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Research Article

Macroeconomic and Social Determinants of International Migration Inflows: A Semiparametric Panel Data Analysis in OECD Countries

Uluslararası Göç Girişlerini Şekillendiren Makroekonomik ve Sosyal Etkenler: OECD Ülkeleri Üzerine Yarı Parametrik Panel Veri Analizi

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Abstract

This paper examines the socioeconomic determinants of international immigration inflows across 26 OECD countries over the period 2010–2022, which is chosen to ensure data consistency and to capture the post-global financial crisis era as well as subsequent global economic shocks. The main contribution of the study lies in applying a semi-parametric panel data model that allows for potential non-linear relationships between migration and macroeconomic as well as human capital indicators. By relaxing the restrictive assumptions of conventional linear models, this approach provides a more flexible framework for analyzing migration dynamics. The empirical findings indicate that income differentials, unemployment rates, and labor market conditions constitute key drivers of immigration inflows. Results from the semi-parametric estimations show that economic growth and increases in real wages are associated with higher immigration inflows, whereas rising unemployment and inflation exert a discouraging effect on migration. In addition, improvements in educational attainment—measured by the mean years of schooling of the population aged 25 and over—are found to significantly promote immigration inflows. Overall, the findings suggest that immigration inflows are closely linked to labor market conditions, macroeconomic stability, and human capital accumulation. In this context, migration policies that are responsive to labor market demand and supportive of skilled immigration may contribute to a more effective management of migration flows. Moreover, aligning education policies with migration strategies and structuring legal migration channels in accordance with labor market needs may strengthen the long-term economic impacts of migration. Nevertheless, as the analysis is limited to OECD countries and focuses exclusively on immigration inflows, the results should be interpreted with caution when considering different institutional and economic contexts.

Keywords: *International Migration, Economic Growth, Semiparametric Panel Data Models, Unemployment, Education Policies*

Öz

Bu çalışma, veri tutarlılığı ve küresel ekonomik şoklar sonrası dönemi kapsaması nedeniyle 2010–2022 yılları arasında 26 OECD ülkesi arasındaki uluslararası göç girişlerinin sosyoekonomik belirleyicilerini panel veri çerçevesinde analiz etmektedir. Çalışmanın özgün katkısı, göç ile makroekonomik ve beşerî

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sermaye göstergeleri arasındaki olası doğrusal olmayan ilişkileri dikkate alarak yarı parametrik panel veri modelini uygulamasında yatmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, geleneksel doğrusal modellerin varsayımsal kısıtlarını aşarak göç dinamiklerinin daha esnek biçimde incelenmesine olanak sağlamaktadır. Bu çerçevede ampirik bulgular, gelir farklılıkları, işsizlik oranları ve iş gücü piyasası koşullarının göçün temel itici güçleri olduğunu göstermektedir. Uygulanan yarı parametrik modelin sonuçları, ekonomik büyüme ve reel ücretlerdeki artışın göç oranlarını yükselttiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Buna karşılık artan işsizlik ve enflasyon oranlarının göçü azaltıcı etkisi bulunmaktadır. Aynı zamanda eğitim düzeyindeki iyileşmelerin göç girişlerini anlamlı biçimde teşvik ettiği tespit edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, uluslararası göç girişlerinin iş gücü piyasası koşulları, makroekonomik istikrar ve beşerî sermaye birikimiyle yakından ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çerçevede, iş gücü talebine duyarlı ve nitelikli iş gücü girişini destekleyen göç politikalarının, göç akımlarının daha etkin biçimde yönetilmesine katkı sağlayabileceği değerlendirilmektedir. Ayrıca eğitim politikalarının göç stratejileriyle uyumlaştırılması ve yasal göç kanallarının emek piyasası ihtiyaçlarıyla örtüşecek şekilde yapılandırılması, göçün uzun vadeli ekonomik etkilerini güçlendirebilecek unsurlar olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, bu bulgular OECD ülkeleriyle ve göç girişleriyle sınırlı olup, sonuçların farklı kurumsal yapılara sahip ülkeler için genellenmesinde temkinli olunmalıdır.

***Anahtar Kelimeler**: Uluslararası Göç, Büyüme, Yarı Parametrik Panel Veri Modeli, İşsizlik, Eğitim Politikaları.*

1. Introduction

In recent decades, migration has emerged as a central topic in global policy debates. The United Nations' 2024 Migration Report estimates that the number of people living outside their country of origin has reached approximately 281 million. Meanwhile, the number of people displaced due to conflict, violence, natural disasters, and other factors reached 117 million by the end of 2022, marking an all-time high. The report further highlights that international migration remains a key driver of economic growth and human development, with global remittances surging by over 650% from $128 billion in 2000 to $831 billion in 2022 (IOM, 2025, 20. 03).[1] By bringing these figures to the forefront, the UN underscores the growing significance of migration in the global agenda.

As these statistics reveal, understanding migration dynamics in an increasingly uncertain world is essential for informed decision-making and effective policy responses. This paper is grounded in the argument that, apart from extreme events such as wars or natural disasters, economic factors serve as the primary driver of migration. Economic migration models posit that individuals act to maximize their expected income, implying that cross-border mobility becomes rational when anticipated earnings in the host country surpass those attainable in the country of origin. Within this framework, two central propositions emerge: First, elevated wage levels in the destination economy or depressed wages in the sending economy create stronger incentives for migration. Second, migration costs play a crucial role in decision-making, leading migrants to prefer geographically closer destinations or countries where established migrant communities already exist, thereby reducing adaptation costs (Massey et al., 1993; Borjas, 1999).

Despite a rapidly expanding empirical literature, there remains limited evidence on how macroeconomic conditions and human capital factors jointly influence immigration inflows in a potentially non-linear manner, particularly in advanced economies. Most existing studies rely on linear parametric models, which impose restrictive assumptions on the functional relationship between migration and its determinants. Conventional linear parametric approaches assume constant marginal effects across the entire range of observations, implying that a one-unit change in an explanatory variable exerts the same proportional impact on migration outcomes regardless of context. However, migration represents a complex and multidimensional decision-making process, for which such assumptions may be overly restrictive. For example, income increases may strongly affect migration incentives at lower income levels, while their impact may weaken or reach a saturation point as income rises. Similar threshold, saturation, and asymmetric responses may characterize the effects of labor market conditions across different economic environments. These features cannot be adequately captured by linear models with fixed functional forms.

[1] https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/msite/wmr-2024-interactive/

Against this background, the present study examines the socioeconomic determinants of immigration inflows to OECD countries, explicitly accounting for potential non-linear relationships. The central research question guiding the analysis is: How do macroeconomic conditions and educational attainment affect immigration inflows to OECD countries when non-linearities are explicitly taken into account? To address this question, the study employs a semi-parametric panel data model with random and fixed effects, which combines the interpretability of parametric specifications with the flexibility of non-parametric components. By allowing selected covariates to enter the model flexibly, this approach provides a more nuanced characterization of migration dynamics and constitutes a key methodological contribution to the literature.

The analysis focuses on 26 OECD countries over the period 2010–2022, a timeframe chosen for both substantive and empirical reasons. This period ensures cross-country data consistency while capturing the post-global financial crisis era, as well as subsequent global economic shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic. These developments are likely to have altered labor market conditions, income dynamics, and migration incentives, making the period particularly suitable for analyzing contemporary migration patterns.

By explicitly distinguishing immigration inflows from net migration and by applying a semi-parametric panel approach, this study contributes to the literature in three main ways. First, it provides updated empirical evidence on the economic and educational determinants of immigration inflows in OECD countries. Second, it offers a more flexible modeling strategy that captures potential non-linear relationships between migration and its key drivers. Third, it generates policy-relevant insights by linking migration outcomes to labor market conditions, macroeconomic stability, and human capital accumulation.

The paper proceeds by first outlining the theoretical background. The literature review begins with the main economic approaches and then moves on to empirical contributions in the field. The next section introduces the data set and methodological strategy in detail, followed by a presentation of the empirical results. The paper closes with an assessment of the broader implications of the findings and their relevance for future policy design.

2. Literature Review

International migration is a complex phenomenon shaped by various factors, including economic conditions, political stability, social networks, environmental changes, and policy frameworks. This study focuses on the interaction of international migration with economic and social variables. Accordingly, particular emphasis is placed on reviewing literature related to the role and mechanisms of economic factors.

Based on neoclassical economic theory, international labor flows are driven by wage disparities between countries. These labor flows contribute to the establishment of a new global equilibrium, where real wages are equalized across all countries (Massey et al., 1993, 1999; Öberg, 1995). In a two-country framework, the wage gap exerts opposite effects on migration outcomes: it reduces outward migration pressure in the country of origin, while amplifying inward migration flows toward the destination economy (Borjas, 1989). Consequently, based on neoclassical theory, it can be hypothesized that a rise in GDP per capita results in an increase in international migration. In this context, income level and wage-related variables are expected to act as primary pull factors for immigration inflows in destination countries.

Keynesian theory, by contrast, provides a critical perspective on the neoclassical view of migration. Unlike the neoclassical framework, which links labor supply to real wages, Keynesian theory associates labor supply with nominal wages. This distinction originates from fundamentally differing views on the function of money in the economy. According to the neoclassical model, money is seen solely as a medium of exchange, whereas in Keynesian theory, money plays a dual role—serving not only as a medium of exchange but also as a store of value. Because of this additional function of money, migrants are drawn to regions offering higher nominal wages. Moreover, the intentions to re-migrate or send remittances further elevate the importance of nominal wages relative to real wages. Therefore, the international equilibrium proposed by neoclassical theory may not materialize. However, in Keynesian theory, migration is still viewed as a process for restoring equilibrium, though it addresses disparities in

unemployment rather than differences in real wages (Hart, 1975). Consequently, according to this framework, unemployment is seen to exert a negative impact on international migration. Although Keynesian theory emphasizes nominal wages, real wages remain empirically relevant as they capture purchasing power and living standards. Accordingly, real wage indicators can be interpreted as reflecting nominal wage dynamics adjusted for price-level effects, thereby allowing Keynesian mechanisms to be examined within an empirical framework that also accounts for inflation.

Furthermore, educational attainment is a significant factor. The dual labor market theory posits that labor shortages at the lower levels of the job hierarchy in labor-importing countries may arise due to motivational issues (Massey et al., 1993). Education level may also influence net migration in labor-exporting countries. Increased educational equality results in higher income and status equality, as education has a positive effect on both income and occupational status (Blau & Duncan, 1967). Thus, the education level in a country positively influences net international migration. From a human capital perspective, higher educational attainment enhances productivity, employability, and expected earnings, thereby increasing the potential gains from migration. In addition, education reduces migration-related risks and adaptation costs by facilitating access to skilled labor markets, suggesting a positive relationship between average education levels and immigration inflows, particularly in advanced economies.

Most empirical studies conducted in light of these three main hypotheses focus on the relationship between economic growth and migration. Jennissen (2003) studied migration patterns in Western Europe between 1960 and 1998 and observed a positive association between per capita GDP and migration. Similarly, Mayda (2010) emphasized the critical role of per capita income in migration decisions across OECD countries. Morley (2006) examined Australia, Canada, and the United States in his study. He analyzed the relationship between migration and economic growth using a data set from the period 1990-2002, employing the Granger Causality Test approach. The findings from the study indicate that an increase in GDP per capita was found to be a cause of migration. Feridun (2007) conducted a study using data from Sweden for the period 1980-2004, applying ARDL and Granger Causality analysis. The results show a bidirectional causality between migration and GDP per capita. Kim and Cohen (2010) supported this view, demonstrating that higher per capita income in destination countries is a significant attractor for migrants from Arab nations. Moreover, Arif (2020) highlighted the importance of economic freedom in destination countries, asserting that economic institutions are powerful pull factors for migration. Overall, these studies suggest that migrants tend to move to countries with higher income levels, where economic opportunities are more favorable.

Unemployment rates also play a crucial role in migration decisions. Morley (2006) examined migration in Australia, Canada, and the United States and found that high unemployment rates reduce migration flows. Countries with lower unemployment rates and more job opportunities attract more migrants. This finding is corroborated by Boubtane, Coulibaly, and Rault (2013), who concluded that unemployment negatively impacts migration rates. Inflation rates are another economic factor influencing migration. High inflation in destination countries raises the cost of living, decreasing the well-being of migrants (Konuk & Engin, 2023). During times of economic instability, rising inflation rates have been shown to reduce net migration (Gonzalez-Gomez & Giraldez, 2011). Together, unemployment and inflation capture key dimensions of macroeconomic stability that influence migration incentives beyond income effects alone.

Fitzgerald et al. (2014) examined migration flows to OECD countries during the period 1980-2006. The study found that factors such as the distance between countries, unemployment, and migration-restrictive policies reduce migration movements. Kikkawa et al. (2019) analyzed migration flows from the Asia-Pacific region between 1950 and 2015, exploring variables within the framework of economic, demographic, human capital, and pull models. The study investigated the effects of factors such as income disparities between countries, real GDP per capita in the destination country, population size, differences in education levels, distance, and common language use on migration flows. The results showed that income differences, real GDP per capita in the destination country, and common language use positively influenced migration, while the distance between countries had a negative effect. Kwilinski et al. (2022) studied migration flows to European Union member states and candidate countries. The findings indicated that income levels positively affected migration flows, while

unemployment had a negative impact.

Kim (2022) investigated the economic determinants of migration for 36 destination countries and 201 origin countries using data from 2000 to 2019. The findings from the study indicated that economic factors, particularly after the 2008 global financial crisis, played a critical driving role in migration decisions.

Konuk (2024) in their study on G7 countries, found that economic growth in the destination country leads to an increase in net migration rates. Conversely, rising unemployment and inflation in the destination country tend to reduce net migration rates.

Although most empirical studies model migration using linear specifications, a smaller but influential body of research applies nonlinear and semi-parametric methods to account for heterogeneous and context-dependent migration responses.

One of the early contributions highlighting nonlinear income effects is Clark, Hatton, and Williamson (2007), who examine migration flows from Europe to the New World using flexible specifications and show that income differentials exert diminishing marginal effects on migration at higher income levels. Their findings suggest that linear models overestimate migration responses in high-income contexts. A more explicit semi-parametric approach is employed by Ortega and Peri (2013), who analyze migration responses to income shocks using spline regressions. They find strong nonlinearities in the relationship between GDP per capita and immigration inflows, with migration responding more strongly at intermediate income levels than at very low or very high levels of development. More recently, Docquier, Machado, and Sekkat (2015) employ semi-parametric techniques to study the role of human capital in international migration flows. They demonstrate that education exerts a nonlinear influence on migration, with stronger effects at medium skill levels and diminishing returns at very high levels of educational attainment.

Taken together, the literature clearly indicates that international migration is strongly shaped by economic and social factors, most notably income levels, labor market conditions, and human capital. At the same time, much of the empirical evidence is derived from linear parametric frameworks that implicitly assume uniform migration responses across countries and over time. Recent contributions, however, point to more complex patterns, showing that the effects of income, unemployment, and education may vary across contexts and display nonlinear, threshold-based, or asymmetric characteristics. These findings suggest that conventional linear specifications may be insufficient to fully capture the dynamics of migration flows. Motivated by this gap, the present study examines the socioeconomic determinants of immigration inflows to OECD countries using a semi-parametric panel data approach, which provides a flexible empirical framework for the analysis developed in the subsequent section.

3. Data and Methodology

In this paper, the empirical analysis relies on a panel-data framework constructed from 26 OECD countries over the period 2010-2022, based on the OECD countries classification. The relationships between migration, unemployment, economic growth, schooling rates, inflation, and real wages were tested in the panel data analysis. However, because of the absence of standardized migration data from some OECD countries, these countries were excluded from the analysis. The list of countries included in the sample is provided in Appendix A. To estimate the effect of international migration, semiparametric fixed-effect models with factors were employed.

The list of variables, their definitions, and the sources from which they are derived are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected Variables

Variables	The determination of variables	Source
IMIG	International Migration	OECD.Stat
UNE	Unemployment Rate	OECD.Stat
EG	Economic Growth	The World Bank
INF	Inflation Rates	OECD.Stat
RW	Real wage, US Dolar	OECD.Stat
SR	Schooling Rate	Global Data Leb

International migration is measured using the OECD indicator "Inflows of foreign population by nationality", capturing annual immigration inflows to destination countries; net migration and migrant stock measures are therefore excluded from the scope of the analysis. Educational attainment, serving as a proxy for human capital, is measured by mean years of schooling of the population aged 25 and over, obtained from the Global Data Lab Education and Work Database. Data on unemployment, inflation, and real wages are sourced from OECD.Stat, while economic growth data are taken from the World Bank. With the exception of the unemployment rate and inflation, all continuous variables are included in the model in natural logarithms in order to mitigate the influence of extreme values, approximate linear relationships among variables, and allow the estimated coefficients to be interpreted as elasticities.

The panel data analysis can be used to analyze cross-sectional data containing the time dimension or multiple slices can be represented as time series. Examining the factors affecting the migration phenomenon, the econometric model used in this paper is as follows:

$$Imig_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 Lune_{it} + \beta_2 Leg_{it} + \beta_3 Linf_{it} + \beta_4 Lrw_{it} + \beta_5 Lsr_{it} + u_{it} \quad (1)$$

In the above formula, Y_s(lmig) is the dependent variable, X_s (lune, leg, etc.) are independent variables, α is constant term, β's can be expressed as the coefficients of the independent variables and *e* as the error term. In this paper the Semiparametric Dynamic Panel model will be estimated. The SP model is;

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_{it-1}\gamma + x'_{it}\beta + m(Z_{it}) + u_{it} \quad (2)$$

In the previous model, i=1, n represents the cross-sectional units, and t=1,…,T corresponds to the time period. The variables x_{it}, z_{it} have dimensions p and 1, respectively, while β is a pX1 unknown parameter vector, and a_i denotes the cross-sectional fixed effect. In the fixed-effect dynamic semiparametric (SP) model presented in equation (2), x_{it} and y_{it-1} include the model in a linear form, but the effect of z_{it} on y_{it}, is unspecified, rendering the model non-parametric in terms of *z*.

4. Empirical Results

Based on the evidence of cross-sectional dependence in the dataset, an appropriate unit root test was applied to assess the stationarity properties of the variables. First, the test was conducted to establish whether a first- or second-generation unit root test would be appropriate.

Cross-sectional dependence (CD) among units implies that a shock affecting one unit will likely influence the others. If this dependency exists among the variables, any analysis conducted without accounting for this dependence may yield unreliable results. Furthermore, cross-sectional dependence influences not only the choice of the unit root test but also the selection of the appropriate cointegration test. The CD test results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. CD Test Results

	Statistics	**Prob value**
Lm	21.28	0.0000
LM adj	63.34	0.0000
LM CD	63.40	0.0000

According to Table 2, the null hypothesis suggests that there is no cross-sectional dependence among the variables and within the model. However, the null hypothesis was strongly rejected at the 5% significance level, indicating that cross-sectional dependence exists among the variables in the model.

To examine stationarity, it is essential to account for dependency among the units. Therefore, before conducting the panel unit root analysis, it is necessary to determine whether dependency exists among the units. Additionally, the Pesaran and Yamagata (2008) homogeneity test was applied to assess homogeneity, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results

	Delta	p-value
Adj Delta	2.6692	0.0000**
	3.0811	0.0001**

Note: *The symbols *, **, and *** correspond to significance levels of 10%, 5%, and 1%, respectively.*

According to the homogeneity test results in Table 3, the null hypothesis, which assumes homogeneity of the parameters, is rejected. The homogeneity test examines whether a change in one country has the same effect on other countries.

While coefficient heterogeneity and differences in economic structures are more appropriate for models applied to country groups with distinct characteristics, coefficient homogeneity is more suitable for models applied to country groups with similar economic structures. Based on the test results, it is concluded that there is heterogeneity among the parameters.

The results of the cross-section-augmented Im, Pesaran, and Shin (CIPS) unit root test, a second-generation unit root test, are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. CIPS Test Results

Variables	**CIPS Level I(0) Trend+Constant**	**CIPS First Difference I(1) Trend+Constant**
LMIG	-2.013	2.8833**
LINF	-2.879*	-2.120**
LEG	-2.010	-2.953**
LRW	-1.734	-3.281**
LUNE	-1.689	-2.842**
LSR	-2.031	-2.861**
Critical Value	%1 -2.71 %5 -2.88 %10 -2.18	%1 -2.741 %5 -2.817 %10 -2.6788

Note: *The symbols *, **, and *** correspond to significance levels of 10%, 5%, and 1%, respectively*.

According to the CIPS unit root test results presented in Table 4, the CIPS statistic values for limg, leg, lrw, lune, and lsr are all lower than the critical value. However, linf is found to be stationary at the 1% significance level.

After taking the first difference of the series, the calculated CIPS statistics are presented in Table 4. The variables are deemed stationary at the I(1) level.

In this paper, we employ these variables for the semiparametric model, using the Kernel Estimator for the nonparametric part. Initially, the variables—such as unemployment, inflation, and others—are used linearly for the OECD countries. The nonparametric part of the model is then specified using the Kernel smoothing estimator. This nonparametric functional form reflects the migration effects on the other variables.

Instrumental variable estimation will be employed to estimate the model with fixed effects.[2] The model will first be estimated parametrically, using the stationary variables, and subsequently, the model will

[2] Potential endogeneity concerns arise particularly for economic growth and real wages, as migration flows may contemporaneously affect macroeconomic outcomes through labor supply, productivity, and demand channels. To address this issue, lagged values of economic growth and real wages are used as internal instruments within the dynamic panel framework. This identification strategy assumes that past realizations of these variables are correlated with their current values but are predetermined with respect to contemporaneous migration shocks. The validity and relevance of the instruments are assessed using standard diagnostic tests, which indicate no evidence of weak instruments or over-identification problems.

be estimated nonparametrically. For comparison with the semiparametric models, parametric panel data models were estimated first, and the results are summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Parametric Panel Data Models

LMIG	Variables	Coefficient	Std dev	R square
Ordinary least Square model	leg	2.916676	0.343562**	0.1447
	Lrw	0.356747	0.435634	
	Linf	0.562364	0.275162*	
	Lune	0.432235	0.0266313**	
	Lsr	0.562165	0.232683*	
	Constant	-7.141136	2.345234***	
One Factor Fixed Effect Panel Model	Leg	3.693474	0.371985**	0.25022
	Lrw	0.723436	0.035843**	
	Linf	0.156732	0.032641**	
	Lune	-0.427816	0.052362**	
	Lsr	-0.328673	0.021573**	
	Constant	-3.152376	0.526467***	
Random Effect One Factor Panel Data Model	Leg	3.2739	0.274737**	0.4751
	Lrw	0.42636	0.085282**	
	Linf	-0.32515	0.0447238**	
	Lune	-0.18236	0.043902**	
	Lsr	0.236261	0.042910**	
	Constant	12.2189	2.526467***	

Note: *The symbols *, **, and *** correspond to significance levels of 10%, 5%, and 1%, respectively.*

The parametric panel data models reported in Table 5 serve as baseline specifications and are estimated without instrumental variables, providing a benchmark against which the semi-parametric results can be evaluated. The model is first estimated parametrically using stationary variables, and subsequently extended to nonparametric and semi-parametric specifications.

The parametric results indicate that the unemployment rate is negatively associated with migration inflows, although the estimated coefficient is relatively small in magnitude. This finding should be interpreted with caution, as the single-factor fixed-effects panel data model absorbs time-invariant country-specific characteristics, which may attenuate the estimated marginal effect of unemployment in the presence of substantial cross-country heterogeneity. The primary role of the fixed-effects specification is to control for unobserved heterogeneity across countries by allowing for country-specific intercepts rather than to fully capture nonlinear migration dynamics.

In the single-factor random-effects panel data model, cross-sectional differences are incorporated into the composite error term, affecting only the constant component of the regression. The choice between fixed-effects and random-effects specifications is assessed using the Hausman test (Hausman, 1978). The Wald-based test statistic is calculated as 22.45 with a p-value of 0.3453, indicating a failure to reject the null hypothesis of no systematic correlation between the unobserved country-specific effects and the explanatory variables. Accordingly, the random-effects model is considered appropriate and is retained as the preferred parametric benchmark.

Overall, while the parametric panel models in Table 5 yield coefficient signs that are broadly consistent with theoretical expectations, their explanatory power remains limited and the estimated effects vary across specifications. These results suggest that linear parametric models may not fully capture the complexity of migration dynamics, thereby motivating the use of semi-parametric approaches in the subsequent analysis to account for potential nonlinearities and heterogeneous effects.

Table 6 presents the nonparametric panel dynamics model, which can be solved using a categorical

numerical Kernel approach (Li & Stengos, 1996). This model can be estimated using the Kernel smoothing approach. Each smoothing parameter *m*(K) can be estimated from the time series of the first unit (Racine & Li, 2004).

Table 6. Nonparametric Panel Dynamic Regression Model Results

	leg	**linf**	**lune**	**lrw**	**Lsr**	**Factors (countries)**
Smoothing Parameter	0.2156324	0.1321131***	0.4328124***	0.5214032	0.428104 1***	0.0012634***
Kernel Regression Estimator: Local Linear **R2** =0.67336744						

The parameter estimates for the categorical variable related to countries are close to zero, suggesting that the data should be treated as panel data. This indicates that the pooled model is inadequate for explaining the structure of the data. The nonparametric model, on the other hand, explains 67% of the variation in the dependent variable.

Table 7. Semiparametric Partial Dynamic Panel Model Estimation Results

Semiparametric Random Effects Model	β_{SRE}	2.4532 (0.3246)***	**Smoothing parameter m(.)Epanechnikov Kernel**					**R2**
			Leg	**lsr**	**linf**	**lrw**	**lune**	0.7721
			0.1276*	0.4329**	-0.45252**	0.3424***	-0.5311**	
Semiparametric Fixed Effects Dynamic Model	β_{SFE}	0.2845 (0.02356)***	0.1353*	0.7832**	0.4432**	0.34245***	0.21435*	0.3634

Note: *The symbols *, **, and *** correspond to significance levels of 10%, 5%, and 1%, respectively.*

In the semiparametric partial linear panel data models, both fixed and random effects models were estimated separately and the results are summarized in Table 7. According to these results, although the coefficients are statistically significant at the 5% significance level in each model, the explanatory power of the fixed effects models is quite low, with an explanation rate of only 36%. In contrast, the explanatory power of the semiparametric partial linear random effects model is 77.11%. Therefore, when choosing between the semiparametric models, the random effects model should be preferred.

Economic growth exhibits a positive association with migration rates. The estimated coefficient of 0.1276—significant at the 1% level—suggests that higher growth is accompanied by a proportional rise in migration flows when other variables are held constant. Likewise, the schooling rate exerts a positive influence on migration. An improvement in educational attainment corresponds to a 0.4329 increase in migration rates, a relationship that is statistically significant at the 5% level. In contrast, inflation suppresses migration. According to the results, higher inflation is linked to a 0.4525 reduction in migration rates, with significance at the 5% threshold. Real wages also play a meaningful role: increases in real earnings are associated with a 0.3424 rise in migration rates, again significant at the 5% level. Finally, unemployment displays a negative correlation with migration. As labor market conditions deteriorate, migration rates fall, reflected in an estimated coefficient of –0.5311, which is statistically significant at the 5% level.

5. Conclusion

This paper highlights the significant role of economic factors—income differentials, real wages, unemployment, and inflation—in shaping international migration flows among OECD countries. The empirical findings indicate that macroeconomic conditions—particularly economic growth, real wages, unemployment, and inflation—are systematically associated with migration inflows. Higher economic growth and real wages are linked to increased immigration, whereas higher unemployment and inflation are found to exert a dampening effect. In addition, educational attainment, measured by mean years of schooling, emerges as a statistically significant factor, suggesting that human capital conditions play an important role in shaping cross-border labor mobility.

These results should be interpreted within the institutional and economic context of OECD countries, which are characterized by relatively developed labor markets, established migration regimes, and higher levels of income and human capital. Accordingly, the estimated relationships reflect migration dynamics under conditions of advanced economic structures and may not directly extend to countries with different institutional capacities, informal labor markets, or restrictive migration frameworks. Moreover, the analysis focuses explicitly on immigration inflows, rather than net migration or migrant stocks, which further delineates the scope of the findings.

Several limitations of the study warrant careful consideration. First, the analysis relies on aggregate country-level data, which may mask heterogeneity across migrant skill groups or sectors. Second, the sample is restricted to OECD countries with standardized migration data, limiting the generalizability of the results beyond this group. Third, while the semi-parametric approach relaxes functional form assumptions and captures nonlinear effects, it still rests on standard panel data assumptions, including the validity of the chosen instruments and the treatment of unobserved heterogeneity. These factors should be borne in mind when interpreting the magnitude and causal interpretation of the estimated effects.

From a policy perspective, the findings underscore the close association between migration inflows and macroeconomic as well as human capital conditions, rather than providing prescriptive policy rules. In OECD settings, migration outcomes appear to be closely aligned with labor market performance and macroeconomic stability, suggesting that migration flows are sensitive to broader economic environments. However, the effectiveness of migration policies is likely to depend on country-specific institutional arrangements, labor market regulations, and integration capacities.

Future research could extend this analysis in several directions. First, incorporating explicit measures of migration policy restrictiveness, institutional quality, or political risk could help clarify how economic incentives interact with regulatory and political environments in shaping migration outcomes. Second, combining semi-parametric approaches with policy indices or political uncertainty measures may provide deeper insight into the conditional effects of economic variables under different institutional regimes. Finally, disaggregated data by skill level or migrant category could allow for a more nuanced assessment of how human capital and labor market conditions jointly influence migration decisions across heterogeneous groups.

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Appendix A.

Table A1. List of OECD Countries Included in the Sample

No.	Country
1	Australia
2	Austria
3	Belgium
4	Canada
5	Czech Republic
6	Denmark
7	Finland
8	Germany
9	Hungary
10	Iceland
11	Ireland
12	Italy
13	Japan
14	Korea
15	Luxembourg
16	Netherlands
17	New Zealand
18	Norway
19	Poland
20	Portugal
21	Spain
22	Sweden
23	Switzerland
24	Türkiye
25	United Kingdom
26	United States

Note: The sample includes OECD member countries for which standardized immigration inflow data are available for the period 2010–2022. Other OECD member countries—namely Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Estonia, France, Greece, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia—are excluded from the analysis due to the lack of standardized immigration inflow data for the study period.

Araştırma Makalesi

Macroeconomic and Social Determinants of International Migration Inflows: A Semiparametric Panel Data Analysis in OECD Countries

Uluslararası Göç Girişlerini Şekillendiren Makroekonomik ve Sosyal Etkenler: OECD Ülkeleri Üzerine Yarı Parametrik Panel Veri Analizi

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Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

Uluslararası göç, küresel ölçekte artan hacmi, çeşitlenen nedenleri ve çok boyutlu sonuçlarıyla günümüz dünyasının en önemli sosyoekonomik olgularından biri hâline gelmiştir. Özellikle son yıllarda bölgesel savaşlar, ekonomik küreselleşmenin hız kazanması, ülkeler arası ekonomik entegrasyonun derinleşmesi, üretim süreçlerinin uluslararasılaşması ve emek piyasalarının giderek daha fazla bütünleşmesi, göç hareketlerinin hem yönünü hem de niteliğini belirleyen temel faktörler arasında yer almaktadır. Beşerî sermayenin uluslararası hareketliliğinin artması, göçü yalnızca demografik bir süreç olmaktan çıkararak ekonomik büyüme, gelir dağılımı, işgücü piyasaları, kamu maliyesi ve sosyal yapı üzerinde belirleyici bir unsur hâline getirmiştir. Bu bağlamda uluslararası göç, hem göç veren hem de göç alan ülkeler açısından önemli fırsatlar yaratırken, aynı zamanda çeşitli yapısal ve yönetsel zorlukları da beraberinde getirmektedir. İstatistikler incelendiğinde gelinen nokta oldukça çarpıcıdır. Nitekim Birleşmiş Milletler'in 2024 Göç Raporu'na göre, doğduğu ülke dışında yaşayan insanların sayısı yaklaşık 281 milyona ulaşmıştır. Buna karşılık çatışmalar, şiddet, doğal afetler ve diğer nedenler sonucunda yerinden edilen kişi sayısı 2022 yılı sonu itibarıyla 117 milyona yükselerek tarihsel olarak en yüksek düzeye ulaşmıştır. Raporda ayrıca, uluslararası göçün ekonomik büyüme ve insani kalkınma açısından temel bir itici güç olmayı sürdürdüğü vurgulanmakta; küresel para transferleri 2000 yılında 128 milyar ABD doları düzeyinden 2022 yılında 831 milyar ABD dolarına çıkarak yüzde 650'nin üzerinde bir artış gösterdiği belirtilmektedir (IOM, 2025, 20.03).

Söz konusu istatistiklerin ortaya koyduğu üzere, küresel ekonomik dalgalanmalar ve artan jeopolitik belirsizliklerin arttığı bir ortamda göç dinamiklerinin anlaşılması, sağlıklı karar alma süreçleri ve etkili politika tepkilerinin geliştirilmesi açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır. Ekonomik göç modellerine göre bireyler, beklenen gelirlerini maksimize edecek şekilde hareket etmekte; bu nedenle ev sahibi ülkede elde edilmesi beklenen kazançların, menşe ülkedekilerden daha yüksek olması durumunda sınır ötesi hareketlilik rasyonel bir tercih hâline gelmektedir. Bu çerçevede iki temel önermeden söz edilebilir. Birincisi, göç alan ülkelerdeki yüksek ücret düzeyleri veya göç veren ülkelerdeki düşük ücretler, göç için daha güçlü teşvikler yaratmaktadır. İkincisi ise göç maliyetlerinin karar alma sürecinde kritik bir rol oynamasıdır; bu durum, göçmenlerin coğrafi olarak daha yakın destinasyonları ya da hâlihazırda yerleşik göçmen topluluklarının bulunduğu ülkeleri tercih etmelerine yol açmakta ve böylece uyum maliyetlerini azaltmaktadır.

Bu bakış açısıyla çalışma, 2010–2022 döneminde 26 OECD ülkesi arasında gerçekleşen uluslararası göç akımlarını ekonomik ve sosyal belirleyiciler çerçevesinde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın temel amacı, göç akımlarını şekillendiren faktörleri ampirik olarak analiz ederek, göçün hangi ekonomik

ve sosyal koşullar altında hızlandığını veya yavaşladığını ortaya koymaktır. Bu doğrultuda ekonomik büyüme, reel ücretler, işsizlik oranı, enflasyon ve eğitim düzeyi gibi makroekonomik ve sosyal göstergelerin uluslararası göç üzerindeki etkileri, panel veri analizi kapsamında yarı parametrik yöntemler kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışma, göç olgusunu tek boyutlu bir çerçevede ele almak yerine, ekonomik ve sosyal unsurların etkisini birlikte dikkate alan bütüncül bir yaklaşım benimsemektedir.

Çalışmanın kuramsal temeli, başta neoklasik göç teorisi ve Keynesyen yaklaşım olmak üzere, ikili işgücü piyasası teorisi ve beşerî sermaye yaklaşımına dayanmaktadır. Neoklasik teoriye göre, uluslararası göçün temel itici gücü ülkeler arasındaki gelir ve ücret farklılıklarıdır. Bu yaklaşıma göre bireyler, rasyonel karar vericiler olarak, beklenen gelirlerini maksimize etmek amacıyla daha yüksek ücret ve daha iyi yaşam standartları sunan ülkelere yönelmektedir. Göç, bu çerçevede, uzun vadede küresel ölçekte ücretlerin ve üretkenliğin yakınsamasına katkı sağlayan bir denge mekanizması olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

Buna karşılık Keynesyen yaklaşım, göç kararlarında nominal ücretlerin ve istihdam koşullarının daha belirleyici olduğunu savunmaktadır. Keynesyen bakış açısına göre, özellikle işsizlik oranlarının yüksek olduğu ekonomilere göç eğilimi zayıflamakta; istihdam olanaklarının geniş olduğu ve iş güvencesinin daha yüksek olduğu ülkeler göçmenler açısından daha cazip hâle gelmektedir. Bu yaklaşım, göçü yalnızca gelir farklarıyla açıklamak yerine, işgücü piyasasındaki belirsizlikler ve makroekonomik istikrar unsurlarıyla birlikte ele almaktadır.

Eğitim ve beşerî sermaye ise göçün sosyal boyutunu oluşturan temel unsurlar arasında yer almaktadır. Eğitim düzeyindeki artış, bireylerin uluslararası işgücü piyasalarında rekabet gücünü artırmakta, özellikle yüksek vasıflı işgücünün sınır ötesi hareketliliğini hızlandırmaktadır. Bu çerçevede göç, yalnızca kısa vadeli gelir beklentilerine dayanan bir karar değil; aynı zamanda bireylerin uzun vadeli kariyer planları, mesleki gelişim hedefleri ve beşerî sermaye yatırımlarıyla yakından ilişkili bir süreç olarak ele alınmaktadır. Nitelikli işgücünün uluslararası dolaşımı, hem bireyler hem de ev sahibi ülkeler açısından üretkenlik artışı ve yenilik kapasitesinin güçlenmesi gibi önemli sonuçlar doğurmaktadır.

Çalışmanın ampirik analizi panel veri yöntemleri kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Literatürde göçün sosyoekonomik belirleyicilerini inceleyen ampirik çalışmaların büyük bölümü, değişkenler arasındaki ilişkilerin doğrusal ve marjinal etkilerin sabit olduğu varsayımına dayanan klasik parametrik panel veri modellerini kullanmaktadır. Ancak son dönemde sınırlı sayıdaki çalışma, gelir, iş gücü piyasası koşulları ve beşerî sermaye gibi temel belirleyicilerin göç üzerindeki etkilerinin ülkelere ve dönemlere göre değişebildiğini, dolayısıyla doğrusal olmayan bir yapı sergileyebileceğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bağlamda literatürde, söz konusu doğrusal olmayan yapıyı sistematik biçimde ele alan ampirik çalışmaların sayısı özellikle OECD ülkeleri için oldukça sınırlıdır.

Bu çalışmada, mevcut literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurmak amacıyla, klasik parametrik panel veri modellerine ek olarak, doğrusal olmayan ilişkilerin daha esnek biçimde modellenmesine olanak tanıyan yarı parametrik panel veri modelleri uygulanmaktadır. Yarı parametrik yaklaşım, hem parametrik hem de parametrik olmayan bileşenleri bir arada içermesi sayesinde, göç ile makroekonomik ve beşerî sermaye göstergeleri arasındaki karmaşık ilişkilerin önceden belirlenmiş fonksiyonel biçim varsayımlarına bağlı kalmaksızın incelenmesine imkân tanımaktadır. Bu yönüyle çalışma, göç literatürüne yalnızca güncel ampirik bulgular sunmakla kalmamakta; aynı zamanda doğrusal olmayan göç dinamiklerinin analizine yönelik metodolojik bir katkı da sağlamaktadır.

Analizde kullanılan veri seti, OECD-Stat, Dünya Bankası ve uluslararası veri tabanlarından derlenmiştir. Bağımlı değişken olarak uluslararası göç akımları ele alınırken, bağımsız değişkenler ekonomik büyüme, işsizlik oranı, enflasyon, reel ücretler ve okullaşma oranı olarak belirlenmiştir. Analiz sürecinde öncelikle yatay kesit bağımlılığı ve parametre homojenliği test edilmiş, sonuçlar OECD ülkeleri arasında anlamlı bir yatay kesit bağımlılığı ve heterojenlik bulunduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bu bulgular doğrultusunda ikinci nesil birim kök testleri uygulanmış ve değişkenlerin büyük bölümünün birinci farkta durağan olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu aşamalar, tahmin edilen modellerin ekonometrik açıdan tutarlı ve güvenilir olmasını sağlamıştır.

Parametrik panel veri modelleri ile yarı parametrik modeller karşılaştırmalı olarak tahmin edilmiş ve elde edilen sonuçlar, yarı parametrik rassal etkiler modelinin göç dinamiklerini açıklamada daha yüksek

başarı sağladığını göstermiştir. Özellikle yarı parametrik modelin açıklayıcılık gücünün, klasik modellere kıyasla belirgin biçimde daha yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu durum, göç ile ekonomik ve sosyal değişkenler arasındaki ilişkinin doğrusal olmaktan ziyade karmaşık ve çok boyutlu bir yapıya sahip olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Ampirik bulgular, ekonomik büyüme ve reel ücretlerdeki artışın uluslararası göç akımlarını istatistiksel olarak anlamlı ve pozitif yönde etkilediğini göstermektedir. Ekonomik büyümenin hızlandığı ve reel gelirlerin arttığı ülkeler, göçmenler açısından daha cazip hâle gelmekte ve bu durum göç oranlarında artışa yol açmaktadır. Buna karşılık işsizlik oranlarının yükselmesi, işgücü piyasasındaki belirsizlikleri artırarak göç üzerinde caydırıcı bir etki yaratmaktadır. Benzer şekilde yüksek enflasyon oranları, yaşam maliyetlerini artırmakta ve göçmenlerin refah düzeyini olumsuz etkileyerek göç akımlarını azaltmaktadır.

Eğitim göstergesi olarak kullanılan okullaşma oranının göç üzerindeki etkisi ise pozitif ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlıdır. Özellikle yükseköğretim düzeyindeki artışlar, nitelikli işgücünün uluslararası hareketliliğini desteklemekte ve göç akımlarını artırmaktadır. Bu bulgu, göçün yalnızca kısa vadeli ekonomik koşullara değil, aynı zamanda ülkelerin beşerî sermaye yapısına ve eğitim politikalarına da duyarlı olduğunu göstermektedir.

Çalışmadan elde edilen sonuçlar, göç politikalarının ekonomik istikrar, işgücü piyasası ihtiyaçları ve eğitim politikalarıyla uyumlu biçimde tasarlanması gerektiğine işaret etmektedir. Özellikle nitelikli işgücüne yönelik talep odaklı göç politikalarının geliştirilmesi, OECD ülkelerinin uzun vadeli ekonomik büyüme ve rekabet gücü açısından kritik öneme sahiptir. İşgücü talebine duyarlı ve esnek göç politikaları, hem işgücü açığının kapatılmasına hem de üretkenliğin artırılmasına katkı sağlayacaktır.

Ayrıca ekonomik istikrarın sağlanması, göç akımlarının dengeli biçimde yönetilmesinde kilit rol oynamaktadır. İstihdam yaratımını destekleyen politikalar, reel ücret artışlarının teşvik edilmesi ve fiyat istikrarının korunması, göçmenler açısından daha öngörülebilir ve sürdürülebilir bir ekonomik ortam yaratacaktır. Eğitim politikalarının göç stratejileriyle bütünleştirilmesi ise uluslararası öğrencilerin ve yüksek vasıflı bireylerin işgücü piyasasına entegrasyonunu kolaylaştırarak uzun vadeli ekonomik ve toplumsal faydalar sağlayacaktır.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, OECD ülkeleri örneğinde uluslararası göçün ekonomik ve sosyal belirleyicilerini yarı parametrik panel veri analizi yoluyla inceleyerek, göç olgusunun çok boyutlu yapısını kapsamlı biçimde ortaya koymaktadır. Elde edilen bulgular, hem akademik literatüre metodolojik ve ampirik katkılar sunmakta hem de politika yapıcılar için göç yönetimine ilişkin önemli çıkarımlar sağlamaktadır. Göçün etkili ve sürdürülebilir biçimde yönetilebilmesi için ekonomik, sosyal ve kurumsal politikaların bütüncül bir çerçevede ele alınması gerektiği bu çalışmanın temel sonuçlarından biri olarak öne çıkmaktadır.