

ABSTRACT

Contemporary development discourses often represent migrants from the South as ‘agents of development’ due to the substantial resources that they send back to their home countries in the form of remittances, investments, and philanthropic donations. Accordingly, the nexus between migration and development has emerged as a key area of research and policy making. In this presentation, after outlining several shortcomings in the literature, I will argue that to fully understand the connections between ‘migration’ and ‘development’ we need to unravel the complexities of both transnational mobilities and various forms of migrant resources. Drawing on current work in the Provincial Globalisation research programme, the presentation will show that ‘remittances’ and ‘diaspora philanthropy’ are in reality multi-faceted, multi-directional and multi-nodal transactions or processes that are embedded in, and inflected by, the specific histories, social structures, and political-economic formations of the ‘migrant sending regions’. I will also present a proposed methodological framework for analysing the social and economic implications of migrant resource flows, focusing on three key elements: (1) the transnational social fields that connect diasporic communities with their home regions; (2) the region, which is the key scale at which dense and significant transnational networks crystallise; and (3) the institutional structures, agents, networks, and other modalities that facilitate and channel such flows.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Carol Upadhyia (Professor, School of Social Sciences, NIAS) is Co-Director of the research programme ‘Provincial Globalisation: The Impact of Reverse Transnational Flows in India’s Regional Towns’ (<http://www.provglo.org/>), a collaboration between the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam and the National Institute of Advanced Studies. She also anchors the NIAS Urban Research and Policy Programme.