

# CHANGING RURAL MIGRATION PATTERNS AFTER THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSITION IN THE VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES

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**Abstract:** The nineteen-seventies marked a turnaround in the rural migration patterns and the beginning of counterurbanisation in the United States and many Western European countries. However, in the countries of the Visegrád Group, because of their lagging development and the interventions of the socialist regimes, preceding stages of the urbanisation process remained dominant until the political and economic transition. After the transition, not counterurbanisation, but suburbanisation emerged as the most noticeable rural migration process. Moreover, remote rural areas not only became a possible destination for migrants seeking natural amenities but also for low-class people losing their livelihood in the urban areas after the economic transition.

The aim of my research is to examine the extent of migration turnaround in the rural areas of the Visegrád countries, with a focus on the differences between central and peripheral areas, described by the temporal distance of large and middle-sized cities. Firstly I selected the local administrative units (Lau-2) which can be considered rural. I analysed the correlation between migration balance and temporal distance of large and middle-sized cities in five categories: capital cities, cities with more than 400 000 inhabitants (only in Poland), cities with more than 100 000 inhabitants, cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants and cities with more than 30 000 inhabitants. The overall migration balance of the distinguished rural units turned to positive after the economic transition, but the results showed that distance from the urban centres still play a key role in the ability of the rural settlements to attract and sustain population.