

The settlement is here, we are its residents

The EP elections in Budapest housing estates

ANALYSIS OF THE REPUBLIKON INSTITUTE



2024 october

SUMMARY

- The housing estates used to be strongholds of the left, but in the past ten years, Fidesz has also been able to appeal to the people living here more and more
- If we compare the results of the housing estates with the districts, we can see that Tisza performed slightly worse in the housing estates than in the districts hosting them, while Fidesz and DK-MSZP-P did slightly better
- There are much greater differences between the individual housing estates than between the housing estates and the districts that host them, but the parties weaken or strengthen to a similar degree in the different housing estates, so we cannot speak of a "partisan" housing estate in particular
- While in 2022 many people read from the results that Fidesz had completely taken over the former role of the left in the housing estates, in this year's elections they achieved a relative result that was even worse than their results in 2018 in these places
- The housing estates therefore did not become Fidesz voters, the housing estate results follow the local party preference relatively well
- The reason for this is presumably that, contrary to stereotypes, housing estates are rather heterogeneous in terms of income, education, social status and worldview

INTRODUCTION

The assessment of housing estates in our country is mixed. Such neighborhoods are usually associated with Soviet-style panel housing. This form of housing construction spread in Hungary after World War II, but since then approximately one third of the capital's housing stock is located in these estates. Based on a 2005 research, 36 percent of the citizens of Budapest lived in housing estates during the examined period, and 28 percent of them already lived in such apartments. In people's minds, mainly negative associations appear when they hear the word housing estate. The common language often holds that the people of the housing estates consist predominantly of low-educated people belonging to the lower income strata. After the 2002 elections, the term "panel prole" entered the public discourse, with which the publicists supporting Fidesz, who lost the parliamentary majority, described the people living in the housing estates as scapegoats, making them stand out as the antithesis of "bourgeois Hungary".

There is an enormous amount of prejudice against both the housing estates and the people who live there, but few are concerned with the extent to which these stereotypes cover the reality, if they cover it at all. It is not only worthwhile, but also necessary to deal with these questions, because investigations in this direction can not only help to break down existing false stereotypes, but also contribute to getting to know the residents of the housing estates better, and with it, our own society.

The Republikon Institute has already contributed to this with several researches and analyses, just think of our analysis dealing with the 2022 housing estate election results, or our 2023 research examining the urban policy opinions of those living in housing estates. The present study is a continuation of these previous analyses, in which we examine the evolution of the results of the 2024 local government and European Parliament elections in the housing estates.

METHODOLOGY

In our 2022 analysis entitled "The people of the housing estates", we examined the distribution of votes cast to the lists in the April parliamentary elections in 12 selected housing estates, comparing them with the same data from the 2018 elections. When selecting the settlements, it was an important aspect that, in addition to the settlements with the largest population, smaller residential settlements were also included in the examined sample, so that not only Pest but also Buda residential settlements were represented, as well as to deal with both the better-off and the lower income deciles. The investigated housing estates: Kaszásdűlő (District III); Békásmegyer (District III); Káposztásmegyer (District IV); Attila József (IX district); Újhegy (District X); Kelenföld (District XI); Kárpát Street (District XIII); Füredi street (XIV district); Újpalota (XVIth district); Rákoskeresztúr (XVII district); Havana (18th district); Csillagtelep (XXI. district).

Our present analysis is a continuation of this previous study. We examined how the support of the individual parties in the 12 housing estates selected at the time changed compared to the conditions two years ago. For this, we took as a basis the results of this year's European Parliament elections, as well as the list votes cast in the municipal elections in the capital. In the course of the analysis, we will not only compare these election results with the voting percentages of 2 and 6 years ago, but also with the results of the districts in which the investigated housing estates are located.

HOUSING ESTATES IN 2018, 2022 AND 2024

Comparing the results of the 2018 and 2022 parliamentary elections with this year's EP elections, it can be seen that while Fidesz was able to increase its share of votes in 2022, in 2024 it achieved a worse result in all housing estates except the Havana settlement than 6 years earlier .

The longitudinal data are presented in the following table:

Name of housing estate	2018 (PE)		2022 (PE)		2024 (EP)		
	Fidesz	six-party opposition	Fidesz	six-party opposition	Fidesz	six-party opposition	Tisza
Kaszásdűlő	35%	61%	38%	50%	31%	24%	33%
Békásmegyer	38%	59%	44%	46%	35%	23%	29%
Káposztásmegyer	30%	66%	35%	50%	28%	23%	37%
Attila József	36%	60%	38%	50%	29%	22%	36%
Újhegy	39%	58%	45%	44%	37%	21%	31%
Kelenföld Vk	38%	58%	39%	51%	32%	23%	32%
Kárpát street	31%	63%	34%	57%	27%	29%	34%
Füredi street	36%	61%	39%	51%	31%	24%	33%
Újpalota	39%	59%	44%	46%	36%	22%	29%
Rákoskeresztúr	39%	59%	43%	47%	37%	22%	30%
Havanna	37%	60%	45%	46%	37%	26%	26%
Csillagtelep	35%	62%	44%	45%	34%	22%	31%

It is therefore clear that the strengthening of Fidesz was not a symptom of the housing estates shifting to the right, but merely the weakening of the national balance of power. proportion, in 2024 all housing estates except the Havanna estate achieved a worse result than 6 years earlier.

If we compare the percentage point change in the results of the parties between 2022 and 2024, we can see that Fidesz and the joint opposition parties have all declined. Fidesz lost an average of 7.25 percentage points in the investigated housing estates, while the six-party opposition lost 24.98 percentage points. As can be seen from the table, their relative results were halved in almost all housing estates. Meanwhile, the support of the opposition parties that did not join the 2022 coalition, Mi Hazánk and MKKP, decreased only minimally (0.27 and 0.51 percentage points).

If we add up the results of Tisza and the six-party alliance in 2024, it appears that they performed better than the listed results of 2022, but the results of 2018 are not achieved except for the Kárpáti street housing estate, while Fidesz won all of the examined except for the Havanna settlement performed lower than six years earlier.

Compared to 2 years ago, the governing parties experienced their biggest drop in the Attila József housing estate, where they performed 11.41 percentage points lower than in the parliamentary election. Meanwhile, their least weakening was in

Kelenföld City Center (4.17 percentage points). However, it must be noted here that the fact that this is the only one of the investigated housing estates where the party lost its support even in 2022 compared to the election four years earlier contributed to the extent of the decline in the last two years. The governing party experienced a relatively small decline in the Fidesz-led Rákoskeresztúr housing estate in the XVII. district. In all other housing estates, Fidesz's decline ranges from 6.4 to 8.7 percentage points.

The combined results of the six parties participating in the 2022 coalition fell drastically compared to 2018 and 2022. In the case of 2018, it is possible to compare the results of the current DK-MSZP-P alliance with the then MSZP-P and DK results. The cooperation of the three parties in the EP elections this year was enough to obtain an average of 14.66 percent of the votes in the housing estates, while in 2018 the two left-wing party lists won an average of 28.94 percent of the votes in the examined locations. This is essentially a halving of the results six years ago. The decline is serious even if the left-wing results of 2018 are compared with the combined results of the participants of the six-party coalition this year. The latter is an average of 23.39 percent in the investigated housing estates, which is still 5.55 percentage points below the left-wing results six years earlier.

The six previously united parties fell by at least 20 percentage points compared to 2022 everywhere, except for one investigated housing estate (Havana). The most drastic relative decrease (30.33 percentage points) was observed in the Kelenföld VK housing estate in the XI. district. The difference between the largest and smallest decline is relatively large (11.73 percentage points), but despite this, it can be said that there are not so many data outliers in a positive or negative direction, since the relative standard deviation (standard deviation divided by the average) is only 13.2 percent. In the case of Fidesz, the same value is 24.8 percent, which means that relatively much larger swings are experienced here, but the rate of decline is not so significant here that the deviation is not only high in relative but also in absolute value.

Overall, we can see that there are no huge differences between the housing estates. Although the results differ, the trends are the same and occur to a similar degree in each of the examined areas. Neither Fidesz nor the previous alliance's results dropped significantly (with the possible exception of Fidesz's participation in Ferencváros), as they were not even able to improve on their previous results in any place.

HOUSING ESTATES AND DISTRICTS

Examining the data of the housing estates and the districts that host them, we also get interesting data, since we compare the results of the estates not with each other, but with their narrower microenvironment. The district election results in the EP election are illustrated in the table below:

District	Fidesz-KDNP	Tisza Party	DK-MSZP-P
	EP	EP	EP
III.	31,82%	34,03%	12,76%
IV.	31,80%	33,05%	14,84%
IX.	29,64%	35,56%	9,84%
X.	35,23%	30,96%	13,57%
XI.	32,11%	33,51%	11,00%
XIII.	25,14%	37,42%	15,23%
XIV.	29,27%	35,15%	12,02%
XV.	35,76%	29,53%	14,65%
XVII.	36,41%	32,37%	11,10%
XVIII.	34,79%	29,59%	16,26%
XXI.	34,17%	31,71%	12,99%

In the 11 districts (the number of districts is one less than the residential areas, because both Kaszásdűlő and Békásmegyer are part of the 3rd district), the Tisza Party finished ahead of the Fidesz-KDNP in 6 of the EP elections, so it was ahead of the government parties.

If we do not compare the parties to each other, but their district and housing estate results, we see that out of the 12 housing estates examined, Fidesz performed better in 7 estates in the EP election than its share of the votes obtained in the district. In the case of the Tisza, this number is only 3. In the investigated housing estates, Fidesz-KDNP achieved an average of 0.42 percentage points better than at the

district level, while in the case of the Tisza, we can see a worse performance in the settlements (-1.28 percentage points). In the case of the DK-MSZP-P alliance, it can also be observed that they achieved a better result at the housing estate level than in the districts (1.53 percentage points).

CONCLUSION

We can still not talk about drastic differences between housing estates and districts or between housing estates and the capital. This was also an important finding of our 2022 analysis, and it still stands. While in the past it was possible to talk about the housing estates being strongholds of the left, in the second half of the 2010s this narrative was replaced by the narrative that Fidesz had taken the place of the left in the housing estates, and that the governing parties have much larger reserves here than the opposition. This was also refuted in our analysis 2 years ago, and our current analysis seems to support it even more. In the two elections this year, Fidesz performed only marginally better among voters in housing estates than in districts, the difference is not significant at all. It can also be established that there can be differences between housing estates and housing estates, even much larger than between housing estates and districts. A good example of this is III. district, where the Tisza Party beat Fidesz by 2.21 percentage points in the EP election in the Kaszásdűlő housing estate, while Fidesz won the Békásmegyer housing estate by 6.38 percentage points ahead of Tisza.

As we wrote in the introduction, there are still a lot of stereotypes about housing estates seeping into the public discourse, and because of these, many people tend to consider the people living in the housing estate (be it anywhere in the city) as a homogeneous group. On the contrary, we see that the voting behavior of the people of the housing estates is much more influenced by the district where they live than by the housing estate itself. The reason for this may be that the housing estates, as well as the districts that host them, are presumably socially diverse themselves, as in the district, people with lower and higher education can live side by side here, as well as other, not only financial considerations can also motivate the people to

move here (it could even be the good public transport, a higher proportion of green areas than in the city center, etc.).