

Land Use Change of the ‘Small Hobby Gardens’ in the Peri-Urban Area of Szeged, Hungary

Gabriella PÓCSI¹

¹ PhD-student, Department of Human and Economy Geography, University of Szeged; H-6701 Szeged, Pf: 560, e-mail: p.gabi@geo.u-szeged.hu

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Abstract

One of the main characteristics of the rural-urban fringe is the rapidly transforming hybrid landscape. This mixed land use is changing fast and is conspicuous since the early 1990s in Hungary. Before the transition, the development process was regulated and determined by the national government. In the post socialist transition, the market economy transferred the peri-urban areas to other context. The aim of this paper is to present how the rural-urban fringe of a post-socialist country has developed during different regimes among different conditions.

Furthermore not only the different regimes among different conditions determine the transformation of the peri-urban area in post socialist countries, but also the special administrative and historical urban space is productive of other location and development ways than as usual. Thus, the second aim of this paper is to discuss how the regional (The Great Hungarian Plane) characteristics of the cities can determine the changes of the rural-urban fringe.

The ‘small hobby garden’ is an important urban space of the peri-urban areas. They were created in the 1960s. The gardens had agricultural and recreational functions. Before 1989 they were a significant part of the Hungarian economy and social life. People had their own land property and the owners could sell their grown vegetables during the socialism. After the transition the hobby gardens lost their roles, thus they are important ‘only’ in local. In the last one and a half decade the gardens have undergone various changes. The functions and the land use of the small hobby gardens have become wider.

The rural-urban fringe zone of Szeged has more, various garden zones than it is usual in the Great Hungarian Plane. Thus, Szeged is suitable to present the development of rural-urban fringe, especially to present the transformation of the small hobby garden zones in Hungary.

Keywords: *small hobby gardens, agriculture, urban development, rural-urban fringe, peri-urban area, post socialist transition, Szeged, Hungary*

Rezumat. Schimbarea modului de utilizare a terenurilor în „micile grădini de tip hobby” din aria periurbană a orașului Szeged, Ungaria

Una din principalele caracteristici ale franjei rur-urbane este transformarea rapidă a peisajului hibrid. Această utilizare mixtă a terenurilor se află într-o permanentă schimbare și a devenit evidentă în Ungaria la începutul anilor 1990. Înainte de perioada tranziției, procesul de dezvoltare era reglat și determinat de către guvernul național. În tranziția post-socialistă, economia de piață a transferat ariile periurbane într-un alt context. Scopul acestei lucrări este să prezinte evoluția franjei rur-urbane a unei țări post-socialiste pe parcursul diferitelor regimuri, cu condiții diferite.

În plus, nu numai regimurile diferite determină transformarea ariei periurbane în țările post-socialiste, dar, în același timp, determinanta administrativă și istorică a spațiului urban produce alte tipuri de localizare și dezvoltare față de situația precedentă. Astfel, cel de-al doilea obiectiv al lucrării este să pună în discuție modul în care contextul regional (Marea Câmpie Ungară) în care sunt poziționate orașele poate determina modificările franjei rur-urbane.

‘Grădina de tip hobby’ este un spațiu urban important al ariilor periurbane. Acestea au fost create în anii 1960. Grădinile aveau funcții agricole și recreative. Înainte de 1989, ele reprezentau o parte semnificativă a economiei și vieții sociale din Ungaria. Oamenii dețineau terenuri, de unde proprietarii putuseră să vândă propriile legume în timpul socialismului. Ulterior tranziției, grădinile și-au pierdut rolul, fiind importante ‘doar’ la nivel local. În ultimii 15 ani, aceste grădini au suferit schimbări variate. Funcțiile și modul de utilizare a terenurilor în micile grădini de tip hobby s-au diversificat.

Aria franjei rur-urbane a orașului Szeged are grădini mai numeroase și mai diversificate decât situația curentă din Marea Câmpie Ungară. Astfel, Szeged este un exemplu potrivit pentru a prezenta dezvoltarea franjei rur-urbane, în special pentru aspecte privind transformarea ariilor cu mici grădini de tip hobby din Ungaria.

Cuvinte-cheie: *mici grădini de tip hobby, dezvoltare urbană, franjă rur-urbană, arie periurbană, tranziție post-socialistă, Szeged, Ungaria*

INTRODUCTION

In 2004 there were 355 sqkm areas which were ‘garden areas’ in Hungary. This is 0.38 percent of the country, which is insignificant, but these

‘garden areas’ have important role at a local level. 97 percent of the ‘garden areas’ are ‘small hobby gardens’, a ratio which has decreased with 12 percent since 1980 (Cros Kárpáti et al., 2004). However, although they have been decreasing

during the last decade, it seems that their role and importance are becoming conspicuous again, but in a different way than earlier. For example, the hobby garden zone of Szeged had only 12 inhabitants in 1990. This increased up to 1,474 inhabitants till 2001. Thus, not only the number of the inhabitants, but also the function of the garden zone has been changed. Earlier they had agricultural and recreational functions, but nowadays the residential function is becoming dominant. The small hobby gardens have become important part of the urban space in the last forty years.

The hobby garden zones are located in the outer administrative area of the cities. This outer area is a transition zone between the rural and the urban area, which is the rural-urban fringe of the cities. This fringe zone was already transformed in different ways during the socialism and the post socialist transition. Their transformation became even more intensive in the last two decades in Hungary (Pócsi, 2009a; Timár, 1993, 1998; Timár et al., 1999).

Earlier, during the socialism, there was no real possibility to develop them. The national government determined the planning concepts of the settlements, which always adjusted to the socialist ideology. Thus, the urban fringe transformed as much as it was necessary because of the urban sprawl (Beluszky, 2003; Csanádi et al., 2010). The biggest change in the transition zone was the development of the small hobby gardens. At the beginning, they were not supported by the government. The legal category of “small hobby garden” was created at that time. All the small territorial agricultural lands around the border of the inner administrative area belonged to this category. At this time the government established the morphology of the gardens. Later the gardens became more important not only for people but also for the government. Later on they gained new functions (recreational) as well.

The transition to market economy transferred them to other context. The market structure was changed, which resulted in different social, economic and political conditions, than earlier. Due to the real estate market some of the urban spaces were appraised, while other spaces, like the small hobby gardens, became devalued. Moreover the national and local government had new challenges and tasks. Thus, the hobby gardens lost their importance. At the end of the 1990s people discovered the hobby gardens again. The municipality pays attention again to them in the planning concepts.

Moreover, the suburbanization determines the urbanization process in the last two decades in

Hungary. Parallel with this, in the last 10 years the small hobby garden zones have been transformed rapidly, new landscape being shaped there.

Therefore it is still a question how the small hobby gardens developed during different regimes, in different conditions. The aim of this paper is to answer this question and to present the results of this developmental process through a case study of Szeged.

THE RURAL-URBAN FRINGE IN THE GREAT HUNGARIAN PLANE

The rural-urban fringe is a transition zone between the urban and rural areas and its main characteristics are: rapid land use change, mixing of urban and rural land use and social differentiation (Arnold, 1981; Johnston et al., 2000; Oort, 1987, 1989; Pond et al., 1994; Whitehand et al., 2006). However, it is argued the location of the fringe zone. According to Sinha, the fringe zone is a dynamic area and it is moving continuously (Sinha, 1980). Thus, we cannot determine exactly where it is. Against this, Antrop (2000) stated that the fringe zone is the border zone of the city. The fringes and their state of development are determined by the size of the settlements. Furthermore Bryan et al., 1983 distinguishes fringe zones morphologically and functionally. According to them, there are two kinds of fringes: an inner and an outer fringe, which are two parts of the suburbanisation area. As such, we cannot determine exactly where the rural-urban fringe is, because there are many options. But it is agreed that this zone is at the border of the city (Oort, 1987).

Moreover, the naming of these areas is under discussion. In this paper, the most frequently accepted definition is used, which defines the rural-urban fringe taking into consideration its physical characteristics. Thus, the expressions ‘rural-urban fringe’, the ‘urban-fringe’ and the ‘peri-urban area’ relate to the same phenomena (Antrop, 2000; Arnold, 1981; Busck et al., 2006; Johnston et al., 2000; Gregory et al., 2009; Oort, 1987; Qviström, 2007; Whitehand et al., 2006).

According to its features, the rural-urban fringe of the Hungarian settlements is the same than in Western Europe. In the last two and a half decades the land use system, the social composition and the characteristics of these cities have changed in a similar way. Although the ‘issue’ of the changing shows us similarity, the location of the rural-urban fringe is different due to special administrative and historical borders and functional features. Therefore, the location of the urban fringe of the

Great Hungarian Plane (where Szeged is located) is different than in Western cities (Kovács, 1999; Mészáros, 1998; Timár, 1992, 1998).

In Hungary, settlements have two administrative areas. The inner administrative area is the urban core (the built-up area). The outer administrative area is around the urban core and the agricultural function is dominant there (Fig.1). Thus the geographical border of the city is the border between the inner and the outer area. The urban fringe is located at this border.

Due to the settlements' historical background, the outer area of the cities within the Great Hungarian Plane is different than the other cities' outer area in Hungary. This means that the settlements of the Great Hungarian Plane have a tanya (farm) zone in the outer area - at the border of the urban core. More people lived there in the past.

Thus, this tanya zone had an agricultural and residential function at the same time. During socialism, the number of farms decreased (Csatári, 2008; Kovács, 2005; Timár, 1992). At the same time, other types of agricultural areas appeared in this area. These were the small hobby gardens. Generally, there are more farms than hobby gardens at the urban fringe of the Great Hungarian Plane. However, the rural-urban fringe zone of Szeged is 'special', because there are more gardens zones than usual. Thus Szeged is the best city to present the development of rural-urban fringe and especially the transformation of the small hobby gardens zone.

Consequently, I accept that the rural-urban fringe is at the border of the cities, but their location cannot be exactly determined because of their local specialization (Johnston et al., 2000; Gregory et al., 2009; Oort, 1987).

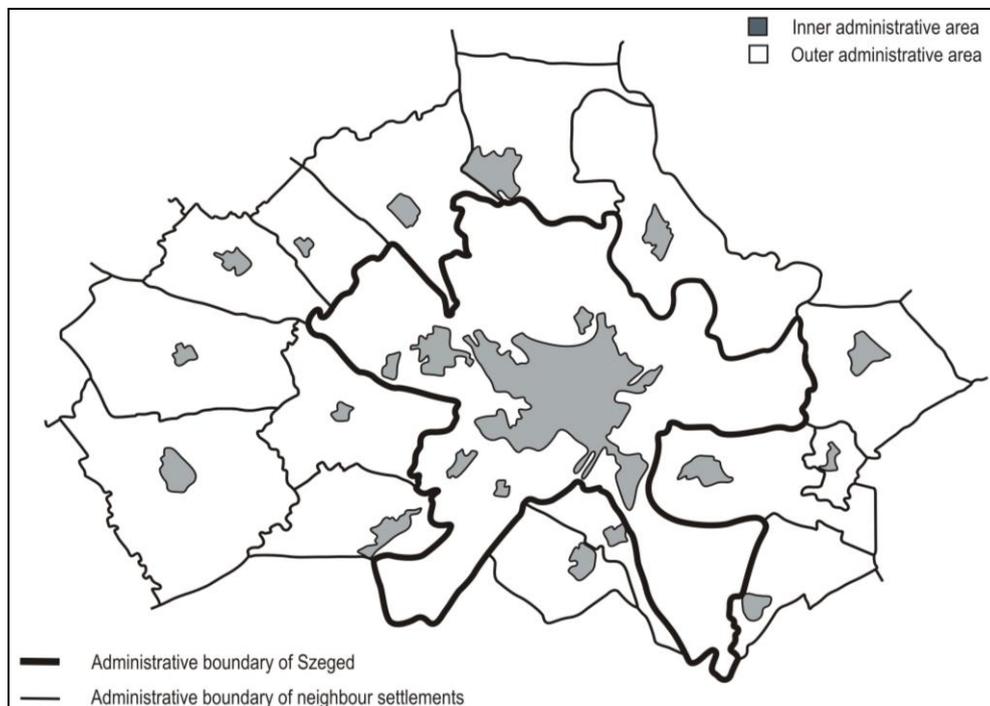


Fig. 1. The administrative categories in Szeged, Hungary (Pócsi, G., 2010)

DATA AND METHODS

The analysis consists of a short term and a long term examination. The long term study presents the development of the small hobby gardens, which includes about five decades, from the 1950s till the end of the 1990s. This focuses on how important was the hobby gardens' life style during different regimes in different view. Document analysis was chosen to be the main method, as in Hungary there is no complex study regarding small hobby gardens. Different types of documents, such as legal,

planning and construction documents were analyzed (SZÉSZ, 2008; VÁTI, 1998, 2000). According to these documents, the key agent that mostly influenced the development of the gardens is the main architect of the city since 1990. Thus, I made a structural interview with the main architect of Szeged. The main questions were: what was the local government's opinion about the land use transformation and what happens nowadays in the small hobby garden zones of Szeged.

The aim of the short term examination was to determine the results of the developmental process in the last decade. As it was mentioned, the

Hungarian settlements have two different administrative areas (Fig.1). The small hobby gardens are in the outer area. There is not enough information about these gardens, because the Central Statistical Office has less data about the outer administrative areas than the inner administrative areas. Therefore, besides the statistical analysis, we carried out field-work to get more information about the function of the gardens. We created a data sheet to fill in. A data sheet was filled in for each plot. Altogether, we took down 5865 data sheets. On the one hand, there were questions about the environment of the plots. On the other hand, there were questions about the functions of the plots. The functional categories of the data sheet were determined based both on a previous field-work and on the types of the rural-urban fringes' land use (Gregory et al. 2009). Thus, there are seven functional categories in the small hobby garden zones in Szeged. These are: traditional, residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, vacant plots and finally, other categories. Thus, we got information how the traditional functions have changed in a decade.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SMALL HOBBY GARDENS BETWEEN 1950-2000

The first hobby gardens appeared at the 1950s. The quality and the location of some areas were not appropriate for the conditions of the large scale agricultural production. This meant that these areas were not the part of the collective land, they were regarded to be 'remained lands'. The number of the 'remained lands' increased continuously. They became a stage of part-time farming. (Azari, 2004; Ónodi et al., 2002b). At the beginning, this activity 'was not tolerated by the government, because the individual farming meant 'capitalist danger'' (Enyedi, 1982, p. 324). But the economic and the social importance of these areas increased. Thus, in 1967 the government created a legal category for these 'remained' lands and called them 'small hobby gardens'.

The hobby gardens as an important part of economic and social life

From the beginning of the 1960s the importance of hobby gardens increased. These gardens became part of the social life. These areas were useful for the political elite. Without this category, they had only one house and one holiday home. Due to the law from 1967, they were allowed to have one more plot, which was the hobby garden. Actually the political elite could buy a holiday home at tourist

destinations, like Lake Balaton or Budai Hills. This was a good possibility for them to increase their property. Due to the special location of hobby gardens, sometimes they had not only an agricultural function, but also a recreational one (Csordás, 1993, 2007).

In addition, new ideological theory associated with the hobby gardens was created. In the 1960s, the first stages of urbanisation and industrialization were typical in Hungary. People coming from rural areas moved into the cities (Enyedi, 1984). Most of them had been previously working in agriculture. In the city, they became industrial or service workers. Although these people started a new life, their 'rural identity' was not lost (Beluszky et al., 2004; Enyedi, 2000). Hobby gardens were a good solution to treat this problem. People could own a plot, where they could grow vegetables, fruits and sometimes they had livestock. They could spend their free time (weekends and holidays) in the hobby gardens. This became the original function of the small hobby gardens (Cros-Kárpáti, 2004; Ónodi et al., 2002). Thus, a new ideological theory based on the fact that the government acknowledged how important it was for people that they could continue their agricultural activities and they had plus income.

Moreover, the gardens were a compensation for the farmers whose lands became part of a large scale production (Csanádi et al., 2010). Although they were 'capitalist danger', personal interests overwrote the statement. The government contributed to their existence and established the formation of a second economy.

As it was mentioned earlier, the owners could grow vegetables, fruits and they had livestock. Thus they had private capital. If they produced more than it was necessary, they sold the products. It was a form of second economy (Gábor, 1989). The government recognized the economic importance of gardens and joined them into the national commerce. This way the government legalized the second economy. According to Enyedi, 'in 1980, 34 percentage of the gross agriculture production was provided by part-time farming' (Enyedi, 1982, p. 324).

The gardens were important economically but they were also important in social life. Later, special social movement evolved around the gardens. This was the 'garden-friends' movement, which was very remarkable because it was formed by the community. At least one 'garden-friends club' could be found in every settlement. These organizations helped their members participate in different programs and helped their owners to join the economic activities (Cros-Kárpáti, 2004; Soós, 2009).

While these gardens were significant and represented a 'positive phenomenon' during socialism, a negative process was attached to them in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In spite of the 1967 law's prohibition, people from lower social class moved into the gardens. The price of plots and life costs were much cheaper than in the inner administrative area. This movement was illegal, but the government did nothing to stop it. According to the social ideology everybody is equal; there is no poverty. If the government had tried to prevent this process, that would have meant that government acts against the official statement. Moreover, this was another way the government could lighten the problems of housing shortage (Szelényi, 1990).

As such, at the beginning the small hobby gardens meant a danger for socialism, so the government changed its approach. The hobby gardens became a part of people's life and of the socialist ideology. However, they also showed us the troubles of socialism.

Devaluation of the small hobby garden areas after transition

Since 1967, when the hobby garden became a legal category, the role of small hobby gardens transformed. At the end of the 1980s they were an important part of social life and economy. At the end of the 1980s, there were about 40,000 hectares representing garden areas. Most of the gardens lay in the Great Hungarian Plane (Csordás, 1993). After the political changes, the conditions and opportunities, the role and the status of the gardens changed. The transformation of the gardens has also been started. This transition period can be divided into two smaller periods according to the different kind of development status. The first period is represented by the first 8-10 years (from 1990 till 1998/1999).

The first smaller period, after 1989, coincides with the post-socialist transition of Hungary (Kovács, 2002). Hungary had to face new challenges such as becoming independent, globalization, market economy, real estate market, regulations. Therefore, national and local governments had new tasks which were big challenges for them (Enyedi, 1998).

Thus, the local government could not pay enough attention to the gardens. Besides this, the small hobby gardens as a legal category was abandoned in 1994. The elite did not need any more the gardens, because they could buy plots without moved into the garden zones and started to transform an agricultural (rural) area into an urban area.

restriction. Thus, the position of the gardens became unfavorable. Moreover, citizens gave up growing vegetables, because these were not marketable in the new market economy. Thus, the gardens lost their economic role. The number of the garden-friends' clubs decreased continuously (Cros-Kárpáti 2004; Soós, 2009). People had other actual problems, like unemployment, so they could not invest into the maintenance of the gardens. Finally there is a general view in Hungary that everything that is related to socialism is wrong, which intensified this process. Thus, this period is the decline of the gardens.

Some of the gardens became the part of the inner administrative area. However, this was an insignificant proportion. The market economy status of these garden areas was also changed. The interest of the population (more gardens to be declared as inner area) was different than that of the government, which resulted in a conflicting situation. This was also a positive process because the regulation and the planning of the inner areas were more precisely elaborated and it had more advantages than the outer areas.

In Szeged for example, at the end of the 1990s, the number of inhabitants in the hobby garden zones increased significantly. Between 1990 and 2001, 52 percent of the migratory population moved into the outer area of Szeged. Moreover, 81 percent of them chose the hobby gardens zones (Table 1). As such, an absolutely particular process has started; people moved into the garden zones and started to transform an agricultural (rural) area into an urban area.

Table 1. The population change in Szeged between 1990 and 2001 in capita

	Population 1990	Population 2001	Change of the population
1	1,001	1,339	338
2	12	1,474	1,462
3	1,013	2,813	1,800
4	168,917	165,460	- 3,457
Sum.	170,943	171,086	143

Sources: Central Statistical Office of Hungary, 1990, 2001; Outer area without garden zones (1), Garden zones (2), Outer area (3), Inner area (4) Sum. - Summary

Other garden areas became real agricultural areas. Thus, the gardens areas reduced by 12 percent in the 1990s (Cros-Kárpáti, 2004).

Nowadays most of the gardens are at the border of the cities. These areas maintained their traditional function and a residential function also appeared.

THE LAND USE CHANGE OF THE SMALL HOBBY GARDENS – A CASE STUDY OF SZEGED

At the end of the 1990s, garden zones lost their value and a new period started in the development of the small hobby garden zones. It is difficult to determine this border. At this time, several conditions that influence the development of hobby gardens nearly simultaneously changed. During that time, the first period of the post-socialist transition finished. The main challenges and tasks of the initial period were solved. At national and local level, the government and the municipality could pay attention not only to basic tasks. For example, planning documents were more carefully elaborated than earlier. Moreover, the real estate market started to discover the hidden possibilities of the gardens (Kovács, 2002; Nagy, E., 1999; SZÉSZ, 2008; Tóth, 2005). Thus, new processes have started in the urban space.

According to the main architect of Szeged, there are three periods of the hobby gardens' transition in the last two decades. In the beginning of the 1990s, which is the first period, the harmonization of the law was carried out. Besides this, people discovered again the new advantages of these areas. The second period is at the end of the 1990s and at the beginning of 2000s.

The local government sized up the garden areas, and two areas (Baktó, Marostó) became a 'special outer area' (SZÉSZ, 2008) (Fig. 2), which is the starting point of the differentiation of the gardens. Finally, the main architect separates a third period, which is represented by the last 3-4 years. During this period new planning documents were created at the initiative of the local community. The main architect of Szeged defined the last two periods according to the time the planning documents appeared. Thus, in these two periods, only the planning conditions changed, the differentiation process itself did not.

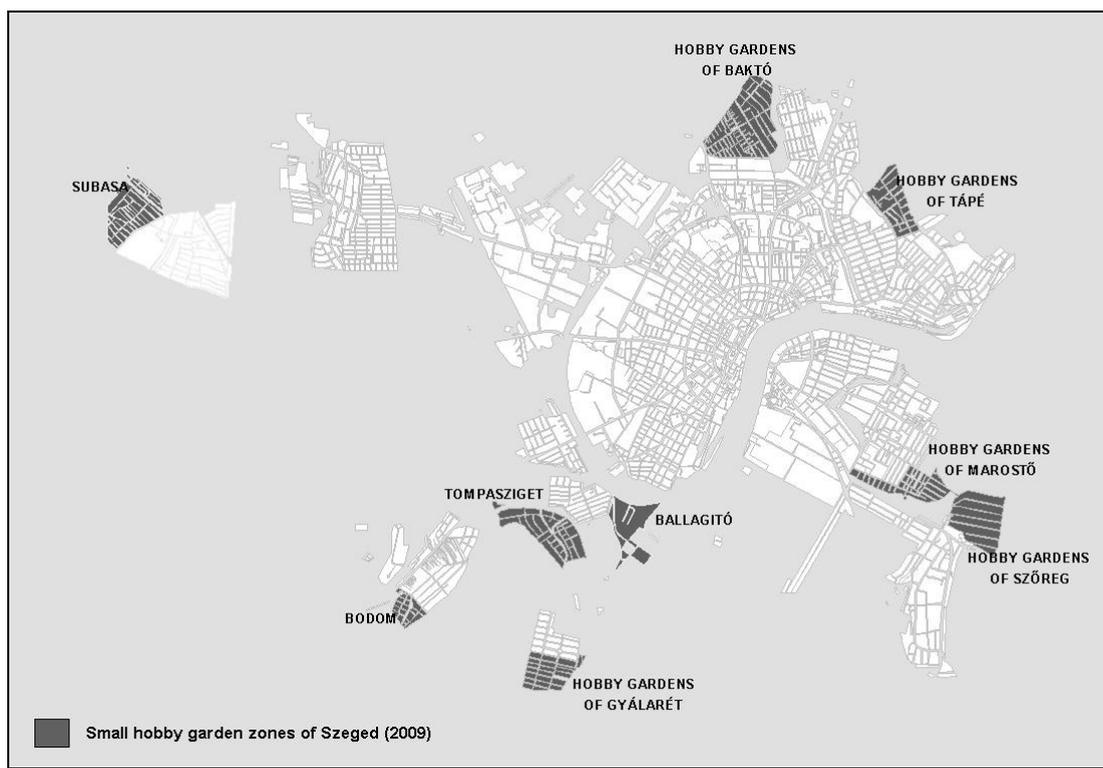


Fig. 2. Small hobby garden zones of Szeged in 2008 (Pócsi, G.)

Case study – the small hobby garden zones of Szeged

With a population of 168,273, Szeged is the third largest town of Hungary. Szeged has nine hobby garden zones (Fig. 2). The settlements of the Great Hungarian Plane have more hobby garden zone areas due to the special spatial structure of these cities. The origin of these zones is different, which

determines the possibilities of development. Some of the gardens are the original hobby garden zones of Szeged: Baktó, Tápé, Marostó, Ballagitó, Tompasziget, Bodom and Subasa. The other two garden zones (hobby gardens of Gyálarét and hobby gardens of Szőreg) were originally the garden zone of other settlements. In 1973, these settlements were incorporated into the administrative area of Szeged by the government. These settlements used to be

independent villages before 1973 (Mészáros, 1998; Nagy, 1999). The distance from the city center also differentiates the gardens (Fig. 2).

Before the transition, it was not allowed to move into the gardens. However illegal it was, poor people were already living there (Beluszky, 1982). This regulation was abandoned after 1989. Thus, in 1990, there was only one hobby garden zone, the Subasa garden zone, where people lived as residents (Table 2). In the next decade the number of inhabitants increased continuously. The most preferred zones were Marostó, Subasa, Baktó and Tompasziget. Except for Subasa, nearer and original hobby garden zones were preferred. According to Cros Kárpáti and her colleagues (2004) there are two types of moving people. On the one hand, old owners move into this zone, because this life is cheaper than in the city. On the other hand, young families buy one or two plots there, build a new modern house and move into the garden zone. These are two different age-groups with different aims and lifestyles. While old people would like to protect the original lifestyle of the gardens, younger families would like to develop these areas and they would like them to be declared as inner areas. Thus, the hobby garden zones have become a zone of conflict from this point of view as well.

Table 2. The change of population in the hobby garden areas of Szeged between 1990 and 2001 in capita

Hobby garden areas	Population 1990	Population 2001	Change of the population
Baktó	0	265	265
Ballagi-tó	0	6	6
Bodom	0	36	36
Gyála-rét	0	140	140
Maros-tó	0	472	472
Subasa	12	288	276
Szóreg	0	0	0
Tápé	0	3	3
Tompa-sziget	0	264	264
Sum.	12	1474	1462

Sources: Central Statistical Office of Hungary 1990, 2001. Sum. – Summary

Multicolored hobby garden zones - functional differentiation of the gardens

The aim of this paper was also to present the results of the land use change of the small hobby garden areas. During the field-work, information was collected regarding the various functions of the gardens. We created a data sheet, which was filled in for each plot. There were two main questions. The first was about the environment of the plots. The second, which is more relevant here, was a question about the functions of the plots. Thus, information was gained regarding the changes of the traditional functions that took place during the last

decades. In this data sheet there were seven different categories determined (Table 3). These were chosen based on two reasons. The first was the types of land uses in the rural-urban fringes (Gregory et al., 2009). The second was the outcome of a previous field-work.

Table 3. Functions of the small hobby garden zones of Szeged according to the field-work in 2008/2009 (%)

Hobby garden areas	1	2	3	4
Baktó	26.6	64.8	1.4	0.1
Ballagító	3.3	34.4	44.3	0.0
Bodom	31.9	26.5	24.3	0.0
Gyálarét	25.9	49.3	13.9	0.0
Marostó	48.3	33.7	4.4	0.4
Subasa	13.7	70.7	3.9	0.2
Szóreg	8.5	86.0	4.6	0.0
Tápé	14.9	25.4	16.6	16.3
Tompa-sziget	14.5	69.3	4.5	0.1
Summary	21.2	56.6	7.3	2.2

Hobby garden areas	5	6	7	8
Baktó	0.1	6.8	0.1	1,037
Ballagító	0.8	13.9	3.3	122
Bodom	0.0	10.8	6.5	185
Gyálarét	0.0	7.3	3.6	274
Marostó	0.0	4.0	9.2	727
Subasa	0.0	4.1	7.4	1,244
Szóreg	0.0	0.3	0.6	329
Tápé	16.2	10.5	0.0	759
Tompa-sziget	0.1	11.4	0.1	1,188
Summary	2.1	7.2	3.2	5,865

Sources: Field-work, 2008/2009 Functions (1), Traditional (2), Agriculture (3), Commercial (4), Industrial (5), Vacant plots (6), Other (7), Number of plots (8)

At the beginning of the 1990s, the main function was the traditional function, as for instance, growing vegetables, fruits and livestock. Besides this, the recreation function was typical too, but not in all hobby garden zones. Nowadays there are seven different functions. According to the characteristic of the garden zones, the scale of the functions is different. The recreational function is typical for three garden areas: Baktó, Marostó and Gyálarét. The first two zones are the nearest area to the city center, where newly built houses can be found. On the other hand, Gyálarét is almost the most distant hobby garden zone (Fig 2.). The houses of this area are renovated. The owners rebuilt the bungalows and they live there.

According to the main architect of Szeged, well-off people live in Baktó and Marostó, where they can better express their interests. Due to this, the two areas are 'special outer areas'. This means they have better conditions for developing the

infrastructures and other deficiencies of these areas (VÁTI, 1998, 2000).

On the other hand, Gyálarét is a hobby garden zone area located in the outer administrative area of Szeged. This means that Gyálarét does not have an own planning document as in the cases of the other garden zones in the outer administrative area which do not have as well. These areas develop as the owners are shaping them (Pócsi, 2009b). According to the main architect of Szeged, although many people move to Gyálarét, the municipality does not plan to declare it a 'special outer areas' as it is too distant from the city center. Moreover, Szeged already has two special areas, it is unnecessary to declare another one. It seems that the municipality leaders clearly see the situation, but they have no plan and will to solve this situation.

The traditional function is still dominant, 56 percent of the plot has not changed. This scale is more than 86 percent in Szőreg. This is the hobby garden zone in Szeged which has not changed significantly during the last two decades. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the distance from the city center is significant. The second reason is that Szőreg is one of the independent settlements. It was a typical rural village where people grew roses. Szőreg is world famous for its roses which is a secure job for the inhabitants. Thus, these people had no reason to give up this activity.

The agricultural function is dominant only in case of two hobby garden zones, such as Ballagító and Bodom. There for example, the owners either grew sweet corn or there is fruit-garden on the plots.

The commercial function mostly means small shops or local pubs. The number of inhabitants and their claim demanded these commercial institutions.

The industrial function is dominant in Tápé. The neighboring settlement is Algyó, where there is the premise of the National Oil Company (MOL). Hydrocarbon-wells of MOL are on some plots. This raises the environmental question about this area.

Besides these functions, some plots are vacant. The reason is mostly that the owners are too old to take care of the state of the garden. On the other hand, once the old owners die, their heirs are no longer interested in keeping the garden in order (Cros Kárpáti et al., 2004).

It seems that the function of the small hobby gardens have been differentiated in the last decades. However, there are two dominant functions: the traditional and residential function. The other functions have just started to appear.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the aim of this paper was to present how the small hobby gardens can develop during different regimes among different conditions.

Before the transition, the central government determined the development of the gardens. However, at the beginning the gardens were capitalist danger, later according to the initiative of the people the small hobby gardens became an important part of social life and economy.

After 1989, they lost their role and importance. In the first period of the post-social transition, the hobby gardens zone were devaluated. After a decade, the differentiation of the land use became the most important change in the gardens. The land use transformed continuously. However, the traditional function is still dominant. These areas were appreciated again.

The small hobby garden zones became an important part of the urban space. This hybrid landscape contains many problems and conflicts. According to the main architect of Szeged there are some problems with the regulation, which is presented not only at local but also national level. Moreover, there are not only many conflicts between the owners and the local government, but between the owners as well.

Thus, the rural-urban fringe of the Hungarian cities has the same features and problems like the settlements in Western Europe. However, the development of the fringe was different because of the different regime. The local characteristics, as for instance the administrative, historical urban space and the special functions (like the farms) of the cities in the Great Hungarian Plane also determine the specializations of the rural-urban fringe in Hungary.

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