
THE GENDER DIMENSION OF THE FEMALE HIGHLY SKILLED MIGRANTS

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Abstract

One of the strategic asset in economic systems is human capital, therefore, advanced and emerging economies have implemented several policies aiming at improving skilled professional inflow. However, highly skilled migrations analysis represents an underdeveloped area of research in geographical sector, gender studies are even more underrepresented.

To this end, it is fundamental to investigate the gender dimension of female highly skilled professionals, with a special focus on the European Union area. As a matter of fact, nowadays more than ever, female highly skilled migrants suffer from a double disadvantage: a more difficult access to the job market being a woman and, at the same time, a discrimination as a migrant, as in this years of economic crisis, several countries have privileged local labor force to foreigners. UK and USA, for example, between 2008 and 2012 have shifted from a highly-skilled open-door policy to a restricted access strategies carried out decreasing the number of visa issues.

The recent economic crisis has, thus, worsen the gender bias in several countries, not only from the labor market access point of view, but from the recovery policies one as well. Despite what has been analyzed after the first wave, described as the "he-cession", when the most affected sectors were male dominant, i.e. construction and finance, the second wave of the crisis (2010-2012) hit traditionally female professions, especially in the public and service sectors. However, while were implemented recovery policy designed for men, few attention was paid to the female labor force (Rodino-Colocino, 2014). Consequently, over the past years men unemployment decreased by 0.7%, whereas female one increased by 0.5% (UN, 2014).

Sadly, although the increasing awareness about the importance of gender equality in both employment and migration policies, authorities have resulted to be blind or, at least, unable to find suitable solutions. In the long run, such inequality can affect both migrants and host countries, considering that these latter cannot benefit from the skills and competences of the female overqualified migrants resident on national territories. The author, thus, will provide an analysis of the destinations countries, sectorial differences and labor market integration, in order to show the difficulties female human capital have to face in their migratory project.

Keywords: – International labor market, Human capital, Gender differences, Migration policies, Skilled migrations

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