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Stream 18

Women migrants and refugees

Stream Chairs:

Dr Joana Vassilopoulou, Brunel Business School, Brunel University London

joana.vassilopoulou@brunel.ac.uk

Prof Shireen Kanji, Brunel Business School, Brunel University London

Shireen.Kanji@brunel.ac.uk

International migration is a feature of the global economy, the business environment for organizations and their members, and for society at large. Yet, attention to this topic has emerged only recently in the business and management literature. Even less attention has been given to female migration. In much of the mainstream, political and academic debate, migration is often discussed as a male phenomenon. The so-called migration crisis of 2015, which saw over one million refugees arriving on European shores, is one such example. In reality international migration has long been feminised (Kofman, 2003), but for some reason female migration and women's agency in the migration process is not sufficiently explored. Nearly half of the 271 million migrants worldwide are females, and this has been the case for nearly 60 years. In 1960, the share of women migrants stood at 46.7%, which increased to 49.1% in 2000 and then started declining slightly to 48.4% in 2010 and to 47.9% in 2019 (UN, 2019).

What has changed are the patterns of women's migration. Currently, fewer women emigrate for example for family reunification, instead, millions of women particularly from developing countries, pursue 'women's work' (Petrozziello, 2013) in highly gendered occupations such as domestic and care work (Meghani, 2015; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2004), which enables more local women in the Global North to enter the workforce. Another more recent development is that highly skilled women are 40% more likely to migrate to OECD countries, compared to highly skilled men and that they migrate in larger numbers compared to women holding lower educational credentials (International Organization for Migration, & OECD Development Centre, 2014). There is a particular lack of attention given to gendered aspects of skilled migration (Kofman, 2012). Migration often comes at a cost for skilled women, who can find their participation in the host labour market reduced, due to several factors, such as lack of demand for their skills, or recognition of their skills, but also and most importantly, gender and ethnic discrimination (International Organization for Migration, & OECD Development Centre, 2014).

Female migrants and refugees come with a diversity of cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu 1986), in the form of professional qualifications, work experience and knowledge of how things work in the host countries, which can be utilised and developed in the world of work in the countries to which they migrate. However, research suggests that female migrants and refugees face multifaceted challenges in the host labour markets due to the complexities of intertwining factors presented by migration, ethnicity, gender and religion; particularly in comparison to male migrants and refugees. This is despite the fact that at the macro, government, level there is (often) legislation promoting equality of opportunity and likewise at the meso, organisation, level there are policies and practices in place which in theory should ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

This stream seeks to explore (but is not limited to):

- the multifaceted challenges female migrants, asylum seekers and refugees face in host labour markets
- women's experiences of skilled migration
- agency of female migrants and refugees
- women's solo migration
- women's migration intentions
- gender discrimination as a motivator of migration
- the experiences of women who have been trafficked
- national and international policies and practices that are meant to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace for female migrants and refugees
- other relevant topics

To further the discussion, we welcome papers which are theoretically and/or empirically informed from a broad variety of disciplines and geographical areas. We also invite papers adopting a multi-level perspective when studying migration and gender. A multi-level perspective bridges micro-individual; meso-team and organisational; and macro-national levels and reveals interconnections between these levels.

Submissions to the stream can be in the form of long abstracts (up to 1500 words), developmental papers (3000-5000 words, including references) or full papers (no length restrictions) by the deadline of 1 March 2020. Please process your registration and paper submission online via www.edi-conference.org.

References

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- Petrozziello, A. (2013) *Gender on the Move: Working on the Migration-development Nexus from a Gender Perspective: Training Manual*. UN Women.
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