



The 39th World
Congress of the
International Institute
of Sociology
Yerevan, Armenia

JUNE 11-14, 2009

www.iisoc.org/iis2009

Title of Session: Political Mobilisation of Immigrant and Minority Groups in Western Europe

Name of Session Convener(s): Bodemann, Michal

University/Organization incl. City: University of Toronto

Chair: Bodemann, Michal

University/Organization incl. City: University of Toronto

Abstract: Antonio Gramsci argues that organic crises in society, such as Black or immigrant political resistance, erupt not simply in the class struggle but also in industrial and economic life and in debates about sexual, moral, and intellectual questions in relation to political representation. Drawing on this argument, this panel aims to critically discuss the mobilization of immigrant and minority groups in various areas of social and political life in Western Europe. We bring together scholars who will discuss the political representation and agency of immigrants and minorities. Focusing on political mobilization, we would like to uncover the processes that immigrants and minorities become political actors. As an extension of this, we will discuss on how political, legal and social structures of Western societies are being transformed by minorities and immigrants.

The following questions will be the focus of this panel: What are the social implications of legal and political processes that concern immigrant and minority communities? In turn, how do immigrant communities and minorities react to the legal decisions and social policies that affect minorities and immigrants? What are the common strategies that immigrants and minorities take on in order to deal with ethnic, religious and racial discrimination in Western Europe? Our explorations of these questions highlight changing political, social and legal discourses around religion, ethnicity and gender in Western Europe.

I) Title of Selected Paper: TBA

Name/s of Author/s: Bodemann, Michal

University/Organization incl. City: University of Toronto

Abstract: -

II) Title of Selected Paper: Mobilising gender: patterns of integration of migrant women in the Republic of Ireland

Name/s of Author/s: De Tona, Carla ; Lentin, Ronit

University/Organization incl. City: Trinity Immigration Initiative, Trinity College Dublin

Abstract: According to a recent study, there are 190 migrant organisations in the Republic of Ireland (Prospectus 2008). Of these, we found 30 women migrants' organisations. These migrant organisations signify the growth in the migrant populations in Ireland but also a new mode of integration and membership in Irish polity and civil society in which migrants permeate public spheres and alter their forms of participation (Soysal 1997). In this paper, we analyse the gendered operation of social and political participation by looking at the case of 13 migrant women groups we have worked with. Migrant women in Ireland have become visible and active subjects of the transformation engendered by contemporary migration in Ireland. Our study found that migrant women organisations tend to have very loose identitarian boundaries, often being multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-faith. These organisations are sustained by inclusive and expanding networks, interlinked at the national, European and global level with other women's organisations. Without assuming that women possess 'superior' networking and communication skills, the paper aims to highlight how migrant women maximise resources while linking with each other and adapting traditional gendered patterns of connectivity. Migrant women's activism counteracts the vulnerability and marginality migrant women face in Ireland, impacts on changing the character of Irish society and shifts the centre of gender normativities. The paper problematises the power relations in which women's organisations and their modes of resistance are embedded.

III) Title of Selected Paper: Memorial to the Murdered Sinti and Roma of Europe: hierarchies of victimhood and contests of representation

Name/s of Author/s: Blumer, Nadine

University/Organization incl. City: University of Toronto, Department of Sociology
Freie Universität, Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies, visiting graduate fellow

Abstract: Karen Till (2004) writes that through "place-making" – the process of claiming and marking social space – people can return to the past and confront lingering injustice. My research draws on this notion of place by considering the negotiation, debate and planning of a memorial in Berlin to the Sinti and Roma murdered in the Holocaust. In 1993, following drawn-out media debates about the inclusion of Sinti/Roma victimization into initial plans of the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the idea of a joint memorial was eventually rejected. Accusations of a "hierarchy of victimhood" erupted from German Sinti/Roma political leaders. The German government responded by approving construction of a separate memorial in the capital city to the Sinti/Roma victims. Soon after, a new series of debates emerged, this

time between Sinti/Roma political leaders regarding the dedication to be inscribed on the memorial plaque. Ongoing conflict has obstructed construction for almost a decade. In this paper, I situate the proposed memorial as a site upon which – both literally and metaphorically – the political mobilization of a minority population is played out and represented. The contest between the Jewish and Sinti/Roma memorials, and later between various Sinti/Roma leaders is ultimately about claiming ideological ownership of the history these memorials are intended to commemorate. Analysis of the proposed Sinti/Roma memorial – and the ways in which it is represented and debated in contemporary German society – offers a unique position from which to explore specific themes related to the Holocaust’s “forgotten victims.”

IV) Title of Selected Paper: Impact of Class Background and Migration History on Educational Attainment: A Study with the 2005 German Mikrozensus

Name/s of Author/s: Reichl, Renee Luthra

University/Organization incl. City: UCLA ; Freie Universität, Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies, visiting graduate fellow

Abstract: Educational attainment is the most critical intervening variable between social origins and destinations^{i[i]}. Although immigrants to Germany generally stem from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, if their children obtain educational and vocational qualifications, their life chances are much more likely to converge with Germans without a migration background. In other words, the intergenerational assimilation of immigrants depends on the educational attainment of the second and later generations.

Unfortunately, prior work on the educational attainment of immigrant children uniformly demonstrates that they have poorer educational outcomes than Germans without an immigration background. Drawing primarily on comparisons between German nationals and foreign guest workers and their children, explanations for this finding are numerous: on the one hand, many researchers argue that the children of immigrants perform poorly because they are the children of negatively selected, economically disadvantaged immigrants^{ii[iii]}, finding that after controlling for the social background of immigrant children, very little ethnic inequality remains. On the other hand, other scholars argue that migrant specific disadvantages such as institutional discrimination^{iii[iv]}, a lack of citizenship^{iv[v]}, school segregation^{v[vi]}, and language ability, among other variables, also play a large role in creating immigrant/non-immigrant inequality in educational attainment in Germany, even net of class background.

These conclusions remain tentative, however, because while former guest workers may be the most visible of the foreign born in Germany, as of 2005 they comprise only 32% of Germans with a migration background^{vi[vii]}. Former guest workers are also unusually homogeneous in terms of their low human capital, poor labour market performance, region of residence, time of migration, and context of reception. In contrast, the ethnic German *Aussiedler*, asylum seekers, and more recent EU migrants who comprise the remaining 68% of the migrant population display a bifurcated human capital distribution, report variation in German language skills, and arrived through different legal channels that are likely to impact their and their children’s integration. Given these differences, it is impossible to extrapolate from the experience of guest worker’s children to the situation of immigrant integration in Germany more generally. Initial comparisons between the children of guest workers and other migrants is suggestive of considerable variation in educational performance,^{vii[viii]} but has yet to be systematically confirmed with nationally representative data.

i[i] Hout, Micheal and Thomas A. Diprete. 2005. "What we have learned: RC28's contributions to knowledge about social stratification" *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 24:1 pp. 1-20.; Breen, Richard und Ruud Luijkx. 2004. "Social Mobilty in Europe between 1970 and 2000" pp.37-75 in: Richard Breen (ed): *Social Mobility in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ii[ii]Kalter, Frank, Nadia Granato and Cornelia Kristen. 2007 „Disentangling recent trends of the second generation's structural assimilation in Germany“ pp.214-245 in: Stefani Scherer, Reinhard Pollak, Gunnar Otte, Markus Gangl(eds): *From Origin to Destination: Trends and Mechanisms in Social Stratification Research*. Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag.; Kristen, Cornelia and Nadia Granato. 2004. "Bildungsinvestitionen in Migrantenfamilien" pp. 123-141 in: Klaus Bade and Micheal Bommers: *Migration – Integration – Bildung* (IMIS-Beiträge No. 23) Osnabrück: Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies.

iii[iii] Gomolla, Mechtild and Frank-Olaf Radtke. 2002. *Institutionelle Diskriminierung. Die Herstellung ethnischer Differenz in der Schule*. Opladen: Leske und Budrich.

iv[iv]Ministerium für Generationen, Familie, Frauen und Integration des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. 2008. *Nordrhein-Westfalen: Land der neuen Integrationschancen: 1. Integrationsbericht der Landesregierung*. <http://www.integration.nrw.de/>

5 Stanat, Petra. 2006. Schulleistungen von Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund: Die Rolle der Zusammensetzung der Schülerschaft. p. 189-219 in J. Baumert, P. Stanat & R. Watermann (eds), *Herkunftsbedingte Disparitäten im Bildungswesen: Differenzielle Bildungsprozesse und Probleme der Verteilungsgerechtigkeit*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

vi[vi] Statistisches Bundesamt 2007. *Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit: Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund – Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2005*. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt.

vii[vii] Weiss, Karin. & Thränhardt, D. 2005. *SelbstHilfe. Wie Migranten Netzwerke knüpfen und soziales Kapital schaffen*. Freiburg: Lambertus; Fuchs, Marek and Micheala Sixt. 2008. „Die Bildungschancen von Aussiedlerkindern“ *SOEP Working Paper* 105