

ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTER FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

Center for Migration Studies

The Center for Migration Studies (CMS) was established some 30 years ago. Its goal is to contribute to the better understanding of international migration in order to achieve more effective and humane policies. To achieve this goal, the Center encourages and engages in social scientific and historical research and the exchange of ideas. A key role is to provide a forum for reasoned debate on migration issue.

The Center attempts to be non-partisan. CMS promotes scholarly endeavours and is not involved in advocacy. Its geographic area of concern is global but, being located in North America, its work is often focused on the migration experience of that region. CMS is a non-profit institution. It was established under the auspices of the Scalabrinian Fathers, an order of the Roman Catholic Church committed to work on behalf of migrants. The Center has consultative status with ECOSOC as an NGO.

During recent months, the Center has begun a series of far-reaching institutional changes, described below.

The current programme of work of the Center includes six major activities:

1. Publication of International Migration Review (IMR), a leading peer-reviewed scholarly journal. It is broadly inter-disciplinary, presenting papers by specialists whose backgrounds are typically in anthropology, economics, history, political science, and sociology. IMR is published quarterly. Normally, one issue in each annual cycle is guest-edited and presents invited papers on a single theme of crucial interest to migration specialists.
2. Convening an annual Legal Conference on Migration and Refugee Policy. The Conferences are designed to provide a forum for migration and refugee specialists to discuss the policies and regulations that affect the migrants and refugees. The focus is largely on conditions and issues in the United States. The Conferences have almost always been convened in Washington, D.C. in the mid-spring, with sessions running over a day and a half. Participants include representatives of government (both legislators and civil servants) who deal with migration and refugees, private sector migration lawyers and NGO representatives, and academic scholars from the social sciences and law schools. The conference proceedings are published.
3. Publication of books and monographs dealing with migration, refugees, ethnic groups, and with religious and pastoral aspects of migration. CMS has published five new titles so far in 2003, and has one additional title scheduled to appear before the end of the year. It has a backlist of some 130 titles in print.
4. Research. CMS professional staff members undertake scholarly research, as time permits. Their work has been published in the form of books, monographs, and journal articles.
5. CMS maintains a specialized library. Current holdings include some 25,000 volumes in the area of migration, refugees, and ethnic studies. It also maintains an extensive collection of "grey literature" on these topics. The catalog of library holdings is available on line at <http://cmsny.library.net>. In addition to the library of published materials, the Center also maintains an archival collection. Much of the material in the archival collection consists of church parish records of social activities concerned with the ethnic communities in the United States. Another important archive comprises ship's passenger lists of refugees and displaced persons arriving in New York in the 1940s.
6. Specialized workshops and seminars. From time to time, CMS is active in the organizing and convening of training workshops or seminars for service providers who deal with immigrants. In many cases, such workshops/seminars are organized in collaboration with other institutions such as universities or migrant service Centers.

Throughout its years of work up to the most recent period, the CMS has functioned as a separate and completely autonomous institution. However, particularly in view of the increasing prominence of international migration as an issue on the global agenda, the Center has recognized a need to broaden and strengthen its institutional base.

On May 22, 2003, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by CMS and Fordham University that provides a framework for developing a formal affiliation between the two institutions. The framework sets forth a programme of activities to take place over the course of the three year period that began when it was signed.

In its discussions with CMS, Fordham is represented in the first instance by the College of Arts and Sciences. As might be expected, the Departments of Sociology and of Economics have been prominently involved. For the longer term, it is expected that the Center will work with a wider range of Schools and Departments. As noted below, discussions have already begun with the Law School.

The Memorandum recognizes that the two institutions will each maintain their separate legal identities, and will continue to be financially self-supporting. However, they will increasingly strive to work jointly in each of the six areas mentioned above.

Thus, it is expected that in the near future Fordham faculty will take on a larger role in the editing of *International Migration Review*. Also under serious consideration are moves toward establishing a fixed-term editorship for IMR and the appointment of a new editor.

Planning has begun for the 2004 annual Legal Conference on Migration and Refugee Policy. Discussions are currently under way with members of the Fordham Law School on the possibility of joint sponsorship of the Conference. Active consideration is also being given to moving the Conference from Washington, D.C. to New York City.

At the outset, it is planned to continue to maintain the CMS Library and Archives in Staten Island. However, the Library catalog will be incorporated into the Fordham Library system. An arrangement will be worked out to make the CMS Library holdings easily available to Fordham students and research scholars.

Discussions are fairly advanced on two seminars that would involve CMS/Fordham joint sponsorship. These would be academic conferences on topics of both scholarly and policy interest. In one case, CMS/Fordham would be joined by a second university.

In order to facilitate communication and collaboration, CMS has opened a new office in Manhattan, at 27 Carmine Street in Greenwich Village. CMS headquarters will remain in Staten Island, along with the Library, but a number of the Center's activities will be moved to the new office. In particular, the editing of IMR and the development of joint research projects will take place there. In addition, it is planned to make use of the Manhattan office by visiting scholars to Fordham.

Finally, efforts have begun to make the system of governance of the Center better reflect the eventual full formal affiliation with Fordham. An immediate step of some urgency is to bring new membership to the CMS Board of Trustees. It is anticipated that a member of the Fordham faculty will join the Board. In addition, a new member will have to be appointed to take the seat of the late Arthur Helton of the Council on Foreign Relations. He was a key member of the CMS Board until he gave his life in the bombing of the United Nations offices in Baghdad.