



# KNOWMIG

## Project Highlights

Expanding the Knowledge Base of European Labour Migration Policies

Marie Curie Excellence Grant, 2004-2008

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### About KNOWMIG

The KNOWMIG project explored the relationships between social knowledge, migration decisions, and policy-making on immigration. It addressed two main sets of questions:

- How does the dissemination of knowledge about policy change influence east-west European migration? How is such information channeled through migrant networks? Do established networks and 'cultures of migration' facilitate or impede adaptation to new opportunities? (*Project One*)
- How do policy-makers produce and draw on social knowledge about immigration? What are the different functions of expert knowledge in policy-making? Is it valued as a means of problem-solving, or in order to legitimise policy-makers and their decisions? (*Project Two*)

The research was carried out by a team of five social scientists, initially based at the Hamburg Institute of International Economics and then at the School of Social and Political Studies, University of Edinburgh. The 4-year project was financed by a Marie Curie Excellence Grant of almost € 1 million.



### Project One Analysing East-West European Migration Flows

This project involved two main parts. The first was a *qualitative analysis* of networks, policy change and mobility. We examined how changes such as EU enlargements, regularisations, or new labour migration programmes, influenced patterns of emigration from four locations in Poland and Romania. Drawing on interviews with almost 100 people in places of origin and destination, we analysed how information on policy change is disseminated through networks, and how networks mediate responses to new opportunities.



## Project Two Uses of Knowledge in Policy

This project explored the uses of research in migration policy-making in Europe. It developed a typology of the different political functions of expert knowledge: knowledge as a means of adjusting output; to substantiate policies; or as a source of legitimation.

The framework was applied to analyse patterns of knowledge use in three organisations: the British Home Office, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, and the European Commission. Each of these agencies established a new research programme between 2001-4.

The project also examined the use of research in political debates on labour migration in Germany and the UK. It compared how politicians and the media deploy research to substantiate claims, and how far expertise was considered authoritative in debates.

Research drew on interviews and participant observation; and analysis of policy documents, political discourse and print media.

The second part applied *econometric methods* to explore temporary migration from selected East European countries. It addressed two types of questions. First, it analysed the determinants of temporary, employment related mobility and return migration, including the impact of social networks and peer effects. Second, it examined the behaviour of temporary migrants both while abroad and upon return, including issues of occupational mobility and performance, savings and remittances, and labour market and entrepreneurial activities. The research drew on European Labour Force Survey and World Bank data on returnees to Central and East Europe, and national labour force data for Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Baltic countries.

### Research Highlights:

#### Policy Change, Networks and Mobility

Our qualitative research found that migration networks facilitate adjustment to policy change, allowing established transmigrant communities to take advantage of new policies. Information on opportunities is disseminated more effectively by integrated or overlapping networks (as opposed to those restricted to a small kinship network or village). The implication is that networks have a strong mediating role in shaping migration decisions.

This was borne out by econometric analysis which showed that network effects and social ties are the most significant determinant of migration decisions – outweighing factors such as employment or income differentials.

However, networks can also create path dependency, impeding the take-up of opportunities in new destinations. In Romania, for example, older networks were less flexible in responding to EU enlargement opportunities.

Networks can also help migrants circumvent official channels for movement, work and stay. Thus regularisations or changes in visa regimes can have unintended effects, prompting an increase in irregular movement or work to try to exploit loopholes in the new provisions.

Women can play a gate-keeping function in networks, negotiating which people in places of origin receive information on job openings in places of destination. This can be a strategy for protecting their jobs in a competitive domestic work sector.

Research on networks and return across different CE countries supports the notion of a 'socially expected' length of time spent abroad, especially for young people. Most returnees show above average wages or entrepreneurial activity, implying that former migrants climb the occupational ladder on return.

## Events

We organised four workshops in the course of the project.

- *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Migration Theory*, Hamburg, June 2005
- *New Patterns of East West Migration*, Hamburg, November 2005
- *Decentralized Migration Policy in Europe*, Edinburgh, November 2006 (jointly with the IMISCOE Network).
- *Migration and Security: Challenges to the Liberal State*, Edinburgh, August 2007 (jointly with the CHALLENGE Network)

We are currently developing themes from the project through an ESRC seminar series, organised together with Andrew Geddes (University of Sheffield). This involves four workshops on 'Migration Policy and Narratives of Societal Steering', and will result in a special issue and a co-authored monograph on *Migration and Mobility in the European Union* (Palgrave, 2009).



## Research Highlights:

### Knowledge Use in Policy-Making

Research is frequently valued by policy-makers as a source of legitimacy, rather than a means of adjusting policy. This is especially likely where: (a) policy impacts are diffuse; (b) there is intense rivalry between agencies; (c) the policy community is highly specialised.

Where organisations are under intense political pressure, they tend to draw on applied 'management' research to help meet targets, rather than academic studies.

Research units within ministries often face a trade-off between retaining scientific standards and meeting organisational needs. In most cases, they opt for either scientific credibility but limited research use by officials; or applied management research.

In areas of risk, research is often accorded a central role in political debate. However, politicians and the media deploy rival knowledge claims in a highly symbolic way. Science loses its authority, and 'technocratic' debates become largely ritualistic.

## Knowledge Exchange

Our research implies the need for more systematic knowledge about migrant networks in planning migration policy. It offers suggestions about how to model such dynamics to help forecast the impacts of policy change. The project also yielded insights about common impediments to knowledge transfer, and good practice in delivering expert knowledge to guide policy.

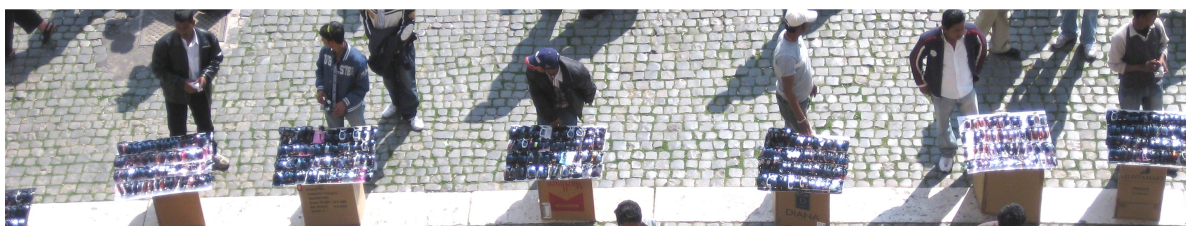
Through publications and events we have shared our findings with various knowledge users.

- ❖ In 2005 the UN Global Commission on International Migration commissioned us to write its regional paper on migration in Europe.
- ❖ Together with colleagues in Hamburg, in 2005 we advised the European Commission on methods for projecting labour shortages.
- ❖ We participated as experts in the German branch of the European Migration Network.
- ❖ In Autumn 2006 we briefed policy-makers on labour migration at a round-table in the Scottish Parliament.
- ❖ We briefed staff at the ILO on research in migration policy.
- ❖ We have written a series of Policy Briefs, available on our website.

See: [www.migration-networks.org](http://www.migration-networks.org).

## Publications

- Monographs: *The Political Uses of Expert Knowledge: Immigration Policy and Social Research* Cambridge University Press (2009), C. Boswell.
- Special Issues: *The New Face of East-West Migration in Europe*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 34:5. (June 2008), ed. T. Elrick & A. Favell.  
*Economics in Migration Research: Towards Interdisciplinary Integration*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 34:4 (March 2008), ed. C. Boswell & P. R. Mueser.
- Articles: 'Migration Networks and Policy Impacts: Insights from Romanian-Spanish Migrations', *Global Networks* (forthcoming 2009), T. Elrick and O. Ciobanu.  
'Culture, utility or social systems? Explaining the cross-national ties of emigrants from Borsa, Romania', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (forthcoming), C. Boswell and O. Ciobanu.  
'Matching and Making Labour Demand and Supply: Agents in Polish Migrant Networks of Domestic Elderly Care in Germany and Italy', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34:5 (2008), T. Elrick & E. Lewandowska.  
'Social Interactions in Economic Models of Migration: A Review and Appraisal', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34:4 (2008), D. Radu.  
'Combining Economics and Sociology in Migration Theory', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34:4 (2008), C. Boswell.  
'The Influence of Migration on Origin Communities: Insights from Polish Migrations to the West', *Europe Asia Studies* (forthcoming 2008), T. Elrick.  
'Returns to Return Migration and Determinants of Subsequent Mobility', *European Association of Labour Economists* (2007), D. Radu & G. S. Epstein.  
'The Political Functions of Expert Knowledge: Knowledge and Legitimation in European Union Immigration Policy', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15:4 (2008), C. Boswell.  
'Knowledge, Legitimation and the Politics of Risk: The Functions of Research in Public Debates on Migration', *Political Studies*, 56:3 (2008), C. Boswell.  
'Evasion, Reinterpretation and Decoupling: European Commission responses to the 'External Dimension' of Immigration and Asylum', *West European Politics*, 31:3 (2008), C. Boswell.  
'Migration Control in Europe after 9/11: Explaining the Absence of Securitization', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 45:3 (2007), C. Boswell.  
'Theorising Migration Policy: Is There a Third Way?', *International Migration Review*, 41:1 (2007), C. Boswell.  
'Politicising Migration: Opportunity or Liability for the Centre-Right in Germany', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15:3 (2008), C. Boswell & D. Hough.
- Book Chapters 'The Determinants and Labour Market Impact of Romanian Emigration', in K. F. Zimmermann (ed.) *EU Enlargement and Labour Markets* (Springer Press, forthcoming 2009), D. Radu.  
,Der Einfluss von Migration auf die Herkunftsgemeinden. Fallstudien polnisch-deutscher Migrationen', in M. Nowicka (ed.) *Von Polen nach Deutschland und zurück. Die Arbeitsmigration und ihre Herausforderungen für Europa* (Bielefeld: Transcript: 2007) T. Elrick & E. Lewandowska.  
'Changing patterns of Polish labour migration after UK's opening of the labour market? Insights from rural case studies in the voivodship Opolskie and Swietokrzyskie', in K. Burrell (ed.) *Polish Migration to the UK in the 'New' EU: After 2004* (Ashgate, forthcoming 2009), T. Elrick & E. Brinkmeier.  
'Migration Policy Debates in Europe after 9/11: Securitization, Embedded Liberalism, or the Quest for Legitimation?', in T.E. Givens, G.P. Freeman & D.L. Leal (eds.) *Immigration Policy and Security* (New York: Routledge, 2008), C. Boswell.  
'Migration in Europe", in B. Marshall (ed.) *The Politics of Migration: A Survey* (London: Routledge, 2006), C. Boswell.  
'Politici de migrație și strategii ale migranților transnaționali între România și Spania', in R. Anghel and I. Horvath (eds.) *Sociologia Migrației* (Iasi: Polirom 2008), O. Ciobanu & T. Elrick.



## Project Team



Dr. Christina Boswell (politics) coordinated the project, and carried out project two.



Dragos Radu (economics) was responsible for the quantitative and econometric analysis.



Tim Elrick (social geography) coordinated the field work in Poland and Romania and was responsible for the qualitative analysis in project one.



Oana Ciobanu (sociology) was researcher on the Romanian case study.



Emilia Lewandowska-Brinkmeier (sociology) was researcher on the Polish case study.

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