

**THE METROPOLIS IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES/  
EASTERN-MIDDLE EUROPE**

by

**Ferenc Vidor**  
Professor in Urban and  
Regional Planning  
Advisor of the Hungarian Academy  
of Sciences  
Budapest, Hungary

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## The Metropolis in Socialist Countries

### /Eastern-Middle Europe/

#### Introduction

One of the objectives of the 3rd Committee of this Conference, i.e. to discuss the metropolises of socialist countries and to identify their main characteristics, seems to be rather a particular challenge. For the time being, several countries which differ from one another regarding their geographical position, historical development and economic level can be called socialist since besides the Soviet Union and Eastern-Middle European countries China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Cuba and some smaller African countries may come under this "category". The latter ones, beyond any doubt, can be classed as much into the group of developing countries as in that of the socialist ones.

Thus, our theme should be narrowed down, and from the great variety of the afore-mentioned countries, which manifests itself in the highly differing characteristics of their metropolises, our study should be concentrated on the discussion of the special features of Eastern-Middle European cities which are situated in a relatively smaller geographic unit and the historical development of some of their groups shows a certain degree of homogeneity. Naturally, this historico-geographical homogeneity, too, includes great differences, and it is our greatest task to detect some significantly homogeneous as well as heterogeneous characteristics of the metropolises of this region like Budapest, Prague, Belgrade, Bucharest or Warsaw.

#### The Metropolis as a Holistic Phenomenon

the city itself nowadays? What do we know about the 20th century metropolises which are the most monumental products of human and social effort among cities? Naturally, to give a categorical and definite answer or a clear-cut definition of the city or the metropolis in order to satisfy every scientific discipline concerned -- be it whatever interdisciplinary -- seems to be rather a preterhuman effort. So we are not undertaking this task either, only using again the truism, we emphasize the fact that every city is something like a superstructure, i.e. the conglomeration of people themselves and their physical products as well as their visible and invisible communication systems which leaves the totality of their secrets hidden, showing the curious researcher only some fragments of statistical and/or dynamic reality.

In one of his latest books while projecting the image of the city of Rome Freud<sup>1.</sup> illustrates the limitations of the cognizability of cities plastically:

"Historians tell us that the oldest Rome was the Roma Quadrata, a fenced settlement on the Palatine. Then followed the phase of the Septimontium, a federation of the settlements on the different hills: after that came the city bounded by the Servian wall; and later still, after all the transformations during the periods of the republic and the early Caesars, the city which the Emperor Aurelian surrounded with his walls. We will not follow the changes which the city went through any further, but we will ask ourselves how much a visitor, whom we will suppose to be equipped with the most complete historical and topographical knowledge, may still find left of these early stages in the Rome of today. Except for a few gaps, he will see the wall of Aurelian almost unchanged. In some places he will be able to find sections of the Servian wall where they have been excavated and brought

in the plan of the city the whole course of that wall and the outline of the Roma Quadrata. Of the buildings which once occupied this ancient area he will find nothing, or only scanty remains, for they exist no longer. The best information about Rome in the republican era would only enable him at the most to point out the sites where the temples and public buildings of that period stood. Their place is now taken by ruins, but not by ruins of themselves but of later restorations made after fires or destruction. It is hardly necessary to remark that all these remains of ancient Rome are found dovetailed into the jumble of a great metropolis which has grown up in the last few centuries since the Renaissance. There is certainly not a little that is ancient still buried in the soil of the city or beneath its modern buildings. This is the manner in which the past is preserved in historical sites like Rome.

Now let us, by a flight of imagination, suppose that Rome is not a human habitation but a psychical entity with a similarly long and copious past -- an entity, that is to say, in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one. This would mean that in Rome the palaces of the Caesars and the Septizonium of Septimius Severus would still be rising to their old height on the Palatine and that the castle of S. Angelo would still be carrying on its battlements the beautiful statues which graced it until the siege by the Goths, and so on. But more than this. In the place occupied by the Palazzo Caffarelli would once more stand -- without the Palazzo having to be removed -- the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus: and this not only in its latest shape, as the Romans of the Empire saw it, but also in its earliest one, when it still showed Etruscan forms and was ornamented with terracotta antefixes. Where the Coliseum now stands we could at the same time admire Nero's vanished Golden House. On the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find not only the Pantheon of today, as it was bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but, on the same site, the original edifice erected by Agrippa

indeed, the same piece of ground would be supporting the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the ancient temple over which it was built. And the observer would perhaps only have to change the direction of his glance or his position in order to call up the one view or the other."

Perhaps, I have quoted too long a passage of Freud but I think we may agree with him on the following as he continues:

"There is clearly no point in spinning our phantasy any further, for it leads to things that are unimaginable and even absurd. If we want to represent historical sequence in spatial terms we can only do it by juxtaposition in space: the same space cannot have two different contents. Our attempt seems to be an idle game. It has only one justification. It shows us how far we are from mastering the characteristics of mental life by representing them in pictorial terms."

Thus, to acquire scientific knowledge on the network of relationships of the city as a whole -- be this city anywhere in the world -- comes up against great difficulties; we can reveal individual partial problems, territorial or historical analogies more or less but to get a deeper insight in our own city or a town discovered during our journey, we must mobilize our intuitions, range of emotions and capabilities for empathy, going beyond the conventional dominance of rational and logical cognition. The metropolis of the 20th century is the most amazing formation which is, at the same time, the sciento-technological, artistic and, moreover, the sacral product of man, i.e. it is a holistic phenomenon in its very essence.

And here it is worth mentioning a linguistic characteristic which can be found in western languages and Hungarian as well, pointing, typically, to the holistic nature of cities or, even

proliferating spatial wrappers of man, which increase his security, ranging from our clothes through the interior decoration of our buildings and quarters of town to the urban, metropolitan, further on, national, continental, global and cosmic scales, the city is the first concept in which physical framework and the population living in it are expressed by one word, and subsequently differentiating we denote only posteriorly whether we have had the physical formations of the city or its inhabitants in mind.

Whereas, when speaking about clothes and architectonic scales we separate man from his clothes or buildings /having to different words to describe them/. This indicates an additive approach, as contrasted to the afore-mentioned holistic concept of the city, that, during history, has always surpassed the creativity of individual man, moreover, that which had been established symbolically by only gods or concretely, rulers playing divine parts even in ancient times.

The building /at best, the smaller or larger groups of buildings/ seems to be the most spacious human product both in space and time, which -- denotable even by words -- may be conceived as a personal product. The city transcends this and this transcendence is of dialectic nature as the magico-mythic, "divine" or ruler's formation has been accompanied by the anonymity of human beings since ancient times. It is not impossibility either that it was this anonymity factor which, -- with rare exceptions, being typical of the whole history of city-planning -- contributed to the great variety of cities in the successive historical ages and to

depending on historical ages, but not excluding our own human and professional conventions either.

As far as our own age is concerned, we may witness so monumental and personally-inspired plan conceptions though -- let us think of President Kubitschek's and/or architects Lucio Costa's and Oscar Niemeyer's Brazilia or Le Corbusier's Chandigarh -- the personal element concerning the global development of city is fading away even in these cases within a comparatively short time. In further growth the anonym features are strengthened. However, in contrast with the "progressive"anonymity of the one-time guild masters, patricians and master builders creating spontaneous harmony --with rare exceptions -- our age may be characterized rather by a "regressively" anonymous proliferation both in developed and underdeveloped countries. Although the "levels" of this luxuriant growth and its special characteristics greatly differ in various countries of the world, all this, basically, indicates, that the cities of our age also resist to be put into the Procrustes' bed of a single and seemingly perfect individual planning concept, having enriched with unforeseeable newer and newer features they surpass the limitations of human "planability".

While our house or our closer homes might be severally reconstructed or put together during our life-time and the spatial and time scales of architecture are at the boundaries of receptability or perspicuity, our cities not only surmount this again but they are experienced, mostly, as being completer and readier by us. Albeit sometimes we can witness

enormous changes during our mortal span covering two or three generations, for the individual the lives of cities with their manifold generations seem to have existed "from time immemorial" or, at least "since ancient times" as if emerging from the mists of time. Such emotions -- frequently contradicting even to historical facts -- accept the inhabitants born in a given city established only one or two generations before or those moving there /confronting with accomplished facts/, and hint at, again, the afore-mentioned holistic character of the city under the circumstances of our age.

The "desacralized" societies of the 20th century -- with their extreme ideas, either by extending planability beyond all boundaries or the apotheosis of material and economic aspects -- are not able or willing or, rather, dare not -- notice the contradictions, the limitations and dangers beside the values, which have propped up by the unprecedented growth of metro-polises, moreover, megalopolises recently all over the world. Up till now the Eastern-Middle European development has not produced agglomerations like New York, London, Paris or the Netherlands' Randstad and, probably, such scales of growth will not be expected in the near future either since, after all, the historical development of this region -- showing similar features in many respects -- has been lagging behind the Western-European pace.

The roots of this socio-economic backwardness of Eastern-Middle Europe go back to several centuries. The shift of world trade to the oceans in the 16th and 17th centuries, the advance of the Turks and the Turkish total or partial occupation of today's Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria



influence on urban development in Eastern-Middle Europe even after several centuries past. Although the 19th century Austro-Hungarian Monarchy induced a spectacular metropolitan development -- especially, in the second half of this century, with the examples of Vienna and Budapest,-- on the whole, it carried the germs of the disease which, finally, led to its collapse after World War I. Among the socialist countries' million-scale metropolises Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia and Budapest, the capital of Hungary can be found in the territory of the one-time Monarchy, however, of the "smaller cities" Zagreb /Yugoslavia/, Brno and Bratislava /Czechoslovakia/, Cracow /Poland/ -- today cities with half a million or more inhabitants -- belonged to this empire as well.

As far as the metropolises of the other socialist countries are concerned -- regarding the centuries of development before World War II -- Leipzig and Dresden, more or less, followed the main line of Western European development /Berlin comprises a special category not only because of its today's dividedness/; the Romanian capital Bucharest and the former Serbian and the present Yugoslavian capital Belgrade as well as the Bulgarian capital Sofia were interlocked with Byzantine traditions, partly due to the Turkish rule centuries long and, partly to the fact that the bulk of the population followed the Eastern Church and, particularly, Bucharest and Belgrade's metropolitan development began vigorously **only** in the twenties of our century, owing to Romania and Yugoslavia's position belonging to the victorious powers **after** World War I.

how different historical backgrounds, how various socio-economic and political forces had worked in these territories viewed as relatively small from West-European, or even, American scales, before the socialist development which unfolded some years past the end of World War II. This development is hardly 40-years old and it is not an overstatement if we say that the real present-day characters of the majority of the afore-mentioned cities were determined -- at least to the same extent, if not more -- by the previous historical ages and traditions and, within these, primarily, the industrialization and speculation booms of the second half of the 19th century. Although it is worth considering to what extent the psychologists' notions about the decisive importance of childhood's experience in adult's life may be applied to cities, after all, it can be claimed that the few decades past since the 1950s cover only a short period of time as compared to the several-century-old lives of the afore-mentioned cities. Naturally, the holistic or rather "super-human" characters of cities are true of the metropolises of Eastern-Middle Europe, and the history of the youngest one discussed here embraces, at least, some centuries though, they far extend over the optimally seven or eight decades of the individual's life.

### The Eastern-Middle European Metropolis

In this paper I want to study, primarily, Budapest since it is this city where I was born and in which I have spent the best part of my life and to which, in addition to intellectual

knowledge, I am emotionally devoted. But before speaking about Budapest, laying some emphasis on the concrete and rationally comprehensible features I should like to mention some characteristics of the afore-mentioned metropolises in the Eastern-Middle European realm which are considered as significant and with which the special features of the socialist era form a non-recurring mix. We know that our remarks are sometimes incidental, impressive, and primarily, irremediably fragmentary as they describe the realities of these European cities only vaguely, but we think they may already arouse the reader's interest towards further richer and more detailed comparative analyses.

Although among the Eastern-Middle European metropolises the number of inhabitants in Prague is almost the lowest /preceding only Sofia/ as compared to those of the other capitals, this town has the most distinct historical character. This is partially due to the fact that Prague has the largest and the most beautiful Gothic and Baroque city centre since she was spared by the devastations of the great wars, amongst them the two world wars. The view on the either side of the Vltava for the by-stander is of unique beauty. The great variety of the features of the ground, the bridges crossing the river, the market of the Old Town, the Gothic and Baroque spires, the delicate details offer a fascinating experience to the visitor. We can hardly shake off the emotional impression of the Hradčany ruling the city, although the contemporary power and defence functions of citadels described by Mumford<sup>2</sup> have become mostly of symbolic nature nowadays. The blocks

architecture joined the historical centre and, after the fifties, this picture have been supplemented, just like in many socialist countries, by the rows of many-storied monotonous housing estates.

In contrast with Prague, Warsaw, Poland's capital was afflicted by the tempests of history many times. This was the town -- later Rotterdam and Belgrade shared her fate -- which was the first victim of the Nazi Germany's total air-raids.

As far as the modern Polish urban development is concerned, it reflects the impacts of the three neighbouring great powers /Austria, Prussia and Russia/, which distributed Poland several times, up till 1920, i.e. the establishment of the new, independent Polish state. In the appearance of Gdańsk, Poznań, Toruń and Wrocław Prussian and German characteristics while in that of Cracow the features of the Monarchy and in Warsaw -- to a lesser extent though -- the influence of the tsarist empire can be traced. Poland, too, belonged to the victorious powers of World War I and the independence regained also contributed, considerably, to the fact that the twenty years past between the two world wars left their marks on the appearance of Warsaw. Among all metropolises in Eastern-Middle Europe the so called socialist realism of the first period after the socialist take-over can be seen perhaps most strongly in Warsaw, owing to the necessity of great constructions after World War II. In the spirit of this the restoration of the destroyed city centre according to its original styles was launched

disappearance of the socialist realism and, parallel to the massive housing estates several modern public buildings and grandiose solutions of city-planning show the trend of further development in Warsaw, too.

The prehistory of Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia can be characterized by the Ottoman rule of many centuries and/or their central roles in national struggles against it as well as the fact that the territories of the Yugoslav Federal Republic forming Old Serbia and a significant part of Romania and Bulgaria's population belong to the Eastern Church as opposed to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and the German Democratic Republic where, during centuries, catholicism and protestantism have become dominant. The Byzantine tradition, which, nowadays, manifests itself only as an element of atmosphere, primarily, in some clerical remains, in the narrow streets of the old towns and some living-houses or public buildings preserving the contemporary architecture is flooded by the housing estates and public buildings of the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries in all the three cities.

In contrast to Warsaw the destroyed parts of Belgrade have been rebuilt in the spirit of modern architecture and the character of this town /owing to the 1949 break with the Soviet Union and a more powerful western orientation/ is determined mostly by this. Among others, the monumental public buildings of New Belgrade on the other side of Sava, her Congress Centre and residential buildings illustrate the importance of the past 30-40 years.

tion of apartments over the past 30-40 years has left its marks. At first the small town of the Balkans before World War I set off on the way towards growing into a metropolis, following French examples, then from the early 1960s on so many new housing estates -- large-scale in form but rather inferior in quantity -- have been built that the proportion of apartments erected in this period as compared to those built in the former ones goes far beyond the proportions of the other Eastern-Middle European capitals.

It can be noted here that while in case of Budapest and Belgrade the Danube, in Warsaw the Vistula and, in Prague the smaller Vltava form a river axis defining the cityscape; in Bucharest there is no river though, its absence is compensated by a partially grandiose artificial lake-system indicating another aspect of the metropolitan presence of water.

There will be only few words about Sofia and East Berlin here as these two capitals represent the particularly extreme cases of our topic discussed here. While Sofia has reached the metropolitan stage only recently, and her traditions -- together with Belgrade and Bucharest -- reflect the Byzantine and Ottoman past, Berlin -- not only with her dividedness but with her Prussian and German imperial past and, in addition, with her more significant order of magnitude than the other socialist countries' capitals have -- comprises a unique type which exempts itself from the comparison with others to many respects. I am not going to analyse here Tirana, the capital of the smallest European socialist country either; in this case, on the one hand, the almost rural or at least "rurban"

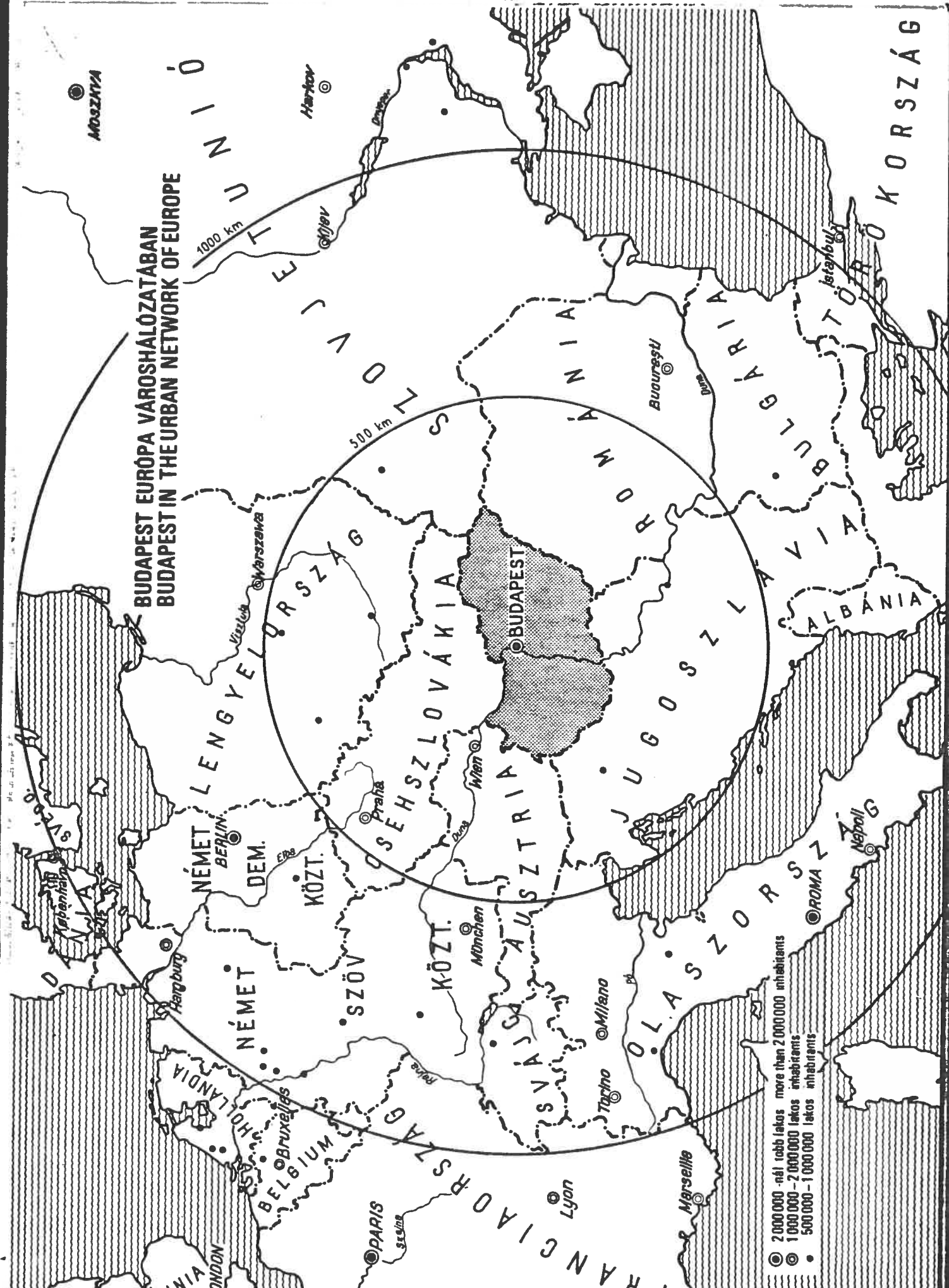
permanent cutting herself from the whole of the world and the other socialist countries mean such phenomena which could be worthy of a specific analysis.

### The Case of Budapest<sup>3</sup>.

Although the problems of Budapest and the Budapest Metropolitan Region are now in the focus of our interest, a brief survey of the emergence of Hungarian settlements, for many interdependencies, could be hardly eliminated. Hungarians settled in the basin of the Danube surrounded by the Carpathians in the 9th century amidst Slavs, Germans and the remnants of Romanized ethnic groups, having preserved the character of their language -- of the Finno-Ugrian family -- for more than on thousand years.

Italian and French influence dominated in the Medieval and Renaissance periods, however, few monuments lasted out the Turkish occupation and the prolonged warfare of the 16th and the 17th centuries. Reconstruction in the 18th century brought about a growing German -- Baroque -- influence; Hungarian settlements of this period follow dominantly western patterns, nevertheless, a special type of town emerges, particularly, in the Great Hungarian Plain: "boroughs" providing both urban and rural functions, anticipating the British Garden City ideal in their visual appearance. The second half of the 19th century brought a large-scale urbanization all over Europe. As a result of the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and its rapid industrial rise in the Middle European region, Budapest -- due to its favourable geographical, social and economic situation in

BUDAPEST EURÓPA VÁROSHÁLÓZATÁBAN  
BUDAPEST IN THE URBAN NETWORK OF EUROPE



● 2000 000 -nél több lakos    more than 2 000 000 inhabitants  
○ 1000 000 - 2 000 000 lakos    inhabitants  
• 500 000 - 1 000 000 lakos    inhabitants



became the largest metropolis of the area.

New frontiers upset the balance of the structural network of settlements after World War I. The cultural and economic role of Budapest seemed to develop to an ill-proportioned direction, and the area of Hungary diminished to 93,000 sq.km. The number of its inhabitants is now somewhat more than 10 million, thus, if the average is concerned, it is among the countries having medium residential density.

As it is certainly known, Hungary was, primarily, an agricultural country before World War II. However, during the last 25 years there has been a powerful shift toward industrialization, and more than half of the national income of today's Hungary already derives from industrial production. The centre of industry is Budapest, respectively, the Budapest metropolitan region. One-fifth of the population of the country lives in Budapest, and Budapest provides approximately half of the industrial workers and the industrial production of the country. If we add the Budapest metropolitan region to the city, nearly three-fifths of the industrial workers of the country work in this area. Of course, the proportion of those working in the tertiary sector is similarly high.

In the 1960s the total increase of the number of the population of Budapest and its environment exceeded the total increase of the population of the country. During this period 48 per cent of workers living in towns concentrated in the medium and large towns of industrially developed areas. The increase of the number of urban population was approximately

concentrated in the capital, one-fifth in the five largest provincial towns with 120-220,000 inhabitants -- Miskolc, Debrecen, Szeged, Pécs, Győr -- which are situated near the frontiers of the country, along a semi-circle at a distance of about 150-200 km from the capital, and constitute only 6-12 per cent of the number of the population of the capital each.

Because of their sphere of attraction extending only on one side and because of their backwardness compared with Budapest, these counterpole towns do not properly perform their relieving role yet. An increasingly important role is played, however, by a ring of towns located at a distance of 50-80 km from the capital in counterbalancing the preponderance of Budapest, the weight of which is less than that of the more distant ring of towns along the border, but from the point of view of industry and supply its weight is increasing, and accordingly the number of its population as well.

In this -- inner -- ring of towns the development of Szolnok, Kecskemét and Székesfehérvár from the point of view of industrial and supply function as well as the considerable increase of the number of their population are prominent. At present, the increase of the counterpoles near the frontier exceeds the double of the growth rate of the capital. The growth rate of Szolnok and Székesfehérvár is even twice higher than these.

And now a brief retrospection should be presented on the

beginnings of urban and regional planning attempts in Hungary in the very beginning of the 19th century, closely connected with the later development of the capital. The ~~Town~~ Improvement Commission was established in Pest /in those times still separated from Buda/ in the year of 1808. This "historical" commission was propagating and realizing the relevant planning ideas of the epoch and might be regarded as one of the early precursors of many similar committees or institutions established later.

It was Count István Széchenyi the very first "regional planner" of Hungary whose ideas enormously determined the construction of the Hungarian railway system, water regulation, irrigation etc. in the midst of the 19th century. Comprehensive characteristic of his concept could be regarded as the most progressive of that time and several aspects of his approach could be accepted as valid in our regional analyses today as well.

Buda and Pest were unified in 1873, few years before the "Council of Public Works" had been established. This governmental institution had an important role in the creation of the radiocentric structure and in shaping many squares, boulevards, parks still living elements of the city.

Between the two world wars the first codification of town planning took place. Cities and towns were obliged to have their master plans elaborated. After World War II reconstruction again became a primordial problem. Regulations put into forth in 1947 extended the scope of the law issued in 1937. Regional planning legally started in 1949 and a general law summarizing

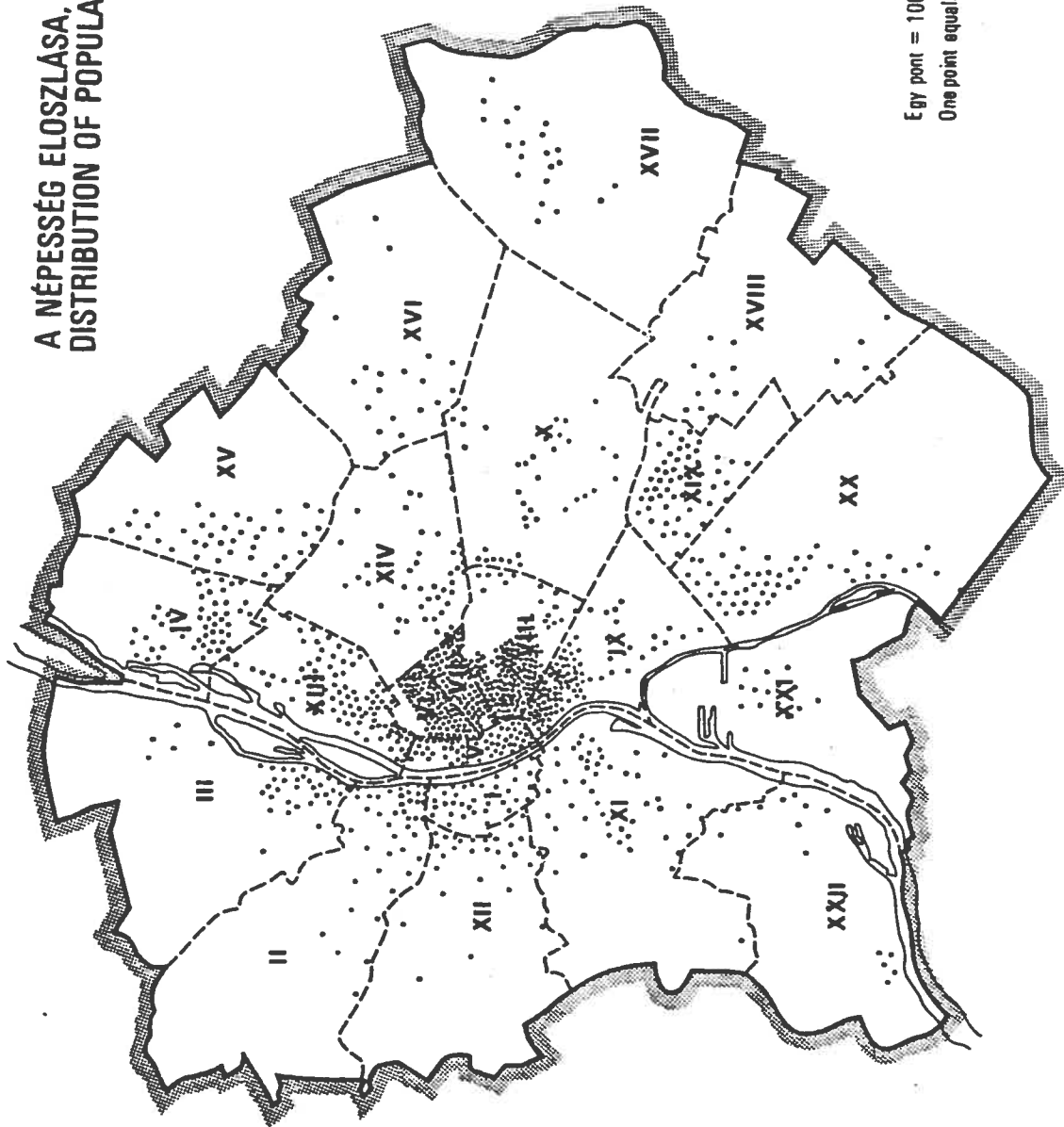
principles of both Urbanism and Regionalism was issued in 1964. According to this law, problems must be solved by taking into consideration various interdependencies within the whole spatial network.

The area of the capital is 525 sq.km, the number of inhabitants makes appr. 2.0 million in the early 1980s. It should be also mentioned that within the boundaries of the city, the density of the population is relatively low: 3600 persons/sq.km., compared e.g. to Vienna /appr. 3800 persons/sq.km/ or Prague appr. 5600 persons/sq.km/.

In contradistinction to the afore-mentioned relatively low average residential density, in the crowded inner districts of the city it is still very high, in many places it exceeds the 1,000 persons/ha value, while in the outer districts it hardly reaches the 40 persons/ha value, which, for example, amounts to less than one-fourth of the lower limit of the supply of public utilities which may be considered economical by some economists in the country.

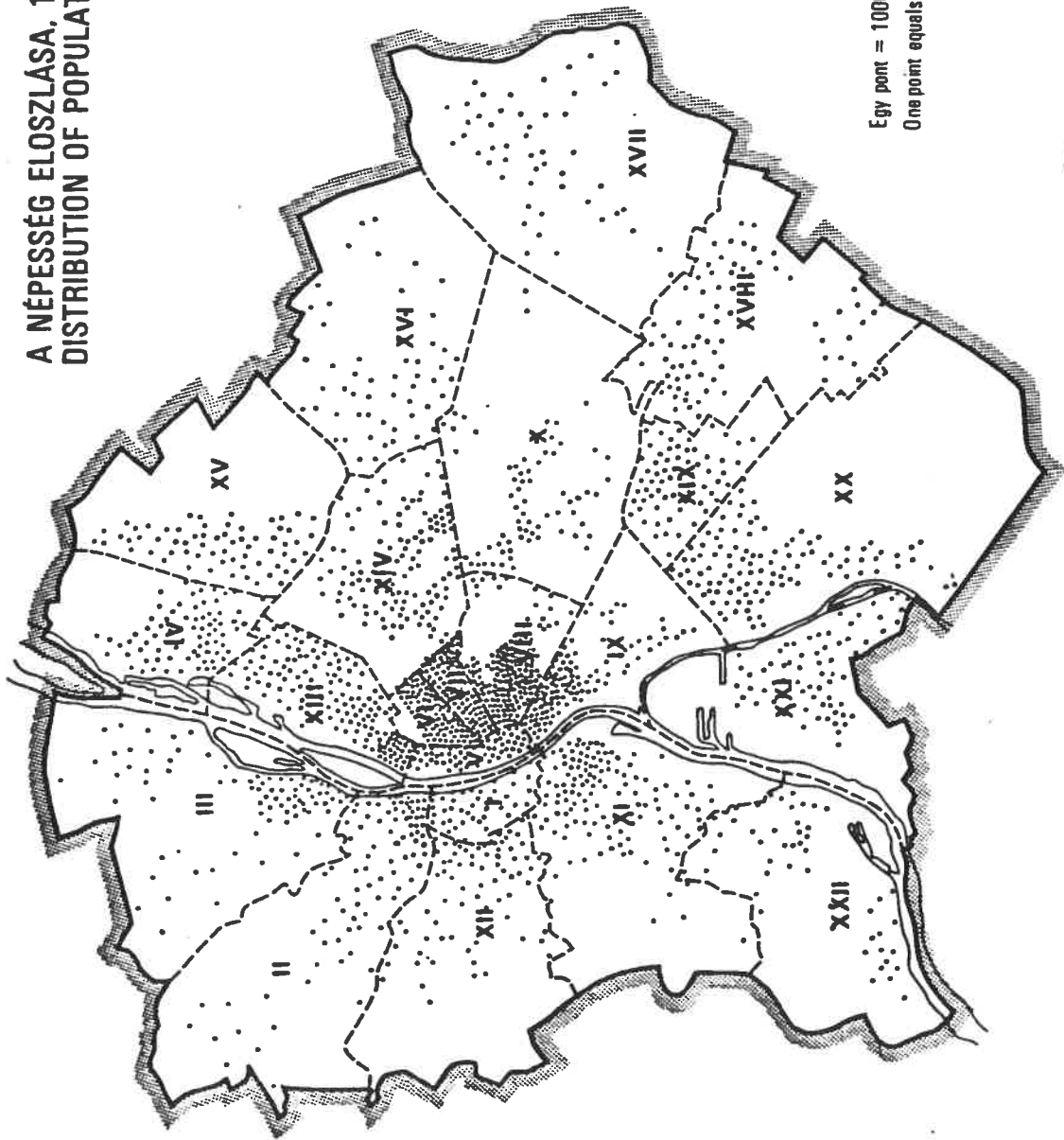
Although traffic is causing increasing difficulties in Budapest, too, for the time being, it has not reached Western European standards yet. It might command interest probably as a matter of curiosity that Budapest has one of the best functioning public traffic system /bus, trolley-bus, tram/ among all the large cities of Europe, which in spite of the increasing private car park still transports the overwhelming majority of the working population to work even today. A few maps illustrate both the distribution of the population in 1920 and 1970 and the development of the concentration of

A NÉPESSÉG ELOSZLÁSA, 1920  
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION 1920



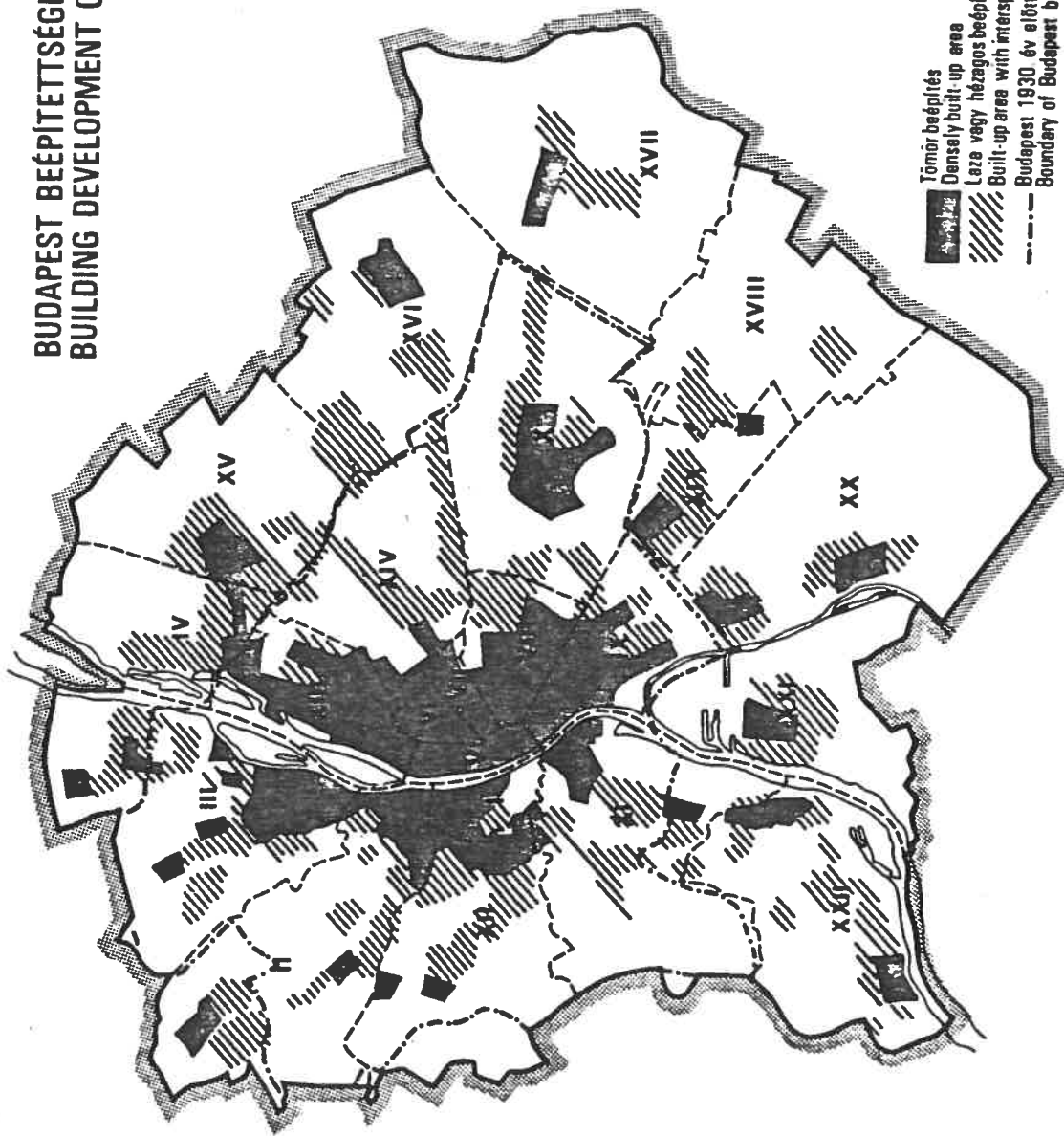
Egy pont = 1000 lakos  
One point equals 1000 inhabitants

A NÉPESÉG ELOSZLÁSA, 1970  
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION 1970

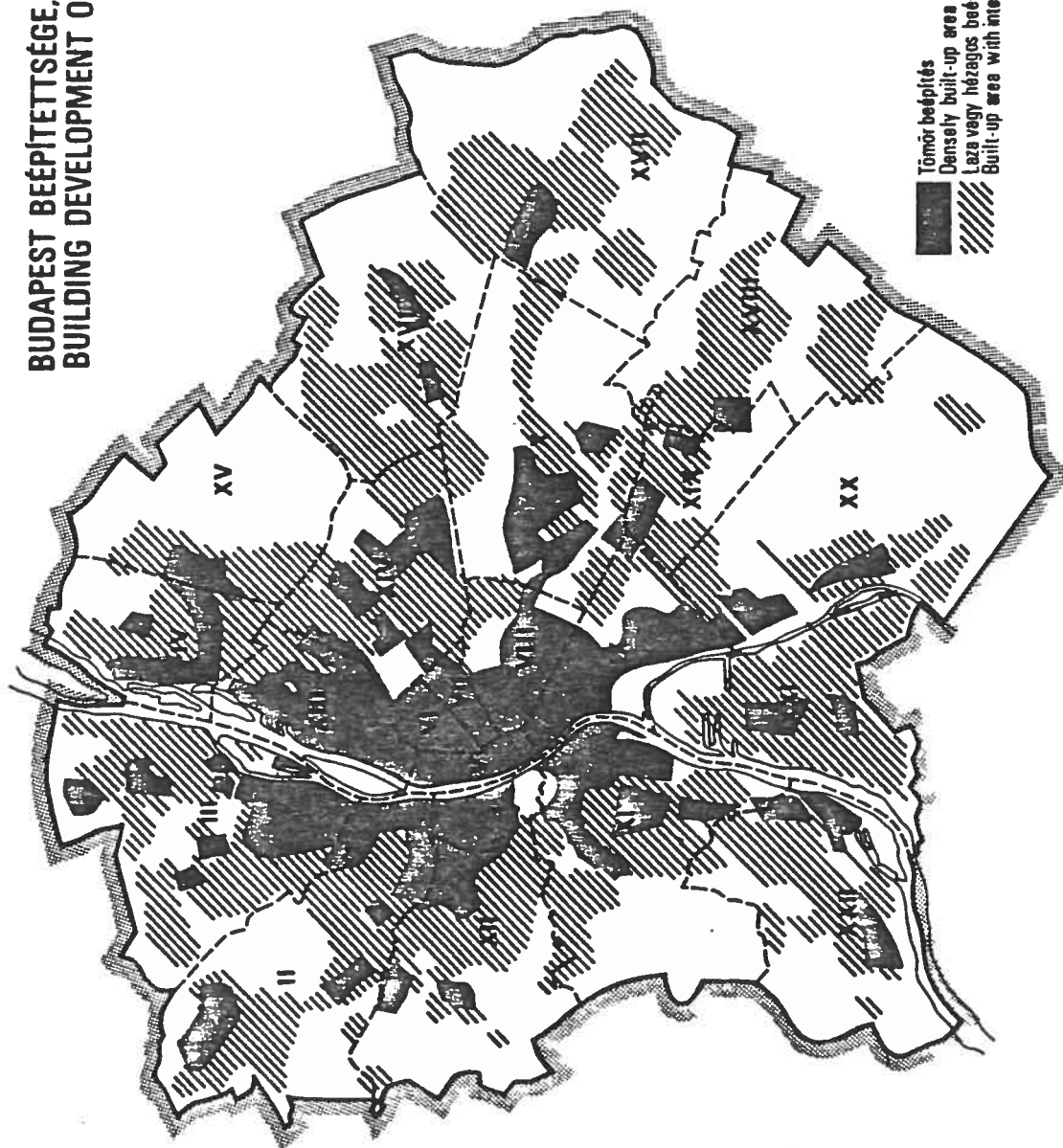


Egy pont = 1000 lakos  
One point equals 1000 inhabitants

BUDAPEST BEÉPÍTETTSÉGE, 1930  
BUILDING DEVELOPMENT OF BUDAPEST 1930



BUDAPEST BEÉPÍTETTSÉGE, 1970  
BUILDING DEVELOPMENT OF BUDAPEST 1970





As regards the Budapest Metropolitan Region /1.670 sq.km. appr. 2.4 million of inhabitants/ a few information should be given, too.

While the agglomeration area embracing 44 communities, among them four towns, makes up only 1.7 per cent of Hungary, here bunches together almost a quarter of the country's population /22.7 per cent in 1970, 23.1 per cent in 1980/: in 1970 27.2 of the employed in the country worked here. In 1970 34.5 per cent of those employed in industry and in 1979 25 per cent of them had work-places in the Budapest agglomeration. The decrease of the absolute number of industrial workers was the consequence of the shift to the tertiary sector which also demonstrates the leading role of Budapest.<sup>5</sup>

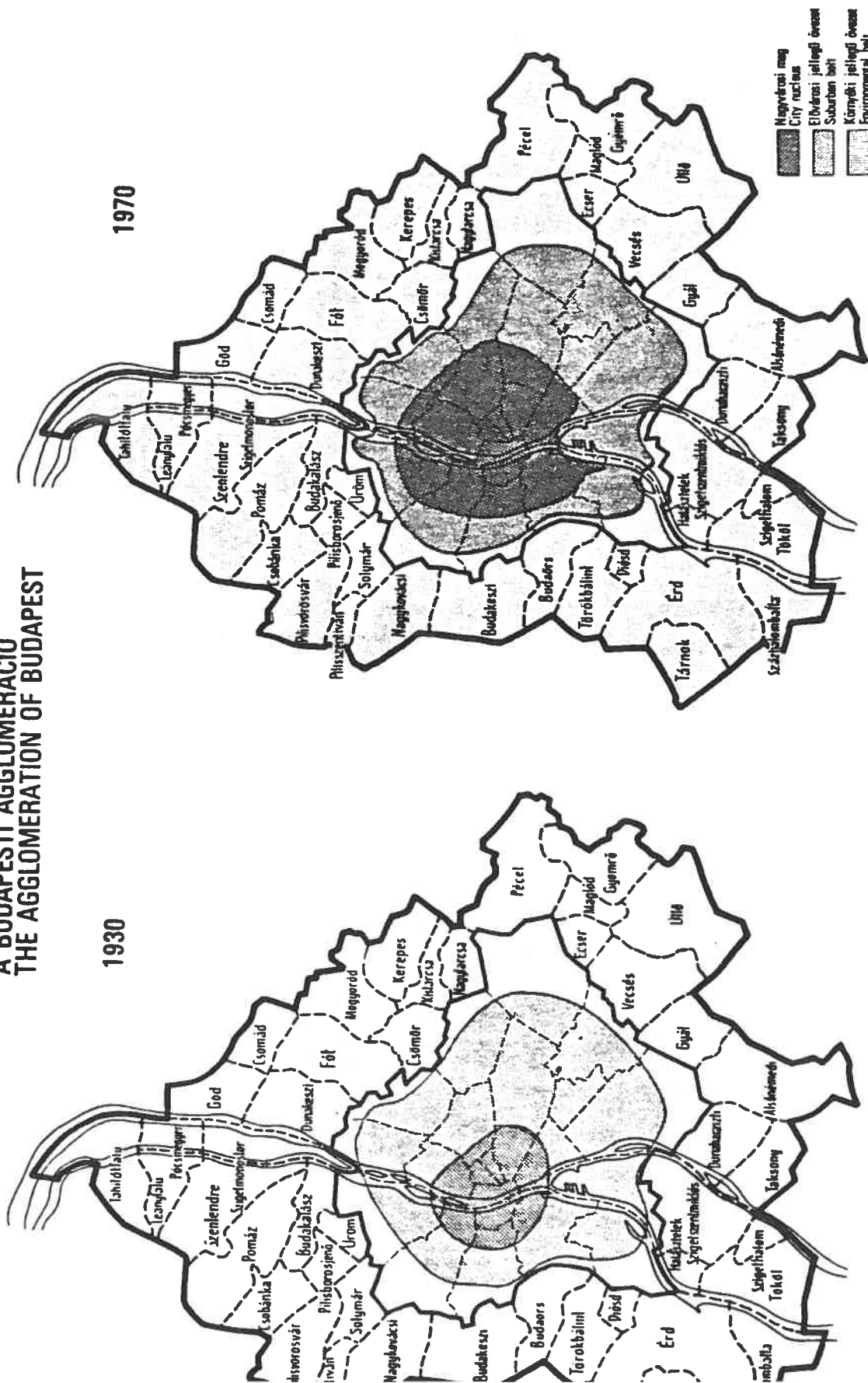
In the following we illustrate the emergence of Budapest agglomeration between 1900 and 1970, the change of the number of population between 1880 and 1970 as well as the 1970 density of population with the help of some maps. A table will show the actual and planned changes of the number of inhabitants of Budapest and her agglomeration between 1960 and 2000.<sup>6</sup>

Budapest is characterized by the very favourable utilization of advantageous natural potentialities from the point of view of settlement and cityscape. The "Queen of the Danube" as she is often called offers a magnificent view from the soft mountaneous areas, the hills or from the Castle area of Buda to the slightly emerging overdimensioned plain of the Pest side. The topological situation of Budapest could be con-

# A BUDAPESTI AGGLOMERÁCIÓ THE AGGLOMERATION OF BUDAPEST

1930

1970

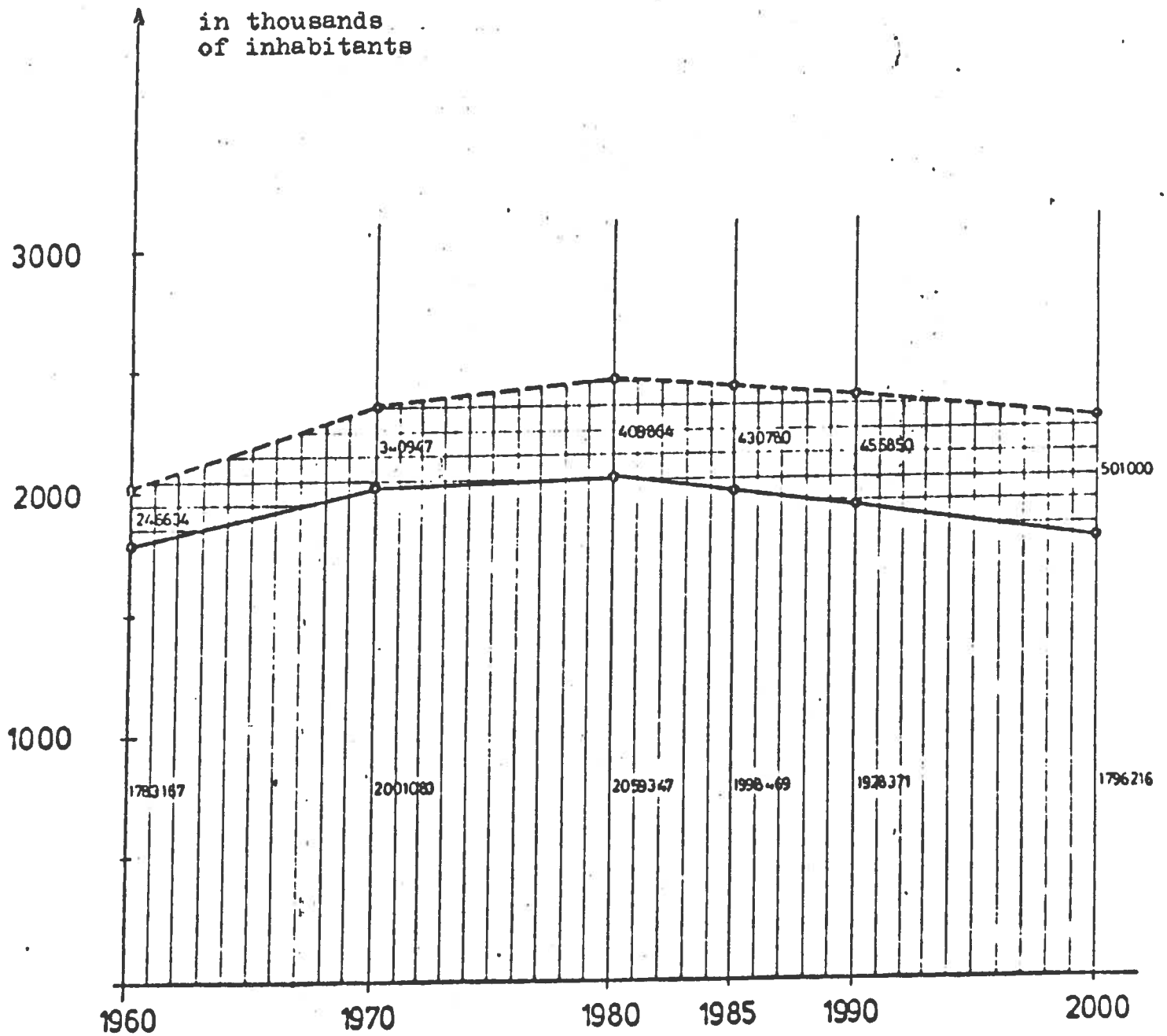


**A népesség az 1880. évi X. évfolyam**  
Population number as a percentage of the 1880 population number

| Age Group   | Percentage of 1880 Population |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 100 alatt   | 10%                           |
| 101-200     | 15%                           |
| 201-500     | 25%                           |
| 501-1000    | 35%                           |
| 1000 felett | 15%                           |



CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF POPULATION OF BUDAPEST AND  
THE BUDAPEST AGGLOMERATION BETWEEN 1960-2000



sidered as a huge amphitheatre where the inhabitants of Pest wherever they live, close to the Danube, or far away in the outskirts, may regard the attractions granted by nature and man. Compared to Prague, though there are many similarities in the situation, no doubt the details, the historical monuments of the Czech Capital are of greater value while Budapest represents a higher dimension in scales. Despite of the relative poverty in historical sites, except perhaps those of the neo-classical and the eclectic period, and also of some definite architectural faults produced in our times, the Danube, which detaches and links at the same time the two parts of the city, offers a unique panorama in Eastern-Middle Europe.

#### Some Common Characteristics and Tendencies

In the preceding part of the study we have provided a somewhat sketchy description of the Eastern Middle-European metropolises and have lingered over the problematique of Budapest. We are well aware of the fact that from the total spectrum of the problems we have been able to grasp only some fragments, giving perhaps some impulses, during the debates of this congress, to the judgement of the metropolises in other spaces of the world. Nevertheless, we must note that, to this respect, we are rather sceptic since even the ~~smaller~~ towns are so unique and there are so many individual features of them that they exempt themselves from every kind of mechanical typologization. Thus, how much more complicated the case is with the metropolises of the world when each of them with their background problematique represents so a unique species that the thorough study of only a single partial detail consumes con-

siderable energy, time and financial means of the host of experts.

Also, the quantitative analyses have proved to be of a restricted value, disorientating and misleading researchers and planners who rely only and chiefly on them. Apprehensions belonging to ~~meta~~-scientific spheres and intuitive perceptions should supplement the conventional scientific analyses: they should lead, in large spatial scales, too, to the intuition and discovery of qualitative patterns the significance of which has been pointed out by Christopher Alexander in one of his latest books.<sup>7</sup>

As we are fully aware of the fact that these patterns touching only the emotional sphere of our knowledge of the world can be communicated with great difficulty, permit me to make an attempt -- this time remaining within the boundaries of practice -- at expounding some remarks on some features considered as homogeneous of the afore-mentioned metropolises of Eastern-Middle European socialist countries and/or their developmental tendencies which were, principally, typical of them after the post-war era. Now we seek to be confined only to the identification of some typical symptoms. But the thorough study of the causes of these symptoms, the formulation of an all-out diagnosis, which would demand a deeper socio-economic and political analysis of the afore-mentioned countries, goes beyond the boundaries of this paper.

In the following sections the Eastern-Middle European metropolises will be analysed by four accentuated approaches: the individual characteristics will be studied as economic,

social and physical entities and, finally, communication and transport will be focussed on.

1./ The Eastern-Middle European Metropolis as an Economic Entity

First of all, it should be stated that the socialist countries of Eastern-Middle Europe, plainly speaking, are poorer than the leading states of Western Europe; in respect to their GNP almost without exception they are lagging behind the latter, owing to both their history and their geographical position. This fact has certain consequences, independently of their social system, not only on their general welfare but the level of physical milieu, too. The socialist planned economy has guaranteed great possibilities of development though, its excessive application, however, has resulted in considerable errors. During the Stalinist era, till the first half of the fifties, in all these countries spectacular investments in heavy industry /e.g. in Hungary: Dunaujváros the former Sztálinváros; in Poland: Nova Huta etc./ prevailed what drew off vast resources from the development of housing not only in the capital but, almost without exception, from that of towns and communities and from the proportionate development of their technological and intellectual infrastructure as well. Later, the highly voluntarist planning of this period gave way to essentially flexible measures taking into account local interests to a greater extent, however, the regulations of the territorial aspects of the corporate institutional and individual conflicts of interest remained mostly strict and formal. It should be mentioned that as the value of sites in socialist countries is not a prime regulator and thus. in theory there is no land grabbing, the ...



for ideal disclocation concerning both housing estates and industrial works could be optimal. But in socialist capitals we come across optimal solutions only rarely since, on the one hand, the preparations of centralized decisions are often unsatisfactory, on the other hand, the conflicts of interest mentioned remain latent.

In general, nevertheless, after the fifties economic policies based on centralized redistribution -- and within the possibilities given -- promoted the development of the metropolises of the Eastern-Middle European socialist countries; they generally had a greater share in resources than smaller towns or especially, the smaller communities of rural areas. Recently, this redistribution policy serving mainly the interests of the capital -- and, at best, those of some larger towns -- has been criticized heavily in Hungary. And there seems to be some signs that a greater part of financial means needed to a more proportionate development of smaller towns and villages can be utilized locally in the future.

## 2./ The Eastern-Middle European Metropolis as a Social Entity

In the metropolises of Eastern-Middle European countries the forms of unemployment which exist either in the western world or -- to a larger scale -- in the developing countries are, actually, unknown. But in a fairly great number of work-places the absence of external unemployment is accompanied by such an "internal" speed of work that -- with some exaggeration -- may be conceived as a limited and intramural unemployment, and it is closely related with the lower level of productivity, com-

pared to that of developed countries. The proportion of women employed is higher than that of richer developed countries with lower women employment, but it is higher, too, when compared to developing ones where the "officially" same lower level is interrelated with poverty and/or historico-religious traditions despite the widely-known fact that here several more real burdens fall on women than on men.

It is the merit of socialist development that it contributed to the decrease of segregation evolved over history. However, this decrease is considered by many experts with ambivalence as this levelling-off occurred chiefly at a lower level. In the seventies and eighties the segregational tendencies have already been reinforced at a higher level; this statement is true, especially, of Budapest or Hungary where this phenomenon may be also regarded as one of the ambiguous concomitant features of the new economic policy.

As far as the phenomenon of anonymity closely interrelated with the existence of metropolitan population is concerned, it is as much characteristic of the large towns in the Eastern-Middle European region as of those situated in the Western Hemisphere. With respect to interpersonal relations segmentality and utility well-known from sociological literature present themselves as similar problems since in their relationships people behave not like whole personalities but their activities and their character fall to "segments", and in addition to this, they meet each other chiefly in definite roles, e.g. as a conductor and passenger, a shop assistant and customer etc. --; their momentary relation is directed

towards the achievement of a goal -- i.e. they buy a ticket or a suit -- and besides this utilitarian relation they do not seek to make a personal contact with the other either.<sup>8.</sup>

Nevertheless, in order to establish utilitarian relations and to recognize each other, it is necessary to be uniformalized /in many cases we must put on a "uniform" word by word a policeman, a postman, a waiter and <sup>(even</sup> a student wear uniforms/. In large cities, moreover, in metropolises thus in the socialist ones, too, -- as was pointed out by Louis Wirth almost fifty years ago<sup>9.</sup> -- the role-like behaviour is strengthened; the great agglomerations promote the process of roles' growing stereotyped. It is, probably, closely interrelated with the uniformalized monotony, too, which is represented by the thousands of housing estates nearly in all the large towns of the world and which have played a particularly great role in the development of the Eastern-Middle European metropolises in the past decades.

### 3./ The Eastern-Middle European Metropolis as a Physical Entity

As far as the physical order of Budapest is concerned, she shows an explicitly radiocentric structure, and in this respect, she is very similar to Vienna since during the large-scale city-development of the second half of the last century the first capital of the monarchy was the example for the second one in many aspects.

Of the other socialist metropolises only Bucharest' morphology

has -- although not so clearly established -- the same radio-centric character. The other metropolises are of such unique character that they exempt themselves from the pattern.

Generally, in case of every large town, thus in that of the cities included in this paper, the most important experience, which determines a town's character, is provided by the /city-/centres. For the time being, these, too, point at the differences.

However, if one goes out of the city-centres in any of the Eastern-Middle European capitals, former or later, he can come across plenty of gigantic -- generally, monotonous -- housing estates, which are mainly the products of housing factories. The appearance of these housing estates can be traced back to the quantitative view which sought to eliminate the flat shortage in each of the socialist countries by providing a great number of comparatively rapidly built apartments. The ten of thousands of apartments built -- although their great majority are small -- contributed to the alleviation of the heavy shortage of flats of the post-war era but , except perhaps the German Democratic Republic and East Berlin, its complete elimination could not be achieved yet.

As in the majority of socialist countries, parallel to the family houses and the blocks of freehold flats the buildings with many apartments are state-owned and rents -- at a comparatively low level -- are also state-controlled, there can be seen many unkept buildings close to the older housing estates and especially in

is connected with the lack of skilled construction workers and/or e.g. in Hungary with their flow to the free market, although governments in all these countries make great efforts to eliminate the deficiencies of construction industry and housing.

Owing to the dwindling financial funds the relative backwardness of one or the other sector of the infrastructures is, more or less, typical of all socialist metropolises. Albeit the situation in large towns /e.g. in respect to drainage system/ is usually more favourable than in smaller towns and villages, the metropolitan administration in all socialist countries faces great tasks in connection with overcoming their local problems in the afore-mentioned fields.

#### 4./The Eastern-Middle European Metropolis as an Entity of Traffic and Communication

As regards the traffic problems of the metropolises in Eastern-Middle Europe we can identify the following characteristics:

- Whereas the number of privately-owned cars has increased in all Eastern-Middle European metropolises over the past 10-15 years, their quantity, quality and average life-time lag behind <sup>(those in</sup> the West-European metropolises of the same size.
- The role of the vehicles of mass transport is greater than that of the privately-owned cars everywhere. It should be noted here that this statement concerning the level of mass transport refers to extreme situations. In Budapest the transport system, i.e. the metro, tram, bus and trolley-bus

mentioned -- is one of the best organized systems in Europe, while Bucharest represents the other extreme and has great difficulties in the solution of her traffic problems.

-- As regards the order of air traffic the Eastern-Middle European metropolises are rather falling behind. E.g. in Budapest the reconstruction of the airport is taking place with great rapidity, however, international contacts will, probably, remain here -- and in the other capitals, too, -- far behind those of the Western metropolises of the same scale.

-- The intensity of telecommunication, too, usually, hangs back the Western metropolises mentioned. As contrasted to the great achievements in mass transport, in the field of telephone supplies, e.g. Budapest but all Hungary, too, takes one of the last places in Europe.

-- Not only in the topics of communication and traffic but in other territories as well several similar and dissimilar features could be mentioned when, on the one hand, the Eastern-Middle European metropolises are compared with one another and, on the other hand, when parallels are drawn with the large towns of advanced, or rather, developing countries. It would be highly useful if a series of comparative studies revealed the homogeneous and heterogeneous features of both the past and the present in order to provide, with the help of information gained, more realistic bases for future programmes.

In connection with future programmes and prognoses we may state that Eastern-Middle European metropolises -- as has been mentioned -- have not reached the order of magnitude of the

and developing countries, nor will they reach their size in the number of population in the future. Albeit the table below shows the retrospective changes of the number of inhabitants of only Budapest and her metropolitan region over the past decades and/or the estimates up till the turn of this century, it makes probable that here and in the other socialist capitals, too, /regrettably, we have no concrete data at our disposal/ the process of urbanization will go into suburbanization, similarly to the metropolises of most developed western countries; at first, the growth of the metropolis proper will slow down then stagnate in order to give way to a decrease of the number of population, just opposite to its former growth. Parallel to this, however, we may expect a smaller or larger-scale growth of the population in the metropolitan areas in the forthcoming decades, presumably, in case of all socialist capitals. This process may be, at most, speeded up, followed or slowed down by government measures, which, under certain conditions of economic development, independently of the political systems, can be studied as parts of either "ad hoc" theories of limited validity or those of middle range.

It has, frequently, been mentioned that Eastern-Middle European metropolises fall behind those of the developed countries in one or other respects. On our part, however, this "falling behind" is not regarded as a shortage in its every aspect. Although we said before that anonymity, segmentality, utilitariness and monotony are also increasing in Eastern-Middle European metropolises, the brutal exaggerations of technology, the rigidity and sterility of human relations concomitant

I think it is beyond any doubt that the leaders, architects and city-planners of the metropolises in Eastern-Middle Europe and the experts concerned with their various problems /i.e. sociologists, economists, men of law, specialists in traffic and communication/ have much to learn from the "developed" West. However, I am convinced there are such relations in these towns which indicate a former developmental stage but are worth considering because -- again quoting psychologists -- their study reveals the symptomatic and symbolic features of childhood and youth and contributes to the comprehension of the problems of adulthood and old age.

### Epilogue

The climates of the countries in Eastern-Middle Europe and thus, those of their capitals are influenced by the impacts of three great currents in various seasons. They are: the Oceanic current coming from the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean coming from the Mediterranean Sea and the continental influences originating from the great spaces of Eastern Europe. Insomuch as these meteorological factors are conceived, even if to a very limited extent, as analogies, we can state that the impacts of three great cultural and economic influences /of western, mainly German, Italian /chiefly, clerical/ and eastern /Byzantine/ character/ on the respective national character and the individual mix coming into being by this and fluctuating into time may be considered as typical with due generalization when providing a brief introduction of the countries in question. And if we pass over the capitals and instead of mix we use the concept of montage -- with an intellectual leap -- we come to the conclusion that the spatial



are expressed more plastically by the montage character following from the smaller or larger-scale participation of the aforementioned components deposited on the national characteristics.

The formation of a montage has time components as well, which are reflected by the history of towns. Every town -- as long as it stands -- must be prepared for revival; new strata must be deposited on the antiquated and decaying ones. The great dilemma is how the new and different strata join the previous ones, how the continuity-and-discontinuity contrast can be resolved in a small town or, perhaps, in a metropolis, or to put it a little differently: How can we achieve that the struggle of modernity and tradition would result in solutions of high-standard?

Eventually, not only the captivating beauty of a town but its "habitability" mentioned by Benton Mac Kaye<sup>10.</sup> stand or fall with the ways of its being montage-like. In addition, a good montage expresses a completer architectural and city-planning culture, orientates and "informs" the inhabitants permanently --, in the widest sense of the word, imperceptibly --, teaching them harmony.

Nevertheless, the realization of the montage character of a city and a metropolis, which corresponds, actually, to the superstructure mentioned at the beginning of our study, is not easy either since the researcher and planner would like to see and make not only a perfect order in the various spheres of the city but such a one which can be perceivable and interpretable in the simplest way. This results in the fact that in most cases researchers and planners use models and techniques

applicable to simpler levels even where reality is far more complicated.

However, the town -- be it in Eastern-Middle Europe or anywhere in the world -- does not easily surrender when we try either to know its inner processes or external relationships or to reveal its past or future: it does not permit us to apply inadequate approaches to the discovery of its secrets. Our too frequent failures as well as our partial successes -- despite the current spread of the so fashionable computer techniques -- can be attributed to attitudes mainly deriving from false pride and the fact that we do not form right opinions of the actual level of the given montage or the components of a montage-detail.

In many respects, the montage-character of Eastern-Middle European metropolises underlines their bridge-like role between the East and West, and to some extent, the North and South as well. This bridge-like role refers not only to their interim position between great European cultures but the level of their numerous technological economic and other factors as well. Into this role fits the interpreting role of the metropolises' intelligentsia -- in its broadest sense of the word -- taken in the world. The special characteristics of this region may have contributed to the fact that so many scientists and artists emigrating from here have become not only the universal interpreter of the world's culture but the initiator of the enfolding of all-human values.

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