

OVERVIEW

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International migration and its link to poverty and economic development have received increased attention in recent years, in large part due to the surge in international migration. Between 1960 and 2005 the number of international migrants in the world doubled, and in 2005 about 190 million people—roughly 3 percent of the world's population—lived outside their country of birth (United Nations 2006). Another reason for this increased interest has been the rapid growth in remittances, currently amounting to approximately \$200 billion a year.¹

The growing importance of this phenomenon led the World Bank to initiate the Research Program on International Migration and Development in 2004, with the aim of improving the meager data sets available on migration and examining issues such as the determinants and impact of international migration and remittances, the brain drain, temporary migration, and the relationships among migration, trade, and foreign direct investment. To date the research program has created several global databases (on bilateral migration, brain drain, and medical brain drain), designed household surveys with migration modules, and published two volumes—*International Migration, Remittances, and the Brain Drain* (Özden and Schiff 2006) and *International Migration, Economic Development, and Policy* (Özden and Schiff 2007)—as well as a number of articles. This volume is the third in this series of monographs.

The current share of women in the world's population of international migrants is close to half, and available evidence suggests that migration flows and their impacts are strongly gendered. Until recently, however, there has been a striking lack of gender analysis in the economics literature on international migration and development. To fill this lacuna, to improve our understanding of

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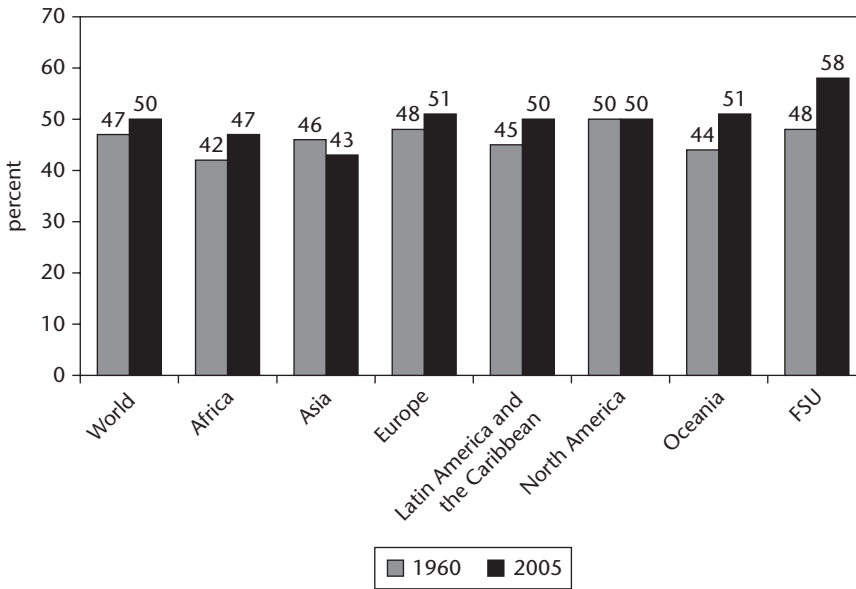
the links among gender, migration, and economic development, and to contribute to an informed policy debate, the World Bank initiated a number of studies on the international migration of women in December 2005. This volume presents key outputs of this analytical research program.

One of the most fundamental questions related to the study of women's migration concerns the extent to which women move across borders. The publication "Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision" (United Nations 2006) estimates that women represented half of the world's migrant population in 2005—that is, approximately 95 million women. Despite the increased interest in women migrants, data on international migration remain surprisingly gender blind. Recent key additions to migration statistics, such as Docquier and Marfouk (2006) on skilled migration, Bhargava and Docquier (2006) on medical brain drain, and Parsons et al. (2007) on global bilateral migration stocks, are especially useful for analysts and policy makers. These data sets, however, do not contain any sex-disaggregated statistics at this time, although the World Bank is in the process of extending Docquier and Marfouk (2006) and Parsons et al. (2007) along gender dimensions.

Today the standard reference on sex-disaggregated migration statistics is the United Nations (UN) database on the stock of migrants, which covers most countries in the world for the period 1960–2005 (United Nations 2006). Overall, these data show that the percentage of international migrants who are women increased almost 3 percentage points, from 46.7 percent to 49.6 percent, between 1960 and 2005. Figure 1.1 shows the change in the stock of female migrants by region for this period.

The largest increases in the proportion of women during the time period were observed in Oceania (from 44 to 51 percent), Latin America and the Caribbean (from 45 to 50 percent), Africa (from 42 to 47 percent), and the former Soviet Union (FSU, from 48 to 58 percent).² The only region registering a drop in the share of female migrants was Asia (from 46 to 43 percent). Of the seven regions in figure 1.1, three (Europe, Oceania, and the FSU) have more female than male migrants, two (Latin America and the Caribbean and North America) have about the same number of female and male migrants, and two (Africa and Asia) have more male than female migrants, with a decline in the share of female migrants in Asia. The region with the lowest proportion of women migrants is Western Asia (the Middle East), where women only represent 38.4 percent of the migrant population (not shown in figure 1.1).³ It is also interesting that the share of female migrants is substantially higher in developed than in developing countries (not shown in the figure). By 2005 there were more female than male migrants in developed countries, while the share of female migrants was 46 percent in developing countries (United Nations 2006). Overall, the UN data show that the proportion of women in the world's stock of migrants has increased steadily during

Figure 1.1. Proportion of Women in Migrant Stocks, by Region, 1960 and 2005



Source: United Nations 2006.

the past 45 years, but that their overall increase in share has been modest (about 6.6 percent over the 45-year period).

The problem with the UN data is that they do not tell us whether a change in the stock of migrants in any particular country is due to inflows, outflows, or mortality of migrants. Guzmán (2006) presents sex-disaggregated data on migration flows to major destination countries and shows a much more modest feminization than emerges from the UN data.⁴ As this book goes to press, two new data sources are becoming available: Docquier et al. (2007) and Dumont et al. (2007). These sources show a substantial increase in the share of female migrants in OECD countries in the past decades.

As the chapters in this volume show, men and women exhibit important differences in the determinants of their decision to migrate, the amount of remittances they send back to their family in their country of origin, and the allocation of these remittances across various expenditure categories. The studies included in the volume are based on household data, although aggregate data on female migration will prove essential to improving our understanding of cross-country differences in aspects of women's migration.

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This volume addresses several issues. The second chapter reviews the existing research on gender and international migration and can be considered a starting point for the remaining chapters. The third chapter focuses on the gendered determinants of migration and remittances in rural Mexico, an important sending country. The following two chapters (chapters 4 and 5) address the impact of migration and remittances on sending countries and provide analysis of household-level data from Ghana and Mexico. Chapter 6 turns to the labor market participation and performance of female migrants in a major destination country, the United States. The volume concludes with a forward-looking chapter that summarizes the major findings, links those to migration policy, and outlines some of the important research and policy issues that need to be addressed in the future.

The remainder of this introductory chapter provides an overview of the volume; it includes a description of methodology, data, main results, and conclusions from the six remaining chapters.

Previous Research: Where Do We Stand?

The second chapter, by Pfeiffer, Richter, Fletcher, and Taylor, contains a critical review of economic research on gender and migration. The chapter outlines the current state of social science thinking about the role of gender in international migration.

The authors systematically survey the most important studies on international migration and gender and outline a simple theoretical framework that serves as a starting point for thinking about women's role in shaping international migration and its impacts. They then present a critique of the treatment of gender in economics research based on models of individual migration. The remaining parts of the chapter discuss other models of gender and migration, including joint models of migration, gender in "split" household models of migration (migration of some household members), and models that emphasize the role of international migration networks. Finally, some priorities for incorporating gender into future economic research on international migration are presented.

The chapter shows that when gender is introduced into empirical models, it is generally found to be an important variable shaping migration and its outcomes. Furthermore, the authors argue that much of the treatment of gender to date—as a control variable in empirical models—is unsatisfactory and that the focus must turn to gender as a central issue for understanding international migration and for which hypotheses can be tested. They also note that critical pieces of the gender-and-international-migration puzzle have been largely ignored. These oversights include differences between the genders with regard to the opportunity

costs of migration; the impact of migration and remittances on household investments and expenditures, production, and technology choices; and the community characteristics both at home and abroad that determine the patterns and effects of migration. Finally, the review points to the importance of bringing a gender focus into household surveys and other instruments used in data collection in order to support future research in this field. Several of the important research gaps identified in this chapter are addressed in other chapters in this volume. Additional considerations on directions for future research on gender and migration are presented at the end of the second chapter.

Gendered Determinants of International Migration

The third chapter focuses on the determinants of migration in rural Mexico. Richter and Taylor investigate how the determinants of international migration differ between men and women. The authors use a unique panel data set with retrospective migration histories that is representative of the rural population of Mexico and apply it in random-effect and fixed-effect models. Their results indicate that international migration selects men and women differently. Overall, women are less likely than men to migrate abroad. Schooling is positively associated with international migration of females (to nonagricultural jobs), but not of males. Age deters international migration slightly more for men than for women. One reason might be that men are typically engaged in highly demanding physical work overseas, including in construction and agriculture.

The authors show that networks—that is, contact with family members who are already abroad—play a more important role in the determination of migration than macroeconomic and policy variables and that these networks are both sector and gender specific. Male migration networks are not more influential than female migration networks, but they nevertheless are highly significant in explaining both male and female international migration. Female networks are significant in explaining male migration, and in some cases they are more significant than own-gender male networks. The latter supports the hypothesis that females are deeply committed to their family and community back home; therefore, their networks are deeper than those of male migrants and may provide services that male networks cannot. The results also show that agricultural own-gender migrant networks are not significant in explaining the number of migrants engaged in nonagricultural jobs for either males or females in the United States; this suggests that networks are also sector specific.

Most policy and macroeconomic variables are insignificant in explaining either female or male international migration. The exception is increased border

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expenditures in the United States, which significantly deter migration by women but do not seem to have a significant impact on migration by men. The authors speculate that women may be less willing than men to play a “cat and mouse” game, in which border officials catch migrants and release them back into Mexico, whereupon they try to cross the border again and often eventually succeed. A possible reason is that repeated migration attempts are likely to be more risky for women than for men. Overall the authors unambiguously reject the assumption that the determinants of migration from Mexico to the United States and their changes over time are gender neutral.

Impacts of the Migration of Women in Origin Countries

The two following chapters turn to the impact of migration and remittances in origin countries and include two studies focusing on Mexico and Ghana.

Chapter 4, by Pfeiffer and Taylor, explores the hypothesis that the impact of international migration and remittances on economic activities of members left behind differs according to the gender of the migrant. More specifically, they investigate the impact of migration and remittances on households’ crop production, staple production, nonstaple crop production, livestock production, and local wage work. They also study the impact of female and male migration on household investments in education and health. The authors use a probit model, employing the same data used in chapter 3; they control for potential endogeneity by using historical migration rates by gender as instrumental variables.

Their findings reveal strikingly different impacts of male and female migration on production activities. Overwhelmingly, the impact of male migration on household production is negative, while that of female migration is positive or insignificant. In more detail, the authors find that neither female nor male migration has any effect on the propensity to produce staple crops, whereas nonstaple crop production responds negatively to male, but not female, migration. The authors argue that this result could be related to the fact that males (in contrast to females) are more likely to be employed in production and wage labor activities prior to migration and that the availability of substitutes for their labor in production activities is limited. Also, the positive impact of remittances on the demand for leisure may be significant enough to decrease production. The positive production effects that are observed only for female migration may be because females participate less than males in production activities prior to migrating or else work only in a subset of activities, such as the cultivation of maize and beans. Thus, the positive remittance and insurance effects of female migration counterbalance the smaller negative effects of lost labor.

With respect to household expenditure patterns, this chapter finds that households with female migrants spend significantly less on education than otherwise similar households without female migrants. These findings may result from female migrants in low-skilled service jobs abroad sending home a signal that there are low returns from schooling in international migration work (see chapter 6 for a discussion of labor market performance abroad of educated female migrants from Mexico). Alternatively, it is possible that females who have migrated lose the ability to monitor their household's schooling investments (as discussed in chapter 5). These findings indicate that the sex of the migrant might have an impact on expenditure patterns in remittance-receiving households in the country of origin.

The subsequent chapter (chapter 5) on impacts of migration and remittances focuses on Ghana. This chapter, by Guzmán, Morrison, and Sjöblom, marries the literature on remittances with the literature on intra-household bargaining by exploring two questions: first, whether or not the sex of the household head affects household budget allocations of remittance-receiving households and, second, whether or not the sex of the remitter has any impact on household expenditure allocations in these households. The chapter draws on data from the nationally representative 1998/99 Ghana Living Standards Survey and uses the adjusted Working-Leser curve and the fractional logit model to estimate the effects.

With respect to the first research question, the results indicate that, after controlling for total income, international remittances have a significant impact on the budget allocations for food, consumer and durable goods, housing, health, and other goods in female-headed households, while there is no such impact on expenditure patterns in male-headed households. Internal remittances from within Ghana have a positive effect on expenditure shares on health and education in female-headed households, but again there is no impact on expenditure shares in male-headed households. Comparing female-headed households receiving international and internal remittances reveals interesting differences: female-headed households receiving internal remittances spend a larger percentage of their budget on education and health, and female-headed households receiving international remittances spend a lower share of their budget on food and a greater share on consumer and durable goods, housing, health, and other goods. Hence, there is heterogeneity in expenditure patterns between female- and male-headed households, but there is also heterogeneity among female-headed households receiving remittances. The authors conclude that only the expenditure pattern for female-headed households receiving internal remittances corresponds to the traditional view of women's specific spending patterns, as described in the literature on intra-household bargaining.

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In response to the second research question, the authors find that households receiving remittances from females have a different expenditure pattern than those that receive remittances from males, after controlling for the remitter's ability to monitor how the remittance-receiving household allocates its resources. Households with female remitters allocate a larger expenditure share to health and other goods, but a lower share to food. This chapter indicates that households receiving remittances from the wife allocate much less of their budget to education than households that receive remittances from the husband. Two reasons possibly explain this result. First, men tend to spend less money on education than women, so households where the wife is absent are likely to spend less on education. Second, when the wife leaves the household, it is plausible to assume that children leave with her or that she leaves when the children are beyond school age, therefore resulting in a smaller share of education in total expenditures of the household left behind. Overall, the chapter highlights that changes in the composition of households associated with migration are likely to affect the relative influence of female and male household members, which in turn may influence expenditure patterns.

Labor Market Insertion of Women Migrants

Chapter 6, by Özden and Neagu, explores the labor market participation and performance of female migrants in the United States, using census data from 1990 and 2000. They use two measures of performance: wage income and average educational requirement in the occupation in which the migrant is employed. The latter measures whether the migrant is in a higher- or lower-skilled profession relative to her education level, especially compared to migrants from other countries with similar educational backgrounds. This is the first time that this type of measure has been used in an analysis of the labor market performance of women migrants, and it constitutes an important contribution of this chapter.

Overall, the authors find that there is significant variation in labor market participation and performance of female migrants according to their country of origin and their level of education. In fact, regardless of country of origin, the most important determinants of labor force participation are education level (+), years in the United States (+), number of children in the household (−), and marital status (single women and women married to American men are the most likely to work). Controlling for these and other personal characteristics, the authors conclude that labor market participation is lower among female migrants from South Asia (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) and the Middle East and North Africa, while it is higher among migrants from Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, and East Asia.

Wage levels are higher for migrants from Europe, followed by East and South Asia and Africa; female migrants from Latin America have the lowest wages. After controlling for probability of employment, the most important determinants of wage rates and placement levels are education and years in the United States. In terms of placement in higher-skilled jobs, European migrants and migrants from English-speaking developing countries (such as India, Pakistan, South Africa, and Ghana) perform the best. Latin American and Eastern European migrants are placed in the lower-skilled job categories for identical education levels. The traditional measure of success in the labor market—namely, wage level—provides cross-regional results that are consistent with those of the innovative measure of placement used in this analysis.

Looking Ahead: Future Directions for Research and Policy

The final chapter, by Morrison and Schiff, discusses some of the most important findings of this research volume, relates them to policy, and highlights some of the burning research and policy issues in the field of gender and international migration. The chapter is structured around five issues: the determinants of women's migration, the economic impacts of female migration, the non-economic impacts of female migration, and issues related to temporary and circular migration (including Mode IV). The final section addresses some methodological issues.

The chapter discusses the relationships among gender inequality, women's empowerment, and migration, how wages in sending countries are affected by female migration, and other issues related to the economic impacts of this phenomenon. It also highlights various understudied aspects of migration, such as the impact of migration on family cohesion and children's welfare as well as the trafficking of women.

In addition, the chapter examines temporary migration and concludes that source countries would benefit from it. Host countries would benefit as well, but some of the temporary migrants might overstay illegally. We argue that the temporary movement of service providers under Mode IV-type trade in services is a superior solution to temporary migration because it would minimize the over-staying problem. The chapter provides reasons why the provision of services that use female labor intensively (for example, nurses, nannies, and maids) may be superior to the provision of male-dominated services in a Mode IV-type agreement. Additional policy suggestions are made that should improve the chances of reaching an agreement on Mode IV-type trade in services at the bilateral, regional, or multilateral levels.

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In terms of methodological issues, the chapter notes that these models of the determinants of migration can be improved by incorporating joint decision making, given that decisions on the migration of wives and husbands are not independent of one another. This would enable models to capture a number of interrelated factors, including the decision to migrate, the migrant's characteristics, such as gender (and others), the migrant's location and sector of employment, and the sequencing of migration (if any).

Endnotes

1. A billion is 1,000 million.
2. The migration flows within the FSU often represent country-border movements that occurred on the breakup of the Soviet Union and not necessarily the relocation of households across country borders.
3. For definitions of regions, see United Nations (2006).
4. As the author recognizes, data constraints limit the confidence that can be placed in this conclusion. First, sex-disaggregated data on migrant flows simply do not exist for many important destination countries such as France and Russia, and Guzmán's final sample of countries covers less than half of the world's total migrant population. Second, there are inconsistencies in data coverage even among those countries for which data are available. For instance, the data from some countries include illegal migrants, while the data from other countries do not.

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