

The Role of Social Mobility and Gender Balance in Shaping Sustainable Regional Development

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Abstract: Trends in modern social development include a focus on ensuring the sustainability of communities against the background of growing gender and migration impacts. The current situation requires the development and implementation of specific targeted steps to adapt gender and migration regional policy in the context of globalization, and the integration of cultural projects of a social orientation. The article aims to identify key challenges in the context of migration and gender differentiation and determine potential ways to overcome them in modern conditions. The study examines the main concepts of gender and migration policy in a regional context, in particular, the use of migration statistics and the gender inequality index as a methodological basis. A thematic study of trends and difficulties in the social integration of migrants has been implemented. It has been determined that socio-economic and cultural factors play a determining role in overcoming gender barriers and the successful integration of migrants. It is substantiated that the older age of migrants determines the need for stronger socio-economic support, providing them with an expanded range of social services and ensuring legal rights, in order to prevent social isolation. Cases of supportive policies for migrant women are considered, including institutional support for integration and social adaptation programs to ensure their independence and guarantee the stability of their economic status. The study proves the need to direct targeted regional development policies towards the social integration of marginalized gender and sexual minorities.

Keywords: adaptation, gender issues, migration, politics, regional development, social integration

Introduction

Current problems of migration and gender policy in overcoming social inequality and preventing the isolation of migrants necessitate a review of narratives of ensuring the stability of regional development, the development of targeted coordinated strategies. Global processes of integration, mobility and globalization transform the processes of life of society and intensify the significance of socio-economic, political, and cultural approaches to support.

Gender and migration dynamics lead to diverse changes in the structure of the community, the availability of resources, and the living conditions of the population, while determining, at the same time, opportunities for women and migrants as vulnerable social categories. The importance of eliminating the gender gap to maintain order, implementing culturally-enhancing programs for social reintegration, identifying key factors of resilience of migrants and successfully combating gender isolation is gaining importance. The above will allow identifying barriers to ensuring gender equality and developing comprehensive solutions to increase the effectiveness of migration and gender policy, implementing inclusion strategies, and regulating the impact of migration on the socio-economic basis of community development.

The article aims to identify key challenges in the context of migration and gender differentiation and determine potential ways to overcome them in modern conditions.

Literature Review

In the current academic discourse, there are numerous discussions of gender and migration challenges for the well-being of society and sustainable regional development. In particular, Huggins and Thompson [1] and Bond [2] focus on the need to implement inclusive programs and effective policies for the social integration of migrant women. At the same time, MacKinnon et al. [3] and Faggian et al. [4] highlight the cultural factors of migrant women's competitiveness in the labor market.

Christou and Kofman [5] and Cantor and Maple [6] emphasized that a key tool for achieving greater equality in the gender context and optimizing migration flows is improving legal norms. Also, Anastasiadou et al. [7], Wojtyńska and Skaptadóttir [8] explore diverse aspects of the impact of migration dynamics on social regional development and concluded that gender and migration differentiation affect the balance of resource distribution and income distribution.

Given the specifics of women's migration, Meshram et al. [9] noted that state cases of institutional support and guarantees of access to basic social services are important for the socio-economic sustainability of community development. For continuation, Boyd [10], Elomäki and Kantola [11], Park and Wee [12] and Tastsoglou [13] in their publications position overcoming cultural prejudices as a crucial step to reduce the social marginalization of immigrants. At the same time, key international aspects of gender equality in the context of migration processes are explored in the works of De Haas et al. [14] and Fresnoza-Flot [15], who carried out a global analysis of the factors influencing regional social policy on migration processes in the community.

Krause and Segadlo [16] and Mora and Piper [17] investigated the impact of social reintegration of migrants on their resilience and mental health and determined that it is crucial to form an inclusive approach in regional development policies, which involves overcoming gender bias and related cultural aspects. Government cases on migrant integration are analyzed by scholars Baldwin-Edwards et al. [18] and stimulate the actualization of attention to migrant women in the socio-economic life of the community. At the same time, Fathi and Ní Laoire [19], Menjívar and Walsh [20] noted that migrant women are often victims of forced displacement against the backdrop of military conflicts, which complicates their social positions. The authors note that the social construction of gender can serve as a challenge for migrant women in terms of access to education and work, pay levels, opportunities for self-presentation, and participation in business. This necessitates the development and implementation of effective policies for social reintegration and regional economic sustainability and actualizes the institutional role of eliminating gender barriers.

Given the popularity of the topic in scientific discourse, it can be argued that addressing the main gender and migration challenges of our time highlights the need to simultaneously address a number of sectoral problems in the socio-economic, legal, and cultural fields.

Methods

The study used ratings and indicators from official sources of international organizations, including the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (further – UNDESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (further – UNDP), international migration statistics, and the Gender Inequality Index.

The method of quantitative analysis of indicators of migration dynamics and gender inequality was used, which allowed to understand the context of the dynamics of changes and identify different and identical trends between individual countries. Thus, for an extended analysis of cultural and social factors of migrant integration, literary sources from leading scientometric databases were used. The results obtained were graphically represented for a more effective visualization of priority aspects of the issue.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic, legal, political and cultural factors serve as the main cause of a number of contemporary migration challenges and gender issues, influencing the experience of migrants in the context of resilience, social adaptation, and community integration.

Economic factors are contextual in terms of migration processes, as unemployment, resource scarcity or economic instability led to income inequality, especially for migrant women. This leads to the development of gender-based forms of discrimination in the labor market, wage gaps, economic independence and integration. At the same time, the social isolation that accompanies migration processes is caused by gender expectations and cultural stereotypes

that do not contribute to the active social position of migrant women. In this case, social factors such as access to health care, education and other essential services become decisive [21].

Cultural differentiation influences the processes of integration of migrants into the community. However, potential cultural challenges are largely determined by the desire of migrants to preserve their own identity, as well as the polarities of views on the role of women in religious contexts and secular realities.

The current legal framework for social integration into the community and gender equality serves as a key regulatory factor, as incorrect state practice and the lack of effective mechanisms for protecting immigrants can simultaneously hinder the employment of migrant women, their access to legal protection and social services and legal protection. In turn, political decisions often determine the success of migration and overcoming gender inequality, increasing the involvement of residents in the public life of the community [22].

All the above factors are closely interconnected, and their synergy allows for successful overcoming of gender and migration problems in a regional context. Among the main aspects are the integration and adaptation of migrants in communities; ensuring gender equality and reducing the vulnerability of women not only as migrants, but also in the context of gender barriers; political approaches to regulating migration, successful inclusion in the economic and social life of communities; overcoming social stereotypes and cultural barriers; social support and access to institutional resources. The above-mentioned necessitates a comprehensive approach to overcoming migration and gender problems, which includes the development of effective inclusive policies, reducing cultural barriers, guarantees of access to basic social services, and gender mainstreaming [23].

Analyzing the dynamics of the Gender Inequality Index (GII) (Figure 1) and the number of international migrants in representative countries for 2020-2023 (Figure 2), the authors can argue about the continuation of the trend of decreasing GII indicators after 2021 in most countries. In particular, in Germany, the GII decreased from 0.080 to 0.075, while the number of international migrants increased significantly. It is worth noting that the share of women among migrants is gradually decreasing, which indicates potential limitations of opportunities for them in the new social environment.

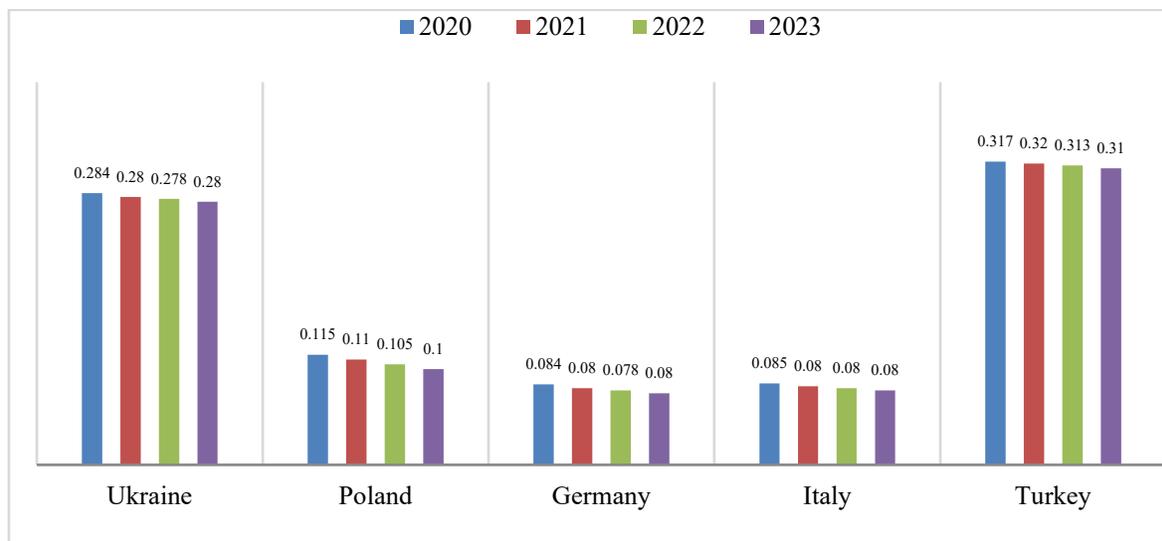


Figure 1. Gender Inequality Index (GII) in representative countries in the period 2020-2023

Source: UNDP [24], UNDESA [25]

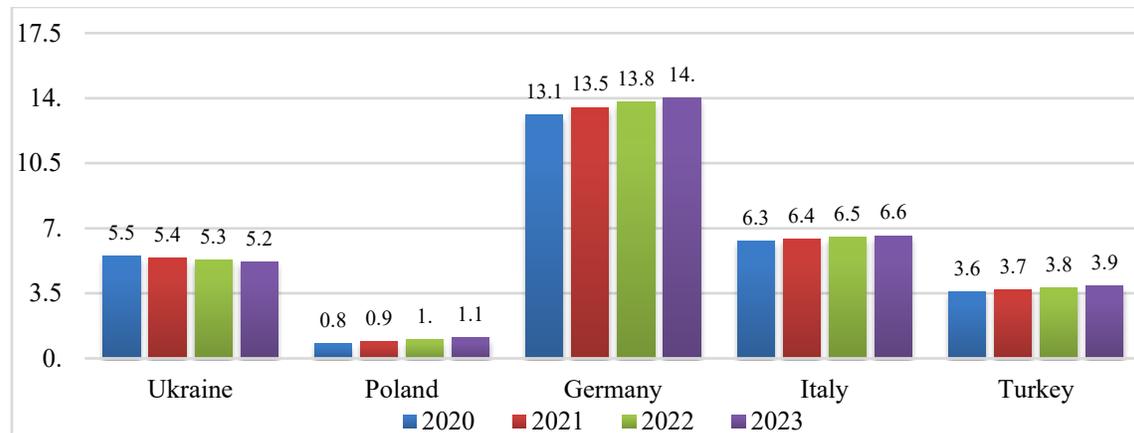


Figure 2. Number of international migrants in representative countries for 2020-2023
Source: UNDP [24], UNDESA [25]

Analyzing Figure 1, Figure 2, it should be noted that the gender inequality index is also a representative indicator of the differentiation of gender rights in terms of opportunities, economic activity and reproductive health. At the same time, the tendency to zero indicates complete equality, and to one – vice versa. The indicator of the number of international migrants demonstrates the total number of people living in the country but born outside its borders. A gradual decrease in the IGN in most countries over the period under study is characteristic, except for Germany and Italy. At the same time, the number of international migrants has increased, including due to migration waves caused by military conflicts.

A separate problem is a slight decrease in the proportion of women among migrants, which may indicate limited opportunities for women in the migration process and difficulties in accessing economic opportunities [26].

Analysis of statistical indicators and international experience allows us to formulate key recommendations for the development of effective regional development strategies to address gender and migration issues. The key narratives of such strategies should be:

- 1) a stable economic policy that provides for the introduction of financial support programs for migrant women, the integration of educational projects to improve skills and ensure competitiveness;
- 2) social integration and reintegration of migrants, which involves the creation of information and psychological support centers, and promotion of social adaptation;
- 3) legal support, including legislative initiatives to protect the rights of migrant women and reduce gender discrimination;
- 4) educational and professional development – free educational projects for mastering new professional skills and learning the language of the host country;
- 5) cultural adaptation, which takes place through targeted activities (educational seminars, cultural festivals, etc.) to establish mutual understanding between migrants and the local community, active cultural exchange, and minimize cultural barriers;
- 6) inclusive policy that contributes to achieving gender equality and social inclusion, ensuring equal opportunities for all residents of the community.

Current observations demonstrate the growth of gender and migration issues that undermine the wealth of communities and emphasize the importance of a generalized approach to their solution. The formation of regional identity is considered as a process of self-determination of belonging to a certain region, awareness of differentiation from other communities and acceptance of local norms, values, culture and history. In general, the process of forming regional identity occurs through active socialization and awareness of socio-territorial position, with a significant role in it assigned to regional governance [27]. Effective governance mechanisms support local cultural initiatives, traditions, linguistic features and historical heritage of the region, which strengthens its uniqueness and belonging,

while integrating migrants into the established socio-cultural environment of the community, forming institutions that promote collaboration to solve common problems in the region, which stimulates residents to community .

It can be argued that in the context of sustainable development of communities with advantages, regional identity is formed on the principles of corporate social responsibility. Community synergy allows solving various social and environmental problems by intensifying investment, transfer of innovations, spiritual and cultural social progress. Public administration in this context is positioned not as a passive process, but as an active tool, the quality and direction of which can strengthen or weaken regional identity, determining the development of all aspects of the life of the regional community.

It is obvious that gender and migration issues are interconnected, as migration often exacerbates existing gender inequalities and can lead to a decline in the role of women in society, while gender stereotypes can influence the causes and directions of migration. Both categories of potential difficulties for effective regional development should certainly be taken into account in adapted policies applied to migration. The elimination of gender stereotypes in host communities is necessary in the context of modern trends in social development.

Conclusions

The study suggests that addressing priority migration and gender issues plays a crucial role in the well-being and sustainable development of communities. The decline in the gender inequality index in some countries in recent years indicates positive dynamics, while socio-economic and cultural barriers for women remain relevant.

The novelty of the study lies in emphasizing the importance of simultaneously taking into account the socio-economic, legal and cultural aspects of migrant integration, especially in the context of women. Adaptive regional development policy should be aimed at eliminating the gender gap, implementing culturally-enhancing programs for social reintegration, identifying key factors of migrant resilience and successfully combating gender isolation. This will allow identifying barriers to ensuring gender equality and developing comprehensive solutions to increase the effectiveness of migration and gender policy, implementing inclusion strategies, and regulating the impact of migration on the socio-economic basis of community development.

Further research in the outlined area should focus on the impact of individual policies to support migrants in the processes of their economic integration and social adaptation, taking into account gender aspects.

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