

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

**A CARING EUROPE?  
CARE, MIGRATION AND GENDER**

**Milton Keynes (UK), 11-13 November 2009**

<http://www3.open.ac.uk/contact/locations.aspx>

**Convened by:  
Umut Erel, Parvati Raghuram and Nicola Yeates**

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**SCIENTIFIC REPORT**

## Executive summary

Care is a key human activity, which embraces many different social relationships, settings and contexts with correspondingly diverse effects and impacts. It is often undertaken by migrant women who are some of the most vulnerable women in European society. Yet they are often responsible for caring for others with vulnerability – children, disabled and older people. These issues have attracted some interest from the research community over the last decade but this two-day workshop provided a novel interdisciplinary context for reviewing the state of the field, consolidating knowledge, and identifying key issues and areas of future research activity on the diverse interconnections of migration, gender and care in Europe.

The workshop set out to conceptualise migrants as complex subjects of care relationships: migrants are both care givers and care receivers; they are actively engaged in constructing an ethics of care in both paid and unpaid work and this should be seen in the context of their citizenship rights locally, nationally and transnationally. It brought together scholars from a range of disciplines (geography, sociology, political science, anthropology and philosophy) and fields of study (social policy, migration studies, gender studies) from across Europe. The papers and discussions were framed by five thematic areas (1) paid and unpaid care, (2) carers as care receivers, (3) carers as ethical subjects, (4) carers as citizens, and (5) carers as subjects in and of policy. The workshop sought to address contemporary debates on the gender-care-migration nexus by bringing together research on various aspects of the nexus that are often compartmentalised.

**1) Paid and unpaid care:** This session simultaneously addressed migrant experiences in *skilled* and *unskilled* sectors of care, i.e. nursing, medicine and domestic work. In private and public sector provision, and in paid and unpaid work contexts. For example, the case of Brussels public healthcare demonstrated how definitions of skill are highly dependent on current labour market policies. The exit of many Belgian ethnic minority health care workers from public healthcare jobs is due to undesirable working conditions and pay. Yet, public policy, rather than improving working conditions, responds by defining these jobs as an area of skills shortages and migrant European health care workers are recruited. The question of skill is not only negotiated across ethnic differences, however, as the experience of long-term familial carers for children with autism spectrum in France shows. Such carers often struggled to communicate effectively with medical professionals who were also involved in care decisions. In order to address this, mothers mobilised civil society organizations in order to gain recognition of their role and the inherent skill in familial care-giving. The care chains across Ukraine, Poland and Germany also raised the key issue of the interconnection between paid and unpaid care work. The transnational migration of women, often to become care workers, implicates different family members, including fathers, in new ways into the care for children left behind. The migration of women has fuelled highly visible public discourses on women's care responsibilities as mothers within the family in the sending countries. While these discourses responsabilize women, in effect a variety of others (fathers, female relatives or neighbours) take responsibility for children left behind. Research into the replacement of care for family members needs to be more nuanced, based on in-depth empirical studies that pay attention to the gendered care competencies and tacit skills involved in caring, both face to face and those that are performed at a distance by the migrants.

**2) Carers as care receivers:** The changing relationship of people to care over the life course was addressed through two case studies of migrants. The case of older Peruvian migrants to Spain identified three different patterns of linking care, migration and age: a) older parents living in Peru, depending on remittances from their migrant children, b)

Peruvians who grow old in Spain and develop their care needs there, c) older Peruvians who join their migrant children in Spain. The issue of old age care therefore needs to be seen as one spanning international borders. Indeed, as the case study of Bulgarian Muslims in Spain showed, caring practices and conceptions both of age and of care obligations are challenged and change through the migration process. Thus, intra-familial obligations of care that were strongly differentiated along gender divisions may begin to be addressed more flexibly. On the other hand, normative understandings of care obligations may be reinforced by some families.

**3) Carers as Ethical Subjects:** Ethics of care underpinned several of the workshop presentations. One novel interjection in this context was on how migrants who care for others also organise their own self care. Through a study of a Pentecostal community of Filipino migrants in Germany the emic framework of spirituality and its importance in self care were addressed. Spiritual principles and the church community help the migrants to address and cope with the everyday problems of living as undocumented migrants. Ethical questions are also linked to broader questions of social stratification. For example in Slovenia, state policy on child care provision and training of child care workers contributed to a social understanding of this work as skilled. This has shaped work and gendered and ethnicized access to jobs. A political philosophy approach to questions of ethics put the concept of reification (Honneth) forward to question hierarchies produced in the employment relationship of domestic workers. It argued that the concept of reification can help to assess whether paid domestic labour can constitute a solution for feminist dilemmas of reproductive labour.

**4) Carers as Citizens :** Political philosophy approaches were mobilized to look at how useful a generalized ethics of care, combined with dialogic transformation can be in addressing issues of migrants' integration in Europe more generally. One contribution to the workshop employed an notion of care to challenge essentialist conceptions of culture underlying many multiculturalist programmes. Instead it proposed a dialogic approach, focused on locality as a way to disentangle the dilemma of multiculturalist vulnerability as it affects migrant women particularly. The contrast between normative understandings of citizenship as encompassing political participation and access to social citizenship on the one hand and empirical experiences of mainly undocumented Filipino migrants in Germany on the other were also addressed. The case of migrant nurses from Latvia in Norway brought to the fore how the failure of social citizenship in the sending countries can become the impetus for migration. On the other hand, the opportunities to realise social citizenship in the migration country can be a powerful force creating loyalties and a sense of belonging. A multi-layered notion of citizenship is therefore, required for addressing local, national and transnational belongings and the contradictory experiences of inclusion and exclusion of migrant care workers.

**5) Carers as Subjects in and of Policy:** Social policies and institutions shape the conditions under which migration and care intersect and are key terrains of socio-political struggle and contestation. A Swedish case study emphasised the lack of data on ethnicity, gender and migration status of care workers in that country context, and documented the content and impacts of Swedish policy in relation to migrant care workers. A second paper outlined the concept of social reproduction and discussed its relationship to the concept of care. A third paper departed from national frameworks for analysing the intersections of migration, gender and care and built on existing globalist frameworks in social policy analyses of care to present a global political economy analysis.

## Scientific content of the event

This workshop constituted a key step towards establishing an international collaborative partnership dedicated to multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary explorations of gender, care and migration in Europe. It instituted a dialogue between scholar-researchers in different geographical spaces in Europe where care giving and receiving is organised differentially. A range of key research issues emerged.

The first is the structuring role of age and generation in relation to care-giving and care-receiving. Thus, a global care chains-based analysis focusing on Ukraine, Poland and Germany highlighted the role of older women, whose labour constitutes an unpaid 'commons', providing unpaid care labour for the families left behind. Age and generation also play a structuring role in policy formation. For example, while some countries like Norway, Sweden or Slovenia now categorise many childcare jobs as skilled, elder care is seen as unskilled work. Finally, the migration of retired people to countries in the south of Europe (and elsewhere in the world) constitutes another expression of the relationship between care and migration.

A second issue is the value of care ethics and subjective approaches to the care-migration nexus. An ethics of care approach can deepen our understanding of care and migration, but it was suggested that the different ways in which an ethics of care manifests itself for transnational caring practices within the family need to be further explored. This can benefit not only the empirical investigation of the experiences of migrant care workers, but also enhance the theorization of an ethics of care. The element of self care for migrant workers who are precariously positioned through migration regimes and in labour markets is a case in point. Furthermore, the relationship between an ethics of care and the role of profit extraction through care work requires further research, in particular as it intersects with questions of migration and gender.

A third issue is the need to extend knowledge of the uneven and differentiated expression of the gender-care-migration nexus across Europe. All too often 'European' research is delimited to western Europe at the expense of southern European countries and Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. Where CEE countries are involved, they have tended to be constructed as suppliers of care labour. Yet CEE countries constitute important sites of import as well as export of care labour. Relatedly, certain 'core' European countries have been constructed as care importers and their role as care labour exporters has not received attention. Such extant analytical binaries were unsettled during the workshop.

A fourth key issue is the necessity of locating European experiences within a wider international context. Europe is one important site in which circulations of care labour occur, and the workshop highlighted the necessity of the relationship between European dynamics and other regions of the world being kept to the foreground. Many care workers originate from non-EU countries, and the processes propelling and shaping their movements together with the roles of social policy regimes in source and destination countries need to be better understood. Comparative analysis is needed to

identify how European countries are differently positioned in relation to diverse global and sub-global circuits of labour and capital. Relatedly, there is a need to attend to the ethical dimensions and wider social impacts of European policy on the meeting of social (care) needs in diverse countries in the Global South. Here, attention was drawn to the under-developed ethical dimensions of European (EU) and global social policy as a realm of political action and policy.

## **Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field, outcome**

### **Short Term Results:**

1) In order to reach younger, less well networked participants we put out a call for papers via several electronic lists in March 2009. This elicited strong interest in the workshop, generating 54 abstracts in total. The rules of the ESF permitted us to only accept 5. Therefore, as a spin off from the ESF exploratory workshop, we organized an additional workshop on 11 November entitled 'New Perspectives on Gender, Care and Migration in Europe' with 20 international participants, many of whom are early career researchers. The workshop was funded by the Centre for Citizenship, Identities and Governance at the Open University.

2) As a result of the grant we have established a dedicated email list hosted by the Open University. The list is open to anyone with an interest in issues of gender, migration and care in Europe. This list has 47 members and has already become an instrument for networking about future conferences and for sharing research outputs.

3) Participants were asked to submit full written papers in advance of the workshop. These were circulated two weeks prior to the workshop to enable all participants to read them in advance of the workshop and to permit considered, in-depth discussion during the workshop. During the workshop many participants reported that the inclusion of speakers from a variety of disciplinary and thematic perspectives was highly conducive to the generation of fresh perspectives on the subject matter. In addition, the extensive geographical affiliations of the participants helped to widen the remit of debates about the intersections of care, migration and gender. This resulted, amongst other things, in the identification of the need for improved data collection and comparative analysis (see also 'Scientific content of the event', above).

### **Medium Term Results:**

1) The multi-disciplinary workshop successfully elucidated key issues, themes and approaches on the gender-care-migration nexus. It generated a high level of interest in building upon the analytical space generated by the multi-disciplinary workshop to consolidate understandings of this nexus. Over the medium term, the convenors will work collaboratively within the network to progress a publications, research and networking strategy:

a) The convenors are exploring the possibility of publishing selected papers in at least one peer-reviewed academic journal. We envisage that this is most likely to take the form of a special issue, anticipating publication in 2011 or 2012.

b) We are exploring the possibility of a collaborative research bid. Among the funding opportunities for research under consideration are the European Union framework programme, ESF and ECRP .

c) We are also exploring the potential for generating funding to consolidate networking. Here, COST features as one possibility of funding.

# FINAL PROGRAMME

## Wednesday 11 November 2009

Afternoon *Arrival*  
20:00 *Dinner at Hilton Hotel*  
**Welcome and Introductions**

## Thursday 12 November 2009

09:00 - 09:15 **Presentation of the European Science Foundation and Welcome (ESF)**

**Umut Erel** (UK)

9:15 - 10:45 **Carers as paid and unpaid workers**

**Nouria Ouali** (Belgium): Migrant and Ethnic Minority Nurses in Brussels' Public Hospitals

**Helma Lutz** (Germany): Care-workers, Care-Drain and Care-Chains – Reflections on central perceptions in the debate about Care and Migration

**Patricia Papermann** and **Aurélie Damamme** (Paris): Competence in long term care: questioning the social division of carework (France)

Discussant: **Lisa Widding Isaksen** (Norway)

Chair : Umut Erel (UK)

11:00 - 11.15 *Coffee*

11:15 - 13:00 **Carers as care-receivers**

**Magdalena Díaz Gorfinkiel** (Spain): Aged Migrants and Care Returns: State, Family and Community

**Neda Deneva** (Hungary): Strategies of Care Giving and the Transformation of the Family in Migration Context: the Case of Bulgarian Muslim in Spain

Discussant: **Karen Fog Olwig** (Denmark)

Chair : Nicola Yeates (UK)

13.00- 14.00 *Lunch*

14.00-14.30 **Discussion session: two parallel groups**

Themes:

a) care giving and receiving: how should care be provided, paid for and where should it be located

*Chaired by* **Fiona Williams** (UK)

b) gender, ethnicity and migration as constituting relations of care

*Chaired by* **Magdalena Díaz Gorfinkiel** (Spain)

14.30-14.45 Report - Back from small group discussion

14.45-15.15 *Coffee*

15.15-16.45 **Carers as ethical subjects**  
**Ziva Humer** (Slovenia): Between power relations and interdependency: experiences of nannies in Slovenia  
**Julia Thiesbonenkamp** (Germany): "Touch us and make us whole again" - Care and self-care within a Filipino migrant community  
**Zuzana Uhde** (Czech Republic): How to value caring relations: the dialectic of reification and recognition  
Discussant: **Parvati Raghuram** (UK)  
Chair : Umut Erel (UK)

20.00 *Dinner at Hilton Hotel*

## Friday 13 November 2009

9.00 -10.45 **Carers as citizens**  
**Kyoko Shinozaki** (Germany): Mobile caregivers, immobile citizenship rights: dilemmas in the transnationalization of care  
**Sarah Scuzzarello** (Sweden): Caring multiculturalism, its transformative and practical aims  
**Lisa Isaksen** (Norway): Migrant Carers in a Norwegian Context.  
Discussant: **Umut Erel** (UK)

10.45-11.00 *Coffee*

11.00-12.45 **Carers as subjects in and of policy**  
**Ulla Björnberg** (Sweden): Care, gender and ethnicity in a Scandinavian welfare state (Sweden)  
**Fiona Williams** (UK): Theorising Migration and Home-based Care in European Welfare States  
**Eleonore Kofman** (UK) Migrants as Subjects of an Ethics of Care  
Discussant: **Nicola Yeates** (UK)

12.45- 13.30 *Lunch*

13.30-14.00 **Discussion session: two parallel groups**  
Themes:  
a) the ethics of care: how can care be better valued by societies?  
*Chaired by Eleonore Kofman*  
b) what kinds of policies would reflect this?  
*Chaired by Helma Lutz*

14. 00-14.15 Report back from small group discussion

14.15-14.30 *Coffee*

14.30-16.0 Future research activities and agenda  
Chaired by Parvati Raghuram (UK)

16.00-16.15 *Close*



# Final list of participants

## Convenors:

1. **Umut Erel** (Open University, UK)
2. **Parvati Raghuram** (Open University, UK)
3. **Nicola Yeates** (Open University, UK)

## Participants:

4. **Björnberg, Ulla** (Gothenburg University, Sweden)
5. **Damamme, Aurélie** (Institut Marcel Mauss-EHESS, Paris, France)
6. **Deneva, Neda** (Central European University, Hungary)
7. **Díaz Gorfinkiel, Magdalena** (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain)
8. **Humer, Ziva** (Peace Institute, Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies, Slovenia)
9. **Isaksen, Lisa Widding** (University of Bergen, Norway)
10. **Kofman, Eleonore** (Middlesex University, UK)
11. **Lutz, Helma** (Frankfurt University, Germany)
12. **Olwig, Karen Fog** (University of Copenhagen, Denmark)
13. **Ouali, Nouria** (Universite Libre Brussels, Belgium)
14. **Papermann, Patricia** (Institut Marcel Mauss-EHESS, Paris, France)
15. **Scuzzarello, Sarah** (Lund University, Sweden)
16. **Shinozaki, Kyoko** (Mainz University, Germany)
17. **Thiesbonenkamp, Julia** (Germany)
18. **Uhde, Zuzana** (Charles University and Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Science, Czech Republic)
19. **Williams, Fiona** (Leeds University, UK)

## 6. Statistical information on participants

### *a. Age Bracket*

Junior experts 8

Senior experts 8

### *b. Countries of Origin*

Czech Republic 1

Belgium 1

Denmark 1

France 2

Germany 3

Hungary 1

Norway 1

Spain 1

Slovenia 1

Sweden 2

United Kingdom 2

### *c. Gender*

16 Female