

== Introduction ==

“Clearly, statistics are not what they used to be. The challenge is to understand their language so as to decipher the story that they are trying to tell.”

—Hania Zlotnik, former director, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division¹

In 1984, demographers at the U.S. Department of Labor published data showing more women than men among U.S. immigrants. Appearing in the first special issue devoted to research on immigrant women in the flagship journal, *International Migration Review*, the authors documented a female majority of 52.3 percent among recent immigrants to the United States. In the same issue, scholars also examined migrant women’s work, lives, and experience in other parts of the world. For example, Saskia Sassen-Koob pointed to the feminization of the workforce in small-scale agricultural production in sending areas characterized by male out-migration, in global assembly plants in Asia and in wealthy nations that increasingly sought for foreign women as domestic laborers.² Less than a year later, the *New York Times* reported on its front page that men made up just one-third of U.S. immigrants,³ suggesting a decline of immigrants entering the labor market as the proportion of women rose. Then, approximately a decade later, social scientists Stephen Castles and Mark Miller further spread the news about migration’s feminization in their widely read book, *The Age of Migration*.⁴

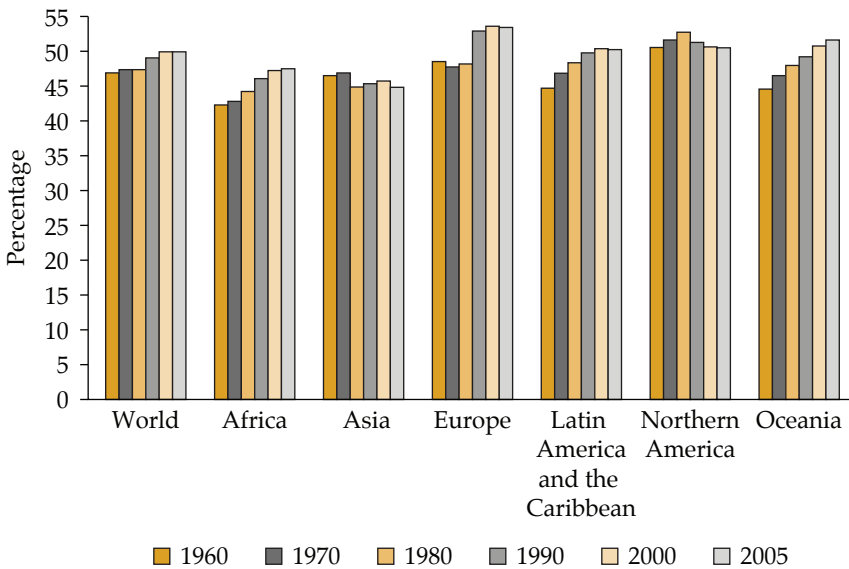
The discovery of migration’s feminization sparked intense scholarly attention to gender and migration.⁵ Today, documentation of the feminization of migration continues as part of the broader study about how gender shapes every dimension of migration, not just into the United States but internationally.⁶ Frequent calls for policy interventions have accompanied the development of scholarship on gender and migration.⁷ References to the feminization of migration often frame studies of the trafficking of women or girls and exploitation of largely female domestic servants and care workers.⁸ Even Wikipedia has an entry on the feminization of migration; it begins, “The feminization of migration is a recent trend in which gendered patterns are changing and a higher rate of women are migrating for labor or marriage.”⁹ But in fact, as we show, feminization is not a recent development and the migration of women and girls has a long history.

This book documents that women have been part of migration flows for more than four centuries. We show that balanced and even predominantly female migrations are not particularly new. Instead, it is the discovery and naming of feminization that are new. We offer a historical analysis of how and why the composition of migrant populations has shifted over time, sometimes quite dramatically, and we ask readers to think about why these changes occur and why they have remained invisible for so long. All existing data point toward great variability in the balance of men and women and boys and girls among migrants, and it is this variability—in both coerced and free migrations in the centuries between 1600 and 2000 across the globe—that is our focus. Underlying these variations are patterns and shifts in gender relations and gender ideologies in sending and receiving societies; these shifts reflect gender dynamics—not biological sex—in a larger political and economic context that has become more global over time. Our analysis also reveals the paucity of evidence for any widespread or negative consequences of sizeable contingents of women among migrants, past or present. Together, these findings suggest that the shift toward more women among international migrants has produced a global period of gender balance among migrants in the early twenty-first century.

Gender balance characterizes most human populations and imbalance—most often a preponderance of men in national populations—has been a recent concern of scholars and policymakers studying population dynamics mainly in China and India, where national policies (such as China's One-Child Policy) and popular practices (that may result in high rates of death among female infants and small children) produce male-predominant populations. Our book documents a long-term trend toward gender balance in migration occurring across the entire twentieth century. The main consequence of such balance has been a pronounced convergence in the composition of mobile international populations and sedentary national ones, and thus between natives and foreigners in many countries. Demographically, natives and foreigners have become more alike—for example, in their fertility and rates of wage-earning—with the feminization of migration. Although it is not possible to know whether this long-term trend will reverse in the future or whether it is a permanent transition comparable to well-documented fertility and mortality transitions,¹⁰ gender balance is one indicator that international migrations have become normalized and predictable.

The Feminization of Migration Goes Global

By the first decade of the twenty-first century, the feminization of migration was no longer unique to the United States and northern Europe. Especially influential in extending the discussion of feminization of migration to the global level was a 2006 United Nations (UN) report on

Figure I.1 Trends in Female Migration, 1960–2005

Source: Alcalá 2006.

the status of world populations.¹¹ Figure I.1, from that report, describes the percentage of women and girls in migrant populations worldwide. Using census data that represent a sequence of demographic snapshots across ten-year periods, the empirical data presented in the chart document a worldwide increase of the proportion female among resident foreigners, from 46.7 to 49.6 percent between 1960 and 2005. Yet the increase itself, only 2.9 percentage points in forty-five years, was modest. Some scholars, such as Hania Zlotnik at the United Nations, openly acknowledge that the increased share of women among migrants was modest.

The main revelation of the new set of global estimates by sex is that women and girls have accounted for a very high proportion of all international migrants for a long time. In 1960, female migrants already accounted for nearly forty-seven of every one hundred migrants living outside their countries of birth. Since then, the share of female migrants among all international migrants has been rising steadily, to 48 percent in 1990 and nearly 49 percent in 2000. Although this trend is consistent with an increasing feminization of international migration, the increase recorded is small compared with the high level in 1960.

One of the most important changes occurring in the fifty years between 1960 and 2010 was not in the relative numbers of males and females

among migrants, but in the overall growth of migrants and refugees of both sexes. But even that seemed less cataclysmic on closer examination. By 2005, persons living outside the country of their birth constituted 3 percent of the world's population. True, the numbers of women and girl migrants had more than doubled between 1960 and 2005—from roughly thirty-five to seventy-eight million—but so had the numbers of migrant men and boys. World populations more than doubled from three billion to more than six billion between 1960 and 2005.¹² So if doubling the numbers of women and girls does not, as Hania Zlotnik notes, constitute feminization, what does feminization after 1960 mean? And why had scholars not noticed it before 1960?

Ultimately, this UN report emphasizes that the world's recent migrant population includes large numbers of mobile women and men, and that the shares of women have shifted modestly upward, but more so in some regions than in others, creating a story that is largely one of gender balance by the end of the twentieth century. What has not been discussed is why such small upward shifts attracted great attention from scholars and policymakers yet feminization before 1960 was ignored. Our book offers some answers to these questions.

Defining a Migrant: Inclusion and the Limits of Existing Data

How nation-states define migrants and thus how they measure migration flows mattered far more in the twentieth century than it had before 1920. Before World War I, borders were relatively open, but gave way—gradually, after 1880—to restrictions on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origins, and class. In the absence of strong national commitments to restrict migration, nations in the nineteenth century (and often before) did not create complex categories that differentiated among migrants of differing motivations or intentions. For example, there was no need to assess whether they sought work or refuge or whether they intended to remain permanently.¹³ Adam McKeown has shown how proliferating restrictions on migration created a new “melancholy order” as nation-states around the world—notably in Australia, Canada, the United States, and Europe—chose to restrict the numbers of migrants and to exclude those deemed racially or ethnically undesirable. In this new twentieth-century world, categories became mechanisms of governance.¹⁴ Thus some social scientists refer to the creation of migration regimes aimed at governing international mobility in the interests of selective nation-building, national development, or security.¹⁵

Restrictions on migration required the creation of categories that differentiated among more and less desirable forms of migrants as each individual nation understood them. Restriction both required complex typologies

of mobility (see, for example, the one created by the International Labour Organization in 1927) and created enormous obstacles to standardizing those categories cross-nationally for purposes of international or global analysis.¹⁶ From the 1920s until the 1960s, growing numbers of new nations in Africa and Asia faced the task of deciding how to restrict and how to distinguish among proliferating categories of migrants. Over time, restrictions based on race and ethnicity were replaced by other categories such as labor migrants, skilled or professional workers, visiting intellectuals and artists, expatriates, refugees, displaced persons, internally displaced persons, tourists, travelers, permanent and temporary migrants, asylum seekers, international students, trafficking victims, adopted children, trailing spouses, and many, many others. As a consequence, migrants often try to fit themselves into these new categories to gain admission from nation-states.¹⁷

We begin by stating that our definition of a migrant is necessarily very broad: he or she is any migrant who crosses an international border (or, in the past, an ocean) and is found in one of the four series of data that we analyze in this book. These data series include flow data (counts of individuals, generally made at borders) for most of the historical analysis before 1970 and census, or stock, data collected from households after 1970. Together, the data permit us to be as inclusive as possible about who is a migrant, but they complicate any effort to place migrants within contemporary categories. Using a broad definition enables us to extend our analysis beyond existing studies based on either flow or stock data, but not both, and to link analyses of migrant gender composition from the past to the present. We describe each of the four data sets to provide a better understanding of the migrants our analysis covers.

The first and earliest data series derives from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database and is analyzed in chapter 3.¹⁸ These data are drawn from ship captains' handwritten records of their human freight. Under the leadership of historian David Eltis, thousands of ship, port, and customs records have been integrated into a single digital database that describes more than thirty-four thousand slave ship voyages. Estimates suggest that the data set includes at least two-thirds of all voyages that transported slaves from Africa to the Americas between 1500 and 1867.¹⁹ The database establishes the general dynamics of the slave trade and identifies points of embarkation or exit from Africa and points of disembarkation or entry into the Americas. Yet the data are not perfect because some records contain more information than others,²⁰ and information by sex is available for only a subset of voyages (4,699—approximately 13 percent of all voyages). We therefore analyze these data cautiously, following in the footsteps of others who have done so.²¹ Despite these limitations, the data set contains information on sex for almost a million persons, though fewer for years before 1650 when migrations were

still small, and more for the period after 1650 as slave transports grew. The data define migrants by their embarkations, for example, emigration, from the significant regions of slave capture in Africa, and disembarkations, for example, immigration, to almost every significant destination or receiving region in the Americas.

The second data series we use originates from international flow data compiled by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and published in 1929 by Walter Willcox and Imre Ferenczi, who understood that state bureaucracies in different countries routinely create data about individual migrants in diverse ways. In this data set, one person may be recorded as two or even more migrants. An individual emigrant who leaves one country may or may not be counted a second time as an immigrant by the destination country; similarly, an immigrant may not have been counted as an emigrant upon departure. Transportation infrastructure and migrants' decisions also meant that some individuals born or living in one country and counted on departure may travel to a second country to depart for a third, and thus be counted three times. In addition, someone who circulated repeatedly over the years may be counted many times, each time he or she exited or entered a country. Further complicating these data is variability in nations' practices collecting emigrant-immigrant sex, nationality, culture, religion or citizenship, and place of birth. Countries receiving large numbers of immigrants often failed to count emigrants or, if they did count them, failed to distinguish between departing immigrant foreigners returning to their homelands and citizens going abroad temporarily or permanently. The reverse was also true: nations that worried about emigration of citizens may not have bothered to enumerate them when they returned or to distinguish them from foreign immigrants. In still other countries, foreigners' registration with the police (as residents) or their applications for work permits substituted for counts of border-crossers.

Like Willcox and Ferenczi, we are very aware of the limits of these data. Although those authors worried that the numbers of emigrants leaving one country for another rarely matched the (usually larger) number of immigrants counted as arriving in a host country from a particular origin, we worry less about this issue because our analysis is about the relative numbers of male and female migrants. In addition, the data describe a substantial portion—we estimate one-half to three-quarters—of all nineteenth-century long-distance international migrations: the number of emigrants from forty-two sending areas and the number of immigrants to thirty-nine receiving areas total more than seventy-five million emigrants and more than seventy-seven million immigrants.

The third data series we use was first generated by the ILO in collaboration with the League of Nations and subsequently with the United Nations. In 1953, the UN Population Division published a compilation of multi-year data in a volume titled "Sex and Age of International Migrants" that

summarized flow data between 1918 and 1947. Beginning in 1948, the UN's *Demographic Yearbook* published annual flow data that also included breakdowns by sex for many—but not all—countries. Overall, about one-third of the data in the 1953 compilation came from Europe and another third from North America, the Caribbean, and South America. Representation of Africa and Asia was better than in the Willcox and Ferenczi volume, including at least some data for a number of nations in these regions, but the annual numbers of departures and arrivals still differed. Many countries did not differentiate aliens or foreigners from citizens or nationals in arrival and departure data. In both Africa and Asia, colonies reported data separately for racial and religion or European-origin and non-European-origin migrants; among the former, Europeans were almost always enumerated more systematically or more often. Some countries distinguished permanent from temporary migrants or transcontinental from intercontinental migrants; others did not. As in the past, some counted only arrivals or only departures. Yet, once again, the coverage of these data is impressive. We estimate that the data available by sex from this volume constitute slightly more than half of global migrants—that is to say, emigrants and immigrants—during this time.

The final data series differs from the first three—an issue we discuss in greater detail in chapters 2 and 5. In the final section of this book, we use stock data that define international migrants as persons born outside their country of birth. These data are individual-level data drawn from national censuses that have been harmonized and made available by the Minnesota Population Center as part of the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS-International and IPUMS-USA). Although these data are from the largest global population data source, include information that extends well beyond nativity and gender, and offer the ability to control for sex-differences in longevity, they too do not cover the entire world. For the analysis found in chapters 6 and 7, we use data from sixty-six nations and a total of 176 censuses that contain information about nativity and describe more than five hundred million people after 1960.

Stock data derived from censuses are different from flow data sources: rather than providing specific counts of individuals leaving and entering, stock data count people living in households at the time of each census. In the United States, the foreign-born population is any household member who was not a U.S. citizen at birth and includes those who have become U.S. citizens through naturalization. Although most nations define nativity in a similar way, there is still some variation. For example, the Israeli census includes in its foreign-born population only foreign-born Jews residing in the country. All noncitizen foreign-born workers who are not Jewish are not counted in the census. Although we note such differences in our subsequent discussion of these data, we rely on stock data about migrants to include as many migrants as possible. We prefer inclusivity

given that our key objective is to examine the extent of migrant gender composition over time and across space; this objective would be severely compromised if we focused only on one or two specific types of migration, such as that related to marriage or labor.

Therefore, we analyze both flow and stock data and many types of international migrants, such as regular immigrants, temporary workers, refugees, slave laborers, and unauthorized migrants. To be sure, these data have limits but, for the sake of our research question about variations in gender composition, we argue that the benefits exceed the limits. One key advantage is that the available data do roughly distinguish between two types migrations. First are those motivated by the recruitment of individual labor (a group that included Atlantic slaves and indentured servants before 1800 and various kinds of contract workers and free labor migrants after 1800). Second are those through which both migrants and receiving societies expected cultural and biological reproduction to occur in a new setting that includes old world slave migrations, refugees, and settler colonizers as well as twentieth-century marriage or family migrants. Although it becomes muddy as we explore specific times and places, this broad distinction does allow us to consider how reproductive and productive labor figured in shaping the gender composition of migrant populations.

Defining Feminization: A Typology of Migrant Gender Composition

We believe it both possible and important to document and analyze the numbers of male and female migrants over time and space. To do this, we develop a typology of gender composition that distinguishes between routine and predictable variations in gender composition and the increases or decreases in the percentage female that are more likely caused by diversity in gender relations and in gender ideology. Recognizing that scholars, journalists, and students have defined feminization in very different ways, we decided to use our measure of migrant gender composition in a very narrow way. Some use it to refer to rising numbers of women migrants between two individual years or across multiple years or periods. Others use it to refer to increasing shares of women among all migrants, again to assess change between two or more years or periods. Still others use it only to describe recent upward shifts in women's presence. How feminization is measured also varies by discipline. For example, demographers often assume that even small variations in age or gender composition may have significant consequences, especially in large populations. They prefer to measure feminization, or the gender composition of a population, with a sex ratio that some assume captures small variations better than percentages. Historians, in contrast, often use

the percentage female to assess the gender composition of migrant populations over long periods.²² Adding to this complexity are the disciplinary differences in assessing variability: historians typically emphasize continuities or similarities whereas sociologists portray the present as a sharp rupture from the past.²³

Because no generally accepted typology for migrant gender composition exists, we develop one here and use it throughout this book. It is based on the idea that predictable variations in gender composition are a product of the changing age composition of populations. Our typology discusses and compares migrations with male and female majorities as male predominant and female predominant. We do not—as do some studies of feminization—distinguish between male and female dominant because we do not assume that greater numbers automatically deliver more power.²⁴ Instead, we use the word *predominant* because its meaning is more numeric.²⁵ Although we recognize that gender relations involve power, we are not sure whether and how the relative numbers of male and female migrants empower either group. Thus, we use predominant in its numeric sense to create a typology of migrant gender composition.

Prior studies have used a simple typology composed of two categories: historical male-predominant and contemporary balanced or female-predominant migrations. Feminization is typically defined as a shift from the first to the second category and masculinization—which is almost never discussed—a shift from the second to the first category. We make three significant additions to this overly simple typology. First, we create a third category of gender-balanced migration, which has been used in the past but never applied to studies about the feminization of migration. Second, because it is pointless to insist that gender balance exists only when the numbers or shares of males and female are exactly equal, we define a range—between 47 and 53 percent—as constituting gender balance. We also define male-predominant migrations as less than 47 percent female and female-predominant migrations as greater than 53 percent female. Third, rather than insist on using one broad category for either male- or female-predominant migrant populations, we define heavily male-predominant populations as less than 25 percent female and heavily female-predominant populations as more than 75 percent female.

Thus, although our typology may need revision in the future, it is clearly defined. In too many prior studies terms such as *overwhelmingly male* appear without any definition.²⁶ Eventually, we hope that studies documenting the consequences of male-predominant migrations will make it possible to identify a sensible upper limit based on the analysis of the consequences of gender imbalance. Until then, we choose to define heavily male-predominant rather broadly. As the chapters ahead demonstrate, evidence exists for heavily male-predominant, male-predominant, gender-balanced, and female-predominant migrations for

almost every period, every spatial scale, and every part of the world. Some chapters in this volume focus particular attention on heavily male and on the gender-balanced or female-predominant migrant populations, using them as case studies of the diverse gender relations that produce variation. Prior studies influenced our choice of case studies that then permit us to situate heavily male and gender-balanced and female-predominant migrations in a particular social or historical context, and to identify the types of gender relations and gender ideologies in sending or host societies associated with each category.

By creating a typology of migrant gender composition, we also aim to more concisely establish a foundation for defining feminization. In this book, we suggest and use three definitions of feminization. Our most generous definition defines it simply as any multiyear rise in the percentage female among migrants. In the chapters ahead, we show that many periods of short-term and temporary feminization of migrant populations were followed by years of masculinization. Our second definition is based more narrowly on the typology of gender composition: feminization is any shift from one category to another (from heavily male to male-predominant, or from male-predominant to gender-balanced) just as masculinization is a shift from female-predominant to gender-balanced, or from male-predominant to heavily male-predominant. Finally, a third definition defines feminization as any increase in the proportion female that has demonstrable consequences for migrants, for their homelands, or for the new societies they enter.

Emphasis on Gender

Throughout this book, we emphasize the gender of migrants and focus on gender relations and ideology rather than on biological sex or on women migrants alone. We adopt a long-term historical perspective that reveals gender and migration as processes occurring over time and across spatial scales, from the local to the global. In the book, we remain poignantly aware of how inequality, including that based on sex and gender, affects migration and its consequences. Scholars have pointed to the inequality associated with too many women or too many men in a population.²⁷ Considerable scholarship on contemporary societies also addresses the negative social consequences for women when young men outnumber them, as they do, for example, in contemporary China or India.²⁸ The same may be true of migrant populations with too many women.

Our choice to focus on gender does not delegitimize the dichotomous and bivariate male and female categories that make quantitative study of empirical data possible. Many theorists insist—and we agree—that gender and sex are not fixed categories or the product of biology but instead malleable, fluid social constructions shaped by relationships of power.²⁹

We also agree, however, with the feminist demographers of the United Nations who—for decades—insisted that the reporting of empirical data about the sex of migrants, labeling migrants as male or female was an important political demand to change international record-keeping practices that had historically ignored sex. Without that data, gender analysis of quantitative data is impossible. In a review of scholarship on gender and migration, Katharine Donato and her colleagues insist that distinguishing male from female is a necessary foundation for gender analysis in the quantitative social sciences.³⁰ Collecting bivariate data on sex makes it possible to measure the composition of populations but it does not preclude gender analysis. As Hania Zlotnik suggests in the quotation with which we open this book, statistics too are a language that can be analyzed with the methods of gender studies. In fact, by documenting gender variation in migrant populations, we can assert that it is not biological sex driving migrant gender composition. If it were, the sex of migrants would vary very little, as it does, for example, among babies at the time of birth.³¹ Variations in the relative numbers of male and female migrants are the product of complex culturally diverse gender relations in sending and receiving societies.

Understanding how we can know sex and gender is related to methodological concerns that have at times divided scholars into two camps: those who reject and those who support quantitative social scientific quantitative methodologies. Many feminists of the 1970s and 1980s rejected quantitative methods as hierarchical, female-unfriendly, and malestream tools, and instead cited African American poet Audre Lorde's trenchant observation that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."³² These scholars preferred qualitative over quantitative methodologies that essentialized male and female as sex or biological difference. For their part, quantitative social scientists in the 1980s and 1990s have too often characterized qualitative analyses as uniformly tainted by the radical relativity of postmodernist philosophers.³³ To begin to bridge this divide, chapter 1 explains in some detail why gender has been a key constituting factor in only a small set of social scientific migration studies.³⁴

Recently, the methodological chasm separating qualitative gender studies from quantitative social science has narrowed somewhat. By using an eclectic array of methods from diverse disciplines—especially from history (with its penchant for temporal interpretations), demography (with its preference for quantitative methods and empirical evidence), and anthropology (with its focus on theory about sex and gender and about linkages among local, national, and global studies),³⁵ we aim to show that empirical evidence and systematic quantitative analysis of bivariate data about sex reveals the fluidity and relationality of gender as constructed in both sending and receiving societies. In our use of quantitative methods, we follow Mary Fonow and Judith Cook, who emphasize

how feminist quantitative research represents “the ways in which key concepts were operationalized, the careful matching of statistical techniques to research questions, the transparency with which the researchers presented their data and analysis, and the focus of the analysis on disenfranchised groups.”³⁶

Outline of Book

This book analyzes the composition of migrant populations over the long term and across a variety of spatial scales, from the global and macro-regional to the national and subnational. Given Zlotnik’s observations about feminization in 1960, some historical perspective seems essential. We decided to push beyond the usual and often narrow social science understanding of the past (for example, as a period that may begin with 1986 or 1996 and ends with the present) by adopting the large temporal scale of global historians. Unlike social scientists who often portray recent migrations as unprecedented, world and global historians examining long-term migration patterns instead describe mobility not as a problem or the norm but rather as a common and not-unexpected dimension of human existence.³⁷

Scholarly attention to the relative numbers of males and females among migrants began long before recent interest in the feminization of migration. For readers interested in the sociology of knowledge production about gender and migration, chapter 1 provides an overview of the two scholarly fields that have most shaped inquiry about gender and migration and describes the divergence of gender studies and quantitative social sciences in the last quarter of the twentieth century and some recent efforts to reconnect the two fields. The focus is on how scholars have understood sex and gender in the migration process and on how scholarship itself has often been associated with masculinity or femininity. Chapter 2 also takes a long-term perspective on the study of migration by examining the creation of several types of data—notably flow and stock data—collected by states and international organizations to document human mobility. It traces the development of scholarly measures—from sex ratios to percentages female—that facilitate analysis of the two types of data. In both chapters, we focus on the ways concepts were operationalized.³⁸

Readers interested in historical and contemporary shifts in the gender composition of immigrants, and the factors and consequences associated with such shifts, may wish to turn immediately to chapter 3. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 use historical flow data to trace the gender composition of a number of large-scale migrations over four centuries and three significant eras of global integration and human mobility. They seek to explain variations in gender composition and identify possible consequences. Why were some migrations heavily male and others gender-balanced or even

female-predominant? How have scholars described the social, economic, or cultural consequences of variations in migrant gender composition? Chapter 3 analyzes settler, coerced, and slave migrations in and around the early modern Atlantic between 1600 and 1860 and points to gender imbalance among labor migrants and gender balance among settler colonizers and refugees. Chapter 4 then explores and contrasts settler and labor migrations of the nineteenth century, identifying the masculinization of global migrations and presenting evidence of a beginning convergence toward gender balance shortly after 1900. Chapter 5 documents the persistence of this convergence as volumes of migration first fell and then rose again across the twentieth century and attributes it both to increased restriction and management of human mobility and to a gendered shift in demand for migrant labor. It describes and explains the belated scholarly discovery of the feminization of migration by grounding that discovery in a shift—initiated at the United Nations—from the analysis of flow to stock data, which were widely available but also exaggerated female representation in international migrations.

Chapters 6 and 7 analyze IPUMS micro-level stock data for the years after 1970. Chapter 6 uses the data to correct a methodological flaw of the influential 2006 UN report, explores contemporary variations in migrant gender composition, and reveals that the feminization of migration—or, as we prefer to call it, the convergence toward gender balance—is both more modest than the UN suggested, yet also real and replicable. Chapter 7 tackles a question that has generally remained unstated and unexamined in recent quantitative analyses of the feminization of migration. Few scholars have presented evidence that the relatively modest increase in female representation over the past fifty years has had any demographic, social, or political consequences, whether in rates of marriage, female or male wage-earning, female emancipation, or the building or collapse of feminist movements. Why should we care about how many women or men move about, leave one region, or work or settle in another? Focusing on the United States, chapter 7 analyzes effects of variations in the gender composition among U.S. immigrants and suggests limited and temporary consequences of modestly unbalanced migrations, whether male- or female-predominant. It reveals convergence of native and immigrant marriage and work patterns over time, and suggests that the convergence is sometimes the product of shifts in the native population and sometimes a consequence of shifts that have accompanied the changing volumes and composition of the immigrant population. Finally, the conclusion summarizes key findings and considers their policy implications. Although we do not use data that permit us to directly assess these effects, our goal is to begin a dialogue about possible links between migrant gender composition and several specific policies and practices in nations that receive and send immigrants.

Twentieth-Century Global Convergence Toward Gender Balance

This book uses methods from the disciplines of history, gender studies, and the social sciences and reveals that what others have described as feminization is a gradual, intermittent, and ongoing twentieth-century global convergence toward gender balance in migrant populations. Our historical analysis demonstrates that migrant gender composition has always varied and that feminization and masculinization are two important forms of variation. We document cases of short-term feminizations and shorter- and longer-term masculinizations of migrant populations. During every important era of migration, from the early modern period to the present, we also show cases of female and heavily female-predominant migration. Migrant populations in Europe seem particularly noteworthy because they have been gender balanced for more than a century, whereas the United States, Canada, and Australia have been roughly gender balanced for at least ninety years. In fact, the achievement of gender balance is probably of less significance—in terms of its social and cultural consequences—than the eighteenth- to nineteenth-century masculinization that preceded it. More recently, we see that women's migration has been on the rise in some other nations worldwide. In some Asian countries, women's rising productivity, in part reflected by growing numbers of migrant women and the remittances they send back to origin households, has helped fuel an export boom that in turn propels more women to migrate in search of work.³⁹ In other nations, immigrant populations are more gender balanced because of refugee flows and the reunification of reproducing family groups.⁴⁰

Yet the consequences of the shift from male-predominant to gender-balanced immigrant populations in the United States offer limited evidence of dramatic consequences. Immigrant women were more likely to be married and less likely to work for wages during periods of heavily male-predominant migration, and over time, as immigrant populations have become more gender balanced, migrants have become more similar to natives in their demographic attributes and behavior. The evidence for significant consequences is therefore fairly modest; it includes small changes in rates of intermarriage and convergence in the employment patterns of natives and migrants as the shift toward gender balance among U.S. immigrants has occurred.

We hope the analysis and findings in this book will be the foundation for future scholarship about gender and international migration. What we know is that some factors more than others encouraged unbalanced migrant populations. Coercive and heavily regulated systems of labor recruitment, including the slave systems and contract- and

indenture-based labor systems of the nineteenth century and guest-worker migrations of our own times, are most likely to result in unbalanced migrations. Although many times they have been almost exclusively male, coercive systems of recruitment of labor have included and do include women, especially as domestic and service workers, including nurses and slaves. Other factors, such as government interventions in the form of restricted or supported policies and programs, migrant autonomy and independence, and the desire to marry or to settle, encourage the migration of gender-balanced populations or produce female-predominant migrations that offset those that were heavily male in the past. Almost all these factors are directly or indirectly related to human reproduction and reproductive labor, whether paid or unpaid. These patterns are unlikely to change as long as reproductive work is assigned—as it is, and has been historically—to women and girls across national and cultural borders.