

MAIN TENDENCIES IN DEVELOPMENT OF SZEGED

GY. KRAJKÓ

At the turn of the century, Szeged was the second most populous Hungarian town. Its development was promoted by favourable features: it was a railway junction, there was a possibility for transport by water, it was a centre for the emerging light and food industries, it possessed an extensive sphere of attraction, and it was a market centre. The dynamic growth of the town is reflected in the change in the number of the population: between 1880 and 1910 (in the area corresponding to the town boundaries in 1970) the population increased from 49 000 to 79 000, i.e. a rise of 30 000.

The floods in 1879 had destroyed the town practically completely. The period of reconstruction coincided with an acceleration of the urbanization process. This permitted the development of an ordered, aesthetic town plan, with a structure of avenues perpendicular to ring-roads, on the example of Budapest. This period saw the completion of the merging of the various parts of the town, and the formation of an areally uniform closed settlement (Fig. 1).

The situation of Szeged was modified very unfavourably by the new national boundaries following the First World War. The town lost a significant proportion of its area of attraction, and its transport geographical location became disadvantageous. Between the two World Wars, there was no industrial development throughout the entire country, while the stagnation in agriculture curbed further expansion of the food industry in the town. Between 1910 and 1950 the increase in the number of the population slowed down: during these 40 years it rose by only 10 000, from 79 000 to 89 000. The town displayed progress only in the fields of culture and public health.

The stagnation not only slowed down the growth of the population, but also exerted adverse influence on the communal investments and on the development of the town's infrastructure.

The urbanization of Szeged after the Second World War was far from being unambiguous and contradiction-free. The process can be broken down into several stages, this being attributable primarily to the nature and dynamism of the industrial development. Accordingly, a somewhat more detailed treatment of the industry of the town is justified.

Szeged is an important industrial centre, and gives close to 2% of the industrial production of the country. For some products the proportion is very high: e.g. it gives more than 50% of the Hungarian production of mineral oil, natural gas, red pepper, salami, hempyarn and textile fabric. Some 15% of the national production of block board, fruit and vegetable preserves and cotton fabric originates from Szeged.

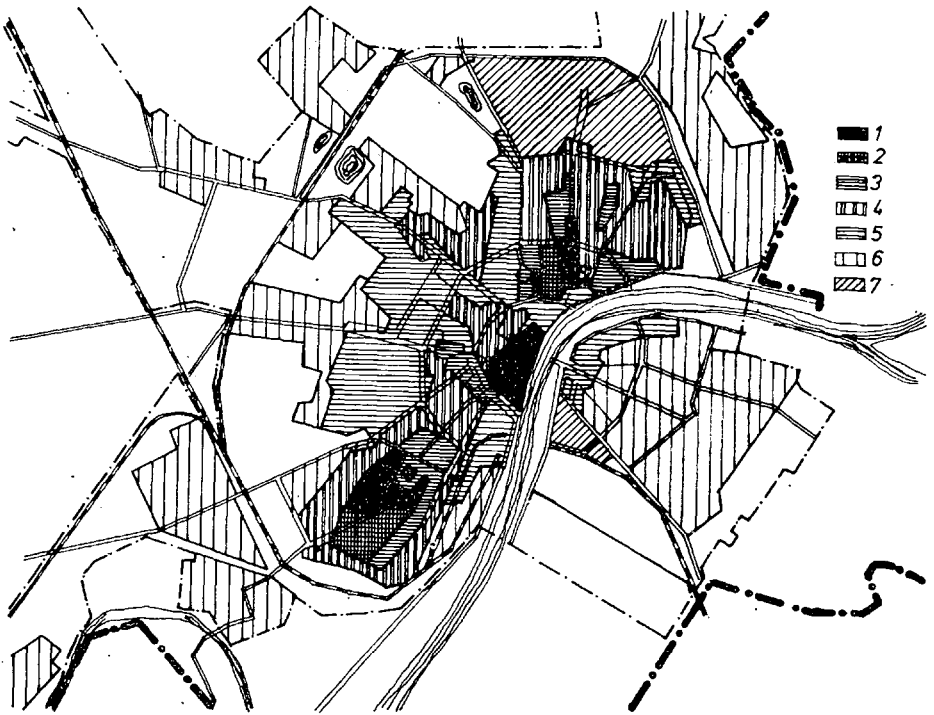


Fig. 1. The map of the history of settling of Szeged

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|--|--|
| 1: 13 th —15 th c. | 2: 15 th —16 th c. |
| 3: 16 th —17 th c. | 4: 18 th c. |
| 5: 19 th | 6: 19 th —20 th c. |
| 7: 20 th c. | |

In 1949 the industry employed, 8500 workers, 1,1% of the national industrial labour force. The number of industrial workers per 1000 inhabitants (98) slightly exceeded the national average. In the first half of the 1950's, the rapid increase in industrial production was achieved mainly by the better utilization of the existing equipment, the doubling of the number of workers, and the enhancement of the working intensity. Industrial investment was slight. Szeged received practically nothing from the building programme of the first fiveyear plan, and this subsequently influenced the development of the town.

In this period, in contrast with the other regional centres, Szeged was in a disadvantageous situation. The explanation of this is as follows:

a) In accordance with the principles of the economic policy then prevailing in the country, all the resources were concentrated on the development of heavy industry, and mainly the basic materials industry, and since Szeged was a centre of light industry and the food industry and did not possess mineral raw materials it was bypassed by the first phase of industrialization.

b) The new national boundary resulting from the First World War deprived

the town of its favourable transport location and a significant part of its area of attraction. The transit traffic stopped completely.

c) The then strained political relations with Yugoslavia impeded the development not only of the industry, but also of the town.

d) The necessary agricultural raw materials for a major development of the food industry were not available.

Besides the unfavourable conditions, Szeged did possess some advantageous features, e.g. its ample labour force, its position as the largest cultural centre after Budapest, this comparatively easily soluble industrial water supply, etc., but it could not make appropriate use of these.

The urbanization of Szeged in the 1950's was very slow. For example, the communal investments in 1955 did not attain even 3% of those in 1975.

A new stage in the development of Szeged began in 1958—1960. From this period on there have been substantial modifications in the above-listed disadvantageous conditions.

a) There have been changes in the economic policies of the country: emphasis has been laid on the labour-consuming branches and on the more pronounced development of the provincial areas, in agreement with the rational regional location of industry.

b) Normalization of relations with Yugoslavia permitted a considerable increase of the town's tourist and transit traffic.

c) The socialist reorganization and development of agriculture has provided raw material for the constant expansion of the food industry.

d) Transfer of the county seat to Szeged increased its function, and its sphere of attraction expanded in area.

e) Importance has been assumed by the factors influencing the establishment of industry in the town: e.g. the labour force, specialist training, industrial water supply, the possibilities of cooperation, cultural background, etc.

f) The development of the town received a new impetus from the middle of the 1960's, with the discovery of the hydrocarbon fields.

With this favourable change in the conditions, the more rapid development of the industry of Szeged became possible: between 1960 and 1970 the number of persons employed in industry rose by 70%, from 21 600 to 33 800, while productivity increased roughly threefold. A number of new plants were established: e.g. a cable factory, a rubber factory a textile mill, a milk plant, etc. Hydrocarbon mining has appeared as a new branch of industry. The dynamic extensive industrialization drew first on the manpower reserves of the town, and later on those of the surrounding district, and since 1970 an ever increasing labour shortage has been experienced. In the 1970's the number of industrial workers has not changed substantially, but industrial production has risen as a consequence of higher productivity. Thus, the conditions of extensive industrial development have disappeared and the period of such development came to an end at the beginning of this decade: in accordance with the national tendency, the increase of the population of the town leads mainly to a rise in the number of those employed in the tertiary sector.

As regards the supply and sphere of attraction of the working force of the town, the changes in the number of commuters are of great importance (Table 1).

Disregarding the agglomeration belt joined to Szeged in 1973, between 1960

and 1975 the number of commuting workers increased fourfold, from 3755 to 13 550. The extent of the change differs from belt to belt. The increase has been the largest in the outer belt, where the number of workers commuting to Szeged increased almost ninefold in the given period. In parallel with this there has been an expansion in the area of attraction of the labour force of the town (Fig. 2). In

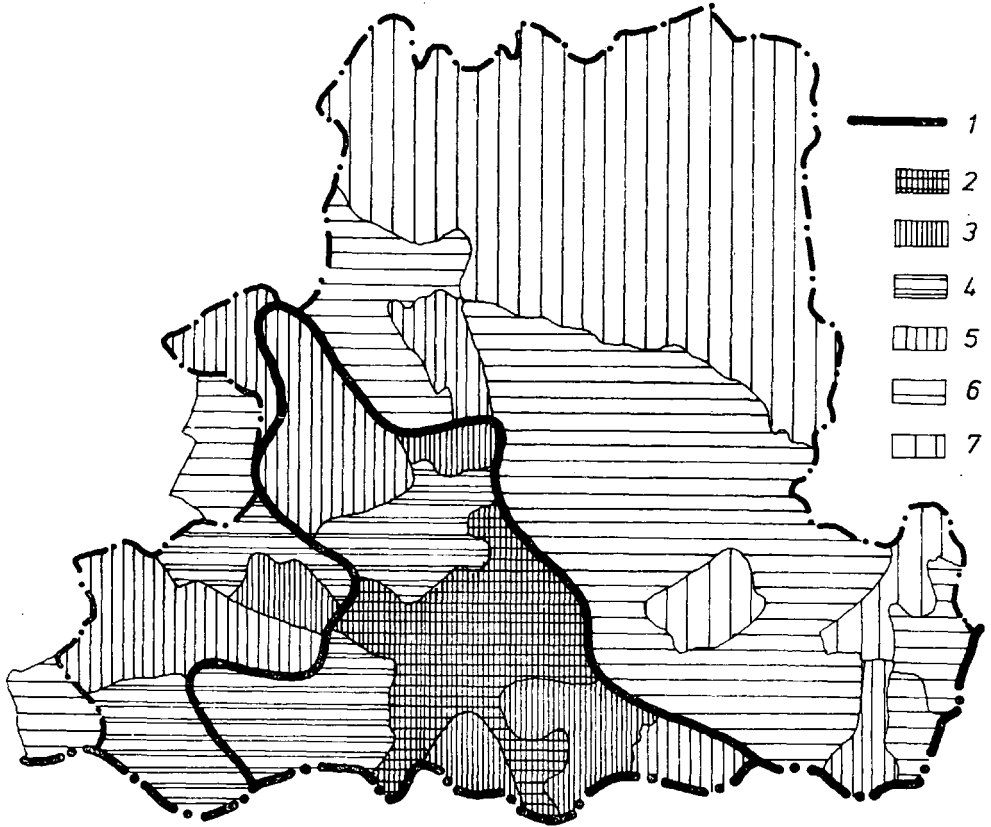


Fig. 2. Manpower attraction region in 1960.

1: the boundary of the attraction region in 1960.
 Percentage of employees working in Szeged:
 2: Szeged 3: 30- < 4: 20-30 5: 10-20
 6: 2-10 7: 2->

1968 72% of the commuters lived within the 30-minute travelling zone, and only 15% travelled for more than 1 hour. In 1975 35% of the commuters lived within the 30-minute travelling time, and nearly 22% were forced to travel for more than 1 hour. In recent years there has been a rapid increase in the number of settlements from which more than 30 people commute to work. The number of settlements connected to Szeged in this way was 19 in 1960, 28 in 1964 and 45 in 1975. In cor-

Table 1. Increase in number and proportion of commuters

	1960			1964			1968 (Szeged)				1975			
	Together with agglomeration belt													
	abs. no.	%	%	abs. no.	%	%	Increase 1960—64	abs. no.	%	%	Increase 1964—68	abs. no.	%	Increase 1968—75
Joined to Szeged in 1973 agglomeration belt	4763	56.0		5 437	50.9		14.0	6 800	46.3		25.1			
Inner belt	1733	20.3	46.1	2 411	21.6	45.9	39.2	2 900	20.0	37.6	20.0	3 984	29.4	37.4
Towns	783	9.2	20.9	800	7.5	15.3	2.2	1 040	7.1	13.5	30.0	1 070	7.9	2.9
Outer belt	700	8.2	18.6	1 450	14.5	27.6	107.0	1 960	13.6	25.5	32.5	6 003	44.3	206.2
Other areas	534	6.3	14.4	587	5.5	11.2	9.9	1 800	12.4	23.4	206.6	2 493	18.4	38.5
Total	8518	100.0		10 685	100.0		24.4	14 500	100.0		35.6			
Total without agglomeration belt	3755		100.0	5 248		100.0		7 700		100.0		13 550	100.0	75.9

Table 2. Numbers of those employed in the various industrial branches

Branch	Szeged		National	Employees per 1000 inhabitants	Employees per 1000 inhabitants nationally	Proportion of Szeged to the national figure		
	1975	1975 (1949)				1975	(1949)	
Heavy industry	11.280	32.8 (9)	1 020.404	58.4	70	100	0.7	(0.23)
Light industry	15.694	45.6 (76)	456.310	24.2	90	40	2.25	(4.8)
Others	1.636	4.8	71.243	4.1	30	10	1.0	—
Food industry	5.774	16.8	196.521	11.2	30	20	1.5	(1.6)
Total	34.384	100%	1 744.478	100%	200	170	—	—

relation with this there has been an increase in the average distance travelled by the commuters. In 1960 it was 12,9 km, in 1968 17 km, and in 1975 23,8 km. 44% of the commuting labour force originates from the outer belt.

A substantial rise in the number of commuters is not expected in the future, and it would not be reasonable either, for there is no further available labour force in the nearer settlements, while daily commuting from the more distant settlements would be irrational.

As regards its rate and means, the industrial development of the town in the past 30 years has been intermittent: this is particularly obvious in the individual branches. Up to 1960 the structure of the industry did not change appreciably. During the following 15 years, however, the previously one-sided structure (in which the light and food industries predominated) underwent a transformation and became essentially more balanced as a consequence of the extremely fast development of the heavy industry. In 1960 the proportion of those employed in heavy industry was only 13,2%: in contrast, in 1975 it had advanced to second place with nearly 33%, while the technical indices showed that it had become the most important branch. The number of those, employed in the food industry changed at the same rate as that for the whole of industry, and therefore its proportion remained unchanged.

The development of light industry lagged behind the national rate: thus, not only did it decline in importance compared to the other branches of industry in the town, but during a quarter of a century the proportion of those employed in this branch relative to the population and to the national average fell from 4,8 to 2,2. (Table 2.)

In the following decade the structure of the industry will be modified to a slight extent: it may be expected that heavy industry will increase its proportion a little.

In spite of the change that has occurred in the industrial structure, Szeged is still a light-industrial centre, and it can be ascribed to this that more than half of those employed in industry, are females.

With regard to the regional location of industry, an addition to the historical inheritance the effect of the main transport routes is manifested (Fig. 3). The river has attracted comparatively few plants (a sawmill, a ship-repair yard, the New Szeged hemp works, the salami factory, etc. are located beside it). The western industrial belt was attracted and developed by the combination of the railway and the main road. Exploitation of the hydrocarbon field covers the area to the north of the town and has resulted in an independent industrial zone here.

The less transport-dependent plants are situated in a scattered manner, incorporated into the housing belt.

The outlined spatiality is not advantageous in every respect.

a) The main wind direction is NW, and thus pollution of the housing belt is fairly strong.

b) The industrial zone limits the possibility of expansion of the housing belt in the W and N directions.

c) Most of the large companies have grown from relatively small plants, and since they are interspersed in the housing belt there is not appropriate area for their expansion. Further, the unfavourable features of the sites, which did not show up initially, are nowadays increasingly more sharply defined. Resiting of the plants is one of the serious and expensive problems of the future development of the town.

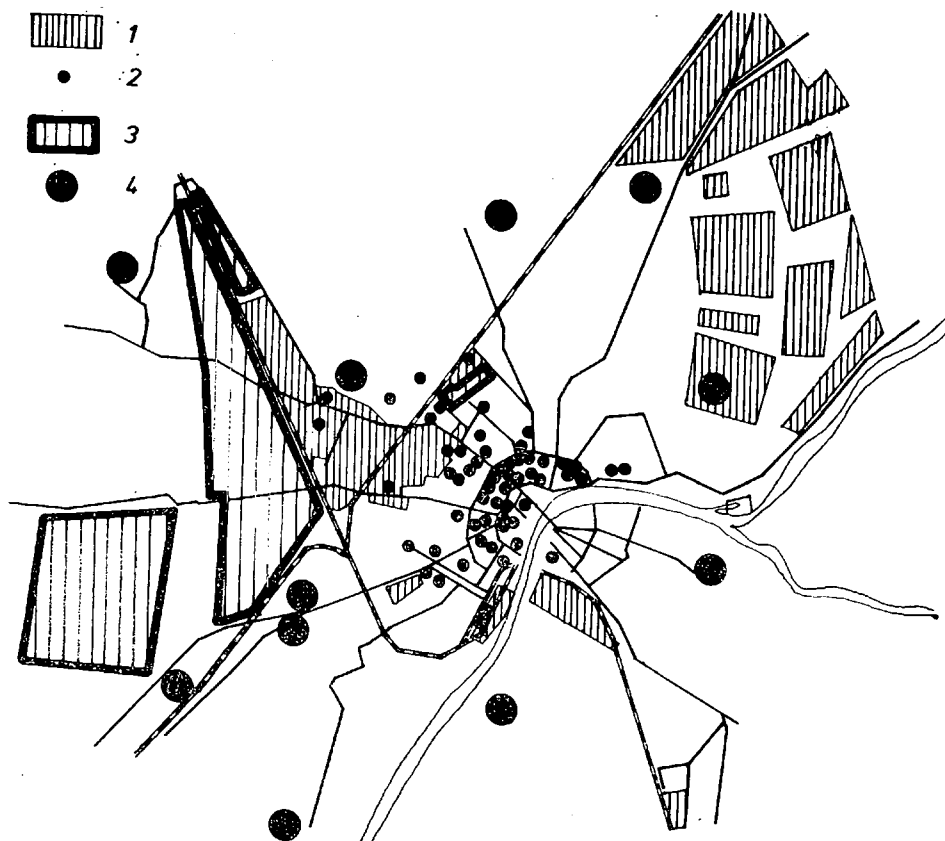


Fig. 3. Szeged and her environment

- 1: connected industrial region
- 2: factories having interfering effect
- 3: suitable territory for location of industry
- 4: centre of the agricultural unit

d) The S and SE parts of the town are not very suitable for industrial settlements. With the building of the new bridge, the housing belt of the New Szeged part can be expanded considerably, but because of the absence of a railway bridge it is not practical to locate plants here. Thus, a free area suitable for industrial settlements is primarily to be found W of the town.

The changes in the population of the town, similarly to the development of the industry (but not in parallel with the latter), were again intermittent (Fig. 4). Up to 1956 the natural increase in population was relatively high, but as a consequence of the slow development of the town immigration was low. In the following period, lasting up to the 1970's, the natural increase was very low (the average for the decade did not reach 0,2%), but the immigration rose markedly. (The increase in migration was a national tendency, and was connected with the socialist reorgani-

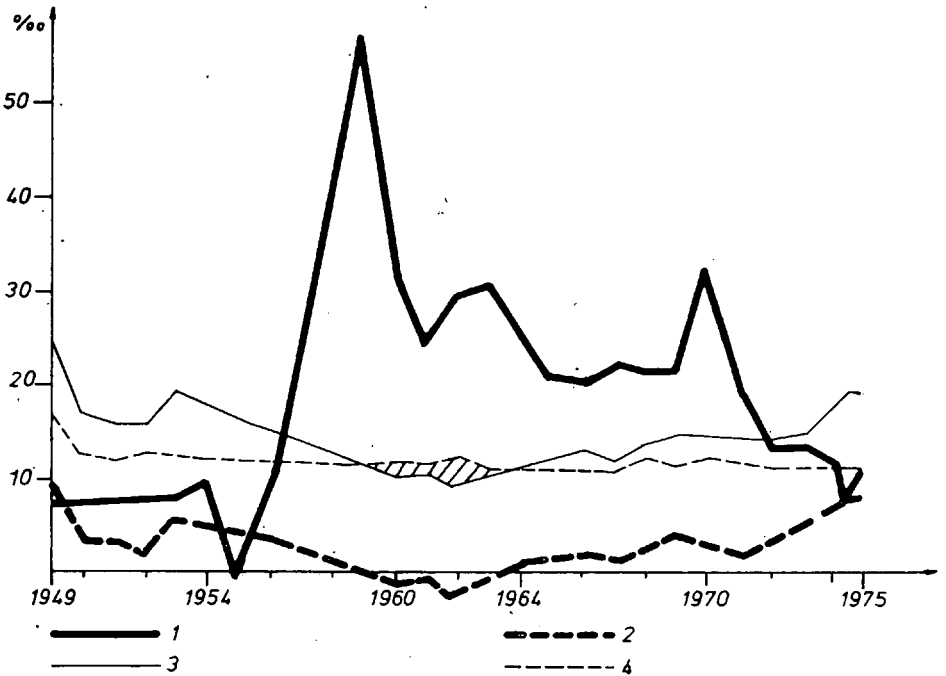


Fig. 4. The most important demographic indexes of Szeged
 1: the difference of migration
 2: natural distribution
 3: birth rate
 4: still-birth rate

zation of agriculture.) Nowadays the increase in the population of the town has become balanced and proportionate: as a result of the natural increase (0,8%) and immigration, the annual increase is 2000—2500. In 1977 the population of Szeged (together with the 5 village settlements joined to it in 1973) numbers 171 000 and by 1990 it will reach 200 000.

The periodicity observed in the rise of the population of the town followed the development of the industry with a phase delay. This correlation also occurs in several other towns of the South Hungarian Plain.

From the 1960's, immigration towards Szeged affected the surrounding settlements too to an ever greater extent. The immigration frequently proceeds in two stages. People first migrate into the surrounding settlements, and then move into the town later. In the present phase of the extensive urbanization the development of the agglomeration belt is forming with an external inflow. The population of the settlements surrounding the town is increasing, and the housing function too is beginning to be fulfilled. The rate of growth of the agglomeration nucleus is determined by the number of houses constructed.

In 1973 a significant part of the agglomeration belt (the 5 settlements Tápé, Szőreg, Kiskundorozsma, Algő and Gyálarét) was incorporated into Szeged.

At present the agglomeration belt is undergoing formation with the accumulation of new settlements, and some 12 villages are connected to the town in this way (Fig. 5).

In the past decade Szeged has developed more rapidly than the other regional centres, but despite this, with the exceptions of education and health, the indices of the infrastructure of the town show a more unfavourable picture, i.e. the 40-year

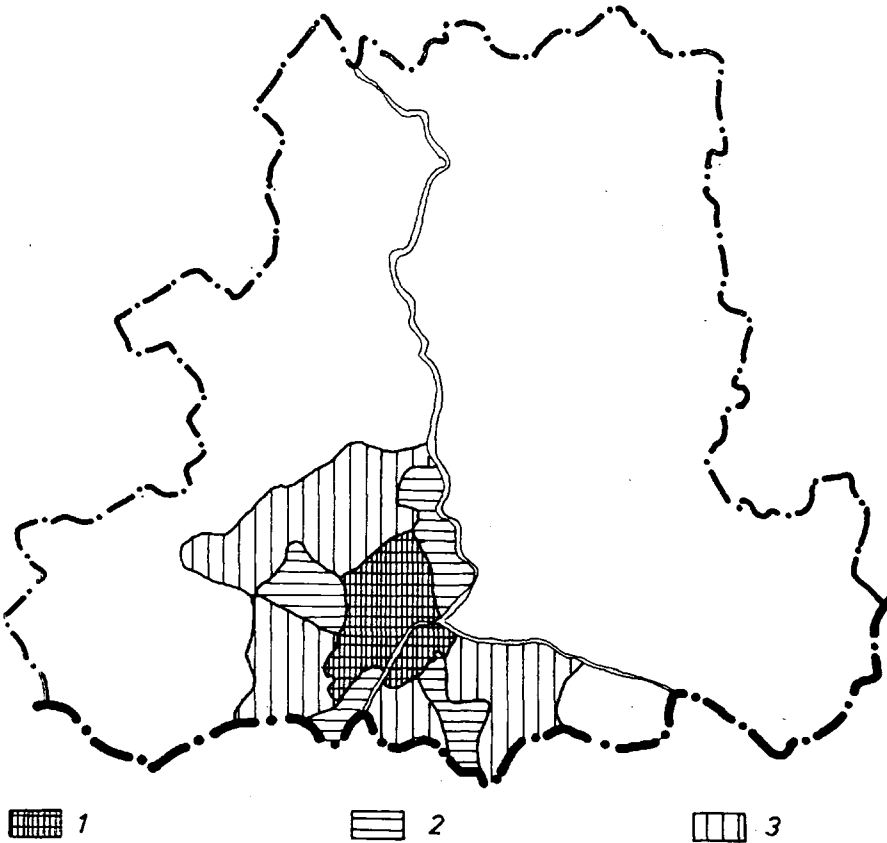


Fig. 5. The agglomeration-area of Szeged
 1: the boundary of Szeged in 1973.
 2: the agglomeration area joining with Szeged
 3: the actual agglomeration

lag has by no means been made up for. Of the 5 regional centres, Szeged occupies 4th place as regards the level of housing and communal provision, transport, trade and sports facilities (1st place in the fields of health, education and public instruction).

The most important trends of the development of the town are as follows:

1. The establishment of larger industrial plants in the near future is not practical: the development can be solved by the enhancement of productivity and by the

expansion of the already existing plants. In accordance with the principle of selective industrial development, in the less efficient plants the production profile must be changed or production must be halted.

2. It is necessary to develop the service network more rapidly than hitherto.

3. An important task is the strengthening and further extension of the non-producing functions of the town. Szeged is a cultural, educational and health centre. It has won recognition, even internationally, as a consequence of its clinics, its universities, the Biological Research Centre and the Open-Air Theatre. The development of these institutions is a permanent task. The town has fallen behind appreciably as regards sports facilities and the construction of a lido utilizing the favourable given features. Great attention is devoted to the creation of the conditions necessary for the further increase of the tourist trade.

4. It is not only the number of inhabitants that makes a settlement a town: urbanization assumes communal provision at an appropriate level. In the past decade the level of such provision has improved substantially: in spite of this, of the regional centres Szeged is in last place because of the rapid rise in the population, the joining of the agglomeration belt to the town, and the insufficient investments in the preceding period. Compared to the increases in the number and demands of the population, a lag can also be observed in the expansion of the network of shops.

5. In the development of the town, it must be taken into consideration that, as a consequence of the town's role as a regional centre, it possesses a widespread region of attraction and the provision of the population of this region must be satisfied from several aspects (supply of goods, education, public health, etc.): secondly, in accordance with the strivings towards decentralization, Szeged must be developed to become one of the counter-poles of Budapest.