# Exploring the Role of Gender and Social Networks in Migration and Cultural Change

Pakhale Pradip Rajaram[1] and Dr. Ravindra Singh[2]

Research Scholar, Department of History[1]

Professor, Department of History[2]

Sunrise University, Alwar, Rajasthan, India

**Abstract**: *Complex intersections exist between migration and cultural change, where social networks and gender dynamics are key factors. The experience of migration is shaped by gender, which also affects the possibilities and challenges people face in their new settings. For example, women often have unique difficulties in obtaining work, gaining access to resources, and assimilating into new communities. Social networks—which include relationships with family, friends, and the community—act as vital support systems for migrants, aiding in adjustment and offering useful information and help. Furthermore, these networks influence the cultural identities and behaviors of migrants by aiding in the transfer of cultural norms and practices. Comprehending the intricate relationship between gender dynamics and social networks is crucial in order to appreciate the many aspects of migration and its influence on cultural transformation.*

**Keywords:** Gender roles in migration, Social networks and migration patterns, Cultural adaptation and migration

## I. INTRODUCTION

Recent study on migration, gender, and remittances shows distinct and different behaviors and practices, suggesting a more complete explanation of migration that accounts for cultural dynamics and behavior and societal outcomes. These results have issues. Dominican immigrants to the US save and send money differently. Men save for house, while women don't. Instead, women purchase durable products and invest in their new community. Rural-to-urban migration in Thailand has distinct remittance patterns. While men and women are equally likely to migrate, women are expected to travel quicker and bring gifts and cash home to their parents. However, recent evidence suggest that male remittances may be approaching those of women. 2. Most Mexican-American migrants are men and return their income, according to studies. Finally, Indonesian women migrants who leave their parents' houses are instructive. They sometimes repay loans but are seldom required to. Can these vastly different migration, gender, and remittance accounts be explained? What social effects do such divergent behaviors have in origin and destination regions? Gender identity, family relationships, and network function change in each of these extreme situations. We examine recent migration literature through the lens of cultural sociology to understand how these elements may be related and used to understand migration processes and how migration exacerbates or redresses gender inequality.

Three major migratory advances occurred in the previous 20 years. The first adjustment was realizing that men and women have different risks, motivations, and societal norms that impact and promote migration and integration, as well as different results. The second improvement is simulating a more dynamic migration process using social network concepts. The final breakthrough is realizing that families and communities impact migratory decisions, not individuals. Except for a few qualitative studies, all three processes have occurred independently and remain distinct. To combine gender and migration literature, we focus on three basic themes about how social networks, households, and communities affect migratory processes. We emphasize "relative deprivation", "circular and cumulative causation", and "social embeddedness". We propose analyzing these three principles via the lens of a third area, sociology of culture,

using normative expectations, identity formation, and trust. Using primary and secondary data from Thailand and Caribbean and Latin American migration experiences, our empirical examples are largely from Thailand.

We examine internal, external, permanent, and temporary migration to demonstrate that gender and social networks are crucial to migration and cultural change. Before beginning our analysis, we briefly review three migration improvements. Next, we propose combining these three literatures with relevant sociology of culture work and each other. Culture affects how individuals identify themselves, migrate, and interact. This influences inequality creation and resolution. We end by exploring how these insights and synthesis may improve network measurement. We also suggest merging these literatures to better understand how migration patterns affect social development and inequality. The three migration and sociology of culture developments' mutually reinforcing consequences might create a more complete explanation of migration and cultural change. Fertility demographers have lately returned to speculating about how ideas act via networks to affect behavior. This portrayal views culture as dynamic, unlike previous demographers' structural-functionalist approach, which saw culture as a stable, cohesive, and externally imposed force that supported social "functions" in communities. In other cases, networks are used to transmit ideas like the value of children, decreased family sizes, economic ambitions, or mobility.

Watkins and colleagues found that interpersonal encounters may change and maintain social norms, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Thanks to this theoretical field, anthropology and demography are increasingly connected. Complex, multidimensional, longitudinal data, rigorous methodology, and field experiences that give narratives about social interactions and conversations can help demographers predict fertility and contraceptive usage. Migration and cultural change are added to our endeavor to maintain this trend.

## Migration and Gender Literature

Critical reviews of migration models and a new research surge  King and Most current speech is descriptive. How are men and women migrants different? Their decision-making differs how? Do their migratory reasons differ? Similar remittance habits? Does migration affect men and women differently? Some research demonstrate that household position daughter, wife, mother, or head of family matters as well as gender.

Gender roles, intra-household resource allocation, and interpersonal bargaining are explored elsewhere. Poorer rural Filipino households send more young women to the city as seasonal migrants. Women get steady short-term income in sex-segregated urban jobs with little chance for advancement. This socio-economic paradigm helps families manage young, female migrants whose insecure job market makes them want to return home. In Thailand, Curran found that females send wages more than boys, who travel similarly. Remittance and migration expectations are similar. Remittance behavior also depends on sibling order. More middle females send wages than boys. Qualitative research demonstrates that middle daughters work hard in a risky urban labor market to inherit parental wealth in matrilineal and matrilocal cultures. Middle daughters get less parental support than oldest or youngest.

Oldest girls receive some riches from their parents due to their earlier marriage, whereas youngest daughters must care for their aged parents and inherit the family home and most rice fields. Middle sons return little of their migrant earnings since family assets benefit them little. They seldom obtain secondary education from their parents because eldest boys receive it for Buddhist merit and youngest sons because family finances are likely to have accumulated to educate younger siblings. The Latin American and Southeast Asian gender, home, and migration study shows no unified family strategy impacting individual behavior. Instead, family members negotiate complexly depending on gender norms and power. The preceding study shows how gender-related cultural expectations and economic possibilities impact migration and society.

Latin American migration studies suggest gender norms may change. Three Latin American studies and Thai research are evaluated. In 1978, Deere examined how 1950s land reform affected Peruvian peasant households. After land reform broke peasant families, affluent ones may acquire hacienda sections, while poorer ones must serve as wage laborers. Lack of work at home drives many poor families to relocate. Most male heads of household work abroad, leaving married women, children, and parents. This new family setup gives women and children greater home decision-making power, says Deere. The high divorce rate once migrant spouses return suggests that women refuse to bend their newly taught egalitarian gender norms when the "man of the house" reclaims control. Not much equality has been gained. Although women gain authority and equality at home, their husbands' move lowers their earnings and job

prospects. Guendelman and Perez-Itriago find seasonal Mexican migrants reshape gender roles. Because they collaborate and share decision-making, seasonal migrants with working spouses enjoy stronger marital ties.

After leaving their family, seasonal migrant women depend more on their partners. Workingwomen must rethink their gender roles at home, whereas non-working women have more family support. Hondagneu-Sotelo also illustrates that gender roles shift dependent on migration pattern, destination length, and whether men migrate alone and bring spouses or girlfriends later or as a family. In the destination, the former may develop gender roles differently than in the origin. Family migration from the Dominican Republic to the U.S. affects men and women differently, according to Grasmuck and Pessar (1991). Men consider migration temporary and desire to return home to regain gender advantages. Because returning meant retiring and losing new freedoms, women postpone or avoid it. Different attitudes make money tricky.

Men save for return migration, while women spend a lot on expensive, long-lasting goods like a house and home furnishings to anchor the family in the US and deplete the income required to relocate. Curran (1995, 1996) finds substantial rural cultural expectations that Thai women give money to their parents, although this impact is waning. Metropolitan fast-lane women's opportunities and cultural models and low-educated men's possibilities conflict with this assumption. There is evidence that parents are shifting inheritance and caregiving obligations from women to the child or grandchild who is more interested in the farm and house. Boys with less urban job opportunities may take on more caregiving and inherit family wealth. Research on gender and migration demonstrates that men and women travel differently. The house also mediates macroeconomic structure and individuals. Finally, it shows how family gender norms develop and reproduce. It cannot handle large-scale migration patterns due to its micro perspective.5 Portes and colleagues (1997) and Massey (1990) do better. Massey ties individual experiences to social structures via complex network theory and "relative deprivation". The Portes and Sensenbrenner think macro cultural and economic influences influence individual behavior via networks. This is next.

### Migration and Networks

Migration, development, and network theories, most explicitly stated by Portes (1997), Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993), Massey (1990, 1987), and Stark (1991), are contemporary with gender and migration research but essentially different. These interesting concepts change society and culture. Migration momentum processes increase migration. Remittances may enhance inequality in the home community, changing internal economies.

Finally and most importantly, they show how social capital and embeddedness, such as migrant enclaves, may alter identity and behavior. Our argument follows Portes and Sensenbrenner that networks carry ideals, cultural viewpoints, and instrumental knowledge. Based on Berger (1967), we will demonstrate how views only become meaningful when incorporated into like-minded networks. Berger calls plausibility structures networks that affirm or reinforce ideas, making them prone to collapse if not engaged. New networks with different ideals will challenge one's viewpoint and provide new values. We will demonstrate how migration and migrant networks promote cultural transformation, especially in male-female relationships. Thai rural-urban migration research will enlighten numerous cases. The concepts should apply to various migratory and social and physical travel.

Massey's cumulative causation concept frames and illuminates Portes and Sensenbrenner's migratory embeddedness and social capital theories. In his 1990 migration literature review, Massey explains how migration and networks may cause large-scale societal change. This idea and its consequences for migration and social change are discussed below. The fundamental result is that networks grow over time and link individual and family behaviors to society institutions. We explore how obligation networks link migrants and non-migrants, relative hardship promotes migration, and trust forms migrant network links. Our debate proves each category is cultural.

### Networks linking time and space

Networks and migration research reveals one-time acts alter social systems. Migratory networks may connect origin and destination economies, they say. Stark et al. conclude that US-Mexico migrant remittances considerably affect Mexican inequality. Poorly built migrant networks from origin create economic imbalance since few families get migrant income. More migrant networks and comparable wages may modify this (Massey 1990).

Place of origin labor markets may evolve, raising local wages to the point where pay differentials no longer motivate migration. Production and destination-origin inequality affect inequality dissipation. Massey et al. (1987) found that

Mexican migrants' repatriated salaries comprise 82% of their household income. Local and migrant wage workers earn six times differently. Such profits dwarf local salaries and alter migrant groups' dispersion, says Massey.

This inequality offers certain families land and resources, turning egalitarian communities into places where a few rule economically and socially. Normal production relations shift in several cases. Some families spread risks by moving husbands and boys and farming moms and kids after buying property in Mexico. Or, agricultural technology investments lower wages and increase unemployment. Migration assumes relative deprivation and responsibility networks link people and groups across time and location. According to the gender and migration research evaluation, men and women may have distinct duty networks that affect society.

Due to relative poverty, gender may alter individual and collective identity. How individuals see themselves as men or women affects production, inequality, and poverty. In migratory literature, cultural sociology may examine these topics. Migration and network theories may benefit from sociology of culture research on identity formation and material effect. We shall show how this technique addresses relative deprivation and obligation networks. We hypothesize that identities impact relative scarcity and duty, which affects migratory motivation and behavior. Though numerous sorts of identification are significant, we will concentrate on gender identity variance in migratory patterns.

### Culture, Gender, Networks and Migration

A network explanation of migration, which is "socially embedded" and "circular and cumulatively caused," discusses culture first. This formulation incorporates culture twice. Obligation networks follow relative deprivation. Massey describes relative deprivation as a strong desire for material goods and a sense of entitlement from seeing others enjoy them. Relative deprivation only occurs when people's goals and ambitions change and local resources cannot provide them, signaling idea and value movement. Massey overlooks the effects. Current migration network theory fails duty networks. Our analysis shows that cultural gender meanings may affect migration patterns differently based on relative poverty and obligation networks. We hypothesize that cultural gender meanings may affect structural changes in origin and destination, resulting in different migration networks and consequences.

### Relative Deprivation and Gender Identities

Massey and Stark (1991) include relative deprivation in their family strategy and migration theories. These authors claim relative deprivation includes comparing starting lives to goal lifestyles and seeking the latter. Origin communities consume more visibly or use destination value systems (Massey 1990, 13). Due to relative deprivation, families use migration and remittances to buy new things, which contradicts other cultural norms (Stark 1991).

The effects of relative deprivation on men and women are unknown. Comparative deprivation is neither a fair assessment of resource ownership nor an instinctual response to inequality. Personal identity influences relative deprivation, or the sense that others have more desirable resources. It takes creativity, the capacity to compare one's destiny to others, and comparison. Berger and Luckman (1967) believe that focusing on the individual is only possible when people have several group allegiances. Many group identities provide alternatives in values and worldviews. Their blend of group cultures makes them "unique." Expanding Berger and Luckman's theory of individuality states that networks introduce people to new social groupings, strategic information, and cultural values, identities, and desires. The demand for market objects to validate new identities is driven by new conceptions and their impact on identity.

Gender shapes most people's identity, which impacts migration motive and suffering reaction. Fieldwork in Thailand demonstrates that men and women experience relative poverty differently, resulting in distinct mobility patterns and networks. Due to gender role conflict, rural Thai women are poorer. This requires some background on rural Thai gender norms and current economic growth that is making them unworkable. Young men are expected to "pay thiaw" or explore, whereas Thai women are kin-based and domestic. This might have been labor migration, itinerant Buddhist monks, cattle dealers, or salesmen (Kirsch 1966). "Pay thiaw" is part of a gendered system that encourages men to go to cities to obtain status and social influence via peer interaction and power and knowledge groups. These ties help migrant men find work and empower young men's households financially and politically.

Thai ladies have always loved their birth residences and avoided non-kin companions and travel. Long recognized are women's rice farming and subsistence farm management. Matrilineal and matrilocal systems have increased women's

social and economic ties to their birthplaces. Economic growth has made female roles less feasible. Thai rice agriculture, which powered the economy until recently, is declining. Urban economic prospects are improving as family size is dropping. Traditional Thai men move in this economy.

Male gender identities include rural and urban aspects, and expectations for young men are identical on farms and in cities, thus economic advancements do not alter them. Women tell a different story. Land scarcity and urban economic opportunities promote female migration, creating new urban gender identities that stress autonomy, sexuality, and consumerism for young Thai women. Unlike rural identities that prioritize family, sexual modesty, and thrift.

Young Thai women get new skills, desires, and self-concepts in cities. Migrant peers may also introduce these identities. They typically want cosmopolitan identity "markers" like clothes and makeup. People join the urban labor market and stay there despite bad working conditions to meet new desires. The case of a 21-year-old Thai textile worker illustrates this dynamic. Seeing her Bangkok-working friend motivated her to move: Her clothes are lovely. When she spotted me, she shouted "Oh ho!" How did you look rundown? How about working with me? On that night, I thought, "I ought to go give it a try." I wanted to work hard in the city and save for my family. I thought about this till bedtime, then got up early to find my friend. It was great to accompany her. Prepared my belongings and left my family (Mills 1997:37). This excerpt displays Thai women's conflicting feminine values. Her friend taunts the non-migrant for seeming tired. Gender roles drove her relocation.

### Networks of Obligation and Gender Roles

Networks and remittances are self-enforcing since they are based on culturally determined family responsibilities and benefit both migrants and non-migrants, according to Massey (1990) and Stark et al. How do kinship responsibilities self-enforce? According to Portes and Sensenbrenner, network density, composition, and norm transmission affect this process. In dense social networks, migrants find resources and opportunities that develop responsibility, commitment, and connection with the community and its needs. Curran (1995) discovered that high-outmigration migrants sent more money home. Migrant culture may shape conduct via remittance customs.

The amount of links between origin and destination affects whether they may "call their children home," provide "a word of warning," or "go find them". These links provide information and norms. Kin-based migrant networks promote normative kinship responsibilities more than non-kin-based networks, regardless of destination distance. Gender composition may affect network family ties. Women have stronger and more kin-based links than males (Smith-Lovin and MacPherson 1993), therefore families may prefer women to move since they will be more connected and provide normative social support.

Fieldwork in Thailand reveals that parents value family links in developing familial obligation among migrants. Thai parents are more likely to accept a daughter's vacation plans with a relative or close friend. The main hazards females face are sexual relationships and exploitative labor, although this minimizes parents' fears. Parents also feel family networks increase home ties. Sons may travel alone or with non-kin because the city is safer for young men or because the family is less reliant on their remittances. The kin and non-kin networks of men and women are affected by gender norms. Different networks may effect migrants differently at their destinations. Studies on rural Thailand (Mills 1997) suggest that strong kin networks force young female migrants to pay considerable amounts home to prove their loyalty. She believes men with fewer kin-based networks feel less pressure.

## II. CONCLUSION

We examined gender and migration and migration and networks literature to demonstrate that each illuminates migration processes. We demonstrated how various sectors may collaborate to study migration and cultural change. Through sociology of culture literature, we established network linkages are more than information transmitters. Large, diverse, and dense, they threaten or reinforce cultural structure, especially gender relations. We argued that migration-induced network characteristics and macro changes affect cultural gender expectations and gender identity (embodied in relationships) effects network linkages. Migration networks are dynamic, yet this cyclical process provides them additional significance and alter capabilities. Migration may increase, challenge, or alleviate gender inequality through significant social relationships based on identification (relative deprivation), obligation, and trust. To understand the various remittance behaviors of men and women migrants globally, we recommend measuring networks.

Age-old wisdom. Many migration experts propose assessing network size, composition, density, and an individual's function as a newcomer, initiator (centrality), or gatekeeper. We advocate adding gender to complicate past network measures and their usage in migratory behavior models. However, we believe our contribution extends beyond adding to theories. We also believe migration theories should study network linkages and their development. Thus, not all migrants have the same networks. Thai men and women have different connections, resulting in different remittance patterns. Migration alters ties by reinforcing and challenging gender identity. Dominican migrants also have gender-specific associations with different effects. Male and female identities drive migration differently, and networks strengthen these identities, resulting in distinct remittances and destination investments.

The effects are significant for people, organizations, and society. Identity formation and change may alter social resource allocation. Young men in Thailand may have access to family resources formerly reserved for females. Migrant networks may also hold women as obedient workers loyal to their families. This favors the market and family above her. Women's migrant networks in the Dominican Republic appeal to women's liberation from patriarchy and refusal to return to domination at home to promote identity building and precarious labor positions in the urban U.S. labor market. Male identity is unaffected by these disagreements. Dominican men are more likely to strike and resist production in their country when resources flow back. Identity and strength come from origin and devotion. Thai men use patron-client networks rather than family networks to migrate and gain resources.

Their flexible family identity may allow them to use parental resources and exhibit dedication to caring and farming. This shows cultural change. Cultural analysts like Anne Swidler (1986) say culture in "unsettled times" is conflicted and all-encompassing. Migration may assist us understand how periods settle (Swidler 1986). According to Swidler, "unsettled times" are times when opposing conceptions about society's organization emerge. Thai young women migrants cannot choose between urban and rural femininity. They must pick between competing views. More women joining urban-rural networks changes everything. Participating in these networks fosters dualistic beliefs. Despite early hostility, networks balance culture. These changes may mainstream migration and change Thai gender norms. Swidler doesn't explain how times settle or unsettle. We suggest answering this using networks. We know innovators, gatekeepers, and network margins transform society. Since innovators, gatekeepers, and early migrants are on the periphery of various networks, migrant networks drive cultural change. This method and network location may explain changing periods and civilizations.

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