

CONNECTION BETWEEN URBANIZATION AND THE CHANGE IN LAND-UTILIZATION IN TOWNS IN THE HUNGARIAN PLAIN IN THE PERIOD OF CAPITALISM

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Preface

The number of population in towns, especially the non-agricultural population concentration — as consumer market — can have a considerable effect on agriculture. It does not only effect the quantity of production but also — especially in capitalistic circumstances — it can determine its structure. The kind of agriculture which produces market-sensitive primeurs and is located around towns is called “town-supplying type” in the technical literature (M. FLESZAR, 1974).

The effect of the town as a market on the regional location of agricultural production was first studied by J. H. V. THÜNEN in the circumstances of classical capitalism (CS. KOVÁCS, 1962). The factor that THÜNEN thought was of basic importance in the location of the agriculture, i.e. distance lost its importance because transport became up-to-date. The extremely intensive agricultural production around big cities in capitalist countries today is explained by the competition in urban land-utilization T. BERNÁT-GY. ENYEDI, 1977). However, it is true in both cases that the effect of the towns is in proportion with the number of population they concentrate and is in close connection with the structure of their population. Thus there is connection between the type of agriculture around the towns and the development of the towns.

The aim of the present paper is to approach the connection between the development of towns in Alföld and the agricultural structure of towns in Alföld by examining land-utilization of their border (administrative region). As for the development of the towns the results of our former examinations were taken into consideration, while data for land-utilization were provided by the general agricultural census in 1895 and 1935.¹ The region of the towns which are investigated is the same as that of the towns which were recognized as towns legally and administratively then. For the sake of comparison the investigation was extended to Budapest and also to settlements in its centre of attraction. Those settlements were independent then.

Population relations in Alföld in the Period of Capitalism

The situation in Alföld at the beginning of capitalistic industrialization — as a result of its role in the regional division of labour and the peculiar Hungarian way of development — did not become spectacularly and definitely unfavourable. Capitalistic industrialization in Hungary started by the development and reinforcement of

¹ Country-wide data refer to the whole area of Hungary, in 1895 without Fiume and Croatia-Slavonia.

food-industry which was based on agriculture. The situation and population of Alföld was effected favourable by the fact that the development of the railway-network improved the transport-geographical situation of the region remarkably and made it possible that agricultural products could be transported to the industrially higher developed regions of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy in favourable conditions.

As a result of the above factors in the first period of capitalistic development — this period is between 1869 and 1920 according to census data — in a period when the population in Alföld was a part of Historical Hungary — the number of population increased by nearly one million and in 1920 was about one and a half times more than in 1869. The density of population increased above 72. It was this period during which the rapid development of the capital started thus forming a Central District. (Population in the Central District increased by 185%). Besides the Central District (Budapest and Pest county today) the population-increase of Alföld is the most dynamic of all economic macro-regions. As an effect of this it occurs in 1920 for the first time that more people lived in Alföld than in Trans-Danubia (despite the fact that in the population-increase of Budapest migration from Alföld had an important role). Although Alföld was also seriously affected by the great emigration wave around the turn of the century, as a whole, a relatively smaller number of people emigrated from Alföld than from other parts of Historical Hungary. The negative effect of emigration was compensated by an internal migration movement the direction of which was from the peripheries towards the centre of the country and had an effect on Alföld, too.

Population in the period of capitalism was of extensive character in Alföld, too. Birth rates and rates of mortality were high alive with a relatively high multiplication on the whole (10/mille annually). According to the above demographic data the age-distribution of the population indicates a young structure: more than one third of the population are under the age of 15. Thus, although the rate of old people — above 60 — is only 6–8% the age-distribution — besides the social-economic situation — is also important to be mentioned when stating that only 45% of the population work for a living. In the northeastern part of Alföld the rate of natural multiplication was higher and the structure of the population showed a more extreme picture than in the southern parts.

In spite of the fact that in Alföld — especially in towns — industrial workshops were built in some parts as an effect of capitalistic industrialization and the development of the railway network which brought basic changes in the transport-geographical situation meant a considerable development, the economic profile of Alföld was always determined by agriculture. According to this the structure of the population changed very slowly. Even at the end of the period three quarters of the population were employed in agriculture; the proportion of industry was hardly more than 10%. Living in separate cottages — especially in the sandy region between the rivers Danube and Tisza increased till the first world war — on the whole the population on the periphery increased. The educational level of the population changed very slowly, too. The rate of illiteracy was high, the factors of school-education low. In Alföld, the rate of those who worked in the tertier sector was low, the number of the intelligentsia was small. Certain illnesses were common resulting from the underdevelopment of public health services the level of which was even under the average in Alföld. Of all the illnesses tuberculosis and infant mortality were the most common.

On the whole, the period that lasted till the end of World War I. can be characterized by the fact that – in comparison with other parts of the country – Alföld prevented the population – concentrating effect of Budapest which was then on the way to becoming a metropolis in a very favourable position since there were favourable conditions in Alföld for agriculture and capitalist processing and distribution based on it. However the number of elements which indicate the increasing under-development of Alföld increased, too.

The second period of the capitalist development which took place between 1920 – the date of another census – and 1949 – the year of a census which reflects the consequences of World War II. can be characterized by a slow development which took place in a different size country. Within the new borders of the country the economic-geographical position of Alföld changed, too. This change was basically unfavourable and was demonstrated by several factors. Traditional regional connections in production ceased owing to the new borders and hostile relationships between Hungary and the neighbouring countries and were forced an orbit the centre of which was Budapest. The significance of the industrialized Central Region relatively grows in the smaller size country; population concentration in Budapest increases at the expense of Alföld, Northern Hungary and Trans-Danubia. Economic growth of the country slowed down, agriculture, together with the industry based on it underwent a serious crisis. The development of agriculture was very retarded in consequence of the out-of-date semi-feudal social-economic relations and the structure of the estate-system which reflected these relations. This retarded development can be traced in connection with population in Alföld.

Between the two World Wars the relatively fast population-increase in the Central Region was parallel with that of the other economic macro-regions which was below average. By the rapid development and functional reformation of the formed peripheries the agglomeration ring around Budapest develops, the administrative recognition of which was carried out only after the liberation. In the rapid growth of the agglomeration region the contribution of the immigrants from Alföld is considerable. The dynamism of the population-increase of Alföld is below the average but it hardly below the rate of Northern Hungary and considerably above the rate of Trans-Danubia. In consequence of this, the importance of the population in Alföld is remarkably greater in proportion with the gross population of the whole country than that of Trans-Danubia. The relative number of the density of population is higher, too.

In Alföld the population-increase was relatively slow even in the regional centres like Debrecen and Szeged; it was quite slow in the case of the so-called agricultural towns. These towns – mainly because of the lack of up-to-date industry – were unable to become urbanized centres for their own environment: local centres of population-concentration were not powerful enough in Alföld. The density of population was more or less even; the rates did not reflect different levels of industrialization – they rather referred to different possibilities of agricultural production. In the course of the period no considerable changes took place as far as the structure of employment of the population was concerned. The percentage of agrarian population was dominant (60%). The rate of industrial population was between 10–20% – a more considerable industrial population-concentration can be demonstrated only in a region near Budapest and in the biggest towns in Alföld.

General Characteristics in Land-Utilization in Towns in Alföld

According to data in 1895 the structure of land-utilization in towns in Alföld was remarkably different from that of the national average (Table 1).

The very high rate of arable land is a striking 61,6%. Of course, the intensity of the utilization of arable land is different from time to time. Since the end of the 19th century e. g. Szeged and Kalocsa red peppers have been grown in arable land (I. PÉNZES 1967). In respect of the urban agriculture field-grown vegetables were more important. Field-growing of vegetables started in the 1890-ies. According to scattered data from 1895 vegetables were grown in 32 thousand acres of arable land in Hungary (A. VÖRÖS, 1978). That was only 0,1% of all the arable land then. Taking into consideration every town the proportion of gardens is below the national average.

As for vineyards, the picture is more favourable. In 1895 in the towns in Alföld the proportion of vineyards of all the arable land is twice as much as the national average (2,4%). The low rate of pastures and the high rate of grazing land is the consequence of natural conditions. Towns in Alföld – similarly to the whole Alföld – were verly poorly forrested. The rate of waste-land is below the national average (4,8%), but no consequences can be drawn from the data from 1895 since the majority of the area that was not cultivated does not indicate the existence or the rate of infrastructure. It was a really uncultivated area.

As it has already been metioned, urban (townsupplying) agriculture shows highly intensive characteristics. Land-utilization is peculiar, too. The rate of arable land and of less intensive branches is low; the rate of non-cultivated areas and of the intensive branches is high. According to the obtainable data, towns in Alföld do not show characteristic features of urban land-utilization.

The fact that the structure of land-utilization in the case of towns in Alföld is hardly different from that of the national average is the consequence of peculiar historical, social-economic conditions. In Hungary the Industrial Revolution which started late came to an end with contradictory, heterogeneous results (I. T. BEREND-GY. RÁNKI, 1972). As a result of this as well as the unfavourable starting conditions – economic life of the country remained on a low level despite the considerable dynamism of capitalist economy. A natural consequence of this was a very slow

Table 1. The structure of agricultural land-utilization in 1895 (%)

	Hungary	Towns in Alföld	Budapest
Arable land	42.8	61.6	55.3
Garden	1.3	0.6	8.4
Vineyard	1.0	2.4	3.0
Pasture	10.2	7.6	10.3
Grazing land	13.0	19.0	5.9
Forest	26.6	4.2	11.3
Reeds	0.3	0.4	0.3
FANET*	4.8	4.2	5.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Field out of cultivation

growth of urbanization. The situation in Alföld was especially unfavourable from this respect. As a result of agricultural development the population in the agricultural towns in Alföld was increasing till the turn of the last century but at the given economic development they became over-stocked (Z. ZOLTÁN, 1972). Before the liberation, towns in Alföld could not play an important role in the population-concentration (I. TÓTH 1975, L. TÁNCZOS-SZABÓ, 1975, J. TÓTH, 1977). In some cases if peasants bought an estate outside the town, they had to move outside the town, too. (Z. DÖVÉNYI-J. TÓTH, 1978).

In towns in Alföld consumer-concentrations which could have made agricultural activity around these towns a peculiar type urban agriculture, did not develop. Et the turn of the century the effect of non-agricultural population-concentration is demonstrated by Budapest which was developing at a very rapid then (see Table 1.). The rate of arable land is higher than the national average in 1895, the proportion of gardens is six times, and that of the most intensive branch, vine, is three times as much as the national average. The above-than average proportion of waste-land might refer to a more developed network of infrastructure.

Between the two world wars the pace of economic development showed down as a result of the changed internal and external situation. Despite the development in some branches the economic backwardness of the country became more serious (I. T. BEREND-GY. RÁNKI 1972). The development of towns in Alföld which were excluded of industrialization became very slow. (J. MAJOR 1974, J. TÓTH 1976, J. TÓTH-I. SIMON 1976).

According to data from 1935 the structure of land-utilization in towns in Alföld did not change in comparison with the national average (see Table 2.).

Table 2. The structure of agricultural land-utilization in 1935 (%)

	Hungary	Towns in Alföld	Budapest
Arable land	60.7	65.7	20.4
Garden	1.4	0.9	17.0
Vineyard	2.2	3.1	3.0
Pasture	6.9	6.3	7.0
Grazing land	10.6	13.4	1.8
Forest	11.9	4.2	11.4
Reeds	0.3	0.3	0.0
FANET	6.0	6.1	39.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The proportion of arable land was still higher, the proportion of garden was lower; the proportion of tax-free area which was just above the average indicate a low level of infrastructure.

The structure of land-utilization in Budapest was definitely urban type. The proportion of arable land decreased to 20,4%, that of the gardens increased to 17%, the rate of pasture went down below the national average. A peculiarly urban structure is indicated by the high proportion of the areas which were stopped being cultivated. These areas were almost 50% of the total in 1935. The great population-con-

centration of Budapest did not effected the agricultural structure of the settlements which were then separate administrative unite but which were situated in the region of attractivity of Budapest. As far as the distribution of the branches of cultivation are concerned, the proportion of gardens is striking in these settlements(Budafok 34,2%, Kispest 29,6%, Pesterzsébet 23,2% etc.).

Regional Differences in Land-Utilization in Towns in Alföld

Regional order of land-utilization which developed by 1895 in towns in Alföld did not undergo a considerable change by 1935. This is why it was possible to analyse the regional characteristics of the structure of the branches of cultivation according to data from 1935. By analysing the arable land of the important braches of cultivation it is obvious that certain towns in the Trans-Tisza area can be characterized as having the greatest proportion (see fig. 1.). Thus the percentage rate is above 80% in the case

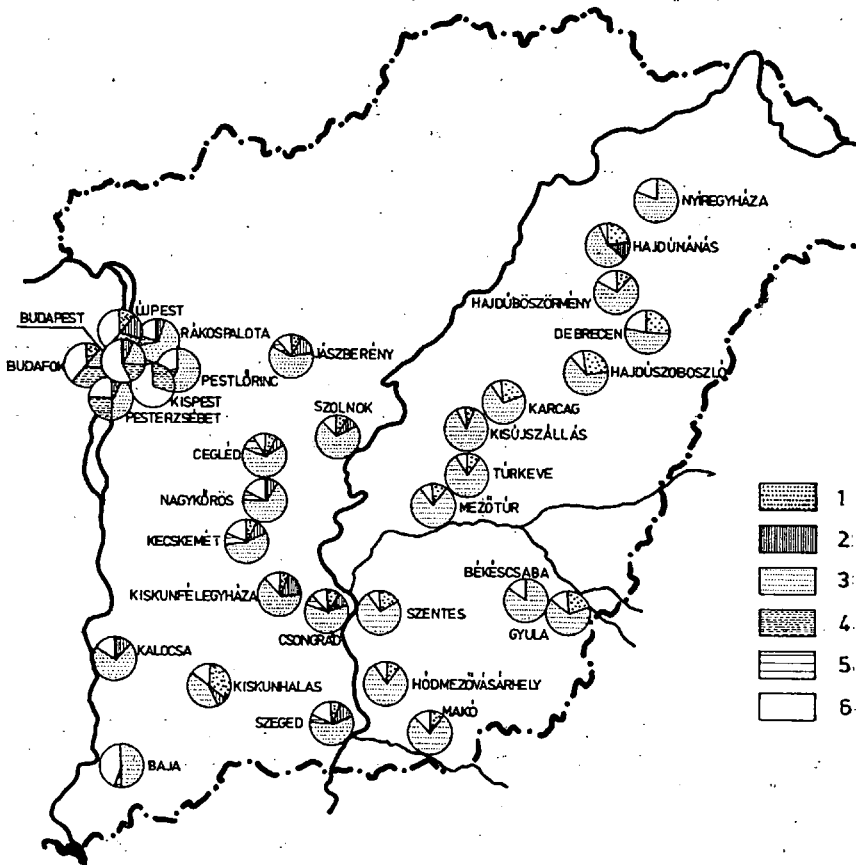


Fig. 1. The structure of cultivation in towns in Alföld in 1935.
(in % above 5%)

1: Grazing land 2: Pasture 3: Arable land 4: Garden 5: Vineyard 6: Miscellaneous.

of Békéscsaba, Hódmezővásárhely, Kisújszállás, Turkeve and Nyíregyháza. In the case of towns situated between the rivers Danube and Tisza the rate of arable land does not increase above 80% and has a less important role in the structure of land-utilization in the case of towns in Hajdúság, too.

In the regional development of the cultivation branches – besides the effect of natural (soil-) conditions – the regional characteristics of social-political conditions had a considerable role. The transformation of Hungarian agriculture into capitalist development was a process full of contradictory elements which took place in the “Prussian way” i. e. with huge size feudal estates. In the restrictive circumstances of this kind of agriculture based on real elements of the “American way” of capitalist agrarian development occurred only in some towns in Alföld in which certain precedents – some of them dating back from Turkish times – prohibited the development of system of real estates (A. VÖRÖS, 1976).

The more favourable estate-structure had an effect on the structure of cultivation. Together with the diminishing of the size of estate, the intensity of cultivation increased. In 1913 only 34,1% of all the arable land belonged to landowners with a bigger size estate than 10 acres (L. FÜR 1976). Of the most intensive branches of cultivation i. e. gardening and vine-growing – the proportion of real estates below 100 acres was above 80%.

From a social point of view small estates were of basic importance in the development of the famous garden – culture in between the rivers Tisza and Danube. The proportion of the branches of the highest intensity was the highest in this area – apart from Budapest and the settlements around it. This proportion is of a smaller value in the case of towns in the Trans-Tisza area. In the case of towns in Nagykunság the proportion of gardens and vineyards was not even 1%. The high proportion of the intensive branches in the area between Danube and Tisza and in near Budapest was of a different character, i. e. in the former it was vine, in the later it was garden that dominated. The high proportion of vine was not caused by local market; but rather the peculiar natural conditions and the system of estates since filoxera had a devastating effect in the whole of Hungary in the second half of the last century. The devastation was the most serious in the traditional vine-growing areas in “Hegyalja” which caused a shift in vine-growing and an extreme development of vine-growing in sandy areas (L. FÜR 1976). In the development of the garden-culture in the area between the rivers Danube and Tisza – besides exportinterest – local market (most of all Kecskemét, Cegléd, Nagykörös) but especially the fact that Budapest was so near had a very important role (I. ASZTALOS-B. SÁRFALVI 1960).

The proportion of branches of low intensity (pasture and grazing land) is high in the case of towns in Hajdúság and in the case of certain towns in the area between the rivers Danube and Tisza. Since these were forced branches of cultivation; their high proportion is the result of the peculiar soil-conditions.

Analysing the structure of land-utilization in towns of Alföld it is obvious that it was not determined by the peculiar claims of urban population-concentration but rather of the whole agriculture in Hungary. Budapest was the only urban market in the new territory of Hungary after the first World War (P. GUNST 1976). Even between the two world wars the majority of the population in towns in Alföld were employed in agriculture (J. MAJOR 1974). The low level of urbanization, the extremely slow pace of social regroupment did not make the development of a non-agricul-

tural population-concentration in towns possible, which, if it had development, would have had peculiar urban claims towards agricultural activity.

In order to give a compound characterization of the structure of land-utilization in towns in Alföld an attempt of classifying was made. In the classification the proportion of arable land, garden, vineyard, pasture and grazing land was taken into consideration since the other cultivation branches do not express the real direction of cultivation. On the basis of the branch of the greatest proportion the structure of land utilization in the case of the majority of towns in Alföld can be characterized as "arable land type". Besides this, vine has a considerable size proportion in the area the rivers Danube and Tisza and grazing land in the case of towns in Hajdúság. Therefore – as a second characteristic feature – the cultivation branch which deviates in a positive direction – as far as its proportion rate is concerned – the greatest extent from the average of towns in Alföld. Thus seven types can be distinguished which indicate special branches of land-utilization (fig. 2.). With Budapest and the neigh-

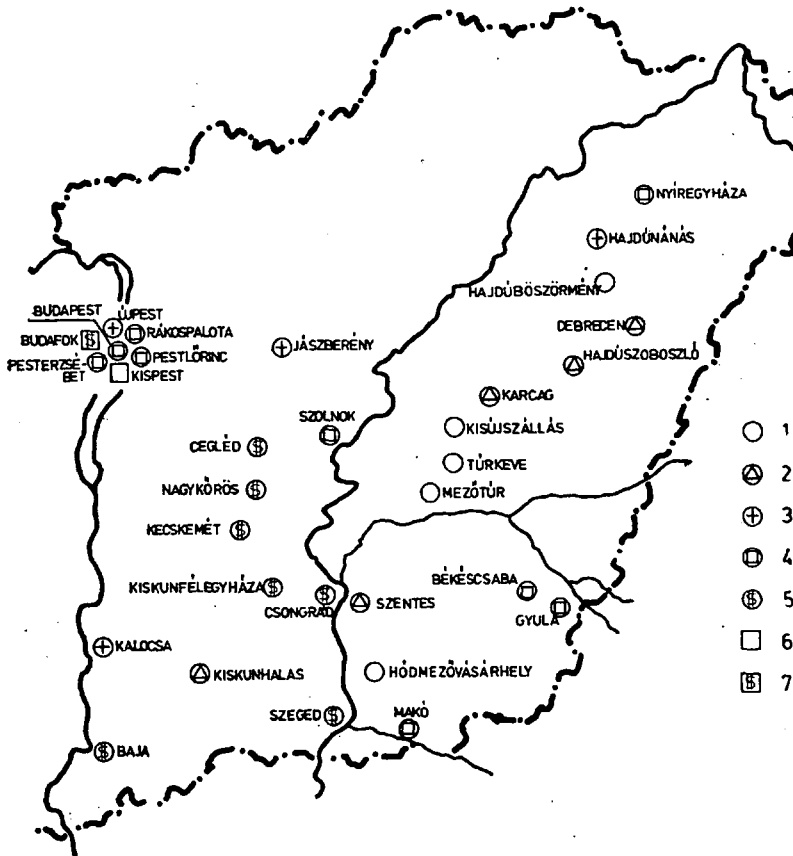


Fig. 2. Types of the structure of branches of cultivation in towns in Alföld (1935)

1: Arable land 2: Arable land—grazing land 3: Arable land—pasture 4: Arable land—garden
5: Arable land—vineyard 6: Garden 7: Garden—vineyard

bouring settlements also taken into consideration 9 towns out of 32 can be called of "arable land-garden" – type. Since classifying always means abstraction it must be understood, that within the class there are considerable differences in the case of the structure of land-utilization in towns. For example the rate of garden is 1,8% in the case of Békéscsaba, while it is 15,2% in the case of Pestlőrinc. At the same time there is doubt that however small the proportion-number is – garden means specialization in the case of Békéscsaba.

Seven towns in the area between the rivers Danube and Tisza shows an arable land – vineyard type structure of land-utilization. The specialization for growing vine began in the area when efforts were made to bind sand down and the significance of vine-growing increased at the time of the phyloxera-epidemic at the end of the 19th century.

Arable land-grazing land and arable land-pasture types can be found in regions where – besides soil which can be cultivated – there is a great proportion of poor quality soil, too. A land -utilization structure of "purely arable type" can be found in Trans-Tisza region; purely garden and garden-vineyard type can be found in the environment of Budapest.

Summary

Since the development of an urban-type (townsupplying) agriculture is in connection with the concentration of non-agricultural population, a connection between the development of towns and the structure of agriculture near the towns can always be indicated. The towns in Alföld did not play a considerable role in the population-concentration before the liberation so the structure of land-utilization in these towns could not reflect the effect of urban market. The close connection between the development of towns and the structure of land-utilization is evident in the case of towns in Alföld, too – these two factors indicate the economic backwardness of Hungary. An urban type structure of land-utilization in the period of capitalist development was demonstrated by Budapest which had the greatest concentration of population as well as by towns in the environment of Budapest. The beginnings of an urban type structure of land-utilization might be indicated in the case of a number of towns in Trans-Danubia and in the north of Hungary.

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