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### SLOVAK LABOR MIGRATION ABROAD

*The study addresses the issue of workforce migration abroad and the reasons why people migrate for employment purposes as well as the effects of migration on Slovak labor market. The study also attempts to examine the migration barriers for migrants themselves, and how long migrants stay and work abroad. In total, 408 respondents participated in the survey.*

*Keyword: labour migration; reasons for migration; push and pull factors.*

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### ТРУДОВА ЕМІГРАЦІЯ СЛОВАКІВ

*У статті розглянуто проблему трудової міграції з країни, а також причини, через які люди емігрують з метою подальшого працевлаштування, та вплив цих процесів на ринок праці в Словаччині. Також зроблено спробу описати бар'єри в такій міграції та тривалість перебування в трудовій міграції. В авторському опитуванні взяло участь 408 респондентів.*

*Ключові слова: трудова міграція; причини міграції; відштовхуючі та притягуючі фактори. Табл. 8. Літ. 14.*

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### ТРУДОВАЯ ЭМИГРАЦИЯ СЛОВАКОВ

*В статье рассмотрена проблема трудовой миграции из страны, а также причины, по которым люди эмигрируют с целью дальнейшего трудоустройства, и влияние данных процессов на рынок труда в Словакии. Также сделана попытка описать барьеры в такой миграции и длительность пребывания в трудовой эмиграции. В авторском опросе приняли участие 408 респондентов.*

*Ключевые слова: трудовая миграция; причины миграции; отторгающие и притягивающие факторы.*

**Introduction.** Migration is defined in accordance with (Vojtovic, 2013) as a change of residence over a border of a particular territorial unit, movement of population in the area, which is associated with change of residence. Some authors consider the concepts of mobility and migration as identical (Koltan and Machacek, 2001). In our study we use the term "migration". Migration accompanies the development of humanity from its origin. It was part of geographical and economic boom powers, but also it was and still is a result of conflicts and poverty. It has always been and will be a natural strategy on how to improve people's quality of life or gain new experiences and personal growth. It is a common phenomenon that is exacerbated if a labor market does not provide sufficient employment opportunities for people and they are forced to seek these opportunities and higher wages in other countries. "Migration for work abroad has several reasons, but the most fundamental is an economic reason or the lack of vacancies in Slovakia" (Sedlacek, 2015: 121). In Slovakia, immigration is a new issue, as Slovakia is more traditionally the emigration country and in 2014 the number of foreigners represented only 1.4% of population, which is about 59,000 people (SU, 2013). This figure also includes citizens of the EU other members, while the Czechs are the largest group for obvious geographical and historical reasons.

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R. Baldwin (2008) describes migration as free movement of people which has been the basis for European integration since the 1950s. Freedom of movement has both economic and political significance. Causes that lead individual members of society to migrate are different. Migration is so extensive and diverse as a phenomenon that there can't be only one migration theory to explain it. There are several theories which may be linked to each other. Various empirical studies on migration give the right for each of them, because migration causes may differ from one migratory wave to another and from state to state. Migrants can be divided between those who went abroad due to the lack of job opportunities and better salaries abroad, and those who went abroad to live with spouses and families, or simply would like to travel more. We must also take into account the so-called push and pull factors. Push factors are specific negative signs in a country that have adverse effects on workforce (e.g., lack of jobs, low standards of living, low wages). On the other hand, pull factors have positive effects on the workforce and tend to attract labor from abroad (e.g., better social security, free and safe society) (Lee, 1972). P. Stalker (2008) divides migrants into 5 groups: settlers, temporary workers, professionals, unauthorized workers, and finally refugees and asylum seekers.

**The impact of migration on labor market.** Positive migration for a host economy means filling the gaps at the labor market, especially in the areas which are not attractive for local workforce, e.g. healthcare, construction etc. And since the arriving workforce has been already trained, this brings savings to a host economy. The inflow of migrants into a country increases the number of consumers, along with the demand for products and services, followed by overall economic development. Migrants are payers of taxes, fees or levies to budgets of all levels and these payment are usually higher than expenses which the state spends on migrants. In countries with aging population social security issues such new funding is vital because the majority of migrants are of working age. Finally, host economy is enriched with new cultural or other findings which are also the benefit to the citizens of a country gaining newer perspectives on migrants and their lives.

Among the drawbacks posed by migration for a host country there is the fact that competitive labor force from abroad may trigger social turmoil and discontent, which can lead to xenophobia (Kunesova, 2014). Hidden discrimination of foreigners can in some cases lead to decreasing wages. Stricter conditions to obtain work permits can be achieved by the following model: migrants who can get in a host country with higher real wages than in the country of origin, their adaptability is increasing and demands on working environment, standards of living, meals and the use of their qualifications are decreasing. This makes the labor force from abroad more attractive for business but on the other hand, not for institutions protecting domestic labor market. Decreasing unemployment appears to be the positive aspect for outcoming economy as manpower goes abroad. Unless migrants financially support their families in a country from which they originate, it causes increased foreign exchange resources that can be useful for domestic economy development. After migrants are coming back to the country they came from, countries can benefit from these workers with new experiences as well as knowledge. M. Kordos (2013) states that country's productivity can be increased by migrants' investments and the use of their experience. As a negative aspect of migration we can mention the exit of highly skilled workers

from such important sectors as education, healthcare, science and research. As a consequence, there can be a slowdown in economic growth of a country. Migrants who return back usually have their wages demands generally higher. Investment in education of workers does not return in case of their permanent stay abroad. Financial support provided by immigrants to their families can be only temporary.

**Objective and methodology.** The aim of the survey is to identify the push and pull factors in labor migration. As the method for investigation, we used a questionnaire. The survey covered random people of different ages, the key condition was to have working experience abroad. The questionnaire was answered by 408 respondents, of which 224 were women and 184 men. In terms of age, the highest number of respondents was 21–25 years old (191), the least number was 51–55 years old (8). The survey was executed in the period from October–December 2014.

*Table 1. Structure of the respondents by age, authors'*

Age	Respondents	%
15–20	12	3
21–25	189	46
26–30	84	21
31–35	58	14
36–40	13	3
41–45	24	6
46–50	20	5
51–55	8	2

In terms of education, most of the respondents were secondary schools graduates with GCE, the minority were university postgraduates with PhD degree.

*Table 2. Structure of the respondents by education level, authors'*

Education level	Respondents	%
Secondary without GCE	49	12
Secondary with GCE	246	60
Undergraduate	72	18
Graduate	41	10
Postgraduate	0	0

Table 3 shows the destination countries of the respondents, most numerous being UK, Austria and Switzerland. UK (23% of the respondents) became #1 choice because big proportion of the respondents (57%) speaks English and many of them have experience working abroad, additionally this is also a great opportunity to travel to UK to see friends. Regarding Austria and Switzerland the key reason is good location, next to Slovakia, thus, travelling to and from these countries is relatively simple. Countries such as Cyprus, Belgium and Denmark were indicated by respondents as the other possibility.

Table 4 illustrates the respondents' responses to the question what forced them think about working abroad. We can see that the most common cause is the lack of job opportunities (28% of the respondents). This possibility was mainly reported by the 26–30 years old respondents. To improve language skills and an opportunity to travel is preferred by the group of 16–20 and 21–25 years old respondents.

*Table 3. Respondents' target countries, authors'*

Country	%
United Kingdom	23
Austria	19
Germany	16
Switzerland	9
USA	5
Other	19

*Table 4. Reasons for leaving to work abroad, authors'*

	%
Lack of employment opportunities	28
Language skills improvement	22
Work experience	21
Poor financial situation	18
An opportunity to travel	11

To the question what has enriched their lives while working abroad the respondents answered almost equally for each option. The most frequent answer was to improve language skills and financial situation. The age groups of 16–20 and 21–25 years old respondents reported mostly the improvement of language skills, other respondents preferred other options.

*Table 5. Life enrichment after returning from abroad, %, authors'*

	All	Men	Women
Language skills improvement	32	29	35
Financial situation improvement	29	33	25
New work experience	28	26	30
New contacts	11	12	10

When asked what mostly deters migrants from working abroad, most respondents answered family and obligations. Most often this was the response of women under 41 years. The second most frequently chosen option was the lack of experience followed by language barriers.

*Table 6. Migration barriers, %, authors'*

	All	Men	Women
Lack of work experience	16	14	18
Family and obligations	52	51	53
Language barrier	19	20	18
Lack of finance	6	7	5
Bad experience of friends	7	8	6

Working abroad met the expectations of 59% of the respondents, partially disappointed were 32% and 9% of the respondents were dissatisfied. From those answers, we can guess that migrants on the basis of good practice can gain experience abroad, improve their language skills and also financial situation, and this was confirmed further. We were interested how respondents assess the level of service in Slovakia and

abroad. 98% of the respondents rated the level of service abroad better than in Slovakia, 2% were unable to answer. Comparing working conditions in Slovakia and abroad, 84% of the respondents rated foreign working conditions as better ones. They could mark several options, the most frequent ones was higher wage (85% of the respondents) and better working conditions (58%).

*Table 7. Comparison of Slovak services to those abroad, authors'*

	%
Higher wages	85
Better working conditions	58
Employer's approach	37
Benefits	24
Other	14

We wondered for how long the respondents are planning to stay abroad. Being asked if they would be willing to settle down and raise a family in a host country 35% answered "no", 27% said "yes".

*Table 8. Raising a family abroad, %, authors'*

	All	Men	Women
No	35	26	44
Yes	27	37	17
Maybe	38	37	39

**Conclusion.** Migration is one of the most important phenomena influencing and future population development in the world. Migration has a very important role in how to obtain human capital in rapidly aging developed countries. The reasons for migration vary. Migrants can be divided between those who go abroad due to the lack of job opportunities, better earnings possibilities, improving language skills and those who simply would like to travel more.

According to the neoclassical economics approach people migrate due to differences in wages or differences in expected wages. O. Stark and D.E. Bloom (1985) noted that economic motives are still the primary reason for migration including revenue increases as well as their diversification and risks reduction. In our survey 28% of the respondents traveled to work abroad due to lack of jobs at home, 18% – because of poor financial situation overall. Destinations where migrants traveled the most frequently were UK (23% of the respondents), Austria (19%) and Germany (16%). The average gross wage in Slovakia in 2014 was 862 EUR (net wage – 665 EUR), in the UK it was 3,684 EUR (net pay – 2,810 EUR), Austria – 3,548 EUR (net – 2,320 EUR) and Germany – 3,829 EUR (net – 2,315 EUR).

The neoclassical theory can be linked here with the theory of pull and push factors which deals with the motives of migrants to emigrate from a country of origin (push factors) and motives to immigrate (pull factors). "The basis of pull and push model is the claim that everyone is a potential migrant if living conditions elsewhere – particularly those connected with the labor market – are better than in current life spot of a person and migration costs are lower than potential profits accumulated by migration" (Fassmann and Musil, 2013).

Family and the related obligations appear to be the most frequent migration barrier in our survey, however, women more often than men mention this reason. Lack of job opportunities is the most important push factor in migration according to our survey. Other can include the opportunity to travel, obtain new life experience, language skills improvement, higher earnings and better working conditions abroad.

Migration theories can be applied in explaining different types of migration in particular historical periods, in certain geographical regions, but many of them cannot be used exclusively. Therefore, there is no generally accepted theory, as most of them are based on just a one variable. Besides economic variables, other factors are taken into account when deciding to leave the country such as a particular period in human life, especially age and position in the family cycle, socioeconomic factors such as education, income, employment, preferences and values, social networks and familial relationship. Therefore, non-economic sociostructural factors should not remain unnoticed (Haug, 2000) in further research on this important problem.

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