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**The Hungarian Urban Network in
the Beginning of the 20th Century**

**by
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1 Introduction

In Hungary, part of the Habsburg Empire, the political and legal conditions of the birth of the bourgeois society were created by the bourgeois revolution of 1848; the laws enacted by the Parliament in the April of this year abolished the noblemen's privileges – e.g. the exemption from taxes, the exclusive right to participate in the political life –; the election of the principal legislative organ, the Parliament on the basis of popular representation was declared, villeinage was abolished, as was so-cage tenure. The lands cultivated by the villeins became their own properties, the principle that all public expenses were to be contributed to by all was declared, and laws were enacted for the modernisation of the economy of Hungary, a one-sided agricultural country at that time (setting up a credit institute, state support for the development of transport etc.). Following the bourgeois revolution, Hungary was involved in an armed fight against the ruler from the Habsburg House and lost this war of independence (in 1849), but the laws making the basis of the bourgeois transformation were still in force. After the so-called “Compromise” between the Austrians and Hungarians (in 1867), Hungary regained its (limited) national sovereignty (the person of the ruler was the same, and foreign and military affairs were common issues). The periods between 1867 and 1918 is called the era of *Dualism*, on the age of the Austro–Hungarian Dual Monarchy. As a consequence of these events, in Hungary, with a territory of just 325,000 km² (whose territory shrank to the present 92,000 km² after the decisions made at the Paris peace treaties concluding World War I), an extremely rapid economic growth, a social and economic modernisation took place; the population of Budapest with a population of just 170,000 increased to 880,000 by 1910, the number of industrial earners doubled between 1870 and 1910, the 178-kilometre railway network that had been completed by the year of the bourgeois revolution grew to 22 thousand kilometres by the beginning of World War I etc. In the period between the “Compromise” (1867) and World War I, the single national market was created, the integration of the formerly rather autarchic regions progressed and the urban network of Hungary was organised into a single network. Our study focuses on this latter process, the development of the urban system into an integrated network and the achievements of its process of organisation into a hierarchical system, concentrating on the conditions at the beginning of the 20th century.

2 Historical preliminaries of the birth of the modern urban network in Hungary

2.1 Medieval towns in the Carpathian Basin

The Carpathian Basin¹ was first “touched” by urbanisation when some parts of it were conquered by the Roman Empire in the first years AD.

In Pannonia, province of the Roman Empire – i.e. in Transdanubia and the territory between the Drava and the Sava Rivers –, the anthropogeneous landscape started to develop, the engineers of the empire had cities built. However, the continuity of these settlements and the cities born after the foundation of the Hungarian state is now rejected, not only because of the destructions of the time of the great migrations and the decay and flight of the urban population, but also because the social roles and the economy of the antique and the medieval city, and also their positions in the geographical division of labour are completely different: the cities of the Roman Empire (i.e. the antique cities) were administrative, military and cultural-cult centres of the empire; the legal situation and societal status of their citizens were mostly independent of their place of residence, as the cities were home to a large number of slaves, as well. In the Roman Empire cities were not the islands of freedom. They had a special situation in goods exchange, too: this exchange between the towns and the villages took place not on the basis of “market” rules but also within the frameworks of large holding employing slaves. Maybe the luxury goods of faraway countries were sold and bought in a “classical” trade. The medieval cities, on the other hand, are first of all *autonomous* settlements.

Thus the roots of the urban network of the Carpathian Basin go back to the time of the foundation of the Hungarian state (1000 AD) in the best case. The semi-nomadic Hungarian nation that settled down between “West” and “East”, in the power vacuum in the border zone of the Byzantine and West Roman Empire, took up Latin Christianity and chose dynastic relations one century later by which, also in the contemporary views, it *joined the West*. However, the “Western” and the

¹ The Carpathian Basin is a large region in Central Europe, with an area covering approximately 320,000 km², including the region between the Drava and the Sava Rivers and the slopes of the mountain range surrounding the Basin. It is a marked region, well separated from its environment, offering “natural” conditions for the peoples settling down in it. The Hungarian nation settling down here in 895–896 gradually filled up these frameworks, and after the foundation of the Hungarian state (in 1000), the state borders ran for almost a millennium along the ridges of the Carpathian Mountains. A less definite borderline was located in the south, only, although the Sava and the Drava Rivers marked quite clearly the border of the Hungarian territories in this direction too, despite the fact that in the Middle Ages also south of these rivers there were satellite state formations, dependant on the Hungarian ruler.

“Eastern” elements of the social organisation coexisted in Hungary in the 10–13th centuries: in spite of the presence of the western church, legal system, ideology, culture and state administration there was actually no feudal system in Hungary until the late 12th century, and even in the time of “early feudalism” – a period thought by Hungarian historians to have lasted until the middle or the end of the 13th century – several “Eastern” elements could be seen in both the society and the economy.² These elements of course set a framework for the development of the settlement system as well:

- The segregation of the society into two basic classes had not taken place yet.
- The patterns of property ownership had not stabilised yet, either; the common ownership of land was typical, the principle of “no land without a feudal landlord” only gradually became exclusive. The formation of the system of villein holdings may have started in the early 13th century;
- The almost exclusive social, political and economic role was held by the ruler. In the early 13th century the king owned approximately three-quarters of the cultivated land. The first organisations of feudal character started in the 1200s.
- In these centuries in the Carpathian Basin a *nature-based economy* was typical, consequently the internal exchange of goods was limited, trading activities were not separate from production (except the luxury goods trade of a

² It is broadly accepted by historians that societal development within Europe had different ways, and different regional types emerged; the basic types being the West- and the East-European social development model (and the so-called Mediterranean world that was another, distinct phenomenon). The West European model was born by the melting of the antique (Roman) and the Germanic heritage. Its economic base was the indisputable private ownership of land, the legally settled right of the villeins to the villein holding, the villeins’ ownership of certain pieces of land (clearings, vineyards), the legally guaranteed and clear-cut separation of the lands used by the villeins and those being the private properties of the landlord. This made individuals (the villein families) interested in the increase of the volume and the efficiency of production, in the modernisation and extension of the tools of production (clearings of forests, planting of vineyards, increase of the draught power etc.) and in the application of the achievements of technical development. The village communities ceased to exist in Western Europe quite soon, the “operational units” of agricultural production were villein holdings. To the contrary, in Eastern Europe the overwhelming majority of the “working class” was servants of early medieval character, who did not have any right to the land that they cultivated. The landlords had the right to sell or expel their villeins or to separate them from the lands that they cultivated. In Eastern Europe, the system of the land community (village community) as a taxation unit survived until the 20th century, together with the common and mutual responsibility of the members of the village communities. This limited the “interests of the individuals” considerably.

In Western Europe, the villeins’ class with private land property was part of the complex feudal society. The legally regulated system of feudalism created a number of autonomies – for towns, guilds, universities, counties, churches etc.

Hungary lived in the border region of these two development types, in a region where Central Europe was born in the middle of the second millennium.

few cities). The agricultural workers and the handicraftsmen were *the same persons* and could not be concentrated in certain settlements. Without separate trading and handicrafts activities and the population pursuing these activities – i.e. without an urban bourgeois class – no elaborate division of labour could be born in Hungary, and the lack of a continuous exchange of goods did not allow the birth of real towns in Hungary in the 10–13th centuries, either. Only two towns were different from the situation described above: *Esztergom* and *(Székes)Fehérvár*, as the royal, church and sacral centres of Hungary. Until the beginning of the 13th century, only *Esztergom* had the staple rights in Hungary. *Esztergom* was the home of well-to-do (Walloonian) merchants, and the royal mint and money exchange worked here as well. In the 13th century it was already the most important marketplace in Hungary, the centre of international trade (of luxury goods) and a handicrafts centre.

In such conditions it is meaningless to talk about *urban hierarchy* and an *urban system*. There was hardly any connection among the *co-existing* central places, and these relationships were not induced by a *hierarchically and functionally organised*, long-term division of labour, anyway.

In the late 12th and early 13th century, the conditions of settlement development changed; the *chances for the birth of “real” towns and cities were there*. The most important factors of these changes are as follows:

- The spread of *goods production*; the acquisition of the innovations of the European agricultural revolution in the 12th–13th centuries doubled the yields. In addition to the luxury goods, mass goods produced by peasants – cereals, wine, fruits, fish, honey, livestock – were marketed, in fact, exported.
- The *social division* of labour resulting in the separation of those pursuing agricultural and handicrafts activities progressed.
- After the *Tartar invasion*, *defence* became of primary importance; in order to achieve this, the king donated royal estates to the noblemen³ building fortresses, and city rights to the towns with increasing population.
- In order to use the formerly scarcely inhabited or uninhabited mountainous fringes of the Carpathian Basin for economic purposes, the king invited foreign, mostly German speaking settlers to Hungary: Upper Northern Hungary and Transylvania (Saxons of the Szepesség and Barcaság areas). The mining towns involved in noble metal extraction also received miners from Ger-

³ The Mongol Empire moved more and more west in the 13th century and had an intensive attack on the Kingdom of Hungary in 1241. The Tartars (i.e. the Mongols) managed to conquer almost the total territory of Hungary. In 1242, however, they left Hungary, leaving a serious destruction behind them. The Tartar invasion set back the population and economy of Hungary by about a century.

many; the bigger part of the urban population in the Carpathian Basin spoke German in the Middle Ages. These privileged settlements also spread the principle of self-governance and a practice of developed urban architecture in Hungary.

- Although the Tartar invasion set back the population increase of Hungary, the population reached 2 million again around the 1330s and 4–4.5 million by the end of the 15th century. The average density of population of the inhabited territories rose to 15–16 persons per square kilometre.

The demand to increase the financial resources made the king promote trade and urbanisation. The king could do this by the donation of different privileges (urban rank, staple right etc.). Pest received already before the Tartar invasion the so-called Fehérvár urban rights.⁴ The excellent geographical endowments of Pest (the harbour of Pest was the best one along a large section of the Danube River; the waterway of the Danube; the large number of roads running to the harbour etc.) could immediately be utilised parallel to the spread of goods production; already in the early 13th century, Ishmaelite merchants lived and held fairs in the proximity of the harbour. In 1218–1225, the population of the town was increased by German speaking hostesses (“guests”) engaged in industry and trade. Also in the 13th century, the following towns were given urban privileges: Nagyszombat [*Trnava, SK*]⁵, Selmecbánya [*Banská Stiavnica, SK*], Késmárk [*Kežmarok, SK*], Zágráb [*Zagreb, HR*], Zólyom [*Zvolen, SK*], Sopron, Nyitra [*Nitra, SK*], Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*], Győr and Eperjes [*Prešov, SK*]. The rulers could take special aspects into consideration when donating urban privileges – e.g. the strengthening of the defence of the country, development of the economy in the formerly less intensively utilised regions etc. –, the reason for the rise of the towns in the urban network was in almost all cases attributable to geographical factors, too. The urbanisation process in the Carpathian Basin in the 13th–14th centuries was primarily built on wine production and trade, mining⁶ (noble metal mining, salt mining) and even more on long-distance trade. In the 14th century, the importance of guild handicraft became important in the urban life.

The number of settlements with the full range of urban privileges was small in the 13th–14th centuries (especially in the present territory of Hungary). In the late

⁴ The Fehérvár urban rights included the free choice of vicar, judge and jury, and the right of jurisdiction – the so-called “jus gladii”, i.e. “the law of the sword” –, exemption from duties, right of holding fairs and the right of free movement.

⁵ A városok névírásánál megtartottuk a korabeli – hivatalos – magyar elnevezéseket. A jelenleg használatos városneveket zárójelben közöljük. Rövidítések: A = Ausztria, SCG = Szerbia és Montenegró, SLO = Szlovénia, SK = Szlovákia, RO = Románia, UA = Ukrajna.

⁶ The noble metal mining of Hungary was of international significance in the 12th–15th centuries. In the 13th century, the Hungarian gold production was one ton per year, silver production ten tons (four-fifth and one quarter of the total European production, respectively).

Middle Ages these few towns were not enough to carry out the goods exchange and to manufacture the necessary commercial goods. A large number of settlements with more or less urban functions and with limited autonomy appeared. These were owned by landlords and featured only a part of the contemporary urban characteristics (e.g. larger size, wall, limited agricultural activities etc.). Their most important urban functions were the tasks in relation to the *local market centre* (weekly fairs, fairs, craftsmen producing tools for everyday use etc.) and they were often the centres of the estates of private landowners. These settlements remained villein communities in the legal sense; although they chose their own judges, they only were competent in affairs of lesser importance. The citizens of these settlements had villein duties; they could redeem themselves from forced labour or could do their duties in cash, in one annual lump sum. These settlements were country towns, the so-called *oppidums*. Their number reached 800–900 by the 15th century, but the major part of them remained villein communities without any real urban functions. There were some, on the other hand, whose economic importance competed with those of the “civitas” (cities).

At the end of the Middle Ages, in the 15th–16th centuries, some signs of the integration of the Hungarian settlements into an urban network were already visible. Buda (and Pest) was the political and administrative centre of the Carpathian Basin; three-quarters of the imported goods were brought to Hungary by the merchants of Buda, and the attraction of the city reached the population of the whole of Transdanubia and the southern parts of Upper Northern Hungary. Some big cities, such as Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*], Sopron, Kassa [*Košice, SK*] and Brassó [*Braşov, RO*] were home to specialised handicrafts activities and merchants dealing with imported goods, and these cities were able to expand their “attraction” on smaller civitas and country towns, so the spread of the division of labour could be experienced within the urban network.

2.2 The development of the urban network in 1529–1688

The catching up process to the West remained lopsided, and not only because of the occupation by the Ottoman Empire but above all due to the *regional rearrangement* of the economy of Europe; the focal point of industrial production and world trade gradually shifted from North Italy (and the Mediterranean region in general) to the “Atlantic Europe”, i.e. the Netherlands, the Rhine region, the northwest regions of France, and later to England. This macro-region played a dominant role from the 15th century in the appearance of early capitalism, allowing the birth of the early forms of the capitalist industry (meanwhile the disintegration of the feudal agricultural system accelerated, the villeins became tenants or free peasants). The character of international trade changed, too: while it had mostly

mediated luxury goods before, from the 15th–16th century the Atlantic ports and commercial cities were home to the exchange of mass goods. The region imported foods and raw materials (cereals, livestock, wine, fish, wood for constructions, wool etc.) and gave commercial goods in exchange (felt, textile goods, metal tools etc.). The centre of the trade of the imperial goods shifted to the Atlantic coast, too. The rapidly increasing demand of Western Europe for foods and raw materials (and the noble metal flowing into Europe in large amounts from the newly discovered America) amounted to a “price revolution”: as a result of the increase of productivity and the growing supply, the price of the commercial goods either did not rise or only increased to a small extent, whereas the prices of the foods and raw materials rapidly multiplied in the 16th century. The large-scale movements of goods and the fundamental transformation of the price ratios of certain goods had an extremely strong dynamising effect on the European economy; large areas were involved in mass (agricultural) goods production and import, creating at the same time a market for the commercial goods produced in Western Europe. The new, regular, large-scale and one-sided exchange of goods (which meant the import of commercial goods and the export of raw materials for Central and Eastern Europe) replaced *belatedness* with *asymmetry*: Central and Eastern Europe became more and more the *periphery* of the West and joined the international division of labour as *agricultural production* and *commercial goods purchasing* region. The imbalance of the relations existed despite the fact that the direct effects of the “price revolution” were favourable for the Central European economy, too; they were able to buy more commercial goods for the same amount of agricultural products, and the market for these goods expanded. The changing price ratios made the commercial goods of Western Europe cheap, creating a strong *competition for the local industry* that was unable to shift to mass production, the modern, capitalising forms of industry organisation. The production of the industry of the Central European towns was more and more restricted for the local market, only, industry protected itself from the intensifying competition within the “walls” of the guilds, isolated from the competitors; industry thus did not spur but actually *blocked* capitalist development. Of course it was also due to the fact that the bourgeois class of Central Europe was smaller and not so well-off in the Middle Ages; also, the *geographical conditions* – e.g. the distance of the trans-Atlantic routes – were unfavourable for this region. The landlords of Central Europe made use of the agricultural boom by increasing *feudal duties*, expanding the lands in their own management (manors) and increasing forced labour for the cultivation of these lands. All these phenomena – the re-strengthening of the feudal dependencies, the limited possibilities of becoming a free peasant, the decline of the cities, the stop of the industrial development etc. – finally resulted in the *diversion* of the socio-economic development of Central Europe *from the western “way”*.

The processes described above are clearly visible in Hungary, too. All over the Middle Ages, including the 15th century, the Hungarian economy exported agricultural goods and noble metals, and imported a large amount of commercial goods into Hungary. This prevented the increase in the number of the handicraftsmen and actually blocked urban development. The Hungarian cities were maintained by foreign trade and agricultural production, and their population stagnated already during the 15th century. These processes even strengthened in the 16th century, exacerbated by the *Turkish conquer*. The Kingdom of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire made heavy wars against each other already in the 15th century, in the Balkan peninsula at that time. During these fights the Turks gradually occupied the Balkan region and reached the southern borders of Hungary by the end of the century. Then they already had regular robbery attacks on the Hungarian territories. In 1521 they occupied the strongest southern fortress of Hungary, Nándorfehérvár (the present Beograd). In 1526 the Turks had a devastating victory over the Hungarian military forces. In the following decades they conquered the middle third of Hungary and occupied the capital city, Buda as well. The western edge of Hungary remained in Hungarian hands, but the feudal classes elected a Habsburg ruler. The eastern third of Hungary, Transylvania became a principality in feudal dependence on the Turkish Empire. The Turks were expelled at the end of the 17th century. The socio-economic arrangement of the Ottoman Empire showed in an even more characteristic and more extreme way the “eastern” features than the Eastern part of Europe did. The lack of private ownership of land made the Turkish society an “Asian type” society.

The Turkish conquer resulted in a vast destruction of the factors of production, the settlements, the cultural landscape and the population. The *number of population* hardly changed between the early 15th century and the 1715–1720 censuses, it was approximately 4 million people (according to the present, probably a bit too optimistic estimations). This means that it was “only” natural increase that was lost in Hungary. The destruction of the *settlements* in the conquered areas and in the direct vicinity of them was 50–96%.

The above-mentioned East-Central European features were valid in the time of the Ottoman conquer, too. The export of 70,000–80,000 livestock in the mid-16th century grew to 120,000–150,000 by the end of the century, its share from the Hungarian export may have reached 80–90%. The import was almost exclusively manufactured goods (textiles, especially felt, metal tools etc.). These data demonstrate the extreme version of the tendency described before: the raw material supplying and manufactured goods importing role that Hungary had on the “periphery” of Europe. This makes the development of the Hungarian towns understandable; they were restricted to the internal markets that were threatened by the competition of the foreign goods in the 16th century.

The royal Hungary and Transylvania became peripheries from several aspects: the peripheries of not only Europe but also of the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empire. The most striking feature of this situation was the decline of the urban development, the preservation of the medieval conditions. We have already mentioned that almost no manufactured goods were exported from Hungary; the industry of the Hungarian towns did not produce any goods that were marketable abroad. The industry of the towns was limited to and mostly produced for a poor market. The number of handicraftsmen did not increase and their property was rather modest. The character of the economy of the towns is well demonstrated by the fact that the most important item of the urban revenues was the profit from the wine sold in the pubs; even in the relatively developed Sopron it reached 25–26%. The decreasing economic resources of the towns, the lack of royal (state) support, the strengthening of the strongholds of feudalism led to a serious decline of urbanisation. This was reflected by the *stagnation of the number of urban population* (Bártfa [Bardejov, SK] had approximately one thousand, Kassa [Košice, SK] and Eperjes [Prešov, SK] some two and a half thousand inhabitants in the 16th century – and these were all towns with long urban traditions), by the efforts of the urban citizens to *acquire the noblemen status* and the resignation by the urban bourgeois to this situation that was actually worse than the medieval conditions. The main effort of the bourgeois and the guilds was to defend their former privileges.⁷ The towns impoverished, *the urban (bourgeois) capital that could have been accumulated by the agricultural boom was lost*. The development of the royal Hungary and Transylvania thus fell back to medieval conditions; the urban network consisted of municipalities with small population, living from conservative guild industry and often from agriculture; these municipalities more and more often *only* had *local market centre* functions. The towns and the wholesale merchants became *clients* of the Western (in fact, Central) European partners. The urban system of the Carpathian Basin made a step backwards as regards urban networking, too. Buda was not more than a Turkish administrative and military centre, a border fortress, leaving the Carpathian Basin without a clear urban centre of national importance; the larger towns of the royal Hungary had some “regional” functions as the seats of civil and military administration, maybe as fortresses (Pozsony [Bratislava, SK], Győr, Kassa [Košice, SK]. In the *Southern Region* – the Szerémség, the Temesköz, Bodrog and Bács counties – urban life almost completely ceased to exist. In *Transylvania* urban functions were divided: Gyulafehérvár [Alba Iulia, RO] was the centre of the state life, Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca, RO] functioned as the economic

⁷ The guilds e.g. prevented any industrial activity or any attempt of industry organisation outside the frameworks of the guilds (this is why the initiatives to establish manufactures were limited to the royal domains or the landlords’ estates). The urban citizens made the national assembly legally prohibit the settling down of Jews in the free royal towns.

and cultural centre of the Hungarian population, while Brassó [*Braşov, RO*] and Nagyszeben [*Sibiu, RO*] were the urban settlements of the Saxon “szék”-s (seats).

The conditions of the Turkish conquer, the peripheral character, the agricultural production and above all the increasing importance of cattle farming led to the birth of a very peculiar settlement system, with unique features, in the *Great Hungarian Plain*. It is reasonable to talk about a special “*Great Plain way*” in social-, economic- and settlement development. The essence of this is that the Great Hungarian Plain had been a superficially feudalised region since the foundation of the Hungarian state, soon getting rid of feudalism. The Great Hungarian Plain was characterised by a peasant-bourgeois development, almost always within peripheral conditions; this was the basis of a special dual character of this large region, the constant lagging of the economy behind social development. In the Central European conditions this path of development did not lead to an autochthonous bourgeois development, nevertheless it contained some “more western” elements of social development until the middle or late 19th century compared to the other parts of Hungary, characterised by the Central European development model (villeins with the right of free movement, self-governments, people’s church, looser feudal dependency). The most characteristic products and also the implementers of the “Great Plain way” were the *country towns in the Great Hungarian Plain*. Their origin and legal status were similar to the so-called oppidums in the other parts of Hungary, but their “diversion” had already started before the Turkish occupation (the dominance of agricultural character and consequently large outer areas belonging to the towns). In the time of the Turkish occupation, several of these special features strengthened. The *legal status* of these towns was favourable: after the landlords and the county administration fled, their everyday life was free from the presence of the feudal power. On the other hand, their primary economic activity, the extensive livestock farming was pursued in *community framework* – commonly used or leased pastures, common flocks or herds, the use of the pasture regulated by the country town –, and the landlords could only manage their country towns as *communities*. This resulted in a much bigger *autonomy* of the Great Plain towns than their counterparts in Transdanubia or Upper Northern Hungary enjoyed. In order to keep their large numbers of livestock, they bought or leased the territories of the villages destroyed by the war damages, and gained large territories to use. These large territories belonging to the country towns (Debrecen e.g. had 170,000 “hold” of land, equal to approximately 240,000 English acres), even on the basis of agricultural production, created *large concentrations of population* in those times (Debrecen had 15,000 inhabitants in the 17th century, while the number of population in Kecskemét, Cegléd, Nagykőrös and (Hódmező)Vásárhely was about 5,000 each), where urban functions (handicraftsmen, merchants, schools, pharmacies, physicians and officers with legal education etc.) settled down.

2.3 Urban development between the expelling of the Turks and the bourgeois revolution (1684–1848)

During the long decades of the Turkish occupation, the *position of Hungary compared to the large European regions, i.e. the geopolitical situation* of the country hardly changed. Hungary remained to be a *periphery* of Europe, where “belatedness” turned into being *different*, *Central European features* became more and more marked. This “relation” was mediated to Hungary more and more by the Habsburg Empire, and this empire itself was a typically Central European state formation. The structure of the Hungarian export changed in the 18th century: it was still mainly agricultural products that Hungary exported, but the share of livestock decreased (to 30–33% by the end of the century), whereas the share of wool export and from the turn of the 18th–19th century, the export of cereals increased. The wine production of Hungary struggled with market problems.

The 18th century was the *century of reconstruction*. The most striking element of this was the *re-population* of the territories depopulated or suffering a population loss during the Turkish occupation. This re-population was partly organised – settlers arrived at Hungary from abroad, especially the German speaking territory – , partly a spontaneous migration started from the more densely populated fringes and from beyond the state border, especially from the Balkans, to the scarcely populated regions. As a result of these processes, the number of population doubled by the end of the 18th century, the population density approached the figure of 30 persons per square kilometre, but the share of the Hungarian speaking population dropped to 42% by the beginning of the 19th century.

The *reconstruction of the settlement network* meant the restoration of the conditions before the Turkish occupation – more precisely, before the spatial rearrangement of the European economy –, the quantitative growth took place within these frameworks. As the economies and the settlement networks of Western Europe and even more so of the fortunate Central European regions had basically transformed and modernised over the centuries, the simple reconstruction of the Hungarian settlement network was actually a *return* to the conditions of the 15th–16th century.

Urban development was “between the devil and the seep sea”: the unfavourable geopolitical location, on the one hand, and the strengthening of the strongholds of feudalism, on the other. In the last third of the 18th century, in some places modern – capitalist? – urban development factors could be seen, for a long time “indirectly”, connected to trade.⁸

⁸ Sándor Gyimesi, a Hungarian urban historian wrote: “... the consequences of the birth of capitalism reached the Central-Eastern European regions by trade for the first time, before the capitalist transformation of the industry and in general the production of these areas made a significant progress. The urban network shaping effect of capitalism this way preceded the unfurling of capitalist production to some extent...” (*Gyimesi, 1975*).

The “urban developing” trade still meant for Hungary the purchase, transport, collection and export of agricultural products, but livestock were more and more replaced by the more transport-intensive cereals and wool. The profit of cereals production and trade first reached the towns of the Little Hungarian Plain, close to the markets – *Tata, Magyaróvár, Moson, Keszthely and Pápa* –, later the towns along the Danubian waterway: *Komárom [Komarno, SK], Győr, Vác, Szentendre and Esztergom* (Párkány [Štúrovo, SK]). The demand for the cereals produced in the Great Hungarian Plain increased in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, induced by the boom of the wars of Napoleon. This is the time when *Dunaföldvár, Paks, Baja, Apatin [Apatin, SCG]* and *Újvidék [Novi Sad, SCG]* became cereals trading towns; the *Ferenc [Francis] Canal* connecting the Danube with the Tisza River, opened in 1802, promoted the traffic of *Törökbecse [Novi Bečej, SCG], Szeged, Zombor [Sombor, SCR], Zenta [Senta, SCR]* and *Arad [Arad, RO]*. With the canalisation of the *Béga River, Temesvár [Timișoara, RO]* gained a navigable waterway. Until the construction of the railway system, the towns on the banks of the Danube River and its navigable tributaries were favoured by cereals trade.

From the late 18th century, administrative and cultural functions started to play an increasingly important role in urban development. The seats of the administrative units of Hungary with considerable autonomy, the so-called noblemen’s counties⁹ gained more and more immobile institutions (county hall home to the county administration, county archives, savings bank, prison etc.), and the number of secondary schools multiplied. At the same time, Hungary had no single administrative and cultural centre; some government offices and the royal court operated in Vienna; the Hungarian Parliament held its sessions in Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*]; the only university of Hungary operated in a countryside small town, Nagyszombat [*Trnava, SK*] until 1776, while the clerical centre in another small town, Esztergom. Only in the late 18th century were the most important state administrative functions moved to Pest or Buda, the later united towns that rose to a capital city status. In the early 19th century, the three cities of Pest, Buda and Óbuda – administratively separate from each other – were the clear economic, intellectual and administrative centre of Hungary (the university already worked here, as did the supreme court, the council of the governor-general, carrying out a part of the governmental tasks, later the national museum, theatre, library, academy of sciences etc. also operated here). The population of the three cities exceeded 100,000 around 1830. The studies on the urban network of Hungary in the early 19th century talk about the differentiation of the urban system all over the country. Only Pest-

⁹ Hungary’s territory – including Transylvania and Croatia – was divided into 63 noblemen’s counties before 1848. In addition, several so-called privileged territories existed, together the so-called Frontier Guard Zone along the southern borders of Hungary, with a territory equal to several counties, administered directly from Vienna. The free royal towns were exempt from the administration of the counties, too.

Buda had a real spatial organising influence, and the catchment area of the bigger fairs had a considerable “radius”, but these events only elevated the respective city from their “everyday” insignificance for a few days, only. Nevertheless the trade of crops built out stable spatial relations (procurement districts, “client towns”, salesmen, competitors etc.).

In the first third of the 19th century, the town with the biggest number of population was Debrecen, although this town was considered by many – unjustly, actually – as a village that had grown big; Buda had 30,000 and Pest 22,000 inhabitants (*Table 1*).

Table 1

Hungarian towns with the biggest population in 1825

Name of town	Number of population
1. Debrecen*	45,375
2. Pozsony [Bratislava, SK]	37,180
3. Szabadka* [Subotica, SCG]	34,924
4. Kecskemét*	34,080
5. Buda	30,001
6. Hódmezővásárhely*	26,166
7. Miskolc	22,910
8. Pest	22,198
9. Újvidék* [Novi Sad, SCG]	20,231
10. Székesfehérvár	20,069
11. Eger	17,782
12. Zombor* [Sombor, SCG]	17,534
13. Makó*	17,148
14. Selmecbánya [Banská Stiavnica, SK]	17,028
15. Nagyvárad [Oradea, RO]	16,155
16. Jászberény*	15,529

*Country towns in the Great Hungarian Plain.

Source: Magyarország története [History of Hungary] 1790–1848.

3 Conditions of urban development in the age of capitalism (until 1914)

3.1 Political, international and general economic conditions of urban development in the age of the Dual Monarchy

The so-called April Laws of the bourgeois revolution in 1848 eliminated the legal and economic frameworks of the feudal system in Hungary. The acts aiming at bourgeois transformation remained in force after the fall of the war of independence in 1849, in the consequent period of absolutism (1849–1867).

The fundamental transformation of the social and political system created brand new conditions for settlement development. The most important direct and indirect effects of the changing conditions included the following:

- The *legal positions of the settlements inherited from the feudal era ceased to exist*, the subordination to the landlord was gone, and the chance for the creation of *municipal autonomy* was there. (However, the establishment of the civil public administration and of the adequate municipal statuses only took place in the 1870s, after the Compromise.)
- The elimination of the feudal restrictions of the economy (e.g. the feudal ownership systems, the lack of municipal autonomy, industrial development limited by the guilds [the restriction of “industrial liberty”], the lack of the legal conditions of the capitalist economy etc.) created the conditions of free competition for the development of the economy, including the development of its regional structure. As a consequence of this, “*free competition*” became a dominant factor in settlement development, as well.
- The capitalising economy created new settlement development factors, including manufacturing industry, the institutions of civil public administration, railway junctions etc.
- The liberation of the villeins allowed *freer migration*.
- Simultaneously with the changing conditions coming from the social transformation, the achievement of the industrial and technological “revolution” had their effect, too, e.g. the *modernisation of transportation* (railway, steamships, suburban and urban public transport), new possibilities of telecommunication (telegraph, in the second half of this period telephone), manufacturing industry that could be concentrated on steam engines (and later electricity) etc.

The “hereditary provinces” of the Austro–Hungarian Dual Monarchy created by the *Compromise* in 1867, and Hungary were legally only bound by the person of the king. The re-gaining of state sovereignty brought about new settlement development factors, e.g. the need to create a *centre for political life*, the urban

developing effects of the institutional system of an independent state (this effect was palpable in Budapest predominantly, too), the chance to create an *independent economic policy* etc.

The *imperial economic policy* considered the interests of Vienna before 1867. The customs regulation enacted in 1851 eliminated customs borders within the Empire; the single customs area had some favourable effects on the Hungarian economy – e.g. secured the markets of the Monarchy for the Hungarian agricultural export, instead of the overseas agricultural products –, but the Hungarian industry (not protected by customs) had to face the hardly beatable competition of the manufacturing industry of Austria and Bohemia (which were more developed, anyway).¹⁰

After the Compromise, Hungary had the possibility to formulate an *independent economic policy*. The independent Hungarian state – in spite of pursuing a liberal politics all the time in the last third of the 19th century – took an active and complex role in building out the capitalist economy. In the beginning the state supported *infrastructure developments*, with large investment needs and slow turnover, by interest rate guarantees and credits. The most important activities of the Hungarian state included

- support of the promotion of the *capital city* to become a modern metropolis. This also met the political objectives of the Hungarian politics that wished to develop *Budapest* as the co-centre of the Monarchy, increasing the weight of Hungary within the Empire;
- the support of the *railway constructions* by providing interest rate guarantees, buying out of railway companies gone bankrupt, and the foundation and development of a state-owned railway company. The support of the railway was part of the economic development policy and the implementation of the wider political and economic policy objectives (increasing the weight of Budapest again, acquisition of an “own” sea port by creating a connection to Fiume – the present Rijeka – and developing the port of Fiume etc.);
- the provision of credit for flood protection works in order to support one of the largest Hungarian enterprises of the second half of the 19th century, the *anti-flood and river regulation works*;
- contribution to the establishment of the Hungarian credit system.

¹⁰ According to the Hungarian economic history, “... the economic unification implemented within the absolutist conditions resulted in the fact that the Trans-Lajta River areas (*i.e. the Austrian, Czech and Moravian provinces – remark by the authors*), as more developed capitalist partners could not only support and make profit from the introduction of the capitalist production of the less developed ‘Hungarian provinces’, but actually were also able to monopolise the capitalist development of Hungary.”

At the end of the 1870s – as an effect of the “great economic depression” starting in 1873 – in many European countries economic liberalism was heavily criticised and protectionist actions by the states were urged, including direct support for the industry and protective tariffs. Nevertheless the official Hungarian economic policy remained liberal all the time, although it directly supported industrial developments after 1881 by tax allowances, and after 1880 the agricultural sector was entitled for support, too (e.g. credits for planting vineyards after the phylloxera epidemic, establishment of feature farms and experimental stations etc.). At the turn of the century even the agriculture of the mountainous regions struggling with agricultural crisis (Northeast Hungary, Székely Land etc.) was supported.

The social judgement of modern urbanisation was rather unambiguous in Hungary in the age of the Dualism.¹¹ The main target of the anti-urban journalism was Budapest.¹² Even more harmful than the “mere” antipathy for the Hungarian urban development was the fact that the anti-urban attitude became part of the official ideology, and although it could not really prevent Budapest from developing and growing – to the “world outside” Budapest remained a representative of the whole country –, it led to the subordination of the interests of industrial development and urban development to the interests of agriculture.

The *international conditions* for the modernisation and growth of the Hungarian economy and for the birth of its capitalist form were *favourable* after 1848. Simultaneously to the establishment of the social and legal conditions for the shift to the capitalist economy, a world-wide *boom* started around 1850. The growth of production and the volume of trade, spurred by the industrial revolution, exceeded the growth of the population. In the developed countries of the world, significant capital surpluses had been accumulated by the mid-19th century, and the capital export of these countries rapidly increased. Hungary – where the bottleneck of economic development had been the lack of capital already in the feudal times – received some 2 billion Hungarian Forints of this capital in 1867–1890. In the years following the Compromise, some 60% of all investments, in the three dec-

¹¹ The most significant Hungarian poet and publicist of the early 20th century, Endre Ady wrote: “In this country towns have never been cherished. Never has there been such malevolence, on the other hand, against them...”

¹² The following lines were published in a scientific (?) work (in between the two world wars, though): “Everything that was nice and expensive was spent on our favourite one [*i.e. Budapest – the authors*], and our ambitions did not go beyond the outfit, the ornaments, as if we had been vain parvenus. Nobody thought of what the role of the city, the capital city was for the sake of the whole nation... an autotelic urbanisation and city mania possessed the nation, and the Hungarians, as if mesmerised, gave all their treasures to Budapest as a sacrifice on the altar of the adored city... The nation did not mind if Budapest was the natural blossoming of the Hungarian nation or a foreign Moloch.” (*Mártonffy, K. 1938*).

ades after the Compromise approximately half of them, after the run of the century a quarter of them came from capital import.

A part of the economic boom was the *boom of agriculture*: industrial development that peaked in England and unfurled in Western Europe further increased the need for food and agricultural raw materials. This increased the competitiveness and supported the modernisation of the regions with good agricultural endowments – above all the Little Hungarian Plain and the Great Hungarian Plain.

The years following the Compromise were the peak of the boom of the world economy, and in the favourable political climate a very intensive *investment fever* took place in Hungary. From 1867 to 1973, 4 thousand kilometres (!) of railway lines were installed, more than five hundred new credit institutes and 170 industrial joint stock companies were founded; approximately 900 million Forints were invested in the Hungarian economy. In these years, 10% of the national income was spent on investments (the biggest part on railway constructions). This extremely dynamic “Gründerzeit” was shorter than a decade in Hungary; in 1873 an economic crisis, so serious as never experienced in the world before, broke out and a depression lasting for a decade and a half started in Hungary too. The effects of this depression were alleviated by the fact that the demand for agricultural products remained the same in the protected market of the Monarchy. From the 1880s another boom started; the last decade of the 19th century was the best decade of the economy in the Dualist era.

3.2 The economic structure of Hungary: the modernisation of agriculture, industry and transport

The development of the agricultural boom also had a dominant influence on the development of the settlement network, at least until 1900, the turn of the century. The economic (and settlement) development in the Dualist era took place in an *agricultural country* all the time, the *most important source of internal capital accumulation was still agriculture and the trade of agricultural products*. The focal point of the economic development in Hungary in the second half of the 19th century – despite the spectacular development of mining or industry – was the capitalist transformation and the technical, agro-technical modernisation of agriculture: the buyout, trade and transport of agricultural products (the main motivation of railway construction was the agro-business), their processing (mill-, spirits and sugar industry etc.) and export, the construction of credit and insurance institutes serving agricultural production etc. These factors were also the most important resources of urban development.

The *share of agricultural earners* exceeded 75% in 1870 and was still above 60% before World War I (Table 2). As regards the *regional disparities* of the employment structure, the differences between urban and rural settlements were typical, and disparities among the regions of Hungary less significant; only the above 80% agricultural employment in continuous areas in *Croatia, Transylvania and Northeast Hungary* are worth mentioning, together with the birth of a district in the centre of *Upper Northern Hungary: Zólyom, Liptó, Gömör and Kishont, Borsod* counties, i.e. the *Szepesség*, where the so-called industrial population (engaged in mining, industry, trade and transportation) reached a 25–50% share in employment in contiguous areas, induced by the good endowments of mining and heavy industry and the small-scale and itinerant industry in the areas with poor conditions for agriculture. A smaller “industrial and trading” district appeared by the turn of the century around Budapest, in the *Dorog and Tatabánya mining region*, the area between *Pozsony [Bratislava, SK]–Kőszeg–Sopron* and the state border and also in the mining and metallurgy districts of *Krassó-Szörény* and *Hunyad counties* (see Figure 1–2). The dominant part of Hungary was nevertheless still an undisturbed *agricultural region* at the turn of the century.

Table 2

Employment structure in Hungary, 1870–1910

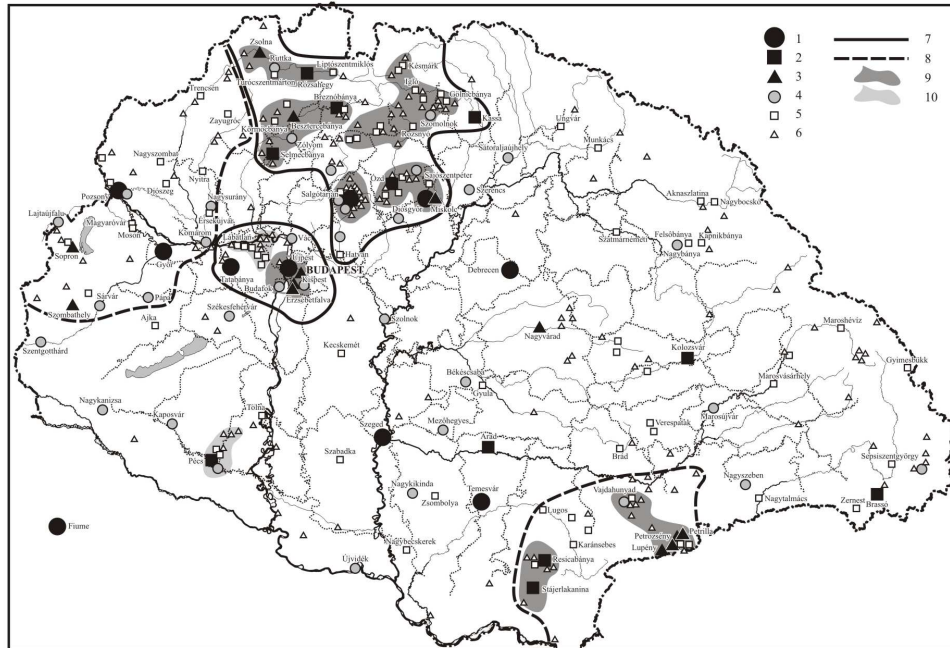
Employment category	1870		1890		1910	
	number of earners (thousand persons)	%	number of earners (thousand)	%	number of earners (thousand)	%
Agriculture	5,002	75.9	4,499	67.4	4,656	60.1
Mining and industry	657	10.0	862	12.9	1,418	18.3
Trade and transport	126	1.9	242	3.6	467	6.0
Day labourers	177	2.7	289	4.3	203	2.6
Other earners	633	9.5	780	11.8	1,006	13.0
Total	6,595	100.0	6,672	100.0	7,751	100.0

Source: Magyarország története [History of Hungary] 1848–1890; 1890–1918.

The relationship of agriculture and the settlement system was also influenced by the fact that after the liberation of the villeins, in the 1860s the peasants’ farms only made 45–46% of the total of cultivated lands, and the majority of the agricultural earners had a little holding, were day labourers or farm servants. The unfavourable breakdown of the agricultural lands resulted in the *accumulation of “poverty” in the villages* – because manufacturing industry could not absorb those who did not find employment in agriculture –, the limited purchasing power of the “country

Figure 1

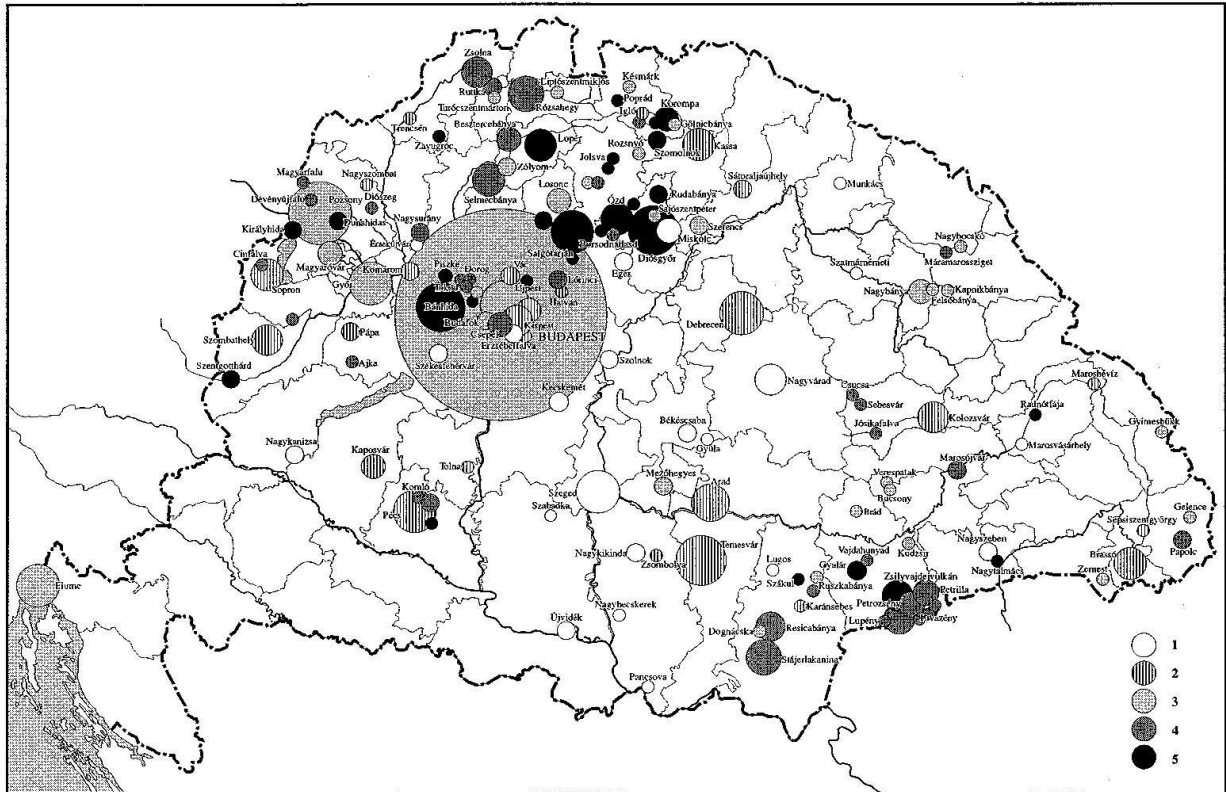
Industrial regions and centres in 1910



Keys: 1–6 – Groups of settlements according to the number of industrial workers; 7 – Border of industrial regions; 8 – Border of semi-industrial region; 9 – Industrial districts; 10 – Industrial districts under construction
Source: Designed by Beluszky, P.

Figure 2

Industrial employees in settlements with more than 500 employees, 1910



Keys: Industrial employees per 1000 inhabitants: 1– less than 50; 2 – 50–99. 3 – 100–199; 4 – 200–349; 5 – 350 and more.

Source: designed by Beluszky, P.

side”, the *limited use of urban goods*, the *slow bourgeois development* of the peasants in many regions of Hungary, the slow modernisation of agricultural production, and then the large-scale *emigration* from the agricultural regions with less favourable endowments.

On the other hand, the *agricultural boom* created a favourable situation not only for the medium sized and large and estates but also to peasants’ farms in the *Little Hungarian Plain*, the *Transdanubian areas on the fringes of the Little Hungarian Plain*, in the *Mezőföld*, *South Baranya*, the *Bácska*, the *Bánát* regions, in several meso-regions of the *Great Hungarian Plain* and around *Budapest*. Nevertheless the general situation of agriculture became worse and worse by the end of the century, due to the competition of the overseas goods; although the markets of the Monarchy were kept in order to protect the common tariff area, the prices of the agricultural products decreased.

In the urbanisation of the Dualist era in Hungary, industry played a special, intermediate role. While formerly handicrafts had showed a strong concentration of production – apart from a few activities closely related to agriculture – and directly joined trading activities (selling goods on the markets), thus fulfilled mostly urban functions, by the end of the century mass production was more and more taken over by manufacturing industry, whose system of relations did not consider the frameworks of the market districts. Thus the connection between industry and urbanisation, and even more so between industrialisation and urban hierarchy, became looser. On the other hand, manufacturing industry was able to create *population concentrations* on the basis of which urbanisation and modernisation could enter a new phase. The general conditions for the development of manufacturing industry were created by the 1880s (state support for industry, presence of capital willing to invest in manufacturing industry etc.). Industrialisation accelerated in Hungary around the turn of the 19th and 20th century: while the number of industrial earners increased by 31.2% from 1870 to 1890, the growth was already 64.5% from 1890 to 1910. The different motivations and conditions for the choice of location of the industry had different effects on the settlement (urban) development.

When industry located in already existing towns, the local capital participated in business foundation and the new plant could rely on local resources, too (trained labour force, consumer market, good transport location etc.) –, industrialisation and urbanisation could be closely related (population growth, increase of capital, infrastructure development etc). However, the location of industry in this form was significant only in a few towns of Hungary at the turn of the century. Only the manufacturing industry of *Budapest* was significant at an international level (the companies employing more than 20 people had a total of 68 and a half thousand employees in 1900), the capital city was followed in the rank of manufacturing industry by *Pozsony* [*Bratislava, SK*] with its 5,800 employees, whereas the larger

plants of *Fiume* [Rijeka, HR], *Temesvár* [Timișoara, RO], *Pécs and Arad* [Arad, RO] employed some 3,000–4,000 workers each.

At the same time, as we have already mentioned, coal and iron ore mining and the “concomitant” metallurgy and metal industry reached a considerable concentration in several regions of Hungary (the number of employees in manufacturing industry was 6,418 in Salgótarján, 4,940 in Diósgyőr, 2,155 in Ózd, 4,000 in Stájerlakanina [*Anina*, RO] and 3,900 in Resicabánya [*Reșița*, RO]). The population concentrations “deposited” around mining and industry reached population numbers comparable to those of the towns (in 1910, 13,746 people lived in Salgótarján, 17,834 in Resicabánya [*Reșița*, RO], 17,202 in Diósgyőr, 12,193 in Petrosény [*Petroșeni*, RO], and over 10,000 in the territory of the later Tatabánya). The traditional mining towns, on the other hand, gradually lost their importance, due to the decline of noble metal extraction in the first place.

The interrelation of railway and prosperity, railway and modernisation, railway and urban development was evident in the time of the Dualism.

Railway – including its construction, maintenance and the services it offered – was the glue of the economy in Hungary: the network of the railway lines created the single national market, it promoted investments, connected vast areas into agricultural goods production, allowed a cheaper and more profitable export; also, it had huge demands for iron and steel production and mechanical engineering. The large state mining sites and metallurgy centres (Diósgyőr, Krassó–Szörény industrial zone) mostly produced for the railway companies. In the time of the Dualism, tens of thousands worked at the railway constructions; railway spread a work culture, technical civilisation and was even a reference of exact time. It tore apart the boundaries of the closed regions and integrated the local societies into bigger units.

In Hungary the first *railway line* was opened in 1846 (between Pest and Vác). Until 1848, only 178 kilometres of railway was built in the current territory of Hungary, but only half a century later the total length of the Hungarian railway network almost reached 22,000 kilometres. In the time between the war of independence and the breakout of World War I, the most dynamically developing sector was infrastructure in Hungary, within then mainly rail constructions. There were times when the *annual* growth of the railway network exceeded five hundred kilometres. Railway constructions “absorbed” the biggest part of the investments: between the Compromise and 1900, railway constructions absorbed eleven times more investments than manufacturing industry (company) investments and six times more than the capital spent on the constructions in Budapest.

Until the Compromise Hungary could not have independent railway policy concepts. The Austrian political and the Austrian–Hungarian economic interests urged the connection of *Vienna* and *Pestbuda*, creating this way a connection of the Great Hungarian Plain and the Austrian markets. The railway connection between Vienna and Pest was constructed as soon as in 1850, and in the 1850s the railway reached

the most important towns of the Great Hungarian Plain: Szeged in 1854, Temesvár [Timișoara, RO] and Debrecen in 1857, Arad [Arad, RO] and Nagyvárad [Oradea, RO] in 1858 and Miskolc (via Debrecen and Nyíregyháza in 1859). In 1860 the direct link between the Great Hungarian Plain and the sea was created by the construction of the *Buda–Székesfehérvár–Nagykanizsa–Trieste* line. Until the Compromise, the Miskolc line was extended to Kassa [Košice, SK] and the *Wiener Neustadt–Sopron–Szombathely–Nagykanizsa* railway track was constructed too. No railway connection was built to *Transylvania*, and *Croatia–Slavonia* was only accessible via Austria. Also, the railway only crossed the state borders to Austria. No direct link was established to *Fiume [Rijeka, HR]* (Figure 3–4).

The independent Hungarian *railway policy* after the Compromise wanted to make *Budapest* the centre of the Hungarian railway network; it urged the establishment of the line to *Fiume [Rijeka, HR]*, *the Balkans and Galicia*. By 1890, the majority of the principal railway lines were built, then the construction of the side-lines was given a priority; railway became the most important tool of the *mobility* of the population.

It is absolutely clear that the *constructed railway network promoted urban development in the Dualism*, the position reached in the railway network affected the development chances of the respective towns and cities. However, this relationship is not automatic by far. The “railway” mostly reinforced the already existing tendencies of the development of the settlement network. Not only “railway” built towns (this was not frequent) but the towns also built railway for themselves; usually a railway that met the criteria coming from their functions. It is evident that the urbanisation of e.g. *Szombathely, Nyíregyháza, Kaposvár, Szolnok, Békéscsaba, Temesvár [Timișoara, RO], Arad [Arad, RO], Zsolna [Žilina, SK], Érsekújvár [Nové Zámky, SK]* and *Zólyom [Zvolen, SK]* or among the smaller towns, of *Barcs, Celldömölk, Dombóvár, Szerencs, Püspökladány, Mátészalka, Hatvan* and *Ruttká [Vrútky, SK]* was effectively supported by the railway. On the other hand, a factor contributing to the stagnation and the decline of the general and economic positions of *Veszprém, Esztergom, Kőszeg, Kalocsa, Eger, Gyöngyös, Szekszárd* etc. in the capitalist era was their disadvantageous transport location, the fact that they were situated along side-lines with less traffic. The euphoria induced by the construction of the railway lines was often replaced by complaints about the mass influx of goods produced in Budapest or abroad, creating a strong competition for the local handicrafts or smaller manufacturing plants. To sum it up, the effect of the railway on the respective settlements can only be defined if we examine the economic weights and character of the respective settlements together with their social fabric, interest representation capacities and other functions, focusing on the interrelations of all these factors.

Figure 3

Railway network in Hungary, 1867



Keys: 1 – Border of the country; 2 – Navigable river or canal; 3 – Railway line.
Source: Kovács, E. (chief ed.) 1987.

3.3 The role of public administration in urban development in the age of the Dual Monarchy

Following the establishment of the civil public administration, in the 1870s the settlement (urban) development role of *public administration* increased. The Compromise eliminated the legal separation of *Transylvania*; *Croatia–Slavonia* with its 43,000 km² territory remained the country of the “Hungarian Crown” with some limited autonomy, with Zágráb [*Zagreb, HR*] as its seat. The civil public administration brought an end to the administrative complexity of the feudal times: *meso-level public administration* was carried out by the *counties*. On the basis of single principles, the division of the counties into districts became general; the district seats became important centres of the operation of state administration (public administration, financial administration, jurisdiction etc.). *Above the county level no higher order administrative units, districts or regions were organised*, despite the fact that a large number of state administrative and jurisdiction institutions and many economic organisations operated within such frameworks (e.g. royal courts of appeal, public prosecutors’ offices, gendarme districts, public education directorates, post office directorates, public notary chambers etc.).

Figure 4

Railway network in Hungary according to the owners, 1914



Keys: 1 – Hungarian National Railway Company [MÁV] ; 2- Local Railway Line [HÉV] managed by MÁV; 3 – Private railway line.

Source: Kovács, L.

At the time of the Compromise, 888 settlements had town rank, of which 81 were free royal towns, 88 corporate towns and over 700 country towns; the majority of them did not have *urban functions*. Following the Compromise, two legal categories of the towns were created: the authorities of the *towns with municipal rights* were similar to those of the counties (these towns were not parts of the surrounding counties), and the autonomy of the *corporate towns* approached that of the municipal towns, too. The number of settlements with town rank significantly decreased, 131 towns kept their rank, of which only 25 became municipal towns. Only one town, Miskolc achieved municipal rank until World War I, but the number of corporate towns rapidly grew around the turn of the century (Rózsashegy [Ružomberok, SK], Szekszárd, Zsolna [Žilina, SK], Fogaras [Făgăraș, RO] and Újpest). This way the set of *settlements with town rank* and those *with urban functions* approached each other, nevertheless considerable anomalies continued to exist (e.g. Balassagyarmat, Békéscsaba, Keszthely, Mohács, Kalocsa etc., with a large population at that time and with significant urban functions – these settlements remained villages in legal sense, whereas there were several corporate towns that had negligible urban functions).

The choice of the seats of civil public administration promoted urban development both in a direct and indirect way:

- The acquisition of the administrative seat rank entailed the location of a number of *institutions with “urban” functions* – vice governors and district administrators’ offices, tax offices, courts, land registry offices, finance guards, gendarmerie and police, state architects’ offices, sanitary offices, public education directorates and so forth –, which resulted in the settling down and emerging of a civil servant layer. This layer had a considerable effect on their place of residence by their consumption, needs, interest representation capacities and constructions.
- The settling down of the offices promoted the appearance of a large number of other institutions with central functions (schools, daily press, hospital, lawyers etc.).
- The attraction of the public offices and the other institutions in their halo created a hinterland for the commercial, financial and service functions of the administrative seats.

The development of the administrative seats of regions with “urban deficiency” was especially striking (Kaposvár, Szombathely, Nyíregyháza, Szolnok, Máramarosziget [Sighetu Marmăției, RO], Beregszász [Berehove, UA], Fogaras [Făgăraș, RO] etc.). The seats of public administration created specific centres in the regions with no towns: towns at a high level of hierarchy compared to their population and economic weight (with hardly any “auxiliary” urban marks), such as e.g. *Alsókubin* [Dolný Kubín, SK], *Liptószentmiklós* [Liptovský Mikuláš, SK], *Turócszentmárton*

[*Martin, SK*], *Aranyosmarót* [*Zlatné Moravce, SK*], *Csíkszereda* [*Miercurea-Ciuc, RO*], *Ipolyság* [*Šahy, SK*] and *Nagyszőlős* [*Vinohradiv, U*]. Especially in the lowest terrain of urbanisation, administrative seat functions were very important for the development of the settlements. Without district seat rank it was extremely difficult for the small local market centres to reach the threshold of the urban quality.

In addition to the institutions of public administration, in the modernisation of the Dualist era a number of economic, cultural and service institutions with urban functions were born. These institutions supported urbanisation, increased the weight and variety of urban functions, promoted the hierarchic breakdown, and they also shaped the hinterlands of the towns. In these towns – even in the less important district seats –, banks, bank outlets, savings banks and insurance companies settled down – their headquarters built in the bigger towns even affected cityscape and made their presence unmistakable. The temporary markets were more and more often replaced by constant shops, in the bigger towns very much specialised shops, also having a spectacular influence on the cityscape. Following the birth of the national market, the outlets, retailers and agents of the faraway factories and wholesale traders settled down in the towns. The trade of agricultural products – which function was the basis of the economic prosperity of a number of towns from the late 18th century – moved to Budapest from several towns, due to increased role of the stock exchange, the huge economic weight of the capital city and the construction of the railway network. Some regional centres too were home to the trade of agricultural products, the rest of the towns only had agents from Budapest or the regional centres, or the local merchants of agricultural products became clients of the big cities. The cultural and educational role of the towns expanded too: in the case of the small towns, education appeared as an “urban function” by the creation and spread of the system of higher elementary schools¹³; in bigger towns, daily press became important, together with the publishing of books. Museums and libraries appeared also in the countryside towns; the hospitals changed from “poorhouses” to health centres. Although handicrafts lost their importance – making the lives of several towns difficult –, small-scale industry became a service sector in the bigger towns, offering modern “urban” services.

¹³ In order to demonstrate the “urban hierarchy” of the medieval Hungary, *Erik Fügedi* used the spread of the cloisters of the mendicant friars; *András Kubinyi* found a more sensitive and well quantifiable index in the statistics of the place of residence of Hungarian students enrolled in the universities of Vienna and Cracow (for the 1440–1512 period). When exploring the urban hierarchy of the 18th–19th century, *Sándor Gyimesi* and *Vera Bácskai* – *Lajos Nagy* relied on statistical data concerning the presence of the network of urban institutions, the economic functions of the settlements and the size of their hinterlands – “market zones” –, in addition to the legal status of the settlements.

3.4 The demographic conditions of urbanisation

In Hungary the “demographic transition” (from the traditional demographic behaviour to the “modern” demographic behaviour) was a short period, and the “gap” between the number of births and deaths did not open very wide; the “*demographic boom*” remained moderate in Hungary. In Hungary in the narrower sense, the population growth between 1850 and 1910 was 58%, i.e. 6.7 million people (the simple annual arithmetical average of the growth was just 1%). In the four decades of the Dualism (1870–1910), the *actual growth* was 4.6 million people, making a 33.7% increase. A factor contributing to the volume of this growth was *emigration* at an increasing pace by the end of the century. According to estimations, a total of 1.8–2 million people emigrated from the countries of the Hungarian Crown overseas.

Nevertheless the number of population in the countries of the Hungarian Crown was 21 million just before World War I; in Hungary the number of population exceeded 18 million (*Table 3*). The population density grew to just 60 persons per square kilometre. *Budapest and its surroundings* was the only “region” in Hungary with a concentration of population.

The different demographic behaviour of the towns and villages resulted in a considerable migration, which further increased the number and the share of the urban population. The “village” easily produced this population surplus and allowed urbanisation (“supply-driven” labour force and population market). The population gain of the settlements with over 5 thousand inhabitants was 1.7 million people in 1880–1910. The number of urban population – in settlements with urban rank! – reached 3.7 million people and their proportion exceeded 20% (*Table 4*).

Table 3

Change of the number of population in Hungary, 1870–1910

Territory	Number of population (thousand people)					
	1850	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
Countries of the Hungarian Crown	–	15,509	15,642	17,464	19,255	20,886
Hungary*	11,554**	13,664	13,834	15,262	16,838	18,265
In the present territory of Hungary	–	5,011	5,329	6,009	6,854	7,612
Actual increase*	–	–	170	1,428	1,576	1,426
Natural increase	–	–	481	1,636	1,728	1,954

* Without Croatia and Slavonia.

** Civil population.

Source: Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1937 – Budapest, 1938.

Table 4

*Change of the number and share of urban population in Hungary, 1857–1910**

Place of residence	Population									
	number, share		number, share		number, share		number, share		number, share	
	1000 people	in per cent	1000 people	in per cent	1000 people	in per cent	1000 people	in per cent	1000 people	in per cent
	1857		1870		1890		1900		1910	
Budapest**	187	1.5	271	2.0	492	3.2	716	4.3	880	4.8
Towns	1,439	11.9	1,736	12.8	2,083	13.7	2,307	13.8	2,846	15.6
Villages	10,489	86.6	11,572	85.2	12,588	83.1	13,698	81.9	14,538	79.6
Total	12,124	100.0	13,579	100.0	15,163	100.0	16,721	100.0	18,264	100.0

* Without Croatia and Slavonia.

** Pest, Buda and Óbuda together before 1873.

Source: Beluszky, P. 1990. p. 16.

In Hungary – where the share of the population of Hungarian mother tongue was only 48.1% in 1910, including Croatia and Slavonia –, the development, composition and operation of the urban functions, after all the position of the settlements in the hierarchy was affected by the ethnic (language) composition of the urban population, and the linguistic “relation” of the towns and their surroundings. An evident aspect of these relations is the multiplication of certain urban institutions in the towns with mixed ethnic population, on the basis of the mother tongue (and the religious denominations usually closely related to the ethnic composition). In Brassó [*Braşov, RO*] in 1910 e.g. 43.4% of the population declared themselves Hungarian, the share of German and Romanian speaking population was 28.7% and 26.4%, respectively; 28.6% of the population belonged to the Greek Catholic 25.5% to the Evangelic, 24.7 to the Roman Catholic and 12.9% to the Protestant denomination. The city was home to a total of ten (!) secondary education institutions, depending on religion, nationality and the language used in education – a separate grammar school was operated by the Roman Catholics, the Evangelists and the Greek Catholics (the latter used Romanian language), also, the state maintained a secondary school for modern sciences. Not only other educational and cultural institutions – libraries, societies, press etc. – were divided by mother tongue and religion (which is natural, after all), but a lot of other urban institutions, too; the individual ethnic groups built out their “own” finance institutions in the bigger towns, preferred the merchants, handicraftsmen, lawyers and physicians etc. speaking the same language. The linguistic relations of the towns were further varied and complicated by the ethnic relation of the urban population and the

“countryside”. In the Carpathian Basin, the towns were “*more Hungarian*” than the “country” as a whole in the beginning of the 20th century; 73.7% of the population in the *municipal towns* and 70.6% of the population in the *corporate towns* (72.5% in the total of the towns) said they were Hungarians by mother tongue, the national average of the narrower state territory was 54.5%, while in the “*country-side*” just over two-fifths of the population was Hungarian (42.4%). This way a number of towns with Hungarian majority were surrounded by a “non-Hungarian” countryside. This fact evidently influenced the urban-rural relations; the towns and their rural surroundings were not only separated by social barriers – a large part of the urban goods and services were “unimportant” for the contemporary peasant layer –, but also linguistic and ethnic barriers. In regions with mixed ethnic population, the rural inhabitants selected the institutions that they used on ethnic and language grounds, too; they used the shops and workshops of their “ethnic fellows”, so the hinterlands were partly shaped by linguistic borders. This was how e.g. Turócszentmárton [*Martin, SK*] expanded its hinterland based on its position in the settlement network and became one of the cultural and economic centres of the Slovaks living in Hungary, similarly to Liptószentmiklós [*Liptovský Mikuláš, SK*] or Rózsahegy [*Ružomberok, SK*]. Balázsfalva [*Blaj, RO*] became the centre of the Transylvanian Romanian culture, Nagyszeben [*Sibiu, RO*] was the administrative, cultural and intellectual centre for the Transylvanian Saxons, and the “Saxon” towns of Transylvania became the economic and cultural centres of the Romanian ethnic group, as well (Nagyszeben [*Sibiu, RO*], Brassó [*Braşov, RO*], Segesvár [*Sighişoara, RO*] etc.).

3.5 Regional frameworks of urban development

It is evident that there is a strong correlation between urbanisation, the birth of the “civil town” and the scale of modernisation taking place in their surrounding regions. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century there were significant differences in the development level and the progress of modernisation of the different regions and territories in Hungary. The index most frequently used for the “level” of modernisation, the literacy rate within the population aged older than 6 years, reached 66.7% in Hungary by 1910 (*Table 5*). However, this figure was only 25.4% in the Croatian Lika-Krbava county, 26.8% in Máramaros county, whereas the figures for Moson county and Sopron county along the Hungarian–Austrian border were 88.9% and 88.7%, respectively (*Tables 6–7*).

Table 5
Literacy rate within the population aged older than 6 years, 1880–1910

Region	Literacy rate, in per cent			
	1880	1890	1900	1910
Hungarian Empire*	41.8	50.6	59.5	66.7
Hungary	43.5	53.2	61.8	68.7
Counties	39.2	48.6	56.8	64.9
Municipal towns	64.2	72.1	79.6	85.4

*Hungary and Croatia–Slavonia.

Table 6
Counties with high literacy rate, 1880–1910

County	Literacy rate, in per cent			
	1880	1890	1900	1910
Moson	76.4	83.1	85.9	88.9
Sopron*	71.0	80.8	85.9	88.7
Győr**	64.9	75.5	81.1	85.4
Veszprém	63.5	72.5	79.5	83.9
Esztergom	58.2	71.2	77.4	83.9
Vas	61.4	72.2	77.2	83.6

* Together with Sopron municipal town.

** Together with Győr municipal town.

Table 7
Counties with high illiteracy rate, 1880–1910

County	Literacy rate, in per cent			
	1880	1890	1900	1910
Lika-Krbava	11.8	13.8	21.3	25.4
Máramaros	12.3	17.6	21.8	26.8
Szolnok-Doboka	10.7	15.7	21.6	28.6
Hunyad	15.0	15.8	24.9	33.9
Torda-Aranyos	15.0	21.6	27.1	37.3
Modrus-Fiume	18.0	24.5	34.8	43.2

Source: Hungarian Statistical Yearbooks 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910.

Similarly great territorial differences can be seen in the distribution of the “doctor-seen dead”. The temporary Hungarian statistical service published the proportion of those within all dead who had had a medical treatment before their death. Professional medical science as an element (index) of modernisation was also in a phase of “boom”, and showed great territorial disparities: just half (50.2%) of the dead had received medical treatment in Hungary as a whole, but only 9.8% of them in Lika-Krbava, 14.9% in Szolnok-Doboka and 13.6% in Árva county; on the other hand, Békés county in the Great Hungarian Plain had a figure of 92.2%, Csanád 88.3% and Hajdú 87.4%. The *content* of the index of “doctor-seen dead” is *of a synthesising character*: it reflects the value system and the financial means of the population, the cultural level of the everyday life, the accessibility of medical treatment; the latter depended on the characteristics of the settlement network, the level of urbanisation, the established health care institutions and the transport possibilities etc.

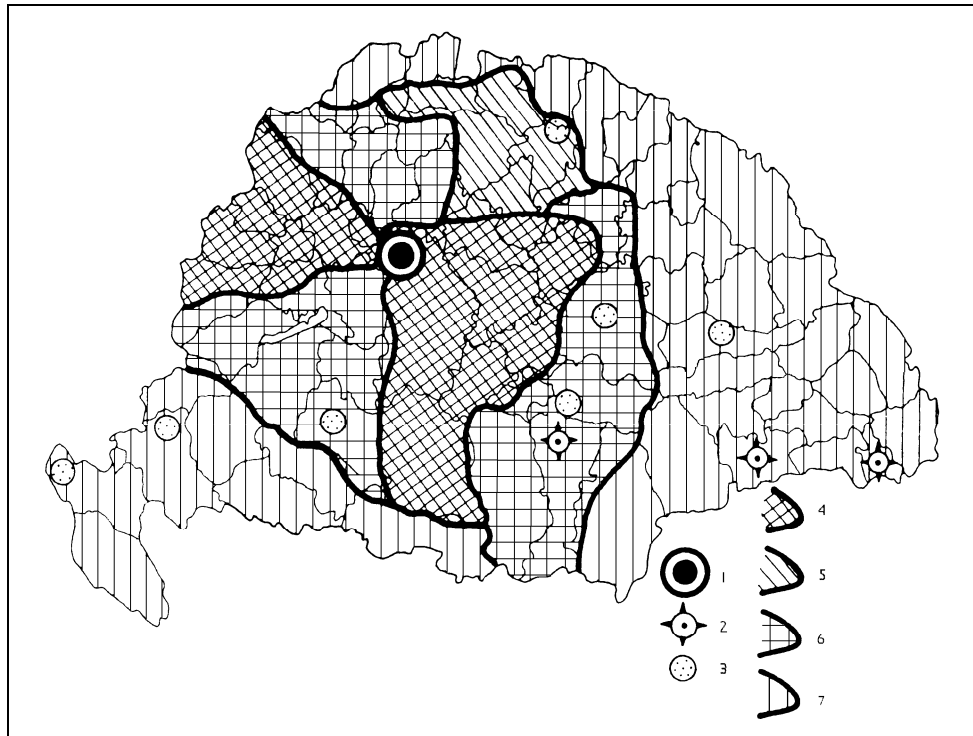
On the basis of the literacy rates and the share of the “doctor-seen dead”, and 10 further indices we created the modernisation map of Hungary (based on the 1910 conditions) (*Figure 5*). (The zones were defined in accordance with the level of relative modernisation in Hungary.)

The map reveals that Budapest played a special role in modernisation in the Dualist era and in close correlation with that, also in urban development. In the middle of the 19th century there was a rather wide gap between Hungary and Western Europe, as regards the economic and technical development level, the level of urbanisation and the bourgeois development of the society. When the possibilities of “catching up” were created in Hungary, the great “difference of tension” between the two “poles” induced a very rapid modernisation of the country. The modernisation process of different sources had a “junction” in Budapest (the regaining of national sovereignty made Budapest the centre of political life, the “revolution” of transportation and the national railway policy converted the capital city into the transport centre of Hungary, the railway and the agricultural boom made Budapest a centre for crop trade and mill industry, national sovereignty spurred the rivalry with Vienna etc.). When modernisation starts with a charge, in its first phase it always occupies one single or only a few centres, bridgeheads, and when the positions are reinforced there, then comes the “attack” on the country or region to be conquered.

The *bridgehead of modernisation* in the Carpathian Basin was Budapest, and the sub-centres of modernisation in Hungary were few in number and “weak” in character at the beginning of the 20th century. At the turn of the century, Budapest showed figures exceeding its number of population several times in the field of the quantifiable indices of “development” (modernisation), and this resulted in “qualitative” differences, too; bourgeois society in its complexity only appeared in Budapest by the turn of the century. By the early 20th century Budapest was a bridge

Figure 5

Zones of modernisation in the early 20th century



Keys: 1 – Main centre of modernisation: Budapest; 2 – Centres of modernisation with attraction; 3 – Centres of modernisation; 4 – Zones of modernisation; 5 – Zones of the second wave of modernisation; 6 – Zones where modernisation process is in the early phase; 7 – Traditional regions.

Source: Designed by Beluszky, P.

head of not only foreign capital, technical civilisation and innovations, but also of the new social ideas and artistic trends. These roles secured a very special position for Budapest in the Hungarian settlement network and urban hierarchy.

To some surprise, the *Great Hungarian Plain* was among the regions most advanced in matters of modernisation. This was attributable to the agricultural boom and the favourable agricultural endowments of the Great Plain – especially compared to the endowments of the contemporary territory of Hungary! – and traditions etc., but above all to the special urban structure and the specific way of urbanisation in this region. In the early 20th century, in Csongrád 65.2% of the population lived in towns at a high level of the urban hierarchy, the same figure was

58.7% for Pest-Pilis-Solt, 47.6% in Hajdú and 38.5% in Békés. These counties of the Great Hungarian Plain were among the ten most urbanised administrative units of Hungary. Looking at the number of population in all settlements with town rank, in five counties of the Great Hungarian Plain the share of the urban population exceeded 50%, only in Bács-Bodrog it remained at about 40% (on the other hand, 69.3% of the population of this county lived in settlements with more than 5 thousand inhabitants). The modernisation of the Great Hungarian Plain was supported just by the high share of the urban population (i.e. living in settlements of urban size). The boundaries between villages and towns, and also among the different “levels” of towns became blurred, as did the settlement hierarchy. However, we cannot accept the statement that in the “backward” Great Hungarian Plain the general level of development was an obstacle to urbanisation, to the development of the urban functions.

In *West Hungary, characterised by an advanced modernisation* – in Sopron, Moson, Pozsony, Győr, Komárom and Esztergom counties, and in the northern part of Vas and Veszprém counties –, modernisation and the urban-rural relations developed harmonically, urbanisation used the resources of the rural areas but also promoted the development of the whole region. The urban functions created a divided hierarchical system. The individual “components” of the towns – economy, including manufacturing industry; urban institutions; infrastructure etc. – were balanced.

In the regions just *setting off on the path of the modernisation process*, modernisation appeared in the – bigger – towns. (Such regions were the western and central parts of Upper Northern Hungary – with the exception of Trencsén and Árva counties –, South Transdanubia, and the zone between the Great Hungarian Plain and Transylvania.) These were the regions where the typical model of hierarchical spread appeared: urbanisation showed up at the higher levels of hierarchy, but it could be very spectacular there – e.g. in the case of Kaposvár, Nyíregyháza, Zalaegerszeg, Nagykanizsa, Miskolc and even more so Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*], Arad [*Arad, RO*], Temesvár [*Timișoara, RO*]. The towns in these regions had a “bridgehead” position, too.

The two great “*traditional*” socio-economic zones of the contemporary Hungarian territory were *East Hungary* (Northeast Upper Northern Hungary, some regions of the Partium and Transylvania with Krassó-Szörény county) and *Croatia-Slavonia*. In these regions modernisation had even less centres, the development of the urban hierarchy was mostly influenced by the – “involuntarily” built out – public administration. A large part of the administrative centres were settlements with a limited number of population, where the functions other than public administration were modest and “auxiliary” urban signs could hardly be seen (Alsókubin [*Dolný Kubín, SK*], Fogaras [*Făgăraș, RO*], Csíkszereda [*Miercurea-Ciuc, RO*], Dicsőszentmárton [*Târnăveni, RO*] etc.). However, even in these regions

there were some very important towns, such as Záhgráb [Zagreb, HR], Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca, RO], Marosvásárhely [Târgu Mureş, RO], Nagyszeben [Sibiu, RO], Brassó [Braşov, RO] etc., which proves the fact that the urban functions appear even in regions with handicapped positions (the Saxon towns of Transylvania could rely upon their considerable urban traditions).

4 The hierarchy of the Hungarian towns in the early 20th century

4.1 Method for the definition of the urban hierarchy

In our opinion the towns are the products of the geographical division of labour emerging within the settlement system; in this division of labour it is the settlements with the central functions where the sufficient quantity and quality of the basic urban functions is concentrated; these are the settlements where the activities and institutions fulfilling the non-everyday needs of the population are concentrated. Coming from their role in the settlement system and their “mission”, the towns are the special places of exchange, connections, “encounters” in a world structured by the territorial division of labour; of course exchange in this case means not only the exchange of goods but also of knowledge, information, “cultures” and ideas. On the basis of the central functions the towns have a considerable spatial organising competency and are often decisionmaking and power centres.

In other words

- the urban character of the settlements *does not depend on* their legal status (although the existence of the town rank itself seems to be a fixed point at the definition of the features, the urban character of any settlement); in Hungary, the set of settlements with town rank often considerably differed from those with urban functions. The number of official towns (139) in the Dualist era was far from the actual number of towns (settlements which were towns in the functional sense). A number of county seats did not receive a town rank, e.g. Balassagyarmat with its 8 thousand population, but neither did Turócszentmárton [Martin, SK], Magyaróvár, Liptószentmiklós [Liptovský Mikuláš, SK], Ipolyság [Šahy, SK], Aranyosmarót [Zlatné Moravce, SK] etc.). The archiepiscopal centre of Kalocsa did not have a town rank, either, together with Békéscsaba, a settlement that had a population of 42 thousand (!); Szarvas with 26 thousand inhabitants and the important Danubian port town and commercial centre; or Mohács with its 17 thousand population. The recognition of the occasional incompatibility of the town rank and the urban

functions led to the fact that in their town definitions and at the survey of the urban network, urban historians now need more than the existence of the legal status, they expand the criteria system with social and economic elements; or at the examination of the urban network they apply criteria, “indices” other than legal status;¹⁴

- the urban status is independent of the number of the population, too, although towns are evidently *population concentrations* as well;
- the so-called *economic concept of towns* looks at the *share of economic functions* offered by the settlements, and *considers the settlements of non-agricultural character as towns*. We do not have to spend much time at this definition of towns: nowadays the share of agricultural population is insignificant in most regions – and decreased to less than 6.5% in Hungary, too –, the “urban character” of industry is questionable, the spread of daily commuting does not allow the “measurement” of the functions of the settlements by the employment structure, “tertiarisation” has become widespread; to sum it up, the composition of the functions of the settlements and their employment structure are not suitable for the separation of the settlements with urban functions, and even less so for the exploration of the urban hierarchy and the measurement of the level of urbanisation.

Of course the definition of towns as the *special terrains of exchange*, and as the *members of the settlement network with central functions* only reflects the naked skeleton of the “genius” of the towns. This “skeleton” is supplemented by a large number of *auxiliary features*, and the consideration of them contributes to the enrichment of the image of the towns. The operation of the varied functions of the towns requires a significant labour force: the towns have an attraction on the

¹⁴ This versatility, many-sided “difference” of the towns and the characteristics beyond the mere settlement network functions made researchers of the towns come to newer and newer statements and definitions, better approaching the “genius” of the towns. Among this we regularly come across the notion that defines towns as the *places of liberty*. B. Oudin, among others, sees the “mission” of the towns as being the “scenes of liberty”. (“If we had to define the reason for the existence of the urban concentrations in one single word, we could say that the towns are meant to be the *scenes of liberty*.”) This liberty can be interpreted as liberty rights guaranteed by the urban privileges, as the exemption from the feudal obligations in the feudal societies, the liberty of the urban municipalities, guilds and citizens; but liberty can also be comprehended in a wider sense: the “facelessness” and anonymity guaranteed by the urban mass, looser social control – but above all the possibility of *choice*. “What justifies the word ‘liberty’, when the concept of towns is more often associated with the bourgeois? Liberty remains theoretical in all fields of life, if not accompanied by the freedom of choice in practice. And to achieve the freedom of choice, the existence of a supply to choose from is necessary. It is a serious mistake to see the only obstacle of freedom in force and oppression... Only the towns allow the individual to *find his or her own self, different from others, and meet other human beings who are just as much different from the others*” – this is how Oudin sums up his opinion about the liberty offered by the towns. (Oudin, B., no year indicated).

population of their surroundings (centres of migration), their population increases and so they emerge from their environment with their number of population, among other things. The operation of the urban institutions requires a higher level of skills; the urban societies are not only more numerous than the village communities but also differ in their employment structure, skills and school education. As a consequence of this and a lot of other factors – e.g. different built environment, privileged situation, the social psychological effects coming from the “mass existence” etc. –, a typical urban lifestyle, value system and social psychological behaviour pattern emerge within the walls of the towns. The built environment and the infrastructure are different than in the villages, among other things because of the demand coming from the large concentration of population.¹⁵

The position of a town in the settlement system – in a network (!) – is *most directly* determined by the *position in the (settlement) hierarchy*. This position, on the other hand, is defined by the *composition of the urban functions in the narrower sense*, the *existence or lack of* certain roles and the *institutions* responsible for these roles, the *supply* of urban functions, i.e. hierarchically differentiated functions and institutions.

When defining the urban hierarchy of Hungary in 1910, we focused on the narrower territory of the country – i.e. we excluded the territory of Croatia–Slavonia –, especially because of the different nature of the data and the different ways of data collection.

¹⁵ The “meditations” of sociology and cultural anthropology take us from the “concrete”, by statistical data and topographical coordinates more or less definable “towns” to the towns “existing in the world of ideas” and town definitions describing this level. The approaches of cultural anthropology were summarised by Péter Niedermüller, who differentiated between two basic types: the *macro-anthropological* approach “... – which is very closely related to classical urban sociology and above all to the Chicago school – looks at towns as an actually existing, historically born settlement type disposing of a given structure of the physical space.” The urban surveys using this approach examine segregation, ethnic settlement structure, the different types of urbanisation and the major indices of the urban lifestyle, “... i.e. they describe and demonstrate everything that can be seen about urban life from the outside.” These surveys, according to the author, are not really original, their significance lies in the “... theoretical approach, the discussion and the holistic interpretation of the town as a whole”. The essence of the *micro-anthropological* “talking style” is that “... it does not talk about the towns in general, instead it focuses on the experiences of the urban inhabitants about their own towns: it analyses the ‘image’ that the people have of their own towns...”. Thus the attention of the micro-anthropological surveys is focusing on “... how people living in the towns move in the urban spaces, with what rules and how they use this relatively complicated spatial structure, and what cultural, social and symbolic functions the respective aspects of the urban space have. ... Space is not only a physical entity but also – and perhaps above all – an entity bearing cultural meanings and symbolic functions.” (Niedermüller, P. 1994) Towns are also defined by other authors as a “state of mind”, a behaviour pattern, a “general human life structure” and so forth.

Of the several methods available for the definition of an urban hierarchy we chose the so-called “inventory method”, i.e. we enumerated each of the urban institutions and activities in the individual towns.¹⁶ Two practices – and the theoretical considerations behind them – emerged as to whether the “level of centralisation” (hierarchical position) can be determined by the *existence, volume* and *supply* of the functions and institutions of the towns, or by the share of the urban services “sold to the countryside”, – i.e. the “extra value”. The latter concept starts from the fact that the towns are the “suppliers of the rural areas” in the geographical division of labour, thus their role in the settlement network – their rank in the hierarchy – can be defined by the volume of the services offered for the rural areas. This approach goes back to the classical examination by *W. Christaller*.

We took the existence or the lack of 88 urban institutions into consideration in each settlement (this number does not include the national functions and institutions). The selected indices were classified into categories, on the basis of the *frequency of their occurrence*.

The levels are as follows:

National level

- I Regional level:* institutions that can be found in settlements 2–20 (e.g. postal directorates, gendarmerie district centres, a total stock of bank deposits in excess of 22 million crowns, more than 50 lawyers, 6 or more secondary schools and colleges etc.)
- II Institutions of developed county seats:* in settlements 21–39 (e.g. lawyers’ chambers, offices of the Austro-Hungarian Bank, 30–49 lawyers, regimental headquarters etc.)
- III Institutions of county seats:* in settlements 40–80 (e.g. county seats, courts, number of lawyers between 17 and 29, stock of bank deposits in a value of at least 8 million crowns etc.)
- IV Middle towns institutions:* in settlements 81–180 (e.g. gendarmerie squads, bank deposits in a value of at least 4 million crowns, treasury post office etc.)
- V District level (small town) institutions:* in settlements 181–450 (e.g. civil schools – 4 classes of elementary school followed by a 4-class secondary school –, public notaries, tax offices, district courts, a stock of bank deposits in a value of at least 2 million crowns etc.)

¹⁶ The “inventory method” has several versions, according to how much the enumeration of urban functions strives for complexity or it is happy with representative level indicators, and how it summarises the selected indices. Some surveys wish to contemplate the weight and significance of the considered institutions, arriving at issues very difficult to compare, e.g. how many lawyers are equal to one bank office or how many dentists are worth one bookstore.

On the basis of the threshold values defined for the respective groups of functions and hierarchy levels, the respective settlements were classified into the following hierarchy levels:

- I (Capital city)
- II Regional centres
- III County centres
- IV Middle towns
- V Small towns
- VI Settlements (also) with district level functions

4.2 The urban hierarchy of Hungary in 1910

4.2.1 Settlements with town rank – settlements with urban functions

The results achieved are demonstrated in *Table 8* and *Figure 6*. The figures in *Table 8* show that in the early 20th century there were much more towns in the functional sense in Hungary than settlements recognised with the town rank by the state administration. As opposed to the 139 settlements with town rank, a certain concentration of urban functions could be seen in some 420–430 settlements. The boundary between villages and towns cannot be precisely drawn even if we

Table 8

Hierarchic division of the towns in the functional sense

Hierarchy level	Number of centres	Of which centres with			Number of centres, including the previous levels
		full	deficient	partial	
		functions			
I Capital city	1	1	–	–	1
II Regional centres	12*	6	4	2	13
III County centres	50	17	12	21	63
VI Middle towns	65	29	31	5**	128
V Small towns	204	88	52	64	332
VI Settlements (also) with district level functions	93		93***		425
Total: I–V	332	141	99	92	–
Altogether	425	–	–	–	–

* At the regional level we included Záhgráb [Zagreb, HR] in this place, but the towns of Croatia–Slavonia are excluded from the other levels.

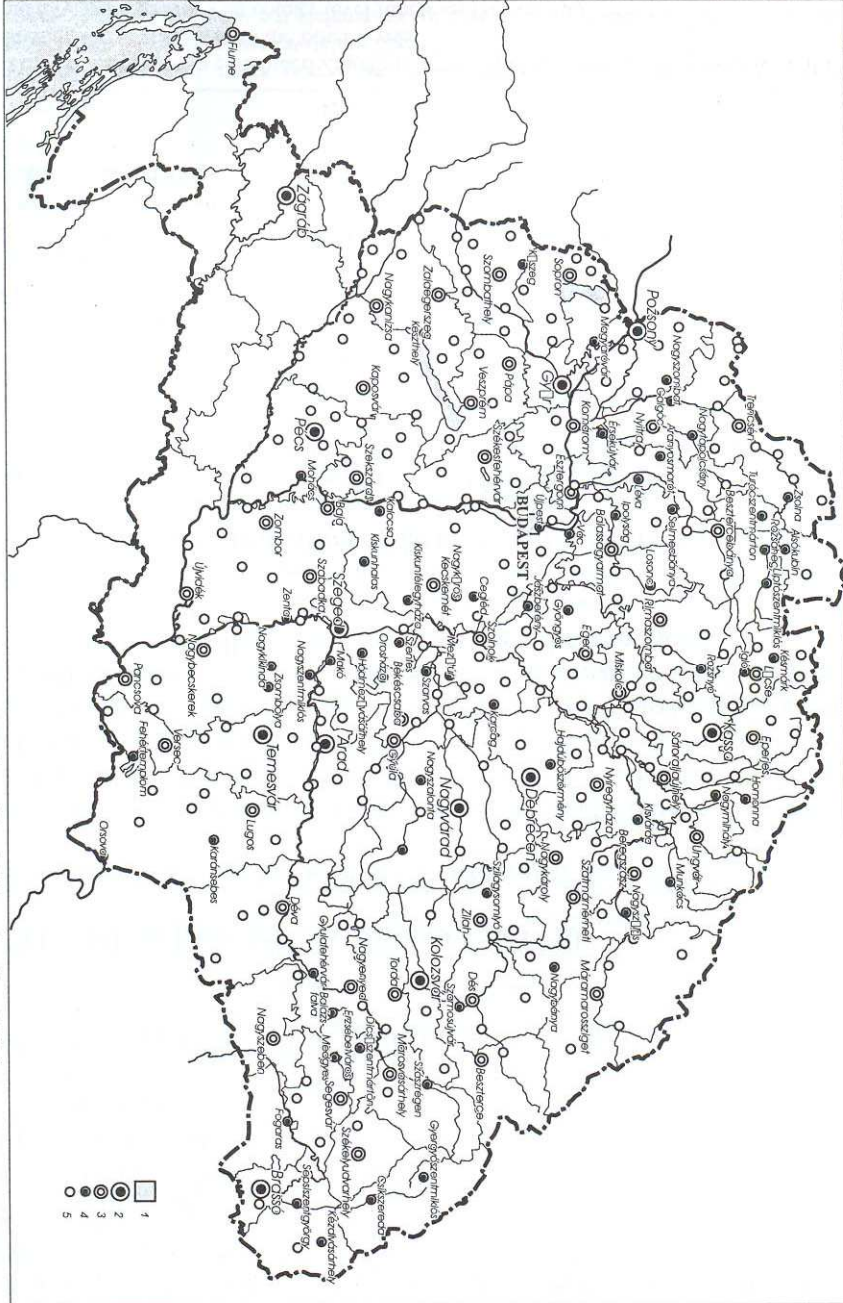
** Actually small towns with county level functions (see below).

*** Within the hierarchy level we did not make a further division.

Source: calculated by the authors.

Figure 6

Hierarchy of the Hungarian cities, 1910



Keys: 1 – Capital City; 2 – Regional Centres; 3 – Centres of Counties; 4 – Medium Sized Cities; 5 – Small Cities.
Source: Designed by Beluszky, P.

know the results of the hierarchy surveys, because even besides the existence of certain urban institutions, the urban character of some settlements were questionable, due to their small population and the lack of more limited presence of “auxiliary urban signs” (lack or urban traditions, village-like cityscape and “society”, lack of an urban lifestyle, deficiencies of the infrastructure etc.). On the basis of these considerations, we can omit the category of “settlements with district level functions” at the definition of the urban system (see below), although some settlements in this category could be qualified as towns even if we are more rigorous with their evaluation (Pöstyén [Piešťany, SK], Modor [Modra, SK], Moson, Érmihályfalva [Valea lui Mihai, RO], Poprád [Poprad, SK] etc.). Also, some settlements on the verge between villages and towns are included in the category of small towns with partial functions. Even after such a correction, approximately 300 settlements are supposed to have had urban functions, and this figure is more than twice the number of the officially acknowledged towns.

The correlations between settlements with *town rank* and those with *urban functions*, and between *administrative functions* and *urban hierarchy* show several important characteristics of the contemporary urban network. The numerical comparison of the two “sets” clearly demonstrated their incompatibility, despite the fact that in the 1870s the complicated feudal legal statuses of the settlements were “simplified” at the creation of the civil public administration, approaching the legal status to the actual functions. *Table 9* allows a more detailed look at the correlations.

Table 9
Legal status and administrative centre functions of the settlements in the respective hierarchy categories

Hierarchy level	Number of settlements	Legal status			Administrative centre functions	
		municipal towns	corporate	villages	county seats	district
I Regional centres	12*	11	1	–	11	11
II County centres	50	14	34	2	39	46
III Middle towns	65	2	40	23	13	54
IV Small towns with full deficient or partial functions	88 116	–	169	72	–	82
Settlements with district level functions	93	–	8	85	–	74
Total	424	27	108**	289	63	377

* With Záhgráb [Zagreb, HR]. **Some corporate towns did not even reach the lowest hierarchy level.
 Source: calculated by the authors.

As regards *regional centres*, the *coincidence* of the function and the “rank” is almost complete. Only Brassó [*Braşov, RO*] did not require a municipal right and Szeged did not have administrative centre functions. Among the county centres, the corporate towns made the majority, and two settlements with village status appeared here: Balassagyarmat – with county seat functions – and a Great Plain country town, Békéscsaba with its population of 42,000. Although the majority of the *county centres* are county seats, several towns managed to “climb up” to this hierarchy level without administrative centre functions (e.g. Fiume, a town in a special position; Szabadka [*Subotica, SCG*] – not even a district centre! – with almost 100,000 population and a huge surrounding area; Kecskemét in a similar situation; the real urban centre of Zala county, Nagykanizsa; Pápa, a town in a similar situation in Veszprém county; the already mentioned Békéscsaba with village status etc.). The *middle town* hierarchy level was the transitory phase in the field of legal status: two municipal towns were included in this hierarchy level “humiliating” for them (Selmecbánya [*Banská Stiavnica, SK*], a formerly rich but for a long time declining mining town, and the huge country town, Hódmezővásárhely). Most of the towns in this category were corporate towns, and this set also contains two dozens of villages that should have been given corporate towns status in the contemporary conditions; in addition, several of these villages were county seats. For example, the lively commercial town with a population of 17,000, Mohács still had a village status, as did Kalocsa, an archiepiscopal centre with a population of 12,000; Turócszentmárton [*Martin, SK*] and Liptószentmiklós [*Liptovský Mikuláš, SK*], both being less populated but busy county seats in Upper Northern Hungary; Magyaróvár or Nagyszőlős [*Vinohradiv, UA*], both being county seats too; Orosháza and Szarvas, two Great Plain country towns, each with a population over 20,000 etc. The award – undertaking? – of town rank becomes especially disputable if we consider that settlements with a population of 1,500–4,000, without hardly any urban functions were included among the corporate towns, such as Kolozs [*Cojocna, RO*], Leibic [*L'ubica, SK*], Szentgyörgy [*Svätý Jur, SK*], Ruszt [*Rust, A*], Felsőbánya [*Baia Sprie, RO*] etc. The settlements with a full range of *small town* functions can rightly be classified to the urban network, but the majority of them only had a village status. Many of the settlements with village status in this category could have justifiably demand town rank, for example the Great Plain country towns with a large number of population, such as Békés (almost 27 thousand inhabitants), Csongrád (25 thousand inhabitants), Óbecse [*Bečej, SCR*] (19 thousand inhabitants), or market centres with long traditions and relatively large population – Vágújhely [*Nové Mesto nad Váhom, SK*], Huszt [*Hust, UA*], Tata, Tapolca, Csáktornya [*Čakovec, HR*], Körmend, Bonyhád, Szigetvár, Apatin [*Apatin, CRG*], Sárvár, Dunaszerdahely [*Dunajská Streda, SK*], Dunaföldvár, Paks etc. –, transport junctions and industrial centres, such as Hatvan or Salgótarján. At the same time, in the lower regions of the urban hierarchy we see set-

tlements with town rank, too. The “legal source” of the town rank of the settlements in the lower hierarchy levels is definitely “tradition”, the formerly possessed free royal town status, or the mining town status. On the other hand, the correlation between *district seat functions* and the urban network is tight: 94% of the small towns had district centre functions. Anyway, the simple numerical comparison of the settlements with town rank and urban functions clearly demonstrates that there are great differences between the two “sets”, so the surveys of the urban network in Hungary in the Dualist era *cannot be restricted to the settlements with town rank*. Justifiable statements – scale of urbanisation, the size of the urban network, “supply of towns”, density of towns – can only be made with the *consideration of the set of functional towns*.

The comparison of the administrative functions fulfilled by the towns and the hierarchical order suggests that the urbanisation process of the Dualist era was largely attributable to “external factors” (i.e. external factors from the aspect of the urban network), the interventions of the state. The most important tool of this intervention was the location of state and public administration functions after the Compromise. (Similarly important were the railway constructions influenced by the state, the state-financed industrial developments or the designation of the bases of the military forces etc.). During the establishment of the civil public administration – especially at the designation of the districts and their centres – some rational criteria had to be met, i.e. the lower and the upper limit of the number of public administered population, the accessibility of the centres – especially of the district seats – (they should be “manageable” from the villages of the districts within one day even on foot), the possibilities of the establishment of the most basic institutional system etc. The consequences of this process are manifold.

- Because administrative centres were needed in weakly urbanised or urban deficient regions as well, in these areas administrative centre functions – in some cases even county seat role – were awarded to several settlements with very weak urban traditions, small population and either deficient or missing other urban functions, i.e. to settlements where no “real urban life” unfurled within the respective municipality. The awarded administrative centre status then “brought” many institutions into the settlement – especially to the county seats –, lifting these settlements to a higher level of the hierarchy, while the formation of the “auxiliary” urban features and the location of other, non-administrative institutions followed the award of the administrative centre functions with a significant delay. This way a number of county seats were less populated settlements, actually “*central places*” with primarily administrative functions but mostly lacking other urban functions even at the end of the Dualist era. Among the county seats such a settlement was the seat of Árva county, *Alsókubín* [*Dolný Kubín, SK*], whose population was

only 1,800 in 1910 (with position 123 in the urban hierarchy, but on the basis of the population living from trade it was not included in the first 300 settlements of Hungary); *Aranyosmarót* [Zlatné Moravce, SK] with a population of approximately 3,000 (at the 91st place of the hierarchy, but only at position 273 when looking at the population employed in trade), together with *Ipolyság* [Šahy, SK], *Dicsőszentmárton* [Târnăveni, RO], *Liptószentmiklós* [Liptovský Mikuláš, SK], *Turócszentmárton* [Martin, SK] or *Csíkszereda* [Miercurea-Ciuc, RO], but *Magyaróvár*, *Nagyszőlős* [Vinohradiv, UA], *Fogarás* [Făgăraș, RO] etc. also belonged to this category.

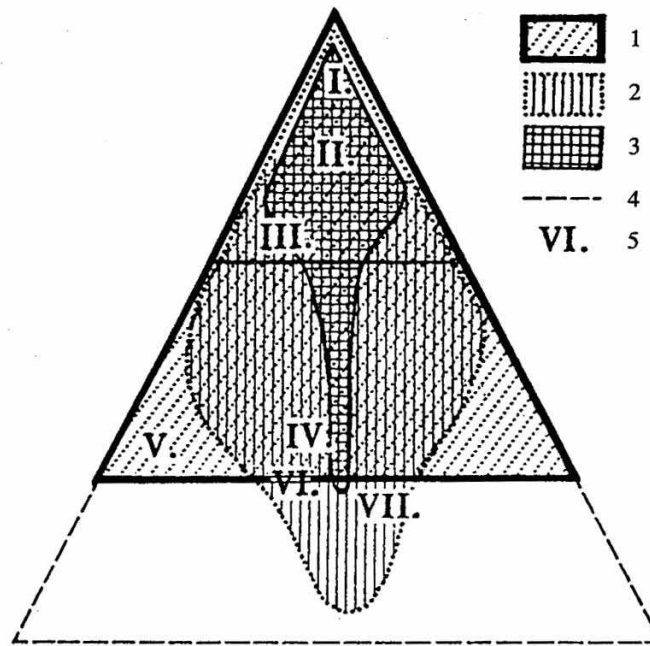
- Despite the fact that 13 Hungarian county seats were not among the so-called “county centres” and 94 of the Hungarian district seats were excluded from the settlements with urban functions, the urban development role of public administration in the Dualist era is still evident. The settlements that were awarded the district seat status did not only gain a few district level institutions; these attracted further “urban elements” into the settlement, as well – the district courts attracted lawyers, the district’s general practitioner attracted the location of a pharmacy, the district offices promoted the settling down of a post office etc. –, the attraction of the administrative offices entailed the visits to other institutions that promoted the settling down of merchants, industrial entrepreneurs etc. In cases where a respective district seat had already fulfilled central functions beforehand, other factors – e.g. favourable transport location – promoted the urban development; the district seat could develop into a small town with versatile functions.
- Another component of the relations between the administrative centre role and the development of the urban hierarchy is that without administrative functions – county seat function – very few Hungarian towns managed to gain a good position in the hierarchical order of the towns in Hungary, and at the establishment of the civil public administration very few “real towns” were omitted, could be omitted from the list of the administrative centres (Table 9.). The relation of Szeged and Csongrád county is an exceptional case when in a county it was not the strongest town in the economic sense – in fact, also when it comes to administrative and cultural institutions – that was awarded the county seat role. This fact shows the efficiency of the civil public administration’s aiming at “rationality”. Among the few exceptions we find Szatmár county where not Szatmárnémeti [*Satu Mare*, RO] – a town with municipal rights – was the county seat; it was Nagykároly [*Carei*, RO], in a peripheral location, with a smaller population and more limited urban functions; in Nógrád county the county nobility chose the “gentry-like” Balassagyarmat as the county seat back in the feudal times, instead of the more bourgeois Losonc [*Lučenec*, SK]. Nagykanizsa, very rapidly developing after the railway constructions, had a higher position in the hierarchy than

Zalaegerszeg, a town supported by county institutions but with a bad transport location and insignificant economic role. The situation was similar in the case of Pápa and Veszprém.

- In addition to the above-mentioned towns, the Great Plain country towns with extended outskirts and large population were county seats, even without central roles at county level: Szabadka [*Subotica, SCG*], Újvidék [*Novi Sad, SCG*], Kecskemét, Békéscsaba, Versec [*Vršac, SCG*], Pancsova [*Pančevo, SCG*] and Baja.
- The “network” of administrative centres created by the needs of public administration, and the circle of centres shaped by the requirements of the settlement network appeared (driven by the demand to supply the respective regions with administrative functions and urban services) even when complex urban development could not keep up with these demands, even when very much lopsided, functionally deficient centres were “available”. Urban hierarchy thus *had broader frameworks* than the “complex” urban functions were able fill out even at the end of the Dualist era. These “relations” are the consequence of the fact that at the time of the creation of civil public administration, a “medieval” urban network existed in Hungary, which was only partially transformed by the bourgeois urban development; this process had not finished by the beginning of the 20th century. This is why the acquisition of the administrative functions could be important in the promotion of urban development. (A similar relationship existed between the establishment of the railway network and urban development – at the time of the construction of the railway system there was no network in Hungary consisting of influential, “unavoidable” towns –, although the urban development effect of the railway, as we have already mentioned, is overrated in our opinion by the Hungarian urban historians.) The overweight of the administrative roles, the dominance of the civil servant layer and the negligible weight of the “real” bourgeois class, together with the strong dependence on the central state made the Hungarian towns with administrative centre functions a bit akin to the Eastern European type of towns.
- Although the circle of towns in the functional sense went beyond the “legal frameworks” – i.e. the circle of the settlements with town rank –, these towns did not fulfil out these frameworks completely; some of the Hungarian settlements with town rank lost their significance and were void of urban functions.
- The circles of town in legal sense, based on the hierarchy and those in the socio-economic functional sense were rather different, which is attributable to the “immaturity” of the urban network (*Figure 7*).

Figure 7

Relationship between settlements with legal status of cities, characterised by urban functions and urbanised society, early 20th century



Keys: 1 – Towns with municipal rights and corporate towns; 2 – Settlements with Urban Functions;
3 – Settlements with Urban Role and Urbanised Society; 4 – District Centres with Legal Status of villages.

Source: designed by: Beluszky, P.

4.2.2 The proportion of urban population – urbanisation level – sizes of the towns

The large difference between the settlements with town rank and those with urban functions modifies the formerly published figures indicated for the number and the proportion of the urban population (these figures were based on the population of the settlements with town rank). Considering all settlements with *urban functions* in Hungary, in 1910 the number of urban population was 5.362 million, making 29.2% of the country (if the last category that we take into consideration down the urban hierarchy is the small towns, the number of urban citizens was 4.965 million, i.e. 27.0% of the Hungarian population). This figure is approximately 1.610 million

more than the number of inhabitants in settlements with town rank; the “urbanisation level” of Hungary is immediately “improved” by almost ten percent if we consider the settlements with urban functions (the proportion of the inhabitants in the settlements with town rank was 20.4% in 1910). Just below one-twentieth (4.8%) of the urban population lived in Budapest, but the 11 regional centres following the capital city together were home to only 4% of the population. In one regional centre the average number of population was 66,000, which is only 7.5% of the population of the capital city (Table 10). These figures suggest that at the end of the Dualist era the weight of the capital city, at least when calculated with the number of population (!), was not outstanding, despite the population boom taking place after the Compromise (the population of Budapest was only 271,000 in 1870 – making 2.0% of the total population of Hungary –, it was 492,000, i.e. 3.2% in 1890). At the same time, there was a deep gap between Budapest and the regional centres – the “rural cities” of that time – among other things in the number of population; big city development was restricted almost exclusively to Budapest, the “rural cities” of 60,000–70,000 population were just above the category of small towns, at least by a European standard; several of them had less than 50,000 inhabitants by the end of the 19th century (Brassó [Braşov, RO] – 41 thousand, Kassa [Košice, SK] and Győr – 44 thousand, Pécs – almost 50 thousand inhabitants); in the most populated Szeged – with 118,000 inhabitants –, two-fifths of the dwellers lived in the scattered farms belonging to the town.¹⁷ At the examination of the urban character of the settlements, as we have already mentioned in the introductory part, it is often the number of population that is taken into consideration. From Table 10 we can draw conclusions concerning the correlation between the hierarchical order and the number of population of the towns. This relationship is contradictory. It is true that the average number of population in the different hierarchy classes is monotonously decreasing. The pace of the decrease, however, from one hierarchical category to the other is rather different; in the regional centres, on the average only 7.5% of the population of the capital city lived, and the population of the county seats is only approximately one-third of that in the regional centres,

¹⁷ The “scattered farms” are a special type of sporadic settlements: they are “auxiliary” settlements, originally not more than the economic backyard of the agricultural population living in the Great Plain country towns, in the faraway places of their estates. There were towns that had areas covering tens of thousands of hectares, some of them may have been 10–20–25 kilometres away from the centres, making it impossible to cultivate them by daily commuting. In the “scattered farm” – which was a stable, stalls, a well and a temporary dwelling in the beginning –, the working members of the family lived in the peak seasons of agricultural works. After the intensification of the agricultural production – e.g. the spread of stabling –, the owners spent more and more time in their scattered farms, finally they became constantly inhabited places. Nevertheless the families usually kept their homes in the towns, where the elderly family members, the children in school age etc. lived. Administratively the scattered farms still belonged to the towns.

while the middle towns follow the county centres with a much smaller gap.

Table 10

Typical numbers of population in the towns belonging to the different hierarchy levels, 1910

Hierarchy level	Number of centres	Number of population	Average population	In per cent of the previous level	Number of population		Standard deviation, %	Relative standard deviation, %	In per cent of the total population of Hungary
					maximum	minimum			
I. Budapest	1	880,371	880,371	–	–	–	–	–	4,8
II. Regional centres	11	729,367	66,306	7.5	118,328	41,056	288.2	33.7	4.0
Of which:	5	348,526	69,705			44,211	209.7	23.6	
a) full ^{a)}	6	380,841	63,474		92,729	41,056	288.2		
b) deficient ^{b)}					118,328				
III. County centres	50	1,196,786	23,936	36.1	94,610	6,912	1,369.2	68.0	6.5
Of which:	17		33,126		94,610	10,776	877.6	57.7	
a) full	12	563,135	25,763		66,834	10,884	616.5	61.2	
b) deficient	21	309,156	15,462		42,146	6,912	609.9	54.6	
c) partial		324,695							
Middle towns	65	956,742	14,719	61.5	62,445	3,701	1,687.7	82.3	5.2
Of which:									
a) full	29	466,752	16,095		55,197	3,701	1,491.8	77.2	
b) deficient	31	464,458	11,983		62,445	4,223	1,478.7	81.9	
c) partial ^{c)}	5	25,532	5,106		8,423	1,821	462.8	60.0	

continuing Table 10

Hierarchy level	Number of centres	Number of population	Average population	In per cent of the previous level	Number of population		Standard deviation, %	Relative standard deviation, %	In per cent of the total population of Hungary
					maximum	minimum			
Small towns	204	1,201,762	5,891	40.0	26,875	977	2,750.8	72.9	6.5
Of which:									
a) full	88		7,269					64.0	
b) deficient	52	632,423	5,736					70.9	
c) partial	64	304,009	4,146					76.1	
		265,319							
V. Settlements with district centre functions	93	397,323	4,319	73.3	17,202	587	2,930.5	85.2	2.2
I–V. total	331	4,965,028	15,000	–	118,328	977	12,111.4 ^d		27.0
I–VI. total	424	5,362,351	12,647	–	118,328	587	20,158.1 ^d		29.2

^{a)} Without Záhgráb [Zagreb, HR];

^{b)} Deficient and partial centres together;

^{c)} Actually small towns with county level functions;

^{d)} Excluding Budapest.

Source: Calculated by the authors.

The “leaps” of different magnitude at the boundaries of the respective categories is a sign of the *immaturity of the urban hierarchy* on the one hand; on the other hand it is due to the fact that the role of the different urban development functions is different at the various levels of hierarchy. The “rise” of the county seats in the hierarchy was often supported by the administrative institutions located to the county seats, but the population concentrating effect of these institutions is rather limited, especially when compared to manufacturing industry or the agricultural activities in the country towns of the Great Hungarian Plain. This is why the county seats had such a small population compared to the regional centres. *Within the individual hierarchy levels*, the standard deviation of the numbers of population of the towns is rather big, usually *increasing as we are descending down the hierarchy*. Among the county seats the standard deviation already reached 68%; this hierarchy level includes Szabadka [*Subotica, SCG*] with its 95,000 population, Kecskemét with 68,000, Miskolc with 51,500 and Békéscsaba with 42,000 inhabitants. At the same time, in Rimaszombat [*Rimavská Sobota, SK*] just over 7,000 people lived in 1910, the number of inhabitants was 7,500 in Lőcse [*Levoča, SK*], just over 8,000 in Trencsén [*Trenčín, SK*] and somewhat more than 8,000 in Balassagyarmat. Standard deviation is even bigger at the lower levels; among the middle towns we find – at position 101 in the hierarchy! – Hódmezővásárhely that had a population of 62,500, Újpest – a town of special situation – that was home to 55,000 people, Kiskunfélegyháza with 35,000 and Csíkszereda [*Miercurea-Ciuc, RO*] with a mere 4,000 population, or Dicsőszentmárton [*Târnăveni, RO*] and Turócszentmárton [*Martin, SK*] with a population of the same magnitude.

To sum it up: despite the fact that there are marked differences in the numbers of population across the hierarchy levels, the *population number is still unsuitable for drawing conclusions concerning the urban character of a settlement* and the development level of the urban functions.

The assessment of the *average size of towns* at the individual hierarchy levels is rather uncertain when we look at how much these population concentrations supported the evolvement of a complex urban life. It is a fact that most of the Hungarian towns were small towns by European standards in the early 20th century. We also have to take into consideration the fact that the average towns sizes are significantly increased by the Great Plain country towns with their large population numbers: if we omit the Great Plain country towns e.g. when examining the middle towns with a full range of urban functions, the average number of population decreases from 16,000 to less than 10,000. Such a settlement size, however, excludes – coming from the mere size – the appearance of a more differentiated urban society and a larger layer of upper and middle bourgeois class and also of a versatile cultural life – permanent theatre, daily papers, versatile “leisure activities” etc. (If we – rather subjectively – presume that in addition to the county centre functions, a

population of at least 20,000, or besides middle town function, a minimum population of 25,000 is necessary for an “urban milieu”, in the early 20th century not more than 53–55 Hungarian towns offered conditions for a complex urban life.) We cannot draw unequivocal conclusions for the value of the *urbanisation threshold* in the early 20th century from the average number of population of the respective hierarchy levels, either, among other things because this threshold varied across the different regions of the country; it was much higher in the Great Hungarian Plain. The average population numbers of the small towns (4 thousand for the small towns with partial and around 7 thousand for those with a full range of functions) might suggest that this threshold is around 5,000 people. However, one can say that the population of many towns does not come near this figure – e.g. the population of Aranyosmarót [*Zlatné Moravce, SK*], Csíkszereda [*Miercurea-Ciuc, RO*], Liptószentmiklós [*Liptovský Mikuláš, SK*], Turócszentmárton [*Martin, SK*] was around 3,000 to 4,000 persons –, also, several settlements with a population larger than 10,000 did not have any urban function at all. Nevertheless in *Upper Northern Hungary* and in *Transdanubia* the *threshold value* above which most settlements had acquired urban functions was about 4,000 population (in Upper Northern Hungary there were approximately 20 such municipalities, in Transdanubia 18–19 of them). In the Great Hungarian Plain this threshold was about 8,000 people, not forgetting the fact that approximately three dozens of villages with a larger population did not have urban functions.

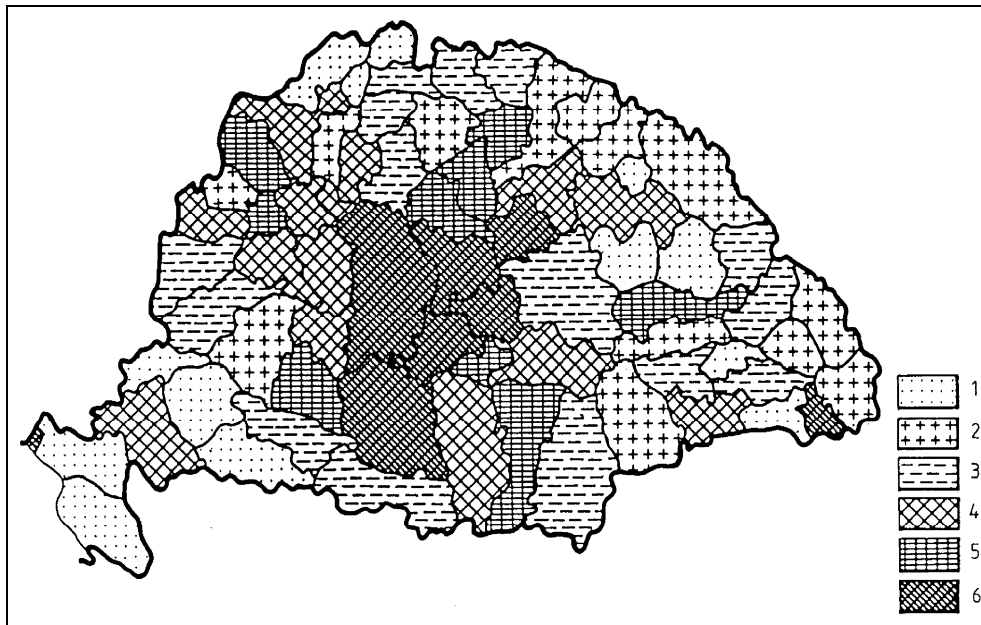
Returning to the issue of the urbanisation level of Hungary – the proportion of the urban population – and its regional disparities, in only one region, the Great Hungarian Plain we find urban figures different – but very much different – than the national average (*Figure 8* and *Table 11*). In the Great Hungarian Plain more than half, 55.8% of the population lived in settlements qualified as towns, but even if we focus on the unequivocally urban settlements, only – regional centres, county centres and middle towns –, more than two-thirds of the population (as opposed to the national average of 20.2%). In addition, a significant part of the population lived in settlements with over 5,000 inhabitants but without urban functions. Despite the fact that these settlements were void of urban functions, the basic provision was definitely better than in the typical “rural” settlements (these settlements already had a physician, veterinary, pharmacy, post office, telegraph office, maybe even a savings bank, the supply of the shops was wider than small groceries etc.). This peculiar settlement structure was even more extreme in some counties: in Csongrád, 71.5% of the population lived in settlements with urban functions (62.5% of them in middle towns or above this level in the urban hierarchy), the same figure for Hajdú county was 69.7%, for Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun – although calculated with Budapest – it was 62.8% and in Békés it reached 59.2% (*Table 12*).

The urban character, “urbanisation level” of the country towns of the Great Hungarian Plain is disputed; it is true that some of their population lived in the

scattered farms, but in the early 20th century the majority of the scattered farms were organically integrated to the country towns, i.e. the classical principle of the scattered farms still existed. The classical researcher of Hungarian settlement geography, *Tibor Mendöl* differentiated among three types of settlements within the Great Plain country towns: he only accepted as “towns” the city centres that were home to the public buildings, shops, workshops and the “industrial and trade employees”, surrounded by the outskirts inhabited by peasant citizens and the urban poverty that Mendöl considered as a (separate) settlement with village functions; the third one was the total of scattered farms in the hinterland of the towns.

Figure 8

Level of urbanisation in the counties, 1900
(All settlements with urban functions are taken into consideration)



Keys: 1 – 0.0-7.0%; 2 – 7.1-12.0%; 3 – 12.1-16.0%; 4 – 16.1-20.0%; 5 – 20.1-30.0%; 6 – 30.1% and more.

Source: designed by Beluszky, P.

Table 11

Major indices of the urbanisation level of the regions, 1910

Region	Area, m ²	Population	Number of settlements with town rank	Number of settlements with urban functions*		Number of population in settlements with town rank	Share of urban population, %
				levels I–III.	levels IV–V.		
Transdanubia	45,661	3,175,181	16	17	57	360,266	11.35
Upper Northern Hungary	54,135	3,574,288	41	29	71	481,663	13.47
Northeast Hungary	24,210	1,191,354	5	8	20	88,437	7.42
Partium	26,626	1,687,461	8	9	31	210,551	12.48
Great Hungarian Plain	45,447	4,527,587	31	30	48	2,045,921	45.19
Tisza–Maros area (Banat)	28,507	1,582,133	8	11	24	212,875	13.45
Transylvania	57,243	2,678,367	29	22	47	350,268	13.07
Total	282,297**	18,416,371	138	126	298	3,749,981	20.36

continuing Table 11

Region	Number of population in settlements with urban functions		Share of urban population, %		Number of settlements		
	in towns belonging to levels I–III.	in towns belonging to levels IV–V.	in towns belonging to levels I–III.	altogether	settlements with town rank	settlements in levels I–III.	all towns
					per 10 thousand km ²		
Transdanubia	385,500	265,017	12.14	20.49	3.5	3.7	16.2
Upper Northern Hungary	437,366	313,648	12.24	21.01	7.6	5.4	18.5
Northeast Hungary	106,876	75,888	8.97	15.34	2.1	3.6	9.4
Partium	226,295	147,466	13.41	22.15	3.8	4.0	15.0
Great Hungarian Plain	1,953,104	633,369	44.02	55.80	6.8	6.6	17.2
Tisza–Maros area (Banat)	240,180	124,433	15.18	23.04	2.8	3.9	12.3
Transylvania	323,120	153,975	12.06	17.80	5.0	3.8	12.1
Total	3,712,441	1,613,796	20.16	28.92***	4.9	4.5	15.0

* In the following breakdown: capital city, regional centres, county centres and middle towns in categories I-III. and small towns and towns “with district level functions”.

** Without Fiume.

*** With Fiume: 29.12%.

Source: Calculated by the authors.

Table 12
Major indices of the urbanisation level of the counties, 1910

Counties	Number of towns	Share of population in settlements with town rank	Number of settlements with urban functions in levels		The share of their population from the total population of the county	
			I-III	IV-V	I-III	I-V
I Transdanubia						
Baranya	1	14.1	2	5	19.0	23.5
Fejér	1	14.6	1	4	14.6	24.1
Győr	1	32.5	1	2	32.5	37.8
Komárom	1	11.1	1	4	11.1	19.2
Moson	-	-	1	3	5.6	18.2
Somogy	1	6.6	1	7	6.6	14.8
Sopron	3	13.6	1	6	12.0	21.2
Tolna	1	5.6	1	7	5.6	20.8
Vas	2	9.0	2	8	9.0	16.9
Veszprém	2	15.2	2	3	15.2	20.2
Zala	2	8.0	3	7	9.6	15.8
Esztergom	1	19.7	1	1	19.7	23.1
II Upper Northern Hungary						
Árva	-	-	1	3	2.3	9.2
Bars	3	10.7	2	3	7.2	14.0
Hont	2	14.5	2	2	14.6	19.0
Liptó	1	14.1	2	1	17.8	18.6
Nógrád	1	5.0	2	4	8.2	16.0
Nyitra	3	8.2	4	8	10.2	19.8
Pozsony	5	27.4	2	7	24.0	32.1
Trencsén	2	5.5	2	6	5.5	11.3
Túróc	-	-	1	2	7.4	22.6
Zólyom	3	17.8	1	2	6.9	16.6
Szepes	9	24.1	3	9	14.0	26.6
Sáros	3	15.0	1	5	9.4	16.4
Gömör and Kishont	5	12.4	2	5	7.2	15.5
Abaúj-Torna	1	21.9	1	4	21.9	28.5
Borsod	1	17.8	1	6	17.8	36.2
Heves	2	16.6	2	5	16.6	30.2
III Northeast Hungary						
Zemplén	1	5.8	3	7	8.9	18.0
Ung	1	10.4	1	3	10.4	13.7
Bereg	2	12.8	2	4	12.8	17.0
Ugocsa	-	-	1	1	8.5	12.3
Máramaros	1	6.0	1	5	6.0	16.0

continuing Table 12

Counties	Number of towns	Share of population in settlements with town rank	Number of settlements with urban functions in levels		The share of their population from the total population of the county	
			I–III	IV–V.	I–III	I–V
IV Partium						
Szatmár	4	17.2	3	7	16.1	23.7
Szilágy	2	6.5	2	4	6.5	13.2
Bihar	1	9.9	3	10	13.0	21.5
Arad	1	15.2	1	10	15.2	26.6
V Great Hungarian Plain						
Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun	9	58.1	9	11	58.4	62.8
Bács-Bodrog	6	27.2	5	12	25.2	40.7
Csongrád	3	65.2	3	6	65.2	71.5
Csanád	1	24.0	1	3	24.0	45.7
Békés	1	8.1	4	4	38.5	59.2
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	6	35.8	4	7	28.7	53.4
Hajdú	4	60.5	2	4	47.6	69.7
Szabolcs	1	11.9	2	4	15.0	22.5
VI Tisza-Maros area (Banat)						
Torontál	3	12.0	5	8	15.5	21.4
Temes	3	22.2	3	9	22.2	32.0
Krassó-Szörény	2	6.0	3	7	7.3	15.8
VII. Transylvania						
Lower Fehér	4	12.3	3	5	10.1	18.4
Beszterce-Naszód	1	10.4	1	2	10.4	16.8
Brassó	1	40.7	1	1	40.7	46.7
Csík	2	8.7	2	1	8.7	11.4
Fogaras	1	6.9	1	2	6.9	10.1
Háromszék	2	10.0	2	2	10.0	14.7
Hunyad	4	7.0	1	9	2.5	13.7
Little Kükküllő	2	7.6	1	2	3.8	9.0
Kolozs	2	22.6	1	4	21.2	25.2
Maros-Torda	2	14.9	2	1	14.9	15.6
Great Kükküllő	2	13.6	2	3	13.6	19.9
Szeben	2	23.7	1	4	18.9	27.5
Szolnok-Doboka	2	7.3	2	5	7.3	11.0
Torda-Aranyos	1	7.7	1	4	7.7	14.2
Udvarhely	1	8.2	1	2	8.2	11.2

Source: calculated by the authors.

Despite its shortcomings, this peculiar Great Plain settlement structure had several advantages: the larger part of the population actually lived in the proximity of the urban institutions and had access to the basic institutions in their place of residence; in fact, in the Great Hungarian Plain settlements with large population – not only in towns – institutions unknown in the “regular” urban regions settled down (book clubs, societies, public libraries, local press, but even the agrarian socialist movements originated from the huge villages and country towns of the Great Hungarian Plain). In other words, despite the fact that the urbanisation of the country towns of the Great Hungarian Plain was peculiar – characterised by a low level of technical infrastructure, predominantly rural cityscape, high proportion of agricultural population etc.–, the *settlement structure of the Great Hungarian Plain* in the early 20th century was favourable for the provision of the population and even for the operation of the economy.

In four other regions of Hungary – Transdanubia, Upper Northern Hungary, the Partium and the Tisza–Maros area (Banat) –, the figures of the urbanisation level were quite close to each other, at the same time the proportion of urban population may have been very low in some of their districts; not only in some counties of Upper Northern Hungary (*Table 12*), e.g. Árva, Bars, Trencsén, Turóc, Zólyom, Gömör, where less than one-tenth of the population of the respective counties lived in towns at higher levels in the urban hierarchy, but also in Transdanubia, where in Somogy, Moson, Tolna, Vas or Zala county the population of the major towns did not reach 10% within the population of the respective counties, either, and the population of all settlements with town rank remained below one-fifth of the total population of these counties. The proportion of urban population was even lower in Northeast Hungary and Transylvania, despite the fact that the number of population in the settlements *with urban functions* exceeded the population of the settlements *with town rank* in all of these regions.

4.2.3 Spatial distribution of the towns

It is evident that the threshold values of the number of population to be supplied by the respective hierarchy levels, the distance and accessibility, the capacities of the urban institutions etc. show certain regularity, a quantifiable structure in the settlement hierarchy. However, there is *practically no correlation* between the well-know theoretical model of W. Christaller and the findings of our survey (*Table 13*). At the top of the hierarchy, the difference among the individual levels below Budapest “blurred”, and the findings of our survey can also be interpreted in a way that one hierarchy level “below” the capital city was absent in Hungary – see the gap in the number of population –, and this is the level of the “real countryside large cities”. Of course we can assume that “natural” urban development would have cre-

ated this urban level, had the Dualist state formation existed for a longer time. *Zágráb* [*Zagreb, HR*] and *Kolozsvár* [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*] were “potentially” suitable for this role. *Zágráb* [*Zagreb, HR*], as the capital city of Croatia–Slavonia with limited autonomy, grew up to its legal status at an extremely rapid pace (also, its population number tripled in the years of the Dualism); in 1910 *Zágráb* [*Zagreb, HR*] was at the top of the regional centres in the volume of each of the urban functions taken into consideration in our survey, despite the fact that its “country” was a backward, the least modernised region of the Carpathian Basin. *Kolozsvár* [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*] could have found a hinterland in Transylvania, a region of 2.8 million inhabitants and legally separated from Hungary until the Compromise, which could have “elevated” the city from among the regional centres. These processes, however, did not lead to the elevation of a few regional centres, allowing them to make a separate level of the hierarchy. Christaller’s model and the actual hierarchy did not coincide at the lower levels, either; at the latter, the “multipliers” belonging to the towns in the respective hierarchy levels varied, showed no regularity.

Table 13

Number of centres by hierarchy levels according to W. Christaller and our survey

Number of settlements in the respective hierarchy levels by		Total number of settlements in the respective and the higher hierarchy levels by	
Christaller’s model	our survey	Christaller’s model	our survey
1	1	1	1
2	11	3	12
6	50	9	63
18	65	27	128
54	204	81	332
162	93	247	425
486	–	729	–

Nevertheless it is not surprising in the light of our findings that we were *not able to demonstrate* any regularity, *geometrical order* in the spatial distribution of the hierarchically divided urban system. In the density of the urban network, especially if we consider the hierarchy levels and the numbers of population in the towns, significant regional differences can be seen. In *Table 11* we demonstrated the density of towns by regions in Hungary. These figures show that if all hierarchy levels are taken into consideration, the density of towns is strikingly low in North-

east Hungary, and the density of towns in Transylvania and the Tisza-Maros region is well below the average, too; on the other hand, in the Great Hungarian Plain and in Upper Northern Hungary, the density of towns is high – for different reasons. The picture is slightly different if we look at higher order centres, only (excluding towns below the middle town category); in this case the density of towns falls below the average in Transdanubia, too, the density of major towns only exceeds the average in the Great Hungarian Plain and in Upper Northern Hungary. If we include the number of population, too, the picture of the “urban density” by regions looks as follows: east of the Versec [Vršac, SCG]–Temesvár [Timișoara, RO]–Arad [Arad, RO]–Nagyvárad [Oradea, RO]–Szatmárnémeti [Satu Mare, RO]–Kassa [Košice, SK] line, in *Transylvania, Northeast Hungary* and in the eastern zone of the *Partium*, the *urban network is scarce*, and the density of major towns is below the average, too (in Transylvania only 4 county seats – of the total of 15 – reached at least the level of the county centres with deficient functions); the population of the centres is strikingly low; the number of population in the higher order towns – regional and county centres, middle towns – remained below 15 thousand, where the average population of the smaller towns was only 3,300. This area is home a strikingly high number of district centres that did not even reach the lowest hierarchy level, and where the volume of urban functions was very low; in these towns, with a few exceptions, urbanisation was primarily due to the needs of public administration.

The “density” of towns in *Transdanubia* is equal to the eastern part of Hungary as regards the higher hierarchy levels, the density of smaller towns even exceeds that; the main difference is that the Transdanubian towns have a larger population – above 22,500 at higher levels and 4,500 at lower levels – and their urban functions are much more varied, their administration-economic-service roles are more balanced; the higher hierarchy levels of several towns (Nagykanizsa, Pápa, Dunaföldvár, Mohács etc.) was primarily due to their economic and service functions. Despite the fact that the share of urban population was not high in Transdanubia, either (settlements with town rank were home to 11.4%, those with urban functions to 20.5% of the population), Transdanubia we can see as a harmonically urbanising region where the majority of the centres grew and developed rapidly.

Upper Northern Hungary had the densest urban network among the Hungarian regions, if we look at all settlements with urban functions, but the density of settlements at a higher level of the hierarchy was above the national average, too. Also, settlements with town rank showed the highest density in Upper Northern Hungary. The share of urban population, however, did not exceed the figures in the other regions of Hungary, which suggests that the population numbers in these centres were rather small (just over 15,000 at the higher hierarchy levels and almost 4,500 at the lower levels). The towns in Upper Northern Hungary lived from their “traditions”; the (noble metal) mining towns of medieval origin, and the

privileged settlements of the Szepesség area, in close proximity to each other; the former royal towns living from wine production on the slopes of the Little Carpathians; small towns of medieval origin pursuing traditional handicrafts and old-style iron manufacturing; and the commerce towns of the Vág valley dominated Upper Northern Hungary. However, the majority of them lived from their past; noble metal manufacturing had declined, the small metallurgy centres were replaced by modern large-scale enterprises – Ózd, Diósgyőr, Salgótarján etc. –, handicrafts were annihilated by manufacturing industry. Also, a significant part of these small towns had not been touched by the modernisation of the bourgeois development, either. (Even the regional centre of Upper Northern Hungary, Kassa [Košice, SK] showed definite signs of feudal remnants.) Several former small towns had neither urban functions nor town rank by the early 20th century [Podolin [Podolínec, SK], Szomolnok [Smolník, SK], Mecenzéf [Medzev, SK], Korompa [Krompachy, SK], Felka [Veľká, SK], Szepesapolca [Spišská Teplica, SK], Gnézda [Hniezdne, SK], Csetnek [Štítnik, SK] etc.). Also, among the settlements with town rank there were many that were losing their urban functions (Szentgyörgy [Svätý Jur, SK], Leibic [L'ubica, SK], Szepesolaszi [Spišské Vlachy, SK], Szepesbéla [Spišská Belá, SK], Felsőbánya [Baia Sprie, RO], Modor [Modra, SK], Bazin [Pezinok, SK], Jolsva [Jelšava, SK], Dobsina [Dobšiná, SK] etc.), including some “great losers”, such as Selmezbánya [Banská Stiavnica, SK] or Bélabánya [Banská Belá, SK]. The latter had been one of the most populated and richest towns of Hungary from the middle ages until the 18th century, but, despite the state support – granting of municipal right, maintenance of a mining academy etc. –, it had gradually lost its importance and population, consequently its rank in the urban hierarchy. A similar fate was suffered by Körmöcbánya [Kremnica, SK], whose population remained below 5,000 in 1910, and so the towns just fit in the first two hundred in the hierarchical order of the Hungarian towns.¹⁸

In the *Great Hungarian Plain* not only the *share of the urban population was high* but also the density of the towns, coupled with a large number of population in the towns (at higher levels of the hierarchy it was 66,500 (!) on the average, and over 11,000 in the towns at the lower levels of the hierarchy in 1910). From the aspect of urbanisation, the Great Hungarian Plain can rightly be regarded as a very special region.

¹⁸ Körmöcbánya in Upper Northern Hungary was one of the Hungarian centres of gold mining in the Middle Ages and the early new age, with a mint. It was a significant member of the contemporary urban network.

4.2.4 Transformation of the urban hierarchy and the urban network in the Dualist era

In Europe, the capitalist urban development resulted in the exchange of a significant part of the former urban network. Our survey can only partly answer the question to what extent the Hungarian urban network transformed in the bourgeois era. We have no adequate surveys for the “original” conditions. The examination of the Hungarian urban historians – Sándor Gyimesi (1975) and Vera Bácskai-Lajos Nagy, who all worked with a census of 1828 – only concerned the higher levels of the urban hierarchy (Transylvania was omitted from their survey, for lack of a similar census). The findings of the hierarchy survey in themselves cannot give a complete answer to the question raised, because they do not “measure” directly the weight of the economy in the towns, the change of the number of population, the transformation of the urban societies, the development level of infrastructure etc. Bearing these reservations in mind, we compared the findings of *Sándor Gyimesi* from a survey concerning 1828 with the “top” of our urban hierarchy of 1910 (*Table 14*). (The method used by Sándor Gyimesi was similar to the method that we chose, although he did not differentiate between hierarchy levels, he only compiled the order of the towns.) *Table 14* suggests that the “movement” of the urban network at the hierarchical scale was very lively; the positions of approximately 45% of the towns changed considerably. Modor [*Modra, SK*] e.g. fell from the top of the urban hierarchy – according to S. Gyimesi, Modor [*Modra, SK*] was among the “best fifty” by its functions in the early 19th century – to position 376, to the category of towns with hardly any urban functions. The loss of positions of Sárospatak was also spectacular (a “fall” by almost 140 positions down the hierarchy), but the decline of Rozsnyó [*Rožňava, SK*], Selmecbánya [*Banská Stiavnica, SK*], Nagyszombat [*Trnava, SK*] and Nagykovács is evident, too. The improvement in the positions of the ambitious towns is less striking – at least at the top of the urban hierarchy –, but Arad [*Arad, RO*] and Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] developed from among the “better county centres” to the level of regional centres. From correlation calculations we can draw the conclusion that there is practically no correlation between the urban hierarchies of the two times (the correlation coefficient is +0.11). We have to consider, however, that the changes in the hierarchy order, if they do not result in the migration of towns from one hierarchy level to another, cannot be interpreted as the “exchange of the urban network”, or at least these changes are not significant from the aspect of the urban hierarchy. The disparities, on the other hand, reveal the reasons for the transformation of the urban hierarchy, e.g. the appreciation of the role of public administration in urban development. The majority of the “declining” towns had considerable economic role compared to their environment and population, but this was not accompanied by significant administration functions after the Compromise, which decreased their relative

Table 14

Comparison of the urban hierarchies in Sándor Gyimesi's survey of 1828 and the present examination of 1910

Town	Position			Town	Position		
	1828	1910*	difference		1828	1910*	difference
Buda + Pest	1	1		Kecskemét	26	31	
Pozsony	2	2		Szabadka	27	16	+11
Debrecen	3	4		Arad	28	10	+18
Győr	4	8		Újvidék	29	25	
Temesvár	5	5		Ungvár	30	39	
Széged	6	6		Kalocsa	31	70	-39
Kassa	7	3		Esztergom	32	33	
Eger	8	23	-15	Losonc	33	51	-18
Pécs	9	8		Máramarossziget	34	14	+20
Szatmárnémeti	10	15		Baja	35	48	-13
Miskolc	11	12		Nagybecskerek	36	20	+16
Komárom	12	34	-22	Zombor	37	28	
Székesfehérvár	13	17		Jászberény	38	59	-21
Sopron	14	11		Sárospatak	39	177	-138
Eperjes	15	24		Hódmezővásárhely	40	79	-39
Besztercebánya	16	18		Nagykároly	41	40	
Rozsnyó	17	76	-59	Makó	42	52	
Veszprém	18	26		Modor	43	376	-333
Vác	19	54	-35	Nagykőrös	44	88	-44
Szombathely	20	13		Nagykanizsa	45	29	+16
Selmecebánya	21	73	-52	Sátoraljaújhely	46	30	+16
Nagyvárad	22	7	+15	Lugos	47	27	+20
Nagyszombat	23	71	-48	Lócse	48	43	
Pápa	24	45	-21	Keszthely	49	63	-14
Nyitra	25	21					

*Excluding the towns in Transylvania.

Source: Gyimesi, 1975; Beluszky, 1990.

significance (Nagyszombat [*Trnava, SK*], Rozsnyó [*Rožňava, SK*], Vác, Losonc [*Lučenec, SK*] etc.). Another proof of the importance of public administration centre functions is that towns of lesser economic importance, when awarded county centre functions in the beginning of the Dualist era, considerably improved their positions in the urban hierarchy; among the settlements in *Table 14.*, this category involves Máramarossziget [*Sighetu Marmăției, RO*], Nagybecskerek [*Zrenjanin, SCG*], Lugos [*Lugoj, RO*], Szombathely, Sátoraljaújhely, and also Kaposvár, Zalaegerszeg, Balassagyarmat, Trencsén [*Trenčín, SK*] and Beregszász [*Berehove, UA*]

– these towns had not been at the top of the hierarchy in the early 19th century and consequently are not present in the Table, either – and so on. The progress of Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] and Arad [*Arad, RO*], in addition to the increase of their economic weight, was due to the demand for regional centres.

Taking all these into consideration, in our opinion we cannot talk about an “exchange” of the Hungarian urban system during the decades of Dualism (or since the foundation of the legal background of the civil society in 1848); apart from the spectacular fall or rise of a small number of towns, the urban network was rather stable. In Hungary – as opposed to e.g. England or the western provinces of Germany –, the *former urban system modernised*, and the feudal towns in better positions *shifted* to a bourgeois (capitalist) development track. However, since the majority of the Hungarian towns had an *economy of medieval character* (their main functions being manufacturing industry pursued by guilds, market centre roles and moderate retails distribution), their upper and middle bourgeois class was negligible, the property of the urban citizens was little, the towns of the feudal age were mostly nothing more than settlement (technical?) frameworks for modern urban development, the “shift” did not come from their own “organic” development. The institutions of the bourgeois era, the capital and a significant part of the bourgeois class came “from outside”. An “organic” development only occurred in a few Hungarian towns where already in the early 19th century a modern bourgeois class, free of guild restrictions – corn dealers, wholesale traders, shipping entrepreneurs etc. – had appeared, such as in Győr, Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*], Pest, Szeged, Temesvár [*Timișoara, RO*] etc. In these towns we could witness the flow of the formerly accumulated (commercial) capital into manufacturing industry, or financial institutions. Thus, even though the urban network – or at least the larger part of it – was not exchanged, a “shift” *within the urban network* occurred, both as regards functions and the composition of the local societies. Even in large cities such as Pest, where a considerable economic basis and a layer of well-off bourgeois had emerged before 1848, there is no or hardly any continuity between the bourgeois of the early and late 19th century, either as regards their persons or character.¹⁹ In the modernising towns, in addition to the bourgeois of the feudal times – handicraftsmen with guild traditions, retail traders, feudal lateiner layer –, in the early years of the Dualist era mainly state bureaucracy, the layer of civil servants increased significantly, later – or parallel to it – a narrow bourgeois class appeared, too, as did “necessarily” industrial proletariat especially in the bigger towns. The urban poor, on the hand, made a significant part of the population in almost each town (day labourers, servants, junior officers, agricultural workers etc.). The *functional and social shift* from feudal to capitalist towns is *only evident at the top of the urban*

¹⁹ It is a characteristic example, from the 1184 tax payers in 1888 of the capital city 15 years earlier in 1873 only 347 were included in the list (himself or his ancestor). (*Vörös, 1978*).

hierarchy, it can only be considered general and complete in the regional centres. This does not mean that the lower levels do not feature towns belonging to the cutting edge of modernisation – e.g. Fiume [*Rijeka, HR*], Miskolc, Szombathely, Nagykanizsa, Kaposvár, Újvidék [*Novi Sad, SCG*] etc. –, but many towns even among the county centres were only at the beginning of this process, bearing some characteristics of the urban development of the feudal times (e.g. Veszprém, Eger, Esztergom, Balassagyarmat, Trencsén [*Trenčín, SK*], Lőcse [*Levoča, SK*], Zilah [*Zaláu, RO*], Szekszárd, Nagyenyed [*Aiud, RO*], Nagykároly [*Carei, RO*] etc.). Our statement that the *formation of the capitalist urban system used and transformed the frameworks inherited from the feudal times* does not mean that the feudal urban system remained unchanged. A number of towns had already fallen from the top of the urban system in the late 18th and early 19th century, and this process accelerated after 1848, partly because of the loss of the “support” provided by the town rank – the number of settlements with any sort of town rank dropped to one-sixth –, and partly because the urban development forces of capitalism neglected some of the towns, also, the weight of the “inherited” urban functions – e.g. handicrafts – decreased. This group contained the already mentioned towns in Upper Northern Hungary and Transylvania, the small centres of the declining noble metal mining – Vízakna [*Ocna Sibiului, RO*], Felsőbánya [*Baia Sprie, RO*], Újbánya [*Nová Baňa, SK*], etc. –, several small country towns – such as Kunmadaras, Hajdúdorog, Hajdúhadház, Szabadszállás, Fülöpszállás, Kiskundorozsma, Jászárokszállás etc. –, former wine producing small towns and country towns (most of the wine-producing country towns of the Hegyalja region had already lost their urban functions in the beginning of the 19th century) etc.

Exclusive products of the capitalist urban development are those industrial and population concentrations that grew on the locations of the “modern” sectors, i.e. coal and iron ore mining, metallurgy and metal processing, mostly totally irrespective of the former urban network. The plants of mining, metallurgy and metal processing in the first step created colonies of large population; their societies had nothing to do with the society of the “feudal towns”, the majority of the population was miners, factory workers and officers; as the majority of the factories and plants were state-owned – in the hand of either state companies or the Hungarian Railway Co. –, the officers too were state employees. The bourgeois class in these towns was negligible; a few merchants and craftsmen settled down to supply the large concentration of population; in some cases a few “urban institutions”, a higher elementary school, or a savings bank settled down, maybe some towns became administrative centres, district seats. According to our survey, some towns, small towns belonged to the category of settlements with urban functions, such as *Resicabánya* [*Reșița, RO*] (17,384 inhabitants), *Diósgyőr*, a town of special situation (a “suburb” of Miskolc; 17,202 inhabitants), *Salgótarján* (13,746 inhabitants), *Petrozsény* [*Petroșeni, RO*] (12,193 inhabitants), *Ózd* (5,981 inhabitants) and

Oravicabánya [*Oravița, RO*] (4,079 inhabitants). In other words, the number of “new”, “capitalist” towns was limited, their hierarchy level was low; in the early 20th century they were negligible elements of the Hungarian settlement network.

As a summary we emphasise again that the five or six decades of bourgeois urban development in Hungary did not “exchange” the urban system inherited from the feudal times, but started to transform that as regards functions and society; a fundamental transformation had only occurred by the beginning of the century in a limited number of towns, mostly at the top of the hierarchy. The number of settlements falling out from the circle of towns is considerable, but only a few “new” towns were born in the decades of the Dualist era.

4.2.5 The weight of urban functions in the settlements

Hierarchy in the narrower sense only registers one aspect of the role of the towns in the settlement hierarchy. We have already mentioned that e.g. most of the towns in Great Hungarian Plain have no large hinterland even if they have a high rank in the hierarchy, the urban goods produced in these towns are usually for the provision of their own population. In other words, even in the case of the same position in the hierarchy, the share of the urban services “sold to the countryside” can significantly vary. We have also mentioned that the urban functions of more or less the same level and weight are almost completely lost among the many agricultural functions of the Great Plain towns (which makes even the urban character of these towns questionable), whereas these urban functions are “purely” present in the case of the traditional towns, giving these settlements a definitely urban character. We can say that the “density” of the urban functions is different. Although there is a strong correlation between the position in the urban hierarchy and the quantity of the urban functions, even at the same level of hierarchy we can see considerable differences among the quantity of the urban functions of the respective towns. In addition to the quantity of the urban functions thus we pay attention to the qualitative data of the urban services, as well. From these data we can make conclusions as regards the size of the population using the services, thus indirectly the size of the (theoretical) urban hinterlands. (The exploration of the relationship between the respective towns and their surroundings is one of the most important aspects of settlement network researches. According to some approaches²⁰ this is what basically determines the urban character of the settlements [the town as a “central place”].)

²⁰ To refer only to the most prominent geographer representing this concept: T. Mendöl 1963.

For the analysis of the quantitative aspects of the urban functions, we took the following indices into consideration:

- Number of earners in trade (persons) in 1910;
- Number of earners in public services (persons) in 1910;
- Number of household servants (persons) in 1910;
- Number of lawyers (persons) in 1910;
- Bank deposits of the financial institutions (in crowns) in 1910;
- Number of secondary school students (persons) in 1910;
- Number of telephone stations in 1911.²¹

In order to make the indices of different character comparable and compatible, we calculated the *number of population provided with urban functions*. This is allowed by the information on the national figures of the earners in trade and public services, the national data of bank deposits and lawyers etc. per “unit” of population, and the consequently calculated number of inhabitants “served” by one tradesman, household servant, lawyer or one crown of bank deposit. If we draw the number of urban population from the above data, we get the number of *rural population provided with these services*, i.e. the “added value” of the town – in some geographers’ view, the “real” index of the urban hierarchy. The measurement of the weight of the urban functions with the number of population served allows the comparison of the respective functions and institutions, and the definition of their weights.

We have to emphasise that the results achieved by these calculations are “abstract figures”; they do not reflect the real situation, i.e. the number of population served is not equal to the size of the hinterlands of the towns and the number of population living there. The reasons for this are manifold. The regional penetration of certain functions can differ from the national average; in regions with better commercial provision e.g. one trader serves less inhabitants than their counterparts in worse endowed areas. The concentration of urban functions, more exactly the sectors that we considered varies across the different regions – in regions dominated by large villages e.g. the “rural” settlements too have some of the institutions that we took into consideration in the calculations, whereas in areas where small villages are more typical, the majority of the trading, public service, finance institution etc. activities is concentrated in the towns –; in fact, even the villages can have certain activities that we took into consideration. The frequency of the use of urban functions is higher among the urban citizens than at rural inhabitants, so the

²¹ Sources of the data: Directory of the Officers of Hungary 1910. Statistics of Credit Institutes of 1894–1909. Hungarian Statistical Yearbook 1910. Census of 1910. Employment of the population and large industrial companies by municipalities. Register of the telephone subscribers of Hungary 1911.

mechanical division of the number of population served into urban and rural categories, on the basis of the population numbers of towns, definitely does not reflect the real situation.

The *hierarchical order* that we get by the calculations can be compared to the *total number of citizens served* and the *number of rural population served*, to the *proportion* of urban and “rural” population served, the *number of inhabitants* of the settlements and the *density* of the functions, but of course the *interrelations* of these indices can also be examined. These comparisons can give us a lot of information on the role of towns in the settlement network; here we only refer to some spectacular characteristics.

The correlation between the *hierarchical order* and the order calculated by the *total number of population served* is very tight, the correlation coefficient is +0.94. (We have to remark that the correlation is even tighter between the population of the towns and the number of population served, reaching +0.98 if we look at the total of the towns; it is weaker at the lower levels of the urban hierarchy, still it reflects a close correlation – 0.58 – at regional centres, 0.79 at county seats, 0.77 in the case of middle towns and 0.51 at small towns. (In other words, within the urban hierarchy the group of county seats and middle towns is the most “coordinated”; the hierarchy level, the population of the towns and the number of population provided with urban goods show a tight correlation.) Looking at the total of the urban network, these two manifestations of the concentration of urban functions mostly coincide, whereas the weight of the urban functions at the different hierarchy levels showed significant differences (*Table 15*).

The average number of population served by hierarchy levels allows the drawing of several conclusions concerning the urban network. First of all it is clear that despite the fact that the Hungarian urban network was in the beginning of the modernisation process in the early 20th century and that the settlement network peculiarities of the Great Hungarian Plain – including e.g. the negligible hinterlands – did not favour the clear separation of the urban and rural regions and consequently the concentration of the urban functions, the Hungarian towns still served a significant number of population with urban goods, and the majority of the users, down to the level of the middle towns, were “rural citizens”. Even if Hungary had very small towns mostly serving the rural areas, the data of the table above reveal that the higher hierarchy level a town had, the higher the *proportion* of its participation in the provision of the countryside. Thus in the provision of the Hungarian population or of the rural population of the country with urban goods, the dominant role was played by the settlements at the higher levels of hierarchy, despite their much smaller number. The weight of the 12 regional centres exceeds that of the institutions in the just 300 small towns or district centres. As opposed to our presumption that the rural population had more regular connections to their district centres, the fact is that the supply with urban goods was the responsibility of the settlements at

the higher levels of hierarchy in the first place. The outstanding opposition of Budapest can also be seen in the number of population supplied: the capital city, only concentrating 4.8% of the total population of Hungary, “supplied” 22.6% of the Hungarian citizens with urban goods, and the average weight of the urban institutions of the regional centres was not more than 6% of that in Budapest.

Table 15

Average number of all citizens and of the rural population served by the tons at the different levels of hierarchy

Hierarchy level	Number of settlements	Average				Population served, in per cent of the previous category
		number of population*	number of inhabitants served	number of rural inhabitants served	share of rural citizens served, %	
Budapest	1	863,735	4,098,618	3,234,883	78.9	–
Regional centres	12	67,367	248,382	181,015	72.9	6.1
County seats	50	23,940	74,992	51,052	68.1	30.2
Middle towns	65	4,718	32,189	17,470	54.3	42.9
Small towns	204	6,004	9,801	3,798	38.7	30.4
Settlements with district centre functions	95	4,275	4,202	–74	–	42.9

* Civil population.

Source: calculated by the authors.

Despite the fact that a close correlation can be demonstrated between the *hierarchical order* and the *number of population supplied* (the volume of the urban institutions), the occasionally occurring discrepancies mark typical urban types, or refer to the special situation of some towns. E.g. a definitely separate group of towns are those settlements with a low number of population that were “elevated” to the urban hierarchy by the need of public administration for centres in town-deficient areas and where administration located institutions of high hierarchy level, but neither the growth of the population nor complex urbanisation, the “auxiliary” signs of urban development – trade, cultural institution, financial institutions etc. – followed the sudden promotion in the order of hierarchy. Apart from the officers, the weight and number of “real” bourgeois was low. These settlements represent a special type, when comparing the hierarchy order and their number of population. *Dicsőszentmárton* [*Târnăveni, RO*], for example (with a population of 4,417 in 1910) had the 83rd position in the order of hierarchy, whereas it was only the 163rd in population. Even bigger towns, if they were mainly administrative

centres and void of “modern” functions, had usually low weight of urban functions compared to their positions in the urban hierarchy. Zalaegerszeg, Trencsén [Trenčín, SK] or Déva [Deva, RO] belonged to this group, among others, but such a “discrepancy” was typical even of Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca, RO] and Kassa [Košice, SK], indicating the slow penetration of modern functions and the over-weight of the public administration and cultural functions.

Disparities in the other direction are usually seen in the Great Hungarian Plain, a region with towns of large population; there is a large number of “own” population to be supplied, but this only locates lower level urban institutions into these country towns, the institutional pyramid remains “distorted”, large city institutions are absent, so the hierarchy level remains low. *Hódmezővásárhely* has the 93rd position in the order of hierarchy, e.g. whereas it has the 33rd biggest number of population supplied. “Incompatibilities” of the same direction can be seen in e.g. *Kiskunfélegyháza*, *Kecskemét* or *Baja*, or in the case of *Újpest* and *Újarad* [Aradu Nou, RO], both in a special situation (satellite towns, with very large population compared to their position in the urban hierarchy). It is remarkable that in the case of Debrecen or Szeged the two “projections” of the urban functions perfectly match, i.e. the different aspects meet at the top of the hierarchy in the Great Hungarian Plain, too. *Fiume* [Rijeka, HR] was one of the most important trading towns of Hungary, a significant financial centre whose special legal situation led to its relatively low position in the hierarchy (a town “without” a county). Considerable differences can also be seen in the case of the major trading cities, if their administrative functions were modest, e.g. if they were not county seats (Pápa, Munkács [Mukacheve, UA] etc.). In the case of *Nyíregyháza*, a county centre, it is its county with a large number of population but few towns, and the large hinterland to be supplied with “basic urban goods” that elevated the quantity of urban functions above the hierarchic position.

The map showing the *number of population supplied* by the towns (Figure 9) is not surprising if we consider the close correlation between the urban hierarchy and the number of population supplied. It is understandable then that the Great Hungarian Plain cannot “remain empty” in the map demonstrating the *quantity of urban goods*, and the often supposed “under-urbanisation” of the Great Hungarian Plain, the “backwardness” of the towns in this region does not mean at all the lack or limited volume of functions and institutions, similarly to the regional appearance of the hierarchical division. The special position of the Great Plain country towns is manifested in other relations, mainly in their role that they played in the *provision of the countryside*.

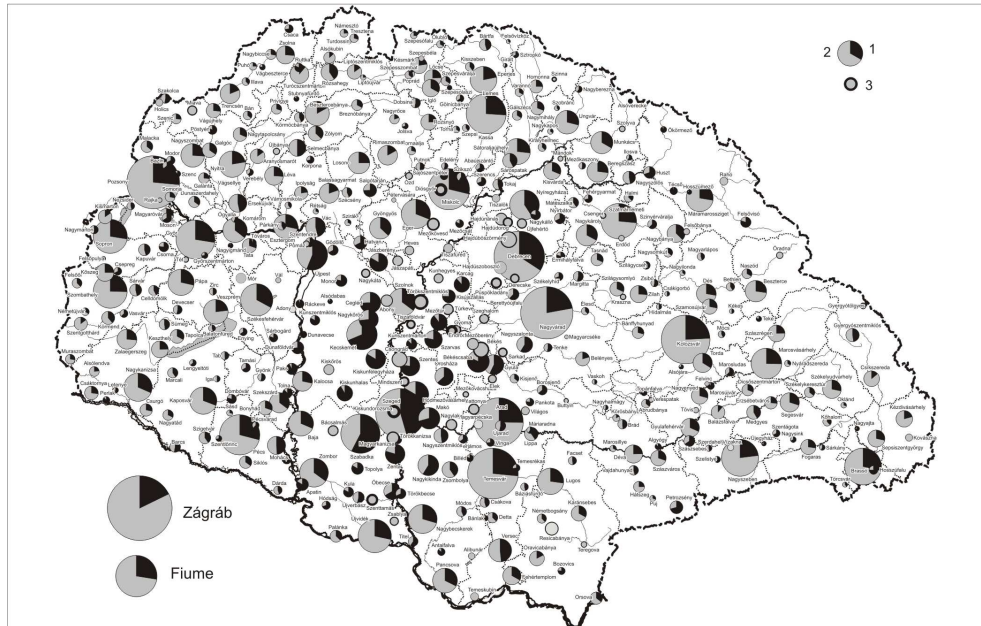
Even if we look at the *number of rural population supplied*, we cannot see the clear “disintegration” of Hungary into the Great Hungarian Plain and the rest of the country in the field of the characteristics of the urban network. In the case of the non-country towns of the Great Hungarian Plain, their positions in the urban

Figure 9

Total and rural population supplied by urban functions

Figure 9

Total and rural population supplied by urban functions



Keys: 1 – Urban population; 2 – Rural population supplied; 3 – No rural population supplied.
Source: designed by the authors.

hierarchy and that in the order defined by the number of rural population supplied mostly coincide. As regards *Temesvár* [Timișoara, RO], *Arad* [Arad, RO], or *Nagyvárad* [Oradea, RO] at the edge of the Great Hungarian Plain, then e.g. *Újvidék* [Novi Sad, SCG], *Nagybecskerek* [Zrenjanin, SCG], the number of rural population served is more or less equal to their hierarchical positions; in some cases it is even higher. The consideration of this aspect of the urban functions underlines that the settlement network of the *Bánát region* developed according to the “regular” model and that *Baja* or *Újvidék* [Novi Sad, SCG] are “Transdanubian” towns by character. Even *Debrecen*, *Szeged*, *Szabadka* [Subotica, SCG], *Zombor* [Sombor, SCG] or *Nyíregyháza* (all being country towns) managed to gain a hinterland compatible with their hierarchical positions – more exactly theoretically supplied rural population –, reinforcing again the fact that the integration of the elements of urbanisation started at the higher levels of the urban hierarchy, urbanisation was able to overcome the differences coming from the regional situation or the varied urban historical past. It is also remarkable that among the towns with *negative values* (e.g. in those cases when the calculated number of population supplied is lower than the own population of the given town), we find many small towns of the Great Hungarian Plain.

A more reliable conclusion than the one we can draw from the individual cases is gained if we compare at each hierarchy level the typical data of the Great Plain country towns and the towns in the other regions of Hungary (*Table 16*).

The data of the table demonstrate two basic trends: on the one hand, the Great Hungarian Plain towns, even more so the country towns (the “Great Plain” towns also include the towns of the Bánát and the edge of the Great Hungarian Plain, not typically of agricultural history) supplied less rural inhabitants at each level of the urban hierarchy than the non-Great Plain towns did; on the other hand, the difference becomes really considerable at the lower levels of the hierarchy. While the number of rural inhabitants attracted by the regional centres of the Great Hungarian Plain made 87%! of the number of population attracted by non-Great Plain regional centres – and the same figure is 85%! at the county seats –, the difference is very marked between the middle towns, the attraction of the Great Hungarian Plain country towns is less than half of the centres in the other regions of Hungary. As regards the small towns, the “widening of the gap” is evident: in the other Hungarian regions the small towns too played a significant role in the provision of the countryside – more than half of the population they supplied were “rural citizens” –, whereas the small towns of the Great Hungarian Plain were not even able to supply themselves. This is a sign of a basically different function in the settlement network – and also of a different settlement system.

Table 16

Average number of rural citizens supplied in the towns of the Great Hungarian Plain and in the other Hungarian regions, by hierarchy level

Hierarchy level	Average number of rural citizens supplied				Share of rural citizens from all supplied population, %			
	at national level	in the non-Great Plain towns	in the Great Plain towns	in the country towns	at national level	in the non-Great Plain towns	in the Great Plain towns	in the country towns
Regional centres	181,015	183,300	176,446	160,081	72.9	76.1	67.0	60.3
County seats	51,052	52,477	46,997	47,044	68.1	72.9	56.3	52.7
Middle towns	17,470	20,778	11,430	9,063	54.3	68.0	32.5	23.9
Small towns	3,798	5,058	625	-553	38.7	52.7	6.1	-
Settlements with district centre functions	-74	685	-2,197	-3,727	-	18.4	-	-

Source: Calculated by the authors.

Nevertheless we can conclude one characteristic feature of the country towns on the basis of the – presumed – number of rural inhabitants supplied: on the streets and markets, and in the shops and offices of e.g. *Hódmezővásárhely*, *Hajdúböszörmény* or *Szentes* – usually not country towns “belonging to the uppermost circles” – there must have been a significantly smaller number of “rural people” than the local inhabitants; as opposed to e.g. Rimaszombat [*Rimavská Sobota, SK*], Balassagyarmat, not to mention Turócszentmárton [*Martin, SK*] or Csíkszereda [*Miercurea-Ciuc, RO*], where the rural inhabitants actually invaded the town and dominated the urban spaces. (The real situation might be reflected in an anecdotic report that in the multi-lingual towns of the regions inhabited by ethnic groups, the official language changed in the course of the day: the German speaking merchant or handicraftsman talked in the daytime in Slovakian or Romanian to his customers, these were the most frequently used languages on the market and fairs – at dusk he spoke German again, maybe Hungarian or Yiddish.) This is the reason why the country towns of the Great Hungarian Plain were much more isolated, left to their own devices and more closed than the towns in Transdanubia or Upper Northern Hungary.

Apart from the towns of the Great Hungarian Plain, we hardly find any other town in Hungary at the beginning of the 20th century that played a limited role in the provision of their hinterlands and were not organically integrated into the settlement network. Such a position was occupied by e.g. the newly grown industrial towns (Resicabánya [*Reșița, RO*], Ózd or Diósgyőr), the formerly important towns that had hopelessly fallen behind (e.g. Szepesbéla [*Spišská Belá, SK*] or Vízakna [*Ocna Sibiului, RO*]), and a lot of small administrative centres – district seats –, where the administrative functions had not yet been accompanied a more comprehensive urbanisation, similarly to the county seats with small population, mentioned before. These small centres appear in the map by dozens. Despite the many “gaps”, the correlation between the *hierarchical order* and the *number of rural inhabitants supplied* seems to be quite close – the correlation coefficient being 0.83 –, but we must not forget that the difference between the towns at the higher hierarchical level and the small towns are so great that they partly conceal the non-compatibilities coming from the regional situation.

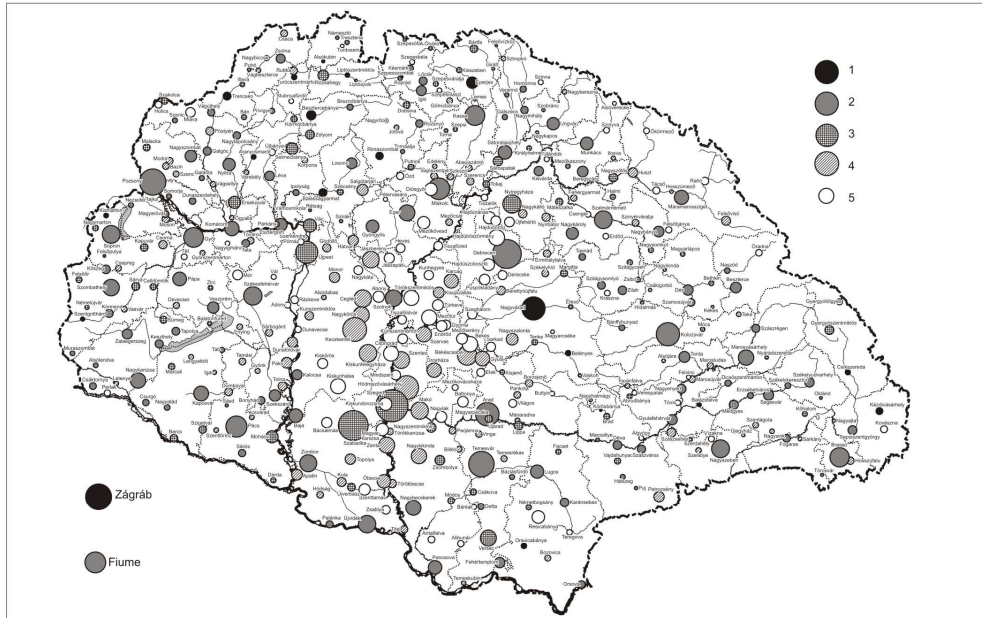
While the *number* of rural population supplied by the respective towns mainly measures the role of these towns in the countryside, the weight of the position they had in the settlement network, the *proportion* of the rural and the own population supplied partly reflects how important role urban functions played in the lives of the towns, what role the towns played – compared to their size – in the supply of their surroundings, to what extent they “dominated” the countryside. The “countryside share” is high in the case of towns where the urban institutions are large-scale compared to the number of population, or where the urban functions are very “purely” present (e.g. the overwhelming majority of the population is employed by

the urban institutions and the share of industrial or agricultural functions is limited). The “picture” drawn by this index is fundamentally different from the aspects of the urban network discussed so far, from the image defined by the hierarchy or the total number of population supplied and the number of the countryside inhabitants served (*Figure 10*). At the top of the order we find small and medium sized towns with marked profile, especially from the western counties of Upper Northern Hungary and Transylvania, occasionally Transdanubia. Most of them are small county seats or centres with special functions, such as Balázsfalva [*Blaj, RO*], the Greek Catholic clerical centre of only two thousand inhabitants, or Liptóújvár [*Liptovský Hrádok, SK*] and Szepesszombat [*Spišská Sobota, SK*], both being district seats with less than one thousand inhabitants. Also in the higher regions of this order we find those county seats that have slightly more population, higher hierarchical level but fulfilling political and administrative functions in the first place: these are Trencsén [*Trenčín, SK*], Balassagyarmat, Lőcse [*Levoča, SK*] and Déva [*Deva, RO*] (all below the threshold of 10 thousand population), and Eperjes [*Prešov, SK*] and Veszprém with their 14–16 thousand inhabitants.

At the top of the urban hierarchy, among the regional centres there were three towns with extremely high share of the countryside supplied: they were Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*], Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] and Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*]. The former was assisted in its concentration of urban functions by its vice-capital rank, Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] by its county with a total of 600,000 inhabitants, while Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*] had an extended hinterland in the also less urbanised North Transylvania. The further hierarchical order is characterised by the strong mixing of towns of different size, character and regional position, although typically there are rather few Great Plain towns among the settlements with a higher share of rural population served, and even they are “extraordinary” in some sense, e.g. *Kalocsa*, an archiepiscopal centre, a “regular” town of a region dominated by small and middle-sized villages (even though the scattered farms of *Kalocsa* became independent villages by the turn of the century), or towns outside the region where settlements followed a country town development path (e.g. *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*], *Nagybecskerek* [*Zrenjanin, SCG*] or *Kisvárd*). The towns in the Great Hungarian Plain, despite their country town past, were in the first half of this hierarchy, supporting the concept that the settlements at the top of the hierarchical pyramid are able to overcome their “regional disadvantages”, the consequences of their country town past; e.g. the number of population served by *Debrecen* was almost twice as much as the own population of the town, but *Zombor* [*Sombor, SCG*], *Szolnok*, or *Nyíregyháza* served more rural inhabitants than the number of their own population, too. Even *Szeged* – despite the huge outskirts with scattered farms, pulling down statistics – “supplied” more rural inhabitants than its own number of population was.

Figure 10

Per capita urban functions (density)



Keys: 1 – High above the urban average; 2 – Above the urban average; 3 – Average; 4 – Below the urban average;
5 – Far below the urban average.
Source: designed by the authors.

The undoubtedly most peculiar towns of Hungary are those that have no visible hinterlands, and where the share of the rural inhabitants served is negative. We deal with this group in more details. The researchers who consider towns as central places do not even regard these settlements as towns (on the other hand, putting them in the hinterland of other towns is not justifiable, either). In our opinion the majority of such towns have special hinterlands (because they have urban institutions and functions whose “quantitative” dimensions are measurable), but these hinterlands can be found within the administrative boundaries of the respective settlement. The word ‘administrative’ should be emphasised here because a large part of the population lived in the outskirts – the scattered farms could be considered as a hinterland.²² The number of such towns is not negligible: the survey of the hierarchy demonstrated urban functions in 425 settlements, of which 72 fall into this category (with a total population of 652 thousand!). They are small towns and district centres, with only one middle town (Hajdúböszörmény). These are usually extended Great Plain country towns with a large population, but this group also includes centres, with often large population, of Upper Northern Hungary, also a few weak district centres and industrial-transport centres of Transylvania, the Partium and Transdanubia. The country towns of the Great Hungarian Plain had the largest numbers of population within this group: Hajdúböszörmény had over 28 thousand inhabitants, but Békés, Törökszentmiklós and Csongrád also had more

²² The already cited Tibor Mendöl (who was a consistent representative of the „central place” theory) did not consider these settlements as towns. He solved the contradiction by saying that the Great Hungarian Plain country towns consisted of three functionally separate settlements that were spatially integrated. E.g. Hódmezővásárhely means the scattered farms of Hódmezővásárhely (lonely agricultural settlements), that surrounded the village of Hódmezővásárhely (a collective agricultural settlement), which ran around the urban core; the third settlement was the city of Hódmezővásárhely, whose inhabitants were engaged in non-agricultural production but supplied the demand of the agricultural population (*Mendöl, T.* 1963). The real size of the towns can be estimated if the corrected number of agricultural earners is drawn from the number of population (For more details see Mendöl, T.: *Városaink valódi nagysági és a helyzeti energiák típusai* [The real size of the Hungarian towns and the type of locational energies]. – *Földrajzi Közlemények.* 1935. 63. pp. 361–366. and Mendöl, T.: *Néhány szó az alföldi városok kérdéséhez* [Some words about issue of the towns in the Great Hungarian Plain]. – *Földrajzi Közlemények.* 1939. 67. pp. 217–232.). His model was criticised for not considering the existing social unity of the settlements (i.e. the fact that the large part of the population on the outskirts only temporarily used the scattered farms, they “lived” in their house in the city, attended religious services and had a social life in the city etc.) To cite only the most renowned of Mendöl’s critiques, see Erdei, F.: *A tanyás település földrajzi szemlélete* [A geographical approach to the scattered farms]. – *Földrajzi Közlemények.* 1941. 69. pp. 78–95. (Mendöl’s reply to the criticism can be read in Mendöl, T.: *Megjegyzések Erdei Ferenc “A tanyás települések földrajzi szemlélete” c. cikkéhez.* [Remarks about Ferenc Erdei’s article titled “A geographical approach to the scattered farms”]. – *Földrajzi Közlemények.* 1941. 69. pp. 113–115.) For a detailed analysis of the opposing views see Tímár, L.: *A szociológia és geográfia pörlekedésének egy lezáratlan fejezete* [An unfinished chapter of the quarrel between sociology and geography]. – *Tér és Társadalom.* 1988. 2. 2. pp. 86–94.

than 25 thousand inhabitants each. In addition to them, 20 towns of the Great Hungarian Plain had more than 10 thousand inhabitants. More than 10 thousand people lived in Mór, a Transdanubian town with a lively agricultural activity (viticulture). The industrial and mining centre of the Bánát region, Resicabánya [*Reșița, RO*], and the industrial suburb of Miskolc, Diósgyőr had 17 thousand inhabitants each. There are several similar settlements in this circle with industrial and transport functions but less than 10 thousand inhabitants (e.g. Ózd). We have to mention separately the group of small towns–district seats in east Upper Northern Hungary, where a part of the population lived on the outskirts, in scattered mountain farms and sawmills, pulling down the (negative) values of the share of the countryside. These are a group of settlements where we do not find a significant number of population supplied with urban goods even within the public administrative boundaries. All over Hungary we find such weak centres, in between the villages and the towns, situated at the bottom of the urban hierarchy. As regards the question whether there were regions in Hungary where the population was only able to see the advantages offered by the towns from a distance, this survey cannot give an exact answer. One thing is sure if we enumerate the settlements without urban functions: these will not be found in the Great Hungarian Plain. In this region, the settlements with urban functions “are close at hand”. On the other hand, in some areas of the eastern part of Upper Northern Hungary, of Transylvania (or South Transdanubia!), with bad traffic endowments, there were territories as big as districts too far from the urban centres.

Finally we can look at the *weight of the urban functions in comparison with the population of the respective settlement* (what specific values the individual urban institutions have) (*Figure 10*). The figures gained this way influenced to a large extent the image of the urban character, the urbanisation levels of the respective settlements, and contributed to the negligence of the urbanisation of the Great Hungarian Plain (both in qualitative and quantitative aspect), to which many references can be found in the geographical literature. In the Great Hungarian Plain the “specific” values are low; the urban functions were lost in the plethora of agricultural functions. It is evident that the density of the urban functions was related – although not always in a cause and effect relationship – to the village-like cityscape and the development – or backward – level of infrastructure in the country towns of the Great Hungarian Plain, to its peasant-like society etc. At the same time, when creating the *urban types*, the primary aspect is the weight of the urban functions within the settlement; on the basis of this can administrative centres, school towns, cultural-religious centres etc. be designated.

Looking at the different aspects of the urban functions, the multi-side approach made the existence of a few marked types of centres probable. The more exact delineation of these can be done in many ways (e.g. cluster analysis, comparison of ranks etc.); we used a relatively simple method, the “cross-table analysis” for the

definition of the different types. In order to secure the manageability of the method and the results, each time we included three aspects in the survey and we categorised the “indices” into three levels at each aspect (values above average, around the average and below the average). Thus the settlements were categorised into a 3x3x3 cross-table. From among the many possible groupings of the indices we briefly evaluate hereby the results of the version done with the inclusion of the three most characteristic “aspects”.

The indices for typifying were as follows:

- Position in the urban hierarchy
- Regional centres and county seats
- Middle towns and complex small towns
- Deficient small towns and significant centres
- Total number of population supplied
- Number of population supplied above 50 thousand inhabitants
- Number of population supplied between 50 thousand and 10 thousand inhabitants
- Number of population supplied below 10 thousand inhabitants
- Percentage value of the share of the rural areas (extra value)
- The quotient above 150%
- The quotient between 0% and 150%
- The quotient below 0%

Using the 3x3x3 cross-table, theoretically we can have 27 types; in our case, 18 “boxes” contained settlements (12 boxes had five or more settlements). Below we are briefly introducing these 12 types.

Type 1

High hierarchy level – high number of population supplied – high share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	39	10
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	36,487	1,422,976
Population supplied (persons)	136,656	5,329,591
Rural population supplied (persons)	100,170	3,906,615
Significance surplus (per cent)	274.5	

Source: Type 1–11 calculated by the authors.

Type 1 contains the *elite group* of the Hungarian towns, including 39 towns that show an above-average figure in all three indices. All regional centres, with the exception of Szeged, are in this category, together with the most developed county seats with balanced administrative and economic functions (Szombathely, Sopron, Székesfehérvár, Marosvásárhely [*Târgu Mureş, RO*], Miskolc, Nagyszeben [*Sibiu, RO*], Komárom [*Komarno, SK*], Zombor [*Sombor, SCG*] etc.), also some major economic and trading centres (Nagykanizsa, Fiume [*Rijeka, HR*], Baja, Pápa). Their average number of population exceeds 36 thousand people and they supplied more than 100 thousand “rural” (i.e. not own) inhabitants. They are located quite proportionately all over Hungary (*Figure 11*), especially if we also consider those six towns of the Great Hungarian Plain that were classified into another group (*Type 2*) only because of their low “significance surplus” (e.g. Szeged, Kecskemét, Szabadka [*Subotica, SCG*]).

Type 2

High hierarchy level – high number of population supplied – medium share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	6	6
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	64,581	387,486
Population supplied (persons)	120,581	723,487
Rural population supplied (persons)	56,000	336,001
Significance surplus (per cent)	86.7	

Type 3A

High hierarchy level – medium number of population supplied – high share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	16	0
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	10,667	170,671
Population supplied (persons)	39,670	634,721
Rural population supplied (persons)	29,003	464,050
Significance surplus (per cent)	271.9	

Figure 11

Urban types according to the combination of the qualitative and quantitative urban functions



Keys: 1–11 Position within the urban hierarchy according to the decreasing values of combination of the total population and the rural population supplied.

Source: designed by the authors.

Type 3B

High hierarchy level – medium number of population supplied – medium share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	1	1
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	24,248	24,248
Population supplied (persons)	42,377	42,377
Rural population supplied (persons)	18,129	18,129
Significance surplus (per cent)	74.8	

A marked group are made by those county seats in Upper Northern Hungary, Transylvania and Transdanubia whose population is relatively low compared to their hierarchy level (less than 11 thousand on the average), accordingly the range of their urban functions is more limited than in the case of the most prestigious group (40 thousand people supplied on the average). However, their “centre character” is marked, the share of urban goods sold to the countryside is high (e.g. Nagykároly [*Carei, RO*], Zalaegerszeg, Segesvár [*Sighișoara, RO*]). The “Great Plain” subcategory of this type contains only one town, Gyula. Gyula has a dual character: on the one hand, it is a Great Plain country town, with 34% of its earners working in agriculture; on the other hand, the share of those employed in industry is not negligible, either (29%). Also, it is an administrative and trading centre, a town of offices.

Type 3C

Medium hierarchy level – high number of population supplied – high share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	3	0
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	15,126	45,377
Population supplied (persons)	53,923	161,770
Rural population supplied (persons)	38,798	116,393
Significance surplus (per cent)	256.5	

This type contains no more than three settlements: Nagyszombat [*Trnava, SK*], Losonc [*Lučenec, SK*] and Munkács [*Mukacheve, UA*]. These three towns, with their population around 15 thousand (and with hinterlands with two or three times more population) are examples for the most developed middle towns. None of them is county seat, but they are important centres of one part of their respective counties, with advanced trade and service functions. Their central role is especially important in secondary school education and the bank sector.

Type 4

Medium hierarchy level – high number of population supplied – medium share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	2	1
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	58,821	117,642
Population supplied (persons)	86,644	173,288
Rural population supplied (persons)	27,823	55,646
Significance surplus (per cent)	47.3	

This group contains only two settlements: Újpest and Hódmezővásárhely. They are towns of different character and history: Újpest was home to 55 thousand, Hódmezővásárhely to 62 thousand inhabitants at that time, but in Újpest 67% of the population worked in industry, whereas in Hódmezővásárhely 61% were agricultural employees. The urban, middle town institutions were rather modest for their size and mostly supplied the local population. Újpest was the most populated settlement of the Budapest agglomeration growing at an “American speed”,²³ while Hódmezővásárhely was one of the biggest country towns in the Great Hungarian Plain.

²³ Beluszky, P: *Az elővárosok útja Nagy-Budapesthez* [The way of the suburbs to Greater Budapest]. Essays from the Past of Budapest XXX. Budapest Archives, Bp. 2002. pp. 121–152. p. 123, 126, 134.

Type 5A

Medium hierarchy level – medium number of population supplied – high share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	66	7
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	5,996	395,747
Population supplied (persons)	21,758	1,436,039
Rural population supplied (persons)	15,762	1,040,292
Significance surplus (per cent)	262.9	

The group – of the middle towns and the “better” small towns with developed urban functions – contained 66 settlements (with an average population of 6 thousand inhabitants); their position in the urban hierarchy and the weight of the urban functions did not exceed the average, but they had a high, sometimes very high “rural” share, and their role in the settlement network was very important (e.g. Turócszentmárton [*Martin, SK*], Csíkszereda [*Miercurea-Ciuc, RO*], Kőszeg, Kalocsa, Muraszombat [*Murska Sobota, SLO*]). This type also involved those county seats of Upper Northern Hungary and Transylvania that had a small population, one-sided administrative functions and a rather low position in the urban hierarchy. They make an extreme group, no matter how we examine them. However, no country town of the Great Hungarian Plain shows up in this group, maybe some towns in a special situation and at the edge of the region, such as Kisvárdá, Kalocsa etc.

Type 5B

Low hierarchy level – medium number of population supplied – high share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	2	0
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	3,631	7,261
Population supplied (persons)	10,764	21,528
Rural population supplied (persons)	7,134	14,267
Significance surplus (per cent)	196.5	

This group contains only two settlements again, Privigyé [*Prievidza, SK*] from Nyitra county and Felsőőr [*Oberwart, A*] from Vas county. Both settlements are at the hierarchy level of small towns with deficient functions; this is why they were omitted from Group 5A, where they should be, on the basis of their character.

Type 6A

Medium hierarchy level – medium number of population supplied – medium share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	54	28
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	14,424	778,909
Population supplied (persons)	22,428	1,211,119
Rural population supplied (persons)	8,004	432,210
Significance surplus (per cent)	55.5	

It is a group of many towns – 54 of them –, towns of a similar hierarchy level and similar weight of urban functions but a “modest” share of the non-urban population supplied. They include many towns of the Great Hungarian Plain, from the “middle group” that did not belong to the elite group of the towns but had a large population; their urban functions were unquestionable and preserved several characteristics of their country town history. Such towns are, among others, Kiskunhalas, Cegléd or Makó. Due to them, the average number of population in this category is over 14 thousand. Besides the towns of the Great Hungarian Plain, the appearance of some towns in this group is surprising at the first glance, but they are towns akin to the country towns on the basis of their position in the settlement network. Such a town is Selmecebánya [*Banská Stiavnica, SK*], a constantly declining mining town that had grown on its own resources and had a large number of industrial earners; Rózsahegy [*Ružomberok, SK*] and Salgótarján, also industrial towns; Paks and Dunaföldvár, both with a “Great Plain” character, and a few small towns of Transdanubia whose limited role in the life of the countryside is difficult to explain. In some cases, behind the more limited “significance surplus” we find a large number of rural population served, so the belonging of these towns to this category is disputable (e.g. Vác, Mohács, Selmecebánya [*Banská Stiavnica, SK*]).

Type 6B

Medium hierarchy level – medium number of population supplied – no share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	7	6
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	19,408	135,855
Population supplied (persons)	15,527	108,686
Rural population supplied (persons)	– 3,881	– 27,169
Significance surplus (per cent)	–20,0	

These seven settlements are already among those whose institutions and service providers were unable to completely supply even their own population with urban goods. However, they are undoubtedly the most populated members of this group, at the highest hierarchy level (their average number of population was almost 20 thousand). Five of them are situated in the middle region of the Great Hungarian Plain (two of them are Hajdú towns), one is a small town in Transdanubia: Mór. Their common feature is the very high share of agricultural earners, over 70%. Mór has the most Great Plain and Hegyalja region features in Transdanubia.

Type 7A

Medium hierarchy level – low number of population supplied – high share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	3	0
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	3,226	9,677
Population supplied (persons)	8,916	26,747
Rural population supplied (persons)	5,690	17,070
Significance surplus (per cent)	176.4	

This group contains three small towns, only; two from Transylvania and one from Upper Northern Hungary. Actually they should be put in group 5A; what differentiates them from the members of Group 5 A is the low number of population (on the average, only 3200 people lived in these settlements), consequently the total

number of the population supplied remains below 10 thousand. The role in the supply of their surroundings is more important; on the average they provided some 5,700 “rural inhabitants” with urban services at a certain level.

Type 7B

Medium hierarchy level – low number of population supplied – medium share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	11	3
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	4,778	52,555
Population supplied (persons)	7,659	84,245
Rural population supplied (persons)	2,881	31,690
Significance surplus (per cent)	60.3	

This group involves 11 settlements, with an average population of 4,700. They are small towns with weak central functions, mostly from Upper Northern Hungary and Transylvania, including towns with more advanced industrial functions (e.g. Szerencs or Vajdahunyad [*Hunedoara, RO*]). There are a few towns in this category in the Great Hungarian Plain too (Fehérgyarmat, Titel [*Titel, SCG*]), but they are not typical Great Plain country towns.

Type 7C

Medium hierarchy level – low number of population supplied – no share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	2	2
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	12,207	24,413
Population supplied (persons)	8,700	17,399
Rural population supplied (persons)	– 3,507	– 7,014
Significance surplus (per cent)	–28.7	

This group contains only two small towns of the Great Hungarian Plain: Jász-apáti and Battonya. They hardly fit into the group of complete small towns; actually the institutions of these towns are unable to supply even their own population completely.

Type 8A

Low hierarchy level – medium number of population supplied – medium share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	11	6
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	8,206	90,269
Population supplied (persons)	12,717	139,882
Rural population supplied (persons)	4,510	49,613
Significance surplus (per cent)	55.0	

The settlements in this group are mostly small towns with deficient functions, but a relatively large average number of population (8,200); their significance surplus is limited. Their central functions are weak; they are more of agricultural and small town character. Half of the 11 settlements can be found in the Great Hungarian Plain (more exactly at the edge of the Great Plain), but there are towns from Transdanubia (Csorna, Tolna), the Partium (Borosjenő [*Ineu, RO*]) and also Transylvania. There is only one where the industrial character is dominant (Petrozsény [*Petroşeni, RO*]), and one that used to be a settlement with central functions but had already lost its former importance and some of its functions (Barcs).

Type 8B

Low hierarchy level – medium number of population supplied – no share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	6	5
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	17,381	104,283
Population supplied (persons)	13,333	80,001
Rural population supplied (persons)	- 4,047	- 24,282
Significance surplus (per cent)	-23.3	

These six settlements are also small towns with deficient functions, all from the Great Hungarian Plain, with only one exception. They are not so much country towns, rather giant villages (e.g. Mezőberény, Törökszentmiklós), their population is outstandingly high (17,400 people on the average!), their urban character is weak. This group also contains Resicabánya [*Reșița, RO*], a mining and industrial centre of the Bánát area (where the share of industrial earners was 68%!). This is a proof for the fact that the industrial activity in itself is not an urbanising factor.

Type 9

Low hierarchy level – low number of population supplied – high share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	36	0
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	1,867	67,199
Population supplied (persons)	5,757	207,247
Rural population supplied (persons)	3,890	140,048
Significance surplus (per cent)	208.4	

The total of those small towns that have both low hierarchy level and volume of urban functions, but very much different “rural share” can be divided into three groups. These types involve almost half of all settlement that we registered as towns: a total of 197 small towns. Group 10 involves 36 settlements, district centres and small towns with deficient functions. The number of their population is very low (usually below 2,000, in some cases less than one thousand people), on the average they supply another 3,900 people in their surroundings with urban goods. They are small centres that seem to be insignificant within the total of the urban network, but their role should not be underrated, since they are located in regions without urban centres. There is not one such town in the Great Hungarian Plain, very few within the present territory of Hungary, they are more typical in the townless areas of Transylvania, in the present Burgenland, the Partium and in the northern part of Upper Northern Hungary.

This group involves over a hundred settlements, district centres that can hardly be called towns and small towns, with deficient functions. This is a varied group of settlements, besides some municipalities grown on industry and transport most of them have an agricultural character and the majority of them have central functions with restrictions. The average number of their population is only 3,500 people, and they offer their limited range of services to not more than 2,000 inhabitants in their surroundings. These settlements can be found in all regions of Hungary (quite a

few of them in Transdanubia), less than one-fifth in the Great Hungarian Plain. They are mostly elevated from anonymity by the district centre role that they had been awarded at the creation of the bourgeois administration; the majority of them fell back to their former insignificance; but we also find declining, formerly more prosperous small towns and rural centres in special situation in this group. These are settlements among which only a few managed to become real towns in the second half of the 20th century (e.g. Ráckeve).

Type 10

Low hierarchy level – low number of population supplied – medium share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	104	18
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	3,564	370,648
Population supplied (persons)	5,435	565,276
Rural population supplied (persons)	1,871	194,628
Significance surplus (per cent)	52.5	

Type 11

Low hierarchy level – low number of population supplied – no share of non-urban residents supplied

Number of settlements	Total	Of which in the Great Plain
	57	32
	Average	Total
Population of towns (persons)	6,803	387,762
Population supplied (persons)	4,520	257,650
Rural population supplied (persons)	-2,283	-130,112
Significance surplus (per cent)	-33.6	

Finally the settlements on the brink of urban existence made the third sub-type, settlements that were at the bottom of any rank, the capacity of their urban institutions – according to theoretical calculations – were not even enough to supply their own population. These 57 settlements that make the last group (together with the 104 settlements of the former category) have a character that may not even be

called urban. Our designation must have been quite generous, when we set the lower limit at a very limited number of urban institutions. This group of settlement at the bottom of the urban hierarchy, with less than 10 thousand inhabitants supplied and without a share in the provision of the rural population, nevertheless deserves our attention; not only because it contains several settlements with urban rank (which, considering the fact that the number of settlements with urban rank was less than 140 in Hungary, something that should not be overlooked), but also because it is a complex group, with a territorial heterogeneity. The average number of population in the settlements making this group is 6,800, but there are quite a few settlements with over 10 thousand inhabitants. More than half of these settlements are country towns and giant villages in the Great Hungarian Plain, although not necessarily with typical country town history; also, some suburbs of industrial and agglomeration character and a few industrial and mining centres can be found here. This group also involves the weak district centres of east Upper Northern Hungary that have no significance surplus. In order to demonstrate the versatility it is enough to make a list of the settlements with urban rank in this group. An example of the country towns of the Great Plain is Túrkeve in the Nagykunság region (with 13 thousand inhabitants), where the urban rank reminds of the former belonging to the privileged areas, but the urban rank had no real content at the time that is the focal point of our survey. The formerly important Transylvanian and Upper Northern Hungarian mining towns are also represented in this group (Vízakna [*Ocna Sibiului, RO*], Felsőbánya [*Baia Sprie, RO*], Újbánya [*Nová Baňa, SK*]), they claimed right to their urban rank only by their more glorious past. In addition to them there is one Saxon town of the Szepesség area, Szepesbéla [*Spišská Belá, SK*], with modest district centre roles.

5 A brief description of the respective hierarchy levels

5.1 Budapest

Buda and Pest approached the development level and significance (but not the number of population) of the European big cities by the end of the 15th century, especially as regards its power and political weight. The large economic and regional rearrangement taking place on the beginning of the New Era pushed Hungary and Pest-Buda to the periphery of Europe, and after the Turkish conquest (in 1541) it ceased to be a “European” city for a long time. After being taken back from the Turks in 1681 it was reborn as a provincial town and it only became the evident centre of Hungary in the late 18th century. Its legal status was not unambiguous: the royal seat and some of the government offices were in *Vienna*, the Hungarian Parliament usually had its sessions in *Pozsony* [*Bratislava, SK*], but the gov-

ernor representing the king and the centre of the executive power of Hungary, i.e. the council of governor-general were located in Buda. The capitalist development connected to the boom of agriculture, the bourgeois development and the independence efforts – demand for an “own” national institutions, university, museum, theatre, library and academy and the location of these in *Buda* and *Pest* – made these towns the most important economic, trading and intellectual centres of Hungary by the mid-19th century. Their population increased from just 50 thousand in the late 18th century to over one hundred thousand by 1831 and 173 thousand by the civil revolution (data from 1851). At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, the baroque Pest of ground floor or one-storey houses was slowly re-built by two- and three-storey classicist public buildings, tenement homes, mostly within the city walls. The defeat of the war of independence only set back the development temporarily, the bourgeois era opened up enormous development possibilities for Pest-Buda. In the middle of the 19th century there was a rather wide gap between Hungary and Western Europe as regards the economic and technical development, the urbanisation level and the bourgeois development of the society. When the possibilities of “catching up” were finally created in Hungary, the large “difference of tension” between the two “poles” launched a very rapid modernisation in Hungary. The temporal coincidence of the new conditions and motivations of catching up also promoted rapid modernisation. In Hungary, after 1848 and 1867 the *social, political and legal conditions of bourgeois development were born* almost parallel, the creation of the legal and organisational frameworks of the society mostly preceded the real processes; the *international conditions* of economic development were favourable (surplus of capital in Western Europe, agricultural boom); the regaining of the (limited) national sovereignty, the acquisition of the tools of technical-technological (industrial) “revolution” etc. all contributed to the development. These modernisation processes of different origin had a “junction” in Budapest: the regaining of national sovereignty made Budapest the centre of political life, a “counter-pole” of Vienna; the revolution of transport and the national railway policy made Budapest the *transport centre of Hungary*; the splendid transport location and the agricultural boom made Budapest the *centre of crops trade and mill industry*. By 1870, each Hungarian region had direct links to the capital city. This created the most important condition for Budapest to rule the national market. The leading position in crops trade gave Budapest a dominant share in *finance institutes activities*, in the credit market and the foundation of industrial companies.

After the Compromise Budapest became the *capital city of a state* with almost 20 million inhabitants (the population of Hungary – including Croatia – was 15.5 million in 1870, and it exceeded 20 million by 1910). Budapest became the centre of the political life and the civil public administration, a seat of a large number of institutions and bureaus. The Hungarian state leadership had a conscious effort to

increase Hungary's economic and political weight within the Monarchy; part of these efforts was the "catching up" of Budapest to the level of Vienna, the rivalry between the two cities.

This is how Budapest became the *bridgehead* of foreign capital, technical civilisation, modern economy, bank capital, manufacturing industry, innovations, new social concepts, and artistic trends, in another word, modernisation in the Carpathian Basin by the beginning of the century, when the "sub-centres" of modernisation were limited both in number and quality in Hungary. Thus the "disproportionately big weight" of Budapest compared to Hungary, even more to the urban network is not linked to Trianon. At the turn of the century, Budapest showed multiple figures compared to its population in the measurable indices of "development" (Table 17). As we have already seen, the capital city is high above the other Hungarian towns as regards the number of population supplied with urban goods and also the number of rural population supplied. This outstanding position led to the extremely rapid growth of the population of Budapest (Table 18), the transformation of the city and its rapid expansion, and also the appearance of technical innovations early (1878: electric public lighting; 1881: telephone; 1887: tram; 1896: underground etc.). In the Dualist era, all *national functions* and *institutions* chose Budapest as the centre (with the exception of the church organisation). The outstanding position of Budapest in the urban network is reflected in the character of its society. The most characteristic and still tangible feature of the society of Budapest is difference, being other than the rest; it can be demonstrated by many statistical data. Budapest was an almost purely industrial – public services – intellectual city in an agricultural country, with a young age pyramid and good indices of school education.

Table 17

Budapest's weight within Hungary, 1910
(Without Croatia and Slavonia)

Indices	In		Budapest's share in %
	Hungary	Budapest	
Number of population	18,064,533	880,371	4.8
Telephone calls, 1000 calls	171,951	71,396	41.5
Stock of savings, 1000 crowns	3 861,277	768,496	19.9
Telegrams sent, 1000 pcs.	9,209	2,427	26.4
Mortgage on buildings, 1000 crowns	1,196,376	733,373	61.3
Employees on industrial companies	392,939	128,358	32.7
Earners in trade	278,104	64,881	23.3
Number of higher education students	14,021	8,675	61.9

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 1910.

Table 18

*Change of the population of Budapest in 1851–1910***

	1851	1857	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
Number of population	172,935	191,796	269,293	360,551	492,237	717,681	880,371
Share from the Hungarian population, %	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.6	3.2	4.3	4.8
Annual growth, persons	–	3,144	5,961	9,126	13,169	22,544	16,269
1851 = 100%	–	110.9	155.7	208.5	284.6	415.0	509.1

* Without Croatia and Slavonia; ** Civil population.

Source: Vörös, K. 1978.

However, an element of being different even more important than the differences in employment statistics is the fact the *bourgeois society only appeared in Budapest in its entirety by the turn of the century*. On the other hand, the development of the capital city was only partly “organic”; foreign capital played a significant role in this process, but the *population of the capital city* was also “foreign” to large extent; at the time of the first census (in 1870), of 1,000 Budapest inhabitants 633 had not been born in the capital city and 151 of them had moved to the capital city from abroad. The case of *Budapest* is peculiar in the sense that the immigrants, and also a large part of the local residents were of “foreign” origin; either German speaking or citizens of other nationality of the Monarchy, or Jewish. In 1870, only 46% of the population designated Hungarian as their mother tongue. A special role was played in the development of the bourgeois society of the capital city by the population of Jewish origin. Their proportion reached 20% by 1880 and 23% by 1910. Their population increase was faster than the growth of the otherwise rapidly growing population of the whole of the capital city. Their share from the typical bourgeois occupations is two or three times higher than their proportion in the population; also, in some districts of Budapest, two-fifths of the population was of Jewish origin.

The consequences of the difference coming from the foreign origin of the citizens, and the development of the bourgeois society in entirety are varied. Because it was only *Budapest* where the complete structure of the bourgeois society was built out, and the institutions and “culture” etc. of this etc. could only develop here, the other cities and towns of Hungary, the citizens living elsewhere had a sort of subordinate relationship to the capital city; this relationship is manifested in the institutional relations (e.g. at the turn of the century almost all financial institutions of Hungary were dependant on the finance institutions of Budapest; the Budapest commodity exchange controlled cereal market etc.). In “cultural consumption” too the countryside was doomed to “follow the example of Budapest”.

5.2 Regional centres

As soon as in the early 19th century, in addition to Pest-Buda there were a few cities emerging from the “usual” rural cities; e.g. *Pozsony* [*Bratislava, SK*], the trading city with a large number of population, home to the national assemblies, and an administrative centre; *Debrecen* that can be seen as the centre of a large region, with its handicrafts since the Turkish occupation, its fairs attracting the whole of the eastern part of Hungary, and its protestant college; *Kolozsvár* [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*], the spiritual centre of Transylvania; and maybe *Szeged*, the crops trading city of the South; *Kassa* [*Košice, SK*], the cultural and administrative centre of Upper Northern Hungary, with some “medieval” touch. However, the attraction of these cities did not “cover” the whole of Hungary, and their functions attracting large regions were one-sided and “accidental”.

The Dualist era, on the other hand, systematically selected a few cities from among the settlements in each large region, and these settlements made a definitely separate hierarchy level by the early 20th century. The birth of regional centres was promoted on the one hand by the selection of the seats of administrative institutions with authority over several counties, although this effect was lessened by the fact that the general administration did not recognise administrative units bigger than the counties (i.e. “districts”) in the Dualist era. Probably the most important consequence of the location of these high prestige institutions was not that they added a few building blocks to the “construction” of the urban functions; what was more important is that they offered orientation points for the “location” of other – market-based – urban functions. On the other hand, the *hierarchical penetration model* of the urban functions of high hierarchy value contributed to the rise of the regional centres; these urban functions were systematically descending on the urban slope, making the settlements that they “reached” rather uniform. The regional centres of the 20th century thus had more or less the same functions; the urbanisation elements of them had been more or less *integrated*, indicating that these cities were parts of an integrating national system.

The “separation” of the first ten settlements in *Table 23* from the lower levels is evident, on the basis of the *presence* of regional functions (institutions). However, the positions of *Arad* [*Arad, RO*] and *Brassó* [*Braşov, RO*] are *transitory*: they did not possess half of the regional institutions that we considered in our survey. When assessing their situation, we have to consider that some of the settlements categorised as county seats also had regional institutions; most such institutions could be found in Szombathely, *Sopron* and *Marosvásárhely* [*Târgu Mureş, RO*], *Miskolc*, *Nagyszében* [*Sibiu, RO*] and *Szabadka* [*Subotica, SCG*], and another 24 towns where institutions of regional importance operated, but usually only one of them.

Arad [*Arad, RO*] can be categorised among the centres of large regions mostly by its economic role and services of regional importance, but first of by the *volume* of its urban functions; following Budapest and *Zágráb* [*Zagreb, HR*], the financial institutions of *Arad* [*Arad, RO*] kept the largest amount of deposits. In the order given by our method used for measuring the volume of the urban functions – see above –, *Arad* [*Arad, RO*] has the 8th position, with just 250,000 inhabitants supplied, while the same figure for *Fiume* [*Rijeka, HR*] – at the 9th position – is only 181,000. However, *Arad* [*Arad, RO*] could only have relatively few regional administrative institutions – in a region surrounded by centres such as *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*], *Szeged* and *Nagyvárad* [*Oradea, RO*]. (We have to remark that a former survey of ours, on the basis of data from 1900, also placed *Arad* among the regional centres, although at the last position.) The position of *Brassó* [*Brașov, RO*] is disputable, although the number of its regional institutions is similar to that in *Arad* [*Arad, RO*]. *Brassó* [*Brașov, RO*] was made a significant centre mainly by its three-lingual character; this language feature doubled and tripled several of its institutions, mainly in the field of culture and education, publishing newspapers and books, but even of finance institutions, insurance companies and trade. The volume of its urban functions lagged behind those of the regional centres, several towns categorised into a lower hierarchy level (*Fiume* [*Rijeka, HR*], *Miskolc*, *Szabadka* [*Subotica, SCG*], and *Nagyszeben* [*Sibiu, RO*]) preceded *Brassó* [*Brașov, RO*] that only had the 16th position behind them. Finally we decided to list *Arad* [*Arad, RO*] and *Brassó* [*Brașov, RO*] among the regional centres, emphasising their transitory situation between the “large regional centres” and the county seats.

If we also consider the amount of urban functions, the following differentiation can be made among the regional centres:

		Zágráb		
Pozsony	Temesvár	Kolozsvár	Nagyvárad	Debrecen
	Szeged		Kassa	
	Pécs	Győr	Arad	
		Brassó		

When assessing the position of *Zágráb* [*Zagreb, HR*], we have to consider that during our survey we did not consider the “national” institutions, and that *Zágráb* [*Zagreb, HR*], the capital city of Croatia–Slavonia with restricted sovereignty, was home to the Sabor (the Croatian Parliament), the Croatian Ban (Head of Croatia–Slavonia, appointed by the king upon the recommendation of the Hungarian prime

minister, and responsible to the Sabor), ministerial institutions in the field of religious and education affairs and jurisdiction, the Croatian Academy of Sciences, the national museum etc., so the hierarchical rank of Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*] is well above the other regional centres of Hungary, as it was revealed by the figures of our survey.

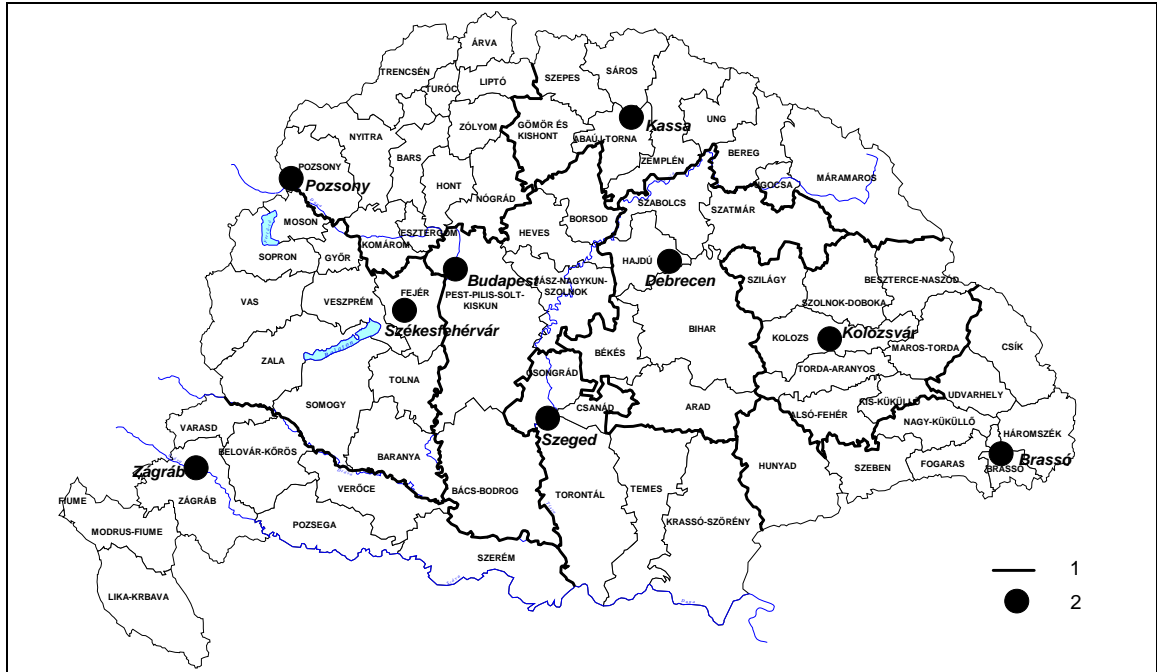
The average population of the regional centres was just 66 thousand in 1910, i.e. they were not more than middle towns by the contemporary European measure. It is also true, on the other hand, that they had just exceeded the threshold of 30,000 inhabitants in the beginning of the Dualist times, and many had 20-21 thousand inhabitants, only. In 1910 Brassó [*Braşov, RO*], Kassa [*Košice, SK*] and Győr had a population below 45 thousand, and Pécs had less than 50 thousand inhabitants, too. The smaller number of population of the regional centres limited the possibilities of a *complex urban life* (i.e. a life beyond the operation of the “compulsory” institutions, mainly in the field of culture, arts, entertainment institutions etc.), although the signs of this were already visible in the early 20th century in the bigger countryside towns of Hungary: some institutions appeared (e.g. the scientific life, theatre culture and film industry of Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*], the literature activity, and the press of Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*], the “modern” entertainment facilities of Temesvár [*Timişoara, RO*] – swimming pool, ice rink etc.).

Lacking contemporary surveys and data, we can only estimate how big the background – hinterland – was on which these cities could rely on for their “subsistence” and development and which they served with big city functions. As regards the latter, we have to remark that probably a very narrow layer of the population used the services of the institutions with regional functions in these large regional centres. The respective “administrative institutions” of regional competence usually did not even have relationships with their hinterlands that were based on personal connections; the “subjects” of the attraction were thus state officers in the first place. The attraction of most of the other institutions of regional hierarchy level – some large banks, insurance companies, secondary schools, wholesale traders etc. – was also limited to very narrow layers of the “rural” society: the more well-off actors of the economy, freelance persons, more qualified intellectuals, or they kept in touch with the population of the small towns and villages via “mediators” (the small groceries, or small towns’ tradesmen “distributed” the goods of the wholesale traders, the faraway crop traders had commission-agents in the larger villages and smaller towns, the “cultural radiation” was spread by the press products etc.). This way the attraction of the regional functions was of low intensity and the boundaries of these attractions blurred. The designation of the hinterlands of the big cities is not alleviated by the consideration of the operational territories of the state bureaus, either, because although the operational territories of these institutions were of course precisely delimited, the territories ordered to the respective institutions rarely coincided – which is understandable, anyway, given their differ-

ent numbers –, resulting in a rather complicated territorial division (*Figure 12*). Thus we can say that the population in the “potential” hinterlands of the regional centres rarely exceeded one million. In the “core” of the regional hinterland of Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*] one and a half million people lived, but this hinterland was almost completely a traditional agricultural area, with negligible level of urbanisation. The whole of Croatia–Slavonia can be considered as the potential hinterland of Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*] – the operational territory of some institutions of national competence did cover the whole of the “associate state”, but the Szerémség region and Verőce county gravitated to Hungarian cities: Pécs, Szeged or Újvidék [*Novi Sad, SCG*] etc., at least in an economic sense. The regional hinterland of Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*] could include the whole of Transylvania, too, despite the fact that Brassó [*Braşov, RO*] was categorised at the bottom of the regional centres, but the population of Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*], situated in a part of Hungary divided in linguistic, cultural and religious aspect and also in a bad transport situation, did not exceed one million. Around the same number of population lived in the hinterlands of Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*], Szeged, Kassa [*Košice, SK*], Debrecen, Temesvár [*Timişoara, RO*] and Pécs, whereas the hinterlands of Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*], Arad [*Arad, RO*] and Brassó [*Braşov, RO*] were home to even less inhabitants (*Table 19*). This also means that in Hungary, a country of 18 million people (over 20 million with Croatia-Slavonia), surprisingly enough, there were no regions with 2.5–3 million inhabitants, integrated around a given big city, which could have guaranteed the growth of “real” countryside big cities. (In the changed state territories some of the former regional centres of course had a new situation, especially Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*] and Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*]; they were the capital cities of not regions but of macro-regions, later of independent countries. Nevertheless this does not contradict our statements above.)

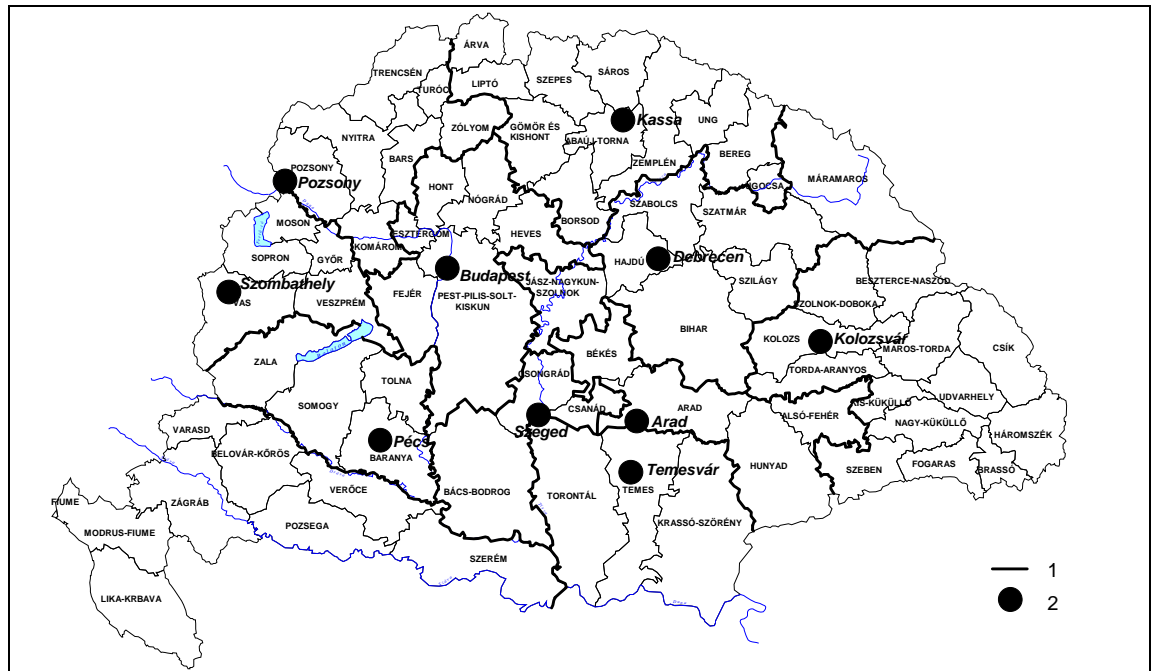
The urban history of the regional centres was rather varied, but the “location” of regional functions among the city walls still made these cities similar to each other in many respects. Their *employment structure* was quite uniform, apart from Szeged and Debrecen (*Figure 13*), two cities of country town past: in 1910 the share of *agricultural activities* among the earners was 34% and 23% in Szeged and Debrecen, respectively (however, the majority of the agricultural earners lived in the scattered farms on the outskirts, so the employment structure of the inner areas of these two cities resembled those of the other cities). In all other towns, the share of agriculture from employment remained below 10%. The majority of the active earners of the regional centres, on the average 52.8% of them were employed in the *tertiary sector* already in 1910 (*Table 19*).

Figure 12a
Headquarters and Scope of Gendarme Districts



Keys: 1 – Headquarter; 2 – Border of Gendarme District; 3 – Borders of Counties.
Source: Designed by Beluszky, P.

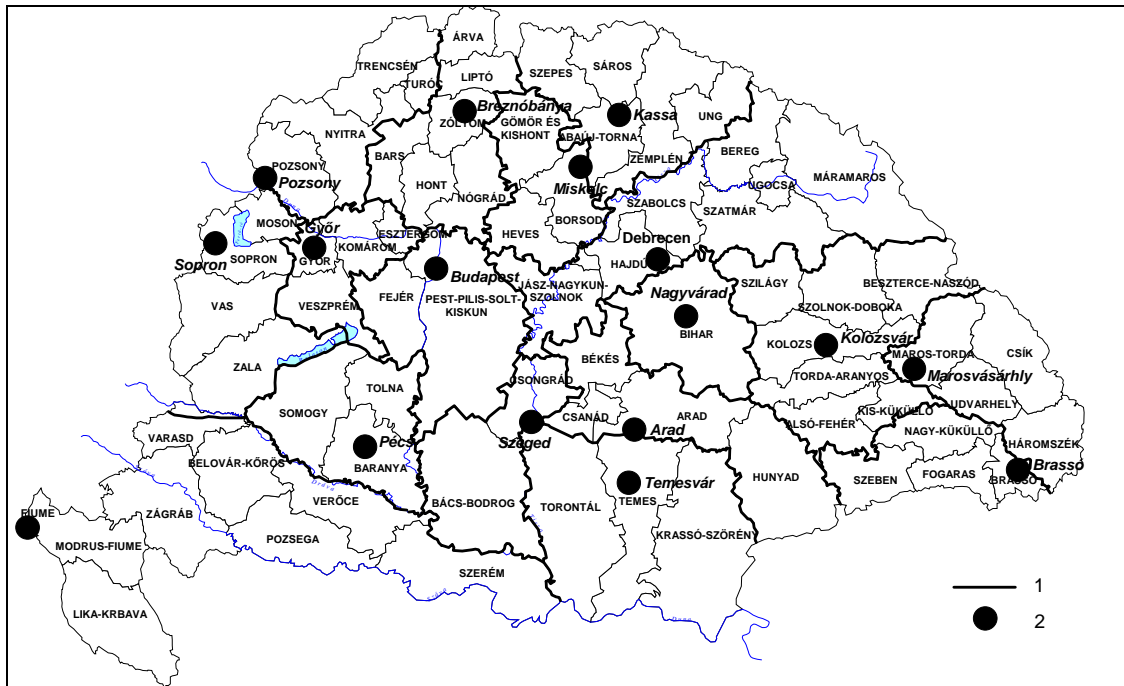
Figure 12b
Headquarters and Scope of Notary Chambers



Keszy: 1 – Borders of Scope of Chambers; 2 – Headquarters.

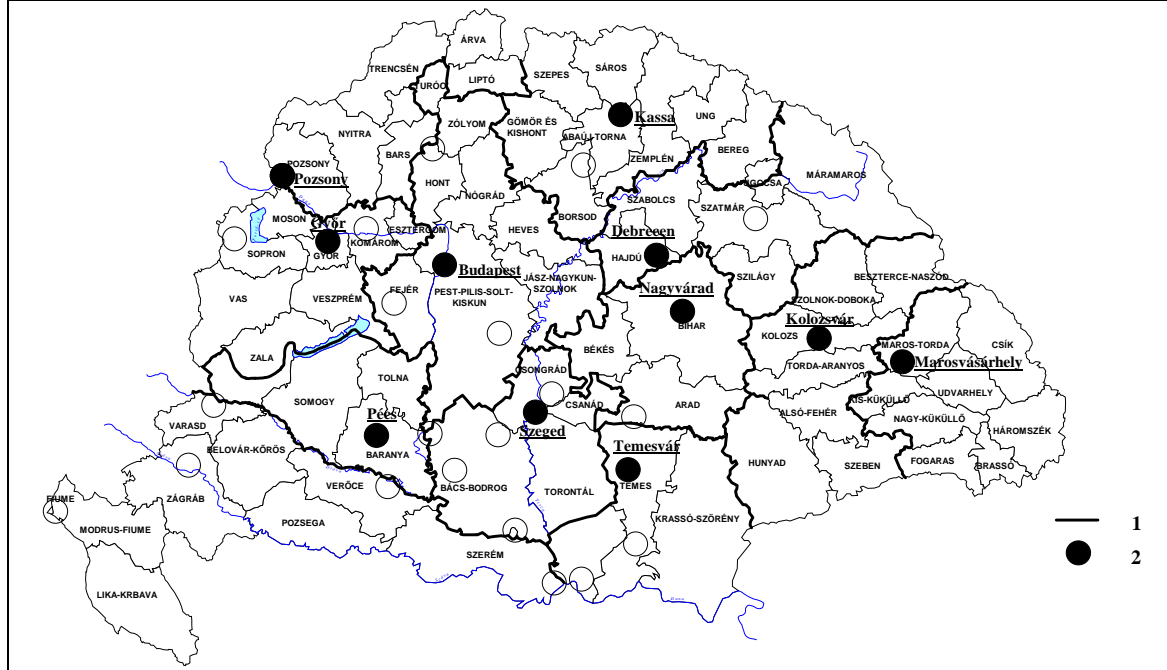
Source: Designed by Beluszky, P.

Figure 12c
Headquarters and Scope of Commercial and Industrial Chambers



Kesy: 1– Borders of Scope of Chambers; 2 – Headquarters.
Source: Designed by Beluszky, P.
Figure 12d

Headquarters and Scope of Royal Supreme Courts



Keys: 1 – Borders of Scope of Supreme Courts 2 – Headquarters.
Source: Designed by Beluszky, P.

Table 19

Main characteristics of the regional centres, 1910

City	Legal status, administrative role*	Value of regional functions			Number of population		Population supplied with urban goods	From which: share of rural population	Earners in trade	Earners in public services	Volume of deposits in finance institutions*•
		admini- stration	services	total	1870	1910					
I. Full centres											
Zágráb	Mc Cs-Ds	13	15	28	20,402	79,038	447,042	368,004	4,425	5,103	117.6
Pozsony	Mc Cs-Ds	12	15	27	46,540	78,223	297,058	218,835	3,552	3,154	70.4
Kolozsvár	Mc Cs-Ds	12	15	27	26,638	60,808	252,166	191,358	2,618	3,150	35.2
Kassa	Mc Cs-Ds	13	14	27	21,742	44,211	170,463	126,252	1,833	1,926	23.4
Debrecen	Mc Cs-Ds	11	14	25	46,111	92,729	272,468	179,739	3,281	2,648	42.8
Temesvár	Mc Cs-Ds	12	13	25	36,844	72,555	273,395	200,840	3,413	2,848	56.0
II. Centres with deficient functions											
Szeged	Mc	11	11	22	71,022	118,328	261,168	142,840	3,165	2,552	40.7
Nagyvárad	Mc Cs-Ds	9	12	21	28,698	64,169	290,976	226,807	3,488	2,760	50.5
Pécs	Mc Cs-Ds	9	11	20	23,863	49,822	172,468	122,646	1,808	1,852	24.5
Győr	Mc Cs-Ds	7	11	18	26,225	44,300	161,859	117,559	1,989	1,566	28.0
III. Centres with partial functions											
Arad	Mc Cs-Ds	3	10	13	32,725	63,166	250,326	187,160	2,691	2,096	77.7
Brassó	Ct Cs-Ds	5	8	13	27,766	41,056	143,569	102,513	1,772	1,431	23.6
Average	–	–	–	–	34,048	66,306	249,413	179,046	2,836	2,596	49.2

*Mc = municipal city; Ct = corporate town; Cs = county seat; Ds = district seat. ** Million crowns.
 Source: Calculated by the authors, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook.

Table 20

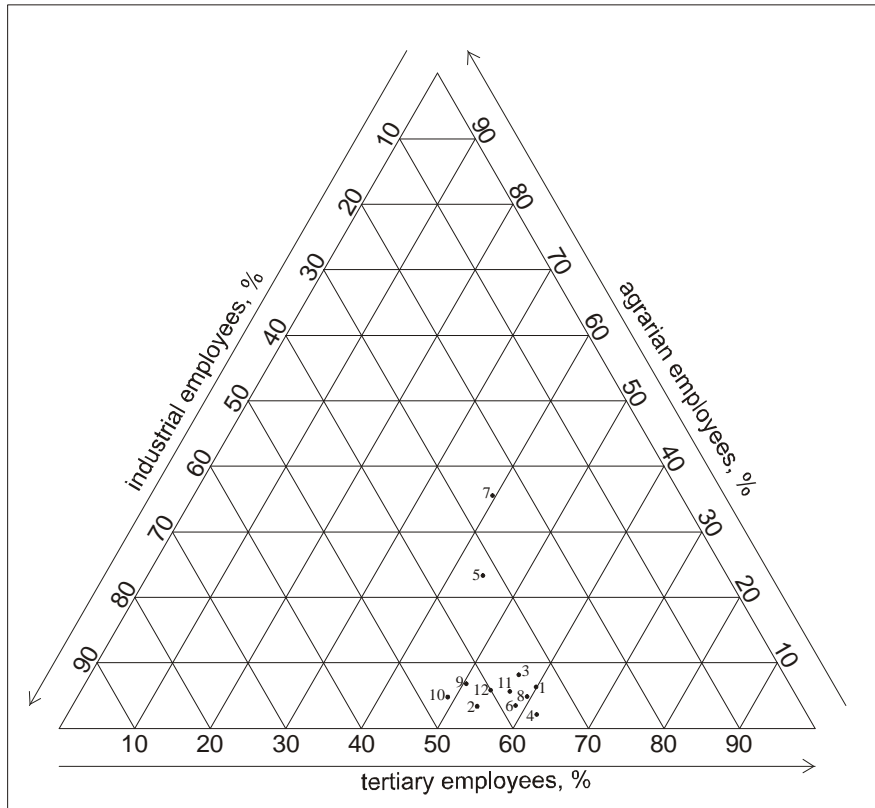
Employment structure at the respective hierarchy levels, 1910

Hierarchy level	Average number of earners	Number of earners in industry & trade (?)	Earners in				Standard deviation of the earners in			
			agriculture	industry	tertiary sector	industry & trade	agriculture	industry	tertiary sector	industry & trade
			%				by levels			
I. Regional centres	33,328	16,902	10,8	36,4	52,8	50,7	88,2	14,4	12,9	11,2
II. County seats	11,051	4,763	21,0	30,1	48,9	43,1	59,7	20,7	19,0	20,7
III. Middle towns	6,418	2,491	35,5	29,1	35,4	38,8	58,5	39,9	37,7	36,1
IV. Small towns	2,493	826	45,6	24,7	29,6	33,1	44,1	46,1	39,9	42,5
V. Settlements with district centre functions	1,718	546	49,4	24,6	26,0	31,8	39,9	57,8	37,5	51,9

Source: Calculated by the authors.

Figure 13

Structure of employment in regional centres, 1910



Keys: 1 – Zágráb [Zagreb, HR]; 2 – Pozsony [Bratislava, SK]; 3 – Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca, RO];
 4 – Kassa [Košice, SK]; 5 – Debrecen; 6 – Timisoara; 7 – Szeged; 8 – Nagyvárad [Oradea,
 RO] 9 – Pécs; 10 – Győr; 11 – Arad [Arad, RO]; 12 – Brassó [Braşov, RO].

Source: Designed by Beluszky. P.

Croatia did not return to the state territory of Hungary in the narrower sense even after the end of the Turkish occupation. The bigger part of its territory was a military frontier region administered directly from Vienna until the mid-19th century. Its *natural centre* was Zágráb [Zagreb, HR], dominating the Zágráb Basin, in the broader sense the historical *Slavonia*. Its growth into a big city as the capital city of Croatia-Slavonia, with limited sovereignty, only started after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, the legal settling of the Hungarian-Croatian relations. Between 1870 and 1910 Zágráb tripled its number of population. The situation and role of Zágráb [Zagreb, HR] within Croatia was similar to that of Budapest within

Hungary. In the beginning of the 20th century, Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*] was not only an administrative centre and the centre of the Croatian intellectual life but also the most significant “countryside” city of Hungary by its economy and the volume of its high level urban functions (if we can consider Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*] in a survey of the Hungarian urban network at all). The hinterland of its urban development – as we have mentioned – is an “associate country” of 2–2.5 half million population, the bigger part of which was only linked to Budapest by the loose administrative ties. Nevertheless the number of population supplied with urban goods was the highest in the case of Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*], and this city also played an outstanding role in the supply of the “countryside”, as well. Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*] is also an example that the spread of the urban functions of high hierarchy level, according to the hierarchy model, is capable of creating a large city – by the contemporary standards – even if the level of economic development in its environment is rather modest, its modernisation is in its infancy and the urbanisation level of Croatia is low; i.e. *it was not the need of a large region that produced a “big city”; the urban institutions coming “from above” found themselves a place of operation.*

Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*] had been probably the most important gateway city of Hungary since the foundation of the state, a ferry crossing place on the Danube River, the centre of the Hungarian state administration in the time of the Turkish occupation, the place of the Hungarian national assemblies and coronations before 1848 and the cradle of the Hungarian press. Built on cereals trade, a modern and bourgeois class rich in capital appeared within its walls, so its development was harmonic in the bourgeois era. Merchant capital founded a significant manufacturing industry, and its offer and volume of regional institutions also put Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*] to the third place in Hungary, right after Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*] (and the second in the order of the countryside cities). The attraction of its big city institutions covered the western part of Upper Northern Hungary. South of the Danube, Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*] only had a major attraction on Moson county, but was not able to cope with the competition of Győr and Sopron. Its role in the settlement network was influenced by the proximity of Vienna; the former coronation city had intensive relations with the imperial city of Vienna, only an hour’s distance away. Maybe only the intellectual and cultural role of Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*] was somewhat weaker than it could have been by its position in the urban network. Probably this was partly due to the proximity of Vienna – the mainly German speaking citizens of Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*] consumed culture in Vienna –, and also to the multi-lingual character of the city. The German-speaking citizens of Hungary were less and less willing to create an “own” cultural life – as opposed to e.g. Bohemia –, but the number of Hungarian-speaking population living in Pozsony (*Bratislava, SK*) was relatively small, only 30–32 thousand; they were the potential clients of the Hungarian-speaking educational, arts and cultural institutions.

The range of the big city institutions of *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*] was similar to that of Debrecen, they had the 5–6th position in the hierarchy order; the volume of urban functions was slightly bigger in *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*] than in Debrecen (and we must not forget, either, that *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*] had 20 thousand less population). Looking at the quantity of the urban functions we can see that the sectors and indices of “economic character” had higher values in *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*]. *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*] is thus a “modern” city, with big city appearance, well built-out infrastructure, with an industry employing approximately 7 thousand people (the “Hungarian Manchester”);²⁴ it is a “genuine” bourgeois city, the product of capitalist urbanisation forces, even though the origins of its big city development are to be found in the second half of the 18th century, not sooner. The city is situated in the centre of the fertile Bánát region, and became a cereals trading city after the Temes and the Béga Rivers had been canalised and made navigable. Because the time of the Turkish occupation eliminated the historical continuity of all “medieval” features, the leading social elite of the city was the bourgeois class getting rich from cereals trade and shipping, already in the first half of the 19th century. After the recession of the Turks, who left behind a “*tabula rasa*”, i.e. a “clean slate”, the boundaries of the city were set by the Emperor’s officers, according to the Western European practice (the administrative area of city was not more than 85 km² in 1910), so the accumulated capital could not be invested in purchasing lands or vineyards; after the construction of the railway side lines all over the Bánát region (in the early 20th century, the railways ran out from *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*] in ten directions), local capital flowed into finance institutions, manufacturing industry, city real estates and infrastructure. The total volume of bank deposits in *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*] were only surpassed by the amount of capital in the banks of Zággráb [*Zagreb, HR*], Arad [*Arad, RO*] and Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*], the majority of the industrial earners worked in modern sectors – mechanical engineering, textile and chemical industry –, the local bourgeois class created the Lloyd Company, serving as the local stock exchange.²⁵ The above described development track of *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*] is an example that a *big city* – a regional centre – *could also grow up relying on the demands and economic resources of a large region of the country*, in this case the Tisza-Maros region. The “natural” operational area of the big city functions of *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*] was the Bánát, together with Torontál and Temes counties, and

²⁴ L. Szász, Z.: A “magyar Manchester”. A modern *Temesvár* építése [The “Hungarian Manchester”. The construction of the modern *Temesvár*]. – *História*. 1992. 1.

²⁵ Gál, Z.: A pénzüintézetek szerepe az alföldi városok modernizációjában. (Az alföldi városok pénzüintézeteti funkciói a 20. század elején) [The role of finance institutions in the modernisation of the towns in the Great Hungarian Plain. The finance institution functions of the Great Plain towns in the early 20th century]. In: Frisnyák, S. (ed.): *Az Alföld történeti földrajza*. College of Nyíregyháza, Department of Geography, Nyíregyháza, 2000. pp. 321–343. (Hereinafter: Gál, Z. 2000.)

also Krassó-Szörény county with its shaping mining and heavy industrial region. This territory had a population of approximately 1.3 million people.

Transylvania enjoyed more or less legal independence before the Compromise, its orographic features also clearly separated this region from the other parts of the Carpathian Basin. Also, it was far from Pest-Buda (Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*] was 8 and a half, Nagyenyed [*Aiud, RO*] 11, Segesvár [*Sighișoara, RO*] 13 and a half, Nagyszeben [*Sibiu, RO*] 14, while Brassó [*Brașov, RO*] 16 and a half hours away from Budapest by train in the early 20th century]. However, this large region of Hungary, very much divided in orographic, ethnic and linguistic, religious and economic sense, had no unambiguous centre. Usually *Kolozsvár* [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*] had been the most important city of this region since the foundation of the Hungarian state, although economically Brassó [*Brașov, RO*] had usually surpassed it – in the field of trade and handicrafts –, while the rather isolated Saxons had other intellectual and economic centres – Nagyszeben [*Sibiu, RO*] and Segesvár [*Sighișoara, RO*]. As regards the supply of its regional functions, Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*] was among the very first cities of the hierarchy, in scientific and cultural life; with its university, theatre culture, libraries, museums and book publishing it directly followed Budapest and Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*], standing out from the other regional centres. Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*] is undoubtedly the intellectual centre of the Hungarian speaking population of Transylvania. It was an almost unique feature of Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*] among the Hungarian cities that 85% of the citizens paying the most tax had intellectual occupations in the early 20th century. Its economic connections, on the other hand, were rather loose to South Transylvania (having lost its importance after the railway constructions), and being a city with mostly Hungarian population (their share reached 83.4% in 1910), Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*] could not become the centre of the Romanian and Saxon population of Transylvania. These factors explain its more modest position by the volume of its urban functions.

Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] was one of the *regional centres with deficient functions* by its supply of institutions. As the city was “squeezed” among Debrecen, Arad [*Arad, RO*] and Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*], several of the state administrative institutions of regional authority had not been located to Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*]. On the other hand, it was only surpassed by Záhgráb [*Zagreb, HR*] and Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*] when it came to the volume of the urban functions, and Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] even preceded Kassa [*Košice, SK*], Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*], Debrecen and Temesvár [*Timișoara, RO*], all being cities with full range of the institutional system. The rise of Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] in the Dualist era is a bit *mysterious*. It is true that the city was located along an important market line, it was the gateway of the most important route leading to Transylvania (which role was weakened by the construction of the railway line in the Maros valley), its county was one of the most populated counties of Hungary (650 thou-

sand inhabitants lived in Bihar county in 1910), but the attraction of its big city functions could not reach beyond the boundaries of its county, partly due to orographic obstacles and partly to the competition of the neighbouring regional centres. It is also thought-provoking that before the construction of the railway, Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] had had hardly any crops trade or wholesale trade – the most effective “producer” of the modern large bourgeois class in Hungary. Nevertheless Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] had one of the biggest institutional networks in the whole of Hungary by the early 20th century, and the manifestations of its fizzy, “modern” intellectual, literature and in general, urban life could make a long list; at the turn of the century, Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] had 11 daily newspapers, 62 societies worked in the city and there was a tram service in Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] after 1906.²⁶ Also on the basis of economic “indices”, Nagyvárad [*Oradea, RO*] had the 3rd–6th position in the national orders.

Debrecen is one of those few Hungarian cities that had already been the centre of an area much larger than a county in the time of the Turkish occupation. Its fairs were visited not only by the people of the North Trans-Tisza area but also by those living in the Partium, the northeast part of Upper Northern Hungary and even of North Transylvania. These areas were also markets for the handicraftsmen of Debrecen (where they dictated the “fashion”); the tradesmen of Debrecen travelled to the Balkan peninsula as well as to Poland; the Reformed College made the “civis” city²⁷ the educational and cultural centre of not only the Great Hungarian Plain, but also served secondary education in a few country towns of Transdanubia. Meanwhile Debrecen remained a genuine country town, the majority of the population of the city were the peasant bourgeois. In the middle of the 19th century, the development of the city came to a halt, its agriculture was reluctant to change from animal husbandry to cereals production, and intensive farming – production of vegetables and fruits, viticulture – was something that the population of Debrecen only experimented with in their home gardens. The development of the city only accelerated in the late 19th century, partly due to the location of a large number of state institutions. The modern economy entered the city after these “trust-building” measures; in 1910 Debrecen already had the major part of the regional institutions; as regards the volume of its urban industry, Debrecen was among the first five Hungarian cities. The hinterland of its regional functions reached out to the north and north-eastern direction in the first place; the designated operational territory of some of the institutions of Debrecen reached from Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county to Máramaros and Bereg counties. However, the society and the cityscape of De-

²⁶ For more details see: Fleisz, J.: “A kultúra metropolisa” – Nagyvárad 1867 és 1918 között [“A metropolis of culture” – Nagyvárad between 1867 and 1918]. *Limes*.1998. 11. 2–3. pp. 115–132.

²⁷ “Civis” means citizen; in Debrecen this category actually means a peasant bourgeois class, which emerged due to the special development history of the city: all citizens had pieces of lands on the outskirts of the city, so they had a civic profession and were “farmers” at the same time.

breceen were much less bourgeois than e.g. in Pozsony [*Bratislava, SK*], Nagyváradi [*Oradea, RO*] or Arad [*Arad, RO*]. (A real big city atmosphere could only be felt in a small area, in the densely built-up inner city, dominated by densely built one-story houses, where the majority of the inhabitants were peasant bourgeois, small traders and officers.)

Kassa [*Košice, SK*] and *Szeged* were at one “step” lower in the urban hierarchy. Although *Kassa* [*Košice, SK*] is undoubtedly a regional centre by its range of regional institutions, the volume of the urban functions is definitely modest for its hierarchy level. Although the society of *Kassa* [*Košice, SK*] had decent patrician traditions, the city was only at the brink of the modern bourgeois development of the late 18th and early 19th century (due the decrease in the importance of the Buda–*Kassa* [*Košice, SK*]–Poland route, the loss of the positions in cereals trade and the lack of cereals producing hinterland and adequate “export” routes); it was still basically an administrative, military, educational and cultural centre, with “traditional” bourgeois class and traditional functions (handicrafts, distribution trade) but with modest manufacturing industry. Its regional attraction covered the eastern part of Upper Northern Hungary.

The situation of *Szeged* is opposite in the sense that it was among the deficient centres by its supply of regional institutions, but it was the 6th city of Hungary by its quantitative indices, whereas it was the second biggest city in Hungary in matters of population – it had 120 thousand inhabitants in 1910 –, right after Budapest. *Szeged* had been characterised by a “double economy” since the medieval times: on the one hand, it was a typical country town with lively animal husbandry and trade, a network of scattered farms emerging soon, already in the “Turkish times”; on the other hand, it had “regular” big city functions as well (and was the only country town of the Great Hungarian Plain that had acquired the free royal city rank before the defeat in the battle of Mohács in 1526). One of the heydays of its “regular” big city life was the late 18th and the 19th century. At the junction of two waterways – the Tisza and the Maros rivers –, its traffic positions were splendid – this was a time when the only economical means of long-distance cereals transport was shipping–, it was the centre of the cereals trade of the South Trans-Tisza region, the Bácska and the Bánát areas, a location of shipping entrepreneurs, a logistics, manufacturing and sales centre of the goods arriving on the waterways (wood, construction material, salt, wool etc.). It was also the main beneficiary of the goods exchange with Transylvania by the waterway of the Maros River. This development path was not broken by the big flood (in 1879); the re-built city was a modern city with its cityscape and infrastructure. It was the construction of the railway that worsened the positions of *Szeged*; the waterways gradually lost their importance, and by the railway *Temesvár* [*Timișoara, RO*], *Arad* [*Arad, RO*], *Szabadka* [*Subotica, SCG*], *Békéscsaba* or even some smaller towns could become more and more active in the trade of agricultural goods and capital accumulation. It was es-

pecially the extremely rapid economic growth, at an almost American pace, of Temesvár [*Timișoara, RO*] and Arad [*Arad, RO*] – trade, credit institutions, manufacturing industry – that slowed down the further boom of Szeged, mainly in the field of the economy. From the late 19th century Szeged paid more and more of its attention to its vast outskirts, and abandoning the former extensive farming – grazing –, it supported intensive farming (leasing of small pieces of city-owned lands, construction of business railways, the creation of the basic institutions in the scattered farms etc.). Parallel to this, its regional functions lost some of their relative importance.

Pécs, Győr and *Arad* [*Arad, RO*] represented the least developed versions of the regional centres. Pécs, the quiet city of handicraftsmen and wine producers, was similar to Kassa [*Košice, SK*] to some extent; it had a bourgeois class of “traditional” composition – but with more modest traditions and fortunes compared to Kassa [*Košice, SK*], unfavourable traffic location and the lack of “modern” functions. The “big city” development was initiated partly by the location of institutions with regional authority in the beginning of the bourgeois era, partly the movement of the – limited amount of – capital accumulated by the handicraftsmen and wine producers and traders, as well as the mining of coal which started around the city. On the other hand, both the local society, the character of the economy and the cityscape still resembled the situation between a feudal city and a bourgeois city. The development history of *Győr* is the opposite: it had soon become a trading and business centre along the waterways and roads towards Vienna and “the West”, a bourgeois class free from guild restrictions emerged within the city walls, and when crop trading lost the competition against Pest and the significance of the Danube as a waterway also decreased, the accumulated capital sought a new place for investment. This was partly found in manufacturing industry – and it was the modern sectors that had dominated the industry of Győr since the foundation of the manufacturing industry –, partly the capital was invested in other cities, mostly in the capital city, but also in a number of smaller towns, e.g. Nagykanizsa or Szombathely. The economically strengthened Győr received “ex post” a few regional administrative and cultural institutions, but these functions were divided in North Transdanubia among Győr, Sopron, Szombathely, and even Székesfehérvár, so in the field of “centrally located” functions Győr has never been (and still is not!) able to compete with the other regional centres. Our survey relating to the year 1900 did not even list Győr among the regional centres, whereas the city was a *deficient* centre in 1910; it only preceded Brassó [*Brașov, RO*] by its weight of urban functions among the regional centres.

Brassó [*Brașov, RO*] is the last city that can be enumerated among the regional centres of the Carpathian Basin, but it is actually a transitory city between the regional and the county centres, both as regards the range of its institutional system and the volume of its urban functions (also, it is the “smallest” regional centre by

its number of population, only 41 thousand inhabitants). Although its Saxon population had created a high level of urbanisation within the walls of Brassó [*Braşov, RO*] and it had a considerable foreign trade at the junction of passes leading to Wallachia, it only had a slight attraction in Transylvania. Brassó [*Braşov, RO*] was not even given a municipal right at the building out of the bourgeois public administration, and was not a selected location of state administrative institutions, either. The range of its urban institutions was extended by the triplication of the institutions serving its trilingual population.

5.3 County seats

In our survey the number of county seats was just 50, and 39 of them had county seat functions in the early 20th century. Since Hungary had 63 counties in 1910, not considering Croatia-Slavonia – Fiume [*Rijeka, HR*] and its region was a “separate body” attached to the Hungarian Crown in the time of the Dualism –, this means that 11 county seats of Hungary were not listed among the county seats by their role in the settlement network. This way, however, 11 towns of the county centres were actually not county seats (e.g. Fiume [*Rijeka, HR*] in a special legal situation, but also Szabadka [*Subotica, SCG*], Szatmárnémeti [*Satu Mare, RO*], Újvidék [*Novi Sad, SCG*], Nagykanizsa, Kecskemét, Pancsova [*Pančevo, SCG*], Pápa, Baja, Versec [*Vršac, SCG*] and Békéscsaba). These 50 towns, with similar roles in the settlement network and at a similar level of the urban hierarchy, *made a rather heterogeneous group* considering their urban history, the composition of their society, their employment structure, the number of population and the cityscape. Despite categorising them in the same hierarchy level, it is reasonable to emphasise the significant differences among them both as regards the range of their urban functions and the volume of these; we have to emphasise the fact that the 21 “partial county seats” were actually a *transitory phase towards the middle towns* (the main argument against their categorisation as a separate level of the hierarchy is the avoidance of the over-fragmentation of the hierarchical order). This heterogeneity within the group is underlined by the large standard deviation of some of their “indices” and the lack of integration among these indices.

The *average number of population* in the county seats was almost 24 thousand people, the median of this category is 20 and a half thousand inhabitants. However, the difference between Szabadka [*Subotica, SCG*] with its 94 and a half thousand population and Rimaszombat [*Rimavská Sobota, SK*] with hardly 7 thousand inhabitants is 13-fold, and the relative standard deviation of the number of population at this hierarchy level is also big, 68.0%, as opposed to the deviation of 33.7% of the regional centres. The circle of the county seats involved quite a number of settlements of small town size even by the contemporary standards, whereas Szabadka

[*Subotica, SCG*], Kecskemét, Miskolc or Fiume [*Rijeka, HR*] had more inhabitants than some of the regional centres. The *volume of the urban functions* of the county seats clearly differentiates these towns from the regional centres (*Table 21*), making only about one-third of the latter, even less in the field of economy. Also, the standard deviation of the economic indices within this group is larger than that of the other indices.

Table 21

Volume of urban functions in the regional centres and the county centres

Indices	Average number in the		County centres in % of the regional centres
	regional	county	
	centres		
Number of population	67,367	23,940	35.5
Earners in trade	2,836	870	30.7
Earners in public services	2,591	827	31.9
Lawyers	77	30	39.0
Secondary school students	3,469	1,145	33.0
Deposits in financial institutions, million crowns	51.9	14.9	28.7
Telephone subscriber	1,153	247	21.4
Household servants	3,272	1,023	31.3

Source: Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1910.

The county seats can be grouped in many ways, depending on the different aspects. We leave the judgement of the *role within the settlement network* to the reader, on the basis of the hierarchy order (*Appendix 1*) and the table edited on the volume of the urban functions of the county centres (*Table 21*), we cannot introduce each town of this hierarchy level individually.

Without detailed analyses it is possible to categorise the county seats into several types, only on the basis of their role in the settlement network. Some of them were settlements with a balanced development and significant urban traditions, with proportionate economic and administrative-clerical-cultural roles; the majority of these county seats were home to regional institutions, as well. Also on the basis of the volume of their urban institutions, they were among the elite of the county centres.

The situation and urban roles of *Fiume [Rijeka, HR]* were special in the Dualist era; legally it was an exclave of Hungary and the authority of its administrative institutions did not reach beyond the boundaries of the town. Being the only sea

port of Hungary, it enjoyed substantial support from the Hungarian state. Naturally it was economic and trade functions that dominated the life of Fiume [*Rijeka, HR*]. As regards the volume of its urban functions, it is at the top of the order of the county centres, with a value more or less the same as that of Miskolc, and although Fiume [*Rijeka, HR*] is also the first as regards its “significance surplus”, its hinterland was nevertheless not in the neighbouring areas – from which it was separated by administrative borders, orographic obstacles and the lack of transport infrastructure, and even by language differences – but in its far-away motherland. Its special situation is further complicated by the fact that majority of its inhabitants were Italian in language and culture. *Sopron* had been in the elite of the Hungarian urban hierarchy already in the Middle Ages, it hosted a range of regional institutions in the Dualist time, too, sharing its regional functions in North Transdanubia with Szombathely and Győr. Probably just because its citizens had been able to create a prosperous town already in the feudal times and had strong ties to feudal institutions, the “modernisation” of Sopron was rather slow in the time of the Dualism, together with its growth. *Miskolc* was located along a strong market line, its transport situation became favourable after the railway constructions, and had a lively mediating trade between the Great Hungarian Plain and Upper Northern Hungary, even though it did not play a dominant role in the crops trade in the 18th and 19th century. The “capitalist” urban development factors were clearly visible in the creation of manufacturing industry, although outside the city, in Diósgyőr, a settlement administratively independent of Miskolc at that time. The completion of its intellectual, cultural and administrative functions was blocked by the competition of Kassa [*Košice, SK*], still Miskolc was the second in the order of the county centres by the volume of its urban functions. Urban life had similar traditions to those of Sopron in *Nagyszében* [*Sibiu, RO*], the cultural, educational and intellectual centre of the Saxons in Transylvania; the modernisation of Nagyszében [*Sibiu, RO*] was also sluggish, as in Sopron – both as regard society and cityscape. *Szabadka* [*Subotica, SCG*], the most populated “countryside” town of Hungary after Szeged, grew big as a country town, but it did not become a county seat; its almost 100 thousand inhabitants and the need of the surrounding rich agricultural region for urban goods lifted it to the level of the county centres. *Szombathely*, *Marosvásárhely* [*Târgu Mureş, RO*], *Szatmárnémeti* [*Satu Mare, RO*], *Székesfehérvár*, *Eger* and *Zombor* [*Sombor, SCG*] can also be categorised in this type.

The next group of county centres too contains towns with balanced functions and usually with significant urban history, but with more limited volume of urban functions and a deficient institutional network – they are administrative centres rather than economic and trading ones. Also, their urban life is deficient from some aspect. *Veszprém*, *Eperjes* [*Prešov, SK*], *Besztercebánya* [*Banská Bystrica, SK*] and *Esztergom* had considerable urban traditions, but they were pushed to the background in the bourgeois era, and their manufacturing industry was negligible;

Máramarossziget [*Sighetu Marmăției, RO*], *Sátoraljaújhely* or *Nyíregyháza*, and even *Kaposvár*, on the other hand, became the centres of their counties in the second half of the 19th century; they were immature, “juvenile” towns. *Nyitra* [*Nitra, SK*], *Szolnok*, *Nagybecskerek* [*Zrenjanin, SCG*] and *Komárom* [*Komarno, SK*] are also in this group of county centres.

Újvidék [*Novi Sad, SCG*], *Kecskemét*, *Nagykanizsa*, *Pápa*, *Munkács* [*Mukacheve, UA*], *Baja*, *Békéscsaba* and *Versec* [*Vršac, SCG*] were not county centres in the early 20th century; these towns were at the same level as the previous county seats because of their trading and financial, transport and economic roles and their urban services.

On the other hand, a number of county centres were “lifted up” in the hierarchy by the acquisition of the county centre position, but the volume of their urban functions was rather modest, the growth of their number of population and the expansion of their economic functions had not “grown up” yet to their administrative roles, so they were usually administrative centres without an advanced modernisation. Such towns are *Trencsén* [*Trenčín, SK*], *Zalaegerszeg*, *Nagyenyed* [*Aiud, RO*], *Lőcse* [*Levoča, SK*], *Zilah* [*Zaláu, RO*], *Déva* [*Deva, RO*], *Székelyudvarhely* [*Odorheiu Secuiesc, RO*], *Rimaszombat* [*Rimavská Sobota, SK*], *Torda* [*Turda, RO*] and *Lugos* [*Lugoj, RO*].

5.4 Middle towns

The 65 middle towns (this specification refers to the medium position in the settlement hierarchy and not to the number of the population) show an even more varied picture than county centres did. They hardly outnumber the previous hierarchy category, which does not meet the laws of the hierarchical breakdown, even if we do not insist on *Christaller's model* in which the number of centres is tripled at each lower hierarchy level. This suggests that the middle towns did not have a *necessary position* in the settlement hierarchy of Hungary in the early 20th century (which is also true today, anyway). The relatively large number of county centres fulfilled the obligations delegated to the higher hierarchy levels, the small towns also “covered” the country with some regularity, but the position and functions of the middle towns in the hierarchy system were casual. Usually towns falling out from the country centre level belonged to this category; these settlements were made county seats – almost as a must –, but because of their modest urban history, their insignificant economic roles, bad traffic situation, the “backwardness” of their counties etc., their county functions remained one-sided, their urban institutions were deficient and also low in number; thus they did not meet the criteria set against the country centres. In some cases the country centres did not even meet the middle town criteria; they were small towns that were home to irreplaceable county

administrative institutions; e.g. *Alsókubin* [*Dolný Kubín, SK*] (1,821 inhabitants in 1910 (!), *Magyaróvár* (5,273 inhabitants), or *Nagyszőlős* [*Vinohradiv, UA*]. But in *Fogaras* [*Făgăraș, RO*], *Ipolyság* [*Šahy, SK*], *Dicsőszentmárton* [*Tárnăveni, RO*] too all county level institutions belonged to the public administration exclusively and not one of them to economic or service sectors.

On the other hand, in some other small towns real *small town functions were accumulated*, either due to the large number of population in the respective town – this group involved a number of Great Plain country towns with large population, such as e.g. Hódmezővásárhely, Kiskunfélegyháza, or Budapest’s suburb, Újpest (55 thousand inhabitants in 1910!) – or because of the insignificance of the neighbouring district seats (e.g. Mohács or Gyöngyös). Also, this hierarchy level contains towns that had lived better days but were now “on the slide” (Selmecbánya [*Banská Stiavnica, SK*], Béalábánya [*Banská Belá, SK*], Gyulafehérvár [*Alba Iulia, RO*], Nagyszombat [*Trnava, SK*]); “secondary centres” of counties that contributed to the supply of their counties with higher level urban services, sharing the tasks with their county seats, such as *Losonc* [*Lučenec, SK*] in Nógrád county (mainly an economic and trading centre besides the office[r] town, Balassagyarmat), *Gyulafehérvár* [*Alba Iulia, RO*] in Lower Fehér county (also mainly an economic and trading centre but with administrative functions, too in addition to Nagyenyed [*Aiud, RO*]). In these counties the county seats were “weak”, so the middle towns contributed to satisfying the demand of the settlement network. There were towns also at this hierarchy level that were selected from among the other “typical” small towns by their “market centre”, economic, or transport functions, maybe their manufacturing industry.

It comes from the mixed origin, functions and roles in the settlement network that average values of the middle town level give little information on the characteristics of these towns (we cannot describe the “model” of the middle towns of the early 20th century in Hungary), although we have to remark that the average values of the indices typical of this respective hierarchy level were quite different from both the county centres and the small towns. The average concealed large differences, however, so the standard deviations are necessarily significant, too. The relative standard deviation of the number of population is 82.3%, the highest among all hierarchy levels.

Nevertheless we believe that the towns not up to the criteria against the county centres, e.g. *Losonc* [*Lučenec, SK*], *Munkács* [*Mukacheve, UA*], *Vác, Érsekújvár* [*Nové Zámky, SK*], or *Szentes* should not be “included” among the small towns. These quantitative and sometimes qualitative differences *justified* the creation of the middle town category, even if the role of the middle towns in the settlement network is usually not unambiguous.

5.5 Small towns

As opposed to the middle towns, the *role* of the small towns *in the settlement network* is usually unambiguous; the small towns – more exactly the small town *functions* – had *direct* contacts to the overwhelming majority of the population, the “rural” population used the small town “institutions”: they brought their goods to be sold to the markets of the small towns, where they also purchased some of their consumables; they bought products from the craftsmen producing agricultural tools, from handicraftsmen producing for the markets, other goods in shops with larger range of goods than the small village groceries, maybe they visited the outlets of the banks and insurance companies, the physicians or the lawyers. There was a *demand* for centres offering such services in all regions of Hungary in the late 19th and early 20th century, and given the contemporary transport conditions – the majority of the villages had no access to railway at the turn of the century, the most frequently used means to visit the towns were still wagon or walking –, a relatively dense network was needed to make it possible to walk to the market centres and back within one day. Public administration also considered this principle when organising the districts and designating the district centres. The district seat centre was an important organising principle anyway in the bourgeois era in the shaping of the network of small towns; where the district administrative functions were designated to settlements, market centres that had already had urban traditions, viable and versatile small towns with lively traffic were born or survived, sometimes advancing in the urban hierarchy. In economically less advanced regions, in areas just leaving autarchy behind the district seats were often settlements of village character; the further development of these depended on whether they had a hinterland with acceptable transport situation, with a large enough population and a possibility to join in the goods production, whether the actors participating in urbanisation had a faith in the viability of these settlements and accordingly settled down in them, or whether some other factors – e.g. manufacturing industry in some cases – assisted the further development of the district centres. The district seat function, however, on its own did not necessarily “developed” a town, even a small town; the findings of our survey categorised some of the district seats among the “urbanising” settlements (with district level functions), but many of them did not even reach this level of hierarchy. Nevertheless, as a consequence of the process described, the small towns were relatively homogeneously dispersed all over Hungary, maybe in the territory of the mountain range surrounding the Carpathian Basin, rarely populated and still close to autarchy anyway, we find some areas with “small town deficiency” (North Transylvania, East Upper Northern Hungary).

Apart from the similar functions in the settlement network, the development paths to the small town category were quite different, and these settlements were rather heterogeneous in their functions, economic roles, the composition and the

number of their population and also in their look. Thus Hungary could have no “typical” small town in the early 20th century; we should make at least half a dozen types to get more or less homogeneous groups of towns. The precise definition of these groups and the complete “categorisation” of the small towns are beyond the objectives of our essay; hereby we only remark the starting hypotheses of a possible enumeration.

- Some of the small towns had considerable urban history – some of them used to be free royal towns –, or at least had had strong and evident market centre functions before the bourgeois era. A part of the small towns had been corporate towns already in the beginning of the 20th century. These settlements had almost the full range of small town functions, and the volume of these functions was significant; most of them even had functions of middle town character. The number of their population exceeded 5 thousand people. Within their local societies, the weight of the bourgeois class was considerable, although this bourgeois class was usually the remnant of the feudal times: handicraftsmen with guild traditions, merchants, domain officials – with very few exceptions, they belonged to the “petty bourgeois”. The cityscape of these towns was relatively urbanised, at least in the centre; partly they preserved the architectural memories of former times – e.g. Bártfa [*Bardejov, SK*] or Szentendre –, partly the architecture of the bourgeois era gave their centres a small town appearance by the beginning of the century, by typically one-storey public buildings, savings banks, some tenements whose ground floors accommodated shops (however, the residential houses were usually ground floor houses even in the city centres and the main streets), like in Tapolca, Szigetvár or Csorna.
- The next group is represented by the “more modest” counterparts of the previous category – with smaller number of population, deficient functions and smaller volume of urban institutions. Within their central functions, the administrative activities prevailed, the role of the officers was bigger in their society. This group contains e.g. Marcali, Tiszafüred or Szécsény.
- Finally a number of settlements can be listed into this type of “market centres – central places” whose small town functions were mostly due to their district seat roles, they had modest urban traditions, and the proportion of the agricultural population was high (applying Tibor Mendöl’s country town model we can say that a district seat function “located” in a settlement with mostly village functions created a separate, not organically integrated “urban core” in the village). In other settlements, the deficient supply and the low volume of the urban functions justifies the classification into this category.
- A number of Great Plain country towns can also be found among the small towns; the urban functions were mostly restricted to the supply of their own

population, their hinterlands were usually very much deficient. Naturally the country town features are characteristic of these towns: large number of population for their hierarchy level (Békés had 27 thousand and Hajdúszoboszló 16 thousand inhabitants in 1910), the very high proportion of agricultural population for a settlement with urban functions (in Mezőkövesd it was 79.2%, in Kunhegyes 72.9% and in Jászapáti 72.3%), the large outskirts with scattered farms, the village-like look of the settlement and so on.

- Some of the characteristic products of capitalist urban development, the mining and industrial settlements had acquired some urban functions by the beginning of the century (e.g. Salgótarján, Resicabánya [*Reșița, RO*], Petrosény [*Petroșeni, RO*]).

5.6 Settlements with some district level functions

This awkward specification covers those settlements whose “district level functions” are so deficient that they could not even be listed among the small towns, but – mostly due to their district seat rank – had some urban institutions. A variety of settlements belong to this category, from *formerly more important small towns hopelessly “declining”* – e.g. Vízakna [*Ocna Sibiului, RO*], or Poprád [*Poprad, SK*] –, *small country towns* – e.g. Mezőberény or Hajdúdorog –, *factory towns* – Diósgyőr, Ózd –, to a large number of “*central places*” benefiting from the district seat rank, or settlements becoming *bathing resorts* – Balatonfüred or Pöstyén [*Piešťany, SK*] –, maybe auxiliary settlements “sticking” to other towns.

On the other hand, some corporate towns had lost all their urban functions by the beginning of the 20th century (Kolozs [*Cojocna, RO*], Leibic [*L'ubica, SK*], Ruszt [*Rust, A*] or Szentgyörgy [*Svätý Jur, SK*]).

6 Summary

Taking the supply and the quantity of the urban functions (i.e. settlement hierarchy) into consideration, in Hungary in the early 20th century, approximately 330 settlements were evidently towns, another 90–100 villages had some urban institution, mostly the offices of the district administration. In other words, the contemporary urban network involved some two and half times more settlements than the number of settlements with town rank. (On the other hand, some Hungarian settlements with town rank were actually villages by function). Taking the settlements with town rank into consideration, the proportion of the urban citizens in Hungary will be approximately 10% higher. The urban network of Hungary was unbalanced at

this time; the weight of the urban functions of Budapest was outstanding already in the Dualist era. (In some “indices” the share of the capital city functions from reached 30–60% of the national “output”.) The modernising urban functions of the “civil towns” spread across Hungary mostly according to the laws of the “hierarchy model”. This explains the fact that the 10 (or 12) regional centres and the more advanced county seats were the “junctions” of the other factors of “urban character”: hierarchy rank, the weight of economic role, the bourgeois development of the local society, the appearance of the cityscape etc. At lower hierarchy levels there were many “lopsided” towns where the penetration of the urban institutions preceded the spread of the modern economic sectors, the rise in the number of population and bourgeois development in general. The external effects (mostly coming from the state) played a significant role in “urbanisation” (both in the qualitative and the quantitative sense): such effects were the location of administrative institutions, railway constructions, industrial development based on foreign capital etc. The “urbanising” function of public administration was outstanding in the Dualist era, especially in areas formerly in shortage of towns. Nonetheless the major part of the urbanisation in the Dualist era took place within the former feudal urban network, a relatively low number of “new” towns were born (a few mining and manufacturing industry towns or administrative centres); however, the urban network of the feudal times decreased in number (especially the previous country towns fell back to the status of the villages in large number). There were even country towns that should be listed among the villages by functional criteria.

As regards the regional differences of urbanisation, the most striking is the difference of the Great Hungarian Plain, originating in urban history. In the Great Hungarian Plain the proportion of urban citizens was extremely high; the towns had very large numbers of population compared to their hierarchical rank. Their urban functions mostly supplied their own citizens (only a small part of the population lived in the villages), so the proportion of urban goods “exported” to the rural areas is low, the urban functions were “swallowed” by the host of other functions, making their presence almost invisible. (This leads to the misinterpretation of the urbanisation of the Great Hungarian Plain.) The urban network of Transdanubia, the Small Hungarian Plain and the Bánát region was more balanced – although the urbanisation level of South Transdanubia was modest –, whereas Upper Northern Hungary was home to a strikingly large number of stagnating or declining small towns, descending to the village category. In Northeast Hungary and Transylvania, the urban network was underdeveloped – with the exception of a few major cities, such as Kolozsvár [*Cluj-Napoca, RO*], Brassó [*Braşov, RO*], Nagyszeben [*Sibiu, RO*] or Marosvásárhely [*Târgu Mureş, RO*] – and the proportion of urban population was low.

Appendix 1

The leading group of the Hungarian urban hierarchy in 1910

Rank	Cities	Legal status & administrative functions of the settlements		Population		Total population supplied with urban services	Rural population supplied with urban services
				in 1870	in 1910		
I REGIONAL CENTRES							
I.1 With full-fledged urban functions							
1	Zágráb [<i>Zagreb, HR</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	20,402	79,038	445,573	366,535
2	Pozsony [<i>Bratislava, SK</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	46,540	78,223	296,256	218,033
3	Kolozsvár [<i>Cluj-Napoca, RO</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	26,638	60,808	251,097	190,289
4	Kassa [<i>Košice, SK</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	21,742	44,211	169,688	125,477
5	Debrecen	Thj.	Msz.	46,111	92,729	271,025	178,296
6	Temesvár [<i>Timișoara, RO</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	36,844	72,555	272,099	199,544
I.2 With incomplete urban functions							
7	Szeged	Thj.		71,022	118,328	260,193	141,865
8	Nagyvárad [<i>Oradea, RO</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	28,698	64,169	289,480	225,311
9	Pécs	Thj.	Msz.	23,683	49,822	171,627	121,805
10	Győr	Thj.	Msz.	26,225	44,300	161,245	116,945
I.3 With partial urban functions							
11	Arad [<i>Arad, RO</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	32,725	63,166	249,244	186,078
12	Brassó [<i>Braşov, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	27,766	01,056	143,061	102,005
II COUNTY SEATS							
II.1 With full-fledged urban functions							
13	Sopron	Thj.	Msz.	21,108	33,932	123,278	89,346
14	Miskolc	Thj.	Msz.	21,535	51,459	179,086	127,627
15	Szombathely	Rtv.	Msz.	9,666	30,947	121,332	90,385
16	Marosvásárhely [<i>Târgu Mureş, RO</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	13,018	25,517	100,598	75,081
17	Fiume [<i>Rijeka, HR</i>]	Thj.		17,884	49,806	180,462	130,656
18	Nagyszeben [<i>Sibiu, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	18,998	33,489	145,118	111,629
19	Máramarossziget [<i>Sighetu Marmaţiei, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	8,833	21,370	77,193	55,823
20	Szatmárnémeti [<i>Satu Mare, RO</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	18,353	34,882	131,325	96,443

continuing Appendix 1

Rank	Cities	Legal status & administrative functions of the settlements		Population		Total population supplied with urban services	Rural population supplied with urban services
				in 1870	in 1910		
21	Szabadka [<i>Subotica, SCG</i>]	Thj.		57,556	94,610	164,445	69,835
22	Székesfehérvár	Thj.	Msz.	22,683	36,625	111,076	74,451
23	Besztercebánya [<i>Banská Bystrica, SK</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	5,950	10,776	63,107	52,331
24	Szolnok	Rtv.	Msz.	15,847	28,778	81,938	53,160
25	Nagybecskerek [<i>Zrenjanin, SCG</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	19,666	26,006	87,932	61,926
26	Nyitra [<i>Nitra, SK</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	10,683	16,419	73,280	56,861
27	Kaposvár	Rtv.	Msz.	6,649	24,134	78,474	54,340
28	Eger	Rtv.	Msz.	19,150	28,052	90,600	62,548
29	Eperjes [<i>Prešov, SK</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	10,772	16,323	74,397	58,074
II. 2. With incomplete urban functions							
30	Újvidék [<i>Novi Sad, SCG</i>]	Thj.	Jsz.	19,119	33,590	118,085	84,495
31	Veszprém	Rtv.	Msz.	12,002	14,792	63,867	49,075
32	Lugos [<i>Lugoj, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	11,654	19,818	72,905	53,087
33	Zombor [<i>Sombor, SCG</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	24,309	30,593	87,453	56,860
34	Nagykanizsa	Rtv.	Jsz.	15,125	26,524	84,012	57,488
35	Sátoraljaújhely	Rtv.	Msz.	9,946	19,940	77,754	57,814
36	Kecskemét	Thj.		41,195	66,834	97,430	30,596
37	Nyíregyháza	Rtv.	Msz.	21,896	38,198	93,381	55,183
38	Esztergom	Rtv.	Msz.	14,512	17,881	62,935	45,054
39	Komárom [<i>Komarno, SK</i>]	Thj.	Msz.	13,595	22,337	62,770	40,433
40	Zalaegerszeg	Rtv.	Msz.	5,850	10,844	41,049	30,205
41	Trencsén [<i>Trenčín, SK</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	3,949	7,805	41,179	33,374
II.3 With partial urban functions							
42	Pancsova [<i>Pančevo, SCG</i>]	Thj.	Jsz.	16,888	20,808	64,188	43,380
43	Dés [<i>Dej, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	5,832	11,452	41,113	29,661
44	Balassagyarmat	K.	Msz.	6,435	8,271	41,815	33,544
45	Ungvár [<i>Uzhhorod, Ua</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	11,017	16,919	58,469	41,550
46	Déva [<i>Deva, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	3,277	8,654	35,091	26,437
47	Beszterce [<i>Bistrița, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	7,212	13,236	48,490	35,254
48	Segesvár [<i>Sighișoara, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	8,204	11,587	38,928	27,341
49	Nagykároly [<i>Carei, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	12,754	16,078	48,809	32,731
50	Beregszász [<i>Berehove, Ua</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	6,272	12,933	47,827	34,894

continuing Appendix 1

Rank	Cities	Legal status & administrative functions of the settlements		Population		Total population supplied with urban services	Rural population supplied with urban services
				in 1870	in 1910		
51	Gyula	Rtv.	Msz.	18,495	24,248	42,377	18,129
52	Lőcse [<i>Levoča, SK</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	6,887	7,528	30,697	23,169
53	Zilah [<i>Zalău, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	5,789	8,062	30,850	22,788
54	Székelyudvarhely [<i>Odorheiu Secuiesc, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	5,173	10,244	36,447	26,203
55	Pápa	Rtv.	Jsz.	14,223	20,150	70,740	50,590
56	Nagyenyed [<i>Aiud, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	5,779	8,663	29,561	20,898
57	Szekszárd	Rtv.	Msz.	11,069	14,947	42,454	27,507
58	Torda [<i>Turda, RO</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	8,803	13,455	39,756	26,301
59	Rimaszombat [<i>Rimavská Sobota, SK</i>]	Rtv.	Msz.	4,796	6,912	40,655	33,743
60	Baja	Thj.	Jsz.	18,169	21,032	66,820	45,788
61	Versec [<i>Vršac, SCG</i>]	Thj.	Jsz.	21,095	27,370	56,544	29,174
62	Békéscsaba	K.	Jsz.	30,022	42,146	51,493	9,347

Abbreviations:

Thj.: City with municipal rights

Rtv.: Town

K.: Village

Msz.: County seat

Jsz.: Micro-region seat

Source: calculated by the authors.

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