

## BOOK REVIEW

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***Rechnitzer, János – Berkes, Judit (editors) (2021): Nagyvárosok Magyarországon  
/Large cities in Hungary***

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The studies in this volume are based on the research launched in 2017: KÖFOP-2.1.2-VEKOP-15 "Development of public services for good governance". In the research programme, the authors aimed at reviewing the development paths of Hungarian cities, analysing their characteristics and understanding their results, in order to identify their possible future directions and the factors determining them. By adapting the territorial capital theory, they examined the defining elements of the urban system, their interconnections and interactions. Eight Hungarian cities (Debrecen, Győr, Kecskemét, Nyíregyháza, Pécs, Miskolc, Szeged, Székesfehérvár) with a population of more than 100,000 and a regional function were selected for the research. The papers in this volume are complex analyses based on the research, providing an opportunity for both comparison and evaluation. In addition to the main results of the research programme referred to, the volume includes information presented at conferences and meetings on the subject, as well as the authors' decades of experience in metropolitan analysis.

The 298-page volume is divided into 15 parts, containing 15 analytical and evaluative studies by 18 authors. In addition to analyses of eight Hungarian cities, separate chapters deal with the specificities of metropolitan development, research trends from 1990 to the present, economic structures and changes, governance models, trends in social structure, changes in land use in metropolitan areas, and cultural potential.

In the first chapter, János Rechnitzer summarises the results and main thematic groups of metropolitan research in Hungary that the authors of this volume consider important, placing them in chronological order and thus giving an idea of the direction of the activities of the researchers working on the topic. The outlook has three dimensions: (1) the directions and trends of metropolitan research, (2) their impact on the development of regional and urban policy, and (3) the contribution of the research carried out to the development of regional science in Hungary and to the strengthening of its scientific nature.

The second chapter of the volume presents the research trends from 1990 to the present, more specifically, the content associated with the concept of the metropolis in Hungarian territorial policy, and how this has changed since the regime change. The author of the chapter is János Rechnitzer.

In the chapter on economic structures and directions of change, János Rechnitzer describes the economic importance of the eight cities analysed and their changes in the national economy, characterising the changes in their economic structure, their main directions, their convergence or divergence from international trends. The analysis is based on national research and current data. In the chapter entitled Governance Models, Dávid Fekete examines the governance activities of the eight Hungarian cities under discussion in relation to the two trends presented in the previous chapters of the book. He presents, evaluates and systematizes the governance characteristics of Hungarian cities. The study concludes that the governance processes of Hungarian cities are mainly generated by projects supported by EU regional policy, which contribute to the emergence of new instruments and trends in European urban governance processes. Based on these trends, governance is no longer the monopoly of economic development alone, and other approaches, such as cultural aspects and cooperation, are increasingly coming to the fore.

In the fifth chapter of the volume, Viktória Szirmai and Júlia Schuchmann analyse the social

structure, social relations and the system of social inequalities of Hungarian cities. They examine how social structural characteristics can affect economic development.

In the sixth chapter, Tamás Csapó analyses the transformation of land use in cities, and more precisely how the image and structure of cities changed after the regime change, and what common features and differences there are. In his summary, he concludes, that the image and structure of large cities have changed considerably following the regime change, becoming more urbanised. It also notes that the differences between cities are largely due to their historical past and their natural geography.

In the seventh chapter, Zsófia Rechnitzer presents a number of aspects that can be used to analyse the cultural potential of Hungarian cities. The study examines the institutional embeddedness of cities in three cultural fields: theatres, libraries and public collections.

The eighth chapter of the volume is about Debrecen. Gábor Kozma and Ernő Molnár describe the city's most important features and its development after the change of regime. They conclude that the ongoing industrial investments are expected to lead to a spectacular increase in Debrecen's economic performance: a strong re-industrialisation, foreign capital, large companies and a stronger role for exports.

In the ninth chapter, János Rechnitzer and Judit Berkes analyse the development trajectory of Győr, using the territorial capital theory and its local adaptation to show the stages of development, the elements of renewal and their survival.

In the tenth chapter, Imre Kanalas examines the factors of Kecskemét's development. He concludes that the challenging periods in the city's history and the decisions and solutions associated with them have provided lessons and models for society in future eras.

The eleventh chapter describes the historical, natural and environmental characteristics of Miskolc, and analyses the city's development path. It is concluded that for the successful development of the city in the future, it would be necessary to return to the old roots of an inclusive city, community building and community cohesion.

The author of the twelfth chapter on Nyíregyháza is Éva Filepné Nagy, who, based on an analysis of the city's development trajectory, concludes that "the strengthening of the Miskolc-Nyíregyháza-Debrecen agglomeration is noticeable, but to find out whether the county seat of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg could have made more use of its opportunities, more thorough comparative analyses would be needed, for example, in terms of income, employment and livelihood opportunities."

In the thirteenth chapter, Szilárd Rácz, Zsolt Sándor Kovács and Réka Horeczki present and analyse the milestones that have influenced the development path of Pécs. At the end of the study, they conclude that a slow development and transformation path based on endogenous resources is outlined for Pécs in the current economic period, on which the city has already been launched.

In the fourteenth chapter, György Vida and Imre Lengyel examine the framework of Szeged's development and evolution, in which they argue that the historical past plays a significant role. In their study, after a brief historical overview of the events that still affect Szeged today, they first provide an overview of the main developments after the regime change and the current situation of the city. They then outline the future development of Szeged in the perspective of local and national development visions, opportunities and constraints, taking into account the historical determinants.

The final chapter of the volume contains an analytical and evaluative study of Székesfehérvár by Nóra Baranyai. After a brief historical overview, the paper presents the main milestones and key areas of the city's development.

The aim of the above description is to briefly present the themes of the papers published in the volume on the eight Hungarian cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants and regional functions (Debrecen, Győr, Kecskemét, Nyíregyháza, Miskolc, Pécs, Szeged, Székesfehérvár) and the approaches to the research carried out. Despite the thematic unity of the volume, the analytical and evaluative papers on the different cities stand on their own and provide a unique insight into the major milestones and issues in the development of the cities.