Annotated Bibliography to “Understanding Women and Migration: A Literature Review”

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1. Introduction

Data indicates that at least since the 1960s female migrants have accounted for nearly half of all international migrants worldwide. The “feminization of migration” has recently been captured in a growing body of literature focused on gender and migration. This annotated bibliography covers research on gender and migration published after the year 2000, with the understanding that current literature will pull from seminal publications pre-2000. The search for literature focused on publications from well-known and relevant organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration and the World Bank, as well as searches specifically targeting the topics of K NOMAD’s Thematic Working Groups and literature by the respective Chairs and Co-Chairs of K NOMAD. It also incorporates background papers from the 2009 Human Development Report “Overcoming Barriers: Human mobility and development.”

There are many key questions that experts on gender and migration hope to address, including how gender norms shape migration, how remittances affect gender equality, and how migrant households allocate resources. The annotated bibliography segments the literature thematically to facilitate finding answers to these overarching questions, using headings like “Social and Gender Norms.” Other sections include an overview section for studies that highlight multiple aspects of gender and migration, as well as a section listing studies by region. Literature that is highly useful is marked with an asterisk (*).

2. General Overview on Gender and Migration


This paper addresses the migration-development nexus, uses a gender perspective at all stages of analysis and programming, and looks at gaps in legislation and provides recommendations for public policies. The paper looks at statistics of migrant women and regional variations, the benefits and the challenges presented, and international efforts like CEDAW to improve migration for women. Recommendations include addressing the root causes of migration (e.g. poverty, lack of economic opportunities, gender discrimination), bilateral agreements between countries, eliminating restrictions on migration, ensuring safe migration channels, support for migrants, protections for trafficking victims, and more sex-disaggregated data.


The article primarily looks at the variation of migration between OECD and non-OECD countries, with some information on gender. Non-OECD migrants have a slightly higher percentage of male migrants than female migrants. OECD countries are destinations for more high-skilled and female migrants, but there is a rising appeal of non-OECD destinations for female migrants. As incomes increase so do the percentages of high-skilled and female emigrants abroad. The article includes data on the numbers of women migrating. On average, brain drain for females is 15 percent

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higher than for males. The authors share that women’s human capital is an important determinant of labor productivity, children’s education, and economic growth.


The paper looks at family reunification and network-driven migration resulting in household labor, and the effects on native Italian women. It begins with a review of literature on the subject. The authors find that the higher the number of immigrants that provide household services the more time native Italian women spend at work without affecting their labor force participation. The authors also find that immigration rises as a substitute to publicly provided welfare services.


The article looks at the feminization of South American intra-regional migration. It describes recent changes and trends, and focuses on the experiences of female migrants, relating to empowerment, the concept of global care chains, the implications on motherhood, and the labor market experiences. It also discusses female trafficking.


The paper provides an overview of ILO research on women, gender, and the informal economy. The focus is on informal work, which women and migrant women often take part in. Regarding migrant women, the paper briefly touches on how economies are experiencing jobless growth resulting in migrants being underemployed or working in casual labor. Women are often paid the least in the informal economy and often vulnerable and unprotected.


Clemens discusses migration and development and the concept of “brain drain.” The author looks at what development is and whether regulations of mobility advance development. The author refers to studies on schooling of children of migrants, fertility rates of migrants, and rates of emigration of highly-skilled women compared to highly-skilled men.


The article reviews the norms that affect the decision to migrate and the outcomes of migration, and the gendered sending and receiving of remittances. The authors give examples from various countries and find that poorer households are likely to have women migrate, that women may suffer when separated from migrating spouses, and that the expectations for daughters to remit causes migration. In some cases, women want to stay abroad while men are eager to return home, which can affect how income is used. The authors also look at relative deprivation and how
women may envy migrants and want to migrate themselves. When women migrate they rely on social networks to help facilitate the process and reduce risks.


The report focuses on the impact of immigration, Europe’s experience on employment, wages, and economic growth, lessons on integration, the impact of emigration, and the role of diaspora. The report discusses the difficulties of migrant women in integrating into the labor market, with most oriented toward low-skilled occupations or facing discrimination. The report offers data and graphs on the share of foreign women in developed countries’ labor forces. The article also provides recommendations, a few of which relate to women, including addressing integration challenges, training and development for vulnerable groups, and educational programs for children, which may also help women gain mobility outside the home.


This article focuses on migration and deprivation, livelihoods, migration as a social process, and policies that support migration. The author claims that policies ignore migration to reduce migration. There are negative aspects of migration, but a better understanding is needed on the capabilities and strategies of poor people. The article looks at female migration across and within regions, the types of jobs performed, and the motivations for migration. It also looks at family structure and the impact of migration.


The paper looks at how migrants can affect structural change, and the need to specify dimensions within the relationship of human mobility and development. The paper briefly looks at gender relations and the effects of migration. Women left behind may experience more autonomy but there is also evidence of no impact on gender roles, or even a reinforcement of traditional gender roles. These changes may be gradual. The paper notes women work as domestic workers, and indicates some protections for women, such as in the Philippines and with international conventions.


The paper begins with an examination of recent trends in women’s migration, internationally and internally. It discusses gender-differentiation in the process of migration, and the different types of female migration, such as marriage migration, family migration, forced migration, and migration for work. It looks at the gendered effects of migration and women’s varied experiences. It also looks at the sending of remittances and impacts on households, as well as issues for returning migrants. Finally, it concludes with recommendations for policy with a gender perspective.
The study of gender and migration has either been an “add and stir” fix or a focus on sex-role theory. The author discusses the gendered roles women play and the way it shapes gendered patterns of migration. There continue to be patriarchal constraints; however, women in the US seem to have more transferrable skills, with migrant women finding jobs faster, working and earning more than men in California. Husbands may also do more housework after migrating, and immigrant girls obtain higher levels of education than their brothers. However, young girls still face gender discrimination and stereotyping.


The paper focuses on major trends in international migration in Asia, and the subsequent outcomes. The paper looks at the feminization of migration in Asia. It notes major sending countries, like the Philippines and Indonesia, and notes that unskilled women predominantly migrate. Migrants thus have low wages and low status, and are more vulnerable to exploitation and risks. These migrants do not have the same access to higher education as male counterparts. High-skilled female migrants generally move for family-related migration. The author also looks at marriage migration.

International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2012). Rural Women and Migration. IOM.

This note by IOM discusses the different challenges and opportunities faced by migrating rural women, including cultural norms and restrictions to travel, the use of support networks or recruitment agencies, and the subsequent issues of abuse many women face. The article touches on the types of migration, including marriage migration, economic migration, and forced migration, and how rural women navigate through each, as well as the effect of male migration leaving women behind and in charge of the households. Finally, IOM offers policy objectives to support rural women.


This article examines how internal migration patterns in the US workforce differ by sex, marital status, and among migrants and their families left behind. It looks at the economic effects for movers and non-movers, including decision making, and how migration differs for married or single migrants. It finds that women face labor discrimination, and that married women have moved for their husbands at the risk of their own careers. It looks at the gains from migration in the short-term and long-term for men and women.


The article discusses the prevalence of South-South migration and the reasons for high South-South flows. The paper has one small section on female migration, and indicates that female
migrants are more represented in developed countries though the difference between developed and developing countries is small. It also discusses the difference of female migratory flows in specific countries, and remarks that migrant women are susceptible to abuse and exploitation. The article looks more broadly at the integration process for South-South migration, again citing that women are victims of exploitation and harassment. It concludes with a discussion on the importance of integration and how to promote social cohesion.


The paper looks at the trends in international migration and the likely effects of the recession on migration. In looking at trends, the paper reports on the numbers of migrant women in various sectors. It notes that declining fertility rates make employment more available for women. Most migrant women are caregivers, in part in response to the aging population, which results in global care chains as women leave their own children behind. The impact of migration on families is mixed. The Philippines experience high migration and have a protective system in place for migrants. The Middle East is seeing more female migration.


The paper highlights similar information to the 2003 paper, and begins with trends and statistics on female migration worldwide. It discusses the impact and outcomes of migration on women, ranging from empowerment to unemployment, remittances and diasporas, and discusses the legal barriers and traditional roles that constrain migrant women. The paper concludes with policy recommendations to maximize the development payoff from the migration of women.


The article pulls together recent information on migration and gender as it relates to remittances, brain drain, returning migrants, diaspora, and the difference types of migration experienced by women, including internal and international migration, forced migration, marriage or family reunification migration, and economic migration. The paper raises important questions to consider regarding gender and migration, as well as program and policy suggestions to improve the protection and rights of migrant women.


The book covers a range of gender-related development topics within health, the environment, rural and urban settings. One section focuses on migration and provides a general overview of trends and ratios of female migration, citing specific examples of the Caribbean island of Montserrat as well as Lesotho. The section also highlights types of migration for women, destination countries, and the types of labor conducted. The book also discusses the effect of migration on rural areas, indicating that men continue to control the household left behind and that female-headed households are often poorer.

The book provides a general overview of gender trends in migration, and discusses how women migrating affects households. It compiles case studies from Mexico, Ghana, and the United States. It also offers advice for further research and relevant policies.


This paper discusses the size of Europe’s migrant population, its demographic structure, and the socioeconomic status of migrants. In terms of gender, the paper offers useful statistics and information on unemployment rates for men and women, as well as compares rates for migrant women and native women. It offers data across regions. In general, the gap is wider for women than men.


The paper highlights two main points – the lack of strictly comparable data on immigrants, and the possibility of using the European Labour Force Survey as a source of information on immigrants. The paper looks at estimates and employment rates of immigrants in the EU. The article briefly compares the rate of migration by sex in various regions and the differences in unemployment by sex.


The article begins with an analysis of increasing trends in female migration. Migrant women work in gender-segregated labor and are vulnerable. The UN adopted the Resolution on Violence Against Migrant Women Workers in 1994. The author discusses the theories behind why some countries have more female emigration, and decides on an “integrative approach,” explaining that for emigration women must have autonomy and decision-making power in the household, the social environment must be accommodating, and the country must be integrated into the global economy and induce women’s internal mobility.


The paper discusses a survey on migrants in North Carolina and their communities in Mexico, looking at the variance of labor, power, and emotional attachments in families. The survey finds that gender relations are not consistent across different gender dimensions. Some gender relations are discarded, others modified, and others reinforced. Findings show that women are more likely to be employed in the United States than in Mexico. This is due to a lack of opportunities in Mexico and the proliferation of low-skill service jobs in the United States. Residence in the US has no direct effect on the allocation of chores and financial responsibilities, relationship control, sexual negotiation, or emotional dissonance. Changes are through labor
force participation and social support. Regular contact with the family allows women to gain more control over their relationships and increases women’s power, but extended contact also hinders gender equality.

Pessar, P. R. (2005). Women, Gender, and International Migration Across and Beyond the Americas: Inequalities and Limited Empowerment. Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. UN DESA.

The paper examines migration as a gendered phenomenon, looking at the feminization of migration and the demand for immigrant labor as well as gendered labor. It reviews the change in gendered ideologies and relations with partners, children that stay behind, and migrant women. It also looks at remittances and diasporas from a gendered perspective. It provides a case study on Guatemalan refugees and how gender played a role.


The article addresses the dearth of research on gender and migration and offers information on the concept of “gender” and how location of birth and position in society play into the analysis. It analyzes how states favor men, and the exclusion encourages women to settle in countries where they are more favored. Much of the article focuses on the structure, frameworks, and hierarchies that disadvantage women, resulting in different abilities to migrate or gain legal status. The article looks at gender relations and how male and female migrants differ and the effects on agency. It finishes with suggestions to improve frameworks and analyze these dynamics.


The manual serves as a learning guide and provides material for workshops on migration and development. The manual provides an overview of gender, migration, and development, offers statistics on remittances and global care chains from a gender perspective, and discusses migration policies and migrant women’s rights. Relevant points include gender stereotypes of women and their role as migrants, gender-segregation of jobs for migrant women, the global care chain of women migrating to care for the children of others while leaving their children under someone else’s care, and the vulnerabilities and inequity faced by migrant women. The manual also points to ways to empower women through migration.


The book looks at migration and climate change from a broad perspective, but has one section on displacement, climate change, and gender. That section looks at how environmental changes affect women’s roles in gathering firewood, etc., as well as environmental push factors for women’s migration. The chapter also provides general information on migration, including information on remittances, norms, and statistics. The section then focuses on disasters and how women are affected differently due to poorer status, higher risks, higher needs, the outcomes of female-headed households, and the differences in out-migration and return-migration.

The author writes that migration has the potential to reconfigure gender relations and power inequalities. Many migrant women are disadvantaged by race/ethnicity, status, skill, and gender discrimination. Women are concentrated in low-skilled jobs and have a lower labor force participation than national women. Migrant women also experience de-skilling. As a result, some women are venturing into entrepreneurship. Many women also work as health workers. The article looks at gendered aspects of remittances, and the empowering nature of migration. However, it finds that many trafficked women are actually aware of what awaits them in jobs, but continue due to economic needs. The author also writes on integration experiences and the relationship with origin societies, as well as information on the health and mental health of migrants. It concludes with a look at legal frameworks by governments and international actors.


This book on migration contains chapters on citizenship, rights, and exclusions, and access to social provisions, social security, health care, social protections, and public distribution systems. Within this context, the book incorporates gender analysis, looking at gender-specific vulnerabilities. The book also discusses transnational parenthood and the impact on families, women’s inability to claim benefits after returning from domestic service positions, and issues with dual nationality and gender equality. It also touches on the Geneva Convention and promotion of women’s rights, protections for refugee women, and the rates of PTSD with asylum seekers.


The author writes about unskilled and semi-skilled migrants’ contributions to development, including the transfer of skills, remittances, and social and economic development. The article discusses the working conditions of low-skilled and irregular migrant workers, and looks at the recruitment industry. The article proposes suggestions for sending and receiving governments and civil society organizations in each section. On gender, the author notes the high prevalence of women in domestic work and the care sector, as well as restrictions to mobility, and the risks of trafficking and exploitation. The author suggests countries ratify the 1990 UN Convention, consider domestic/care work under labor laws, and that countries and organizations should support women through services and awareness programs.


The report provides a thorough look at the increasing migration of adolescent girls and their experiences. It covers why girls migrate, including education and poverty, how girls move and the risks they face, as well as their experiences in employment, education, and health. The report
concludes with a discussion on current programming targeting migrant adolescent girls and offers suggestions for further action.


This report focuses on the problems of violence against migrant workers and their access to justice. It begins with general data on migrant women and the risks and potential areas of abuse. It lists legislation, policies, and programs that are or ought to be implemented by Member States, for example the Convention against Transnational Crime, examples of country-specific legislation, and existing preventive measures, training, and capacity-building programs. The report concludes with recommendations for future action and urges states to ratify and implement international instruments.


The selected papers cover a wide range of migration topics as they relate to the MDGs, including poverty reduction, remittances, health, the environment, global partnerships, and gender, and offers several case studies as well. The papers largely report on the growing trends of female migrants and the vulnerabilities and health issues migrant women face. Asis authors the paper “International Migration and Prospects for Gender Equality,” which focuses on the many dimensions of gender and migration, including types of migration (marriage, labor, etc.), the different areas of demand for female migrants, gender-differentiated outcomes, the role and status of migrant women, the effects on families and women, and concludes with suggestions for more government efforts and research on the working and living conditions of migrants.


The report begins with an overview of migration, and then specifically focuses on migrant women, including trends, factors linked to decisions to migrate, typical areas of work, wages, health and fertility, remittances, social networks, and policies that affect women, amongst other issues. The report also looks at issues faced by trafficked or exploited migrant women, refugees and asylum-seekers, and the need to safeguard and protect the rights of migrants.

UNFPA and IOM. (2006). Women on the Move. UNFPA, IOM.

This short paper provides a review of women and migration, including information on why migration is empowering, the risks women face, and what role women play as migrants, during transit, and even upon return. The paper also recommends data collection, cross-national policies and agreements, and supportive programs for migrants.

UNFPA and The International Migration Policy Programme. (2004). Meeting the Challenges of Migration: Progress Since the ICPD. UNFPA, IMP.

The report reviews information on migration since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) ten years before in 1994. The document looks at trends and data in
migration, as well as human rights and migration policy, and different types of migrants, including economic migrants, refugees, internal migrants, and trafficked migrants. Within each category, the report discusses migrant women, including the growing number of migrant women, differences in health care or discrimination against women, remittances from and for women, and recruitment of high-skilled and low-skilled migrant women.


The report looks at the evolution of migration, including the feminization of migration, as well as remittances, poverty and inequities, the impacts of migration, future issues of climate change and disease, and suggestions to strengthen banking and diasporas for development. It looks at female migration, the difficult work and hours faced by women, burdens put on families left behind, the variation in remittance-sending by women, gender-segregated labor, cultural norms that act as barriers to migration, and gender inequalities based on the rural/urban division. Women may experience more social mobility in places like the United States than men, a change in norms, and may not prefer to return to their home communities. The article also discusses gender and vulnerability to HIV and diseases, as well as gender inequalities with climate change.


The paper focuses on gender and agency through qualitative research conducted in Niger. The study highlights the opportunities and constraints Nigerien women face in regards to mobility and migration. It looks closely at the norms and traditions that define a “good wife” and the roles that men and women maintain.


The report examines laws across 152 countries to determine women’s legal access to institutions, ability to own and/or control property, ability to get a job, legal incentives to work, ability to gain credit, access to courts, and protection from violence. In terms of migration, it highlights women’s mobility and countries where restrictions are in place, as well as discriminatory citizenship laws and the ability to get a job without the permission of men.


The paper looks at the relationship between international migration and human development, specifically at the factors that drive migration, the impact and remittances for source countries, and the policies that can improve development impact. Regarding gender, it finds that migration results in a 3.3 percentage point increase in the likelihood of girls attending school. Boys are more likely to be working, though schooling may reduce the mean hours worked per week. High outmigration leads to more women at home but less political engagement by women and voting outcomes more adverse towards women. Yang also notes that male Kenyan migrants may monitor their wives and enforce remittance instructions.

The author pulls together statistics on the percentage of female migrants from 1960 to 2000 across the world and by region. The paper also distinguishes percentages of female migrants by developed or developing countries.

3. Social and Gender Norms


This paper provides evidence of remittances as a way to reduce risk and improve social development. The author argues that migration and remittances have the potential to improve well-being, stimulate economic growth, and reduce poverty, but the effects on equality are ambiguous. Migration and remittances are nuanced, making targeting policies toward improving the developmental impact difficult. In terms of gender, women may not necessarily experience autonomy or gender equality due to migration. Instead, traditional gender norms may be reinforced. Gender roles are slow and resistant to change.


De Jong highlights the expectations and norms involved in the intention to migrate. The article looks specifically at the Thailand National Migration Survey, and reflects on Thai gender roles. Norms were found to be a powerful determinant of migration behavior. Thai migrant women are motivated to repay their parents for raising them, and parents encourage female migration believing daughters are more likely to remit, though evidence shows comparable remittance rates with men. Prior migration is a highly significant determinant of migration for women, but not for men, due to women’s reliance of migrant networks. The article also looks at how marital status affects migration differently by gender.


This article discusses the effects of labor migration in eastern and southern Africa. It finds that men may still control household finances and remittances even when they migrate, leaving women with little authority and dependence on their husbands for income. Although wives of a migrant usually had a greater managerial role in the household than wives of non-migrants, more decision-making power threatened the authority of men and local social order. Older women could negotiate sharing crop income and financial responsibilities. Women that traded regularly had more authority and the income gave them more voice. In Lesotho, changes in mining eventually resulted in more joint-decision making, though not necessarily more gender equality.

The study looks at how patriarchal and matrifocal societies influence gendered migration. The study looks at five Latin American countries. Mexico and Costa Rica are both more patriarchal and subsequently has less female out-migration, compared to Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, which are more matrifocal and have higher female out-migration. Puerto Rico falls in the middle, both with societal norms and female out-migration. In patriarchal societies, formal or informal unions with men result in lower female out-migration.


The authors offer a review on the effects of remittances for both sending and receiving countries. It finds that migration leads to increased incomes and poverty reduction, improved health and educational outcomes, and economic development. However, issues of integration, job competition, and accessing social services can be difficult for migrants. The paper concludes with policy recommendations. Regarding gender, the paper notes that in Pakistan temporary migration results in an increase in high school enrollment, especially for girls. However, migrants’ daughters’ domestic workload also increases, and children are found to cope negatively with separation. Migration can change gender roles, with men more likely to engage in care for children and the elderly, and women becoming empowered and having more decision-making power. Migration can also affect fertility rates.


The article looks at migration and the family in Asia, specifically looking at how migration and globalization are changing social, cultural, economic, and political conditions. Female migration has become more common, especially among Filipino women, and occurs “for the sake of the family.” Women may also migrate to escape gender norms and patriarchy. There may be emotional and psychological effects on families left-behind. Men may return having done more domestic work, but will attempt to reclaim their masculinity at home.

4. Recruitment of Migrants


The authors focus on migration and the Philippines, first offering a historical background. It continues to discuss the laws emphasizing migration in the Philippines, including the regulations on recruitment agencies. It discusses the effects on Filipino domestic workers and the potential for abuses, as well as the migration of nurses. It provides information on general wages for these workers, as well as remittances.


This paper highlights the fact that the institutional approach to understanding international labor migration has largely ignored gender, even though gender influences recruitment for overseas labor. It finds that both men and women are at risk of exploitation. Recruitment agencies channel
potential female migrants into specific “female” occupations, whereas men have a greater variety of occupations available. Thai men have been migrating abroad longer than women, so men have been found to have more networks and social contacts living abroad to help. Women were found to rely on social networks developed once in the destination country.

5. Domestic Workers

The paper offers an analysis of Filipino domestic workers, most of whom are women migrating internally or internationally. The paper looks at the rights and working conditions of these domestic workers and notes that there are marked differences between migrant and local domestic workers in educational qualifications and work experience. Push-pull factors are discussed, as well as the backgrounds of internal and international domestic workers. The findings are that domestic helpers that work overseas tend to be older, better-educated, and have a broader range of professional experiences, and often come from more urban areas. The paper also looks at legislative efforts for governments to protect domestic workers, including ILO’s efforts.


This study provides an extensive review of female migrant workers from the Philippines. The report looks at unemployment in the Philippines and the need for migration. The report discusses identity, changing norms, returning migrants, the psychological impacts of migration. It analyzes the impact and theories of gendered migration.


This paper focuses on domestic work and the difficulties in regulating it and respecting workers’ rights. The article looks at the causes of outsourcing for domestic work, an analysis of the public schemes and their impact on a number of variables, as well as suggestions to improve the rights of domestic workers. While some government recruitment of domestic workers can be seen as helping women, it also reinforces the perception that care work is women’s work.


The authors explain the high risks to exploitation and abuse that accompanies domestic work due to the exclusion of labor laws, the isolation of work in private homes, and different forms of employment contracts. The report discusses the ILO Domestic Workers Convention as a way to address these issues, and explains the components and steps taken to craft the Convention.
6. High-Skilled Migration


The article provides trends across countries for skilled migration, particularly statistics on high-skilled women’s migration. It explains that women in developing countries face less access to tertiary education and high-skilled jobs, thus the emigration of educated women results in higher relative losses than the emigration of skilled men.


The paper addresses a dearth of data on highly-skilled female migrants and offers statistics on growth of highly-skilled female migrants. It also discusses areas in which women work, labor market discrimination that women face, and some of the reasons why women may be underemployed, such as discriminatory laws. It reviews the training and out-migration of skilled women, policies of immigrant-receiving countries, and gender and the on-arrival accreditation of qualifications and skills.


The article discusses theories of professional migration, the internationalization of professions, and the typologies of skilled migration. The article discusses types of skilled migration positions that migrant women hold, particularly nursing, due to the demand for nurses in the Middle East, the US, Canada, and Australia. It also discusses recruitment visas and the emerging issue of exploitation. The article touches on gender bias, as well as the likelihood that women will forego their careers for the sake of the family.

7. Gender-Specific Vulnerabilities


This report focuses on the abuses Indonesian migrant domestic workers face before migrating and in Hong Kong. It uses survey data from the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union, and reports rates and types of abuse faced by respondents. It also indicates that the governments of both Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Indonesia are not complying with international conventions or they own provisions, and ought to be doing more. The report ends with recommendations.


This article looks at xenophobia and racism towards migrants. It notes cultural differences that affect migrants, including headscarves for Muslim women, and the heightened risks for female migrants who are more at risk of sexual exploitation. The paper provides examples of
maltreatment, including pregnant women being arrested in hospitals immediately after giving birth.

8. Gender Analysis of Remittances


The authors use a database of over 12,000 African migrants to analyze remittances, and finds that male migrants remit more than female migrants, contrary to the perception that women are better remitters. It also finds those that are more educated and have higher incomes remit more as well. Remittances are also shown to increase over the first 10 years of time abroad.


The article shows the trade-offs, causes, and effects of migration, and also provides policy proposals. It provides a brief look at remittances by gender, noting that no difference is found in expenditures by men and women. The male labor supply is more elastic to remittances than that of females. It shows data on remittances by men and women and dependent and self-employed workers.


The article provides an overview of migration by women. It explains that migration can be empowering or restrictive, discusses measures to enable female migration in countries like the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia, and discusses the role women play in remittances. It also discusses temporary migration and whether or not it is beneficial, finding that resettlement may decrease remittances sent home.


This article looks at surveys on remittances from migrants from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. It looks at the study by Massey et al. on Latin American countries, patriarchy, and levels of female-outmigration. It finds that female migration is not necessarily a predictor for remittances, though it is for the Dominican Republic. The presence of sons living abroad is a predictor of remittances for Mexican households, both daughters are more associated with remittances with Dominican households. It highlights Grassmuck and Pessar’s findings that Dominican women want to remain in the United States and set roots there. It concludes that family structure and gender roles are important determinants of remittances.


This lengthy report compiles a comprehensive review of remittances. The literature on women states that women are more reliable sources of remittances and may be preferred to migrate.
Most unskilled migrant workers are women that work as domestic servants, with high percentages in the Middle East. Unmarried women remit high percentages of income, but when married focus more on the needs of their children and spouses and remittances may lessen. The report also discusses that female migrants are not from the poorest households, and these households view domestic services as shameful and unattractive work. The poorest have more barriers to migration. Households prefer to send married and mature women to avoid corruption. Women may have to do repeat journeys to continue keeping families above poverty. The report shares that children of migrant women bear the brunt with under-nutrition and poorer educational performance.


This paper looks at how destination countries’ migration policies affect rural welfare in origin countries. It finds that for Mexico-to-US migration, remittance elasticities are higher for men than women, and from Nicaragua-to-Costa Rica migration, they are higher for women. Overall, the paper’s results indicate that the migrant-sending economy is more sensitive to changes in the economic returns to male than female migration.

9. Effects of Migration on Families and Household Roles


The paper focuses on 14 countries and migration and the drivers and differences in impacts. The article briefly looks at the feminization of migration, though young men are more commonly emigrants of specific countries. It highlights the restrictions women face, but also the higher pay and stability of some “female” work. The article also looks at the increased burden on families’ eldest daughters, resulting in lower education.


This study analyzes whether families that move together for the male/husband’s career result in detrimental effects on the female/wife’s employment status. This study analyzed census microdata in the U.S. and Britain and found that regardless of economic situation or cultural norms regarding gender and migration, women’s employment status was harmed by family migration. The study looks at couples that move together and posits that studies that do not analyze linked migrant couples are likely to underestimate the negative effects of family migration on women’s employment status.


The article primarily focuses on migration as a means of investing, such as investment in human capital. It looks at the various aspects of remittances, including the potential of dependency, the
effects on the economy, etc. The article briefly touches on female labor force participation resulting in “latch key” children, and finds little or no lasting negative effects of women’s work on their children. However, it notes the true effects of migration and remittances on children are notoriously difficult to identify.


The report studies the effects of remittances on the economy and how migration affects social development, including education, health, child well-being, and families. It concludes with policy implications and recommendations. Regarding gender, the paper discusses that gender roles do not necessarily change due to migration, and women may actually be more vulnerable in countries of destination. When mothers migrate there are more ramifications, with children experiencing resentment towards their mothers, unlike when fathers migrate. Remittances play a large role in migrant families, but the report states that households in Ghana receive less remittances from wives than they receive from husbands. While migration may be empowering, the shift in gender roles may not be positive but lead to more emotional and physical burden. Girls may have to modify their lives to take over care-giving and domestic tasks.


This article looks at the effects of migration on children in Colombia. Separation may be difficult for children, and remittances’ impacts are not homogenous. The article looks briefly at the stigma migrant mothers face, and the difficulties of separation their children face. However, it notes that mothers continue to care for their children, and that there are positive effects from remittances on children’s education, health, and housing. The author recommends strengthening the role of schools to support children and families, and preparation of families, including the children, for migration.


This paper explores the relationship between temporary economic migration and investment in child schooling. It finds potential positive effects of temporary economic migration on human capital accumulation are large. Moreover, the gains are much greater for girls, yielding a very substantial reduction in gender inequalities in access to education. It does not find any protective effect of migration induced female headship on schooling outcomes for girls. Rather, female headship appears to protect boys at the cost of girls.


This study finds that the effect of migration on education is negative, with young males in migrant households themselves migrating and young females leaving school to engage in housework. Rates of children in school drop from age 12 to age 18. Evidence points to a significant negative effect of migration on schooling for 16-18 year old girls. Since girls do housework instead, they are losing out both on schooling and income.

The paper explores how irregular status impacts a range of human development outcomes for labor migrants. It states that it is imperative that policy makers take action to protect migrants, ensuring basic human rights and positive outcomes from their migration experiences. The paper briefly discusses gendered inequalities of migration, including oppression and risks. It looks at the effects of migration on women and girls’ health.


The article reviews the outcomes of internationally and internally migrating children and the barriers they face in accessing quality schooling. It discusses various channels of how migration affects education of non-migrant children in migrant households. The impact of migration shows that girls tend to benefit relatively more than boys. Girls’ education increases, especially with mothers that have less than 3 years of schooling. Women’s autonomy has increased with husbands away, and that they spend more of the higher income on children’s education and healthcare. However, female headship appears to protect boys at the expense of girls. Girls are more likely to do housework and childcare. The article also discusses the attachment of children to migrating parents and the stresses of separation.

10. Migrant and Migrant Household Health


This paper studies the health performance of immigrants relative to natives. It finds women migrants’ health is worse. Women are less intensive about visiting physicians than native, except for women from Eastern Europe. When women go to the doctor, they tend to do it more often. Women and people employed are likely to have less risky behaviors, but women with more years of completed schooling are associated with more likelihood of consuming addictive substances. Women are less likely to have additional health insurance, except if they completed more years of schooling or if they were born in LAC region. Except for older women, women have more out-of-pocket health expenditures.


The study looks closely at the health status of migrants from Turkey, Surinam, Antilles, and Morocco in the Netherlands. The data available suggests that the health status of migrants is less favorable than of the indigenous population, and that children and adult women are more at risk of being overweight, particularly the Turkish and Moroccan groups. It presents more detailed findings, such as that Moroccan and Turkish girls were more likely to skip breakfast than boys or Dutch boys and girls.

The authors examine migrant health, mental health, rates of suicide, addiction, and access and use of health care. The article provides a general overview, and includes a few notes on gender differences, including additional language barriers in accessing health care for women, as well as higher rates of suicide amongst younger women and second generation migrants in places like the United Kingdom.


The paper gives a broad overview of gender and migration, including trends of migrant women, and the higher risks and vulnerabilities faced by women. It notes that migrants tend to be of better health, thus their travel abroad. Women that follow their husbands may not have as much access to health services, or are confined to familial networks and not social networks, which may help increase access to health care. The paper reports that female immigrants migrating from source countries far away from Western societies have higher prevalence of mental disorders than men, which also implies an underutilization of in-hospital mental services by immigrant women.


This paper studies migrants living in Spain between the ages 25-64, and finds that inequalities between natives and migrants from poor areas were wider in, or limited to, manual social classes and especially women.


The paper explores how irregular status impacts a range of human development outcomes for labor migrants. It states that it is imperative that policy makers take action to protect migrants, ensuring basic human rights and positive outcomes from their migration experiences. The paper briefly discusses gendered inequalities of migration, including oppression and risks. It looks at the effects of migration on women and girls’ health.


The authors find that migrating from Tonga to New Zealand leads to mental health improvements, in particular for women and migrants with low levels of mental health. Increase in income has slightly higher improvements in mental health for women compared to men. The same is found for employment status and women’s mental health. Women are more likely than men to say that accessing better public services such as health care is a very important reason for wanting to
migrate and less likely to say that earning money to start a business in Tonga is a very important reason.

11. Child Migration

Annotation: This paper focuses on the impact of remittances on child labor in Ghana. The study finds that households receiving remittances have a lower probability of children participating in the labor force. This is seen primarily with international remittances, as domestic remittances seem to have no statistically significant effect on child labor. International remittances also reduce the number of hours children work. The paper highlights research on the effects on female children, and the difference between child labor amongst boys and girls. Boys’ labor is valued more and boys are more likely to be engaged in child labor than girls. The paper concludes by affirming positive results from international remittance on reducing child labor.


Annotation: The author focuses on rural African youth as some of the most disadvantaged and marginalized in the world. It discusses the increase of youth migrating for survival, but resulting in more vulnerable and tragic situations. The article discusses female youth migrants as even more vulnerable and exploited, at times abused or forced to have sex and contracting HIV/AIDs. The article concludes by urging African governments to prioritize pro-agricultural rural youth programs that offer employment opportunities, and to incorporate youth migration policies that will allow youth to make more empowered choices regarding migration. The aim of the author is to decrease youth migration and marginalization and reduce poverty. The article also provides an annotated bibliography on the subject.


Annotation: This article provides an overview of what is known and unknown about international child migrants, while highlighting the significance of child migration around the world. The author provides statistics for various types of child migrants (labor, unaccompanied/separated, refugees, etc) and briefly contrasts information on migrant boys and girls. The author also shares the reasons why children migrate and how they fare in host countries. The article emphasizes the significant lack of legal and policy tools available for governments to respond well and in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (“CRC”) to the children themselves. Using social science research, this article briefly sets out the grounds for treating children as unique, arguing that policymakers remember that child migrants as children first and above all. The article then looks at norms and practices that recognize the uniqueness of children and child migrants in particular. Finally, this article suggests examples of how scholars, practitioners, policy makers, and adjudicators might begin to develop better tools to address what sets child migrants apart.
12. Theory on Gender and Migration

Annotation: This report reviews scholarly literature on migration as a gendered phenomenon through a review in anthropology, geography, history, law and society, political science, psychology, sociology, and sexuality studies. The report discusses early literature focusing on the linguistics of the term “gender,” to the development of research that moves beyond women-centered statistics on women, families, and households to instead focus on gendered relationships between identity, place, and community. The authors indicate since the early recognition in the 1970s and 1980s on the paucity of research on gender and migration, research on women, gender, and migration has since progressed.

13. Climate Change and Migration

Annotation: This study takes place in the Ecuadorian Amazon and analyzes the likelihood of migration and difference between men and women, with women more likely to migrate to urban areas than men, who often migrate to other rural areas. The authors highlight several reasons for female urbanization, including higher population density, increasing resource scarcity, and weaker migration networks. The article also focuses on deforestation resulting in more male migration, which continues to result in even more deforestation and migration.


Annotation: In this article the authors outline climate change predictions, and explore the effects of long-term climate change on agriculture, ecological systems, and gender relations, since these could be significant. They identify predicted changes in natural hazard frequency and intensity as a result of climate change, and explore the gendered effects of natural hazards. Women are poorer and restricted by many norms, lack of resources, and consequently are affected different by natural hazards. The article briefly touches on male out-migration and the additional burdens placed on women. The article concludes on the urgent need to integrate gender analyses into public policy-making, and in adaptation responses to climate change.


Annotation: The authors discuss the response of migration to global environmental change, such as climate change. The type of environmental change will affect the decision to move, though differentiating between various push-pull factors is difficult to discern. The article briefly mentions the rise of migration of women and children as differing from men when environmental change, such as poor rainfall, occurs. The article is meant to serve as a tool for operational agencies to provide support to those migrating due to environmental stresses.
14. Laws and Policies Affecting Migrants


This paper examines how laws shape international migration, as well as the constraints of laws. It discusses international institutions and reviews the international agreements and conventions that affect women, children, and issues like human smuggling and trafficking.


The paper reviews the Bangladesh government’s efforts to improve migration, and the areas in need of improvement. It shares that there are information campaigns in both the Philippines and Sri Lanka to improve safe migration. It provides information on various efforts and acts that attempt to assist migrants, particularly migrants in distress.

15. Region-Specific Analysis of Gender and Migration

15.1. Africa


This paper offers a critical analysis of the concept of South-South migration and draws attention to problems, such as lack of definition or rationale between “South” and “North,” and that these definitions change over time, making longitudinal studies difficult. The paper looks at African migration, and looks at the drivers of migration, the role of the State, the contributions of migration, and that more data is required. Within this, it briefly looks at migration of women within the South, including for marriage migration. It offers statistics of marriage migration.


The report examines the contribution of migration to urbanization and looks at Francophone West Africa. It offers information on lower rates of fertility of female migrants, and gender differences in urbanization, including social roles. It concludes that migrants adapt well to cities but that social and economic integration should be studied from a rural point of view.


The article looks at mobility and the ways it shapes South Africa’s politics, economy and society. It looks at trends and the effects of enhancing remittances. Regarding women, it briefly touches
on the denial of emergency medical care for 17 percent of refugees and asylum seekers, and shares an incident of a migrant forced to deliver her child without care. Xenophobia threatens foreigners, and police are discussed as abusing their power with migrants. The article makes the bold statement that women remit significantly less than men. The report concludes with recommendations.


The study looks at migration among 1,500 Kenyan rural youth. In doing so, it briefly states females move in higher rates than males, likely due to marriage. The mother’s education attainment is higher for migrants, and the level of the father’s attainment doesn’t seem to matter. Older females are more likely to have lived in an urban area, but older males tend to stay longer. Women work as temporary or casual domestic service workers, while men are more likely to obtain permanent industrial positions. More older men live outside of Kenya, though older females stay longer. Again, this may be due to marriage. There is faster growth for females in the labor force participation rate.

15.2. East Asia and the Pacific


The article looks at the impact of rural-to-urban migration on income inequality and gender wage gap in source regions in China. The findings included a Kuznets (inverse U-shaped) pattern between migration and income inequality in the sending communities. The estimated relationship between emigration and the gender wage gap also has an inverse U-shaped pattern. Emigration tends to increase the gender wage gap initially, and then tends to decrease it in the sending villages.


Overall, the paper looks at international migration in Asia-Pacific and internal migration in China. It reviews trends and the impacts, patterns, and policy issues. Regarding gender, the article looks at the rates marriage migration, Indonesian migrant women, migrant women in GCC countries, and Filipina workers in the entertainment industry. The author shares that Hong Kong has measures in place to protect migrant women domestic helpers, as does the Philippines. Malaysia and Indonesia also have a MOU to protect domestic helpers. It provides a closer look at Asian countries, like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, etc and the levels of outmigration for women. It reviews remittances on households, the effects on children, and the political participation of diasporas.

The article is specifically on Indonesia and migration. It briefly reviews marriage’s role in migration, the sectors in which women work, and the agreements with countries like Japan to hire women as entertainment workers and nurses. Migrant women are vulnerable to risks and human trafficking.

15.3. Europe and Central Asia


The paper looks at trends in migration from the Commonwealth of Independent States, including the push and pull factors for migration, and the impact of migration on human development. It notes that with mass departure of men, some regions struggle with women and marriage, like in Tajikistan. The article explains how Soviet policies enforced quotas for women’s work, but after the policies were abandoned women struggled to recapture their position in society. Migration has helped women achieve some economic independence and economic status and has helped social norms change. Negative impacts include how women are lured into trafficking positions, or are stuck in low-wage work or unemployment.


This article shows Turkey as a case study, looking at its role in emigration, immigration, and transit, the gains and the losses, and its EU-membership as it relates to migration issues. Turkey signed the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and “The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking, Especially Women and Children, and “The Protocol against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air.” Previously, foreigners could not engage in domestic work, which resulted in thousands of Moldavian women workers being exploited. Turkey later changed the ruling, and also now allowed foreigners married to Turkish citizens to become citizens after three years of marriage. It was harder for men married to Turkish women, but is now standardized for both genders. Before, irregular women migrants obtained residence and work permits through arranged marriages. The majority of irregular labor migrants to Turkey are women. Emigration has brought more autonomy and economic well-being for many Turkish women. The article discusses changing norms for the Turkish.


The paper looks at migration after the Wall in European countries. Eastern Europeans are free to leave and return post-wall. The author looks at a gendered analysis and finds that women have less access to employment, and will often turn to the informal sector, working as domestic helpers, caretakers, or prostitution. Women also play a role in suitcase trading as they are less conspicuous than men or may use prostitution for successful transactions. Polish women use a rotation system, allowing women to continue providing for their family while also working part-time as domestic helpers or caretakers. The article also discusses trafficking.

This report focuses on immigration in Europe, analyzing stocks and flows, the impact of immigration, and offers policy implications. Regarding women, it notes that the lowest labor force participation registered in the EU-15 in 2003 was that of immigrant women of Turkish and North African nationality, illustrating that migrant women (in particular Muslim women) are more likely than men to remain outside the labor market, which makes it more difficult for them to integrate into the receiving society because they are less able to acquire language skills and establish social networks. Some immigrant women, are reluctant to enter the labor market due to cultural reasons. Thus, immigration policies and integration programs should be gender-sensitive and give attention to the social situation and inclusion of migrant women.

15.4. Latin America and the Caribbean


Using the Mexico National Rural Household Survey, several findings emerged in the paper’s analysis of Mexico-U.S. migration. Female migration is lower than male migration and has a steady increase over the 23-year period. The article finds that estimates of a gender’s participation in labor migration do not improve appreciably when the other gender’s migration network is included in the regressions. Policy changes have similar effects on male and female migration, with the exception of GDP growth, which are only significant for female migration. Male migration appears to be sensitive to US economic growth. Female migration was more resilient to NAFTA-related policy changes.


This study examines migrant networks and finds that networks are more important for international than internal moves and that female networks are more important for both men and women than male networks. When Mexicans move to the United States, male migrant networks are more important for prospective male migrants than female migrants, and female migrant networks lower the odds for male migration but increase the likelihood significantly for female migration.


This research examines continuities and changes in the profile of Mexican migration to the United States. The analysis focuses on which states of Mexico are migrating and at what rates, the urbanization within Mexico, as well as how migration has related to immigration. Regarding gender, the statistics show an increase in rates of female migration, though male migrants still dominate.

Data analysis of 14,000 individuals in 43 Mexican villages reveals several mechanisms through which the effects of gender play out in the migration process. Results suggest that migrant networks provide support to new men and women migrants alike, whereas high female employment rates reduce the likelihood that men, but not women, begin migrating. Education effects also emphasize the importance of examining gender differences. In keeping with the literature on Mexican migration, the author finds that men are negatively selected to migrate, but, conversely, that higher education increases migration among women. The findings also question the narrow portrayal of women as associational migrants that follow spouses, disclosing much greater chances of family separation than reunification among migrants’ wives and significantly higher migration risks for single and previously married women than married women.

15.5. Middle East and North Africa


The paper reviews Moroccan gender distinctions in the intention to emigrate. It finds that for women the existence of a migration culture has no effect on the intention to leave the country, whereas family networks abroad tend to increase this intention. Interestingly, women with a paid job and who judge their financial situation negatively have the highest emigration intentions. This may indicate that, among Moroccan women, the more modernized intend to migrate. The more conservative Moroccan women are not likely to express an intention to migrate on their own. Rather, they behave in a manner that suits the husband or family, which may or may not lead to emigration.

15.6. South Asia


The article examines the intersection of gender, space, and mobility, specifically in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to the Arab states. It looks at how gender roles and responsibilities influence differential behavior patterns of currently married and never married women, how it is reflected in the size of remittances and the number or remitters, and the spending patterns of remittances. Migration can also challenge existing relationships of power.


The paper looks at the changing landscape of Bangladesh, and the importance of migration for people’s livelihood strategies and the national economy. It also examines migration patterns according to gender, the rates of women to urban areas, the data on marital status and class, and the risks and vulnerability of women.

The article brings together evidence on migration, drivers and outcomes in India. It discusses the gendered rates of migration in India. The garment units employ large numbers of women, and the conditions are poor. Women left behind are often unaware of AIDS and how to protect themselves with migrating husbands. Young girls also migrate and work, and are preferred over young boys. Migrant women are paid poorly in many processing plants, and live in inadequate factory premises, and those that raise their voices are fired and sent home. Domestic work is also significant for migrant women and girls, as is sex work. The study shows the trends, regions, and ages of domestic workers. Despite the negative aspects, women report better access to schooling for their children, more food intake, and better healthcare.


The article refers to Nepal’s high fertility rate and the resulting emigration and urbanization. It finds a high incidence of poverty with out-migration. Unemployment and underemployment rates are exceedingly high, particularly among females. Most female migration is within districts while most male migration is between districts. A high rate of women migrate for marriage. Almost 66 percent of foreign-born female migrants also came to Nepal for marriage. The article also notes cases of HIV amongst migrants and other risks like trafficking.