

GENDER AND AGE DIFFERENCES OF MIGRANTS

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Abstract

Migration is one of the social processes that influences our society the most. It's not an independent process but a process connected with many other elements, factors and processes, influencing each developments. It influences the evolution of demographic, social and economic processes: the demographic volume and structure of the local communities and the evolution of their specific social-demographic phenomena, the structure and functionality of the households from their origin and the destination of migration flows, connection amongst the local resources and the work force and the population in the said zone, the quality and personal lifestyle etc. In this paper we will focus on the sex and gender differences between Romanian migrants for work in conjunction with the effects of the global economic crisis which started in 2008.

Keywords

migration, gender, age, EU, crisis, differences

1. Introduction

Romanian migration is mostly focused on the movement of people from home towards bigger cities and to the more evolved West. So, there is an internal and an external migration process. These massive movements can influence the Romanian economy, labor market, birth rate etc.

The effects are both positive and negative. For instance the remittances sent by the emigrants are quite important for those left behind but also for our economy, in some areas this is the only investment source. On the other hand, the external migration flows leave our economy without many qualified or unqualified workers, doctors and medical assistants, farmers but they also have a negative effect on the family institution, for instance when the children are left behind with the grandparents or worse.

2. The background

In the years 2008-2011, Romania reached the status of primal supplier of migrant labor in EU, with over 2.5 million migrants. Roughly 70% of the Romanian migrants headed for Spain and Italy. Some of the main causes being: the jobless in Romania; earnings far from decent; poor leadership of the Romanian political class; lack of opportunities etc.

In another train of thoughts, it's important to underline that it's more accurate to talk about a "migration of labor" than a "brain exodus". The migration for work prevails, most Romanians migrants having medium or low-skilled jobs and 30% of them didn't even try to find a job at home. It's interesting that 60% of migrants work abroad with relatives and friends from Romania.

Most migrants when back evoke the superiority of the countries of destination in terms of "a better life", people's fairness, better working services etc.

In some academic circles it's been theories that at a macro level societal organization generates certain structural migration models: "The family and the traditional household confronted with climate change, market fluctuation, lack of liquidities for investments etc.

reach out to migration as a strategy of risk management". (Remus G. Anghel, I. Horváth, (coordonatori), *Sociologia migrației. Teorii și studii de caz românești*, Polirom, București, 2009, p.33)

Therefore, from 2002 onwards, the migration towards EU countries is the solution for a better life of a significant proportion of Romania's population.

The crisis greatly affected the labor market of all the EU countries and the changes and adaptations they suffered affected on their end the migration for work. The constructions and the services where the economic sectors affected the most by the crisis causing job loss among migrants

Amid this crisis it's created a favorable space for an increase in xenophobia and racism, adoption of more severe laws to prevent migration, measures to protect the homeland labor market which give migration a rather negative image and certainly makes things harder for the lives of the Romanian migrants. As a result Romania wasn't allowed to fully join the Schengen space and the extremist's parties in UK, France, and Holland gained power. The latest EU parliamentary elections were dominated by the ideological fight between the pro and anti EU political parties.

3. Analysis

In this context this analysis, the gender and age differences of the Romanian migrants for work in the EU, aims to describe how migrants adapted at different ages, as females and as men.

We will split the migration process into two sections: internal and external migration. We will focus on external migration, which is also split into two categories: migrants who returned home and migrants who remained abroad due to the economic climate in the EU.

There are no significant differences between migrants who returned and migrants from abroad regard to gender, age or gender-sex. However, the work experiences of the migrants, does considerably differ with gender and age.

Most migrants leave for work abroad between the ages of 21 and 27. Afterwards, the migration decreases only to slightly raise once more between the age of 35 and 37. After the age of 44 fewer people migrate abroad, but from those who still leave women are in greater numbers than men. This also explains why the average age of female migrants is 2 years higher than males, 30 years vs. 28 years. (table 1)

Table 1. The profiles of migrants on gender and age (%) (FES-CCSB Poll, 2010)

| | Abroad migrants | | | Return migrants | |
|--------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| | Men | Women | Total | Men | Women |
| 18-29 years | 18,7 | 17,1 | 35,8 | 35,8 | 15 |
| 30-44 years | 23 | 23,4 | 46,4 | 23,3 | 21,8 |
| 45-64 years | 8,1 | 9,4 | 17,6 | 9,8 | 8,3 |
| 65 and above | 0,1 | 0,1 | 0,2 | | 0,8 |
| Total | 49,9 | 50,1 | 100 | 54,1 | 45,9 |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Before leaving to work abroad 15% of the female migrants were housewives or unemployed but only 6% of men were in the same situation. We can conclude that more female migrants than men didn't try to find a job in Romania. Those who did try also found a job in comparable proportion to men (59% vs. 64%). They were workers and craftsmen in the industry, tradesmen in commerce or they worked in other services, often health or education.

Most female migrants found work abroad but had to change their profession and branch. Therefore, in proportions higher than men they found jobs as technicians, craftsmen or clerks, in commerce, tourism but more often as unqualified workers in cleaning and people care services. This is why for females the work mobility is of a descending type.

Men where, more often than women, unemployed workers in Romania, before going to work abroad, who failed to find jobs at home as qualified or unqualified workers especially in constructions, transports or agriculture. Unlike females they didn't have to change their profession and branch as there was a demand abroad for qualified workers in constructions, transports and agriculture. Therefore, men's work mobility is of an ascending type, from unqualified to qualified.

Both men and women, when abroad work alternatively in the formal and informal economy. (With or without a contract) On average the women who work abroad have a smaller length of service, 5 years vs. 6 for men.

Notable differences between age categories are given by young migrants, 18-29 years. They were either students, unemployed or stay-at-home before they left abroad. Once abroad, most of the youngsters, both male and female, found jobs in commerce, hotels and restaurants, where youth is an advantage. Only 6% (vs. 12% from the totality of migrants) found jobs which required superior qualifications – management, specialists, technicians, clerks etc.

Table 2 Occupational status of Romanian migrants abroad before the first departure in august 2010 depending on gender.

| | | In Romania, before the first departure | | | Abroad, in august 2010 | | |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------|-------|-------|------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | Men | Women | Total | Men | Women | Total |
| Total | N | 420 | 424 | 844 | 479 | 485 | 964 |
| | %, from which | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Employed personnel | | | | | | | |
| Managers, business owners, senior officials | | * | 1,9 | 1,3 | 2,1 | * | 1,5 |
| Specialists | | 5,2 | 3,8 | 4,6 | 5,2 | 4,7 | 5 |
| Technicians, craftsman | | 2,9 | 4 | 3,4 | 2,3 | 5,8 | 4,1 |
| Clerks | | * | 5,9 | 3,2 | * | 2,5 | 1,6 |
| Workers, service operators | | 7,6 | 19,1 | 13,4 | 9 | 29,7 | 19,3 |
| Farmers | | 4,5 | 1,4 | 3 | 8,8 | 5,4 | 7,1 |
| Trail workers | | 21,4 | 20,3 | 20,8 | 50,9 | 9,1 | 29,9 |
| Machine and installation operators | | 11 | * | 5,9 | 9 | 1,4 | 5,2 |
| Unqualified workers | | 9,8 | 1,9 | 5,8 | 8,4 | 35,7 | 22,1 |
| Military personnel | | * | | * | | | 0 |
| Unemployed and people without a job | | | | | | | |

(FES-CCSB Poll, 2010)

In regard to family migration for work it's hard to come up with solid data to analyze. Though there have been some qualitative enquires focused on the survival strategies used by the migrant families.

Such studies evocate that men were more affected than women by the crisis because most where concentrated in the economic sectors which suffered most. (Construction, tourism etc.) In these cases, when women manage to hold on to their jobs despite the recession, the decision to return home was alerted, the income made by them being used to sustain the family abroad in wait for better times. Often men in these families did, eventually find some ways to gain money even if this meant the worked in the informal economy.

Both the returned migrants and those still abroad seem to agree on how the crisis affected them no matter the sex, gender, country of residence or migrant occupation. Many started to

lose their jobs; the cost of living went higher; many salaries were scaled down. Only very few consider that the attitude of the natives became more reserved or negative or that the host authorities became stricter.

Table 3 Perceived crisis effects on the migrants (%)

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|----|
| | | | | | 30 |
| They Started to scale down migrant's salaries | | | | | 48 |
| | | | | | 56 |
| The cost of life got higher | | | | | 55 |
| | | | | | 64 |
| Many migrants started to lose their jobs | | | | | 77 |
| | | | | | 67 |
| Returned migrants | | | | | |
| Abroad migrants | | | | | |

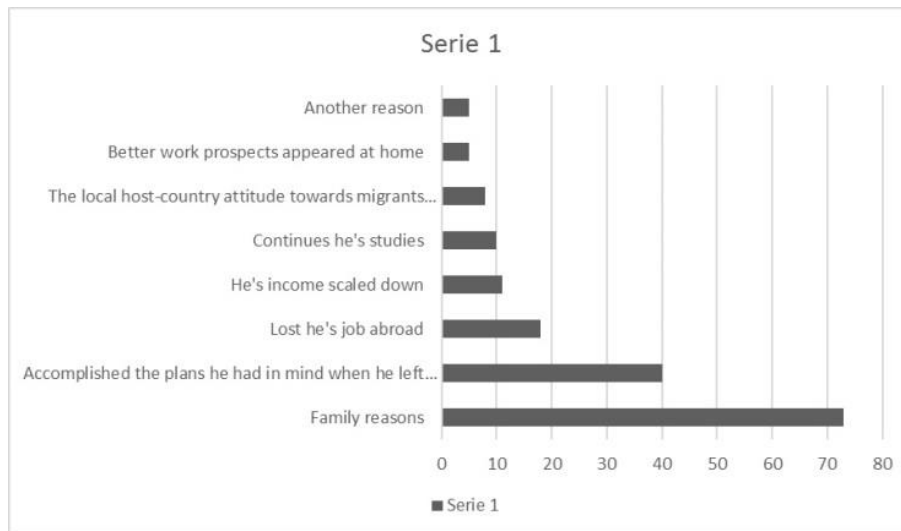
(FES-CCSB Poll, 2010)

When asked general questions about personal matters, 63% among the returned migrants in the last year sustain that in the last 6 months spend abroad, their income remained constant. Only 17% declare that their income scaled down and 20% say, despite the crisis, that their income scaled up. There are no significant differences here between men and women or young and adults. The rural workers, no matter the activity sector, tend (a 30% proportion) to claim that their income scaled down, while (38%) farmers sustain that their income scaled up. The country they reside does make a big difference in these reports. For instance 73% of the migrants from Italy say they make just as much as they did before the crisis while only 43% of those who reside in Spain claim the same, the rest either gain or lost some part of their earnings.

The migrants who choose to return home, to Romania, do it for a number of reasons, being dependent on the age, education, territorial mobility, country of destination, occupation and the support networks from abroad.

Even if the returned migrants and the abroad migrants don't differ too much in terms of age, the chance of the young, age between 18-29, to return home, by comparison with the option to remain abroad, is 7 times bigger than of the older, above 60 years. Likewise, the chance of the adults, age 30-44, is 10.37 times higher, controlling the other predictors. In other words, the hypothesis that the age is the sole favoring factor for the return of the migrants is not sustainable.

A lower education level of the migrants, 8 grades at most, coincides with a reduction of the chance to return home.



Source: Sanculescu, M.S., Stoiciu, V. 2012. *Impactul crizei economice asupra migratiei fortei de munca din Romania*, Paideia, p.126

Fig. 1 The returning home from abroad work motivation (%)

The returned migrants differ from those abroad significantly by the fact that they move abroad more recently, they had less time to adjust.

Also people who worked in more than one country have a higher chance of returning than those who only worked in one.

The same principle, the circularity of migration, applies to those migrants who work in agriculture, they have a higher chance of returning home.

Migrants from Italy and Spain are more likely to return than those from other countries. (UK, France, Ireland etc.)

Despite the destination and all the other factors to having brothers and/or sisters abroad decreases significantly the chance to return home. In other words the support network is a key factor in the migrant's success abroad. (Sanculescu and Stoiciu, 2012)

The main reason for returning seems to be longing for the family, followed by achieving the set objectives, job loss, salary decrease etc.

Conclusions

We agree with Sanculescu and Stoiciu (2012) that the economic crisis had, in general, multiple negative effect over the Romanian migrants who worked abroad. The marginalized persons on the labor market, with human capital and reduced capital and smaller income are those who perceive themselves as the most affected by the crisis. Those who felt it the most where the Romanians who worked as unqualified workers and those who worked without papers or in the informal economy of the destination country. The prevailing sectors of activity occupied by migrants, like constructions or hotel services among the other sectors which depend on the economic cycles were most hit by the recession, causing losses of jobs and an increase of the unemployment rate amongst the migrant workers than the local employees.

The crisis itself did not determine a massive flow of migrant return to Romania, and even those returned most likely only came back temporarily.

Despite the crisis in EU and the slow come back the job opportunities on the labor market are more attractive than those found on the local Romanian labor market.

Maybe with the modernization of the agro-food sector, the identification of new methods to boost the entrepreneur structures and spirit could decrease and even stop the transitional migration, the *working arms drain*.

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