

EDUCATION, MOBILITY AND CITIZENSHIP

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION TO DENMARK

Within the last decade, Denmark has become a popular destination for a new type of transnational migrants – young people from the developing and post-socialist countries who travel abroad on educational programmes for the purpose of social and economic mobility. This project examines how these migrants experience three different Danish educational programmes, which provide one of the few legal gateways for foreigners to enter the country. Focusing on youth as an empirical and analytical category, the project brings together three key concepts: education, mobility and citizenship. The project, which lasts for three years, is located at the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University (DPU, AU), and will be conducted in close collaboration with the Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen (DA, UC).

AIM

The aim of the project is to explore the role of education in geographical and social mobility strategies of three different groups of migrants: young Nepalese who enrol in vocational colleges and institutions of higher education; young Filipina women who participate in the cultural exchange programme of the au pair system; and Ukrainian youths who engage in agricultural internships. As a new category of transnational migrants in Denmark they share common traits: 1) They have begun migrating to Denmark during the last 10 years, 2) they are in Denmark on educational programmes and are granted temporary visas and 3) they are not expected to become integrated into Danish society on a permanent basis. The project will examine how young educational migrants seek to establish a life for themselves while in Denmark and how educational programmes help them acquire new skills that in a long-term perspective can improve not just their own social and economic position, but also that of their families left behind. The project thus sheds light on the double-edged importance of education for young migrants as a way to gain societal membership in new locations and as a short and long-term strategy of geographical and social mobility.

The project makes an important contribution to several areas of research:

- It participates in building up the emerging academic field of 'educational migration' through a critical exploration of the relationship between education and migration in the context of transnationalism.
- It further develops existing theories on the relationship between migration and citizenship by bringing into focus the role of education, beyond institutions of mass schooling.

- It explores how young migrants as social actors creatively engage in improving their livelihoods in the face of the severe structural limitations they encounter both in Denmark and their country of origin. It thereby contributes new insights to as well as problematizes a dominant trend in migration studies to focus on 'problems' of integrating ethnic minorities into host societies

BACKGROUND

Youths aged 15-29 constitute about 50% of all documented, international migrants in the world (estimated at 190 million). Most of them come from developing and post-socialist countries (UNFPA 2006). The consolidation of the EU, with its unilateral immigration policies, has resulted in a new situation for today's migrants; it has become more difficult to enter the Schengen area of the EU countries (UNDP 2009), but once inside, mobility between countries is easy. Despite common immigration policies, widely different interpretations of these policies in various EU countries have contributed to the creation of numerous possibilities for migrants to enter the EU. At the same time, Europe's decreasing population and lack of labour power, as well as the internationalization and commercialization of the educational market, have opened new opportunities for young people desiring to migrate to Europe. It is well documented that migrants are generally enterprising and entrepreneurial and therefore often manage to seek out various opportunities, even under difficult circumstances (Foner 2000). Educational programmes abroad, combined with the need for labour in certain occupational niches for youths, have opened up new pathways through which young migrants can enter Denmark legally, even though this country is one of the EU member states with the most restrictive legislation on immigration.

THE PROBLEM IN FOCUS

The project will investigate migrants from developing and post-socialist countries who are enrolled in three official programmes seeking to promote international education and/or cultural exchange and regulated by detailed rules specifying the conditions of immigration and residence in Denmark. The young immigrants share several features. Firstly, they all come from countries outside the European Union where they see few social and economic opportunities for pursuing their dreams of a better life. Secondly, most of them belong to working class or middle class families, who have the economic means to raise the money needed to migrate, but at the same time are vulnerable to fluctuating local economies. They therefore encourage youths to seek opportunities in other parts of the world. Thirdly, the migrants have legal status in Denmark but over time, in their attempt to improve their living conditions under severe constraints, some of them enter more legally ambiguous domains, for example through employment in the 'grey zones' of the labour market. Fourthly, many arrive in Denmark, partly through existing migrant networks that help them

identify their migration destination and establish themselves in Denmark, partly through active recruitment efforts in particular parts of the world by Danish institutions. Specific ethnic groups have therefore become concentrated in certain niches of education.

The project will examine how this educational migration furthers the social and economic mobility of the youths through the following research questions:

- How do economic and political conditions, family support and individual resources and aspirations in the country of origin motivate young people to migrate, and what role do educational ambitions play in this migration strategy?
- In which ways do young migrants draw on local and transnational social networks in identifying Denmark as their destination, in organizing their travel and migration, and in mobilizing resources necessary for establishing, maintaining and enhancing their livelihood in Denmark?
- Which institutions (e.g. recruiting agencies, families, work places, colleagues) serve as mediators of the relationship between Danish society, including official authorities, and the individual migrant and do they enable young migrants to become part of local communities and nurture feelings of belonging during their stay in Denmark?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The notion of youth is conceptualized generationally as a social category associated with an intermediate life stage between childhood and adulthood and defined by a complex set of relations between the older and the younger generation (Cole and Durham 2007). The project examines how young people act and interact in relation to the wider social networks of familial, societal and transnational ties with which they are connected (Amit 2001), and how youth becomes a central point of symbolic investment through education and migration. The hope of change and, coupled to this, the fear of failures and uncertainties are fundamentally linked to the category of youth (Cole and Durham 2008), which means that many young people are willing to take chances in order to improve their situation. As is the case with other categories based on age and generation it is imperative to ask what *youth* means in specific cultural and historical contexts and how concepts of youth are defined cross-culturally (Hansen 2008). This project therefore does not make a priori definitions of youth based on chronological age, but rather investigates the culturally and socially contested nature of youth. Taking its point of departure in youth as a focal empirical and analytical category, the project will explore and expand existing knowledge of the three concepts of education, mobility and citizenship in order to examine the interplay between these in relation to young people's strategies of improvement.

EDUCATION

From an anthropological perspective *education* is not just school-based learning. It is, broadly conceived, the socially legitimate processes of training and learning whereby members of a given society come to define themselves and become recognized as knowledgeable and educated according to specific cultural criteria (Levinson and Holland 1996). Taking on multiple and shifting meanings, depending on context and situation (Levinson 1999), education is not identical with, but encompasses, the distinct form of schooling that is historically closely related to the development of the nation-state as a political form (Fuller 1991). The global expansion of modern schooling in the second half of the 20th century is inextricably related to prevailing modernistic ideas of a positive correlation between mass schooling, economic progress and national development (Anderson-Levitt 2003). This has resulted in huge expectations of the transformative potential of educational systems, on a societal as well as an individual level. For many, especially in the developing countries, formal education entails promises of social and economic progress while continued exclusion from the educational system, combined with widespread unemployment after completed schooling, gives rise to profound frustrations among the youth (Valentin 2005).

The dilemma described above is fundamental to this project because lack of opportunities in the home country makes it attractive to migrate, but at the same time education in its various forms is still key to the dream of another and better life, not just for the young migrants, but also for the relatives who stay behind. Investments in education are therefore part of collective strategies to accumulate cultural capital with symbolic and potentially economic value (Bourdieu 1986). By offering educational programmes to foreign youths from the developing and post-socialist world, Denmark invites these youths to take advantage of social and economic opportunities in Western societies that, in the sending countries, are associated with high prestige and strong hopes for a better future. This project will examine the role of education – varying from college education to agricultural internship to training in the culture and language of a Western country – as an integrated part of the livelihood strategies of the migrants and their families and the hopes and ambitions for social and physical mobility linked to these strategies. The project thus addresses significant new trends in transnational education as a global mass phenomenon rather than as a privilege of the select elites.

MOBILITY

The growing educational migration to Denmark from different parts of the world is an aspect of the contemporary globalization processes that is leading, on the one hand, Danish institutions to recruit young trainees and students abroad and, on the other hand, foreign youths to look for educational opportunities in different countries. At a more general level, educational migration is also an integral dimension of the

mobile livelihoods and the transnational networks of relations that have become important aspects of life for people in the developing and post-socialist world seeking social and economic improvement.

The notion of *mobile livelihood* (Olwig and Sørensen 2002) underscores that making a living does not just concern obtaining the most necessary material means of subsistence. It involves, just as significantly, ambitions to achieve culturally conditioned goals regarding desirable occupations and modes of living. Often, however, such ambitions cannot be fulfilled within the confines of the local society or the nation-state, and they may therefore result in extensive physical mobility. The youths who leave for Denmark thus arrive with well-defined ideas of what kinds of livelihoods, and associated social and economic mobility, they expect their physical mobility will facilitate. Such ambitions may be entirely unrealistic given the opportunities available to temporary educational migrants in Denmark. International research has shown, however, that it can be difficult for migrants to down-scale their goals, because they are embedded in transnational social networks that maintain high expectations of migrants' achievements abroad (Brettell 2000, Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). Important elements in these *social networks* are the migrants' economic and social obligations toward relatives and friends who have helped finance and organize their migration, as well as their emotional ties to their country of origin, where they anticipate returning when they have achieved the desired social mobility (Olwig and Pærregaard 2004). The migrants thus struggle for physical and social mobility within a complex field of contradictory expectations and demands. They are regarded as key resources in the transnational networks of relations extending to family and friends in their country of origin and abroad, while treated as foreigners in the migration destination, subjected to tight immigration regulations staking out an extremely limited space of opportunity. The project will examine how this contested social arena shapes the migrants' attempts to strive for social and economic mobility.

CITIZENSHIP

In legal terms, the idea of citizenship is closely associated with the migrants being able to establish themselves in a country where they have no formal legal or political rights. The meaning of *citizenship*, however, has been expanded from the conventional political science interpretation, which defines it as a set of rights practised in a vertical relationship between the state and the individual, to a more inclusive and actor-oriented understanding emphasizing how people gain membership in collective life (Kabeer 2005). Citizenship, thus, cannot be reduced to just legal status and entitlements, given or denied by the state, but refers to a more normative ideal based on the notion of societal membership (Hall et al. 1999) and involving both available resources and subjective experiences of belonging (cf. Rosaldo 1994). Such societal membership is socially mediated and shaped by not only the state but also by social policies and practices beyond the state that in various ways define and support informal norms of belonging that are

different from those of the state (Ong 2003). When formal legal distinctions between citizens and non-citizens are applied to the more inclusive notions of socio-cultural modes of belonging (Maira 2009) the result may be a blurring of the boundaries between legal and illegal domains and the emergence of 'semi-legal' spheres (Rytter forthcoming) that implicate both migrants and host institutions.

The link between citizenship and education is primarily discussed with respect to the role of the school in shaping future citizens in normative and practical terms, as occurs when concrete pedagogical programs are implemented (Osler and Starkey 2005), or when the meaning of citizenship is discussed within the context of formal educational programmes (Stevick and Levinson 2007, Sørensen 2008). An anthropological perspective opens up for the many diverse, more or less formalized educational settings where citizenship formation takes place, intentionally and unintentionally (Reed-Danahay 2007). This project therefore asks how different groups of migrants may succeed at gaining societal membership through the informal interpersonal relationships associated with the formally recognized educational programmes, and how they may learn to behave as 'proper' citizens without being nationals.

METHODOLOGY

The project is fundamentally comparative in its scope. Taking its point of departure in three parallel ethnographic studies it employs an explicitly comparative research methodology, not by following identical methodological guidelines and techniques, but by pursuing a set of common analytical questions, which makes it possible to compare structural conditions and processes of agency across specific contexts (Fox and Gingrich 2002, Moore 2005). Insight gained from the three ethnographic studies will be explored further from a cross-cultural perspective through a comprehensive review of relevant literature on similar forms of migration in other countries. This will strengthen the comparative dimension of the project considerably and allow for more general theoretical conclusions concerning the relationship between transnational education and social mobility.

Each ethnographic study, to be conducted in Denmark, is grounded in the everyday life experiences of the young migrants with a particular focus on their relationship to the host institutions, as well as their local and transnational ethnic networks. Moreover, relatives of the migrants studied in Denmark will be interviewed during short field trips to their country of origin. This will illuminate transnational links between migrants and their home communities as well as the social and economic situation of families staying behind. The three ethnographic sub-projects will also investigate the actors and agencies who, often through the Internet, serve as mediators recruiting young people in their country of origin for specific Danish host institutions. Finally, they will analyse discursive constructions of the three migrant groups in the Danish media and public debate. The project uses a range of ethnographic methods:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Life histories
- Participant observation
- Interviews with stakeholders representing state and local authorities, and host institutions
- Analysis of written, especially legal, documentation and web resources, including web pages of recruiting agencies

The length of fieldwork in the three sub-projects varies depending on prior research experience, the extent of already established networks and the amount of other obligations (teaching and administration) at the universities: The PhD project on Filipina au pairs involves six months in Denmark and two in the Philippines; the post-doc project on Ukrainian trainees involves five months in Denmark and one month in the Ukraine; and the senior research project on Nepalese students involves five months in Denmark and one month in Nepal. All three migrant groups speak English. Furthermore, two researchers communicate in local languages (Nepali and Ukrainian). An interpreter is required for fieldwork in the Philippines, while the other field projects in sending countries will need limited field assistance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE NEW FIELD OF EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION BY KAREN FOG OLWIG

While educational migration is a fairly new phenomenon in Denmark, it is well known elsewhere, such as in Britain and France, which have a long tradition of providing education for youths from the (former) colonies, and the United States and Russia, which are centres of higher education for many international students. In recent years, however, educational migration has become widespread in much of the global north.

The literature on educational migration is fragmented and few studies seek to capture the complex relationship between education, mobility and citizenship that this form of migration entails. They include Ong's (1999) analysis of well-to-do Chinese families who establish a foothold in the United States by sending their children to California on educational exchange programmes; Olwig's (2007) ethnography of educational migration in West Indian middle class families; Amit's study of students' experiences of study abroad programmes (forthcoming), and Valentin's study of education strategies among Nepalese youth in North India (forthcoming). This sub-project will review and synthesize the scattered literature with a view to defining the contours of the new field of educational migration and establishing a framework of comparative analysis.

ETHNOGRAPHIC SUB-PROJECTS

The three specific migrant groups are chosen partly because they are all officially classified as migrants entering Denmark with an educational purpose, partly because they numerically constitute relatively large groups of recent migrants from outside the EU.

FORMAL EDUCATION: NEPALESE STUDENTS IN DANISH COLLEGES BY KAREN VALENTIN

In its efforts to make Denmark competitive in the global economy by securing a highly qualified workforce, the Danish government is attempting to attract more talented, international students (UVM 2008). Unintentionally, this branding of Denmark as an 'education country' has resulted in an increasing number of students from poor developing countries being admitted to Danish colleges and universities. In 2008, 710 Nepalese students received a student visa, making them the third largest group from countries outside the EU (Udlændingetjeneste 2009). Most enter two-year vocational programmes in, for example, computer science, multimedia and management. The Nepalese students are typically recruited through the Danish educational institutions' local agents in Nepal and have paid up to 150,000 DKK for their education, excluding travel, room and board. According to the Ministry of Education, many study irregularly and discontinue their studies, resulting in the suspending of their residential permit (UVM 2008). As students they are allowed to work 15 hours per week and full time during the summer. Restaurants and cafes, in particular, hire many young Nepalese to work in the kitchen, presumably both legally and illegally.

Fieldwork will be concentrated within and around Copenhagen, where the majority of Nepalese students live and study. Initial contacts to the Nepalese community have already been established and will be expanded partly through informal social networks, partly through Nepalese student, cultural and political organizations.

CULTURAL LEARNING: FILIPINA AU PAIRS IN DANISH HOMES BY KARINA MÄRCHER DALGAS, SUPERVISOR KAREN FOG OLWIG

Since the mid 1990s, the au pair programme, dating back to 1969, has attracted an increasing number of foreign women to Denmark. While au pairs previously came mostly from Western countries, Filipina women represent the majority of foreign au pairs today, 2,163 being granted a residence permit in 2008 (Udlændingetjeneste 2009). The au pair programme officially seeks to provide young people with an opportunity to improve their language skills and expand their cultural horizons. The au pairs must live with the sponsoring host family, they are only allowed to do light domestic work, and they receive no wages but a minimum of DKK 3,000 in pocket money. They do not obtain work permits, but temporary residence permits, valid for up to 18 months. Au pairs are supposed to be treated as members of the host families,

not as labour migrants. They are therefore not protected by the laws regulating wage labour, but are expected to be safeguarded by the social conventions of family life.

According to one report, most Filipina au pairs desire salaried employment so that they can send remittances to their families in the Philippines (Stenum 2008). Since they receive minimal pocket money, it is difficult for them to send savings to the Philippines, apparently leading many to seek extra-legal housework against payment. This work is promoted through the au pairs' network, often approved and facilitated by the host families, who make contact with other families needing domestic help.

Fieldwork among the au pairs will be initiated in public spaces where they meet, such as the St. Annae Church in Copenhagen, which is attended by about two hundred Filipina au pairs. The fieldwork will focus on au pairs and host families in Northern Sealand, where most of the au pair families live.

APPRENTICESHIPS: UKRAINIAN TRAINEES IN DANISH AGRICULTURE BY VERA SKVIRSKAJA

The agricultural trainee programme allows young foreigners to work for minimal wages on Danish farms for a period of a maximum of 18 months, provided their stay has an educational purpose. In 2008 2,374 Ukrainians were granted a residential permit and they constitute the largest group of foreign agricultural trainees (Udlændingetjeneste 2009). The marked influx of Ukrainians has been facilitated through, among others, a network of private actors who establish contacts between young Ukrainians and Danish farmers. Traditionally, Danish agriculture has relied on apprenticeships to transmit knowledge and practical experiences between established and aspiring farmers. Despite the increasing professionalization of agriculture, practical experience remains an essential element of agricultural training and the profession still relies on a lifestyle where trainees live on the workplace. A traineeship in Denmark enables the young Ukrainians to combine practical experience and a stay abroad with economic benefits. The intention behind the programme is to qualify young foreigners, and many apprentices come to Denmark through exchange programmes run by agricultural universities and technical colleges in Ukraine. Some have prior experience as agricultural trainees in other EU and non-EU countries (e.g. the UK and Switzerland). While some take short courses at Danish agricultural colleges (e.g. Dalum Landbrugsskole in Odense, or Kalø Økologiske Landbrugsskole in Rønne), Danish trade unions have argued that the agricultural trainee programme neglects both the educational requirements and ordinary rules concerning working hours and safety.

The research will initially focus on several selected agricultural colleges situated in Jutland and Fyn, which, together with Internet resources, provide information on those farms that have a history of training Ukrainian youth. 'Snowballing' techniques will be used to enrol Ukrainian agricultural apprentices, both at the farms and at various diasporic sites in Denmark (e.g. the Russian Orthodox church), into the study.

THE COMPARATIVE DIMENSIONS

The ethnographic studies raise important questions of similarities and differences across specific contexts that will be analysed through cross-cultural comparison in order to produce new knowledge of contemporary forms of educational migration:

- **Education:** Nepalese students enrol in formal educational institutions; Filipina au pairs take part in cultural exchange; Ukrainian agricultural students are trainees. What kinds of qualifications and competencies do they acquire formally and informally during their stay in Denmark? Does this international experience give them qualifications that may improve their social and economic opportunities in their home countries? And how does what the migrants experience and achieve match their own and their families' expectations of the programmes?
- **Mobility through local and transnational networks:** The youths gain entry through recruiting agencies employed by public educational institutions (the Nepalese), private actors making contact with agricultural trainees (the Ukrainians) and informal relations made through social networks or the Internet (the Philippines). What are the implications of the particular form of recruitment for migrants' stays in Denmark? How do families and friends support the young people financially, practically and morally, before leaving and during their stay, and how is such support expected to be repaid? Do educational migration experiences gained in Denmark instigate aspirations for migration elsewhere?
- **Citizenship:** The three groups of migrants are legally in Denmark, having obtained temporary residence permits with reference to their enrolment in educational programmes. However, they are not expected to become integrated into Danish society as future citizens in a legal sense. What are the social communities to which they claim membership during their stay in Denmark and how does membership in such communities affect their opportunities for social mobility? Do they develop a form of more cosmopolitan subjectivity that allows them to claim or imagine wider forms of societal membership or global citizenship?

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