



Migration and Families: complexity and diversity

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Rediscovery of Family Migration

- Family migration under-studied academically and in policy. Majority female, the result of male migration and treated as secondary with little consequence for labour market
- Growing interest due to gender and migration approaches and increasing number and diversity of transnational families due to female lead migration (academic).; integration, contribution to labour force eg. Dept Immigration and Border Protection (2012) *Family Migration to Australia. Literature review*

Complexity

- Types of family migration
- Range of family members
- Gender composition
- Immigration regulations
- Key problems (employment and skills, family separation, intergenerational issues, family violence)

Types of family migration

- Family reunification of spouse, parent or other relative
- Family formation or new marriage between permanent resident or citizen
- Accompanying family member entering at same time as primary migrant

Members of family

- Children –dependent usually under 18 up to 21 years within European Economic Area
- Adult children (not usually allowed)
- Spouses
- Parents –independent and dependent usually over 60 or 65 years (most common in EU)

Gender

- Overwhelmingly female in reunification but lower for family as a whole eg. 67% family stream in Australia; 60% of family migrants and dependents in UK but still third to 40% male. Higher amongst second generation.
- But where females are lead migrants eg, domestic and care work in Southern Europe or Canada (Live in Caregiver Program) and have right to bring in family members, even if not doing skilled work, higher proportion of males.
- Recently more interest in fathers and implications for masculinities amongst plurality of transnational families (Bonizzoni and Boccagni 2013).
- Wide variety of responses to women migrating among male partners. Some largely took over, others did some reproductive tasks with help of female kin; other reinforced their masculinity through drinking and smoking (Fresnoza-Flot 2013 in the Philippines).

Immigration Regulations

- Available to skilled migrants in a large no. of countries
- Unavailable to less skilled as in Asia and Middle East
- Even with regional legal instrument 2003/86 on the Right to Family Reunification, family has become much more restrictive in many Northern countries, especially in Denmark and UK, which have not signed Directive, and the Netherlands. Income set at very high level £18,600 in UK with substantial discriminatory effects in terms of gender and those working in less skilled jobs.
- Where permitted, lack of affordable child care and without family support may prevent reunification even for skilled (Wong on nurses from Ghana in UK). With looser regulations parents, especially grandmothers, enter to provide care as in Southern Europe but they may lose out on social entitlements.

Family Migration and Employment

- Few studies sought to draw out link between work and family for migrants
- Many family members enter labour market, especially amongst accompanying. Varies according to nationality, language proficiency and local employment conditions of destination country. Restrictions lifted in European countries.
- Deskilling
- Some work in voluntary sector, others do unpaid care work, especially late middle aged and young old, so both parents can work or study.

Family separation

- For the low skilled, separation from children may be permanent
- Separation and subsequent reunification eg. schooling for older children and poor educational outcome eg, children of Filipina migrants many through LCP in Canada.
- Transition to new country difficult for children
- Separation in country of origin from parent(s). Different conclusions depending on country and arrangements
- Care needs are dynamic and evolve through the life course - eg. responsibility for aging parents in country of origin.