

CHANGING SOCIAL PATTERN OF TWO WEST—HUNGARIAN SETTLEMENTS: THE TRENDS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

by

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Following the liberation of the country in 1945, the social-economic structure of Hungary underwent revolutionary changes. An overall social phenomenon of this eventful period, the most important process accompanying rapid industrial growth has been the large scale mobility of population.

The changes in the structure of national economy, employment structure and in the pattern of the social and regional distribution of labour have brought about intensive internal migration from rural to urban areas, and have exerted influence on the development of the national settlement system as a whole.

The large-scale regional mobility of population is an extremely complex process adjusted in intensity and pace to those of industrial growth. Linked to the changes of the employment pattern it is interesting in many-sided transformation of Hungary's socio-geographic picture. Some of the changes are numeric, quantitative, others are structural, i.e. qualitative in nature.

Among the *quantitative changes* three major processes are to be pointed out:

a) In connection with employment changes several hundred thousand people have participated in migration, resulting in a spectacular shift in the regional distribution of population between 1950 and 1975. The difference among the regions in terms of density of non-urban population has significantly increased. In the regions undergoing industrialisation the density grew by 10–20 head per square kilometres, while in rural areas it has decreased by 5–10 persons.

b) As a result of migration the ratio of population living in small villages, where the number of inhabitants is under 1000, has decreased, whereas the ratio and number of larger settlements has increased; thus the concentration of population has been in progress.

c) Migration, combined with the development of some rural settlements to achieve urban status has resulted in a marked decrease of the

ratio of rural population. The population of non-urban settlements performing some industrial function has increased.

The *qualitative changes* are shown by the distribution of population by age, sex and occupation:

a) In the agricultural regions most affected by outmigration the ratio of active population (between 15 and 59 years) — in contrast to the national average of 61,3% — is only 58%, in some cases even below 55%, since it is mostly the younger population that takes part in outmigration.

b) since the bulk of out-migrating population are men, the ratio of men in declining settlements has fallen by 1 — 5%.

c) In rural settlements the social group leading a dual urban-rural way of life has grown, i.e. the number of mixed households has increased. Their number grew especially in those areas, where land per agricultural employee is small, or the level of agricultural development is low; that is, the agricultural income in itself does not ensure living.

Several comprehensive studies have dealt with the basic phenomena of social mobility and its general tendencies, and not only from the geographer's point of view. However, to analyse the individual and typical geographic phenomena which make up the fundamental economic process, in other words the regional variations behind the general economic trend, can be regarded as a *specifically geographic task*. The factors eliciting and motivating the process of social mobility can only be revealed in an analytic way and in their actual geographic setting only.

The nation-wide changes have had a great effect on rural settlements as well. In the social-economic changes that occurred in the past decades the rural settlements did not only take part as major resources of labour force, but the rapid wave of employment changes has more or less changed the settlements themselves. Naturally, this change has not affected these settlements in the same way. Many of them are well on the way — be it rapid or slow — towards an occupational structure that is characteristic for urban settlements, others represent various transitional stages of the process. In a smaller number of rural settlements, however, large scale outmigration has resulted in declining. These settlements — first of all minor villages of less than 500 inhabitants, are becoming again homogeneous agricultural settlements because of administrative centralisation and thus the outmigration of service population. Meanwhile the number of their population continues to decrease at a rapid pace.

Geographic research registering and analyzing the factors and consequences of social-economic changes — besides national or regional studies — may undertake studies at the local scale, to assess the extent and pace at which the structure, economic and social pattern of the individual settlements is affected by the national or the regional development process.

It has already been mentioned that the development of rural settlements significantly differs in the different parts of the country. The settlements near Budapest or other major cities, and the villages performing local administrative functions have undergone a dynamic change;

while the development of villages far from the cities or industrial centres has been slow.

From this wide range of rural settlements we have selected two for detailed study of the change of social structure, and for making attempt to interpret this change from geographic point of view.

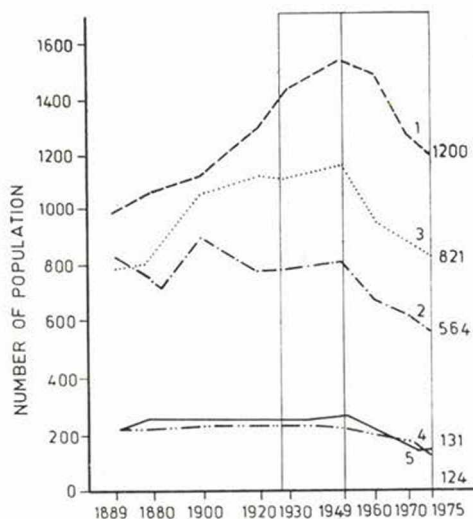


Fig. 1. The growth of population in selected settlements of Órség, 1889-1975
1=Óriszentpéter; 2=Apátistvánfalva; 3=Bajánsénye; 4=Szatta; 5=Ispánk

Both settlements — *Óriszentpéter* and *Apátistvánfalva* — are located at the country's south-western edge, in a region hardly affected by the intensive waves of industrialisation. In this region, during the past three decades of industrial growth 40-50 new non-agricultural workplaces were available for 100 people born locally, and arriving at the working age. The ratio of agricultural employees is 1.5-2 times higher than the national average, and the gross production rate per agricultural worker is low. These circumstances resulted in an intensive outmigration from the area; the population of settlements is continuously decreasing. The migrants leave the region and go to distant places, since apart from Szombathely there is no town in the vicinity undergoing large scale industrial development, and that would be ready to receive the surplus of labour from the relatively overpopulated area.

Besides the nearly identical fundamental characteristics, mostly disadvantageous for the development of both settlements, there have been circumstances different in each case, producing favourable effects. *Óriszentpéter*, although it did not have administrative functions until recently, has central location, and performs minor central functions in the Órség

region. The very unfavourable marginal location of Apátistvánfalva is in many respect balanced by the proximity of the town of Szentgotthárd. Although the importance of this small town in industry – in comparison with the national average – is very limited, its industrialisation and other central functions are not at all to be disregarded as attraction for the population of the surrounding rural settlements, including Apátistvánfalva.

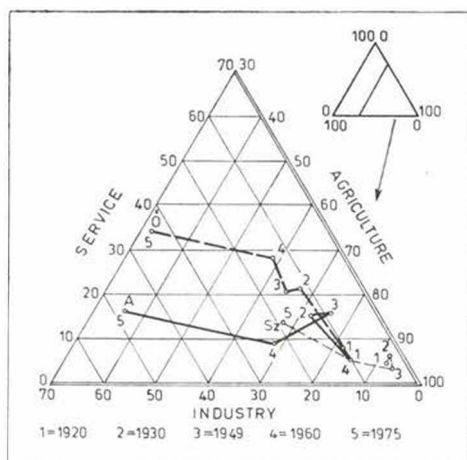


Fig. 2. Changes of the professional structure of the gainfully occupied population of selected settlements,

Ö=Óriszentpéter; A=Apátistvánfalva; Sz=Szatta.

In the following the social pattern of both settlements will be a subject of analysis.

Óriszentpéter, a community with a past of more than 800 years, has a central position in Órség. Earlier the region had various sources for living, which could be fully utilized by the population by means of an appropriate economic system, and could achieve a relatively high standard of living. These sources were agriculture, forestry, homecraft and the sales of their produces and products.

The number of the population since the first census (in 1783–84:630 inhabitants), gradually grew, and in these days it is the largest settlement in the region of Órség. From the turn of the century, (1900) up to 1949 the number of the population grew from 1108 to 1507. During this period growth was constant though not steady. From 1949 growth has given way to decline. The number of migrants to foreign countries – although significant – remained far behind the number of those taking part in internal migration. Natural increase – as a result of the anti-abortion law – was higher than ever (198) but outmigration was even higher (–247), and so the number of residents decreased to 1458.

The major motives of outmigration – both for the individual and for the whole migration movement – were mostly of economic nature and have been so ever since. The closing down of the local timber mills, and the need for non-agricultural labour elsewhere in the country at the time of the reconstruction of war damages forced or attracted many people into the nearby towns. The years following the 2nd World War the outmigration of families or groups was typical, while in the period between 1960 and 1980 mostly the younger, productive and unmarried part of the population took part in the movement.

By the end of 1979, the number of inhabitants in Óriszentpéter decreased to 1190, despite the positive natural growth (65). *The decrease of the population was due to outmigration the rate of which was higher than ever.* Although in the past few years it has slowed down a bit, still, *one fourth of the population (-360 people) left the village in the past 20 years.*

Outmigration and the changes of employment are interrelated. At the turn of the century more than 80 per cent of the population lived on agriculture, and this ratio was still some 55% shortly after the liberation (1945). Following the organisation of the large scale collective production the ratio of those living on agriculture began to decrease rapidly, and today only one third of the population is employed in that sector. The socialist reorganisation of agriculture took place only at the beginning of the 1960's, relatively late. The unfavourable natural conditions and the difficulties at the beginning have led to poor yields which forced many to look for other sources of living, partly on the spot, but mostly in the industrial centres of the region (Szombathely, Zalaegerszeg, Kőrmend, Szentgotthárd) in non-agricultural occupations. The shift from farming to non-agricultural branches of economy were due to financial reasons first of all, but the psychological motives is not to be dismissed either. The higher and more secure income of non-agricultural employees, and the more comfortable working conditions were major attractions for most of the people who left agriculture. The labour force created this way could find but limited non-agricultural employment in the local village, since neither the local industry, nor the relatively developed tertiary sector – services – could provide sufficient number of jobs despite that Óriszentpéter has been the transport, cultural and commercial centre of the region Órség.

The process of social mobility was thus disharmonious, because the development of agriculture and the other branches of the economy were not balanced, and there was a significant labour surplus. The number of *commuters* to workplaces in the above mentioned towns grew steadily. A considerable part of these *potential migrants* became actual outmigrants. In the last 15 years three quarters of the commuters left the village, mostly men, because the number of female labour force is less, and women migrate more rarely – especially to larger distances.

As a result of outmigration the *demographic composition of the community has significantly changed*. One tenth of the houses are deserted; in a settlement earlier characterized by an overproportion of men, the

ratio has profoundly changed: in 1960 the ratio of men and women were 1000 to 992, whereas in 1875 it was 1000 to 1120!

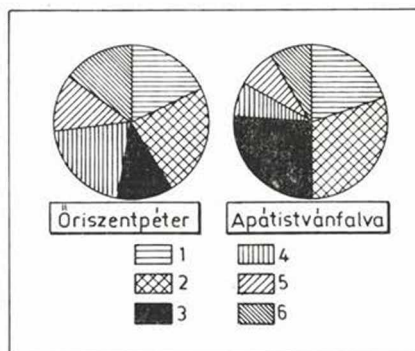
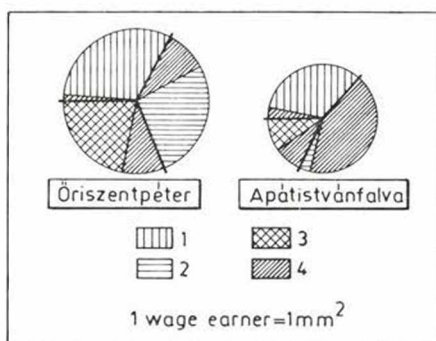


Fig. 3. Professional structure of population and commuting, 1975

1=agriculture; 2=industry; 3=services; 4=proportion of commuters according to the different branches.

Fig. 4. Types of households, 1975

1=agricultural; 2=mixed; 3=industrial; 4=servicing; 5=servicing and industrial; 6=retired.

Age distribution has also changed significantly. While from the turn of the century to 1960 the ratio of population under 14 and above 60 gradually grew (from 23.3% to 29.3% and from 12.3% to 15.2%), and the ratio of active population decreased at the same rate; from 1960 to date the trend has turned, and *the population is rapidly aging*. In 1975 the ratio of population between 0–14 years (19%) is below the national average (20.5%), whereas the ratio of those over 60 is significantly higher (23.1% and 18.2%). The number of active population has largely decreased, and their ratio is far below the national average (57.9% and 61.3%), and, regarding the fact that most of the outmigrants are young and middle age (20 to 39 years) – that is why natural growth has fallen back so alarmingly –, the conclusion seems to be realistic that the population of the settlement is facing an even faster process of aging. If the population is divided into two large groups, that is under 40 years and above 40, the rapid pace of the trend becomes even more obvious. In 1869 more than three quarters of the population was under 40, and even in 1960 more than two thirds of the population still belonged to that age group. As a result of outmigration, hardly more than 60% of the population belongs to the category today.

The process of aging has brought another phenomenon to the surface as well: the unhealthy *growth of dependents* and, simultaneously, the decrease of the number of wage earners, the active population. At the national level this ratio has been evolving in the opposite way. At the turn of the century the number of dependents to 100 employees was 68 (national average 130), in 1949 : 107 (average 109), in 1960 : 85 (average 87), and today 63 (national average is 65).

The educational standard of the population has changed too. In the two rural settlements — especially at Óriszentspéter — the ratio of educated population grew quickly. This is partly a consequence of purposeful educational policy, and partly a process emerging from the tendency of occupational regroupment. First, the new jobs in industry and in the services — both the local ones and those in the nearby industrial centres — demanded higher qualification, and secondly, large-scale farming required the involvement of experts, too.

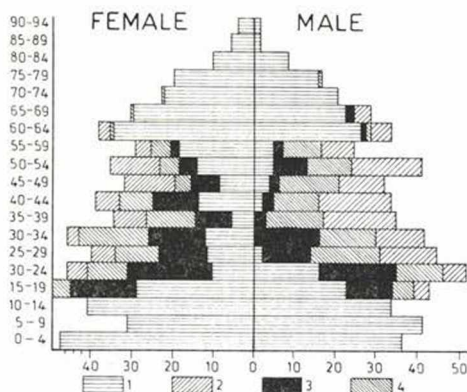


Fig. 5. Population of Óriszentspéter by age, sex and profession, 1975
1 = dependents; 2 = agriculture; 3 = industry; 4 = services.

The ratio of those not having completed the 8 grades of primary school is still relatively high, but it has considerably decreased between 1960 and 1970, while the number of those having completed secondary or high level of education has multiplied.

At the turn of the century 85% of all the active wage earners worked in agriculture, and between 1949 and 1960 it was still about 60–65%. As a result of the above described social-economic regroupment *the proportion of active wage earners in agriculture is not more than one third of all active workers*. Side by side with the decrease of the agricultural wage earners, the ratio of those employed in industry and services has increased. The proportion of *industrial employees* has grown from 7.7% to 30% since the turn of the century, and the ratio of the tertiary sector from 7.2% to 37%. More than one quarter of non-agricultural employed are commuters, who sooner or later will become outmigrants unless some significant industry is allocated in the village. Especially local female employment problems are serious, since two fifth of the commuters are women, and a high proportion of women in working age are dependents. The shoe factory, opened in 1970 (a local shop of the SAVARIA Shoe Factory), employs 150 women, which is significant, but it is far from being the final solution of occupational problems.

ÖRISZENTPÉTER

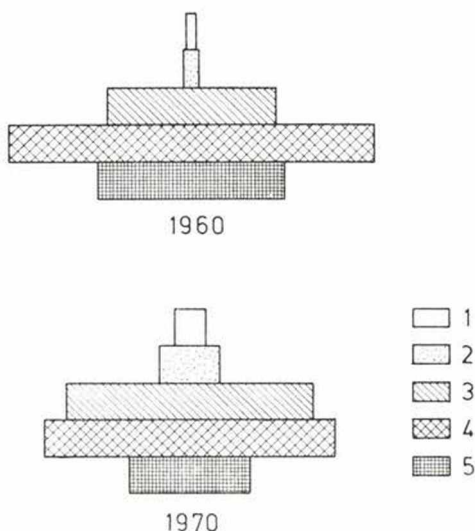


Fig. 6. Educational level of the population of Óriszentpéter

1 = graduated from university; 2 = graduated from college; 3 = graduated from secondary school;
4 = graduated from primary school 5 = without any completed education.

Earlier the families living on agriculture lived in fair separation from the non-agricultural population. Owing to the change of the employment structure of the population, the number of mixed families grew transitionally (40%). In such families one of the active wage earners works in agriculture and the other in industry or services. In recent years the number of such mixed families has steadily decreased (to 24%), and so did the number of families living on agriculture, only (18%). All the other families earn their living solely from non-agricultural activities. This change is reflected in the income-conditions, too. The lowest annual income per capita is in the families living in the outskirts of the village occupied in agriculture. The next income category is formed mostly by the mixed families, while the highest income category is made up by the families occupied in non-agricultural branches, who tend to live in the centre of the village.

The population of Apátistvánfalva is southern slavonic – slovenian – . *Hungarian is the native language of only 10% of the population.* The number of the population – in contrast to Óriszentpéter and most of our rural settlements – reached its peak in 1900: at the turn of the century it was 900, then, after a transitional decrease it grew again to 800 by 1949. The attraction of labour force by industry and the resettlement of some slovenian population from the country resulted in a repeated decrease in the past few decades. (1980: 517 inhabitants).

The present number of population can be regarded as stable. However there is a slight outmigration, but two circumstances hinder this to a large extent:

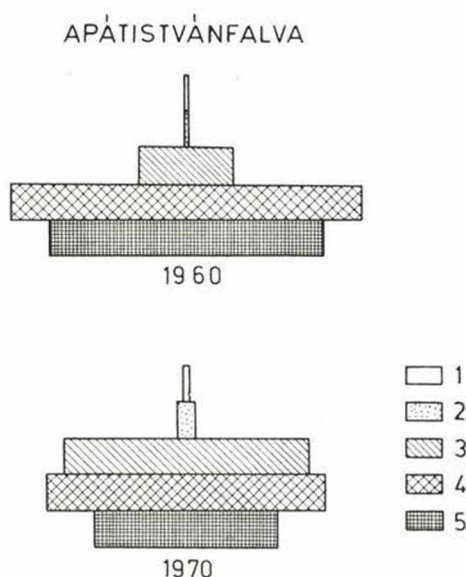


Fig 7. Educational level of the population of Apátistvánfalva

1=graduated from university; 2=graduated from college; 3=graduated from secondary school; 4 = graduated from primary school 5=without any completed education.

a) The population belonging to a national minority is unwilling to give up life in a village and move into town since they only can reserve their mother tongue under rural conditions.

b) Unfavourable natural circumstances, and the conserved traditions of economic activity in the area are obstacles to forming up to date large scale farming, and the individual agricultural work on a small piece of land – although it only ensures a modest living standard – ties the conservative part of the population to the spot.

The moderate outmigration, however, does not mean a total ossification of the social-economic structure; on the contrary, social mobility was fairly large scale between 1960 and 1980. The ratio of active population is 53%; in 1960 71% of the active workers were employed in agriculture and 29% in other branches. By 1980 the ratio of agricultural workers has decreased to 32%, therefore the majority of the wage earners work in industry (48%) and in the services (20%). Only one fifth of non-agricultural employees work in the village, most of the others commute to the industrial and tertiary workplaces of Szentgotthárd. Owing to the increasing number of commuters the village will soon become a satellite settlement of the nearby town. Two thirds of the commuters are men, and one third are women. The female labour force is attracted first of all by the industrial

and tertiary workplaces of Szentgotthárd (textile industry, administration).

The movement of the outmigrating national minorities is also worth tracing. People from Apátistvánfalva and other villages with slovenian population settle down at Szentgotthárd in separate units as it is indicated by the name of the street where they live.

Due to the closer ties of the population of national minorities to their native village, the age composition remained nearly unchanged between 1900 and 1960, and the symptoms of aging were not distinct. However, since 1960 outmigration of the younger population was enhanced, and, side by side with this process the proportion of elderly has increased.

Land is unfavourable for agricultural production, which thus does not ensure living, especially for large families. One third of such families are mixed — that is one of the active wage earners is employed in a non-agricultural branch — which understandably increases the income standard of the family, since the more non-agricultural workers are in a family the more is the average income per capita. Only one fifth of all families live on agriculture, and half of the families have already totally departed from agricultural work.

The comparison of the two villages in terms of the trend and pace of their development and social-economic change indicates that *Őriszentpéter is at a more advanced stage of social restructuring*. The difference between the two settlements in terms of the phase of social-economic advancement is due to the following:

— At *Őriszentpéter*, although the ratio of commuting is high, there are local employment possibilities, ensuring a local restructuring process. At Apátistvánfalva the number of local employment possibilities is minimal, and so the active workers leaving agriculture have to commute to find employment.

— At *Őriszentpéter* the level of agricultural development is higher than at Apátistvánfalva, where many inhabitants work on their own small pieces of land. This is also reflected in the income conditions of the families.

The major aim of the present, brief comparison of the two villages as regards their social employment structure was to point out the general typical as well as the unique, distinct features of the development of rural settlements entangled in the stream of the overall national process, and and to underline the justification of micro investigations carried out by methods of social geography.

РЕЗЮМЕ

ПРОЦЕСС СОЦИАЛЬНОГО РАССЛОЕНИЯ НА ПРИМЕРЕ РАЗВИТИЯ ДВУХ ЗАПАДНЫХ НАСЕЛЕННЫХ ПУНКТОВ ВЕНГРИИ — АПАТИШТВАНФАЛВА И БОРИСЕНТПЕТЕР

В течении трех послевоенных десятилетий в экономико-социальной структуре Венгрии произошли коренные изменения. Следствием этого бурного периода, поднимающего страну в ряды промышленно развитых государств и затрагивающим все общество, явилось сопровождающее индустриализацию, быстрое и крупномасштабное расслоение населения.

Анализу общих закономерностей процесса социального расслоения посвящены многочисленные и, естественно, не только географические научные работы. Специфически географической задачей можно считать анализ тех конкретных и типичных географических явлений, которые способствовали формированию основного географического процесса, другими словами: какие региональные особенности скрываются за экономическими обобщениями, так как факторы, вызывающие процесс социального расслоения, мотивирующие его течение, можно конкретно уловить только на уровне деталей, в их определенной географической среде.

В процессе социально-экономической трансформации, имевшей место в последние десятилетия, сельские поселения приняли участие не только как поставщики рабочей силы для промышленности; волна довольно быстрого расслоения самодеятельного населения более или менее трансформировала и сами населенные пункты.

Географические исследования, направленные на определение и анализ факторов и последствий социально-экономического расслоения, наряду с исследованиями государственных или региональных масштабов, могут поставить себе задачей такой анализ нескольких населенных пунктов, в ходе которого пытаются определить, в какой степени, в каких размерах государственный или региональный процесс развития трансформирует экономическое и социальное лицо, структуру населения этих поселений.

В очерке рассматривается формирование социальной структуры населения двух юго-западных венгерских сел-Апатишванфалва и Еорисентпетер, оказавшихся по существу за пределами волны интенсивной индустриализации. Формирование социальной структуры пытаемся рассматривать с географической точки зрения.

Авторы подробно анализируют и сравнивают социальную структуру двух поселений: формирование количества населения, причины эмиграций, демографические аспекты, изменения происшедшие в структуре занятого населения, дисгармонию социальной трансформации, формирование доходов населения, изменение типов семей, и.т. д. Мы стремились показать, что наряду с общими явлениями, в развитии сельских населенных пунктов, затронутых волной генерального процесса, протекающего на общественном уровне, большую роль играют отклоняющиеся от общих-индивидуальные и типичные черты, тем самым подчеркивая право на существование микроисследований с помощью социографических методов.