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Spaces and forms of international circular mobility

ABSTRACT

The repetitive back and forth migration is advantageous for both the forwarding and receiving countries as well as for individuals of mobile lifestyle. The circular systems overwrite one-directional and mass migratory waves. Nowadays (from the aspect of Serbia) not only the continuous migration of young experts and the phenomenon of brain-drain are worrying, but also the influx of one-directional, mass international migration from Asia. These migrants aim to get to a country of the EU (mostly Germany) by crossing the state borders illegally and consider the countries of the region as transit states. The phenomenon is alarming for local individuals of circular mobility as well as for both governments. It is worthy of analyzing the motives, dimensions and consequences of both types of mobility (back and forth circulation and one-directional refugee type of migration), especially by quantitative, statistical as well as qualitative (interview) methods. The purpose of the present paper is to describe the forms and features of one-directional and several directional international mobility in Hungary, since these are not independent of each other¹. According to our hypothesis, political reactions on the new type of refugee flow negatively influences the already existing and functioning circular mobility system in the border region of Hungary and Serbia.

Keywords: international migration, circular migrant, spatial pattern, Hungary

1. Introduction

Within the system of international circular mobility individuals who dispose of a substantial migratory fund prove to participate in back and forth fluxes. Circular mobility were formed along the state border zone of Serbia and Hungary during the South-Slavic civil war (Wastl-Walter et al. 2011). Mass and wave migrations were first detected from Serbia towards Hungary during the civil war (the unemployed looking for jobs, students, entrepreneurs, seasonal workers, smugglers, etc.) (Gábrity Molnár 2012). In Hungary quantitative and qualitative changes began in 1988 after four decades of a controlled and restrictive migration regime. Due to the political transformation process in Central and Eastern Europe there was also a turn in the types of international migration flows. Hungary got integrated

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into the European and international migration systems again after the collapse of state socialist era².

There was a significant growth of international migration of foreign citizen flows in Hungary which became a receiving and a transit country after a long period of being a sending area. This development was strongly connected to the collapse of the People's Democratic Republic of Germany (GDR), the last phase of Ceausescu's rule in Romania, the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. In 1990-1991 the number of immigrants to Hungary reached a peak and thereafter fell steeply till the mid-1990s when it started to rise again. The yearly absolute number of foreign immigrants stabilized around 15 000 and the number of emigrating foreign citizens stabilized at the 2000 level. In the second half of 1990's the yearly numbers increased to 20 thousand immigrants and there was no change in the emigration flow. As a result of the continuous inflows and moderate outflows the number of foreign citizens staying in Hungary rose steadily. At the end of 1999 more than 150 000 long-term immigrant were living in Hungary, so their share within the total population rose above 1.5%. It is worth mentioning that it is a low proportion in European context. The mass immigration during the change of regime later diminished, then it grew again but did not reached its former level. In spite of continuing processes the stock of foreign immigrants decreased radically one year to another (110,000 at the end of 2000) and then the stock has been moving hectic manner.

During the accession negotiations to the European Union in the Chapter of Free Movement of Persons has been practically closed in June 2001. An increase of international immigration flow could be measured in the years following Hungary accession (1st May, 2004). Number of immigrants exceeded 25,000. The surplus came from the other countries of European Union. We saw that the nearness in western direction plays a rather small role in the quantity of immigration. Compared to the neighboring Austria more German and may be surprising, British citizens stay in Hungary for a longer period (over one year). The number of the French and Italian citizens is almost the same that of the Austrian citizens. The common history of the long centuries (Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), the lively economic relations is not reflected in the above figures. The significant role of Germany is proved by the fact that from every ten citizen arriving from the EU six are German. This order of magnitude can be attributed to the fact that Germany is the first economic partner of Hungary within the EU. Additionally, we did not forget the factors based on ethnic relations and family-related reasons. Swedish and Dutch citizens live in Hungary in a number still significant. They were followed by Finnish, then by Belgians, and also a few citizens of Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Denmark and Luxembourg stayed in Hungary longer than one year.

The attraction of Hungary has been diminishing till 2006. In parallel with this Hungary has been falling into economic crises from the end of 2008. The stock of foreign citizens living in Hungary 1st January, 2009 was 184,358 persons, so their share within the total population increased above 1.8%. Thirty-six per cent moved from Romania at about one-tenth from Ukraine and Serbia. Only 3% came from the neighboring Slovakia. Germans had 9% plus other Europeans 17%. Chinese possessed 6% plus other Asians 7%. Citizens of American countries had 2% while Africans had 1%.

The emigration of foreign citizens heavily rose in 2009 and 2010. As a consequence of outward migration and the simplified naturalization process came into force in 2001 the positive balance of international migration diminished deeply. The stock immigrant living in

² In the following sections we study the development of the number and rate of foreign citizens considered as immigrants on basis of the data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office – that is collected originally by the Ministry of Interior.

Hungary more than one year at the start of 2013 was 141,357 persons according the data of Hungarian Central Statistical Office, so their share within the total population decreased 1.4%. 25% moved from Romania, at about 8% from Ukraine and only 3% from Serbia. 5% came from the neighboring Slovakia. Germans rose to 12% plus other Europeans 21%. Chinese possessed 8% plus other Asians 9% in which two-third (6%) were Vietnamese. Citizens of American countries had 4% while Africans had 3%.

The issues of asylum seekers and refugees are completely different from international migrant. The Office of Immigration and Nationality (OIN) gained and published data about them. The legal regulations established three different categories: refugee according to Geneva Convention (*menekült*), temporary protected asylum seekers (*menedékes*) and persons granted subsidiary protection (*oltalmazott-befogadott*). In the middle of 1990's with the escalation of war at Yugoslav successor states ethnic Bosnians Serbs and Albanians arrived in Hungary and applied for temporary shelter and they gained asylum-seeker status. Before the accession to EU the average number of asylum application was high (5 thousand per year). After that it diminished an average of 2 thousand per year level. All in all the asylum applicants was 41 thousand between 2001 and 2012. More than three-quarters arrived illegally with the help of human traffickers. Many applicants moved forward the west from refugee camps before the Hungarian official decision was ever born because their initial aims were to reach Western Europe and only a few applicants were granted any asylum status (less than 10%). For instance between 2001 and 2012 only 1616 persons received conventional refugee status in Hungary. The first part of the period investigated the majority of asylum applicants were Afghan, Iraqi and Bangladeshi. Till 2007 the most significant receiving countries were Serbia and Kosovo. Considerable quantitative change has been staring from 2013 due to the liberalization of legal rules. It means that asylum applicants who arrived illegally have not been arrested during examination of their application. The first half of 2013, 11 741 asylum applicants arrived in Hungary mainly from Kosovo, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The stock of recognized applicants were as follows at the first of January 2013 in Hungary: 1513 persons as refugees, 1121 temporary protected asylum seekers and persons granted subsidiary protection.

Hungary – as member of the European Union and part of Schengen area – is committed to fulfill all requirements concerning controlling and protecting of external borders of EU. Hungary lies on the illegal migration route from the Balkans to Western Europe. As a transit country emphasis needs to be placed on handling the “transit traffic”, intensifying border control and maintaining internal security. Hungary's accession to the Schengen area in December 2007 has not affected the illegal migration routes in the short term; it has not changed it in any significant way. Main source and transit areas of the continuously increasing illegal migration flows are the Middle East, Asia Minor, Northern Africa and the Balkans.

2. Literature review

The concept of the usual place of residence is one of the basic elements of the definition of international migration adopted by the United Nations (Bilsborrow 1997; Poulain 2006). According to this concept, migration is a single (non-recurring) event that happens rarely during an individual's life. A long-term international migrant was generally a lifetime settler and perhaps never returned to his or her motherland. However, migratory movements have been developing as a type of recurring event. Multiple displacements from one home to another have become increasingly frequent during the epoch of globalization. We argued that circulation, as a part of international migration, should be viewed as interlinked

processes rather than a single event. The transnational dimension of migration is increasing. Certain international migrants become circular migrants. They devoted their time and activity to both their country of origin and their destination country (Brickell and Datta 2011; Jeffery and Murison 2011; McLoughlin et al. 2011; Casado-Díaz et al. 2014).

Based on the traditional statistical view, migration is a single, i.e., non-repeating event. Long-term migration is considered an exceptional event within the individual life cycle. The steps of the process are strictly separated from each other. From the demographic point of view, circulation consists of repeatable events, and the analysis of its parity (the number of times that a given individual migrates to a country, or in other words the serial number) is a problem that can be solved through biographical data sets, life course analysis and event history analysis (Henry 1976; Fischer and Malmberg 2001; Beguy et al. 2010). Multiple moves of individuals often show particular systematic features. Even the simplest migration system consists of at least two elements. Return migration, typical of this pattern, inevitably includes the preceding migration (King and Christou 2011; Kovács et al. 2013). If the migrant explores more than one new country, we have a case of serial migration (Ossman 2004). Moreover, the multiple moves of individuals interconnect two or more geographical locations.

3. Concept and definitions

“A single immigration may mean *a migration (from the country of origin to the host ... of origin) or a repeated migration (from the host country to a third country)*. In our view, circulation contains two *or more instances of immigration to the same country*.” (European Commission 2011: 21). By analogy to the distinction stated by the European Commission, two different perspectives can be identified on non-nationals as viewed from the destination country. We might differentiate between non-national circulars residing in the country of origin (inwards circulation) and non-national circulars settled in the host country (outwards circulation). From a methodological point of view, the analytical value of these two perspectives is completely equivalent. For practical reasons, the inwards perspective was utilized in present research. In cases involving two immigrations of the same person to the same host country, we can identify four different cases (host-origin-host; host-third-host; host-third-origin-host; host-origin-third-host) from the point of view of the host country. The next logical step can then be taken by considering analogous cases involving three immigrations. The occurrences of three instances of immigration by the same person to the same host country comprise 16 potential spatial cases. In a general sense, n ($n=1, 2, 3...$) immigrations may occur as $2^{2(n-1)}$ different cases from the perspective of the host country.

Students of transnationalism claim that multiple affiliations are inherent in recent world conditions (Portes and DeWind 2004; Walton-Roberts 2004; Lévai 2006; Papademetriou 2006; Amelina and Vasilache 2014; Hárs 2014). One of the distinguishing features of transnational migrants was that their status transcended the exclusive relationship between the territory of the nation-state and its population (Tóth 2011). Several phenomena involving multiplicity accompanied the more frequent recurring spatial movements in the era of globalization. These phenomena included multiple residence (McHugh 1995; Klinthäll 2006), multiple citizenship (Bloemraad 2004), multiple property ownership (Hall and Müller 2004), multiple employment and multi-occupationality (Kaufmann 2004; Lundborg 2010), multiple social and political activities (Waldinger 2008), multiple identity (Tannenbaum 2007; Tamaki 2011), multiple knowledge (Williams and Baláž 2008), multiple loyalty (Waldinger 2008; Sirkeci 2009; Tamaki 2011) and multiple partnerships (family, friendly, marital) (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Hagan 2008). We are aware that this list was not complete. We could expand the roster. However, we only

cited those newly emerging multiple phenomena that might exhibit a close relationship with circulation as a migratory system.

The general working definition of circulation is as follows: *circulation is a type of spatial mobility system containing at least three interlinked and individual return moves* (Illés and Kincses 2009). We intentionally use the broadest concepts applicable to human movements, such as “spatial mobility system” and “move”, to allow a more workable conceptualization of the notion of circulation with additional connotations of tourism, commuting and migration (Hall 2005). The concept usually involves return and repetition. For the specific purpose of this research, we create a particular definition. The exact working definition of international circular migration is as follows: *international circular migrations is a type of spatial migratory system including at least three interlinked and return individual migrations among the countries involved* (Illés and Kincses 2012). According to this definition, international circular migration constitutes multiple return moves within the same spatial system.

4. Data and methods

Clearly, given the macro scope of this research (Sanderson 2010), not all dimensions of circulation can be investigated (Bailey 2010; Williams et al. 2011; Skeldon 2012; Beauchemin 2014). We studied the immigrants for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 and determined the number of individuals who registered since 2001. Immigrants registered twice, three times, four times and more constitute the long-term international circular migrants, the topic of this paper.

The primary database consists of individual data files on legal immigrants each year between 2001 and 2008. According to the official statistical definition, the term ‘immigrant’ means a foreign citizen who entered Hungary in a given year and obtained a permanent residence or settlement permit for one year or more than one year. This definition is consistent with the recommendation of the United Nations on the gathering of international migration data (Haug 2002; Fassmann 2009). The documented legal status guarantees free movements and appears to encourage border crossing. These data are obtained from the Office of Immigration and Nationality. We utilise data on the flow of immigrants because net migration figures conceal multiple movements, e.g., circulation. The researchers had access to the primary database on international immigrants to Hungary. Individual immigrants were identifiable in this database. The individual data files include the immigrant’s surname, given name, sex, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, citizenship, and the address of the immigrant’s usual place of residence in Hungary.

An original method was established for the creation of a secondary database on international circular immigrants in Hungary as our group of interest. In this method, we compared one of the three years under investigation with the previous years, starting with 2001 (for example, 2006 with 2001-2005, 2007 with 2001-2006 and 2008 with 2001-2007). We created a special computer programme as a multi-level identification system to identify the same individual over different time periods³. Overall, we obtained an exceptional

³ On the first level of disaggregation, natural persons were associated with the same surname, given name(s), sex, date of birth, and place of birth. This procedure was an essential step towards the identification of circular immigrants. The first results were extracted from the original data set. The subject of the next stage of the analysis was the residuum data file. On the second level, we connected the natural persons remaining with the same surname and given name(s) without any special characters in the letters, sex, date of birth, or place of birth. This stage is necessary due to the large variety of languages and due to the mistakes in spelling made by the officers who recorded the information with or without any documents that could be consulted. On the third level, we

secondary database. In this database, natural persons returning different numbers of times to Hungary were recognised as long-term international circular migrants.

As mentioned above, this analysis covers a three-year interval. We chose to investigate flow data from 2006 through 2008. This choice was made because the results (numbers, patterns, structures) for separate years differed markedly year by year. This solution helped to decrease the distortion produced by the highly changeable character of year-to-year international circular migration (Triandafyllidou 2013).

5. Spatiality from inward perspective

The classification by citizenship shows that circulation is more typical for the citizens of the countries to the east and south direction from Hungary, such as Romania, Ukraine and Serbia. Because these migrants originated primarily from the Hungarian minorities living in these countries, their language created no real barriers (Gödri 2010; Tóth 2011; Gábrity Molnár 2012, Tátrai at al. 2013). More than one-half of the international circular migrants originated from Romania (50.6 per cent). Citizens of Western European countries or other, more distant countries generally do not return to Hungary as circulars. The exceptions to this pattern are Germans (2.3 per cent) and Chinese (5.7 per cent). The inclusion of German citizens can be explained by the observation that former Hungarian emigrants and German pensioners moved back and forth between their first and second homes (Illés and Michalkó 2008). The role of Chinese international circular migrants is explained by the emerging Chinese Diaspora and is associated primarily with the capital, Budapest (Egedy 2009; Kőszeghy 2010).

It is extremely probable that ethnic Hungarians fluent in their own language returned as multiple immigrants from neighbouring countries. Circulation functioned as an original solution to the dilemma of remaining in the homeland (motherland) or going to the home country (mother country) to obtain work or an education (Popov 2010). Note that the initiatives originating from above (from national and international bodies) failed due to several reasons linked to contemporary history. Circulation, as a spatial process extending upwards from the ground level, has been involved in an effective solution of the situation of Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries since the beginning of the era of the free movement of people related to Hungary (Kocsis 2006; Tátrai at al. 2013). International circular migration mediates the migrants' multiple engagement with their home countries and their countries of destination.

In addition to the principal countries of origin, Norway, Russia and Syria contribute significant percentages of circular immigrants. The high proportion of circulars within the immigrants from Norway and Syria is consistent with the mass international immigration of third level students (Findley 2011) to Hungary (Langerné 2009). The relatively significant percentage of circular immigrants from Russia is in agreement with the occurrence of strengthened economic motives and the phenomenon of international retirement migration to Hungary (Illés and Kincses 2008).

6. Conclusion

As the result of effects of globalization, there is not any part of the world that is not affected by the problem of migration. The results of this research conducted in 2013 indicate that the

abbreviated the family name to the first five letters without any special characters. We did not include the given name(s). This information was combined with the information on sex, date of birth, and place of birth. In the next stages, we did not use the names, but we included any other variables. In practice, we did not find the same persons after the seventh or eighth levels of comparison of the residuum data sets.

long-term circulation (multiple immigration) of foreigners to Hungary as the host country is a mass phenomenon. Based on the unique data processing method used in this study, more than 14 per cent of all immigrants arriving in Hungary were long-term circular migrants between 2006 and 2008. They had well-founded experience with living conditions in the host country due to their previous stay as international immigrants (Rátz and Michalkó 2013). Of these registered circular immigrants, 75.9% entered the country for the second time, 21.6 per cent for the third time, and 2.5% for the fourth time.

Due to the multiple selection processes, the group of international circular immigrants includes a significantly lower share of children, students and elderly people than the total subpopulation of immigrants. Most circular migrants are aged 25-54. Naturally, the age structure of circular migrants is older overall than that of non-circulars. However, in contrast to previous expectation, the average age of international circular migrants does not increase evenly by parity. Therefore, we can assume that the primary selection factors affecting these groups in the population include both the need to make money in the host country and the desire to continue their usual lifestyle in their country of origin. Circulation is most typical for single persons at productive ages from Romania, Ukraine, and Serbia. These individuals circulate primarily within well-established ethnic Hungarian networks.

Attempt has been made to embed our research results in a broader scientific context, but we have found few opportunities to perform international comparisons. The investigation of international circular immigrants on macro scale is fundamental. The definition of long-term international migration advanced by the United Nations can facilitate the use of the method presented above for the creation of secondary data on international circular migration worldwide. The emerging databases across countries may be important resources for international comparisons and may allow us to test the robustness of the findings of this case study.

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Prostori i forme međunarodne cirkularne migracije

Kružna mobilnost je korisna i za zemlju porekla i za ciljnu zemlju, kao i za pojedinca. Ovakvi kružni oblici migracije menjaju dosadašnju formu masovne jednosmerne selidbe stanovništva. Sa aspekta Srbije, zabrinjavajuća pojava je ne samo permanentni „odliv mozgova” mladih stručnjaka, nego i omasovljavanje jednosmerne međunarodne imigracije iz Azije. Izbegli prilikom ilegalnog prelaska granice prema Evropskoj uniji (uglavnom u Nemačku) koriste našu državu kao tranzitni prostor. Sve

ovo se odvija uz veliku zabrinutost lokalnog stanovništva koji je do sada kružio, a i vlada obe države. Bilo bi korisno analizirati motive, dimenzije i efekte dva oblika mobilnosti (prekogranični cirkularni i jednosmerni izbeglički), pre svega pomoću statističkih podataka i metodom dubokog intervjua. Cilj rada je da prikaže karakteristike i forme jednosmerne i višesmerne međunarodne prostorne migracije u Mađarskoj. Naš stav je da dosadašnje zvanične političke reakcije na novi tip izbegličke migracije koče dosada izgrađene i funkcionalne sisteme cirkularne migracije u srpsko-mađarskom pograničnom regionu.

Ključne reči: međunarodna migracija, kružni doseljenik, prostorni raspored, Mađarska