



**Doctoral School of
Sociology**

THESES
of the doctoral dissertation by

Júlia Egyedné Gergely

**The opportunities of local governments to influence the processes of
suburbanization**

**The spatial form of suburban effects, and the possible reasons behind the
differences – investigating the Agglomeration of Budapest**

Supervisor:

Iván Tosics PhD

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Institute of Sociology and Social Policy

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1. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

1.1. INTRODUCTION

There have been significant social and economical changes in the agglomeration around Budapest in the last more than two decades. One of the most determining causes of these changes was the great number of residential and institutions moving to the settlements of the suburban area – mostly from Budapest. Nevertheless the process of suburbanization was unevenly spread over the agglomeration. There are several causes behind the phenomenon: from the historical or landscape historical peculiarities through geographical conditions to settlement-strategies responding to the processes of suburbanization.

Among the many possible reasons the main focus of interest is the role of the local governments, and the possible actions the leaders of each settlement could take.

The antecedent of my Ph.D. research is my thesis which was about the segregation among the settlements in the suburban area around Budapest. That research and its results inspired me to investigate further. In my thesis I was dealing with social changes in the last two decades (between 1980 and 2001). Now I try to go further than that. On one hand I extend my research with the more than one decade that has passed since then, and I discuss the antecedents as well. On the other hand I approach now from governmental side. In this research I will present the Agglomeration of Budapest not only descriptively but I also make an attempt to explain the different intensity and character of moving to the suburbs, and the inequalities of the area. I investigate primarily the role of the local governments and the possibilities of local leaders influencing the processes of suburbanization.

The different aspects of the field were and are investigated by many noted urban researchers so there is a great number of scientific literature in the topic. Moreover on this continuously varying area there is always something new to be investigated. This present research can contribute to results up till now as it can give some new knowledge expanding the earlier ones about the suburban period of the Budapest Metropolitan Area, especially about the local leaders' role.

1.2. TOPIC

Thus the research introduced in the study discusses the shaping of the Budapest Agglomeration's social-economic structure, the growth of the settlements and the reasons behind regional differences, primarily the role of local governments.

One of the aims of this research is to present the inequality of the settlements' growth. The other intention is to explore its reasons. In search for the reasons the primary research fields are the local governments, enquiring whether the extent of moving to the settlements were affected by the conscious decisions of the leaders.

The 'prehistory' of the suburban area around Budapest is related to this topic as well: questioning that the different settlement-development in the suburban period is how related to the preceding events. Furthermore the current status of the settlements is also related to the topic: locating the Agglomeration of Budapest among the urban development stages and analyzing the recent processes in the suburban area, and the role of the leaders in it.

The period which was particularly studied is the last more than 20 years, namely the period of the 'modern' suburbanization, but the analysis also touches upon the earlier decades and the most recent events. The analysis covers all the officially stated settlements in the suburban ring.

1.3. RELEVANCE

Budapest is the capital of Hungary, the most populated and important city of the country, thus the area around it has national, moreover European influence.

The special literature (Csanádi-Csizmady, 2002, Gerőházi-Szabó-Tosics, 2002, Szirmai, 2004) agree that there have been suburbanization processes in the agglomeration around Budapest in the last more than two decades.

However it seems from the data available (e.g. annual data by settlements of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office), as well as more and more essays suppose that this era is coming to an end by now (Ongjerth 2002, Kovács 2006, Csanádi et al, 2009, Szirmai 2011, Váradi-Hamar-Koós 2012, Kovács-Tosics, 2014). Lately the former en mass moving out of the city to the neighbouring villages and towns has relapsed, while moving back to the capital from some agglomeration

settlements has started. The change of the era results in a retrospection and the over- and rethinking of the processes which were characteristics to this period.

One of the most interesting characteristics of the suburban period in the Budapest Agglomeration, and of the social-economical transformation in the area is the variation of the settlements differing much from each other, which is primarily due to the different migration intensity, and which was discussed in many essays lately (Dövényi-Kovács 1999, Váradi 1999, Csanádi-Csizmady 2002, Tímár 2005, Szirmai 2007, Szirmai 2009). Since both residential and economical migration differently affected each township in that area.

Some settlements had a dynamic growing population, while others had moderate growing, stagnating or even declining population. Moreover higher-status people and lower-status people had different destinations in the agglomeration (Kok-Kovács, 1998, Csanády-Ladányi, 1992).

Beside the settlement changes, moving institutions is also an important part of the suburbanization era, the appearance of new economic units has great influence on the life of each community. What bases companies choose, shows as a various picture as the motion of dwellers: popular and less popular settlements are located next to each other.

Thus settlements in the Budapest Agglomeration attracted settlers to different extent; accordingly they grew variously in the last decades.

Out of the above mentioned different possible causes, the present research examines the role of the local governments in details. Community leaders could certainly react to the processes of suburbanization. The procedure had serious consequences for the lives of the dwellers therefore it did matter at what pace and what way it progressed. The leaders could draw up concepts and elaborate strategies to supervise or influence the processes: helping or delaying immigration. Namely the attitude of the local governments towards settling down could diverge. Supposedly the governments not equally wanted to and were able to attract the dwellers and institutions, and their strategy was not so evenly successful either.

When suburbanization period of the agglomerations is analyzed, the decision-makers' world and the local governments' 'contribution' made to run processes are among the rarely studied areas (e.g. Tosics 1998, Gerőházi-Szabó-Tosics 2002, Tosics-Ravetz, 2011, Kovács-Tosics, 2014). Researching the society and economics of the Agglomeration of Budapest is a very relevant task. Inquiring about the changes in the last decades and analyzing the most recent tendencies may help us understand the current and predict the future proceedings. Mapping of the roles of local governments can help us understand some of the reasons underlying, or rather define the future possibilities and working strategies of the settlements.

1.4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The paper would like to frame the project in two main theories. To become acquainted with the present growth of Budapest Agglomeration and in the last 20 years, and investigating the stage-boundaries, urban development models – especially suburbanization phase – can guide and give a starting point. Moreover introducing the theoretical background of urban development may help to understand what situation and phenomena the leaders encountered with at the beginning of the '90s, at the very start of suburbanization, and what effects were taken on townships afterwards.

On the other hand, theoretical considerations of the regional sciences (regional development, regional governance) and becoming acquainted with the regulation background can help quest the leaders' potential and applicable means.

The chapter, which introduces urbanization theories in the paper, first reviews the ecological and the historical urban development models (Ladányi-Szelényi, 1997, Tosics, 1998, Tosics-Gerőházi-Zsámboki, 2000). In the former one Peter Hall's model consisting of six, Leo van den Berg's model with four and György Enyedi's model also with four phases of urban development are mentioned. Then it is followed by the reconsideration of classical theories which contains the most recent statements and theories of the researchers of the topic. In this chapter among others Castells', Sassen's, or György Enyedi's new conceptions are indicated.

The urbanization theories are followed by the detailed introduction of suburbanization phase characteristics, as the experts agree on that that in Budapest and in its neighbourhood

suburbanization processes launched after the political transformation, therefore it is needed to be taken as basis in analyzing the domestic urban development.

After the general introduction of suburbanization period, presentation of its Hungarian characteristics follows. According to the paper the Hungarian urban development differs from western or - thought to be - global tendencies in many ways. Though it may be stated with good reason that Budapest and its Agglomeration stepped into the suburbanization urban development phase at the beginning of 1990s. This was a new situation both to the lives of the capital and to its neighbourhood – the latter were set to new development and growth and their leaders were given new situations, possibilities and problems.

The paper deals with regional policies, local governance and regional development as well. These parts contain theories of settlement policies, settlement development, regional system and regional asset (Rechnitzer-Smahó, 2011, Lados, 2009, Kocsis, 2009, Csanádi et al, 2010), the elements of regional development (Lackó, 2009), moreover the demonstration of the local governments' resources and means, and the governmental regulations. Growth or development of a given settlement is basically based on its specificities, its leadership and the state regulations. Thus the effects of the suburbanization may depend on the settlement management as well.

2. METHODOLOGY

Applying quantitative and qualitative methods the research would like to explore (1) what have affected the suburban areas regarding city development, moreover (2) what opportunities the local governments had and utilized to influence suburban processes and how successful they were in them.

2.1. DATA

In the quantitative part there are many data from different sources which can be handled merged as they are not based on samples. The main data source was the T-STAR database (Hungarian Central Statistical Office), but there are data also from the Hungarian State Treasury, the National Labour

Office, the National Tax and Customs Administration of Hungary, the GeoX, the CORINE, the Cdata Ltd., the GKIE NET Ltd., and the Hungarian Public Road Non Governmental Private Company.

In the qualitative part there are four case-study demonstrations of four chosen settlements in the suburban area. In this case the following data sources were applied:

- personal interviews with leaders and with people who are familiar with the given settlements
- field work: getting acquainted with the settlements by personal visits and photographic documentation - record characteristic street views
- analysis of media and other written documents: strategies, scripts, essays, minutes of sessions by body of representatives, resettlement plans, home pages of the settlements, local papers

2.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS, HYPOTHESES AND METHODS

The paper would like to answer to how the settlements in the Agglomeration of Budapest have been affected by the processes of suburbanization since the beginning of 1990s, what differences and inequalities can be observed in this area and what causes can be behind these. In search for the reasons this paper primarily investigates the governmental side.

The research questions and the hypotheses of the research:

Research question 1: What does it depend on, that the process of suburbanization how and to what extent affected a settlement in the last two decades?

Hypothesis 1.1: To what extent the process of suburbanization affected a settlement, depended mostly on geographical conditions (location) and vehicular accesses to Budapest.

The closer an agglomeration settlement was situated to the capital, the more popular it was among those who left Budapest, and therefore more settlers were accommodated there.

Hypothesis 1.2: To what extent the process of suburbanization affected a settlement, depended significantly on the strategy of local leaders towards immigrants. It did matter whether the local leaders had strategies for it, and if yes how detailed and grounded they were.

Research question 2: How could the community leaders influence the degree of moving into and away from their settlements?

Hypothesis 2.1: The community leaders could primarily motivate the moving into their settlements by infrastructural and institutional improvements. Supposedly the more developed a settlement is (regarding its infrastructure and institutional supply), the more settlers it can attract.

Hypothesis 2.2: The success of settlement leaders facilitating immigrations greatly depended on their attitudes. Supposedly to acquire, select and successfully apply the tools available depended largely on the decision makers' skills, inventiveness and aptitude.

Research question 3: How did the dynamism of the process of suburbanization change?

Hypothesis 3.1: One of the main reasons of the slow-down of the process of suburbanization is the local leaders' intervention to reduce immigration. In addition to the economical crisis and the increasing number of people in the agglomeration, local leaders had a great affect too of the slow-down – influenced by the changes of governmental regulations.

2.3. ANALYSIS

The paper has two main units: one is a quantitative description, the other one - combining both quantitative and qualitative methods - searches for answers. (For connections between them and the applied variables see Table 1). The previous one presents the extent of suburbanization (growth of the settlements), the latter one searches for answers to the variances emerged. While the quantitative part uses databases to find causes, hereby indirectly the leaders' 'theoretical' opportunities, then the qualitative part maps the decision-makers' specific strategies with deeply analyzing some characteristic settlements. Therefore the latter one examines whether the previously found 'theoretical' opportunities appeared in practice, and, moreover, it studies what other means were possessed by the local government leaders, how efficient they were by utilizing them, and how they evaluate their current status.

The descriptive part of the analysis demonstrates the spatial presence of the processes of suburbanization and its fluctuation with the review of special literature (Beluszky, 1999, Barta-Beluszky, 1999), along with application of charts and maps. The two main periods: till the 1990s and from the 1990s till today. Beside the presentation with traditional methods, by the help of applied variables such an index got into shape which presents the effects of suburbanization (growth of the settlements) after 1990s. The examined nearly twenty years are divided into four shorter periods.

In this present research suburbanization effect expressly means growth, which extends to residential and economical growth as well. Thus suburbanization index would like to embrace these two areas. For this two pairs of variables seemed to serve the purpose the best. The first measures the residential in-moving with migration balance and the second one measures the economical growth with the change in number of ventures. The adequate variables have been adopted in the model as absolute and relative indexes.

Thus suburbanization index consists of the following variables:

- migration balance
- migration balance per 1000 inhabitants
- number of new ventures
- rate of new ventures

To get the index the aforementioned variables first needed to be totalized for each interval, then to take their annual average, and finally to be standardized. After that the suburbanization index measuring settlement growth came from the total of so converted variables. The index assigns a value to every settlement, the greater this value is the more expansive growth there was in that given settlement in a given period.

If the settlements are arrayed according to the index, we get an order of settlements according to their growth for every interval. On the basis of settlement classifications 5 settlement groups evolved in every period, which are presented in detail in the research.

The paper briefly reviews the distribution of the above mentioned 5 groups in each period, and in the whole interval. Keeping track of the settlements and settlement groups it is revealed that they have taken divergent ways from the 1990s till today.

The next chapter tries to set up such an explanatory model which defines the differences of the settlements introduced in the descriptive part with diverse variables.

The number of people, families or ventures that move to a given settlement can depend on several factors. Each local government can try to influence the process in different ways (e.g. infrastructural improvements, expansion of estate supply), however there are some unchangeable conditions (e.g. geographical situation), or rather such factors which are beyond the supervision and influence of the local governments (e.g. situated next to a motorway, commuting facilities to Budapest).

The possible influential factors examined in the research are the followings:

- Population growth before 1990
- Status at the beginning of the 1990s
- Vehicular, delivery facilities
- Infrastructure
- Educational institution services
- Medical institution services
- Cultural institution services
- Commercial units
- Geographical location

The next step was to examine the correlation coefficients of these and the suburbanization index characteristics to the whole period.

According to the results the growth-related factors can be divided into three larger groups: institutional supply at the beginning of the 1990s, vehicular accesses and earlier population growth.

Then the research examines the shorter periods in a similar way. According to the analysis in all periods the obvious average or rather a little weaker correlation of the suburbanization index appears at the institutional supply and access to Budapest in the given period. This is no longer the case with population growth before 1990: the farther we get from the starting date 1990, the less determining the previous population growth is. Though, by examining each period one by one, variables measuring status appear in the growth-related factor group. It seems that from the mid-suburbanization period the status could have been determinant. The better situation a settlement was in, the more migrants and ventures were welcomed.

In the next part of the analysis, the examination of the villages and the towns can be read. After dividing the two groups of settlements, this chapter examines the potential influential factors by correlation coefficients again. By this it turned out that leaders of towns could favor possible immigrants by institutional developments and improvement of transport facilities, while leaders of villages could favor them by the improvement of the accessibility.

Quantitative research was followed by qualitative analysis to explore what the local leaders perceive from all these, what tools they possess are good for, how the above mentioned ones appear in practice, and what other means they could adopt.

On the basis of the previously adopted settlement-order the following step was to choose such towns and villages which have been distinctly improving in the last 20 years. Finally such 2-2 settlements were chosen which are located next to each other but developed diversely. These are Pilisborosjenő and Üröm, on the western side of the agglomeration area, near to Budapest, and Veresegyház and Vácrátót which are situated on the eastern side and farther on Budapest.

These settlements, of course, started improving not totally equally (though in many ways similarly) at the beginning of the 1990s, at the start of suburbanization. But today they are completely elsewhere regarding their states of development, number of population and economic situation.

The paper reviews the situation, development, history of the four settlements in detail, putting particular emphasis on the operation, objectives and strategies of the local government leadership.

After the case studies, today's situation of the Agglomeration of Budapest is overviewed in few words and the paper ends with the possible future scenarios. The chapter is partly based on the results of the quantitative descriptive part, and partly draws lessons from case studies.

3. RESULTS

The main target of the survey was to study those means of the local governments in the suburban area which had effect on the processes from the beginning of the 1990s till the second part of the 2000s. Therefore the paper dealt on one hand with urban development processes in general, and their Hungarian characteristics, the processes of suburbanization in the examined two decades, and on the other hand with the strength of decisions made by settlements' leaders.

3.1. SUBURBANIZATION IN THE AGGLOMERATION OF BUDAPEST

The suburbanization period of Budapest lasted from the beginning of the 1990s till the second part of the 2000s. The suburbanization effects formed differently in the case of the settlements and in the case of the shorter periods.

As you can see from the results there was a real shift during the last two decades, and the emphasis was put from the Buda side to the northern east side of Pest.

According to the results suburbanization slowed down. It is obvious that people's moving to the suburban areas moderated in the previous years, while moving back to Budapest intensified. Thus the paper proved again that suburbanization ended or at least slowed down.

3.2. REASONS BEHIND THE DIFFERENCES

During the analysis that hypothesis was justified which stated that the distance from Budapest is related to how the process of suburbanization affected that given settlement. The settlements which can be reached easier unambiguously were in better positions to receive newcomers.

But, according to the analysis it also turned out, that there are still three important factors which were related to suburban effects: the institutional supply at the beginning of the 1990s, the

economic and financial position of the settlements at the beginning of the 1990s and the earlier population growth.

The case studies revealed that there were some means which the local leaders could take to influence the processes of suburbanization. The most significant of these were land policy and institutional and infrastructure development. According to experiences the attitude of the local government leadership had a key role in questing for possible local means and in their successful usage. The main elements of this attitude are the followings:

- consciousness of local government leadership
- cooperation among local government leadership
- extension and usage of local leaders' relationship network
- 'courage' of local government leadership
- creativity of local government leadership

Thus the paper states that, though the way of development of each settlement was greatly defined by vehicular accesses and the situation at the beginning of the 1990s, still the local leaders could/were able to change it through their own strategies – primarily by land policies and institutional or infrastructure development.

Moreover it was revealed that the settlement-leading strategies connecting to migration differed from each other at a great extent, regarding not only their goals and means, but also how deliberate, perspective or detailed they were. This significant difference had an effect on how successful they were. However the paper highlights that the local leaders basically set up their strategies in line with how to develop their communities the most – primarily infrastructural, and not because they wanted to attract newcomers or new ventures. During these strategy discussions they concluded that the reception of people or ventures can be a good method for that.

3.3. REASONS BEHIND THE STAGE-BOUNDARIES

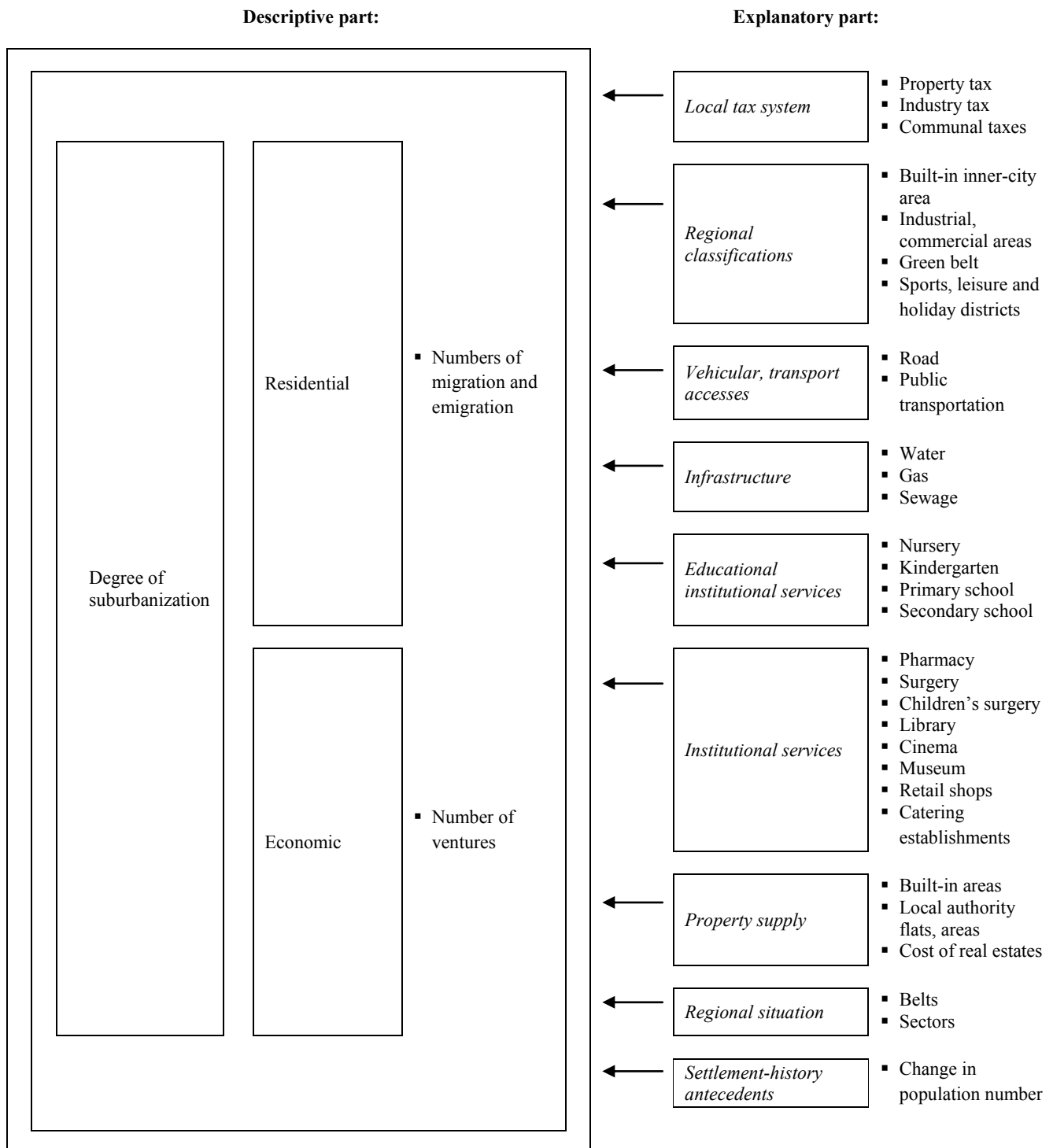
Local leaders could influence suburbanization processes, but their possible tools and margins were determined by the regional characteristics, the local leadership characteristics and the governmental regulations.

Another important statement results from the paper: the borders of urban development stages are consequences of conscious decisions made both on local and state level, and not only results of ‘natural city development’.

It is interesting that as earlier moving to the suburban areas did, in the last couple of years moving back to Budapest also shows dual picture. A distinction can be made whether people move back because of (classic) homesickness or because of (from necessity) failing financial situation.

It was emerged that there is a new period for Budapest Agglomeration. Partly because suburbanization is on the decline and soon will be altered, and for this new processes are getting under way, and partly because such new central regulations have been enacted which fundamentally change the lives on the settlements and the opportunities of the local governments. All of these put the leaders into a new position who therefore need to set up new strategies and face new challenges.

Table 1: The descriptive and explanatory part of the paper and their relation (dimensions, next to them the variables used for their measurement)



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