(Dis)similarities between the urban systems of the former Yugoslav republics

National urban systems are dynamic and subject to constant change, which can be the result of spontaneous development or planned action, while major changes can be caused by changes in administrative boundaries. The observation of the past and present state of the urban system and the search for deviations from certain regularities in terms of population size of the cities within the urban system and their causes are necessary for planning the future organisation of the settlement network in each country. Polarisation, which is expressed in the pronounced population dominance of the capital, is a key feature of urban systems in all former Yugoslav republics, with slight differences in scale. Today's state is mainly the result of an intensive urbanisation process in the second half of the 20th century and the creation of new administrative borders after the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. However, certain dissimilarities in later development could allow interesting conclusions to be drawn about different developmental factors and causal relationships. Against this background, the current hierarchy (vertical dimension), the spatial (horizontal) dimensions and the development of the urban systems of the former Yugoslav republics were analysed in order to assess possible development trends in the future. Prominent approaches for researching and modelling urban systems were used within the study, in particular the Rank-size Rule and the Law of the Primate City. The study is based on available data, including previous and recent censuses (with the exception of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina for the most recent).

**Keywords:** Urban system, Rank-size Rule, Yugoslavia, polarisation