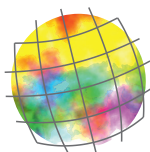


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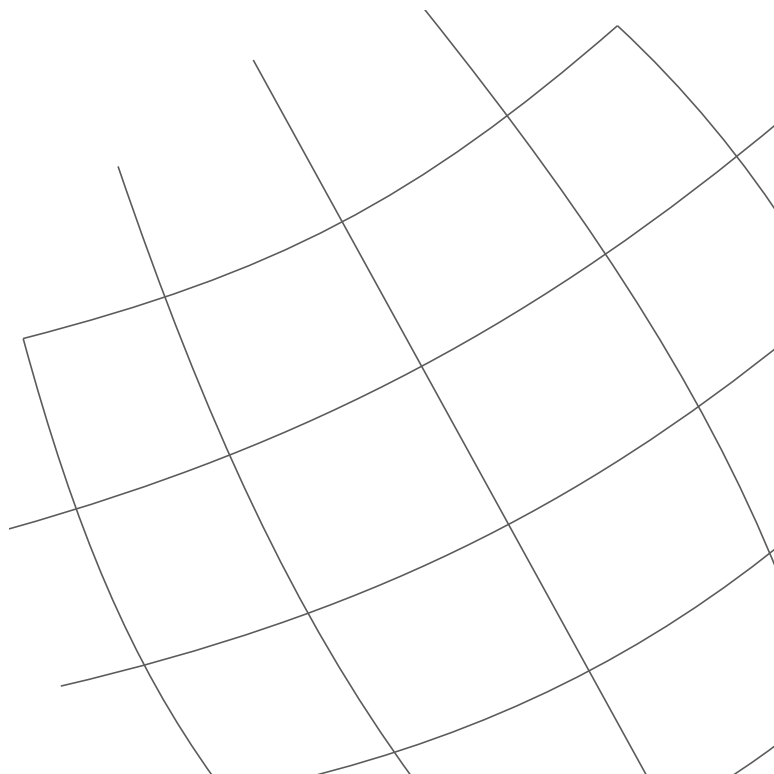
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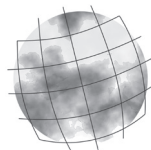
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# MANAGING OF THE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY: CHALLENGES FOR A SUSTAINABLE URBAN POLICY

## The case of Krakow

**Robert PAWLUSIŃSKI** <sup>A\*</sup>

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### Abstract

The development of modern cities takes place not only in terms of spatial (territorial) enlargement but also in terms of time stretch. More and more economic activities in the city are open until late in the evening and at night. Today's cities have a rhythm similar to the daytime at night. This applies to services included in the economy of free time. The night-time economy is treated in the development plans of cities, especially large cities, as an innovative development direction. Many cities have adopted the support of night-time tourist attractions as their direction of development. The night-time economy, unfortunately, does not always bring only positive benefits. The question of sustainable city night and city night policy as a tool for its implementation seems to be very current. This article aims to present the problem of managing the night-time economy in a historic city on the example of Krakow in Poland. The author will indicate the main factors that determine the development of night tourism and urban recreation at night in this city, identify the main groups of recipients and the problems related to them, and discuss the assumptions of urban policy in relation to sustainable tourism, where night management has also become an issue. This article is a case study based on various sources of information. Planning materials, reports and other studies devoted to this phenomenon were used, and interviews were conducted with representatives of city authorities and entrepreneurs.

### Keywords

night-time economy, night-time city policy, night tourism, Krakow

## INTRODUCTION

The term "night" can be defined in various dimensions and contexts (van Liempt et al., 2015; Edensor, 2015; Shaw 2021). In terms of nature, it is the time when Sunlight does not reach Earth and darkness falls. Biologically, this time of day for most living organisms, including humans, is the time necessary for the physical and mental regeneration. Disrupting the biological rhythm in the long term may have several negative effects on human life and health. The geographical aspects of the night (different lengths of the night depending on the latitude), combined with the Earth's climatic diversity, mean that the night is perceived differently in the cultural

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dimension. Tribal peoples treated the night mainly as a taboo and a threat to life, and some communities inhabiting high-temperature zones treated the early night-time as a time of cultural and social relations (Koslofsky, 2011).

The invention of artificial light has fundamentally changed the perception of the night (Edensor, 2015). On the one hand, it was associated with an increase in human activity after dark; on the other hand, it led to the commodification of the night simply. The night began to be viewed in terms of economic profit (Beer, 2011). In the twentieth century, with the spread of electric lighting of houses and streets, the hours of operation of various institutions were extended. The dimension of the night was gained not only by culture (theatres, cinemas), for which the night was a specific scene of events but also by commerce and services (van Liempt et al.; 2015, Rowe 2008). Along with the concept of revitalizing urban centres, the evening and night revival of city centres was supposed to be an alternative to the phenomenon of depopulation of central districts in favour of suburbia zones, common in Western cities from the second half of the twentieth century (Roberts, Eldridge 2009). As a result, in today's urbanized space, a conflict has arisen over the comfort of living at night (Edensor, 2015). After a phase of choking with the night-time economy in cities, especially in central districts, a "sustainable night" concept was discussed (Roberts, Eldridge 2009). This issue seems to be justified, especially in the case of historical cities that based their development strategy on tourism. To make historical cities attractive to visitors, they often excessively promoted the development of night entertainment or illuminated monuments, encouraging them to wander the city at night (Eldridge, A., Smith, A. 2019).

The question of sustainable city night and city night policy as a tool for its implementation seems to be very current. The aim of this article is to present selected aspects of managing the night-time economy in a historic city on the example of Krakow in Poland. The author will indicate the main factors that determine the development of night tourism and urban recreation at night, identify the main groups of recipients and the problems related to them, and discuss the assumptions of urban policy in relation to sustainable tourism, where management has also become an issue.

## NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

The night-time economy (NTE) is not a separate sector of the urban economy. It is heterogeneous in nature and permeates various components of the urban system (Beer, 2011; Ming-tak Chew, 2009). The key issue in identifying it is the time dimension. The most common time frame for NTE is the interval between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., and sometimes it is significantly extended, for example, in research on the development of NTE in London (*Think Night: London's Neighborhoods...*, 2019) the interval between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.



The night-time economy (NTE) is considered from two perspectives (Pawlusiński, Zmysłony, 2018). In general, NTE is identified with the concept of 24 hours' city, that is, a city in which most, if not all, spheres of socioeconomic life function both during the day and at night. The 24-hour city rhythm is typical mainly for global cities (van Liempt et al., 2015). In a narrow sense, emphasis is placed on the aspect of satisfying free time needs, and other spheres of city activity at night are considered as complementary (auxiliary) elements. This perception of the night-time economy, set out in the following, has been adopted in this study.

The author of this article states a city's night-time economy as a complex of various economic and social functions of the city developed directly or indirectly in order to meet the growing human demand for services and goods of recreational and entertainment (free time) nature, consumed at night outside the place of residence. So framed city's night-time economy has strong links with the tourist economy, and tourists are one of the main groups of recipients of city night services (Eldridge, Smith, 2019; Pinke-Sziva et al., 2019).

The subjective scope of the night-time economy includes various forms of activity. They include, among others (Roberts, Eldridge 2009; Ming-tak Chew, 2009; Pawlusiński, Zmysłony, 2018):

- entertainment services based on popular music and meetings in music clubs (music clubs, discos, dance clubs, café clubs; outdoor music);
- gambling services (casinos, arcades, etc.);
- cultural services (theatres, cinemas, philharmonics, concert halls, museums, galleries, creative spaces);
- services related to the organization of mass events and various types of meetings (amphitheatres and city stages: outdoor music concerts, jubilee events - e.g., New Year's Eve parties, street theatres; city games, mass sports events; organization of private meetings in public and private spaces - e.g., at museum facilities at night);
- gastronomic and gastronomic and entertainment services (restaurants, cafes, pubs, alcohol pump rooms, beer gardens, food corners with mobile gastronomy);
- guided tours and organization of sightseeing at night;
- services related to active recreation (sports centres, gyms, swimming pools, outdoor gyms, sports fields);
- services related to biological regeneration (spa & wellness centres, and others)
- commercial services, related to the operation of shops and shopping centres, but also occasional events such as fairs, exhibitions, etc.

The accompanying services, significantly shaping the possibilities of functioning of the night-time economy, include:





- night public transport services,
- services related to the protection of public order and security,
- health services,
- illumination of monuments and communication routes in the city.

It is extremely difficult to unambiguously (apart from the time dimension of the facility's availability) assign an entity (or the related service or services) to the night-time economy. Most of the above-mentioned services and their providers operate both during the day and at night. The observations to date indicate that with the popularization of nightlife and the growing demand for this type of service, the number of entities that shift the moment of closing the facility (providing the service) to late evening or night hours is increasing, which in turn expands the range of the city's night offer and increases the importance of "Nighttime income" in the structure of income of business entities. Often, the impulse to extend working hours is not only the demand factor, but also the fear of losing a competitive advantage in relation to outlets adjacent to the facility. As a result, small enterprises, which after all dominate in the night-time economy, tend to operate in spatial clusters.

The relationship between the night city offer and night demand was explained by Daniel Campo and Brendt D. Ryan (2008). The typology below can also be used to describe the phenomenon of the night-time economy in European cities, including Krakow. Based on observations of American cities, they distinguished three basic markets of the night-time economy and the related set of products. These are:

Ad a) Sophisticated entertainment – an offer addressed to people interested in participating in sophisticated forms of culture. It is a group with a large age range, albeit not a mass one, largely composed of experts and connoisseurs of art. The activities they undertake include participation in theatre performances, classical music concerts, participation in jubilee events, exhibitions, and vernissages, as well as visits to museums and exhibition galleries. The interest in the city's night products on the part of this group of recipients is determined by the city's rank as a centre of cultural life, the reputation of city cultural institutions and artists associated with the city, as well as the calendar of artistic events.

Ad b) High-end entertainment - includes services of an exclusive nature, such as casinos, night clubs, renowned gastronomic establishments, and others. Often, it is supplemented by cultural offers made available on an exclusive basis (e.g., night visits to a museum). These offers are addressed to a narrow group of people for whom the issue of elitism and uniqueness of the product is of great importance, as well as the so-called corporate client, mainly representatives of the business world. In the case of Krakow, a potential group of customers are participants of international congresses organized, among others, at the ICE congress centre.



Ad c) Middlebrow partying, a type of offer addressed to a mass audience, mainly young people (20-30 years of age) focused on "simple" entertainment, often related to the consumption of alcoholic beverages. As the authors note (Campo, Ryan 2008), the current nightlife of the city is simpler, does not require adherence to strict rules and customs, and, importantly, does not involve large financial expenses. In the scope of the so-called simple entertainment includes several products ranging from meetings in cafes, pubs, restaurants, or the so-called meeting zones (e.g., city zones without curfew) through participation in music concerts, visits to discos, games rooms or cinemas, to offers related to sports recreation at night (visits to gyms, swimming pools, open-air sports at night). Generally, this type of entertainment is available to the undemanding mass client, for whom the quality of service is not a priority. Its recipients are mainly students, tourists coming to the city, as well as young inhabitants of cities and suburbs.

In the last two decades, middlebrow partying has been the fastest growing night product in general. This is especially true for products related to alcohol consumption. As a result, it generates huge negative social effects. An example would be a pub crawl, where customers move in groups between pubs late at night to consume alcohol in each of them. Drunken participants do not follow the rules of social co-existence and are burdensome (e.g., due to noise) for the people living in the buildings along the route of their march.

The negative phenomena accompanying the night-time economy that require regulation include (Chatterton, 2002; Hobbs et al. 2005; Roberts, Eldridge 2009; Eldridge, 2019):

- disturbing the silence of the night by music played from many sources, loud conversations, shouting, and singing of clubbers and passersby, noise generated by devices (e.g., fans, air conditioners) and vehicles (passenger cars, public transport, cleaning vehicles);
- increase in pollution of public space (bottles, packaging, cigarettes, food scraps, etc.);
- troublesome or unbearable smells resulting from gastronomic activities, smoking nicotine by people spending time outside clubs and in cafe gardens, crowds, and dysfunctional human behaviour;
- dysfunctional behaviours, e.g., group consumption of strong alcohol in quick doses (so-called shots), public drug use, public urination and vomiting, arguments and fights;
- illegal and criminal phenomena, including prostitution, drug and drug trafficking, vandalism, verbal and physical sexual violence, theft and robbery, etc.;
- increasing the number of incidents and accidents caused by people returning home or to accommodation facilities.



Struggles with the negative aspects of nightlife require not only deliberate actions on the part of city authorities and their subordinate services, but also the cooperation of various entities involved in the night-time economy, including entrepreneurs who, in accordance with the idea of corporate social responsibility, should undertake activities aimed at the needs of the social environment (place) where they run their business. Nowadays, one of the ways to solve this type of problem is to establish the night mayor institution as a form of cooperation between authorities and business, which is the subject of the next part of the study.

### **MANAGING THE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY IN THE CITY**

The night-time economy (NTE) creates new opportunities for the economic growth of cities, especially in cultural consumption and leisure services (Bianchini 1995; Roberts, 2006; Rowe, 2008). The trend of linking the NTE with the leisure culture of the postindustrial city was initiated at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s of the twentieth century in Anglo-Saxon cities (Lovatt, O'Connor, 1995). It was based on the belief of city activists about the great causative potential of nightlife in the process of revitalizing extinct downtown centres and post-industrial quarters. Similar demands were also made in Italy (see: Bianchini, 1995).

On the one hand, the activation of the night-time economy was fostered by activities related to the revitalization of downtown and industrial districts, the attractiveness of which increased as a result of improving the aesthetics of space, adaptation of post-industrial buildings for culture and entertainment; and, on the other hand, liberalization of the law in the field of the sale and consumption of alcohol and the operation of bars at night (Roberts, Eldridge, 2009). The introduction of gastronomic and entertainment services to these parts of the city has enlivened this space, apart from the so-called business hours. City centres and revitalized post-industrial quarters have become the mecca of the so-called "Recreators" of the night and, as a result, began to live in a 24-hour rhythm. The fashion for urban recreation based on meetings held in areas where pubs and other entertainment venues are concentrated quickly penetrated the international circulation. All this had a significant impact on the needs and behavior of tourist participants, especially young people. The free behavior of young Englishmen and binge drinking have become an element of the landscape of many tourist centres in Europe and beyond (Roberts, Eldridge, 2009).

The development of the sphere of night catering and entertainment services in many countries (cities) took on a spontaneous character and proceeded practically beyond the control of urban planners (Füller et al., 2018; Nofre et. al, 2018; Olt et al., 2019). The phenomenon spread rapidly across Europe, resembling contagious diffusion. The amusing nightlife was entering new urban quarters, taking over both



areas with a very high historical and cultural potential, as well as post-industrial quarters characterized by low rental costs (Nofre et al., 2019; Füller et al., 2018,). In addition to local users (young residents of the city and suburban area and students), tourists (especially visiting cities as part of the so-called city break) have become an important group of nightlife recipients, who have annexed historic city centres and neighborhoods nearby (e.g., Kazimierz in Krakow, Trastevere in Rome). However, the local community preferred entertainment areas outside the so-called Central Tourism District.

At the turn of the first and second decades of the twenty-first century, urban policy drew attention to the growing social costs of the uncontrolled development of the night-time economy. Actions in this regard were carried out in two ways. The first included attempts to minimize the negative effects of NTE development by identifying problem areas and intensifying the activities of various public services, including police and medical care. The second focused on the establishment of services (units) - commonly known as the night mayor - within which the issues of managing night entertainment would be dealt with in a professional manner (Seijas, Gelders, 2020).

The decision-making powers of night mayors vary (Seijas, Gelders, 2020). In western European cities, there is a clear emphasis on partnership - i.e., this entity performs advisory functions for the city authorities and may be partially financed from the city budget. These solutions are most often a derivative of the city management models used and the establishment of institutions (entities) dealing with issues of city development.

There are three models (see: Seijas, Gelders, 2020) : (1) The first one consists of creating informal structures external to the city authorities. These entities are most often established as a result of the so-called urban movements or the night-economy sector itself and take the form of networking (e.g., without a legally formalized structure) or act as associations or even private entities. Some of these bodies transform into the so-called Night Committees or Club Committees, and cities are more involved in cooperating with them (as advisory bodies, etc.). (2) The second model, the most common in the USA, is composed of entities that have the status of Nightlife, Nightlife, and Culture Offices (these spheres are often combined). These units are headed by managers. As formalized entities, they have their own competences and objective scope of activity. These are units that are subordinate to or strongly associated with the structure of municipal authorities. The third model, the most common in European cities, is the night mayor (3). This office has various positions in its relations with the city authorities. What most often characterizes him is the origin of the night mayor: he is a person coming from the night sector, most often with extensive experience in managing entities in the night-time economy (clubs, pubs, cultural institutions). In some cities, it is selected by various entities and institutions (sometimes appointed for this body).



## A CASE STUDY: KRAKOW (POLAND)

### Why Krakow?

Krakow is an interesting case for analysing the issue of the development of the night-time economy and the challenges in managing this sector. On the one hand, it is determined by the city's cultural and historical potential, which determines its specific direction of development. On the other hand, Krakow is an example of a city entangled in the path of low costs tourism development. A city that in the 1990s, like other historical cities of Central and Eastern Europe, focused on the development of tourism in order to appear on the European market and had to display the attribute of low costs in its offer for years (Zmyślony, Pawlusiński, 2019). Today, this element has become the "ball and chain" of Krakow tourism.

Krakow has the rank of a historic city of Central European importance. It is distinguished by numerous preserved monuments, which in the case of Polish cities, heavily damaged during World War II, is not common. The medieval Krakow city layout was entered on the UNESCO list in 1978. The city was the former capital of Poland in the Middle Ages, the burial place of Polish kings, and the place of national revival after the loss of independence in the 19th century. Krakow has an important position in the cultural life of the country. It is often referred to as the historic capital of the country. The city has more than 750,000 permanent residents and an additional 250,000 students and young workers staying in the city temporarily. For years, it has been called a vibrant city with a rich nightlife offer. The development of the night-time economy (NTE) in Krakow shows strong connections to the tourism sphere. They are perceived both in the socio-economic and spatial dimensions.

### RESEARCH METHODS

The question of the functioning of cities at night is still a new area of scientific research in geography and is still very rarely investigated. As noted by Ilse van Liempt et al. (2015), we suffer from *nyctalopia*: (night blindness) in urban studies. Although we have a lot of information on how the city functions in different dimensions during the day, night remains undiscovered for us. Although many research concepts have been developed in geography that can be adapted to urban night studies, e.g., time geography, urban social geography or studies on the structure and functions of urban areas, they are still not adapted to night studies. Especially in Poland, there is a clear research gap in the field of studies on how urban areas function at night. This applies not only to geography, but also to economic, sociological, and anthropological studies.

There are practically no statistical data to illustrate the functioning of the city at night in Poland. Such data are not collected at the national level. None of the Polish cities has identified an information resource devoted to the investigation



of the city at night. Within municipal offices (municipal administration) there is no unit that undertakes tasks in this field in Poland. Until the end of 2019, the issue of city night was not included in the records of a single planning document/strategy prepared by any of the Polish cities. The preparation of analyses on the functioning of the city at night is not commissioned to external research institutions, as well.

The lack of interest in the nightlife of the cities in Poland may be due to the fact that nightlife is still very poorly developed here. However, this problem becomes clear in the case of large cities, which are also important tourist centres. Krakow is such an example. According to the author, the use of the case study approach is one of the best ways to discuss a problem that is shaped differently in different countries with varied cultural and historical conditions.

However, also in the case of Krakow, the problem of a limited information resource devoted to the city nightlife is visible. Importantly, city leaders, city authorities, and entrepreneurs did not see the need to study the night economy of the city for a long time. The situation changed significantly only in 2019, when the first protests of residents against the lively nightlife in the city appeared. Discussions began on the social costs of tourism and their relationship with NTE.

The article is one of the first attempts to describe the problem of the night economy in Krakow in the context of city management and minimising social problems related to the development of night entertainment. The study is of exploratory nature. The source material was collected mainly in 2019. Research material was collected in two stages.

First, existing materials, such as statistical data, acts of local law, reports of municipal services, city development strategies, and other sectoral development plans, were studied. The analysis of existing collected materials showed that they are insufficient to achieve the purpose of the work. The data collected was fragmentary and required supplementation.

As a result, it was decided to expand the information resource during talks with representatives of various social groups involved in the city management process. This was supported by the first official public debates that took place in 2019 in Krakow, devoted to the directions and future of tourism development in the city. During these debates, postulates related to the need to address the problem of urban night management were often put forward. At that time, also representatives of the Krakow City Council initiated the first meetings - round tables about tourism management in the city, including night tourism. In total, 20 interviews were conducted, mainly with entrepreneurs operating in historic city centre and representatives of city authorities (people responsible for shaping urban policy, mainly tourism policy). They were mainly people actively involved in the discussion on the development of tourism in the city.

The interview was uncategorized to allow respondents to express their opinions freely. It was also decided to completely anonymise the respondents, although



a significant proportion of them were public figures. The interview concerned two problem areas: a) the level of development of nightlife in the city and its nuisance to residents, and b) the need to implement formalised solutions in the field of NTE management in Krakow. In general, the conversation showed a poor understanding of the essence and specificity of the 24-hour city and nightlife management. Interviews with officials provided information on the activities of the city administration in the sphere of night. The entrepreneurs, which make up the majority of the respondents, referred mainly to the issue of NTE management. Interestingly, representatives of this group often expressed concerns that their opinions would not be used to create restrictions on the functioning of the night-time economy in the city.

## RESULTS

The period of economic transformation in the late nineties of the twentieth century brought a number of changes in the Central Europe in the sphere of leisure services, including in the sphere of culture and entertainment. Many institutions of cultural life stagnated due to financial constraints. The activities of new entities, mainly private ones, consisted mainly of copying the patterns from the Western world to the “new urban recreation”. The nightlife was rapidly developing, based on bars and music clubs. For example, in 1990, there were 89 gastronomic and entertainment establishments operating around the Old Town in Krakow, and in 2008 there were up to 375 (Mika 2011). A similar development trend is observed in Kazimierz, where 33 facilities operated in 1994, in 2003, 118, and in 2016 around 300 (Mika 2011).

The dynamic development of the night-time economy in Krakow has been observed since 2004, i.e., from the moment of Poland’s accession to the European Union and the improvement of the city’s accessibility by air (launching connections of low-cost air carriers). Favourable price differences, along with the increasingly common fashion for city breaks, resulted in a massive influx of young tourists to Krakow from the British Isles, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and Italy (Borkowski 2019). Visitors reporting demand for parties contributed to the activation of the supply sphere of the Krakow night-time economy. More gastronomic, especially pubs and bars were opened in the city. - in 2017 there were about 1,400 pubs, restaurants and others similar facilities in Krakow with at least 1 alcohol license and over 1,300 stores selling alcohol (*Raport o stanie miasta...*, 2017). Pub crawling became one of most popular night entertainment, and stag parties were held just as often - mainly for guests from Great Britain. The massive influx of foreign tourists gave rise to other activities in the historical space of the city that did not meet social acceptance from the inhabitants, i.e., night clubs with sexual entertainment (e.g., at Grodzka Street).





Currently, the main part of the city's night offer is based on gastronomy and visits to pubs and other places where alcohol can be consumed (Pawlusiński, 2020). Importantly, the most valuable spaces in the city, the Old Town, the Kazimierz, and the Podgórze (apart from the activities of theatre establishments, which, however, mainly target domestic recipients), do not have significant alternative night offers (see: Zmysłony, Pawlusiński 2019; Kowalczyk-Anioł et al., 2021). Most of the museums in these quarters close before 6.00 pm. Only a few sites operate longer, and all of them finish work before 8.00 pm. The analysis of the city's museum offers shows that 2-3 private entities work after 9.00 pm (Pawlusiński, 2020). The participation of private individuals in running activities at night can be a signal that there is a demand for this type of service in the late-night hours.

Cultural events are an important element of Krakow's night-economy potential. In addition to renowned festivals and mass events (e.g., Wianki), music concerts of world-famous singers and music bands, organized in Tauron Arena or the ICE Congress Centre, the initiative of the so-called Krakow Nights, which in their assumptions refer to the Night of museums popularized in Europe since the 1990s. Currently, several events of this type take place in Krakow every year. These are the Krakow Night of Museums (May; approximately 100,000 visitors to museums; approximately 50 museums participate in the campaign), Night of Theatres (June), Night of Music (June), Night of Jazz (July), Night of Cracovia Sacra (August), and Poetry Night (October). They are complemented by Scientists' Night (September), organized by the regional authorities and Krakow universities. Unfortunately, these events, although enjoying a great reputation, are not clearly exposed as the dominant feature of the city's nightlife.

### **Market segmentation**

The demand for the so-called night recreation in Krakow has been showing a clear upward trend for years. This is confirmed by studies of tourist traffic in Krakow (Borkowski 2015, 2018, 2019). For comparison, in 2015 about 4% of foreign guests and less than 2% of domestic guests indicated entertainment as the leitmotif to visit Krakow, and in 2019, 7.6% of domestic guests and 10% of foreign guests, respectively. In 2019, Krakow at night was identified as one of the main attractions of the city by more than 4% of foreign visitors and 3.5% of domestic guests. Of the 13.5 million tourists who visited Krakow in 2018, approximately 37% are people aged 20 to 29 years (3.6 million domestic visitors and 1.1 million foreign visitors).

When discussing the demand factors for the night-time economy in Krakow, other groups of recipients should not be forgotten. These are, apart from tourists: (1) permanent residents of the city, (2) people temporarily staying in the city for professional purposes (e.g., expats, businessmen, etc.), (3) students, and (4) people living in the suburban area but using the night offer city service.





Taking into account the population aged 20-29 (main recipients of the so-called middle-brow partying), the potential of the city and its immediate vicinity can be estimated at around 300,000. This group includes 100,000-140,000 students, 80,000 Krakow residents aged 20-29 years, 50,000 inhabitants of neighbouring communes, 25,000 corporate employees and 25,000 foreigners staying in the city. Young city users constitute an equally important market segment, along with tourists, influencing the conditions for the functioning of the night-time economy in the city.

The overlap of problems related to tourism in the space of historic districts in Krakow and the negative effects of the night-time economy, which were identified mainly with tourists, triggered a social protest of the inhabitants. Resistance against short-term rental was associated with a protest against the alcoholization of city space and excessive noise. In 2018, there was a social initiative to hang posters in foreign languages aimed at tourists with the suggestion of keeping the curfew at night. The main problem areas are the Old Town and the Kazimierz district. In both areas, there is a clear overlap between the tourism sector and the night-time economy. As a result, it causes several inconveniences to the daily life of the inhabitants, both during the day and at night. Residents' problems include noise, littering of the city, and alcohol consumption in places not intended for this.

The factor that stimulates the night-time economy is the rapid growth in the number of small grocery stores, whose offer is not aimed at residents but mainly at tourists and people interested in buying alcohol. Many of these stores are open late at night or even around the clock. The operation of night shops selling alcohol, especially located in the historic districts of the city, is widely regarded as one of the generators of problem situations.

### **The first attempt at night management**

Based on social protests against tourism in the city, an initiative was born to establish a night mayor, who was initially perceived as a sheriff with a wide legal instrumentation, enabling the solution of various problems, especially those related to the elimination of socially burdensome phenomena. In June 2019, a resolution of the City Council was adopted on the directions of action of the Mayor of Krakow regarding the appointment of the "Night Mayor Commission" (Resolution No. XIX / 389/19). According to the provisions of Section 2, this commission should include mainly representatives of residents of districts where nightlife is concentrated, owners and employees of clubs, restaurants, bars, the tourism industry, accommodation facilities, taxi drivers, city guides, and municipal services (fire brigades). city councils, police) academics dealing with this issue, representatives of NGOs and city activists, as well as city and district councillors and officials from the City Hall.



The main tasks assigned to the night mayor and his committee include:

- working out regulations regarding clubs, pubs, and other entities of the city's nightlife economy, which will, on the one hand, enable them to function and develop, and, on the other hand, will allow residents to live comfortably in the areas of nightlife accumulation in the city;
- ensuring a compromise between residents and tourism, catering, and other night-time entities in the city, and participating in resolving disputes between residents and business;
- supporting the economic development of the city based on the night-time economy sector and striving to adapt the city's cultural offer in the evening and night hours to the expectations of residents and tourists, including extending the hours of operation of museums and other institutions;
- inclusion of evening cultural events in the creation of the city's night offer;
- development and implementation of a city lighting concept that will improve safety in the city and contribute to increasing the visual attractiveness of facilities and places at night;
- aiming to ensure safety at night in places of traffic accumulation and aiming to minimize the negative effects of nightlife for residents and guests staying in the city, especially reducing noise generated by nightlife participants;
- regulation of the sale of alcohol at night in areas of accumulation of nightlife in the city;
- establishment of night volunteer institutions;
- night communication and improving its efficiency;
- parking policy at night;
- maintenance of cleanliness at night and in the morning, and provision of toilets at night in places of traffic accumulation.

Unfortunately, this resolution was criticized by the Voivode's Office and was revoked by this institution. It seems that Krakow should not stop trying to establish a unit responsible for these issues. This is essential for the development of a sustainable tourism policy in the city.

### **Local entrepreneurs against night management**

The discussion aroused by the attempt to create the position of the mayor of the night in Krakow prompted a discussion about the expectations of the night sector towards the city authorities. The interviews conducted reveal three types of attitudes (opinions) among the local night-time economy sector.

The first is based on the belief that the development of the night offer should be encouraged. Representatives of this group believe that the night offer is an important distinguishing feature of the city on the tourist market, and its recipients



are mainly tourists. The lack of such an offer would affect the city's position on the tourist map of Poland and Europe and would cause an outflow of tourists to other cities. The respondents indicated that neither the space nor the availability time of nightclubs is allowed to be limited. Several of the respondents emphasized that the advantage of Krakow is the combination of monuments and nightlife in one package and that there should be no problematic issues in this regard. Alcohol-based entertainment is present in many European cities, and we cannot stop or eliminate it. Potential action aimed at withdrawing the night-time economy from the space of historical districts was assessed as erroneous and risky to maintain the current volume of tourist traffic. Managers agreed with the statement that the city's night offer should be expanded and directed to other groups of recipients, ages, etc. But most of them were skeptical of the success of these activities. The interviews pointed to the awareness of the costs incurred by the local community, but at the same time did not see any significant problem in this. The owners of nightclubs in all historic districts treated their night offer as an element of a very significant competitive advantage of the city. It was even pointed out that Krakow is a city of young people, and that the young community must have an entertainment night offer, meeting places at night, etc. This group recognizes that nighttime activity in the city should not be regulated by the city in any way and even left to market rules. They also do not see the need, and some even oppose the appointment of a night mayor.

The second attitude is best conveyed by the word: "withdrawal from the decision". Managers representing this group are often aware of the social costs associated with the development of the night-time economy and often do not support this form of urban entertainment. Sometimes, they indicate a need for change. However, they do not intend to break anything in this regard, as the economic benefits obtained from the business are the most important to them. However, the essence of this approach is best conveyed by one of the owners of the nightclub: "(...) for me, the night-time economy is just a business, I have invested money, and I want a certain rate of profit; I am not a participant in the nightlife myself and I do not see the difficulties for residents associated with it. If they are, they should be handled by appropriate authorities within the law". Representatives of this group are not interested in participating in night management in the city. In their opinion, the creation of the position of a night mayor is pointless.

The third attitude is related to the awareness of the need for change and appropriate regulations in the city. Unfortunately, such voices are rare among representatives of the night-economy sector. What characterizes this group of managers is the fact that they have a good understanding of the situation in the functioning of the night-time economy sector in other countries of the world. They are aware of the important role of a night mayor and support his appointment. However, they indicate that its role should not be limited to controlling curfew;



in contrast, it must activate nightlife, but in a sustainable manner, considering the needs of the local community. Among the representatives of this point of view, there were respondents who represented premises of high reputation and of long duration. They can be described as leaders in creating nightlife in Krakow.

Observing trends in the preferred forms and ways of spending free time by both residents and tourists, it can be concluded that the development of the night-time economy in Krakow will show a permanent upward trend in the coming years. This will be favoured not only by the increase in the number of tourists coming to the city, but also by general socioeconomic processes modelling the functional and social structure of the city, such as metropolisation, internationalization, and studentification.

The main activities in the city in relation to the night-time economy should include:

- promoting high culture as a basic element of the city's night offer addressed to various audiences;
- involving creative sectors in the creation of the city's night offer;
- activating the business sector in solving problems related to the night-time economy based on the idea of corporate social responsibility;
- taking care of the city's image, including striving to eliminate associations with Krakow as a place of entertainment, based on events and alcohol.

## CONCLUSIONS

Today, cities function in a system of various dependencies and systems on a local, regional, or international scale. Cities that want to operate in global circulation must also be active at night. The night policy must be adapted to the rank of the city, its functions, the complexity of the local economy, and the social and cultural characteristics of the city's inhabitants. However, the nature of night-time activities in cities will differ from one part of the world to another. This will be influenced by several factors, including geographical location, duration of the night and importance of the night in the local cultural and religious system. However, it is indisputable that there is a need to regulate this sphere of human socioeconomic life.

The problems of the night-time economy presented above, based on the example of a Central European city such as Krakow, make it possible to clearly indicate that this sphere of social and economic life requires the application of complex and multidirectional legal regulations. The question about the new night policy of cities, its scope, and scale seem to be highly justified and should not be postponed to the future.

Sustainable management of the development of the city at night must consider the needs of all its users, with particular emphasis on permanent residents of the



city. The foundation of the city's night policy should be the right to the city. This right must be implemented in two ways. On the one hand, one should look at the quality and comfort of the life of individual city residents. On the other, the city as a socio-economic system and the incomes related to the leisure economy should be considered.

Taking the above into account, the city's night policy should define three groups of issues. The first concerns the determination of the limits (limits) for the use of the city at night, which will be established to ensure the comfort of life for the inhabitants. It is about a number of detailed issues regarding the elimination of the negative effects of nighttime activity, such as the issues of curfew, setting the hours of operation of restaurants at night, and limiting light pollution of the city. The second group of issues focuses on the provision of public services at night. In addition to an efficient transport system at night, it is necessary to provide security services, access to health care, and other public services that meet the basic needs of residents. The third group of issues relates to the role that cities as a whole assign to themselves with respect to internal and external users. This applies, inter alia, to shaping the city's image in terms of nightlife, creating new zones for night recreation or new cultural services at night. In this approach, we treat night as a competitive advantage of the city but controlled from the inside, with a delineated direction for further development and clearly defined functional and time frames.

The lack of a night policy can quickly lead to various local tensions and thus generate dissatisfaction among the inhabitants with the living conditions. In today's world, such an attitude is unacceptable.

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## ANALYSIS OF THE INTRA-URBAN SUBURBANIZATION WITH GIS METHODS

### The case of Debrecen since the 1980s

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#### Abstract

The issues of intra-urban suburbanization tend to be received increasing attention during the last decades. The rapidly growing possibilities through the GIS-based methods provide new ways to analyse the processes. In the current research, a new methodology of dataset building was implemented in order to cover different types of resources (topographic maps, orthophotos, satellite images) and to create basis for a longitudinal analysis by the example of Debrecen. The resulted parcel level point layers ensured detailed grid-based analyses to discover changes between the early 1980s and 2000 and after the millennium until nowadays. The investigation drew the attention to the different tendencies of intra-urban suburbanization in which some areas proved to be continuously dynamic (some parts of the urban fringe or the external part of the inner areas), some garden zones' role changed and unambiguous decrease was represented by some agricultural territories. The most dynamic territories were characterised by quick densification and by extension of the built-up areas at the fringes. The rapid suburbanization process slowed down after the 1990s, but it has not stopped in Debrecen. These findings tend to be regarded as spatial concentration process within the frame of relative deconcentration of the population (as part of intra-urban suburbanization).

#### Key words

GIS methods, Great Hungarian Plain, grid, intra-urban suburbanization, long-term changes, urban fringe, urban sprawl

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## INTRODUCTION

Urban sprawl and suburbanization are essential research issues during the last decades within urban geography (Schneider and Woodcock, 2008) because this global phenomenon is accelerated by numerous complex processes and outcomes (Knox, 2009). Suburbanization with its social and economic impacts is regarded as the most important spatial processes in the post socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Kubeš, 2013).

The rapidly increasing datasets and analysing methods – including GIS tools – providing intensively extending possibilities for researches (Jakobi, 2014, Taubenböck et al., 2019).

The process of suburbanization gained altering attention within the relating urban studies, but due to the lack of territorially detailed statistical datasets analyses primarily concentrated on the settlement level tendencies. This is the reason why intra-urban suburbanization (Szmytkie, 2021) within the administrative area of a larger town has become important part of the researches (Vasárus, 2022). The intra-urban suburbanization is in relation to the process called 'hidden suburbanization' in which former second homes or summer-homes became the target of migration (Leetmaa et al., 2012; Vasárus and Lennert, 2022).

## OBJECTIVES

The objective of the current paper is to introduce a GIS-based methodology, which creates the basis for a longitudinal and spatially detailed database to analyse the intra-urban suburbanization process by the example of Debrecen.

Further aim of the analysis is to discover the spatial pattern of objects within the administrative area of Debrecen (Hungary) except for the main inner area (according to its boundary in 1980).

The analysis makes attempt to represent the changes between the early 1980s and 2000, and from the millennium until nowadays, furthermore to discover some spatial characteristics of these.

Additional objective is to identify the characteristics of the local processes in the context of the suburbanization features of the Great Hungarian Plain.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

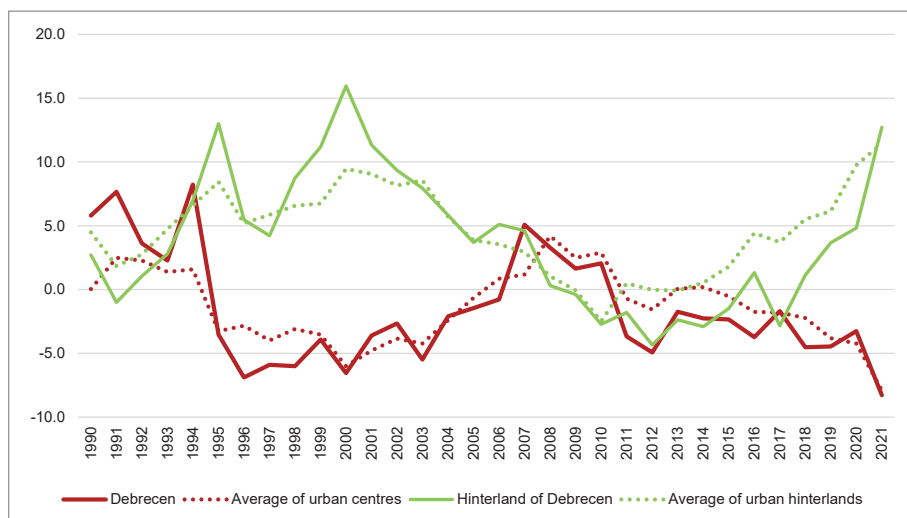
After the decades of socialism, the phenomena of suburbanization has become the most dominant part of the urban development in Central Europe (Timár and Várad, 2001, Timár, 1999, Enyedi, 1992), as the result of fundamental political, societal and economic changes (Beluszky and Timár, 1992, Sýkora and Stefan, 2012). Suburbanization caused a significant restructuring – relative deconcentration – of the population (Enyedi, 2011) and a major alteration of the local societies (Sýkora,



2003, Matlovič and Sedláková, 2007), but its consequences are widespread and comprehensive. The process has generated a rapid and irreversible change in the land cover and use in the surroundings of the cities (Kovács et al., 2019, Vasárus and Lennert, 2022). The complex environmental influences of the urban sprawl have effects on the long-term sustainability of the cities and their hinterlands with decreasing resilience, weakening competitiveness and deteriorating quality of life (Hardi et al, 2020, Lennert, 2020, Mocak et al. 2022; Pachura et al. 2018).

The process in Central Europe appeared in a delayed form comparing to Western Europe and mostly to North America. However, suburbanization had appeared even before the WWII in Central Europe, in most countries the process froze under the communist era. It became spectacular – mostly in the close proximity of the capital cities since the 1980s (Enyedi, 1992). Numerous studies discovered the characteristic features of suburbanisation especially focused on these cities (Kok and Kovács, 1999, Sýkora et al., 2000, Havryliuk et al., 2021), but cities and towns at lower hierarchical level also faced with considerable restructuring of the population as the result of significant migration (Bajmócy, 2014, Bujdosó et al., 2016; Pachura et al. 2018). Based on the common characteristics of suburbanization in Central Europe models were developed about the spatial features (Sailer-Fliege, 1999, Vasárus et al., 2018, Spórna and Krzysztofik, 2020; Matlovicova, Mocak and Kolesarova 2016). The global economic and financial crisis in 2008-2009 decreased the intensity of the observed processes of suburbanization in Central Europe, although it did not changed their nature (Novotný, 2016). During the last decades, the issues of intra-urban suburbanization gained greater attention (Ouředníček, 2007, Bajmócy, 2014), as this process was significant component of the post-socialist diffusive urban development (Spórna and Krzysztofik, 2020). Relating studies highlighted the outstanding population growth in the urban-rural fringe, in the other inner areas and in the outskirts of large Hungarian towns (Pócsi, 2011, Bajmócy and Makra, 2016). Between 1990 and 2011, 44.1% of suburbanisation was directed towards the separated inner areas and outskirts within the agglomerations and settlement groups in Hungary (excluding the agglomeation of Budapest) (Vasárus, 2022).

The phase of suburbanization is characteristically started during the mid-1990s and turned back by the period of the global financial crisis in 2008-2009, however the declining trend appeared years before (Fig 1). The process of suburbanization not only slowed down in the urban hinterlands of Hungary (the official delimitation is seen in: Tóth, 2014), but it represented reurbanization in given years (Budapest and its agglomeration is not included into this calculation in order to avoid the distortions). The tendencies of the last few years definitely demonstrate a new phase in the internal migration of Hungary (and a new wave of suburbanization) in parallel with the governmental measures in relation to the family and housing policies. Further researches are required to discover the factors behind these trends (covering the effects of COVID-19 lockdowns in the recent years).

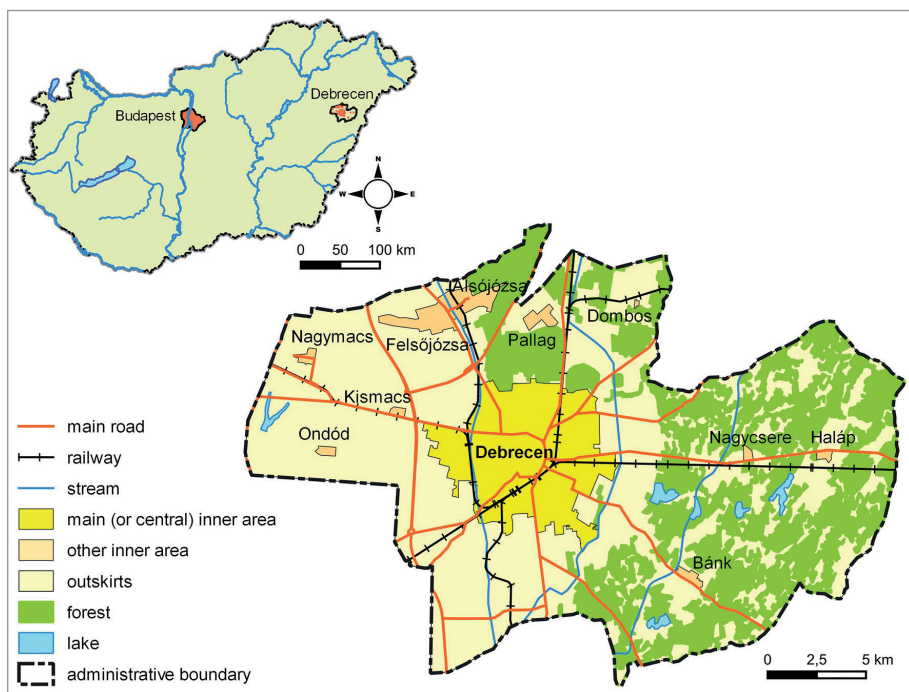


**Fig. 1** The average internal migration balance per 1000 residents in the urban centres and in their hinterlands of Hungary (excluding Budapest) between 1990 and 2021, head

*Source: edited by the authors, data from the Hungarian Central Statistical office (HCSO) and National Regional Development and Spatial Planning Information System (TEIR)*

The Great Hungarian Plain represented some characteristic features in a Central European comparison. These are reflected by the agricultural dominated land cover, the settlement structure, the delayed and insufficient local infrastructural networks and even by the rural activities (e.g. supplementary farming) and heterogeneous social status of residents (Timár, 1993). The urban-rural fringe – primarily at the edges of the main (or central) inner area – faced with complex and altering transition due to economic reasons (besides the population movements the expansion of the retail stores, transportation network and greenfield industrial and recreational investments are highlighted) (Vasárus et al., 2018, Csátári et al., 2013; Brunn et al. 2018). These processes triggered profound changes inter alia in the land use, the cover of artificial areas and the social decomposition of the separated inner areas and outskirts of large towns (Vasárus and Lennert, 2022).

In the current study, the characteristics of intra-urban suburbanization is analysed by the case of Debrecen. The trends of suburbanization in Debrecen and in its hinterland correlated the most significantly out of the larger towns with the average tendencies of the urban areas of Hungary (in the mirror of migration balances) – see Fig. 1. At the same time, some of the inner areas (Józsa) and outskirts (Biczó István-kert and Bayk András-kert) of Debrecen demonstrated the most dynamic population growth among these group of territories after 1990 (Bajmócy, 2014).



**Fig. 2** The location of Debrecen and its inner areas

Source: edited by the authors, with the usage of OpenStreetMap and Corine Land Cover 2018 database

**Tab. 1** Population of Debrecen and its areas between 1980 and 2020

Areas	1980	1990	2001	2011	2020*
main inner area	180,372	195,414	188,924	181,859	166,289
other inner areas	9,606	10,362	13,745	15,137	17,347
from which Józsa**	6,701	7,293	9,541	10,944	11,886
outskirts	8,217	6,459	7,686	14,127	15,651
<b>Debrecen together</b>	<b>198,195</b>	<b>212,235</b>	<b>210,355</b>	<b>211,123</b>	<b>199,287</b>

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical office (HCSO) census; Kozma (2016) and population registry data. \*Estimated numbers \*\*Alsójózsza and Felsőjózsza together

Debrecen is the second largest town in Hungary with 200,000 inhabitants in the Great Hungarian Plain. The administrative area of Debrecen is 461.7 km<sup>2</sup> and besides its central inner area, there are 10 other inner areas and 22 named outskirts (Fig. 2). Population growth appeared during the 1980s in the neighbouring settlements of Debrecen (Süli-Zakar, 1996) that accelerated after the mid-1990s (Bajmócy, 2014), but as the result of its large extent administrative area intra-urban



suburbanization took place ensured stable number of residents in the case town (Süli-Zakar, 1994, Kozma, 2016). However, significant spatial restructuring of the population could be detected as the population number of the main inner area started to decline after 1990 (Tab.1). In the case of the other inner areas (including the largest one – Józsa, that is indicated on the map as AlsóJózsa and FelsőJózsa) increasing numbers of residents have been observed since 1980 (Eke, 1994). At the same time, the outskirts became attractive only after the political transition with outstanding increase during the 2000s. The financial and economic crises slowed this process down even in the surroundings of Debrecen (Pósfai and Nagy, 2017), but the recovery and revival of the construction sector (primarily due to the state subsidy of families for housing) accelerates the intra-urban suburbanization in the last few years again.

## DATA AND METHODS

In the last decades, the rapid development of GIS techniques provided several possibilities to discover the detailed spatial characteristics of the built environment. Analysis of the urban sprawl – and within this the low-density suburbanization – is often based on land use data (Zévl and Ouředníček, 2021). The CORINE and Urban Atlas database (Lennert et al., 2020, Vasárus and Lennert, 2022) provide good basis for large-scale territorial analysis. Satellite images, scanned and digital orthophotos mean possibility to process them with GIS methods and impressively precise vector data can be achieved to analyse the built-up area (Schlosser et al., 2020). Spatial attributes are also integrated into some of the grid datasets available in the last decade in which the cell size is 100\*100 metres provide detailed data about the population number (Csomós et al., 2020). The combination of traditional maps and new datasets provide a perspective combination to discover the tendencies with a precise resolution.

In the case of different input spatial datasets and layers, data aggregation or even disaggregation might be necessary in order to find the most appropriate forms of territorial units to analyse. The grid or lattice model is a raster model in which the regular system of cells stores single attributes of the representing points – or other features. This fact might mean significant loss of information according to the initial state but through the bottom-up method of data aggregation the methodology provide appropriate solution to process the point-like spatial features (with point-in-polygon operations) (Jakobi, 2015, Fotheringham et al., 2000) or to compare significantly different spatial divisions (Netrdová et al., 2020) even in longitudinal analyses (Papp et al., 2021). Additional aggregation techniques are also applied to analyse the different territorial processes – including urban sprawl and suburbanization (Verma et al., 2017).



Current analysis is part of our multistep research project targeting to discover the transport access of different services in the light of the population changes in Debrecen during the last decades. Based on this objective and according to the constraints of the limited number of detailed population datasets before 2010 and because of the heterogeneous territorial data resources specific methodology must have been developed. For this reason, the Urban Atlas has been regarded as not appropriate because of its limited time frame (available only from 2006). The CORINE Land Cover database is a good basis for longitudinal analyses (as it is available since 1990) but its resolution and content are not detailed enough to discover those fine changes in the case of the built-up areas which were expected to be identified.

The creation of the territorial dataset was accomplished in a retrospective form in which the recent situation was vectorised with the help of the Google Satellite Hybrid layers (for 2019-2020) and OpenStreetMap (OSM) layers and we validated it by the digital building plan of the Local Authority of Debrecen (maintained by the ERDA Kft. company). In order to create the dataset of the second period (year of 2000), we vectorised orthophoto layers provided by the former FÖMI (Institute of Geodesy, Cartography and Remote Sensing – nowadays it is maintained by the Lechner Knowledge Centre) with the usage of Quick Map Services (QMS) plugin of the Quantum GIS 3.16 „Hannover”. In order to improve the accuracy of the digital map, the primarily created dataset was modified according to the orthophotos. Vector layers were not available about the early 1980s, for this reason the scanned and geo-referred topographic maps of Hungary (scale 1:10,000) were vectorised by the authors on the basis of the previously created digital layers. Paper format cadastral maps (scale 1:4,000) were used to the validation on the level of parcels (these were recorded during more years in the early 1980s – in order to simplify, we refer to this as 1980 in the followings).

Because of the great heterogeneity of the available resources and the final objective of the research project one single point was vectorised in every individual parcel with at least one visible building apart from its function or size. This approach is not appropriate to detect the changes in neither the built-up areas nor the number of population – because the points are not able to represent these features. The decision about this major simplification was primarily made under the constraint of limited possibility to identify objects and functions in the case of older layers and maps. Nevertheless, in our opinion this approach is regarded as sufficient to discover the most characteristic territorial processes of the intra-urban suburbanization of Debrecen.

According to the research topic, the vectorised area covered the whole administrative area of Debrecen except for the main (central) inner area – included the other inner areas and the outskirts. The main inner area was delineated according to its boundary in the early 1980s, because some parts of the territories



influenced by the suburbanization later became the main inner area (almost 10 percent growth occurred since than in the extent of the main inner area from 45.524 km<sup>2</sup> to 49.749 km<sup>2</sup>).

To process the point-based layers with the other spatial datasets grid cells were used to ensure the common basis. The grid network with the attributes of the population number created by the GeoX Ltd. were available for our research but only about those territories in which at least one citizen lived. A grid network was drawn with 100\*100 meters cell size and fitted to the existing one. In order to test the similarity of the point-based datasets and the population numbers, point densities were calculated in the cells – except for those cells which were inside the main inner area of Debrecen (according to the boundary in the early 1980s). On the basis of the point density values in the cells, the different temporal stages became comparative and the changes could have been detected (see on Figure 3 depicting an exemplifying area in the case of Józsa – one of the most populous other inner areas of Debrecen). The changes of the point densities were discovered during the periods (between the early 1980s and 2000; between 2000 and 2020) and the whole timeline too.

The city centre (Kossuth square in Debrecen) was tagged on the layers and it was a reference point to measure the distance from centre in the comparative analysis. The centres of the grid cells were used in this analysis and the attributes of the cells (point densities) were used to calculate. Special territorial aggregation – similarly to the method used by Verma et al. (2017) – were applied to combine the compass directions and the distance from city centre.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The significant spatial restructuring of the population was demonstrated by the census and the estimated population data (Tab. 1). The objective of the current research is to analyse this process based on the created spatial datasets with some GIS methods.

The special approach of the current investigation resulted in point maps (representing those parcels with at least one completed building or structure) in the case of the administrative area of Debrecen (excluding the main inner area in 1980) from three years. The number of objects increased dynamically – almost doubled during the investigated period (the value rose from 10,304 to 16,087 between 1980 and 2000 and it reached 18,155 by 2020). These values clearly represented the period of intensive growth during the 1990s, however certain parts of the administrative area of Debrecen showed significant increase in the density of points.

In order to discover the changes in the number of objects, at the same time the changes in the extent and density of these units, spatial aggregation of data





was implemented. 42,588 grid cells (100\*100 meters size) were created in the field of Debrecen excluding the main inner area in 1980 – 46,901 grid cells covered the whole administrative area. 5,278 grid cells were inhabited with at least one resident in 2020, from which approximately one half (2,597 grid cells) was located outside the inner main area of Debrecen.

The correlation between the number of objects (represented by points) and the number of population was  $r = 0.439$  based on the grid cells in 2020. This fact drew the attention to the different character of the layers correlated and it means that the number of objects should not be regarded as a substituting data of the number of population. This difference is reasonable as the vectorised points (so called objects) do not represent the size or the function of the building on a given individual parcel (one point can represent even an agricultural warehouse or a school building or a detached house or a whole block of flats). This limit of the investigation was a necessary consequence of the longitudinal research due to the impossible reconstruction of the mentioned characteristics especially for the 1980s. Keeping these limits in mind, the transforming or unchanging character of the territories in the administrative area of Debrecen (except for the main inner area in 1980) could be investigated (see by the example of Alsójózsa – Fig. 3).



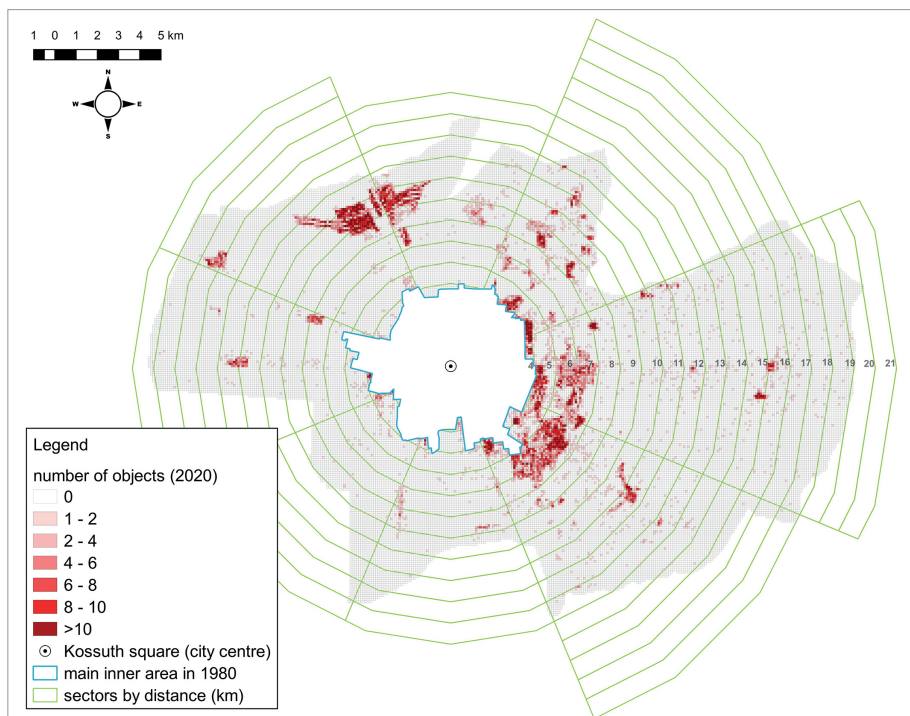
**Fig. 3** The location of the objects in three periods with the grid network by the example of Alsójózsa

*Source: authors' edition by the topographic maps of Hungary (1980s), by the orthophoto layers (2000), by the Google Satellite Hybrid, and by the OpenStreetMap layers*





The grid cells provided an illustration with appropriate resolution about the disparities of the objects and through this about the extent of the Debrecen with its areas and outskirts (Fig. 4). According to the spatial distribution of the objects, the most densely effected (but at the same time densely built and populated) area is at the eastern peri-urban zone of Debrecen. At the time of the regime change these streets were opened and became built-up. Later, significant parts of these directly connected zones were attached to the main inner area.



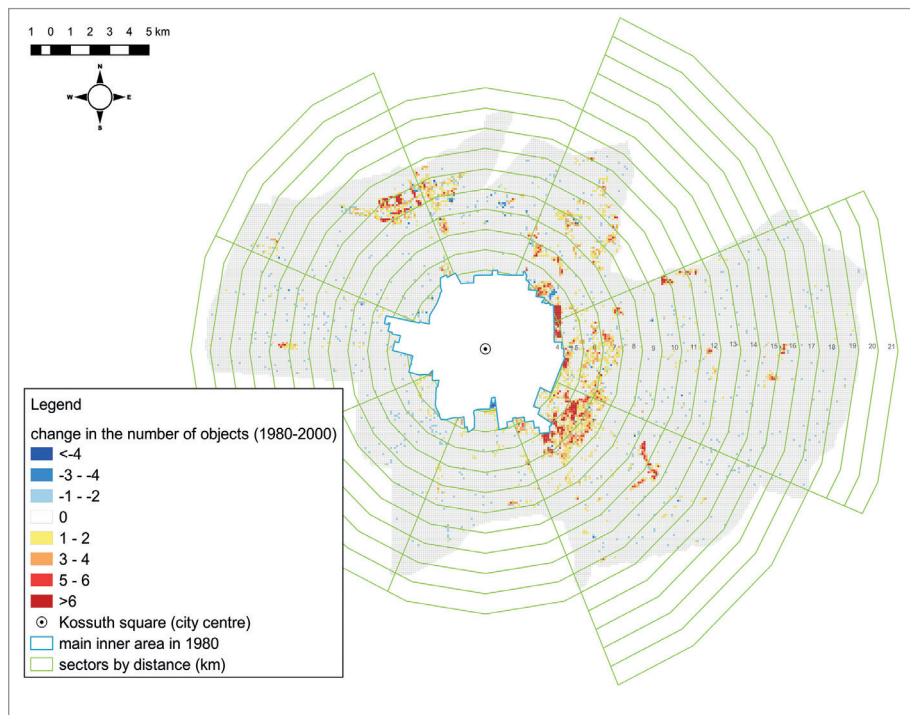
**Fig. 4** The density of objects by the grid network in 2020 with the sectors from the Kossuth square

*Source: authors' edition by the Google Satellite Hybrid*

The zone to the east-southeast from the main inner area is between 5 and 7 kilometres distance from the city centre represents spectacular density of objects. However, this territory has dominantly agricultural and residential function (mainly with small hobby gardens), but these areas – namely the Biczó István-kert and the Bayk András-kert – represented outstanding population growth after 1990 (Bajmócy, 2014). These areas are typically characterised by the features of the suburbanization in the Great Hungarian Plain (Timár, 1993, Pócsi, 2011). The



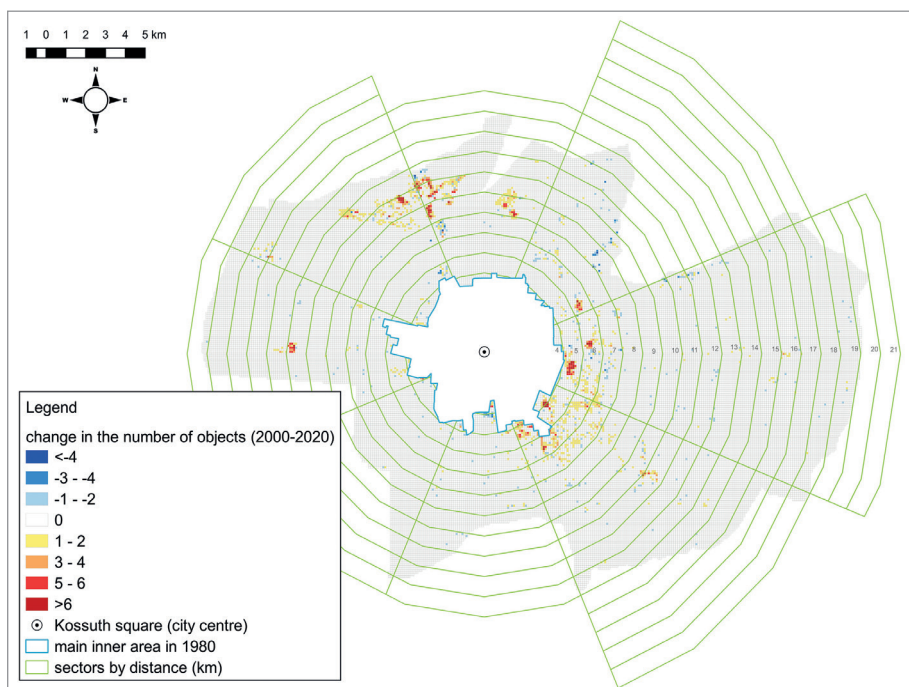
population is mixed regarding their social status and this type of suburbanization is primarily motivated by the lower costs of living and the possibility of household level agricultural production (Kozma, 2016). According to the experiences (personal field visits and the satellite images), the number of population living in this area tends to differ from the official register data (these garden areas are sometimes called as 'grey zones' due to the illegal activities) (Vasárus, 2022). These zones were dynamic not only in the first period but also after the millennium (Fig. 5 and 6).



**Fig. 5** Change in the number of objects in the grid cells measured from the city centre, between 1980 and 2000

*Source: authors' edition by the topographic maps of Hungary (1980s), by the orthophoto layers (2000), and by the OpenStreetMap layers*

The other group of garden zones of Debrecen (e.g. Gáspár György-kert) to the northeast from the main inner area is between 7 and 10 kilometres distance from the city centre showed intensive growth in the first period (Fig. 5) that completely finished after 2000 (Fig. 6).



**Fig. 6** Change in the number of objects in the grid cells measured from the city centre, between 2000 and 2020

*Source: authors' edition by the orthophoto layers (2000), by the Google Satellite Hybrid, and by the OpenStreetMap layers*

The most emblematic areas of growth are to the north and northwest from the city centre in the 7 and 10 kilometres distance sectors. These sectors include the characteristic suburban other inner areas of Debrecen (Alsójózsa, Felsőjózsa and Pallag). These areas are typically target for families in the middle and upper class to move there. The intensive construction of buildings with dominantly residential function resulted almost continuous increase in the number of objects. As the territorial changes of Alsójózsa demonstrates (Fig. 3), more types of growth can be identified with the precise analysis of objects. The altering agricultural character is also confirmed by the intensive decrease of the average size of parcels. For instance, new street was established at the contiguous boundaries of the parcels which were cut into half by the owners and sold to be built in. New detached houses were constructed on the empty parcels and several large parcels were separated for investment purposes. Besides of this densification process, the definite territorial sprawl of Alsójózsa is also confirmed through the extension of this other inner area, but similar tendencies can be detected in the attractive other inner areas (Felsőjózsa and Pallag).



Decreasing values are also observed in the sectors to the west and southwest and in the distant sectors to the east and southeast from the main inner area before 2000. After the millennium, decrease could have been detected in some of the north-eastern and eastern sectors, and at the southern fringe of Debrecen. The disappearance of former individual farms primarily on the territory of extensive agricultural cultivation is regarded as a long-term process. At the same time, the intensive industrial investments in Debrecen (e.g. BMW, Continental, Krones, Thyssenkrupp, CATL, Semcorp) will have significant influence on the land use of the surrounded areas as well in the near future (Molnár et al., 2018).

## CONCLUSIONS

The investigation primarily focused on the situation of Debrecen, but some findings can be regarded as general and confirm the previous results published by dominantly Central European authors. In order to contribute to the existing researches, some GIS-based methodological attempts were accomplished. As part of the method developed significant generalization was implemented in order to integrate the different resources – topographic maps, orthophotos and satellite images with the grid-based datasets of population number. Parcels with buildings – apart from their function – were identified and were represented with one point as objects. This approach resulted in comparable and precise territorial datasets which are appropriate to detect the changes from the early 1980s to 2000 and after the millennium until nowadays.

In the light of the tendencies discovered the intra-urban suburbanization is continuous after the change of regime in the case of Debrecen – confirming the trends observed in Central Europe –, however there are more intensive and less intensive periods. The general tendency of the population's spatial restructuring was similar during the whole investigated period (between 1980 and 2020), but considerable spatial disparities were detected. The main inner area of Debrecen extended intensively (1) after the change of regime. The garden zones became important target to reside (2) after the political transition (but different status groups of population moved there for different purposes), though some of the distant garden areas became less attractive after the millennium (3). The most prospering other inner areas are transforming quickly as the result of the intensive population increase. Two forms of these were observed; first of all, the former village character is disappearing with the quick densification of the residential areas (4), and on the other hand, the built-up areas are extending at the fringes (5). At the same time, the significant part of the territorially dispersed individual farms disappeared (6) during the investigated period. These findings tend to be regarded as spatial concentration process within the frame of relative deconcentration of the population (as part of intra-urban suburbanization).



Current analysis should be continued in the future focusing on several aspects of the spatial and social changes in the surroundings of the urban centres.

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## GEOGRAPHIA EST VIA VITAE: THE SLOVAK ANABASIS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK ANTHROPOGEOGRAPHER JIŘÍ KRÁL (1893-1975)

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### Abstract


Professor Jiří Král was, together with Viktor Dvorský, one of the most important founders of Czechoslovak anthropogeography. This Prague native and son of the eminent Czech philologist Josef Král studied Slavic philology, history and geography at the Charles University in Prague. His primary research interests were in the field of literary history and geography of Slavic countries. He worked briefly as a high school professor and in 1919 took up a position as an assistant to Professor Václav Švambera at the Geographical Institute of Charles University in Prague. In 1924 he was habilitated and in 1929 he filled a vacant post at the Comenius University in Bratislava after the departure of František Štůla. In this paper, we will discuss his stay in Bratislava in 1929-1938, which turned out to be the culminating period of his academic career. Král was an enthusiastic geographer who was not afraid to open new research agendas in accordance with his personal motto "Geographia est via vitae". However, his journey through life was an anabasis, i.e. full of hardships in overcoming various obstacles and problems. He had very difficult relations in the academic community and in the following period faced multiple persecutions and early retirement as a result of the rise of the totalitarian regimes of Nazism and Communism. Despite formal rehabilitation in 1966, he was not allowed to resume full participation in academic life. In this paper we will discuss in more detail the pedagogical, research and organizational activities of J. Král during his time in Bratislava. Based on a detailed study of archival materials, we will highlight some of his lesser-known initiatives.

### Key words


Anthropogeography, applied geography, Comenius University in Bratislava, Czechoslovak geography, Geographical Seminar, history of geographic thought, interwar period, Jiří Král, military geography, persecuted geographers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Along with Viktor Dvorský, Jiří Král is one of the important founders of Czechoslovak anthropogeography. This year marks the 130th anniversary of the anniversary of his birth. Král was an enthusiastic geographer who was not afraid to open new research agendas in accordance with his personal motto "Geographia est via vitae". Until now, his personality has not received systematic attention. References to his work can be found in more broadly focused works on the history of geography and geographic departments in Czechoslovakia (Häufler 1967, Carpathians, Slavík 2014, Martínek 2010, 2017, Matlovič 2008, 2018, Matlovič, Matlovičová 2018, Matlovičová, Matlovič 2019, Trávníček 1984). The most detailed data can be found in entries of biographical dictionaries (e.g. Martínek 2008, pp. 128-130, Martínek et Martínek 1998, pp. 253-254) and in medallions on the occasion of life anniversaries (Korčák 1968, 1973, Lukniš 1974).

The aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive picture of his activities and their effects during his service at Comenius University in Bratislava in 1929-1938. The presented knowledge is based not only on the study of secondary sources, but was obtained on the basis of detailed research in the archives - the Archives of Comenius University in Bratislava (ACU)<sup>1</sup>, the Literary Archive of the Slovak National Library in Martin (LA)<sup>2</sup> and the Masaryk Institute - Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague (AAS)<sup>3</sup>. We consider the present paper to be a suitable model example illustrating the complexity of the situation, in which the establishment of geography as a university discipline at Comenius University took place. Throughout the whole period it was a struggle for

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- 1 The following fonds were the subject of research in the Archives of Comenius University in Bratislava (ACU): the fonds of the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University, Minutes of the Professors Meetings A1 1921-1938, the personal fond of Jiří Král, the fonds of the Geographical Seminar, the fonds of the Rectorate of CU - List of persons and institutes and state examination commissions and list of lectures for the winter and summer semesters, issued by Academic Senate of Comenius University. These fonds contain a number of documents relating to the running of the department. An important source of information are the minutes of the meetings of the professors at the Faculty of Arts and documentation concerning the efforts to establish a lectureship in military geography. There is also J. Král's personal collection, which contains personal and official correspondence, appointment decrees, documents relating to the proposal for his appointment as full professor and bibliographical summaries
  - 2 In the Literary Archive of the Slovak National Library in Martin (LA) there is in the fond Bokes František (1906-1968), sign. 137) the correspondence of F. Bokes with J. Král.
  - 3 The Masaryk Institute - Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague (AAS) holds the personal collection of Jiří Král, which contains documents in 59 boxes. There are personal documents, personal and official correspondence, manuscripts of scientific, professional and popular articles, separates, clippings from contemporary press, biographical and bibliographical summaries, personal notes, documents concerning other persons, texts of lectures. The collection has not been processed, there is an accession protocol only.



its existence, especially in the clash with historians. For a better understanding, we also present the vicissitudes that Král went through.

## **BEFORE COMING TO BRATISLAVA**

Jiří Král was born on 31 October 1893 in Prague. He grew up with his two siblings in Prague's Vinohrady (Mánesova Street) in the family of prof. Josef Král (1853-1917) and Anna, nee. Sychravová. He grew up in an intellectually stimulating environment that belonged to the Czech elite. His father was a classical philologist and translator from ancient literature. In 1909-10 he was the rector of the Czech Charles-Ferdinand University. The fact that he was buried in the Slavín - pantheon of important personalities of Czech national culture at the Vyšehrad cemetery - is a symbolic expression of his important social position. His mother was the daughter of Ferdinand Sychrava, a fighter for Czech Jihlava. These facts not only predetermined the young Král's professional career, but also influenced his values, expectations and attitudes. His writings preserved in the archives show that he was extremely active, ambitious, very demanding and critical, which quite often brought him many complications in his interpersonal relationships and professional activities.

In 1904-1912 he successfully graduated from a classical grammar school. In 1912-1916 he studied Czech language, history and geography at the Czech Charles-Ferdinand University. Geography was provided by prof. V. Švambera, prof. J.V. Daneš and doc. V. Dvorský in that period. It was at this time that the Institute of Geography acquired premises in a new building in Prague's Albertov district (Häufner 1967, p. 115). In 1914-1916 Král worked as a librarian in the Slavonic Seminar of the Faculty of Arts. After the death of his father, he worked briefly as a tutor in the family of the landowner Harrach. In 1917-1920 he was a teacher at the Second State Real School in Prague-Vinohrady. At the same time, he devoted himself mainly to the study of Slavic languages. Professionally, he devoted himself to literary history, from which he received his doctorate in 1917. In 1920 he accepted the offer of prof. Švambera and took up a position as an assistant at the Geographical Institute of Charles University, which became vacant with the departure of V. Dvorský to the College of Commerce. In his later memoirs he stated that he preferred this offer to the lucrative offer of the Harrach family to accompany Jan Harrach to England<sup>4</sup>.

After joining the Institute of Geography at Charles University, he began to work on the geography of Slavic countries at the instigation of Švambera. He made several study trips to universities in Bulgaria, Poland and Belgrade, from which he brought valuable scientific literature to the Institute's library. These efforts resulted

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in his habilitation in 1924 in the field of geography of Slavic countries. This also influenced the focus of his teaching activities. The Ministry allowed substituting lectures in the geography of Slavic countries for 3 hours a week, which created the conditions for the establishment of a separate chair for the geography of Slavic countries in Prague (Král 1936e, p. 2). Král provided lectures in several subjects - Introduction to the Geography of Slavic Countries, Bulgaria, Subcarpathian Rus, Anthropogeography of the Southern Slavs, Natural Areas of the Czechoslovak Republic, Economic Geography of the Czechoslovak Republic, European Russia, and from 1927 he also headed one of the departments of the geographical pro-seminar<sup>5</sup>. Král also reflected on the teaching of the geography of Slavic countries in two review articles (Král 1926d, 1936e).

Research activities were predetermined by Švambera's assignment to carry out field research in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. Král went to the High Tatras for the first time in 1919, and in the following years he made research trips to various localities. He focused in particular on research in sparsely populated and developed rural areas, with a view to studying pastoralism in the Carpathian Mountains in Subcarpathian Rus. The French geographer E. de Martonne's 1904 „*La vie pastorale et la transhumance dans le Carpathes meridionales in Romania/Pastoral life and transhumance in the Southern Carpathians in Romania*“ and the eminent Polish geographer L. Sawicki's 1911 „*Wędrówki pasterskie w Karpatach/Wanderings in the Carpathian Mountains*“ were the impetus for these investigations and the methodological inspiration for them (Korčák 1968). From 1924, Král was a member of the Slavic Commission for Research on Pastoralism in the Carpathians and the Balkans. This commission was initiated at the First Congress of Slavic geographers and ethnographers in Prague. This congress was held on the initiative of the eminent Serbian geographer J. Cvijić, who had already proposed it to the Slavic geographers during the International Geographical Congress in 1913 in Rome. The congress was organised only after a delay of more than ten years. Král became involved in the work of the commission immediately after its establishment, during a scientific excursion of the participants. In the following years he headed the Czechoslovak section of the commission. Thanks to this, he became part of the network of international cooperation (Král 1928e), and he cooperated particularly intensively with W. Kubijowicz. In 1926 he carried out field research on Hutsul settlements together with the Ukrainian geographer S. Rudnycky. Král repeatedly reported on the results of the work of the Czechoslovak section of the Commission at congresses and in review articles (e.g. Král 1929d, 1930e, 1961a). Král's greatest contribution in this period was his work on Subcarpathian Rus. He prepared a very detailed bibliographical survey of the state of research on this territory, which he later updated (Král 1923a, 1928a). He assessed the state of knowledge

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in several review articles (Král 1924c, 1930d, 1935, 1938a). He also published several studies on the settlement of Subcarpathian Rus (Král 1923c, 1926b), shepherding and pastoral life (Král 1925b, 1928b, 1929a), the regionalisation of Subcarpathian Rus into production areas and natural agricultural areas (Král 1924b), as well as a comprehensive work on Subcarpathian Rus (Král 1924a). In particular, his synthetic studies on the settlement and economic use of several mountain territories in Subcarpathian Rus - Chorna Hora (Král 1923b), Polonina Rivna (Král 1925a) and Svidovets (1927a) - are considered to be a very valuable contribution. Král also reacted to the establishment of the new state and prepared a geographical guidebook on Czechoslovakia (Král 1921), and was also involved in the creation of the first tourist guides on Czechoslovakia, which were published in English and German (Král 1928c, 1928d). He also edited a collection of essays dedicated to the jubilee of V. Švambera (Král 1926a).

In 1929 this stage of Král's professional career came to an end, as he left Prague for Bratislava to attend Comenius University. In his later memoirs, Král is quite critical of his departure for Bratislava. He regretted that he could not devote himself to the geography of the Slavic countries to such an extent. He attributed his departure to the tactical manoeuvres of Švambera, who, in his opinion, was only a cameral geographer with no experience of field research. Král, stressing the need for field research, was therefore reportedly disgusted with him and so sent him to Bratislava instead. However, other documents show that Švambera had a favourable attitude towards him. The best evidence of this is the favourable opinion and recommendation, which Švambera prepared at the request of the commission for the appointment of J. Král as a full professor of antropogeography at the Comenius University in Bratislava in 1933<sup>6</sup>.

## KRÁL AT COMENIUS UNIVERSITY IN BRATISLAVA

From the overview so far, it is clear that Král came to Comenius University already as a profiled and internationally accepted scientific and pedagogical personality. His arrival in Bratislava triggered a chain of events. At the beginning of March 1929 V. Dvorský had a stroke during his business trip in London. The consequences were so severe that he could no longer continue his work as a professor at the College of Commerce in Prague. František Štůla, who had been working at Comenius University since 1925, took over the post vacated by him. He was the first full professor of general geography appointed on the basis of a proposal from Comenius University. Paradoxically, his appointment took place on 30 April 1929, i.e. already in the time when it was obvious that his tenure in Bratislava was over (Matlovič, Matlovičová 2022). The announced departure of Štůla to

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Prague was already addressed by the professorial board of the Faculty of Arts of the Comenius University in Bratislava at its meeting on 13 March 1929, when it approved a commission to fill the vacant professorial chair composed of K. Chotek, F. Štůla and V. Chaloupecký. On the basis of the proposal of this commission, the professorial board, at its meeting on 15 May 1929, approved the proposal for the appointment of Jiří Král as an extraordinary professor of anthropogeography at Comenius University<sup>7</sup>. On 10 October 1929, the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment entrusted Král with substituting lectures in geography in Bratislava for 8 hours a week as well as with holding relevant exercises. Soon President T.G. Masaryk on 23. 10. 1929 appointed J. Kral as an extraordinary professor of anthropogeography at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University (decree issued on 27th November 1929), which finally resolved the situation of the vacant professor's chair<sup>8</sup>. J. Král first attended the meeting of the professorial board on 20th November 1929, where he made a proposal on behalf of the absent prof. Chotek to appoint a commission for the habilitation proceedings of J. Hromádka (composed of Chotek, Štůla, Král).

### **Král as director and organizer**

In 1929, Král took over the management of the Geographical Seminar<sup>9</sup> and the Geographical Proseminar from Štůla. He was a very agile director. According to the surviving correspondence and other documents, he worked tirelessly to improve its spatial, personnel and material conditions. Practically from the beginning, however, he encountered problems and the hostility of his colleagues, especially historians. For several years he was unable to resolve the official takeover of the Geographical Seminar's inventory, entering into conflicts over this. For example, at a meeting of the professorial board on 29 January 1936, his announcement that he no longer intended to serve as director of the Geographical Seminar and the Geographical Proseminar was discussed. He justified this on the grounds that he had been exercising it for more than 6 years without proper appointment by the Ministry and without remuneration, and he asked the Dean's Office to take over the responsibility for the management of the Geographical Seminar. However, the professorial board did not accept this. Finally, it was not until 1937 that a proper takeover of the Geographical Seminar was completed<sup>10</sup>.

Král also sought to expand the staff of the department. In 1930, as a member of the commission, he participated in the habilitation of J. Hromádka, who

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7 ACU Bratislava, Fond Faculty of Arts, minutes of the professorial board 1921-1939

8 ACU Bratislava, Personal fond of Jiří Král

9 Geographical seminar was a basic institutional unit, which delivered geographic education and research at the Faculty of Arts Comenius University

10 ACU Bratislava, Fond Faculty of Arts, sign. 80.



subsequently began to work at the Geographical Seminar as a private associate professor. During his stay in Paris in 1931-1932, Král arranged for some subjects to be taught by his Prague colleagues V.J. Novák and K. Kuchař. The Geographical Seminar was struggling with a shortage of additional support staff. Initially, Král had at his disposal the scientific auxiliary assistants of V. Maříková (1929-1932) and J. Hubáček (1932-1934). In the following years, due to cuts in the financial endowment, even this position could not be filled. It was not until 1937 that F. Pätoprstý (1937-1938) began to help out, and after him came F. Toporcer (1938-1940) (Matlovič 2018, p. 165). Due to the aforementioned unfavourable financial situation and the lack of students, the private associate professor docent J. Hromádka did not hold classes in some semesters (e.g. in 1937), which put an even heavier burden on Král. He tried to stabilize the situation in terms of personnel and agreed to the division of the Geographical Seminar into the Seminar for Physical Geography and the Seminar for Anthropogeography, which actually took place already in 1936 and was formally confirmed by the Ministry in 1938. J. Hromádka became the director of the Seminar for Physical Geography and J. Král continued as the director of the Geographical Proseminar and the Seminar for Anthropogeography. In 1938, Král was instrumental in getting J. Hromádka appointed as an extraordinary professor of physical geography (Matlovič 2018, p. 174).

The Geographical Seminar also struggled with problems of space and material equipment during this period. At the time of J. Král's arrival, it was housed in the Gymnasium building at 33 Dunajská Street, in a side wing facing Reichardova (now Rajská) Street. Immediately after his arrival, Král successfully applied for the establishment of a photographic chamber. In 1930 the lecture room was taken away from the seminar. In 1931, Král demanded new facilities for the seminar, but in the end he had to vacate the premises to the Gymnasium in the summer and for half a year the seminar was in a state of stopgap. From 1932, the premises on the first floor of the courtyard wing of the Municipal Savings Bank building at 22 Republic Square (now SNP Square) were made available to the seminar. The conditions were not satisfactory and the Král often complained. Finally, in 1937, after a water main failure caused the premises to flood, it was possible to obtain premises for the Geographical Seminar in the building at 32b Reichardova Street (now 12 Rajská Street) opposite its original seat in the Gymnasium building (Martínek 2017, pp. 224-5). These premises housed the geography department until 1986.

Král tried to solve the inadequate state of the library by founding the edition "*Geographical Works-Les Travaux géographiques*", in which 13 volumes were published in 1930-1938. He took great pains to secure financial support for this publishing activity, publishing many of the works from his own funds. He exchanged these publications for foreign literature with many universities, geographical societies and editorial offices around the world, thus enriching the Bratislava geographical library immeasurably.





Král's organisational activities were also related to the work of the Czechoslovak Geographical Society. Together with V. Dědina, he initiated the 1st Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1930 in Brno and was the main organizer (together with Hromádka and Žibrita) of the 2nd Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in Bratislava in October 1933, which was attended by 114 experts, featured 63 papers in 4 sections and included an exhibition of student papers and maps and 3 excursions. At this event, Král presented a paper entitled *'The latest anthropogeographical maps of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus'*, in which he presented nine anthropogeographical maps. His aim was to show the different possibilities of cartographic interpretation of individual anthropogeographic phenomena. In his later memoirs, the Král complained about various obstacles in the organisation of this event, which was originally supposed to take place in 1932. He even mentioned Hromádka, who allegedly sabotaged the preparation of the congress<sup>11</sup>.

Král was instrumental in the development of international cooperation. One of his closest collaborators was the Polish-Ukrainian geographer W. Kubijowicz from Cracow, with whom he made joint field research in the Carpathian Mountains (Borzhava). Král invited him to Bratislava for a lecture in March 1930. Kubijowicz gave two lectures - the first on the spread of cultures and folkways in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus and the second on the main types of pastoral life in Slovakia) (Matlovič 2018, p. 171). As part of the Geographical works series, Kubijowicz published three volumes: 'Participation of the inhabitants of Spiš in pastoral life' (vol. 3, 1932), 'Pastoral life in Subcarpathian Rus. I.' (vol. 8, 1935), "Pastoral Life in Subcarpathian Rus. II" (vol. 10, 1937). Another monograph on pastoral life in Slovakia, which was already ready for printing, could not be published, because lack of finance (Matlovič 2018, p. 171).

### **Pedagogical activity**

Král taught at the Comenius University in Bratislava for 19 semesters. He taught a full range of core courses: General Physical Geography, Introduction to Human Geography, General Economic Geography, Geographical Seminar, Geographical Proseminar, Field Exercises and Excursions. He also introduced new subjects not provided by his predecessors: Geography of Trade, Geography of World Transport, People and Mountains, Geography of Rural Settlements, Regional Geography of Australia and Oceania, Geography of Poland, Geography of Bulgaria, Geography of the European part of the Soviet Union, Geography of Eastern Europe, Anthropogeography of the Czechoslovak Republic, Natural Areas of Czechoslovakia. He emphasized new publications and maps in his seminars and devoted some semesters to the analysis of specific geographical monographs by

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P. Deffontaines “La vie forestière en Slovaquie” and W. Kubijowicz “Pastoral Life in Subcarpathian Rus”. Král was also instrumental in expanding the range of courses to include a cartography course, which was provided by J. Hromádka, with K. Kuchař substituting in his absence. One of the most important students of J. Král was František Bokes (1906-1968), who in 1943 became the first director of the Geographical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts (Matlovičová, Matlovič 2019, p. 78). Král maintained contact with Bokes until his death, as evidenced by their correspondence from 1966-1968<sup>12</sup>. Král was also concerned with issues of geographical education and its support in the form of textbooks, maps, atlases and other aids (Král 1933a, 1936d).

### Scientific research activity

Král partly continued the focus of his scientific research activities, which he carried out in Prague. As pointed out by M. Lukniš (1974, p. 67), Král significantly influenced the fate of geography not only at Comenius University, but also in the whole of Slovakia.

His first research domain was the research on the occasional settlements and pastoral life in the Carpathian Mountains with special regard to Subcarpathian Rus, which he carried out in the spirit of the French school of regional geography of P. Vidal de la Blache. The main results include a three-volume interdisciplinary monograph on Borzhava - a mountain area in the Eastern Carpathians, which Král prepared with several experts - W. Kubijowicz, A. Hilitzer, L. Jonáš, K. Kuchař, M. Maloch, A. Matějka, E. Perfeckij. Král contributed to this work with chapters on local places names, pastoral life (together with Kubijowicz), settlement development, occasional and permanent urban and rural settlement units, unoccupied buildings, rural and mixed rural-urban permanent settlements, and characteristics of the main settlement districts of the Borzhava area (Hilitzer et al. 1932, Král et al. 1933, Král 1936a). A fourth volume was also in preparation, which was to be devoted to the population and economic land use and transport of the Borzhava area (Král 1936a, p. 3).

The second research domain was the questions of anthropogeographical research of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. Among the main outputs was a study on the state of natural history and anthropogeographical research in Slovakia (Král 1930b). In it, Král clearly inventoried the results and status of research on the natural environment of Slovakia according to its individual components. He limited himself to a list of researchers and institutions that carried out this research. He described anthropogeographical research in more detail. He considered Slovakia to be a very suitable area of interest. He justified this by the existence of relatively isolated small areas that had not yet been exposed to foreign influence,

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12 LA Martin, Personal Fond Bokes František



where many anthropogeographical curiosities could be found. He was looking for analogies with geomorphological research, which in Slovakia finds relatively distinct units suitable for monographic research. Král also pays special attention to the results of the work of W. Kubijowicz and J. Pohl and announces his own research programme aimed at anthropogeographical monographs of some natural areas. In the next part of the study he presents the works of foreign authors that can serve as methodological inspiration for research in Slovakia. In the case of J. Cvijić, he appreciated his emphasis on field research. French geographers P. Vidal de la Blache, J. Brunhes and P. Deffontaines provided models for the development of regional monographs of small areas. In the case of Brunhes, he also mentioned his recommendation to investigate place names, which are a similar tool for the anthropogeographer as fossils are for the geologist. Among other authors, he mentioned L. Sawicki and V. Dvorský. Král then discusses the characteristics of two ways of conducting research. The first relies on secondary sources, mainly the results of research in related disciplines and the study of maps. The second method relies on collecting primary data directly in the field. In addition to observation, he identified interviewing as an effective method. Consequently, it assumes either an analytical orientation resulting in a deep knowledge of a partial phenomenon or a synthetic orientation which may result in a monographic works of a particular area. Within these considerations, in a footnote, he also reflects on the problem of the inconsistent and chaotic understanding of the division of the Carpathian territory into natural areas of their nomenclature in contemporary literature. Another problem he has pointed out is the fragmentation and dispersion of research activities on initiatives into many institutional units - the Committee for Research on Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus and institutes of Charles University in Prague, the Commission for Research on the Tatra Mountains and their immediate areas and institutes of Masaryk University in Brno, the Šafárik Learned Society, institutes of Comenius University and the Society of the Homeland Museum of Slovakia in Bratislava, the Slovak Matica and the Slovak Museum Society in Turčiansky St. Martin. According to Král, it would be necessary for these scholars to join forces and produce a joint synthetic monographic work on Slovakia (Král 1930b, pp. 344-6). According to archival materials, Král worked on two monographs in 1934-1938 - Anthropogeography of the Turčianska kotlina/Turčianska Basin and Anthropogeography of the Malé Karpaty/Small Carpathians. He was unable to complete either due to his forced departure to Prague at the end of 1938.

The third important domain of his research interests was the question of the division of the Carpathian Mountains and the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic. He began to address the problem of the delimitation of the natural areas of the Czechoslovak Carpathians as early as 1922 and 1923 in discussions with the botanist K. Domin, to whom he presented the first rough and provisional proposal for the delimitation and naming of these areas. Subsequently, as early as 1925, at



a meeting of the Czechoslovak Geographical Society in Prague, he proposed that attention should be paid to unifying the location, delimitation and naming of the larger mountain groups in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. He reopened the issue at the 2nd Congress of Slavic Geographers and Ethnographers in Poland in 1927, and he also reported on it at the 1st Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1930 in Brno and in the same year at the 3rd Congress of Slavic Geographers and Ethnographers in Ljubljana. His speech provoked a rather rich discussion, which resulted in the draft of another resolution prepared by J. Kral and F. Koláček. Král then expanded his report with several suggestions by J. Moscheles and published it as a separate study (Král 1930a). The study begins with a definition of the term natural area, by which he understood an internally relatively homogeneous part of the Earth's surface separated from other neighbouring parts by distinct orographic boundaries. In addition, a definition is given of a cultural (sociological) area as a unit formed from a natural area by social and cultural coexistence with natural forces. While he regarded natural areas as static, he attributed a dynamic character to cultural areas. He considered transport flows as a key element in their delimitation and also assumed different hierarchical levels of cultural areas. He considered the work of the British geographer C.B. Fawcett to be a methodologically inspiring attempt to define cultural areas. The study continues with a review of previous attempts to subdivide the Carpathians. He then describes his own methodological approach. His regionalisation was based on natural conditions, taking into account anthropogeographical elements. In the empirical part, he presents the delimitation of 41 natural areas grouped into 10 higher order units with a corresponding map (Král 1930a). Two years later he prepared a study of the natural areas of the western part of Czechoslovakia (Král 1932). This study provoked critical reviews by F. Koláček and F. Říkovský. Koláček pointed out, for example, that the orographic subdivision of the Moravian-Silesian landscape was made for the Commission for Local Nomenclature on the basis of his 1931 report, and the subdivision of the Czech landscape on the basis of V. Dědinu and V.J. Novák from 1932, which essentially accused Kral of plagiarism (Koláček 1933). Král reacted to this criticism (Král 1933e). He then invited Hromádka, as a geologist and geomorphologist, to work together on a new proposal. This was prepared in 1933 in 50 pages, but was not published. Král also collaborated with Polish and Ukrainian geographers on this subdivision and discussed it several times with J. Moscheles and also with V.J. Novák<sup>13</sup>.

Král also dealt with other issues. Drawing inspiration from the works of P. Deffontaines on seasonally employed craftsmen and tradesmen in Slovakia, he investigated the life of Bulgarian gardeners in the vicinity of Bratislava (Král 1936b). He also compiled a geographical handbook on the Czechoslovak Republic, which was published in Belgrade (Král 1933d). He also began to devote himself

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to the geographical study of rural settlements (Král 1934, 1936c, 1938b). He also reviewed research in Bulgaria and the contribution of Bulgarian scientists for the development of geography (Král 1933c, 1938d). He also continued to produce tourist guides (Král 1936g).

In addition to publications, he reported the results of his scientific activity at national and international congresses. At the First Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1930 in Brno, he presented a paper on the new division of the Czechoslovak Carpathians. At the Third Congress of Slavic geographers and ethnographers in 1930 in Ljubljana, he presented a report on the activities of the Czechoslovak section of the Slavic Commission for Research on Pastoral Life in the Carpathians and the Balkans. At the 2nd Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1933 in Bratislava he reported on the latest anthropogeographical maps of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. He gave two papers at the 3rd Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1935 in Pilsen. The first was on the study of rural settlements in Czechoslovakia and the second was on geography in secondary school textbooks. At the 4th Congress of Czechoslovak Geographers in 1937 in Olomouc, he presented his thoughts on the immediate tasks of anthropogeography in Czechoslovakia. At the 15th International Geographical Congress in 1938 in Amsterdam, he gave a paper in German entitled "Die Durchforschung des Hirtenlebens in den Tschechoslowakisches Karpathen"/ The Pastoral Life Research in the Czechoslovak Carpathians<sup>14</sup>.

### Expertise for practice

In addition to his purely academic activities, Král was also engaged in expertise for practice. Later, he also wrote on this topic about the need for the development of applied geography (Král 1945, 1949).

In 1938, he submitted to the Ministry of National Defence a conceptual proposal of two alternatives for the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Hnilec River near the village of Dedinky and for the diversion of water through an underground pipeline to the Slaná basin for the Dobšiná hydroelectric power plant. In the same year, for the Bata company, he prepared a conceptual proposal for the construction of an artificial lake in the High Tatras by flooding the former moraine lake below Kamzík on the Studený Potok river in the two-stage alternative with a pumping hydroelectric power plant. In 1948 he repeatedly submitted this proposal to the State Planning and Statistical Office in Bratislava.

On the basis of the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, J. Král was to prepare a revision of the delimitation plan of the Catholic dioceses in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus, which had been prepared by František Machát, and possibly to prepare a new revised proposal. In the period March-September 1938, he drew up

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a provisional proposal for the delimitation of the dioceses, taking into account the comments of church dignitaries and also the national conditions in the dioceses<sup>15</sup>.

## THE MAIN KRÁL'S STRUGGLES DURING HIS STAY IN BRATISLAVA

### The issue of housing

Král was the first Czech professor of geography at Comenius University who undertook to move to Bratislava. His predecessors J. V. Daneš and F. Štůla were so-called "suitcase professors" who commuted to Bratislava for two and three days a week, respectively. However, he had a condition that the apartment should be cheap and reasonable. In Prague, he lived in a four-room apartment that belonged to his father-in-law. In Bratislava, he first gave his residence on Hradobna Street. Later he was given an apartment in the professor's house at 2 Dankovského Street. At the same time, he was reimbursed for his moving expenses. Soon, however, Král complained in letters about the disproportionate increase in rent (by 30 % on 1 October 1932 and by a further 30 % on 1 April 1933) in the flat in the professor's house at 2 Dankovského Street and asked for the possibility of moving back to Prague and subsequent reimbursement of travel expenses on the Prague-Bratislava route. He also complained about the high prices in Bratislava, which was the most expensive city in the whole of Czechoslovakia. He documented his income and expenses in great detail and argued that his family budget was unsustainable. He also pointed out that he still had to travel to Prague on business, particularly to access the latest literature, because there was no suitable professional library in Bratislava and also several disciplines with which he had had contact at the Prague faculty were not being developed at the Comenius University, which negatively affected his scientific activities. He also mentioned that he could not count in the future on his wife's financial income from renting three apartment buildings in Prague-Podolí, of which she was a co-owner. There had been a sudden fall in rents as a result of the economic crisis and the insolvency of several tenants. These efforts were unsuccessful and Král lived in the Bratislava apartment until the end of his stay in Slovakia.

### Limiting the field of geography

As director of the Geographical Seminar, Král faced a significant threat to its existence. The impetus was a resolution of the professorial board of the Faculty of Arts on 27 April 1934, which, on the basis of the low number of students and the financial crisis, proposed to limit it considerably and even contemplated the abolition of geography as a field of study. A decree of the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment of 7 June 1934 subsequently abolished the study

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of geography for future secondary school teachers, leaving only the professional studies preparing for the rigorous examinations. As a consequence, the financial subsidy of the Geographical Seminar was reduced, exercises were restricted, the part-time substitute private assistant professor J. Hromádka was not allowed to increase his workload, and the assistant post could not be occupied. This was a paradoxical decision because there was an acute need for secondary school teachers in Slovakia. The attitude of the Faculty of Arts changed in the autumn of 1934. However, requests for the resumption of teaching studies went unanswered by the Ministry for a long time. Král tried to draw attention to the problem. He also appealed in an article published on 16 February 1936 in the newspaper. In it he presented arguments in favour of the establishment of a Faculty of Science and drew attention to the marginal position of geography as the only natural science department at Comenius University. He emphasised mainly scientific arguments, linking the need for the development of natural sciences with the needs of economic practice (Král 1936f). It was not until 1937 that it was finally possible to reinstate the study of geography teaching (Martínek 2017, p. 225)<sup>16</sup>.

### **Professorship**

The weakened position of geography at Comenius University is illustrated by the peripeties related to the proposal to appoint Král as a full professor. At a meeting on 1 February 1933, the professorial board approved a commission consisting of prof. Chaloupecký - historian, prof. Klecanda - auxiliary historical sciences and prof. Kalda - German philologist. Due to the absence of an expert in geography, the commission requested an opinion from prof. Švambera and also asked for the opinion of prof. Vitásek and Horák from Brno (who ultimately did not agree to its publication). Their aim was to evaluate the results of Král's work in the period after his appointment as an extraordinary professor. Švambera sent a positive opinion. He praised Král for having already directed his research interests to the eastern part of the Czechoslovak Republic during his time in Prague. He noted that after his appointment as an extraordinary professor, he began to devote himself to the organization of geographical education and research in Slovakia. He pointed out that in his activities Král followed a very broadly conceived programme. First, he undertook a detailed documentation of the state of existing knowledge and published a bibliography of works on Subcarpathian Rus. This is valuable material not only for him, but for other researchers dealing with this territory. According to Švambera, Král was very familiar with contemporary literature, not only anthropogeographical, but also more broadly focused. He greatly appreciated his study on natural history and anthropogeographical research in Slovakia, in which he rightly pointed out the unsystematic nature of Slovak exploration.

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He appreciated the results of Král's many years of anthropogeographical research in mountainous areas. According to Švambera, Král developed his own research procedure, although he was undoubtedly inspired by French geographers (he mentions Arbos). Král was particularly active in discussions with Polish and French geographers. Švambera highlighted the fact that Král regularly reported on the work of the Slavic Commission for the Study of Pastoralism in the Carpathians and the Balkans at congresses and other events. According to him, Král himself had achieved remarkable results in the study of the Hutsuls in the Marmarosh Alps. Švambera also pointed out that Král did not limit himself to anthropogeographical research on mountain areas, but also devoted himself to the regionalisation of the territory of Czechoslovakia. This is a challenging issue, especially in relation to the application of physical and anthropogeographical criteria in the delimitation of natural and cultural areas. Švambera appreciated the fact that Král did not base his proposal for the subdivision only on a good knowledge of the literature and the study of maps, but also knew the territory from his detailed field research. He appreciated the fact that, in delimiting the natural areas of the western part of the Czechoslovak Republic, he had tried to be reasonably proportionate to his proposed division of the Czechoslovak Carpathians. In his final summing-up, he highlighted Král's diligence, his strictness with himself and his very clear idea of the definition of geography as a science. Of his style of expression, he said that it was factual, concise and more akin to the language of the exact sciences<sup>17</sup>.

The Commission considered the proposal at its meeting on January 22, 1934. It concentrated on the evaluation of the candidate's performance since his appointment for extraordinary professor, approved on May 15, 1929. It proceeded according to the standards agreed upon at the meeting of the seniors of the various disciplines and subsequently approved by the Faculty of Arts. However, the members were not unanimous in their evaluation of Král. Historians Chaloupecký and Klecanda were convinced that Král's research activities after 1929 were not of such a scope or nature as to warrant nominating him for appointment as a full professor. In their view, Král's articles were short, several-page reference papers. They faulted him for two larger articles, not exceeding 20 pages, which he had co-authored with W. Kubijowicz. In the three larger articles (Král 1930a, 1930b, 1932), it was not possible to identify the author's own contribution to the production of original findings. They also pointed out that one of the studies (Král 1932) provoked a very critical response in the reviews (Koláček and Říkovský). They therefore recommended that the proposal be postponed and that time be allowed for Král to show improvement. The third member of the commission, the philologist Kalda (who was dean at the time), did not share their views. He argued that the favourable opinion of Švambera should be taken into account. The commission's proposal was

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presented to the professorial board at a meeting on January 24, 1934. Professor Kolář took the floor and objected to the proposal of committee. He reproached the committee for not taking into account in the proposal another extensive work by Král on Czechoslovakia, published in Belgrade, and for not taking into account the map-making and extensive organisational activities of the applicant. He disputed the arguments about professional inadequacy by confirming it in the opinion of Švambera. The appellants, who were not active in the field, should, in his view, have submitted the opinions of other experts which would have provided suitable reasoning. He recalled that at the meeting of the professorial board on 17 May 1933 they had announced that they had approached Prof. Vitásek and Horák. Therefore, Kolář suggested that the professorial board should agree with the opinion of Dean Kalda. Chaloupecký, in response, objected to the claim that he was not an expert and stated that he had drawn up the proposal in accordance with his best knowledge and conscience. He defended himself on the matter of expertise, citing his background in anthropogeography. If the Board approved the proposal, he would exercise a minority veto against it. He then left the meeting. Kolář countered that at the time of the discussion of the proposal at the meeting of the seniors on February 1, 1933, Chaloupecký himself had stated that, in the absence of an expert on the commission, he recommended that an opinion be solicited from Prof. Švambera. Klecanda then took the floor and described in detail the results of Král's publications, repeating the arguments about their small size and the fact that several of them were co-authored. Klecanda mentioned that the commission had also requested private opinions from other experts, but that he could not mention them because they had not given their consent to their publication. Kolář rejected the fact that some of the information could not be known by the board because it was private and stated that Klecanda had not convinced him that the commission had considered all aspects of Král's work and accused him of trying to devalue Král's work even more in his statement than the commission had done in its written proposal. The board then voted first on the committee's proposal that Král not be nominated for appointment as a full professor. There were 15 members present, 7 in favor and 8 against, so the motion did not pass. The board then voted on the proposal of the third member of the commission, Kalda, that Král be proposed for appointment as a full professor. By a vote of 9 to 6, the board approved the motion. Chaloupecký and Klecanda immediately announced that they would file a minority vote against the motion, in which they presented arguments against the appointment of Král as full professor. Kolář subsequently pointed out that the minority vote was submitted in violation of the regulations. The Professorial board, at a meeting on 14 March 1934, therefore rejected the minority vote and attached it only as an appendix to the proposal sent to the Ministry<sup>18</sup>.

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This, however, was not the end of the obstacles with the appointment. The Ministry of Education subsequently approached the faculty to see if it would be possible to extend Král's professorship to a broader field than anthropogeography. This proposal was reconsidered by the committee at a meeting on 22 January 1935. The majority (Klecanda and Chaloupecký) were opposed to the extension of the field (*venia docendi*); a third member, Kalda, after privately consulting the question with professors from Charles University Švambera, Dědina, and Šalamon, recommended the extension of the field for Král on his appointment as full professor. Finally, President T. G. Masaryk, by a decision of August 21, 1935, appointed J. Král as a full professor of anthropogeography at the Faculty of Arts Comenius University in Bratislava with retroactive effect from 1st July 1935<sup>19</sup>.

### **Efforts to establish a lectureship in military geography**

In November 1937, Král began activity with the intention of establishing a lectureship in military geography. He proposed that compulsory classes in physical and military education be introduced at Comenius University. He envisaged that military geography should be compulsory for all students of the university to the extent of 2-3 hours per week. In the justification of the proposal, he argued that military geography was one of the most important components of the military education of youth. He pointed out that in Germany special professorships were being set up for the subject. He also envisaged the lectureship's external educational influence in the wider community. He specifically mentioned the Boy Scouts, physical education and other organizations serving in the field of military and security training. Part of Král's argumentation in favor of the establishment of the lectorate included a warning about the limited capacity of the Geographical Seminar and the overload of its two staff members, including only one professor and a private associate professor (J. Hromádka), who would not be able to provide instruction in military geography. His argumentation ends with a warning of the necessity to quickly ensure the readiness of the population for the defence of the state. With this proposal, Král sought to significantly strengthen the position of the geography in the structure of Comenius University, taking advantage of the contemporary context of the militarisation of the economy and society. Král subsequently made great efforts to obtain the approval of the professorial board. He was looking for a suitable expert who would be willing to accept the position of lecturer. Gradually he communicated with U. Kolařík, A. Mrzena, Š. Andreas and F. Houdek. In the end, the intention to establish a lectureship in military geography was not realised<sup>20</sup>. The turbulent political events in the autumn of 1938, which led to the forced departure of J. Kral to Prague, contributed to this (Matlovič, Matlovičová 2018).

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19 AAS Prague, Personal Papers, Fond Jiří Král

20 AUC Bratislava, D6, Fond Geographical Seminar, 1937-1938, box 111.



### **Forced departure from Slovakia**

The turbulent events in the autumn of 1938, especially the signing of the Munich Agreement and the declaration of Slovak autonomy, created a very unfavourable atmosphere for the continued stay of Czech professors at Comenius University. The situation was gradually becoming more serious, which apparently left its mark on the health of J. Král, who by letter of 9 November 1938 asked the ministry for a medical leave of absence. He justified his request on the grounds of his tiring 9-year work for the Comenius University, but also on the suffering brought about by the actions of some Czech colleagues (he was probably referring to the peripeties in the approval of a full professorship) as well as the actions taken against him by the Slovak side at the time. The Ministry granted his request by letter of 1 December 1938 and granted him a proper paid leave until the end of 1938. The Government of the Slovak Republic, by its decision of 19 December 1938, gave, by agreement with the central Czechoslovak Government of 12 December 1938, J. Král (together with most of the Czech professors at the Comenius University) at the disposal of the Land of Bohemia and Moravia-Silesia with effect from 31 December 1938. As a result, J. Král was released from the service of the Faculty of Arts in Bratislava as of 31 December 1938. This marked the end of his tenure at the Comenius University of Bratislava<sup>21</sup>.

### **THE GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT OF J. KRÁL**

The most important sources in which we can find reflections of geographical thought are Král's textbooks (Král 1941a, 1941b), a brief monograph on the tasks of Czech geography (Král 1945) and a joint study with J. Kondracki on the state of geography in the West Slavic countries (Král, Kondracki 1951). Král was influenced mainly by the Vidalian tradition of human geography (founded by P. Vidal de la Blache) - especially the Parisian school (J. Brunhes, A. Demangeon, P. Deffontaine) and the Grenoblian school (R. Blanchard, J. Blache, Ph. Arbos) with some inspiration from the American and British schools (I. Bowman, E. Huntington, W. Cushing), some Polish geographers (L. Sawicki, S. Pawlowski) and the Serbian geographer J. Cvijić. He rejected German anthropogeography and defined himself against its successors in Czech geography (Kolářček, Říkovský, Pohl). Král emphasized the activity of man as a geographical agent and traced the development of man's increasing influence on his environment from the people of primitive culture to the peoples of highly developed culture. Under the influence of Cvijić, Brunhes and Demangeon, he strongly emphasized field research, data collection techniques through surveys, map work and inductive procedures. He promoted research in small areas, the

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perfect knowledge of which he considered a prerequisite for understanding large units. This is clear from his position paper:

*"only perfect research of small (natural, cultural) areas, and not, as before, only superficial knowledge of large units, leads to perfect geographical knowledge of these large units as well and, of course, to the derivation of certain laws and rules, which are also valid in geography"* (Král 1945, p. 8).

This understanding of regional geography as microgeography distinguished him from other colleagues who, under German influence, promoted cultural regional geography (Kolářček and Říkovský) (Král 1945, p. 17). Král also dealt with position of geography in the system of sciences. In his view, he criticized the outdated view that geography belonged to the humanities and promoted the understanding of geography as a natural science (Král 1945, p. 6). He saw the cause of outdated practices in the close connection of geography to history. He rejected the genetic approach of the German school of geography and the use of historical method and statistical approaches. He also considered topographical-statistical-historical descriptions of territories to be unfashionable. He defined human geography (anthropogeography) very strictly and narrowly. He often distanced himself from his colleagues whom he did not consider to be 'pure' geographers:

*"the boundaries of human geography are given differently by different authors and, in particular, abound in ancillary sciences, which are by some, certainly mistakenly, elevated to equivalence with anthropogeography... we must finally demand, with unrelenting firmness and with persistence, going to the most extreme consequences, the strict and exclusive specialization of geography as a separate and precisely defined branch of science and, above all, to remove from it everything that simply does not belong to it"* (Král 1945, p. 17).

Inspired by historians, he conceptualized the auxiliary anthropogeographical sciences: physical geography, geology, geomorphology, historical geography, statistics, ethnography, sociography, sociology, demography, anthropology. He often considered other colleagues as representatives of these auxiliary geographic sciences (e.g. B. Horák - historical geographer, A. Boháč, J. Auerhan, J. Korčák, J. Pohl and A. Malík - demographers and statisticians, S. Hanzlík - meteorologist and climatologist, B. Šalamon - mathematical geographer and cartographer). He did not consider these auxiliary sciences to be an equal part of geography. On the other hand, he considered them valuable sources of knowledge (Král 1945, p. 17).

## AFTER LEAVING SLOVAKIA

Král was a very interesting figure of Czechoslovak anthropogeography. He paid great attention to personal marketing. He published many scientific works in his own edition. He also promoted his works with short annotations in periodicals (e.g. Král 1927c). He also used his own motto *Geographia est via vitae*/Geography is



a way of life (e.g. Král 1945, p. 6, Král 1958, p. 117). He situated it in the context of an analogy with the well-known statement "*historia est magistra vitae*" coming from Cicero (Král 1945, p. 71).

Král was not very popular in the geographical community. He had complicated relations with most of his colleagues. His greatest rival was J. Pohl/Doberský. Král became a victim of the rise of totalitarian regimes. After being forced to leave Slovakia for Prague at the end of 1938, he returned to Charles University. Already in November 1939, however, Czech universities were closed by the Nazi regime. Král did not slack off during this period either and prepared a two-volume textbook on human geography (Král 1941a, 1941b). This was the first attempt by a Czech geographer to provide a global overview of the impact of the natural environment on human economic activities as well as how these human activities change the natural environment. In 1945 the activities of the university were renewed. However, Král had to face a trumped-up charge of collaboration with the Nazis. He managed to prove his innocence and was thus able to head the Department of the Geographical Institute for the Geography of the Slavic Countries. During this period he published a regional study of the Třeboň Basin (Král 1947d) and a geographical guide to Prague (Král 1947a).

The turning point in his career came in 1948 after the rise of the communist regime. He became a victim of purges organized by some colleagues and students. In 1949 he was retired early and was forced to earn a living as a tourist guide. In the following years he unsuccessfully applied for a job in the Department of Economic Geography at the CSAS and at the University of Bratislava.

However, he remained scientifically and publishing active and tried to maintain contact with some foreign colleagues. He promoted applied geography (Král 1949). On the basis of inspiration taken from the French geographer E. de Martonne, he elaborated on the use of aerial photographs in geography. Král had a relationship with aviation already in his youth. In 1950-51 he published 24 articles in the journal „*Letectví*“ and in 1953 he submitted a comprehensive book on aerial geography, which was not published (Korčák 1968, p. 400). He also worked on medical geography and so-called radiogeography (Král 1956, 1958, 1960a, 1960b, 1968, 1969). In these works he drew attention to the negative effects of ionizing radiation. He warned of the environmental consequences of the disposal of radioactive waste and of the consequences of nuclear conflict, nuclear explosion testing and possible accidents at nuclear power plants. He drew attention to the differentiated level of natural radioactivity resulting from the specificities of the bedrock. He pointed out the links with the occurrence of cancer. He even referred to 'mental cancer', by which he meant the increasing incidence of socio-pathological phenomena, in particular crime, mental disorders and suicide attempts. In addition, he devoted himself to historical geography and archeocivilizational research in several works (Král 1947b, 1961b). Due to his isolation from the scientific community, some of



these works were considered scientifically problematic and even naive, and the professional community did not accept them (Martínek 2008).

In Although he managed to achieve rehabilitation in 1966, he could no longer return to the university due to his advanced age. His life journey ended on January 24, 1975 with a tragic accident in Prague.

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## ARMENIAN RETURN MIGRATION IN THE DISCOURSE OF LOCAL ELITE

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### Abstract

The study is based on interviews with 32 experts on international migration conducted in Yerevan in 2016. This paper aims to analyse their perspectives on return migration, which go beyond the dichotomy of the return as a failure or success. Armenia has a large diaspora and only few migrants and members of the diaspora decide to go back. However, there are such cases and they merit our attention and further analysis. The transnational turn in migration studies showed the importance of the return and the ways how the migration cycle can never be completed. Narratives among the key informants revolve around the issue of old and new diaspora and diasporic consciousness (or patriotism), the issue of a weak state after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, and uneven development. All of these themes incorporate the top-down and bottom-up perspectives, even though they are a part of the discourse of the key informants working on migration issues and members of the local elite. This study will also highlight the significance of return migration and the Armenian diaspora for the Armenian society's changes.

### Keywords

return migration, diaspora, transnationalism, elite discourse, Armenia

## INTRODUCTION

Migration represents an important part of Armenian culture, which led to the formation of a large diaspora community around the world (Thomas et al., 2018). The so-called classic Armenian diaspora was established after the 1915 Armenian Genocide. It came into being after escaping violence in the Ottoman Empire *en masse*. There was also significant migration after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. A negative net migration rate in Armenia makes return migration


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particularly important (Macková and Harmáček, 2019). The population of Armenia is very homogeneous and return migration increases the population in the country. Despite having limited data on return migration to Armenia, it seems that Armenian return migration has been growing steadily in the past years (Fleischer, 2012). There are different groups of returnees to Armenia. Probably the largest group is represented by the seasonal migrant workers who return from Russia. Most of the research so far has focused on this type of seasonal migration. According to the Returned Migrants' survey (European Training Foundation, 2013), Russia was the first destination country for 85% of the returned migrants. Moreover, a large percentage of the returnees considered re-emigration in the future – 68% of the returnees intended to migrate again (European Training Foundation, 2013). However, migrants to Russia usually spend less than one year abroad. There is also a number of returnees from the European Union states and other countries, which is significant for the phenomenon of return migration to Armenia.

## OBJECTIVES

The reality of return migration can be mixed or blurry. That is why we pose the following research questions: *In what ways do the experts view the issue of Armenian return migration? What are the key narratives which are stressed by the experts and the discourse surrounding Armenian return migration?* We uncover that the issues pertaining to return migration are interconnected with Armenian society in many different ways and reflect its understanding on profound levels.

The aim of the paper is to discuss the issue of Armenian return migration in terms of its volume, composition and type. In the methods section, we discuss the selection of research participants, their numbers and relevance to the work on return migration. Afterwards, in the results section, we aim to show the various ways how return migration is represented by the experts. The main narratives – around the issue of patriotism, the weak state after the end of the former Soviet Union, and uneven development will be discussed from the point of view of the experts. Finally, this paper aims to tie their narratives into the broader literature on return migration and diasporic communities.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are two main international migration theories that deal with the return and explain it differently (De Haas et al., 2015). The former is the neoclassical economic theory and the latter is the new economics of labour migration (NELM). The neoclassical economic theory looks at the return through the prism of failure. It argues that the migrant failed to achieve his or her goals and therefore, was compelled to return. This theory maintains that people migrate in order to maximise benefits by moving to places where they can achieve higher productivity



(Harris and Todaro, 1970; Massey et al., 1998). According to this theory, migrants would integrate successfully in their countries of settlement and would be more productive than in their countries of origin, so there would be no reason for returning. However, migrants might not be able to find employment or may not improve their lives through migration. As De Haas et al. (2015: 416) put it, 'while "winners" settle, "losers" return'. The prism of migration as a failure is dominant in the discourse of various agencies which work with the returnees through AVRR (assisted voluntary return and reintegration) programmes.

The new economics of labour migration (NELM) theory argues that international migration is a livelihood strategy employed by households and families to diversify risk and overcome market constraints (Stark, 1991). In the countries of origin, there is often a lack of insurance and obtaining adequate credit is difficult. Having a member of the household abroad aims to overcome these issues. Thus, the main motivation for migrants is to improve the situation in the country of origin and they can return if they have accomplished their goals. Therefore, under the NELM theory, return signifies a measure of success. One study that combines both the neoclassical economic theory and NELM is the study by Constant and Massey (2002). This study enquires about the likelihood of return among migrants in Germany. The study found that both neoclassical economic theory and NELM are important for future return intentions. Therefore, it seems likely that there is no single way how to explain return migration because of different backgrounds and motivations of migrants. However, both theories might provide a useful explanation tool depending on different contexts.

Return migration represents just one possible path in the life-paths and motivations to move and can follow a stepwise pattern of migration. Uher and Ira (2019) investigated time-space behaviour patterns among migrants from former Yugoslavia, considering many different spatial and temporal scales. Similarly, in the case of Armenia, there are different motivations for return that will be discussed in this paper. According to the literature, there are different categories of return on the continuum between 'return of success' and 'return of failure'. Two main typologies are presented by Cerase (1974) and Carling (2004). Both authors present one type of returnee – 'return of failure' or 'empty-handed returnees' as an example of failure while migrating. The other polarity 'classical returnee', 'return of conservatism' or 'return of retirement' represents a more positive view of return migration. The opposite of the return of retirement can be seen in the migration aspirations of pensioners (Pytel, 2018).

Repat Armenia, an organisation which helps skilled return migrants establish themselves in Armenia, registers 1 000 to 1 500 voluntary return cases to Armenia per year (respondent 15). However, this number excludes the Syrian Armenians whose numbers could be up to 20 000 (Al Jazeera, 2017) as well as involuntary returns due to deportations, especially from the European Union countries.



According to the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora, 65 000 returnees have returned to Armenia since the early 1990s but only 35 000 remained there (respondent 2).

For example, Pawlowska (2017) argued that American Armenians who repatriated tried to distance themselves from the local Armenians and were forced to renegotiate their identity. She also inquired about the ways how return Armenians were challenged by the local narratives. Pawlowska (2017: 106) notes that by the word development 'repatriates meant mostly growth in terms of economy and the human development index, which means external categories used by most of international organisations, not local standards of positive change and improvement.' Moreover, returnees emphasized personal sacrifice of having to build a new life in Armenia including a more challenging career search, rather than using the comfort of their established lives in the US. The research done by Pawlowska focused on the 'returnees' who were from the second or third generation of migrants. These people have not actually lived in Armenia before moving there which might have impacted their perception of the country and their feelings of isolation.

In cases of unsuccessful asylum applications or visa termination, the migrants can benefit from the so-called assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) schemes run by international organisations such as IOM or governments of different European countries (Belgium and Austria, among others). However, it is questionable to what extent these schemes are voluntary, as many returnees can be forced to participate in these programmes under different circumstances (Lietaert et al., 2014; Koch, 2014). Upon their return, the returnees can receive social as well as medical assistance. These programmes can involve a business component that helps them with vocational training and small grants or loans for setting up their own businesses. Some of the returnees from Russia can also benefit from similar reintegration programmes (respondent 17). The Armenian return migration comes in many forms – from the labour migrants from Russia, spontaneous returnees with diverse sets of backgrounds coming from different states to AVRR returnees.

## DATA AND METHODS

Interviewing in migration studies is much more than 'having a chat' although good social skills and the right atmosphere are certainly helpful in conducting interviews (Hay and Cope 2021). We have used an interview guide in order to carry out semi-structured interviews. The questions asked in the interviews focused on the theme of return migration to Armenia and dealt with the issues deemed pertinent to the research question. The first period of fieldwork in Yerevan took place between July and September 2016. During this time, key informant interviews with 32 experts on international migration were conducted. Dexter (1970: 136) defines interviews with experts as a 'conversation with a purpose'. The key informant is able to supply information regarding the research topic and can serve as the point of



entry into the field. Moreover, the interviews with key stakeholders can serve as 'crystallisation points' for insider knowledge (Bogner, Littig, and Menz, 2009: 2). The semi-structured interviews discussed several key themes surrounding return migration to Armenia and focused on the complexity of the phenomenon and eliciting answers to the research questions.

Most organisations dealing with migration, state institutions, and academic institutions in Armenia have their headquarters in the capital so that is why all interviews happened in Yerevan. The majority of interviews were conducted in English. In a few cases, they were in Armenian with the help of an interpreter. The interviewees were selected due to their engagement with the issue of international migration and included employees of state authorities, international organisations such as the agencies of the United Nations, non-governmental organisations, and academic institutions (Tab. 1). Interviewees were selected through snowball sampling (Creswell, 2002) and personal and organisational networks. All interviews have been recorded and transcribed. A narrative analysis was used to analyse the interviews.

**Tab. 1** The key informant interviews according to their institutional affiliation

Institution	n
Non-governmental organisations	12
Governmental organisations	6
International organisations	5
Private sector organisations	4
Academic institutions	3
Diplomatic representations	2
Total	32

Source: Authors

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

There are different perspectives of return that have been highlighted by the key migration theories. The situation in Armenia showed that return could be viewed both as a success and a failure. It depends on the category of the returnee but also the point of view of the interviewee. While some state, *"We can say that the people who return have not been very successful"* (respondent 3), others claim that there are success stories, for example, brands or businesses run by the returnees. Respondent 24 mentions, *"the wines that have been winning medals on international fairs (...) Tierras di Armenia brand. There is Karas wine, the Yerevan brandy, which are all successful."* At the same time, this person mentions that *"there is a need to work on favourable investment climate."* Another respondent (14) highlights a café which





was established by a returnee. *"For example, the Greenbean café is a non-smoking café and is a successful example of this. As soon as you create a precedent, people start looking at you and then they copy you."* Therefore, the issue of social remittances or the transfer of norms can also be attributed to return migration (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011). In the following section, we will look at the narratives of return migration, which highlight the complexities of this phenomenon. Three main narratives – ones of patriotism, weak state and underdevelopment pave the way for our understanding of return migration to Armenia.

### **Narrative of patriotism**

In various interviews, the respondents stressed the importance of patriotism for return migration, and some respondents mentioned some key figures among the diaspora Armenians and returnees from the diaspora. While for some returnees, patriotism can play a role in the decision-making process, others might find it hard that it obfuscates other reasons to return. It seems that it might not be the single most important pull factor despite the rhetoric. Respondent 3 stated that *"the biggest motivation for return is patriotism. I know about families who returned from the USA and worked for a lower salary. Their motivation was to make an investment in Armenia."* The same respondent also mentions external pressure on other groups of returnees. *"Another group is people who have been obliged to return because their visa has run out, etc. (...) This situation creates financial and psychological problems."* Therefore, it is important to distinguish between the return motivations, which can be internal (such as patriotism) or forced by external circumstances. The type of return, which can be forced or voluntary, determines the role of patriotism in it. For voluntary return, patriotism was even more significant than for the forced one, where it played a much lesser role.

Another respondent (5) states that the return motives can be connected to *"raising children in Russia (which) is seen as risky. There are fears for identity of the children and finding the right partner."* Therefore, the motives relating to the family, upbringing and future plans can be connected to patriotism. Moreover, respondent 5 further claims that some people invest money in Armenia *"so they are at least symbolically here."* Then she goes on to present a case of her relative, who organized an IT business in Armenia, *"Maybe a part of the reason was patriotism. Nostalgia is a part of Armenian identity, but physically returning to Armenia is not that important."* Therefore, there is a mix of motives, including further economic opportunities and entrepreneurship. The quote that physical return is not that important for the diaspora is significant for the transnational ties that returnees have (Lietaert et al., 2017).

One of the respondents (30) was a returnee himself. He returned from Lebanon several years ago and recalled the relationship of patriotism towards return. He also brings in the narratives of a nation as a mother. He states, *"The elders said:*



*'You have to go back to Armenia. You have a host motherland (Lebanon).'* But I do not understand how can that be a host motherland, it is like a surrogate mother when you have to go back to your real mother." He expresses the ambiguity many returnees face after a prolonged period of absence.

Furthermore, he discusses the role of diaspora organizations and the role of patriotism in it. One particular organization that he worked with was based on the aspirations to help with the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh and help wounded soldiers' families. He proceeds to add, *"There is only a limit to what you can do without being here. It was a dream to come back. (...) The political ideology was to help. There was a national agenda. To sacrifice, to have national aspirations, support each other. (...) The motives are based on the nation."* For some returnees, patriotism can play an important role in return, yet others are more pragmatic. The experts working on migration issues in Armenia stressed mostly the economic opportunities (not) awaiting return migrants.

Respondent 7 states the following concerning return motivations, which combine both economic opportunities and patriotism: *"I think that economic opportunities are the most important. Patriotism can play some role. But you find very few people that would trade their standard of living for patriotism and live in poverty."* This respondent also mentioned the hope of economic prosperity which was seen as the motivating factor. Therefore, patriotism is possibly not the only factor. Many experts believed that economic opportunities were the key to encouraging return migration. The next narrative, the one of a weak state, undermined the efforts of attracting returnees to Armenia and frustrated some of the returnees.

### **Narrative of a weak state**

The weak state was mentioned several times as an obstacle to sustainable return. One of the problems respondents mentioned was the rigidity of the state. This sense of dissatisfaction with the way the state works is connected to the issue of return migration and perceived shortcomings of the state institutions. Respondent 20 stresses that *"people are afraid of mobilizing their resources and being creative and the government is afraid of supporting the creative industries because these are the areas that challenge the governmental structures. However, it is going in this direction anyway, even without the support of the government"*. Respondent 18 added that *"you need to invest in people, the right opportunities and the best way to do that through the state. I know it's difficult in a country like Armenia. (...) Especially in Armenia, people use examples of Singapore or Israel, these miracle success stories, maybe Rwanda, but in all those cases, there is a very strong state. I think it has to be the same here."* Therefore, the issue of a weak state is connected to the lack of economic incentives but also perceived dissatisfaction with the economic situation.

The Armenian state remains weak vis-à-vis the transnational diaspora. Respondent 27 states that *"with the independence of Armenia, there was more*



support. A lot of the diaspora support is done informally. We know that the situation concerning development needs more help and this is one of the things we want to concentrate on. The challenges here are too big. We bring people here but we need to do more. We need a good and open economy.” Respondent 23 adds, “There are no economic opportunities here, all they have is go[ing] to Russia and they keep going, even with the economic crisis. There is less money to send, so the new trend is that now fathers and sons go to provide assistance to their families. Sometimes families even have to send money to Russia. (...) Many Armenians stay in Russia because they do not know if they would be allowed to go back. The whole family joins so it becomes a permanent migration.”

The economic issues are connected with corruption. Respondent 30 claims that “the problem is that you will never achieve your goals if you are weak. So if you close your eyes on corruption, this mismanagement we have here, you will never have a strong state. And if you don’t have a strong state, that state will never really be respected by the international community and its cause will not be heard. So instead of going to the US Senate, House of Representatives or the French Parliament and advocating, strengthen your country here. Help this country.”

Respondent 27 further reflects on this issue. “It is tough to have our own state in the last 25 years. Before the mentality was that you could blame everything on the empire. The nation was not ready for internal transformation. Some important national issues will need help from the outside.” Therefore, Armenian return migration is also influenced by the state, which is perceived to have shortcomings. The final narrative of the perceived economic underdevelopment of Armenia is also connected to this issue.

### **Narrative of (under)development**

The interviewees discussed the overall situation in Armenia, encompassing economic, social, and structural aspects that contribute to the challenges of returning to the country. The narrative of (under)development is connected with some aspects pertaining to (return) migration and development, such as remittances used by the migrants and returnees but also other key issues, such as infrastructure, which might also relate to the role of the Armenian state discussed above. For some respondents, the issue of remittances connected to return migration played a significant role.

For example, one respondent who worked in an organization active in rural regions highlighted the role of remittances. Respondent 6 claimed: “We were working with the migrants’ families who receive remittances to inspire them, to have the idea that these remittances should not only stay in the shops. You can collect them, you can save them, and make investments. We give them the grant but they also have their matching fund, which is formed by remittances and this is the kind of idea to show that these remittances can really work if they’re directed towards local economic



*development.*" Therefore, the idea that returnees (or families of migrants) can use remittances to encourage local economic growth is quite prevalent. The idea was supported by other experts on migration in Armenia and also other research discussing the role of remittances in Armenia (e. g. Grigorian and Melkonyan, 2011). However, this topic is only discussed in relation to rural regions, which should be "developed" by means of development projects. Some of them are related to the agricultural sector, which seems to struggle in Armenia. As explained by respondent 24, *"there are still some gaps in the policy. The problem is the interest rates of agricultural loans. Trust is the biggest obstacle. They (the farmers) only try to survive. Every time they cultivate, there is more debt."* Yet agriculture is offered as one of the avenues of further engagement to some returnees, especially those benefitting from the AVRР projects.

There are other projects run by different organizations targeting sectors such as tourism. Respondent 20 added, *"With socio-economic governance, we're starting a project on local tourism development, just trying to provide alternative income generation means for local communities that are not self-sufficient. Tourism is, from my mind, one of the key growth areas for Armenia. It can grow a lot of attention, and (the project) is trying to tap into that. Of course, not everywhere will be a successful tourist hotspot but there is definitely room for growth. The problem is the infrastructure, the poor roads."* Therefore, the issue of perceived (under)development connects various aspects of return migration and also the perceived issue of a weak state. Yet it is mainly discussed in relation to the rural regions in Armenia. The interviewees mentioned that not just development projects but also investments in infrastructure could also encourage return migration and businesses run by the returnees. This issue is connected with urban evolution in the post-socialist countries due to the specific nature of social, economic and political conditions in this geographical space (Havryliuk et al., 2021).

## Discussion

Armenia is generally supportive of the return of its citizens (as has been stated in its 2017-2021 Strategy for Migration Policy of the Republic of Armenia). However, only a few resources are offered to the prospective returnees. So far, there are mixed narratives of return as a success or failure and it is important to move beyond this dichotomy of return. While in some cases, the interviewees mentioned the hardship encountered by the returnees, in others, they highlighted the success stories and the presumed skilfulness of returnees who were able to get around the economic situation and use it to their advantage. This is in line with the statements of respondents who claimed patriotism only motivates a minority of the returnees and the economic incentives are even more important.

Interestingly, the issue of a weak state was also put vis-à-vis the diaspora, which was perceived as weakening Armenia in the narratives. National identity



and its formation were not limited to the nation-state and could be transnational, as evidenced by the heavy presence of the word diaspora in the local discourse. The Armenian diaspora is an important part of the narrative of its inception and is connected to genocide in 1915 (Safirstyan, 2011). Another important milestone connected to Armenian migration is the dissolution of the Soviet Union (preceded by the devastating Spitak earthquake), which also caused economic upheaval in Armenia. The conflict in Nagorno Karabakh also led to the narrative of mobilisation of resources, which was an important part of how return migration to Armenia had been viewed. All of the crises are connected to the rhetoric of patriotism. Pawlowska (2017) showed that the returnees to Armenia worked with the external categories of human development, which were used by international organizations. Many of the experts interviewed for this paper worked in local and international organizations in Armenia, and they used the language connected to development. The development projects targeting returnees are often implemented in the rural regions, yet without considering that many returnees wish to remain in the capital. The migrants and returnees are viewed as “the heroes of development” (De Haas, 2012) as long as they send remittances or use them to encourage local economic growth.

The issue of remittances is one of the cornerstones of the literature on migration and development and recently, the literature on social remittances has become more prominent (Levitt, 1998). Yet social remittances are more difficult to measure. One of the ways how they can be understood is the perception of the returnees towards the state institutions in comparison to people who never migrated. Many experts on migration in Armenia mentioned the term “weak state,” which can mean anything from state capture, rigid state institutions, or corruption in daily life. It can be the reason why some returnees are dissatisfied with the situation in their home countries. For example, Paasche (2016) inquired about the returnees from Europe to Iraqi Kurdistan and their sense of dissatisfaction with corruption and a more critical approach towards the state. Similarly, some experts in Armenia challenged the state and the work of state institutions and positioned themselves vis-à-vis the state.

## CONCLUSIONS

Currently, significant changes are taking place in Armenian society. Important narratives of the members of the local elite shed some light on the changes taking place in connection with return migration. This paper discussed the role of return migration to Armenia through the lens of the experts working in the field of migration in Armenia. The respondents worked in different organizations, including state agencies, international organisations, international and local non-governmental organisations, academic institutions or diplomatic offices. All of them were familiar with the issue of return migration to Armenia and discussed multiple meanings which relate to return migration to Armenia. The discussions



with the experts revolved around three critical narratives—the narrative of patriotism, the narrative of a weak state, and the narrative of underdevelopment, which represent unique challenges for the returnees. Future work in this area can inquire about the role of social remittances in return migration and the narratives that are shaped by returnees. Possible transnational aspects of these narratives and the meanings ascribed to them by the returnees are also to be uncovered in future work.

In 2021, Armenia was among top 5 countries that had most returnees in the region of South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and received assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2021). Among the regions where most returnees came from were Russia, Europe and the United States and Canada (Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 2022). Therefore, this theme continues to have a high relevance in today's world.

As stated by King (2002: 89), “new forms of migration derive from new motivations (...), new space-time flexibilities, globalization forces, and migrations of consumption and personal self-realisation.” New geopolitical situations also come into play here. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach enriched by case studies from diverse geographical environments is required to address the multifaceted nature of human migration and spatial mobility.

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