

Chapter #11

COUNTRY MATTERS: WELL-BEING AND EMIGRATION PLANS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SLOVAKIA AND BULGARIA: THE MEDIATION EFFECT OF ROOTEDNESS

Frederika Lučanská¹, Olga Orosová², Vihra Naydenova³, Jozef Benka²,
Marta Dobrowolska Kulanová², & Lenka Abrinková¹

¹*Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, P.J. Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia*

²*Department of Educational Psychology and Psychology of Health, Faculty of Arts, P.J. Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia*

³*Department of Social, Work and Educational Psychology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Bulgaria*

ABSTRACT

The objective of this exploratory study was to examine the relationship between well-being, rootedness and emigration plans (EP) among university students in Slovakia and Bulgaria. It also explored the mediation effect of rootedness in the relationship between well-being and EP. The data were collected through an online survey (SLiCE 2016). The research sample consisted of 361 university students (M=22.4 years, SD=3.8) from Slovakia (141, 86.5% female) and Bulgaria (220, 69.1% female). Based on their emigration plans, the respondents were divided into two groups; those who do not plan to leave (n=218, 60.4%) and those who plan to leave in the long term (n=143, 39.6%) after they finish university. For Slovakia, all factors were significantly related to EP. Furthermore, the association between well-being and EP was fully mediated by two dimensions of rootedness with different psychological mechanisms. For Bulgaria, only well-being and one dimension of rootedness, desire for change, were significantly related to EP. It was also found that the association between well-being and EP was partially mediated by only one dimension of rootedness – desire for change. This study highlights that rootedness has a different relationship with other examined factors in different countries and also that it is necessary to respect the cultural and socio-economic features of a country.

Keywords: emigration plans, well-being, rootedness, university students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a phenomenon driven by different causes and presents itself in various forms around the world. Rather than being static, it is a dynamic phenomenon which naturally develops as the result of new and high quality ways of transport, supported by new technologies and high interconnectedness via the Internet. Some parts of Europe are more affected by this phenomenon than others. In order to understand this issue in general, international comparisons and identification of specific factors related to emigration behavior in individual countries is important. According to Manafi, Marinescu, Roman and Hemming (2017), it is possible to identify three groups of European countries with regard to emigration. These are based on geographical position within Europe and the trends in net migration flows over the years. The first group is the EU/EFTA center-receiving countries; these are the favorite destination countries located in the center of Europe. The second

group consists of EU/EFTA periphery-sending countries; countries from Eastern Europe, which struggle with a greater outflow of the skilled population. The last group consists of EU/EFTA outlier countries (e.g. Luxembourg, Norway). These are the countries with the best socio-economic indicators. In respect to skilled migration, Battistella and Liao (2013) often use the terms brain drain and brain gain. Brain drain can be defined as a big outflow of highly educated people, especially skilled young people usually migrating from less developed to more developed or highly industrialized countries. Brain gain is defined as gaining potential benefits for the development of the country through the migration of its citizens. This perspective supposes that skilled migrants also contribute to the development of the receiving country (Battistella & Liao, 2013). Therefore, it can be said that migration is perceived differently with different consequences for different countries.

Slovakia has long been known as a country of origin of many migrants. Even today's numbers remain quite high. According to Káčerová and Horváthová (2014), 1863 residents left Slovakia in 2011. The migration from Slovakia can be categorized into three groups: highly qualified individuals (who are unable to find work with adequate financial remuneration), students and those who have retired (Baláž, 2009). In terms of education, Slovakia loses many people with secondary school education and university graduates every year. In 2011, 53.68% of those leaving Slovakia had secondary school education and 21.55% had higher education (Káčerová & Horváthová, 2014). Haluš, Hlaváč, Harvan, and Hidas (2017) have pointed out that Slovakia is facing both a demographic crisis and a significant brain drain due to the exodus of the younger generation. Overall, Slovakia has lost about 300,000 of its citizens since 2000, which is about 5% of the population. This number increases every year and more than half these people are under the age of 30. The authors have also pointed out that approximately one in 10 students who has completed their higher education leaves abroad. Bahna (2009) has described the profile of a Slovak migrant based on previous research. He found that the most fundamental factors are age and gender. The older a person is, the less willing he is to travel abroad. In addition, men are more willing to travel abroad than women. Slovakia belongs to one of the EU/EFTA periphery-sending countries together with Romania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain, Greece, and Portugal (Manafi et al., 2017). Based on that, it can be assumed that the migration trend in Bulgaria is similar to that in Slovakia. Therefore, this study will attempt to compare Slovakia and Bulgaria.

Initially, the most qualified people (e.g. research associates and university professors) emigrated from Bulgaria although nowadays it is young and less experienced people with university degrees who leave more often (Beleva & Kotzeva, 2001). In general, all groups of potential emigrants in Bulgaria have increasing intentions to emigrate in comparison to 1996 (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2001). According to this study, permanent emigration increased from 3% to 6.1%, temporary emigration from 6% to 17.1% and more than 25% of people showed intentions for future emigration in the next year (IOM, 2001). Beleva and Kotzeva (2001) only focused on Bulgarian student migration. They found that more than a third of students planned to find a job outside Bulgaria while almost half of the students had not known what they would do after graduation. Only 15% of students wanted to stay in Bulgaria. These authors highlight that most students who wanted to find a job abroad also wanted to study abroad. This was because students considered searching for a job in the destination country as a natural step after finishing their studies. Therefore, Beleva and Kotzeva (2001) suggest that leaving the country can be prevented by proper policy aimed at improving living and working conditions for young people in Bulgaria. Bulgarian migrants can be described as highly mobile, well-educated, single and living in the capital city or in another large town. Similarly to Slovakia migrants,

they are more likely to be young men (IOM, 2001). According to Sheikh, Naqvi, Sheikh, Naqvi and Bandukda (2012), only 24% of young students are willing to reconsider their decision to go abroad. Surprisingly, it was not possible to find more recent information on this issue. However, we believe that the available information is still relevant for the purpose of this article.

Silventoinen et al. (2007) have pointed out that overall life satisfaction in the home country has a direct impact on emigration tendencies. According to Diener, Suh, and Oishi (1997), life satisfaction can be addressed in terms of subjective well-being. This can be understood to be a multidimensional construct which consists of three separate components: (1) the presence of positive emotions, (2) the absence of negative emotions and (3) the cognitive evaluation of life conditions (also known as life satisfaction). Hřebíčková, Blatný, and Jelínek (2010) point out that this is a cognitive assessment of one's own life, while the emotional dimension is a summary of moods and emotions, even at an unconscious level. Silventoinen et al. (2007) found that there is an increasing tendency to emigrate with increasing dissatisfaction with the living situation in the home country. Other research has found that individuals with higher subjective well-being have lower international migration desires (Cai, Esipova, Oppenheimer, & Feng, 2014). The same findings concerning Slovak students have been shown in a study by Hajduch, Orosová, and Kulanová (2018). The authors confirmed that life satisfaction and emigration intentions are related. Indeed, university students who were characterized by lower life satisfaction showed stronger intentions to emigrate. According to Ivlevs (2014) however, it can be the other way around. He believes that some countries attract migrants who have high life satisfaction because these people tend to be more productive, healthy and sociable. These characteristics probably help them to integrate more successfully into the host society. His study showed that for lower levels of life satisfaction, the probability of reporting intentions to migrate decreases with higher life satisfaction. However, for higher levels of life satisfaction, the probability of reporting intentions to migrate increases with higher life satisfaction. Thus, this study revealed that higher life satisfaction may increase the likelihood of reporting emigration intentions. A similar finding is reported by Polgreen and Simpson (2011) who found that the highest emigration rates were observed in the most and the least happy countries. It is assumed that this could also be the case with Bulgaria. According to Beleva and Kotzeva (2001), unemployment is still a major problem for this country even after better work placement of highly educated in the labor market. The share of these people in the total emigration flow is still increasing.

Like Slovakia, Americans have always been perceived as a society of migrants (Cooke, 2011). However, their migration rates are at record lows, with only 3.7% of Americans moving from one country to another. Cooke (2011) concludes that approximately 63% of this decline in the migration rate between 1999 and 2009 can be attributed to the 2007 economic crisis, a further 17% to demographic changes (e.g. aging population) and the remaining 20% to increased rootedness. He assumes that with the possible stability of housing markets and the effects of economic recovery, the migration rate will likely increase over several years although the long-term effects of the aging population and rootedness will keep the migration rate lower than otherwise. The role of rootedness in developing emigration intentions has been investigated by Hricová, Janovská, Orosová, and Kulanová (2017) among Slovak university students. They found that rootedness with its two subscales – desire for change and home/family rootedness was significantly related to emigration intentions. Therefore, the lower the desire for change and the higher the desire for family rootedness, the less likely it is that students will consider moving abroad. However, family rootedness was not significantly related to emigration

intentions of students studying teaching unlike other students (Hricová et al., 2017). In another study, Orosová, Benka, Hricová, and Kulanová (2018) also found that the desire for change was significantly positively associated with emigration intentions. The home/family rootedness contributed to the emigration intentions only among females. A recent study by Gajdošová and Orosová (2019) showed similar results. The exploration of emigration intentions of the voluntary permanent migration of university students showed that there was a direct positive association of desire for change and a direct negative association of home/family rootedness observed.

The current study aimed to explore this topic and investigate the degree to which well-being constitutes a relevant factor affecting the formation of emigration plans among Slovak and Bulgarian university students and whether rootedness has an impact on this relationship.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this exploratory study was to examine the relationship between emigration plans and well-being and rootedness among Slovak and Bulgarian students. It also explored the psychological mechanism of this relationship in terms of the mediation effect of rootedness in the relationship between well-being and emigration plans in both countries.

3. METHODS

3.1. Sample and procedure

The data were collected through an online survey as part of the Student Life Cohort Study (SLiCE 2016). This focuses on emigration/migration intentions and risk behavior of university students. In the current study we worked separately with 2 research samples. The first sample consisted of 141 university students from Slovakia (86.5% female) where the mean age of the students was 22.6 years ($SD = 2.9$). The second sample consisted of 220 university students from Bulgaria (69.1% female) where the mean age of the students was 22.2 years ($SD = 4.3$). First, the emigration plans for all respondents in both countries were examined. Based on these plans, the respondents were subsequently divided into two groups in each sample: those who do not plan to leave (for Slovakia $n = 77$, 54.6%, $M = 23$ years, $SD = 3.2$; for Bulgaria $n = 141$, 64.1%, $M = 22.3$ years, $SD = 4.4$) and those who plan to leave in the long term (for Slovakia $n = 64$, 45.4%, $M = 22.1$ years, $SD = 2.4$; for Bulgaria $n = 79$, 35.9%, $M = 22$ years, $SD = 4.2$).

3.2. Measures

All students were asked to fill in an online questionnaire. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. For the purpose of this study, emigration plans and factors related to emigration plans were measured by the following measures:

- **Emigration plans** were identified by a single item measure: "Do you plan to leave Slovakia/Bulgaria after you finish university" with 8 answer options: (1) No, I am not planning to leave; (2) I do not know, I have not thought about it; (3) I do not know, I have not decided yet; (4) I am planning to go abroad for six months; (5) I am planning to go abroad for six to twelve months; (6) I am planning to leave for more than a year; (7) I am planning to leave for more than five years; (8) I am planning to leave permanently. Based on the answer, the respondents were divided into two groups: (a) those who do not plan to

leave Slovakia/Bulgaria (answer 1); (b) those who plan to leave Slovakia/Bulgaria in the long term (answer 6, 7 or 8).

- **Well-being** was addressed using the construct of subjective well-being. This consists of the cognitive aspect in terms of life satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) and experiencing positive and negative emotions (Džuka & Dalbet, 2002). Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with 5 statements (e.g. "In most ways my life is close to my ideal.") on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 7 – strongly agree. The score ranges from 5 to 35 points with a higher score indicating a higher level of well-being. Cronbach's alpha for well-being was 0.828 for Slovakia and 0.852 for Bulgaria.

- **Rootedness** was measured by the Rootedness scale (McAndrew, 1998) which assesses rootedness as a construct focusing on individual's psychological attachment to the place and social environment where one lives. The Rootedness scale captures this construct in two dimensions by focusing on the desire to change one's living environment ("Desire for change" subscale) and attachment to one's family and home ("Home/Family" subscale). Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with 6 statements for the "Desire for change" subscale (e.g. "Moving from place to place is exciting and fun.") and with 4 statements for the "Home/Family" subscale (e.g. "I am extremely satisfied with my present home.") on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. The score ranges from 6 to 30 points for "Desire for change" subscale and from 4 to 20 points for the "Home/Family" subscale. A higher score in the "Desire for change" subscale indicates a higher level of a respondent's desire to change their living environment. Cronbach's alpha for this subscale was 0.528 for Slovakia and 0.506 for Bulgaria. A higher score for the "Home/Family" subscale indicates a higher level of a respondent's attachment to their family and home. Cronbach's alpha for this subscale was 0.604 for Slovakia and 0.442 for Bulgaria.

3.3. Statistical analyses

A binary logistic regression analysis was applied in two steps. The first model was used to examine the relationship between well-being and emigration plans. In the second model, two dimensions of rootedness were added as independent variables. After using these regression models, we explored whether these two dimensions of rootedness would mediate the relationship between well-being and emigration plans. The Hayes' PROCESS tool was used to perform this analysis. There were two samples so all analyzes were conducted separately for Slovakia and Bulgaria. Given the fact that in the theoretical part gender was shown to be an important predictor of emigration plans, all analyzes were controlled for gender.

4. RESULTS

The results showed that 54.6% of students in Slovakia (56.6% female) do not plan to leave Slovakia after they finish university and 45.4% of students (43.4% female) plan to leave in the long term. In Bulgaria, 64.1% of students (63.2% female) do not plan to leave Bulgaria after they finish university and 35.9% of students (36.8% female) plan to leave in the long term. The emigration plans among students with respect to gender can be seen in Table 1 for Slovakia and in Table 2 for Bulgaria. A Chi-square test of independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicated no significant association between gender and emigration plans, $\chi^2(1, n = 141) = .864, p = .353$ for Slovakia and $\chi^2(1, n = 220) = .078, p = .780$ for Bulgaria.

Table 1.
Emigration plans among university students in Slovakia.

| Emigration plan | Among sample (n=141) | Among female (n=122) | Among men (n=19) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Not planning to leave | 77 (54.6%) | 69 (56.6%) | 8 (42.1%) |
| Planning to leave in the long-term | 64 (45.4%) | 53 (43.4%) | 11 (57.9%) |

Table 2.
Emigration plans among university students in Bulgaria.

| Emigration plan | Among sample (n=220) | Among female (n=152) | Among men (n=68) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Not planning to leave | 141 (64.1%) | 96 (63.2%) | 45 (66.2%) |
| Planning to leave in the long-term | 79 (35.9%) | 56 (36.8%) | 23 (33.8%) |

A descriptive analysis of all the explored variables regarding emigration plans for both countries are presented in Table 3. In the case of Slovakia, those who do not plan to leave scored higher in well-being and family rootedness and lower in desire for change, compared to those who plan to leave in the long term. However, in the case of Bulgaria, those who do not plan to leave scored higher in well-being and lower in desire for change, compared to those who plan to leave in the long term. The Bulgarian students did not significantly differ in family rootedness.

Table 3.
Descriptive characteristics in the measured variables according to emigration plans for both countries.

| Variable | Theoretical range | Not planning to leave | Planning to leave in the long-term | T-test value |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| SLOVAKIA | | | | |
| Well-being | 5 – 35 | M = 17.84 (SD = 3.78) | M = 14.75 (SD = 4.38) | 4.497*** |
| Rootedness – Home/Family | 4 – 20 | M = 16.76 (SD = 2.38) | M = 14.42 (SD = 3.03) | 5.021*** |
| Rootedness – Desire for change | 6 – 30 | M = 17.36 (SD = 3.71) | M = 22.31 (SD = 3.30) | - 8.275*** |
| BULGARIA | | | | |
| Well-being | 5 – 35 | M = 17.12 (SD = 4.96) | M = 13.75 (SD = 4.94) | 4.840*** |
| Rootedness – Home/Family | 4 – 20 | M = 13.69 (SD = 3.79) | M = 14.43 (SD = 3.08) | -1.559 |
| Rootedness – Desire for change | 6 – 30 | M = 19.70 (SD = 5.23) | M = 21.63 (SD = 4.05) | -3.110** |

*M – Mean; SD – Standard deviation; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001*

For Slovakia, the first model explained 16.8% of the variance in emigration plans. As predicted, higher well-being was significantly associated with a lower probability of having emigration plans ($b = - 0.183$, $p\alpha < 0.001$). The relationship between gender and emigration plans was not statistically significant. In the second model, rootedness was added which then explained 51.6% of the variance in emigration plans. The two dimensions of rootedness were found to make the largest contribution in explaining emigration plans. Therefore, a greater desire for change was significantly associated with a higher probability of emigration plans ($b = 0.367$, $p\alpha < 0.001$) while higher family rootedness was significantly associated with a lower probability of emigration plans ($b = - 0.240$, $p\alpha < 0.05$). Interestingly, well-being was not shown to be a factor significantly related to emigration plans. Gender was not found to be significant either (see Table 4 for more details).

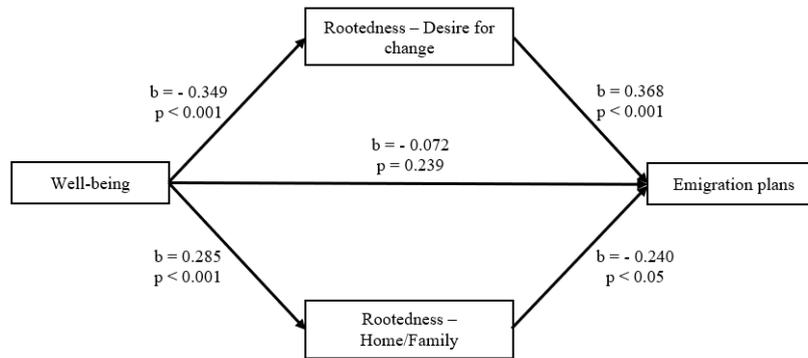
Table 4.
Regression model 1 and 2 – factors related to emigration plans among Slovak university students.

| Model 1 (R² = 0.168) | | | | | | |
|--|----------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Predictors | B | S. E. | Exp(B) | 95 % C. I for Exp(B) | | Sig. |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | |
| Gender* | 0.108 | 0.543 | 1.114 | 0.385 | 3.226 | 0.843 |
| Well-being | - 0.183 | 0.048 | 0.833 | 0.758 | 0.914 | < 0.001 |
| Model 2 (R² = 0.516) | | | | | | |
| Gender* | 0.102 | 0.666 | 1.108 | 0.301 | 4.082 | 0.878 |
| Well-being | - 0.072 | 0.061 | 0.931 | 0.826 | 1.049 | 0.239 |
| Rootedness – Home/Family | - 0.240 | 0.098 | 0.787 | 0.649 | 0.953 | < 0.05 |
| Rootedness – Desire for change | 0.367 | 0.073 | 1.444 | 1.252 | 1.666 | < 0.001 |

*Note: * female as a reference group*

The mediation analysis showed that there was a significant indirect effect of well-being on emigration plans through rootedness – desire for change, $b = - 0.128$, BCa CI [- 0.240, - 0.064] and rootedness – family rootedness, $b = - 0.068$, BCa CI [- 0.149, - 0.015]. Therefore, the association between well-being and emigration plans was fully mediated by the two dimensions of rootedness. The current results also show that there are different psychological mechanisms. On one hand, the higher the well-being, the lower the desire for change and the lower the desire for change, the more likely it is that Slovak students will not plan to leave Slovakia. On the other hand, the higher the well-being, the higher the family rootedness and the higher the family rootedness, the more likely it is that Slovak students will not plan to leave Slovakia (for further details see Figure 1).

Figure 1.
The mediation effect of rootedness in the relationship between well-being and emigration plans in Slovakia.



For Bulgaria, the first model explained 13.3% of the variance in emigration plans. Similarly to Slovakia, higher well-being was significantly associated with a lower probability of having emigration plans ($b = -0.136$, $p\alpha < 0.001$). The relationship between gender and emigration plans was also not statistically significant. The second model, where rootedness was added, explained 29.6% of the variance in emigration plans. Unlike Slovakia however, well-being was still significantly associated with a lower probability of having emigration plans ($b = -0.240$, $p\alpha < 0.001$). For Bulgaria, only one dimension of rootedness – desire for change was found to make the largest contribution in explaining emigration plans. A greater desire for change was significantly associated with a higher probability of emigration plans ($b = 0.183$, $p\alpha < 0.001$). Interestingly, the second dimension of rootedness – family rootedness was not shown to be a factor significantly related to emigration plans. Gender was not found to be significant either (see Table 5 for further details).

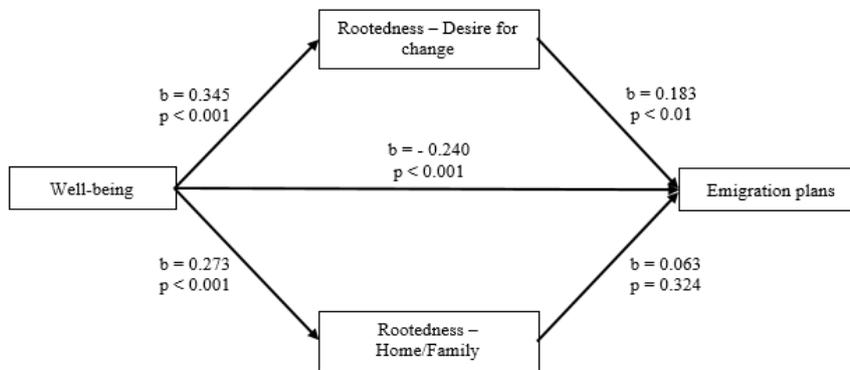
Table 5.
Regression model 1 and 2 - factors related to emigration plans among Bulgarian university students.

| Model 1 ($R^2 = 0.133$) | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|-------|--------|----------------------|-------|---------|
| Predictors | B | S. E. | Exp(B) | 95 % C. I for Exp(B) | | Sig. |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | |
| Gender* | - 0.249 | 0.326 | 0.780 | 0.411 | 1.477 | 0.445 |
| Well-being | - 0.136 | 0.031 | 0.873 | 0.821 | 0.928 | < 0.001 |
| Model 2 ($R^2 = 0.296$) | | | | | | |
| Gender* | - 0.205 | 0.353 | 0.815 | 0.408 | 1.627 | 0.561 |
| Well-being | - 0.240 | 0.042 | 0.787 | 0.724 | 0.854 | < 0.001 |
| Rootedness – Home/Family | 0.063 | 0.063 | 1.065 | 0.940 | 1.205 | 0.324 |
| Rootedness – Desire for change | 0.183 | 0.049 | 1.201 | 1.091 | 1.322 | < 0.001 |

Note: *female as a reference group

The mediation analysis for Bulgaria showed that there was a significant direct effect of well-being on emigration plans, $b = -0.2402$, $p < 0.001$. The results also show that there was a significant indirect effect of well-being on emigration plans through rootedness – desire for change, $b = 0.0631$, BCa CI [0.0202, 0.1223]. In the case of rootedness – family rootedness, there was no statistically significant indirect effect observed. Therefore, the association between well-being and emigration plans was partially mediated by only one dimension of rootedness. This means that the higher the well-being, the higher the desire for change and the higher the desire for change, the more likely it is that Bulgarian students will plan to leave Bulgaria (see Figure 2 for further details).

Figure 2.
The mediation effect of rootedness in the relationship between well-being and emigration plans in Bulgaria



5. CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION

Although many theories of migration speak of the importance of economic and demographic factors in understanding migration behavior (Massey et al., 1998), the results of this exploratory study point to the fact that gender plays no role in developing emigration plans in either of the examined countries. Given this, Cai et al. (2014) have pointed out that there may be something else that needs to be considered. Like many others (e.g. Silventoinen et al., 2007; Hajduch et al., 2018), these authors found that people with higher well-being have a lower desire to emigrate. According to Cai et al. (2014), this is so because the relationship between subjective well-being and migration is more robust than the income-migration relationship.

It is of interest to see that well-being is perhaps not as important in creating student emigration plans as previously thought. This is not in line with previous findings, however. When considering the current results, it is important to take the country into account as we observed a discrepancy in the relationships between the examined factors and emigration plans in different countries. For Slovakia, the research has shown that rootedness has a much stronger relationship than well-being to developing emigration plans. In particular, a high desire for change can encourage (in the case of low well-being) the creation of emigration plans while high family rootedness can prevent (in the case of high well-being) the creation of emigration plans. This is in line with Cooke (2011) who found out that rootedness has an impact on migration in America. However, it is different for Bulgaria in

that well-being is still a strong predictor of emigration plans together with one dimension of rootedness – desire for change. High levels of well-being can prevent the development of emigration plans but surprisingly the high desire for change can encourage (despite high levels of well-being) the development of emigration plans. In Bulgaria, family rootedness had no impact on the formation of emigration plans. This is not in line with Hricová et al. (2017) who found that both dimensions of rootedness are significant predictors of emigration intentions.

The finding of most interest was that high levels of well-being among Bulgarian university students can simultaneously prevent and also encourage (through rootedness – desire for change) emigration. This is in line with Polgreen and Simpson (2011) or Ivlevs (2014) who found that the highest emigration rates have been observed in the most and the least happy countries. There are several reasons for this finding. Ivlevs (2014) tried to explain it through the Neoclassical model which predicts that the least happy people are more likely to migrate because they can get the most of it. He believes that some income is needed to deal with migration costs and that is the reason why it can be hypothesized that some level of happiness is needed to overcome the psychological barriers to migration. Beleva and Kotzeva (2001), who studied skilled migration in Bulgaria, have a different view on this issue. Since emigration is seen as a reasonable solution for many unemployed people, lower life satisfaction has been considered to explain this issue. Despite the fact that educated people in Bulgaria are in a better position in the labor market and thus more satisfied, their share in the total emigration flow is constantly increasing. According to these authors, Bulgaria tries to solve this problem by increasing the number of students but it has had a controversial influence on emigration. It is true that this has improved the position of more people in the internal labor market, thus reducing emigration intentions. However, the persistent social and economic problems that young people face after school support their emigration intentions (Beleva & Kotzeva, 2001).

Based on this, it can be hypothesized that even though people are satisfied at some point in their lives and have a high level of well-being, this does not mean that they expect such an experience in the future. Therefore, we believe that it is important to examine not only general well-being but also satisfaction with individual areas of life, the lack of which could potentially lead to emigration intentions.

The biggest limitation of this study concerns working with a small sample for both countries and also the gender imbalance. It is also important to mention that the sample was only made up of university students who comprise a small amount of the migrating population. Indeed, the majority of people migrate after they finish university. Nevertheless, we believe that looking at this particular section of the population makes sense as we follow emigration plans which are known to be reliable predictors of future migration behavior. Moreover, this study focuses on examining the psychological mechanism of migration, not the migratory population. Thus, our results provide a background for the formulation of further research intentions. Moreover, because the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the rootedness subscales are relatively low, the psychometric limitations of this scale must be considered. However, there are several studies in which this scale has been used with similar values (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Orosová et al., 2018). Rioux and Mokoukolo (2010) confirmed good psychometric quality of this scale in their study. Given the current situation in the world, it is necessary to note that data for this study were collected in the period before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, this research does not capture migration behavior during such a pandemic.

In this study, the focus was only on two countries – Slovakia and Bulgaria, so there is still an opportunity to extend this research to other countries. The country of a potential migrant has shown itself to be an important factor in developing emigration plans. Furthermore, this study only focused on part of the migrating population, so there is still an opportunity to extend this research by using a more complex sample.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by Research and Development support Agency under the contract No. APVV-15-0662.

AUTHORS' INFORMATION

Full name: Frederika Lučanská, Mgr.

Institutional affiliation: Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, PJ Safarik University in Kosice (Slovakia)

Institutional address: Moyzesova 9, 040 59 Košice, Slovak Republic

Short biographical sketch: Frederika Lučanská is an internal PhD student in social psychology and work psychology studies at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. She is currently working on the research project “Resilience and life satisfaction among Slovak university students studying in Slovakia and abroad”. Moreover, she is lecturing a prevention program mostly for the future teachers. The main goal is to educate them about the dangers of drug abuse and sexual risk behavior and also how to prevent it.

Full name: Oľga Orosová, Prof. PhDr., CSc.

Institutional affiliation: Department of Educational Psychology and Psychology of Health, Faculty of Arts, PJ Safarik University in Kosice (Slovakia)

Institutional address: Moyzesova 9, 040 59 Košice, Slovak Republic

Short biographical sketch: Oľga Orosová is a professor of Educational, Counselling, and School Psychology. She is a principal investigator of personal and interpersonal factors of changes in the risk behavior of university students, as well as the psychological mechanism of changes in the risk behavior of schoolchildren and university students and emigration / migration intentions. Moreover, she is a member in several scientific and professional societies: International School Psychology Association (ISPA), European Health Psychology Society (EHPS), The European Society for Prevention Research (EUSPR) and The International Society of Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Professionals (ISSUP).

Country Matters: Well-Being and Emigration Plans Among University Students in Slovakia
and Bulgaria: The Mediation Effect of Rootedness

Full name: Vihra Naydenova, Ass. Professor, PhD

Institutional affiliation: Department of Social, Work and Educational Psychology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Institutional address: Sofia 1504, 115 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.

Short biographical sketch: Vihra Naydenova completed PhD program in Activities and Societies at Bielefeld University, Germany. At the same time she completed specialization in Human Resources, in Stress & Health Management and also participated in recruitment projects. Currently she is a lecturer in HR Management, Organizational psychology and Organizational Behavior at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Moreover, she has certification and Practitioner Coach Diploma from Noble Manhattan Coaching, accreditation by the International Institute IIC&M and the Institute of Leadership and Management.

Full name: Jozef Benka, Mgr., PhD.

Institutional affiliation: Department of Educational Psychology and Psychology of Health, Faculty of Arts, PJ Safarik University in Kosice (Slovakia)

Institutional address: Moyzesova 9, 040 59 Košice, Slovak Republic

Short biographical sketch: Jozef Benka completed two PhD programs in Health Sciences at University of Groningen, the Netherlands and in Social Psychology at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia. While his teaching activities focuses especially on Personality psychology, Psychology of emotion and motivation and Self-determination theory, his research interests are mainly about quality of life in chronic disease and also about life perspective, wellbeing and risk behaviours of students and young adults.

Full name: Marta Dobrowolska Kulanová, Mgr. , PhD.

Institutional affiliation: Department of Educational Psychology and Psychology of Health, Faculty of Arts, PJ Safarik University in Kosice (Slovakia)

Institutional address: Moyzesova 9, 040 59 Košice, Slovak Republic

Short biographical sketch: Marta Dobrowolska Kulanová completed PhD program in Social psychology and organization psychology at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia. Her teaching activities are focused in particular on drug prevention. Furthermore, she is also involved in project concerning the psychological mechanism of changes in the risk behavior of schoolchildren. Risk behavior and emigration, migration intentions.

Full name: Lenka Abrinková, Mgr.

Institutional affiliation: Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, PJ Safarik University in Kosice (Slovakia)

Institutional address: Moyzesova 9, 040 59 Košice, Slovak Republic

Short biographical sketch: Lenka Abrinková is an internal PhD student in social psychology and work psychology studies at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. She is currently responsible researcher of grant project "Intrapersonal and interpersonal factors of health-related behavior of high school students". She is also lecturing a prevention program of university students.