

## **Exploring New Links Between Transnational Migration and Education**

**Two-day symposium on the 21-22 June 2018**

**Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies (CeMIS), University of Antwerp, in collaboration with the Department of Anthropology, School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex**

Most current debates on international migration and education focus on the consequences of migration from the Global South to the Global North. The issues debated in this body of literature include for example the implications of South-North migration for the accumulation/depletion of 'human capital' in the sending countries, the need for schools in receiving countries in the Global North to adapt to increased numbers of pupils from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds, and the opening of private schools created by cultural or religious minorities as well as the roles these play in facilitating, or impeding, 'integration'.

We believe that while important, an over-emphasis on these research foci means that other equally significant dynamics in the overlap between transnational migration and education have been overlooked. In the face of increasing legal provisions among countries of the Global North to discourage immigration, trends in educational strategies are likely to shift. In this context, more attention should be paid to North-South and South-South migration, and to how such flows disrupt notions of the global knowledge economy in which the Global North is supposedly the pole of reference. The proposed two-day workshop at the Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies (CeMIS) at the University of Antwerp, Belgium, invites participants to share new research which illuminates such processes. We have identified three broad themes which we consider particularly relevant and under-explored:

### **The educational aspirations and experiences of children and young people in the context of transnational migration.**

The fact that children and young people migrate as part of their educational trajectories is well-accepted, but research still neglects to foreground their perspectives. Their experiences are often overshadowed by a concern for family (read adult) migration decisions and strategies. What is more, much existing research involving young migrants has focused on relatively privileged groups, such as children from elite transnational families known as 'third culture kids', or on university students moving to countries in the Global North in the context of the internationalisation of higher education. Other groups of young people have received significantly less attention, notably those 'sent back' from diaspora contexts to their parents' countries of origin for their education, or those who have stayed behind in the homeland when other members of their extended family have migrated. Within this theme, participants are invited to consider transnational migration as an aspiration or reality which shapes young people's education preferences, trajectories and experiences. Data derived from methodological approaches which foreground children and young people's voices are particularly welcomed.

### **Power and networks in decision-making surrounding migration and education trajectories.**

The educational trajectories of individuals are embedded within wider dynamics of extended families and community networks. Questions to consider include not only how people migrate to seek education, but how migrants influence the educational trajectories of other members of their family or network, notably in their homelands. Attention has been given to the role of children as a central part of household strategies of capital accumulation, and education emerges as a central concern organising migration. But – and to link back to the previous theme - how does the agency of children and young



people shape the education and migration trends within the broader networks of which they are a part? Consideration will be especially given to papers using data derived from methodological approaches which foreground intergenerational dynamics, and which highlight the roles of gender, age and other social characteristics in shaping the power relations underpinning educational decision-making.

### **Transnational migrants as education providers, funders, and shapers of policy.**

While private schools established by diaspora communities in host countries of the Global North have been relatively well-studied, the same cannot be said for similar institutions in the Global South, or schools which diaspora communities have established back in their home countries. Alternatively, while some transnational educational movements have been well-documented, such as Turkish Fethullah Gülen schools, there is a tendency to focus on the 'official' discourses of what they intend to achieve. In contrast, this theme asks contributors to illuminate what these transnational educational projects are, and question what kinds of educational demand they respond to. What are the actual dynamics which ensue when schools run or funded by migrants are embedded in local contexts? What are the expectations, identity politics and power dynamics surrounding their establishment? How do they interact with, complement or compete with other providers in the educational landscape? How do they contribute to the production of new forms of inequality? Beyond education provision, in what ways do migrants shape education policy in their host or home countries?

Papers may address any type of education (secular, religious, non-formal, etc.) in the Global South but must draw on original qualitative empirical data. Particularly welcome are contributions which make connections between the different themes, or which problematize dominant models of education provision and decision-making which are nation-state centric or take stasis rather than mobility to be the norm. Participants must submit a 500-word abstract explaining the main themes of the research; how the research responds to the theme(s); a clear statement of methods used; and an indication of theoretical or analytical questions arising from the data. The abstract should be accompanied by a 200-word author biography. The symposium will include several keynote speeches from senior researchers, and thematic panels of short presentations (15-20min), followed by discussion and feedback. There will be a closing discussion on continuing the dialogue among researchers working on the relationship between transnational migration and education.

### **Timeframe and logistics:**

- Potential participants should email an abstract of their intended presentation by **31<sup>st</sup> October 2017** to [migration.education.2018@gmail.com](mailto:migration.education.2018@gmail.com).
- Applicants will be informed of acceptance/rejection by **15<sup>th</sup> November 2017**.
- Presenters must submit 'work-in-progress' papers of up to 3000 words two weeks in advance of the workshop on **21-22 June 2018** for reading by panel discussants and other participants. Registration will be €20 for PhD students and part-time or unemployed recent PhD graduates, and €40 for full-time employed academics.
- After the symposium, authors of the most developed papers will be invited to attend a further writing workshop on **6<sup>th</sup> September 2018** at the University of Sussex, UK. Here full-length draft manuscripts of 8000 words will be discussed by all attendees, for eventual submission to a journal special issue.
- Final journal manuscripts must be due for submission by **1<sup>st</sup> December 2018**.