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Examining the Role of Gender in the Social Dynamics of Migration

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Abstract

This paper explores the intricate relationship between gender and the social dynamics of migration, highlighting the pivotal role gender plays in shaping migration experiences, decision-making processes, social networks, and outcomes. Through an examination of diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts, the study delves into how migration both challenges and reinforces gender norms and inequalities, shedding light on the complex interplay of economic, social, and cultural forces that influence migratory patterns. Emphasizing the need for gender-sensitive policies, the analysis underscores the importance of considering gender intersectionality to effectively address the multifaceted aspects of migration management. By integrating theoretical insights with empirical findings, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the gendered dimensions of migration, advocating for approaches that promote equity and recognize the diverse experiences of migrants across different gender identities.

Keywords: Gender, migration, social dynamics, decision-making, experiences, social networks, intersectionality, gender-sensitive policies, inequality, migration management.

Introduction

There are a number of factors that make it difficult to draw firm conclusions about how migration affects women's social standing, including the fact that migration is just one of many social forces that alter gender relations, the lack of cohesion and coherence in the available empirical data, and the difficulty of studying these shifts in relation to different cultures. This is particularly true when transferring conclusions from research that used various degrees of analysis. There have been some helpful analytical and empirical insights from both macro and micro approaches to female migration, but few writers have tried to integrate the results of research using different levels of analysis.

An important reason why migration is relevant to studying gender roles and social change is because it is a component of developing societies' structural transformation (Oliveira and Garcia 2014; Stern and Corona 2011; Findley 2017; Boserup 2010). Actually, when different economic, social, and cultural systems are at work, migration and societal transformation go hand in hand. This is especially true in developing nations where people are leaving rural regions for urban centres or even crossing international borders. The assumption that women's integration into migratory streams would improve their social standing stems from the widespread perception that receiving communities provide more diverse and, by extension, greater social chances than the communities of origin of the migrants.

Analysing the specific impacts of migration in isolation from the larger constellation of causes causing societal change is difficult. A conceptual framework outlining the ways gender constrains and is circumscribed by geographical movement, as well as the myriad of individual and structural arrangements that impact migration outcomes, is necessary for establishing how migration (e.g., directly or indirectly) changes women's position in society. While this article does not aim to cover every possible aspect of this topic, we do provide an analytical framework to help organise the results of a selected but purposeful literature study.

Given the limited amount of data available, our investigation into the topic of migration and shifting gender roles does not provide fresh empirical findings. The present understanding of how migration affects women's status is organised via a critical evaluation of previous research, which utilises a distribution and redistribution framework (Curtis 2016). In addition to finding different results for women, our evaluation tries to determine what variables contributed to the improvement or worsening of women's situation after migration. The significance of understanding women's responsibilities within the framework of their families is emphasised in Section II, which also outlines the conceptual and methodological challenges that impact the evaluation of evolving gender relations. This analysis clearly differentiates

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between two processes that contribute to and sustain gender inequality: distribution, which involves monetary transactions in the market, and redistribution, which involves non-monetary transactions inside the home.

In Section III, we review case studies that show how the distribution-redistribution analytical framework can lead to different results for migrant women in Latin America and Africa. Finally, we summarise the key findings in an effort to separate problems that affect society as a whole from issues that are unique to individual countries. This conversation raises important concerns about the analytical value of migrant status as a social category that is not reliant on gender or social class, and it also highlights areas that need further investigation.

Conceptual and methodological considerations

Understanding the theoretical foundations of gender as a socially constructed category and the mechanisms through which migration alters women's position in diverse social and cultural settings is necessary before assessing how migration changes their position in familial and market domains. For this reason, it is useful to take a cursory look at the socioeconomic and material roots of gender stratification; doing so opens our minds to the possibility of paradoxical results, such as the advancement of women in certain fields at the expense of their advancement in others.

The role of women is being defined. The category of gender is one that is created by society. An historical process known as the social construction of gender entails rating features, activities, attitudes, and behaviours. Almost generally, those associated with males or the positions they fill are accorded more value, according to Beneria and Roldan (2017). This means that "access to resources, generating male privilege and female subordination" is both a product of and an institutionalisation of gender inequality (Beneria and Roldan 2017: 12). While status is a common way to describe gender inequality, it is overly simplistic and fails to take into account the complex web of culturally and socially imposed expectations and obligations that people are born into (Curtis 2016: 169).

For instance, it's hard to tell if women's participation in the work market improved their position relative to males without considering the societal underpinnings of the gender distribution of tasks in the home. In other words, migration may benefit the family overall, but women may not benefit from it (see also Sandell 2017), if market activity just adds to women's workload and if city life necessitates a greater distribution of labour among the members of migrant families (Oliveira and Garcia 2014). Consequently, while discussing gender inequality, we employ the word "position" to sidestep the problems with individualistic success models (Curtis, 2016) and to make room for the possibility of conflicting results in different areas of gender relations.

The social embeddedness of mechanisms of exchange? While most would agree that gender is a socially created concept, there is still a lot of debate about which gender roles best describe and quantify gender inequity. Although economic interactions are a prime example, non-economic roles also have a significant impact in both the creation and the reorganisation of gender imbalances. Considering gender as a socially constructed category with its roots in class relations can lead to several outcomes, such as: (1) having access to productive resources and/or owning the means of production; (2) having control over the labour process in both the home and the market; (3) having a way to be compensated, whether it's in kind or money; and (4) being aware of power and authority inequalities in both the public and private spheres (Beneria and Roldan 2017; Pessar 2014; Jelin 2017).

Less obvious but potentially more limiting societal dynamics that dehne the gendered division of labour inside the family and that demarcate the productive and reproductive spheres of women's activities are just as significant for evaluating changes in women's status during migration. For a better understanding of why gender disparity persists even as society evolves, patriarchy—a system of norms that gives males power and defines their dominating roles in the home and the marketplace—is crucial. Rule of non-economic exchange (Curtis, 2016), and the standards governing parental and conjugal love and responsibility (Whitehead , 2014) are additional sources of male dominance over women, in addition to the material resources that men acquire through inheritance or the labour market. When evaluating shifts in women's status, it is crucial to consider if and under what circumstances migration across different regions helps to challenge or renegotiate patriarchal power.

Patriarchy is pervasive but far from universal; contrary to popular conception, patriarchal control originates in the family rather than in sexual relations (Curtis 2016).' In order to accept the idea that inequality is mostly generated by families or households, it is necessary to dispel certain misconceptions on how redistribution works. Some of the most prominent examples of such misconceptions include the following: (1) the idea that families make decisions about consumption and production as a whole, as well as fertility, marriage, and migration; (2) the idea that each family member brings something special to the table, and (3) the idea that families use economic rationality to pool their resources and spend money (Beneria and Roldan 2017). On the other hand, there is mounting evidence that unequal family interactions both

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create and solidify hierarchies of inequality. Inequality based on market transactions may persist even after using family allocative principles, as families as redistributive units are regulated by a social rather than an economic system (Curtis 2016). To rephrase, family members rarely get the same benefits from non-monetary transactions.

What matters most in figuring out how the market and family dynamics work to perpetuate gender disparity is the kind of transaction at hand, whether it social or economic in character. In contrast to social exchanges, which are regulated by informal, non-binding agreements with vague future commitments, economic transactions are based on enforceable agreements, which allow for very precise assessment of inequality. When trying to understand why gender inequalities exist in such diverse social settings, it is essential to keep in mind that social transactions are not easily quantifiable.

Inequitable allocation of family resources (money and in-kind items) is a result of socially built power imbalances that govern redistribution processes within families. When everyone pitches in to make something, that doesn't mean everyone gets to eat it. It is commonly believed that women's status improves compared to men's when they migrate, which is why this issue is especially significant for evaluating changes in women's position during migration. However, this is not always the case. These assumptions are challenged by the case studies that follow. Generally speaking, women's marital and headship roles, particularly the access they provide to joint decision-making and the resources produced by other family members, as well as their position in the market sphere and the class structure before migration, all play a role in assessing the ways in which migration affects their position. These theoretical notions get concrete substance from the example studies covered below.

Migration and gender toward an assessment

When people move, they open themselves up to new ways of making a living. Redefining gender relations is theoretically possible via migration (Morokvasic 2014). There are a number of factors that influence the way women's social position changes after migration. These include: (1) family and marital responsibilities, especially regarding whether women migrate alone or with their children; (2) women's productive roles in both their home and new communities; (3) the reasons for migration; (4) the type of migration (temporary or permanent, long or short distance, rural-to-urban versus intra-urban); and (5) cultural arrangements that provide concrete meaning to these social outcomes. If women's migration is accompanied by increasing wage employment and gives them more control over their earnings or, at the very least, more involvement in family decision-making, then migration might improve social mobility, economic independence, and relative autonomy (Pessar 2014). Another possibility is that gender inequalities remain largely unchanged as a result of migration, which may just involve the transfer of patriarchal power from one community to another (although in different forms) (Beneria and Roldan 2017; Curtis 2016). As an example, this could happen to people who migrated temporarily for no other reason than to help support their families back home (Arizpe, 2011) or to people whose families' financial situation worsened as a result of their increased involvement in wage labour (Beneria and Roldan, 2017).

To determine how migration affects gender relations, we need a way to compare women's positions before and after they migrate. Economic and non-economic interactions are the main areas of concentration due to our interest in family and market ties. On the one hand, we look at the former, or women's productive roles, and how migration affects three things: (1) wage activity participation, (2) relative income contribution, and (3) time spent in domestic production. The following are examples of non-monetary interests that people have: (1) control over their own income; (2) control over the income of other family members; and (3) relative power in household decision-making, especially when it comes to the distribution of common goods (Beneria and Roldan 2017; Curtis 2016; Morokvasic 2014; Jelin 2017).

The key to understanding how women's social position might be altered by geographical mobility is to look at marriage and family statuses, which are the basis for non-economic transactions. Determining the distinctive consequences of migration on women's position from family and marriage statuses that define gender relations is already a challenging endeavour, and women's inclination to move is further complicated by their family position, whether as single heads, daughters, or spouses. So, before and after you relocate, make sure you find out everyone's marital and family status (Oliveira and Garcia 2014). The question therefore becomes whether women's positions are changed by changes in family and marital status, new possibilities brought about by migration, or by the tension that arises from the competing demands of work and family life (Morokvasic 2014). It is evident from comparing the migratory experiences of women in Latin America (Jelin 2017; Elizaga 2012; Simmons et al. 2017) and Africa (Khoo et al. 2014) that the effects on gender relations of geographical moves depend on job opportunities and whether women migrate as young, single women, which is common in Latin America, or as tied movers.

There is no universal agreement on whether migration elevates or lowers women's status relative to males. This is due to

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the fact that thèse situations differ among cultures and to the many elements that influence and mitigate migration's impact on women's position. Women may experience both benefits and drawbacks from migration, depending on whether more independence in the public and private spheres is accompanied by a larger burden (Sandell 2017; Morokvasic 2014).' The groundbreaking study by Boserup (2010) on women's role in economic development highlighted the fact that women's involvement in economic activities (and income generation) is likely to decrease rather than increase after migration. However, this generalisation appears to be more applicable to Africa than Latin America, according to Simmons et al. (2017), Khoo et al. (2014), and Oliveira and Garcia (2014).

The idea that migration makes women's lives easier is based on three assumptions: that women migrate from oppressive to less oppressive environments (to break taboos like having children outside of marriage or to escape extremely unequal and rigid gender roles), that women should prioritise paid work over unpaid labour, and that women should have more say in how their families' resources are distributed (Morokvasic 2014). On the other hand, evidence of fewer employment opportunities for women (Boserup, 2010), less control over earnings and reduced participation in family decision-making (Beneria and Roldan, 2017), and family relations disrupted by separation and divorce (Morokvasic, 2014) are used to argue that migration undermines women's position.

In the end, it comes down to specific conditions to determine how to empirically measure changes in women's standing after migration. In our review of the research, we look for examples that show how three separate but linked outcomes—"restructured asymmetries," "improvement," and "eroding"—have played out. By examining women's roles in economic and non-economic exchanges before and after migration, we may evaluate whether their status has improved or deteriorated. 'Restructured disparities' are more challenging to assess; in these cases, women's relative status to men's remains uneven, but the concrete circumstances of their involvement undergo radical changes, such as when the economy moves from subsistence to cash. However, there aren't many shifts in women's status that are so straightforward and linear that it's easy to see whether things are becoming better or worse. However, due to the fact that social development is an ongoing historical process that alters social relations over time, all we can do is compare and contrast the ways in which factors affecting women's status interact with migration patterns to influence shifts in gender asymmetries.

Research on female migrants from Latin America and Africa is assessed in the following sections. First, we take a high-level look at the demographic and economic shifts happening in each area, including how migratory flows are skewed towards or away from women and men. Then, we go into several case studies that tackle the problems we mentioned earlier. Although our chosen studies may not be exhaustive, we aimed to cover a wide range of results for the three economic exchange indicators and the three non-economic exchange indicators.

1. Africa

Males have historically made up the majority of sub-Saharan African labour migrant flows since the region came under colonial control. Young men were either enlisted or coerced into working on fields, railroads, and in cities by plantation and mining owners, European housewives, and colonial governments. The government, businesses, and elders in the community worked together to ensure that the married women and their daughters remained in the countryside to tend to the subsistence crops. In addition to safeguarding long-established male-dominated marital control structures, this measure subsidised poor pay in commercial agriculture and urban occupations. Another way to prevent the establishment of a permanent Black population in mostly white regions was to keep women in rural areas (Stichter 2015; Parpart 2013).

The transition from communal and male-dominated work to new crop production methods that required less labour demanding techniques paved the way for these patterns of male mobility and female immobility (Guyer 2013). The sex ratio is still high in the biggest cities in Africa because sex discrimination in urban labour markets reinforces and complements the "feminization" of subsistence production across the continent. Internal rural-to-rural movements are dominated by women, whereas international migration remains highly selective of males throughout the subcontinent (Adepoju 2013). Internal rural-to-urban streams have been the primary focus of most case studies on migration in Africa.

Female participation in internal rural-urban streams has been on the rise since 2010, and male dominance in all flows has been decreasing, even if male migration rates in Africa are greater (Zachariah and Conde 2011; Stichter 2015). Case studies show that many more women are being forced out of rural regions due to male absenteeism, cash-cropping, and diminishing land quality. On the other hand, educational and job possibilities in cities attract female migrants. However, census data is not accessible for most countries beyond 2010. Concerning the role of women in modern migrant streams, there is much space for discussion due to out-of-date official statistics. Despite the widespread belief that married women make up the bulk of female migrants, an increasing number of single women are also joining the streams (Stichter 2015; Wilkinson 2017).

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While highlighting the significant relevance of female migration and taking into account region- and country-specific heterogeneity in its character, scope, and repercussions, the following case studies provide evidence that the mobility of married and single women is on the rise in Africa. As a result, we've broken down our conversation into three main geographical groups. Distinctions in socioeconomic development, the roles of women in subsistence production and other economic activities, and other factors are the main causes of the observed variations between East and Central Africa, West Africa, and Southern Africa.

South Africa's high degree of industrialization and the reliance of surrounding Southern African nations on it have caused a tremendous exodus of males from Botswana and Lesotho. As a result of this process and the sometimes harsh attempts to exclude women from South African cities, there are a lot of very poor rural households headed by single women, and women are the ones who migrate from the countryside to the city most often (Izzard 2019; Cooper 2019; Wilkinson 2017). The urban sex ratio is almost one to one in South Africa, nevertheless, since many unmarried women have sought employment as factory workers and domestic staff in the cities (Stichter 2015).

Industrialization is still capital-intensive and relatively restricted in East and West Africa. Agricultural capitalization has been more widespread in East Africa, particularly in Kenya, leading to higher rates of rural landlessness and more employment prospects for rural women (Stichter 2015). In East and West Africa, males outnumber females when it comes to rural-to-urban migration. As an example, by the end of the 2010s, the urban sex ratios in Kampala, Dar es Salaam, and Nairobi ranged from 140 to 300 (Gugler 2012: 12-3; Obbo 2010: 27; Thadani 2018-79: 68). Since there aren't many studies that specifically address Central Africa, we'll be covering both East Africa and Central Africa together.

Fewer rural peasant families have been able to afford to leave West Africa since cash-cropping by small farmers is still an important economic driver in the region (Bukh 2019). In addition, historically, women in West Africa were more likely to participate in internal and international migration streams due to the division of labour that allowed them to participate in commerce, which came with a high degree of economic independence (Sudarkasa 2017). Despite a growing trend of women migrating alone in East Africa and, to a lesser degree, in the West, most women in these regions go to cities with their spouses or to be with them. Based on their capacity to address topics pertinent to our analytical methodology, two case studies from each of the three areas have been chosen for discussion.

Southern Africa

Lesotho. Migration has the potential to worsen women's status in comparison to males, as seen in Wilkinson's (2017) research on migrating women in Lesotho. When women migrate, they give up some control over their lives as farm managers in their home communities in exchange for complete reliance on male wage earners in their new homes. Wilkinson found that almost all of the women he spoke to in Maseru were unmarried when they migrated, and that the majority of them were also responsible for young children, either before or after they left. The main reason people moved was because women couldn't produce enough food for their families in the villages. Many women had false beliefs about their capacity to become economically independent by getting work in the formal sector before they migrated. While women made up a significant share of Maseru's informal workforce, males dominated the city's official and public sector occupations. Because of the low earnings, women had no choice but to rely on males for financial support, whether it be as city prostitutes or minor commodity producers.

Wilkinson asserted that migration harmed women's position in Lesotho, but it is unclear how much of his claim rested on survey data comparing women's position before and after migration, and how much on impressionistic evidence regarding the economic and social roles of women in their home villages. Instead of trying to put a number on it or conduct a thorough analysis of his clients' situations, he wanted to find out what financial limitations women had and how they connected to the labour reserve situation. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to conclude that women's reliance on males in the informal sector rose due to migration. The women may not have freely given up social control over nonexistent riches, as Wilkinson suggests, since they relocated from very impoverished agricultural regions. As a whole, migration seems to have rearranged power in society, putting women in a lower position.

Botswana. In his research of female migrant family heads in a low-income settlement in the city of Selebe-Phikwe, Cooper (2019) draws parallels to the plight of the Lesotho migrants. Although Wilkinson came to the conclusion that women's status had been much improved or worsened by internal rural-to-urban migration, Cooper disagreed. He drew his conclusions from a subset of a larger study of migrants in Selebe-Phikwe who were the breadwinners of their households (N = 12). All twelve of the women were breadwinners in their homes before they migrated, and they all said

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that farming and other forms of small-scale production and commerce were not enough to support them.

Although women only make up over a third of the workforce in Selebe-Phikwe, those who responded to Cooper's survey still think their career chances were higher in the city. Instead, most of them carried on with the beer-making and trading that they had begun in the rural regions before relocating to the city. According to Cooper, these women rely heavily on men's readiness to buy their wares. The relative status of women did not improve even though their earnings improved and they participated in income-generating activities more than they had in the villages. The increased expense of living in cities meant that most women could not save enough to make ends meet.

The women in Cooper's research did not lose the family power that was rightfully theirs as household leaders, even if he did not discover that relocation really enhanced their position in terms of economic transactions. Women in his sample continued to play an important role in consumption and production decisions, and they were also the breadwinners in their families' networks that extended to their moms and other female relatives in the villages. The majority of migrants were able to get home by enlisting the help of their mothers, who were responsible for caring for their children. Alternatively, they may send a young female relative to work as a domestic assistant in the city in return for housing. Migrants were able to keep using rural resources thanks to their kin networks, and they still had the opportunity to come back. Migration may have reorganised gender disparities, according to this case study.

East and Central Africa

Uganda. Obbo (2010) carried out research in sending communities and interviewed 142 low-income migrant women residing in a peri-urban community in Kampala for her study of these women. Among the women who travelled, more than half came with their husbands or to be with them. Fifty-nine travelled alone, and fifteen joined urban relatives. While migration opened up new income-generating alternatives for married women, Obbo discovered that husbands might limit their ability to strengthen their negotiating position via intra-household allocation. Nearly half of the married women were not working, and those that did sell food to the male employees, who would then use the extra money to support their own families. Obbo does not deal with the problem of child dependence, but it is reasonable to assume that single women were better able to take advantage of new sources of income as they did not have as many dependents on their modest wages and could better allocate their time. The majority of the women who were unmarried made a living by trading and making beer, but very few were able to make it without having brief sexual encounters with males. There was less male interference with women's trade and brewing operations in these relationships, but there were still certain injustices linked with weddings.

According to this research, women's marital status when they migrate dictates a great deal of the outcomes of rural-to-urban migration. As women migrated from rural to urban regions, either alone or with their spouses, males adapted hierarchical connections to the new environment by taking control of women's work and earnings. In other words, the patriarchal redistributive connections that were reconstructed in the city were not challenged by the spouses of low-income families, and gender imbalances persisted, all because males also hold dominating positions in the urban distributive system.

However, via economic transactions, unmarried women were able to gain more independence and rise in the social hierarchy. Assured subordination in the hamlet isn't an option, so they go to the city instead. Neither married nor single women saw significant advances in material well-being due to the common economic restrictions caused by their relegation to informal activity. To a large extent, the independence that single women seem to have may, in fact, be an illusion. Additionally, Obbo did not discover that women had lost economic or social influence when they relocated, in contrast to Wilkinson and Cooper. It was quite unlikely that women, whether they were married or not, would be able to acquire the means to significantly enhance their standing in comparison to males.

Zambia. Similar to Obbo's research in Kampala, Jules-Rosette's (2015) ethnographic study of Lusaka migrant women shows that for low-income, illiterate women, marital status during migration is a crucial factor in their situation after migration. Women who worked in the informal sector and lived in two squatter areas in Lusaka were the subjects of this research. None of the emigrants had completed secondary education before leaving their rural homes in Zambia. Jules-Rosette follows in the footsteps of Wilkinson and Cooper by limiting her research to a specific subset of the workforce: craft and beer makers. This is due to the fact that males predominate in the formal sector, which includes services such as domestic labour and licenced market trading.

Prior to and after their migration, every single one of the women studied by Jules-Rosette worked to support themselves and their families. Women who were not married were more likely to engage in illicit beer brewing, which they often did

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in tandem with craft manufacturing, than married women. These women in rural regions were unable to leave the informal activities they had been involved in, despite the fact that the combined income from both was larger than that of each one alone. It is unclear whether the lone migrants were dependent on anybody when they migrated, if they were daughters or heads of family. Jules-Rosette gives no sign that, in the long term, the single women may anticipate to solidify their autonomy outside of marriage with a stable economic foundation, even though migration provided them more discretion over marriage choices.

Moving to the city as a married woman imposed greater restrictions than being single did in many respects. Their wives' economic and non-economic power grew as their access to female relatives, who had previously helped out around the house, shrank. In addition to having less access to their spouses' income, married migrants often lost control over the little money they did earn on their own. Although the specifics of the shifts in family pooling patterns are sketchy, it's easy to see how intra-household redistribution plays a key role in preserving gender segregation in city settings. In a nutshell, the study found that migrant women's social status changed depending on their marital status; married women saw a decline in their standing in the market and the home, while single women saw an improvement. However, this effect was only observed in the households of migratory women.

West Africa

Nigeria. Because rural women's economic status rose when they married males from urban areas, Watts' (2013) research of Yoruba women migrants in the tiny Nigerian city of Ilorin offers an intriguing counterpoint to the studies mentioned earlier. When the Yoruba women left their communities, they kept control of the money that came in from trading, even when they were married. Just like women, men kept their financial independence from their spouses. In an urban neighbourhood where Yoruba people predominate, Watts spoke with women from 41 homes, or 12% of the total. Traders in Ilorin catered to a rather affluent customer, since almost all of the ladies had relocated shortly after marrying a non-migrant metropolitan guy. Since their jobs remained the same, migrating allowed them to earn more money. Not only that, but in an urban setting, the division of labour and control over resources did not diminish; neither sex gained nor lost power in the home as a result of women migrating. Even though Watts doesn't let us know how much women's relative contributions to household budgets changed or stayed the same, the fact that women could live well in the city without being more reliant on their husbands' incomes suggests that female trading was still a good way to make money in this urban setting.

Watts' positive evaluation of the migrant women's status in Ilorin is corroborated by the respondents' accounts of their economic situations and household resource transfers. Women over the age of 34 are relatively rare in urban areas, but they make up a disproportionate share of rural residents (according to census data), so many young women go back to the villages after their husbands—who are usually much older—retire. What impact these changes could have on women's salaries and independence is unclear. They can probably keep trading, but the assumption that women will quit urban trading while they're young would limit their long-term earning potential. Regardless, Watts makes a strong argument that 'tied' migration does not always lead to more male control over women in societies where women are expected to be economically independent and participate in the market. It is possible to bring female influence from rural regions to urban centres, as this case study shows.

Ivory Coast. Using a diachronic lens, Etienne (2013) places her synchronic research of urban households of one ethnic group in Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast, in order to comprehend the nature of the unequal relationships between husbands and wives who have relocated from rural areas to the city. Historically, the matrilineal Baule were a very egalitarian society in terms of sexuality. Women had a lot of freedom to move around, trade, and earn their own money. Because of the wealth and support they received from matrilineal family, they were able to maintain their economic and social independence from males. This assistance continued for married women even when they relocated to their husbands' communities.

Women in rural areas were economically disadvantaged relative to males in Baule society due to the introduction of cash crops and the gradual dominance of male merchants over the commerce that had previously been conducted by women in West Africa. Therefore, the division of work shifted, and married women's labour became more subordinate to their husbands and oriented to agricultural tasks that did not directly contribute to the family's revenue. Because of these shifts, more and more married and single Baule women are considering moving to Abidjan as a way to raise their salaries, work less in agriculture, and be socially and economically equal to men. Traditional egalitarian standards are showing indications of erosion in the gender interactions within the marital family among the urban Baule. Household migration has severed women from their support system among matrilineal relatives, leading to an increase in male dominance and

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gender inequality. To sum up, the strategy of relocation did not succeed in raising the potential earnings of Baule women engaged in small-scale trading.

As a result of migration, women's status relative to males declined, according to Etienne, even if women believed otherwise. The fact that almost every Baule woman in Abidjan was wed leads Etienne to believe that, notwithstanding the inequalities within marriage, having access to male salaries was better than living in poverty.

On top of that, it's hard to tell how migration specifically shapes marital inequality if women's status in rural places declines at the same time. Migration may have targeted less egalitarian households, or the urban economy may have provided males with new opportunities to take advantage of women's subordination. It is evident, nevertheless, that women mistakenly believed migration would be advantageous for them since it would enable them to perpetuate their advantages in an urban setting.

Latin America

Latin American migration streams, in contrast to their African counterparts, have been skewed towards young, single women since the acceleration of urbanisation in the 2010s (Crummett 2017). Demographic studies have shown that the streams' sex composition varies greatly depending on the distances and types of flows (Simmons et al., 2017). However, there has been little success in explaining why Latin American cities attract more women than men, and under what circumstances do the gender-specific consequences of migration differ (Crummett, 2017). This matter is revisited in the last part.

Crimmett (2017), Oliveira and Garcia (2014), and Jelin (2017) all point to the fact that urban employment in Latin America grew fast and created a demand for fewafe labour, proving that worries about the cities' capacity to absorb large shares of rural migrants were unfounded. According to research by Jelin (2017) and Simmons et al. (2017), female migration was fueled by the explosive expansion of service jobs, especially domestic service. The structural restructuring of rural communities made the labour of young, single women superfluous, and the enticement of work prospects in cities served as a demographic safety valve for these areas (Boserup 2010; Stern and Corona 2011). As a result, urban middle-class women were more likely to join the labour force, and rural females were able to afford reproduction thanks to the proliferation of domestic service jobs in Latin American major cities (Oliveira and Garcia 2014).

Although Latin American cultural values of male domination have not prevented women from migrating, neither has physical migration proved a magic bullet for empowering women or increasing their economic status. Migrant women and their children are almost doomed to economic marginalisation because of the concentration of unskilled employment they hold, many of which are in the informal urban sector (Beneria and Roldan 2017). A worsening, rather than an improvement, of women's situation has been caused, in part, by sex imbalances brought about by female migration. Urban families are losing control of their financial resources, more and more low-skilled migrant workers are being exploited as a result of capitalist expansion and subcontracting, and more and more low-income households are being headed by single women (Beneria and Roldan 2017; Garcia et al. 2011).

To make sense of Latin American female migration, we need to separate the young women who are headed for paid domestic service from the mothers who are migrating with children and who spend most of their time working unpaid (Jelin 2017). The first group may not be able to climb the economic ladder when they move, but changes in their family status (such as when they get married and have children) determine whether they end up in the lower middle class, return to their home communities, or join the sub-proletariat (Beneria and Roldan 2017; Stern and Corona 2011). Some have argued that Latin American women can rise through the ranks by working as domestics (Smith, 2013), but others have argued that we need to look closer at the lives of female migrants before and after they leave, both as individuals and as part of their families (Jelin, 2017; Garcia et al., 2011).

Case studies like these show how crucial it is to break down Latin American women's movement patterns by age and family status before making broad assumptions about how migration has affected gender relations in the region. While the chosen case studies may not be representative of the whole area, they do show the many results outlined in our analytical framework, such as those for African states.

Mexico. Research by Garcia et al. (201 l) and Beneria and Roldan (2017), which examine female migration within the context of families, highlights the difficulty of understanding how migration affects women's status in relation to processes of redistribution and distribution. Garcia and colleagues analysed 2,401 families in Mexico City to see how family members with different socio-demographic traits divided up household chores. The first is that migrant women's living arrangements are complicated and often involve men who are not migrants; the second is that migration increases the size of the working class, both through the entry of migrant women and their spouses into the labour market and

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through the passing of social status from one generation to the next.

Garcia et al. showed that migrant women were more likely to participate in the labour force if both their husband and father were migrants by categorising households based on the migratory composition of the family unit. It is worth considering whether migrant status or income levels have a greater impact on women's decision to join the workforce. This is because, while migration may make it easier for women to work for pay, there is evidence that migrant men earn less than native men on average. The authors do not explicitly answer this issue, but their data shows that women's labour force participation is more affected by family income sufficiency.

It is not feasible to evaluate how migration affected the status of female migrants in intra-family exchanges in Garcia et al.'s research as it focuses on economic exchanges. Beneria and Roldan (2017), however, used data from an ethnographic survey of 137 low-income and working-class families in Mexico City to answer this very issue. Seventy percent of the women in the research's sample were migrants to Mexico City; of these, around 75% came as young, unmarried women seeking low-skilled urban jobs, despite the fact that the study was not intended to examine migration. The bulk of these women, according to the report, were compelled to work various service and industrial jobs to help support their families. Time allocation studies for men and women showed significant disparities in interactions based on age and gender. Even when women's wage contributions were higher or more consistent than men's, males still had more influence over household resources. A double load of labour was experienced by women who engaged in paid activities, whether it was industrial homework or employment outside the house, on top of their domestic duties. Basically, their in-depth examination of the dynamics of trade relationships showed that women's tactics to increase family income resulted in very little leverage when it came time to divide up family resources. As women worked longer hours overall, the distribution of resources remained relatively unchanged, and the income and labour exchanges grew even more unequal.

Due to the lack of data on pre-migration characteristics in both case studies, it is not able to draw broad conclusions on how migration has changed women's roles in the home and the workplace. Typical of Latin American female migration (Simmons et al., 2017; Jelin, 2017; Oliveira and Garcia, 2014; Crummett, 2017), the great majority of the migrant women in these two studies were either married or the primary breadwinners when they arrived in Mexico City. When it came to the structural factors that shaped gender relations for women, however, descriptive assessments seem to imply that marital status—and particularly the financial possibilities of other family members—were more important than geographical mobility. To rephrase, patriarchal power is still in place, which makes it impossible for women to participate in redistribution efforts, even when those resources contain significant input from women. These two studies provide credence to the idea that migration does not lead to more gender equality, but rather reorganises existing inequalities along those lines.

Peru. Migrants gave young rural women a chance to better themselves, according to Smith (2013), who saw domestic work as a path to success. Smith highlighted the life-cycle of domestic service as a profession that may encourage women's mobility in her ethnography of migrants to Lima. She basically says that when young, unmarried women migrate, they often start out in domestic service to get a feel for city life, which sets them up for future mobility.

Her main point is valid, however it's unclear from her reasoning if women's situation has changed due to migration or changes in marital status, both of which allow them to leave domestic employment. The empirical issue of whether domestic work may be a pathway to upward mobility or even a means of reshaping gender relations requires information on the circumstances of young women both before and after migration (Jelin 2017), which Smith does not provide. To sum up, except from restating the obvious—that women's chances in cities are different from those in rural areas—Smith's research does not address the subject of whether migration affects women's status in any way.

Colombia. "The positive picture of how migration changes gender relations is shown by Whiteford (2018) research on Popayan. Supporting his central thesis, that "migration is a liberating, or freeing process," are claims that women get equal say in home decision-making when they migrate and that women business owners also retain control of economic transaction.

Unlike migrants to other Latin American towns, at least half of the women who migrate to Popayan bring their partners and children with them. This is one differentiating element. It would have been helpful if Whiteford had systematically compared married and single women to provide light on how marital status affects the impact of migration on gender relations. According to Whiteford, patrilineal relations are typically rendered moot when a family relocates to a city. This is because, as he points out, women are typically the breadwinners in these households, and their market activities give them more control over the household's resources. This conclusion is based on the premise that, before migration, women's agency was strictly limited to the home sphere. Nevertheless, he fails to provide any evidence to back up this assertion.

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In addition, considering Whiteford's own claims about the difficulties single women had in making a livelihood, the notion that they had more agency in redistribution procedures hardly constitutes an improvement in women's status. To rephrase, women's status will not rise only because single women (including those who have been through a divorce, separation, or widowhood) have more power over less resources. His comment on how women in voluntary or short-term "liaisons" are less constrained by patriarchal power is a scathing indictment of patriarchy's ability to perpetuate injustice inside families.

Whiteford draws his findings on impressionistic and disorganised reports of shifts in gender relations, in contrast to the methodical ethnographic work of Roldan and Beneria, which systematically analyses patterns of redistribution and distribution. For women whose marital status remained unchanged after migrating, reducing gender asymmetries could be achieved through increased wage activity and greater participation in family income generation (distribution processes). However, this would be conditional on women's ability to control their own and other family members' earnings, as well as whether their increased contributions to family resources were accompanied by greater authority in household decision-making. It is hard to agree with Whiteford that migration might be a liberating experience for women who migrate to Popayan since his research is conflicting on these important issues.

There may have been differences between migrant and local women in terms of labour activity, family power, and authority, according to Harkess's (2013) research on Bogotá migrants. In two Bogotá districts, one serving the working class and the other the very impoverished harrio, she spoke with 153 women ranging in age from fifteen to forty-nine years old who had ever been married (including those in consensual relationships). She included people from all walks of life in her sample, including natives of Bogotá (22% of the total), long-term migrants (37% of the total), and recent migrants (41% of the total). There was also some class fluctuation, with people falling into the extremely poor, working class, and lower middle class categories.

Given the strong correlation between migrant status and class position (lower middle class for long-term native residents and very poor for recent arrivals), it is difficult to draw broad conclusions regarding the relative significance of migration status and class position in shaping gender relations. However, her findings imply that marital consent to their wives working and class position, not migrant status per se, is the determining factor in whether or not women work. "Husbands wield more power than their wives, and that long-resident lower-middle-class women resemble very poor recent arrivals in their surprisingly similar lack of power," according to research on family power and authority (9, 2013: 246). This result remains true even after accounting for women's age and work status.

Given these data, it seems implausible that migration itself causes a shift in women's status. Providing women with new alternatives in the workplace is, at best, a chance for change. Limitations on migration's ability to change gender relations stem from the fact that migrating women's forays into paid work are often driven by extreme need and do nothing to challenge patriarchal authority. In a nutshell, her research backs up the idea that migration causes "restructured inequities" since gender asymmetries remain the same and the only thing that changes for women is the nature of their activities. With this interpretation of Whiteford's ethnographic evidence in mind, his research lends credence to this finding.

Dominican Republic. The research by Pessar (2014) on Dominican women migrants to the US sheds the most light on how migration changes gender inequalities via redistribution and distribution mechanisms. Through the use of ethnographic and survey research techniques, she delves into the complex dynamics at play in the lives of Dominican migrant women and their experiences in the workplace. Her findings reveal that although women's wage work does enhance social relations within the household, it does not necessarily lead to an awareness of class identity.

The arrival of Dominican migrant women into paid work sent a message that they should also have a say in how their earnings are spent, challenging the gender dogma that holds males responsible for being the main breadwinners. The degree to which men were expected to pitch in around the house changed depending on the family's domestic cycle; for example, males in households where the girls were older felt less pressure to perform their fair share of housework. However, women's wage work has given them more say in home budgets than in the past. Although the majority of women had jobs before migrating, only about a third were involved in making choices about the family budget. However, after migrating, that number jumped to 69%. As a result of migration and women's greater labour force involvement, opinions supporting conventional patriarchal authority fell from 18% to 4%, while the practice of males controlling women via household allowances fell from 51% to 27% of all homes. Migrants' ability to alter their involvement in intra-household exchanges via distribution exchanges weakened patriarchal power, which in turn allowed for a reshaping of gender relations.

Dominican women who engage in international wage labour flows may face significant social and cultural inequalities

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between their communities of origin and destination, which may explain why this happened to them and not to other migrant women. The fact that fourteen out of eighteen women who went through a divorce or separation listed the "right to control income" as a major reason for the breakup of their marriage provides credence to the idea that shifting social and cultural norms are necessary conditions for migration that reorganises gender roles. Therefore, it seems that women's position has been enhanced as a result of Dominican migration to the United States, from the perspective of minimising gender asymmetries.

Conclusion

The examination of gender in the social dynamics of migration reveals a multifaceted landscape where gender significantly influences the experiences, outcomes, and implications of migratory movements. The analysis, grounded in a comprehensive review of case studies across Latin America and Africa, underscores the variability of migration's impact on women's social standing, challenging the notion of a uniform migratory experience. While migration offers opportunities for economic independence and social mobility, it also perpetuates existing inequalities and introduces new forms of gendered vulnerabilities. The findings highlight the importance of adopting gender-sensitive approaches in migration management and policy formulation, taking into account the nuanced ways in which migration intersects with gender, social networks, and decision-making processes. By addressing these intersectionalities, policies can more effectively mitigate the inequalities exacerbated by migration and harness the potential of migration as a force for social change. Ultimately, this paper calls for a deeper understanding of the gendered dimensions of migration, advocating for strategies that empower all migrants, regardless of gender, in their pursuit of better opportunities and outcomes.

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