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Administrative Division and Administrative Geography in Hungary

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No. 3
Administrative Division and
Administrative Geography in
Hungary
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I. INTRODUCTION

The settling and territorial organization of citizens is a characteristic feature common to all states. The majority of states - apart from city-states and mini-states - have no internal political (administrative) division. Administrative division is mainly a matter of state power and policy-making but obviously from the aspect of efficient functioning the predominance of exercising power rather presupposes than excludes the creation of a rational administrative system of centres and territories.

Administrative division also involves historically established national particularities. The structure of territorial division, the extent of centralization and decentralization cannot be separated from historical determination by ideas of state and nation, from the prevailing class and power relations and the method of exercising power.

The administrative division, called into being by long-term historical development of the political, economic and social relations, has relative independence and stability, affecting the emergence of new forms.

Besides the primacy and determining character of power relations and the conserving effect of historically established structures, the development of administrative division is considerably influenced by the development of the productive forces and the es-

tablished practice of territorial division, the natural, economic, transport and settlement network patterns of the territory of state, the number of inhabitants, their territorial distribution, the composition of nationalities and the formation of the communication possibilities etc.

In spite of this, administrative division depends directly neither upon the territorial division of labour, nor the economic structure, nor intersettlement relationships. Public administration has its own particular internal system of requirements; thus the efficient functioning of administration may be required only if these requirements are taken into consideration in defining the territorial division.

The theoretical issues of administrative division are dealt with by political law, while the functioning of the territorial system is the main concern of public administration law. It is increasingly widely expressed that no single science is capable of solving the theoretical, methodological and practical tasks facing administrative territorial organization.

The examination of the formation, contents, effects and boundaries of the administrative system of centres and territories is an important geographical issue, as the organization of the population separated by territories takes place within the framework of the prevailing administrative division. Administration is an ac-

tivity of the widest range, which encompasses nearly all the areas of the life of the population, powerfully influencing the formation of the functional and hierarchical system of the relationships of settlements through its own function, and control of the regular movement of the population in several aspects.

The territorial and settlement pattern of the administrative division entirely covers the whole of the country, each point of the country being a regulated and visibly organized part of the administrative territorial system.

The geographical issues of administrative organization are farreaching. A whole range of issues posed in connection with natural geography, economic geography, settlement geography, population geography, historical geography etc. Administrative geography as a discipline was developed within political geography in order to explore, analyse, answer the issue of this complex system of interconnections in an aim-oriented way.

This study surveys the relationships between the formation and the development of the Hungarian administrative geography and the historical changes in administrative division. We seek an answer to the question of the nature of the relationship between the development of geographical theory, the geographical ideas on admin-

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istrative organization (administrative space theory) and the reform proposals of geographical character. We survey the role and effects of the foreign schools of thought in the development of the approach and methodology in Hungarian administrative geography.

II. MAIN TENDENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE GEOGRAPHY

The theory of geography has always been closely connected with broader philosophical, socio-theoretical and political thinking, and social practice. The basic points of departure of geography, the interpretation and evaluation of the relationships between the economy and political structures, are considerably determined by the objectives of society.

The relationships between geography, state and administrative division have changed essentially in the course of historical development. For centuries geography used to meet the demands of extending knowledge on and describing the state and administrative units became the fundamental, if not an exclusive field of geographical research and elaboration.

In the second half of the 19th century geography transformed from a mass of facts on states into a modern science. The transformation was accompanied by the large-scale extension of analytical research, the differentiation and intense specialization of disciplines. Gaining impetus, political geography mainly analysed the geographical issues of political systems, though at the same time it gave way to the study of politico-territory-

rial division within the state. In the process of formation, political geography formulated the "regularities" of state development in the spirit of geographical mechanistic determinism.

The developing administrative geography considered its task to do research into the theoretical, historical issues and practical influence of administrative territorial organization and division, and to elaborate the geographical foundations of administrative division.

After the formation of administrative geography several tendencies of development unfolded, national schools of thought came into being; in fact, the views of some significant representatives of this scientific field also changed considerably.

Investigating the development of administrative geography chronologically we can state that during and after World War I the research of those geographical questions of administrative division relying upon the pre-war initiatives became intensified in most European countries. The war efforts posed questions of the management and administration of the economy and population in a new way. The post-war economic, social and political changes, the formation of states and the change of state boundaries drew the attention of geography to the questions of state, state structure and the political division of society.

In the period between the two World Wars research in the field of administrative geography became more intense. Development asserted itself in several directions, "discipline-grounding" analyses of theoretical character came of the forefront as well as attempts to find the taxonomical place of administrative geography among sciences. The most significant of all tendencies was the interconnection of the research of administrative geography, the territorial reform proposals of different character and the research of territorial improvement and regional planning in the most developed countries. It became increasingly clear to geographers that public administration and the administrative organization of territories represent an important aspect of the life of society.

After World War II the intensification of the earlier tendencies may be encountered. On the one hand, thorough and detailed territorial research was on the increase in administrative geography, analyses aimed at finding the taxonomical place of administrative geography among sciences gained ground on the other, and finally research in administrative geography became more closely connected with the efforts of territorial development. In the 1950s administrative geography made the first definite move toward sociology and political science. After the 1960s significant methodological devel-

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opment took place, administrative geography became mathematicized and new ways of approach appeared. In the 1970s the field of research shifted to the theory of space, various space-modelling experiments being initiated.

By the 1980s it became widely accepted that "Administrative geography is that branch of political geography which concentrates on the geographic study of internal subdivisions of states (R. Sevrin, 1985. p. 72). Correspondingly, administrative geographical research covers theoretical, historical and practical issues of administrative division, it explores the effects of the functioning of public administration.

Examining the development of administrative geography from the point of view of geographical theory it can be discovered that all the three main ideologies of geography studying the regularities of natural, economic and social space—namely landscape geography, economic regionalization theory and the theory of central places—arrived at (although with significantly different emphasis) the research of the theoretical and practical issues of administrative division, formulating their concepts of administrative division and elaborating proposals of territorial division.

It is conspicuous that the proposals of geographically based division range over a wide scale in every

country; as the concrete territorial systems of the proposals resting on similar theoretical principles greatly differ, it is quite understandable that the territorial reform proposals of diverse theoretical inspiration are entirely diverse (R. E. Dickinson, 1964).

With regard to administrative territorial organization the statements of the 3 large schools of geographical theory can be outlined only very briefly as follows:

In the modern landscape theory of the second half of the 19th century, landscape is at first a category of natural geography, then its scope gradually widens. Landscape becomes a comprehensive category of classification, in which the interaction of the natural, economic, social, demographic, settlement network etc, processes can be interpreted. According to quite a number of scholars of the landscape geography of the early 19th century, all producing, building, organizing etc. activities of man have a landscape character, thus landscape can serve as the objective scientific spatial basis of states, administrative division and social organization. Gradually the theory of landscape theory and landscape administration appears. The followers of landscape administration wished to construct the administrative division of state upon the system of landscapes. Although the theory of landscape administration is a mainstream tendency in the

early 20th century, later on it can be met with only sporadically. (In Hungary, as will be pointed out below, this tendency was also very strong between the two world wars due to the particular historical situation).

The theory of economic regionalization considers its main task to be the exploration of the spatial system of the territorial labour division and it approaches the theoretical questions of settlement network and administrative division from this very aspect. It studies the role of settlements from the side of economic performance.

Concrete research of economic regions was mainly focussed upon in the exploration of the territorial system and the structure and relationships of the economy, and touched upon the questions of settlement network as well. The territorial categories revealed or created in the course of research (micro-, mezo-, macro-region) mainly reflect the structure and spatial relations of the economy and one cannot draw a clear-cut analogy between these territorial categories and either the administrative division or the established system of central places and gravity zones of the settlement network.

The concepts of administrative division based on the theory of economic regionalization emerged in France at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries; then, becoming the central category of the Soviet economic geography,

it started to determine the administrative division concept of Marxist economic geography.

According to the significant representatives of economic regionalization the territorial division of society is basically determined by the economic spatial structure; therefore they propose that administrative division should be based upon the system of economic regions. Recently, however, the claim to formulate the determining character of economic regions in a subtler way has gained ground.

The theory of central places chiefly approaches the interconnections of administrative division from the side of the structural and functional relationships of settlement network. According to quite a few advocates of the theory of central places the spatial relations of supply provide the foundations of the regular movement of the population and the framework of intersettlement relations, whereby the gravity zones formed round the settlements of central character and of different levels may become the optimal spatial grounds of administrative division.

A regional survey of the emergence, formation and development of administrative geography will confirm the conclusion that under the influence of the historical particularities of the individual countries and that of

the "geographical national schools", geography approached the questions of administrative division in diverse ways and from the aspect of diverse theoretical principles; nevertheless and in many places it had a major role in investigating the changes and conflicts of the historically established administrative division, in elaborating the geographical foundations of a new administrative division.

Administrative geography has become a major trend of research in the countries where internal political division, the system of territorial administration and distribution are of complex character, the relations of nationalities are strongly divided territorially (Belgium, Canada); where attempts have been made time and again to reform the historical division (France); and where substantial administrative reform has been carried through (Great Britain). Within geography the study of the geographical questions of the federal construction of government (the USA, Australia, the Federal Republic of Germany) has also led to a more vigorous research in administrative geography.

Among the socialist countries it is mainly the Soviet Union where the study of the geographical, methodological and practical issues of administrative organization has been carried on in close connection with economic

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regionalization; but to some extent and in some way the question of administrative territorial organization has appeared in the geography of other countries as well.

III. INTERRELATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE GEOGRAPHY AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION IN HUNGARY

The relationship of geography and administration has a long historical past. Until the end of the 19th century Hungarian geography considered its main task to give an encyclopaedic description of the state and counties. In this way administrative units became the basic territorial categories of geography, the most important framework of investigation, data publication and description.

A chronological survey of the relationship between Hungarian geography and administrative territorial organization suggests that until the end of the 19th century geography conformed to the prevailing administrative division; it did not take a critical approach but took the administrative framework for granted, merely describing the counties. The exact, transport geographical analysis of the existing administrative division and its criticism based on insochronous maps started in the 1900s. During and after World War I the elaboration of geographically based administrative reform plans was initiated. After 1945 geography as a science wanted to have and did have its share in the theoretical and in part practical preparation of the administrative reforms based on complex foundations.

Studying the relationships from the point of view of geographical theory it can be stated that the landscape theory approach remained predominant until 1945, but the need for an administrative territorial reform based on the theory of central places also appeared mainly through the inclusion of the coordination of transport gravity zones and administrative division. In the 1950s most geographers envisaged and planned the reform of administrative division on the basis of economic regionalization. Since the 1960s the claim to a system of administrative division relying upon the research of gravity zones has been most frequently expressed but conceptions of administrative division integrated with the economic regionalization approach may also be encountered.

In the course of modern Hungarian history significant changes occurred in the 1870s, in 1923, 1949 and 1984. Territorial changes were caused on the one hand by the transformation of the economic, social and political relations, and on the other by the change of the national boundaries.

Further on this study going to examine what role geography played in the preparation of administrative territorial reforms in particular historical situations, what attitude it had towards internal political division, and will also attempt to give an idea of the after-effects

of internal political division on the theoretical development of geography.

A) Administrative geography in the period preceding World War I

The Compromise of 1867 regulated the relation of Hungary to Austria as defined by political law, and created the general political conditions and state framework of capitalist development in Hungary. In 1868 the various territories of historical Hungary as defined by political law were defined. Transylvania was reunited with the so-called mother country, Croatia - Slavonia - Dalmatia became member-countries, while Fiume (Rijeka) was annexed to the country "as a separate body". The laws of 1867 and 1868 gave birth to a complex state structure, created territorially as well as constitutionally. The country consisted of territories of different legal status, thus it was regarded as a state of imperial structure.

The census taken in 1870 was still organized within the feudal administrative framework. The territorial administration of the country of 325,411 km² area was carried out by 102 counties and territories of the same legal status (the provinces, seats, thousands) and 666 districts. The administration of settlements took place within the framework of 98 royal boroughs (they had the same rank

as counties), 91 corporate towns (these were not part of the district framework but were under direct county government), 769 market towns and 16,373 townships of rural character.

Following state territorialization, reform of internal administrative division was also commenced. The legal and territorial system of municipal and communal administration was regulated and then the modification of the territorial system of counties ensued.

In the course of the rearrangement of settlement administration some of the royal boroughs, being equal in rank to the counties, maintained their municipal character and became municipal boroughs; the majority of them, however, regressed. In 1871 the reform of the legal status and administrative division of large and small villages took place. Three categories of communities were established (corporate towns, large and small communities). (This system remained valid until 1949 with only small alternations). The districts within the counties included the communities but as administrative units they did not have any authority, while villages were organized into notarial districts.

The territorial reform of the counties in 1876 aimed at abolishing the territorial municipalities of feudal origin and character, and at establishing the unified ter-

ritorial system of counties. On the Great Hungarian Plain and in Transylvania significant territorial changes occurred. In Transdanubia the establishment of modern public administration took place mainly within the framework of the historical county boundaries.

After the implementation of the reform in 1880 the local-territorial administration of the country took place within the framework of 80 counties or military districts, 46 municipal boroughs, 137 corporate towns, 483 districts, 1,914 large and 16,177 small communities.

In this period geography is still lagging behind, it has no instrumental role in the preparation of country planning. Geography soon adapts itself to the new county boundaries and discusses the geography of the country according to the new boundaries. The new administrative division represents an endowment and territorial framework for geography, the changes are merely acknowledged (K. Ballagi - P. Király, 1878).

The decomposite character of the Hungarian state and the striking disproportionateness of administrative division, its distorted, sometimes irrational features, participated in the development of administrative geography in Hungary.

Within Hungarian geography a specific and separate trend is represented by constitutional geography, by which the

geographical components of the Austro-Hungarian dualism were dealt with and the consideration of the administrative possibilities and contents of a trivalist (Austrian, Hungarian, Slavian) monarchy also appeared as a concomitant phenomenon of the political processes (R. Havass, 1909).

Already in the first modern synthesis of the geography of Hungary great attention is paid to the study of the internal political division of the state territory. Gy. Prinz considers the most important task of administrative geography to be the study of the internal political boundaries, above all county boundaries. According to him the majority of the internal political boundaries do not represent natural boundaries (on the surface of the earth they are actual dividing lines, natural barriers) but rather artificial, legal artefacts. In spite of this the internal political boundaries should be of high priority in geography, as they play the same role of dividing as the natural boundaries (Gy. Prinz, 1914).

In his analysis and criticism of the internal political boundaries Prinz also considers the natural and economic factors, on the basis of his earlier transport geographical research; however, he concludes that basically the conditions of transport should be taken into consideration. Only a combined consideration of the space, time and cost of transport may lead to the formation of a rational territorial division.

A statement of universal validity is claimed by Prinz in saying that administrative centres are to be located in the centres of the territory administered, and that only thus can it be ensured for the population of the particular territory to reach the centres at approximately the same cost and during the same time.

Prinz also touches upon the geographical issues of the district administration covering several counties and clearly formulates that given the natural political unity of the state, division into districts is a difficult task because it has neither geographical nor historical foundations.

In summary it can be concluded that Hungarian geography reached a critical analysis of the geographical issues of administrative division as early as the period preceding World War I, and that under the perceptible influence of international - mostly German and French - geography the foundations of the geographical principles and research of administrative division were at this time laid down.

B) The connection between geography and public administration in Hungary between the two world wars

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was defeated in World War I. The Monarchy collapsed, and historical Hungary disintegrated. After the enforcement of the Trianon Peace Treaty

only 28,5 % (92,833 km²) of the former territory of Hungary (325,411 km²) remained under Hungarian jurisdiction. The number of the population fell to 7,606,971 (36,4 %) as compared to 20,886,487 in 1910. Of the former 72 counties only 10 territories remained whole within the new national boundaries, 25 partly and 37 completely being annexed to the new states. In 1921 35 counties 12 municipal boroughs, 36 corporate towns, 162 districts, 985 large and 2,425 small communities (the last were united by 712 notarial districts) performed the duties of administration.

After changes of boundaries by the peace treaty the already existing disproportionateness and contradictions of our administrative division worsened. (The smallest county in 1920 was Ung with an area 16 km² and 1,397 inhabitants, the biggest one being Pest with an area of 12,034 km² and 1,161,325 inhabitants).

Within the new national boundaries the reform of the administrative division became imperative.

The measure and direction of the reform were fundamentally determined by political intention, thus in 1923, the broken counties along the border of the country were united in term of "provisionally" in this manner the number of the counties decreased to 25.

By this time geography had gone as far as to give a systematic theoretical interpretation of administrative

organization and division and approach it as a factor or-
ganizing and influencing the life of the population, di-
recting its movements and controlling its activities.

In the period between the two world wars three schools of thought produced significant achievements in the investigation of the geographical aspects of administration, in the elaboration and further development of the theoretical foundations and categories of administrative geography.

At the Budapest Economic Faculty, at the Geographical Institute headed by P. Teleki and at the Institute of Political Science, political geography was studied and the interpretation of the geographical issues of administrative division was reached within this field.

At the Institute of Administration Theory organized and headed by Z. Magyar aim-oriented research was carried out in the analysis of the Hungarian administrative division and the creation of the new administrative division at the time of the preparation of the planned administrative reform in the 1930s. This research was partly done by Teleki's students.

The representatives of the third school were grouped around Gy. Prinz at the Geographical Institute of the Erzsébet University of Pécs. Prinz and his students analysed the geographical issues of public administration, departing from the investigation of transport and settlement geography.

From among the three schools involved in the research of the geographical issues of public administration I am going to dwell only upon the activities of the school of Teleki and Gy. Prinz.

a) The endeavours of Teleki's school
in territorial division

P. Teleki, the founder of modern Hungarian economic and political geography and the outstanding politician of the period between the two world wars, started to deal with the geographical issues of administrative division and territorial organization for geographico-theoretical and practical political reasons.

According to Teleki, the role of geography is to investigate all the economic, social and political phenomena that are connected in some way with the natural environment. Teleki is the adherent of an objective landscape concept, landscape is a unit of life and represents higher biocenosis in his view. According to him geography is the study of all economic, social and political phenomena on the basis of landscape and landscape determination (P. Teleki, 1903, 1936).

The territory of a country is not homogeneous but rather a system of individual and hierarchically integrated landscapes; thus, an analogy can be drawn between

the classification of landscapes and administrative division.

Teleki completed his reform project in 1921 but he had been dealing with the geographical issues of state formation and administrative territorial organization as early as 1904. He divided historical Hungary - after its disintegration - into administrative units, departing from a landscape deterministic approach and taking natural landscapes as the basic (P. Teleki, n.d.). In defining the boundaries of the natural landscapes and territories of administrative units besides the dominance of the aspects of nationalities he took into consideration the natural, economic, social, historical, settlement network, transport and supply factors as well. The thus formed natural landscapes were to comprise the territories of the counties, and the administrative division into districts was to be implemented on a similar basis (Fig.1).

Teleki's project did not have practical significance as he had made it with regard to non-existing national territory. It has only theoretical and historical value but it greatly determined Hungarian geographical thought between the two world wars; in the final analysis he was the first representative of landscape administration theory in Hungary. Teleki's concept was expressly determined by the landscape geographical school of Vidal de la Blache, Clémentel's regionalization project but he was also in-

fluenced by the landscape geographical, regionalization and landscape administration ideas of the English geographer C. B. Fawcett.

Teleki rejoins the research of the geographical issues of public administration in the course of Magyary's rationalization activities in the 1930s. This time Teleki makes proposals for the rationalization of Hungarian administrative division on the basis of French examples. He retained his landscape geographical approach but in the new situation he placed greater emphasis on the role of economic relations.

For Teleki the adoption of landscape state and landscape administration theory forms the "scientific basis" of the revisionist policy in the early 1920s. The scientific confirmation of the revisionist policy becomes his main purpose, therefore his approach does not go beyond the theory of landscape administration, although he is aware of and follows in the wake of the changes in geographical theory.

The comprehensive study of Gy. Hantos on administrative geography (with 56 detailed and synthetizing maps) is, on the one hand, a diagnosis made at the "sick-bed of public administration", and a proposal for rationalizing regional administrative division (Gy. Hantos, 1931).

First, Hantos sets out to demonstrate that the division

of individual administrative sectors is disproportionate in relation to both territory and population. The accessibility of seats is not synchronized with the territories subordinated to the seats. The divisions are independent of one another, the territories and centres of the individual sectors do not coincide. The territorial division and system of centres are puzzling for the citizens and state alike (Fig. 2).

Before the reform proposal of administrative division Hantos performs the geographical analysis on transport indispensable to the administrative division of the country. He reveals the possible transport gravity zones within half a day's or one day's journey and points out which centre may be reached from which territory within one day (Fig. 3). His final conclusion is that the role of transport must not be exaggerated. If we carried out the rationalization of the regional administrative division only on the basis of the transport geographical situation and accessibility of the respective towns, the result would be even greater disproportionateness.

After analysing the existing regional division and the transport geographical situation of the respective centres Gy. Hantos makes a proposal for reforming the system of territories and centres of regional administration. He places in the forefront the regional division to be formed around the "seven natural centres"

(Budapest, Debrecen, Győr, Miskolc, Pécs, Szeged, Szombathely). He does not take a definite position concerning the exclusiveness of this division but he claims that the decrease or increase in the number of the regional territorial units may cause serious difficulties. Hantos also made a summarizing map of his proposals. This map reflects a significantly improved - although due to the distorted county boundaries disproportionate and irregular - division (Fig. 4).

Besides Hantos it is worth mentioning the name of P. Elek, from Teleki's school. Elek is mainly concerned with the management of agriculture and within this framework he develops Teleki's landscape administration theory. He elaborates the possible system of the realization of landscape administration at the national boundaries of 1939 (Fig. 5). The small landscapes (districts) have to be formed around the centres with good transport connections in such a way that both the soil and the agricultural way of life become homogeneous. Social life, the direct management of production and administration having the greatest impact on the population take their places within this framework. The towns comprising the centres of the mezo-landscapes should also be defined on the basis of good transport, their authority being extended onto a territory still representing a homogeneous way of life, of the

size of a county. The way of life in a large landscape formed by the combination of 3-5 medium landscapes is no longer entirely uniform, nevertheless it is still an outstanding, characteristic framework in comparison with the other landscapes. The centre of a large landscape is a real metropolis, which represents the large landscape outwards and defends its interests against other landscapes (P. Elek, 1940, 1942).

b) Prinz's reform projects

The administrative geographical proposals that served practical purposes in the period between the two World Wars are associated with Gy. Prinz's name. Prinz is also an adherent of the objective landscape concept but with respect to administrative organization he lays stress not so much upon the aspects of landscape geography as upon the approach of transport geography and gravity zone.

In 1922 he elaborated his administrative territorial reform project concerning the new national boundaries. After a critical survey of existing territorial division he makes a proposal for 23 counties, all of which are transport geographical units. Besides the division of the counties he examines the transport geographical foundations of the administrative division of regional character which cover several counties, but in the final analysis he disclaims the justification of the division into

urban districts within the new national boundaries.

The greatest merit of the project consists in the exact criticism of the administrative division of the country and in making proposals for a rational division of the counties on the basis of homogeneous and purposeful geographical principles. Surveying the planned division, however, it can be concluded that the aspects of transport geography cannot serve as the exclusive foundations of territorial division, for in this way insignificant settlements (Simontornya, Kiskőrös, Kisterenye, Füzesgyarmat, Vásárosnamény) would become county seats (Fig. 6,7,8).

In the 1930s the attention of Prinz is turned again to the geographical issues of administrative division. In his view the three basic criteria of rational internal division are: 1) proportionality between the size of the territory and the population; 2) the size of the globular shape of the territorial units; 3) the adjustment of the territorial units to the channels of communication. Prinz specifies 6 factors - the relief, population density, cultural standard, degree of production, road network and costs of travelling - the exploration of the internal interconnections of which should serve as the basis for the new administrative division (Pinz, 1933a).

After the elucidation of the principles he sums up the geographical method of the formation of administrative di-

vision under 5 headings. In formulating the aspects he aims at complexity, taking into consideration the components of political science, economy and sociology (Gy. Prinz, 1933b).

1. The basis of any rational territorial division consists in deciding how many grades state administration should have. Prinz's conviction on this point is that in the case of the Hungarian state territory the two-grade administrative division is optimal, in this case counties (comitats) should be expanded to the size of the Austrian "Land", while districts to that of "Bezirk". (Prinz's so-called two-grade administrative division corresponds to the notion of the three-grade administrative division of modern political law. In political law the components of settlements or rather larger settlements organized as territorial units are regarded as first-grade territorial units; territories formed by the combination of the first-grade territorial units (districts, larger towns) are second-grade territorial units; the territories built upon the second-grade territorial units become third-grade territorial units (e.g.: counties).

2. The first and most important issue of the division of the state territory into internal political units is the determination of the size of the territorial units. In the analysis of the size of the territorial units the point of departure is the average area of the present ex-

isting units. (The average area of the special administration units of regional character is 15,000 km², the average area of the counties is 4,753 km², and that of the districts 644 km².) Prinz feels it necessary to expand the area of the counties. His viewpoint is that only larger counties are capable of generally developing their seats and towns.

3. In establishing administrative division the first step to be taken is to determine the area of the districts. It is not the counties that should be divided into districts, but the optimally formed district territories that should serve as the basis for forming the counties. The forming of the optimal districts is based on the theoretical assumption that the narrow gravity zones of the market towns formed under the influence of several factors may be regarded as the suitable basis of division into districts. Prinz also touches upon the complex, and for a long time problematic, interrelations of towns and districts. He regards his own district system as a territorial one, which includes the towns as well. He extends the territorial approach elaborated in connection with the districts onto the relationship of municipal boroughs and counties too. From a geographical aspect he finds it useless to separate the municipal boroughs and counties.

4. He unites the established districts into territorial units of higher degree on the basis of transport geog-

raphical aspects. He groups the 162 districts around 14 transport junctions.

5. In spite of the fact that Prinz disclaims the justification of regional (urban district) administration, he analyses its geographical issues because he thinks that administrative geography should allow for the possibility of the formation of urban district administration as well. At the same time he points out that on the territory of the Hungarian state it is not possible to establish a proportionate administrative division because there are no real regional centres and there is a lack of road networks. We may analyse and criticize the process of territorial division elaborated and formed by Prinz from several aspects. It is obvious that in contrast with the contemporary administrative division of the state he elaborated a project that was rational and kept the interests of the population in view, contributed to the functioning of the state administration and conformed to the development of the urban network. (Fig. 9)

Research between the two world wars encompassed the analysis of the interrelations of the natural geographical environment, the issue of nationalities, settlement network and administrative division. The representatives of geography elaborated several territorial reform proposals but there was no uniform attitude with regard to either the grades of territorial administration or to the concrete stages of territorial implementation.

C) Administrative geography after 1945

The Provisory National Assembly had already started to lay the foundations of a new, democratic Hungary in December, 1944 - before the complete liberation of the country. In connection with it the temporary administrative division was regulated as well. These readjustments and the reannexation of villages eliminated the most conspicuous disproportionateness of the earlier division. These measures were based upon the earlier petitions and applications of the population and therefore the territorial changes met with general acceptance in most cases.

From the Liberation to the adoption of the Constitution of 1949 the different political parties - according to their political, power objectives and future expectations - represented diverse reformative administrative ambitions. Each party had some concept of administration, which included the reform of the territorial division as well.

The Constitution clearly decided and determined the system of administrative division for a long time. The Constitution did not alter the historically established administrative structure, henceforward invariably the villages, towns, districts and counties remained the settlement or territorial units of Hungarian administration but by the democratic reformation of the role, situation

and tasks of the settlements and administrative territorial units it brought about decisive changes.

After the adoption of the Constitution, first the reformation of the counties and subsequently that of the system of centres and territories of districts ensued. Instead of the former 25 counties 19 counties were formed eliminating the most striking territorial and population disproportionateness of the former division into counties (Fig. 10). In the course of the reformation of districts 140 districts were established as opposed to the former 150. The established districts were of relatively small area and population; as a general rule that principle of administrative geography dominated which claims that districts should comprise homogeneous territories from the aspect of geography, economy, transport and settlement network alike. Most district seats became the actual centres of the districts under the given circumstances.

After the reform of the territorial administration the formation of the system of settlement administration and organization took place. In this respect the administrative redivision of Budapest has outstanding significance. In 1949 7 towns and 16 villages were united with Budapest, solving thereby the administration problem of the capital, which had dragged on for long decades.

The administration of towns underwent significant changes. Three categories of municipalities were established: 1) mu-

municipality under the direct government of the Council of Ministers (Budapest); 2) municipalities under the direct government of county councils; 3) municipalities under direct government of the district councils (29). This new construction of urban administration did not prove efficient, therefore in 1954 it was readjusted. The towns left the jurisdiction of the district councils and received rights equal to those of the districts, while Debrecen, Miskolc, Pécs and Szeged became towns of county rights equal in rank to the counties.

Sweeping changes occurred in the administrative division of villages as well. While before the establishment of the councils 1,191 large communities and 662 notarial districts were functioning, in 1950, 2,978 community councils were formed, from among which 170 joint community councils were formed from 361 communities.

In spite of the heated theoretical and methodological debates, the renewed geography paid attention to keeping the geographical issues of administrative division in the public eye. In 1948 a brief summary of Hungarian administrative geography was published, written in the spirit of the traditional statistical description of territories (Kovács, 1948).

After the Liberation geographers ceased to consider the mechanistic deterministic geographical approach. They started to interpret the relation of nature and society

as a reflection of dialectic interrelations. In the period following the Liberation reform proposals of landscape administration cannot be found, although it should also be noted that the conceptions of the representatives of natural geography laid greater emphasis on the consideration of natural conditions in forming the economic regions of different levels.

Geographers did not take an organic part in the preparation of the territorial reform of 1949. On the one hand they summed up the changes and achievements of the territorial reform from the point of view of transport geography (Fig. 11), analysed and criticized the area, boundaries and seats of the new counties (A. Vagócs, 1952) and compared the transport geographical gravity zones with the new county boundaries, while on the other hand they examined the theoretical and practical realization of the unity of economic regions and administrative territorial division (Gy. Markos, 1952).

Research in economic regionalization started in Hungary after the theoretical and methodological achievements of Soviet economic geography had been studied. Surveying the interconnection of administrative division and regionalization, Markos stated right at the beginning of his research that the socialist state has the role of economic management not only at the highest but also at the medium and low levels. The units of

administration and economic geography may not be independent of each other. The administrative division of the policy-organizing and economy-building socialist state must be adjusted to the economic functions, first, the economic-geographical division must be made and then administrative division be adjusted to it. It must be laid down as a principle that administrative and economic units must coincide, their boundaries must not cross one another. Within one economic unit there may be one or more coordinated or subordinated administrative units but their territory must not exceed the boundary of the economic unit. It is feasible that an economic unit will become an administrative unit e.g.: in such a way that the boundaries of the county making up the majority of the territory are rounded off or by uniting the territory of two or more counties into an economic unit, furthermore by the division, the abolition of some part of the counties and by the advancing of specific territories (Gy. Markos, 1952).

The division into economic regions initiated in different periods (mainly hypotheses, rough sketches interpreting the territorial endowments and spatial pattern of the country) contained diverse hierarchical grades and different territorial delimitations (Fig. 12). The particular territorial demands of administration were taken into consideration only in some projects.

The theoretical issues of the economic regions have given rise to much controversy within modern Hungarian geography, as a result of which the questions of the economic regions and administrative division have been treated with differentiation both in geography and in administration theory (P. Beluszky - T.T. Sikos (ed), 1982).

Partly due to the differing results and the uncompleted character of economic regionalization, the government organs did not put these projects in the forefront in determining the territorial framework of national planning; at the same time it is conspicuous that the delimitations of regions connected with national economic planning or projects differ just as much from one another as the economic regions determined geographically (Fig. 13).

Since the 1960s settlement theoretical and geographical research relying on the theory of central places has gained impetus. The investigation of the functional and hierarchical territorial system of the settlement network and the interpretation of the town - countryside relationship have led to the contribution of settlement geographical research; that is, to the exploration of the settlement network of the country, it being formulated that in forming the administrative division the territorial system of gravity zones must be taken into

consideration. The explored, planned or expected gravity zones do not coincide, nor can their boundaries and territorial system meet the demands and requirements of administration in all respects (Fig. 14).

Since the 1970s the need for a complex foundation of territorial development and administration has led to an increase in theoretical and empirical research dealing with the territorial system of the economy, society and administration.

E. Lettrich provided new information through his comprehensive, detailed exploration of the development and condition of the Hungarian settlement network in the 1970s. She expressed the need for a new spatial discipline, administrative geography; but she did not make a proposal for reforming the territorial system (E. Lettrich, 1975).

Surveying the interrelation of the gravity zones, economic regions and administration, P. Beluszky made an attempt to interpret the geographico-spatial structure foundations of administrative division. He analysed ways of adapting both the gravity zones and economic regions in public administration, but he did not take an exclusive position with regard to either (P. Beluszky, 1980a).

Hungarian geography after the Liberation - despite its undoubtedly new methodological and theoretical achievements - paid less attention to the detailed analysis of the various geographical issues of administrative

division than before. Research was lagging behind as compared with the significance of administrative division and international geographical tendencies were not always followed either.

IV. THE GEOGRAPHICAL ISSUES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM OF 1984

If we take a look at the transformation process of Hungarian administrative division in the period 1950-1980 (Table 1) we may come to the conclusion that the number of counties remained unaltered (only the county division of 1 district and some communities was changed), the number and significance of the districts sharply decreased, and by 1980 a significant part of the system of townsurroundings had been formed, replacing the districts. The number and population of the towns dynamically increased. The number of large villages decreased due to their obtaining the legal status of towns and their unification. Substantial rearrangement took place in the organization of the community councils; there was a sharp decrease in the number of independent councils and an abrupt increase in that of the joint councils.

Summarizing, it can be said that during the past decades urbanization and the stages leading towards urbanization have transformed the spatial structure of Hungarian administration to a great extent. At the same time we cannot claim that the administrative organization and territorial system are entirely adequate in view of the urbanization processes.

On January 1, 1984, substantial changes were brought

about in the administrative division of the country. The districts were abolished and they were replaced by surroundings of town and large villages. The jurisdiction of the abolished districts was decentralized, it was divided between the large villages and to a smaller extent the towns. This reform was in fact the first step toward the formation of two-level administration. Administration of town-surroundings is only a temporary form which will last only until the conditions for the direct county government of communities are created.

In the course of the territorial reform 139 town- and village-surroundings were established. From among the seats 139 town- or village-surroundings and 34 newly-formed large villages of town rank were established. Apart from 4 exceptions (Budapest, Hajduböszörmény, Százhalombatta, Turkeve) the towns participated in meeting the solution of administrative tasks. In 34 large villages of town rights the conditions for obtaining the legal status of towns were being created.

In determining the size of the town-surroundings 2 factors were in the forefront: 1) the relations of the resulting gravity zones of the settlement geographical and economico-social endowments of particular communities and 2) the administration political considerations of medium-level administration.

In the new-administrative territorial structure the

number of medium-sized regions is of determining character but quite a few regions with small- or large-sized settlements were formed as well (Fig. 15). The system of the gravity zones of settlement network and the established intersettlement relation did not come to the forefront by absolute standards in determining the administrative system of centres and territories (Table 2).

In the preparation of the introduction of two-level administration 32 local councils fell under direct county government. These communities are not included in the division into town-surroundings. The limited character of the experiment is shown by the fact that in 11 counties communities under direct county government were not established.

The territorial reform of 1984 is the result of a number of compromises, the extent of the scope of the territorial change was determined by the politico-economic environment, and the unchanged character of the county boundaries represented an important limit. The concrete spatial structure of the new administrative division shows endeavours different from county to county as well.

V. SUMMARY

Administrative reform have always been interlinked with the prevailing economic, social, political changes and endeavours. The territorial reform concepts of administration have also borne the mark of the determining processes of the epoch. We can also quote by way of examples cases when administrative division was subordinated to the political aims of the day.

Since the formation of the Hungarian administrative organization its most important units have been the counties. In the course of historical development the functions of the counties has changed several times but their spatial structure shows considerable stability, in certain territories they have been modified to a slight extent. In contrast with the counties districts have changed a lot several times in respect of settlement (municipal and communal) administration and territorial administration.

Administrative geography was called into being by objective social needs. The administrative geographical investigations explored the (often anachronistic) character of the inherited administrative division and compared it with the new achievements of the development of settlement network, economy and transport. The researchers of administrative geography have made proposals time and time again for reforming and rationalizing the ad-

ministrative division.

We also have to realise that in most cases the representatives of geography have taken up the position of "outsiders" with regard to the territorial reform, they have not had an instrumental part in their elaboration. This is due to the fact that the judgement of the fundamental geographical questions of administration and administrative division often changed and that up to now there has been disagreement with regard to the optimal geographical fundamentals of administrative division.

The achievements of administrative geographical research - despite their contradictions - have contributed to the exploration of the general theoretical and methodological issues of administrative spatial organization but we must realize that the elaboration of the optimal fundamentals of administrative division is a complex scientific task, where significant but by no means exclusive tasks fall to geography.

The reform of territorial division is always the result of complicated compromises of many factors and in its elaboration and planning we must keep in mind the fact that administrative division has not turned from the question of supremacy into a purely scientific issue.

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APPENDIX

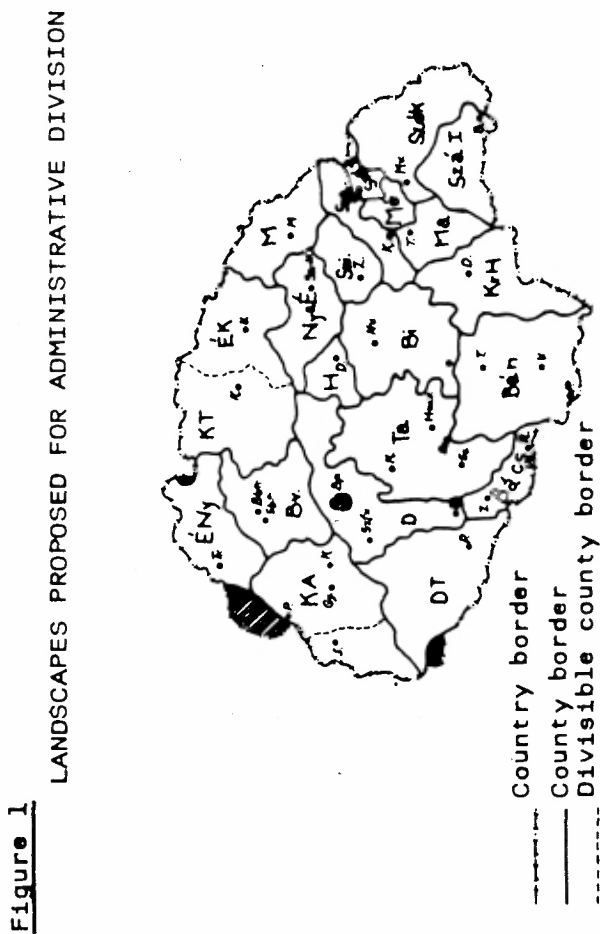


Figure 5 LANDSCAPE DIVISION OF HUNGARY

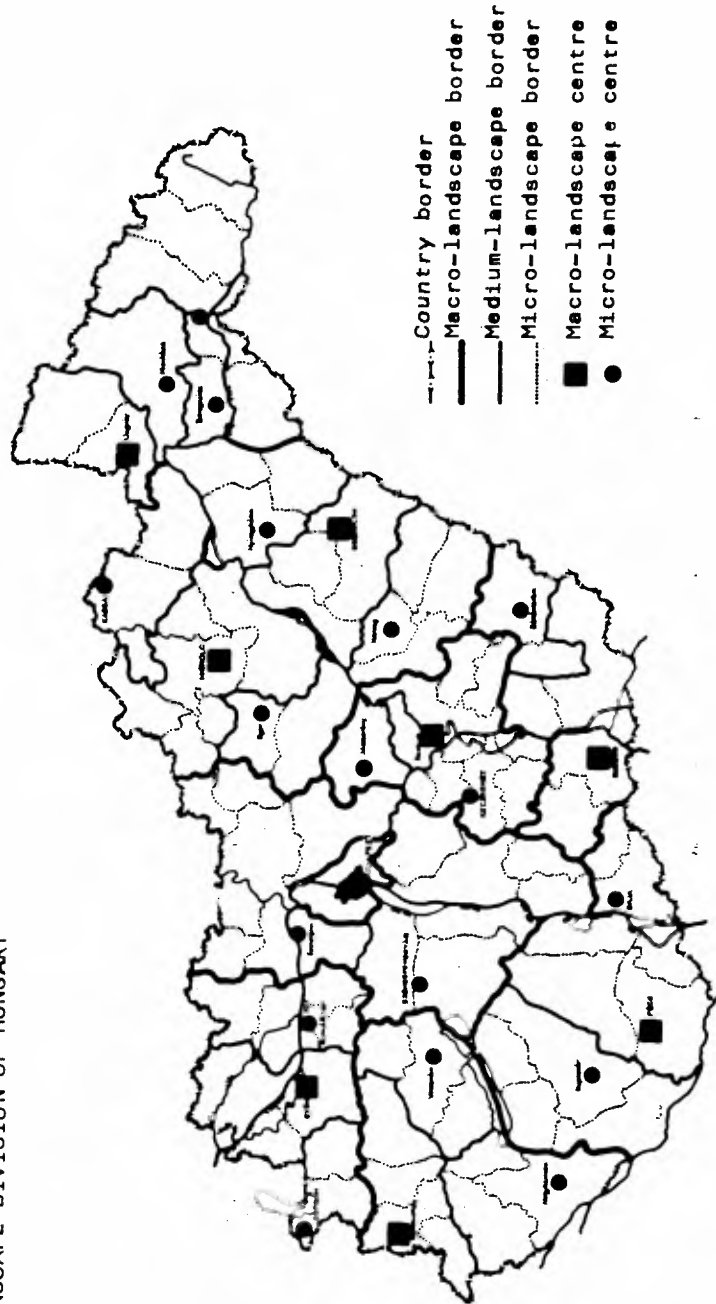


Figure 6
ONE- AND TWO-HOUR ISOCHRONES OF HUNGARIAN COUNTY SEATS

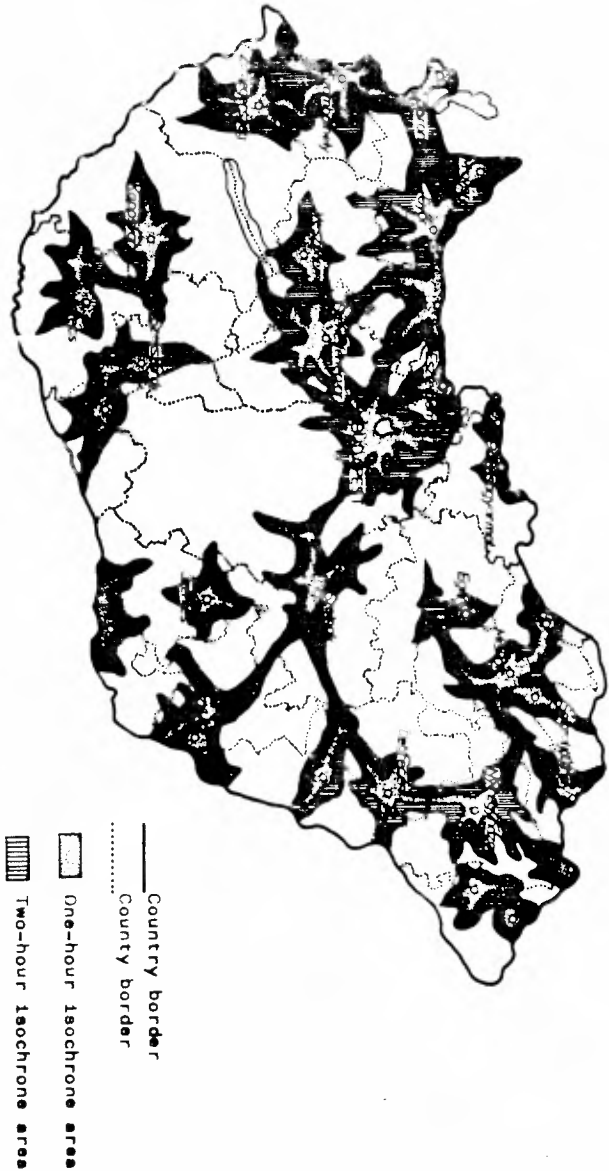


Figure 7 HUNGARY'S TRANSPORT-GEOGRAPHICAL TERRITORIES WITH THEIR CENTRES
ONE- AND TWO-HOUR ISOCHRONES

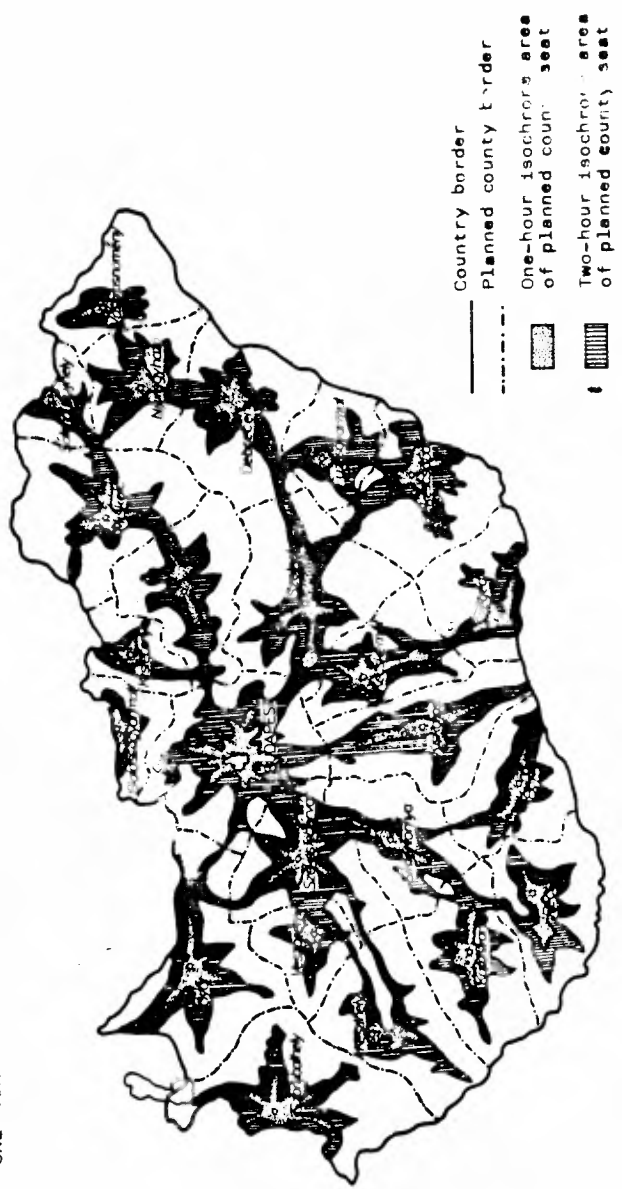


Figure 8
MAIN ATTRACTION ZONES OF TRANSPORT GEOGRAPHY IN HUNGARY

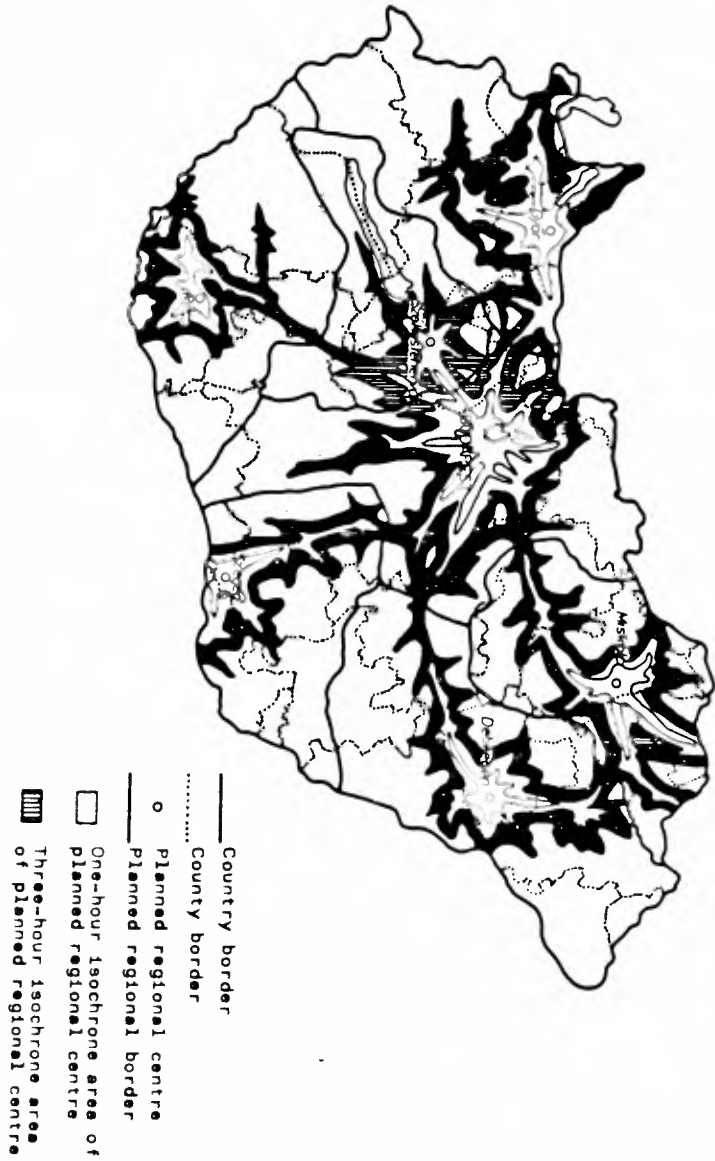
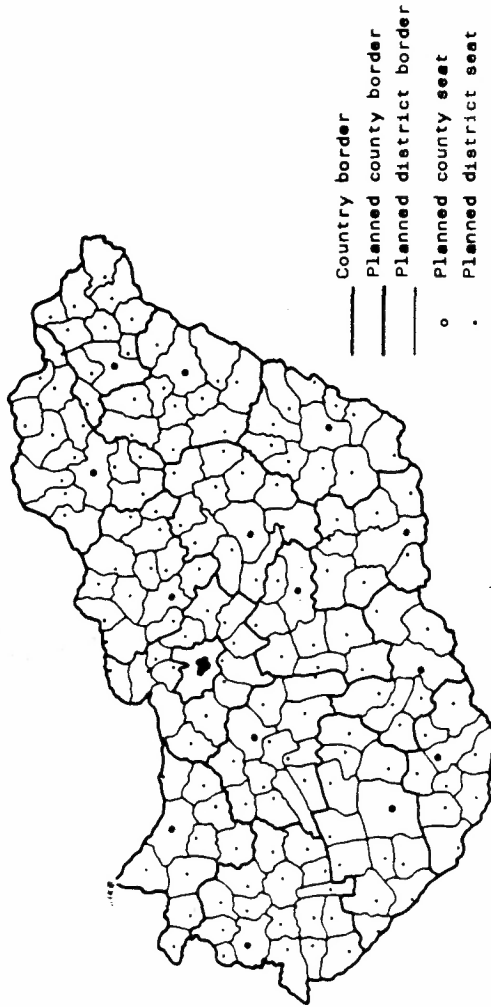


Figure 9 SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE POLITICAL DIVISION OF THE HUNGARIAN STATE



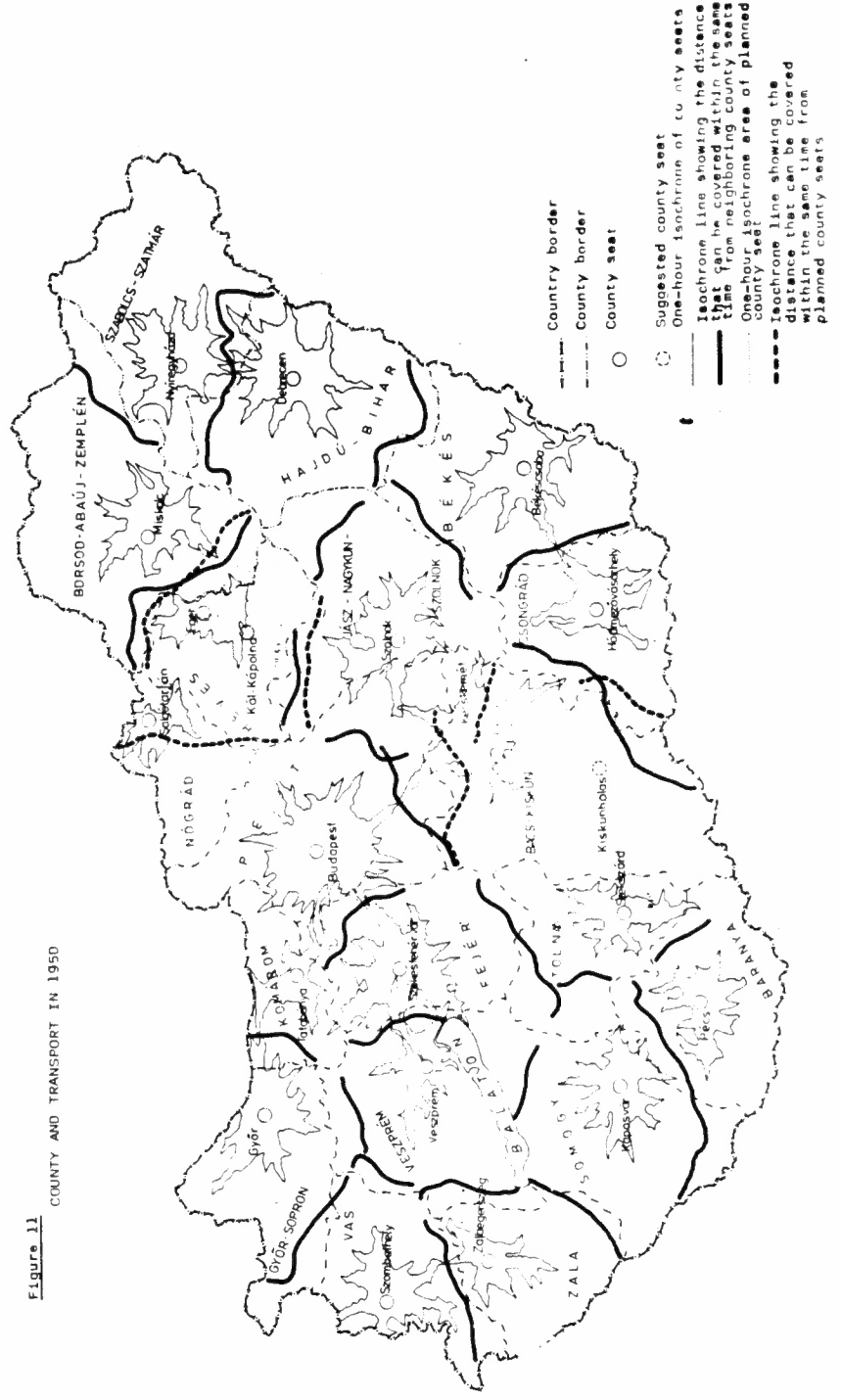


Figure 11
 COUNTY AND TRANSPORT IN 1950

Figure 12
 HUNGARY'S ECONOMIC-REGIONAL DIVISION FROM
 GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

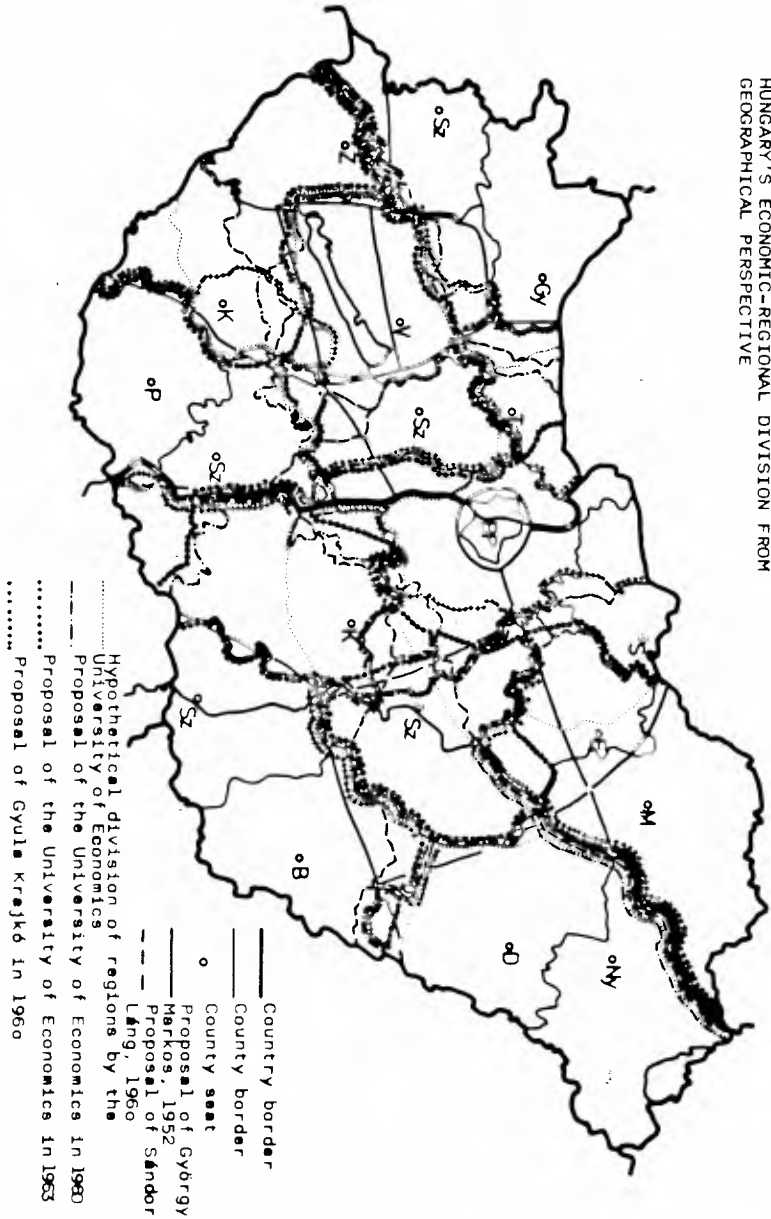


Figure 13
 REGIONAL DIVISION FOR THE NATIONAL
 ECONOMIC PLANNING

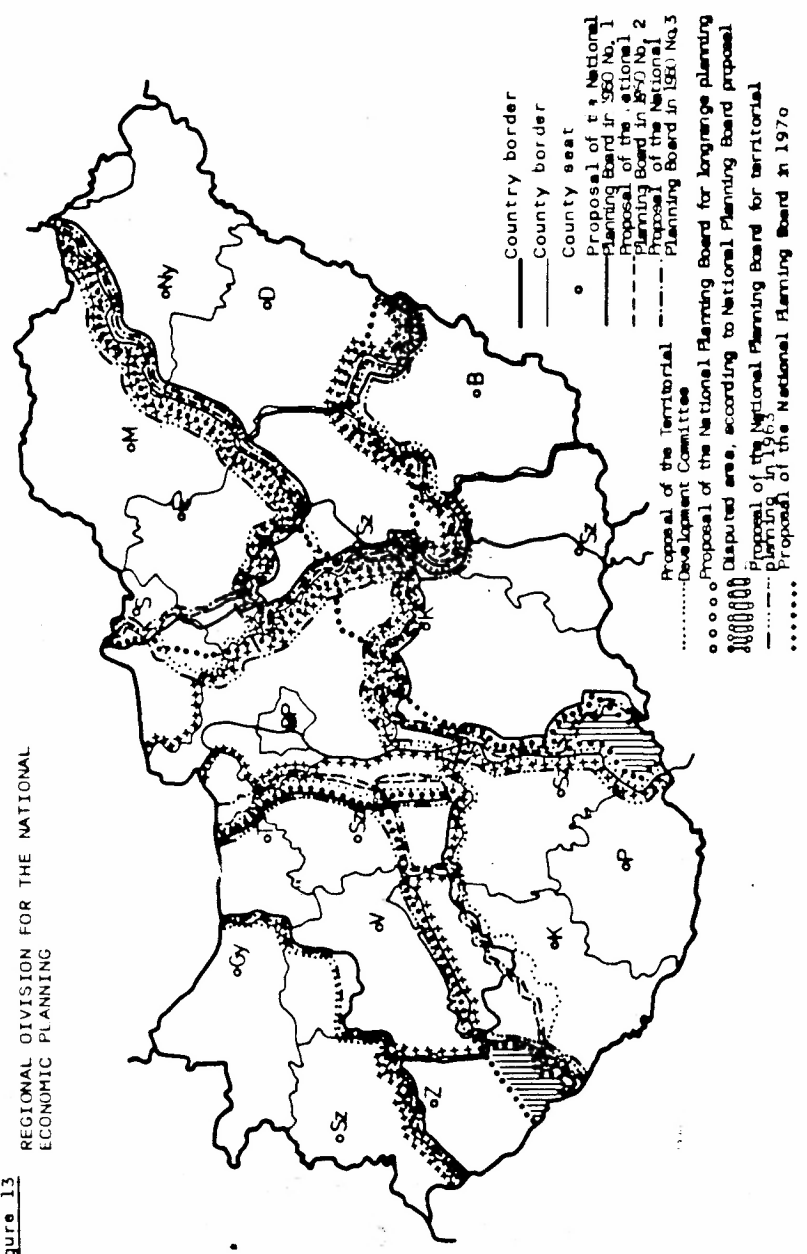


Figure 15

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF TERRITORY OF HUNGARY IN 1984

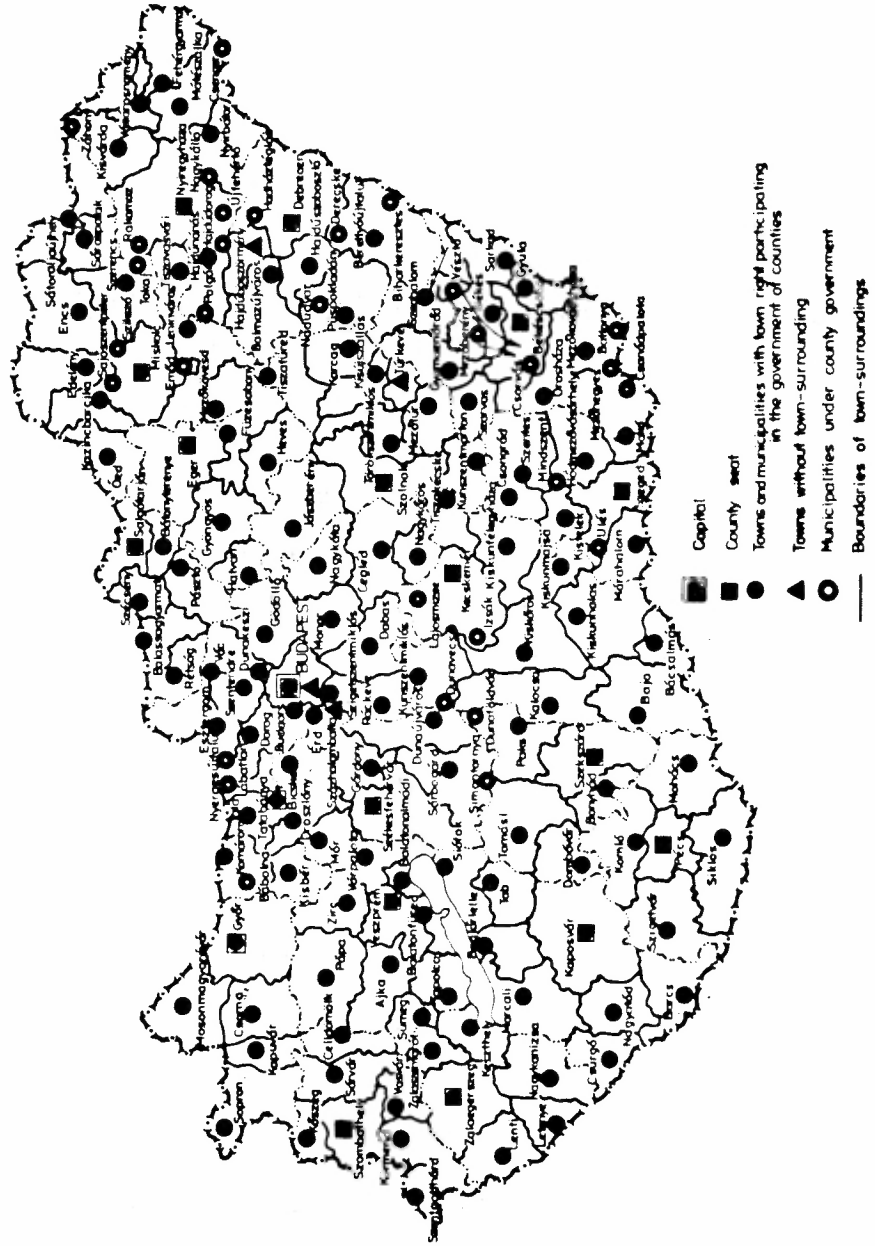


Table 1

Administrative division of territory of Hungary between 1950-1980

Year	Number of						
	counties	districts	town- surroundings	towns	villages	independent councils among the villages	common councils among the villages
1950	19	140	-	54	3,169	2,808	361
1960	19	128	-	63	3,210	2,857	353
1970	19	107	-	73	3,151	1,711	1,440
1980	19	83	49	96	3,026	715	2,311

Table 2

Administrative division of territory of Hungary on 1. January, 1984

Capital, Counties	Area (hectare)	Population	Number of			Village councils various rank totally	Number of		Number of co-villages without local councils
			town- surroundings	surroundings of large villages	towns		independent councils among the village councils	common councils among the village councils	
Budapest	52,507	2,064,307	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Baranya	448,701	433,788	5	-	5	291	77	11	66
Bács-Kiskun	836,170	566,066	6	4	6	105	98	91	7
Békés	563,193	431,291	6	3	6	68	58	50	8
Borsod-Abaúj- Zemplén	724,784	803,956	9	1	9	339	151	62	89
Csongrád	426,268	454,633	5	2	5	54	41	31	10
Főjér	437,367	423,377	3	3	3	103	69	45	24
Győr-Sopron	401,222	429,987	5	-	5	160	75	35	40
Hajdú-Bihar	621,161	553,036	4	2	5	74	42	21	21
Heves	363,755	317,763	4	1	4	114	83	63	20
Komárom	225,052	323,256	6	1	6	68	45	30	15
Nógrád	254,438	238,319	3	3	3	117	52	18	34
Pest	639,414	983,200	7	6	8	171	122	89	33
Szeged	603,630	350,283	5	3	5	233	63	4	59
Szatmár-Szatmár	593,809	587,784	6	1	6	219	108	48	60
Szolnok	560,756	443,375	7	1	8	67	45	28	17
Tolna	370,391	268,237	5	-	5	103	56	33	23
Vas	333,682	284,504	6	1	6	209	65	8	57
Veszprém	468,888	388,625	8	1	8	212	66	12	54
Zala	378,440	316,368	5	1	5	250	65	2	63
Megyei- székek	9,303,629	10,700,155	105	10	115	3,000	1,000	100	100

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