



# Migrating out of Poverty

RESEARCH PROGRAMME CONSORTIUM

Call for Papers: International Conference

## **Gendered Dimensions of Migration: Material and social outcomes of South-South migration**

30 June - 2 July 2015

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

The times of ignoring women and girls' encounter with migration as migrants in their own right and as active members of communities engaged in migratory livelihood practices have gone. In both policy and research circles changes in migration flows have generated profound attention to gendered and generational patterns of migration and to changes in these patterns. Initially, this attention raised moral concerns related to the protection of migrant categories considered particularly vulnerable and at risk – usually women and children – and to anxieties about migrants transgressing social and legal rules – usually young men and sometimes women evading the supervision of elders or husbands. Empirical research has since helped enrich the ways in which gendered dimensions of migration are conceptualised and how this may impact policy. Important insights hail from research documenting gender differences in the ability to migrate, the feminisation of certain types of migration, and linkages between labour and mobility regimes impacting migrants and their home communities in complex and often gendered ways.

The aim of this conference is to bring together scholars focusing on the material and social linkages between gender and labour migration in the global South. We are particularly interested in exploring questions related to how notions of gender and age appropriate activities and comportment shape migratory projects and their outcomes. Of equal interest are questions about how migration affects relationships between women and men and between parents and their sons and daughters. The conference urges scholars to examine the (re)-configuration of gender relations in relation to internal and international migration within the global South from the perspective of multiple disciplines and angles.



The conference is organised by The Migrating Out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium and will be hosted by one of its partners - the Asia Research Institute at the University of Singapore. It builds on several research programmes within the consortium and their international networks. We invite papers addressing the following themes:

### **1. Gender dynamics in labour markets**

Women's international migration to work as nurses, nannies and domestic workers has in recent years evoked contentions of a feminisation of migration flows, yet in many places the flow of young women and girls from rural areas to urban areas to work in domestic service is not a new phenomenon. The focus on female migrants of different ages working in domestic service within internal labour markets or tapping into opportunities in the international labour market opens up an exploration of gender dynamics within labour markets that can be extended to other sectors of work and to male migrants. Not only interested in domestic service but also in employment relations in the catering sector and in factory and construction sites, this panel explores how migratory flows impact labour relations and shape the commodification of particular occupations or lack of same. The panel also explores internal and international labour markets as sites of configuring the gendered migrant worker by looking at how particular categories of workers are constructed and whether the presence of migrant workers impact processes of feminising or masculinising certain occupations. Papers are invited to examine spatial and historical constitutions of a particular sector, changes in labour relations and the effect on employees' earnings and well-being, shifts in migratory and/or gendered patterns linked with a sector or particular occupations within this sector. We hope to bring together papers focusing on internal, regional or international labour markets in the global South to encourage the theorisation of gender dynamics within labour markets based on in-depth empirical studies. The panel is also open to explorations of different forms of violence in the labour market.

### **2. Labour and mobility regimes**

Restrictive regimes of mobility globally have made labour migration more difficult for migrants working outside a select few occupations. This development has opened a space for brokers helping to facilitate the journey and sometimes also employment at the destination. The use of brokers is not just a phenomenon in international migration; in some places and occupations agencies have become gradually more involved in the recruitment of workers irrespective of their origin. For migrants the use of brokers may have long term consequences. The poorest internal migrants are often recruited against advances paid to the migrant or their family, and international migrants lacking the means to pay travel expenses and brokering fees may sign employment contracts through the agent who retains the right to some or all of their wage. Although migrants thereby become locked in an unfree situation akin to bondage, they may make this choice knowingly as part of a strategy for longer-term improvement. This panel invites papers examining labour regimes linked with the use of intermediaries to facilitate migration and/or employment. We welcome papers that consider internal, regional or international migration along the lines of gender and occupation and

focus on i) linkages between restrictive migration laws and human smuggling into particular occupations/sectors; ii) the ways in which employment agencies operate and shape women and men's opportunities in the global South; or iii) the impact of debt-migration on the material, emotional and social wellbeing of migrants and their families, including why people continue to migrate even when it generates significant costs or challenges.

### **3. Expectations and moralities surrounding remittances**

Migration in the global South is often described as an outcome of poverty and inequity, sparking an intense interest in how material and social remittances may affect sending communities and the temporalities surrounding migrants' allegiance to their homeland (international migration), village or kin (internal migration). While feminist scholars have begun to unpack the effect on household relations of women's economic empowerment through work, micro-credit schemes and cash transfer policies, little is known about how remittances affect domestic relationships. This panel explores migrants and non-migrants' expectations of migration and specifically the gendered dynamics related to who remits what to whom and to what ends. Papers are invited to examine how the economic side of migration is shaped by expectations relating to the type of work deemed suitable by female and male migrants of different ages, the vulnerabilities in the labour market impacting their earning capacities, and the expectations linked with the organisation of gendered responsibilities within families. We are particularly interested in papers exploring the social and economic transformation of these expectations, the malleability of social and economic relations between migrants and non-migrants and the consequences in the realm of affection and household cohesion.

### **4. Images of gender, migration and development**

Aimed at researchers and other creative professionals engaging visual methods in their work on gender dimensions of migration, this panel explores the intellectual contribution of visual methods, the ways in which they can enrich analyses of migratory practices and their limitations. We invite contributions in the form of short films and multi-media presentations that touch upon one or more of the issues addressed in themes 1-3. Each short film or multi-media presentation should not exceed 15 minutes.

### **Preliminary programme**

Two key note speakers

16 paper presentations

Forum for visual presentations

Policy symposium connecting research and policy

**Abstracts for contributions** should address one of the three themes in maximum 250 words. Junior researchers are welcome to submit abstracts for consideration. Abstracts should be submitted to [D.Thorsen@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:D.Thorsen@sussex.ac.uk) and [rpctemp@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:rpctemp@sussex.ac.uk) **no later than 6 March 2015**. Late submissions will not be considered. All papers will be evaluated by the conference committee and responded to by 27 March 2015.

The conference pays for accommodation, board and local transport for paper givers and visual presenters. In the case of co-authored pieces, the conference will pay for one presenter. Limited funding is available for presenters working in the global South and will be awarded on a by-case basis.

### **Schedule**

6 March 2015	Abstract submission
27 March 2015	Participation decision
10 June 2015	Full paper submission
30 June 2015	Conference begins