Europe in crisis – migrations, racisms and belongings in the new economic order

19-20 April 2012
Karl-Franzens Universität Graz
Graz, Austria

Conference Theme

The economic crisis has destabilised the European project and made visible tensions between Europe as imagined by its political and economic elites and the ordinary peoples of Europe. Before the crisis the dominant political narrative was of an increasingly open European space within which goods, people and knowledge would circulate. In an early formulation of this Europe was imagined as a bulwark against American cultural, political and economic dominance. This was partly captured in the language of the ‘learning society’ and discourses of ‘lifelong learning’. However, more recently, elite interests have transformed these more egalitarian sounding terms into Europe as a ‘knowledge-based economy’. The mobility of goods, people and knowledge become commodities re-designed in the interests of capital accumulation. But this might suggest a shift from a more inclusive to a more exclusive regime. Whether it is the ‘learning society’ or the ‘knowledge-based economy’ the key points of tension have remained the same. It is the mobility of people, whether historic or current, that appears to challenge Europe’s self-understanding of itself, to challenge the very idea of being European. The positive and self-confident tones of the language of European expansion and integration disguise its historic formation in opposition to an ‘other’. The primary focus of this ‘other’ changes over time and from place to place. The formation of the European Economic Community was a deliberate attempt to avoid the repetition of events that led to the Shoah and to expunge from Europe’s self-identity the need to define itself as against its internal Jewish ‘other’ as part of its Christian identity. Modern Europe has defined itself as ‘Fortress Europe’ and as bulwark, not against American imperialism, but against the poor, dispossessed and oppressed of Africa and Asia. The ‘migrant’ became, and continues to be, the nodal point around which exclusionary policies and right wing politics is organised. This has also been a feature of tensions between ‘old’ and ‘new’ or ‘West’ and ‘East’ Europe. These tensions have been racialised, particularly in relation to the Roma peoples. Since 9/11 Europe’s ‘other’ has been depicted by Islam. This creates a dual process of antagonism both towards Europe’s internal Muslim communities, and against Islam on its borders. In recent times we have seen this explode into public policy debate in France and Switzerland. We have seen the rise of populist right wing parties mobilised against Islam and the increasingly racialised and anti-Islamic language of politics in general. It seems inevitable that the current economic crisis will exacerbate these issues, especially as the majority of ‘established Europe’ prepares to open their borders to the Accession states.

This conference focuses on the economisation of migration, difference, diversity and belonging. The conference aims to critically examine the particular chain of meaning that characterises the elite imagination: the knowledge-based economy reconceptualises migration and belonging in economic terms, privileging issues of labour migration and economic belonging. This has been translated into an emerging convergence across Europe around policies of managed migration structured by high and low skill routes into labour markets. This high/low
skill binary is radicalised, gendered and classed with women and poor people of colour directed into the low pay, insecure and most exploitative sectors of European economies. This is related to the re-emergence of assimilationist policies across Europe. Allied to this is an ongoing experience of forced migration either in terms of sex slavery or undocumented labour.

Sub-themes

This conference is aimed at all those affected by the above processes and discourses, interested in, researching, politically or professionally engaged in relation to these issues. **The conference is a space for critical dialogue with the aim of raising issues for the field of adult education but not necessarily by those in the field of adult education.** A key concern for this conference is what role should adult education play in relation to these issues. Can adult education play a role in the building of solidarity from below and contributing to the building of a Europe comfortable with difference and is active against discrimination, or is adult education, particularly in its formal modes, relegated to reproducing the social order? Therefore the conference is being organised around 5 sub-themes that will enable such a dialogue:

- **Labour market integration:** What are the mechanisms of integration and do they produce inclusion and acceptance? Who is integrated into the labour market and where?

- **Managing migration:** How are different groups distinguished and managed in migration policy, and what is the impact? How is access to education managed and what are the barriers to participation?

- **The dignity of migration:** How do concepts such as dignity and respect relate to the process of migration? What kinds of dignity are available to migrants and how is it constructed?

- **The feminisation of migration:** How does gender influence and impact on the experience of migration?

- **The role of adult education in relation to migration:** How does adult education encourage critical reflection on society, particularly in relation to issues of racism, migration and xenophobia? Does adult education engage in solidarity building or is it merely reproducing social inequalities?

Call for Papers

Proposals are invited for papers related to the conference questions. Abstracts should be one side of A4 maximum (450 words in 12 point) and should include a title but not the author/s name/s or institution/s. These should be stated in the email accompanying the abstract together with name, institutional affiliation, and contact details. Authors should indicate which of the conference sub-themes they are addressing. Abstracts should be submitted in the first instance to Annette Sprung by e-mail on annette.sprung@uni-graz.at.
Conference Fee
€ 80/30 ESREA Member (Individual/Student)
€ 130/80 Non-ESREA Member (Individual/Student)

Fees will include refreshments and lunches on both conference days. A Conference dinner (optional) on Thursday evening will be additional.

Bursaries
A limited number of bursaries are available to Doctoral students who are individual members of ESREA, or studying at an institution which has institutional membership of ESREA. To be eligible, your paper must have been accepted for the conference. Applications for bursaries should be submitted by the deadline for paper proposals. Bursaries are normally € 300, and may be used to cover all or part of the cost of travel and accommodation. Applications should be made by 28 November 2011. The Migration, Racism and Xenophobia Research Network will provide a bursary for 1 additional student. By accepting the bursary the student is responsible to participate in the conference, and after the conference the student needs to provide the secretary of ESREA with the receipt/s of the air fare, hotel etc, for which the bursary was used (the receipt/s sent to the secretary needs to cover the 300 Euros). If such conditions cannot be accommodated, the bursary will have to be repaid to ESREA.

ALL APPLICATIONS FOR BURSARIES SHOULD BE MADE TO THE CONFERENCE ORGANISERS.

Important Dates

All abstracts for papers to be submitted by 15 November 2011.
Response of acceptance of paper proposals by 16 December 2011
Final papers (of no more than 3000 words) should be submitted by 18 February 2012
Final deadline for registration: 18 February 2012

Organising Committee
Annette Sprung, Angela Pilch-Ortega Hernández & Helga Moser, Institut für Erziehungs- und Bildungswissenschaft der K.F.-Universität Graz, Austria; Rozalia Ligus, Instytut Pedagogiki (Faculty of Education), Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa (University of Lower Silesia), Poland; Simon Warren, School of Education, The University of Sheffield, UK; Joke Vandenabeele, Faculteit Psychologie en Pedagogische Wetenschappen (Laboratory for Education and Society), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium; Linda Morrice, Centre for Community Engagement, University of Sussex, UK.

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Conference information will be updated on our website (www.uni-graz.at/esrea-migration2012/).