

**INDIVIDUAL VERSUS HOUSEHOLD MIGRATION DECISION RULES:
GENDER DIFFERENCES IN INTENTIONS TO MIGRATE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

Bina Gubhaju and Gordon F. De Jong
Population Research Institute
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA. 16802
dejong@pop.psu.edu
bina@pop.psu.edu

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Introduction:

Two competing microeconomic theories in the migration literature contrast with respect to their perspective on whether an individual's decision to migrate is based on what is best for one's own future or whether the decision is based on the well-being for the household as a whole. The neoclassical microeconomic theory of migration decision making posits that migration is an individual choice whereby the rational actor is motivated to move to maximize his/her own personal gains, whether in terms of monetary or human capital utility (Todaro 1976; Massey et al. 1993). In contrast, the new household economic theory places migration decisions within the context of the household and contends that the family well-being is at the center of migration decision making (Stark and Bloom 1982, Massey et al. 1993). Proponents of this theory argue that migration decisions are rarely made by individual actors but rather by larger units such as families or households. Within this framework, an individual's decision to migrate is not based on maximizing one's own expected utility but rather for the benefit of the household and other family members. The focus thus shifts from individual independence to mutual interdependence, and it has been argued that this perspective is particularly salient for developing countries.

While each of these perspectives has established its own niche within the set of theories that attempt to explain migration intentions and behavior, the question as to which one is more salient as a driving force for migration decision making remains unresolved in the literature. Furthermore, the literature has not been able to disentangle whether there are differences in who is more likely to make an independent decision to migrate and which individuals are more likely

to be driven by household concerns. What is also lacking is how these migration decision rules may differ for various sub-groups of the population. In particular, possible migration decision rule differences by gender have been given very little attention in the literature. How would these competing theories differ in explaining migration decision making for men and women? Are women more likely to base their decisions on household needs rather than on their own future individual choices?

Another important dimension when considering whether migration decision making is based on neoclassical or household economic arguments is the time horizon on which migration decisions are based. It is important to also examine if an individual's motivating force to migrate differs when intending to move in the short-term vs. in a longer term time horizon. The main objective of this paper is to analyze national migration survey data for South African to explain how migration decision rules may differ in predicting intentions to migrate for subgroups of males and females both in short-term and longer-term time horizons.

The specific research questions to be addressed in the paper are:

1. Are migration intentions different for South African male and female adults expressing own-future versus household well-being migration decision rules?
2. How do short-term (next 12 months) and longer-term (next five year) intentions to migrate differ for male and female South African adults who express own-future versus household well-being decision making perspectives?
3. Are the own-future versus household well-being differences in South African male and female intentions to migrate explained by such usual migration literature factors as marital status, human capital, subjective expectations, family pressure to move, household resources, and

demographic characteristics?

The theoretical context for addressing these questions will draw on both neoclassical and new household economic theory as well as the gender and migration literatures.

Data and Methods:

The data that are used for the study come from the 2001-2002 Causes of Migration in South Africa Survey, sponsored by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). The survey collected information from 3,618 households in 711 enumeration areas. In addition to the household questionnaire, a randomly selected adult between the ages of 18-69 completed an individual questionnaire, and this data is used in the present study. A stratified cluster random sampling design was utilized for the survey based on four strata: the local government, Spatial Development Initiative Areas, and population groups of African/Black, colored, Indian/Asian, and White. Individual weights have been applied to the descriptive and multivariate analyses so that the sample reflects the national population.

The dependent variables used for the analysis are two measures of migration intentions that capture intentions to move in short-term and long-term time horizons.

1: Intend to move in the next 12 months: This measure combines the responses of two questions: a) plan to move from this area to settle permanently in another area in South Africa or in another country, with b) plan to move from this area for a few months to work or look for work or for other reasons and then return to this area.

2. Intend to move in the next 5 years: This measure combined the two responses above for the next 12 months with responses to similar permanent and temporary migration intention questions concerning the next five years.

Since a major goal of this paper is to examine how the neoclassical and the new household economic frameworks predict migration intentions for male and female adults in South Africa, the main independent variable is a measure which captures the decision making rules of these frameworks. This variable is based on responses to the question: “In thinking about whether you intend to move or stay here, on which of the following, if any, will you base your decision (to move or stay)? 1) On what would be best for my own future, 2) On the household’s need for a higher income, 3) On reducing the risk of bad things happening to this household, or 4) On needs of family members who are not currently part of this household.” Responses to this question are designed to capture the extent to which migration intentions are based on expected individual gains or on benefits to the household and other family members. In addition, indicators of several additional factors, identified in the migration literature as important determinants of migration intentions and behavior, are included in the model. These include measures of 1) value-expectancy subjective expectations, 2) life satisfaction, 3) human capital, 4) household resources, and 5) demographic and family characteristics.

The analysis is stratified by sex of the respondent to examine possible gender role differences in migration decision rules, and by short-term and long-term migration intention to examine possible time-horizon differences in migration decision rules. Our analysis strategy is first, to present descriptive data on intentions to migrate by decision rules and time horizon. Next we present a series of regression models predicting intentions to migrate for men and women by time horizon based on migration decision rules and the extensive set of migration literature-based migration intention and behavior indicators.

Preliminary Results:

Preliminary results from the two tables attached and from the preliminary regression models (not shown) indicate:

1. Nearly two-thirds of both male and female South African adults report “what would be best for their own future” as the dominant framework for their migration decision making.

2. Male and female South African adults reporting an “own-future” migration decision rule have higher intentions to move than adults who report household income maximization, reduce household risk, or needs of other family members decision frameworks (Table 1).

3. Controlling for the salient impact of marital status on migration decision making in developing countries, the basic logistic regression model (Table 2) shows higher odds of intentions to migrate in 12 months but not in 5 years for both male and female South African adults who report an “own future” vs. a household income maximization migration decision rule. Respondents who report reduced household risk, or needs of other family members decision frameworks generally have non-significantly lower migration intention odds vs. respondents reporting a household income maximization migration decision rule.

4. Preliminary results from separate full regression models by gender and time horizon of migration intentions show that the household migration decision rules vs. own-future decision rules remain significant predictors of migration intentions for both South African women and men, and that the migration literature predictors of intentions to migrate are significantly different by gender.

5. Preliminary results from separate full regression models by gender and marital status show marked differences in the human capital, household resources, value-expectancy, and individual and family characteristics that predict intentions to migrate.

Tables for IUSSP Paper (Table 1 and 2 only):

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Intentions to Migrate in Next 12 Months and Next 5 Years, by Gender and Migration Decision Rules

	Male				Female			
	12 Months		5 Years		12 Months		5 Years	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Best for own future	20.1	63	29.2	22	18.1	152	24.	24
Maximize Household Income	11.7	14	28.7	56	11.6	47	18.	3 68
Reduce Household Risk	10.2	70	24.8	40	12.3	24	19.	1 44
Best for other family members	12.1	25	33.0	16	6.1	12	19.	3 27

Table 2
Migration Decision Rules and Marital Status Determinants of Male and Female Intentions to Migrate in Next 12 Months and Next 5 Years:
Logistic Regression Odds Ratios

Model Components	12 mos. Odds Ratios		5 yrs Odds ratios			
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
A. Migration Decision Rules (Maximize HH Income)						
Best for own future	1.79 ***	2.01 ***	1.59 *	1.14	1.05	1.32 +
Reduced Household Risk	1.09	0.95	1.22	1.02	0.92	1.24
Best for other Family Members	0.71	1.02	0.50 +	1.10	1.28	1.10
B. Marital Status (Married)						
Never Married	1.94 ***	1.47 *	2.57 ***	2.35 ***	1.78 ***	3.23 ***
Living Together	1.45 +	1.35	1.62 *	1.26	1.11	1.63 *
Widowed	0.64 ***	0.78	0.67	0.58 *	0.68	0.70
Divorced/Separated	2.11 **	3.50 **	1.49	1.62 *	2.14 +	1.45
Number of cases	3618	1377	2241	3618	1377	2241
Intercept	-2.41 ***	-2.33 ***	-2.51 ***	-1.62 ***	-1.27 ***	-2.07 ***

Reference Category in parentheses
 +p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001