
Destiny of neighbourhoods in post-socialist context

Balázs Szabó^{*1}, Tamás Egedy^{†1}, and Zoltan Kovacs^{‡1}

¹Geographical Institute, Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (GI, RCAES HAS) – 1112 Budapest Budaörsi út 45. Hungary, Hungary

Abstract

The level of residential mobility significantly fluctuated throughout the last two and half decades in Budapest. After the collapse of state socialism, it remained low in the 1990s and started to rise only at the Millennium due to the economic boom and the housing policy changes. The financial crisis stopped this expansion in 2008 but the residential mobility started to increase again some years ago. The real estate prices indicate that the differences between the new, renewing and deteriorating neighbourhoods have become more and more important since 2000. Both the housing investors and the public urban rehabilitation projects have contributed to this differentiation process. The transformation is especially intense in the inner residential zone, where there are completely renewed and deteriorated neighbourhoods, while the change is slower in the low-rise suburbia.

The presentation focuses on the residential mobility in the neighbourhoods with changing physical and social environment. As a first step of the analysis, the real estate prices are used to identify the up- and downgrading residential areas within Budapest. The neighbourhoods where the prices are rising are considered upgrading areas while the decreasing level of prices is regarded as an indicator of downgrading.

The second part of the study explores the socio-economic transformation in these neighbourhoods on the basis of the census data of 2001 and 2011. The comparison of the results of the last two censuses is likely to reveal how closely the modification of social composition in these residential areas is connected to the changing housing price level. The changes of the demographic, professional and educational composition indicate the extent and direction of social transformation. Their thorough examination can lead to an in-depth understanding of the upgrading and downgrading process. It also offers an opportunity to test a series of commonly accepted assumptions like the relatively high and increasing share of the elderly in cheaper neighbourhoods or the intensive and growing presence of the younger middle class in the upgrading quarters.

The third part of the presentation examines how the up- or downgrading character of the residential area is reflected in their subjective image. This is an important aspect because the residential mobility partly depends on the image of the neighbourhoods, on the perception of the up- and downgrading process by the inhabitants. For this purpose, the analysis relies on the results of two surveys carried out in eight different neighbourhoods of Budapest. These surveys included several questions about the local inhabitants' opinion on the changes in their social and physical environment and on the impact of urban development on the local milieu of the quarter.

*Speaker

†Corresponding author: egedy.tamas@csfk.mta.hu

‡Corresponding author: zkovacs@iif.hu

Keywords: urban, residential environment, Budapest