

Abstract

This thesis examines the impact of drainage processes that were conducted in the first half of the Nineteenth century on the urban centrality of the free royal town of Sombor. The existing approach in the literature regarding urbanization in Kingdom of Hungary mainly focused on the economic role of a settlement, which put aside the importance of its legal status within the feudal system. This theory, even though it validly changed the definition of what being urban means for a specific settlement, also passed over the importance of the administrative aspect of centrality. In the case of Sombor, there were two main central political authorities that interacted and conflicted with each other, thus impeding the overall progress of a settlement as a whole. On the one side, town's administration represented the interests that did not usually go beyond the territory under their control. On the other, Bács–Bodrog County's administration represented the interests of the feudal dominions and inhabitants living there.

The main hypotheses of this thesis is that the process of land drainage, which was conducted in order to reduce the level of redundant waters and ameliorate conditions for agricultural activity, emanated contested centrality of Sombor as a settlement, and showed juxtaposed positions of the Town and the County. The entire building process of derivation canals was possible only after the construction of Emperor Francis's Canal in the beginning of Nineteenth Century. Furthermore, their route that connected them to the aforementioned waterway went through the territories which were under the administrative control of both contested parties. This led to negotiations and interplay that prolonged the entire process for decades, as it was conducted in the period 1827–1848. Therefore, this proves the importance of administrative aspect in determining the level of urban centrality of Sombor and its relation to surrounding region.

Keywords: urban centrality, Sombor, canal, drainage