

# Differences beyond homogeneity - Preferred and underestimated housing estates inside a regional centre

Dr. Gabor Nagy<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Rcers Regional Science Institute, Budapest, Hungary*

G16-O3 Real Estate and Housing Markets Issues, August 26, 2021, 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Housing estates became important segments of socialist towns and cities between the 1950s and 1980s. The multi-storeyed blocks of buildings built by prefabricated elements were major instruments to fight against lack of flats in urban centres and improving comfortability level of living.

At the first period, just after finishing the blocks, the housing estates became quite popular for workers' families and young couples, but after a decade, the critical voices became louder. The lack of institutions (child care, schools, retail, personal services), the undersized traffic connections towards workplaces, or with the city centre, the bleak public spaces were the major push factors for families. From the 1990s, there was an ageing process in housing estates and a change of local society, as well. Well off families were moved out, towards family houses in the outskirts, newly built detached or semi-detached, or terraced houses inside the cities.

Reacting the negative trends, the national and local governments began large-scaled programs to renew these blocks of flats with improving insulation, change into more effective heating system, changing windows and doors, elevators, upgrading the electricity network, internet accessibility etc., and in parallel, improving the quality of public spaces around the blocks. After 15 years of the so called 'Panel programme' in certain cities appr. the half of the stock of flats in housing estates were renewed.

In our research project "Transforming local housing markets in regional centres in Hungary" (financed by NKFIH, identity No.: K 131534) we make an investigation in local and sublocal levels to identify the common features and unique characteristics of changes in the non-metropolitan, regional centres. Using a database developed by CSO Hungary, we are able to analyse not just the city-level trends, but identifying the quartier level characteristics, such as activity level, structure of demand, price level inequalities.

As a part of our research, we try to investigate the large scaled changes among housing estates in a non-metropolitan regional centre – Szeged. There are 6 large-scaled units were built up between 1963 and 1990, in different parts of the city. In the first ones, the flat structure is mixed (partly used bricks and pre-fabricated elements), the later ones dominated by the products of local 'house-factory'.

We were interested in, are there any differences in prices comparing the different housing estates by age, location, renovation process, quality of public spaces, accessibility, available institutions, services.