

International Migration Patterns in and between Hungary and Austria

Research Report



MIGWELL

Well-being and Migration:
The Hungary – Austria Migration Nexus

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Work Package 2: ‘Secondary Analysis of Existing Data’

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MIGWELL at a glance

The MIGWELL project focuses on the nexus of migration and well-being in Hungary and Austria. Using quantitative and qualitative research methods, it seeks to explore the impacts of migration on subjective well-being in the case of Hungarian immigrants in Austria as well as the effects of subjective well-being differences on emigration potential in Hungary. The approach of this project is innovative, not only because it links the concepts of ‘well-being’ and ‘migration’, but also because it interprets their two-way causal relationship within one research framework. Since the Covid-19 pandemic might have had a profound impact on both pillars, MIGWELL will also reflect on the rapidly changing socio-economic and well-being related issues that have emerged due to the epidemic throughout the life cycle of the project. The theoretical expansion of these concepts and the empirical findings of the project may contribute to more effective policies in both countries.



1. Aims

The main goal of Work Package 2 is to understand the patterns of subjective well-being in Hungary and Austria, and the factors responsible for the country-level differences as a driver behind international migration flows. Most importantly, EU-SILC and micro-census data will provide input for the secondary analysis, which will also consider the changing macro-structural conditions and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Before presenting an exhaustive statistical analysis of the currently available secondary data on well-being, this paper, as the first deliverable of WP2, aims to provide an overarching analysis of the international migration patterns in Hungary and Austria.

2. Migration: definitions and methodological challenges

2.1 An overview of key definitions and the focus of the MIGWELL project

A previous research report of the MIGWELL project, entitled “Conceptual Framework for the Study of the Subjective Well-being–Migration Nexus” (Németh et al. 2022: 4-19) already provided an overview of the key definitions and some typologies of migration processes in general, followed by a literature-based review of the main theories on migration and well-being. This chapter briefly summarizes the most important definitions that are relevant for Work Package 2, “Secondary Analysis of Existing Data”.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs defines an *international migrant* as “any person who changes his or her country of usual residence”, excluding movements due to “recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimages”. Persons who are absent from their country of origin for a period of three to twelve months are considered short-term international migrants. If this period exceeds twelve months, they appear in statistics as long-term international migrants (UN 1998: 17). The term “usual residence” is used to refer to the place “at which a person normally spends the daily period of rest, regardless of temporary absence for purposes of recreation, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage or, in default, the place of legal or registered residence” (EC 2007). However, not all states adhere precisely to these definitions, as we will point out in Chapter 2.2.

It is important to mention here that during the last years, a new expression has emerged in the European Union’s parlance: when EU nationals or legally resident third-country nationals move from one EU Member State to another – implementing their right to free movement – it is usually called “intra-EU mobility”. From a scientific point of view it is, of course, still a form of international migration, but this type of spatial mobility is treated separately in EU policy debates. Beyond the pure changes in terminology, this has practical consequences too. Free language courses, for instance, are not available anymore for people who change their

country of residence “only” within the European Union. In this paper, we will follow the United Nation’s definition, and use the word “migration” consistently.

The MIGWELL project has been designed to analyse the subjective well-being of potential stayers and potential emigrants in Hungary, permanent long-term immigrants in Austria who have arrived from the territory of Hungary, as well as return migrants (or potential return migrants) who have decided (or plan) to move back to Hungary from Austria. Daily or weekly cross-border commuters and second or third-generation immigrants are not included in MIGWELL.

2.2 Methodological challenges

“Statistics are not synonymous with reality but are, rather, a way of representing the complexity of the world in categories and figures attached to such categories” (Fassmann et al. 2009: 17). This becomes obvious when we look at the different ways in which certain groups of people – e.g. ethnic minorities, religious groups, or immigrants – have been counted in censuses, population registers, and other databases worldwide. The recognition of the technical and methodological challenges of conducting regular enumerations of the whole population, and tracking processes like migration, date back to the 19th century, when the European empires (e.g. Habsburg, Russian, Ottoman) spent enormous efforts to register, categorise, and hence better control their heterogeneous populations (Kertzer and Arel 2002).

While overseas migration was relatively well documented during the 1800s, the measurement of internal migration was technically impossible at the time, and tracking migration across European state borders was likewise difficult. It could only be reconstructed indirectly from the censuses, based on personal declarations of place of birth. (In some cases, statistical offices registered all resident foreign citizens and sent the registration cards back to their countries of origin.) Population censuses rarely provided information about emigrants; if so, they did not yield precise and verifiable results. The first agreements on the necessity of comparable migration statistics started at the conferences held by the International Statistical Institute in the late 1800s (Fassmann 2009: 22-24).

Although the United Nations, the OECD, Eurostat, and some other international institutions made significant efforts in the last decades to standardise and harmonise the main concepts and measurement tools of international migration, the definitions and instruments for determining migration figures used by individual countries still differ remarkably, and data are not always directly comparable. This chapter will briefly reflect on the most important methodological problems and the ways national statistics try to cope with them. These challenges are associated with both flow and stock statistics.

Migrant-flow data account for the number of migrants entering or leaving a territorial unit, e.g. a country, during a specified time period, usually one calendar year (UN DESA 2017).

They are more sensitive than stock data for the following reasons: 1. Since these data are typically collected in the course of administrative procedures, such as registrations and deregistrations at registry offices, they heavily depend on the actual legal systems of the individual states. Thus, flow statistics are not always comparable across countries or over time. 2. They are usually compiled by administrative staff without specific qualifications in statistics, which has negative effects on data quality. 3. The whole process is not initially designed and coordinated with the purpose of research in mind. In most cases, only very few basic variables are collected (or published) about the people who arrived or left the country. Detailed information beyond age and gender – that would be useful for researchers, e.g. qualifications, previous countries of residence, or family members left behind – are rarely available (Fassmann 2009).

According to the UN recommendations, statistical offices should label only those people as international migrants who had entered the country at least 12 months earlier. Therefore, immigration flow data become out-dated before they are actually published. Some countries, such as Austria, “try to circumvent the problem of delayed statistics by counting those who have crossed their borders as international migrants after they have stayed for more than three months” (ibid: 32-36). However, in this way, data on immigration become comparatively higher than in other countries where statistical offices keep to the one-year limit.

Another practical problem concerns the question of who should be called an emigrant. While most European countries count their citizens as part of the resident population for some months after they have left (e.g. three months in the case of Austria), in many countries, for instance in Romania or Hungary, all people are counted toward the population who have a registered permanent address in the country, even if they live in another country (Poulain et al. 2006).

This is related to the fact that emigration is poorly registered in most countries. A significant number of the people who leave a country, even for a longer period of time, does not declare the change of their residence, particularly within the European Union. Since there are no incentives for deregistration, many of them maintain their permanent address in the country of origin, while they actually live, work, or study in another country. As a result, flow data on emigration are very often seriously underestimated (Nowok et al. 2006). The numerical gap can be estimated by bilateral comparisons of official emigration data of a country and immigration data of the destination countries within the same time period. Using “mirror statistics” as a tool for detecting asymmetries in flow data is essential in migration studies.

International *migrant stocks* show the total number of international migrants present in a given country at a particular point in time. Country of birth or, if this information is not available, citizenship, are the most frequently used proxy variables for defining international immigrants (UN DESA 2017: 9, 2 UN DESA 2020: 5). However, these approaches are not without difficulties.

Although most countries gather information on the *place of birth* of their resident population in the course of censuses or population registers, this data in itself does not say anything about when and from which country the respective person has arrived. In this sense, the country of previous residence could be a useful complementary indicator but relatively few censuses contain specific questions on that. Moreover, a person's country of birth data can differ from his/her current country of residence without their having moved at all in their lifetime because the international borders have changed or the state itself had meanwhile dissolved. Similarly, all EU Member States ask their resident population about their *citizenship*. Since the requirements for obtaining citizenship and the treatment of children born in families with foreign citizenship differ significantly in each country, the use of this variable is even more problematic.

The main sources of information on international migrant stock are still the *censuses*. These regular enumerations provide full and precise cross-sectional pictures of the population stock of a country. Their major disadvantage is the great time span – in most cases ten years – between data collection periods. Some national statistics offices, for example in Hungary and Austria, aim to bridge this gap by conducting in-between micro-censuses. Although data validity is limited because these are based on representative sample surveys (and they usually underestimate immigrant population), micro-censuses are widely considered useful tools to track population dynamics that can change drastically over a decade (Fassmann 2009: 39).

Another methodological problem that hamper the international comparability of stock data is the lack of consensus about the necessary period of stay to be counted as immigrant (e.g. three months in Austria, three months in Hungary for EU citizens, one year for third-country citizens), and the treatment of asylum seekers; in Austria they are included, while in Hungary they are excluded from the resident population (Poulain et al. 2006).

With all challenges and limitations in mind, *in this Research Report* we will use country of birth as a proxy variable for defining international immigrants, with reflections on the data of country of last residency, which have been available in Austria since 2002.

2.3 Data sources

In this paper, we use three main data sources concerning international migration: censuses that cover the stock populations in Hungary and Austria, the population register in Austria, and databases of Eurostat and the United Nations.

In *Hungary*, the authority responsible for organising the censuses and producing accurate data on the population stock is the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. The 2001, 2011, and 2022 censuses provided several variables regarding the foreign population stock, such as citizenship, place of birth, sex, age, and so forth (Hárs and Sik 2009). Beside the census results, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office also uses administrative data sources to count

foreign population, such as the Central Population Register, the Central Aliens Register, and work-permit data.

In *Austria*, the last “classic” population census was held in 2001. The high costs, growing resistance of the population, and the delay of years between the inquiry and the publication of the results were the main reasons for introducing a new *population register*, and abandoning the old model (Reeger 2009). Every person who changes his/her residence within Austria, arrives in, or leaves the country, must register within three days. Municipal registration services are responsible for coordinating this process, and Statistics Austria receives these data through the Central Registration System. Since the population register has been linked to many other registers, including education, social security, tax, unemployment, business, etc., Statistics Austria has been able to conduct register-based censuses since 2011. This integrated register-based system makes it possible to measure internal and international migration flows more accurately than before. Data on citizenship, place of birth, current and previous or – in case of deregistered emigrants, the next – country of main residence are available on the level of municipalities. However, pre- and post-2002 data on migration are not perfectly comparable (ibid: 115-116).

*Eurostat*¹ continuously updates, revises (to obtain internationally comparable data), and publishes migration statistics collected from the Member States’ national statistical institutes. The *United Nations* database² on international migrant stocks is another relevant source that covers all countries in the world. These data are obtained from censuses, population registers, or nationally representative surveys according to the reference years 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020. However, for countries where empirical data are not available for two or more points in time, interpolation or extrapolation is used to estimate the migrant stock for the reference years. The UN international migration flow statistics cover 45 countries. These data are collected through a variety of data collection systems: population registers, border statistics, the number of residence permits issued, statistical forms that are completed when persons change their place of residence, etc.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/data/database>

² <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data-landing-page>

3. General population dynamics

The changes in the population number of a country always consist of two components: natural change, i.e. the difference between the number of live births and deaths, and net migration (the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants). This chapter aims to reflect on the main tendencies over the second half of the 20th century and the first two decades of the 21st century.

3.1 Hungary

In 1960, Hungary had almost exactly 10 million inhabitants. During the 1960s and 1970s, the population number increased by approximately 75,000, and reached its peak in 1982. Since then, a reverse tendency has become observable: on 1 January 2022, only 9.73 million people lived in Hungary, which is 10% less than four decades earlier. Thus, the total population loss of the country reaches almost one million.

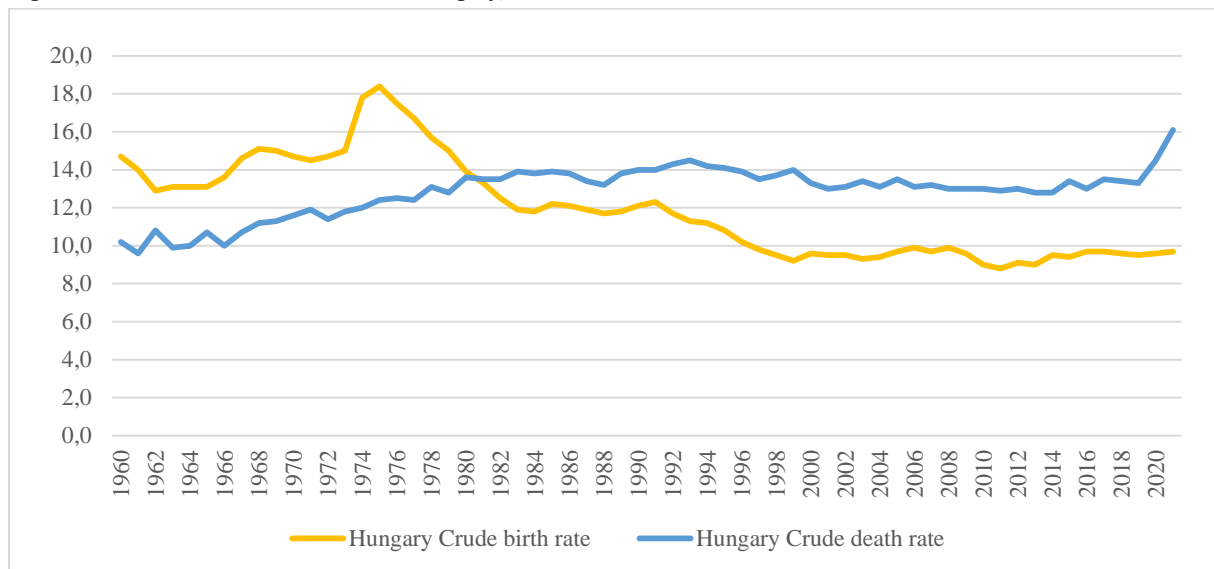
One of the main reasons for the *population decrease* is that women have been having fewer children in general. The most widely used demographic indicator in this respect is the *total fertility rate (TFR)*, which shows the mean number of children that would be born alive to a woman during her lifetime if she were to pass through her childbearing years conforming to the age-specific fertility rates of a given year. In the absence of migration, the total fertility rate of 2.1 would be able to keep the population size constant, thus it is called the “replacement level”. During the early 1960s, the TFR in most of the Central European countries varied between 1.80 and 3.00. The average number of children per woman started to decrease permanently in Austria in the mid-1960s, followed by Hungary and other socialist countries approximately one and a half decades later. This delay can be explained by these political regimes’ explicit aim to maintain extensive reproduction rates through restrictive abortion policies, punitive taxation of childless families, and a limited choice of modern contraception options (Fassmann et al. 2014, Sobotka 2002). Hungarian TFR dropped below the replacement level in 1978, and stabilized at around 1.8 during the 1980s. In the years of the economic transition – coupled with high unemployment rates, insecurity, and the relative deprivation of households – the TFR dropped sharply and reached its nadir in 1999 (1.28). Since 2011, a modest recovery is observable, and today Hungary already reaches the EU-28 average with 1.59 live births per woman.

On the other hand, since 1981, *crude death rates* (the number of deaths per 1,000 inhabitants) have been constantly higher than *crude birth rates* (the number of live births per 1,000 inhabitants). The decline in the number of births after 1990 was the result of women postponing motherhood to a later age. Thus, the childbearing age has increased from 23 years to 28.2 years until 2010. With the end of this postponement process having been reached, the age of having first-borns remains relatively steady (Kapitány and Spéder 2018: 48-49). The

differences between the crude birth rates and crude death rates were relatively stable after the millennium at around 3.6 on average but in 2021, the crude death rate jumped to 16.1 due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Figure 1).

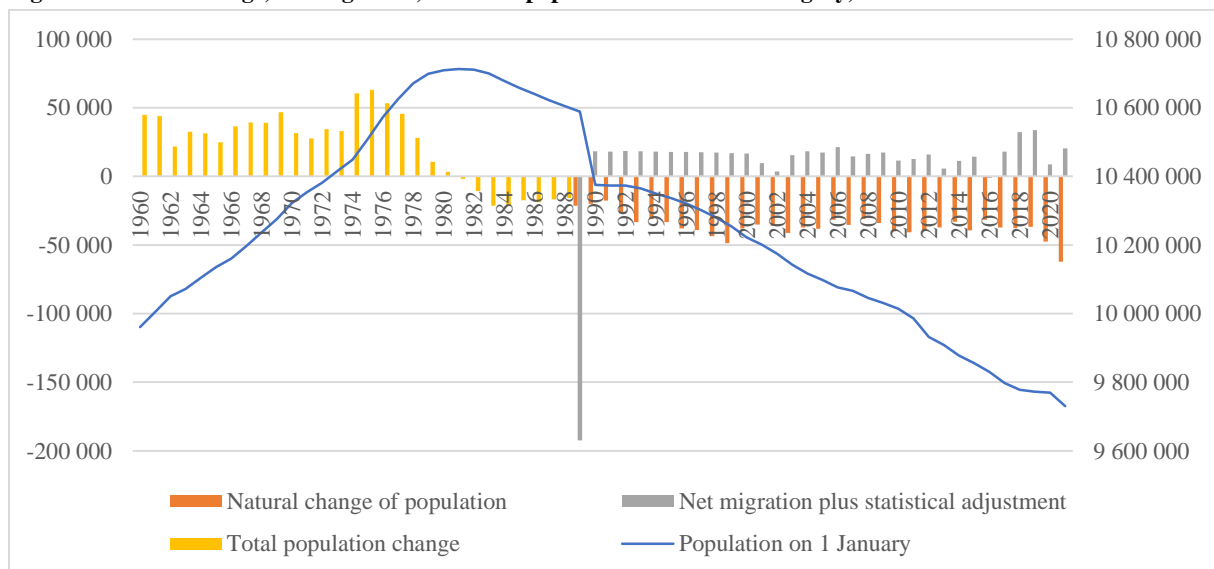
As a result, the Hungarian population has been experiencing natural decrease since 1982, and the positive migration balance (altogether roundabout half a million people between 1991 and 2022) is only partly counterbalancing this overall tendency (Figure 2, Table 1).

Figure 1. Crude birth and death rates in Hungary, 1960-2021



Source: Eurostat, own figure

Figure 2. Natural change, net migration, and total population number in Hungary, 1960-2021



Source: Eurostat, own figure. (Reliable data on international migration during the socialist era are not available)

Table 1: Population change by components in Hungary, 1961-2022

Year	Population, 1 January	Period	Population change	Natural change	Net migration plus statistical adjustment
1961	10,005,980	1961-1970	+347,741	+338,648	n.a.
1971	10,353,721	1971-1980	+359,060	+371,973	n.a.
1981	10,712,781	1981-1990	-339,628	-165,541	n.a.
1991	10,373,153	1991-2000	-172,855	-349,624	+176,769
2001	10,200,298	2001-2010	-214,576	-359,960	+145,384
2011	9,985,722	2011-2021	-270,906	-442,710	+171,804
2022	9,689,010				

Source: Eurostat. Own table (n.a.: reliable data on international migration during the socialist era are not available)

As in many other European countries, **demographic challenges**, such as ageing and shrinking of the working-age population, are major concerns in Hungary too, which is the outcome of the low fertility and high mortality rates (Billingsley 2010). Since 1990, the average age of the population grew from 36 to 43 years, while the share of the 65+ age group rose from 13% to 19% (Tálas 2020: 67). Whereas in 1990 about 24 people in the 65+ age group were dependent on 100 people aged 15 to 64, this ratio increased to 31.8 in 2022, and is forecasted to rise further to 45.8 by 2050.³ According to the **population forecasts**, the Hungarian population will decrease to 8.49 – 8.74 million (thus, by approximately one million) until 2050, depending whether pessimist or optimist scenarios will materialise.⁴ Still, in the Hungarian government there is a strong refusal to address these demographic challenges through immigration. Since the proportion of foreign-born people in the population is relatively modest in Hungary, it is rather the emigration of young Hungarians that is often placed in the limelight of contemporary public discourses, a phenomenon that sharpens the demographic problems.

3.2 Austria

The demographic development of Austria shows a different pattern. For the last decades, **three main phases** can be identified based on population changes: growth between 1952 and 1974, stagnation between 1974 and 1988, and remarkable population growth again since then.

In 1952, Austria counted 6.9 million inhabitants. Until 1974, the country experienced a population gain of approximately 700,000. During this phase, natural increase was the main source of growth. With the recovery of the Austrian economy after World War II, the birth rates were especially high (Figure 3). The post-war baby-boom period has been referred to in the literature as the “Golden Age of marrying and childbearing” (Hanisch 1994: 426). Parallel to the slowdown of the natural increase, the international migration balance showed a remarkable growth in the late 1960s and early 1970s. (In the previous decade, out-migration

³ https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/nep/hu/nep0039.html

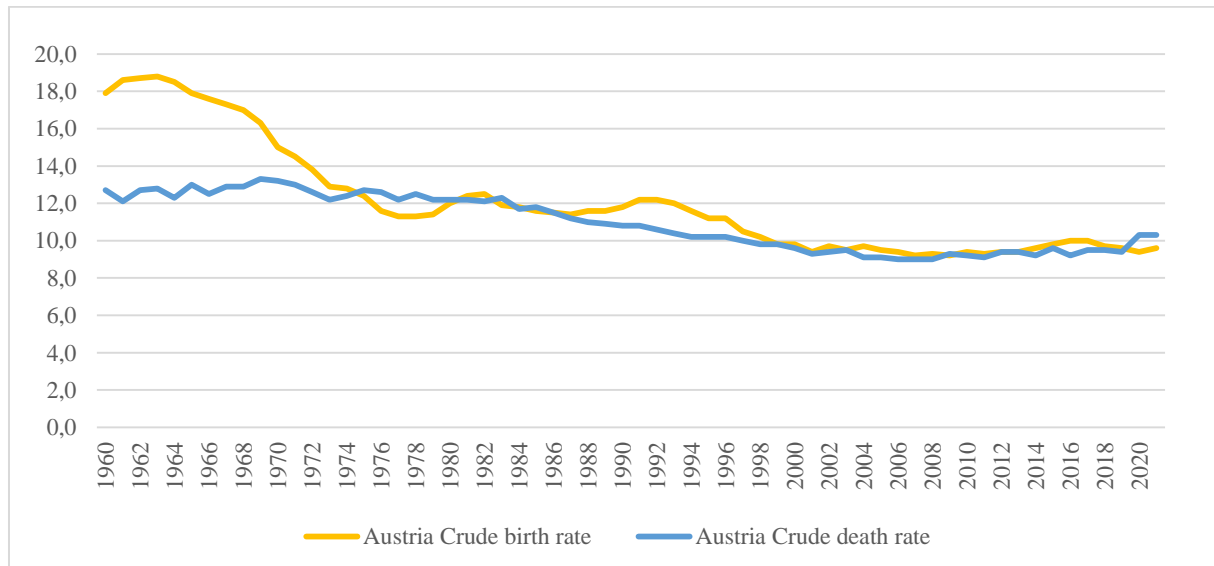
⁴ <https://ksh.hu/s/helyzetkep-2021/#/kiadvany/nepesedesi-vilagnap/magyarorszag-nepessegenek-alakulasa>

of Austrian nationals exceeded immigration levels, with the most important target countries being Switzerland, Germany, the USA, and Canada). Since the Austrian economy suffered from labour shortage, the government recruited foreign workers according to bilateral guest-worker agreements with Turkey and Yugoslavia (See more details in Chapter 4.2).

The 1973 oil crisis proved to be a turning point, and the economic downturn went hand in hand with fundamental societal changes promoted by politics: legalisation of abortion, access to contraceptives, a rising percentage of working women, and their rapidly rising education level due to an education offensive of the socio-democratic government of the Federal Chancellor, Bruno Kreisky. Thus, not only did immigration lose momentum in the 1970s, but fertility rates also started to decrease considerably (2.82 in 1963, 1.69 in 1976), causing a natural decrease and stagnation in the population number at around 7.5 million (Figure 4). In the 1980s, family reunification processes were mainly responsible for the migration surplus.

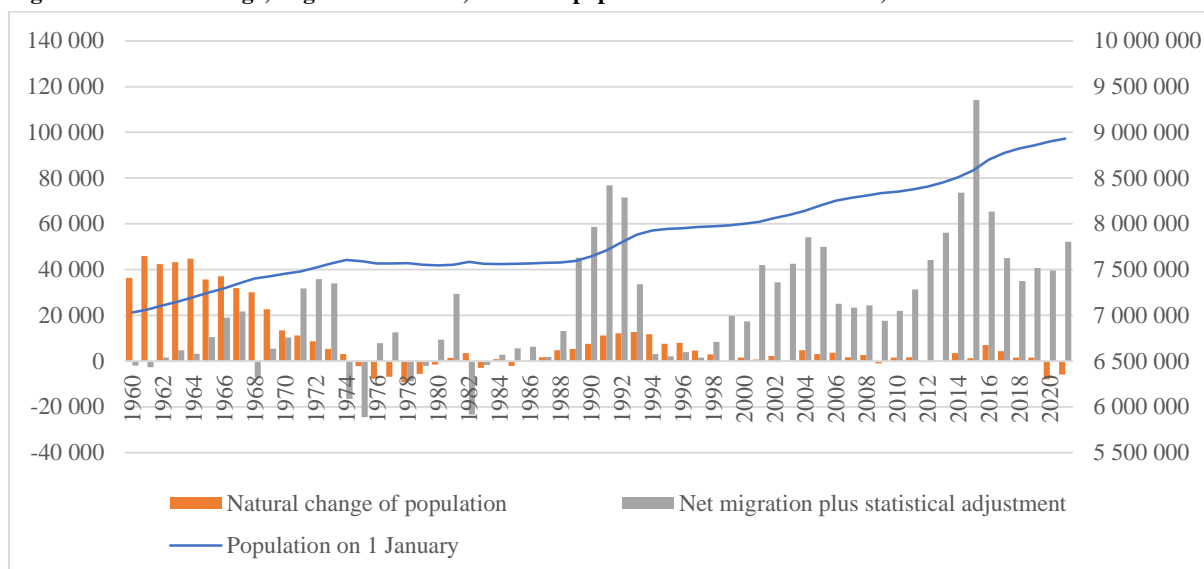
Since the late 1980s, Austria has again been experiencing significant population growth. Between 1988 and 2022, the number of inhabitants rose from 7.6 million to almost 9 million, i.e. by 19%. However, its components changed drastically: whereas natural change constituted around 23% of the total population increase in the 1990s, this ratio dropped to 1% during the 2010s (Table 2).

Figure 3. Crude birth and death rates in Austria, 1960-2021



Source: Eurostat, own figure

Figure 4. Natural change, migration balance, and total population number in Austria, 1960-2021



Source: Eurostat, own figure

Table 2: Population change by components in Austria, 1961-2022

Year	Population, 1st of January	Period	Population change	Natural change	Net migration plus statistical adjustment
1961	7,064,693	1961-1970	+414,337	+347,278	+67.059
1971	7,479,030	1971-1980	+74,296	-4,929	+79.225
1981	7,553,326	1981-1990	+157,556	+19,589	+137.967
1991	7,710,882	1991-2000	+310,064	+72,232	+237.832
2001	8,020,946	2001-2010	+354,218	+18,790	+335.428
2011	8,375,164	2011-2021	+603,765	+6,343	+597.422
2022	8,978,929				

Source: Eurostat, own table.

Today, low fertility and rapid ageing are among the highly relevant topics in the public discourse in Austria as well (Riederer et al. 2020). *Unfavourable demographic trends* clearly challenge the public systems providing retirement pensions, health care, elderly care (Melegh et al. 2018), and the question whether immigration should – and effectively could – counterbalance these processes is another controversial topic. Since the birth rates are low and the fertility rate is below the reproduction level (1.48 in 2021), the population is ageing. The average age of the Austrian population was 36 years in 1970, 38 years in 1991, and 43.2 years in 2022. The changing size of the age groups is also remarkable: whereas about 24.4 people in the 65+ age group were dependent on 100 people aged 20 to 64 in 1991, this number increased to 31.7 in 2022. Moreover, the “Baby-Boom Generation” will also step into retirement age. Thus, until 2050, the proportion of 65+ year-olds in Austria will presumably increase from 19% to 27%, which underlines the importance of further reforms in public systems (Christl and Kucsera 2015).

According to the main variant of the *population forecasts* of Statistics Austria,⁵ the population of the country will increase to 9.62 million by 2050. The scenarios vary between 10.72 million (growth forecasting variant) and 8.29 million (main variant exc. migration). As Fassmann and Marik-Lebeck (2015) underlined, net migration should be around +20.000 to stabilize the population size. However, net migration gains per year should be ca. +159.000 in order to have a stable age structure (i.e., a constant potential support ratio between the 15-64 year-olds and the 65+ population). These numbers clearly illustrate the importance of migration for demographics, and indirectly for the social and economic development of the country.⁶

⁵ <https://www.statistik.at/en/statistics/population-and-society/population/demographische-prognosen/population-projecions-for-austria-and-federal-states>

⁶ Fassmann and Marik-Lebeck's study (2015) also underlined the necessary social and family policy measures, for instance raising the retirement age, increasing female labour-force participation, improving capabilities to combine career and child-bearing responsibilities, etc.

4. International migration processes

4.1 Hungary

4.1.1 Migration flows

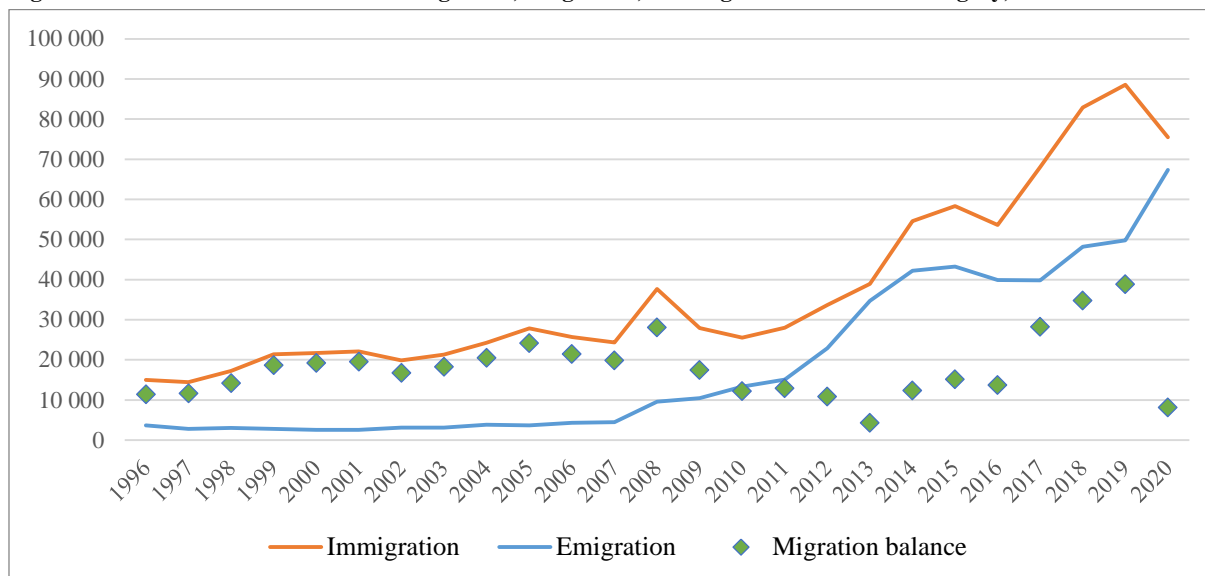
As in many other socialist countries, the international migration flows of Hungary were quite moderate throughout the socialist era. Legal emigration and immigration could be permitted upon request in cases of family reunification, although it was not considered a universal right but was decided on a case-by-case basis (Gödri et al. 2013). There were some notable exceptions to this rule, because politically favoured groups such as Greek and Chilean refugees received residence permits in 1949 and 1973 respectively. A circular form of labour migration furthermore existed within the Eastern Bloc. For example, Hungarian engineers worked in the Soviet Union and in certain Middle Eastern countries, while Hungary in return received Cuban weavers, Polish miners, and Russian industrial workers (Puskás 1991). The sum of legal immigrants in the state socialist period is estimated at around 52,000, whereas the total outward migration could have been around 430,000 (Tóth 1997). In 1956, the year of the revolution against the Soviet rule, almost 200,000 people left Hungary during a brief period of open borders (Hablicsek and Illés 2007). From the late 1980s onward, Hungary changed from a closed country with very low migration rates to a country with considerable immigration and transit migration. Due to the introduction in 1988 of rights for nationals to travel abroad freely, outmigration also became significant (Gödri et al. 2013).

While the natural change has varied between -30,000 and -40,000 per year since the early 1990s, migration surplus has been mitigating its negative effect on population development. On the whole, approximately 450,000 more people arrived in Hungary than those who had left the country between 1996 and 2021.

Immigration

According to the official statistics, the annual number of immigrants increased slightly until the 2008 global financial crisis. After a temporary jump and drop, a consistent and considerable increase is observable: in 2010 only 25,000 people arrived in Hungary, while in 2019 this number amounted to more than 88,000 (Figure 5). Ethnicity has played an important role in this process because the inflow of foreign-born people had consisted mainly of ethnic Hungarians from Romania, Ukraine, Serbia, and Slovakia. Although their share has been declining, one can still find the neighbouring countries on the list of the immigrants' top countries of birth, together with Germany, Turkey, China, Vietnam, and the USA (Table 3, Figure 6-7). The share of total immigration made up by Hungarian citizens (including returnees) varied between 8 and 13% after the millennium but today it is greater than 55% (Németh and Gruber 2019: 29).

Figure 5. Flow data on international immigration, emigration, and migration balance in Hungary, 1996-2020



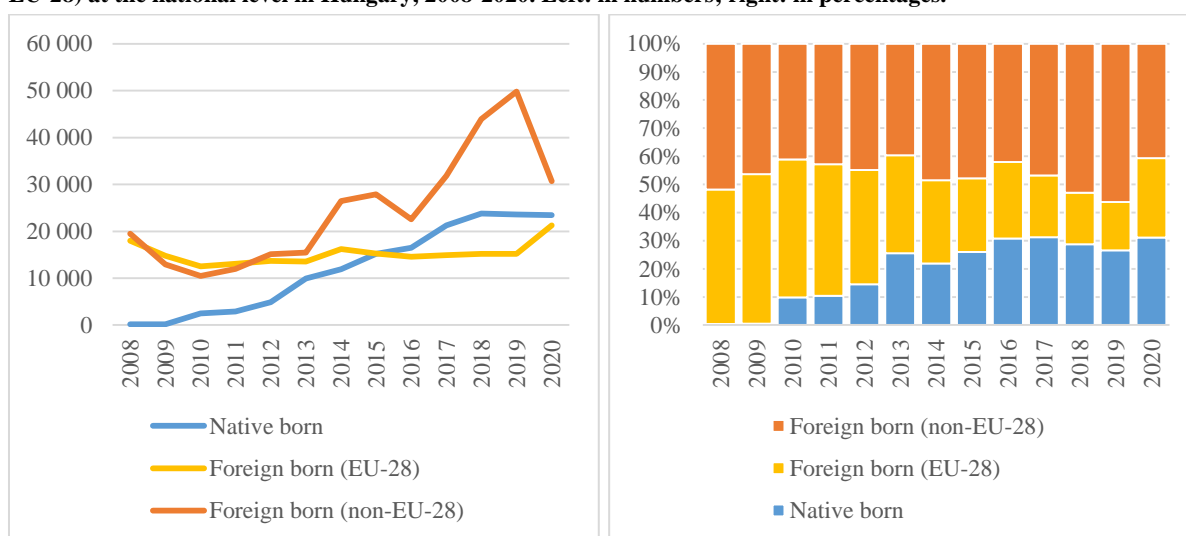
Source: Eurostat, own figure.

Table 3. International immigration flows by country of birth (native born, foreign born, top 5 countries of birth) at the national level in Hungary by 2010, 2015, 2020

Immigration flow by country of birth						
	2010		2015		2020	
Total	25,519		58,344		75,470	
Native born	2,507		15,162		23,440	
Foreign born (EU*)	12,521		15,286		21,297	
Foreign born (non-EU)	10,491		27,889		30,718	
Top 1.	Romania	6,441	Ukraine	10,003	Romania	6,203
Top 2.	Germany	2,054	Romania	8,451	Ukraine	5,674
Top 3.	Serbia	1,264	Serbia	3,751	Germany	3,532
Top 4.	Ukraine	1,072	China	3,527	Slovakia	2,824
Top 5.	China	1,056	Germany	1,888	Serbia	2,622

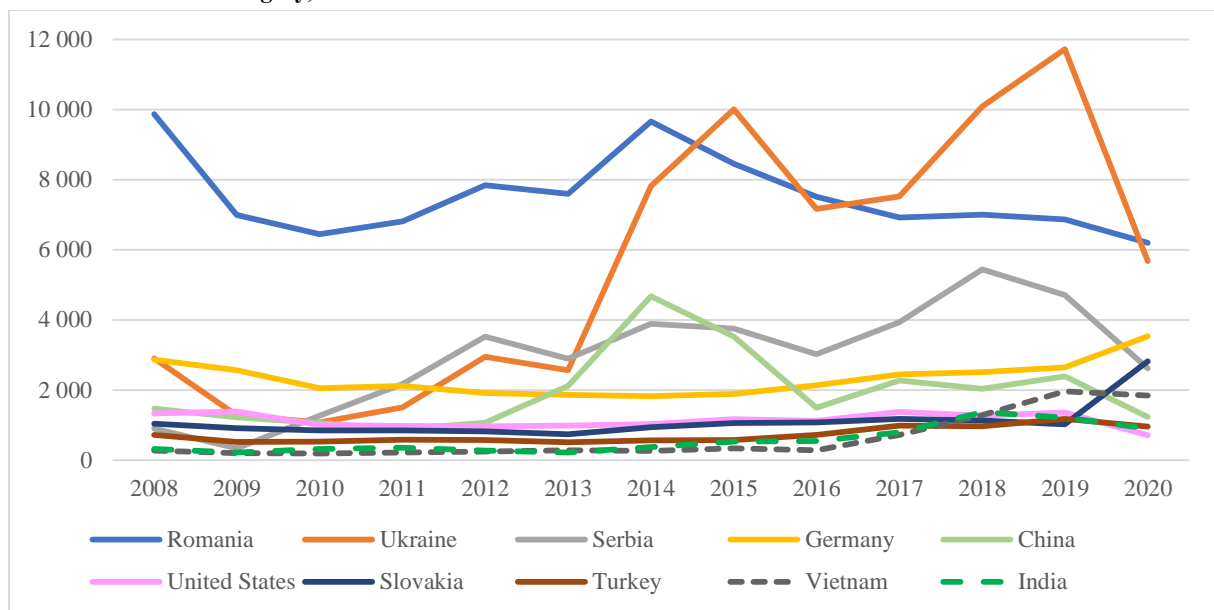
Source: Eurostat, own table. (*EU-28 countries, 2013-2020)

Figure 6. International immigration flows by country of birth (native born, foreign born EU-28*, foreign-born non-EU-28) at the national level in Hungary, 2008-2020. Left: in numbers; right: in percentages.



Source: Eurostat, own figure. (*EU-28 countries: 2013-2020, including the United Kingdom)

Figure 7. International immigration flows according to the top 10 countries of birth (regarding the whole period) at the national level in Hungary, 2008-2020.



Source: Eurostat, own figure.

Emigration

Similarly to most European countries, Hungary also lacks reliable data on emigration. Thus, the number of deregistered emigrants is far below the figures shown by mirror statistics. (For instance, while officially about 13,000 Hungarians moved to another EU country in 2012, according to “mirror statistics” almost 80,000 Hungarian immigrants were registered by the respective destination countries – Gödri 2014). Emigration flows from Hungary also experienced a peak in the first years after the political transformation. At the time it however was mainly non-Hungarian citizens, who had arrived in the late 1980s, who then left the country. After a short period with relatively moderate emigration figures, the number of out-migrants started to increase after Hungary’s accession to the European Union, and particularly after the global financial crisis in 2008 (Hárs 2013).

The most important turning point came in 2011, when Germany and Austria opened their labour markets to the workforce coming from the new EU Member States (Gödri 2016: 7). After a temporary stagnation, the number of emigrants grew dynamically – by 72% – between 2017 and 2020 (Figure 5). The three main countries of destination are Germany, Austria, and the United Kingdom, which have yearly been absorbing more than three-thirds of all registered emigrants (Table 4). However, surveys reveal that while living and working in Germany entails a permanent move abroad, Austria and the United Kingdom tend to appear as scenes of circular labour-force migration (Gödri et al. 2013).

Table 4. International emigration flows of native-born national and foreign citizens by destination country (Top-5 destination countries) at the national level in Hungary by 2016

	Emigration flow of native born national citizens	Emigration flow of foreign citizens
Total	28,166	10,464
Germany	9,087	n.a.
Austria	7,470	n.a.
United Kingdom	5,759	n.a.
Switzerland	1,004	n.a.
Netherlands	813	n.a.

Source: Németh and Gruber 2019: 29.

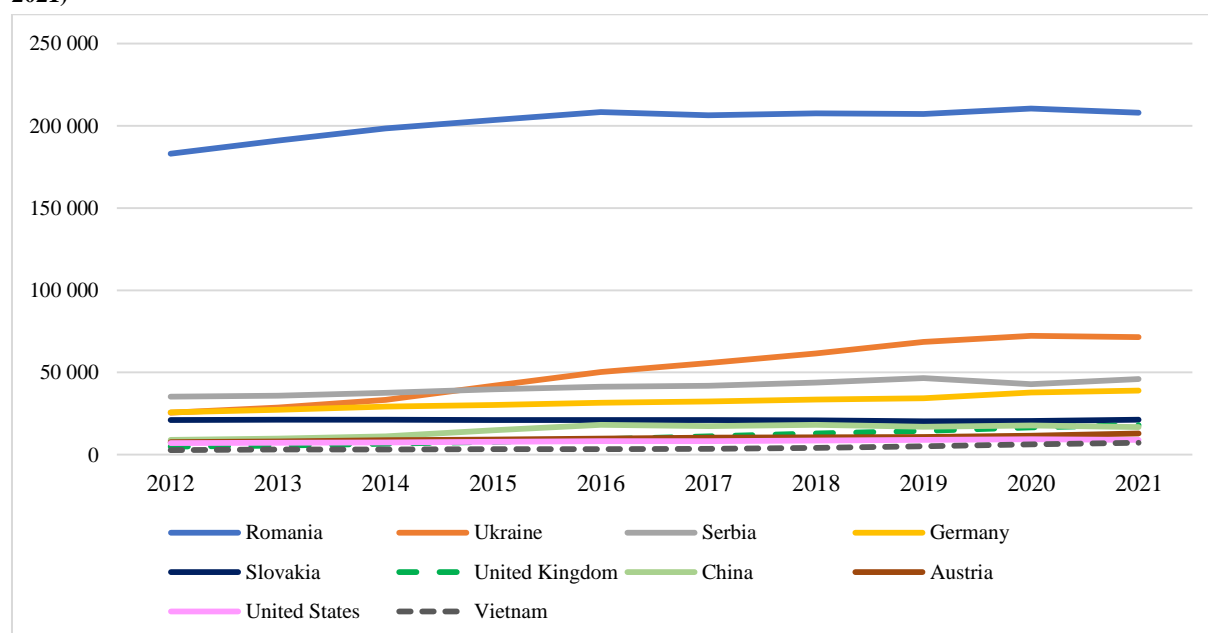
Therefore, the international migration balance grew significantly between 2013 (ca. +4,000) and 2019 (+39,000 people). The Covid-19 pandemic changed this tendency, but it is not yet clear whether this is a temporary phenomenon (Figure 5).

4.1.2 Population by place of birth

Foreign-born population in Hungary

The size of the foreign-born population (597,000, i.e. 6%) in Hungary has been growing slightly since 1991. Comparable to the flow data, the largest proportion of the foreign-born population stems from the four neighbouring countries of Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia, and Serbia (altogether 64% of the immigrant stock) as well as from Germany and China (Figure 8, Table 5).

Figure 8. Population stock by the top 10 countries of birth at the national level in Hungary (number of people, 2012-2021)



Source: Eurostat. Own figure.

Table 5. Population stock by country of birth (native born, foreign born, top 5 countries of birth) at the national level in Hungary by 2011, 2016, 2021

Immigration flow by country of birth						
	2011		2016		2021	
Total	9,937,628 (100%)		9,803,837 (100%)		9,730,772 (100%)	
Native born	9,544,643 (96%)		9,420,342 (96%)		9,133,130 (94%)	
Foreign born (EU*)	266,981 (3%)		252,958 (3%)		337,790 (4%)	
Foreign born (non-EU)	116,255 (1%)		130,537 (1%)		259,852 (3%)	
<i>Top 1.</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>176,550</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>158,020</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>207,970</i>
<i>Top 2.</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>35,354</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>37,121</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>71,508</i>
<i>Top 3.</i>	<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>33,155</i>	<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>32,843</i>	<i>Serbia</i>	<i>45,935</i>
<i>Top 4.</i>	<i>Serbia</i>	<i>29,144</i>	<i>Serbia</i>	<i>25,387</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>38,954</i>
<i>Top 5.</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>22,605</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>23,453</i>	<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>21,266</i>

Source: 2011 population census, 2016 micro-census, 2021: Eurostat. Own table. (*EU-28 countries, 2013-2020)

Hungarian-born people abroad

According to the estimations of the United Nations, approximately 632,000 Hungarian-born people lived abroad in 2019. This value increased by 64% during the last three decades. The Hungarian emigrant stock (based on country-of-birth data) comprised ca. 387,000 people in 1990, ca. 421,000 in 2000 and almost 514,000 in 2010. Today, almost half of all Hungarian emigrants live in Western Europe, but the USA (85,000) and Canada (39,000) also belong to the most important destination countries (UN DESA 2019).

According to the 2016 micro-census, the number of people living abroad temporarily or permanently (but belonging to households in Hungary) was about 38,000 and 259,000 respectively. More than 80% of them moved abroad for to employment reasons, and 70% work in Germany, Austria, or the United Kingdom. Among the people who have chosen Germany or Austria, the ratio of men (55%) was higher than their respective ratio among the total population, while the other over-represented groups were those of working age (90%), the younger generation (33-37%), skilled workmen (58%), or people with a higher education (30%) (Tálas 2020: 73). Additionally, the number of cross-border commuters exceeded 72,000 (Horváth 2022: 110). Based on the 2016 micro-census results regarding the migration experience, we can conclude that ca. 41% of Hungarian emigrants returned to Hungary (Tálas 2020: 73).

4.2 Austria

4.2.1 Migration flows

Immigration

After having been an emigration country for decades, Austria has developed into an immigration country during the post-World War II period (Fassmann and Münz 1994). Until the 1990s, the highest share of immigration was associated with guest-worker mobility mainly from two countries: Turkey and Yugoslavia. At the peak of the recruitment phase, the number

of entries rose to around 35,000 per year. This first wave of international immigration brought individual young people, mostly males, to Austria. They were interested in maximising income while minimising living costs, in order to send home as much money as possible (Fassmann 1992: 102). Establishing integration policy was not on the Austrian political agenda because these newly arrived people were generally seen as temporary guest workers who can be hired or sent back home depending on the economic situation (Fassmann and Reeger 2012: 79).

The annual international migration balance was moderate (in some years negative) in the post-1973 period. During the economic downturn, accompanied by growing unemployment as well as increased inflation and public debt, the Austrian government attempted to reduce the foreign labour force and recruitment was also stopped. The international migration surplus started to grow again slowly in the second half of the 1980s, mainly due to family reunifications. At the same time, the number of refugees from socialist Eastern and South-Eastern European countries also increased significantly.

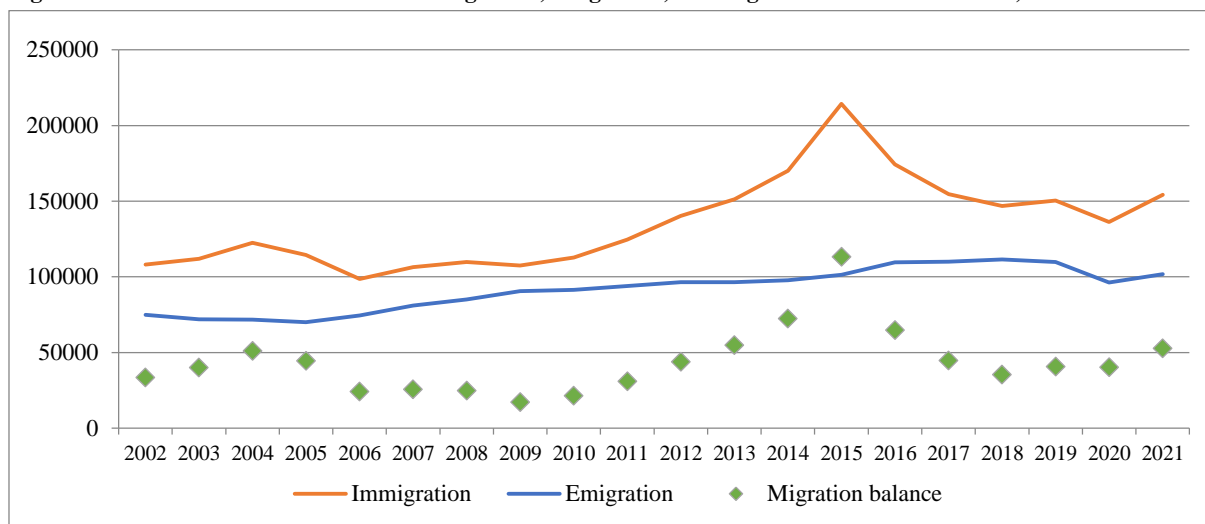
Since the 1991 census, the Austrian population has grown by about one million, and nearly 90% of this increase has been a result of migration gain. However, these three decades cannot be considered a homogeneous period regarding the international migration processes. During the early 1990s, a significant part of the new arrivals comprised refugees from former Yugoslavia. After 1993, stricter regulations (“Aliens Act”, “Residence Law” and the 2002 “Aliens’ Law Package”) were introduced to control immigration. These involved annual quotas and the classification of potential immigrants into different groups. Austria became more restrictive, especially to third-country nationals. These political measures were the main reason for the drop in migration figures (Figure 4).

The annual number of immigrants started to grow again after the eastward expansion of the EU. However, transitional arrangements were introduced: citizens of the new Member States were not granted employment rights in Austria in protected economic sectors (e.g. construction industry) until May 2011. In the case of Romanian and Bulgarian nationals, this regulation was in force until 2013. Thus, immigration flows from the new EU countries grew significantly after the end of these restrictions (Figure 9, 11). The inflow of people from the Middle East increased significantly in 2015-2017 due to an increased number of refugees arriving in Europe. During this period, about 156,000 asylum applications were filed. More than 77,000 persons – mostly from Syria and Afghanistan – were granted asylum but many of these applications are still pending. It was the fifth major wave of asylum applications in Austria since the 1950s, and numerically the most important one since the 1956 uprising in Hungary (Riederer et al. 2020: 22). This created a completely new situation in immigration and integration measures, as these two countries had previously been of little importance as sources of migration to Austria.

The Eurostat data illustrate that the shares of foreign-born non-EU citizens in the total international immigration flow have largely returned to pre-2015 values (Figure 10).

However, the strong asylum migration in 2022 will probably break this trend again. Most of the 71.885 asylum applications were submitted by citizens of Afghanistan (16.510), Syria (12.529), and India (11.541). Among the total number of applicants, the high number of unaccompanied minors (9.347) is particularly noteworthy.⁷

Figure 9. Official data on international immigration, emigration, and migration balance in Austria, 2002-2020



Source: Statistics Austria, own figure.

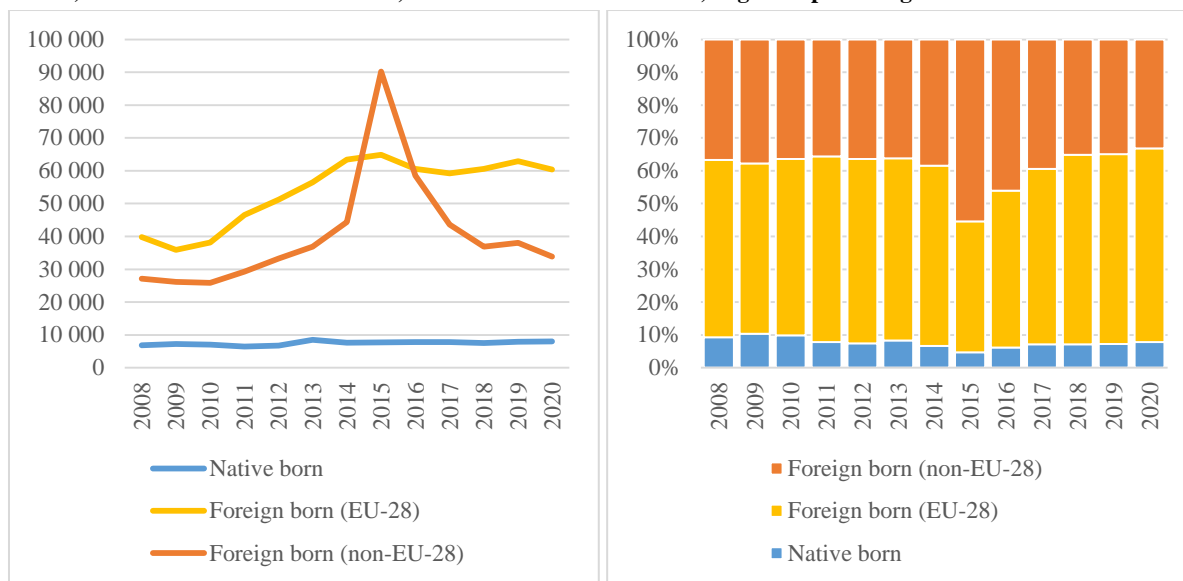
Table 6. International immigration flows by country of birth (native born, foreign born, top 5 countries of birth) at the national level in Austria by 2010, 2015, 2020

Immigration flow by country of birth						
	2010		2015		2020	
Total	112,691		214,410		136,343	
Native born	13,260		13,483		12,532	
Foreign born (EU*)	58,193		85,571		77,207	
Foreign born (non-EU)	41,292		115,356		46,604	
Top 1.	Germany	17,555	Syria	21,741	Germany	18,934
Top 2.	Romania	11,432	Afghanistan	17,403	Romania	16,799
Top 3.	Serbia	6,775	Romania	17,246	Hungary	8,898
Top 4.	Hungary	6,351	Germany	16,875	Serbia	6,333
Top 5.	Turkey	4,476	Hungary	13,060	Bosnia-H.	5,545

Source: Statistics Austria. Own table. (*EU-28 countries, 2013-2020)

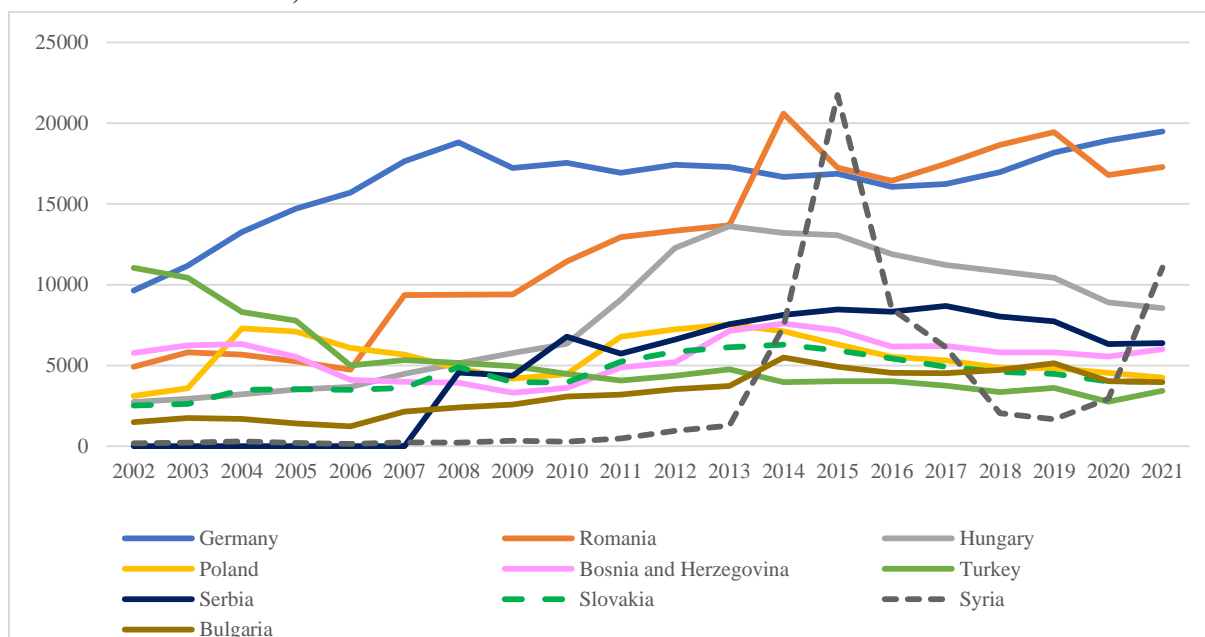
⁷ https://www.bmi.gv.at/301/Statistiken/files/2022/Detailstatistik_BFA_Kennzahlen_1-3_Quartal_2022.pdf

Figure 10. International immigration flows by country of birth (native born, foreign-born EU-28*, foreign-born non-EU-28) at the national level in Austria, 2008-2020. Left: in numbers; Right: in percentages.



Source: Eurostat, own figure. (*EU-28 countries: 2013-2020, with the United Kingdom)

Figure 11. International immigration flows according to the top 10 countries of birth (regarding the whole period) at the national level in Austria, 2002-2020.



Source: Statistics Austria, own figure.

Emigration

Since 2002, around 1.3 million people emigrated from Austria, and approximately one third of them were native-born persons. Among their main destination countries one could find Germany, Switzerland, the USA, the UK, and Turkey in 2016, while Germany, Romania, Hungary, Serbia, and Poland led the list for foreign nationals (Table 7).

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic restricted mobility, resulting in a decrease in movement in and out of the country. Around 96,000 people left Austria, so that 2020 was the year with the lowest emigration level since 2012. The volume of emigration increased again in 2021 (ca. 102,000 people). The largest group of emigrants were Austrian citizens (17,140), followed by Romanians (13,318), Germans (11,024), Hungarians (7,702) and Serbs (4,615).⁸ Austria's current net migration rate is 3,237 per 1000 inhabitants, which is a 24.1% decline from 2021.⁹

Table 7. International emigration flows of native-born national and foreign citizens by destination country (top-5 destination countries) at the national level in Austria by 2016

Emigration flow of native born national citizens		Emigration flow of foreign citizens	
Total	16,143	Total	89,026
Germany	2,581	Germany	11,593
Switzerland	1,245	Romania	8,811
USA	467	Hungary	7,081
UK	344	Serbia	4,893
Turkey	290	Poland	3,407

Source: Nemeth and Gruber 2019: 21.

4.2.2 Population by place of birth

Foreign-born population in Austria

Approximately 1.8 million foreign-born people lived in Austria on 1 January 2021, amounting to 20.5% of the population. Looking at a broader indicator, 25% of the total population (more than 2.2 million persons) has a “migration background”, including all persons whose parents had been born abroad. Looking at the current population structure, the highest shares of today's population are still holding a migration background from Serbia or Turkey.

Today the highest proportion of foreigners in the Austrian population is constituted by people born in Germany, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Serbia, and Romania. (Table 8). As a consequence of the 2022 Ukrainian war, there is a strong increase in the number of Ukrainians. At the beginning of 2022, approximately 13,000 Ukrainians lived in Austria, whereas on 1 April 2022, their number already exceeded 52,000.¹⁰ The share of those who want to stay in Austria permanently is currently still uncertain.

⁸ <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/718036/umfrage/auswanderer-aus-oesterreich-nach-staatsangehoerigkeiten/>

⁹ <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/AUT/austria/net-migration.>

¹⁰

https://www.integrationsfonds.at/fileadmin/content/AT/Fotos/Publikationen/Statistikbroschuere/OEIF_Statistisches_Jahrbuch_2021.pdf

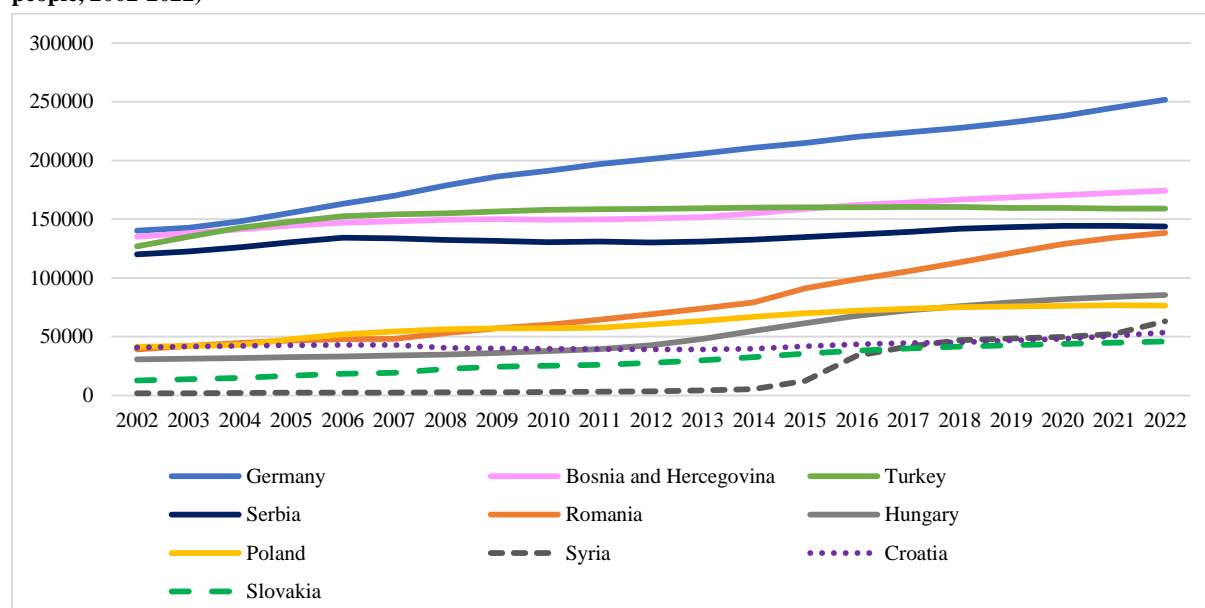
Table 8. Population stock by country of birth (native born, foreign born, Top 5 countries of birth) at the national level in Austria by 2011, 2016, 2021

Immigration flow by country of birth						
	2011		2016		2021	
Total	8,426,498 (100%)		8,700,471 (100%)		8,932,664 (100%)	
Native born	7,131,792 (85%)		7,105,748 (81%)		7,135,091 (79.5%)	
Foreign born (EU*)	585,276 (7%)		714,028 (9%)		831,427 (9.5%)	
Foreign born (non-EU)	709,430 (8%)		880,695 (10%)		966,146 (11%)	
Top 1.	Germany	205,630	Germany	219,943	Germany	244,947
Top 2.	Bosnia-H.	167,255	Bosnia-H.	162,021	Bosnia-H.	172,373
Top 3.	Turkey	126,778	Turkey	160,184	Turkey	159,068
Top 4.	Serbia	141,877	Serbia	137,057	Serbia	144,416
Top 5.	Romania	109,988	Romania	98,727	Romania	134,206

Source: Statistics Austria. Own table. (*EU-28 countries, 2013-2020)

The annual data show a significant continuous increase in the German- and Romanian-born population stock, and a similar trend for Syrians since 2015. The relatively stable stock of Hungarian origin also increased in the following years, but has levelled off again at a stable level since 2018 (Figure 12). In terms of stock of the foreign-born population, the most important country is Germany (14%), followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Serbia, Romania, and Hungary.

Figure 12. Population stock according to the top 10 countries of birth at the national level in Austria (number of people, 2002-2022)



Source: Statistics Austria. Own figure.

Austrian-born people abroad

According to the United Nations, more than 576,000 Austrian-born people lived abroad in 2019: 238,000 in Germany, 72,000 in the USA and Canada, 61,000 in Switzerland and 28,000 in the United Kingdom. This emigration stock, calculated by country-of-birth data, represents a fairly stable number, which has increased slightly since 1990, when around 506,000

Austrian-born people lived in other countries worldwide. The relatively high numbers for Eastern Europe (28,000), Turkey (19,000) and the post-Yugoslav countries (15,000) refer mainly to persons who were born in Austria to foreign parents or to parents with a migratory background and subsequently moved back to the countries of origin of their parents or grandparents (UN DESA 2019).

5. The Hungary – Austria migration nexus

5.1 Migration processes since the late 19th century

The Hungary–Austria migration nexus is a very stable migration channel with deep historical roots (Melegh 2012, Fassmann et al. 2014). Apart from the province of Burgenland, where Hungarians constitute an “autochthonous minority group”, families of Hungarian origin have lived in Vienna for many centuries since the Middle Ages.

Five population censuses were conducted in the *Austro-Hungarian Empire* between 1870 and 1910. The migration patterns between the two territories can be traced indirectly, by stock data on place of birth or citizenship. Since no physical or legal barriers hampered the spatial mobility within the Empire, these processes by definition represented internal migration. As Hilbert (2016) pointed out, the number of Austrian citizens living in the historical territory of Hungary grew from ca. 66,000 to 235,000 between 1870 and 1910. At the same time, the number of Hungarian citizens living in other parts of the Empire increased eleven times, from ca. 27,000 to 301,000. However, since Hungarian citizens lost their citizenship after 10 years of living abroad, the official statistics presumably underestimated the Hungarian “emigrant” stock in Austria (ibid).

Considering the present territories of the two countries, the majority of the Hungarian counties had a negative migration balance in relation to Austria. Migration was especially concentrated along the border: most people moved from the counties of Sopron, Vas (and Bratislava, Nitra) to Lower Austria as well as from the counties of Vas (and Zagreb, Varaždin) to Styria. Long-distance bidirectional migration was typical between Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun and Lower Austria, i.e. between the two capitals, Budapest and Vienna (ibid: 368-373).

After World War I and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the first complete population census in the Austrian Republic took place in 1934. The previous census, eleven years earlier, suffered from incomplete processing due to lack of financial resources (Gisser 2020). As the result of the new state border, formalised legally by the 1919 Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and the 1920 Treaty of Trianon, about 15,000 Hungarian-speaking citizens became residents of Austria.¹¹ Until 1934, the number of Hungarians in this eastern federal province of Austria decreased to 10,442, representing 5.3% and 3.5% of the regional population respectively (Kocsis 2017). Since a part of the Jewish population also had Hungarian as mother tongue (Baumgartner 2008), their disappearance during World War II caused a further decrease in the proportion and number of the Hungarian minority in

¹¹ They represented an autochthonous minority in Burgenland, which was recognized by the Austrian government in 1976. In this year “the Federal Act on the legal status of ethnic groups in Austria” granted state support, certain language rights, and official representation in the Chancellery to five historical minorities, including the Hungarians in Burgenland (Molnár 2017).

Burgenland (1.9%, i.e. 5,251 people by 1951).¹² However, they represented only around one-third of the Hungarian-speaking community in Austria. Every second person with Hungarian as native language lived in Vienna and Lower Austria, the federal province around the capital (Table 9).

Table 9. The number and share of the Austrian citizens who predominantly used Hungarian at home in Austria (“Umgangssprache”), according to the population censuses 1971-2001.

	Austria	Burgen-land	Carinthia	Lower Austria	Upper Austria	Salz-burg	Styria	Tyrol	Vorarl-berg	Wien
1971	14,815	5,447 (37%)	141 (1%)	1,381 (9%)	585 (4%)	87 (1%)	802 (5%)	101 (1%)	172 (1%)	6,099 (41%)
1981	12,043	4,025 (33%)	121 (1%)	749 (6%)	540 (4%)	204 (2%)	440 (4%)	121 (1%)	160 (1%)	5,683 (47%)
1991	19,638	4,973 (27%)	247 (1%)	2,389 (12%)	1,182 (6%)	432 (2%)	836 (4%)	347 (2%)	302 (2%)	8,930 (45%)
2001	25,884	4,704 (18%)	313 (1%)	4,790 (19%)	2,344 (9%)	551 (2%)	1,652 (6%)	469 (2%)	375 (1%)	10,686 (41%)

Source: Statistics Austria. Own table.

Nevertheless, the data on language used at home per se tell us little about the migration processes between the two countries. Since the post-WWII population censuses did not provide information about respondents’ countries of birth, we can estimate the volume of immigration by the changes in stock data of citizenship and the number of asylum applications.

Generally speaking, *migration across the Iron Curtain* was negligible during the Cold-War period. The main exception was the Soviet repression of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, which resulted in the arrival of about 180,000 refugees in Austria, mostly from Budapest and the western part of Hungary. However, most of them moved further to other Western European or overseas destinations. About 11,500 people returned home after receiving political amnesty (Lénárt and Cooper 2012: 371) and finally less than 10% stayed permanently in Austria (Zierer 1995: 163). According to official statistics, about 2,000-4,000 people left Hungary yearly between 1956 and 1987 but illegal emigration can be estimated at at least 4,000-5,000 persons annually (Rédei 1994: 88, Dövényi and Vukovich 1996). Many of these people sought asylum in Austria. Until the mid-1980s, the number of Hungarian asylum seekers in Austria varied between 500 and 1,000 persons per year. After 1984, their number increased rapidly, and reached a peak in 1987, when more than 4,500 applications were made (Münz et al. 2003: 61, Gruber 2013: 7).

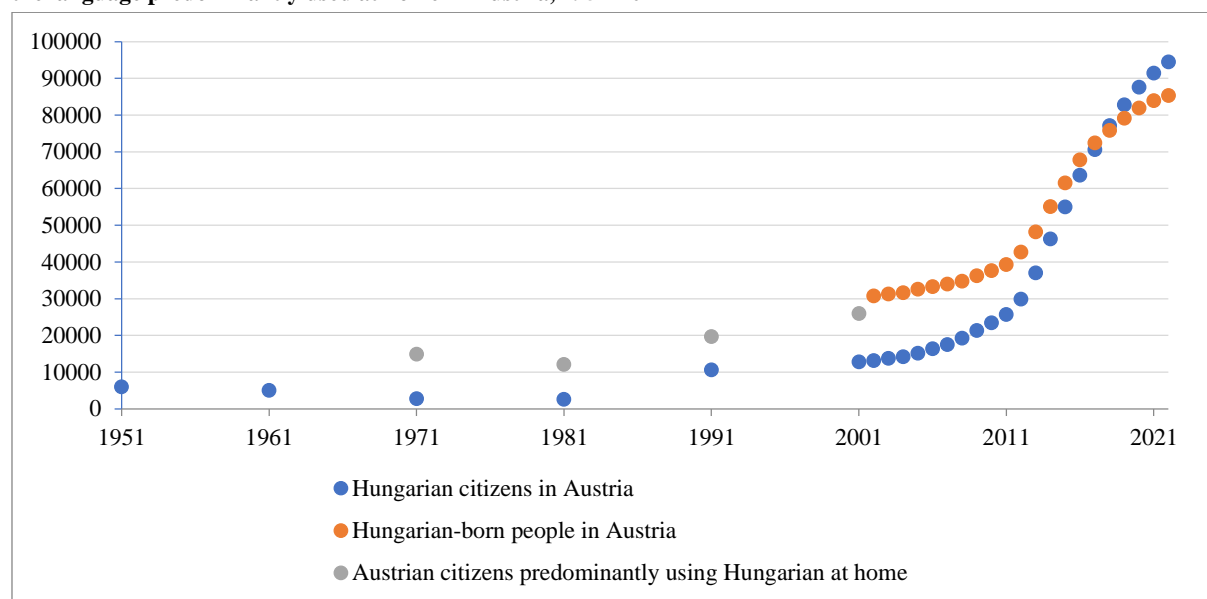
During the socialist era, there was no political interest in paying attention to the marginal number of immigrants in Hungary, thus the censuses did not include specific questions about this topic.

¹² In the post-WWII censuses, “Umgangssprache” (language used predominantly at home) replaced the older category of “Muttersprache” (mother tongue) – Szoatak 2015.

Table 10. Population stock of Hungarian-born people and Hungarian citizens in Austria, 1951-2022

	1951 ^a	1961 ^a	1971 ^a	1981 ^a	1991 ^a	2001 ^a	2006 ^b	2011 ^b	2016 ^b	2021 ^b	2022 ^b
Country of birth: Hungary	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	33,228	39,251	67,729	83,914	85,316
Citizenship: Hungary	5,985	4,956	2,691	2,526	10,556	12,729	16,284	25,627	63,550	91,395	94,411

Source: Statistics Austria. a: census data, b: register-based data (n.a.: not available). Own table.

Figure 13. Population stock of Hungarian-born people, Hungarian citizens, and Austrian citizens with Hungarian as the language predominantly used at home in Austria, 1951-2022

Source: Statistics Austria. Census data until 2001, register-based data since 2002. Own figure.

Between 1951 and 1981, the number of Hungarian citizens living in Austria decreased from ca. 6,000 to 2,000, and it quadrupled again until 1991. After a moderate increase during the first decade *after the fall of the Iron Curtain*, their number started to grow more dynamically in the early 2000s.¹³ An important milestone was reached in 2011 when Austria opened its labour market to the workforce from the new EU-Member States. Since then, the Hungarian-born population stock doubled (from ca. 39,000 to 85,000), while the number of Hungarian citizens living in Austria tripled, and exceeded 94,000 on 1 January 2022 (Figure 13).

5.2 Migration flows between Hungary and Austria after the millennium

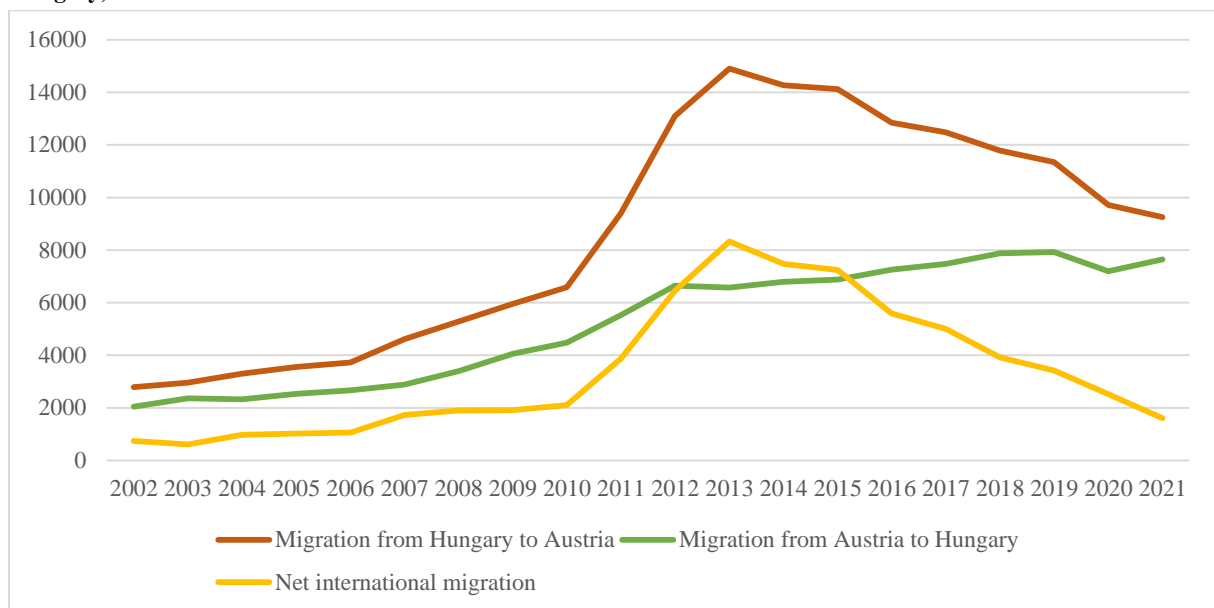
However, this has not been a movement in one direction only. Based on the official data of registrations and deregistrations, Statistics Austria has been regularly publishing figures on international migrants according to countries of origin and destination since 2002. Considering these flow data, the volume of international migration from Austria to Hungary

¹³ The slight increase in the number of Austrian citizens with Hungarian as native language can be explained by naturalisation processes.

has likewise been significant during the whole period of analysis. Until 2010, Austria’s migration gain from Hungary did not exceed 2,000 persons per year. After a rapid increase, the migration balance reached its peak in 2013 when almost 15,000 people decided to move from Hungary to Austria and only about 6,500 people moved in the opposite direction. Since then there has been a reversed tendency: while the number of immigrants from Hungary has been decreasing, the role of the Austria–Hungary migration direction has been increasing slightly (with the exception of 2020, due to the travel restrictions in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic). In general, the high turnover¹⁴ volume suggests that due to its geographical proximity, Austria acts as a kind of “migration laboratory” for Hungarian migrants, from where they can easily move back (or back-and-forth, even multiple times) if their migration project failed.

The MIGWELL interviews in the subsequent work packages will reflect on the background of these migration decisions. However, the growing importance of the cross-border commuting option definitely belongs to the main reasons.¹⁵

Figure 14. International migration flows by countries of origin and destinations in the relation of Austria and Hungary, 2002-2021



Source: Statistics Austria. Own figure.

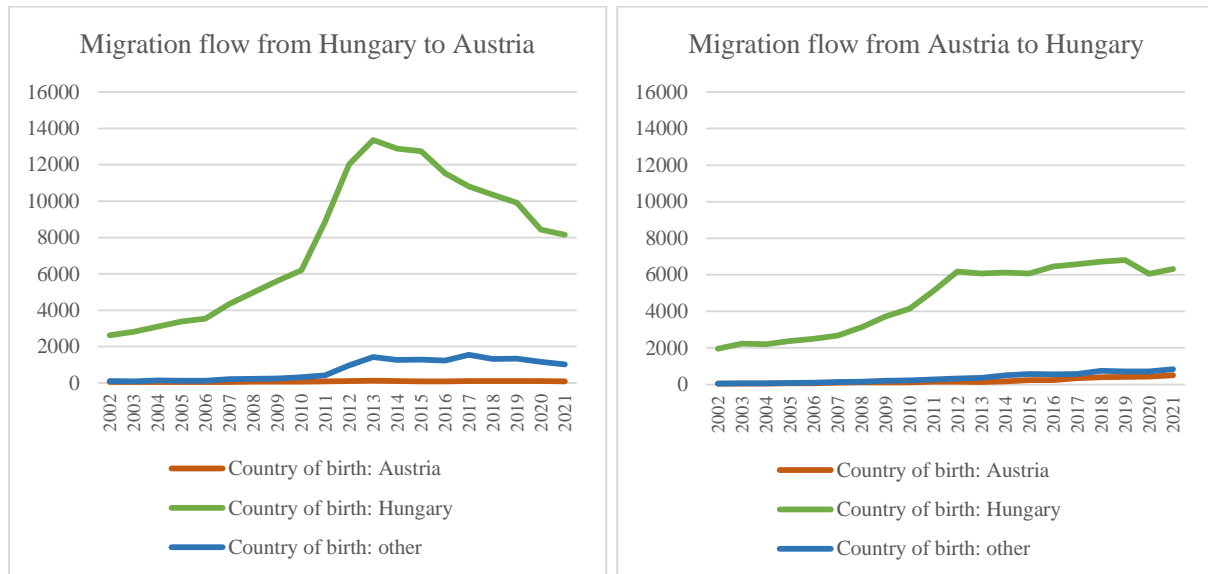
While Hungarian-born people make up the vast majority of these international migrants in both directions, about 11% were born in other countries. They are mostly ethnic Hungarians from Serbia, Romania, etc., who move to Austria after a shorter or longer period of living in

¹⁴ Turnover is a measure of the intensity of migration into and out of a country.

¹⁵ The number of Hungarian cross-border commuters working in Austria increased from 22,000 to 41,000 between the 2011 census and the 2016 micro-census (Horváth 2022: 112-113). In July 2022, altogether 113,000 Hungarian citizens were active on the Austrian labour market (Dachverband der Sozialversicherungsträger).

Hungary, or move in the opposite direction to Hungary, instead of returning to their countries of origin (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Migration flows between Hungary and Austria by country of birth, 2002-2021



Source: Statistics Austria. Own figure.

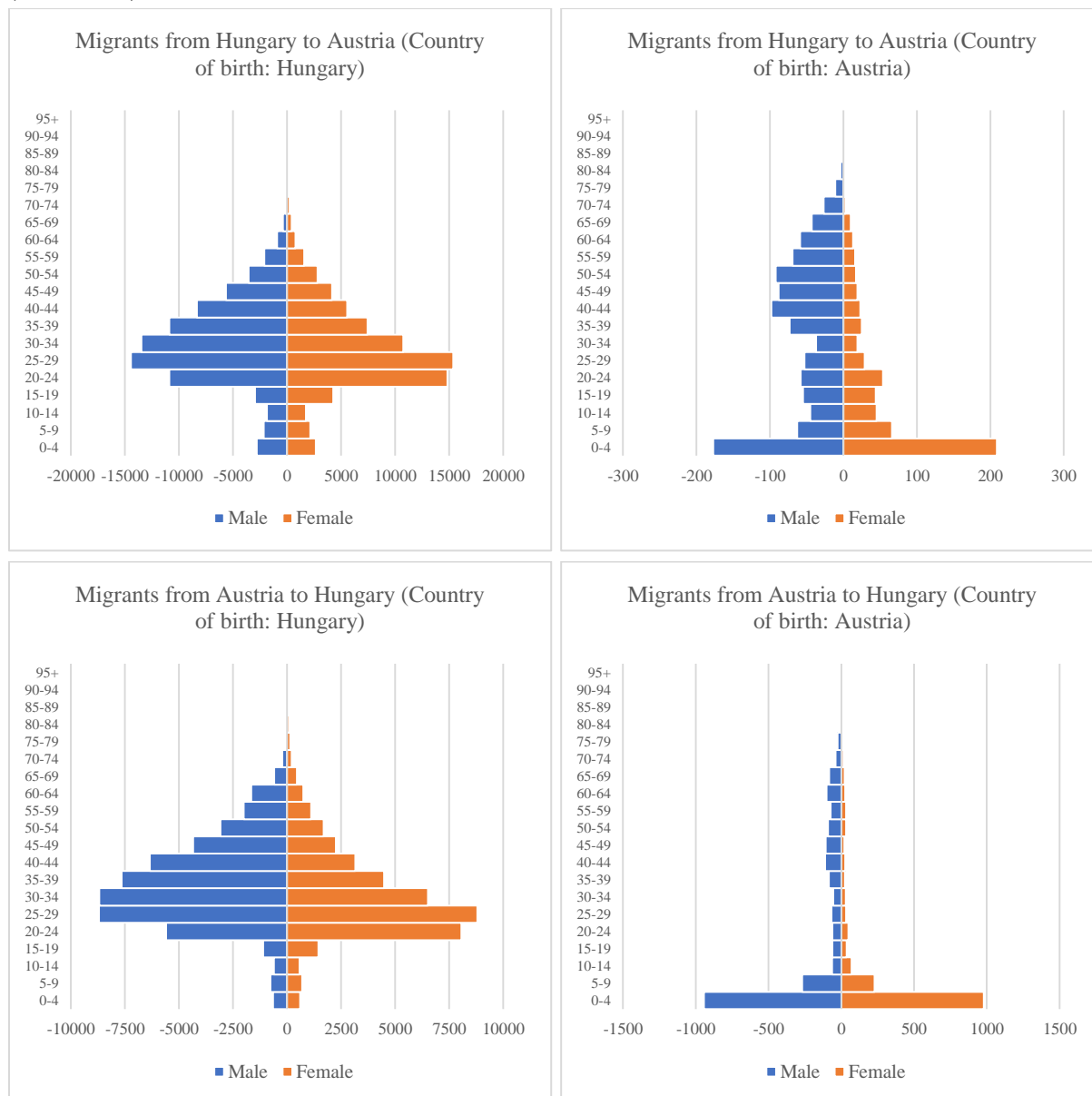
Between 1 January 2002 and 2022, altogether 155,711 *Hungarian-born people* changed their place of residence from Hungary to Austria. The majority (72%) were adults between the ages of 20 and 44. This is not surprising, because international migrants tend to leave their home countries to study or work abroad mostly in the economically active ages (Fassmann et al. 2008). The low proportion (5%) of 55+ year-old Hungarian migrants can be explained by the fact that people are less likely to migrate at older ages. On the other hand, only 13% of these migrants belonged to the 0-19 year-old age category, which means that the majority of Hungarians arrive in Austria with few or no children (Figure 16).

During the last two decades, altogether 51.8% of Hungarian-born migrants were males. However, the male-female ratio displays different patterns in certain age categories. Between the ages of 15 and 29, the majority of migrants were actually women (34,471, i.e. 55%), and the same applies to the 65+ year-old category (910 persons, i.e. 58%). Conversely, 58% of the migrants between the ages of 30 and 64 were males. The age-sex pyramid has a similar shape in the case of return migrants – i.e. Hungarian-born people who moved from Austria to Hungary – with a female surplus between the ages of 15-29 (54%) and with an even stronger male surplus between the ages 30-74 (63%).

Beside the return migrants, the share of *Austrian-born persons* has also been increasing among the people who decided to change their place of residence from Austria to Hungary (Figure 15). However, two-thirds of them belong to the 0-14-year-old cohort. We may thus

assume that they predominantly represent the children born in Austria of return migrants. (Figure 16).

Figure 16. The age-sex pyramids of the migration flow between Hungary and Austria, by country of birth, 2002-2021. (Scales differ)



Source: Statistics Austria. Own figure.

5.3 The Hungarian population stock in Austria

According to the official statistics, altogether 85,316 Hungarian-born people lived in Austria on the 1st of January 2022. More than 85% of them has Hungarian citizenship, yet only three-fourths of these Hungarian nationals were born in Hungary (Table 11). These figures include

people with dual citizenship, an option that has been available for ethnic Hungarians outside of their kin state since 2010. Since Austrian law does not permit multiple citizenship, people are only allowed to indicate one country of citizenship in their registration documents. We have no information about the decision-making outcomes but a significant proportion of these dual citizens may choose the Hungarian citizenship, instead of the Ukrainian, Romanian, Serbian and so forth. This would explain the difference of approximately 9,000 between the number of Hungarian-born people and Hungarian citizens living in Austria (Figure 13).

Table 11. Population stock of the Hungarian-born people by top-5 citizenships and the Hungarian citizens by the top-5 countries of birth in Austria in 2022

Hungarian-born people by citizenship			Hungarian citizens by country of birth		
Hungary	72,044	84.44%	Hungary	72,044	76.31%
Austria	12,038	14.11%	Austria	9,778	10.36%
Germany	714	0.84%	Serbia	7,447	7.89%
Romania	135	0.16%	Romania	2,757	2.92%
United States of America	38	0.04%	Germany	579	0.61%
Slovakia	25	0.03%	Ukraine	308	0.33%
other	322	0.38%	other	1,498	1.59%
SUM	85,316	100%	SUM	94,411	100%

Source: Statistics Austria. Own table.

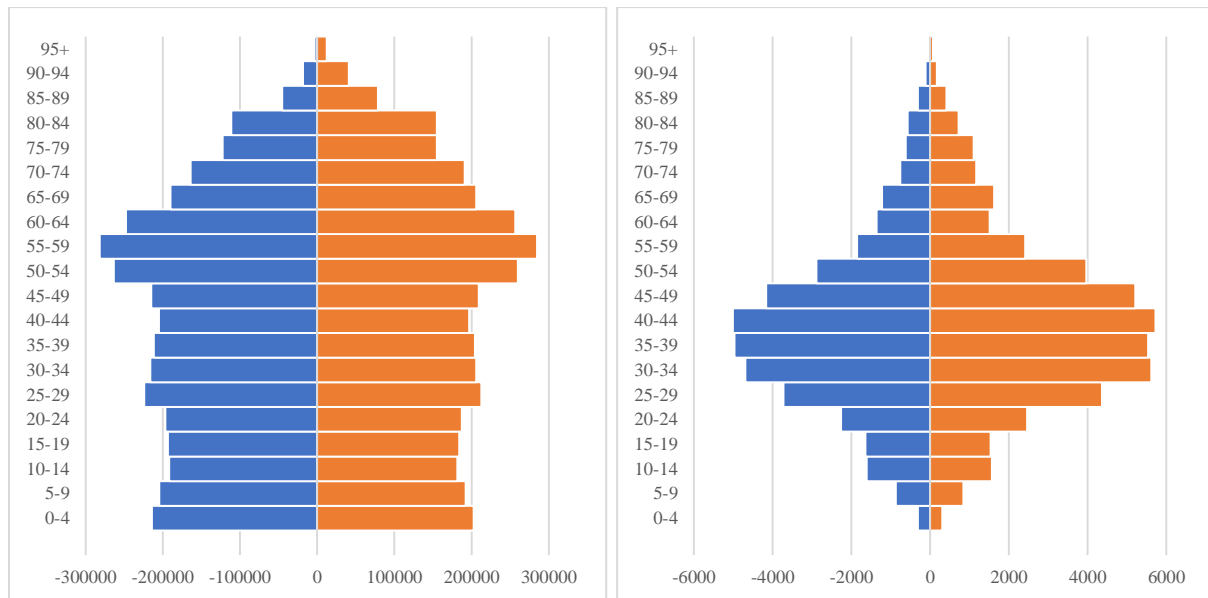
Similar to the majority of countries in the Global North, the ratio between the sexes in Austria is slightly biased toward the female sex with about 97 males to 100 females. Women make up a bigger proportion of the Austrian-born population from age 55, and this female surplus increases gradually in every age group thereafter. In the case of the Hungarian-born population, the sex ratio is even more biased with 87 males per 100 females, i.e. 46% males and 54% females. Women outnumber men in all age groups above the age of 20. The age-sex pyramid of the Austrian-born population has an “urn” shape, which is common in the developed countries, with decreasing population numbers and longer life expectancies. The “diamond” shape of the Hungarian-born population’s age-sex pyramid is also typical for immigrant populations (Figure 17).

Nevertheless, it is interesting that the ratio of the sexes is inversed in the case of flow and stock data. To recall: while males made up the majority (52%) of the Hungarian-born migrants over the last two decades, and their proportion is even higher among return migrants¹⁶ (56%), there is a female surplus (52%) in the Hungarian-born population stock living in Austria. Based on these figures, we can assume that males are generally more mobile than females, and they move back and forth more frequently, while Hungarian women are more likely to remain in Austria. (Another explanation for the female surplus could be that the

¹⁶ As a proxy variable for “return migration”, we here refer to the flow data regarding the number of Hungarian-born people moving from Austria to Hungary.

Hungarian workers in Austria are concentrated in sectors of the hotel and hospitality industry as well as 24-hour home nursing, where the proportion of women is usually higher.)

Figure 17. Population pyramid of the Austrian-born (left) and the Hungarian-born (right) populations living in Austria, 2022 (Scales differ)



Source: Statistics Austria. Own figure. Blue: males; Orange: females.

Although *student mobility* does exist, and sometimes *familial relationships* may be the main motivation for migration (e.g. moving abroad because of the pressure to support the family, or, conversely, returning to the country of origin in order to receive kin support, for example, from grandparents), *labour migrants* doubtlessly constitute the majority of international migrants in the Danube Region, including the Hungary–Austria migration channel. As Gruber and Németh (2021: 232-234) concluded, higher salaries and the availability of jobs are the pull factors, while youth unemployment, precarious or part-time employment, and the aspiration for better opportunities in a different country represent the main push factors.

Many of these young males or females can be considered “target earners”, who take up employment in Austria in order to save money and send it back to Hungary, or make investments after returning. While unqualified workers are primarily motivated by higher salaries, skilled workers or those with higher education diplomas tend to pursue professional excellence abroad. However, many of them have to accept jobs requiring lower skills than their own, and they often become trapped in employment below their actual qualification. This phenomenon is called “brain waste” in the literature, and can be explained by the limited international transferability of skills.¹⁷

¹⁷ From a theoretical point of view, the segmentation of the labour market also explains why migrants are enrolled in unskilled work to a large extent, despite their actual qualification. Brain waste carries substantial

In general, families display a lower tendency toward migrating, especially when family ties are close (Kulu and Milewski 2007). In the Danube Region, transnational families with family members left behind are very typical (Gruber and Nemeth 2018). All of these aspects of international migration have a strong impact on peoples' subjective well-being. We will focus on this topic in the subsequent Work Packages and MIGWELL Research Reports.

5.3.1 Some socio-demographic features of permanent immigrants from Hungary

The 2016 Hungarian micro-census contained a supplementary questionnaire on international migration. It provided, among others, detailed information about persons who belonged to Hungarian households but lived abroad temporarily or permanently on 1 October 2016. The sample was representative by several attributes, including gender, age, economic activity, educational background, etc.¹⁸

The micro-census detected 24,212 *permanent migrants* with a Hungarian origin in Austria.¹⁹ 67% of them belonged to the 15-39 age group, whereas 22% belonged to the 40-54 age group. Overall, the proportion of men was 53%. The male surplus was particularly strong among the 25-39 year-olds (60%) but in the age group 15-24, females outnumbered males (58%). While vocational qualification was typical for men (42%, compared to 17% for women), the proportion of women with secondary school graduation and a higher education degree was significantly higher; 46% and 32% for females, 36% and 17% for males respectively. Regarding marital status there was no remarkable gender-specific differences: 56-58% of this population were single, 29% were married and 11-14% were divorced.²⁰

While the relative majority of men work in general industry and specifically the construction industry, most women are employed in the tertiary sector (Figure 18). According to the micro-census, more than one-third of the Hungarian permanent migrants can be considered overqualified, i.e. they exceed the education level that is required to perform their actual job. (However, this ratio is no less than 85% among migrant women with children remaining in the homeland – Horváth 2022: 136-137). Permanent migrants tend to maintain strong transnational relationships: 65% of them financially support family members at home and 95% of them have visited Hungary at least once after they had moved to Austria (ibid: 113-122).

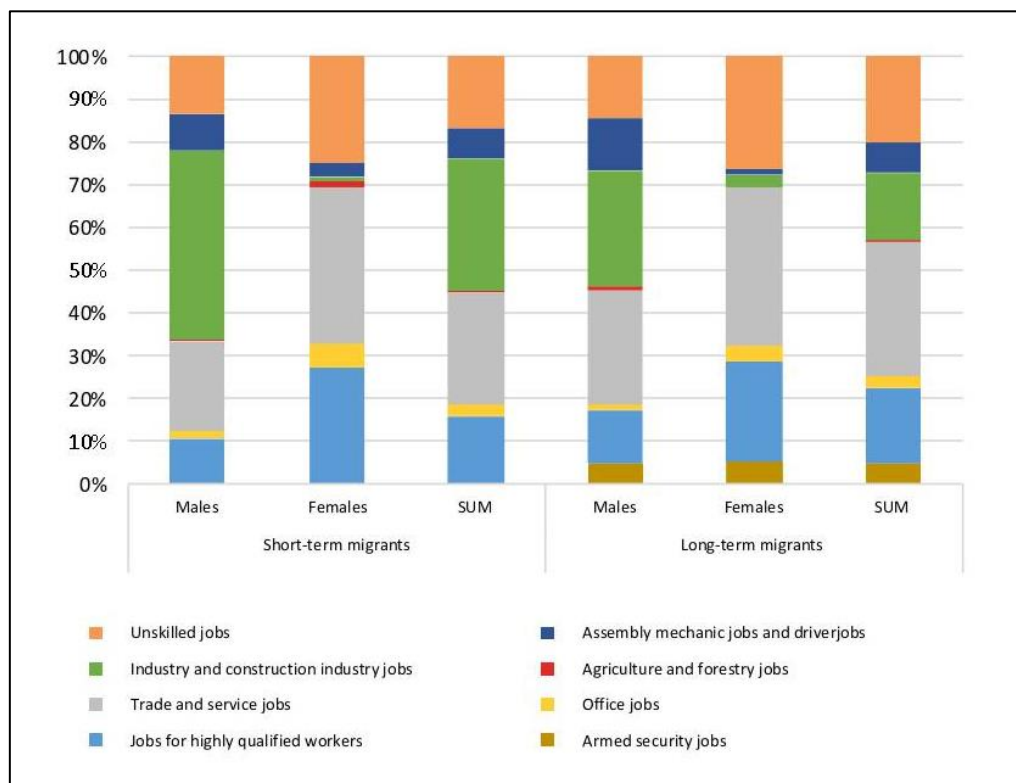
economic costs, it can reduce education incentives, weaken the chances of positive self-selection, and decrease the possibility of 'real' brain gain (Garcia Pires 2015).

¹⁸ https://www.ksh.hu/mikrocensus2016/kerdoivek/microcensus2016_migration_survey.pdf

¹⁹ Temporary migrants (module D), i.e. short-term migrants: people who have been living in Austria for more than 3 but less than 12 months. Permanent migrants (module E), i.e. long-term migrants: people who have been living in Austria for more than 12 months.

²⁰ However, every 10th temporary migrant woman was divorced, while this ratio was only 4% among men.

Figure 18. The occupational distribution of the short-term and long-term Hungarian migrants in Austria, 2016

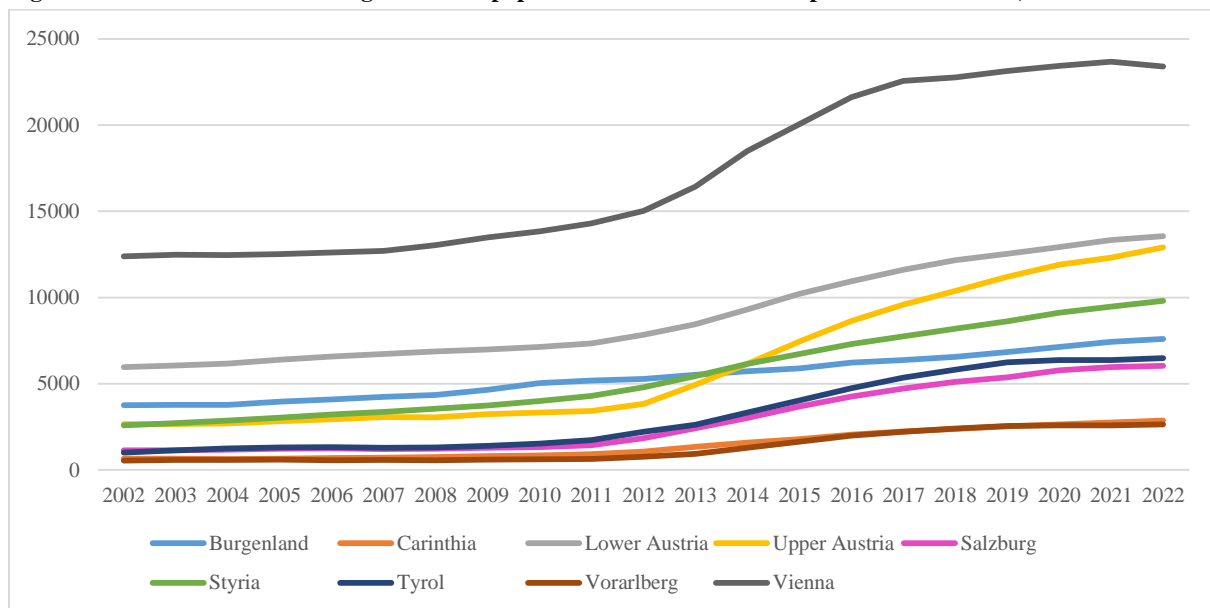


Source: Horváth (2022) in Hungarian. Data source: 2016 Hungarian micro-census

5.4 Spatial aspect

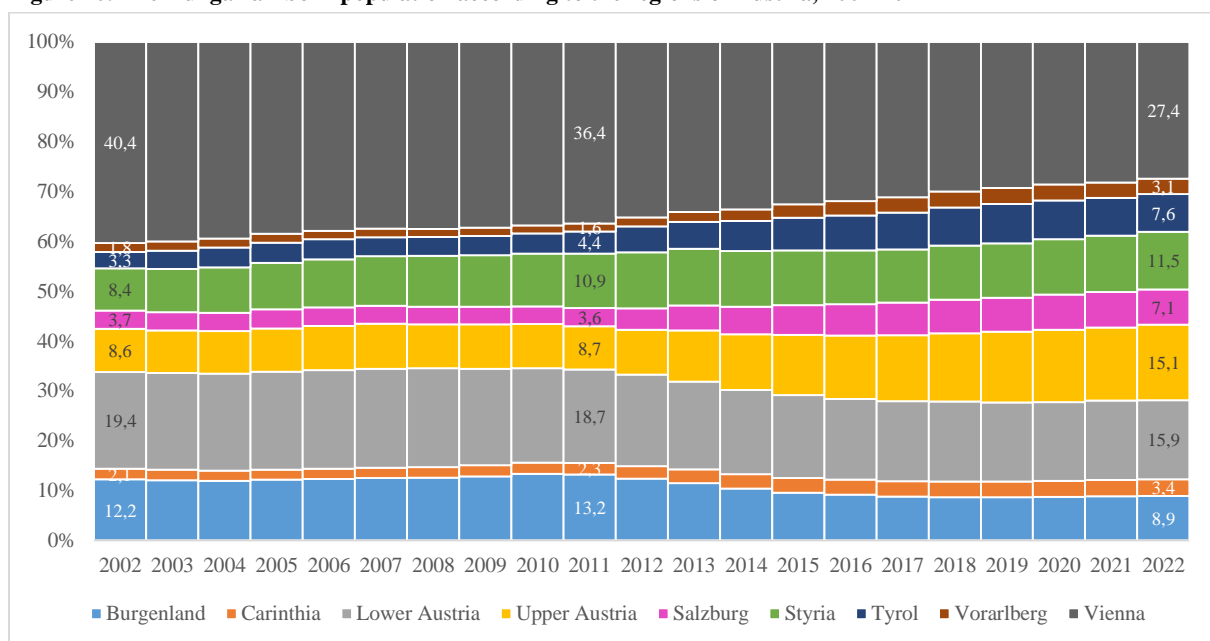
During the last two decades, the spatial pattern of the Hungarian-born population in Austria changed significantly. Although the increase was the greatest in Vienna in absolute terms (by 2,000 people between 2002 and 2011, and further by 9,000 until 2022), today the capital city draws a lower proportion of Hungarians than had been the case around the millennium. While almost three quarters of Hungarian-born migrants lived in Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland in 2002, only half of them are residents of these eastern provinces today (Figure 19, 20). The changing spatial structure can be explained by the rapid growth of the number of Hungarians in other federal provinces, first of all in Upper Austria (from ca. 3,000 to 13,000), Styria (from ca. 3,000 to 10,000), Salzburg and Tyrol (in both cases from ca. 1,000 to 6,000) between 2002 and 2022.

Figure 19. The number of the Hungarian-born population stock in the federal provinces of Austria, 2002-2022



Source: Statistics Austria. Own figure.

Figure 20. The Hungarian-born population according to the regions of Austria, 2002-2022



Source: Statistics Austria. Own figure.

Although the greatest number of Hungarian-born people live in the largest cities of Austria, their share is relatively high (above 2%) mainly in small towns and villages with a population of about 300 to 5,000 inhabitants (Table 12, Figure 21). Traditionally, these settlements were concentrated in close proximity to Hungary, mostly in Burgenland and the south-eastern part of Lower Austria. However, this spatial pattern has changed dramatically during the last decade – cf. Figure 22 and 23. On the one hand, the darker shades of orange and red on the

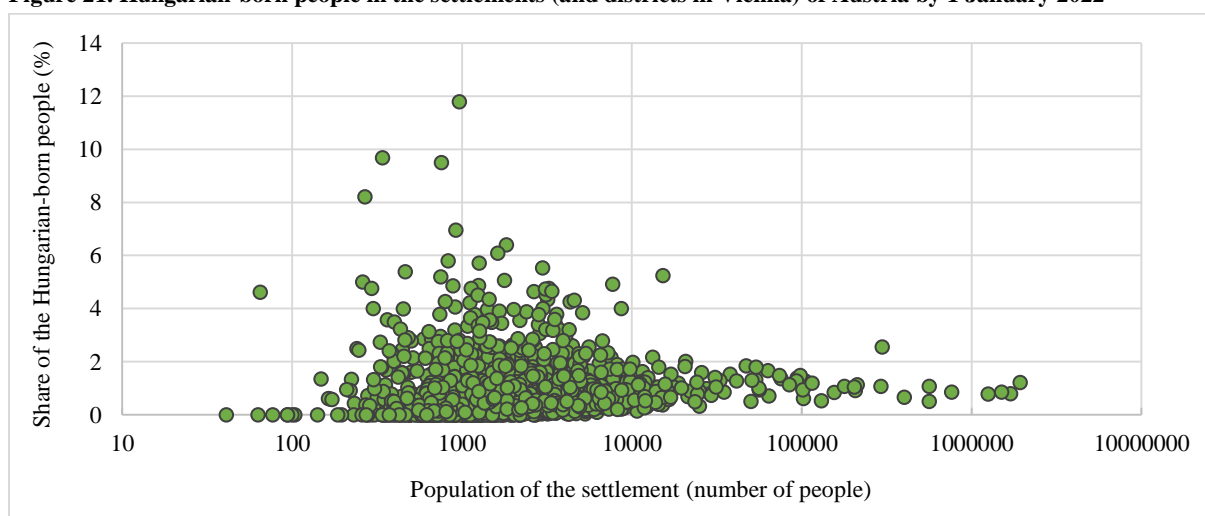
maps refer to the increasing number and proportion of Hungarian immigrants in general. On the other hand, while the “eastern cluster” remained significant, the previously sporadic occurrence of settlements with at least 1% Hungarians has become another well visible cluster in the west. In other words, their population-weighted centre moved clearly toward the west. The proportion of Hungarians is especially high in the eastern part of Tyrol (e.g. Eben am Achensee, Kitzbühel), the southern part of the province of Salzburg (e.g. Kaprun, Flachau), and the western edge of Styria (e.g. Bad Aussee, Schladming). We assume that the greater part of this population works in the tertiary sector, first of all in hospitality related to skiing tourism, including lodging, gastronomic services, etc.

Table 12. The top-10 settlements (and top-3 Vienna districts) in Austria with the highest number of Hungarian-born people by 1 January 2022

No.	Settlement	Federal province	Hungarian-born population
1	Vienna ... District 10, Favoriten ... District 20, Donaustadt ... District 21, Floridsdorf	Vienna	23,403 2,411 2,134 1,910
2	Graz	Styria	3,120
3	Linz	Upper Austria	1,903
4	Salzburg	Salzburg	1,305
5	Wels	Upper Austria	1,051
6	Wiener Neustadt	Lower Austria	868
7	Eisenstadt	Burgenland	798
8	Innsbruck	Tyrol	687
9	Klagenfurt am Wörthersee	Carinthia	629
10	Steyr	Upper Austria	581

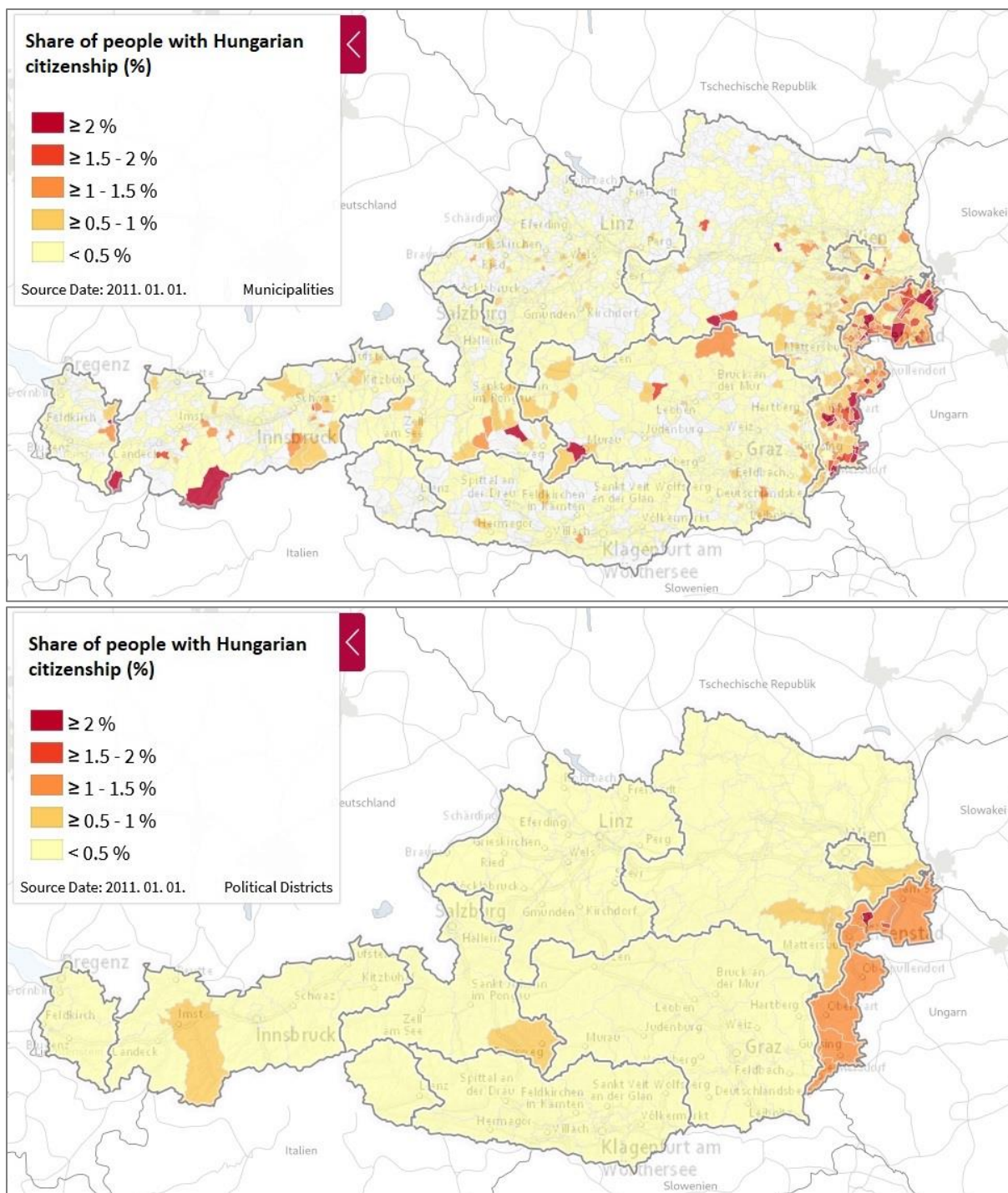
Source: Statistics Austria

Figure 21. Hungarian-born people in the settlements (and districts in Vienna) of Austria by 1 January 2022



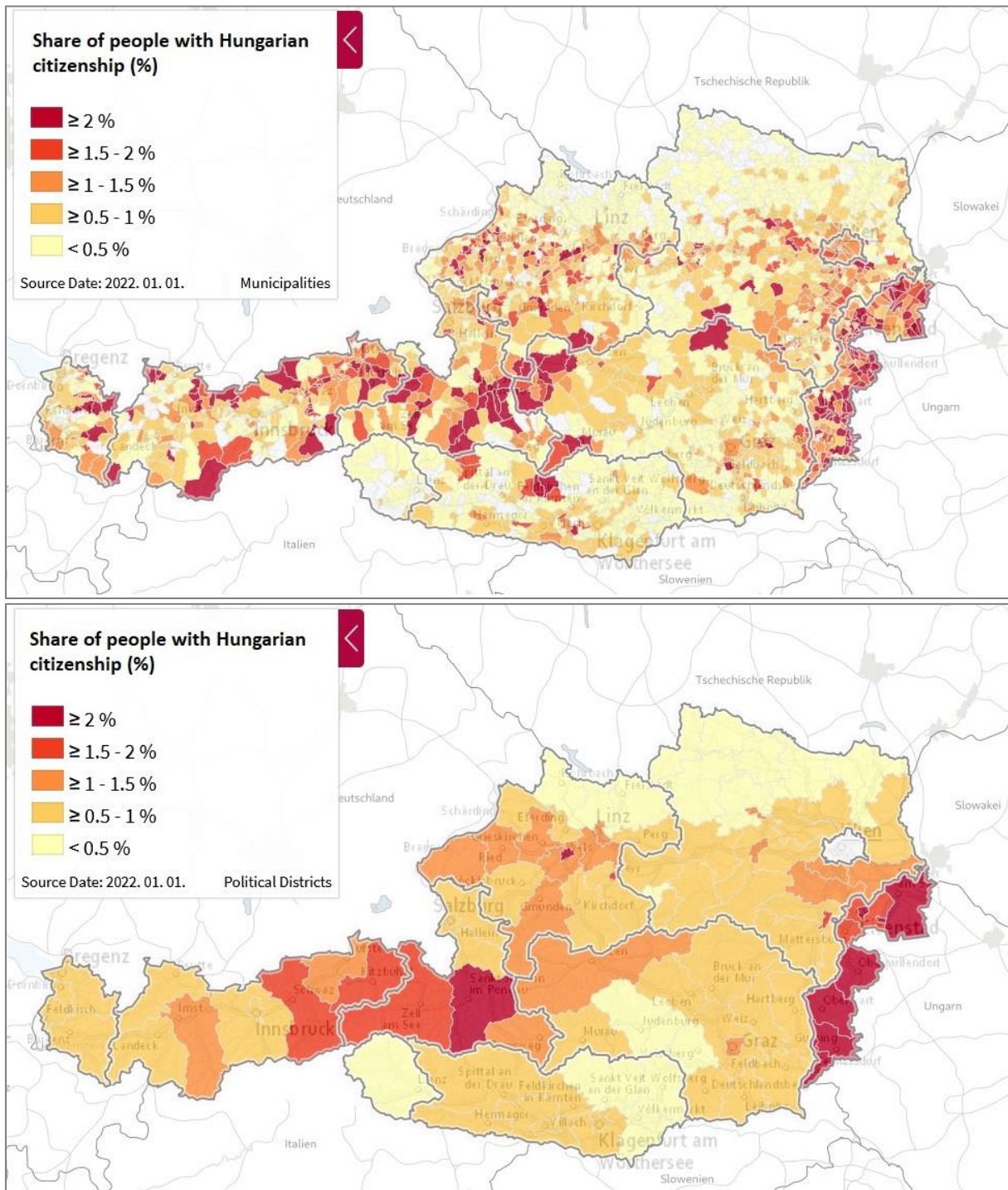
Source: Statistics Austria (X axis: Logarithmic scale). Own figure.

Figure 22. The share of Hungarian citizens in the municipalities (above) and political districts (below) of Austria by 2011.



Source: Statistics Austria²¹

Figure 23. The share of Hungarian citizens in the municipalities (above) and political districts (below) of Austria by 2022.



Source: Statistics Austria

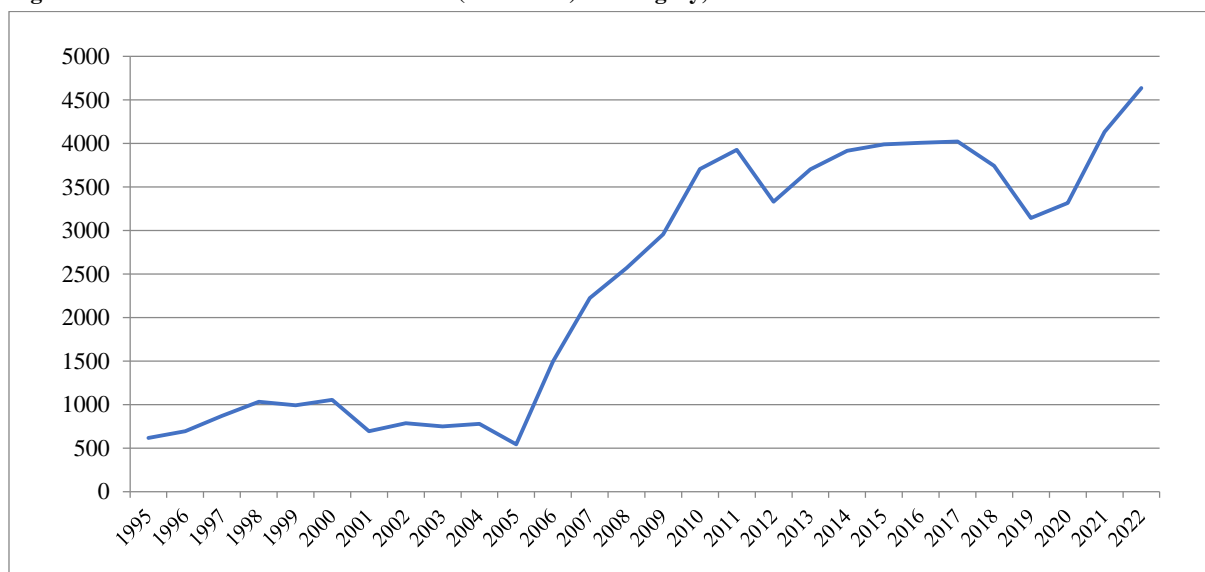
5.5 The Austrian population stock in Hungary

Until 2005, the number of Austrian citizens living in Hungary was relatively stable at around 500-1,000 persons. In the subsequent five years, the size of the Austrian population stock experienced a six-fold increase, and reached almost 4,000. After a considerable fluctuation during the 2010s, their number has been growing again dynamically since 2019. On 1 January 2022, a total of 4,637 Austrian nationals lived in Hungary (Figure 24).

Their sex ratio is strongly biased, with the proportion of males reaching 60.6%. According to the 2011 population census, their age structure is one of the oldest among the foreign population stocks in Hungary. While the proportion of individuals belonging to the 15-39 year-old category was only 24% (far below the country average of 34%), more than one-third of the Austrian citizens were older than 60 (Figure 25).

In 2011, almost 70% of them were concentrated in the western part of Hungary: in Győr-Moson-Sopron (1,258 persons), the Vas (436) and Zala counties (472), as well as in the capital, Budapest (521 individuals) (Figure 26). The results of the 2022 population census will be available shortly.

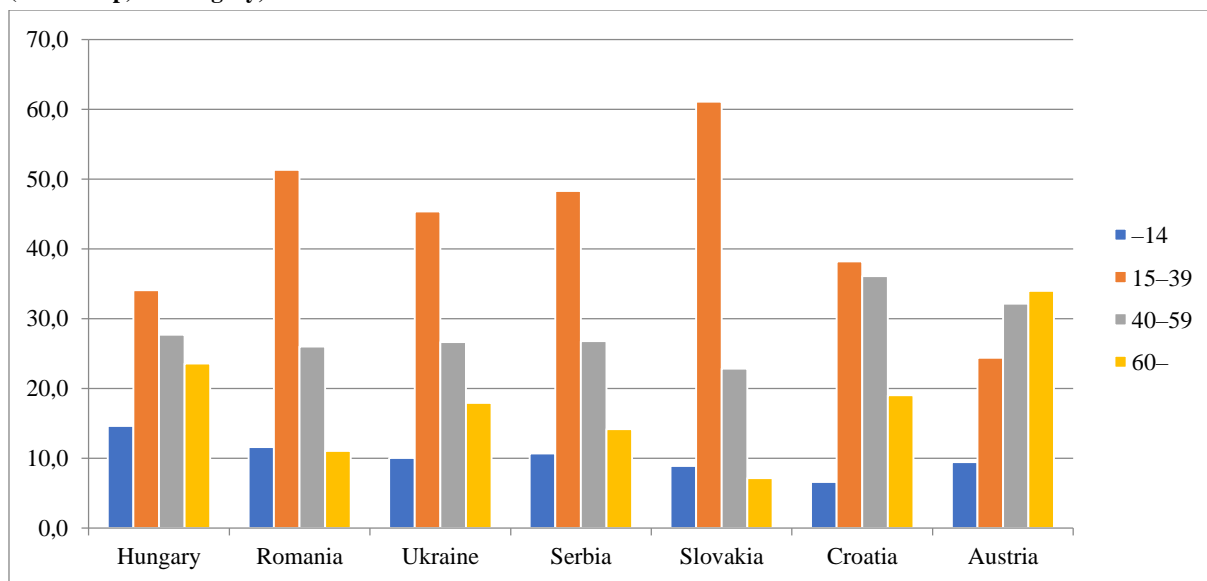
Figure 24. The number of Austrian citizens (stock data) in Hungary, 1995-2022.



Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office.²² Own figure.

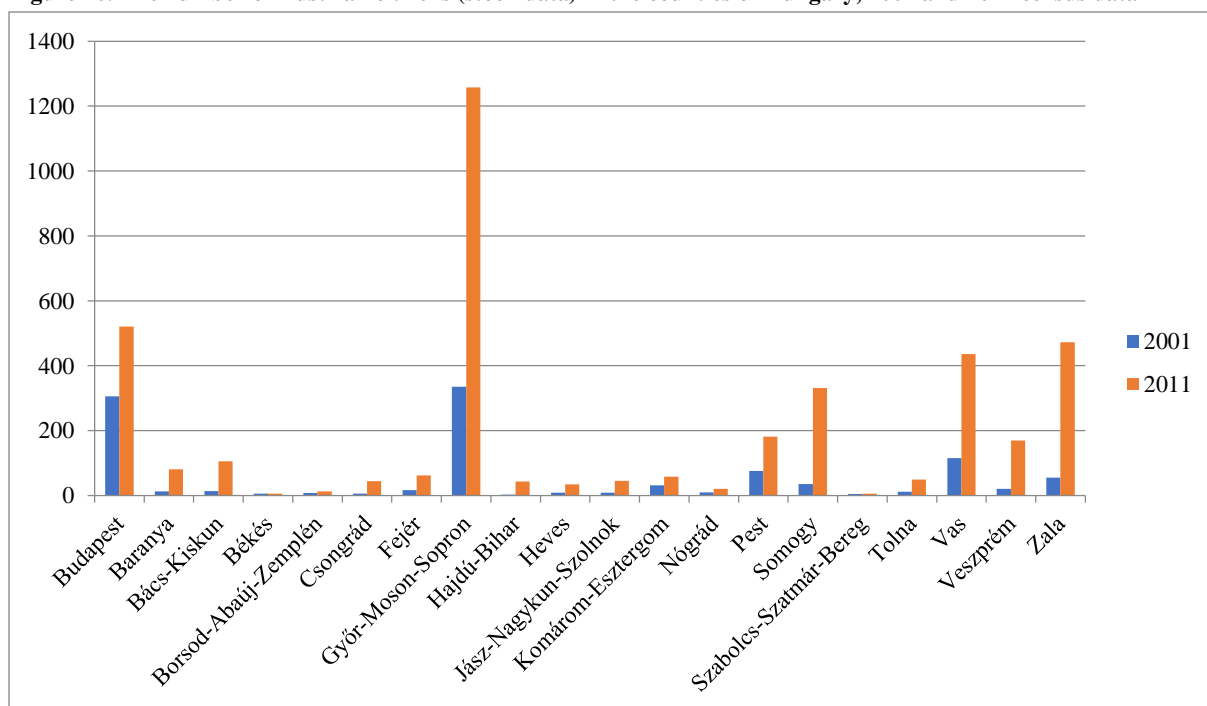
²² https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/nep/hu/nep0023.html

Figure 25. The proportion of the main age categories of the population stocks by selected countries of origin (citizenship) in Hungary, 2011 census.



Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office.²³ Own figure.

Figure 26. The number of Austrian citizens (stock data) in the counties of Hungary, 2001 and 2011 census data



Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office.²⁴ Own figure.

²³ https://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/docs/tablak/teruleti/00/00_2_1_2_4.xls

²⁴ https://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak_teruleti_00

6. Open questions for MIGWELL

In this research report, several questions were raised that we cannot yet answer appropriately based on our current knowledge. Without a claim to exhaustiveness, the following socio-demographic phenomena will require further investigation:

- Although the Hungarian-born population stock in Austria has doubled during the last decade, and the yearly migration balance has been positive from the Austrian perspective, the *volume of the international migration flow* from Hungary to Austria has in fact constantly decreased, whereas it has slightly increased since 2013 in the opposite direction (Figure 14). Why? Is this the result of the growing tendency toward return migration? If so, how can this tendency be explained? Has the socio-economic situation in Hungary improved considerably, causing the subjective well-being gap to narrow between the two countries, or are these return migrants only “pseudo-returnees” who have been working in Austria but have chosen the cross-border commuting option? Is it, on the other hand, perhaps simply a consequence of the methodological imperfection of detecting circular migration (for instance seasonal migration)?
- While males made up the majority of the Hungarian-born migrants over the last two decades, and their proportion is even higher among return migrants, there is a female surplus in the Hungarian-born population stock living in Austria (Figures 16, 17). Why is the *male-female ratio* inverted in the case of flow and stock data? And why is there a female surplus in the age-group 15-29, while a strong male surplus is typical between the ages 30 and 74?
- Based on the 2016 micro-census, we have sketched the rough *socio-demographic profile* of the permanent Hungarian immigrants in Austria. How have these features changed since then? How do the objective factors of well-being – material resources and personal relationships – affect the subjective reflections of this group of immigrants on happiness and satisfaction, and how do the changes affect their intention to stay in Austria or return to Hungary?

The subsequent MIGWELL work packages aim to answer these questions through qualitative research techniques (narrative and cognitive interviews, focus groups, round-table discussions) and a quantitative survey in both countries.

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