Migration and gender trajectories within the female-dominated care work in the United Kingdom

Dr Shereen Hussein
Principal Research Fellow (Chair)
SCWRU, King’s College London

Data and Methods

- Based on two national studies
  - International Recruitment in social care (2009-2011)
  - Longitudinal Care Study (2010- ongoing)
- Recent migrants working in the social care sector
- Surveys and interview data
  - 120 migrants completed surveys over two time points
    - 26 men (22%)
  - In-depth interviews with 105 migrant care workers
    - 20 men (19%)
- Contextualized by quantitative analysis large national workforce data (over 600K records of individual workers)
The contribution of migrant men

- Men are over represented in the migrant workforce
  - 27% of those from A2 and 26% of non-EEA were men compared to only 15% of British workers
- There were also differences in main job roles of men by country of origin
  - for example, men from non-EEA countries are over-represented in nursing jobs while those arriving from A8 and A2 countries are in direct care and ‘other’ jobs (such as ancillary work).
- The contribution of migrant men appears to be increasing however
  - They remain a minority in a double sense
    - A minority in a feminised job
    - At a lower hierarchical level compared to British men
## Country of origin of migrant men and women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of birth</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>2,592</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2,266</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>1,780</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1,177</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the world</td>
<td>3,989</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of migrant workers</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,354</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE ROLE OF AGED CARE IN THE MIGRATORY JOURNEY- GENDER PERSPECTIVE
Aged care as a mobiliser for women’s migration

• Escalating demand + low status → a means for women to migrate and work in this ‘feminine’ occupation
  • It’s always short staffed; the work is not proportioned... I mean, the money that you are getting is not good. That’s why the English people don’t want to join the business, or join the kind of work. (Filipino, woman, 50-59 years)

• Choice of occupation usually precede migration
• In many cases active choice of care related skills and training as a facilitator to the act of migration
  • I read in the newspapers and watching the television. I’ve heard of loads of nursing home in this place (in England). I decided (to come to England) because, before in my country, I’m (I was) working in the hospital (Indian, woman, 35-39 years)
Aged care as an (inconspicuous) option for migrant men

• Not necessarily a ‘mobiliser’ for the act of migration but a post-migratory ‘option’ for labour participation
  • ... I see this job as an entrance to another work that is more related to my skills, I am a linguist (my) speciality is German ... I would like to travel to many countries. (Polish, man, 20-25 years).

• ‘Stumbling upon care work’
  • [care sector] was the first place I felt I could really get a job when I came to this country [UK], with my previous experience... I came to this country and I tried going to the same [hospitality] industry, but I couldn’t—they were not ready to accept my work experience. (Nigerian, man, 30-35 years)
Perceptions and negotiating access

- Societal acceptance, cultural and gendered norms
- Many would have never considered care work in their home countries
  - Yeah, if you ask me, the care work, actually, I wouldn’t have done any care back home ... (Sri Lankan, man, 45-50 years)

- Perceived as not the ‘right’ gender
  - I started looking on the internet, and spoke to a couple of agencies but they were a bit negative. One guy pretty much told me, you know, I have to be honest with you, I have loads of guys on my book but still you know most people seem to go for women. (South African, man, 40-45 years)
The advantages of an atypical position

• Glass escalator and Glass barriers
  • Migrant men usually do not find or use the glass escalator – but negotiate a better situation within their migratory journey
  • Male, migrant identity in a female-dominated occupation allows them to be seen as an ‘exotic’ or ‘eccentric’ by colleagues and users

• We found horizontal and vertical segregation in male experience in the sector (e.g. holding authoritative positions)
  • Race/migration important factors interacting with gender
  • Visual markers and race may alter a positive experience
Masculine identity – negotiation strategies

• Simple denial of the ‘feminine’ nature of the profession
  • Secondariness

• ‘Masculinizing’ the job
  • Attributing professional qualities
  • *I am very confident in my work. Whatever client you give me, I will deal with it. I have that confidence...* (Sri Lankan, man, 40-45 years)
  • .. *I use my power to empower the users* (Nigerian, man, 30-35 years)

• Reversing the subordination relation of the feminine job
  • Adventurous
  • ‘my own choice’
  • Flexible- ‘allows me to do my own thing’
Negotiation strategies- cont.

- Warding off stigmatization
  - Through social/culture capital
    - Attaining further relevant but professional qualifications while providing hands on care (e.g. nursing, social work)
  - Drawing on peers’ experience
    - I just decided to work in the hospital because I was thinking to visit my brother [in the UK] he is a nurse because my parents when I was studying they wanted me to do nursing but when I finish my studies in commerce I started my own business (Filipino, man, 35-40 years)

- Negotiating a position with minimum potential conflict between their gender identity and working in a feminine job
However, there are differences within gender differences

- Between women and between men
- Immigration policies and free labour mobility are important issues
  - Examining motivations to migrate to the UK and work in the care sector by country of origin
- For those from outside the EU with no free labour mobility
  - Choice of work is an elaborate process – but women tended to invest more pre migration
  - For EU migrants- care work is an option among many
    - Learning English was key attraction factor
- Post migratory relationships between different migrant groups can be complex
  - Let’s say in my case, I’m just saying the one who is sitting on the management position is an Indian they prefer to give people from their country. (Filipino, woman, 50-59 years)
Future expectations

• For migrant men, care work features highly as a temporary step that is secondary to the main ‘life project’ and ultimate target
• It can be an entrance to further learning and skills development
• For many ‘traditional’ migrant women, it is part of a life-long career and migratory project
  • In the long run I would like to migrate to another country wherein we would like to start a small care home. ... it’s too expensive here, (Filipino, woman, 50-59 years)
• However, EU women migrants may have different experiences and expectations
Conclusion

• Nuanced understanding of individual and structural conditions of men working the feminine occupation of care work
• Care work can attract migrant men because of no other alternatives, as a source of employment
• At the other end of the spectrum, care work may offer migrant men opportunity to attain a level of professional status that is not possible in other ‘male-dominated’ occupations
• Men adopt different strategies to negotiate their masculine identity within the feminine care work – providing satisfaction and sometimes pride
Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

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References

• Hussein, S. & Christensen, K. (accepted with revisions) Migrant men in women’s work: On male migratory journeys crossing feminized elder care occupations, *Work Employment & Society*


Thank You

Shereen.hussein@kcl.ac.uk