

CHALLENGES OF UKRAINIAN FEMALE IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN IN HOST COUNTRIES

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The article presents the investigation of problems and difficulties of Ukrainian female migrants in Turkey and Poland. A survey was conducted in Turkey among women in several parts of the country. In Poland data from the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy - Ministerstwa Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (MRPiPS) was used.

Around the end of the 20th and the start of the 21st century migration of women from Ukraine abroad became possible as an independent and personal choice. Ukrainian women have always been a very strong and hard-working part of the society. They have endured wars, revolutions, genocide, famine and the communist past. After the destruction of the “Iron Curtain” of the communist past, Ukrainians began to seek better opportunities for jobs and living abroad. This research has explored and analysed challenges, problems and reasons that forced Ukrainian women to go abroad, in this case to Poland and Turkey, and their opportunities, prospects, and rights for social security etc.

Data and methodology of the research. With the goal of exploring problems and prospects of Ukrainian female migrants in Turkey we have conducted unique research among women who are living in Istanbul, Izmir, Antalya and Ankara. Therefore in this article we used primary statistical data collected from our own questionnaires and interviews with Ukrainian female migrants, obtained by quantitative research methods (questionnaires) and qualitative research methods (semi-structured interviews). We used secondary statistical data from the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy (Danych Ministerstwa Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej – MRPiPS) [1] to explore problems of Ukrainian female migration in Poland.

Problems of Ukrainian female migrants in their country of origin and in host countries. Ukrainian women try to find better opportunities abroad because of problems in their country of origin - unemployment, poverty, low wages and pension, debts, domestic violence, the war, etc. In this case reasons that forced Ukrainian women to go abroad are needs in Ukrainian families; job abroad as forced work; violence in Ukrainian families; the interest in being abroad; marriage to foreign men; self-fulfillment abroad; better future for children; medical purposes; political persecution etc.

Ukrainian women who have lived their whole lives under socialism and then decide to go to capitalist countries, very often cannot adapt and integrate very fast into these societies because the majority of these female immigrants do not speak foreign languages. The laws of host countries mean that very often the women do not have visas or have them only for temporary periods, and because of this they sometimes become victims of violence, discrimination, harassment, slavery or Human Trafficking when they are forced to work as prostitutes in host countries. Of course, there is no entitlement to social security for them in host countries. Very often they can stay in host countries not only illegally, but even without their passports and therefore are even unable to return to their country of origin. Currently more and more Ukrainian women have gone abroad with some of these goals, either to find jobs or husbands, or seeking all these opportunities together [2-6].

Differences in opportunities for Ukrainian female migrants in Poland and Turkey. Poland and Turkey are the nearest countries to the Ukrainian border and in these host countries female migrants try to find better opportunities and prospects for life [7–11].

We may divide Ukrainian women who decide to go abroad into groups such as:

- intellectuals and workers,
- brides and housewives,
- professionals and students,
- business women and scientists,
- victims of Human Trafficking, prostitutes etc.

The majority of Ukrainian women go to Poland to work; they can find jobs there from cleaners to scientists. In 2014 the number of job applications from them, according to the data of the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy was 143956, and this number of job applications will increase because of the situation in the Ukraine.

The situation in Turkey is different, and currently many young and educated Ukrainian women with Graduate degrees are going to Turkey to marry. The majority of them does not work and do not develop their careers in the host country for various reasons.

Problems of Ukrainian female migrants in Poland. According to the data of the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy (Danych Ministerstwa Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (MRPiPS), during the period 2007–2014 the number of Ukrainian female migrants seeking an official job in Poland increased eighteenfold, from 7968 Ukrainian women in 2007 to 143956 in 2014. Of all Ukrainian migrants in Poland 39–49% were female, and the majority of these women are under 40 years old. The majority of Ukrainian female migrants working officially in Poland during 2007–2010 were in:

- agriculture (permanent or seasonal work),
- domestic service, trade, industry, food service, the hotel industry,
- manufacturing, information and communication, financial and insurance activities, etc.

According to data from the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy (Danych Ministerstwa Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (MRPiPS), during the period 2011–2014 Ukrainian female migrants obtained the following number of work permits: in 2011 – 7376; in 2012 – 8429; in 2013 – 8956; in 2014 – 10300.

Therefore, Ukrainian female migrants in Poland obtained 18-24% of all work permits in this country for foreigners, and constituted 40.9% of all Ukrainian immigrants during the period 2011-2014.

The ratio between the number of applications from Ukrainian female migrants and the number of work permits that Ukrainian female migrants obtained in Poland in 2014 is 7.15%.

However, the majority of Ukrainian women in Poland cannot work legally and, so, they are working illegally in the host country. This is the primary problem of Ukrainian female migrants in Poland. The second problem is the level of salaries as they receive even lower salaries than female migrants who have official work permits in Poland.

Problems of Ukrainian female migrants in Turkey. This group of Ukrainian female migrants in Turkey consists of thousands of women and it is possible to separate these women according to their reasons for staying in the host country:

- a job and career,
- labor migration,
- marriage,
- business, new opportunities etc.

It is necessary to divide this group of women into further categories:

- professional women, who are staying in Turkey because of their contracts of employment;
- business women who are owners of companies and employers;
- female labour migrants, who are working legally or illegally in Turkey in the domestic sector of the economy or similar;
- female victims of Human Trafficking or crime and prostitutes;
- female – seasonal workers in the hotels of the Turkish tourist trade;
- the wives of Turkish men.

Turkey is a specific and a special country for Ukrainian female migrants. In this host country other mentality, norms of the society, the religion, and traditions in families and in the country exist. Not all Ukrainian female migrants can adapt and absolutely accept these differences. With the aim of exploring challenges and problems of Ukrainian female migrants in Turkey we conducted a survey among women there and we wanted to know about their causes, problems, difficulties, opportunities, prospects, achievements and outcomes in the host country. The questionnaire of the survey comprised questions about their ages, jobs, children, educational level, employment, pension opportunities, and religion.

The women-respondents were Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, the majority of them were under 40 years old and with a Graduate degree, and they were living in different regions of Turkey: Istanbul, Izmir, Antalya and Ankara.

As we have already noted, the nationalities of the participants of the survey were Ukrainians (95%) and Crimean Tatars (5%). The majority of them have Ukrainian citizenship (68%), but 32% of them have obtained their second Turkish citizenship even though it is prohibited by Ukrainian law. The majority of Ukrainians are women under 40 years old – 72%. The purpose for the majority of them of coming to Turkey is marriage (75%), and because of traditions of the host country 7% of them have changed their religion from Orthodoxy to Muslim. Out of all the respondents of the survey, 38% have been living in the host country 10 years and more, and the level of knowledge of the Turkish language for the majority (56%) of them is native and advanced.

Most of these women adapted to the host country in first few years. The majority of women, 77%, are married, and for 62% of women this is their first marriage.

Children of Ukrainian female migrants. The majority of women-respondents of the survey have children; 72% of them, and one woman among them has three children (2% of all the women who have children), 28% of the women have two children, and 70% of the women have one child. But only 58% of children were born in Turkey; 28% of children were born in the host country of their mothers, and 14% of children were born in Ukraine but they are children with Turkish nationality.

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Of the children of Ukrainian female migrants 40% are boys and 60% are girls. 58% of these children were born in the host country and are Muslim, but the mothers of all the children (39%) didn't mark it in the questionnaire of the survey. Therefore, 25% of children are orthodox, 36% are Muslim.

The ages of children of Ukrainian female migrants, who were respondents of the survey, are 0–5 years – 36%; 5–9 years – 25%; 10–19 years – 25% etc.

The educational level of women. The educational level of women from Ukraine is also very important to explore. So, in the study we have looked at this educational level of women from Ukraine in Turkey, their opportunities to work (legally) and in their professions.

According to the results of the survey, 5% of women are PhD holders; 82% of women have a Graduate degree; and 13% have a College Degree. 42% of women are working, but only 36% of them are working in their professions. 82% women have the opportunity to work. A very important achievement of the research is the study of the experiences of women in respect of discrimination or harassment within their Turkish families and the host society. Therefore, 28% of women replied that they have experienced discrimination or harassment in the host society, and also 13% of women answered the same about their Turkish families.

Comparison of social insurance for Ukrainian female migrants in Turkey and Poland. The majority of Ukrainian women who are wives of Turkish men are not working in Turkey, and they are dependent on their husbands and their social insurance (insurance holders) because according to the Turkish Social Security and Universal Health Insurance Law No.5510 [12], which is also known as the Turkish Social Security Law (the date of enactment of the Law was on May 31, 2006 and the date of entry into force was on October 01, 2008), these women have rights to social security in this host country. In this case, in particular the Article 34 of the Act No.5510, female migrants who are wives or widows of Turkish men and their children can be protected by this Law (Amended on April 17, 2008 – 5754/21st Art.). Therefore Ukrainian wives or widows of Turkish men have the right to receive pensions through the entitlement of their husbands anyway. At the same time there is no Agreement between the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine on social security.

In Poland there exists the Agreement between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine on social security that was signed on May 18, 2012 in Kiev between Poland and Ukraine and another Agreement concerning the mutual employment of workers that was signed on February 16, 1994 in Warsaw [13]. The Agreement would protect Ukrainian female migrants in case of their legal employment in Poland because this time could be added to their pension entitlement in Ukraine. However the majority of these women are working illegally in Poland.

Conclusions. The article presents the results of the comparative characteristics in the situations of Ukrainian female migrants in Turkey and Poland. In Turkey the majority of these women are wives of Turkish men, they are young women under 40 years old, with a very good level of education. Common problems that they have in the host country are lack of jobs, their total dependency on their husbands and very often they have been forced to change their religion. The majority of them cannot work in general or legally and they can receive social security only through the entitlement of their husbands who are insurance holders due to the Turkish Social Security and Universal Health Insurance Law No.5510.

An analysis was also conducted about the situation of Ukrainian female migrants in Poland. The biggest problems of Ukrainian female migrants in Poland are connected with finding legal jobs because the period of work, according to the Agreement between Ukraine and Poland on social security, signed on May 18, 2012 in Kiev, may be added to future pension entitlement for them in Ukraine. However according to data from the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy (Danych Ministerstwa Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (MRPiPS) the ratio of applications and work permits for Ukrainian female migrants in Poland in 2014 was only 7% because the majority of these women are working illegally in this host country.

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