

**The Woman and Sixpence: Gendered impact of remittances on social sustainability of
Ukrainian transnational households**

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Abstract

The key objective of this paper is to make an analysis of the gendered effect of remittances on poverty alleviation, and in wider terms, on socio-economic sustainability in Ukrainian transnational household. Socio-economic sustainability is measured here by means of its impact indicators, which include together with poverty, issues of employment, health, education and gender equality in migrant families. The paper is grounded on the materials of a field research, implemented across a number of stages: a participant observation, in-depth interviews with experts in migration policy and women's/gender issues, structured interviews with members of Ukrainian transnational households and life-course interviews with Ukrainian labor migrants.

Key words: gendered effect of remittances, socio-economic sustainability, poverty alleviation, Ukrainian transnational family

Introduction

The research in various countries of the world has revealed the importance of understanding migration within the family dynamics and as a community strategy. From this point of view, the issue of gender and remittances is a perspective area of study, which is still under-researched. This explains the goal of this paper which is to identify the gendered impact of remittances on *social sustainability impact indicators* (TSIA Handbook, 2008). These include: poverty, health, education, labour issues and gender equality in Ukrainian family. To reach this broader goal, the study will pursue the following **narrower objectives**:

1. *Conceptually*, it uses a gender sensitive analysis to link into a holistic approach the diverse debates about Ukrainian transnational migration and remittances, low-paid employment and household coping strategies.
2. *Methodologically*, the research is designed to employ “soft” research methods of data selection, procession and analysis to produce an account of the financial aspect of Ukrainian migrant labour, incorporating gendered views and experiences of migrants themselves.
3. *Empirically*, it is aimed to develop important new data sets outlining the experience of Ukrainian low-paid migrant labour employed in the EU, highlighting a gender dimension of their economic strategies via varying remitting patterns. Special emphasis is placed on the role of remittance for *poverty alleviation* in the Ukrainian migrant households and such key aspects of social sustainability of the family as *children’s education, employment* of home-staying family members, *gender and family equality, health-care* issues.

Key terminology. In this paper the concept of *gender* is understood in compliance with the OECD definition, referring to “economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities, associated with being male and female” (OECD, 1998). *Transnational family* is conceptualized here following Bryceson and Vuorela (2002: 3) as the one whose members “live some or most of the time separated from each other but yet create a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders”. The paper follows a classical definition of *remittances* as “monetary funds sent by individuals working abroad to recipients in the country that they came from”, combined with theoretical considerations informing what monetary flows are included in it, particularly in what concerns *who sends the resources* and *who decides how the resources are used* (Roberts, Banaian, 2004: 3). Furthermore, remittances are presented here in line with a UN-INSTRAW approach (2006a) as going beyond the monetary dimension of “migradollars” (Massey, Parrado, 1994) and covering social aspects of migrant transfers. It is assumed that social remittances have an impact on gender relations within the household and community, challenging traditional

views on gender roles and images of women due to “gender equality remittances” (Tolstokorova, 2010a). Drawing upon this framework, the **main goal** of the paper is to make a gender-sensitive analysis of the role of remittances for *social sustainability impact indicators* (TSIA Handbook, 2008) which include: poverty, health, education, labour issues and gender equality in the Ukrainian family.

Methodology. The paper is grounded on the materials of a research project, which involved a complex approach implemented across *the following stages*:

- 25 in-depth interviews with experts in migration policy and women’s/gender issues made in Kiev and Lviv in the course of the project “Care-work and welfare internationalization. Transnational scenarios for the welfare of the future”, carried out by Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), Rome, Italy;

- 29 semi-formal interviews with Ukrainian migrant women working in recipient EU countries (work in progress);

- interviews with 9 migrant families included both circular migrants themselves and their family members;

- non-participant observation through informal conversations with members of migrants social networks.

Role of remittances in the economic sustainability of Ukrainian transnational household

Remittances are crucial for many Ukrainian households and regions, although statistics on migrants’ remittances are fragmentary and data from different sources are difficult to reconcile (Atamanov et al, 2009: 28-29). As was discussed earlier (Tolstokorova, 2010b), the pull of remittances Ukraine receives from the citizens working abroad, by analysts’ assessments may amount between 0.7% to 25% of GDP (GFK, 2008, p. 5). Thus, according to the National Bank of Ukraine, in 2006 alone Ukraine received \$5.6 bn of remittances from its migrant workers (taken from Gajducky, 2007). The IFAD statistics for that year was \$8.47 bn (IFAD, 2007, p. 12). Meanwhile, by the estimates of Ukrainian experts, the real sum may reach up to 10-20 bn (Fedorak, 2007), considering that Ukrainians do not trust the national banking system and prefer unofficial means of credit transfer. By contrast, the foreign direct investments Ukraine attracted throughout 16 years of state independence did not exceed \$24 bn (Kyiv Post, 2007). In the most economically disadvantaged areas, as for instance Ternopil and Chernivcy, this contrast is even sharper: the ratio

between foreign investments and informal migrant remittances into the national economy is 1 vs 40 (Parkhomenko, Starodub, 2005, p. 20). The dynamics of remittances throughout 2000-2006 is reflected in table 1.

Table 1. Remittances dynamics in Ukraine, 2000-2006

<i>(US\$ million)</i>	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Inward remittance flows <i>of which:</i>	33	141	209	330	411	595	595
Workers' remittances	-	84	133	185	193	236	-
Compensation of employees	33	56	74	145	218	359	-
Migrants' transfer	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
Outward remittance flows <i>of which:</i>	10	5	15	29	20	34	34
Workers' remittances	-	-	-	-	-	34	-
Compensation of employees	2	-	4	4	6	10	-
Migrants' transfer	8	5	11	25	14	22	-

Source: World Bank (2008)

The analysis of available research literature shows that in many Ukrainian transnational households, remittances serve as an efficient tool allowing to alleviate poverty and advance material well-being. As was shown elsewhere (Tolstokorova, 2009b), savings made through international employment are used mainly for family consumption and for investments into children's education and housing. By assessments of Ukrainian realtors, around 60–80 % of remittances are invested into real property

estate. To a much lesser extent, they are invested into small family businesses, mainly because Ukraine has few economic incentives for such enterprise (Malynovska, 2006). According to sociological self-assessments of transnational households held in 2002, 41,1% of responders reported that migration enabled them to increase their family welfare tangibly; 43,1% found their material and financial status to be only “somewhat improved” and mere 8,8% acknowledged that their well-being did not change considerably. At the same time, 63,4% of families acknowledged that labour migration allowed them to reach high economic status, while only 13% estimated their material situation as poor (SIFY, 2004: 19). Statistics confirms that consumption patterns in translational families are more varied than in families with similar social and educational status working in Ukraine. For example, their households are better equipped with modern furniture and appliances, they own more motor vehicles and consumer durables, etc. (Malynovska, 2004: 14). For instance, there were 2 microwaves in non-migrant families vs 25 in those receiving remittances respectively, 2 vs 24 computers, 16 vs 36 automobiles per 100 families. Responders of sociological polls acknowledged that 55-60% of these goods were purchased from remittances (SIFY, 2004: 19). Results of an all-nation sociological survey were consistent with these findings. The evidences that migrant households owned more modern commodities as compared to non-migrant ones in such proportions are: every-day ware – 2,3 times more, computer equipment - 2,5, stereo and video appliances - 1,8 (Pribytkova, 2003: 112).

At the same time, as was noted earlier (Tolstokorova, 2010b), remittances became a sort of “development mantra” (Kapur, 2004), seen as a panacea against economic hardships in transnational families and source societies at large, and a key “silver lining argument” against those who are mindful of negative repercussions of outsourcing. Yet, what is often silenced is that remittances accelerate inflation in the societies receiving them, and therefore, shrink the consumption potential of the population (SIFY, 2004, p. 21). Additionally, the benefits of remittances “may not offset the losses of the local social protection systems and/or budget deficits resulting from the fact that the migrant workers do not pay taxes in their home countries, but their families use public goods (healthcare, education and other public services” (Góra, Rohozynsky, 2009, p. 11). Equally, while foregrounding the financial benefits of labour export for source societies, this approach often neglects the social and human costs of migration, especially in the medium and the long run.

Remittances, gender and sustainable family development

Although there is now some recognition that migration is a gendered process, the relationships between remittances and gender are under-researched. The gender perspective has barely been considered in studies on patterns of remittances, transfer channels, use of remittances, and their potential for development (Yinger, 2007). Furthermore, despite having some consensus about the economic benefits of transnational labor migration for labor-sending societies at large, there is far less understanding of the long-term impact of remittances on labor-sending communities, especially at the level of the household, marital and intergenerational relations within the family. Empirical research (Pinnawala, 2009) showed that the spatial separation of migrants from their families entails that issues of resources use and management are taken outside the confines of the household. This may result in the separation of an earner from a manager, creating spatially separated parallel power centers within the transnational family space with the manager of income as the center of power in local family/household space and earner of income (woman migrant) as the center of power in the new livelihood space. Hence, gender is an important factor in determining the remitting strategies in transnational families and in shaping supportive social networks to bolster the basis of financial security and wellbeing of the transnational household.

Furthermore, research findings evidence that women play a leading role in remitting, as recipients and managers and as senders. Thus, the participants of a UN-INSTRAW virtual discussion on gender and remittances (UN-INSTRAW, 2008) evidenced that although women's patterns of remitting may vary depending on why they have migrated (Ramirez, Dominguez, Morais, 2005), overall, women are found to be more reliable as senders and managers of remittances than men. Research from Peru showed that women are more prone to invest remittances in productive enterprises, such as tailoring, producing handicrafts, commercial agriculture and raising cattle. A case study from the Dominican Republic found that when migratory flows first began, women remitted money to their husbands, but as a result of men's poor management of remittances, women chose to send money directly to mothers or sisters but not to men (UN-INSTRAW, 2006) which is also true for Philippina women-migrants (Parreñas, 2005). The research in Georgia showed the prevalent perception among returned female informants that female migrants sent more remittances and were better able to support their families, because they did not spare themselves while working for remittances: they did not go out during their days off, called home only twice a month, did not buy anything for themselves in order to save as much as they could to send savings back home (Zurabishvili, Zurabishvili, 2010: 81). Men, it was found, spent their remittances not as effectively

as women. The experience of Tajikistan showed that the longer migrant men stayed away from their families, the more likely they were to start a second family and when this happened, the remittances gradually decreased (Crisis Group Interviews, 2009). The research among Ghanaians in London discovered gender differences in remitting patterns, in particular, that while men send remittances in larger amounts and not so regularly, women send more regularly and respond more positively to calls from the country of origin in periods of crisis. Therefore, women are seen by the UN as critical actors in the remittance-to-development paradigm, and for that matter, understanding differential gender characteristics in remittance use, savings and investments becomes a major prerequisite for the success of local development programs (Ribas-Mateos, 2008). This is why, as argued by the UN-INSTRAW, in search for a framework through which the complexities of global migration may be understood at its best, the connection between *gender and remittances* emerges as a *key factor* in this global phenomenon that demands further examination (UN-INSTRAW, 2007).

Analysis of field research findings

The financial aspect of labour migration is a relatively new area of research in Ukraine. It is comprised of few occasional papers (Gajducky, 2007; Atamanov et al, 2009). At the same time, the gender dimension of economic activity of migrants has never before been placed in the focus of attention in the Ukrainian scholarship. Therefore, the project was designed as an indicative study, aimed to better understand the various forces underlying the dynamics of foreign employment and its economic aspects through gender perspective and mapping the key transnational stakeholders of migration and remittances in the selected geographical areas.

Role of remittances in poverty alleviation and employment of Ukrainian transnational households: Efficient but insufficient

Our interviews showed that remittances play a crucial role in poverty alleviation in transnational households, enabling family members left behind to secure means for the basic subsistence consumption expenditures on food, rent, petty everyday expenses, etc. This was unanimously admitted by all the women-migrants and female members of migrant families left behind. As was commented by one migrant woman, when she complained about the hardships of her migrant life to her mother on the phone, the old woman replied (cited in Tolstokorova, 2010a):

“While you are there, your children here have food to eat and money to pay the university fees. So, clench your fists and tolerate it. (Interview with Tamara, 49 domestic workers, Rome, 02.04.2009).

It was admitted that remittances enabled transnational households to escape serious financial constraints, which otherwise might be unavoidable:

Responder (2): *If it was not for remittances, I would parish here, because practically, for my own salary I would not be able to survive, of course (Interview with Olena, an unmarried adult daughter of migrant parents and a sister to a migrant brother. Works as a sales-assistant at a supermarket. Chortkiv, 29.04. 2010).*

Responder (2): *My migrant daughter sends me transfers every month, because with my retirement allowance, which is a minimal of 700 hryvnyas¹, it is impossible to survive here. Although my son works here, his wage is only 700 hryvnyas too and this is insufficient for the family to survive, of course. Just consider that in the family but for me, there is also my son, who studies and works, my grand-son, who also studies while my migrant daughter pays for his tuition, and my grand-daughter, who will also become a student soon. And the daughter herself needs something to live on, because she is still young, she is but 40. You see, after her husband passed away, she has to make her own living (Interview with Marta, retired, works part-time, mother to a widowed migrant daughter. Lviv, 18.05.2010).*

However, all the women admitted that although remittances enabled the improvement of the financial situation in their families, taken alone, they were insufficient to cover the consumption requirements of family members left behind. Notwithstanding that nearly all of responders pulled remittances with retirement allowances and earnings from part-time jobs, the financial situation in the household was not seen as affluent.

Interviewer: *Are remittances you receive enough to support you family here?*

Responder (1): *To say they are sufficient for 100%, I wouldn't say so. Probably not. It is only €150 per month. So, of course not, it is not enough (Interview with Marta, retired, works part-time, mother to a widowed migrant daughter. Lviv, 18.05. 2010).*

Responder (2): *Not always. Sometimes they are not. ... And this is despite both me and my husband still working, although being retired. (Interview with Ganna, retired, works part-time, mother to a divorced migrant son. Chortkiv, 29.04. 2010).*

¹ By rates for May 2010, it was around \$90.

Responder (3). *Well, probably yes, but consider that in addition to them I have my pension and the earnings from my part-time job. If to put all this together, then it is more or less enough. (Interview with Diana, retired, works part-time, mother to a migrant couple. Chortkiv, 29.04. 2010).*

Therefore, although remittances, in most cases received from more than one relative, enabled migrant's households to escape poverty and to raise their financial security, they could cover their financial requirements only partially, being sufficient to provide mainly for the most basic daily needs of the family. In order to maintain a more or less decent level of life in transnational households, all their adult members, including retired seniors and students, had to work. Hence, they had to pull remittances with other sources of income, like wages, earnings from part-time jobs, retirement allowances, etc. Nonetheless, even when migrant relatives took the responsibility for more costly expenditures, like electronic equipment, furniture, clothes, footwear and tuition of children left behind, etc., women assessed the financial situation in their households to be no more than satisfactory.

Therefore, the results of our interviews showed that the empowering effect of remittances on women in terms of their financial advancement is rather relative, enabling them to escape poverty, but not proving sufficient funding to ensure financial security, especially after retirement. In addition to an observation that “reducing the poverty of particular remittance-receiving households will not necessarily reduce poverty in the economy as a whole” (IBON EDM, 2009: 2) this signifies that the potential of remittances for resolving the economic constraints in the family and society is rather low and does not offset “the cost of the social stresses due to extended separation from family members” (Ibidem).

Role of remittances in securing education for the younger generation in migrants' families: Earning for learning

Our interviews with all the three groups of responders showed that children's education is one of the key incentives for migration. According to expert assessments, the three priorities for earnings abroad for Ukrainians are as follows (Tolstokorova, 2009a):

- a) to find a job to earn for everyday living and to support the family left behind at home;
- b) to make accumulations necessary to cover tuition for children;
- c) to make accumulations to buy housing or to make investments into real property estate.

These motivations were not recognized as gender-specific, but pertaining to both women and men. This is how it was explained in one of the experts' interviews:

Responder: *I don't agree with those who claim that this money is used mainly for everyday consumption, for example for food. My personal opinion is that remittances arriving from abroad, and it is around 10% of our GDP, despite not being invested in business development, are invested into higher education for children. For most people going abroad, the key incentive is to provide quality higher education for their children. (Interview with a Director of a think-tank on connections with the Ukrainian Diaspora. Lviv, 01.07.2008).*

This is consistent with the situations described by migrant women themselves, for example, in the interview with Tamara, cited above. Other interviewed women also noted that their primary goal for migration was to accumulate money to cover the University tuition of their children. This was the case in the family of Nadezhda (39, a former music teacher and a singer), who went to work first to Greece and then moved to Italy, where she was employed in elderly care. Her remittances allowed her son to study at the University in Kyiv, where he lived with Nadezhda's brother. The intention to give higher education to her two sons was also the incentive for migration to Anastasia (cited in Tolstokorova, 2010a):

"...My elder son was about to graduate from school and we needed money to pay for his university education. The problem was that, when industry and the army collapsed after the demise of the Union <USSR>, in our small Crimean town there were no jobs left for men. Only some low-paid work for women in the service sector was still available. So, my husband lost his job and could find only part-time work in the informal sector. Since I worked in the service sector, I managed to keep my job, but my wage was ridiculously low. Anyway, our joint incomes were insufficient to maintain a family with two children. So, I decided it was me who had to leave for earnings abroad (Interview with Anastasia, 38, working in the services business in Monaco [more specific information on the character of her job was not provided to the interviewer "for confidentiality reasons"]. Nice, France, 08.12. 2007).

Among members of transnational families there were different models of investing remittances into the higher education of the younger generation. Thus, as was evidenced by the interview with Marta cited above, remittances were earned by her migrant daughter to invest into the tuition for all the three children in the family staying in Ukraine, both current students (the remitter's son and her

brother) and the prospective ones (her daughter). In Olena's family it is her migrant brother who receives higher education in the USA from savings, which he makes by working there part-time. When necessary, his divorced parents (both working in Italy) help him to cover the tuition. The third model was found in Vera's family. Her daughter together with her husband left to work in Italy with the intention to secure money in order to provide higher education for their two small children who were left behind at home at Vera's care. When the parents could stay and work legally in Italy, they decided that it would be better for their children to receive European education. They fetched their school-age children to live with them, hoping that in the future they would be able to pay the fees for their studies at an Italian University. First it was the elder daughter who moved there, and then the younger boy joined the family:

Responder: *Even though both of my grandchildren started studying in a regular Italian secondary school, they learned the language very quickly. They both are very successful at school. In some subjects they even rate the best in their grades. For example, the girl was allowed to skip one year at school and from the 5th grade she was transferred to the 7th, not the 6th! She won the competition for the best essay about Italian history in her class! So, we are sure our kids will be successful as University students in the future too ((Interview with Vera, retired, mother to migrant couple. Kyiv,05.03.2009).*

These examples allow us to conclude that remittances play a pivotal role in securing educational possibilities for migrants' children. Hence, they justify the role of a key incentive and a "rationale" for parents working abroad (Boehm, 2008), as they contribute to social sustainability of the Ukrainian family by enabling better life perspectives for the children in the future. At the same time, as was discussed elsewhere (Tolstokorova, 2008; Tolstokorova, 2010a) expert interviews showed that for the education of the children of migrants it often becomes primarily a matter of high social prestige, rather than skills and knowledge acquisition and therefore, they often neglect studies at Universities, thus wasting "European scholarships" (Tolstokorova, 2009b), received through remittances of their "paychecks moms" (Tolstokorova, 2010b), working abroad: (cited in Tolstokorova, 2008).

"One girl told me: "Oh, I study in a group where half of my group-mates have their moms in Italy, so they don't have to study because their moms send them money and they just pay for their credits". So, it's a huge impact on children, especially teenagers. They have money that their moms send, they have easy money, they start gambling, or take alcohol and they don't need to study because they know: "Mom will

send me money, why should I go to school”?” (Interview with experts of a women’s NGO. Lviv, 02.07.2008).

Hence, the efficiency of remittances invested into University studies of children may be dubious, insofar as children and teenagers, who lack parental control due to parents’ out-migration, are not always able to use them properly and often misuse the money transfers from abroad for unduly purposes, wasting them on their whims, if not vices (Kyrchiv, 2004).

Role of remittances in resolving health-care issues in families of migrants: the cost of the cure

As was discussed earlier (Tolstokorova, 2009b), health-care is a challenging area of life for labour migrants, taking into account that the majority of them work abroad illegally and have no health-insurance. Moreover, very often they work in conditions of high physical pressure, health-hazards and even life-risk, entailing serious deteriorations to their physical, emotional and reproductive health (Lakiza-Sachuk, 2001: 48). Interview with migration experts showed that despite most of potential migrants usually being in good health, which they regarded as a prerequisite for successful job search abroad, there is evidence that many of them developed health problems through their work in another country. Thus, sociological polls (Women’s Perspectives, 2003) showed that 37.86% of migrants gave positive answers to the question if they had health problems while working aboard and 6.80% answered that they experienced partial problems; while 8.2% of women reported that they experienced sexual harassment. Furthermore, experts noted that one of key health problems for women-migrants is gynecological illnesses, which may be due to emotional pressure or different climate in a foreign country (cited in Tolstokorova, 2008).

***Expert:** I am talking about health problems, because as a result of a different climate, stress, etc., a lot of women have gynecological problems. Anyway, I had a client, who said that she came back [from Italy] and had to re-start her life here because if she went back [to Italy], doctors could not guarantee that this disease would not develop into a cancer and stuff like that...”. If they [women] work unofficially, illegally, they don’t have medical insurance and the situation is getting worse for them [in terms of health condition]. Take, for example, my sister-in-law. She worked abroad illegally and this is why after a while she came back home with a poor health. After she had a treatment here, the doctors said that she should better stay home if she wanted to live longer, because her health condition was worsening.*

Interviewer: *And are there many cases like that?*

Expert: *Yes.... I had another client who came back from Italy some years ago. The reason was because she got into a car accident and she had no medical insurance. She spent all the money she earned on the operations ... and for that matter she couldn't work for some time. She could only afford to cover air-fair to come back to Ukraine...". (Interview with a lawyer, an expert of a women's NGO. Lviv, 02.07. 2008).*

Emotional wellbeing of women-migrants is also a matter of concern for specialists, taking into account that very often they work in conditions of high stress and emotional pressure, but being separated from their families they can hardly count on their emotional and spiritual support, protection in times of hardships and crises. In such conditions it is no wonder that they experience emotional and mental health problems. Thus, the Parliamentary Committee of Ukraine in Foreign Affairs reported that starting 1999, cases of hospitalization of Ukrainian women working in Italy increased 10 times (NIC, 2006). Many women-migrants, who in Italy often work in psychologically unfavorable environment, upon returning home develop a so-called "Italian syndrome" (Tolstokorova, 2009b), which refers, but for physical ailments, to paranoia, agoraphobia, aggressiveness and other mental disorders, etc.

Hence, remittances not always have a multiplier effect, insofar as they may be used not so much for the benefit of the healthcare requirements of family members left behind, but to compensate for the detrimental effect to health of migrants themselves, caused by unfavorable conditions of work abroad. In other words, they do not always bring "healthcare dividends", but may serve as a fee to be paid for the experience of migration *per se*, in addition to the damage to the migrants' health.

Role of remittances in gender equality: promotion in transnational families

In our interviews, experts in women's issues noted that for women, migration was an opportunity to get rid of excessive parental control or failed marriages. To move away from situations where they lived under traditional, patriarchal authority to situations where they are empowered to exercise greater authority over their own lives" (UN, 2006).

Expert (1): *...A rural woman who works in agriculture here, she works very hard, but she is not paid much. And of course, when the context changes, when she gets into other conditions of work, her attitude changes, it changes her mentality. So, when women get back home, they refuse to accept the same realities as they had before,*

because their mentality changes and their perceptions change. (Interview with an expert in migration issues from a state research institute Kyiv, 24.07.2009).

Expert (2): “In the village she [a woman] works hard, because you know the situation. And now she can leave abroad, where she sees quite a different attitude to herself. This is why she does not want to go back to the same situation at home. It is an empowering effect, you see. This is one of the reasons why families collapse. Because she does not want to go back to conditions where she was powerless [...]. Because after coming back home she will teach her child that it is possible to live by other standards. She will not want her daughter to be treated the same way as she herself had been treated by her husband.” (Interview with the director of a think-tank on connections with the Ukrainian Diaspora. Lviv, 01.07. 2008).

However, although this is of course true for some women, other interviews confirmed our earlier findings (Tolstokorova, 2008; Tolstokorova, 2009b; Tolstokorova, 2010a) that the empowering effect of migration on women in many cases is but relative. The paradox is that although remittances enable migrant women to acquire more financial freedom and self-reliance, they entail neither more fiscal democracy, nor more gender equality in transnational families. Foreign employment only increases mother's double burden, but does not always lead to more financial independence insofar as by assuming the roles of breadwinners, women become more bound by financial obligations to their children and their minders, while their husbands use the managerial financial roles of their wives as an opportunity to decrease or even escape their own contribution into family budget. Furthermore, in some cases women may even be tapped into specific forms of financial dependency from their ex-husbands, who try to manipulate the motherly feelings of their ex-spouses. Thus, as was shown in our other work (Tolstokorova, Ryndyk, 2010), during the participant observation and informal interviews with officials of the Service for affairs of family and minors of the Chortkiv district state administration, we learnt that the town courts there abound in legal cases, initiated by migrant women in order to deprive their ex-husbands of their paternal rights in view of their alcoholism or other kinds of anti-social behavior. These husbands often demanded their ex-wives to pay them penalties for the official abandonment of their paternal rights (and respectively duties) to their own children. The rationality behind these collusions is not the emotional attachment of fathers to their children, who they do not want to forfeit for free, but a mercantile desire of men to obtain dividends for a “favour” of abandoning the rights for their own off-springs. These cases testify not only the transformation of gender role models in migrants'

families, but also evince the mercantelization of interpersonal ties in transnational kinship relationships.

Therefore, our research shows once again that financial independence and “gender equality remittances” (Tolstokorova, 2010a) which women acquire through the exposure to more egalitarian cultures of Western democracies, do not obligatory entail empowerment, but may have even a reverse effect on them, leading to more dependency on family and ex-husbands.

Summary and Conclusions

Our interviews showed that remittances are, indeed, instrumental for the goal of achieving economic and social sustainability of Ukrainian migrant family. They allow to escape poverty and to raise the financial security of transnational households, thus enabling them to escape serious financial constraints, which otherwise might be unavoidable. Remittances play a pivotal role in securing educational possibilities for migrants’ children, thus providing the background for their fulfillment and professional self-realization in the future.

For women, migration in some cases may be an opportunity to get rid of excessive parental control or failed marriages. Finances accumulated abroad make an important contribution to healthcare security of transnational families. At the same time, it was learned that remittances cover the financial requirements of transnational households but partially, being sufficient to provide only for the most basic daily needs of the family. The empowering effect of remittances on women-receivers in terms of their financial advancement is rather relative, insofar as they do not provide sufficient funding to ensure financial security, especially after retirement. In reference to women who are remittances senders, although they acquire more of financial independence and “gender equality remittances” due to their work abroad, yet it does not always entail either their empowerment or more family equality, while in many cases has a reverse effect on them, leading to more dependency on family and ex-husbands.

The investment of remittances into university tuitions of migrants’ children may result in their misuse by the latter, who often develop consumerist attitude to financial contributions arriving from abroad and are not always prone to benefit by them for professional purposes. In terms of contribution of remittances into the resolution of healthcare issues in transitional families, our fieldwork showed that in many cases they serve not so much to maintain physical well-being of

family members, but to compensate for the health damages to migrants, which they acquire due to unfavorable conditions of low-cost foreign employment.

Hence, our general conclusion is that although remittances obviously contribute to the socio-economic sustainability of Ukrainian transnational family, their effect is rather relative and can hardly offset the destructive impact of migration on the transnational family space, which includes undermining its of principle social functions (Tolstokorova, 2009b) and the decline of kinships ties (Tolstokorova, Ryndyk, 2010) and often leads to dissolution of family as it is.

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