

THE EXAMINATION OF SETTLEMENT FUNCTIONS IN THE HÓDMEZŐVÁSÁRHELY MICRO-REGION ACCORDING TO THE INSTITUTIONAL PROVISION

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ABSTRACT

The presentation is about the examination of settlement functions in the Hódmezővásárhely micro-region. During the hierarchy-examination – applying the so-called inventory method – I considered the provision of urban – or in some cases village – institutions, their presence, their quantitative data, regarding each settlement. It can be concluded from the result of the examination that Hódmezővásárhely provides all the examined functions, while the other town of the micro-region, Mindszent has only the half of them. For the villages of the micro-region – Mártély and Székkutas – the bigger part of the services is available in the towns, since their institutional provision is at low level and it is not numerous enough, as well.

ÖSSZEFOGLALÓ – A Hódmezővásárhelyi kistérség településeinek funkcióvizsgálata az intézményi ellátottság tükrében

Az előadás a Hódmezővásárhelyi kistérség települései által ellátott szerepkörök vizsgálatával foglalkozik. A hierarchia-vizsgálat során – az ún. leltározó módszert alkalmazva – tételesen számba vettem az egyes települések városi – s néhány esetben falusi – intézményekkel való ellátottságát, azok jelenlétét és mennyiségi adataikat. A vizsgálat eredménye alapján kijelenthető, hogy Hódmezővásárhely minden vizsgált települési funkciót ellát, ezzel szemben a kistérség másik városa, Mindszent a vizsgált intézmények csak mintegy felével rendelkezik. A kistérség falvai – Mártély és Székkutas – alacsony hierarchiaszintű és kevés számú intézményi ellátottságuk miatt a szolgáltatások nagyobb részét városokban veszik igénybe.

Keywords: settlement function, institutional provision, town, village, catchment area

Kulcsszavak: települési funkció, intézményi ellátottság, város, falu, vonzáskörzet

INTRODUCTION

According to the law of 1996 on spatial development and spatial planning, the micro-region is a territorial unit of the spatial development and statistics, which is defined by the functional connection-system among settlements. In settlement geographical terms, the Hódmezővásárhely micro-region includes two villages (Mártély and Székkutas which are communities from legal and administrative aspects), and two towns (Hódmezővásárhely with county rights, and Mindszent). The settlements are distinguished not only by the number of their population but by the diversity and level of their functions, as well. The content of the concept town-village can be clearly defined from the aspect of the settlement functions. In settlement geographical terms, the settlement is a village which has only the basic functions, low order services partly or entirely, while it is a town if it has central functions, high order services which are utilized not only by its own residents but by the settlements in its sphere of influence, as well. According to BELUSZKY AND GYŐRI (2006) both separation of towns and villages, and the position of towns in the settlement network-system are determined by the position in the settlement hierarchy. This position is determined by the composition of urban functions, certain spheres of action, services and the presence or the lack of institutions that provide them, and by the range of urban functions – namely hierarchical differentiated functions and institutions. As BELUSZKY AND GYŐRI (2004) say „...the town is the product of the geographical division of labour formed within a certain group of settlements; a settlement that has a central role in this

division of labour and where the suitable quantity and variety of central functions culminate; so it is a settlement where activities and institutions satisfying the unusual, special needs of inhabitants concentrate. ...Relying on this central role the town has a significant area organizing force, and it is often the centre of decision-making and power." Consequently, the town is a special type of settlements that in the territorial division of labour attracts other settlements in its closer or wider surroundings with its institutions that are suitable to provide various central activities. The area which is connected to a settlement with regard to certain functions or in a complex way is called catchment area (KŐSZEGFALVI AND TÓTH, 2002). The town provides services, the so-called urban goods to its sphere of influence with small range of functions (BELUSZKY AND GYŐRI, 2004). According to FEHÉR (2005) „rural places or settlements are not of urban nature, they can be clearly distinguished from urban places. However, rural areas exist, in any terms, if there are urban areas (towns, cities). This way the rural economy can be defined in a model where there is an urban centre and its rural background.” Regarding the resources of rural economy, FEHÉR (2005) adds that on the one hand, settlements as resources are closely connected to the satisfaction of needs of the rural population, on the other hand they are direct economic resources for the given branches and activities. According to CLOKE AND PARK (1986) the importance of settlements in rural areas lies in their dual role. They say that settlements are indicators of the life style and needs and they serve as potential locations for the supply of opportunities to meet those needs. The spatial connections between the urban centre and its catchment area can be interpreted as a relation–system of functions between settlements in different level of hierarchy, which is determined in space and time.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The purpose of the research is to define that what role certain settlements play in the settlement network-system of the micro-region by means of their functions. I was aiming to specify the role of the towns in the settlement network-system according to their position in the urban hierarchy. To examine this hierarchy I used the so-called inventory method, during which I examined the presence or the lack of institutions providing central – or local – functions, and in addition, the occurrence frequency of the chosen institutions. I considered the provision with urban – or in some cases village – institutions, their presence, their quantitative data regarding each settlement. In the course of my examination I took the presence of 65 institutions in the micro-region into consideration.

RESULTS

In *Table 1* I summarized the data concerning the institutional provision of the settlements in the micro-region. I grouped the institutions according to their functions. According to this idea I formed seven groups: jurisdiction and law enforcement; education and culture; healthcare and social services; leisure and sports activities; commerce and hospitality; public administration, authorities and offices; enterprises, financial institutions and economic chambers. In the table I indicated the presence of each institution in the settlement (1) and the occurrence frequency of the institution in brackets. The table shows very well that the most populated settlement of the micro-region, Hódmezővásárhely (47567 persons) has all the examined institutions. Mindszent, with population of 7212 – the second town of the micro-region – gives home to only the half of it, to 32 examined institutions. The two villages of the micro-region, Mártély (1320 persons) and Székkutas

(2515 persons) have 15, and 17 institutions. It indicates the correlation between the number of population and the number of settlement functions, which is coloured by the frequency of utilization of certain institutions.

Table 1: Institutional provision and occurrence frequency in the settlements of the Hódmezővásárhely micro-region

Institution	Hódmezővásárhely	Mártély	Mindszent	Székkutas
Jurisdiction & law enforcement				
- District court	1 (1)			
- Public prosecutors office	1 (1)			
- Police station	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	
Education & culture				
- Nursery school	1 (22)	1 (1)	1 (2)	1 (1)
- Primary school	1 (10)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
- Vocational secondary school	1 (4)			
- Grammar school	1 (2)		1 (1)	
- Institution of higher education	1 (2)			
- Library	1 (21)	1 (1)	1 (2)	1 (1)
- Cultural site	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
- Cultural centre	1 (1)			
- Museal institution	1 (5)		1 (1)	1 (2)
- District Archives	1 (1)			
Healthcare & social services				
- Hospital	1 (1)			
- Doctor on duty centre	1 (1)			
- Ambulance stations	1 (1)			
- Pharmacy	1 (10)	1 (1)	1 (2)	1 (1)
- On duty pharmacy	1 (1)			
- Family support service	1 (1)		1 (1)	
- Creche	1 (3)		1 (1)	
- Daily attendance provided by elderly clubs	1 (3)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
- Twilight home	1 (1)		1 (1)	
Leisure & sports				
- Cinema	1 (1)		1 (1)	
- District radio and TV studio	1 (1)			
- Thermal and medicinal bath	1 (1)			
- Competition swimming pool	1 (1)			
- Sports hall	1 (1)		1 (1)	
Commerce & hospitality				
- Grocery*	1 (173)	1 (4)	1 (22)	1 (9)
- Electric household goods shop*	1 (41)		1 (1)	
- Shoe and leather goods shop*	1 (15)		1 (2)	
- Industrial product shop*	1 (25)		1 (4)	1 (1)
- Clothes shop*	1 (92)		1 (11)	1 (2)
- Textile shop*	1 (33)		1 (2)	
- Hypermarket	1 (2)			
- Authorized car dealer	1 (7)			
- Car rental agency*	1 (4)			
- Filling station	1 (7)		1 (1)	1 (2)
- Hotel	1 (3)			
- Pension	1 (4)	1 (2)	1 (1)	
- Restaurant	1 (15)	1 (1)	1 (2)	1 (1)
- Travel agency	1 (1)			
- Tourinform office	1 (1)			
Public administration, authorities & offices				
- Document office	1 (1)		1 (1)	
- Children's guardian office	1 (1)		1 (1)	
- Housing authority	1 (1)		1 (1)	
- Land registry office	1 (1)			
- Public notary	1 (2)			
- Directorate of Plant and Soil protection	1 (1)			
- District veterinary officer	1 (1)			
- Agricultural Administration Office	1 (1)			
- APEH office	1 (1)			
- ANTSZ office	1 (1)			
- Employment office	1 (1)			
- Local Rural Development Office	1 (1)			
- Fire brigade	1 (1)			
- Post office	1 (6)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)

Table 1 (continued): Institutional provision and occurrence frequency in the settlements of the Hódmezővásárhely micro-region

Institution	Hódmezővásárhely	Mártély	Mindszent	Székkutas
Enterprises, financial institutions & chambers				
- Enterprises having more than 250 employees*	1 (6)			
- Enterprises having 50-249 employees*	1 (26)		1 (1)	1 (1)
- Enterprises having 20-49 employees*	1 (54)	1 (2)	1 (2)	
- Enterprises having 10-19 employees*	1 (95)	1 (5)	1 (7)	1 (3)
- Enterprises having 1-9 employees*	1 (2890)	1 (74)	1 (389)	1 (115)
- Industrial park	1 (1)			
- Bank, savings cooperative	1 (9)	1 (1)	1 (3)	1 (1)
- Chamber of Agriculture	1 (1)			
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry	1 (1)			
Institutions altogether	65	15	32	17

Source: Own construction based on TEIR database* and own data gathering

Note: 1 = existing institution in a given settlement; in brackets → occurrence frequency of a given institution

I considered the settlement occurrence of three institutions in the group of institutions of jurisdiction and law enforcement. Their centre and area of competence, and so their presence in the micro-region are regulated by laws. The centre of all the three institutions (court, public prosecutor, police station) is Hódmezővásárhely, and their area of competence is the micro-region. Police organ can be found in two other settlements, as well: a police office operates in Mindszent, while a district representative works in Mártyély. Their superior authority is the institution in the centre of the micro-region.

I examined the presence of ten institutions in the group of educational and cultural institutions. In the first round I reviewed the presence and occurrence frequency of the educational institutions (nursery school → primary school → secondary school (vocational secondary school and grammar school) → institution of higher education). Institutions that form the base of the educational hierarchy (nursery school, primary school) can be found in all the four settlements in the micro-region, since the utilization of these institutions is frequent and even the population of a village can maintain them. However, there is a big difference in their occurrence frequency: the most can be found in Hódmezővásárhely (22, and 10), while one-one in each village. Vocational secondary school can be found only in the central settlement, but there is a grammar school in Mindszent, too. Hódmezővásárhely has two institutions of the higher education. The (educational) catchment area of the institutions of secondary and higher education goes beyond the borders of the micro-region, so they provide settlements in other regions with their services. There is a local library in each settlement, but there is a significant difference in the number of books and the number of members regarding each local library. Cultural site (community centre) can be found in each settlement which provides the local population with cultural services. However, cultural centre, which gives high order cultural services not only for the local population, but for other settlements, too, can be found only in Hódmezővásárhely. There is a museal institution in three settlements of the micro-region, except for Mártyély. There are collections and galleries of local importance in Mindszent (collection of the local history) and in Székkutas (village museum, Hugo Hartung memorial room), while there are museal institutions covering more museal branches with widescale collection themes and extended collection areas, in Hódmezővásárhely. The Hódmezővásárhely District Archives of the Csongrád County Archives works, which preserves and systematizes the public documents in the settlement.

In the group of institutions that provide healthcare and social services I examined the presence of nine institutions. Hódmezővásárhely has a full palette of them, while I could register the presence of five institutions in Mindszent, two in Mártyély and two in Székkutas. The pharmacy and the daily attendance provided by elderly clubs are available in each settlement. Another group of the examined institutions is represented only in the towns, so they provide services to the villages in the micro-region, as well. Hospital, doctor

on duty centre, ambulance station and on-duty pharmacy can be found only in the central settlement, so these institutions assure the availability of services for every settlement in the micro-region.

I considered five institutions in the group of leisure and sports activities the peculiarity of which is that they are available only in the towns of the micro-region. Cinema and sports hall can be found in Mindszent, too, but district TV and radio studio, thermal and medicinal bath and competition swimming pool operate only in Hódmezővásárhely. According to this fact the villages of the micro-region are provided with these services by the urban institutions. Within the borders of the micro-region to utilize the services provided by the thermal and medicinal bath and the competition swimming pool, Mindszentsers also have to travel to Vásárhely. Programmes of the TV and radio studio can reach any residents of the micro-region through the air, if they need them.

I examined the presence of fifteen institutions in connection with commerce and hospitality. All the fifteen institutions are represented in Vásárhely, nine in Mindszent, five in Székkutas and three in Mártély. Grocery and restaurant can be found in each settlement the occurrence frequency of which significantly differs in relations of town-village, and central settlement-the other settlements in the micro-region. Hypermarket, authorized car dealer, car rental agency, hotel, travel agency and Tourinform office work in Hódmezővásárhely only, so the utilization of services provided by these institutions is available in the central settlement.

I reviewed fourteen institutions of public administration, authorities and offices. The centre and the area of competence of eight institutions (document office, children's guardian office, housing authority, land registry office, public notary, ÁNTSZ – National Public Health and Medical Officer Service, employment office, fire brigade) are determined by laws. Mindszent provides independently the official tasks in connection with three institutions (document office, children's guardian office, housing authority). In other cases Mindszent is also a part of the area of competence of the institutions are seated in Hódmezővásárhely. The assignment and definition of the area of competence of three examined territorial organs (Directorate of Plant and Soil Protection (DPSP), district veterinary officer, agricultural administration office) within the Csongrád County Central Agricultural Office is laid down in the constitution of the office. According to this the centre of the mentioned institutions is Hódmezővásárhely, their area of competence covers the micro-region, or the whole county in the case of DPSP. The situation is similar in the case of the APEH (Tax and Financial Control Administration) branch agency in Hódmezővásárhely where the constitution of the South Great Plain Regional Directorate determines the centre of the customer service (Vásárhely) and its area of competence (the Hódmezővásárhely micro-region). The Local Rural Development Office is an institution which is operated by a foundation in Hódmezővásárhely till 30 June 2008. The post office is the only institution among these offices which can be found in all the four settlements in the micro-region, so it can be used locally.

In the field of enterprises, financial institutions and economic chambers I examined the presence of nine institutions. Workplaces play an important role in the ability to retain and maintain the population of settlements and regions, since through assuring the income, they determine the satisfaction of people's need by means of accessibility of different goods and services. Regarding the enterprises in employment categories, it becomes clear that companies having more than 250 employees (large enterprises) can be found only in the centre of the micro-region. Beside Vásárhely, medium-sized enterprises (50-249 employees) work in one case in Mindszent, and one in Székkutas. There are not any small enterprises having 20-49 employees in Székkutas. Small enterprises having 10-19 employees and micro-enterprises (<10 employees) operate in all settlements of the micro-

region. According to the occurrence frequency of different enterprises the economy of Hódmezővásárhely has the most significant employment potential by means of which it attracts the labour force from the settlements of the micro-region. Unfortunately, Mindszent is not able to fulfil this function because of the weaknesses of the local economy, for this reason the significant part of its population has to find work in other settlements, similarly to inhabitants of villages. Institutions that support the development and organization of the economy (industrial park, economic chambers: Branch Office of The Csongrád County Chamber of Agriculture, Branch Office of The Csongrád County Chamber of Commerce and Industry) can be found only in the central settlement. However, each settlement has a bank or a savings cooperative, so financial affairs can be managed locally.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the result of the examination Hódmezővásárhely has the institutions that provide all the examined settlement functions which can be expected from a town with county rights. On the basis of the number of population, functions and their occurrence frequency Hódmezővásárhely is a middle-sized town. However, the catchment area of Hódmezővásárhely coincides with the micro-region, which is in connection with the unique settlement structure of the Great Plain. 18.85% of the population of the micro-region live in its hinterland. The other town of the micro-region is Mindszent, with the population of 7212, which has the half of the examined institutions. According to its population and its settlement functions, Mindszent, actually, is a small town lacking of urban functions without catchment area. The villages of the micro-region, Mártély and Székkutas, has 15 and 17 institutions and their bigger part is a so-called village institution with local functions. Because of their institutional provision is at low level they utilize the majority of services in the towns, especially in Hódmezővásárhely. It is clear from the examination that at micro-regional level the examined institutional functions are available for the population, since Hódmezővásárhely, as the central settlement of the micro-region, makes the utilization of services provided by the examined institutions possible for its population and its surroundings.

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