

2016-2018 Task Force: Communication and Transnational Mobilities

Chair: **Liz Jones**, Griffith University

Cross-border mobility is a defining and contentious feature of life in the 21st century. Latest UN statistics suggest that there are currently more than 200 million 'international migrants' in the world, a figure that includes refugees, asylum seekers and those described as 'economic' migrants. Motivations for mobilities vary. Some cross borders voluntarily to pursue an education, or to improve their economic situation and seek a better life. Others are on the move against their will to escape poverty or armed conflict. Cross-border mobility can be stimulating and rewarding, but it can also be an uncertain, even dangerous, experience that involves learning new skills, coping with an unfamiliar environment, and negotiating complex interpersonal and intergroup relations.

This symposium explores, from a socio-psychological perspective, the intercultural and communicative processes involved in cross-border mobility, and their effects on mobile individuals (past and present) and on the societies that host them. The papers include both theoretical and methodological perspectives, and cutting-edge empirical research on a range of mobile groups, including migrant workers (Ladegaard) and refugees (Tsetsi), and communication challenges faced by health professionals in the host country (Sheeran).

Identity Transformation During a Time of Resettlement: A Case Study of Refugee Identity Reformation in the United States

Eric Tsetsi and **Maggie Pitts**, University of Arizona

This case study gives voice to two refugees displaced by war and instability in Iraqi Kurdistan and the Central African Republic. Data were collected through interviews, participant observation, and document analysis and analyzed using social identity theory (SIT) and the communication theory of identity (CTI). This study focuses on refugee experiences of acculturation and resettlement in a U.S. border state (Arizona) where relationships are often strained. These stories provide important contributions to the international conversation regarding the massive forced migration taking place globally. Both refugees sought to establish new group affiliations within their host country while creatively interweaving their established identities. New group affiliations, however, often emerged through distancing from other refugee communities in the host culture, even familial connections.

Reinventing the Self: Voice and (In)Visibility in Domestic Migrant Workers Returnee Narratives

Hans J Ladegaard, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Every year, large numbers of women from rural areas in Indonesia and the Philippines leave their families to become domestic helpers overseas. This paper draws on a large corpus of

domestic migrant worker returnee narratives recorded in rural areas in Indonesia and the Philippines. The women talk about their migration experience working under gruelling conditions, and their experiences of coming home as radically changed individuals. The paper considers why some women gain increased visibility through migration, while others lose their voice and suffer from the employers' demeaning discourses. Voice and visibility are related to the women's access to a dominant language (English), and the paper discusses how language training and other forms of empowerment may help migrant women gain visibility

Communicating with LEP patients in Australia: How do health professionals decide what should be communicated and by whom?

Nicola Sheeran, Griffith University; **Liz Jones**, Griffith University; and **Rachyl Pines**, University of California, Santa Barbara

Australia hosts a range of migrants for whom communication can be problematic, as Australians are typically monolingual and English speaking, while migrants vary in their English language proficiency (LEP). This is particularly challenging in healthcare where compromised communication between health professionals (HP's) and LEP patients may result in poorer outcomes. Typically, an interpreter is required, though not always used. Our study used Communication Accommodation theory and heuristic systematic processing theory to investigate how HP's assess an LEP patient's need for an interpreter. Verbal protocol interviews with 69 HP's were thematically analysed. HPs' goals for the interaction, stereotypes, and beliefs about their role influenced their decision making. Doctors and allied health workers used more systematic processes while nurses used heuristics more.