

The spatial implications of urban renewal carried out by the ECC programs in Pécs

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Abstract

Cultural economy – interpreted in the broadest sense – is a phenomenon existing among the impacts of post-industrial transformation and renewal of cities. In this paper the changing and developing role of investments related to European Capital of Culture 2010 is tackled in a city, which used to have a commercial profile, later on it became an industrial centre and has recently provoked sharp debates on the further direction to follow in the frame of post-socialist economic and urban restructuring. Current tendencies and deliberate investment directions proceed towards significantly influencing the development of the city of Pécs in general and shaping its inner structure in particular.

Keywords: urban renewal, gentrification, cultural economy, ECC

Introduction

Urban renewal in its widest interpretation includes a physical, economic and community (re)development taking place during the land use change of cities. Its present practice began in the late 19th century in developed nations and entered an intensive phase in the post WWII era brought into being by the necessary reconstruction of urban districts. Generally, this kind of complex planning action becomes inevitable when the actual or former functions of a definite segment of a city cannot cope with the new challenges, therefore the demolition of previous physical structures, the relocation of housing and economic activities are indispensable. The organic adaptation to the new needs and functions takes too much time and results in many conflicts hence large scale investors, the state and/or the municipality take the initiative. While block renewals are mostly directed by investors, district renewals serving long term strategies are led by local governments. During the planning and development process the legal instrument of eminent domain is widely used

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to foster the speed of renewal projects. Large scale urban renewal is often associated with design and architectural shift of a neighbourhood, revitalising the district regularly resulting also in gentrification. Because of a massive need for capital in the course of planning and realisation a sufficient level of economic resources is essential. (REIMANN, B. 1997)

Pécs, the Cultural Capital of Europe 2010 (*Photo 1*), located in a region and country belonging to the group often characterised as transitional economies is a good example to investigate sudden urban functional and morphological changes. Under-urbanisation (SAILER-FLIEGE, U. 1999) is very characteristic, urban in its traditions and present size, functions, but with explicit signs of distorted socialist development. Throughout the past two decades the city has experienced a massive backslide regarding its economic position both in domestic and international comparison. Being positioned on a remarkable historical and cultural background, but suffering from the lack of realisable strategies for development accompanied by a dire necessity of proper infrastructure offered an exquisite situation for culture based urban renewal (TRÓCSÁNYI A. 2006).



Photo 1. Pécs at the foothills of Mecsek (Photo by TRÓCSÁNYI, A. 2006)

Theoretical context

The process of tertiarisation that started in the post-industrial stage of the highly developed part of the world arrived in East Central Europe belatedly,

in a prolonged form and with specific regional features. The dynamic development of the tertiary sector of the economy, characterised with the concurrent regression of industry, spatial and company level rationalisation, outsourcing and worldwide sourcing, modernisation of production technologies stimulated by information science, adoption of new devices by consumers and users and demographic transition, has brought about the reduction of producing sectors, and the upgrading of non-material type of goods and possessions. However, this widely familiar process of restructuring can rather be interpreted as the emergence of a new economic paradigm, thus the service sector (in the broadest sense) went through an intrinsic differentiation and transformation, giving birth to the quaternary sector that is based on information and includes higher education, scientific, research, intelligence, organisation, management and tourism activities. This fourth sector of economy has gained increasing importance in the highly developed regions, with its non-material character (information, idea, knowledge, competence, talent, etc.) bringing to life new attitudes and structures both in production and consumption.

The footprints of social and economic structural transformation can be followed both in rural and urban areas, although the remarkable structural changes have taken place mostly in cities. Central Europe's eastern part can be distinguished from the more western and more fortunate major regions mostly on the basis of the fact that although Central Eastern Europe lies in the mainstream of social and economic development, yet the effects arrive from the countries of the core with a delay, often in a more or less distorted form. After the change of the political regime, serious problems were loaded onto Hungarian cities, caused by the fact that the economic structure had not been transformed. In addition to this, there were also phenomena like the settlement consequences of the transformations, the temporary suppression of community level planning, the almightiness of market, and the striking manifestations of physical and moral amortisation of the building stock caused by the fact that important investment projects had not been implemented amidst the shortage of funds. In other words: post-industrial and post-socialist impacts piled up on each other, creating a specific structure of transformations. This process was described and modelled by a number of researchers, focusing mostly on larger cities, first of all on regional centres. Kovács, Z. (1999) made a distinction in the model of post-socialist urban transition between the effects of political versus those of economic transformation, defining also the termination of central planning and the onset of new supremacy of market regulation, as well as the transformation of the two most important segments of the process, i.e. labour market and real estate market. These are the stages in the described model, leading to the formation of a new urban order.

When looking at post-socialist urban transformation, SAILER-FLIEGE, U. (1999) emphasised five basic factors: the spreading of neo-liberal ideology,

deindustrialization and tertiarisation appearing as an aftermath of economic transformation (*Photo 2*), the social restructuring that accompanies social inequalities, the low tide in urban planning, and the regression of the roles of the state. According to this author, post-socialist cities have retained much of the compactness of their predecessors, thus the particular functional zones still show a relative uniformity. An important factor is the growth of areas occupied by the service sector, not only through the expansion of CBD, but also – through deconcentration processes – in formerly homogeneous residential zones. Besides several factors of the transformation that have been specified by a number of authors SAILER-FLIEGE underlines the formation of industrial brown fields and their unsolved problems.

The formation of considerable differences in income and social status typical in post-socialist societies launched a process of intensive segregation, and contributed to the revaluation of certain districts of cities. The formation of slum- and ghetto-type of districts again became characteristic features of these urban environs (LADÁNYI, J. 1993; KOVÁCS, Z. 1998). It is not only the abandoned and neglected industrial facilities that have started to convey problems for urban development and management, but also the decaying residential sectors that are also under-utilised in a certain sense (LICHTENBERGER, E., CSÉFALVAY, Z. and PAAL, M. 1994). Districts located in easily accessible quarters of cities or



Photo 2. Shopping centres and malls invaded the former industrial zones of Hungarian cities – Árkád Pécs (Photo by TRÓCSÁNYI, A.)

outskirts are often considered as possible development venues of transformation based on cultural industry.

The growing importance of the production of non-material values is an important distinctive feature of post-modern or post-industrial development. There is no scientific consensus that could give guidance in deciding where exactly the boundaries of cultural economy are running, or which are its well-defined constituents or subsets. Not even the concept of cultural industry has been agreed in: according to the definition put forward by PRATT it is actually a produce or performance expressed in arts or literature, and the reproduction (and dissemination) of these in the form of books, journals, films, TV and radio programmes and data storage media, and also activities that interlink various branches of art (including promotion and advertising). Also included are the creation, distribution and broadcasting of the materialised products of printed and electronic media, as well as the operation of museums, libraries, theatres, galleries or even night clubs (PRATT, A.C. 1997).

ENYEDI, GY. (*et al.* 2005) defines two major groups, namely that of cultural services and that of cultural products. SÜLI-ZAKAR, I. *et al.* (2005) even put forward complex interpretations whose main dimension is the role fulfilled in competitiveness, whereas RECHNITZER, J. (2007) approached this subject from the analyses of supply and demand. According to this interpretation, cultural economy is a complexity made up of cultural infrastructure (TRÓCSÁNYI, A. and TÓTH, J. 2002) and the programmes offered and consumed in these facilities (monuments, museums, exhibitions, theatres, open-air performances, concert halls, festivals, community centres, movies, libraries, journals of literature and culture, media). Another segment is also closely associated with this field – i.e. the one that is normally defined as knowledge economy, in order to distinguish it from the former, and consisting of special elements of cultural institutions, mostly the intellectual and economic potential represented by higher education institutions and research facilities (du GAY, P. and PRYKE, M. 2002). However, because universities have other outstandingly important roles as well in distributing and promoting culture, besides their education and research duties *sensu strictu*, this sector can also be grouped together with cultural economy. The concept that cultural economy is a complex of services and products associated with culture seems justified, as well as the idea that the spatial projections of cultural economy should be analysed along the lines of production, trading and consumption of cultural functions and products.

The main reason why it is worth dealing with the importance of cultural economy in the revival of towns is because it is a genuinely urban element, associated with the essence of the urban issue. This recognition and such intentions came earlier in the leading countries of the globalised world, and have lead to success in many cases. WEHRLI-SCHINDLER, B. (2002) not just emphasised how a valuable element culture can be in a city as a seat for a company, but also

underlined factors that play significant role in the revival of certain sections of cities, e.g. the influence of grand cultural projects or building museums, exhibition facilities. Providing an analysis of the issue through the example of London (Tate Gallery), Paris (Pompidou) and Bilbao (Guggenheim), she mentioned similarly successful projects in smaller scales as well (Basel, Bregenz, Luzern), with a detailed introduction to the development of a complex cultural and amusement district, i.e. Zürich West. There are also a number of other examples: there have been quite a lot of recent urban renewal projects both in Europe (MediaPark and Rhine harbour, Cologne; International Cultural Centre, Avilés; Fjord City, Oslo; Park of the Nations, Lisbon; Bijlmermeer, Amsterdam) and at global levels (Alexandra Renewal Project, Gauteng, RSA; Cheonggyecheon, Seoul; South Brisbane, Queensland) in which the creation of public spaces for community use was seen to be the key to revival and development. The only question remains how these factors and directions can be identified and brought to life in the case of a Hungarian city.

The factors that accompanied the transformation of post-socialist cities did not favour the spreading of cultural urban rehabilitation. Although deindustrialisation and economic structural transformation together meant that definite functions were suddenly lost from many of the urban spaces, resulting vast under-utilised areas in cities, many times quite close to the centre, thus offering theoretically excellent grounds for the settling of cultural economy. However, there was a highly significant inhibiting factor that strategic urban planning and related implementation were at a very low, downsized level and efficiency.

Private capital – where it was interested – became the engine of transformation, and development had elements that were early-modern rather than post-modern, recalling the world of free competition capitalism of the 19th century in many respects. The feeling of urban spatial discontinuity and patchwork city transformation was further strengthened by the fact that the new projects were mostly green field investments. The symbols of the new economy were malls, shopping centres, logistical bases and modern industrial plants, all built rather on the fringes of cities, along main roads leading into the urban areas. Even the rehabilitation projects of inner urban spaces went on in an isolated way, each of them forming separate worlds, creating their own micro-environs through the establishment of new junctions, pavement reconstructions, neatly trimmed lawn, new planted trees, fountains and outdoor furniture, thus intensifying the collage-character of cities in transformation (LUKOVICH, T. 2001).

Culture and cultural economy did truly suffer the shrinkage of state functions in all fields. Culture did not offer rapid and secure rates of return for private capital, thus after 1990 both the state residing in a financial crisis and the local governments that partly took over governmental roles were rather

just onlookers of the deterioration of still existing cultural infrastructure, and did not undertake or have influence on important investments in this field. When talking about the early 1990s it is more reasonable to mention just cultural sector/sphere rather than economy, because the “industrialisation” of this sector started only hesitantly. For cultural economy to be able to become determinant in the life of a city, its transformation is essential, under circumstances amidst which culture is not only a service supported and sustained by the state and local governments, but instead a special type of market where competition can evolve in the presence of real supply and demand, thus forcing the actors in this sphere to provide high-quality services. As a summary, cultural economy in Hungary can be described as still standing on a weak ground. Just to mention a few of the problems: the mass of discretionary incomes is meagre, and there are difficulties also with the availability of sufficiently differentiated supply (and sometimes of demand). Under such circumstances, even the investments of the period after the late 1990s, which became increasingly common (often with motivations of prestige) and deliberately symbolic, have remained rather isolated.

In many respects, those said generally in connection with the transformation of cities and cultural economy cannot be applied to Hungary as the aforementioned “critical mass” of solvent and selective demand and differentiated supply is missing. The regional centres in Hungary with their 150–200 thousand inhabitants, situated on the level of urban hierarchy second to the capital are deemed middle-sized cities at a European scale, in which (as it will be illustrated below by the case of Pécs) cultural economy has only a potential to be determinant, and cultural investments are rather running ahead instead of truly being demanded by local needs.

The resources of Pécs

The city of Pécs is far from the level of global cities both in its size and in its relation systems, and those cities are centres for the globalised and uniformed culture as well. Being the centre of the South-Transdanubian region, Pécs is the fifth populous city in Hungary, and the largest one (apart from Budapest) in the region west of the Danube. However, measured at an international scale it is a middle-sized city (EPSON 2005) with its 157,680 inhabitants in 2010. Although the city is endowed with universal values – for example it has been listed as a World Heritage Site and elected as European Capital of Culture for 2010, and its international regional relation system is well beyond what would be expected for its size and economic potential, yet the great global challenges have only secondary influence on forming the inner texture of this settlement (FARAGÓ, L. 2010).

Pécs performed the role of a regional centre for centuries in trade, institutional and cultural aspects, but could develop into a big city only as a result of the industrial revolution, by taking advantage of the extractable minerals in its environment (coal and later uranium ore). Besides, advanced and diversified light and food industry were also present which together ranked Pécs among the highly developed cities of the socialist Hungary in the 1970–1980s. However, the structural transformations suddenly wiped away mining industry which was an important source of income for many people, and also left a wide, empty track among light industrial plants. An even deeper economic and industrial crisis had struck the South-Transdanubian region which acted as a hinterland for Pécs, and made catching up even more difficult.

Pécs has always liked to define itself as a cultural – or even multi-cultural – city (German, Serb, Croatian and Bulgarian minorities have also lived here in historic co-existence), and the town even has a unique sub-Mediterranean character (AUBERT, A. *et al.* 2007). It is quite difficult though to find the genuine historic basis for such a cultural role: in the period when culture was becoming institutionalised at large scale in the 19th century, Pécs did not belong to the leading group of Hungarian cities. Debrecen and Szeged, and even Kolozsvár (Cluj), Kassa (Košice) and Pozsony (Bratislava) (the latter three belonged to Hungary at that time) overweighed it in size, roles, and the number and importance of cultural institutions and functions (BELUSZKY, P.–GYÖRI, R. 2004). Furthermore, the civic traditions of Pécs seemed much less pronounced than those of a number of West-Hungarian cities. In this sense, Pécs started to challenge the rivals after 1920, when Hungary, forced behind new state borders by the Treaty of Trianon, lost its most important regional centres. The establishment of the new (cultural) spatial structure within the new borders, e.g. the settlement of institutions of higher education, the creation of museums, etc. persisted throughout the 20th century, and that process, provided the opportunity for Pécs to catch up with the rest of the Hungarian big

cities. However, until 1990 it has remained primarily an industrial centre that ensured higher-than-average living standards for its citizens, regarding indicators such as average income. The dual (schizophrenic) city image (mining, industry versus culture, history and traditions) that had developed by the 1980s is well represented by the official coat of arms of Pécs in the socialist times (Figure. 1).

The mining city unquestionably had a very strong cultural character with its almost thousand years old bishopric, the oldest university (founded in 1367) in the country, the first Hungarian public library (1774), a theatre founded in 1800 presently

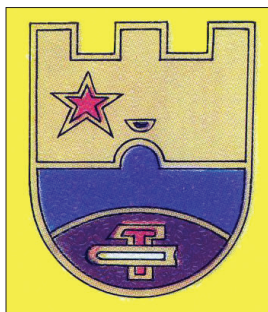


Fig. 1. The coat of arms of Pécs in the socialist era

with five separate companies, a local newspaper first published in 1848, and its 14 museums of nationwide reputation in 1990. Not only the cultural infrastructure was present, but also the cultural output of the city had expanded in the course of time: the Pécs Bauhauslers (1920s), the cultural quarterly *Jelenkor* (1958), the Ballet Pécs (1960), the neo-avantgarde artists (1970s), and strengthening intelligentsia of the forming university city (increasing enrolment of students, assisted by almost 2,000 academics and researchers) had shaped a remarkable cultural character by 1990.

The rebirth of the cultural function after 1990 was partly relative: parallel with deindustrialisation, the weight of the existing cultural sector and services became more significant. This was further enhanced by the fact that the University of Pécs integrating other institutions of the city was successful in taking advantage of the nationwide expansion of higher education, and became the university with the highest number of students (31,000 in the peak years, presently 28,000) in the country, and the greatest employer (more than 6,000 employees in 2010) in the region of South Transdanubia. Another factor rests with the self-definition of the city, i.e. in the approach by means of which Pécs – maybe not quite consciously – has tried to get rid of the prolonged crisis. Unlike many other Hungarian cities that have appeared to be dynamic in recent years, no strategy based on external investments was practiced in Pécs, for the sole reason that financially potent companies did not show up in the city, apart from just one (electronics industry). Obviously, some sort of endogenous strategy had to be sought after, and in finding it an ever growing role was deliberately assigned to cultural heritage, cultural industry and culture-based economy.

Some of the most important stages of this process were as follows. After an unsuccessful attempt to bring the entire multi-faceted historic downtown area under international protection, Pécs was finally listed among UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in the year 2000, owing to the Early Christian Necropolis. In preparation for the EU's 2007–2013 budgetary period, the Pécs Pole Developmental Strategy was formulated and approved in 2005, in which the development of the city is envisaged as resting on three pillars (cultural, health and environmental industry), with the university being strongly involved in all three fields. After an extensive domestic political debate, rivalry and international contest finally in 2005 Pécs was awarded the title European Capital of Culture 2010.

A common impact of these three actions was that they all upgraded the role of culture in revitalisation of the city. The status of World Heritage Site has meant that Pécs gained some advantage in the competition on the tourism market, and its name (brand) can become more familiar, with its world heritage attractions being internationally qualified and renowned. Winning the title did not bring about an effective breakthrough either in the numbers

of visiting tourists or in the related economic activity types, nevertheless it became the basis of a relatively important rehabilitation project aiming not only at displaying the World Heritage Site, but also at providing its environment an architectural renewal. In case of the Pole Programme, the main objective was to transform the city of Pécs into a hub that bears significant radiation over and attraction within the surrounding South-Transdanubian region. The programme became known for its mosaic-like character of developmental concepts, yet it was conceived at strengthening the connections between knowledge-intensive sectors of economy, university R&D capacities and the business/entrepreneur sphere. Originally, its cultural pillar had high emphasis on the settling of film and movie industry and on a number of other measures that would have aimed at creating an atmosphere required for the settling of creative sectors. The Pole Programme however has been somewhat shaded out by the European Capital of Culture 2010 project, partly because resources for the former were re-allocated so that the ideas formulated in the latter could be financed.

Overview of functional morphology

The urban morphology of Pécs is mainly determined by physical factors: it is located on the foothills of Mecsek, with its historic centre developed on the fluvial deposits of streams. In the early years the northward and southward expansion of the city was limited by the northerly located elevations and the southern swampy areas. The east-west axis is formed by both the Pécs basin and the transit routes crossing the city. Historically the economy of the city was based on wine cultivation on the southerly slopes, while craftsmanship developed using the water resources of streams coming from the karst reservoir of the hills. Pécs was surrounded by a group of villages either located in the valleys of the north or the flat segments of the rolling southern surface. This structure was fundamentally deformed by industrial development of the 19th century.

Coal mining at the northeast outskirts at the beginning was only limited, while with the appearance of Danube Steam Navigation Co. in 1853 the excavation reached industrial scales. Firstly, the northeast mining districts started to develop rapidly, on the other hand the company opened a railway line transporting the raw material to the Danube ports, which attracted the town to the south. Economic progress of the late 19th century stimulated the expansion of the settlement with zones of manufacturing as many new industrial estates were founded, including porcelain works, and also resulted in housing developments for the growing population. Industrial character was reinforced in the post-war era, melting in morphologically the coal-mining

suburbs supplemented by the westward expansion of uranium ore research and mining from the early 1950s. As the new mining pits were located out in the western peripheries of the fast growing city, additional housing estates were erected from the outskirts towards the centre. Small villages were integrated in this part of the urban expansion too, while the functional change enlarged Pécs to the south during the 1970s. The lowest territories between the centre and the vast housing areas provided space for industrial and commercial activities near and along the railway line. Urban land use pattern had become fragmented even by the end of the socialist time, which was further strengthened by the post-industrial transformation taking shape rapidly after 1990 (*Figure. 2*).

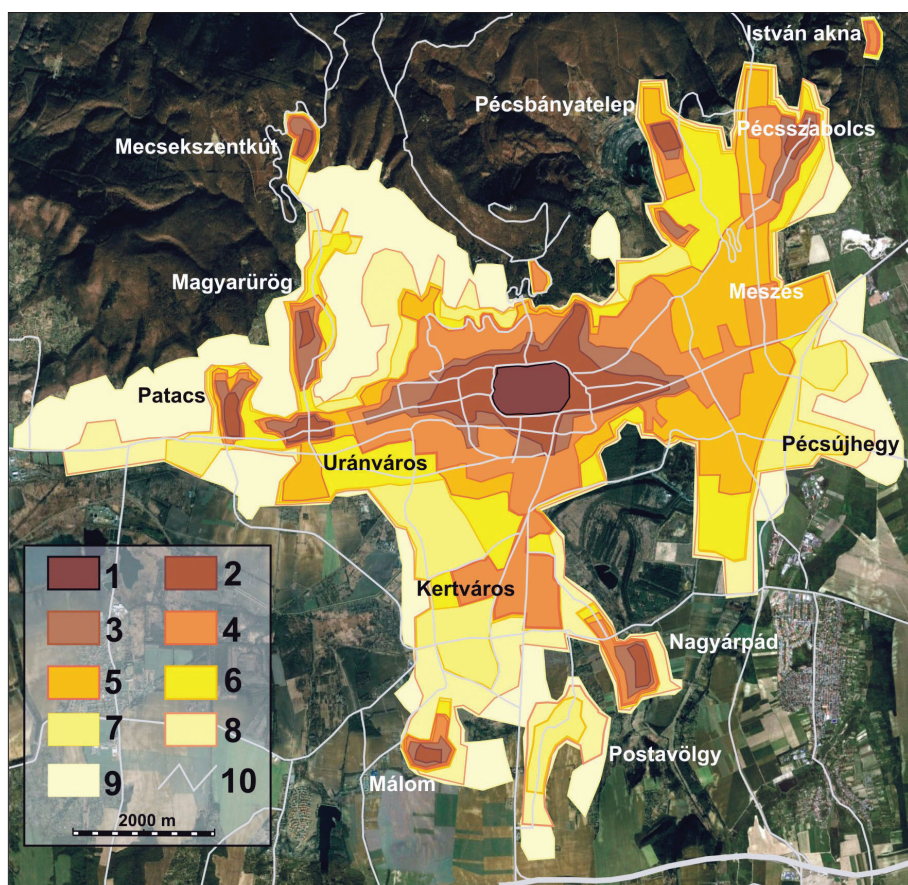


Fig. 2. Spatial development of Pécs (compiled by TRÓCSÁNYI, A.). – 1 = Medieval City; 2 = 1864; 3 = 1880; 4 = 1943; 5 = 1957; 6 = 1967; 7 = 1980; 8 = 1990; 9 = 2010; 10 = Main thoroughfares (2011)

Certainly post-industrial economic transformation also left its (spatial) footprint on the functional morphology of Pécs. The previously rigid functional zones started to change their character in different pace and time. Generally: Pécs has lost its pivotal position among Hungarian regional centres, the city of well paid miners and reputed cultural values had turned into a pole of unemployment, a community of mismanagement, a place with poor accessibility and obsolete inner infrastructure continuously and sorely missing capital investment.

The massive deindustrialization (the closing of both coal and uranium ore mines), the decrease of industrial output and the postponement of reindustrialization left substantial extensions of brown fields all over the city. Many of them were located along the railway line, some spotted the inner blocks, while immense segments could be found at the north-eastern peripheries. Both industrial decline, and the gradually diminishing and eventually dissolved military functions had provided under-utilised estates. Out of the three large military bases only one preserved its former function and presently is used by police.

Luckily, the deindustrialization was accompanied by the growing (importance) of higher education: the rapidly increasing figures of student enrolment, the (partly) successful internationalisation of training programs provided a significantly strengthening market demand both in housing and consumption aspects. University of Pécs had become the largest employer within the region by 2000, its budget is certainly comparable with that of the municipality. According to previous surveys (Gyüre, J. 2007), the expenditure of students only on accommodation calculated with an average price (HUF 24,000/month) and a ten-month period makes up an annual income of about HUF 1.15 billion for the city. The university was involved in a successful property exchange with the state owned companies, the municipality and the exchequer in the early 1990s, legally and physically integrated formerly separate organizations (schools, hospitals, institutions), initiated real estate reconstructions and developments giving new fashion to some districts and a leaving a massive footprint on the entire city.

Housing areas and estates have also experienced a substantial transformation in the past decades. The formerly young dwellers of housing estates either has moved to more lucrative locations within the city and the suburbs of Pécs, or just has grown old in their original location. The dwellers of housing estates show a new, at least triple character presently. Aging, generally retired original population is supplemented by low income couples moving into the cheaper districts, while the massive figure of university students provides for a growing demand on the apartments to rent. Therefore, the surviving functions and services of housing estates are not able to satisfy the current need of the present inhabitants.

Although the city management recognised the historic heritage and marketing elements and possibilities of the downtown, but its central business functions weakened significantly, the crowdedness continued to grow. The huge brown field supply has continuously provided areas for retail de-

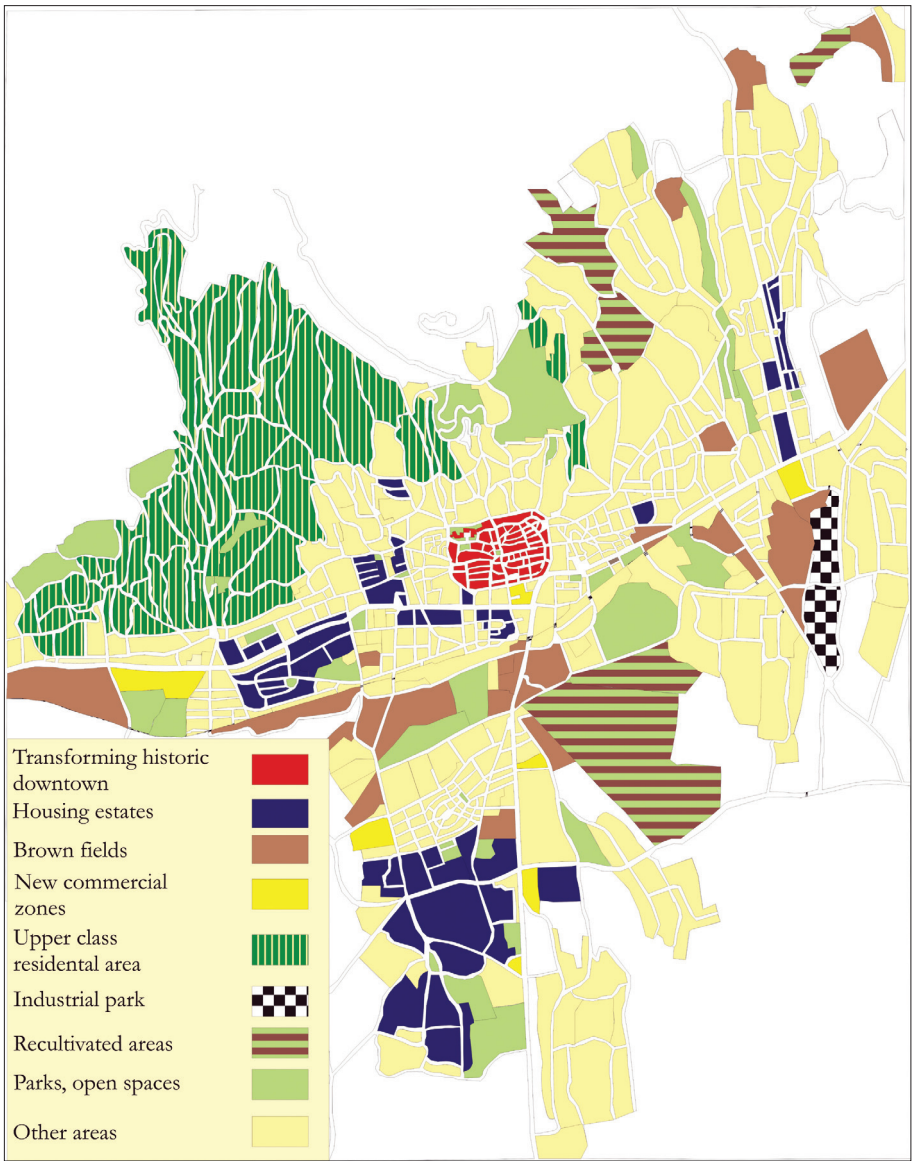


Fig. 3. Types of spatial transformation in Pécs (compiled by PIRISI, G.)

velopment, new shopping centres and malls were opened at the peripheries of the city which did not help the revitalisation of the inner city functions. Nevertheless, the municipality of Pécs successfully managed the renovation of some heritage elements and eventually became entitled the UNESCO World Heritage Site for the Early Christian Necropolis. Functional change of the historic centre took place gradually and slowly: traffic control, entering and parking restrictions, pedestrianisation started to be introduced as early as 1989, but the physical transformation of streets and part of public spaces were completed only in 2010.

Parks and recreational areas have also painfully experienced the lack of funds and the altered economic focus of the city. Financial resources for the maintenance of the green areas were missing and policy turned out to be forlorn, their accessibility remained weak, and they hardly fit properly into the urban texture of the city (*Figure. 3*).

The borderless city project

The Borderless City is a slogan invented by local intellectuals for the European Capital of Culture project proposal, offering several connotations: social, economic, geographic etc.. Firstly of course, it refers to the Balkan region, towards which Pécs has traditionally represented an important gateway. In the course of history it happened several times that this orientation was more important than the ones towards the national capital or hinterland. On this basis, with the help of infrastructural investments and grand cultural events Pécs intends to regain its regional attraction, including the inevitable cross-border links. On the other hand, it also means the deliberate removal of virtual (mental, image) and physical barriers or borders within the city. These borders have been created either by intention or by coincidence throughout the past century as a consequence of the altering intensity of urban development. The texture of Hungary's fifth largest city is more than heterogeneous: founded by the Romans, its somewhere medieval or Turkish flavour, and generally Mediterranean atmosphere is mixed with heritage elements of modern and Art Nouveau architecture surrounded by vast housing estates of post-war development spotted by rundown industrial brown fields.

The aimed fundamental principles according to the proposal were to promote the utilisation of the city's economic potential and the development of the creative industry and (cultural) tourism. Investments had to be made into the foundation of cultural institutions to enable Pécs to be compatible with those in the European Union to fulfill the targeted international functions. The developments had to be closely connected to the fundamental cultural tendencies and heritage of the city; furthermore, they had to be related to these

functions. Investments were aimed to help to revive the urban character of individual city quarters, to carry out social revitalisation of neighbourhoods, involving local ideas in development, encouraging talented young citizens to stay in the city, and help Pécs to regain an international regional impact (TAKÁTS, J. 2005).

The project can be approached from two different dimensions: on the one hand it focused on investments in cultural infrastructure – i.e. on (re)constructions –, on the other hand an attractive program for 2010 was overseen. Certainly the latter will not be tackled in detail but the spatial implications of the program sites will be discussed briefly. From the very start the investments were based on five pillars i.e. on the following key projects: Grand Exhibition Space, Music and Conference Centre, Regional Library and Information Centre, Revival of public squares and parks, Zsolnay Cultural Quarter (*Figure 4*).

When looking at the key investment sites of the cultural capital project, one can recognise the apparent intention to interlink sections of the city separated by industrial blight zones, and to attach areas formerly existing in the city as *terrae incognitae* to cultural spaces. Such neglected areas sometimes appear very boldly in the urban structure: in the case of Pécs, wedged in between the traditional and the modern but outdated districts of the city. The new strategy intended to remove these inner boundaries as well, creating a uniform, post-modern urban appearance. The ultimate goal, of course, is the long-awaited structural transformation i.e. the creation of such a cultural economy which is capable of filling in the empty space that was created as a result of industrial decline and of transforming the city into a regional centre in a broader, cross-border sense.

The majority of the strategy is to be implemented in the form of five key projects, three of which was to be carried out within a single coherent spatial unit, in the zone of city centre edge and an unappealing former inner industrial belt. The creation of the Zsolnay Cultural Quarter, presently the largest brown field cultural investment in Central Europe (marked A on *Figure 4*) has been a central element of the project proposal. The factory itself is an emblem of the city: symbol of the gone, but still memorable development of the modern age (TAKÁTS, J. 2005). Its (former) products (eosin-dye and piro-granite tiling) decorate buildings from Paris to Zagreb, from Pécs to Budapest. The heritage management, but also post-modern style oriented reconstruction of the complex of great industrial traditions can bring new energies to the easternmost periphery of city centre. Thus, the experiences from recent years have shown that industrial production on its own cannot sustain the factory any longer; production will be limited to a manufacture scale, providing an insight by the public to traditional industry. The invented new functions, in line with the post-modern concepts of urban planning are mixed: there will

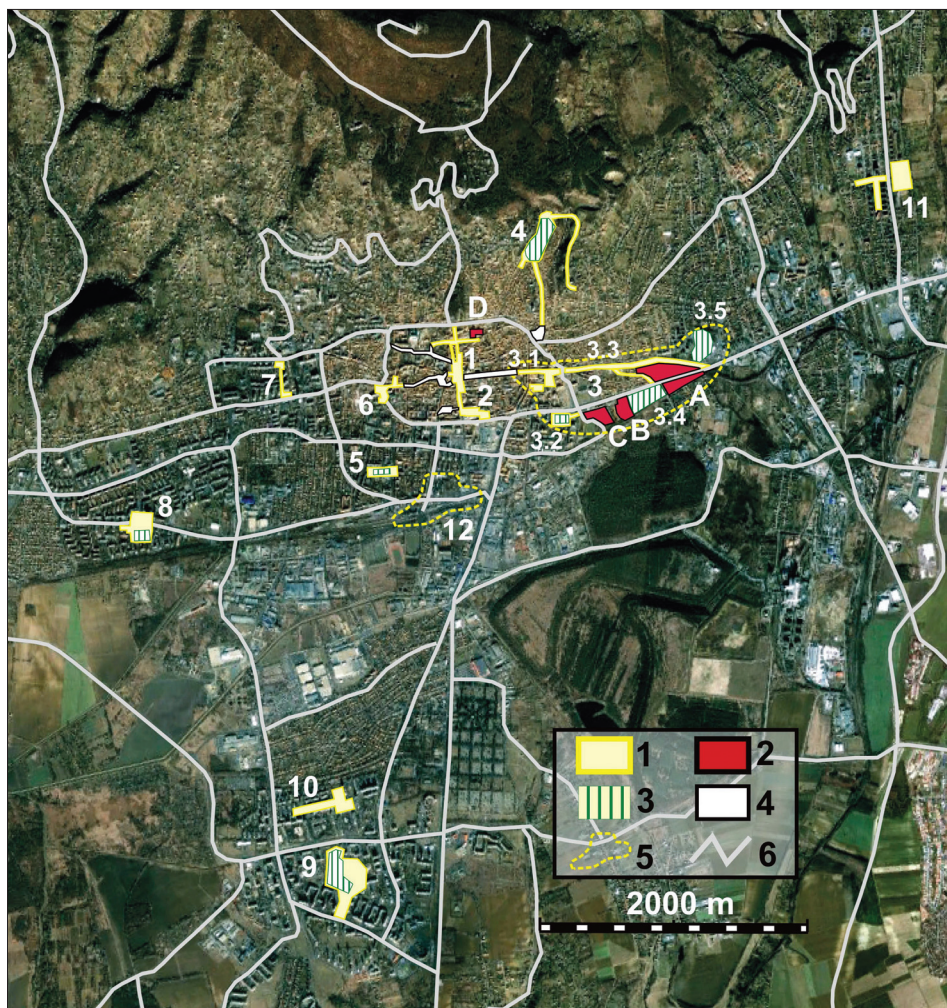


Fig. 4. Investment sites of the ECC project (compiled by TRÓCSÁNYI, A.). – 1 = Revitalised public spaces; 2 = Key projects (institutions); 3 = Revitalised parks; 4 = Previously renewed sites of the inner city; 5 = Other important districts of renewal; 6 = Main thoroughfares (2011). For the explanation of letters A through D and white numbers 1 through 12 see the text

be an industrial historic theme park installed in the building complex with a park in its inner court and with Art Nouveau features, as well as an incubator house, an artists' camp and exhibition facilities for the Faculty of Arts, restaurants and hotel facilities. The planned functions (creative industry, university facilities, entertainment, museums and heritage elements) are to provide a

full day program for the visitors developing a new tourist attraction site of the city. This large scale project (both in capital investment and extension) is intended to give a drive to progressive development in the neighbourhood and provide basis for the further cultural transformation of the district. Along with the conference centre and concert hall complex it can enable the city with higher reputation via hosting profitable international events of cultural, creative and conference tourism. Although the cultural year passed and some elements of the site are working, the entire complex is to be opened for the public by the end of 2011.

Next-door, easily accessible to the development site of Zsolnay Cultural Quarter an impressive 11,000 m² Music and Conference Centre (marked B on *Figure 4*) was erected in the framework of the project. Before its opening in November, 2010 the city had no venue either for larger conferences or concerts with sufficient standard or capacity. The new concert hall has placed Pécs on the musical and scientific conference map of Europe, making the city a hub in its international region. The flagship of investments presently houses the Pannon Philharmonic Orchestra and the offices of Pécs Cultural Centre. The concert hall with a capacity of almost 1,000 seats can host classical, jazz, world and folk music, pop concerts, as well as film festivals and conferences. Smaller events can be organised in the two bigger and two smaller conference halls with a capacity of 350 and 40 persons each, while halls of ballet and music rehearsal are also available for the artists. The centre costed 7.9 billion HUF and seems to be one of the most successful investments at the moment: 189 larger concerts and programs are scheduled for 2011.

The walk from the Zsolnay site to the city leads along the Regional Knowledge Centre (marked C on *Figure 4*) – originally named Regional Library and Information Centre – which attracts the view next to a university hostel. Having the oldest public library in the country Pécs has a strong tradition of offering a wide range of collection of readings, not only for the university audience, but for the general public. The prideful expansion during the past decades has led to reaching physical limits of several collections, thus none of them could develop their services according to the changing modern needs. With the completion of the new centre the former collections of the County, City and University Libraries are held under a unified catalogue structure providing access to all materials for all registered users. In addition to its IT based services presenting one of the largest stock and variety of books, several reading rooms are available; the new centre has a multitude of computer workstations, databases and access to the internet. With its seven day per week opening time, it is truly visitor-friendly, offering services not only for the academic public, but also for all city dwellers from different age and interest groups. The combined investment of the county, the city and the university amounted to 4.9 billion HUF.

Pécs is well known for its wide range of museums both internationally and domestically, spread all over the city, but mostly concentrated along Káptalan Street (often called Museum Street) in the northern part of the historic centre. These collections are fascinating and some of them are quite unique, but the city had no capacity before to receive larger temporary exhibitions. In the framework of the cultural capital project the renovation of Museum Street and its units (in eight different buildings) was completed, while this artistic corner (actually axis) was extended further to the east. The fine baroque architecture of the former County Assembly Hall was also renovated and the building extended by an additional new wing now called the Grand Exhibition Space (marked D on *Figure 4*). The appealing mixture of historic and modern structures can accommodate larger transit thematic exhibitions more flexibly while the offices and research labs, storage capacities of the County Museum were also enlarged and improved. This investment can improve the artistic life of the city with better and larger capacities for exhibitions and can boost tourism, as Museum Street starts from the most visited and reputed tourism attraction of the city: the cathedral and the Early Christian Necropolis. The eastern extension and pedestrianisation of the street to the direction of the Grand Exhibition Space lead and attract tourists to other, formerly neglected places of interest districts of the city. The total investment for this project was budgeted to 3.5 billion HUF.

The remaining, fifth project was the transformation of the city's appearance in minor details but with fundamental spatial effects. It included the physical reconstruction and revival of public squares and parks (marked 1 to 12 on *Figure 4*), and the total renewal of the downtown area. A central element of this project is the pavement, pedestrianisation therefore the total functional change of the emblematic Széchenyi Square (*photos 3 and 4*).

The site originally, historically functioned as a market place for centuries, but reconstruction in the early 1940s transformed it to a mixture of a transportation hub and a public space. These two functions were physically separated by balustrades, however increasing traffic played down almost totally the social, agora role of it. Through-traffic control did not solve the problem, the historic centre and some of the adjoining streets had turned into a polluted, over-crowded and partly illegal car park by the turn of the new millennium. The reconstruction focused on the revival of the lost social function, with full pedestrianisation, and the implementation of new fountains and water pools, the square was given a new atmosphere when it was returned to the city dwellers and tourists. It was moreover inevitable to link up the tourism attraction sites to one another providing an easily accessible pedestrian district, with friendly (Mediterranean) atmosphere. The historic east–west axis of the city was furthered to the direction of the new investment sites described above, but the north–south extension was also enlarged with



Photos 3–4. The changing character of Széchenyi Square: parking function in the 1980s and the public space in 2011 (Photos: Archive Pécs, MÁNFAI, GY.)

street reconstructions. Another large open place (Kossuth Square) with less historic connotation lost its surface parking function during the transformation: an underground garage was constructed, freeing additional space for public use (*photos 5 and 6*). The nicely renovated area now can house festivals and concerts, smaller seasonal markets. The philosophy of the cultural capital emphasized that the sense of urbanity largely depends on how public spaces are used. The original monofunctional utilisation had to be altered according to the changing requirements of a given area, preferably developing in a multi-functional direction. The historic development of Pécs resulted in a patchwork structure of the city where different districts not only showed distinct urban



Photos 5–6. The changing character of Kossuth Square: bus station in 1970s and a public space with underground car park in 2011 (Photos: Archive Pécs, MÁNFAL, Gy.)

characters but many of them were separated from the others physically and also socially. The concept of borderless city aimed to pull down the inner barriers by the reconstruction and functional change of district centres. With the implementation of this tool the heterogeneity of the city's texture has become somewhat reduced as the project invested not only into the revitalisation of district centres, but also into the reconstruction of important corridors between the sectors of the city and within them. The revival of public squares and parks project pillar managed to spread the development among 12 different sites, out of which nine is located outside of the historic centre. The reconstruction of highly degraded public spaces improved the quality of local residential

environment and also changed the texture of the city positively. The budget of this project pillar reached 7.4 billion HUF.

Beside the prestigious investments in the city the cultural capital program also meant several programs throughout the official year, before and after. The calendar of cultural events on the official website of the project (www.pecs2010.hu) has shown around 550 events between January 2009 and June, while up to May 2011 an additional 200 contributed to the success of the event. Large scale, internationally really attractive programs could hardly be found, but the variety of programs is sincerely creditable. Grand concerts were difficult to be organised as the possible (new) venues to host them were all under construction in 2010, furthermore, because of the late start and the uncertainty, internationally reputed stars were not able to schedule a Pécs program into their busy agenda. Nevertheless, the delay in the investments transferred both the program sites to open air locations and the dimension of the programs: smaller and more specific events entertained the public all around the year and the city. The repaved and restructured public spaces offered pleasant locations not only for visitors in a growing figure (AUBERT, A. *et al.* 2010), but also for locals. This unintentional arrangement shifted the structure to a less international and less concentrated (both in time and space), but more sustainable character (HAJNAL, K. 2008).

By the end of 2010 most of the new investments were completed (September – library complex, November – exhibition hall, December – conference centre) offering new venues for the closing events of the program series. Since then the constructions have continued opening interesting new segments of the investments to the public almost every month. The long lasting highway development from the capital to Pécs speeded up significantly because of the cultural capital programs, and it was opened in March 2010 shortening the access to the city with almost an hour.

Conclusions

Pécs managed to win the national and international contest for title European Capital of Culture 2010 which gave an enormous impetus to the development of the city and its environs. A substantial infrastructural reconstruction was added to the large scale investments to cultural premises initiating a structural change both in the urban morphology and the (cultural) economy of the city.

Within the patchwork urban structure cultural institutions in Pécs originally could be characterised with the dominance of the historic inner city. Developmental policy made several attempts to resolve this disproportion in the socialist era, but it was just these scattered institutions (community centres, movies) that were brought to an impossible situation and then collapsed

with the marketisation of culture. The two factors discussed above i.e. the spatial expansion of the university and the appearance of cultural economy elements relying on university students, together with the manifested effects of the European Capital of Culture 2010 project investments all lead towards the relief of spatial concentration. It is particularly the European Capital of Culture projects located east of the inner city that might have a significant revival effects on the structure via both the realised public investments and the announced or planned private ones. They can speed up the renewal of definite districts, extend the attractive historic centre, and add new elements to raise the city's cultural reputation.

New cultural institutions and venues placed formerly neglected districts of the city not only on their mental, but also on the cultural maps of both dwellers and tourists. In this sense the project reached its goal; it contributed significantly to the (international) image of Pécs, while it spurred the unavoidable urban renewal of certain districts and the entire city. (The detailed map of the new pattern of cultural sites in Pécs can be studied in Hungarian Geographical Bulletin, Volume 59, Number 1, p. 72., http://www.mta.hu/konyvtar/kiadv/HunGeoBull2010/HunGeoBull_2010_1_70-76.pdf)

The most important sites of renewal and revival signify the new cultural axis of the city of Pécs, which – based on its direction and relation system – could generate such a supply structure (ranging from universal values to subculture), in which the entire population of the city i.e. locals, together with university students and tourists could find pleasure, whereas it could also yield some profit for its managing entity. It would mean a linkage between the new Zsolnay Cultural Quarter with the inner city which is to gain deepened cultural functions and with the university district located somewhat towards the west, across residential areas now awaiting renewal. Unfortunately, the southern expansion of the inner city has not manifested yet, as the reconstruction towards that direction failed because of missing resources. Although it is also a strategic direction – linking the centre to the railway station –, which used to be a popular place in the turn of the 19–20th century, important traffic corridors (national road No 6) and a housing estate form obstacles at present.

The new cultural axis is to transpose the old monocentric heritage and cultural pattern, signs of successful transformation can be seen even just after the official year of the program. The essential extension of program venues and cultural supply can bring life to formerly hidden, unknown corners of Pécs and also help transformation towards cultural economy. Private investments are essential to be contributed as public sources reached their limits putting a heavy burden of debt on the municipality budget for decades. Although this new pattern is just under realisation and new elements of it are to be strengthened, conflicts among different interest groups have surfaced recently.

The new M6–M60 highway to Pécs is expected to boost the economy: the first signs of investors' inquiries can be felt just a year after its opening. Although the construction of the highway was not included in the project, it contributed not only to the success of the programs, but to the spatial transformation of the city. As the new track reaches Pécs from the south, the traditional, rigid east-west pattern is to be biased. Along the well reconstructed and widened route from the city centre to the highway and the awakened airport investments started to take place, moreover even the real estate market evaluates this district prosperous.

The Cultural Capital of Europe 2010 programs and investments have brought progressive ideas to development, highlighting new dimensions, areas and directions. Even at this stage it is visible that it promoted to reweave the pattern of the city, having extended the cultural inner city both spatially and spiritually. Although Pécs is still full of problems to be solved, one can see in 2011 that the Borderless City program resulted a city with much less borders.

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