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Migration and Cultural Change: A Role for Gender and Social Networks?

Sara R. Curran* and Abigail C. Saguy**¹

Introduction

Recent research on migration, gender and remittances show distinct and disparate behaviors and practices that raise a number of questions and suggest the need for a more complete theory of migration that incorporates notions of cultural dynamics as they relate to behavior and societal outcomes. For example, migrants to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic show distinct savings and remittance behaviors. Men save to take money home and women do not, instead investing in their new local environs and purchasing durable items (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). Rural-urban migrants in Thailand also show distinct remittance behavior. Although men and women are equally likely to migrate, women remit wages and gifts to their parents' home at a significantly higher rate, and are expected to do so (Curran 1996, 1995; DeJong, Richter, and Isarabhakdi 1995). However, more recently there is some evidence that gendered remittance patterns are changing, where men are possibly remitting almost as much as women.² In some studies of Mexican-U.S. migrants - men predominate in the migrant streams and remit their wages (Massey, Alarcon, Durand, and Gonzalez 1987). And, in a final, illustrative example, Indonesia women migrants come and go from their parent's households, borrowing money, sometimes returning with money, but rarely is there an expectation to do so (Wolf 1994).

Is there an explanation for these disparate and very different stories of migration, gender, and remittances? And, what are the societal effects in places of destination and origin of such different behaviors? There are clearly elements of varying gender identity, household relations, and the role of networks in each of these very different contexts. In order to understand how these elements might be related and used to understand migration processes, as well as provide insights on how gender inequality is exacerbated or redressed through migration, we examine recent developments in the migration literature and view them through the lens of cultural sociology.

During the last twenty years there have been three important developments in the field of migration. The first development has been the recognition that there are significant differences between men and women in terms of motivations, risks, and norms governing and promoting their

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² Personal communication with John Knodel (a leading expert on demographic behavior in Thailand), April 2, 1997 during the Population Association of America Annual Meetings.

movement and assimilation, as well as differential consequences. The second development has been the incorporation of social network concepts to model a more dynamic migration process. And, the third development has been the recognition that migration decisions are not made by atomistic individuals but conditioned by membership within households and communities. However, with the exception of a few qualitative studies (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Hagan 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Menjivar 2000) these three developments have occurred independently of each other and remain relatively distinct.

To incorporate the insights from the literature on gender and migration, we focus upon three key concepts that have emerged regarding the role of social networks, households, and communities for affecting migration processes. The three key concepts we interrogate are: “social embeddedness” (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993), “circular and cumulative causation” (Massey 1990), and “relative deprivation” (Stark 1991). We propose considering these three concepts through the lens of a third area of research, the sociology of culture, and we draw upon ideas about identity formation, trust, and normative expectations. Our empirical examples come primarily from Thailand where we draw upon both secondary and primary data but also from secondary data from Latin America and the Caribbean migrant experiences. In our effort to demonstrate that social networks and gender are essential elements for understanding migration and cultural change, our discussion refers to international, internal, permanent, and temporary migration.

We begin our analysis through a brief review of the three developments in the migration field. We then conceptualize how these three literatures might be usefully synthesized with each other and relevant work in the sociology of culture. In our view, culture is an essential component for understanding the meaning given to individuals (gender), their actions (migration), and their relationships (network ties). This in turn influences the way inequality is produced or redressed. In the conclusion, we discuss how measurement of networks might be improved by these insights and synthesis. We also suggest that by synthesizing these literatures we can refine theories of social change and the structuring of inequality in relation to migration processes.

Our contention that a more complete theory of migration and cultural change could be built by considering the combined and mutually reinforcing implications of the three developments in migration and the sociology of culture parallels work by demographers studying fertility, who have recently returned to theorizing about the role of ideas working through networks to influence behavioral change (Hammel 1990; Watkins 1993; Watkins 1991). This treatment of culture as dynamic contrasts with earlier work by demographers whose structural-functionalist perspective regarded culture as a stable, coherent, and externally imposed force that served social “functions” within communities (e.g. dissipating conflict or anxiety) (Hammel 1990). This newer literature’s use of networks is mostly confined to the transmission of instrumental information, although in some cases, the transmission of ideas like the value of children, smaller family size, economic aspiration, or mobility (Casterline and Knight 1993) is also discussed.³

³ This literature and research responds to the poor performance of purely economic models of fertility and the promising applications of multilevel statistical models. Multilevel models suggest that community or neighborhood factors such as aggregate levels of infant mortality, women’s labor force participation, women’s education levels, urban settings, etc. have both independent effects upon an individual woman’s fertility behavior

The work of Watkins and colleagues (Watkins and Pollack 1993; Watkins 1991; Watkins 1993) suggests that societal norms, values, beliefs, and practices are reproduced and transformed within interpersonal interactions. This theoretical field of inquiry has encouraged links between the fields of Demography and Anthropology.⁴ The availability of complex, multilevel, longitudinal data, more rigorous methodologies, and field experiences that yield stories about conversations and social interactions are expected to allow demographers to better predict fertility and contraceptive behavior. In this paper we build on this tradition, widening the scope of interest to migration and cultural change.

Migration and Gender Literature

The paucity of research on gender and migration until the 1990s has recently been redressed by critical reviews of migration models (Bilsborrow and Nations 1993; Jones 1993; Pedraza 1991; Tacoli 1995) and a new surge in research (e.g., (Bravo-Ureta, Quiroga, and Brea 1996; Constable 1997; Curran 1996; Curran 1995; Curran 1994; Datta 1995; DeJong et al. 1995; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Guendelman and Perez-Itriago 1987; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; King and O'Connor 1996; Mills 1997; Mills 1999; Schenk-Sandbergen 1995; Trager 1988; Tyner 1996; Zlotnik 1993). Most of the current discourse is descriptive. It asks questions like: How are male migrants different than female migrants? How is their decision-making process distinct? How do their reasons for migrating vary? How similar are their remittance behaviors? Are the consequences of migration different for men and women?

A few studies have shown that it is not only gender but position within the household that seems to matter: such as daughter, wife, mother, or head of household (Curran 1996; Curran 1995; Datta 1995; DeJong et al. 1995; Lauby and Stark 1988). Other studies examine intra-household resource allocation, inter-personal negotiations within the household, and changing gender roles. For example studies of rural households in the Philippines (Trager 1988; Lauby and Stark 1988) find that poorer households are more likely to send young women family members to the city as seasonal migrants. The sex-segregated, urban labor force structure insures steady short-term income for women in jobs with little opportunity for upward mobility. This socio-economic structure enables households to maintain control over young, female migrants, whose tenuous labor market situation makes them likely to continue to rely on the option of returning home.

In Thailand, Curran (1995 and 1996) finds that although both sons and daughters are equally likely to migrate, daughters are more likely to remit wages. Expectations about migration and remittances follow a similar pattern (DeJong, Richter, and Isarabhakdi 1995). In addition, sibling order position is an important determinant of remittance behavior. Middle daughters are the most likely to remit wages and middle sons the least likely. This difference is explained through

and interact with the woman's individual characteristics (Entwisle et al. 1996; Mason et al. 1983) and thus influencing her behavior. However, exactly how social context affects individual behavior remains elusive in these multilevel models.

⁴ In the last five years a new generation of demographers with developing country interests have been funded, trained, and encouraged to collect qualitative data with money from the Mellon Foundation (Kertzer and Fricke 1997).

qualitative evidence that middle daughters work hard to insure a place in the family as they face a tenuous urban labor market, in the hopes of garnering parental resources through inheritance in the matrilineal and matrilocal society. Middle daughters occupy a more tenuous position than oldest or youngest daughters relative to parental resources. Oldest daughters, given the earlier timing of their marriage, are assured of some resources from parents and youngest daughters carry the burden and opportunity of being expected to care for their elderly parents and inherit the family house and a majority of rice fields. Among sons, middle sons have little to gain in investments from their parental households and therefore return little of their migrant earnings (Curran 1995, 1996). They rarely receive opportunities for secondary education from their parents for two reasons: oldest sons receive it for Buddhist merit accruing to parents and youngest sons because family resources (through the pooling behavior of daughters) are likely to have accumulated to afford educating younger siblings (Curran 1996).

The particular insight from the studies on gender, households and migration (in Latin America and Southeast Asia) is not unified family strategies influencing individual behavior. Instead the insight is that there are complex negotiations (either implicit or explicit) between family members where the outcomes are dependent upon both cultural expectations of each gender as well as the relative resources (power) available to each family member. The preceding studies show how cultural expectations and economic opportunity associated with gender shape migration and its impact upon society. Studies of Latin America offer some examples in which migration processes can actually challenge gender roles. We review results from three Latin American studies and provide additional evidence from our own research in Thailand.

In the case of Peru, Deere (1978) shows how land reform in the 1950s has a differential effect upon peasant households. Richer households are able to finance the purchase of hacienda parcels (available when haciendas were broken up as a result of land reform), whereas poorer peasant households are forced to become wage laborers. Migration becomes common among a significant proportion of the poorer households, in response to limited jobs at home. Usually, the male head of household seeks work abroad, leaving behind an extended family of married women, their children, and their parents. In this new family structure, Deere finds that women and children gain increased decision-making power and responsibility within the household. The high rate of divorce or separation upon migrant husbands' return, suggests that women refuse to compromise their newly acquired egalitarian gender expectations when the "man of the house" reclaims his authority. However, the move to equality is only partial. For, although women gain greater power within the household and acquire more egalitarian perceptions of themselves, their husbands' migration makes them financially poorer, due to the loss of their incomes and limited labor market opportunities for women (Deere 1978).

Similarly, Guendelman and Perez-Itriago (1987) find that among seasonal Mexican migrants, gender roles are realigned in the process of migration. For seasonal migrants where the women also work, marital relations improve in the place of destination, in that there is more sharing of decision-making and cooperation. Non-working wives of seasonal migrants suffer because, separated from their kin, they become more dependent upon husbands in the place of destination. However, upon their return to the place of origin, workingwomen are forced to realign their gender roles, and the non-working women actually perceive more freedom, as they rediscover

kinship support networks (Guendelman and Perez-Itriago 1987). Further, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) finds that gender roles also shift depending on the pattern of migration and length of stay in the place of destination, whether men migrate individually and bring wives or girlfriends later or whether migration occurs as a family. In the case of the former, gender roles are more likely to be differently constructed in the place of destination than in the place of origin (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994)

Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) examine family migration from the Dominican Republic to the U.S. and find that the process has profoundly different implications for the men and women within the household. Men view migration as temporary and are eager to return home, thereby regaining traditional gender privileges. In contrast, women often hope to postpone or avoid return because they realize it entails retirement from work and the loss of newfound freedoms. As a result of these different outlooks, a struggle develops over finances. Men save to facilitate return migration, while women spend large amounts of money on expensive, durable goods, such as a home and home furnishings, so as to root the family securely in the United States and to deplete the funds necessary to relocate (as summarized by Pedraza 1991).

In the Thai example, although Curran (1995, 1996) finds substantial rural cultural expectations that daughters remit to their natal household, more recent studies suggest a weakening of this effect. Increasingly this expectation is coming into conflict with opportunities and cultural models offered women in the urban fast lane (Curran 1995, Mills 1997) and a lack of opportunities for men who have little education. In fact, there is some evidence that parents' expectations of sharing inheritance and care giving is shifting away from daughters to the child (or grandchild) who shows the most interest in the farm and household (Curran 1995; Pramualrathana 1991). This may create a space for a redefinition of gender roles, where sons take on more care-giving roles (given their limited urban labor market opportunities) and thus expect to inherit parental resources.

In sum, the gender and migration literature reveals how women and men's migration experiences differ. It also demonstrates how the household mediates between macro-economic structure and individuals. Finally, it shows how cultural expectations associated with gender are both reproduced and transformed within the household. However, its extremely micro perspective means that it does not tackle large societal patterns of migration.⁵ Better at this is Portes and colleagues (Portes 1997; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993) and Massey (1990). Massey uses a sophisticated theory of networks and the concept of "relative deprivation" to link individual experiences with societal structures. Portes' and Sensenbrenner's work posits that macro cultural and economic influences work through networks to affect individual behavior. It is to this that we now turn.

Migration and Networks

Concurrent with, but largely isolated from the gender and migration research are theories of migration, development, and networks, advanced most convincingly by Portes (1997), Portes and

⁵ Tacoli (1995) began to tackle these issues in her review but in a very limited and instrumental way. We address some of her suggestions later in the paper.

Sensenbrenner (1993), Massey (1990, 1987), and Stark (1991). These compelling theories have broad implications for social and cultural change. They point to mechanisms inherent in migration that create momentum and lead to the augmentation of migration over time. They also show how patterns of migration and networks transform internal economies, for instance, when remittances result in greater inequality in the community of origin (Massey et al. 1987). Finally and most importantly, they show how social structures and individual positions within structures (social capital and embeddedness), such as migrant enclaves, can influence individual identity and behavior (for better or worse) (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993).

Building on Portes and Sensenbrenner's work we will argue that networks are not only powerful conduits for instrumental information (Massey 1987, 1990), but that they also transmit values and cultural perceptions. Drawing on Berger (1967), we will demonstrate how beliefs become and remain meaningful if and only if one is integrated into networks of individuals who share those beliefs. If one fails to participate in such networks, which Berger calls plausibility structures, then one's beliefs are not confirmed or reinforced by others, making them susceptible to erosion. On the other hand, exposure to new networks with different beliefs will serve to challenge one's established world-view and offer alternative value systems. We will demonstrate how migration and migrant networks facilitate this process, leading to cultural transformation, in particular, in male-female relations. Many of our examples will draw upon research about rural-urban migration in Thailand. But the hypotheses put forth are expected to be just as applicable to other types of migration or movement across social and physical space.

We begin with a review of the work by Massey because his concept of cumulative causation provides the background and tools for understanding Portes and Sensenbrenner's ideas about embeddedness and social capital as they relate to migration. A review of the migration literature by Massey (1990) is useful for understanding how patterns of migration and networks can catalyze large, national and international patterns of social change. Below, we summarize the theory and its insights for migration and social change in some detail. Its key insight is that networks serve to link individual and household decisions to larger social structures and have a cumulative effect over space and time. We focus upon how *networks of obligation* link individuals (both migrating and non-migrating), *relative deprivation* motivates migration, and *trust* structures the content and formation of migrant network ties. Each of these concepts is inherently cultural in their construct and our discussion highlights how this is so.

Networks of obligation linking individuals

Massey debunks the individualist assumptions of the most influential and widely used approach in migration, the individual cost-benefit model (Todaro 1989; Todaro 1986). He reveals that the assumptions of this model, in which migration decisions are based on the calculations of a rational individual who weighs her expected gains (e.g. employment or higher salary) against possible losses (e.g. deportation), are faulty. Rather than isolated agents, people are linked to one another through social networks. These connections have a ponderous effect on migration. The two central ways they shape migration include: 1) making migration less risky for individuals by circulating information among potential migrants, and 2) feeding subsequent migration, since

kinship networks allow migrants to send remittances home, making migration a viable household strategy for diversifying economic risk.

Thus, the nature of migration changes dramatically over time. The initial associated high-risk declines for individuals as more of their family and friends migrate. This is because, denser networks of migrants provide potential migrants with increasingly reliable information about the opportunities and dangers associated with the place of destination and the migration process (Portes and Bach 1985; DaVanzo 1978; Massey 1990; Stark 1991). People in one's network also offer needed assistance, such as helping one find a job or a place to live. This facilitates the choice to migrate, making migration progressively more likely, which is what Massey refers to as "circular and cumulative causation" (Massey 1990:4). Because of this process, the profile of migrants shifts over time, from that of innovating, risk-taking youth to more typical individuals (Tacoli 1995).

Just as potential migrants expect kin or friends, who have already migrated, to assist them, so households of origin expect migrants to "help out" financially, by remitting a portion of their salary. Because of these expectations, households encourage select family members to migrate. As dense social networks reduce the risks of migration, households use migration to "diversify" economic risk. As long as the economies of places of origin and destination are weakly or inversely correlated, a viable household strategy for minimizing economic risk consists of having wage earners in both places (Stark 1991). This strategy relies on the assumption that migrants and non-migrants are *linked* through *networks of obligation* and *shared understandings* of kinship and friendship. These assumptions are not unreasonable, but shared understandings and obligation are likely to vary across members of a network. As the preceding section suggested, the cultural expectations of men's and women's behavior in different circumstances may mean that one or the other is more or less likely to share these understandings.

Portes and Sensenbrenner suggest some theoretical concepts that might explain networks of obligation and shared understandings. Through their refinement of the terms social capital and social embeddedness, Portes and Sensenbrenner suggest four kinds of trust that may be at work to reduce transactions costs between individuals, and by implication strengthen network ties and obligations. The first two are well worn in sociology: value introjection and reciprocity transactions (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993, pp. 1323-1324). The first imbues economic transactions with moral motivations resulting from socialization as the basis for trust. The second incorporates the history of past successful exchanges with the norm to reciprocate as the basis for trust. The third and fourth types of trust are newer ideas and most interesting to the paper at hand. Bounded solidarity and the resulting trust among group members arises in particular situations where a common threat is recognized by many as a result of their shared identity, circumstance, or history. Invoking cultural symbols that reinforce this commonality serves to reinforce network ties of obligation. Finally, enforceable trust is more utilitarian and is based on the internal sanctioning capacity of the group either through ostracism or coercion (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993, p. 1332). The ability of the group to enforce individual subordination to the group depends on the resources available in the community relative to resources available outside the community as well as its ability to monitor individual behavior (through tight knit networks resulting from both physical and social proximity).

Thus far, Portes and Sensenbrenner's descriptions and concepts are used in the context of immigrant communities in places of destination as opposed to Massey's concepts, which describes the phenomena from places of origin. In both cases the concepts might be expanded to networks in both places of origin and destination. Their concepts also differ from Massey's in terms of where social change occurs. In Portes and Sensenbrenner's formulation the group, either through socialization, invocation of cultural symbols and identity, or closure and resources weighs heavily upon individual behavior. Thus, the locus of action is found in the group, whereas in Massey's concept of circular and cumulative causation the locus of action is an interaction between the group and the individual. Combining these two concepts brings greater insight on the processes of social change both between and within places of destination and origin.

However, there is nothing in either Massey's or Portes and Sensenbrenner's ideas that would explain why men and women might behave differently. Although Portes and Sensenbrenner suggest some differentiation across class within the Cuban migrant community, there is little else to suggest within community variation. But, why would Dominican Republic men and women behave so differently? Or Thai men and women? The answers to these questions are pursued following a discussion of how networks are suggested to link time and space. This discussion is necessarily precedent because it introduces the concept of *relative deprivation*, a concept we find relevant for understanding the formation and changes in gender identity resulting from migration processes.

Networks linking time and space

Work on networks and migration has further shown that individual decisions made at one point in time have profound effects upon social structures at later points in time. Moreover, they suggest that migrant networks can link economies of places of origin and destination so that they become inter-dependent. For instance, Stark et al. find that migration remittances from the United States back to Mexico have a strong impact upon inequality in the place of origin. Poorly developed migrant networks from places of origin increase income inequality in the place of origin, as few households have access to migrant income (Stark, Taylor, and Yitzhaki 1988; Stark, Taylor, and Shlomo Yitzhaki 1986). However, this may change as migrant networks grow and more people have access to similar sources of income (Massey 1990).

In addition, labor markets in the place of origin may change with increasing migration such that the outflow of migrants raises local wages to the point that wage differentials no longer provide a motivation to move. The possibility of inequality dissipating depends on levels of inequality between places of destination and origin, and how structures of production change. For example, Massey et al. (1987) find that on average a Mexican migrant's repatriated earnings constitutes 82% of a migrant's origin household income. The wage rates differ by six times between migrants and local wage laborers. Massey argues that earnings on this scale dwarf locally generated incomes and have profound distributional impacts on migrant communities.

Some of the effects of this kind of difference result in privileging some households' access to land and resources, transforming egalitarian places into places where the social context is characterized

by a few with economic and social power (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Massey 1990; Reichert 1979; Reichert 1981; Reichert 1982). In addition, traditional relations of production also change under some contexts. In the case of Mexico, after acquiring land, some households continue to diversify risks by allocating family workers across activities, specifically sending fathers and sons to migrate, and women and children to work in agricultural production (Reichert 1979; Reichert 1981; Reichert 1982; Mines 1981; Massey 1990). Or, investments in agricultural technology reduce the need for agricultural wage labor and increase unemployment.

The derivative expectations about the consequences of migration assume that relative deprivation and networks of obligation link individuals and communities across time and space. For networks of obligation, we have noted there may be significant differences between men and women (as suggested by the preceding review of the literature on gender and migration), which may differentially influence societal level outcomes. Similarly, relative deprivation operates through individual and group identity and one might expect that gender would be a significant distinction. And, therefore, the way in which people understand themselves, or construct their identity as either men or women can be expected to shape how relative deprivation operates and, in turn, social structures of production and inequality.

These ideas are incompletely developed in the migration literature and could benefit from works in the field of cultural sociology. There is a body of work in the sociology of culture that explores how people fashion identity (e.g. (Berger and Luckman 1967) and the role material things play in this (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981) that holds great promise for migration and network theories. We will demonstrate how this work can speak directly to questions of relative deprivation and networks of obligation. We argue that different types of identity will lead to differential experiences of relative deprivation and different notions of obligation, thereby resulting in distinct patterns of migration motivation and behavior. Although many forms of identity are relevant, we will focus on gender identity variation in patterns of migration, according to gender.

Culture, Gender, Networks and Migration

We begin with a discussion of the role of culture in a network theory of migration, theorized as a "socially embedded" and "circular and cumulatively caused" process. We consider two ways that culture enters this formulation. The first is through notions of relative deprivation and the second is through networks of obligation. Massey uses the concept of relative deprivation to designate strong desire for material goods, accompanied by a sense of entitlement, stemming from the realization that one's peers possess these goods. Relative deprivation is an explicit reference to the movement of ideas and shifting value schemes, in that it is only relevant when people's needs and desires change and can no longer be met by resources in the place of origin. Yet, Massey does not sufficiently explore the implications of this. Nor does the current formulation of network theory of migration sufficiently address the role played by networks of obligation. We discuss both and suggest that cultural meanings of gender may differentially affect the impact of relative deprivation and networks of obligation upon migration processes. We then proceed to suggest ways in which structural changes in places of origin and destination may be driven by different cultural meanings of gender, resulting in different networks and migration outcomes.

Relative Deprivation and Gender Identities

The role of relative deprivation is central to Stark's (1991) formulation about household strategies and migration, and Massey incorporates it into his theory. According to these authors, feelings of relative deprivation involve contrasting habitual lifestyles at the place of origin with new ones at the place of destination and coming to desire the latter. This usually results in growing conspicuous consumption within the origin community (Massey 1990, 13), and/or the absorption and incorporation of destination value systems. Relative deprivation, which involves the clash of alternative cultural models, drives migration as individuals and households use migration and remittances to try to gain access to newly desired goods (Stark 1991). Unexplored thus far are questions of how men and women might differentially be influenced by relative deprivation.

Relative deprivation is not an automatic response to situations of inequality, nor is it a purely rational assessment of ownership of various resources. Rather, relative deprivation, or the perception that one unjustly lacks desirable resources that others possess, operates through personal identity. It presumes a sense of individuality, the capacity to evaluate one's own fortune against others, and a sense of which people are comparable to one another. According to Berger and Luckman (1967) such a focus on the individual is only possible in the modern day, when people have a multiplicity of group allegiances. A wide range of group identities accords people with choice among different values and worldviews. It is the particular blend that a person constructs from among these group cultures that makes her or him "unique." Pushing Berger and Luckman's theory of individuality further suggests that networks, which expose people to different social groups, not only transmit strategic information, but also serve as a conduit for new cultural values, identity, and desires. Exposure to new ideas and the subsequent impact on individual identity, in turn, fosters a pressing and urgent desire for market goods that are perceived as necessary for affirming the new identity (Csikzentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981).

Different kinds of identity influence the experience of relative deprivation, thereby changing migration motivation and behavior and gender is arguably the most central element of most people's identity. Fieldwork from Thailand demonstrates that men and women experience relative deprivation differently, resulting in differential patterns of migration and migrant networks. Specifically, in the case of rural Thailand, particularly intense conflict in female gender roles makes relative deprivation more profound for women. In order to understand why this is the case, some back ground on rural Thai gender roles as well as recent economic change that is making them less tenable is in order.

Traditional gender roles in Thailand assign women a heavily kin-based, domestic role, while young men are expected to be freer from the household, to "pay thiaiw" or go adventuring. This may have been in the form of labor migration or as itinerant Buddhist monks, cattle sellers, and other traveling salesmen (Kirsch 1966). "Pay thiaiw" is part of a gendered scheme, which encourages men to acquire status and social influence through association with peers and contact with institutions of power and knowledge by moving to urban centers (Limpinuntana et al. 1982; O'Connor 1995; O'Connor 1987). In turn, these contacts help migrant men find jobs and serve

the young men's households with access to resources like credit or local political influence (Limpinuntana et al. 1982).

In contrast, Thai women have traditionally had stronger ties to their natal households and have not been encouraged to develop non-kin ties or go far from home. Women's important contributions to the labor of growing rice and managing both commercial and subsistence farming operations have historically been well recognized. The matrilineal and matrilocal system has further served to reinforce and maintain the social and economic ties of women to their natal households. However, recent economic change has made gender roles, particularly female ones, less tenable. Land for growing rice, which was until recently the basis of the Thai economy, is becoming increasingly scarce. Meanwhile, urban economic opportunities are growing, and family size is declining. Thai men, who have traditionally migrated, continue to do so in this economic context. Because their gender identities have incorporated both rural and urban elements and since expectations for young men are relatively consistent between the farm and the city, these economic transformations do not entail major upheaval in male gender identity. For women, on the other hand, the story is different.

As scarcity of land and urban economic opportunity translate into higher rates of female migration, young Thai women are increasingly confronted with new, urban concepts of gender identity, which stress autonomy, sexuality, and consumerism (Curran 1996; Curran 1995; Yoddumnern-Attig 1992; Pramualrathana 1991; Yoddumnern-Attig 1992). Such an identity contrasts with rural identities, which primarily stress obligations to family, sexual modesty, and thrift. Young Thai women are exposed to such urban concepts of gender identity when they themselves migrate, where they acquire not only new skills but novel desires and conceptions of self. They can also encounter these identities through contact with peers who have migrated.⁶ Often, their experience is charged with longing for the material "markers" of urban identity, such as clothing or makeup. In fact, part of the drive to join the urban labor force and stay within it, despite miserable working conditions, is exposure to new desires (such as independence, consumer goods, etc.) and the new need to fulfill them (Enloe 1989). The following account of a 21 year-old Thai woman, employed as a textile worker, beautifully illustrates this dynamic. She explains how seeing her friend, who worked in Bangkok, led her to migrate as well:

She wore beautiful clothes. When she saw me, her greeting was, "Oh ho! How did you get so run-down looking? Want to come work with me? [That night] I lay thinking, "I ought to go give it a try." I dreamed that I would go [to the city], work really hard, and save money to help my family. I lay unable to stop thinking about this until I slept, I got up early in the morning and at once rushed to find my friend. I was so happy that I could go with her. I got my clothes ready and said good-bye to my brothers, sisters, father and mother (cited in Mills 1997:37).

This excerpt demonstrates the conflict Thai women feel between competing concepts of femininity. The non-migrant is confronted by her friend and ridiculed for looking run-down. At the same time, her justification for migrating appeals to traditional gender role sensibilities ("save

⁶ This does not exclude or diminish the effect of mass media upon cultural meanings. The media also serves to shape cultural meanings about identity, but in a less personal way and probably indirectly by reinforcing the influence of returning migrants. Images in the mass media may be much more salient and meaningful if migrants look, act, and tell stories that are similar to those images in the mass media.

money to help my family”). As Berger and Luckman (1967) would predict, this tension is exacerbated because these young women participate in social networks that ascribe to contradictory worldviews. If they were to cut off ties from either their rural family or urban friends, the values of the rejected group would wither on the vine from disuse. Instead, social networks link these women to both groups, causing them to feel torn between two reference groups. The migrant network is often composed of similarly aged women, friends or kin, who travel and live together in the place of destination and whose new friends are similarly situated living in close proximity to each other. This social and physical proximity affords close monitoring of individual behavior - where encouragement of slightly risky or nontraditional behavior and material consumption is likely. At the same time, family in the place of origin use the networks of kin to remind children of their obligation to remit. In contrast, men's migration behavior is less oriented toward the group and is historically less socially controlled.

Networks of Obligation and Gender Roles

Massey (1990) and Stark et al. (Stark and Lucas 1988; Stark 1991; Stark et al. 1986) suggest that both networks and remittances are based on culturally determined kinship obligations, and serve the interests of both non-migrants and migrants, thereby becoming self-enforcing. But how do kinship obligations become self-enforcing? Drawing on Portes and Sensenbrenner's work, we suggest that this process is mediated by the characteristics of the network (e.g. density and composition) and the transmission of norms. Migrant embeddedness in dense social networks offers resources and opportunities that motivate an individual's sense of obligation and commitment to the group as well as his or her identification with the group and its needs. For example, Curran (1995) shows that a migrant is more likely to remit wages back to the household of origin when she or he came from a place that has had a high level of out-migration to the same destination. One interpretation of this finding is that individual behavior is shaped by a migrant culture that reinforces normative expectations about remittances. For example, the following focus group discussion with young men from a rural village (Curran 1994:182) demonstrates the normative reinforcement of migrant networks:

Interviewer: “What will parents do if children do not send money home?”

Young man #1: “They cannot do anything much more than call their children to come home.”

Young man #2: “Sometimes they ask their children's friends to deliver their words to their children. A word of warning.”

Interviewer: “How do parents call their children back?”

Young men together: “By writing letters. But if the children still do not return, their parents will go to find them.”

The ability to “call their children home,” deliver “a word of warning,” or “go find them” depends on the density of ties between the place of origin and destination. In addition to information, normative expectations are conveyed through these ties. Moreover, primarily kin-based are more likely than non-kin based migrant networks to reinforce normative expectations about kinship obligations, independent of their distance from the place of destination.

Again, gender composition may also affect the strength of kinship ties within a network. If, as is widely believed, women's networks are composed of stronger and more kin-based ties than men's

(Smith-Lovin and MacPherson 1993), households may prefer that women, rather than men, migrate, because they will be more tightly linked to the household and maintain the normative expectations of social support. Fieldwork experiences in Thailand suggest that parents recognize the important role kinship ties play in fostering a sense of familial obligation among migrants. For instance, Thai parents are more likely to agree to a daughter's moves if she goes with a relative or close friend. This seems to calm fears of what parents consider the most important risks daughters face: sexual relationships or exploitative working conditions. Parents also explicitly explain, however, that kinship networks also serve to reinforce close ties with the household of origin. In contrast, perhaps because there is less perceived danger for young men in the city or because the family is less economically reliant on their remittances, sons are much freer to leave, even on their own or with non-kin.

This demonstrates how normative expectations regarding gender influence the types of networks, i.e. kin or non-kin, in which men and women respectively participate. Different types of networks may, in turn, have differential impacts on migrants at the places of destination. For instance, research on rural Thailand (Mills 1997) suggests that strong kin networks among young female migrants put tremendous pressure on them to send generous amounts of money home and in other ways demonstrate their loyalty. She suggests that men, who are involved in less kin-based networks, do not feel such pressure.

Gender, Networks, Trust and the Formation of Ties

Network analysis does not give sufficient attention to how networks are formed or the content of social ties (Emibayer and Goodwin 1994). Clearly migration is a fertile ground for historically and culturally sensitive accounts of networks and economic action like remittances (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). One motivation for Portes and Sensenbrenner's work is to define social capital. In doing so, they use terminology that is based in discussions of trust and exchange relations. By returning to that literature, we propose more detailed consideration of the formation and content of social ties. For this, we draw on work by Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) examining social exchange and networks. They argue that there are three kinds of trust: a) competence or reputation, which is the belief that someone is capable of achieving a given goal or task; b) mutual assurance, which is based on the knowledge of the incentive structure surrounding the relationship, similar to Portes and Sensenbrenner's (1993:1325) term: enforceable trust, (Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994); c) good will, a cognitive bias, very much a product of early socialization, in which one feels a sense that one is more likely than not to be treated fairly. Similarly, Zucker (1986) also distinguishes between three different kinds of trust, two of which are additions to the above list. The first, called character based, refers to people's tendency to have greater confidence in people that seem to share the same "background," for instance, are from the same ethnic group (this is closest to Portes and Sensenbrenne's (1993: 1324) term: bounded solidarity. The second, process-based trust, is confidence in a given person based on positive past experiences (or, in Portes and Sensenbrenner's (1993: 1324) terminology: reciprocity transactions. The third, institution-based trust, is confidence in a person's competence because they possess some kind of certificate, like a degree or credential, from an institution, e.g. a university (Zucker 1986), which corresponds with Yamagishi and Yamagishi's term: reputation.

For our purposes and in the case of migration, household networks, and remittances, the types of trust that are most relevant include: a) assurance based on embeddedness in dense social networks, b) good will based on cognitive bias (based in childhood experience), c) process, based on past interactions, and d) bounded solidarity or identification with a group. We will demonstrate how each of these can be used to improve theories of migration, networks, and remittances.

Assurance is based on embeddedness in dense social networks: this is effectively the concept used by Massey to explain how migration becomes a cumulative process through networks. The denser the networks become between place of origin and destination, the greater the assurance that people have in the information relayed by the networks and the greater their confidence in the people within them. This is because information appears consistent across messengers. In addition, this also means that more and more people migrate, as they know more migrants. Moreover, households are more likely to use migration as a strategy for diversifying economic risk, if they have confidence that strong networks will insure that migrant family members remit home.

Good-will trust that is grounded in early socialization might in fact be more variable than Yamagishi and Yamagishi imply (they dismiss it as a cognitive bias). After all, types of early socialization vary. In particular, if attitudes towards women in the household change, this may have an impact on the gender gap in feelings of good will to the family. Previous research on migration and immigration suggests that there is considerable national variability in the goodwill felt alternatively by men and women towards the family. For instance, research suggests that female migrants from Mexico (Hodigneau-Sotelo 1994) and the Dominican Republic (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991) to the United States are less likely than their male counterparts to want to return home. As part of a strategy to postpone or preclude return, they spend money on expensive items for the home, which serve to anchor the family comfortably in the U.S. and squandering money that could be used to finance a return. On the other hand, research on Thailand suggests that women tend to remit more than men and to nurture strong ties with their family. This difference in gender gap could be fruitfully analyzed as a difference in good will, that may be fostered during child socialization. Messages about the worth of women are communicated to girls at a young age. Girls that grow up feeling that they are not treated fairly in the household may learn to lack good will for their family. If those women migrate, this lack of good might translate into a reluctance to return home and resistance towards financially helping their family, if the relative opportunities in the place of destination are greater. In contrast, if girls are raised in a way that makes them believe that their families essentially treat them fairly, they are more likely to feel a sense of goodwill towards their household. In other words, Yamagishi and Yamagishi's concept of good will may be more based on previous experiences than they acknowledge. Certainly, Zucker's concept of process-based trust would suggest that people are more likely to trust their families if their past experiences have fostered confidence.

But the whole premise of migrant networks is that they are circular and cumulatively caused. They are in motion, as are the cultural norms that flow through them. So, if gender expectations shift such that women are thought of more as autonomous beings, "modern women," rather than "dutiful daughters," they may continue to migrate but remit less. Or, concepts of sons could shift

to that of the “good son” (Curran 1995), much like the “dutiful daughter” (Mills 1997), so that men could comprise more of the migrant stream without remittance rates being jeopardized. Large economic change (e.g. urbanization) may provoke such cultural evolution. Alternatively, ideological conflict over gender roles and young adults' obligation to their parents could revolutionize economic institutions and monetary exchange within the family. This could occur in much the same way that the “sacrilization” of children between the 1870s and 1930s in the United States transformed, ended, or gave birth to major institutions like child work or labor, child insurance, baby farms and adoption agencies (Zelizer 1994).

Finally, trust based on bounded solidarity or group identity as the basis for network formation may be very different across men and women with very different consequences. As mentioned earlier, women in Thai society may identify with the family and kin group more readily than men, resulting in greater likelihood of succumbing to group pressures to conform to norms of reciprocity. In the Dominican Republic identity with one's gender and rights as a woman motivated outmigration. The story is thus (see Grasmuck and Pessar 1991, pp. 144-147): initial rural outmigration of men from primarily petty capitalist and capitalist classes of the countryside, left women at home confined to household activities. Male migrants were reluctant to relinquish control over farming decisions by allowing their wives either the option to work on the farm or manage agricultural wage laborers. Women, according to Grasmuck and Pessar, resented this lack of responsibility especially in the face of more difficult times within the household economy as a result of lost, male labor. As this quote highlights, although the motivation to migrate is explicitly stated as to save money for the household, the appeal is more to the woman's identity as an individual and freedom from patriarchal constraints:

“On a visit to Juan Pablo, my cousin saw the way my husband was making me wait on him hand and foot, and the way he'd yell if everything wasn't perfect. She said she didn't see such behavior in New York. She said, “Wait till you get there. You'll have your own paycheck, and I tell you, he won't be pushing you around there the way he is here.” After that I just kept reminding my husband about how expensive it was to keep a house in Juan Pablo and a house in New York. I also told him about how much money other women were making in New York.” (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991, p. 147).

The reasons for migrating are multiple, but as with the Thai case, part of the motivation in the Dominican case is a result of an appeal to the woman's identity as a woman. The salience of the appeal is palpable and, as Grasmuck and Pessar point out, reinforced upon the women's arrival in New York. As the following quote suggests there is a significant rearrangement of household relations:

“We are both the heads [household heads]. If both husband and wife are earning salaries, then they should rule equally in the household. In the Dominican Republic it is always the husband who gives the orders in the household. But here, when the two are

working, the women feels herself the equal of the man in ruling the home.” (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991, p. 151).

This equality also spills over to the sharing of domestic duties in the U.S., unheard of in the Dominican Republic. Thus, it may not be surprising that Dominican women invest in durables and housing in the U.S. rather than save frugally for a quick return to the Dominican Republic. What is not clear from Grasmuck and Pessar account is how men’s and women’s different motivations might be reinforced socially. In the Thai case, it is clear that tight kinship networks and highly focused migration (either to factories to live in dormitories or to construction sites) serves to compel migrant women to face conflicting social identities and obligations. In the Dominican case, the tie to home is less riveting, but the concentration of women in particular occupations dependent upon networks of other women for employment (men’s U.S. labor market opportunities are less restrictive), may serve to catalyze women to identify as Dominican women in the U.S. rather than just Dominican immigrants (there is some hint of this in relation to women’s lack of labor militancy relative to men’s militancy).

Gender, Networks, and the Structure of Production and Inequality

Implicated in the preceding two subsections is the potential of networks to reinforce the gender selectivity of migrant streams. One way is through the provision of information. This is reinforced in two ways: through obligations to the place of origin and by employers in the place of destination. In the place of origin, a decision to migrate may depend on whom the information comes from, since some sources are more trusted than others. Offers of assistance from female friends and relatives to potential migrants may facilitate migration intention (Tacoli 1995). Thus, given the gender segmentation of labor markets in places of destination, networks may influence the composition of migrants to specific destinations. In addition, employers take advantage of networks, especially kin-based ones, to recruit labor (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Wolf 1994). Experienced laborers provide the necessary socialization and on the job training that facilitates ready incorporation of new migrants into the economy and production system. This is an explicit strategy on the part of factory managers in Thailand (Curran 1994), Indonesia (Wolf 1994), and New York (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). This system of relations between production, networks, places of destination, and origin seems to be particularly facilitated by women migrants (Curran 1994; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Wolf 1994).

Moreover, networks can shape the economic and social makeup of the place of destination by, for instance, leading to segregation of migrant groups in their new destination. In these instances, dense, kin-based networks promote intense, continuing involvement in kin groups and may slow down assimilation and acculturation in destination areas. Adaptive assistance, provided by these networks, is often regarded as contributing to the isolation of migrants from the receiving society, within segmentation already prevalent in the destination area. So, while dense networks serve to reinforce ties to places of origin, they also limit migrants’ opportunities by restricting ties to the larger society.⁷ On the other hand, these migrant enclaves can serve as a source of resources (both financial and social capital) if the composition of the network is sufficiently class diverse

⁷ Both Filipino men and women are likely to be working in the domestic service sector of the Italian economy. This is an unusual occupation for Filipino men and may result from the earlier, high migration rates of Filipinas, the control of network resources by Filipinas (Tacoli 1995).

(Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). Although gender is not mentioned in this literature, much labor movement of women, especially if it is single women or independent moves, tends to be highly class segregated, thus limiting women's opportunities for mobility (Schenk-Sandbergen 1995).

Remittances, which have a dramatic effect on the community of origin's economy and the way they drive migration, are also greatly affected by several aspects of gender. These include: 1) gender ratio among migrants, 2) balance of power between men/women over household resources in the community of origin, 3) gender norms and expectations, and 4) sex-segregation in the economy. One might expect that if the ratio of female to male, rural-urban migrants fell in Thailand, for example, remittances would also decline, which could have a profound impact on the rural or origin communities. Or, in the case of the Dominican Republic, a higher ratio of women to men would lower the rate of remittances.

Moreover, we expect that reciprocity, which insures remittance, is dependent on feelings of goodwill and potential opportunities at home, which will vary by gender and cultural context. Women feel fewer obligations to remit home if home is oppressive, as is the case of the Dominican Republic (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991) or Mexico (Hodigneau-Sotelo 1994). Women are more likely to remit if they have some power in their households of origin and something to gain from their households of origin (e.g. inheritance of parental land), as is the case in rural Thailand. Moreover, gender norms and expectations regarding familial expectations, unless significantly challenged, have an independent effect on likelihood of remittance.

The gendered structure of labor opportunities (Chant and Radcliffe 1992; Fernandez-Kelly 1983; Ward 1990) further shapes the flow of resources. Thus, in Thailand, women have access to the low wage, low skill manufacturing jobs located in the export processing zones outside Bangkok and along the eastern seaboard of the country. Also, women have greater access to the rapidly growing service sector jobs in the country (not only prostitution). These jobs are generally more stable than those for men, who continue to predominate in the seasonal or transitory occupations of construction and agricultural wage labor. For women, these steadier jobs allow them to remit more than men. Elsewhere, where different jobs are available to women, such as domestic service, or operatives (in the case of Dominican women), women might remit less because the wages may not be adequate.

We also suggest that the selectivity of migration may influence relations of production and gender in places of origin. For instance, in a place like Thailand, where women were traditionally critical participants in agrarian production, their out-migration, especially to steady, manufacturing or service sector jobs, serves to increase reliance upon technology and men. The women's absence, in turn, raises men's status in the place of origin, displacing women's relatively good position within the household and farm economy.⁸ This portends profound economic and cultural changes to rural society. On the other hand, migrant selectivity sometimes serves to reinforce traditional gender relations, as is the case in the Dominican Republic, where the resistance of migrant women to return from the U.S. means that those who are left in the Dominican Republic are less exposed

⁸ There is some debate about women's status in Thailand, but generally it is agreed that within the household they have considerable decision-making power relative to their neighbors in East Asia (Keyes; Esterik)

to alternative, less oppressive gender regimes. Combined with the fact that acceptance of traditional gender relations may also be higher among women who remain, cultural perception of gender is relatively stable in home communities of the Dominican Republic.

Conclusion

We have reviewed the literature on gender and migration and the literature on migration and networks to demonstrate that each has provided important new insights on migration processes. We have attempted to demonstrate how these isolated fields might speak to each other, thereby contributing to a better understanding of migration and cultural change. Drawing upon the literature on the sociology of culture, we showed that network ties are more than transmitters of information. Their size, composition, and density also serve to challenge or reinforce cultural forms of organization, particularly gender relations. We suggested that gender identity (as embodied in relationships) shapes the kinds of ties within networks and that network characteristics and macro changes brought about through migration, in turn, influences cultural expectations about gender. This circular process shares the dynamism described by the theory of migration networks, while attributing more nuanced meanings and variable consequences to networks. Thus, we suggest ways that gender inequality may be magnified, challenged or diminished through the influence of networks of meaningful social ties defined by identity (relative deprivation), obligation, and trust, via migration.

In trying to understand the distinct but varying remittance behaviors of men and women migrants across the globe, we have suggested that measurement of networks is important. This is not a new insight. Many other researchers in the field of migration have suggested the importance of measuring network size, composition, and density, as well as an individual's position in the network as newcomer, initiator (centrality), or gatekeeper. Regarding these previous measures of networks and their importance in models predicting migration behavior, we have suggested adding some complexity to the measures by considering gender as an important component of all these measures.

However, we believe our contribution is not just an additive one to previous theories. We also suggest that migration theories, to be more complete, must consider the meaning of the ties binding individuals within a network and the motivations for forming network ties. In doing so, one realizes that not all network ties are the same across all migrants. In our case, one realizes that the ties that bind migrants in Thailand are very different for men and women resulting in very different patterns of remittances. The difference in ties is intimately related to how gender identity is reinforced and challenged by migration. Similarly, but with very different outcomes, the ties that bind Dominican migrants are also differentiated across gender. Men's and women's identities not only motivate migration differently, but the networks themselves serve to reinforce these identities creating divergent patterns of remittance to the place of origin and investment in the place of destination. The effects are profound at the level of the individual, the group, or the society.

The structuring of identity formation and change has potential impact upon the way resources are distributed within a society. In the case of Thailand, the story is yet incomplete, but there is

potential for a change in gender relations within the family such that young men are more privileged than in the past, gaining access to parental resources that used to be transferred to daughters. But gender identity formation, as reinforced by embeddedness in migrant networks, may also serve to maintain women as a docile labor force, committed to their families in places of origin. This serves larger market interests as well as the interests of the family, rather than the woman. Similarly, in the case of the Dominican Republic, identity formation, as served by women's migrant networks, supports the maintenance of tenuous labor positions in the urban, U.S. labor market, ironically because the networks appeal to women's freedom from patriarchy and unwillingness to return to domination within their homes in the Dominican Republic. Male identity in both cases does not face these conflicts. In the case of Dominican men it means resources flow back to their place of origin, and at the same time they are more willing to challenge relations of production in the place of destination, through strikes and other forms of resistance. Their source of identity and strength is found in the place of origin with consequent commitment to it. For Thai men, their networks are less confined to kinship networks and more likely associated with patron-client relations, which facilitate mobility and access to resources for themselves. In addition, the flexibility in their identity with their household of origin may allow them to take advantage of parental resources if they are so inclined and demonstrate commitment to providing some care and farming.

This leads us to insights on cultural change. As the cultural theorist Anne Swidler (1986) predicts, culture during such "unsettled times" seems to operate as competing and all-encompassing ideologies. If we think of migration responding to and creating "unsettled times," defined by Swidler as moments in time and space where competing ideas about the way society is or should be organized flourish, we might think of the migration process as useful in understanding how shifts from unsettled to settled times might occur (Swidler 1986). In the case of Thailand, young women migrants are not free to pick and choose from among either urban or rural values pertaining to womanhood. Instead, they are pressured to choose between sets of competing ideologies. Change occurs as women become involved in more networks that bridge the urban and rural settings. Being involved in these networks creates and reinforces new values that are a compromise of the two initial ideologies. Although initially unsettling in their impact, networks also serve to *settle* the times by enabling such cultural compromise. These changes might normalize migration behaviors and new meanings regarding being a man or a woman in Thai society. One of the problems with Swidler's arguments is the lack of explanation for how times become settled or unsettled. In fact, we suggest that networks are one way to get at this question. What we know about network structures is that social change occurs through innovators, gatekeepers and around the margins of networks. Migrant networks are particular important vehicles for cultural change precisely because migrants are often considered innovators, migrants serve as gatekeepers to facilitate the movement of others, and early migrants are situated at the margins of several different networks. The process and their network position can explain the shifts from settled to unsettled times and cultural change.

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