

**Short Summary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop on Migrating Identities: Measurement,  
6 June 2017, Utrecht\***

Summary Date: July 7, 2017

Migration and integration are inherently multidimensional and complex phenomena. Taking off from this broad motivation, Merve Burnazoglu (Utrecht University) organized a workshop on the measurement of migration and integration in collaboration with the Dutch Association for Migration Research (DAMR).

The main aim of the workshop was to inquire the issues of measurement by carrying these into the intersection of an unordinary gathering of several disciplines for two reasons: First, to investigate measurement issues about migration. Second, to investigate disciplinary differences, boundaries and interactions relating to measurement issues in migration studies. These two investigations were not separated but discussed simultaneously.

The structure of the workshop was built around the following four pillars, which appeared to be very fruitful, particularly by bringing them together, which was on itself a unique attempt of this kind:

1. Measurement of Migration – from a philosophy of science perspective
2. Measurement of Migration – from the perspective of economics of migration
3. Measurement of Migration – from a political science perspective
4. Measurement of Migration – from a social science perspective

Combining these diverse approaches and aiming to stretch borders between social disciplines, this workshop aimed at looking at the issues from a holistic perspective. Participants included non-migration scholar economists, migration economists, philosophers and historians of science and measurement, and migration scholars from sociology, political science, law, and anthropology. Interactions between different backgrounds led to a constructive and fruitful discussion. It was a unique opportunity that allowed the participants to familiarize with very different perspectives, which might contribute to their own research. Providing a platform for such interactions appeared to create a good case of multidisciplinary inquiry of *Measuring Migration and Integration*.

A few results, based on my own understanding, can be drawn from the workshop discussion:

**1. Measurement of migration and integration is, indeed, of such relevance that it requires significant effort and attention.** Ranging from designing measurement to categorization, from selection of indicators to data collection and production, each process and procedure will potentially influence studies on migration and integration significantly. Because these processes and procedures, in the end, may be used for policy-making purposes, they will also affect migration itself.

**2. Making of numbers and objectivity have a complicated relationship.** One could see the making of numbers and measurement to be political and potentially manipulable processes. However, it is not an easy task to identify such manipulation mechanisms and the processes during which the judgments affect measurement.

**3. Are economists of migration also migration scholars?** Migration is usually investigated by sociologists, political scientists, and anthropologists. Economists has been adopting the topic as well; however, they do not seem to be interacting with the migration scholars from the other disciplines. They investigate migration mostly by employing models and methods from the subfields of economics such as labor market analysis. These methods are quite different than those of other social scientists and this may be the reason for economists' limited interaction with other social scientists working on migration and integration.

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**4. Philosophy and methodology should be applied to migration studies.** Research methods applicable to migration and integration studies should be of interest to any migration scholar. Philosophers, methodologists, and historians of science and, in particular, of economics, conduct systematic studies of methods, models, research tools, and measurement practices of any topic. Methodological concepts that result from such systematic studies, such as *lab versus field investigations*, *the problem of passive observations*, *representation*, and *identification*, *commensurability of social phenomena*, *measurability of the phenomena of the dynamic properties*, are relevant for the study of migration and integration. Migration studies can benefit from these systematic investigations of measurement issues.

The workshop discussion has sparked new questions to be developed and discussed next year, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Migrating Identities Workshop.

**The four pillars of the workshop and presenters:**

1. Measurement of Migration – from a philosophy of science perspective

Marcel Boumans (Utrecht University), *Identification is Measurement*

2. Measurement of Migration – from the perspective of economics of migration

Hendrik van den Berg (University of Nebraska; University of Massachusetts),

*Measuring the Macroeconomic Demand Effects of Immigration*

3. Measurement of Migration – from a political science perspective

Mark van Ostaijen (Erasmus University Rotterdam, Tilburg University),

*The Politics of Numbers: Counting European mobile workers in the Netherlands*

4. Measurement of Migration – from a social science perspective

Leydi Johana van den Braken (Utrecht University),

*A Social Science Perspective on Measuring Non-Migration*

## **1. Measurement of Migration – from a philosophy of science perspective**

**Marcel Boumans** (Utrecht University), *Identification is Measurement*

**Abstract:** Measurement is mapping aspects of the world into numbers such that those numbers represents these aspects in a reliable way. Although this statement comprises several problematic terms, I will focus on “aspects of the world.” A presumption of measurement is that one has reached consensus about what the “measurand” is. In the process of reaching consensus, theory plays only a minor role, and instead, pragmatic considerations, often of a political nature, are more often prevailing. This presentation will show that reaching consensus about the measurand is similar to model building, which is an integrative process of various kinds of elements, including values and political ideas.

## **2. Measurement of Migration –from the perspective of economics of migration**

**Hendrik van den Berg** (University of Nebraska; University of Massachusetts),

*Measuring the Macroeconomic Demand Effects of Immigration*

**Abstract:** In the paper I discuss how immigrants' role as consumers balances the supply-side effects of immigrants as workers and innovators. It is well-known that macroeconomic stability requires both aggregate demand and aggregate supply to grow in a consistent manner. The conventional focus on immigrants as workers, and sometimes as innovators, only reveals the supply side of the equation. In the paper, I discuss the ways in which we can measure the demand-side effects of immigration. Based on my estimates of the demand effects of immigration, I conclude by analyzing whether, from a macroeconomic perspective, immigration is likely to be stabilizing or destabilizing.

## **3. Measurement of Migration – from a political science perspective**

**Mark van Ostaijen** (Erasmus University Rotterdam, Tilburg University),

*The Politics of Numbers: Counting European mobile workers in the Netherlands*

**Abstract:** Numbers and data collection play a key role in political framing. To explore how this works, I will provide with a case-study analysis of European mobile workers in the Netherlands. Following the increase of intra-European movement, European mobile workers have emerged as an important but contested policy target group for receiving countries. I will show how numbers contributed to their framing process. It reveals how frames legitimize the strategic usage of numbers and the indication of issues as problems. This contributes to our understanding of numbers as non-neutral, innocent or self-evident devices in policy and politics.

## **4. Measurement of Migration – from a social science perspective**

**Leydi Johana van den Braken** (Utrecht University),

*A Social Science Perspective on Measuring Non-Migration*

**Abstract:** In migration models, economic aspects of migration are usually stressed, such as the need for employment. However, in recent years the role of non-economic aspects of migration are more and more recognized. These non-economic aspects are also less easily expressed in meaningful numbers. This workshop is about how to combine different streams of thought (the economic, sociological and even psychological), and how this can lead to a different understanding of migration decision-making. In the process of combining these different streams, we are able to discuss the difficulty of identity as a measurement and also how we can (qualitatively) develop potential measurements. One different way to look at migration is by considering why people don't migrate through stay and stay away factors. These factors will be explained and developed in order to view migration in a new perspective.