

Transnational Migration, Gender and Sexuality in the Global South

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This is the eight volume of *Gender Questions* to be published by Unisa Press since the journal's inception in 2013. The journal is accredited with the South African Department of Higher Education and Training.

This special issue on Transnational Migration, Gender and Sexuality in the Global South consists of eight articles. We would like to thank Pragna Rugunanan for her role as consultant for the special issue.

Transnational migration reconfigures how we understand gender and migration in the broader field of migration studies. Globally, South to South migration is on the increase, with a decline in South to North migration as the rise in right-wing nationalism, racism and anti-immigration posturing grips nations in the Global North. While the Global North welcomes the migration of specific groups of skilled professionals where prospects offered by the labour markets exist, in contrast, less skilled workers and unskilled workers, actively supported by their governments, migrate to the Global South in the hope of securing employment prospects and education rather than face “underemployment” at home. The increasing mobility of women in South to South migration raises questions concerning how we understand temporal dimensions of mobility, and how migrants reconstitute and renegotiate their gendered identities and roles in their everyday lives.

Kalpana Hiralal provides a historical perspective on migration from British India to Africa in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She contends that male outmigration was circumscribed by factors often hidden in the migration literature: gender relations in the household and the crucial role of women in the rural economy. She rejects the myth of the “passive” role of women in the historical migration of the Indian diaspora by arguing that women were the pivot of the rural household and rather influenced male-centred migration. In the second article, Pragna Rugunanan looks at the contemporary flows of skilled married Indian women who renegotiate their lives



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when leaving secure jobs to follow their spouses to a foreign country. The article illustrates that gender relations are produced and reproduced in the transnational spaces and that migratory strategies renegotiate the hegemony of traditional and patriarchal practices of the home country in the host country.

Continuing with the theme of human capital broadly, Willie Tafadzwa Chinyamurindi and Tatenda Nyabvudzi examine the barriers to career development for vulnerable groups such as women refugees in South Africa. Building on this theme, Khangelani Moyo explores the transnational experiences of Zimbabwean migrants in the urban terrain of Johannesburg. By engaging with the Bourdieusian concepts of transnational habitus and transnational social field, Moyo argues that the dynamic forces of South–South migration for Zimbabwean migrants are significantly different to those in the South–North migration stream.

Adding another layer of complexity, Kezia Batisai and Lylian Manjowo document Zimbabwean migrant women’s experiences of feminised poverty and illustrate how sexuality and migration shape and reshape processes of migration in the host country. B Camminga argues that in recent years LGBT people are “fleeing Africa” to safer spaces in the Global North. Visibly absent from this reading of sexuality, she argues, is the “role of gender expression,” particularly from the vantage point of transgender people. An important contribution from the article is how transgender people, through the use of digital technology, shine a political lens on those who are transgender and African, which is reflected back onto the African continent.

Sanction Madambi shows how Zimbabwean migrant women in the town of Mthatha, in the Eastern Cape province, despite the shackles of exploitation, marriage constraints, and broken family ties, rise above these challenges to counter gender stereotyping and reconsider traditional approaches to women’s migration. Christopher Ogunyemi examines the motifs of female marginalisation, cultural masculinities, and gender constructions in selected modern Islamic fictions as he “reconfigures and redefines gender performance, masculinities and Islamic metaphysics.”

We hope that you will enjoy reading the special issue on Transnational Migration, Gender and Sexuality in the Global South that comprises a 2019 issue of *Gender Questions*.