



EXPLORING THE BEHAVIOURAL ASPECTS OF MIGRATION DECISIONS IN THE BIOGRAPHY OF A RETURNER

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ABSTRACT

While a growing number of national migration policies seek to influence behaviour related to different aspects of migration, the efficiency of such policies in the absence of a coherent conceptualization of these types of behaviour is at least to be evaluated as doubtful. The predominant policy mantra, the optimistic 'migration for development' perspective is not backed up with an empirically supported theoretical explanation of how micro level migration behaviour and system level socio-economic developments interact with each other. This paper, through briefly reviewing the behaviour models used within migration literature, proposes the adoption of a dynamic model of economic behaviour as an interpretative framework in migration and development research and makes a first step in exploring the explanatory power of such a model using the biography of a Hungarian returner from Spain.

Keywords: migration behaviour, subjective well-being, biographic interviews, return migration.

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RESUMO

Explorando os aspetos comportamentais das decisões de migração na biografia de um retornado. Enquanto um número crescente de políticas nacionais de migração procura influenciar o comportamento relacionado com diferentes aspetos da migração, a eficácia de tais políticas, na ausência de uma coerente conceptualização destes tipos de comportamento, deve ser, no mínimo, avaliada como duvidosa. O mantra da política predominante, a perspectiva otimista “migração para o desenvolvimento”, não é acompanhado por uma explicação teórica suportada empiricamente sobre como o nível micro no comportamento na migração interage com o nível do sistema de desenvolvimentos socioeconómicos. Este artigo propõe, por meio de uma breve revisão dos modelos de comportamento utilizados na literatura relativa à migração, a adoção de um modelo dinâmico de comportamento económico como quadro interpretativo na investigação sobre migração e desenvolvimento e dá um primeiro passo, explorando o poder explicativo desse modelo, utilizando a biografia de um húngaro retornado a partir de Espanha.

Palavras-chave: comportamento na migração, bem-estar subjetivo, entrevistas biográficas, migração de retorno.

1. INTRODUCTION

A growing number of national migration policies aim at influencing behaviour related to different aspects of migration, such as in- and out-migration, return or circular movements of the skilled or less skilled, the diaspora investments and remitting, among others (see United Nations), which reflect the predominant, optimistic “migration and development policy mantra” (see e.g. Kapur, 2004; Castles, 2008; De Haas, 2010; Gamlen, 2014). From this policy perspective, these types of migrant behaviour are seen as “key ways to increase the contribution of international migration to development” that bring net gains for receiving, sending communities and individual migrants alike (UNECE, 2016). Harvesting the benefits of triple-win situations of this kind is something policy-makers increasingly count on, however, such solutions are not without challenges (Castles, 2004; Czaika and De Haas, 2011, 2013; Triandafyllidou, 2013). Besides the shortcomings of national political systems in putting strategy into practice, a lack of high-quality empirical data and the absence of an adequate theoretical framework are apparent.

The mainstream “migration for development” perspective - that identifies migrants as “development agents” - is not backed up with an empirically supported theoretical explanation of how micro level migration behaviour and system level socio-economic developments interact with each other. I would argue that there is a strong need for a comprehensive framework that would on the one hand cover a wide range of behaviour types and on the other validly explains the complex interconnections between micro level migration decision-making and macro level results of behaviour. One could question the need for such a comprehensive theoretical framework referring to a series of authors according to whom the “compartmentalization” of existing approaches to migration phenomena by categories of motivations and levels of analysis is useful or even necessary to examine diverging forms of migration (e.g. Arango, 2000; Castles, 2004). However, as the United Nations’ Human Development Report 2009 pointed out, migrant categorization - usually based on legal definitions - “obscures rather than illuminates the processes underlying the decision to move, with potentially harmful effects on policy-making” (UNDP, 2009; see also Carling and Talleraas, 2016).

As regards the micro level explanations of migration behaviour, the idea of the famous “Push-Pull” factors is commonly accepted both in the public discourse and in mainstream scientific approaches since Ravenstein’s Laws of Migration (1885, 1889). This perspective dominated neoclassical migration theorization that offered the rational choice scheme for studying migration decisions (see e.g. Sjaastad, 1962; Harris and Todaro, 1970). However, as Lee (1966) suggested, instead of a rational cost-benefit calculus, it might be the perceptions on attractive and unattractive conditions in sending and receiving countries that determine individual decisions to migrate. The growing interest today for including psycho-social determinants in the analysis of migration as well as recent developments in research on migrants’ subjective well-being can be traced back to that times.

This paper, seeking to contribute to theoretical debates on migration and development, proposes the adoption of Fred van Raaij’s (1981) dynamic model of economic behaviour as an interpretative framework and aims at exploring the

relationships between the factors described in it. The model involves a circular dynamism of macro level socio-economic and individual level psychological factors in the sense of the dual causation paradigm (Lea, Tarpy and Webley, 1987). It takes into account the general and immediate socio-economic contexts of behaviour, as well as individual perceptions, aspirations or the subjective well-being of decision-makers. It should be highlighted however, that the model's circular dynamism, which is undeniably one of its most important theoretical advantages, becomes a methodological obstacle when designing quantitative empirical research (Csányi, 2017). Instead of pursuing such ambitious plans, this paper settles for making a first step in exploring the explanatory power of the Van Raaij model using the biography of a Hungarian returner from Spain².

In the following pages, first I briefly review the models of behaviour used within migration literature and delineate Van Raaij's model. Section 3 highlights some of the most important methodological concerns. Then in Section 4, characteristics of migration flows of national Hungarians to and from Spain will be discussed on the basis of available quantitative data. After that, in Section 5, I make an attempt to explore and identify the factors as described by the proposed model using a selected migrant biography. Finally, some concluding remarks close the paper.

2. MODELLING MIGRATION BEHAVIOUR

2.1. BEHAVIOUR IN MIGRATION THEORIES

Paul Albou (2004) noted that the English term "behaviour" has a double connotation expressed in the French language as *conduite* and *comportement*. He argued that the difference lies in the meanings attributed to the action: while the first refers to behaviour as a manifestation of conditioned reflexes without further signification (reflexive behaviour), the second stands for meaningful responses to motivations and aspirations (purposeful action). A similar distinction also appears in

² As part of my Ph.D. research, I conducted a total of 14 interviews with Hungarian citizens residing in, planning to leave for or returned from Spain. The interview analysed in this paper is one of them.

migration literature. Already Findley (1977) observed the dualism of *passive* and *active* models of migration behaviour that is on the one hand a “frustration mobility reflecting a reaction to dissatisfaction and unhappiness” and on the other an aspiring behaviour “assumed to be a purposeful and rational search for a better place to live and work.” “The two models, or views, often blend together in practice, and research designs should incorporate aspects of both” - she added. More recently, UNDP (2009) distinguished the adverse conditions and the free will as two basic forces that influence migration behaviour and emphasized that comprehending their dynamic interaction - “labelled in sociological parlance as the agency-structure interaction - is vital for understanding what shapes human behaviour” (UNDP, 2009).

Indeed, the evolution of theoretical debates in this field is often described with the image of pendulum-like shifts between the two extremes of the agency-structure dichotomy, that is, whether the individual behaviour or the influence of great structures is decisive when interpreting migration and development (see Spaan et al., 2005; Faist, 2009; De Haas, 2010, 2012; Gamlen, 2014). Authors as De Haas (2010, 2012) snappily pointed out that this opposition looks like a discussion of optimists and pessimists as regards the developmental outcomes of migration. From the 1950-60’s, defenders of the optimistic neoclassical approach - referring to a market equilibrium based on opposite-direction flows of labour and capital - predicted a positive relationship and a consequent deceleration of emigration. While at the other extreme, the advocates of historical structuralism and dependency theories emphasized structural imbalances and cumulative causation from the 1970’s and stated that developmental differences between sending regions and destinations would deepen, thus conducting to higher levels of outmigration.

As regards the developmental causes of migration behaviour, interestingly, what both positions suggest in an explicit or implicit way is that increasing socio-economic development in sending countries would reduce massive outflows. It should be added here however, that none of the conflicting approaches are based on an empirically supported model of behaviour. From a structuralist point of view, behavioural processes of individual migration decision-making are irrelevant and negligible: despite

some vague allusions to frustrated consumption expectations of individuals, there are no references to individual level determinants of migrant behaviour in structuralist migration literature. In contrast, the agency perspective of neoclassical approaches is conceptualized in a similar way as investments in human capital as proposed in rational choice theory. This however - lacking the evidences to be based on - remains only a set of assumptions.³

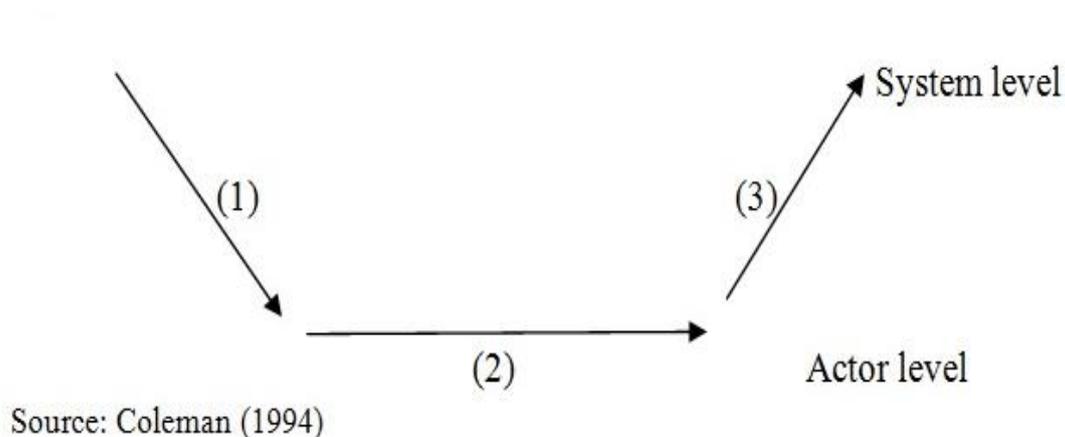


Figure 1 – Coleman's Boat.

Coleman (1994) explained in his model - known as Coleman's Boat (see Figure 1) - that rational choice axioms make possible to validly relate individual economic actions to systemic results in neoclassical economics. The boat consists of three arrows representing three kinds of relations that connect the individual and system levels. Relation (1) represents the effects of system level phenomena on individual action: in neoclassical economics "there is assumed to be perfect information, so that relation (1) is simply a transmission of information about prices offered and prices demanded from the system level" (Coleman, 1994). Relation (2) symbolizes the actions of supposedly rational, self-interested and utility-maximizing individuals and (3) stands for the

³ Since Friedman (1953), pure economists maintain that there is no need to analyse empirically the axioms of rationality, because macro level results of behaviour support micro level assumptions. Indeed, rationality assumptions have never been proved empirically. On the contrary, they have been refuted in several ways on several occasions by behavioural economists. The most famous contributions to this critical literature are those of Simon (1978) who developed the concept of bounded rationality, and of Kahneman et al. (1982), whose objective was to "obtain a map of bounded rationality" (Kahneman, 2003).

combination of these actions into systemic outcomes, i.e., assuming perfect markets, a simple aggregation of individual results.

Paradoxically, neoclassical rational choice assumptions play a similar role in modelling purposeful action to that of conditional reflexes in behaviourism: their function is to predict human reactions to (macroeconomic) stimuli⁴. Nevertheless, as noted by Coleman (1994), the real world does not necessarily satisfy these axioms, there might be sociological and psychological anomalies, examined by economic sociology and behavioural economics respectively. The theoretical pluralism of “new optimists”, attempting to integrate structure and agency perspectives on migration and development, brought in the analysis the concepts of embeddedness, social networks, transnational communities, relative deprivation and others that called attention to some of the sociological anomalies mentioned by Coleman. These migration theories⁵ suggest that migration does bring development to sending territories under certain conditions and does not under others. In this set-up, migrants - as development agents - are responsible for the development of their communities, while governments for creating the “right conditions”.⁶

Regarding the developmental causes of migration behaviour, pluralist researchers hypothesized and even found aggregate level evidence that, instead of reducing outflows “the economic development process itself tends in the short term to stimulate migration by raising expectations and enhancing people’s ability to migrate” (CSIMCED 1990, cited by Clemens, 2014). This view on the migration and development transition however still lacks behavioural foundations. More recent contributions to migration research deal with some of the psychological anomalies of rational assumptions⁷ and propose studying social rationalities that account for the psycho-social determinants of migration decision-making (for a comparison of rational choice

⁴ Because of that, behavioural economist George Katona (1975) criticized the concept of *economic man* in neoclassical economics, holding that human beings are not simply ‘puppets’ pushed by macroeconomic forces. Interestingly, this is quite similar to Arango’s (2003) criticism of structural views on migration according to which migrants are more than ‘passive marionettes’ in the interplay of great structures.

⁵ The New Economics of Labour Migration, transnational theories, theory of social capital, theory of migration transition, etc. are not discussed in this paper in details due to space limitations.

⁶ Authors as Gamlen (2014) warn about a “new migration and development pessimism.”

⁷ However, sociologists as Boswell (2008) rejected the study of psychological anomalies and defended the assumption of rational actors in migration.

and social rationalities see for example Lindenberg, 2001). In this view, individual perceptions on development and related expectations and aspirations play a critical role in decision-making, while the aim of behaviour, instead of maximizing utilities, is to increase subjective well-being and achieve higher levels of satisfaction. Using these concepts, the “search for a better life” of a wide range of migrants can be easily interpreted including traditional categories of voluntary or forced migrants as well as such peculiar ones as retirement mobility or lifestyle migration (see for example Benson and O’Reilly 2009, 2016).

Synonymously used, happiness, subjective well-being and life satisfaction appeared in academic debates on migration and development as a proxy for utility on one hand, and as a complementary element to development indices on the other. Since the last decade well-being has become one of the key concepts of migration literature, and a number of studies have been carried out on the relations of happiness and migration (for a summary, see Simpson, 2013; IOM, 2013; Ivlevs, 2014a; Csányi, 2017). Today, research on migration and well-being has gained its own *raison d’être* as a specific research line within migration literature, with clear political relevance for migration policy-makers in sending and destination countries. So much so that some researchers started to speak of – instead of the migration and development nexus dominant to this point – an “emigration intentions–subjective well-being” (Ivlevs, 2014b) or, closely related, the “aspiration–migration nexus” (Czaika & Vothknecht, 2014).

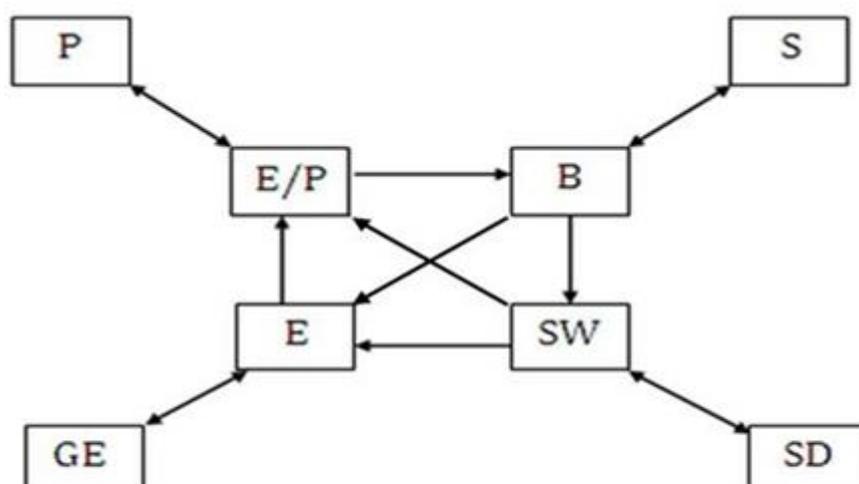
An enormous amount of recent studies examine the effects of migration on the well-being of movers (see for example Knight & Gunatilaka, 2007; Bartram, 2010, 2012; Nowok et al., 2011; Czaika and Vothknecht, 2012; Gokdemir and Dumludag, 2012; Melzer and Muffels, 2012; Olgiati et al., 2013), while others analyze the happiness of potential migrants as a determinant of displacements (Graham and Markovitz, 2011; Cai et al., 2014; Chindarkar, 2014; Otrashchenko and Popova, 2014; Simpson and Polgreen, 2011; Ivlevs 2014a, 2014b). There are even some studies on the effects of migration on the well-being of the family back home (Borraz et al., 2008; Jacka, 2012). However, as

Simpson (2013) pointed out the directions of causality, whether “happiness causes (or inhibits) migration, or migration affects happiness” are still not clear.

On their behalf, Carling and Talleraas (2016) outlined a model that reflects these “newer approaches to migration theory that see migration as the outcome of, first, the formation of migration aspirations, and second, the ability to realize those aspirations” (see also Czaika and Vothknecht, 2012, 2014; Carling, 2014; De Haas, 2014). Their model however focuses on how development affects migration decision-making, while overshadows the other side of the coin: how migration affects well-being and development.

2.2. FRED VAN RAAJ’S MODEL OF ECONOMIC BEHAVIOUR

Fred van Raaij proposed his model (see Figure 2) in the very first number of the *Journal of Economic Psychology* in 1981. In this article, he defined economic behaviour as “the behaviour of consumers/citizens that involves economic decisions, and the determinants and consequences of economic decisions” (Van Raaij, 1981). Further, he described economic decisions as those “characterized by sacrifices to be made by the actor, an evaluation of present or future benefits of one’s expenditure, [...] an evaluation of the expected benefits of some alternatives, and a relatively concrete variable of behaviour.” He added that the determinants of such decisions “include personal, cultural, situational, and general economic factors that stimulate or inhibit economic decisions.” He also stressed that policy-makers “often do not know the relative efficiencies of policy measures to generate behavioural change” and expressed his intention to present his model as a tool for examining the effects of policies on behaviour on the one hand and to analyze the roles that perceptions, well-being and satisfaction play in decision-making on the other.



Source: Van Raaij (1981)

Figure 2 – The model of economic behavior proposed by Van Raaij (1981).

The meaning of the abbreviations is as follows (also see Albou, 1984; Wärneryd, 1988; Quintanilla and Bonavía, 2005):

GE – General economic conditions: recession or expansion, governmental economic policies, international economic relations, war, ecological conditions.

E – Immediate economic environment, consisting of personal availabilities, market situation, type of employment, incomes, etc.

P – Personal factors: goals, values, aspirations, expectations, cognitive styles, internal and external control of reinforcement, access to information, interest in economic and political issues, socio-demographic factors.

E / P – Perceptions on economic conditions: perceptions of the environment in which economic activities take place, perceptions of prices, of the relative distribution of incomes, of opportunities.

B – Economic behaviour.

S – The situation in which the individual is at the given moment, influenced by expected or unexpected events in the environment such as an accident, illness, sudden unemployment, the completion of studies, marriage or birth of a child, and so on.

SW – Subjective well-being depends on the difference between the expected benefits and the actual results of economic action, captured as individual satisfaction

(or dissatisfaction) associated with the chosen behaviour taking into account previous aspirations and expectations.

SD – Social climate: social perceptions, evaluations, satisfaction with societal structures and the economic system, trust in economic/political institutions.

The inner circle illustrates how economic behaviour (B) determines subjective well-being (SW) and affects the immediate economic environment (E), and how this modified environment, together with the perceptions of it (E/P), influences future behaviour (B). In contrast to the neoclassical model, behaviour (B) is much more influenced here by the perceived environment (E/P) than by the immediate economic environment (E) or even the general economic conditions (GE). Perceptions on the environment (E/P), naturally, depend on the environment (E). However, personal factors (P), subjective well-being (SW) and indirectly the social climate (SD) also have an influence on perceptions. Differently from the traditional interpretations of subjective well-being (SW), in this model the object of satisfaction is not life (or life conditions) as a whole, but a given economic behaviour – to migrate or not to migrate in our case – and is defined by the difference between previous expectations and the actual results of the economic action. Additionally, it is influenced by the social climate (SD) as well. Indeed, the definition of subjective well-being that Van Raaij used is closer to what sociologist Ruut Veenhoven called the cognitive component of happiness: the “degree to which an individual perceives his aspirations to be met” (Veenhoven, 1991). As such, it is highly compatible with the Multiple Discrepancies Theory of Michalos (1985), according to which “reported net satisfaction is a function of perceived discrepancies between what one has and wants, relevant others have, the best one has had in the past, expected to have three years ago, expects to have after five years, deserves and needs.”

Adapted to migration phenomena, the model suggests that apart from the economic factors (GE and E), psychosocial elements such as subjective well-being (SW), individual perceptions (E/P) and personal traits (P) are important driving forces of migration behaviour (B) that however, at the same time, affect the subjective well-being

(SW) and the immediate and general economic environments (GE and E) of migrants themselves and of the members of sending and receiving communities in which new decisions will be made. The new environment and new well-being levels could affect migrants' decisions to send remittances, or to spend in host economies; they could also make them return and invest in sending regions. On the other hand, stayers might feel dissatisfied with their lives at home and follow the example of emigrating peers and leave. Those receiving remittances could stop working and spend more on the "conspicuous consumption" of goods produced abroad. Using the proposed theoretical framework these and other behaviour types affecting the development of sending and receiving areas could be explained.

The model, however, also has its own weaknesses when used to describe migration and development. It does not explain how social relations and social capital affect individual perceptions, aspirations and expectations, or in which point policies enter in dual causation and what the role of migration policies in particular is. Further, it is not clear how to distinguish general economic conditions of sending and receiving countries, and how global socio-economic processes influence each of the factors described in the model. In this light, exploring the model's applicability for studying migration can potentially bring arguments for proposing modifications of it in order to better explain peculiarities of migrant behaviour in contrast to other behaviour types.

3. METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

During the Work Session on Migration Statistics held in Geneva, October 2017 as part of the Conference of European Statisticians, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Steering Group on Migration Statistics called for the reinforcement of a longitudinal approach in official migration statistics, and urged joint efforts to incorporate longitudinal data into annual statistics on migration. The proposal, referring to the need for studying return and circular movements as well as events of migrant integration, reflects the position that the statistical community has taken in the scholarly debates on migration and development: the optimistic view on

migration and development (that was delineated in the previous section). What should be underlined here is that producers of official statistics recognized the need for creating data sets appropriate for analysing migration as a sequence in time of behaviour types related to the geographical mobility of people and not as single events in migrants' life-courses. This is of crucial importance for the construction of theories that involve sequential decision-making processes and actions of individuals. Despite, the scarcity of such longitudinal data sources today is apparent, thus putting special emphasis on the UNECE announcement.

Apart from the lack of longitudinal data, as regards the possibilities of carrying out empirical research based on the Van Raaij model, it should be highlighted that its circular dynamism, which is undeniably one of its most important theoretical advantages, becomes a severe methodological obstacle for positivist quantitative approaches used to study linear casual relations (Csányi, 2017). Moreover, the problem of integrating micro and macro level data is not resolved in statistics (despite some promising experiments carried out within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), see in Zwijnenburg, 2016), not to mention more general shortcomings of using quantitative techniques in migration research such as the self-selection bias or the difficulties in obtaining representative data on out-migrants or others (see e.g. Stillman et. al, 2012). For these reasons, instead of contrasting hypotheses derived from the model, a mixed approach to explore its explanatory power appears to be more adequate: a) a revision of available quantitative data on the phenomenon and some key variables, and b) a qualitative exploration of the relationships between factors described in the Van Raaij model.

Regarding the selection of the target population, being familiar with both languages as well as the socio-economic, cultural and political contexts in the countries involved was decisive: Hungarian migrants in Spain. The fact that the stock of Hungarian citizens in Spain has been multiplied approximately by twenty between 1998 and 2017 (in accordance with data from the Spanish National Statistical Institute, INE) reinforced my intention to study the migration behaviour of this community. An additional advantage to be noted is that due to the free movement of labour within the

Schengen area – Spain opened its labour market for Eastern-European EU citizens in 2006 – there are no political barriers to be taken into account in the analysis.

For the purposes of quantitative analysis, besides conventional statistical data sources on the stocks and flows of migrants in Spain (provided by the National Statistical Institutes of Spain, INE, and Hungary, HCSO), a unique data source should be mentioned: the Hungarian Microcensus of 2016 that surveyed household members in an unusually large sample of Hungarian households. This data collection used a complementary questionnaire on international migration in the case of household members affected by migration (and aged 16-64), that contained questions on the socio-demographic characteristics and economic conditions as well as on the satisfaction and aspirations of the household members residing in, planning to leave for or returned from abroad. This feature makes possible the comparison of these subpopulations in Spain or other countries with those residing in Hungary (HCSO, 2016).

As regards the qualitative element of the study, I carried out a total of fourteen interviews with national Hungarians in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Budapest or via Skype in 2016 and 2017. Eight interviewees were women and six men, all aged 25-40 and all with tertiary education. Ten of them were born in the national territory of Hungary, two in Romania and two in Ukraine⁸. Regarding their migrant profiles, two of them were potential migrants; ten were emigrants (one of them already left Spain for the U.K. when making the interview) and two returners. In the interviews I used an unstructured/structured approach with open (*Please, tell me about yourself!*) or clarifying (*Could you tell me more about...?*), as well as structured questions that referred to key aspects of the Van Raaij model (*How much would you say you are satisfied with your life here? How do/did you see your situation? How did you feel in that moment?*). To localize interviewees I used online social networks and snowball techniques. Due to the space limitations, in this paper I will present and briefly analyse only one of these interviews, that of a returner.

⁸ As it will be seen in Section 4, the characteristics of these fourteen people fits quite well in the subpopulation of Hungarians migrating between the two countries regarding their age, sex composition, educational attainment and even also their country of birth.

4. HUNGARIAN MIGRANTS IN SPAIN

Hungary has been witnessing greater changes in the trends of outmigration of its citizens since the 2000's. Despite restrictive border controls disappeared with the end of state socialism, major outflows took place only after the country's accession to the EU in 2004⁹ (for a longer term historical analysis of migration processes in Hungary, see Gödri, Soltész and Bodacz-Nagy, 2014). Nevertheless, compared to other countries of the Eastern-European region – like Romania, Poland or the Baltic states –, emigration from Hungary remained relatively low (a fact that is often attributed to the relatively generous social transfers and allowances in Hungary). Hungarian migration researchers agree that the turning point was 2007 when a sharp increase in emigration flows was observable. The question of outward movements became a central issue in political debates and in the public discourse in that time.

It became clear that contemporary outmigration from Hungary is characterized by flows towards European countries, while overseas destinations – mainly the United States, Canada and some of the Latin-American countries – that prevailed in the past, today receive less attention. Among European destinations, the priority of Germany, the U.K. and Austria is unquestionable: in 2014 three quarters that is almost 250 thousands of Hungarians lived in one of these three countries, out of a total of 330 thousands residing in EEA countries¹⁰. Spain is the sixth destination of contemporary migration from Hungary, following the above mentioned three countries, Switzerland and the Netherlands (cf. the Hungarian community in Spain constitutes only the 54th community of immigrants in this country by size).

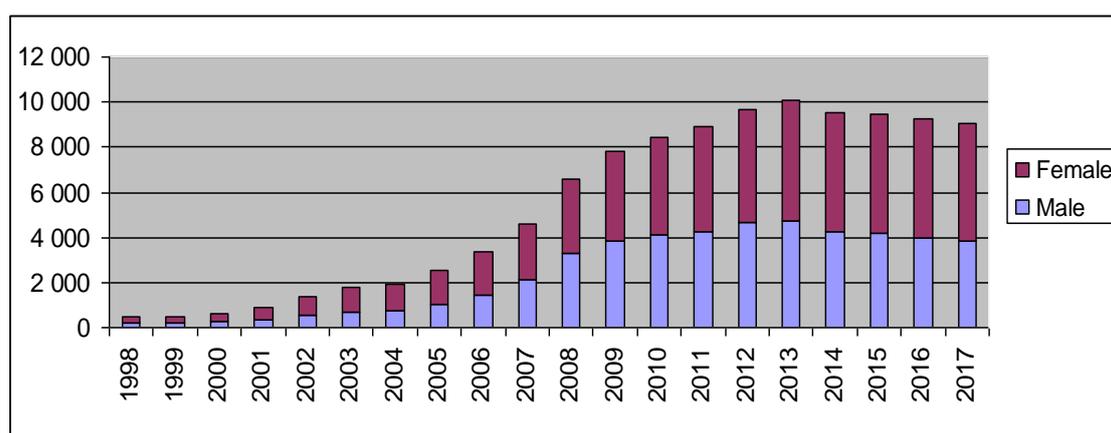
As a result of increasing outflows and increasing policy concerns about population losses in the aging home country, by today a huge amount of studies have been published on the stocks and flows of Hungarian emigrants, on the socio-

⁹ Some EU countries – as the U.K., Ireland or Sweden – opened their labour markets for the citizens of new member states already in 2004. Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece and others did it in 2006, while the rest of EU countries in the following years. It should be noted that traditional destinations of Hungarian migrants as Austria and Germany only opened their labour markets among the last ones in 2011. This undoubtedly affected migration decisions of the Hungarians and channelled outflows towards other destinations until 2011.

¹⁰ Based on mirror statistics from Eurostat. See also Gödri (2015).

demographic characteristics, economic conditions and motivations of movers, potential movers and even of returners, as well as on the effects of outmigration on the Hungarian society and labour market (Blaskó, Ligeti and Sik, 2014; Blaskó and Gödri, 2014, 2016; Gödri, 2015; Hárs 2016; Kapitány and Rohr, 2013; Sik and Szeitl, 2016; Lados and Hegedűs, 2016; Bodnár and Szabó, 2014; Hárs and Simon, 2015, 2017; Horváth 2016 – just to mention a few). It is out of the scope of this paper to review in details these papers and the characteristics of contemporary emigration from Hungary as a whole. Instead, what follows is a short description of some relevant data sources available¹¹ on the movements of Hungarians to and from Spain.

Graph 1 - Stock of Hungarian citizens in Spain, number of persons (1998-2017). Source: INE, 2017. *Padrón Continuo*.



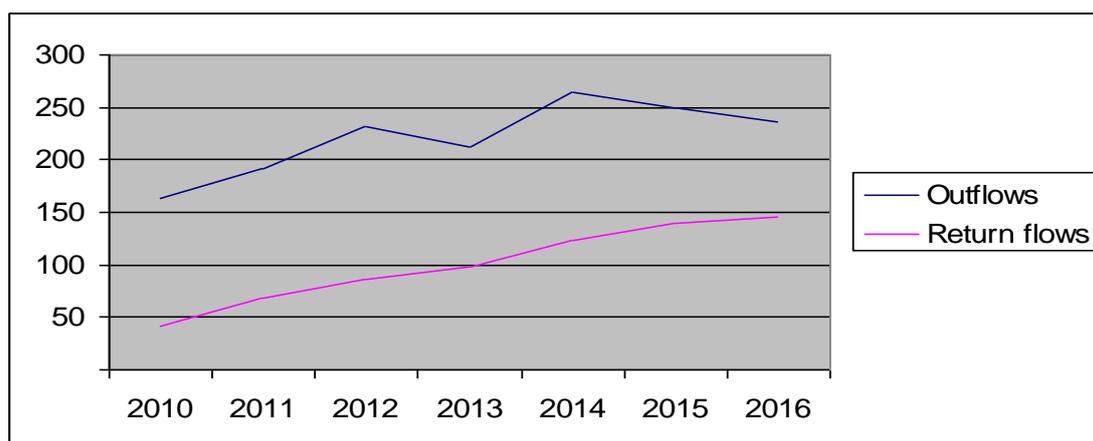
Regarding the stocks of Hungarian citizens¹² (see Graph 1), mirror statistics – data from the *Padrón Continuo* of INE – show a sharp increase from 2007 when the number of Hungarians in Spain exceeded four thousands for the first time. Their number reached its peak in 2013 with more than ten thousands of persons, twenty times higher than in it was in 1998. Since 2013 however, a slight decrease in the

¹¹ For a detailed analysis of the possibilities and challenges of measuring emigration from Hungary, see for example Sárosi and Tóth, 2009 or Gárdos and Gödri, 2014).

¹² If data is accessed using the filter “country of birth: Hungary”, the results are slightly different. The reason for that is mostly the existence of communities of national Hungarians in the neighboring countries. On the possibilities of simplified naturalization for these populations born outside of Hungary, see for example Gödri, Soltész and Bodacz-Nagy (2014).

number of Hungarians in this country can be observed. The composition by sex of this population is characterized by a stable majority of women during the 20 years on which INE data is available. In 2017, more than 57 % of them were women (contrary to top destination countries of Hungarian emigrants where a majority of men is observable). The average age in 2017 was 34,3 years. As regards the most popular autonomous communities of Spain among Hungarian residents, these are typically the coastal regions (more than 70% of the Hungarians live in the following coastal communities): the Canary Islands (where 20,68% of Hungarian residents live), Catalonia (18,37%), Community of Valencia (17,63%), and Andalusia (15,24%). The Capital city of Madrid is only the fifth most popular destination (9,3%).

Graph 2 - Out-and return flows of Hungarian citizens to and from Spain, number of persons (2010-2016). Source: HCSO.



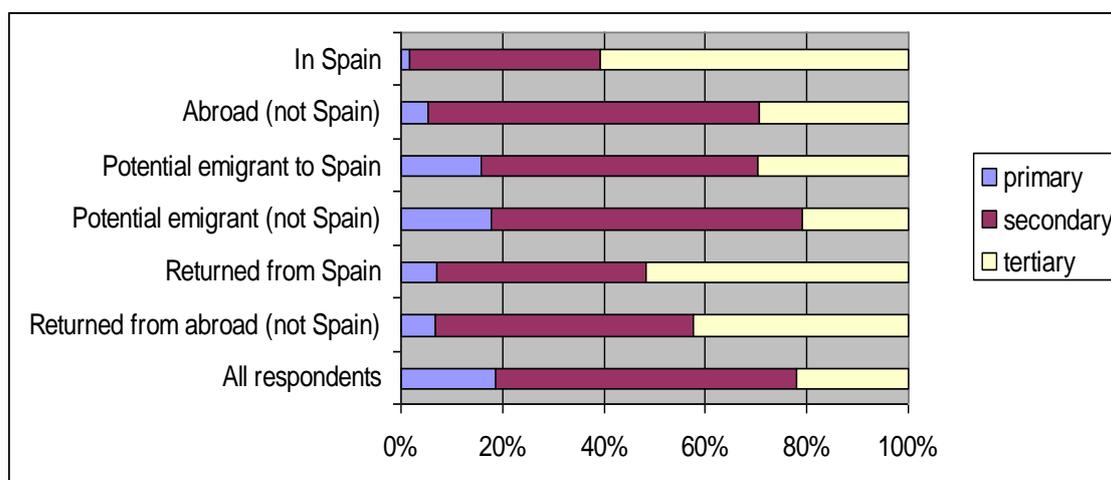
Since 2010, official data on the flows of emigrants to and returners from Spain are calculated by the HCSO on the basis of de-registrations and re-registrations in the National Health Insurance database.¹³ Due to the limitations of this methodology, however, these data presumably underestimate real out and return flows. As it can be seen in Graph 2, the migration balance of Hungarians between the two countries favours Spain. In fact, in line with the changing trends in stock data, there was a drop in the outflows in 2013 and the number of Hungarians moving to Spain continuously decreases since 2014, accompanied by steadily growing return flows. Despite, these

¹³ For more methodological details, see the HCSO Statistical Yearbooks on Demography.

data do not explain the tendency of decreasing stocks in the destination country, being outflows still higher than return. A plausible hypothesis is that Hungarians leave Spain for third countries, instead of returning.

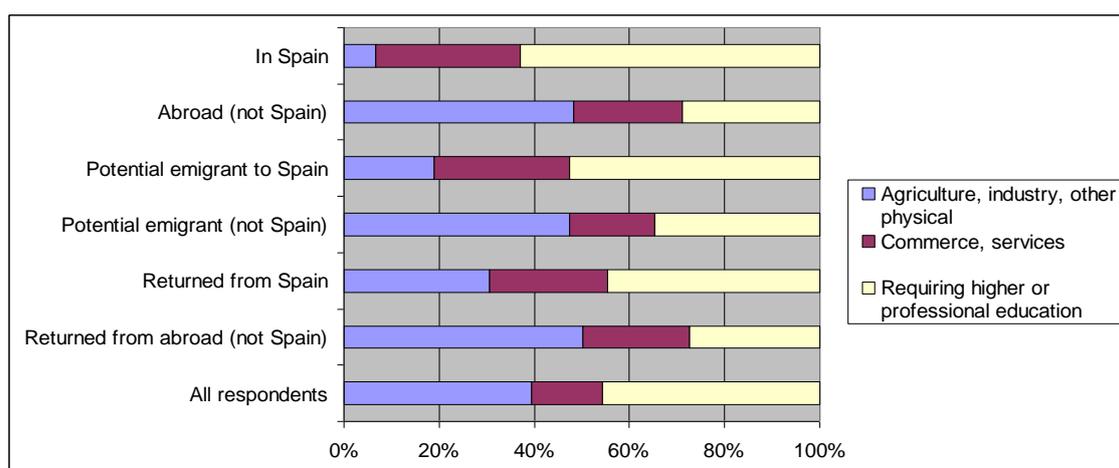
While stocks and flows, together with some basic socio-demographic attributes, are easily accessible, more detailed information on emigrant populations of Hungarians is more difficult to obtain. Due to the relatively low number of Hungarian citizens residing in Spain, they usually do not appear in sample surveys in sufficient numbers, thus far-reaching conclusions should not be drawn from such surveys. For the same purpose, Hungarian researchers tend to use the household surveys carried in Hungary (prominently the Labour Force Survey) that contain questions on household members staying abroad. Following the same logics, the Hungarian Microcensus, carried out in the fall of 2016, asked respondents - in a 10% sample of Hungarian households - on the socio-economic conditions, the satisfaction and aspirations of household members living in, planning to leave for or returned from other countries. Graph 3, 4 and 5 illustrate a few of these characteristics. In Graph 3, a comparison of the levels of education can be observed. The data shows that the educational attainment of the Hungarians in Spain is among the highest, followed by that of those returned from the same or other countries.

Graph 3 - Emigrants, Potential emigrants and Returners by level of education in Spain and abroad, % of Hungarian citizens, aged 16-64. Source: HCSO, Microcensus 2016.



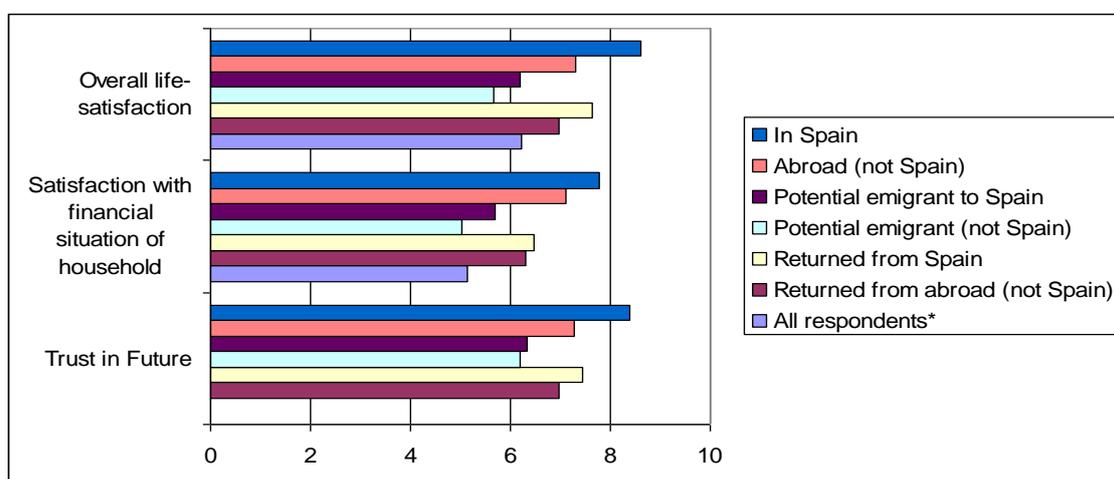
In line with that, as Graph 4 shows, the share of those employed in positions that require higher or professional education is the highest among the Hungarian population living in Spain. A similar ratio can be observed among those planning to leave for this country. In accordance with HCSO's Standard Classification of Occupations, these results suggest that Hungarian migration to Spain is characterized by the highest share (63%) of professionals, technicians, office clerks, administrators, health-care workers, managers and others employed in jobs requiring higher education. In comparison, this share is only 29% among the emigrants in other countries, and 46% of all respondents. As a matter of fact, the same population of Hungarians in Spain represents also the highest share (30%) of those working in commercial, catering industry, personal service, tourism or other occupations of the service sector (in contrast to 23% of those abroad in other countries and 15% of all respondents); and even the lowest share (7%) of those employed in agricultural, forestry, construction and industry occupations, machine operators as well as assembly workers or others with occupations not requiring qualifications (this share is 48% in the case Hungarian emigrants in other countries and 39% of all respondents) appear among those residing in Spain.

Graph 4 - Emigrants, Potential emigrants and Returners by category of employment in Spain and abroad, % of Hungarian citizens, aged 16-64. Source: HCSO, Microcensus 2016.



Other distinctive characteristics of the Hungarian emigration to Spain can be seen in Graph 5: those residing in, planning to leave for or returned from Spain show higher levels of satisfaction and trust than those residing in, planning to leave for or returned from other countries respectively. These features however might be related to other socio-demographic or economic variables. A thorough analysis of this valuable data source is needed to explore such relations that however are out of the scope of this paper.

Graph 5 - Some aspects of well-being of emigrants in, potential emigrants to and returners from Spain and abroad, Hungarian citizens, aged 16-64. Source: HCSO, Microcensus 2016 and *EU-SILC, 2016.



Obs.: where 0 means "not satisfied at all" and 10 means "absolutely satisfied".

Instead, before continuing with the analysis of the chosen migrant biography, I consider important to offer a comparison of selected objective measurements of development that describe socio-economic contexts, health and education (see Table 1) as well as of subjective indices of well-being, satisfaction and perceptions (see Table 2) in the two countries at the aggregate level. As regards the objective measurements, while the economic crises of the last decade hit both countries, Spain – with few exceptions – appears to be a more developed place to live and work. The GDP per capita as well as the Human Development Index are significantly higher in this country than in Hungary. Earnings are also higher and less people belong to the category of

low-wage earners (that is those who earn less than 60% of median gross earnings). However, the employment situation is worse in Spain: the employment rate is lower and the unemployment rate is higher than in the Hungarian labour market. On the contrary, life expectancy and the expected years of schooling also make Spain an attractive destination for Hungarians. Aggregate level subjective measurements show similar patterns in the two countries. The overall life satisfaction, the satisfaction with the standards of living, with the quality of education and health are higher in Spain. However, perceptions on the local labour market are better in Hungary. Levels of trust in national governments coincide, while confidence in the judicial systems is higher in Hungary.

Table 1 - Objective measurements of development, labour market conditions, health and education in Spain and Hungary.

	Spain	Hungary
GDP/capita (and ranking) (PPP USD)^a	36,416 (34)	27,482 (46)
HDI (and ranking)^b	0,884 (27)	0,836 (43)
Median gross hourly earnings (EUR)^c	9,80	3,60
Low-wage earners (%)^c	14,6	17,8
Employment/unemployment (%)^d	63,9 / 19,6	71,5 / 5,1
Life expectancy at birth^b	82,8	75,3
Expected years of schooling^b	17,7	15,6

Sources: a: IMF, 2016; b: UNDP, 2015; c: Eurostat, 2014; d: Eurostat, 2016.

Table 2 - Subjective measurements of well-being, satisfaction and trust in Spain and Hungary.

	Spain	Hungary
Overall life satisfaction (0-10)	6.4	5,3
Satisfied with standard of living (%)	75	56
Satisfied with education quality (%)	57	55
Satisfied with health care quality (%)	66	53
Perceptions on "Feeling safe" (% answering yes)	82	53
Perceptions on Local labour market (% answering good)	17	23
Trust in national government (% answering yes)	28	28
Confidence in judicial system (% answering yes)	36	42

Source: UNDP (reference year: 2015).

Summarizing available quantitative data, some distinctive characteristics of the Hungarian migrant community in Spain should be highlighted. Not only the clear majority of women, but also the high proportions of the skilled and of those employed in positions requiring high qualifications call attention to this population. Further, the levels of satisfaction of Hungarians living in or returned from this destination are among the highest compared to other Hungarians. It should be added that despite higher levels of economic development and salaries in Spain, migrants might have been achieved higher incomes if migrated to other destinations hit less by recent economic downturns. The fact that these migrants, coming from a relatively unhappy society, chose a relatively happy one – in terms of satisfaction – as a destination, suggests that aspirations of improving their lives may play a role, stronger than expectations of higher incomes, in their migration decisions.

5. THE BIOGRAPHY OF A RETURNER

Among the fourteen interviews that have been carried out, the chosen one – that of a returner, let's call him R. – appeared as one of the most adequate ones for the purposes of this study, due to that R.'s narration contained several decisions related to his migration behaviour as well as his perceptions, expectations and satisfaction before, during and after the migration experiences. Furthermore, he mentioned several keywords that can be related to the Van Raaij model. As regards his socio-demographic characteristics, R. holds a university degree, approximately 35 years old and led a single life when emigrated in 2008. He already spoke Spanish and had visited Spain for several times before changing residence. In general terms, he considers himself as an optimistic and happy person. He mentioned that a traffic accident, years before migrating, changed his view of life: *"in those moments I decided that I want a life that if I die, I will say 'yes, I lived as I wanted' [...] because in the end, I live to be happy."* This experience – that could be identified as an unexpected event in the life-course, that is "S" in the Van Raaij model – played a role when the decision to emigrate was made. *"My dad was in New York when he was young and as a child I had to listen to him all the*

time: 'Why did I come back? Why did I come back?' So, I didn't want to die without trying out how is to live abroad [...] and I felt something in myself that I should try something different, somewhere else." In this sense, the personal experiences of "S" together with the influence of the father, that appeared as social discontent, "SD" affected the formation of perceptions "E/P" and personal values and attitudes "P", pushing R. towards the idea of moving.

The social climate "SD" appeared once again as the dissatisfaction with societal/political structures and distrust in political institutions: *"I didn't like how things were since 2001, when I felt on my own family for the first time that politics divided us... This barricading has not ended since then. And I wanted to escape from that."* However, another unexpected event had to come that triggered the outmigration in a more direct way: the company that employed him, and the job that he loved, ceased to exist and R. received severance payments. *"So I was there without my job asking myself: what to do? And I pointed at five places on the map with my fingers – all places in Spanish speaking countries - and tried to calculate how much time I could survive using my money in each of these places... Then I discovered that an old friend of mine lives in Valencia who told me that I can live at their place until I get a job. So it became clear: I go to Valencia."* That is, the situation "S" affected first of all the immediate economic environment "E" that resulted in migration behaviour. Two aspects of this decision-making process should be highlighted here: 1) the general economic environment "GE" was not taken into account at all (however, we do not have information on how "GE" affected the close-down of the employer, that is "S" and "E"), and 2) social networks played a crucial role when making the decision and choosing destination (a feature that the Van Raaij model does not capture in an explicit way).

R. mentioned that he had not developed high expectations: he thought that it would be easy to find a job as a shop assistant or something similar with his fluent Spanish and English. *"But there is no place here for the expectations, because one sobers up immediately. And I sobered up really fast, because nothing came true that I expected [...] time was running and I still did not find a job. So I was a bit sad that what if I cannot get on? What if I have to go back? [...] but in the very last moment, somebody called me*

by the phone that *'hey, I have a job for you.'* The fact that R. directly related his dissatisfaction and sadness to the frustration of his employment expectations shows the validity of the cognitive definition of subjective well-being "SW" in the model. Getting a job in a hostel, for which he was overqualified, did not calm down his dissatisfaction on the long run: *"I was happy, don't misunderstand me, but I had my own frustrations."*

He spent almost three years in Valencia, when again, as a combination of an unexpected event and his social capital, R. received a phone call: he was offered a similar position in Budapest that he had before moving to Spain, but in a more prestigious company. Before returning to Hungary however, R. contrasted thoroughly the pros and contras. Among the latter, he underlined that his perceptions on the social climate in Hungary even got more negative after 2010 (cf. he returned to Hungary in 2011). *"However, I thought this is the top in my profession in Hungary, they will call me only once. So I returned home in one week's time and I work here since then. [...] When I arrived, I met many of my friends and everybody told me: You are totally crazy, man! You come back now to Hungary? And I said: we will see."*

Interestingly, R. even evaluated his own well-being after coming back to Hungary on a scale of 1-10. In doing so, first he mentioned the weaknesses of his actual job that in his view are counterweighted by the fact that *"elsewhere I couldn't grow professionally like I do here, even in the same position, because I have my networks here [...] I returned home many years ago and in general I am happy now. I would give myself a 10. However, when I think that I was living in Spain, in a country that is more developed ...and richer than Hungary, and I speak the language... what if I could have done something in a better or different way... this takes away 1 point of the 10. This is why it is not 10, but 9."*

6. INSTEAD OF CONCLUSIONS

The lack of a coherent conceptualization of migration behaviour and development is a fact often ignored by policy-makers trying to alter such behaviour.

Further, it is often forgotten even by the producers of statistical data that the aim of producing evidences should be to have the empirical basis on which theories could be tested. The UNECE call for the reinforcement of a longitudinal approach in statistics is a valuable step in this direction, however there is still much to do. The behavioural model – that of Fred van Raaij – proposed in this paper as an interpretative framework for studying migration and development is expected to be a useful input in scholarly debates on these issues. As a first step, this paper started to explore the explanatory power of this model using the example of Hungarian migrants in Spain. For this sake, first some of the relevant quantitative sources have been reviewed in order to contextualize the migration flows in question. This was followed by the analysis of a migrant biography that showed the validity of many relationships described in the model, however also pointed out some of its weaknesses. Among the former the applicability of Van Raaij's definition of subjective well-being, and among the latter, first of all the need for including social capital in the model should be mentioned. In order to find out how the Van Raaij model can be refined in a way that policy makers as well as researchers and producers of official statistics could make use of it, a more thorough analysis of available quantitative data and of more biographic interviews is needed.

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