

*Kryzys migracyjny – destrukcja czy szansa?
Społeczne i pastoralne aspekty*

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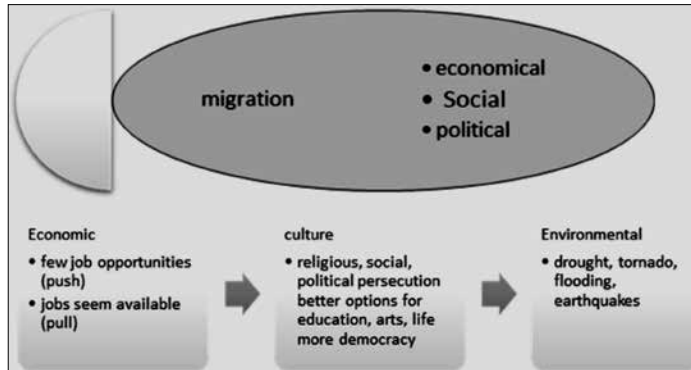
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Migration and it's gender aspects

Around the world, more people are on the move than ever before. Many of them are seeking new opportunities and a better life for themselves and their families. Others are forced to move due to disaster or conflict. Gender is central to any discussion of the causes and consequences of migration, whether forced, voluntary or somewhere in between. Gender influences reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where, how people migrate and the networks they use, opportunities and resources available at destinations, and relations with the country of origin. Risks, vulnerabilities and needs are also shaped in large part by one's gender, and often vary drastically for different groups. The roles, expectations, relationships and power dynamics associated with being a man, woman, boy or girl, and whether one identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (LGBTI), significantly affect all aspects of the migration process, and can also be affected in new ways by migration. It is therefore crucial to understand how gender interacts with migration and to respond accordingly. Taking into account gender-specific migration trends can mean the difference between implementing a project that successfully addresses the specific needs and capacities of all IOM beneficiaries, and one that fails to do so and perpetuates inequality. Given the gender-specific nature of migration, the following are central to IOM's work: advocating for equal rights under the law in employment and mobility; combatting discriminatory migration practices; understanding how gender affects the types of migration undertaken; responding to how gender influences access to social services, economic growth, capacities, risks and vulnerabilities; ensuring diversity and inclusiveness in consultations and participation in activities; and addressing how migration influences gender roles and relations.

Migration is Moving internally within countries, or internationally between countries (from sending to receiving country). May be a move for the short or long term, for economic, political or social reasons. May be regular (conforming to legal requirements) or irregular. The migrant may have varying degrees of choice over whether or not they move – the decision may be somewhere between “forced” and “voluntary”.

Gender-Gender refers to the differences and commonalities between women and men which are set by convention and other social, economic, political and cultural forces. In this report we are particularly concerned with roles, relations, power dynamics and inequalities between women and men.

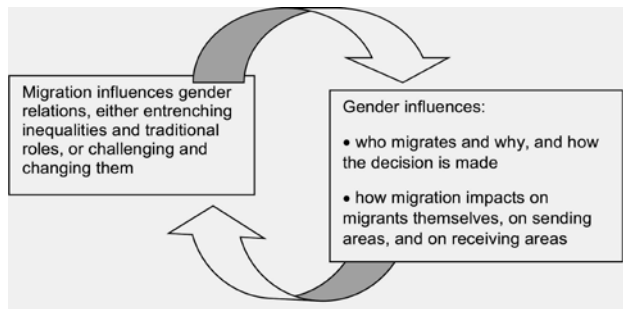


• Gender is culturally and socially constructed difference between men and women. Gender is about the differences between men and women and how they are perceived. For migrants, gender is a very important factor shaping their experience. Migrant women today account for almost 50% of all migrants and are increasingly migrating to find jobs as individuals, although many still migrate as dependants. As economic decision-makers in their family, the community and the workplace, they are emerging from the margins as key players in the migration equation. Traditionally with less access to resources and less decision-making power than men, women can be empowered by migration.

Forced migration – A migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes (e.g. movements of refugees and internally displaced persons as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects).

1. Gendered causes of migration

The connections between gender and migration are illustrated in the diagram below:



Most decisions to migrate are made in response to a combination of economic, social and political pressures and incentives. Inequalities within and between countries create incentives to move. Seeking to make money is one important motivator of migration for both women and men. However, economic motivations are only one among many factors influencing decisions. The motivation may be to join a spouse who has migrated (family reunification) or to escape gender discrimination and constraining gender norms. Yet migration may be forced by traffickers or displacement may be forced by natural disaster or conflict. Conversely, cultural constraints and gendered international migration and immigration policies may limit women's ability to migrate.

Real life examples show the problems in categorising the motivations of migration as either “forced” or “voluntary”. To what extent these people’s migration was coercion or choice is open to debate: a family from Niger faced with famine moving for survival; a daughter in the Philippines sent by her family to work as a maid and send her earnings back home; a Bangladeshi woman divorced by her husband who is sent back to her parents’ village; a woman fleeing feared violence from the militia to a displaced people’s camp in Darfur; an English boy who runs away from home to escape sexual abuse; a Serbian woman who has willingly migrated for sex work, but has been deceived to believe that she will earn good money rather than be trapped in conditions of virtual slavery. In recognition of the ambiguity in the division between forced and voluntary migration, this pack will consider both.

In a family or household, who makes the decisions on migration? The ongoing gender relations and hierarchies within a household context affect such decisions – the interests of women and men do not necessarily coincide and may affect decisions about who manages to migrate, for how long, and to what countries (Boyd and Grieco 2003). Women may have little influence on migration decisions in the household. Even where women migrate alone this is likely to be with reference to, or even determined by, the household livelihood strategy and expectations of contributions through remittances. Several studies of internal Filipino migrants show families are more likely to send daughters to migrate because they perceive them to be more reliable in sending remittances. In addition, the family assigns the roles of women and girls, which in turn determine their relative motivation and incentive to migrate, and controls the distribution of resources and information that can support, discourage or prevent migration (ibid.). However, a decision to leave is not the same as being allowed to exit the country or to enter a specific country – there is a gendered international migration process, with government immigration policies playing a key role (ibid.).

Here we will particularly focus on the following mixture of motivations and coercions: seeking economic betterment for self or family; migrating to escape gender discrimination or to conform to or challenge gender norms; being trafficked; and moving to escape conflict. We will see later how government policies relating to migration can also impact on decisions to migrate – including selective migration based on skills, family reunification policies and response to asylum-seekers.

2. Gender discrimination and norms

Gender discrimination and norms in the household and society push particular groups of people to migrate in particular ways, and push others to stay put. How this happens varies according to the different contexts. For example:

- men may be expected to support the family economically, so migrate to try to earn money while their wives stay behind
- migration might be seen as a rite of passage for young men
- it may be less acceptable for women to move about and travel on their own so women may find it more difficult to migrate, or migrate shorter distances than men, internally, or within the region (as is the case in Africa)
- it may be the norm for women to move to husbands’ families upon marriage
- parents may see it as a duty for daughters to migrate and send money home to support the family, so encourage them to migrate.

Some people may migrate to escape pressure to conform to gender norms or to escape gender-specific discrimination, for example:

- women wanting to earn more and have more economic independence rather than stay put
- young men leaving the country to escape being forced to become soldiers
- women migrating to escape sexual violence and abuse, sometimes related to a conflict situation
- single women, widows and divorcees migrating to escape social stigma
- young women migrating to escape restrictions on their freedom, pressure to marry, or to remain chaste until marriage

3. Trafficking

• migration holds more dangers for women than men. They are more vulnerable to physical, sexual and verbal abuse when travelling. And they are more likely to fall prey to human traffickers for the sex industry. More women are in the workforce than ever before – which means that more women are seeking opportunities abroad, and contributing to their home countries by empowering themselves, their homes. In crisis situations, women often are among the first responders.

There are an estimated 2 million people, mainly women and girls, trafficked annually (approximately 2.3 per cent of female migrants) (Murison 2005: 1). However, accurately quantifying the extent of trafficking is an impossible task and some suggest that estimates are exaggerated (Piper 2005). The focus has been on trafficking women and girls and, in particular, their trafficking for sexual exploitation – this has primarily been due to the success of feminist campaigning. However there is increasing recognition that both women and men, boys and girls, may be trafficked for either sex work or other exploitative labour purposes, although women are at particular risk (Kaye 2003, Committee on Feminism and International Law 2004). The following case shows the context which makes a young woman wish to migrate as a survival strategy, yet be deceived into being trafficked by an agent.

4. Migration and gender relations

Migration may challenge traditional gender roles – absence of one spouse may leave the other spouse with both greater decision-making power and a greater burden of responsibility and labour. Where men migrate from rural to urban areas, women are left with a greater burden of agricultural labour, but at the same time may have more control over how crops and any revenue are used. Women may gain economic independence, confidence and greater freedom through migration. Displacement due to conflict often leads to shifts in gendered roles and responsibilities for both women and men – sometimes to women's benefit and sometimes to their further marginalisation. Women may suffer from the added work burden or transfer this to younger girls who have to assume more responsibilities such as caring for children, the elderly and the sick (El Jack 2003). This shift of responsibility impacts on the welfare and future of female household members. However, women may be given priority for training and development programmes in health and education, as well as in income-generating activities. The skills women gain enable them to assume new roles within their households, becoming the main breadwinners when men have been killed or have problems

finding employment after removal from their homes and communities. Men however may react to these changes with depression, alcoholism and an escalation of violence against women in public and private.

Migrant women often play essential roles in sustaining and rebuilding their families. We now know that they send a greater portion of their overseas earnings home than men do.

We also know they often take on more caring responsibilities related to family and household than men do – wherever they may be. Migrant women often face double discrimination in the labour market. Their status as “dependants” often limits their access to employment, social and health programmes, and their residence may depend on their relationship with an employed male partner. For example, many women migrate to seek financial independence and empowerment, to escape from poverty, to expand their knowledge or to join loved ones.

Unfortunately, many women on the move encounter hardship because of both lack of information and knowledge about information access points.

Among the 1.6 billion workers receiving regular wages in the labour market, female workers are paid, on average, significantly less than male workers. Women in most countries earn on average only 60% to 75% of men’s wages.

- We must not forget that violence against women is a manifestation of deeply-rooted unequal power relations between men and women that we all must condemn.

Forced displacement: gendered impact of displacement, resettlement, local integration and return

Forced displacement: gendered impact of displacement, resettlement, local integration and return In conflict and disaster, both women and men are subjected to risks that lead to displacement. However, women and girls in particular are more often affected by Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV). The risk of abduction and forced recruitment by armed groups, whether as fighters, for sexual exploitation or other task, is the same for both genders. In the case of conflict-induced displacement, the average duration of displacement is 17 years. Displacement aggravates existing gender inequalities: families are separated, and there is an increase in female-headed households and socio-economic vulnerability, which heightens the risk of negative coping mechanisms (i.e. early marriage) and exploitation/abuse. Women and girls may have to take on additional roles (i.e. taking care of an injured family member, time-consuming collection of water and firewood, income-generating activities as the new breadwinner) adding to their existing workload. SGBV increases, particularly for adolescent girls, while protective structures and services for survivors break down. An average of 18 to 20 percent of the reproductive-age female population is either pregnant or lactating and therefore faces specific needs; 60% of preventable maternal deaths take place in humanitarian settings while girls are 2.5 more likely to drop out of school than boys. Loss or lacking access to personal documentation (i.e. marriage, birth, death certificate of husband, land deeds) may negatively impact displaced women and children’s access to rights and services, including citizenship. Women and men’s access to information and humanitarian assistance also differs: women often face limited mobility due to cultural norms, care-taking roles, lacking sanitary pads during menstruation or an unsafe environment. Ideally a displaced person can resettle, return or integrate locally. Women being resettled may face problems with divorce, child custody and are exposed to continued protection risks. Upon return, they may experience continued violence,

stigmatization and discrimination in accessing housing, land, property and services. When being locally integrated, women and girls have to adapt to different social norms or find themselves marginalized (i.e. due to language skills, old age). Trauma and lengthy asylum processes further hamper the integration process.

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