



EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



EUMAGINE
*Imagining Europe
from the Outside*

On the role of human rights and democracy perceptions in constructing migration aspirations and decisions towards Europe

January 2013

INTRODUCTION

New insights into perceptions of Europe with regard to human rights and democracy and their impact on migration aspirations

Perceptions of Europe have usually been studied from within the EU while those from the viewpoint of non-EU member states and their citizens remained largely unexplored. Because the concepts of human rights and democracy are central features to the EU, its international policies and its migration and asylum policies, the EUMAGINE project investigated the outside perceptions on democracy and human rights of Europe through the inclusion of non-European perspectives and research undertaken in Turkey, Morocco, Senegal and Ukraine.

The EUMAGINE project is the first to have studied the role of perceptions on human rights and democracy on migration aspirations and decisions in major emigration regions in a systematic manner. While the importance of a 'culture of emigration' in perpetuating migration aspirations and decisions was already well-established, the EUMAGINE project now shows that individual perceptions on human rights and democracy also affect migration aspirations and decisions.

Within our definition of human rights and democracy related issues, we have included corruption, safety and security, freedom of expression, cultural freedom, job opportunities, social security, quality of health care/schools. Knowledge of these perceptions and aspirations as well as their possible link and determinants were considered to be a necessary condition for an informed migration policy in Europe.

Perceptions of human rights and democracy related issues of the home country and Europe influence migration aspirations

We found that human rights and democracy related perceptions of the own country and Europe are related to having migration aspirations. On the one hand, negative perceptions on health care, education, poverty reduction policies and gender relations in the own country have a positive effect on migration aspirations.

On the other hand, positive perceptions on the life in Europe (including health care, education, gender relations and poverty reduction policies) have a positive effect on having migration aspirations to Europe.

The impact of human rights and democracy related perceptions on migration aspirations is influenced by the socio-economic context of emigration countries

By comparing and contrasting sixteen research areas (ranging from high emigration areas to low emigration areas and high immigration regions, and including specific human rights areas) across four emigration countries, the EUMAGINE project was able to make analytical generalizations about how perceptions on human rights and democracy impact on migrations aspirations.

The project assessed the presumed negative relationship between the perceptions on human rights and democracy in the home country and the aspirations to migrate on the one hand, and the presumed positive relationship between perceptions on human rights and democracy in Europe and migration aspirations on the other hand.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Among respondents 18 to 39 years old, more than half have migration aspirations, men more so than women

Migration aspirations are the highest in the Senegalese research areas (72%), then the Moroccan (57%), Ukrainian (47%) and the lowest in the Turkish research areas (40%). In all countries, more *men* than women have migrations aspirations (see figure 1).

As expected, the aspiration to migrate tends to be the highest among the younger respondents in all four countries. In the *age* category of 18 to 22 year olds, there are consistently more persons wishing to migrate than wishing to stay in the country while the opposite is true for the age category 31 to 39 year olds, who largely prefer to stay in their country rather than migrate.

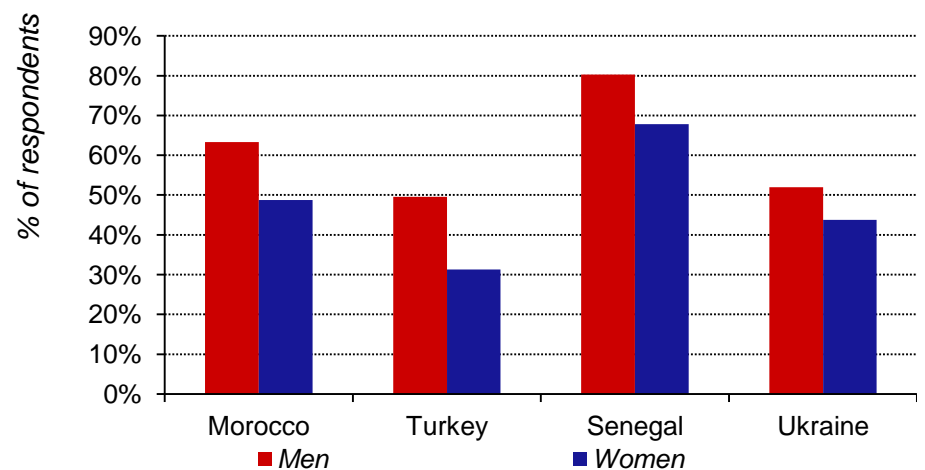


Figure 1. Gendered migration aspirations in four countries.

Source: EUMAGINE Survey data. Average of four research areas in each country; not nationally representative.

With regard to marital status, there are far more persons with migration aspirations among the unmarried men or women in all countries than among the married ones, whether in monogamous or polygamous marriages. The same trend appears when respondents are asked whether they have children living with them in the household.

Perceptions on human rights and democracy (including access to social institutions) play an important role in the construction of migration aspirations

Far more men and women who do not have children living with them in the household foster migration aspirations than wishing to stay in the country.

The project's analyses demonstrate that negative perceptions on job opportunities in the home country have a significant effect on migration aspirations of both male and female respondents between 18 and 39 years old in all four research countries: Turkey, Senegal, Ukraine and Morocco.

Overall, the majority of persons aspiring to migrate assess the human rights and democracy situation in terms of corruption in their own country as (very) bad. In Ukraine, Senegal and Turkey negative perceptions on human rights and democracy in the own country have the expected significant effects on migration aspirations. Only in *Morocco*, do perceptions on the situation in the home country not appear to play a significant role in the respondents' aspirations to migrate.

In addition to perceptions on corruption, the EUMAGINE project also investigated the role that perceptions on other democracy and human rights related elements such as education, health care, gender equality, and access to government assistance for the poor—in the home country versus in Europe—play in the decision to aspire to migrate. The effect of these factors on migration aspirations is the strongest in Ukraine, to a lesser extent so in Morocco and Turkey, and least in Senegal.

Migration aspirations are linked to the perceptions on the quality of health care

EUMAGINE analyses show that in Ukraine and Turkey higher negative perceptions on the access to and quality of the health care system in the own country increase the probability of migration aspirations with 54 and 20% respectively compared to positive perceptions (Fig. 2).

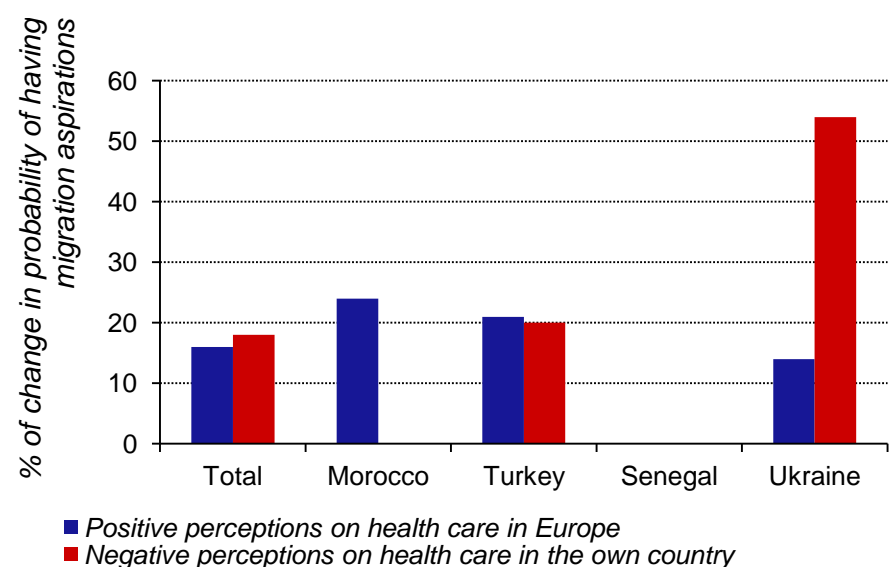


Figure 2. Migration aspirations and perceptions on health care

Source: EUMAGINE Survey data (Controlled for the following variables: age, marital status, gender, educational attainment, family migration experience, children and material wealth)

Migration aspirations are linked to perceptions on the education system

Positive perceptions on the health care system in Europe have the same significant positive effect on the probability of having migration aspirations in Morocco (24%), Turkey (21%) and Ukraine (14%). It is only in Senegal that perceptions on the health care system in the own country or Europe have no significant effects on migration aspirations.

Similar significant influences of perceptions on the level of probability of having migration aspirations are found in all four countries with regard to the education sector (Fig. 3). In Turkey, Senegal and Ukraine higher negative perceptions on the situation of the national education system and its opportunities increase the probability that a person aspires to migrate (compared to persons with positive perceptions).

Higher positive perceptions on the European educational system do the same in Morocco, Turkey and Ukraine (compared to negative perceptions).

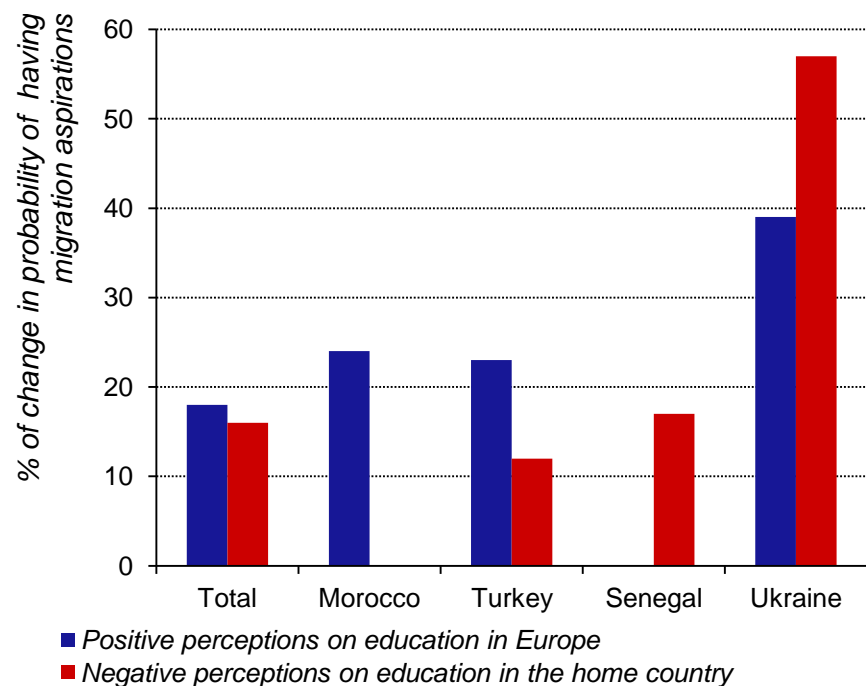


Figure 3. Migration aspirations and perceptions on education

Source: EUMAGINE Survey data (Controlled for the following variables: age, marital status, gender, educational attainment, family migration experience, children and material wealth)

Migration aspirations are also linked to perceptions on gender equality and government assistance to the poor

Perceptions on government assistance to the poor in one's own country as compared to Europe also have significant effects on the probability of having migration aspirations in Turkey and Ukraine, as do perceptions on equal gender opportunities.

In Turkey, higher negative perceptions on gender equality in the own country will increase the probability of having migration aspirations with 17%, in Ukraine with 18% in comparison to respondents holding positive perceptions on their home country's gender equality situation.

The effect of negative perceptions on human rights is stronger for people with concrete plans to migrate within 5 years

Holding negative perceptions on government assistance to the poor in the own country equally increases the probability of having migration aspirations with 17% in Turkey and 35% in Ukraine, compared to those holding opposite views.

Persons with migration aspirations view migration as something desirable and/or ideal. However, people with aspirations do not always have *concrete plans to migrate*.

Research analyses show that persons with concrete plans to migrate within 5 years are even more motivated by their negative perceptions of human rights in the own country compared to those with only aspirations to migrate (and not yet having concrete plans to actually make the move).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Promoting respect for human rights and democracy in third countries in terms of corruption and political transparency

Negative perceptions on the existence of high levels of corruption in the home country as compared to Europe, together with other instances of insufficient respect for human rights and democracy (i.e. unequal opportunities for women, education, health care and poverty reduction policy) are important factors in the high levels of migration aspirations towards Europe.

Promoting more respect for human rights and democracy in terms of corruption and political transparency in emigration countries will therefore most likely reduce migrations aspirations.

Promoting equal gender opportunities in third countries

In the EUMAGINE survey, two thirds of respondents (68%) consider women in Europe to have the same opportunities as men, while only 42% judge gender opportunities in the own country to be equal. Analyses prove that these perceptions encourage migration aspirations among both men and women.

Promoting equal gender opportunities in third countries in order to reduce the difference in perceptions on the gender situation in the own country as compared to Europe will contribute to reducing migration aspirations to Europe.

Promoting social institutions and job-creation development policies in third countries

The EUMAGINE project shows that—apart from Turkey which has known a remarkable economic growth over the past decade and where migration aspirations are on the decline—in the three other research countries the migration aspirations continue to be high, and that this phenomenon is strongly linked to the (perceived) lack of job opportunities and access to and quality of social institutions in the home country.

Promoting development policies geared towards social institution improvement in third countries will contribute towards lowering currently high levels of migration aspirations.

Discouraging exclusive immigration by the highly educated in order to avoid brain drain in third countries

Current policies of EU member states often encourage exclusive immigration of highly educated or highly skilled third country citizens based on quota systems.

Emigration of these professionals leads to possible brain drain hampering further local and regional development as well as job creation in the source countries, which in turn will encourage the migration aspirations of increasing numbers of persons for lack of job opportunities in the home country.

Promoting mobility as a universal human right

High numbers of persons aspiring to migrate never translate into equally high numbers of migrants because of the large gap between aspirations to migrate and capabilities to migrate.

At the same time, the EUMAGINE data show that changing perceptions on the own country and Europe (e.g. the economic crisis) have stronger effects on migration aspirations than large scale campaigns destined to discourage aspiring migrants from “Third countries”.

In this respect, the EUMAGINE project advocates that “mobility” be promoted as a human right for all contrary to the current juxtaposition between “mobility for EU nationals” and “migration for Third Country nationals”. Circular migration should be encouraged.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

EUMAGINE seeks to understand why people want to migrate to Europe or not

Imagining Europe from the Outside (EUMAGINE) set out to understand why people in Europe's neighbouring regions may or may not want to migrate to Europe. The project paid particular attention to people's perceptions of human rights and democracy—both in Europe and in their own country.

Data collection was carried out in Senegal, Morocco, Turkey and Ukraine. Within each country, the project team selected four research areas to represent diverse socio-economic and migration contexts.

A detailed survey was conducted with 8000 people

Quantitative data collection consisted of a survey that was carried out with 500 respondents in each Research Area, yielding a project-wide total of 8000. Plans for random sampling were elaborated for each research area, depending on local conditions.

A detailed questionnaire was developed over a ten-month period, including extensive pilot testing in each research area. Questions covered household migration histories, individual migration aspirations, perceptions of human rights and democracy, and a range of other issues.

Qualitative interviews provided deeper insights

Qualitative data collection entailed in-depth interviews and observation. In each research area the team conducted twenty interviews. The qualitative material provided an opportunity to contextualize the quantitative results and understand more of the social processes behind statistical patterns.

The qualitative interviews also allowed for addressing the effects of the financial crisis in Europe, which unfolded while data collection was under way.

The interview transcripts and observation reports were analysed with a specialized software (NVivo) for analysis of qualitative data.

PROJECT IDENTITY

Coordinator	Prof. Christiane Timmerman (University of Antwerp, BE) <hr/>
Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University of Antwerp, BE• University of Oxford, UK• Peace Research Institute Oslo, NO• Koç University, TR• Université Mohamed V – Agdal, MA• Centre of Sociological Research, UA• Université Cheikh Anta Diop, SN <hr/>
Duration	February 2010–January 2013 <hr/>
Funding scheme	Collaborative Project. Small or medium-scale focused research project <hr/>
Budget	€ 2,415.000 (of which EU contribution: € 1,852,000) <hr/>
Website	www.eumagine.org <hr/>
Further reading on the topic of this policy brief	Project Paper 13 on Cross country analysis (www.eumagine.org) Project Paper 14 on Policy considerations (www.eumagine.org) <hr/>
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