

IMPACT OF BREXIT ON RETURN MIGRATION TO THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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Abstract: Brexit is one of the most important events of the present time, which affects several areas of social life in the United Kingdom, as well as in the countries of the European Union and around the world. Obviously, this event is of interest to the academic and professional public. This study focuses on the impact of Brexit on migrant worker flows in the UK and examines the impact of Brexit on the return migration of Slovak citizens working in the UK. The findings of the first studies on this issue have already indicated an expected increase in the trend of migrant workers returning back to their home countries, which should be reflected in their migration balances (especially return migration) as well as in the transfer of migrant workers to other EU Member States.

Keywords: Brexit, labour migration, return migration, return migration motives.

1 Introduction

As a major social event, Brexit began to resonate in professional and public discussions and has been the subject of scientific research since 2015. The focus of these studies varies from political, legal, economic, social or cross-border cooperation. The overall balance of the impact and losses from labour migration for the United Kingdom in the case of changes in its intensity and magnitude under the influence of Brexit cannot yet be accurately calculated. Changes in the migration decisions of Slovak citizens working in the United Kingdom will form only a small part of this migration mosaic for the United Kingdom. However, from the perspective of Slovakia's interests, its emigrants in the United Kingdom create one of the most significant part of the total number of Slovak migrants working abroad.

In this context, it is necessary to know what Brexit means for the Slovak labour market and for citizens who are employed in the United Kingdom and how the employment situation will change when the migrants return home. After returning home, will Slovak citizens be able find employment and will they be willing to work under conditions which, even 15 years after joining the EU, remain different than in the United Kingdom?

It is known that leaving of Slovak citizens to work in the United Kingdom began after the Slovak Republic joined the European Union in 2004 and was intensified by the subsequent accession of the country to the Schengen area. At that time, the employment situation in Slovakia was very difficult. Unemployment was close to 20%, which was more than half a million of unemployed people in absolute terms. Despite the inflow of foreign investment into the Slovak economy, unemployment remained at almost the same level. Under these conditions, a certain proportion of emigrants sought employment abroad, others were looking for better conditions and remuneration for work, or other social benefits.

At that time, employment in the United Kingdom became attractive to Slovak citizens mainly because of their knowledge of the English language, which has been in Slovakia compulsory subject in elementary schools. Apart from the absence of language barrier, another reason was the UK's approach to new EU members during its enlargement and the decision not to use a transitional period for immigrants from newly admitted EU countries. The countries of the original EU-15 had the possibility to use the transitional period in order not to allow the citizens of the newly admitted countries to look for work in their labour markets, or to allow only selectively in certain jobs. The United

Kingdom (together with Ireland and Sweden) did not take advantage of this transition period or the possibility of managed selective migration, which made the United Kingdom in particular an attractive destination for Slovaks intending to work abroad (Tupá, Vojtovič, 2018). Since Slovakia joined the EU in May 2004 until the end of 2006, up to 56,425 Slovak citizens have been employed in the UK labour market under the „Worker Registration Scheme“, representing 10.2% of the total migrants for work from the new EU Member States in that period (Divinský, 2007).

If the development of these events was different, evidently the army of unemployed people would have been registered with labour offices for years, competing with poverty, losing work skills and willingness to work, and burdening the welfare system. In the present case, emigrants employed abroad have at least maintained their social and economic status and, at the same time, through remittances have supported an increase in aggregate demand in the Slovak economy. The decision of Slovak workers to work in the UK after Slovakia joined the EU was favourable for both Slovakia and the United Kingdom. At present, when the unemployment rate in Slovakia is around 6% and domestic employers experience a shortage of skilled workers, the return of Slovak emigrants from the United Kingdom would be beneficial for domestic employers and the Slovak economy. It is understandable that the community of Slovak migrants in relation to the UK population is not a significant component. However, in relation to the total population of Slovakia and in particular in relation to the number of Slovak migrants abroad, it is relevant and represents a qualitative problem with regard to „brain drain“, significant negative migration balance in individual sectors such as health care, information technologies and also with regard to reduction of the reproductive potential of Slovak population. In case of return of Slovak emigrants back to Slovakia, the current problem of shortage of qualified workers in industrial production or health care could be solved to a certain extent. At the same time, it should be stressed that intensive return migration would clearly not be beneficial for the United Kingdom. How this problem will be solved will depend on the UK's new immigration policy as well as on the decisions of emigrants - whether they choose to remain in the UK, re-migrate to other EU countries, or return to their home countries after Brexit is completed.

2 Theoretical Background

For several years, the planned exit of the United Kingdom from the EU has attracted attention of the general public, experts and, also scientists who have addressed its impact on various areas of social life. Most often, researchers are investigating Brexit not only in the context of its impact on a particular area of social life, but also in the context of a particular country or group of countries that are influenced by Brexit - what the country gains versus what it loses after Brexit is done. Of course, this event will also have a significant impact on the UK itself. Therefore, the largest representation among scientific studies are those that deal with the effects of Brexit on the UK (Dhingra, 2019; Tupá, 2017) or deal with the genesis of the causes and consequences of this event (Wincott et al., 2017; Siles-Brügge, 2019).

The impact of Brexit on the economic development of the United Kingdom, especially at local level, is presented in scientific studies in two different scenarios, soft and hard, developed from a structural business model. The effect of Brexit in both scenarios is expected to be negative (Dhingra et al., 2019). At the same time, it is emphasized that Brexit provides an opportunity to put an end to forms of the local neoliberalized economy and to focus on innovative trends (Kordoš, Krajiňáková, 2018), family business (Srovnalíková et al., 2018), community development based on the assets of different economies, corporate social responsibility (Krajiňáková et al., 2018) and approaches to a solidarity economy (North, 2017).

In several studies, Brexit is seen as one aspect of the wider crisis of neoliberalism, as part of a wider development of global capitalism, and as a new form of organized capitalism with a national focus, which was reflected in the elections of Donald Trump in the USA and the erosion of global liberal institutions (Nölke, 2017; Mulvey, Davidson, 2018). The „crisis of solidarity“, which is one of the fundamental values of the European Union, is also considered to be part of this neoliberal crisis. Comprehensively, Brexit is perceived as testing of solidarity at local, national and European level. As the authors of one study point out, those who voted in favour of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union have revealed the British dimension of this „solidarity crisis“ (Baglioni et al., 2019). At the same time, Brexit, according to another study, influences the basic characteristics of the world outside the UK. As the study emphasizes, Brexit acts as a promise of a different future, as a framework for shaping national and European identity in different national environments, as a model of understanding geopolitical reality and the nature of the global economic order (Adler-Nissen, 2017).

Based on this, Brexit could be seen as a response to these global transformations as well as a way of addressing the three global dilemmas (Wincott, 2017). The first, according to D. Wincott, is to control immigration, gain lost sovereignty or access the European Union's markets. The second dilemma stems from the need to maintain economic prosperity in the case of post-Brexit immigration restrictions, and the third is linked to the weakening of parliamentary democracy by remaining in the single market. However, the problems mentioned above, and their analysis are the global environment in which Brexit is implemented and which we consider to be a commentary on the Brexit-related context. As a shift towards the main problem can be considered an examination of the impact of Brexit on labour rights in general and on the participation of British trade unions in European Works Councils. (Gumbrell-McCormick, Hyman, 2017). Since the period between 1975 and 2016 as a modern era of neoliberalism in his British manifestation and his particular policies during those years influenced migration to the United Kingdom, the issue of migration and the challenges of immigration policy dominated the whole debate between the two UK referendums on membership in the European Community (Mulvey, Davidson, 2018; Rolfe, 2019). Even the Brexit vote was considered a vote against the free movement of workers and new policies should aim at introducing more restrictive controls (Barnard, 2016; Parker, 2017).

Findings of surveys indicate that specific increases in local immigration and moods about immigration control were key predictors of the Brexit vote and the percentage of migrants who arrived between 2004 and 2011 positively correlated with the share of votes for Britain's exit from the European Union (Tammes, 2017).

The key to understanding Brexit according to Antonucci, Varriale (2019) are inequalities between peripherals within Europe and inequalities in migration opportunities within the EU. Based on the post-Bourdieuian social theory, these authors explore the role of the UK in legitimizing the fundamental and peripheral inequalities in Europe and the social hierarchies between the western and eastern, northern and southern European populations. At the same time, the authors emphasize the UK's influence on EU transnational policies, which shape the rules and importance of intra-European migration and how the UK has contributed to the unequal Europe it wants to leave and how unequal migration of EU citizens makes Brexit an asymmetric process.

The genesis of the reasons and causes of Brexit is now a historical issue. Finding answers to questions about the impact of Brexit on the United Kingdom itself and other countries remains current in the professional community and scientific studies (Vousden, 2019). What are the short and long-term effects of the referendum on migration, will the UK maintain an ethical approach in migration policy and a strong preference for EU

citizens, and to what extent will migration policy shift towards a liberal or restrictive direction (Harrison, 2019; Portes, 2016).

It is known that not only in public opinion exists a negative thinking and perception of labour migrants and UK immigration policy (Kaufmann, 2017; Lumsden et al., 2018; Walter, 2019). Negative attitudes to migration also occur at institutional level. For example, the Migration Advisory Committee in its report from September 2018 recommended a new regulation for low-skilled immigrants after Brexit, which was then adopted by the Home Affairs Committee in its White Paper (MAC, 2018). This White Paper raises public concerns that labour immigrants are reducing the labour market opportunities of British workers and undermining already negotiated principles of their salaries and working conditions (Rolfe et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, it is evident that not only industrial, but also service, transport and other sectors of the country's economy are currently unable to function without working immigrants. As stated in a study by Rolfe, Runge, Hudson-Sharp (2019), employers say they must continue to recruit low and high-skilled workers from abroad, because the supply of British workers is insufficient. Therefore, alternative models of employing immigrant workers are being sought, such as employer sponsorship. According to the proposals of UK government, highly qualified jobs will also require foreign workers to be employed after Brexit, and these should be sponsored by employers. Other institutional conditions for future immigration policy are also being created in this spirit. One such document, the Conservative Manifesto, prepared in accordance with the Australian-style points-based system, states that priority will be given to „people who have a good knowledge of English, are lawful and have a good education and qualification“ (Cavendish, 2020).

Low-skilled foreign workers and low-paid workers will receive short-term work permit that will not require employer sponsorship (Sumption, 2019). This model of employing immigrants, according to Sumption, gives the government greater control over which jobs can be filled by immigrants and gives employers more power over their workers, but obviously increases the administrative burden of hiring foreign workers. One of the few studies that focuses on working immigrants in the UK examines the attitudes of Polish, Romanian and British workers to low-skilled migration to the EU in the context of a new skills-based immigration system. This system, which was at the centre of Brexit's political discussions, favours highly qualified foreign workers (Bulat, 2019). In this context, the subject of the study was the perception of the term 'low-skilled labour immigrants' by workers, and why low-skilled jobs that could be occupied by unemployed people in the UK are dominated by labour immigrants. The British lack of interest in working in some jobs and in particular low-skilled jobs (see Rolfe et al., 2018, p.38) is based on their assumption that immigrants are unfairly favoured by providing them with subsidized accommodation and food. Therefore, immigrants can afford to receive lower wages, unlike the British, who would „prefer to be unemployed“ in these circumstances (Bulat, 2019, p.54).

Research on the migration of EU citizens to work in the UK in qualitative terms after 2004 focused mainly on Polish workers as the largest group of migrants (Anderson, 2017), Polish and Lithuanian (Parutis, 2011) or Polish and Romanian as the second largest group (Bulat, 2019). Polish migration literature itself focuses mainly on highly qualified emigrants with higher education (Bilan, 2014; White, 2016). In their research, several authors followed the work trajectories of re-migrants after returning to their home country and the possibilities of their employment (Bermudez, López, 2019; Duci et al., 2019). In these cases, return migration was a natural process. In our case, return migration will be linked to Brexit, which means it will be caused by urgent changes in the rules and conditions of employment of migrants in the UK. It is understandable that the current scientific concern is primarily the institutional aspects of labour migration and the interests of the state in the post-Brexit

period, which create the legal framework and conditions for immigrants to remain in the UK or to return home or to re-migrate. British moods and attitudes to labour migrants and immigration, which are a very important factor affecting immigrants' attitudes, motives and final decisions, also occur in scientific studies. (Rolfe et al., 2018, p.38; Bulat, 2019, p.54). Although British citizens' attitudes to migration have moderated since the vote on Brexit, the vast majority still require limited immigration. However, the analysis of the UK labour market situation after Brexit, the mood, the assessment and the response to the forthcoming conditions of employment of immigrants in the form of return migration are not yet of interest to professional and scientific studies in both the UK and immigrant countries of origin. As already mentioned, one of Brexit's main issues was migration and immigration policy, which will clearly affect the current and future migratory flows of workers to the UK, and in particular how it will be perceived and evaluated by immigrants who already live and work in the UK. At the same time, this will affect return migration and possibly re-migration to some extent. It is understandable that for professional and scientific community in the UK return migration is not the focus of their interest. At the same time, we did not meet relevant studies on return migration in the countries of origin of immigrants working in the UK. Therefore, in this study we are interested in how the events related to Brexit affect the mood of Slovak citizens, their assessment of the institutional aspects of the UK's new migration policy, the expected economic and social conditions of work, the attitudes of British citizens and so on.

Of course, the new conditions and rules of labour migration regulation after Brexit will not automatically affect the decisions of Slovak citizens to return home. Those who do not like the new rules of migration policy after Brexit and the conditions of work and life may not return home. With the experience and skills gained in the UK, they will have a chance to find employment in other Western European countries.

3 Methodology and Data

The aim of the study is to determine the impact of Brexit on the motives and expected extent of return migration or re-emigration of Slovak nationals who have worked in the UK labour market. Of course, irrespective of the Brexit campaign, some of the immigrants who worked in the UK had their thoughts and motives to return home. Brexit could only strengthen the motives and projected return migration plans for most immigrants who arrived in the United Kingdom, mainly from the European Union. We examined the motives of return migration and the evaluation of its expected extent at the time of the final phase of Brexit, i.e. at the de facto stage. Therefore, the motives and projected extent of return migration consist of two parts - the motives and projected extent of return migration that were formed over time into the Brexit campaign and those aspects that were influenced by both the Brexit campaign and Brexit itself.

The difficulty in measuring the extent of return migration is the difficulty of tracking it. One possibility is to monitor the number of registered persons for the payment of health insurance in Slovakia. This method was used, for example, by the authors of the Institute of Financial Policy of the Slovak Republic (IFP), who in their study found, among other things, that approximately 28,000 Slovak immigrants returned to the Slovak Republic annually from 2010 to 2015. In 2016, their number was higher by 14%, which represented more than 32 thousand (Rizman, Sacherová, 2018).

In another study, the authors of IFP, using the same methods and data sources, report that over the past 15 years, Slovakia has lost more than 300,000 workers due to emigration, which represents approximately 12% of the working population (Haluš et al., 2017). Furthermore, this study states that almost half of those who left between 2000 and 2012 returned to 2015. Although the authors consider the chosen method to be the most reliable, it is necessary to realize that many emigrants working abroad do not opt out of health insurance in the Slovak Republic and continue

to pay for it voluntarily. We assume that this will be eliminated by the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU making Slovakia a third country, so citizens of Slovakia who will continue to work in the UK will no longer be able to use European insurance and in this case the indicators of migrant flows of workers will become more accurate. Another drawback of this method is that it is impossible to define from which country the citizens of Slovakia return home. Therefore, we consider the named method irrelevant for the purposes of our research.

One method of monitoring migration is the analysis of statistical data provided by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. Approximately every ten years, the Statistical Office carries out a population census and subsequently annually carries out sample surveys on the state and population movements. Migration statistics are based on evidence of change of permanent residence and provide data on the extent of internal and external migration and the characteristics of migrants. But even this method does not provide completely accurate information on labour migration. As the population rarely changes their permanent residence due to administrative demands and failure to fulfil this obligation is not penalized, therefore these statistics do not provide adequate data on the size of migratory flows of workers. However, a positive aspect of this method is that it provides data on the characteristics of migrants - not only their age or gender, but also their education, profession and the destination country of migration. Some information on migrant flows of workers abroad and back is provided by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, which conducts a labour force sample survey on a sample of 10,250 households on a quarterly basis. However, these findings mainly target people who work abroad for less than one year. For example, if someone has been working in the United Kingdom for two years, they are not registered in these migration statistics. The emphasis on short-term migration means that this statistic will mainly capture the increased interest in personal care jobs in Austria or seasonal work in Germany (Tupá, 2017).

An idea of the number of Slovak citizens migrating to and from abroad can also be obtained using various statistics, which are produced in the target countries on the basis of matrices, population censuses, sample surveys at the border, national social insurance data, etc. However, even in this way we will not get a comprehensive overview of the motives and extent of migrant workers' flows abroad as well as return migration. In order to determine the impact of Brexit on the motives and expected extent of return migration or re-emigration of Slovak citizens, we conducted an empirical survey whose task was to define the motives and expected extent of return migration of citizens of Slovakia affected by Brexit. The subject of our research were motives and projected plans to return home of Slovak emigrants, which we obtained from their statements. For this purpose, we used a questionnaire, which was distributed online in May 2019 to Slovak emigrants who lived and worked in the United Kingdom at that time. We contacted relevant websites and social network discussion groups focusing on Slovak emigrants with a request to distribute the questionnaire to members of these groups and visitors of the sites. The Slovak Embassy in the United Kingdom was also contacted with the same request. As a result of the chosen procedure we obtained 468 completed questionnaires, which were subsequently processed and evaluated for the purposes of our study. Regarding the representativeness of the empirical survey, we did not have an accurate indicator of the size of the population as well as its socio-demographic characteristics. It is estimated that around 10,000 Slovak citizens work in the United Kingdom (Grmanová, 2018). However, according to the socio-demographic characteristics found in several studies, our respondents do not differ significantly from other Slovak immigrants working in EU countries (Divinský, 2007; Masso et al., 2019). This allows us to find out the motives of return migration and its intensity under the influence of Brexit of individual socio-demographic groups of Slovak immigrants. An exception in our sample is the structure of respondents by gender, dominated by women, which can be explained by the

greater activity and willingness of women to complete the questionnaire compared to men.

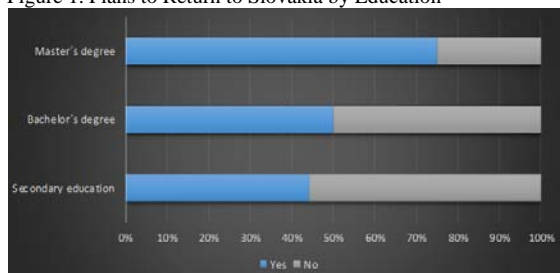
For testing the independence between variables of our sample we used Pearson Chi-square independence test. In accordance with the recommended procedure for calculating Pearson Chi-square independence test, a contingency table was used, all requirements were met - measurements were independent, variables were categorical and at least 80% of the expected frequencies corresponded to ≥ 5 . In this case, the null hypothesis stated that the variables are independent. We set the significance level at $\alpha = 0.05$. We also used the Cramér's V coefficient used for measuring the association between a dichotomous variable and a variable that takes more than two categories, or for measuring the relationship between two nominal variables having two or more levels. The result of the calculation of the Cramér's V coefficient takes values from 0 - which means the absence of association between the variables up to 1 - complete association.

Among the respondents who completed our online questionnaire, 29.5% were men and 70.5% were women. In the questionnaire, we divided the age of respondents into five categories, of which two were not represented at all, namely the category 45-54 years and the category over 55 years. The 15-24 age group was represented by 15% of the respondents, the 25-34 age category represented more than 45% and the 35-44 age category represented almost 40% of the respondents. Secondary education (63%) prevailed significantly in the respondents, which corresponds to the available statistics on the population of Slovaks living in the United Kingdom (Tupá, Vojtovič, 2018; Masso et al., 2019). None of the respondents had primary education and none had doctoral degree. 15% of respondents had a bachelor's degree and 21% had a master's degree. The family status of our respondents was characterized by a predominance of single people - 65%. The rest of the respondents were married. We also examined their length of residence and working status in the United Kingdom. The results showed that none of the respondents had lived in the UK for less than 3 months, 12% reported a 4-12 month residence, 7% more than a year, and 81% had lived in the UK for more than two years. Student status was reported by 8%, employee status 66%, unemployed less than 15% and self-employed almost 11%.

4 Results and Discussion

In the questionnaire survey we examined whether Brexit-related events affect respondents' decisions to return to Slovakia or re-emigrate to other EU countries. We were also interested in whether the citizens of Slovakia who work in the United Kingdom are following the economic and social situation in Slovakia and from where they draw information for such purposes, and similarly, whether they are following the Brexit situation and from what sources they draw information. Subsequently, we asked respondents to assess, based on the information gathered about Brexit, how they perceived the threat to their working status and the negative impact on their plans to continue working in the United Kingdom. Respondents who stated their intention to return to Slovakia were asked about their motives, and the suggested answers included the threat of Brexit as one of several possible motives for return or re-emigration.

Figure 1. Plans to Return to Slovakia by Education



Source: author survey

When asked whether respondents are planning to return to Slovakia, 53% said they were not planning, 47% said they were planning to return. The answers to this question differed depending on the level of education of the respondents. 44% of respondents with secondary education, 50% of respondents with bachelor's degree and 75% of respondents with master's degree stated they were planning to return to Slovakia (Figure 1).

In relation to the same question, we have further set the assumption that respondents who have lived in the UK for a longer period of time will more likely plan to stay in the UK and not return to Slovakia. We tested this assumption by Chi-square independence test and then quantified the observed dependence using the Cramér's V coefficient.

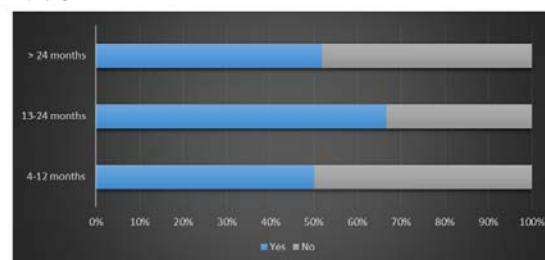
Based on the answers to the question whether the respondents plan to return to Slovakia, we have identified and formulated two hypotheses:

H0: There is no statistically significant dependence between the length of residence of respondents in the UK and the intention to return to Slovakia.

H1: There is a statistically significant dependence between the length of residence of respondents in the UK and the intention to return to Slovakia.

The criteria for using Chi-square test ($e_{ij} > 5$; $N \geq 20$) were met and the result of Chi-square independence test with $P = 0.74$ and a critical value = 5.99 at the selected level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$ does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis, which means that there may be a relation between the length of residence in the UK and the chosen answer but the calculation of the Cramér's V coefficient with result 0.068 at two degrees of freedom indicates a weak dependence between the named variables. This means that our assumption has not been confirmed and there was no statistically significant dependence between the length of residence of respondents in the UK and their intention to return to Slovakia. The results are supplemented by a graphical representation of the answers to the question of planned return to Slovakia according to the length of residence in the UK (Figure 2).

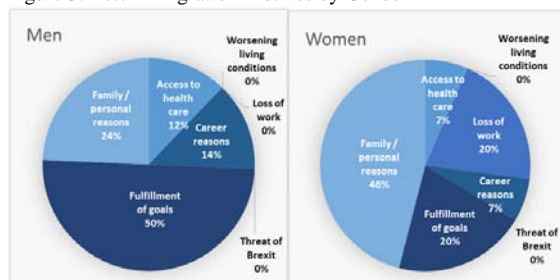
Figure 2. Plans to Return to Slovakia by the Length of Residence in the UK



Source: author survey.

When asked about the motives of return migration, the respondents could choose several answers according to what is important to them. In this context, it is necessary to stress that our question sounded neutral without emphasizing or commemorating Brexit events. The question of Brexit's impact on return migration motives was included later in the questionnaire. However, it cannot be ruled out that in answering this question in the semantic field of respondents, the reality associated with Brexit may have emerged. We were interested in the differences in the responses of men and women (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Return Migration Motives by Gender



Source: author survey.

The results of our survey indicate that family / personal reasons would predominate among the assumed motives for returning to Slovakia, and as another motive in order of importance, respondents chose fulfilment of goals that were set before leaving for the United Kingdom. These motives were equally acceptable by both men and women. As the third motive for return migration, in order of importance, men cited career reasons, while for women it would be a loss of work in the United Kingdom. Surprisingly, none of the respondents identified the threat of Brexit as a motive to return to Slovakia, even though this question seemed irrelevant in the Brexit research questionnaire. Likewise, the 'worsening of living conditions in the United Kingdom' option has not been identified as a motive for return by any respondent. The male population of our respondents, without exception, monitors the situation and is interested in events taking place in Slovakia. In contrast, only 60% of women showed activities related to searching for information on the current situation in Slovakia. The rest of the female population said they were not following the situation in Slovakia. Concerning the sources used to search for information on the situation in Slovakia, respondents named media as a priority, followed by social networks and family members/ friends on the third place in order of importance. The answers of men and women to this question did not differ significantly, the order of importance of the named resources was identical.

In answers to the question of whether respondents are following the Brexit situation, only 12% of them answered 'no, I don't care', 54% said they were following the situation, drawing information from the media. Another 32% of respondents also responded positively to this question, with the difference that they draw information from social networks. Two percent of respondents receive information about Brexit from family members or friends.

Relevant for the purposes of our study were the answers to the question of Slovak immigrants in the United Kingdom, as they perceive the impact of Brexit on their plans to remain in the United Kingdom or return home. We assumed that respondents with lower education would consider Brexit to be a greater threat to their work in the United Kingdom as their fellow citizens with higher education. We also subjected this assumption to a Chi-square independence test to verify the statistical relationship between respondents' level of education and the perception of Brexit's impact on their ability to remain in the UK. We then quantified the observed dependence by Cramér's V.

Based on the responses of our respondents to how they perceive Brexit's impact on their plans to remain in the United Kingdom, we have formulated two hypotheses:

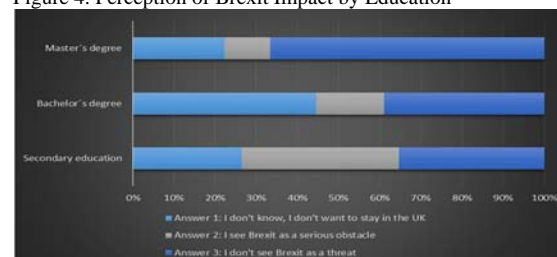
H0: There is no statistically significant dependence between respondents' education and perception of Brexit's impact on the possibility of continuing to work in the UK.

H1: There is a statistically significant correlation between the education of respondents and their perception of the impact of Brexit on the possibility of staying in the UK.

The requirements for using the Chi-square independence test ($e_{ij} > 5$; $N \geq 20$) were met and result $P = 16.23$ with a critical

value of 9.48 at the selected significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ does not allow us to accept a null hypothesis about independence of these variables. The results of the independence test calculation clearly indicate that there is a statistically significant association between the level of education of respondents and their perception of the impact of Brexit on the possibility of employment in the United Kingdom. At the same time, the calculated value of the Cramér's V coefficient of 0.228 at the four degrees of freedom indicates a strong dependence between the named variables. Even more relevant would be indicators of dependence of these variables if we calculated them on the basis of only two educational categories of respondents - secondary and university education. The results of testing the dependence between the level of education of respondents and their perception of the impact of Brexit on the possibility of staying and working in the United Kingdom are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Perception of Brexit Impact by Education



Source: author survey.

Based on our empirical survey, Brexit clearly will affect the persistence and work in the United Kingdom of almost half of Slovakia's migrants and will trigger a significant degree of forced return migration. This will be more relevant to migrants with secondary education, of which 38% consider Brexit a threat to staying and working in the United Kingdom. A minor threat to staying and working in the United Kingdom is Brexit for migrants with university education. Brexit is seen as a serious obstacle to staying in the United Kingdom by only 17% of migrants with a bachelor's degree and 11% with a master's degree.

Cultures across the world are becoming more and more interconnected and the business world is becoming increasingly global. The implication for corporations involved in international trade and cross-border mergers and acquisitions is that they are facing increasingly global employees, customers, suppliers, competitors and creditors (House et al., 2004).

5 Conclusions

The theoretical analysis of the current state of knowledge of labour migration in relation to Brexit has already indicated that this event will have an impact on the overall state and trends in migrant workers' flows in the United Kingdom, while also generating a significant return migration to home countries. This will fully apply to emigrants from third countries, as emigrants from the Eastern European countries of the EU have an alternative to re-migrate to other countries of the European Union. Regardless of the events associated with Brexit, more than half of Slovak immigrants are planning to return to Slovakia in the uncertain future. The predicted motives for these decisions are primarily family or personal reasons. Other motives in order of importance are the fulfilment of goals that were set before leaving for the United Kingdom and career reasons for men and the loss of work in the United Kingdom for women. Brexit is seen as a barrier to staying in the United Kingdom and a motive for return migration by almost a third of our respondents. However, depending on qualifications and education, the perception of Brexit as an obstacle to working in the UK varies considerably. While nearly 40% of immigrants with secondary education sees Brexit as a barrier to staying and working in the United Kingdom, only 11% immigrants with a master's degree share this view. This data suggests that addressed emigrants seem to have experience in finding work and employment in the United Kingdom or other developed EU countries where

education and qualifications have guaranteed success in finding work and employment. At the same time, these people seemed to be well informed about all events related to Brexit, starting with public debates, through a referendum and ending with the conditions for negotiating the end of EU membership, where the issue of immigration policy was dominant. As we have already mentioned, one of the sketches of the new immigration policy will be to give preference to highly qualified migrants and to apply stricter measures to low-skilled workers. This suggests that Brexit will not substantially affect the intensity and extent of labour migration of the European Community. The return migration caused by Brexit will mainly concern low-skilled workers from Eastern European countries. However, this category of immigrants makes up two thirds of the total number of Slovak immigrants. Nevertheless, the return migration of Slovak workers will not affect the overall situation on the UK labour market after Brexit. But if we assume that the qualification structure of immigrants from other Eastern European countries and especially from Poland is similar, in the United Kingdom this category of immigrants counts not tens but hundreds of thousands. In this case, the return migration wave can be very intense and extensive and will involve hundreds of thousands of people. In the case of Slovakia and other Eastern European countries, this may have a positive impact on national labour markets if some of the immigrants return home. At the same time, the labour markets of other developed EU countries, where these people will be able to re-migrate, will make use of this job potential without major problems. On this basis, it can be assumed that the return migration wave triggered by Brexit may cause some problems in the UK labour market, particularly in the low-skilled segment. This means that the UK labour market will experience an acute shortage of vacant workers, putting pressure on low-skilled domestic workers who are not interested in named jobs. Less beneficial for Slovakia and other Eastern European countries will be the situation of highly qualified immigrants, which we include in the term „brain drain“. The situation on the labour market of the United Kingdom and other developed countries, as well as the home countries of these workers, will remain unchanged in the near future. Therefore, no significant return migration can be expected from them. The space for these workers to find employment in the labour markets of both developed EU countries and the United Kingdom, despite Brexit, will not be narrowed. To outline the full picture of migrant workers' flows in the EU under the influence of Brexit, it requires examining the entire population of immigrants in the United Kingdom and occupied jobs and determining the full extent and intensity of return migration. At the same time, it is necessary to identify the immigration potential of the rest of the developed EU countries where part of the immigrants who lose their jobs in the United Kingdom would be able to re-migrate. Based on the overall course of Brexit related events and processes and the planned changes to the UK immigration policy, it can be anticipated that a more comprehensive and accurate picture of Brexit related return migration can only be explored and obtained after completing the entire set of procedural processes and negotiations associated with the full termination of the UK's EU membership.

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