

Workshop: “Migration, Development and Citizenship: examining the nexus between the arrangement of migrant lives and (Global/National) political and economic regimes”

Hosted by: NWO/WOTRO” Migration, Development and Conflict” Projects: “The migrant suitcase: examining the flow of norms, practices, identities and social capital between India and the Netherlands” (University of Groningen) and “Migration, development and citizenship: Notions of belonging and civic engagement among Indian migrants in the Netherlands and return migrants in India” (VU University Amsterdam)

Location: VU University Amsterdam and the Lloyd Hotel Amsterdam

Dates: 25 and 26 June 2015

Introduction:

Discourses linking migration and development are widespread and concrete policies and initiatives around the world have been introduced to channel migration towards development. In destination countries, highly skilled migrants are seen as contributing to the host economy through participation in labor markets. In origin countries, migration of highly skilled migrants is no longer depicted as brain drain but this type of migrants are expected to bring back social, economic and human capital.

This migration and development thinking finds its roots in the current neoliberal ideology, which deems market freedom to be the basis of a healthy socio-political order. While promoting deregulation of the private and public sectors and limited state intervention, neoliberal governance delegates responsibilities to individuals, including migrants. Governments select migrants deemed capable of such responsibilities on the basis of perceived skills and migrant resources are largely directed towards centrally defined targets.

Migration (and development) policies throughout the world are geared to distinguish between desirable and undesirable individuals. In many developed destination countries, low-skilled migration is discouraged; these migrants are considered a burden rather than an asset. Integration is framed as vital to the cultural and political wellbeing of the nation state, and deportation of undesired migrants is encouraged. High-skilled migrants, instead, face fewer barriers and less stringent integration and naturalization requirements. In less

developed countries too, this low-skilled population is very often unwelcome and is encouraged to emigrate as a way to reduce pressure on saturated labor markets and to fuel remittances into home economies. The physical return of high-skilled migrants or of migrant investors is sought after.

Courted or shunned by origin and destination countries, migrants may develop multiple affiliations or simply navigate the opportunities and constraints to their advantage. Often, they cultivate ties across countries and, with their migration, contribute to the transfer of resources from country of origin to country of destination and the other way round. Some become civically engaged in home and host countries, others strategically use opportunities available to them for “flexible citizenship”.

Social and economic remittances engage migrants and their families to ‘perform’ or ‘do’ family life across geopolitical and cultural borders. The many ways in which migrants and their families maintain a sense of co-presence shapes their multiple senses of belonging. The acts of care giving and care receiving are mediated through travels, technologies and non-kin support. The maintenance of ties and integration into the host society is differentially experienced due to both social-political and individual conditions.

This workshop seeks to explore questions concerning the nexus between the personal lives of migrants and (Global/National political and economic regimes). What are the implications of diverse policy attitudes towards migrants’ senses of belonging? Can migrant (private or collective) resources be put to the service of development? What are the uneven reciprocities between migrants and their transnational families? What development (social-cultural, economic, political) can different migrants bring to both countries of origin and destination? In particular, how do skilled migrants evaluate their contributions to development in their communities at home and in the host country? What are the implications for (formal and) active citizenship?

PROGRAM

25 June: VU University Amsterdam
Metropolitan Building,
Buitenveldertselaan 3
1081 HV Amsterdam

15:00: Coffee / Tea: Metropolitan Building, room Z-009

16:00: Key Note: Professor Thomas Hylland Eriksen: “Boat refugees in the Mediterranean: An anthropological perspective on the global situation”

17:30: Reception

19:00: Dinner

26 June: The Lloyd Hotel, Lloyd Zaal (Room)
Oostelijke Handelskade 34
1019 BN Amsterdam

9:00-10:30: Workshop One: Social Remittances and development: Public and Private Practices (Discussant Peggy Levitt

1. Ratnakar Tripathy: “Bringing knowledge home: contribution of return migrants to incubation centers in India”
2. Hannelore Roos: “Exchanges of socio-cultural remittances: India’s new economy professionals as actors of development”
3. Ajay Bailey: “The Migrant suitcase: onward and reverse social remittances among Highly Skilled Indian Migrants in the Netherlands”

10:30-11:00: Coffee/ Tea

11:00-12:30: Workshop Two (Part 1): Managing Migration and Migrant Experience in a neoliberal era: Migrant interaction with governmental and non-governmental efforts to manage migration (Discussant Thomas Eriksen)

1. Guilia Sinatti: “Engaging diasporas in development: Participatory development or political methodology of empowerment?”

2. Kathinka Sinha-Kerkhoff and Kate Kirk: "Individual development among married Indian women under structural constraints in the Netherlands"

12:30-13:30: Lunch

13:30-15:00: Workshop Two (part 2): Managing Migration and Migrant Experience in a neoliberal era : Migrant interaction with governmental and non-governmental efforts to manage migration (Discussant Thomas Eriksen)

1. Sanderien Verstappen: "Not for Muslims only: Transnational associations in central Gujarat"
2. Francesco Ragazzi: "Governing Populations in Transnational Social Spaces: Practices of Elites and Mid-Level Bureaucrats"
3. Kate Kirk and Ellen Bal : "Flexible Citizenship: Dutch Migration and Naturalization policies and the citizenship of Indian High Skilled Migrants"

15:00-15:30: Coffee/ Tea

15:30-16:45: Workshop Three: Gender, family and migration (Discussant K. S. James)

1. Erka Caro: "Experiences of Albanian and Estonian women migrants in the service sector in Italy and Finland"
2. Anu Kou: "Some people expect women should always be dependent': Indian women's experiences as a highly skilled migrant"
3. Sandhya Mahapatro: "Remittance use among female headed households in Kerala, India"

17:00-18:00: Concluding Thoughts: Professor Peggy Levitt

18:00: Tour of the Lloyd Hotel

18:30: Departure / Dinner for those staying on in Amsterdam