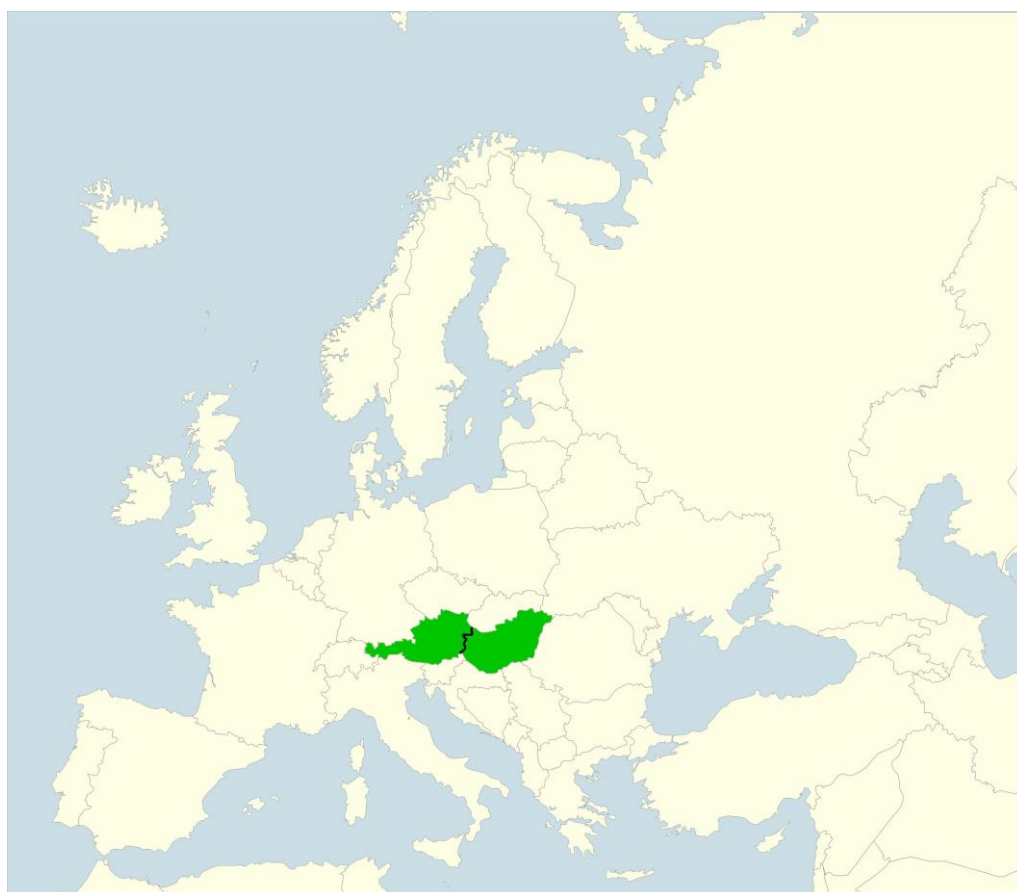


VIENNA'S SOUTH-EASTERN HINTERLANDS: REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE AUSTRIAN-HUNGARIAN BORDER AREA, 1910–2011

Ferenc Jankó¹, Zsolt Bottlik², Róbert Gyóri³



¹ Ferenc JANKÓ, Associate Professor, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest and Alexandre Lamfalussy Faculty of Economics, University of Sopron, Hungary; e-mail: frk@caesar.elte.hu, ORCID: 0000-0003-1149-6745

² Zsolt BOTTLIK, Associate Professor, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest, Hungary; e-mail: agria@gmx.net, ORCID: 0000-0003-0337-5580

³ Róbert GYÓRI, Associate Professor, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest, Hungary; e-mail: gyori.robort@ttk.elte.hu, ORCID: 0000-0002-9147-8784

Abstract: Formed from the westernmost territories of Hungary, Burgenland became a part of Austria a hundred years ago. The aim of the paper is to answer the question of how Burgenland became integrated into the Austrian society and economy, how its regional inequalities and rural character changed in comparison to the neighbouring Austrian and Hungarian areas, under the influence of Vienna's major role. The analysis is based on the census data of 1910, 1960/61, 2001 and 2011 and on the mapping of different social and economic indicators. Our data revealed that one hundred years ago, the northern, more prosperous area of Western Hungary was an integral part of the rural hinterland of the imperial capital, Vienna, in stark contrast to the region's southern periphery. After World War II, however, a steep west-east gradient emerged in the borderland along the Iron Curtain, while the traditional north-south disparity continued to exist on both sides of the new border. During the political transformation in the early 1990s, and even more after Hungary's EU accession (2004), the former hard border ceased to exist in this region, while Vienna regained its former economic importance and influence. After 1990, the patterns of regional disparities changed rapidly in Hungary, and the western part achieved a leading position within Hungary in every dimension of economic prosperity. In line with this, while the Austrian rural regions in Burgenland and between Vienna and Graz showed remarkable infrastructural progress, Southern Burgenland remained peripheral regarding economic activity.

Keywords: Burgenland, Styria, Lower Austria, West Hungary, spatial disparities, rural development

Absztrakt: Száz évvel ezelőtt vált Ausztria részévé a nyugat-magyarországi területekből létrejött Burgenland tartomány. Tanulmányunk azt szeretné bemutatni, hogyan integrálódott Burgenland az osztrák társadalomba és gazdaságba, hogyan alakultak a regionális különbségek ebben a határtérségben. Azt is vizsgáltuk, hogyan változott meg Bécs erősödő hatása alatt a terület egykori rurális arculata a szomszédos osztrák és magyar régiókkal összehasonlítva. A kutatás az 1910-es, az 1960–61-es, a 2001-es és a 2011-es népszámlálás társadalmi és gazdasági adatainak elemzésre és térképezésére épül. Kutatásunk során megállapítottuk, hogy száz évvel ezelőtt Nyugat-Magyarország leginkább prosperáló, északi területe a birodalmi főváros, Bécs vonzáskörzetéhez tartozott, míg a régió déli perifériájának gazdasági helyzete sokkal rosszabb volt. A második világháború után azonban egy éles nyugat-kelet megosztottság alakult ki a vasfüggöny mentén, miközben a hagyományos észak-déli különbségek a határ mindkét oldalán csökkentek. Az 1990-es évek elején, Kelet-Közép-Európa politikai átalakulását követően, különösen pedig Magyarország 2004-es EU-csatlakozása után a határ korábbi zártsága oldódott. Ez tette lehetővé, hogy Bécs visszanyerje korábbi gazdasági szerepét és befolyását a határtérségben. 1990 után a területi különbségek térképe gyorsan átalakult Magyarországon: a gazdasági teljesítmény szinte minden dimenziójában az ország nyugati része állt az élre. Ausztriában eközben a korábban rurális Burgenland Bécs és Graz közelében fekvő területei jelentősen fejlődtek (pl. infrastruktúra területén), de Dél-Burgenland továbbra is periférikus, gazdaságilag kevésbé aktív terület maradt.

Zusammenfassung: Vor 100 Jahren wurde Burgenland ein Teil Österreichs, wessen Territorien aus den Gebieten Westungarns gebildet wurden. Unser Beitrag möchte vorstellen, wie sich Burgenland in die österreichische Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft integriert wurde und wie sich die regionalen Disparitäten in dieser Grenzregion entwickelt wurden. Untersucht wurde auch, wie sich das vorherige rurale Bild des Gebiets im Vergleich zu den benachbarten österreichischen und ungarischen Regionen meist unter dem wachsenden Einfluss Wiens verändert wurde. Die Forschung basiert vor allem auf der Analyse und auf kartographischer Bearbeitung sozialer und wirtschaftlicher Daten aus den Volkszählungsdaten von den Jahren 1910, 1960–61, 2001 sowie 2011. Während unserer Untersuchung wurde festgestellt, dass vor hundert Jahren der

wirtschaftlich prosperierende nördliche Teil Westungarns zum Hinterland der kaiserlichen Hauptstadt Wien gehörte. Die wirtschaftliche Lage der südlichen Peripherie der Region war aber viel schlimmer. Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg entstand jedoch entlang des Eisernen Vorhangs ein scharfes West-Ost-Gefälle. In Vergleich dazu nahm das traditionelle Nord-Süd-Gegenteil auf beiden Seiten der Grenze ab. Nach dem politischen Wende Ost- und Südosteuropas anfang der 1990er Jahre und insbesondere seit dem Jahr 2004, nach dem EU-Beitritt Ungarns wurde die damalige Grenzschießung aufgehoben. Dadurch konnte Wien seine frühere wirtschaftliche Rolle und seinen Einfluss in der Grenzregion zurückgewinnen. Nach 1990 änderte sich das Bild der territorialen Disparitäten Ungarns sehr rasch: der westliche Teil des Landes wurde in fast allen Dimensionen der Wirtschaftsleistung hervorragend. In Österreich entwickelte sich hingegen die ehemals ländlichen Gebiete Burgenlands rund um Wien und Graz ganz stark (z. B. in Bezug auf die Infrastruktur), wobei Südburgenland ein peripherer, wirtschaftlich weniger aktiver Raum blieb.

Highlights:

- The Austrian-Hungarian border area is analysed using regional statistics and mapping.
 - Vienna lost its territorial role after WWII on the Hungarian side of the border.
 - Besides the original north-south divide, a west-east gradient emerged after WWII.
 - Demographic decline was a dominant process with different factors in the study area.
 - Vienna regained its role on the Hungarian side of the border after 1989.
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1. Introduction

As the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy fell apart, there was an interesting area transfer between the two state-forming parties. The mostly German-inhabited Western Hungary was claimed and acquired by Austria, although the would-be capital of the new province, Sopron/Ödenburg was regained by Hungary after a referendum. Nevertheless, Burgenland, a completely rural area, was annexed by Austria, and it remained a separate province with only the Nazi regime dividing it up for seven years. Burgenland was re-established in 1945; hence its development as an area under changing conditions, even after the Iron Curtain descended, serves as a laboratory for the study of structural changes. Now, as Burgenland celebrates its 100-year anniversary, it is a timely research task to evaluate Burgenland as a geographical project. Beyond its success in regional identity formation (Burghardt 1962; Jankó and Jobbitt 2017), it is also instructive to investigate the process of its economic convergence to Austria's more developed regions. This paper focuses on this aspect; we aim to analyse how Burgenland developed in Austria in terms of its regional structure and rural spaces, how the province became similar to the Alpine territories, and what it retained from Hungary in its regional character. We will also explore how the new Austrian-Hungarian border became a line of transition after 1945 regarding the regional inequalities after serving as an ethnic divide, especially after the expulsion of the Germans from Hungary and the appearance of the political-ideological barrier.

More widely, we have witnessed three types of regional development in Vienna's southern hinterlands, i.e., its gravity zone. First, Lower Austria and Styria had an almost uninterrupted path of development in the modern, Western-type Austrian nation state, while, second, Burgenland's development was that of a territory originally belonging to Hungary, but which is now leading towards its more developed western part, but with an overwhelmingly agrarian and rural character. Third, the remaining Hungarian parts had forty-five years of the state-socialist Hungarian regime, with different frames and results of development, and, as a consequence, a remarkable lag that became apparent after the political transition in 1989 (Gyóri and Mikle 2017). Turning to the 1990s, the development of these areas involved them becoming increasingly intertwined with each other again in the hinterland of the Viennese urban centre and partly in the hinterland of Graz, the Styrian provincial seat. It may be assumed that Vienna had and still has

a major role in driving the regional and rural processes in the area; hence, it is well worth examining the area's regional structure and the changes there in the last hundred years.

2. The scientific context of regional development in the Austrian-Hungarian border area

There is a long tradition of research into regional inequalities in geography and related disciplines across different historical periods and political contexts (Gyuris 2014). In Europe, regional and rural policy maintains scholarly attention aimed at the inequalities within and between countries. In terms of the latter, the differences between countries seemed to be diminishing after EU-enlargement (Heidenreich, Wunder 2008), while the latest studies are highlighting the reinforcing inequalities and the need for regional policy reform (Iammarino et al. 2019). They show that borders have remained important ruptures in social and economic development, and cross-border policy has maintained its momentum in the latest EU planning periods, although the territorial approach and rural development seems to have been pushed in the background (Heintel et al. 2018; Finta 2019; Leduc et al. 2021).

Analyses of international border areas have always been distinct aspects of rural studies, deserving of ongoing scholarly interest in the field (Kladivo et al. 2012; Dotzblasz 2013; Marot 2013). Theoretically, the changing role of borders is a major driver of regional processes (Bufon 2013), partly in connection with deagrarianization, urban-suburban development (Čede et al. 2018; Viñas 2019), depopulation and deprivation (Damyanovic, Reinwald 2014; Josipovič 2014; Fischer, Born 2018; Vaishar et al. 2020). The border region of this study also illustrates the numerous changes to the border in the functional and symbolic sense (Martinez 1994; Bufon 2013; Sendhardt 2013). The border served as a weak tariff border until the collapse of the Monarchy, then as the neighbouring states increased border controls in the interwar period, economic interdependence weakened. With the emerging Iron Curtain, nearly all economic and social ties were broken; the settlements along the border shifted to a completely different path of development. After the political transition in 1989, cross-border relationships slowly began to revive.

The Austrian-Hungarian border is also a unique formation in terms of its broader post World War II history. Hungary became part of socialist Eastern Europe, while Austria fell on the western side of the Iron Curtain. Hence, Burgenland became a laboratory for the remaining Hungarian areas, at least its western parts, displaying a possible path for regional development under a western-capitalist market economy. However, long-term Austrian economic history has almost disregarded this aspect (Schulze 2018).

As a consequence, the frames of regional economic development were fundamentally different for half a century. Burgenland became part of an Alpine country with developing industry, transportation and commerce, and a rich cultural and tourism industry. The rural areas also gained new impetus from leisure society, tourism (Lichtenberger 1984) and organic farming (Darnhofer 2005). Coping with the fragmented farms and reinforcing the countryside was an important task, as rural demographic erosion had spread on the Austrian side of the border, with mainly Southern Burgenland and the mountainous regions being faced with this process (Lambert 1963; Bätzing et al. 1996). Additionally, it was a historic process with different factors before industrialisation, like the expansion of extensive agriculture and market-led reforestation, which was visible from late medieval times (Lichtenberger 1965, 2002; Zsilincsar 2009).

It was decisive for the study area that Vienna, as a result of the emerging borders, lost its role as the centre of an empire, but the leftist shift in its urban policy succeeded in handling the post-war crisis and the city became a strong national and economic centre of post-WWII Austria (Becker and Novy 1999). Hence, Austria became one of the most developed countries in the World, where Burgenland, considered as a periphery in the country, also enjoyed the benefits of the emerging Austrian economy and the support from the EU structural and cohesion funds after Austria joined the European Union. Burgenland's catching up was a successful project in terms of development indicators, at least with respect to its counterparts of Lower Austria and Styria (Schrott et al. 2012). Nevertheless, Burgenland was not a focus of regional and geographical research in Austria after WWII, however EU accession and structural policy provided some impetus in this field (Damyanovic, Reinwald 2014).

Meanwhile, Hungary went on with the “socialist experiment” of social and economic progress, and tried to leave behind its dominantly agrarian and rural character. In any case, the rural landscape was intensively transformed by the socialist reorganisation of agriculture, yet, rural areas, but also the towns along the border, were faced with much neglect and backwardness without the gravity of Vienna. In West Hungary, it was mainly Győr that profited from the heavy industry-based development in the 1950–1960s, with industrial development becoming commonplace only later. The industrial plants were much more usable after the political and economic transition in 1989, which helped the market shift towards the west.

Comparing the modes of regional development, the pursuit of progress was fairly similar in the two countries. For example, there was focus on industrial and infrastructure-oriented development and on urban growth decentralisation efforts from the capital cities (Vienna and Budapest) into local centres, but with different implementation and partly different results. E.g., industry and agriculture had their lower performance embedded in the planned economy and more widely in the market of the socialist block, while Austria focused more on the development of the road network. In contrast, more emphasis was put on the state-led development of the housing sector in Hungary and less on roads and railways. As a result, the urban transformation in Austria was more profound and earlier than in Hungary (Berentsen 1978; Honvári 2007).

3. Methodology

This study focuses on the investigation of regional development disparity in a border region, and endeavours to give an answer to the research questions using quantitative approach. The study primarily makes use of the Hungarian and Austrian census data, at the smallest possible territorial level, primarily from 1910, 1960–61, 2001 and 2011, in this way encompassing some 100 years, however, in order to study certain processes, data from intermediate years were also used. In order to be able to produce a uniform database and maps, we, of course, had to find corresponding and compatible types of data on regional inequalities, which restricted the possibilities of the study to a great extent. There was a problem in connection with the Austrian 1910 census, not only was the data spectrum very narrow as compared to the Hungarian census, but there was also a complete lack of published data on the municipality level, therefore we were only able to use the district data (in Austria: *politische Bezirke*) in the case of the year of 1910. Hence, data on population density, literacy level, population distribution between sectors could be used from this year (Gistory 2021). For 2011, the year of the last census conducted on both sides of the border, the Austrian statistics office published little data on the municipality level, and only a small proportion of these data was compatible with the published Hungarian census data (KSH 2011; SA 2013a-c). From 1960/1961 (Hungary and Austria resp.), data on population, employment distribution between sectors, the proportion of single roomed homes, and the proportion of homes with running water and electricity were used (KSH 1962a-c; ÖSZ 1963a-f). From 2001, we were able to use data on population, age structure, commuting, employment, homes with four or more rooms and the building date of homes, etc. (KSH 2002a-b; SA 2002a-f; SA 2004a-c). Additionally it was possible to update some data with 2011 data. Overall, the data may be generally used to demonstrate regional inequalities regarding different social and economic aspects.

With respect to the territory under examination from the east, we added the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron and Vas to Burgenland, and from the west, we attached the borderland districts, the municipalities of Lower Austria and Styria in accordance with the public administration status of 2001–2011. In Lower Austria, these included Baden, Bruck an der Leitha, Mödling, Neunkirchen, Wiener Neustadt (town), Wiener Neustadt (district) and districts in the vicinity of Vienna, and in Styria Feldbach, Fürstenfeld, Graz (town), Graz (district), Hartberg, Mürzzuschlag, Radkersburg and Weiz. Formally, it is this area that constitutes Vienna’s southern hinterland in our analysis.

We combined the data from different sources in a database for mapping. In the case of both 1960–61 and 2001–2011, the data had to be homogenised for the same set of municipalities. The reason for this was that app. 300 villages had been attached to a larger municipality, primarily in Austria due to the public administration reform of 1970. Numerous similar municipality changes took place in Hungary too, with

31 villages being merged with a larger settlement, or unified as a new settlement. This process went even further in Styria and Lower Austria in 2015, however the impact of this cannot be seen on the maps. It must be noted that the maps primarily reflect the public administration status of 2001–2011. Thematic cartography was an iterative task, graphics and categories were specified to enhance the visibility of the maps considering equal class distance and threshold values.

4. Results

Before and after the birth of Burgenland – the border region in the first half of the 20th century

Our previous investigations have demonstrated that in the western region of Hungary, including the territory of Burgenland today, it was primarily the proximity of Vienna that influenced the regional development pattern (Győri 2006, 233; Győri and Jankó 2009). Indicators of this were the level of literacy over the age of 6 years old, the ratio of stone or brick-built residential houses or with stone or brick foundations, the ratio of the population who are not employed in agriculture, the ratio among the deceased of those receiving medical attention before their death, the migration balance (1901–1910) and the cadastral (agricultural) income index per capita. In spite of the relatively unfavourable, small village settlement structure of Western Hungary, it counted as one of the most developed regions of Hungary with its growing middle class. It was the proximity of Vienna that played the main role in establishing the level of development of the region. The more developed towns and villages were located close to Vienna, on the basis of which one may speak of a north-western – south-eastern development slope. But these data could not be used on the Austrian part of the Monarchy.

The district-level maps relating to the broader Austrian-Hungarian border region confirm this regional structure and the role of Vienna inside it, within a wider territorial comparison. Even at this time, the concentration of population in the southern hinterland of Vienna and in the vicinity of Graz was perceptible (Fig. 1). In the short term, the region was generally still characterised by population growth, however, mainly in the districts in today's Burgenland, there was a small decrease in the population in the first decade of the 20th century. The degree of literacy also displayed the north-south contrasts, although it is true that there was a greater “chasm” between the north and the south on the Hungarian side than on the Austrian, and in this respect, Győr and its hinterland belonged to the less-developed south (Fig. 2).

The employment structure shows the relatively higher level of development of the districts in Lower Austria, i.e., industrialisation and the greater significance of the service sectors. Both Western Hungary and Styria had more of an agrarian character before World War I, in many places, the proportion of those employed in agriculture reached even 75%. If we examine industrialisation, with the exception of the area of Wiener Neustadt, it approached 50% in the Lower Austria districts, but in Styria, this can only be said of the district of Mürzzuschlag, which, due to the Semmering railway, was connected to the progressive region of Vienna. In this respect, Graz and the surrounding area was significantly behind and resembled the Mattersburg district more or the region around Wiener Neustadt. It is true though that Fig. 3 is a little misleading: even at this time, the towns which constituted a public administration unit separate to their districts, had a separate employment structure with a high ratio of services, so the data of their surrounding areas, understandably, does not show significant industrialisation or development of the tertiary sector (see Graz, Wiener Neustadt, Sopron, Szombathely, etc.).

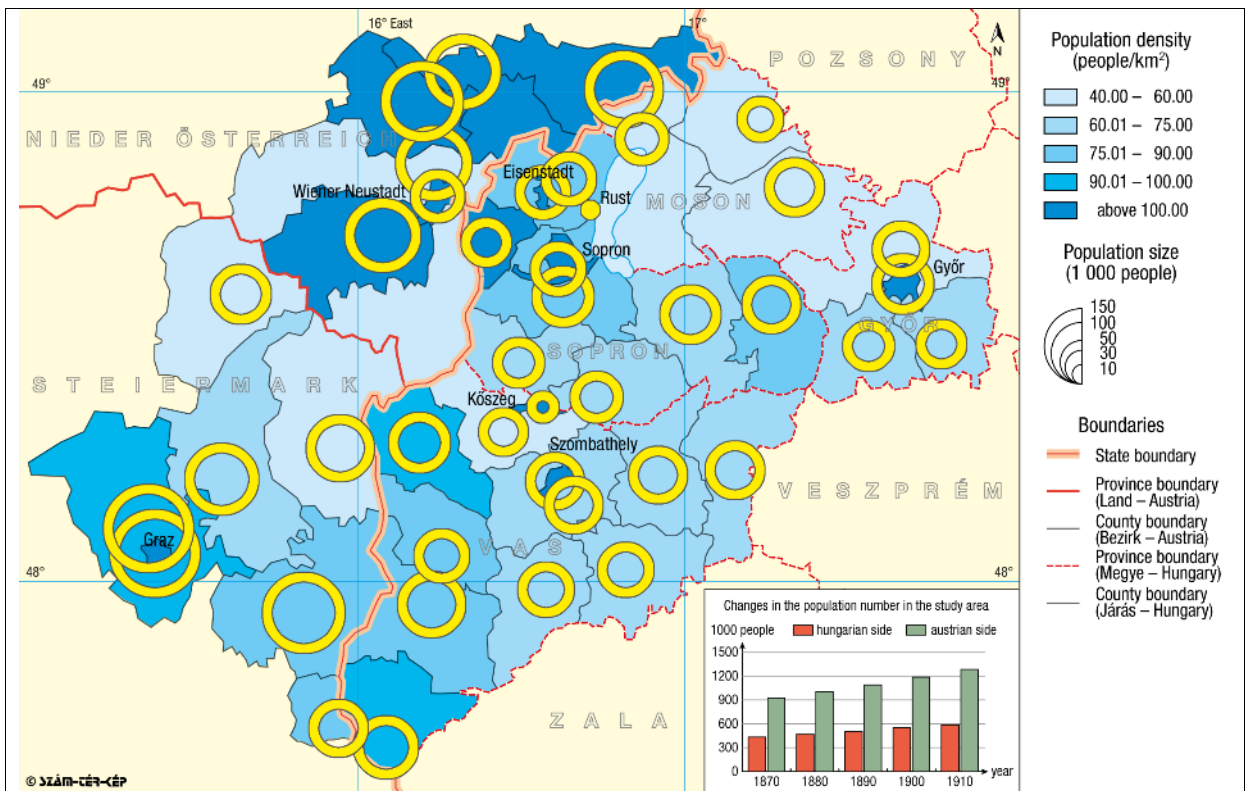


Fig 1. Population level and population density relationships, 1910. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

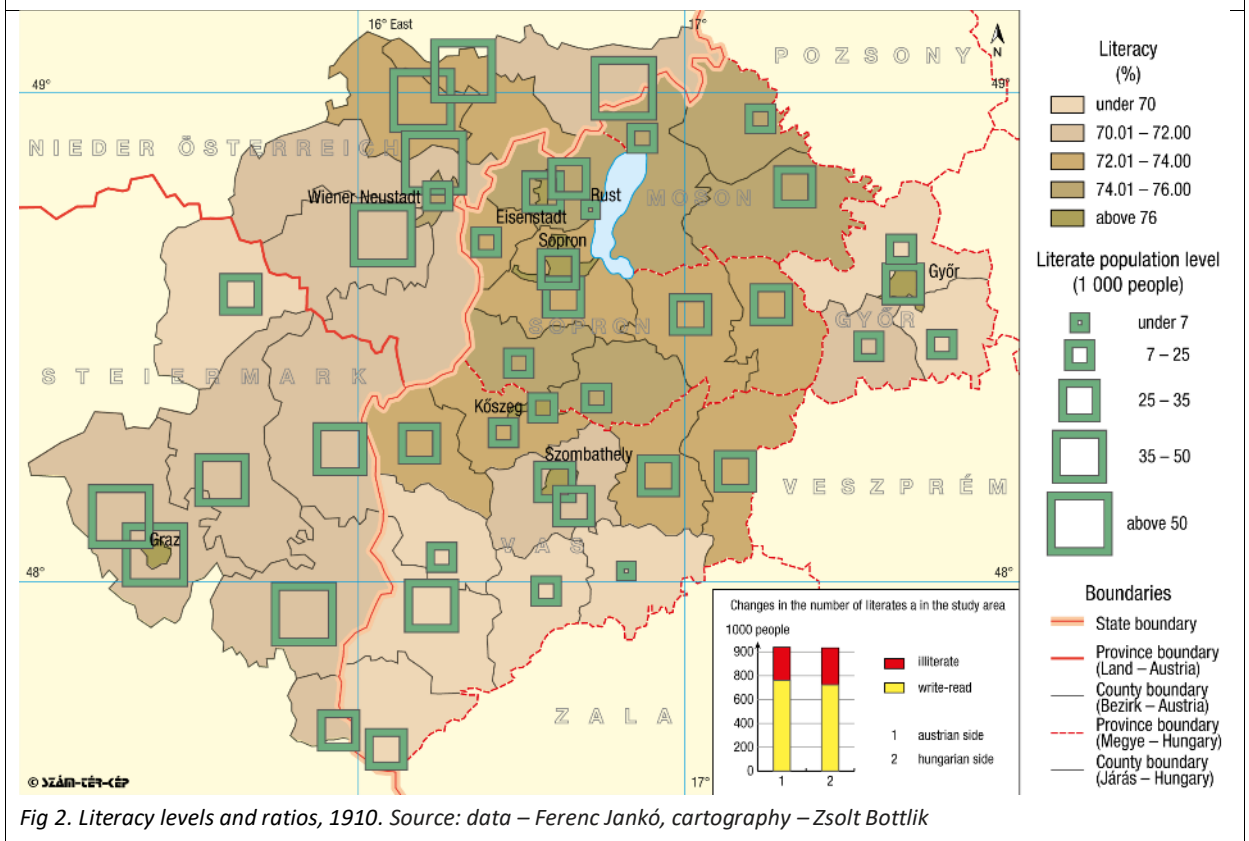


Fig 2. Literacy levels and ratios, 1910. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

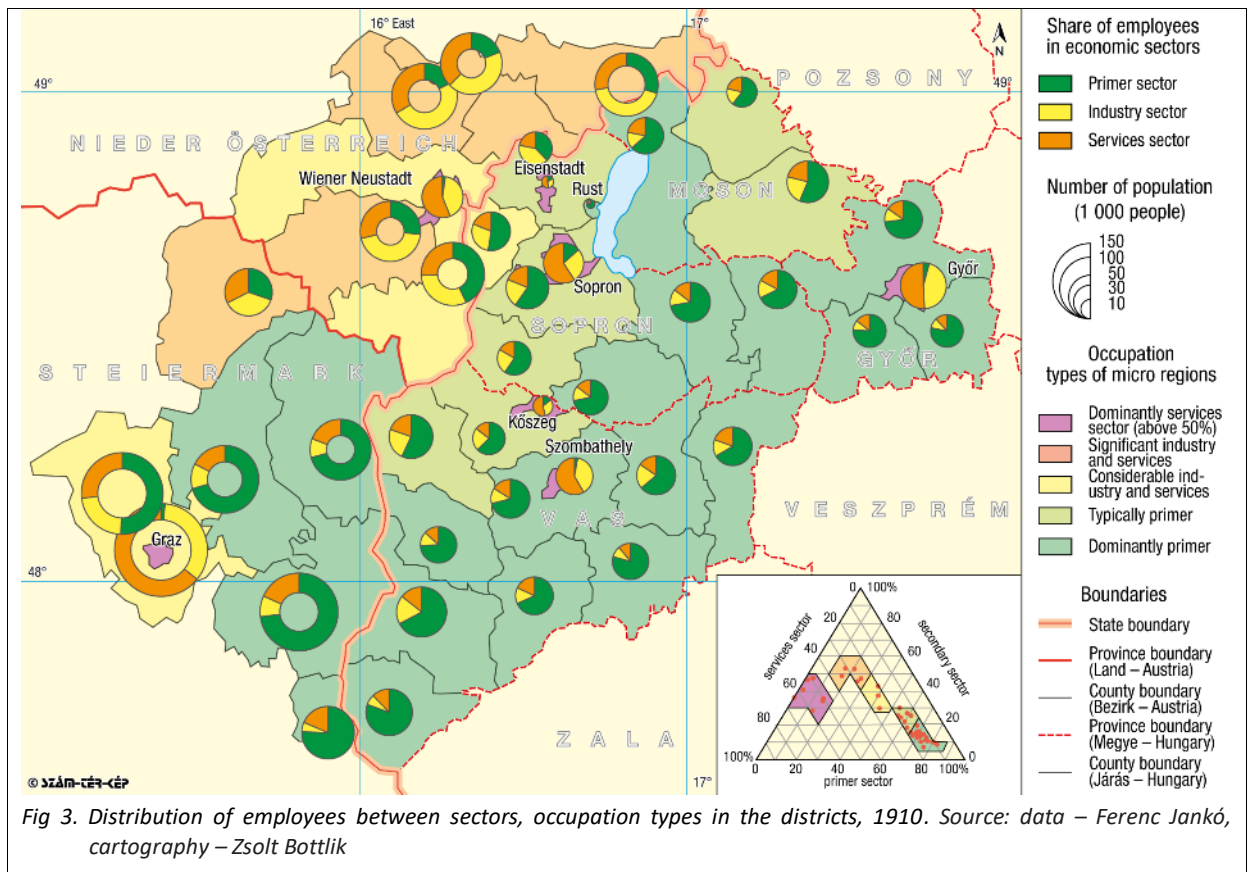


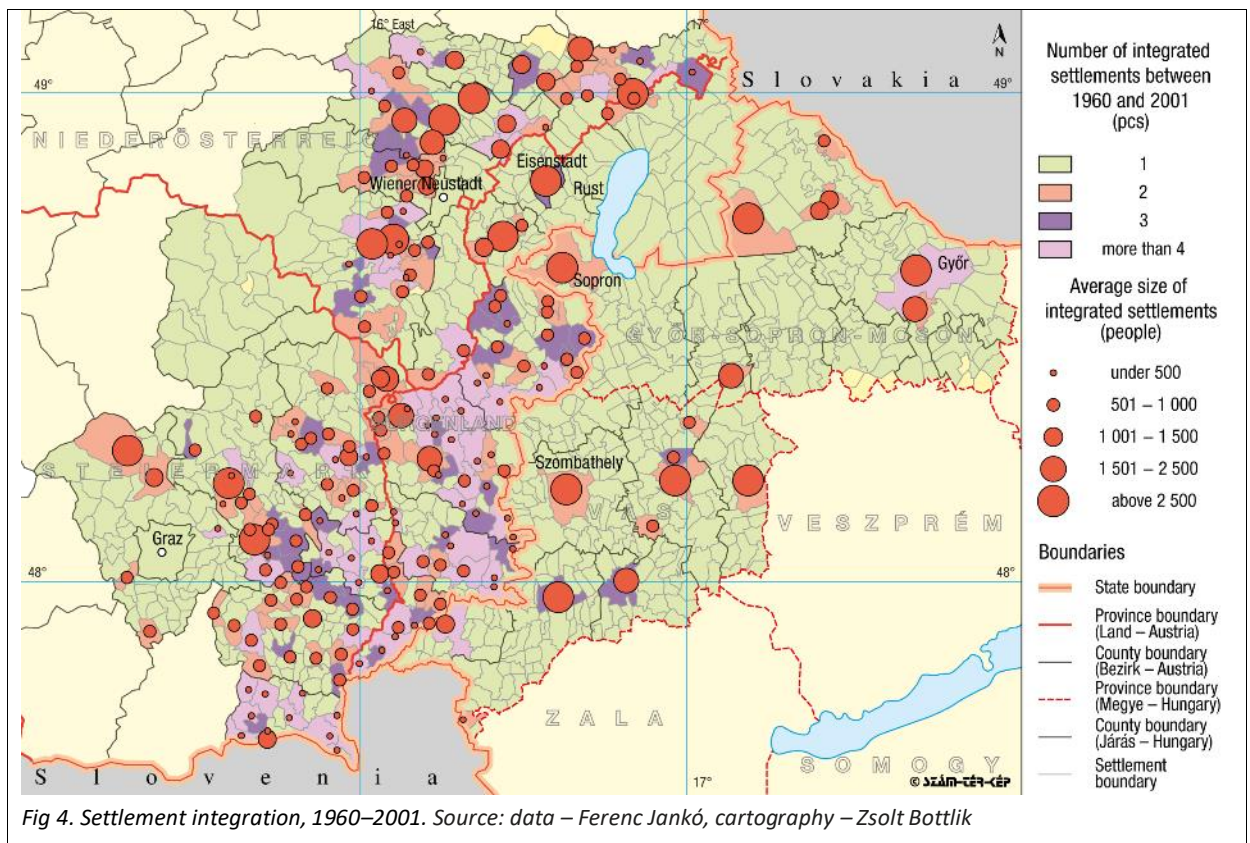
Fig 3. Distribution of employees between sectors, occupation types in the districts, 1910. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

Between the two world wars, there was probably no striking difference between the processes taking place in the Austrian and Hungarian halves of the border region, the tendencies remain the same. Almost all of the towns and villages on the Burgenland side lost population at this time, which could be partly due to the mass emigration already discussed; only the main urban centres were able to show positive change in population. As a result of the border changes, the southern half of Burgenland sank into deeper depression, although the northern half of the province suffered less from the economic difficulties; the majority of the municipalities were able to show population growth between 1920 and 1930. So, while the new urban network was being built in the twenties, there was a recession in the region's economy or at least in the otherwise peripheral Southern Burgenland (Knabl 1977, 23–24). The explanation seems obvious: in the Hungarian half of the border region, the towns that had remained in Hungary were able to mitigate the crisis situation that had developed due to the border changes, and in Northern Burgenland the proximity of Vienna and the good communications made the problems easier, however the railway network did not help the recovery there either. In addition, the completion of the main route 50 creating a proper connection between Southern and Northern Burgenland was still years away, and was only finished after World War II. Therefore, in this way, the divide between the north and south in the region was reinforced (Burghardt 1962).

Due to the border demarcation the catchment areas of majority of the towns were deformed and changed. The big losers, e.g., Sopron and Kőszeg, were in Hungary, while the “winners” were in Austria: the district seats, such as Eisenstadt and Mattersburg, etc. had to grow into their districts, and develop their urban functions. This proved to be the most problematic for Jennersdorf, which had been granted the rank of district seat. The transport geography problems made progress difficult, and so not everything could be organised in one fell swoop, because of this, these tiny administrative entities were unable to fully act as district centres for their potential hinterlands. In the south, initially it was only Oberwart that was able to profit from the new situation, and become the centre of Southern Burgenland, with Jennersdorf and Güssing suffering due to the loss of their former orientation towards Szombathely and Körmend (Burghardt 1962, 235–237; Győri and Jankó 2009; Seger et al. 1993, 64).

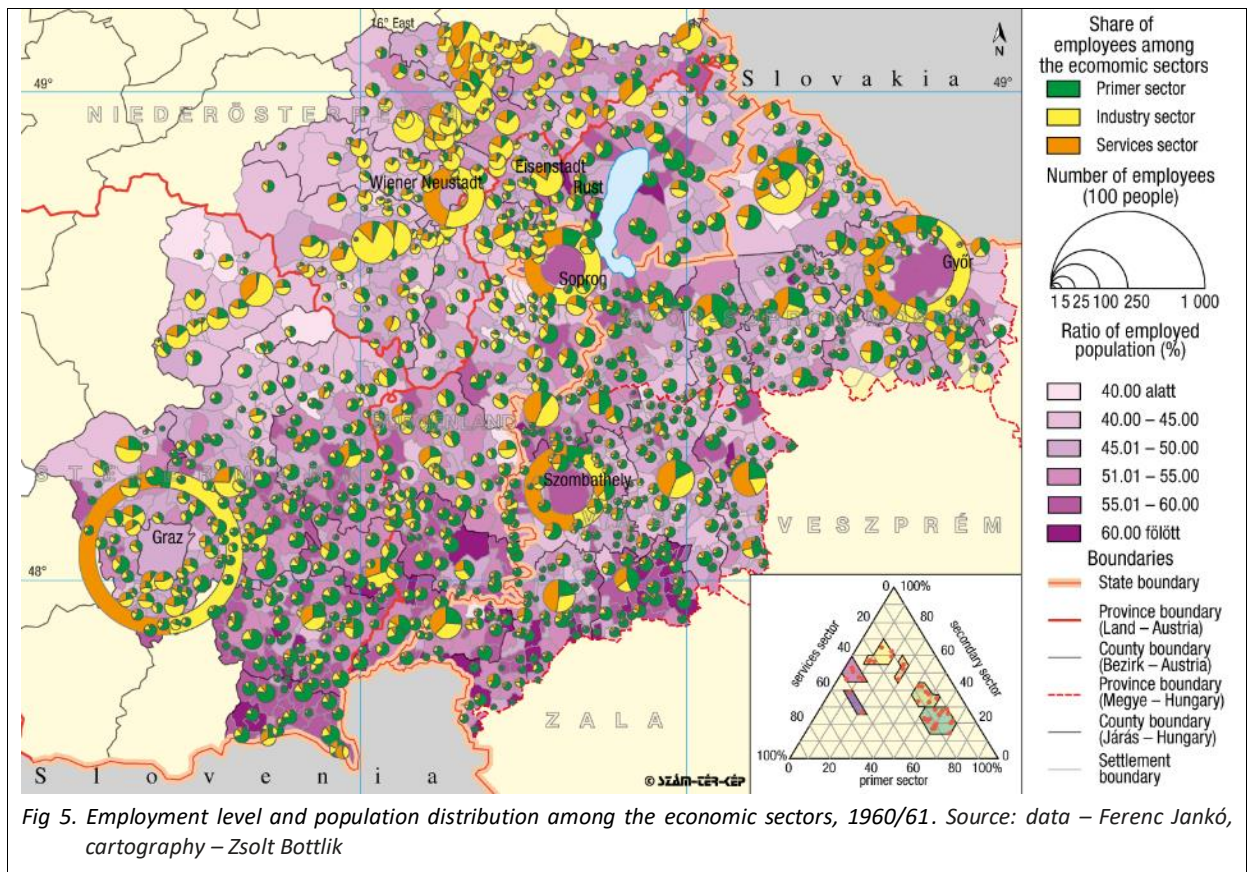
Regional development between 1945 and 1989

In 1960–61, we were able to outline the social configuration at municipality level in Burgenland's broader Austrian-Hungarian environment. By this time, urbanisation had extended even further; in the middle of the 20th century, continuous rural areas almost only existed in the hilly regions, in Southern Burgenland and in the southern part of Vas County. However, the data depicted according to the municipality structure of 2001–2011 do not show the advanced level of depopulation of the small villages. This problem was addressed in Eastern Austria from the 1970s through public administration rationalisation, i.e., settlements were merged, so in this way the depopulated villages could actually be wiped off the map and so from the statistics too. At the same time, Fig. 4 shows that even using this method, the average population of the merged villages in Southern Burgenland and the Eastern Styria hill region does not even reach five hundred in many cases. The consolidation process taking place at the same time on the Hungarian side was primarily related to larger villages being reclassified as towns, and to the merger of villages with towns, e.g., Győr and Szentgotthárd. In this case, the motivation was different, for example, this was how Szentgotthárd achieved the population of 8000 required for town status. Public administration rationalisation similar to that occurring in Austria could have been done on the Hungarian side too, as the population erosion in the small villages was similar. The number of villages of less than 500: in Győr-Sopron County, there were 23, in Vas County, there were 64; in Burgenland, following consolidation, there were 25 (137 before consolidation); in Lower Austria 21 (83 before consolidation), and in Styria 66 (188 before consolidation).



The most striking social process behind this phenomenon of dwindling village populations on both sides of the border includes the decline in the population living from agriculture and the related migration. As a result of its more rural settlement structure, Burgenland had a much larger agricultural population, which only dropped below the combined data for the two Hungarian counties by the time of the 1970–71 census (KSH 1971a-b; ÖSZ 1972). Nevertheless, the related map Fig. 5 shows that there were more extensive agriculture areas at this time in Western Transdanubia than in Eastern Austria. The decline of agriculture was in close relationship with settlement size: agriculture dominated in the areas of small villages in Austria and Hungary.

However, the process of the reduction of the proportion of agricultural workers took place much quicker in Austria, and there, by the time of the change of regime in Hungary, the proportion of agricultural workers was half of that in West Hungary, approaching the average level of Western Europe. All this took place with a smallholding system being established in both countries after the division of the large estates, however in Burgenland, the family farm system remained, even during the decade of Soviet occupation, while in Hungary, the majority of cooperative and state farms used a system of large-field, large-scale production (Lichtenberger 2002, 261; Seger et al. 1993, 50–53).



As compared to 1910, industrial development in the agglomeration of Vienna and the transformation of the workforce into industrial employees had progressed hugely by the 1960s, and even in the whole eastern part of Lower Austria and the northwest part of Burgenland. This was all in spite of the fact that there were no motorways or dual carriageways anywhere yet. In the same way, there was spectacular industrialisation in the Mur valley near Graz and in Southern Burgenland's Pinkafeld, Oberwart and Rechnitz. Although we know industry was slow to start in Burgenland. By the eve of World War II Eisenstadt still had no important industrial employer, and within the industry of the province only some sugar factories and textile mills had any significance greater than supplying local demands (Bodo 1941, 39–40). The Soviet occupation had a significant negative impact on development for many years, putting the new province at a disadvantage until 1955, with hardly any of the Marshall Aid getting here and investors avoiding it (Titz 1977, 69, 83–91).

However, the economy in the whole of Austria recovered with difficulty after World War II, and consequentially unemployment dropped only very slowly. But in the 1960s, there was intensive industrial development throughout all of Austria driven by the construction of the infrastructure networks. It was at this time that Burgenland really got connected to the rest of the Austrian provinces. This is true mainly for the northern part of Burgenland, which, in addition to the creation of commuting possibilities, became part of the recreational zone around Vienna and a popular internal tourism region. Contrary to this, development in Southern and Central Burgenland remained the slowest with there being little industrial

investment there, and the low wages continued to motivate the men to travel for work (Trummer 1995, 25–29). The final result was that the north-south differences were heightened. In the 1970s, the federal government gave greater support to the province and in 1974, the development directions were marked out within the framework of the cooperation program, and the continued development of the local infrastructure had a beneficial effect on investments. However, a substantial proportion of these investments required a large, low-skilled workforce (primarily electronics, metal and textile industry investments), and the added value produced in the province remained relatively low (Kiss 2017). Due to this, curbing the ever-present migration resulting from the limited regional labour market was a very slow process (Lang and Polsterer 2005, 94–95).

Accordingly, it was not the top sectors that settled in Burgenland first of all; instead light industry companies came here, but with more advanced technology than in neighbouring West Hungary. Still in the 1960s, the textile industry was the largest employer, but by that time the metal, machine and electric industries were already growing: between 1956 and 1960, a total of 33 new factories were built and a further 40 were built between 1961 and 1963, creating four thousand new jobs. The increase in the number of industrial workers in Burgenland was especially significant when compared with the Hungarian counties on the other side of the border. The much more intense rate of motorisation and the infrastructure development enabling this played a large role in this: initially, bus transport had a very important role, and by 1970, the advanced, good quality road network created the north-south connection in the province with these factors enabling more workers to commute and extending the reach of the daily commuting zone (Burghardt 1962; Krenn 2012).

By contrast, industrialisation in Győr-Sopron and Vas Counties was held back for political reasons: in the first decades of the socialist planned economy, the development of industry in the areas along the western and southern borders was not thought to be advisable for strategic reasons. In the 1960s, industrialisation, with respect to the occupation structure of the population, was only to be found in the region around Győr. It was due to this that the more northern Hungarian county, similarly to Burgenland, stood at 35% in terms of the proportion of industrial workers, while Vas County only stood at 24%. Meanwhile, the service sector only had no outstanding role in employment in the towns (KSH 1962a-b).

A significant proportion of the Burgenland population was still forced to commute, mainly to Vienna and Lower Austria, only now it was industry that was the main employer among commuters. At the time of the census in 1961, there were some 37 thousand commuters in the province. Of these, 24 thousand travelled to work beyond the borders of Burgenland. However, the attraction of Graz and Styria, the jobs available there remained at a low level, with only 2200 commuting to Styria, in contrast with the 14 thousand travelling to Vienna and the 7000 to Lower Austria. All these factors had a negative impact on the development of Southern Burgenland, meaning that weekly commuting remained significant, and is still frequent today (Knabl 1977, 27–28; Titz 1977, 70; Windisch 1991, 54–55). At the time of the 2011 census, there were 98.5 thousand commuters (from a total of 133 thousand employees, 74%) from which 49.1 thousand commuted outside of Burgenland. It must also be seen, however, that in the whole of Lower Austria and Styria, the percentage of employees commuting out of the municipalities did not significantly differ, which was 71% in Lower Austria and 61% in Styria (SA 2013a-c). In comparison: in Győr-Moson-Sopron County, the proportion of commuters was 44% in 2011 and 45% in Vas County (KSH 2011).

The closing of the borders in the period of socialism held back the development of the regions along the Hungarian border significantly; up to the 1970s, there were hardly any investments at all, neither in the economy nor in the field of public infrastructure (Rechnitzer 1999, 83–86; Seger et al. 1993, 54–55, 63–66; Szörényiné 1999, 247–250). However, in Burgenland, these developments aimed at improving the living conditions of the population, were at a very advanced stage, by the 1960s modernisation within the home caused very significant differences in the standard of living between the two sides of the border.

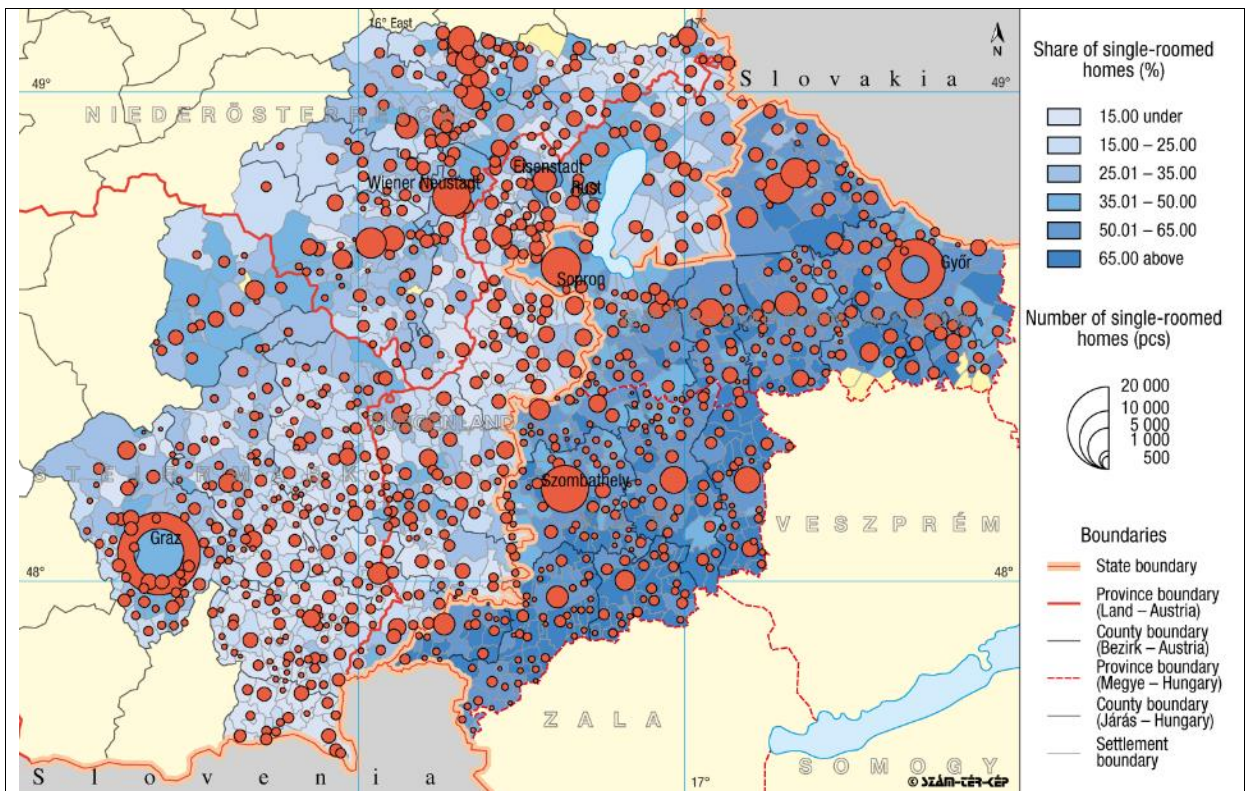


Fig 6. The number and ratio of single-roomed homes, 1960/61. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

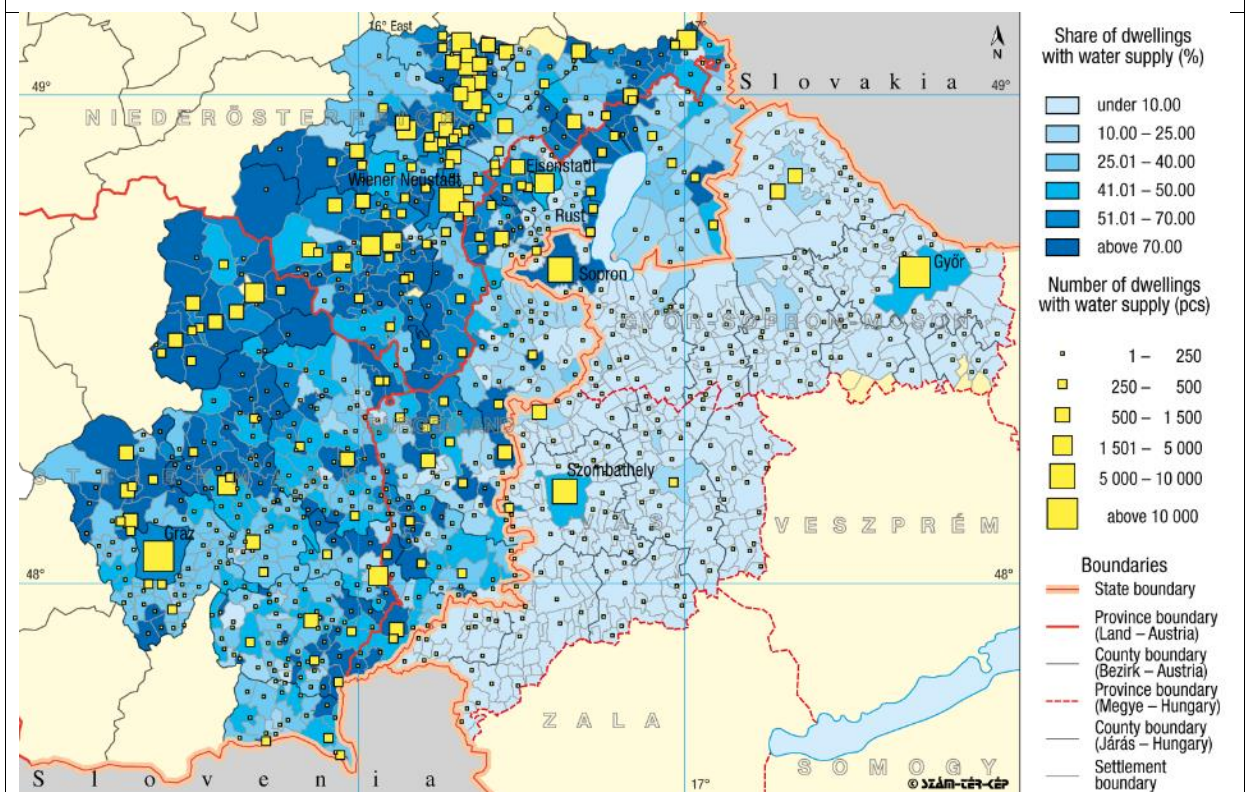


Fig 7. The number and ratio of homes with mains water supply, 1960/61. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

Consequentially, by 1960 in Burgenland, there was no village where single-room homes were in the majority, showing remarkable renewal of the buildings (Fig. 6), and the construction of the electricity and water networks in the villages was also at an advanced stage (Fig. 7), with respect to the latter, it was

only Central Burgenland that was visibly behind (and South-eastern Styria to a certain extent), but overall, the province was not at all at a disadvantage compared to Lower Austria and Styria. It could be easily seen that these public infrastructure developments did not follow the economy; the modernisation was largely implemented independently of the industrialisation process. On the other side of the border, the electricity cables wove their way around West Hungary only slowly, although the village electrification program in Hungary had been announced in the 1950s. In addition to this, the mains water supply and even running water in the home spread even more slowly. The proportion of village homes with mains water reached 50% in 1980 in the villages of Győr-Sopron County and only by the time of the 1990 census in the villages of Vas County.

The more intensive economy and infrastructure developments starting in West Hungary from the 1970s were primarily concentrated in the county seats and towns, and the investments implemented in the 1970s resulted in fast growth in production. The region's previous disadvantageous geographical position had started to become advantageous. Western technology appeared, joint ventures were established, and shopping tourism started. In certain towns, such as Sopron, Mosonmagyaróvár, Kőszeg and Győr a diverse and blossoming service sector had started to develop. Then, from the end of the 1980s, workers increasingly travelled to Austria for work, first illegally then later legally. Development was very strongly influenced in that the road and railway lines linking Western Europe and Hungary passed through the region. The latter were of special significance from the point of view of transit traffic (Honvári 2007).

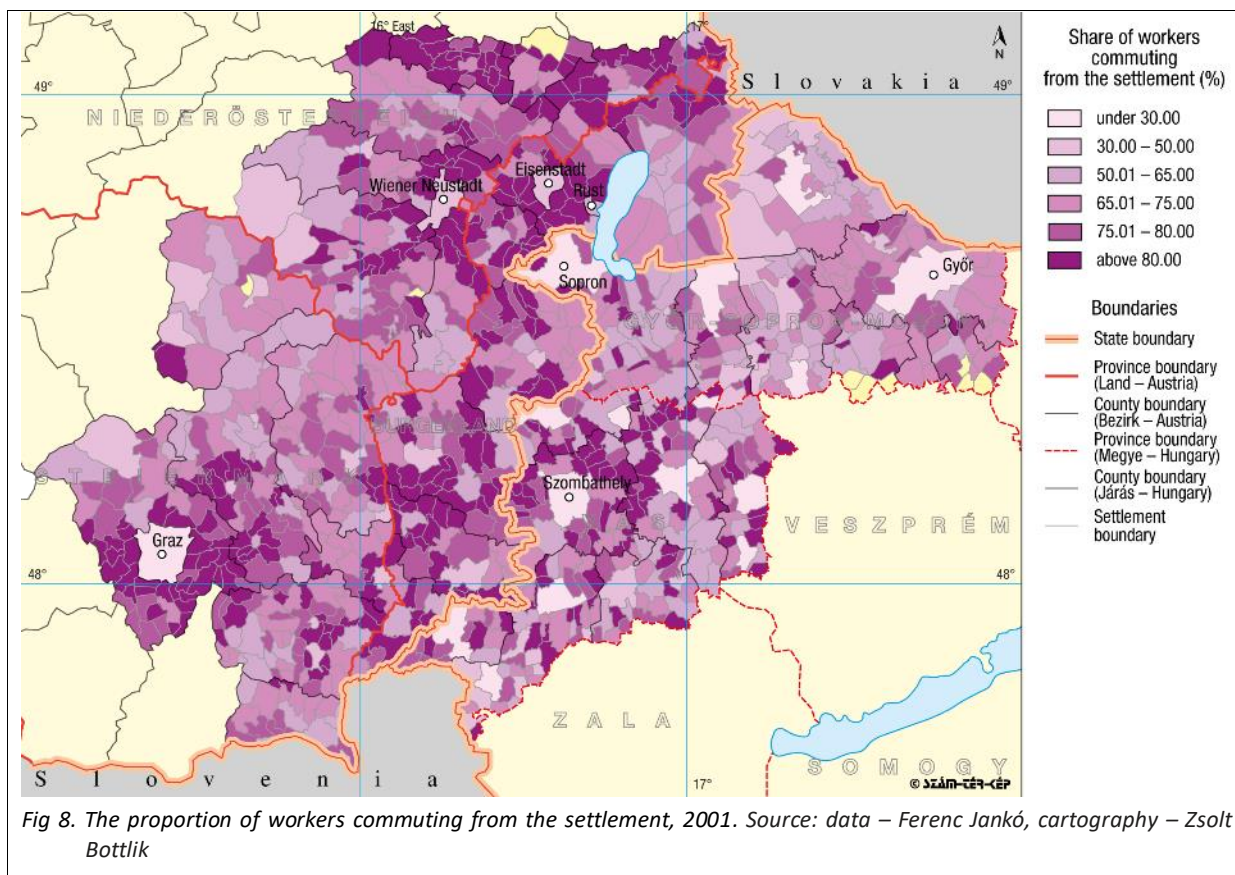
West Hungary mostly has good agricultural land, hence the socialist modernisation of the villages may have been the achievement of agricultural productivity as state developments were less common in rural areas. However, the West Hungary development outlined above was much below that produced in Burgenland, which otherwise was seen as the most underdeveloped region of the country. A form of balance may be drawn of this modernisation on the basis of the development of the population in the era. Increases in population can almost only be seen in the towns on the Hungarian side of the border. Rural regions suffered general population erosion, and the southern parts of the two Hungarian counties were especially impacted by this process (KSH 2011; SA 2002g).

Interweaving border area? Remaining inequalities

As a result of the processes taking place, the role of the urban centres in the study area was reinforced. On the basis of the regional population trends, the agglomerations of Vienna, Graz, and of the much smaller Győr and Szombathely were becoming increasingly defined, while the group of municipalities around Sopron increasingly became a part of the Vienna agglomeration after crossing the border was made easier. It is important to note that after 1990, suburbanisation started around the larger Hungarian towns – medium-sized and large towns in Hungary – meaning the urban population moving out to the surrounding towns and villages. This process may be seen in the commuting data, for example, with the map of workers commuting from these settlements showing the many smaller employment centres and the surrounding villages characterised by more intensive outward commuting (Fig. 8).

It is also visible on this map that the indicated Graz and Vienna agglomerations are split up into several smaller components, and smaller employment sub-centres may be observed around Graz and to the south of Vienna, where the roles of Wiener Neustadt and Eisenstadt are especially important. It is conspicuous that twice as many, more than ten thousand people, travel to work in Eisenstadt than to Sopron, which has five times the population, in other words nearly as many as actually live in the town itself (SA 2002a-b). The provincial capital's role as employment centre is prominent, which speaks much of the success of the urban development taking place in Eisenstadt. The data clearly show Sopron's inability to attract a workforce, which is a consequence of the Trianon border demarcation with the town having five thousand fewer potential commuters at the turn of the millennium (KSH 2002a). Not only Eisenstadt but also other smaller Burgenland towns function as large workforce attraction centres, which are especially prominent in comparison with the Hungarian side. In 2001, there was still no significant commuting in the districts around Győr and Sopron, but the trend of the past decades is growing. One of the reasons of growth in commuting on the Hungarian side is the EU accession of 2004, but especially the opening of the Austrian labour market in 2011 and the Austrian job market developing as a consequence of the boom

following the recession (Pogátsa 2017). As a result, Sopron became a great migration destination within Hungary with a significant part of those moving and those living here commuting to Austria in the past decade because of the large differences in labour wages (Kiss et al. 2018; Bertalan 2020).



It was in this way that Eisenstadt, with its constantly growing population, improved its position in the Austrian town hierarchy as well. In spite of its small-town population, the rank as provincial capital brought innumerable regional functions to Eisenstadt, which at the same time is a prominent migration centre within the Vienna city region. However, the majority of small towns in the region are characterised by an increasing population, with only the small towns with a stagnating or decreasing population being in the south (Kovács 2017). On the Hungarian side of the border though by the 1960s Sopron, which had lost a large part of its catchment area and then its role as county centre, had temporarily sunk to the level of a medium-sized town. A greater decline than this could only be seen in Kőszeg, its development had come to a halt already at the beginning of the 19th century and today, on the basis of its functions, it counts as a small town. Sopron, however, primarily as a result of the economic functions being revived after the change of regime, today once again counts as a county centre with restored regional functions and organises the life of its region (Beluszky and Győri 2004, 20, 25–26).

From the development of the past decades, it may be clearly concluded that while Burgenland turned towards Vienna and less so to Graz, Western Transdanubia, i.e., West Hungary turned to the east until the 1970s. With the relaxing of the political climate in the 1970s, economic connections between the two regions, which had been strictly separated by the border until then, started to revive (tourism, shopping, etc.), then at the time of the change of regime in Hungary, these connections saw explosive growth. The Austrian capital, as it had done a hundred years previously, undertook a significant role in the modernisation of the economy of the region, through the privatisation of old companies or the establishment of new enterprises, even at the cost of jobs in Burgenland or Austria in some cases. The companies with a share of foreign capital, i.e., from Germany and Austria are those that played a significant role in the integration of the economy of the border region. The converging of the Hungarian

and Austrian markets also meant that the competition between companies on both sides of the border region intensified, which in the long run resulted in the market and the population being better supplied in Hungary too (Lang 2005, 147–148; Rechnitzer 1999, 94–95).

An iconic phenomenon in the region is shopping tourism, in which both parties mutually participated, the Hungarians primarily sought household and electronic appliances, which were in short supply. The peak point of this was immediately following the opening of the border, at the turn of the 1980–1990s. The Austrian shoppers initially came to Hungary for the cheap, state-subsidised foodstuffs, clothing and for personal and healthcare services (dentists, hairdressers, auto mechanics, etc.). Following the peak occurring in the middle of the 1990s, Austrian shopping tourism declined, becoming hardly visible in certain towns (Kőszeg, Szombathely). It may be assumed, however, and is a little visible in Sopron, that with the further improvement of the transport connections, the catchment areas of the centres along the border have been rehabilitated to an extent, at least with respect to trade (Michalkó 2004, 28, 70–76; Horváth-Saródi and Mándli 2014; Bertalan 2020).

Although Burgenland was for a long time considered an underdeveloped region, this statement is increasingly less true of the northern part. Following Austria's accession to the European Union on 1 January 1995, they were able to achieve spectacular results with the use of the incoming funding. Due to its low level of economic development, Burgenland specifically became one of the EU's subsidised regions (*Ziel-1 Gebiet*), meaning it received significant support from the Union's structural funds. Although the opening of the eastern border shook the economy somewhat, with many of the textile mills closing and moving to the east, the region endeavoured to make use of the subsidies to attract multinationals that produce more knowledge-intensive, high-added-value products and services (Kiss 2017). Today, Burgenland counts as a region of average development in the EU with respect to per capita GDP, although this is true because of the eastern expansion. It is striving to reap profit from the eastern expansion of the EU with a technology-intensive development policy, much investment in tourism, in addition the development of the energy sector based on renewable sources is lending a unique character to the economy (Binder and Rupp 2001; Lang and Polsterer 2005, 95–96). There are many spectacular examples of the exploiting of renewable energy sources, such as the several hundreds of wind turbines installed on the northern shore of Lake Neusiedl, and bioenergy-based developments (Pappné Vancsó et al. 2017).

The shrinking regional development level differences in the Austrian-Hungarian border region are outlined well by the social statistics indicators. The tertiarisation process is more progressed in Burgenland and the other two eastern Austrian provinces, with the proportion of industrial and agricultural workers only reaching a higher level in a small number of industrial or farming areas. As a result, the rural nature of the land can still be seen in North-eastern Burgenland and North-eastern Styria (Fig. 9–10).

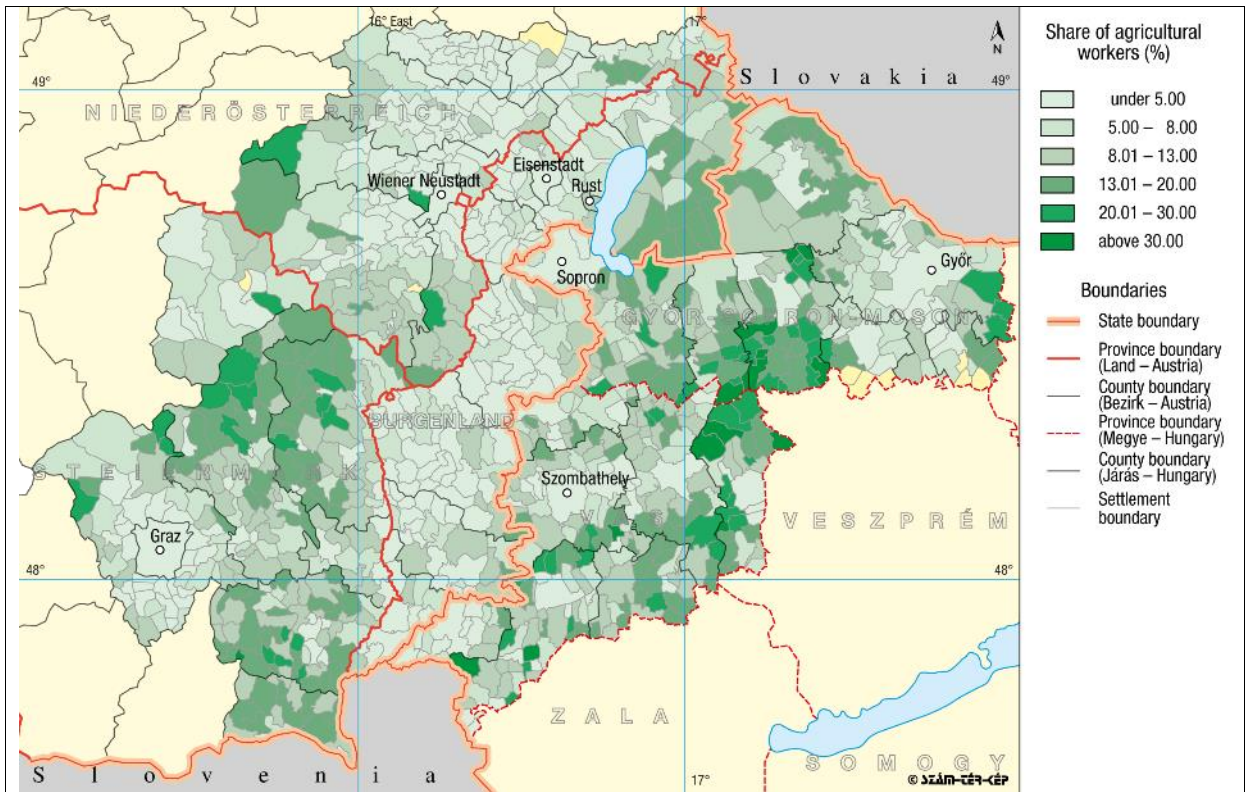


Fig 9. The ratio of agricultural workers, 2001. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

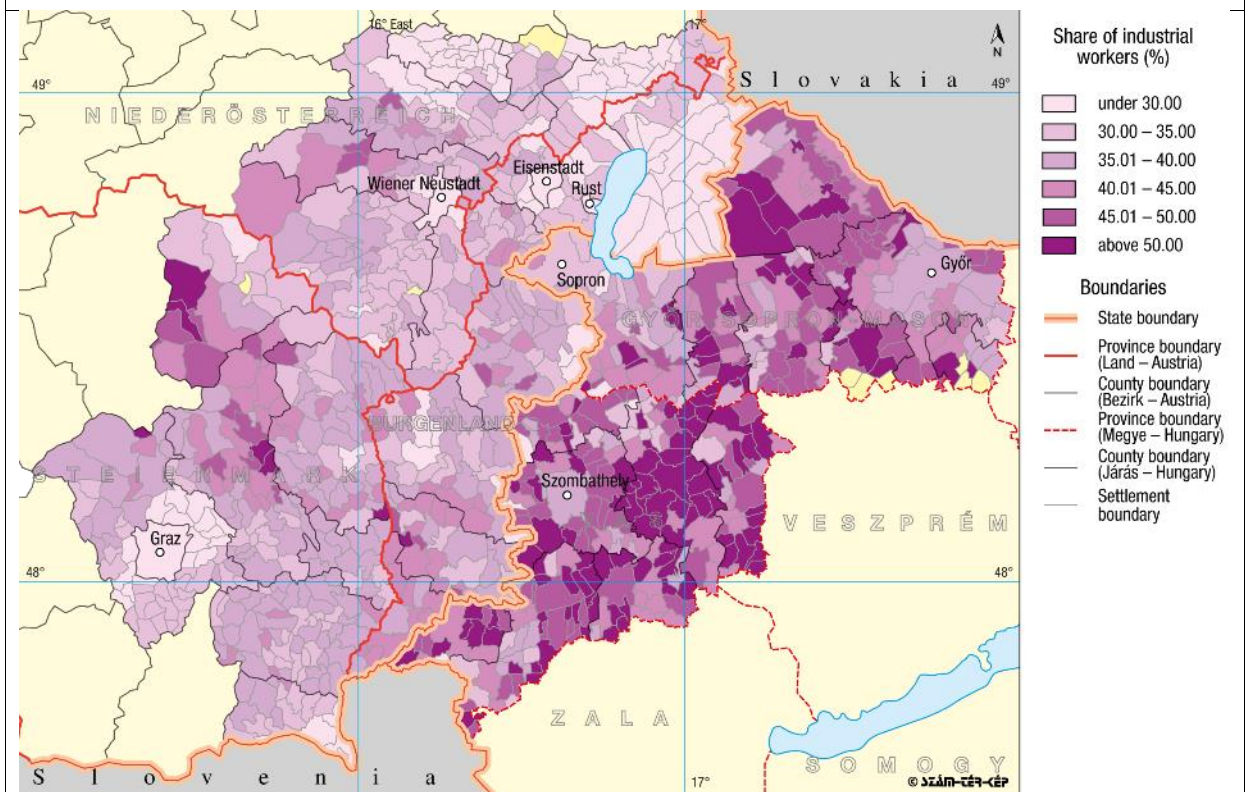


Fig 10. The ratio of industrial workers, 2001. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

The proportion of industrial workers at the turn of the millennium was only high in the Hungarian region, since then this area has experienced a significant drop in this map and then slight growth after the end of the crisis starting in 2008, or at least this is shown by the available regional data (Fig. 11). However, the infrastructural differences remain, furthermore in some respects, these have even become more

defined as well. Today, there are no differences in basic infrastructure (water and electricity supply), however in Burgenland and more to the west, it is hard to find a home that has fewer than four rooms, while in the Hungarian parts of the region in 2001, there are numerous low-population villages where one fifth of the homes had just one room. Pre-1945 residential buildings are common in Vas County and in the southern part of Győr-Moson-Sopron County (Fig. 12). The heightening of the differences is a consequence of the much more dynamic home construction that took place in Burgenland with a similar process taking place in Hungary only in large and medium-sized towns and in the suburban zone villages scattered around them. At the same time, a significant proportion of the homes in the central and southern parts of Burgenland, and in almost the entire area of Győr-Moson-Sopron County were built in the period between 1945–1990, which is an indication of the relatively better situation of the time and the slight slowdown that has occurred since then (Fig. 13). In parallel with all this, the homes built after 1990 are again only characteristic of the more dynamic regions: Lower Austria, the region of Graz and Northern Burgenland. All this may also be related to the age structure, as the elderly do not build houses: compared to both neighbouring regions (Lower Austria, Styria and Western Transdanubia) the society of Central and Southern Burgenland has become older, and the ratio of those in childhood is low. Only the southern part of Vas County and the towns and villages in the two counties along the border are affected by ageing population (Fig. 14–15).

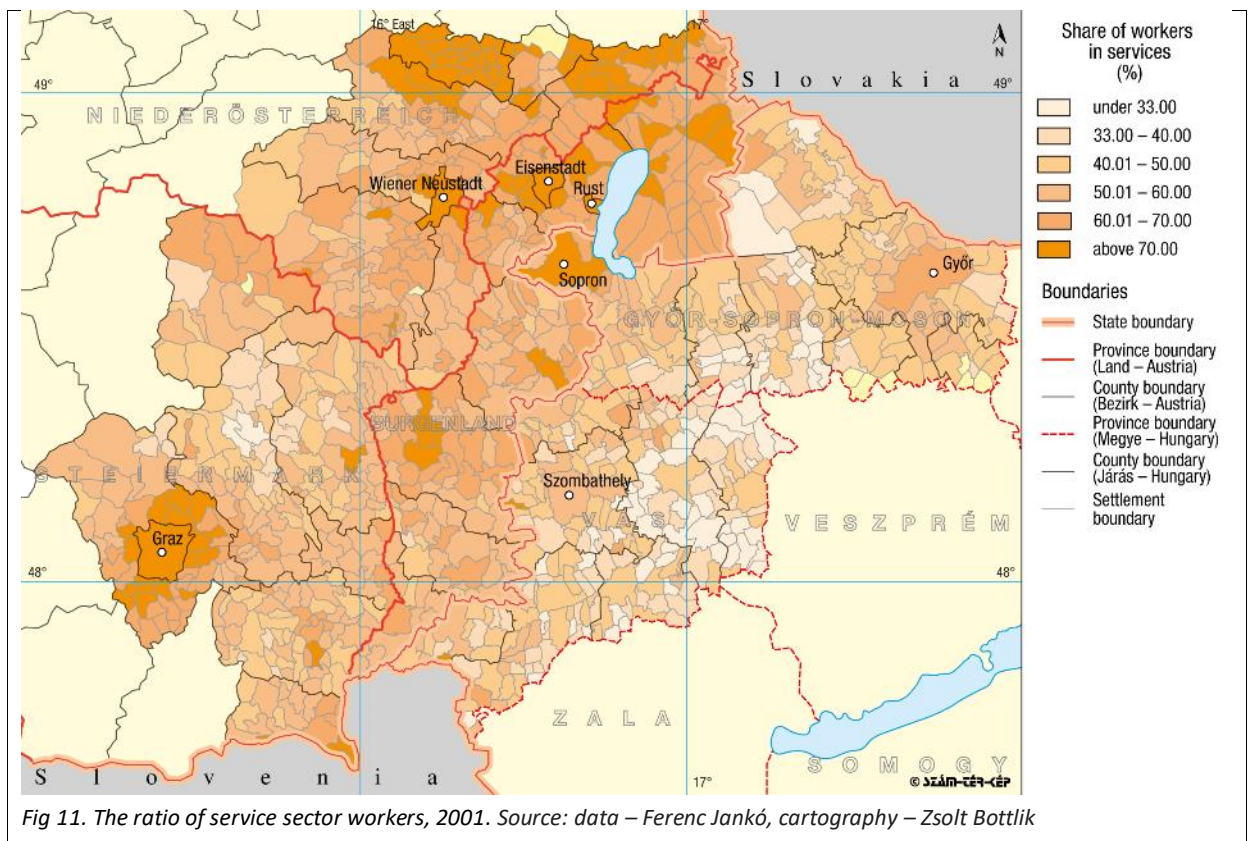


Fig 11. The ratio of service sector workers, 2001. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

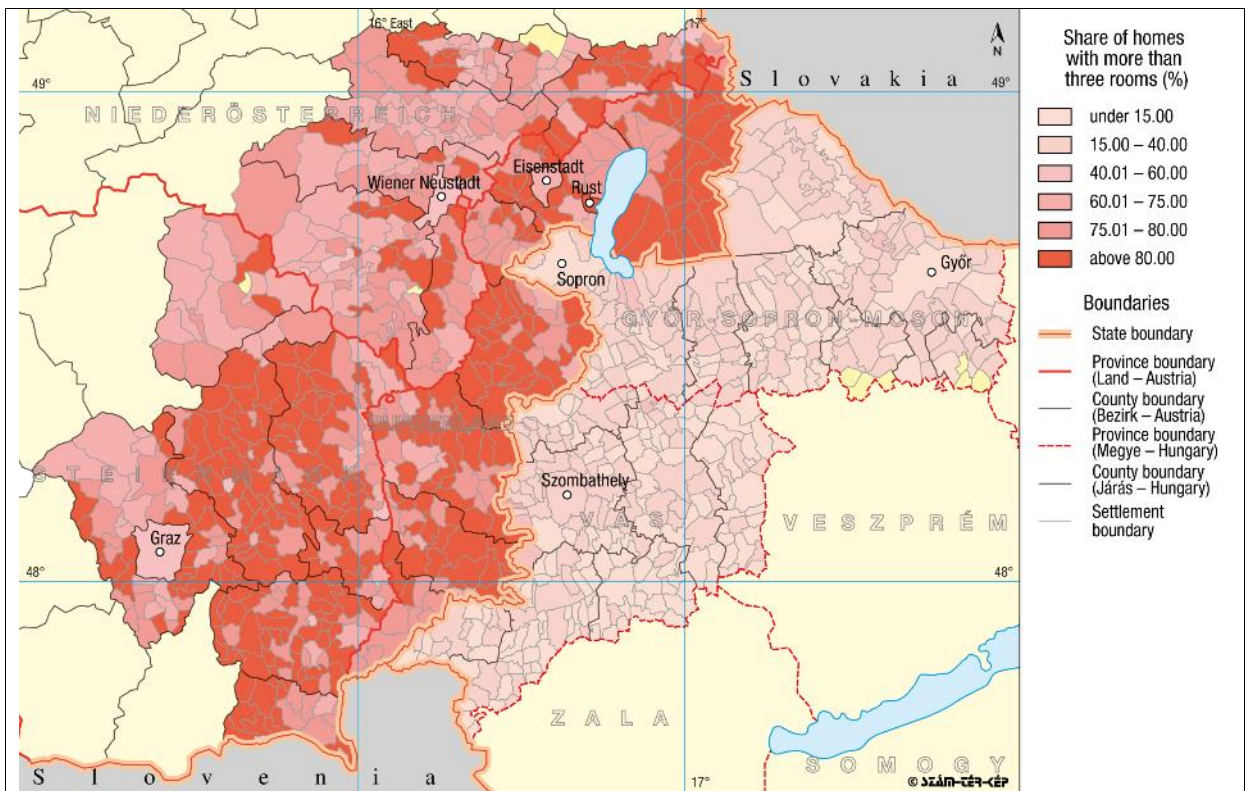


Fig 12. The proportion of homes with four or more rooms, 2001. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

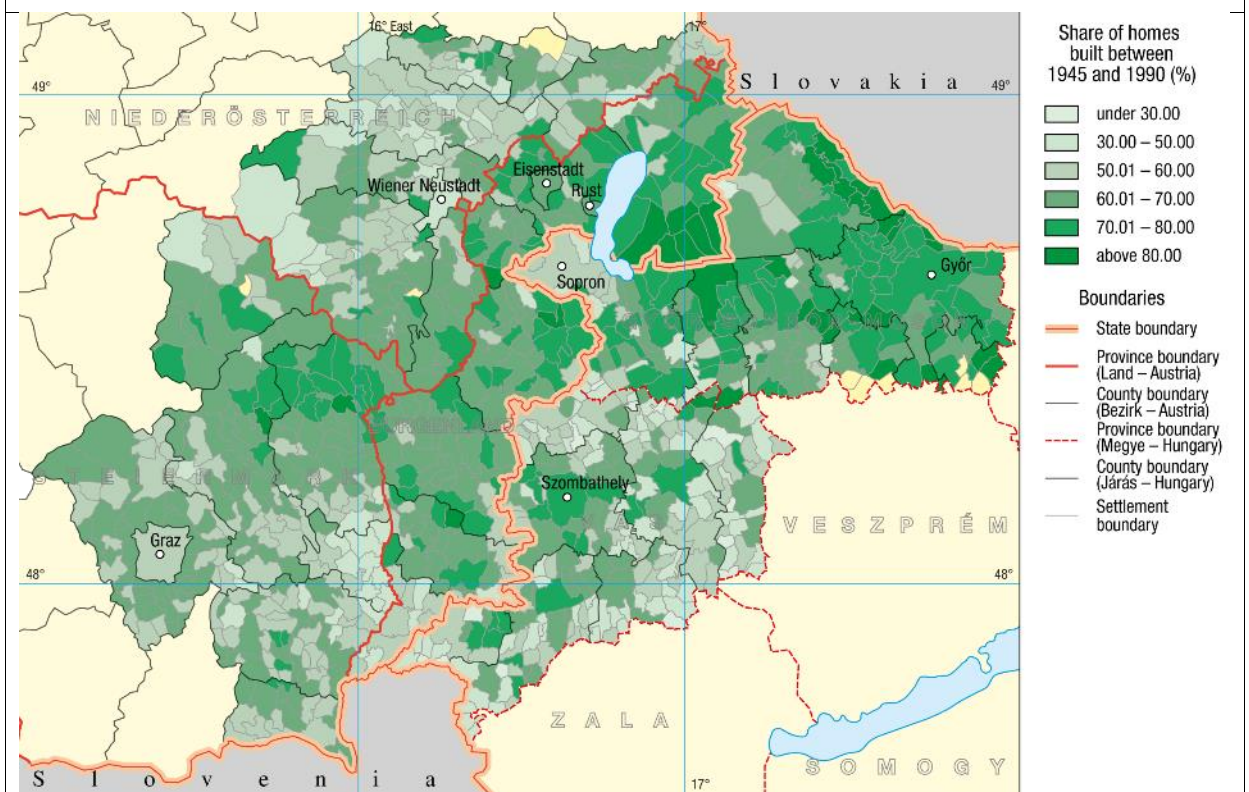


Fig 13. The proportion of homes built between 1945 and 1990, 2001. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

Demographic trends following 1990 are reflected well in the processes that have not changed direction at all. A strong north-south contrast may be observed quite distinctly on the Austrian side, with a population decline in Central and Southern Burgenland. In Northern Burgenland, the Seewinkel area of the former Moson County with its strong agricultural character looks to be polarising; a slight population increase has occurred in the past ten years or so in the small centres. The north-south contrast is perhaps

less striking in Győr-Moson-Sopron and Vas counties, but it is still present. For example, most of the villages along the now reopened Austrian-Hungarian border saw an increase in population since the change of regime. However, significant population erosion is taking place in the southernmost parts of Vas county.

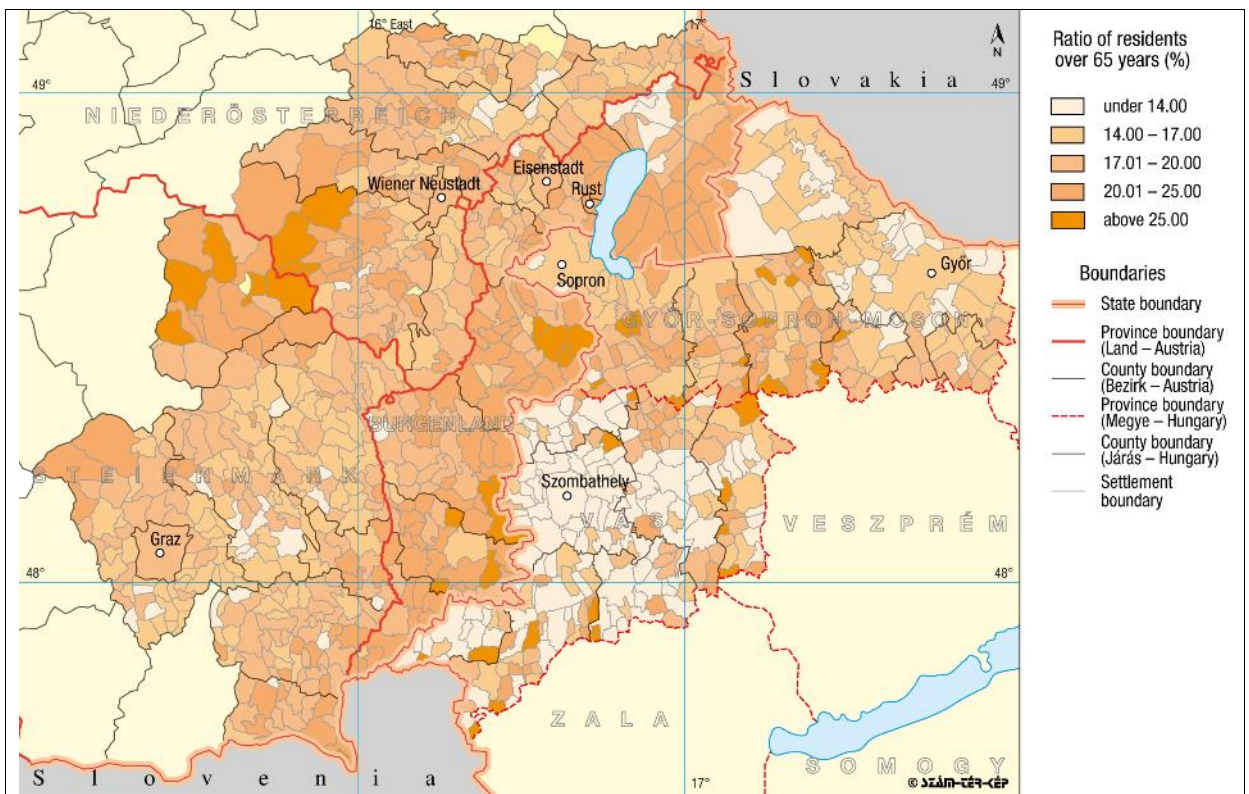


Fig 14. The ratio of elderly people, 2011. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

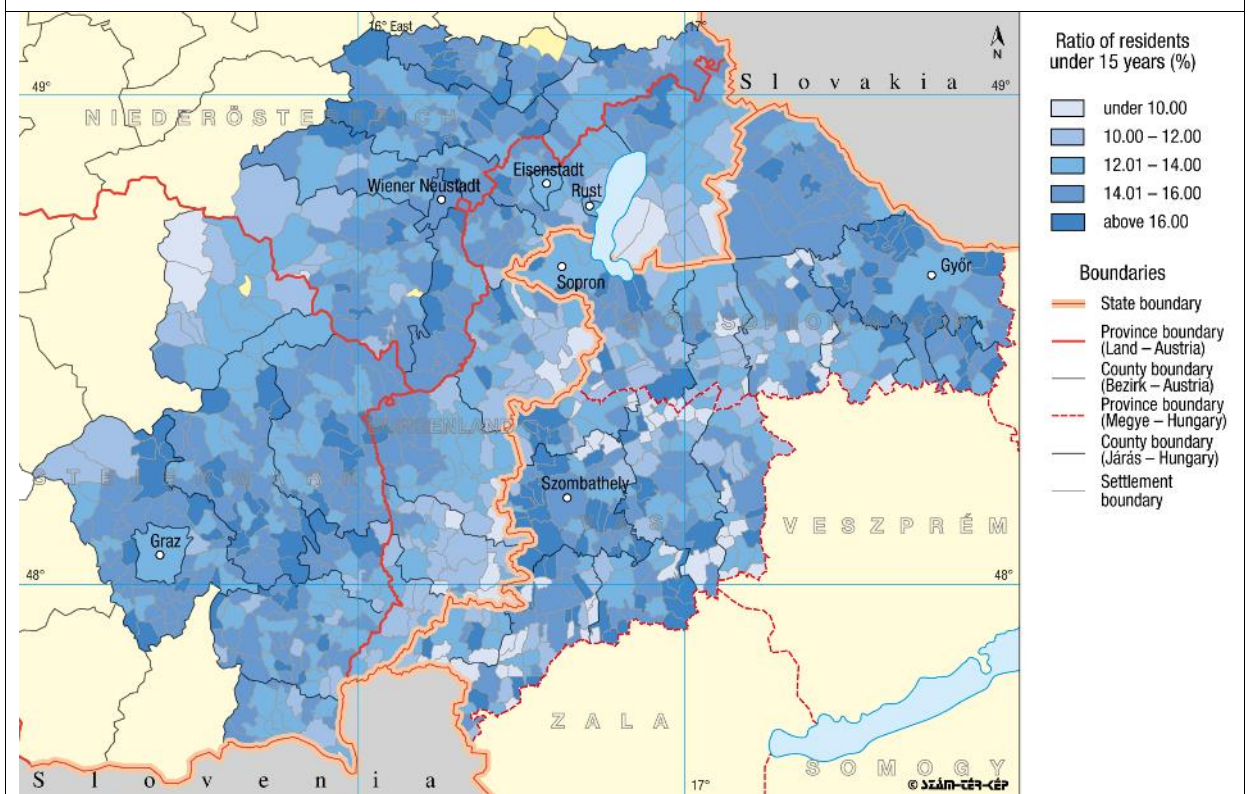


Fig 15. The ratio of residents under 15 years, 2011. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

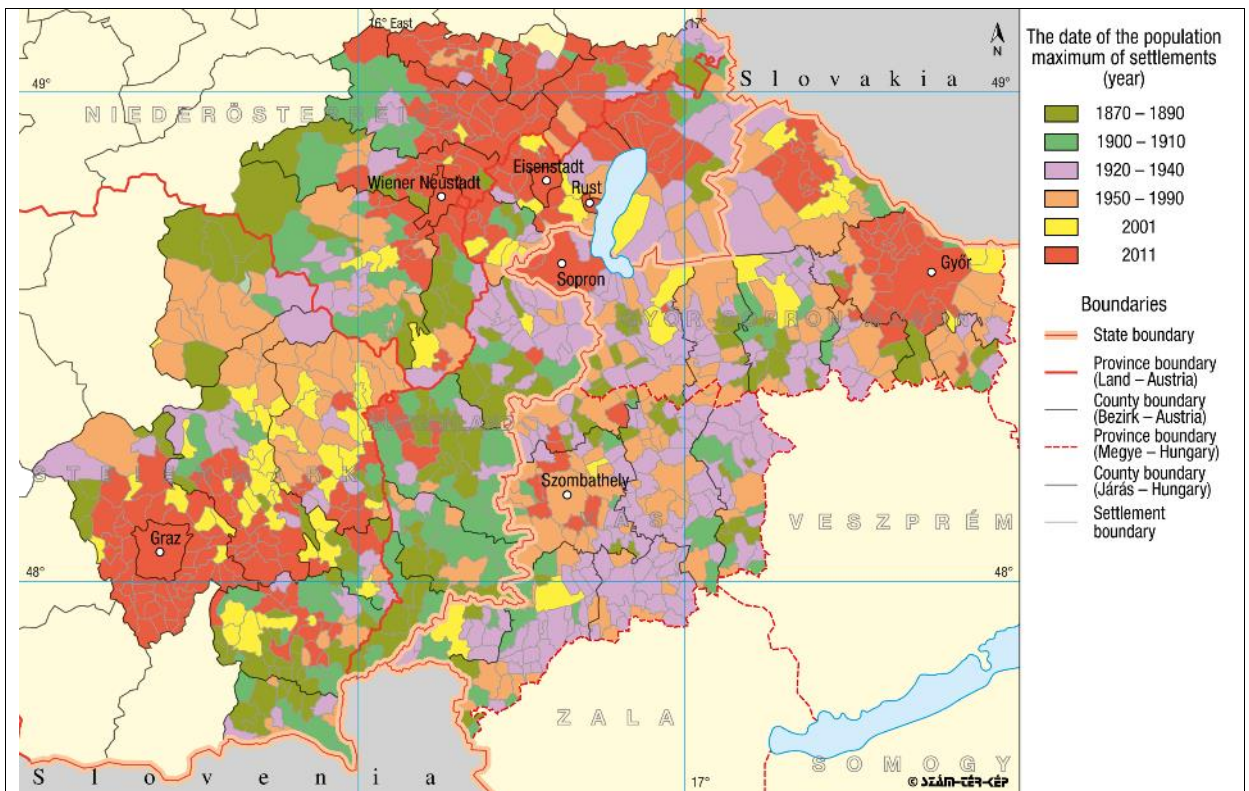


Fig 16. The date of the population maximum of settlements. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

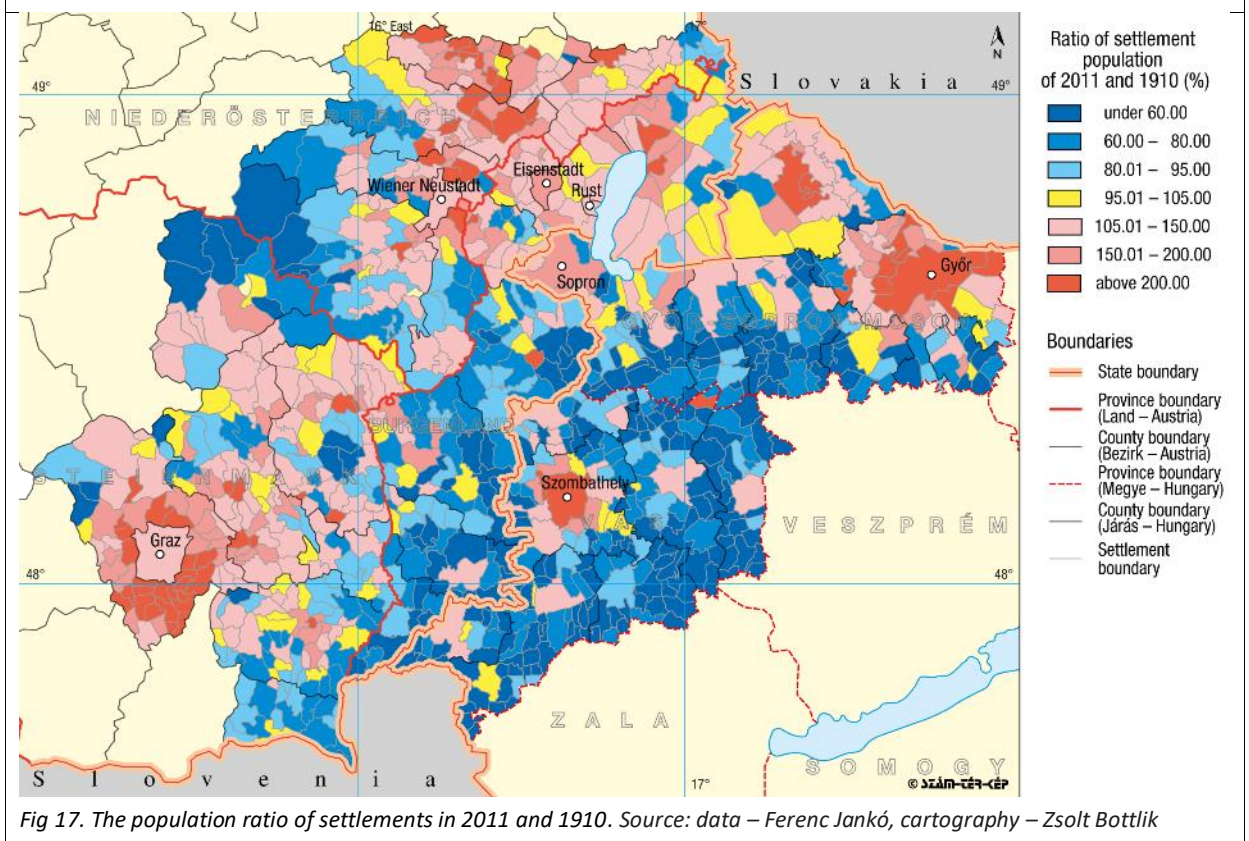


Fig 17. The population ratio of settlements in 2011 and 1910. Source: data – Ferenc Jankó, cartography – Zsolt Bottlik

The north-south differences are even quite visible over a larger timescale. In the period of the censuses – between 1870 and 2011 – the population centre-point in Burgenland moved from the south to the north, in other words the population grew in the northern towns and villages and declined in the south. However, between 2001 and 2011, this centre-point moved sharply to the west, which indicates the strengthening

of the Vienna and Graz catchment areas, in other words the population growth in the western parts of the province at the expense of the eastern municipalities along the border (Gyóri and Jankó 2017, 418–420). In the light of this, it is no surprise that the towns and villages in the southern half of today's Burgenland, Southern Burgenland and the southern part of Central Burgenland, had the greatest population around the turn of the century, i.e., during the period of the Kingdom of Hungary (Fig. 16). For example, today's district seat of Jennersdorf had a thousand fewer residents in 2011 than at the time of its population peak in 1890, when the town did not yet have its district seat function. The reason for this very probably needs to be sought in the unique features of the settlement structure of the region. The areas of small villages presumably lost their ability to retain their populations then at the turn of the century because of the reduced need for manual labour in agriculture. This is in spite of the fact that the majority of the settlements in the region showed a positive population growth in the period of 1870–1910, notwithstanding that some 25 thousand people migrated from the area of the later Burgenland to the New World up to the start of World War I (Dujmovits 1984). Apart from Burgenland, such regions in Austria may only be found around Radkersburg in South-eastern Styria, and in the hill areas of Lower Austria and Styria, such as in the eastern half of Bucklige Welt. The settlements marked purple on the map at their population peak between 1920 and 1940 became connected in turn to these settlements marked in green in these same hilly regions, but the same thing may also be seen in the northern half of Central Burgenland. It is striking, however, that on the Hungarian side, there are much more extensive areas that belong to this category. The population erosion was of such an extent that the population of these villages does not even reach the half of the maximum registered in the census periods. The same extensive areas may also be found in the rural southern region of Burgenland, however, more to the west only in the border region between Lower Austria and Styria and in the district of Radkersburg. Perhaps showing the different courses of the settlements better is the map that shows the population ratio. The picture is deceiving: it is as if the entire Southern and Central Burgenland were Szombathely's emptying hinterland, which at least indicates that these rural regions, Austrian for some 100 years now, suffer population depletion and ageing, just like extensive areas of Vas County and the southern districts of Győr-Moson-Sopron County. On the other part, however, the extensive areas of the Vienna and Graz agglomerations are clearly visible, which almost touch each other in this respect in the vicinity of the route of the A2 motorway. The spread of the Graz agglomeration, though, seems as if it has its boundary before the Burgenland border (Fig. 17).

5. Discussion and conclusion

The border region of the study is in many aspects similar to other border regions of Austria to the east, e.g., the Austrian-Slovenian region, with remarkable regional inequalities where urban agglomerations also bring the impetus for change in the rural countryside (Kladivo et al. 2012; Marot 2013). However, inequalities are much lower among post-socialist states (Dołzbłasz 2013). Several papers reported that beyond the influence of major urban areas depopulation is a major process of the countryside (Josipović 2014; Vaishar et al. 2020), which is also the case in Southern Burgenland (Damyanovic, Reinwald 2014).

In line with these earlier papers, our quantitative study has demonstrated the major socioeconomic processes in the Austrian-Hungarian borderland. We showed how the courses of development of West Hungary and Burgenland branched off, how the eastern and western halves of the formerly cohesive region drifted apart from each other. The former Austrian-Hungarian border had not cut Hungary off from Austria, as the Dual Monarchy had an open internal border. As a result of this, at the beginning of the 20th century, the outer band of Vienna's catchment area also included the northern part of today's Burgenland and West Hungary, while the region's southern and south-eastern part displayed peripheral features. This north-south fragmentation is a permanent characteristic of this border region. In addition to the north-south divide, the west-east rift became gradually reinforced. Following World War II, the Iron Curtain separating the political and economic world orders descended onto the Austrian-Hungarian border also, which isolated West Hungary and Burgenland from each other, and by 1990, a sharp difference had developed between the Austrian and Hungarian sides in terms of certain economic-infrastructure characteristics and standard of living indicators. At the same time, however, certain tendencies developed in the same way: with respect to ageing and population decline, the southern part

of Burgenland and the areas lying on the other side of the border differ to a lesser extent, the same picture may also be seen in the municipality structure too.

The decades of separation were once again replaced at the end of the 1980s with a period of approach. The Austrian-Hungarian border of today (similarly to the border at the beginning of the 20th century) is an easier crossable country border, as it is an internal border of the European Union. Economic integration has become increasingly stronger in the whole of the border region, but especially in its northern part. Northern Burgenland and, in line with this, the northern parts of Győr-Moson-Sopron County are fully parts of the Vienna region, and not only in terms of their economies but also in terms of certain demographic indicators, such as the commuting workforce. However, the west-east divide still exists in standard of living, while the strong depopulation processes in the south on both sides of the border show that the effect of borders on socio-demographic processes is limited.

Acknowledgments

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