

THE 50 YEARS OF SERBIAN MIGRATION

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Abstract

The main reasons of the half-century long Serbian emigration are the following: the continuous changes of the social structure, the unemployed, the weighing status of the domestic economy and family's income has resulted the growth of emigration (crises, South-Slavic wars), finally the career-building (brain drain). Presently, the hosting country decides who can migrate into the country (degree, profession, age, guarantee of self-maintenance, language knowledge). The hosting countries are in Europe (78%): Germany, Austria, Switzerland and France, or on other continents: USA, Canada and Australia (approximately 22%).¹

The current emigrants are mostly experts (IT specialist, programmer, engineer, inventor, microbiologist, professionals with PhD degrees, medical workers, artist, sportsman), those who speak foreign languages and who have capital at their disposal. The consequences of emigration are mostly negative: financial loss (capital distraction, non-refundable educational costs), the absence of experts, demographic deformation, and reduction of population (the absence of young men).

The refugee types of Vojvodina before the civil war (1989-91) was guest-worker, those who left at the beginning of the war, during the hyperinflation (1992-93) were mostly entrepreneurs, and those who aimed at escaping from the civil war (1992-95) were refugees, illegal workers and students.

The hosting readiness of Hungary indicates that the positive behavior towards the refugees has declined, because the population gradually loses its patience seeing the amount of refugees. Towards the political refugees more sympathetic behavior can be noticed, however less towards the economic refugees.

Keywords: Serbia, Vojvodina, emigrational processes, quest workers.

According to the hypothesis of the present paper the main reasons for the half-century long, continuous Serbian migration are the slow change of the social system, the quest for a new road by the disadvantageous actors of the transitional processes, in other words, the emigrational toss that has been nourishing the Serbian crisis (South Slavic war, hyperinflation) for two decades, as well as the carrier quest of youngsters that has seriously contributed to brain-drain. The emigrational waves had not affected Hungary, but rather the developed Western European countries and countries beyond the seas.

Emigrational waves

According to experts, a country's openness enables migration. However, the incapacitation of traveling abroad may also encourage migration, namely, when societies are relatively closed. It has been for fifty years that the population of either Tito's Yugoslavia or the Milošević era has been emigrating from the country; however, the motifs are different. The Serbian economic crisis, the slowness of transition, the high ration of unemployment still nourishes the migration inclination today.

Following the World War II, the number of migrants from Yugoslavia proved to be ordinary in comparison to other East European countries, mostly those emigrated who did not agree with the new, communist regime. Approximately 30,000 Hungarians left the

¹ The original text was translated by Scientific Association for Hungarology Research (Gábrity, Eszter PhD. student)

country, but according to some data 20,000 Hungarians fell victim to blood feud, many of them innocently. Since 1961 the continuous foreign migration of the population has begun, the number of workers working abroad (guest workers) has also increased. In the beginning the economic migration of the Yugoslav population did not receive social support: the politicians of those times often labeled the phenomenon of migration to be very interesting as far as the social development of a socialist country is concerned. The un-organized and spontaneous migration was allowed, but unexpected. However, since 1965 the economic migration was organized because of the massive departure of the active labor population hoping that the unfavorable economic processes could be balanced, the demographic pressure would be controlled and the country would benefit from the profit of the returning guest workers. The first emigrational wave began just after the economic reform of 1965. The announced aim of the economic policy was to intensify the economy, to abolish the unproductive work of the employment, to decrease the influence of the state's economic developmental plans (e.g. light industry), to introduce the supply-demand market conditions as well as new credit and financial reforms. The West European countries achieved a relatively high economic boom at those times, and the demand for un-qualified, trained and cheap labor force was high. According to the Yugoslav reform-force's idea the departure of unqualified and unemployed population the agricultural over-population would decrease, the quality of labor would amend and through the return of the guest workers the imbalanced economic status of the region's countries would moderate.

According to some estimations², in 1964 approximately 100,000 citizens of Yugoslavia lived abroad. On the basis of the 1971 census, the number of migrants was 750,000; in 1973 this number reached 1.1 million³. The so-called "first oil-shock" of 1973 resulted changes in the economy of the West European countries since the era of recession caused unemployment in the middle/end of the 70's. As a consequence, the guest workers were sent home. According to the census of 1981, the number of those who worked abroad with their family was 874,966⁴. The massive migration to another country started out from the most developed republics (Slovenia, Croatia) and later reached Vojvodina as well. Between 1968 and 1979, the number of those who lived abroad was the highest among the population of Serbia, approximately 1/3 from Slovenia and only 1/10 from Kosovo⁵. Later the number of migrants from Kosovo was ten times higher than between 1968 and 1979. The dynamics of working abroad can be illustrated by the data that in 1970 2.5 times more people left the territory of Serbia than in 1969. The number of people living abroad moderated, but continuously grew, except for the most developed region, Vojvodina, where the number of emigrants decreased to 33,957 in 1991. In the 90's the nearness of the war and its dangers resulted further waves of massive and rapid migration within the borders of the country and abroad as well. Tragedies of whole nations and ethnic groups forced several families to leave their country, some families even for good. At the end of the 20th century, the antecedent and consequence of the NATO-bombing (poverty, military mobilization, insecurity) hovelled the massive migration. According to some moderate estimations, during the last decade approximately 50,000 Hungarians migrated from Vojvodina, but some experts consider the number of Hungarians living abroad even higher.

² The census of the Yugoslav population is conducted every tenth year: in 1921, 1931, 1948, 1953, 1971, 1981, 1991, but the number of workers temporarily working abroad is registered only from 1971.

³ Source: Stanovništvo i domaćinstva SR Srbije prema popisu 1981, In: Statistical Institute Serbia, Centar za demografska istraživanja, Beograd, 1984, p.141.

⁴ Jugoslav Statistical Almanach 1986: 466. In 1981 the population of Yugoslavia was 22,424,711.

⁵ Source: Stanovništvo i domaćinstva SR Srbije prema popisu 1981, In: Statistical Institute Serbia, Centar za demografska istraživanja, Beograd, 1984.

The emigrational movement of Yugoslavs and Hungarians in Vojvodina

Between 1918 and 1924, 45,000 Hungarian intellectuals, bureaucrats, farm-owners and capitalists were deported from the country (GÁBRITYNÉ MOLNÁR, I.: 115-162). Between 1921 and 1929 14,442 people moved to America. The farm-less farmers (the 44% of Hungarians) became seasonal workers, pick-and-shovel men and servants. Thousands of Hungarians moved to towns or even to Belgrade from poor villages (at one time 30,000 Hungarians lived in the capital) (MIRNICS, K.: 9-76). Hungarians during their quest for work reached even mines, tourist centers as well, while one part of the intellectuals was employed in the center or south part of the country. 100,000 Serbian farming families were settled into Vojvodina justified by the result of the agrarian reforms of 1920 and 1941 (they received 5 hectare of farm that of the former Hungarian farmers). In contrary to this, the deportation of the South Slavic “colonists” and the settlement of the Hungarian Csángós began during the World War II. Afterwards, those who did not agree with the new, communist regime left the country. Approximately, 30,000 Hungarians moved from Yugoslavia.

The migration of the Yugoslav population (including Hungarians) has been taking place for fifty years. Its first wave started after 1965 and the target countries included developed capitalist ones. The state opened the borders, introduced new economic and system actions in order to prevent the overpopulation of the agricultural population and to solve the problem of the unemployment and unqualified labor force. The destinations of migration were: German Federal Republic, Austria and France. Since the second half of the 1960's migration was organized the active labor population migrated massively. The system expected the recovery of the unfavorable economic conditions and experiencing benefit from the profit of the returning guest workers.

Until the 1980's, migration had an economic motivation (economic migration). In comparison to inner migration the migration of Hungarians abroad caused more serious loss for Hungarians of Vojvodina than assimilation. On the basis of the calculations of Károly Kocsis, the Hungarian emigrational loss was 69,193 between 1948 and 1991 (25,228 Hungarians left the country in the 1980's). The first wave of leaving for the West (between 1965 and 1970) to get a job seemed to be only temporary: 16,627 Hungarians (the 27.5% of the regions guest workers) (BUKUROV, B. 1977: 135–156). Most of the Hungarians came from municipalities of Subotica, Novi Sad, Topola, Sombor and Ada, mostly from the linguistic islands of Banat and Bačka. The reason for migration changed in the 90's: it was political and psychological, the fear of war and military mobilization. The narrowed socio-cultural minority life and developmental area disabled the adequate cultivation of traditions, decreased the possibility of mother tongues education (from pre-school to university). The political migrants appeared in the beginning of the 90's, mostly because of refusing to act on military call-up, since they felt their basic civil rights to be violated as being member of a minority group. The majority of Hungarians did not feel the need of taking part in the South Slavic conflict. Migration was massive, young experts, families moved to countries that were willing to receive refugees or political and economic migrants (Canada, Australia, Germany, Hungary, etc.). The migration of Hungarian experts was encouraged because of their knowledge and talent, the inappropriate and incomplete conditions of scientific research, inadequate investments of reforms and inventions and their low financial evaluation. At the same time, Europe welcomed the new, creative ideas and our experts could compete.

The Hungarian migrants from Serbia first moved to European countries: Germany, Austria, Sweden and France and less Hungarians traveled to non-European countries

(Canada, USA). Lately, since European countries have been over flood by refugees and guest workers, migrants did not have the opportunity to choose their destination, but go to a country that allowed their entrance: Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

Types of migration

Today the majority of migrants are young experts (IT specialist, programmer, engineer, inventor, microbiologist, professional with PhD degrees, medical worker, artist, sportsman) who master foreign languages and have capital as well. Our region faces serious disadvantages as a result of “brain-drain” and the migration of businessmen and their capital. The analysis of migration types according to the length of migrants’ stay during the last decade:

a) temporary foreign employment

Employment targeted at the west has been officially registered by the state for half century. The mostly qualified employees work abroad during the whole year (generally with their family) and return only occasionally (significant holidays, visiting relatives two or three times per year). They usually maintain their foreign status until they have their jobs or till the amendment of Serbia’s status, but it is also possible that this group of people will return only after Serbia’s admission to the EU.

b) Entrepreneurs, businessmen

At the end of the 80’s a small number of enterprising-oriented private tradesmen, private small factories and suppliers appeared in Yugoslavia and Vojvodina. The nature of their business activity resulted the establishment of various relationships with foreign business partners. A group of new businessmen tried to launch enterprises again and again, either during the years of critical economy since the state jobs were insecure of the economic reforms or during the years of economic boom as a result of gaining new motivation. The new class of entrepreneurs in Serbia changes its economic activity even today, tries to benefit from the cross-border economic opportunities. The average life cycle of firms is usually short, but diverse concerning its business activity and is characterized by perpetuate, traveling businessmen, managers.

c) The economic migration of the unemployment

During the 90’s (civil war) the state firms’ “technological labor excess” became the new unemployed population and tried to look for a new job abroad. They tried to find a job according to their qualifications in the neighboring EU states. Beside this group of unemployed those who were unnecessary agricultural workers (from villages) also went abroad to find seasonal work.

d) Daily or weekly cross border commuters

Following the World War II the rapid industrialization resulted the inner migration. First, people commuted between villages and towns, later (from the 90’s) people who lived near the border started commuting to their schools or workplaces on daily or weekly basis. It resulted periodical, but permanent commuting and absence from their home country. There were architectural and industrial workers who traveled home every 2nd or 3rd month, secondary school and university students, but daily commuting smugglers, too. Many of them were black marketers, but shopping tourists as well.

The consequences of migration

The massive migration in Serbia has economic, social, psychological consequences. The economic migration of the population caused multilevel damage to the society and economy:

1. The lack of experts is human loss (lack of young men, lack of experts, and the irreplaceability of occupations⁶),

2. Serious economic deficit (capital withdrawal, non-profitable and non-refundable education/qualification),

3. Demographic deformation, decrease in population (desolation of villages, decrease of natality, decrease of the number of marriages, the increase of the number of divorces and juvenile delinquency as well as alcoholism, drug consumption, etc.)

4. The impowerlessness of the region (the lack of developmental potential and innovation).

According to a data from 1971, every 19th person of the active labor population of Serbian and out of a hundred eight employees changed their residence. This shows that the fluctuation of the labor force is very high, but its direction is not rational and appropriate. The emigrational territories were not the most developed regions nor did the most densely populate one where living circumstances were harsh. Unemployment and dissatisfaction with social-financial standards encouraged migration. The rate of migration from the present territory of Serbia was the highest in Vojvodina, though this part of the country is the most developed. Within Vojvodina the most intensive emigrational region was the relatively under developed South Banat and North Bačka which on the other hand was economically and culturally the most developed.

It is a disadvantageous phenomenon that the qualification of those who work abroad is higher than that of those who work in Serbia. Nowadays, the situation is even worse since target countries are not in need of non-qualified labor force any more. The one of the damage caused by the migration of labor force is financial loss resulting from the absence of those experts whose education the state spent money on. At the same time the rhythm and quality of economic development of countries that face human and financial loss slowed down. Countries of high migration highly depend on foreign capital investments that they spend on the replacement of the lacking experts' labor force. Labor market competition will also be less since the workplaces of the lacking experts is occupied by less qualified unemployed.

Integration into the new atmosphere

Analyzing the state and behavior of those who live abroad and wish to return contradictions can be faced. When someone leaves the country with their family as time passes their attachment to the living circumstances and work habits of the country they left behind are less and less strong. If immigrants want to over bridge their integration difficulties they make efforts to identify themselves with the new mentality, living circumstances and work habits. Guest workers usually aim at living rationally by providing their maximum achievement and earn as much as they can. However, the differences (cultural, ideological, and historic-genetic) between the target country's and foreign workers are obvious (TANIĆ, Ž. 1972. 441–461). The communicational difficulties between the domestic and “new-comer” workers are not only linguistic (that are easier to

⁶ Between 1990 and 1993 719 registered scientists (who had doctoral degree) left (Small) Yugoslavia. Their number comprised the 67% of the migrants of those years. At the beginning of the Yugoslav war 200,000 youngsters left the country: escaping from the military duties, war dangers, ethnic cleansing or because they did not feel their future safe.

overcome), but it is rather the differences of slant of life and their value system that cause misunderstandings. Immigrants usually arrive from villages or regions that are either culturally or economically under-developed. The majority of guest workers considers their foreign employment to be temporary and do not make any effort to acquire the new social-cultural customs. Those who leave their home country for economic reasons are negatively discriminated from several aspects by not considering them to be organic members of the target country's working class. The situation of immigrants worsens by the fact that they compete with the workers of the target country on the labor market (what is more, foreigners are potential strike breakers).

As for the integration difficulties foreigners live separately from the domestic population. Some districts become exclusively Turkish, Polish or Yugoslav ones as a result of massive migration, clubs and schools were established for the children of guest workers. The living and housing circumstances of immigrants depended on their income and financial status. Since immigrants usually arrive with no capital, they depend on each other very much. Their residential and cultural closed-ness gradually becomes ghetto-like by aiming at the preservation of their national and cultural identity. Relatively successful cultural and social communication between the domestic and foreign workers may also occur. This is usually possible among young, well-qualified experts as a result of their modern life-style and their capacity of adjusting to changes. More educated groups consciously accept the new behavior patterns and preserve only the most crucial elements of their identities. Research conducted among guest workers returning to their home country for holidays show that they are much disciplined in the new workplaces, they are aware of their class and social status and are less rebellious than in their home country. Those who are highly qualified and come from towns/cities are more willing to accept the new circumstances but keep themselves away from the political and institutional life of the target country. Those who migrated for economic reason are not privileged at their workplaces. Should they wish for anything that is usually higher income, better workplace or higher living circumstances. Foreign workers may confront with those who are in power and the state bureaucracy especially when prolonging their residential or employee license. Conflicts, however, are rare from the immigrants' side since they know that should they demand the same rights and conditions that the domestic population enjoys they risk their residence in the target country. One small group of conformists (those who wish to accommodate) put up with any working conditions and are satisfied with the mere fact that they have a job and income and by that also acknowledge that their future highly depends on their employers.

The majority of guest workers belong to the third behavior group who are reluctant to be pessimistic. They are very dissatisfied with their state, their ambitions decrease and accept any kind of job. Should their dissatisfaction reach a critical status they change employers or consider returning to their home country. This behavior is characteristic for those coming from villages and for elder workers as well.

The behavior models of immigrants:

- Assimilation: when immigrants' social attraction is low, while that of the target country is high
- Isolation positioning: both are low
- Autonomous integration: both are high

Within the category of adaptation we can distinguish three different levels, however, the borderlines of theirs are difficult to identify. The first step is contact and facing the otherness. The second is the crisis, which can be resolved in two radical ways: by assimilation or resistance and withdrawal. The third step is adaptation. The assimilation of

immigrants into the new environment is always difficult because of cultural, linguistic, ideological, historic-genetic differences.

Until the beginning of the 1990's no significant migrations were registered of Hungarians of Vojvodina between Hungary and Yugoslavia/Serbia. Several demographers and anthropologists in Hungary wrote about the Hungarians of Vojvodina who left for Hungary. Most studies analyzed and compared the data of immigrants in the Carpathian Basin during the regime change (TÓTH, P. 1996). The statistical data of those who come from Yugoslavia show that it was rather young men of military age who left for Hungary in 1991. In 1989 the 95% of immigrating men were between the age of 14-19. Until 1993 there were more immigrating men than women, later, however, the ratio of immigrating men and women was balanced and the number of immigrating children rose which refers to the departure of families. Between 1988-1994 Yugoslavia had the second highest number of migrants, 10,404 people left Yugoslavia, while 74,298 Romania. More immigrants applied for Hungarian citizenship from Romania (45,021) than from Yugoslavia (3,845) (TÓTH, P. 1996: 111). We can conclude that the Yugoslavs immigrants did not aim at leaving their country for good, rather wanted to stay abroad until the war ended.

During the South Slavic war instead of integration self-organized closedness could have been noticed. This supposition can be proved by the destination choice of the group under analysis: what played a significant role when deciding upon the destination of migration was, firstly, the relatives' presence and only secondly, the presence of friends. Following the first wave of migration the new-comers were supported by those who had already established their life standards. The immigrants from Yugoslavia were called "Yugos" by the domestic population of Hungary. During the critical phase of integration immigrants were supported by their Hungarian friends from Hungary or relatives and friends who arrived earlier. The types of groups who immigrated to Hungary:

1. Before the civil war, between, 1989-1991, Hungarians of Vojvodina were not refugees, but migrating guest workers. Hungary often served only as a transitional country for further migration to more developed capitalist countries in hope of well-paid work possibilities.

2. At the beginning of the war and hyperinflation (1992-93) it was mostly entrepreneurs who left the country. This group established small and medium-sized private companies (e.g. ltd) with a positional advantage (having the capital). Most of these companies belong to the third sector.

3. Economic immigrants and refugees who left as a result of fear from the civil war (1991-95) had less capital. They had to rely on their domestic relationships and also to find a job with the help and support of their domestic relationships (black marketer). The migrants belonging to this group rarely sold their properties in order to maintain the possibility of returning. They usually chose seasonal well-paying jobs. Some of them are "refugee entrepreneurs".

4. From 1990, there was the group of studying youth among the immigrant to Hungary (hundreds of secondary school and university students who usually stay abroad).

The effects of cross-border migration

Following the fall of the Milošević regime the process of democratization and economic stabilization was slow. Despite of this, however, the migration wave decreased and from then on (especially from Hungary's EU admission) is the importance of the establishment of cross-border relationships obvious. The main means and frames of the establishment of cross-border co-operation are frequent debate topics of certain economic

institutions, local governments and ministry partner organizations. Massive migration has been replaced by regional and cross-border relationships that require the following factors: mutual planning and programs (for instance, regional relationships between South Plain and Vojvodina as well as the synchronization of the local developmental plans of cross-border municipalities), later resource coordination and income effectiveness (for instance, island-like development, regional optimization, the harmony of mutual programs, synergistic effects). The role of spontaneously co-operating organizations that became Europe-regional formations or territorial co-operational groupings still bear significant importance even today (PÁL, Á. 2003: 233).

The intensive (though one directional) migration processes of the last decade need to be reflected from a point of view that brings positive advantages for both countries. Therefore, the elements of the mutual developmental processes of the region need to be established. Between, 1991-1999 the number of foreign-interested (especially small) entrepreneurships in Hungary quadrified (SZÓNOKYNE ANCSIN, G. 2001). „... there are chronological data about the industry's export-orientation of the county according to which the export ratio of industrial sale between 1994 and 2002 significantly rose, almost doubled (from 27.7% to 55.1%). The increase of export-orientation characterized all regions, however, differences in ration can be noticed. In 2002 the two most typical export-oriented regions (the export ratio to be higher than 70%) were West and Central Transdanubia. The lowest rate of industrial sale was noted in the South Plain” (ANTALÓCZY, K. – SASS, M. 2005: 510).

At the end of the 90's the territorial structure of foreign capital was the following: (SZÓNOKYNE ANCSIN, G. 2001: 3)

- The central region attracted the 59% of foreign organizations and 65% of documented capital,
- West Transdanubia attracted the 11% of business companies and 10% of documented capital,
- South Plain attracted the 8% of business companies and 5% of documented capital

In Hungary the density of foreign entrepreneurships (1999) was 2.6% (the ratio of foreign entrepreneurships in comparison to registered ones), which is only 1.9% in the South Plain, but Csongrád county exceeds the country's average: 2.9%. The 70% of Yugoslav companies were founded in this region (44% of them in Csongrád County). After 1996 the number of Yugoslav firms decreased by 10% in Bács-Kiskun county, while it rose by 32% in Csongrád county (*Source: CD Céghírek, 1999. január 31.*). The territorial movements of Yugoslav entrepreneurships concerning their economic innovational spreading describe two directions: spreading along the municipalities' hierarchy or spreading out from municipalities along the border to the cross-border municipalities, significantly influencing the economy of the municipalities of the border.

The entrepreneurship types of Serbian or mostly Hungarian refugee-businessmen were the following:

1. Skillful small and medium-sized entrepreneurships became foreign subcontractors who were experience and had investable capital (money, capital, machines that they could custom-freely take over the border). The target municipality of the refugee-businessmen was the nearest cross-border municipalities or Szeged (SZÓNOKY MIKLÓSNÉ ANCSIN, G. 2001: 69).

2. Many fictive companies were founded in the region in order to receive working license, property purchase or residential license.

3. Hungarians of Vojvodina established family companies in villages along the border. These were mostly small factories employing approximately ten employees.

Receptive readiness of Hungary

Following the change of the regime in Hungary in the 90's the country opened up its borders. More and more immigrants and refugees came to Hungary. As their number rose the positive attitude towards them decreased and the negative ones increased. The patience of the domestic population grew by seeing the hundred thousands of new comers. The political refugees were more or less accepted, however, the economic immigrants were not welcome. Hungarians were more welcome from the neighboring country than Serbians.

The immigrants of Vojvodina settled near to the south border, between the rivers Tisza and Danube and to Budapest. The future of cross-border labor force movements is promising with the following possibilities:

- Trade, logistics (rail and shipping on the Tisza), architecture, within the framework of special logistics
- Mutual small and medium-sized entrepreneurship and
- Establishing a mutual network of educational and cultural relationships.

The labor force fluctuation of cross-border regions, the new emigrational waves require mutual regional development. Serbia has firmly dedicated itself to European integration in the recent years. The acceleration of reforms and the establishment of the legal-economic background of investment may result a greater inflow of Hungarian capital. Potential Hungarian investors are becoming more and more interested in the possibilities of Serbian privatization and green-field investment⁷. The Hungarian small and medium-sized sphere's attention has been drawn not only to privatization, but also to the possibilities of Serbian company foundation in the recent years. Hundreds of Hungarian interested mixed companies were founded, especially in Vojvodina and Belgrade, mainly in the sphere of trade and services⁸.

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⁷ The MOL founded its Serbian companies, the Intermol that began the construction of gas stations in 2005. OTP Bank in Serbia was established on May 21th 2007 by the union of three other successful banks under the name OTP Banka Srbija a.d. (its centre in Novi Sad). Its market share is 3%, the 13th biggest actor of the Serbian bank market. The Hungarian investors' gross-value in Serbia reached 300 million dollars in 2008.

⁸ Source HÍD hírlevél, Feliciter Kiadó http://dkmt.netion.hu/textpage.html?lang=hu&loc=0&menu_id=196

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