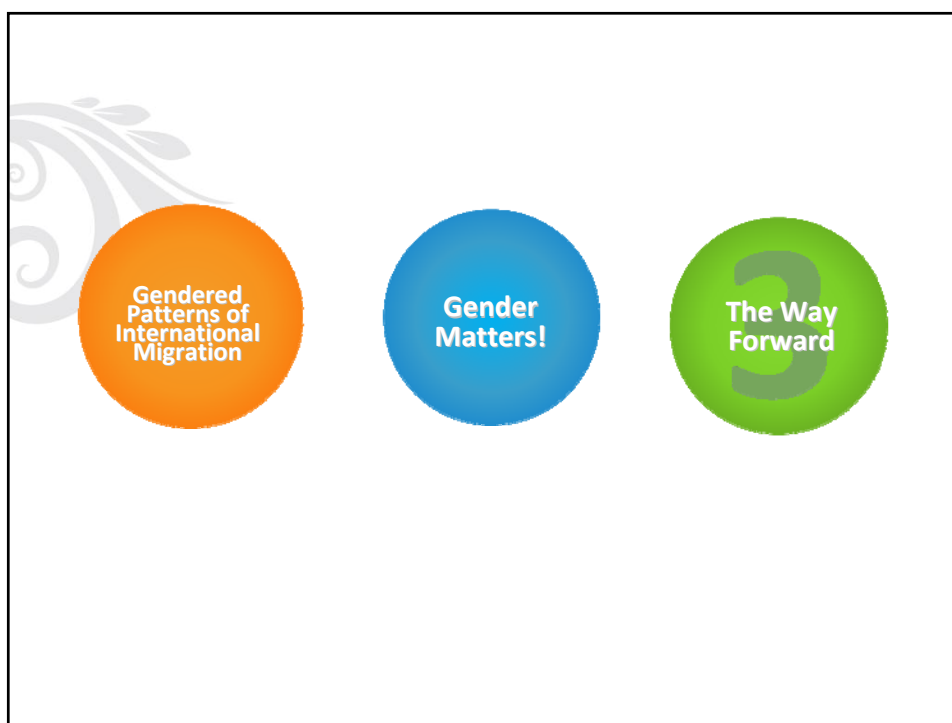


Gender matters in migration

Migration, Gender and the Family in Asia: Recent Trends and Emerging Issues

Stella P. Go

46th Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development,
April 22-26, 2013, New York City.

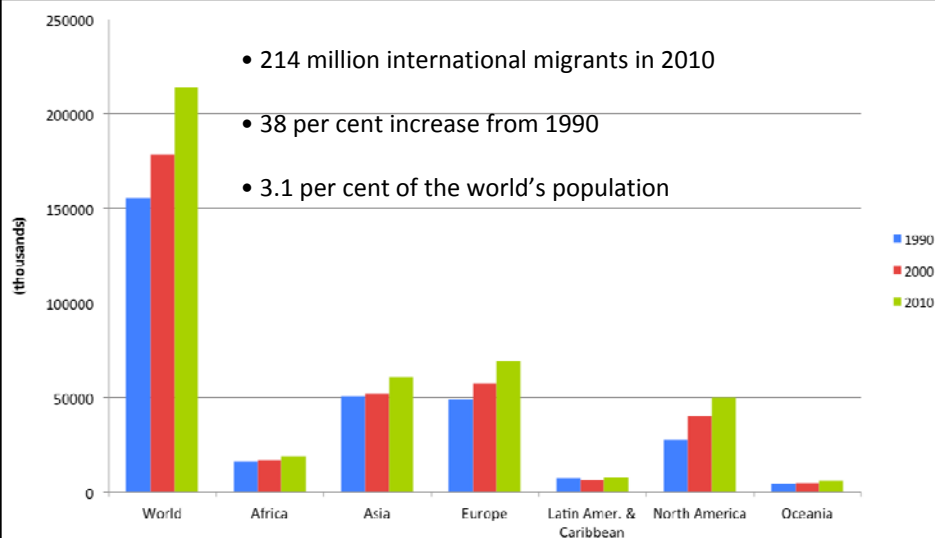




Gendered Patterns of International Migration

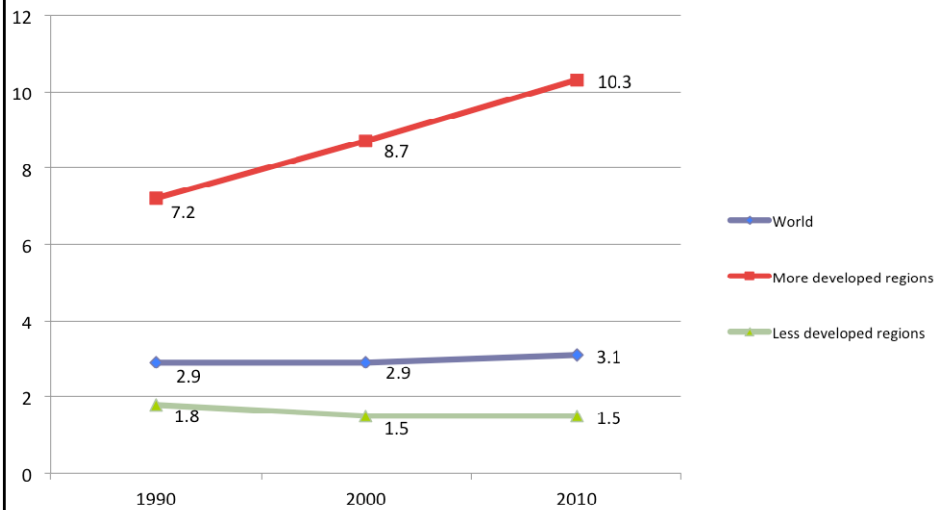
Gender matters in migration 

Estimated stock of international migrants 1990, 2000, 2010



Source: United Nations (2011).

International migrants as percentage of the population



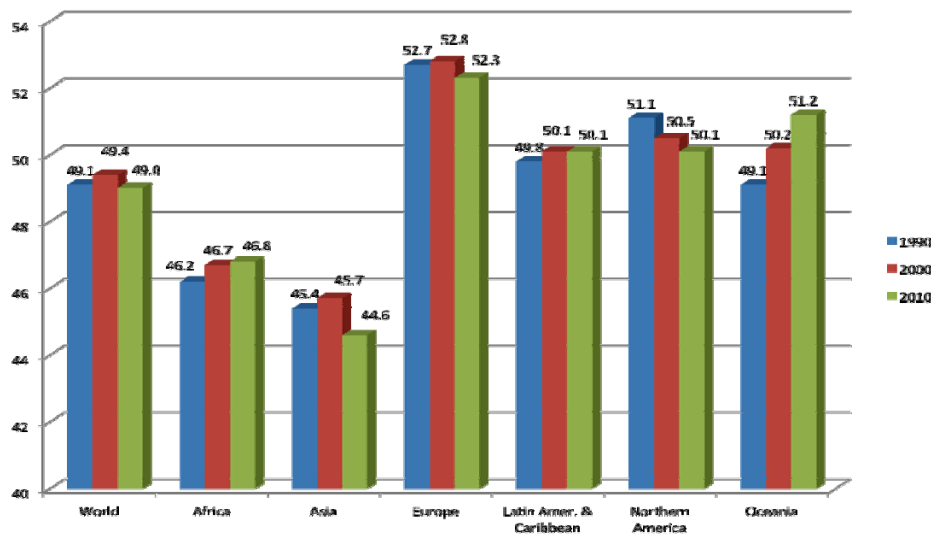
Source: United Nations (2011)

Percentage distribution of international migrants

	All Migrants			All Female Migrants		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
Africa	10.3	9.6	9.0	9.7	9.0	8.6
Asia	32.7	29.1	28.7	30.2	26.9	26.1
Europe	31.8	32.3	32.6	34.1	34.5	34.9
Northern America	17.9	22.6	23.4	18.6	23.1	23.9
Latin America & Caribbean	4.6	3.6	3.5	4.6	3.7	3.6
Oceania	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9

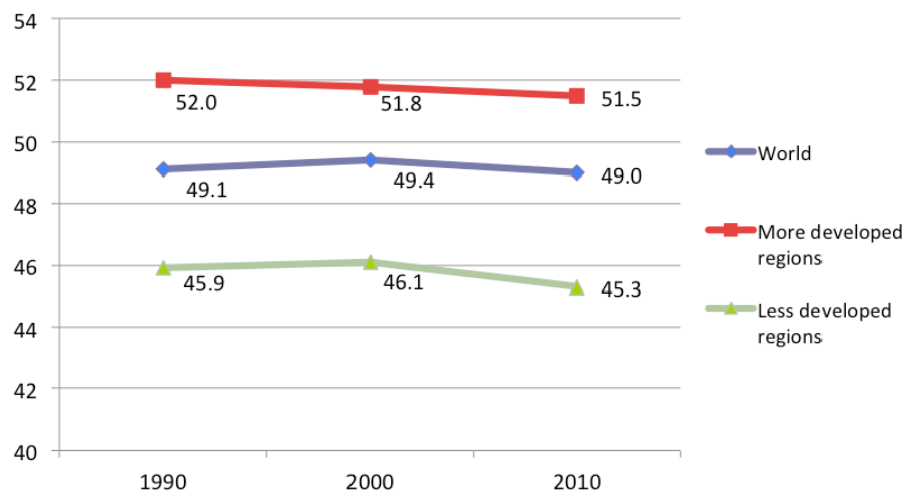
Source: United Nations (2011)

Percentage of females among international migrants world regions



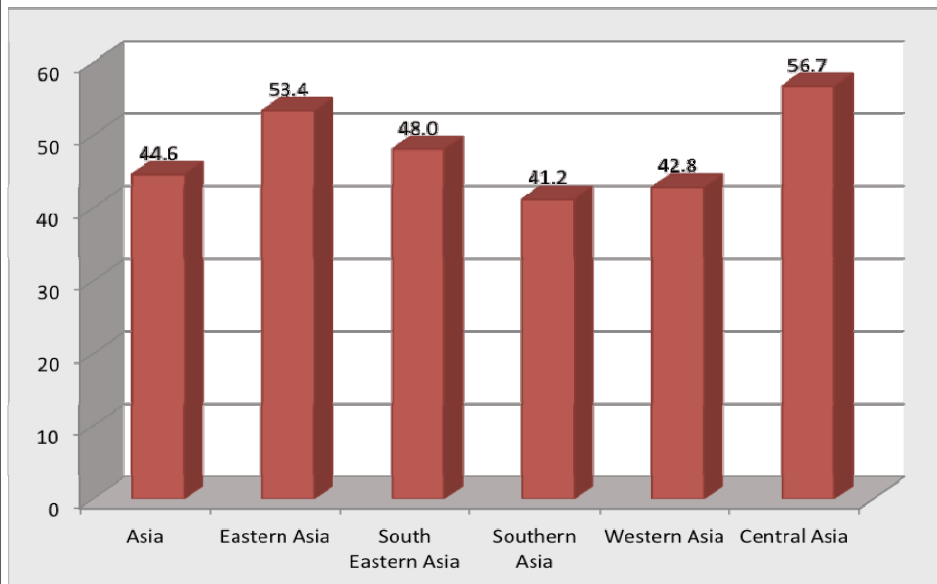
Source: United Nations (2011)

Percentage of females among international migrants



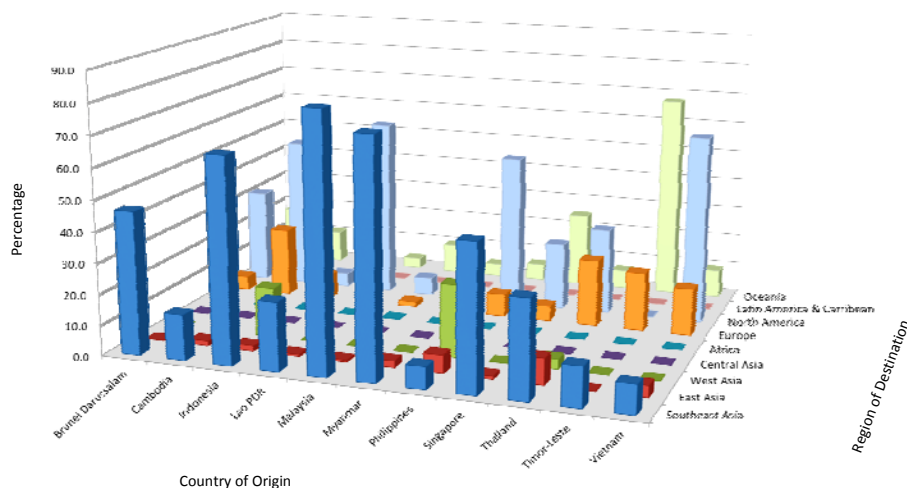
Source: United Nations (2011)

Percentage of females among international migrants in Asia, 2010

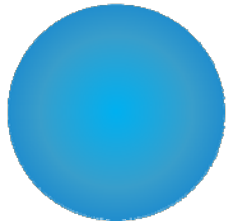


Source: United Nations (2011).

International migrants from selected countries of origin in Southeast Asia by sub-region of destination, 2010



Sources: Ratha and Shaw (2007) updated with additional data for 71 destination countries



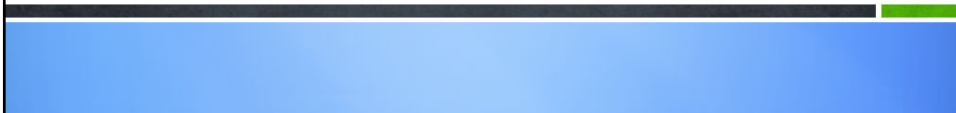
Gender matters!

Migration is a gendered process that impacts on the family



It's not just about the individual migrant, it's also about family

**Who migrates in the household has
gender implications and impacts on the
family**





Husbands, wives, sons, daughters migrate leaving family behind

Transnational families a common feature of international migration



Effects on families left behind may be positive or negative

Studies on families left behind in Asia reveal similarities and differences

Family Structure and Gender Roles

Effects on family structure and gender roles vary, could be positive or negative:

- Migration of one or both parents, unmarried sons and daughters
- Absence of father, mother, both parents
- Internationalization of families resulting from transnational marriages

Family Structure and Gender Roles

Net effect:

- Change in composition of migrant households and roles within the family
- Shift of care regimes
- Effect on traditional notions of masculinity and femininity and appropriate gender roles
- Economic empowerment of women migrants may not change the gender power dynamics in families left behind

Family Unity, Cohesion and Well-being

Impact on family unity, cohesion and well-being in migrant households varies across Asia, between and within countries:

- Effect on spousal relations
- Effect on children
- Effect of computer-mediated communication on family cohesion
- Gender and remittances
- Reintegration into the family

Effect on Spousal Relations

- The longer the separation, the more detrimental to the spousal relationship
- Stable marriages are better able to cope with separation
- Migration does not necessarily cause marital dissolutions, can serve as an escape route out of troubled and abusive relationships

Effect on Children

Research on effect of parental absence on children is limited and shows that impacts are mixed:

- Education
 - Educational outcomes of children more negatively affected by mother's absence than father's absence
 - Father's absence can even have positive effect in some cases
- Psychological well-being
 - Children of migrant fathers in some countries are more likely to have poor psychological well-being
 - In other countries, children of migrant parents had no difference or better psychological well-being

Effect on Children

- Behaviour
 - Young children more likely to exhibit conduct problems than older children in some countries
 - Girls are less likely to exhibit conduct problems in most countries studied
- Physical Health
 - Physical health of children left behind better than children of non-migrants in the Philippines
- Identity and citizenship
 - For children born out of cross-cultural relationships or in the few countries of destination where family reunification is possible, there are mixed impacts on identity and citizenship issues

Effect on Health of Other Family Members

- Absence of husbands for long periods can lead to widened birth intervals and can lead to better health-seeking behavior
- Migration of children can have a positive effect on the health of elderly parents
- Wives of migrants can experience more stress than non-migrants, feel vulnerable to harassment and abuse, and feel lonely and depressed

Communication and Family Cohesion

Maintaining communication among members of transnational families important

- New media or computer mediated communication important in maintaining and strengthening family ties and allow mothers to continue their parenting role more intensively
- However, it can also be used as an instrument for control by migrant husbands of their wives left behind

Gender and Remittances

Remittances benefit migrant families, important to understand the gender dimension as gender affects:

- The amount and frequency of remittances sent home
- Who the recipients are and how it is used
- How relationships within families are affected

Return to and Reintegration into the Family

Returning and reintegrating into home and family “requires reworking traditional relationships between men and women, husbands and wives, parents and children” and carry with them varying degrees of difficulty depending on other factors like length of absence.

Return to and Reintegration into the Family

There can be challenges, for example:

- Readjusting to traditional family life and inadequacy of a single migratory cycle to meet goals (Sri Lanka)
- Adjusting to traditional family life has led to conflict and domestic violence (Bangladeshi women returnees)
- Reintegrating into families and the perceived difficulties because they have changed and families have changed in their absence (Filipino women migrants in Hong Kong)



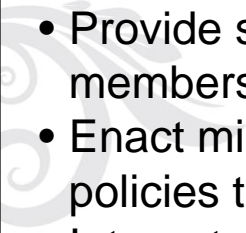
The Way Forward ...





Mitigating the negative effects on migrant families and promoting family welfare


Support of social networks of family and kin as well as the state, non-government and civil society organizations at both origin and destination crucial

- 
- Provide support for different transnational members
 - Enact migration legislation and social policies that are gender-sensitive
 - Integrate migration, gender and the family perspective into development planning at the national and local levels of countries of origin.
 - Pursue bilateral and /or multilateral agreements/arrangements



Good research informs policies, programs and services

Research



Maraming Salamat!