

Not Leaving ‘Lone Migrant Mothers’ Behind: The Role of Place-based Childcare Support in Australia’s Marginalised Neighbourhoods

Teddy Nagaddya

Western Sydney University, Australia.

Brian Stout

Western Sydney University, Australia.

Abstract

In Australia, lone migrant mothers remain an invisible social category within the childcare-poverty discourse. There has been an increase in the population of lone mothers migrating to Australia in pursuit of a better economic life, though with no childcare support. Within the public and political spheres, they are homogenised as single mothers incognisant of how gender intersects with factors such as migration status, ethnicity, lone parenting, and class to induce poverty. Childcare support is not only a pillar to societal flourishing and advancement but also a strategy to settlement and integration. This study aimed at examining lone migrant mothers’ experiences with place-based childcare support within one of the marginalised neighbourhoods in the Liverpool LGA in Sydney, Australia. While dominant narratives broadly associate childcare support to women’s labour participation and gender equality, there is limited knowledge on the role of place-based childcare support among lone migrant mothers. Drawing on Sen’s capabilities theoretical framework, the article demonstrates that place-based childcare support is not only a welfare service but a tool for building localism. Consequently, translating into a structure for creating healthy spaces, place-making, and community cohesion, and building neighbourhood capacity – aspects considered core to socio-economic inclusion of women who migrate as lone parents.

Keywords: Lone mothers, place-based childcare, inclusion, poverty

Introduction

In an era of global capitalism characterised by high labour demands and economic efficiency, lone women have been over-represented as labour migrants across developed countries (Deka, 2020; Ho, 2006b; Özkazanç-Pan, 2020; Ryan, 2002). While migration is seen as an opportunity for a better economic life (Dantas, Strauss, Cameron, & Rogers, 2020), it comes at a cost of dismantling, disrupting, and reconfiguring families and systems of social support for those migrating. Moreover, most lone migrant women, for instance, those from Asia and Africa come from collectivist cultures who rely on their extended families for various forms of support (Wali & Renzaho, 2018). At the time of migrating, these support systems are left in their home countries or may join them years later – a situation that has huge implications for those migrating as lone mothers with young children. Regardless of women’s career ambitions, they remain the primary carers of their children (Graham, McKenzie, & Lamaro, 2018; Horwood et al., 2021; Silverman, Brotman, Molgat, & Gagnon, 2020).

Corresponding author: Teddy Nagaddya (t.nagaddya@westernsydney.edu.au)

In both developed and emerging economies, the prevalence of lone parents is increasing and gendered with more women fitting the category and living in precarious situations (Bernardi, Mortelmans, & Larenza, 2018). In Australia, newly arrived migrants including lone parents particularly women, tend to live below the poverty line (HILDA, 2020), and in marginalised neighbourhoods where localised childcare support amenities are limited. This is a generalised view that does not give a clear picture of what childcare support means and looks like in the context of women who migrate from a collectivist culture in child caring responsibilities to an individualistic context. It is sociologically important to understand that within a collectivist culture, child support is not simply a welfare service but rather a complexity of social relations of family, reciprocity, collective values, and norms (Renzaho, McCabe, & Sainsbury, 2011). This is an area that remains underexplored, yet it has implications on lone migrants' settlement and integration as well as economic inclusion. In this article, the role of place-based childcare support among lone migrant mothers within the Liverpool neighbourhood in Sydney, Australia is examined. To articulate this, the article provides a brief overview of place-based initiatives in Australia, and this is followed by a discussion of the prevalence and marginality of lone migrant mothers. The article concludes with findings demonstrating that for lone migrants, place-based childcare support is not simply a welfare service but rather a means to creating healthy spaces, place-making and community cohesion, and building local skills capacity.

Brief overview of place-based initiatives in Australia

Place-based initiatives are becoming extensively recognised as a means of poverty alleviation in a world of increasing vulnerabilities associated with rapid social changes (Green, 2017). It is argued that rapid social changes such as migration, have disrupted the social organisation of families, and fragmented communities (Moore & Fry, 2011). Communities have had to scramble for the limited resources and reimagine their sense of belonging (Williamson, 2016). In which case, grass-root support systems such as place-based initiatives emerge with an aim of creating opportunities for the local populace (Moore et al., 2014). In Australia, place-based initiatives have been associated with advancing the notion of equity among migrant families in crisis within marginalised neighbourhoods (Stout & Nagaddya, 2020). They have played a response role to the disruptive aspects of global social changes but in consideration of local diversity. They show significance of the local as well as context-specific needs (Featherstone, Ince, Mackinnon, Strauss, & Cumbers, 2012). As observed by Gruenewald and Smith (2014), the focus on localism is a recognition that within global capitalism lies aspects of economic devastation, inequalities, and cultural homogenisation – all of which impact on women and men, and local communities differently. It is within this context that place-based initiatives have been known to play a role in the lives of migrant families who are constantly living on the margins.

Prevalence and marginality of lone migrant mothers in Australia

The prevalence of lone migrant mothers and their marginality has not received the much-desired attention it deserves in the public and policy discourse. In Australia, the term 'lone parent' is interchangeably used to mean one or single parent. Although single-parent households rank third as the commonest type of families in Australia, their characterisation remains abstract. Being a single parent is associated with taking care of at least one child but with no identified partner (ABS, 2022). This form of family sociology ignores the fact that some single parents have identifiable partners though not living within the same household or even country. And unlike single parents who may in some cases share caring responsibilities with an ex-partner, lone mothers take on full responsibility of their children. In other instances, single motherhood is associated with power and privilege premised on the assumption that women choose to live independently due to being economically empowered (Matapanyane, 2016). Yet, this narrative masks the diversity in experiences of lone mothers that may be shaped by the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, migrant status, and class (Crenshaw, 1997) – all of

which exacerbate the risk of poverty. Being the carer and sole earner positions lone migrant mothers in precarious situations. They tend to be locked in low paying part-time or casual jobs with no work progression which puts them in a situation of financial instability (Bowman & Wickramasinghe, 2020; Evans, 2014).

According to the Labour Force Status of Families Survey (2020), the prevalence of lone-parent families stands at a high of 14.4 percent of all families in Australia. But of these, 81.6 percent are single mothers' families – a statistic that confirms childcare work as a gendered activity. Yet, the literature clearly shows how single mothers with caring roles have a high risk of income insecurity due to engagement in precarious employment (Nieuwenhuis & Maldonado, 2018). Between 2016-2018, it was reported that 25 percent of lone mothers experienced income poverty, and only 35 percent of single-parent households had access to paid childcare (HILDA 2020). Although these statistics provide some useful insights about lone parenthood in Australia, they fall short of aggregated data to represent the different categories of lone mothers such as migrants whose experiences and marginality are shaped by other factors such as discrimination and unequal opportunities.

Global migration has had an impact on the social reconstruction of family and the notion of parenthood (Haagsman & Mazzucato, 2021). Over the years, Australia has seen a growth of lone mother concentration within its regional areas and urban neighbourhoods. (Birrell, Rapson, & Hourigan, 2002). In furtherance of their observation, Birrell and others assert that in New South Wales, areas such as Blacktown, Campbelltown among others have had a high concentration of lone mothers, many of whom are overseas born. Partially, this is attributed to the feminisation of labour migration (Bastia & Piper, 2019; Ho, 2006a; Holliday, Hennebry, & Gammage, 2019). Women are migrating independently with caring responsibilities to young children. This has also seen an increase in the number of families with children but without an employed adult (Gray, Qu, Renda, & de Vaus, 2021) – an issue of policy concern since it has the potential of increasing welfare dependants.

Lone migrant mothers struggle and resist the structural challenges associated with the process of migration, settlement, and integration (Liamputtong, 2003). For instance, in a study conducted to assess the challenges of single female migrant parents of African descent (Ochala & Mungai, 2016), it was revealed that though childcare support was an issue of concern due to lack of information about services, social and cultural isolation and the stigma associated with lone parenthood were a major challenge in a new country. The stigma is associated with the culture of heteropatriarchal approach to parenting where western traditional family values are promoted, and labels of good or bad mothers are used (Leonard & Kelly, 2021; Matapanyane, 2016). Clearly, in such an environment, lone migrant mothers are left in a precarious situation with no social support but rather a heavy care burden amid struggles of settlement. The outcome of this is poor mental health and undesirable parenting practices. Literature shows that lone parenthood is likely to cause chronic fatigue and stress (Campbell, Thomson, Fenton, & Gibson, 2016; Carey & Bell, 2021) – all of which are detrimental to one's well-being. This situation can quickly escalate into depression for lone mothers (Caragata & Liegghio, 2013; Carey & Bell, 2021; Kim & Kim, 2020). The situation is exacerbated by mothers' migrant status where they are in a constant struggle to reconstruct their identity, and sense of place while being confronted with the anxiety of childrearing. Of importance here is the understanding that lone migrant mothers are likely to be locked in a cycle of poverty if no efforts are put into interrogating the factors that shape their access to childcare, and the associated meanings in a transnational context.

Setting of the Study

This study was conducted within the Liverpool LGA with CGC¹ – a place-based organisation that provides services to migrant families in crisis (Stout & Nagaddya, 2020). Liverpool is a home to a culturally and linguistically diverse populace. The Liverpool Community Strategic Plan report 'Our Home, Liverpool 2027' which was endorsed in 2015, reported that 50 per cent of the migrant population in Liverpool-Sydney, speak a language other than English and 40% were born overseas. Common languages spoken in the area include Hindi, Arabic, Vietnamese among others. While this diversity contributes to the cultural economy, it has implications on settlement, integration, and place-making. With the influences of a globalising economy, the area is experiencing massive social changes in the way people live, work and relate (PwC, 2017). Although the changes have the potential of creating new social and economic opportunities for the local community, they are also altering the way families are living, working, parenting, and relating.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force survey (ABS, 2021), unemployment in this LGA stands at a high of 8.3 per cent with women being affected the most. This statistic almost doubles the national rate of 4.6% in the same year. This situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic that has seen more women losing formal employment and engaging in additional child care activities such as home schooling (Carli, 2020). It is this environment of economic vulnerability that has stimulated the growth of local initiatives in form of place-based organisations. Established in the 1990s, CGC offers a wide range of services including childcare support services to a diverse group of migrant mothers in the area. However, not much is documented about the role of childcare support services in improving the livelihood of particularly lone migrant mothers. This is a social category of women who must confront a complexity of factors that intersect with gender and class to create marginality.

Participants, Methods of Data collection and Analysis

With the aim of exploring the lived experiences of lone migrant mothers who are engaging with CGC place-based childcare support, the study employed a qualitative inductive approach. An ethical approval from the Western Sydney University's Ethics Committee was sought and granted (HREC Approval Number: H13233). A purposively selected sample of 20 women who self-identified as lone and migrant, attending CGC were identified and recruited into the study. The sampling technique limited inclusion in the study to migrant mothers who attended the centre, were willing to share their experiences, and available to participate within the stated timeframe (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Verbal consent was obtained from all participants by the research assistants after sending them study information sheets and allowing them to ask questions. Data was collected using in-depth interviews that allowed participants to engage in a reflective conversation (Bryman, 2016). This was imperative in constructing their everyday realities associated with the utilisation of childcare services. The interviews were audio-recorded, between 45minutes to 1hour in duration, and took place at various locations that were convenient and safe to the participants. Data transcription was manually done by the research assistants. The process of data analysis took a phased approach with the first phase involving coding where data was organised under different broad themes (Bazeley, 2009). An interpretivist approach (Schwandt, 1994), was vitally important here to gain a clear understanding of lone migrant mothers' experiences of attending CGC childcare services. In the final analysis, four key themes emerged; experiences before engagement with services, creation of healthy spaces, place-making and community cohesion, and neighbourhood capacity building.

¹ CGC is used as a pseudonym for the community-based organisation where this research was conducted.

Findings and Discussion

This research aimed at capturing lone migrant mothers lived experiences of engaging with a place-based organisation that provided localised childcare support as part of its services. Their narratives contributed to evaluating the effectiveness of CGC services particularly in improving their livelihood as migrant mothers. With all the participant quotes in this article, pseudonyms have been assigned to ensure confidentiality. In this section, the findings are presented in two main parts. The first part gives an account of lone migrant mothers' feelings prior to engagement with the CGC place-based childcare support. The second part demonstrates how localised childcare support is not only an anti-poverty strategy for lone migrant mothers but also has distinctive patterns of advantages in terms of place-making and community cohesion, and capacity building.

Pre-service engagement experiences

Most lone migrant mothers in this study were from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. They reflected upon their pre-service engagement experiences by talking about their life before joining CGC. Their experiences gravitated around the complexities of negotiating new spatial and cultural spaces – aspects that made mothers feel alone and lonely and invisible. For instance, some expressed feelings of inadequacy as one mother put it '*I think I was nothing much before*'. This construct of being 'nothing' shows how spaces are socially constructed as environments of production and social classes (Massey, 1994). More to that, 'feelings of nothing' indicate a perceived lack of agency, and capabilities to contribute to society. Amartya Sen (2005) observes that capabilities are freedoms. These freedoms are embedded in human functioning (Sen, 1990). Humans derive life satisfaction from doing the things that fulfill valued human needs. Achieving this assumes that humans are exposed to opportunities that enable them to do the things they value in life. They take an active role rather than a passive one, for instance being an active member in one's community, and being seen in the public domain as a valued member of society. This does not mean that exposure to these opportunities will result in the same level of achievement. But once humans are deprived of these opportunities or freedoms, they get trapped into a cycle of poverty in all its forms and poor health. With the global economic transformative processes where the key domains of life are defined and determined by market logic (Beumer, Figge, & Elliott, 2018), these freedoms are threatened. They can only be attained when there are opportunities, processes and structures that avail lone mothers with unbounded choices, ability to act and feel valued. In the absence of this enabling environment, feelings of disconnectedness and vulnerability emerged amidst the gendered practices of daily life.

Well, the day I moved into this area I came with a new baby, I didn't know what was around me, I didn't have family, so I was pretty much isolated with a baby. So, it was a bit over whelming, not much support. Again, moving in a new area, you don't have friends to meet up with, you don't have things like that, so I was isolated **(Participant - Linda)**

I needed human contact. I was stuck in a very small apartment, no contact with adults, baby crying all the time. Every single time I tried just to get him out of the house to the park by myself, it became really stressful and somewhat depressing because there is no social interaction, and I was doing it only for him. I was trying to make my baby have some fun but having the same thing day in day out is tiresome. **(Participant - Ann)**

What seems to be a common theme here is how gendered practices of parenthood intersect with women's migrant status and spatial isolation to invoke loss of 'being and identity' due to lack of meaningful social interactions and relations. It is important to note that most of the lone

migrant mothers came from countries that embody collectivist cultures. These are characterised by extended families and social networks that are built around face-to-face human interactions. It is within this sense of collectivism that relations of support and interdependence are nurtured (Wali & Renzaho, 2018). As seen from the participant's remarks '*I was doing it for him*' – while this is what every mother would be expected to do for their children, in this case, the remarks had undertones of social struggles experienced by a mother with unsupported routine. In the absence of structures of support, lone migrant mothers felt alienated and struggled with multiple forms of social isolation including that of their children. For instance, lone mother Ann's reported distress, reflected a loss of self-esteem as a mother due to the fact that there is no sense of feeling valued as a caring parent by the 'collective' – a situation she considered stressful and depressing. It is worth drawing on such experiences to articulate the relationship between childcare support, mental health, and poverty among lone migrant mothers.

Place-based childcare support as a precursor for creating healthy spaces

Attending the place-based childcare support services stimulated an environment where mothers and their children engaged in activities to create healthy spaces. Lone migrant mothers spoke of the CGC centre as a holistic wellness centre for their children and themselves. Mothers reported that their children joined age friendly playgroups where they socialised and formed friendships with other kids. The CGC centre was perceived as a safe place where women reported establishing a group identity as mothers and balanced both domestic and public domains of life. Through their narratives, mothers demonstrated that the place-based routine activities provided alternatives to the realities of their everyday stressful domestic life. The outcome of which was a sense of well-being and productive capacity.

I used to ask if there is somewhere I could go to feel better and once I joined CGC I just found out so much by talking to other women. Also, my daughter enjoys coming here. I have been a student and I study online. It has just been really tough being by myself studying online and just living in isolation - that is what I felt. It has been tough as my family is also not here. I don't really have much support. This place has helped me heal, connecting me to other women. **(Participant – Julie)**

Speaking about 'healing' indicated not only human agency but also the existence of structures that provided opportunities for lone migrant mothers to 'be and become' and build healthy spaces outside the confines of their homes. For instance, one mother said, '*I can't ask for more, the way they give us opportunities to be working and at the same time to be a mother*'. This remark demonstrates spaces that facilitate meaningful life choices and identity construction in a new cultural environment as core in designing childcare support.

Dyck and Dossa (2007) observe that there is a relationship between gender and the construction of healthy landscapes. Although mothers were from different countries, they sought for places and spaces where they could perform their gender roles of raising healthy families and engaging in other activities that give them a sense of place/local. They navigated the tension between the local and wider processes that disadvantaged them by creating relationships of reciprocity and social connectedness and reaffirming gender roles.

I am happier, it gives structure to our routine. Every week we have gotten something to do... at least we come here, it takes off the stress from me of trying to get my son out somewhere and having to play with him. At the same time all mothers know themselves and all the kids know themselves and they are more understanding with my son's situation which alleviates a lot of

stress for me. **(Participant - Sally)**

I was facing a lot of challenges before I came to CGC, and I am still facing those challenges in terms of parenting and raising my son, but CGC has supported me in addressing them, and it hasn't thrown any problems my way
(Participant – Amelia)

Clearly, the intertwining of placed-based childcare support with opportunities that expose mothers to healthy everyday life practices, forms a basis for revitalising marginalised neighbourhoods. The process unravels features of a collectivist culture that enhances local agency and place-making.

Place-based childcare support as a mechanism for place-making and community cohesion

Whereas participants were from different countries of origin, they had intersecting factors such as immigration status, gender, lone parenthood, and childcare support challenges. These factors contributed to building a collective identity amidst situations of adversity. Mothers had collective struggles of parenting, belonging, and reconstructing new neighbourhood identities. However, by collectively accessing localised childcare support, an environment of relational place-making and new aspirations of neighbourhood identities was established. Massey (2005) asserts that place-making is about socio-spatial relationships and connections that allow individuals not only to gain collective identity but also a sense of collective meanings, responsibility, and attachment to place. And in culturally diverse migrant neighbourhoods where there is no single dominant ethnic group, place-making tends to proceed along the lines of balanced power (Pemberton & Phillimore, 2018). It is from this perspective that participants reported feeling accepted in the community which broadened their circle of friends, and facilitated learning about their neighbourhood.

I think the first thing is, when I came here, I could feel the acceptance in the community because that's the main thing I wanted. And this is because when we moved from India and came here, you know like.... we hardly knew people. So, the first thing we want is the acceptance in the community - which is wanting to feel secure. So that's the main thing which will you know empower us or will give us peace of mind. If that's not there - when you are not feeling secure, and you do not have that acceptance you can't do anything else, you know... not even at your home or your professional life as well. **(Participant - Roseline)**

I come to this playgroup, and to do some courses here. I have made many friends from my community and outside my community there are so many. Yep, because of it I have broadened my circle of friends because of this institution. I am learning more about my community **(Participant - Hayley)**

When I came in here, I was a bit isolated but now am not, I have got contact with people and I have their phone numbers. I went from zero in the new area that does not have people but now I have contact with people and I feel this is more like a family here more than anything else. **(Participant - Viola)**

From a sociological perspective, participants narratives revealed the power of community and the relevance of the social in promoting cultural and social integration. The mothers demonstrated a level of bonding that created resilience and functional interdependence. Some mothers alluded to the notion of having established family. This reignited the sense of a

collective culture that calls for collective responsibility, shared values, and community cohesion. Lone migrant mothers viewed the newly established families as a way of building social capital. The kind of group membership and social networks that mothers spoke of is what Bourdieu refers to as social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) – a resource that is paramount in addressing social struggles of poverty. It is a form of power through association in the sense that those who are able to control and accumulate permanent social networks are more privileged. Much as this is likely to create social classes among migrant mothers, it builds a space of self-discovery for purposes of developing their neighbourhood.

Social capital has a multiplier effect in the sense that the more one increases their networks, they are likely to access other forms of capital, for instance cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013). In these social spaces that lone migrant mothers occupied and created families, they brought cultural capital in terms of shared knowledge, life experiences, offered emotional and physical support. Evidently, in the long run, social capital availed possibilities to access important life opportunities as one Nepalese lone migrant mother put it.

.....it is like family, you come here and make friends, you make more than friends. You get to know someone is missing from the women's group or the play group and we look out for each other. We give each other advice, there is room for self-connection here and again it gives you access to things that you would never have had access to, it is a family, and you cannot find this anywhere else. **(Participant - Arapi).**

Lone migrant mothers' narratives show how social capital is imperative in reconstructing the notion of family in a transnational context.

Place-based childcare support as a tool for building neighbourhood capacity

With localised free childcare support, mothers reported reduced parental stress. This gave lone migrant mothers an opportunity to enrol for the free TAFE courses that were offered within the same spaces where their children received childcare support. Mothers trained in Barista skills, floristry, and the English language among others. Undeniably, this is vitally important in building place-based skills as a strategy of alleviating feminised migrant poverty. Some mothers reported that their confidence to join the job market was boosted after attaining recognisable skills. This aligns with Sen's capabilities approach that views skills attainment as a process of empowerment and freedom (Sen, 1999). Migrants including lone mothers face the challenge of having academic qualifications from their countries of origin sometimes not recognised in Australia (Cameron, Farivar, & Dantas, 2019). Others are likely to be less educated due to having caring roles over their most productive years of life. This situation exposes them to low-skilled and poor paying jobs (Bernardi et al., 2018). But with localised skills training, mothers expressed feelings of accomplishment and power through a process of retooling as they narrated.

.....with the children's playgroup, one has the opportunity to participate in TAFE class for free with the centre and now we have those privileges. The centre provides child minding, it really gives people the opportunity that they wouldn't get elsewhere except through the centre
(Participant - Jovia).

I gained a lot through the courses, and earnings as well. It's more like I am proud of myself. I have done all these things with the help of CGC of course, without them I don't know where I would be right now **(Participant - Angelica).**

Evidently, lone migrant mothers demonstrated the ability to resist against the challenges of

migrating as unskilled or semi-skilled labourer. These structural challenges emanate from the complexities of being a female sole carer, migrant and living in a poor neighbourhood. The engagement in skills building played a fundamental role in sustaining neighbourhoods, reducing marginality and building community resilience.

This study has offered an analysis of how place-based childcare support is not only a welfare service or a defining factor for addressing the cycle of marginality in all its forms among lone migrant mothers' but most importantly it is a trajectory for constructing a sense of localism. The notion of focusing on the 'local' is vitally important within the poverty discourse given the deleterious effects of a globalising economy (Keeves, Darmawan, & Lietz, 2021; Pleninger & Sturm, 2020). In saying that, place-based childcare support remains underexplored in terms of its contribution to building localism. Predominantly, the focus has been on the link of childcare support to women's labour participation (Arpino & Luppi, 2020; Lee, Ruppner, & Perales, 2020; Moussié, 2021; Mumford, Parera-Nicolau, & Pena-Boquete, 2020; Pimkina & de La Flor, 2020), but this is problematic due to homogenisation of women, ignoring the unique struggles that different categories of women go through, particularly during this period of rampant migration.

What this study foregrounds is that, for lone migrant mothers, making meaning of the local creates sustainable approaches not only for labour participation but for meaningful public-domestic neighbourhood life. Place-based childcare support offers that opportunity by creating an enabling environment that allows lone migrant mothers to locate themselves within their neighbourhoods as mothers and productive members of society. This is in cognisance of the fact that localism gives local communities an opportunity to be active participants in the development of their neighbourhoods (Davoudi & Madanipour, 2013). It is within this perspective that lone migrant mothers' engagement with Place-based childcare support paved way for making meaning of the local through creation of healthy spaces, place-making, and community cohesion, and building neighbourhood capacity – aspects that are core to socio-economic inclusion.

What is quite distinct here is that, to lone migrant mothers, the locales of childcare support within their neighbourhoods are sites of human agency. It is within these sites that lone migrant mothers utilise their capabilities to create healthy spaces. Their capacity to connect, share experiences, volunteer in everyday activities is not only a means to building their confidence in connecting to broader material systems but an enhancement of their mental state. Clearly, this is what Sen views as human development that combines agency, freedom to act, and well-being (Sen, 1980, 1993). They are fundamentals in alleviating poverty in an environment of increasing neighbourhood inequalities. In this context, Sen's theoretical framework is important because it captures the many different dimensions of lone migrant mothers' forms of marginality that are alleviated through place-based childcare support. It is a reminder that for labour migrants who are mothers and lone, addressing income poverty starts with building safe spaces that make meaning to their everyday life. The process of which leads to material opportunity.

Even though lone migrant mothers face risky economic vulnerabilities within their neighbourhoods, the meanings they ascribe to these places and the childcare support provided goes beyond economic rationality. In their context, providing localised childcare support constitutes inter-group connections and relationships, that provide a conducive environment to engage in activities that enhance neighbourhood cohesion - which is a form of power and privilege (Méndez, Otero, Link, López Morales, & Gayo, 2021). What this means is that, for lone mothers, it is not material well-being that matters the most but rather the commitment to the local and opportunity to find a balance between collective and individualistic cultural identities that shape everyday behaviours and practices. As a consequence, a sense of place and integration is developed.

Place-making in the context lone migrant mothers aligns with Bourdieu's notion of the habitus (Bourdieu, 2004, 2017, 2018). It is argued that there are open spaces that are imbued with structures that shape everyday behaviour and practices. But the shaping of practices is based on reasoned interest, resources available and prevailing power relations which in this case, give mothers a sense of place. This is what constitutes and qualifies the habitus as a space of structure and agency. CGC place-based childcare support has created that open space where mothers share experiences and engage in activities with an aim of reinforcing cohesion and in other instances, modifying behaviour to gain an equilibrium between collectivist and individualist cultures. Lone mothers got attached to their neighbourhood because of the existence of local structures of childcare support that gave them a sense of communal identity and shared meaning of place. It is a way of building local legitimacy through the place-based initiatives that encourage mothers to be and become (Molden, Abrams, Davis, & Moseley, 2017). It is within these structures that inclusion and belonging are constructed. Lone migrant mothers build social networks of women with different forms of power in the form of skills, knowledge, and experiences. In the process, they accumulate the different forms of transformable capital – social, cultural, and economic (Bourdieu, 1986), necessary for resisting the disruptions of global capitalism. This approach to socio-economic inclusion challenges the top-down approach and instead promotes localism which symbolises community power (Sturzaker & Shaw, 2015). It creates an environment where lone mothers from marginalised neighbourhoods take actions that are guided by need and interest. While this has the potential to create class politics, it is the cross-class alliances that provide new ways of understanding and dealing with marginality among mothers who migrate as lone parents.

Conclusion

In this article, one of the key things that has been highlighted is the invisibility of lone migrant mothers as a unique social category with diverse needs. Nonetheless, this article has demonstrated that place-based childcare support is a fundamental source of freedom among lone migrant mothers. This freedom is associated with the deep-rooted meanings associated with childcare framed from a collectivist as opposed to individualistic culture.

The analysis of the participants narratives has shown that for lone migrant mothers from collectivist cultures, place-based childcare is about building localism. It is about creating a sense of autonomy, place purpose, community and connectedness. - aspects that are not only a form of social privilege but a means to socio-economic inclusion. In which case, place-based childcare support forms a trajectory to settlement, integration and reconstruction of identity for women who migrate as lone parents with caring roles. This research foregrounds the relevance of a bottom-up approach in articulating the role of place-based childcare support in alleviating poverty within marginalised neighbourhoods of Australia. Overall, it contributes to policy and practice initiatives that seek to address issues of socio-economic inclusion within collectivist migrant communities, informed by local context needs and gender sensitive approaches.

References

- Arpino, B., & Luppi, F. (2020). Childcare arrangements and working mothers' satisfaction with work–family balance. *Demographic Research, 42*, 549-588.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). *Labour Force, Australia*. Retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/nov-2021>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Labour Force Status of Families*. Retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-status-families/latest-release>
- Bastia, T., & Piper, N. (2019). Women migrants in the global economy: a global overview (and

- regional perspectives). *Gender & Development, 27(1)*, 15-30.
- Bazeley, P. (2009). Analysing qualitative data: More than 'identifying themes'. *Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research, 2(2)*, 6-22.
- Bernardi, L., Mortelmans, D., & Larenza, O. (2018). Changing lone parents, changing life courses. In *Lone parenthood in the life course* (pp. 1-26): Springer, Cham.
- Beumer, C., Figge, L., & Elliott, J. (2018). The sustainability of globalisation: Including the 'social robustness criterion'. *Journal of cleaner production, 179*, 704-715.
- Birrell, B., Rapson, V., & Hourigan, C. (2002). The origin of lone-parent concentrations in metropolitan and regional Australia. *Family Matters(62)*, 11-17.
- Bourdieu, P. (2004). Structures and the habitus. *Material culture: Critical concepts in the social sciences, 1(part 1)*, 116-77.
- Bourdieu, P. (2011). The forms of capital.(1986). *Cultural theory: An anthology, 1*, 81-93.
- Bourdieu, P. (2017). Habitus. In *Habitus: A sense of place* (pp. 59-66): Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (2018). Structures, habitus, practices. In *Rethinking the Subject* (pp. 31-45): Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (2013). Symbolic capital and social classes. *Journal of classical sociology, 13(2)*, 292-302.
- Bowman, D., & Wickramasinghe, S. (2020). Trampolines not traps: enabling economic security for single mothers and their children.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*: Oxford university press.
- Cameron, R., Farivar, F., & Dantas, J. (2019). The unanticipated road to skills wastage for skilled migrants: the non-recognition of overseas qualifications and experience (ROQE). *Labour & Industry: a journal of the social and economic relations of work, 29(1)*, 80-97.
- Campbell, M., Thomson, H., Fenton, C., & Gibson, M. (2016). Lone parents, health, wellbeing and welfare to work: a systematic review of qualitative studies. *BMC Public Health, 16(1)*, 1-10.
- Caragata, L., & Liegghio, M. (2013). Mental health, welfare reliance, and lone motherhood. *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health, 32(1)*, 95-107.
- Carey, M., & Bell, S. (2021). Universal Credit, Lone Mothers and Poverty: Some Ethical Challenges for Social Work with Children and Families. *Ethics and Social Welfare, 1-16*.
- Carli, L. L. (2020). Women, Gender equality and COVID-19. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*.
- Crenshaw, K. (1997). Intersectionality and identity politics: Learning from violence against women of color.
- Dantas, J. A., Strauss, P., Cameron, R., & Rogers, C. (2020). Women Migrants in Western Australia: Case Studies of Resilience and Empowerment. *Social Change, 50(1)*, 77-94.
- Davoudi, S., & Madanipour, A. (2013). Localism and neo-liberal governmentality. *Town Planning Review, 551-561*.
- Deka, J. (2020). Globalisation, Employment and Women Employees. *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine, 7(11)*, 1599-1608.
- Dyck, I., & Dossa, P. (2007). Place, health and home: Gender and migration in the constitution of healthy space. *Health & place, 13(3)*, 691-701.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American journal of theoretical and applied statistics, 5(1)*, 1-4.
- Evans, T. (2014). *The Meanings and Experiences of Single Mothers in Nineteenth-Century Sydney, Australia*. Paper presented at the Annales de demographie historique.
- Featherstone, D., Ince, A., Mackinnon, D., Strauss, K., & Cumbers, A. (2012). Progressive localism and the construction of political alternatives. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 37(2)*, 177-182.
- Graham, M., McKenzie, H., & Lamaro, G. (2018). Exploring the Australian policy context relating to women's reproductive choices. *Policy Studies, 39(2)*, 145-164.
- Gray, M., Qu, L., Renda, J., & de Vaus, D. (2021). Changes in the labour force status of lone

- and couple Australian mothers, 1983-2002 Changes in the labour force status of lone and couple Australian mothers, 1983-2002.
- Green, G. P. (2017). Place-based approaches to poverty alleviation: Institutional innovation and asset-based community development. In *The Routledge Handbook of Community Development* (pp. 87-97): Routledge.
- Gruenewald, D. A., & Smith, G. A. (2014). *Place-based education in the global age: Local diversity*: Routledge.
- Haagsman, K., & Mazzucato, V. (2021). Gendered Transnational Parenting. *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Migration*, 121-136.
- Ho, C. (2006a). Migration as feminisation? Chinese women's experiences of work and family in Australia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32(3), 497-514.
- Ho, C. (2006b). Women crossing borders: the changing identities of professional Chinese migrant women in Australia. *PORTAL: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 3(2), 1-16.
- Holliday, J., Henneby, J., & Gammage, S. (2019). Achieving the sustainable development goals: surfacing the role for a gender analytic of migration. In: Taylor & Francis.
- Horwood, C., Hinton, R., Haskins, L., Luthuli, S., Mapumulo, S., & Rollins, N. (2021). 'I can no longer do my work like how I used to': a mixed methods longitudinal cohort study exploring how informal working mothers balance the requirements of livelihood and safe childcare in South Africa. *BMC Women's Health*, 21(1), 1-15.
- Keeves, J. P., Darmawan, I., & Lietz, P. N. (2021). Globalisation, Culture and Social Transformation. In *Third International Handbook of Globalisation, Education and Policy Research* (pp. 415-438): Springer.
- Kim, G. E., & Kim, E.-J. (2020). Factors affecting the quality of life of single mothers compared to married mothers. *BMC psychiatry*, 20(1), 1-10.
- Lee, R., Ruppner, L., & Perales, F. (2020). Making it work: Migration, motherhood and employment in Australia. *Social Science Research*, 88, 102429.
- Leonard, M., & Kelly, G. (2021). Constructing the "good" mother: pride and shame in lone mothers' narratives of motherhood. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*.
- Liamputtong, P. (2003). Life as mothers in a new land: the experience of motherhood among Thai women in Australia. *Health Care for Women International*, 24(7), 650-668.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis, UNITED STATES: University of Minnesota Press.
- Matapanyane, M. (2016). *Motherhood and Single-Lone Parenting: A 21st Century Perspective*: Demeter Press.
- Méndez, M. L., Otero, G., Link, F., López Morales, E., & Gayo, M. (2021). Neighbourhood cohesion as a form of privilege. *Urban Studies*, 58(8), 1691-1711.
- Molden, O., Abrams, J., Davis, E. J., & Moseley, C. (2017). Beyond localism: The micropolitics of local legitimacy in a community-based organization. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 50, 60-69.
- Moore, T. G., & Fry, R. (2011). Place-based approaches to child and family services: A literature review. *Parkville, Victoria: Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health*.
- Moore, T. G., McHugh-Dillon, H., Bull, K., Fry, R., Laidlaw, B., & West, S. (2014). The evidence: What we know about place-based approaches to support children's wellbeing.
- Moussié, R. (2021). Childcare services in cities: challenges and emerging solutions for women informal workers and their children. *Environment and Urbanization*, 33(1), 117-130.
- Mumford, K., Parera-Nicolau, A., & Pena-Boquete, Y. (2020). Labour supply and childcare: Allowing both parents to choose. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 82(3), 577-602.
- Nieuwenhuis, R., & Maldonado, L. C. (2018). Single-parent families and in-work poverty. In *Handbook on in-work poverty*: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Ochala, Y., & Mungai, N. w. (2016). The challenges facing single female parents of African

- background in regional Australia. *Australian Social Work*, 69(3), 311-322.
- Özkazanç-Pan, B. (2020). Feminist writing in a gendered transnational world: Women on the move? In *Writing differently*: Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Pemberton, S., & Phillimore, J. (2018). Migrant place-making in super-diverse neighbourhoods: Moving beyond ethno-national approaches. *Urban Studies*, 55(4), 733-750.
- Pimkina, S., & de La Flor, L. (2020). Promoting Female Labor Force Participation.
- Pleninger, R., & Sturm, J.-E. (2020). The effects of economic globalisation and ethnic fractionalisation on redistribution. *World Development*, 130, 104945.
- Price Waterhouse Coopers,(PwC). (2017). *Reimagining the Liverpool innovation precinct*. Retrieved from <https://www.pwc.com.au/agendas/cities/reimagining-liverpool-aug17.pdf>
- Renzaho, A. M., McCabe, M., & Sainsbury, W. J. (2011). Parenting, role reversals and the preservation of cultural values among Arabic speaking migrant families in Melbourne, Australia. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(4), 416-424.
- Roger Wilkins, Ferdi Botha, Esperanza Vera-Toscano and Mark Wooden (2020) The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 18. Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research, University of Melbourne.
- Ryan, J. (2002). Chinese women as transnational migrants: Gender and class in global migration narratives. *International migration*, 40(2), 93-116.
- Schwandt, T. A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 1(1994), 118-137.
- Sen, A. (1980). Equality of what? *The Tanner lecture on human values*, 1, 197-220.
- Sen, A. (1990). Development as capability expansion. *The community development reader*, 41-58.
- Sen, A. (1993). 'Capability and well-being⁷³'. *The quality of life*, 30, 270-293.
- Sen, A. (1999). Commodities and capabilities. *OUP Catalogue*.
- Sen, A. (2005). Human rights and capabilities. *Journal of human development*, 6(2), 151-166.
- Silverman, M., Brotman, S., Molgat, M., & Gagnon, E. (2020). "I've always been the one who drops everything": the lived experiences and life-course impacts of young adult women carers. *International Journal of Care and Caring*, 4(3), 331-348.
- Stout, B., & Nagaddya, T. (2020). *Evaluation Report: Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections Community Development Program*. Retrieved from <https://researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au/islandora/object/uws:59275/>
- Sturzaker, J., & Shaw, D. (2015). Localism in practice: lessons from a pioneer neighbourhood plan in England. *Town Planning Review*, 587-609.
- Wali, N., & Renzaho, A. M. (2018). "Our riches are our family", the changing family dynamics & social capital for new migrant families in Australia. *PloS one*, 13(12), e0209421.
- Williamson, R. (2016). Everyday space, mobile subjects and place-based belonging in suburban Sydney. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42(14), 2328-2344.

Biographical Notes

Teddy Nagaddya is a multidisciplinary educator and researcher, School of Social Sciences, Western Sydney University. She is particularly interested in research questions that examine change over time and the impact of global economic processes on marginalised populations in terms of political, social, cultural, and economic dimensions.

Brian Stout is Professor of Social Work and Dean, School of Social Sciences, Western Sydney University.