

EVALUATION OF THE BUILT, SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE HOUSING ESTATES FROM THE GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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The major achievements of the study can be summarised in the following statements:

- Hungary – as far as the number, size and character of her housing estates are regarded – represents a transition between the western and eastern European countries.
- Housing estates in Hungary are concentrated in urban settlements and their distribution – in addition to the regional differences – predominantly varies by settlement categories. Budapest has a pivotal role in the housing estate stock since most of the estates and especially the largest ones are located here.
- The change of the socio-economic regime (1990) was a turning point in the development of housing estates. A devaluation of their prestige has been indicated by the accelerated housing mobility, a rapid fluctuation of the resident population in these quarters and a general intention to move out. Nowadays each third resident would abandon his/her dwelling if he/she could afford it. The main pushing factor is the scarcity of living space.
- The composition of the population is characterised by an imbalance of the demographic structure. In most cases there is an ageing population and in many places a high proportion of single parent households indicate social problems. The population of the estates has an educational level above the average; those living in the quarters built in the 70's have typically lower standard while people residing in estates completed in the late 80's have higher qualification.
- After the change of power a profound transformation of the social environment has taken place and the previous balance of the social pattern has been broken. An outmigration of a relatively well-off cohort between 35 and 45 years has started accompanied with an in-migration of people belonging to the less affluent strata aged between 20 and 30 years (a filtering down process). A stabilisation of the population is under way turning these estates into independent residence classes.
- Due to the above circumstances the housing demand is not likely to decrease in urban settlements in the foreseeable future and this statement is related both to the quality and quantity of dwellings. Therefore the demolition of housing estates is not a real alternative. In spite of this a renewal of the environment in the housing estates is in an embryonic phase and only some local initiatives have been reported. The physical status of the buildings is particularly poor in some estates built in the 70's.
- Since the change of power the structure of services and retailing have not developed basically. The standard of services in post and telecommunications, tourism and insurance has been raised, still there are some serious inadequacies.
- A survey testifies to considerable variations in the physical environment and cleanness of green spaces of the individual housing estates. In this respect there is a distinct difference between the generations of the estates built in the 70's and 80's. Due to a particular heavy environmental load deteriorating green zones frequently occur within the quarters.