

THE URBANISATION IN HUNGARY DURING THE LAST DECADE

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Abstract

Demographic change represents a special challenge for all Europe. Its The process of reclassification of settlements has been on the focus of the scientific.research. It is thanks to the continuous changing of the legal backgrounds and the process . The legal process of the urban reclassification is very different in the countries of Europe. The study deals with the situation in Hungary, the changing of the legal conditions and its consequences. Furthermore it shows the territorial distribution of the towns in the country through secondary data.

Keywords: Urbanisation, Reclassification, Hungary, towns

1. INTRODUCTION

The title „town”, and the process of reclassification of settlements has been on the focus of the scientific research. Each discipline finds different values to be important during the process of grading a settlement (Tóth 2008). The geographers put emphasis on the functions of a settlement and on the institutions that insure medium level supply, this way grading one or two settlements among the others into town (Beluszky, Győri 2006). The law considers a settlement a town if the rank is given (Csapó, Kocsis 1997). The architecture examines the technical relations of the settlements and they call those settlements a town in which the building line can be characterised by the horizontal closeness and certain vertical layers (Pató 2000). Statistics join the title to a certain population while the sociologists say that those functions are presents in towns that is necessary fulfil its population's everyday needs (Bánlaky 1989).

The legal process of the urban reclassification is very different in the countries, which was summarizes by Kocsis (Kocsis 2008) (Table 1).

TABLE 1 - THE LEGAL PROCESS OF THE URBAN RECLASSIFICATION IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES OF EUROPE

Level	Central: Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Ireland, Poland, Great-Britain, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden, Central-Europe, Baltic States	Local, regional: Austria, Germany, Norway
Method	Mechanical (related to population: Austria, Denmark, France, Norway, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden,	Application: Italy, Central-Europe, Baltic States

Source: Own edition after Kocsis Zs., 2008, p. 722

According to Table 1. numerous factors are taken into account during the process of the urban reclassification. These factors could be objectively measurable so called 'hard' indicators such as population, length of sewage or water supply system. Nevertheless the "soft" factors like history, identity, traditions or tourism of the settlement are also important.

Many Hungarian researcher delt with the towns of the former (till the second World War) Hungary (Enyedi 1988, Csapó, Kocsis 1997, Gyáni, Kövér 1998, Beluszky, Győri 2005). Numerus study was born about the changing of the criteria of reclassification (Besnyő 1973, Beluszky 1977, Szirmai 1988, László, Tóth 1998, Szigeti 1998, Hajdú 2001, Beluszky, Győri 2006, Dövényi 2006, Kőszegfalvy 2008). After the change of regime sterngtened the interest in the topic and many new publication appeared (Csapó, Kocsis 1997, Kara 1998,. Rudl 1998a, 1998b, Tóth 2000, 2000b, Rechnitzer 2002, Zoltán 2002, Trócsányi, Pirisi, Malatyinszky 2007, Pirisi, Trócsányi 2007, Rácz 2008, Zsótér 2008, Gyüre 2009, Németh 2009, Pirisi 2009, Kiss, Tiner, Michalkó, 2012).

2. THE CHANGING CONDITIONS OF GRADING A SETTLEMENT A TOWN IN HUNGARY

However same factors of the „town-grading” have undergone significant changes since the World War II. This process resulted in a loose system, milder criterion and this led to the reclassification of settlements with missing functions. At that time the 11/1971 (III.31) regulation demanded strict requirements to get the title „town”. The law contains the following (Besnyő 1973.):

- A village can be reclassified if
- It belongs to the mid or partial mid category defined by National Settlement Development Concept

- The population of the central inner area is at least 15 000 inhabitants, it is beyond at least 8 000, and the number of inhabitants of the catchment area is above 20 000
- The growth of the number of the inhabitants increases at least 1% every year
- The rate of the inhabitants working in the industry and service sector is at least 75%
- In the medical centre the inhabitants of the catchment area are served
- A cultural centre that can receive at least 300 inhabitants
- At least one secondary school and 10-15% of the students live in the nearby settlements
- The trading account of goods is close to the average of the country
- At least 40% of the inner area has covered firmly
- At least 35% of the flats of the inner area is supplied with canalisation and water network

Only few settlements could fulfil all of these criteria so that this regulation was put out of law by the 1990.LXV. 115§(1) bill. The law says the following: "A village can apply for its reclassification if its role in the region and its level of development gives a reason". The criterion system of the judgement were drawn up by the Major Department of Settlement Development and Communication of the Ministry of Interior, during the judgement of the incoming applications of they compare the indexes of applicants to the average of the small towns (less than 20 000 inhabitants) in Hungary. They divide the indexes into 4 parts (population, housing stock, infrastructure and terciar indexes) this way they characterise the settlements from the aspect of statistics, then professionals give their opinion after having a look at the settlement and considering the objective indexes and subjective factors. In case of positive decision the application is submitted for acceptance to the head of state. However this kind of rule did not contain any requirements it suggested only some guiding principles for the judges.

The accouchement of the Ministry of Interior of 1995 did not result significant changes, either. This document mostly described desirable conditions rather than required indexes.

The bill of 1999.XLI.15-17§ was not breaking through, however it set out a system of indexes but not requirements or strict rules. The bill considers the question from the following angles.

- The place of the village in the system of settlements of the region, main characteristics of its development, its historical, social values and its main traditions

- The development of the population of the village, the characteristics features of its demographic and social structure
- The level of economical growth of the village, its structure, some significant economic organisations, and the effect of these on the region, the characteristics features of trade
- The level of infrastructural development in the village (level of improvement of public utilities, water supply, sewage, disposal-sewage cleaning, waste collection and distribution, the method of heating, the system of roads
- The structure of the settlement, its shape, development plans, strategies
- The institutions of the village (educational, cultural, scientific, research, innovative, health-care, social)
- The intellectual, cultural and sport events in the life of the village, the level of its social organisation, civil organisation and their effects on their environment
- The description of the budget of the self-government, the connections among the self-governments, the organisational role of the village in the region

The last legal change was in 2012. According to this law a village can be reclassified if it takes effect on the neighbouring settlements and reaches the urban level.

In line with legal law in force the process of grading town is the following: the Minister of the Interior establishes a professional delegation of 15 members (settlement-science, economy, administrative, mechanical sciences, self-governmental organisations, KSH and other professionals) for evaluating the incoming applications. This delegation make suggestions to the Minister who sends it to the President of the Republic until 31th of May. The head of the state decides on grading town till 30th of June and he publishes his decision in the Magyar Közlöny (Hungarian Official Journal). Town grading is impossible in the year of the election the members of the parliament.

To sum it up we can say that after the change of regime the reclassification became a formal urbanization (Pirisi 2009).

3. THE CHANGE OF THE NUMBERS OF THE TOWNS AFTER 1945

The texture of the town system in Hungary was really sparse after the World War II. when there were only 52 legal town. This number has increased more than fivefold in the last 65 years and after the most recent grading there are 312 settlements with this title (Table 2.)

TABLE 2 - THE CHANGE OF THE NUMBERS OF THE TOWNS IN HUNGARY, 1945-2013

Year	Number of towns	Ratio of urban population (%)
1945	52	35
1960	63	40
1970	76	45
1982	96	53
1984	109	55
1989	164	58
1990	177	62
1993	184	63
1995	194	63
1996	206	64
1997	218	64
2000	237	65
2004	274	66
2006	289	67
2007	298	67
2008	306	68
2010	328	68
2013	346	69

Source: Gazetteer of Hungary, 2013

The number of the towns, the ratio of the urban population and the urbanisation index is similar to the average of Europe (Csapó, Kocsis 2008, Tóth 2008).

During the period of planned economy the reclassification had definite and strict conditions as I have already described this phenomenon but at the same time the status of town provided some advantages. On the one hand these towns got more advanced positions in the redistribution of the town system on the other hand the institutions of towns were handled with priority in financial questions (Beluszky 1999). The settlements with functions (administration, health, education, trade) had good changes for application the reclassification in the middle of the 1990s as the criterias were getting less stricter and by 1990 nearly all settlements formerly district centres became a town (in 1989 41 settlements were reclassified). But at the same time with the growth of the number of town the value of the status began to decrease. The major reason for this is that the formerly differentiated infrastructural investments financed by the state (building house estates, pipe system) became more infrequent and the sharing of

the financial tools of the socialist system had become more rational between the town and the village (Beluszky 1999). Due to the the weakening of the lawful rules after the change of the political system a large number of the villages without basic functions was reclassified. Roughly 150 settlements have reclassified in the last two decades in Hungary, most of them missing basic functions. Of course it resulted a growth in the number and rate of town inhabitants, as well. While in 1920 only 49% of the present area of the population inhabited towns in 1996 the rate was 63% and it has risen over 68% recently.

TABLE 3 - SOME INDEXES OF THE URBANISATION IN THE HUNGARIAN COUNTIES

County	Number of towns	Total number of settlements	Rato of towns (%)	Ratio of urban population (%)
Budapest	1	1	100	100
Pest megye	54	187	28,8	66,21
Közép-Magyarország	55	188	29,2	88,1
Fejér megye	17	108	15,7	44,12
Komárom-Esztergom megye	12	76	15,8	64,73
Veszprém megye	15	217	6,9	32,23
Közép-Dunántúl	44	401	10,9	54,47
Győr-Moson-Sopron megye	12	183	6,5	59,77
Vas megye	13	216	6,0	60,48
Zala megye	10	258	3,9	56,61
Nyugat-Dunántúl	35	657	5,3	59,24
Baranya megye	14	301	4,6	66,04
Somogy megye	16	245	6,5	52,34
Tolna megye	11	109	10,1	56,39
Dél-Dunántúl	41	655	6,2	59,02
Borsod-Abaj Zemplén megye	29	358	8,1	58,63
Heves megye	11	121	9,1	46,93
Nógrád megye	6	131	4,6	41,96
Észak-Magyarország	46	610	7,5	52,85
Hajdú-Bihar megye	21	82	25,6	80,43
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok megye	22	78	28,2	72,81
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg megye	28	229	12,2	54,31
Észak-Alföld	71	389	18,2	68,56
Bács-Kiskun megye	22	119	18,5	68,17
Békés megye	22	75	29,3	75,85
Csongrád megye	10	60	16,6	75,35
Dél-Alföld	54	254	21,2	72,61
Ország összesen	348	3154	11,03	68,6

Source: Gazetteer of Hungary

4. TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF TOWNS, URBANISATION OF COUNTIES IN HUNGARY

Distribution of towns in the counties

Hungary has recently 305 towns in 19 counties most of them situated in Pest County (47), followed by Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (27) and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (26) followed by Bács-Kiskun, Békés and Hajdú-Bihar. So on the Great Plain, mostly the populated settlements with large area reclassified nowadays. The least number of towns is in Nógrád, Csongrád and Heves County, but to tell the truth these three counties have relatively small areas.



FIGURE 1 - THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS (COUNTY) OF HUNGARY

If we take into consideration the number of settlement in the county Hajdú-Bihar is the top-ranking followed by Békés, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, and the counties of denser, village like system of settlements are the last: Zala, Baranya, Vas and Nógrád.

Csongrád, Somogy and Heves Counties have the greatest area of the town and Pest, Komárom-Esztergom and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Counties close the row in his aspect. Compared to the values published by Beluszky Pál in 1999 the following statements can be made (Beluszky 1999): The value of index has increased in each county in the last two decade except for Nógrád County, where no one settlement reclassified during this period of time. The value has fallen back in the greatest in Baranya, Győr-Moson-Sopron and Fejér Counties and the least in Nógrád, Somogy and Csongrád.

The regional distribution of the new towns (graded after 2000) shows the Figure 2. Due to the suburbanization process Pest County is the top ranking with 27 new towns while in the abovementioned underdeveloped Nógrád county has not got any reclassification (Szepesi 2008).

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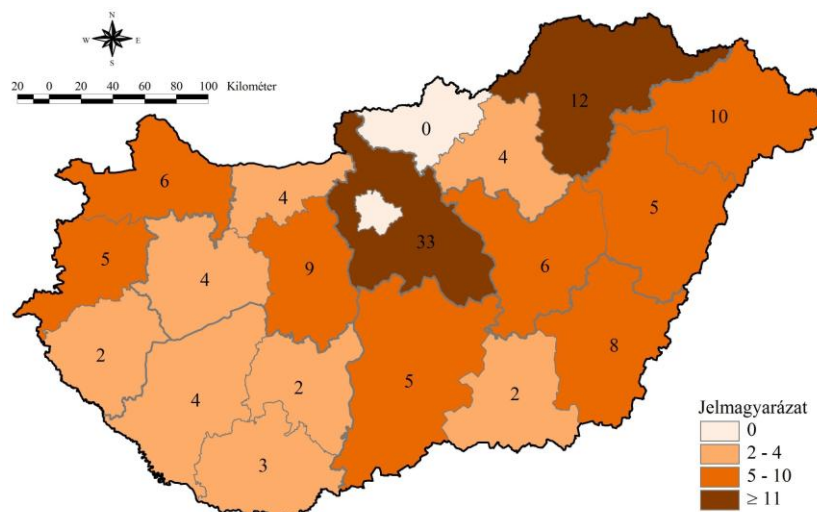


FIGURE 2 - THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOWNS RECLASSIFIED AFTER 2000 (THE NUMBER IN BRACKET MEANS THE NUMBER OF THE TOWNS RECLASSIFIED AFTER 2000)

Change of the population of towns

The towns with the highest number of inhabitants expect Budapest in Hungary in 2013 Debrecen (218.000), Miskolc and Szeged (roughly 180.000) the towns with the smallest number of inhabitants is Pálháza (1200), Visegrád and Zalakaros (just above 1500). In the aspect of number of urban inhabitants the rate is highest in Hajdú-Bihar and Csongrád and Békés almost reach this level, but Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Somogy, Nógrád and Heves Counties stay beyond 50%. According to the above mentioned researches made by Beluszky Pál Pest County has undergone the greatest change of number of population in the last decade followed by Békés and Hajdú-Bihar while the smallest values of course belong to Nógrád, Heves and Komárom-Esztergom Counties.

Considering the number of inhabitants per a town Csongrád, Győr-Moson-Sopron and Heves Counties are in the first place. In the case of the former two county-centres and the town with the same laws as county rise the value high. Examining this index Hajdú-Bihar, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Vas lag behind.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Small towns are determining factors in the urban network of Hungary, most of them reclassified during the last decade but in many cases their urban functions and central roles are missing. What says the future? This is a legitimate question. Instead of answering it here are two thoughts from two leading

settlements-geography researchers. Tóth József defined the settlements he suggest to be reclassified some of them has already been given the title but the others are still apply for it with more or less success (Tóth J 1994). But at the same time Beluszky Pál believes that the individual features of the network of settlement does not give an opportunity to raise the number of towns in a significant way. He believes that the population would make the spread of real towns again only if the shopping power of the population increases or the judging of the role system of towns would change (Beluszky 1999).

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