

Preface

The research on the spatial structure of society has been strengthened throughout the last 30 years in Hungary. The institutional framework of the new branch of studies called regional science has been established, thus, it has a broad base in higher education and research, its embedding in scientific life and its international relationships, as well as its human resources, are widespread reaching from Doctoral Schools to qualifications awarded by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In the framework of a research finished in 2012 (TÁMOP- 4.2.1./B-09/KONV-2010-0003 “Mobility and environment: Environmental researches in the Central and Western Hungarian region) – which was a forerunner of the current research programme – we examined the location factors of the automotive industry in Central and Eastern Europe, looking for Hungarian and regional positions and analysing the specificities, structural and operational factors of supplier networks (Rechnitzer – Smahó 2012a; 2012b). In the research group these results raised the following scientific questions: how a district or region based on automotive industry is organized, how its economic, social, institutional and networking specificities can be described, and how its development can be influenced, formed by different tools. The scientific questions were elaborated in Research Programme TÁMOP- 4.2.2.A-11/1/KONV-2012-0010 “The Győr Automotive District, as the direction and tool of regional development”, and after the successful project the analyses were started in the fall of 2012. The results of this research were published in six volumes in Hungarian language and two volumes in English. The first volume in English was the summary of theoretical research results in the field of industrial districts and city centres of Central Europe (Somlyódiné Pfeil 2014). The present volume is a collection of the most interesting localized, regional and city level empirical research results of research programme.

Győr and its region belong to the most dynamically developing regions of Hungary. When speaking of region we understand the city’s catchment area within a radius of 60–100 km. It is city with county rights, and the capital of Győr-Moson-Sopron County. The city is located 120 km distance from Budapest and Vienna, while it is situated 80 km from the Slovak capital Bratislava. Győr and its region has highway, railroad and water transport connections to the national and neighbouring (Vienna, Bratislava) capitals. There are two international airports (Vienna, Bratislava) and two ports in the vicinity of the city. The city has excellent transport connections: it is located in two (IV, VII) European transport corridors. The main roads determining the economic life of the Northern-Transdanubian region start from or pass by this city. The economic trauma of the transition found the city in a relatively beneficial situation: due to its favourable geographic location and multifold economic structure the city has undergone significant developments in the 90ies. Győr became a favoured destination for foreign investments; the appearance of new industry diversified further the city’s economic structure. As suppliers for Audi global companies settled in the city, however, national and international SMEs on advanced technological level are present as well. In comparisons with the other cities of the Western-Transdanubian region (Sopron, Szombathely, Nagykanizsa, Zalaegerszeg) Győr’s leading

role is unambiguous; its provisioning indicators are almost in every aspect higher than in other cities with county rights or cities in the region hosting higher education institutions. Győr's primacy is outstanding considering every factor connected to innovations and its indicators are similar to other Hungarian regional centres, development poles.

The goal of Győr's development is to create a regional centre, as sub-centre of the Vienna-Bratislava-Budapest Central and Eastern European development region, in which – through the improving establishment of the institutions supporting knowledge – industrial and technologic conditions can be renewed. It is an explicit goal that the institutions of the city shall be able to assist the integration of the Northern Transdanubian region into a new European development area, and this integration shall be accomplished by a development, which sustains urban environment and enhances its capacities in order to provide attractive living conditions for the people living in both the centre and the region. Győr is a traditional industrial centre, which was able to modernize its economic structure in the 90ies by itself. The formerly determining automotive industrial background was renewed by the fact that the German Audi AG owned Audi Hungaria Motor Ltd. established an engine factory plant in the city in 1994. Today the plant produces two million motor vehicle engines yearly, and soon 100 thousand motor vehicles are going to be assembled, and thereby even more modern industrial and service operators will settle in the city and the region. Győr has been establishing gradually its regional service functions, among others university level education, health care, commerce and trade, advanced business and technological services, cultural and sporting activities.

Through the analysis of a successful and forward-looking – automotive industrial district, which has a wide set of functions and regional connections, the research might offer new approaches to the theory and practice of both national and international development policies. The research is conducted on two levels; thus, the goals are completed in these dimensions. The theoretical goal is the thorough and professional description of the theoretical model of a development centre and industrial district, as new systems forming and developing the region (Somlyódiné Pfeil 2014). These analyses need to present all specificities, which prevail in the Central and Eastern European region considering the economic structure, situation of the urban network, as well as the tools and institutions of urban and spatial development. The analyses might form a scientific base for the programming period 2014–2020, by the exploration of new territorial organizational structures and the description of their operation and development orientation. Our research results might make findings and recommendations considering the whole region, its internal (intraregional), domestic and cross border (interregional) relationships, and – with regard to both methodology and content – it could support planning.

The second phase of research is the phase of empirical analyses, which are city and region specific, and the results might verify the assumptions of the theoretical models: whether a real industrial district was established, how it follows the existing Western and Eastern European structures, and if all this is verified, what interventions and developments could contribute to the success of the local actors. In the Hungarian regional science – so far – there were no complex fundamental researches conducted to analyse

growth poles and the structure and regional impacts of industrial macro centres built on them. Thus, the programme should also serve the elaborate analysing methods for these spatial structures and – as a consequence of its testing – research models applicable for other large cities as well.

In this volume we have selected empirical researches aiming at the exploration of Győr and its area. Historic research of the modern, industrial Győr and the analysis of the Development Processes over the course of the 20th Century have been rather mosaic like, than systematic. Although knowledge is already available on the factors forming the historic trends of the city and its region, deeper, more ambitious explorations have not been designed yet (*Chapter 1: landmarks of the economy*). An important empirical goal is the exploration and scientific description of the Győr Automotive District, evaluation of its resources, determination of the city's and its area's system of relations (*Chapter 2: complex gravity zones*), demarcation of the cooperation's organizational, institutional and financial framework (*Chapter 6: fiscal policy*) and eventually the elaboration of the key points of a new type – regional level – planning and development system. In this cross cutting research we need to highlight those researches, which aim at the delineation of the industrial district, covering economic functions (*Chapter 7: SMEs and open innovation*), fields of social and public services (*Chapter 4 and 5: public sector and public services*) and the region-forming role of education institutions (*Chapter 3: the spatial structure of higher education*). We attach great importance to the research of the city's and its region's social structure and the human demands of the population (*Chapter 10: human development demands*) too. Throughout the last 30 years no in-depth socio structural analyses have been conducted in this region, so, our research (*Chapter 8 and 9: social structure and spatial characteristics of the stratification*) does not only fulfil a need, but – supported by the appropriate surveys and researches – it presents the structural cross-section of a large city and its region, which can quickly and effectively react to economic and social challenges.

We hope that the analyses will make it possible that relevant regional actors of research, higher education, local government, economic, professional and scientific organizations within and across national borders continually communicate and generate new co-operations. This way we need to strengthen the evolving social science research network, encourage the local institutions of economic and social researches, and their integration into the national and international scientific initiatives.

Győr, November 2014.

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