

## **The tipping point in migration: from intention to realisation**

The influence of migration-related expectations and life-course events on migration intentions and the realization of these intentions

(Abstract)

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Since 1993 research has regularly been conducted on migration potential in Hungary, which by measuring migration intentions and plans have explored the expected volume, destination and social basis of emigration. Parallel, since the end of the 1990s until today there have been numerous studies and analyses on the migration intentions and plans of ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania. These sources enabled us to explore the temporal and directional changes of migration intentions as well.

Even though exploration of changes in intensity and destination of migration intentions became possible by the research on migration potential (and these changes are also reflected in the data of various destination countries), there are still numerous unanswered questions. On the one hand, it is unknown *in what degree and in case of whom measured migration intentions are really realised*. On the other hand, the questions of *factors influencing the emergence of migration intentions and their realisation* also need to be clarified. In our paper we aim at answering these questions.

The panel study “*Turning Points of Life Course – Transylvania*”, conducted by the Demographic Research Institute (Budapest) and the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (Kolozsvár/Cluj), constitutes an unique possibility for the study of realisation of migration intentions. Its first wave was conducted in 2006 with a sample of 2,942 ethnic Hungarians living in Transylvania, aged between 20-45 years. The second wave took place in 2009, when 1,900 respondents of the first wave were reached and further 600 people’s residence was recorded on address cards. Based on the second wave we can test the realisation of migration intentions declared in the first wave. These intentions were measured

by standard questions: considering the purpose and duration of migration they asked whether the respondent plans short or long term employment abroad or emigration. Based on the data of the second wave *proportion of realisation of migration intentions* can be revealed, together with *factors promoting or hindering their realisation*.

In migration studies it is already accepted that migration itself is a process, which starts with consideration of the possibility of migration, and which is then in some cases followed by concrete migration intention or plan. Finally – depending on certain individual and contextual factors – some of them are actually realised as well. Therefore, the process of migration has a *phase of decision making* and a *phase of realising the move*. An important research question arises – which can fully be answered only by longitudinal/panel study – namely, which factors do play role in particular phases. It is presumable that different factors influence the emergence of migration intentions and some others have effect on actual realisation of migration.

Models explaining migration intentions mostly include the role of basic demographic variables (sex, age, marital status, number of children), contextual variables (type of settlement, region), socio-economic status (educational attainment, economic activity, income status) together with various capitals (knowledge of foreign language, social capital in the destination countries, former migration experience) (Sik 1999, Gödri – Kiss 2009). Nevertheless, past research has partially neglected both the effect of *life-course events*, and the *expected effects of migration*, i.e. *the perception of advantages and disadvantages connected to migration*, in spite of the fact that these factors might have important role already in the emergence of the possibility of migration and in the formulation of migration intention as well.

More studies have proved that some events of the life-course (such as starting higher level education, beginning of employment, leaving parental house or marriage) are related to the emergence of migration intentions (Mulder – Wagner 1993, Mulder – Clark 2000, Kley – Mulder 2010). At the same time, realisation of migration plans is determined primarily by the existence or non-existence of various financial, social and psychological capitals, which promote or hinder the realisation of intentions (Massey – Espinosa 1997, Palloni et al. 2001). Nevertheless, as the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991) in relation to migration states, the *primary determinant of migration behaviour is migration intention* (De Jong 2000). Based on the conception of this seemingly trivial approach, migration intention emerges by more or less conscious consideration of expected advantages. Therefore, if we study which *subjective expectations* are linked to the possible effects of migration and how they are related to the

existence or non-existence of migration intention, we get closer to understanding of migration itself.

In the reality, migration on the one hand often occurs without former migration intention due to coercive factors. On the other hand, not everybody with migration intention persists in his/her plan and not everybody gets to its realisation either. Furthermore, the chance of realisation of intention is influenced by various personal resources, which are convertible during migration, and these are usually unevenly distributed in the society. It means that certain groups have higher chance for realising their plans.

Taken all these into consideration the paper aims at revealing the role of expectations related to migration (considerations of its advantages and disadvantages), and of life-course events in the emergence of migration intentions and plans, furthermore it considers their role in their realisation.

Firstly, we plan to study what relationship there is between the mentioned factors (migration-related expectations and life-course events) and the existence of migration intentions, based on the data of “Turning Points in Life Course – Transylvania” panel study. Then, utilising the unique opportunities of the panel character of the study, paper aims at exploring in what degree and in case of whom did migration intentions measured in 2006 actually realise between 2006 and 2009; what form of migration was mostly realised, and which factors influenced the chance of realisation. For this latter analysis we will apply the method of logistic regression. Besides socio-demographic variables we will take capital variables (measured in the first wave) into consideration. We hypothesise that human capital (young age, high educational attainment, knowledge of foreign language, former migration experience), financial capital (appropriate income, good financial standing) together with social capital (member of household in the potential destination country) increases the realisation chance of migration intention. Yet, migration-related expectations and life-course events are to be studied, considering destination country of the planned migration (to Hungary or more distant country with a foreign language), keeping in mind that migration in these two cases implies different costs and risks, which can influence the realisation chance of migration.

Our analysis by revealing the relationship between migration intentions and their realisation would test the hypothesis whether migration processes can be forecasted by the study of migration intentions. Hereby – parallel to providing information about factors influencing the emergence of migration intentions and their realisation – it contributes to the knowledge about migration potential from theoretical perspective as well.

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