

TRANSFORMATION HOBBY GARDENS RESIDENTIAL AREA IN HÓDMEZŐVÁSÁRHELY

GÁLNÉ HORVÁTH ILDIKÓ

Pécsi Tudományegyetem (University of Pécs),
Földtudományok Doktori Iskola,
7624 Pécs, Ifjúság útja 6. Hungary
Galne.horvath@nlg.httpe.hu

ABSTRACT

By the administrative area of Hódmezővásárhely we are supposed to mean not only the inner part of the town but also the vast world of farmsteads together with it.

Fate of the former farmsteads of Kishomok on the two sides of the main road 47 between Hódmezővásárhely and Szeged has been formed differently as compared to the farmsteads in other parts of the town. As the area could not be cultivated on a large scale, due to its natural conditions, it was divided into plots and formed into closed gardens in the 1960s.

In the gardens around the farmsteads the former owners grew grapes and fruit until these places were transformed into gardens for resting purposes. In the 1970s small sheds and then weekend-houses were built on the plots.

In the 1980s the population started to move into this area which is resulted from decentralization, so the first permanent inhabitants settled down in the closed gardens of Kishomok that time. This process can be explained primarily with social reasons.

One of the most outstanding elements of the Hungarian suburbanization was the spatial reorganization of the population. The same thing happened in Hódmezővásárhely, too. For the last 20 years it has been Kishomok where the infrastructural development could be experienced the most, comparing to certain parts of the Town. By today the former world of farmsteads has been transformed into an independent district.

INTRODUCTION

On the basis of the data from 1 January, 2010, 1149 people live in Kishomok, which is now a district of Hódmezővásárhely (data from the registry of addresses Hódmezővásárhely). This part of the town underwent a huge change in the last ten years, the former farmsteads and especially the cottages, gardens have formed into a suburbia area by today. A particular form of suburbanization can be observed here which I am planning to show.

At first I introduce geographical location and history of area called Kishomok. The main road 47 divides Kishomok into two parts: the so-called Öreg-Kishomok, which is a bit away from the town and Új-Kishomok, which can be seen as continuation of the town. (*Map 1*)



Map 1. Real image map of Hódmezővásárhely

Source: (CSÁKI, 1977)

The relatively vast wavy ridge, by the road to Szeged, evolved from the bed of the lake Hód, which was in the former flood area of the Tisza, in called hydroeolic way. Its height above the sea level is 77-88 metres. (ANDÓ, 1984) Before the Tisza had been regulated, at time of bigger flooding the higher parts remained dry thus making grape and fruit production possible. Some maps suggest that there had been contiguous vineyards in the 1780s. After the regulation of the Tisza it partially started to be transformed into a summer resort along with the construction of the road to Szeged (today, motorway 47) and railway. (BODNÁR, 1983) It began in 1905 when Countess Károlyi, Pálffy Geraldina divided the family property into gardens of 1.936 square meters which were then bought by the inhabitants of Vásárhely. The area was called Bercsényi Colony (today, Öreg-Kishomok) from the 1920s.

There were fruit-gardens just south of the town which spread to the banks of the Tisza, in the direction of the railway bridge at Algyő. The owners planted pear, apple, plum, cherry and nut-trees and hazel-groves. Gardens and fields alternated with each other.

Besides summer houses, vine-yards and fruit-gardens were planted where the former owners produced for the capital markets; the area had its own fruit-packing plant in the building of today's „Anno” restaurant (*Picture 1*). (KÖRTVÉLYESSY, 1971) In these years there were 10-12 farmsteads in the area, while the others worked as gardens where the owners, who lived in the town, built only a shed. Later a part of the vineyards was cut down, and the sand was exploited for the construction works (BODNÁR, 1983). The area of the former sand-pit has been built in by today, only a deep slope shows its place.

After the World War II the trees were cut down in the framework of collectivization, while instead of the former owners, the Lenin and Rákóczi Co-operative Farms, which have gone into liquidation, cultivated the fields.



Picture 1. The „Anno” restaurant in the past (1.a) and now (1.b)

Source: (Private collection, and author's photo)

Today's Új-Kishomok evolved from the former Kishomok-halom and Szöllő-halom on the other side of the main road 47, west of the railway between Szeged and Szentés. According to some records the two „halom” („hillock”) are the same but the name „Kishomok” is more wide-spread. There are only a few farmsteads here, in this part. Új-Kishomok is located closer to „Kertváros” -another district of the town-, practically it is the continuation of the latter one (BODNÁR, 1983).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In my research I used articles on the urbanization of Hódmezővásárhely and the news from the local newspaper, besides the specialized literature on suburbanization. Also, I met some older and new inhabitants of Kishomok, coordinators, the leader of the reading circle, the representative whom I made interviews with. By examining the photos, given to me, sales contracts from the last centuries and other archive materials, I managed to reconstruct how Öreg and Új-Kishomok were formed. I got valuable answers from the experts of the Engineering Office of the town I would like to thank for now. During my work I visited the district several times taking photos and making descriptions, and also I participated in the programs organized in Kishomok.

RESULTS

From farmsteads and hobby gardens to district and village-like zone

A particular process of suburbanization can be observed around Hódmezővásárhely-Kishomok which I am aiming to describe briefly. Its essence is that the inhabitants moved from the town to the surrounding areas where the basic elements of the infrastructure were provided for them. Hódmezővásárhely, like other Hungarian towns, differs from the general suburbanization process of cities in the fact that, while in other cases even economic activities might appear in the rural area, moving out and the settlement of the population can be experienced as a typical process (BAJMÓCZY, 2001).

In the area of Kishomok the number of permanently inhabited farmsteads was low, while the number of weekend-gardens is relatively high. Since it was difficult to cultivate the area on a large scale, from the 1960s both Öreg and Új-Kishomok were divided into closed gardens. As a result, about 700 plots were sold the owners of which lived in Vásárhely having their own flats. Kishomok became a new zone of the town with hobby-gardens, as a suburban agricultural area. According to the regulations of the Country's Architectural Rule, in the 1960s only smaller territories could be built in, later the size of these areas increased. It meant

that while in the beginning only sheds were allowed to be built, then a toilet or a shower next to the shed which later „moved” into the house itself. A subsequent direction allowed to construct a bigger building on plots the topographical number of which began with „0”. This house made a more comfortable recreation possible for the owners. (Oral information from the Engineering Office of Hódmezővásárhely)

A similar process can be seen around several towns of the Hungarian Plain in the 1970s, like-for example- in the nearest city, Szeged. (TÍMÁR, 2005)

Animal husbandry and cultivation of plants, typical to the old farmsteads, were specific to Öreg-Kishomok on a lower scale however, it is not typical to Új-Kishomok. They cultivated the area for their own needs, or perhaps they sold their crops in the local market (SZENTI, 2007).

A new district on the town map

On the basis of the „tetrahedron model” created by TÓTH JÓZSEF, by the beginning of the 1990s everything had been provided to make Kishomok a small settlement, a new district (TÓTH, 1981). The natural conditions were favorable, also it is close to the main road 47, which made possible to reach either Hódmezővásárhely or Szeged more easily and quickly. Moreover, it became more difficult for some families living in the blocks of flats to make ends meet there, since they could not or could hardly pay their bank loans. As a result, they decided to move to Kishomok. That time the basic infrastructural elements (drinking water, electricity and road) had been provided, and more and more property owners intended to make their plots in Kishomok permanent dwellings. This interest and need increased even more after the political changes, at the beginning of the 1990s. Demand for the comfortable life from both the permanent inhabitants of Kishomok and the owners of „second houses” resulted in more infrastructural development in this area. Becsei says these types of farm are called holiday farm types (BECSEI, 2002).

The town's council had its own order according to which if the garden owners of Kishomok contribute to the infrastructural development with a determined sum, the town provides the remaining part. Besides, the council took charge of making the plans and then the implementation, as well (36/1995./10.05/KGY. SZ. order).

In Új-Kishomok the construction of the network of the technical infrastructure began with the water-conduit in 1996 which was followed by the gas distributing system in 1999. In September, 2000 after the basic public-utility services had been constructed, Új-Kishomok became the inner part of Hódmezővásárhely, as a continuation of the district Kertváros. It is estimated that the plot prices has increased ten times as compared to the ones in the 1980s. More and more areas join the inner town so more and more people ask for and get permissions to build houses. According to the data of the Town's Registry 756 people lived in Kishomok on 1 January, 2010. Regarding the age composition of the inhabitants mostly young families with small children live there. However, it is important to mention that there are still lots of hobby-gardens and weekend houses where the number of older owners is relatively high (*Picture 2*).



Picture 2: A street in Új-Kishomok

Source: (author's photo)

The interest towards the district has not decreased which is supported by the public lighting and the surfaced road which can be reached both from the main road 47 and the centre of Hódmezővásárhely.

Construction of the water-conduit and the gas distributing system was carried out later (at the end of September, 2003) in Öreg-Kishomok. The roadbed was finished in 2004 followed by the surfaced road and public lighting. It became a residential area in 2006.

Development of Öreg-Kishomok differs from Új-Kishomok in some respects. Új-Kishomok is a suburbia zone, while Öreg-Kishomok is a village-like area. According to today's town development plan the whole area of Kishomok is regarded as a village-like residential zone, according to Mendöl's literature (MENDÖL, 1963).

There are approximately 600 hobby-gardens in Öreg-Kishomok, out of which 160 are permanently inhabited, the others are only gardens. Their number is constantly changing since certain gardens are drawn together, while others are divided and then sold. On the basis of data from 1 January, 2010, it has 393 permanent inhabitants whose age is higher than in Új-Kishomok, so is the number of people who live alone (130-140 live in families, the others are single). The rate of the younger population is increasing here, too. The older ones are replaced by younger families, though not by their own family members, but by those who are newcomers in this area. (Data from the registry of Hódmezővásárhely)

More people grow vegetables and fruit for their own use in Öreg-Kishomok than in Új-Kishomok. The number of bigger farmsteads is 8 which is more than the one in Új-Kishomok. 4 farmsteads go in for floriculture; the others raise geese and pigs. Where there are cows, milk and cottage cheese are also produced and sold. In 2 farmsteads people grow mushrooms. (It is sourced on the basis of the oral information of coordinator in Öreg-Kishomok.)

The street network of Kishomok was formed together with the development of the infrastructure. Their names come from the names of the former ridges (Fári, Hegyi, Gólya, Szántó, Vajnai). There are 29 streets in Öreg-Kishomok and 33 in Új-Kishomok.

Both parts are represented; they organize their social life independently. The inhabitants organize „village days”, carnivals, Santa Claus-evening – like any other districts. The Society of Garden Owners of Öreg-Kishomok was founded on 3 March, 2003. The Reading Circle of Kishomok gives home to the community programs in Új-Kishomok.

The Reading Circle works in a similar way to the reading circles in the former world of farmsteads. They have a community building where there is a small library; also a computer and internet access are available for the members. They are utilized mostly by the less wealthy families living in some farmsteads of Kishomok.

Strolling along the streets of Kishomok we can meet the garden owners, permanent

inhabitants, in both parts we can go into groceries or to the local pub to drink something. I think the district, which consists of the former summer houses and farmsteads, lacks only three things: public transport, a church and a school.

CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays those who arrive from Szeged can have the view of a typical Hungarian town border: first, weekend-houses, then getting closer to the town: new detached houses, villas together with a few farmsteads. However, the farmsteads built here differ from the others, they resemble an old detached house which is fenced and which is adjusted to the neighboring plots. Only the carefully cultivated garden, the fruit-trees, some rows of vines, and the kitchen garden refer to the fact that they were farmsteads. On the other hand, in the plots of the inhabitants who moved here from the end of the 1980s the pleasure garden, garden trees and the well-mowed grass surround the detached houses.

The society of today's Kishomok has changed due to the moving out. Inhabitants of the old farms, houses have been replaced by the families who moved out of the town. In my research I realized a specific element of suburbanization: namely the power of social collaboration. Due to the initiatives of the „new” population in the last 20 years a new district and village-like zone could be formed on both sides of the main road 47.

REFERENCES

- ANDÓ, M. (1984): Hódmezővásárhely természeti földrajza. In: Nagy I.(szerk.): Hódmezővásárhely története I. pp. 55-111.
- BAJMÓCY, P. (2001): A szuburbanizáció motivációi Magyarországon. Földrajzi konferencia, Szeged.
- BECSEI, J. (2002): A tanyavilág jövőbeni alakulására ható tényezők. Magyar Tudomány, szeptember.
- BODNÁR, B. (1983): Hódmezővásárhelynek és környékének földrajzi nevei. In: Blazovich L. (szerk.): Tanulmányok Csongrád Megye Történetéből VII. Szeged, 1983. pp.11-13,245-248.
- BÖLCSFÖLDI, E. (szerk.) (2005): A nagyvárosok belső tagozódása, Hódmezővásárhely.
- CSÁKI, I. (1977): Real image map of Hódmezővásárhely.
- Hódmezővásárhely Megyei Jogú Város 36/1995.(10.05) Kgy. sz. rendelet. www.hodmezovasarhely.hu/rendeletek
- Hódmezővásárhely Megyei Jogú Város 2006/1998.(09.03) Kgy. sz. határozat
- KÖRTVÉLYESSY, L. (1961): Hódmezővásárhely gazdasági földrajza a századfordulón. Vásárhelyi Tanulmányok 10, Hódmezővásárhely.
- MENDÖL, T. (1963): Általános településföldrajz. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest.
- SZENTI, T. (2007): Vásárhelyi emlékeim. Hódmezővásárhely Megyei Jogú Város kiadványa, Hódmezővásárhely. pp.87-89.
- TIMÁR, J. (1993): Az alföldi szuburbanizáció néhány sajátossága. – *Alföldi Tanulmányok* XV.: 217–232. Új-Kishomok
- TIMÁR, J. (2005): Városiasodás és szuburbanizáció. In: Török J.(szerk.): Tér-társadalom-kultúra, VII. Közmuvelődési Nyári Egyetem, 2005. július 4-8. Szeged
- TÓTH, J. (1981): A településhálózat és a környezet kölcsönhatásának néhány elméleti és gyakorlati kérdése. Földrajzi Értesítő, 1981. 2-3. pp. 267-291.