

Katharine M. Donato and Donna Gabaccia (2015). *Gender and International Migration: From the Slavery Era to the Global Age*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. 254 Pages (paperback). (ISBN 978-0-87154-546-6)

Written from the perspective of a historian and a sociologist/demographer, this book dispels the idea of the ‘feminization of migration’ that has recently taken credence in international migration studies. The feminization of migration, defined as the rise in the proportion of women in the migration flow, is generally linked to popular alarm linking it to exploitation, trafficking, the sex industry and the like. In this work, Donato and Gabaccia argue that the migration of women is not a new phenomenon, but rather, women have been a significant part of international migration flows, both free and coerced, for more than four centuries (1600-2000). They report that in 1960, female migrants already accounted for 47% of global migrants. The gains in the last 50 years or so have only been a few percentage points, rendering it rather insignificant in the larger historical context. It is thus important to question the recent fascination and ‘discovery’ of the feminization of migration and why gender analysis of migration has remained on the side lines or even invisible for so long.

Previously, scholars have perhaps over-emphasized the feminization of migration due to the lack of a practical operational definition. Most studies seem to differentiate between historical male predominant and contemporary gender balanced or female predominant migrations. Donato and Gabaccia on the other hand provide a concise and unambiguous typology of gender composition comprised of five categories that can be useful beyond this particular work. They identify gender balanced migrations as a range between 47-53 percent male or female, female predominant as those that range between 54-74 percent female, and heavily female predominant migrations as those that encompass more than 75 percent female. The authors also deal with masculinization of migration, a topic seldom addressed in migration studies partly because of the assumption that it represents the norm (the quintessential migrant is portrayed as a single unencumbered male). Male predominant migration is classified as 54-74 percent male, while heavily male predominant migrations as those that encompass more than 75 percent male migrants. Although this typology may require some future revisions, it helps focus the discussion using accurate measures rather than the alarmist tendencies of some previous work.

In addition to providing a useful typology, this seminal work is substantiated with an impressive array of global historical and sex-disaggregated demographic data. The authors draw on four main sources, including flow (counts of individuals at border crossings) and stock data (censuses focusing generally on ‘foreign-born’ populations). The data sources are comprised of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (compiled into a single digital database by historian David Eltis), international flow data compiled in 1929 by the ILO (International Labor Organization), United Nations’ Population Division multi-year data summarizing migration flow data between 1918 and 1947, and lastly stock data covering 1960s onwards and amalgamated from national censuses (compiled by the Minnesota Population Center). Although it unfortunately does not



permit to consider how different migrations may be related, the mosaic of data sources helps the authors interrogate variations in the gender composition of migrants over large historical time periods.

The structure of the book consists of three main sections and seven substantive chapters not including the introduction and conclusion. In the first third of the book, the authors examine the intersections between sex, gender and migration studies, and the general chasm between gender studies and quantitative social sciences. In Chapters one and two, the authors discuss in detail the use of quantitative data on sex to study malleable and fluid constructs such as gender. Although statisticians have been using sex ratios to study gender imbalances, the authors argue that the bivariate data on sex reveals the 'fluidity and relationality' of gender as constructed in both sending and receiving nations. Thus, the focus is less on biological *sex* but rather on *gender* imbalances. Although some gender scholars might challenge this line of analysis, Donato and Gabaccia interrogate the sociology of knowledge and knowledge production. There was initially a positive association between quantitative methodologies and feminist perspectives. However, starting from the 1990's, there has been a decisive shift by gender scholars away from quantitative methods and towards qualitative methods as they claimed the former would not enable them to dismantle patriarchy. Donato and Gabaccia see their work as bridging the existing chasm between gender studies and quantitative social sciences.

The next two sections respectively use the analysis of historical migration flow data and micro-level stock data to analyse gender compositions. In chapter three, the authors discuss the gender composition of early modern migrations (1492–1867), both free and coerced. Although some might take exception to the inclusion of slaves as migrants, comparable in some respects to other migrants, their inclusion is imperative to understand global migration history. In general, the assumption of enslaved populations' gender composition has followed a 2 to 1 ratio, meaning that there have been two men for every woman that has crossed the Atlantic. The association of the slave holders/owners is that males provided 'productive' labour while females supplied 'reproductive' labour. Nonetheless, the authors find more gender variations or gender balanced migrations in the beginning (pre-1700) and end stages (post 1800s) of the Slave Trades.

The period between 1800 and 1924, as detailed in chapter four, ushers a new era of European empire building. With the advent of industrialization and global trade, we witness a predominantly male migration during this period. This mass migration of the proletariat is mainly motivated by wage earnings but also includes newer forms of slavery such as the 30 million indentured labourers from India and to a lesser extent China that were brought over to colonial plantations in the Caribbean, Africa and other parts of Asia. At the same time, settler colonization migration tended to be more gender balanced. The authors note that different gender relations and gender ideologies may produce gender balanced migration. For instance, migration laws that favoured family reunification have contributed to the feminization of migration during this time period. Although the causes might be varied, the consequences of changes in migrants' gender composition are poorly understood particularly for the 19th century.

Chapter five deals with the 20th century, particularly the period after the First World War (1918 onwards). Although the 19th century experienced heavily male predominant migrations, the twentieth century shifts towards more of a gender balance in international migration. The authors explain the 20th century gender convergence by pointing to migration restrictions in receiving nations (effectively ending the proletariat mass migrations of largely unregulated male movements) and the emphasis placed on permanent settlements (heavily male populations were seen as unruly and dangerous, thus

social policy encouraged marriage and setting roots). Moreover, the rising global inequalities starting from the 1950-1960s, coupled with the gains of women in the more developed nations opened the doors for a very specific type of female migration. The growing need for paid reproductive labour and care work in developed nations meant that migrant women from the Global South were needed to free women from the Global North to take up professional work.

Using stock data, chapter six examines particular national origins to understand global variations in migrant gender composition between 1970 and 2010. Donato and Gabaccia find two patterns specific to national origin and migrant gender composition. For the US, Canada, Israel and Europe, they find gender balanced migration since 1970s, whereas for newer immigrant destinations (such as South Africa, Philippines, Costa Rica, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile), the number of women migrants has significantly increased for the same time period. It is interesting to note that not only are today's international migrations gender selective, but the bifurcation of migrants as either labour migrants on one side and refugees/asylum seekers on the other has also created changes in the gender composition. Refugee flows for the most part tend to be more gender balanced whereas labour migrations see a predominance of one or the other gender depending on the type of demand for migrant labour (care/domestic work or manual labour).

Chapter seven deals with the consequences of the aforementioned migrant gender compositions using the US as a case study and considering variables such as age, marital status, educational attributes, participation in the labour force and rates of intermarriage. As the last substantive chapter and also the shortest, the intent behind this chapter appears to be sparking discussion and introducing new areas for future research rather dealing with the issues in depth. Whereas most studies have focused on the negative consequences of male predominant populations, Donato and Gabaccia only find modest consequences of the changing migrant gender composition among immigrants in the US. This is an insufficient chapter since it focuses almost exclusively on the US and it is hard to gauge whether the findings would be similar in other countries/regions. Hence, the possible impacts of migrant gender composition in different locations and time periods remain to be seen.

Overall, the scale of this project is massive and covers global historical time periods spanning the last five hundred years. It dispels the notion of recent feminization of migration and provides a comprehensive overview of women's *continued* participation in migration flows for centuries. It further bridges the gap between gender studies and quantitative methodologies. Due to its global geographic scope and time scale, the book will need further elaboration and expansion on specific regions and other details. Nonetheless, *Gender and International Migration* will no doubt become essential reading for anybody interested in gender and migration studies.

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