

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

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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

Distribution of migrant men and women by country of birth, NMDS-SC March 2011

Country of birth	Men		Women	
	N	%	N	%
Philippines	2,592	16.9%	6,935	15.0%
India	2,266	14.8%	4,371	9.5%
Nigeria	1,780	11.6%	4,072	8.8%
Zimbabwe	1,348	8.8%	4,098	8.9%
Poland	1,177	7.7%	4,725	10.2%
Romania	398	2.6%	871	1.9%
Ghana	385	2.5%	1,476	3.2%
South Africa	359	2.3%	1,564	3.4%
Mauritius	319	2.1%	359	0.8%
Pakistan	295	1.9%	550	1.2%
Bangladesh	248	1.6%	267	0.6%
Ireland	198	1.3%	1,098	2.4%
Rest of the world	3,989	26.0%	15,812	34.2%
Number of migrant workers	15,354	100.00%	46,198	100.00%

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

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