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Immigration countries in Central and Eastern Europe The Case of Hungary

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Acronyms

HCSO - Hungarian Central Statistical Office
 OIN BÁH - Office of Immigration and Nationality
 LFS - Labour Force Survey
 CAR - Central Aliens Register

Introduction

In the early years of the democratic transition in Hungary, migration was a hot issue and authorities were busy managing a system-in-the-making and tailoring it to meet proper conditions. Migration was sizeable all of a sudden, and there was hope that a migration policy would emerge and be satisfactory under the new circumstances. A mixture of concern and also rejection, organizational improvisation and imitation, postponement and quasi-solutions were the result of these efforts. Hungary was undoubtedly an emerging immigrant country in Central and Eastern Europe.

Nevertheless, the early drivers of increasing migration have vanished and begun to stagnate. The discussion about migration and migration policy, collecting and improving the quality of data, understanding migration drivers and inflows were no longer key issues. There is still no migration policy in Hungary, though the process of creating one is still ongoing – albeit with less enthusiasm than in the early times. Bits and pieces of such a policy appear from time to time. Contrary to – or irrespective of – the given demand for labour migration, any sign of change in the migration regime is provoking strong rejection. Fears about migration are recurrent, though migration does not correspond to official expectations. It corresponds, more likely, to the push-and-pull effects of the labour market.

The puzzle of the migration development of the past two decades turned out to be a rather marginal topic for Hungary. Research and data collection is considered a field of study with minor relevance, namely a focus on the limited size of migration. The IDEA research project offers an opportunity to raise the questions that were set aside and rejected in Hungary following the early enthusiasm concerning migration. By means of the approach and methodology of the IDEA research, the somewhat outdated understanding of migration flows and character in Hungary can be challenged and reinterpreted. Some widespread supposition, explanations and stereotypes associated with the low level of migration were challenged. With this goal in mind, the Hungarian research team organized a native language workshop to raise the main questions of the IDEA project in order to understand Hungarian migration in both geographic and time space. The lively conversation and the impact of the workshop, as well as the papers, presentations and discussion, all constituted essential support to the present country paper.

The paper will be organized as follows: first, some important historical background will be discussed including the relevance of ethnic character. Then the turning point of the Hungarian migration regime to immigration will be shown. Immigration of the last two decades and the particular relevance of labour migration will be discussed in details. The making of the migration policy and some impacts will then be discussed. The paper concludes by posing several questions about future migration expectations.

1. Introductory historical background

1. 1. The ethnic character of the population

In the early 20th century, the Kingdom of Hungary, as part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, was a multi-ethnic country, much different from the nation states of the Western European nations that time.¹ As a result of the peace treaties concluding World War I, the territory of Hungary changed considerably and attained its present shape. It lost a substantial part of its territory and population. Compared with its former size, the population of Hungary following the Trianon Treaty was reduced from 20.8 million to 7 million and its land area decreased by 72%. These factors had a substantial effect on Hungary's later history – including its migration history and its ethnic character, until today.

With the decrease in the size of the territory and the population, the ethnic composition changed drastically. As regards the present (post-Trianon) part of the Kingdom of Hungary, a considerable number of non-Hungarian nationalities lived within it, and they remained within the country's new frontiers.² According to the 1910 Census 11.6% of the population in this territory of the country spoke one of the minority languages as mother language, while, according to the 1920 census, 10.4% did.³ The share and number of non-Hungarian nationalities decreased over the next few decades, although the total population of the country increased within the present (that is the post-Trianon) territory. The main reasons of this process were spontaneous population movements within the border, assimilation and the ethnic cleansing policy of the state and some migratory movements. Minorities made up 8% of the total population in 1930 and 7% in 1941 (according to census data, table 1.1).

¹ According to the census of 1910, the largest ethnic group were Hungarians, which was approximately half of the entire population. Hungary was not a unique case with its considerable minorities and ethnic consequences in the Eastern part of Europe of that time. (See e.g. Münz 2002, Brubaker 1995)

² The census did not record the respondents' ethnicity before 1941, but rather only language (whether it was "native language" or "most frequently spoken language") and the religion, thus the presented census numbers of ethnic groups in the Kingdom of Hungary are actually the numbers of speakers of various languages, which may not correspond exactly to the ethnic composition.

³ 6.9% were German (551,211), 1.8% Slovak (141,882), 0.3% Romanian (23,760), 0.5% Croatian (36,858), 0.2% Serb (17,131), 0.3% other Southern Slavic dialects (mainly Bunjevac and Šokac (23,228) and some 7,000 Slovenes. (Census 1920)

Table 1.1. Nationalities in the present territory of Hungary, according to the language spoken

Population	1900	1910	1920	1930	1941	1949	1960	1970	1980	1990	2001*
Hungarian	85.9	88.4	89.6	92.1	92.9	98.6	98.2	98.6	98.8	98.5	98.6
German	8.8	7.3	6.9	5.5	5.1	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3
Slovak	2.8	2.2	1.8	1.2	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Croatian	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Romanian	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Serbian	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Slovenian (Vend)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Others, unknown**	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1000 persons	6 854	7 612	7 987	8 685	9 316	9 205	9 961	10 301	10 709	10 375	10 198

*excluding those denied answer (about 5% of the total), ** mainly various gypsy languages

Source: Census 1900-2001, downloadable:

http://portal.ksh.hu/portal/page?_pageid=37,417741&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.

On the territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary that was assigned by the by peace treaty following World War I to neighbouring states, a majority of the population was non-Hungarian. Still, a significant minority was Hungarian, numbering 3,318,000 in total (based on census 1910). Half of this total Hungarian minority lived in Transylvania (Romania), 27% in Upper Hungary (Slovakia), 13% in Vojvodina (Serbia), 5.5% in Transcarpathia (Ukraine) and the rest in Croatia, Slovenia and Burgenland (Austria).⁴

Considerable ethnic amendments came about after WWII as well. About 200,000 Germans were deported from Hungary to Germany according to the decree of the Potsdam Conference. In addition, under the forced exchange of the population between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, approximately 73,000 Slovaks left Hungary for Czechoslovakia. The houses of those expelled from Hungary were filled with ethnic Hungarians expelled from the neighbouring countries, and a considerable number of persons (about 80-100,000) were fleeing voluntarily from the neighbouring countries to Hungary immediately after the war and the re-establishment of the 1920 border that was expanded during the war period. In 1947 247,000 persons were registered who moved to Hungary from 1938 to 1947 (including exchanges of population). Emigration was compensated by this immigration flows (Valuch 2003).⁵ Some 300,000 members of the Hungarian minorities were involved.⁶

After these extensive population movements Hungary became an ethnically almost homogeneous country by the second half of the 20th century. (Tables 1.1 & 1.2) Not much has changed since that time.

⁴ The share of Hungarian minorities was 30% in Slovakia (885,000 persons), 32% in Transylvania, Romania (1,662,000 in persons), 28% in Vojvodina, Serbia (420,000 persons), 30% in Transcarpathia, Ukraine (183,000), 3.5% in Croatia (121,000 persons), 1.6% in Slovenia (20,800 persons) and 9% in Burgenland, Austria (26,200 persons).

⁵ Data are limited and sources partial and/or unreliable for this period of migration (Bencsik 2002).

⁶ Cp. Münz (1992, 1995), Dövényi –Vukovich (1994).

Table 1.2. Nationalities in Hungary, according to ethnicity

	1941	1949	1960	1980	1990	2001*
Hungarian	95.7	98.9	98.8	99.3	97.8	97.5
German	3.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6
Slovak	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Croatian	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Romanian	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Serbian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Others**	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.2	1.6	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1000 persons	9 316	9 205	9 961	10 709	10 375	10 198

*excluding those denied answer (about 5% of the total), ** mainly various gipsy ethnicities

Source: Census 1941-2001, except 1970 (no question on any of the ethnic indicators in 1970), downloadable:

http://portal.ksh.hu/portal/page?_pageid=37,417741&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.

As a result, on the one hand, an ethnically homogeneous population was created on the territory of present Hungary; on the other hand, an ethnically mixed population with considerable Hungarian minorities emerged in the surrounding countries of Hungary, which remain even until today. This ethnic homogeneity (and its origin described above) has had tough effects onto the migration patterns and migration policy of contemporary Hungary. Large ethnic Hungarian minorities across and over the borders of Hungary is an important source of immigration to Hungary as well, as it has major influence on migration politics and policy. To summarize, in the case of Hungary, instead of a conceptually “pure” labour migration, ethnicity plays a crucial role in engendering, patterning and regulating migration flows. (Brubaker (1998: 1049)

1. 2. Early migratory movements

At the end of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century, similar to other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Hungary was an emigration country – sending millions of poor persons, mostly young males from the fringes of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, overseas, to the New World, mainly to the USA.⁷ In the first one-and-a-half decades of the 20th century, about 1.5 million emigrated from the Hungarian Kingdom to the US, mostly due to economic reasons. Only one-third of the emigrants were ethnic Hungarians, while the majority of them were non-Hungarian nationals who were, in fact, more affected by emigration.⁸ About 30% of the emigrants were returnees. (Puskás 1996); the net emigration loss of Hungarians was about 6-7% of the population. The US quota system of the 1920s cut emigration flows, and was coupled with the migration control and defence of the country’s labour market due to the economic crisis of that time. (Bencsik 2002)

Strong migration in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and following the Trianon Treaty was cut by strict passport regulations that were introduced and which controlled migration with the neighbouring countries in the 1920s and 1930s.

During the four decades of Communist rule, Hungary was a closed country, with limited and state-controlled inward and outward migration. There was practically no immigration into

⁷ Emigration data are limited. Official statistical data on emigration exists since 1899 for those who emigrated legally, with a passport. Passports were, in fact, not used before. (Bencsik 2002, Puskás 1982)

⁸ 25% of the emigrants were Slovaks, 18% Germans, 15% Romanians, 4.5% Transcarpathians, 2.6% from Vojvodina. The non-Hungarian nationals in the Slovakian and Transcarpathian regions were the most affected, 25 vs. 10 % population losses.

Hungary, except for two politically motivated ones, i.e., groups of Greek⁹ and Chilean¹⁰ communists were given asylum in the early 1950s and 1970s, respectively. In addition, students (from Comecon or Comecon-supported countries) and some small numbers of channelled labour from particular countries (e.g. Cuba, China, Mongolia, Poland) shaped immigration in the 1980s. Concerning emigration, the Hungarian border was also sealed, except during the aftermath of the failed revolution: in 1956, about net 200,000 persons left the country. There was a continuous moderate emigration flow from Hungary during the more than three decades between 1956 and 1989. The main migration patterns prior to the 1990s is summarized in the table 1.3 below.

Table 1.3. Main immigration and emigration character, 1899-1987

Period	Emigration		Immigration and return migration		Net migration	
	total (pers)	average (pers/year)	total (pers)	average (pers/year)	average (pers/year)	Migration pattern
1899-1914	585 344*	39 023	221 596*	14 773	-24 250	Strong emigration, lower but significant immigration vs. return migration
1925-1941	51 237	3 202	13 552	847	-2 355	Moderate emigration
1956-1957	193 885	96 943	16 201	8 100	-88 843	Strong emigration
1958-1987	min.125 658	4 330	54 528	1 880	-2 450	Moderate emigration

* Emigration and return migration to the USA only

Source: 1899-1914: Puskás (1982): 69; 1925-1941: Historical... (1992). Published in Juhász (1994; 1956-1957: Unpublished... (1991); 1958-1987: Illés -Hablicsek (1996)

⁹ Following the Civil War of 1946-49 in Greece, several thousand communist refugees (of which about 2 thousand were children) arrived to Hungary (similar to some other communist countries of that time). Most of them returned home in several waves but the younger generation remained and was assimilated. According to Greek organisations, about 4-5,000 is the size of the assimilated Greek community in Hungary.

¹⁰ After 1973 about 1,000-1,500 Chilean communist refugees were accepted, who were assimilated into Hungary or left for third country.

2. Turning point from emigration to immigration

2.1 Emigration following the democratic transition

Prior to and during the transition from the socialist to the democratic regime, the migration trend changed considerably. The inclination of the socialist regime to control the border turned into free border crossings. After political control over emigration was abolished, the quality of emigration statistics deteriorated significantly.¹¹ Moreover, emigrations of temporary residents were not tracked at all. Mirror statistics may help by collecting some figures from the statistics of the receiving countries. According to data mirrored in the immigration statistics of European countries, the emigration trend of Hungarians has not changed much in the last few decades and was not considerable in size. (Table 2.1)

Table 2.1. Hungarian citizens in European countries (1 January, persons)

Country	1971	1981	1991	2002	2006
Austria	2 691	2 526	10 556	13 104 ¹	16 763
Denmark	204	212	294	445	624
Finland		81	308	708	687
France			2 736	2 961 ²	
Germany	18 151	20 144	31 627	55 978	49 472
Italy				3 186 ⁴	4 051
Luxemburg		35	56	143 ³	
Netherlands	1 065	840	1 037	1 719	2 271
Norway				308	395
Portugal				134	
Sweden	31	80	205	2 463 ⁶	2 349
Switzerland	11 561	6 213	4 722	3 646	3 833
United Kingdom				7 133 ⁵	5 157

¹ Eurostat data for 2002; ² Data of 2000, ³ Data of 2001, ⁴ Eurostat data for 2002, ⁵ Eurostat data for 2000, ⁶ Eurostat data for 2003

Source: Council of Europe (2003) http://www.coe.int/t/e/social_cohesion/population/demographic_year_book/; 2006 data: EU online data source on population by citizenship; own calculations by countries http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996.45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/popula/migr/migr_stock&language=en&product=EU_MASTER_population&root=EU_MASTER_population&scrollto=0.

Emigration from Hungary is moderate when looking at migration potential data; recent Hungarian emigration falls behind other countries in the region. (Table 2.2)

¹¹ Those leaving the country for more than 90 days *should, in principle*, inform their municipality of this fact. Those leaving temporarily stay in the register but their place of temporary residence abroad is added to the data, while there is no information on the place of destination for those leaving for good. Returning residents have to notify their municipality within three days if they have no permanent address in Hungary. However, since there are no incentives for deregistration, emigration is usually significantly underreported.

Table 2.2. Migration intentions in EU 10-2, 1995–2005 (%)*

	1995 (% very willing)	1995 (mean)	2001–2002 (%)	2005 (%)
Hungary	3.2	0.7	1.3	3.0
Czech R.	3.9	0.7	1.7	1.4
Slovenia	3.9	0.9	1.5	4.1
Lithuania	3.4	0.8	3.2	9.6
Poland	9.6	1.3	2.5	9.9
Slovakia	10.2	1.3	3.3	5.4
Latvia	4.9	13.1		
Estonia	2.8	9.7		
Cyprus	2.9	4.2		
Malta	0.4	8.0		
Bulgaria	12.8	1.6	7.3	
Romania	3.8			

* Data of 1995 and that of 2000s are from different surveys and not comparable.

Source: ISSP 1995 and Eurobarometer 2001-2002 and 2005, published in Fouarge and Ester (2007): 14

2.2 Immigration following the democratic transition: a turning point into immigration

The modest net emigration of the decades before the democratic transition resulted in a stagnation of mobility: neither emigration nor immigration took place at a significant level. While emigration remained moderate at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, since that time, immigration increased suddenly. The late 1980s and the early 1990s was evidently a turning point in the history of the Hungarian migration to a net immigration pattern, and it proved to be permanent. (Figure 2.1) The overwhelmingly ethnic migration was connected, however, to the historical past. In the late 1980s, a growing number of people arrived from neighbouring countries. The overwhelming majority of them were ethnic Hungarians fleeing from the still communist Romania.¹² A second large inflow was caused by the war in the former Yugoslavia. Unlike ethnic Germans scattered over vast areas far from Germany, ethnic Hungarians are concentrated in states adjoining Hungary, which is a unique case for Hungary in the migration pattern (Brubaker 1998: 1054).

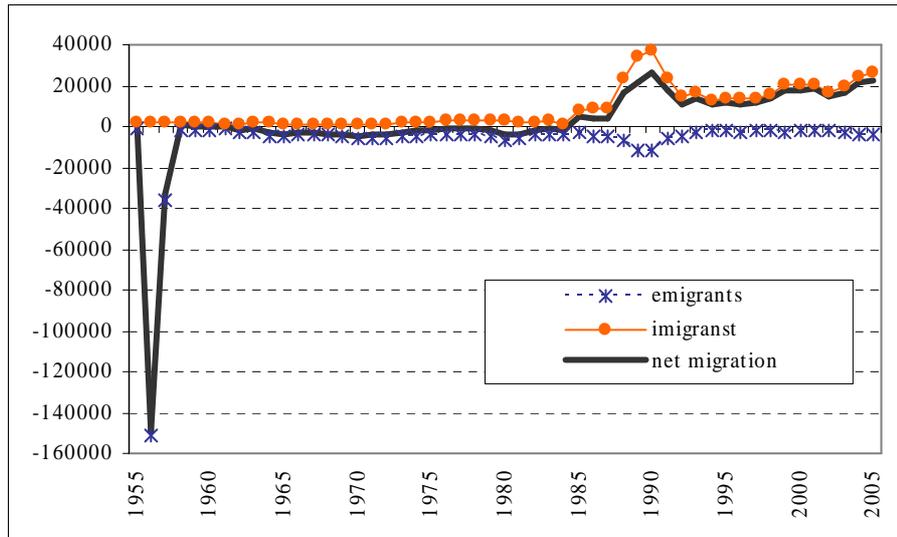
Following the sudden and unexpected first large inflow of migrants (mostly from Romania), there was a sizeable outflow, due to their return home or departure for a third country. The migration from the former Yugoslavia was also followed by a significant outflow in the mid-1990s.¹³ At the same time, a considerable share of foreigners, students and immigrants of the pre-transition period left Hungary.¹⁴

¹² In 1989, masses of East Germans left the GDR and stayed on their way towards Austria or the BRD in Hungary. The Heroic period will not be discussed here since it had some influence on Hungarian politics but no impact on the Hungarian migration system.

¹³ With the abolishing of the border control emigration data are strongly underestimated.

¹⁴ According to Census data in 1990, the number of people with an African mother tongue was 229, in 2001 only 138, with Arab mother tongue 1,459 vs. 1,438, Vietnamese are not mentioned in the census. The number of Poles who stayed in considerable numbers as guest worker also decreased, from 3,788 to 2,580.

Figure 2.1. Main migration flows – turning into immigration



Source: until 1993: Illés-Hablicsek (1996), 1994-2000: HCSO (2003), more recent data own calculation from Office of Immigration and Nationality online (<http://www.bmbah.hu/statisztikak.php>)

Some periodicity in the immigration is also visible. In the following sections, some inconsistency in definition will be addressed, then the trends and characteristics of the migration will be shown, the periodicity will be described and tested. In addition, the reasons why migration has not changed into a more mature phase (yet) will be discussed. When discussing the period of two decades of immigration, we may speak about the premature phase of immigration, with early signs of the migration system changing from emigration to immigration. Reasons for the stagnation of the migration inflow will be discussed and interpreted.

3. Immigration in the last two decades

3.1. Definition, quality and accessibility of data

To describe the migration flows and the migrant population in question it is unavoidable to clarify what we mean by *migrants*, to define the term and evaluate the statistics used. Who are the migrants? Depending on various data sources the characteristics of migration gives a fundamentally different picture. We define migration as a wide and loose category and as a *general term* we always speak about migration, immigrants etc. Nevertheless, differences are crucial and the term will be clarified using various sources. *First*, migrant can be defined as a foreign citizen (according to the widespread used official definition) or someone who is foreign-born; the difference between the two approaches is substantial. *Second*, a migrant can be defined according to the length of stay and, also, *thirdly* by whether they are legal or undocumented/irregular migrants (of various reasons like expired legal documents, legal stay and irregular employment, fully illegal, etc.) The main categories that should be used include:

1. Citizenship versus place of birth
 - A migrant is a non-Hungarian or dual citizen (with Hungarian + other citizenship)
 - A migrant is a person born outside the territory of Hungary (customary place of the mother, the existing territory of the country at the date of birth)
2. Length of stay
 - Settled in Hungary
 - Recurrently in Hungary and recurrently in the home country, long term commuter or circular migrants
 - Living basically abroad, and working in Hungary, daily or short time commuters
3. Legal or illegal (undocumented, irregular migrants)
 - Legal migrants covered in any register – what do we know about them
 - Illegal/irregular migrants – not covered in the statistics – how to get information on them. How to define a migration regime without distinct knowledge and statistics on this migration.

To quantify the number of migrants we use various data sources. There is no comprehensive data source or statistics to give a comprehensive picture of migration; complementary data should be used. Data sources cover different segments of the migrants and give limited information on migrant groups covered. Some data are administrative registration data with the limitation of secondary statistical exploitation. Survey type data face the problem of the sample size, due to the small scale of migration. Purpose of stay is a qualitative indicator of each migrant category, in fact: labour migration and economic activity is a main issue and coverage is different according to data sources. A sketchy overview of data sources used and information covered by these sources is given in table 3. 1.

Table 3.1. Data sources of migration *

Statistical data source	Resident permits	Census	Work permit	LFS
Type of data and institution responsible for data collection	Administrative data source Central Aliens Register (CAR) Basic statistics	Statistics total population HCSO	Administrative data source National Employment Service	Statistical sample survey HCSO
Time of data collecting	Continuous	Continuous	2001	Continuous
Citizenship				
Place of birth				
Legal immigration				
Illegal immigration.				
Permanent immigrant				
Long distance/time commuter				
Daily commuter				
Economic activity				
Detailed labour market info				
Size of immigrant population				
Time series				

*Coloured cells indicate that corresponding data exist. If only half of the cells are coloured corresponding data are poor

Some of the data sources are rather poor and/or in some cases worsening over time.¹⁵ There is some inconsistency in the data: administrative data are strongly connected with the aim of the data collection. EU enlargement considerably changed data coverage of work permit statistics, among others. The small size of immigration is a limiting factor for a detailed breakdown of survey type data (LFS). Irregular immigration is mostly hidden for all statistical data sources. Research evidence and surveys without statistical relevance serve as additional information.

The resident permit data of the foreigners cover a wide range of immigrants' inflow and stock based on Central Aliens Register (CAR). It includes information on all foreigners who applied for or hold a visa, a temporary residence permit or a permanent residence permit, plus data on children accompanying these people.¹⁶ Migration statistics published by the HCSO are based on this data source.

The national *Census* gives detailed cross-sectional data on immigration for the year 2001¹⁷. It covers foreign citizens residing in Hungary for more than three months, including their citizenship, place of birth, sex, age, actual and permanent address, education and occupation. The 2001 Census covers resident population, i.e., those who actually lived in the country and could be contacted at a given address regardless of whether they were registered there or not.

¹⁵ The reason is some level of disinterest of the responsible bodies, supposing the marginal relevance of migration over time, following the lively migration flows and interest in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, the worsening quality and limited extent of statistics is not exceptional. E.g., following the large migration flows of the early 20th century, data collection was stopped during the war period and the following political situation and was never revitalized due to moderate flows and interest in collecting detailed data. (Bencsik: 46) For more detailed discussion of the data sources see Hárs-Sik (2008)

¹⁶ The data comprises the date of application, the date of entry into the country, the type of permit granted or not, and the date the respective permit was issued. Due to the administrative character of the data, those whose permits had expired were not necessarily removed from the database. This was corrected in 2001.

¹⁷ No comparable data in previous census. Citizenship data are given in the previous census waves in 1949, 1960 and 2001; on place of birth in 1930, 1949 and 2001.

Work permit data are for administrative purposes and depend very much on work permit regulation. Data cover those obliged to obtain work permits and give detailed labour market characteristics on them.

LFS data offer detailed labour market characteristics and include data by citizenship and place of birth. Still, a survey sample covers a small share of the foreign population.

Additional data sources are missing. The *register of employers* comprises data on self-employed foreigners. *Social security register* may serve as administrative data sources to describe part of the irregular immigrant population, those semi-irregular employees who are not registered but pay social security. We do not know much about this “grey field”. We endeavoured to contact these official sources, but have met with only limited success. Considering the circular character of migration, which can include considerable daily/weekly commuting, even available data are sometimes ambiguous.

3.2. Immigration flows based on foreign register data

3.2.1. Size and periodicity of immigration of foreign citizens

The first immigrant flows were already recognisable during the mid-1980s in Hungary. It got a sudden push in the transition period of the late 1980s and the early 1990s, following the Romanian revolution in 1989. Most of the immigrants were Romanian citizens. In the very first phase, the intelligentsia, dissidents and political refugees and a wide range of immigrant population arrived (Regényi & Törzsök 1998, Kiss 2007). Most of the immigrants were ethnic Hungarians, although the statistics registered them by citizenship, as ‘foreign citizens,’ and therefore no official registration on ethnicity is available¹⁸. The early immigration of the 1980s was a refugee-driven migration with a high share of ethnic Hungarians (about 75%, according to Kiss 2007) while in 1990s the share increased to 97% (Szöke 1992). Because of the ambivalent and indeterminate governmental stance, ethnicity does not play a crucial role in the legal status of immigrants. Ethnic Hungarians enter Hungary in an ambiguous status; they enter the country as foreigners, albeit as favoured foreigners. For ethnic Hungarians, ethnic nationality has been uncertain and context-dependent (Brubaker 1998: 1056).

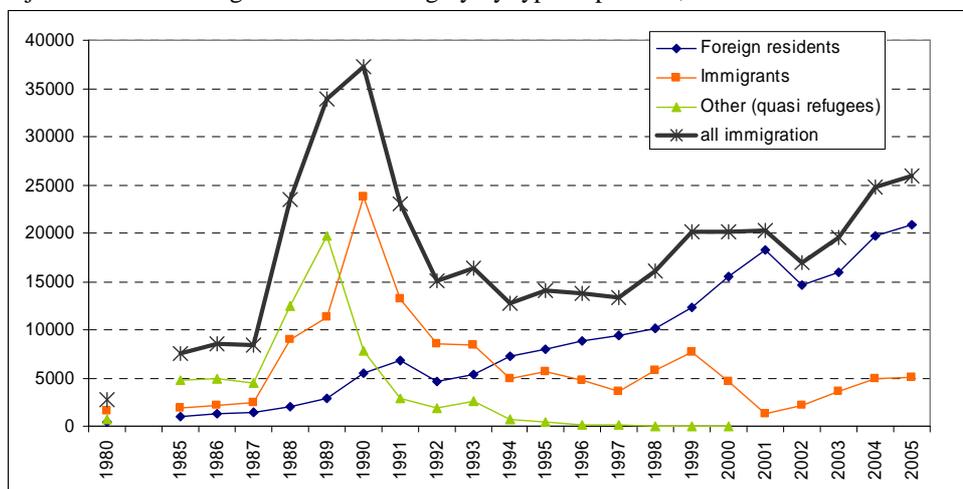
The immigrants were ‘quasi-refugees’ (categorised in the statistics as ‘others’) who were not recognised as refugees but not defined as immigrants, either. Having entered the country in various ways, they either managed to regularise their status to become legal immigrants or residents in the following years or left again for a third country. The first wave of immigration of the ‘quasi-refugees’, with a peak in 1990, was followed by a brief ‘immigration’ period. Later it was overtaken by the ‘foreign residents’. While the former was a long-term permit for immigration, the latter is a shorter permission for residence.¹⁹ The replacement of the various

¹⁸ On the principle of “neutrality,” ethnic character is not registered. As a consequence, various estimations are available based on surveys, secondary sources or everyday experiences.

¹⁹ *Foreign residents* are those staying with a *residence permit* in the country. The permits are given for various purposes of residence: working or some kind of activity in order to get an income, for a maximum of four years for the first time. The validation period of the residence of foreigners studying in higher education or taking part in further vocational training or in a professional practice cannot exceed a year for the first time, and can be prolonged every time by a year until the studies or professional practices have been finished. As of 1 January 2002 residence permits are unified, whereas previously (i) permanent or (ii) temporary permits were issued. At the request of foreigners residing in Hungary with a valid residence visa - in order to extend the period of residence - the regional authority of aliens administration can issue residence permits. *Immigrants* are those staying with an *immigration permit* until 31 December 2001 or with a *settlement permit* following 1 January 2002 (when the latter

flows and the stabilization of the process are evident by the late 1990s, before the end of the 2000s. *Considering the first phase of the migration, we may speak about unexpected immigration followed by regulation.* (Figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1. Major inflows of foreign citizens to Hungary by type of permit*, 1985-2005



*Foreign residents: resident permit holders until 2001 and the new resident permit holders following 2001; immigrants: immigrant permit holders before 2001 and settlement permit holders following 2001.

Sources: CAR data: HCSO 2003, more recent data: own calculation from Office of Immigration and Nationality online (<http://www.bmbah.hu/statisztikak.php>)

Immigration regulations were only crafted by 1993 and developed as a quasi-regulated immigration regime. The regulations were changed in 2001 in accordance with preparation for EU membership. (The so-called alliance policing package). Although regulations were changing, the trends of immigration continued. Inflows of *foreign residents* outnumbered *immigrants* who stayed permanently. The period of the late 1990s and early 2000s until 2004 can be characterized by *preparation for the EU that reshaped the immigration regulations*; a new set of laws regulated migration, which was initiated by the EU norms. The EU regulations challenged the previous ambiguous immigration policy concerning ethnic Hungarians, but the trends remained unchanged. That has been followed by a *period of migration following the enlargement of the EU as a new member of the European Union*.

To summarize the periodicity of the immigration, we may identify three distinct phases in the process towards a mature migration regime (if at all), while the future is uncertain.

- 1988-89-1992: *unexpected immigration followed by regulation*: the quasi migration period
- 1993-2000: *consolidation and stabilisation of the migration regime, shaping immigration regulations*

was introduced to replace the former). An immigration permit was issued to a foreigner who resided in Hungary continuously and legally for at least three years since his entry, had a permanent address and secure job in Hungary and no legal precluding reasons lodged against him. The *settlement permit* was introduced on 1 January 2002 instead of the immigration permit. A foreigner has to possess a residence permit on the basis that he has stayed in Hungary continuously legally and lived his life in the country for at least three years since his entry, except when the purpose of residence is continuing education. A foreigner with a residence visa or residence permit can get an exemption from the condition of the three years' residence if he asks for residence as a family member with the purpose of family reunion.

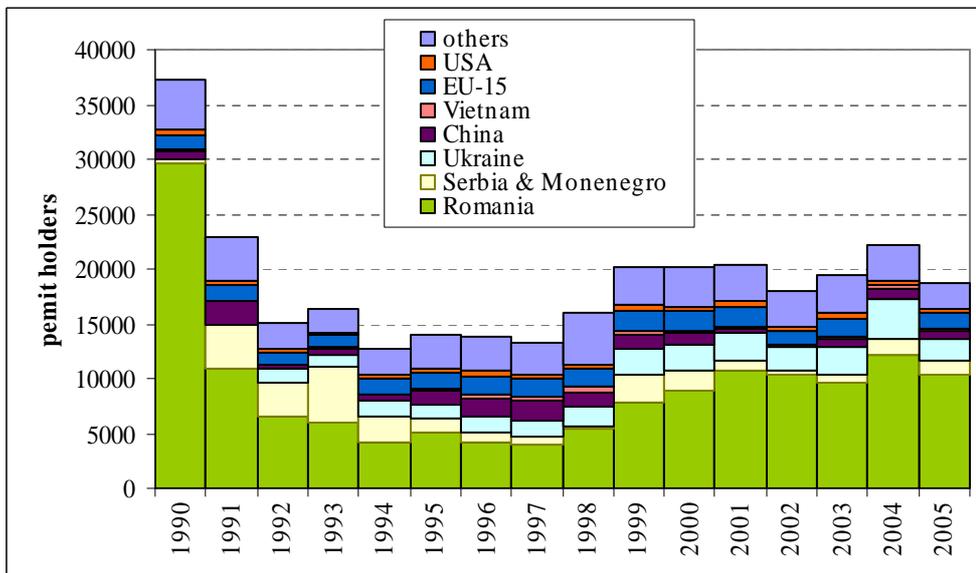
- 2001 -: prior to and following the enlargement; member of the EU, the (slowly) developing maturity of the migration regime
- future prospects - vague

3.2.2. Characteristics of the immigrant inflow of foreigners

The bulk of immigrants flowed from few countries to Hungary, and this trend has not much changed over time. The main sending country is Romania; the share of some others is gradually increasing or stagnating. The breakdown of immigration is, in fact, not changing: the fluctuation of the size of immigration largely depends on the immigration of the Romanian citizens.

At the beginning of the 1990s a new Chinese immigrant community began to develop, taking advantage of the economic and political situation and the lack of visa obligations between the two countries. (Nyíri 1995) In spite of the early signs of emerging Chinese immigration, the migration levels remained moderate. (Figure 3.2)

Figure 3.2. Inflow of main immigrant groups by citizenship, 1990-2005

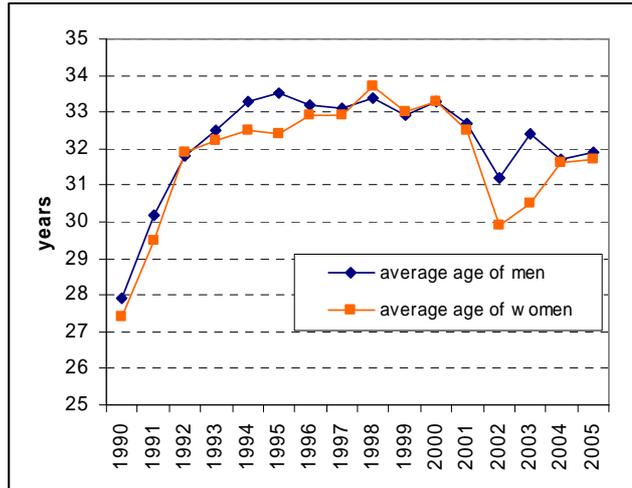


Source: CAR data, HCSO 2003b, HCSO 2006b.

In the early period immigrants were, on average, young (share of youth was high among them) meaning the group was stabilized soon at an average age over 30. Later, during a stabilized preparation phase for the EU the immigrants turned out to be younger again. Little difference exists by gender as it is shown in figure 3.3.²⁰

²⁰ Due to the changing registration methods following EU membership, inflow data are rather unclear.

Figure 3.3. Average age of immigrants by gender



Sources: CAR data, HCSO 2003b, HCSO 2006b.

Table 3.2. Main activities and occupational groups of immigrants prior immigration, 1990-2000 (%)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Labour market participation of immigrants											
employed	63.4	64.1	58.7	58.0	60.0	63.9	58.5	55.2	50.4	48.5	49.8
unemployed	3.9	4.3	5.3	4.7	3.2	9.4	12.1	13.4	14.8	13.7	8.2
inactive	32.7	31.5	35.8	37.3	36.6	26.5	28.9	30.8	33.2	32.0	32.1
of which											
dependents	2.0	2.9	5.4	7.0	5.5	3.9	4.5	4.1	3.6	3.5	3.5
retired	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.7	5.5	5.8	6.3	7.5	9.6	9.4	9.0
university students	3.2	2.5	2.8	3.5	3.1	4.2	5.5	4.0	4.0	3.2	3.0
non-university pupils	24.4	23.1	24.6	23.1	22.5	12.6	12.6	15.2	16	15.9	16.6
Migrants total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Occupation of the employed immigrants											
legislators, senior government officials, managers	1.7	6.7	7.2	7.8	10.5	20.0	27.4	25.2	21.6	11.8	8.6
professionals	20.5	21.2	23.5	23.6	23.3	17.8	17.1	15.8	16.1	17.9	17.1
technicians and associate professionals	10.1	8.6	9.9	9.7	7.8	7.4	7.2	6.2	7.3	10.1	10.8
office and management clerks	8.0	9.0	10.1	9.0	6.7	8.1	7.5	8.9	14.3	16.7	17.5
service workers	7.3	13.9	9.9	8.8	8.2	9.1	9.1	10.1	8.5	9.7	9.0
skilled agricultural workers	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.4
craft and related occupations	37.7	27.6	27.1	25.7	23.7	23.2	20.3	22.1	19.4	21.9	23.9
machine operators, assemblers, drivers	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.7	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.8	1.2	1.0
elementary occupations	12.0	10.6	10.4	13.1	18.0	13.0	10.3	10.5	11.3	10.1	11.6
Total employed immigrants	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
unknown	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.8	1.6	5.8	10.8
<i>total immigration flow in persons</i>	<i>37242</i>	<i>22974</i>	<i>15113</i>	<i>16397</i>	<i>12752</i>	<i>14008</i>	<i>13734</i>	<i>13283</i>	<i>16052</i>	<i>20151</i>	<i>20184</i>

Sources: CAR data, HCSO 2003b, HCSO 2006b (data is unclear following 2000)

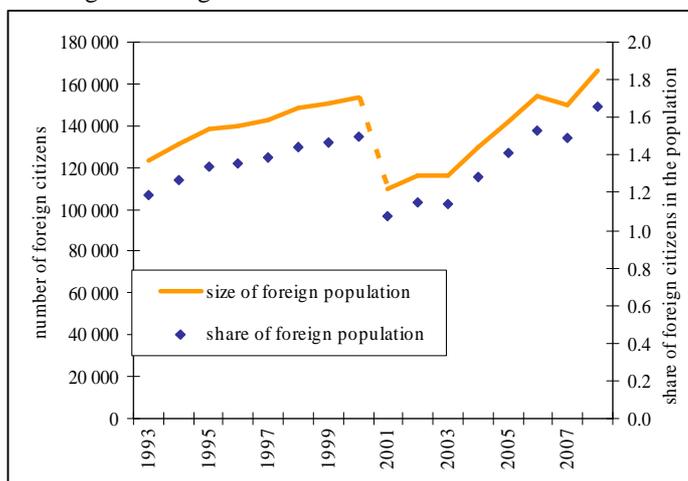
Data on immigrants' activity prior to migration was available until 2000.²¹ About every third of the immigrants was inactive. A high share of them were children (in school) and, to a much lesser extent, university students. The high share of children in the early phase of immigration (nearly ¼ of the total) diminished (to 15%) by 2000, while the share of retired immigrants increased (from 3% to 9%). Increasing shares of immigrants were unemployed before migration to Hungary. Due to migration from the former Yugoslavia during and after the war, the share of unemployed individuals reached 13-15% of total immigrants. The share decreased by the end of the decade.

Immigration according to resident permits is rather qualified, extremely so in the mid-1990s (the quasi-refugee period, immigration from Yugoslavia). According to the last profession before emigration, the share of professionals was over 20% of the total immigrants in the early 1990s, which decreased to 15% in 1995-1998: a sizeable share of employed immigrants included legislators, senior government officials or managers; that decreased by the end of the decade. Immigrants with elementary occupations, on the other hand, were at a stable share of about 10%, craft and related occupations over 20%. (Table 3.2) Gödri- Tóth (2005) using unpublished data of immigrant permit holders supports the data of the 1990s, however, in the year of the census (2001), he finds also a qualified immigrant population similar to the one described above.

3.3. Immigration stock based on foreign register data

Legal immigration based on the resident permits continuously increased. Following the sudden jump of migration in the early 'quasi-refugee' phase of immigration, the pattern of gradually increasing migration did not change. The share of foreign citizens in the total population increased from 1.1% to 1.9%. (Figure 3.4)

Figure 3.4. Stock and share of migrant foreign citizens



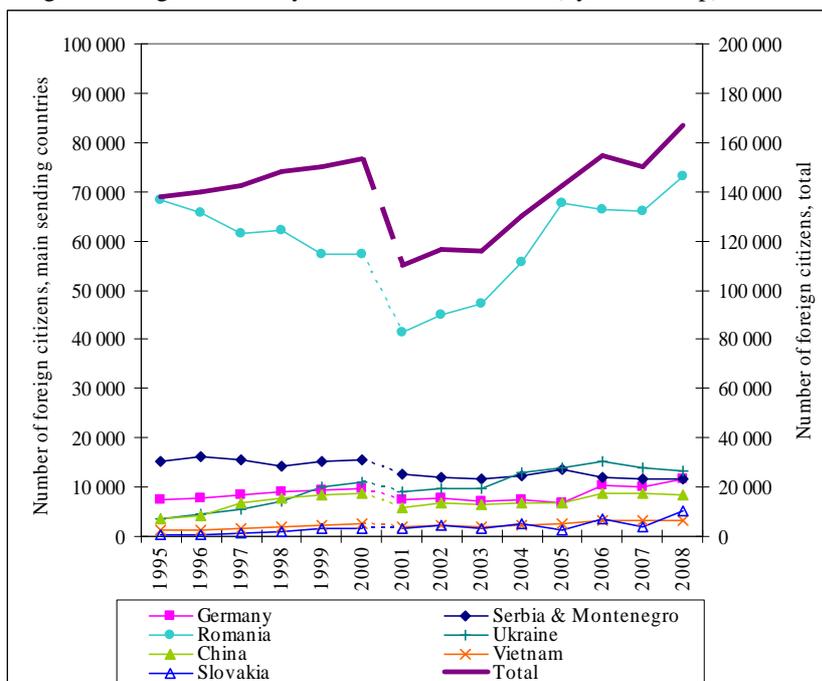
Data refer to the 1st of January. Due to data revision drop in data between 2000 and 2001 (invalid permits were dropped from the database).

Source: CAR data, until 2006: HCSO 2006b, 2007-2008 Office of Immigration and Nationality online (<http://www.bmbah.hu/statisztikak.php>) data, own calculation, 2007 data is partly estimated

²¹ As a consequence of data administration and data revision (invalid permits were dropped from the database) the share of files with unknown data of previous job or any qualification was very high (sometimes half of the total), no statistics on any kind of qualification of the immigrants available for the 2000s

The composition of the stock of the (legal) immigrant population is rather homogeneous and unchanging. The number of Romanian citizens far outnumbers all the other foreign communities and is still increasing. Most of the foreign communities were stabilized in the 1990s, and not much increase came about since that time. A moderate increase in the number of Chinese and somewhat more in that of the Ukrainian citizens is visible. All (legal) foreign communities except the ethnic Hungarians from Romania are rather small. This trend is dominated by the Romanian citizens' migration. (Figure 3.5)

Figure 3.5. Stock of migrant foreign citizens by main source countries (by citizenship)



Data refer to the 1st of January. Due to data revision drop in data between 2000 and 2001 (invalid permits were skipped from the database).

Source: CAR data, until 2006: HCSO 2006b, 2007-2008 Office of Immigration and Nationality online (<http://www.bmbah.hu/statisztikak.php>) data, own calculation, 2007 data is partly estimated.

The stock of foreign citizens is, somewhat surprisingly, an aging population. The share of elder age groups is increasing, especially in case of women. The share of those over 50 increased from 15% to about 25%. The share of youths below 19 and also of the immigrant population between the ages of 20-29 is decreasing. The changing age structure affected the youth and the elderly immigrants, the share of prime age immigrants of 30-39 and 40-49 is more or less constant, around 25 versus 15%. (Table 3.3)

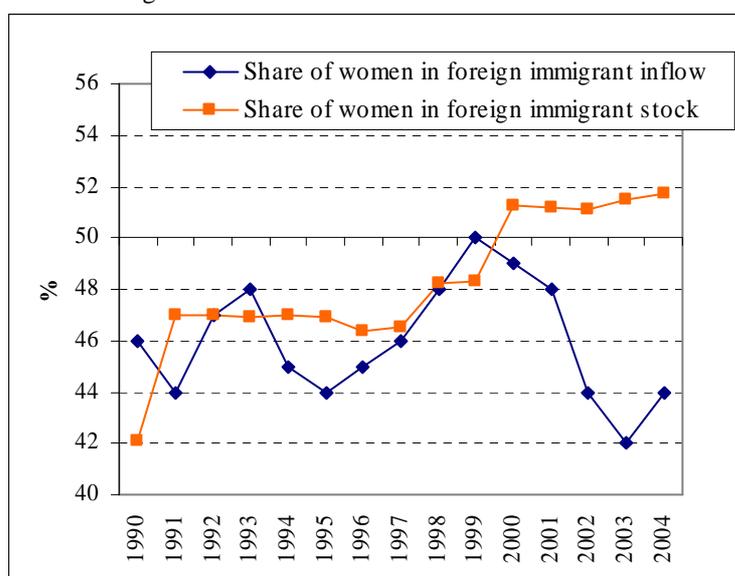
Table 3.3. Changing share of age groups of the immigrants by gender (%)

share of all foreign citizens by age group							
	-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-	total
1995	16.9	30.2	24.2	15.5	7.0	6.2	100.0
1998	13.7	28.5	24.1	17.7	8.4	7.7	100.0
2001	15.4	25.1	23.9	16.8	9.3	10.0	100.0
2004	14.6	21.5	25.0	16.6	10.2	12.2	100.0
2006	13.2	22.5	25.0	16.0	11.0	12.5	100.0
share of immigrant men by age group							
	-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-	total
1995	16.2	31.5	24.9	15.2	7.1	5.0	100.0
1998	13.0	28.2	25.9	17.9	8.7	6.3	100.0
2001	16.1	24.4	26.0	16.2	9.5	8.4	100.7
2004	15.3	20.8	26.9	17.1	9.5	10.3	100.0
2006	13.5	21.7	26.8	17.2	10.3	10.5	100.0
share of immigrant women by age group							
	-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-	total
1995	17.5	28.7	23.3	15.8	6.9	7.7	100.0
1998	14.4	28.8	22.0	17.4	8.1	9.3	100.0
2001	14.7	25.6	21.8	17.3	9.1	11.5	100.0
2004	13.9	22.1	23.1	16.2	10.8	13.9	100.0
2006	12.9	23.2	23.1	14.8	11.6	14.5	100.0

Sources: CAR data, HCSO 2006/b

While the share of women is smaller than that of men in the immigrant flows and displays considerable fluctuations over time, the share of women is above men in the immigrant stock and is continuously increasing. (Figure 3.6) The reason for this is a more mobile immigration of men and a settlement type of immigration of women.

Figure 3.6. Share of women in immigrants flow and stock

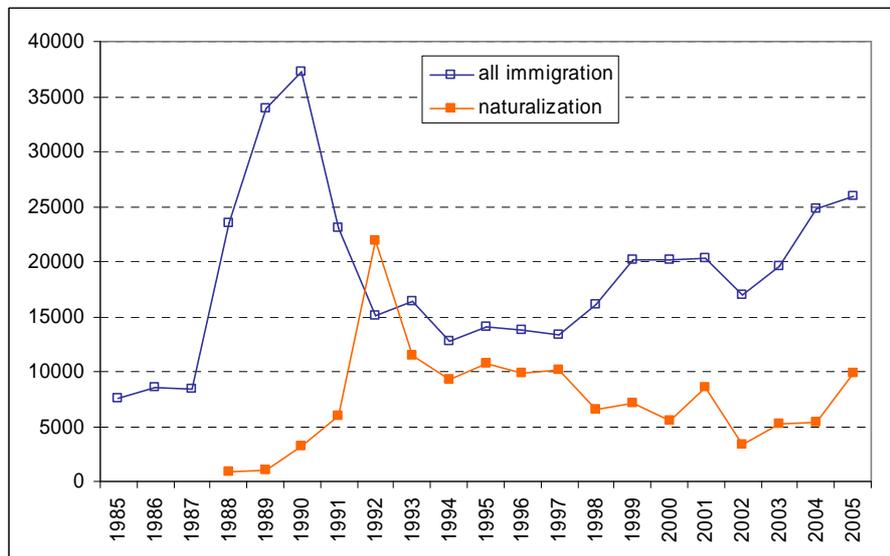


Sources: CAR data, HCSO 2003b, HCSO 2006b

3.4. Naturalisation of foreigners

Some immigrants apply for citizenship and leave the stock of foreigners for citizenship. Naturalisation had a peak in the early 1990s, in 1992, and followed the inflow peak of immigration in the early phase of immigration (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7. Immigration and naturalisation 1985-2005

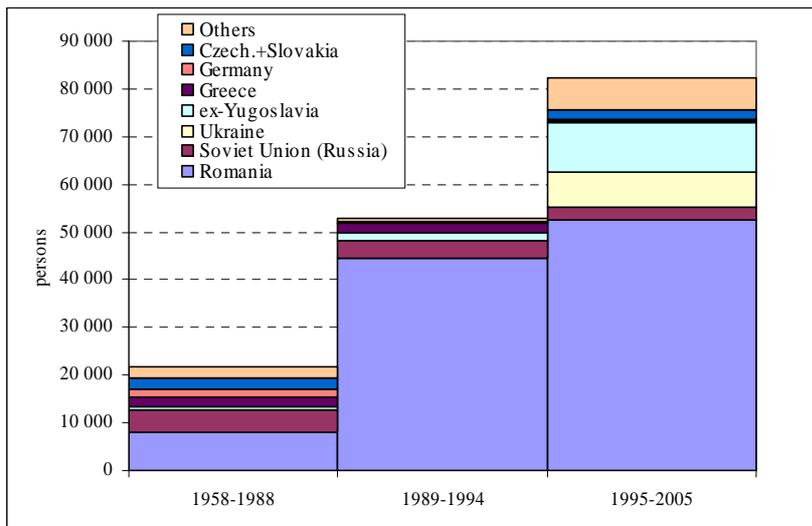


Source: until 1994 Tóth (1997), following 1994 HCSO (2006/a)

The share of Romanian citizens is conspicuous in the naturalisation process, especially in the early 1990s, both in number and in share. Naturalisation involves a long procedure with essential preferences for ethnic Hungarians.²² Naturalisation was moderate before 1989. In the five-year period between 1989-1994, the naturalised Romanian citizens equalled the number of naturalised Romanian citizens in the next 10-year period of 1995-2005. In 1989-1994, the naturalised population was rather homogeneous: the overwhelming majority of them were ethnic Hungarians from Romania. In the next decade an increasing share of Ukrainian, Yugoslav, and some others were naturalised, as well. (Figure 3.8)

²² Following the unregulated period, the Act on Nationality was passed in 1993 and made preconditions for naturalisation more restrictive, but preferences based on ethnic and family ties has been introduced to compensate for the change. (Kovács-Tóth 2007)

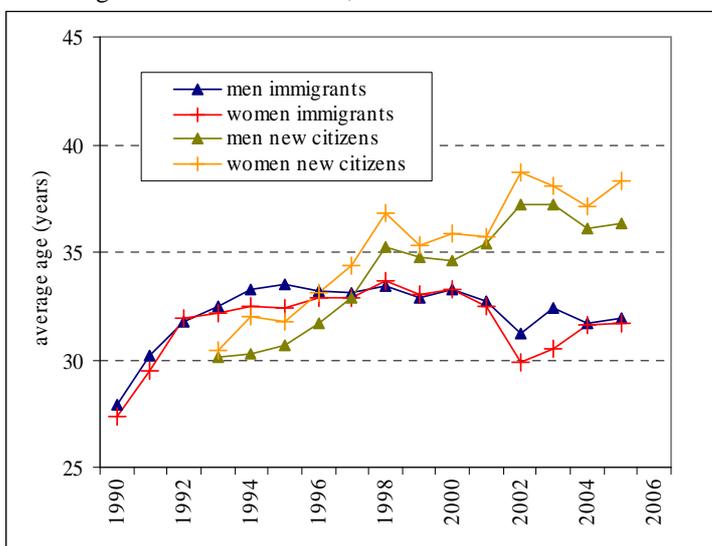
Figure 3.8. Naturalisation: new citizens by their previous citizenship, 1958-2005



Source: until 1994 Tóth (1997), following 1994 HCSO (2006/a)

The share of women is slightly higher and is increasing (52-55%) in the naturalised population. The naturalised population was rather young (30 years on average) in the mid 1990s. It has considerably changed following the early first phase of migration. Naturalisation adds to the aging of the population. Since 1996, the naturalised population has been considerably older, on average, than the immigrant population. The difference is more than 10 years in the case of women and somewhat less in the case of men. The average age of the naturalised population is increasing: while it was about 30-35 in the mid-1990s it increased to 35-40 years by the mid-2000s. (Figure 3.9)

Figure 3.9. Average age of immigrants and new citizens, 1990-2005



Source: based on data of HCSO (2006/a)

Naturalised persons are, in fact, immigrants who arrived as immigrants and applied for citizenship. They are similar to the first generation immigrants in Hungary who are covered by the Census as part of the foreign born-citizens. In the following section, we give a detailed overview on immigrant population according to census data.

3.5. Immigration according to 2001 census data

The Census provides the most comprehensive information on foreign citizens residing in Hungary²³ and also on the foreign-born population²⁴. No detailed comparable data is available from previous censuses, however.²⁵ While only 1% of the total population in Hungary is foreign or with dual citizenship²⁶, the proportion of the foreign-born population is considerably higher: 2.7%. As for gender, the share of women is higher among the foreign-born while lower among the foreign citizens.

Table 3.4. Share of foreign and dual citizens and foreign-born population in Hungary, 2001 (%)

	Total	Men	Women
Share of foreign citizens	0.91	0.94	0.89
Share of dual citizens	0.17	0.19	0.16
Share foreign & dual citizens	1.09	1.12	1.05
Share of foreign born population	2.7	2.5	2.9
Number of total (native + foreign) population	10,198,300	4,850,600	5,347,600

Source: 2001 Census

While 2.9 per cent of the total resident population in Hungary was born abroad, 9.2 per cent of the foreign citizens and 42.2 per cent of the dual citizens were born in Hungary. The two groups differ significantly. (Table 3.5)

Table 3.5. Breakdown of population in Hungary by place of birth and residency, 2001 (%)

citizenship	Resident in Hungary	Resident in Hungary		Total	
	born abroad	permanent residency abroad	Resident in Hungary born in Hungary		
Foreign citizens	74.5	16.3	0.4	8.8	100.0
Dual citizens	54.8	3	2.8	39.4	100.0
Foreign & dual citizens	71.4	14.2	0.7	13.7	100.0
Hungarian citizens	2.0	0.0	0.0	97.9	100.0
Total population	2.7	0.2	0.0	97.1	100.0

Source: 2001 Census, authors' calculations

Foreign citizens residing in Hungary were mostly born abroad. The 2nd generation immigrant population with foreign citizenship, which includes individuals who were born in the country, is marginal. The immigrant foreign citizen population according to the census greatly corresponds to the immigrant population based on residence permit (CAR data). The Census provides similar information on the geographic origins of the foreigners residing in Hungary. (Table 3.6)

²³ Non-Hungarian citizens include persons staying in Hungary over 3 months, immigrants, refugees, stateless persons, sheltered persons, and those with residence permits. Actual or permanent residence is, in Hungary, the one registered by the census. Diplomatic corps, tourists, business tourists are not included. That is, only legal immigrants are covered.

²⁴ Place of birth is the country in which the mother was living at the date of birth of the person.

²⁵ Citizenship was last registered in 1960 and its share was very low (0.2%) as well as in 1949 (0.5%). The share of the foreign born population, on the contrary, was rather high in the previous census in 1949 (6.8%) and similarly in 1930 (7.1%).

²⁶ Hungarian citizens with a second citizenship are considered as persons with dual citizenship.

Table 3.6. Breakdown of foreign citizens by country of citizenship (stock, % 2001)

	Census 2001			Foreign population 2001*		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total foreigners	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
European origin	83.1	79.6	86.4	84.7	81.5	87.8
of which						
Romanian	36.3	34.4	38.2	37.8	37.5	38.0
Ukrainian	9.5	7.8	11.2	8.1	7.3	11.7
Yugoslav	9.3	10.3	8.3	11.5	13.0	10.1
Slovak	4.1	2.9	5.2	1.4	1.1	1.7
German	7.1	6.7	7.4	6.8	5.2	8.3
Russian	2.6	1.8	3.3	1.7	1.5	1.9
Polish	2.0	1.5	2.5	2.1	1.6	2.6
Asian origin	10.3	12.2	8.5	11.5	13.5	9.5
of which						
Chinese and Vietnamese	5.6	6.2	5.0	7.0	8.0	6.0
African origin	1.5	2.4	0.7	1.1	1.9	0.4
USA+ Australia	5.1	5.9	4.4	2.7	3.1	2.4

Note: * data refer to 1 January

Sources: 2001 Census, HCSO 2006/b, authors' calculations

The foreign-born population only partly covers new citizens. Half of the foreign-born population was born in Romania, corresponding to the naturalisation trend discussed above. An additional 35% was born in other surrounding countries and Germany, and only 13% was born in other countries. Two thirds of the foreign born population settled before 1991 in Hungary²⁷. Slovakia is an exception: an overwhelming majority (93.5%) of those born in Slovakia lived for a long time in Hungary. We may suppose that the population born in Slovakia goes back to the historical past while others are mostly new immigrants arriving to Hungary during and after the transition. (Table 3.7)

Table 3.7. Foreign-born population over 15 by their place of birth and length of stay in Hungary (in years)

Place of birth	0-5 years	5-10 years	10+ years	Together	
	%			1000 persons	%
Romania	13.1	26.0	60.9	75	52.9
Ex-Yugoslavia	13.3	20.9	65.8	15	10.8
Slovakia	4.0	2.5	93.5	14	10.0
Ex-Soviet Union	16.4	28.8	54.8	13	9.5
Germany	9.9	7.1	83.1	5	3.9
Total foreign born	12.7	21.1	66.2	141	100.0

Source: Own calculation based on 2001 Census data published in OECD (2008)

Foreign citizens are rather young. The share of the young population of 15-24 is overrepresented, while the share of the old age population over 60 is underrepresented among the foreign citizens. The foreign-born population, on the contrary, is an old population: the share of the foreign-born population of ages 15-24 is below the share of the native population. The elderly age group over 65, on the other hand, is overrepresented in the foreign-born population. (Table 3.8)

²⁷ Unfortunately, the available census data do not differentiate between the foreign-born population that arrived before the transition and those who arrived since that time. We know that they lived in 1991 (over 10 years in 2001) in Hungary.

Table 3.8. Age distribution of the native and foreign citizen versus native born and foreign-born populations (% of the 15+ population)

Foreign citizens									
	Native			Foreign citizens			Total		
Age group	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
15-24	18.9	15.9	17.3	22.3	22.5	22.4	19.0	16.0	17.4
25-60	60.8	55.7	58.1	67.4	64.3	65.8	60.8	55.8	58.1
60+	20.3	28.4	24.6	10.3	13.2	11.8	20.2	28.2	24.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Foreign born population									
	Native-born			Foreign-born			Total		
Age group	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
15-24	19.2	16.2	17.6	13.1	10.8	11.8	19.0	16.0	17.4
25-64	66.7	62.7	64.6	62.9	58.1	60.2	66.6	62.5	64.4
65+	14.1	21.2	17.9	23.9	31.1	27.9	14.4	21.5	18.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own calculation based on 2001 Census HCSO online data and data published in OECD (2008)

The foreign citizens are more qualified than the natives, dual citizens even better than other foreign citizens.

Table 3.9. Education level of the native and foreign citizens (%)

Education in the respective age population	Natives	Foreign and dual citizens	Within foreign and dual citizens	
			Foreign citizens	Dual citizens
Secondary education	38.0	57.3	56.0	65.1
Higher education	12.5	25.3	24.2	31.4

Source: 2001 Census

The foreign-born population, in total, is also more qualified than the native-born. The share of primary education of the foreign-born population is below that of the Hungarians while the share of tertiary education is higher among foreign-born people. The share of secondary education is lower among foreign-born people. Some parts of the foreign-born population is poorly educated and rather old, while some other parts are highly qualified. The ambiguous picture of qualification is due to the very different foreign-born communities. Those born in the former Soviet Union or in Germany are highly qualified. The people born in the former Yugoslavia, Slovakia or Romania are less well-educated. (Table 3.10)

Table 3.10. Educational level of the native-born and foreign-born population (%)

Place of birth	Men			Women			Total		
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Native born	39.5	49.2	11.3	50.1	39.7	10.2	45.1	44.2	10.7
Foreign-born	35.6	40.7	23.6	45.4	37.8	16.7	41.1	39.1	19.8
Of which:									
Romania	34.0	45.9	20.2	43.4	42.8	13.8	39.2	44.2	16.6
Slovak Republic	47.1	30.8	22.2	62.0	27.1	10.9	56.2	28.5	15.3
Ex-Yugoslavia	41.5	37.9	20.5	56.5	28.9	14.6	49.3	33.2	17.5
Former USSR	27.9	38.5	33.6	31.3	37.4	31.2	30.1	37.8	32.0
Germany	25.8	47.9	26.3	30.2	49.9	19.9	28.4	49.1	22.5

Source: Own calculation, 2001 Census data published in OECD (2008)

4. Labour market participation of immigrants

4.1. Main purpose of immigration is work

Following the early migration period, immigration, in sum, was moderate: nevertheless the main purpose of immigration was labour migration. As for legal immigration, residence permits were given at an increasing rate for labour purposes. In addition, family reasons and study are important drivers of migration.²⁸ (Table 4.1)

Table 4.1. Residence permits issued and extended, by purpose, 2002-2007, %

Purpose of stay	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Jan-Jun 2006	Jan-Jun 2007
Labour	49.0	51.4	55.9	64.2	57.4	56.5	46.8
Study	14.6	14.1	10.9	10.1	11.4	9.7	17.0
Family union	13.1	14.6	14.6	16.9	18.2	17.3	23.1
Entrepreneurship	11.6	8.1	5.0	1.4	1.0	1.2	1.8
Visitor	4.0	3.5	4.3	4.1	3.1	3.6	2.5
Official	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.7
Medical treatment	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other	7.1	7.7	9.0	3.0	8.6	11.3	8.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Residence permits (cases)	37 151	39 564	44 532	46 666	46 587	23 302	11 045

Source: Office of Immigration and Nationality online statistics (<http://www.bmbah.hu/statisztikak.php>)

4.1.1. Labour market position of immigrants according to Census 2001²⁹

Looking at the stock of the primarily labour-driven legal immigration, Census data serve as the best and most detailed data source (for 2001). At the time the census was conducted, the early migration period was completed and migration was stabilized. Over 40% of the legal immigrants (foreign citizens) were employed, which is somewhat above the level of the nationals, while the share of the unemployed was lower than that of the nationals. In sum, the immigrants covered by the census are, at a large share, economically active. (Table 4.2)

²⁸ As a general rule, employment is possible on a work permit basis in Hungary, regulated by the Employment Law. Some foreigners (immigrant permit holders, refugees, etc.) are not obliged to possess a work permit. In addition, exceptions regulated by Employment Law were numerous and extensive, for peculiar professions or aims of employment. Nevertheless, the main principle was to possess a resident permit for the purpose of work (labour visa). (Prior to enlargement, legal employment was possible on the basis of resident permits for labour as a precondition for a work permit; following enlargement, the work permit regulations were abolished and it remained only with 3rd country nationals.)

²⁹ We used mostly the available data published (<http://www.KSH.hu> vs. OECD 2008 for the foreign born). Census data are sensitive and it is hard to get a detailed breakdown. Small samples (for research purpose) are not proper to use since the size of immigrant groups is small. Some additional tables were to be completed by the HCSO, but this has not been delivered yet.

Table 4.2. Labour market position of nationals and foreign citizens, 2001

	All	Hungarian. nationals	Double	Foreign only	Double & foreign
			citizens		
Employed	36.1	36.1	35.7	43.4	42.2
Unemployed	4.1	4.1	2.6	3.8	3.6
Inactive earners	32.5	32.5	26.9	18.9	20.2
Dependents	27.3	27.2	34.8	33.9	34.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>N '000persons</i>	<i>10 198.3</i>	<i>10 087.5</i>	<i>17.6</i>	<i>93.2</i>	<i>110.8</i>

Source: 2001 Census. <http://www.KSH.hu>

Immigrant groups differ by their labour market position. The employment rate of the largest immigrant groups (Romanian, Asian, and the EU15) is higher and the unemployment is lower than that of the nationals. Labour market positions of the Ukrainians and ex-Yugoslavians, on the other hand, are less favourable.

Labour market position of the foreign-born population is similar to that of the foreign citizens. The employment rate is above that of the natives: in case of men it is significantly higher, while in the case of women slightly higher than that of the nationals. The employment rate of those born in Romania and Germany is high for both men and women, and also the employment of men born in the Soviet Union (including also Ukraine). The employment of other significant foreign-born groups (those born in Yugoslavia or Slovakia) is below the nationals' employment rate. (Table 4.3)

Table 4.3. Employment rate of the foreign-born population, 15-64 years old, by main countries of birth, 2001

	Employment rate		
	Men	Women	All
Born in Romania	67.2	50.2	58.2
Born in Germany	60.9	52.3	55.7
Born in ex-Soviet Union	58.9	47.7	51.8
Born in ex Yugoslavia	58.2	35.6	47.5
Born in Slovakia	47.9	34.5	40.0
Total foreign born	63.3	46.9	54.6
Total non-foreign born	58.6	47.6	53.0
Total	58.8	47.5	53.0

Source: 2001 Census data published in OECD (2008)

According to 2001 Census data, the main occupations of the immigrants demonstrate a qualified immigrant population, far above the total native population. The small group of dual citizens are the most qualified. (Table 4.4) The picture is similar-looking for the foreign citizens or the foreign-born population.

Table 4.4. National and foreign citizens by main occupations, 2001 (%)

	Nationals	Foreign	Dual	Foreign and dual	Share of the foreign citizens in the respective group of occupation
	Citizens				
Senior officials, managers, professionals	20.4	26.5	38.2	28.1	1.8
Other white-collar professions	20.4	15.7	21.3	16.5	1.0
Service workers	15.7	22	15.5	21.1	1.7
Skilled agricultural workers	3.1	2.5	1.8	2.4	1.0
Craft & related occupations, operators, assemblers, drivers	31.6	26.6	18.6	25.5	1.0
Elementary occupations	8.9	6.7	4.6	6.4	0.9
Total	100	100	100	100	1.3

Source: 2001 Census data available at <http://www.KSH.hu>

To summarize, the immigrant population covered by the census according to both citizenship and place of birth is a rather qualified population with a favourable labour market position. They are – similar to the immigrant population according to residence permits – only part of the immigrants who are legalized and stay permanently or settle in Hungary. Looking more in detail, other sources reveal still other labour migrant segments.

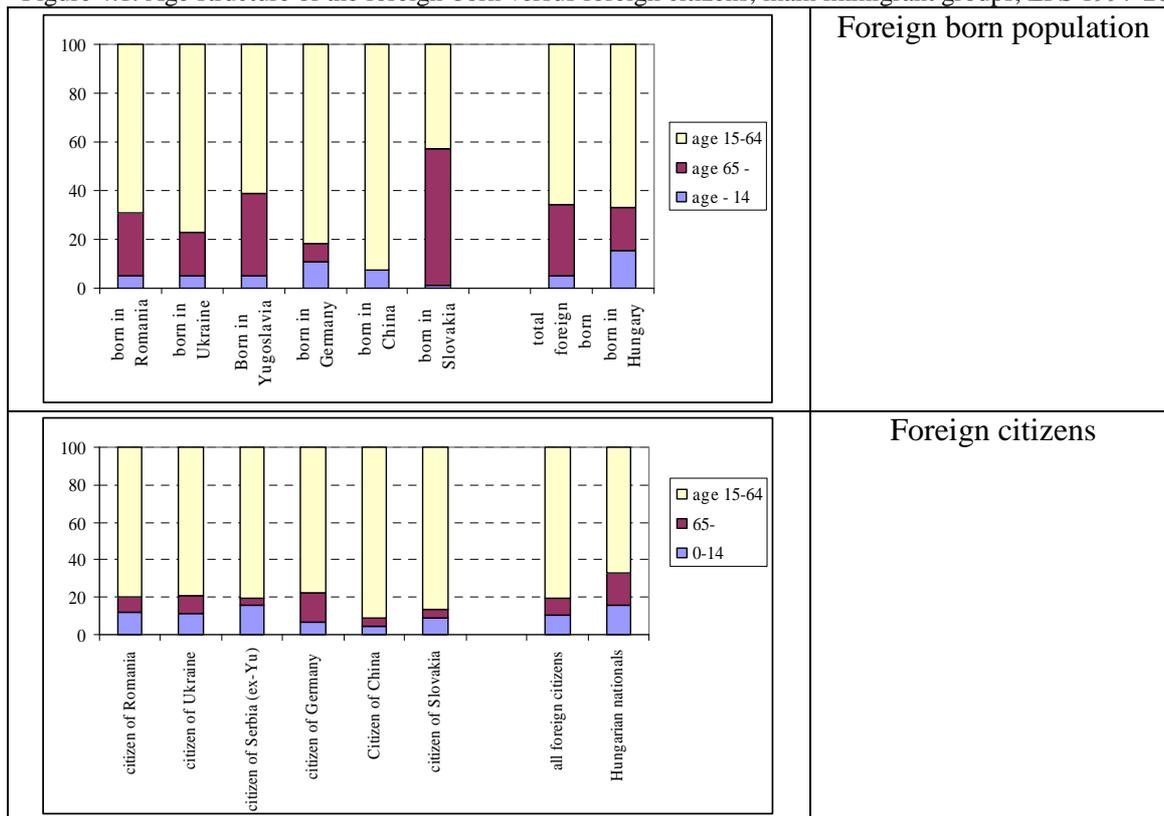
4.1.2 Immigrant population in the LFS

A key data source of the labour market is the LFS, a survey-type data source. Due to the low size of the total immigrant population and its clandestine attitude, the total sample comprises only a limited number of immigrants in the sample. As a consequence, the LFS has not been used as data source for migration in Hungary. Nevertheless, for the purpose of the present study and to complete the previous depiction of migrants, we tried to exploit the advantages of the LFS to describe the labour market characteristics of the migrant population.³⁰

A high share of the foreign-born population covered by the LFS was over 65 and some were children below 15. The share of the former was higher and the latter lower than nationals'. The share of the old age population was extremely high among those born in Slovakia (an old ethnic population, as discussed above). The elderly foreign-born population is, on the other hand, extremely low among those of Chinese and German origin. The immigrant population by citizenship is very different: it is young, of an overwhelmingly active age in all main immigrant groups. Immigrant citizens are much younger than Hungarian nationals: the share of the older population, over 65, is low among the foreign citizens. While the size of the foreign-born immigrant population is much larger than that of foreign citizens, the difference largely depends on the old age immigrant measures such as foreign citizens or foreign-born persons. The difference is in the active age immigrant population, measured by the place of birth versus citizenship, and is considerably smaller. (Figure 4.1)

³⁰ To avoid the problem of the small size of the sample we formulated a panel of the detailed data for the period of 1997-2005 when data were available. In addition to the sample size problem, 2006 data are not published by the main immigrant groups, but only differentiated as EU citizens versus non-EU citizens (based on EU data collection methodology). Unfortunately the representation of the migrants was too small to form a time series but the summarized data of the panel for the period 1997-2005 offered a reasonable size of the data.

Figure 4.1. Age structure of the foreign-born versus foreign citizens, main immigrant groups, LFS 1997-2005



Source: Hungarian LFS, own panel calculation 1997-2005

The labour market position of the active age immigrant population of 15-64 is shown in table 4.5. Among the foreign-born the inactivity rate is higher and employment rate is lower, although the difference across migrant groups is substantial. The highest is the employment rate of immigrants from Romania and Germany; the lowest, on the other hand, is among the foreign born Slovaks and ex-Yugoslavs. Unemployment is also high among various foreign citizens: Slovaks, Ukrainians. The employment rate for Chinese is extremely high (although sample size is rather small!).

Table 4.. Labour market position of foreign born versus foreign citizens, %, LFS 1997-2005, age 15-64

	employment rate	unemployment rate	inactivity rate	share in total immigrants
Foreign born population				
born in Romania	57.1	6.8	38.7	54.3
born in Germany	59.0	6.1	37.1	4.3
born in Ukraine	52.7	6.7	43.5	8.4
Born in Yugoslavia	43.3	4.1	54.9	8.0
born in Slovakia	35.0	7.0	62.4	7.1
born in China	82.4	0.0	17.6	0.5
all born abroad	54.1	6.1	42.4	100.0
Hungarian nationals	53.1	7.4	42.7	
Foreign citizens				
citizen of Romania	58.0	7.1	37.6	46.2
citizen of Germany	58.5	6.1	37.7	7.1
citizen of Ukraine	45.9	11.7	48.0	11.0
citizen of Serbia (ex-Yu)	53.2	6.3	43.2	6.6
citizen of Slovakia	51.6	10.3	42.5	4.6
citizen of China	72.0	0.0	28.0	1.2
all foreign citizens	56.5	6.8	39.4	100.0
Hungarian nationals	53.1	7.3	42.7	

Source: Hungarian LFS, own panel calculation 1997-2005

4.2. Dynamics of the labour migration according to work permits

Somewhat different from the data above and more relevant from the labour market's point of view is work permit statistics. Following the first migration wave in the early years of the transition, (legal) labour migration measured by work permits became moderate, around 20 thousand work permits as a stock, that is, around a half per cent of the labour force, until the end of the 1990s. Since the end of the 1990s the number of work permits has been continuously increasing.³¹ With the enlargement of the EU, work permit regulations changed with some effect on work permit data.³²

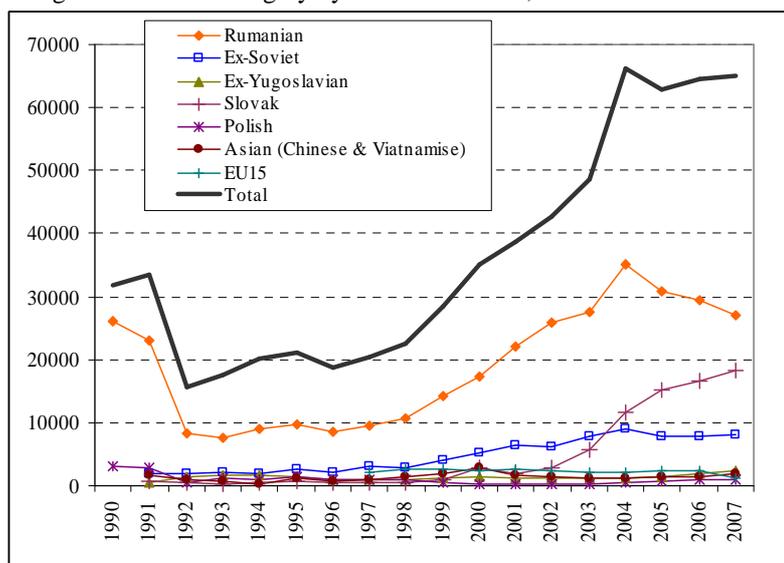
In the early 1990s, the main source of labour migration was the huge and sudden inflow of ethnic Hungarians from Romania. In these "pioneering" years of the quasi-refugees, the number of work permits issued was high, partly due to failing regulation of labour migration. Quasi-refugees could also legalise their stay with work permits: a precondition of the residence permit was legal employment in Hungary. (Tóth 1995, Hárs 1997) As a second step, a precondition of naturalisation was the legal labour market and residence permit. Following this early period,

³¹ Work permits were issued for a maximum of one year; the inflow of the foreign labour employed on a work permit basis was not much different from the stock. That is, most of those employed were employed for a year. Extensions of the permits seem to be a new permit, consequently the length of extensions and new entries are impossible to separate.

³² Following Hungary's accession to the EU on 1 May 2004, labour migration among member states was free, meaning EU citizens are no longer included in the work permit register (except in the case of reciprocity with those countries without a liberal policy, where a work permit is required), a green card registration is needed, however. Consequently, work permits and special green cards for the EU15 citizens and the obligatory registration of the citizens of the new member states working in Hungary should be summarised to give a reliable picture of immigrant labour in Hungary.

labour migration dropped and remained low. As a consequence of the economic transition, the labour market situation worsened and resulted in increasing unemployment and high inactivity of the native population. Labour market solidarity with the quasi-refugees soon diminished (Hárs 1999). According to survey data on the attitude of the native Hungarians towards ethnic Hungarians, in 1989 only a quarter of the respondents was of the opinion that ethnic Hungarians would take their jobs; in 1990 38%, in 1993 more than half of the respondents. In 1999, this fear was somewhat relaxed: 41% blamed ethnic Hungarians for labour market difficulties (Fábián et al 2001).

Figure 4.2. Dynamics of immigrant labour in Hungary by source countries, 1990-2007

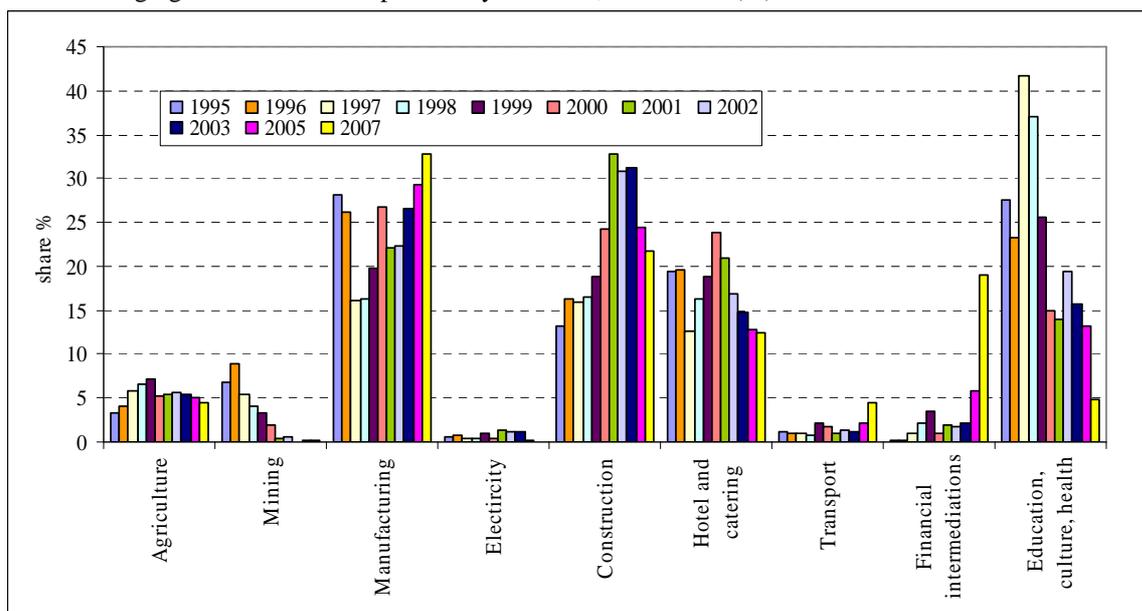


Sources: 1990-2003: work permits statistics, National Employment Service. 2004- work permits + green cards + registrations (all data for 31 December).

The geographic origin and the ethnic character of work permit holders have not changed much. In the end of the 1990s, coinciding with the easing labour market situation and improved economic climate, the employment of legal foreign labour was evidently rising. The number of work permits issued was increasing: an overwhelming majority of the permits were given to Romanian nationals. Recently, prior to and following the enlargement, a sudden jump came about in the number of Slovak workers, who are mostly of ethnic Hungarian origin as well. Ukrainian labour is the third largest group among foreign workers: a continuous increase came about in their numbers. (Figure 4.2)

The increase in the number of work permits in the last decade coincided with the change of the structure of the foreign worker. The previously high share of work permits in the field of culture, education and health care was replaced by employment in manufacturing, construction or in service branches like trade or hotel and catering. The restructuring is partly due to the fact that work permit obligation in the field of culture, education, etc., has been abolished or obligation for those persons who applied for work permits was no longer necessary (they became naturalised or long-term residents, vs. Immigrants, etc., and, finally, EU enlargement also changed work permit requirements). Before the millennium, employment in the manufacturing sector was obvious. Not much was visible, however, in the legal employment in construction or trade, hotel and catering. As a consequence, the share of the latter in the employment of slowly increasing numbers of foreigners has dropped. Legal employment in agriculture is modest, similar to the other branches not mentioned above. Signs of some employment in business have been emerging recently. (Figure 4.3)

Figure 4.3. Changing structure of work permits by branches, 1995-2007 (%)



Sources: 1995-2003: work permits statistics, National Employment Service. 2004- work permits + green cards + registrations (All data for 31 December).

The qualification of the work permit holders is relatively low. The difference is considerable across countries of origin. The education level of Romanian or Ukrainian citizens is low (apprentice school or less). EU15 citizens employed on a work permit basis, on the contrary, are rather highly qualified. Some other migrant groups are diverse: there are partly lower, partly higher-educated labour migrants among them. (Table 4.6)

Table 4.6. Work permits by education level and citizenship of the main sending countries, 2003 (%)

	Primary school or less	Apprentice school	Secondary school	Collage, university degree	Un-known	All	N (persons)
Romania	64.9	19.0	9.9	4.7	1.5	100	27609
Ukraine	66.3	16.9	11.4	5.3	0.2	100	7621
Slovakia	38.7	28.1	26.4	6.8	0.0	100	5686
Ex-Yugoslavia	25.2	21.3	23.4	18.8	11.3	100	937
Poland	20.6	43.9	15.1	20.1	0.3	100	344
Asians	21.9	41.9	12.8	23.0	0.4	100	2667
EU-15	3.5	8.5	20.1	67.4	0.6	100	2200
Total	54.1	20.7	13.2	10.9	1.2	100	48651

Sources: work permits statistics, National Employment Service.

Contrary to the picture of the settled immigrants according to residence permits or census data (cp table 3.2 or table 4.4) work permits drive the low-quality immigrant workers to the low-quality semi-skilled and unskilled jobs.³³ At the end of 2007, 42% of the work permits issued was given to elementary (non-agricultural) occupations, of which more than three-quarters of the work permits of Romanian citizens (and 50% of the old permits) and 80% of the work permits of the Ukrainian citizens was given for elementary occupations. The second most important group of occupations was machine operators and assemblers. Nearly two-thirds of the work permits

³³ The data of Tables 4.7 and 4.6 refer to different years, due to data inconsistency or lack of data of various years. The overall picture was not changing much in time, however.

were given to Slovak citizens in these occupations (and another 16% were elementary occupations). The share of work permits for craft and related occupations was altogether 10% (mostly Romanian, Serbian and Slovak workers received this). Chinese immigrants received work permits mainly in trade and services. (Table 4.7)

Table 4.7. Work permits by occupational groups and the citizenship of the main sending countries, 2007 (%)

Citizen	Occupational groups*									total	person
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Slovak	0.6	2.0	4.1	1.1	2.1	0.8	11.5	62.0	15.8	100.0	17690
Romanian ^a	0.2	2.4	3.7	1.2	3.5	1.1	6.9	4.2	76.8	100.0	14602
Romanian ^b	0.5	4.2	3.5	1.0	6.7	2.9	13.9	8.0	59.3	100.0	1650
Ukrainian	0.8	2.2	3.0	1.0	1.8	0.9	6.9	3.0	80.3	100.0	6692
Serbian	1.7	7.0	11.1	2.2	2.8	0.1	19.5	22.9	32.6	100.0	1549
Chinese	2.9	2.0	4.7	0.9	75.6	0.0	4.2	0.0	9.7	100.0	1412
Total	2.5	4.8	5.8	1.7	6.6	0.9	10.2	25.3	42.2	100.0	51475

Source: work permits statistics, National Employment Service. work permits + registrations (all data for 31 December). ^a work permits following EU membership ^b work permits prior EU membership.

*Occupational groups: 1. Legislators, senior government officials, managers, 2. Professionals, 3. Technicians and associate professionals, 4. Office and management clerks, 5. Service workers, 6. Skilled agricultural workers, 7. Craft and related occupations, 8. Machine operators, assemblers, drivers, 9. Elementary occupations.

The different positions and insertion of various migrant groups (by citizenship of the sending countries) is clear in the Hungarian labour market. They are confined to various jobs in various branches. Romanian citizens are employed in unskilled agricultural jobs, a mix of Ukrainian, Romanian and Slovak citizens in unskilled non-agricultural (service) jobs, Slovak citizens in manufacturing, Slovak and Polish citizens in metallurgy, Chinese and Vietnamese in hotel and catering service jobs. (Table 4.8)

Table 4.8. Work permits given for various groups of profession by citizenship of the sending country, 31st December, 2007

Main jobs and branches involved in foreign employment	Share jobs in total, %	Permits issued	Main sending countries in particular jobs	Share of the citizens of the main sending countries in different job %
Managers	2	1106	EU 15, Japan, USA etc	
Non-manual technical jobs	2	1027	EU 15, Japan, USA etc	
Technicians	2	805	Various	
Manual jobs in hotel and catering	5	2361	1061 Chinese + 137 Vietnamese	51
Jobs in light industry	2	1271	Various	
Manual jobs in metallurgy	4	1869	817 Slovak + 227 Polish	56
Manual jobs in manufacturing	22	11643	10586 Slovak	91
Unskilled service	40	20929	5306 Ukrainians + 10654 Romanian + 2739 Slovak	89
Unskilled agriculture	2	803	561 Romanian	70
Other	20	10434	Various	
Total	100	52248		

Source: Work permit data information of the National Employment Service, own calculations (groups with a share of work permits above 1 per cent).

Following the enlargement of the EU in 2007 towards Bulgaria and Romania, Hungary partially opened its labour market to the new EU members. In spite of experts' opinions to open the Hungarian labour market to the new members, the reason was largely some fear about the huge inflow of immigrants from the main sending countries, namely from Romania. Nevertheless, the

huge and increasing inflow failed to come. (Hárs-Neumann 2007, Hárs-Örkény-Sik 2006) Work permits given in 2007 were very much concentrated in particular jobs, similar to the previous trend, and were only partly coinciding with the preference of the labour government: to create jobs without labour market examination in qualified blue collar professions. As a matter of fact, the immigrant labour market based on work permits is very much concentrated in a few (mainly low-qualified) jobs and nationals mainly of adjacent countries.

4.3. Irregular labour migration

Legal labour immigration is only part of total labour migration. According to everyday evidence and “experts’ estimations” based on labour inspectorates’ and other authorities’ information, it is obvious that irregular labour is present in construction, in agriculture and also in domestic services (domestic servant, maid, nursing children or taking care of elderly people). The informal foreign and local labour markets overlap, sometimes compete and sometimes replace corresponding jobs of natives or, more likely, informal migrant labour complements native labour.

An informal economy and irregular native labour market is an evident magnet for irregular migration (Reyneri 1998) as is also stressed by Arango et al (2008). Irregular employment of natives far outnumbers that of immigrants in Hungary. The irregular labour market and undeclared employment of natives is extensive in Hungary. Comparing the level of declared employment recorded in the National Pension Insurance Directorate database with the level of gainful employment revealed by the labour force survey, Köllő (2008) estimated the scale of undeclared labour as being approximately 17–18 percent of the declared labour in 2004, varying between 10 percent in white collar jobs, to 50 percent in construction and personal services and 56 percent in various forms of agricultural labour.

A recent comparative European analysis of the attitudes toward undeclared work (Undeclared, 2007) demonstrated that the behaviour of Hungarians is very tolerant towards the informal economy in all its forms. There are currently strong governmental efforts being made to decrease the scope of the informal economy in general and the fight against undeclared work in particular. To achieve these goals, new legislative measures and organizational solutions are in the making: new committees have been organised, the control authorities are to be reinforced and so forth, and a campaign to change the attitude of the population towards informality has been launched. An analysis of more recent labour inspection data shows that, in 2006, 3–4% of undeclared workers caught in the course of inspection were of foreign origin. In 2007 – due to more frequent inspections – the number of undeclared workers was about twice that in 2006 (until August 2007, 51,000 compared to 22,000 until August 2006) but the number of foreigners among them has decreased. (Hárs-Sik 2008b)

Considering the high share of the underground economy it is very likely that inactivity measured by formal statistics contains a sizeable unmeasured labour market in Hungary. The underground economy encourages a shift of employees from low income formal jobs to inactive status through channels like early retirement, the possibility of disability pension or a generous maternity leave system. Indirect evidence for this might be that even when unemployment was at its highest (in the early 1990s) there was no sign of it causing social or political unrest. It was supposed that domestic and underground economy acted as a welfare and subsistence buffer (Sik 1996).

Although the size of immigrants is moderate, the magnet of the national informal labour market is inevitable. Jobs immigrants would take were concentrated in particular occupations rather than sectors. In early 2000, efforts were made to legalize some of the labour migration from the adolescent countries' ethnic Hungarians under the framework of the so-called Status Law. A survey was conducted to determine the expected migration from all around the source region of the Carpathian basin. (Örkény 2003) According to the survey, an overwhelming majority of men would take jobs in construction; elementary occupation is not the aim for them. As for women, job expectations are more diverse. Service jobs are important for women and elementary occupations as well (servant-type jobs: cleaning, nursing or taking care of the elderly are common.)

A special form of informal labour market, the “tip of the iceberg” of the informal market in a way, is the open-air day-labour market for foreigners. Almost every major Hungarian city has at least one open-air informal market of goods and labour. The basic characteristics of these open-air labour markets are similar to that of those in other countries. The open-air labour markets analyzed between 1995 and 2004 have the following characteristics: most of the transactions of the informal labour market-place take place in the morning, before 10 a.m. – the peak hours are before 7 a.m. The informal labour market-place is seasonal with the peak months in the spring and summer, it is concentrated in Budapest and its vicinity, the typical jobs are casual unskilled jobs in construction, and the typical employee is a male from Romania paid a low wage. As to migrant workers, there is a substantial number of ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania among them: the dominant groups are “Hungarian Hungarians” and ethnic Romanians from Romania, and, finally compared to ethnic Hungarians, those with Romanian or Roma ethnic backgrounds have a significant wage disadvantage in the informal labour market-place. (Sik, 2006)

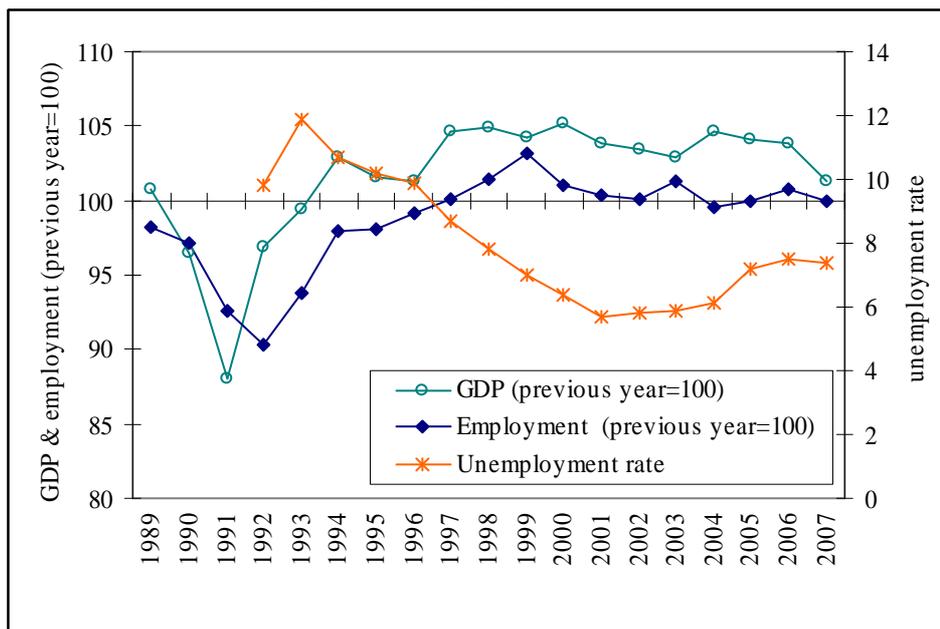
In Hungary, undeclared work (of nationals, in fact) has been part of the political discourse for decades. The results of several public opinion polls have proved the controversial attitude of the Hungarian population towards this phenomenon. For example, in the late 1990s, 59 percent of the respondents, and 67 percent of the entrepreneurs responding, agreed that “the hidden economy is part of our everyday life” (HCSO, 1998), and accepted it as part of their coping strategy. There is high inertia in these opinions.

4.4. The characteristics of the labour market: pull factors for and impediments to migration

The sudden inflow of immigrants at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s did not turn into a fast-developing permanent progress over time. The continuous inflow of labour migration regulated by work permits has never exceeded the upper limit set by the ministry of labour. Economic and labour market trends explain the low pull effects.

The transition of the economy in the early 1990s caused a transition shock with serious job losses and an economic slump, so unemployment jumped high all of a sudden. Following the dramatic recession, GDP as well as industrial output was increasing and unemployment decreasing, but nevertheless employment was stagnating. In sum, we can say that Hungary is characterized by *jobless economic growth* (Figure 4.4). The low level of participation coinciding with no extreme unemployment resulted in a low level of employment. As for age groups, even labour force participation of the prime age Hungarian population is considerably below the European level.

Figure 4.4. GDP and labour-market developments in Hungary, 1989–2007



Source: The Hungarian Labour Market 2007, recent data HCSO.

The process of job losses and gains took place in various forms. Socialist industries disappeared with serious losses of jobs, while new jobs were created at a much slower rate and within a different structure: in high-tech industries, in services, trade and the banking sector, where labour shortages even occurred in particular jobs, branches or regions. (Körösi 2005) Replacement of jobs was dramatic, as Kertesi-Köllő (2002) gives evidence of the demand for unskilled, young skilled, and older skilled workers during the post-communist transition in Hungary. Capital investment resulted mostly in unskilled labour redundancy, and younger and older skilled workers proved to be substitutes where young people often enjoyed a benefit. The qualification of the employed population changed dramatically: the share of both men and women with primary school education almost disappeared from the employment pool. (Table 4.9)

Table 4.9. Structure of employment by education, %

Year	Primary school or less	Apprentice school	Secondary school	College, university graduates	Total
Male					
1990	38	31	20	12	100
1995	21	39	26	15	100
2000	16	42	27	16	100
2005	13	41	28	19	100
Female					
1990	43	13	31	12	100
1995	27	20	37	16	100
2000	19	21	41	19	100
2005	15	20	40	24	100

Source: The Hungarian Labour Market 2007.

The process was accompanied by dramatic regional inequalities. The transition shock was successfully overcome in some regions while never succeeded in others. The employment rate is far below the level of that of the national, and stubborn in the latter and rather high in the former. Central and N-W regions of the country gained, while the Eastern part of the country, especially N-E Hungary experienced serious losses. (Table 4.10)

Table 4.10. Increasing regional inequalities: employment rate, 1992-2005

	1992	1996	2000	2005
Central Hungary	62	57	61	63
Central Trans-Danube	58	53	59	60
Western Trans-Danube	62	59	63	62
Southern Trans-Danube	57	50	54	53
Northern Hungary	52	46	49	50
Northern Great Plain	53	46	49	50
Southern Great Plain	58	53	56	54
Total	58	52	56	57

Source: HCSO, LFS data.

In addition to the dramatic changes in high versus low-wage jobs and the employment level, the structure of the Hungarian economy as a post-socialist economy has a peculiar structure. It is in a way “*over-modernized*”, that is, job structure refers to a more productive economy. Low-wage small enterprises or self-employed jobs are missing or have a character of a provisory, non-increasing family base. Other enterprises highly rely on multinational firms with limited freedom of activity. (Laki 1998, GKM 2007) That is more or less characteristic for the region as a relic of the previous socialist economy.³⁴ By contrast, job creation is essential in the Mediterranean countries, as it is a large share in the sector of their extensive small and micro enterprises. As a matter of fact, pull factors of migration are often these employers attracting labour to these jobs.³⁵ In case of Hungary, the pattern of economic growth without job creation does not assume strong factors of pulling immigration.³⁶ The Hungarian labour market with its low level of employment and considerable low-wage and unskilled labour reserves is not ready to attract considerable labour migration.

Even if strong push factors in the sending region exist, pull factors are essential for successful migration. In the early 2000s, research revealed that migration is limited by the fact that generally the reservation wages – the minimum accepted amount of income – were not below Hungary’s average, compared to the given job and wage structure of the Hungarian labour market. That means that most of the employment of the possible migration pull from surrounding countries will not be realized in Hungary: most migrant labour inflow will not have a serious wage dumping effect in Hungary. (Hárs 2003)

A shortage of some skilled labour in industry, often with a disadvantageous organisation of work, resulted in skilled labour migration. To solve the mismatch of the labour markets and to fill these jobs, Slovak labour (ethnic Hungarians from the Slovakian side of the border, mainly on daily basis of commuting) have been increasingly apparent on the North-West Hungarian labour market. That part is a developed region of Hungary, with plants and industrial parks of multinational enterprises which extensively invested in the country and have a place in the global labour market. The other side of the border is an agricultural region with high unemployment and considerable labour reserves. The labour migration from Slovakia remained localised in the broader border region. (Vári 2002, Hárs et al 2006)

³⁴ The statement originates from J Köllő, unpublished manuscript, based on Maloney (2004)

³⁵ Cp. Reyneri. (2008) Abreu - Peixoto (2008)

³⁶ Hönekop et al (2006) gives a similar example for Sweden explaining relative low immigration despite the liberal immigration regime towards the EU 8

4.5. Sources of labour migration – ethnic and transnational-type migration

The main sources of migration to Hungary, until today, were ethnic Hungarians from the adolescent countries, principally from Romania. In addition to the Eastern European co-ethnic return migrant population in the neighbouring countries, Hungary has also a vital and distinctive Asian – Chinese – trans-national migrant community. The differences in the basic migration pattern of the two immigrant populations are evident and strongly influence the migration routes, effects and outcomes in Hungary.

Although peculiarities exist (as referred to earlier, see Brubaker 1998), the Hungarian case of ethnic return migration to the kin-state is not unique. Skrentny et al (2007) highlight that, despite international non-discrimination norms, a preferential ethnic return policy is common in Europe and also in Asian trans-national communities. As they put it, these policies at least implicitly define the nation as existing across borders. The authors point to the essential difference between the European and Asian states to their co-ethnics. “Asian ethnic preferences are more instrumentally integrated into larger policy objectives than those practices in Western Europe, and specifically they are geared toward economic development, utilizing skills and investment preferences. In contrast, the European policies, especially the strong moves toward ethnic preference in Eastern Europe, have been mostly expressions of ties or efforts at protection. Rather than tools for economic development, European preferences are a kind of protective or expressive nationalism”. (Skrentny et al (2007: 816-817)

The circular character of both the ethnic and the transnational Chinese migration is essential and needs to be stressed in explaining migration. The integration of the migrants or the developing (and measured) maturity of migration in the case of a strongly circular character of migration challenges immigration, integration and migration policy as well.

4.5.1. Labour migration– changing role of the ethnic character³⁷

As we can see from above, the main source of migration to Hungary, as yet, is of an ethnic character. Part of the immigration to Hungary – covered by the residence permit statistics and also the Census – is legal and rather qualified. Research based on these data describes the mainly successfully integrated immigrants in Hungary (Gödri-Tóth 2005, Gödri 2005). The variety of early immigration flows turned mainly to legalized forms of immigration. Nevertheless, a considerable part of the migration of the ethnic Hungarians has different features: undocumented, irregular labour or even legal labour on a work permit basis, all of which are mostly of a circular character of migration and are omitted from the residence permit statistics.

Hungarian policy was concerned and had a double-minded attitude towards migration. While discourses of the political elite supported the inclusion of the non-national ethnic Hungarians into the nation, ethnic Hungarians who went to Hungary in search of work met the reality of economic exclusion and also arrived as immigrants and experienced the exclusion of migrants having the status of foreigners. As Fox (2007) writes, the migrants’ national self-understandings have taken shape not in accordance with the wishes of national elites, but rather in response to the economic imperatives of labour migration. The ambiguous co-ethnic politics and policy of Hungary (more in detail in chapter 5.3) encourages ethnic Hungarians to stay put in their homeland. Nevertheless, the ethnic Hungarians (mainly from Romania) did not stay put for good but rather set off to find jobs in Hungary, which was an attractive neighbouring country with a

³⁷ Not much research has been conducted on labour market behaviour of other ethnic minorities except for those from Romania. Since the main source of labour migration comes from Romania, the chapter focuses on this group.

relative prosperous economy and high expected wages. Except for the very early period, without national support of Hungary, the ethnic Hungarians were provided with neither a legal nor an institutional framework to integrate into the labour market. As a consequence, a prosperous undocumented labour market has developed. As tourists they were allowed to stay for 30 days and they could work illegally: that was, for most labour migrants, the practice. After 30 days many returned home and came back later in order to legalize their stay in this way. The relatively short distance, common language and developing networks helped to maintain the practice of undocumented circular migration (Bodó 1996, Fox 2005, Oláh 1993). The migration to Hungary was evidently a type of circular migration rooted in both countries. Fox (2007) underlines that national affinities were not the labour migrants' objective, rather the means to realize their economic goals.³⁸ Immigrants arrived as guest workers in Hungary, taking low status jobs and incurring the nationals' suspicion and aversion. (Fox 2007, Pulai 2005) No social benefits and no documents – these ethnic Hungarian foreign workers were marginal in all forms. They were often referred to as “Romanians” or even more discredibly labelled. (A selection of every day experiences and interview evidence collected in Fox 2007, see also Brubaker et al 2006) The labour migrants in Hungary, similar to Piore (1979) had an instrumental relation to their work. “It's true that [Transylvanian Hungarians] work for less than Hungarians [in Hungary] – that's why they get pissed off. But they don't even like to work... I worked there a year ... as a manual labourer, I mixed the mortar, hammered the boards, laid the bricks, whatever they needed... [...] Transylvanians, *they* really work. Take my father-in-law; he works sixteen hours a day every day. Hungarians [in Hungary] are already heading home at 4:00. Maybe they don't need the money so badly ... and so they don't work so hard... (Pulai 2005, cited and translated in Fox 2007).

There was a crucial change in the push factors of emigration from Romania over time, which was extensively discussed in the literature (Kiss 2008). At the end of the 1980s, the Hungarian government accepted the ethnic Hungarians as quasi-refugees: that was an essential driver of the large emigration. The push factor was the ethnic exclusion and repression of the Hungarian minority in Romania. Ethnic repression as an argument and push factor survived as long as the late 1990s in Romania. The ambiguous character of economic and labour-driven emigration versus ethnic repression and push was no more relevant. It became obvious with the fact that emigration of non-ethnic Hungarians was gradually emerging in Romania. As a result, beyond the ambiguous and not really overheated pull effects of the Hungarian labour market, potential migrants to Hungary have options for emigration. *First*, the Romanian economy turned into a period of rapid growth and the home economy offered alternative options that were lacking before. Labour shortages of similar kind are emerging in Romania as well. Those working in Hungary had a choice to return home and take a job or set up or continue their business at home. *Second*, migration to more attractive destination countries in the EU, into the Mediterranean region, became an option for those formerly used to migrating to Hungary or were potential migrants. Research among potential migrants of ethnic Hungarians in Romania (Székelyföld-Seklerland) revealed migration pressure targeting southern Europe as an alternative. Those potential migrant mixed families, which have marketable networks other than the Hungarians, tend to migrate to following other destinations: mainly the Mediterranean countries. Sources of migration pressure to Hungary are diminishing. (Csata-Kiss (2003), Bodó-Bíró 2006, Kiss 2007)

³⁸ Asking a Transylvanian construction worker about their national feeling to work in Hungary in the early 1990 he replied the he was unfortunately not Saxonian and therefore could not have the advantage of working in a wealthier German speaking country.... (Hárs 1991)

4.5.2. Foreign entrepreneurs – the Chinese immigrant community

A peculiar characteristic of the migration following 1989 has been the migration of entrepreneurs to Central and Eastern Europe and to Hungary as well, mostly from the Far East Asian region. In Eastern Europe and in other transitional peripheries, Chinese migrants are entrepreneurs who display a particularly intense transnationalism that is manifested in very high levels of international mobility and economic dependence on China. Chinese migrants follow the model of “transnational middleman minorities”: their ethnic networks serve the flexible mobilization of labour, capital and business information in order to provide goods and services at a low price otherwise not accessible for the large share of the population. In the receiving CEEU countries the position of these transnational middlemen minorities is not really accepted as a mainstream carrier, consequently they are inclined to take positions (and remain competitive in their business) in economic roles and methods that are seen as deviant (e.g., sweatshops, flea markets). This led to an increased fear of the entire group, although Hungarians meet Chinese daily in the shops, market places, restaurants, etc. Locals perceive the Chinese migrants as useful and exotic but potentially threatening aliens. (Nyíri 2007)

As an outcome of the historical past, in Hungary, Italy and partly in Slovakia the Chinese have formed the largest Asian community, while in the rest of CEEU (Poland, Czech Republic, partly Slovakia or East-Germany) it has been the Vietnamese. There was a considerable number of Vietnamese guest workers in Poland, GDR or the Czech part of Czechoslovakia. In Hungary (or in South Eastern Europe) the presence of Vietnamese was marginal. On the other hand, in 1987 a small group (335 persons) of metal workers spent a year in Hungary and formed the roots for the following migrants.

The origin of the Chinese community in Hungary was supported by the short period of liberal immigration policy of the early 1990s, and it was fuelled by the Chinese political and economic circumstances in the wake of Tiananmen in 1989. Hungary offered an attractive destination with a newly freed market economy, forecasts of rapid economic developments and, above all, a newly signed treaty abolishing the visa requirement for citizens of China (Nyíri 1997). The unlimited flourishing period of the Chinese community was short. Hungarian immigration and economic policies deeply affected the situation of the developing Chinese community. The tightening of immigration rules in 1991, strict and offensive regulations in Hungary and the introduction of visa obligations resulted in a drop in the total number of Chinese, as well as a reduction in the rate of new immigrants. The size was considerable at the origin of the Chinese community in 1991-92. In these years around 30-40,000 Chinese immigrants resided in Hungary. In 2007 the Chinese community in Hungary comprised altogether about 9,000 persons.

Nevertheless, favourable market and economic conditions led to the emergence of the relatively consolidated, prosperous and sophisticated Chinese community. A considerable share of the present Chinese immigrants arrived in the early days to Hungary. In the political climate of the emerging Hungarian-Chinese community, the emigrants were qualified or even highly qualified: senior officials, managers, etc., escaping from China in large numbers. The share of women was high among Chinese immigrants and they are likely active as entrepreneurs. (Nyíri 2001) The Chinese immigrant population is highly concentrated in Budapest (82%, according to CAR registration). A sizeable Chinese population is registered in two other Hungarian towns (Nyíregyháza and Szeged in east, versus south-east, Hungary). In both towns a China market has been established. In addition, Chinese shops can be found in most of the settlements in Hungary. (According to the estimation of the Chinese embassy in 2001, in about 2,000 settlements there

was a Chinese shop.) That means a sizeable population: 2-3 Chinese persons per settlement may be found in the countryside.

In 1992, at the peak of the Chinese community in Hungary, 1,400 Chinese enterprises were registered. Most of the enterprises were small or micro enterprises. In ten years, the number of Chinese-owned enterprises increased to a number of 10,000 ventures; the capital stock was not increasing, however. Enterprises are partly ghost enterprises that are not functioning. Still, Chinese are entrepreneurs even if they are owners of micro or small enterprises, petty trades. China markets replaced the previously existing “Polish” or “Comecon” smuggle markets. Chinese entrepreneurs consider Hungary a base from which to re-export their goods to Eastern Europe and sometimes to farther destinations. Chinese immigrants aim at creating chains of stores by contracting with Hungarian retailers for exclusive distribution of their goods. Such chains appear to be the key to successful business. The Chinese community in Hungary is extremely mobile in a transnational space and to the business partners. Chinese are deeply rooted in their home community in China.

The immigration of the Chinese to Hungary developed similarly to the Italian community. Still, the Hungarian community stopped increasing soon, in contrast to that in Italy. (Pieke et al 2004) The reason for the difference is the structure of the economic circumstances. The Italian confection industry largely depends on the small scale of Chinese workshops and illegal immigration to these industries. It has resulted in a policy of repeated regularisations of illegal migrants in Italy. (Reyneri 2008) In Hungary, in contrast, the government strongly hindered the activity of the Chinese businesses and even re-introduced visa obligations in 1992. Some members of the Chinese community spread out in the neighbouring countries.

Integration of the Chinese in Hungary is hard to interpret since they exist in their transnational ways and spaces. As shop-keepers they are connected with the native population, they even employ the relatively cheap native labour or ethnic Hungarians, as a related possibility, in their shops. Nevertheless, the Hungarian government insists on integrating the Chinese community, which would in fact rather turn to their home country and integrate in the transnational Chinese community. At the same time, the Chinese immigrant population appreciates the life in Hungary and prefers to keep residence here. (Nyíri 2005)

The ambiguous or rather closed-off policy of the Hungarian government and migration policy limited the size of the Chinese community in Hungary, in accordance with the general defensive migration policy in Hungary (as will be discussed in the next section). Still, economic and social circumstances were more influential in the sudden stop in the development of the flourishing Chinese community in Hungary. the profitability of Chinese trade in Hungary was worsening and the business support system failed. Still, Chinese immigrants have kept their houses, schools and move on with their businesses using their mobility and networks. The future of the Hungarian Chinese community is uncertain.

5. Migration Policy in Hungary between 1989 and 2008

5.1. The conceptual framework

The immigration process in Hungary can be considered as peculiar for two reasons. *First*, it starts with a refugee crisis which is huge even in international standards, and the legal and institutional system develops as the very result of this crisis. This in turn has a deep impact on the perception of immigration and on the organisational culture of the institutions dealing with immigration. *Second*, ‘peculiarity’ is due to the fact that, for the past twenty years, the majority of immigrants have come from among the ethnic Hungarian communities in the neighbouring countries, which supports the general perception that the Hungarian immigration is something ‘special’, which can not be modelled or described within the traditional paradigms. It is not even migration in standard terms but something more and less at the same time³⁹. These two dimensions have a strong effect on the migration policy and strategy, setting the boundaries of the discursive framework in which the migration policy debates take place.

Although researchers and practitioners dealing with international migration have emphasized the importance of formulating and applying an overarching migration policy framework for the past decade, neither the political nor professional debates have taken place, and its administrative structure has not been set up yet.⁴⁰ Although there has been an Inter-ministry Committee on Migration since 2004, with the declared task of strategic guidance for and coordination between responsible ministries, up until now the Government has not even presented the document setting out the migration strategy to the Parliament. Nowadays the administrative roles and competences related to migration have been scattered among several ministries, professional debates or applied research activities which usually deal with technicalities belonging to particular segments of public administration. Legislation related to migration and technical monitoring of the implementation is the role of the Department of Justice and Home Affairs and Migration of the Ministry of Law Enforcement and Justice; the implementation is the responsibility of the Office of Immigration and Nationality.

When talking about the national immigration system we mean the legal and institutional structure of a) entry into the country, b) stay and residence in the country, c) settlement and integration, d) naturalisation and e) asylum. The framework of this paper does not permit a discussion of each and every aspect of the evolution of the national migration system. It will examine only a few core issues that emerged during the past twenty years.

In the time elapsed since the late 1980s, we can identify particular periods that correspond to the descriptions of migration trends (cp. subchapter 3.2.1) The *first period*, between 1988 and 1992, is characterised by the birth of the legal and institutional framework, starting with a Constitutional amendment and ending before the drafting of the first Acts on Immigration and Citizenship. The *second period*, between 1993 and 2000, can be described as the years of consolidation and stabilisation of the migration regime, when the core legal texts were drafted and the institutional system developed into the present structure of a central implementation body and single ministerial supervision. The *third period*, from 2001 on, has been about the legal and institutional harmonisation with (or adjustment to) the existing or assumed standards of the

³⁹ This concept is best represented by the works of Tóth Pál Péter (1997) , but references to the “special” situation are present in the works of, e.g., Kováts-Nyíri-Tóth (2003), Kováts (2005) and Kováts-Sik (2007).

⁴⁰ A motto of the chapter could be “We don’t need migration policy. What the law says: that is the policy.” (borderguard general József Dúzs)

Common European Migration and Asylum Systems. Obviously the boundaries are rather arbitrary and the periods sometimes overlap with each other in the case of the development of the five subsystems of the migration regime we identified above.

5.2. The evolution of the legal and institutional framework of the immigration system

5.2.1. Migration without legislation – the quasi-refugee migration regime (late 1980s early 1990s)

Many of the legal provisions from this period had been introduced and accepted by the last Parliament and Government before the first democratic elections in 1990. The most remarkable among these is the thorough amendment of the Constitution, including the insertion of provisions that set the framework for the legislative and institutional development of the migration system. Prior to the democratic transition, the Constitution dealt with the issue of immigration only in one – and rather peculiar – aspect, namely the provision of asylum for those foreign citizens who are “persecuted for their democratic conduct and for their endeavours to liberate other nations.”⁴¹ The Constitutional provisions which have influenced the formulation of the migration system after 1989 are the following:

“Whoever is staying in the territory of Hungary is entitled - except for some cases defined in the law - to free movement and the right of choosing his or her place of residence, including the right of leaving his domicile or the country. Foreigners lawfully staying in Hungary may be expelled from the country only on the basis of a decision that is in accord with the law.”⁴²

“On terms laid down in the law, the Republic of Hungary ensures the right of asylum for foreign citizens persecuted in their homeland and for those displaced persons who are, at their place of stay, harassed on grounds of race, religion, nationality, language or political affiliation. A person already granted asylum must not be extradited to another state.”⁴³

“In the Republic of Hungary no one may be arbitrarily deprived of his or her Hungarian citizenship, nor may any Hungarian citizen be expelled from the territory of the Republic of Hungary. A Hungarian citizen may always come home from abroad. During a legitimate stay abroad every Hungarian citizen is entitled to protection by the Republic of Hungary.”⁴⁴

There is a less specific, nevertheless very important fourth provision, which expresses a concept that has since then been one of the most influential factors in shaping the country’s immigration policy. It simply says: “The Republic of Hungary bears a sense of responsibility for what happens to Hungarians living outside of its borders and promotes the fostering of their relations with Hungary.”⁴⁵

Besides the normative claims above, the Constitution obliged the Parliament to create laws on the first three issues (immigration, naturalisation and asylum) which were to be passed with a two-thirds majority support. Thus the Constitutional framework and authorisation for establishing a firm legal background of the migration system had been in place since the very

⁴¹ See Article 58 (2) of the Constitution before 1989.

⁴² Article 58 (1 and 2) of the new Constitution.

⁴³ Article 65 (1 and 2) of the new Constitution.

⁴⁴ Article 69 (1, 2 and 3) of the new Constitution.

⁴⁵ Article 6 (3) of the new Constitution.

first days of the democratic transition. However promising it may have seemed, the creation of the Immigration and Citizenship Acts did not take place for the next four years. In the case of the Asylum Act it was passed only in late 1997, and came into force in the spring of 1998. The possible factors behind the delay are both internal and external: On one hand, in the first five years Hungary faced a tremendous social, political and economic change in the course of which the Parliament had to work under extreme legislative pressure, setting priorities other than the issue of immigration. On the other hand, the migration pressure on the country was the highest in those years, with tens of thousands of forced migrants arriving in or transiting through the country, which required great flexibility from the institutions dealing with the issue. A low-level, discretionary legislative ‘patchwork’ (as the migration and asylum system looked like in those days) proved to be more suitable for handling the extraordinary situation of providing for sufficient flexibility, which could compensate, to a certain extent, for the relative underdevelopment and inexperience of the system. The legal basis was set by a law which paradoxically regulated issues related to both emigration from and immigration into the country, including the return of those who left Hungary in previous decades.⁴⁶ The very short text of the law itself failed to identify those whom Hungary should treat as desirable immigrants; it only talked about those who were *not* suitable for immigration. These included individuals whose immigration would interfere with the public order, public security and morale, as well as those whose stay and subsistence in Hungary was not secured or simply “whose integration into the society could not be expected”.⁴⁷ This vague wording gave sufficient discretionary power to the immigration authorities in issuing and withdrawing residence permits. This initial discretionality remained one of the strongest characteristics of the Hungarian immigration system until quite recently.

In this period, the alien policing authorities (the Police and Borderguard) were the main actors responsible for controlling and managing the entry and residence of foreigners, the access to the social welfare system as well as to employment and education, which was based on the condition of obtaining a valid residence permit. Additional measures promoting social integration were not in place. The treatment of the ‘de facto’ and later on ‘de jure’ refugees and temporarily protected people who consisted of the majority of foreign citizens entering into Hungary in this initial period was somewhat different. As a reaction to the mass influx of forced immigrants in the late 1980s, whose situation could not be dealt with within the framework of the existing alien policing measures, the Government established the Interministerial Committee for Migration. It was initially the only official body responsible for dealing with asylum in 1988, when neither the legal environment was ready nor the necessary political decisions had been made. The Committee and its county-level representative organs provided a very vivid example of wide-range co-operation among stakeholders from various institutional backgrounds: representatives of the Borderguard, the Alien Police, the National Security Office, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health and Education as well as the local municipalities, churches and the Red Cross were present in the Committee. Although the Committee could have become the initial step toward a differentiated, multi-level type of governance of the national immigration system, the Government (the Council of Ministers those days) authorised the Minister of the Interior to assume responsibility over border monitoring, alien policing and asylum, already in 1989. The Office of Refugee Affairs was then established, which continued to work as Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs from 1993 onward, until its merge into the newly established Office of Immigration and Nationality in 2000.

⁴⁶ Act No. XXXI of 1989 on Emigration and Immigration.

⁴⁷ See Article 7 of the Act.

However centralised the public administration had become, local municipalities, NGOs as well as the UNHCR played a crucial role, especially in the accommodation and social care of the great number of refugees present in the country. In 1992, only ten thousand out of eighty thousand refugees were accommodated in the Refugee Reception Centres operated by the Ministry of Interior. The rest found shelter in the local communities (Jungbert 1996). By the mid-1990s this positive attitude of the community and the large – usually church-based – NGOs melted away. It was largely due to the fact that the composition of asylum seekers had changed by this time profoundly: whereas in the late 1980s and early 1990s the majority of them were ethnic Hungarians, from 1992 onward, Bosnians started to arrive in the country in ever growing numbers. The term “refugee” was no longer connected with the feeling of sympathy based on ethnic and cultural similarity, and the issue lost its popular and consequently institutional support from civil society.

5.2.2. The Consolidation: Legislation in the 1990s (1993-2000)

This period starts with the Establishment of the Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs and the drafting and passing of the Acts on Immigration and Citizenship. The drafting of these legal texts lacked any substantial preliminary policy debate: the professional discussions around it were restricted to technicalities.

When the Minister of the Interior presented the draft law of the Aliens Act⁴⁸ to the Parliament in 1993, migration was first and foremost dealt with as a security issue. Changes in the migratory movements as well as the previous “overtly permissive” alien policing practice strengthened illegal immigration, which would be effectively treated by the new act. “He who scrutinises the country’s situation and takes seriously the fact that, from a migratory point of view, we are the most endangered country in Europe, I feel, understands our position, which takes into consideration the country’s capacity and many other interests, and the proportional restrictive measures.”⁴⁹ In order to alleviate the “migration danger” that threatens the country the law regulating entry and residence should create a “policing regulation” that “(...) is in harmony with the requirements of the rule of law, but enforces the country’s sovereignty and provides the authorities with appropriate tools against those foreigners who violate our laws and threaten the country’s public order and security”.⁵⁰

The policy position regarding labour migration was first articulated at the presentation of the draft Aliens Act in the Parliament. According to this, “in order to protect the Hungarian labour market, certain provisions were amended, including restricting the employment conditions of foreigners and imposing visa requirements for such entries”.⁵¹ The foreign workforce is presented here as a dangerous factor that needs to be restricted.

The Government’s explanation for the drafting of the Citizenship Act⁵² emphasizes that the aim is the reconciliation of the relationship between the state and the citizen, through remedies to past injustices to the nation. By regulating the acquisition of citizenship, the country wants to respond to the problems of those Hungarians who were forced to leave the country, who were left outside the present state borders or who were forced to migrate to Hungary.⁵³ According to

⁴⁸ Act No. LXXXIII of 1993 on the Entry and Stay of Foreigners in Hungary.

⁴⁹ Parliamentary Logbook, 20th April, 1993, presentation of Péter Boross (Minister of the Interior)

⁵⁰ Parliamentary Logbook, 20th April, 1993, presentation of Péter Boross (Minister of the Interior).

⁵¹ Parliamentary Logbook, 20th April, 1993, presentation of Péter Boross (Minister of the Interior)

⁵² Act No. LV of 1993 on Hungarian Citizenship

⁵³ Parliamentary Logbook, 2nd March, 1993, presentation of. Fábián Józsa (Secretary of State of the Ministry of the Interior)

the legislators, it is a moral obligation of the Republic of Hungary that the claim for naturalisation of our former compatriots or their descendants who are of Hungarian⁵⁴ origin should be considered as a “natural claim,” as opposed to other foreigners, in case of whom such a claim cannot be identified. The proposal strongly reflects the double standards that characterise the Hungarian migration policy: the symbolic and real support of any “return” to the ethnically constituted nation, as opposed to the need for restricting the naturalisation conditions for those who do not belong to the ethnic community.

Although it is nowhere articulated explicitly or in a comprehensive manner by the policy makers, there is a vague migration policy framework present which can be constructed on the basis of the provisions of the two laws (Tóth 1995). According to this, there are three major challenges, and migration policy should *react* to them:

1. The magnitude, direction and composition of international migration in Hungary changed in the previous years, the old institutional system and its practices are no longer sufficient or even applicable.
2. Due to the country’s ever growing commitments to the observation of human rights and international treaties and conventions on its basis, it is no longer acceptable to leave a significant group of the society in an unclear legal situation.
3. Irregular and uncontrolled immigration poses an ever growing challenge on the public order and security, therefore an effective legal regulation is needed to combat illegal immigration, as well as human smuggling and trafficking.

Beyond these, there should be preferential treatment in case of ethnic Hungarians moving to Hungary from abroad, but the principle of preserving the integrity of Hungarian communities across the state borders should not be undermined by active encouragement of their resettlement in Hungary.

However significant the birth of the two laws was in the creation of the rule of law in post-communist Hungary, they preserved the highly discretionary character of the immigration system developed in the previous years. The laws set only the principles of admission, residence and naturalisation; all procedural and technical elements were regulated in low-level Government or Ministerial decrees or even ‘ex-officio’ orders and rules. This has remained the situation until most recently, despite the ongoing criticism on behalf of experts, international stakeholders (especially the UNHCR) and NGOs.

The period between passing the Citizenship and Immigration Acts and the end of the decade is characterised by a more relaxed and manageable immigration into the country. The large number of asylum seekers and immigrants (many of them de-facto refugees) has fallen, and the responsible authorities could start to develop the legal and institutional framework under less external pressure and with more experience from the previous years. The legal system regulating the border-monitoring, the entry and stay of foreigners becomes more sophisticated and detailed, but the initial discretionality remains in place: “operational efficiency” enjoys priority over legal certainty. The rather uncertain position of the National Borderguards Service becomes secured by a law on its status,⁵⁵ stabilising its independence from the Army and Police Forces and enhancing its competence with immigration control and management roles. This independence

⁵⁴ As an ethnic category, not as citizenship.

⁵⁵ Act XXXII. of 1997.

lasts until the end of 2007, when the Borderguards are finally integrated into the Police, but this time with a strengthened position due to its responsibility for monitoring EU external borders, as well as the eastern limits of the Schengen-zone.

As Hungary becomes a target for migratory movements other than those fleeing or resettling from the neighbouring countries, the authorities increasingly establish transnational co-operations, predominantly in the field of alien policing and security. Good practices on the reception and integration of foreigners are less likely to become subject to international exchange schemes in this period (Tóth, 2001).

The most significant development of the period took place in the field of asylum. In 1997, the Parliament adopted a law on asylum⁵⁶, which entered into force in spring 1998. The most remarkable change was the elimination of the geographical restriction Hungary applied in case of the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees: the country provided international protection only to those asylum seekers and refugees who were citizens of European countries: all others were taken care of by the local Branch Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The factors behind the change are manifold:

The composition of asylum seekers gradually changed, people from outside of Europe arrived in the country in ever-growing numbers. There was diplomatic pressure on the Government on behalf of the UNHCR in order to change its position towards non-European (in the early 1990s, it practically meant non-Hungarian) refugees (Fullerton, 1997), and the start of the EU accession talks with Hungary also facilitated the process. The philosophy of the Asylum Act was very much in line with that of the act on immigration: a low level of normativity and much room for discretionality made it compatible with the already established organisational culture of ORMA, the responsible authority for its implementation.

When presenting the draft law on asylum the Government drew the boundaries within which the asylum system was supposed to work. The law “(...) determines the conditions and limits of protection, creates the guarantees for a lawful procedure, and formulates the framework of detailed rules. It does these all by observing the humanitarian traditions of the country, its durability, our international obligations and meets the requirements of the convergence with the European Union’s laws”.⁵⁷ This very well describes the system of contradicting opportunities and expectations which determines the development of asylum policy: the value-based humanitarian traditions, the utilitarian and pragmatic economic objectives, the international legal norms, and the geopolitical orientation are the sources of the complex system in which the policy is deemed to operate.

However, even if the asylum regulation has humanitarian principles as its foundations, policy makers still express security requirements, narrowing the room for legislation and implementation. “When establishing the main rules for the procedure our aim was to maintain the harmony between our obligations for the protection of refugees and our interests in protecting public order, doing it while observing of the rules of international treaties.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Act CXXXIX. of 1997.

⁵⁷ Parliamentary Logbook, 24th September, 1997. speech of Gábor Világosi (Secretary of State of the Ministry of the Interior)

⁵⁸ Parliamentary Logbook, 24th September, 1997. speech of Gábor Világosi (Secretary of State of the Ministry of the Interior)

During the amendment of the asylum regulation in 2001, there was no new argument presented: the modifications were communicated as purely technical and as a result of obligations stemming from legal harmonisation.

5.2.3. The Europeanization: Legislation in the pre- and post-EU accession period (from 2001 on)

This last period has not brought significant change in the number or composition of immigrants into Hungary apart from one exception. The number of asylum seekers started to decrease rapidly in 2001 and reached stagnation in 2004-5, at approximately 20 percent of the level five years before. Though the numbers rose somewhat in 2006 and 2007, in 2008 they were down again. This development found the policy makers and stakeholders involved in asylum rather unprepared, as all communications before the EU accession projected a significant increase both in the number of asylum seekers and in the number of those who would be returned to Hungary according to the regulations of the Dublin II Convention. The system slowly started to adjust to the new reality, though there has not been any significant reduction or restructuring due to the much lower number of asylum seekers.

As for the legal and institutional background, the process of becoming ever more sophisticated and less transparent continued from the previous period. In 2001, there was a thorough amendment to the laws on immigration, citizenship and asylum, which came into force in 2002, and the newly created Office of Immigration and Nationality (OIN) continued its activity with more autonomy and a regional structure.

In the thorough amendment of the Aliens Act in 2001, the emphasis was clearly on the reduction of illegal immigration in the context of combating organised crime. Besides the security considerations known from before, a new argument surfaced: the accession to the EU and the legal harmonisation required by this process. “One of the greatest challenges is the handling of illegal migration and the reduction of organised crime. (...) In the case of observing our laws, the Republic of Hungary guarantees security and freedom to all. At the same time it gives the opportunity for determined and strict actions against those who break the rules. All these are in line with the decisions of the EU summit held in Tampere in 1999.”⁵⁹

As for the position towards labour migration, there is only one sentence dealing with the connection between migration and the labour market in the Government’s proposition when presenting the new Aliens’ Act to the Parliament in 2001. It says: “One of the main objectives of the European Union is the fight against illegal immigration and illegal employment”.⁶⁰

Between the year 2001 and Hungary’s accession to the EU in 2004, legislative activity was very intensive: the reason for this was the harmonisation with the Immigration and Asylum Acquis of the EU. Policy and legal developments in various EU member states often served as a legitimate basis for Governments opting for new – usually more restrictive – approaches in regulating the entry and stay of foreigners in the country. In the autumn of 2006, there was again a thorough amendment introduced, due to the transposition deadlines of several EU Directives (on Family Unification, Long-term Residence, Asylum Procedure), resulting in two brand new Immigration Acts in early 2007, and the Asylum Act was changed in mid-2007 subsequently. During the

⁵⁹ Parliamentary Logbook, 7th March, 2000. speech of Károly Konrád (Secretary of State of the Ministry of the Interior)

⁶⁰ Parliamentary Logbook, 7th March, 2001. speech of Károly Konrád (Secretary of State of the Ministry of the Interior)

presentation of the draft of the present Asylum Act⁶¹ new elements appear in the Government's argument. As a justification of the amendment, on the one hand, it prevents severe breaching of EU norms which may result even in fines; on the other it is a necessity for introducing a progressive regulation which meets the expectations of the international refugee law and responds to the challenges of international refugee movements.

It was only during the presentation of the draft of the present law on the entry and residence of third country nationals⁶² that arguments about the economy and labour market were articulated. It was said that in order to facilitate competitiveness, rigid employment regulations should be revised in order to provide easier conditions for foreigners in management and other key positions.

The main policy debate in 2004 and 2005 took place around the issue of labour market liberalisation in the context of immigrant labour. According to the National Action Plan for Employment, the Government's position was that labour immigration was not an alternative to the low domestic labour supply and mismatches: the primary aim should be mobilisation within the domestic labour market, and this should be reflected by the NAP, not by encouraging labour immigration. Another aspect behind the lack of policy responses was the surprisingly rigid position on other member states' restrictions on the free movement of labour from new member states: Hungary applies equal measures on the basis of reciprocity, but beyond this there is an argument saying that non-EU citizens should not enjoy a better position on the labour market than those who come from another member state; thus any policy promoting the employability of third country nationals should not offer better positions than that of those EU nationals whose participation on the labour market is restricted due to reciprocity. A third aspect which is reflected by the NAP is the controversial approach to the overwhelmingly ethnic character of the labour immigration into Hungary: immigration policy should reflect preferential treatment of ethnic Hungarians, but expressing or even implying a resettlement (facilitated immigration) approach in the national Diaspora policy should be avoided.

The Prime Minister's Office set up the Inter-ministry Committee on Migration in April 2004, but it has not yet become a major actor in formulating the national migration policy. The committee which consists of political secretaries of state from several Ministries⁶³ as well as from the Office of Hungarians Across the Border (the relevant Government office dealing with the affairs of the Hungarian Diaspora), and the political secretary of state responsible for national security, was set up with the explicit aim of harmonising and co-ordinating activities that are closely linked with the country's EU membership. According to its mandate, the main task of the Committee is to lay down the foundations of the national migration strategy by gathering and analysing relevant data and formulating a proposal for a long-term migration policy. Once the Government approves this policy, the Committee shall revise the relevant legislation proposing amendments, if necessary. From this point onward its main task will be to monitor the implementation of the migration policy and co-ordinate the different activities targeting immigrant integration.

By late August 2004, the Committee had come forward with a draft proposal for the Migration Strategy of the Republic of Hungary. After some inter-ministry consultations the draft was amended in November 2004 and sent out for consultation to the relevant ministries. In spring 2005 the document was sent back to the Committee for a thorough revision, as it was found to be

⁶¹ Law No. LXXX of 2007 on Asylum

⁶² Law No. II of 2007 on the Entry and Residence of Third Country Nationals

⁶³ These are: Ministry of Interior; Health, Social and Family Affairs; Employment and Labour; Economy and Traffic; Justice; Foreign Affairs; Education; Finance.

inappropriate in too many aspects. There were no wider consultations in the matter; neither the academic community nor the NGO society was approached yet. By the end of 2005 the addressed ministries prepared their position on a future migration strategy. In spring 2006, the Committee drafted another version of the text, which was amended in November of the same year. The amended version (this time drafted by the Department of Migration of the Ministry of Justice and Law Enforcement) was sent to experts and NGO representatives for discussion, and based on the comments another text was drafted in February 2007. Just weeks before the Government planned to present the strategy to the Parliament, an opposition party got hold of the text and displayed it on its website, creating much media attention. Several ambiguous and unclear parts of the text were presented in a rather xenophobic context, accusing the Government of resettling a million Asian immigrants, and as a result, the Government took the formulation of the strategy off its agenda, claiming that the text was only the product of a consultancy with no political support. Since then there has been no sign of formulating any migration strategy and the Inter-ministry Committee has been dormant for more than two years. The outlook is uncertain.

5.3. Diaspora politics

The majority of immigrants for the past two decades have been ethnic Hungarian citizens from neighbouring countries. The policy concerning the Hungarian population of these countries is overwhelmed with severe intrinsic contradictions. The ‘threefold priority’ of Hungarian foreign affairs – which has been articulated since the democratic transition – as well as the blurry ‘national interest’ and its multiple interpretations, created an ambiguous situation in the management of the immigration or ‘resettlement’ of ethnic Hungarians from across the borders. Although the immigration and naturalisation legislation and practice secures a wide range of preferential treatment for foreigners with Hungarian ancestry or ethnicity, the political discourse firmly emphasizes the message of remaining in the ‘birthland’, viewing the encouragement or even the acceptance of resettlement as anti-nationalist.

The status of ethnic Hungarians living in countries adjacent to Hungary has always been part of the discussion on immigration legislation. The Hungarian governments between 1990 and 2002 maintained that they aimed at encouraging ethnic Hungarians to remain in the lands of their birth, and initiated no active immigration or resettlement policy of co-ethnics as in case of Germany. Unlike in Germany, Hungary’s policy toward co-ethnics abroad has, thus, developed not as immigration policy but as a policy of shaping national identity (Tóth 2000a, Hegyesi and Melegh 2002). The Hungarian immigration and naturalisation system has often been criticised for being indifferent towards ethnic Hungarians who “return to their motherland” despite the preferential treatment of ethnic Hungarians and persons of Hungarian ancestry in the immigration and naturalisation process.

It was also articulated at the presentation of the draft Aliens Act in 1993 that “(...) it is our moral and human obligation towards ethnic Hungarians that in certain cases we’d always give them a home”, which the law “(...) always enforces when it offers considerably more beneficial immigration conditions to Hungarians”.⁶⁴ The legislator left no doubts about his position: “Hungary is full – except for Hungarians.” – said the Minister of Interior in the Parliament, who became Prime Minister in a few months.

The conflict between the EU legal harmonisation and the preferential entry and residence of Hungarians from across the borders appeared first in the presentation of the draft of the new

⁶⁴ Parliamentary Logbook, 20th April, 1993, presentation of Péter Boross (Minister of the Interior)

Aliens Act in 2001. The legislator made the expectations of the EU responsible for the situation, nevertheless emphasizing that benefits for immigrants of Hungarian background should remain, and furthermore that the number of opportunities should remain after Hungary's accession to the EU –or even grow. “It is often said among Hungarians beyond our borders that the Schengen rules preclude contacts with the motherland. It goes without saying that there are some new norms, obligatory for us too, that change the rules of entry to a certain extent when compared to the present situation. However, even before the accession the draft law offers solutions that can broaden the range of the present benefits available for Hungarians.”⁶⁵ The continuation of this strategy is the present Act on the Entry and Stay of Third Country nationals, which according to the Government's presentation of its draft “(...) observing the ethnopolitical priorities, transposes the instruments of the national visa and national residence permit with a content identical to the present measures’ and these instruments are among the most important tools of maintaining the links with the motherland and preserving the national identity of Hungarians across the borders.”⁶⁶

Besides the developments in the field of immigration and asylum, by the second half of the 1990s, elements of an implicit Diaspora politics had been put in place. It never gained independent status from other policies that its elements are embedded in, nevertheless scientific literature started to identify it on its own merits (Tóth, 2000a, 2000b).

The relevance of Diaspora politics in contemporary Hungary is well illustrated by the existence of two special bodies: the Office for Hungarians Living across the Border and the Standing Hungarian Conference. The Office for Hungarians Living across the Border was established in 1992 to carry out government policy; the Office first located within the Prime Minister's Office was integrated in 1998 into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As an institution of dialogue among the representatives of the Government, the parties in the Parliament and Hungarian communities of the Diaspora, the Standing Hungarian Conference was set up in 1999. This body, which comprised numerous sub-committees, played a vague political role: the Parliament only ‘welcomed its establishment’ and called upon the Government ‘to give a yearly report on its operation and execution of the political proposals of the Conference concerning Hungarians across the border’. Thus the Government had a wide room for manoeuvre to exchange views, to reconcile divergent opinions and to strike political consensus. According to the Government's interpretation, the main national task was to develop the connection between Hungarians living beyond the borders and the mother country, in the fields of education, culture, economy, health care, welfare, local governmental and regional relations. This was in order to ‘remain resident in the homeland, yet preserve national identity’. For these reasons, working committees of the Conference were also formed on citizenship and European integration issues. The state secretary (deputy secretary) of the competent ministry chaired all of the committees, while expert members were appointed by the Office for Hungarians Living across the Border. Parties in the Parliament, representative organisations of Hungarian communities across the border and the World Federation of Hungarians as an NGO, could delegate the other members of the committees. This organ produced proposals but their relevance, the decision-making procedure and publicity has not been defined. In this way, the Conference was often considered as a shadow or a substitute body of genuine negotiation, discourse or compromise-making. However, it was enough to legitimise actual Diaspora policy

⁶⁵ Parliamentary Logbook, 7th March, 2001, speech of Károly Konrád (Secretary of State of the Ministry of the Interior)

⁶⁶ Parliamentary Logbook, 28th November, 2006, presentation of József Petrétai (Minister of Justice and Law Enforcement)

for a couple of years. In 2007 the Conference dissolved, lacking sufficient political support from the Government. The Government argued that the Conference became a battlefield for domestic party politics, and it had no will to 'resurrect' it. Beginning in autumn of 2007, the Conference was replaced by another entity, the Forum for Hungarian Representatives from the Carpathian-Basin. It consisted of members who were elected representatives in national and European parliaments as well as local or regional councils in the neighbouring countries and Hungary.

As for the situation of ethnic Hungarians across the borders, the policy debates have kept their ambiguous characteristic: the main message is still about the preservation of these communities in their places of origin, but attempts for a more active Diaspora politics have been made on two occasions:

The so-called Status Law, ostensibly intended to be a set of legal instruments to support ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries, stirred domestic political debates in 2001 and 2002, resulting, among other things, in a set of proposed measures regulating seasonal employment in Hungary.

The public and political debate of the status of ethnic Hungarians living across state borders emerged again in late 2004. This time the issue of granting Hungarian citizenship to those who requested it and were able to prove their Hungarian origin was raised by the World Federation of Hungarians, a political lobby group active both in Hungary and in the Diaspora. The campaign, eventually endorsed by the right wing opposition parties and opposed by the Government, ended in a public referendum in December, when the majority of the voters turned down the idea of even discussing the possibility of granting extraterritorial citizenship rights to non-immigrant, non-resident fellow Hungarians.⁶⁷

5.4. Debates and ambivalences of the immigration system

Policy-related debates are strongly interrelated to migration policy and mirrored in migration trends, attitudes, and ultimately in the migration regime of the country. Migration trends develop in harmony or independently and make controversial the 'mainstreaming' of the migration policy. While the result of the former is an effective and prosperous migration regime, the latter results in various contradictions, elusive tendencies and conflicting issues concerning migration. Discussion on migration issues facilitates the development of existing trends and push and pull factors; the lack of open debates ends up in unsuccessful stories and an unclear maturity of the process. Three relevant debates prove the controversial attitude of Hungarian government towards migration: on economic migration, on demographic impact and integration.

5.4.1. Economic migration – the Green Paper debate

In early 2005 the Ministry of Employment and Labour drafted its position on the Commission's Green Paper on economic migration,⁶⁸ answering the standard set of questions posed by the document. The ignorance about labour migration as discussed earlier was mirrored in the Hungarian position during the debate. Regarding the degree of harmonisation, the position opted for a horizontal approach, proposing a framework regulation which equally applied to all third country nationals, regardless of their country of origin or sector of employment. As for the admission procedure, the Ministry took a rather firm position not to introduce any further

⁶⁷ The debate is well documented by the Institute of National and Ethnic Minority Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at the following Internet site: <http://www.kettosallampolgarsag.mtaki.hu/>

⁶⁸ Green Paper on an EU Approach to Managing Economic Migration. Brussels 11.01.2005. COM(2004) 811 final

advantages for third country nationals. Some comments on the position paper further emphasised the restrictions imposed by the old member states as the main reason for not giving more preferences for third country nationals: as long as EU citizens have restricted access to their labour markets, others should not enjoy better circumstances.

The idea of a combined work and residence permit raised by the Green Paper was not welcomed. The same applied to restricting the mobility of third country nationals: the Hungarian position was to continue with the present practice of issuing work permits. Although this practice presents a clear obstacle to the mobility of third country nationals, it provides a better opportunity to follow and react to changes in the labour market.

5.4.2. The Demography debate

The possible demographic impact of immigration received political and public attention in 2000 when a report drew the attention to the rapidly ageing population. This was projected to induce problems in the following decade in the labour market, in the pension and health care system (Habicsek and Tóth 2001). It came in the wake of the United Nations' study on "replacement migration" in Europe, which suggested that Europe would have to absorb 159 million immigrants if it was to maintain sustainable demographic trends. The release of the report and the Prime Minister's subsequent comment that Hungary should be able to draw on a pool of hundreds of thousands or even 1.5 million potential ethnic Hungarian workers from neighbouring countries⁶⁹ was the first instance in which migration as an option to address population aging aroused significant public debate.

Following the report, the government established a Population Committee, which had a subcommittee on migration, and received a mandate to develop a strategy to introduce a national population programme. The strategy was elaborated and published in December 2003 as a policy document, devoting a full chapter to the issue of immigration. Nevertheless, the document remained an example of the controversial and ambiguous approach towards the immigration situation in Hungary. Besides recognising the importance of facilitating long-term settlement and integration of qualified labour immigrants, it omitted the fact that the majority of this group is from the Hungarian communities across the borders. Furthermore, it explicitly stated that members of these communities should not be encouraged to emigrate to Hungary, and the Government should give cultural and economic support in order to make them stay. Neither a professional debate nor policy steps have followed the policy recommendation of the documents of the Committee.

5.4.3. Integration of immigrants

The issue of social integration first appeared in the early 1990s with the presentation of the draft Citizenship Act to the Parliament proposing the reduction of the waiting period in the case of ethnic Hungarian immigrants before their acquisition of citizenship. In the case of non-Hungarian immigrants, the Act proposes tightening of the existing rules, with the explicit aim of reaching a level of social integration desirable in the case of citizens: "this time⁷⁰ is not enough even to talk about the inclusion, accepting our social realities or the integration of the future Hungarian citizen". In the proposed eight years "(...) the person in question can learn the

⁶⁹ This statement was interpreted by the Hungarian press as an encouragement to immigration, but the Prime Minister later clarified that he had in mind Hungarians abroad as an economic resource for the "mother country" (Melegh, 2002).

⁷⁰ I.e. the 3 years which was set as a waiting period by the previous law in force.

Hungarian language, can get acquainted with our customs, and can integrate into the community of Hungarian citizens, which should be proven by a new instrument: the passing of an exam on Constitutional affairs. Obviously, the stricter rules do not apply for the ethnic Hungarian former compatriots and their descendants if they want to return to their homeland. It is a moral obligation of the Republic of Hungary to consider the naturalisation claim of these people as a natural claim and judge it differently.”⁷¹

Nevertheless, in the political discourse of the 1990s, the claim of the country’s limited inclusion capacity is present: “(...) at the present level of its economic performance, its service infrastructure and public security capacity, this country is not able to receive immigrants in masses.”⁷² The main principle of migration management was “(...) that only those foreigners should cross the border whose residence conditions are secured and who are capable of integrating into our society (...)”.⁷³

According to the implicit migration policy framework, the immigrants who are ideal settlers in Hungary are law-abiding persons with no criminal records; healthy; able to speak Hungarian; people who have proper residence and subsistence in Hungary above the level of the average Hungarian standards; highly motivated to immigrate into and settle in Hungary; and able to integrate smoothly into the Hungarian society.

During the following fifteen years, the issue of social integration never came up again about immigration or the asylum legislation. The question has only been dealt with in lower-level policy debates, such as the drafting of a White Paper on the integration of refugees in 2006, which mentioned the possibility of including other immigrants into the target of a future integration strategy. Another attempt to deal with the integration of immigrants was a proposed drafting of a separate Integration Act in 2007, when a thorough amendment of the Aliens Act and the Asylum Act took place. The Government took it off the agenda in early 2008, though it is still part of the work plan of the Ministry of Justice and Law Enforcement, and there has been an expert committee on integration of third country nationals set up since June 2008 – with no programme or agenda whatsoever. The initiatives were very much triggered by the recent developments of the EC ‘soft law’, particularly the Justice and Home Affairs Council’s adoption of the Common Basic Principles of Integration and the Commission’s communication on the proposed Common Agenda for Integration.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Parliamentary Logbook, 2nd March, 1993. Fábíán Józsa’s speech.

⁷² Parliamentary Logbook, 20th April, 1993. Péter Boross’ presentation.

⁷³ Parliamentary Logbook, 20th April, 1993. Péter Boross’ presentation.

⁷⁴ COM (2005) 389.

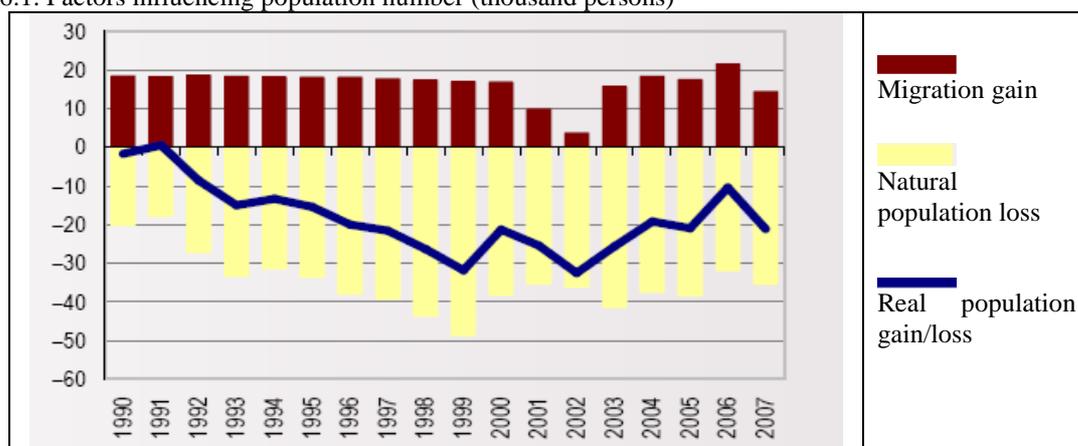
6. The impact of immigration

6.1. The impact of migration on the demographic character

6.1.1. Natural change of population and migration

Population loss in Hungary is essential and stable over time. International migration is instrumental in the trend of the real population number. Although the real number of the total resident population is decreasing, population loss has been somewhat compensated by immigration. Concerning the population change, long-term residence permit holders or those with an immigrant status are considered to be an immigrant population. The trend since that transition has slightly fluctuated: an increasing natural population loss has been partly compensated for by a steady inflow of foreigners during the 1990s, while the natural loss of population stabilised during the 2000s, and immigration, with some fluctuation, compensated for some of the losses. During the past decade, between 2001 and 2007 the natural population loss has been about 225 thousand persons, while immigration compensated for the loss by a gain of about 100 thousand persons. The total loss has been 155 thousand in total. Natural population loss in 2007 increased, while immigration dropped. As a consequence, the real population loss increased to 21 thousand in 2007. The trend could possibly worsen in the near future. (Figure 6.1)

Figure 6.1. Factors influencing population number (thousand persons)



Source: <http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xftp/stattukor/nemzvand.pdf>.

6.1.2. Long-term trends and expected demographic impact of migration

The demographic impact of immigrants is, in fact, restricted to long-term resident migration, although the main body of immigration is of a circular type of migration. Nevertheless, long-term resident immigration has a steady character in Hungary, as has been shown in figure 6.1. A considerable number of immigrants was naturalised or even left the country, as discussed above. The 2001 population census covered 110 thousand foreigners residing in Hungary with long-term residence permits or immigrant status.

In line with the demographic debate discussed previously (subchapter 5.4.2) population scenarios were developed for the period of 2001-2050 to calculate future size and age distribution impact of immigrants, starting with the subgroup of immigrants covered by the Census. (Hablicsek-Tóth 2001, Hablicsek 2004) The most realistic scenario estimated 10 thousand net immigrants per year, on average, in line with official population forecasting. The scenario

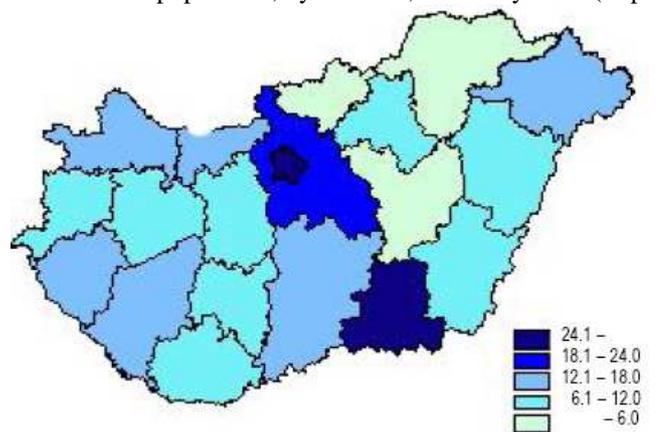
supposes that, in the long run, 20 thousand immigrants and 2-5 thousand or even more emigrants per year. Taking age distribution into consideration, population loss may partly be compensated for and the age structure improved if the trend and integration of the immigrants is realized. Nevertheless, the forecast supposes that previous immigration trends will be sustainable. The demographic forecast draws attention, however, to the labour market risk of huge immigrant inflows that may jeopardize the labour market balance of the natives in the case of a sudden inflow of young immigrants, and, in longer run, also by the stock of elderly immigrants. No further estimations or impact analysis were developed, however.

The demographic scenarios are echoing in population and also as labour market forecasts and so immigration as a tool for the labour market need is taken for granted. (Polónyi and Tímár (2002) Nevertheless, the demographic forecast is challenged by the uncertainty of ceaseless migration sources on the one hand and the economic need and attractiveness of the county for the migrants on the other. The trend of the 1990s, including the early strong immigration, is hardly reasonable to extrapolate for the decades to come. More careful examination raises the question of whether the presumption of the demographic debate was acceptable and evident. (Foreign policy strategy 2007) Signs of change in economic structure, labour market trends and needs are not foreseen for the time being. An alternative scenario of population and migration forecasting should consider a more complex approach.

6.2. The spread and regional distribution of immigration

Immigration is very much concentrated in the central regions: Budapest and the surrounding county (Pest) are essential as target regions. The share of foreign population differs by region, concentration is high in the central region but the share of the immigrant population is also significant near to the Serbian border. (Map 6.1)

Map 6.1. Share of foreign citizens in the population, by counties, 1 January 2008 (% per 1000 inhabitants)



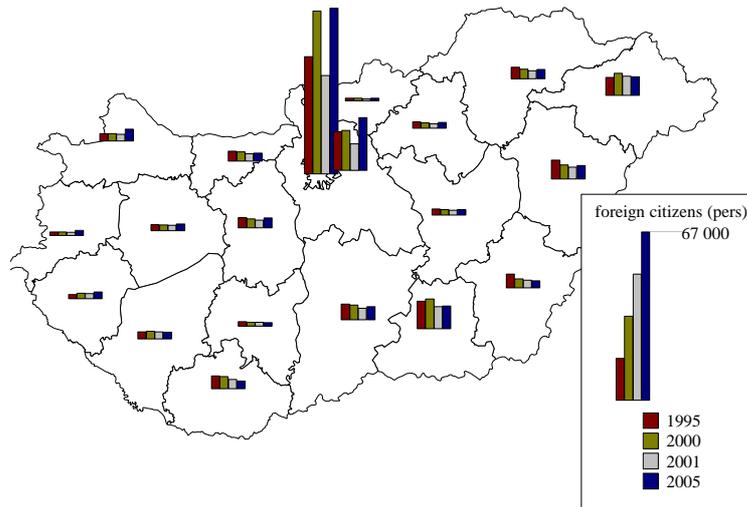
Source: <http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xftp/stattukor/nemzvand.pdf>.

The capital outnumbers the immigration flows of all other parts of the country. Various immigrant data sources which cover various migrant groups show very similar regional concentration. Immigration based on residence permits was concentrated in Budapest, and the surrounding regions and the concentration turned out to be even stronger recently.⁷⁵ While immigration was continuously increasing to Budapest and the surrounding region (the county

⁷⁵ We point out here that the above-mentioned data was revised between 2000 and 2001. That is why data in the chart is indicated for 1995-2000 and 2001-2005, respectively, and the changes should be understood for the two distinct periods.

Pest), immigration to other destinations was not changing and even decreased. In the counties around the Eastern border of Hungary which neighboured the main sending countries, immigration was considerable but most of the immigrants headed to Budapest or the surroundings. Following the early flows, immigration into these regions had no further dynamics. Hardly any immigration is observable heading to the North-Western, more developed part of the country. (Map 6.2)

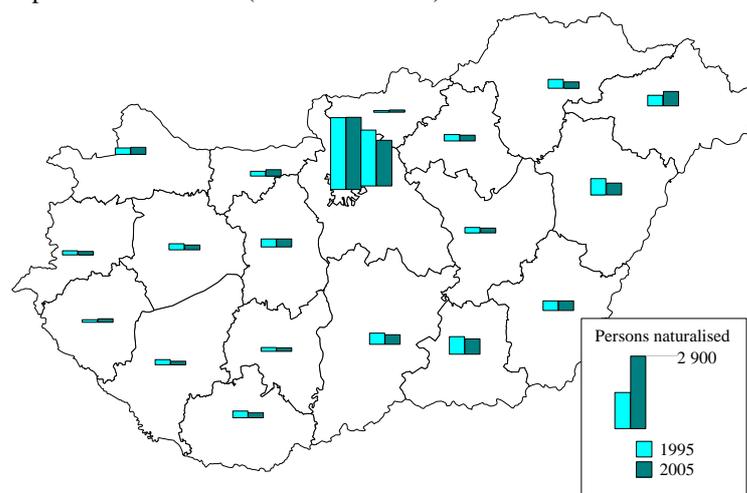
Map 6.2. Localization and spreading of immigrant foreign citizens (resident permits 1995, 2000vs 2001, 2005, persons)



Source: CAR data, HCSO (2006/b) (between 2000 and 2001 data revision and drop in the number, as discussed above).

The geographic distribution of the naturalized population – i.e., the new citizens – fully supports the pattern of concentration of the immigration in the capital and surrounding regions. A larger number of the new citizens decided to settle near Budapest (which is cheaper living in than in the capital). Not much change came about in the last 10 years between, 1995 and 2005. (Map 6.3)

Map 6.3. Localization of persons naturalised (in 1995 vs. 2005)

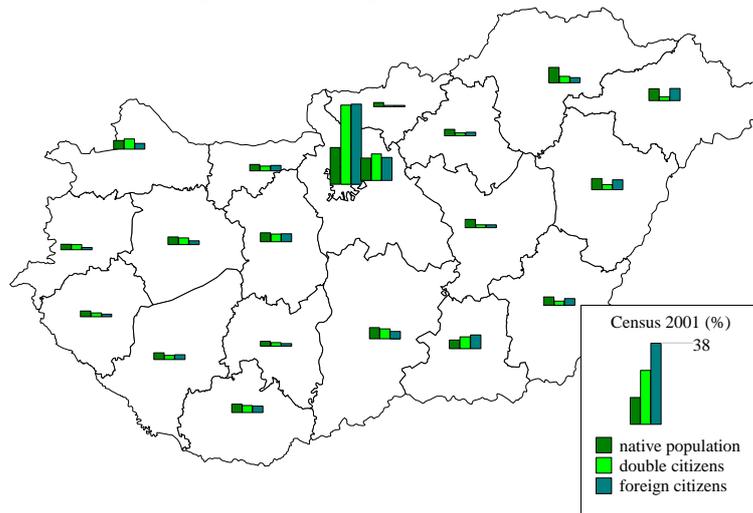


Source: based on data of HCSO (2006/a) .

The strong geographic concentration of the immigrants is reinforced by the 2001 Census data as well. Foreign and dual citizens are sharply overrepresented in the capital. Data also reveal the

fact, however: that foreigners are far overrepresented in Budapest and also in some other regions (in the counties near the Serbian border) and that the share of foreigners corresponds to the population of the respective counties. Foreign citizens are settled mainly near the Eastern border (next to the main sending countries) while dual citizens are more likely settled next to the Western border (in the more developed counties). Although the total number of the foreign population is not too high, the embryonic sign of an immigration map with different immigrant groups is evident. (Map 6.4)

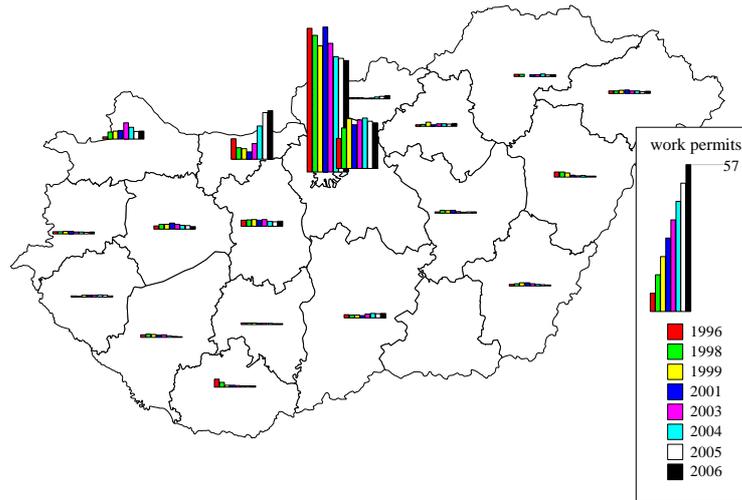
Map 6.4. Geographic distribution of Hungarian and foreign citizens in the census, 2001, %



Source: Census 2001 HCSO online database (<http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/hun/kotetek/06/index.html>), own calculation.

Finally, and somewhat surprisingly, work permits are also regionally concentrated. The superiority of Budapest is substantial and stable, although the share is somewhat decreasing in time. The agglomeration is also attractive to foreigners and its share is slowly increasing: it is the second most important labour immigration destination region. In the new millennium, the north Hungarian immigration was a new development: Slovakian labour saw a quick increase in the bordering counties (overwhelmingly, these were work permits for daily commuting). Foreign labour, although increasing, largely concentrates in some regions and is not spreading to other parts of the country. (6.6)

Map 6.5. Changing geographic distribution of the work permit holders (1996-2006, %)



Source: Work permits statistics, National Employment Service.

6.3. The concentration and integration of migrants in the Metropolis

Budapest has a distinguished position in migration trends. The migrant population is overrepresented in the capital, according to all official data, and labour migration is also very much concentrated in Budapest. Irregular labour is also supposed to be overrepresented here due to the various facts. The population is overrepresented in the capital because it is a magnet for family services, private house constructions, shops, restaurants and other services, etc. Two recent research projects focused on the migration characteristics of Budapest. The share, structure and integration of immigrants in Budapest as a metropolis were addressed in both cases.⁷⁶

6.3.1. Characteristics and integration of immigrants in Budapest⁷⁷

Budapest is not only the capital of Hungary but also a strong economic centre. The GDP of the metropolitan region is far above the national GDP, 134% in 2005. The unemployment rate of the city is far behind the national level. There has been a considerable out-migration from Budapest in the last decade: the population loss of the city was 12% between 1995 and 2005. The loss in number of the non-migrant population was 12.8%; immigrants somewhat slowed the total population trend.

The proportion of immigrants (speaking about the resident immigrant population) was 2.5 times higher in Budapest than in the country, on average. This is still moderate, however: just over 3% in 2005. The immigrant population had only a modest increase in Budapest: about 15% in ten years between 1995 and 2005. The most important foreign communities were, corresponding to the general trend, the ethnic Hungarians, who formed over half of the immigrant population in Budapest. The considerable size of Chinese community in Budapest amounted to about 10 per cent of the immigrant population of the city. The former increased by 35%, the latter nearly doubled between 1995 and 2005. The immigrant population is of a slightly more masculine

⁷⁶ The European multicultural democracy and the immigrants' social networks were the main focus of the LOCALMULTIDEM FP6 research (2006-2009). The INTERREG project on 'Experiment in Newcomer Integration' focuses on the main immigrant district of Budapest and investigates the migration in the concentrated region. (2007)

⁷⁷ Based on the results of the LOCALMULTIDEM project

character, while in the native population the share of women outweighs that of men. Among Chinese the share of males is somewhat higher than among ethnic Hungarians.

Education levels as well as their employment status are somewhat better than those of the natives of Budapest. (This corresponds to the characteristics of the total immigrant population measured by resident immigrants in Hungary.) This way – not forgetting that, of course, the immigrants form a heterogeneous group – the immigrants should not be referred to as a particularly deprived group of society, as they are in several different cities and countries around Europe.

Residential segregation of immigrants in Budapest is remarkable, although foreigners live scattered in all part of the city. There are 23 districts in Budapest, with considerable differences in the size of population of the districts. The number of foreigners is relatively low in the centrally located districts and in some suburban region. On the other hand, the foreign population lives in the largest numbers in the “round districts” of the city centre, in a location that is a moderate distance from the centre. A more characteristic picture of the foreign population can be given by the share of the foreign population within the population of certain districts. The highest – over 5% – is the share of foreigners in the 8th (VIII) district of Budapest a centrally located district in the Pest side with a high share of old and partly poor population. It coincides also with a considerable local ethnicity, the Roma. The second relevant district is the 10th (X), somewhat less in the centre, a mixed population bordering the 8th district. Finally, the 5th (V) district is downtown, a rather small district where businesses, universities, etc., are located.

Table 6.1. Highest and lowest share foreign population in districts

Budapest district	Number of foreign citizens			Share of foreign citizens			Rank of district
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	According to share of foreigners
	Persons			%			
Districts with highest share of population of foreigners							
VIII	2 006	2 066	4 072	5.5	4.8	5.1	1
X	2 015	1 815	3 830	5.6	4.4	4.9	2
V	674	561	1 235	5.7	3.7	4.5	3
Districts with lowest share of foreign population							
XVII	865	818	1 683	2.4	2.0	2.2	21
IV	1 002	1 135	2 137	2.2	2.1	2.2	22
XXI	745	778	1 523	2.1	1.9	2.0	23
Budapest total	27629	26622	54251	3.6	2.9	3.2	

Source Own calculation, based on population and foreign register, 1 Jan. 2005.

Although the immigrant statistics for Budapest are rather limited and do not give a detailed picture of immigrant populations in Budapest, the main trends can be well observed and general facts concerning the Budapest immigrants can be known. According to all data sources it can be assumed that the proportion of immigrants in Budapest hardly exceed 3 % of the total population, which clearly demonstrates that Budapest is not a particularly immigrant city. In each case, the share of men is somewhat higher among the population than that of women. Concerning the national background of the immigrants, it is notable that around 80% of the immigrants come from European countries, according to which the cultural differences among the indigenous and migrant population are rather low as compared to other capitals of the EU.

6.3.2. Immigration and integration – the case of the 8th district in Budapest ⁷⁸

The 8th district of Budapest comprises the highest share of the foreign population. The district is located in the inner Pest side, with a number of national and municipal-level institutions in the higher status part. This is very different from the outer part, where the most problematic slum areas of Budapest are located, which include a high ratio of Roma residents (according to estimations, in particular parts, the ratio of Roma residents reaches about 30 per cent.). The low property prices in the district attract university students and young couples as well as foreigners with limited resources. This results in a much more diverse social environment than in other parts of the capital.

Due to their uneven territorial distribution, in certain localities the presence of the foreign population might be *perceived* as a significant issue –if not necessarily in quantitative terms – but in terms of their appearance in the local institutions, the local – but not necessarily formal – economy as well as in the public perception. This is the situation in the 8th district of Budapest. Official statistics cover the actual set of foreign population only partly and unevenly. It is reasonable to assume that there are significant numbers of foreigners who do not appear in the statistics. The region hosts the biggest Chinese market of the country.

People from neighbouring countries, mostly ethnic Hungarians, make up a significant population group amongst foreign citizens (more than 2,500 persons registered). These add up to almost half of the foreign population, although their proportion is lower than it is at the national level. Romanian Roma are also present. The district hosts one of the most significant Chinese and Vietnamese communities in the capital in the country (approx. 1,700 persons according to official statistics, multiple according to non-official sources) and the biggest Chinese market of the country.

The status and settlement of various immigrant groups is clearly separated. The more educated EU-15 citizens are strongly underrepresented while Asian and Chinese as well as African immigrants live in the middle and lower status slum area of the district. The mainly ethnic Hungarians from Romania, still the most numerous group of foreigners living in the district – live dispersed, throughout the whole area (according to data of the 2001 census).

6.3.3. Economic activity of the immigrants ⁷⁹

Work permits based on employment are not common in this particular district. The foreign business and different enterprises, on the other hand, are quite noticeable: there are Chinese, Arabic and Turkish retail shops and fast food restaurants and the largest Chinese market of Hungary. Corresponding to the emerging Chinese community discussed earlier, the market began to develop rapidly in the middle of the 1990s, when there was a great demand for cheap goods. It also served as a centre of distribution towards Eastern European countries. Nowadays, besides the dominant Chinese and Vietnamese merchants, some vendors from Arabic countries can also be found here. A relatively smaller and unnoticeable, but existing group of foreign employees in the market are the ethnic Hungarians from the neighbouring countries.

Besides Chinese business activities, in the past few years the number of entrepreneurs arriving from different Muslim countries has noticeably risen. They represent a rather closed group in terms of living and running businesses. The most frequent and most popular activity of them include fast food kebab buffets, butchers and groceries.

⁷⁸ Based on the results of the INTERREG project

⁷⁹ Based on the results of the INTERREG project

To see the possible trend of immigration and the requisite economic support, one should pose a question as to what the prospects of the migrants' enterprises are. Looking at this more in detail, the integration of migrants in the local business environment is hardly noticeable. There are neither representative interest groups aiming at foreign enterprises nor credit facilities that focus on migrants as a target group. As for participation, among the members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Budapest, no foreign small enterprises can be found. There were no efforts made to involve them. Foreign small enterprises fell out of the sight of the Chamber, one of the most significant interest groups aiming to promote enterprise development. As for the financial possibilities, on the other hand, it is well-known that both the Chinese and the Middle Eastern entrepreneurs seek assistance within their own community for their business matters. In some cases, specific business services have already been formed which focus on respective migrant entrepreneurs. The vast majority of the micro and small enterprises exclusively in foreign possession is not creditable at the commercial banks. As a result, crediting transactions between individuals and enterprises is relatively widespread within certain communities. During the interviews some entrepreneurs were mentioned both within the Arabic and the Chinese community who carry out this kind of activity on a market basis (mainly illegally).

6.3.4. Integration of immigrants at the local level ⁸⁰

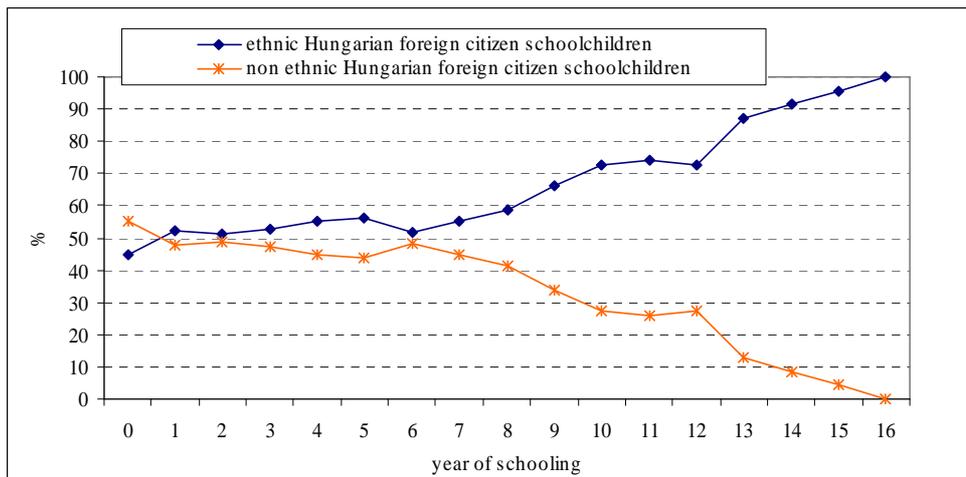
In addition to the lack of the economic integration of the immigrants, social integration is controversial. Despite the relatively higher ratio and the specific composition of foreigners, the development strategy of the district does not refer specifically to foreigners. In addition, statements of local officials suggest that the local government does not intend to treat the origin of residents as an important factor either in development or in the operation of local institutions and services. In most cases, this approach is put in the context of an equal opportunity narrative by the staff of the local government. "Origin is immaterial for us," as a local official said.

6.4. Integration and schooling of immigrants and immigrants' children

Schooling of immigrant children is obviously an established and effective means of integration. According to the school system, foreign immigrant children are also obliged to attend school – even those who live in refugee camps or remain illegal. Migrant children attend school, and, as long as the first 6 school years, the shares of ethnic Hungarian and non-ethnic foreign citizens are balanced. In secondary school, the difference is large and increasing. The share of foreign citizens who are not members of the ethnic Hungarian population is sharply decreasing. (Figure 6.2)

⁸⁰ Based on the results of the INTERREG project

Figure 6.2. Share of schoolchildren by years of schooling and ethnicity, 2007



0 year of schooling is preschool (kindergarten)

Source: Ministry of Education.

The reasons for this vary. Migrants return home or take off for another country and bring the child as well. Other families send children abroad to study at different secondary schools. The preference of foreign language schools is high, which resulted also in foreign study in other countries. (Feischmidt-Nyíri 2006)

6.5. Xenophobia in Hungary and in the Visegrad countries

The existence and extent of xenophobia offers insights on the openness of a society, and at the environment in which a migrant or refugee arrives and will be integrated. The trend of xenophobia will be shown that has been measured regularly since 1992 in Hungary. A brief comparison with the Visegrad countries will also be given.⁸¹

6.5. 1. Trends in and characteristics of xenophobia in Hungary

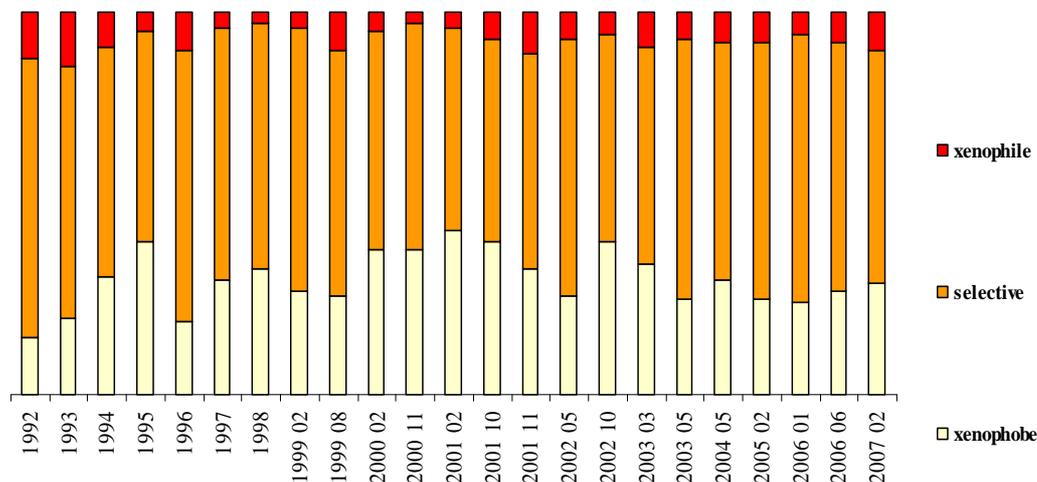
The native population towards the immigrants can be *'xenophobic, that is, of the opinion that no one foreigner should step into the country; or in perfect contrast, 'xenophiles,'* who would allow all immigrants to come and settle in the country. Also, individuals might possess a *'situational viewpoint'* in-between, who are the so-called *'selective'* people. In 2007 three out of ten adult Hungarians (29%) could be considered *'xenophobic'* whereas only one out of ten (10%) could be seen as *'xenophiles'*. Most of the population, six out of ten (61%) have a *'situational viewpoint'*.

Apart from some waves, the trend of xenophobia is stable. *Xenophiles* form traditionally the smallest group and the *selective people* the largest one, although the share varies considerably over time. The xenophobic attitude varied significantly: from 15% surveyed in 1992, within a few years this figure almost tripled to 40%, and after a small regression period rose to 43% in the new millennium. It reached a top, then fell back again and fluctuated at around 25-30%. (Figure

⁸¹ In Hungary, for over 15 years now TÁRKI Social Research Institute measures prejudices and, in more general terms, the amount of xenophobia in Hungary against migrants and asylum seekers. The methodology and the questions are unchanged since 1992, thus a rarely seen permanence is visible in trends of attitudes. And this is not only in Hungarian but also in a regional context: although not through longitudinal but rather crossover analyses, they surveyed in 2005 notions in connection with migrants in the other three Visegrad-countries, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, within the CEORG cooperation (at the same time, with the same questions and scientific approach).

6.3) The general openness at the beginning of the period suddenly shifted towards xenophobia, and then a more open manifestation of it came about around the new millennium. The consolidation of these figures occurred then, finally bringing about the more stable current situation, even if it is not reaching the terms of the early 1990s.

Figure 6.3. Xenophobia in Hungary between 1992 and 2007 (%)



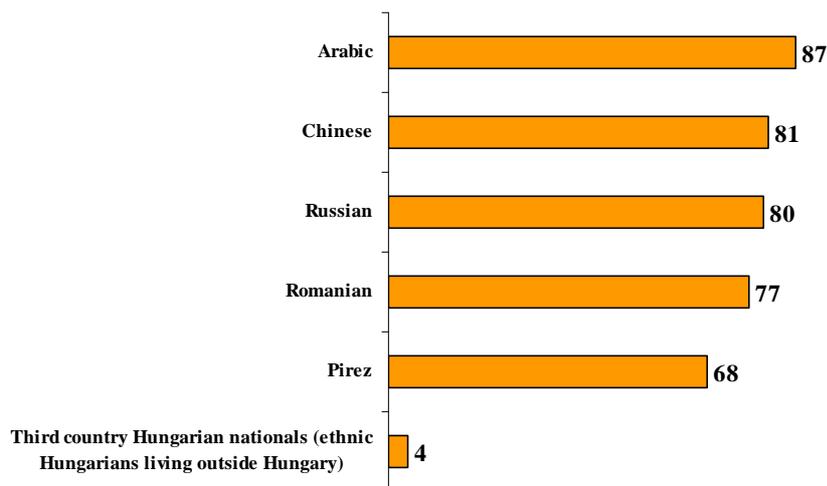
Source: Dencső – Sik (2007).

The selective group was asked every year about what kind of nationalities or ethnics they would welcome. The list contains typical constant groups (third country national ethnic Hungarians, Romanians, Arabs). Some new groups were added to the survey corresponding to the actual political context (Chinese, Afghans)⁸². Similar to the general patterns of the period in question, answers reflect an inclination towards xenophobia within the group of selective answerers: they would not allow most of the mentioned ethnic groups come to Hungary as immigrants. Their views are the same as that of the xenophobic respondents, only not as openly, but more latently or indirectly expressed. In February 2007 – just like the years before – the least refused group is the one of Hungarians living abroad: almost every selective respondent would let them in. By contrast, at least two thirds – sometimes even ninety percent – would not allow other foreigners come to Hungary. The Arabs suffer the strongest rejection, closely followed by Chinese and Russians, then Romanians and ‘Pirez’ (a fictional ethnic group used to prove how unrealistic the basis of the xenophobic views is.)⁸³ (Figure 6.4)

⁸² Changing groups make comparison over 15 years difficult. Those selective respondents who said, “some refugees should be admitted, some refugees should not” a follow-up question was asked: ‘would you admit refugees from the following groups....?’

⁸³ The fact that people from a non-existent ethnic group or country would face similar xenophobic attitude to regular and existing ones (and in an increasing amount since the year before) shows us that xenophobia is not related to its subject. Although it is an attitude against visible, concrete groups, it can also arise against a fictional minority just as well.

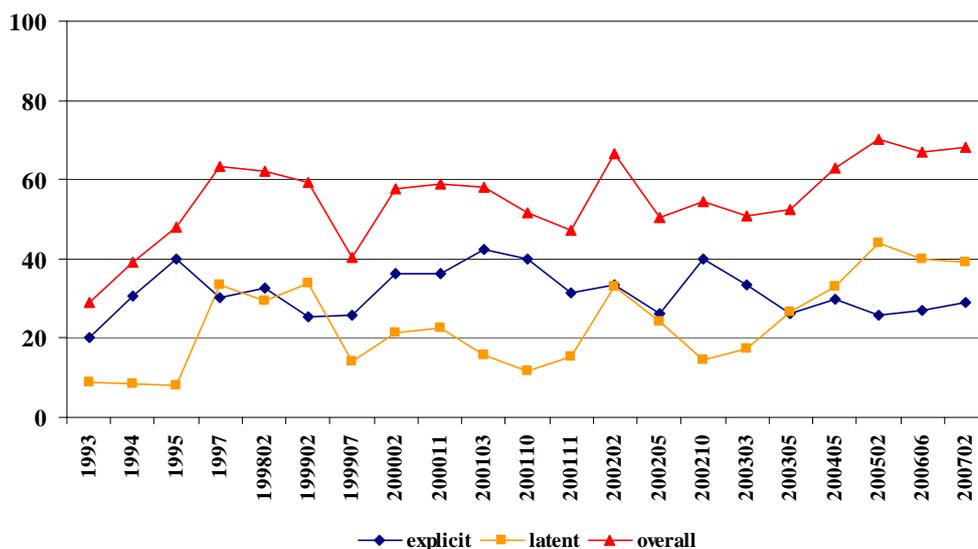
Figure 6.4. Share of rejecting versus tolerating population by different immigrant groups (%)



Source: TÁRKI Omnibusz February 2007

'Latent' xenophobes are those selective respondents who consistently reject the immigrant groups: they would not admit any group except ethnic Hungarians. Nevertheless this group is large enough in itself. It has a meaning to make distinctions within the overall xenophobic sentiment as well by adding up the groups of latent and explicit xenophobic respondents. Figure 6.10 shows the trend of the explicit, the latent and the overall xenophobia in Hungary after the transition. Overall xenophobia was rather low in the early 1990s. All forms of xenophobia increased fast and doubled between 1993 and 1997. With some fluctuation, the trend remained similar. In 2007, seven out of ten adult Hungarians can be characterised by xenophobia, according to this question. Latent xenophobia became more prevalent in the whole period and mostly in the first half of the 1990s, i.e., a significant part of the xenophobes "learned" not to express this attitude explicitly due to its labelling as 'politically incorrect' in the public sphere.

Figure 6.5. Explicit, latent and overall xenophobia in Hungary between 1993 and 2007 (%)



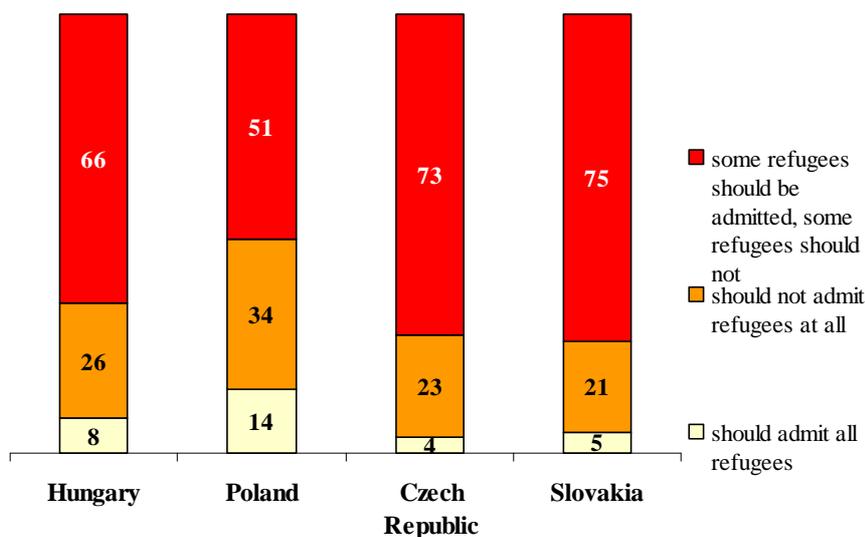
Source: Dencső – Sik 2007, TÁRKI

Socio-demographic indicators strongly influence attitudes toward foreigners: primarily the education level but also the age and the type of settlement where the respondents live. According to a survey carried out in February 2007 (TÁRKI Omnibusz February 2007) the proportion of xenophiles is increasing and the proportion of xenophobes is decreasing with education levels. The selective respondents are overrepresented among those with secondary educations. Age has less influence on xenophobia, but younger cohorts are more tolerant, while those in the age group 40 to 60 tend to be more explicitly xenophobic than the average. Those living in villages are rather tolerant, while those living in small and middle size towns would admit foreigners to the country only in lower proportions. Similar surveys from the previous year also highlight that the proportion of xenophiles is irrespective of the fact that the respondent knows a refugee or a migrant personally, but the proportion of xenophobes is lower than the average among these individuals. Personal contact decreases only the explicit xenophobia, not the latent attitude.

6.5.2. Xenophobia in the Visegrad countries

The extent and pattern of xenophobia seems to be similar in the Visegrad countries. The cross-country survey from 2005 shows that the ‘selective’ group was the largest in each country, but differences can be observed: half of the Poles, two-thirds of the Hungarians and three-quarters of the Slovaks and the Czechs belong to this group. The pattern is identical in the other groups as well, i.e., in the case of explicit xenophobes and the xenophiles. (Figure 6.6)

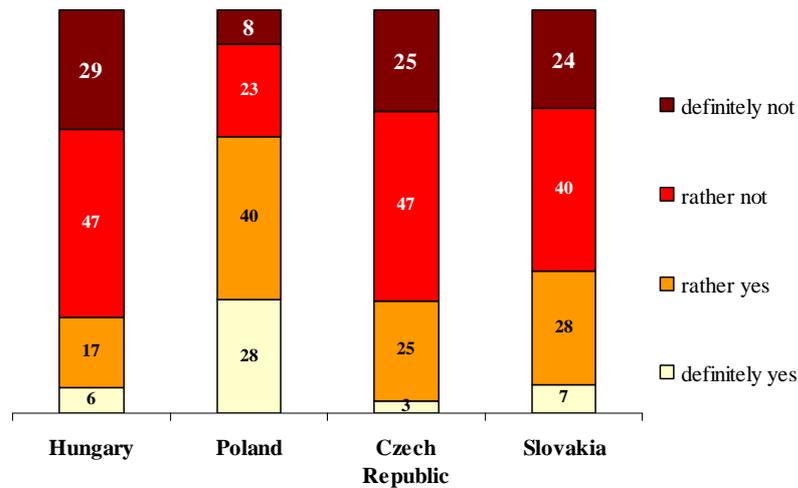
Figure 6.6. Your country should admit all refugees, should not admit refugees at all or some refugees should be admitted, some refugees should not? (February 2005, %)



Source: CEORG-research, Hungarian partner: TÁRKI

Attitudes towards immigrants in general give similar results: except for the Poles in each country, the majority of the respondents opposed the idea that anyone who wishes to come and live in their country should be allowed to do so. Consequently the most tolerant are the Poles from the four countries; two-thirds of the Polish respondents would definitely or most likely allow anyone to live in Poland, while only half of them, in sum 35%, in the Czech Republic, and only 28% in Slovakia, respectively. The least tolerant are the Hungarians (23%). (Figure 6.7)

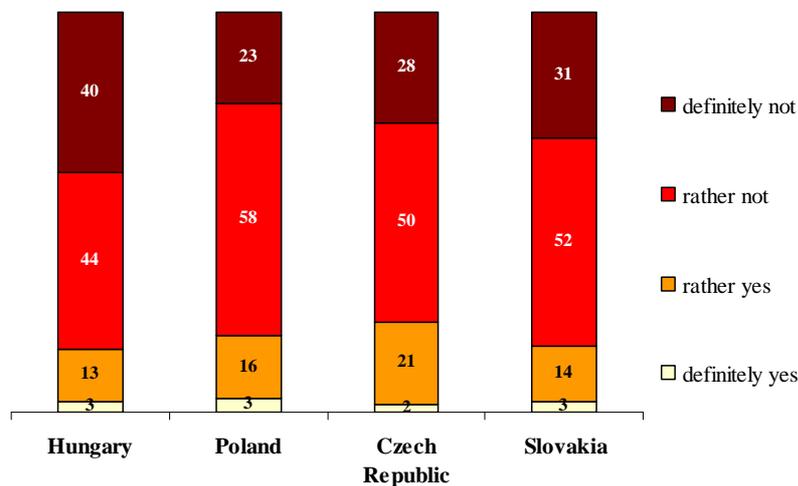
Figure 6.7. Do you think that anyone who wishes to come and live in country should be allowed to do so? (February 2005, %)



Source: CEORG-research, Hungarian partner: TÁRKI

Asking the same question from another perspective highlights the similarity among the countries. Inquiring about the necessity of immigrants, half of the respondents in each of the four Visegrad countries basically rejected the immigrants: four out of five inhabitants said that the country does not need any immigrants, and the difference between the four countries is smaller in this question than in the previous ones. Nevertheless, the definitely rejecting answer was obvious in Hungary, while the rather or definitely supportive answer was somewhat higher in the Czech Republic. (Figure 6.8)

Figure 6.8. Does your country need immigrants? (February 2005, %)



Source: CEORG-research, Hungarian partner: TÁRKI

The xenophobic attitude characteristic for Hungary corresponds to the ambivalent attitude of the Hungarian migration policy towards both the labour migration and the ethnic Hungarians. The present stagnation of migration policy and migration trends is not changing, and the general attitude is also one of rejecting foreigners.

7. Future prospects of the immigration

Forecasting the trend of Hungarian migration regime is difficult. The origin of the migration regime was somewhat unexpected and sudden at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. The main immigration communities and networks emerged in this short period and kept developing since that time. Ethnic Hungarian migration was essential, while the development of the ethnic migration for the future is a challenge. With the recent enlargement of the EU to include Romania, the main migration route has been incorporated in the European Union, which is part of the solution. Similarly, the Chinese community emerged in the late 1980s and did not develop; it is now in fact diminishing in number. The policy of the Hungarian government is ambiguous, migration policy is not mature.

Migration policy, in fact, corresponds to the embryonic stage of immigration. There are definite migrant communities – their role is evident and stable in the Hungarian society and economy. There is no definite preference for ethnic migration, but some has been evident. The same approach is evident towards the emerging and economically significant Chinese migration. Migration policy is considerably more defensive towards any other group of immigrants. The reason behind the ambiguous policy is the uncertain economic role of immigrants. As it has been put in a more general context by Skentny et al (2007) “Though wealthier than their neighbours, Hungary and the others are not wealthy states relative to the rest of Europe, and in fact are seen as low-cost labour destinations for outsourcing manufacturing from the West (*e.g.*, Audi makes cars in Hungary). These states are not in need of low-skilled workers. More similar to China and Southeast Asian states, they would seem to need, if anything, skilled co-ethnics and investments.”(: 814) As for the future, migration policy should follow the economic rationale that places less emphasis on the low wage workers and more on skilled co-ethnics and investments, similar to the Irish case. Signs of this type of migration are failing, however. The end of the premature phase of the migration in Hungary is unforeseeable. It has lasted even in the Mediterranean countries for decades. It largely depends on the economic development of both Hungary and the potential sending regions. The next phase and type of the migration is now subject to the uncertain future of the world economy.

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