

The Gendered Political Economy of Migration

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Abstract

The phenomenon of 'feminisation of migration' has become a widely recognized feature of international migration, as it has in the context of work more broadly. The feminisation of work and migration is largely the outcome of increasing informalisation, casualisation and precariousness of work, men's increasing inability to find permanent or full-time employment as well as jobs in traditionally male dominated sectors. As a result, an increased burden is placed upon many women in their role of securing families' livelihoods and economic survival. Establishing a link between the feminisation of work, migration and poverty is the main objective of this paper, done by way of discussing the three feminisations in relation to the international division of labour and the conceptualization of two 'global chains': the global commodity (i.e. productive) chain and the global care (i.e. reproductive) chain. It is argued that the feminisation of work and migration is not only linked to the transnationalisation of work, but also to gender segregated labour markets within and across countries. The implications of this for pushing IPE into making a more profound contribution to the analytical and conceptual advancement of gendered political economy of migration are discussed in the final section.

Keywords: Gender, International migration, Feminisation, Transnationalisation.

1. Introduction

Feminist scholars have for long stressed the need for fostering a greater understanding of political economy models as inherently gendered, through critiquing economic concepts such as 'rational choice', the privileging of the public over the private and the dichotomous treatment of structure and agency (Waylen, 2000). In the wake of the rebirth of academic interest in political economy approaches in the 1990s, the argument was advanced for a 'gendered political economy' as distinct from a 'political economy of gender'. The former views gender as an analytical category and an essential basis for analysis in mainstream political economy, rather than simply as a subject studied with the conventional tools of political economy, as the latter implies (Cook and Roberts, 2000). This mirrors the development of feminist scholarship in the social sciences more broadly in taking a step from merely 'adding women in' to a thorough gender analysis based on feminist epistemology. Given the widespread acknowledgement of the feminisation of migration (UNRISD, 2005; UNFPA, 2006) as well as the fact that the dynamics of international migration involve the crossing of political borders and thus, state jurisdictions (as opposed to internal, or domestic, migration), this requires not only a perspective that transcends the analytical and regulatory framework of the nation-state¹, but also reveals the importance of a serious gendered perspective.

¹ Because I mainly discuss international migration across state borders, I use the phrase "political economy of migration" to refer to "international political economy of migration" in the remainder of this paper solely for the purpose of convenience.

The phenomenon of 'feminisation' is not only a recognized feature of international migration but also of work more broadly (Standing, 1989 and 1999; Sassen, 2000), and in this context 'feminisation' is largely the outcome of increasing informalisation, casualisation and precariousness of work, resulting in men's increasing inability to find permanent employment as well as jobs in traditionally male dominated sectors. This has had the effect that feminisation has also become a key feature of poverty, especially in the specific definition provided by Chant (2006) who has related the feminisation of poverty to the increased burden placed upon women in their role of securing families' livelihoods and economic survival. Establishing a link between the feminisation of work, migration and poverty is the main objective of this paper, and I propose to do so by way of discussing the three feminisations in relation to the international division of labour and the conceptualization of two 'global chains': the global commodity (i.e. productive) chain and the global care (i.e. reproductive) chain. The feminisation of work and migration is, thus, not only linked to the transnationalisation of work, but also to gender segregated labour markets within and across countries.

By adding a further component to the discussion of the feminisation of work and international migration, that is the feminisation of poverty, I shall develop a framework of analysis that situates the gendered political economy of migration within the so-called 'migration-development nexus' (that is, the relationship between migration and development) which is the subject of a debate that has recently been revived by global policy makers as well as academics. The main concerns in this debate are geared towards origin countries in the global South and related to structures of socio-economic inequality that constitute the main push factors for migration. The feminisation of poverty and responsibility, thus, lies at the intersection of specific dynamics linking rich and poorer countries to do with the effects of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), the demand for labour in feminised jobs in the wake of neoliberal restructuring of Northern economies and welfare states, as well as the intensification of global commodity and care chains.

Furthermore, the relationship between migration and development has been of renewed interest to *global* policy makers with the objective of turning migration more into a matter of a choice rather than a necessity by tackling the slow, and at times backtracking, process of socio-economic development in countries of origin that are typically resource poor (GCIM, 2005; UN, 2006). Countries of origin, however, have placed great emphasis on remittances to spur development, backed up by some economists who argue that many origin countries would benefit from 'exporting' larger numbers of their citizens. This is, however, obstructed by rich countries' restrictive policies, especially vis-à-vis the so-called low skilled migrants, with the effect of turning those migrants into 'unfree' labour as argued by some². Given prevailing migration policies vis-à-vis the majority of migrants and origin states' inability to provide public goods and create employment locally, the current focus on 'remittance led' development carries a strong element of coercion by turning into a matter of 'migration for development' if not even 'migration instead of development' (Matsas, 2008). By constructing individual migrants, many of whom are women, as 'agents of development', the current phase of the migration-development nexus debate, thus, mirrors Chant's argument about the increasing burden now being placed upon women in securing their families' livelihoods and survival.

² See Basok (1999) for a detailed discussion.

I begin this paper by situating the analysis of migration within the emerging global economy and changing international division of labour by highlighting the trend toward increasing stratification and polarisation of migrant with specific gender outcomes. The section thereafter provides a brief discussion of the link between the restrictive migration policies practiced by destination countries and poverty of migrants and left behind non-migrants with specific reference to the example of agricultural and farm work (in its dual role as 'push factor' and 'pull factor'). The dynamics between destination and origin countries, and the linkages between migration and poverty embedded within a gendered political economy of global production, are as argued here connected to academic debates on 'global chains'. I therefore discuss in the section thereafter two types of 'chains': global commodity/value chain and the global care chain. The final section proposes some ideas of the implications of my discussion for pushing IPE into making a more profound contribution to the analytical and conceptual advancement of gendered political economy of migration.

2. International Division of Labour, Migration and Gender

Along with the accelerated process of globalisation, the spatial division of labour has deepened with production processes being no longer confined to national economies but involving a complex system of out-sourcing, subcontracting and relocating of labour-intensive parts of the manufacturing process to developing countries where the costs for labour are substantially lower. The complex web of these processes is well captured by the notion of 'global commodity chains' (to which I return in more detail below), leading to the infamous 'race to the bottom' with regard to wages, entitlements, and working conditions for workers positioned at the different locations within these chains. Internal migration (as shown in the literature on export processing zones in Asia and the maquila industries in Latin America) as well as international flows of workers are part and parcel of these processes, linking the 'chain' phenomenon to the emergence of transnational labour markets. In the case of international migration, the notion of "replacement migration" (UN DESA, 2001) describes dynamics that resonate the metaphor of the 'race to the bottom'. This can be illustrated by the example of a South African nurse migrating to the UK in the search for better conditions, thereby replacing a British nurse who migrates to the US or Canada; the South African nurse is in turn replaced by a Zimbabwean nurse who, through her own migration, escapes even worse conditions. Another example would be that of a Polish nurse who migrates to Sweden and is replaced by a Moldovan nurse searching for better conditions in Poland. Another additional issue is in-country locality: rural areas usually fare worse than urban centres with regard to attracting and retaining health personnel.

This division of labour is not only a matter of space, however. A *gender* division of labour is customarily one in which women and men occupy different places in the labour market; women tend to carry out jobs which are on average worse paid, less valued and entail more (or differently) difficult working conditions than men's. In other words, women and men are directed towards certain tasks (enforced by policies or informal practices that are reflective of specific socio-cultural norms or customs) and/or explicitly prohibited from performing others³. Women are also overrepresented in the informal sector such as petty trading which is

³ In the context of international migration, this is evident from the various bans imposed by some Asian governments on the out-migration of women in what is classified as 'unskilled migration' (Siddiqui, 2001; Oishi, 2005).

often performed by pendular migrants (see Dodson, 1998 and 2008 for South Africa, and Sophal and Sovannarith, 1999 for cross-border migration between Cambodia and Thailand). Pendular migration refers to the crossing of international borders only for a very short period and more immanent return to the origin community. This usually happens on a daily or weekly basis. This is a phenomenon that has been observed in a number of border areas, also between Eastern and Western Europe where pendular migrants are not only involved in petty trading but also other types of work (Morokvasic, 2003).

The gendered division of labour is, thus, predicated upon gender segregated labour markets with men being the dominant workforce in certain sectors and women in others ('between' sector differentiations), but this division also pertains to different tasks being carried out by the different genders *within* the same sector (e.g. in agriculture and manufacturing, women are typically designated to do jobs that require "nimble fingers" (Elson and Pearson, 1981) whereas men usually occupy middle and upper managerial positions, see Dias and Wanasundera, 2002). In this latter context, Wright (2006) has argued that what is actually happening here is a mythical construction of female labour as 'disposable' (read: unskilled). This in turn allows managers to use female workers as skilled labour without changing their 'unskilled' status within the division of labour at production sites (and as a result, avoiding to raise women's pay).

Intensified economic integration and changing labour markets globally have increased both opportunities and pressures for women and men to migrate internationally in larger numbers. Contemporary changes in the economic sphere – attributed by many scholars to the global trend towards neo-liberalism and the after-effects of structural adjustment policies – experienced by many countries of origin has resulted in an increasing burden being placed upon women on account of rising male unemployment, the reduction in demand for male labour due to economic slowdowns of certain sectors, and the shift in economic emphasis to the service industries in countries of origin as well as destination. Studies conducted in the context of Latin America and Europe have observed the decline in female inactivity versus the growth in the inactivity of men in the domestic labour market (Farah et al., 2002), resulting in one point of convergence between home-state (i.e. non-migrant) and migrant women: their growing economic activity as part of the general feminisation of the workforce, albeit accompanied by re-growth of inequalities and insecurities as the result of the informalisation of many sectors (Chaib, 2003). Yet, the opposite trend has been observed in the case of women from Eastern Europe: the changes during the 1990s led in fact to a loss of local employment for women who had experienced a high labour force participation rate during the communist period (Kofman, 2004). This lack of opportunities has increased the push to migrate for women. The current economic crisis is bound to add further pressure to out-migrate, however with even fewer chances for legal immigration given the rise in unemployment in many countries of the global North.⁴

Furthermore, it has been argued that migrants' labour market positioning and experiences have to be analysed in relation to gender segregated labour markets in the countries of

⁴ One concrete example here is offered by the dynamics between Ecuador and Spain. The latter has experienced a record high unemployment rate at 17.4 percent (joblessness has almost doubled within the space of one year) (*The Times*, April 25, 2009). In response, the Spanish government started to offer 'return incentives' to Ecuadorian and other Latin American migrants in the second half of 2008 when the job crisis began. At the same time, the economic situation in Ecuador has also worsened on the basis of falling oil prices, decreasing tourism etc. (ibid.).

destination *as well as* origin (Kofman, 2008; Boyd and Pikkov, 2008). In other words, migrants leave and enter already gender segregated labour markets. In addition, there are qualitative differences between home-state and migrant women at the destination. The significant increases in female labour force participation of home-state women across the OECD countries, as well as in certain destination countries in Southeast/East Asia (such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan) and Latin America (e.g. Costa Rica, Argentina), has created a need for social and care related services, especially where mothers of young children work full-time. Most migrant women thus tend to be concentrated to a greater extent than their home-state peers in less skilled personal service work.

Globally, most migrants generate income through jobs which are considered 'unskilled', are poorly paid, increasingly regulated via temporary migration schemes or carried out in an undocumented manner, often performed in the domestic/private domain or related to the expansion of the service industry and construction projects – that is involving jobs that tend to be looked down upon socially and/or devalued economically by home-state workers. In the case of male lower skilled migrants, it is especially construction/mining (e.g. as in South Africa) and agriculture⁵ (Garcia et al., 2002), two sectors of the three that are deemed the most precarious by the ILO (2003). The third is domestic work which is dominated by women.

Globally, it is the case that most women who migrate in the less skilled category work as domestic or care workers. In France, for instance, over 50 percent of migrant women are believed to be engaged in domestic work and in Italy, from among the 600,000 registered domestic workers the great majority are non-EU nationals (ILO, 2003, p. 11; Irene and IUF, 2008). In Spain domestic service is the main and almost obligatory gateway for 63 percent of non-Community foreign women (Colectivo Ioé, 2003, Irene and IUF, 2008)⁶ – a situation not so different in Canada and its 'live-in-caregiver' programme⁷ also (McKay, 2003; Hankivsky, 2009). Domestic work is also the single most important category of employment among women migrants to the Gulf States, as well as to Lebanon and Jordan (Esim and Smith, 2004). Chin's study on foreign domestic work has situated the 'import' of such workers within the "politics of development" of Malaysia and the expansion of the middle class with more educated women entering the labour market, leaving a care gap to be filled. Without the state providing such services, this gap has been filled by foreign domestic workers (Chin, 1998; see also Teo and Piper, 2009 on Singapore). In this regard Chin's work echoes approaches by other social scientists who have linked foreign domestic worker issues to larger questions of global economic restructuring and the feminisation of labour migration (Sassen, 1988).

Male migrant workers, by contrast, are highly (but not exclusively) represented in agriculture and related food production. They now provide up to 80 percent of the agricultural labour force in some countries or regions (IUF, 2008). South African commercial

⁵ Men dominate in agriculture in North America, but not in Southern Europe where this sector is in fact female dominated (Kahmann, 2002). Interesting in the case of agriculture or farming is also the difference between countries of origin in the South where a "feminisation of agriculture" has taken place especially in Africa (FAO, n.d.) and also China (IOM, 2008) where men migrate to urban areas or to abroad for work, leaving women behind in charge of farming and as heads of rural households.

⁶ The effect the economic crisis and high unemployment rate in Spain has had on foreigners employed in domestic work was not discernible at the time of writing.

⁷ This programme, which still exists, is explained on a Canadian governmental website as follows: "Live-in caregivers are individuals who are qualified to provide care for children, elderly persons or persons with disabilities in private homes without supervision. Live-in caregivers must live in the private home where they work in Canada" (www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/caregiver/index.asp, accessed on 12 June 2009).

agriculture are said to have hired migrant workers from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho, whereby migrant Mozambican farm workers are almost exclusively male and young. In the immediate border areas, however, both men and women are said to cross borders for farm work. Moreover, the tasks tend to be highly gendered, with women concentrated in harvesting and picking (Crush, 2000). Although an overall highly male dominated sector in many destination countries such as the US, Canada and Malaysia (Martin, 2006 and 1998; Basok, 1999), an increasing number of employers in agriculture and related food industries are employing women rather than men. Moreover, some 70 percent of all child labour in the world takes place in agriculture. As more women migrate, more children travel with them and become part of the workforce. In Africa, children from Mali and Burkina Faso work in Cote d'Ivoire, a country which produces about 40 percent of the world's cocoa. In the US, over 300,000 children work as hired labourers on commercial farms; nearly three-quarters of them are Hispanic, including migrants from Mexico. Employers use and abuse the labour of children rather than pay a decent wage to adult workers (IUF, 2008). In this regard, child migration and child migrant labour is a side-effect of the feminisation of migration.

Whilst the majority of international migrants fill the less skilled jobs upon entry, they are not absent from the ranks of the skilled. Skilled migration, however, is also heterogeneous in its gender divisions, occupations and conditions of work (Iredale, 2004). Men overwhelmingly form the mass of those moving within transnational corporations and in the Information Technology and Scientific sectors, upon which the notion of the highly skilled and the knowledge society has been predicated (OECD, 2002)⁸. Other male migrant dominated professions are accounting and engineering. Within national workforces fewer women have entered IT sectors but for migrant women, this is often compounded by the work demand for constant physical mobility and flexibility between different places amongst software specialists (UNRISD, 2005). Furthermore, it can be a gendered demand structure that explains the dominance of a certain sex in specific migration streams. For example, 88 percent of the Green card permits in Germany in 2000 were taken up by men (SOPEMI, 2001), with the vast majority of scientists from Eastern Europe where there are almost as many women in the same profession (thus the gender imbalance does not necessarily already exist in the sending countries) (Kofman, 2008).

Skilled women have globally tended to go into what can be broadly classified as the welfare and social professions (education, health, social work) – jobs that have traditionally been relegated to a largely female workforce. Nursing constitutes the most feminised sector, with 90 percent or more of the nursing workforce being comprised of women (Buchan and Calman, 2004). An analysis of the UK work permit data for 2000 showed that sectors with high proportions of female staff constituted some of the fastest growing sectors of migrant employment. Between 1998/9 and 2003/4, all professional health and education related occupations were posted on the Work Permits UK website as priority areas unlike IT which has been demoted (Winkelman-Gleed, 2006).

Recourse to foreign nurses in response to the crisis in the shortage of nurses has become a truly global phenomenon and health sectors in richer countries a truly global labour market, as evident in the case of the UK, Ireland, Canada and the US and countries in the Middle East. Above all, it is the Philippines which supplies the overwhelming number of nurses to

⁸ According to the OECD Report (2007), there are now more highly-skilled migrant women in industrialized countries and they women are over-represented in the brain drain. But this has to be broken down into gender segregated labour market positioning: most women migrating in the skilled category are health workers.

overseas destinations, followed by India (Ball, 2004). As a reflection or result of this, the migration of nurses has become subject to a number of global studies (Kingma, 2005; Buchan and Calman, 2004). Despite being classified as 'skilled', however, downgrading or deskilling migrant health workers have been subjected to a practice widely reported by those global studies. This raises questions about the accreditation and recognition of skills and the implications for gender given that so many women work in highly regulated sectors such as health.

It has been argued that existing structures of gendered labour division and inequality constrain women's options and relegate to them work roles that reinforce male supremacy and privilege (Chafetz, 1988). The notion of 'constrained choice' has also informed gendered analyses of international migration (Cook and Roberts, 2000; Piper, 2000). In the analysis of an evolving hierarchy between highly skilled and lower skilled international migrants, Weiss (2005) has argued that the concept of 'social inequality' that has so far been used in national contexts only should be applied to the world scale in order to further our understanding of the gendered international division of labour, and economic migration's place therein. What emerges from these accounts and conceptualisations of differences is the need for a comprehensive analysis of existing divides and divisions not only between men and women, but also between different groups of women – and this complex picture is well captured by the notion of 'stratification'.

Diversified and Stratified Migration

Our understanding of gendered global migratory movements has to be based on the dynamic and changing division of labour (nationally as well as internationally), the selective (and changing) nature of migration policies (in response to the, real or perceived, needs by origin and destination countries) and an appreciation of the diversity of different migrant groups (Grieco and Boyd, 1998; Kofman, 2004). What we can observe globally, then, is a trend towards greater diversification and polarisation of mobility resulting in a highly stratified pattern of migration. The notion of 'polarisation' highlights the distinction between highly skilled or professional and less skilled categories of migrants. Intra-group differences (see for instance Rojas Wiesner and Angeles, 2008 on the greater diversity of Mexicans with regard to skill and place of origin in the US today) as well as inter-group differences (with regard to more nationalities now having entered the 'migration scene') are captured by the notion of 'diversification'. The shift towards more diversified migration is related to changing politico-economic structures (Piper, 2008a).

Geo-political changes (such as the break-up of the former Soviet union and economic reform processes in other former socialist countries in, for example, Mongolia and Vietnam) have also resulted in the deepening of regional integration of labour markets and in the "opening up" of opportunities for migration. As a result, there are now male and female factory workers from Vietnam working in Korea and Taiwan. Increasing overseas investment by Japan, Korea and Taiwan – and more lately China – have led migrant workers to opt for migration to East Asia as an alternative to the Middle East or Europe⁹. The dollarisation of

⁹ Given the increasingly restrictive migration policies in Europe, North America and Australia, those migrants who cannot afford the huge costs of visa to those destinations have the option to remain "closer to home". This adds a further layer to the stratification of migration.

the economy in Ecuador in 2001 has made it lucrative for Peruvians to work there (Boccagni, 2008), and relative political stability have attracted migrants to Chile (since about 1989) and Argentina (since 1983¹⁰).

Stratification, then, emphasises the combined effects of gender, ethnicity, legal status, skill level and mode of entry or exit that result in complex systems of stratification along new lines of inclusion and exclusion (Castles, 2003). Such a pattern of stratification reflects the ability of the skilled in states lower down the hierarchy to be able to move to states higher up, which are experiencing severe labour shortages and are engaged in the competition for skilled labour in specific sectors. This entails gender differences along with skills: men and women circulate differently in an unevenly globalised economy where significant sectors are heavily regulated by states and corporatist bodies (Kofman, 2004). Men are the ones who typically “pursue careers in the financial, scientific and technological spheres” and are thus “the protagonists of knowledge-driven economies” (Kofman, 2004, p. 645).

Women, on the other hand, are conspicuously absent from these hypermobile spaces occupied by specific types of elite migrants. Although far from non-existent in the skilled category (according to the OECD (2007), women are overrepresented in the brain drain), women tend to dominate the education and health sectors, rather than trade, finances and sciences. The dramatic increase of international migration in the health sector has to be placed in the context of structural changes in the global economy. In the rich countries, this includes public sector reforms, privatisation and the liberalisation of welfare regimes resulting in shortages in health, education and social services. In the poorer countries, it is the impacts of SAPs which have resulted in serious budget cuts and explain to a large extent the abysmal state of social services in the health sector – a situation which drives many health workers to seek employment abroad (Van Eyck, 2004) – as well as un- or underemployment of men. Many of the sectors in demand of workers are highly feminised, thus contributing to the overall feminisation of migration.

The experiences of women migrant health workers from the South are often a world away from the global mobility of (white) male professional workers from the North. Although nurses and other health care workers may be ‘professionals’ and skilled migrants, they are not likely to be provided with the same quality of benefits that other white-collar workers might expect when working abroad such as housing, transportation, family relocation or domestic help (Van Eyck, 2004)¹¹. In the lower skilled categories, apart from labouring in the textile and light manufacturing sector, certain types of agricultural work and service-related jobs, women are predominantly drawn into domestic or household work. It is not uncommon to find among the large numbers of foreign women working as domestic helpers worldwide a considerable proportion of women who are in fact overqualified but cannot find legal employment in areas of their expertise (Weiss, 2005). This has led to the coinage of the phrase ‘de-skilling’ or ‘brain waste’ (UNFPA, 2006).

In sum, although not a new phenomenon as such, migration has become an issue of increasingly pressing concern for policy-makers and politicians around the world, predicated

¹⁰ This is not to suggest to emigration from Chile, and especially Argentina, stopped post-1983.

¹¹ Migration of health workers does, however, not only take place between the developing and developed world, but also between developed countries (e.g. Canadian physicians in the US) and between countries of the south (e.g. Cuban doctors in Ghana). Some have referred to this phenomenon as ‘replacement migration’.

upon specific interests by, or pressures exerted on, origin and destination countries. More highly developed countries are pressed into considering how to limit 'brain drain' migration, to produce ethical migration policies and (rightly or wrongly) to foster development through their migration policies. First and foremost, however, there is the pursuit of their own economic and political development, by maximizing the benefits of skilled and lesser skilled migration and by ensuring availability of workers in sectors more varied than those formally acknowledged as part of the knowledge economy - care work, domestic work, construction and agricultural work. From the perspective of origin countries - especially those that fall under the category of low developed countries - access to paid overseas work constitutes an ever more important means to solve the problem of local un- or underemployment (Briones, 2009). In a highly political environment of restrictive immigration controls which constrain migration as a livelihood strategy for many, coupled with oppressive development policies which have obliterated livelihood access in countries of origin, however, the beneficial outcomes of migration are seriously undermined (*ibid.*).

In this stratified system, it is human capital which becomes an important criterion to determine a migrant's place, and within a specific sector there are often further divisions along ethnic and human capital lines (whereby, for instance, English speaking Filipino domestic worker obtain higher wages and better 'deals' than their Indonesian or Sri Lankan counterparts, Lan, 2003). Overall, access to movement constitutes a highly unequal matter, and even when movement across borders is possible, it might then result in deskilling and, thus, become a complex issue of social inequality across nation states (*cf.* Weiss, 2005). Highly differentiated mobility rights, based on which types of migrants a sending state wants to send or retain and which types a destination country wants, follow from contemporary forms of managing the circulation of people (Kalm, 2008; Grugel and Piper, 2007).

3. Managing Migration and Managing Poverty

Since the official halt of immigration in the 1970s, western Europe (Britain in particular) has begun to re-open channels for economic migration to ameliorate labour shortages experienced by certain sectors since the 1990s, while southern European countries have shifted from sending to destination countries during the same period. Unlike the 'guest worker schemes' that were practiced in the 1950s and 60s, the current recruitment phase has taken place under a new discursive framework: that of 'management of migration' (Kalm, 2008). Another element that distinguishes the guest worker migration phase from the current one is the more or less systematic recruitment along skilled-lower skilled categories entailing an increasing bifurcation between these two categories in the ease of migration between countries, access to labour markets and other resources or entitlements. Temporary contract migration has become a significant component, or feature, of the 'managed migration' policy framework in many parts of this world, having experienced a recent revival in Europe after the official 'zero migration' policies following the economic crisis in the early 1970s. In North America and Australia this policy frame constitutes a new phenomenon, whereas in Asia (including the Gulf countries) it is subject to continuation as a well established feature of migration policies. In this regard, the (re-)emergence of temporary and seasonal migration can arguably be described as a converging policy of almost global outreach.

The difference between post-Second World War decades and now is that not only lower skilled migrants are subject to temporary migration schemes but skilled migrants also. In Europe and elsewhere, demographic, economic and labour-market related trends have resulted in the increased demand for skilled foreigners (e.g. in the health and care sector) and the revival or intensification of temporary ('guest worker') migration schemes (Ruhs, 2006; Castles, 2006; Piper, 2008; Basok, 1999). Asia contrasts with Europe and traditional immigration countries in that governments of destination countries in Asia practice temporary migration schemes only (with few exceptions) and, thus, at least officially prevent migrants in especially the lower skilled categories from settling and reuniting with their families in the host country. As a consequence of lacking integration and family unification policies, the acquisition of permanent residence status, let alone citizenship, is out of reach for most migrants in Asia and increasingly so in parts of the western world also. Thus, despite being a signifier, or acknowledgement, of migration as 'normal' and something to be dealt with rather than just ignored, the policy of 'managed migration' tends to place greater emphasis on control issues rather than rights protection, as I have argued elsewhere (Grugel and Piper, 2007).

At the lower skilled end, many of these migrants end up working in a narrow range of sectors, especially in agriculture, construction and food packaging/processing as well documented in the case of the UK (Markova and Black, 2007; TLWG, 2007; TUC, 2007). As mentioned above, domestic work has proven to be an increasingly important 'sector' all over the world and, thus, a vital employment opportunity, for newly arrived women in Europe, North America, Asia and elsewhere. Migrant workers' location within specific sectors of the (formal or informal) labour market and the temporary nature of their migration status usually entail a number of legal and economic constraints. With female dominated domestic work and male dominated agricultural work being subjected to rigid migration control exercised by both, the origin¹² as well as destination countries, both sectors or areas of work can be said to constitute a re-newed form of unfree labour, as argued by Basok (1999) in the context of Mexican agricultural workers in Canada, and Briones (2009) in the context of Filipino domestic workers in Asia and Europe.

Agricultural and Farm Work

Foreign agricultural workers are often brought to northern countries under temporary migration schemes (see former Bracero programme by the US, today's bilateral agreement between Canada and Mexico), largely due to the seasonal nature of this sector and the reluctance of home-state workers to perform low paid and erratic work therein. In Australia, this type of seasonal work is to a large extent performed by young people who take advantage of the 'working holiday visa' during their so-called 'gap year' (Khoo et al., 2008). Elsewhere, many more migrants who labour in agriculture are undocumented (Martin, 2006).

Agriculture, according to Martin (1998), has been the major side and back door through which unskilled Mexican immigrants have entered the US for the past half century. This sector is considered a US economic success story for its ability to provide US residents with

¹² Origin countries display a certain control via the imposition of bans – either total bans on the out-migration of lower skilled women or bans on specific destination countries. Government policies in origin countries are also shaped by elite interests (collusion between recruitment agencies and politicians) as well as by bilateral agreements (although origin countries typically have a weaker bargaining power with regard to the latter).

low cost food and to generate a consistent trade surplus (although most US farms actually lose money and government payments account for one-fourth of net farm income; small farms lose money by farming; most American farms are family farms operated by non-Hispanic whites). The agriculture sector in the US is, thus, subsidized in two ways: 1. through government money, and 2. foreign labour, much of which unauthorised (with little legal enforcement against their employment and border control).

The subsector of US agriculture most closely associated with Mexican migrants is so-called FVH agriculture (fruit and nuts, vegetables, horticulture) which constitutes a particularly labour intensive part of agriculture. Immigrants comprise almost 2/3 (two thirds) of the industry's current work force and nearly all entrants to the seasonal fruit and vegetable work force. Many migrants work in this sector for several years (up to a decade) before moving to other job options which are often in cities. To cope with the labour turn-over, farmers lobby (usually successfully) for open border gates. In California in particular, the workers typically live in non-employer provided housing. Most of them do not speak English and few finished high school. Illegal immigrants who do farm work are usually among the poorest and least sophisticated such workers in the US. The result is an accelerated "transfer of rural poverty from Mexico to the US" (Martin, 1998, p. 79). Some Mexican workers manage to settle in the US and bring their families and try their luck in urban labour markets. If they do not succeed, then "rural poverty in Mexico becomes rural and eventually urban poverty in the US" (ibid., 1998, p. 80).

In addition to seasonal migrant worker schemes, another way in which poverty enters the picture in terms of governance (that is, management) is via Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), popular with the EU and Japan, and the effect they have on sending countries. The EU Commission, for instance, is pushing the ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) into signing such agreements. Women in developing countries are said to be particularly affected by EPAs as it is "they who mainly work in the agricultural sectors, e.g. as poultry and vegetable farmers, which will be most adversely affected by trade liberalisation and the EPAs" (Groth, 2008, p. 4). Similar to this, it has also been shown that regional trade agreements like NAFTA have had no effect on reducing economic hardship has the main push factor for migration from Mexico to the US. The effects of such agreements are, therefore, related to the feminisation of poverty by being linked to the feminisation of agriculture when men are 'forced' into out-migration to industrial cities or to abroad, leaving women behind as head of household and main person to work the fields.

China is a case in point (Jacka, 2008). As part of China's efforts to develop a globalised, market economy increased rural-urban migration has taken place (the dynamics of internal migration in China are very similar to international migration in terms of regulation and policies, see Solinger, 1999). From the mid-1980s rural incomes began to stagnate and as a result rural/urban income inequalities increased markedly, pushing larger numbers of rural people to move to urban centres (where they were welcomed by employers of domestic and foreign-owned companies as cheap, flexible and unskilled labour). Broken down by gender, roughly two-thirds of all rural-to-urban migrants in China are said to be men but sex ratios vary quite significantly from one region to another. In the Pearl River Delta region, for instance, young rural women are reported to make up 65 to 70 percent of the labour force, being the favoured type of worker by the transnational clothing, textile, toy, electronics and other labour-intensive manufacturing companies. Migrant women are found to be younger

and more likely to be single than men. They also tend to be less educated than rural migrant men, partly due to their lower average age and partly owing to gender inequalities in education attainment across rural China (Jacka, 2008).

New and more desirable off-farm work leaves many women behind to take care of farms, a trend which has consequently resulted in the ‘feminisation of agriculture’. Today across China a higher proportion of women than men are agricultural labourers. When women are left behind, they typically experience an increased workload, particularly in poor households in which women can neither afford to hire labour to help with farm work nor to not farm their land. To cope with labour shortages on the farm, it is commonly girls who are withdrawn from school rather than boys. The ‘reversed’ form of gender division of labour with the wife becoming the migrant worker and her husband taking care of farm and domestic work is rare and considered the very last resort (Jacka, 2008). In Sri Lanka by contrast, women’s participation in agriculture has declined and as a result, women’s out-migration has been on the increase (Ukwatta, in IOM, 2005). All of this indicates the increasing burden placed upon many women in their role as principle migrant or left behind adult. Moreover, migration as a route to socio-economic betterment is also increasingly exposed as a myth, especially in the case of the majority migrants who are lower skilled (Piper, 2008). According to Jacka (2008) for instance, the 1999 household survey taken in Sichuan and Anhui revealed that 75 percent of returned migrant women and 63 percent of male returnees worked primarily in agriculture post-return. The temporary or seasonal migration schemes, thus, have clear limitations with regard to allowing migrants to develop “here” (destination) and/or “there” (origin).

The socio-economic changes that result from gendered migration dynamics and the shifts in ‘managing poverty’ have to be analysed in an integrated manner by looking at the impacts on origin and destination countries simultaneously or in a parallel manner. The global chain concept is an ideal framework with which to do just that.

4. Global Chains

4.1 Commodity (productive) Chains

Studies on the changing nature of work and business that have focused on cross-border production and trade networks have led scholars to use the ‘global commodity chains’ (GCC) framework, developed to map and analyse the internationally dispersed activities involved in the production of a specific commodity, and thus to illuminate the various flows (of capital, goods, services and labour) between and across space. In other words, global chain analysis provides “key elements for understanding changes in the global economy and the role of developing countries in it” (Ponte and Gibbon, 2005, p. 1). Within this framework, it is the example of the garment or apparel industry that has been particularly amply documented (Bair and Gereffi, 2003). As noted above, women constitute the dominant workforce in the textile and garment manufacturing outlets in the global South, as internal migrants (Hale and Wills, 2007; Prieto and Quinteros, 2004) as well as international migrants (Dannecker, 2009; Bastia, 2007; Pearson, 2004).

The ‘global value’ or ‘commodity chain’ concept has also been applied to horticulture (fresh fruit, vegetable and cut flowers) and the production of food in Africa, Asia and Latin

America in its linkage to northern consumers. It has been argued that in Europe, and particularly in the UK, it is large supermarket buyers which increasingly dominate the trade in, and retailing of, fresh produce (Rogali, 2006; Kritzinger et al., 2004). They do so by working through integrated global value chains with the result that market conditions are now governing prices. Because of the intensification of the agri-food system and implications of internationalisation of food for agricultural employment, there is a strong downward pressure on pricing (Kritzinger et al., 2004). The production of food is not only linked to agriculture but also to food processing, two areas where women and migrants constitute an important workforce.

In response to the 'global commodity chain', it is in particular feminists who argued for, and developed, the more nuanced notion of 'global value chains' "to highlight the growing informalisation and the links between different sectors along the chain of production" across global supply networks (Waylen, 2004, p. 563, drawing on Pearson, 2003 and Barrientos, 2001). The main point is the recognition that "the design, production and marketing of many products now involves a chain of activities divided among enterprises located in different places" (McCormick and Schmitz, 2001, p. 17). This 'chain' concept, thus, adds another layer to the commodity chain framework by emphasising not only the spatial reach of the production process, but also the process of creating value. This refers to value being added at different stages and that the value added at the design stage (usually in the Global North) is considered higher than that of the final assembly process (in the Global South). In doing so, the notion of 'value' elucidates the gender and ethnic character of production processes as well as the returns to different types of labour (*ibid.*).

The value chain concept also highlights that much of this work occurs in the form of 'home-based work' (informal, casual or subcontracted). In the literature on home-based work, it has been argued that "in developing countries, the broader term 'home-based workers' tends to be used in recognition of the fact that the term 'home' is not necessarily consistent with a private domestic space, and that women often work around or outside their home or travel to and from home in pursuit of different activities. This is particularly the case in activities related to agriculture or food processing" (Pearson, 2004, p. 138). Not surprisingly this type of work is mostly done by women: an estimated 80 percent of home-based workers are women (Pearson, 2004, p. 136). The dynamics expressed by the 'chain' metaphor, thus, resonate the notion of a 'race to the bottom' in that the workers at the end of the chain carry out the least valued tasks and are therefore women.

4.2 Care (reproductive) Chains

The global interconnections of the productive sector, captured by the notion of 'global commodity chain' (hereafter GCC) in general, and migrant women's role in this captured by the notion of 'global value chain' in specific, are both non-territorially based approaches. They have one major flaw, however, in not providing the full picture of the international division of labour. Because, as feminists have for long argued, to do so we have to look beyond the productive sphere to recognize the extent and significance of reproductive labour which has historically and culturally one element in common: that it is mainly carried out by women. The focus of GCC analysis on industrial production by firms and the consequent neglect of services and household production has been central to feminist critiques of global commodity chain analysis (Yeates, 2004). Carr et al. (2000) argue that the GCC analysis fails to recognize

the integral role of informalisation in the globalisation of production in the manufacturing, agriculture and forestry sectors, let alone unpaid reproductive labour. Home-based work constitutes a significant source of employment in many parts of the world but the workforce in those industries around which GCC revolves do not include households as a site of production that is situated within commodity chains (Yeates, 2004; Pearson, 2004; Elson, 1998).

To address these lacunae, the 'global care chain' concept (Hochschild, 2000), drawing on the GCC framework in its conceptualization, constitutes an important innovative theoretical tool for the analysis of the relationship between globalisation, migration and care in its paid and unpaid forms. "It captures the significance of transnational care services and the international division of reproductive labour as integral features of the contemporary international economy that are otherwise neglected by globalisation studies and also migration studies" (Yeates, 2004, p. 370). But this does not come without further flaws. Although the global commodity chain concept offers a useful framework for analysing transnational production processes, Yeates argues that it does not directly lend itself to an analysis of the care services sector. "The global care chain concept suffers from its lack of embeddedness in a critical international political economy perspective and from its narrow application to just one group of migrant care workers" (2004, p. 370).

Yeates' critique is, thus, based on a broader understanding of what constitutes the 'global care economy' and the fact, for instance that care as a key element of social reproduction involves activities that fall outside of market production. What emerged is a 'care mix' whereby only part of it can be 'outsourced' because of the distinction between caring for (physical care) and caring about (emotional care). Hence, there are limits to the commodification of care (aspects such as time to listen or holding a hand cannot be billed). The main aspect of Yeates' critique, however, revolves around the limited empirical base of the 'care chain concept': domestic work. The existing literature on 'global care chains' has focused almost exclusively on domestic work. Also, this literature has not established links to the issue of development, whereas the literature on the migration and development nexus has tended to focus almost exclusively on medical migration (nurses and doctors), approached from the perspective of 'brain drain' or 'brain gain' by neglecting other forms of care work (Piper, 2009). Thus, the important link in the continuum between the (usually female) emigration of 'unskilled' domestic workers and 'skilled' health workers from less developed to more developed countries" (Hugo, 2009, p. 189) has not been established – neither by academics nor policymakers.

The dramatic increase of internationally migrating health workers can only be understood in the context of structural changes in the global economy and the political responses to these. As a result of the unequal global economy, restructuring of European welfare states and shortages of health or care workers experienced in Europe, North America, Australia and parts of Asia, high numbers of mostly female migrants are drawn to fill jobs in private households as well as state institutions (Kofman, 2008; Hugo, 2009). In the South, Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) have resulted in serious budget cuts that explain to a large extent the declining state of social services such as health. This situation drives health workers to seek employment abroad (Van Eyck, 2004). Care work has, thus, become one of the most globalised forms of work forming a complex web of "a series of personal links between people across the globe based on paid or unpaid work of caring" (Hochschild, 2000, p. 132).

4.3 Linking the Two Chains

The central element common in the global care chain concept and the GCC or GVC concept is that it is women who emerge as supplying labour and that many of the consumers are also women – in their role as household managers (employers of domestic workers, main controllers of the family's budget) and main target of the fashion, flower and other industries. Poorer countries thereby are the main suppliers of cheap labour demanded by richer countries either “here” (as foreign workers in destination countries) or “there” (at the bottom rank of production or care chains). Hence, what emerges is an international division of productive and reproductive labour structured by social class, ethnicity, race and gender (Lycklama, 1994; Anderson, 1997; Wee and Sim, 2005).

This point has also been flagged by Parreñas (2000) in her “three-tier” conceptualisation of the international division of reproductive labour in which she distinguishes between the following groups of women: 1. middle-class women in receiving countries; 2. migrant domestic workers; and 3. women from the Global South who are too poor to migrate. The migrant domestic worker as a result is ranked in the middle of this division of labour and the care deficit created by her own out-migration might be filled by the poor woman who cannot migrate (in paid form) or by the eldest daughter or another female relative (in unpaid or paid form) (Hochschild, 2000). The notion of the global chain, productive and reproductive, thus, elucidates the structures and processes that perpetuate the unequal distribution of resources and are a reflection of socio-economic inequalities arising from unequal development.

5. Way forward for Gendered IPE of Migration

Within the academe, the traditional IPE approach has for long narrowly focused on macro structural elitist issues detached from ‘real lives’ of ordinary people. More recently, however, arguments have been made for a more integrated approach that bridges structure by introducing agency as a focal perspective into IPE (Delgado-Wise and Marquez Covarrubias, 2008), and with this insights into how everyday actions transform the global economy (Dobson and Seabrooke, 2007). The incorporation of ‘everyday IPE’ (EIPE) into mainstream regulatory IPE (RIPE), as argued by Dobson and Seabrooke (2007) involves ‘bringing in’ social movement scholarship or counter-globalisation movement perspectives - that is a framework usually associated with sociology. By doing so, the focus is shifted away from “order and regulation” to a focus on “transformation” (ibid, p. 2). Given that the higher echelons of power tend to be male dominated spheres (especially in government politics, finance and trade), the injection of the ‘everyday’ into IPE perspective allows, amongst other, greater inroad for gender perspectives on the basis of de-privileging elitists concerns over the non-elitist, the macro over the micro, the public over the private, and the paid over the unpaid.

Related to the neglect of the non-elitist, ‘everyday’ within IPE is that the study of migration has not been very prominent, nor well developed within this sub-discipline of political science. If it were, there would be a greater sense of agency and real lives of male and female migrants who constitute a significant component of the international division of labour. The ‘everyday’ approach, by contrast, allows us to zoom in on the majority of migrant workers who are not part of the highly skilled or professionals, such as Chinese business people or Indian IT workers whose experience has been heralded as “success stories” within

the migration-development debate – but instead to highlight the large numbers of less skilled (male and female) migrants, among whom the many farm and care workers whose migration is largely regulated by temporary contract schemes but whose work and employment conditions are subject to very little labour regulation. They are often excluded from national labour laws and not subject to labour union organizing.

The everyday caring activities by (foreign and home-state) household workers and nurses are conceptually linked to the notion of ‘social reproduction’. Feminist scholars within IPE have lately revisited this notion in their efforts to broaden the meaning of economics by looking beyond the market to include households and women’s unpaid work (Beneria, 1979, 2003; Hoskyns and Ray, 2007) – “work that does not fit into the industrial class framework, the work of women farmers, of the self-employed, domestics, home-makers and mothers” (Prügl, 2002, p. 33). Some IPE feminists have pointed to the increasingly marketised and privatised relations involved in social reproduction. This also highlights the interconnections between neo-liberal transformations in the processes of social reproduction and the globalisation of commodified care labour (Bakker, 2007). The commodification and marketisation of domestic work (by turning unpaid care work into paid work), for instance, indicates how the constructs of the public and private sphere becomes a false dichotomy (Litt and Zimmerman, 2003). As outlined above, migrant women’s role in social reproduction and care work is gaining empirically and academically greater significance (Onuki forthcoming).

The ‘everyday’ is also crucial in moving agency to centre stage, specifically political agency which is of particular interest here. In the realm of work, trade unions have been the historically most significant channel for collective agency in the struggle for improved working conditions and labour rights. However, the point made above about much of women’s work not fitting into industrial class framework alludes to the insignificance of trade unionism in this regard – an observation that has also made in the case of migrant workers in general and migrant women in specific (Piper, 2008b). The increasing marketisation of care work and the commodification of domestic work, however, could create opportunities for worker organising (notwithstanding the reservations by Yeates (2004), with regard to the limits to full commodification) but this idea requires further investigation.

In the mainstream IPE literature the conceptualisation of rights has largely been treated in a top-down fashion as the preserve of international organisations and negotiations among states. Not many attempts have been made to link this analysis to a discussion of political activism and advocacy from within civil society (with the exception of Grugel and Piper, 2008). The significance of the feminisation of migration and stratified access to a bundle of rights and entitlements as discussed above highlights the importance and necessity of integrating *migrant* rights activism into broader women’s rights activism. Interesting in this regard (and a possible starting point to further exploration in the case of women migrants’ rights) is Elson and Gideon’s (2006) study on women’s labour activism in Latin America and women’s organisations employing notions of economic rights in pointing to the gender injustices inherent to neoliberal capitalist development. By emphasising socio-economic rights these organisations challenge the liberal association of human rights with civil and political liberties and primarily with the right to hold private property. The question this raises for migration is whether the migrant rights movement frames its advocacy in similar manners.

Overall, there is still a need for a systematic discussion and application of the issue of rights and social justice for migrant workers from the perspective of gendered political economy. Useful in this regard is the argument forwarded by Hoskyns and Rai (2007) which derives from a feminist critique about IPE having so far mostly prioritised the study of state and market and the need to be expanded to include the social, the domestic and the household. They suggest that this expanding agenda could lead to a new discipline that might be called International Social and Political Economy (ISPE).

Gendered political economy of migration would have a firm place on this discipline's agenda, and with this a thorough exploration of the international division of productive and reproductive labour that implicate the three feminisations by establishing a link between resource rich and poorer countries across the world. The feminisation of work is linked to the marketisation of social reproduction whereby migrants play a prominent role as 'care' providers in a paid form, and the feminisation of poverty in the context of migration (with women as left behind or principle migrant) is linked to the privatisation of responsibility to do with the retreat of state's from providing public goods and services in both the origin and sending countries. The potential implications of this for political organising and activism deserve further attention, and the chain concept lends itself as a great analytical tool to bring these different strands together.

6. Concluding Remarks

The main objective in this paper was to situate increasingly stratified and polarised migratory flows within the transnational political economy of gender by bridging the three feminisations – of work, migration and poverty – which in return are linked to the changing gender division of labour and economic restructuring processes on the global scale. These dynamics and interlinkages, as epitomized by the examples of care and agricultural or farm work, constitute issues which are often treated separately in academic analyses. This links up to the broader literature on globalisation, especially the combined appreciation of organisational dimension of globalisation (regulation, governance), the direction globalisation is heading and the way in which it is reshaping the lives of real people in the global web of places (cf. Coe and Yeung, 2001), and migration constitutes an important component of the direction and shape of these processes.

Migration plays an important role in transforming the world in its empirical reality and this has to be reflected in the concepts with which we analyse and make sense of these changes, especially by highlighting the linkages between origin and destination countries, within and across regions. At the core of these transformations are shifts in gender relations as they are played out at work sites, household/family/community and individual level. Thus, the processes and dynamics triggered by international migration require us to go beyond the nation-state as a point of reference and to analyse the complex linkages and interdependencies within (re-)production processes. In order to help us understand how exactly these global processes work, IPE has to engage with the social and the everyday, to establish connections between the politico-economic structures and people across places all over the world. These varied and complex interconnections require further exploration via research to inform policymakers and advocates. A new vocabulary for describing and analysing these complex inter-linkages beyond the North-South divide (or resource rich versus poorer) and beyond

economics (typically based on human and financial resource flows) is required - and the notion of an integrated analysis of productive and reproductive chains, entailing the blurring of the public and the private, might be the first step.

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