

CENTRE AND HINTERLAND - MIGRATION RELATIONS

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Recent ideas about bearable values of population concentration in Slovakia range from a merciless reduction of settlements and support for the concentration of population and activities into a limited number of selected centres on one hand, to conceptions and ideas that propagate dispersion of settlement and a general renaissance of the country areas on the other hand. From a realistic view the truth should be looked at for somewhere in the middle of these two conceptions.

The existing hierarchy of settlements is one of the realities to be respected, but beyond this base there is still enough space for some other developing variants. In some empirical analysis of developing trends of population and settlements some indications of a slowing of concentration processes already appear. In this sense the migration processes and especially centre-hinterland relations play a very important role and more attention should be given to them. The following contribution focuses on migration analysis in a particular area of the Slovak Republic - the south-western part of the country.

1 Migration characteristics

The area observed was limited by the location of two large towns - Trnava with a population of more than 70,000 and Dunajská Streda with a population of over 23,000. As far as it is natural to expect that these two towns attract population from their surroundings, the area observed was limited in this sense. Data about migration to and from Bratislava in the years 1987-1991 were used.

Data about migration in the hinterland of the largest (from the point of view of intensity and spatially as well) area of population concentration in Slovakia - the area in the south-western part of the country near Bratislava - were used for the analysis of the recent situation and trends. Different statistical measures as, e.g., migration efficiency, net in- and out-migration, net migration exchange etc. were used to analyse migration relations between the centre and the hinterland, to identify areas, where migration contacts with Bratislava are most intensive and where emigration from rural settlements is becoming a relatively lower intensity. The Gini's index of concentration of the whole area and the changes in population density were used as well.

Bemerkung der Herausgeber:

Podolák's Studie befaßt sich mit den Migrationsbeziehungen zwischen Zentrum und Hinterland am Beispiel des Gebietes der südwestlichen Slowakei in den Jahren 1987-1991. Der Beitrag bietet wertvolle Unterlagen zum Vergleich mit dem gegenwärtigen Stand der Migrationszüge, weil es die Zeit vor den markanten Veränderungen der Migrationszüge, zu denen es im Laufe der 60-er Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts kam, erfaßt.

From the point of view of migration balance (difference between in- and out-migration) a clear picture emerges, with a strong polarization between small towns and other rural communes. 6 out of 7 small towns in the observed area (Pezinok, Malacky, Samorín, Senec, Modra and Stupava) are characterized by a positive migration balance during the last 5 years. The smallest town (Sv. Jur) has a negative migration balance. The communes with the most negative migration balance are situated north-east of the centre.

The communes with the highest intensity of emigration to Bratislava are concentrated in the very neighbourhood of the centre, most of all in Bratislava's north-eastern and western hinterland. Intensity of emigration to Bratislava declines much more rapidly in the area east of Bratislava than in western and northern directions.

For better analysis of the migration system in south-western Slovakia two statistical measures were used

$$I_j = MO_{ij} / MO_j$$

where I_j expresses the share of migration exchange of commune j with centre i from the total migration of the observed commune j (in %) and

$$E_j = MS_{ij} / MO_{ij}$$

where E_j expresses the effectivity of migration in the sense of the share of net migration exchange between a pair of communes from the total migration exchange of the observed commune.

The I_j values show a clear belt in the immediate neighbourhood of the centre with values over 35%, and smaller areas west and north-east of Bratislava with values over 25%. The decline of I_j values is more rapid again in the eastern direction than west or north of the centre. It is interesting, that in this characteristic spatial position seems to play a more important role than the size of the commune or small town. The size of the commune (together with its location) seems to be important in the spatial distribution of E_j values; towns and rural communes in peripheral areas - especially in north-east - are characterized by the lowest E_j values.

Migration processes (together with natural changes of population) serve as the basic factor - from the demographic point of view - of changes in population distribution. For the observed area as a whole the Gini's Index of concentration was computed. In this statistics the changes of concentration of population for the whole area is reflected in its development over the years. The value of the index has been increasing permanently (since 1950), only in the last years increase is becoming relatively smaller. The influence of Bratislava is still too dominant and the development of smaller towns in the hinterland also plays its role.

2 Regional Structure of Migration Relations

The observed area was divided into 8 regular belts each 4 km wide, with the centre in Bratislava. In each of the belts changes in population density during the last 5 years have been observed. In the first belt, in the very neighbourhood of Bratislava, the largest positive change in population density is evident (increase of more than 5 persons/km²); in the two following belts, an increase lower than 5 persons/km² was observed. The following 3 belts are characterized by relative decrease (less than 5 persons/km²) and in the last belt a decrease of more than 5 persons/km² during the last 5 years can be observed.

The results show that changes of concentration and density of population (from the spatial viewpoint) in the observed hinterland of Bratislava are influenced by the migration attractivity of the centre to a certain degree and by the development of smaller towns with a population between 20,000 (Pezinok) and 4,600 (Sv. Jur) that are also attractive for the population of the area.

It is impossible to deal with all the important influences of a very different nature that play their role in relation centre-hinterland. The relation centre-hinterland is a very complicated one and in this paper attention was given only to one partial problem. Such important influences as house market, accessibility, job market, commuting, structure of services etc. were not considered here, but there is no doubt about their importance in the relation centre-hinterland.

Research on population concentration and deconcentration is only limited according to Slovak geographical literature. Anyway, except for these few empirical results, there is still a chance and a certain probability that the development of the settlement system will follow - with a certain time lag and modifications - trends visible in developed European countries. They begin to appear in Slovakia just in the form of shy indications.

References

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