

**The Global Labor Migration Network**

The Center for Global Migration Studies at the University of Maryland has created a global, interdisciplinary, network of scholars focused on contemporary and historical labor migration. This network seeks to generate intellectual dialogue, faculty and student exchanges, collaborative projects, virtual communities, workshops, conferences, and publications. Members of the network are drawn from partners at Universitas 21 institutions, as well as other universities around the globe.  
  
The Center is committed to studying migration through interdisciplinary collaborations and through a global framework. It is also committed to a model of engaged scholarship and pedagogy that seeks to illuminate contemporary social problems. The conditions surrounding global labor migration today--unprecedented in world history--provide the challenge and opportunity for precisely this model of engaged scholarship and pedagogy.   
  
Labor migration is a vast, global, and highly fluid phenomenon in the 21st century. There are more labor migrants working in areas beyond their birth country or region than ever before. According to the United Nations, 232 million people, more than 3% of the world’s population, are living today outside their country of citizenship. More than half of these are migrant workers. If we include internal labor migrants, the numbers soar much higher. In China alone, according to the International Labor Rights Forum, there are today 262 million internal labor migrants. This fluid system of migration is shaping most parts of the globe, from South and North America to Europe, Asia, and Africa.   
  
Labor migrants are vulnerable: they are exploited more easily by recruiters and employers, and are less likely to benefit from union representation. They often face arrest or deportation when attempting to fight for their rights, and are bound to special documents that limit their ability to change jobs. They can become enmeshed in debt bondage, and routinely face separation from family members as well as social isolation. Roughly half are women. And although there are many efforts underway to regulate and improve the conditions migrants workers face, by such organizations as the United Nations and the ILO as well as various NGO’s and regionally-based efforts, so far they are not effective.   
  
Labor migration is not only a pressing social issue; it is also a growing area of scholarship and research in a wide variety of disciplines. In sociology, anthropology, public health, education, and public policy, there is renewed and energetic attention to labor migration. And global labor migration concerns not only social scientists but also humanities scholars. Historians are lavishing attention on the journeys of those who moved to make their living, whether under conditions of coercion, such as slaves or indentured laborers, or voluntarily. From the Irish and Chinese who laid railroad tracks in the 19th century, to contemporary Filipina care workers, or South Asians building soccer arenas, labor migrants’ experiences form a major concern for humanities and social science scholars alike.   
  
Because today global labor migration is shaping the lives of millions, and because it is receiving unprecedented attention by scholars, the time is right for an international and interdisciplinary scholarly network. This network unites social scientists and humanities scholars because connecting the work being done on labor migration in the contemporary world with those historicizing the phenomenon will lend the project much power, insight, and cross-fertilization. It involves scholars from diverse parts of the globe because only that will fully illuminate the continuities and contrasts facing diverse workers, while also allowing for global exchange about the range of intellectual cultures and methodologies available for expanding knowledge on this topic. This project will bring international attention to one of the world’s most pressing issues, generate scholarly dialogue and new research agendas, and propose policies that can improve conditions for migrants.

The Global Labor Migration Network will hold an inaugural workshop in April 2017 that will provide an opportunity for advisory board members to convene, share work in progress, and plan future collaborations. The latter will include faculty-student exchanges and a major global summit on labor migration being planned for 2018.

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**Advisory Board**

Ira Berlin, History, University of Maryland \*\*  
Eileen Boris, History, UC-Santa Barbara  
Jennifer Chun, Sociology, Centre for the Study of Korea, University of Toronto   
Leon Fink, History, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Donna Gabaccia, History, University of Toronto  
Julie Greene, History, University of Maryland \*\*  
Heidi Gottfried, Sociology, Wayne State University  
Cindy Hahamovitch, History, University of Georgia  
Ruri Ito, Sociology, Hitotsubashi University  
Zaheera Jinnah, African Centre for Migration and Society, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg  
Chitra Joshi, History, University of Delhi \*\*  
Seung-Kyung Kim, Anthropology, Indiana University  
Anders Kjellberg, Sociology, Lund University  
Eleonore Kofman, Law, University of Middlesex   
Leo Lucassen, History, University of Amsterdam \*\*   
Helma Lutz, Sociology, Frankfort University  
Nelson Lichtenstein, History, UC-Santa Barbara  
Mae Ngai, History, Colombia University  
Pun Ngai, Sociology, Hong Kong Polytechnic University   
Annelise Orleck, History, Dartmouth College  
Mary Romero, Justice and Social Inquiry, Arizona State University  
Paul Shackel, Anthropology, University of Maryland  
Joo-Cheong Tham, Melbourne Law School \*\*  
Andres Villarreal, Sociology, Univ. of Maryland \*\*  
 Rodolfo García Zamora, Economics, Univ. Autónoma de Zacatecas

\*\* Members of Universitas 21

**Global Labor Migration Inaugural Workshop**

**April 20-21, 2017**

**University of Maryland, College Park**

*Thursday, April 20*

8:30 a.m. breakfast

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductory Remarks

* Julie Greene, Department of History, University of Maryland, and Heidi Gottfried, Department of Sociology, Wayne State University

9:30 a.m. Session One: *Migrant Workers’ Organizing*

Chair: Heidi Gotttfried, Department of Sociology, Wayne State University

Speakers:

* Ruri Ito, Department of Sociology, Hitotsubashi University, “Impacts of Regularization on Migrant Domestic Workers’ Lives: The Case of Filipino Workers in Paris”
* Mae Ngai, Department of History, Colombia University, “Chinese Labor Resistance in South African Gold Mines”
* Annelise Orleck, Department of History, Dartmouth College, “Global Labor Organizing”

Commentator: Mary Romero, Department of Sociology, Arizona State University

11:30 a.m. Lunch break

1:00 p.m. Session Two: *Global Labor Regulation, Migration, Nation-Building*

Chair: Leon Fink, Department of History, University of Illinois at Chicago

Speakers:

* Eileen Boris, Department of History, “Gender and Global Labor Regulation: ILO and Migration Conventions”
* Donna Gabaccia, Department of History, University of Toronto, "Imagining Nations of Immigrants"
* Joo-Cheong Tham, Melbourne Law School, “Neo-Liberalism at Work: A Comparison of Low-Skill Temporary Labor Migration Programs In Australia and Canada”

Commentator: Eleonore Kofman, Department of Social Policy, University of Middlesex

3:00 p.m. break

4:00 p.m. Public Talk: Ruth Milkman, Sociology, CUNY Graduate Center, *“Precarious Lives: 21st Century Immigrants and the Global United States”*

5:30 p.m. Reception

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*Friday, April 21*

8:30 a.m. breakfast

9:o0 a.m. Session One: *Crossing-Borders, Return Journeys: Circuits of Labor Migration*

Chair: Cindy Hahamovitch, Department of History, University of Georgia

Speakers:

* Helma Lutz, Department of Sociology, Frankfort University “Care Chains and Migrant Workers' Transnational Lives”
* Rodolfo Garcia Zamora, Department of Economics, Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, México, “Return Migrations”
* Leo Lucassen, Department of History, University of Amsterdam, “Cross Cultural Labor Migrations"

Commentator: Andres Villarreal, Department of Sociology, University of Maryland

11:30 a.m. Lunchtime Conversation with Cathy Feingold, AFL-CIO Vice President for International Affairs on the policy implications of global labor migration research

1:30 final session to brainstorm and plan for future collaborations for the Global Labor Migration Network

4 p.m. Adjournment