

Tiedekunta-Fakultet-Faculty Faculty of Social Sciences		Laitos-Institution-Department Department of Political Science
Tekijä-Författare-Author Pietarinen, Katri		
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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>The thesis deals with the westward migration of Hungarian Roma in the 21st century from the perspective of migrant understandings and experiences. It is based on eight interviews conducted in December 2007 in Hungary. Five of the interviewees had applied for asylum abroad and three had left for work. None were granted asylum. Target countries were Canada, Great Britain, Belgium, Sweden and Spain.</p> <p>A general presentation of the current situation of Central and Eastern European Roma is offered, as well as a presentation of Romani migration in post-socialist times. Since 1990 several hundred thousand Roma from this region have applied for asylum abroad and many have migrated westwards to work. Only very few have been granted asylum, which has been explained by Western racism and populism by many researchers. Hungarian Romani asylum-seekers make up only a few percent of the overall number: 12 000 between 1994 and 2005. Hungarian Roma have also gone abroad to work, but no data or research on them is available.</p> <p>The aim of the thesis, inspired by biographic methods, is to offer an understanding of migrant perspectives. It is divided into three parts, which each deal with one theme related to migration. Each theme has a theoretical framework of its own. First, a push/pull model is used to structure the interviewees' reasons for departure and dreams of arrival. Second, the interviewees' understandings of the difference between asylum and economic migration are compared to the official definitions espoused by the UNHCR and the Geneva Convention. The last part approaches contradictory experiences of migrant work via theories of segmented labour market and the concept of decent work.</p> <p>All interviewees went abroad dreaming of a better life. Some would have wanted to stay abroad for good, others went for short terms to work and save up money. There was a clear difference between reasons for departure in Budapest and in rural areas: interviewees from the countryside left because of unemployment and insufficient social benefits, whereas those from the capital presented racism and fear as primary reasons. None of the asylum-seekers had understood the criteria for getting asylum as they are laid out in official definitions. Several interviewees assumed that asylum was granted for economic reasons, and they had cited unemployment and poverty as bases for their application. All had found low-wage, unskilled work abroad. Only one interviewee had a work contract; the rest worked informally. Daily working-hours ranged from ten to even twenty. In one case the interviewee had not been paid at all for a month's heavy physical work. Nonetheless, the majority of interviewees were satisfied with their experience, as wages were so much higher than in Hungary. On a broad level, the interviewees can be seen to have considerable autonomy as migrants, to use a concept developed by Sandro Mezzadra; while simultaneously being subject to strong control.</p>		
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