THESIS

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„Should I stay or should I go?”

Migration from Hungary to Western Europe

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Abstract

The aim of my thesis is to explore the current trends regarding migration from Hungary to the more affluent, first world, western European countries. My focus is on mainly young adults aging 18-28. I am interested in the factors affecting the decision making process of working age individuals in the context of the present forces of globalization and economic difficulties. I would like to find out the true nature of social networks affecting the young work force. At the end of this brief research study, the reader will get a general idea of the attributes of East-West migration of Hungarians.

Key words: Hungarian migrants, globalization, cultural capital, Human capital, Push and pull theory, forced migration, voluntary migration
1 Introduction

In 2004, when Hungary became a member of the European Union and later in 2007 became part of the Schengen area, migration became a highly discussed issue in both public and private discourses. These „free” borders and social, economic and political push and pull factors meant a foreseeable increase in the outflow of workforce. From unskilled workers to professionals with lots of experience, moving to a foreign country was more tempting than ever. The unemployed could find a job, and the professional could have a much higher standard of living for the same amount of work.

The reason why I chose this particular topic is because I would like to find out more about the current opinions, standpoints and possible plans for staying or going. I am also interested in this topic because lots of my peers have plans of migrating abroad, and I would like to know if this positive intention is a common thing or not and if it is, what are the possible causes? Exploring the present situation could help us to forecast, to predict the future.

There is a general debate about the new generation of professionals and intellectuals leaving the country after finishing their studies in higher education. This is mostly common amongst doctors and engineers, whom are offered better career opportunities in „the west”. This phenomena is sometimes referred to as the ‘brain drain’. The studies of these young adults was mostly sponsored by the taxpayer’s money, through government scholarships given by the state. In general the public thinks that it’s very unfair as in a way, they are the ones who paid for their degrees and qualifications and therefore leaving the country for building a career is an act of betrayal and selfishness. A shortage of reliable professionals is already a problem for instance in the health care sector, due to the big gap between the salaries between Hungary and for instance Germany.

During my short research on the subject, I will use sociological theories that will guide me along the way. Using these theories enables me to look at the issue from different perspectives and therefore come up with a conclusion that is least biased.
2 Literature Review

The aim of this literature review is to collect and compare important social scientific articles and books about migration intentions and behaviour in Hungary. This “stand alone” review will give the reader a general perspective on important findings about people’s migration habits. In the body of the literature review, I am going to summarise articles regarding my topic. Also last but not least, I will conclude my essay by drawing conclusions and giving a personal opinion on the articles and future research.

Nowadays, migration is a major topic in all spheres of life. The globalising process opened new doors to people on an international level. Local and international migration is not a modern phenomenon, but it is fair to say that the “modern man” is flexible to migrate internally or outside one’s country’s borders, given that certain requirements are met. Economic aspects are the number one factors that prompt individuals to move from one place to another. Social scientists are still actively engaging in research that is exploring migration behaviour.

It is a known problem in Hungary, that the population is declining at a high rate. This is due to a couple of reasons. Firstly, the fertility rate is currently at its all time lowest. In 2010 it was just 1.25 children/ woman, which is lower than that of the Euro Zone (KSH). The aging population is a clear fact and the decline in fertility rates is a general trend in almost all European Union member states. The European commission forecasts that “nearly one third of Europeans will be 65 or over by 2060, in a total EU population of 517 million”. Another reason why the Hungarian population is shrinking is that the freedom of movement, which is a key part of the European Union’s philosophy, encourages people to cross borders towards a more stable life. These international migrants are mostly labour migrants, but there can be various other reasons other than economic, which I will elaborate later. All in all, the population has decreased by 737 000 persons, since 1981 (KSH ).
This graph illustrates the progression of the Hungarian population from 1910 until 2010. We can see very clearly the rate of increases and decreases over time. Historical periods like the two world wars and the revolution of 1956 caused the population to decrease because of the inevitable deaths, escape from political pressure, persecution or mortal danger. Forced migration affected millions over this century. The pursuit of social and financial stability meant that a great number of people, sometimes in big groups, had to leave the country mostly towards the West. The main destination of these refugees was the United States, Canada and Western European states. Migration in Hungary under the communist regime was rather limited. This migration control was present in the whole Communist Bloc. Apart from a „rural-to-urban exodus in the 1950s, spatial mobility was moderate if not meagre” (Paweł Kaczmarczyk, Marek Okólski 2006). However, after the collapse of the Communist
regime in 1989, movement was not restricted as it was before. Economic difficulties and various other reasons led to the outflow of people.

2.1 Theoretical Background

In order to give the reader a deeper insight into the topic I feel I have to define some of the major theories and comprehensive aspects of international migration. It is apparent, that a unified international migration theory does not exist as such. It is composed of „theory-fragments” which were formed in isolation. Economic, sociological or political standpoints have slightly different views based on their distinct approaches to migration related issues. Economic theories, for example, deal with migration as the “mechanism to redistribute labour”: migrants go where wages are higher, and psychological, social, and political motivations are not included. Political views, on the other hand, emphasise that states will protect their “insider” citizens from “outsiders”. Sociological theories deal with cultural and human capital, networks and other elements. Therefore it is virtually impossible to describe the theoretical background of this field of study in a unitary way. For this reason, I would like to deal with this topic from a sociological perspective. (Messina, Lavah 2006)

2.1.1 Globalisation and international migration

In the late 20th century, globalisation „as a new discursive and social order” opened a new era, when the global flow of capital and labour triggers the appearance of „transnational capital” (Melegh 2006). This transnational capital directly stimulates the mobility of workforce. This mobility of workers and companies have different motivations. On the one hand, companies are crossing borders mainly to find cheaper labour and new circles of customers and on the other hand „workers are increasingly prepared to cross borders to find where the best jobs are” (Taylor, 2008).

“Transnational capital appears in “weaker” countries, it establishes niches of global capitalism, while due to transnational links and cultural homogenization created by the
universal consumption patterns migrants start moving to get involved in a new type of transnational movement” (Melegh, 2006).

This map shows patterns of international migration on the entire globe. We can easily identify which are the so-called “sending” countries and which are the “receiving” countries. In the Americas for example: the United States attracts immigrants from the whole continent and is also a preferential destination for Europens and Asians. But most importantly, for my study, it is clear that in Europe the Western countries are the main destination for migrants from the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs).

2.1.2 Social Capital

Concerning the opportunites of people who plan to move to another country, the Social Capital concept is quite feasible. This concept stresses the power of social networks, social relations. In the case of migration, the existence of social relations in the receiving country could be a huge help in the beginning.
2.1.3 Network Theory

The so called Network theory is quite similar to the social capital concept. It states that once the number of migrants reaches a threshold, the expansion of networks reduces the costs and risks of movement which causes the likelihood of migration to rise. Network ties are of kinship, friendship and shared community origin. These ties represent a form of social capital that people can use. Polish immigrants in the United Kingdom are a good example for this phenomenon. Because of the existing Polish networks in big cities like London, individuals or groups of people with migration intentions in Poland have greater chances of finding a job and most importantly a place to live. The initial difficulties of mobility are reduced. (Messina; Lahav, 2006)

It is important to understand the difference between the type of connections or ties an individual has with the receiving country. Social scientists differentiate between „strong ties” and „weak ties”. Mark Granovetter, an American sociologist, argues that weak ties are very crucial for anyone because „individuals with a few weak ties will be deprived of information from distant parts of the social system and will be confined to the provincial news and views of their close friends”. (Granovetter, 1973) Weak ties enable us to have connections with people who are not members of the „closely knit clump of social structure” as us.

2.1.4 Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory incorporates the set of „innate abilities” that an individual accumulates throughout his/her lifetime. The theory suggests that higher ability individuals have higher chances for succeeding at migration because they can „recoup the out-of-pocket costs of migration faster and they may also be more efficient in migrating and adapt more easily to the conditions of the destination country”. Also, better opportunities are available for the high skilled on the international level. Social networks theory says that, „the influence of networks is bound to affect the decision to emigrate”. Social ties are also very important for someone who is considering to move abroad, one can get more accurate
information about the possibilities and also these social networks offer services that eases the process of migration. All in all we can say that „the larger the number of emigrants in an individual’s network, the stronger the intention to emigrate”. (Hendrik, Van Dalen, Henkens 2008)

2.1.5 Reasoned Action Theory

According to the theory of „reasoned action”, which was introduced by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980); intentions are positive predictors of behaviour. (Gordon F. De Jong et al 1985). So, ultimately, a measurement of a given population’s intentions can serve as reliable data when we want to assess the probability of that given population’s future migration behavior. I’ll be using this theory as my main hypothesis and at some point I will discuss to what extent it applied to my case studies in focus.

2.1.6 Push-Pull Theory

This theory can be very well applied in the field of migration studies because it may explain the main driving forces of people. Push and Pull factors are the two forces that affect someone either to migrate or not. Push factors include financial difficulties, lack of opportunities, political instability. In a way, the more push factors a certain region has, the more likely that its inhabitants have migration intentions. Pull factors on the other hand, generally include political stability, a pleasant climate and most importantly, appropriate job opportunities. All in all, the reasons can be classified into four groups:

1. **Economic migration**: Moving to find work or pursue desired career goals which could only be achieved abroad.
2. **Social migration**: Moving because of family reunification or just for a better quality of life.
3. **Political migration**: Moving because of political persecution.
4. **Environmental**: Moving to find security of nourishments and/ or health.
Internationally speaking, a country with lots of negative push factors is called the „sending country”, for example countries from the Balkans, whereas a country with lots of attractive pull factors is called the „receiving country”. Instability, poverty, environmental issues can trigger migration in a certain region or even nationwide as well. It is quite important to differentiate between the push and pull factors of “voluntary migrants” and “forced migrants”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Push</th>
<th>Pull</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour migration</td>
<td>Joblessness, bad working conditions / bad pay</td>
<td>New work / job, better conditions / pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social migration</td>
<td>Family ties, separation</td>
<td>Family reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-migration</td>
<td>Study and research, special qualifications abroad, job-related foreign assignment</td>
<td>Special conditions for study and research, research area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic migration</td>
<td>Sinking living standards / poverty, general situation of poor countries</td>
<td>Social stability / affluence, example of rich countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voluntary Migration: Push and Pull Factors (Demuth, 2000)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Push</th>
<th>Pull</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political refugee (GC)</td>
<td>Political persecution</td>
<td>Freedom / survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Political / civil war) Refugees (GC and de facto)</td>
<td>Religious / ethnic conflicts, persecution, xenophobia, human rights violations</td>
<td>Safety and freedom from persecution, human rights abuse, or generally from violent conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Civil) War refugees (de facto refugees)</td>
<td>War, mortal danger</td>
<td>Safe Haven: survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental refugees, refugees from famine</td>
<td>Heavy environmental damage, drought, hunger, health risks</td>
<td>Safe Haven: security of nourishments and / or health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘betterment migrants’ / ‘economic refugees’</td>
<td>Endangered basic needs / poverty</td>
<td>Social stability / securing survival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Forced Migration: Push and Pull Factors (Demuth, 2000)

There are a number of negative aspects to this methodological approach. One would be that the factors which are listed in the tables may not always be objective. For example; bad working conditions can be perceived differently by various people. Individual perception matters when considering causal influences. This means that push and pull factors can be used effectively on the individual level (Demuth, 2000)

2.1.7 Cumulative causation theory

In addition to the development of networks, there are other processes that make additional movement more and more likely over time. If there is already flowing migration, each act of migration creates a new situation which makes migration even easier. The distribution of income is one such factor: the money sent home by emigrant workers creates income differences between households in home countries, and this encourages more and more people to go abroad as well.
Also, a “culture of migration” can develop, which contains sets of norms, expectations and informations. If an individual experiences better standard of living, new tastes abroad, they are more likely to return or to stay permanently. It is also usual that family members follow fathers/ husbands abroad. If many people migrated from a country, this becomes part of the repertoire of behaviours. Others will be more likely to see themselves as successful migrants too. Migrating can become a rite of passage for young men (and women too). (Messina; Lahav, 2006; Morawska, 2009)

2.1.8 Social labeling theory

This theory describes that when the proportion of immigrant workers grows in a certain job, it becomes labeled as an „immigrant job“. „Local” residents of countries then refuse to take up these, and the demand for immigrants will grow. A stigma gets placed on these types of work. The nature of the job does not matter, for example, car manufacturing is seen as an „immigrant job” in Europe but is „native job” in the United States. (Messina; Lahav, 2006)

2.1.9 Structuration theory

A „structuration theory” aims to integrate several mechanisms that influence migration, namely macro-level societal structures, local conditions, and migrants’ personal motivations and purposes. Some of these elements have been mentioned above but will be revisited here. Structuration theory shows how „structural and agentic processes” combine and strengthen each other. For example, the „culture of migration” is both a cause and an effect of migration.

On the highest level, the factors that facilitate international migration nowadays are: technological advancement, which makes the flow of information and travelling faster, and the universal recognition of human rights, the right to free movement among them. International treaties also guarantee some rights for migrants/ refugees. In the capitalist world-system, there are „core” countries in the North-West and the „compass of push and pull factors” points towards them from the „periphery” of the South-East.
On the level of countries, advanced „core” economies offer jobs on their labour markets, and in underperforming „periphery” countries, there is a stratum of well educated people who can hope to emigrate successfully. Country policies can often influence migration, e.g. limits can be placed on the number of immigrants accepted from a region or country. (This is now largely harmonised in the European Union and movement is free between member states.) As can be seen, the state is an important actor in influencing migration.

Often, the collapse or restructuring of a country’s political or economic system is a cause for substantial emigration. For example, the massive layoffs following the transition from Communism to market economy in Eastern Europe accelerated migration to the West. This was the consequence of the appearance of multinational companies and the integration into the world capitalist system. Similarly, military intervention in a country will generate an outflow of migrants.

On the local level, factors such as job opportunities, social services (education, health, etc.), public safety, environmental quality and others can influence migration decisions.

As for individual („agentic”) decisions concerning migration, socioeconomic position, human capital, gender, race, and geographic position are influential. There is a „habitual” component which refers to the „entrepreneurial spirit” that is necessary to take the risk of migration. This is dependent on education level, skills, age, family and marital status also (e.g. married people with children migrate less often). The other, „practical” component means the assessment of risks and benefits of migrating.

A so-called „bend-the-rules” mentality which was typical in Eastern European countries during communism is a good tool for migrants abroad. They expect that they can live and work there even illegally, exploiting the loopholes in host-country economic and political structures.

Sometimes migration can reverse. For example, the economic crisis in the UK made many Polish workers return to their home country after 2008. And when Kosovo declared its independence, migration to Germany slowed down and many people returned. (Morawska, 2009)
2.2 Incorporating immigrants

There are different responses to immigration, broadly one of assimilation and another of multiculturalism. „Assimilation is the process whereby immigrants and their descendants become increasingly similar to the majority population in their patterns of cultural, economic, or political behaviors and perspectives.” Assimilation was encouraged by many Western governments by making citizenship laws more relaxed. Assimilation can also be voluntary. In the US, the „melting pot” model was followed, in which native and immigrant cultures produce a new national culture.

„Multiculturalism implies the near equal coexistence of different cultures within a given society.” This can happen when governments give equal value to immigrants’ cultures to that of the so-called majority group. The UK, France, Germany were considered multicultural countries.

However, there is a considerable hatred towards immigrants in many countries. When “insiders” see that foreigners bring in unfamiliar cultural and religious practices, they find this threatening and react with xenophobia, hatred of the stranger. In many countries targeted by immigration, anti-immigrant movements and parties appeared after the 1970s. (Messina; Lahav, 2006)

2.3 Magyar Ifjúság 2012 (Hungarian Youth 2012)

The „Magyar Ifjúság 2012” is a study conducted amongst the young generation aging from 15 to 29. The larger sample of 8000 respondents can be considered representative. This data helped researchers to find out about various aspects of the life of teenagers – young adults. These aspects include work, education, free time, but most importantly for me, mobility. The extensive questionnaire is intended to reveal the causes and background of the decision making regarding mobility. Mobility obviously can be both negative and positive. This is
highly influenced by a person’s network of individuals and the apparent push-pull factors in a given space and time. The reason why it is necessary to do these kind of studies on the youth is because this way we can see the changes that occur in comparison to older generations.

This study is actually the 4th extensive study that has been focusing on primarily youth. When it comes to the analysis of data regarding migration, we can discover some gaps in information. Due to measuring error and the fact that international migrants do not announce their migration intentions, data is limited and therefore can be difficult to analyse. Because of the limited resources, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) has launched a project called SEEMING in order to provide eligible data on international migrants.

The focus for the „Magyar Ifjúság 2012” was „willingness to migrate” and „attitude”. They aimed to find out the factors which prompt mobility and those which inhibit it. All in all, they have found out that more than half of the youth (52%) would leave the country for studying or work compared to the 34% who wouldn’t. Age and marital status are very dominant factors. Younger and single individuals tend to have higher proportion of migration intentions.

2.4 Migration Ban

In 2013, a new law was accepted by the Hungarian Parliament. This law is intended to stop the outflow of freshly graduated students. There were multiple protests by student organisations against this migration ban which only resulted in negotiations between decision makers and representatives of student organisations, but not the cancellation of the policy. There were different versions of this law and at the end a mutual agreement was born.

The law requires students enrolling in higher education using state scholarship, to sign statement that lists the duties of those who utilize the scholarship. The most important part of this „contract” is that the individuals enrolling in state funded education are obliged to work in Hungary for at least the time of their studies (at first it was double the time of
their studies). So, for example, an engineer studying for 3-5 years has to work 3-5 years in Hungary. (Index, Nol)

2.5 Issues in the European Union

In the European Union, the citizens of new member states gained full rights to live and work in old member states only gradually. For example, Bulgarians and Romanians received full rights to live and work in the UK from January 1 2014. At the end of 2013, the British Prime Minister David Cameron made a speech about restricting social benefits of immigrants. László Andor, the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, responded that Cameron was “hysterical” and did not tell the “full truth”. He claimed that for example, Polish migration, which was even bigger than expected, benefited the UK economy.

Nigel Farage, leader of the UK Independence Party, said he did not think Cameron really wanted to restrict migrants. “Under his proposal somebody can come here on January 1 from Romania and within 12 weeks be entitled to unemployment benefit. I think that's outrageous” he said. This is relevant because lots of people migrated to the UK, mostly London, from Hungary as well. (The Telegraph)

3 Methodology

The whole research is based on two distinctive methodological perspectives. The reason for applying more than one perspective is because I believe that my topic can only be understood by examining it from various standpoints which I will further elaborate on in this segment. There are obviously strengths and weaknesses in respect of my decision, but ultimately it will be worth doing in the end. Its indisputable strength lies in the variety of information gained according to different methodologies. On the other hand, its weakness
could be the added complication when it comes to analysing the results in a cumulative manner.

The two methodological perspectives that I have chosen, in no particular order of importance are; Interpretive and Critical. An interpretive approach provides a deep insight into “the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it. Interpretive research assumes that reality is socially constructed and the researcher becomes the vehicle by which this reality is revealed. This approach is consistent with the construction of the social world characterised by interaction between the researcher and the participants. The researcher’s interpretations play a key role in this kind of study bringing “such subjectivity to the fore, backed with quality arguments rather than statistical exactness” (Andrade 2009)

Thus I have choosen to use an interpretive approach, because I think, that qualitative data is needed to find out more about the situation on a micro level. Deep interviews can point out the trends on a personal level, which of course could be used later to make general statements of the whole population in question. As a matter of fact, qualitative data takes more time and effort to analyse, but I am sure it is something that is worth doing. I adopted a critical methodological perspective because for the study of any social movement it is a good idea to view everything from a distance, in order to find commonalities and differences.

“Critical research” is not a tidy, clearly defined category of research but represents many different types of research. Broadly, ‘critical’, in line with its Marxist roots, is a term that is used to identify approaches that challenge taken-for-granted norms and aim to expose structures of power and domination. It, therefore, assumes that there are ‘dominated’ or ‘marginalised’ groups whose interests are not best served by existing societal structures”. (University of Strathclyde, undated)

It is absolutely important to carry out any kind of research of scientific value, in accordance with fundamental rules and regulations, concerning the basic procedures and requirements. When working with people and especially strangers, it is a must to set up certain conditions which enable the individual to be fully relaxed about his/her answers
regarding personal opinions. In other words, certain ethics need to be applied. For my own research, I use the Code of Ethics that is approved by the International Sociology Association (ISA). This code of ethics describes how a legitimate scientist, in this case sociologist, should carry out a research. Some of its parts can be linked with the CUDOS model which was put forward by famous American Sociologist; Robert K. Merton. In brief, the main message that the ISA Code of Ethics or even the CUDOS model conveys is a general unbiased, transparent and clearly defined methodology that is accepted by the scientific community.

It is also crucial to always make sure that our research will cause no harm and will not violate any personal rights. Anonymity is very important in any research. I clarified the aim of the study to every single participant of my research. In order to avoid any future misunderstandings or complications in relations to the data provided by the participant, I asked them to sign an Informed Consent form that serves as „contract of trust”. I plan to contribute to this field of study with my own results and conclusions, and therefore the conformation of these methods is fundamental.

As far as my actual research methods are concerned, I utilise more than one method, which is a consequence of my decision to apply more than one methodological perspective. For the purposes of presenting the major works done in this field of study, I made a literature review. In this review of the literature I collected books and articles from the most relevant authors on migration in general and migration in the region of interest, namely Central-Eastern Europe and Western Europe.

It is vital for me to have both qualitative and quantitative data for my analysis. Getting these two types of data requires the application of two distinct methodological approaches. To get my qualitative data I use semi-structured interviews. For these interviews I use an interview guide, which is essentially a list of questions that I want my interviewees to answer, but of course other questions may come to the surface and I might choose to neglect some of my questions. In essence, I take advantage of the situation and personalise the flow of the interview to get the most interesting and usable information as I can. Selecting the appropriate participants for the interview was a fundamental task to do with care for any research. In my case, interviewees were chosen through personal ties.
To obtain quantitative data on the other hand, I make use of the possibilities given by the internet. I set up an on-line survey on one of the biggest social networking websites. The reason why I use this method is because usually a decent amount of data can be acquired in a considerably short period of time, by creating a short but effective survey which can be reached with ease. The survey itself consists mostly of short, closed ended questions to make it easy on the respondants.

Thus my research methods can be described as mixed. A mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem (Creswell 2003)

4 Qualitative data analysis

For gathering qualitative data, I have conducted 4 interviews. The interviewees were selected based on their academic background, because I believe that one’s highest academic attainment is a key factor in the decision making process regarding migration. For the purposes of anonymity, I use fictitious names throughout my entire analysis. All four interviewees are males, because I wanted to focus on the male decision making process considering the limited magnitude of this study. The participants are my acquaintances, but not my closest friends.

For the interviews, I have created an interview guide, which is just a list of questions that I thought would be important to get the answers I aimed to obtain. In general the interviews lasted about 15-20 minutes because I stuck to the interview guide questions very strictly. I was just generally interested in the personal opinions of the interviewees regarding their interest in my subject, the scope of their personal network involved in international migration and evidently their own intentions for the future.

It is also important to mention that two interviews were done in English the other two in Hungarian. For those who did not speak English, I translated the questions listed in
the interview guide. All the interviewees are native Hungarians living in Veszprém and Budapest.

The interview guide consists of 15 short questions in total. These questions focus on general issues like the government’s action taken against the outflow of the workforce, and also more personal questions like the ones which were aimed to get knowledge about the experience and intentions of the interviewee. I actually slightly modified my research question before the interview from „What is the general opinion of people aged between 18-26 about the more and more debated topic of migration from Hungary to the West?” to „What is general opinion and intentions of people aged 18-28 related to the more and more debated topic of migration from Hungary to the West?”. I added intentions, because I had a few questions that are related to it.

My main motive was to discover the opinions related to migration and find out possible mobility plans of teenagers and young adults. I assumed that my topic should not be difficult to talk about for the interviewees, because it is a very popular subject nowadays. The majority of the representatives of my age group in focus have some sort of experience or opinion regarding the general questions and personal questions as well.

4.1 Interviewees

In this section, I would like to introduce the participants of the interviews to the reader. As I mentioned before, I will use fictitious names during the analysis.

Gergő is 24 years old and he studies engineering in Sopron. He will graduate this year so that is why I wanted to get to know about his opinions on migration and his intentions. It is quite well known that freshly graduated engineers have a high chance in countries like Germany or the U.K. to find employment which of course can offer a higher wage than those in Hungary.

Péter is 25 years old and plans to study engineering in the Netherlands. He attended an IT University here in Hungary, but towards the end he could not finish it and decided to
learn something else instead. He lived abroad before, so he has the experience that the other three interviewees don’t. He speaks English at a high level so that is why he decided to study and start a career abroad.

Norbert is 22 years old now and works as a CNC operator in a small factory. He did not enroll in higher education after finishing high school. The reason I chose him for the interview is because he represents the young skilled workers who did not choose to continue studying after the baccalaureate, but instead decided to learn a profession and start working at a relatively young age instead. I was curious about his thoughts on migration because, I have had heard lots of stories of these young skilled workers leaving the country for mainly short periods of time.

Gábor, my last interviewee, is about to finish an apprenticeship and start working as a mechanic. He has a big advantage in finding work because his father is also a mechanic and has a small workshop. Because of this, it seems like he has a secure place at home and may not be tempted to migrate, at least not because of economic reasons.

4.2 Interview Findings and Analysis

The very first thing that I have asked from my interviewees is their general opinion on the „recent migration phenomenon in Hungary“. I just wanted to get a general idea about their relation to the topic. According to Gergő, this whole phenomenon „is just a big hype, this is blown up by the media“. Norbert on the other hand suggested that the reason why migration is such a major topic in the media or in public talk is that there are „more and more positive feedbacks from the people...there are more opportunities, more money“.

When I asked them about the possible reason behind migration, I mostly got similar answers. According to Gergő: „money is a big reason. I think that’s the main motor of this thing“. Better quality of life, more job opportunities was mentioned by Norbert. Péter also emphasised „economic reasons, individual life“, and he added that „lots of people cannot sponsor a stable, sustainable individual life“. According to him, a young individual has higher chances of starting a separate life from their parents and create his/her existence.
Péter mentioned that „Family reasons, work, and a hope for a better future in general” are the main reasons behind international migration.

It is never very obvious what can be considered „forced migration” and „free movement”. I was interested in the respondents opinion on this issue. Norbert said that „No one is forcing people to work abroad. It is everyone’s own decision.” and then I asked him about his opinion on people who are long-term unemployed or who have accumulated too much debt. He responded by saying „If someone wants to work, they will find employment. Probably not in the position or wage which is expected.” According to Péter, migration is an „independent choice” and that „unemployment does not necessarily force someone to migrate”. As far as Gergő is concerned, migration is „not forced”. He added „I have friends working abroad and none of them were forced to go out. It was their wish. So, I don’t think that it is forced. I don’t think even politics can do anything about this”. Gábor said that migration is „free” but there are a number of influencing factors like „unstable jobs or if someone cannot sustain life from salary”.

Consequently I asked them about their own intentions of moving to a Western European country. Gábor said „Not momentarily because I have a job, and I see the future (as an entrepreneur)” On the other hand, Norbert has definite mobility plans „but the level of my language is not sufficient”. Péter too is thinking about taking his chance abroad, more precisely in the Netherlands because its a „nice opportunity” and in general there are „better options”. He has specific goals, specifically to go to a Technical University to study engineering. Gergő has absolutely no intentions of working/living abroad.

Subsequently I was questioning them on their friends, relatives or family members who are considering to go abroad. I was curious if there was a relationship between the personal intentions/plans and private network. „Yes, I have younger friends, they are mainly out for easy money and having fun, but I have older friends to and they are there mainly for the money and also my mother was working abroad too, she was working in Austria for a year.”- said Gergő. Péter too answered positively and said that he has some of his friends working in Germany. Norbert knows „lots of people” living/ working abroad. Mostly in „Austria and the U.K.” They are in their 20s – 30s and single. He also added that there are „more and more positive feedbacks” from them. Gábor answered that he has got some
friends and acquaintances living abroad. Principally in Austria and Germany, and mainly with family.

There are undoubtedly positives and negatives related with every big decision concerning one’s life. Hence it is evident that decisions with regard to mobility and more importantly for me, international migration has got its benefits and drawbacks but clearly these factors can be subjective and objective. Norbert highlighted „missing the family, not being treated as others [native citizens] and language boundaries” as the most apparent negative aspects of the life in a foreign country. I immediately asked what he meant by „not treated as others” to which he answered „There are some places where migrants are not really welcome”. Gergő reinforced Norbert’s opinion by saying „the first possible conflict is the language, if you can’t speak well then you will have conflicts with other people”, he added that „The second may be the traditions. You come from a country, you bring your own traditions and the other country just don’t like it.” I asked him if Hungarian individuals were capable of coping with these possible conflicts, to which he responded by saying „Well, I think yes, because I think our tradition fits in the other European countries’ traditions. And, if you just mention the biggest thing, the religion, we are Christians and that is the case in most European countries so, I don’t think that coping with conflicts should be a problem”. Furthermore, Péter pointed out one might „feel alone in the beginning” and that „language, cultural differences and dissimilar food” might be negatives or challenges that mostly a newly arrived immigrant or group of immigrants has deal with. Finally, Gábor further stressed the language difficulties that might arise and he also added that the „place of residence” might be difficult to find or would be just too expensive.

Moreover, I was interested in their opinions regarding the possible conflicts that could emerge between residents of the host country and the newcomer immigrants. „I haven’t heard really bad things so far” – said Norbert. On the contrary Péter indicated that in certain cases the „country where the immigrant is from is not liked” and also that „racial groups” can be „criticised”. Gábor reinforced Péter’s answer by saying „There are some nationalities that are not very welcome”. Gergő on the other hand, emphasised that differences in tradition could result in conflicting situations.
Apparently, economic reasons are the main motives of international migration from Hungary to Western European countries, so in reality money is the primary motor of this „cross-border” mobility. I wanted to know from my interviewees if there are any other temptations for individuals to build a career abroad. Gábor drew attention to the fact that „quality workers are needed” abroad and that they have better career possibilities in countries like in Germany. He referred to Hungarian welders who, according to him, have a good reputation for being very professional, even abroad. Norbert said that „Exploring other cultures, more modern tools or better job experience” are some of the pull factors that could attract workers besides the evident higher standard of living.

To get a general picture of their plans for the future I asked them to tell me where they see themselves in five years from now. I have already asked them about their migration intentions, but I still wanted to get a more specific description of their plans. Gergő, who previously said that he wouldn’t consider moving abroad said that he sees himself „at home, building a career”. I asked him: What would be the major cause that would change this decision towards migration? He answered: „If the enterprise will not succeed”. Norbert, who has very positive migration plans said that in five years he wants to go to either Austria or the Netherlands. Péter also wants to study and work abroad, more precisely, in the Netherlands. So, ideally in five years from now he will have found employment as an engineer. Last but not least, Gergő has no intentions at all to work/live abroad. He plans to work in Hungary and he is not easily tempted by the „pull factors” of Western European countries because he is absolutely satisfied with what his home country has to offer.

In order to be able to work abroad, the knowledge of foreign language, at least on basic level, is absolutely crucial. People who move to a foreign country without any knowledge of the language, can feel absolutely alien. Gábor, who intends to build his career at home, has positive goals towards language learning. He wishes to learn German and English on a higher level. „German language is the plan” – said Norbert. Péter already speaks English on a higher level so he desires to learn Japanese because he wants to travel there in the future for a vacation and he is generally interested in Japanese culture.
The next topic was the role of government in the prevention of the outflow of the workforce and especially the young workforce. In Gergő’s opinion „Yes, it's the government's responsibility, but not just the government's, because...well, the government can't create workplaces so easily”, I don't know. This is a very long process and it's impossible to make young educated people stop going abroad for work”. Péter also agrees that its the government’s responsibility to keep the labour force within the borders, but he also added that the new taxes for those who work abroad are too strict and are actually „pushing people out”.

5 Online survey

In order to get quantitative data for my analysis, I made an online survey. The power of these online survey generator sites is that, it is very convenient to accumulate and analyse data quickly. I set up the questionnaire in a way that it is clear and does not take too much time to complete. I used „Facebook” as my medium. This has positive and negative aspects. The positive is obviously its convenience and the negative side is that the respondents are limited considering that only my acquaintances could see it.

Altogether, there were 30 respondents which is nowhere near statistically significant, but at least it gives the reader a general picture of the situation. It is important to note that I did not set an age limit, but still 76% of the respondents still fell into my age category of interest. As far as gender is concerned there is a marginal difference between the proportion of the respondents. I have made hypotheses in relation to the answers I will generally get. It turns out that in most of the cases my assumptions were right but in some instances I was absolutely incorrect.

The majority of the respondents are still students or have just entered into the labour market. 73% of them speak one or more foreign language at least at an intermediate level. This suggests that language should not be an issue that would hold them back from living in a foreign country.
Only 20% of the respondents claimed that they don’t really care about migration, which creates the impression that the majority, in one way or another, have definite opinions about mobility plans and in general about international migration.

A very important aspect of the whole survey was the question in respect to „highest educational attainment”. All in all, the proportions are rather balanced. 33% of the respondents already finished a course in higher education, 36% have graduated from high school and the rest finished apprenticeship or some sort of vocational school.

93% of them think that the main drive of migration is economic and only 2 people think that the fundamental mobility incentive is stimulated by political reasons. Over 2/3 think that it is the government’s task to keep the workforce, the taxpayers within the borders and stop them leaving the national labour market. This means that essentially migration is driven by economic and political factors. Economic migration refers to the group of labour migrants which includes people from highly educated professionals to members of the working class and often referred to as „guest workers”.

As far as the present governmental activities to stop the outflow of the young workforce are concerned the results are somewhat diffuse. 1/3 of the respondents are satisfied with the present situation, 1/3 think that actions should be more strict and the rest thinks that it should be alleviated. I gave here the example of the „Röghöz Kötés” (Migration Ban) as a reference. Older and less educated individuals tend to think that this migration ban, which limits the freedom of students enrolling in state funded higher education, and other actions are justified, but with respect to current circumstances, need to be more strict. On the other hand, younger and more educated persons tend to be against these restrictive measures and would like the regulations to be less strict.

Next I wanted to know their satisfaction with the current political situation. I was not curious of their political affiliation because it is in general very rude to ask questions of that nature even though it is an anonymous questionnaire. One third of the respondents are absolutely dissatisfied with Hungarian politics. All in all, 93% gave a rating of 3 or less out of 5 (where 1 signalled „absolutely dissatisfied” and 5 „absolutely satisfied”). These results indicate that in general there is a high level of dissatisfaction with politics. People who
answered with only 1 out of 5 all finished secondary or tertiary education and their average age is 22.8 years. This indicates, that mostly young and educated. This correspondence shows that absolute dissatisfaction with politics can be seen amongst the younger generation.

Subsequently, I inquired how happy/satisfied people are in general on scale of 1-5. 83% answered with 3/5 and 4/5, but no one answered with 5/5. This means, that respondents are reasonably content, but obviously happiness has so many factors that it would be a mistake to explain it with one single cause, like economic performance or unemployment for instance. I found that there is no positive relationship between age, gender or political opinion and level of happiness. However 83% of those people who gave a rating of 2 out of 5 or below live in Budapest, and 66% of them finished tertiary education. This might be explained with the difficulties of finding employment which is connected to the degree of the individual or just a general hardship of finding a stable job because of the still ongoing recession which can be felt in all spheres of the labour market.

The following couple of questions focused on the personal network of friends, acquaintances and family that have mobility plans for the future or have already had experience with international migration. It turns out that 86% of the respondents have acquaintances, friends or family members who plan to migrate internationally in the future. In 70% of the answers the reasons for the mobility plans is economic and in 20% is educational. 87% of the respondents personally know people who live abroad at the moment. The proportion of reasons for migration is almost identical as in the previous question. 30% of the respondents have already stayed abroad for more than 12 months. In 82% the reason was economic. From those people who have not lived abroad for more than 12 months, 52% would not like to migrate and 48% would consider to move into a Western European country.

I also wanted to know which are the favourite countries for living. I have listed 14 Western European countries which the respondents had to rate from 1 to 5 (where 1 meant that people would not consider to live in that particular country and 5 meant that people would love to live in that country). On the first three places are: Switzerland (4.29/5), Sweden (3.64/5), United Kingdom (3.57/5). As according to the answers given to the
previous questions, the main motives of migration are economic, my hypothesis was that economically stable countries would be the primary destinations. I thought that rich countries would top the list and as it turns out, I was right. The top three countries by Hungarians would be described as „affluent”. Principally Switzerland is seen as an economically strong and stable country where the average salary is multiple times higher than what Hungarian employers offer. This and various other pull factors, like the beautiful landscape, mean that Switzerland is the most attractive destination for those who are considering to work and live abroad.

Finally, 77% of the respondents think that in the next 5 years, the rate of migration will increase, 17% consideres that it will remain about the same and the rest assumes that it will decrease.
6 Conclusions

The primary aim of this thesis, from the very beginning, was to show the recent trends in international migration related discourses and to discuss the key theoretical and historical background of this field of research. In this final part I would like to highlight the key findings of the mixed methods research and I would also like to present my personal opinions regarding future policies and the topic in general.

The mixed methods approach that I used to get data for analysis proved to be very effective indeed. Analysing both sets of data, I have found in the literature that I have gathered for this study is in correspondence with my results. Migration is a common topic between young individuals who are at the beginning of their careers. It is also clear that the formation of migration intentions is influenced by many factors. The main motives of international migrants from Hungary to Western Europe are economic. Strong and stable economies of the „West” are very strong pull factors for people from skilled workers and professionals. It is also clear that, positive feedbacks in the ego network have a decisive role in the individual’s migration behaviour.

As far as future policy is concerned with regard to international migration from Hungary to Western Europe or other parts of the world for that matter. I think that politicians should encourage the youth to work in Hungary. Policies in general should not be restrictive because in my belief, restrictions and prohibitions are not always achieving what they are should. For example the migration ban (which is unique in the European Union) is not the route that policy makers should not take. On contrary, the government should focus on creating jobs and developing an economy that is favorable for possible employees. So in my opinion providing secure jobs with living wage and a more „liveable” environment could be the answer for the loss of employees or potential employees. Because, I have learned during this study that people do not migrate because they find pleasure in it. Mostly they cross borders to find employment in „rich” First World countries such as Switzerland, Sweden and the U.K. International migration is merely a financial decision for the majority.

With reference to a critical theory approach it can be seen that these young people have been come to accept a need to migrate and be flexible in an international labour
market. However, this flexibility may come at a price in terms of low wages and having to step down the career ladder in terms of their aspirations. This is indeed why a neoliberal order favour the free movement of labour. In order to prevent a downwards spiral of living standards what must young workers do? The dilemma is that I have stated I do not believe in restriction and prohibition so how can the ‘circle be squared’ – as young workers head west and as they face innumerable hardships what is important is that they reflect on the nature of the system that forces they into actions often at odds with the level of their training and qualifications – from reflection will come awareness and from awareness action will come. I am at the start of such a journey myself and the answers to these questions are only now starting to form in my mind – what is clear for me is that neoliberalism must be tamed but capitalism can and should be reformed and the key to this change will be critical awareness and a revival in forms of solidarity.

There are still big gaps in literature and the analysis of migration data is limited. I believe that this thesis could be expanded by accumulating bigger sets of data. Also, the collaboration with the Central Statistical Office and projects such as: SEEMING and Magyar Ifjúság, could result in a broad picture of the trend sin international migration.
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Appendices

Interview Guide

Gender?

Date of Birth?

Place of residence?

Highest educational attainment?

1: What is your general opinion on the recent migration phenomenon in Hungary?

2: What do you think is the reason for migration becoming such a highly discussed issue nowadays?

3: What could be the possible reasons, in your opinion, for people leaving the country?

4: Do you think that migration is „forced” or it is totally dependent on the individual?

5: Are you personally interested in moving to a Western European country?

6: Do you have friends, relatives or family members who are considering to go abroad?

7: What are your thoughts on the possible negative aspects of moving abroad?

8: What are the possible conflicts that might arise with the individual and the foreign community?

9: What would be the main motive for you to choose to build your career abroad?

10: In the next 5 years, where do you imagine yourself?

11: Do you speak or plan to learn any foreign language?

12: Which Western European country appeals to you the most, and why?

13: What is your opinion on the government’s action against the outflow of workforce?

14: Do you think that it is the government’s responsibility to keep its labour force from migration?

15: Do you see an increase or decrease in migration from Hungary to the west in the future?
Questinnaire (Original language: Hungarian)

I study Sociology at the Corvinus University of Budapest. My thesis is on the East-West migration from Hungary to Western Europe. Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

1. Gender?
   - Male
   - Female

2. Year of Birth?

3. Place of Residence?

4. Highest educational attainment?
   - Elementary School/ Apprenticeship, Vocational school/ Secondary school/ Gymnasium/ Accredited post-secondary school/ College/ University

5. Do you speak one or more foreign languages on intermediate level?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Are you concerned with the topic of migration?
   - Yes, very
   - Yes
   - Sometimes
   - Not really
What do you think are the main motives for migration?

- Economic
- Educational
- Political
- Religious
- other

Do you think that it is the government’s responsibility to stop the workforce from migration?

- Yes
- No

In your opinion, should policies related to the outflow of workforce be more strict or less strict? (Eg. Migration Ban)

How satisfied are you with the Hungarian political situation? 5= Fully 1=Not at all

How happy do you feel yourself in Hungary? 5=Absolutely 1=Not at all

Do you have friends, relatives or family members who are planning to migrate abroad?

- Yes
- No

If yes: Reasons for migration?

- Economic
- Educational
- Political
- Religious
- other
14
Do you have friends, relatives or family members who are currently living abroad?
- Yes
- No

15
If yes: Reason for migration?
- Economic
- Educational
- Political
- Religious
- other

16
Have you stayed abroad for more than 12 months?
- Yes
- No

17
If yes: Reasons for stay?
- Economic
- Educational
- Political
- Religious
- other

18
If no: Do you plan to migrate in the near/ far future?
- Yes
- No

19
Rate the following countries from 1 to 5. 1 star: not at all, 5 stars: with pleasure

Germany, Austria, France, U.K., Ireland, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Finnland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Neatherlands, Belgium,
Will the outflow of people increase or decrease in the next 5 years?

- Increase
- It will be the same as now
- Decrease
Title of Study: „Should I stay or should I go?”: Migration from Hungary to Western Europe
Conductor: Harcsa Krisztián

Purpose of Study
The goal of this study is to highlight the general trends of migration intentions and migration behaviour amongst the age group of 18-28. Finding relevant data through deep interviews and an online survey may add to the already existing research projects conducted in this field of study. Through your participation in this study, I will be able to compare opinions of individuals on the topic of migration and ultimately come up with a conclusion that is representative of the target population. This research will be potentially helpful for future professors at Oklahoma City Community College as they create the best atmosphere for student learning. By participating in this research study, you are also helping the progress in this field.

Protection of Confidentiality
Your confidentiality is essential to me and as a matter of fact, to all my fellow classmates carrying out scientific research projects. It is guaranteed that your name will remain anonymous throughout the entire research process. I will be using fictitious names during the analysis of the answers to the interview questions. Any participant of this study can be sure that his/her identity will not be revealed and no information provided will be exploited outside of the boundaries of the study.

Voluntary Participation
The participation in the study is completely voluntary. If you decide to reject at any point of the research study you are absolutely free to do so. If you choose withdraw your participation you can be sure that any information from you, will be disregarded from the study, and thus your protection of confidentiality is assured.

Contact information
If you have any concerns about any parts of the interview or just want to get more information about the study, feel free to contact me via e-mail at kriszmalev@freemail.hu or by mobile phone at 06308252336.

Consent
I have read and fully understood the outline of the study and its procedures. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Date: 2014__________________

Name: __________________________

Signature: ______________________