

# **The Impact of Migration on Emnambithi Households: A Class and Gender Analysis**

## **Abstract**

This dissertation is a study of social reproduction in different classes of migrant households in Emnambithi, a town in northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It traces the history of households in this community under the impact of racialised dispossession and migration, and illustrates how households were stratified into distinct classes. The three classes identified are a semi-professional, educated class, a migratory working class, and the marginalised, a segment of the “bantustan” population who never had the possibility of working in the capitalist economy during apartheid. The research then focuses on the gendered nature of social reproduction in households in the post-apartheid era, when this community continues to be shaped by migration. The research illustrates that class-based advantage and disadvantage are reproduced in post-apartheid South Africa. The dissertation analyses the different ways in which household members – predominantly migrant and resident women – deal with daily provisioning and consumption, education and care of the dependants of migrants in the absence of some members of the household. The study argues that social reproduction varies significantly in different classes of households. The class-based and gendered nature of social reproduction has implications for an understanding of developmental needs in post-apartheid South Africa, and this research opens up ways in which job creation and social policies could lead to class-based redress and gender equity.

**Keywords:** care, class, gender, households, marginalised, migration, racialised dispossession, social reproduction, work, working class