



Research into the dilemmas concerning the employment of immigrants in their professions abroad and the depreciation or restoration of their human capital

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of research based on surveys and semi-structured interviews conducted in the framework of fellowship projects on issues of Ukrainian immigration in Turkey and Poland during the 2014-2016 academics years [3-9]. This research allowed us to study the employment issues of Ukrainian immigrants in Turkey and Poland, in particular the depreciation and restoration of their human capital. This subject is timely and topical because the majority of immigrants from Ukraine arrived in these countries possessing a good level of education. Our aim was to discover whether they found jobs relevant to their professions. In these cases we considered whether there had been human capital depreciation and, if so, how it would be possible to restore this loss of human capital.

Keywords: Human Capital, host countries, country of origin, Employment, Poland, Turkey, surveys, semi-structured interviews

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of employment of immigrants is not new. We wrote about this problem in our previous papers “Exploring of the Human Capital Depreciation of Ukrainian Labor Migrants Abroad: Results of a Survey” [7], “Issues in countries of the former Soviet Union as the driving force for female migration to Turkey” [9], and “The role of Ukrainians in the economic growth of Poland” [5], in a book “Women from North move to South: Contemporary migration from the Former Soviet Union countries to Turkey” [3], in the essay “Discourse about Women-Immigrants from Former Soviet Union Countries as a Special Social Group in Turkey” [4], and in a thesis of the 10th Women in Culture Conference “Gender, Culture & Migration 2015” - “Gender equality in case of Ukrainian female migrants in Poland” [8]. We also studied papers by M. Arrazola and J. Hevia [1]; M. Beinea, C. Defoortb and F. Docquier [2]; B.L. Lowell [10]; D. McFadden [11]; J. Mincer and H. Ofek [12]; L. Salmonsson and O. Mella [13]; S.Weber [14], and other colleagues. However in this paper we would like to explore not only any depreciation but also restoration of loss of human capital of Ukrainian immigrants in Turkey and Poland. Restoration is very important not only for the people who possess this human capital but also for their countries of origin and their new homelands.

2. RESULT / EXPERIMENTAL

The methodology of the research consisted of quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative methods consisted of objective measurement and the statistical and numerical analysis of data collected through surveys. Qualitative research consisted of semi-structured interviews, generally referred to as ‘conversation with a purpose’.

The strategy of the research consisted of the following stages: collecting data through surveys and semi-structured interviews; creating a database using the responses; the statistical and numerical analysis of received data.

Our sample for research was taken from Ukrainians in Poland and Turkey, who came to their new countries for a variety of reasons. We aimed to discover their professions, level of education and, for those who wanted to continue to work in their own professions, their opportunities and prospects of obtaining a job in that profession in the new country.

More than 100 respondents in each country have participated in our surveys and semi-structured interviews. The sample for our research was taken from Ukrainian immigrants in Warsaw and Krakow, in Poland and the same number of Ukrainians in Istanbul, Antalya and Izmir, in Turkey.

Our sample consisted of Ukrainian male and female immigrants in Poland and Turkey. However no method of sampling can truly represent the entire Ukrainian population in Turkey and Poland and the resulting margin of error is known as a sampling error.

The most important questions that we wanted to explore in the surveys and semi-structured interviews were:

- the level of education of the immigrants in our sample;
- the number of the immigrants working in their professions;

- the ability to find work in their own professions or even to find any work and what efforts can they take to avoid depreciation of their human capital;
- the possibility of restoring any loss of human capital in their cases.

In order to explore these questions we created questionnaires for surveys and semi-structured interviews, asking about their level of education and their job opportunities in their new countries. Data from these surveys and semi-structured interviews showed that the level of education of Ukrainian immigrants in Turkey and Poland is high.

In Turkey 5% of all respondents were holders of a Doctor of Philosophy; 65% of Master's and Bachelor's degree holders; 12% of College's degree holders, and 18% of High School's degree holders.

In Poland 3% of all respondents were holders of the Doctor of Philosophy; 71% of Master's and Bachelor's degree holders; 19% of College's degree holders, and 7% of High School's degree holders (Table 1).

So, we can say confidently that the level of education of Ukrainian immigrants abroad (at least in our sample for research) is high but the question is - are they able to use their human capital in their new countries?

The situation with employment/unemployment of Ukrainian immigrants in both host countries differs because in Poland labor migration prevails, while in Turkey migration for the purpose of marriage prevails. Thus, if Ukrainian immigrants came to Turkey in order to marry there, the majority of them have some restrictions, for example - sometimes they do not work at all and cannot develop their careers because they remain as housewives. However, even taking this into account, the responses show that in Turkey 17% of these immigrants are working in their professions and in Poland the figure is 23%.

We were convinced that in both host countries some immigrants work illegally. In the case of Turkey 3.8% of respondents who worked, were doing so illegally and 1.5% of the immigrants worked part-time. In the case of Poland 16.5% of Ukrainian immigrants from our sample were working illegally. Of course, immigrants who did not work in their own professions were trying to find ways to use their human capital in their new country in order to prevent the human capital depreciation.

Table 1. Level of education of respondents - Ukrainian immigrants in Turkey and Poland (in %)

| Level of education | Turkey | Poland |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Doctor of Philosophy | 5 | 3 |
| Master's and Bachelor's degree | 65 | 71 |
| College degree | 12 | 19 |
| High School degree | 18 | 7 |

Source: own research in Turkey and Poland

2. 1. Depreciation and Restoration of Human Capital of immigrants

We borrowed the terms “Depreciation” and “Restoration” of human capital from the article “Interrupted Work Careers: Depreciation and Restoration of Human Capital” [12] by J. Mincer and H. Ofek, but the authors used these terms there for exploring the human capital not only of immigrants but also of married women. We have used these terms to explore the human capital of Ukrainian immigrants in Turkey and Poland.

As mentioned above, here we wanted to explore and to find answers to our questions:

- if immigrants cannot work in their own professions or cannot find any work, what can they do to prevent their human capital depreciation?

- how is it possible to restore their human capital?

We explored this step by step and found four methods by which Ukrainian immigrants abroad can prevent their human capital depreciation or can restore their human capital loss.

This depends on the hopes and aspirations of the individual Ukrainian immigrants.

On one hand we saw the success stories of immigrants who set out to be successful. On the other hand we saw many immigrants who did not want to work, either in their own profession or in any other job. From our research we discovered that, in order to prevent human capital depreciation or to restore the loss of human capital, many immigrants study in their new country. For example, in Warsaw adult immigrants can study free of charge in schools for adults at the weekends. They can study three different disciplines in Polish and also learn the Polish language as a separate subject. In Istanbul the situation is the same. The majority of immigrants can study the Turkish language free. This is a first method - to study. Of course, it cannot provide a complete education, but it can help to prevent human capital depreciation or to restore the loss of human capital for immigrants. So, the first method is to study in the new country to prevent human capital depreciation or to restore lost human capital. In our opinion, the second method is to gain recognition of the academic diplomas of foreigners in Turkey and Poland but this is difficult and expensive. Not all immigrants can complete the necessary procedure to gain recognition of their academic diplomas in their new country. In Turkey the procedure to gain this recognition for foreigners can be done at the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) (in Turkish: Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı) in Ankara, the capital of Turkey.

In Poland, this procedure can be done at any state university, which independently determines the cost and timing of the process. However, in reality, it is very difficult for Ukrainian immigrants to gain recognition of their academic diplomas in Poland. We can show a real example of this situation from a paper “The role of Ukrainians in the economic growth of Poland” [5]: *“during our semi-structured interviews we met a 40 year old Ukrainian woman from Luhansk in Krakow who has been unable to confirm her diploma in dentistry for over a year for several reasons. Firstly, it is a long bureaucratic procedure to confirm each discipline in which she has gained qualification in a Ukrainian university. Secondly, this procedure is very expensive for Ukrainians, 4000-4500 PLN (which is more than 1 thousand Euros). Therefore this woman is forced to work as a cleaner in a hostel, when her knowledge and skills could be more usefully employed working as a doctor in dentistry for the host country. This is against the background of young Polish doctors leaving the country en masse.”* Incidentally, the cost of confirmation of Ukrainian Diplomas Ph.D. by Polish universities is 6000 PLN [Nostrification (recognition) procedure. Migrant. (2016). Information on http://www.migrant.info.pl/Nostrification_of_diplomas.html]

So, the second method to prevent human capital depreciation or to restore loss of human capital is to facilitate the recognition of the academic diplomas of immigrant workers.

In our opinion, the third method for Ukrainian immigrants in their new country is to research the prospects and strategies of their stay abroad, particularly in the area of gaining employment. If they have interrupted their professional career and cannot find work in their own profession in the new country, it may be better for them to return to their home country. Of course, interruption of the professional career may happen to anyone, especially immigrants abroad, but, if this interruption is temporary and will have no negative impact on their future life and career, they can use the two methods mentioned above to prevent human capital depreciation or to restore loss of human capital. If this is not possible, it may be better for them to return to their country of origin to work in their own profession.

The following example of the human capital depreciation of a Ukrainian female immigrant in Turkey is from the book “Women from North move to South: Contemporary migration from the Former Soviet Union countries to Turkey” [3]: *“Olga, 45 years old. She was married to a Turkish man for 6 years. She has one son. She did not know the Turkish language, traditions or culture and so her husband's family did not accept her as a daughter-in-law. As a consequence of the bad attitude shown to her by her husband's relatives, she left the host country even though her husband has twice sought reconciliation because of their son. She came back to her country of origin 10 years ago. She has a diploma in teaching, but she works as a seller on a market because she lost her professional skills and knowledge (Brain Waste) and she cannot work as a teacher. This situation demonstrates Human capital depreciation as the woman cannot work in her profession of teacher. She was unhappy in the country of origin and she has no desire ever to return there.”* So, this third method may help to prevent human capital depreciation or to restore loss of human capital.

If human capital depreciation has already occurred, the fourth method for immigrants in their new country is to choose a new profession and obtain the necessary training and experience. The following example is from the book “Women from North move to South: Contemporary migration from the Former Soviet Union countries to Turkey” [3]: *“We met numerous women in Turkey who are in work that is different from their own professions, from translators and teachers of Russian to cleaners and sales people. In these cases their professional human capital cannot develop and this constitutes Brain Waste, which after some time will become human capital depreciation of the professional skills and knowledge. These women will not be able to return to work in their professions nor will they be able to work in the more junior positions”*.

Of course, we also know a lot of cases when immigrants are successful in their new professions abroad even with a complete change of profession. In these cases there is no need for restoration of their human capital and they will have developed a new quality in their human capital. So, the fourth method for Ukrainian immigrants in Poland and Turkey is to change profession and direction of personal development.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we do not claim to speak about all Ukrainian immigrants abroad but we explored cases of the immigrants who came to Poland and Turkey, with a good level of education and who want work abroad in their professions.

Our samples in this research showed that in Turkey 5% of all respondents were Doctors of Philosophy; 65% Master's and Bachelor's degree holders; 12% College's degree holders, and 18% High School's degree holders. In Poland 3% of all respondents were Doctors of Philosophy; 71% Master's and Bachelor's degree holders; 19% College's degree holders, and 7% High School's degree holders.

However only 17% of Ukrainians in Turkey, who participated in our research, and 23% of responders in Poland, worked in their own professions.

So, in order to prevent human capital depreciation and to continue restoration of human capital for immigrants abroad we created the four following methods of approach:

- study in the host country to prevent human capital depreciation and for the restoration of human capital;

- secure the recognition of academic diplomas of foreigners in Turkey and Poland. Although this way is difficult and expensive and not all immigrants can complete the procedure of recognition in their new country, the process must be attempted;

- research the prospects and strategies of staying abroad, particularly in the area of gaining employment. For those whose prospects are slim, rather than abandoning their career and losing the chance of working in their own profession when returning later to their country of origin, it could be better to cut their losses and return to their homeland without delay;

- where human capital depreciation has already occurred, a fourth way for immigrants in staying in their new country is to choose a new profession and direction of personal development.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Oksana Koshulko gained a Ph.D. in Economic Sciences at the National University of Food Technologies in Kyiv, Ukraine. She is an Associate Professor of the Department of Finance and Industrial Economics at Polotsk State University, Belarus and a member of the Association for Women in Slavic Studies (AWSS), USA. She has written around a hundred papers and publications, which have appeared in peer-reviewed journals in Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Poland, and Switzerland. Her books and chapters of books have been published in USA, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Germany and USA. In December 2016 her monograph "Women from North move to South: Contemporary migration from the Former Soviet Union countries to Turkey" was published by the Transnational Press London Ltd., in London, the UK. During her scientific career Dr. Koshulko has received many scholarships and grants, including those from the Association for Women in Slavic Studies, USA; the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey; the Network of East-West Women, USA; the Polish Academy of Sciences "Jozef Mianowski Fund" and the Queen Jadwiga Scholarship Fund of Jagiellonian University, Poland; the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, and from the Polish and the Romanian National Commissions of UNESCO. She continues to develop both her international scientific career and her research into International, Female and Labor Migration.

Dr. Svetlana Kostjukova gained a Ph.D. in Economic Sciences at the Belarus State Economic University in Minsk in 2013. She is an Associate Professor and the Head of the Department of Finance and Industrial Economics at the Polotsk State University, Belarus. She has written numerous of papers and publications that have appeared in journals in Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, and Bulgaria. Her monographs have been published in Belarus and the Russian Federation.

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