

Julia J. Shin **Migrant Women On the Move: The Road From Home**

This research will be of interest to:

- articulate structure and agency in the analysis of the process of international migration.
- show migrant women acting as 'strategic agents' in their migratory journey.

Researcher info/contact:
Ph.D. candidate
Department of Sociology
J.Shin@warwick.ac.uk

Keywords

1. Gender
2. Int'l Migration
3. Migrant Institutions

With special reference to the case of migrant women workers in South Korea, this research explores the process of international labour migration - including workers' different migratory routes; various agencies and organisations in the 'business of migration' within and outside existing legal constraints. Taking gender as a central concept of analysis and examining the under-researched country case of South Korea, it aims to show that gender and race/ethnicity are significantly implicated in the process and structures of labour migration and how ostensibly gender-neutral processes of movement are in fact gender specific, resulting in fundamental differences in the migration experiences between women and men.

Research Methods

Qualitative Research

This research is based on the fieldwork conducted between April and September 2005 in South Korea, involving **in-depth individual interviews** with:

- **thirty migrant women workers,**
 - **five male migrant workers,**
 - **three government officials**
 - **four NGO workers**
- and **three group interviews (with Chinese, Filipino and Vietnamese workers).**

Key Findings/Ideas

- ❖ International labour migration is 'the outcome of a complex combination of individual actions and social structures' (Goss and Lindquist, 1995:344).
- ❖ Avoiding a holistic approach to the concept of 'knowledgeable agents'
 - The range of allocative and authoritative resources available to individuals are differently distributed and very often structurally circumscribed.
 - Different knowledge of rules and access to resources between women and men in their pre-migration stages
- ❖ Unequal distributions of social knowledge and power as well as rules and resources -> women opting for different strategic use of resources
- ❖ 'Sedimented' practices of potential women migrants and various recruitment agencies and private brokers become highly institutionalised.
- ❖ This, in turn, forms **the gendered process of international migration** that is reproduced and transformed.