

MEASURING THE SOCIAL INNOVATION POTENTIAL IN THE NORTHERN HUNGARIAN REGION

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The literature pays increasing attention on the analysis of the regions' innovation potential, basically because of its active contribution to the economic growth and competitiveness improvement. Beside the natural sciences based innovation the researchers emphasize in their works the role of social innovation, which can give an alternative solution principally in the case of settlements which are in a relatively peripheral situation. The convergence of peripheral regions has high priority also in the European Union; that is why the EU examines the territorial inequalities since almost more than 20 years. New aspect for the territorial level inequalities can be the analysis of patterns observed by the social innovation potential.

The state of territorial inequalities is a critical problem also in the case of Hungary, with special regards on the Northern Hungarian region's settlements. Character of the region is, that based on the most important socio-economic indicators is in a relatively disadvantaged, peripheral situation (e.g. last place among the regions in terms of GDP per capita; second last, sixth place in unemployment rate, R&D expenditures and income of households in 2015 based on the dates of the Eurostat, and the Central Statistics Office of Hungary). Beside this the region can be characterized by high level inner socio-economic disparities (lag of the territories characterized by small villages). The author's aim is to measure the social innovation potential of the Northern Hungarian regions' settlements, and draw up the possible spatial patterns of the indicator. The question is what kind of similarities and differences can be observed among the patterns of the Northern Hungarian region's settlements' per capita income and social innovation potential. I use the model indicators elaborated by the Faculty of Economics of the University of Miskolc for measuring the region's social innovation potential and I try to underlie the results with inequality measures and spatial autocorrelation analysis. According the results can be made a statement that in the case of the incomes the most developed territories can be found mainly in the central part of the region, on the one hand along the path of the motorway and on the other hand in the area of the county centres and their agglomeration, while the most underdeveloped territories can be found mainly in the northern and north-eastern periphery of the region, principally in the areas characterized by small villages. Instead of this in the case of the social innovation potential there are also some hot spots in the peripheries, where the bottom-up initiatives are stronger than the average, due to the complex character of social innovation index.

THE EVOLUTION OF ABSOLUTE SPACE: FROM THE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF THE CONCEPT, TO ITS CURRENT ROLE IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Cognition of spatiality has been of interest to human thinking since thousands of years. The interpretation of the mechanism of the universe, the perception of spatial dimensions and the spatiality of socio-economic relations has a continuous and significant influence in forming of the human thinking. The importance of inserting these perceived natural and social phenomena into a system manifests in spatial thinking. During the past decades, hundreds and thousands of years different answers were made to reply the question 'What is the world like?'. Different theories of philosophical, cosmological and social thinking from different eras have brought new but also continuously recurring ideas for the interpretation of concepts of space.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were particular parts of this process, since on the basis of former philosophical, cosmological and theological knowledge and the evolving pre-modern scientific thinking, several ideological directions have emerged and been separated, related to great thinkers from Descartes, Locke or Berkeley, through Newton, Leibniz to Kant. Some of these ideas served as points of reference for later scientific thinking on spatial phenomena, even in the field of social sciences, such as the concept of absolute space of Newton, in relation to positivistic tendencies in regional science and human geography.

This paper aims to introduce three questions related to this chain of thoughts. Firstly, by revising the philosophical roots of the concept of absolute space, it attempts to clarify what this theory intended to answer in its original form contrary to some generalisations of later interpretations. Secondly, it raises the question how elements of this idea become parts of a modern concept on the field of social sciences. And thirdly, it intends to explore some elements of the current relevance of absolute space from the viewpoint of the understanding of contemporary socio-spatial processes.

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URBAN VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS FOR 2 ACCIDENT SCENARIOS AT AN UPPER-TIER SEVESO ESTABLISHMENT IN ROMANIA

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Major accidents involving dangerous substances pose a serious threat to the health and safety of local communities and the environment, as well as to the integrity and development of infrastructure where Seveso establishments are located. There are cases when the disastrous effects may affect larger, even cross-border areas. At European level, there are continuous efforts to develop land-use planning policies and regulations to reduce consequences and to prevent future accidents from happening. Hence, research in this field comes to support the current actions and strategies of the European Commission to improve the capacity of EU Member States of coping with and responding to the identified risks by effective prevention, preparedness and response measures. In Romania, the Seveso establishments are mostly located in or very close to urban areas. This paper analyses vulnerability in case of two different accident scenarios (explosion and toxic dispersion) in Targu-Mures, a city where one of the largest Seveso upper-tier establishments in Romania is located. The approach starts with exposure analysis - the first step in the process of vulnerability analysis - which identifies all the elements at risk, be they social (population, medical facilities, schools), environmental (protected areas, aquatic units) or economic (transport infrastructure, buildings, utility and water supply networks, fuel or food storage facilities). Following the exposure analysis, vulnerability is assessed based on indicators identified so that they cover the entire range of social, economic, environmental aspects, as well as the existing response capabilities in case of major accident. The findings of the study contribute to a more efficient risk management planning, as the identification of the exposed elements and their vulnerability plays a leading role in the implementation of prevention, adaptation and mitigation measures.