International Labour Migration: Students Viewpoint

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There are around 200 million people - about three percent of the world’s population living in a country not of their birth (Centre for Global Development (2008)). Economic systems that have failed to provide for people’s most basic survival needs, or that are simply unable to fulfill expectations of decent living standards, drive people to look outside their country of birth for a better life.

The consequences of labour migration usually are assessed analysing migration theories. At present, there is no single, coherent theory of international migration, only a fragmented set of various theories. Scientists of various fields focus on slightly different but interrelated reasons for the decision to migrate. Economists emphasize that reasons leading to migration are motivated and sustained by three major types of influences: demand-pull factors in the destination area; supply-push factors in the origin area; network factors that link origin and destination areas. Sociologists describe a chain migration process: migration begets additional migration. The first person emigrating from the area sends information to those in the home country about jobs, housing, and schools in the new setting. Anthropologists emphasize changes in the standard of living and cultural reasons. First-hand accounts from new immigrants as well as media accounts of the country's standard of living entice people to immigrate to the new country for a better way of life.

The factors that lead individuals to migrate are motivated and sustained by three major types of influences demand-pull factors in the destination area, supply-push factors in the origin area, and network factors that link origin and destination.

Keywords: globalization, international migration, students, Lithuania.

Introduction

People have always left their homes in search of better opportunities. But globalization, involving rapid technological change and intense market competition, has put a new spin on international migration, causing global uprootedness and human displacement on an unprecedented scale. Large scale migration is one of the most important social developments of our time. Today both Europe and North America are home for about one fifth of the world’s migrant population each. Through globalization, rates of migration have accelerated and the diversity of origin points has increased.

The factors that lead individuals to migrate are motivated and sustained by three major types of influences demand-pull factors in the destination area, supply-push factors in the origin area, and network factors that link origin and destination.

Topic of migration is not very new. Migration processes were analysed recently by Cekanavicius & Kasnauskiene (2009), Daugeliene (2007), Grundey, Sarvutyte & Streimikiene (2007), Kumpikaite (2009a), Kaminska & Kahanova (2011), Stulgiene & Daunoriene (2009), Matuzevičiute & Butkus (2009) and others. However it is very important and actual during rapid globalization influence on labour market, economics and organization. Such globalization impact was analysed by Kryk (2009), Markovic (2008), Memon & Demirdogen (2009), Piotrowska (2009), Rozenberg & Dorozik (2009), Tvaronaviciene & Kalasinskaite (2010) and Wlodarczyk-Spiewak (2009). Preidyts & Sakalauskas (2010), Skudiene et al. (2010). Students’ attitude towards different social and economical problems were analyzed by Stukalina (2008), Zaharia (2009), Dumciuviene et al (2009), Ciarniene et al (2011).

Migration statistics and recent proportions of emigrants from Lithuania confirm the trouble concerning the problem of knowledge workers emigration (about 21 percent in comparison with total emigrants) and “brain drain” - departure of educated or professional people that is dangerous for Lithuania’s economy. This paper is actual and significant as it integrates almost not analyzed problem - students’ altitudes to migration.
The aim of the article is to show students’ attitude towards international migration processes. Research objectives are to disclose migration reasons and consequences summarizing the main migration theories and diverse disciplines researchers’ focus on migration decisions; to investigate students’ approaches to international migration. Research methods are the analysis of scientific literature; logical analysis; empirical research; and conclusion formulation.

The paper consists of theoretical part analyzing scientific approach of migration, background of its reasons and motives and empirical part, presenting data of research of students’ attitudes to international migration.

**Theoretical background of migration processes**

The consequences of labour migration usually are assessed analysing migration theories. At present, there is no single, coherent theory of international migration, only a fragmented set of various theories that have developed largely in isolation from one another, sometimes but not always segmented by disciplinary boundaries and not able to provide theoretical background for assessing migration reasons and consequences. Immigration may begin for a variety of reasons — a desire for individual income gain, an attempt to diversify risks to household income, a program of recruitment to satisfy employer demands for low-wage workers, an international displacement of peasants by market penetration within peripheral regions, or some combination thereof (Sarvutyte & Streimikiene, 2010).

According to Akerlof et al., (2009), Castles and Miller (2003), and Massey et al., (1993), the main aspects of various theories are presented in Table 1.

Researchers from diverse disciplines focus on slightly different but interrelated reasons for the decision to migrate. Table 2 summarizes the main reasons influencing migration decisions.

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<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neo-classical economic theory</strong></td>
<td>Migration is caused by the supply and demand of labour (“push” and “pull” forces) and the resulting wage differentiation based on a country’s economic conditions. In the micro level this theory measures that the decision considering migration or not migration depends on each individual solution. Individual actors migrate after making cost – benefit analysis. Migration is a form of investment in human capital.</td>
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<td><strong>Dual labour market theory</strong></td>
<td>Two labour markets exist in the country: the first one – market for high educated well paid local individuals (knowledge workers); the second one – low wage rate and in-secure jobs market which seems not attractive for local inhabitants. Usually these working places are occupied by immigrants.</td>
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<td><strong>Migration network theory</strong></td>
<td>The flows of migration are self generating phenomenon: migrants accumulate and disseminate information about the situation in labour market, the possibilities of employment, wages rates and so on. The growth of migration stimulates the decline of migration costs.</td>
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<td><strong>Migration systems theory</strong></td>
<td>Migration is a result of interrelations of micro and macro structures between two territories. Macro structures are considered as institutional factors, and micro structures - as believes and experiences of migrants.</td>
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<td><strong>World systems theory</strong></td>
<td>Migration is coursed by the movement of workforce from periphery to the central regions. Periphery is considered as the region not developing market economy. Central regions are capitalistic, post-industrial countries.</td>
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<td><strong>Behavioural theory</strong></td>
<td>Describes how human psychology drives the economy and causes several economic problems which cannot be effectively solved by markets. One of the main problems of economy is involuntary unemployment having huge impact on labour markets and migration of labour forces.</td>
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<td><strong>Economists</strong></td>
<td>Pull and push factors</td>
<td>The reasons leading to migrate are motivated and sustained by three major types of influences: demand-pull factors in the destination area; supply-push factors in the origin area; network factors that link origin and destination areas.</td>
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<td><strong>Sociologists</strong></td>
<td>Chain migration process</td>
<td>Migration begets additional migration. The first person emigrating from the area sends information to those in the home country about jobs, housing, and schools in the new setting.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Anthropologists</strong></td>
<td>Changes in the standard of living and culture</td>
<td>First-hand accounts from new immigrants as well as media accounts of the country's standard of living entice people to immigrate to the new country for a better way of life.</td>
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<td><strong>Psychologists</strong></td>
<td>Personality factors</td>
<td>Personality factors are important in the desire to emigrate. Those who want to resettle in another country tend to be more work-oriented and to have higher achievement and power motivation, but lower affiliation motivation and family centrality, than those who do not want to leave their country of origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political scientists</strong></td>
<td>Ethno political reasons</td>
<td>Countries may encourage emigration to ease ethnic conflict, or to establish presence in another country, by resettling particular ethnic groups voluntarily or involuntarily.</td>
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Economists emphasize pull and push factors, both of which emphasize employment opportunities. For example, if the economy in the other country compared to the home country offers better chances for job advancement, wages, and employment, the individual is pushed to emigrate. In a pull situation, a country is actively recruiting new workers for specific jobs, and the opportunities are sufficient to entice the person to immigrate. Countries of origin may encourage people to leave for economic reasons. If some family members emigrate but others remain behind, the family and the country both benefit from the financial support sent back to family members.

The reasons leading to migrate are motivated and sustained by three major types of influences:
1. Demand-pull factors in the destination area. People are attracted to places of destination by one or more factors there:
   - Higher incomes
   - Lower taxes
   - Better availability of employment
   - Better weather
   - Political stability
   - Better education facilities
   - Better medical facilities
   - National prestige
   - Better behaviour among people
   - Religious tolerance
   - Family reasons

2. Supply-push factors in the origin area. Various social, political and economic forces in the place of destination impel people to do so:
   - War or other armed conflict
   - Famine or drought
   - Poverty
   - Political corruption
   - Disagreement with politics
   - Religious fundamentalism or religious intolerance
   - Lack of employment opportunities
   - Lack of various rights
   - Natural disasters
   - Goal of spreading one's own culture and religion

3. Network factors that link origin and destination areas.

   Sociologists describe a chain migration process. Chain migration process - migration begets additional migration. The first person emigrating from the area sends information to those in the home country about jobs, housing, and schools in the new setting. Others immigrate and are assisted by those who preceded them. Eventually, within a geographic area in the new country, there are a number of immigrants from the same area in the home country.

Anthropologists focus on changes in the standard of living and cultural reasons. First-hand accounts from new immigrants as well as media accounts of the country's standard of living entice people to immigrate to the new country for a better way of life. Parents place their children's interests before their own. Immigration is worthwhile because it better the lives of their children even if the parents' situation is not as good as they anticipated (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Psychologists suggest personality factors. Personality factors are important in the desire to emigrate. Individuals who want to emigrate possess a syndrome of personality characteristics that differentiates them from those who want to stay in their country of origin. Those who want to resettle in another country tend to be more work-oriented and to have higher achievement and power motivation, but lower affiliation motivation and family centrality, than those who do not want to leave their country of origin. These personality factors are most well-marked for those who are not family-sponsored immigrants (Boneva and Frieze, 2001).

Political scientists emphasize ethno political reasons. Countries may encourage emigration to ease ethnic conflict, or to establish presence in another country, by resettling particular ethnic groups voluntarily or involuntarily. Whether one is allowed to emigrate may depend upon payment to or permission of authorities in the country of origin.

Summarizing different migration theories and focus of various scientists, the authors of the paper present the model of decision making about migration (see Figure 1).

Practical research and results

Framework of research

The goal of this study was to investigate students' attitudes to international migration. The empirical research method was structured questionnaire survey, based on theoretical background (see table 3).
The theoretical background of empirical research is given in Table 3. The data were gathered via Internet.

Survey was made in spring of 2010. 220 students (68 males and 152 females) participated in the poll. 74 percent of respondents study Economics, 23 percent Design, and 3 percent other specialties. The youngest participant was 18 years old, the oldest - 41 years old. Respondents’ age average was 20.5 years.

Results of the survey

52 percent of respondents had work experience. 7 percent of respondents were occupied during survey period. 83 percent of students were supported by their parents, 15 percent got salary and scholarship (see Figure 3).

Survey showed that 89 percent of respondents were abroad before. The reasons of their travelling are given in Figure 4. Respondents could select several reasons. Results showed that 82 percent of respondents travelled for tourism, 23 percent – visiting their close people and 19 percent for work. However, 2 percent of respondents studied or were abroad for medical reasons.

Figure 2. Logical chain of the research

The biggest amount of respondents would like to stay abroad up to 12 months (46 percent) (see Figure 6). 12 percent of respondents did not want to go abroad at that moment at all; however, 11 percent would like to leave Lithuania for the rest of their life.
Next question was to find out what countries would be selected for emigration. Respondents mentioned over 15 different countries. The main purpose countries for migration were the USA (52 answers), Norway (38 answers), UK (31 answers), Spain (25 answers) and Sweden (18 answers) (see Figure 7).

And the answers to the last question identified reasons of selecting countries. Factors having the most impact on decision are shown on Figure 8.

In most cases it is connected with economic reasons, such as bigger salary (75 percent), better possibility to get job (56 percent), and less living costs (25 percent). Social – demographical factors such as better social conditions (47 percent), possibility to make career (44 percent), to get education (26 percent) and to feel social equality (18 percent) are very important for selecting country too. However, such factors as language (28 percent), close people living there (24 percent) have a strong impact on decision also. 16 percent of respondents would make their decision for political views, 6 percent because of a big community Lithuanians in that country, 6 percent of geographical distance and 3 percent for marriage.

Conclusions

A number of aspects of emigration warrant emphasis in thinking about a national development strategy. Perhaps most importantly, emigration should not be seen as a substitute for job creation at home. If appropriate employment, personal security and opportunities for education were available at home, most people would prefer to remain in their own country.

As the main push and pull factors among surveyed Lithuanian students’ there were identified economic reasons. 85 percent of respondents selected economic factor as the main reason for migration. Therefore, looking at the countries selected for migration, one could see economically highly developed countries, offering much higher salaries than Lithuania.

References


Migracijos esmė ir priežastys aiškinamos įvairiose teorijose. Reikia pabrėžti, kad vieningos tarptautinės migracijos teorijos nėra, be to, migracijos priežastingumas aiškinamas skirtingo lygmenimi: individo, šalies ir globaliu, o veiksmai, sukeliantys migracijos procesus, ir veiksmai, palankūs jai išsilaikyti išsivieti. Reikia atsižvelgti į ekonomiką, socialinės ir politinės sukūrimų, demografinių, kultūrinį ir požiūrį į darbo rinką, įsidegusių šaltinių ir t. t. Migracijos procesas susijęs su įvairiais faktorais: socialiais, politiniais, ekonominiais, demografiniais, socialiniais ir kitais. Migracijos procesui yra įtaka ne tik demografinių, bet ir ekonominių veiksnių. Šis straipsnis apima įvairius veiksnių poveikį migracijos procesams. Šio straipsnio tikslas – išanalizuoti studentų požiūrį į tarptautinę migraciją.