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Suburbanization in Hungary except the Agglomeration of Budapest

Abstract of the PhD dissertation

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1. INTRODUCTION, PRECEDENTS

The suburbanization is one of the most spectacular regional processes in Hungary in the 1990's and in the first years of the new millennium. There are a lot of new houses, new streets near the largest towns of Hungary in more and more settlements. A lot of those settlements, which are close to the largest towns have migration gain, while the largest towns have migration loss. It is an absolutely new phenomena, before the 1980's the mass urbanization was the main migrational process in Hungary.

It is undisputable, that the suburbanization process is the strongest near Budapest, the process is much more weaker near the provincial towns. Because of it, most of the Hungarian references of the suburbanization deal with the processes near the capital (CSANÁDI, G. – CSIZMADY, A. (2002), DARÓCZI, E. (1999), DÖVÉNYI, Z.-KOVÁCS, Z. (1999), IZSÁK, É. (1999), KOVÁCS, K. (1999), KOVÁCS, Z. (ed.) 1999), VÁRADI, M. (1999)). The processes of the provincial towns have been less known yet (BAJMÓCY, P. 1999c, HARDI, T. 2002, TIMÁR, J. 1994, TIMÁR, J. – VÁRADI, M. 2000). The previous researches of the provincial¹ deals with only one town or sometimes with only one region, so it can be interesting to compare the suburbanization process in the different regions of Hungary. This is the main aim of this dissertation.

There are a lot of definitions of the *suburbanization* process. By our opinion the suburbanization is a decentralization of the urban population and functions. Decentralization, because the urban population and functions

¹ The provincial areas of Hungary means in this case the area except Budapest and its agglomeration.

don't concentrate mainly in the cities, but in the nearby area, and deconcentration because a real out-migration of the people and the activities, functions start. This process is decentralization in the urban areas, but concentration, if we see the development of a whole region or a country.

In harmony with the previous definition the *suburban settlement* is a dynamic settlement near the cities and its dynamism derives in considerable amount from the out-migration of people and their activities, functions from the cities to these settlements.

In this dissertation we would like to answer three questions. First we would like to compare the suburbanization process in different urban areas of Hungary and compare the single villages in the same urban areas. Secondly we try to measure the process of suburbanization with creating special „suburbanization-indices” and specify and classify the suburban settlements. Thirdly we would like to investigate the reasons of the out-migration of the people from the towns to the nearby villages.

2. DATABASE AND METHODS

The database of the dissertation comes from three sources. The statistical database is mainly from the Hungarian Statistical Office (HSO, KSH), from the census of 1990 and 2001, and the statistical yearbooks of Hungary. We have been used different statistical and graphic methods to analyse these data.

We also used the data of our own questionnaires from the local governments of 345 settlements near the largest Hungarian towns. We chose these settlements by the statistical data (population change, net migration, etc.).

At least we also used the database of the questionnaires of the population of these villages. With the students of the University of Szeged we asked almost 1500 families in the villages near almost all of the largest towns of Hungary.

3. SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

3.1. SPECIFYING THE SUBURBAN VILLAGES

First we wanted to specify the suburban villages of the provincial part of Hungary. There are no data about the direction of the migration, so we can not measure the quantity of the suburbanization directly. We have to use indirect indices to measure and specify this process.

(I) In the first main part of the dissertation we see some main statistical data (population growing rate, migration-rate) about the suburbanization. Almost all of the settlements near the towns are quite good in these indices (*Figure 1.*), but a lot of other settlements as well. For example there are settlements with huge tourist facilities, or with large gipsy population and all of them have population growth as well as some Western and North-eastern settlements of Hungary.

So these indices are not enough to measure the suburbanization and to specify those settlements where the suburbanization is important. The combination of these indices is not enough as well. After that we investigated some other indices (number of cars, personal income, house-building, etc.), which are relatively good in the areas near the towns too. These indices alone are not enough to measure the suburbanization, too. But

all of these indices are high at the settlements lying nearby the largest cities, and none of other settlements have good value at all these indices.

(2) At least we made a *complex suburbanization index* with the combination of eight previous indices. It was quite good to specify the suburban settlements, but there was a problem with this index. Because of the large regional differences of some indices it is possible that a settlement is dynamic in a region, but not dynamic in the whole country, so this index is unsuitable to specify the suburban settlements in the whole country.

(3) It was possible, that we can use this complex index in a single region or a county, so we tested it with the settlements of Fejér county. We also used a gravity index as well and we could specify the urban, dynamic settlements with the combination of these indices, but we do not know anything about the source(-settlement) of the migration, so we do not know, if this migration is suburbanization or not.

(4) We need empirical surveys to solve this problem. We made questionnaires at 345 local governments of those villages, which are close to the largest Hungarian towns, and which have migration-gain. 70% of those local governments, who sent back the questionnaire (230, 67% of the 345) said, that there is out-migration from the nearby town to that village. These villages can be the potential territory of the suburbanization.

(5) With the results of the local governmental questionnaires and the statistical data it was possible to specify better those settlements which are influenced by the suburbanization process. We used the migrational and personal income data, the location of the settlements, and two questions from the questionnaires of the local governments. (Is there any migration from the nearest town to your village? Do you know any other settlements nearby with in-migration from the nearest town?)

We made seven types of settlements by the statistical and local governmental data (*Figure 2*). This dissertation deals with the suburbanization in the provincial part of Hungary, so we did not see *Budapest and the settlements of Pest county*. Those became „*certain suburban*” settlements, where both the statistical data and the local government said that it's a suburban village. There are 215 „*certain suburban*” villages around 33 towns of Hungary (except Budapest). Most of these settlements are near Pécs (24), Győr (21), Székesfehérvár (18), Szombathely (16), Miskolc (15), Kaposvár, Szeged and Veszprém (13-13). 7% of the Hungarian settlements except Pest county belong to this group.

There were 232 „*uncertain/weak suburban*” settlements, where only one of my two main information-sources (statistics or local-government) said that the settlement suburban. These settlements are nearby the largest towns, but a little bit further than the previous group, but some of them are near some middle-sized towns, where is not any certain suburban settlement (near Salgótarján, Dombóvár, Hódmezővásárhely).

There were 71 settlements near the border of Pest county (in Fejér, Komárom-Esztergom, Bács—Kiskun, Heves and Nógrád counties), which are dynamic settlements, but mainly because of the nearness of Budapest, these are the outer part of the agglomeration of Budapest.

The other settlements, were not the statistics, nor the local governments said, that they're suburban settlements make the large group of *rural (non-suburban) settlements*. 76% of all the settlements belong to this group, some of them with in-migration or increasing population, but not because of the suburbanization.

We divided the centres of the suburbanization into two groups. The first group is the group of *certain suburban centers*, where there are at least

two certain suburban villages nearby the town. There are 25 certain suburban centres, all the municipalities except Salgótarján and Hódmezővásárhely, but also Mosonmagyaróvár, Ajka, Baja, Tiszaújváros and Gyöngyös.

The number of *uncertain/weak centers* is 20 (with only one certain or some uncertain suburban settlements nearby), some of these centres are near an other larger town, where the boundaries of the suburban zones are not clear. Most of them are at the border of the agglomeration of Budapest (Hatvan, Jászberény, Esztergom), and at the classic urban zones (Tatabánya-Tata-Oroszlány, Veszprém-Várpalota-Székesfehérvár, Szombathely-Kőszeg, Pécs-Komló, Kaposvár-Dombóvár, Miskolc-Szerencs-Kazincbarcika).

3.2. SUBURBANIZATION BY THE ASPECT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

(6) Almost half of the settlements (from the 230, who sent back the questionnaire for the local governments) subsidize the in-migration, but on the Transdanubian part of the country a bit more. The most common form of subsidizing is the cheap building plots supplied with public utilities or supporting the house-building. Only half a dozen local government prevent the in-migration, all of them are in very nice environment and with large amount of a national minority (Germans, Slovaks, Croats).

(7) The largest group of the migrants were the families with little children (according the data of the local governments), but at the most developed Middle- and Western-Transdanubian Regions the intellectuals were the largest group. The entrepreneurs were also an important group,

mainly in West-Hungary, while the pensioners in South-Transdanubia and Eastern-Hungary. In Western-Hungary the rate of the richer out-migrants (the rich, intellectuals, entrepreneurs) is much larger than the poorer (the poor, gipsies, pensioners), while in Eastern- and South-Hungary the poorer out-migrants are in majority. So in this case the urbanization process of Eastern-Hungary in the 1990's is similar to Eastern-Europe, and in Western-Hungary is similar to Western-Europe.

(8) There is not just residential suburbanization around the large cities of Hungary, but industrial, commercial and recreational as well. But the gap between the agglomeration of Budapest and the other towns is larger in these processes than the residential suburbanization. There are only some discos, petrol stations, restaurants, some small factories in the villages near the larger Hungarian towns. In the contrast of it, the recreational suburbanization is quite common in the provincial part of Hungary as well.

(9) Most of those people who moved out from the towns to the nearest village use to go back to the town to work or for some services, so the connections between the towns and the suburban settlements are very strong. Only 55% of the local governments said, that the suburbanization is important for the development of the settlement. So almost half of the settlements near the larger towns do not think that the suburbanization is important for them (or do not know, what the word means). There are not large regional differences in this case, and the local government's view about the suburbanization has not a strong connection with the migration rate of the settlements either.

3.3. MOTIVATIONS OF THE RESIDENTAL SUBURBANIZATION

The next part of the dissertation deals with the motivation of the out-migration from the towns to the nearest villages. By our opinion the main (but not the only) reason is the need of the consumers, what they want, where they want to live. We asked almost 1500 households in 24 different urban areas of Hungary with the geography students of the University of Szeged. The questionnaires aimed at those households, which migrated out from the towns to the nearby villages in the last decade. We asked questions about the date of the migration, the living facilities in the previous and the actual house, the reasons of migration and the reasons of the settlement choosing. We chose the households with random sampling by the data of the local governments. At least we have 1226 useable questionnaires from the out-migrant families. Most of the questionnaires are from nearby villages from 24 of the largest Hungarian towns, but some of them are from settlements in the administrative area of the towns, because of the speciality of the Hungarian urbanization (suburbanization inside the administrative area of the towns).

(10) Most of the out-migrants are with secondary-school certificate or diplom. So it is true even in the provincial part of Hungary, that most of the out-migrants are from the higher groups of the society or at least they have higher school degree.

(11) On the other hand most of the out-migrants came from block of flats and now living in a family-house with garden, so the living facilities of these families changed drastically with the migration.

Why do people move out from the large towns to the villages (and small towns) near the towns? The main reasons are economical. The price of the building plots is very expensive in the towns and much cheaper in the villages. It is very important, that the people move out from the towns to the villages, but the working-places are still in the towns, mainly in the centres of the towns. The transport facilities are in key position. The other forces are in connection with the circumstances of life and the environment. The time of the suburbanization process is the time of the "rural renaissance" as well. We can enumerate the advantages of the villages and the disadvantages of the towns at great length. But the „rural renaissance" is not so important reason in Hungary than in Western-Europe. An other main reason was that people want private houses (probably with garden) and they can buy or built it easier in the suburban villages, than in the towns. In the towns there is not lot of new place for building plots especially for large ones, so to build a new house is easier in the villages than in the large towns. The out-migrant people said that the main difference is at the environmental position of the villages and the towns, but the service facilities was much better in the towns. The main difference is not at the view of the different towns, but at the view of the towns in contrast of the villages.

4. CONCLUSIONS

We think we could take a picture about the specialities of the suburbanization in Hungary except the agglomeration of Budapest.

The main achievements of the dissertation are: we could specify those urban areas and settlements, where we can see this process, we could contribute to the recognition of the motivations of residential suburbanization in Hungary, and we could investigate the statistical characteristics of the suburbanization in Hungary.

The process of suburbanization will continue. More and more settlements will join to the phenomena. It will be a long-lasting process, so we have to take it into consideration when we make plans for the near and the distant future development of the larger towns and the nearby settlements.

The dissertation has 119 pages with references, list of figures, 26 figures, 4 inserts a Hungarian and an English summary.

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