

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL END OF AWARD REPORT



For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the **grant reference** as the email subject, to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.

Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. ESRC reserves the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

Grant Reference	RES-167-25-0327		
Grant Title	Linking Migration, Reproduction and Wellbeing: Exploring the Reproductive Strategies of Low-Income Rural-Urban Migrants in Vietnam		
Grant Start Date	01 Jan 2008	Total Amount	£90, 678.71
Grant End Date	30 June 2010	Expended:	
Grant holding Institution	University of East Anglia		
Grant Holder	Dr Catherine Locke		
Grant Holder's Contact Details	Address	Email	
	School of International Development, UEA, Norwich, NR4 7TJ, UK.	c.locke@uea.ac.uk	
		Telephone	
		01603 593565	
Co-Investigators (as per project application):		Institution	

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by ESRC to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. *[Max 250 words]*

The impact of migration on marriage, childbearing and child-rearing profoundly shapes the gendered outcomes around new economic opportunities. This study focuses on the reproductive strategies of low-income rural-urban migrants in Vietnam. Using life histories from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh, the project built up a picture of the range of family strategies that poor men and women migrants used during their peak child-bearing and early child-rearing years. Some migrants tried to make a life for their family in the city; some migrated as a couple or one parent stayed behind with children; and for others nobody in their immediate family lived together. The costs of these family strategies for migrants were highly gendered in terms of migrant experiences and their fulfilment of social identity as mothers/wives or husbands/fathers. Those struggling to raise children in the city faced many economic and administrative barriers. Those leaving children behind traded off providing for their children with caring for their children. Those for whom nobody in the family lived together felt a deep sense of failure. Universally, migrants were concerned about the impact of parental separation on young children's moral and social development, particularly where migration was long distance and precluded 'remote parenting'. Although their anxieties privileged lack of mothering as a concern, they also consistently raised important worries about lack of fathering. Nevertheless, the time when children are 'still young' and parents are 'not yet old' represents a unique opportunity for migrants to try to improve their families' lives.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to the ESRC. *[Max 200 words]*

This study aimed to develop gendered understandings of the linkages between reproduction, migration and wellbeing for poor men and women in their peak child-bearing years.

Specifically its objectives were to:

- Explore the reproductive aspirations of migrant men and women
- Develop understanding of how migrants manage their reproductive lives
- Investigate how these strategies are shaped by varying institutional conditions
- Explore the implications for wellbeing over time of self, spouse and children.

The research aimed to produce both specific and detailed empirical findings about rural-urban migration in Vietnam as well as robust theoretical insights of more general validity in South East Asia and possibly beyond. These insights aimed to integrate poor people's aspirations, strategies and experiences relating to reproduction within gendered understandings of their livelihoods and wellbeing over time and between generations. The project intended to develop theoretical insights around masculinities and the changing linkages between reproduction, migration and wellbeing of importance to gender and migration studies more broadly. Finally, the project sought to contribute to an enhanced evidence base for policy making concerned with making migration work for the poor.

b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with the ESRC. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder's institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. *[Max 200 words]*

- A no-cost extension was granted by the ESRC (original end date 31 December 2010 was extended to 30 June 2011)

c) Methodology

Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. *[Max. 500 words]*

Qualitative life histories were collected from low-income rural-urban migrants in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh in 2008. These cities represent contrasting institutional settings in which to explore the reproductive strategies of low-income migrants. 77 men and women with at least one child under 8 years of age were purposively selected from specific wards in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh that had a high incidence of rural migrants. The purposive selection targeted: migrants leaving their spouse behind; migrants living with their spouse; migrants whose spouse was migrating elsewhere; and migrants who were single, separated, divorced or widowed. The migrants were identified by local women's officers, guest house owners, and other migrants.

The fieldwork was given ethical clearance by the University of East Anglia and the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences. Participation was voluntary and conditional on informed consent from the interviewee and full confidentiality on the part of the interviewer. Interviewees had the right to full anonymity and to withdraw at any time.

The life histories involved a two-part interview conducted by one of two Vietnamese senior researchers: firstly, a semi-structured interview to collect 'factual' information about the migrants work, residence and reproductive history; and secondly, an in-depth qualitative interview to explore the migrants' aspirations, motivations and perspectives on their life history. The first interview was recorded by hand using an interview schedule; the second was recorded, transcribed and then translated in to English. The primary dataset was supported by review of the secondary literature and a small number of key informant interviews with Vietnamese researchers, local authorities and local service providers, and guest house owners.

Analysis involved Vietnamese senior researchers and the principal investigator in reviewing each migrant case in detail and in relation to the overall dataset. For each migrant, a short summary was prepared to facilitate the handling of the data. A spreadsheet was created for the full dataset that reported on 69 variables to facilitate comparison across the dataset. Nvivo8 was used in the analysis and all interpretations were checked by the senior researchers who were able to refer back to original transcripts in Vietnamese whilst the principal investigator was only able to work with the English translations.

Outputs include two briefs – one summarising the overall findings and the other the policy implications – and three research reports – as well as conference papers and forthcoming book chapters and journal articles. All outputs are co-authored and listed on the project webpage at www.uea.ac.uk/dev/Locke/LinkingMRW/Outputs. Where copyright allows the full text is available for download. In addition the full dataset and supporting documentation are being

published by the Economic and Social Data Service on their self-archive facility the UKDA (UK Data Archive).

d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. Any future research plans should also be identified. *[Max 500 words]*

Brief 1 (2010) summarises research findings and Brief 2 (2010) summarises their implications for policy. Research Report 1 (2008) details the institutional context in which migrant families craft strategies for reproduction, Research Report 2 (2010) provides an overview of the range of family strategies, and Research Report 3 (forthcoming 2010) further investigates relations with the left-behind children/spouses, migrant mothering, and masculinities.

Family strategies were orientated to making a better life for the family, especially the children. Although there were no rigid pathways and family strategies were subject to renegotiation, they included:

- Visiting marriages or Remote parenting strategies which trade-off the togetherness of husband/wife with keeping at least one parent and children 'living together'.
- Strategies to make a life in the city which involves considerable costs and difficulties in order to keep father, mother and children living together.
- Strategies in which nobody in the family lives together and for whom the chronic family separation of both spouses and parents/children is regarded by migrants as a 'failure'.

Migration was about and in tension with family roles. Whilst social norms were more supportive of men's separation from their family, women were under considerable pressure to simultaneously provide for their children and to care for their children. In their efforts to achieve this, women are increasingly migrating before, between and after the births of their children.

Migrants were seriously concerned about parent-child separation - emphasising parent-child relations and children's social development - but raising children in the city was extremely difficult. Many absent mothers actively sustained a parenting role over short distances, however, remote parenting relationships could not be credibly sustained over long distances. All migrants anticipated that parenting dilemmas would become more acute as children got older and had more complex needs for parental guidance.

Discriminatory attitudes and practices, against rural migrants and/or the urban informal sector, continue to restrict migrant work and social entitlements in the city. The implementation of reforms to the household registration system is often arbitrary and new economic barriers and inequalities are increasingly displacing administrative hurdles for migrants. Despite these difficulties, migrants perceive that the period when children are 'still young' and parents are 'not yet old' represents an opportunity for migration to try to improve their families' lives.

However, the difficulties they face make it difficult for them to realise these aspirations: migrants may find themselves locked into going away for low-income work with little real improvement in their standard of living; they may pay a heavy price for the erosion of quality of

family relationships, imperilling children's development and filial relations; or, they may find themselves joining the lowest ranks of the urban poor.

The research confirms the importance of the reproductive dynamics of the peak child-bearing years for understanding the possibilities of inter-generational social mobility through labour migration. It points to the need to attend to other key transitional periods of inter-generational relations around migration, most particularly in Vietnam the period when migrant's children are transitioning through teenage years to young adulthood.

e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative's objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. *[Max. 200 words]*

n/a

3. EARLY AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

a) Summary of Impacts to date

Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. *[Max. 400 words]*

Findings and their implications were discussed at a bi-lingual seminar hosted by the Institute of Gender and Family Studies (IFGS) in Hanoi. Invitees included Vietnamese researchers and policy-makers from both NGOs, including UNICEF Vietnam, The International Organisation of Migration (IOM), and Oxfam GB, as well as officers from the Government of Vietnam (GoV).

Follow up contact initiated by the UNICEF representative led to further sharing of detailed findings around maternal and child wellbeing and of research instruments and his feedback was that our findings had many implications for UNICEF's ongoing work to support GoV. We also had individual correspondences over the research findings with UNFPA, the World Bank and the UNDP team studying urban poverty in Vietnam during 2010.

Findings were also discussed at three conferences and one seminar:

- the American Association of Geographer's (AAG) 2009 panel on Gender Transitions in South East Asia,
- a research seminar at the Migration and Globalisations DRC at Sussex University in 2009.
- the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population's (IUSSP) 2009 conference,
- the 2009 Vietnam Update Conference (partially funded by AusAid)
- and the Asia Research Institute's 2010 conference on Migration and Masculinity.

Research reports (two with a third forthcoming) and briefs (two in English, one in Vietnamese with the second forthcoming in Vietnamese) are lodged with *Society Today* and available at <https://cms.uea.ac.uk/dev/faculty/Locke/Research/MRWOutputs>. Outputs have been submitted to ELDIS and widely circulated to researchers and policy-makers in Vietnam.

Regarding publications, one chapter is forthcoming in the refereed *Vietnam Update Series*, which is well read by researchers and policy makers in Vietnam, and another will appear in a volume edited by Unnithan-Kumar (Sussex) and Khanna (Oregon) on *Reproduction, Health and Migration* to be published by Berghahn.

Nguyen Thi Ngan Hoa has translated our conference presentation from the Vietnam Update into Vietnamese for a book that is forthcoming with the Vietnamese publisher, Social Sciences, and she has presented and discussed this chapter with her colleagues at the Southern Institute of Sustainable Development (SISD) in Ho Chi Minh.

Nguyen Thi Thanh Tam cited our findings in her report on the situation of migrants commissioned by the Director of the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences for him to present to the Assembly of the GoV in 2010. She has also written a summary of findings that appears in IFGS's English-language journal *Family and Gender Studies* No 2/ 2010.

b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts

Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. [Max. 200 words]

The dataset is already archived with the UK data archiving service for use by other researchers. Selected students at UEA will use part of the data for research dissertations and lecturers at the SISD, Ho Chi Minh, are intending to use some interviews for their teaching on research methods.

I have been invited by Brenda Yeoh to be an academic visitor at ARI in 2011 to progress conceptual work arising from this project and to develop a joint research proposal. I have also been invited by Brickell (LSE) and Yeoh (ARI) to present our findings in an ARI workshop in July 2011 entitled 'Householding in Transition: Emerging Dynamics in 'Developing' East and Southeast Asia'.

We have an article based on this research under review with the *Journal of Development Studies* and envisage submitting a second manuscript to a relevant journal in 2011.

A Vietnam translation version of the ARI conference presentation on masculinity will appear in IFGS's Vietnamese version of their journal *Family and Gender Studies* No 2 / 2011 (Feb, 2011). Nguyen Thi Ngan Hoa will make a presentation of the Ho Chi Minh findings in a workshop by SISD and one International Fund in December 2010.

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.

4. DECLARATIONS

Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed.

Please note hard copies are NOT required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

A: To be completed by Grant Holder

Please read the following statements. Tick ONE statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section.

i) The Project

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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ii) Submissions to *ESRC Society Today*

Output and impact information has been submitted to <i>ESRC Society Today</i> . Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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OR

This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to <i>ESRC Society Today</i> as soon as they become available.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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OR

This grant is not listed on <i>ESRC Society Today</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>
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iii) Submission of Datasets

Datasets arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the Economic and Social Data Service.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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OR

Datasets that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the Economic and Social Data Service has been notified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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OR

No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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