GENDER & MIGRATION: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

A graduate seminar by Jose C. Moya, Professor of History at UCLA and Barnard College, Columbia University and Director, Forum on Global Migration

Schedule: Tuesdays November 4, 18 and 25 and December 2 and 9, 2008; 17-20 hrs.

Course Description:
Studies of gender and migration typically begin with a dual mantra. One line highlights the recent feminization of international migration; the other complains about the lack of studies on the subject and about scholars’ continuing tendency to treat migration as if it were a male phenomenon.

Both contentions are questionable. Large scale female participation in global migration is hardly new. It is true that women make up about half (49%) of all international migrants today. But they made up a similar proportion (47%) half-a-century ago. In the U.S., the female proportion of all immigrants was actually ten percentage points higher in the 1930s and 40s (60%) than it is today. Women outnumbered men in the movement from Seville to the Americas in the late 1500s and in that from Ireland to the U.S. in the 1800s. And despite the habitual complains, scholarly studies of gender and migration are numerous enough to fill an entire library.

This seminar will review part of this rich scholarship to shed light on some basic questions. Why do sex ratios in population movements vary so much across time and place? Why, for example, was the Irish exodus significantly female, the Italian one heavily male, and Chinese migration almost exclusively male during the nineteenth and early twentieth century? Or why over four-fifths of Dominican migrants to Spain are women but emigration to Kazakhstan is, according to a recent New York Times article, “emptying whole swaths of Central Asia of young men”? What factors could account for these drastic differences: labor markets, education, demographic and family structures, gender ideologies, religion, government regulations and legal status, intrinsic aspects of the migratory flow itself?

We will also address a series of related questions: Do men and women migrate for different reasons? Are there significant gender differences in the socio-economic integration in host societies, in the sending and receiving of remittances, in the rates of return? To what degree migration undermines or strengthens gender systems in the countries of origins and in the diaspora? Does emigration serve to empower women economically, reduce fertility, increase the value of education, make definitions of femininity and masculinity more androgynous? Or can greater freedom of movement coexist with continued restrictions in other realms?

Assignments and Grade
The assigned readings, listed at the end of the syllabus, will be posted on the internet or sent to students by e-mail. They cover the last two centuries, all continents, and both international and internal movements.

Half of your grade will be earned from reading these assignments and discussing them in class. The other half of your grade will come from a 10+ page paper on a topic to be selected in consultation with the instructor. The paper can be written in English, Spanish, or French. It can take the following formats: 1-a historiographical essay, or a review of the scholarly literature in general if it deals with post 1960 migrations based on the readings of the seminar and a few other works; 2-a research paper based only, or mainly, on secondary sources; and 3-a research paper based mostly on primary documents and oral history. The final version of the paper is due on Tuesday, December 9.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1. Nov. 4.

Topic I-Theoretical and Historiographical Reviews

Reviews the scholarly literature on the topic while focusing on three questions: How is gender related to the decision to migrate--i.e. what are the causes and consequences of female or male-dominated flows of migration? What are the patterns of labor market incorporation of women immigrants--i.e. what accounts for their participation in the labor force and their occupational concentration? And what is the relationship of the public and the private--i.e. what is the impact of work roles on family roles and of the experience of migration on the immigrants themselves?

2-Marlou Schrover, “Theories on Gender and Migration” (2008)

An introduction to the book manuscript “Gendered Migration from a Global and Historical Perspective: Theory and Practice”


Unpublished paper by an interdisciplinary team that reviews the scholarly literature on sex ratios in migration and then explores the issue using individual-level census data from the “Integrated Public Use Microdata Series” at the University of Minnesota.

Topic II- Nineteenth-Century U.S.

This article uses data from the mid seventeenth to the mid nineteenth century and compares the slave trade with other transatlantic labor migrations during the period mainly to the U.S. to show the limits of the assumption that adult males accounted for the major share of the traffic and offers explanations for the found patterns.

Using a sample of 24,000 individuals culled from ship passenger lists, it compares the characteristics, including several related to gender, of immigrant groups, particularly Irish, English, and Germans, to the U.S. from 1836 to 1853.


   Examines post-famine migration looking at changes in marriage and inheritance practices, and lack of industrialization to explain high female participation.

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**Week 2. November 18.**

**Topic I- Work and Political Activism**


   It examines the domestic service in Europe, the Western Hemisphere, Africa, Australia, India and Japan from early modernity to the present to reveal broad trends in gendered-labor, migration, and ethnic strategies that are often missed by local and national approaches. It detects a feminisation of the occupation that while temporally dissimilar was remarkably global, and attempts to find an explanation for this phenomenon in particular aspects of modernity.


   Using the cases of Jewish immigrants in New York and Paris, it discusses how and why the garment industry shifted during the 19th century from needle to sawing machine, from tailor-made to ready-made garments, and from a male and native to a female and immigrant labor force.


   Explains why anarchism attracted a greater number of foreign-born women than other radical or mainstream social movements.

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**Topic II- Sexuality, Trafficking and Fear in the UK, the US, Argentina…and today**


7-Laura Agustín, “The Disappearing of a Migration Category: Migrants Who Sell Sex” in
Argues that moral panic has shifted the study of these immigrants from migration studies to criminology and feminism, facilitating in the process the avoidance of uncomfortable truths for Western societies: their enormous demand for sexual services and the fact that many women do not mind or prefer this occupation to others available to them.

The Second Wave: 1960s to the Present Migrations

Week 3. November 25. Latin America
Authors use census data to assess the standing of five Latin American Nations (Mexico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico) on a gender continuum ranging from patriarchal to matrifocal. They then show how those differences yield different patterns of female relative to male migration.

Using data on 14,000 individuals in 43 Mexican villages, author shows that 1-migrant networks provide support to new men and women migrants alike, 2-high female employment rates reduce the likelihood that men, but not women, begin migrating, 3- higher education decreases the chance of emigration among men and increases it among women, and 4-single and previously married women are more likely to emigrate than married women.

Based on in-depth interviews with 86 Maya and Ladina women in Guatemala and Los Angeles, examines link between paid and household work, family relations, and gender definitions, finding that the process may be global but the results are particular, localized, historically situated.

Shows that unlike Ecuadorian migration to the U.S., that to Spain was initially led by women, many of whom left families behind, and explores its significance.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork, discusses the reasons for migrating or staying, economic strategies, and attitudes in a rural community of 500 in the Andean highlands.

6-Jeffrey H. Cohen, Leila Rodriguez, Margaret Fox, “Gender and Migration in the Central Valleys of Oaxaca” in International Migration, 46, 1 (2008):79-101
Using ethnographic data from twelve communities in Oaxaca the article explores how local concepts of correct behavior shapes different outcomes in the migration of men and women.
Week 4. December 2. Asia


Tries to explain why men predominated in internal migration in Asia (and Africa) while women did so in Western Europe, Latin America, the countries of European settlement (U.S. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand).


A synopsis of her book *Women in Motion: Globalization, State Policies, and Labor Migration in Asia* published three years later, Stanford University Press, a survey international female migration in ten Asian countries. Employs multiple levels of analysis: (1) the state (macro); (2) individuals (micro); and (3) society (meso) in both migrant-sending and receiving countries. Looks at effect of foreign direct investment, state policies, labor force participation, cultural attitudes, and individual decision-making.

3-Rajni Palriwala and Patricia Uberoi, “Marriage and Migration in Asia: Gender Issues” in *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 12, 2-3 (2005):v-xxix

Introductory essay for a special issue of the journal on marriage and migration organized in six sections devoted to: 1-patriilocality and territorial exogamy; 2-marriage as a migration strategy; 3-commercially negotiated marriage; 4-political economy of marriage transactions; 5-transformation of family relations; 6-comparative dimensions of marriage and migration.

4-X. Biao, “Gender, dowry and the migration system of Indian information technology professionals” in *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 12, 2-3 (2005):357-80

Based on in-depth fieldwork in Sydney, Australia and Andhra Pradesh, India, the article suggests that the gender relations prevalent in Andhra Pradesh, particularly the institution of dowry, have been critical in producing a specially cheap and flexible labour force, and in supporting it in the volatile global economy. In turn, the emergence of a group of mobile IT professionals contributes to the increase of dowry, with disturbing consequences for those underprivileged and seemingly unconcerned with the IT industry.


Nine-tenths of the 200,000 Filipinos that are married to foreigners are women. This has become a mechanism of migration and producer of images. Lauser argues that “American men—a category that includes all ‘Caucasian’ or ‘Western’ men—are imagined as good providers, romantic lovers and, unlike Filipinos, as men who do not keep ‘queridas’ [the Spanish word for mistress].


Argues that rural women whose first baby is a boy are more likely to migrate that those whose first child is a girl and that this indicates that migration is driven not only by opportunities but also by autonomy and status (women whose first child is a boy are in a stronger position to negotiate decisions regarding migration opportunities). Migration,
however, evens sex ratios to biological levels. So the sex ratio of children born to women who started childbearing before migration was 152 (152 boys for every 100 girls) and a natural 102 for women who started childbearing after their first migration.

**Week 5. December 9. Africa**


Using demographic evidence from the slave trade and ethnographic studies, it argues that African conceptions of gender—more than American demand— influenced who became a slave.

2-Kate Hampshire, “Flexibility in Domestic Organization and Seasonal Migration among the Fulani of Northern Burkina Faso” in *Africa* 76 (3) 2006:402-23.

Shows how migration patterns among the Fulani have changed in recent decades from transhumance involving whole families to seasonal rural-to-urban migration involving young men. It then examines how households accommodate to the temporary loss of productive members and the effect of this on domestic relations.


Based on surveys and interviews, it examines the socioeconomic background of the emigrants, the reasons for leaving, the desired and actual jobs (finding a heavy male concentration in mining and female in trade), and attitudes toward the experience and the host country.