



Does migration contribute to women's empowerment? Portrait of urban Turkey and Istanbul

Değer Eryar, Hasan Tekgüç & Sule Toktas

To cite this article: Değer Eryar, Hasan Tekgüç & Sule Toktas (2019) Does migration contribute to women's empowerment? Portrait of urban Turkey and Istanbul, Turkish Studies, 20:2, 200-221, DOI: [10.1080/14683849.2018.1495566](https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2018.1495566)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2018.1495566>



Published online: 11 Jul 2018.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 140



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Does migration contribute to women's empowerment? Portrait of urban Turkey and Istanbul

Değer Eryar^a, Hasan Tekgüç^b and Sule Toktas ^c

^aDepartment of Economics, İzmir University of Economics, İzmir, Turkey; ^bDepartment of Economics, Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey; ^cDepartment of Political Science and Public Administration, Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey

ABSTRACT

This article empirically investigates the impact of internal migration on women's empowerment in urban areas of Turkey. Based on data from a nationally representative household survey, we find that migration exerts a positive impact in urban settings through improvements in educational attainment and labor market outcomes. Migration contributes to women's empowerment by raising their education levels and lowering the gap in schooling between men and women. Migration also allows migrants, both men and women and particularly those with tertiary education, to access jobs and occupations in high wage regions like Istanbul. However, unlike in education, a gender wage gap persists even after migration.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 12 January 2018; Accepted 19 April 2018

KEYWORDS Migration; women; immigrants; empowerment; Istanbul

Introduction

Empowerment in its simplest term is expansion in personal ability to make and implement significant decisions affecting one's own life and the lives of others in a context where this ability was previously denied to him/her.¹ Increase in assets and capabilities produces control over resources and decisions and at the same time enhances freedom of choice and action.² Empowerment occurs at individual and collective levels as well as in the public and the private spheres with interrelated socio-economic, political, cultural, legal, psychological and legal dimensions.³ On account of the many faces of gender inequality, empowerment of women refers to multivariate situations of increased power in accessing education, work, health and decision-making processes in the household. Thus, the process of empowerment entails women's individual consciousness for freedom and well-being that gets operationalized through mobility,⁴ wage labor, a strong role in the

CONTACT Sule Toktas  suletoktas@yahoo.com; sule@khas.edu.tr  Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Kadir Has University, Cibali, 34083 Istanbul, Turkey

© 2018 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

household and eventually a meaningful participation in the wider community.⁵

This article focuses on the impact of internal migration on women's empowerment through changes in women's educational attainment and their labor market outcomes such as employment rate, occupational choices and wage income. With migration, women can have more access to a variety of education and employment opportunities, which directly or indirectly help reduce inequality and poverty.⁶ Migration might also expand the opportunities of women's economic, social and inter-personal relations. What's more, the migration of women from rural-to-urban areas can proliferate economic and social empowerment and economic attainment through trading, independence and networking to find better economic opportunities.⁷ Yet, factors like low education levels, prior non-working status and rural background negatively correlate with empowering outcomes for women due to migration.⁸

Most of the studies on internal migration in Turkey are overwhelmingly field studies employing qualitative methods based on data from migrant enclaves that present a multi-dimensional picture of rural-to-urban and generally less educated migrant experience. The current study, however, utilizing a nationally representative survey, allows for an investigation of often overlooked groups of migrants, such as urban-to-urban and better-educated migrants, living outside the enclaves. Incorporating the gender aspect to the processes of internal migration, the article discusses the relationship between migration and women's involvement in education and labor force by comparing the related figures to those of men as well as to those of non-migrants.

The main results of this study present us sufficient empirical evidence for the positive correlation between internal migration and empowerment of women observed mostly through improvements in women's educational attainment and in their labor market outcomes. The analysis indicates that migration provides both migrants and their children with better education opportunities, which themselves can lead to better-paid occupations, especially for those with tertiary education. This link is much more pronounced for women as much as migration is positively associated not only with higher levels of education for women, but also with a narrowed gap between men's and women's educational attainment. Apart from enabling women to acquire more education and to have them better equipped for the labor market, migration tends to offer them more job opportunities which do not necessarily become available immediately after arrival in a new setting.

Turkey is a country that has nearly completed its urbanization process. According to the latest national figures in 2016,⁹ the majority of the population lives in urban settings with 92.3 percent of population residing in

provincial and district centers, and only 7.7 percent of the population lives in towns and villages.¹⁰ Although migration from rural to the urban settings has dominated the recent history of urbanization in Turkey since the 1950s, which resulted in the emergence of shanty towns (commonly known as the ‘gecekondu’ phenomenon) in the cities,¹¹ changing socio-economic dynamics have produced urbanization which over time came to be dominated more by urban-urban migrations and less by rural-to-urban migrations.¹² Especially after 1990s and in 2000s, critical shifts in housing policies in addition to several other national and global socio-economic factors provoked intra-city as well as inter-city mobility. Both the central and municipal governments shifted their stance on squatter housing from tacit approval to proactive rehabilitation of existing ones coupled with prevention of new ones.¹³ This shift in policy probably increased the housing costs of newcomers.

The migration process was accompanied by the transformation of big cities into metropolitan settlements and in the case of Istanbul changing the city into a ‘mega city’ comparable to Bangkok, Buenos Aires, Cairo, and Mexico City, and the like in the global South. Nowadays, these megacities attract highly educated, ambitious and skilled migrants to fill the jobs in corporate headquarters, bureaucracy, and in high-paying sectors like finance and technology. They also attract low-skilled migrants to fill in jobs like construction workers, domestic cleaners, and other low-skilled and manual service sector jobs. Therefore, both the educational composition and the wage structure of migrants in Istanbul are probably different from the national averages. Thus, although the current article focuses on the impact of internal migration on women’s empowerment in urban areas of Turkey, a specific focus on the case of Istanbul that entails a comparison to be drawn between this ‘mega city’ and national overview is inevitable. Thus, the paper, after presenting the data source and methods, discusses the empirical findings not only with reference to previous empirical studies but also comparatively of the different tabulations pulled out of the data set. The results of the quantitative research are discussed in connection with women’s empowerment in the last section.

The study: data source and methods

This study uses the Household Labor Force Survey from 2013 (HLFS) which is provided by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) as open data. The HLFS is the most recent nationally representative micro data set that contains comprehensive information regarding all the variables relevant for our analysis where we investigate the impact of internal migration on female empowerment. It has a large sample size with a rich micro data set of around 380,000 working-age individuals (15 years of age and above) in a nationally representative sample along with a very high response rate (around 91 percent).

In addition to demographic questions, the presence of unique set of questions in the 2013 HLFS on different aspects of labor market experience of individuals provides a rich set of information. Some of these questions shed light on the labor market status (employed, unemployed or outside the labor force), occupational position (e.g. managers, service and sale workers, etc.), working hours and wage income. The questions on the educational history of individuals along with their labor market outcome across gender dimension within the same data set allow for an analysis of female empowerment as a combination of education and labor market outcome. Especially the responses given to the questions of 'Have you been living permanently in this province since you were born?' or 'From which year do you live in this province?' help identify and distinguish immigrants.¹⁴ We limit our main analysis to those individuals who were born between 1960 and 1989 in order to focus more on prime working-age population. Given the importance of having tertiary education for labor market outcome, especially for women, we did not focus on those individuals who were younger than 24 years of age in 2013 during the year of survey.

Most recent migrants need some time in order to adapt themselves to new local conditions in terms of labor market conditions, acquisition of new skills, and networking.¹⁵ Hence, instead of pooling all migrants into the same category we further divided them into three groups according to their arrival date in order to investigate the degree of assimilation over time. The most recent group consists of migrants who arrived in the last five years (2009–2013) prior to the survey (most recent); the second group contains all migrants who moved between 2004 and 2008 (in-transit); and the last group covers the migrants who came to their current residences before 2004 (settled-down). Moreover, those individuals who never migrated in their lifetime became our control group. The urban-rural division as an essential dimension of internal migration¹⁶ underlines the significance of the 2013 HLFS since it is the last HLFS that contains information about the urban-rural divide in a nationally representative survey. We took urban areas as the main migration destination and excluded rural-to-rural and urban-to-rural migration movements in our main analysis given that almost 95 percent of all migrants in our sample chose urban areas as their destination.

According to economic perspectives in explaining migration among various other theories of migration, most migrants, at least if migrating voluntarily, are motivated by the search for better living conditions in locations other than their current location.¹⁷ The expectation for a better life may be linked to higher expected earnings for all members of the family and better access to improved conditions in terms of living standards for present and future.¹⁸ If migration depends on the comparison between expected lifetime earnings in the current and alternative regions of residence, then the relationship between migration and education as one of the key determinants of

expected earnings comes to forefront. Human capital theory is one of the most frequently used approaches in order to account for the impact of education on the expected earnings of individuals.¹⁹

In this research, we explore the role of migration on the educational attainment of individuals moving to urban destinations. There are different channels where the positive correlation between migration and education can be detected.²⁰ Accordingly, the prospect of migration can result in more acquisition of education as long as there are more job opportunities with higher returns to education in new destinations. Therefore, individuals are expected to invest more in education before migrating.²¹ Due to the significance of additional skills acquisition through further education and training after arriving at the new residence,²² acquisition of education may also be the main reason for migration.²³ This can be especially important for increasing investment in the education of migrants' children in response to changes in socio-economic and cultural environment in which children grow up. Taking into consideration these factors, we first compute the average years of education according to two new categories (those who migrated after completing their education and those who migrated before completing their education). Comparing these two categories with non-migrants according to average years of education enables us to explore the following questions:

- a. Is migration important as a prospect for acquiring more education even before migrating?
- b. Does migration provide an opportunity of getting more education for people after migrating?

We repeat the same comparison for three migrant groups (most recent, in-transit, settled-down) and across gender division as well. Therefore, we are able to inspect the possible gender differences regarding the extent of the above correlations between migration and education for each subgroup of migrants.

Although educational attainment turns out to be one of the main determinants of wage, occupational categories also seem to play a crucial role in determining the expected earnings of individuals. Yet, both the probability of being employed and choosing a particular occupational position strongly depends on education as well.²⁴ It is in this context that the correlation between migration and occupation should not be carried out independently of educational categories. Our aim is to find out whether being employed is differently correlated with migrants than with non-migrants for individual educational categories. Another related question arises as to whether the same correlation varies across gender dimension.

Apart from being employed, the choice of occupational position is also correlated with migration and educational attainment.²⁵ We are interested in

whether there is a higher probability of better-educated migrants to find themselves in less-skilled occupations during the initial years of their migration due to possible constraints such as discrimination or lack of required social networks. Therefore, we also check the possibility of downgrading of better-educated migrants.²⁶ For example, if the majority of college graduates are not employed in skilled non-manual occupational positions, such as professionals, then this observation indicates the possibility of downgrading. We discuss the degree of assimilation of men and women migrants by exploring both the presence of downgrading and whether it fades away over time when migrants adapt themselves to new conditions.

In due course, we explore the impact of being migrant on average wage income by focusing on the correlation between these two factors in a multivariate framework.²⁷ In order to single out the relationship between being migrant and wages, all other observable relevant factors are controlled for in the same analysis. These factors consist of human capital (educational attainment, tenure in the work place), occupational position, age cohort effect, public employee, marital status and regions. Only after taking into account all possible correlations between wage and control factors, we can appropriately focus on the partial correlation between wage and being migrant. This multivariate analysis is carried out first for the whole sample where gender is used as another control factor. Then, the same analysis is conducted separately for men and women in order to find out whether the correlation between being migrant and wages is different for either of the genders.

As of 2013, migrants compose of 38 percent of all working-age population which are more than the share of urban or rural non-migrants. The situation is much more extreme in Istanbul; almost 70 percent of prime working-age population in Istanbul are migrants. On the one hand, Istanbul is currently hosting the headquarters of overwhelming majority of large corporations and high-paying technology and finance sectors. On the other hand, it has been a destination city for migrants like low-skilled workers for a long-time. As a result, we suspect that the national averages may not be representative for Istanbul. Therefore, we analyze Istanbul as a separate unit in addition to Turkey in our framework.

With respect to limitations of the study, it has to be noted that our analysis depends on the evidence provided by the 2013 HLFS which does not contain certain questions that might help for a more detailed inquiry. There are at least three data limitations. First, we do not know the reason for migration. Due to restrictions of the data set that make it impossible to identify between voluntary and involuntary migration, our definition of migrants cannot distinguish between migrants who were motivated mostly for economic reasons and forced migrants, who leave their current location due to natural disaster or socio-political crisis. Second, we do not know the complete migration history of individuals as there might have been multiple migration

(s) of an individual migrant. Last but not least, we do not know the origin region of migrants. Other household level datasets that contain these information (migration reason, region of birth, migration history) such as Turkish Demographic and Health Surveys, unfortunately lack detailed information on labor force outcomes (employment, occupation and wages).

Findings: women's empowerment and internal migration

In Turkey, 32 percent of all people are first generation migrants (i.e. they live in a different province than their place of birth) whereas the same figure is slightly above 50 percent in Istanbul. The share of migrants turns out to be higher in the sample used in the analysis, 44 and 68 percent, in Turkey and Istanbul, respectively. Table 1 reports the share of migrants and non-migrants by internal migration status. It further shows that the overwhelming majority of migrants are destined to urban areas in both Turkey and Istanbul.

Regarding average years of education by arrival time, our key finding is that the educational attainment of migrants (9.4 years for men and 7.8 years for women) turns out to be higher than that of non-migrants (8.7 years for men and 7.3 years for women) in Turkey as measured by the average years of schooling. Moreover, this difference becomes much more significant for those migrants who migrated before completing their education than those who migrated after completing their education. Both men and women in the first group of migrants have higher average years of schooling (10 years for both men and women) compared to the latter group of migrants (9.1 years for men and 7.1 years for women). This result shows that individuals utilize migration more as an opportunity of having better access to schools in their new destinations rather than as an endeavor that might increase

Table 1. Distribution of migrants by origin and destination.

	All population			Born between 1960 and 1989		
	Men	Women	All	Men	Women	All
<i>Origin-to-destination</i>						
Rural-to-rural	1	1	1	1	1	1
Urban-to-rural	4	3	4	5	4	4
Rural-to-urban	8	8	8	11	11	11
Urban-to-urban	19	20	19	27	27	27
Rural non-migrant	27	27	27	22	22	22
Urban non-migrant	41	41	41	34	34	34
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Destination Istanbul</i>						
Rural-to-rural	0	0	0	0	1	1
Urban-to-rural	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural-to-urban	24	23	23	32	30	31
Urban-to-urban	26	28	27	34	38	36
Rural non-migrant	1	1	1	1	1	1
Urban non-migrant	48	47	47	32	30	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

their migrant chance. In some cases, acquiring education itself can be an important motivation for migration as is clearly presented for inter-state mobility in India.²⁸ In some other cases, migration can provide better education opportunities for the children of migrants, whereas the same channel strongly depends on the socio-economic status of migrant parents.²⁹ Additionally, community-wide interactions and peer effects also significantly contribute to the impact of migration on children's education by changing parents' incentives to educate their children in their new residence.³⁰ These findings are illustrated in Table 2 which shows average years of education by arrival time.

Internal migration has a direct positive impact on women's empowerment by providing an opportunity for improving educational gender inequality as well. Although we observe gender gap of schooling for both migrants and non-migrants, the same gender gap of average years of schooling does not exist anymore for those migrants who moved to their new destinations before completing their education. This result again emphasizes the role of internal migration in terms of generating better opportunities of acquiring education and/or staying in the educational system, particularly for young women. Apart from lower costs of attaining education and higher returns to education, migration to urban areas also exposes both parents and children to more non-traditional gender norms about working women.³¹ When conducting the same analysis only for Istanbul, some of our general findings do not seem to hold. Unlike Turkey, there is no positive correlation between being migrant and educational attainment in this city. In terms of average years of schooling, non-migrants perform better than migrants do for both men and women. One partial explanation is the relatively smaller share of public employees in the overall migrant group moving to Istanbul, who, on average, are highly educated, and might keep the average educational

Table 2. Average years of Education, born between 1960 and 1989.

	Migrated after		Migrated before		Average		Share (%)
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
<i>Urban</i>							
Non-migrant					8.7	7.3	47
Arrived before 2004	7.8	5.9	9.7	9.5	8.6	7.1	36
Arrived between 2004 and 2008	10.0	7.9	14.0	14.1	10.4	8.4	9
Arrived between 2009 and 2013	11.3	9.7	15.0	15.0	11.4	9.9	9
Average	9.1	7.1	10.0	10.0	9.0	7.5	100
<i>Istanbul</i>							
Non-migrant					9.9	9.8	32
Arrived before 2004	6.9	5.5	9.2	9.1	7.9	6.7	53
Arrived between 2004 and 2008	9.1	7.2	13.6	13.9	9.7	7.8	9
Arrived between 2009 and 2013	10.8	9.2	15.0	15.0	10.9	9.4	6
Average	7.8	6.2	9.5	9.4	8.9	7.9	100

attainment of migrants to Istanbul below that of Turkey. Moreover, relatively high share of rural-urban migration in total urban migration in Istanbul compared to Turkey (46 percent in Istanbul against 29 percent in Turkey) can also negatively contribute to the low levels of average years schooling of migrants especially due to the ones coming to Istanbul after finishing their education from places with already low average years of schooling. Historically, eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey received less public education spending,³² hence, migrants from these regions probably arrive in big cities with lower education level.

Our findings shed light on the impact of internal migration on the labor market outcomes of individuals. As is discussed in data source and method sections, the analysis of the correlation between migration and the labor market outcomes such as employment, occupation and wages have been carried out by controlling for different levels of education as well. Although one can observe the expected positive correlation between educational attainment and probability of employment (see Figure 1), there is a need to single out the very strong correlation between university education and employment of women. Therefore, both the rise in average years of schooling and the fall in gender gap regarding educational attainment particularly for those migrants moving to their new destinations before completing their education reflect

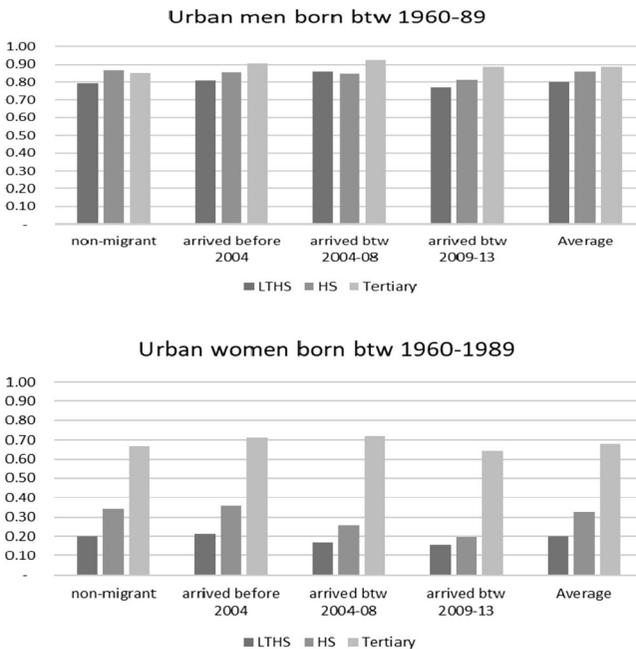


Figure 1. Education and employment. LTHS: Less than High School; HS: High School.

the positive effect of internal migration especially on women's probability of employment.

Following [Figure 1](#), we do not distinguish between unemployed and out-of-labor force but combine them under non-employed category. We create three sub-categories for the employed: skilled non-manual, skilled manual, and unskilled manual.³³ While migration might raise the probability of employment by exerting its influence on the educational attainment of individuals, it is also correlated with the occupational positions in the labor market as long as the occupational positions are attained mostly due to appropriate human capital investment. Moreover, migration can affect the probability of employment and occupational choices by creating some barriers during the assimilation process. We also explore the possibility of downgrading of better-educated migrants as is relevant in the literature on international migration.³⁴ Especially, there is a higher probability of better-educated migrants to find themselves in low-paid occupations during the initial years of their migration. [Table 3](#) shows the cross tabulation of education and occupation as follows:

Our results indicate the presence of occupational downgrading especially for migrant men. The better-educated part of the more recent migrants (those who arrived between 2009 and 2013) are under-represented in high paid occupations such as skilled non-manual jobs compared to those migrants who arrived before 2004 ([Table 3](#)). This observation can partly be accounted by the difficulties in accessing to the appropriate networks necessary for best-matched jobs.³⁵ This problem of downgrading is more visible in Istanbul (not presented here due to space limitations but available from authors) where most of the job opportunities for better-educated people consist of private sector jobs rather than public sector jobs like in many other parts of Turkey.

The same analysis presented in [Table 3](#) above depicts a different picture for women. Although college-educated most recent migrant women (who arrived between 2009 and 2013) have a smaller share in better-paid jobs than the migrant women who arrived before 2004, the reason seems to be associated more with being unemployed or out of the labor force at the earlier stage of migration rather than downgrading as is observed for men. A gradual rise in the rate of labor force participation after the first phase of migration is detected for the other migrant women as well; however, it is much stronger for women with a high-school diploma. The share of women with no job in this educational category (who are either out of the labor force or unemployed) is 80 percent for the most recent migrant group, whereas the same share drops down to 64 percent for those migrant women who arrived before 2004. These results point to the positive impact of internal migration on women's labor market outcomes through different channels. One of them seems to be the gradual adjustment of migrant women to labor market conditions in view of the lack of formal networks similar to the case

Table 3. Education and employment, born between 1960 and 1989.

	Non-migrant				Arrived before 2004				Arrived between 2004 and 2008				Arrived between 2009 and 2013			
	LTHS	HS	Tertiary	Aver.	LTHS	HS	Tertiary	Aver.	LTHS	HS	Tertiary	Aver.	LTHS	HS	Tertiary	Aver.
<i>Urban men</i>																
Non-employed	21	13	15	18	19	14	9	16	14	15	8	12	23	19	11	16
Unskilled manual	13	7	2	9	13	6	1	9	16	5	1	7	15	6	1	6
Skilled manual	59	52	19	50	59	50	15	48	65	54	21	45	55	41	21	35
Skilled non-manual	8	28	65	23	9	30	75	27	6	26	70	35	6	34	67	42
<i>Urban women</i>																
Non-employed	80	66	34	71	79	64	29	68	83	74	28	68	84	80	36	65
Unskilled manual	6	3	0	5	8	5	0	6	6	2	0	4	5	2	0	3
Skilled manual	13	15	6	12	12	15	4	11	10	10	4	9	10	9	4	7
Skilled non-manual	1	17	60	12	1	16	67	14	1	13	68	20	1	9	60	25

Note: LTHS: Less than high school; HS: high school.

of better-educated men. However, the more significant increase in the share of employed women who have less than tertiary education over time emphasizes the possibility of women's exposition to non-traditional gender norms in new destinations regarding the status of women in the labor market. Lastly, it is also likely that those migrant women with lower education levels tend to work outside home out of economic necessity.³⁶ Most of these women are more likely to have a husband along with similar educational attainment or live in a household where the other members also have lower educational attainment and therefore been employed in low-paid occupations.

Given the limitations in our data set on the ethnicity and the region of origin, we are in no position to claim that ethnic discrimination does not play a role in accounting for variations in terms of employment rates among migrants. This can be especially important regarding the wave of the Kurdish migration in the 1990s that has been usually associated with involuntary migration.³⁷ The migrants from Southeastern and Eastern parts of Turkey, who are predominantly Kurdish, tend to be less educated on average than the migrants do from other regions. Hence, without controls for the region of origin or ethnicity, education variable is probably picking up some of the effect of the ethnicity.

Regarding the impact of migration on the wages of individuals, [Figure 2](#) shows the average monthly wages for migrant groups according to educational categories and gender (see below). During 2013, net minimum wage was 773 TL for the first half and 804 TL for the second half of the year. Wage data excludes self-employed and entrepreneurs. Most self-employed in urban areas are small-scale craftsmen with modest incomes, but self-employed category also includes some high earning professionals (lawyers, doctors, architects). The over-representation of these professionals and entrepreneurs among non-migrants might result underestimation of average wages for individuals with tertiary education especially in Istanbul. The overall comparison indicates higher wages for all migrant groups than non-migrant group in Turkey across all education categories for both men and women. However, the same result does not necessarily hold for the lower educated migrants in Istanbul. Many people along with less than high-school diploma migrate to Istanbul in order to exploit job opportunities that are not available in their original area of residence although many of these jobs are low-paid positions in the informal sector.³⁸ The raw wage gap between migrants and non-migrants is pronounced most significantly for individuals with tertiary education level.

We investigate the correlation between being migrant and average wage income in a multivariate framework where all other relevant factors are controlled (see [Table 4](#) below). These control factors include educational attainment (including programs finished for tertiary graduates), occupational positions, experience in the workplace, public sector, cohort effects, marital

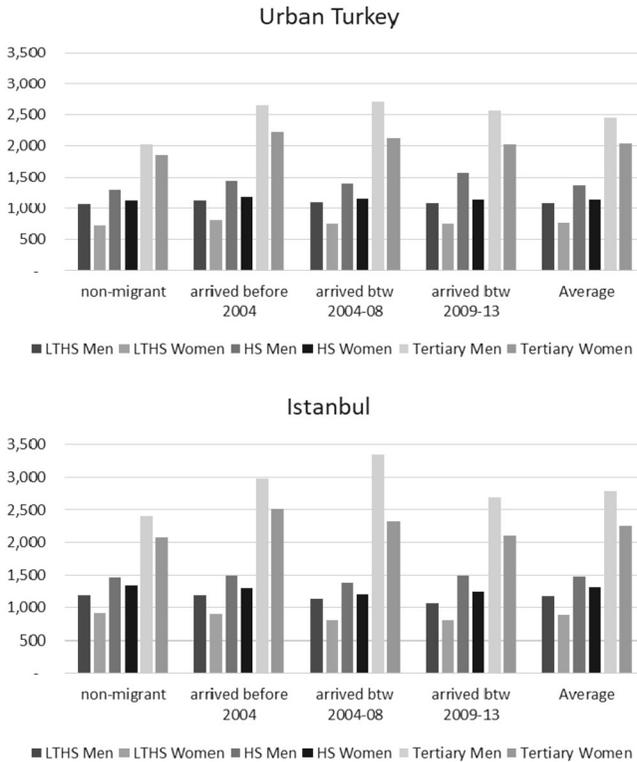


Figure 2. Average wages, born between 1960 and 1989. During 2013, net minimum wage was 773 TL for the first half and 804 TL for the second half of the year (average = 788 TL).

status, the presence of small children, and current region of residence. The results show overall a positive correlation between migrants and wages. In other words, migrants are likely to earn more than non-migrants, when we compare migrants and non-migrants with similar observable characteristics. The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of self-reported positive wage and hence coefficient estimates correspond to percentage change. Accordingly, a wage-employed migrant who arrived between 2009 and 2013 is expected to earn on average about 12 percent more than a non-migrant along with similar observable characteristics such as same educational attainment, same work place experience, same age group and etc. This effect becomes much more significant when we carry out the same analysis only for those migrants with tertiary education where the most recent migrants earn almost 22 percent more than non-migrants do on average. This wage premium is highest for the most recent migrants whereas it falls down to 7 percent for those migrants arrived between 2004 and 2008, and to 2 percent for those migrants arrived before 2004. Returning migrants

Table 4. Wage differences by migration and gender (dependent variable: log wages).

	Urban wages		Istanbul wages		Urban and university		Istanbul and university	
Arrived before 2004	0.020	***	0.002		0.063	***	0.028	
Arrived between 2004 and 2008	0.073	***	0.076	***	0.154	***	0.202	***
Arrived between 2009 and 2013	0.122	***	0.071	***	0.216	***	0.198	***
Women	-0.247	***	-0.195	***	-0.160	***	-0.149	***
R-squared	0.512		0.464		0.344		0.280	
N	67,945		11,239		22,039		3424	
<i>Men only</i>								
Arrived before 2004	0.018	***	-0.011		0.081	***	0.024	
Arrived between 2004 and 2008	0.080	***	0.080	***	0.183	***	0.265	***
Arrived between 2009 and 2013	0.130	***	0.070	***	0.241	***	0.250	***
R-squared	0.51		0.459		0.364		0.316	
N	48,891		7776		13,296		1856	
<i>Women only</i>								
Arrived before 2004	0.043	***	0.040	**	0.043	***	0.041	
Arrived between 2004 and 2008	0.068	***	0.052	*	0.096	***	0.093	**
Arrived between 2009 and 2013	0.119	***	0.078	**	0.156	***	0.127	***
R-squared	0.527		0.485		0.294		0.224	
N	19,054		3463		8743		1568	
<i>Controls</i>								
Age, five-year cohorts	Y		Y		Y		Y	
Occupation, three sub-groups	Y		Y		Y		Y	
Married, tenure, public	Y		Y		Y		Y	
Education, three sub-groups	Y		Y					
Major, five sub-groups					Y		Y	
NUTS1 regions	Y				Y			

*** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .10$.

can partly account for the above wage dynamics of migrants.³⁹ Hence, it is possible that migrants who are unsuccessful in landing jobs tend to return to original place earlier than successful ones as long as their decisions are related to their earnings. This can lead to overestimation of the positive impact of migration on wages in the earlier phase of migration. The ones who quickly find a good job upon their arrival might decide to stay and their success can be the outcome of possessing above average ability, having pre-migration network connections, or just pure luck.

Overall women earn less than men on average independently of being migrant or not in every sub-group. However, when we explore the impact of being migrant on wages separately for men and women, our results indicate again the positive impact of being migrant on average wages within the same sex category after taking all other observable factors into account. Similar to the results for the whole sample, the impact of migration on women's wages is also particularly high and significant for the most recent migrant group and university graduates.

Does all these mean that migration is bad for non-migrants? Not necessarily, Istanbul is the number one destination for migration in Turkey for the last 70 years and after receiving millions of migrants, wages are still at least 20 percent higher than the rest of Turkey. In other words, the

agglomeration of high-skilled and highly motivated migrants creates such a dynamism that it leads to higher overall wages in Istanbul including non-migrants.

Conclusion

The current study confirms that migration contributes to women's empowerment in the case of Turkey. The empirical evidence obtained in the current research suggests for a positive correlation between internal migration and empowerment of women mostly through improvements in women's educational attainment and to a certain extent in their labor market outcomes. Migration provides both migrants and their children with better education opportunities that open the path for better-paid occupations. For women migrants, such a link is clearer not only because of the positive association between migration and higher levels of education for women but also due to the gap between men's and women's educational attainment narrowing down with migration. However, the current research also indicates that unlike the case of education, migration does not lead to a narrower wage gap between men and women. With respect to the labor market and wage differentials, a rather different and complicated picture is at stake. Findings pinpoint various dimensions to question of empowerment and internal migration.

First, according to the research results, it is significant that women in Turkey obtain more education in the course of migration that equips them better for the labor market, and present them more job opportunities. Yet, these job opportunities do not necessarily become available immediately after the arrival. Migrant women seem to need some time in order to adapt themselves to the new socio-economic environment by acquiring new skills through education, getting familiar with new social networks, and being exposed to non-traditional social norms about women working outside home.

Second, research results show that migration is associated with higher wages particularly for recent migrants with university education; yet a causality cannot be claimed. The evidence gathered in the research for the national outlook of Turkey does not suggest that migration causes wages to be higher for migrants on average than non-migrants. However, it is significant that migration definitely contributes to higher wages by providing the migrants with opportunities for improving their wage-enhancing characteristics such as education and occupational choices, which might not have been possible had they not migrated in the first place. The positive wage premium that exists among those individuals even with similar observable characteristics can be explained by higher ability/motivations of individuals, the possibility of participating in social networks, or a combination of these factors that might affect the decision to migrate and cannot be captured by the available data in this study.

Third, specifically for women migrants, although the above universal outlook is valid, that is women migrants would have had earned less had they stayed in their settlements of origin, gender seems to continue to serve as a blockade. When compared with male migrants, women migrants earn less. The wage gap does not seem to close down between men and women,⁴⁰ even with the utilization of the opportunity of migration. Despite the significant correlation of internal migration with higher wages, gender barrier seems to remain strong for women to surpass to obtain equal wages with men.⁴¹

Fourth, although most of the results of this study are generalizable to the whole country, migration dynamics for Istanbul seem to be working differently in certain aspects. Apart from providing the best labor market and educational opportunities, Istanbul, like other mega cities in the global South, also attracts lower educated people from other parts of Turkey by offering them better jobs than those available in their original areas of residence. Yet, the relatively lower wages for those migrants compared to similar non-migrants in Istanbul indicate that most of those migrants are employed in low-paid and informal jobs.

Gender is a critical factor in identifying the motivations, outcomes, and barriers to migration and what's more, migration flows and their outcomes are strongly gendered. As part of selection bias, women on the move might also be those who have been empowered to a certain extent in the previous pre-migration situation so that they were able to utilize the opportunity of migration.⁴² It has to be noted that migration not only opens the gate for opportunities, it is an opportunity in itself especially if occurring voluntarily. To be able to move, one needs to have certain social and material capital. Thus, migration can be both a cause and consequence of female empowerment.⁴³ Women migrate for different purposes and under different circumstances, as there are various types of migration voluntary or involuntary in nature. A large part of female migration is for marriage purpose or because the husband is migrating, however, there are also other migrations like for education, for family re-unification, for work or for forced situations. Yet, the same physical mobility brings by social mobility with increased education levels, enhanced job opportunities as well as elevated wages in most of the cases.

There are many different types of empowerment but in this analysis, we focused on socio-economic empowerment in the spheres of education and labor market. In a complicated manner, migration has both empowering and disempowering effects for women.⁴⁴ Empowerment or disempowerment of women through migration heavily depends on the context in which the migration occurs, the type of movement, and the characteristics of the female migrants. It is very common that women migrants receive lower wages than male migrants in similar situations and, therefore, terms of

employment and enclave employment might limit the benefit for women migrants.⁴⁵ Migration does not bring about a complete transformation in intra-household power relations, too. Women's increased access to household resources including income by way of entering labor market does not necessarily give rise to a comparable or proportionate increase in absolute control over those resources.⁴⁶ Migrant women's involvement in the labor market do not pinpoint to an innate transformation for an increased bargaining power within the home, an equal distribution of household duties like cleaning and cooking and a greater male-female cooperation. An overemphasis on wage labor as a means to migrant women's liberation also runs the risk of making assumptions that homogenize women's experiences and perceptions.⁴⁷

In the context of Turkey, patriarchal societal structure confines women to the domain of domesticity irrespective of improvements experienced in both educational attainment and labor market outcomes.⁴⁸ Although economic participation is supposed to be a key contribution to the empowerment process of women,⁴⁹ this expected gain is constrained by a solid patriarchal culture imposed upon migrant women mostly by their husbands and other family members in different sites such as workplaces. Women's work either paid or unpaid is devalued and unrecognized as long as women are identified primarily as wives and mothers rather than labor market participants like their male counterparts.⁵⁰ Women, even with higher education levels, encounter problems like inner conflicts between being working women and caring mom that negatively affects their attachment to the labor force.⁵¹ The prevalence of traditional gender norms in the society and their impact on social policies (e.g. inadequate provision of childcare services) are some of the key factors that reinforce the inner conflict for working women even with tertiary education.

Notes

1. Kabeer, "Resources, Agency, Achievements"; Narayan, "Conceptual Framework"; and Sinha, Jha and Negi, "Migration and Empowerment."
2. Kabeer, "Discussing Women's Empowerment," and Narayan, *Empowerment*.
3. Malhotra, "Measuring Empowerment."
4. Sen, "Introduction: The Many Faces."
5. Schuler and Hahemi, "Defining and Studying."
6. Momsen, *Domestic Service*.
7. Bello-Bravo, "Rural-urban Migration."
8. Narazani et al., "Policy Brief on Migration."
9. The Turkish Statistical Institute, "The Results."
10. Accordingly with the Law No. 6360 on metropolitan municipalities enacted in 2012, TurkStat significantly altered the definition of the rural area and discontinued releasing data about the urban-rural divide after the revision. According to one of the last available data from a Labor Force Survey, the share of urban population is 77.3 percent and rural population is 22.7 percent.

11. Erman, "The Politics of Squatter."
12. The phenomenon of shantytowns in the peripheries of cities especially metropolitan cities reveal the trends, tendencies and workings of migration from rural-to-urban settlements. There is also a flow, albeit small in scope and frequency, from urban-to-rural and from rural-to-rural settlements.
13. Icduygu, "Demographic Mobility."
14. Similar questions for foreign-born Turkish nationals are also available in the survey.
15. Dustmann and Glitz, "How Do Industries Respond."
16. Ibid.
17. Castles and Miller, "Theories of Migration," 25.
18. UN, "Human Development Report."
19. Becker, *Human Capital*.
20. Dustmann and Glitz, "How Do Industries Respond."
21. Blunch and Laderchi, "The Winner Takes It All," and Girsberger, "Migration, Education and Work."
22. Dustmann and Glitz, "How Do Industries Respond."
23. Jha and Kumar, "Socio-economic Determinants."
24. Chiswick and Miller, "Earnings and Occupational Attainment," and Maani, Dai and Inkson, "Occupational Attainment."
25. Elliot and Lindley, "Immigrant Wage Differentials."
26. Aleksnyska and Tritah, "Occupation-Education Mismatch."
27. Eckstein and Weiss, "On the Wage Growth," and Borjas, "The Slowdown."
28. Jha and Kumar, "Socio-economic Determinants."
29. Kusadokoro and Hasegawa, "The Influence."
30. Gümüş, "The Effects of Community."
31. Tansel, "Determinants of School Attainment"; Smits and Gündüz-Hoşgör, "Effects of Family"; and Duman, "Female Education."
32. Oyvatt and Tekgüç, *Double Squeeze*.
33. International Labour Organization, *Global Employment*.
34. Aleksnyska and Tritah, "Occupation-Education Mismatch."
35. Dustmann and Glitz, "How Do Industries Respond."
36. Erman et al. "Money-Earning Activities."
37. Bahar, "The Name Says It All."
38. More than 90 percent of high school and tertiary graduate wage earners are employed in formal sector. LTHS graduate wage employed women are the only sub-group where it is almost an even split between formal and informal wage employment.
39. Bijwaard and Whaba, "Immigrants' Wage Growth."
40. All the more so in academia where there are high education levels, gender wage gap persists. See Ucal, O'Neil and Toktaş, "Gender and the Wage Gap."
41. Tekgüç et al. presents a wage decomposition analysis of gender wage gap and reports that after controlling for selection tertiary educated women face 8 percent wage discrimination and less educated women face 23 percent wage discrimination in 2011. See Tekgüç, Eryar and Cindoğlu, "Women's Tertiary Education."
42. Gaye and Shreyasi, "Measuring Women's Empowerment," 53.
43. Hugo, "Migration and Women's Empowerment."
44. Yu, *An Empowerment Approach*.
45. Ghosh, "Migration and Gender," 30.

46. Handapangoda, “Transnational Labour Migration.”
47. Zentgraf, “Immigration.”
48. Erman et al. “Money-Earning Activities.”
49. Cindoğlu and Toktaş, “Empowerment and Resistance Strategies of Working Women.”
50. Dedeoğlu, “Visible Hands.”
51. Paker and Uysal, “Who Takes Care.”

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Note on contributors

Değer Eryar is an assistant professor in the Department of Economics at Izmir University of Economics. He received his PhD from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst where he completed his dissertation on the macroeconomic impact of capital flows in Turkey. His research concentrates on gender and youth dimensions of the labor market, economic integration and financial crises. His articles have appeared in journals such as *Comparative Economic Studies*, *Developing Economies* and *The Journal of Labor Research*.

Hasan Tekgüç received his PhD in Economics from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in June 2010. His dissertation focused on consumption behavior of households and their vulnerability to poverty. Between 2011 and 2015 he held an assistant professor position at Mardin Artuklu University, and since September 2015 he has worked at Kadir Has University. His research interests include competition and price transmission in animal product markets and gender issues in labor markets in Turkey. His recent publications have appeared in *The Review of Economics of the Household*, *Agribusiness*, *Developing Economies*, and *The Journal of Labor Research*.

Sule Toktas is a professor of political science in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Kadir Has University in Istanbul. Her research interests include women’s studies, minority issues and migration. Her publications have appeared in various journals such as *International Migration*, *Geopolitics*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, *European Journal of Women Studies*, *Minerva* and *The Muslim World*. She has also co-authored four books.

ORCID

Sule Toktas  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1332-2039>

Bibliography

Aleksynska, M., and A. Tritah. “Occupation–Education Mismatch of Immigrant Workers in Europe: Context and Policies.” *Economics of Education Review* 36 (2013): 229–244.

- Bahar, O. Ş. “‘The Name Says It All, It’s Saraybostan’: Low-Income Kurdish Migrant Women’s Experiences with Life in a Poverty-Impacted Urban Neighborhood.” *Journal of Poverty* 21, no. 6 (2017): 543–571.
- Becker, G. S. *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, With Special Reference to Education*. 3rd ed. New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1994.
- Bello-Bravo, J. “Rural-Urban Migration: A Path for Empowering Women Through Entrepreneurial Activities in West Africa.” *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research* 5, no. 9 (2015): 1–9.
- Bijwaard, G. E., and J. Wahba. “Immigrants’ Wage Growth and Selective Out-Migration.” IZA Discussion Paper, no. 8627 (2014).
- Blunch, N.-H., and C. R. Laderchi. “The Winner Takes It All: Internal Migration, Education and Wages in Ethiopia.” IZA Discussion Paper Series, no. 8926 (2015).
- Borjas, G. J. “The Slowdown in the Economic Assimilation of Immigrants: Aging and Cohort Effects Revisited Again.” *Journal of Human Capital* 9, no. 4 (2015): 483–517.
- Castles, S., and M. J. Miller, eds. “Theories of Migration.” Chap. 2. In *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 20–49. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Chiswick, B. R., and P. W. Miller. “Earnings and Occupational Attainment Among Immigrants.” *Industrial Relations* 48, no. 3 (2009): 454–465.
- Cindoğlu, D., and Ş. Toktaş. “Empowerment and Resistance Strategies of Working Women in Turkey.” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 9, no. 1 (2002): 31–48.
- Dedeoğlu, S. “Visible Hands – Invisible Women: Garment Production in Turkey.” *Feminist Economics* 16, no. 4 (2010): 1–32.
- Duman, A. “Female Education Inequality in Turkey: Factors Affecting Girls Schooling Decisions.” *International Journal of Education Economics and Development* 1, no. 3 (2010): 243–258.
- Dustmann, C., and A. Glitz. “How Do Industries and Firms Respond to Changes in Local Labor Supply?” *Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration* 11, no. 18 (2011).
- Eckstein, Z., and Y. Weiss. “On the Wage Growth of Immigrants: Israel, 1990–2000.” *Journal of the European Economic Association* 2, no. 4 (2004): 665–695.
- Elliot, R. J., and J. K. Lindley. “Immigrant Wage Differentials, Ethnicity and Occupational Segregation.” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)* 171, no. 3 (2008): 645–671.
- Erman, T. “The Politics of Squatter (Gecekondu) Studies in Turkey: The Changing Representations of Rural Migrants in the Academic Discourse.” *Urban Studies* 38, no. 7 (2001): 983–1002.
- Erman, T., S. Kalaycıoğlu, and H. Rittersberger-Tılıç. “Money-earning Activities and Empowerment Experiences of Rural Migrant Women in the City.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 25, no. 4 (2002): 395–410.
- Gaye, A., and S. Jha. “Measuring Women’s Empowerment Through Migration.” *Diversities* 13, no. 1 (2011): 49–66.
- Ghosh, J. “Migration and Gender Empowerment: Recent Trends and Emerging Issues.” United Nations Development Programme Human Development Reports Research Paper, no. 2009/04 (2009).
- Girsberger, E. M. “Migration, Education and Work Opportunities.” IZA Discussion Paper Series, no. 11028 (2017).

- Gümüş, S. "The Effects of Community Factors on School Participation in Turkey: A Multilevel Analysis." *International Review of Education* 60, no. 1 (2014): 79–98.
- Handapangoda, W. S. "Is Transnational Labour Migration Empowering for Women? Re-Evaluating the Case of Married Sri Lankan Domestic Maids." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 21, no. 3 (2014): 353–377.
- Hugo, G. "Migration and Women's Empowerment." In *Women's Empowerment and Demographic Processes: Moving Beyond Cairo*, edited by Harriet B. Presser, and Gita Sen, 287–317. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Icduygu, A. "Demographic Mobility and Turkey: Migration Experiences and Government Responses." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (2004): 88–99.
- International Labour Organization (ILO). *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013: A Generation at Risk*. Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2013.
- Jha, S., and S. Kumar. "Socio-economic Determinants of Inter-State Student Mobility in India." *Higher Education for the Future* 4, no. 2 (2017): 166–185.
- Kabeer, N. "Discussing Women's Empowerment, Theory and Practice." *Sida Studies* (Sweden) no. 3 (2001). <https://www.sida.se/contentassets/5e45d330e16743179cef93de34e71ac/15611.pdf>.
- Kabeer, N. "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment." *Development and Change* 30, no. 3 (1999): 435–464.
- Kusadokoro, M., and A. Hasegawa. "The Influence of Internal Migration on Migrant Children's School Enrolment and Work in Turkey." *The European Journal of Development Research* 29, no. 2 (2017): 348–368.
- Maani, S., M. Dai, and K. Inkson. "Occupational Attainment and Earnings Among Immigrant Groups: Evidence from New Zealand." IZA Discussion Paper, no. 9352 (2015).
- Malhotra, A. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development. Proceedings from Work Bank: Measuring Empowerment." Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives held at the World Bank. Accessed February 4–5, 2003. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/486312-1095970750368/529763-1095970803335/malhotra2.pdf>.
- Momsen, J. H. *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Narayan, D. *Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook*. Washington: World Bank, 2002.
- Narayan, D. "Conceptual Framework and Methodological Challenges." In *Measuring Empowerment: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Narayan Deepa, 3–38. Washington: The World Bank, 2005.
- Narazani, E., I. Mara, S. Basic, and A. Stojilovska. "Policy Brief on Migration and Women Empowerment in the Western Balkan Countries." Regional Research Promotion Programme, 2014. http://www.analyticamk.org/images/Files/Reports/poly_brief-rev_corrected_Ana_7c632.pdf.
- Oyvatt, C., and H. Tekgüç. "Double Squeeze on Educational Development: Land Inequality and Ethnic Conflict in Southeastern Turkey." *Greenwich Papers in Political Economy*, no. 49, 2017. <http://gala.gre.ac.uk/16812/>.
- Paker, H., and G. Uysal. "Who Takes Care of the Children? Female Labor Force Participation and Gender." *BETAM*. Research Brief No. 202 (2017). <http://betam.bahcesehir.edu.tr/en/2017/05/who-takes-care-of-the-children-female-labor-force-participation-and-gender/>.
- Schuler, S. R., and S. Hashemi. "Defining and Studying Empowerment of Women: A Research Note from Bangladesh." JSI Working Paper, no. 3. Boston: John Snow Inc., 1993.

- Sen, A. "Introduction: The Many Faces of Gender and Organization." *Understanding Gender and Organizations* 18, no. 22 (2001): 1–19.
- Sinha, B., S. Jha, and N. S. Negi. "Migration and Empowerment: The Experience of Women in Households in India Where Migration of a Husband Has Occurred." *Journal of Gender Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 61–76.
- Smits, J., and A. Gunduz-Hosgor. "Effects of Family Background Characteristics on Educational Participation in Turkey." *International Journal of Educational Development* 26, no. 5 (2006): 545–560.
- Tansel, A. "Determinants of School Attainment of Boys and Girls in Turkey: Individual, Household and Community Factors." *Economics of Education Review* 21, no. 5 (2002): 455–470.
- Tekgüç, H., D. S. Eryar, and D. Cindoğlu. "Women's Tertiary Education Masks the Gender Wage Gap in Turkey." *Journal of Labor Research* 38, no. 3 (2017): 360–386.
- Turkish Statistical Institute. "The Results of Address Based Population Registration System 2016." Accessed January 31, 2017. <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=24638>.
- Ucal, M. "Mary Lou O'Neil and Şule Toktaş "Gender and the Wage Gap in Turkish Academia.'" *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 17, no. 4 (2015): 447–464.
- United Nations. "Human Development Report 2009." *Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*, 2009.
- Yu, T. K. *An Empowerment Approach to Female Migration: A Case Study of China's Manufacturing Industry*. London: Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2007.
- Zentgraf, K. M. "Immigration and Women's Empowerment." *Gender & Society* 16, no. 5 (2002): 625–646.