

THE GENDER DIFFERENCES OF IMMIGRATION IN OECD COUNTRIES

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Abstract: *Immigration has become a very significant topic in recent years. Over the centuries, millions of people have migrated, despite the accompanying physical, cultural and economic obstacles, to other lands in search of better lives for themselves and their children. Currently, the number of people living outside their country of birth is estimated to be over 180 million or 3 percent of the world's population. Consequently, in the last few years the growing awareness of migration flows has focused on the gender perspective. Gender, in this case, refers to the norms, behaviours and expectations associated with being a female or a male immigrant. The aim of this study is to find out what gender differences there are in immigration in the OECD countries studied. According to our results, in the labour force women migrants are fewer than men. Thus, female migrants are more inactive and less employed than males. Moreover, the male migrants' educational level is higher than that of women. Our conclusions also allow policy makers to identify potential needs for reforms, in relation to specific features of migration policies, and provides some evidence about which groups of migrants are in need of supplementary supports in other social and economic contexts, as well.*

Keywords: *Immigration; labour market; education.*

JEL classification: *I23; J61; J31.*

1. Introduction

The economic, political and social changes which have occurred globally in recent years have influenced international migration in some countries (Özgür and Deniz, 2014). Hence, over 175 million people - accounting for 3% of the world's population - live permanently outside their home country. People migrate from their own countries, mainly from rural to urban areas, as well as across borders. The main reason for choosing to be a migrant is to seek a better life by finding a better job. Also, the driving forces of migration in today's world are wages, human security and work opportunities. For these reasons the number of immigrants is constantly increasing year on year. Hence, immigration has become a significant research topic in recent years and a global issue for all countries.

Almost all countries at present are affected by migrants. As a result, international migration has become a recognized feature of contemporary social and economic life globally. It has both positive and negative features and opportunities for the countries and individuals involved (Piper, 2005). According to the UN (United Nations) Population Division, there has been a steady growth in migration with an estimated 175 million migrants today. 60% of these migrants live in more developed, and 40% in less developed regions. In contrast, nearly one in every 70 persons in developing countries is a migrant (Kawar, 2004). Moreover, with globalization resulting in the increased movement of individuals around the world, immigration has

become a noteworthy political concern in most industrialized countries (Milner and Tingley, 2011).

Worldwide, migrants make up roughly 3.5 percent of the global population, about half of whom are women, despite the common misapprehension that it is men who migrate (Jolly, Reeves and Piper, 2005). The reason for this misconception is that many migrants are women who seem not to be socially considered as part of the 'workforce' because they tend to engage in care work, such as domestic work, child-rearing, or other forms of household activities that take place in the home or in hotels and hospitals. Thus, their jobs are often under-paid and valued.

Besides this gender perspective, we should mention that there is an increasing female share of immigration in OECD countries. The percentage of women in the migrant population (both permanent and temporary migrants) has been increasing in the post-war period, and now women make up the majority of international migrants. According to Zlotnik (1998), the number of female migrants in the world increased by 63% from 35 million to 57 million between 1965 and 1990, and increased 8% more than was the case with male migrants. In the United States, 53.5% of newly admitted immigrants were women in 1998 (Oishi, 2002).

These tendencies are defined in and by the social and cultural assemblies where people live. Meanwhile, migration is actually gender-structured, because men and women migrate for different reasons, and migration has different consequences for men and women in both sending and receiving communities (Dugbazah, 2009). Moreover, in recent times international migration flows by gender have developed in response to factors such as immigration legislation, and gender-selective demand for foreign labour with changing gender relations in countries of origin. Different factors have often worked together to increase the proportion of women in migration flows. As a result, the feminization of migration has been documented as a phenomena at the worldwide level (Castles and Miller, 2003).

Between 2000 and 2008, before the fiscal and economic crisis, migration streams to OECD countries increased significantly by more than 33%. This increase was observed in various OECD countries (i.e. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States), but even more so in several European countries, remarkably in southern Europe and Ireland. In the five years previous to 2005/06, OECD countries received more than 16 million new migrants and the migrant population increased by more than 20% (Widmaier and Dumont, 2011). Furthermore, in almost all OECD countries the mainstream of new arrivals is due to family reconciliation, and the other main category of immigrants are those who come primarily to work. As regards the skill characteristics of the foreign population, educational attainment levels of immigrants have previously been below those of citizens in many OECD countries, conceivably also due to vigorous immigration policies aiming to attract low-skilled labour (Coppel, 2001).

The notion of gender was introduced to social science in order to emphasize the difference between socially and biologically defined sexes. It includes both men's and women's active characterisation in a society and their ideas about 'maleness' and 'femaleness'. Through these ideas, gender produces and then institutionalizes asymmetries on the basis of gender. In other words, gender relations are instantaneously produced and are reproduced by social repetition (Carling, 2005). More reliable evidence on migrants and migration tendencies are needed and are important in order to develop evidence-based policies, to inform public opinion, and to fight against widely held misconceptions (OECD, 2013).

What are immigrants' main characteristics? How do they contribute to their host and origin societies? How does the role of immigrants evolve over time? These and other main research questions should be answered to plan the future of migration, to influence the opportunities for migration, and to address its conflicts.

The aim of this study is to discover the gender differences of immigration in OECD countries. Furthermore, the study shows the proportion of men and women migrants by their labour status (employed, unemployed and inactive), and also aims to demonstrate differences in gender by educational attainment.

2. Theoretical Background

While migration regarding gender differences has for long been an invisible issue in policies, especially at the EU level, research projects have been common at the domestic, European and global levels (Bach, 2009). Furthermore, gender as a social construct that organizes families into males and females can provide outstanding explanations of the reasons, progression and influencing factors of the migration patterns of both genders. Moreover, the incorporation of a gender perception into improving policies and programs can contribute to their efficiency and sustainability (Omelaniuk, 2005). However, migration is sometimes perceived as a principally male movement, with women left behind, even though, in both intercontinental and internal migration, female migration has been almost as great as male migration overall. For more than 40 years, female migrants have been almost as numerous as their male counterparts. In 1960 there were 35 million female migrants and 40 million male migrants; by 2000, although the total number of migrants had more than doubled, the gap between females and males remained about the same: 85 million female migrants versus 90 million male migrants (Jolly, Bell, Narayanaswamy, 2003). Although there has always been some female component to migration flows, over the last 20 years the gender equilibrium of international migration flows has changed noticeably, in response to a number of factors, including gender-selective demand for foreign labour, economic development, and subsequent changes in gender relations both in countries of origin and countries of destination (Badkar, Callister, Krishan, Didham and Bedford, 2007).

In practical terms, women's contribution to the labour market has been less than men's. Women and young people are often at a disadvantage in labour markets around the world (Oláh and Pakurár, 2013). While the gap has been reduced over the past few decades, considerable differences remain. This modification has noteworthy consequences for economic growth. For example, employment based immigration progressively favours those with advanced education, methodological or technical skills, or wealth (Fitzpatrick, 1997). Furthermore, three main factors lead to gender separation in terms of access to economic opportunities among agricultural workers, entrepreneurs, and wage workers: (1) gender differences in the use of time (primarily resulting from differences in care responsibilities), (2) gender differences in access to productive contributions (particularly land and credit), and (3) gender differences stemming from market and institutional failures (World Development Report, 2012).

2.1. Neo-Classic Migration Theory

Based on the neoclassical theory of the labour market, Lewis, Hicks, Harris and Todara set out the so-called neo-classical macroeconomic theory, which today is

undoubtedly the best known theory of international migration (Olejárová, 2007). The model puts special emphasis on the labour market measurement of migration, and essentially relates migration-induced population changes to the relative income (or wage) and employment situation found in the districts of origin and of destination (Mitze, 2012). Furthermore, current neo-classical economic theory can be used to explain international migration currents within the European Union, as these flows are also less encumbered by restrictions (Jennisen, 2006). In addition, labour migration has been the focus of much attention in economic geography and regional science. This is largely due to the fact that it has traditionally played an important role in regional development and in the spatial economy as a whole. While there are many attitudes to labour migration modelling, much of contemporary migration analysis is based upon neoclassical economic theory. Correctly, the nations of utility and resource distribution which are crucial to the neoclassical scheme are often key assumptions in the analysis of labour migration (Olligschlaeger, 1986).

As a result, the neoclassical discussion of immigration has generally focused on the performance of a single worker as he or she compares employment opportunities across regions and chooses the location that maximizes the present value of expected life-time earnings. Most migration decisions, however, are not made by single workers, but by families. Migration decisions, therefore, should not be based on whether a particular member of the household is better off at the destination than at the origin, but rather on whether the family as a whole (nuclear and even extended) will benefit (Kubirsi, 2006). The decision is taken by using the classical behavioural push-pull-model with intervening obstacles. Poverty, social exclusion, unemployment and an insufficient housing situation are examples of push-factors, while the prospects of higher income, getting a (better) job, better access to services and better housing are examples of pull-factors. Gender differences in migration relate to how men and women are affected by push- and pull-factors in the areas of origin and destination (Kocziszky et al., 2012). Moreover, neoclassical theory suggests that women earn less than men because they have lower levels of human capital - mainly education, training and on-the-job experience - and therefore lower labour productivity (Máté, 2014a). For example, because some women interrupt their employment to marry, and then bear and rear children, employers are said to be reluctant to invest in the training of women. Also, for parents and the women themselves there is said to be less incentive to invest in education and training. Periods of withdrawal from the labour force mean that women accumulate less work experience than men and that their skills tend to depreciate more (House, 1995).

2.2. Dual Labour Market Theory

According to the dual labour market theory the market consists of two segments. Workers belonging to the first segment receive relatively high wages and have stable jobs. Workers belonging to the second segment have relatively low wages, work at unstable jobs and change jobs more frequently (Launow, 2004). Moreover, a growing body of empirical research has documented persistent divisions among American workers: divisions by race, sex, educational credentials, industry grouping, and so forth. These groups seem to operate in different labour markets, with different working conditions, different promotional opportunities and wages, and different market institutions (Reich, Gordon and Edward, 1973). Thus, the dual labour market theory posits that international migration is the result of a permanent demand for foreign labour, which is inherent to the economic structure of developed countries.

In accordance with this theory, wages not only reflect conditions of supply and demand, but also confer status and prestige (Maresová, 1999).

The dual labour market theory maintains parts of the Doeringer Piore (1971) model, but expands its explanations as to why certain groups in society, such as women and ethnic minorities, are segmented into different labour markets (Rapino, 2008). However, no evidence of segmentation was found in the women's labour market using a pooled sample of men and women from 1976 to 1984 (Meyer and Mukerjee, 2007). In dual labour market theory women and men earn different amounts because they tend to work within different segments of the labour market. According to dual labour market theory, the market is organized into two different sectors, one the "primary market", the other the "secondary market". The primary market is comprised of top level executive and professional positions. The secondary market is comprised of working-class, clerical work, skilled and blue-collar work. The gender segregation of occupations within both the primary and secondary sectors has led some writers to suggest that gender also needs to be considered as one of the dimensions on which the labour market is segmented. The existence of two relatively separate labour markets for men and women is seen by some as an important determinant of the lower earnings of women. To the extent that women's occupational choices are restricted and there is an oversupply of candidates for women's jobs, women can be considered as 'crowded' into these occupations. According to such an 'overcrowding model', wages are lower for occupations which are highly feminised, since women must compete against each other for relatively few jobs in what is essentially an artificially restricted, overcrowded segment of the labour market. Similarly, women do not compete with men for a large number of jobs considered to be 'male' jobs, which helps maintain the higher wages of these jobs (House, 1995). Barron and Norris argue that whilst men are employed in both sectors, they are mainly employed in the primary sector. Women, on the other hand, are mainly employed in the secondary sector (with a number of important and significant exceptions mainly involving single or childless married women). There are a number of explanations for this 'gendering of the workplace' advanced by Barron and Norris.

As a result, dual labour market theory implies that in the primary market the turnover is lower and job stability is higher than in the secondary market. However, less educated workers, e.g. immigrants, tend to work in low skill-intensive industries (Máté, 2014b). Furthermore, in the secondary market human capital should not have a significant influence on turnover, whereas in the primary market the relationship between market turnover and human capital must be positive (Launow, 2004).

2.3. Human Capital

Approximations are based on the standard specification of an earnings occupation, extended by years of residence, which is a measure of host country specific human capital (HC) (Dustmann, 1999). Hence, it is frequently believed that the accumulation of human capital and access to physical and financial capital are among the main determinants of economic growth. It is also widely accepted that a lack of these resources (along with the inability to expand them) are potential reasons behind the delay of many poor countries in achieving development (Checci et al., 2007). Moreover, human capital is noteworthy in the process of immigration. Migrants often orient their human capital development strategy to obtain specific competencies to increase their prospects for recruitment abroad, focusing on skills

that are in demand in foreign labour markets, or preparing for specific overseas requirements (OECD, 2015).

According to human capital theory, one's incentive to invest in training is directly proportional to the time one expects to work over a lifetime. A spectacular rise in women's labour force contribution relative to men's implies that women's human capital investments should intensify compared to men's. In turn, rising female human capital investments relative to male investments suggest a narrowing in the gender wage gap. Thus, during the period 1890 to 2001, women's earnings should have grown relative to men; and indeed, women's relative earnings did grow during this period. From 1890 to the present, female incomes rose from just over 30% of male earnings in 1890 to close to 80% in 2001, just as the human capital model predicts (Polachek, 2004).

However, male and female workers still differ in their individual characteristics. In general, men have more labour market knowledge and seniority and less part-time employment. Men and women also tend to differ in their fields of study and in the selection of which college courses they can attend (Magnusson, 2010). As a result of differences in human capital men and women have different wages. Most of the time, men's wages are higher than women's wages. But in recent years women's wages in the labour market have also increased. Therefore, part of the unexplained gender wage gap could be the result of differences between men and women in their job search efforts, caused by differences in earnings (Reimer and Schröder, 2006).

3. Data and Methodology

This research uses data from the database on the OECD (OECD, 2017) website. For processing statistics, the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used. Cross-tabulation was created with the SPSS, to answer the question of whether there are any important gender differences for migrants in terms of labour force status and educational attainment in OECD countries. Additionally, cross-tabulation is used for explaining consequences.

4. Results

Changing labour markets have improved both opportunities and pressures for women and men to migrate globally in larger numbers. Their labour market positioning and skills must be examined in relation to gender separated labour markets in the countries of origin as well as countries of destination (Piper, 2005).

In addition, gender differences in terms of access to economic opportunities are often discussed in relation to gender differences in labour market influence. Moreover, men and women have different roles in the labour market. These differences are seen in the numbers of men and women in the labour force, as well as the types of professions they choose, and their comparative incomes or hourly wages. According to the literature, noticeable aspects that affect pay include education, job experience, hours of work and so on.

According to Table 1, the number of employed migrants is 86,990 (35.1 % of the total), while 69,381 (28%) are unemployed, and 91,550 (36.9%) inactive. The total number for female labour migrants is 35.7%, and the proportion of employed female migrants is also lower (35.1%). In accordance with this result males are more likely to be employed than females in OECD countries. In the total labour force, male

employment stands at 51.1%, and female employment at 48.9%. This result undoubtedly shows that male migrants are more likely to be employed than female migrants in the labour force in OECD countries. As we analyse unemployment, the results are the same as before, i.e. male migrants are more likely to be unemployed than females. In the total labour force, male unemployment stands at 50.5%, and female unemployment at 49.5%. Moreover, the number of inactive female migrants, at 50.8%, is higher than the number of inactive males, at 49.2%.

Table 1: Cross table of immigrants by labour force status by gender

| | | | Labour Force Status (LFS) | | | Total |
|----------|--------------|--|---------------------------|------------|----------|--------|
| | | | Employed | Unemployed | Inactive | |
| Sex Male | Count | | 44453 | 35005 | 45082 | 124540 |
| | % within Sex | | 35.7% | 28.1% | 36.2% | 100.0% |
| | % within LFS | | 51.1% | 50.5% | 49.2% | 50.2% |
| Female | Count | | 42537 | 34376 | 46468 | 123381 |
| | % within Sex | | 34.5% | 27.9% | 37.7% | 100.0% |
| | % within LFS | | 48.9% | 49.5% | 50.8% | 49.8% |
| Total | Count | | 86990 | 69381 | 91550 | 247921 |
| | % within Sex | | 35.1% | 28.0% | 36.9% | 100.0% |
| | % within LFS | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: Estimations based on OECD (2017).

Note: according to the Pearson Chi-Square tests (63.470 significant at 0.01 p-level), there is a significant association between the gender and the labour status of migrants.

Table 2: Cross table of immigrants by educational attainment and place of birth

| | | | Educational Attainment (EA) | | | | Total |
|----------|--------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------|--------|
| | | | ISCED 0/1/2 | ISCED 3/4 | ISCED 5a/5b | ISCED 6 | |
| Sex male | Count | | 29719 | 30637 | 28881 | 19630 | 108867 |
| | % within Sex | | 27.3% | 28.1% | 26.5% | 18.0% | 100.0% |
| | % within EA | | 50.1% | 50.2% | 50.1% | 51.1% | 50.3% |
| female | Count | | 29601 | 30340 | 28711 | 18761 | 107413 |
| | % within sex | | 27.6% | 28.2% | 26.7% | 17.5% | 100.0% |
| | % within EA | | 49.9% | 49.8% | 49.9% | 48.9% | 49.7% |
| Total | Count | | 59320 | 60977 | 57592 | 38391 | 216280 |
| | % within Sex | | 27.4% | 28.2% | 26.6% | 17.8% | 100.0% |
| | % within EA | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: Estimations based on OECD (2017).

Notes: 1 = ISCED 0/1/2 Pre-primary/Primary/Lower secondary education, 2 = ISCED 3 and 4 (Upper) secondary/Post-secondary non-tertiary education, 3 = ISCED 5A/5B First stage of tertiary education (Bachelor and Master), 4 = ISCED second stage of tertiary education (PhD). According to the Pearson Chi-Square tests (12.079 significant at 0.01 p-level), there is a significant association between the gender and the educational attainment of migrants.

Table 2 shows the educational attainment in terms of gender differences of immigration in OECD countries. According to this table, male migrants are less educated than female migrants. 27.3% of male migrants, and 27.6% of female migrants have pre-primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 0/1/2). With secondary education (ISCED 3 and 4), the proportions are 28.1% for males, and 28.2% for females. Of those migrants with a higher education qualification 26.5% of males and 26.7% of females have a bachelor or master level qualification, while for a PhD qualification, the figures are 18% for males and 17.5% for females. This table shows that at almost every level of educational attainment male migrants are more educated than female migrants.

5. Conclusion

Since the 1960s, international migration theory has certainly become more gender sensitive, moving from the predominant view of female migrants as simply the wives and children of migrants to incorporating explanations of the unique experiences of women migrants themselves. However, in an effort to correct the 'invisibility' of women in migration theory, there is a risk that researchers will begin to over-emphasize the migration experience of women.

The aim of this research is to show immigration gender differences in OECD countries. According to our results, males are more likely to be employed than females. Moreover, the number of inactive female migrants is higher than that of males. There are many reasons for these phenomena. Firstly, people generally migrate from rural areas to urban areas, and rural areas have a patriarchal structure. For this reason, in rural areas generally women do not work, or do less work, than males. Even when they move to another country women are expected to stay at home instead of working. Secondly, marital status, educational level, health status, age, and the number of children in the household aged 3 years or less can all have an effect on the phenomenon, as well.

Nevertheless, we found at almost every level of educational attainment that male migrants are more educated than female migrants. Consequently, the educational level of female migrants can be enhanced in destination countries. Authorities can encourage female migrants to improve their educational level and also upgrade their skills in the labour force. The most significant proposal concerns language. Most female migrants do not know how to speak the native language or the most commonly used second language, i.e. English. This also makes it hard to find a job in the labour market. Nevertheless, destination countries can open some language schools for both genders, which will support migrants in learning the destination countries' language. After solving this problem it will be easier for female migrants to seek jobs, and it may decrease the number of inactive members of the labour force, as well.

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