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Institute on Globalization,
Culture and Mobility

CONFERENCE

Female Agency, Mobility and Socio-cultural Change

June 11th - 12th 2015, Barcelona, Spain

The feminisation of migration is one of the most significant social patterns to have emerged in the course of the last century. Too often, female migrants occupy vulnerable positions in their host societies, engaging in domestic work, sex work and other unregulated sectors. Despite being so vulnerable and despite established patterns of exploitation, the numbers of women who choose to migrate is rising. This conference focuses on this phenomenon, in order to better understand why and how migration may offer routes to empowerment to women. A specific area of focus will be the extent to which migration offers women new sociocultural horizons as they move between different regions of the world. This conference will examine themes of: female agency, women diasporas and transnationalism, labour and decent work, processes of identity construction in the light of mobility, the sociocultural reconstruction of home, work and urban spaces and policy responses to female migration. It will put academic research into dialogue with debates in the United Nations that address gender discrimination and the role of female migrants in development agendas.

Keynote Speakers: Professor Maggie O'Neill (Durham University), Professor Christiane Timmerman (University of Antwerp) and Dr. Maria Jaschok (University of Oxford)

CALL FOR PAPERS

Panel Theme:

Women Diasporas and Transnationalism

In the light of UN discussions on the role of women in the world, this panel would like to gather contributions from researchers who investigate whether migration can offer ways to empower women and, consequently, whether women migrants are able to influence socio-cultural change in countries of origin and countries of residence.

This panel work is grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the UN Charter, and particularly on the achievement of "equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security" (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – Resolution 1).

The research findings in this area are of great importance to policy-makers in order to understand what role women play and how policy-making could adjust to further empower women in diverse societies.

The panel relates to existing debates on the role of women on a variety of research questions, including women diasporas, the gender-related aspect of prejudice towards immigrants, women as promoters of socio-cultural change in countries of origin and of destination, women migrants and those left behind, health issues related to women



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migrants, the role of women migrants for sustainable development. The panel convenor welcomes proposals on all these research themes.

Abstracts of no more than 250 words and short bios of max 100 words should be submitted by email to Valeria Bello (vbello@unu.edu) no later than 20th April 2015. Decisions will be communicated by 30th April 2015.

Panel Theme:

(Dis) Empowering Labour: Gender, Migration and Decent Work

While the feminisation of transnational migrant labour is now a firmly ingrained feature of the contemporary global economy, the specific experiences and understandings of labour in a range of 'feminised' sectors of global and regional labour markets still require comparative and ethnographic attention. This panel will address the experiences of female migrant labour with the aim to understand their empowerment, or lack thereof, in their working lives. It will take a particular focus on migrants employed in sectors of the economy that are typically regarded as marginal or precarious (with a particular focus on domestic work and care work in private homes and institutional settings, but also sex work and informal labour in other sectors such as factory work), with the wider goal to understand the aspirations and mobility of migrants in relation to questions of gender and labour.

The panel will examine the different understandings that migrants have of their labour and consider the different social statuses associated with these forms of labour. It will be concerned with how certain types of labour are stigmatised, poorly valued and where the threat of violence and exploitation at work are prevalent; while also examining how migrants use their agency to pursue their own aspirations for economic and social empowerment and wellbeing in the face of precarity and entrenched racial and gendered stereotypes.

The panel invites abstract submissions that focus on a range of cultural contexts and regions and that address the following themes: ethnographic understandings of migrant labour in feminised sectors of work; activism for rights and decent work; transformations in labour conditions and identities; questions of care, intimacy and affective labour; and wider political-economic analyses and critiques of gender dynamics in labour markets.

Abstracts of no more than 250 words and short bios of max 100 words should be submitted by email to Megha Amrith (amrith@unu.edu) no later than 20th April 2015. Decisions will be communicated by 30th April 2015.