FIELDWORK BRIEF

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY IN MARAMUREȘ

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the scope of the MIGRADEMO project, this brief presents selected descriptive findings from a household survey conducted with 1252 respondents in a town located in the region of Maramureș, Romania. The survey focused on the topics of migration experiences, migration history in the family, financial and social remittances, and socio-political attitudes and behaviours. The goal is to analyse the effect of remittances and migration experiences on outlooks and behaviour on a variety of socio-political issues.

Our preliminary analysis shows that migration is a common experience for many households, with 77.7% of all respondents having at least one family member outside Romania or who has returned from abroad. We also find that respondents with migration experiences are on the overall less supportive of environmental protection and gender equality, despite those receiving social remittances agreeing with the importance of the promotion of equality between men and women.

INTRODUCTION

Both international migration and democratic development are important contemporary academic and policy concerns. Recent studies of transnational migrant practices have uncovered how migrants influence democratic participation in their homelands through the remittance of both money and newfound ideas about democracy from afar or through return. The MIGRADEMO project seeks to unpack these processes at the level of the political elite, civil society, and among households in regions of high outmigration. This brief deals with the analysis of a household survey that was conducted in the context of this project, making an initial assessment of how migration experiences and the reception of financial and social remittances impact socio-political attitudes and behaviour.

THE SURVEY

Methodology

This survey took place in a town located in the region of **Maramureș**, between **June and July 2022**, after a pilot study conducted in June 2022.

It was based on a **probabilistic, multistage, stratified sampling design**. It used a variant of the **random route method**, in which each field coordinator randomly chose several points within each of the selected localities for the interviewers to start their routes. The initial routes were monitored and adjusted to avoid superposition, according to the size of the sample and of each locality. Interviewers visited each third household and, should there be no responses after 3 interview attempts, they proceeded to the following selected household. The **birthday method** was used to determine which member would be interviewed - within each household the chosen respondent was the adult with the closest incoming birthday. Both the sampling method and the survey conduction were carried out by the Centre for Urban and Regional Sociology (CURS).

Fig. 1. Empty house in the town where the survey took place

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed by the MIGRADEMO team to cover an array of topics related to migration. These include the **migration history of the respondent, their household, and their family,** besides questions related to **financial and social remittances** and **socio-political attitudes**

and behaviours. It also includes **one vignette experiment** on the impact of financial and social remittances and of destination countries in a battery of variables related to outlook on migration.

PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

A total of **1252 individuals** took part in the survey, with an average interview duration of 35 minutes. The profile of the respondents is **balanced in terms of gende**r – 51.5% are men and 48.5% women – and age – 50.4% are below the median age of **56 years old**, and 49.6% above. The **level of education is low**, with 75.7% of the respondents only having reached an education level lower or equal to secondary school. The majority are employed (55.9%), and most of the respondents (77.6%) declare a **household income below the range of 2001 to 4000 lei per month**, which corresponds to approximately 400 to 800 euros per month.

Migration profile of the respondents

Most of the respondents (59.7%) belong to what we define as a **"migrant household"**, that is, a household in which a family member is living out of Romania or has returned from abroad. Most of the respondents have not had a migration experience themselves – 28.4% have lived in another town in Romania in the past, and 26.5% have lived abroad. Altogether, the majority of the households surveyed have at least one member from their immediate or extended family abroad (70.5%). In contrast, the figures for returned migration are lower – only 32.5% of the respondents have at least one member from their

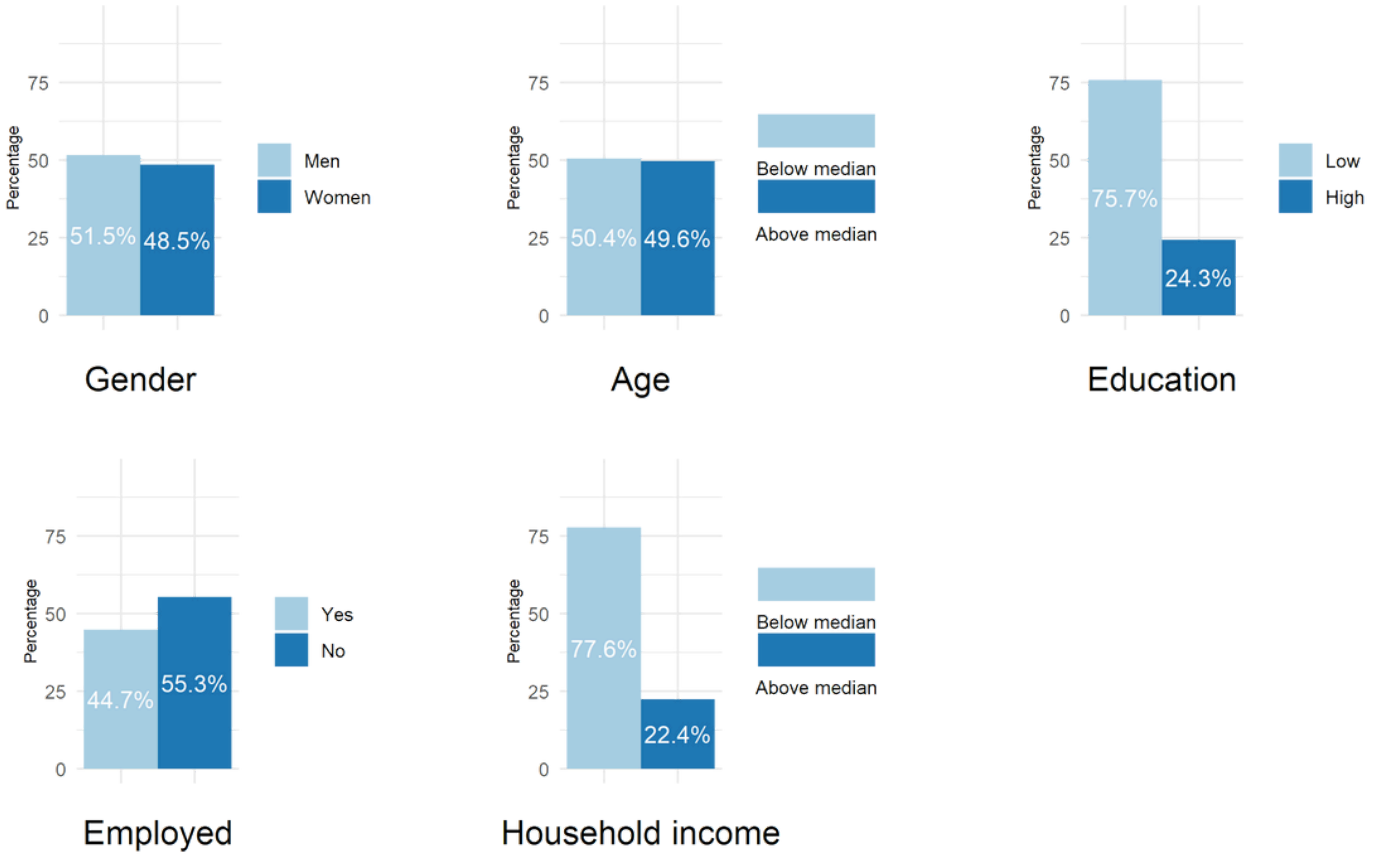

Fig. 2. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

immediate or extended family who has returned from abroad.

Social-political attitudes

When analysing the relationship between the respondents' experiences with migration and their social and political attitudes, there are some differences between those who have migration links and receive financial and social remittances, and those who do not. Here are some examples at a descriptive level.

First, **migration experiences and remittances seem to play a role in the respondents' outlook on gender equality**. Respondents who receive financial remittances are less likely to believe that the promotion of gender equality is a prominent issue compared to those who do not. Only 71.8% of the recipients of financial remittances think that the promotion of gender equality is a priority, compared to 83.9% of the non-recipients. On the contrary, individuals who frequently receive social remittances tend to think that it is more of a prominent issue than those who receive them less often (86.1% versus 76.36%).

However, when asked whether men are better political leaders than women, **our analysis shows that both respondents belonging to migrant households and those who are returned migrants tend to disagree with that statement at a higher rate than others**. For migrant households, 69.4% of them disagree that men are better leaders than women, compared to 53.5% of non-migrant households. For returned migrants, 69.1% disagree with the statement, compared to 60.8% of those who have never left the country.

Fig. 3. Migration profile of the respondents

Moreover, **those respondents who themselves have migration experiences seem to be less supportive of environmental protection** than those without them. 70.2% of non-migrant households agree that protecting the environment should come before economic growth, compared to 64% of migrant households; 28.8% of the respondents who have never left Romania agree with it, compared to 24.1% of those with experiences abroad. 23.9% of the respondents from migrant households declare to "never recycle" and 14.6% to "always recycle", compared to respectively 12.8% and 23.9% of non-migrant households. Between respondents who have never lived abroad and those who have, 21.5% of the former "always recycle" compared to 14.9% of the latter. In turn, receiving social remittances increases one's compromise with recycling.

Fig. 4. Italian bar in the town where the survey took place

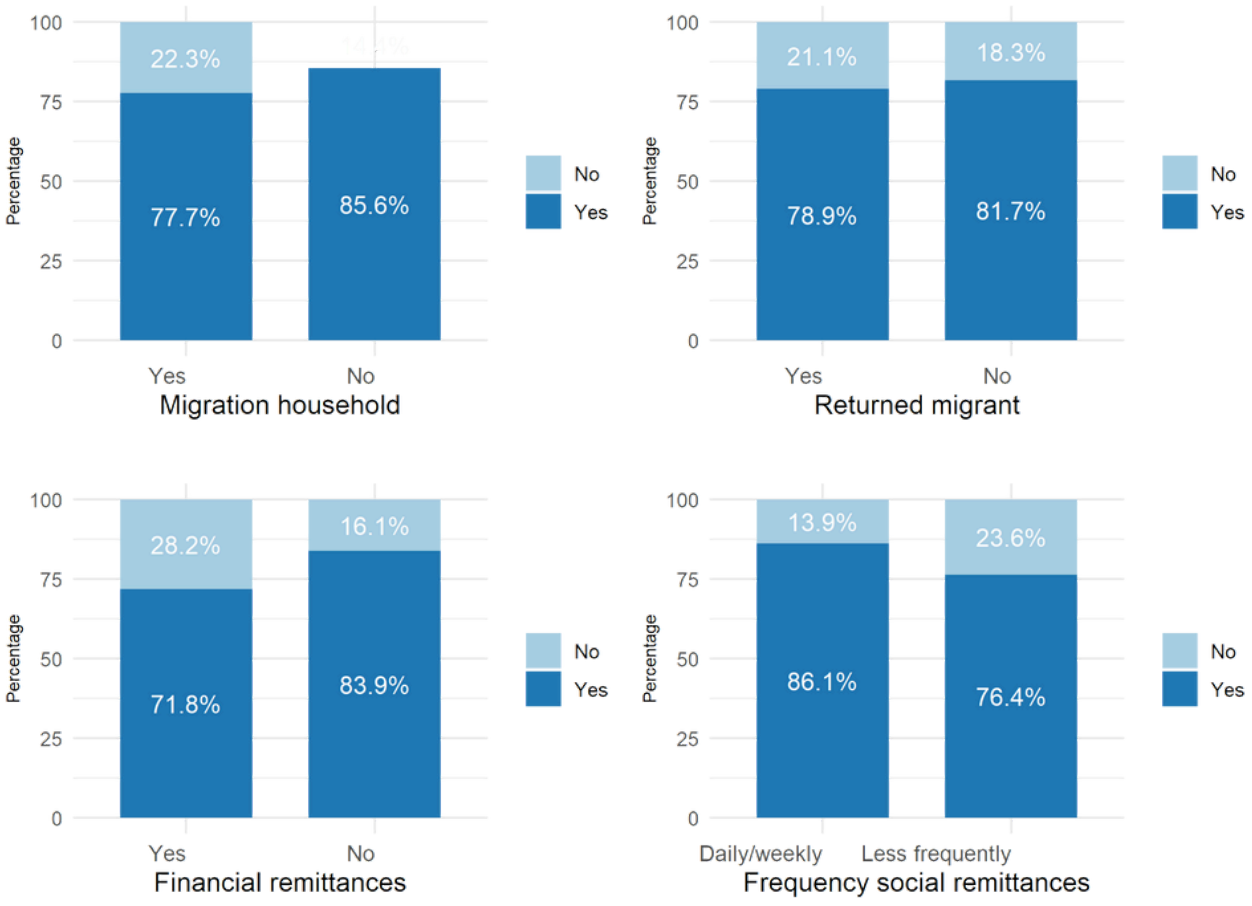

Fig. 5. Group differences when asked whether the promotion of gender equality is important

Those who frequently receive social remittances state that they "never recycle" less often than those who do not (16.9% versus 24.2%) and that they "always recycle" to a higher extent (24.6% versus 11.6%).

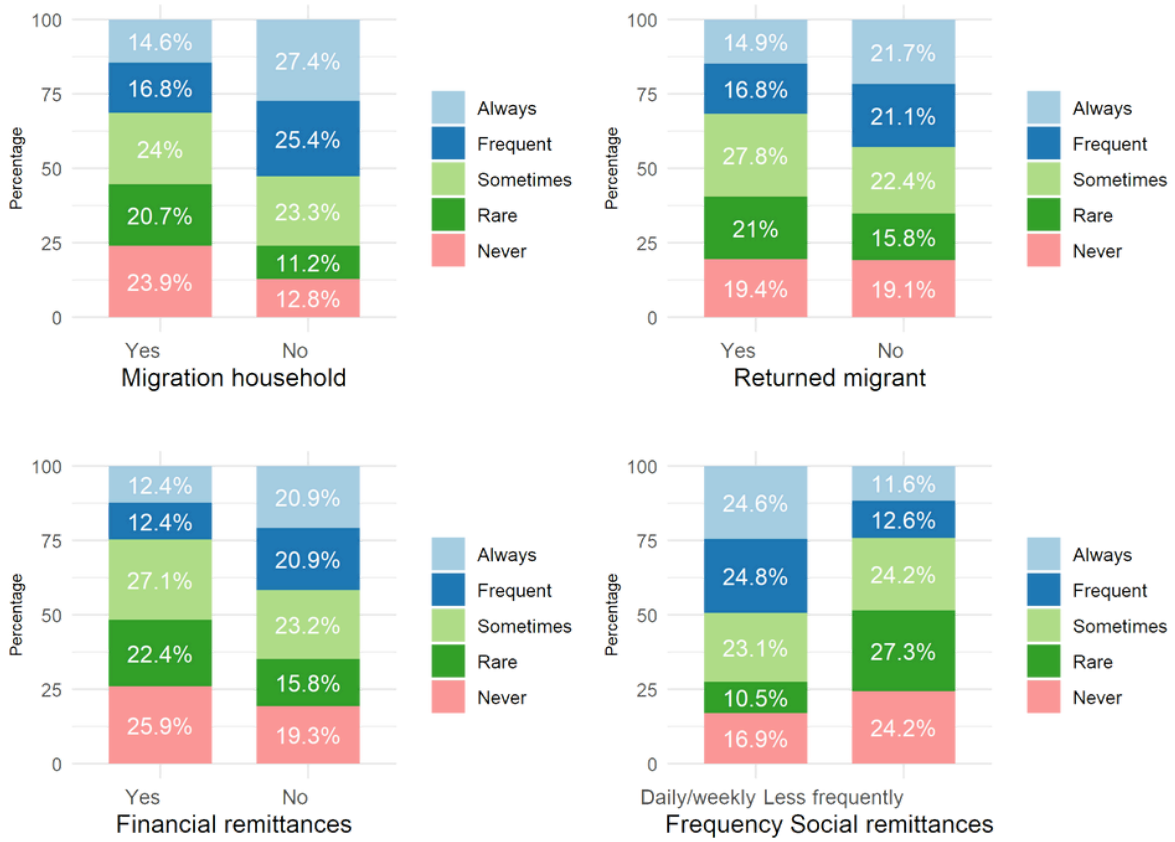

Fig. 6. Group differences when asked how often the respondent recycles

MIGRADEMO is a European Research Council (ERC) funded project which examines the impact of migration on democratic participation and processes in countries of origin. It is hosted by the Department of Political Science at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

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