

OPTIMISM AND SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING INFLUENCE OVER THE EMIGRATIONAL BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: *The article reviews the topic of the optimistic attitude and the feeling of subjective wellbeing concerning the individual's intention to emigrate in another country. The main theoretical aspects of the given phenomenon are presented, which aspects show a direct connection between optimism, subjective wellbeing and the decision of permanent emigration.¹*

Keywords: optimism; influence; emigrational behavior; state policy; subjective wellbeing.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF OPTIMISM

The word “optimism” is used for the first time by the German philosopher Leibniz (1710) meaning “the greatest good”. The idea of Leibniz is that we live in “the best world possible” where everybody does the most good by the means of the least evil (Nadler, 2010). Later, psychology, probably more than any other scientific field, has dominated in examining the optimistic attitudes mainly as a personal characteristic. During the first half of the XX century, prominent psychologists as Sigmund Freud and Eric Erikson establish the idea of psychology as an inborn human trait (Hristova et al., 2017). From an evolutionary perspective, some sociologists, including the optimism expert Dr. Lionel Tiger, conclude that optimism is one of the distinctive factors that enable the people to progress and develop (Tiger 1985 look Hristova et.al., 2017).

Tiger (1979) regards the optimism as “mood or attitude related to the expectation of social or material future – one that the appraiser considers socially desirable, for his/her advantage or his/her pleasure”. Therefore, optimism is viewed as cognitive, affective, and motivational construct (Peterson 2000, quoted by Seligman & Forgeard, 2012).

While optimists tend to believe that the future will be beneficial for them, pessimists believe that probably bad events will happen to them. As a result, pessimists behave in a way that allows them to prepare themselves for the worse. Thus, optimism and pessimism act as powerful cognitive filters that change people’s perceptions of the world and influence the way they will adapt to new situations. Optimism and pessimism seem to have a significantly important effect over the way people deal with challenges and stress events (Rotondo and al., 2010).

It is believed that optimism is partly genetically predetermined and later is formed by experiences in early childhood (Forgeard & Seligman, 2012).

There is a significant positive association between optimism and coping strategies focused on social support and emphasis on the positive aspects of situations of stress. By us-

ing specific coping strategies optimism has a direct impact on the quality of life. There lies the proof that optimistic people have better life quality compared to those with low levels of optimism or even to the pessimists. Optimism can significantly influence psychical and physical wellbeing through the encouragement of a healthy lifestyle and through adaptive behavior and cognitive answers that are related to larger agility, problem-solving ability, and better assimilation of the negative events. In perspective, positive correlations are found between optimism and physical/psychical wellbeing by topic-related research (ex. Forgeard & Seligman, 2012).

Other research, conducted by Petersen and Seligman (quoted by Rotondo et al., 2010), that is mainly targeted at the understanding of the psychological foundations of pessimism, leads to the notion of opposition – optimism as “attribution style”, characterized with its tendency to believe that the negative events are volatile (the negative event won’t occur again), external (I don’t carry the responsibility of the event), and specific (the event is “specific”, self-restraining and won’t influence other activities in my life). Optimists believe that positive events are more stable and occur more often than negative ones. They believe that they can avoid the problems in their daily life by disallowing to be influenced by that and thus optimists cope better in stressful situations than non-optimists.

According to M. Seligman (Seligman & Forgeard, 2012), the essence of optimism consists in the special way of attribution – a special way of explanation of the reasons for success or failure. Optimists, Seligman believes, have several advantages: they are more initiative, energetic, they are less likely to fall into depression, and the results of their action usually seem more impressive. They make a better impression on others.

Human helplessness is caused by the inability of control, and to foresee and foretell events from the outside world. In this view, the education of possible control to the outside world begins at an early child’s age. In that same period optimism appears as an individual psychological phenomenon, connected

to happiness or as a component of the dyad “optimism - pessimism”. Not enough ideas connected to this dyad are at hand yet even at a level of making a differentiation between optimists and pessimists in their perception of the same events in their lives. The information about the connection between optimism with other psychological phenomenon is insufficient, its structural organization, and its forming and development factors (Rotondo and al., 2010).

Approaches in the conceptualization of optimism

Optimism, examined by the level of the individual specifics and differences is conceptualized and presented by the researches during the last decades in two main ways: as “optimistic explanatory style” and as “dispositional optimism”.

• Optimistic explanatory style

The first way for the conceptualization of optimism, the “optimistic explanatory style” is an approach, developed by Seligman and colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania (Seligman & Forgard 2012). This perspective is inspired by the statement that more – but not all – animals and people give up and become helpless when they are exposed to uncontrollable stress, and later continue to act helpless even when the stressors are already controllable (Seligman & Forgard 2012) – this phenomenon is called “acquired helplessness”. They examine how people explain the uncontrollable situations that they have met and found out that those who show acquired helplessness are prone to possess “pessimistic explanatory style”, believing that the negative events are inevitable (“that will always be in the future”) or make more genius conclusion (“their whole life is ruined”). More often than the others they blame themselves for the bad events (“it’s my fault”) and don’t hold on the good ones (“I was just lucky”). They believe that the good events won’t last long (“Today, I just performed well but who knows what will happen in future”) or that they affect only one aspect of their lives (“I may be good at this

but otherwise I’m quite foolish”) (Seligman & Forgard, 2012).

On the other hand, individuals that always succeed in taking control over the stress situation and don’t fall into helplessness are prone to have “optimistic explanatory style” and believe that negative events aren’t a stable constant in their lives (“things will get better soon”) (Seligman & Forgard, 2012). Therefore, according to this perspective, the optimists admit the presence of negative events but they think of them in a constructive, not in a fatalistic way.

• Dispositional optimism

The second way of conceptualization of optimism is connected to the so-called “dispositional optimism” which is deriving from researches, developed by Schaver and Carver (quoted by Seligman & Forgard, 2012).

The dispositional optimism concerns the tendency to have overall positive expectations for the future. It is defined as a general expectation that more good (desired) events will happen in the future than bad (undesired) ones (Blackwell et al., 2012). These summarized expectations spring from the common self-regulation model of purposeful activity. Per se, important goals motivate the behavior as well as internal self-centering, the evaluation if a person feels capable or confident that the goal achievement is possible. The result is that the evaluation leads to the formation of the expected duration of the result that is positive or negative (i.e. I can or cannot achieve the goal).

Most people show “optimistic bias” expecting positive rather than negative events to occur in the future without needing supporting evidence (Blackwell et al., 2012). It is stated that optimism is an adaptive and important product of human evolution (Sharot, 2011). Growing evidence shows that optimism influences not only the general wellbeing but also on the physical and mental health (Carver et al., 2010). Researches show that higher levels of optimism are connected to the lower cumulative frequency of depression with a reduced risk of future cardiovascular diseases in several populations (Boehm et al., 2011), and even

to lower death rate (Blackwell et al., 2012). In other words, optimists not only think but also feel positive about the future.

OPTIMISM AND SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING (HAPPINESS)

In recent years, in the world scientific literature more and more publications are dedicated to the problem of subjective wellbeing – happiness. Optimism is highlighted as the main component in their structure. The monography of Michael Argyle's "Psychology of Happiness" is one of the main components of the first scientific works dedicated to happiness and optimism, which monography summarizes some preliminary results of happiness research from scientists from all over the world (Argyle, 2003).

Argyle believes that happiness is a separate factor in the human experience but it consists of 3 areas, partly independent factors: life satisfaction, presence of happy emotions, and lack of negative emotions. Three main reasons for the condition of happiness are traditionally pointed out: optimism as an attitude towards the successful development of events, existence of life purpose, high and stable self-esteem. These three indicators can be considered as the main elements of positive thinking.

The majority of investigators consider optimism as the most significant and key component of happiness. Argyle points out that the larger part of people possesses a positive attitude towards the world but it is more pronounced in some of the cases. Optimism is defined as a *general expectation for the positive development of future events* (Argyle, 2003). People attract the expected events to some extent since they act according to their attitudes and anticipations. We tend to think that optimistic people have "luck in their life". Partly, this is because optimists are prone to so-called positive thinking. It includes: predomination of thoughts of positive content and assigning the occurrence of positive events to personal merits, also the sense of humor that allows the individual to see the comic side of things. Optimism can rest on the philosophical view to-

wards life ("Whatever happens everything is for the better") but also can be based on a bad experience from heavy psychological trauma ("Everything that doesn't kill me makes me stronger"). In every case, optimism includes one type of dominating focus that underlines and emphasizes. Optimism strongly influences mental and physical health conditions and in particular, that of the immune system, increasing our ability to oppose illnesses.

Optimists feel less stress and the lack of pessimism and optimistic view of life are key components of happiness. They believe that others have a good opinion of them. This regard towards life makes optimists happier than pessimists. A positive attitude leads to higher activity in searching. The one that is optimistically predisposed often creates situations that bring luck and success and benefit his independent development.

Optimists are more successful in coping with stress compared to pessimists. They have better health because they are less prone to different ailments. Besides this, optimists are more likely to lead others after them. Optimistic thoughts and elevated spirit of a man inspire similar thoughts in the minds of the others.

Viktor Frankl says that the accomplished goal creates a reason for happiness. Happiness automatically and spontaneously follows by the goal realization. Therefore the aspiration for happiness can't be an end by itself (Posohova, 2009).

It is important that optimism is always connected to the experience of joy and real emotions. The sources of positive emotions are various. Between the psychological components of optimism, *self-esteem* takes a special place. The high self-evaluation of the optimist is combined with the willingness for the resolution of conflict communication situations by overcoming the given barriers and by achieving the goal.

OPTIMISM AND RISK-TAKING /UNREALISTIC OPTIMISM/

Unrealistic optimism is defined as a favorable difference between risk assessment that people make for themselves and risk assessment

offered by an objective standard (as epidemic data, basic data) and so on (Shapperd et al., 2015). Unrealistic optimism includes a comparison of oneself to others in an unjustly favorable way. This definition does not explain how exactly the difference is manifested. It can reflect distortion in the personal assessment of risk, distortion of perceived risk from the goal for comparison, or both. An assumption can be made about why this difference exists. It can derive from several motivational sources as a willingness to deny vulnerability as harmful for the identity or from cognitive processes such as addiction to the positivity of the personality, egocentric thinking, or excessive use of representativeness (Shapperd et al., 2015).

From a *social knowledge* point of view, a third of the perspective supports the thesis that optimism is a consequence of cognitive underestimation of risk, in other words, it comes as an “addiction” of the self. This bias reflects the optimist’s attitude that positive events are more likely to happen to him, and negative would affect mainly others. Weinstein (quoted by Rotondo et al., 2010) defines that phenomenon as “unrealistic optimism”. Optimistic bias is not a personal trait as dispositional optimism but it is more of a systematic cognitive distortion connected to the consideration of the personal likelihood of encountering negative events. Optimistic bias is defined as a result of the joint operation of two mechanisms. The first is connected to the cognitive factors as a lack of information and a critical point of view over personal cognitive abilities. The second has a motivational character that is tightly connected to the defense mechanisms and preservation of self-esteem.

In various researches, the connection between risk perception and unrealistic optimism that leads to risk situations is being measured. Unrealistically – optimistic subjects are prone to perceive themselves as less exposed to risk compared to the pessimists.

A strong conclusion in social psychology is that people assess the negative events as less likely to occur to themselves in comparison to others – a behavior showing that people are “unrealistically optimistic” in their risk judgment related to future life events. For almost

30 years the maxima that “People have an optimistic bias in terms of personal risk” is perceived (Adam et al., 2011), i.e. they are “prone to believe they are inviolable” (Weinstein 1980), and “are often over-optimistic about the future” (Chambers, Windschitl & Suls, 2003). Unrealistic optimism in terms of risk is frequently examined as a singular aspect of more general willingness for self-perfection that also includes another phenomenon – planned delusion (Buehler & Griffin, 2003), *the illusion of control* (Langer & Roth, 1975), the tendency of people to overestimate their personal abilities in comparison to those of others (the so-called *better than the average effect*; ex. Svenson, 1981), and statement for *overconfidence* in one’s own judgment (Adam et al., 2011).

The term “unrealistic optimism” therefore is used for marking the assessment of future life events risk.

Research often establish that engagement with risk behavior is connected to increased unrealistic optimism. The more risk behavior people have the more vulnerable they feel as a result of the negative consequences of this behavior (Adam et al., 2011).

It turns out that the assessments of people about their own risks are qualitatively different from those that they make in about the risk taken by others. Researches investigating the possibility of unrealistic optimism connected to people’s evaluations of positive events are quite fewer than the ones investigating negative events, and results of positive events are far more categorical. A series of optimism research has registered that people think it’s far more likely for them to experience positive events than the average person (Campbell et al., 2007) but others report for pessimistic attitudes in that direction (Adam et al., 2011).

OPTIMISM, SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING AND EMIGRATIONAL BEHAVIOR

• *Optimism and emigration at National policy level*

The oldest idea that economic development determines emigration dates back to the 19th

century and is connected to the name of the geographer Ernest Rawnstein (1885, 1889) and the relation that he does between emigration and resource distribution (Gamlan, 2014). The connection between emigration and development is considered from two viewpoints – optimistic and pessimistic. Optimistic arguments tend to show the relation as an “immaculate circle” where progress is driven by mobility (Wise & Covarrubias, 2009) while pessimist argument considers the relation as a “vicious cycle” where underdevelopment drives emigration and the latter grows based on it. As in all analyses, through the terms “optimism” and “pessimism” a complicated reality is being simplified but they are already familiar and handy analytical categories that let an important, massive, and long-term tendency to be followed.

The optimistic opinions of emigration remain steady through the 50s and the 60s but are followed by a pessimism wave in the 70s and 80s before the new rebirth during the 90s and 2000s (de Haas, 2012).

Firstly, the optimism about emigration and development arises in the 50s and 60s during the economic expansion when emigration as a mechanism of “balanced growth” is observed (Gamlen, 2014). The main purpose of the emigrational situation back then is that the salary increase urges the companies in the emigrating countries, to invest in more productive technologies rather than in hiring more workers that lead to new economic growth through innovation.

The new optimism for emigration dates back to the 90s, along with an economic boom, leading to larger emigration labor demand. This confidence towards the emigrant impact over progress is supported by the so-called “new economy of labor emigration” – a theoretical paradigm, introduced by Stark and developed by Macy, Taylor, and others (quoted by Gamlen, 2014).

It is considered that emigrants win in terms of their development along with one other inherent good – the freedom of movement (de Haas & Van Rooij, 2010) in a sense that their movement can bring large profit. The destination countries also take advantage of qualified

and entrepreneur emigrants that bring along new ideas and technologies (Niebuhr, 2010) and contribute in taxes more than they consume (Dustmann et al., 2010). Emigrants with low qualifications take labor positions that the local workers are unwilling to take, keeping the battle with inflation and low remuneration (Gamlen, 2014).

Indeed, the new optimism includes new elements. According to the new optimism, the key variable is emigrational politics: if the politics are right – everybody benefits from emigration. The new optimism offers a list of policies – a prescription for minimization of risks and sizing the prizes related to emigration. The countries should open legal channels for emigration aiming to minimize the irregular influx. But they need to rule these channels by following the market needs (to prevent salary competition and ethnic tension) and stimulate development and aims that are set (helping origin countries to keep their key talents, trained for social benefit). Ways for organizing social mobility have to be found, and for encouraging the integration of emigrants through support from civil groups, working with emigrants. The optimistic “approach for balanced growth” that reached its peak in the 60s considers that the pluses of the emigration surpass the minuses that lead to a new equilibrium between capital and labor, which eventually stimulates development. Even though optimism isn’t brand new on its own, it has new elements in the existing thinking, especially the idea that emigration benefits all (Gamlen, 2014).

For this reason, the trade unions, and especially the ones that represent local workers in the low-skilled sector, often oppose emigration thinking that emigrants overtake the working places of local workers and undermine the local wages and working conditions. In an economic upsurge, when the growth is significant and the unemployment is low, those type of emigrational control tends to “loosen”. But anti-migration attitudes become even sharper in economic downturns when the employers strive to decrease the labor expenses by layoffs and/or hiring cheaper workforce. For this reason, anti-migration

politics often is adaptable and is impacted by economic cycles.

Another aspect is developed in Rays research (2010) that is related to optimism and emigration among scientists in Romania. The author points that the research is conducted in 2000 and the examined sample contains 210 people, but he also shares that it is representative for Romanian scientists as hires workers on a regular working time as lecturers in the Public universities. The optimism is discussed through a couple of topics, referring not only to the evaluation of personal future but also to the evaluation of the Romanian society as a whole. The questions are connected to the researched group's own projects in a 5-year perspective along with the perceived "direction of development" of the Romanian society. The results show that scientists are far more optimistic about their own future but are also not less optimistic about that of their country. Only a third of them considers that Romania's direction of development is negative in comparison to over 60% of the nation's opinion in the relatively same period. Only 12% think that their status will worsen in the coming years while almost 40% think that it will improve. On the other hand, only 23% of the general population is optimistically inclined during this period (see Reisz, 2010). The general conclusion of this research is that mobility (the tendency for emigration) seems to be more strongly connected with the social pessimism, compared to the individual pessimism.

- ***Subjective wellbeing/ happiness/ and emigration***

In the newer literature, the role of the subjective wellbeing in terms of emigration is examined i.e. the research interest is aimed at if the people that are less happy or those that have the highest happiness levels are more willing to move abroad (Otrachshenko & Popova, 2014).

There are several important reasons to examine the association between subjective wellbeing and the decision to emigrate. First, the local and national authorities around the world more and more consider the subjective

wellbeing to be the key variable of the policy covering the individual welfare and society's progress (Helliwell et al. 2013). Second, it's proven that the higher levels of individual subjective wellbeing lead to bigger productivity (Oswald et al., 2015) and creativity (Ivlevs, 2015).

It is examined if the emigration attempt makes people happier (Nikolova & Gream, 2015) and if emigration influences over the welfare of the receiving populations and sending countries (Akay et al., 2014), the physical health (Diener and Chan, 2011), the sociability, the quality of inter-social relations, the social capital and social behavior (De Neve et al., 2013), as well as the larger possibility for the people to be hired and promoted or to receive a higher level of education and income (Ivlevs, 2015).

Therefore, if a country accepts emigrants it should show interest if it also receives a better share of happy people. The more productive, more healthy, and more communicative emigrants would likely cause less pressure on the social system of the state and would integrate more successfully into the receiving society. Despite this, the opposite side of every "happiness gain" for the countries that receive emigrants is "draining of happiness" for the sending countries. The policymakers of the latter have to be concerned about the withdraw of happy people. In that way, similarly to the human capital, happiness is a valuable resource that both receiving and sending countries may wish to acquire or keep.

On the other hand, a few pieces of research on a micro-level suppose that there is more likely a negative connection between the subjective wellbeing /happiness/ and the intend or desire to emigrate. Otrachshenko and Popova (2014) use the data of the Eurobarometer to prove that in Central and Eastern Europe people are less happy with their lives and are more willing to declare their emigration intentions – in international and internal scope. Gream, Markovitz (2011) and Chindarkar (2014) state that in Latin America the subjective wellbeing and the intentions for emigration have negative relation (Otrachshenko & Popova, 2014). Kay and co. (2014), uncover

the negative association between life satisfaction and the desire for emigration in an international scope, using Gallup World Survey data for 166 countries. A more mixed picture is reported by Polgreen and Simpson (2011), who study the life satisfaction, emigration and inter-relations on a national level to find out that the share of emigration drops in countries with a relatively low index of subjective wellbeing, when the average happiness in the country increases, while the opposite is true for countries with relatively higher wellbeing index. The higher share of emigration is observed in the countries with the highest index of subjective wellbeing, and those with the lowest index of subjective wellbeing.

A serious intention of living abroad comes from the people that are most and least satisfied with their lives. This relation slightly varies in different countries and different cultural contexts. Furthermore, while the existing literature offers important ideas about the *connection* between life satisfaction and the willingness to emigrate, little is known about the *effect* of subjective wellbeing over the decision to emigrate. Van Dalen and Hankens (2013) discover that a third of the local Holland's residents who have stated intentions to move abroad emigrate in the next 5 years.

Research conducted by Böheim and Taylor (2002) shows that the tendency towards internal migration in Great Britain is trice as high for those who have earlier stated preference to migrate compared to the one who hasn't. On a theoretical level, De Jong (2000) states that the migration intention is the main determinant for migration behavior, and Burda and co. (1998) claim that the intentions are a function of the variables that motivate the emigration.

It's usual for the economists and other social scientists to look at the emigration decision as an investment: people go abroad if their benefits surpass the losses. Despite this, if we accept that 1) instead of their income people increase their wellbeing/happiness to the maximum, and 2) people believe that higher happiness levels can be achieved abroad, the frame predicts that individuals with a low level of subjective wellbeing to be

more prone to emigrate since they have the biggest gain (in terms of happiness) of emigration. The forecast that it's most likely for people with a low level of happiness to emigrate mainly depends on the assumption that they believe in the higher level of happiness that is accomplishable only abroad. Potential migrants can learn through friends, parents, or media about the foreign experience of the already emigrated people, and those experiences can transfer signals for better wellbeing as well as for lower wellbeing. For instance, a study conducted in Latvia in 2013 shows that people are divided almost equally about whether they think emigration leads to a happier life. As much as 15% of the respondents answered "Yes" to the question "Without considering the financial issues, do you think that Latvian migrants who live abroad are happier than when they lived in Latvia?", 27% answered with "Probably yes", 28% say "Probably not", 14% say "No", and 16% find it hard to answer (DNB Banka 2013 quoted by Ivlevs 2015).

The analysis of emigration expenses shows interesting results. In the traditional version that is income orientated, the poorest people rarely emigrate because a certain level of income is needed to cover emigrational expenses. Analogically, it can be assumed that a certain happiness level is needed for emigration to be provoked. It is controversial if people should be optimists, confident, open, and sociable in order to transfer the borders and adapt to a new medium. Since these characteristics are probably related to happiness, a positive relationship can be expected between happiness and emigration. Proof of the assumption that emigrants share definite personal characteristics, that could walk hand in hand with happiness exist. For example, Ek and co (2008) found out that the internal migrants in Finland are more optimistic and satisfied with life compared to non-migrants. Boneva and Frieze (2001) state that emigrants in Eastern Europe have higher motivation for achievements compared to non-emigrants (for example expressed in their readiness to exceed their own standards of excellent achievement and to do something challenging and unique),

and strong motivation related to the willingness to be recognized and to impress others. Polgreen and Simpson (2011) also claim that happier people are more tend to be optimistic, adventurous, and ready to look for new opportunities abroad.

Another way to present the positive correlation between happiness and emigration is connected to returning to the traditional version of the neoclassical model and the perception that emigration leads to a happier life. In spite of this, people still relate emigration to higher income and in fact, they increase their salaries, not their subjective wellbeing.

If people with a higher level of subjective wellbeing are clear that they are more productive, creative, communicative and have better chances to be hired, promoted or proposed for a raise, compared to the people with a lower level of subjective wellbeing (De Neve et al., 2013), then they would be more asserted in their ability to consider emigration in similar conditions.

That positive link between happiness and emigration intentions would be more suitable for poorer countries where income from emigration increases. It could also be said that in states where the individual development is hindered by ineffective governments and limited upward mobility, the more ambitious and entrepreneur people who love freedom can think of emigration as a strategy to improve their social-economic status. If these personal characteristics are related to happiness, one can expect a stronger positive connection between happiness and emigration in countries where the institutions are ineffective and the chances for personal and professional growth are small.

In short, a positive, as well as a negative connection between happiness and emigration decision, can exist. It is also possible that the link between both variables to be stronger in poorer countries, and countries with weak institutions and limited opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Happiness increase can lead to a larger desire for emigration – probably reflecting the role of optimism (Polgreen & Simpson, 2015), and motivation (Boneva & Friz, 2001)

in shaping the emigration decision. From this point of view, the presumption is made that it's more likely for people who report that are least happy of life to have emigration intentions.

The analysis (Ivlevs, 2015) connected to the social-demographic control coefficients correspond to the expectations to a large extent: women, elderly people, and the ones with health issue show less desire to emigrate while unmarried and those who participate in migrant networks are more likely to do so.

The problems with endogeneity can appear if the preparation for emigrating can temporarily make people less or more happy, according to their basic and long-term happiness levels. For instance, the future migrant that is expecting a separation from friends and family can feel anxiety and report a lower than usual subject wellbeing level.

There is some proof that comes from the internal migration literature. For example, Nowok and co (2013) state that internal migrants in Great Britain feel a significant decrease in their life satisfaction immediately before the transfer. However, a return to the normal levels of life satisfaction doesn't occur after the transfer and they remain as they are. If the preparation for movement to a country makes the people less happy, there is an essential reason to be believed that preparation for going abroad can have the same if not larger negative effects over the subjective wellbeing.

Changes in personal circumstances such as the decay of family members relations or work-place troubles can make people consider moving abroad, and at the same time to temporarily decrease the happiness that they feel.

The results suggest U-shape connection between life satisfaction and emigration intentions – many satisfied and many dissatisfied with their lives intend to move abroad in the upcoming year, while people close to the mean of the distribution of life satisfaction are the least probable to do it.

The last data show that higher levels of subjective wellbeing make people more productive, creative, healthy, and sociable. "The leaking" of happy people "drains the happi-

ness”, and that will deprive the countries that send emigrants of their positive influence. On the other hand, the positive selection of migrants based on their subjective wellbeing has to be good news in the receiving countries. The happier, thus more productive, healthier, and more communicative emigrants most probably will make a lesser pressure on the social state and will integrate more easily in the receiving communities.

Economists and social scientists tend to look to the emigration solution as an investment: rational, maximally useful individuals move abroad if the benefits from this act surpass the expenses. In this frame, the expenses and the benefits from emigration usually are represented by the income throughout the whole life that could be earned in the home country and abroad. The main forecast is that is poorer people are more prone to emigrate. However, remuneration isn't the only thing that people would like to maximize. In this frame, if people strive to maximally increase happiness instead of income, and if they believe that they can achieve higher levels of happiness abroad, the forecast is that people with lower subjective happiness levels are more prone to emigrate because they mostly want to earn happiness from emigration.

In reality, the poorest people most often don't emigrate because they don't reach the threshold of income necessary to cover their emigrational costs. Analogically, it can be assumed that a certain level of happiness is needed to trigger emigration. People have to be optimistic, confident, frank, and sociable to decide to cross the borders and to adapt to a new environment. Because these characteristics are tightly connected to happiness, a positive relationship between happiness and emigration can't be excluded.

Research and data collected for the same people with time show that the emigration plans are a good forecast for actual behavior. Regardless, not everyone with certain emigrational plans and a general desire to emigrate actually does it. A large share of the work that observes the connection between happiness and emigrational intention is done by Latin America research data. One of the pioneer-

ing research in the field that uses data from 5 waves (2004, 2006-2009) (18 countries with over 90 000 interviews), found out that the higher happiness levels are correlated to lower emigration predisposition, determined by the positive answer to the question: “Have you or have members of your family ever seriously thought of moving abroad?” (Ivlevs, 2015). This research also disclosed that expected Latin America's emigrants have higher levels of wealth and lower levels of happiness.

The people that are satisfied with their lives are less likely to say that they plan to move abroad with 2 to 4 p.p. in comparison to the unsatisfied people. In addition, according to happiness and emigration decision research (Ivlevs, 2015), it is determined that highly educated people who are unhappy with life are far more likely to consider emigration.

The same research also compares the connection between the life satisfaction and emigrational intentions in the older 15 members of EU (Western European countries) and the 10 newer members (Central and Eastern European countries) which joined the block in 2004 and 2007 (including Bulgaria). The difference between the emigrational intentions among the ones most and least satisfied with their lives is larger in the countries from Western Europe, which would mean that this discontent with life is a more important emigration engine in the wealthier countries.

Among the people who express willingness to emigrate, the higher levels of subjective wellbeing usually are connected to the larger possibility of taking concrete actions towards emigration.

According to the research of the 27 countries in the EU, research of Gallup defines that subjective wellbeing is a strong negative predictor to the general willingness for emigration more in the rich countries compared to the poor. On a regional level, the negative connection between subjective wellbeing and the willingness for emigration is stronger in Europe and weaker in other parts of the world. The Gallup study also finds out that subjective wellbeing is a stronger predictor of the desire for emigration compared to the household income, simultaneously admitting that income

can be an important component for the subjective wellbeing.

Most research that is monitoring the connection between subjective wellbeing and emigrational intentions at an individual level suggests that people with higher happiness rates have a lower desire to emigrate.

Several pieces of research show that people that want to emigrate are less happy than those who don't. The less happy people are more likely to express willingness to emigrate if they live in richer countries or are more educated. Also, personal characteristics such as big ambitions, greater abilities, motivation, and the predisposition to risk behavior can influence happiness along with the desire for emigration (Ivlevs, 2015).

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