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## DEBATES

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### *Regional Economic and Social History or Historical Geography?*

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"Historical science still knows about two fields only: the investigation of national development and local history".<sup>1</sup> This sentence is quoted from a Hungarian historian, but we may quote similar sentences from British and German historians too.<sup>2</sup>

"Bridge-building" between these two fields seems to be most urgent from the point of view of socio-historical researches. On the one hand, investigations with new aspects can be carried out in sufficient depth only at the settlement-level, or they can produce sufficient results only at the definite micro-level, with the analysis of family and individual careers and relationship-networks. On the other hand, even if there is explicit regional distribution in the economic sphere within a country and the regions can be separated, their analysis cannot reveal the spatial characteristics of society in their complexity. Since the special characteristics of the latter, being different from those of the economic sphere, partly manifest themselves in different spatial dimensions and forms, the problem of the proper size of the territorial/regional unit used in the investigation is raised. In other words: when investigating society from the settlement-side only, should regions or the "historical land" be the basic units? According to our opinion, monographical analysis of regions is one important way, but not the only way of revealing the historical and spatial characteristics of a society.

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<sup>1</sup> PETER GUNST, "Some remarks about agricultural history research in Hungary", in Peter Gunst (ed.) *Agriculture and agricultural history* (In Hungarian) (Budapest Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979) p. 202.

When analyzing the characteristics of society related to the settlement network, we have to face several methodological problems. John Urry thinks that "the description of national class structure might conceal the variations of the significant geographical differences".<sup>3</sup> According to our opinion, examination of the spatial dimensions of society is also represented by several other aspects, besides the above-mentioned ones. However, we cannot fail to consider that the diversity of geographical variants has its own inner system and these spatial regularities are inseparable from the basic tendencies of the reproduction of the society in question.

### Tendencies of regional historical analysis

First, we shall give a review of the international literature in order to help shed light on the issues. According to Franklin F. Mendels, "national history has remained the ultimate goal for the scholar, providing the 'synthesis', the completed edifice" for which the regional and local historical studies are the building stones.<sup>4</sup> In this division of labour, "Historians" are seen as researchers giving birth to the witty combinations of suggestive hypotheses and going to archives very seldom. While on the other hand, a sufficient spatio-theoretical framework is missing for wider generalizations in the case of investigators working in the archives, so that they remain local historians. (The exception proves the rule!) In order to draw together local history and national history, two spheres which cannot be connected to each other directly, recently historians have tried to use concepts of "region," "historical land," etc., as mediators.<sup>5</sup>

Going back to the sparkling idea of Mendels, his comparison in itself raises the question: what kind of "binding material" should be used for the building stones? Because even if we suppose the situation, which does not exist in any country yet, that regional histories or land histories cover the whole territory of the country, we can still wonder how the "whole," the na-

<sup>2</sup> J.D. MARSHALL, "Why study regions? (2): Some historical considerations", *The Journal of Regional and Local Studies* Vol. 6. No. 1. Spring 1986 pp. 1-12. Horst Matzerath, 'Lokalgeschichte, Historische Urbanisierungsforschung?' *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 15 (1989) pp. 62-88.

<sup>3</sup> JOHN URRY, Some notes on regionalism and the analysis of space, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 7. 1983. No. 1. p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> FRANKLIN F. MENDELS, 'Season and Regions in Agriculture and Industry during the Process of Industrialization', in Sidney Pollard (Hg.) *Region und Industrialisierung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck-Ruprecht, 1980) p. 177.

<sup>5</sup> PETER STEINBACH, 'Territorial-oder Regionalgeschichte. Wege der modernen Landesgeschichte', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 11 (1985) pp. 528-540. J.D. Marshall, 'Why study regions? (1)' *The Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, Vol. 5. No. 1. Spring 1985. pp. 15-27.

tional picture, can be obtained from the mosaic of the regions. "Consequently, the decisive methodological problem is to be able to get to the recognition of the real interaction among the different regions, to the explanation of the complicated reciprocity of how the different regions simultaneously existing and representing different economic levels and characteristics affect each other and what is the extent of their mutual influence".<sup>6</sup> We think that the above-quoted train of thought of György Ránki, which refers to historical regions comprehending several countries, has to be continued by raising additional problems. All the more so, because we try to analyse only a spatial structure existing within a national economy. And this means basically different "dimensions" in the historical and geographical sense.

The following problems are raised within the framework of the national economy: which factors mediate the complicated interactions between the regions, or the historical lands? What is the type of regional division of labour between the centre(s), located on the higher hierarchical level of the settlement network and providing multiple urban, basic functions, and the settlements in their sphere of influence? What kind of relationships and interactions developed between the centres of certain assumed regions? After the above instances requiring concrete, empirical analysis, the following questions seem logical: Is it true that only regions, or historical lands, can be the basic units of investigation when analyzing society from the settlement-side (because this is our main purpose)? A basic requirement of regional historical analysis: "The analysis of the economic domain and its structural levels must find its own course between historical times and geographical spaces and, at the same time, it must try to develop a process of interaction with the analysis of other domains".<sup>7</sup>

We have to turn to geography for methodological assistance in order to solve this problem. However, we should not forget — though the geographers like to — the fact that geographical categories, as the reflections of historically changing reality, change their meaning and sometimes become obsolete. "Every human geography is historically specific" as Allan Pred, the famous theoretician of historical geography, admonishes us.<sup>8</sup> So we should be specific concerning the time period and geographical scale. We shall focus on Western Europe, mostly on Britain, from the early nineteenth century onward.

Reviving the geographical disputes related to regions is also important, because the famous historians aiming at the formation of regional history —

<sup>6</sup> GYÖRGY RÁNKI, 'Regional analysis of industrial development in the Pannon territory', (In Hungarian) *MIA II. Oszt. Közleményei* 1979/1-3, p. 156.

<sup>7</sup> LUCA MELDOLESI, 'Critical Economics and Long-Term History', *Review*, Vol. 9, 1985, No. 1, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> ALLAN PRED, 'Place, Practice and Structure', (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986) p. 5.

whether we are speaking about Sidney Pollard, Franklin F. Mendels, P.J. Waller, or P.K. O'Brien — refer to these investigations of geography only superficially. Nevertheless, they are the heartening exception; as John Langton is right to underline, the representative English studies on economic history, published in the early 1980s, hardly mention whether there were regional differences within the country at all.<sup>9</sup>

The case of historical-demographic and socio-historical studies is the same. At the same time the notion of region was increasingly questioned in French geography as well. "But what will happen to the geographical space" — asks Pierre George, the illustrious exemplar of geography — "in the modern developed economic systems, whose components are "multi-spatial" to the extent that they exhaust their ways of existence in the different spatial fragments".<sup>10</sup> The opinion of Anglo-Saxon geography at the end of the 1970s was summarized by Doreen Massey in the following: "It is possible to summarise and analyse the effects of geographical differentiation without the construction of coherent regions".<sup>11</sup> At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, attempts were again made to revive regional geography. However, it became evident that: "a revived regional geography will not come merely from the addition to old bottles of regional geography of the strong wine of modern theory and technique".<sup>12</sup>

In the sociological literature of the 1980s, the standpoints of researchers dealing with the problems of regional differentiation are very similar to those of the geographers. Pierre Bourdieu — speaking from the sociological camp — refers to the "upheaval" which was created in the discussions on "region" and more generally on the notions of "ethnic groups".<sup>13</sup> John Urry has a more definite opinion: to make attempts to introduce regions as separated

<sup>9</sup> JOHN LANGTON, 'The industrial revolution and the regional geography of England', *Transaction of the Institute of British Geographers*, n.s. Vol. 9, 1984, p. 145. A useful discussion of these questions is to be found, too, in Sidney Pollard (Hg.) *Region und Industrialisierung*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck-Ruprecht, 1980). P.J. WALLER, *Town, City and Nation. England 1850-1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). P.K. O'BRIEN, 'Do we have a Typology for the Study of European Industrialisation in the XIXth Century?', *The Journal of European Economic History*, Vol. 15, 1982, No. 2.

<sup>10</sup> PIERRE GEORGE, 'La géographie, histoire profonde. A la recherche d'une notion globale de l'espace', *Annales de Géographie*, Marc-Avril, 1981, p. 201.

<sup>11</sup> DOREEN MASSEY, 'Regionalism: Some Current Issues', *Capital and Class*, 1979, No. 6, p. 121.

<sup>12</sup> B.H. FARMER, 'Geography, area studies and the study of area', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 60, 1973, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> PIERRE BOURDIEU, 'The social space and the genesis of groups', *Social Science Informations*, Vol. 24, 1984, No. 2, p. 211.

units on the basis of their assumed homogeneity or interdependency is not a suitable venture.<sup>14</sup>

However, regional history is trying to find the explanation for regional differences in previous historical periods; that is why the conceptual apparatus and the methods of the disciplines investigating the present can only be used with great care.

After all this, is it a practical venture to investigate the methodological problems of those branches of economic and social history which use a regional or geographic approach? A summarily negative approach cannot be accepted, since the regions of centre, semi-periphery, and periphery comprehending several states give the basic framework for global, complex analysis as was proved by Braudel, Predöhl, and Wallerstein.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, it is a clear fact that the national interpretation of the global "steps" of Wallerstein's approach requires further investigation. For example, David Montejano raises the following doubts when investigating the economic and social development of South Texas in the XIXth and XXth centuries: "For neither the world of ranch *patrones* and *peones* nor the world of absentee farmers and repressed wage laborers have the features expected of nineteenth-century core states. Thus there seems to be no place for a region like South Texas in the modern world system, a void which is made all the more noticeable by the logic of the world-system itself. For if such unevenness can exist within a sub-region of a core state, then the possibility of similar complex development existing in peripheral states... should be greater".<sup>16</sup>

The methodological problems of regional analysis within a country are especially striking in the studies analyzing the second half of the XIXth century. Accelerated urbanization, basic changes in urban functions, and the widening of the sphere of influence of the cities caused fundamental changes in the spatial structure of the economy and society. Urban development changed the characteristics of British regional development first. Between 1801 and 1811, the proportion of urban dwellers was only 33.8% in England and Wales, while it was already 78% between 1901 and 1911. At the end of the XIXth century, the bigger cities created real "urban regions" around themselves due to their influence. Between 1871 and 1911, the proportion of people living in cities and conurbations with more than 100,000 inhabitants

<sup>14</sup> JOHN URRY, 'Localities, regions and social class', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 5, 1981, pp. 455-74.

<sup>15</sup> Braudel's and Wallerstein's books are well known but we should refer to Predöhl's book too: *Aussenwirtschaft, Weltwirtschaft, Handelspolitik*. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck-Ruprecht, 1949) His terms ('Industriekern' and 'Kerngebiet') are very similar to Wallerstein's terms.

<sup>16</sup> DAVID MONTEJANO, 'Is Texas Bigger than the World System? A Critique from a Provincial Point of View', *Review* Vol. 4, 1985, no. 3, pp. 624-625.

increased from 37.5% to 50.4% in the United Kingdom.<sup>17</sup> The above characteristics of British development provide a framework for starting our review of the methodological problems of regional development with the case of the United Kingdom.

Michael Hechter interpreted the regional inequalities in connection with British development as a special relationship between the centre and peripheries. The process of industrialization influenced the majority of the British territories, but it transformed only a small part of the "Celtic periphery." While the English economy became highly diversified, the peripheral economies were nearer a monocultural norm highly vulnerable to extra-regional price changes.<sup>18</sup> "The peripheral economy is forced into a kind of development that is complementary to the center, ...".<sup>19</sup>

Table 1  
VARIATIONAL COEFFICIENTS OF NON AGRICULTURAL  
JOBS  
(Michael Hechter)<sup>20</sup>

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Ireland
1891	0.22	0.35	0.43	0.46	0.50
1911	0.20	0.27	0.34	0.51	0.52
1931	0.18	0.39	0.53	0.40	0.65

Synthetic data on occupation show the gradual increase in the peripheral characteristics when moving from England as the centre to the other extreme, Ireland. Selection of the territorial unit investigated is a basic problem when analyzing internal regional inequalities.

Data in the above table show that the strengthening of the peripheral situation not only caused the decrease of non-agricultural jobs, but the process of industrialization was slower and regionally more unbalanced in these regions. As Derek W. Urwin notes: economic changes of the XIXth century

<sup>17</sup> CLIVE H. LEE, *Regional Economic Growth in the United Kingdom since the 1880s*, (London: McGraw-Hill, 1971) p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> MICHAEL HECHTER, 'Industrialisation and National Development in the British Isles', *The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 9, April 1972, p. 167.

<sup>19</sup> MICHAEL HECHTER, 'Industrialisation and National Development', *International Journal of Urban Regional Research* 4/3/1980, p. 169.

<sup>20</sup> MICHAEL HECHTER, 'Regional Inequality and National Integration', *Journal of Social History* Vol. 5, 1971, No. 1, p. 99.

caused such inequalities within Scotland, England and Wales, which were bigger than the general inequalities between them.<sup>21</sup> It can be explained by those processes, which appeared in the United Kingdom for the first time, but then appeared in France, Germany and in the European periphery with a certain delay and in a modified form. The railroad network under development basically influenced the conditions of the cities as well, because it connected the different crop lands having a different production profile and specializing in different products and created a more intensive exchange of products between the cities and their environs. Changes in the "cost-distance" of the big consumer markets also changed the relative rental conditions in certain regions. Manufacturing industry, with its special technological-traffic relations and "aggressive" market requirements, penetrated into the previously closed, traditional regions of production. Evidently, this process took place with great regional inequalities.

Raymond Williams, the author of "The Country and the City," expressively illustrates this regional differentiation. In the neighbourhood of his native village, at the border of England and Wales: "Within twenty miles, ... was in one direction an old cathedral city, in the other an old frontier market town but only a few miles beyond it the first industrial towns and villages of the great coal and steel area of South Wales".<sup>22</sup> A biggish city of a peripheral "region", like for example Glasgow in Scotland, offers more bourgeois social structure and bigger social mobility than those villages of the "centre" region which are far from the cities.

The developing bigger cities — as the centres of manufacturing industry, administration, and higher-level services — became more and more sharply definable from their neighbourhood by their economic and social characteristics both in the regions of the centre and the periphery. Hechter himself notes: "Table 1 thus demonstrates that the higher  $W_{WS}$  for Wales and Scotland do not merely represent random country variation, but are systematically related to levels of industrialisation. In other words a relatively high  $V_W$  indicates the necessity of investigating sub-regional phenomena".<sup>23</sup> However, analysis within the region (or intra-regional analysis) did not finish with the revelation of sub-regions, as was suggested by Hechter, since we can conclu-

<sup>21</sup> DEREK W. URWIN, 'Territorial Structures and Political Developments in the United Kingdom', in Stein Rokkan - Derek W. Urwin (eds) *The Politics of Territory and Identity*. Studies in European Regionalization. (London: SAGE Publications, 1982), p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> RAYMOND WILLIAMS, *The Country and the City*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973) p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> MICHAEL HECHTER, 'Industrialisation and National Development in the British Isles. *The Journal of Development Studies*. Vol. 9. April 1972. p. 167.

de on the basis of the data calculated by him that the functional and hierarchical configuration of the settlement network becomes more expressly parallel with an increase of peripheral characteristics.

The internal spatial configuration of the previously mentioned Scotland, as a "peripheral region," cannot be captured on the basis of combined data at all. The capacity of Glasgow's ship-building industry nearly equalled Germany's before the first World War. Eighteen per cent of the world's ships were launched from the dockyards of the city. Glasgow was one of those few cities where the proportion of unskilled workers was less than 30%.<sup>24</sup> According to the investigations of E.H. Hunt, Glasgow, besides London, was among the cities with the highest industrial salaries at the turn of the century. Thus the characteristic occupational structure in Glasgow was significantly different from London, as investigated by Hobsbawn or Crossick, or Edinburgh, described by Gray.<sup>25</sup> In the case of the latter, skilled craftsmen and the working class aristocracy formed a much smaller proportion of the labour force than in Glasgow.

Consequently, as is proved by the above example, the view that it is possible to analyze the internal relationships between the centre and the periphery only at the level of regions can "conceal" industrial cities with international significance under the title of peripheral region. Even within England, which is considered to be a centre region by Hechter, the regional differences were so big that taking no notice of them means that the characteristic features of the British economic spatial structure are disregarded. These are spatial differences that cannot be analyzed only with the use of region as the basic terminology.

Industrialization and modernization — even within England — developed spatial inequality. Ditchfield wrote in 1889: "In most of our large towns the old features are fast disappearing ... and everything is being modernized; but in the country everything remains the same, ..." <sup>26</sup> Gissing refers to "those old villages in the midlands or the west, which lie at some distance from a railway station and in aspect are still untouched by the base tendencies of the time". <sup>27</sup> "The modern inventions — as Jefferies wrote — the steam and elec-

<sup>24</sup> JOAN SMITH, 'Class, skill and sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool, 1880-1914', in *Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth-century Town* (ed.) R.J. Morris, Leicester University Press, 1986. p. 184.

<sup>25</sup> E.H. HUNT, 'Industrialization and Regional Inequality: Wages in Britain 1760-1914', *Journal of Economic History*, December 1986, p. 946; E.J. HOBBSBAWN, 'The labour aristocracy in nineteenth century Britain, in *Laboring Men* (1964) 272-315; R.Q. GRAY, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh* (Oxford, 1971)

<sup>26</sup> DITCHFIELD, *Our English Villages* (London 1889) p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> GEORGE GISSING, 'The Private Papers of Henry Rycroft' (1903), quoted by Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 98.

tric telegraph, and even the printing press have but just skimmed the surface of village life".<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, "time stopped" even in those towns which were only a little bit farther from the dynamically developing cities. For example, a contemporary observer saw Winchester, located in the vicinity of Southampton, like this in 1890: "While other centres have leapt forward at feverish speed, and in so doing have trodden out all relics of their ancient state, Winchester lying out of the main streams of English industry and life, has almost stood still".<sup>29</sup>

The above examples have tried to illustrate that *the region is an important, but rather problematic, spatial framework for regional historical analysis. We can therefore ask if another spatial concept for regional analysis should be found.*

### **Diverse methodological problems of regional analysis in economic and social history**

On the basis of the foregoing it becomes evident that regional analysis raises diverse problems for economic and social history. In the following, the diverse aspects of the two fields of science are compared through some regional examples. The structural changes of the English economy in the XIXth century were closely related to its central role in the world economy. "The British pole" system of the international division of labour had fundamental influence on the spatial structure of the British economy as well. At the same time, the increased role of services created a special spatial concentration in South-East England, primarily in the neighbourhood of London and Middlesex. In 1841, the proportion of those employed in services was 21.7% in London and Middlesex, as compared to the national average of 13.1%. By 1911, this proportion increased to 27.9%, while the national average to 20.7%. However, the proportion of those employed in services increased above the national average in the other parts of South-East England as well by the turn of the century. It is very well indicated by the fact that in 1841 six out of the ten counties with the highest proportion of people employed in services were located in South-East England, while in 1911 these numbers were eight out of ten.<sup>30</sup> Namely, South-East England undoubtedly became a region of services and thus its socio-historic analysis is absolutely justified. However, South-East England is hardly a convenient regional unit for economic historians analyzing industry. While for social historians, the radically different social structure of the settlements of this region (London,

<sup>28</sup> RICHARD JEFFERIES, *Hodge and His Masters* 1890, p. 276.

<sup>29</sup> G.W. KITCHIN, *Winchester*, London, 1890, pp. 217-218.

<sup>30</sup> CLIVE H. LEE, 'Regional Structural Change in the Long Run: Great Britain 1841-1971', in Sidney Pollard (Hg.) *Region und Industrialisierung*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck - ruprecht 1980) p. 267.

Winchester) automatically excludes the possibility of performing the investigation exclusively based on the notion of region.

We may quote a French example, too.

With the analysis of the neighbourhood of Lyon in the XIXth century, Pierre Cayez expressively illustrates that this part of the country forms a fairly homogeneous region from an industrial point of view. However, we would look in vain for those social groups which formed the economic élite of Lyon in the smaller villages located in the neighbourhood of the city. In such cases, following the flexible concept of Georges Bertrand does not help either: "What counts is the general organization and internal contrasts of the regional whole".<sup>31</sup>

In general, when the economic-historical aspects are taken over by socio-historical ones, the spatial frameworks of the analysis have to be (should be) taken over by other spatial concepts. From the end of the XVIIIth century on — for the first time in England, then with a certain delay in other centre countries, and semi-peripheral and peripheral countries as well — the nationally characteristic hierarchic system of the urban network, especially in its social respect, increasingly separates from the regional frameworks. Modernization was a characteristic process in every country in the spatio-geographic sense as well. The level of the settlement hierarchy, where this process can be grasped, reflects the extent and the character of modernization. For example, in mid-XIXth century Russia, only one single city, St. Petersburg, opened up "in the heart of an underdeveloped country, a prospect of all the dazzling promises of the modern world".<sup>32</sup> Moreover, within the city, only one avenue symbolized the modern way of living. As Gogol writes in 1835: "There is nothing to compare with the Nevsky Prospect, at least not in Petersburg; for in that city it is everything. The beauty of the capital! — what splendours does this street know? I'm sure that not one of the town's pale and clerkish inhabitants would exchange the Nevsky for any earthy blessing..."<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, in the centre countries, a continuous system of cities is under formation, where the reproduction on an increased scale of the economic and cultural capital is guaranteed and where the forms of symbolic capital fitting modernization as well are produced. *Functional specialization within the urban hierarchy and a more developed infrastructure contribute to the expansion of innovational processes. New occupational and social groups appear*

<sup>31</sup> PIERRE CAYEZ, 'Industrielle und regionale Entwicklung am Beispiele Lyons', published in the above quoted book pp. 107-125; GEORGES BERTRAND, 'Pour une histoire ecologique de la France rurale', in Georges Duby, *La formation des campagnes françaises des origines au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1973) p. 100.

<sup>32</sup> MARSHALL BERMAN, *All that is Solid Melts Into Air. The Experience of Modernity*. (London: Verso 1985).

<sup>33</sup> Quoted by Marshall Berman p. 195.

ing as their consequence guarantee the social background for the self-generating economic and social modernization.

It is not accidental that the repeatedly recurring problem of historical regional investigation was the "emergence" of cities from their regional frameworks. Here we are faced with a problem that is repeatedly stated by historians, which means that urban history has to find its own identity not only in its field of research, but also conceptually. Theodore Herschberg admits already in the introduction of his study on "New Urban History" that this old problem could not be solved.<sup>34</sup> Ellen Jane Hollingsworth and J. Roger Hollingsworth bring up some ideas, which might be really promising starting points.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, they cannot give any concrete idea on the classification of cities either.

It is absolutely evident for us that this task can be solved only within the framework of a concept that incorporates the temporality of the economic-social and political processes, while connecting them organically to spatial dimensions. Such a concept, or discipline, namely "new historical geography" is under development. However, the actual situation can be best characterized by Giddens' statement: "Historians, I have said, cannot be properly regarded as specialists along a dimension of time, any more than geographers can be regarded as specialists along a dimension of space; such disciplinary divisions, as ordinarily conceived, are concrete expressions of the repression of time and space in social theory".<sup>36</sup>

The researcher, stepping over the habitual disciplinary limits, when getting into "no man's land" might feel as if he were a soldier getting between the opposing trenches accidentally. Thus it is fully understandable that the separate examination of the role of cities in the spatial structure of an economy or society is a task which researchers have usually refused to analyze until now. The famous scholar of urban history, P.J. Waller from Oxford, has to announce in the foreword of his recently published book that the major problem of scholars of urban history is to convince their colleagues of the sense of studying cities separately. "Urban history allegedly is invertebrate, ... a promiscuous jumble of items brought together on the poor pretext that these things have been found in or have occurred in towns".<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> THEODORE HERSHBERG, 'The New Urban History: Forward an Interdisciplinary History of City', in Theodore Hershberg (ed.) *Philadelphia Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> J. ROGER HOLLINGSWORTH and ELLEN JANE HOLLINGSWORTH, *Dimensions in Urban History. Historical and Social Science Perspective on Middle-Size American Cities*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979) p. 160.

<sup>36</sup> ANTHONY GIDDENS, 'Critical Notes: Social Science, History and Geography' in *The Constitution of Society*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), p. 355.

<sup>37</sup> P.J. WALLER, *Town, City and Nation. England 1850-1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) Foreword VIII.

The dogma of the concept of region as the single and exclusive unit of analysis paralyzes even those who recognized the prominent role of the cities in the spatial organization of the economy and society. P.K. O'Brien notes, when writing about the typology of industrialization in the XIXth century: "The majority of educated and innovative people lived in the cities of Europe..." Production-related knowledge could better spread in areas where the population spatially concentrated in the 'network' or "hierarchy" of cities should also be the basic unit of regional historical analysis. When writing about the historical geography of the regional issue, Edward Soja declares about the processes of the late XIXth century: "The major scale for spatial restructuring in the core countries, ... was not so much the regional division of labour ... It was concentrated at the urban scale".<sup>39</sup> But the cult of the region concept diverts him as well from placing the hierarchical system of the urban network, as the spatial concept, into the centre of his analysis. This partiality is partly justified, because Louis Wirth wrote precisely that about the concept of region in 1964: "Seminal ideas are so rare that in the scientific world we tend to embrace them with more than justifiable enthusiasm".<sup>40</sup>

### The spatial concept of the "new urban historical geography"

Some of the representatives of the "new historical geography" begin to recognize that besides the regional concept — especially in the interest of revealing the spatial configuration of society and the adequate analysis of the urban network — additional regional concepts have to be developed.

Hans-Dieter Laux, a West-German historical geographer, analyzed German urban development between 1871 and 1914 with an eye for something new.<sup>41</sup> In his investigation, he primarily analyzed demographic indicators, but he also developed a "functional" classification of cities. The different groups were pragmatically formed on the basis of the empirical analysis of occupational differences among the cities. His groups of cities were the following:

<sup>38</sup> P.K. O'BRIEN, 'Do we have a typology for the Study of European Industrialization in the XIXth Century', *The Journal of European Economic History*, Vol. 15. No. 2, Fall 1986, p. 298.

<sup>39</sup> EDWARD SOJA, 'Regions in context: spatiality, periodicity, and the historical geography of the regional question', *Environment and Planning D. Society and Space*, vol. 3/2 June 1985, p. 184.

<sup>40</sup> LOUIS WIRTH, 'The limitations of regionalism' in Louis Wirth, *On Cities and Social Life* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964) p. 207.

<sup>41</sup> HANS DIETER LAUX, 'Zur Bevölkerungsstruktur und natürlichen Bevölkerungsentwicklung deutscher Stadttypen 1871-1914', in H.J. Teuteberg, *Urbanisierung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Historische und geographische Aspekte* (Cologne: Böhlau, Köln, Wien, 1983) p. 113.

## Functional urban types of Germany in 1907

### 1. Service cities

The proportion of the tertiary sector is above 52.13%

n = 31

#### 1.1 *Service cities with mixed structure*

n = 5

#### 1.2 *Trading cities*

The proportion of trade and transport is above 22.95%

n = 8

#### 1.3 *Administrative and garrison cities*

The proportion of soldiers, civil servants, and freelance professionals is above 17.4%

n = 10

#### 1.4 *University, or pensioner cities*

The proportion of unemployed is above 18.81%

n = 8

### 2. Industrial cities

The proportion of manufacturing and handicraft industry is above 57.58%

n = 31

#### 2.1 *Mining and heavy-industrial cities*

The proportion of mining and metallurgy is above 16.06%

n = 9

#### 2.2 *Textile-industrial cities*

The proportion of textile industry is above 12.68%

n = 7

#### 2.3 *Other industrial cities*

Cannot be categorized under points 2.1 and 2.2

n = 15

### 3. Multi-functional cities

The tertiary sector is below 52.13% and industry and manufacturing industry is below 57.58%

n = 25

#### 3.1 *Multi-functional cities without a main role* Cannot be categorized under points 3.2 and 3.3

n = 10

#### 3.2 *Multi-functional cities with a significant role of services*

The proportion of the tertiary sector is above 49.12%

n = 9

#### 3.3 *Multi-functional cities, with significant role of manufacturing and handicraft industry*

The proportion of manufacturing and handicraft industry is above 54.45%

n = 6

The main merit of Hans-Dieter Laux's work is that such a consistent classification based on the differences of the occupational structure is fairly rare in the international literature. One of the deficiencies of the classification is that it does not take the proportion of agricultural jobs and the size of the city into account. Thus, for example, putting Berlin, Ratibon, and Wandsee into one category can be questioned partly because of the great difference in their size and partly because the servicing role and the sphere of influence of Berlin was significantly bigger, primarily due to the difference in its size and to its function, than those of the previously mentioned small towns.

*According to our opinion, the common investigation of the occupational structure and the city's function and central role facilitates the synthesis of the historical and geographical aspects. Besides the above aspects, the revelation of the hierarchical configuration of cities requires the analysis of the settlement-specific characteristics of social stratification and social mobility. The concrete task is to determine those social strata and main mobility tendencies that are dominant at the different levels of the urban network.*

After examining the spatial frameworks of our analysis, namely, after the question of "where", the question of "what" comes to the front. That is why in the following we describe the basic aspects of the comparative historico-geographical analysis of the urban system.

1. What is the internal structure of the stratum related to the functional forms of economic capital and which are the spatial frameworks (local, national, and international market) of the capital operated by them? What is the division of power such as that which was created between economic capital and the class of landowner? Which are the levels of urban hierarchy that are chosen as centres by economic monopolies? Besides the market conditions, to what extent do the different forms of state intervention and the norms of the "local" society influence the power relations among the capitalist strata?

2. How far does the stratum ensuring the reproduction of cultural capital get connected with the organization of capitalist production and how is it categorized into the class structure of the capitalist society? Which are the dimensions, besides the division of labour, that divide this social stratum? What is the extent of the internal division and has this division got any settlement-specific characteristics? From the late nineteenth century we find the separation of the following groups at the different levels of the urban hierarchy necessary on the basis of the character and extent of their connection with the organization of capitalist production and the character of their activity:

a) Group performing the transformation and development of the technical means of production;

b) Group performing the supervision and organization of the working processes;

c) Group promoting the registration and sales of the produced goods;

d) Group performing the production and circulation of information, innovation, and sciences. It is an important issue to investigate the extent of the requirement of economic capital, by the state, or local communities in determining the circulation of information and the spread of innovations;

e) Groups related to the reproduction of capitalist social conditions, the superstructure and, within this, the state;

f) The traditional intellectuals, the mediators of knowledge, the group being active at the low and medium level of the educational system.

No rigid line can be drawn between these groups of professionals; only a kind of statistical approximation is possible. Quite apart from this, these groups play such a diverse role in the reproduction of economic and cultural capital, which justifies the above categorization.

3. To what extent do the "rentiers of history" (land and house owners) join economic, social, and political life? To what extent can they preserve and extend their economic, cultural, and symbolic capital?

4. At the different levels of the urban hierarchy, what kind of scope of activity do the central functions of settlements ensure for small industry, small trade, and services? How has the division of labour developed between the entrepreneurs of manufacturing, wholesale, and small industry and between retailing and services? What are the differences in this respect between the different levels of the urban hierarchy? What is the level and structure of the cultural capital that is required for the preservation of the economic capital in the case of the *petite bourgeoisie*? To what extent are the attitudes of the *petite bourgeoisie* based on patterns trickling down from the top to the bottom and how much are they the result of their own "production of values"?

5. How much does the proportion and the internal division of the workers — and within this the industrial workers — change at the different levels of the urban hierarchy? How far can the political and cultural institutions of the workers and their institutions devised to protect their economic interests be influenced by the state or by the capitalist class?

6. And last, but not least: at the national level, what is the extent of social mobility among the different social strata and groups; which are the settlement specific characteristics of such a process? What is the role of the accumulation of economic and cultural and symbolic capital in the *changes of the social conditions*? To what extent is the process of social mobility connected with geographical mobility?

## Conclusion

We hope that on the basis of the foregoing it is clear that regional analysis raises diverse problems for economic and social history. In order to solve the above-mentioned problems, we should seek a concept that incorporates the temporality of the economic-social and political processes while connecting them organically to spatial processes.

We contend that should a definite regional division of the economic sphere exist and be separated within a country, a mere analysis of these regions in itself cannot present in their full complexity the spatial characteristics of society, because these spatial characteristics have their own laws differing from those of the economic sphere that are manifested partly in other spatial dimensions. It is evident that the most important change in modern societies is the very differentiated and articulated urban class structure. It means that the historical analysis of the functional and hierarchical distribution of settlement networks and within this, of urban networks instead of the assumed regions should be focussed upon. Applying Bourdieu's concept of capital at the level of settlement network, economic, social-cultural, and symbolic capital seems to be distributed not only among individual social groups and regions, but also among cities and towns. An urban system, and in a broader sense a settlement system comprises a hierarchical system whose specific elements assure totally diverse levels and composition of reproduction of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. Within a settlement network, it is especially the upper level of urban hierarchy where a superior level of social infrastructure is required and created by the objectivized 'economic capital' as well as institutionalized cultural and symbolic capital due to innovation processes. From the point of view of social history it is the above mentioned upper level of urban hierarchy where new social processes and social groups are created. At the same time within a national economy, even in countries belonging to the centre, almost unchanged relics of settlement, can still exist. In fact, the basic characteristics of social macro-structure can be well reflected also by the different economic, social, and cultural processes taking place at specific levels of urban hierarchy. We need to know the extreme values of figures showing the national average of different social processes and the extent of spatial differences. Future research into these problems is important in as much as spatial variations form their own inner structure, and these spatial phenomena are organically linked to the fundamental processes of social reproduction of the given nation. The local, the hierarchical order of towns and cities, the regional and the national — placed within a world history perspective — must all play a part in the new synthesis.