

The background of the cover is a monochromatic blue aerial photograph of a city. The city's layout is visible through the white outlines of buildings and streets. A river flows through the lower portion of the image. A pen is positioned diagonally across the bottom right, with its tip pointing towards the center of the cover. The title '[UN]PLANNED CITY' is printed in large, bold, white letters across the middle. In the top right corner, the journal's name 'A&U' is displayed in a large, white, serif font, with 'ARCHITEKTÚRA & URBANIZMUS' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. Further down, the journal's focus is listed in three languages: 'ČASOPIS PRE TEÓRIU ARCHITEKTÚRY A URBANIZMU', 'JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL AND TOWN-PLANNING THEORY', and 'Ročník Volume LIV Číslo Number 1 – 2 / 2020'.

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# [UN]PLANNED CITY

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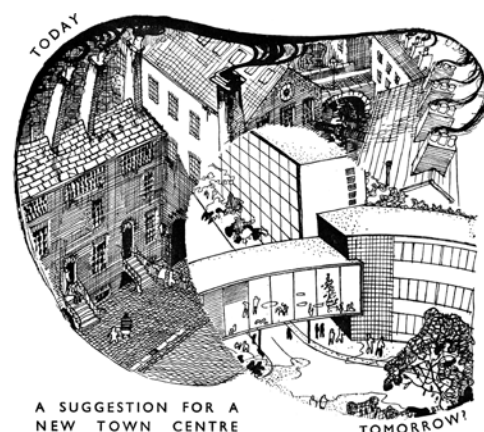
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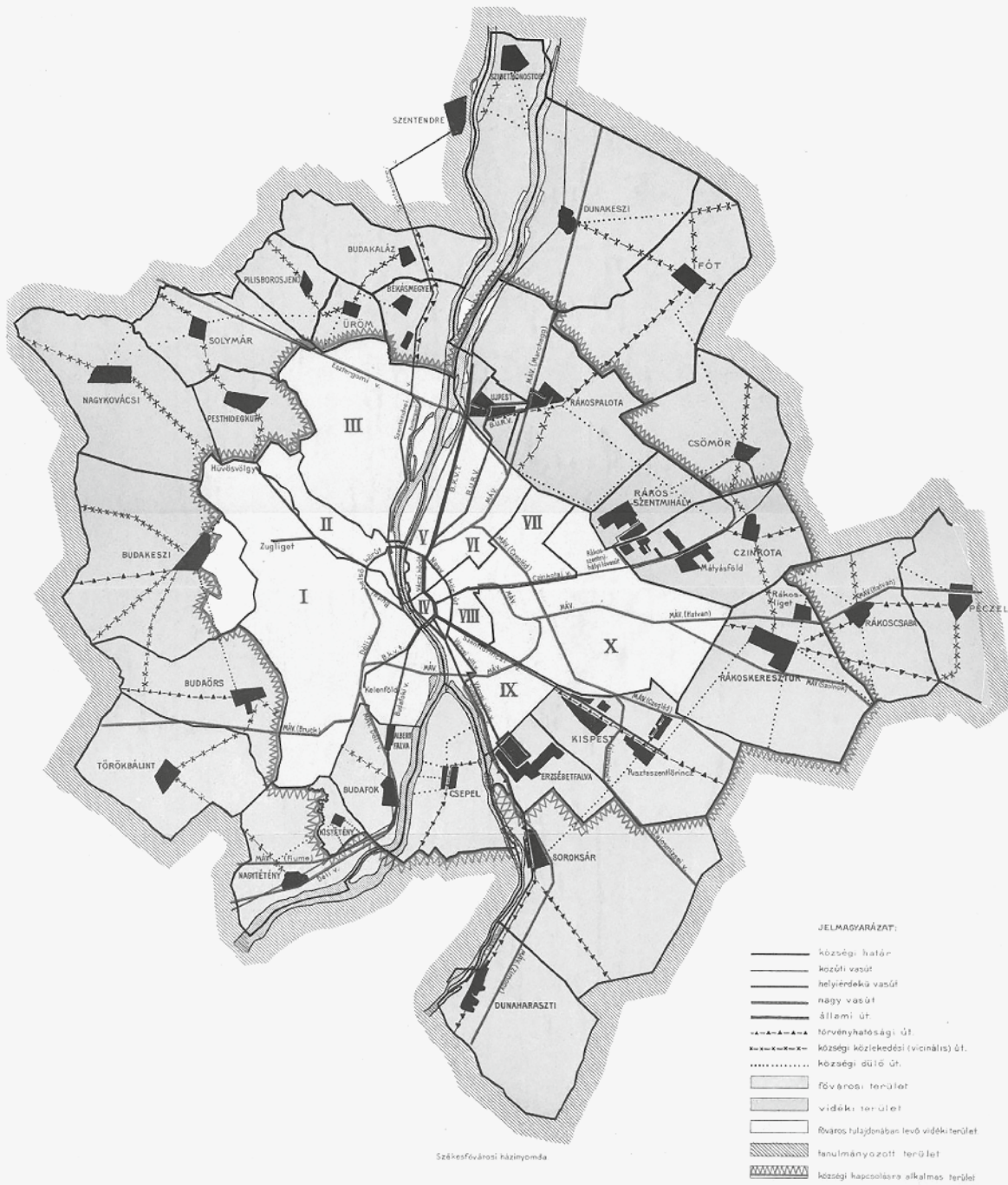
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ROZVOJOVÝ PLÁN BUDPEAŠTI  
Z ROKU 1908, ZOBRAZUJÚCI  
STARÉ USADLOSTI OKOLO "MALEJ"  
BUDPEAŠTI. HRANICE TERITÓRIA  
VEĽKEJ BUDPEAŠTI SA PRED  
JEJ SCHVÁLENÍM V ROKU 1950  
NIEKOĽKO KRÁT MENILI.

**Source** Zdroj: HARRER, József and BÁRCZY, István. 1908. Tanulmány a szomszédos községeknek Budapesthez való kapcsolásáról. Budapest.



# Re-Shaping Budapest: Large Housing Estates and their (Un)Planned Centers

## Pretvoriť Budapešť: veľké sídliská a ich (ne)plánované centrá

Anna Kornélia Losonczy, Regina Balla,  
Hlib Antypenko, Melinda Benkő

Budapešť, hlavné mesto Maďarska, má trinásť veľkých sídlisk plánovaných pre viac ako 20 000 obyvateľov. Všetky boli realizované v priebehu dvoch pätnásť rokov trvajúcich programov hromadného bývania medzi rokmi 1960 a 1990 a významne transformovali územie mesta vytvárajúc nové husto obývané štvrte. Svojou unifikovanou urbanistickou formou sa veľké sídliská stali dôležitými novými časťami metropolitného zlepenca a novým využitím mestského územia predstavujú významnú vrstvu mesta-palimpsestu. Tieto priestorové a časové kontexty odhaľujeme prostredníctvom komparatívnej štúdie zameriavajúcej sa na otázku centrality: na to, ako boli v dobe výstavby sídlisk ich centrá plánované či neplánované a ako sú plánované či neplánované dnes. Aký vzťah panuje medzi starými, modernými a súčasnými plánovanými centrami? Ako sa mení rola a pozícia týchto centier v celkovom systéme budapešťianskych centier? Ako mesto ovplyvňovali či v súčasnosti ovplyvňujú veľké sídliská a ich centrá? Veľké sídliská sú „mestami“ vnútri Budapešti, pričom normálne mesto by malo mať jedno alebo viacero centier. Rovnako je dôležitým aspektom to, ako definujeme centrum a čo predstavuje v rámci každodennej funkčnosti, ako aj fyzického vzhľadu.

Výskum vychádza z prehľadu medzinárodnej a maďarskej literatúry venovanej teórii veľkých sídlisk a mestského centra, ktorú dopĺňa súbor historických a súčasných údajov (zámery a plánovacie dokumenty, publikácie, terénne prieskumy) súvisiacich s predchádzajúcimi plánmi z 50., 60. a 70. rokov a s aktuálnym plánom z roku 2013, ako aj s realitou budapešťianskych sídlisk. Príspevok sumarizuje naše zistenia a vizualizuje meniaci sa systém centier, a to v dvoch rovinách: z perspektívy celkovej mierky Budapešti a následne mierky samotných trinástich sídlisk.

Centrálnosť sa v priebehu času zvykne meniť pomaly. Veľké sídliská realizované v priebehu niekoľkých rokov ako nové „mestá“ rovnako potrebovali nové centrá. Tridsať rokov po konci obdobia socialistického hromadného bývania sa tieto moderné centrá, plánované aj neplánované, realizované či nerealizované,

stali integrálnou súčasťou histórie mesta a veľkou výzvou pre súčasný mestský rozvoj. Podľa aktuálnych mestotvorných hodnôt zdedených sídlisk a tohto výskumu zameraného na ich typy centier môžeme určiť dva hlavné faktory zohrávajúce významnú úlohu pri utváraní ich statusu a potenciálu rozvoja. Prvý faktor súvisí s časom a napriek 40 rokov trvajúceho politickému a ekonomickému zlomu v histórii počas demolačných a obmenných procesov, ktoré zmenili mestskú štruktúru, veľké sídliská s polycentrickým modelom zostali a aj naďalej zostanú v Budapešti v centrálnej pozícii. Sú administratívnymi centrami budapešťianskych mestských obvodov, kde stoja tradičné historické budovy povedľa moderných historických a súčasných budov a verejných priestorov. Druhý faktor súvisí s lokalitou a s výhodným situovaním v rámci mestského zlepenca. Veľké sídliská s dobrou pozíciou neďaleko budapešťianskeho mestského centra a s dobrým dopravným prepojením, dobrými „susedmi“ sa tak môžu stať lokalitami súčasného rozvoja. Ich takzvané dynamické nové centrá v skutočnosti neprihliadajú na pôvodné centrá konkrétnych sídlisk či históriu lokality, fungujú však ako styčné body umožňujúce komunikáciu medzi jednotlivými časťami mesta. V tomto prípade sú moderné sídliská len jedným, no vďaka svojej hustote kľúčovým komponentom pre potenciál rozvoja centra. Ďalšie príklady extrovertných sídlisk s existujúcimi či plánovanými centrami v ich okrajových častiach alebo s centrami nachádzajúcimi sa na významných dopravných tepnách Budapešti, majú skutočne dobrú pozíciu. No izolované, introvertné sídliská s malými dennými centrami uprostred sú pre verejný i súkromný rozvoj nezaujímavé.

Záver výskumu na jednej strane zdôrazňuje dôležitosť individuálneho prístupu k jednotlivým sídliskám v rámci mestského rozvoja, procesov obnovy či tvorby politík vzhľadom na to, že každá životnosť je rozdielna. A na druhej strane zdôrazňuje potrebu dobre koordinovaného mestského rozvoja v aglomerácii Budapešti založeného na danom fyzickom a sociálnom kontexte reflektujú, že mesto funguje ako živý organizmus.

### Introduction

Budapest, the Hungarian capital, contains thirteen large housing estates planned for more than 20 000 inhabitants each. All of them were realized during the two 15-year mass housing programs between 1960 and 1990, and obviously transformed the territory of the city, creating new high-density neighborhoods. Through their unified urban form, large housing estates became significant new parts of the patchwork metropolis,<sup>1</sup> and in their re-use of the urban land, they exist as a powerful layer of the palimpsest city.<sup>2</sup> To discover these contexts of space and time, the present

BUDAPEST'S LARGE HOUSING ESTATES BUDAPEŠTIANSKE VEĽKÉ SÍDLISKÁ			BEFORE 1960 PRED 1960		1960 – 1969		1970 – 1979		1980 – 1990		1990 ONWARDS 1990 ĎALEJ	
name názov	spatial position umiestnenie v priestore	construc- tion výstavba	housing: inherited bývanie: zdedené	center transport centrum doprava	housing: no. new flats bývanie: počet nových bytov	center transport centrum doprava	housing: no. new flats bývanie: počet nových bytov	center transport centrum doprava	housing: no. new flats bývanie: počet nových bytov	center transport centrum doprava	housing: total no. in estate bývanie: celkový počet bytov	center transport centrum doprava

#### C1 Budapest's subcenters in 2013

Budapeštianske subcentrá v roku 2013

Füredi út	<b>small Budapest</b> malá Budapešť	1964 – 82	<b>old</b> starý	village C H8-PM2	527	D/P H8-PM2	10940	R H8-RM2	666	R H8-M2	12276	C1 H8-M2
Kelenföld	<b>small Budapest</b> malá Budapešť	1966 – 83	-	- T	6517	P T-PM4	2437	P T-PM4	343	R T-PM4	9494	C1 T-M4
Óbuda Center	<b>small Budapest</b> malá Budapešť	1968 – 75	<b>old &amp; socialist</b> starý a so- cialistický	town C H5	1175	D/P H5	11684	R H5	670	R H5	15999	C1 H5

#### C2 Budapest's local centers in higher level in 2013

Budapeštianske lokálne centrá vyššieho významu v roku 2013

Csepel Center	<b>outskirt</b> pred- mestie	1968 – 88	<b>old &amp; socialist</b> starý a so- cialistický	town C H7	1166	D/P H7	3092	P H7	6310	R H7	10960	C2 H7
Pesterzsé- bet Center	<b>outskirt</b> pred- mestie	1976 – 83	<b>old &amp; socialist</b> starý a so- cialistický	town C T-H6	1249	D/P T-H6	3663	P T-H6	2908	R T-H6	7971	C2 T-H6
Rákoske- resztúr	<b>outskirt</b> pred- mestie	1971 – 89	<b>old &amp; socialist</b> starý a so- cialistický	village C T	-	D/P T	924	R T	6710	R T	7657	C2 T
Újpest Center	<b>outskirt</b> pred- mestie	1969 – 88	<b>old &amp; socialist</b> starý a so- cialistický	town C T	1091	D/P T-PM3	8355	R T-PM3	7471	R T-RM3	17528	C2 T-M3

#### C3 Budapest's local centers in lower level in 2013

Budapeštianske lokálne centrá nižšieho významu v roku 2013

Békás- megyer	<b>outskirt Danube</b> pred- mestie Dunaj	1971 – 83	-	- H5	-	- H5	7694	P H5	10279	R H5	17973	C3 H5
Havanna	<b>outskirt</b> pred- mestie	1976 – 85	slum	slum	-	- -	2868	P -	3354	- -	6231	C3 -
Kispest Center	<b>outskirt</b> pred- mestie	1977 – 86	<b>old</b> starý	town C -	-	P PM3	3228	D/P PM3	8239	R RM3	11467	C3 M3
Újpalota	<b>outskirt</b> pred- mestie	1968 – 85	-	- -	173	P PM4	15563	P PM4	150	P PM4	15886	C3 -

#### without any central role in Budapest in 2013

bez centrálneho významu v roku 2013

József Attila	<b>small Budapest</b> malá Budapešť	1955 – 81	slum	- -	6826	P PM3	1087	R RM3	242	R M3	8440	- M3
Kőbánya- Újhegy	<b>small Budapest</b> malá Budapešť	1974 – 78	-	- -	-	- -	6352	P -	616	R -	6968	- -

**BUDAPEST'S LARGE HOUSING ESTATES: PERIODIZATION, NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS BUILT, PLANNED AND REALIZED CENTRAL FUNCTIONS. THE ORDER OF THE HOUSING ESTATES FOLLOWS THE ACTUAL RANKING RELATED TO THE ROLE IN BUDAPEST'S CENTER SYSTEM DEFINED BY THE LATEST BUDAPEST DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT IN 2013.**

BUDAPEŠTIANSKE VEĽKÉ ŠÍDLISKÁ: PERIODIZÁCIA, POČET BYTOVÝCH JEDNOTIEK, PLÁNOVANÉ A REALIZOVANÉ FUNKCIE CENTRA. PORADIE ŠÍDLISK ZODPOVEDÁ AKTUÁLNEMU HODNOTENIU PODĽA ICH ÚLOHY V RÁMCI SYSTÉMU BUDAPEŠTIANSKEHO CENTRA DEFINOVANÉHO POSLEDNÝM ZÁMEROM ROZVOJA BUDAPEŠTI Z ROKU 2013.

comparative study focuses on the question of their centrality: how their centers were planned or unplanned at the time of the period of mass housing construction, and how their centers are planned or unplanned today. What is the relationship among the old (if was a historic in the neighborhood), the modern (realized for the housing estate) and the contemporary planned centers? How have these centers changed their role and position in the system of Budapest's centers? How have large housing estates and their centers shaped and continue to shape the city? The research tries to propose a classification for center types that could be used for a better understanding of current spatial, functional and development challenges related to modern large housing estates.

## Case Study Section and Comparison Method

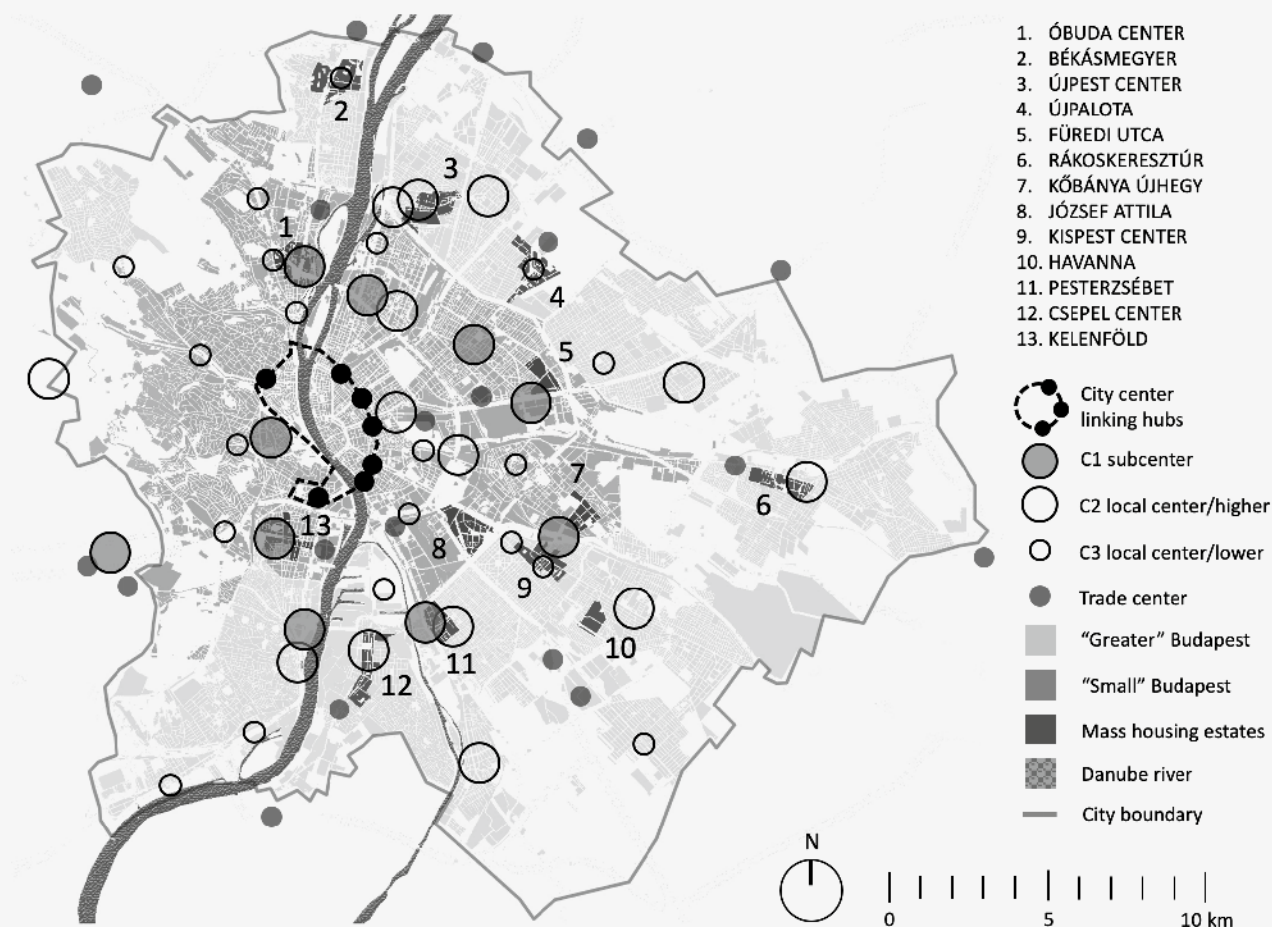
In international comparison, Hungary is a country of "small" housing estates.<sup>3</sup> However, we lack an exact definition of the large housing estate, so as fundamentals we used two different approaches. On one hand, during the state-socialist era,<sup>4</sup> Soviet mass housing concept calculated 3.5 persons per apartment as the normative density<sup>5</sup> and officially more than 20 000 residents formed an institutional neighborhood.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, by the United Nations Statistic Divisions<sup>7</sup> a population of 20 000 today corresponds to a small or medium-sized city. Considering these facts and using existing housing data about the number of constructed dwelling units,<sup>8</sup> we worked with a definition of the large housing estate as an urban development and planning unit – realized in one or more phases – with more than 6 000 flats. As consequence, in Budapest we have thirteen large housing estates that function as institutional neighborhoods, all of which were realized during the socialist mass housing programs between 1960 and 1990.

In consequence, we can recognize that these modern high-density large housing estates form "cities" within the city of Budapest, and that a normal city should have one or more centers. At the same time, it is an important question how we determine the center, what it means in terms of everyday functionality as well as physical appearance. The research is based on a review of international and Hungarian literature on the theory of the large housing estate and city center, previous historic and contemporary data collection (policy and planning documents, publications, fieldwork) related to the previous findings in 1950, 1960, 1970<sup>9</sup> and actual planning in 2013<sup>10</sup>, and the reality of these estates in Budapest.

A summary of the relevant collected data is presented in a table and on a map of Budapest helping in the understanding of the changing dimension and role of these areas. The spatial position reflects the location of the large housing estates. In this category, we can differentiate two cases: five estates realized on land lying outside the former 'small Budapest' (in fact known as the transitional zone of Greater Budapest), the other eight in the outskirts of Greater Budapest that formed a part of the agglomeration before 1950. The construction period indicates the initial year of the planning phase of the housing estate and the year of the realization of its last residential building. In this research, the periodization addresses the site before (till 1960) and after (1990 onwards), and the division of the two 15-year periods of mass housing programs between 1960 and 1990 follows the existing housing data stated in decades.

In addition to population changes and the intensification of the built density through the construction of mostly prefabricated residential buildings and basic facilities (nurseries, primary schools, health centers, small shops), the other important aspect of this research is the change of the more complex central functions: public multimodal transport hub, administrative, cultural, educational (secondary school, higher education), social, large scale shopping facilities, etc. For this reason, the table shows center/transport columns with the following signs: "D" = demolition, means that the previous built environment was partly or totally demolished, "P" = planned or "R" = realized, reflecting the decade when center functions or new high-speed transport connection, stations (T = train, H = HÉV<sup>11</sup> and M = metro, and the number of the line, for example H5 or M2) were opened.

The paper summarizes our findings and provides a visualization of the changing system of centers on two levels: first on the scale of Budapest as a whole, then on the scale of the individual thirteen housing estates. The objectives are to analyze how the realization of large housing estates, these new cities within the city, modified the former position of their land and how the existence of a large housing estate could affect the actual urban development concepts. Last, based on the research we attempted to create a classification for housing estates vs a center system.



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LOCATION OF LARGE HOUSING ESTATES AND BUDAPEST CENTERS DEFINED BY THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN 2013

VZŤAH MEDZI LOKALITOU VEĽKÉHO SÍDLISKA A CENTROM BUDAPEŠTI DEFINOVANÝ MESTSKÝM PLÁNOM ROZVOJA Z ROKU 2013

Authors Autori: A. K. Losonczy, R. Balla, H. Antypenko and M. Benkő

## The Greater Budapest Plan and its Realization in 1950

The idea of the Greater Budapest Plan (GBP)<sup>12</sup> emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, hoping to shape the future Hungarian capital city for 6 million people of a prospering Central European country. But after WWI and the loss of much territory after the Trianon Treaty, Budapest remained "small", confined to the form realized in 1873, and workers and immigrants moved to the settlements surrounding the capital. In this way, the population of the agglomeration grew rapidly during the interwar period. Most of the land of the suburbia developed without control, in which areas of housing, industry, infrastructure, agriculture changed the urban landscape dramatically. In 1946, the *Fővárosi Közmunkák Tanácsa*,<sup>13</sup> the Communal Planning Office of Budapest (1870 – 1948) created a new unified concept to develop the agglomeration for a population of 3.2 million, in which the high-density Budapest city center would be surrounded by a green belt, and the sparsely built-up outskirts function in terms of separate local centers of low-density residential areas.<sup>14</sup>

The plans of the territorial boundaries of Greater Budapest were modified several times following changing political forces, and finally "Greater Budapest", the actual city, was established in 1950. Twenty-three former settlements, mainly on the Pest side, were annexed to "Small Budapest". At the time, seven of them were important towns with developed centers (Budafok, Csepel, Kispest, Pesterzsébet, Pestszentlőrinc, Rákospalota, and Újpest) while the other sixteen were simple villages. Traditionally these settlements had a strong blue-collar worker identity that was enhanced still further under state socialism, alongside their development through creating modern and ideologically appreciated urban values.<sup>15</sup>

## Development of Budapest's Large Housing Estates

The solution to the post-war housing shortage was the standardization, industrialization, and prefabrication of apartment buildings, as well as the construction of large housing estates as

**HISTORIC CITY CENTER,  
SZENTLÉLEK TÉR IN ÓBUDA  
SURROUNDED BY THE ÓBUDA  
CENTER LARGE HOUSING ESTATE,  
1970**

HISTORICKÉ CENTRUM, SZENTLÉLEK  
TÉR V ÓBUDE UPROSTRED CENTRA  
SÍDLISKA ÓBUDA, 1970

Source Zdroj: zoldkalauz.hu



**THE FIRST RESIDENTS ARRIVED  
IN KELENFÖLD IN 1967 AND THE  
CENTER OF HOUSING ESTATE WAS  
OPENED IN 1980, CONTAINING  
A LIBRARY, CINEMA, SHOPS, AND  
OFFICES**

PRVÝ OBYVATELIA PRIŠLI DO  
KELENFÖLDU V 1967 A CENTRUM  
SÍDLISKA S KNIŽNICOU, KINOM,  
OBCHODMI A KANCELÁRIAMI BOLO  
OTVORENÉ V ROKU 1980

Photo Foto: Melinda Benkő, 2018

**THE MAIN SQUARE OF THE  
ÚJPALOTA HOUSING ESTATE  
WHERE THE REAL CENTER WAS  
NEVER REALIZED, 1974**

HLAVNÉ NÁMESTIE SÍDLISKA  
ÚJPALOTA, KDE SKUTOČNÉ  
CENTRUM NEBOLO NIKDY  
REALIZOVANÉ, 1974

Source Zdroj: fortetpan.hu, János Gergely





nationwide policy. Nevertheless, Communist politicians also promised apartments for every family as part of creating a socially just society, and most of the urban planners and construction designers were similarly enthusiastic about utilizing international housing policy, architecture, and planning theory. Generally, under the influence of modernist dogmas, no attention was paid in the renewal process to the earlier physical and social characteristics of the site of new housing developments.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, during the development of Greater Budapest, the first housing estates were planned for areas of the territory of the former Small Budapest that were well-connected but unused or not urbanized; later, the sites were cleared through demolition of well-located central areas or were situated on greenfield areas of the outskirts. In 1950, the year of the creation of Greater Budapest, the first national housing scheme planned to build 75,000 dwelling units by 1960, but the focus was on the development of entirely new Communist industrially-focused cities and not on the capital.<sup>17</sup> In Budapest, the planning and realization of large housing estates started in 1960, through the new General Development Plan (GDP 1960)<sup>18</sup> and the first fifteen-year housing policy (1960 – 1975) reflecting the Soviet-type centrally planned economy. In this first mass housing development period, new housing developments formed a belt around the historic city center of Budapest, in its transitional zone: Kelenföld, József Attila, Óbuda Center, and some smaller estates. This led to the demolition of large areas of former outlying towns and their transformation into additional housing estates: Újpest Center, Pesterzsébet Center and Csepel Center. The use of the word “center” [*központ*] in the names of these planned housing estates reflects their traditional center position.

The professional directives determined a hierarchic structure of the city in which every estate with more than 15 – 20,000 inhabitants had to include urban center elements such as: secondary educational institutions, major shopping malls, sports and cultural facilities.<sup>19</sup> In some cases (for example in Óbuda Center, Csepel Center and Újpest Center), the center of the original town settlement along with a few public buildings was preserved, but in general, the focus was on constructing housing and basic residential facilities. As for the planned complex centers, these were realized later – if at all.

During the preparation period of the second fifteen-year housing policy (1976 – 1990), new professional initiatives appeared: planners and architects strove to find urban and architectural design solutions to realize more flexible plans on the consecutive levels of the neighborhood, building and apartment. The General Development Plan accepted in 1970 (GDP 1970) further increased the number of large-scale residential developments. Time and budget restrictions became more important factors. At the same time, the well-located central areas were developed during the first fifteen-year housing policy, thanks to which most of the new housing estates arose in the outskirts of the capital city. According to the mass housing concept at that time, the calculated normative density was 3.5 persons per apartment. Finally, during the 30-year long mass housing period of state socialism between 1960 and 1990, thirteen large housing estates were constructed with at least 6 000 dwellings in Budapest. As should be evident, these urban interventions dramatically changed not only the structure but also the everyday life-patterns of the city.<sup>20</sup>

These large housing estates could be classified by their relationship to their former land use. Five large housing estates were realized within the border of small Budapest, inside its former exterior (so-called transitional) zone: the sites of the Óbuda Center and Fűredi úti (Rákosszalva) estates were originally historic neighborhoods, József Attila was one of the biggest residential slums of the growing capital, but Kelenföld and Kőbánya-Újhegy were largely unurbanized areas at the beginning of the 1960s. After the realization of Greater Budapest in 1950, five former centers of towns or villages, namely Csepel Center, Kispest Center, Pesterzsébet Center (Pestszenterzsébet), Rákoskeresztúr, and Újpest Center – after drastic demolition of their physical and social environments – became the site of new large housing estates. Only three new estates out of the thirteen were created by slum clearance (e.a. Havanna) or on the greenfield land of the outskirt of Budapest (Békásmegyér, Újpalota).

## The System of Budapest's Centers

After the realization of Greater Budapest, the development concept changed its direction. The new aim was to dissolve the distinction between the city historic core and the annexed outskirts

by applying modern development to the traditional “workers’ districts” and linking them to the center by densification and transport infrastructure – not only using the metro and suburban railway (HÉV) but also cars and buses – along the extant radial roads. The first Urban Development Program of the new Communist Budapest was submitted in 1952 (UDP 1952) and designated five sub-centers in the outskirts: Óbuda, Újpest, Zugló, Kőbánya, and Csepel.<sup>21</sup> But due to financial constraints, the GDP of 1960 limited the new large housing estate development areas to empty plots around the historic city center. So, despite the 1952 Program, the housing development plan did not make any concept for decentralization: as in the pre-war era, the idea was based on the steady decrease of density. Planners then began to assume a Greater Budapest population of 2.3 million people<sup>22</sup> and this number remained until the change of the political and economic regime in 1989.<sup>23</sup>

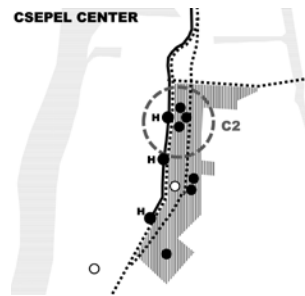
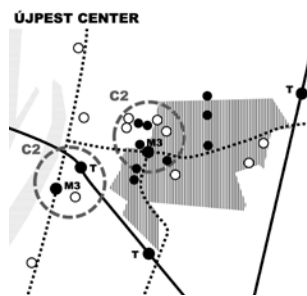
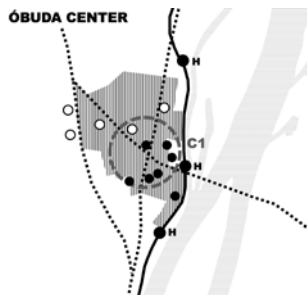
However, the development of the former workers’ settlements became an increasingly pressing issue because their poor human infrastructure (= health, education, nutrition and other services) and rural outlook caused political tension. The idea of forming sub-centers and local centers appeared again in the General Development Plan of 1970<sup>24</sup> envisioning a radial development for the city by integrating the arbitrarily imposed greenfield prefabricated mass-housing estate developments.<sup>25</sup> The GDP 1970 elaborated a two-tier hierarchy: besides the historic core, it designated six sub-centers<sup>26</sup> and sixteen local centers<sup>27, 28</sup>. We can see that the GDP of 1970 applied a different method than the UDP 1952: sub-centers and local centers were positioned along existing or planned railway, HÉV and metro lines and were defined as transport hubs rather than community centers. Large greenfield housing estates -like Újpalota and Káposztásmegyer - that are located far from existing centers appear on this map as local centers, being connected to the city core by planned new metro lines. This shows the aim of forming substantive local centers with new upper-level community facilities.

In the last years of state socialism, professionals often criticized the lack of complexity in the two General Development Plans. They noticed the priority of arbitrary housing project constructions that resulted in developments consigned to peripheral status.<sup>29</sup> Due to financial restrictions and the lack of subsidiarity, the community and cultural facilities of the housing estates were built with long years of delay, and the architectural quality was often far from expectations. It is interesting to note that among several hundred winners of the Ybl Prize (the most important Hungarian award in architecture since 1954) architectural projects for public buildings realized in a new housing estate in Budapest are severely underrepresented.<sup>30</sup> Evidently, the missing central functions of these new neighborhoods indicated a sizeable political discrepancy between the municipality of Budapest and the state.<sup>31</sup>

## Budapest Development Concepts after 1990

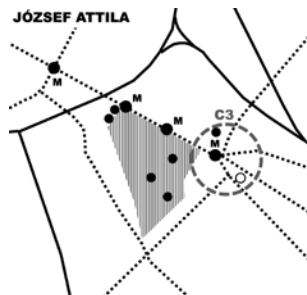
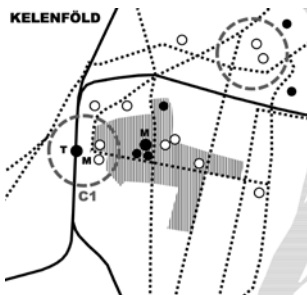
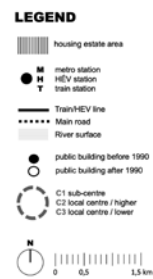
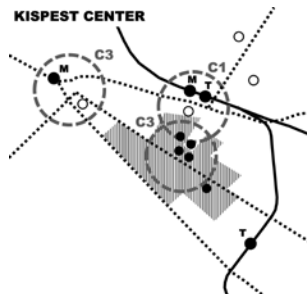
In the centralized socialist era, Budapest did not have its own urban development concept. The State Planning Office<sup>32</sup> made central decisions and shared financial sources. After the change of regime, the first General Development Plan was submitted in 1994, which aimed to define the new strategic goals for the capital city. The GDP of 1994<sup>33</sup> defined the new zoning system of Budapest, identifying five major areas with different urban characteristics and development goals. The inner zone, the historic city center of Budapest, was not targeted with large housing estates, while the transitional zone, i.e. the historic exterior belt of small Budapest, contains six of the thirteen large mass housing estates inherited from the state socialist era: Óbuda Center, Füredi úti, Kőbánya-Újhegy, József Attila, Pesterzsébet Center and Kelenföld. The so-called suburban zone, or more precisely the outskirts of Greater Budapest, is almost equivalent to the 1950 extension area where seven large mass housing estates are located: Békásmegyer, Újpest Center, Újpalota, Rákoskeresztúr, Havanna, Kispest Center (a smaller part of which belongs to the transitional zone) and Csepel Center. A few housing estates are also marginally connected to the Danube zone: Békásmegyer, Óbuda Center and Pesterzsébet Center. The hilly zone, which comprises residential areas and significant nature conservation reserves, contains no large housing estates whatsoever.

The GDP of 1994 was replaced by the new Urban Development Concept (UDC) in 2003 which was modified in 2013. The five zones established in 1994 remain, but the planned centrality system of Budapest has changed significantly. In the UDC of 2003, the city center was surrounded by six sub-centers. The ones termed “centers with intermodal significance” lay in the transitional zone between the historic core and the outskirts or the hilly zone. In addition, local centers were mostly



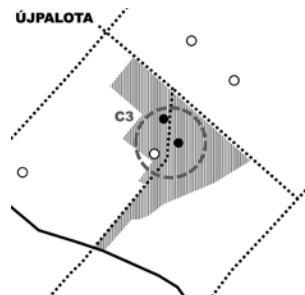
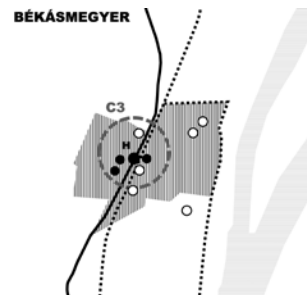
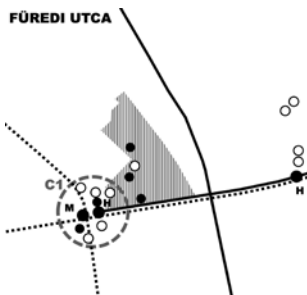
**POLYCENTRIC MODEL:** ÓBUDA CENTER (C1), ÚJPEST CENTER (C2), CSEPEL CENTER (C2), PESTERZSÉBET CENTER (C2), KISPEST CENTER (C3)

**POLYCENTRICKÝ MODEL:** CENTRUM ÓBUDY (C1), CENTRUM ÚJPESTE (C2), CENTRUM CSEPELU (C2), CENTRUM PESTERZSÉBET (C2), CENTRUM KISPESTE (C3)



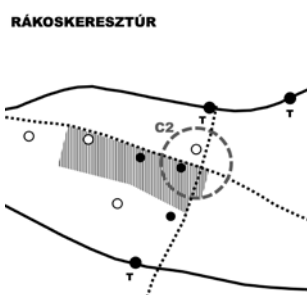
**DYNAMIC MODEL:** KELENFÖLD (C1) AND JÓZSEF ATTILA (C3)

**DYNAMICKÝ MODEL:** KELENFÖLD (C1) A JÓZSEF ATTILA (C3)



**MONOCENTRIC MODEL:** FÜREDI ÚTI (C1), BÉKÁSMEGYER (C3) AND ÚJPALOTA (C3)

**MONOCENTRICKÝ MODEL:** FÜREDI ÚTI (C1), BÉKÁSMEGYER (C3) A ÚJPALOTA (C3)



**ABANDONED MODEL:** RÁKOSKERESZTÚR (C2), KÖBÁNYA-ÚJHEGY AND HAVANNA (C3)

**OPUSTENÝ MODEL:** RÁKOSKERESZTÚR (C2), KÖBÁNYA-ÚJHEGY A HAVANNA (C3)

**Authors** Autori: A. K. Losonczy, R. Balla, H. Antypenko and M. Benkő

positioned in the outskirts and were considered as traditional neighborhood centers in the legislative documents.<sup>34</sup> The development goal of the local centers was to reduce the burden placed on the city core by creating higher-level facilities.

Since the UDC of 2013 was submitted, the city center has been surrounded by six hubs along the Grand Boulevard (Nagykörút), though shifted in their positions when compared to the GDP of 1994. According to the UDC 2013, existing and potential centers require strengthening through development of a network of sub-centers as easily accessible transport nodes which include both workplaces and dwellings. An important characteristic of these centers is mixed-use development that provides varied functionality. The Budapest transitional zone has nine potential sub-centers<sup>35</sup> that can play a major role in creating a polycentric city. In turn, sub-centers require a significant capacity of traffic connections; thus, they can have sectorial influence towards agglomeration, and most of them also function as intermodal hubs. From these nine subcenters, only three are within or on the border of a high-density large housing estate : Óbuda Center (Flórián tér), Kelenföld and Fűredi úti (Örs vezér tere).

The Plan applies a three-tier methodology: apart from sub-centers, the document distinguishes local centers by catchment area. “Local centers on a higher level” are defined as district centers or traditional community centers that have a major capacity of connectivity to the city. The functional criteria are those of local administration, secondary schools or higher education facilities, and the presence of higher-level services. They are positioned both next to the transitional zone and the outskirts, but in case of the large mass housing estates, the hubs in the outskirts<sup>36</sup> are important. The ones termed “local centers on lower level” are defined as neighborhood centers with only basic services that have no effect on the whole city. Four of the thirteen estates with more than 20 000 residents are in this category, and two others have no official center position.

### **Classification of the Center Types in Budapest’s Large Housing Estates**

To compare the actual central position of Budapest’s thirteen large housing estates, and to classify them by actual spatial and functional characteristics, the research focuses on the representation on the housing estate level after consideration of the scale of the city as a whole. Using similar visualization methods, maps show the following components of the urban fabric: the area of the mass housing, the inherited buildings with central functions (city hall, culture center, secondary school, church, shopping mall, market, etc.) in black and new buildings realized after 1990 in white. Train, HÉV or Metro stations are marked (T, H, M), along with the main roads providing connectivity and the contemporary plan related to central position in Budapest: C1 – sub-center, C2 – local center in higher level, C3 local center in lower level.

We can differentiate four types:

#### **The polycentric model**

The five large housing estates representing this type were historic town centers before 1950 with strong local identity. Nevertheless, their administrative center functions were preserved to form one of the 23 district centers of Greater Budapest. They are well connected by HÉV or metro lines to Budapest’s urban core. Some of the historic public institutions were not demolished by housing estate developments in the 60s and 70s, so there is a planned symbiosis between old, modern, and contemporary centrality.

#### **The dynamic model**

The two housing estates that belong to this model are particularly well positioned, being situated close to Budapest’s city center with good metro connection. In their case, besides the good location, development of contemporary urban infrastructure has facilitated the reevaluation of the area to attract private investments as well. Their planned and partly realized new centers are situated on the edge of the large housing estate, previously not intensively used, but these neighborhoods are able to adapt to the changing situation and are future oriented.

#### **The monocentric model**

In the monocentric model, the inherited modern center, realized or partly realized, remains intact, and there is no strong exterior effect – as in the case of the dynamic model – to modify the position of the large housing estate. At Fűredi utca, this center of the housing estate is situated on the



edge, because that point is one of the most important intermodal centers of Budapest, with metro and HÉV stations. In the two other neighborhoods, the center is in the middle of the housing estate area, on the main road, though one, Újpalota,<sup>37</sup> has only a planned metro connection since the 60s.

### **The abandoned model**

In the abandoned model, the main problem of the three large housing estates in Budapest is their poor connectivity, because the planned infrastructure developments were never realized, and higher-level facilities were never built. In addition, these estates lack strong local historic grounding. Thus, these parts of the city function today as isolated islands that struggle with identity crisis searching character.

### **Conclusion**

Normally, urban centrality changes slowly over time, providing one of the fixed points of a multilayered palimpsest city. As a result, large housing estates realized in a short few years as new “cities” at least for 20,000 inhabitants needed new centers as well. Thirty years after the end of the socialist mass housing period, these planned or unplanned, realized or unrealized modern centers became integrative parts of the urban history, yet also an important challenge for contemporary urban development. Matching the current urban values of inherited mass housing neighborhoods with theoretical research related to their center types, we can highlight two main components that provide an important role in their status and development potential.

The first one is related to time: in spite of the 40-year long political and economic rupture in the history during demolition and replacement process changing the urban fabric, large housing estates with a polycentric model have remained and will remain in a central position in Budapest. They are the administrative centers of a Budapest district, where traditional historic buildings coexist alongside modern historic and contemporary buildings and public space. The second one is related to space, in other words their good location within the patchwork metropolis. Consequently, large housing estates in a good position, not at a distance from Budapest’s city center and with good connectivity to it<sup>38</sup> along with good “neighbors”, could become sites for contemporary developments. The so-called dynamic new centers are not particularly connected to the former centrality of mass housing or the history of the site, but they function as shared points to facilitate the communication among parts of the city. In this case, the modern mass housing estate is just one component, if through its density a key one, of the center’s development potential. In other cases, outward-looking housing estates with their inherited or planned centers on the edge, or with their center on a Budapest’s scale transit road are in a quite good position. But isolated, inward-turned housing estates with their small everyday center in the middle have been abandoned by contemporary public and private developments.

The research findings on one hand highlight the importance of the individual approach to every large housing estate<sup>39</sup> in urban development, renewal process, policy making, etc., revealing that every lifespan is different. On the other hand, they highlight the necessity of the well-coordinated urban development on the scale of the Budapest agglomeration, based on the inherited physical and social context that allows the city to function as a living organism.

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## ARCHITEKTÚRA & URBANIZMUS

Časopis Architektúra & urbanizmus uverejňuje štúdie z oblasti teórie architektúry a urbanizmu. Zameriava sa na súčasný stav, históriu, filozofiu a kultúru architektúry a urbanizmu, na otázky ich umeleckého charakteru a na teóriu ich technickej stránky. Zaoberá sa vzťahom architektúry a urbanizmu k umeniu, technike a k životnému prostrediu. Publikuje výsledky sociológie a psychológie architektúry a urbanizmu, sociálnej ekológie, výsledky výskumov z oblasti techniky prostredia a z iných disciplín, ktoré prispievajú k rozvoju teoretického poznania v architektúre a urbanizme. Zaoberá sa ďalej metódami hodnotenia a kritiky architektonickej a urbanistickej tvorby a hodnotením význačných architektov, architektonických diel a období. Publikuje príspevky o výučbe architektúry a urbanizmu, recenzie odborných kníh, ako aj informácie a správy o dôležitých vedeckých podujatiach. Časopis Architektúra a urbanizmus vydáva Historický ústav Slovenskej akadémie vied v spolupráci s Ústavom dejín umenia Akadémie vied Českej republiky.

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The journal Architektúra & urbanizmus provides a forum for the publication of papers on theory of architecture and town-planning. The attention is mostly concentrated on the recent state, history, philosophy and culture of architecture and town-planning, as well as on the problems of their art nature and on the theory of their technical aspects. The published papers deal with the relation of architecture and town-planning to art, technology and environment. They also present research results of architecture and town-planning sociology and psychology, social ecology, environment technology and of other theoretical disciplines which contribute to the development of the theoretical knowledge in architecture and town-planning. The papers further deal with methods of appreciation and criticism of architectural and town-planning activities, as with appreciation of outstanding architects, architectonic works and periods. Papers on architecture and town-planning education, book reviews and information on scientific meetings are involved. The quarterly is published by the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in cooperation with the Art History Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Czech Republic.

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