

BRIDGE AND/OR SPRINGBOARD: SOPRON/ÖDENBURG, THE HUNGARIAN BORDER TOWN'S ROLE IN INTERNAL MIGRATION AFTER 1989¹⁾

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Zusammenfassung

Brücke und/oder Sprungbrett: Sopron/Ödenburg, die Rolle der ungarischen Grenzstadt im Rahmen der Binnenmigration nach 1989

Es ist das Hauptziel dieser Studie, die Rolle einer ungarischen Mittelstadt an der Grenze zu Österreich, nämlich Ödenburgs [Sopron/Ödenburg], im Rahmen der Binnenmigra-

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tion zu analysieren. Der Wechsel des politischen Systems nach 1989 wirkte sich nicht nur auf die soziale und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der Stadt aus, sondern veränderte auch die Wahrnehmung ihrer geographischen Lage. Während der Jahrzehnte des Sozialismus an der westlichen Peripherie des Landes, nahe dem Eisernen Vorhang gelegen, fand sich Ódenburg nach 1989 in einer weit günstigeren Position wieder. Das machte die Stadt zu einer der attraktivsten Destinationen der ungarischen Binnenmigration. Später haben auch noch andere Faktoren (Ungarns EU-Beitritt 2004, die Weltwirtschaftskrise 2008, das Wegfallen aller Arbeitsmarktbeschränkungen 2011) dazu beigetragen. Eine quantitative Analyse der Migranten nach statistischen Daten wird durch die Ergebnisse einer Befragung von neu zugezogenen und älter ansässigen Bewohnern Ódenburgs ergänzt, die Hinweise auf deren sozialen Hintergrund sowie auf die zeitlichen und räumlichen Muster der Zuwanderung geben. Die Zahl der Zuwanderer stieg besonders nach der Weltwirtschaftskrise an, und ihr wichtigstes Motiv für die Zuwanderung war es, Arbeit in Ódenburg oder Österreich zu finden. Die Ergebnisse der Befragung zeigen aber auch bedeutsame Unterschiede zwischen früheren und späteren Zuwanderern nach Ódenburg auf. Die Stadt hat anscheinend mehr die Funktion einer Brücke, obwohl auch ihre Sprungbrettfunktion wichtig ist.

Schlagwörter: Binnenmigration, Bevölkerung, Grenzstadt, Sopron/Ódenburg, Ungarn, Österreich

Summary

It is the main aim of this study to analyse the role of a Hungarian medium-sized town located by the Austrian border, Sopron/Ódenburg, in internal migration. The change of the political system after 1989 has had its impact not only on the social and economic development of the town, but also on perception of the town's geographical location. Located in the western periphery of the country, near to the Iron Curtain during the decades of Socialism, Sopron/Ódenburg found itself in a much more favourable position after 1989. This resulted in becoming one of the most attractive destinations of Hungarian internal migration. Later, other factors (Hungary's EU accession in 2004, the global economic crisis in 2008, abandoning of all labour-market restrictions 2011) have also contributed to this. Quantitative analysis of migrants based on statistical data is supplemented by the results of a survey conducted among newer and older residents of Sopron/Ódenburg that reveal information about their social background as well as temporal and spatial patterns of in-migration. The number of in-migrants grew especially after the global economic crisis, and the primary reason for in-migration was to get work in Sopron/Ódenburg or Austria. Survey results show, however, also relevant differences between earlier and later in-migrants to Sopron/Ódenburg. It seems that the town functions rather as a 'bridge', although its function of a 'springboard' is also important.

Keywords: Internal migration, population, border town, Sopron/Ódenburg, Hungary, Austria

1 Introduction

After 1989, radical political, economic and social changes started in the eastern half of Europe, which had also an impact on migration (HABLIČEK 2004; JEFFREY 2006). European Union (EU) accession in 2004 and the global economic crisis starting in 2008 meant additional changes that affected also internal and international migration in post-Socialist countries. These countries play also a growing role in transit or as receivers of international migration from other parts of the world, mainly from Asia and Africa. Accordingly, inhabitants and experts are primarily occupied with issues related to international migration. Thus, in Hungarian migration studies, international migration has certainly received much more attention than internal migration. This is also because the former is always connected with striking political, economic and social events and thus producing more spectacular outcomes (DÖVÉNYI 2007). Research that examines the role of a region or a populated place in internal migration in detail is almost missing. Albeit, the impacts of migration can be most directly experienced on local level. This is particularly true for those populated places, which have for some reason a special position in migration.

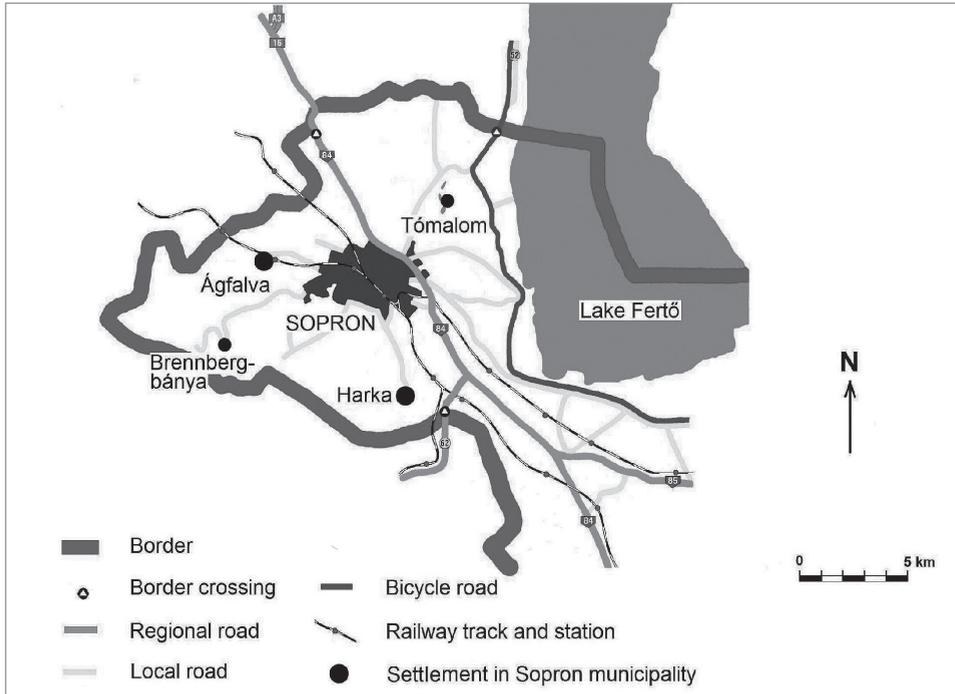
The town Sopron/Ödenburg,²⁾ situated along the Austrian border (see Fig. 1 a, b), belongs to this group. Partly because the town has been an important target of Hungarian internal



Source: Edited by the authors

Fig. 1a: Location of Sopron/Ödenburg in Hungary and the towns belonging to the same population size category as Sopron/Ödenburg except Budapest, the capital city

²⁾ The name of the town is officially bilingual (Hungarian/German). This is indicated by a consequent bilingual naming also in this text.



Source: Edited by the authors

Fig. 1b: Sopron/Ödenburg and its surroundings

migration during the last decades, partly because of its geographical location at the western border, it is more and more significant in international migration, too. The town of currently some 62,000 inhabitants has also great tradition in the field of migration. Throughout history, there have always been (a good many) more migrants coming to the town than leaving. The migration balance correlated to a large extent with social and economic processes of the given period as well as with the contemporary political situation. Thus the ‘popularity’ of Sopron/Ödenburg as a migration destination has also varied in different periods.

In the Socialist period, however, Sopron/Ödenburg has played a relevant role neither in international nor in internal migration. Crossing the western border of Hungary was almost impossible, and its economy, primarily its industry did not develop intensively. The political changes after 1989 led to a turnaround, not only in the social and economic development of the town, but also in the perception of its geographical location (IAN HAMILTON 1995; NEMES NAGY 1999). Located on the western periphery of the country, alongside the Iron Curtain during the decades of Socialism, the town came into a more favourable position after 1989, because ‘values of places’ had changed. Borders could be crossed more easily, and the geographical location became favourable, which manifested itself, e.g., in the influx of foreign direct investment (KISS 2007) like in locations along western borders in other post-Socialist countries (DOMAŃSKI 2004; IAN HAMILTON 1995; LUX

2013). Moreover, the transport-geographical situation of the town improved, and transport connections became more favourable, not only towards the country's interior and the Hungarian capital (TÓTH & KÁLMÁN 2012), but also towards Austria and its capital Vienna [Wien]. An additional advantage of Sopron/Ödenburg is that the Austrian capital and the towns in the northern, more developed part of the Austrian federal province of Burgenland are relatively close – not to mention the fact that Sopron/Ödenburg and its surroundings rank among the most developed parts of the country (ENYEDI 1996; NEMES NAGY 2005). This coincides with the overall West-East gradient, confirmed by several indices like GDP per capita, unemployment rate, economic activity. These very favourable characteristics have been recognised by an increasing number of people in other, more distant parts of the country (probably also in areas beyond the eastern and south-eastern borders of Hungary), and thus migration to Sopron/Ödenburg has grown. The town has become one of the most attractive destinations for internal migration in Hungary.

In fact, investigation into the role of Sopron/Ödenburg in internal migration is the main aim of this study. Based on official statistical data we will analyse how the number of in-migrants from other parts of the country has developed in Sopron/Ödenburg after 1989, in other words, to which extent the town was attractive for internal migrants in Hungary. This quantitative research is supplemented by a deeper analysis based on a questionnaire survey conducted among later and earlier residents of Sopron/Ödenburg. It investigates into their demographic background, their spatial and temporal migration patterns as well as into the role of Sopron/Ödenburg and the proximity of Austrian jobs for their decision to migrate. This empirical survey was necessary because published statistical data do not contain such in-depth information. We assumed that there are remarkable differences in social, spatial as well as temporal trends in in-migration; underdeveloped regions might have become more important sources of migration, and the years of the economic crisis might have been pushing migration, particularly in the case of less qualified employees.

The study is structured into five parts. After this introduction, in the second section the theoretical background of the research is outlined. The third section deals with the role of internal migration in the population processes of the town after 1989. The findings of the questionnaire survey are summarised in the fourth section. Finally, conclusions follow.

2 Theoretical background

Research on migration looks back to a long history and is flourishing again today. This is because international migration has been on the increase recently and migration is an extremely complicated and complex phenomenon. It can be scrutinised by different fields of science, and within the same discipline it can be studied in a multitude of contexts. An already rich specific literature discusses in detail the concept of migration, its development, its theoretical and methodological questions and models, the reason for and types of migration (e.g. BRETTEL & HALLIFIELD 2000; CASTLES & MILLER 2009; CSERESNYÉS 2005; FASSMANN & MUSIL 2013; KOVÁCS 2002; LEE 1966; PORTES & DEWIND 2007; RUDL 2007; STARK 2012). Hence, these items are not examined by this study.

However, it needs to be emphasised that although international migration has received outstanding attention in migration research, analysis of internal migration cannot be left out of consideration either. There are studies of internal migration, especially in developed countries (ANDERSEN & PAPAGEORGIOU 1994; FLOWERDEW 2004; GÄRTNER 2016), and the past decades witnessed several publications, which examine internal migration under several aspects. In the United States, e.g., it has been concluded that migration from urban areas to rural areas has had a positive effect on the out-migrants and – according to empirical research – led to satisfaction on part of the population (BARCUS 2004). Studies in Japan on the relationship between the economic crisis and migration have revealed that human mobility went down significantly in three big city areas (Tokyo [Tōkyō], Osaka, Nagoya) between 2008 and 2010 (ISHIKAWA 2011). In the United Kingdom, the relationship between migration and the housing market was studied, as the desire to purchase a home is a relevant driver of migration. The study concludes that life cycle and socio-economic factors are the most important in becoming a home owner, and thus also in migratory processes (CLARK & HUANG 2004). In Germany, internal migration – especially between East and West Germany – was motivated by political and economic reasons in the beginning, later by social networks and housing. Consequently – with the passage of time – the convergence of spatial processes was replaced again by divergence, by the sharpening of regional differences (KEMPER 2004). Research conducted in a Belgian province revealed that populated places able to attract high-income migrants managed to join the group with the highest per capita income (PETEERS 2008). In Sweden, research using a modern estimation technique has also confirmed that wages and unemployment have a relevant role in migration decisions (GÄRTNER 2016).

Former Socialist countries witnessed an upswing in internal migration research only after system change due to various reasons. Factors contributing were increase in regional disparities, growing intensity of suburbanisation, increasing importance of geographical location and change in value of locations. It became obvious that migration in these countries have their specifics. Internal migration in Estonia, e.g., shows features inherited from the Soviet era (KULU & BILLARI 2004). In Poland, different models have been elaborated for the description of the relationship between regional disparities and migration to facilitate adjustment of internal migration to the lasting regional disparities (MAINARDI 2004). In Croatia, political and economic factors (war, crisis etc.) triggered a more substantial movement of the population at the end of the 20th century resulting in a very disproportionate population distribution (MIKAČIĆ 2000). In Romania, increase of internal migration also led to growing regional differences and disparities in population distribution (KURKÓ 2011). From the aspect of internal migration, the Bucharest [București] capital region and the counties at the western border (Bihor, Arad, Timiș) are the most attractive (HORVÁTH 2016). In some parts of the transformation sphere new borders were established after 1989, and this contributed to a new role of border settlements in migration. In Serbia, e.g., the population of ten border villages has considerably increased (LUKIĆ et al. 2014).

Also in Hungary, the regional impact of internal migration as well as its impact on the network of settlements has been analysed. Such analyses explored not only temporal development and drivers of migration, but also the demographic parameters of migrants, and

the main source and target areas of migration (BALINT & DARÓCZI 2014; DÖVÉNYI 2009; GINTER 2008; ILLÉS 1995; KAPITÁNY 1998; KISS 1992). It is well known that Hungarians are not so much inclined to migrate, and that Hungarian internal migration has a relatively short history (DÖVÉNYI 2007). In the first decades of Socialism, primarily long distance or interregional (inter-county) migration dominated due to the considerable economic changes. But from the 1970s onward, short-distance (intraregional, intra-county) migration came to the fore. The 1990s meant a new era in internal migration (DÖVÉNYI 2007; GINTER 2008) resulting from suburbanisation, transformation of the spatial pattern of the economy, primarily industry, improvement of accessibility and transportation as well as the change of the value of places.

Also today, migration is a space-shaping force, but also a society-shaping one, because it contributes not only to the spatial restructuring of population, but also to the development of favourable or unfavourable societal structures of source and receiving areas. Measurement of the impact of migration needs to be related to time and space, and this was confirmed by the experiences of other countries (MIKAČIĆ 2000; LUKIĆ et al. 2014). The most spectacular impacts of migration can be observed on local level as examples from Cologne [Köln], Joensuu, Srem, Leipzig, Mannheim, and Münster show (DITTRICH-WESBUER et al. 2008; WEST et al. 2008; KUMPULAINEN 1994; LUKIĆ et al. 2014). After 1989, in post-Socialist countries the role of many populated places in internal migration has been modified in parallel with social and economic changes. Many places have become important targets, which had not been attractive earlier, e.g., places at western borders. Their position has changed and they have gained in attractiveness due to the new openness of borders.

Since Sopron/Ödenburg is near to the eastern border of the developed West, it is increasingly attractive for those participating not only in internal but also in international migration. Consequently, a wider range of migrant types (e.g., employee migrant³⁾, transit migrant⁴⁾, ethnic migrant⁵⁾, forced migrant⁶⁾) can be found there (WALLACE et al. 1996). But more specific categories of migration (e.g., dealer-trader, adventurer⁷⁾) also appear. Migrants spend different lengths of time in Sopron/Ödenburg. The town functions for them as a bridge and/or a springboard (Fig. 2). It functions as a bridge, when it connects the permanent residence of the migrant and the job site and provides for a good passage for those crossing the border in both directions. (There are in-migrants to Sopron/Ödenburg not only from Hungary, but also from Austria.) In 2008, e.g., 132 Austrians lived in Sopron/Ödenburg, i.e. 5% of all Austrians staying in Hungary (KINCSES 2012). But as their number is not as large and the focus of this study is on internal migration, we will

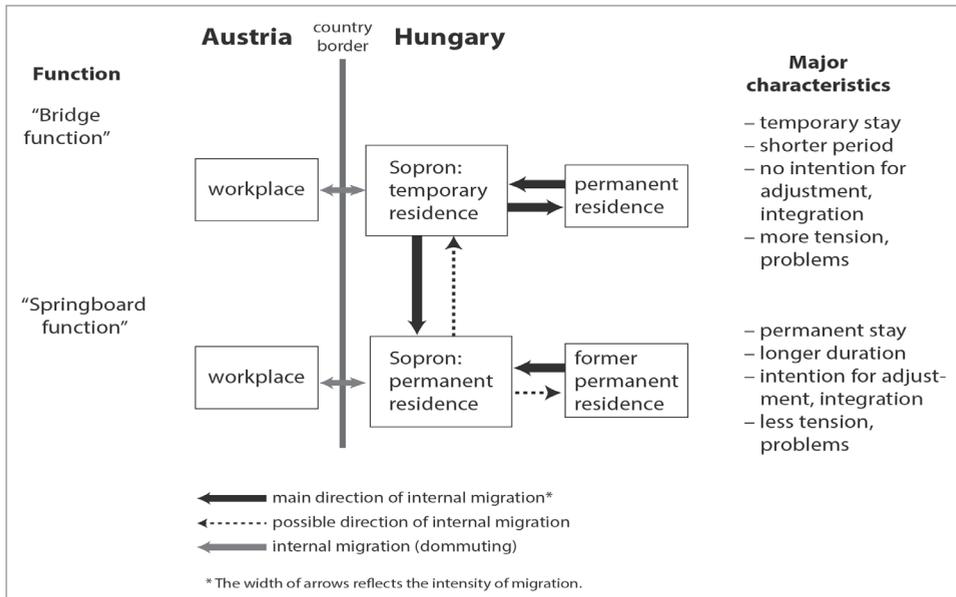
³⁾ Migrants leaving their place of residence and arriving in a receiving area close to the border because of the striking difference in wages on the two sides of the border.

⁴⁾ Migrants for whom the borders of the post-Socialist countries (e.g., the western Hungarian border) offer good opportunities for moving on to the more developed countries of the West.

⁵⁾ Migrants who have been persecuted in their place of residence due to ethnic affiliation and so have left it.

⁶⁾ Migrants (refugees) who were forced to leave their place of residence for some political or military reason (e.g., war) or natural disaster.

⁷⁾ Migrants motivated to move close to the border by the differing price levels on the two sides of the border and hoping to find business opportunities, or in search of adventure (WALLACE et al. 1996).



Source: Edited by the authors

Fig. 2: Modelling the role of Sopron/Ödenburg in internal migration

not refer to them further. Sopron/Ödenburg functions as a springboard for in-migrants, when it means for them a breakthrough and the beginning of a 'new life' within the town or at the other side of the border. Exceptionally, it is also a springboard for moving back to the original place of residence after having achieved a certain goal. The two functions cannot be sharply separated from each other. A transition is primarily possible from bridge to springboard function.

Yet another reason for the scrutiny of the migration scene in Sopron/Ödenburg is that in the past decades only a few scholarly works dealt with population issues of the town, and most of them did so only superficially and not from the perspective of migration (CSAPÓ 1998; JANKÓ 2004; JANKÓ & TÓTH 2008). This is, however, not at all extraordinary, because even in the last century THIRRING (1931) argued that it was surprising how little attention had been paid to describing in detail the demographic processes of Sopron/Ödenburg.

3 Internal migration after 1989

The fall of Communism was a turning point in the population processes of Sopron/Ödenburg from several points of view. On the one hand, the process of natural reproduction was halted, and the population started to decrease as the growing death rate increas-

ingly exceeded the declining birth rate. On the other hand, the surplus of the migration balance started to grow again, which played an increasing role in offsetting natural population decrease. During the last decades, the main reason for population growth in Sopron/Ödenburg was migration gain (Table 1).

Period	Live births	Deaths	Natural population development	Internal migration balance	Overall population development
1980–1990	6,279	6,088	+191	+56	+247
1991–2000	5,831	6,893	-1,062	+2,154	+1,092
2001–2011	5,709	6,975	-1,266	+5,639	+4,373
2012–2015	1,593	2,081	-488	+2,364	+1,876

Source: Demographic yearbooks; statistical yearbooks of Győr-Moson-Sopron County

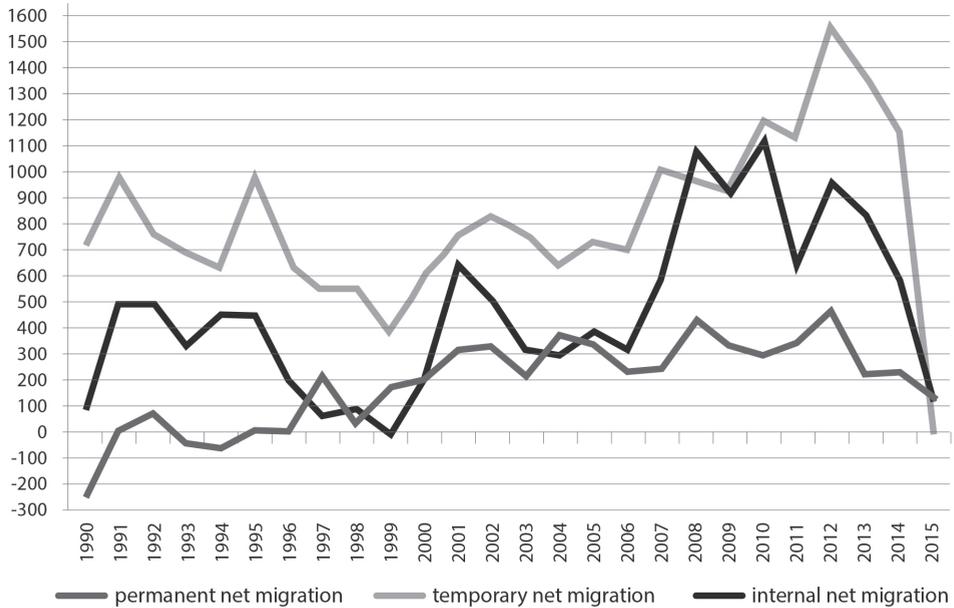
Tab. 1: Vital statistics of Sopron/Ödenburg 1980–2015

In the 1990s, the migration surplus fell short of the value in the first decade of the 21st century, and the population grew less. As opposed to this, after the turn of the millennia – as a result of the much higher migration surplus – the population number rose by several thousands and in 2011 it already exceeded 60,000. Thus, the population of the town is increasing steadily despite a continuous population decrease of the country in total. Among the towns with a population of 50,000–100,000 (see Fig. 1a) only Sopron/Ödenburg enjoyed migration gain between 1990 and 2006 (GINTER 2008). The situation has not changed until today, except for Érd, where a significant (amounting to several thousands) migration surplus was generated by its location in the Budapest agglomeration. At the same time, the migration balance was negative in two towns of this same category (Szombathely, Zalaegerszeg), which are located relatively close to the western border of the country. This suggests that proximity to the western border is not enough and that other factors are also necessary to attract (internal) migrants.

Among the five migration types developed – based on migration trends of Hungarian medium-sized and large towns and cities between 1979 and 2002, – Sopron/Ödenburg falls into the “hectic type” (ZÁBRÁDI 2005). This means that the migration curve passes through “several irregular waves”, in other words: No trend can be discerned in their migration balance. Their main feature is that from one year to the next great leaps can be found “...and [that] they pass the zero point of the migration balance in half a decade several times, sometimes they are in the negative, sometimes in the positive range.” (ZÁBRÁDI 2005, p. 169) In the case of Sopron/Ödenburg this hectic character can be observed within the positive range. It was only in one year – 1999 – that the value of the migration balance was negative, but even then only to a small extent (-6) (Fig. 3).

The role of Sopron/Ödenburg in migration grew especially after 2007. While in the period between 1990 and 2007, except for the second half of the 1990s, the migration balance had often a surplus of not more than 500 people, from 2008 on the surplus was usually between 800 and 1,000. Thus, the volume of in-migration grew in the decade after

the great economic and financial crisis. The migration surplus was exceptionally high in 2008 and 2010. As regards intensity changes of migration, a more thorough examination of the components of the migration balance offers some explanation (Table 2).



Source: Demographic yearbooks 1990–2015

Fig. 3: Types of internal migration concerning Sopron/Ödenburg 1990–2015

Literature on migration hints at the fact that people react to major turning points of history almost automatically by increased spatial mobility (DÖVÉNYI 2007). This was also what experts expected after 1989, whereas in reality mobility within the country decreased (ILLÉS 1995; DÖVÉNYI 2009). Also in Sopron/Ödenburg, population increase was limited at that time due to a frequent change between positive and negative values of the migration balance – out-migration mainly caused by suburbanisation, similar to almost all major urban regions of the country (BAJMÓCZY 2009; DÖVÉNYI 2009). In the second half of the 1990s, in-migration prevailed, although the number of out-migrants was also on the increase. After 2000, the number of in-migrants (1,100–1,200 people/year) and the number of out-migrants (800–900 people/year) stabilised at a high level. Consequently, the annual migration gain settled at 200–400 people. Sopron/Ödenburg's comparatively moderate suburbanisation in the 1990s can be explained by the fact that the commune's large administrative area has satisfied the desire of citizens to build houses in suburban zones (JANKÓ 2004, p. 296). In the subsequent period, however, suburbanisation outside the administrative boundary of the town became more relevant.

Year	Permanent		Perma- net migra- tion	Temporary		Remigration		Difference between temporary migration and remigration	Overall internal migration balance
	to	from		to	from	to place of residenc	from place of stay		
	migration			migration					
1990	620	870	-250	1,382	652	486	882	334	84
1991	690	684	6	1,410	436	383	869	488	494
1992	784	716	68	1,245	480	460	802	423	491
1993	650	696	-46	1,075	386	355	666	378	332
1994	706	766	-60	1,116	482	139	266	507	447
1995	698	693	5	1,495	503	282	831	443	448
1996	760	746	4	1,137	479	510	978	190	194
1997	899	687	212	1,002	450	428	1,129	-149	63
1998	782	746	36	1,043	477	412	926	52	88
1999	840	668	172	849	456	356	927	-178	-6
2000	890	686	204	976	380	370	965	1	205
2001	1,046	732	314	1,173	423	390	810	330	644
2002	1,122	796	326	1,335	512	304	950	177	503
2003	1,104	890	214	1,266	505	356	1,020	97	311
2004	1,137	759	378	1,131	485	393	1,122	-83	295
2005	1,127	792	335	1,224	501	378	1,046	55	390
2006	1,185	952	233	1,296	589	340	969	78	311
2007	1,214	972	242	1,716	707	362	1,023	348	590
2008	1,317	891	426	1,516	553	100	413	650	1,076
2009	1,182	853	329	1,519	592	133	468	592	921
2010	1,139	843	296	1,775	579	136	517	815	1,111
2011	1,229	887	342	1,882	745	364	1,197	304	646
2012	1,328	864	464	2,333	779	455	1,519	490	954
2013	1,180	962	218	2,113	739	347	1,108	613	831
2014	1,418	1,190	228	2,140	988	454	1,255	351	579
2015	1,432	1,299	133	2,509	2,526	-*	-*	-17	116

* Included in temporary migration

Source: Demographic yearbooks

Tab. 2: Migration concerning Sopron/Ödenburg 1990–2015

Among the reasons for migration – taking the nation-wide experience as the base-line – the role of migration for a new job is increasingly replaced by remaining at the place and commuting with varying frequency (KAPITÁNY 1998). Foreign experiences also indicate that job change does not necessarily require a new place of residence (GREEN 2004). The widespread assumption that people migrate for a new job usually longer distances than for a new house/flat is also less and less tenable (CLARK & HUANG 2004; NIEDOMYSŁ 2011). There is no doubt, however, that job change is the primary reason for great distance migration (CLARK & HUANG 2004). In Hungary, migration due to housing and family is also on the decrease compared to other reasons (DOVÉNYI 2007; ILLÉS 1995, 1998). These latter reasons comprise the case of Sopron/Ödenburg, to which people either permanently or temporarily move to get closer to the neighbouring country, Austria, which is more likely to provide a job and higher wages. Thus, not (or not only) local job opportunities are the attraction, but mainly the opportunity to get a better paid job on the other side of the border. As Sopron/Ödenburg is close to the Austrian border, it is easy to take a job there by commuting. The number of Hungarian employees is especially high in Burgenland because of historical relations and geographical proximity. At the beginning of 2014, more than 11,000 Hungarians worked in this least-developed Austrian province (POGÁTSÁ 2014). For some of those who moved to Sopron/Ödenburg and took a job in Austria this kind of division (living in Sopron/Ödenburg, working in Austria) provides a good opportunity to earn more money and thus start a new life. Moving to the town may have a life-changing or fate-turning role for them.

The annual number of temporary migrants to Sopron/Ödenburg between 1990 and 2006 was only 1,100–1,200. However, after that period the quantity suddenly increased by some hundred people. This can be explained by the fact that resulting from the economic crisis the domestic job opportunities narrowed down. There may be several explanations for the fact that temporary migrants did not become permanent migrants. Firstly – as it is very likely that many of them come from far away regions of the country – they are not familiar with the place, they only assess their prospects first. They want to take their chances, but should they fail, they can easily go back where they came from. Secondly, many people regard migration as a temporary solution, they do not intend to settle down permanently, since various relations (e.g., family, friends) tie them to the permanent residence located far away. Thirdly, although many people wished to permanently settle down in Sopron/Ödenburg, they are not able to do so because of the high property prices and the small supply on the property market. This is the case even if they manage to sell their property at the place of permanent residence. However, the biggest problem is often that they cannot sell their property at home, and thus they cannot raise money to buy a similar house/flat in Sopron/Ödenburg.

A part of the temporary migrants in Sopron/Ödenburg are students, who study at the local university. It is highly likely that their majority will settle down somewhere else once they have finished their studies, while the others may boost the camp of local residents with diploma.

The annual number of people migrating back to Sopron/Ödenburg used to be merely 300–400, which is quite small compared even to the permanent and temporary migration difference. The modest value means that only a few of those leaving the town will return. This was particularly true during the latest economic recession. We can only guess why

people who had earlier left Sopron/Ödenburg for some reason for a shorter or longer period chose to come back. They most probably had an individual pursuit, e.g., to complete their studies, family reasons (e.g., retirement, moving to an empty parents' house), taking a job or other reasons.

Based on the various types of migration, it can be concluded that the annual number of in-migrants to Sopron/Ödenburg in the 1990s was 1,900–2,500. After the turn of the millennia, the figures went up, reaching about 3,000 during the economic recession, which was roughly 5% of the town's population in the given year. This also explains why at the date of the census 2011 27% of the town's population had their previous residence outside Sopron/Ödenburg and only 14% of residents born in the town had lived at the same address since their birth. Currently there is no available statistics about the share of the town's population not born in Sopron/Ödenburg, but it can exceed 50%.

Yet another feature of Sopron/Ödenburg's population is that at the beginning of the 20th century non-native residents mainly came from within the county (amounting to 20–23% of the local population) and only a smaller portion of them (13–20%) came from other parts of the country (THIRRING 1931). Resulting from migration in the past decades, however, it is highly probable (as there are no published statistical data) that the share of those coming from outside the county, partly from distant regions of the country, has grown, and the share of in-migrants from within the county had decreased.

4 Methods and experiences of the survey

4.1 Methods

The questionnaire survey was conducted in the beginning of 2017. We designed an online questionnaire in an open-source software called Limesurvey, and propagated it using the internet with snowball-sampling and the social media. This method offered a rapid and cheap way of data collection. However, it has its clear disadvantages as well, considering the representativeness of the sample, since the internet-user community is uneven per se in the social sense. Nevertheless, we believe that the survey is suitable for gaining detailed information about the in-migrants to Sopron/Ödenburg. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions about demographic features of the respondents and about their spatial movement; from where, when and why they had come to the town and what is their future intention.

The questionnaires were returned by 782 people, and that is quite considerable, because it is about 1.3% of the population and 2.3% of all those, who in-migrated to the town after 2000. Among the respondents were 460 females and 322 males, of ages between 16 and 82. The majority were highly qualified people, with 25% and 20% owning Bachelor (BA) or Master (MA) degrees, respectively. Considering the sector of working, agriculture and industry reach only 9.1% altogether, blue collar workers only 8% among the respondents. 17.1% of all respondents work in Austria, and a further 8% work in both countries, in Austria and Hungary.

Basically, the respondents were divided into two major groups: old residents and newcomers. To the first category resort people (563), who live in the town since birth or moved there before 2000. Newcomers (219) came to the town after 2000. Thus, 28.0% of the respondents could be classified as in-migrants according to the survey. 79 of them came to Sopron/Ödenburg before 2009, the top year of the crisis, 140 thereafter. The following analysis will focus on the newcomers.

4.2 Results and discussion

The survey confirmed generally known characteristics of migration. Compared to the old residents, the newcomers are younger, i.e. 51% of the respondents were below the age of 35, a share two times higher than with the old residents. This is no surprise, because younger people are much more motivated to migrate (DÖVÉNYI 2009; SIK & SZEITL 2016). Among the newcomers before 2009 were less married people compared to the newcomers after 2009. In the former group were more (62%) in-migrants with children, mostly two, while in the latter the share of in-migrants with children was lower (44%). It seems that later in-migrants intend migrating to earn more money before having a child and returning to their former residence. They probably consider the town as a ‘bridge’ and do not plan for a longer term. A reason for moving to the town as a married couple may be to help each other and to achieve in this way more social security.

The age of the newcomers was computed based on the age of the respondent at the year of arrival in Sopron/Ödenburg. In-migrants after 2009 were older than the group coming earlier. Particularly the share of the age group 25–34 has increased. It is also interesting to see that among the newcomers after 2009 older age groups are more frequent. The share of respondents over 55, e.g., was 3.5%. In their case the main reasons for in-migration were family issues, e.g., getting closer to their children or their parents (Table 3).

Age group	–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65–
Newcomers	43.8	34.2	12.8	6.9	1.4	0.9
Newcomers before 2009	57.0	26.6	11.4	5.1	0.0	0.0
Newcomers after 2009	36.4	38.6	13.6	7.9	2.1	1.4

Source: Survey 2017

Tab. 3: Newcomers by age groups according to their age at arrival to Sopron/Ödenburg (%)

Newcomers before 2009 came to Sopron/Ödenburg mainly to study and gain higher degrees. They have the highest shares in higher education levels or in the index of white-collar workers. Consequently, they are overrepresented in the financial sector, in banking, real estate business, and professions in education and culture. In contrast, with the newer wave of in-migration at average less-educated people arrived, found jobs with

lower wages and show higher shares in agriculture, industry and constructions. According to the data of the survey, the share of those who have finished just vocational schools is extremely high (32.9%) among the newcomers after 2009, and there are less people with diploma (45%) compared to those coming before 2009 (63%). While old residents have the highest shares in vocational school graduates and the lowest in graduates of grammar school, MA degrees and white-collar workers, they cannot complain about poor positions on the labour market having their jobs mainly as skilled workers and small-scale entrepreneurs in transport, communications, retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, catering and tourism (Tables 4 and 5).

Education	Primary school	Vocational school without graduation	Vocational school with graduation	Grammar school	College, BA degree	University, MA degree
Old residents	2.8	14.7	24.3	13.7	26.1	18.3
Newcomers in total	2.3	8.7	25.6	11.9	24.7	26.9
Newcomers before 2009	1.3	10.1	12.7	12.7	29.1	34.2
Newcomers after 2009	2.9	7.9	32.9	11.4	22.1	22.9

Source: Survey 2017

Tab. 4: Old residents and newcomers to Sopron/Ödenburg by education (%)

Labour market position	Semi-skilled or simple manual workers	Skilled workers, direct production manager	Skilled workers in office, sales or services	White-collar workers, medium or large-scale entrepreneurs	Small-scale employers	Pensioners	Students	Long-time unemployed	Others
Old residents	7.5	16.0	27.9	22.6	10.3	8.9	4.3	0.5	2.1
Newcomers in total	11.0	11.4	27.4	29.7	8.2	3.2	4.6	2.7	1.8
Newcomers before 2009	3.8	10.1	29.1	38.0	7.6	3.8	2.5	2.5	2.5
Newcomers after 2009	15.0	12.1	26.4	25.0	8.6	2.9	5.7	2.9	1.4

Source: Survey 2017

Tab. 5: Labour-market position of the respondents (%)

In general, there are numerous motives for migration, but usually they can be subsumed under some major motives like work, study, family and others. For the newcomers to Sopron/Ödenburg the most important motive for migrating was to get a job either in Sopron/Ödenburg or Austria. This can be a consequence of the fact that due to the crisis working opportunities have declined and that the impacts of the crisis were much more lasting in the eastern and north-eastern, less developed parts of the country, from where an increasing number of people came. This is confirmed by the different spatial distribution of newcomers before and after 2009. In contrast, studying in Sopron/Ödenburg was not an important motive for newcomers after 2009 (Table 6).

Motive	Working in Sopron/Ödenburg	Working in Austria	Studying	Family
Newcomers in total	28.9	19.2	20.5	31.4
Newcomers before 2009	28.9	8.4	30.1	32.6
Newcomers after 2009	28.8	25.0	15.4	30.8

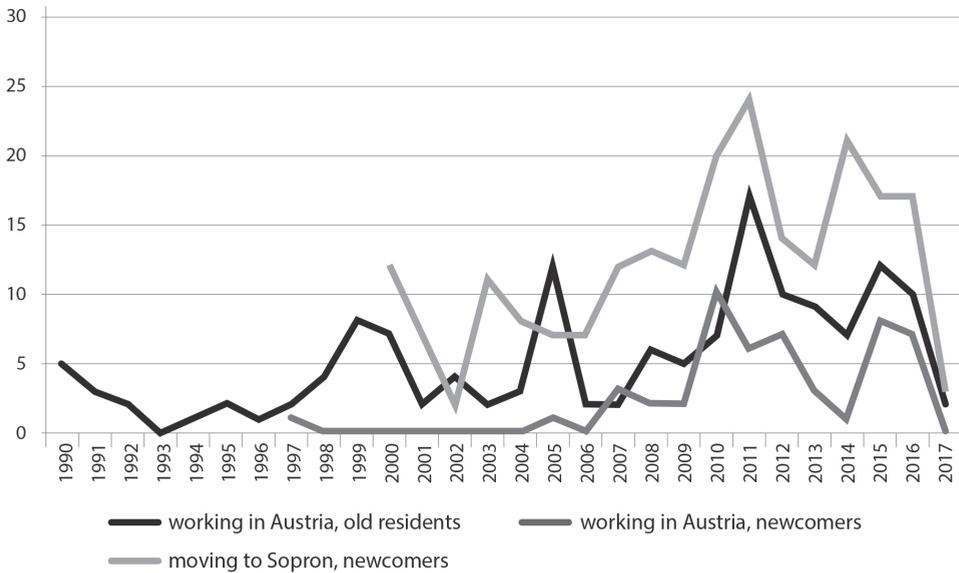
Source: Survey 2017

Tab. 6: Newcomers' motives for migration to Sopron/Ödenburg (%)

One of the questions referred to the year of moving to Sopron/Ödenburg, also the starting year of work in Austria was asked for. Temporal trends of these two characteristics indicate changes around the turn of millennia, the European Union accession of Hungary (2004), and the global economic crisis. There is some increase after 2011, because legal restrictions to enter the Austrian labour market were abolished for Hungarian employees. This attracted also 'adventurers', typically long-distance commuters, for whom the town is primarily functioning as a 'bridge' (Fig. 4).

It is also worth looking behind the lines: What is the link between moving to Sopron/Ödenburg and getting a job in Austria? Do migrants use Sopron/Ödenburg as a 'springboard', working here for some years and seeking for a job in Austria later, or do they come here with the intention to work immediately in Austria using the town only as a place, a 'bridge', to sleep and to commute from? Counting the temporal difference between arriving in Sopron/Ödenburg and finding a job in Austria an average of four years arises with the 10 in-migrants before 2009 and the 41 after 2009. According to these data about 20% of the newcomers before 2009 and 29% of the newcomers after 2009 work in Austria. In the case of the earlier newcomers there is only one person with zero difference between arrival in Sopron/Ödenburg and work in Austria and another one working in Austria already prior to moving to Sopron/Ödenburg. Compared to these, the later in-migrants found their job in Austria on average within -0.1 years, i.e. before the arrival to the town; with 11 people corresponding to this case and another 18 respondents, who found work in Austria immediately after their arrival in Sopron/Ödenburg. However, it has to be added that jobs in Austria are more frequent in the old residents'

group, reaching almost 30%, while with later in-migrants this share is only 25.5%. Anyway, job opportunities in Austria are a dominant reason for newcomers for moving to Sopron/Ödenburg.



Source: Edited by the authors based on the Survey 2017

Fig. 4: Temporal trends of moving to Sopron/Ödenburg and working in Austria as indicated by the respondents

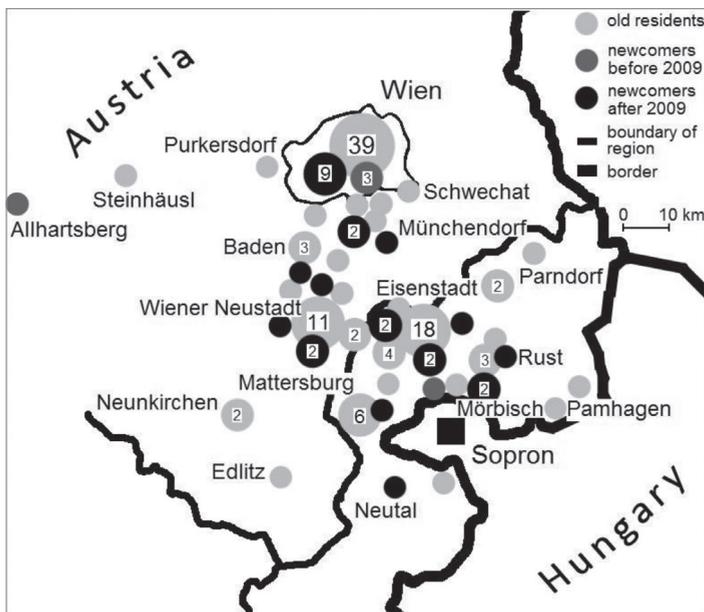
Sopron/Ödenburg has a great tradition of working in Austria. Old residents and newcomers prefer the same destinations in Austria, but to different extents. Data of the survey indicate that the destinations of the newcomers after 2009 are spatially more concentrated. They focus on Austria’s capital Vienna, since Burgenland offers less work opportunities, and wages are lower than in the capital region, while the destinations of old residents – partly based on traditions – are more scattered (KINCSES 2012). Generally speaking, the respondents gravitate mainly to Vienna and the Eisenstadt-Wiener Neustadt region, probably also due to the good transport connections from Sopron/Ödenburg (Fig. 5).

It was also an important aim of the study to reveal the origin of in-migrants to Sopron/Ödenburg. Its geographical pattern is a good marker of the subgroups of newcomers. Before the crisis, Sopron/Ödenburg attracted in-migrants from its surroundings to a higher extent, while after 2009 the importance of less-developed parts of the country (e.g., the Northern Plain) as well as of Central Hungary located far from Sopron/Ödenburg has increased. However, the town is less attractive for people of southern regions of the country (Table 7, Fig. 6).

Region of origin	Western Transdanubia	Centre Transdanubia	Southern Transdanubia	Central Hungary	Northern Hungary	Northern Plain	Southern Plain
Newcomers in total	31.5	15.1	4.6	16.9	10.0	11.0	8.7
Newcomers before 2009	35.4	17.7	3.8	10.1	8.9	7.6	11.4
Newcomers after 2009	29.3	13.6	5.0	20.7	10.7	12.9	7.1

Source: Survey 2017

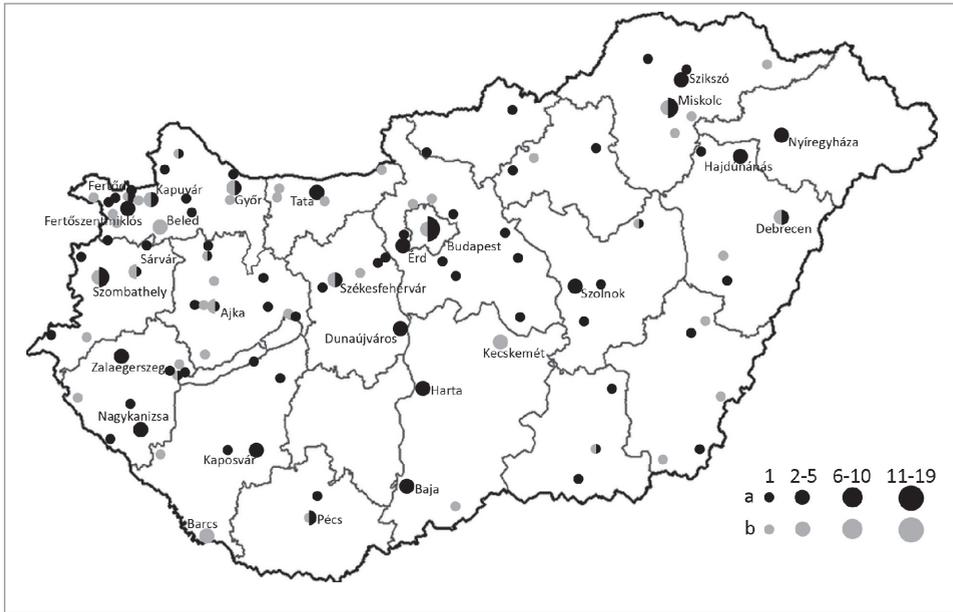
Tab. 7: Origin of migrants to Sopron/Ödenburg by Hungarian macro-regions (%)



Source: Edited by the authors based on the Survey 2017

Fig. 5: Spatial distribution of the respondents' work places in Austria

Unsurprisingly, the roots of new residents are not so deep: They live to a higher share in rented flats or houses, which indicates uncertainty, not having so long-term plans for residing here and being ready for re-migration or moving even to Austria. Thus, Sopron/Ödenburg can serve as a 'bridge' and/or a 'springboard' for them depending on their decisions and fate in future.



a: newcomers after 2009, b: newcomers before 2009

Source: Survey 2017

Fig. 6: In-migrants to Sopron/Ödenburg by places of origin

5 Conclusions

Today, Sopron/Ödenburg is one of the most attractive destinations for internal Hungarian migration, which has played an extraordinary role in population increase, particularly after the latest economic crisis. During the last decades, a significant migration surplus has exceeded the value of natural decrease and thus has greatly contributed to the population increase, which differs from the national trend. After the turn of the millennia, permanent and temporary in-migrants were more numerous than out-migrants. While the town is rather a ‘springboard’ for permanent in-migrants, it has more of a ‘bridge’ function for temporary immigrants. In total, the function of the town in internal migration is twofold: Receiving newcomers at the local labour market or transmitting them to Austria by offering cheaper accommodation than in Austria and enabling them to commute daily to a workplace on the other side of the border.

The survey conducted among newcomers to Sopron/Ödenburg revealed that in-migration to the town passed a milestone during the years of the economic crisis and that the characteristics of in-migrants significantly changed. Later in-migrants have a stronger motivation for working in the surroundings of Sopron/Ödenburg, especially in Austria. Accordingly, they are at average of elder age, of lower education and get jobs with lower

demands and skills. The town attracts a growing number of people from the less-developed eastern and north-eastern parts of the country.

Several questions remain for further research: Do other towns along the western or south-western border of Hungary show similar trends? How are in-migrants received by the local society? How do locals look at the newcomers? How do in-migrants regard their integration in the town?

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