

MIGRATION AND IDENTITY ARE FOREIGN STUDENTS MIGRANTS?

Klara VERESNÉ VALENTINYI¹, Csilla JUDIT SUHAJDA², Saadia MORSE³,
Kristóf CSIZMADIA⁴

Abstract

Migration has become an important issue in Europe influencing the attitude and thinking of people towards foreign students in higher education. Foreign students often face prejudice since they are often labelled as „migrants” in a hostile way. This descriptive secondary study, first, gives the definitions of the terms ‚movement‘, ‚migration‘ and ‚mobility of people‘, then, it summarizes the main models, variables and classifications of mobility and migration (internal and external migration, inbound and outbound migration, causes of migration, push and pull factors, individual or group migration, voluntary or forced, involuntary migration, economic migrant, refugee, asylum seeker, temporary or permanent migration). Then, it classifies foreign students in terms of their language proficiency and their willingness to integrate into the host environment. The latter one is a new variable in the classification of foreign students. The purpose of this study is to show that foreign students do not have migrant identity; they fall in a different category as they intend to stay temporarily in the host country, unlike migrants. It is hoped that this classification helps to decrease prejudice against foreign students.

Keywords: mobility, migration, integration, foreign students, prejudice

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration has always been a big issue in Europe and the rest of the world. Back in ancient times, numerous sources and records described the impacts migration made on the social, scientific, legal and daily people lives (Halász, 2011). The change of location of people and its economic and social effects have influenced public opinion and scientific thinking, and has been an important issue not only for heads of states, military leaders but for common people for hundreds and thousands of years.

Over the last few years, the size of migrating groups has increased to such an extent that Europe has experienced a mass migration from different parts of the world. It was not only the size of migrating groups which created unprecedented challenges for European governments, but also the inclination of migrants to cross the national borders illegally. As a result, national and European defence and security policies have been placed high on the agenda of national governments and European institutions (Pósán et al., 2018).

2. DEFINITION OF MOVEMENT, MIGRATION AND MOBILITY OF PEOPLE

¹ associate professor, PhD, Szent István University, Gödöllő, Hungary, veresne.valentinyi.klara@szie.hu

² assistant professor, PhD, Szent István University, Gödöllő, Hungary, suhajda.csilla.judit@szie.hu

³ lecturer, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK, s.morse@lancaster.ac.uk

⁴ student, J. Selye University, Komarno, Slovakia, csizmadia.kristof@hotmail.com

Movement, migration and mobility of people are sometimes mixed up, despite the fact that they refer to different concepts.

Movement of people is a general concept and an umbrella term, the more specific terms of migration and mobility are its subconcepts.

Migration is the geographical movement of people from one place to another with the intention of relocation or settling down or resettling in a new location permanently or temporarily. Migration is a continuous and repeated, temporary or permanent movement and relocation of people through geographical and national borders driven by individual or group intention and motivation to attain social, financial and personal wellbeing (Massey et al., 2003, 2004). It is a complex social and economic issue. Migration starts from those countries which have wars and experience economic and social insecurity and imbalance. The people of such countries go to those regions which are worth undertaking the sacrifices and inconvenience of migration (Rozumne, online, year?) for the sake of safe and financially secure life. As a result of migrations, new states and new nations may be founded or born, and visa versa old states and nations may be ? and disappear. The conquest of the Carpathian Basin by Hungarian migrating tribes, the formation of the USA and the Republic of Liberia and Israel belongs to the Asian continent and part of the Middle East region in Africa can be mentioned as examples of the birth of a new state as results of migration and relocation of people (Halász, 2011).

Mobility of people takes place within a country or across international borders (Pusztai, 2014). Mobility is the ability to move or be moved freely and easily, which does not necessarily incorporate the relocation or resettlement of people. According to Rédey (2007), mobility is the ability and opportunity to move between the different levels (classes) of the society or the organisation of businesses, for example due to employment, or between different regions of the same country or different countries, including urbanisation, suburbanisation, seasonal employment and studies. Mobility can be temporary or permanent.

Mobility has two main subbranches: social mobility (except for territorial or in the physical space, mostly within an organisation or between organisations or level (classes) of a society/societies) and relocational mobility (regional, territorial). Relocational mobility is the movement of people in the society and in the physical space or territory. Relocational mobility has five subcategories: migration (temporary or permanent), relocation inside of a settlement (temporary or permanent), commuting (without relocation: daily or less frequently tourism and others (family visits, holidays, studies, etc.) (Illés, 2000).

As seen in the definitions above, mobility does not necessarily mean relocation or resettlement, but it refers rather to a change or transfer in the social hierarchy or position or in the region or territory, i.e. free movement between different levels or regions of a society or societies, within a country or outside a country. Migration is a relocational mobility through regional or national or international administrative borders for resettlement in a new location (Illés, 2000). The next statement gives a schematic summary of the differences between migration and mobility: migration is mobility, but mobility is not migration?

Movement, migration and mobility of people are as old as the history of mankind, so they are not new social phenomena. It is the innate need and desire of mankind to live a better and economically safe life, which motivates and drives the mobility and relocation of people.

3. MODELS, CLASSIFICATIONS AND VARIABLES OF MIGRATION

The migration of people can be modelled and classified in different ways by versatile variables such as crossing national borders, legality of movement and the length of relocation (permanent, relocation, etc.), Identification of the different variables is never easy and straightforward, overlappings and exceptions (atypical variables) occur quite frequently, for example state borders are changed and states are dissolved, whereas states are created without movement of people (Hautzinger et al., 2014).

Inside or outside the state border: internal and external migration

The crossing of a state border is a typical variable in the classification and distinction between internal and external migration. However, the concept of the state border is quite complex, because it is sometimes not just a simple and geometrical line, but it refers to the air space above the state border, the area beneath the surface of the state border, the depth of the oceans etc. State borders may separate ethnic minorities of the same language, culture, political and economic regions (Sallai, 2004).

Internal migration takes place within the state borders, from rural areas to urban areas, from village to town, from one region to another region etc. It is a legal action and deed motivated by economic, financial and personal reasons such as employment, marriage, etc. Whereas external migration takes place over state borders by border crossing, it is a permanent relocation in most of the cases. The country, which migrants leave, is termed as the sending state, whereas the target country is called the receiving state. Although during holidays, diplomatic, family and business visits, studies, people cross national borders, these are temporary (albeit for a longer period of time) movements for the purpose of travel, tourism, pilgrimages, and are not regarded as external migration, in the absence of an intention to live and settle in the visited places (Baranyai, 2007).

Direction of migration: inbound and outbound migration (inflow and outflow of people)

The direction of migration is a crucial variable in modelling and classification of migration: inbound migration is the movement and flow of people into a country from another country, whereas outbound migration is the outflow from or the act of leaving a resident country with the intention of settling somewhere else (Halász, 2009).

Causes of migration

Numerous causes drive people to move to another country. Relocation is getting easier due to the development of transportation, social media, communication, and receiving countries encourage relocation of people because they need labour force. Lower birth rates in European countries increased the demand for workers due to the shortage of qualified and unqualified workforce, therefore people from impoverished developing countries migrate to developed countries to earn a sufficient income for their families (Bodnár – Szabó, 2014). Migrants leave their mother countries in the hope to secure better financial and economic opportunities and more democratic political institutions which may guarantee basic human rights and freedom (Korinek, 2010). At the same time, people want to get access to better social and health care opportunities or to a higher social prestige, thus, they are termed as economic migrants.

People move or are forced to move from their country of residence as a result of natural or industrial disasters or wars, military, political or civil rights conflict or violence to avoid persecution. They are called asylum seekers (Póczik – Dunavölgyi, 2013).

Overpopulation of developing countries drives migration as well. Others move to escape from extreme climate and weather; they move inside their country of residence in most cases. Natural and industrial disasters, climate change, lack of water in the area boost ecological migration (Also see push and pull factors below.) There are other people who are keen to join their ethnic minority in a far away country or even continent and integrate in their religious community (e.g. Russians relocation to Israel) (Migration, online, year?).

Push and Pull factors

Lee (1966) and Ernest Ravenstein (1885) proposed the laws of migration and determined the well known push and pull factors of migration.

The main pull factors of migration are those favourable conditions in the target country (better health care, more jobs, political and religious freedom, better climate, just to name a few) which attract and pull people to seize better opportunities.

Push factors in a country of residence are unfavourable conditions, which push people out of the country such as low wages, poor education, low standard of living, bad health care system, civil war, violation of human rights, famine and drought, desertification, few labour opportunities, political persecution, etc. Lee (1966) set up four categories of the main push and pull factors: 1. conditions in the source country, 2. conditions in the target country, 3. obstacles, 4. personal factors.

Some of Ravenstein's laws (1885) suggested that migrants relocate to the nearest possible (neighbouring) countries to find better living conditions and tend to move within a short distance. Families are less likely to make international moves than young adults, therefore, most migrants are adults. He stated that migrants who move for longer distances tend to choose big city destinations. However, the farther they need to travel, the more reduced the size of migration becomes. According to Lee (1966), migration is a selective process which is, in significant correlation, with age, gender, social class, education, family background and distance.

Individual or group migration

Migration can be individual or group migration (sometimes mass migration) based on the number of migrating people. However, it needs to be noted that migration is always based on the decision and motivation of individual people that serve to meet their individual needs. When the intention, the goal and need of individuals are the same, they may migrate in a group collectively, at the same time, to the same place and for the same purpose. Groups sometimes constitute families or relatives. Migration is always egotistic and individualistic, when the need and interest of migrating people differ, they may leave the group. Mass migration occurs when disaster (economic crisis, natural disaster (earthquake) etc.) happens in the sending country (Gödri, 2010).

A new theory of migration contradicts the above claims. Massey and Taylor (2004) express that migration decisions are made by families and communities and not by individuals. The main goal is to decrease the risks, therefore only some members of the family or community, mainly young adults relocate to another country with the intention of unclear and transferring money back home. But in the beginning – until they manage to find a living in the target country – they are supported financially by the rest of the family, who stay in the source country and make money locally. In this way, all the members of the family make sure they have enough money to live on to minimise risks.

Voluntary or forced, involuntary migration

Free or voluntary migration takes place when the individual decides to relocate, based on his/her own free will and conscious decisions, without the occurrence of an influencing event or seeking financial or economic wellbeing or securing a job (see pull factors). In involuntary or forced migration, which is due to outside circumstances, the individual, the family or the group are forced to relocate from a situation (due to military conflict, civil disturbance, unemployment, religious persecution, financial crisis, etc.) in which their options are limited (see push factors). The balance of push and pull factors determine the voluntary or involuntary nature of migration (Rédei 2009, Pap, 2009).

Economic migrant, refugee, asylum seeker

A person or a family who moves from their home country because of natural disaster, war or civil disturbance, religious persecution are described as refugees. The person who seeks refuge

from political, religious, or other forms of persecution is usually described as an asylum seeker. The distinction between involuntary (fleeing political conflict, civil disturbance, natural or industrial disaster) and voluntary migration (economic migrant for better living (see above)) is difficult to make and partially subjective, as the motivators and drivers for refugee and asylum seekers and migrants are often correlated and overlap .

Temporary or permanent migration

Apart from its spatial and intentional dimension, migration can be classified by the length and frequency of relocation, which is a crucial variable: permanent, temporary, circular (repeated, seasonal). Migration can be permanent, short term, temporary for a set period of time (return to the home country after a period of time) or even repeated (Štefančík – Lenč, 2011).

Booden és Rees (2008) set up three categories by the length and frequency of stay: 1. visitors (spend time shorter than 3 months), 2. short term migrants (spend time longer than 3 months but shorter than a year), 3. long term migrants (have permanent address, spend 12 months or longer).

Legal or illegal migration

National and international laws determine the circumstances under which migrants can legally stay in a country or have jobs. Thus, legislation codifies migration as legal, regular, documented (migrants have all the required permit and document to do this) or illegal, irregular, undocumented (migrants cross the border of the country illegally without the required and valid documents, by the help of human traffickers). Human trafficking has developed into an international and transnational business which extends across national borders of countries.

Native speaking and non-native speaking migrants (foreign people) and their willingness to integrate, assimilate or participate in a foreign country

Horn et al. (year?) claim that the effect of language proficiency is positive, both on participation and employment as language skills positively affect the labor market situation of immigrants. Although there are many other aspects to cultural assimilation, Horn et al. (year?) believe that language skills are one of the fundamental factors. Their analysis supports previous findings in the literature that cultural assimilation can also be the result of a rational decision and goes hand in hand with the degree of language proficiency. They have shown that non-native immigrants who speak the language of the host country at home are 3-4 percent more likely to participate in the labor market or education or find a paid job. Language proficiency seems to be a decisive factor in the successful integration, participation or even assimilation of foreign people in a foreign country.

4.THEORIES AND MODELS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

World-systems theory is a multidisciplinary and global approach to social changes such as global migration. The theory correlates migration with international, interregional and transnational trade, division of labour, and classifies the world as core countries, semi-peripheral countries and peripheral countries. Core countries have higher skills, capital-intensive production and thus economic dominance, they are potential target countries. The rest of the countries have low-skills and labor-intensive production. Core countries are attractive for migrants from semi-peripheral or peripheral countries since they provide better working conditions and higher wages, thus they are potential target countries for migrants. The system is dynamic, due to the evolving nature of economies both in core and peripheral countries, for example Great Britain is a core country and a potential target for migration, however, after brexit its status may change (Wallerstein, 1983).

Model of migration in the 21st century

Although quite a few dynamic and new theories of migration exist, such as the world-systems theory, there is no comprehensive model of migration which incorporates and explains all the variables, drivers, motives and patterns of migration as well as embraces the global and multidisciplinary nature of both the temporary and permanent relocation of people (Huzdik, 2014). Two basic questions should be answered: What drives migrations? Which factors maintain and support or curb migration? unclear also need to be extended and include new variables such as globalisation, development of communication, political, military and religious conflicts, international migration, natural disasters, new trends such as changes in the direction of migration (sending countries become receiving countries), etc. (Faist, 2000).

Migration models are expected to identify the direct and indirect impacts of migration and forecast and anticipate the effects of internal and external events, through statistical models, calculations and simulations to give a precise picture for researchers and political decision-makers (Štefančík, 2010).

5.METHODS

The Questionnaire survey (primary research) was carried out from the 1st of April to the 30th of June, 2020. The questionnaire had 9 groups of questions, of which one question was analysed for the purpose of this descriptive study (see below).

6.THE SAMPLE OF RESEARCH

The survey was carried out among foreign students studying at four universities: Szent István University, Gödöllő, Hungary (76.6%) and University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK (21%), University of Limerick and Lancaster University (2.4%). The questionnaire was filled in by 120 students studying or having studied at one of the four universities (Chart 1).

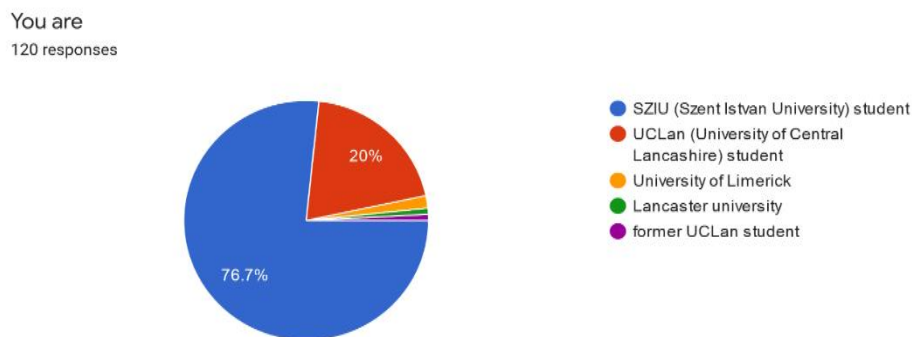


Chart 1. Respondents' composition by university (own data) N=120

In our research we had 120 students of whom 53.3% were male and 45.8% were female respondents, 0.9% preferred not to say their gender (Chart 2).

Gender
120 responses

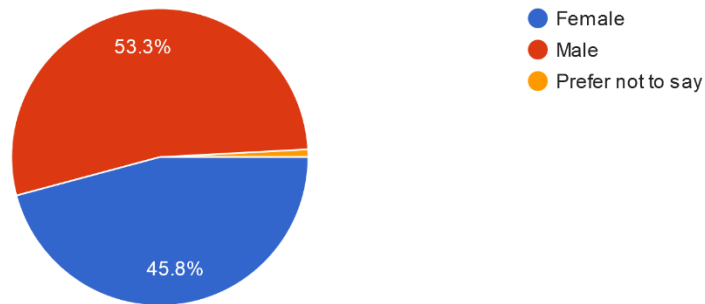


Chart 2. Respondents composition by gender (own data) N=120

The age of the research sample is between 19 and 43 years, truly reflecting the age of the population. Chart 3 below shows respondents by age.

Age
120 responses

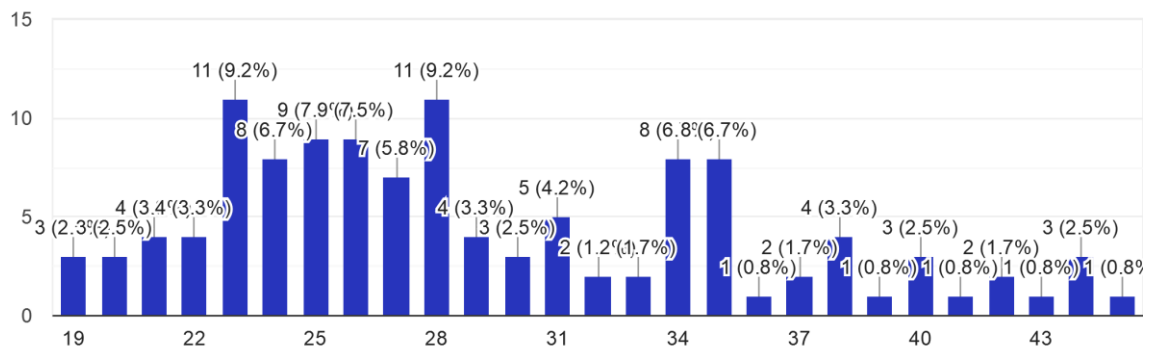


Chart 3. Respondents composition by age (own data) N=120

Chart 4 shows the different types of settlements (village, small town, big city, capital) and the different types of regions of the country in the sample by number and proportion.

Place of residence in your country of origin:
120 responses

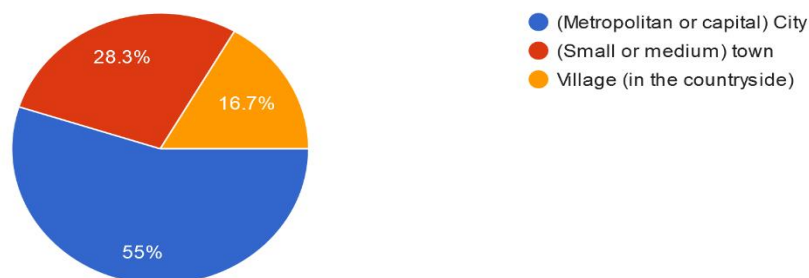


Chart 4. Respondents composition by place of residence in their own countries (own data) N=120

In order for the sample to appropriately reflect the population, students from the different training programmes were selected to participate in the research (Chart 5).

Which academic programme do you study in? Choose from the list below!

120 responses

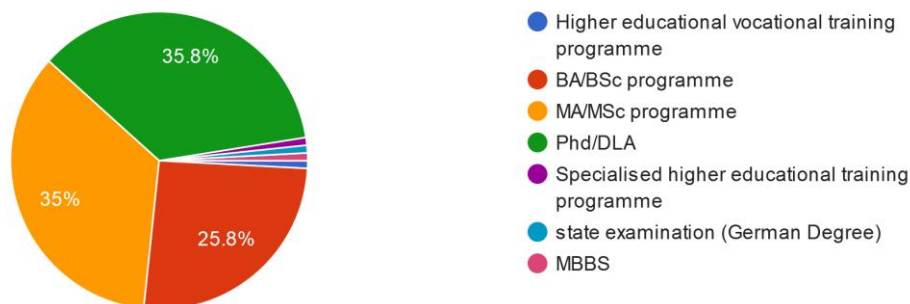


Chart 5. Respondents composition by academic programmes they participate in (own data) N=120

7.RESULTS

As the chart shows only 33.3% of foreign students said they had migration background, and 67.3% said they had no relationship with migration or migrants, or had no intention to move to the host country permanently. This result has been supported by Table 1.

Do you have a migration background?

120 responses

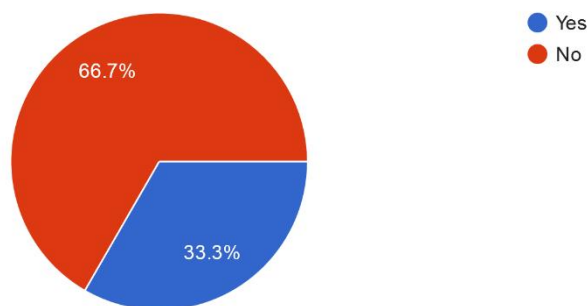


Chart 6. Respondents by migration intention (own data) N=120

Foreign students at Szent István University, Gödöllő, Hungary and at University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), Preston, UK

The following table characterizes foreign students studying at Szent István University (SZIE) and at University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), Preston, UK based on the literature, models, classification and constituting variables introduced above.

<i>Variables of migration, relocation and mobility to describe foreign students at Szent István University, Gödöllő, Hungary and at University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK</i>	
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Characterisation</i>
<i>Migration or relocation or mobility</i>	Students' mobility takes place across international borders, but they move freely and easily, without relocation or resettlement, due to studying at university → mobility
<i>Temporary or permanent</i> <i>Temporary or permanent mobility</i> <i>Apart from its spatial and intentional dimension, migration can be classified by the length and frequency of relocation.</i>	Students are not willing to stay in Hungary or in England permanently, only for the period of their studies. → Their mobility is temporary , only very rarely permanent.
<i>Direction of mobility: Inside or outside the state border: of internal and external migration, inbound or outbound inflow and outflow of people)</i>	Students at SZIU and UCLAN crossed the state border → so their mobility is external and outbound .
<i>Causes of mobility</i>	Students want to study abroad and obtain a degree.
<i>Push and pull factors of mobility</i>	Students' main push factor is that their countries do not have prestigious universities. The pull factor is the prestige of SZIU and UCLAN.
<i>Individual or group mobility</i> <i>Migration can be individual or group migration (sometimes mass migration)</i>	Students generally move to study in Hungary or England without families, on their own → individual mobility
<i>Voluntary or forced, involuntary mobility</i> <i>Free or voluntary mobility takes place when the individual decides to relocate based on his own free will and conscious decisions, without the occurrence of an influencing event seeking financial or economic wellbeing or a job (see pull factors).</i>	Students generally move to study in Hungary or England voluntarily → voluntary mobility
<i>Economic migrant, refugee, asylum seeker</i>	Most of the time they are not refugees, asylum seekers or economic migrants.
<i>Legal or illegal mobility</i>	Foreign students always have a permit of residence so they stay legally in Hungary or England → legal mobility

<i>Language proficiency (Native speaking and non-native speaking migrants)</i>	Most foreign students who go to university abroad speak either English or the language of the country (e.g. in the UK), generally, they are not natives → non native speaking people
<i>Willingness to assimilate, integrate or participate or work or study in a foreign country</i>	Most foreign students who go to university abroad are willing to participate or work or study in the foreign country. → It is their conscious decision to study in a foreign country.

Table 1. Description of foreign students at Szent István University, Gödöllő, Hungary and University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK.

8.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To sum up the results, the classification of foreign students can be summarized as follows: foreign students move from their mother countries (see external and outbound mobility) to Hungary or England or to other foreign countries to study, not to resettle in these countries (see mobility). Their stay is temporary, their mobility is individual, voluntary, legal, and the prestige of the universities is considered the pull factor for them. In most of the cases, no political, economic, religious, etc reasons are behind their intention to leave their native country, they want to return into their home countries after graduation so they are not refugees, asylum seekers or migrants. Most of them have the required language skills and are willing to study and participate in the society of the foreign country of their studies, and they will not stay in their host country permanently (Chart 6). This study showed that foreign students are not migrants, they fall in a different category than migrants, they want to stay in the host country temporarily and they want to get a degree and make use of the knowledge they acquired in the foreign country in their home countries. It is hoped that this study and classification help to decrease prejudice against foreign students.

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