

Potential emigration from post-communist Prague

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Abstract: This article deals with the potential emigration from Prague. The analysis is based on a questionnaire survey implemented in 1996, in 30 Prague's enterprises. The respondents were divided into 3 groups: probable migrants (including the "real" migrants), potential migrants, and people lacking an interest in migration. These groups were compared by family status, education, occupation, income, reasons and barriers for migration, and countries of destination.

Key Words: migration, potential emigrants, real emigrants, probable emigrants

Introduction

One of the main features of the post Communist period has been a visible decrease in the number of emigrants. According to the Czech Statistical Office, the number declined from 4113 in 1990 to 468 in 1992. This considerable drop can be explained by the inaccuracy and underestimation of data collection, because since 1991, only those who voluntarily and officially "deregister" from their permanent residence in the Czech Republic, and return their identity cards, are recorded as emigrants. It can be assumed that the real number of emigrants do not reach significantly higher levels than those in the official figures. One of the explanation should be free movement of people towards the West and possibility to work abroad. However, there is a substantial increase in the temporary migration of the Czech nationals to the advanced western countries. The newly acquired right to free movement, coupled with increasing unemployment, a decline in living standards among some groups, and the opportunity for better salary income, has led many people to search for work abroad.

It is very difficult to estimate the total number of Czech nationals working in foreign countries because only the employment through intergovernmental agreements is registered by the state authorities. Because objective and credible data on emigration are not available, the findings of special surveys have become an important tool for estimating current and future migration flows.

This paper is trying to discuss and answer following questions:

Are the citizens of Prague interested in working abroad? If conditions in Prague were such that city had a high concentration of skilled workers; if Prague had jobs available with good wages and if there are possibilities for work in international firms; then, would the citizens want to migrate? Which kind of barriers influence emigration decisions?

Methods

The analysis on migration potential in Prague is based on a two round survey¹. The quota sample in the first round consisted of a total of 2000 employees (to ensure that the cohort of potential out-migrants provided a statistically robust sample) who were chosen as representative of the 30 selected enterprises (the enterprises were incidentally/causally selected and were divided into 4 groups: private, state, joint ventures and foreign firms). In the second round 600 respondents-employees were chosen from the original sample. Firstly, the original respondents were divided into three groups according to their answers to two key questions: "Have you ever had to seek work abroad?" and "Would you like to work abroad now?"

Group 1: The respondents who answered "yes" to both questions.

Group 2: The respondents who answered yes/no, no/yes.

Group 3: The respondents who answered negatively to both questions.

Secondly, from the first group, 30 % of respondents were randomly selected. Similarly, from second and third group, we selected 40 % and 30 % respectively. This created a sample for the second round of questionnaire survey.

The questionnaire conducted during the second round consisted of about 65 questions which comprised a series of issues: intentions to migrate (barriers and assumptions); basic socio-demographic characteristics; and, emigration experience. The interviews lasted an average of 40-50 minutes and the questionnaire was administered in the form of personal interviews.

The "real", probable, and potential emigration

To determine the potential for emigration one cannot merely ask people whether or not they would like to live abroad for sometime. Every intention to migrate involves a probability element. According to the answer to the question "Do you intend to live abroad for a more than one year?", three groups of respondents were chosen:

1. Probable and real² emigration group. Those who answered yes, I already made initial steps.

2. Potential emigration group. Those who answered yes, but not just now.

3. Non emigration group (answer was no)

(In the further research we investigate only the first two groups, which are named Prague I and Prague II)

If we start by considering the general emigration potential, it is possible to compare our results in Prague with the other previous surveys within the Czech Republic. However, it is necessary to be very cautious with the explanation of the results because of the different methodology.

¹ This study was accomplished under the survey of the University of Tampere (Finland) held by the Project of the Social Changes in the Central and Eastern parts of Europe (May-June 1996 in Warsaw, Bratislava, Talinn and Prague).

² The actual emigration in Prague was 1.2 %. This number was included into the group labeled as "the probable emigrants group".

According to a survey by Fassmann in 1996 (see Table 1), approximately 21 % of the Czechs interviewed claimed to be thinking of emigrating in the early 1990's. The corresponding figures for Poland were nearly 17 %, Hungary about 20 % and Slovakia as high as 30 %, which does correspond with the actual economic situation of particular countries.

It can be seen from Table 1 that Prague plays important role in the emigration potential within the Czech Republic³. It indicates that the urban and metropolitan areas could be main driving force behind the emigration, especially labour emigration. But for this assumption is necessary to make similar surveys in other metropolitan areas (and then compare the 1980's and 1990's).

Table 1 General, probable and "real" emigration potential

	General Migration Potential as %*	Probable Migration Potential as %*	"real" migration Potential as %*
Prague*)	21.4	13.6	1.2
Czech Republic	20.1	11.6	2
Slovakia	30.3	17.7	2.1
Poland	16.6	5.5	1.3
Hungary	20.5	8.7	0.7

(Sources: Gallup Survey, June-July 1996, official statistics of the countries concerned, my own figures)

* as % of total population over 14 years

*) Sources: Survey under the University Tampere Project, May-June 1996, own figures

Similar results have been proved by the institution AISA in October 1994, with the representational sample of 1,120 people of the Czech Republic. According to the survey: 15 % of the Czech Republic's population would choose to live in countries other than the Czech Republic; in Prague the figure was 18 %. The favorite destinations for Prague citizens were Great Britain and France (both 15 %), followed by Australia, the USA, The Netherlands and Switzerland (each 10 %).

The survey made by Institute for Public Opinions Research (IVVM) in September 1996 shown that 37 % of respondents from the Czech Republic would like to live or work abroad. In comparison, the survey from 1995 indicated a mere 8 %. This radical change can be explained by the worsening economical and social situation since the 1996.

Structural Characteristics of Potential Emigrant

Which population groups consider emigrating? Those who can be seen as losing out in the transition process and who consider working in Western Europe as a way to secure their existence? Or those who are perfectly successful and almost established in their own country but who want to enjoy higher incomes in the potential target countries? What

³ During the 1980s it was clearly indicated that the metropolitan and urban population was the main driving force behind emigration (Drbohlav 1994).

prevents or prompts people to leave their homeland? Do relatives play an important part in their decision? All these questions should be answered by an empirical survey which can determine the profile of particular emigrant groups.

Who want to migrate?

The socio-demographic ideal migrant type is young, well educated male (Berenczi, Sik, 1995). In Fassmann's study there was a ratio of 2:1 in favore of men over women in the Czech Republic. However our research in Prague shows different results. The share of women is equal or higher than in the case of men (see Table 2). One of the explanations for this result is that the education standard of females living in Prague is higher in comparison to females living in other regions of the Czech Republic. Prague females are situated higher on the so-called "socioeconomic ladder".

Table 2 Gender Distribution and Age Structure of Potential Emigrants as Percentages

	male	female	under 24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Czech Rep. *)	66.1	33.9	43.4	14.3	17	17.9	7.4
Prague I.	51	49	19	22	22	12.8	18
Prague II.	41	59	22	18	14.7	23	17.3

Sources: Survey under the University Tampere Project, May-June 1996, own figures

*) Sources: Gallup Survey, June-July 1996, official statistics of the countries concerned, own figures

The highest number of those who intend to migrate was in the age group under 24 in the Czech Republic's population (43.4 %), while in Prague's two groups is the distribution more equal. The possible reason is that in Prague there are more highly skilled people in each age group than is the Czech average (language skills, experience in foreigners firms, etc.)

In the category under 30 years, about 40 % of respondents in each group were unmarried (42 % in the first, 46.6 % in the second).

Together with age and gender, family status also influences the intention to migrate. The results in Prague show that the share of both unmarried and married respondents in both categories of potential and probable emigrants is about the same – 40–47 %. The high share of married people is surprising, however, working abroad generates an increase in the family income. A similar situation was also found by the survey for the whole of the Czech Republic whereby unmarried people form the largest group (50.5 %).

Table 3 Family Status of Potential Emigrants as Percentages

	unmarried	married	divorced	separated	widowed
Czech Rep. *)	50.4	34.5	13.4	0.4	1.3
Prague I.	42	43.6	11.5	1.3	1.3
Prague II.	46.6	40	12.3	1	–

Sources: Survey under the University Tampere Project, May-June 1996, own figures

*) Sources: Gallup Survey, June-July 1996, official statistics of the countries concerned, own figures

While the total emigration development in the Czech Republic in the second half of the 1980's can be characterized by relative stability; the annual share of university educated people fluctuated between 11–14 % from the total number of emigrants (for details see Drbohlav 1994). According to a survey that was carried out by the institute AISA in 1994, only 10 % from the total number of emigrants were high educated people. Prague is one of the most preferred education centers in the Czech Republic. Consequently, the higher level of education will, eventually, help potential emigrants achieve better job prospects in the labour market and a greater chance of integration into the target country.

Table 4 Educational Level of Potential and Probable Emigrants as Percentages

	basic	vocational	general	university	PhD
Czech Rep. *)	15.7	29.2	45.7	9.4	*
Prague I.	–	31	20	37	10
Prague II.	–	40	27	21.3	7.3

Sources: Survey under the University Tampere Project, May-June 1996, own figures

*) Sources: Gallup Survey, June-July 1996, official statistics of the countries concerned, own figures

Occupation is one of the most critical features of potential and probable emigrants. In the first group (Prague I.), there is a wider occupational spectrum: the economic and managerial, technical, agricultural and pedagogical occupations create more than 65 %. This shows an important role of educational level for assertion in the labour market abroad. In the second group, there prevail technical, economic and managerial occupations (more than 52 %).

Table 5 Occupational Group as Percentages

	Prague I. (Probable emigrants)	Prague II. (Potential emigrants)
economic, managers	22	30.3
technical	19	22.1
natural sciences	7.8	5
health service	4	5.7
pedagogical	11.5	3.3
agriculture	13	5
other	22	25.4
judicial and social	7.7	2.4

Sources: Survey under the University Tampere Project, May-June 1996, own figures

Which income groups consider emigration? Those with low incomes or, rather, successful people who are looking to climb further up the economic ladder? Do those surveyed really fit the theoretical “push-pull” model (in details Massey, S. D., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., Taylor, J. E. 1993) which sees income differences and poor job prospects as influencing or even determining emigration?

Table 6 Income Distribution

Incomes brutto (in Czech crowns)	Prague I. (Probable emigrants)	Prague II. (Potential emigrants)
under 5000	7.7	5.7
5001-10 000	40	27.2
10 001-15 000	21.7	35.2
15 001-20 000	9	11.5
20 001 +	7.6	7.4

Sources: Survey under the University Tampere Project, May-June 1996, own figures

We can see similarities in both of Prague's groups. The respondents in the lowest income group express much less frequently a wish to emigrate. They are the poorest people in their country who do not have the means to cover the costs that result from emigration and often have no access to the required information. We find a similar situation in the two groups with the highest income. They probably would choose only short term experiences abroad and have good career prospects in their country. The groups with middle and lower middle incomes seem to be the ones with the highest potential for emigration. They are people mostly from the lower middle class which would like to change their standard of living and probably have some experience abroad. Here the "push-pull" model could be observed. It can be assumed that the pull factors are a higher income and a higher standard of living. In the opposite, the push factors are: worsening environment in the country of origin and previous experience with working abroad.

What are the potential target countries?

The most significant potential target countries are Germany, Switzerland, and Great Britain in Europe, and the USA, Canada and Australia overseas. From the Table 7 can be seen, that Germany is the most attractive country for potential migrants (see also Berencsi, Sik 1995). This is no surprise considering Germany's leading economic potential in the region, moreover its neighboring position. The countries which never would be chosen as destination countries are: Russia (41 %!), Romania and Albania in Europe, African countries, as well as China, Iran and Iraq.

Table 7 Target Countries

	Prague I.	Prague II.
Acceptable European countries	Germany 22, Switzerland 11.5, GB 9	GB 16.4, Germany 15.6, Switzerland 14
„other” world	USA 25.6, Canada 38.4, Australia 10.2	USA 30, Canada 24.6, Australia 15.6
Unacceptable European countries	Russia 41, Romania 15, Albania 6	Russia 28.7, Romania 14, Albania 9.8
„other” world	African countries 22, China 19.2, Iran, Iraq 10.2	China 18.2, Japan 13, Iran, Iraq 8.2

(Sources: Survey under the University Tampere Project, May-June 1996, own figures)

Reasons and barriers for migration

What leads people to migrate and leave their country? Is it the fact of higher incomes, better career or improved living and working conditions? The results of the analysis of our two groups are similar. The reasons which positively influence the decision to migrate are:

- to have better living conditions (more than 70 % respondents in each group),
- to improve the language skills (more than 80 % respondents in each group),
- to acquire a new experience (more than 85 % respondents in each group),

Career qualification, income and environment are the other less important factors that influence the decision of people to migrate. The probable migrants are more interested in better career prospects than the potential migrants. Contacts abroad, relatives and ethnic problems do not significantly influence the decision to migrate.

Table 8 Important reasons for Migration

	++	+	0	-	—	no response
career						
– Prague I.	11.5	46	28.2 x	7.7	1.6	3.8
– Prague II.	15.6	37.7	39.3	5	1	1.6
further qualification						
– Prague I.	18	49	28.2	3.8	1.3	5
– Prague II.	18.8	42	39.3	5.7	1.5	–
income						
– Prague I.	28	38.5	30	1.3	–	2.6
– Prague II.	23.7	38.5	32	4	–	1.6
contacts abroad						
– Prague I.	7.7	23	61.5	1.3	2.6	3.8
– Prague II.	5	17	71	2.4	1	3.2
previous experience						
– Prague I.	46	41	10	-	1.3	1.3
– Prague II.	34	51	11.4	1	–	2.5
improving language skills						
– Prague I.	68	15.4	9	3.8	3.8	3.8
– Prague II.	55	32	12.3	-	–	1
living stand.						
– Prague I.	27	49	19.2	-	2.6	2.6
– Prague II.	24.6	48.3	25	-	–	2.5
family abroad						
– Prague I.	7.7	12.8	74.4	-	2.6	2.6
– Prague II.	7.4	9.8	76	1.6	2.5	2.5
environment						
– Prague I.	12.8	33.3	48.7	1.3	1.3	2.6
– Prague II.	16.4	46	33.6	1.6	1	1.6
ethnic minority						
– Prague I.	1.3	1.3	81	10.3	3.8	2.6
– Prague II.	1	3.3	74.6	12.3	7.4	1.6

Sources: Survey under the University Tampere Project, May-June 1996

++ increase reasons for migration

+ likely to increase reasons for migration

0 do not influence reasons for migration

- likely to decrease reasons for migration

— decreases reasons for migration

The migration barriers within the two groups are also similar. Insufficient qualification, culture barriers, lacking contacts abroad, work of a lower standard create small or no barriers for both groups. Language skills, lack of family and friends is a lower barrier for the first group than for the second group.

Table 9 Barriers

	any		small		quite big		big	
language skills	30.7	25	45	39	14	28	10	6
qualification	41	30	37	45	19	17	3	5
family	36	17.7	32	31	23	38.5	6.4	13.1
friends	35	17	46	52	15.5	20.5	1.3	6.5
unemployment	11	9	26	20	45	37.7	18	30.3
lower standard of work	11.5	9	41	33	36	42	10.2	15
culture	37	34	54	51	6.4	11.5	1.3	-
lacking contacts	33	26	40	46.7	19.2	18.8	5.1	4.1
work permission	17	17	43.6	38.5	29.6	32	10.2	8.29

Sources: Survey under the University Tampere Project, May-June 1996, own figures

Conclusion

Migration from the Czech Republic to the West still continues, however in comparison with the beginning of the 1990's the pace has been slowing down. Czechs (and Slovaks) seem to have deep roots in their own country (Drbohlav, 1994). Although there exists a tradition of emigration, there are factors, which prevent people from leaving the country. First of all, despite many contemporary problems in the society, people have realistic hope of a "better tomorrow" now. Secondly, due to the constraints on migration during the forty years of Communism, there is limited cultural experience of individuals as well as households with international migration. Thirdly, it is typical of the Czech mentality to wisely consider reasons to migrate and not to solve it "directly and drastically".

The survey investigates reasons why people consider migration. The main reasons are the pull factors of the West labour market (higher qualification, new experience, higher earnings, better living standard). Push factors are not so significant at the moment, however, in the future these can be associated with the economic situation in the Czech Republic (the results of the new economic measures). The network theory does not play a big role for about half of all the respondents as over 50 % of migrant in each group do not have relatives or friends abroad. Also, people who make decisions about migrating are aware of the high unemployment abroad. As the result of a general retreat from Western ideals, which for years have safeguarded the right for East European citizens to leave their country, we may now find the discrepancy between "real", probable and potential migration figures. According to the income structures in Prague, those in the highest income area do not have an interest to migrate and are probably satisfied with their job. In the future, it can be expected that migrants will prefer short term migration abroad to improve their language, to gain higher income and to seek new experience. At the same time they will not lose contacts with their mother country.

Nevertheless, it is likely that in the near future, that is until the Czech Republic becomes a stable, prosperous democratic state, this outflow, especially in the case of skilled labour, will continue. There is, however, nothing to indicate that this wave of temporary emigration will turn into a more extensive flow of permanent emigrants.

For the detailed analysis it is necessary to make specific comparisons of selected groups, look closely at dependencies of each variables and also an attempt should be made to explain conditionality. It would be interesting to use similar research method for the analysis of other Czech metropolitan areas and find similarities and differences in comparison with Prague.

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POTENCIÁLNÍ EMIGRACE Z POST-KOMUNISTICKÉ PRAHY

Résumé

Analýza potenciální emigrace z post-komunistické Prahy byla provedena na základě dotazníkového šetření uskutečněného ve třiceti pražských podnicích. Respondenti byli rozděleni do tří skupin: pravděpodobní mi-

granti (označeno jako skupina Praha I.), potenciální migranti (skupina Praha II.) a respondenti neprojevující zájem o migraci. U všech skupin byly hodnoceny jejich socioekonomické charakteristiky a dále také důvody a příčiny jejich možného odchodu do zahraničí.

Zatímco pro ČR je „typickým“ migrantem svobodný a vzdělaný muž, pro Prahu je podle našeho průzkumu potenciálním či pravděpodobným migrantem (skupina Praha I. a II.) spíše žena, přičemž zastoupení svobodných a ženatých/vdaných je vyrovnané. Převažují vzdělanější s dobrými jazykovými znalostmi a případnými zkušenostmi z dřívějšího působení v zahraniční firmě. Pro ty, co nemají zájem pracovat v zahraničí, je typický jejich rodinný status ženatí/vdané, špatné jazykové znalosti, nižší kvalifikace a překvapivě i zkušenost s nezaměstnaností (jeden z typických „push“ faktorů).

V případě odchodu do zahraničí by si respondenti nejčastěji vybrali z evropských zemí sousední Německo, ze zámořských potom Kanadu a USA. Naopak, mezi země, kam by nikdy nechtěli odejít patří s převahou Rusko.

Do skupiny pravděpodobných migrantů (Praha I) byli také začleněni tzv. „skuteční“ migranti, tj. respondenti, kteří již podnikly určité kroky k vycestování. Vzhledem k jejich nízkému zastoupení (1,2 %) nelze v blízké budoucnosti předpokládat velký odliv pracovních sil z Prahy.