



Women on the Move

*Magnitude, Trends and Impacts of the
International Migration of Women*



THE WORLD BANK

Insights from a Policy Roundtable with Experts on International Migration

These comments originate from a policy roundtable on the International Migration of Women organized by the Gender and Development Group at the World Bank.

“Migration policies are often framed as gender neutral in principle, but many times they disproportionately affect women in practice. It is crucial to analyze the gender impacts of policies to avoid unintended discriminatory effects.”

Susan F. Martin, Director of the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University

“In all different fields of public policy, migration is the area where the distance between those who know and those who do is the largest.”

Jan O. Karlsson, former Co-Chair Global Commission on International Migration

“Women who migrate through family unification are economic actors — they work, send remittances, and contribute to the development of their source country.”

Susan F. Martin, Director of the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University

“Often, the types of policies needed in the area of international migration and development to address the problems faced by female migrants are policies that benefit all women and not just migrant women. They have to do with measures to improve the status of women generally.”

Hania Zlotnik, Director of the Population Division, DESA of the UN



New Evidence on the International Migration of Women*

Magnitudes

- About half of the world's migrant population is female, and the share of women in the migrant stock has increased by almost 3 percentage points from 35 million in 1960 to 94 million in 2005 (UN, 2005).
- Africa, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin American and the Caribbean were the regions with large increases in the proportion of women in the migrant stock between 1960 and 2005 (UN, 2005).
- The gender composition of migration flows to the main destination countries in the North differ by region. Flows from Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East tend to be male-dominated, while flows from East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean tend to be female-dominated (Guzmán, 2006).

Map over migration flows to main destination countries in the North



- Male-dominated migration flows
- Female-dominated migration flows

Source: Guzmán, 2006

Trends

- The dynamics and determinants of international migration differ significantly between men and women (Taylor and Richter, 2006).
- Men and women respond differently to migration networks, which may be sector—as well as gender—specific (Taylor and Richter, 2006). For instance, in the U.S. over the long-term, the stock of male migrants has a positive effect on both female and male migration, while the stock of female migrants has a negative effect on both female and male migration (Guzmán, 2006).
- Women may have different motivations to remit than men. Female remitters tend to send money over longer time periods, they send larger amounts to distant family members, and seem to be motivated by altruism to greater extent than men (Orozco et al., 2006).
- U.S. border enforcement expenditures significantly decrease the probability of female migration from Mexico but have no effect on male migration probabilities (Richter and Taylor, 2006).
- Gender as well as age and schooling differences affect the determinants of Mexico-to-U.S. migration and their changes over time. Women migrate at an older age than men, although the probability of migrating decreases for both with age. Schooling is positively associated with female international migration to non-agricultural jobs but has no effect on male migration to either agricultural or non-agricultural jobs (Richter and Taylor, 2006).

Impacts

- The impacts of migration vary with the gender of the migrant, as well as the gender of those left behind (Pfeiffer and Taylor, 2006).
- Migration has gender-specific effects on sending households. Departure of a male migrant from a household in rural Mexico reduces output in cash crop and subsistence agriculture, as well as wage work; a female migrant's departure has no such impacts (Pfeiffer and Taylor, 2006).
- The opportunity costs for migration differ by gender. In rural Mexico, female migration has a negative impact on schooling investments and a positive effect on expenditure on health. By contrast, male migration does not have a significant effect on spending patterns (Pfeiffer and Taylor, 2006).
- In both Pakistan and El Salvador, girls benefit more than boys from migration in terms of education (Mansuri, 2006 and Acosta, 2006).

* Data from World Bank research programs.
For bibliography please see back cover.

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**See draft versions at www.worldbank.org/gender
<http://www.econ.worldbank.org/programs/migration>**

For more information on the studies, and the research programs please contact the Gender and Development Group (PRMGE) at: **genderequality@worldbank.org**