING CENTRE

6:00-7:30pm

**Opening Reception**

Welcoming remarks:

Jim Sacouman, ACSED Director

Tom Herman, Vice-President Academic, Acadia University

Ray Ivany, President and Vice-Chancellor, Acadia University

**Friday, Oct 8** ACADIA ROOM, K.C. IRVING CENTRE

**Workshop Meeting**

9:00-9:30 am

Introductions and coffee

9:30-10:45 am

**Stream: Migration, Neoliberalism, Economic Marginalization (Session I)**

Chair: Jim Brittain, ACSED

Philip Marfleet, "Neo-liberalism, Migration and the State"

Alexandra Dobrowolsky, "Migration and Marketization from Multiple Sites/Sights"

10:45-11:15 am

Coffee break

11:15-12:30 pm

**Stream: Citizenship and Transnational Cultures (Session I)**

Chair: Jamie Whidden, ACSED

Danièle Joly, "Muslim Women: Arenas of Collective Action"

Ruth Amir, "Citizenship, Religion and Transnational Cultures in a Jewish Democratic State"

1:45-3:00 pm

**Stream: Comparative and Transdisciplinary Methodologies (Session I)**

Chair: Jim Sacouman, ACSED

Joaquín Arango, "Comparing Migration Regimes"

Marta Núñez-Sarmiento, "The Gender Perspective in Comparative and Transdisciplinary Studies on Migration"

3:00-3:30 pm

Coffee break

3:30-5:00 pm

**Roundtable I: Accounting for Difference - The Value of Comparative Perspectives**

Facilitator: Stephen Ahern, ACSED

P R O G R A M

**Saturday, Oct 9** ACADIA ROOM, K.C. IRVING CENTRE  
**Workshop Meeting**

9:00-9:30 am Conversation and coffee

9:30-10:45 am **Stream: Migration, Neoliberalism, Economic Marginalization (Session II)**

Chair: Stephen Ahern, ACSED

Susie Brigham, "Women and the Transnational Homeplace: Implications for Social Policy"

Terry Gibbs, "The Political Economy of Forced Displacement in Colombia"

10:45-11:15 am Coffee break

11:15-12:15 pm **Stream: Citizenship and Transnational Cultures (Session II)**

Chair: Jamie Whidden, ACSED

Mark R. Westmoreland, "Documenting Defeat: The Disenchantment of the Lebanese Left"

1:45-3:00 pm **Stream: Comparative and Transdisciplinary Methodologies (Session II)**

Chair: Rachel Brickner, ACSED

Yvon Le Bot, "Migrants, Identities and Globalization"

Stephen Ahern, "Legacies of Forced Migration: A Comparative-Historical Perspective"

3:00-3:30 pm Coffee break

3:30-5:00 pm **Roundtable II: Next Steps: On Building a Network of Research Centres**

Facilitator: James Sacouman, ACSED



**STREAM: Migration, Neoliberalism, Economic Marginalization**

**Neo-liberalism, Migration and the State**

This paper considers the implications for migration of three decades of neo-liberal economic policy. It suggests that “marketisation” has reshaped economic and social relations in much of the Global South, with profound implications for patterns of forced migration. Problems of choice/constraint have become acute, producing accelerated mass displacement within and across borders, of which much passes through informal channels – unrecorded and “invisible” to official bodies.

The paper considers impacts of neo-liberal reform on structures of the state. It suggests that “accumulation by dispossession” has had a cumulative impact, manifested during crises such as that which affected Darfur in 2003 and which saw successive population movements across a host of states.

Using examples from Africa, Central America and the Middle East, the paper suggests that forced migration is now embedded in processes operating at the regional and global levels. It proposes that the current economic crisis is intensifying pressures on millions of people living at the margin of survival, and that state bodies – systematically weakened by the neo-liberal project - are ill-equipped to intervene. In the face of protests over falling incomes, and the price and availability of food and fuel, cross-border migration becomes a useful “venting” mechanism for authorities afflicted by deep crises of legitimacy. States of the North are increasingly preoccupied by domestic issues, with the result that “root causes” of poverty, social breakdown and displacement in the Global South receive decreasing attention and reduced resources. The paper suggests that crises of displacement are likely to become more acute, posing a significant challenge to regimes of migration control.

Philip Marfleet  
Associate Director, Centre for Research on Migration,  
Refugees & Belonging  
University of East London,  
UK

**Migration and Marketization from Multiple Sites/Sights**

While there is a significant body of scholarly work that exposes how neoliberalism has affected migration at global and national levels, particularly in countries of the global South, fewer studies have traced the commodification of immigration policy in the global North at the sub-national level. This paper endeavours to fill this research gap. It will explore how Canadian immigration policies that were once almost exclusively under the federal government’s purview are now being devolved with new strategies that provide provincial governments with increased control over immigration matters. More specifically, by comparing two provinces’ experiences with “provincial nominee programs”, and considering their implications in terms of gender, race, and class, as well as the respective, political, economic and cultural contexts in each province under study, the aim is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the repercussions of migration and marketization. As a result, the intent of this paper will be to consider migration, neoliberalism and economic marginalization from different sites and sights, and hopefully, provide new insights into these complex, and often contradictory, contemporary developments.

Alexandra Dobrowolsky  
Dept of Political Science  
Saint Mary’s University  
Canada

## **Women and the Transnational Homeplace: Implications for Social Policy**

Using examples from some of my recent research studies (involving migrants from, for example, Jamaica, the Philippines and Russia) I explore the ways in which social policies shape the experiences of migrant women, such as those who arrive in Canada via Internet mediated matchmaking agencies (often referred to as Mail Order Brides) and women who work legally or illegally as live-in caregivers (also referred to as Nannies, maids, or domestic workers). I assert that social policy concerning migration, which has evolved from colonialist discourse reflecting ethnocentric and patriarchal ideologies, does not adequately capture or address the transmigratory realities of women's lives or the cultural and historical perspectives of caregiving work in the Canadian homeplace. This has left severe 'gaps' in our analysis of migration, citizenship and transnational identities. This in turn has perpetuated a continuous evading of critical questions about the impact globalization processes have had on individual women's lives and their families. I assert that a more thorough understanding of the lived realities, specifically the complexities of the social, cultural, economic and political lives of those who are positioned outside of, or not adequately recognized within current social policy is required to inform a transformation in social policy and critical and creative problem-posing work from migrants' perspectives needs to (continue to) be researched in migration studies.

Susie Brigham  
Faculty of Education  
Mount Saint Vincent University  
Canada

## **The Political Economy of Forced Displacement in Colombia: A Structural Violence Perspective**

Colombia's current president Alvaro Uribe has been lauded by analysts for the success of his security and economic policies, which have allowed the country to attract dramatically-increased levels of foreign investment. Little attention, however, has been paid to what, in 2007, Doctor's Without Borders called "one of the top ten most under-reported humanitarian stories." Colombia ranks second in the world to Sudan in numbers of forcibly displaced persons with almost 4 million internal refugees—approximately 6 percent of the population. More than 90 percent of displacement in Colombia occurs in resource-rich rural regions where land is coveted by both domestic and multinational companies seeking to take advantage of neoliberal policies implemented over the previous two decades. This process has led to the swelling of Colombia's shantytowns where 80 percent of the population lives in extreme poverty. Lack of education and job skills are significant issues for many, particularly for Afro-Colombian and indigenous peoples who make up a disproportionate percentage of the displaced population. Using a political economy perspective, this paper explores the links between neoliberal policies, the government's security strategies, and displacement, placing the concrete experience of displaced people in the theoretical framework of structural violence.

Terry Gibbs  
Director, Centre for International Studies  
Cape Breton University  
Canada

## **STREAM: Citizenship and Transnational Cultures**

### **Muslim Women: Arenas of Collective Action**

Deriving from an in-depth empirical research project using action research, this paper considers the action of women of Muslim background in relation to the three major entities which are the theatre of their lives: the ethnic group, the religious group, and majority society. All three are traversed with contradictions within each and between them. Unequal relations of power characterise the interface between majority society on one hand and both ethnic minorities and Muslims on the other hand. But this does not signify that the relationship between ethnicity and Islam is free from tensions. Unequal relations of power also affect the women in relation to the men within all these entities. Muslim women have to situate themselves and their actions within this complex web of interactions, and their action is situated at the nexus of multiple tensions and contradictions within and between their various reference groups. For the women studied, the salience of Islam lies at the interface of contradictions between traditional culture and majority society: it is the sword for the Gordian knot of Muslim women. Indeed, total rejection of ethnic ties and Islamic norms with a complete alignment on those of majority society remains rare, particularly in Britain. This paper seeks to produce an account of the complexities of lives caught between cultures.

Danièle Joly  
Director, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations  
University of Warwick  
UK

### **Citizenship, Religion and Transnational Cultures in a Jewish Democratic State**

Israel seems to be light years away from Habermas' vision of the post-national state. While modern collective identity involved a shaky balance between universalism and particularism, liberal democracies have tilted the balance towards universalistic principles of justice. Israel has yet to balance the three partly-contradictory commitments that constitute the hard core of Israeli political and social order: colonialism, ethno-nationalism and democracy. The rhetoric of ethno-nationalism and of colonialism, which are the direct opposite of universalism, is based almost entirely on exclusion.

The global and local liberalization processes have deepened the diversity of Israeli society which was frowned upon by the Zionist ideology. These processes resulted in the incorporation into Israeli society of groups who challenge the established patterns of immigration. The proposed paper will analyze policies and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, opportunity and exploitation which are employed by the state with regard to the four recent groups of immigrants: immigrants from the former Soviet Union, Ethiopians, migrant workers and refugees (mainly from Sudan).

The paper will hold three parts. In the first part I will deal with the three citizenship discourses in Israel; namely, the liberal, republican and the ethno-nationalist. The second part will offer an analysis of the policies which are used to incorporate each of these groups (and their sub-groups) into society. I will examine the differential allocation of civil, political and social rights, which is legitimized and sustained through a particular conception of citizenship. The final part will discuss the manner in which the incorporation of these groups affects Israel's particularistic commitment to being both democratic and Jewish. While this commitment is quite unique, the Israeli case offers the most overt form of such tensions which characterize many liberal democracies today.

Ruth Amir  
Dept of Political Science

### **Documenting Defeat: The Disenchantment of the Lebanese Left**

The defeat of leftist revolutionary projects in the Middle East reverberates through the personal histories of many artists and intellectuals in Lebanon and illuminates the intimate desires and failures of ideological imaginaries. For instance, Mohamad Soueid's video, *My Heart Beats Only for Her* (2009), traces the transnational trajectories of the Arab Left from solidarity with Vietnam's colonial wars in the 1970s to Dubai labor flows nowadays. Disentangling this past means addressing the failure of the Left to achieve its revolutionary ambition. Rather than stories of heroism, Soueid and others express disenchantment with the fantasies of revolutionary struggle. And yet, the cosmopolitan secularism of these histories stands in contrast to the ethno-nationalism that typifies Lebanon's sectarian battles. This paper will detail the way Lebanese filmmakers critically appraise this situation in order to question the potential for cosmopolitan civil society when national narratives of defeat replace the revolutionary ambitions of secular politics.

Mark R. Westmoreland  
Dept of Sociology and Anthropology  
The American University in Cairo  
Egypt

### **STREAM: Comparative and Transdisciplinary Methodologies**

#### **Comparing Migration Regimes**

Migration regimes can be defined as the different sets of ways in which different immigration receiving societies try to regulate the admission of immigrants and their incorporation to society and the nation, or their exclusion thereof. Their importance can hardly be overstated. As Kingsley Davis wrote two decades ago, migration is a creature of policies. The dictum should be nuanced by adding the clause *inter alia*, as other factors obviously concur. Yet, policies play a prominent role in shaping migration flows and their consequences. The same could be said of integration, except that in this case the *inter alia* clause is even more necessary, as the number of determinants is larger. And things can be made more complex if the migration-integration nexus is duly recognized. In turn, migration regimes are a creature of a host of factors, socio-economic, political, cultural, and historical in nature. The paper will posit that three major types of migration regimes – and maybe a fourth, still in the making - can be identified in the world of our days, and will try to explore their defining characteristics, determinants and implications.

Joaquín Arango  
Director, Center for the Study of Migration  
and Citizenship  
Complutense University of Madrid  
Spain

#### **The Gender Perspective in Comparative and Transdisciplinary Studies on Migration**

This paper examine how the gender perspective produces new knowledge on migration and transnational gender identities by means of studying the gender distinctiveness of recent Cuban migrants, and its value to address political topics. Through this case study I will highlight the wisdom of the gender perspective to understand how the social and historical structures in native countries mould gender identities in migrants that are vital to understanding their capabilities to acquire or not new transnational identities in host countries. Its hierarchical meaning helps to disentangle the network of repressions and power in the processes of migrant integration and settlement. I will criticize scholarly views considered universal on



migration and remittances as part of the “common sense” of global economic integration. Finally I will deal with the need to obtain a learning balance between the commitment of scholars devoted to comparative migration studies and transnational identities -- being themselves involved in these processes -- and their detachment on analyzing these topics.

Marta Núñez-Sarmiento  
Center for Studies of International Migrations  
University of Havana  
Cuba

### **Migrants, Identities and Globalization**

What are the forms, meanings and limits to collective action and cultural invention among migrants today? Under what conditions and to what extent can the persons and groups in peripheral societies and communities, bound up in global flows of migration, economy and culture, establish themselves as protagonists of social conflicts and as creators of their own images and their representations of the world? How are individual and collective identities deconstructed and reconstructed through migration?

Migrants live through dramatic and often tragic experiences, but they are never totally alone or entirely without hope. In spite of precariousness, discrimination and overexploitation, they are part of circuits and networks and are lifted by dreams, strategies and plans. They strive to overcome trauma and to put back the pieces of their lives. They reconstruct changing identities that are always fragile.

In the case of migrants, more than any other population, identity is a fleeting, slippery category, the frontier of which is an internalized dimension - a personal experience.

Yvon Le Bot  
Centre d'Analyse et d'Intervention Sociologiques, CNRS  
l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales  
France

### **Legacies of Forced Migration: A Comparative-Historical Perspective**

This paper addresses the current lack of historized understanding of forced migration practices. It argues for a method of comparative analysis that takes into account the patterns of past events in order better to understand the implications of present day crises. The paper also argues for a method of situated discourse analysis, since key to stopping abuse of forced migrants is to listen to their own lived experience, and to critically interrogate the rhetoric used by state actors past and present to either exclude or cover over those realities on the ground. I provide results of recent research into the transatlantic slave trade and the expulsion of the Acadian people, as case studies in how lessons learned from the past can better inform analysis of present migration and can encourage development of just policies to deal with the fluid movements of populations in our day.

Stephen Ahern  
Centre for the Study of Ethnocultural Diversity  
Acadia University  
Canada