



**Deadline for abstract submission:**

**30 April 2018**

Please submit a **400-word abstract of original research** and a brief bio (including contact details) to

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**Notification of selection** will be announced on **7 May 2018**.

**Deadline for full paper submission:**

**30<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

## Call for papers for an international workshop

### The Invisible Within: Actors, Relationships and Activities in Chinese Migrant Families

Features the screening of

*Nowhere to Call Home: A Tibetan in Beijing* (Jocelyn Ford, 2014) &  
*Border People* (Elena Barabantseva, 2018)

15-16 November 2018 at the University of Central Lancashire, UK

The literature on Chinese families emphasises the power of the patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal structures and ideologies over family members, particularly women and younger generations. Reinforced by Confucian values, family members, within this patriarchal system, are expected to prioritise solidarity, filial piety, frugality, and collective wellbeing over individual interests. Yet, in a global context characterised by a weakening of traditions and more individualistic life styles, traditional arrangements and practices of Chinese families have also gone through a process of transformation and reconfiguration.

Furthermore, migration for employment, study, investment and marriage has contributed to creating opportunities for transforming and reconfiguring family structures amongst Chinese communities abroad as a result of their increased geographical movement, socio-economic mobility and interaction with other cultures. The literature covering the experiences of individuals within these new family formations is multifold, for instance the experiences of “parachute children” and “astronaut fathers” of Hong Kong and Taiwanese origin in English-speaking countries, the “study mama” in the context of their children’s education in Singapore, Chinese wives in South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong, as well as Vietnamese, Laotian and Russian women married to Chinese citizens.

This ongoing family restructuring warrants a timely examination of how men, women, children and elders as actors negotiate this reconfiguration whilst acquiring new roles inside and outside the family domain. It is insufficient to project migrant men mainly as risk-seekers, exploited labourers or resourceful entrepreneurs without attending to their experiences as sons, husbands and fathers of seeking transnational marriage and contributing to family wellbeing. Likewise, it would be too restrictive to fail to shed light on migrant women’s economic agency and exercise of citizenship outside the family, continuing instead to view women only as daughters, wives, mothers and daughters-in-law in their global movement. Socially and legally regarded as dependants, the subjective accounts of children and the elderly, either migrating or being left behind, are indispensable for understanding the struggle of Chinese families for their settlement and betterment. In sum, the research agenda of current scholarship unhelpfully renders invisible the relationships and activities of Chinese migrants inside and outside of the sphere of family.

In light of these reflections, this interdisciplinary workshop aims to discuss the existence and implications of various forms of invisibility concerning the intersecting spheres of marriage, mobility and family formation in Chinese social and cultural contexts. This may include, but should not be limited to:

- How do men, women, children and elders draw upon socio-political, economic, cultural or legal resources in response to the challenges brought by transnational family arrangements?
- How do women exercise their agency, not only within but also beyond the family domain, such as in the political, economic, and civil society spheres?
- How does the geographical and socio-economic mobility of Chinese migrants, as individuals as well as family members, challenge the conceptualisation of “border”, “frontier”, “borderland” and “boundary”?
- How does the family restructuring give rise to new forms of spousal, parental and familial intimacy, such as same-sex marriage, single parenthood and the cohabitation of elders, and how do these emerging arrangements contest our understanding of masculinity, femininity and the very concept of “family”?
- How do literary and artistic creations project the evolving experiences of Chinese migrants as individuals and family members?

Using both individual and family as units of analysis, this workshop hopes to draw out the dynamic inside the family realm amongst its members and the interactions between family and the state and society in a global context. By including children and elders in this investigation, this workshop aims at analysing migration not only as a geographical movement but also how mobility intersects with temporality. By uncovering the “invisible” relationships and activities of men, women, children and elders, this workshop will contribute to the rethinking of the concepts of nation, border, gender, family and time that are often taken for granted when investigating the complexities of transnational migration.

A series of events have been already confirmed for this workshop. **Professor Janet Carsten** at the University of Edinburgh will deliver a keynote speech. Furthermore, ***Nowhere to Call Home. A Tibetan in Beijing*** (2014), an award-winning documentary directed by **Jocelyn Ford** will be screened on the first day of the workshop, followed by a Q&A session with the director. Another documentary entitled ***Border People*** (2018), directed by Dr. **Elena Barabantseva**, will feature in the second day of the workshop, followed by Q&A hosted by Dr. Barabantseva for her filming and observations of Vietnamese-Chinese marriages in the borderland.