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## Conditions of Minorities

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### **The demographic characteristics of foreigners coming to Hungary compared to the Hungarian population 1991–2000**

#### **Introduction**

The objective of the study is to analyse what kind of parameters motivate foreigners coming to Hungary in their choice of habitat and how much they differ in their gender, age, occupation from their surroundings. Motivation varies depending on nationality, occupation, and whether the person is young or old. As a first step distributions and cross references are analysed than by the help of multinomial regression it will be established how the chosen habitat corresponds to age, gender, occupation and nationality. The same methods will be used to find out whether the height of the economic level influences the choice of a village or a town near Budapest.

#### **Trends of migration**

From the beginning of the 1990s Hungary was reached by the waves of international migration. The political changes in Eastern Europe caused a change in the magnitude and nature of international mobility. Hungary became a transit as well as a target country. Most of the immigrants came to Hungary between 1988 and 1990; afterwards their number continuously decreased, than became stable, while since 1997 there is an increase. Between 1990 and 2000 201,000 foreign citizens were given long-term residence or immigration permit in Hungary. Part of the immigrants, left the country after a short while, they moved on or returned to their original country. The wave of immigration was accompanied by emigration; the number of registered emigrants was about 41,000 persons in the period in question. Some groups of immigrants arrived with the aim to settle down and get naturalized. About 20% of them actually became Hungarian citizens and thus were removed from the immigration registers. The immigration wave increased the number of the Hungarian population, in 1992 with 22,000 persons, later the number lessened and the yearly quota does not exceed the 50% of the figure for 1992.

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### Results

Who came to Hungary in the 1990s? The majority of immigrants have been Europeans with a considerable number from Asia while very few came from elsewhere (Africa, America). In 1990, at the beginning of the change of regime, more than 90% of the immigrants came from Europe, a high proportion of them from Romania. Two third of the immigrants came from three countries: Romania, the successor states of Yugoslavia, the successor states of the Soviet Union, especially from Ukraine, and from China. The most important group of immigrants are the ethnic Hungarians living in neighbouring countries. The percentage is above 80% of the immigrants coming from Romania; 50-60% of those coming from the former Soviet Union, especially from Ukraine (showing a tendency of increasing); 70-80% of those coming from the former Yugoslavia (showing a tendency of decreasing).<sup>1</sup>

The rate of immigration was not even; more than 40% of those living permanently in Hungary arrived mainly from Romania before 1992, since than the flow of arrivals is continuous. Romanian citizens – mainly ethnic Hungarians – keep forming the largest group of immigrants. At the beginning of the 1990s, in 1993-1994, the number of immigrants from the former Yugoslavia leapt up above 25% as a consequence of the Yugoslav wars, than it went back to the earlier 7%. Coming from the former Soviet Union – later mostly from Ukraine – the number of immigrants increased from 10% to 18% by the end of the 1990s. The percentage of those coming from EU countries stabilized at 9-10%, the number of Chinese citizens was growing till 1997 it reached 9%, in some years, it was about 6% in 2000.

According to the gender of the immigrants, the ratio of men was 54% then it grew to 56%, by 2000 the proportion of men and women was about equal: 51%-49%; the ratio of men and women from the neighbouring countries is also about fifty-fifty; from the EU countries the ratio of men is 60% and from far away places more men come than women.

According to age: young adults are predominant; the proportion of the age group between 20 and 39 years was 50-60% in the period in question, at the end of the 1990s it was 53%. There is an equal share of the 0-19 age group and that of working over 40 of working age (21-22%). The average age of the immigrants was 28 years, in 1994 33 years and so it

<sup>1</sup> OECD Sopemi Trends in International Migration, OECD Paris, 2002.

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remained. According to gender no difference could be observed. All over Hungary the age distribution of foreign citizens is about the same.

Fig 1.



Source: KSH, Demográfiai évkönyv (Central Statistical Office, Demographical yearbook)

\* BM-BAH Állampolgársági Főosztály (Internal Ministry, Department of Citizenship)

Table 1

**Immigrants according to nationality 1990–2000  
(%)**

Nationality	1990	1995	1998	2000	1990–2000 Average
Europe	92.1	78.2	76.9	85.5	83.2
Of these:					
Citizens of EU-states	3.6	10.1	10.2	9.1	8.1
Romanian citizens	79.5	36.4	34.3	44.1	46.0
Citizens of successor states of former Yugoslavia*	1.1	10.9	9.3	9.6	12.6
Citizens of successor states of former Soviet Union**	–	13.2	12.9	13.6	9.0

Source: KSH, Demográfiai évkönyv 2001. (Central Statistical Office, Demographical yearbook)

\* Croatian and Yugoslav citizens

\*\* Russian and Ukrainian citizens

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Nationality	1990	1995	1998	2000	1990-2000 Average
Asia	4.5	15.7	18.3	11.0	12.3
Of these:					
Chinese citizens	1.8	8.6	8.0	5.3	6.1
America	1.7	4.2	2.9	2.4	3.0
Africa	1.4	1.5	0.3	0.8	1.2
Unknown	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2

### Number and distribution of foreign immigrants according to age and gender 1900-2000

Age	Man (%)	Women (%)	Total
0-19	23.2%	25.5%	4,863
20-39	54.3%	53.0%	105,908
40-64	19.9%	17.5%	37,011
65-x	2.6%	4.0%	6,406
<b>Total</b>	<b>107,829</b>	<b>94,056</b>	<b>201,885</b>

Source: KSH Demográfiai évkönyv 2001 (Central Statistical Office, Demographical yearbook)

Table 3

### The proportion of immigrant foreigners compared to the Hungarian population according to age and residence (1. January 2001, in percentages)

	0-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-	Total
Budapest	1.3	1.7	2.9	4.3	4.5	2.4	1.2	0.8	2.2
Other towns	0.5	1.2	1.3	1.7	1.8	1.1	0.7	0.6	1.0
Villages	0.4	0.6	0.7	1.2	1.2	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.7

Source: KSH Demográfiai évkönyv 2001, Nepszámítás 2001. (Central Statistical Office, Demographical yearbook Census 2001)

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Among the foreigners coming to Hungary the proportion of the group 20–39 years of age is almost the double of the census ratio. The ratio of the group of younger persons is the same as that of the locals, while the older groups are underrepresented: 40–64 years of age 40%, over that age 80%. According to nationality the proportion of the age group 20–39 is 1.5–2.4 times as many as the similar group of the Hungarian population (28%). With the exception of Romania, among the citizens of the neighbouring countries the ratio of the group 0–19 years exceeds the census percentage (23%), and it especially high among the Slovakian citizens, 1.7 times more than the previous figure. The group of 40 years or older is underrepresented among the foreign citizens with the exception of the Germans where the ratio of the group 40–64 is the same as the census figures; all the same there are proportionately more Germans over 65 years of age, and next to the Chinese the least persons under 20 years of age, less than half of the census figures.

Regionally the distribution is not even among the counties, the immigrants rarely choose the western and northern counties for their residence. Their proportion grew fastest in Budapest in the period under investigation while the eastern counties, along the state border can be observed a proportionate decrease, though otherwise there is where a considerable contingent of immigrants is living. This indicates that the migrations flows toward Budapest and concentrates there. Almost 40% of the immigrants settled down in the capital where the share of the young active group (20–39 years) is 61%. In the westernmost counties and in County Pest, in the commuting belt of Budapest, the proportion of immigrants exceeds 50%. In eastern Hungary the percentage of the group of less than 15 years is remarkable while in southern and western Hungary the share of the older group is greater (6%). The over representation of the working age group in Budapest indicates that here the job seeking factor dominates and is stronger than elsewhere in the country. In the eastern counties along the state borders of the high percentage of the under-age group is the proof that the migrants arrived as families.

According to occupation<sup>2</sup> the majority of the immigrants were university, college or other type of students. Their composite percentage was between 28% (in 1990) and 20% (in 2000). The proportion of unemployed, house maker and old age pensioner taken separately did not

<sup>2</sup> The data refer to the occupation at arrival.

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reach 10% each, together it was 20% in 1995 and 28% in 1998. Though their proportion has decreased still 23% of the immigrants belonged to this group, which means that half of the immigrants was inactive or unemployed.

On the labour market the immigrants appeared in the industrial and building sector representing 24% of all immigrants in 1990 and 10% in 1998. There were years at the beginning of the change of regime when one third of the immigrant men sought work in the industry or building. The percentage of persons with higher qualifications was also high, in the first half of the decade in question it was 14%, since 1997 it is less than 9%. If all the categories of the higher qualified groups are lumped together, they reach their share is the same as that of the industrial – builder group.

Regarding occupation there is a considerable difference in the category of gender of the various nationalities. Among the Germans the students' share is the highest (32%). The positions requiring higher education are most frequently filled by Chinese (49%), USA (46%) and Vietnamese (43%) citizens. Only 6% of the Chinese immigrants come to Hungary to study; more than 25% of them work in the service industry. 25% of those coming from Romania are industrial or building workers. Comparing the data to the census results, the men migrating to Hungary are employed in the service industry to a higher proportion, which is especially high in the case of the Chinese, 60% more than the census figure but even among the Yugoslavs it is the double. There are many managers and white-collar workers among the Chinese, the double of the local count. The percentage is even higher among those coming from the USA, Vietnam and Russia. The successor states of the former Yugoslavia supplies the most agricultural workers, 50% more than the census proportion. Industrial and building workers mostly come from Romania, their share is 1.5 times higher than that of the local population. Other intermediate white-collar workers coming from Slovakia exceed the census data by 30%.

Women in work-situations show a different pattern. Compared to the census data they are employed more frequently in the industry and building (2.4 times) and less frequently in the service industry (60%). None of the nationalities reaches the proportion of the Hungarian population as workers in the service industry; with the exception of the Slovakian and Russian women they are over represented in the case of those coming from the USA (2,6 times), Chinese, Vietnamese and Russian citizens (2.6

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times). The proportion of intellectuals is three times higher among the Slovakian women than the census population. The industrial and building workers are 2.8–3.2 times over represented among the Romanian, Ukrainian and other citizens.

Immigrants live in 2,600 settlements of Hungary, which is 82% of all the settlements. This means that every type of economic-social area can be interesting for the immigrants. In the south-eastern and southern parts of Hungary 90% of the settlements were chosen by immigrants, in the western part 85%, while in the southern most county only two third of the settlements.

Comparing the distribution of foreign citizens according to the size and status of the place of their habitat it can be established with the help of the data of the 2001 census that the farther away country the immigrants come from, the greater the possibility that they chose Budapest for their habitat. Vietnamese and Chinese live proportionately five times as many in Budapest as the census population and three times as many those who came from the USA, Russia and 'other' countries. Slovaks and Yugoslavs are twice over-represented in county towns. Analysing the proportion of the immigrants and the census population according to the population size of the settlements it is evident that the bigger a settlement the more immigrants choose it as their residence: number of the foreigners who settled down in Budapest in 11 years equals 4.5% of the census population. The proportion is 3% in towns with more than 100 000 inhabitants, in the ones between 10,000–99,000 is about 1.5%, and in the smaller settlements about 1%. There is a difference between the preference of foreigners and Hungarian inland migrants. From the point of view of the legal situation it seems that foreigners prefer greater, more urbanised settlements while members of the Hungarian population like to choose smaller one when changing their residence.

In the multinomial regressive analysis the township is the reference category for the factors influencing preference. Men have chosen towns as their habitat in Hungary in a significantly higher proportion. Members of the group over 65 years old seldom settle down in Budapest; they prefer either villages or towns near the capital. The probable reason is that they want to live stress free but with the necessary infrastructure (shopping facilities, medical care, etc.) within reach. The year group 20–39 prefer the capital and – next to the oldest age group – the county towns. The analysis reveals that why it is so: it is not only the availability of work or study places but also that they want the livelier city life. Understandably

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no occupation group is so much oriented towards the capital and county towns as that of the students, even at elementary or secondary level. As expected, the people working in agriculture are living in less urbanised settlements; those with higher education and those working in industry and building prefer smaller towns. Nationality means the greatest difference in distribution. Chinese citizens choose the capital 7.2 times more frequently, 2.5 times frequently the county towns than those summed up as 'others'. In the case of the Vietnamese the preference for Budapest is 5.3 times greater. On the other hand people coming from the neighbouring countries rarely choose Budapest. Thus the choice is not only regulated by the age and occupation of the migrant but also by preconceptions; choice sometimes is due to lack of information.

Settlements, which are less developed, are less frequently the target place of international migrants than the inland ones (6% versus 16.7%). As has already been explained above foreigners prefer larger settlements, better infrastructure, which is understandably since they come first of all to study and to work or accompany their working or studying family. Those who live outside Budapest have rarely chosen areas where the economic indices are low and unemployment high, i.e. which are economically underdeveloped. The under-representation of foreigners in such areas is noticeable where there are industrial and educational centres.

The result of the logistic regression indicates that among those having settled down outside Budapest, the group of over 60 years and older insists on higher economic development, which can also mean that those of the younger groups are not necessarily living where they are working or spend their free time but are commuting. Examining the preference of settlements, Chinese, USA and Yugoslav citizens are the ones who do not care about under developed areas. This confirms the statement that the capital and county towns are mostly preferred. Considering occupation, not even students, let alone highly qualified persons and managers would choose such an area for their habitat. The results reinforce the fact that Chinese, Vietnamese and USA citizens insist on living in settlements with high infrastructure; such places where the local population shows a tendency of moving out the chances to receive immigrant settlers stand about 30% in comparison to more developed or attractive areas.

As a conclusion it can be stated that foreigners coming from far away countries are more likely to insist on living in highly developed, urbanized settlements, preferably the capital. People coming from the neighbouring

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countries seem to be less demanding; it may mean that their way of life is more mobile, they go back to their original dwelling more frequently, they can more easily find contact, information about what would be more advantageous for them; thus they can change their habitat more easily; moreover, many of them are Hungarian speakers and their family is closer at hand than in the case of those who had to cross several borders to get to Hungary.

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