

Abstract

Brain drain, or human capital flight, is a phenomenon which represents a society-wide problem in the post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). At present, more than half of the people claiming BiH nationality live abroad, out of which a significant part possesses tertiary education. Loss of human capital carries negative socio-economic consequences which hinder the country's development. On the other hand, brain gain, i.e. return of highly skilled migrants to their country of origin, might reverse some of the unfavourable effects. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of the return of highly skilled migrants remains under researched not only within the region of the Western Balkans, but also on a global scale. Although this type of migration has increasingly attracted the attention of many scholars from various academic and non-academic fields, contemporary literature on this topic suffers from limitations and tends to oversimplify the returnees' motivations to purely economic incentives. This study attempts to describe the complex factors leading the highly skilled migrants to return to BiH. Based on the 33 respondents' subjective preferences from the spheres of career, family and lifestyle, this work provides an insight into the decisions of returnees in the context of the developing Western Balkan country.