

EMERGENCE OF A NEW URBAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL? IMPACTS OF THE TRANSITION AND GLOBALISATION IN HUNGARIAN NEW TOWN REGIONS

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The aims of the paper are to introduce the impacts of the politico-economic transition and the effects of globalisation on former socialist new towns, and to reveal the social characteristics and physical patterns of Hungarian new town regions. The so-called new ('artificial') town development was a high priority for socialist regimes all around Eastern Europe. The socialist ideology's endeavour was to create new cities with monofunctional economic functions (primarily based on heavy industry), and homogenous social and physical structure. In Hungary, 11 artificial cities were planned during the 1950-60s, becoming the most prosperous settlements over the subsequent decades. Problems only appeared after 1990, with the collapse of the previous regime, the decrease of the industrial sector, the appearance of market economy and privatisation, causing several negative effects in these towns. As a consequence, although in a regionally differentiated manner, these became some of the most disadvantaged regions of Hungary.

Based on our initial hypotheses and the international literature on new towns, we raised the following question; do these cities represent a specific development model after 1990 compared to historical cities? The answer might help us in creating new development directions in the future.

The paper focuses on 3 main topics; socio-spatial development processes, the changing relations between cities and their surrounding regions, and finally, on social conflicts. Research methods were based on statistical data and the analysis of development plans, and 100 structured in-depth interviews were conducted with local leaders and elites.

Key words: Hungary, socialist city, new urban development, social polarisation, transition,

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