Globalization, Gender, Migration and Trafficking in Women

Introduction:
This module focuses on some of the consequences of the gendered processes of globalization; in particular, it examines gendered patterns of migration and trafficking across borders. While migration and trafficking are not new phenomena, their scope has grown and intensified with increased globalization. Structural adjustment programs and accelerated movement of trade, goods, services, capital and communication across borders has also increased the movement of people, especially poor women. Women have constituted the majority of migrants and those trafficked. In this context, in the last 15 years, Ukraine has been the “sending” country and the United States the “receiving” country.

Target Audience:
Upper level undergraduates and graduate students; practitioners in women’s/progressive organizations.

Academic Goals:
1. To introduce students/practitioners to the consequences of globalization as a gendered process.
2. To introduce students/practitioners to the notion that women and men participate differently in global migration streams.
3. To introduce students/practitioners to the global sex trade and how Ukraine and the U.S. are implicated in it.
4. To present information about organizations working to address problems of gendered migration and human trafficking.

Learning Objectives:
1. Students/practitioners will be able to articulate how globalization produces gendered forms of migration and human trafficking.
2. Students/practitioners will understand how migration involves women and men differently.
3. Students/practitioners will understand the reasons for increased trafficking in women for sexual and other reasons.
4. Students/practitioners will be able to explain why and how Ukraine is a sending country and the U.S. a receiving country when it comes to migration and trafficking.
5. Students/practitioners will be able to offer examples of attempts to address and stem illegal forms of movement of people across borders in the U.S. and Ukraine and to compare them.

Key Concepts and Questions:
**Globalization** involves processes through which countries and regions are integrated into a world capitalist market. “Globalization can be understood as a complex process of economic, political, and cultural change on a world scale that entails integration, marginalization, exploitation and resistance.” (V. Moghadam. 2006. “Feminism and the Global Economy.” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 34(1&2), 71)

**Gendered processes** are processes that favor or are biased toward one of two sexes, usually in favor of men.

**Human rights** are rights recognized as inalienable, integral, individual, and universal for all people with the United Nations’ passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the creation of a UN Commission on Human Rights. The international movement for women’s human rights developed around organizing the four UN Conferences on Women and crystallized during the second World Conference on Human Rights (1993). Under the slogan of “women’s rights are human rights” women from around the world pressed to make gender-based violations such as battery, rape, female genital mutilation, female infanticide, trafficking and forced prostitution recognized and visible in the international community.

**Migration** is the movement of populations, both voluntary and forced, from one’s place of origin to another within a country or across national borders.

**Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** are organizations undertaking development, advocacy or social service projects outside the state sector; also known as voluntary agencies or private and voluntary organizations (PVOs), comparable to U.S. nonprofit organizations.

**Trafficking in persons** is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction or fraud for the purpose of exploitation. The minimum requirements of exploitation are prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs. (U.S. State Department. 2005. Trafficking in Persons Report, 11. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office).

**Questions for the module:**
1. How does gender affect migration?
2. What are the reasons for increased migration of women from the poorer, developing and post-Socialist nations to those of the West?
3. Why has migration of women from poor countries to do “women’s work” in affluent countries received little media attention?
4. What types of migrants are there among women and how do their experiences differ from those of men?
5. What are the main reasons for human trafficking and why are most of those trafficked (80%) women?
6. What are local and transnational organizations doing to prevent and stem forced migration and trafficking?
Learning Activities:

Session 1. Increased Female Migration as a Consequence of Globalization.
Due to globalization, women are moving across borders in ever increasing numbers. Recent research on migration has emphasized the increased presence of women as migrants, and identified the difference that gender makes to the migration experience. Rapidly evolving globalization of the world economy has made it relatively easy to move people across international borders. There is a high demand especially for cheap unskilled labor as industries and multinational corporations try to cut costs. Increasing numbers of women are migrating from poor countries to rich ones where they serve as nannies, maids and sex workers—millions of women from the East and South migrate to do “women’s work” of the North, work that affluent women are no longer able or willing to perform.
Immigrant receiving countries benefit from immigrant women’s work in low-paying industries, such as garment, electronic assembly, and services, as well as from the labor of domestic workers and sex workers. Immigrant sending countries benefit from migrant women’s work through licensing fees and through the wages workers send home which finance the economy and relieve unemployment. Despite their many contributions, migrant women are often exploited, sexually abused, deprived of their basic human rights, and treated as scapegoats by racist backlash movements.

Readings:


Activities:
First half of session: Discussion with students about their experiences with migrants to or emigrants from their countries.

Second half of session: Lecture on gender and migration and discussion of readings.

Session 2. Varied experiences of migrating women.
Recent feminist research on migration has emphasized the agency of women who migrate and argued for expanding the ways in which we think about female migration. Many migrate to work in domestic and sex work. However, others do so for a variety of other reasons. For example, many skilled women and men migrate from Asian countries to the West and the experiences of skilled women are different from those of either skilled men or lesser skilled women. In post-Socialist countries, including Ukraine, young highly educated women often migrate to the West because of high levels of unemployment and preferential hiring of men.

**Readings:**

**Activities:**
First half of session: Lecture and discussion of readings.

Second half of session: Students in small groups discuss differences among women migrants, and between female and male migrants, different ways that women migrants may be subjected to human rights violations, and what organizational and government responses might be appropriate to remedy migrants’ rights violations. After about twenty minutes each group reports to the entire class.

**Sessions 3. Trafficking in Women.**
Along with weapons and narcotics trade, sex trafficking has grown to be one of the largest international industries in the underground global economy. Although women’s and girls’ bodies have been sold for centuries, globalization, which has made easier the movement of goods and people across borders, has increased sex trafficking in women and girls. Gender inequality contributes to the vulnerability of women as traffickers use the low status of females, and stereotypes of women as property, commodities and sexual objects, to their advantage.

**Readings:**

Activities:
First half of session: Lecture on gendered human trafficking and class discussion about women’s agency in relation to trafficking.

Second half of session: Students in small groups are asked to calculate benefits as well as costs from working in the global sex industry.
Questions to guide discussion:
-How are the wages, hours, benefits and job security?
-What about independence and self-respect?
-Is the forced/voluntary dichotomy in relation to global sex work meaningful?

Session 4. Local and Global Responses to Problems of Migration and Trafficking.
Migrant women, survivors of the sex trade, and women’s human rights groups and NGOs are fighting for the human rights of women in sending and receiving countries. Transnational organizations are also seeking ways to redress these problems. Organizations in both Ukraine and the U.S. are involved at the local and global levels.

Readings:

Activities:
Before this session, students are asked to find two anti-trafficking organizations, one in Ukraine, and one in the U.S., on the Internet and to write a report comparing how these organizations are addressing the issue. In the first part of the session, students provide short summaries of their reports.
In the second part of the session, students and instructor compare the approaches of various local and transnational organizations to dealing with issues of women’s migration and trafficking.

**Examples of organizations:**

**La Strada** is a transnational NGO with chapters in Ukraine, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, the Netherlands and several other countries. Aims to prevent trafficking in women, but also provides assistance to victims of trafficking.

[www.lastrada.org.uk](http://www.lastrada.org.uk)

**Women for Women Centers** in Ukrainian cities of Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, and Lviv, the Centers are part of the Trafficking Prevention Program of Winrock International and the NIS-US Women’s Consortium with the financial support of U.S. AID.

**Polaris Project** is a US-based NGO with an office in Japan, committed to combating human trafficking and modern day slavery.

[www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)

**International Organization for Migration** is an intergovernmental organization based in Geneva, Switzerland with offices located around the world in 109 member countries. It promotes humane movement of people on the globe. Its focus on migration issues includes human trafficking.


**Written assignment:**

At the end of the module students will be asked to write an essay on any one of the following topics/questions:

1. Why are women more vulnerable than men to increased migration and trafficking?
2. How and why has globalization contributed to increased migration of and trafficking in women?
3. What are organizations doing to support migrant women and men workers and women who have been trafficked in the global sex trade?

**Student Evaluation of Entire Module:**

A set of questions for students to evaluate the module on whether the material was clearly presented and was useful, what should be improved, and what other material on the topic could be introduced. The structure and material of the module can be changed based on student feedback.