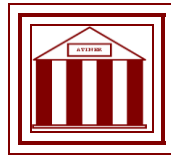# Athens Institute for Education and Research
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Immigrants' Circulation to Hungary

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Immigrants' Circulation to Hungary

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Abstract

The research paper presents empirical evidence on long-term international circular migration to Hungary as a receiving country. Circulation is of rising importance in the context of international migration policy on national, international and global level. Policy making is constrained by a lack of appropriate data and techniques so data gathering is essential. The literature echoes the temporal character of circulation, but we provide another side of the coin. The study aims to enrich geographic knowledge of long-term international circulation based on official register data. We established an original method for the creation of the database. The contribution seeks to gain insight into the spatial characteristics of foreign circular migrants in Hungary by sending countries. Conclusions indicate the need for future research.

Keywords: circulation, international circular migration, migration policy, transnationalism, Hungary, spatial distribution, parity analysis

Introduction

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 et al., 1997; Poulain et al., 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 repeating event. Multiple displacements from one home to another have become increasingly frequent during the epoch of globalisation. 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 (Papademetriou, 2006;. Brickell and Datta, 2011; Hárs, 2014). In general, macro-scale information on international circulars by serial number is scarce. Our research aims to assist in filling this gap.

This paper provides empirical evidence on international circular migrants based on the comprehensive administrative database available in Hungarian Central Statistical Office, and it conceptualises and analyses one of the aspects of the system of circulation. The aim of this study is to transform the highly theoretical concept of circulation (Jeffery and Murison, 2011) to align this notion with the practice of demography, statistics, migration studies, population geography and all in all social sciences.

Literature Review

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 the serial number) is a problem that can be solved through biographical data sets, life course analysis and event history analysis with multi-sited approaches (Henry, 1976; Fischer and Malmberg, 2001; Beauchemin, 2014). 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). 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.

In this section, we analyse the development of notion of circulation. In migration studies, this term is both old and new. Circulation involves a system of multiple, recurring spatial movements of individuals. The gross volume of

international circular migration has undoubtedly increased, and many new types of circulation have begun to develop. Studies conducted worldwide found that the highly changeable character of circulation was the only consistent feature of the phenomenon (Cassarino, 2008; Newland et al. 2008; McLoughlin, and Münz et al. 2011).

The definition of circulation is one of the key questions that our contribution will address. Based on an explicit definition fitted for statistical purposes, we will select international circular migrants from the mass of international migrants. To formulate a definition of circulation suited to our specific aims. To fulfil these aims we review the recent literature on this topic. Circulation is not an entirely novel idea in the contemporary literature (Vertovec, 2006; Skeldon, 2010; Constant et al. 2013). According to the widely quoted study of Wilbur Zelinsky (1971: 226), "Circulation denotes a great variety of movements, usually short term, repetitive, or cyclical in nature, but all having in common the lack of any declared intention of a permanent or long-lasting change in residence." Another more recent recognition of circulation involves aspects of migration: "Circular migration is a continuing, long-term, and fluid pattern of international mobility of people among countries that occupy what is now increasingly recognised as a single economic space." (Newland et al. 2008: 1). In his essay, Frank Bovenkerk (1974: 5) defined circulation from the perspective of the country of departure as "the to and fro movement between two places, (this movement) includes more than one return (to the place of origin)." The same definition is valid, with little modification, from the perspective of the country of departure.

We address the central concern of this study, including the returns to the destination country (Hungary). In general, in a system including only two countries, the return to the country of immigration is the next step taken by individual circulars in terms of the serial number after he or she returns to the country of origin. In reality, however, circular migration cannot be limited to a binary, pendulum-like movement between two countries (Cassarino, 2008). Flows with a circular character might occur among three or more countries as well. The most recent attempt to define circulation for a purpose similar to that of our research began half a decade ago (Illés and Kincses, 2009) and originated from a supranational organisation. Note that an acceptable definition of circulation has not been formulated by the EU member states. As a result of the Janus-faced process of coordination under the umbrella of the European Migration Network, the following definition has emerged: Circulation is nothing other than "a repetition of legal migration by the same person between two or more countries" (EC, 2011: 14).

The system of multiple and repeating migration emerges in the arena of international migration due to the rapid development of information, transportation technology and telecommunication. The distinctive function of state borders has been eroding. The free movement of individuals has become a reality within particular supranational integrations (Gellérné Lukács, 2011). Scholars have not yet reached a consensus on how to conceptualise the newly emerging multiple and recurrent movements (King, and Christou, 2011; Triandafyllidou, 2013). The migrants did not completely abandon their

relationship with their country of origin (Tamaki, 2011). They developed partial affiliations to their destination country through their work, housing arrangements and other activities now included in their lifestyle (Salt, 2001). The migrants could adopt a strategy of dual or multiple residence. In reality, this strategy involved moving back and forth (Klinthäll, 2006; Lunt, 2008; Nadler, 2012).

Working Definition of Circulation for Macro-statistics

For a sophisticated conception of circulatory spatial movements, we develop the necessary elements of the phenomenon of circulation from the point of view of migratory systems. The migration system is no more than the sum of the migration processes, i.e., a set of non-independent associated moves. The simplest example is the two-centre system. In this system, the flows occur between the two centres. In the two-residence case, the first movement, is immigration to country of destination with parity number 1. The return movement to the country of origin is no more than a simple return migration with parity number 2. However, the next immigration of the same individual to the same receiving country has parity number 3. This third movement (step) is conceptualised as first-parity return to the country of immigration is sufficient for the occurrence of circulation and is irrespective of the particular residences involved. Note that three interlinked and recurring migration steps are necessary for the creation of circulation.

In summary, the general definition of circulation is as follows fitted for our qualitative, macro-statistical point of view: *circulation is a type of spatial mobility system containing at least three interlinked, individual movement in which at least one has return character* (Illés and Kincses, 2009). We intentionally use the broadest concepts applicable to human movements, such as "spatial mobility system" and "movement", to allow a more workable conceptualisation of the notion of circulation with additional connotations of tourism, commuting and migration (Hall, 2005; Rátz and Michalkó, 2013). The concept usually involves return and repetition. For the specific purpose of this research, we create a particular definition. The exact definition of international circular migration for statistics is as follows: *international circular migration is a type of spatial migratory system including at least three interlinked, individual migrations in which at least one has return character among the countries involved* (Illés and Kincses, 2012). According to this definition, international circular migration constitutes multiple return moves within the same spatial system if we combine the inward and outward perspectives and study the circulation together. However, by analogy to the distinction stated by the European Commission (2011: 14), we may identify two different perspectives 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 equivalent. For practical reasons,

due to data accessibility we decided to utilise the inwards perspective in our Hungarian research.

Because few circular movements are documented quantitatively, data gathering is essential (Newland et al., 2008; Hugo, 2013). The present study aims to enrich our knowledge of circulation within an international migration context. Because we focus on Hungary as a receiving country, we concentrate on inwards circulation. Naturally, Hungary is an individual case and may represent an exception. Nevertheless, its statistical system allows us to create a unique macro-level database on international circular migrants. Following the initial but relatively unknown study by Illés and Kincses (2009), three papers addressed international circulation in reference to Hungary, except for the two authors mentioned above.

The first paper was an official report. Ács (2010: 7) defined circular migration as legal mobility involving movement back and forth between two countries regardless of the length of stay. However, she restricted the scope of circulation to short-term labour migration, and her empirical examples (*e.g.*, seasonal workers, researchers and students) relied only on simple migration processes. The spatial movements presented in her paper lacked any fundamental characteristics of circulation, in spite of it was one of the national reports for the synthesis of European Migration Network (see above EC, 2011).

The second and third papers had unfinished characters and were part of the broader Metoikos research project on circular migration patterns in Southern and Central Eastern Europe. The authors concentrated on field work in the Ukrainian-Hungarian border region (Çağlar, et al. 2011; Çağlar, 2013) and sought to describe different migratory and circulatory patterns. The original results relied primarily on their own qualitative research. The interviewees described their migration-related experiences, but the respondents were primarily short-term circular migrants and cross border commuters, rather than long-term international circular migrants. Six main types of legal circular migration were distinguished by the authors through ethnographical fieldwork conducted between November 2010 and June 2011. The project combined quantitative and qualitative methods but it remained top secret the number of interviews with migrants, in-depth interviews with stakeholders, policymakers and experts. Unfortunately, the authors neglected the large amount of Hungarian and Ukrainian literature highly relevant to this topic (in the Hungarian side see for instance: Tóth, 2011;. Karácsonyi, and Kincses, 2011; Gellérné Lukács, 2011; Kincses, 2011; Ács, 2010; Gödri, 2010; Rédei, 2009; Illés, and Kincses, 2009; Egedy et al. 2009; Langerné Rédei, 2009; Kocsis et al. 2006).

Data and Methods

The main disadvantage of this research is its country-dependency. The Hungarian case study occupied the centre of our perspective. The study did not include emigrants from Hungary (Gödri et al. 2014). From this perspective, we could only distinguish immigrants by parity. For example, we could distinguish those that arrived in the country for the first time, for the second time and for

the third time. We did not have precise information about the destination of immigrants who left Hungary between their two stays in the country, i.e., whether such migrants returned to their country of citizenship or emigrated to a third country. For pragmatic reasons, we assumed that the migrants returned to their country of citizenship. Based on the relevant literature, the probability of return migration is far higher than the probability of emigration to a third country. In this study, we analysed international circular migration involving only two countries: the country of citizenship as the source and Hungary as the recipient.

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 and/or staying as immigrant for one year or more than one year. These data are came originally from the Immigration and Nationality Office. 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, gender, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, citizenship, and the address of the immigrant's usual place of residence in Hungary.

We established an original method for the creation of a secondary database on international circular immigrants in Hungary as our group of interest in Hungarian Central statistical Office. In doing so we created a special computer programme as a multi-level identification system to recognise the same individual over different time periods. In this secondary database, natural persons returning different times to Hungary were recognised as international circular migrants (Illés and Kincses, 2012).

Spatial Characteristics

A classification by citizenship and parity (numbers of entering) shows that circulation is more typical for the citizens of the countries to the east and south of 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). According to Table 1, 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 circular migrants. 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 et al., 2009; Irimiás, 2009).

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. 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 et al. 2006; Soltész et al. 2014). International circular migration mediates the migrants' multiple engagement with their home countries and their countries of destination.

Table 1. *Distribution of the Country of Citizenship of International Non-Circular (1) and Circular (2–X) Immigrants Within Each Parity of Entrance Category in Hungary between 2006 and 2008 (%)*

Citizenship	Numbers of entering					*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*Together (2–X)*	
Romania	27.0	56.0	34.4	27.6	50.6	30.4
Serbia and Montenegro	13.3	5.7	8.1	20.5	6.5	12.4
Ukraine	11.8	11.3	21.1	26.9	13.8	12.1
Germany	7.3	2.5	1.7	0.7	2.3	6.6
China	6.5	5.0	8.4	4.1	5.7	6.4
Slovakia	4.1	1.6	1.8	0.0	1.6	3.7
USA	2.7	1.4	2.0	1.9	1.5	2.6
Austria	2.2	1.1	0.3	0.4	0.9	2.0
Turkey	1.7	0.5	1.0	0.4	0.6	1.5
Israel	1.4	1.0	1.2	1.5	1.1	1.3
Japan	1.4	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.6	1.3
Russia	1.1	1.8	2.4	1.5	1.9	1.2
Italy	0.9	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.8
United Kingdom	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.8
Croatia	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.5
France	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.5
The Netherlands	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4
Switzerland	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.2	0.3
Sweden	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2
Norway	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.2
Syria	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Other	15.4	9.3	16.2	13.4	10.9	14.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: authors´ own calculation

Table 2 depicts another, contrasting characteristic of the circular immigrants. 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 (Findlay, 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; Südas

and Mutluer, 2010). However, Labour mobility would be the predominant source of international circular migration. 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 (Illés and Kincses, 2012 Karácsonyi and Kincses, 2012).

Many migrants are involved in one or more systems of emigration and return. In the Hungarian labour market, the circular immigrants might feel marginalised from the host society. Accordingly, they simultaneously retained links to their country of origin by sending remittances, by conducting dual entrepreneurial activities and by moving back and forth (L. Rédei, 2009). These activities reflect a dual attachment to the source country and the receiving country.

Table 2. *Distribution of the Parity of Entrance of International Non-Circular (1) and Circular (2–X) Immigrants within each Country of Citizenship in Hungary between 2006 and 2008 (%)*

Citizenship	Numbers of entering					*Total*
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*Together (2–X)*	
Romania	76.5	19.7	3.4	0.3	23.5	100.0
Serbia and Montenegro	92.5	4.9	2.0	0.6	7.5	100.0
Ukraine	83.9	10.0	5.3	0.8	16.1	100.0
Germany	95.0	4.1	0.8	0.0	5.0	100.0
China	87.4	8.3	4.0	0.2	12.6	100.0
Slovakia	94.1	4.5	1.5	0.0	5.9	100.0
USA	91.5	5.8	2.4	0.3	8.5	100.0
Austria	93.9	5.6	0.4	0.1	6.1	100.0
Turkey	94.3	3.7	2.0	0.1	5.7	100.0
Israel	88.5	8.4	2.7	0.4	11.5	100.0
Japan	94.0	4.6	1.4	0.0	6.0	100.0
Russia	77.8	15.8	6.0	0.4	22.2	100.0
Italy	93.7	5.8	0.5	0.0	6.3	100.0
United Kingdom	93.3	5.3	1.2	0.2	6.7	100.0
Croatia	96.4	2.9	0.7	0.0	3.6	100.0
France	95.7	4.3	0.0	0.0	4.3	100.0
The Netherlands	96.9	3.1	0.0	0.0	3.1	100.0
Switzerland	93.2	5.3	0.8	0.8	6.8	100.0
Sweden	94.4	5.1	0.6	0.0	5.6	100.0
Norway	67.1	31.7	1.2	0.0	32.9	100.0
Syria	84.7	11.1	4.2	0.0	15.3	100.0
Other	89.6	6.8	3.3	0.3	10.4	100.0
Total	85.9	10.7	3.0	0.3	14.1	100.0

Source: authors´ own calculation

Conclusions

The current study's empirical analysis of international circular migrants was limited to Hungarian immigration data. This choice had several advantages. The data set came from a comprehensive administrative database. The method of data gathering harmonised well with international recommendations. In this study, we concentrate on the aspects of multiple movers related to immigration. As a reference group, of course, we can also distinguish the first-parity immigrants. In our subjective opinion, which may be open to dispute, the main value of this research is that we could distinguish the international circular migrants within the overall complexity of immigration patterns. In addition, we explored particular aspects of the demographic and territorial patterns shown by the international circular immigrant population in Hungary.

The consistent patterns characterising the demographic composition and the territorial distribution of the country of citizenship reflected the identity of the international circular immigrant subpopulation as a multiply selected group. Upon their first immigration to Hungary, they became separate from the population that was not internationally mobile. Upon their second immigration, they became international circular immigrants, differentiated from the group of foreign citizens with immigrant status who emigrated from Hungary for the first time. With the increase in their serial number (the parity), the populations of circular migrants changed from larger groups to increasingly small subgroups. The international circular migrants generated increasingly homogeneous subpopulations due to the results of these multiple metamorphoses.

We tried 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 a 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 facilitating international comparisons and may allow us to test the robustness of the findings of this case study.

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