

## ***Progress of the World's Women Call for Papers: Human mobility, gender and family relations***

*Progress of the World's Women (Progress)* is one of UN Women's flagship reports. Produced by UN Women's Research and Data section, the report aims to frame and explore key gender and women's rights issues for a broad audience of policymakers, advocates and academics. Each report takes up a particular theme and includes the following key elements: a conceptual framework, policy and data analysis, and case studies. The next edition of *Progress*, entitled *Families in a Changing World*, seeks to answer the following question: how can laws, policies and public action support families in ways that enable women's rights to resources, bodily integrity and voice? It will do so by commissioning and bringing together high quality research, innovative data analysis, and compelling case studies to show the plurality of family structures across the world; and by providing evidence on how public action can ensure that families support women's enjoyment of their rights.

As part of a broader endeavour to understand how gender and generational relations within families are (re)defined and (re)negotiated in response to broader economic, social and political shifts, the report will include a specific chapter on families in contexts of migration and mobility. To inform this chapter, UN Women is issuing a call for papers, to bring together regionally-diverse, empirically-grounded and innovative research on human mobility, gender and family relations. The authors of the selected papers will be invited to present them at a conference in New York in December 2016.

### **Call for Papers: Human Mobility, Gender and Family Relations**

Migration is a fact of life for an increasing number of people around the world. The overwhelming majority of people who move do so inside their own country.<sup>1</sup> However, migration can often involve cross-border movements, from a developing to a developed country, or more commonly within the same region. People make the decision to migrate for a great variety of reasons – ranging from those 'pushed' out of their homelands by conflict, violence, restrictive social norms and the destruction of their livelihoods; to those seeking to find prosperity and to secure a better future for themselves and their children. Some move for purposes of marriage which accounts for a significant proportion of permanent migrants in East Asia, Europe and North America.<sup>2</sup> Despite restrictive legislation, in some cases, older parents join their children, often to assist them with childcare.<sup>3</sup> There is also great variability in who leaves, who is 'left behind' and for how long, and whether there is eventual reunification (or even if reunification is the ultimate goal for all concerned).

Gendered analyses of migration have moved well beyond disaggregating migration flows by sex. The literature contests the simplistic bureaucratic view of 'family migration' as a dependent and largely feminized flow related to the social realm, as opposed to labour migration which derives from economic imperatives and is dominated by men.<sup>4</sup> As research from Asia suggests, the boundaries between

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP (2009). *Human Development Report 2009. Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*. UNDP, New York.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, Lucy (2010). *Global Marriage. Cross-Border Marriage Migration in Global Context*. London Macmillan Palgrave.

<sup>3</sup> Deneva, Neda. Transnational aging carers: on transformation of kinship and citizenship in the context of migration among Bulgarian Muslims in Spain, *Social Politics* 19 (1): 105-28

<sup>4</sup> Kofman, Eleonore. 2015. 'Family Migration as an Economic Matter'. Paper presented at *Migration as a Family Matter. Perspectives from inside and outside the law*. 31-31 March 2015, VU University, Amsterdam.

marriage as a migration strategy and migration as a marriage strategy are often blurred.<sup>5</sup> With the male breadwinner model increasingly under stress, women sometimes move first, because they are able to secure jobs more rapidly than their partners who may follow suit with children.<sup>6</sup> Mobility can affect gender power relations in complex and contingent ways. For example, even if men are reluctant to take on care-giving responsibilities, women who migrate can still experience greater autonomy and more decision-making power in how resources are allocated, especially if they are remitting to their families. On the other hand, women's absence can lead to a loss of influence and power in the family, and they may be subject to economic abuse. When men move, women can sometimes be empowered by their absence, but the tables may turn again if men return home.

Policy responses need to be responsive to this complexity, which calls into question the neat categorization of refugees versus economic migrants<sup>7</sup> or labour and family migrations.<sup>8</sup> Geographical distance, especially if spread across borders, has implications for resource flows and entitlements to assets, social security and social services<sup>9</sup> and for intimacy and care arrangements. It can modify gender and generational power relations and alter the social norms, ideas and ideals that underpin them. The current policy regimes governing migration issues encompass UN conventions on refugees and migrant workers, international humanitarian law and national legislation, which overlap in some cases and leave gaps in protection and rights entitlements in others.<sup>10</sup>

The burgeoning literature on how women migrants are inserted into global, regional and national care chains underlines the variability and malleability of transnational families<sup>11</sup> and of care arrangements, especially in contexts where the 'nuclear family' is not the norm.<sup>12</sup> This is rarely recognized in migration policies. The concept of global householding can enable us to map the evolving relationships and resources between family members entering and exiting a household for different reasons such as work, study, marriage and retirement and the patterns these generate over time and space in the context of changing economic, social and political orders.<sup>13</sup> It can also reveal movements into and out of households of those providing paid domestic labour.

Migration and refugee flows are subject to heavy scrutiny and regulation, though significant numbers move, live and work under the radar and with irregular status.<sup>14</sup> Those who are undocumented face the risk of deportation, disproportionately affecting men, separating families and producing single parent

<sup>5</sup> Jones, Gavin and Hsiu-hua Shen (2008) 'International marriage in East and Southeast Asia: Trends and research emphases', *Citizenship Studies* 12(1): 9-25.

<sup>6</sup> Cerrutti, Marcela (2009) 'Gender and intra-regional migration in South America', *Human Development Research Paper* 2009/12. UNDP, New York.

<sup>7</sup> Betts, Alexander (2010) 'Survival migration: A new protection framework', *Global Governance* 16: 361-382.

<sup>8</sup> Kofman, Eleonore (2012) 'Rethinking care through reproduction. Articulating circuits of migration', *Social Politics* 19(1): 142-62.

<sup>9</sup> Sabates-Wheeler, Rachel and Rayah Feldman (eds) (2011) *Migration and Social Protection. Claiming social rights beyond borders*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke and New York; Diaz Garfinkel, Magdalena and Angeles Escrivà 'Care of older people in migration contexts: local and transnational arrangements between Peru and Spain', *Social Politics* 19 (1): pp. 129-141.

<sup>10</sup> Betts, Alexander, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Baldassar, Laura. and Laura. Merla (eds) (2014) *Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care*, Routledge

<sup>12</sup> Mazzucato, Valentina and Djamila Schans (2011) 'Transnational families and the well-being of children: Conceptual and methodological challenges', *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73: 704-712.

<sup>13</sup> Mike Douglass (2013) "Global Householding and Social Reproduction in Migration Research Part I: From the Peasantry to Feminist and Political Economy Critiques," *EWHA Journal of Social Sciences*, 29, December, 5-34; Part II: Contemporary East and Southeast Asia." *EWHA Journal of Social Sciences*, 29: 35-68

<sup>14</sup> Boehm, Deborah (2012) *Intimate Migrations. Gender, family and illegality among transnational Mexicans*, New York University Press.

families.<sup>15</sup> Risks and human rights violations are differentially experienced--based on gender and sexual identity, socioeconomic status, racial/ethnic identity, nationality, legal status as well as HIV status—when people are on the move, in refugee camps, in reception or accommodation centres and in the process of settlement in new destinations. The same axes of discrimination are likely to shape people's access to entitlements and their ability to enjoy rights.

Migration policies often have the effect of stratifying people, for example separating those who are 'skilled', and welcomed, from the much larger numbers who are classified as 'low-skilled' or 'unskilled', and whose status and treatment leave much to be desired (even if their labour is badly needed).<sup>16</sup> In order to attract them, the skilled often have the right to be accompanied by their family unlike the less skilled. In Northern Europe, in particular, family migration has become much more restrictive in terms of the economic resources demanded of both migrant sponsors and spouses, effectively making class and socioeconomic status the main determinant of access to family migration.<sup>17</sup> The conditions of permanent residence have also become more restrictive, with lengthier probationary periods for the continuation of marriage being imposed for example, making lives more insecure. Stigma and stereotypes colour how public institutions, especially those in charge of social services, welfare and domestic violence, treat migrant women and their families, and what opportunities are available to them for employment and training.

### Paper requirements

The purpose of this call for papers is to solicit research that addresses **how mobility, and the distancing of family members across place and borders, shape gender and generational dynamics within families, with a view to understanding its implications for women's capacity to claim and substantiate their rights.** We are interested in context-specific, empirically grounded research that identifies public policies and other kinds of interventions that enable (or constrain) women's enjoyment of their human rights, whether they are among those who migrate (alone or with family members) or stay behind.

We welcome papers based on original research, particularly those with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Abstracts for research papers of between 8-10,000 words will be selected that address one or more of the **themes** listed below. Selected paper authors will be invited to present their research at a conference in New York in December 2016.

- **Immigration policies and gendered family life.** How do state immigration policies shape gendered family life for different categories of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees? How do these different groups respond and strategize in relation to such policies?
- **Women's economic power and socioeconomic rights.** Are women able to exercise greater power over land/assets/finances when men migrate, even if they are burdened with heavier workloads? Are women able to have and exercise greater control over their own earnings when they have migrated and are living apart from spouses/partners?

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<sup>15</sup> Boehm, Deborah (2016) *Returned. Going and Coming in an Age of Deportation*. University of California Press.

<sup>16</sup> Piper, Nicola (2007) 'International migration and gendered axes of stratification: Introduction', in Piper, Nicola (ed.), *New Perspectives on Gender and Migration: Livelihood, Rights and Entitlements*. Routledge/UNRISD, London and New York.

<sup>17</sup> Kofman (2015) *op. cit.*

What kinds of national and international public interventions (e.g. labour market policies, education and training, social protection) can facilitate migrant women's economic and social rights in these different contexts? What happens to their rights when they return and are reunited with their families?

- **Care relationships.** How do conjugal relations and gender divisions of responsibility for care change—not just with respect to children but also vis-a-vis other family members—when families relocate together or when women migrate on their own? How do men and boys adapt their lives to women's absence?

What happens when those who migrate need care themselves? How well do policy interventions (e.g. welfare policies, care policies) in sending and receiving countries respond to the rights of women in migrant and refugee families who are themselves providing care?

- **Social norms, stigma and gender stereotypes.** How does the experience of living apart from families—especially intimate partners in the case of married and/or co-habiting women—and/or of being exposed to a different culture and way of life impact on gender norms, notions of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality and social practices?

How do gender and racial discrimination and stigma in relation to particular groups in receiving countries impact women's rights in the family? How do hegemonic understandings of family life in receiving countries shape state policies for migrant and refugee families (e.g. reception and settlement, family reunification, welfare services, the justice system, etc.) and what are the implications for women's rights within families and beyond?

- **Violence against women.** Are women in migrant and refugee families prone to more, less or different kinds of violence by their intimate partners and other family members? Under what conditions does the process of moving from one's domicile and resettlement into a new location trigger domestic violence? What protection is offered to those without secure status? How are female migrant workers, particularly domestic workers, protected against violence and abuse in the context of families that they work for? How can policies on violence against women respond to the specific circumstances of migrant and refugee women without stigmatizing them and their families?
- **Agency and compulsion.** How can we adequately capture the compulsory forces and vulnerabilities that migrant women are exposed to (the most extreme case being that of trafficking) without casting them as victims with no agency in migration decisions and processes?

To what extent is migration used as a strategy for escaping oppressive family arrangements? What are the trade-offs involved and what role do legal frameworks and public policies play in enhancing or undermining women's ability to make meaningful choices in the context of migration and mobility and in exiting oppressive relationships post-migration?

### Process and timeline

Researchers interested in submitting a proposal should send an abstract of no more than 500 words, indicating which theme or themes they are responding to, and a one-page CV to [progress@unwomen.org](mailto:progress@unwomen.org). Submissions will be accepted in English, French and Spanish.

The deadline for submissions is Monday 8 August at 5pm (UTC-4).

Deadline for abstracts and CVs	Monday 8 August 2016
Notification of successful researchers	Mid-September 2016
Draft papers submitted to UN Women	Mid-November 2016
Conference in New York	Early December 2016