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ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC REPORT

2017

I. Main duties of the research unit in 2017

As in previous years, the key activities of the Institute for Regional Studies (IRS) included basic research on strategic research themes related to its public tasks and also within the framework of seven domestic (NKFIH National Research, Development and Innovation Office) and five international (H2020, ESPON) projects. In addition, it executed a number of short-term research tasks of high social relevance in the domain of applied research. In the reporting year, the main focus was on socio-spatial inequalities (marginalisation, peripheralisation), the complex system of dependencies created by central stakeholders (the political, economic elite), centre-periphery relations from an Eastern European perspective, migration potential of the Hungarian people, regional development in Eastern Europe, borderland research (geopolitics, Europeanisation), reindustrialisation, territorial finances, the urban environment (smart city, circular economy) and the impacts of climate change.

In the reporting year, the performance indicators included in the mid-term development strategy of the Institute adopted in 2016 showed a significant improvement. The number of PhD dissertations submitted by the Institute's researchers is a key indicator of the education of the upcoming generation of scientists. In 2017, seven PhD dissertations were defended in four doctoral schools (regional science, economics, sociology, earth sciences). The publication output – despite a relatively youthful research staff – indicates a gradual qualitative improvement, due partially to the growing number and proportion of publications indexed in Scopus, and the number of papers published or awaiting publication in impact factor journals well beyond the average rate of the previous period. IRS considers as its priority to contribute to book series published by prestigious foreign publishing houses, which, besides improving the international visibility of researchers, enriches the monographic literature in regional science.

II. Outstanding research and other results in 2017

a) Outstanding research results

Research on peripheral countries

The objective of the ESPON-research titled „*PROFECY Processes, Features and Cycles of Inner Peripheries in Europe*” is to identify inner peripheries at the European level and to detect the main factors of the emergence of these particularly vulnerable areas. Geographical isolation is by far not the most fundamental challenge faced by inner peripheries, but rather, it is a combination of disadvantages stemming from various processes, social characteristics and development cycles, which, despite their (often) central position maintains the „distance” of these areas from networks and centers of powers. This type of distance induces marginalisation processes which lead to declining economic performance and social well-being of the population (e.g. limited accessibility of services).

The research team of IRS coordinated the work package focussing on the socio-economic status of inner peripheries. The main task was to determine to what extent the social characteristics of inner peripheries differ from other types of territories, and whether it is possible to identify social features or processes unique to inner peripheries, and to examine what degree of uniformity or heterogeneity characterises these inner peripheral areas with respect to their identified distinctive traits. According to our results, the inner peripheries of Europe, albeit their moderate/intermediate position in comparison with other territories, are characterised by multiple disadvantages. These disadvantages are most evident in terms of their demographic features, economic performance and the availability of services. Peripheral areas are generally associated with negative demographic phenomena such as ageing and migration impacting the functioning of their local economies and services.

These observations, complemented by experiences drawn from case studies and policy analyses, were incorporated into policy proposals on countering or preventing peripheralisation processes providing valuable lessons for local and European-level cohesion policy alike. The understanding of causal relations and driving forces of peripheralisation is critical to implementing successful policy interventions. Stakeholders' awareness of the peripheralisation-related problems of various areas must be heightened at the national level. Ensuring a sufficient EU-level coordination between the various programming areas (e.g. cohesion and rural development policies) is necessary in order to tackle problems more efficiently. At the level of local communities, capacity development and the provision of accessible relational channels for territorial capital must be prioritised in order to facilitate the efficient utilisation of resources.

Migration research

The main task of the NKFIH-research entitled „*International Migration from Hungary and its Impacts on Rural Societies*” was to identify those structural factors, opportunities and constraints which trigger and maintain work-related migration in lagging rural areas, and to find out, within the confines of the existing structures and frameworks, what migration-related decisions, trajectories and resources are available for those who seek employment, livelihood opportunities and prosperity abroad, and how migration shapes the lives of the examined families and localities.

Based on the concept of agency elaborated by de Haas, we evaluated the individual and family experiences of employment-related international circular migration and mobility in lagging rural areas in function of structurally determined migration efforts and abilities. This approach facilitated the identification of the structural determinants of migration-related aspirations and decisions of various generations, as well as the detection of capital types critical to migration potential and their role in individual migration trajectories.

The heterogeneous patterns and networks of migration identified within the examined areas (e.g. female participation in the domestic elderly care sector or the mobility of the poor and unskilled Roma population) and their various local specifics by no means reduce the general validity of our findings on the structural determinants of migration, migration propensity and efforts, and most importantly, on different forms of capital that individuals might access and mobilise in the process of migration.

The generation-specific structural constraints leading to non-planned migration are identical in each of the settlements covered by the research and fundamentally echo the results of various other national-scale surveys: limited opportunities to earn a living, unemployment, income poverty, debt, a fear of impoverishment and a loss of livelihood. Migration potential is reinforced by human and/or cultural capital, openness and risk taking propensity. Nonetheless, access to personal and social networks, i.e. relational capital, and the migration shell turned out to be the most significant factors affecting migration propensity. Relational networks underlying migration also serve as the main tissues of the „migration industry”. Formal and informal networks sustain the complex multi-actor system of elderly care which, in harmony with the global pattern of the feminisation of migration, was joined by rural Hungarian women as well. The culture of migration currently pervades the examined local societies, is perceived as a legitimate and/or desirable livelihood strategy which affects young people hoping to earn a living just as much as members of the middle generation seeking to escape the debt trap or women obliged to work in elderly care due to the low amount of pension.

Our research results indicate that the migration patterns of Roma people cannot be evaluated along ethnic lines, factors such as class status, the position of various families and individuals within their respective local societies, human, cultural and relational capital fundamentally determine which migration trajectories are perceived as viable and pertinent. Roma families living in (deep) poverty in segregated areas, despite their lack of financial and cultural capital, were able to migrate to foreign countries thanks to the conversion of their family and kinship ties into relational capital. However, the displaced kinship ties, whilst contributing to raising individuals’ life chances, might also reproduce, albeit at a somewhat higher income level, previous relations of dependency and vulnerability.

Polarisation, centre–periphery relations from an Eastern European perspective

The results of the Marie Curie ITN programme titled „*RegPol² Socio-economic and Political Responses to Polarisation Processes in Central and Eastern Europe*” will be published in 2018 in a special issue of the journal *European Spatial Research and Policy*. The purpose of the project was to provide a critical examination of socio-spatial polarisation and the role of the centre-periphery binary in shaping scientific, professional and wider social discourses, covering the investigation of the various interpretations of the concepts as well as their social embeddedness, and the rethinking, from an Eastern European perspective, of the debates on peripheralisation and polarisation.

The researchers, by connecting the concepts of unequal spatial development and financialisation, investigated (i) the mechanisms of operation of the housing market and the responses thereto of peripheral households of various income levels (ii) based on various examples taken from Hungary, the reproduction of social inequalities within the context of peripheral capitalist countries.

The research highlighted that the reproduction of inequalities was manifest (i) in the strategies of market stakeholders, their access to capital and the impacts thereof on local societies; (ii) the Janus-faced role of residence ownership, which, whilst contributing to immobility, forms an integral part of survival strategies in marginalised areas, thus maintaining a self-reinforcing state of dependency (iii) in the specific contexts describing the opportunities, exposure and capacity of households of various income levels to cope with situations of dependency.

The analysis of systems of dependence

The theoretical results of the NKFIH-project titled „*Institutional and individual responses to state restructuring in different geographical contexts*” included (i) The detection of mechanisms employed by central stakeholders (the political and economic elite) in favor of constructing a complex system of dependencies in marginalised areas whereby various means of income generation are combined with the modes of the consumption of basic goods and the evaluation thereof in the context of peripheral capitalist countries. (ii) We found that these systems of dependencies are operated by the institutional practices of the local state, therefore, the analysis of unequal development within the context of peripheral capitalist countries must be based on a detection of the system of relations between the central and the local state. (iii) The fundamental objective of the detected systems of dependencies is the immobilisation of marginalised social groups, a method applied by the central state authority to tackle social conflicts.

The research yielded the following empirical results: (i) the processes of centralisation have engendered new interdependencies within local areas, urban-rural relations, and through the hierarchical relations of state institutions, in the capital vs countryside relation as well. While in lagging areas the local state assumed a central role in the everyday life of the population, seeking to mitigate the polarising impacts of central state policies, in dynamically developing areas, the local state adopted a consumption-centered, neoliberal urban policy in an effort to decrease subordination to the central state and a small number of capital investors, thereby engendering inequalities and conflicts in local areas. The changing role of the state was manifest in both cases in decreasing transparency, the revaluation of personal relationships, and consequently, new dependencies. (ii) The health of the local economy, ensured by the influx of local tax revenues, is an essential factor of local developments. At the same time, it must be noted that the impact of development resources accessed in function of political position on investment activity significantly outweighs the mobilisation of local resources. In the latter case, the problem arises when funding is only available for areas that do not match development needs/concepts. Occasionally, the question of the disproportionate regional distribution of resources may also emerge, which local stakeholders attribute to key stakeholders’ embeddedness and position within the power arena. (iii) In lagging areas, local governments focussed on their classical role, i.e. the delivery of local public services, have a limited power to influence the directions of local development. The inclusion of local economic development amongst local governmental priorities enhances not only local economic growth and employment, but contributes to the emergence of local networks and the execution of public tasks as well, since increased economic activity creates stable resources for financing the delivery of high-quality public services. Successful local governments not only contribute indirectly to economic development (e.g. via infrastructural investments and industrial parks developments), but are active local economic stakeholders, on one hand, due to their coordinating role in local collaborations, and on the other hand, due to their role as founders, owners or co-owners of local companies. (iv) Domestic land use is heavily influenced by societal paradigms prompting the complex protection of the environment. However, one can observe a chaotic combination of interests (even at the level of individual institutions) that might stabilise the currently decreasing role and impact of the protection of nature. The proponents of ecological landscape management are less and less able to ensure the practical enforcement of their ideas. Our results clearly indicate that the state and local governments have failed to place sufficient emphasis on safeguarding environmental assets.

Reindustrialisation in Central Europe

The monograph of Gábor Lux titled „*Reindustrialisation in Central Europe*” was published within the series *Studia Regionum* of Dialóg Campus Publishing House. What is the current role of industry in modern post-industrial economies? Why do some industrial areas experience long-term crises, and why do others achieve outstanding success? How do various sectoral policies impact industrial development and what do the growing efforts of reindustrialisation observed during the past decade indicate? Which factors currently ensure the long-term competitiveness of industrial areas? The monograph of Gábor Lux written in a comparative approach seeks to respond to the above questions through a complex analysis of Western and Eastern European regional development processes. It presents the major theories of industrial restructuring and adaptation, the new renaissance of the instruments of industrial policy, and, incorporating a wide array of empirical research, it illustrates various Central European industrial restructuring trajectories, providing the reader a useful resource in the complex evaluation of the role and development processes of a highly significant economic sector.

The primary objective of the NKFIH-research analysing the role of the domestic sector of medium-sized firms was to examine the contribution of home-owned manufacturing companies to capital accumulation and regional growth in the light of international examples and practices of the development of medium-sized companies (German and French models), and to perform quantitative and qualitative research on the development opportunities of this particular segment of firms in Hungary. The sector of medium-sized companies displays heterogeneous and diverse regional specialisation patterns from a territorial and sectoral point of view as well. In light of the research results, the domestic sector of medium-sized companies, despite a more unfavourable environment and shorter life cycles, reveals certain similarities with the German *Mittelstand* companies, and a share of small firms have the potential to become medium-sized companies. Currently, the lack of skilled employees is one of the most significant obstacles to growth. The stimulating or hindering role of the institutional context is also a factor deserving attention. The generational change faced by the companies is a largely unexplored issue that will nonetheless exert a significant influence on the growth prospects of companies.

The analysis of spatial categories

The research titled „*Laying the Groundwork for the Revision of the Spatial Categories in the National Development and Spatial Development Concept*” financed by the Ministry for National Economy elaborated detailed proposals. Both the partial studies on territories and types of territories eligible for spatial development policy intervention, the country-level case studies and the comprehensive, synthesizing chapters provided general lessons and in some cases, presented proposals exceeding by far the opportunities and competences of the Ministry for National Economy. Determining the use, content, and methodology of the delineation of various spatial categories requires the establishment of a system of priorities in spatial objectives (Budapest metropolitan region, growth zones, various macro-regions), which would have exceeded the scope of the study. Our scientific analyses confirmed the need for the modification and in some cases, renaming of certain spatial categories identified in the NDTC, a reduction of their number and the elimination or merger of their various components, and a reconsideration of the need to specify smaller landscape units (belonging to a single county).

Research on territorial finances

The NKFIH-research titled *„Economic development role of Financial institutions based on performance and lending indicators: Territorial Financial Analysis”* discussed, amongst others, the sustainability-related activities of lending institutions. According to our findings, albeit banking practice incorporating environmental and social issues widespread in international practice is represented (in its rudimentary form) in the business policy of Hungarian institutions, the full range of products and services available in Western European countries is not. Despite the recent changes affecting market conditions (economic crisis, increasing domestic ownership, legally prescribed integration of cooperatives), and stakeholder interests on the market of credit institutions, significant disparities can be detected in the areas and mechanisms of operation of commercial banks and saving cooperatives owned by global banking groups.

Environmental research

The initial year of the H2020 project titled *„REPAiR Resource Management in Peri-urban Areas: Going Beyond Urban Metabolism”* was focused on two pilot areas, Amsterdam and Naples. The first experimental living labs demonstrate that a well designed workshop series is capable of generating ideas and eco-innovative solutions that foster a shift towards the circular economy in the given region. The initial results of sociocultural and environmental awareness analyses indicate that despite the Netherlands’ European and global leadership position in the circular economy, also confirmed by EUROSTAT data, Italy and the Campania region perform much better in terms of environmental awareness at the level of individuals and firms alike. The goal of the research is to unearth the causes behind this contradiction. The investigation of the domestic case study (Pécs) has also commenced, revealing a growing number of initiatives in favor of the circular economy, while also pointing out the obstacles posed by the newly implemented regulatory frameworks.

Borderland research

The major results and nodes detected and identified by the IRS-based horizontal CERS HAS Borders and borderland research group were shaped by global political processes. The year 2017 – due largely to the inauguration of the new president of the United States – has brought a global reevaluation of the significance of state borders. The issue of state border control triggered by global and intercontinental migration emerged at multiple levels (UN, EU, individual states, the pope, etc.) as a focal point of moral, economic and political debates. In several instances, the problems affecting external borders infiltrated the internal borders of the EU as well. Phenomena unknown to those born after the Cold War such as long waiting hours at border crossings emerged along internal EU borders. As a result of the transformation of the EU (Brexit), internal border related issues became subject to conflicting interests which history, albeit amidst different conditions, had already resolved. A permanent rethinking of border research on behalf of participating researchers is required in order to achieve up-to-date results at the mid-term of the NKFIH-project titled *„Change and Continuity in Hungarian Spatial Imaginaries: Nationality, Territoriality, Development and the Politics of Borders”*.

b) Science and society

IRS, thanks to its member institutes hosted by five Hungarian cities (Békéscsaba, Budapest, Győr, Kecskemét, Pécs) is actively engaged in the scientific and higher education activities of five regions and several settlements. The four thematic libraries of IRS can be accessed by local researchers, lecturers, professionals and students alike. HAS MADI Gallery operated by the Department of Győr is a renowned exhibition site of geometric art where five exhibitions were held in 2017.

Each department organised scientific and dissemination events open to the public. The Department of Kisalföld (Győr) and the Department of Körösvidék (Békéscsaba) of the Hungarian Geographic Society have co-organised 11 professional lectures at the Institute's premises. The evaluation of the impacts of climate change, their modelisation and adaptation were among the most significant contributions of the Institute's researchers to the resolution of challenges faced by society today. The seminar series launched by the Transdanubian Research Department in 2016 organised four events to promote debate on current research, manuscripts, research results, dissertations and an exchange of ideas between experts. In complement to these, Ugo Fratesi (Politecnico di Milano) presented a lecture in November 2017 within the framework of the CERS HAS „Economics with policy” international seminar series.

The West Hungarian Research Department in collaboration with the Győr-Moson-Sopron county division of Hungarian Society for Urban Planning continued to organise its monthly Smart City event series in Győr, in the framework of which ten events took place in the reporting year. A conference was organised by each of the horizontal workshops of IRS in the autumn, one in Budapest by the Socio-spatial inequalities horizontal research network titled „*A question of viewpoint? Crises and their interpretations in the European periphery*”, one in Pécs by the Environmental working group titled „*Waste vs. Resource – A city's alternative trajectories towards the circular economy*” and one in Subotica organised by the Borders and borderland research group titled „*Forces shaping borders*”.

After a decade-long pause, the Village Conference, a traditional and popular event organised by the Institute since the regime change, took place in 2017 once more. As usual, the Village Conference, in addition to presenting the most up-to-date scientific results, provided a consultation forum for rural development experts, practitioners and decision-makers alike.

III. A presentation of national and international R&D relations in 2017

Domestic co-operation

The journal *Tér és Társadalom* (Space and Society) published by the Institute plays a key role in the organisation of regional science in Hungary and across the border. *Tér és Társadalom* is an interdisciplinary journal engaged in the continuous dissemination of new results in regional science and spatial research. As a telling indicator of its prestige, ten applications were submitted for the call for proposals for the thematic issue of 2017/4. The journal was added to the Web of Science Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) database in 2017 and the editorial office submitted its application to the Scopus database once again, awaiting appraisal in 2018.

International relations

The three winning H2020 and two ESPON projects launched in 2016 and the ten international grant applications submitted in 2017 indicates a significant progress in the European network of relationships and international embeddedness of several departments of the Institute. In the framework of the ongoing Bulgarian, Czech and Romanian bilateral co-operations closing in 2018, foreign study trips, fieldworks and co-organised conferences were realised.

In the framework of the Marie Curie project, the open summer university hosted in Békéscsaba was one of the most significant events organised by our Institute. On the basis of its new and reinforced international relationships, and as a follow-up to the project, the Institute as a member of an international consortium is currently working on laying the groundwork for a new large-scale research project.

IV. Brief summary of national and international research proposals, winning in 2017

The most significant international and domestic projects receiving funding in the reporting year were as follows:

- The EU-sponsored research (Pilot Project Europe of diversities) entitled „*VOICITYS Voices of Diversity – Connecting People and Policies for More Integrated Neighbourhoods in European Cities*” investigates the manifestations and interactions between the ethnic and social diversity of cities, their differences and similarities on the basis of four case studies (Manchester, Berlin, Sassari and Budapest). The research applies a hybrid sociological methodology for the analysis of policy responses, the opinion of local decision-makers, contrasting those with local residents’ perceptions, everyday practices and use of space.
- As a follow-up to the previous IPA REGPHOSYS project, the Croatian-Hungarian INTERREG-project entitled „*RuRES Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency in a Function of Rural Development*” focuses on opportunities of renewable energy use and energy efficiency. IRS investigates the socio-economic and geographic conditions of the utilisation of renewable energy resources in the borderland area, presenting the most efficient solutions and modes of application to key stakeholders in the form of a training.
- The purpose of the Slovakian-Hungarian INTERREG-project entitled „*Smart Communities – Virtual Education and Research and Development and Innovation Network in the Slovakian-Hungarian Border Region*” is to raise the level of digital knowledge of members of the local community in the lagging border region, thereby facilitating their access to higher value-added employment opportunities. The prioritised sectors of the project cover training and R+D+I with a focus on sustainability and ICT. These processes are facilitated by the creation of a network of stakeholders of civil society, educational and research institutions, and the organisation of joint professional training programmes and a mentor system in collaboration with the target groups.
- The NKFIH-research entitled „*Regional and sectoral features of the labour market integration of vocational training, with special regard to peripheries and early school leaving*” evaluates the efficiency of vocational training. The research simultaneously seeks to examine the employment opportunities of young people with a vocational degree, the labour market demand of the economy, and to identify the array of qualifications and

occupations (bottleneck jobs) where employers experience difficulties of recruitment. The research places a special emphasis on the examination of territorial processes and aims to elaborate concrete comparative territorial analyses, while also examining the issue of early school leaving.

- The postgraduate NKFIH-research entitled „*Marginalization and (im)mobility: the dynamic of habitus*” is related to the NKFIH-project entitled „*Governing urban marginality in shrinking cities*”. The objective of the micro-level analysis of urban space is to interpret marginalisation through the lens of spatial and social process and to study, in selected marginalised districts of a given locality its individual and generational implications through a reconstruction of family histories. Thus, the research explores the conscious and unconscious strategies of mobility and immobility, incorporation and transmission of the socio-spatial situation (structural constraints) and mobility opportunities (individual agency) within various social, economic, historical contexts and territories.
- The HAS Premium Postdoctoral Research project entitled „*A safe start? – The impact of early childhood care services on child rearing and social and spatial integration*” explores the complex interrelations between child rearing, social cohesion and socio-spatial disparities through assessing the impacts of early childhood care services on parents. The research, by contrasting the continent-wide paradigm shift in the culture of child rearing with current domestic practices, seeks to identify the mechanisms through which early childhood care services may moderate or conversely, aggravate social-spatial inequalities and social exclusion.
- The postgraduate NKFIH-research entitled „*Normative Actorness of the European Union*” endeavours to conceptualise the notion of a value- and principle-based Europe, to offer a theoretical clarification of „Europeanism” as a socio-cultural identity, and to elaborate a theoretical framework for understanding Europeanisation, that is, the various social and political processes which promote a cosmopolitan Europeanism and a normative „Europe” via institutional changes or reforms also capable of accounting for the causes behind the failure of this progress. Finally, it examines through an empirical study whether any visible signs of the incorporation of these values and attitudes can be discerned among the domestic political elite, EU member states and the societies of neighbouring countries.
- The postgraduate NKFIH-research entitled „*Svejkian ferry countries? Geopolitical identities in East Central Europe*” explores spatial concepts shaping collective consciousness and geographical self-determination in East-Central Europe and Hungary in particular. Geographical concepts such as the Carpathian Basin, Danube basin, Central-Europe, Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Turan, ferry country or the bastion of the West are such ideas. Hungary is characterised by a number of rivalling concepts of space which provide heterogeneous interpretations of the position of the country and the nation. Which notions have gained predominance since the change of regime? How have they shaped collective consciousness and self-determination? Who evoke them, why, with what intent and impact?
- The research titled „*The anticipated impacts of climate change on labour market processes in Hungary*” obtained funding within the framework of the KEHOP-project of the Mining and Geological Survey of Hungary for the further refinement of the National Adaptation Geo-Information System (NAGis), in the framework of which exposure, sensitivity, vulnerability, adaptation and impact indicators were elaborated for Hungary, at a 10×10 km grid resolution, complemented by literature review and methodological developments. The realisation of the research is supported by the Databank of CERS HAS.

- The research entitled „*The impacts of climate change on the health of the population – The vulnerability of the population to health impacts related to climate change*” seeks to assess the health impacts and consequences of heat waves associated with climate change. The first phase of the research included the review of the domestic scientific literature on the antecedents of vulnerability assessment research, and an assessment of the opportunities of preparation and adaptation through interviews conducted with health care and local governmental stakeholders. The main focus of the statistical analyses was the demand for health care services and its district-level disparities underlying the forecasts.
- The „*Climate Change Adaptation Research*” constitutes a new thematic priority within the NAGiS system, providing legislators, public and policy stakeholders and sectoral strategy makers reliable and scientifically well-grounded information on the adaptive capacities of the domestic agricultural sector in the face of climate change as well as the main trends and constraints of adaptation. The project is realised in collaboration with the Research Institute of Agricultural Economics.
- The objective of the collaborative research project titled „*The impact of public employment on the local economy and society*” financed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs is to examine the conditions of the continuation of public employment programmes and to identify the types of programmes that may correspond to the needs of various areas/categories of settlements in the coming years.

V. List of important publications in 2017

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