

ARTICULATING AND RESISTING THE CRISIS THROUGH HOUSING

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Keywords: debt, housing, Hungary, territorial inequalities,

Abstract: The economic crisis of 2008 made the – already existing – linkages between local housing markets and global capital flows very clear. My aim is to investigate this link in depth in order to understand the geographically highly differentiated effects of the crisis. Based on the theoretical approach of uneven development my argument is that peripheral regions are – due to their dependent integration in the global economy – more vulnerable to crisis. An important sphere for understanding how this vulnerability is translated to a household or individual scale is that of housing. Housing is the main asset of a household and – especially in globally (semi)peripheral regions – can often only be accessed through the assumption of the disproportionately high risk of a predatory mortgage debt. At the same time, individual and collective strategies for solving one's housing situation are also a potentially important sphere of mobilization against global forces of capitalism.

In my paper I will demonstrate through the case of Hungary how A) peripheralization as a result of economic crisis is produced, enforced and manifested in housing markets; B) how housing directly connects households to global economic flows and dependencies (primarily through debt); and C) what possibilities for strategies of resistance can be identified in the domain of housing.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

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Keywords: economic crisis, periphery, social exclusion, spatial patterns

Abstract: The process of social exclusion influences social conditions in various – often multiply connected – ways. In the case of social groups endangered by exclusion relations with society, with actors of economic life, with institutions or individuals can be degraded by the effect of numerous factors. Processes leading to exclusion are essentially influenced by the attributes and operation of social or welfare systems and the characteristics of economic structures. Besides, social and economic “shocks” like times of crisis might also have a significant impact on risks of social exclusion. Several aspects of the influence of current economic crisis on social processes can directly be revealed by various changes affecting labour market and social service systems. Nevertheless, many indirect effects on wider social conditions might appear only in a long run, and the course and outcome of these processes is still unclear now.

The paper focuses on presenting spatial patterns of social exclusion in Europe related to various domains of the phenomenon (e.g. earning a living, access to basic services, social environment and political participation) by considering the spatial aspects of peripherality at different geographical scales or rurality. Besides, it has an especial regard to socio-spatial changes of the past years in order to investigate the relationship between changing spatial patterns of exclusion and the potential impact of economic crisis. In addition to the identification of current crisis effects, the paper aims to illustrate what are those vulnerabilities which might be critical factors of social exclusion in a longer run.

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY ASSESMENT USING EXPLORATORY SPATIAL DATA ANALYSIS. CASE STUDY: MURES COUNTY

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Keywords: Mures County, social vulnerability, spatial data analysis

Abstract: The uneven development of a certain territory, especially the existing disparities between urban centers and rural areas can greatly determine the population's vulnerability in the face of natural hazards. The increasing importance and attention given to natural hazards in numerous papers at national and international level towards the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century is largely due to the increasing impact of natural phenomena on society as well as the environment, generating at the same time major dysfunctions. Understanding the mechanism and origins of hazardous phenomena and their relation to other factors they influence are indispensable when studying natural hazards and risks, but the socio-economic and environmental dimension of vulnerability which could be influenced by policy interventions and through adequate planning are important as well. The paper examines the social dimension of vulnerability in Mures County using exploratory spatial data analysis in order to determine the presence and location of socially vulnerable groups. The main reason for choosing the mentioned area is given by its agricultural profile and hence the fact that almost all economic activities are related in one way or another to the area's natural resources, often subject to adverse natural conditions induced by natural hazards.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE STATE IN THE ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION (CENTRALISATION, DECENTRALISATION, RECENTRALISATION)

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Keywords: marginalisation, public education

Abstract: The centralised organizational and control mechanisms in place during the era of state socialism had been undergoing continuous erosion even before the change of regimes. In the case of public education this erosion took the form of a peculiar innovational anarchy and a growing disregard for compliance with regulation. The 1990s brought a system based on the decentralised provision of services coupled with a centrally set regulatory framework, and this sustained the possibility of diversity in the organization of education on one hand, while a continuous decrease in government engagement and the polarized nature of the distribution of local potential created vast societal and spatial differences on the other. The new regime set out to address the problem with a policy of recentralisation, but its actions merely substituted the previous dependence on spatially varying performance status with an even greater dependence on central planning and also led to the prevalence of political considerations over professional viewpoint due to the weak nature of community control, while failing to address the persistent lack of funding. The presentation aims to reviews the responses available in such an environment addressing the specific margin regions and peripheral areas.