

FERTILITY OF WOMEN OUT-MIGRANTS: DOES REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR CHANGES WITH EMIGRATION? CASE STUDY - EAST SERBIA

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Abstract

The aim of this paper, which unifies two, usually separately studied areas of research, fertility and migration, is to determine trends in reproduction behaviour of women out-migrants. In the last decades, there has been an increasing amount of research on women and migration, which has begun to fill the gap created by the earlier focus on the stereotypical male labour migrant. The focus of this research is to observe and analyze the difference in fertility trends between women in different generations and according to women non migrants and out-migrants. The emphasis is on the question: whether the indicators of fertility are closely linked with the act of migration itself. For this purpose we used survey with the questions focused on fertility as well as on socio-demographic characteristics of women out-migrants. Survey data analysis was performed by descriptive statistics and analytical statistical methods. We try to identify how migration process affects the level of fertility of women out-migrants and if there is a significant difference between the level of fertility of the respondents and their mothers and grandmothers who didn't participate in migration process.

Key words: women, fertility, migration, survey, East Serbia.

ФЕРТИЛИТЕТ ЖЕНА НА РАДУ И БОРАВКУ У ИНОСТРАНСТВУ: ДА ЛИ СЕ РЕПРОДУКТИВНО ПОНАШАЊЕ МЕЊА СА ЕМИГРАЦИЈОМ? СТУДИЈА СЛУЧАЈА – ИСТОЧНА СРБИЈА

Апстракт

Циљ овог рада, који обједињује две обично одвојене области истраживања – фертилитет и миграције – јесте да утврди трендове репродуктивног понашања жена на раду и боравку у иностранству. Током последњих деценија, дошло је до повећаног броја истраживања о женама и миграцијама, која су почела да попуњавају празнину створену ранијим усредсређивањем на стереотип мушких радних миграција.

У средишту овог истраживања је посматрање и анализирање разлика у трендовима фертилитета између жена у различитим генерацијама и између жена миграната и оних које то нису. Нагласак је на питању: Да ли су показатељи фертилитета уско повезани са самим чином миграција? За ту сврху користили смо анкету са питањима усредсређеним на фертилитет, као и на социо-демографске карактеристике жена на раду и боравку у иностранству. Истраживање је извршено помоћу дескриптивне статистике и аналитичких статистичких метода. Трудили смо се да идентификујемо како процес миграција утиче на ниво фертилитета жена миграната и да ли постоји значајна разлика између нивоа плодности испитаника и њихових мајки и бака, које нису учествовале у процесу миграције.

Кључне речи: жене, фертилитет, миграције, истраживање, Источна Србија.

INTRODUCTION

The global context of population mobility is constantly changing, becoming one of the most discussed topics in nowadays scientific debates. Migration process is very important factor of population reproduction which affects fertility choices (Ediev et al, 2007). Migration has the potential to change both the population dynamics in sending countries as well as in receiving countries. In fact, Coleman argues that migration is the catalyst for a third demographic transition (Coleman, 2006).

Interactions between migration and fertility have been under-explored and under-theorized (Genereux, 2007). Women in earlier migration research were seen as companions to men, passive, non-decision-makers (Morokvasic 1984; Ong 1991, Zlotnik 1995). New studies show that women migrate at same rate as men (United Nations 2006, Morokvasic 2010), which leads to the conclusion that invisibility of women in international migration does not correspond to the reality (Pessar, Mahler 2003). Also, women's migration experiences is often different from men's (Pedraza 1991), in the first place because women have more social and economic ties to the place of origin (Chant 1992). That is why, in the last decades, there has been an increasing amount of research on women and migration, which has begun to fill the gap created by the earlier focus on the stereotypical male labour migrant (Carling 2005). Several approaches were proposed to clarify migration impact on population reproduction. Keely (1974) pointed many problems and potential biases in interpreting the immigration role in population growth based on crude data. In the attempt to link migration and fertility, Zelinsky (1971) created a macro-level model in which he associated changes in fertility, mortality and migration, emphasizing the evolution of the processes in time. Fargues (2011) examine the links between those two determinants of population dynamics. In recent years there has been a lot of interest in various aspects of the migrants' fertility (Généreux 2007; Milewski 2010; Schmid, Kohls 2010; Adsera, Ferrer 2011; Mussino, Strozza 2012; Mussino, Van Raalte 2013).

The majority of research is on the impact of international migration on fertility in the United States, considering the fertility of Mexicans (Ford, 1990; Stephen, Bean 1992; Lindstrom, Saucedo, 2007; Passel et al. 2011; Choi, 2014; Hill, Johnson, 2014) and Chinese immigrants (Hwang, Saenz 1997). The studies on the impact of migration on fertility in Europe was conducted recently (Lutz, Wolfgang, Scherbov, 2003), as well as for some European countries like Sweden (Persson, Hoem, 2014) and France (Genereux, 2007). On the other hand, Skeldon (2013) argues that a very general statement can be made regarding the relationship between changing mortality and fertility levels related to the changes in migration patterns. In Serbia the relation between migration and fertility was analyzed in the work of M. Rančić (1972). He compared the levels of fertility between non-migrant and migrant population.

Significant progress in studying the links between migration and fertility has been made with introduction of two new measures. UN introduce the term ‘‘replacement migration’’ to support the constant population size or to prevent from decline of the labour force (UNDP, 2000). Second measure, ‘‘Migratory Fertility’’ (MF)¹ measures the stake of migration in the population reproduction (Ediev et all, 2007).

Many examples shows that the receiving country interacts with migrants in various ways—thought the measures of immigration policies, economic conditions and social institutions. That interaction plays an important role in fertility outcomes, either through changes in fertility norms and behaviours of migrants or in acceleration of transition (Bongaarts, Watkins, 1996). The research on the impact of migration on fertility have proposed, four major hypotheses: socialization, selection, disruption, and adaptation (Kulu 2005). These four hypotheses place different emphasis on sending and receiving countries, with socialization giving more weight to the sending country context and adaptation to the receiving country context. Disruption can be placed in both contexts as women may ‘disrupt’ their fertility by delaying childbearing before migrating or continuing delaying or start recuperation immediately after migration.

The area of East Serbia (Timok region) is characterized by a rapid fertility transition, since late XIX century, causing the negative trend of demographic change, which is the precursor of extremely low fertility in Serbia. The reason for that was caused by the constraints such as the economic value of children and land inheritance norms. Also, this area is one of the three emigration ‘‘hot spots’’ in Serbia since 1960s (temporary workers, or ‘‘gastarbaiters’’ and members of their families) to the countries of Western Europe (Predojević-Despić, Penev, 2009). For those

¹ The reproduction regimen of the population at large is characterised by the ‘Combined Fertility’, which is approximated by the sum of conventional Total Fertility and of Migratory Fertility

two reasons the Timok region has been facing population decline and total depopulation for almost half of the century. But what are the main characteristics of fertility transition in this area and does it have any relations with women out-migrants? Is there a connection in the level of fertility between women out-migrants and their ancestors? The demographic patterns and cultural mores of sending country need to be considered in order to understand better the impact of migration on fertility. The receiving country's specific immigration policies, economy, social services, and gender relations impact the context in which women make their fertility decisions. Usually the women out migrants have higher fertility, particularly in the years immediately after their arrival. But that is not the case in the Eastern part of Serbia. Those women out-migrants were already placed in the low fertility group of their society and kept those characteristics in the countries of destination.

METHODOLOGY

To understand the aspect of migration-fertility question, one must look at social interactions on the local level both in sending and in receiving countries. Generally, social interactions are best studied through qualitative methods such as ethnography, interviewing, surveys, focus groups and historical research which emphasize detail and locality. In this paper we use as a research tool survey method which was conducted for the project "Fertility of female out migrants - workers and family members". The survey was created by University of Belgrade -Faculty of Geography, Statistical Office of Serbia and Institute of Public Health, Zaječar. For the purpose of this research 242 women participated in survey, among them 39 was returns. There was 35 questions divided in several groups: socio/demographic characteristics of women out migrants, their marital status, household characteristics, and a special part of the survey was dedicated to fertility questions: number of children, intention to have more children, the age of childbearing the first child, how many children their mother and grandmothers born, the gender of children, their opinion about the most appropriate age for getting married and having children, about the reasons for not having more children, what should state do in order to increase fertility rate and the methods of birth control they use. It is important to notice that very few data about fertility and migration are conducted in census. The results of our survey correspond to the census data, but they are more comprehensive.

For the purpose of this paper we will use the data about nuptiality, fertility and population control measures as a basic line for the demographic transition theory confirmation, in the first place fertility transition of female population in East Serbia. Analyzing the changes of these characteristics in female population living and working abroad compared to their mothers,

grandmothers and paternal grandmothers provided the time frame of the current changes. Data analysis was performed by descriptive statistics (absolute and relative numbers, mean and standard deviation) and analytical statistical methods (T-test). Significance difference testing was on the level of 0.05 and 0.01.

The statistical program used in this analysis is SPSS. Statistical analysis included testing the significance of differences in age at first marriage respondents and partners; years of marriage respondents and mother, maternal grandmother and paternal grandmother; years of birth of the first child respondents and mother, maternal grandmother and paternal grandmother; years of birth of the first child and educational qualifications of respondents; the total number of children of respondents and their mother, maternal grandmother and paternal grandmother; the impact of years of birth of the first child to the total number of births; the total number of children born of mothers of respondents and paternal grandmother and maternal grandmother.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic transition in Serbia started in eastern part of the country in the second half of the XIX century and proceeded with different intensity until modern period. Since 1960s, this area was characterised with depopulation, decline or slow population growth and intensive process of emigration. The processes of deagrarization, industrialization and urbanization intensified all forms of spatial mobility. On these bases, the regional specificities in transition occurred. The relations between natural change and migration in forming the total population potentials were spatially polarized. These processes were particularly different between the urban settlements and municipal centres on one side and the villages on the other.

Table 1. The statistical significance between the age of women and man at first marriage

	Average age	Standard deviation	T-test	df	p
The age of women at first marriage	17.80	4.887	-8.504	241	.000
The age of husband at first marriage	20.09	6.238			

Table 2. The statistical significance between the age of women at first marriage and age of the respondent's mother at first marriage

	Average age	Standard deviation	T-test	df	p
The age of women at first marriage	17.71	4.966	2.020	215	0.045
The age of the mother respondent at first marriage	16.94	2.391			

Transition has been determined by the specific flow and level of depopulation, as well as the development of international migration. It has determined the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of contemporary population potentials in this area and their possible future development trends. International migration flows from East Serbia (Timok region) started in 1960s. The most common type of out migrants were unqualified or low qualified workers, in most cases unemployed or engaged in agriculture, with primary education, or without complete primary school. The male migrations were predominant in the first years, but soon women join them as family members. Usually they didn't have a job in Serbia, and had very low qualification skills. The women who participated in survey were unemployed in Serbia, with very low qualifications (57.85%), and engaged in agriculture (31%). More than 1/3 of the women in survey had only 4 grades of basic primary education. Survey results shows that women migrants worked abroad in tertiary sector (commerce) and 1/3 of all women worked in secondary sector (industry).

The data about the nuptiality of women out migrants showed that the majority of the respondents were married (83.06%) with majority of marriage contracted before they left the country (80.99%). The reasons for getting married were emotional (78.1%) and arranged marriages (12.39%). The most of the respondents aged 14-23 were in the first marriage (86.78%) and every 10th women lived in cohabitation. More than half of all women concluded their marriage between 14 and 18 years old (56.61%), and one third (29.34%) between 19 and 23 years, with the average year 17.8. The difference in the years of concluding the marriage is statistically significant ($t = -8.504$; $df=241$; $p<0.05$)², because 48.76% of the respondents said that the age of their husbands was 19- 23 and 26.03% 14- 18 years and the average age of concluding the marriage for males was 20 years. This kind of deviation in average years of concluding the marriage, confirms retention of traditional norms of getting married in young age cohorts, primarily among women. The proof of a demographic transition process in this area provides statistically significant difference between the ages of concluding the marriage of the women respondents and their mothers ($t = -2.020$; $df=215$; $p<0.05$), their maternal grandmother ($t = -2.077$; $df=124$; $p<0.05$) and paternal grandmother ($t = -2.295$; $df=114$; $p<0.05$), showing that respondents are getting married later (16 years at the beginning of XX century to 18 years in second half of XX century).

² df is the degree of freedom, or varying number of members of the string and is used to determine statistical significance in the table. T is t test. P is the probability of error, and if:
 $p < 0.05$ indicates that a statistically significant difference
 $p < 0.01$ indicates highly statistically significant difference

Table 3. The statistical significance between the age of women at first marriage and age of their maternal grandmother respondent at first marriage

	Average age	Standard deviation	T-test	df	p
The age of women at first marriage	17.43	5.042			
The age of maternal grandmother respondent at first marriage	16.44	1.613	2.077	124	0.040

Table 4. The statistical significance between the age of women at first marriage and age of their paternal grandmother respondent at first marriage

	Average age	Standard deviation	T-test	df	p
The age of women at first marriage	17.77	4.290			
The age of paternal grandmother respondent at first marriage	16.80	2.112	2.295	114	0.024

Considering the number of children of women participating in the survey it has to be pointed out that 94.63% have children. More than half of them have two children (56.61%), and 1/3 only one child. The majority of women (51.24%) had first child at the age between 14 and 18 and 35.13% had first child at the age of 19-23. There is a significant difference between the women who participated in the survey and their mothers and grandmothers. Analyzing the year of birth of the first child there is a statistical significance among the year of birth of the first child of the respondent (19.07) and her mother (18.42), ($t = -2.157$; $df=211$; $p<0.05$), maternal grandmother (17.42), ($t = -4.324$; $df=119$; $p<0.05$) and paternal grandmother (18.02), ($t = -1.173$; $df=107$; $p<0.05$), which leads to the conclusion that the respondents have given birth to their first child later in life. Using quantitative measures it is also obvious that there is a statistical significant difference between the numbers of children, because mothers and grandmothers had more children than the women who participated in survey. That occurred as the result of birth control, which is one of the main characteristics of fertility transition in this area. The Timok region is known as the region of early marriages, low fertility rates and completion of reproduction in younger age cohorts of women. The survey results also proved those facts. Maternal grandmothers finished their reproductive period when they were 21.88 years and paternal grandmothers 22.46 years of age.

Table 5. Statistical significance in the years of the birth of the first child and the mother of the respondents.

	Average age	Standard deviation	T-test	df	p
The years of the birth of the first child of respondents	19.04	3.234			
The years of the birth of the first child of respondents mothers	18.42	2.927	2.157	211	0.032

Table 6. Statistical significance in the years of birth of the first child of the respondents, and maternal grandmother respondents.

	Average age	Standard deviation	T-test	df	p
The year of birth of the first child of the respondents	19.00	3.363			
The year of birth of the first child of the maternal grandmother	17.47	2.078	4.324	119	0.000

The level of education has a significant influence on the year of birth of first child, which is also the result of survey. The difference between the year of birth of the first child and the educational level does not have a statistical significance among women with only four grades of primary school and with complete primary education. But there is a significant statistical difference between previous cohorts and cohorts of women with secondary education. The women who were a part of the survey had their children in the second half of XX century, so that is the reason for not having a significant difference in the total number of children among those women and their mothers, but there is a significant difference in comparison to their grandmothers, or the women who gave birth in the first half of XX century, because they had higher fertility rates (TFR 3). That confirms the fact that there were significant changes in fertility behaviour, because women entered marriage older, the year of the first birth moved to older ages, TFR is lower, with a unifying reproductive behaviour in the second half of the XX century.

The question is: does the year of birth of the first child affect the total number of children among women? This survey showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the respondents considering the birth of the first child and total number of births. If the first child is born in the early years of life the women gave birth to more children, while the difference between the second and third child is not significant. It can be concluded that the change in the reproductive characteristics of the female population of the Timok region during the 20th century and the constant medium intensity, and that no changes occurred in earlier periods.

Abortion is the most common type of birth control among women out-migrants with 69% (24.55% two, 23.35% one and 14.97% five and more abortions). Speaking of reasons for this high amount is that they didn't want to have more children (62.28%), but 13.17% said that the reason is different but with no specific answer as to how. The women who live and work abroad use contraceptives, in the first place pills with 49,59%, most of all among women with two children. A very common contraceptive method among women out-migrants is coitus interruptus (30.08%) which is considered as unsafe. Most of the responded who are using this method have two children (45.95%) and one child (37.84%). The spiral contraceptive is used among women who already had one child (20.33%), two children (68%) and 12% with no children or three or more. Observing the total use of contraceptive methods according to the total number of children, 54.74% women with two children and 26.02% with one child are using these methods. The rest of the respondents with no children or with three children were represented with 12% each. The smallest share is the women with 4 or more children (2.44 %). Considering the total number of the surveyed women out-migrants, only 50.83% of them were using contraceptive methods. Among the female population younger than 29 years the use of contraceptive methods is 60%, and among women older than 30 years 49.01%. That proves the fact that there has been a change in the relation of the female population according to their sexual and reproductive health. The respondents under 29 years of age commonly use the interrupted intercourse (50%) and the pill (33.33%). In elderly ages women showed more responsible behaviour related to birth control and family planning in relation to the young women. More than half of the women use contraception peel (53.54%), while one in four respondents use interrupted coitus.

Table 7. Statistical significance in the years of the birth of the first child respondents, and paternal grandmother respondents.

	Average age	Standard deviation	T-test	df	p
The age of woman having first child	18.70	2.752			
The age of paternal grandmother having first child	18.02	3.241	1.773	107	0.079

There is no statistically significant difference between the years of marriage and the age of the respondents, and there is no statistically significant difference between the number of marriages and age of the respondents. This confirms that the reasons for marriage keep previously entrenched reproductive behavioural norms, and that cohabitation in all age cohorts of women have a significant role.

Observing the data about the marriages of female out-migrants from the Timok region the retention of the established norms of reproductive behaviour in relation to the year of getting married, reasons for marriage, the number of marriages and the existence of cohabitation in all age groups of women is evident. In the second half of the XX century, there is traditionally entering into marriage among woman in young age cohorts, with the average of 17,8 years, and the age of man is 20 years. Yet in rural areas during the XX century a fertility transition and the transition of birth control occurred, because it is a significant deviation in the years of the first marriage respondents, their mothers and grandmothers. Postponement of marriage is statistically significant, so the marriage from 16 to 17 years in the first half of the XX century moves in the mid XX century to 17 years, but in the second half of the XX century, about 18 years old. Parallel with that, there is a shift in the date of birth of the first child from 17 to 18 years, over 18 to 19 and to 19 years old mother. In addition to early marriages, the female population of rural areas of the Timok region gives rise to a small number of children and ends her reproductive period at 21.88 years of age (maternal grandmother respondents) and 22.46 years of age (paternal grandmother respondents).

CONCLUSION

Migration impacts fertility and families by moving these processes to the transnational arena where decisions about fertility, family, work and residence are negotiated by households and states, with multiple mutable systems of gender and ideas about the nation-state (Genereux, 2007). But the question is whether this statement can be applied to the area of Serbia, especially east part of the country – the Timok region?

Rural areas of the Timok region are characterized by a small number of children born in the second half of the XX century and there is no difference in the number of children born between the respondents and their mothers, but there is a significant difference compared to the maternal grandmother and paternal grandmother. Female population in rural areas has replaced the birth of three and more children with the birth of only one child. If the first child was born in the earlier years of age, the respondents gave birth to one more child but they are finishing their reproduction in early twenties. The importance of the marriage to the level of fertility has to be pointed out once again. The largest number of the surveyed women was married before they left the country and the majority of the respondents were in the first marriage. More than the half of the respondents entered marriage at the age between 14 and 18 years old and one third between 19 and 23 years, with the average age of 17.8, and the average age of husbands was 20. That there is still fertility transition in this region and in rural areas confirms a statistically significant difference between the year of entry into the first marriage of the respondents and their mothers, grandmothers and

paternal grandmothers. The level of education of the respondents was tightly connected with the birth of the first child. The women with only fourth grade of elementary school, with part-time or with complete primary school had their children very young. On the other hand, the respondents with secondary education gave birth in the later years of age and with a high statistically significant difference. The responsible reproductive behaviour of the out-migrants is very unsatisfactory. As a form of birth control, abortion was used by 70% of the respondents and only 60% of the respondents used contraceptives and methods in sexual relations. The disturbing fact is that the proportion of unsafe method of birth control is large, and to a greater extent among young women (under 29 years of age).

The Timok region is an area with specific demographic trends and characteristics, different from other parts of the country. The demographic transition begun in the late XIX century, with the adoption of the one child policy. In mid XX century, intensive migration flows toward West Europe started. Those processes lead to a total depopulation of this area, but what was the leading determinant of population dynamic: natural increase/decrease or emigration? The countries of destination of the female population from East Serbia are characterized by low levels of fertility, and those women out-migrants didn't have to change their reproductive behavior. The most important conclusion is that those women have very tight social connections with the country of origin, and the reproductive behavior is more connected with the demographic trends in their home country than in the country of destination.

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ФЕРТИЛИТЕТ ЖЕНА НА РАДУ И БОРАВКУ У ИНОСТРАНСТВУ: ДА ЛИ СЕ РЕПРОДУКТИВНО ПОНАШАЊЕ МЕЊА СА ЕМИГРАЦИЈОМ? СТУДИЈА СЛУЧАЈА – ИСТОЧНА СРБИЈА

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Резиме

Простор Тимочке крајине одликује се убрзаном демографском транзицијом плодности женског становништва већ крајем 19. века, условљавајући негативни тренд демографског развоја који представља претечу екстремно ниског фертилитета Србије. Трансформација проширена у просту репродукцију и достизање нивоа фертилитета женског становништва недовољног за просту замену генерација одређује, на самом почетку 21. века, да се овај простор Србије налази у одмаклој фази демографске транзиције са дубоком биолошком депопулацијом. Праћењем тредова стопа кумулативног фертилитета и просечног броја деце жена старих 15 и више година у земљи и иностранству – указаће се на специфичност одвијања транзиције трендова репродукције женског становништва које живи у иностранству и њихових мајки и бака, које су остале у земљи.

Транзиција фертилитета није различитог нивоа и тока код аутохтоног и мигрантског становништва на простору Тимочке крајине, јер женско становништво које је на привременом раду у иностранству показује одлике транзиције фертилитета аутохтоног становништва, са незнатним колебањима у интензитету. Рађање код анкетираних жена на привременом раду и боравку у иностранству заступљено је код 94,63%, а код аутохтоног становништва нешто више од 80%. На привременом раду и боравку у иностранству су жене влашке националности које имају већи удео жена које рађају у односу на укупно становништво у Тимочној крајини и креће се око 87,28%, што потврђује да је ток и ниво транзиције фертилитета код аутохтоног и мигрантског становништва без значајних одступања. Више од половине анкетираних жена које су рађале у другој половини 20. века имају два детета (56,61%), а нешто мање од трећине само једно дете. Код аутохтоног становништва Тимочке крајине које је рађало у другој половини 20. века нешто мање од 50 % рађало је два детета, а нешто мање од трећине једно дете, тако да не постоји разлика у односу на жене на раду и боравку у иностранству.