

Navigating the Gendered Terrain of Migration: Variations in the Gender Composition of International Migrants

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ABSTRACT

This paper navigates the gendered landscape of international migration by estimating and examining age-standardized gender ratio of foreign-born stocks in 56 countries since 1960 to gauge the extent of feminization of international migration. I focus on major destination countries in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, and Africa, and examine the gender composition of the three largest immigrant groups in these destinations to map the gendered circuits of migration. Findings reveal that while there is considerable variation in the gender composition of immigrants across space and time, there is an upward trend, albeit modest, in women's representation in foreign-born populations, lending support to the feminization phenomenon. In addition, each region has complex and unique migration circuits, with some countries attracting more women while others attracting more men. The changing gender make-up of migrant populations has important implications for sending and receiving countries as well as for the individuals involved.

I. Introduction

Recent demographic trends in international migration indicate distinct and profound changes in the gender composition of migrant populations. While men have historically dominated in cross-border movements, the latest estimates suggest that women now constitute about half of the total foreign-born stock in a large number of countries, particularly in Europe, Asia and the Americas (United Nations 2006). This feminization of international migration calls for a closer examination of the gender breakdown of migrant populations to discern whether women are increasingly as migratory as men, and how this notion of feminization varies across time and space (Donato et al. 2011). Closer attention to the changing gender landscape of international migration is important because it can have strong implications for sending and receiving countries.

In this paper, I estimate the age-standardized gender composition of foreign-born populations in 56 countries and describe the nature and patterns of women's representation in international migration to gauge the extent of feminization. In doing so, I build on work by Donato et al. (2011), who use the concept of gender ratio to refer to the percent of migrant population that is female. Like Donato et al. (2011), I prefer gender ratio over sex ratio because there is little doubt that migration is largely a social phenomenon embedded in gender and other social relations.

The other concept central to my project is feminization. Initially used in terms of poverty to describe women's increasing representation among the poor (Pearce 1978; Peterson 1987; Chant 2006) and in the economy (Jensen, Hagen and Reddy 1988; Standing 1989, 1999; Catagay and Ozler 1995), it first appeared in migration studies in the 1984 special issue of the *International Migration Review* (see Morokvasic 1984; Houstoun

et al. 1984). Alexander and Steidl (2012: 224) define feminization of migration as a dynamic process in which “international migrant streams formerly dominated by men gradually become gender-balanced or even majority-female.” Similar conceptualizations have been discussed in several other works (e.g. Gabaccia 1996; Simon and Brettell 1986; Donato et al. 2006; United Nations 2006). Adding another layer to this idea of feminization, Oishi (2005) asserted that women are not only traveling more, but they are traveling as autonomous migrants and not only as dependents. These two concepts – gender composition of immigrants and feminization – are central to my analysis and will be explored throughout the paper.

The main objective of this research is twofold. First, I generate estimates of gender ratios of foreign-born populations, defined as those living in a country or area other than that in which they were born. These estimates are age-standardized to account for the different age structures of male and female populations. Using the demographic technique of age-standardization, I assess the degree of feminization by ensuring that women’s overrepresentation is not attributable to the higher mortality rates among aging foreign-born men. Second, I examine how the gender ratios of foreign-born populations vary across time and space. Specifically, I examine how gender ratios of immigrant populations differ across geographic regions and over time to distinguish countries or clusters of countries that have received more women than men, and vice versa. Based on these observed patterns of male-female migrations, I then map gendered circuits of migration to describe how the major regional and global destinations for female migrants compare to male-dominated circuits of migration.

Findings from the study add to growing literature on the gender composition of immigrant populations and address differences and shifts in gender ratios of immigrants in different parts of the world. Substantively, the study contributes toward our understanding of the nature of the variations in the gender ratios of migrants, and informs us about female and male patterns of migration in the contemporary world and how they differ from historical trends. Finally, the study has important implications for future national and transnational migration policies at the sending and receiving ends, a point I discuss in the last section of this paper.

II. Literature Review

The incorporation of gender in migration studies is both old and new. The earliest known scholar to discuss the gendered dimensions of migration was E. G. Ravenstein, who is often quoted to this day for his influential work *The Laws of Migration* (1885, 1889). In this work, he explicated laws of migration based on 19th century migrants in the United Kingdom. With respect to gender, he stated that although men clearly dominated as international migrants, the majority of domestic, or short-distance, movers were women. Because the volume and frequency of domestic migration exceeded international movements, he confidently stated, “Woman is a greater migrant than man” (Ravenstein 1885:196). Nearly a century after Ravenstein’s reports, the scholarship on gender and migration resurfaced and grew. These studies drew attention to the changing face of immigrants by highlighting the patterning of international migration by gender, and they challenged predominant migration theories that assumed migration was a male

phenomenon. However, despite intriguing revelations, the scholarship on the gender dynamics of migration developed only unevenly at first.¹

From 1980 onward, many articles, edited volumes and books showcasing women's side of the immigrant story started to emerge (e.g. Dumon 1981; Phizacklea 1983; Simon and Brettell 1986; Lauby and Stark 1988; Gabaccia 1992 and 1994; Constable 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). These works asserted that migration entails different meanings, experiences and consequences for men and women. The *International Migration Review (IMR)* published a special issue titled "Women in Migration" in 1984, which brought much attention to this topic including from the *New York Times* which featured findings from the Houstoun et al. (1984) study on its front page. The news piece headlined "Men Only a Third of U.S. Immigrants" and highlighted that women have comprised more than half of the total immigrant population since 1930, challenging conventional wisdom that the majority of the immigrants were working-age men (Pear 1985). Houstoun and his colleagues described the predominance of women among the U.S. immigrants as unique since the vast majority of immigrants in other parts of the world continued to be men, and they offered several reasons for this unique pattern. They explained that more foreign women came to United States than men for family reunification, including widowed mothers who moved to live with their children. Additionally, American men were more likely than women to marry foreigners and bring them to the country, and Americans also adopted more baby girls from abroad than boys. This landmark study yielded rich insights into the gender dynamics of migration by

¹ The history of gender and migration scholarship that follows derives largely from Donato et al. (2006) and Curran et al. (2006).

explicating distinct individual and state level factors in shaping the gender distribution of immigrant population.

The special issue of the *IMR* also included articles that dealt with the implications of migrant women's participation in the labor market in the recipient communities. Pessar (1984) examined how the domains of household and workplace interacted in the lives of Dominican immigrant women in the United States. Her ethnographic study revealed that women's wage employment improved their social relations and status in the family but the newly adopted egalitarian ideals in the household did not fully translate to collective action to demand for better working conditions. Boyd (1984), on the other hand, studied the labor force experiences of immigrants in Canada using the 1973 Canadian Mobility Survey. She found that the occupational statuses of Canadian female immigrants were lower than those of their male counterparts and native-born Canadian women, indicating the "double negative" effect of being woman and foreign-born. However, the experiences of double disadvantage varied by birthplace: immigrant women from the United States and the United Kingdom experienced the disadvantage to a lesser extent than those from other national origins. These works brought to the fore some of the important implications of women's migration for receiving countries as well as for families.

In another assessment of the scholarship on the intersection of gender and migration, Curran et al. (2006) revealed that the body of literature published in the 1990s on gender and migration was clearly dominated by qualitative studies which established gender as a constitutive element in migration studies. For instance, studies by Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992), Kibria (1994) and Constable (1997) explored the different ways in which gender influences the expectations and experiences of migration. Hondagneu-Sotelo

(1992) studied how migration impacts patriarchal relations in the Mexican immigrant families and concluded that “migration is both gendered and gendering” (p.411). She found that men’s departure rearranged gender relations within the household by giving women who stayed behind autonomy and decision-making power. Men, on the other hand, learned to do domestic work such as cooking and cleaning, and also conceded to their wives’ decisions regarding household matters when away from home. Hence, when families were reunited, families took on more egalitarian values.

Kibria’s (1994) study of the Vietnamese refugees in Philadelphia suggested that the egalitarian structure of households actually hindered achievement of economic goals among immigrant families. Among other things, she found that Vietnamese immigrant families with diversity in age and gender among household members, which are the bases of inequality, yielded positive economic outcomes. These two works, along with several others (e.g. Wolf 1992; Pessar 1994; Mahler 1995), illuminated on the gender dynamics of migration within the domain of the household.

Moving beyond the household and the economy, Constable’s (1997) case study painstakingly documented the experiences of Filipina domestic workers from recruitment to deployment to employment in Hong Kong. The author examined how recruiters disciplined Filipinas throughout the process of labor migration to produce docile bodies and uphold the stereotype of female domestic workers. The baton of discipline was then passed on to employers in Hong Kong who exercised control by enforcing strict dress code and timetable on their employees. In response, Filipina domestic workers found ways to resist and challenge the treatment of the recruiters and employers. Constable’s study

reveals how different parties – migrant workers, recruiters, the state and receiving community – negotiate the meaning and terms of migration.

As Hondagneu-Sotelo (2003:6) lamented, the majority of these works “added” and “stirred” women in the sociological discourse on migration by either focusing on male and female immigrant experiences or only on women. At the turn of the 21st century, migration scholars continued to engage in qualitative research to further nuance and refine the gendered experiences of migrants in various parts of the world (e.g. Menjivar 2000; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Espiritu 2003; Piper and Roces 2003; Parrenas 2008). One consequence was a quantitative-qualitative divide in migration scholarship whereby qualitative undertakings have made theoretical strides but quantitative scholars have struggled to do so (Curran et al. 2006). Part of the problem is that migration data are not always inclusive of the context and experiences of non-migrants, who are predominantly women.

Very recently, scholars have begun to address these limitations and quantitative research efforts have emerged and made worthy headway in the recent years. These studies have not only complemented and corroborated findings from previous studies, but have also generated new knowledge on migration and migratory behaviors. Some major migration projects, such as Mexican Migration Project (MMP), Latin American Migration Project (LAMP), Migrations between Africa and Europe (MAFE), and the collection of census data from multiple countries such as Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS- USA and International), have been instrumental in propelling migration studies to include women and to represent larger scales across geographic and time units. All of

these data sources now include enough detail by gender to permit statistical analysis of patterns and determinants of gendered migration.

More recently, insightful studies have been published using one or more of these data sets. Kanaiaupuni (2000) used MMP data to study the determinants of Mexican migration and found that gender interacts with social and economic factors in defining and predicting migration. For example, these findings revealed that human capital investment in terms of education differentially affected the migration risks of men and women. While higher education increased the odds of women migrating, it had an opposite effect on male migration. In terms of age, women were more likely to travel at older age than men, and the number of children increased the odds of male migration but had no effect on female migration. These findings led her to state that “migration is a profoundly gendered process and conventional explanations of men’s migration in many cases do not apply to women” (Kanaiaupuni 2000: 1312).

Another study, Cerrutti and Massey (2001) sought to uncover the determinants and timing of Mexican migration to the U.S. and how they differ for men and women using MMP data set. Their study found that while the vast majority of Mexican men move to the United States independently and pioneer subsequent migration for other family members, Mexican women almost always followed their husband or other relatives. Moreover, men tended to migrate for employment purposes whereas women were motivated mostly by familial reasons. Likewise, Curran and Rivero-Fuentes (2003) considered how the gender composition of migrant networks influences international and domestic moves among Mexicans. Regarding migration to the United States, male migrant networks were more important for men than for women whereas female migrant networks were important

determinants of female migration only. Interestingly, having female migrant networks lowered the odds of male migration. As the authors argued, these findings suggest that gender organizes migration in significant ways. In a similar vein, Donato, Wagner and Patterson (2008) used data from the MMP to study undocumented migration across Mexico-United States border. The authors established that undocumented border crossing was a gendered phenomenon with women more likely to cross with the aid of paid smuggler while men tended to cross alone, and that more women were migrating from Mexico than in the past. Along the same line, Donato et al. (2008) examined how U.S. immigration policies affect the labor market conditions and employment prospects for Mexican immigrants and how they vary by gender. Their results showed that U.S. policies negatively affected employment conditions for both men and women, but the consequences were harsher for women. Women not only experienced lower wages but were also pushed into informal economic activities more than their male counterparts.

While the MMP has enabled in-depth analysis of Mexican-U.S. migration, the LAMP survey covers migration flows originating in 11 Latin American countries.² Recent studies using LAMP data also corroborate the importance of using a gender lens. For example, Donato (2010) examined the gendered patterns of migration from a number of nations south of the U.S. border and reported that life-time migration probabilities differed significantly for men and women, depending on their legal status and national origin. She found that men, especially unauthorized men, led the migration flows from Mexico to the U.S. but women led documented migration from other nations, such as the Dominican Republic.

² The Latin American countries covered in LAMP survey are Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Puerto Rico.

Furthermore, in an analysis of MMP and LAMP data, Sana and Massey (2005) assessed the effects of household composition, family members abroad and community context on remittances in Mexico, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Among other things, their results established remitting behavior as largely gendered – while men remitted more to Mexico, women migrants from the Dominican Republic remitted less, suggesting Dominican women's tendency to settle abroad. Likewise, Cerrutti and Gaudio (2010) described gender differences between Mexican migration to the U.S. and Paraguayan migration to Argentina. While women constituted less than 45% of the total Mexican migrant stock in the U.S., Paraguayan immigrant women overwhelmingly predominated (58%) in Argentina. They also reported that not only were Paraguayan women more likely to migrate than Mexican women, but that they also tended to migrate autonomously.

Beyond the Americas, European scholars have also begun to use MAFE data to examine the gender-migration nexus. Toma and Vause (2010), for example, examined whether and how migrant networks affect the probability of moving abroad in the context of Senegalese and Congolese migration. Among other things, they found that women in both countries were two times less likely to pioneer a migration trip than men in absence of network at the destination. Their results also suggested that for both countries, presence of networks at destination mattered more for women migrants than for men. Interestingly, network composition differed for Senegalese and Congolese women; Senegalese women tended to follow their spouses whereas Congolese women went where they had friends, relatives and spouses. Together these efforts, and the data sets behind these analyses, have helped to spearhead more quantitative gendered analyses of migration processes in the

Americas, Europe and Africa. Moreover, these studies also reveal that gendered patterns, motivations and behaviors are far from uniform; instead, there is discernable variation in migration across historical periods and geographical locations. Therefore, given both qualitative and quantitative realms attest to indispensable role that gender plays in all facets of migration, going forward migration studies in the 21st century are incomplete without including gender as an integrative element.

Despite these advances in scholarship, some topics are less well understood than others. One is how the gender composition of migrants varies over time and across nations (Donato et al. 2011; Donato 2012; Moya 2012). In their review article, Curran et al. (2006) reported that a large proportion – at least 20 percent – of migration studies in sociological journals failed to describe the gender composition of the samples under study. Given that gender fundamentally influences how individuals experience migration, it is important to understand the gender distributions of migrants in different parts of the world and how they have changed over the course of the history (see Donato et al. 2011). This is especially important considering the renewed interest in the increasing feminization of migration and its implications (e.g. Zlotnik 2003; Gordon 2005; United Nations 2006; Donato et al. 2011). The latest issue of *Social Science History* (2012) has a special section dedicated to gender ratios of international migrants and it includes three manuscripts.

The first, Alexander and Steidl (2012), revisits Ravenstein's landmark study and recalculates gender composition of domestic migrants for that same time period using data that has recently become available from the 1881 Census of England and Wales. The author's replication includes a control for the age structures of male and female populations. To much intrigue, the authors reported that “the apparent overrepresentation

of women among internal migrants was due not to their higher propensity to move but to the much higher rate at which male migrants left the population, through either death or emigration" (p.223) Therefore, when the age structure was taken into consideration, the difference between the male and female internal migrants was minuscule.

In the same issue, Gabaccia and Zanoni (2012) explore transitions in gender ratios of international migrants using historical flow data for the period of 1820-1930 initially compiled by Willcox and Ferenczi (1970 [1929]). Their findings reveal significant variations and shifts in gender ratios over the course of the study period and across geographic units. Importantly, they show that the characterization of historical migrations as predominantly male is problematic because migration had begun to feminize as early as first half of the 20th century in some parts of the world such as the United States where the shift had begun in the 1930s.

Likewise, Leinonen (2012) reports her findings from her study on intermarried Finland-U.S. migrants, which sought to uncover underlying factors that pattern the gender distribution of migrants. She found that the reasons for migrating are not purely economic or educational as commonly depicted in the preponderance of migration literature, but that the underlying motivations are multi-faceted and include factors such as love, marriage and family ties. Leinonen also touches upon an important issue here - the economic and male bias in migration theories that need to be revised given the recent developments in migration studies on the gender dynamics of international migration.

Among the recent studies that delve into the gender distribution of migrants, the most comprehensive was conducted by Donato et al. (2011). The authors took on the extraordinary task of estimating age-standardized gender ratios of U.S. immigrant

populations since 1850 and 26 other nations since 1960. They corroborated many of the gender trends reported elsewhere but showed how shifts in the gender composition were more conservative than the previously thought. They also reported that there is no one trend that characterizes the gender make-up of the migrant populations, and there is substantial variation across different nations. Donato et al. (2011) demonstrated the importance of controlling for the feminization of aging foreign-born populations when estimating migrant gender ratios from stock data. Their rationale was that without accounting for the age distribution of immigrants, it is difficult to know whether the observed feminization of migration over 20th century was due to “sex differences in the aging population, different rates of departure by males and females, or changing gender ratios among recent migrants” (Donato et al 2011: 504). Together, these works offer invaluable insights into the gender distribution of migrations across geographic regions and historical times, and ushered in an important discourse towards upending dated migration theories.

The predominant migration theories that map the movement of peoples across borders have not only been male-centric, they have relied on economic models (Boyd and Greico 2003). For example, the neo-classical framework asserts that migration patterns and circuits are shaped by economic variables such as the demand for labor in the receiving countries and the large supply in the sending countries (Massey et al. 1993; Stalker 1994; Goss and Lindquist 1995). Such a model attributes the initiation of migration to push factors at the origin communities and pull factors at the destination, whereby individuals are rational actors who weigh the costs and benefits of migration. Subsequent theorizing on migration within the economic framework used families or

households as the unit of analysis to examine migration decisions, known as the new economies of labor migration (Massey et al. 1993; Castles and Miller 2009). The theory posits that migration is as a means to diversify income sources and dispersing risks among family or household members. As such, migration decisions are made in the context of a group and not limited to the individual.

Moving away from neoclassical explanations and the new economies paradigm, which are essentially micro level decision models, dual labor market theory focuses on the larger, structural forces of the global economy. The theory postulates that international migration is essentially shaped by “pull” factors, especially the unique labor demands in the industrialized nations driven by social meaning and status ascribed to jobs (Massey et al. 1993). The low-paying, risky jobs at the bottom rungs of the occupational hierarchy are unappealing and socially undesirable to native workers in industrialized societies. To fill this labor gap, the advanced economies attract cheap, foreign laborers. Hence, migration occurs in the context of structural differences in the labor demands between industrialized and non-industrialized nations. Similarly, world systems theory (Wallerstein 1974; Massey et al. 1993; Mahler and Pessar 2006) contends that global capitalism extracts labor from the periphery to the core nations. The link between the peripheral and core economies, which facilitates the flow of laborers, could be colonial, ideological or cultural.

These theories have some merits but are limited in the analysis of the gendered and diverse nature of international migration today. The neoclassical and new economies of labor migration theories ignore gender relations within a family dictated by patriarchal values in traditional communities. These theories do not take into account gendered social

structures that operate at the individual and household levels and impinge on migration decisions. Macro theories are also inadequate in explaining in the gendered flow of migrants and why some migration circuits are male dominated while others are female dominated.

Hochschild (2003) argues that richer countries extract the “new gold” or emotional labor from poorer countries and lay paths for the transport of feminized labor migrants. In another work, Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2003) charted similar configurations of female migration in their book *Global Women: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. The authors described a global care chain in which women crossed borders to fulfill domestic work and care -related needs in other countries, thereby creating a care-driven link between people and communities across the globe. These findings suggest one way for scholarship to move forward is to map variations in the gender composition of immigrants in some major destination countries to discern which countries are attracting more women and from which parts of the world.

A much-refined and integrative approach to female migration is offered by Oishi (2005) in her study of women’s migration in Asia. She argues that the patterns of female migration defy traditional migration theories that propose poverty or unemployment as the main drivers of emigration. Her research revealed that while men mostly emigrated from low-income countries such as Bangladesh and India, women also left from relatively better off countries like the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. On the receiving end, she found that men mostly traveled to economically affluent countries but women traveled worldwide. This is an important finding suggesting that migration flows are essentially gendered and that migration circuits are significantly different for men and women. Oishi

further delved into care-motivated migration characterized by women increasingly migrating to fill reproductive labor gaps in wealthier and newly industrialized countries where native women join the labor force and work long hours, creating demand for services involving nursing, caring for children and the elderly, and domestic, household work. Importantly, Oishi's work proposes an integrative framework to theorize international female migration. Thus, to fully understand where women travel from and to what countries, we have to take into account individual-level factors such as women's autonomy and decision-making power within households, the social legitimacy and social norms that approve of women's wage employment and international migration, and the role of the state in facilitating or restricting women's migration. Massey (1993, 1999) offers a similar multi-level approach but does so without mentioning gender; he integrates different theoretical propositions and offers to explain migration in terms of individual motivations and aspirations, push factors in the developing countries and pull factors in the developed regions, and social structures that connect the origin and destination communities. Together, these all-encompassing approaches offer a fruitful avenue from which to examine the variations in the gender ratios of international migrants.

From this literature review, I identify some salient gaps in migration research pertaining to gender. First, although there is much buzz about the feminization of migration and how women now constitute half of the total migrant population, it is less clear how this notion of feminization varies across time and space. As such, a study needs to establish whether the increasing representation of women in the current migrant stock is because more women are traveling now than before or is it due to the higher rate of exit among male immigrants through mortality. Second, although there are many studies about

the gender distribution of immigrants in the United States and Europe, fewer studies tell us about less industrialized regions. This paper attempts to address that gap by including countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa in the analysis. Finally, I build on the work of Donato et al (2011) and examine the extent to which gendered circuits exist worldwide in more detail. Because traditional understandings of migration streams and circuits are still male-centric and do not fully accommodate the gendered paths of migration today, I identify major regional destinations and examine the gender composition of the largest immigrant or national origin groups residing in those countries. The objective is to map the gendered circuits of migration. By undertaking these tasks, this paper adds to the current momentum that migration scholars have built to uncover the gendered patterns of international movements that depict the reality of today's migration.

To address these gaps, I use data from IPUMS-USA and IPUMS-International to estimate the age-standardized gender composition of immigrants in more than 50 countries. By removing the effects of age, I generate conservative estimates to assess whether contemporary migration is indeed feminized and to what extent. I also examine variability in foreign-born women's representation in different geographic regions and investigate differences within and across regions.

III. Data and Methods

For the analysis, I use census data from IPUMS-International made available by the Minnesota Population Center at the University of Minnesota (www.ipums.org). The IPUMS-International is a public-use data set that offers individual-level data on populations in many countries, including foreign-born persons. As of May 2012, IPUMS-International contains data for 62 countries representing approximately 397 million persons (<http://www.ipums.org>). Of these countries, data on the foreign born are available for 56 nations in years ranging from 1960 to 2008.

Table 1 lists the 56 nations that comprise the sample for my analysis. For each nation, there is at least one census year of data and many have more than one census year. As a result, the sample of nations includes 147 censuses. These nations and censuses contain detailed information about nativity.

Table 1 also shows a set of nations that offer considerable geographic coverage across five world regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean. North America has the longest chronological coverage (1960-2005), followed by Mexico (1960-2000) and Canada (1971-2001). For the Latin American and Caribbean regions, data are available for 14 countries. Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Puerto Rico have the most historical coverage with data from five census years, while Bolivia, Peru and Saint Lucia have only two censuses and Cuba has just one. For Europe, there are data on 13 countries with France (seven censuses) and Ireland (six censuses) having the most historical coverage. In contrast, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Greece and Italy have census data only for one year. In Asia, there are 14 countries and Malaysia and Thailand have four census years. However, the remaining nations in Asia have data for

just one or two censuses. Similarly, data are available for 12 African countries. For Malawi and South Africa, there are three census years, and for the rest of the countries, at most two census years. Taken together, these data represent considerable geographic and chronological coverage that permit an analysis about regional and global variations in migrant gender ratios.

Table 1 about here

Another strength of the IPUMS-International data is that they are user-friendly. All PUMS files contain harmonized microdata with uniform variable codes, including those for nativity, facilitating comparative studies. One final strength important for my analysis is that the data permit age-standardization of the gender composition of foreign-born populations because they include data on age.

While the IPUMS-International has several advantages, it also has some limitations. Although data are available for a large number of countries and in some cases for multiple years, countries like India and China are not present. However, recent census data from China reveal that migration is largely rural-urban with approximately 261 million temporary or “floating” individuals living in different parts of China. One consequence is that immigrants accounted for only a fraction of the total mobile population with slightly over 1 million foreigners, including residents of Hong Kong and Macau, living in China at the time of the census (Hvistendahl 2011). Other studies on Chinese migration also attest to the prominence of rural-urban migration (e.g. Roberts 1997; Fan 2003; West and Zhao 2000; He and Gober 2003).

In contrast, the foreign-born population is much larger in India than in China. The United Nations (2012) estimated that there are approximately 5.4 million foreign-born persons living in India. Hence, missing data on immigrants in China may be less problematic for this study but absence of data on India is one of the limitations of this paper.

In the analysis that follows, I use a sample of immigrants who are 18 years or older living in the countries listed in Table 1. Table 2 contains the variables used in the analysis and their descriptions, codes and types as defined by IPUMS-International; these are age, gender, nativity and country of birth. Age is measured as how old respondents are in years. The nativity variable identifies individuals who are native born or foreign-born. Foreign-born individuals are those who are residing in countries different from their countries of birth. For these persons, there is also information about country of national origin. Gender is male or female. All of these variables have minimal missing data. On average, missing values represent just .25 percent of the total values for age, one percent for nativity, and there is no missing data for gender.

Table 2 about here

The analysis is in two main phases. First, I examine weighted³ unstandardized estimates of the gender composition of the immigrant population in 56 nations. I also estimate age-standardized estimates of the gender composition and compare the

³ In IPUMS data sets, each person from the sample has a weight value that represents certain number of people in the population. For most data sets, each individual has a value of 100 people but in some cases different weights are assigned to ensure that the results are representative of the entire population

differences between these two types of estimates. For countries with multiple years, I calculate gender ratios for all available years.

The bulk of the analysis in this first phase involves applying the age standardization procedure to estimates of the gender composition. There are a number of strong reasons to standardize gender ratios by age (see Preston, Heuveline and Guillot 2001). First, male and female populations have different age structures. Although the sex ratios at birth around the world indicate that slightly more men are born for every woman, this ratio changes over the life course and is influenced by biological as well as social factors. Differences in the age distributions of male and female populations are apparent among older populations given women's lower mortality rates among men (Case and Paxson 2005). Therefore, because the age distributions of populations are affected by factors such as birth, death and migration rates, it is necessary to standardize the gender composition of foreign-born population (Donato et al. 2011; Alexander and Steidl 2012).

Following Donato et al. (2011) and Alexander and Steidl (2012), I implement direct age standardization by, first, calculating the expected number of foreign-born men by multiplying the percentage of men who are foreign-born and the number of women in the destination population for each age group for each destination country. Second, I divide the actual number of foreign-born women (numerator) by the sum of expected number of foreign-born men and actual number foreign-born women (denominator) to calculate of the gender composition of foreign-born stock. Because data are not disaggregated by age for several countries, I substitute age categories in the standardization procedure. This procedure adequately controls for the effects of differential exit rates due to disparate mortality rates for men and women. If the percent

female foreign-born is roughly 50 or more, I consider the migrant stock feminized. As a comparison, I also generate unstandardized estimates by calculating the percent of total migrant population that is female. This phase of the analysis permits me to determine the gender distribution of migrant populations residing in each of the 56 countries, thereby allowing me to gauge the degree of feminization. In addition, I am able to assess differences in age-standardized and unstandardized estimates and how different age structures of women and men influence our estimation of the feminization of migration.

The second phase of the analysis identifies patterns of countries that have disproportionately high or low percentage of foreign-born women. I group countries geographically and examine whether regional gender distributions have regional differences. I also identify outliers or unique cases in each region. Such outliers provide insights into why some regions or countries attract comparatively high or low proportion of female migrants. For instance, past research suggests that the proportion of female migrants will likely be smaller in Gulf and oil-producing countries where there is demand for manual labor traditionally fulfilled by foreign men, whereas nations in Asia and Europe are more likely to attract female immigrants to fulfill the need of nation-states for caregivers (Tyree and Donato 1986; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Oishi 2005).

Finally, based on the available data , I identify five countries with the largest foreign-born populations in each region to examine variation in the gender composition of immigrants within regions. I then examine the gender composition of the three largest immigrant groups residing in these regional destinations. I restrict this analysis to data available since 2000. For example, in Asia for census years 2000 and beyond, the top five receivers of immigrants are Malaysia, Philippines, Nepal, Thailand and Cambodia, and

within each, I identify the three largest national origin groups. In Malaysia, which is the largest host for the foreign-born population in this region, the three largest national origin groups are Indonesia, Philippines and Bangladesh. This phase of the analysis identifies the key regional destinations, the major migrant sending countries to those destinations, and subsequently, maps migration circuits for each region. The focus is whether and how migration circuits are gendered, and the extent to which they compare to the male models migration as predicted by conventional migration theories.

IV. Findings

Gender Composition of Immigrants and How It Varies Over Time

I begin by examining variation in the gender composition of foreign-born populations across different historical periods. Table 3 describes the study's sample divided into four periods based on census years, and presents the means and standard deviations of the age-standardized and unstandardized estimates of the gender composition for each period. Results show that immigrant population's average age-standardized gender composition varies across census periods, albeit modestly. The mean age-standardized percent female for all census periods is 47.7 whereas the mean for unstandardized estimates is 49.4 percent. The net difference of 1.7 percent in the global percent female is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) based on two-tailed, paired difference of means test. These results suggest that the unstandardized calculation of gender ratios consistently overestimates the feminization of migration.

Table 3 about here

Table 3 also describes how these estimates shift over time. Overall, there is some evidence of women's increasing presence in cross-border movements. On average, women constituted 46.9 percent of the foreign-born populations in 1960s through 1970s and that share increased to 47.9 percent in the 1980s. The 1990s saw a slight decrease in the average percent female but the gender ratio increased again to 48.4 by early in the 21st century. Comparable means for unstandardized estimates also show an increase, and one that is larger than that based on the standardized estimates. Unstandardized estimates

suggest that women have constituted about half of the global migrant population since 1980s. Without accounting for the age distribution of the population, women's representation among foreign-born stocks increased from 49.4 to 50.2 percent between 1960-79 and 2000-09.

On the whole, these results are interesting because of what they suggest about the gender composition of global immigrant populations. First, they document a shift in the gender composition of immigrants such that more women are international migrants in the early 21st century than in earlier decades during the late 20th century. Second, they also suggest that the pace of feminization has become fairly modest in contrast to what is generally conveyed in most reports from the United Nations. Third, as expected, age standardization yields estimates that are more conservative than unstandardized ones. Importantly, the more conservative, age-standardized estimates demonstrate an upward trend in women's representation among global immigrants over the census years, offering strong evidence that the rising number of women in the migrant stocks is not entirely due to the longevity of women and higher mortality rates of male immigrants, but it is most likely due to an actual increase in women's cross-border movement.

Gender Composition of Immigrants Across Space and Time

This section emphasizes the extent to which the gender composition of immigrant populations varies across geographic regions and over time. For this analysis, I group the 56 nations into five geographic regions and track changes in the gender composition of the

foreign-born in these regions across three census periods.⁴ In general, Table 4 reveals considerably more variation in the gender composition of immigrant populations than Table 3. It also documents a shift toward feminization in many of the world regions, and that age-standardized estimates are more conservative indicators of the gender composition of immigrants.

North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia have experienced an increase in their shares of female immigrants. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the share of female immigrants rose from 46 percent to 49.1 percent between pre-1990 and post-2000, representing a 3.1 percentage point increase. In Asia and North America, the increases were of smaller scale (2.8 and .8 percent, respectively). In contrast, the immigrant population in Europe has remained gender balanced across the periods, and in Africa, the gender composition of immigrants shifted downward toward more men, from 47 to 44 percent between pre-1990 and post-2000. Hence, in Africa, immigrants continue to be predominantly male and they have become increasingly so compared to earlier in time. Note, however, that we urge readers to approach the African case with caution because of its limited data coverage. Unlike other regions, the African region consists of the smallest number of nations (N=12) and few have data for multiple census years.

Table 4 about here

Compared to age-standardized estimates, unstandardized estimates depict more women among immigrant populations worldwide, and a larger increase in the percentage

⁴ In this analysis, I collapse the four census periods in Table 3 into three because of small sample size. This insures adequate sample size of countries in each period in each region (see Table 4).

of female immigrants in all regions. The unstandardized estimates suggest that in the Americas, Europe and Asia, female immigrants constituted, on average, at least 50 percent of total foreign-born populations by the beginning of the 21st century. Europe leads the way with 52 percent female, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (51 percent), North America (51 percent) and Asia (50 percent). Moreover, the increase in the percent female from pre-1990 to recent census years is larger than the increase based on age-standardized estimates, suggesting that unstandardized estimates are inflated by aging immigrant populations. Nonetheless, even standardized estimates clearly indicate that male hegemony in international migration is on the decline except in Africa.

Figure 1 tells a similar story. It illustrates shifts in the gender composition of the global immigrant population based on standardized and unstandardized estimates for 56 countries since 1960. Once again, there is considerable variation in the gender ratios of foreign-born populations. Although this variation seems to have increased over time, it may be related to the larger number of country census samples for the most recent period. The figure also shows the extent to which unstandardized estimates of the gender composition overestimate women's presence; note that the blue circles, e.g. age-standardized estimates, are consistently below red triangles, e.g. unstandardized estimates. In addition, there are a number of sizeable outliers such as the Netherlands in 1960 (61 percent female), Nepal in 2001 (70 percent female) and South Africa in multiple years (34 - 36 percent female). These cases will be discussed in more detail later.

Figure 1 about here

Figure 1 also includes trend lines for both standardized (blue) and unstandardized (red) estimates. These are simple linear trend lines generated by excel using a least squares

fit (based on the equation $y = mx + b$ where m is the slope and b is the intercept). These trend lines indicate the general spread of the estimates based on the average estimates over the period between 1960 and 2008. For unstandardized estimates, the trend line crossed the 50 percent mark in early 2000, suggesting that women now constitute at least half of the total immigrant stock for these 56 countries. The trend line for standardized estimates depicts a more modest upward trend and the line is consistently below the 50 percent mark. Again, differences between standardized and unstandardized estimates indicate that although women may now constitute at least half of the total migrant stock in absolute figures, the observed upward trend is not entirely due to women's increasing participation in cross-border movements in recent years. It may also be due to other demographic factors such as feminizing of the aging migrant population and different rates of return migration among men and women. With respect to the latter point, some studies suggest that while male immigrants intend to return to their native countries, women often prefer to stay in the foreign land (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Grasmuck and Pessar 2005). Finally, note that the two trend lines in Figure 1 diverge over time, indicating a growing gap between standardized and unstandardized estimates. This suggests that the effect of age is stronger now than in the past and that there may be more women in aging foreign-born populations than men.

Examining the gender composition of immigrant population worldwide across regions and by period suggests considerable variation in the gender distribution of global immigrant populations. The findings provide strong evidence that immigrants in these study countries are increasingly gender-balanced and in some cases female dominated (e.g. Europe) or male dominated (e.g. Africa). These patterns are suggested by both

standardized and unstandardized estimates, although the extent of feminization is somewhat smaller after standardizing by age.

Variability by National Origin

In the section that follows, I shift gears to examine the gender composition of foreign-born populations in particular destinations by their national origins. Specifically, I identify regional destinations, i.e. countries with the largest immigrant population in each of the six regions discussed earlier, and estimate the gender composition of the three largest national origin immigrant groups residing in these regional destinations.

North America.

Compared to other regions, three North American countries - Canada, Mexico and the United States - have more extensive data in terms of historical coverage. Figure 2 summarizes those data and shows that the estimates of gender composition of foreign-born populations in these three countries have been over 45 percent since 1960. In the United States, women immigrants comprised half of the total immigrant population in 1970 and 1980, but since then their share has remained just less than 50 percent. In Canada, the foreign-born population has also become increasingly feminized; here women's representation has been rising steadily since 1930 and it crossed the 50 percent mark in 2000. However, Mexico adds more variation. Male immigrants continue to dominate in terms of overall numbers, but since 1960 more women have immigrated to Mexico. However, the upward trend in women's representation among immigrants in Mexico remains lower than trends in the United States and Canada.

Figure 2 about here

While both Canada and Mexico have experienced recent increases in women's share of immigrant stock, the United States has experienced the opposite trend. That is, while the gendered stock of U.S. immigrants is currently less than 50 percent female, the most recent estimates suggest a small downward trend. Donato et al. (2011) showed that this decline is due to the increase in Mexico-U.S. migration since the 1970s. Although the flow of Mexico-U.S. migrants is one of the largest between any two nations in the world, it has been male-dominated largely because it contains a large share of unauthorized migrants (Fry 2006). Therefore, after excluding Mexican-born immigrants from the analysis, Donato et al. (2011) found that women's share among the remaining foreign-born population was 51 percent in 2006, compared to 49 percent when Mexico was included.

To further explore the issue of variation in the gender composition of immigrants in North America, I identify the top three sending countries to North America and estimate their gender composition for the latest available years. Examining variations in the gender composition of immigrants by national origin helps to identify variation in specific migration circuits between nations in North America and elsewhere. Moreover, assessing the gender make-up of these national origin groups informs us about whether these migration circuits are gendered.

Figure 3 displays standardized estimates of the gender composition for the top three national origin groups in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Nations are ordered by the size of their foreign-born populations: the United States has the largest (in 2005,

approximately 40 million), followed by Canada (5.7 million in 2001), and then Mexico with approximately 520,000 foreign-born persons in 2000. Within each country, I show the gender compositions of the three largest national origin groups, with the largest presented first. In the United States, the biggest immigrant group is from Mexico (28 percent of the total foreign-born population), followed by China (5 percent) and the Philippines (4 percent). While Chinese and Filipino immigrants are clearly female dominated, Mexican immigrants are predominantly male, as expected. The Philippines is one of the biggest labor-exporting countries in Asia⁵ and sends large numbers of women to undertake care-related jobs in developed and newly industrialized countries, including the United States (Parrenas 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Battistella in Massey and Taylor 2004; Oishi 2005). In addition, the United States and the Philippines have cultural and historical links as well as bilateral military agreements, which include United States military bases in the Philippines until 1991 when the Philippines Senate voted to shut them down (United States Department of State 2012). Among other conditions, the presence of a U.S. military base has contributed to the marriage related migration of Filipinas to the United States (Donato 1992).

Figure 3 about here

⁵ The Commission on Filipinos Overseas estimated that there are almost 9.5 million Filipinos living outside the country as of December 2010. Of the total, about 47 percent are permanent migrants, 45 percent are temporary and the remaining 8 percent are irregular migrants. The number of emigrants has increased steadily in the past decade.

(http://www.cfo.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1340:stock-estimate-of-overseas-filipinos&catid=134:statisticsstock-estimate&Itemid=814)

In Canada, the largest immigrant group was from Central and South America and the Caribbean (11 percent of foreign-born population)⁶, closely followed by the United Kingdom (10.5 percent) and then China (6 percent). Since the largest immigrant group includes individuals from all of South/Central America and the Caribbean and data cannot be disaggregated, it is difficult to formulate a generalizable immigration story for this diverse group. Nevertheless, the standardized estimate of percent female show that the immigrant population from this region living in Canada is feminized (54.2 percent). The second and third largest groups – United Kingdom (50.7 percent) and China (51.3 percent), respectively – are also feminized. Overall, the three largest foreign-born populations appear to be considerably feminized. Women are traveling in equal numbers, if not exceeding their male counterparts, to Canada. Also, notably, female-dominated Chinese immigrants have a significant presence in the United States and Canada.

In Mexico, the vast majority of immigrants, over two-thirds (69 percent), originate from the United States, and 49.2 percent are women. The second and third largest sending nations, Guatemala (6 percent) and Spain (4 percent), sent far fewer immigrants to Mexico. While the population of Guatemalan immigrants in Mexico is gender balanced, Spanish immigrants in Mexico are heavily male. In general, these estimates suggest that the immigrant populations in Mexico are less feminized than the other two North American countries.

Latin America and the Caribbean

There is considerable variation in the gender composition of foreign-born populations in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the overall trend for the 14

⁶ The data from Central and South America and the Caribbean were reported as such and cannot be disaggregated.

countries and territories in this region suggests that immigration in this area has been predominantly male. As Figure 4 illustrates, for most countries, historically and in recent years, women account for less than half of the immigrant populations as depicted by the vast majority of estimates falling below the 50 percent mark. Puerto Rico and Cuba are the exceptions. Puerto Rican immigration has been female dominated since 1980s and Cuba's immigrant population in 2002 was largely female (54.2 percent). Notably, Chile experienced a distinct upward shift in women's representation in the immigrant population with almost 10 percentage point increase from 1960 (41.5 percent) to 2002 (49.9 percent). A similar upward trend is observed for Argentina, whose immigrant population has become increasingly feminized from less than 45 percent in 1970 to over 50 percent at the beginning of the 21st century.

On the other hand, Brazil, and to lesser extent, Venezuela and Colombia saw downward shifts in women's representation in the immigrant populations. Estimates for Brazil show a distinct downward trend with women's share, decreasing from 45 percent in 1960 to 43 percent in the 2000s. The significant presence of male immigrants in Brazil could be explained by demand for manual labor force, which is overwhelmingly male, to work in agriculture, especially from Japan beginning in the early 20th century (Amaral and Fusco 2005). In addition, Brazil is a destination of low-skilled migrants from the neighboring countries of Bolivia and Peru. Similarly, Venezuela's historically male-dominated foreign-born population, moved towards feminization from 1970s (45.7 percent female) through 1990s (48.4 percent female) but the trend reversed in early 2000s (47.9 percent female). Interestingly, the unstandardized estimates show no such decline and in fact, indicate that Venezuela's foreign-born population was gender balanced in 2001. This

suggests Venezuela's immigrant population that achieved gender balance, in crude terms, in the 21st century may not entirely be due to the increasing immigration of women compared to men, but also that foreign-born women were living longer than their male counterparts. Once again, however, across all nations, despite substantial variations , there is a distinct upward trend overall in percent female for the census years covered as indicated by the trend line for the region.

Figure 4 about here

To further examine the variation in the gender composition of immigrants in Latin America and the Caribbean, Figure 5 presents five regional destinations and the gender composition of the top three national origin immigrant groups in each of the destinations. For the latest year for which data are available, the largest recipient of migrants in this region is Argentina with more than one and half million foreign-born individuals, followed by Venezuela with a little less than a million, then Brazil with well over half a million, and Puerto Rico and Costa Rica both housing less than half a million foreign-born persons. As Figure 5 depicts, there is much variation in the gender composition of immigrants in these countries. In Argentina, immigration from Paraguay was heavily female whereas it was mostly male from Bolivia and Italy. The overall gender-balance observed in Argentina in 2001 is considerably influenced by Paraguayan immigrants who constitute about one-fifth (21 percent) of the total foreign-born population in Argentina. As a result, trafficking of women from Paraguay to Argentina for sex work has been an issue of concern for both countries. A report released during the Conference against Human Trafficking, Embassy of Paraguay in Buenos Aires (2011) stated that about 80 percent of women who are sexually exploited in Argentina are from Paraguay. In addition

to the large presence of Paraguayan women in the sex industry, many also migrate to Argentinian cities to work as domestic helpers (Jachimowicz 2006).

In Venezuela, the second largest regional destination, the largest national origin immigrant group is Colombia, which constitutes more than 60 percent of the total immigrant population in the country. Colombian immigrants are gender-balanced, whereas men clearly dominate among the Spanish and Portuguese national origin immigrant groups.

Comparatively, Brazil is a unique destination since male immigrants widely predominate and shares of women are below 45 percent for all three national origin groups. But Brazil's migration circuit is globally more far-reaching with the largest immigrant groups coming from Portugal, Japan and Italy. Portuguese immigrants comprise of about one third of the foreign-born population followed by Japanese and Italian immigrants, each with about one-tenth of the share. Significant immigration from Japan to Brazil reflects the two nation's unique history traced back to the early 20th century when Brazil brought Japanese laborers to work in coffee plantations after slave labor was abolished in the country (Amemiya 1998). Since then, Japanese immigrants have continued to migrate to Brazil but in lesser numbers than before.

Figure 5 about here

As for Puerto Rico, immigrants from the United States (roughly two-third of the total foreign-born population) and from Dominican Republic were largely women, but Cubans were mostly men. The feminized immigrant population in Puerto Rico appears to be driven by female-dominated U.S. migration. Finally, in Costa Rica, Nicaraguans, who

make up more than three quarters of the total immigrant population, were evenly distributed in terms of gender, but those from Panama (4 percent) and the U.S. (3 percent) were largely men. Nicaraguans were largely driven to Costa Rica by political instability in their home country, but recent immigrants are also motivated by better job prospects in agricultural industry and social programs that Costa Rica offers (Mahler and Ugrina 2006). Americans also have a large presence in Costa Rica since the United States has a strong trade, military and diplomatic relationship with the country. As such, the vast majority of the American immigrants in Costa Rica are men.

Overall, there is a distinct shift toward feminization among immigrant populations residing in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the representation of women in the immigrant populations is not uniform and varies substantially by national origin. Migration from other Latin American countries and the Caribbean is explained partially by geographic proximity and historical ties whereas migration from Europe is rooted in the colonial ties (e.g. Portuguese in Brazil, Spanish in Venezuela). Importantly, the migration circuits linking the regional destinations and the sending countries depict considerable gendered variations. Some migration circuits such as the ones linking Paraguayans to Argentina, and Americans and Dominicans to Puerto Rico are predominantly female, while the migration streams to Brazil, Costa Rica and Venezuela are distinctly male.

Europe

The gender composition of immigrant populations in the 13 European countries included in the analysis reveal some variation in the estimates over the course of the history. As Figure 6 illustrates, the foreign-born populations in these countries have been

relatively gender-balanced with most estimates of gender composition falling around the 50 percent. However, there are some distinct cases that merit some discussion. First, France displays a clear upward trend since 1960, indicating a progressively more feminized immigrant population in the recent years. Despite more than six percentage point increase in the percent female from 1960 (43 percent) to 2006 (49 percent), the overall representation of women is still slightly less than half. In contrast, Ireland is experiencing de-feminization of their immigrant population with fewer women traveling to Ireland. From 1970 to 2006, the share of female immigrants decreased from 53 percent to 48 percent and the historically female dominated immigrant population became male dominated at the turn of the 21st century. This downward trend among immigrants in Ireland perhaps resulted from the stricter immigration policies in Ireland since early 2000s that were geared towards attracting highly skilled individuals from outside the European Union (E.U.) and low or semi skilled workers from within the E.U. (Ruhs and Quinn 2009).

Figure 6 about here

The Netherlands reported a highly feminized immigrant population (60.9 percent female) in 1960 and subsequent decades saw a steep decline in the percent of immigrants that are female. About 53 percent of the Netherlands' foreign born were female in 1970 and their presence further decreased to 51.4 percent by 2004. Despite the gradual decrease, women's representation among immigrants remained more than half. The distinctive female-dominated immigrant population in Netherlands in the 1960s was most likely driven by the decolonization of Indonesia and Suriname, which motivated return

migration among Dutch expatriates, many of whom had Indonesian or Surinamese brides (Jansen 2006).

Similar but less severe downward trends are observed for Portugal, Romania and Spain. Other countries such as the United Kingdom and Switzerland exhibit somewhat less variation over the years, maintaining either a gender-balanced or female-dominated immigrant population. Despite some de-feminization, on the whole the data for Europe reveal women's predominance in foreign-born populations across Europe historically even though the trend line suggests a modest decline.

Figure 7 illustrates national origin differences in the gender composition of international migrants in the five largest regional destinations in Europe. These destination countries receive international migrants from nations far and wide. In addition to migrants from nearby European countries, there is a significant presence of immigrants from Africa, South Asia and Latin America. France, by far, has the largest foreign-born population (7.3 million foreign-born persons), followed by United Kingdom (4.5 million), Italy (2.4 million), Spain (2.1 million) and Greece (1 million).

In France, the largest national origin immigrant group was Algerian (18 percent), followed by Moroccan (12 percent) and then other African nations (11 percent). Historically, from these three origin communities, more men have come into France than women. Adepoju (2006) contends that although the migration from Africa has historically been male dominated, the trend is gradually changing. He adds that the African migrant streams have become feminized in recent times as women from several African countries travel more autonomously to Europe and to oil-producing countries to work in health care

and other domestic labor industries.

Table 7 about here

In the United Kingdom, the largest national origin group includes immigrants from three Commonwealth South Asian countries - India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (22 percent of the total immigrant population). The next largest immigrant groups were from Africa and Western Europe, each constituting about 19 percent of the foreign-born population in the UK. Female immigrants clearly predominate in the United Kingdom, particularly from Africa and other Western European countries. Most notably, the vast majority of African immigrants were female, a finding likely linked to the immigration of care workers and nurses to the UK. In contrast, the gender composition of immigrants in Italy reveals much more variation. Approximately 60 percent of Italian immigrants from European Union 15⁷ were women, compared to 51.2 percent for those Central and Eastern Europe and to 38.1 percent from North Africa.

The three largest national origins among immigrants in Spain are Morocco, Ecuador and Colombia, and they display substantial variation in the gender composition. Moroccan immigrants are by far and large male dominated (only 38 percent female), followed by Ecuador (52.2 percent female) and female-dominated Colombian immigrants (60.4 percent female). Large numbers of Colombian and Ecuadorian women travel to Spain to work as domestic helpers and care-givers. In Greece, the largest national origin immigrant group, Albanians, were majority male but both German and Turkish immigrant groups consisted of more women. Albanians constituted more than one-third of the

⁷ European Union 15 includes Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

foreign-born in Greece; many migrated to Greece, both legally and illegally, after the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe (Vidali 1999).

Overall, European destinations contain much diversity in their immigrant populations. Migration circuits in this region are defined by historical and colonial ties as well as the contemporary drivers of migration such as health care professional migration among African women as well as domestic workers' migration from Latin American countries. The migration circuits linking France and Northern/other African countries are also highly gendered consisting of many more men than women. The United Kingdom and South Asian countries are linked via their colonial history, whereas the female dominated African immigrants are motivated by health care labor demand. Similarly interesting variations are observed among national origin groups in Italy, Spain and Greece at the beginning of the 21st century.

Asia

Although the topic of migration has not been explored in the Asian context to the same extent as in Europe and the Americas, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009) estimates that Asia has a highly mobile population and houses over 60 million of the world's 213 million international migrants. Figure 8 depicts the gender makeup of immigrant populations in 12 Asian countries for which we have data. The trend line indicates an increase in women's representation among immigrants residing in this region over the years.

Figure 8 about here

Estimates of the gender composition are quite dispersed suggesting substantial variation in the gender composition of foreign-born populations. However, the majority of estimates fall under the 50 percent mark indicating that most immigrant populations in this region are male-dominated. Israel, Nepal, Kyrgyz Republic and Palestine are exceptions because they have comparatively more feminized foreign-born populations than other Asian nations.

In Israel, since 1970, the foreign-born population has remained gender balanced. Donato et al. (2011) noted that the gender balance in Israel could be understood in terms of the uniqueness of the country in that it attracts families as well as older individuals for religious and ethnicity-related reasons. In addition, the politically volatile territory of Palestine has experienced nearly a 10 percentage point increase, rising from slightly more than 50 percent female to almost 60 percent female between 1998 and 2008.

Figure 8 also shows that Nepal's immigration is distinctly feminized compared to other destinations. Data from the Philippines also show a huge leap towards feminization, with a 14 percentage point increase in percent female in one decade, between 1990 and 2000. On the other side, a contrasting story emerges for Cambodia, Iraq, Mongolia, Malaysia and Thailand. In these countries, the immigrant populations are heavily male.

It is important to note that data on Asian countries are quite sparse compared to other parts of the world, both in terms of chronological and geographical coverage. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the two largest countries in the region, India and China, are missing from the analysis. Nonetheless, this analysis offers an exciting avenue to begin to explore the variability in the gender distribution of migrants living in this region.

Figure 9 about here

As Figure 9 illustrates, the largest recipient of migrants in this region is Malaysia with over 1.5 million foreign-born residing in the country at the turn of the 21st century. The second largest Asian destination is the Philippines with 1.3 million foreign-born individuals, third is Nepal with approximately 600,000 immigrants, followed by Thailand with slightly more than one quarter of a million and Cambodia with slightly more than 80,000 immigrants.

Indonesians, the largest national origin immigrant group in Malaysia, constitute a slightly less than half (42 percent) of the total immigrant population, followed by immigrants from the Philippines (8 percent) and then Bangladesh (4 percent). While the Philippines sent mostly women, which is consistent with prior studies, Indonesian immigrants in Malaysia were male dominated, and notably Bangladeshi immigrants were almost entirely men, with less than two percent of Bangladeshi immigrants in Malaysia being women. Oishi (2005) and Donato et al. (2011) noted that this extremely low presence of women results from the demand for manual labor in Malaysia, which is met almost exclusively by men, and from Bangladeshi law that limited women's emigration from Bangladesh until very recently. In fact, the Bangladeshi government imposed a ban on the migration of semi-skilled and unskilled women in 1981, and this restriction was eased only in 2003, when women over 35 years of age were permitted to leave (Siddiqui 2006). The Bangladeshi case demonstrates the powerful role of the state and how it can influence the gender representation of immigrant populations around the world.

Following Malaysia, the Philippines was the second largest recipient of migrants in the Asian region with approximately 1.3 million foreign-born individuals residing in the country in 2000. The largest national origin groups in the Philippines included immigrants

from the UK, Bahrain and the United States. Immigrant populations from the UK and Bahrain were more or less gender balanced, but there were more U.S. immigrant men than women in the Philippines.

Nepal is a unique case among countries covered in this study. Nepal had the highest percent of women among its immigrant population (70 percent) and the top three national origin groups residing in the country were also highly feminized. About 70 percent of Indian immigrants in Nepal, 58 percent of Hong Kong immigrants, and 50 percent of immigrants from other Asian countries were women. It is not surprising to find many Indians in Nepal given the open border policy between the two nations signed in 1950 (Nayak 2010); the Treaty of Peace and Friendship allows citizens of both countries to freely travel and work across borders. What contributes to the large share of women Indian immigrants in Nepal is the two nations share linguistic, religious and cultural heritage, facilitating marriage migration. Kansakar (2003) noted that the large presence of Indian women in southern parts of Nepal indicates much marriage migration across Nepal-India border. Therefore, the Nepali case reveals that a variety of factors, including cultural similarities that motivate marriage and state treaties, gender migration circuits.

On the other hand, immigrants in Thailand were heavily male for all three top senders. The largest national origin group is Burmese (43 percent of total foreign-born population), followed by Chinese (21 percent) and then Japanese (10 percent). As Figure 9 illustrates, the overwhelming majority of Japanese immigrants were men and Japanese women comprised less than one-third of the total Japanese immigrant population in Thailand as of 2000. Similar gender distribution is apparent among Chinese immigrants. Japanese and Chinese immigrants travel to Thailand mostly for business purposes to fill

senior or other managerial positions, held mostly by men (IOM- Thailand 2011). In addition, Thailand's government granted about 270,000 immigrants who entered the country before 1972 permanent residency, and of those, 85 percent were Chinese (Muntarbhorn 2005). Hence, there were more men in Japanese and Chinese national origin groups. Burmese men are also recruited to occupy low-skilled jobs in Thailand.

Likewise, Cambodia's foreign-born population was overwhelmingly male. Only 45 percent of the Vietnamese population, which is the largest immigrant group residing in Cambodia, were women. About 48 percent of the Thai national origin group were women and the share of women among the Chinese immigrants was noticeably small (32 percent). According to the Asian Migration Center (2002), Cambodia draws migrants from Vietnam to work in the construction sector and fill positions such as foremen, craftsmen and mechanics. Similarly, the majority of Chinese immigrants enter the country to fill managerial and other highly skilled jobs among other things.

In the top Asian destinations, it appears that immigrants are mostly coming from neighboring countries, with the exception of the Philippines which draws immigrants from the UK and the United States. In general, men continue to dominate in the migration streams to Asian destinations. However, there are some unique cases such as Nepal with overwhelmingly feminized immigrant populations, affected by open borders and factors that facilitate marriage migration of Indian women to Nepali men. As observed in other regions, labor-related migration circuits such as Bangladesh to Malaysia, and Japan and China to Thailand, mostly draw male migrants. On the other hand, there is some indication that the migration circuits that are also characterized by cultural and marriage motivation (e.g. Nepal and Israel).

Africa

As of 2010, Africa housed over 19 million international migrants and that number is steadily increasing (United Nations 2009). However, very little is known about the gender makeup of foreign-born stocks living in various nations across this continent. Adepoju (2004) contends that like in other parts of the world, most international migrations in Africa are driven by rapid population growth and unemployment in origin countries. Additionally, several parts of Africa continue to experience ethno-political conflicts and civil strife engendering forced migration to neighboring countries and Europe. According to the most recent estimates from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are about 2.7 million refugees in Africa (2011). The UNHCR *Global Trends Report* reveals that the refugee population in sub-Saharan is feminized (51.2%) but in southern Africa, refugees are largely men. Given the scale and frequency of forced migration, it is important to keep in mind that the refugee populations are often enumerated in the foreign-born stock of the African nations included in this analysis.

As Figure 10 illustrates, estimates of the gender composition of foreign-born populations for the nine African nations vary geographically and by census years. Overall, immigrant populations residing in this area are predominantly male and the trend line indicates a gradual decline in women's presence in the immigrant populations in the recent years suggesting a trend toward defeminizing. However, we have to be cautious while interpreting the trend since we have few cases for this region with limited chronological coverage. Also note that the trend line may be influenced by the recent estimates of the

gender composition of immigrants in South Africa, which has an overwhelmingly male majority foreign-born stock.

Figure 10 about here

Compared to other African cases, Malawi has a more feminized immigrant population but gender ratios have fluctuated considerably over the three census periods. In 1987, the share of women in the foreign-born stock was more than 50 percent, but the estimate dipped to 45 percent in 1998 and then dramatically increased to over 50 percent again in 2008. In contrast, immigration in South Africa has been consistently and overwhelmingly male. The large presence of male immigrants in the country can be attributed to the large coal and gold mining industries that depend on male migrant workers (Zlotnik 2004). In addition, a report published by the South African Institute of International Affairs (Hughes 2007) on migration in southern Africa stated that migrants who seek work in South Africa, and particularly female migrants, are often victims of violence, overt hostility, social exclusion and economic exploitation, making South Africa particularly unappealing to female migrants. The report also indicated that while there are some opportunities for contract work, female migrants in South Africa have limited opportunities in terms of scope, location and pay. Therefore, labor demands in the mining industry and its unfavorable environment for female migrants are likely responsible for the low representation of women in the foreign-born population.

Sierra Leone also has considerably fewer women than men in their foreign-born population. On the other hand, Egypt (49.6 percent female in 1996), Guinea (50.4 percent

female in 1996) and Uganda (49.7 percent female in 2002) had relatively gender-balanced foreign-born populations. These countries have experienced some economic growth in the recent years, albeit unevenly. According to the World Bank, while Egypt experienced dramatic increase in per capita GDP (in constant 2000 US\$) in the 1990s, Guinea and Uganda only saw modest increase in per capita GDP.

Figure 11 about here

The five largest destinations for migrants in Africa are South Africa, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Malawi. These countries are also some of the largest recipients of refugee populations and asylum seekers from various parts of the continent, suggesting that the substantial presence of some immigrant groups is due to the influx of refugees fleeing violence in origin countries. Early in the 21st century, armed conflict and political instability in the Great Lakes region, particularly in Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi, drove a large number of refugees to neighboring countries such as Tanzania and Uganda, and as far away to southern African countries (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2001). For example, according to the UNHCR report, Tanzania alone had over 500,000 Burundian refugees as of 2000. Note too that a handful of countries, such as Rwanda and Sudan, are both receiver and sender of refugees. The UNHCR (2001) further reported that Rwanda housed almost 60,000 refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. Unfortunately, our data sets do not allow distinction between voluntary migrants and refugee or asylum seekers.

As Figure 11 illustrates, South Africa is the largest regional destination with over 1 million foreign-born individuals, followed by Uganda and Rwanda with just under

400,000 immigrants, and Tanzania and Malawi with just under a quarter million. In the African context, migrants seem to originate from a handful of countries, namely Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Congo and Burundi. For instance, Mozambique was one of the largest national origin groups in South Africa and constituted about 26 percent of the total immigrants in the country. Similarly, in Tanzania and Malawi, 18 percent and 26 percent of the foreign-born populations, respectively, were from Mozambique. Although immigrants from Mozambique legally traveled to South Africa to work in mines and farms in the 1990s, they also entered in large numbers through illegal means (Crush 2008). Likewise, Zimbabwe is one of the three largest immigrant groups in South Africa and Malawi, and the Congolese is one of the biggest national origin groups in Uganda and Rwanda. Interestingly, Uganda is both one of the largest receivers of migrants and one of the largest senders to Rwanda.

In terms of gender composition, the largest national origin groups in all five countries are strikingly male-dominated with the exception of Congolese immigrants in Uganda, Kenyan immigrants in Tanzania, and Zambian and Zimbabwean immigrants in Malawi. In South Africa, only a quarter of the Mozambique immigrant group was female. In Zimbabwean and British national origin groups, men were in majority. In contrast, immigrant groups in Uganda appear to be more gender balanced, with the Sudanese and Rwandans just under 50 percent, and Congolese with 54 percent, female. Toma and Vause (2010) suggested that women in Congo are less subjected to social control and have higher labor market participation than countries like Senegal and, therefore, face fewer restraints in migrating. In Rwanda, all three top national origin groups have more men than women.

However, a different story unfolds for Tanzania. While immigrants from Burundi and Mozambique are predominantly male, immigrants from Kenya are remarkably feminized with 65 percent of Kenyan immigrants in Tanzania being female. Along the same lines, Zambian and Zimbabwean immigrants in Malawi are female dominated but those coming from Mozambique are mostly men.

African immigration is therefore very much male dominated and originates from a handful of countries in the region. However, Adepoju (2004) argues that there is some evidence of feminization in African migrant streams in more recent years. He notes that African women, particularly from Nigeria, Ghana and Tanzania, are traveling abroad to pursue higher education and careers in European and Arab countries. Most are professionals, mostly doctors and nurses. Within Africa, women travel because their informal income generating activities are not as affected as others living in economically depressed nations. Relatively more is known about Africans traveling to Western and Gulf countries compared to migrants traveling to African destinations. From the few cases we have in this study, it appears that women's migration circuits are patterned by economic activities, especially when men cannot find employment.

V. Discussion and Conclusion

There is now a large body of scholarship that attests to the significance of gender in migration studies. Recent studies have made considerable strides in gendering migration theories by demonstrating that the motivations, experiences, and consequences of migration are distinct for men and women. The next important step toward developing a coherent and comprehensive understanding of male-female migration is to examine the gender distribution of migrants living in different parts of the world today and examine how they vary across space and historical times. Past research efforts (e.g. Tyree and Donato 1986; Oishi 2005; United Nations 2006; Donato et al. 2011) have started to look into the gender makeup of immigrants living in several parts of the world. These works have raised intriguing questions regarding the gendered processes, circuits, and consequences that characterize contemporary migration. This paper attempts to answer some of the questions raised in those studies.

This paper carefully explores the gendered landscape of international migration by estimating and examining the age-standardized gender ratios of foreign-born stocks in 56 countries since 1960 to gauge the extent of the feminization of migration. My results show an observable shift toward the feminization of immigrant populations globally, but the extent of feminization is not uniform and varies significantly across countries and regions. Moreover, some trends of de-feminization were observed in some nations, particularly in Brazil, Ireland and South Africa. Even more remarkable differences in the gender composition of immigrants emerged when estimating the gender distribution of immigrant populations by national origin within the regional destination countries.

Another important finding is that age-standardized estimates of gender composition of immigrant populations are more conservative than what is generally portrayed in academic and non-academic reports. Methodologically, I demonstrated how the effects of differential mortality rates of men and women at older age can be controlled using the age-standardization procedure to gauge the degree of feminization of international migration. The age standardization produces more conservative estimates of the gender composition and ensures that the greater enumeration of female migrants as compared to men is not due to a larger number of women among the aging foreign-born leaving through emigration or death at higher rate than men. Age standardization is widely used in demographic studies and adds power to the estimation of population related statistics, and future migration studies can greatly benefit from this technique.

On the substantive side, findings from this paper add to already formidable evidence that migration is gendered. Importantly, the uneven representation of women in immigrant populations and gender-specific migration circuits suggest that international migration occurs in the interactive context of individual, household, societal and state level factors. As such, this paper maps migration circuits that link sending and receiving communities to suggest why some countries send more women than men and vice versa. Although the male migration circuits are somewhat consistent with what neo-classical theories predict, women's circuits have some unique features. The study offers evidence that female-dominated migration streams are also driven by employment activity, such as the female African nurses in European countries, Filipina domestic workers in the United States, and Paraguayan sex workers in Argentina. These circuits also highlight the role of non-tangible motivations such as the matters of family and marriage (e.g. migration of

Indian brides to Nepal) driving female migration. There is also evidence suggesting that highly skilled women are increasingly traveling abroad to pursue educational and career goals.

A state's stance on emigration of women also plays a vital role in patterning male-women's migration. Countries like Bangladesh and Nepal have had restrictive policies on women's migration for low-skilled and domestic work abroad. Hence, there is low representation of Bangladeshi and Nepali women in the Gulf countries compared to male counterparts. On the receiving end, immigration policies geared towards importation of cheap manual labor to work in construction and mining industries select on male migration. Therefore, on the whole, there is convincing evidence that the factors producing gendered migration circuits are best understood by taking an integrative approach such as the one propounded by Oishi (2005).

The feminization of migrant populations has important implications for migrants and their families, for sending and receiving communities, and for migration regimes at national and transnational levels. Although my study does not directly measure or quantify these consequences, I discuss several of them for future researchers to consider. First, women's movement to take up wage employment and to pursue other aspirational goals challenges normative gender expectations. Women who not only cross household boundaries but independently travel beyond their national frontier to provide for themselves and their family are likely to experience migration as a source of empowerment and an exercise of freedom, especially for those women from traditional, patriarchal societies. At the household level, migration of care-providers may shift the balance of power in families by reconfiguring the household division of labor. Men who

stay behind have to take on the role of child-rearing and provide care for the older members of the family. Such changes at the individual and household levels portend much larger changes at the societal level. On the flip side, emigration of many women, especially mothers, may create care strain in families and adversely affect the children (Parrenas 2005). In addition, the transnational relationship stresses marital ties and challenges the traditional notion of family – the extent of which is not fully known at this point.

Having many women in immigrant populations may affect the local marriage market by inflating the pool of marriageable-aged women in destinations, while at the same time, deflating the number in sending communities. The negative effects of sex ratio imbalance have been documented extensively in India, China and South Korea, where sex-selective abortions have produced significantly more men than women. Some consequences include a surplus of unmarried men, the importation of foreign brides, and social instability (Yi et al. 1993; Dreze and Khera 2000; Hesketh and Xing 2006). In the receiving communities, the immigration of young women expands and diversifies marriage market for the native men. Among immigrant women, the pool of preferred marriage partners may be dramatically reduced in the foreign land since most immigrants prefer endogamous marriage (Pagnini and Morgan 1990; Angrist 2002). As a result, unmarried immigrant women may intermarry or delay/forgo marriage altogether. Moreover, when immigrant women marry men in destination communities, the likelihood of return migration is reduced and may result in permanent care and brain-drain from sending communities.

Women's increasing migration to undertake certain categories of jobs also affects the labor market. Although migration increases women's overall participation in the labor force, it may contribute to segmentation of the global labor market whereby immigrant women are funneled into low-paying domestic jobs with little prospects for advancement. Studies have shown that immigrant women are often confined to an enclave economy that offers lower pay, long work hours and challenging working conditions (Zhou and Nordquist 1994; Chiswick and Miller 2005; Xie and Gough 2009). Although immigrant women's increasing economic participation in ethnic enclaves provides a livelihood, it may hinder their incorporation into the larger formal labor market. In addition, the intimate services and emotional labor that women from poorer countries provide in the richer economies become commodified in the global capitalist system (Constable 2009). Hochschild (2003) goes as far as to argue that the extraction of love and care is a new form of imperialism. In addition to "care drain," the sending countries also experience brain drain as educated and highly-skilled women to seek better opportunities elsewhere (Dumont, Martin and Spielvogel 2007).

The changing gender composition of immigrants also raises questions about the suitability of current emigration and immigration laws catering to the increasingly feminized migrant population. Current migration regimes still operate under the presupposition that migration is a male phenomenon. Countries that have recently started sending more women do not yet have legal structures to facilitate female migration and to ensure their well-being at the destinations. Lack of proper support system and regulations on the recruitment of migrant workers inevitably leads to exploitation and abuse (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). Often, receiving countries are not fully prepared to address to

the needs of the unprecedented number of female immigrants from a range of countries and cultures. For example, Thierfelder, Tanner and Bodiang (2005) discuss the inability of the Swiss health care system to adequately address specific gynecological and obstetric health care needs of migrant women from Africa who have undergone female genital mutilation. This is just one example the inadequacy and lack of preparedness that can happen among destination countries receiving culturally diverse, female dominated immigrant populations. Therefore, new legal framework and migration regimes should be tailored to meet the needs of the changing demographics of migrant populations.

This paper acknowledges a number of limitations. First, we have only 56 countries in our analysis with uneven spatial and historical coverage. While some distinct patterns emerged in terms of the gendered patterns of migration, the small number of cases poses some problem in making generalizable conclusions. Second, census data are gathered from multiple sources and although the data are harmonized, there may be cases in which variables may not be exactly comparable. For instance, in terms of origin location, some censuses report individual countries while others report in regions and continents. Finally, stock data, as opposed to flow data, are limited in the sense that it makes it challenging to precisely understand the effects of the gender composition of recent immigrants on the overall gender ratio even though they permit removing the effects of age generating conservative estimates. But other variables, such as differential rates of return migration which may affect the gender composition of immigrants, cannot be adequately controlled for. However, despite these shortcomings, this project has produced some important and exciting findings that add substantively to international migration scholarship and will spearhead further research into this crucial topic.

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