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Migrant Gender Imbalance and Marriage Choices: Evidence from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Norway, 1860–1910

Johanna Leinonen and Donna R. Gabaccia

Beginning with the discovery of male predominant[1] "sex ratios" among new-born infants in the seventeenth century, demographers have documented predictable variations in the gender composition of human populations.[2] Higher rates of male mortality across the human life-course mean that populations with large components of very young people tend to be slightly male predominant while those with large components of elderly persons tend to be female predominant. Demographers acknowledge that selectivity in migration can produce extreme imbalances in gender composition, often in the form of heavily male migrant populations.[3] Migrants also tend to be young; as they age, their gender composition changes and becomes proportionately more female.

Studies focusing on gender composition rest on the assumption that its variations matter and have predictable consequences. While demographers often suggest that small differences in the age or sex structure of a population can have significant consequences in large populations, very few scholars who study gender and migration have demonstrated what those consequences – whether on marriage, employment, fertility

1 We follow Donna R. Gabaccia and Katharine M. Donato, Beyond the Feminization of Migration: Insights from Gender Studies and Empirical Social Science (unpublished manuscript), chap. 3, in using the percentage female (rather than the demographers' "sex ratio") to measure and discuss "male predominant" and "female predominant" migrations rather than "male-dominant" or "female-dominant" migrations. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "dominant" as a political relation. "Predominant" also carries associations with power but also has a strictly numeric second meaning that – lacking evidence that numerical predominance itself creates power – we use here.

2 Cf. Daniela F. Sieff, Explaining Biased Sex Ratios in Human Populations: A Critique of Recent Studies, in: Current Anthropology, 31, 1 (1990), 25–48; Éric Brian and Marie Jaisson, The Descent of Human Sex Ratio at Birth: A Dialogue between Mathematics, Biology and Sociology, Dordrecht 2007.

3 Cf. Jacob S. Siegel, David A. Swanson and Henry Shryock eds., The Methods and Materials of Demography, Amsterdam 2004, 129.

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or education patterns – might be or what level of gender imbalance produces consequences.[4] Gender scholars, on the other hand, have been reluctant to use statistical evidence as the study of gender – as a socially-constructed, relational, and fluid category – is often seen as incompatible with quantitative methods that divide populations into bivariate categories of 'male' and 'female'. Following Donna Gabaccia and Katharine Donato, our paper shows how quantitative analysis of bivariate data on sex can be interpreted through attention to gender.[5] Changing gender ratios were produced by fluid and contextual gender relations (rather than by biology), and gender imbalances could also have significant consequences in the marital choices of migrants, albeit somewhat differently for men and women. Quantitative analysis of bivariate data also calls attention to patterns – e.g. the frequency of gender-balanced migrations – that qualitative studies of women immigrants have not revealed to date. To explore the interactions of gender, migrant population gender composition and marital choices, we focus on nineteenth century migrants living in five countries of the North Atlantic region.

Feminist scholarship in the 1970s encouraged theorization of consequences of variations in sex composition, including its impact on marital patterns.[6] In 1983 Marcia Guttentag and Paul Secord explored gender relations in unbalanced sedentary populations by distinguishing between "dyadic" power (that was exercised interpersonally by men and women) and "structural" (or societal) power that has been monopolized by men across most human societies. The two social psychologists posited that the outnumbered sex in male and female predominant populations always increased its dyadic power, for example in negotiating marriages. However, men's structural power also produced differing society-wide gender dynamics – for example in fertility, family structures, female employment and cultural evaluation of the two sexes – depending on which sex was more numerous. In male predominant societies, women were advantaged in their marital negotiations but 'traditional' gender relations (male-headed

4 For one exception see Josh Angrist, How Do Sex Ratios Affect Marriage and Labor Markets? Evidence from America's Second Generation, in: The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 117, 3 (2002), 997–1038, who argues that the most male predominant immigrant populations in the U.S. produced the best educational and income outcomes for the children of those immigrants.

5 Cf. Gabaccia/Donato, Feminization, see note 1. See also Donna Gabaccia and Elizabeth Zanoni, Transitions in Gender Ratios among International Migrants, 1820–1930, in: Social Science History, 36, 2 (2012), 197–221.

6 While historians Marlou Schrover, Differences that Make All the Difference: Gender, Migration and Vulnerability, in: Michel Oris, Guy Brunet, Virginie De Luca Barusse and Danielle Gauvreau eds., Une démographie au féminin – A Female Demography. Risques et opportunités dans le parcours de vie – Risks and Chances in the Life Course, Bern 2009, 143–168, and Jose Moya, Gender and Migration: A Search for Recurrent Patterns and an Integrated Explanation, unpublished paper 2008, point toward female vulnerability or male-risk-taking as possible biological influences on migrant sex composition, variations in the percentage female in migrant populations are large enough to suggest they are more the product of gender relations than of sex difference. Thus we focus in this paper not on migrant "sex ratios" or "sex composition", but rather on migrant "gender composition".

households, high rates of female nuptiality and marital fertility, low female age at first marriage, and low rates of female labor force participation) nevertheless prevailed. When women predominated, by contrast, men not only gained dyadic advantage in marriage negotiations, their structural power produced sexually permissive and misogynist societies with high rates of female employment among culturally disparaged 'surplus' women. Guttentag and Secord speculated that under these conditions women often mobilized, demanding structural change as feminists.[7]

Although many studies suggest that migrant gender imbalance results in higher rates of out-marriage,[8] only a few studies of migration build on the insights of Guttentag and Secord to explore gender power relations.[9] Out-marriage is explained as a measure of assimilation or as a result of men or women in gender imbalanced migrations having limited opportunities to meet partners of culturally appropriate age and origin.[10] However, this pattern of out-marriage has also been challenged. For example, historians of U.S. communities formed by male predominant migrations from eastern and southern Europe have found that migrant men married mainly within their ethnic or linguistic group, despite the scarcity of co-ethnic women.[11] Annemarie Steidl suggests that instead of finding a partner from the local marriage market, many migrant men preferred

7 Cf. Marcia Guttentag and Paul F. Secord, Too Many Women? The Sex Ratio Question, Beverly Hills 1983.

8 Cf. David M. Heer, Intermarriage, in: Stephan Thernstrom, Ann Orlov and Oscar Handlin eds., Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups, Cambridge, MA 1980, 514; Gary A. Cretser and Joseph J. Leon, Intermarriage in the U.S.: An Overview of Theory and Research, in: iidem eds., Intermarriage in the United States, New York 1982, 3–13, 7; Guillermina Jasso and Mark R. Rosenzweig, The New Chosen People: Immigrants in the United States, New York 1990, 175ff.; Matthijs Kalmijn and Frank van Tubergen, Ethnic Intermarriage in the Netherlands: Confirmations and Refutations of Accepted Insights, in: European Journal of Population, 22 (2006), 371–397, 371; Robert McCaa, Albert Esteve and Clara Cortina, Marriage Patterns in Historical Perspective: Gender and Ethnicity, in: Reed Ueda ed., A Companion to American Immigration, Malden, MA/Oxford 2006, 359–370, 362; Janet Penny and Siew-Ean Khoo, Intermarriage: A Study of Migration and Integration, Canberra 1996, 16.

9 Three exceptions are Daniel Goodkind, The Vietnamese Double Marriage Squeeze, in: International Migration Review, 31, 1 (1997), 108–127; Angrist, Sex Ratios, see note 4; Julia C. Lowell, Women and Men in Warfare and Migration: Implications of Gender Imbalance in the Grasshopper Region of Arizona, in: American Antiquity, 72, 1 (2007), 95–123.

10 Cf. Sharon Sassler, Gender and Ethnic Differences in Marital Assimilation in the Early Twentieth Century, in: International Migration Review, 39, 3 (2005), 608–636.

11 E.g. Deanna L. Pagnini and S. Philip Morgan, Intermarriage and Social Distance among U.S. Immigrants at the Turn of the Century, in: The American Journal of Sociology, 96, 2 (1990), 405–432; Johanna Leinonen, 'A Yankee Boy Promised Me Everything Except the Moon': Changing Marriage Patterns of Finnish Migrants in the U.S. in the Twentieth Century, in: Elli Heikkilä and Saara Koikkalainen eds., Finns Abroad: New Forms of Mobility and Migration, Turku 2011, 82–102, 83.

to find a spouse transnationally, from their home region or village.[12] Suzanne Sinke has demonstrated how such transnational marriage markets worked, making marriage a major motivation for women's migrations.[13] The explanation usually offered for transnational marriage is men's powerful cultural preference for a spouse of the same background. In Guttentag and Secord's model, transnational marriage markets offered men, disadvantaged by their local numeric preponderance, a way to rebalance dyadic power in negotiating marriages.

In this paper, we explore migrants' marriage choices in both heavily male and female predominant migrant populations. Contrary to studies such as Steidl's, we found that gender imbalance significantly influenced migrants' marriage patterns. By taking age and sex as well as migrants' nationality into account, our analysis also suggests that the relation of marriage and gender imbalance was somewhat different for men and women. Across migrant groups and countries, married men in male predominant migrant populations had disproportionately chosen women from different cultural backgrounds. Following Guttentag and Secord, we view their out-marriage not as a positive sign of men's assimilation but as a response to dyadic disempowerment. The majority of men in male predominant migrant settings married native-born women but chose women who were considerably younger than themselves. The men who had found spouses from their own cultures also departed from cultural norms by disproportionately marrying women who were the same age or older. The relation of marriage and migration was more complex when female migrants outnumbered males. The vast majority of married American women living abroad had also out-married, while immigrant women in the United States and Canada were able to achieve in-marriage. More research is required to adequately explain these variations. We explore the possibility that marriage and familial migrations of women may have influenced the differing outcomes we found in cases of female preponderance. Where marriage preceded or motivated female migration, a shortage of local migrant men of similar background hardly mattered and produced little alteration in dyadic power.

1. Data and Methods

Since the late nineteenth century, scholars of migration have used both stock (census) data and flow data (counts of migrants crossing national borders) to study migrant gender composition.[14] By recording information about migrant fertility, marriage,

12 Cf. Annemarie Steidl, An Intermingling of Many Ethnicities? The Changing Role of Transnational Marriage Markets of US-Migrants from Austria Hungary in the Early Twentieth Century, paper presented at the XVIth World Economic History Congress, July 2012, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

13 Cf. Suzanne M. Sinke, Migration for Labor, Migration for Love: Marriage and Family Formation across Borders, in: OAH Magazine of History, 14, 1 (1999), 17–21.

14 Cf. Gabaccia/Donato, Feminization, see note 1, chap. 2.

family, and employment patterns, only stock data can reveal migrants' post-migration behaviors, where the consequences of gender imbalance can be assessed. One problem with measuring gender composition in stock data is its sensitivity to the age structure of a population. For example, the early geographer Ernst G. Ravenstein studied the 1871 British census and found that – with the exception of the Irish – males predominated among long distance migrants while women predominated among local, short-distance movers.[15] Demographic historians J. Trent Alexander and Annemarie Steidl have demonstrated recently that Ravenstein's failure to take into account the age structure of Britain's migrant populations led him to exaggerate female predominance among short-distance migrants: They concluded that in Britain in 1871 only very old women and adolescent girls had been more mobile than men and boys of comparable age.[16] Alexander and Steidl's work is a reminder that any analysis of gender composition in stock data must take age into account.

For many years, scholars had access to longitudinal stock data on migrants before 1960 only for the United States. In this essay we analyze the consequences of gender composition for migrant marriage using census microdata made available by the North Atlantic Population Project (NAPP), supplemented by the "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series – USA" (IPUMS-USA), both created by the Minnesota Population Center.[17] We focus on data from five North Atlantic countries – the United States (for the years 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, and 1910), Canada (for the years 1871, 1881, 1891, and 1901), Sweden (for the years 1890 and 1900), Norway (for the years 1865, 1875, and 1900), and Great Britain (for the years 1851 and 1881).[18] All these countries experienced increased border crossing movements between 1850 and 1910, although of course the overall demographic impact of international mobility was greater for the United States and Canada than for the three European countries.[19] We

15 Cf. Ernst G. Ravenstein, The Birthplace of the People and the Laws of Migration, in: The Geographical Magazine, 3 (1876), 173–177, 201–206, 229–233; idem, The Laws of Migration, in: Journal of the Statistical Society of London, 48, 2 (1885), 167–235; idem, The Laws of Migration, in: Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, 52, 2 (1889), 241–305.

16 Cf. J. Trent Alexander and Annemarie Steidl, Gender and the 'Laws of Migration': A Reconsideration of Nineteenth-Century Patterns, in: Social Science History, 36, 2 (2012), 223–241.

17 IPUMS-USA and NAPP data are available online at https://www.ipums.org/. We used IPUMS-USA data for the analysis of the Irish-born in the U.S. because in the NAPP data there are Irish-born persons only in 1870 and 1880.

18 NAPP has 100 per cent data (full population count) for the following censuses: Canada 1881, Great Britain 1881, Norway 1865 and 1900, Sweden 1890 and 1900, and U.S. 1880. We have excluded from our analysis data for Norway for 1801 and for Mecklenburg-Schwerin Germany, which is available only for 1819, before the onset of the nineteenth century mass migrations, and for Iceland, which sent and received very small numbers of migrants.

19 Rates of internal movement were also high in all five countries but we chose to forego comparisons of marital consequences of the gender composition of internal and international migrant populations for a later paper.

chose to analyze marriage patterns only among migrants originating in the five NAPP countries (which in the case of Great Britain included Ireland).[20]

NAPP and IPUMS-USA provided fairly good data for the analysis of migrant marriage. NAPP and IPUMS-USA listed individual level data on the age, sex, place of residence (county, province state, British "realm" and, for the U.S., macro-regional "census divisions"), and birthplace of migrants, excepting only for the Great Britain 1881 census, where census takers enumerated foreigners (aliens) but noted a more precise place of birth only for migrants born in Ireland. We could also distinguish rural from urban residence among migrants for all countries except Canada in 1871, 1891, and 1901. NAPP also identified the marital status for all individuals, except for the United States before 1880. We could identify the birth country of migrants' marriage partners – and thus patterns of in- and out-marriage – for all countries except Canada before 1891. We were also able to identify migrants' mothers' and fathers' birthplaces for migrants living in Canada in 1891 and in the United States in 1880, 1900, and 1910. In addition, Norway provided data for mothers' and fathers' ethnicity (excepting only the 1900 census). Finally – but only for the United States in 1900 and 1910 – we could establish both the length of time migrants had lived in their new countries of residence and the durations of marriages, thus distinguishing marriages that had occurred prior to or after migrations.

To determine which migrant populations were female – or heavily male – predominant we first employed age-standardization to control for the impact of aging on migrant gender composition, using weighted age-standardized estimates of gender composition.[21] (For this reason we also limited our analysis to administrative units with at least 100 resident female and 100 resident male migrants from any particular birthplace.) Then, slightly modifying a typology of migrant gender composition developed by Gabaccia and Donato, we distinguished among heavily male predominant migrant populations (less than 35 per cent female), male predominant migrant populations (35 to 47 per cent female), gender-balanced migrant populations (48 to 53 per cent female) and female predominant migrant populations (more than 53 per cent female).[22]

20 Thus we do not analyze some of the most heavily male migrations destined for North America from east-central, southern, and southeastern Europe in the years between 1890 and 1910: cf. Donna R. Gabaccia, Women of the Mass Migrations: From Minority to Majority, 1820–1930, in: Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Moch eds., European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives, Boston 1996, 90–111.

21 Cf. Alexander/Steidl, Gender, see note 16; Katharine Donato, Joseph T. Alexander, Donna R. Gabaccia and Johanna Leinonen, Variations in the Gender Composition of Immigrant Populations: How They Matter, in: International Migration Review, 45, 3 (2011), 495–526.

22 Cf. Gabaccia/Donato, Feminization, see note 1, who used demographers' definitions of predictable age-driven variations in sedentary populations (approximately 48–53 percent female) to define gender balance in migrant populations and to create the typology that we use here in slightly modified form. Since northern and western European migrations were more gender balanced than most contemporary global migrations we used a broader definition of "heavily male" predominant for our typology.

Following studies by Donato et al. and Donato and Gabaccia, this paper focuses on marriages of migrants living as part of female and heavily male predominant migration populations.[23]

2. Migrant Gender Composition in the North Atlantic

Table 1 contrasts the gender composition of all international migrants living in the five NAPP countries before and after age-standardization. While the late nineteenth century is often described as a period of particularly imbalanced and heavily male migrations, the NAPP data paints a somewhat different portrait. It describes North Atlantic migrant populations as quite close to gender balance already in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Strikingly this data reveals that migrants living in Norway and not in the vast, new countries of North America were the most imbalanced and heavily male, with the lowest percentages female.

Table 1: Per cent Female among International Migrants in Five North Atlantic Countries, 1850–1910

	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s
Canada							
unstandardized			47.2	45.9	43.7	43.0	
age-standardized			48.5	47.2	45.3	44.5	
United States							
unstandardized	44.1	45.3	45.8	45.3		45.4	42.7
age-standardized	46.1	47.5	46.4	46.5		47.1	44.8
Great Britain							
unstandardized	49.5			46.8			
age-standardized	47.2			44.5			
Norway							
unstandardized		42.2	40.4			41.8	
age-standardized		40.1	38.6			40.1	
Sweden							
unstandardized					49.1	50.9	
age-standardized					46.6	49.0	

23 Cf. Donato/Alexander/Gabaccia/Leinonen, Variations, see note 21; Gabaccia/Donato, Feminization, see note 1.

Variations in gender composition become more interesting – because larger, even after age-standardization – when we compare migrant populations of particular origins and resident in particular regions abroad. In one or more years between 1860 and 1910 migrant populations with more than 53 per cent female were found in three of the five NAPP countries (Table 2). Age-standardization eliminated all cases of female predominance in Norway. In Great Britain – where Ravenstein had identified female predominance among the Irish – age-standardization also eliminated all cases of female predominance.[24] It was no surprise to find female predominance among Irish-born migrants living in Quebec, Canada, as well as in the New England, Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions of the United States. But NAPP data also revealed cases of migrant female predominance that have not been acknowledged or as often analyzed in the scholarly literature as the Irish case has been.[25] These included U.S.-born migrants living in the Canadian provinces of Quebec, the Maritimes and Ontario as well as in Sweden;[26] Swedish-born migrants in New England; and British-born migrants living in Sweden as well as in the New England and Middle Atlantic regions of the United States. Clearly, scholars who contrast the gender balanced and female predominant migrants of the present to the male predominant migrant populations of the past need to understand that balanced and female predominant migrant populations can be found already in the nineteenth century North Atlantic.[27]

While both frequency and diverse national origins of female predominant migrant populations in the North Atlantic were astonishing, the characteristics of the regions in which these female predominant migrant populations lived were less surprising. In fact, they mirrored the situation in British counties with female predominant migrant populations as described by Ravenstein in the 1880s.[28] Female predominant Irish, Swedish, and British migrants in the U.S. and Canada and U.S.-born migrants in Canada, too, all lived in the oldest and most urbanized regions of eastern North America. In Sweden, the majority of the female predominant populations of British migrants also lived in

24 Cf. Ravenstein, Laws, see note 15; Patrick O'Sullivan ed., Irish Women and Irish Migration, York 1995.

25 Cf. Hasia R. Diner, Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century, Baltimore 1983.

26 Apart from several studies of Black Americans in Canada – Shirley Yee, Finding a Place: Mary Ann Shadd Cary and the Dilemmas of Black Migration to Canada,1850–1870, in: Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies, 18, 3 (1997), 1–16 and Saje Mathieu, North of the Color Line: Migration and Black Resistance in Canada, 1870–1955, Chapel Hill 2010 – see John J. Bukowczyk et al. eds., Permeable Border: The Great Lakes Region as Transnational Region, 1650–1990, Pittsburgh 2005 and Dirk Hoerder and Nora Faires eds., Migrants and Migration in Modern North America: Cross-Border Lives, Labor Markets, and Politics, Durham 2011.

27 Cf. Marlou Schrover, Feminization and Problematization of Migration: Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, in: Dirk Hoerder and Amarjit Kaur eds., Proletarian and Gendered Mass Migrations: A Global Perspective on Continuities and Discontinuities from the 19th to the 21st Centuries, Leiden 2013, 103–132.

28 Cf. Ravenstein, Laws, see note 15.

Table 2: Predominantly Female NAPP Migrant Populations, 1860–1910

Destination & Migrant Group	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s
Canada						
Americans in Quebec					54.7	
Americans in Maritimes					56.0	
Americans in Ontario					53.3	
Irish in Quebec			53.8		55.0	
United States						
Brits in Mid-Atlantic					53.5	54.6
Brits in New England					54.0	55.6
Irish in Mid-Atlantic	53.2	53.7	54.3		56.1	57.9
Irish in New England		53.4	53.6		57.6	58.0
Irish in South Atlantic					58.9	
Swedes in New England						54.0
Sweden						
All Americans				61.2	57.4	
All Brits				60.9	61.8	

urban settings, mainly in southern Swedish cities, including Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. The female predominant Americans in Sweden were a more distinctive group. More evenly divided between rural and urban residence, the largest numbers were children and unmarried adolescents. As a majority of these children reported Swedish nationality, it is likely that many were American-born children of returned Swedish migrant parents. Why returners brought more female than male children back to Sweden is unknown and has never been addressed in the scholarly literature.

After age-standardization, the 25 heavily male migrant populations we identified significantly outnumbered the twelve female predominant migrant populations. That was predictable, given the generally male predominant migrations of the late nineteenth century. But there were surprising findings in this group, too (Table 3). For example, none of the frontier districts of the United States appeared in this group – perhaps because migrant populations there were still so small that we had excluded them. Historians of Norway, where male predominance was most pronounced, remind us that the country often served as a 'reserve America' for Swedish migrants: between 1850 and 1910, 66,400 Swedes migrated to their western neighbor.[29] As in Norway, most of the other heavily male migrant populations lived in areas characterized by recent settlement. Many were timbering or mining regions and most were rural areas,

29 Cf. Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli, A History of Immigration: The Case of Norway 900–2000, Oslo 2008, 112–115.

Table 3: Heavily Male NAPP Migrant Populations, 1850–1900

Destination & Migrant Group	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s
Canada						
Brits in Northwest Territory				15.6		
Irish in British Colombia				34.9		
Irish in Northwest Territory					33.4	
Swedes in Ontario				23.1		
United States						
Brits in West South Central				34.8		
Canadians in West South Central				30.2		
Irish in East South Central	33.6					
Norwegians in Mid-Atlantic				30.8		
Norwegians in South Atlantic				20.0		
Swedes in East South Central				25.9		
Swedes in South Atlantic				25.4		
Swedes in West South Central				30.1		
Sweden						
Norwegians in Gävleborg					25.7	31.7
Norwegians in Västernorrland					32.4	
Norway						
Swedes in Aust-Adger		18.0	18.1			29.0
Swedes in Buskerud		19.9				32.9
Swedes in Hordaland						16.8
Swedes in Nordland						32.4
Swedes in Nord-Trøndelag						28.6
Swedes in Oppland		22.0				16.6
Swedes in Rogaland						17.3
Swedes in Sør-Trøndelag		30.7	14.5			31.4
Swedes in Telemark		12.4				
Swedes in Vest-Adger						21.5
Swedes in Vestfold		24.4	24.9			

thus contrasting sharply with the regions with female predominant migrant populations. Our age-standardized cases of heavily male and female predominant migrant populations thus confirm what scholars have long argued, namely that rural areas disproportionately drew male workers as farmers, miners, and timber workers while cities – with their lively labor markets for domestic servants – have disproportionately attracted female, and usually also unmarried female, migrants.

Contrary to discussions juxtaposing the male dominated migrations of the nineteenth century with the gender balanced and female predominant migrations of our own times, NAPP data revealed that North Atlantic migrant populations were quite close to gender balance already in the nineteenth century. Irish migrant populations appeared in NAPP data as neither completely unique nor anomalous in their female predominance which led us to question analyses emphasizing the distinctiveness of the Irish as either famine refugees or bearers of a distinctive culture of gender relations. Finally, NAPP data calls attention to small but interesting and not yet fully explored populations of gender imbalanced American born migrants living in Canada and Sweden.

3. The Impact of Gender Imbalance on Marriage in Female Predominant and Heavily Male Migrant Populations

In this section, we assume that consequences resulting from differences in the age or sex structure of a population can be very easily discerned in the most gender imbalanced migrant populations. We compare in- and out-marriages among migrants in heavily male predominant and predominantly female migrant groups.[30] Following Guttentag and Secord, we assume that the numerically predominant sex is disadvantaged and may experience difficulties achieving its preferred marriage partners. We suggest further that both migrant men and women of all groups preferred partners of their own cultural group,[31] that migrant men rather chose wives who were their own age or younger, and that migrant women had a preference for husbands their own age or older.[32] A logical implication of these assumptions is that both migrant men and women are likely to choose transnational in-marriage instead of local out-marriage.

30 We have omitted from our analysis of marriage patterns the following heavily male and female predominant cases, as Canada does not provide data on spouse's country of birth before 1891: British men in Northwest Territory 1881, Irish men in British Colombia 1881, Swedish men in Ontario 1881, and Irish women in Quebec 1881.

31 Cf. e.g. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880–1930, Ithaca 1977, 256ff.; Pagnini/Morgan, Intermarriage, see note 11; Suzanne M. Sinke, The International Marriage Market: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives, in: Dirk Hoerder and Jorg Nagler eds., People in Transit: German Migrations in Comparative Perspective, 1820–1930, Cambridge 1995, 227–248, 240f.; Sinke, Migration, see note 13, 19.

32 For Sweden, two years difference was the norm: Rollin Chambliss, Median Age at First Marriage in Sweden, 1881–1953, in: The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly, 35, 3 (1957), 280–286; in the United States a four year differential was the norm: Christopher Tietze and Patience Lauriat, Age at Marriage and Educational Attainment in the United States, in: Population Studies, 9, 2 (1955), 159–166.

NAPP data suggests that heavily male predominant migrant local populations did create difficult choices for migrant men around the North Atlantic in the years book-ending 1900. Those who responded by seeking a spouse of their own background – presumably in many cases doing so transnationally – could not always find a woman younger than themselves. Those who instead chose to marry out – usually to a native woman – may have sought to overcome their disadvantage as foreigners by marrying women much younger than themselves. Finally, women in female predominant populations sometimes chose not to marry rather than to out-marry.

Table 4 compares the proportion of in-married migrant men nationwide to the proportion of in-married migrant men in regions with heavily male predominant populations. There was only one migrant group – Irish in the East South Central division of the United States in 1850 – in which the majority of men (61.5 per cent) were in-married. In all other cases, be it in the United States, Canada, Sweden, or in Norway, out-marriage was more common than in-marriage among men in heavily male migrant populations. The lowest percentages of in-married men (less than 25 per cent) could be found among Norwegian men in the counties of Gävleborg and Västernorrland in Sweden, almost all communities of Swedish men in Norwegian provinces (with the exception of Aust-Adger in 1875), Norwegians in the South Atlantic division of the United States, and among Canadian men in West South Central, United States. The wives in these out-marriages were usually natives of the destination country (e.g. Norwegians mainly married American-born women in the South Atlantic division of the United States and Swedish-born women in Sweden, etc.). In the United States and Canada, the wives' origins were more diverse because male migrants sometimes married women from other migrant groups.

Furthermore, in almost all cases – with the exception of Swedish men in Aust-Adger, Norway in 1875 – the percentage of in-married migrant men was well below the national average for their group. The largest deviation from the national average can be found among Norwegian men in South Atlantic: The proportion of in-marriage was 70 percentage points lower than the average rate of in-marriage for Norwegian men in the United States in 1880. Large differences also characterized the heavily male communities of Swedes and Canadians in the United States. These findings suggest that gender imbalance significantly shaped migrants' marriage choices and that men, disadvantaged by their very large numbers, could not easily achieve their marital ideals.

If we take into account the ages of migrant men we find further support for men's diminished dyadic power in marital negotiations in male dominated migrant communities. Guttentag and Secord suggested that older and more powerful men monopolized desirable marriage partners when men heavily outnumbered women. Scholars studying marital power relations have also noted that an older spouse is advantaged in the exercise of power within the relationship. (Indeed, some have suggested, this is why men in most western cultures prefer to marry younger women.) Scholars have also argued that the larger the age difference between the spouses, the more power inequity

Table 4: Per cent In-married in Heavily Male Regions and National NAPP Migrant Populations

Destination & Migrant Group	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s
Canada						
Irish men in Northwest Territory					41.1	
All Irish men in Canada					48.1	
United States						
British men in West South Central				29.3		
All British men in the U.S.				50.3		
Canadian men in West South Central				12.3		
All Canadian men in the U.S.				49.6		
Irish men in East South Central	61.5					
All Irish men in the U.S.	85.5					
Norwegian men in Mid-Atlantic				38.2		
Norwegian men in South Atlantic				15.3		
All Norwegian men in the U.S.				85.7		
Swedish men in East South Central				39.9		
Swedish men in South Atlantic				33.8		
Swedish men in West South Central				46.2		
All Swedish men in the U.S.				81.9		
Sweden						
Norwegian men in Gävleborg					8.9	14.4
Norwegian men in Västernorrland					19.0	
All Norwegian men in Sweden					22.8	20.1
Norway						
Swedish men in Aust-Adger		10.6	42.4			19.9
Swedish men in Buskerud		12.5				22.6
Swedish men in Hordaland						13.4
Swedish men in Nordland						20.0
Swedish men in Nord-Trøndelag						21.1
Swedish men in Oppland		17.7				8.9
Swedish men in Rogaland						8.9
Swedish men in Sør-Trøndelag		23.7	19.7			23.8
Swedish men in Telemark		11.7				
Swedish men in Vest-Adger						12.6
Swedish men in Vestfold		19.8	11.5			
All Swedish men in Norway		29.5	29.8			35.2

there is in marriage. For example, a much younger wife may have little power to influence decisions regarding reproduction and employment.[33]

NAPP data on the age difference of in- and out-married migrant men in male predominant settings hints especially at younger men's difficulties in achieving their marital goals. Men who wanted to marry a woman of their own cultural origin often had to marry a woman who was the same age or older. For example, among the in-married Swedish-born men in the West South Central division of the United States, 35.5 per cent failed to find a younger wife. The corresponding percentage for out-married Swedish men was only 12.1. Similarly, 14 per cent of out-married and 28.6 per cent of in-married British-born men in West South Central in 1880 had a wife of the same age or older. If we divide these husbands further into two age groups, younger men aged 35 years or less and older men aged 36 years or more, it becomes apparent that it was specifically the younger in-married men who were most likely to have a wife who was the same age or older. For example, 44.1 per cent of the younger in-married Swedish-born men in West South Central had older wives. By contrast, among Brits, Canadians, and Swedes in West South Central about 40 per cent of out-married men aged 36 or older had wedded a wife who was at least ten years younger and a majority of these were U.S.-born. While such choices certainly reflect the limited number of co-ethnic women available for marriage to these older men, marrying a much younger, native-born wife (as opposed to a native-born woman closer to the husband's age) might also have been a mechanism for foreign-born men to try to guarantee marital power in negotiation with a wife otherwise advantaged by nativity, culture, language, or religion. The pattern was not as evident in the other heavily male NAPP regions of North America (and in many cases the communities were too small to allow break-outs by age) but corresponding examples existed in male predominant parts of Sweden and Norway, too.

In addition to gender imbalance, it is likely that in some cases the 'logic of numbers' contributed to the higher-than-average out-marriage rate among men. For example, in the relatively small community of Swedish migrants in the West South Central division of the United States in 1880 (about 1,650 adults, 100 per cent census count), the gender ratios were most skewed among migrants who were single and of marriageable age (16 to 36 years). While the overall percentage of women in the community was 30, it

33 Cf. Maxine P. Atkinson and Becky L. Glass, Marital Age Heterogamy and Homogamy, 1900 to 1980, in: Journal of Marriage and the Family, 47, 3 (1985), 685–691; Felix M. Berardo, Jeffrey Appel and Donna H. Berardo, Age Dissimilar Marriages: Review and Assessment, in: Journal of Aging Studies, 7, 1 (1993), 93–106; Dennis P. Hogan and Belay Biratu, Social Identity and Community Effects on Contraceptive Use and Intentions in Southern Ethiopia, in: Studies in Family Planning, 35, 2 (2004), 79–90; Cynthia B. Lloyd ed., Growing Up Global: The Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries, Washington, D.C. 2005; Emilio A. Parrado, Chenoa A. Flippen and Chris McQuiston, Migration and Relationship Power among Mexican Women, in: Demography, 42, 2 (2005), 347–372, 350.

was only 14.5 among young, unmarried persons (60 women and 353 men). Thus, if these young men wanted to marry a Swedish wife, they would need to find her transnationally or from other regions in the United States. Of the Swedish men who were married, 46.2 per cent had found a Swedish-born wife; the rest were married to American-born (34 per cent) or other foreign-born women (20 per cent). (The American-born wives were not necessarily second generation Swedish Americans: about 70 per cent had American-born parents as well.) In other words, while some men (we cannot know which ones) had undoubtedly found their home country wives transnationally, many men had opted for marrying a non-Swedish woman in the United States.

Finally, as we expected to find, migrant women in heavily male predominant regions were in all cases more frequently in-married than men of the same migrant group. In some cases, women's in-marriage rate was almost twice as high as men's; for example, 75.2 per cent of Swedish women in East South Central in 1880 were in-married (as compared to 39.9 per cent of men). However, women's marriage choices and their dyadic power only seem to have been enhanced by being part of a small minority. Living in the midst of a heavily male migrant population did not mean that women could always choose a spouse of their own background: women's in-marriage rates were still usually below their national averages (e.g. the average for Swedish women in the U.S. in 1880 was 88.6 per cent, or more than the 75.2 per cent of Swedish women in the East South Central U.S.), a puzzling finding that scholars will want to explore further. And this is just the first of many examples describing the relation between gender imbalance and marital choice as far more complex for migrant women than for migrant men.

That complexity comes even more to the fore when we shift our focus to marriages of migrant women in regions with female predominant migrant populations. They contrast sharply with marriages of men in heavily male predominant migrant populations. In the United States, women in female predominant migrant populations were mainly in-married, while in Canada and Sweden they were to a large extent out-married (see Table 5, below). The groups with a majority of in-married women included both migrant communities with a long history of migration to the United States – e.g. the British and Irish in the northeast – as well as a somewhat more recent migrant group of Swedes in New England in 1910. Surprisingly, the percentage of in-married women in these female predominant areas usually surpassed the national average (with the exception of Irish women in Mid-Atlantic in 1860 and South Atlantic in 1900). Nor had all these migrants arrived in the U.S. as married women. NAPP data allowed us to compare the year of arrival to the year of marriage only for the United States and only for the years 1900 and 1910. At that time, a majority (70 to 87 per cent) of British, Swedish, and Irish migrant women in the female predominant northeast United States had married after migrating to the country. Men in female predominant areas of the U.S. were, predictably, even more successful in achieving their marital goals. For example, 86 per cent of Swedish men were in-married in New England in 1910 –

a percentage that was higher than the corresponding figure for women (82 per cent) and the national average for Swedish men (74 per cent) in 1910. It seems, then, that both men and women in female predominant regions were able to find a spouse of their own ethnic group more easily than in the country as a whole.

Table 5: Percent In-married in Predominantly Female Regions and National NAPP Migrant Populations

Destination & Migrant Group	**1860s**	**1870s**	**1880s**	**1890s**	**1900s**	**1910s**
Canada						
American women in Quebec					19.4	
American women in Maritimes					11.7	
American women in Ontario					17.8	
All American women in Canada					25.8	
Irish women in Quebec					53.8	
All Irish women in Canada					49.2	
United States						
British women in Mid-Atlantic					70.4	63.9
British women in New England					71.5	64.4
All British women in the U.S.					68.0	60.9
Irish women in Mid-Atlantic	86.8	85.6	81.5		70.7	62.3
Irish women in New England		88.1	85.5		70.8	63.6
Irish women in South Atlantic					58.8	
All Irish women in the U.S.	87.1	84.7	80.6		68.8	60.6
Swedish women in New England						81.6
All Swedish women in the U.S.						78.5
Sweden						
All American women in Sweden				4.0	0.7	
All British women in Sweden				13.3	13.1	

Without referring to available sources beyond NAPP, we can at best speculate about the surprisingly high rates of in-marriage among migrant women in female predominant areas. In most of these areas (except among Americans in Maritimes and Ontario in 1901 and Brits in Sweden in 1900), only the unmarried migrant population was characterized by female predominance. Live-in domestic service – the most common employment for migrant women and one that was strictly limited to those who remained unmarried – may have allowed migrant women to remove themselves from local marriage markets. Hasia Diner's study of Irish domestic servants suggested long ago that domestic service empowered women to avoid marriage for many years, a preference traced – somewhat controversially – to a uniquely Irish culture of hostility between

men and women.[34] Guttentag and Secord might have interpreted these choices instead as a woman's response to diminished dyadic power. Certainly Diner's account of gender hostility and high rates of female employment is in line with Guttentag and Secord's description of female predominant populations where men's structural power persists. Since similar patterns are evident among other groups in NAPP data, alternative explanations must also be considered, yet it is impossible to confirm other interpretations based on further analysis of NAPP data alone. Perhaps, for example, it was easier for migrant women to find a spouse from their own country of origin in areas with long-established immigrant communities such as New England, where they had deep and rich personal networks. Or perhaps such networks could encourage women to migrate transnationally with a marriage proposal either in hand, arranged through personal correspondence (as Suzanne Sinke has demonstrated for other groups), or expected upon arrival. Clearly, more research is needed if we are to understand why the consequences of marital negotiation differed so significantly for migrant women in female predominant groups and migrant men in heavily male predominant groups.

More research may also be needed to understand why, in sharp contrast to the prevalence of in-marriages in female predominant migrant groups in the United States, less than 20 per cent of American women in the female predominant Quebec, Maritime provinces, and in Ontario were in-married in 1901. Here women's marriage choices more often resembled those of men in heavily male migrant areas: They married out. Women's rate of in-marriage in these places also fell several points below the national average for American women in Canada. A majority of the husbands of these American-born women were Canadian-born. In the Maritime provinces, for example, 81 per cent of American-born women had a Canadian-born husband. In addition, the great majority of British-born and, in particular, American-born women in Sweden were out-married to Swedish-born men in 1890 and 1900. Most of these women (87 to 95 per cent) were of Swedish nationality, which suggests that they were either second-generation migrants who had returned to their country of origin (in the case of U.S.-born women) or women from the U.S. or Britain who had become Swedish citizens through marriage prior to migration. While there is no data available about the timing of marriage for Canada or Sweden to confirm our hunch, the most likely explanation is that these female predominant communities were a result of women's marriage migrations.

Finally, female predominant regions seem not to have encouraged the kinds of age difference between in- and out-married spouses that were evident in heavily male predominant populations. The spousal age differences were quite similar (and small) for in- and out-married women in female predominant locations. At most, the percentage of women who were significantly younger than their husbands (in both in- and out-marriages) was generally lower than in heavily male migrant populations. In such cases,

34 Cf. Diner, Erin's Daughters, see note 25, 22.

it was also more common for the wife to be the same age or older than the husband than to be much younger than the husband. Among British women in New England in 1900 and 1910, for example, less than ten per cent of married women had husbands who were more than ten years older. In contrast, about 30 per cent of the women were the same age or older than their husbands. In Canada, Irish women in Quebec in 1901 made similar marriage choices. Large age differences were rare in both in- and out-marriages among migrant women living in female predominant places. By contrast, 30.6 per cent of in-married and 37 per cent of out-married women were older or the same age as the husband. This is a remarkable finding if one assumes that men both enjoyed dyadic advantages in female predominant populations and preferred younger wives. Again, however, answers to this paradox are unlikely to be found in NAPP data; other methods and sources may eventually explain why dyadically disadvantaged migrant women's marital choices, in this example, too, differed so significantly from men's choices under roughly similar conditions of dyadic disadvantage.

4. Concluding Thoughts

When women's marriage migrations created female predominant migrant populations, as they likely did among Americans and British subjects living in Sweden or Canada, there were no 'surplus' women and no diminishment of women's dyadic power, as Guttentag and Secord would have predicted. Out-marriage in these cases was not a response to gender imbalance in migrant populations; on the contrary, it was the cause of gender imbalance in migrant populations. Where urban domestic service attracted a female predominant population of largely unmarried female workers, furthermore, women seem to have responded to diminished dyadic power quite differently than men facing similar challenges in heavily male predominant settings. Whereas migrant men's rate of out-marriage in such cases increased in ways that Guttentag and Secord predicted, migrant women working as domestic servants married late, if at all: they apparently did not marry out but chose husbands of their own age, or slightly younger, who were almost exclusively of their own backgrounds. We do not have evidence to establish whether women in female predominant migrant populations sought their spouses locally or transnationally, although transnational marriage has not figured as a prominent theme in studies of Irish immigrant women in North America. Still, we have to consider the possibility that migrant women preferred employment and celibacy to out-marriage.

The cases we have described of heavily male predominant migrant populations suggest how gender imbalance had consequences for migrants' marriages. The prevalence of out-marriage raises the question of why such men did not instead seek spouses from their presumably female predominant transnational social fields. Scholars studying migrants' marriage patterns often use measures such as group size and gender imbalance,

residential propinquity, group cohesion, linguistic similarity, and education to explain why some groups marry out more than others.[35] In the cases we have studied, factors such as cultural proximity and linguistic similarity can partially clarify the high number of out-marriages. This is, for instance, true for marriages between Canadians and Americans, which were common on both sides of the border. Also, the high rate of marriages between Swedes and Norwegians in these two countries highlights how cultural proximity, linguistic similarities, and the long history of mobility between the countries facilitated the formation of out-marriages. However, it is impossible to decipher to which extent the couples in such marriages considered their marriages as 'inter-ethnic'. Data from Canada suggests that when American women married Canadian men, their marriages occurred within the same religious group. For example, over 90 per cent of Roman Catholic American women in Quebec, Maritimes, and Ontario were married to a Canadian-born Roman Catholic man.

Migrant marriage patterns lend at least some support to Guttentag and Secord's assertions about the decrease of dyadic power of the outnumbered sex. The fact that marriage patterns of migrant men in many heavily male regions differed significantly from those of migrant men in more gender balanced regions (especially in the U.S.) suggests that men's dyadic power in marriage negotiations decreased when they outnumbered women. Migrant women's high in-marriage rate (as compared to men's) in heavily male regions also points to the same conclusion. If we look again at the example of Swedes in West South Central, U.S., in 1880 (discussed above), it seems plausible that the 60 unmarried Swedish-born women aged 16 to 36 were in a privileged position in marital negotiations compared to the 353 Swedish-born men of the same age. Among the married women, 77.3 per cent had a Swedish-born husband, as opposed to 46.2 per cent of the men. These findings suggest that migrant women in male dominated regions were able to increase their marital negotiation power and find a man of their ethnic group, even when they were older than their husbands. Out-married men, on the other hand, were more likely to have a much younger wife (age difference ten or more years) than in-married men and older out-married men (aged 36 years or older) were the most likely of all to have a young wife. If older men were indeed as a group more powerful than younger men, then these choices suggest that out-marriage to a much younger woman may have been a safer strategy for enhancing male dyadic power than marriage to an older woman of one's own culture.

35 Scholars have also examined personal characteristics and preferences of those who marry out. Another popular explanatory model is that of the exchange theory/hypergamy, which assumes that a person of lower social status (often female) marries somebody from a group of higher social status (male); in this context, the male exchanges his high social status for the youth and attractiveness of the female of lower status. Cf. Reuben B. Resnik, Some Sociological Aspects of Intermarriage of Jew and Non-Jew, in: Social Forces, 12, 1 (1933), 94–102; Cretser/Leon, Intermarriage, see note 8, 6f.; Penny/Khoo, Intermarriage, see note 8, xii.

Finally, high rates of out-marriage among men in heavily male migrant populations suggest that far fewer northern European men chose the transnational marriage option than scholars have found among southern and eastern European migrants. It is quite likely that native-born white American women found men from the North Atlantic countries more acceptable as marital partners than men from southern and Eastern Europe. Using data about the age of spouses, we are able to suggest how migrant men responded to being disadvantaged in negotiating marriages. High rates of in-marriage among women in some female predominant populations instead raise questions about the timing of marriage, nuptiality rates and the gender composition of U.S. citizens as international migrants. While the theoretical work of Guttentag and Secord is helpful in interpreting men's responses to a gender imbalance that diminished their dyadic power, it has proved far less useful in explaining variations in marriage patterns among women in female predominant migrant groups. When female predominance was the product of marriage migrations, its marital consequences were limited and quite unlike other cases where demand for female labor as urban domestic servants resulted in gender imbalance.