

# South-South migration from a gender and intersectional perspective: an overview

WORKING PAPER



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lorena Izaguirre carried out the initial literature review and wrote the first draft of this working paper which was revised and edited by Matthew Walsham, who also contributed substantial additional written material throughout.

Nicola Piper, Tanja Bastia, Kavita Datta and Katja Hujo provided feedback and insightful comments at various stages throughout the development of the paper.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, gender and migration scholarship has documented the inherently gendered nature of migration flows and of their developmental and societal impacts at both origin and destination. However, as with scholarship on migration more generally, the majority of existing studies focus on North-North or South-North migration flows. The issue of gender and migration between countries in the Global South has only recently attracted greater attention among scholars and policy makers. What constitutes the ‘South’ is itself contested and approaches vary considerably across studies, an issue we explore in detail in Section 3. However, increasing evidence suggests that, whatever definition is adopted, South-South migration flows are not only significant in terms of their magnitude and diversity – at cross-border, intra- and inter-regional scales – but also because they may have some distinctive characteristics in comparison to other migration flows (De Lombaerde et al., 2014; de Haas, 2009; Ratha and Shaw, 2007). This includes the ways in which gender dynamics, policies and processes both shape and are shaped by the experiences of migrants, their families and their communities in the context of South-South migration.

This literature review has been conducted as part of a project focused on gendered inequalities and South-South migration. The complex relationship between different forms of inequality and migration requires an understanding of both the positive potential of migration as a force for progressive social change but also its capacity to reinforce existing inequalities and support the status quo. If this is to be achieved, we would argue that research needs to pay attention to inequalities between men and women who migrate, but also with those who stay and those who reside in countries of destination. Further, we suggest that in recognition of the diversity of migrants and their experiences of dis/advantage, research also requires a focus on how gender relations intersect with other social characteristics such as age, class, race, ethnicity, disability and sexuality to produce, reduce or reproduce inequalities. This review therefore draws on the available literature on South-South migration from a gender and intersectional perspective. Our aim is to take stock of existing research that addresses the gendered dimensions of South-South migration as well as to identify gaps within the literature and agendas for future research.

The migration corridors within the project – whose gendered migration dynamics will be the focus of a separate, forthcoming working paper – are dominated by migration for work and the focus in this review is therefore primarily, if not exclusively, on labour migration. However, we extend the discussion beyond domestic work to consider a wider range of formal and informal sectors in which female and male migrants seek employment. We seek to highlight the ways in which gender relations can be transformed, both positively and negatively, in and through

spatial mobility, as well as how institutions in the Global South address the relationship between gender and migration (Kofman and Raghuram, 2010). To do so, we primarily focused on studies which explicitly adopted a gendered or intersectional approach. Where this was not possible, or where the literature is very limited, we have tried to highlight this and to identify areas that would benefit from gender-based and intersectional analyses in future research.

A detailed critical discussion of ‘South-South migration’ as a term – both conceptually and in its practical applications – follows below in Section 3. However, it is worth noting here that in defining the ‘South’, we chose to rely on the UNDP categorisation, which incorporates a larger group of countries than some other definitions by including some states characterised by high-income levels<sup>1</sup>. A search on SCOPUS and SciELO databases, and on Google Scholar, was conducted covering topics and geographical regions of interest. The search was conducted in four languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese and French). Thus, even though this review is not fully representative, it extends beyond the Anglophone literature and this has enabled us to identify a wider range of issues, themes and regional trends.

The review begins with a discussion of the main ‘phases’ that have shaped gender and migration research, namely the inclusion of women, the development of scholarship on gender and migration, and the use of intersectionality to grasp interdependent dimensions of inequality (Section 2). This is followed by a critical analysis of the concept of ‘South-South migration’ itself as background for a brief exploration of quantitative trends in South-South migration, including regional perspectives (Section 3). The following section critically analyses key empirical research on South-South migration and gender with a particular focus on the gendered nature of labour markets (Section 4). We then explore some gaps in the literature and identify areas for future research informed by an analysis of wider intersectional concerns (Section 5). The review finishes with some brief concluding remarks (Section 9).

## 2. FROM WOMEN TO GENDER TO INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES

This section briefly explores migration research on women, gender and intersectionality over the last four decades to frame the review of the literature on gender and South-South migration that follows. It traces developments from the 1980s onwards, initially aimed at including – or ‘adding’ – women within migration research followed subsequently by the introduction of a broader gender perspective into the field. It then introduces the intersectionality framework and briefly considers

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<sup>1</sup> Such as Chile, Singapore, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

some of the key challenges – and benefits – of deploying an intersectionality lens within migration research.

## 2.1 ‘ADDING’ MIGRANT WOMEN

Until very recently, the archetypal image of the migrant for migration scholars and policy-makers was the migrant worker, and labour migration was assumed to be overwhelmingly male. As a result, initial efforts to theoretically account for the causes and consequences of these movements focused on the male migrant worker. Migration researchers thus overlooked other types of migration, especially of women. This is what Mirjana Morokvasic (1984) called the ‘male bias’ in migration research. Women were mostly absent from analyses or seen as the ‘trailing spouse’, merely accompanying or following their male partners (Boyd, 1989). From the 1980s onwards, feminist scholars set out to address this bias and to make women in migration streams visible. In doing so, they identified an increasing worldwide ‘feminization of migration’ that, initially at least, was thought to be linked to broader processes of globalisation (Gabaccia, 2016). However, the focus of this research – drawing on insights from the Women in Development (WID) approach – was largely on women rather than gender, resulting in ‘add and stir’ approaches to data collection, analysis and theorisation, “whereby ‘women’ were added as an analytical variable for measuring various economic outcomes — education, employment, and income differentials — with male migrants” (Remennick, 2016, p. 1).

## 2.2 GENDER AND MIGRATION

In line with broader critiques of WID and the ‘add and stir’ approach across development studies (Moser, 1995; Datta, 2004), feminist scholars in the 1980s and 1990s increasingly brought gender into migration studies as a “set of norms and practices that shape both migration streams and integration outcomes for men and women who move across national borders” (Remennick, 2016, p.1). From this perspective, women should not simply be ‘added’ when missing in analyses. Rather, gender norms and practices structuring social life at different scales – among individuals, households, communities and at the national and international level – should be acknowledged (Erel et al., 2003). At the same time, more recent research on the feminization of migration has demonstrated that the gender-balanced character of many migration streams is not particularly new and its onset can be traced to at least the early twentieth century (Gabaccia, 2016). Further, it is important to be aware of significant regional variations over time, including the relative importance of South-North and South-South flows. For example, a substantial proportion of recent growth in female migration has taken place in Asia, from countries in South and South East Asia to Gulf and East Asian states (Mansouri and Tittensor, 2017).

Women are thus no longer invisible in migration research and a large body of scholarship demonstrates how gender shapes the size, destination and composition of migration flows. For instance, gender differences yield distinct migration patterns. A study of five Central American countries based on census data showed that more patriarchal societies (Mexico and Costa Rica) had low rates of female migration in comparison to male migration; while more matrifocal countries (Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic) showed higher rates of female migration compared with male migration, even among married women (Massey et al., 2006). Other research found that women were more prone to migrate in response to gender-based forms of discrimination, such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, gendered social stigmas, or the prevalence of gender-based violence (Ferrant et al., 2014). Researchers have also highlighted migrant women's insertion in sex-segregated labour markets and the influence of race or ethno-national markers in producing this segregation. Women from the South, in particular, are incorporated in the global labour market as a flexible and low-paid labour force in hospitals, domestic work, home-based nursing care, hospitality services, entertainment and sex work industries (Sassen, 2003). Women are also more likely than men to migrate via lower-skilled temporary worker schemes or undocumented channels (Hennebry et al., 2017). Nonetheless, in the face of these challenging structural conditions, feminist scholars have also drawn attention to women's agency in their migration experiences. This perspective has been critical in understanding not only the structural constraints that migrant women face, but also how migration may entail some spaces – however ambivalent – for autonomy (Bastia, 2013; Yeoh and Ramdas, 2014).

Acknowledgement of the 'feminization of migration' drew attention to the occupational structures and institutions hosting migrant women workers from the Global South and their insertion in highly segmented labour markets. A common concern is the way in which the domestic and care sectors in the Global North are often dominated by migrant women from the Global South (Bastia and Piper, 2019). Indeed, since the 2000s, most research in South America on female migration has focused on migrant women in domestic work, especially in the North but also in intraregional migration streams (Herrera, 2016). In Asia, female migrants in domestic work have also emerged as the paramount topic of interest (Malhotra et al., 2016; Setién and Acosta, 2013; Silvey and Parreñas, 2020). This literature has demonstrated that jobs are often low-paid, unregulated and potentially dangerous, for example in emerging research on race, gender and migrant domestic work in Gulf countries (Mahdavi, 2013; Nisrane et al., 2020). Female migration from the South has also led to a rich field of studies around migrants' families and those 'left-behind', drawing on concepts such as transnational families, transnational motherhood, fatherhood and childhood, and transnational care (Hoang et al., 2015; Lam et al., 2013).

Despite these significant advances, two major issues remain in the study of migration as a gendered process. First, most research on gender and migration continues to focus primarily on women (Bastia, 2014; Carling, 2005). Carling has underlined that there is a far too recurrent conflation between ‘gender’ and ‘women’ in migration research, which obscures the relational dimension of gender. This critique has retained its relevance, since a large part of the literature drawing on a gender perspective continues to concentrate primarily on female migrants rather than on gender relations between men and women. In doing so, it gives inadequate attention to both femininities and masculinities, and to how gender norms, values and ideologies shape the experiences of male as well as female migrants. Second, gender and migration research too often neglects other axes of differentiation such as class, ethnicity and race (Anthias, 2012; Bastia, 2014). In isolation, a gender lens is insufficient to grasp the diverse experiences of migrants who must navigate multiple layers of social stratification while occupying different social positions and facing multiple categories of oppression within and between countries (Anthias, 2013; Parreñas, 2015).

## 2.3 INTERSECTIONALITY

This latter issue has been addressed by scholars through the intersectionality framework, which has been deployed increasingly often in migration research in recent years (Anthias, 2008, 2012; Bastia, 2014; Grosfoguel et al., 2015; Mahler et al., 2015; Romero and Valdez, 2016). Intersectionality emerged in the 1980s within feminist theory from scholars working in legal studies and on race and racism who questioned why there was no legal language to describe the double discrimination experienced by black women, on the basis of race and gender (Crenshaw, 1991). Moreover, the category of ‘women’ was used as if it embodied the same shared experience for all women and represented a homogeneous collective (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983). Instead, they argued, gender should be understood as operating in interaction with other socially constructed characteristics, initially race, and later on also class, ethnicity, generation and sexuality. For feminist scholars, intersectionality brings to the fore how multiple categories of oppression are interconnected, interdependent and interlocking. As Anthias (2012) emphasises, classes are always gendered and racialised, and gender is always classed and racialised, and so on. Thus, intersectionality draws attention to the problematic nature of homogeneous and essentialised social categories. Moreover, it sheds light on the production of specific social positions and identities as a result of the intersection of different and overlapping systems of oppression, which may simultaneously entail both privileges and disadvantages.

One of the difficulties with the application of intersectionality is that some authors fail to develop and make explicit how they operationalise it within their analysis. This is a general challenge in relation to intersectional approaches, since there is no

single way to use the framework or distinct methodology and some dimensions may end up being emphasised to the exclusion of others (Bastia, 2014; Cho et al., 2013). In some cases, this may be a product of cultural and geographical diversity, for example the relative significance of categories such as race, ethnicity and caste in different contexts across the Global North and South. In other cases, however, it may reflect a bias towards certain categories that are more 'obvious' or established, less contested or stigmatised, or easier to identify and research. For example, critiques have been levelled at feminist research on intersectionality for, as Bilge argues:

*“annexing intersectionality to disciplinary feminism and decentring the constitutive role of race in intersectional thought and praxis” (2013, p. 412).*

This challenge applies not only to researchers but also to policy makers and practitioners. Thus, for NGOs practitioners involved in advocacy for migrant workers' rights, their identities as workers may end up dominating over other characteristics (e.g. their identities as migrants and women) resulting in an 'identity hierarchy' in which the 'migrant' identity occupies the lowest position (Miles et al., 2019, p. 697). Miles et al. (2019) argue that the operationalisation of intersectionality faces two major obstacles: 1) that organisations tend to concentrate on a small number of identities or issues; and 2) that intersectional activism must advance beyond the identification of intersecting needs to question the social structures responsible for these multiple oppressions. Building alliances with other organisations to effectively oppose social structures of oppression involves sharing a strategy and a perspective, rather than choosing which axes of difference and inequality to privilege. Finally, as Bastia (2014) suggests, the use of intersectionality as a concept is not essential in analysing a particular issue in an intersectional manner. Some work seeks to grasp the 'intersections' of gender and other axes of stratification, without any reference to intersectionality as a framework.

Indeed, as we show in this review of the literature on gender and South-South migration, a notable feature of this corpus is that it is highly heterogeneous, with no single predominant theoretical paradigm. Research with a gender perspective draws on intersectional, feminist and post-colonial theory alongside a range of other theoretical frameworks and approaches, including those within a neoliberal paradigm. Concerning intersectionality in particular, the diversity of approaches to theorising the concept make it difficult to define as a theory as such (Anthias, 2012). For example, some authors now draw on an 'intra-categorical' intersectional framework (McCall, 2005), which focuses on the neglected points of intersection within any particular social group, to reveal the complexity of lived experience within such groups (Miles et al., 2019; Rodriguez and Scurry, 2019). Nonetheless, as we will seek to show, given the diversity of contexts across the Global South, this plurality of approaches may also be a strength in understanding and illuminating the multiple ways in which gender intersects with other social characteristics, identities

and institutions to shape the experiences of female and male migrants as they move within and between countries of the Global South.

### 3. TRENDS IN SOUTH-SOUTH MIGRATION

This section begins with a critical discussion of ‘South-South migration’ as a concept and a brief review of commonly deployed definitions. It then explores overall trends in relation to gender and South-South migration at global and regional levels as background for the detailed review of the literature that follows in sections 4 and 5.

#### 3.1 DEFINITIONS OF SOUTH-SOUTH MIGRATION

Over the last decade, an increasing number of studies have highlighted the growing importance of South-South migration flows and the magnitude of these movements, both in quantitative terms and concerning social policy on migration (Bakewell, 2009; Campillo-Carrete, 2013; Hujo and Piper, 2010a; Ratha and Shaw, 2007). Research on South-South migration sheds light on a wide range of issues concerning displacement and migration at different levels, including intra- and inter-regional streams as well as more localized cross-border circulation. These streams have some distinctive characteristics in comparison to other migration flows, which De Lombaerde et al. (2014) group into five areas: (1) the relation to borders, which modifies the relation to mobility, particularly for border regions; (2) the composition of migration flows (less educated and younger migrants); (3) the close relationship between migration and (socio-political) conflicts; (4) the conditions of migration governance that facilitate or hinder movement; and, finally, (5) the challenges these movements pose for categories and concepts transposed without adequate critical scrutiny from case studies of North-North migration. Other authors have argued that South-South migration tends to be less selective than South-North migration, which makes it less likely to increase inequalities in sending contexts (de Haas, 2009). Furthermore, migrants who travel to other Southern countries may experience much lower increases in income, are more likely to be irregular, are subject to greater risks of exploitation, and are more likely to be subject to mass expulsion and conflict than those who migrate to the North (Ratha and Shaw, 2007).

Still, both categories—North and South—are often ill-defined with limited conceptual utility and are frequently used in a primarily symbolic manner (Bastia and Skeldon, 2020, p. 7). Critics of prevailing ‘international development’ discourses, for example, point to the increasingly limited utility of North-South binaries in understanding 21st century processes of global development (Horner, 2020). Thus, while they are supposed to embody the divide between wealthy developed economies and poorer developing countries, both the Global North and Global South are highly heterogeneous and include diverse groups of migrants, with different

sociocultural backgrounds and migration experiences (Bakewell, 2009). For that reason, Bakewell has argued in favour of using alternative categories when it comes to international migration, such as “intra-regional migration”, “regional and global labour hubs” (e.g. the Gulf countries and cities in China, India, Brazil and South Africa) and “migration patterns based on historical ties” (e.g. in Lusophone African countries) (Bakewell, 2013, as cited by Melde et al., 2014). Furthermore, the definition of ‘developed’ and ‘developing countries’ also varies among international organisations. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the three most commonly used categorisations draw upon different criteria: the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) uses a regional criterion, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) relies on the Human Development Index, and the World Bank employs gross national income (GNI) per capita.

As a result, the scale of South-South migration varies considerably depending on how developed and developing countries are defined. Ingleby, Singleton and Wickramage (2019), for example, found that the distinction between North and South based on UNDESA’s classification produced the misleading impression that migration within the Global South is increasing — both in absolute numbers and migrant density – and that South-South migration is now of greater magnitude than South-North migration. According to the authors, UNDESA’s regional criterion is problematic, since “[w]ealthy destination countries like Singapore and Qatar are classified by UNDESA as LD [less developed], simply because of where they are located” (Ingleby et al., 2019, p. 13). The classification of Gulf Cooperation Council<sup>2</sup> countries seems to play a key role in these estimations, since – with the exceptions of Oman and Saudi Arabia – migrants make up the majority of their population (IOM, 2020, p. 4). Using the World Bank’s classification of “high-income” and “low- or middle-income” countries<sup>3</sup> – and thus excluding countries like Singapore and Qatar – Ingleby et al. observed that the percentage of migrants in the population of the Global South decreases rather than increases overall between 1990 and 2015. These differences have significant implications for policy and research, inviting us to interrogate how migration data is constructed and used.

IOM’s World Migration Report from 2013 argued that while Global North and Global South may be imprecise categories that oversimplify development realities, they have proved useful in capturing the attention of policymakers and encouraging greater debate around migration and development (IOM, 2013). In that sense, the use of these categories may embody a political goal as much as an analytical one. Following this argument, it is interesting to assess when, and by whom, these terms

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<sup>2</sup> The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a regional political organization composed of six countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

<sup>3</sup> The World Bank now use these terms in preference to the categories of ‘developed’ or ‘developing’ countries, whose use has been phased out.

are put into use in empirical research on migration. For instance, it is striking that when a search is conducted for the terms ‘South-South’ and ‘migration’ in academic search engines, the number of results seems limited compared to the growing visibility of this topic in contemporary debates on international migration. ‘South-South migration’ as a label for a specific research object may also reflect geographical trends: the search showed that the term is mainly used in the English language academic literature, while searches in Spanish and French yield very few results. Interestingly, in the Portuguese context it seems to have gained momentum in recent years as a result of increasing South-South migration streams arriving in Brazil over the last decade (see, for example, a recent book by Baeninger et al., 2018).

### 3.2 GLOBAL TRENDS

Turning to the data itself, IOM’s Migration Report from 2013 contained estimates concerning migrant stocks in the four global migration pathways – South-North, North-North, South-South and North-South. The report adopted the three most commonly used, i.e. those of UNDESA, the World Bank and UNDP, and the 2010 data showed that where geographical regions or the Human Development Indicators are used to define the Global South – rather than the World Bank’s GNI rankings – the scale of South-South migration was equivalent to or slightly less than South-North migration (Table 1).

**TAB 1. STOCK OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS (THOUSANDS) AND SHARE OF GLOBAL MIGRANT STOCKS IN THE FOUR MIGRATION PATHWAYS USING THREE CLASSIFICATIONS**

	UNDESA	World Bank	UNDP
<b>South-North</b>			
Stock	74,297	95,091	86,873
Percentage	35%	44%	41%
<b>North-North</b>			
Stock	53,464	36,71	32,757
Percentage	25%	17%	15%
<b>South-South</b>			
Stock	73,158	75,355	87,159
Percentage	34%	35%	41%
<b>North-South</b>			
Stock	13,279	7,044	7,410
Percentage	6%	3%	3%

Source: IOM calculations based on UNDESA, 2012 (IOM, 2013, p. 55)

In subsequent 2015 estimates by the IOM, South-South streams accounted for 37% of global international migration and surpassed South-North flows at 35% (IOM,

2015). Recent World Bank data also shows a similar trend: 84.3 million people – 34% of international flows – moved in a South-North direction in 2015, while 93.1 million people, equivalent to 38% of global migration flows, did so between countries in the South (Ratha et al., 2016, p. 28). In contrast, as discussed in the introduction, Ingleby et al. (2019) found that migrant stocks in the South have increased only when it is defined according to UNDESA’s regional categorisation. Using the World Bank’s economic categories of low- and middle-income countries, migrant density is shown to be low and declining, especially if refugees are not included<sup>4</sup>, although this in turn obscures the emergence of new destination countries across several regions.

Beyond methodological discussions about definitions of the Global North and South, these divergences in estimates should be understood in light of what Campillo-Carretero identifies as perhaps the most commonly discussed feature of South-South migration: the increasing diversification of flows (2013, p. 21). Migration streams in the South adapt quickly, including in response to changes in the North’s management of migration inflows (Hujo and Piper, 2010a). For example, as IOM (2020) suggest, changes in labour migration regulations and the economic growth of middle-income countries could explain some of the decrease in migrant workers heading towards high-income countries. Thus, between 2013 and 2017 these countries experienced a seven percentage point decrease in migrant workers (from 75% to 68%) at the same time as upper-middle-income countries saw a seven percentage point increase (from 12% to 19%) (IOM, 2020, p. 33). Furthermore, as access to countries in the Global North gets increasingly difficult, migrant routes change and incorporate a variety of transit countries in shorter or longer-term ways, complicating rigid classifications between countries of transit and destination. This is also associated with increasingly ‘mixed’ forms of migration, in which asylum seekers move through irregular labour migration channels, while labour migrants are deported and placed “in situations akin to that of refugees” (Bakewell, 2009, p. 30).

Migrant women are a growing presence in most, if not all, migration streams (Campillo-Carretero, 2013, p. 27) but the share of women among migrants varies substantially by country income levels. In ‘less developed regions’, as defined by the United Nations, the share of migrant women in 2005 was 44.7 percent, below the 52.4 percent reported for other regions (Ratha and Shaw, 2007, p. 28). Recent data shows that while the number of international migrants globally is roughly equal between men and women (52% and 48% respectively), there are more male than female migrant workers worldwide (58% and 42% respectively), with much higher numbers of male migrant workers in low-income and lower-middle income countries (IOM, 2020, p. 34). Earlier estimates found that of 68.1 million female migrant workers, 47.5 million (69.7 percent) resided in high-income countries, 13.1 million

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<sup>4</sup> As discussed in the introduction, this review concentrates on labour migration, although the distinction between ‘migrants’ and ‘refugees’ is itself a fluid one.

(19.2 percent) in upper middle-income countries, 5.6 million (8.3 percent) in lower middle-income countries and only 1.9 million (2.8 percent) in low-income countries (ILO, 2018, p. 11). Among other things, this reflects the higher demand for migrant workers in the gender segregated service and care sectors in higher income countries (Benería, Diana Deere and Kabeer, 2012; ILO, 2015a).

### 3.3 REGIONAL TRENDS

Importantly, these gender imbalances are also related to regional differences, with particularly sharp distinctions in Southern Asia (6 million men compared with 1.3 million women) and the Arab States (19.1 million men compared with 3.6 million women) (IOM, 2020, p. 34). As this suggests, regional trends are thus of considerable importance in considering South-South migration as a whole – including both intra- and inter-regional flows – and in relation to gendered migration flows specifically. Most international migrants from Africa, Asia and Europe reside in their regions, while the majority of migrants from Latin America, the Caribbean and North America reside outside their regions of birth. In Oceania, the number of intraregional migrants and those residing outside the region was roughly equal in 2019 (IOM, 2020, p. 4).

In Asia, recent estimates indicate a significant rise of intraregional migration on the continent. Nearly 66 million migrants were residing in other Asian countries in 2019, an increase of around 5 million migrants since 2015 (IOM, 2020, p. 68). Moreover, thirteen of the twenty most important migration corridors involving Asian countries are within the region (IOM, 2020, p. 72). The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) accounts for more than 21 million migrants, almost 9 percent of total migrants worldwide; and through adding the ‘plus three countries’ – China, Japan and South Korea – this share rises to 13 percent (Asis, Piper and Raghuram, 2019). The Gulf countries stand out within the region for the share of migrants in their population: in 2019, migrants accounted for 88 percent of the population in the United Arab Emirates, 72 percent in Kuwait, nearly 79 percent in Qatar, and 45 percent in Bahrain (UNDESA, 2019). Many of these migrants are drawn from South Asia and South-East Asia but, as noted above, the overwhelming majority – 84 percent – are male (IOM, 2020).

In the African context, eleven out of the continent’s twenty main migration corridors are between African countries, Burkina Faso to Cote d’Ivoire being the second largest corridor in Africa overall. Labour migration towards the Gulf States – mainly from Egypt, Sudan and South Sudan – is also significant (IOM, 2020, p. 58). Intraregional migration dynamics on the continent are highly diversified and driven by political conflicts and violence as well as environmental and economic factors. Eastern and Southern Africa has also been a historical destination for Indian migrants (Flahaux and De Haas, 2016), while Chinese workers have recently been arriving in increasing numbers (Cook et al., 2016). Economic diversification is

attracting both high- and low-skilled migrant workers in this subregion, for example to Rwanda's expanding technology sector (IOM, 2020, p. 62). South Africa is another country with high-skilled labour needs in sectors such as mining, finance and information technology (IOM, 2020, p. 62). In West and Central Africa, in contrast, most international migrants come from within the subregion and work in low-skilled sectors, including domestic work, informal trade and agriculture (IOM, 2020, p. 64).

Unsurprisingly, given the relatively low numbers of female migrant workers in low- and lower-middle-income countries, labour migrants in sub-Saharan Africa are predominantly male, with 8.3 million men compared to 3.6 million women (ILO, 2018, p. 17). In other contexts, however, the number of female migrant workers may be increasing, for example a growing number of women have been attracted by high demand for domestic workers in the Gulf States over the last ten years (Atong et al., 2018). North Africa is also distinctive in that most migrants move to countries outside the continent (Flahaux and De Haas, 2016). According to UNDESA estimates, around half of North African migrants emigrate to Europe, while 3.3 million head to the Gulf States (UNDESA, 2019). Although men continue to dominate these flows, the number of migrant women moving within and between countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been steadily increasing since at least the early 2000s (Kassar et al., 2014).

The current migration landscape in South America is rather diverse. The presence of inter-regional migrants from Africa and Asia, particularly Senegalese, Chinese, Koreans, Syrians, Indians and Pakistanis, has attracted considerable attention, even if it remains relatively small in numerical terms (IOM, 2017). For example, a significant research trend over the last ten years has been to explore the reception of migrants from the African continent. Argentina and Brazil are the main destinations for African migrants, many of whom are pursuing the goal of reaching the US and Canada by first migrating to South America. In Argentina, Senegalese migrants stand out as the largest group, followed by migrants from Nigeria, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cameroon (Zubrzycki and Alvarado, 2015). Senegalese migrants are predominantly male, with Senegalese women usually migrating for family reunification or marriage (Zubrzycki and Alvarado, 2015, p. 73). However, there have been some shifts in these patterns, with growing numbers of Senegalese women, divorced or single, migrating to Argentina independently to provide for their families (Zubrzycki and Alvarado 2015, p. 82). In Brazil, besides the historical migration of Angolan migrants, the country has also been receiving migrants from Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Winters and Reiffen, 2019). African migrants in Brazil are mostly men and this trend is persistent, with the proportion of young men (25-35 years old) increasing since 2017, while the number of migrant women declined (Baeninger, Demétrio and Domeniconi, 2019, p. 46).

Chinese migration to South America is also dominated by men but shows significant variation between countries, with only 28% of residency permits for Chinese nationals in Colombia issued to women compared to 42% in Chile (IOM, 2017). In contrast, male and female labour migration across the Latin America and Caribbean regions as a whole is more evenly balanced, with the share of male and female migrant workers in the total labour force at 1.5% and 1.3% respectively (ILO, 2018). Intra-regional migration streams are thus increasingly feminised but remain quite heterogeneous with, for example, a higher proportion of migrant women from Peru and Paraguay compared with those from Brazil, Bolivia or Chile (Cerrutti and Parrado, 2015, p. 12). It is also important to note the growing significance of forced displacement and refugees as a result of conflicts and humanitarian crises, especially from Colombia and Venezuela (Villamar, 2018). Indeed, the migration corridor between Colombia and Venezuela represents the most important migration stream in the region and Venezuelan emigration since 2015 has involved the largest displacement of people in such a short period in the history of the region (Gandini, Lozano and Prieto, 2019). The main countries of destination for Venezuelan migrants are Colombia and Peru, both of which were historically seen as sites of emigration rather than immigration (Acosta, Blouin and Freier, 2019). There is a broad gender balance of Venezuelan migrants across the region as a whole but, once again, this varies significantly by destination. IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix suggests that almost 58 percent of Venezuelan migrants in Chile and Trinidad and Tobago were male, while nearly 60 percent of respondents in Brazil and Guyana were female (Chaves-González and Echeverría-Estrada, 2020, p.8). In Colombia, national estimates suggest that 48% of Venezuelan migrants are men, 44% women, 0.03% transgender, and 7.97% did not register their sex (Kalyanpur, 2019, p. 7).

The next section moves beyond these statistical trends to explore the existing literature on gender and South-South migration, with a focus on gendered labour migration across different sectors of the labour market and how gender intersects with other social characteristics to structure the experiences of economic migrants.

## 4. SOUTH-SOUTH MIGRATION AND GENDERED LABOUR MARKETS

This section explores the literature on gender and South-South migration with a particular focus on how migrant women and men are incorporated in different, gendered sectors of the labour market. Beginning with a brief discussion of the diversity of contexts across the Global South in which migrant women and men are employed, we then focus on three sets of literature exploring care and domestic work, informal trading and skilled migrant workers. In doing so, priority is given to research that – explicitly or implicitly – deploys an intersectional framework to understand how race, ethnicity, religion and other social characteristics combine with gender to shape migrants' experiences. Section 5 then builds on this analysis to

identify some priority areas for future research, with a particular focus on intersectional concerns.

## 4.1 DIVERSITY ACROSS THE GLOBAL SOUTH

The contemporary global economy relies extensively on migrant labour. The literature on South-South migration contains many case studies of migrant workers working in migrant dependent economic sectors which are themselves highly gendered, such as construction, domestic work, informal trading, sex work, home care and hospitality. Construction, for instance, is a niche for male migrants in a number of different regions. For example, between 2013 and 2017, the number of migrant workers in the Arab States increased by over five percent as a result of a growing demand for male migrant workers, especially for the construction sector (IOM, 2020, p. 34). In ASEAN countries, this sector is also constituted mainly by male migrants (Asis et al., 2019; Baey and Yeoh, 2015; Yeoh et al., 2017). In Latin America, major cities such as Buenos Aires in Argentina have construction sectors employing large number of migrants, with Paraguayan men constituting a particular ethnic and class group in this case (Del Águila, 2014).

South-South migrants head to rural as well as urban areas with, for example, agriculture, plantations and fishing in ASEAN having a disproportionate presence of migrant workers including both male and female migrants (Asis et al., 2019, p. 21). Similarly, since the 1970s, Argentinean agriculture in peripheral regions has relied on a Bolivian labour force (Benencia, 2005, 2011) and this migration stream has become increasingly feminised over time (Ataide, 2019). The garment sector is also characterised by a mix of both male and female migrants in South America. For example, male and female Bolivian migrants represent a large share of the labour force in garment shops in Argentina (Bastia, 2007) and Brazil (Miranda, 2017; Souchaud, 2014). In Asia, garment and other labour-intensive, export-orientated industries are often dominated by female migrants, in many cases rural-urban internal migrants but – for example in Thailand – including substantial number of migrant women from neighbouring countries (Gunawardana, 2018).

As this very brief discussion highlights, there is considerable diversity in how migrants engage in gendered labour markets across different contexts in the Global South, including between rural and urban settings. Some labour markets are dominated primarily by men, while others are more mixed or primarily employ women; and these patterns differ within and between regions. It is not possible within the scope of this report to cover every sector or region in detail so we will concentrate below on three areas: care and domestic work, informal trade and high-skilled workers.

## 4.2 CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

Ten years ago, Kofman and Raghuram (2010) noted that women's migration was insufficiently explored in the Global South, including the incorporation of female migrants into formal and informal labour markets as caregivers. As they pointed out, not only do female migrants often find employment within this sector, which straddles the border between productive and reproductive spheres in the care economy, but those who move for other reasons leave 'care gaps' to be filled in their areas of origin (2010, pp. 47-48). Since then, one of the most prolific and active fields in South-South migration research has been the gendered dimensions of care and domestic work provided by migrant women, and the interplay between migration regimes and social reproduction regimes. Here, the notion of 'care' concerns a set of practices not only linking women, households and domestic work but, in the context of a heterogeneous Global South, encompassing considerable complexity in the providers of both paid and unpaid care and extending beyond the family to the community, market and state (Kofman and Raghuram, 2012). Thus, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the demand for care workers grew exponentially not only in the North (Datta et al., 2010) but also in middle- and upper-class households in Asia (India, Singapore, Hong Kong, etc.), the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Egypt, etc.), and Central and Latin America (Lutz, 2017).

Domestic work constitutes an overwhelmingly female niche within care. Within the rapidly growing and interdisciplinary literature on domestic work, a significant portion has focused on migrant women in South-South and intraregional flows. In fact, as noted above, some middle-income countries have become important destinations for domestic workers from countries with lower income levels (e.g., Lebanon, South Africa, China, Argentina and Brazil) especially in the context of a growing female labour force entering labour markets in those countries (Ratha and Shaw, 2007). According to Asis et al., the main driver for female migration from the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka is the flourishing global demand for healthcare and domestic workers (Asis et al., 2019, p. 21). Filipino workers, for example, head in the greatest numbers to the Gulf States, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as to northern destinations such as Italy (Spitzer and Piper, 2014). In South America, most of the research on women, gender and migration explores intraregional female migrants in domestic work (Herrera, 2016). In contrast, in the Gulf States domestic work provides employment for male as well as female migrants, with 1.56 million men working in this sector compared to 1.6 million women (ILO, 2015a, p. 18). Male migrant care and domestic workers are found in some other contexts where studies have explored, for example, the implications of working in 'feminised' jobs for the construction and negotiation of migrant masculinities (Datta et al., 2009; Näre, 2010; Scrinzi, 2010). That the scale of male migrant domestic workers in the Gulf States is unusual, however, is shown by the fact that they account for 50.8% of all male migrant domestic workers worldwide (ILO, 2015a).

We can identify two main trends when it comes to migrant domestic work. On the one hand, transnational migration is facilitated by state intervention through bilateral agreements and managed through recruitment agencies. This is the case for migration in Southeast Asia (Wee, Goh and Yeoh, 2019). The systematic recruitment of female migrant care workers may be a core element of a national labour market policy designed to enable female citizens to engage in waged work, like in Singapore (Teo, 2014, as cited by Lutz, 2017). On the other hand, there is migration that does not go through formal channels with training protocols or pre-established contracts before the journey. This is the case in South America and in various migrant corridors in Africa (e.g., Zimbabwe-South Africa). However, as Zack et al. (2019) point out, the absence of formal mechanisms obscures the high level of organisation structuring many informal channels, as in the case of migrant domestic workers from Zimbabwe in South Africa.

In their literature review on South-South migration for domestic work, Deshingkar and Zeitlyn (2015) note that the literature on this issue is mainly focused on “[...] power relations between workers and employers, the absence of protective legislation, neglect by states, and exploitation by recruitment agents and employers” (2015, p. 170). Migrants’ agency, in contrast, remains understudied in many regions. For example, Herrera suggests that the links between migration experiences and women’s citizenship and rights activism are still underexplored in Latin America (Herrera, 2016). In contrast, in Asia the last two decades have witnessed the emergence of a substantial literature on the political activism of domestic workers (Gibson, Law and McKay, 2001; Piper, Rosewarne and Withers, 2017).

In the African context, Zack et al. (2019) highlight how gender, generational divides and economic conditions shape Zimbabwean migrants’ agency and capacity in South Africa. They also analyse the role of intermediaries who facilitate migration, such as members of migrants’ social networks or, to a lesser extent, external brokers. Representing the majority of migrant domestic workers from neighbouring countries, Zimbabwean female migrant workers are unable to regularise their status due to the restrictive nature of migration policies and controls in South Africa (Kofman and Raghuram, 2012). Although their entry to the country is permitted, the current migration regime produces illegality by denying access to work permits. Thus, unlike South African domestic workers who have gained significant rights in recent years, international migrants in this niche are completely unprotected and in competition with the local labour force.

In South America, research on South-South migrant domestic work has mainly focused on Argentina (Cerrutti, 2009; Magliano, 2013, 2017; Magliano, Perissinotti and Zenklusen, 2013, 2016), Chile (Anderson, 2012; Staab and Maher, 2006; Stefoni, 2002, 2009) and, to a lesser extent, Brazil (Dutra, 2013; Dutra and Matos, 2016). The emphasis of this body of literature has been on the exclusionary nature of domestic work and the difficulties migrant women encounter in leaving these jobs

and experiencing some degree of social mobility. Indeed, for many women domestic work entails a process of downgrading and de-skilling: this is the case for about 70 percent of Peruvian women in Chile, who have completed secondary school or have a university degree (Stefoni, 2009). Magliano et al.'s (2016) book highlights similar themes regarding domestic work in Argentina. The authors conducted research on Peruvian and Bolivian women in a sector which is largely dominated by Paraguayan migrants. Using a gendered and intersectional approach, the authors analyse intra-regional migrant women's experiences as care workers. Their work sheds light on how national, ethnic and racial origins, as well as gender and social class, shape the different trajectories of migrant women. Bolivian women's migration projects are family-based and led by their spouses, allowing domestic work to be conceived as a transitory activity associated with a stage in their life course. In contrast, Peruvian women organise their migration project around domestic work. As Peruvian women in Argentina are known to be overqualified for such work (Pacecca and Courtis, 2008, p.23), they are highly appreciated by Argentinian employers. Domestic work thus represents the easiest option to enter the labour market.

Extensive research has also been carried out on the social and institutional arrangements for care in sites of origin, showing that transnational care involves not only mothers and daughters, but also various members of the nuclear and extended family including, in some cases, men as well as women (Anderson, 2012; Bastia, 2009; Herrera, 2016; Hoang and Yeoh, 2011; Hoang et al., 2015; Leinaweaver, 2010; Pearson and Kusakabe, 2012). Care may also involve an institutional setting such a medical facility and female migrants are similarly over-represented in the global healthcare market. Countries like India and the Philippines have increased their role in the provision of nurses for international markets (Thompson and Walton-Roberts, 2019). While many of these professionals head to destinations in the Global North, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States more generally are major recipients of internationally educated nurses (Walton-Roberts, Bhutani and Kaur, 2017). This once again highlights the diversity of countries covered under the label of the Global South and that perceived hierarchies of migrant destinations exist between these countries as well as in relation to the Global North (Gardner and Osella, 2003; Gardner, 2008). Concerning intra-African dynamics, South Africa and Botswana attract Zambian and Zimbabwean nurses, although once again the higher demand is from Northern countries such as the UK (Dovlo, 2007). In South America, where this issue is still under-researched, some studies have identified inter-occupational mobility of former migrant domestic workers enrolling in nursing training in Argentina (Mallimaci Barral, 2016, 2018). Izaguirre and Anderson (2012) also noted the existence of specific channels for the recruitment of nurses in Peruvian provinces for employment in Argentina.

### 4.3 INFORMAL TRADING

Women from low-income countries also enter labour markets through the informal economy, especially as cross-border traders or street vendors (Ratha and Shaw, 2007). In Africa, studies have explored the role of women traders in cross-border (Diallo, 2014; Muzvidziwa, 2001) or transnational contexts (Bowles, 2013). Trade as a whole constitutes 60 percent of non-agricultural self-employment of women in sub-Saharan Africa and women account for 70 percent of cross-border traders (UN Women, 2010). These migration dynamics are, however, sources of vulnerability as well as livelihoods for many women, as they may encounter harassment and discrimination when crossing borders. A survey in the Great Lakes region showed that more than 80 percent of women traders reported having to pay a bribe to cross the border; more than half had suffered from physical harassment and abuse, including beatings, verbal insults, stripping, sexual harassment, and even rape. Much of this abuse remained unreported (Brenton et al., 2011, n.d.). When it comes to street vending, South African cities are known to attract migrants from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mali, Sierra Leone and Senegal hoping to capitalise on its market (Adepoju 2004, as cited by Sidzatané and Maharaj, 2013). As with cross-border trade, women street vendors – both internal and international migrants – face heightened threats of verbal and physical abuse, with 29% of women in one study in South Africa reporting having been robbed (Pick, Ross and Dada, 2002).

In Latin America, Brazil's large informal economy is also an economic niche for international migrants. Research has shown the substantial presence of intraregional migrants in street vending in important cities such as Sao Paulo or Rio de Janeiro. Sao Paulo and its popular night markets attract migrants from Bolivia, China, Ecuador and Peru (Hirata, 2017; Izaguirre, 2019; Preturlan and de Toledo Piza, 2011; Silva, 2008) and, more recently, migrants from Haiti and the African continent. In another study of migrants as street vendors, Herrera (2019) explored the experiences of Cuban, Haitian and Venezuelan migrants in Quito, showing how Haitian women occupy the most devalued position and have to work as street vendors or 'guardians' over parked cars in the streets. Even if these three national groups are characterised by migrants in highly precarious situations, the author identifies important differences between them. While Cubans and Venezuelans, especially women, tend to share labour niches, Haitians occupy the most precarious and low value jobs despite their level of educational attainment. Haitian women suffer from racial discrimination and sexual harassment in their jobs, particularly in domestic work, and working on the street is a way to escape violence. Haitian men and women share their place in the informal economy with internal migrants of poor backgrounds, usually from indigenous communities or of Afro-Ecuadorian descent (Herrera, 2019, p. 305). However, for Haitian men, who also encounter exclusion and racial discrimination, language skills are often an asset. Indeed, the knowledge of foreign and prestigious languages (i.e. English and French) can act as a

protection against discrimination in comparison to Afro Ecuadorians from the coast. These gender differences show how intersections between race and gender can have distinctive effects on migrants from the same national group.

#### 4.4 SKILLED MIGRANT WORKERS

South-South migration research continues to focus mainly on migrant workers with limited or no qualifications and there is much less evidence concerning highly skilled migration among countries of the South. While, proportionally, more educated migrants from the South tend to move to the North, many countries in the South receive migrants with tertiary education from other countries in the region, such as the Gulf States, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Africa and the countries of the East African Community (Oucho et al., 2013, as cited by Melde et al., 2014). Within these streams, the experiences of skilled migrant women remain understudied (Barbieri and Ruiz, 2018; Raghuram, 2000).

Cross-border intraregional mobility of university students, professionals and scholars is increasing in Latin America (Pedone and Alfaro, 2018) and Asia (Lee and Piper, 2003). Some recent work in South America aims to address this research gap. Using an intersectional framework, researchers have analysed intraregional high-skilled mobility of scholars in Ecuador (Pedone and Alfaro, 2015), university students in Argentina (Pedone, 2018), or professional 'de-skilling' processes driven by migration in Brazil and Argentina (Delmonte Allasia and Ribeiro, 2018). In Asia, growing intra-Asian investment, the expansion of the middle classes, improving education levels and reduced restrictions on travel, have combined to increase cross-border mobility of students and professionals (Lee and Piper, 2003, p. 122). In this context, Willis and Yeoh's (2003) study on Singaporean skilled women and men in China foregrounds the intertwined dynamic of migration and marriage from a gender perspective. Conceived as a priority, marriage shapes the trajectories of these skilled migrants. For men, it is common to get married in Shanghai and stay after marriage; whereas for women, who have to 'marry up', their career plans include a return to Singapore to marry in-line with the Singaporean government family model.

For some other women, however, migration is a way to escape or postpone marriage. Lee and Piper (2003) have explored the career implications for highly educated women who migrate to Malaysia following marriage with a Malaysian national. The authors draw attention to the role of state immigration rules in delineating their different statuses as mothers, workers and wives. Rodríguez and Scurry's (2019) intersectional analysis of skilled women migrants in Qatar explores how the intersection of gender and foreignness produces disadvantage and controls, subordinates, marginalises and excludes skilled migrant women in work and social spaces (Rodríguez and Scurry, 2019, p. 493). The intersection of both dimensions produces what the authors define as institutional and organisational disadvantage,

as well as social and cultural subordination. In their sample, more than half come from the South, especially India, Philippines and Peru. These women simultaneously face dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, in a highly regulated environment.

Generally, however, there is very limited existing scholarship exploring the gendered dimensions of high-skilled South-South migration, even in contexts where such migration is a major component of local labour markets. For example, in South Africa, skilled health workers from other African countries – including both male and female doctors, nurses and other health professionals – are a recognised feature of the health system (Clemens and Pettersson, 2008). Despite this, there is a dearth of studies that explore gendered aspects of migrant experiences in the health sector, or that focus specifically on female migrant health workers. In one notable exception, Wojczewski' et al.'s (2015) study found that despite challenging registration procedures, some migrant women experienced improved professional opportunities in South Africa. However, relative privilege in educational and class terms was combined with pervasive experiences of gender-based and especially race-based discrimination against black Africans from outside of South Africa. Similarly, within the education system, Ranga's (2015) study found that female Zimbabwean teachers faced restricted opportunities compared to migrant men in South Africa, and were more likely to work in less well remunerated positions in private schools and to report heightened concerns about sexual violence and abuse. Interestingly, female migrant teachers were more likely to learn local languages than their male colleagues and the author identifies this, at least in part, as a coping strategy to address safety concerns by concealing their foreign identity. Beyond intra-African skilled migration, a small number of studies have also explored the experiences of high-skilled migrant Indian women in Africa (Thubauville, 2013; Rugunanan, 2017). However, in general, studies that explore the gendered experiences of high-skilled international migrants are very limited in number and are not part of a coherent body of research across the African continent or more widely across the Global South as a whole.

To summarise, more gendered and intersectional research on skilled migrants in the Global South would allow for a more complex and nuanced analysis of these migrants' experiences and how these differ for highly skilled individuals heading to Northern and Southern destinations. For example, approaches that seek to understand highly skilled migrant women as 'marginalised elites' (Riaño, 2016) may help to unpick the complex intersections between privilege and disadvantage that high-skilled women face in a South-South migration context. This research agenda would help expand the current focus beyond the set of gender segregated labour markets – care, domestic work and trade – that have to-date received the majority of attention from researchers. In the next section, we move beyond labour markets to identify other potential agendas for new research on gender and South-South

migration, with a particular focus on intersectional concerns around sexuality, masculinities and disability.

## 5. FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDAS

While our focus above was on the gendered nature of migrant labour markets in the Global South, here we explore some relatively understudied aspects of South-South migration streams that future research on gender and migration could address. While concerns with employment and labour issues remain important, we broaden the focus to consider three areas where intersectional concerns might be explored more fully: migration and sexuality, masculinities and disability. The section concludes with some reflections on connecting intersectionality to wider debates about 'migration regimes' in the context of South-South migration.

### 5.1 MIGRATION AND SEXUALITY

Research exploring the links between migration and sexualities is rather scarce in the South-South context. Advocating a 'queer perspective', Manalansan calls for researchers to move "beyond a laboring gendered agent" and recognise "a desiring and pleasure-seeking migrant subject" (2006, p. 243). This includes a concern with female migrants and their sexual practices. For example, based on a study with Peruvian and Ecuadorian migrant women working in the sex industry in Ecuador, Ruiz's (2017) work examines the role of sexuality in the relations between different national groups in a context where, according to the author, racial and class differences seem attenuated. In this case, a process of "sexual stigmatization based on...national origin" (Ruiz, 2017, p. 28) nonetheless defines both Peruvian and Colombian migrant women as 'different'. The author emphasises these migrants' agency and explores how they mobilise 'erotic capital' to navigate insecurity and financial uncertainty.

Ruiz draws on feminist approaches to understand how sexuality became a means of securing income for women in the sex industry, but also outside of it. Intimacy can in fact become a 'special currency', enabling migrant women to find pathways to inclusion in a larger context of exclusion. In contrast, Smith (2010) shows how state and civil society actors may make Sri Lankan women migrants invisible as sexual and desiring beings, drawing on a moral-based discourse that extols them to be, "monogamous, heterosexual, responsible wives, mothers and daughters" (Smith, 2010, p. 380). Her research focuses on Sri Lankan 'freelancers', domestic workers who live outside their employers' houses and who reside mostly illegally in Lebanon. A large majority of these women were married with children left behind in Sri Lanka. By analysing a UNDP report that the author had worked on, which focused on HIV-related vulnerabilities faced by women migrants and, crucially, what was left out of it, Smith shows how the sexuality of migrant women was left

deliberately unacknowledged. She argues that this left them unprotected and denied their desires for intimacy, in line with the discourses of Sri Lankan government agencies and NGOs. Even worse, as the author notes, if these migrants experienced actual violence and abuse in their relationships during migration, it was likely to be left unprosecuted (Smith, 2010, p. 391).

In a study of Filipina domestic workers in Thailand and Singapore, Cruz-del Rosario (2015) draws on the governmentality framework to explore women's agency and intimate choices in two contrasting migration regimes. In Singapore, migrant women are impeded from entering intimate relations with locals, and boundaries are imposed between skilled and unskilled workers; while in Thailand, the migration regime provides a lot of room for agency and emotional choices, including plentiful opportunities to enter new personal relationships. In both cases, despite structural constraints, domestic work provides migrant women an opportunity to pursue their personal projects and to gain autonomy, albeit to a varying degree.

Likewise, Pande's (2018) article on migrant domestic workers in Lebanon explores migrant women's sexualities in what the author calls 'counter-spaces'. The paper sheds light on how these women contest their day-to-day exclusion by occupying and redefining spaces such as cybercafes and ethnic churches, making them places for romantic encounters and the expression of their sexualities. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork among female domestic workers from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and Ethiopia, among others, the author seeks to contest "heteronormative assumptions" in the academic literature on gender and migration, which often reduce female migrants to "moral married mothers" (Pande, 2018, p. 20). Against this idea, "[w]omen date, flirt, and experiment with their sexualities for economic and strategic reasons but also for pleasure, with no sharp boundaries between the two needs" (Pande, 2018, p. 14). The author argues that these kinds of counter-spaces may be particularly relevant for the understanding of gender struggles among subaltern subjects. As such, she emphasises the importance of analysing space use, especially of migrants' spaces, to capture migrants' agency in negotiating their intersectional identities (Pande, 2018, p. 24).

Other research has highlighted the extreme methods deployed to discipline and control migrant women's bodies and sexualities. For instance, some Gulf States, such as the United Emirates and Kuwait, forbid women migrant workers from engaging in sexual activities. If a pregnancy occurs, they may be imprisoned, forced to give birth in prison and forcibly separated from their children when deported (Mahdavi, 2014). Taken together, these works all share a concern with how implicit-heteronormative orders operate to erase sexuality and desire in female migrants' bodies and determine how they are managed and disciplined through moral norms of intimacy. This bias may help explain why HIV prevalence has been the main focus of research on migrants' health in general, and migrants' sexual health in particular. In the Global South, this pattern is especially prominent. Thus, while the prevalence of

HIV among women migrants may be particularly high among domestic and sexual workers, for example in Asia (Ratha and Shaw, 2007), further research on the sexual health of migrant workers should extend beyond public health concerns to address migrants' sexual practices in a broader, non-heteronormative, non-restrictive and non-moralistic manner.

A related research area gaining increasing visibility deals with LGTB+ individuals on the move. Most of those works have focused specifically on LGTB+ asylum seekers and refugees in locations bordering countries in the Global North, showing how queer migrants are gendered, racialised and their lives put at risk. Bhagat (2018), for instance, analyses obstacles in accessing the right to the city in Cape Town, South Africa. Connecting race, class and sexuality, which produce “tiered dimensions of discrimination” (2018, p. 6), the author argues that queer refugees are “unable to participate in gay consumption due to class, race, and ethnic barriers” and thus “are left to die” (Bhagat, 2018, p. 3). In particular, he analyses how urban violence against asylum seekers is produced by a state-structured heteronormativity, and revealed through employment, housing and police actions. Shakhsari's (2014) work also presents a compelling analysis of multiple discriminations that queer and transgender Iranian have to face in Turkey while applying for refugee status. The author shows how, “particular forms of modern sexual identities that are recognized and deemed legitimate by the refugee rights regimes are produced and regulated according to normative notions of race, class, and gender” (2014, p. 1004). This leads her to question “abstract configurations of citizen, refugee, and rights” (2014, p. 1013) and to situate these in specific temporal and spatial settings. This corpus of literature thus engages with a critical analysis of how the ‘rhetoric of rights’ operates, and why it is often insufficient to protect LGTB+ migrants in the South.

As this discussion shows, some researchers have begun engaging with issues related to sexuality and South-South migration, including migrant women and LGTB+ migrants. Further research is needed, however, to explore the entanglement of migration, gender identities and sexual practices across different regional and country contexts in the Global South.

## 5.2 MASCULINITIES ON THE MOVE

Research drawing on gender perspectives has paid limited attention to masculinities and their relation to migrants' trajectories, despite the fact that masculinities are critical to a more accurate understanding of gender inequalities. In fact, men as gendered subjects are largely absent in studies of migration in South-South contexts. According to Asis et al. (2019), in Asia, gendered analyses of migration have neglected issues of masculinity, including the longitudinal processes necessary to grasp social change and the consequences for migrants over time and between generations (Asis et al., 2019). In the South American context, this research gap is even more striking.

In an African setting, Bartolomei (2010) reviewed four case studies of male migrant domestic work, including cross-border migrants from Burkina Faso in the Ivory Coast and internal migrants in the Congo, to show how migration challenges gender institutions. In all four cases there was an evident racialisation of domestic work. For example, in the Congo male cooks were “perceived as a sexual threat” because of the “racialized construction of black male sexuality” and as a result, male employers “tend[ed] to regulate interactions between male cooks and their wives or other women of the household” (2010, p. 102). Regarding the challenge to traditional masculine identity of working in the domestic sphere, the author argues that, rather than a rejection of traditionally perceived ‘feminine tasks’, male migrant domestic workers primarily struggled with the idea of being in a woman’s service (Bartolomei, 2010: 103). Burkinabe workers, for example, acknowledged experiencing a progressive loss of masculinity and this was linked to a broader sensation of their ‘suspended’ status. The author recognises here what some authors have called ‘masculinities in crisis’ or ‘in transition’, reflected in the effort of these migrant men to ‘de-genderize’ their work. Hegemonic masculinities should also be understood through their linkages with race, ethnic and class intersections, and this leads the author to conclude that ethnicity plays a major role in the production of subordinate masculinities among these migrants (Bartolomei, 2010, p. 105).

Along with male domestic work, other studies have contributed to the understanding of shifting masculinities in migration contexts. For example, Pande (2017) explores the processual dimension of male identity construction at the intersection of gender, race, and religious practices. Through an ethnography of Bangladeshi migrants working in South Africa, she calls for more attention to racialised masculinities in contexts of mobility, looking at how identities change across time, space and borders. Three masculinity models are identified, corresponding to the different stages of migration: a mandatory masculinity (at the beginning of migration), relational masculinities (during migration) and protest masculinities (at destinations); and these operate in two contrasting forms (hyper-masculinity and Ummah/religious masculinity). In doing so, Pande shows how migrant masculinities are both relational and temporal constructions.

In a different context, Magliano (2015) also explores the imbrication of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities during migration. She investigates the labour trajectory of a Peruvian couple working in the garment sector in Argentina, one of the main niches for migrant labour in South America, especially in Argentina and Brazil. In Brazil, there are slightly more male migrants engaged in garment work, an activity that is usually conceived of as female. Magliano shows how men deploy strategies of masculinisation, visible in the way they reproduce the family ideal of the male breadwinner. At the same time, this model of hegemonic masculinity appeared

to be in tension with a subordinate masculinity, that of a migrant and racialised man doing a 'female' job in a highly segmented labour market.

These studies demonstrate the value of exploring masculinities and migration in a South-South context, both to deepen understanding of the experiences of male migrants as well as for understanding gender norms and changing relations between migrant men and women at origin and destination. The research also demonstrates that an intersectional approach is equally important in relation to gender and masculinities in the South, although there is clearly a need for much more work on this going forward.

### 5.3 DISABILITY AND MIGRATION

Migration studies still have to account for the multiple and diverse bodies that circulate across borders. Indeed, the migrant body has usually been presented as a productive, ready-to-work body, obscuring or stigmatising the presence of those framed in hegemonic political discourses as 'unproductive' or 'burdensome', including people with disabilities (Pisani and Grech, 2017). The movement of people with disabilities is thus not well researched and this applies not only to studies of labour migration but also to broader research into migration, gender and development. Unsurprisingly, this is even more apparent in studies of South-South migration.

Where it is mentioned, disability is primarily included as one among many categories of 'vulnerability' and the experiences of migrant women and men with disabilities – or family members with disabilities at sites of origin or destination – are rarely explored in any detail. For example, in a study of gender and remittances in Lesotho, Crush et al. (2006) collected data on women with disabilities at origin and male migrants who acquired a disability, but disability is incorporated alongside other categories of vulnerability rather than analysed on its own terms. Similarly, in Stulgaitis' (2015) analysis of the legal context for transnational families in South Africa, people with disabilities are only considered as one among many groups of 'individuals with special needs'. Within the region, Thomas' (2004) study on disability among the children of migrants in South Africa stands out in presenting a detailed analysis of outcomes for children with disabilities that explores how age, gender, race and parental migration status correlate with outcomes such as school enrolment.

One area that does attract some attention from scholars as well as policy makers is the risk that labour migrants working in unsafe conditions may be victims of workplace injuries and accidents through which they acquire a disability. In these cases, the opportunity to continue working and securing income may be significantly reduced, increasing the likelihood that disabled migrants will agree to exploitative working relationships such as debt bondage (Miles et al., 2019). This is also linked to

broader concerns about the extension of social protection to migrants, with many researchers noting that migrant workers in the Global South are often excluded from adequate protection for the consequences of employment-related accidents or ill-health through workplace injury or other disability schemes (Oucho, 2014; Taha et al., 2015; Sabates-Wheeler and Koettl, 2010).

Other studies adopt a healthcare lens to explore the linkages between migration, disability, illness and access to care, although most focus on South-North migration (Ottosdottir and Evans, 2014, 2016; Soldatic, Meekosha and Somers, 2012; Burns, 2017). Some notable exceptions, however, are the work of Graham, Jordan and Yeoh (2015) on the mental health of those who stay behind and look after children in South-East Asia and similar research into mental health among Asian labour migrants (Wickramage and Siriwardhana, 2016; Wikramaga, Siriwardhana and Peiris, 2015). Graham et al., for example, argue that gendered expectations and wider geopolitical factors in Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam contribute to the poor mental health of mothers in transnational households, and call for more attention to supporting transnational family practices that are less detrimental to the mental well-being of carers.

Beyond labour migration, there is also evidence that people with disabilities represent a significant number of refugees and forced migrants (Pisani et al., 2016; Pisani and Grech, 2017). People living in conflict settings are more exposed and vulnerable to impairments and disability and some researchers have begun connecting the fields of disability and forced migration, particularly in the context of the Global South. Pisani et al. (2016), for example, argue that in migration contexts categorisations such as ‘illegal bodies’ and ‘disabled people’ may intersect. On the one hand, “[t]he disabled body and mind, in particular, is an unwelcome and unwanted threat to the wellbeing of the nation state” (Pisani et al., 2016, p. 297–98). On the other hand, migrants are also frequently seen as an “unproductive foreign body” and both categories are deployed to distinguish between those who are ‘deserving’ and those who are presented as a burden. Vulnerability is often deployed as an analytical category in this context too. However, as Mirza (2014) shows, using this category uncritically risks introducing an essentialist bias, implying that people with disabilities are ‘vulnerable’ per se and should not, for example, be subjected to detention and confinement in camps because they are in need of greater protection, and not because those practices violate human rights.

While the research above has begun to explore some issues facing migrants or family members of migrants with disabilities, the paucity of studies shows that there is an urgent need for more work on disability and migration in the Global South. Some emerging research on South-North migration suggests the potential for an intersectional approach to migration and disability and the value of a ‘critical disability lens’ in exploring the experiences of migrants with disabilities (Spangualo, El-Lahib and Kusari, 2020; El-Lahib, 2016). Further research on South-South migration

should thus explore not only the experiences of migrants who acquire disabilities while working in other countries, but also how the intersection of disability, gender, race and other factors affect migrants and their families at both origin and destination. This includes the experiences of male and female migrants with disabilities – which may be physical or mental, visible or invisible – moving within the Global South, and of migrants who have caring responsibilities for people with disabilities in their countries of origin.

## 5.4 CONNECTING INTERSECTIONALITY AND MIGRATION REGIMES

As this literature review suggests, migration scholars drawing on intersectional approaches have largely done so through the classical triad of intersectional analysis – gender, class and race/ethnicity – along with nationality or citizenship. Race and ethnicity are certainly key dimensions in intersectional analyses of migrant women in the Global South due to their insertion in racialised or ethnically demarcated labour markets such as domestic work in South America and Asia. Similarly, class structures the experiences of migrant men and women throughout the migration process, even where middle-class or educated migrants experience de-skilling or ‘down grading’ in labour markets and social contexts at destination. As this suggests, all these categories vary in their characteristics across different geographical, historical and political contexts, and thus may play different roles in different settings.

Nationality or citizenship also plays a crucial role, as migrants’ movements across state borders are subject to different national, bi-national and regional migration and mobility regimes. Some of the works reviewed used the concept of ‘regime’ to address the institutional and organisational arrangements shaping migration streams (e.g. Huijsmans 2014; Platt et al. 2017; Yeoh et al. 2017; Zack et al. 2019). These institutions (norms, rules, social constructions and knowledge) not only define the conditions for migrants to enter and leave territories, but also frame their entitlements according to migrants’ perceived “economic, social and cultural desirability” (Lutz, 2017, p. 359). Furthermore, migration regimes produce particular forms of work, as well as specific expectations among employers who rely on migrant labour (Cox, 2012).

The concept of ‘migration regimes’ has been deployed most frequently in work that mobilises a gender perspective to understand the entanglement of migration regimes and transnational families (Kilkey and Merla, 2014), domestic work (Cox, 2012) or the provision of care (Lutz, 2017). Its use in South-South migration research could be deepened, and its cross-fertilisation with intersectional approaches should take into account how gender regimes and gender relations are crosscut by discourses of race, class and nation (Adams and Padamsee, 2001, as cited by Lutz,

2017, p. 7) as well as other intersecting social categories of difference and disadvantage, such as disability or sexuality.

## 6. CONCLUSION

As we saw earlier, the categories of “North” and “South” are problematic. What we describe as the “Global South” is a space criss-crossed by its own hierarchies – both material and symbolic – and inequalities. Unfortunately, most research on South-South migration continues to reinforce the image of the Global South as a homogeneously ‘backward’ space, leaving aside the fact that there is significant economic and social diversity within and between countries of the South (Horner, 2020; Solarz, 2014). Indeed, the South has its own ‘Norths’, containing – as we have defined it – high-income, upper-middle, lower-middle and low-income countries; diverse political regimes and social protection systems; different patterns of urbanisation and different degrees of articulation to global dynamics; and a myriad of cultural attitudes towards immigration and emigration. In this context, as Herrera says, “[...] racial, gender and national identities acquire different meanings in South-South migration, contingent to different forms of stratification, and may trigger migrants’ strategies of resistance and agency” (2019, p. 311). Different historical backgrounds, colonial legacies, political regimes and social institutions all affect how racial, gender and national attitudes and identities are constructed and contested, and how they interact to produce, reproduce and transform inequalities. Although this review has not explored in detail how historical legacies and contemporary realities combine to shape migrants’ experiences, it has provided insights into the value of an intersectional approach in uncovering and exploring these social realities – including their links to contemporary migration regimes. Further research – such as through the project under which this review has been undertaken – should therefore aim to deepen this analysis, not only in spatial but also in temporal terms.

South-South labour migration streams are composed largely of flows of precarious workers, who seek opportunities in the formal and informal economy in places better integrated into globalised markets. Women – and men – who migrate in this manner do not experience racism, patriarchy, class hierarchies and xenophobia as separate phenomena; these forms of oppression are interconnected, interdependent and embedded in overlapping norms, institutions and behaviours. Intersectionality thus has great potential to identify and interrogate these multiple, interlocking sources of discrimination and exclusion. Researchers must therefore pay close attention to how, and under what circumstances, specific intersections of different dimensions of inequality combine to shape migrants’ pathways before, during and after migration. As we argued above, this could include a productive engagement and cross-fertilization with the literature on migration regimes to understand how these regimes in the Global South are entangled with discourses of gender, race, class and other intersecting concerns.

Our review of the literature suggests that there is no predominant theoretical framework deployed uniformly across South-South migration studies. Research in this area is fragmented and spread across disciplinary as well as geographical boundaries. Further, the use of gender and intersectional perspectives is highly uneven with very few studies incorporating an explicit gender focus in some settings, especially where migration streams are dominated by male migrants. Those studies that do exist highlight the value of this approach, not only for exploring the experiences of migrant women – although this remains understudied in a majority of contexts – but also for understanding how South-South migration affects male migrants and masculinities, as well as gender relations between men and women at both origin and destination. Since migration within the South may not always occur between countries with large wage differences, it also raises questions about other drivers, meanings and motivations that migrants connect to their migration experiences. Thus, for migrant women, the search for autonomy, for freedom from oppressive family and cultural contexts, and for new experiences and self-discovery, may be intertwined with economic motivations, perhaps to a larger extent – or certainly in different forms – than in South-North migration streams. Taken as whole, research on gender, intersectionality and South-South migration thus has the potential to renew and reinvigorate our views on a broad range of issues that underpin global concerns with migration, development and inequality. This can only help to improve our understanding of the critical challenges facing migrants and their families across the Global South, both in the context of current crises – such as the COVID epidemic – and longer-term objectives to promote greater equality and more inclusive outcomes in countries of origin and destination across Latin America, Africa and Asia.

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## Suggested citation

Lorena Izaguirre and Matthew Walsham (February 2021). South-South migration from a gender and intersectional perspective: an overview, MIDEQ Working Paper. Manchester: MIDEQ. Available at: <https://www.mideq.org/en/resources-index-page/south-south-migration-gender-and-intersectional-perspective>

## Cover image

A group of young Indonesian migrant workers take a break to check their phones after getting off work at a nearby hi-tech factory facility in Malaysia. Staton Winter for UN Women. CC BY-NC-ND. <https://flic.kr/p/2c1A1qz>

## Funding

This work has been funded by the UKRI Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) [Grant Reference: ES/S007415/1]. The GCRF is a five-year £1.5 billion fund aimed at addressing the problems faced by developing countries.

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