



Gender, class and ethnicity in the life course perspective of immigrant women.

Qualitative study of female immigrants in eight EU countries

Éva Kovács and Attila Melegh

Budapest, September 7-9

Main issues of this presentation

- What is the life course perspective of immigrant women in different migratory spaces?
- How do they see themselves as immigrants, as women, in terms of social social class and as members of a new community?
- How do they see social exclusion in Europe?
And what do we learn from their life course perspectives

Why are these issues important?

- The perspectives of different groups of migrants in different migratory spaces are rarely analysed in a comparative way.
- The role and the ratio of women among international migrants has increased dramatically during the last few decades.
- The growth of gendered industries increasingly based on migrants and closely related to demographic processes : maid industry, care of the elderly, health care.

Why are these issues important?

- Previous models of integration and exclusion of migrants seem to be inadequate (new transnational patterns of migration).
- Huge debates are going on with regard to migration policy.

Methodology.

- Combined narrative and structured interviews analysed with hermeneutic methods.
- Different sending countries and territories 30 per country (239 altogether).
- Methodological status of the „data” on life course perspective.
- Typology of biographies and narrations.

Receiving and sending countries. Migratory spaces

NEWLY IMMIGRANT:

Czech Rep.	Ukraine, Romania
Hungary	China and Ukraine
Finland	Russia and Kosovo
Poland	Ukraine and Vietnam

IMMIGRANT

Austria	Turkey and Bosnia-Hezegovina
Germany	Russia and Turkey

POST-FEDERAL

Estonia	Russia versus Tatar, Tshuvash, Caucasian and Central Asians territories
Slovenia	Bosnia-Herzegovina, post Soviet territories

Migrants' life course perspective: complex manoeuvring

- Complex manoeuvring with huge costs in rebuilding personal and social spaces.
- „Personal” costs: instability of the family, restricted child bearing, stressful everyday family life, isolation, deskilling, being locked into a „Diaspora”, emancipation, gender ideals, identity crisis due to the migration as a child.
- Types have been created with regard to the process, reasons, consequences and integration.

Types of life courses

Process of migration

Voluntary migration

- Type 1. A voluntary decision embedded into family formation
- Type 2. Economic migrant
- Type 3. "Imperial" mobilization
- Type 4. Ethnic business
- Type 5. Young adults with educational purposes

Types of life courses

Involuntary migration

- Type 1. Refugee
- Type 2. Escape from familial harassment
- Type 3. Migrant children
- Type 4. Joining the spouse involuntarily

Types of life courses

Reasons of migration

- Family and migration
- Type 1. Love
- Type 2. Traditional
- Type 3. Emancipation through migration and marriage
- Type 4. Well-being
- Individualist gender strategy

Types of life courses

Results of migration

- Status after migration
- Regaining and deskilling
- Type 1. Social and/or economic vacuum
- Type 2. Legal vacuum
- Type 3. Subordinated as a woman
- Type 4. Emotional vacuum

Types of life courses

- Success
 - Type 1. Successful young singles
 - Type 2. Global
 - Type 3. Successful in business or profession
 - Type 4. Success as refugee
- Changes in the family structure
 - Type 1. Break-up of original familial arrangement
 - Type 2. Break-up of cross-border migration

Types of life courses

Integration

In-between

- Type 1. In-between status on an individual level
- Type 2. In-between status and ethnic revival
- Type 3. Integration via Diaspora community
- Integration
- Disintegration

Types of life courses

- Family and gender roles
- Type 1. Woman remaining in traditional role models
- Type 2. Forced into traditional roles temporarily
- Type 3. Emancipated within the family
- Type 4. Emancipated outside a permanent family

Types of life courses

Narratives

- Active versus passive types of narrations
- Type 1. Active narrations
- Type 2. Passive narrations
- Type 3. Ambivalent narrations

Types of life courses

Master narratives

- Type 1. Ethnic-religious
- Type 2. Acceptance and anti-discrimination
- Type 3. "Paper"
- Type 4. Monotony and minimalism
- Trauma

Individual manoeuvring and the sociology of migration: ethnicity, class position and religion

- Different life course types can be found in all spaces and with regard to all groups. We cannot essentialise life course patterns (no Chinese patterns etc.).
- This can show that what we observe the complex working out of a global class position with different routes.
- Traditionalism and Diaspora as a sign of a joint social, gender and integration trap.

Thank you for your attention!

[http://www.bib-
demographie.de/femage/index.html](http://www.bib-demographie.de/femage/index.html)

The struggle

- "Always, in fact always I've been looking for a different path - a path for myself, that's why I'm not afraid of anything (...) Maybe this is a personal feature of people of capitalist class since it is really in my blood."
- 'Well - I helped to organise the arrival of the Pope from Rome, or other priests from France (...) I've handed flowers (...) I have a '0' blood type - I still remember this detail - they didn't have this type in their blood bank - so they called my husband to seek among Vietnamese a donor with a '0' type to make me a transfusion. He was looking for donors and found 1.5 litre - maybe that's' why I was so healthy afterwards - this is European blood isn't it? I have European blood in my vessels." (PL).