

Gender stratification in global migration flows

Liudmyla Herman

West Ukrainian National University, Ternopil

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4011-9765>

Abstract. *Under the influence of a number of global factors, the need to study the peculiarities of gender stratification in the context of modern global migration processes is becoming more urgent. The emphasis is placed on the growing feminisation of international migration, as well as on the structural inequalities faced by women migrants at different stages of mobility - from the decision to leave to adaptation in the destination countries. This leads to the justification of the need for a gender-sensitive migration policy that would take into account the social, economic and legal challenges faced by women migrants in the globalised world. Recommendations on integration policy and protection of women's rights in a cross-border context are offered.*

Keywords: *gender stratification, feminisation of migration, global migration flows, migration policy.*

In the twenty-first century, international migration has become not only a socio-economic, but also a civilisational phenomenon, which is one of the leading features of the globalised world. It reflects profound transformations in labour, demography, international relations, and social norms and roles. Among the numerous dimensions of cross-border mobility, which is increasingly affecting both developed and developing countries, the issue of gender stratification is gaining more and more attention in academic circles and among political analysts.

Gender is a key dimension that affects all stages and aspects of the migration process: from motivations for movement and the decision to migrate to patterns of mobility, the structure of social networks used by migrants, access to opportunities and resources in destination countries, and the nature of ties with the country of origin. Who migrates and who stays is largely determined not only by socio-economic factors, but also by gender roles, expectations and cultural norms in the society of origin.

The risks, vulnerabilities and needs of migrants differ significantly depending on their gender, which necessitates a gender-sensitive approach to analysing migration. Depending on their gender, individuals face different forms of discrimination, unequal access to services or protection, as well as various forms of violence, both during the process of displacement and upon arrival in the country of destination.

Moreover, characteristics such as gender identity, expression, sexual orientation and sex characteristics not only determine a person's experience in the migration context, but can also be transformed by the new social environment, legal regimes or integration policies. Thus, gender does not just accompany migration processes - it actively shapes them, creating specific trajectories of inclusion, exclusion and adaptation that require systematic analysis with a multisectoral approach.

The provisions of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration [2] and the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants emphasise the need to expand the collection and systematic analysis of migration data disaggregated by sex and age. Such an approach is key to ensuring gender sensitivity in migration policy-making, as only a comprehensive empirical base can reveal inequalities that remain hidden behind generalised indicators.

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as of mid-2024, the number of women among international migrants worldwide was about 146 million, which is approximately 48% of the total migrant population. This figure indicates that women continue to account for almost half of all international migrants, maintaining their share at a stable level in recent years: in mid-2020, it was 48.03%, while in mid-2020 it was 49.97%.

Although the overall gender distribution is relatively balanced, the share of women among migrants varies significantly by region. In particular, the lowest rates are recorded in Asia, where the share of female migrants does not exceed 42%, while in Europe this figure is the highest at around 52%. This regional differentiation is due to various socio-economic, cultural and demographic factors that affect the structure of migration flows and gender-based mobility patterns [3].

According to the International Labour Organization in 2022, the share of men among formally employed labour migrants was 102.7 million, which corresponds to 61.3% of the total international migrant labour force. Compared to 2013, when the number of male migrants was 84.2 million, there has been a significant increase in the volume of mobility among the male population. Globally, male migrants accounted for about 4.7% of the total male labour force, indicating their high representation in international labour migration.

At the same time, female migrants accounted for 38.7% of all labour migrants in 2022, equivalent to 64.9 million people. This figure also shows a positive trend compared to 2013, when the number of female migrants was 53.2 million. At the same time, their share in the total female labour force in the world was 4.5%, which is slightly lower than the corresponding figure for men. This difference can be explained by structural barriers, gender stereotypes, and women's limited access to formalised and well-paid employment internationally.

In view of this, it is important to consider not only the quantitative indicators of migrant labour market participation, but also the qualitative aspects of their employment - working conditions, social protection, legal status - which are crucial for assessing the level of economic integration and social justice in host societies.

One of the most common employment sectors for migrant women is the care economy, which covers a wide range of services related to caring for the elderly, children and people with disabilities. In countries with high levels of population ageing, the need for caregiving is constantly growing, and women from the Global South - such as the Philippines, Moldova, Ukraine and Nigeria - are becoming the main workforce in this sector.

According to the ILO, in 2022, 28.8 per cent of female migrants were employed in the care economy (compared to 12.4 per cent of male migrants). In addition, an international survey showed that the total number of care workers reached 215 million (143 million women and 72 million men), i.e. they accounted for $\approx 6.5\%$ of global employment, of which a significant proportion were migrant workers [1]

One of the key characteristics of contemporary female migration is the active involvement of women in the formation and maintenance of transnational social networks which, on the one hand, provide informational, material and psychological support, and on the other hand, contribute to the reproduction of established migration routes. These networks, which emerge through family, ethnic or religious ties, include channels for sharing information about job opportunities, accommodation, and legalisation procedures, within which women gain access to critically important resources in the country of destination.

According to data from the IOM and the Migration Data Portal, social connections remain a key element for migrant women, who, in turn, tend to demonstrate a greater reliance on such networks compared to men (with estimates of at least 41%), providing them with access to the social capital necessary for successful integration.[4]

In this context, the development and implementation of a gender-sensitive migration policy, which should not only comply with human rights principles, but also reflect the specifics of female labor migration, becomes particularly relevant.

Such a policy should include regulatory recognition of the specificities of the employment of migrant women in legal documents, strengthening state and international control over the observance of labor rights in the care sector, expanding social integration programs, ensuring access to medical, educational and legal services, as well as the development of interstate mechanisms for regulating the care labor market, taking into account gender specificities.

Therefore, the integration of a gender approach into the migration settlement system is a strategically important condition for the formation of a just, inclusive, and sustainable global order in which the rights of migrant women will be effectively protected.

References

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