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Migration Projects: Children on the Move for Work and Education

- **MIGRATING FOR WORK**
  – **Reasons**
  – **Experiences**
- **MIGRATION FOR EDUCATION**
  – **Reasons**
  – **Experiences**
- **Influential factors**
- **Methods**
- **Research gaps**

**Negotiating autonomy:
home, work, school & play**

Ethnographic Fieldwork:
July 1993 – July 1995
July - Dec 1996 (3-17 yrs)
April – July 2006 (13-27 yrs)

Early 2000

- Migration lit focused mainly on adults

- Child migrants: coerced by parents or trafficked - economic reasons

- Passive victims of exploitation, lacking agency and voice (Hashim 2006).

- Dependents (Farrow 2007) not independent

- Ordinary child migrants' stories were hidden (Whitehead and Hashim 2005)

    - Negative experiences

Recent Research

- Variety and diversity of children's migration motives and experiences

- Often complex:

  – multiple reasons for migrating: not just economic

  – both positive and negative migrant experiences: often combined

MIGRATING FOR WORK: REASONS

- Political conflict (Boyden and de Berry 2004), HIV/AIDS (Ansell and van Blerk 2004), environmental disasters (Lynch 2005)

- Global economic restructuring and uneven development (Bryceson 2004; Taracena 2003)
  - For *some* a relatively new phenomena (Carpena-Mendez 2007; Swanson 2007)
  - Favourable exchange rates (Bastia 2005; Hellman 2007 Punch 2007a)

- Lack of work/education opportunities
  - Fragmented land (Punch 2002; Swanson 2007)

- Domestic violence or abuse
  - (Bastia 2005; Hauge Riisøen et al. 2004; Iversen 2002)

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- **'Culture of migration'**

- high rates of adult migration = high rates of child migration (Farrow 2007; Whitehead and Hashim 2005)

- long history of migration (Ansell 2000; Camacho 1999; Punch 2007a) = the norm

- two key benefits (Hashim 2006):
  – wider social networks as extended families become dispersed
  – knowledge of alternative labour markets

- **Social networks**
  - family-based contacts (Camacho 1999)

- **Rite of passage**
  – youth transition (Carpena-Mendez 2007; Punch 2002)
  – 'being awake' after urban migration (Thorsen 2005)
  – 'interest in new life-experiences' (Hashim 2006)
  – 'have their eyes opened' (Hashim 2005: 33)
  – 'see what it's like' & not be left behind (Bey 2003)

- **Becoming economically independent**
  - consume more widely, access global goods
  (Thorsen 2005; Whitehead and Hashim 2005; Punch 2007a)

• **Balancing individual and household needs**

- '**negotiated interdependence**': "*which reflects how young people in the majority world are constrained by various structures and cultural expectations of family responsibilities yet also have the ability to act within and between such constraints, balancing household and individual needs*" (Punch 2002: 132)

- Hashim (2006: 26) children "*as economic agents with a responsibility to contribute to their households and their individual livelihoods*"

- "*family and personal goals are interwoven*" (Camacho 2007: 64)

   - **Broadening future opportunities** (Jeffrey and McDowell 2004; Punch 2007a)

Decision-making process

- **diverse and complex**
  - parents and children to varying degrees
  - siblings (Camacho 1999) birth order (Punch 2001
  - both children and parents may be ambivalent
  - influence of return migrants (Beauchemin 1999; Castle and Diarra 2003; Punch 2007a)

- children often actively seek migration work
  - domestics: 66% (Bourdillon 2007), 80% (Camacho 1999)

"*children do make strategic life choices and negotiate with adults to do so*"
(Hashim 2006:26; see also Iversen 2006; Leinaweaver 2007)

Importance of stage of the lifecourse

- *"we need to consider how decisions to move are part and parcel of personhood and the construction of identity, or interrelated with the household development cycle"* (Gardner 2007: 15)

- Link to youth transitions & identity

MIGRATING FOR WORK: EXPERIENCES

Positives

- Learning experience
- Material benefits (individual and household)
  - Remittances, gifts, siblings education
- Working – not always tougher than at home
- Opportunity to learn new skills
- Social benefits – new experiences
- Offers wider range of future options
- Social networks
- Coping strategies and resilience
- Create new identities

Identity and migration

- *"Migration, then, is not simply a case of moving from place to place, or of uprooting contexts and identity. Rather, it involves becoming part of a place. It involves not just settling, but settling in, where place and identity interact in daily activities and social relations. Our young research participants had no desire to retain an identity as migrants – indeed, a migrant identity was quite negative"* (Ansell and van Blerk 2007)

- migrant status important part of youth identity (Punch 2007a)

- children blur the boundaries between urban and rural identity (Carpena-Mendez 2007)

Negative experiences

- Emotionally difficult
  - Overwhelming, loneliness, homesickness
- Having to adapt to new environment
- Stigma or discrimination
- Physical, verbal, sexual abuse
- Working conditions
- Living conditions – lack space or food
- Limited social networks

Shifting vulnerabilities

- *"Children's vulnerability is not an absolute state. There are degrees of vulnerability, depending on the situation of the child."* (Yaqub 2007a: 6)

- *"… rural young people can be both constrained and enabled by their experience of leaving the community. Migration can lead to young people feeling empowered and powerless in different ways at the same time"* (Punch 2007b)

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"*on the whole, children felt positively about their migration experience; seeing the benefits to themselves and to their families compensates the difficulties experienced and affirms their decision to migrate.*"

(Camacho 2007: 65; see also Bourdillon 2007; Hashim 2006; Huijsmans Forthcoming; Swanson 2007)

Inter-generational relationships

- **Cooperation and conflict**
  - clash of values (Bryceson 2002; Carpena-Mendez 2007; Punch 2007a; Taracena 2003)
  - mutually supportive
    - Hashim (2006) 'inter-generational contract'
    - Thorsen (2005) parents giving advice

- **Changes over the lifecourse**
  - how relations are renegotiated over time

Intra-generational relationships

- Importance of siblings:

  Intra-generational relations also influence the ways in which power is distributed within the household. The hierarchy of the birth order shapes siblings' opportunities and constraints regarding work, education and migration." (Punch 2007b)

- Peers, girlfriends & boyfriends (Bell 2007)
  - the nature and impact of parenthood

Youth transitions

- **Leaving home**

- **Forming own household**
  - housing
  - access to land

- **New relationships**

- **Having children**

Type of migration

- **step**-wise migration (village – town – city)

- **circulatory** migration (village – city – village)

- **cyclical** migration (associated with seasonal variation in labour demand)

- **multi-locational** households (where households have members in town and country)

- **chain** migration (where migrants follow their predecessors, are are assisted by them in establishing an urban base)" (Lynch 2005: 96).

- Flexibility: "The labour migration complex is not static, but constantly evolving" (Ansell 2000: 155)

MIGRATION FOR EDUCATION: REASONS

- For secondary education (Ansell 2004; Punch 2004)

- Rural schools can be under-resourced and poor teaching quality (Bey 2003)

- An educated identity is linked to increased status (Jeffrey et al. 2004; Skinner and Holland 1996)

- Combining work and education (Camacho 1999; Hashim 2005)

- 'Fostering' situations (Hashim 2005)

- Improve future employment prospects

Reasons to reject migration for education

- **Structural constraints of education** (Punch 2004)

- **Pressures to start earning income** (Aiken et al. 2006; Bey 2003)

- **More tangible benefits from work** (Levinson 1996; Punch 2007a)

- **Realistic view where labour markets are limited and structured**

Ines' Experiences

"I lacked everything that they asked for in the schools in town. I needed a uniform, I needed books"

"When I went the first year I almost didn't know anything… It was like learning from scratch."

"Almost all those who go from the countryside, fail."

"Many of the pupils who are from the town are well dressed. They have loads of clothes…. I had some new clothes but they weren't like their clothes."

"That's why I stopped going. It was different, even the way of speaking. … When we were outside in the playground, I almost didn't speak."

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

- Context: social, cultural and economic
- Gender
  - Gendered work "they often enter the same labour market as adult migrants from the same area" (Whitehead & Hashim 2005: 30)
  - Hashim (2005: 32) girls are less embedded so are more able to migrate than boys (see also Huijsmans Forthcoming)
- Age
  - Hauge Riisøen et al. (2004) state that "As a child grows older, the causes for moving change."

- **Household structure, birth order, sibling composition** (Punch 2001)

- **Other factors that affect quality of experience**
  - reason for migrating
  - type of work/school
  - migrant location
  - climatic conditions
  - working/studying and living conditions
  - relationship with employer/teacher
  - social networks
  - length of migration
  - opportunities for visits back home

STUDYING MIGRATION: METHODS

- **Multi-sited**
  - research at both sender and destination communities

- **Multiple perspectives**
  - children, parents, siblings, employers (Camacho 2007)

- **Ethnographic**
  - understanding the social, cultural and economic context at both the sender and destination communities

- **Holistic**
  - exploring different arenas of their daily lives

- **Longitudinal research**
  - to capture changes over time and long-term impacts

Research gaps

- Birth order and sibling relationships

- Peer relationships

- Experiences of children who migrate for education

- Impact of, and links with, other youth transitions

- Migrant pathways

- Impacts of child migration processes on the sender and destination communities

- Return migrants

- Non-migrant children

Constrained choices

- the ambiguity about 'free choice' (Huijsmans Forthcoming)

- *"These children are exercising agency to choose the least worst option."* (Hashim 2006: 28)

- *"We need to understand how different migratory contexts alter the balance of children's agency and opportunities on the one hand, and risks and vulnerabilities on the other."* (Yaqub 2007a: 3)

- *"acknowledging the complexities and subjectivities in children's migration experiences calls for an approach that rejects the conventional contrast between children as passive pawns and vulnerable preys or as active and autonomous agents in the migration process."* (Camacho 2007: 65)

A continuum of experiences and a balance between:

- the range of positives and negatives that exist at both the sender and destination communities

- the different arenas of their everyday lives

- different perspectives: adults (parents, employers, teachers) and children (siblings, friends, peers)

- the impact of both inter-generational and intra-generational relationships

- children's agency and structural constraints, and how these change over time and as they move through the lifecourse

"young people can be both powerful and powerless simultaneously with respect to different aspects of their social worlds. Their everyday lives move back and forth along a continuum of diverse experiences in relation to changing degrees of power and powerlessness. Power relationships are negotiated and renegotiated with different people in different contexts at different times. Interdependent power relations within rural households are dynamic and evolve over the life course. As children acquire economic power, this tends to increase their social power and relationships between children and parents are renegotiated accordingly." (Punch 2007b)