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Characteristics of Serbian-Hungarian international migrations before Schengen

Serbian citizens may travel to the Schengen area without a visa since 19th December 2009. There has been a considerable migration between Serbia and Hungary since the beginning of the Yugoslav civilian wars. Serbian citizens make one of the largest foreign populations in Hungary. Therefore, it is important to examine the characteristics of these people, what regional effects do their presence in Hungary have, as well as the impact of their absence from Serbia. We can point out characteristic relations between emigration and the target regions, which means the connection between the kinds of migrants from different parts of Serbia settling in various parts of Hungary. This study intends to present the spatial characteristics of this migration network.

During the study we primarily examined data from the period 2001-2008. However, we also consider it important to talk about Serbian migrations in the 20th century as well as the current migration role of Vojvodina. This is important for better understanding of processes, the effects of preceding events on the observed period, as well as in order to map socio-economic background of migrations from Serbia towards Hungary.

Bibliographic approach of international migration

According to Hungarian interpretation, international migration means such leaving of the country of the original place of living, where the aim is to found a new place of living in another country for settling down or for performing earning activities *(Demographic Yearbook, 2007)*. The definition from above is completed by Mária Rédei, who introduced the term of educational migration *(Rédei, 2007)* done for learning, and by Sándor Illés with old-age migration *(Illés, 2008)* done for better utilisation of purchasing power of pensions, or to search for better climate (Mediterranean region). The Serbian definition of migration says that it is the permanent or temporary leaving of one territory for another done by a greater number of inhabitants. Legally it is considered for a neutral phenomenon: an activity that cannot be punished *(Szalma, 2001)*. However, by 2009 this has dramatically changed: according to the European migration policy illegal migration has become a criminal category that must be punished *(Đorđević, 2009)*. Grečić means by the term of migration the permanent settlement and movement of population *(Grečić, 2001)*.

To summarise, international migrants change their place of living after their individual decision, which is influenced by external and internal factors, attractive and repulsive effects. This way the migrants actively take part in the rapid transformation of the world's demographic and economic structure, thus international migration is a visible form of numerous economic and demographic force fields.

In our opinion, besides the regional differences in wages *(Hatton-Williamson, 2005)*, the geographic position of the target regions also has an important effect on spatial distribution of migrants. Geographic and economic centre and periphery play an important role in choosing the place of living. According to our hypothesis, an important factor in the spatial distribution of Serbian migrants in Hungary is its capital, Budapest, an economic centre, which is a typical dynamic receptive centre of international migration as well. Compared to the national average of

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settlements, Budapest is quite over-represented concerning the number of foreigners and their proportion in 1000 inhabitants, which is in tune with the international trends, since the main target territories of migration are the capitals. There is a wide range of occupations and originating-countries in this place. Another important factor is the proximity of borders, which presents an additional value for many migrants. We can mention, for example, the better and easier contacts with family members who remained at home. It is important that we can also recognise these phenomena in the originating countries, namely, migrants from Serbia who lived near the border would more probably settle down near the Hungarian border than others. Serbian migrants, who mostly come from Vojvodina, prefer to live in Budapest or near the Serbian border.

Border regions were traditionally considered as disadvantageous territories according to location theories, because of the barriers in international trade and the threats of military invasions *(Anderson, O'Dowd, 1999)*. National borders have negatively affected regional economy because of increasing transactional costs. Taxes, different languages, cultures and business practice made obstacles for cross-border trade in general, which reduces the willingness of national and foreign companies to locate in these regions *(Hansen, 1977)*.

The alteration of this unfavourable image could generate a new increase in the border regions through greater international economic integration – with lover trade barriers. These regions have characteristics by which they can be defined as active contact regions *(Nijkamp, 1988; Van Geenhuizen, Ratti, 2001)*. Important target regions of international migration from Serbia towards Hungary are the settlements and counties near the border (besides the capital city).

Between 1988 and 1999 there were 3982 Yugoslav investments realised in Hungary, which made 16% of all foreign investments. 70% of them were in the South Great Plain region, while only 20% in Budapest (it reached its peak in 1993 with about one thousand enterprises) *(Szónoky Miklósné Ancsin, 2001)*. Nagy characterises this period as the time of the intellectuals' leaving, founding companies and escaping of capital *(Nagy, 2006)*. Gábrity Molnár talks about migration losses of ethnical character concerning Vojvodina Hungarians *(Gábrity Molnár, 2008)*.

Grečić considers Hungary and Poland for the countries of transit migrants resulting from the stricter migration policy of EU in the 1990's *(Grečić, 2001)*. Nagy considers these countries for a springboard *(Nagy, 2006)*. However, the hardship of entering the target country often made these people to remain here *(Grečić, 2001)*.

The migration study in Serbia cannot be considered for continuous because of the lack of adequate data. The events of the 1991-2002 period can hardly be backed up with exact numbers, and Serbian literature after 2000 is based on estimates. We could find only few migration statistics in 2002 census data compared to the previous ones, partly because of the modified methodology. For this reason, our main survey results are based on the statistical database of the target countries. The receptive countries marked the originating country of the migrants as former Yugoslavia until 1998, which makes region-specific studies more difficult. On the other hand, the relevant Hungarian migration databases contain even the settlements of the originating countries (databases of the Migration and Citizenship Office and of the Central Statistical Office). After we identified the settlements one by one, we could analyse the spatial distribution in details. In our study we consider for foreign citizens those people living in Hungary who possess a valid living, immigration or settlement permit on the 1st January (so tourists, diplomats and those who stay in Hungary for less than a year are not examined).

Serbian citizens in Hungary

After presenting the migration situation in Serbia, we start our analysis in which we examine migration processes in the 2001-2008 period based on the original (Serbian) and current (Hungarian) place of living, age group, occupation, qualification and the rate of taxpayers. The observed regional level is NUTS3 where it is relevant, we also give detailed data (at settlement level). We have distinguished three educational levels, elementary (ISCED 1-2), secondary (ISCED 3-4) and higher (ISCED 5-7) education, while the classification of occupations is based on ISCO-88 structure.

Hungary has a surplus in international migration since the change of regime with the demolition of Iron Curtain . Namely, more foreigners arrive to the country than the number of Hungarian citizens leave it. On 1st January, 2008 there were 174,697 foreign citizens staying in Hungary permanently, which is 1,7% of the population. This means that from 100 people living in Hungary almost two are foreigners. The proportion of foreigners in Hungary increased for 61% during the eight years after the millennium.

Direct and indirect effects of international migration are undoubtedly determining factors of demography in Hungary. This can be stated based on the processes of the past two decades and those expected in the future. Direct effects are in the increase of the number of population, of active population and of older people together with the rejuvenating effect due to the age and gender structure of the migrants. Indirect effects are those phenomena, which are connected to the age and happen in the receptive country, e.g. births, marriages, studentification, changes in the real estate and labour market.

10% of foreigners staying in Hungary on 1st January 2008 were Serbian citizens. This proportion has increased during the past three years. The proportion of foreigners from neighbouring countries in Hungary is great and increasing. On 1st January 2008 about 17,186 Serbian citizens stayed in Hungary, while additional 12,556 people have become Hungarian citizens since 1993 (97% of them have Hungarian as mother tongue). Therefore, according to the official statistics about **30,000 Serbian citizens have moved to and settled down in Hungary for 15 years**. This is about half of the natural decrease of population (the difference between live births and deaths) in Hungary per year.

As Figure 1 shows, the proportion of foreigners in the active population in Hungary is tower above the case of the native Hungarians who are over-represented in the 0-14 and 50-X age groups. The proportion of Serbian citizens between 15-24 years is higher than of foreigners and the whole population. Those between 25-59 from Serbia also have higher proportion than Hungarians, however the high percentage of foreigners between 25-49 years is not characteristic for them.

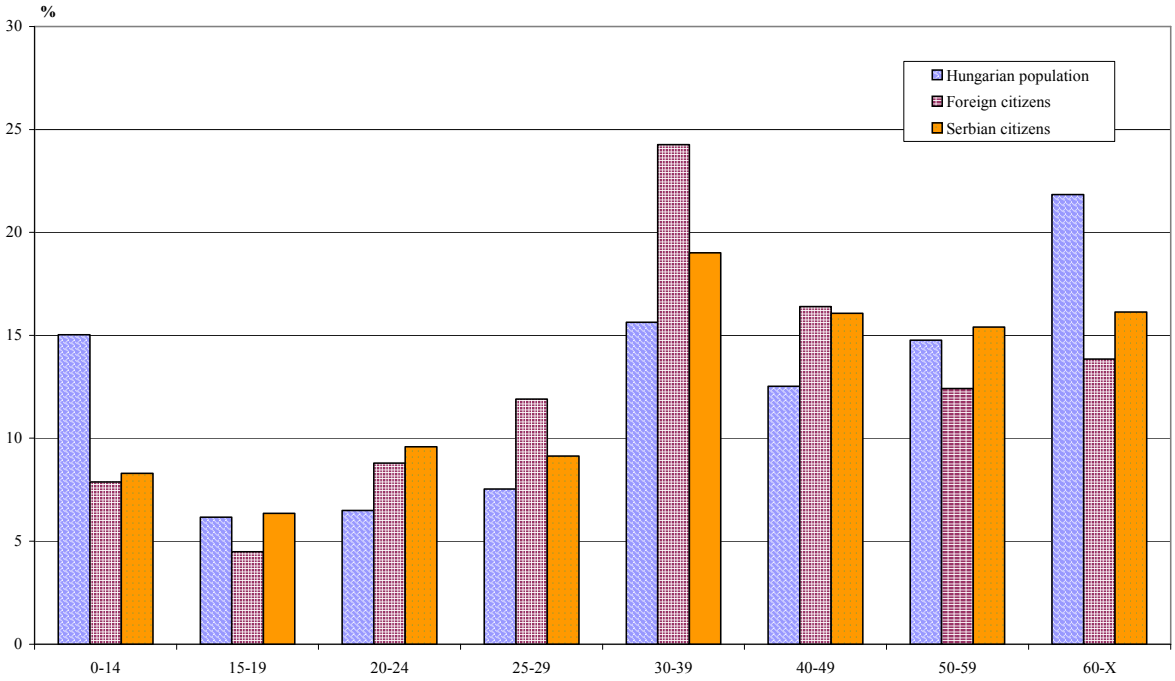


Figure 1: Hungarian population by citizenship and age group, 1st January 2008.
Source: HCSO

Due to the higher share of active population, the proportion of taxpayers is also higher. The distribution of foreign taxpayers between counties is not proportional; it is higher where taxable income per capita is higher, like in Budapest where more than 4% of taxpayers are foreigners. This trend is less characteristic to Serbian citizens. While the proportion of foreign taxpayers in Budapest and Pest County is 62%, the proportion of Serbians is below 40% here. However they pay tax nearly the same number in Csongrád County as in the capital.

Counties	Number of taxpayers	Taxable income per capita (HUF)	Foreign taxpayers	
			Serbian	Total
Budapest	759 360	638 083	1109	32036
Baranya	169 041	289 332	131	1334
Bács-K	227 188	263 798	339	2015
Békés	161 601	237 811	79	1151
Borsod-A-Z	277 197	288 442	13	1196
Csongrád	182 817	298 582	968	2984
Fejér	207 272	367 202	142	2118
Győr-M-S	212 858	340 320	68	2864
Hajdú	226 311	287 685	30	1802
Heves	135 760	310 157	21	1187
Komárom-E	151 416	358 457	31	2146
Nógrád	87 407	264 147	6	521
Pest	514 948	421 507	255	10735
Somogy	136 964	253 000	59	830
Szabolcs-Sz-B	211 950	250 575	8	1983
Jász-N-Sz	168 124	272 844	18	803
Tolna	104 360	291 682	53	708
Vas	130 716	300 813	23	705
Veszprém	174 841	289 702	30	1063
Zala	138 475	279 140	76	862
Külföld			220	18034
Total	**4 378 606**	**373 033**	**3679**	**87077**

Table 1: Taxpayers by citizenship and county, 2007.
Source:Tax and Financial Control Administration

Regional study in Serbia and Hungary

There are traditionally strong migration relations between Serbia and Hungary. The migration concerns every Serbian and Hungarian regions – there are migrants in every Hungarian county from each part of Serbia. This process involves 5,3% of Serbian and 24% of Hungarian settlements, thus strong regional effects can be observed.

Serbian settlements particularly involved in emigration to Hungary are Subotica (3365 people), Senta (1951), Novi Sad (1020), Bačka Topola (705), Kanjiža (694), Bečej (524) and Zrenjanin (508). Regions from Serbia are North Bačka (5869), North Banat (4661), South Bačka (2429) and West Bačka (1005). About 88% of immigrants from Serbia arrive from Vojvodina. On the other hand, among settlements in Hungary as a target region the most preferred settlements are Szeged (4481), Budapest (3896), Kecskemét (499) and Baja (336); concerning counties these are Csongrád (6270), Budapest (3896), Bács-Kiskun (2522) and Pest (945). 80% of migrants live in the abovementioned regions. It is important to point out that Serbian citizens are characterised by higher convergence to the original and higher divergence to their current place of living.

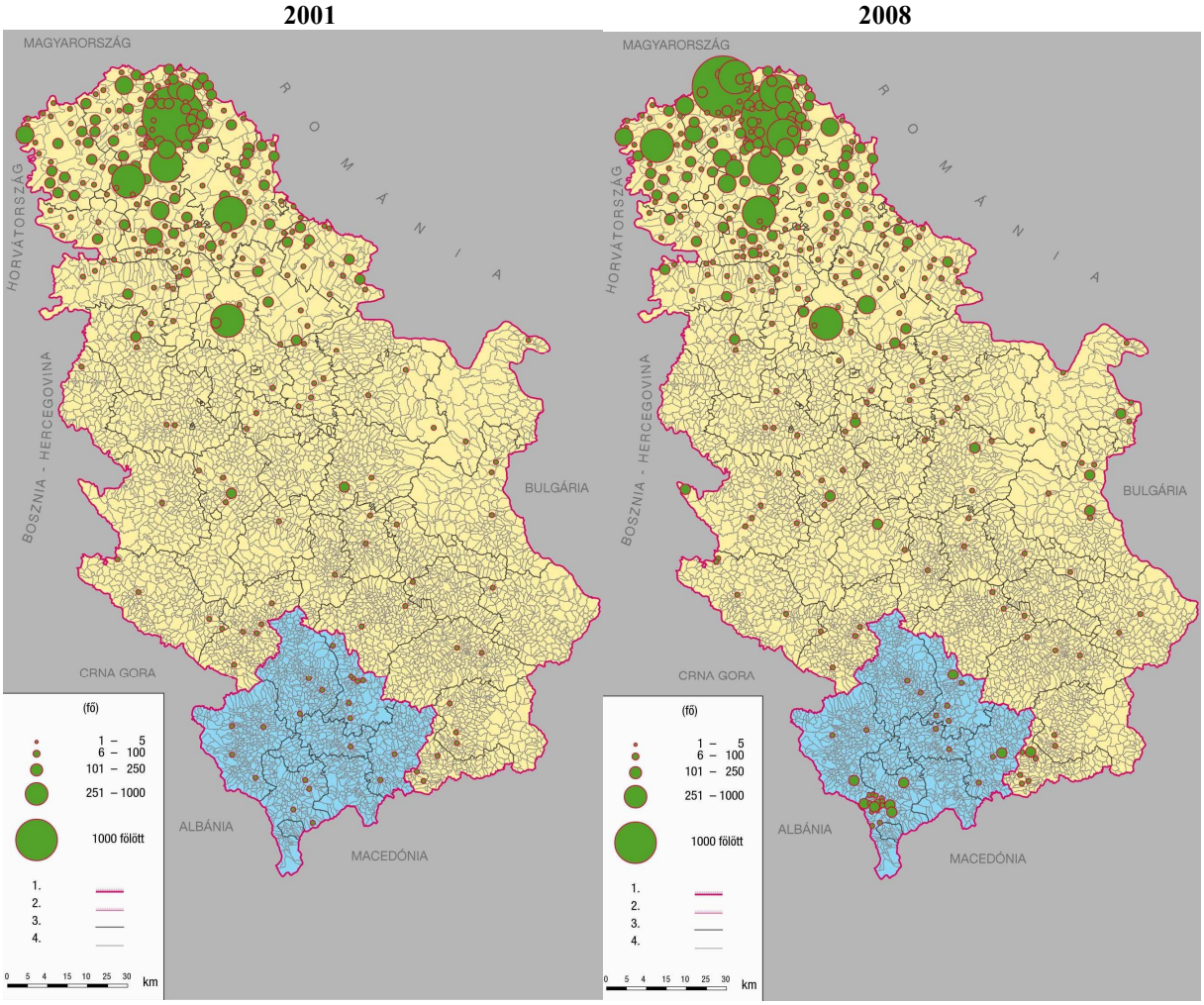
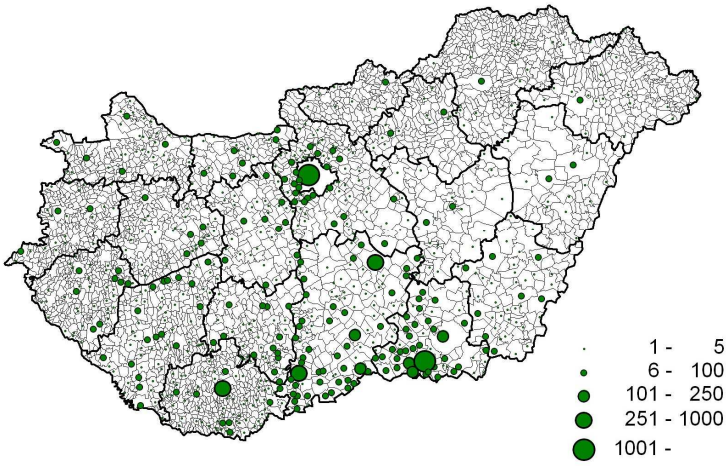
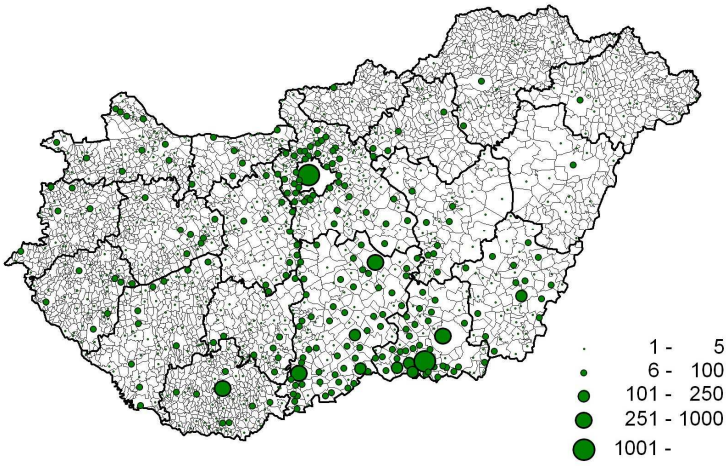


Figure 2: Serbian citizens living in Hungary by sending settlements, 1st January 2001 and 2008.
Cartography: Zsolt Dr. Bottlik, MTA FKI



Map 1: Serbian citizens living in Hungary by current settlement, 1st January 2001.



Map 2: Serbian citizens living in Hungary by their current settlement, 1st January 2008.

Our aim is to find a relationship between the original Serbian districts and the current Hungarian counties, so to analyse international migrants concerning this characteristic. According to **from where– to where migration matrix,** we can divide the regions of the original (Serbian) places of living into three groups. In the first group there are places near the border (North Bačka, North Banat and West Bačka), in the second are South Bačka, South Banat, Central Banat and Srem, while the third is the group of other regions. We also differentiate three groups in Hungary for characterising the observed migration system. These are the counties near the border (Csongrád, Bács-Kiskun), areas of migration centre (Budapest and Pest County) and other counties.

It is important to notify that there is a strong, concentrated flow of people between North Vojvodina and Csongrád, Bács-Kiskun counties with a number of 6532, who are 40% of all migrants. This way there is a significant regional concentration of migration. There is also a significant relation between the proportion of Hungarian nationality (in an ethnic sense) and the willingness to emigrate from the original Serbian settlements. Namely, Serbian citizens who are now living near the border (on the Hungarian side) mainly arrived from areas near the border

(78%), while Serbian migrants from out of this part of Vojvodina have settled to the Hungarian migration centre (49,4%). Migrants from other countries also prefer Budapest and Pest County irrespective to their original place of living.

We further examined these groups based on their qualifications, occupation and age group. We found that people with higher education attainments are attracted to the migration centre even from larger distance. Migrants with secondary and higher education attainments mainly live in this area. The average educational level of Serbian citizens near the Hungarian border is lower than in other places, however there is also a considerable number of migrants with higher education. According to the data we can see that the qualifications more depend on the current place of living in Hungary than on the original one in Serbia.

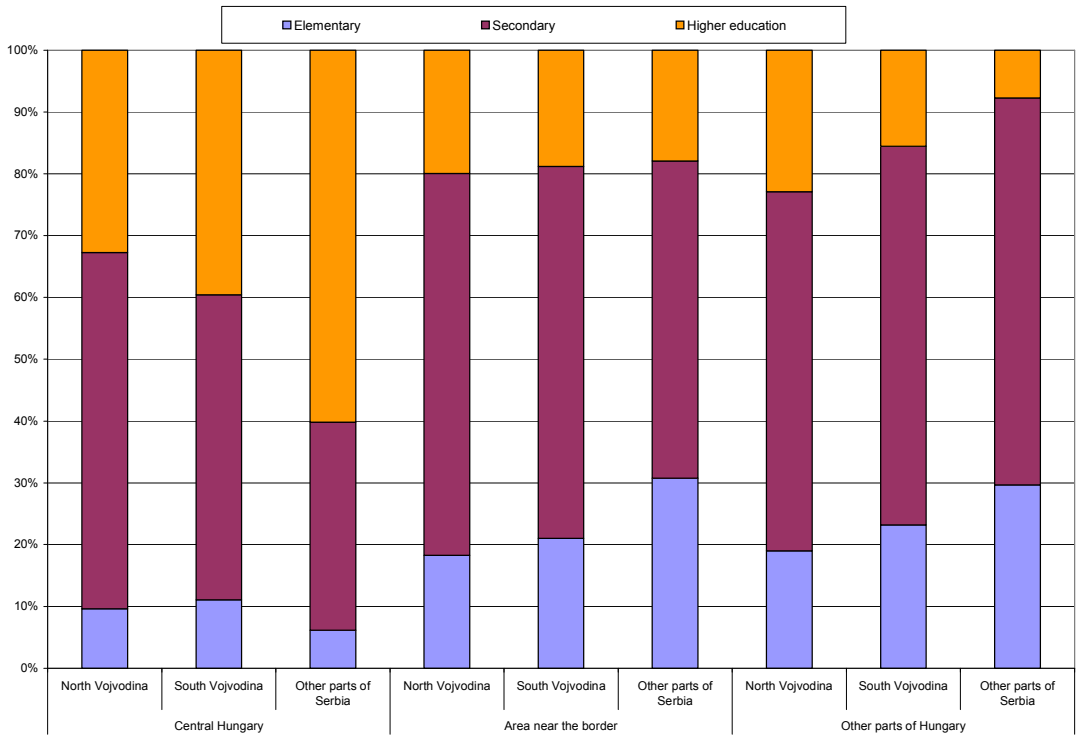


Figure 3: Serbian citizens staying in Hungary by spatial groups and educational attainments (18-X aged), 1st January 2008.

The analysis of age groups (Figure 4.) shows a considerably different spatial distribution. The majority of Serbian citizens living in Central Hungary are in the active age group, but the proportion of older people is also high. The share of older people who migrated from Vojvodina is much higher than of those from other parts of Serbia, irrespective to their current place of living in Hungary. More young people live near the border than in the other parts of the country; there is a higher proportion of people between 19-24, so we could assume that they intend to obtain their higher qualification in either of Hungarian Colleges or Universities. The distribution of age groups depends both on the original Serbian settlement and the current one in Hungary.

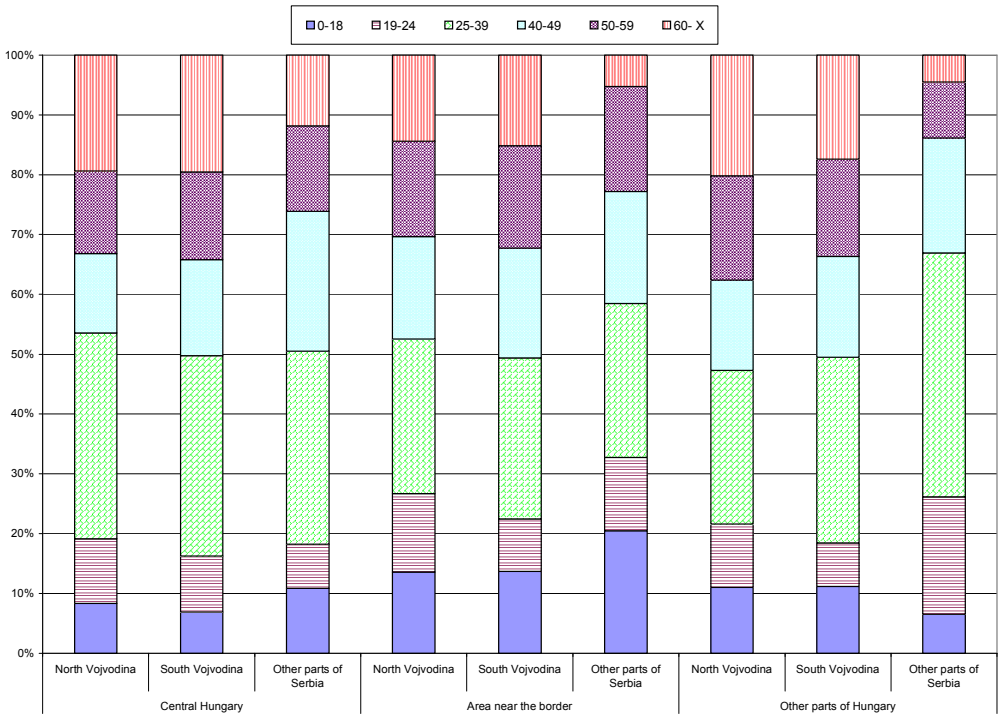


Figure 4: Serbian citizens staying in Hungary by spatial groups and age groups, 1st January 2008.

Concerning the occupation of Serbian citizens above 18 years living in Hungary, we can see the following proportions: professionals (12%), technicians and associate professionals (10.7%), other jobs with higher or secondary qualifications (7.4%), service workers and craft workers (7.4%), clerks (5.4%), elementary occupations (5.1%), legislators, senior officials and managers (3.5%), plant and machine operators and assemblers (2.4%), skilled agricultural and fishery workers (2%). Furthermore, the proportion of unemployed, pensioners, housekeepers and personal care workers is 28.5%, while pupils and students are 15.5%. The proportion of pupils is the most highest in Central Hungary (20%). Based on the original place of living of citizens above 18 years, 16% of them are students, coming from North Vojvodina, 14% from South Vojvodina and 10.8% from other parts of Serbia. In Central Hungary professionals (16.5% of Serbian citizens above 18 living here), legislators, senior officials and managers (5%) are prevailing to the national average, while near the border clerks (8.3%), skilled agricultural and fishery workers (2.5%) and elementary occupations (6.3%) are more characteristic.

Research summary, comparison of Serbian – Hungarian migration

The analysis of spatial distribution of Serbian migrants in Hungary after the millennium shows that the Serbian and Hungarian (migration) centres and the (geographical) periphery territories considerably influence the trends in international migration. Budapest and Pest County are the general dynamic migration centres of Hungary, while Vojvodina is the central territory of emigration. The proximity of the border is an important geographic motive, which is not a barrier but a contact zone from the aspect of migration flows.

In our research we examined the migration of Serbian citizens concerning their original place of living between 2001 and 2008. The results show that the number of Serbian citizens staying in Hungary is gradually increasing after 2001. The ending of the ten-year period of Yugoslav wars does not mean decreased emigration willingness in Serbia. In reality, the consequences of happenings in Kosovo in 2008 may also have further political motives for emigration.

In our opinion, the reasons for emigration (to Hungary) from Serbia/Vojvodina after the millennium are the following:

- transformation of the economic structure, unsuccessful privatisation, unemployment, regional disparities, newer uncertainty (economic migration)
- amphibious enterprises, doing business both in Hungary and Serbia, capital investments (economic migration, commuting)
- migration (temporary or permanent) or commuting of new generations for educational purposes (educational migration, commuting)
- particular ethnocentric migration in case of Vojvodina Hungarians (contact zone)
- transit migration towards Western Europe (for political and economic motives)

We found out that most of the Serbian citizens (78%) living near the border in Hungary arrived from Vojvodina near the border. This way the border is not barrier but a contact zone. Budapest and Pest County is the favourite place for settling irrespective to the migrants' original place of living. Here we can find migrants with various occupations and qualifications, but the intensity of migration is below its level near the border.

We can assume that the structure of migration is defined by the location of the original Serbian and current Hungarian county, the demographic and economic attributes of the migrants and their acquaintances.

The migration benefit/losses on the two sides of the border are human, material and demographics. Summarising the results, there is a strong relation in the Serbian –Hungarian migration: about 17,186 Serbian citizens are staying in Hungary, almost the same number (12,556) have become Hungarian citizens since 1993 (97% of them have Hungarian as mother languagetongue). So in total about 30,000 Serbian citizens immigrated to Hungary during the past 15 years.

With 19th December 2009 a new era has begun in Serbian migrations. The migration difficulties of the 1990's seem to lessen since Serbian citizens got international legitimacy for free movements. In the study we presented and analysed continuous and intensifying emigrations of Serbian citizens in the past two decades until 2008. Instead of assumptions on future trends in migrations, we want to call attention to the presented tendencies, data and statistics, which would be greatly influenced by Schengen.

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Summary

Keywords*:* Schengen 2009, Serbia – Hungary, emigration, regional disparities.

After 19th December 2009 citizens of Serbia can travel to the Schengen area without a visa. There has been (and still is) a significant population motion between Serbia and Hungary since the Yugoslav wars. One of the most considerable groups of foreign inhabitants in Hungary is the Serbians. That is why it is important to know what kind of features and spatial impacts characterise the international migration between these two neighbouring countries. In this article we study the migration process from Serbia to Hungary. An analysis of the spatial distribution of migrants shows that there are two separate and considerable geographical motives, which mostly determine the location of foreigners in Hungary, namely, the effects of centres and the borders. The first one means both a dynamic centre of immigration to Hungary and such emigration from Serbia. The second geographical motive is the proximity to the border, which is not a barrier, but rather a contact zone. To simplify it, we analyse the period between 2001-2008 with the aim to show the effect of Serbian citizens' emigration on the Serbian and Hungarian society and economy, and the role of Vojvodina as a region. We describe migration between these two countries before Schengen.

Kivonat

Kulcsszavak: Schengen 2009, Szerbia – Magyarország, emigráció, regionális különbségek.

2009. december 19-e után Szerbia állampolgárai vízummentesen utazhatnak a Schengen-térségbe. Szerbia és Magyarország között a délszláv háborúk óta jelentős népességmozgás zajlott le, és zajlik napjainkig. A szerb állampolgárok alkotják az egyik legjelentősebb külföldi népesség-csoportot Magyarországon. Ezért is fontos megvizsgálni, milyen tulajdonságok jellemzik őket, milyen területi hatásuk van Magyarországon, illetve hiányuknak Szerbiában. Karakteres kapcsolatok mutathatók ki az elvándorlás és a célterületek között, azaz jellemző, hogy Szerbia melyik részeiről Magyarországon hová, milyen tulajdonságú migránsok mozognak. A cikk ennek a migrációs hálózatnak a területi tulajdonságait igyekszik bemutatni. A kutatásunkban konkrétan a 2001-2008 közötti időszak adatait elemezzük, azonban egyrészt a folyamatok mélyebb megértése érdekében, másrészt az előzmények adott időszakra gyakorolt hatása miatt, harmadrészt a Szerbia felől Magyarországra érkező áramlások társadalmi-gazdasági hátterének feltérképezése okán lényegesnek tartjuk a szerbiai migráció XX. századi főbb vonulatainak ismertetését, illetve a Vajdaság jelenkori migrációs szerepének leírását is. Egységes képet szeretnénk adni arról a helyzetről, amely a Schengent megelőző – két ország közti népességmozgást jellemezte.