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Locally Neglected, Globally Engaged: Ukrainian Women on the Move

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Feminization of International Migration

- International migration is increasingly “globalizing, accelerating, diversifying and feminizing” (Castles and Miller, 2003).
- The share of women increases in response to changes in the international division of “reproductive work” and emergence of globalized industries built upon work and “care services” provided by women.



Need for caring services is caused by a combination of factors:



- increased participation of women in the labour force;
- demographic aging of the population;
- major health crises;
- deconstruction of extended and nucleus families;
- unequal share of domestic chores between the sexes.

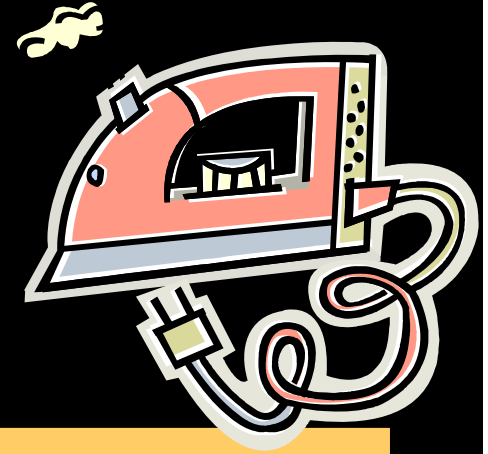
Emergence of “care economy”

- “care deficit” (Hochschild 1997) - “care crises” - the collapse of welfare states – responsibility for care work is pushed out from institutions to the family – primarily women and girls;
- demand for care labour force in postindustrial societies - “global care chains” (Yeates, 2005) or „care economy“ (Folbre, 1995) – “global service economy” (Gershuni, Miles 1983).





Care economy



- Represents allocation of scarce resources (mostly work) contributing to the welfare of others, within and outside household;
- No reciprocation and remuneration;
- Based on specific activities (child care, providing for others' needs);
- In low-class families - performed by women of the families;
- In middle classes - performed by employed paid carers.

Care economy



- requires external work force to compensate for a shrinking labour market of domestic workers;
- these positions are being increasingly taken by migrant women from developing and transitional countries.

Migrant women are preferred as care workers because:

- cheap cost of their labour as a result of predominantly illegal and insecure position in the labour market;
- having left their own families at home, they have no daily care obligations in hosting countries and hence can perform “emotional labour” more efficiently (Degiuli, 2007)

“Care migration”

- is based on “care drain” (Hochschild, 2000);
- leads to the outflow of women as major providers of care service in sending countries.



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Three major actors in migration process:

- **Hosting societies** – benefit: immigrant female work in low-paying industries (garment, electronic assembly, services, domestic and sex work).
- **Sending societies** - benefit: fees and remittances, which finance the economy and relieve unemployment.
- **Migrant women** - exploited, sexually abused, deprived of basic human rights, treated as scapegoats by racist backlash movements.

Ukraine

- little understanding and ignorance of the dramatic situation of Ukrainian women-migrants;
- ex-President Leonid Kuchma called Ukrainian women working in Italy “prostitutes”.



Theoretical Framework

- Labor migration is both globally and locally gendered phenomenon;
- “feminization” of migration refers less to an increase in numbers of migrant women, and more to the qualitative change in their role as providers;
- feminization of migration is a part of a new international division of reproductive labor brought about by globalization;
- together with quantitative study, also qualitative, interpretative, i.e. “soft” methods should be used.

Gender-sensitive data on Ukrainian labour migration



- ❑ Out of 7 mln of the total stock of Ukrainians working abroad women make 5 mln;
- ❑ Feminisation of migration to Southern Europe
- ❑ Women predominate in: Spain - 65% of, in Greece - 75,5%, Italy - 90,2%;
- ❑ Women predominate among people involved in petty trade abroad - 53,6%;
- ❑ Men predominate in: Portugal - 68%, Russia – 60,4%, Germany - 60.0%.



Motivations for Migration

- Motivations are triggered by the outspread of poverty and low cost of the workforce;
- Principle motivations:
- to secure employment to be able to provide for migrants' own every-day living and to support family members left behind at home.
- to accumulate finances for higher education for children;
- to accumulate finances for housing into invest into real property estate;
- Male demonstrate a higher readiness to migration than females.

Effect for women migrants (1):



- labour rights are largely unprotected, because many work illegally;
- many have no permanent employment and have to drift from job to job, which makes the situation economically and socially insecure;
- health condition often deteriorates, sexual and reproductive rights are unprotected, emotional wellbeing in many cases is at stake

Effect for women migrants (2):



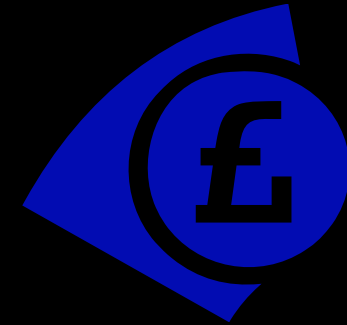
Although for many women migration may have an empowering effect, gender equity in families is not advanced because after coming back home women either return to the same traditional gender contract they had before migration, or their families collapse because they don't find an old type of gender contract acceptable for themselves, while their husbands are not ready to agree to their new roles of providers.

Effect for family and community :



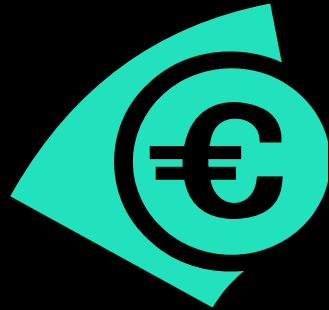
- devastating effect;
- leads to emotional distancing between family members, both between spouses and between parents and children;
- erodes family connections and ruins marriages;
- often results in children's social orphanage, criminalization and juvenile delinquency;
- encourages social misadaptation and life-risky behavior of husbands of migrant women (alcoholism, drug-addiction, road accidents, violence, unprotected sex);
- deprives many families of a possibility to provide necessary support to their own elder generation

Economic effect. Positive:



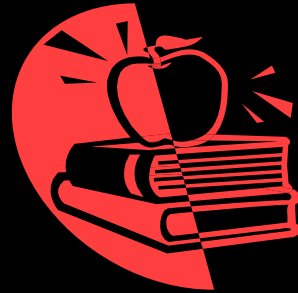
- Increases financial wellbeing, economic security and quality of life of migrants' families;
- contributes to elimination of poverty, promotes financial, material and housing conditions, consumption patterns, possibilities to provide better education for children, quality health-care, recreation and leisure;
- 48.29% of interviewees confirmed the improvement of their financial condition and of possibilities to provide for their families and children;

Economic effect. **Negative:**



- although economic wellbeing of migrants' families generally increases, 10.20% of migrants did not confirm any advancements in their economic status;
- improvements in the financial situation of families left behind at home has a reverse economic and ethical effect:
 - remittances sent by migrants to Ukraine cause high inflation in the country and thus lower consuming capacities of migrants' families;
 - consumerist attitude of home-staying family members to women bread-winners.

Cultural and civic effect. Positive:



- allows to acquire economic knowledge and managerial skills;
- increases cultural capital and intercultural tolerance;
- promotes linguistic competence;
- encourages political literacy and responsibility;
- the social remittances of women advance their human rights, promote socioeconomic status and raise self-esteem.

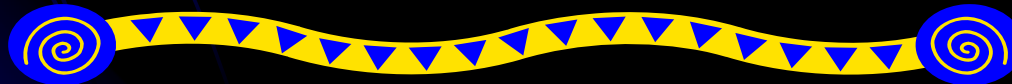


Cultural and civic effect.

Negative:



The number of those who admitted these personal changes are far too low – only 8.39% of women-migrants noted that migration allowed them to develop their worldview and raise self-esteem, no more than 4.53% benefited by learning a foreign language.



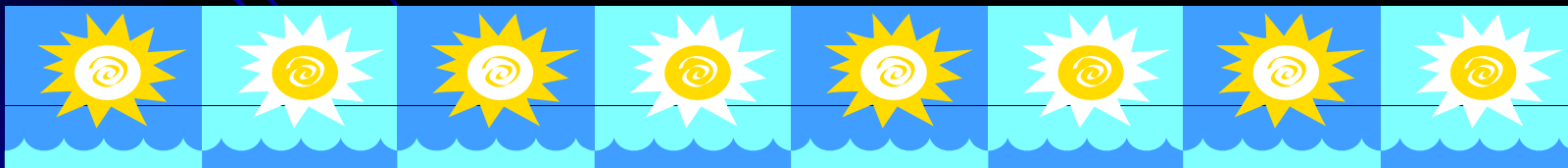
Conclusions (1)

- Research findings contradict the World Bank's stance about "migration as a "triple win": for 'sending' and 'receiving' countries and for migrants themselves" (2006).
- If to put together costs and benefits of labour migration, than for sending countries and migrants it comes out if not a "triple disadvantage" (Piper, 2005) than more of a "zero-sum game" (Agunias, 2007).



Conclusions (2)

- In contrast to the WB stance of the “triple win”, my research confirms the opinions that:
- “migration can have devastating consequences especially for women” (UNIFEM, 2006);
- “with the overall increasing feminization of international migration the vulnerability of women migrants to discrimination, exploitation and abuse is also likely to increase” (ILO, 2003).



General conclusion

- Labour migration, which is sometimes represented as a “remedy” and a “gift of fate” in times of economic hardships and turmoil, actually turns out to be rather a “poisoned gift” than a “dream realized”.
- If migration can ever be seen as a remedy, then it must be admitted that it allows only to obscure the symptoms, but not to cure sending societies of socio-economic diseases which push people away from their native places.