



THE IMPACT OF LABOR MIGRATION ON THE FORMATION OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOR IN FAMILIES: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Kalmuratov Sansizbay Toktabaevich

University of Innovative Technologies

Head of the Educational and Methodological Department

galmuratovsansizbay@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19695595>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 16th April 2026

Accepted: 18th April 2026

Online: 21st April 2026

KEYWORDS

labor migration, deviant behavior, family structure, parental absence, socialization, adolescents, social control, emotional deprivation

ABSTRACT

In the context of globalization, labor migration has emerged as a significant socio-economic phenomenon that profoundly influences family structures and social relations. Although migration contributes to economic stability through remittances, it simultaneously generates complex social challenges, particularly within families. Therefore, this study explores the impact of labor migration on the formation of deviant behavior, especially among children and adolescents left behind. Drawing on sociological theories and analytical observations, the paper argues that parental absence weakens social control, disrupts primary socialization, and leads to emotional deprivation. Consequently, these factors increase the likelihood of behavioral deviations such as aggression, delinquency, and social withdrawal. Furthermore, the study highlights the paradoxical nature of migration, where economic benefits coexist with social risks. Thus, it is concluded that deviant behavior in migrant families should be understood as a socially conditioned phenomenon requiring comprehensive institutional and community-based interventions.

In contemporary society, labor migration has become one of the most influential socio-economic processes shaping both global and local realities. On the one hand, it serves as a vital mechanism for improving household income and ensuring economic survival. On the other hand, however, it generates complex social consequences that extend beyond financial dimensions. In particular, labor migration significantly affects family structures, interpersonal relationships, and the socialization of children. Therefore, it is essential to examine how migration influences behavioral patterns within families, especially the emergence of deviant behavior.

From a sociological standpoint, deviant behavior is generally understood as actions that violate established social norms and expectations. However, such behavior does not arise in isolation; rather, it is shaped by social structures, cultural conditions, and interpersonal dynamics. As Émile Durkheim argued, deviance becomes more prominent during periods of

social disorganization, when traditional norms lose their regulatory power [2, 9-14]. In a similar vein, Robert K. Merton emphasized that structural strain—caused by a mismatch between societal goals and accessible means—can push individuals toward deviant adaptations [5, 3-13]. Furthermore, Travis Hirschi highlighted the critical role of social bonds, asserting that weakened attachment to family and community increases the likelihood of deviant behavior [3]. In light of these theoretical perspectives, labor migration can be interpreted as a structural factor that disrupts social equilibrium within families.

First and foremost, labor migration leads to a transformation of traditional family structures. In many cases, one or both parents leave their home country in search of employment opportunities, thereby creating what sociologists refer to as “transnational families.” As a consequence, children are often left behind in the care of extended family members or, in some instances, without consistent supervision. This shift, therefore, undermines the stability of the family as a primary institution of social control. Since the family is traditionally responsible for regulating behavior and instilling norms, its partial or complete absence weakens the mechanisms that prevent deviance.

Moreover, the absence of parents directly affects the emotional and psychological well-being of children. It is widely acknowledged that emotional support and parental attention are crucial for healthy development. However, when children experience prolonged separation from their parents, they may develop feelings of abandonment, loneliness, and insecurity. Consequently, such emotional distress can manifest in various forms of deviant behavior. For example, some children may exhibit aggression and defiance as a way of expressing frustration, whereas others may become socially withdrawn and disengaged. Thus, deviance in this context should not be viewed solely as norm violation but also as a response to unmet emotional needs [1, 366-370].

In addition to emotional factors, the disruption of socialization processes plays a significant role in shaping deviant behavior. Socialization, particularly primary socialization within the family, is essential for transmitting cultural values, moral principles, and acceptable patterns of conduct. Nevertheless, labor migration interrupts this process. When parents are absent, children may rely more heavily on peers, media, or digital environments for guidance. As a result, the internalization of norms becomes inconsistent and, in some cases, distorted. Therefore, the likelihood of adopting deviant or non-conformist behaviors increases, especially when peer groups promote risky or antisocial activities.

At the same time, it is important to consider the role of peer influence in migrant families. Without adequate parental supervision, children tend to seek belonging and recognition within peer groups. While peer interaction is a normal aspect of development, it can also become a source of negative influence if the group itself engages in deviant practices. Consequently, behaviors such as truancy, substance use, and minor delinquency may become normalized within these social circles. In this regard, deviance is not merely an individual choice but a socially learned phenomenon reinforced through interaction.

Interestingly, labor migration creates a paradoxical situation in which economic benefits coexist with social risks. On the one hand, remittances sent by migrant workers improve living standards, provide access to better education, and enhance material well-being. On the other hand, however, these financial gains cannot compensate for the absence of parental

guidance and emotional connection. Therefore, while families may experience economic advancement, they simultaneously face social and psychological challenges that can contribute to deviant outcomes [4, 243-248].

Furthermore, cultural context plays a crucial role in mediating the impact of migration. In societies with strong communal ties and extended family systems, the negative effects of parental absence may be partially mitigated. Relatives, neighbors, and community institutions can provide support and supervision, thereby reducing the risk of deviance. Nevertheless, in contexts where such support systems are weak or inconsistent, children are more vulnerable to behavioral problems. Thus, the influence of labor migration on deviance is not uniform but varies depending on cultural and social conditions.

In addition, modern technological developments introduce both opportunities and challenges for migrant families. On the positive side, digital communication tools allow parents and children to maintain regular contact despite geographical distance. This can help preserve emotional bonds and provide some level of guidance. However, on the negative side, excessive reliance on virtual communication cannot fully replace physical presence and direct interaction. Moreover, increased exposure to uncontrolled online content may further contribute to the development of deviant attitudes and behaviors.

It is also important to emphasize that not all children in migrant families develop deviant behavior. Individual resilience, personality traits, and supportive environments can serve as protective factors. For instance, children who have strong relationships with caregivers, teachers, or mentors are less likely to engage in deviance. Similarly, participation in structured activities such as sports, arts, or academic programs can provide positive outlets for energy and creativity. Therefore, the relationship between labor migration and deviant behavior is complex and mediated by multiple variables.

From a policy perspective, addressing the social consequences of labor migration requires a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach. First of all, governments and social institutions should develop programs aimed at supporting families affected by migration. This may include psychological counseling, parenting education, and community-based initiatives. In addition, schools play a crucial role in identifying at-risk children and providing guidance and support. Teachers, therefore, should be trained to recognize signs of emotional distress and behavioral problems.

Furthermore, it is essential to promote policies that facilitate family unity, such as creating local employment opportunities and improving working conditions within the home country. By reducing the need for migration, such measures can help preserve family stability and prevent the negative social outcomes associated with separation. At the same time, for families already affected by migration, strengthening communication and maintaining emotional connections should be prioritized.

In conclusion, labor migration is a multifaceted phenomenon that significantly influences family dynamics and behavioral outcomes. Although it offers economic advantages, it also disrupts social structures, weakens parental control, and affects the emotional and psychological development of children. Consequently, these factors contribute to the formation of deviant behavior within families. However, it should be emphasized that deviance is not an inevitable consequence of migration; rather, it is shaped by a complex

interplay of structural, cultural, and individual factors. Therefore, effective intervention strategies must address not only economic issues but also the social and emotional dimensions of family life.

References:

1. Dilrabo Murodillayevna Mo'minova (2026). Oilaviy munosabatlarni o'smirlar deviant xulq-atvoriga ta'siri. *Science and Education*, 7 (2), 366-370.
2. Durkheim, E. (2023). The rules of sociological method. In *Social theory re-wired* (pp. 9-14). Routledge.
3. Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of Delinquency*. Berkeley.
4. Isroilova, D.K. (2021). Mehnat migratsiyasi-iqtisodiy o'sishni ta'minlovchi omil sifatida. *Iqtisodiyot va innovatsion texnologiyalar ilmiy elektron jurnali*, №6 (noyabr-dekabr), 243-248 b.
5. Merton, R. K. (2017). Social structure and anomie. In *Gangs* (pp. 3-13). Routledge.

