



MODERN PROBLEMS OF UKRAINIAN FEMALE MIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

Oksana Abreu Bastos
Salvador - Bahia - Brazil

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Abstract:

This article presents a study of preconditions for women's migration from Ukraine to EU countries. Important preconditions that I identify are low salaries in Ukraine, inadequate state support for low-income families, a low level of alimony for children and increasing numbers of children who are being born into single parent families since the early 1990s. Thus, this article gives an explanation for the continued migration of women from Ukraine to EU countries. In general, Ukrainian women who decide to go abroad in order to work state that their main concern is the wellbeing and the education of their children in Ukraine. It is therefore common that Ukrainian female labor migrants deny themselves the most necessary things in order to send as much money as possible to their children in Ukraine. Paradoxically, children of female labor migrants do not always value their mothers' efforts, and sometimes the money sent by their mothers actually has the reverse effect than that intended, as the money discourages rather than motivates these children to study, to work, and to create their careers. As a result, the money sent from abroad, in conjunction with a lack of control from their mothers as well as from the state, leads to adverse consequences for these children and for society in general.

Keywords:

Ukraine, the phenomenon of female migration, the social orphaning of children with living parents, Ukrainian women, EU countries

1 INTRODUCTION

It is generally known that salaries and pensions in Ukraine are low, and that people barely survive on regular wages. As a consequence, many Ukrainians try to find other sources for survival, for example, subsistence farming in rural areas.

The address of the author:

Oksana Abreu Bastos

 abreubastos.oksana@gmail.com

For mothers, who bring up their children alone, sources of means for survival can be state support for low-income families and alimony from the fathers. In my research I analyze to what extent Ukrainian single mothers cope and are able to support their children materially, despite low salaries and the inadequate state support to low-income families. This case study explains the reasons behind the migration of women from Ukraine to EU countries.



Experts often refer to recent developments in international migration as "the phenomenon of female migration" (Markov, 2012; Abreu Bastos, 2013). European countries are indeed affected by "the phenomenon of female migration," and this has spurred an increased attention by international researchers studying countries such as Portugal (Wall, 2003, 2005; Sertorio, 2004; Baganha, 2004, 2010; Goncalves, 2005; Hellerman, 2005; Miranda, 2007, 2009; Marques, 2012), Italy (Piperno, 2005, 2006, 2007; Nare, 2010; Vianello, 2008, 2012), Spain (Sanchez Urios, 2007, 2010; Hosnedlova, 2010), Poland (Igliska, 2003; Kaczmarczyk, 2008; Slany, 2006, 2007, 2010; Kindler, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013), and Ukraine (Yeleyko, 2007; Kotusenko, 2007; Tolstokorova, 2010; Volodko, 2011; Koshulko, 2012; Markov, 2005, 2012; Fedyuk, 2012; Makazan, 2013).

2 METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

In my study I used the following methods: Qualitative analysis of data, Economic intuition, Statistical Generalization, Economics comparisons, Calculation Methods - Subtraction and Addition, etc.

3 THE CURRENT SOCIO-ECONOMY SITUATION IN UKRAINE FOR UKRAINIAN SINGLE MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

The situation for Ukrainian single mothers and their children today is very difficult, since mothers only get a very small amount of money from the state to bring up their children. If a woman is a single parent or divorced, and she does not get any money from the child's father it is very difficult for her and her children to survive on a single salary. The salary of one person, even when supplemented with state support to low-income families, is so low compared to the cost of supporting a family with children.

I will analyze incomes and expenses in a family that consists of a single mother and children. For my analysis, I will use the Ukrainian currency (UAH), and here will be presented converted to Euro (EUR) (exchange rate of June 17th, 2013, 100 EUR = 1063.3088 UAH).

According to the Law of Ukraine "On State budget of Ukraine for 2013" in accordance with

Article 8 (Anon, 2012A), from January 1st, 2013 to November 30th, 2013 the monthly minimum wage in Ukraine is set at 108 EUR per month) or 0.647 EUR/hour.

The rate of public assistance for families with children, and especially, for low-income families, is determined in accordance with Article 5 of the Law of Ukraine from November 21st, 1992 No.2811-XII (Last edition from October 16th, 2012) "About the government assistance to families with children" (Anon, 1992), the Law of Ukraine No.1768-III of January 6th, 2000 "On State Support to Low-Income Families" (Anon, 2000), and in accordance with Article 7 of the Law of Ukraine "On State budget of Ukraine for 2013," (Anon, 2012A). For children aged 0-6 years it is set to 91 EUR per month; for children aged 6-18 years, it is 114 EUR per month.

Also, in accordance with the Law of Ukraine No.606-XIV "On enforcement proceedings" dated 21 April 1999 (Anon, 1999) and Family code of Ukraine (Anon, 2002), a mother with a child has the right to receive alimony (spousal support) from the father of the child (Anon, 2012B). If a single mother has one child, she has the right to get alimony at the rate of a quarter of the father's income; if she has two children, she is entitled to one third of his income per month, and if she has three or more children, she is entitled to half of his income. I will calculate the proportion of alimony from the minimum wage, because in Ukraine 2 million workers receive the minimum wage as their monthly salary (Anon, 2011), and the unemployment rate is 8.1% of the workforce of Ukraine (Anon, 2013A).

So, the alimony for one child, based on the minimum wage will be 27 EUR; for two children it amounts to 36 EUR. In accordance with the Laws of Ukraine, and according to my calculations, Table 1 shows incomes and expenses for families consisting of a single mother and one child 0-6 years of age.

In Table 1 I used Calculation Methods - subtraction and addition. I added the amount of incomes together for families consisting of a single mother and one child 0-6 age, then all expenses too, and then I subtracted the total income from the total expenses. The sum of incomes is 226 EUR, and the sum of expenses is 300.9 EUR. For the expenses I do not take into

account any extra expenses: related to payment of bank loans, the cost of winter clothing and footwear, the cost of more complex medical procedures (surgical intervention), and even in this case for families consisting of a single

mother and one child 0-6 age total income per month is not enough in the sum 74.9 EUR.

Therefore, as we can see, a single mother with child cannot cover her expenses with her salary, alimony, and state support.

Table 1 Incomes and expenses for families consisting of a single mother and one child 0-6 age in Ukraine in 2013, per month, EUR

Incomes	EUR
Salary of mother - minimum wage	108
The state support to low-income families for child 0-6 years	91
Alimony (spousal support) from the father of the child, one child - a quarter of the father's income	27
Total	226
Expenses	EUR
Cost of food	84.7
The cost of clothing and footwear for mother and child	141
Costs of public transport	9.4
Costs of an apartment (includes gas, water, phone and electricity bills, etc.)	37.6
Payment of kindergarten ('formal' and 'informal' fee)	14.1
Healthcare payment (payment for medicines and personal care products)	14.1
Total	300.9
The difference between income and expenses	- 74.9

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Therefore, as we can see, a single mother with child cannot cover her expenses with her salary, alimony, and state support.

In Table 2 I created an estimate of income and expenses in families that consist of a single mother and two children of 0-6 years and 6-18 years.

For women who are single parents with two children and for similar families it is very difficult

to survive on low incomes. The worst situation can be when the mothers are unemployed because according to data of the State Employment Service of Ukraine (Anon, 2013B), on the 1 February 2013 the number of registered unemployed in the state was 564.5 thousand people, of whom more than half were female, over 40% were young people under 35 (Anon, 2013C).

In Table 2 I used Calculation Methods - subtraction and addition too. I added together the total income of families consisting of a single mother and two children 0-6 and 6-18 of age, then I added together the total expenses, and then I subtracted total income from total expenses. Total income was 349.03 EUR, and total expenses were 437.31 EUR. For families that consisting of a single mother and two children 0-6 and 6-18 of age, the total income was not enough by the sum of 88.4 EUR per month.

In the situation, when monthly income for a family is not enough, single mothers are forced to find other ways and means for survival of themselves and their children. This situation is the

precondition for female labor migration from Ukraine to EU countries. Experts have called this phenomenon “the phenomenon of female migration.” There, in EU countries, women are ready to perform any sort of non-skilled work, and

receive a salary 3-4 times higher than they would earn in Ukraine. Unfortunately, women can seldom use their skills and their experience of work abroad, but in this situation the wellbeing of their children is paramount for them.

Table 2 Income and expenses for families that consisting of a single mother and two children 0-6 and 6-18 of age in Ukraine in 2013, per month, EUR

Incomes	EUR
Salary of mother - minimum wage	108
The state support to low-income families for child 0-6 years	91
The state support to low-income families for child 6-18 years	114
Alimony (spousal support) from the father of children, two children - one third of the father's income	36
Total	349
Expenses	EUR
Cost of food	122.3
The cost of clothing and footwear for mother and children	188
Costs of public transport	14
Costs of an apartment (includes gas, water, phone and electricity bills, etc.)	42
Payment of kindergarten ('formal' and 'informal' fee)	14
Payment of school ('formal' and 'informal' fee)	37.6
Healthcare payment (payment for medicines and personal care products) ('formal' and 'informal' fee)	18.8
Total	437.4
The difference between income and expenses	-88.4

For example, in Italy, according to a survey by the Ukrainian newspaper “*Gazeta Ukrainska*” of the Ukrainian labor migrants, the majority of the Ukrainian female labor migrants have a high level of education, 67%. But 80% of them are working in Italian families, and do not have the opportunity to continue in Italy the career they started in Ukraine (Anon, 2010).

So, despite the high level of education, the majority of the Ukrainian labor migrants continue to do domestic work in the EU (Felstead, 2001), in Italy (Vianello, 2008, 2012; Nare, 2010), Portugal (Wall, 2003, 2005; Miranda, 2007, 2009), etc.

4 WHY IS THIS RESEARCH BASED ON THE SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY?

This research is based on the single-parent family because the number of children who are

born into single parent families in Ukraine increases every year (Anon, 2013D). The proportion of children born to women, who were not in a registered marriage, has almost doubled in the period from 1990 until 2012. In 1990, this proportion of children was 11.2%, and in 2012 this proportion of children was already 21.4% (Fig. 1).

This means that women need to educate their children without men for different reasons: It can be because of violence in the family; divorce; death of the father; antisocial lifestyle of the father; father working abroad as labor migrant; the father not accepting the child as his; etc.

Also, the number of registered marriages is declining constantly in Ukraine (Anon, 2013D). During 1990-2012 this number was reduced by 42%, from 482.8 thousand of registered marriages in 1990 to 278.3 thousand in 2012 (Fig. 2).

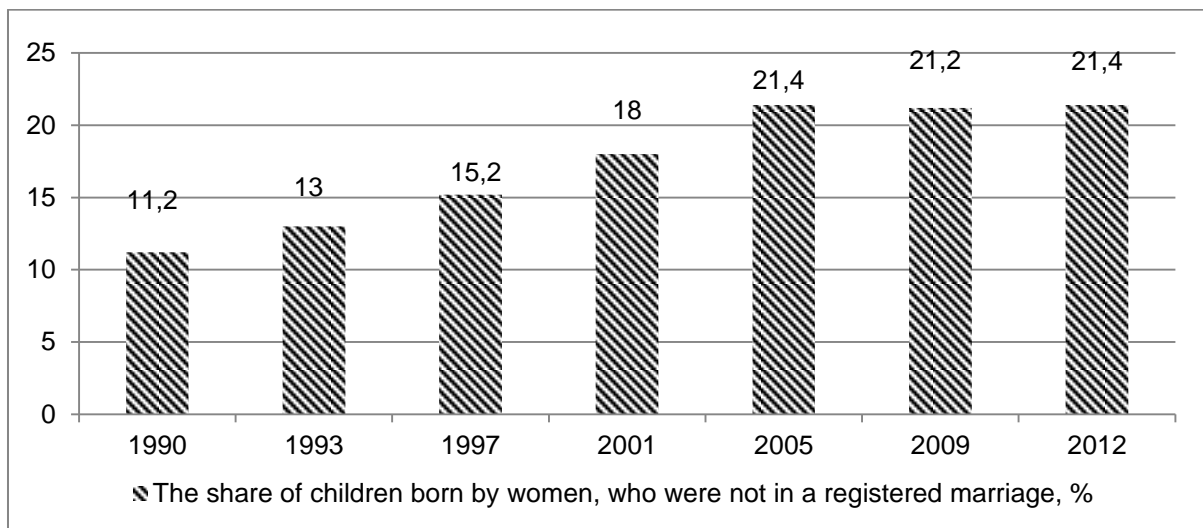


Fig. 1 The percentage of children born to women, who were not in a registered marriage in Ukraine (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 1990-2012), %

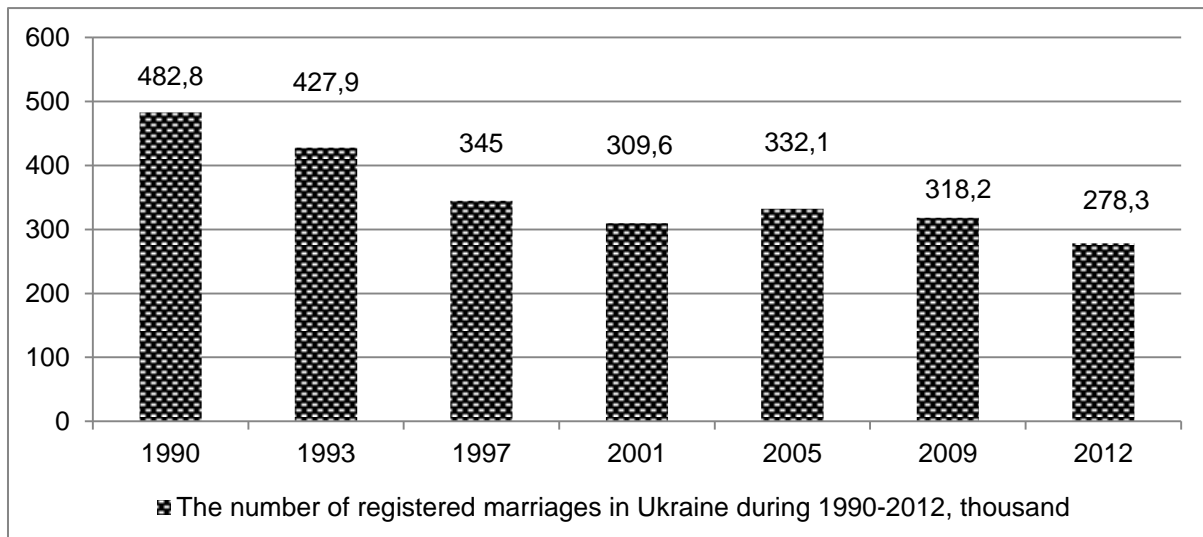


Fig. 2 The number of registered marriages in Ukraine (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 1990-2012)

5 FEMALE LABOR MIGRATION IMPACT ON FUTURE LIFE OF CHILDREN LIVING WITHOUT THEIR MOTHERS

When their mother goes to work abroad is the biggest shock in lives of their children. Children may lose sleep, appetite; they can get sick, because for a child of any age, the psychological and a physical loss of their mother are tantamount to death. The loss of their mother can distort their future. This phenomenon has been called "the social orphaning of children with living parents." Some scientists do not agree with this

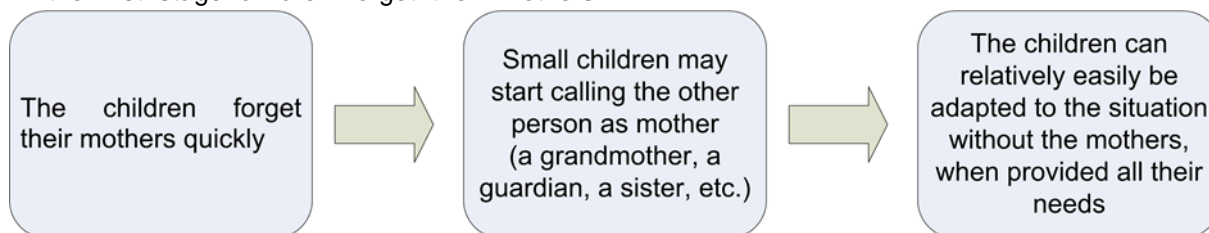
title (Tymczuk, 2010), but in my opinion the title of this phenomenon is correct.

For children whose mothers are working abroad for 5-10 years this is a very negative and difficult period. Children gradually get used to living without their mothers, but don't always find comfort in the correct things.

I would like to construct and to demonstrate several scenarios which explain how the phenomenon "the social orphaning of children with living parents" may affect the future life of children living without their mothers.

The scheme 1 will introduce a script, when children lose their mothers at a very young age

(0-6 years) because of a female labor migration. very quickly.
 In the first stage children forget their mothers

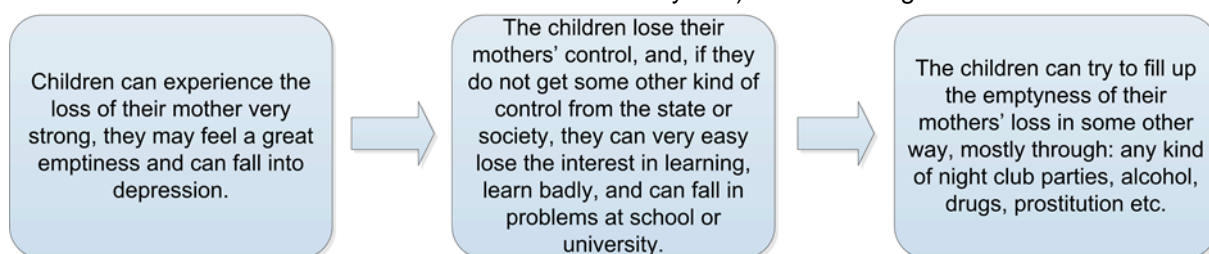


Scheme 1 Impact of the female labor migration on life of children without their mothers at a very young age (0-6 years)

In the second stage a small children may start addressing another person as mother (grandmothers, guardians, sisters). In the last stage children can adapt completely to living without their mother.

For much older children life without their mother can be more difficult.

The scheme 2 presents how the female labor migration can impact on life of older children (6-18 years) who are living without their mothers.



Scheme 2 Impact of the female migration on their children in more late age (6-18 years)

In the first stage of this scheme children feels the loss of their mothers very keenly, and then these children can feel a void and become depressed because of this loss. In the second stage mothers who are working abroad can lose control over their children very easy and at the same time if these children do not experience any other kind of control from the state or from society, they can lose interest in learning, and very soon they have problems at school or university.

In the last stage these children try to fill the void caused by the loss of their mothers in various different ways: through alcohol, drugs, prostitution, staying in night clubs, etc.

6 HOW CAN JOB OF THE FEMALE LABOR MIGRANTS ABROAD IMPACT ON THEIR MARRIAGES IN UKRAINE?

It appears that the job of female labor migrants abroad does have a negative impact on their marriages in Ukraine because in 90-95% cases these couples divorced.

Our conclusions confirm the survey conducted in Italy. At our request, in 2013 the Ukrainian

newspaper in Italy "Gazeta Ukrainska," newspaper for the Ukrainian labor migrants, conducted a survey among the labor migrants (Anon, 2010). In the survey there were 397 respondents. On the question: do you consider that women's labor migration leads to divorced families in Ukraine?, they answered as follows:

- 52% - yes, women's migration into Italy entails the inevitable divorce of the Ukrainian families;
- 23% - no, women's migration is not a reason for these divorces. Divorces occur regardless of the migration;
- 20% - yes, I know some Ukrainian women, ex-labor migrants, who divorced in Ukraine and created new families in Italy;
- 5% - no, I do not see any threat in the women's migration.

Therefore, this and other researches confirm that because of female labor migration in 90-95% cases migrants become divorced.

Also our study confirms the investigative journalism of the Ukrainian TV on this topic, because this subject is very relevant in Ukrainian society today (Anon, 2013E).

7 WHY THE UKRAINIAN LABOR MIGRANTS DO NOT EXPECT ANY PROTECTION OR SUPPORT FROM THEIR HOST COUNTRIES?

Unfortunately, Ukrainian female labor migrants abroad can be victims of criminal gangs of illegal human traffickers, social insecurity, violence, discrimination, and gender inequality. According to the Italian Red Cross (*Anon, 2013F*), Ukrainians are the only group out of all immigrants groups in Italy which hides the labor and sexual exploitation that they suffer (*Anon, 2013G*). But they do not ask any help or support from host countries for several reasons:

- a) They do not know their rights;
- b) They are very afraid of being deported;
- c) They are afraid of losing their job even when employers exploit them;
- d) They do not believe it possible to get any kind of support from governments of their host countries.

Therefore, the Ukrainian labor migrants, included the female migrants, need to learn how to trust people, organizations, and governments of host countries which try to help them.

8 DOES THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT HAVE OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS SOCIAL ORPHANS WITH LIVING PARENTS WHO ARE WORKING ABROAD?

The social orphans with living parents can lose very many things in their life. As we noted in our previous chapters of this study, first they lose their mothers or whole family if both parents are labor migrants, and through this loss they lose everything important in their life: their childhood, control by mothers or parents, successful study at school or university, peace of mind, confidence in the future, etc.

Also these children lose the example of family, they do not know in general how to create relationships between men and women, how to create a family life. The majority of these children need the help of psychologists. In other situations they can lose direction in their lives, because these children have only emptiness in their lives and money from their mothers abroad.

9 DOES THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT HAVE OBLIGATIONS TOWARD THE SOCIAL ORPHANS WITH LIVING PARENTS?

Yes, of course because today they are children, they are minor citizens of the country, but in the near future they will be adult citizens of the country. And if now the state does not want to create any help or support for these children, the social orphans, the state cannot expect anything from them in the future. It is the obligation of the government to support these children, the social orphans, during the time, when their mothers are working abroad. As we noted earlier, this topic is very real in society, and because of this we asked Ukrainian students about this through our survey. We conducted it among Ukrainian students in two Ukrainian universities in two different regions of the country in 2013 (*Abreu Bastos, 2013; Makazan, 2013*). One of the two universities was Khmelnytsky National University (KhNU) from the west of the country, located closer to the border with the EU. The second university was Zaporizhzhya National University (ZNU) from the south of the country, located closer to the border with Russia. In the survey 136 students participated.

The exact wording of the question was as follows: "Do you think that Ukraine should take care of the children of migrant workers who remain "orphans with living parents" at a time when parents are forced to work abroad?"

Among the students interviewed at the first university KhNU 68% students answered "yes," 24% students could not answer this question, and only 8% students answered "no". Among the students interviewed at the second university ZNU 75% students answered "yes", 6% students could not answer this question, and 19% students answered "no". In general, 72% students of both Ukrainian universities answered "yes," 13% students could not answer this question, and 15% students answered "no."

Therefore it means that this problem is extremely relevant, and the state needs to create a national program for support, help and protection of children of Ukrainian female migrants working abroad. But in Ukraine is

seems that this is not seen as a problem by the government.

Instead this problem of Ukraine is seen by the Portuguese scientists (Góis, 2013), the Italian scientists (Vianello, 2012), also the Italian government (Anon, 2013H), separately the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Anon, 2013I), IOM (Anon, 2013J), and Caritas Ukraine - Caritas-Europa (Anon, 2013K). These International Organizations helps these children, the social orphans with the living parents in the Western Ukraine.

10 HOW CAN THE GOVERNMENT HELP MOTHERS, WHO ARE WORKING ABROAD, AND THEIR CHILDREN IN UKRAINE?

We are sure that the government can and needs to help them.

First step, the state can connect even the most remote Ukrainian villages in the Western Ukraine to the Internet, because we are sure that almost all these children can buy computers or laptops with money from their mothers abroad, and the problem for them is just the absence of the Internet at home and at school. We are sure that through the Internet these children and their mothers can fill the void between them, and mothers can keep control over their children every day.

But these children even at schools cannot use the Internet for the following reasons:

- a) Schools do not have the Internet in general;
- b) Schools may have the Internet, but the speed of the network is very slow, or the school's computers may be obsolete;
- c) Schools may be connected to the Internet but they do not have the money to pay for it every month.

First example, in the Lviv region only half of all schools has the Internet (Anon, 2013L). Also the problem at schools may be obsolete computers for use with the Internet.

Second example, in the Chernovtsy region the schools may have the Internet, but due to the very slow speed of the Internet only one computer can be connected to the Internet network (Anon, 2013M). Therefore use of the

Internet in the schools of the Western Ukraine is almost impossible.

Second step, the state can provide professional psychologists to help these children in all schools of the Western Ukraine. If the professional psychologists do not want to go and work in the most remote Ukrainian villages of the Western Ukraine, volunteers can be found, and they need not be only from Ukraine, but also from EU countries, and the post-soviet countries too. The language barrier between volunteers and children is not a problem because children can learn other languages very fast, which is very good experience for them too.

Now the government needs to recognize on the state level "the phenomenon of female migration," and the phenomenon of "the social orphaning children with living parents" as a national problems and a serious challenge of the contemporary and future Ukraine.

11 CONCLUSIONS

My research presents the study of preconditions for the spread of the migration of women from Ukraine to EU countries because salaries and pensions in Ukraine are low, and people can't survive on this money, and so they try to find other sources of income. These preconditions are low salary in Ukraine, low state support for low-income families, the low level of alimony for children, etc.

The situation for single mothers and their children in Ukraine today is very difficult because mothers only get a small amount of money from the state to raise their children. When the family's income is not enough, mothers are forced to find other ways and means for survival for themselves and their children. This situation encourages the spread of migration of woman from Ukraine to EU countries. Experts have called this phenomenon "the phenomenon of female migration."

There, in EU countries, women are ready perform any non-skilled work, and get their salary 3-4 times higher than in Ukraine.

Because of female migration 90-95% families are divorced. Women's migration into the EU entails inevitable divorce for the Ukrainian families, which leads to "the social orphaning children with living parents."

The Ukrainian government has obligations to the social orphans with living parents, because today they are children, they junior citizens of the country, but in near future they will be the adult citizens of the country. And if now the state does not want to create any help or support to these children, the social orphans, the state cannot expect anything from them in future. We are sure that the government can and should help the Ukrainian labor migrants and their children in Ukraine.

First step, the state needs to connect even the most remote Ukrainian villages of the Western Ukraine to the Internet.

Second step, the state should provide professional help for these children by psychologists at all schools of the Western Ukraine.

Now the government needs to recognize at state level "the phenomenon of female migration" and the phenomenon of "the social orphaning children with living parents" as a real national problem and a serious challenge to the Ukraine now and in the future.

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