

## **COEXISTENCE OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL GROUPS AROUND ONE OF THE CAMPUSES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PÉCS**

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### **Abstract**

#### **Coexistence of different social groups around one of the campuses of the University of Pécs**

In the process of urban transformation and renewal, large numbers of immigrants are expected in connection with the existence of prosperous branches of industry. It is assumed that in an environment where higher education is one of the most important economic factors, there will be conflicts in the everyday coexistence of social groups. The aim of this study is to investigate, in a city quarter which was forced to transform due to economic structural changes, and which has a bold mixture of ageing people and temporary university residents, how the coexistence of different groups of the society influences the quality of life in the quarter, and how the situation is perceived by the affected people themselves. Furthermore, we want to see what kinds of tension arise from the interactions between these groups with dissimilar/different background, and what possible solutions can be found to resolve such tension.

### **Keywords**

University, urban transformation, studentification, housing estate

## **1. Introduction**

Recently, the geographic study of the transformation of settlements and city quarters (gentrification, studentification) has started to include cities where there are large numbers of higher education (primarily university) students as residents. Besides the analysis of the economic effect of universities (including Florax 1992; Geuna, Nesta 2006, Varga 2009 among others) there is an increasing number of publications in which the research focuses on the effect of university students on local conditions, the city quarter or district (Fincher, Shaw, 2011, Munro, Livingston 2012). The aim of the present study has been to gain insight, through the transformations induced by the university, into the relationship in which the "original" population of a particular quarter coexists with university students moving into the district.

The studied housing block city district was established in the mid-1970s, as industry in Pécs was developing and the functions of the city kept continuously widening; it was mainly its location and its highly qualified inhabitants that could make it a residential environment of higher prestige (Pirisi, Trócsányi 2006, 91). Its good liveability was ensured by its easy access to public institutions and services, of which a substantial proportion still are considered an attraction. When mining was discontinued in the 1990s, the decline (ranging from the degradation of buildings to the birth of slum zones) that was experienced in other parts of the city (Meszes, Gyárváros, Balokány) did not really appear here. The reason for this is partly the relatively young age of flats in comparison with those of other housing blocks, and the geographic proximity to university faculties. Linked with the expansion of higher education, the university started to become an increasingly important economic factor in the city of Pécs (e.g. increasing employment rate and student numbers), thus the development of the quarter in the 1990s was influenced fundamentally by the presence and proximity of university faculties and teacher training college (Trócsányi, A. 2011. pp. 267-270.). The Medical School (with 2,912 students, and with training programmes running in Hungarian, German and English languages), the Faculty of Humanities (4,960 students), and the faculty of Sciences (2,742 students) are in the immediate neighbourhood of the housing estate, and also the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (3,799 students) is within walking distance (PTE 2011, 1). In accordance with those written above, the studied housing block district is a highly adequate sample for presenting about the social and economic effects of a town turning more into a university city.

Currently, the greatest employer of the city and the region is the University of Pécs, with more than 25,000 students, of whom 18,660 (PTE 2011, 1) are pursuing their studies full-time, meaning that they actually live their everyday life in the city. The aim of the current study is to present about the issues of coexistence between local residents and university students, through the analysis of a particular city quarter. It is likely that these two substantially different (age, lifestyle, incomes) major social groups have conflicts between them, which were now scrutinized, together with the difficulties in such coexistence. The fundamental questions of the research related to how liveable the city quarter is for its residents. Is the presence of university students performs an advantage or a disadvantage? Are there conflicts between students and local residents? According to our hypothesis that we formulated before the research as university students and professors with good knowledge and frequent use of the area, the students temporarily living in the area make the everyday lives of "native" residents harder. As a consequence of the seasonality of

university life and due to the constant change of people between years, filtration and the turnover of the population is very fast, therefore conflicts may arise. As we supposed, the possible sources of such conflicts root in lifestyle, communication difficulties and the general lack of trust. In the followings, we deal with the background of the research, introduce the host city Pécs, and present the results of the survey.

## **2. Methodology**

The research was based on a data collection in May 2011 and May 2012. When geographically designating the study area, the main idea was to include as many of the university faculties as possible, despite the fact that the university has a scattered structure within the city. Accordingly, one of the university blocks, located west of the city centre, was selected (the "western campus") where several faculties are located (Medical School, Humanities, Sciences, Engineering, and even the Faculty of Arts, at the beginning of our studies), concentrating on a block-based uniform structure segment (Fig. 1). In our studies we surveyed the residents of the ten-storey blocks of flats in the western and northern part of the sample area, and also all of the businesses and stores in the area. Each of the seven selected buildings had 2x32 or 2x40 flats, and the number of surveyed commercial units was 48.

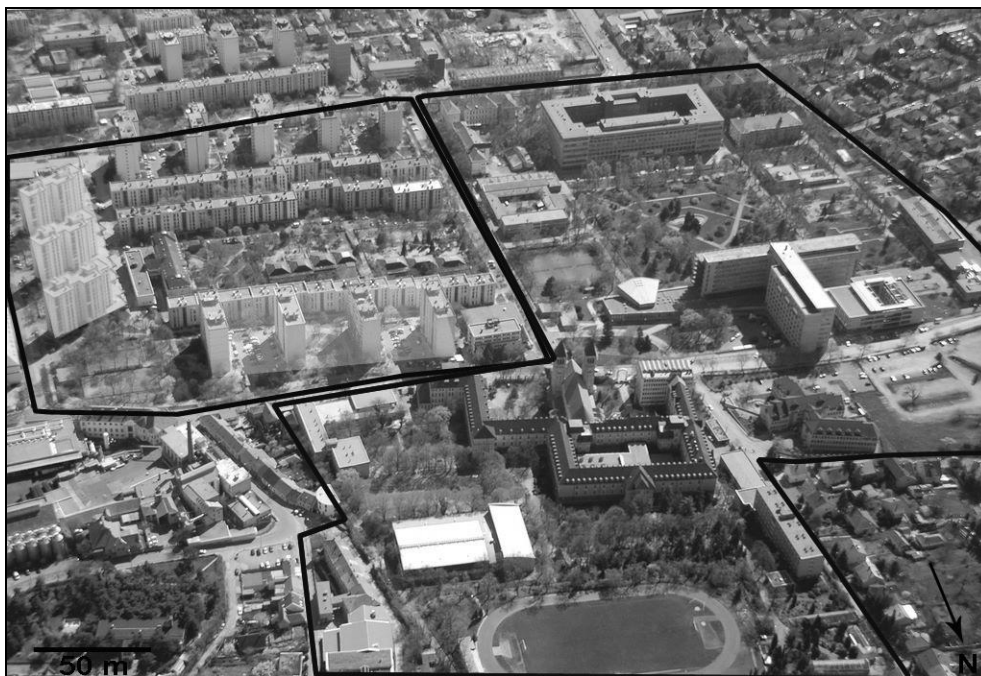


Fig. 1: The investigated area.

Source: TRócsányi, A. 2008, Ed.: Gyüre, J. – Makkai, B. 2012.

During the survey we contacted altogether 892 local residents (including 240 flat owners), altogether 208 university students, and staff members/owners of a total of 63 businesses operating in the area, who were asked about living conditions

(apartment total area, ownership relations), coexistence with university students / locals, basic demographic information, and types and client pool of small business units). Any further field information required for our research was obtained using questionnaire surveys and interviews. Surveying the population was done in the form of a full survey/census, whereas recording people's perceptions was done in random ways. The interviews (32 altogether) were made with local business owners, residents and university students. During the survey, interview subjects were categorised in three major groups: local ("native") residents, university students and business owners. Within the pool of local residents, the opinions of singles, of those with small children and of retired people were analysed separately, with the assumption that their different habits and daily rhythms influence the preferences they indicate in the interviews. Besides recording the general demographic data, special emphasis was laid in the questionnaires on trying to survey positive and negative perceptions associated with the city district, the university and the students (interview subjects were asked to associate three positive and three negative expressions with each).

### **3. Results**

#### **3.1 Residents of the city quarter and how the quarter is perceived**

Traditionally as well as today, the studied city quarter has a variety of functions. Of these, the residential function, as reflected by the intensive housing block structure, appears boldly, but also present are education (kindergarten, university) health, (from general practitioner to clinical services), business and commercial services. The northern and southern margin of the studied area fits onto an important traffic axis which also handles, in addition to local needs, (east-west) transit traffic too. The total population of the area is estimated at around 3-4,000 individuals<sup>1</sup> (including university students), whereas the aforementioned faculties have nearly 12,000 full-time students (PTE 2011, 1).

Basic demographic data were collected about altogether 822 local residents and 178 tenant university students in seven building blocks of the studied housing district. Looking at the age structure of people living here (Fig. 2) it appears that the district is characterised with a highly aging population, according to the current trends. The children age group is almost totally missing, and the absence of middle aged people is also striking. Normally, younger people live here who consider for themselves this part of the city as a starting point. Young couples with no children or with one child tend to move here because of the reasonable prices of flats, the proximity of the downtown area and for the good availability of services. The dominant features of the district (e.g. concrete panel buildings, flat sizes) distract young and middle aged people with higher incomes, among whom only those remain in place for whom certain features of the quarter (being close to the university) are dominant in their choice of values. However, a certain type of distortion is also observed, especially in the younger age group (19-26 years), where university students appear, besides being tenants, as owners too. Generally, these cases are about flats that are purchased with the help of the parents for the period of university studies – of which one or two rooms are in most cases let out, this way improving the cost-effectiveness of such an investment, e.g. easing the burden of loan repayment.

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<sup>1</sup>No exact data are available, since even the most recent official census data are older than 10 years. However, it is also true that the official registration of flat-hiring university students (official checking in as temporary residents) is not always done. This is a sort of unspoken agreement between the flat owner (no tax paying required) and the tenant (lower rental fees imply).

After graduation, the majority of students having become flat owners sell their property, while some utilise them by letting them out, either staying at the place or leaving.

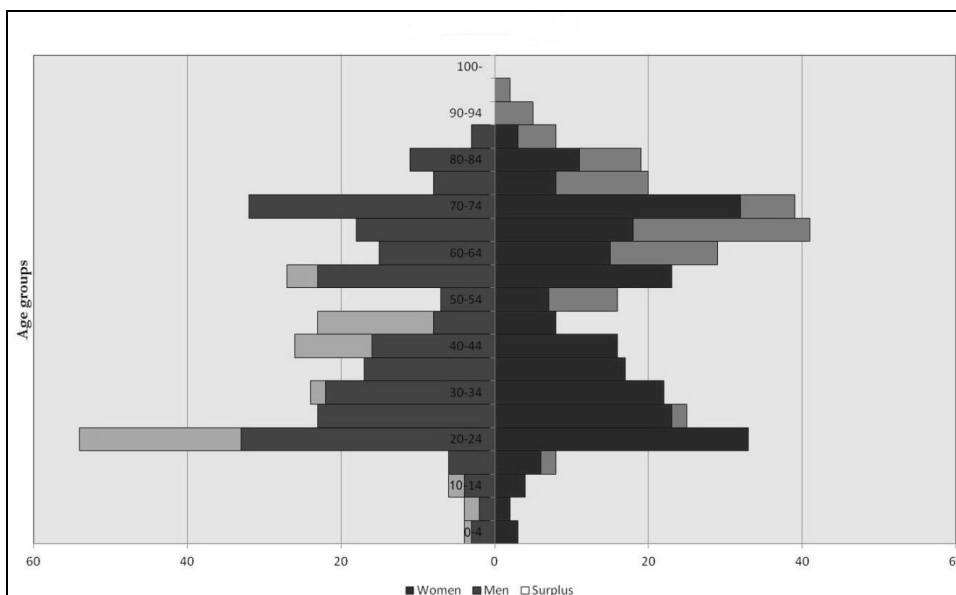


Fig. 2: Age structure of local residents (n=822).

Source: Gyüre, J. – Makkai, B. 2012.

In the case of older age groups, there are more factors in effect; some people are still members of the original population of the quarter. People living in the area partly belong to those who were formerly unable to move to other quarters of the city (primarily due to reasons related with estate market), and there are others who did not want to move because of the good accessibility of the area. As a special feature, widowing exists in this quarter, too: the children have left the family, and one of the parents has become a widow and stayed in the relatively large flat.

A unique category is made up by students living here in hired flats (178 people), their age structure appearing in Figure 3. We should note here that there were only 26 tenants who were not university students: among them it was middle-aged employees that were found to be dominant<sup>2</sup>. An explanation to this may be the fact that in the city of Pécs there is a predominantly supply-determined market of estates, with a result that price-sensitive tenants do not prefer this relatively expensive district, unless there is a serious reason for it to be considered such as local institutions of local employment possibilities. The age structure of students, most certainly, shows a completely different picture. In the greatest proportion it depicts the "official" age of people participating in higher education (ages 18-24), but it also appears that university graduation often shifts to the 25-27 year-old age group. This is influenced by the type of training (e.g. medical) as well as other factors such as when obtaining the degree is postponed for some reason (eg. gap year), the lack of a language exam, etc.). The appearance of the middle-aged

<sup>2</sup> Their data do not appear in the chart.

cohorts is explained by a number of factors including going for second and third degrees or pursuing doctoral studies. It is also common that the student can enter or re-enter higher education only with some delay for some particular reason (e.g. birth of children, spending a period in the workforce market, financial constraints), in which cases flat hiring is preferred to university dormitories. In general it can be stated that younger university students or those in the initial years of their studies choose dormitories in a greater proportion, whereas students in the upper university years or in an older age tend to prefer hired flats that offer increased privacy, due to reasons such as choosing a mate, looking for improved comfort, or having higher incomes.

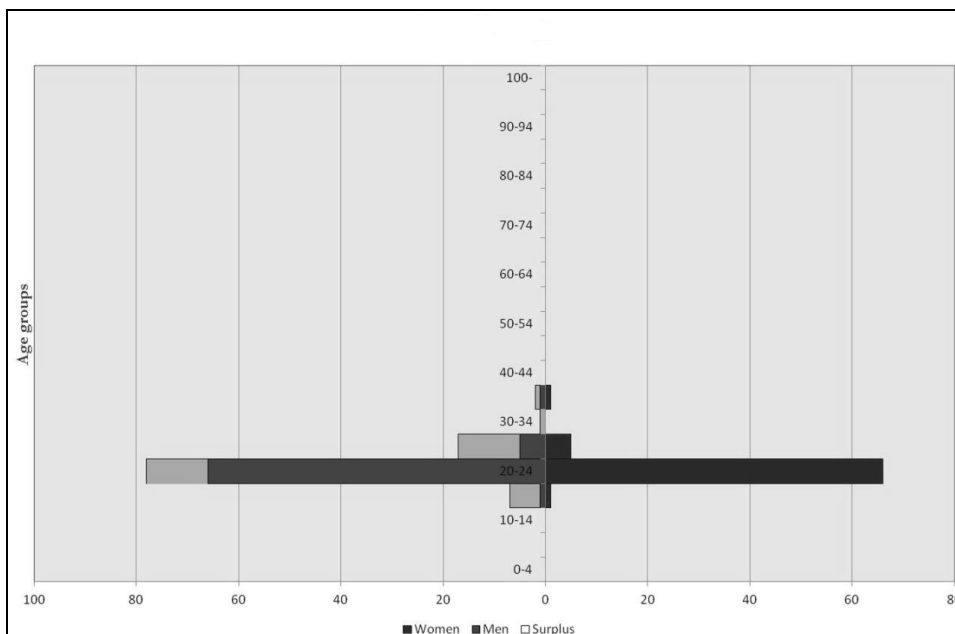


Fig. 3: Age structure of flat-hiring university students (n=178).

Source: Gyüre, J. – Makkai, B. 2012.

The aforementioned structural peculiarities are reflected in the employment structure of the city, too. Among the interviewed people, there is a relatively even distribution of those employed in the service sector (33%, of which 2% are associated with the university), pensioners (33%), and students (32%).

Regarding the liveability of the quarter, it can be concluded that the vast majority of the interviewed people like to live there. In the case of pensioners and families with small children, this proportion is almost 100%, but, interestingly, 20% of university students do not consider the area to be a liveable one. The possible background for this may be the fact that older people like their familiar environment they got used to, and adhere to it. This assumption is supported by the interviews, too; the following statement by a pensioner is a typical one. "I have lived here for long, and would not like the idea of moving. Mostly because of having got used to it, and I like the place, anyway." At the same time, not all of the students will surely be able to fit in the environment or will like this setting, since the costs of hiring a flat are quite substantial in a Hungarian context, and it is mostly the well-off students (or their

parents) – i.e. those coming from housing environments that are highly different from panel blocks – who can afford paying for it. For them, this type of accommodation is the necessary, least bad option, located close to the university. Nevertheless, it also has to be considered that the young, highly mobile population, i.e. the majority of those involved in the process of studentification, normally have weak bonds with their temporary residential environments (Smith 2005, 83).

During the research we wanted to find out how different groups evaluated the area (Fig. 3). Among positive opinions regarding the studied city quarter, it was the good accessibility of the area that was most prominently highlighted by all three social groups. Another shared positive feature was public transport which means, as there is no other form of community transportation service in the city, the dense network of bus lines. Among university students and residents, the broad spectrum of services was another substantial positive factor. For residents of the district (especially with regard to age), medical services belonging to the university was a highly emphasised feature. The clinic block run by the Medical School is a health service centre not only for the city but also for the south-western region of the country. The negative perceptions regarding the city quarter are along two major themes. Noise pollution and crowdedness associated with traffic (either private or community) was the most important problem that was noted. Personal spaces are seen as shrinking, and the liveability of the quarter and everyday general feeling are disturbed by the frequent occurrence of homeless or beggar people. All three groups mentioned the odour/smell of malt generated by the brewery located next door to the studied district. Another aspect of crowdedness was blamed among business owners: the simultaneous presence of a high number of competitors causes the lack of buyers and the insufficiency of purchasing power.



Fig. 4: Positive and negative perceptions regarding the studied city quarter.

Source: Gyüre, J. Makkai, B. 2012.

### 3.2 Students, university and supply of services in the city quarter

When launching the research it was assumed that both the university and the students are perceived positively in the studied city quarter, therefore we also surveyed the associated perceptions, e.g. the cultural and economic effects on local society, among others. Besides the former two factors, we also found it important to survey the opinions of the service sector which is present in the area with high impact on the image and appearance of the city. Fig. 5 shows that the presence of both the university as an institution and the students is considered to be positive by those interviewed. In the case of the university, the representation of negative perceptions is at an almost negligible level. According to what was written in the questionnaires for residents and for the service sector, and based on what was said in the interviews, the reason for such a perception is the fact that owing to the university, the cultural programmes have a wider variety, there is a high level of health care services, and community transportation is also managed at high standards. In the answers it was also emphasised that the presence of the university is a factor that is beneficial for development, for attracting investment projects, for improving communities, and for boosting up purchasing power.

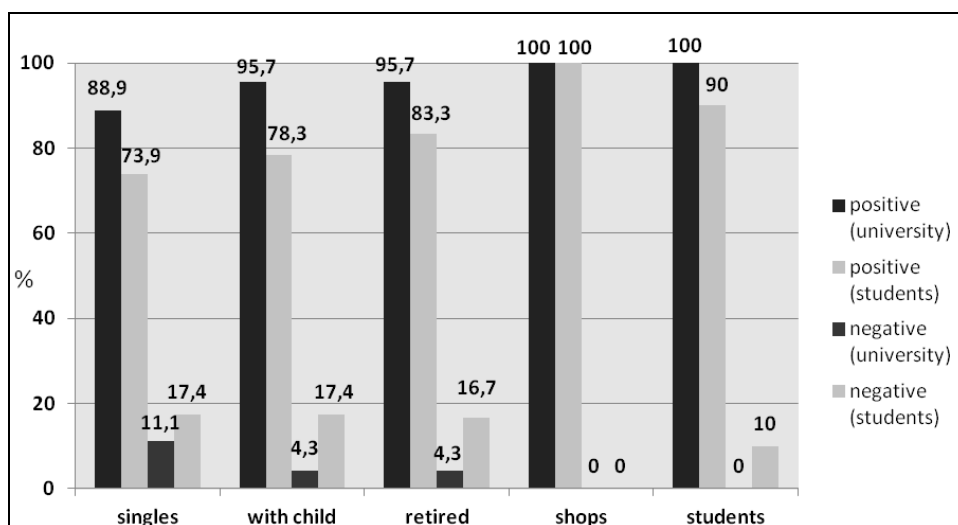


Fig. 5: The perception of the university and the students, by various groups of the society (n=110).

Source: Gyüre, J. – Makkai, B. 2012.

Students are judged predominantly positively, especially by business owners according to whom students make the city quarter become younger, and provide them with a basis for a living (in the studied shops, approximately 30% of the turnover was generated by student clients, as declared by business owners). In businesses that are specialised on the needs of university students (e.g. stationary, copy centre), about 95% of the turnover is from students. The proportion of people negatively perceiving the presence of high numbers of students is around 16-17%. The negative feature most often mentioned in connection with students is noise, loudness, parties and garbage. Even among the students themselves, about 10% regard such conditions as disturbing. Altogether, the general perception can be considered to be positive, although there are certain problematic fields that we are going to touch upon later on.

There are about 50 commercial units trying to satisfy the fundamental needs of altogether 15,000 people including those living here and those coming to the quarter. Almost all of the interviewed groups were entirely satisfied with the standards of these services. As it appears from the interviews, such a high level of positive judgement originates from the presence and wide choice of banks, ATMs, shops and amusement opportunities. The only exception is the category of pensioners: 8.3% expressed their dissatisfaction in this dimension. From personal interviews and from communication during data recording it turned out that the indicated deficiencies concerned mostly the availability of book stores, marketplace, and, as most of the pensioners pointed out, the post office. (Each of these lacking services used to operate earlier in the city district, but were forced to disappear one by one by the transformation of the local population and the economy.) It must be noted that there is a considerable fluctuation of shops in the city district, which may result from improper profile selection or mismanagement, as well as from high rental fees. Nevertheless, if the long-term structure of the service business portfolio is analysed, it clearly appears that the profile related to the university, its students and professors has a constantly growing share.

### 3.3 Conflict points

During everyday coexistence, it is quite likely that there will be some confrontation between groups with different cultural and social backgrounds. In the followings the conflict sources typical of the city district will be presented, specifying the reasons, types and possible solutions. From the responses it appears that the university students think in higher proportions than local residents that there are problematic issues between them and locals (Fig. 6). Students normally do not participate in the community life of local residents: 63.3% confessed so. This roots in the fact that they consider their hired flat as a temporary place of residence, and this is the first time in their lives when they spend longer periods away from the parent's home, that is when they first have encounters with strangers on a daily basis, and learn how to coexist with them (Darren 2005, 86.) Among possible causes, probably there are factors in the background like difference between mobilities of the social groups. During their everyday life, university students probably have much more, intensive interactions with local people (travelling between university buildings, partying, shopping), and that is why they may perceive more conflicts. In addition – especially in the case of students coming from abroad –, adaptation in a new cultural setting is harder, and a possible cultural shock can be more difficult to cope with, e.g. because of language problems. On the other hand, people living here have become used to university students and the problems associated with them (e.g. moving from one hired flat to another) during the past decades, accepting them and having become insensitive or more tolerant, thus they have a different perception of situations that might appear to be a conflict for the students. It must be noted, however, that in the case of families with small children, 40% of those questioned do not consider their relationship with students to be good, which may be caused by the fact that they lack the type of experience we described above as something shared by the (older) local residents. People with small children are at the same time tend to be much more sensitive in buildings that have weak noise insulation, and their young age means that they have higher mobility and stronger interactions than older local people.

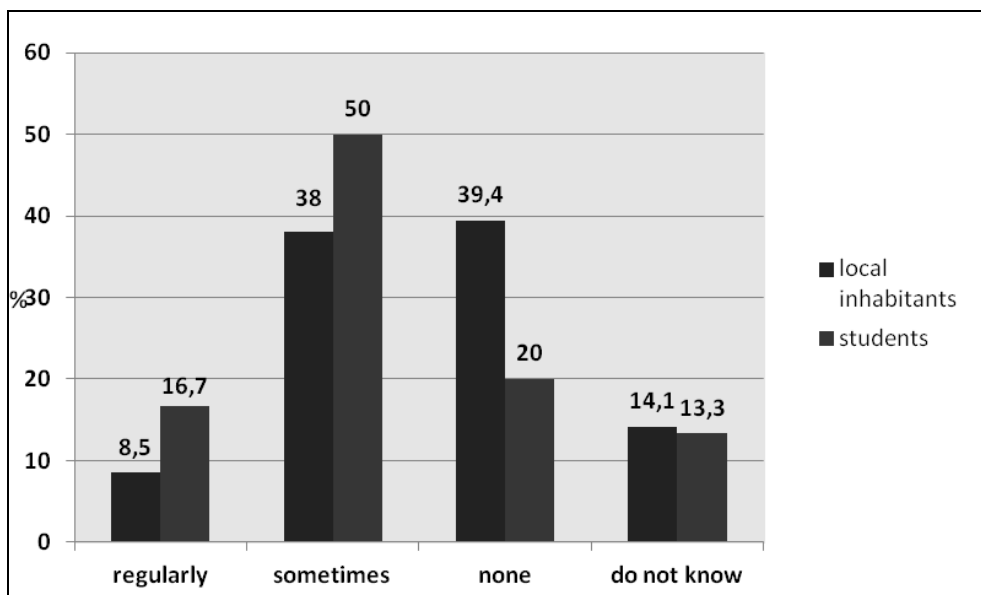


Fig. 6: The occurrence of conflicts, as seen by local inhabitants and university students (n=118).

Source: Gyüre, J. Makkai, B. 2012.

Accordingly, the study has revealed that the formerly assumed conflicts do exist in the analysed city quarter. It can be said that both the students and the local residents identified the different ways of thinking and the problems in behaviour as the most typical sources of conflict. Students emphasised the different ways of thinking (32%), whereas local residents highlighted behaviour (45%). It is important to note that none of the answers included the lack of trust. Interview answers, too, support the results that were obtained from questionnaires. Most of the answers specified noise, partying and the continuous sound of music as problems. It is interesting that even among students there were some who expressed their dislike upon the regular partying next door, this finding also underlining that university students cannot be regarded as a homogenous group, either. So as to find effective solutions, it is necessary to reveal the causes of conflicts. When possible reasons were sought, it was found that one of the conflict sources typical of the city quarter, i.e. stealing, cannot be associated with university students. As revealed by statistics, and opinions of business owners and residents, such cases were more related to the housing block nature of the area and the type of businesses offering their services there.

According to our survey results, conflicts and collision points during everyday coexistence are generated by the following causes. First of all, the generation problem has to be underlined: the most frequent reason for conflicts is the generation difference issue. The everyday life rhythm of people living in the area (families and older people) can be described with typical daily and weekly cycles (with strict timely barriers such as getting to school/work). Compared to this, the more liberal and relaxed daily rhythm of university students is determined by the daily and weekly cycle of lectures, community events (parties, concerts) and journeys home and back. The next major group of factors is those related with

differences in attitudes and with the lack of respect. This problem group is partly rooted in the generation issue. On the other hand, the coexistence of groups from different social and cultural environments (both from within the country and from abroad) necessarily brings about the emergence of conflict points. The third category is that of problems generated by communication difficulties. There are two components of which the dominant one is the aforementioned generation gap, and the other is the presence of an increasing number of foreign students (537 in 2004, 1,615 in 2011; PTE 2004, 1) in the city quarter, the numbers having grown to threefold in five years and still growing in line with the expectations of the university.

Based on the above factors, our study has revealed the following conflict types in the city quarter. Loud behaviour is normally associated with students having fun at night. Loudness is a problem not only out in the streets but also inside houses or blocks of flats (students having parties). The crime of stealing is not associated with students, but instead mostly to homeless people, although a valuable subject type of stealing is bicycles often preferred by university students. As regards crowdedness, we must differentiate between busy traffic and congestion in the city quarter outside the morning and afternoon rush hours (when there are serious traffic jams, especially because there are several kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in the neighbourhood). Due to the currently existing traffic management mode, the transit capacity of the area is very low. Crowdedness in public transportation is a serious problem, which does not decrease despite that the local bus company has increased the frequency of lines in the peak periods, and has introduced vehicles with higher passenger capacity. Vehicles are still overloaded, and their rate of utilisation is well beyond the maximum holding capacity. In traffic, the shortage of car parking space is critical. Besides university people and the local residents, there are also patients and their relatives coming from the wider region to the clinical centre managed by the university, who contribute significantly to the parking burden on the district. In peak times, crowdedness makes personal spaces of people to shrink to its minimum. In everyday life, crowdedness is felt in the service sector. The time needed to arrange or buy things in shops, cafeteria, banks or at the doctor has become longer. Impoliteness became measurable, possibly caused by the already mentioned generation gap and crowdedness. Littering generally is a result of the larger population and less developed waste management. There are also cases when there are masses of garbage left behind in open public places after parties or different events, containing bottles, cans and cigarette butts. For an increasing number of residents, dog faeces is the greatest problem, as pets become more and more popular.

### 3.4 Possible solutions

The authors of this study believe that solving the raised problems can be more successful if the following possibilities are considered. All parties concerned should be involved in handling the conflicts or tensions, or at least attempts should be made by all parties. We believe that problem management/solving should follow a top-down approach (city, university), and a bottom-up type of initiative (local residents, university students) at the same time. The municipality can handle some of the problems emerging in the city quarter (and in other districts), using the available measures (passing local governmental regulations, organising traffic, etc) and relying on the assistance of city residents. The university sanctions student behaviour that is "incompatible with the status of being a student, harming or threatening the university's good reputation" (PTE 2012, 2). The university which

already has an active function in city matters (there is a separate official for maintaining relationship with the municipality) should play a much more intensive role in the communication between university students and local residents (e.g. by organising joint programmes for the city quarter).

Different needs appearing on the levels of various social groups and individuals (transportation, health serviced, etc.) should be taken into consideration. In addition, a common voice should be found between newcomers and those already living in the district – necessarily calling for compromise solutions due to the difference of backgrounds –, which need to be progressive from the aspect of the entire community (e.g. the service sector should be able to communicate with all its customers, and should be able to serve simultaneously the socially different needs of locals and those coming to the place). In practice, this could be achieved by making the various groups become interested. For the sake of social integration and better familiarisation, it is possible to organise community development programmes (e.g. cultural and sport events, visiting neighbours, gardening, cleaning up or renovation activities for the community). In order for one of the most significant problems, i.e. the generation gap, to be reduced, marketing tools should be applied, and programmes should be set up (e.g. “adopt a grandma”, assistance in shopping, carrying home the goods, helping in info-communication, with a return of some cooking, minor mechanical chores around the hired flat). It is essential that compromises are sought, the rules of mutually beneficial coexistence are established, and the so-called ‘wall effect’ neighbour disturbance is minimised – e.g. washing machine use and loud music is restricted in the evenings after 22.00. Besides all these it is important that the municipality plays a more active role in the city quarter, as part of which the representatives can better familiarise themselves with the needs of local people, and with that knowledge, can better direct actions and development projects affecting the district. Another great difficulty besides the generation gap is the existing structure of traffic (regardless of it being individual or community, motorised or pedestrian). Some intervention is required from the side of the city management (modifying traffic order, organising community transportation, maintaining pedestrian sidewalks). In addition to that, well-harmonised cooperation is necessary between the university and the municipality, for the sake of parking area reorganisation and traffic management.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Our study has shown that all parties involved consider the analysed city quarter to be liveable, and relate to it with a positive manner. There is no significant difference between various age groups in how they feel about the city quarter, the university and the students. However, it was revealed that there is a degree of tension between university students moving in and local residents. These conflicts are latent; they do exist but are still in an embryonic stage. It was also found out that the direction in which the transformation of the city quarter proceeds is accepted by people living there, but they perceive some side-effects (e.g. crowdedness) as disturbing. The effect of the university on the district is viewed as a positive phenomenon both at present and for the future. Besides its influence on local economy (multiplicity of the service sector; estate market), there is also a strong cultural effect of the institution. Due to the presence of foreign students, a sort of multi-cultural city quarter is gaining shape, with its effects appearing for example in the form of multilingual advertisements and services. Compared to the general Hungarian degree of openness and the reserved attitude towards strangers, people

living in the city quarter are more open, more tolerant and more receptive. Further studies are necessary to find out whether this is going to stay like that as the number of foreign students possibly continues to increase. The university generates higher numbers and better quality in respect of cultural programmes. The new research centre of the university was built in the immediate neighbourhood of the studied district, which, in addition to its beneficial effect on the appearance of the quarter, can further emphasise its educational-scientific character. Another question regarding the transformation of the area is whether the replacement of the population continues along the former trends, or it even accelerates because of the conflicts described earlier. If it turns into a district of temporary residences mostly, and becomes a university quarter, how will it be possible to handle its seasonality? To find about these issues, further studies are required which will hopefully help the formation of the proactive type of behaviour in all parties involved.

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## **COEXISTENCE OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL GROUPS AROUND ONE OF THE CAMPUSES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PÉCS**

### **Summary**

Recently, the geographic study of the transformation of settlements and city quarters (gentrification, studentification) has started to include cities where there are large numbers of higher education (primarily university) students as residents. Besides the analysis of the economic effect of universities (Florax 1992, Geuna, Nesta 2006, Varga 2009) there is an increasing number of publications in which the research focuses on the effect of university students on local conditions, the city quarter or district (Fincher, Shaw 2011, Munro, Livingston 2012). The aim of the present study has been to gain insight, through the transformations induced by the university, into the relationship in which the "original" population of a particular quarter coexists with university students moving into the district. The studied housing block city district was established in the mid-1970s, as industry in Pécs was developing and the functions of the city kept continuously widening; it was mainly its location and its highly qualified inhabitants that could make it a residential environment of higher prestige (Pirisi, Trócsányi 2006, 91.). The research was based on a data collection in May 2011 and May 2012. In our studies we surveyed the residents of the ten-storey blocks of flats in the western and northern part of the sample area, and also all of the businesses and stores in the area. During the survey we contacted altogether 892 local residents (including 240 flat owners), altogether 208 university students, and staff members/owners of a total of 63 businesses operating in the area, who were asked about living conditions (apartment total area, ownership relations), coexistence with university students / locals, basic demographic information, and types and client pool of small business units). Any further field information required for our research was obtained using questionnaire surveys and interviews. Surveying the population was done in the form of a full survey/census, whereas recording people's perceptions was done in random ways. The interviews (32 altogether) were made with local business owners, residents and university students.

Basic demographic data were collected about altogether 822 local residents and 178 tenant university students in 7 building blocks of the studied housing district. A unique category is made up by students living here in hired flats (178 people). The age structure of students, most certainly, shows a completely different picture. In the greatest proportion it depicts the "official" age of people participating in higher education (ages 18-24), but it also appears that university graduation often shifts to the 25-27 year-old age group. This is influenced by the type of training (e.g. medical) as well as other factors such as when obtaining the degree is postponed for some reason (eg. gap year), the lack of a language exam, etc.). When launching the research it was assumed that both the university and the students are perceived positively in the studied city quarter, therefore we also surveyed the associated perceptions, e.g. the cultural and economic effects on local society, among others. Students are judged predominantly positively, especially by business owners according to whom students make the city quarter become younger, and provide them with a basis for a living (in the studied shops, approximately 30% of the turnover was generated by student clients, as declared by business owners). In businesses that are specialised on the needs of university students (e.g. stationary, copy centre), about 95% of the turnover is from students. The proportion of people negatively perceiving the presence of high numbers of students is around 16-17%. The negative feature most often mentioned in connection with students is noise,

loudness, parties and garbage. Even among the students themselves, about 10% regard such conditions as disturbing. Altogether, the general perception can be considered to be positive, although there are certain problematic fields that we are going to touch upon later on.

During everyday coexistence, it is quite likely that there will be some confrontation between groups with different cultural and social backgrounds. In the followings the conflict sources typical of the city district will be presented, specifying the reasons, types and possible solutions. Accordingly, the study has revealed that the formerly assumed conflicts do exist in the analysed city quarter. It can be said that both the students and the local residents identified the different ways of thinking and the problems in behaviour as the most typical sources of conflict. Students emphasised the different ways of thinking (32%), whereas local residents highlighted behaviour (45%). It is important to note that none of the answers included the lack of trust. So as to find effective solutions, it is necessary to reveal the causes of conflicts. According to our survey results, conflicts and collision points during everyday coexistence are generated by the following causes. First of all, the generation problem has to be underlined: the most frequent reason for conflicts is the generation difference issue. The next major group of factors is those related with differences in attitudes and with the lack of respect. This problem group is partly rooted in the generation issue. On the other hand, the coexistence of groups from different social and cultural environments (both from within the country and from abroad) necessarily brings about the emergence of conflict points. The third category is that of problems generated by communication difficulties. There are two components of which the dominant one is the aforementioned generation gap, and the other is the presence of an increasing number of foreign students (537 in 2004, 1,615 in 2011; PTE 2004, p. 1., 2011, p. 1.) in the city quarter, the numbers having grown to threefold in five years and still growing in line with the expectations of the university. The authors of this study believe that solving the raised problems can be more successful if the following possibilities are considered. All parties concerned should be involved in handling the conflicts or tensions, or at least attempts should be made by all parties. We believe that problem management/solving should follow a top-down approach (city, university), and a bottom-up type of initiative (local residents, university students) at the same time. The municipality can handle some of the problems emerging in the city quarter (and in other districts), using the available measures (passing local governmental regulations, organising traffic, etc) and relying on the assistance of city residents. In practice, this could be achieved by making the various groups become interested. For the sake of social integration and better familiarisation, it is possible to organise community development programmes (e.g. cultural and sport events, visiting neighbours, gardening, cleaning up or renovation activities for the community). In order for one of the most significant problems, i.e. the generation gap, to be reduced, marketing tools should be applied, and programmes should be set up.

All in all our study has shown that all parties involved consider the analysed city quarter to be liveable, and relate to it with a positive manner. There is no significant difference between various age groups in how they feel about the city quarter, the university and the students. However, it was revealed that there is a degree of tension between university students moving in and local residents. These conflicts are latent; they do exist but are still in an embryonic stage.

*Bernadett Makkai, Judit Gyüre: Coexistence of different social groups...*