

**Abstract**

**Layers of Rural-urban Migration of Eastern Indonesian Women**

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Globalisation and 'modernity' in contemporary Indonesia has entailed an increase in and a proliferation of mobility. The patterns of this population movement and the ways in which they have been experienced are highly gendered, and have led to new meanings of place and identity among women and novel understandings of femininity. These recent gendered experiences, relationships and subjectivities, constituted through mobility have become key aspects of a different kind of local 'modernity', entering uncertain and multi dimensional relations. This paper investigates the relationships between migration and the constitution of gender relations and subjectivities of rural-urban migration of women in Indonesia.

Women's migration to urban areas is mediated and negotiated through a particular idea of femininity. Urban areas has been classically conceptualised as playing crucial functions in development along the lines of the duality between a traditional sector and a modern sector. The expansion of modern sector particularly in urban centres in Java for rural migrant women in recent decades represents a political economic space. Women's autonomous migration nevertheless is negotiated through a particular idea of femininity. My research of Eastern Indonesian women's migration to urban centres to be teachers and nurses emphasises the migrants' interpretation of place and understanding of self. It pays attention to place-based identities and relationships at a range of spatial scales that go beyond the economic reasons of migration.

Employing an ethnographic approach, the research explores meanings of space and changes of relationships and migrant subjects from their move to urban centres. Teachers and nurses from the outer islands working in urban centres in Java elaborate their stories of migration in this qualitative study. My paper suggests that rural women use the opportunity to migrate with a wide range of reasons. The benefits of their migration flow from the individual woman shown in their mobile subjectivity to the family and also to local communities of origin and destination. On a larger scale, layers of migration of rural women to urban centres in Indonesia represent a political economic space of their contribution in development as teachers and nurses.