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## **Mobility from the Pupils' Perspective<sup>1</sup>**

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### *Introduction*

After the transition time, in Hungary, several researches (Sik & Simonovits, 2002; Nyírő, 2012; Gödri & Feleky, 2013) were implemented related to migration potential. According to the latest data, in Hungary, the migration propensity has started to grow before the EU accession compared to the 1990s. The analyses (Hárs, 2013; Czibik et al., 2014; Bodnár & Szabó, 2014) based on the combination of the mirror statistics and macro-level labour statistics show that the growing trend of migration was accelerated after 2006, and still increasing. Between 2010 and 2013 it also increased. Despite of the different age intervals of the surveys, among the Hungarians living abroad, we find that the proportion of migrants is fairly high in the young age group and slightly high in the age group between 36 and 50. Our research aims to contribute to understand better the attitudes of youth migration.

The Y and Z generations grown up in a world, where you have to hurry forever, they must carry out themselves, and they must build a career. They are living in an interest-driven world, where it is feared that unless you are trying you become amortized, and will be side-lined. The age, the experience themselves are not admired, respected and prestigious (Tari, 2010). Young people are looking for new ways in which networking plays an important role. The world is both shrinking and expanding on it.

### *Some theoretical questions of Y and Z generation mobility attitudes*

Young people in different stages of their lives have different unsettled mobility motivations, they often maneuver through the choices (Mills & Blossfeld, 2005). *Mills and Blossfeld* (2005) have developed a dynamic model of rational decision-making to understand the decisions made in precarious conditions. Three criteria lies behind the young people's

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individual decisions. One of them when the young people make the decision best-fit to their desires, however, it is not a static state, because the desires and ideas are constantly changing depending on the circumstances. Second of them when the young people make decisions taking into account the available information, which is also not static, as the information flows from the environment were constantly being altered, or the individual re-rank their importance. The third criterion: young people are trying to get as much information as possible, which is also dynamic, as gathering the information is partly depending on time, so the individual can determine when it worth to spend more time to acquire the information.

### *Examination of exchange students' mobility attitude*

In this section we present the first results of a research conducted within the framework of an ongoing H2020 project. As part of the MOVE<sup>2</sup> project of 14 semi-structural interviews were made with exchange students who spent at least three months in an EU member country. In our study, three hypotheses were examined in detail:

1. The mobilization is initiated and supported by the parents.
2. Participation in the exchange student program requires a favourable financial conditions.
3. The secondary school pupils gained international experience are more likely that they want to be mobilized again in the future.

Within the learning mobility, we can distinguish the high school students' mobility and the university students' mobility. The exchange student programs provide mobility opportunity for the high school students, usually at their own expense; and in the higher education different training, research and professional scholarships and internships are available for the students to travel abroad. The state, in human capital training, provides only the basic skills, and those who wish to develop further require individually or multiple contributions to solve the funding – through tendering (Rédei, 2009). According to Rédei, mobility for learning purposes is increasing. The mobility of students is beneficiary for both the individual and the host country. The students studying abroad can play the role of mediator in the international economy. Thus, the relationship between "sending" and "receiving" countries can develop the economy (Rédei, 2009). In Table 1, some characteristics of the interviewees can be seen: the destination, the place of residence, and the parents' occupation.

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<sup>2</sup> Mapping mobility – pathways, institutions and structural effects of youth mobility in Europe. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 649263. Webpage: <http://move-project.eu/>

Table 1. Some characteristic of exchange students

|                  | <i>Destination country</i> | <i>Mother's occupation</i> | <i>Father's occupation</i>   | <i>Residence</i>                                     |
|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Emese</i>     | Italy                      | teacher                    | bank employee  | Budapest, previously Debrecen                        |
| <i>Luca</i>      | Germany                    | musician (classical music) | musician (classical music)   | Budapest   |
| <i>Kitti</i>     | Germany                    | teacher                    | doctor   | Budapest, but they are from Szombathely              |
| <i>Niki</i>      | Finland                    | Deputy manager of a hotel  | entrepreneur, manager in a company, member of an exchange organization | Budapest, but they lived previously in Borsod county |
| <i>Dani</i>      | Denmark                    | teacher                    | engineer   | Budapest   |
| <i>Petra 1</i>   | Poland                     | teacher                    | lives separately from the family                                       | Budapest   |
| <i>Petra 2</i>   | France                     | teacher                    | retired train driver   | 10 km from Miskolc                                   |
| <i>Viktor</i>    | Austria                    | doctor                     | doctor   | Szeged   |
| <i>Kincső</i>    | Germany                    | doctor                     | engineer, middle management  | Budapest   |
| <i>Alexandra</i> | Italy                      | bank employee              | policeman  | in a village near to Veszprém                        |
| <i>Panka</i>     | Switzerland                | economist, entrepreneur    | economist, entrepreneur  | Miskolc  |
| <i>Elina</i>     | Finland                    | educator                   | electric engineer  | Budapest   |
| <i>Zsófia</i>    | Belgium                    | speech therapist           | dentist  | Miskolc  |
| <i>Kata</i>      | Netherlands                | teacher                    | managing subsidiary of Austrian company                                | next to the Austrian border                          |

*Source: own edition*

The interviewed exchange students have good family background: the majority of parents are intellectuals (see Table 1). It is typical that parents encourage and advise their children to participate in the programs. In the case of Petra, who was exchange student in France, she discussed the opportunity with her parents and they considered it appropriate, so she submitted her application and her parents financed the mobility. Three persons out of 14 said that their brothers were exchange students as well. In such a case, when the environment of the

person contains relatives or friends with a migration background, it will have an impact on this person, and it increases the likelihood of international migration. Through the exchange of experiences with these relatives and friends the travel costs and risks can be reduced (Taylor, 2001). Niki's father works for an exchange student organization, and he described the program to his daughter as a "must-do opportunity." Kata's mother heard about the exchange program from one of her students, who also offered it to her daughter. First, Kata's family hosted an exchange student, then she also went abroad, the parents fully financed the mobility – they could have sought financial assistance, but they did not ask for, saying that "leaving more for those who really need it." Alexandra's mother informed her daughter about the program: in her workplace, there was a scholarship application opportunity. Emese's father persuaded her to participate in the mobility program supported by the employer's scholarship. All students highlighted the initiative role of the parents.

Besides the parents' recommendations, the type of the secondary school (bilingual, or a higher number of hours of foreign language teaching institutions, educational institutions teaching in German) was a powerful affecting factor for the exchange students. Unlike other high schools, in these institutions the students have language skills at a higher level, or through various programs – sometimes involving foreign students – the foreign culture is brought closer to the students. According to the interviewees, in their secondary school, the promotion of the exchange student programs is actively going on. Most of the exchange students surveyed had a contact with a student exchange organizations: the exchange student organizations gave presentations in educational institutions; there is migration past in the family, the brothers also were exchange students, one of their fathers worked for a student exchange organization.

According to our experiences, the promotion of student exchange programs is more typical in such high schools, where students from wealthier families are studying. During exploring the interview subjects, we visited almost every high school in the country's third largest city, we are only found students studying abroad in such high schools where the students had wealthier families. One reason of it is that the programs are typically financed by their own. According to one of the interviewees, Petra, a student's one-year stay abroad costs two million Hungarian forints, which is an annual average net income in Hungary today.

The third hypothesis is that if someone has already been exchange student, may be more likely to continue their studies abroad in the future or take part of student mobility in the higher education. An expert said that earlier a youth goes abroad, more likely he would be engaged to go abroad in the future too. For example, the chance to continue their higher educational studies abroad is increasing, or a college student may participate more likely in Erasmus program. Nine students out of fourteen planned to study or work abroad. Five out of them specifically intend to continue their studies abroad. Luca has already submitted her application, and she intends to continue her studies in Austria. Kitti is a university

student, after the graduation, she would like to work as a physical education coach in Germany or Austria. Niki is still considering whether to submit her application for abroad. Petra who was exchange student in France is planning to go abroad for a "shorter" period (2-5 years), "either because of learning or any other purpose." Viktor has been working and studying in Vienna, he is going to apply for general medical training, and he would like to continue to work in Austria. Kincső, who was exchange student in Germany, said that when she came home, she wanted to go abroad again in the future, but now she feels that she would stay at home, she thinks this is a difficult decision and "being abroad is good as long as you know when it ends." Discouraging the feeling that she is an alien abroad, the fact that "you're not German." Alexandra did not apply to higher education institution, she is planning to travel to England with her boyfriend. She wants to spend at least a year abroad, because she thinks that it is easier to find work there. She wants to learn some kind of inter-cultural issue, for instance interpretation. Her dream destination is Canada. Her boyfriend is also very interested in foreign opportunities, "he did not have the opportunity to go abroad due to the bad financial conditions." Zsófi would like to go abroad during her higher education studies. Kata has specific plans abroad: she applied for one-year voluntary work in Norway. She would like to know more foreign culture. In addition, she is looking at foreign universities in the Netherlands, where she would travel by Erasmus. The other interviewees are not averse to foreign studies, but they did not talk about specific ideas. If the gross potential of mobility used in the field of migration we measured 64%, if we consider the net potential of it (ie, those who have already taken steps to further stay abroad), then it is 28%.

For exchange students it is unique that they are deeply knowing the foreign culture because they tend to make it in a family. Several people called the host family's youngsters brothers. Referring to the iceberg model, below the level of the water the parts of culture cannot be detected by outside observer. These elements of the culture are unconscious ones, and the individuals acquire them during their socialization processes. In this case the exchange students are located under the iceberg.

It emerged from the interviews that the exchange students are prepared to go abroad because of the exchange student organizes preparatory and orientation camps and they tell them, among other things, that during their stay abroad, how often is recommended to keep in touch with their parents, and that they should more focus on their foreign relationships. The students interviewed were conscious. Petra who was in Poland came up to the idea that "she wants to do something with his life" during her secondary school studies. She could not go abroad previously under a student exchange program due to the financial background of her family, but finally succeeded in applying for a scholarship to seize the opportunities. Before the departure she had already become volunteer for AFS organization in order to move around in

"inter-cultural environment." Luca also came up with the idea by herself: she sat down in front of the Internet and looked after the programs.

Five of thirteen answerers specifically formulated that they went abroad to improve language skills. Some interviewees had a strong influence on the brothers who also went abroad previously, or anybody got an earlier short-term foreign study trip what encouraged them to do it again. The exchange students mentioned the importance of gaining new experiences as well.

Each interviewed exchange student had personality changes. The exchange students confessed themselves that they became more sincere after the mobility and we also observed it during the interviews. Among the personality changes, the self-reliance were mostly mentioned, then the problem-solving, and a few others have pointed out that self-confidence (became more confident, more courageous) has grown and they have become more open.

During the stay abroad, foreign language difficulties were mostly mentioned, especially in the beginning (9 out of 14 mentioned it). Four persons specifically mentioned homesickness. Six interviewees expressed any integration problems, some of them changed receiving family.

According to the evaluation of interviewed students, they considered the development of their personality as the most beneficial, then language learning and gaining experience. Some participants also mentioned the networking and understanding of the culture.

## *Summary*

Based on our investigations we accept our hypotheses. In general, children of wealthier parents who are exchange students. The parents' decision on further studies has great significance when they decide about their children's secondary school enrollment: they consciously inscribe them to bilingual school or school where subjects are taught in foreign language, which is encouraging to become an exchange student. After the exchange year, the majority of interviewed students is still having specific international mobility in future. Our research will continue with the preparation of a new interview, involving experts. The data of the interviews will also be analyzed in detail. In connection with the MOVE project we are going to also examine the attitude of students in higher education institutions. Since this is an international research project in the future so we have the opportunity to learn about the mobility of Norwegian students, which will be evaluated as a comparative case study.

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