A Sea of Troubles?
Problematising Migration Law
Migration and Law Network 2014 Conference
In association with Birkbeck College School of Law
The Migration and Law Network aim to promote migration law as a subject in United Kingdom universities, including through occasional conferences and seminars.

The overall theme of our 2014 conference is the fluidity of migration law, in the face of its own contradictions, and multiple contextual, political and legal challenges. At the conference, we would like to give teachers, researchers and research students the opportunity to present their work, in a supportive environment, within this broad perspective. This year’s conference is being organised by:

Eddie Bruce-Jones, Birkbeck College School of Law
Nadine El-Enany, Birkbeck College School of Law
Khadija Rahman, Birkbeck College School of Law/ Strand Chambers
Bernard Ryan, University of Leicester School of Law
Prakash Shah, Queen Mary School of Law
Thanos Zartaloudis, Birkbeck College School of Law

Planned Streams: call for papers
The following are confirmed as stream topics:

- Critical migration studies
- The legal puzzle of irregular migration
- Protection of family life
- The body of the refugee claim

Further details of these stream topics are given below.

Call for other streams and papers
We would also welcome proposals for new streams, or for individual papers within the theme of the conference. We are particularly interested in streams that address one of the following themes or issues:

- Deaths at the borders of the EU
- Children and migration
- Administrative failures and/ or legal aid provision
- Immigration detention
- Reception conditions in Europe
- Criminalisation of migrants
- Comparative migration law

If you are interested in organising a stream, or in presenting an individual paper, please contact one or more of the conference organisers by 15 November 2013, preferably with a stream or paper proposal of roughly 300 words: Eddie Bruce-Jones (eddiebrucejones@bbk.ac.uk), Nadine El-Enany (n.el-enany@bbk.ac.uk) or Bernard Ryan (bernard.ryan@le.ac.uk).
Call for Papers

Conference registration
The conference will be held at Birkbeck College School of Law in Bloomsbury, London, on Friday 28th March and Saturday 29th March. To register for this conference, please visit https://mln2014conference.eventbrite.co.uk.

Confirmed streams: Abstracts

- **Critical Migration Studies**
  Convenor: Nadine El-Enany, N.El-Enany@bbk.ac.uk
  This stream aims to gather together academics, graduate students, practitioners and activists whose work falls within the field of critical migration studies. While many scholars seek to assess the effectiveness of migration law and policies, this stream aims to interrogate the law as constitutive of exclusion and violence in the context of migration. Possible areas of focus for this stream include critical reflections on migration and refugee law and the body, and papers which adopt a post/de-colonial, critical race, feminist and/or queer perspective on migration and law.

- **The Legal Puzzle of Irregular Migration**
  Convenor: Bernard Ryan, bernard.ryan@le.ac.uk
  Papers invited for this stream will address the dilemmas for law and public policy posed by irregular migration. On the one hand, the logic of immigration control, and the policy goals which underlie immigration control, point towards policies which prevent, deter and/or penalise irregular migration. On the other hand, other values and goals expressed through law, including the protection of fundamental human rights and the promotion of social equality, limit the control-oriented measures which may be imposed. We would welcome contributions which address this legal dilemma in relation to discrete legal topics, such as employment law, housing, social provision, expulsion, etc. We would particularly welcome contributions which are theoretical and/or comparative in focus.

- **Protection of Family Life**
  Convenors: Prakash Shah, prakash.shah@qmul.ac.uk and Khadija Rahman, k.rahman@bbk.ac.uk
  Laws and associated practices in European jurisdictions indicate many ways of restricting the use of family connections as a means of immigration. Legal systems increasingly question the type of family form of the migrant/transnational or simply refuse to recognise some kinds of family relationships. Private international law rules often get co-opted into the control of immigration. Other devices such as age restrictions, forced marriage, language ability are now also an established part of immigration control systems. All these developments beg questions about the legitimacy of the family relationship as a vehicle for immigration, even while there is at least a formal acceptance that the right to family and private life constitutes a core European legal value. They also invite questions about what
the cultural constitution of Europe is or what it should be, given that official legal orders prefer some family types or relationships over others.

- **The Body of the Refugee Claim**
  Convenor: Eddie Bruce-Jones, e.bruce-jones@bbk.ac.uk

Refugee claims are intimate discussions that frequently relate to torture, the loss of loved ones, extreme violence, personal sometimes intimate relations, and death. The person at the centre of the claim is made to translate experience through several layers to become legible to courts, interviewers, enforcement agents and their receiving societies more generally. This panel is interested in how this translation process involves the body. The body is read in terms of its credibility, it is detained, used as a screen for the projection of criminal stereotypes, and its suffering is observed, measured and regulated to an extreme degree by asylum courts (e.g., the 2008 ECtHR Article 3 decision of *N v. UK*). What role does the body play in contemporary asylum law as an organising symbol or discursive element? How might closer examination of this role, if not closer examination of the body itself, help us better understand the discursive and legal-technical challenges inherent in contemporary asylum law? Or are we ill-equipped to more closely consider the body in legal praxis?

**The Migration and Law Network**
The Migration and Law Network was set up in 2007 to promote migration law as a subject within United Kingdom universities. It is overseen by a steering committee of academics and other professionals in the immigration law field. It runs the Migration and Law mailing list for those who work in the field, for which subscription requests may be made at [http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/migrationlaw](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/migrationlaw). Further information about the network or mailing list may be obtained from the network’s co-chairs, Bernard Ryan (bernard.ryan@le.ac.uk) and Prakash Shah (prakash.shah@qmul.ac.uk).