

Behaviour of Young Migrants from Visegrad Countries

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Pekajová, L 2016, 'Behaviour of young migrants from Visegrad countries', *International Journal of Public Administration, Management and Economic Development*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 40-45. ISSN 2533-4077.

Abstract

The paper deals with the current topic of migration as focused on the young migrants from the Visegrad countries of Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Their migration behaviour, motives, financial and social issues as well as the factors influencing the migration decision are detailed by way of detailed interviews. As far as the influencing factors are concerned, the young migrants are most influenced by exiting background in the migration target country, however, their education of knowledge of the language play a more minor role than expected. The interviews also revealed several migrant types - the economic migrant, the adventure seeking one and finally a migrant of mixed national origins. These groups have certain individual characteristics that set them apart and all occur frequently among the young people from the Visegrad countries

Keywords: migration; Visegrad; young people

1. Introduction

The topic of migration is so wide that no theory covers it completely, nor does this paper attempt it. The paper sets aside merely small fragment of migration processes, that is the migration behaviour of young people who originally resided in one of the Visegrad countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland or Slovakia. The paper focuses on two questions. Firstly, what are the influences of education, existing background in a potential immigration country and language knowledge on the migration behaviour of said group? Secondly, based on series of in depth interviews this paper attempt to categorize certain often occurring types of migrants.

2. Theoretical background

First, it is necessary to point out the imprecise terminology used by the general public with regards to migration. The words migrant, economic migrant, refugee or asylum seeker are often confused (Nuscheler 2004). A clear definition is provided by the United nations and indicates that the migrant is someone who lives more than a year outside their home country. Migration, however, denotes not only move outside of peoples' territory, but such cross-

border movement, which implies a longer or even permanent move in the new territory (Štica 2014). For clarification, migration in general distinguishes migrating from a spatial perspective on intranational and international scale, respectively it follows the movement of persons within a territorial unit or outside a territorial unit. In terms of time migration is short and long term, or has permanent nature. To differentiate between the time perspective is quite difficult despite the fact that the UN definition gives the time limit of one year. This viewpoint is also reflected in legislation (Štica 2014). The motives of the migrants are classified as well. Massey et al. (1993) distinguishes these motives on following scale:

- economic - the effort to increase the quality of life for the migrants or their families,
- political and security motives for migration – Stojanov et al. (2006) includes in this category also ethnic and religious migration,
- environmental migrations (causes are the global warming, extreme weather or regular occurrence of pests especially in rural areas, and natural disasters),
- migration caused by social factors (migration after family members).

Finally, there is a distinction of migration by the possibility or impossibility to leave the territory. Thus migration can be on a voluntary basis or forced migration.

On the contrary, Demuth (2000) favours the distinction of voluntary migration and migration forced by circumstances. He perceives voluntary migration in terms of unforced choice to leave a person's home and their environment. This he further divides into work related migration, chain migration (in the sense of leaving for family and relatives) and migration for a better life. At the same time introduces the concept of non-immigration, which refers mostly to an internship or work abroad. Here Stojanov et al. (2006) highlight the need to distinguish between forms of labour related migration. In many cases, according to his conception, this may not represent voluntary migration. The need to secure the family is in a sense migrations forced by circumstances. Likewise, Demuth (2000) highlights the thin line between voluntary and forced migration. In the literature there is also the view that any form of migration contains certain forms involuntariness (Keely 2000; Štica 2014)

The literature also presents us with the terminology of re-emigration. This indicated the return of migrants to the home country and is often confused with the concept of repatriation - ie. the return of migrants to their home countries, but under supervision of the state apparatus. Antonym for the repatriation is the expatriation. The above mentioned indirectly points to the difficulty of studying migration as such. Difficulty to qualify of certain types of migrants is mainly due to the individuality of their decisions, and other external and internal factors that influence their decision. It can therefore be argued that it is an interdisciplinary research above and beyond geography, economics, political science, and sociology that all enters into the issue together with law, demography, ethnography and others.

Drbohlav & Uherek (2007) then note that currently does not exist and probably will not ever exist a theory which would cover all aspects of migration processes. This idea is confirmed by Borjas (1989), who defined following areas for a "super migration model". Firstly, there is the issue of predictions of the direction, size and the build of the migration flows. Secondly, is the issue of assimilation of migrants. How quickly do the immigrants adapt to new cultural, economic, and political conditions? Can a theory describe the migration process in terms of how long should the successful assimilation process take? Finally, the third condition for creating a coherent conceptual theory of migration is, according to Borjas (1989), the answer to the question of what is the impact of immigration on the economy of immigration and emigration countries? Large migratory flows that occur within international

borders lead to significant changes in economic conditions in both the original and the host countries. Also Massey et. al. (1993) stresses the need of not just multidisciplinary but also a multilevel perspective on the issue.

3. Methods

The method chosen to research the migration behaviour of the Visegrad countries young population is an interview. Approximately 40 in depth interviews were conducted in each of the four Visegrad countries (see table 1 for number of interviews).

Table 1: Number of in depth interviews with Visegrad countries young migrants.

Country	Female	Male	Total
Czech Republic	30	34	64
Hungary	27	23	50
Poland	16	23	39
Slovakia	28	25	53

Source: author

Given the intentions to deepen the understanding of what influences the migrants and what types of migrants might be identified, the interview naturally focused on factors of education, language knowledge and existing background in other, possibly immigration, countries. The age group chosen to interview was selected to be between 25 and 35 years of age. This selection is not a random one. This is an age group that has or rather should have acquired working habits and awareness of their price on the labour market. Also, it is one of the groups hardest hit by the economic crisis across the European Union member states. Members of this generation are forced not only to determine the new prices of their work within the market, but they also have to think of diversification of the economic risks. Secondly, this generation quite naturally seeks and is massively induced to do so, work throughout the labour market of the entire European Union. Further the reasoning included the expected social maturity and responsibility to parents and grandparents.

The questions asked of the respondents may be divided into several groups. First, the general information about the respondent including age, sex, education. Second, the question pertaining to migration targeting their experiences, motives, target countries, reasons to migrate. At last the respondents were asked a question with regards to their relationship to national identity, places, and co-expatriates in new countries.

4. Results and discussion

There were 40 interviews conducted in every Visegrad country which after careful analysis yielded the following results. In the case of question of the factors that influence the migration behaviour of the young people from the Visegrad countries, the author expected a major influence of knowledge of the language of the immigration country and already existing background in the country as compared to the migrants' own education status. This reflected

the thesis that knowledge of the language may help the migrant to achieve faster state of relative assimilation and settling the immigration country.

Analysis of in-depth interviews among the migrants from Visegrad countries confirmed this argument only partially. Neither the education nor the knowledge of the language of the target country was of particular importance to the respondents, respectively they did not perceive the language barrier as such. If they could not speak the language of the country or were not preparing to understand it, they relied on another language – mostly English. Most of the young people who have not chosen deliberately a target country, considered the language barrier only afterwards. Conversely, those who deliberately chose the country either prepared in language courses (or as self-taught, downloaded online manuals, etc.), or understood the language to some extent already. The situation changed with bilingual respondents who are largely concentrated on the country of their origin. Either they spoke the language of the country, at least to a limited extent, or they migrated in order to learn that language.

Considering the question of education, it appeared the educational status had to influence on the respondents. Only the respondents from Slovakia confirmed the well-known practice. Many young students chose the Czech Republic due to a better level of education, in their opinion. All of the respondents of that group at the time planned to remain in the Czech Republic. But the fact remains, that most of them would not work on the position at which they had worked in the country of origin.

Question background in the immigration country in the sense of having a family, partner or friends, was solved rather clearly among the respondents. Two-thirds of the respondents have migrated only because of the secured background in the target country in the form of above mentioned family, friends, colleagues or partner. Also, we may include in this category the instances of secured living and other basic facilities provided by the employer. The background helps the young migrant in many aspects. Chief among them are, alongside the accommodation, help with orienting the migrant in the new environment, help with the bureaucracy, and the third most frequent answer was to secure employment.

And how they these contacts abroad to help? The most frequent answers are in the category of accommodation or help with orientation in the new environment, help with the bureaucracy, and the third most frequent answer was to secure employment. In the category of those who migrated, the idea of backgrounds met with great acclaim. The most common argument was the fact that if they want to migrate long ago, regardless of financial means or background.

The second major question posed in the paper is as follows. What are the types of migrants that may be identified based on the interviews concluded? Based on the conducted interviews the author concludes no differences based on the observed age group and geographic category and identified three types of migrants.

For most migrants the prevailing motive is economic (in terms of increasing the living standard by achieving better education, gaining working experience). Economic migrant of this type is the kind of migrant who travelled abroad to acquire education, new knowledge, skills and particularly earning money. They believe that after returning home they will capitalize on the above mentioned and will be offered a higher position than they would have without the abroad experience abroad. These migrants attempt to stabilize their position on the labour market and accumulate financial gain (usually using two jobs) and be promoted to a better-paid position. Adaptation and socialization in the immigration country usually proceeds without a problem, this person is often a member of expatriate associations to build a network of contact. This type of migrant regularly saves up a predetermined amount of money they earned. This group may also include the migrants who migrated to an increase in

professional qualifications (university studies, internship in a foreign company). Their income consists of scholarships as well as financial resources obtained from part time jobs. The funds these migrant accumulated are destined to ensure a better life in their home country.

Apart from the economic motive, there is another one that can be called a search for adventure or search for one's self. Adventurer is a young person who is looking abroad for opportunities to kill boredom and disenchantment of inadequate employment opportunities in their home country. They remain in target country usually for limited time of one year, usually also hold a lower position (fast food vendors, agricultural workers, auxiliary work in the hotel industry) and money they earn are spent on travel or temporary enjoyments (parties, fashion clothes). These migrant do not seek opportunities to improve their grasp of a foreign language, gain new experience, and embrace socio-cultural trends of the new society and socialize in it. They do not proclaim loudly which their home country is, often do not acknowledge it at all but still refuse to fully socialize in the new country. They often rely on parents to be supported financially. Time spent abroad takes a meaning of an extension of student life and carelessness. They do not perceive it as an added value in the form of new knowledge and skills. A common feature was the fact that such a person migrated together with a group of like-minded friends.

An individual category is connected to the migrants who come from mixed families of two nationalities. It seems that their target country is almost always a country with which they have built a stronger emotional bond. They try to create their own value system and find a place in the new society. They often prefer the target country to a great extent. From a social perspective, we can say that create a new identity and even if they return to the country of origin they keep the identity they built in the immigration country. Disillusionment and identity insecurity come at the moment when they realize that even in their destination country they may be perceived as "different due to their mixed background. They regularly deposit financial funds and often send some back to the parents in their home country. Considering this was often the case when they grew up, this presents a natural situation. This is basically a second generation of migrants, who are not sure about their identity and do not want to remain in the country that their parents chose. Repeatedly and for a certain period of time they return to the selected country and attempt to fit in. They are flexible as far as the labour market is concerned and should they remain in the new country they belong to a very successful migrant group. The motivational factors that set them apart are composed of a desire to socialize in a new society and the belief that in the new country they have to succeed.

5. Conclusion

The migration processes are as old as the society itself. In today's aggravated political, economic and social situation, however, they come to the forefront of agenda, be it agenda of the politics, civil society of the academics and their research. While there is no comprehensive all-encompassing migration theory, this paper builds on existing academic definitions and differentiations in migration to try and answer the questions of young people migrating from the Visegrad countries. Firstly, the paper determined that the migrants respond positively to existing backgrounds and are likely to migrate when having one. At the same time the level of attained education and knowledge of language of the target country play a minor role in their decision to migrate. Secondly, there are several types of migrant – the economic migrant, the adventure seeking one and finally a migrant of mixed national origins. These groups have

certain individual characteristics that set them apart and all occur frequently among the young people from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.

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