

THE SCALE AND CAUSES OF MIGRATION FROM BORDER AREAS OF UKRAINE (ILLUSTRATED BY THE CASE OF LVIV REGION)

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ABSTRACT

The article attempts to assess the motives of migration of citizens of Ukraine, in particular of Lviv region. The assessment was made based on the results of a survey conducted in 2015 among citizens of Ukraine who emigrated abroad after 1990. The questionnaire survey covered 102 people and its results show that mostly young and well-educated people emigrated, and the basic motive of migration was the desire to improve the material status. The political situation in Ukraine and a threat to personal safety were also of significant importance. A large part of the migrants benefited from the support of friends in search of a place to stay and work abroad. In addition, most persons surveyed said that it was important for them to allow their children to gain education and employment abroad in the future. The rationale for such motivation and expectations lies in the economic stagnation in Ukraine, including in Lviv region, which is deepened by major intensification of migration processes.

Key words: migration, Ukraine, border areas.

JEL: J10, R10

1. Introduction

Migration processes are increasingly a common feature of demographic changes in the modern world. Among the factors that contribute to the increase in migration one can include ever wider opening of national borders to citizens of other countries, which in turn is a manifestation of one of the many aspects of globalization. Migration decisions may be motivated by different reasons, among which the improvement in the material status of migrants and their families is of particular importance.

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A conceptual review of migration theories was made by L. Kurekova (2011) and R. King (2012). Different theories were divided into two groups using the subject of analysis as a criterion. Some of theories are focused on determinants of migration: neoclassical theory of migration, human capital theory of migration, new economics theory of migration, world system theory (historical-structural approaches), dual labour market theory. The second group of theories concerns perpetuation of migration and/or directionality of flows: network theory, migration system theory, transnational migration. Each of these theories has some weaknesses and there is a need to improve theoretical aspects of the migration process. Additionally, a new approach to researching migration in Central and Eastern Europe should view this process as endogenous and accept that migration dynamics plays out according to a broader set of elements, such as job availability, skill structure, social welfare and working conditions. A similar point of view is presented by H. de Haas (2014) confirming that classical functionalist and historical-structural migration theories implicitly assume that peoples' preferences and aspirations are constant across societies and over time and determined by individual income maximisation. This means that human beings are conceptualized to be "pulled" and "pushed" in space like atoms through abstract casual forces. This approach ignores the fact that culture, education and exposure to particular forms of information are likely to have a huge impact on peoples' notions of the good life, personal aspirations and their awareness and perception of appetites and their awareness and perception.

A short review of the migration theories is the basis for emphasising the need for interdisciplinary opportunities elsewhere.

Gainful international migration can be divided into temporary and permanent. The first of them are also divided into periodical, seasonal and circular migration, with the time spent abroad as the main criterion of division, and the desire to obtain greater economic benefits (salary and non-salary) than the ones one can obtain at the place of residence as the common feature (Jończy, 2003).

As noted by Iglicka - migration can bring positive and negative effects, which are reflected at three levels: macro (entire country), meso (households) and micro (migrant). On the macro level, one positive consequence of migration is a decline in the unemployment rate and wage growth, while negative effects come down mostly to the weakening of economic growth, deterioration in the quality of human capital through the outflow of highly qualified workers and reduction in the number of residents. The benefits of migration, which also affect households, include primarily an increase in consumption and higher investment spending, while threats have their origin in the separation of families and the weakening of social ties. In turn, the positive effects of migration on individuals include mainly an increase in wages, gaining work experience and rising qualification. The negative effects of migration on the micro level are most frequently related to the risk of double marginalization caused by difficulties in finding work abroad,

combined with the inability to obtain the expected income in the country (Iglicka, 2008).

In the last few years migration processes of inhabitants of Ukraine of a gainful character became especially intensive, and Poland became one of the countries with the highest growth rate of immigration from the East.

Bearing in mind the importance of migration processes, an attempt was made to identify the scale of migration of the Ukrainian population, as well as to determine the motives and intentions of migrants to remain abroad. In order to accomplish the objective a survey was carried out of 102 citizens of Ukraine who stayed abroad in 2015 (the period of the survey) and agreed to answer the survey questions sent to them via the Internet³. The survey was conducted among the residents of Lviv region, who, in larger part, had more opportunities to go to neighbouring regions in Poland due to border location of the region.

2. The scale of migration processes of Ukrainian citizens

According to the authors of the report "A new wave of migration of citizens of Ukraine to Poland" (Chmielewska, Dobroczek, Pusynkiewicz, [http.](http://)), compiled on the basis of surveys conducted by the Polish National Bank, it is estimated that in 2015 in Poland 1 million Ukrainians worked, and due to the dominance of short-term stays - about 500 thousand citizens of this country resided in Poland at one time. Mainly residents of western Ukraine migrate to Poland, although after 2014 a considerable increase in the proportion of people living in the eastern regions of the country was observed. According to the aforementioned report (surveys conducted in 2015 by the National Bank of Poland among adult citizens of Ukraine who came to Poland for the first time in 1989 or later), a common phenomenon is that migrants perform work of a temporary character.

The most common place of employment is services to households, followed by repair and construction services and work in agriculture.

Based on the results of the survey, the authors estimate that in 2015 the Ukrainians working in Poland transferred an amount of 5.0 billion zł to Ukraine.

A large group of migrants from Ukraine are students - 30.6 thousand in 2015, according to CSO data, which was twice as high as in 2013.

Gainful employment abroad not only improves the economic status of families (money transfers or return with saved money to Ukraine), but staying in another country also brings positive effects in the form of the experience gained, and even strengthens the sense of national identity. According to Budzinskyy, research conducted among migrants from districts of south and east Ukraine shows that a

³ The research has been conducted by Andrzej Mykytyak – a student of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Rzeszów in the framework of a MA seminar in the Department of Economic Policy, and used in the MA thesis prepared under the supervision of Prof. Adam Czudec.

significant number of migrants changed their views on the origins and roots of nationality, and also acquired the conviction of the need for learning the Ukrainian language and raising children with a sense of patriotism (Budzinkyy, [http.](#)).

One has to remember also about the negative impact of migration, which causes depopulation of regions, loss of labour resources and a slowdown or even stagnation of the economy. These problems are escalated especially when short-term migration is converted to a long-term migration.

In this context, one should pay attention to another aspect of migration of citizens of Ukraine to Poland, which is the nearest neighbour. Migrants from Ukraine are increasingly filling the space after the Poles who in turn migrated to the EU countries. These threats are addressed by Bukraba-Rylska, who refers to the works of Max Weber and states that - on the basis of strictly economic reasons – the acceptance of mass migration will lead to the marginalization of regions with a large outflow of residents. At the same time, the employment of workers from the eastern municipality, motivated by their low wage expectations, does not lead to the improvement in the economic situation of less developed regions and is a reproduction of past mistakes of EU countries (Bukraba-Rylska, 2009).

All this leads to the conclusion that the problem of migration has many facets and can be evaluated from different points of view. It is important to learn and analyse the opinions of migrants, because in this way one can better understand at least some of the issues related to this process, which is fairly common in the modern world.

3. Motives for migration of residents of Lviv region

From among those covered by the survey, the largest percentage (almost 70%) was made up of migrants aged 19-30. Urban residents prevailed in the total number of respondents (less than 6% lived in the countryside), with the largest group living in medium-sized cities (nearly 67% of respondents lived in cities with population between 50 thousand to 100 thousand). The high level of education of migrants was characteristic, because 60.7% of respondents were university graduates.

Too low standard of living due to inadequate remuneration for work in Ukraine was the main reason for migration of respondents (49% of respondents), followed by dangerous political situation in Ukraine (34.4% of participants), which involves uncertainty about the prospects for work and living at current location, as well as a sense of security risks for the family. For this reason, the need to join family members staying abroad was the reason for migration for up to 17.5% of the respondents.

The results of these studies vary in relation to the survey conducted in the same period on the population generally representing the residents of Ukraine, the

results of which were published in the aforementioned report. Based on those surveys, the authors found that although the number of migrants for whom the reason for the migration was the political situation in Ukraine increases (until 2013 – 3.5%, from 2014 – 12.5%), their percentage is much lower in comparison with the migrants from Lviv region. The second important difference is the relatively low percentage of the unemployed among migrants from Lviv region (2%), while among the total number of migrants from Ukraine the share of the unemployed stood at 20.1% from 2014 and over 36% until 2013. These differences may indicate a higher sense of threat from the political situation among the residents of Lviv region in comparison with the inhabitants of other regions of Ukraine. They also demonstrate that even relatively better economic situation in the western regions of Ukraine – which gives employment opportunities – is not an important reason for staying at the place of residence for a large group of Ukrainians.

Both surveys confirm, however, the same regularity that young people prevail among migrants.

Migration generally involves the departure of entire families, or at least some of their members. Among the unemployed citizens of Lviv oblast, almost 53% emigrated together with their families, and also the vast majority of those who left Ukraine alone intended to bring the family members there. This can be interpreted as meaning that migrants are not guided exclusively by an economic motive, but also by care about minimizing the negative effects of migration indicating the loosening of family ties, and in extreme situations - family breakdown. It may also be evidence of the perception of migration as a way to improve the material conditions of the family in the long term, with the possibility of leaving the country definitely.

Contacts with persons that have gone abroad turn out to be the factor facilitating migration. It is evidenced by a high percentage of respondents who have more than five such friends (74.6% of all respondents). This means that a large part of migrant visit their countrymen who are already abroad, which certainly makes searching for job or place to live easier. This does not mean, however, that it happens in any case, because about 30% of respondents said that no one helped them in job search abroad. Nearly all of them declared that migration had a positive impact on their standard of living, and as much as 52% believe their status improved to a high degree (42.1% said that there was a slight change in the standard of their living and only 5.9% of respondents said that the migration did not improve their situation).

Such a high impact of migration on the quality of life assessment certainly has an impact on plans for the future of children. Nearly half of the respondents would

not like Ukraine to be the place of residence of their children, but one of the economically developed countries, while only 11.8% of respondents want their children to remain in their home country.

The reasons for which a large part of parents would welcome their children's future abroad include ensuring safety (41.2%) in the first place, but providing education and high standard of living determined by income level appears to be a little less important. As it was mentioned earlier, students are a large group among the migrants from Ukraine, who were covered by the NBP survey. When asked about their plans for the future, they express willingness to work in Poland (36.6%) or to have their career at least partially bound with Poland (32.5%). The others are planning to migrate to another country (22%), and only 2.4% would like to work in Ukraine.

4. Migration and the economy of Lviv region

Despite the fact that intensified migration of inhabitants of Ukraine (including largely from Lviv region) have been observed for at least several years, it has not brought a positive effect on reducing unemployment, and above all, on a significant increase in average wages. This is evidenced by the figures given in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicators showing the level of economic development of Lviv region compared to the neighboring Podkarpackie Voivodship in Poland

Specification	Years					
	2008		2011		2013	
	Podkarpackie	Lviv Region	Podkarpackie	Lviv Region	Podkarpackie	Lviv Region
GDP per capita (in euro)	6800	1804	6900	1847	7300	7350
Unemployment rate	8,2	7,6	12,4	7,7	14,3	7,1
The average monthly gross wage and salary (in euro)	708	204	701	202	750	263
The number of economic entities per 10 thousand residents	687	633	710	490	750	527

Source: Own study based on: B. Błachut and others, *Cross-border areas of Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine – the factors of progression and peripherisation*, Statistical Office in Rzeszów, Rzeszów University, Rzeszów, 2015, pp. 115–117 and 120.

Based on the indicators presented in Table 1 we can say that the economy of Lviv region is characterized by stagnation in the last few years. Firstly, it can be seen in the weak dynamics of the basic indicators of the state of the economy, which is particularly evident in the case of the indicator reflecting the number of economic entities per 10 thousand residents. Secondly, a large gap between the level of economic development of Lviv region and the neighbouring Podkarpackie Voivodship in Poland is visible. Although it is among the least developed regions in Poland, it has three times higher rates of GDP per capita and the average monthly salary. These differences – at least partly – explain why migration of residents of Lviv region is strongly intensified and have the characteristics of long-term trends, according to the opinion of migrants. On the other hand, a relatively low unemployment rate in Lviv region allows us to understand the reason for which the percentage of unemployment among migrants from Ukraine is low.

This confirms also the gainful nature of migration, which can be additionally motivated by own and family security threats, which derive from military conflict.

One consequence of low level of economic development in Lviv region is the systematic decrease in the number of inhabitants (from 2,553 thousand in 2008 to 2,538 thousand in 2013), the negative balance of migration for permanent residence as well as the negative population growth in the last few years.

5. Conclusion

Migration is one of the important social and economic problems in Ukraine. The scale of this process is the factor that seems to have negative consequences for the economy, which have not showed accelerated upward trend in recent years. One reason may be systematic outflow of well-educated young citizens of Ukraine who migrate abroad motivated by the search for a decent wage for their work, and by their own security being at risk the ongoing armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. The surveys conducted among migrants show that a large part of them obtains the expected benefits from being employed in a new job and accepts the emigration of their children. Such attitudes mean that the migration process may even increase in the coming years, and may also be transformed from short-term or seasonal migration into permanent migration. All this creates a weak outlook for accelerating economic development of Ukraine and reducing the gap to countries with well-developed economy.

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