

**SOME CONSEQUENCES OF DIFFERENT  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE  
WESTERN BORDERS OF HUNGARY**

NEKATERI UČINKI RAZLIČNEGA  
REGIONALNEGA RAZVOJA VZDOLŽ  
MADŽARSKE ZAHODNE MEJE

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**Abstract**

UDC 911.3 (94/439)(-04)

**Some consequences of different regional development along the western borders of Hungary**

The paper deals with different trends in the development in areas divided by the Austro-Hungarian border which are also reflected in the functional spatial structure of society. The new organisation of regional development and cooperation in Europe can only be useful if these differences in history and the physical and socioeconomic conditions in borderline zones are well known. It seems to be the purpose to discuss some of the theoretical and methodological findings of the geographical research along the Austro-Hungarian border.

**Izveček**

UDK 911.3 (94/439)(-04)

**Nekateri učinki različnega regionalnega razvoja vzdolž madžarske zahodne meje**

Prispevek predstavlja različne razvojne trende na območjih na obeh straneh avstrijsko-madžarske meje, ki se odražajo tudi v funkcijski in prostorski strukturi družbe. Nove organizacije regionalnega razvoja in sodelovanja v Evropi so lahko koristne samo, kadar so zgodovinske, fizičnogeografske in socialnoekonomske razmere v obmejnih območjih dobro poznane. Predstavljene so tudi nekatere teoretične in metodološke ugotovitve geografskih proučevanj vzdolž avstrijsko-madžarske meje.

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## INTRODUCTION

Some researchers of the Geographical Research Institute and of the Centre for Regional Research, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and of the Institute of Geography, University of Klagenfurt, have investigated the socioeconomic structures and the different pathways of post-war development on both sides of the Austro-Hungarian border (Fig. 1) and the possible consequences on the progress of rapprochement, cooperation and hopeful integration between Central European states.

The different trends in the development in areas divided by a border are also reflected in the functional spatial structure of society and this will persist as a condition of regional cooperation.

### SOME REGIONAL CONTRASTS REVEALED BY COMPARATIVE STUDIES

1. Although population numbers have decreased in both zones since the First World War and particularly after the Second, maximum decrease on the Austrian side fell into the period 1950–1960, while it was most intensive in the decade 1970–1980 in the Hungarian area. A fundamental difference lies in the rate of population decrease, which was slower on the Austrian side than on the Hungarian and, therefore, the 'internal' urbanisation of local society was interwoven with the general urbanisation of the country. Thus, the aging of population and the deterioration of the vertical internal structure of local societies did not take place in a drastic and hardly reversible manner as in the rural areas along the Hungarian side of the border.

The urbanisation in the Hungarian border zone was primarily induced by the industrial and settlement development in other areas of the country and this circumstance led to emigration (like in the Órség and Hetés). On the other hand, the large-scale concentration of resources within the region (in Szombathely) accelerated changes in the pattern of employment and contributed to emigration from Hungarian villages. In the rural border zone of Austria, the population remained in place and modernisation happened within the local societies. For this reason, a 'more urbanised' employment pattern has evolved compared to the Hungarian villages beyond the border (Fig. 2).

2. The urbanisation and the related changes in employment have also been strongly influenced by the differences in the development of transport infrastructure (Fig. 3). In Austria the spatial mobility based on the use of personal cars allows far more liberal em-

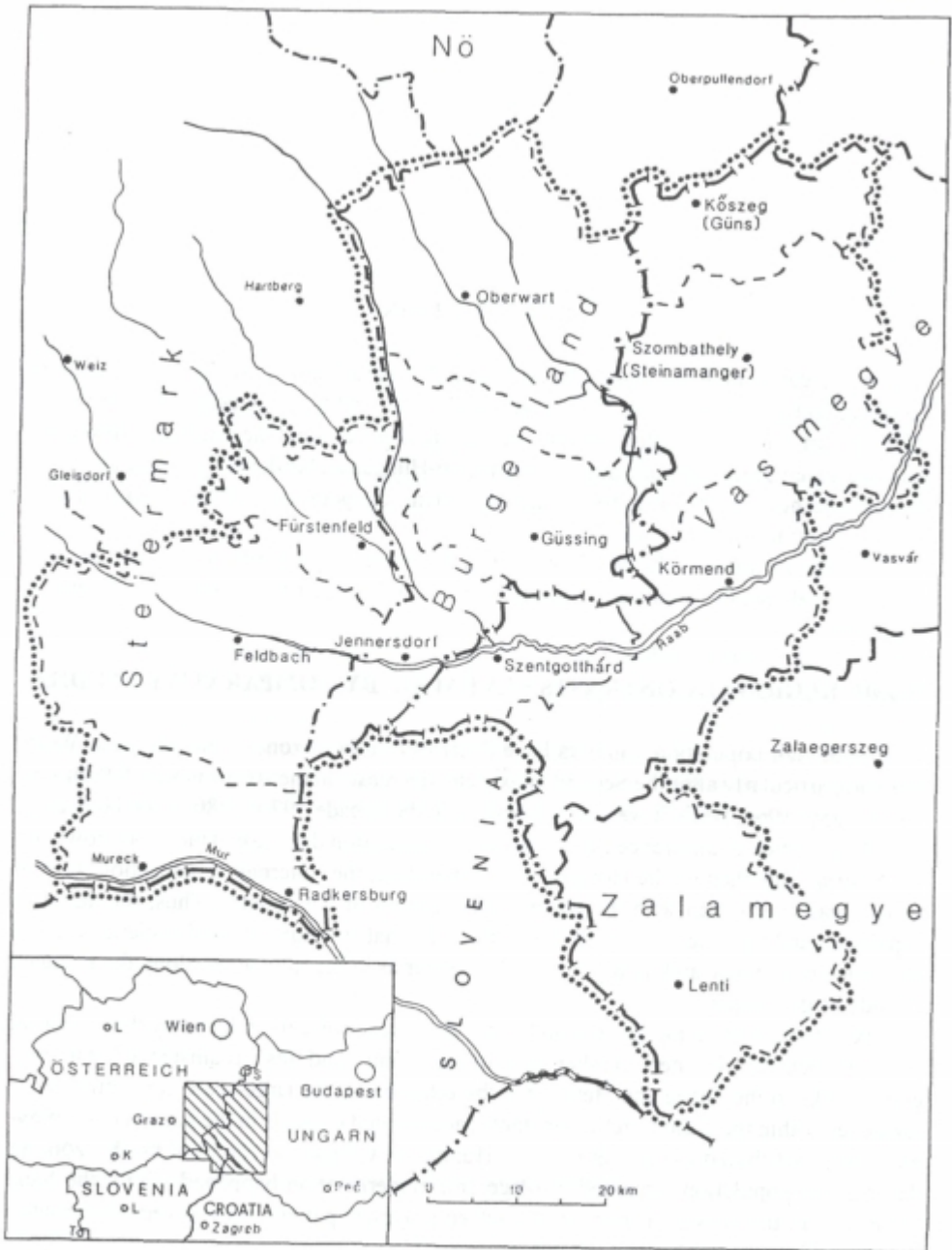


Fig. 1: The investigated section of the Austro-Hungarian border.  
 Slika 1: Lega proučevanega ozemlja ob avstrijsko-madžarski meji.

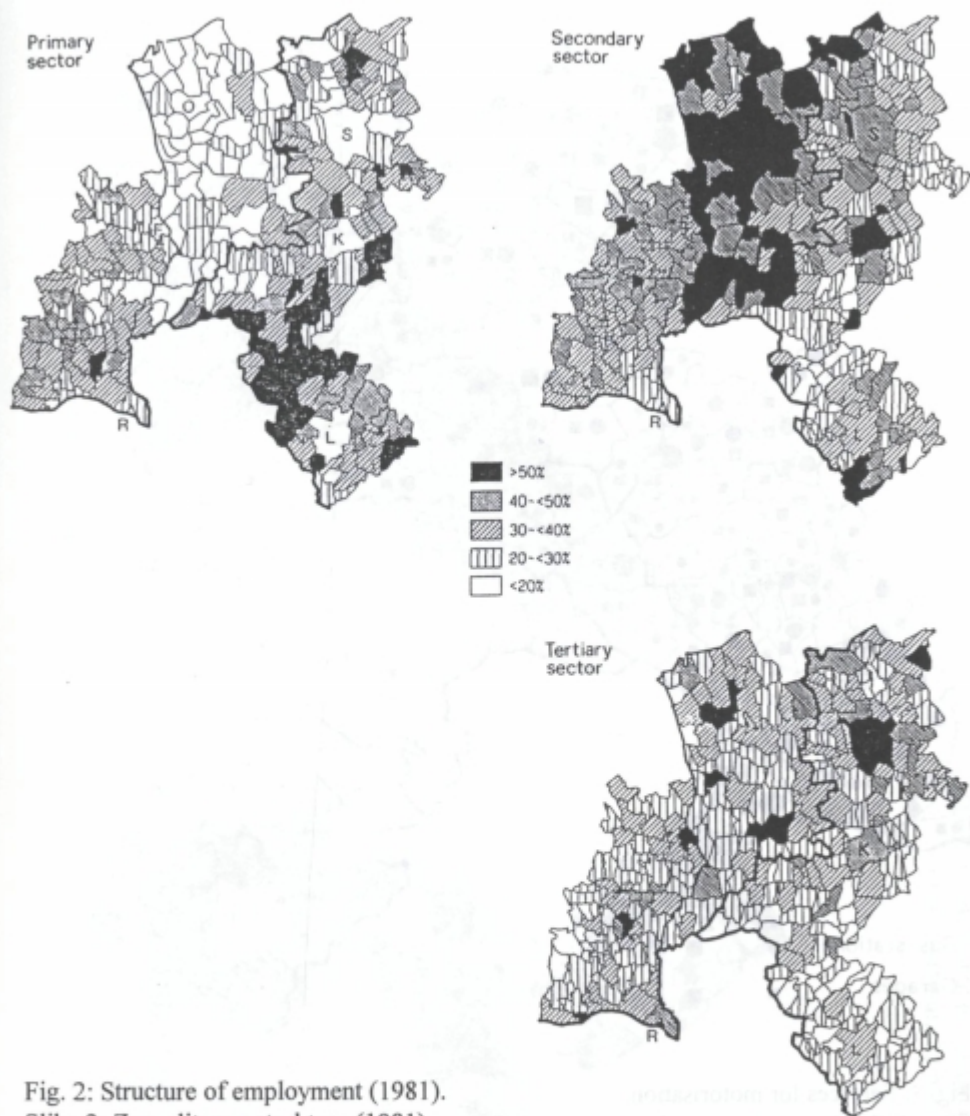


Fig. 2: Structure of employment (1981).

Slika 2: Zaposlitvena struktura (1981).

ployment, weekly commuting, without a force to change permanent residence. This has also given an opportunity for the local accumulation of private capital. As opposed to this development trend, on the Hungarian side passenger traffic relies on public transport, calls for daily commuting in the environs of towns and contributes to the decline of settlements located in areas isolated from traffic (Fig. 4).

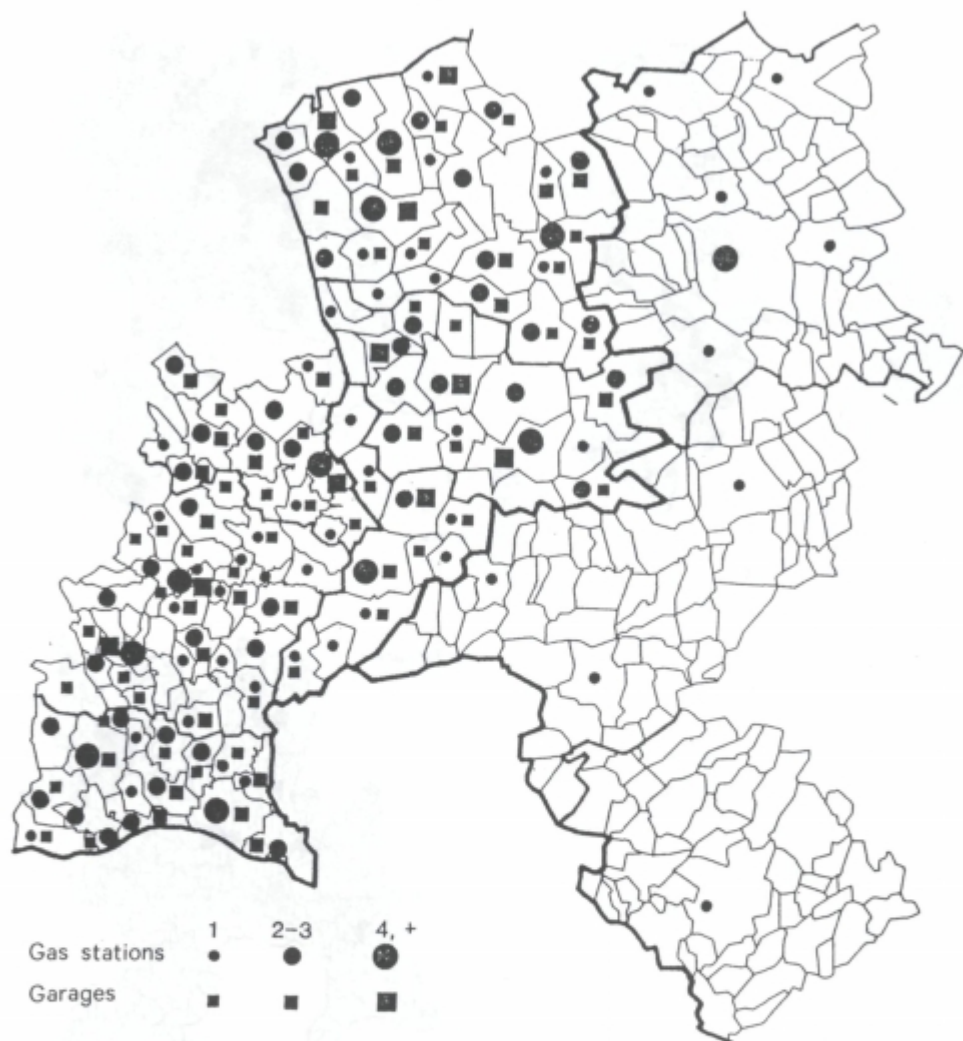


Fig. 3: Services for motorisation.

Slika 3: Storitvene dejavnosti, povezane z motorizacijo.

3. As a consequence of the societal exploitation of resources and of the large-scale concentration of economy, the villages in the Hungarian border zone were unable to retain their economic functions and their positions in the administrative system of settlement hierarchy did not alter considerably (Fig. 5). In the border zone of Hungary under investigation the settlements of small town character are in backward situation and cannot function as

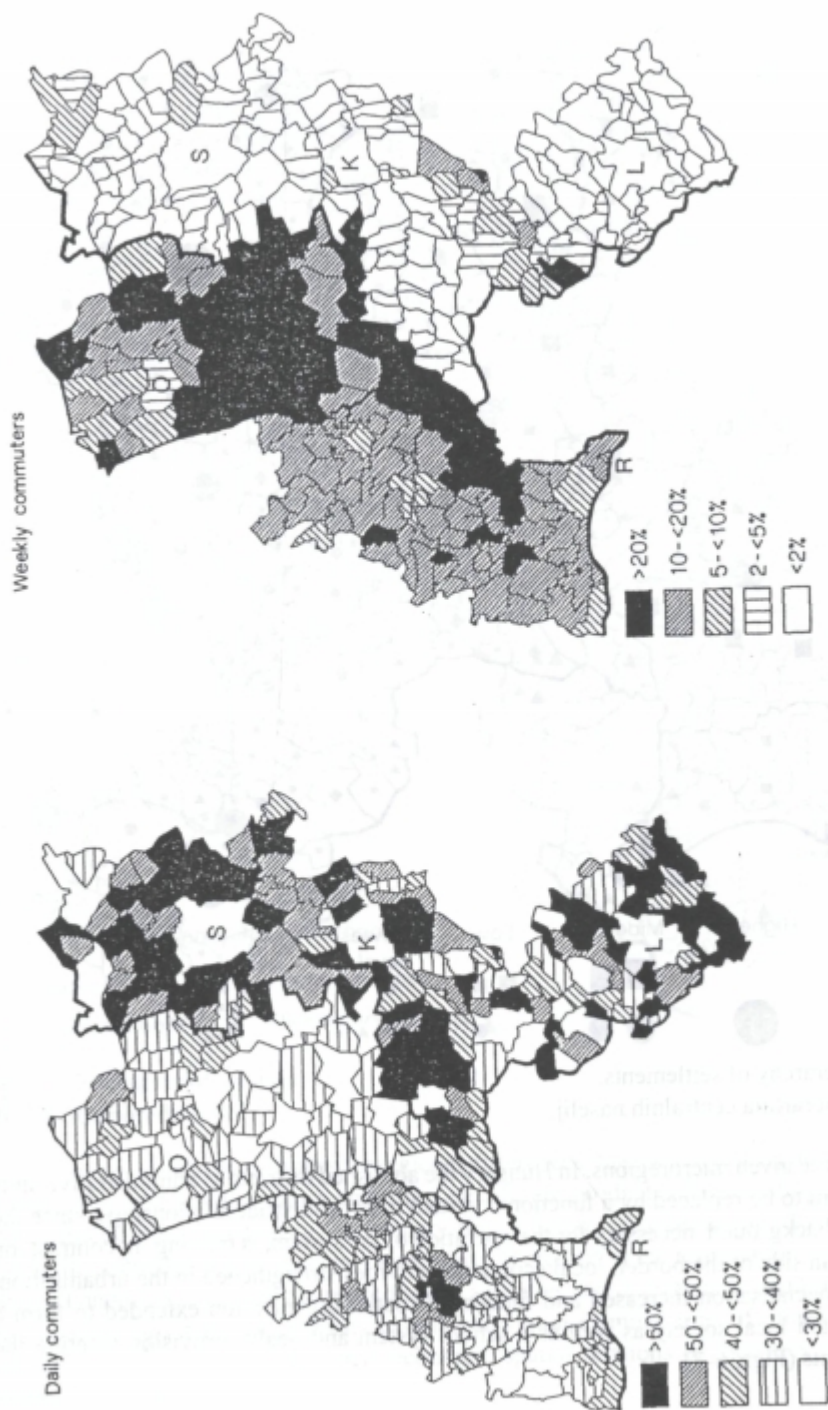


Fig. 4: Daily and week-end commuters (1981).  
Slika 4: Deleži dnevnih in tedenskih migrantov (1981).



Fig. 5: Hierarchy of settlements.  
Slika 5: Hierarhija centralnih naselij.

centres in the given microregions. In Hungary the abolished districts as administrative units do not seem to be replaced by a functional system of town-district relationships, since the industrial background, necessary for the operation of the system, is missing. In contrast, on the Austrian side of the border, local economic activities strengthened in the urbanisation, regional specialisation increased and functional spatial organization extended to form a differentiated local society as well as a school system and health provision meeting the requirements (Figs. 6-7).



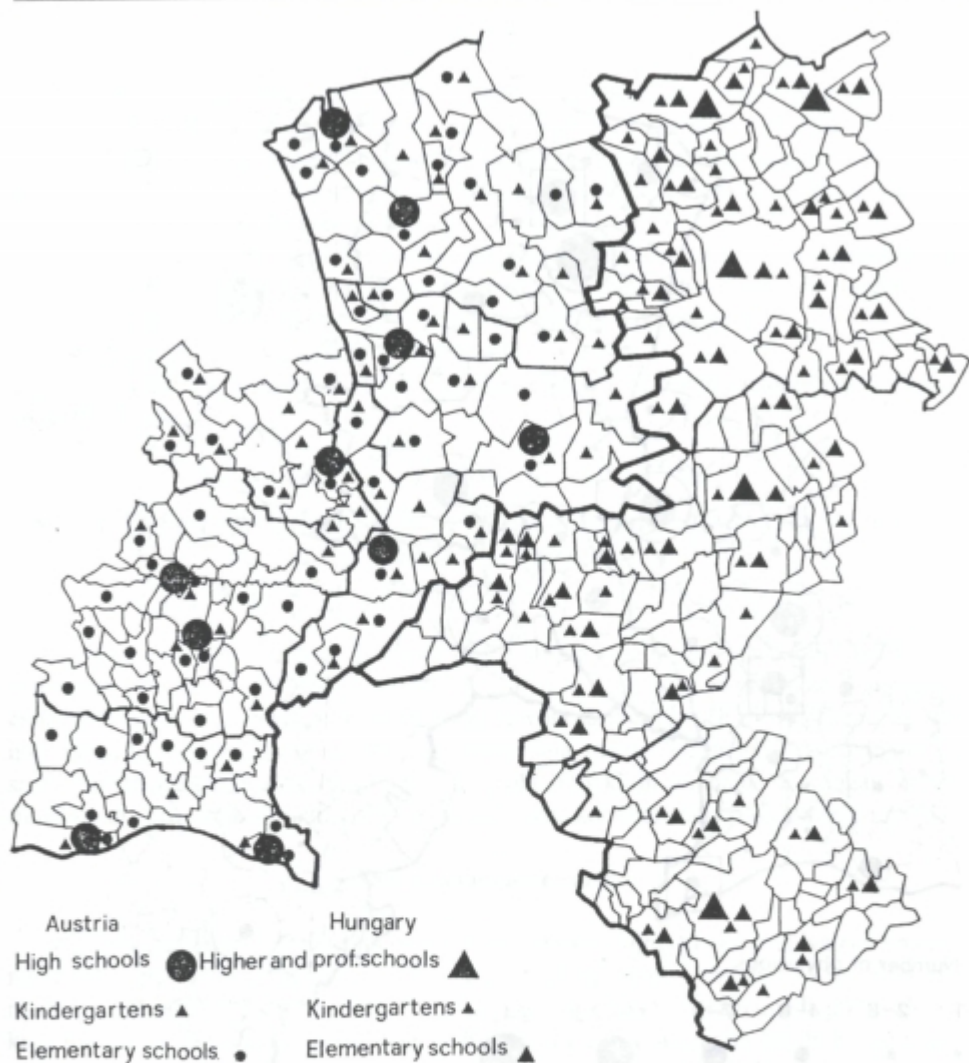


Fig. 6: Distribution of schools.

Slika 6: Razporeditev šol.

Obviously, the above examples for regional differences, functionally and spatially bound to each other and building cause-and-effect chains, are products of contrasting socio-economic and political mechanisms. A primary precondition to the reduction of inequalities and to the strengthening of regional cooperation, therefore, is the reformation of the Hungarian economic system and the related social activities and operational conditions. Long-term relationships in mutual interest can only build upon a similar order of values and these contacts will create the natural socio-economic spatial relations of localities of various dimensions in the future.

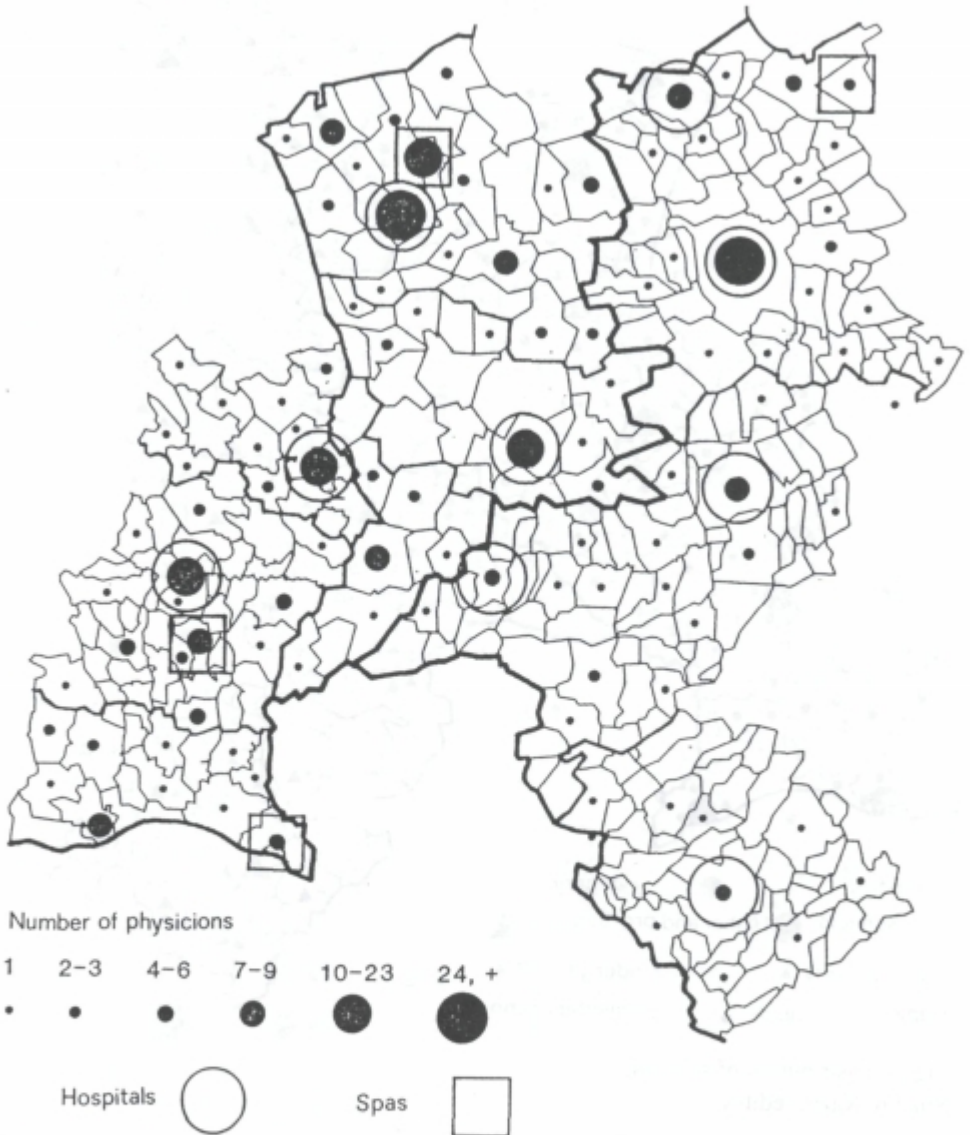


Fig. 7: Distribution of health institutions.  
Slika 7: Razporeditev zdravstvenih ustanov.

## PERSPECTIVES

The new organisations of regional development and cooperation in Europe (Alps-Adria, Visegrád Group, Carpathian Euroregion etc.) can only be useful if these differences in history and the physical and socioeconomic conditions in borderline zones are well known in the countries affected and, relying on this information, alternatives for joint regional development policy can be proposed.

It seems to be the purpose to discuss some of the theoretical and methodological findings resulting from the geographical research along the Austro-Hungarian border:

- What elements should be involved into the comparative research?
- Which factors are suitable for comparison?
- Is it possible to compare regional equalities rooted in different socioeconomic development?

### NEKATERI UČINKI RAZLIČNEGA REGIONALNEGA RAZVOJA VZDOLŽ MADŽARSKE ZAHODNE MEJE

Povzetek

Raziskovalci Geografskega inštituta in Centra za regionalne raziskave Madžarske akademije znanosti in Geografskega inštituta Univerze v Celovcu so raziskovali socialno-ekonomske strukture in različne poti povojnega razvoja na obeh straneh avstrijsko-madžarske meje (slika 1) in verjetne učinke ponovnega zbliževanja, sodelovanja in morebitne integracije srednjeevropskih držav. Različni trendi razvoja območij, ki jih deli meja, se odražajo tudi v funkcionalni prostorski strukturi družbe, kar bo ostalo kot okoliščina regionalnega razvoja.

#### Nekatere regionalne razlike

1. Čeprav je po prvi, še posebno pa po drugi svetovni vojni, število prebivalcev upadlo na obeh straneh meje, je bil na avstrijski strani največji upad v obdobju 1950–1960, na madžarski pa v obdobju 1970–1980. Temeljna razlika je bila v deležih upada prebivalcev, ki je bil manjši na avstrijski strani, kjer je bila 'notranja' urbanizacija lokalnih skupnosti vpeta v splošni proces urbanizacije. Zaradi tega nista bila ostarevanje prebivalstva in propad vertikalne strukture lokalnih skupnosti tako drastična in v bistvu nepovratna kot v ruralnih območjih na madžarski strani meje.

Urbanizacijo madžarskega obmejnega območja sta sprožila industrijski in poselitveni razvoj v drugih delih države, kar je povzročilo izseljevanje (npr. v Őrségu in Hetésu). Po drugi strani je močna koncentracija resursov v območju Szombatelya pospešila spreminjanje vzorca zaposlovanja in prispevala k izseljevanju iz madžarskih vasi. V kmetijskih območjih na avstrijski strani je prebivalstvo ostalo, tako da je modernizacija potekala znotraj lokalnih skupnosti. Tako je nastal 'bolj urbaniziran' vzorec zaposlovanja v primerjavi z madžarskimi vasmi na drugi strani meje (slika 2).

2. Na urbanizacijo in z njo povezane spremembe zaposlitvene strukture so močno vplivale razlike v razvoju prometne infrastrukture (slika 3). V Avstriji je prostorska mobilnost temeljila na uporabi osebnih avtomobilov, kar je omogočalo bolj svobodno zaposlovanje ali tedensko migracijo in ni sililo k spremembi stalnega bivališča. To je hkrati omogočalo lokalno akumulacijo zasebnega kapitala. V nasprotju s tem trendom je bil na madžarski strani potniški promet navezan na javni transport, ki je v okolici mest omogočal dnevno migracijo, v prometno odročnih delih pa povzročil propadanje naselij (slika 4).

3. Kot posledica družbenega izkoriščanja resursov ter obsežne koncentracije gospodarstva niso bile vasi v madžarskem obmejnem pasu sposobne obdržati svojih gospodarskih funkcij, njihov položaj v upravnem sistemu hierarhije naselij pa se ni bistveno spremenil (slika 5). V madžarskem delu območja proučevanja so manjša mestna naselja nazadovala in niso mogla funkcionirati kot središča mikroregij. Opustitev občin kot upravnih enot ni mogel nadomestiti funkcijski sistem mesto-občina, ker ni bilo industrijske podlage, potrebne za delovanje sistema. V nasprotju s tem so se na avstrijski strani meje lokalne gospodarske dejavnosti z urbanizacijo okrepile, prav tako regionalne specializacije, funkcijska prostorska struktura pa se je razširila v obliko diferencirane lokalne skupnosti, hkrati pa sta se sistema šol in zdravstvenega varstva prilagodila novim potrebam (sliki 6 in 7).

Očitno je, da so zgornji primeri regionalnih razlik, funkcijsko in prostorsko povezani drug z drugim v obliki vzročno-posledičnega niza, rezultat zelo različnih socialno-ekonomskih in političnih mehanizmov. Osnovni pogoj za zmanjšanje razlik in okrepitev regionalnega sodelovanja je prenova madžarskega gospodarskega sistema ter z njim povezanih socialnih dejavnosti in možnosti delovanja. Dolgoročni odnosi, v obojestranskem interesu, se lahko vzpostavijo samo na podobnem nivoju vrednot, ti stiki pa bodo v prihodnosti ustvarili normalne socialno-ekonomske prostorske odnose med naselji različnih velikostnih redov.

### **Perspektive**

Nova organiziranost regionalnega razvoja in sodelovanja v Evropi (Alpe Adria, višegrajska skupina, karpatska evroregija itd.) je lahko koristna samo takrat, ko se bodo v teh državah zavedli razlik v naravnogeografskih in socialno-ekonomskih razmerah v obmejnih območjih in na osnovi teh informacij poiskali alternative skupne regionalne razvojne politike.

Namen prispevka je spodbuditi razpravo o nekaterih teoretskih in metodoloških ugotovitvah geografskega proučevanja vzdolž avstrijsko-madžarske meje:

- Katere elemente bi morali vključiti v primerjalne študije?
- Kateri dejavniki so primerni za primerjavo?
- Ali je možna primerjava regionalnih podobnosti, ki izvirajo iz različnega socio-ekonomskega razvoja?