

Call for papers for a special issue in *International Migration*

“HIGHLY-SKILLED MIGRANT WOMEN ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS IN KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMIES: A PROCESS PERSPECTIVE”

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Background

The share of highly-skilled migrants has reached 30% in 2011 (Eurostat, 2011) and several Western countries have resorted to migration policies as an instrument to fill the gaps in the supply of skilled workers in knowledge-based economies (European Migration Network, 2007; OECD-EU, 2016). Whereas these workers represent key talent pools for companies, they often are the first to lose their job in the event of an economic downturn and face poor career outcomes, such as underemployment, brain waste, lower wages, worst working conditions, and de-skilling (Lo & Yu, 2017; United Nations, 2016), as a result of individual, organizational, and environmental factors (Syed, 2008; Al Ariss et al., 2012). The anti-immigration sentiment and rampant populism in several countries (e.g., Brexit, US travel ban, and European-level discussions about migration issues) (OECD, 2016) does not help in solving discrimination, cross-cultural adjustment, and other difficulties (e.g., Dietz et al., 2016).

In addition to these trends, highly-skilled migration trends have increasingly feminized in time, both in OECD and non-OECD countries (Özden et al., 2011). Highly-skilled female migration presents several peculiar characteristics worth of notice, such as unconventional migration biographies (e.g., Gonzales Enriques & Triandafyllidou, 2016), differences in terms of national backgrounds in different host countries (European Migration Network, 2007; Kofman, 2014), high levels of over-qualification and deskilling in the job market with respect to men (Eurostat, 2011), and under-representation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) sectors (e.g., European Migration Network, 2007; Kofman, 2014; Raghuram, 2008). As highlighted by previous studies, characteristics like gender, age, or country of origin affect career prospects, such as occupation level and salary (e.g., Jenkins, 2004; Williams & Balazs, 2008), through the social construction of the power relations underpinning the evaluation of skills (Phillips & Taylor, 1980).

This is why highly skilled migrant women, especially those working or aspiring to work in male-dominated sectors (like STEM), offer an important context to study how the many forms of social differentiation (e.g., gender, migrant status, occupational sector) operate in conjunction to shape labor market participation and outcomes (Grigoleit-Richter, 2017; Raghuram, 2008; Shirmohammadi et al., 2018).

Purpose

The purpose of the call for papers is to provide a focused journal issue which could advance theoretical development and empirical knowledge about highly-skilled migration of women in the knowledge-based economy from different disciplinary perspectives, so as to offer relevant recommendations for policy and practice. Specifically, most of previous literature has studied the antecedents to qualification-matched employment (Shirmohammadi et al., 2018), looking for instance at individual-level characteristics of skilled migrant women (e.g., migratory legal status, education, language proficiency) (e.g., Aure, 2013; Syed & Murray, 2009), or the problems and barriers that they face (e.g., work-life balance, social integration and networking) (e.g., Pio, 2005; Grigoleit-Richter, 2017). Relatively less attention has been paid to the initiatives at place to help them to overcome these obstacles (e.g., Iredale, 2005), or to the strategies and agentic role employed by women themselves (e.g., Colakoglu et al., 2018; Riaño, 2011; Shih, 2006), and the final outcome in terms of their engagement in the labour market and society at large, such as innovation, knowledge spillovers, and socio-economic wellbeing. Nevertheless, while the adoption of a process-based approach has been highlighted by several recent contributions analysing highly-skilled migration patterns, to date a few studies have adopted such a comprehensive approach.

While we are interested in understanding the final outcome in terms of contribution of skilled women to the knowledge-based economy, we call for a better understanding of the factors, the processes and dynamics that drive such outcomes. Our aim is to provide a comprehensive overview of the linkages, processes, activities, and dynamics that explain why and how certain antecedent characteristics and conditions regarding highly-skilled migrant women, their families, networks, or home/host societies drive certain final outcomes, such as individual career trajectories, organizational arrangements, or impact on home/host knowledge economies and societies. Shedding light on these processes is extremely needed to favor the emergence of evidence for the development of policy and managerial implications which can help addressing a stronger participation of migrant women to innovation, knowledge creation and socio-economic wellbeing.

We welcome academic contributions taking different disciplinary views on the topic, so as to increase the variety of disciplines and perspectives represented in the final issue.

We invite the contributions to take, where possible, a multi-level stance on the analyzed processes, activities, linkages, or dynamics – thus considering the individual-, group-, organizational-, and environmental-level.

In line with the editorial aims of *International Migration*, we look for empirical research with clear and explicit policy-related content. Articles which are entirely theoretical will not be accepted.

Examples of research questions that could be in line with this call for paper are the following:

1. How and why does individual experience in the home country – such as education or professional experience – or in the host country – such as education, professional, or migratory experience – influence highly-skilled migrant women's ability in integrating into the workplace?
2. How and why do individual attitudes and psychological variables (e.g., motivation, self-efficacy, hope, perseverance) shape inclusion patterns of highly-skilled migrant women in host societies and their work outcomes? What behavioural strategies do these women adopt to make sense of their experiences and to deal with the work and life situation in the host country?
3. How and under what conditions do formal and informal networks established by highly-skilled migrant women with both migrant and native individuals and organizations influence their inclusion patterns in host labour markets and work outcomes?
4. How do employment and diversity management policies and practices in employers' organizations (either private or public) influence the work outcomes for highly-skilled migrant women? Under what conditions might they have different effects, also with respect to other workers (e.g., migrant men, or non-migrant women) in the same organization?
5. What are the perceived effects of having highly-skilled migrant workers, especially women, for companies' managers, employees, suppliers, or customers? Do companies having an international footprint or serving international markets better reap the potential benefits of having migrant employees?
6. How and to which extent transnational engagement of highly-skilled migrant women affects their work outcomes and entrepreneurial aspirations?
7. What are the perceptions of feasibility and desirability of entrepreneurship for highly-skilled migrant women? Under which conditions and why do they become entrepreneurs? What does success mean in these instances of migrant entrepreneurship? Under what conditions are their companies successful in subjective terms of objective mainstream terms (e.g., revenues or employee growth)?
8. How do aspects of the institutional and cultural environment (e.g., immigration, employment, and family/welfare policies; societal values; public services; job placement offering; etc.) influence labour market and social integration practices and outcomes for highly-skilled migrant women, or comparatively for them and other migrant and native individuals? How does this relate to other aspects of their life, such as marital or family relationships?
9. What is the role played by institutional actors (such as policy-makers, professional associations, immigrant agencies, placement services, welfare organizations, incubation/acceleration facilities, co-working spaces, non-governmental organizations, etc.) in helping highly-skilled migrant women to display and exploit their competencies or in inhibiting their participation in the job market? Do these actors interact and network with one another and what are the implications of these relationships?

10. How do individual highly-skilled migrant women, and companies, organizations or policy-makers interacting with them, use language – e.g., narratives, storytelling, rhetoric – to deal with highly-skilled migrant women career, employment, and acculturation processes and outcomes? Does this vary according to the sector of employment (e.g., STEM vs. social sciences and humanities), national or institutional settings?

Submission information

To submit a paper for the Special Issue, authors should submit a manuscript, written in English and not exceeding a total of 8,000 words (including abstract, policy implications, references plus 2-3 tables or graphs if needed). Manuscript should allow blind review, and therefore should not contain any detail to identify authors.

Submitted manuscripts will first undergo a process of screening by guest editors, to check formal requisites and fit with the call for papers. All submissions will be run through plagiarism software. Manuscript that will pass this first screening will be sent out to two anonymous reviewers.

Paper Development Workshop

The special issue will be associated with a one-day-and-half academic-policy workshop (Bologna, Italy, 12-13 September 2019), where authors of prospective papers will have the chance to present their works and network with editors and other authors working on this topic. The presentation of the papers will allow the authors to further develop ideas and collect constructive feedbacks. Please note that presentation at the workshop is neither a requirement, neither an assurance for publication.

To apply for participation in the Paper Development Workshop, authors can submit an extended abstract of their work, written in English and not exceeding a total of seven (7) pages and 4000 words – five (5) pages for the body which can include charts, graphs, diagrams, and up to two (2) pages of references. The 4000-word count includes all text in the charts, graphs, diagrams, and references. Please use single spacing and 12-point font.

Submitted abstract will undergo a process of review by the conference organizers and should include name and institutional affiliation of all authors, including e-mail contacts. Authors of selected abstracts will be invited to participate to the conference and to submit a full manuscript.

The deadline for submission of the extended abstract is June 15th, 2019.

Abstract and full papers should be submitted in MS Word (or equivalent) or PDF format, via email to eumentorstem@unibo.it. In the e-mail subject, please specify "CFP – MIGRANT WOMEN CONFERENCE".

There are no fees to participate to the Paper Development Workshop. The organizers will offer coffee breaks and a light lunch during the conference. Costs for transport to Bologna and accommodation will be covered by presenters of accepted papers.

Applicants will be notified of acceptance to the workshop by June 30th, 2019.

Participants are required to register and confirm participation to the Paper Development Workshop by August 25, 2019.

Important dates

- Deadline for optional submission (abstract) to Paper Development Workshop: June 15, 2019
- Optional registration for Paper Development Workshop: August 25, 2019
- Optional Paper Development Workshop (Bologna, Italy): 12-13 September 2019
- Deadline for submission of Special Issue full papers: October 31, 2019
- First round of Special Issue revisions: December 30, 2019
- Deadline for submission of Special Issue first round of revisions: 31 March, 2020
- Second round of Special Issue revisions: 31 May, 2020
- Final submission of Special Issue full papers: 31 July, 2020

Further information

For questions regarding the call for papers and the Paper Development Workshop, please contact the guest editors: Daniela Bolzani (daniela.bolzani@unicatt.it), Francesca Crivellaro (francesca.crivellar4@unibo.it) and Rosa Grimaldi (rosa.grimaldi@unibo.it).

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