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**Urban development planning in Hungary and Romania  
comparative analysis of the tools of the Transylvanian town of  
Barót (Baraolt) development**

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# 1. TOPIC OF THE THESIS

The topic of the dissertation is the methodology and tools of urban development planning in Romania and Hungary, which I analyse in the light of the urban development plans of the city of Barót (Baraolt).

In the dissertation, the official settlement development plan of the city of Barót, as well as its further elaborated and improved version, will be examined as a case study in Romania, and in the light of this concrete example, a comparative analysis of the regulation of the preparation of settlement development plans in Romania and Hungary will be carried out. In this way, a four-pronged analysis is applied in the thesis, in which, confronted with the numerous similarities and significant differences in the methodology and tools of urban development planning in the two EU Member States, it was not possible to avoid raising and attempting to answer some fundamental questions of urban development, based on the relevant EU academic literature and on the independent research carried out during the preparation of the thesis. The fundamental questions raised are whether and why planned urban development is necessary and, if so, what conclusions can be drawn from the reasons for this necessity as to the methods and instruments that can be used to plan development activities – urban development and settlement development – aimed at transforming the physical reality of towns and cities. The relevance of this research and analysis is self-evident and obvious in order to clarify and define the common European cultural, theoretical and conceptual foundations, when we wish to carry out an unbiased comparative analysis of a very complex, highly specific and multifaceted interdisciplinary field of activity in two EU Member States, which are linked by a thousand links and at the same time differ in a thousand ways, by comparing the two different regulations in the light of a case study example. Of course, it could be argued that the validity of this aspect of analysis should be demonstrated in detail, but this is considered to be an axiomatic principle, the detailed discussion of which would require the elaboration of another academic treatise, which is the only one devoted to this subject, and which is beyond the scope of this paper.

By examining these fundamental issues, the present thesis adds a new layer to the two national regulations and the European Union regulation, which, in relation to the main topic of the thesis, formulates theses and messages of fundamental importance for the scientific and professional discourse, based on the international literature, recent European and, among others, Hungarian scientific research results.

In my thesis, after examining the aforementioned fundamental issues and reviewing the European Union, Romanian and Hungarian legislation, I compare the Hungarian Government Decree 314/2012 and the Romanian Government Decree 215/2001 as the Romanian legislation that can be identified as the Romanian equivalent of the Hungarian Government Decree on the planning of the settlement development.

The analysis of the Romanian and Hungarian legal background shows that there are legal provisions for spatial development planning and spatial planning planning, as well as for settlement development planning and settlement planning.

As regards the instrument of spatial development planning, the Romanian legislation stipulates that each municipality must prepare a Strategic Development Plan (SDP), but does not specify the content requirements. Therefore, how and with what content such an urban development strategy is prepared in Romania cannot be known by analysing the legislation itself, but can only be analysed and evaluated in the light of case studies. In contrast to the Romanian legislation, Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the Hungarian Government Decree No. 314/2012 define the content requirements for the preparation of a settlement development plan in much more detail, and differ from it in their basic approach in some essential features. As a consequence, it also foresees activities in the field of science in the preparation of the plans which are not foreseen in the Romanian legislation.

It follows that the two pieces of legislation, while obviously having many substantive similarities and even identities, which is legitimate because of their common cultural roots, also contain many differences, including fundamental ones. These substantive differences lead to significant shifts in emphasis and are reflected in practice, as the analysis in and on the basis of the case study illustrates.

The parts of the Hungarian Government Decree 314/2012 that are relevant to ITS are examined, the two annexes mentioned above being the most interesting, as one sets out the content of the baseline study and the other sets out the content of the strategy. The content requirements of the feasibility study are a long, detailed list of requirements defined in the Hungarian regulation, and this is a good guide, and it is also applied in Hungary, so it can be applied to municipalities of the scale and nature of Barot, with some minor or major differences. The groundwork is divided into a situation assessment and analysis, and a situation evaluation, and what needs to be assessed and analysed is listed in the annex to this government decree, anticipating the substantial differences mentioned above. The ramifications and differences are much clearer and more explicit in the provisions on the development plan itself. The Romanian legislation provides for the analysis of the social and economic reality of the settlement in a

similar structure and depth as the Hungarian legislation, but in comparison to the Hungarian legislation, it pays much less attention to the analysis of the technical and physical conditions of the settlement and the resulting tasks of settlement development.

The only one that is produced in Romania is the SWOT analysis, which is also often produced in Hungary, although it is not a general obligation under the Government Decree 314. The Romanian practice, however, is to content itself with a SWOT analysis for the mandatory content of the urban development documents resulting from the urban development planning defined in the legislation. This may describe qualitatively in text what the problem is and what the possible direction of development is, but it completely lacks the spatial planning that is an integral part of urban development thinking and planning, and the requirements for visualising the spatial, technical and physical target state that will be achieved as a result of the development, and for representing the characteristic parameters of the development activity aimed at achieving the target state, even at the level of a reference.

The purpose of the study of Barót is to examine, as a case study, how the Romanian legislation mentioned above, which does not specify the content requirements of the strategic plan, is applied in practice in the actual strategic planning of a small town of the size of Barót. I have chosen Baroque because I have detailed data on it, I know its background, and a professional strategic plan was prepared here by the Cluj-based company Cluj Management and Planning Group, hereafter CMPG. CMPG is a company run by renowned professionals from the prestigious Faculty of Public Administration and Communication of the prestigious Babeş-Bolyai University, which has also prepared, among other things, the development strategy for Cluj, so its activities reflect typical urban planning practice in Romania.

The Barot case study runs on two strands. One is the analysis of the situation assessment and the strategic planning of Barót, and the other is the examination of this specific plan as a planning tool for the development of the municipality, the Strategic Development Plan (SFT), as defined in the Romanian legislation, and the methodology used to develop it.

At the same time, the analysis also examines the potential application of the Hungarian strategic development toolkit in Romania from a professional and academic perspective. It can be seen from the analysis that there are significant differences in the interpretation of the methodology and tools of urban development planning in the two countries in terms of legal regulation and practice, while there are also considerable similarities.

The thesis is structured in seven chapters. In the first chapter, the hypotheses are formulated and the research methodology is presented. In the second chapter, the Romanian, Hungarian and international contemporary literature and academic workshops on urbanism, urban development and urban planning are reviewed. In the third chapter, the need for planned urban development is discussed. In the fourth chapter, the rules and instruments for urban development, urban development planning in the European Union, Romania and Hungary are presented. The fifth chapter will first present the strategic development plan in Romania as a case study using the example of the city of Barót, and then make recommendations and update the development plan of the city of Barót based on my own research. The sixth chapter compares the Romanian strategic development plan presented in the example of Barót with the Hungarian integrated urban development strategy. The starting point for our analysis is the official urban development strategy of the city of Barót, which we compare with the results of our own research, taking into account both the Hungarian and Romanian legal requirements, thus adopting a four-pronged approach. In chapter seven, we summarise and evaluate the hypotheses.

## 2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. **Hypothesis 1:** The case of Barót suggests that the challenge of sustainable urbanisation applies to cities of similar scale and character in Romania.
2. **Hypothesis 2:** The case of Barót suggests that the approach of the integrated urban development strategy (ITS) applied in the Hungarian legislation – Government Decree 314/2012 (8.XI.) – could be used for the planning of sustainable urbanisation in Barót and in Romanian cities of similar scale and character.
3. **Hypothesis 3:** The case of Barót suggests that the methodology based on the definition of medium-term strategic objectives and operational urban development interventions of the city based on local conditions and visions can be used in the elaboration of integrated local development strategies for Romanian cities of a similar scale and character as Barót.
4. **Hypothesis 4:** Romanian legislation on strategic urban development planning is fundamentally similar to that in Hungary, and thus provides the basis for the application of proven European approaches that have been successfully applied in Hungary but are less widespread in Romania.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The analysis developed in this thesis is primarily exploratory and qualitative in nature. The aim was to provide findings and recommendations on the design methodologies and tools for sustainable urbanisation in Romania, as a result of the comparative analysis carried out in the research, which could be used in further work on the development of methodologies and tools, as well as in future academic research in this field.

Part of our research was qualitative, secondary in nature. It aimed to better understand the current situation in Romania regarding the methodology and tools for the implementation of urban development plans in order to address the challenges of sustainable urbanisation. Its fundamental importance was due to the fact that I hypothesised that addressing the challenges of sustainable urbanisation is also an inevitable task for cities and municipalities in Romania. If this is the case, then conscious and planned urban development is also essential in Romania, without which it is inconceivable. This presupposes a set of urban planning tools that can be used to achieve planned urban development, according to the experience gained from European best practice and the scientific literature. Urban planning for the development of towns and cities is a public sector competence. Accordingly, its instruments are defined by legislation. Therefore, in order to better understand the instruments of planning, it has proved essential to examine and analyse their legal basis from a European perspective. A more detailed examination of the planning instruments defined by the legislation was carried out in the context of a case study. The case study provided an opportunity to examine and analyse the official urban development plans of a small, average Transylvanian town and to reflect on the issues raised in them. A European perspective was provided by the study and analysis of the Hungarian settlement development toolkit and its practical application, as well as the relevant legislation, with its Western European roots and a century and a half of operational urban development experience in Hungary, which has a global reach. The validity of my hypotheses was examined by a comparative analysis of the Hungarian and Romanian legislation, for which the analysis and further reflection of the development plans of the city of Barót served as an empirical research basis.

## 4. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE THESIS

A summary of my empirical research on the situation and potential development prospects of Barot is as follows.

The SWOT analyses revealed that the inhabitants of the sub-region of Erdővidék consider their cultural heritage as a significant strength and are proud of it.

The geographical location of the region and its rich mineral resources represent a major economic potential. Despite this, there are no signs of economic recovery in the region.

The objective of tackling environmental threats such as waste water and waste problems should encourage local authorities to make renewed efforts. For example, waste management based on selective collection is in place in a few places, but the full implementation of sewerage systems is still a major task.

In terms of population trends, the area did not experience any change in population between 1930 and 1992, but there was a decline of about 10% every ten years for the following twenty years. Thus, we can say that around 140 people leave the area each year due to lack of livelihood opportunities and poverty.

However, there has been a striking change in the natural increase in the period under study, from 1985 to 2020, when a negative figure was recorded after the fall of the Ceaușescu dictatorship. As elsewhere in the country, the number of births declined rapidly after 1990, but compared to national and Transylvanian trends, the number of births in Baró has risen above the number of deaths since 1995, with two exceptions in the period under study, 2010 and 2020. This means that the population decline can be explained almost exclusively by emigration.

The situation is very unfavourable from the point of view of the activity of civil society, although this is not at all due to the low number of NGOs, but to the fact that they have very weak advocacy capacity, are not well established in society and have a shortage of volunteers to run their activities, as the population is not motivated to volunteer. This is particularly unfavourable for the development of a small rural town in the category of Barót, which in many respects is similar to LEADER programmes, since their initial absorption can be based mainly on the activity of NGOs.

The situation of the mine has left its mark not only on economic life, but also on social life in social, mental and identity terms. Mine workers were in a position of advantage compared to others. Consequently, a certain miner's mentality was born, which is still present today and is not necessarily a driving force for the development of the town.

An analysis of the region's industry reveals that the cessation of deep mining is not the only obstacle to the further development of the rural economy.

Although the official data on this date back to 2002, and no more recent data is available, we believe that the trend has not changed significantly since then. In 2002, the employment rate of the population was low and unemployment was high, with 61% of the population inactive and a quarter of the 39% active population unemployed.

At present, very few people claim heating subsidies, but this does not mean that poverty seems to be going away. In fact, what has happened is that the steady increase in the national minimum wage has meant that many people are now excluded from the pool of people who could claim it, as the average monthly wage per person, which acts as a screening criterion for the heating allowance, has not been increased in line with the increase in the national minimum wage.

Optimally, after the implementation of the SFT, young people with at least vocational schooling could find employment in a new local small industry, thus increasing the very low level of local employment. A significant proportion (more than 7%) of people with tertiary education could take up administrative and other jobs requiring tertiary education in various start-ups, and people coming out of the mine could be involved in the reclamation of the coal mine.

The situation is also unfavourable from an infrastructure and tourism point of view (despite the fact that the sub-region has a tourist attraction in terms of days out) due to poor roads and isolation.

These are all problems that urgently need to be addressed, and I believe that the Barót municipality, on the one hand, and the European Union, on the other, will succeed in doing so, with the help of the European Union. However, the fact is that the first step must be taken by the local mayor's office of the town of Barót. Concrete action is needed in several areas, and these are: to address the retraining of the unemployed, to teach trades for which there is a local market, such as hairdressing, beauty, manual skills, etc. This can be done through online training, but also through classroom sessions. Although the proportion of people with higher education qualifications is relatively high in the municipality, it may be worthwhile to increase this further, and to do so, it would be necessary to take advantage of the current range of courses offered by the higher education institutions in Sfântu Gheorghe (Babeş-Bolyai University, Sapientia University of Transylvania) and, of course, the expanded range of courses planned for the near future.

As regards the retention or attraction of graduates, it is essential to provide favourable conditions for teleworkers with higher education qualifications who could work locally from anywhere, including Barót, and the necessary infrastructure for online working (e.g. internet via optical fibre, mobile phone network coverage). This type of incentive scheme is in place in Sfântu Gheorghe, so it might be worthwhile to look at this as an example and develop such an incentive scheme in Barót.

It would also be very important to take advantage of the opportunities offered by tourism, by ensuring easy access to attractions by land and rail, and by using online marketing tools. It would be worthwhile to take advantage of Romania's membership of the EU to make Baroque a more liveable city and to obtain the subsidies that would make this possible.

It is also clear that it is not possible to solve all the social problems that arise at the same time, it will be necessary to set priorities, and in our opinion the first priority is to allocate human resources to EU tenders, but it is crucial that these human resources should be the ones that will move Barót from the deadlock it is in, which is that it has been able to obtain 0 RON EU funding so far. As this does not seem to be something that can be successfully done internally, it is likely that an external expert will be needed to do a quality job. It would probably not be possible to do this successfully as a local government employee, but would require a company with the resources and of course the expertise to do it. In the following, the results of the test of the hypotheses originally formulated will be presented. The previous chapters of this thesis serve as a basis for demonstrating that the hypotheses I originally formulated were correct.

***Hypothesis 1:** The case of Barót suggests that the challenge of sustainable urbanisation is also valid for cities of similar scale and character in Romania.*

The local analyses of points II, III, IV, V and VI of my thesis, in particular points V and VI, the studies of my colleagues in Cluj-Napoca and my own research, as well as the literature cited in Hungary and Romania, the EU public policy guidelines and legislation, confirm the validity of my hypothesis.

The challenge of environmentally, socially and economically sustainable urbanisation is valid for Barót, and it follows that the case of Barót suggests that the challenge of sustainable urbanisation is also valid for other Romanian cities of similar scale and character. Barót is a small Romanian town on the eastern edge of Transylvania. Barót is a town in Romania where the Hungarian ethnic population is still predominant.

The town of Barót is not a product of the urbanisation of the 19th and first half of the 20th century, but of the socialist urbanisation era, when a former rural-type regional centre was developed into a mainly mono-industrial mining town. Despite this, the town has retained its cohesion from the earlier period, the physical reality of the local community of the town forming a unit closely linked to the small region of the Forest Region.

In the era of the crisis of the urban world, explored in depth by Françoise Choay, it is still true for Barot, after the radical transformations of the last century, that the city is an inseparable unity of a social community and a distinct part of space.

The research work has shown that, in the light of different socio-economic characteristics and processes, Barot has to respond to the challenge of socially sustainable urbanisation and the challenge of economically sustainable development. The fact that the challenges of environmental, social and economic sustainable urbanisation are undoubtedly valid for Barot means that the challenge of social and economic sustainable urbanisation is valid for Barot. The fact that the sustainable urbanisation challenge is valid for Barót, described with the above-mentioned key characteristics, implies that this case is a case where the sustainable urbanisation challenge is also valid for other cities in Romania with similar situations and characteristics.

And if it is not, the urbanisation processes of the last hundred years, in their different manifestations, have automatically produced a situation where, due to various factors, their social situation and development trajectory are not in a state of equilibrium. Thus, the challenges to the socially sustainable development of Barot are at least as evident in their case as in Barot, albeit in different forms. The local economy is inseparable from local society.

So if the challenges of socially sustainable urbanisation apply to them, so do those of economically sustainable development.

Our thesis does not claim that the case of Barót proves something for other Romanian cities, but that it points to something in their context. And this is proved by what has been described.

As it was stated in the theoretical introduction (Sandu 2020), one of the obstacles to the development of small Romanian cities, such as Barót, is the lack of infrastructural connections with other cities. In the case of Barót, as we have seen, the railway connection, railway station belongs to the neighbouring county, and therefore development opportunities in this respect are limited. The condition of the roads between Sfântu Gheorghe – Barot – Odorheiu Secuiesc has not been fully rehabilitated for a long time, their quality is constantly deteriorating, for example, a passenger bus trip on the 50 km distance between Sfântu Gheorghe and Barot takes one and

a half hour, while for a Western European city the same distance takes 20-30 minutes maximum travel time.

***Hypothesis 2:** The case of Barót suggests that the approach of the Integrated Settlement Development Strategy (ITS) applied in the Hungarian legislation – Government Decree 314/2012 (8.XI.) – could be used for sustainable urbanisation planning in Barót and in Romanian cities of similar scale and nature.*

The analyses of the points II, III, IV, V and VI of my thesis, as well as the Hungarian literature and the EU public policy guidelines and legislation cited, confirm the validity of my hypothesis.

The approach adopted in the preparation of ITS, based on the Hungarian policy guidelines and the provisions of the government decree, is to be coordinated from a spatial functional and sectoral point of view as an integrated local development strategy, in accordance with the Leipzig Charter, as a prerequisite for the use of EU structural funds for urban development, an integrated, action-oriented strategy, in order to identify, in the medium term, at a strategic level, and with the depth and precision appropriate to the strategic level, the techno-physical interventions to be implemented in order to achieve the long- and medium-term social, economic and physical objectives (directly related to the built urban fabric) which:

- a situation analysis and assessment of the physical, social and economic reality of the city, and
- the objectives and interventions identified in the baseline study.

The analyses and academic literature references in Chapter II, as well as the literature cited, concerning the planning of urban development and urban planning, provide theoretical evidence that my hypothesis is correct.

The references from the European Union, Romania and Hungary in Chapter III, as well as the public policies, guidelines and their supporting policy documents cited, also demonstrate at a theoretical level that my hypothesis is correct.

In the light of my two-part case study from Barotá, my research results in analysing the typical approach and content elements of the Romanian SFT, also using empirical research tools, also support the conclusion that my hypothesis is correct, as the parts of the Romanian SFT that can be identified as a grounding study and strategic plan only include necessary but not sufficient content elements of what is

- the Leipzig Charter, as an integrated local development strategy required by the EU as a precondition for the use of structural funds for urban development,

- based on the academic literature references referred to above and the literature cited,
- in the light of the content of the exemplary ITS in Hungary, as described above,
- the Romanian rules should include a strategic level urban development plan for the operational urban development mentioned in addition to the normative one. This is also clear from the following details.

The difference between the Hungarian and the Romanian system of settlement development planning based on the Leipzig Charter is that the Hungarian methodology goes further than the Romanian method, which is reflected here, since it does not only define objectives (which is done in 99% of the Romanian cases) and general directions for solving problems by SWOT analysis, but also proposes technical and physical interventions of a concrete, coordinated nature in the action area and network. In this sense, a Hungarian strategy defines specific directions for action area and network development interventions with technical-physical characteristics, not only infrastructure development objectives formulated in thematic terms.

Taking the simplest examples, and with gross simplifications, this problem can be illustrated as follows.

Thematic, for example, is the need to solve the problem of water supply, to bring piped drinking water to 100% of dwellings and to ensure that this water is of good quality, clean and healthy drinking water. This is the first step in the thematic direction, but then a Hungarian or Western European strategy goes further: it identifies that some streets in a city have piped drinking water, some do not, and our strategy is that in the medium or long term, this street and that street should be supplied with piped drinking water.

This is linked here to the fact that, in the case of Barót, drinking water is taken from surface water, a process that has been outdated in Europe for over 100 years, but even if it were taken from drilled wells, the raw water would still have to be treated and the pollution eliminated, which unfortunately is not happening in the case of Barót. Another problem, however, is that the part of the catchment area from which the water is taken requires 100% sewerage, and if the waste water is discharged into this surface water (as is unfortunately the case in Barót), then obviously untreated waste water is discharged which has never seen a sewer, or is simply discharged from the sewer network without being treated, and then it has to be treated.

This issue is related to the first hypothesis, and we are at the point where environmentally sustainable urbanisation is strongly manifested in Barotá, albeit in a different way, because it is here that we are poisoning people with untreated tap water. From these points

of view, this is no longer a problem in Hungary, but the problem is that, for example, with our explosive motor vehicles, we are wasting a lot of energy because of our lifestyle and we are putting large quantities of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the air.

Another important problem is that there are no underground cables at all in Romanian cities of the scale of Barot, only electric overhead cables.

In order for a city of any size to have modern, competitive economic and industrial businesses, whether industrial or service, it needs an electricity supply that not only has sufficient capacity, but also has a reliable service without interruptions. This is also a sustainability issue for the functioning of the economy and for the population.

Global climate change is bringing to the fore the increased frequency and intensity of torrential rainfall and associated windstorms, making the reliability and uninterrupted service of an overhead cable supply much less likely to work than a supply with a land cable. This means that if, by some miracle, Barót were to come into the picture in terms of investment and development, because from the point of view of nature and the environment, it is a good place to live, because the landscape is beautiful, the air is good, it is surrounded by forests, and although the drinking water is not adequate, there is spring water that could be sold. You could have information technology services, or even people who work anywhere in the world via the Internet, just because it is nice to live here. This could be built up with marketing tools. A physical barrier is that telecom cables are also overhead cables, so their capacity is much smaller than an optical terrestrial cable, so an investor would not even consider such an area, because the operational reliability is low due to the entire overhead cable system, so they would not take the risk to invest here. It can be seen that the design is responding to local conditions.

It can be said that while in Romania a SWOT analysis may well get to the tip of the iceberg (but at what pace it should and could be transformed: first develop the city centre, the urban core or the economic service part of the city), an ITS in Hungary will look at this and make a proposal, an SFT in Romania will not get there (stop at the conceptual level) and will not make a proposal.

The question is, does my own research reflect this? In my view, yes. It reflects it well. So you can see immediately that strategic planning in Romania is at a standstill at a level where a strategic planning in Hungary is going far beyond and making concrete proposals.

The approach of the ITS in Hungary could be well used in Romania, at least for Romanian cities of a similar scale and nature to Barot, and in Romania.

***Hypothesis 3:** The case of Barót suggests that a methodology based on the formulation of medium-term strategic objectives and operational urban development interventions for the city based on local conditions and visions can be used in the development of integrated local development strategies for Romanian cities of a similar scale and character to Barót.*

My hypothesis goes a significant step further than the previous hypothesis by emphasising that good urban development planning builds on local assets, the rest of the evidence for this is already contained in the previous hypothesis. This additional element of my hypothesis is a fundamental requirement of urban development of such paramount importance that its significance cannot be over-emphasised, if only because, although it is a direct consequence of EU public policy guidelines and legislation, it is a regular feature of the constant process of change in the institutional systems of public administration and organisation, which, by centralisation to the detriment of subsidiarity, are manifested in the side-effects of decisions being taken in various decision-making centres – even if they are good in their own logic – on the functional and technical content of urban development interventions which, in accordance with the criteria set out above, could not be derived from a local integrated development strategy based on specific local conditions.

The analyses in sections II, III, IV, V and VI of my thesis, as well as the findings of the cited Hungarian literature and the EU public policy guidelines and legislation, confirm the validity of my hypothesis.

The original SFT itself, as analysed in the case study, also confirms the need to build on local conditions. This could also be the approach of the Romanian legislation, which requires as a content requirement for the preparation of the SFT only the absolute minimum of what it considers important according to its own logic, and leaves the rest to the local actors concerned.

The same follows from the content requirements for the development of the Hungarian ITS, which are laid down in the Hungarian legislation both for the preparatory study and for the ITS itself.

There are typical situations, common problems in the planning of urban development, but they are only typical at thematic level. In terms of their specific physical, social and economic reality, each problem that is typical at this conceptual level is different from all the others.

For example, the typical situation in Romanian cities is that the availability of piped water supply is far from 100%, its quality is also far from 100%, and the level of sewerage is even lower than that of water supply, and wastewater treatment is almost non-existent. However, the question of what needs to be done and what can be done to solve this general

problem, where, how, for how much, and in what timeframe, in which city, from city to city, from urban area to urban area, is completely different from the others and can only be determined on the basis of local conditions. The strategy is essential because the individual perspectives of different sectors, specific problems, urban areas and parts of municipalities do not spontaneously add up to an integrated local development plan, the preparation of which at least gives the decision-makers concerned the opportunity to make the right decisions for the city as a whole and for its parts.

Such problems are likely to occur in many places in Romania and Hungary. So, where, with what technical content, with what financial parameters, in what timeframe it is necessary and possible to intervene in Barót, or in any of the other five municipalities under Barót's administration, or in any other town of similar size but with a completely different urban fabric with a different specific physical, social and economic morphology, is completely different. To be able to anticipate these different interventions at a strategic level, the ITS needs content that is not part of the SFT.

***Hypothesis 4:** Romanian legislation on urban planning at strategic level is fundamentally similar to that in Hungary, and thus provides the basis for the application of proven European approaches that have been successfully applied in Hungary but are less widespread in Romania.*

The analyses of points II, III, IV, V and VI of my thesis, as well as the Hungarian literature and the EU public policy guidelines and legislation cited, confirm the validity of my hypothesis.

The similarity of the two compared legal regulations and the urban development practice based on them is evident from my above analyses, hypotheses and their proof. It is also evident from a theoretical point of view from the fact that both countries are Member States of the European Union, which not only applies to them its public policy guidelines, but also its binding legal provisions that define the professional and methodological prerequisites for the use of Structural Funds for urban development purposes by local authorities, and the obligation to prepare integrated local development strategies as part of this, since both countries spend considerable amounts of EU funds on financing local development. This similarity is confirmed by my two-part case study, which, in addition to the analysis of the legal and theoretical background, shows that what is specifically provided for in the Romanian legislation and what is put into practice within this framework is very similar to what is happening in Hungary in the same respect. Even the operational approach itself is present in a dominant way in Romanian

legislation – at the level of principles – as József Benedek's analysis concludes. The difference, which is very significant for the meaning and essence of integrated local development strategies, is not due to the fact that the two regulations and practices do not stem from the same source and that there are no significant similarities between them, but to the fact that the European methodology and toolbox of the operational approach to urban development at the theoretical level – and as part of this the technical-physical dimension of the medium-term urban development plan at the strategic level – is present in the specific legal regulation of SFT in Romania, and in the practical urban development planning activities within its framework, in contrast to the urban development planning practices in Hungary and in developed Western European countries such as France, where this is the core of the practice.

As the essence of my conclusions, as a result of my own research, I have to conclude that the city of Barót is facing very serious challenges in the field of socially and economically sustainable development/urbanisation, and if differently than more developed and larger cities, also in the field of environmentally sustainable development/urbanisation, as already outlined in the SFT commissioned by the city government, which is confirmed in this respect by my own research. My own research updates, completes, clarifies and refines the official SFT in terms of certain issues, but does not refute or overwrite it in its entirety, at most in terms of the modifying findings I have made, which do not, however, affect the validity of the findings of the original SFT 2015.

## 5. NEW SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS

The first and most important new academic achievement is the production of a comprehensive interdisciplinary comparative analysis, for the first time in the history of urbanisation in the two countries, which has allowed us to identify several other important academic findings. We have found that the city of Barót has faced very serious challenges in the field of socially and economically sustainable development/urbanisation, some of which have been brought to light by the application of a specific Hungarian methodology. These are:

1. the analysis of the integrated local development strategy showed that the Romanian strategy preparation standards were complemented with a methodology that adapted the Hungarian ITS methodology and its medium-term strategic objectives and operational urban development interventions to the local conditions and opportunities in Barót, resulting in new conclusions and strategic proposals that were not formulated on the basis of the classical Romanian SFT (Strategic Development Plan).

2. The ITS methodology revealed that other barriers and challenges are involved in overcoming this disadvantage. One is the former miner mentality and the fact that a significant number of miners have migrated from other, even more distant, rural areas. This situation has negatively affected the strengthening of the local urban fabric as a basis for development.

3. Although the SFT has shown, based on the SWOT analysis of Barotá, that the local population considers their cultural heritage as a major strength and is proud of it, the city administration has failed to market the local cultural and natural heritage for tourism three decades after the regime change, the reasons for which have been identified through the ITS methodology based on a more complex analysis and which are linked to the weakened urban fabric.

4. Another scientific result of this thesis is that the city of Barót can be classified in the second type of Romanian small town typology developed by Stoica – Tulla et al. (2020), and the results of our research suggest that the scope of the development conclusions drawn for the situation of Barót can be extended to all mining towns in Romania with less than 20,000 inhabitants, which are typically mono-industrial or peripheral.

5. Another new result of the research is the operationalisation of a small peripheral town in Romania. In the case of Barót, the peripheral location can be empirically captured on the one hand by the fact that the railway connection, i.e. the railway station, belongs to the neighbouring county (Brassó-Brasov), and therefore the development possibilities as a railway station of its

own are limited. On the other hand, in terms of road accessibility, the peripherality is reflected in the fact that it is more than an hour's drive from any other major city, due to the state of the roads. For example, a bus passenger transport on the 50 km distance between Barot and Sfântu Gheorghe (or Odorheiu Secuiesc) takes almost one and a half hours, while in a large part of Hungary, or in an average Western European region, the same distance requires a maximum travel time of 20-30 minutes.

6. The ITS methodology also made it possible to identify the level of development of civil society as another constraint to the city's development, as the Romanian SFT methodology does not provide for its analysis as a separate chapter. In this respect, the independent research of the thesis also showed that the negative situation was not at all due to the low number of CSOs, but to the fact that CSOs have a very weak advocacy capacity, which again underlines the importance of the urban tissue approach mode as a fundamental component of the problem.

7. Overall, it can be said that the Hungarian ITS can be used for planning sustainable urbanisation in small Romanian cities of the same scale and character as Barót and Barót. The parts of the Romanian SFT that can be identified as a baseline study and a strategic plan include only necessary but not sufficient content. The difference between the Hungarian and Romanian urban development planning systems, based on the Leipzig Charter, is that the Hungarian methodology goes further than the Romanian method, as it does not only define objectives (which is done in 99% of the cases in Romania) and general directions for solving problems by means of SWOT analysis, but also proposes technical and physical interventions in the form of coordinated action areas and networks.

8. According to our survey, the poverty rate in Barot is much higher than official statistics allow us to show. This means that the proportion of people in need of various social assistance is relatively lower, for example, very few people currently claim heating subsidies, but this does not mean that poverty levels are low. In fact, as eligibility is linked to the minimum wage, which has been steadily increasing at national level, many people are already excluded from being able to claim it, as the average monthly wage per person, which acts as a screening criterion for the heating allowance, has not been increased in line with the increase in the national minimum wage.

9. The comparison of the ITS and the SFT also revealed the human resource development opportunities in the municipality. It was found that young people with at least a vocational school education could find employment in one of the new local small industries, thus increasing the very low level of local employment. Those with tertiary qualifications could

take up administrative and other jobs requiring tertiary qualifications in various start-ups, and people coming out of the mine could be involved in the reclamation of the coal mine.

10. The research and the comparative methodology also suggested prioritising solutions to local social problems. Since it is not possible to solve all the social problems that arise in parallel, it is necessary to prioritise them and we propose that the first priority should be to assign human resources to EU tenders, but it is crucial that these human resources should be the ones that will move Barót out of the deadlock it is currently in, namely that until now (December 2020) the city has not been able to obtain EU funding. To address this, it is proposed to bring in external expertise to coordinate and complement the work of the local government staff in terms of proposal writing and resource mobilisation.

## 6. PUBLICATION SUBSCRIPTION

1.

Józsa, Attila; Zubánics, László

*Changes in the Townscape of Lampertszásza (Berehove/Beregszász) in the 13th–15th Centuries*

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS SAPIENTIAE EUROPEAN AND REGIONAL STUDIES 2021: 19

pp. 88–97., 10 p. (2021)

[DOI Full document: http://acta.sapientia.ro/acta-euro/C19/euro19-06.pdf](http://acta.sapientia.ro/acta-euro/C19/euro19-06.pdf)

Publication date: 32474138 Admin viewed Source Journal article (Technical article) Scientific

2.

Bajnai, László; Józsa, Attila

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pp. 11–28., 18 p. (2020)

[DOI Full document: http://www.acta.sapientia.ro/acta-euro/C18/euro18\\_02.pdf](http://www.acta.sapientia.ro/acta-euro/C18/euro18_02.pdf)

Journal Article/Article (Journal Article)/Scientific[31788806] [Admin viewed]

3.

Bajnai, László; Józsa, Attila

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83–104., 22 p. (2019)

[Full document: http://acta.sapientia.ro/acta-euro/C15/euro15-06.pdf](http://acta.sapientia.ro/acta-euro/C15/euro15-06.pdf)

Journal Article/Article (Journal Article)/Scientific[31042933] [Admin viewed]

4.

Józsa, Attila

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ACTA UNIVERSITATIS SAPIENTIAE EUROPEAN AND REGIONAL STUDIES 16 pp.

123–134., 12 p. (2019)

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS SAPIENTIAE EUROPEAN AND REGIONAL STUDIES 16 pp.

123–134., 12 p. (2019)

[DOI Full document: http://www.acta.sapientia.ro/acta-euro/C16/euro16-06.pdf](http://www.acta.sapientia.ro/acta-euro/C16/euro16-06.pdf)

Journal article/Review/Critique (Journal article)/Scientific[31180192] [Admin added]

5.

Józsa, Attila

„Dózsa György történelmi személyiségének újszerű megítélése a parasztháború 500. évfordulója kapcsán”,

НОВИЗНА В ОЦІНЦІ ІСТОРИЧНОЇ ПОСТАТІ Д'ЄРДЯ ДОЖИ ДО 500-річчя СЕЛЯНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ

Науковий вісник Миколаївського національного університету імені В. О. Сухомлинського 2019: 1 pp. 63–66., 4 p. (2019)

Other URL: [http://www.irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/cgi-bin/irbis\\_nbuv/cgiirbis\\_64.exe?I21DBN=LINK&P21DBN=UJRN&Z21ID=&S21REF=10&S21CNR=20&S21STN=1&S21FMT=ASP\\_meta&C21COM=S&2\\_S21P03=FILA=&2\\_S21STR=Nvmdu\\_2019\\_1\\_12](http://www.irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/cgi-bin/irbis_nbuv/cgiirbis_64.exe?I21DBN=LINK&P21DBN=UJRN&Z21ID=&S21REF=10&S21CNR=20&S21STN=1&S21FMT=ASP_meta&C21COM=S&2_S21P03=FILA=&2_S21STR=Nvmdu_2019_1_12)

Journal Article/Article (Journal Article)/Scientific[30759608] [Admin viewed]

6.

Józsa, Attila

„HOMONNAI DRUGETH (II.) ZSIGMOND (? – 1684) – EGY ISMERETLEN ÉLETPÁLYA KÉPEI”

ЖИГМОНД (II) ДРУГЕТ (?–1684) – НАРИСИ З НЕВІДОМОГО ЖИТТЄВОГО ШЛЯХУ [Zsigmond II Drug et (? -1684) – sketches from the unknown life path]

VISNYK-HISTORY 48: 2 pp. 98–102., 5 p. (2019)

Full document: <http://mdu.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/Hist-visnyk-48-17.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3ZJXq9y4lN5rgxwOA8ynu9-Y6VtpGl01xuq6DssHTilvxgvexfuBIUbl0>

Journal Article/Article (Journal Article)/Scientific [31043020] [Admin added]

7.

BAJNAI, László; JÓZSA, Attila

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DOI ISSN: ISSN 2068-7583 Full document: <http://acta.sapientia.ro/acta-euro/C13/euro13-04.pdf>

Journal Article/Article (Journal Article)/Scientific[30321728] [Admin viewed]

## **7. PROFESSIONAL-SCIENTIFIC BIOGRAPHY**

Born in 1984 as the second child of the Józsa family, his mother is a bank clerk, his father is a water and gas engineer, both retired, his sister is a teacher of Hungarian language and literature.

She graduated from secondary school in 2002 at the "Baróti Szabó Dávid" Secondary School of Mathematics and Computer Science in her hometown.

He started his higher education at the Faculty of Biology and Geography of the "Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca, where he graduated in 2006, and in 2007 he obtained a Master's degree in Regional and Rural Development, also at the "Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca, but now at the Faculty of Public Administration and Management. In 2017, she applied to the Doctoral School of Public Administration at the National University of Public Service in Budapest, where she is now a PhD candidate under the supervision of Dr. László Bajnai PhD.

During his university years, he has been actively involved in the organisation of several academic and cultural student events.

After completing his Master's degree in 2007, he joined the Rector's Office of Sapientia University of Erélyi in Hungary, where he is still working today.

She has fifteen years of professional experience in higher education administration: pre-bookkeeping, bank account balancing, currency exchange bidding, cash management, preparation of financial reports for the Rector's Office, liaison with faculties, control of financial accounts of the sites, keeping records of fixed assets and inventory movements, preparation of certificates, employment contracts, Erasmus+ scholarships.

In 2017, after 10 years in administration, she decided that she could help the intellectual growth of university students by working as a lecturer after completing her doctoral studies, as she decided at a young age that she wanted to work for the common good and for education.

During her time at the Rector's Office, she has also made it a priority to gain international experience, and the Erasmus+ programme has given her the opportunity to see how universities abroad operate, which has broadened her horizons and her professional knowledge.