

HETEROGENEITIES OF MIGRATION TO AND FROM TURKEY, 1990-2019: INCOMING YOUNG MEN AND OUTGOING EDUCATED WOMEN

Caner Özdemir¹, Dilek Yildiz², Figen Uzar Özdemir³

This paper aims at exploring the heterogeneities in migration flows to and from Turkey over the past three decades based on age, sex, and educational attainment. Additionally, it aims to explore the factors that contribute to outbound migration, with a particular focus on highly educated young women. While Turkey was mostly a sending country in terms of migration, it has evolved into a receiving and a transit country for the last three decades. On one hand, an unprecedented large number of migrants from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria moved to Turkey either to settle there or to move farther West in the last decade. On the other hand, emigration of Turkish born people has continued, though the demographic structure of the emigrant population has been changing. In this paper, we examine the migration flows from and to Turkey according to age, sex and educational status between 1990-2019 using Yildiz & Abel's (forthcoming) migration flow estimates by age, sex and education.

Preliminary analyses indicate a significant rise in both immigration to and emigration from Turkey, particularly after 2005. First, emigration from Turkey in the 1990s was mostly in the form of family unification in which many children were involved. Through the end of the 2010's, it became a combination of transit migration and labour migration. On the other hand, immigration to Turkey was quite limited in number compared to emigration. After the Syrian Civil War, the number of people moving to Turkey increased dramatically. After 2010, the majority of migrants to Turkey were males in the 20-30 age range, with primary and secondary education as their highest level of attainment. Simultaneously, there was a rapid surge in the number of individuals emigrating from Turkey. Among these emigrants, men and, particularly after 2015, women aged 25-35, and those with post-secondary education were more prevalent.

Opposed to some recent arguments in the literature, we found out that indicators like Gender Inequality Index and female labour force participation rate are negatively correlated with the rate of emigrants among highly educated women at the country level while mean years of schooling is positively correlated. We argue that gender inequality does not act as a pushing factor for emigration. Instead, in the last decades through improvements in education and skills, means of migration such as an income, education, knowledge of foreign languages, job experience or skills to emigrate has been improved for women (and also men).

¹ Corresponding Author. Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, Turkey. Department of Labour Economics and Industrial Relations. canerozdemir@beun.edu.tr

² International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Austria. Population and Just Societies Program, yildiz@iiasa.ac.at

³ Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, Turkey. Department of Sociology, figenuozdemir@beun.edu.tr