

Gender, migration and human security: HIV vulnerability among rural to urban migrants in the People's Republic of China

Anna Hayes (anna.hayes@usq.edu.au)

University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland, 4350, Australia.

Abstract

The 'human security' paradigm emerged in the early 1990s as a means of refocusing the security referent away from the state to the individual. It is a theory that is grounded in human rights and the provision of basic needs for all of humanity, regardless of their locale, identity or citizenship status. As a theory, it was not intended to replace notions of traditional security, but was instead intended to be a complementary theory on security as it has been argued that human insecurity actually threatens state security. While the concept itself remains somewhat contested in the political sciences, human security nonetheless provides a useful analysis of non-state security issues and dilemmas, particularly those that concern the human condition. In recent years there has been increasing recognition that the human security paradigm has overlooked the vulnerabilities often faced by women, many of which are gender-based and thereby not shared by men. To counter this, there have been attempts to 'engender' human security discourse in academic literature. This paper considers the vulnerabilities faced by female rural to urban migrants in the People's Republic of China and intersects the mainstream discourse on human security in an attempt to contribute further to the engendering of human security discourse.

Keywords

Human security, gender, rural to urban migration

DEFINING HUMAN SECURITY

Human security remains a somewhat contested term in the political sciences. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the definition of human security is aligned closely with that of the United Nations which states that human security is both 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want', incorporating components such as economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security (UNDP 1995:229). The definition asserts that human security is centred on four key characteristics, namely that it is a universal concern; its components are interdependent, it is best achieved through prevention rather than intervention, and it is people-centred (UNDP 1995:232-34).

It should be noted that because the UNDP definition of human security views it to be what Burke describes as 'a comprehensive and integrated matrix of needs and rights' (2001:216), this definition challenges restricted notions of human security that limit the discussion of human security to 'subjects and territories recognised by sovereign states, or that retain a hierarchy of state interests over human interests in times of perceived crisis' (2001:216). For the author, restricted approaches to human security are problematic as they fail to recognise the important role that gender plays in determining threats to both men and women on a daily basis. Without gendered analyses, human security can quickly be centred on the male experience of security, sidelining women and the unique gender-based vulnerabilities that affect their security such as economic, educational and employment disparities, gender discrimination, substandard healthcare, restricted access to healthcare facilities, reproductive rights, the traffic of women, and male violence directed at women.

In addition, the 'broader notion' of human security is more encompassing as it does not recognise a 'hierarchy of security' but instead recognises that both state security and human security are interdependent, and that all the components of security identified by the United Nations are of equal importance because a deficiency in one could lead to a deficiency in another.¹ Hence, while the author recognises that different interpretations of human security exist,² for the purposes of this

¹ However, scholars such as Paris believe that such an assertion is in fact a 'truism'. In his article, *Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?*, Paris stated that by treating all components of security as equal, the 'broader notion' human security theorists are attempting to make human security mean too much and are therefore rendering it unusable as an analytical tool for research (Paris 2001).

² Some interpretations of human security do not support the development-oriented or human safety based approaches to human security put forth by the UNDP. Instead, these interpretations generally restrict their definition to military or intentional threats (such as misuse of authority by governments) to the security of humans. For more

study the UNDP definition of human security is favoured in the context of the more gendered approach mentioned above.

It should also be noted that human security not only increases human development and human rights, but it also increases state security by protecting people from a range of threats that might otherwise cause social upheaval such as poverty and conflict, and empowering them to make informed decisions and to 'act on their own behalf' (Commission on Human Security 2003:3-5). In his summary of human security, the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that:

Human security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential (Cited in Commission on Human Security 2003:4).

This quote is important because it demonstrated Annan's belief that human security is not constrained to the restricted notions of human security espoused by some scholars. In addition, Annan later reinforces that the components of wider interpretations of human security 'are the interrelated building blocks of human, and therefore national, security' (Commission on Human Security 2003:4). Clearly, Annan's definition of human security incorporates the wider 'freedom from fear', 'freedom from want' interpretation of human security.

In its report, *Human Security Now*, the Commission on Human Security also supported a wider notion of human security and identified state security as both dependent on and mutually reinforced by human security. Put simply, in an unstable state it is impossible to attain state security, and human security is dependent on sturdy, stable institutions. It also

discussion on restricted notions of human security see Wesley, M 1999, 'Human Security in Development and Crisis: How to Capture Human Security in Regional Institutional Arrangements' in *The Asia-Australia Papers*, 2(September): 24-34; Newman, Edward & Richmond, Oliver (eds) 2001, *The United Nations and Human Security*, Palgrave, New York; Buzan, Barry 2000, 'Human security: What it means and what it entails', paper presented at 14th Asia-Pacific Roundtable, Kuala Lumpur, 3-7 June:1-15; Kerr, Pauline 2003, 'The evolving dialectic between state-centric and human-centric security', *Working Paper* (Australian National University), 2:1-34 and Paris, Roland 2001, 'Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?' in *International Security*, 26(2):87-102.

concluded that 'state security is focused, [whereas] human security is broad' (Commission on Human Security 2003:6). Therefore, while it would appear that the wider notions of human security are generally supported in the literature and thereby credible, we also need to consider how does human security view gendered difference.

LOCATING WOMEN IN HUMAN SECURITY DEFINITIONS

It could be easily argued that the current human security framework is flawed in that while gender issues are given some attention, the defining documents on human security such as the UNDP article *Redefining Security: the Human Dimension* (1995) and the *Human Security Now* report by the Commission on Human Security (2003) are not wholly inclusive of a gendered analysis. The absence of a genuine effort to consider how men and women's security is affected is important, as is ensuring that human security discourse and policy documents include gender as a mainstream rather than a secondary consideration. This change would result in both a more inclusive approach to human security and health crises, and one which considered the differences in insecurity faced by men and women.

While official documents have been slow in fully integrating gender into their analysis of human security, several scholars have discussed the importance of including a gendered analysis in mainstream human security discourse. Hudson (2005) is one such scholar, and she used HIV/AIDS vulnerability to provide an argument for the inclusion of gender in human security discourse. Like the argument contained in this paper, Hudson stated that the unequal status of women and girls in all societies reinforces the need to link HIV/AIDS and a gender inclusive analysis of human security because 'their susceptibility to the disease is linked to their socio-cultural, biological, economic and political subordination within broader society' (2005:162). Furthermore, Hudson warned that human rights could be undercut in favour of 'particular power interests' if there is not a genuine attempt to make human security discourse 'wholly inclusive' of all humans.

To overcome this, however, she argued that if scholars employed a feminist conceptualisation of security when discussing issues of human security, they would be able to strongly affect the previous complacency of former human security analysts who did not consider gender. Thus, for Hudson (2005:162), the failure to adequately include 'women's pervasive insecurity' has meant that the

broader notion of human security merely offers a 'partial understanding of human security', and that until issues of human security are given feminist analysis, such complacency will continue.

Similarly, McKay (2004) and Boyd (2005) also examined the need for transparency and analysis of the types of threats women face to their security during times of conflict. McKay proposed that it is important that the experiences of women become a part of mainstream discussions of human security and that women must also be integrated into the peace-building process, as they are often overlooked during this important period. Therefore, while all of these authors examined human security from the narrower 'freedom from fear' interpretative framework, their discussions identified many strong arguments for the engendering of human security discourse.

Engendering Human Security (2006) is an important text that has paved the way for gendered discourse in human security by examining security from feminist perspectives. This text challenged the previous neglect of women in mainstream human security discourse, and examined a range of international examples and perspectives to provide focused analysis of how women experience different threats to their security than men. The editors of the text argued that for many years, discussions of women and human security have largely been 'fragmented' and that the evolving nature of human security discourse means there is a real opportunity for women to be included in mainstream discussions of security. They also proposed that an engendered human security framework would not only improve the lives of women but it would also allow for a 'more humane security vision' (Truong, Wieringa & Chhachhi 2006:xxvi).

Bunch (2004) also agreed with the above proposition by Truong, Wieringa and Chhachhi that an *engendered* human security framework has the potential to improve the lives of all humans, because human security provides a framework for examining security issues that recognises the interrelated nature of 'peace, security, equality, human rights, and development' and accentuates 'protection and empowerment' (2004:30). However, Bunch criticised the Human Security Commission Report (2003) for its failure to include a comprehensive gender analysis of human security into its mainstream discussion, and concluded that despite this, human security is a concept that 'women can build on' (2004:33). Fukuda-Parr came to similar conclusions in her discussion of the threats posed by globalisation to the human security

of women. While Fukuda-Parr welcomed the focus on threats to human security contained in the Human Security Commission Report (2003), she too felt that it was important that in the future such important documents on human security must also include a gendered perspective (2004).

Kermani (2006) also discussed the benefits offered by human security for extending human rights, as well as meeting the challenges posed by globalisation such as environmental degradation, HIV/AIDS, terrorism and drug and human trafficking. After reviewing a number of criticisms of human security, Kermani concluded that human security offers the possibility of securing both human rights and human development, and that it offered a framework for responding to the non-traditional threats to security that have been heightened by globalisation.

Therefore, most of the above-mentioned scholars argued that a gendered human security framework offered the possibility of meeting the new range of security threats posed by globalisation, while at the same time ensuring both human rights and human development needs are integrated into mainstream security discourse. Furthermore, they also recognised the possibility offered by human security for the threats faced by women to become integrated into mainstream security discourse. This would give women greater visibility in such discourse, and offers the prospect of women achieving empowerment and agency in the security arena, as well as advancing women's rights globally. These considerations have significant application for migrant women, many of whom face heightened insecurity before, during and after the process of migration. This particular study examines rural to urban migration in the People's Republic of China, and the gendered dimensions of human insecurity associated with this migrant population.

HIV/AIDS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

In China, HIV/AIDS has spread to new groups of the population and it has been estimated that around 740,000 people were living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) at the end of 2009 (Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China 2010:5). There are serious localised HIV/AIDS epidemics in several provinces; Yunnan, Guangxi, Henan, Sichuan, Xinjiang and Guangdong. These provinces alone account for 70-80 percent of China's overall HIV/AIDS rates (Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China 2010:5). Xinjiang Autonomous Region and Yunnan Province

have both experienced HIV/AIDS epidemics resulting from high rates of needle sharing among injecting drug users and up until 2005 the sharing of intravenous drug equipment was the main mode of HIV transmission in the PRC. In addition, blood and plasma selling to centres practising unsafe blood-donation procedures has led to approximately 69,000 former blood and plasma donors and recipients contracting HIV mainly in Henan, Hubei, Anhui, Hebei and Shanxi (National Centre for AIDS/STD Prevention and Control 2006:1).³

Figures from the Ministry of Health (MOH) show sexual transmission is now the main mode of HIV transmission in the PRC, signalling that China has moved into the growth period of its HIV/AIDS epidemic. At the close of 2009, it was reported that 59 percent of the total number of HIV/AIDS cases in China were caused by sexual transmission, with heterosexual transmission accounting for 44.3 percent of those infections and homosexual transmission accounting for 14.7 percent (Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China 2010:22). Of the total reported number of HIV/AIDS cases, 30.8 percent of PLWHA in the PRC are women demonstrating the vulnerability of women to HIV transmission (SCAWCO and UNAIDS 2007:4).

Also concerning is that since 2005, sexual transmission has been the fastest growing mode of HIV transmission in China, thereby increasing the vulnerability of women to HIV transmission (Hong et al. 2009). If effective prevention and control measures are not introduced prior to or during the growth period, and the country's HIV/AIDS epidemic moves into the rampant prevalence period, large scale HIV transmission is inevitable. Although rates of HIV among the general population remain low in the PRC, with rates believed to be between 0.042 and 0.071 percent (Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China 2010:5), the spread of HIV through heterosexual intercourse among the general population is very much a warning that the numbers of PLWHA may soon explode across the country. If this occurs, it would make the epidemic very difficult to prevent and control. If the epidemic does reach the rampant prevalence phase, Chinese women's

³ The transmission of HIV through blood selling is relatively unique to China and has caused many of China's rural poor to become HIV positive. It has also been a very sensitive issue for the Chinese government due to the role of the Henan Provincial Health Department in both Henan's blood trade and the initial cover-up of the emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic there. For further reading see Hayes, A 2005, 'AIDS, Bloodheads and Cover-Ups: the "ABC" of Henan's AIDS Epidemic', *AQ: Journal of Contemporary Analysis*, 77(3):12-16.

vulnerability to HIV transmission will increase substantially.

Physiologically, women are 2-4 times more vulnerable to HIV transmission than their male counterparts when engaging in unprotected vaginal intercourse (UNAIDS 2002:57).⁴ In addition to physiological risks, women worldwide face a number of vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS, deriving from a variety of social, cultural, economic and political factors. A society's gender roles have considerable influence on three main areas of HIV/AIDS vulnerability; accurate sexual and reproductive health knowledge, sexual passivity and aggression, and promiscuity. In addition, 'enabling environments' such as social, cultural, political and economic environments, can all fuel HIV vulnerability among women and these vulnerabilities are largely the result of gender inequality (Feinstein and Prentice 2000).

Thus, in order for a state's HIV/AIDS response to be effective it must include gender-specific factors. Therefore, women must be recognised as a vulnerable group. However, when asked whether she believed Chinese women were particularly vulnerable to HIV transmission, Interviewee D (2003, pers. comm., 27 August),⁵ who was the Director of a government organisation that played a key role in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, responded that she believed 'women are less vulnerable [than men] to HIV/AIDS' and that women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS largely depended on whether a woman was a sex worker, an intravenous drug user (IDU), if she had donated her blood, had a blood transfusion or had used other blood

⁴ This is largely because the surface of vaginal mucosa is much bigger than penile mucosa. Furthermore, semen from an HIV infected male is usually higher in HIV concentrations than are the vaginal secretions from a HIV positive female. Also, if a woman has a reproductive tract infection (RTI) or a sexually transmitted infection (STI), her vaginal mucosa is changed and can become irritated, ulcerated or more prone to scratches, all of which result in the vagina becoming more vulnerable to HIV infection (UNAIDS 2002:57).

⁵ All interviewees spoken to during fieldwork were employed in government or non-government organisations that were responsible for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. Furthermore, none of the interviewees wanted to be identified, nor did they want the identity of the organisations in which they worked to be named. This was largely due to the continued sensitivity of HIV/AIDS in China, particularly when discussing the issue with international researchers or reporters. Thus, the interviews were conducted upon agreement that the interviewees' details would be kept confidential. It is for this reason that neither the interviewees, nor the organisations they worked for, have been identified in this paper.

products (Interviewee D 2003, pers. comm., 27 August). This point of view was supported by another interviewee, who was the National Programme Officer for an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) responsible for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. In response to the same question, this interviewee stated that 'gender does not play any role [in its HIV/AIDS policies], and it is not part of mainstream discussions' (Interviewee C 2003, pers. comm., 22 August). These responses are alarming because they ignore the patterns of HIV transmission to women in much of the rest of the world, whereby women in the general population have been found to be extremely vulnerable to HIV transmission in areas with high rates of HIV/AIDS.⁶ Rural to urban migrants, and their spouses, experience increased HIV vulnerability due to a range of factors linked to their transient lifestyles. This paper now considers the links between HIV vulnerability and labour migration, particularly among Chinese women.

THE LINKS BETWEEN HIV VULNERABILITY AND LABOUR MIGRATION

The rural to urban migrants in China, colloquially known as the 'floating' population, number in the vicinity of approximately 150 million people (Moise 2008:250). The gender ratio of rural to urban migrants is approximately 136:100 male to female migrants with the 15-34 year old age bracket accounting for some 70 percent of the total number of migrant workers (Xia 2004). While some rural to urban migrants live within close distance of their hometown, around a third of them are engaged in employment outside of their home province and they may only return home once or twice a year (Thompson 2003).

⁶ Surveys conducted in Africa reveal that 60-80 percent of HIV positive women, who contracted HIV from sexual intercourse, reported that their only sexual partner was their husband. Another study, which was conducted in India, another region where HIV/AIDS is growing at an alarming rate, revealed that 91 percent of HIV positive women surveyed, who had contracted HIV from sexual intercourse, also reported that their only sexual partner was their husband (Feinstein and Prentice 2000:22). These findings support the results of an earlier study conducted in 1989 which also found the majority of HIV positive women who had contracted HIV through heterosexual intercourse, had also contracted HIV/AIDS from their only sexual partner, their husband. The researchers in this instance concluded that often 'condom use was more effective in preventing HIV infection than was limiting the number of partners' (Berger and Vizgirda 1993:62).

While labour migration is not a risk factor per se for HIV infection, the physical separation of the migrant worker from their spouses and families, as well as community and social support networks can heighten HIV vulnerability. This separation can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness that may see the migrant worker seeking sexual relationships outside of their spouses or regular sexual partner. In addition, the increased income that accompanies labour migration combined with new social networks also increases HIV vulnerability. The social networks are important as they can be more liberal than the types of familial, religious or social restrictions the migrant worker may be accustomed to. This can lead to migrant workers engaging in high risk behaviours such as binge drinking, drug taking – including intravenous drug use, and engaging in casual or paid sexual relations – often without using condoms due to inaccessibility to condoms, poor condom awareness and knowledge of their role in the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, or economic factors preventing the purchase of condoms.

Labour migration also increases women's vulnerability to HIV transmission because it often separates women from familial and social support networks that might otherwise protect them from unwanted sexual advances. In addition to this lack of protection, migrant women often work in low status occupations such as domestic service or factory work, whereby they may work or live in isolated conditions, making them vulnerable to sexual harassment or sexual assault by their colleagues or employers.

In China, rates of premarital sex among female migrant workers are approximately 50 percent for factory workers and 80 percent for women engaged in the services sector such as catering and entertainment (Xia 2004: 29). Among male migrant workers, studies have found that approximately 60 percent of men reported engaging in premarital sex while away for work, and of these men, 50-60 percent reported they had solicited sex (Yang et al. 2009: 428). For both men and women, these rates of extramarital intercourse are higher than they would likely be had the person not been a migrant worker, due to factors such as isolation, relaxed social networks and increased involvement in high risk behaviours like binge drinking and drug taking both of which can contribute to engagement in casual sexual relations.

Low education levels are also common among the floating population with 40 percent of migrants having only a primary school education (Yang et al. 2009: 428). Poor education levels increase the likelihood of

poor levels of STI/HIV awareness thereby increasing the likelihood of the migrant workers engaging in unprotected intercourse even in commercial sex. Furthermore, due to the transient nature of these workers, combined with their marginalisation in the urban areas to which they migrate, the floating population is difficult to reach with STI/HIV prevention and awareness knowledge (Xia 2004: 28). Therefore, many migrant workers lack basic knowledge on STI/HIV prevention and this increases their vulnerability to transmission.

In HIV screening tests conducted in Shanxi Province between 1996 and 1999, 66.7 percent of people identified as HIV positive were members of the floating population (Xia 2004: 29). Other more recent tests have shown that HIV prevalence among migrant workers is almost double that of China's rural residents reflecting that labour migration is the difference in heightening HIV vulnerability among these rural residents (Yang et al. 2009: 420). In addition to heightening their own HIV vulnerability, the floating population is an important HIV 'bridge' population between urban high-risk groups and the rural population (Yang et al. 2009: 420). Therefore, they have the potential to spread HIV epidemics into previously uninfected areas, and more importantly for this paper, back to their rural spouse. This risk is especially heightened when one considers condoms are not normally used in extramarital or marital sexual relations, increasing their spouses HIV vulnerability. Therefore, even though she/he may not have been involved in labour migration directly, their HIV vulnerability is heightened by the labour migration of their spouse.

For female migrants, labour migration is often a contributing factor for women's involvement in the sex trade, which substantially increases their vulnerability to HIV transmission. This involvement can occur as a survival strategy for women facing economic hardship after migrating to urban areas for work, or it can be due to migrant women being tricked into the sex trade after applying for false jobs such as domestic servants or factory work. A large number of China's sex workers are migrant women (Thompson 2003), with figures on the proportion of migrant women engaging in sex works ranging from between 62.3-95 percent in some locations (Hong et al. 2009:212). Migrant sex workers sometimes display higher risk behaviour than non-migrant sex workers, in part due to low education levels and poor HIV/AIDS awareness, which increases their likelihood of contracting HIV and due to the transient nature of their stay at a particular site, which is often around 2-3 months, thereby

making them difficult to reach with HIV/AIDS prevention knowledge (Hong et al. 2009:212).

While conservative estimates suggest the number of sex workers in China is approximately three million (Thompson 2004) to four million (Harding 2000), scholars such as Pan of People's University of Beijing believe the figure to be much higher when the numbers of women who engage in 'casual or infrequent transactional sex' are included (cited in Thompson 2004). It has also been reported by UNAIDS that the Public Security Bureau estimates the number of sex workers in China could be as high as six million (UNAIDS 2002:65). Jeffreys states that government authorities in China have called prostitution in China a 'widespread and growing problem' (2004:83).⁷ Thus, a conservative estimate of four million sex workers demonstrates that a considerable number of Chinese women are vulnerable to HIV infection through prostitution.

The illegal nature of prostitution in China is a major barrier to HIV/AIDS advocacy for sex workers and continues to exacerbate the vulnerable status of sex workers, particularly migrant women. Interviewee D (2003, pers. comm., 27 August) stated that organisations like hers could give HIV prevention information to sex workers, without arresting them, because it was not a government organisation. If workers from the government organisations identified sex workers, she stated that they were required to report them because of the illegality of prostitution. After being reported, the identified sex worker would then face detention in a rehabilitation centre. While there are debates in China as to whether or not prostitution should be legalised so as to allow INGOs, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government organisations to legally provide STI prevention knowledge and services to sex workers, the rehabilitation system offers an opportunity to reach this vulnerable group with HIV/AIDS prevention information. However, Interviewee D (2003, pers. comm., 27 August) stated that this was not occurring, even though the organisation she worked for had been trying to launch programs that linked 'HIV/AIDS prevention education into the rehabilitation programs of these centres'. Furthermore, without adequate help to overcome their economic insecurity, upon release from these centres many women actually returned to prostitution. Thus, she

⁷ For further reading see Jeffreys, Elaine 2004, 'Feminist prostitution debates: Are there any sex workers in China?', Anne McLaren (ed), *Chinese Women – Living and Working*, Routledge Curzon, New York.

stated, an important opportunity was being missed.

There is concern however, over the contradiction in the government's response to prostitution, which sees sex workers targeted by interventionist programs, not those soliciting the prostitutes. This obvious gender bias is in part fuelled by the extant view that those selling sex always come before those buying sex (Chen 2008). This view is problematic in that one could argue that it is demand that drives provision; however at a very basic level it punishes the sex worker as the guilty party in the commercial sex exchange and not the solicitor. It also means that many of the men who solicit prostitutes are left out of the targeted commercial sex HIV prevention strategies although they are clearly a 'high risk' group. If they are married or have other sexual encounters outside of the commercial sexual exchange, they are also a possible 'bridge' population who have the potential to transmit HIV into the general population.

Chen (2008) argues that the failure of the Chinese government to adequately respond to this contradiction reflects that there is an urgent need in China for recognition of the important role men play in safer sexual practice, a responsibility that is continually being thrust onto women. In fact, recent campaigns by the ACWF provided 27.25 million women across China with HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness knowledge. However, there was no discussion of if/how men were also given this important knowledge or if they were made aware of how their actions can impact on the HIV vulnerability of their spouses (SCAWCO and UNAIDS 2007). These types of measures require the involvement of both men and women. To neglect the involvement and importance of men serves to increase women's vulnerability while at the same time apportioning responsibility to women for their own HIV safety, something that is simply unachievable for many women. Chen (2008) also argues that the increase in HIV transmission among spouses is unsurprising considering low rates of condom use among spouses, even when there is extra-marital sexual activity and that this is an important reason for the inclusion of men into measures designed to increase women's awareness of HIV/AIDS.

CONCLUSION

Labour migration increases women's HIV vulnerability as it often involves long periods of physical separation from family and loved ones thus leading to feelings of isolation and seeking out extramarital or casual sexual relationships as outlets for erotic impulses. It

also increases women's HIV vulnerability because labour migration takes women away from the economic support and protection networks that exist in their home villages, making them easy targets to be lured or forced into prostitution due to economic necessity, as well as becoming the victims of sexual harassment and sexual violence. However, women do not have to be directly involved in labour migration for it to heighten their HIV vulnerability. The spouses of returning labour migrants also face heightened vulnerability to HIV transmission due to their partner's transgressions while away. Therefore, in areas of HIV epidemics, labour migrants play an important role in patterns of HIV transmission and they are an important part of an effective HIV/AIDS response. However, the gendered dynamics of this vulnerability reflect that gender is an important consideration in human security discourse. By exploring the HIV vulnerability faced by rural to urban labour migrants in the People's Republic of China, this paper has considered how gender, migration and human insecurity are linked. In an era of increased labour migration, it reflects the importance of gendered considerations of both migration and human security.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank all participants in the field component of this study for their time and insights into China's HIV/AIDS epidemic.

She would also like to acknowledge the involvement of Professor Don McMillen (USQ) and Dr Rosemary Roberts (UQ) for their comments on earlier versions of this research.

References

- Berger, B & Vizgirda, V 1993, 'Prevention of HIV Infection in Women and Children', in F L Cohen & J D Durham (eds), *Women, Children and HIV/AIDS*, Springer Publishing, New York.
- Boyd, R 2005, 'Gender and human security issues: building a programme of action-research', *Development in Practice*, 15(1):115-21.
- Bunch, C 2004, 'A Feminist Human Rights Lens', *Peace Review*, 16(1): 29-34.
- Burke, A 2001, 'Caught between National and Human Security: Knowledge and Power in Post-Crisis Asia', *Pacifica Review*, 13(3):215-39.
- Commission on Human Security 2003, *Human*

- Security Now*, viewed 22nd April 2005, <<http://www2.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/index.html>>.
- Feinstein, N & Prentice, B 2000, *Gender and AIDS Almanac*, viewed 18th February 2003, <<http://www.unaids.org/gender/docs/Gender%20Package/GenderandAIDSAlmanac.pdf>>.
- Fukuda-Parr, S 2004, 'Gender, Globalization and New Threats to Human Security', *Peace Review*, 16(1):35-42.
- Harding, L 2000, 'India is New Loser in Asian AIDS Epidemic', *The Guardian*, viewed 20th February 2003, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,230527,00.html>>.
- Hong, Y, Li, X, Yang, H, Fang, X and Zhao, R 2009, 'HIV/AIDS-related sexual risks and migratory status among female sex workers in a rural Chinese country', *AIDS Care*, 21(2):212-20.
- Hudson, H 2005, "'Doing" Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security', *Security Dialogue*, 36(2):155-74.
- Kermani, P 2006, 'The Human Security Paradigm Shift: From an "Expansion of Security" to an "Extension of Human Rights"', *Human Security Journal*, 1(April):24-34.
- Jeffreys, E 2004, 'Feminist prostitution debates: Are there any sex workers in China?', A McLaren (ed), *Chinese Women – Living and Working*, Routledge Curzon, New York.
- McKay, S 2004, 'Women, Human Security, and Peace-building: A Feminist Analysis', *Conflict and Human Security: A Search for New Approaches of Peacebuilding*, IPSHU English Research Report Series, 19, viewed 26th April 2007, <<http://www.hegoa.ehu.es/congreso/bilbo/doku/bost/humansfeminist.pdf>>.
- Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China 2010, *China 2010 UNGASS Country Progress Report (2008-2009)*, viewed 9th April 2010, <http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2010/china_2010_country_progress_report_en.pdf>.
- Moise, E 2008, *Modern China*, 3rd edn, Pearson, Harlow.
- National Center for AIDS/STD Prevention and Control 2006, *2005 Update on the HIV/AIDS Epidemic and Response in China*, report for the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, viewed 1st January 2006, <www.unchina.org/un aids/2005-China%20HIV-AIDS%20Estimation-English.pdf>.
- Paris, R 2001, 'Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?', *International Security*, 26(2):87-102.
- SCAWCO and UNAIDS 2007, *A Joint Assessment of HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment and Care in China (2007)*, viewed 3rd May 2010, <<http://www.undp.org.cn/downloads/otherlocal/HIV/20080104.pdf>>.
- Thompson, D 2003, *HIV/AIDS Epidemic in China Spreads Into the General Population*, Population Reference Bureau, viewed 27th June 2004, <<http://www.prb.org/Template.cfm?Section=PRB&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8501>>.
- Thompson, D 2004, *China's Growing AIDS Epidemic Increasingly Affects Women*, Population Reference Bureau, viewed 1st February 2005, <<http://www.prb.org/Template.cfm?Section=PRB&template=/ContentManagement/Con...>>.
- Truong, T-D, Wieringa, S & Chhachhi, A 2006, *Engendering Human Security: Feminist Perspectives*, Zed Books, London.
- UNAIDS 2002, *HIV/AIDS: China's Titanic Peril*, viewed 26th March 2003, <<http://www.unaids.org/whatsnew/newadds/AIDSChina2001update.pdf>>.
- UNDP 1995, "'Redefining Security": The Human Dimension', *Current History*, 94(592):229-36.
- Yang, T, Wang, W, Abdullah, A S, Beard, J, Cao, C & Shen, M 2009, 'HIV/AIDS-Related Sexual Risk Behaviours In Male Rural-To-Urban Migrants in China', *Social Behaviour and Personality*, 37(3):419-432.
- Xia, G M 2004, *HIV/AIDS in China*, Foreign Language Press, Beijing.