VOJVODINA IN FOCUS OF MIGRATION AND IDENTITY CHANGES


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Project: “Integrating (trans)national migrants in transition states (IMIG)” TRANSMIG 2009-2012

- joint research project in the framework of the co-operation programme SCOPES, submitted to the SNSF

- Partners: Department of Geography, University of Bern, Switzerland, Geographical Research Institute, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary, Centre for Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Pécs, Hungary, Department of Geography, Tourism & Hotel Management, University of Novi Sad, Serbia, Scientific Association for Hungarology Research, Subotica, Serbia

- coordinated by Prof. Dr. Doris Wastl-Walter

Summarized first year research results (of a part) of this international project
The focus of Scientific Association for Hungarology Research of Subotica is on:

The cross-boundary mobilities related to Serbia and Hungary:

1. Youth migrants, commuters with educational purposes (towards Hungary)
2. Commuters between SRB and HU
3. Refugees arriving at Serbia (HR, BiH, KiM)
4. Relevant institution leaders, cross-border relationship of institutions
Where are we?
OVERVIEW

- Vojvodina
- Changes (secondary resources, theoretical background, numbers) in Vojvodina:
  - Migration
  - Demographic changes
    - New migration models in border region
    - Identity variaties
- Empirical research (fieldwork in 2010, 2011)
- Summarised research results in focus of migration and identity changes, 2011
Inhabitans: 2,031,992
21,506 km², 45 municipalities

Multiethnic structure:

65% Serbs,
35% other nations
(Hungarians, Croats, Slovaks, Romanians, Ruthenians, etc.)

Immigration rate: 19.17

The percentage of autochthonous inhabitans is only 50% !)

Source: Census, 2002
CHANGES 1.

- **1st and 2nd flow (1920-1945)** *(Gredelj, 2006)*
- **3rd - New Diaspora (1960-)**
  
  temporary labor migrants *(Grečić, 2001)*
  
  2.5 million Serb migrants around the world (some other estimates: 4 million Serbs *(WB, 2005, Hofer, 2010)*, 21.9% of population of Serbia lives abroad (...)

- **4th group – the virtual generation** *(Gredelj, 2006)*

- **5th emigration flow from Vojvodina (1990-)**
The most numerous (autochthon) minority group: Vojvodina Hungarians (14.6%) with declining demographic capacities (Gábrity Molnár, 2003, 2006, 2008, Penev, 2007).

CHANGES 2.

- Vojvodina: stage of immigration and emigration from ’90s (Marinić-Bugarin, 2006).

- 9.2% of population of Vojvodina are refugees (Đurđev, 1995, Penev, 2006)

617,000 refugees arrived to Serbia

42% (257,729) arrived to Vojvodina (Popis izb. 1996), territorially unbalanced settling: some municipalities with more than 20% of population of these municipalities (Šid, Inđija... Temerin) (Kicošev, 2006),

Today the number of refugees in SRB is about 97,000 (...)

Number of Serb inhabitans: 1991: 57.1%, 2002: 65%

Changes: ethnographic, cultural, ownership of properties, etc. ... Process of homogenisation
MAP D. "Serbian refugees in Vojvodina (1996)"

Source: Census of Refugees and other War-affected Persons in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
UNHCR - UN High Commissioner for Refugees - Commissioner for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 1996
Fieldwork in 2010-2011

Interviews with:

A. youth migrants with educational purposes from Serbia to Hungary (18 subjects) and commuters between SRB and HU (14 subjects)

B. Serb refugees (19 subjects)

- **Age:** 24-80
- **Language of interviews:** Hungarian or Serbian
- **Date of interviews:** 2010 and 2011
Spatial distribution of the subjects:

- **Commuters:** from Bečej, Mol, Ada, Senta, Kanjiža, Subotica, Palić to Szeged, Orosháza, Hódmezővasárhely, Pécs, Budapest

- **Refugees:** from HR, BiH and KiM to Vojvodina

(3 types of communities, e.g. Subotica, Kanjiža, kikinda)
CURRENT MODELS OF MIGRATION BETWEEN SRB AND HU

1) Temporary foreign employment (labor migration)
2) Entrepreneurs, businessmen
3) The economic migration of the unemployment
4) Daily or weekly cross border commuters (students, smugglers, other employees)
SERBIAN REFUGEES IN VOJVODINA

- Their settlement was planned by the state
- Not mobile since they received flats/houses, jobs (mainly state employees in hospitals, schools, institutions of local governments)
- Satisfied with their current position: perceive Vojvodina as a developed region
- Not willing to return to their previous homes
RELEVANT IDENTITIES IN THE REGION

- Secondary sources and empirical research
- 4 types of identities that influence the construction of identities of the 2 groups under investigation
  1. Regional
  2. National
  3. Minority ethnic
  4. European/transnational
REGIONAL IDENTITY

„Collective self-image, the interpretation of political and economic organization of a group of people on a particular territory in the frame of emotional attachment and community structure” (Lošonc 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hungarian minority commuters</th>
<th>Serbian refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Strong attachment to regional identities</td>
<td>- Have no sense of regional identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Discrepancy between home country and nationality</td>
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**NATIONAL IDENTITY**

The neighboring countries influence the national identities of their inhabitants

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<tr>
<td>-The national policy of the Republic of Hungary: dual-citizenship → enforcing national identity</td>
<td>-Territorial concentration (colonization)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Experiencing „Hungarian-ness” In Hungary</td>
<td>-Strong attachment to their nationalities as a result of south Slavic wars</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Fear of deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian minority commuters</td>
<td>Serbian refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- in Hungary constantly reminded of not being a Hungarian („Yugo”)</td>
<td>- shock of multicultural and multiethnic environment → identity crisis</td>
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<td>- neither belonging to Hungary nor to Serbia</td>
<td>- refusing to learn the minority languages</td>
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## EUROPEAN/TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY

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<tr>
<td>- Pay attention to its formation as a result of</td>
<td>- Not European, only transnational as a result of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-- EU and non-EU state</td>
<td>leaving their relatives and</td>
</tr>
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<td>-- regular traveling</td>
<td>friends behind in Cro, BiH or KiM</td>
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</table>
One form of identity formation is through language, i.e. identities are linguistically performed (Bustamente-López 2008).

The establishment and maintenance of social identities underlie sociolinguistic difference (Chambers 2003).

Signaling membership by the choice of the appropriate linguistic features.
Speakers construct their identities by careful choice of the appropriate linguistic features that will convey the specific social information that identifies them as part of a particular speech community.

Investigation of the interdependence of language and identity is how speakers view language, and how speakers view themselves, particularly in opposition to others.
What they thought of their language variety?

- „we invent new words”
- „our accent is different, it is Vojvodinian”
- „traditionally, we are all multilinguals”
- Mixing Serbian and Hungarian
Hungarian-Serbian language contact phenomena

Ráadásul az óra végén nagyon sok nehéz házi feladat-ok-at ad-ott fel. Moreover the lesson end very many difficult home work-PL-ACC give-PAST.3SG PFX.

Standard form: work-ACC give-PAST.3SG PFX.

Code mixing

„azt mondta kao” (he said like)

Using dialectal features

Egy szem cukor sincs az egész házba. (’There’s no sugar in the house.’)

Standard form: house.ILL

house. INE
CONCLUSIONS

- **Common** for the two groups: influence of the wars, political and social doubtfulness (...)
- The reason behind **commuting**: geographical proximity, same language, European Union, professional development
- **Refugees** are satisfied with their life conditions and tend to remain non-mobile in Vojvodina which they perceive as a developed region
- Various forms of migration have generated **various formations of identities** which is likely to turn into **transnationalism** within certain groups of people
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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