

Abstract

In the decades after the Second World War, thousands of young people in the Commonwealth migrated to Britain to become trained as nurses. Migration researchers have emphasized that the nurses were treated as inexpensive labor serving the needs of British society. For the past several years I have conducted life story interviews with Caribbean nurses, who stayed in Britain after completing their training as nurses, in order to investigate how they experienced this migration. In this paper I show that, while the women were fully cognizant of the systemic discrimination they had encountered in Britain, and the obstacles this had presented to them, they generally viewed their migration as an attractive way of fulfilling family and gender expectations while, at the same time, enjoying career options and a form of personal independence that would not have been possible, had they remained in their country of origin.

About the Speaker

Karen Fog Olwig, Professor at the Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, has done research on migration for many years with particular focus on the role of family relations in migration processes. Her most recent major publications are: *Caribbean Journeys: An Ethnography of Migration and Home in Three Family Networks* (Duke University Press, 2007), 'Integration' - Migrants and Refugees between Scandinavian Welfare Societies and Family Relations (special issue of *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol 37, No 2, 2011, edited with Birgitte Romme Larsen and Mikkel Rytter); *The Question of Integration: Immigration, Exclusion and the Danish Welfare State* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011, edited with Karsten Paerregaard); *Mobile Bodies, Mobile Souls. Family, Religion and Migration in a Global World* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011, edited with Mikkel Rytter).