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Gender related out-migration tendencies in Northern Hungary and in Västernorrland, Sweden^{*}

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Abstract

The paper aims to analyse the out-migration of young women from the rural regions Northern Hungary and Västernorrland, Sweden. The theoretical frameworks are based upon the neoclassical macro theory of migration and the dual labour market theory in combination with the human capital theory. A qualitative method will be used in the analysis. The empirical material in this study is based upon questionnaires to identify gender related differences in migration behaviour already in the very young age groups. In-depth interviews with young women to learn more about the social reality in the region under consideration were made as well as the experiences and shared knowledge of the people living in the regions that are related to migration decisions. Also interviews with experts have been made.

The initial findings suggest that the driving forces of out-migration of young women appear connected to studies and moving to more attractive labour markets. For those who do not return the lack of employment possibilities in their profession appears to be the main reason for not returning. Some country specific results are also identified. In Northern Hungary the situation of the Roma population is different from the Hungarian population and in Västernorrland life style factors appears significant.

Keywords: young women, migration

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INTRODUCTION

Gender aspects have been largely neglected in the analysis of rural migration patterns. The out-migration of young adults has received some scientific attention, but only a few studies specifically address gender differences in migration patterns. The social and economic consequences of imbalanced sex ratios have received even less attention. Despite the long tradition of rural depopulation in almost all member states of the EU, this topic also remains under-researched (ESPON 2012).

In the international research it is recognised that women have increased their share of international migrants since 1945 (Castles & Miller 1994). Especially with regard to development theories, research on migration has undergone a feminisation process. Nevertheless lots of methodological and theoretical work remains before the research on migrating women has caught up with the research on migrating men (Kofman 1999). To better understand the processes behind migration, a short overview on the most common migration theories is given with particular regard to gender issues.

Given that the migration patterns of young women are not only a result of perceived educational and employment opportunities but also of the attractiveness of urban ways of living, the analysis of the reasons for out-migration should not be confined to a purely economic rationale. To understand the decision-making process of whether to (re-)migrate or not, it is necessary to take ideational and cultural aspects into account. Rural out-migration may be motivated by the quest for the increased personal freedom urban life-styles offer and the dissatisfaction with the social control and the absent or hesitant economic and social progress in rural areas (Rico González & Gómez García 2003). Young, well-educated women may refuse a traditional way of life and family formation which is associated with rural living and attach great importance to gender equality. "Gender issues" in rural societies, e.g. the construction of rural femininities and masculinities may be relevant for migration since "traditional" gender roles and expectations are more prevalent in rural societies (ESPON 2012).

Regions affected by deindustrialisation processes, with industrial monostructures, or predominated by agriculture and forestry often show a pronounced mismatch between young men and women. Urban labour markets, on the other hand, offer more career opportunities for women, especially in the service sector (Kröhnert & Klingholz 2007). Additionally, the gender wage gap tends to be bigger in rural areas. The neoliberal restructuring of the economy

and staff reductions in the service, education and health care sectors as well as in public administration, may exacerbate the problem of sex-selective out-migration in the future. Women's employment is still more confined to particular sectors of the economy than men's, especially in rural areas with deeply rooted traditional gender norms (ESPON 2012).

This paper aims to analyse the out-migration of young women from the rural regions Northern Hungary and Västernorrland, Sweden. This study proposes to answer the following questions: (1) what are the push and pull factors to migration, (2) are the push and pull factors perceived differently by different actors?, and (3) what are the similarities/dissimilarities between Northern Hungary and Västernorrland, Sweden regarding the push and pull factors for young women to leave?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The *neo-classical macro theory of migration* explains labour migration by wage differences and unemployment between the area of origin and the area of destination (Ranis & Fei 1961, Todaro 1976). Consequently, if one sex is over-represented amongst the migrants this can be explained by higher net gains of migration for that sex.

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 prospects of higher income, to get a (better) job, better access to services and better housing are examples of pull-factors (Lee 1966). Sex differences in migration relates to how men and women are affected by push- and pull-factors in the areas of origin and destination.

Expansive regions with a larger demand for labour than actually can be met regionally or nationally will stimulate migration; in these regions job prospects are good and the wages in the modern and expanding sector are higher than in other sectors. Labour will be transferred from economically less developed sectors to modern and knowledge-based ones (Fisher & Straubhaar 1996). When the labour demand in the expanding regions has been met, wages will be relatively lower, and unemployment relatively higher in these regions. As a result, the demand for labour will subside. Wage differentials and differences in unemployment between two regions are both push and pull factors for migration (Massey *et al.* 1993). The big difference between expanding and retarding regions is instead the employment size – in the expanding regions where the increased demand resulted in a transfer of people from the retarding regions, the amount of jobs and workers are larger than before while the contrary is

the case in the retarding regions (McCann 2005). Even these development paths are in line with the neo-classical theory even if the outcome will be a divergent development and even polarisation between differing regions as a consequence of external or internal factors or shocks. A new equilibrium is reached but the attractiveness of the regions is quite different after than before the transformation process. This means that the push and pull-factors will be quite different as "big is beautiful" often is one central ingredient among the migration motives that are associated with jobs, flexibility and urban life styles. This kind of reasoning has been developed in *human capital based economic theory* where individuals are assumed to undertake long term calculations where migration can be seen analogical with an investment in future wellbeing (Todaro 1969, 1976, 1989, Harris and Todaro, 1970). One central assumption is that the migrant is rational – at least *ex ante*.

As mentioned earlier the migrant is rational from the supply side of view according to the human capital theory simultaneously as demand side consists of several differing segments. This situation results in several labour market segments with little mobility and substitution between these, but high mobility and substitution within them (Johansson 1996). In the post-industrial society, the production factors are more complementary compared to the industrial society where they more easily substitute each other.

The *Dual Labour Market Theory* argues that most migrants originating from rural areas have a low education. Usually the migrant is unemployed or has a marginal position at the labour market in the area of origin. The person will climb in the social hierarchy in the area of origin when they emigrate – regardless of what job they pick up in the area of destination (Piore 1979). According to Morokvasic (1984), women demand less than men and constitute a more flexible labour force. For rural young men staying may be more beneficial than leaving. Rural labour markets tend to offer better job opportunities for men with low formal education, e.g. in agriculture or handicraft enterprises where manual skills and personal relationships matter more than school leaving certificates (Bye 2009). Women rely much more on formal educational credentials for their economic security than men (Corbett 2005).

The decision whether to migrate or not does not only take economic considerations into account, but has also a socio-cultural dimension. Women in rural regions where economic and social structures offer no future other than being a homemaker and mother are willing to take any job just to leave the area. In this respect, patriarchal structures and the low compatibility of family and career may constitute a major push-factor for these women (Morokvasic 1984).

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research concept of SEMIGRA included quantitative and qualitative research methods that complement each other. This approach is derived from the complexity of the research question dealing with the interrelations between regional development and migration decisions. The intention was to provide a more differentiated picture of sex-selective migration in European regions, trying to explain processes on different scales and from different angles. In that context, qualitative data is regarded as a precondition for a deeper understanding of the typologies and indicators provided by the statistical analyses on the European and the regional level. While the quantitative analyses are appropriate to point out the extent of demographic processes on the European, national, and regional levels as well as to describe the structural framework conditions, the qualitative research approach is most suitable to deal with individual pathways of regional development and the embeddedness of individual migration decisions.

The structural framework conditions like labour market, infrastructure, accessibility (generalising/quantitative) and the individual perception and interpretation of these structures (individualising/qualitative). In the frame of SEMIGRA, the main target of the qualitative research is to provide holistic explanations for unbalanced sex ratio structures and selective migration behaviour in the European Union with regard to the complexity of decision situations young men and young women living in these regions have to face.

Qualitative research is an approach that is partly open, explorative and flexible. According to this paradigm the understanding of the complexity of human behaviour and actions rather than the generalizability of results is the main target of research. Therefore the qualitative approach seems appropriate to better understand the context in which migration decisions take place and the meanings people assign to living in rural areas. Against this backdrop, in-depth interviews with young women and expert interviews have been carried out that are central for the qualitative approach of SEMIGRA. According to the qualitative paradigm not the sample size is decisive, but the quality and richness of the individual case. The principles of theoretical sampling are crucial, which means that the sample size has to fit to the research question, should be heterogenous and should include typical representatives. The aim of the interviews with young women is to learn more about the social reality in the regions under consideration as well as the experiences and shared knowledge of the people living in the regions that are related to migration decisions. A sample size between 10 and 20 interviews with young women in each case study region covering in-migrants, re-migrants, out-migrants

as well as stayers was considered to be sufficient to reflect on female migration biographies and decision situations. The life-stories of the young women should illustrate how the living situation and the image of the region are negotiated and how this is influencing individual migration decisions. This in-depth knowledge on the local level is considered to be crucial to provide differentiated explanations for the facts and processes elaborated on statistical data and to develop promising political strategies.

THE CASE STUDY REGIONS

Northern Hungary

A geographical inequality is characteristic of the labour market in Hungary: the level of employment, the rate of unemployment and the inactivity rate differ by regions. Its reason has been different in the various decades after 1989 (change of regime) (Tóthné Sikora 2007).

The region has faced severe economic and social challenges since the transition to market economy. In spite of its natural and environmental potentials, the performance of the region is very poor both in terms of economic and social progresses. Currently real struggle has been fought for economic competitiveness and for a better quality of life.

Demographic development can be characterised by the number of population. The decline in the number of population was only interrupted twice in the past twenty years. Firstly it happened in 1995, when the number of population slightly increased by 0.8 percent. The second increase was in 2001, when the Hungarian Statistical Office corrected the applied methodology of estimations after the 2001 census.

It is notable that one of the highest fertility rate indicators can be found in Northern Hungary. This is due to the fact that fertility rate is extremely high among women younger than 14 (which is three times higher than the national average) and women between 15 and 19 years (twice as high as the national average) (Darók 2006), while the fertility rate of those above 25 is lower than in Hungary (Tóth Szita – Buday-Malik 2006). This leads to the unfavourable fact that young mother get out of the education system, do not get any qualification and thus cannot reach the living standard necessary to satisfy the minimum needs. Early founding of family can be a reason for poverty and deprivation.

In 2001 during the national census there were 1 302 835 people living in the North Hungarian region, of which 682 936 women and 619 899 men. According to the Hungarian statistical office by 2010 the region's population decreased by 100 thousand people to 1 109 142, the

gender ratio did not change significantly. Compared to the 1990 base year the region's population was decreased to 91% which is the largest population decline in the country. Compared to the 1990 base year the Northern Hungarian region had the largest population decrease to 86,5% among 15-39 year old female participants, compared to the other parts of the country. Despite the nationwide decrease in the demographic index, Central Hungary shows a 5% increase in the number of women of childbearing age, which is likely due to the internal migration trends; the central region has a more attractive economy and labour market ability.

Västernorrland

Due to early and rapid industrialisation starting in the second half of the 19th century the typical image of Västernorrland is that of an industrial region dominated by large raw-material based export-oriented industries with a large share of men in the labour force. This implies that the county is of a dual character where most of the people and activities are localised in the cities and in the municipalities along the Botnia coastline. The major and historic companies, founded during the industrialisation process, have long since been merged and concentrated. Still they remain the backbone of the region's economy. In the course of structural transformation labour demand decreased in the basic industries and in recent decades, employment in these large companies has declined. Even during the upswings the concept *jobless growth* has increasingly become a major factor for the region's labour force and primarily for the male labour market. At the same time the public sector has also been restructuring and cutting back, hampering the growth of job opportunities for female labour. In combination these factors have had a significant influence on population development and the settlement pattern in Västernorrland with the population now concentrated along the Botnian coast and particularly in the Sundsvall-Härnösand corridor (Johansson & Rauhut 2012b).

The relatively old, and also ageing, population in Västernorrland County constitutes a long-term threat to the population development in the region as it may act as a push-factor for young people to out-migrate to "younger" regions. This seems to be a self-generating process of negative development spirals. The Västernorrland County reached a peak in population in the middle of 1950s, with a little more than 280000 inhabitants. Since that the number has decreased with more than 10 percent. Particularly during the last 20 years, population decrease has been very rapid and placed Västernorrland as one of the most rapidly

depopulating counties in Sweden. In Sweden migration intensities are as highest in the ages 18-24. Especially out-migration intensities for younger women are high in out-migration regions where women seem to be more frequent than younger men among the young out-migrants in Västernorrland and then especially its predominantly rural parts (Johansson & Rauhut 2012a).

DISCUSSION

Unemployment and low incomes will be push-factors and jobs, higher incomes and access to better housing will be pull-factors. Furthermore, the migration flows will be directed towards the modern and expansive economic sectors (Lee 1966). The empirical materials support this. Unemployment is high and incomes low in Västernorrland; consequently, access to housing is limited and well as prospects for the future. In Stockholm, the situation is different (Johansson & Rauhut 2012a).

In Hungary, the data supports the same as mentioned above: the critical employment conditions and the lack of jobs in the economically disadvantaged Northern Hungarian areas are serious push factors, as the problem of the gipsy-minority and the lower level security in many settlements. The region of North Hungary has the highest number of Roma population in the country; the proportion is the highest in rural areas, internal peripheries. As in Sweden, the situation of the capital city is different.

Johansson & Rauhut (2012b) conclude that the motives for leaving Västernorrland are dominated by studies and work. Youth unemployment is high in the region and for those who leave secondary school the risk of unemployment is high; for those who want to study the educational facilities for tertiary education are limited in Västernorrland. In both cases it can be assumed that the persons leaving Västernorrland have a relatively low education, i.e. an exam from secondary school. The very high share of young unemployed in Västernorrland who are in labour market programs indicate a marginal position, which is in line with the dual market theory (Piore 1979). The person will climb in the social hierarchy in the area of origin when they emigrate regardless of what job they pick up in the area of destination. Persons who have been unemployed for very long and/or in labour market programs for very long usually do not have the needed resources to move.

Morokvasic (1984) argued that women in rural regions where economic and social structures offer no future other than being a homemaker and mother are willing to take any job just to leave the area. 'Macho' life-styles, patriarchal structures and the low compatibility of family

and career constitute a major push-factor for these women. Although there are indications of 'macho'-life styles and presence of racism in Västernorrland¹, there are no support for patriarchal structures and low compatibility of family and career constituting a major push-factor for these women. On the contrary, employers appear to work actively with these issues (Johansson & Rauhut 2012b). To what extent a gender segregated labour market can be considered as a patriarchal structure is beyond the scope of this study.

The push and pull-factors will be quite different as "big is beautiful" often is one central ingredient among the migration motives that are associated with jobs, flexibility and urban life styles. This kind of reasoning has been developed in *human capital based economic theory* where individuals are assumed to undertake long term calculations where migration can be seen analogical with an investment in future wellbeing. The interviews with experts and young women highlighted this. The urban life style is perceived as something positive and desirable, while the rural life style is perceived the opposite. Some of the returnees miss the urban life style, while some consider the urban life style as overrated (Johansson & Rauhut 2012b).

The push-factors for out-migration of young women appear connected to studies and moving to jobs; the pull-factors appear to be related to educational facilities, jobs and the urban life style. In the household creating ages the findings suggest a return-migration for women who are lucky to find a job in Västernorrland with net in-migration of women as one result. For those who do not return the lack of employment possibilities in their profession appears to be the main reason for not returning.

The labour market for women is, by tradition, dominated by jobs in the public sector, and in particular in schools and in the care sectors. The new, modern and expansive sectors prefer to expand elsewhere. These jobs are usually created in the private sector. Consequently, women who are interested to work in these sectors have to move.

¹ In the survey by Dalin & Bostedt (2010) racism and harassment are a distinct finding, as well as the area of origin and ethnicity matters. The same patterns appear in the expert interviews and in depth interviews with young women (Johansson & Rauhut 2012b).

COMPARISON NORTH HUNGARY-VÄSTERNORRLAND

The task of a region's economic policy is to attract, retain, motivate and to efficiently manage its population which includes that migration strategy is art of its employment policy. Tools that would be able to treat the rapidly growing lack of balance are missing in the labour market. The competitiveness is hold by the lack of coordinated migration strategy that would protect the labour market. It is a great loss for the whole country if its investment into the human capital is harvested by other countries. Retaining workforce should get a greater role in the employment strategy.

The motivation and willingness are different in the case of the various social strategies. Some large nations have prepared to the treatment of the growing migration in their migration policies, in which coordination and precise data collection get an outstanding role. The techniques of managing migration do not exist in Hungary. A well segmented migration policy is very important for the future, as it was seen in Sweden.

As it was observed in both countries as the main problem is the low employment rate, we suggest that the national employment policy should place more emphasis on managing migration in order to decrease the negative effects of the emigration processes and make use of the positive effects. We should draw conclusions from other countries' practices. It is important to notice that migration influences growth, redistribution and the sustainability of the pension system. This process needs to be managed. Immigration, especially in the case of qualified workforce, may strengthen the domestic economic growth. Apart from the potential benefits of immigration, the countries has to prepare for the emigration of its labour force. Since qualified workforce is a key factor of competitiveness, one objective of a nation's economic policy is to utilize the knowledge of its citizens, so make sure if they move abroad temporarily, then having returned, they can make use of their experiences at home.

In order to lay the groundwork for migration strategy, we implemented the following (Protection-Attraction-Defence) model:

1. Protection: means to curb the immigration hazarding the region, the objective of which is to maintain the fragile peace of the society. Although the emphasis of the research was to call attention to the losses caused by emigration, one has to pay attention to immigration as well. On the one hand, a strong and selective procedure of getting residence and work permit is necessary. However, EU citizens' migration should not be administratively hindered. One way of protection is strengthening the national self-

awareness, interpreted in its correct meaning. This means, that employees should enjoy preference. On the other hand, the society and the people employed in infrastructure facilities should be prepared for the rippling world-tendency that more and more foreigners will settle down.

2. Attraction: because of the loss of population (natural loss and emigration), the demographical self-reliance of the region has become less and less. The labour market trends clearly necessitate supplementing the loss of the population from external sources. The demand is twofold: highly qualified workforce with innovative marketable knowledge and highly skilled workers are needed. The migration strategy has to support immigration of artists, doctors and people coming from afar because their presence may revitalize competition.
3. Defence: refers to retain the population born in the region to decrease the willingness to emigrate. It is essential that policy makers concentrate on people with outstandingly good skills (innate and gained competences). Two solutions are recommended at this point: on the one hand establishing local educational and research bases, financing and supporting public education. Knowledge centres are becoming today's economic and political centres. Those colleges and student workshops are important in which students become aware of their talents. However, we should not become a knowledge-factory. On the other hand, paving the way for the circular migration is also the task of the strategy. It means creating opportunities that motivates people working or studying abroad to return home. Areas of the region in bad social conditions also need special attention for economic reasons.

In the event that the above mentioned terms are secured, the regions will have a chance to considerably reduce territorial differences within the region and raise the level of employment even in underdeveloped areas with reducing out-migration processes.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The findings suggest that the driving forces of out-migration of young women appear connected to studies and moving to more attractive labour markets. For those who do not return the lack of employment possibilities in their profession appears to be the main reason for not returning. Some country specific results are also identified. In Northern Hungary the situation of the Roma population is different from the Hungarian population and in Västernorrland life style factors appears significant.

Seen from a regional planning perspective the results of this paper as well as from the SEMIGRA project are a rather delicate issue as e.g. higher education and labour market policies are determined at the national level and not at the regional in both Hungary and Sweden. To solve many of the issues touched upon here regional policies are needed (Rauhut & Kahila 2012). More research is needed to identify how regions can design regional policies, without interfering with the national, so that they can break a vicious development.

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