

Rural restructuring in post-communism in Hungary OR in post-communist Hungary?

Introduction

The collapse of the socialist system resulted in significant spatial changes and related demographic, social and economic restructuring in Hungary (Kovách – (usually ‘and’ or ‘&’ in English journals?) Nagy Kalamász 2006). The main characteristic of the Hungarian spatial system is the high number (more than 3000) of local governments (settlement level – NUTS V) and the low dominance of middle level settlements (NUTS IV and NUTS III) (Pálné 2000) even though the role of micro regions (NUTS IV) was increased by the implementation of the European Territorial Development System from the EU integration in 2004 (Kovách-Nagy Kalamász 2006, Megyesi 2014). As a result of the collapse of state socialism the independence of settlements and micro-regions has increased. Local governments have independent development strategies and financial and economic systems. Although a high amount of the local governmental budget is based on national state support, it has significantly decreased year by year. Thus local governments are economic development oriented. There is a sharp competition between settlements for multi-national economic capital and development resources especially for smaller settlements which mostly means the rural ones having less capacity and opportunity (Kovách-Nagy Kalamász 2006).

One of the most important elements of rural restructuring is the changing patterns of agriculture. In the last decades, after the fall of the socialist co-operative and state farm system, the restitution and privatisation of land and immovable assets of socialist agricultural cooperatives and later rapid concentration of land use and agricultural production were basic processes which led to the recent structure of agricultural and family farming (Starosta et al 1999, Górlach – Kovách 2006).

Another important challenge facing rural areas after the change of the political system was the urban demand for providing facilities related to rural landscape and culture. Therefore, permanent and temporary migrations into rural areas became the most important element of development for rural places in the last decades.

Finally, another crucial element of rural restructuring is connected to the introduction of a new Europeanised rural development system which parallels the decentralisation of the Socialist redistributive system resulting in new local power relationships and economic and social networks in rural areas.

This paper aims to present the main aspects of rural restructuring in Hungary. The paper begins by discussing agricultural restructuring and its impacts on rural society. The second part focuses on urban-rural relationships from a rural point of view presenting how local society and mostly local government react to new urban demands after the change of political system. The last part of the paper seeks to understand and present the role of the new European rural development system (is it just one system??) in rural restructuring. We conclude our paper with a summary of the main aspects relating to rural restructuring in the post-communist era.

1. Family farming and farmers in Hungary

The Central and Eastern European post-communist regimes have been committed to full scale re-privatisation of land property. The post-communist states used a variety of privatisation strategies and techniques from direct restitution (Romania), sale (Poland) to voucher distribution (former Czechoslovakia). The Hungarian government's and legislation's answer was to strengthen post-communist crises tendencies so in 1992 two basic acts were passed on restitution and another on the transformation of the co-operatives. The extremely complex and involved privatisation of co-operatives and land restitution was started in mid-1992 and was carried out using two techniques: restitution coupons and share coupons in the enterprise acquired by the named (or nominated?) new owner. The former owners did not get the property back but received restitution coupons: up to 200,000 forints degressively (I am not sure what this means? Retrospectively?), the former owners were fully compensated, whereas restitution was partial above the value of 200,000 forints. Restitution coupons were used to compensate for fifty per cent of lost property between 200,000 and one million forints, and only ten per cent or less above one million forints. Members joining co-operatives without landed property received compensation in the form of shares in property to the value of thirty, and for employees twenty gold crowns. Altogether two million families were entitled to receive restitution (Harcsa et al 1998).

Of the 5 million hectares used by co-operatives, 1.9 million hectares were put aside for the purpose of restitution. The restitution coupons could be exchanged for land by bidding at auctions. Nobody received his or her original plot of land, and could bid with their restitution coupons only for the pieces of land earmarked for the purpose. People who received their restitution coupons on the basis of landed property in the region before collectivisation, as well as local inhabitants and employees of the local co-operative were eligible to participate in the bidding (Kováč 1994).

Another procedure used for the privatisation of co-operative property was naming (I wonder if this should be 'nominating' instead?) the owner of land, movable and immovable property left in the use of co-operatives, and the establishment of the proportion of ownership in the enterprise. The total value of co-operative property was 260 thousand million forints, representing 15 per cent of national wealth. Nominating the owners and defining their share in the enterprise was executed by the general sessions of co-operatives, hence the practice could differ from place to place. In some cases it was property originally brought in, elsewhere it was the active period of work spent there, or qualifications and position which mattered most. Nationally the active members of co-operatives received property coupons corresponding to 40 per cent of the whole, whereas 40 per cent was given to pensioners and 20 per cent to the outside owners. According to the Act on the transformation of co-operatives, the proportions had to be set by April 1992, and the termination of membership and the intention of taking out property corresponding to the value of the property coupons had to be announced by the end of the year. Thus ten per cent of co-operative property was privatised by the end of the year. Presumably this was so little because after January 1st 1993 no applications for taking property out were possible, and until then it was not at all clear that the economic activities of co-operatives would collapse. The former obligation of co-operatives to employ their members was terminated only in 1993, when 300,000 people left the co-operatives within half a year because of production hit by recession. These people did not leave the subsidiary branches but agricultural production and at a time when they could not take out their share of the business from the co-operative. In 1996 almost all arable land was in private hands but

private producers or their organisations used 30-35 per cent of land used by transformed co-operatives. About 2 million hectares could be cultivated by private farmers and their limited companies (Burgerné 2006).

Through re-privatisation 1.5 million people became landowners before 1996. A significant part of rural society became landowners and even many urban households acquired land. Between 1994 and 1996 land used by small-scale agricultural enterprises was doubled. Forty per cent of land acquired by restitution was rented, the rest was cultivated by the new owners. In 1994, though restitution had significantly progressed, 30 per cent of land formerly used by co-operatives was utilised by private producers, or their organisations. The national average of the size of land acquired by restitution was 4.4 ha. It was out of the question that the ownership and production structures of agriculture before collectivisation would be restored by restitution (Burgerné 1996).

As a result of organisational transformation there were 1933 co-operatives, 188 incorporated companies, 3654 limited companies and 1.2–1.6 million part-, or full-time family farms in operation in 1996. Private production gradually became dominant in agriculture, though the number of registered individual entrepreneurs active in that sector did not grow after 1993. The number of registered individual farmers was around 30,000 (about 3–4 per cent of all the family farms). There were about 1.2–1.6 million private family farms in the country the majority of which were part-time and produced for subsistence to a considerable extent. The average area of land of the private family farms did not even reach 1 ha. Parallel to the decrease in the number of co-operatives the area of land under co-operative cultivation did not decrease, while the limited companies, deposit companies and incorporated companies, established in recent years, cultivated a growing area of land. In the nineties the structure of land ownership was characterised by holdings smaller than 5 ha (less than 5 ha = 44.2%, 5.1–10 ha = 14.3 %, 10.1–30 ha = 18.9%, 30.1–50 ha = 7.1 %, more than 50 ha = 15.5 %). More than half of the land cultivated by individual farms belonged to units of less than 10 ha. About 62.5 per cent of arable land was cultivated by tenants. In the case of farms of more than 50 ha, only 23–26 per cent were owned by the cultivators. (Harcza – Kovách 1996)

The structural change of agriculture took place simultaneously with the transformation crisis of the entire Hungarian economy and society, and together with the reshaping of the formerly efficient local redistribution it radically altered the living conditions of the inhabitants of rural settlements. Agricultural production dropped to 60 per cent of the level of 1988. In 1988 the number of persons employed by agricultural units was 1,028,000, which dropped to 326,000 by 1996, to 31.8 per cent of the total of 1988. Rural unemployment was much higher than urban unemployment due to the reduction of agricultural employees and industrial unemployment hitting rural, commuting and unskilled labourers more than average. In the nineties the society of rural settlements was restructured with a dramatic force and speed. One of the most conspicuous phenomena was the appearance of massive rural poverty and its new forms, identified by several researchers as the phenomenon of rural underclass. Masses of rural people lost their job, the possibility of actually disposing over their property (does this mean that ‘many were threatened with being dispossessed of their property’?) and also the institution of part-time farming at the same time in 1993. Experts on the emergence of poverty commented on the appearance of belts of rural ghettos. (Ladányi-Szelényi 2004, Virág 2010)

By the second half of the nineties Hungarian agriculture did not move out of the long period of slow growth, instead it was pushed into a crisis of transformation. In the 80's the state socialist agriculture grew slowly or stagnated after 1989 and began to collapse. Taking the level of 1988 as 100, the gross agricultural production dropped to 90 per cent, then to 84 per cent by 1991, and to 66 per cent by 1992 and by 1996 to no more than 60 %. 1993 was a "black year": agriculture was unable to produce little more than half the output of the last year prior to the systemic change. While the rate of inflation was around 20 to 30 per cent, food prices went up only by 10 to 20 per cent. The agricultural producers reduced their investments. The purchase of machinery dropped from the 1985 level taken as 100 per cent to 25 per cent, and - as the most significant indicator of the crisis - ten per cent of arable land remained uncultivated in 1992 and again in 1993. The falling number of agricultural employees and their proportion within all employment was one of the biggest changes in the labour market. Of the 108 million employees of agriculture in 1988 only about 325 thousand persons remained by January 1st 1997. From the second half of the nineties rapid concentration of land use and agricultural production began. After the millennium the proportion of agro-companies and bigger family farms in land use constantly increased. A new agricultural structure came into being in which the number of the joint – companies and commodity family farms grew and the number of small and subsistence farms radically decreased. While in 2000 there were still 966,000 working family farms ten years later there were only 575,000 (1.1 table). In the middle of the first decade of the 21st century only bigger farms over 100 hectares could raise profit, farms between 50-100 hectares profit was around zero and much smaller farms (less than 50 hectares) could not gain profit. The structure of agriculture shifted from the dominance of smaller farms towards small units-bigger farms diversification. The specialised modernised commodity farms over 100 hectares and the part-time subsistence farms were the main types of agricultural units.

Table 1.1. The number of agricultural holdings (in thousands)

year	company	family farm	total
2000	8,4	958,5	966,9
2003	7,8	765,5	773,4
2005	7,9	706,9	714,8
2007	7,4	618,7	626,1
2010	8,8	566,6	575,4

source: Agricultural Census 2010

The privatisation of land in the 90's in Hungary followed by the rapid concentration of land use and agricultural production resulted in considerable changes but the dual – commodity and subsistence - character of farming survived radical shifts in the structure of agriculture. In 2005 the number of semi-subsistence and subsistence farmers was similar to commodity full and part-time family farmers. From 2000 to 2010 the number of private farms fell by 40%. 400 000 smaller family farms were excluded from agricultural census or being out I am not sure what this means? 'left out from'? farming, but the proportion of subsistence and semi-subsistence farms was 60 % even in 2010 (Agricultural Census 2010).

Evidence from Hungarian agro-census data shows that small-scale subsistence farming was extensively practised in Hungary. In 2010, 85% of private farms and agricultural companies used less than 5 hectares. 567 000 farms, and 1.1 million non-farmer families, altogether 40 per cent of Hungarian households produced food. The proportion of self-provisioning farming of private farms was 60 per cent. The evolution of a new agricultural structure started some years before Hungary joined the European Union in 2004. Between 2000 and 2003 200,000 smaller farms disappeared. The EU membership and introduction of EU agro-policy and supporting system did not change the tendency to decrease the number of farms and restructuring. For example from 2005 to 2007, 90,000 family farms finished agricultural production.

The restructuring of farming structure was even more radical compared to the loss of family farms. The process of specialisation intensified: the number of cereal and maize growing farms increased by 30 percent while farms with mixed (animal keeping and plant-growing) decreased by one third. The Hungarian agriculture mainly changed to intensive, top level modernised crop and maize production and this could be a source of structural, market and environmental risk. The land use of farms denoted a more intensive shift towards double (big commodity and subsistence farming) structure and polarisation (Table 1.3). Not more than 2 percent of agricultural units owned 65.5 percent of arable land, 0.9 percent of family farms used more than one third of family farms' land property. Family farms over 50 hectares used 50 percent of family land property in 2010. Nearly two third of family farm work took place on less than one hectare.

Table 1.2. Family farms by purpose of production, 2007

purpose of production	crop production	animal husbandry	mix	total
	proportion of farms %			
household consumption, hobby	49,33	73,15	37,28	52,06
self-consumption and sale of surplus	27,8	24,01	47,25	32,41
commodity production	22,82	2,73	15,37	15,45
mainly agricultural services	0,05	0,12	0,1	0,08
total	100	100	100	100

source: General Agro-census 2010

Table 1.3. Private farms, companies and land size categories in Hungary, 2010

private farms		
land size category hectare	number of farms %	agricultural area %

0,01– 0,15	29	0,5
0,16– 1,00	41,5	3,1
1,01– 5,00	16,1	8,3
5,01– 10,00	5,1	7,8
10,01– 25,00	4,5	15,3
10,01– 50,00	1,9	14,9
50,01–100,00	1,1	17,1
100,01–300,00	0,8	27,7
300,01–	0,1	5,2
total	100	100
private farms and companies		
land size category hectare	number of farms %	agricultural area %
0,01– 0,15	28,7	0,2
0,16– 1,00	41	1,7
1,01– 5,00	16	4,5
5,01– 10,00	5,1	4,2
10,01– 25,00	4,6	8,4
10,01– 50,00	2,1	8,4
50,01–100,00	1,2	10,1
100,01–300,00	1	19,4
300,01–	0,4	43,1
total	100	100

source: General Agro-census 2010

The concentration of land use and agricultural production, the introduction of EU agro-policy and support system consolidation were concurrent with stabilisation of bigger commodity farms. The price difference between agricultural and industrial products was mainly positive, the cereal and maize production was profitable when bigger farms changed to monoculture cereal production. Crop growing family farms gained 60 percent higher income than one year before and stabilisation was highly supported by EU agro-subsidies. The concentration of production could be continued and 30-50 percent of commodity family farms increased production. 10-15,000 units (12,000 family farms and 3000 joint-companies) dominated the Hungarian agricultural sector and this concentration became stronger when the land market was liberalised (Kovács K. 2007).

Employment in agriculture constantly decreased from nearly 1 million in 1988 to less than 200,000 in 2010 from whom only 40,000 farmers were less than 40 years old. Hungarian agriculture worked in mixed farming structure (part-time, subsistence farms, commodity family farms and joint-companies, agro-enterprises). The post-communist transformational crises was retarded by the second half of the nineties, effective investment and dynamic technical modernisation were implemented in last decade, and farmers could find and develop new ways of integration in production, supply and marketing (Tisenkopf et al 2011).

2. Rural-urban relationships

Interactions and dependences between rural and urban places become drivers of spatial and social changes after the fall of state socialism in Hungary (Kovách-Nagy Kalamász 2006, Csurgó 2013). Urban and rural areas interact and their success is based on these interactions and synergies. Urban-rural flows of people and products are or could be the basis of developments. We argue that cities and their hinterlands no longer are independent entities. New urban-rural relationships have emerged in Hungary in the last decades (Csurgó 2013). The urban demand for rurality includes houses, leisure opportunities, but also food production and industrialization.

Urban-rural flows of people are one of the most important bases of rural restructuring. Urban and rural areas interact and their success is based on these interactions and synergies. The urban and rural processes became highly dependent on each other and their internal boundaries tended to blur (Overbeek 2006). After the change of the socialist system the main characteristics of spatial-social changes were the increasing population deconcentration of cities (especially Budapest) and the faster population growth of rural areas. Scholars defined it as extended suburbanisation or counter-urbanisation (Boyle-Halfacree 1998, Tímár 1999, Kovács K 1999, Dövényi-Kovács 1999, Dövényi 2009, Kovách 2012 Csurgó 2013). Nevertheless, two different processes: decentralisation and deconcentration were presented with different causes and different effects. Counter-urbanisation and rural depopulation did not exclude each other. Population decline in rural areas continually exists and counter-urbanisation could even lead to depopulation of rural areas as a result of selectivity of the migration process (Kovách 2012, Virág 2010).

In Hungary there are two faces of rural migration. There are areas where the main source of rural migrants is well-off urban dwellers, but there are also rural places to where relatively poor people who are try to escape from urban poverty are migrated (Csita et al 2004). The heterogeneity of actors and their interest in rural areas has increased in contemporary societies (Esparcia-Buciega 2005) as well as in Hungary.

The most significant changes in rural-urban relationships are situated in metropolitan areas. The period of the 1990s could be characterized as a period with a substantial degree of movement away from the largest urban areas especially from Budapest in Hungary.

Table 2.1. Population changes between Budapest city and its agglomeration

Budapest agglomeration	sectors	Population, N			Changes, %	
		1990	2001	2011	1990-2001	2011-2001
	city	2016774	1777921	1729040	-12	-2,7
	fringe	566861	675394	805848	19,1	19,3

Source: own creation based on data of Hungarian National Statistical Office

In the nineties Budapest lost 12 % of its population (180 thousand people) while the population of the agglomeration increased by 19,1%. The population of the Budapest agglomeration has been increasing

by 23,8000 people since 1990 due to migration. The extent of population growth of rural-urban fringe decreased between 2001-2011, but the direction of changes does not alter.

Thirty years ago most of the villages of the agglomeration were agricultural settlements and most of the residents worked in agriculture co-operatives. The development of sectoral shares in employment showed clearly the decline in agriculture and the rise of the third sector, similarly to the national level. The agricultural land and hobby gardens in Budapest Agglomeration became building plots, except for protected nature areas. Presently the share of children is above the national average confirming that many young families can be found among the newcomers (Váradi 1999, Izsák1996, Tímár-Váradi 2000, Csité at al 2004).

Thus, one of the most important challenges currently facing rural-urban relationships is the urban demand for providing facilities related to rural landscape and culture. The urban demand for rurality includes better quality of life, houses, leisure opportunities which results in permanent or temporary migration into rural areas in Hungary.

The concept of urban-rural migration flows has been used in combination with explanations of people's behaviours and motivations (Halfacree 1998, Csurgó 2013, Boyle-Halfacree 1998) with explanations of push and pull factors of migration (Cloke 1985) with the analysis of social changes.

Several studies (Mormont 1987, 1990, Tovey 1998, Frouws 1998, Richardson 2000, Burnet 1998, Munkejord 2006, Halfacree 2006) discourse the different perceptions of rural and urban areas in terms of the use and meaning of places. A central theme in this social-cultural approach is the valuation of the quality of urban and rural life, which comes back to the theory of Tönnies (2004) who conceptualised the 'Gesellschaft' and 'Gemeinschaft'. It refers to the negative value of city-like lack of social safety and to positive values of rural places like care and community. The result of these subjectivist (?) studies is the assumption that the experience of the rural is dependent on personal perceptions and interpretations of everyday reality.

We also argue that the perceptions of rural and also the past or present involvement in agriculture and rurality have an integrative force and effect on the behaviour and motivation towards rurality of people. Some decades ago 45% of the Hungarian active population worked in agriculture, and still in 1988 20-25 percent of the Hungarian labour force was employed in state farms and agricultural co-operatives and two thirds of the adult population participated in part-time farming. Data of Integration and Disintegration of Hungarian Society Survey 2015¹ consists of information on the respondents' relationships with agriculture.

Table 2.2 Involvement in agriculture in % of total population, 2015

Agriculture related activity	%
commodity vegetable, fruit	2,2

¹ Integration and disintegration in Hungarian Society (HAS, Institute of Sociology, TÁRKI) - National Research, Development and Innovation Office – NKFIH, 108836

subsistence vegetable, fruit	33,5
commodity meat production	1,6
subsistence meat production	18,0
less than 1 hectare	11,7
more than 1 hectare	4,0
parents, grandpa in agriculture	33,6
employed, work in agriculture	3,0

Data shows that 33,6% of Hungarian adults have an agriculture-based family background and also 33,5% do subsistence vegetable and fruit production. Agriculture has a strong effect on the past and present experience of Hungarian society.

Table 2.3. Agriculture-related groups

Relation to agriculture	%
strongly related	11,8
weakly related	28
latently related	17,9
not related	34,6
not related, but ascending relatives related	7,7

Based on the above mentioned activities we created five agriculture related groups: (1) strongly related (11,8%) means commodity food production and having more than 1 hectare and having work experience in agriculture and/or agricultural education, (2) weakly related (28%) means subsistence production and less than 1 hectare arable land, (3) latently related (17,9%) means no agro-activity but reported hobby, leisure time gardening, (4) not related (34,6%) means no connections to agriculture while (5) not related but ascending relatives (parents, grandparents) related (7,7%) shows the agriculture related family background.

Table 2.4. Urban-rural distribution of agriculture related groups

	strongly	weakly	latently	not related	only	Total

	related	related	related		ascending relatives	
Budapest	1,9%	1,2%	13,1%	38,6%	24,2%	100%
county centre	11,0%	13,4%	20,0%	25,3%	33,3%	100%
town	32,4%	31,9%	44,3%	25,7%	31,5%	100%
village	54,8%	53,5%	22,6%	10,4%	11,0%	100%

Data shows that both rural and urban populations have several types of relationships with agriculture. Latent and weak relationships of urban dwellers could be an important basis of positive perceptions toward rurality which can be regarded as a motivation factor of permanent and temporary migration into rural areas.

To understand the various types of experiences and relationships between and behind the rural and urban a reflexive approach is needed. This theoretical framework involves social constructions of rurality and urbanity and draws on more post-modern and post-structural ways of thinking (Mormont 1987, Mormont 1990, Cloke 2006, Halfacree 2006). Regarding rurality as ‘socially constructed’ suggests that the importance of the rural lies in the fascinating world of social, cultural and moral values which have become associated with rurality, rural spaces and rural life. As a starting point there has been significant interest in interconnections between socio-cultural constructs of rurality and also urbanity and the actual lived experiences and practices of lives in different spaces (Cloke 2006, Halfacree 2006, Munkejord 2006).

Within the processes that influence rural-urban relationships several actors play a role. One of the characteristic actors of rural-urban relationships is urban incomers, in-migrant families from the city. An analysis on migration into the Western-Budapest agglomeration which is a green area and has good infrastructure showed why this part of the agglomeration is very prestigious, and it became the main target of in-migration of upper-middle classes. The study shows that the reason why urban citizens moved to rural areas range from issues related to family to the desire for adventure, living close to nature and in traditional community and combinations of these facts. Most of the studied families moved to rural settlements after having children. The reason was that they wanted better circumstances for their children, and rural areas provide it. Another significant group of informants migrated to rural areas from the city after their marriage in the beginning their family life. A detached house with a garden was the symbol of the family life for them. Because of their property status they were able to achieve their goal in rural areas. They were open to moving to settlements within the agglomeration which were further away. There is a third type of in-migrants who are older intellectuals with adult children. They desired a rural idyll with elements of nature, beauty and traditional culture and community. Because of their property status they could choose to live in villages closer to Budapest. The common feature of the studied families was that their image of place is very positive including elements of rural idyll, nature, beauty, fresh air, silence and sense of security. This study argues that perception of place determines the

immigrants' lifestyles and the relationship with local society. During the analysis we focused on social representations of the rural and its impact on rural development. Two significant but different types of representation groups with different lifestyle characteristics were found during the analysis. The first group was the suburban rural representation group featuring positive perceptions of rural areas but lacking involvement in local community. The second group was the rural idyll representation group with positive perceptions of rurality and strong connections to local community. According to different immigrants' representation and lifestyle groups two different types of development in the studied villages can be identified relating to the different demands of newcomers. The role of governance in the rural-urban relationship is crucial in the development success of rural areas (Csurgó 2013).

Other studies also prove that rural local governments, in the era of intensive search for development funds, mostly think that urban emigration can open new sources of investment for development at local level. However, the lack of standardised programs or regulations to support the new rural-urban situations and different economic and consumer interests of newcomers has frequently created chaos in many places. There are significant changes from long-term and medium term planning to short term planning and thinking in Budapest and surrounding regions resulting in decision making that takes place in no single power centre and frequent multiplicity in decision making. However, governance of urban – rural relations needs to take into consideration temporality, fluctuations, flexibility, changing actors and interests (Csurgó et al 2012). The methods of governance and involvement of actors significantly determines the success of interactions and synergies between rural and urban areas.

3. Networks in rural development

The changes of the regime and process of EU accession changed also the economic transfer between the rural and the urban areas, as we presented in the previous section. In the following section we give a deep insight into a special policy arena - into the changes of rural development in the last decade. In this paper we use a broad understanding of rural development: it comprises all activities which aim at improving rural livelihood, thus our analysis is not restricted to the effects of the subsidies and measures of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), but takes into consideration also the effects of several different development funds, private sources (investments), and national resources. Based on our previous research and on the findings of practitioners, we argue that at the macro-level even between 2004 and 11, (1) private investments had the main effect on the economic performance of a certain region and (2) that development policy could hardly counter-balance social effects of demographic and economic changes. While at the micro-level (3) strategic planning, together with a dense network and trust among the different stakeholders could lead to sustainable developments.

The institutionalization of development policy started in the middle of the nineties, in the pre-EU accession period (Csurgó 2005, Nemes 2000), but a continuous change characterized it even after 2004 with EU-accession. Several authors gave detailed descriptions and analysis about these changes (Kengyel 2008, Kovách-Kristóf, 2009, Csurgó-Kovács 2014). These processes were in line with the processes of the wider environment of Hungary, the European Union (Sjöblom, 2006; Murdoch, 2006, Marsden, 2006). The so-called Europeanization of development policy meant that the national governments gradually lost control over development policy: besides the national governments, supra-national decision-makers (namely the institutions of the EU) also gained an important role in funding

and controlling. National governments had to build reliable institutions which ensure the proper spending of EU-taxpayers' money, while sub-national levels (regions, counties and local communities) became active stakeholders in planning and project management. As scholars argue, EU integration strengthens the regionalization of government in Europe (Keating, 1998; Dreier, 1994; Larsson et al, 1999); but t integration and regionalization is encouraged by other factors as well: the reduction of community resources, growing quality expectations of locals, and new tasks appearing locally. The dense structure of different coalitions and networks are also a result of the above described changes (Buller, 2000; Marsden, 2000; Pálné, 2008). The focus of this article is on the period between 2004 and 2013.

For the decision-makers of development policy, it is a continuously open question whether policies should support the increase of competitiveness, or should support cohesion: the following studies argue that cohesion policy supported mainly competitiveness.

Lóránd (2009) analyses the cohesion policy of the European Union, and argues that the differences among the EU regions (NUT2 level) did not decrease after accession. In his article he compares Ireland (1973), Greece (1981), Spain and Portugal (1986) and finds that only the first one could compare to the most developed EU countries, although there were major and deep changes also in the three Mediterranean countries. Analysing the factors influencing the success and failure of the countries, he finds that while financial transfers have an eminent role in their success, disciplined economic policies, proper resource allocation, a balanced investment in both physical and human infrastructure and an efficient institutional back-ground are also necessary.

Balogh (2009) argues that the so-called priority projects do not decrease regional disparities. He analysed 1031 priority projects, and found that it is less likely that a priority project in a disadvantaged region would gain subsidy. Although the analysis is theoretically well grounded, the argumentation is debatable, as the main aim of priority projects is not to decrease regional disparities.

Lukovics and Lóránd (2010) conducted a broader analysis: their research question was whether the resources of the National Development Plan between 2004 and 2006 lead to spatial convergence or on the contrary, lead to spatial divergence (Lukovics-Lóránd, 2010: 82). Their analysis shows that although the National Development Plan aims at strengthening cohesion; its competitive impact is stronger, thus the decrease of spatial inequalities is moderate (Lukovics-Lóránd, 2010: 99, Csité-Németh, 2007).

Voszka argues that although state redistribution increased after the EU accession (2006), it is still far less than foreign investments (Voszka 2006:17). The author presents the different redistribution channels, the changes in volumes and the methods of redistribution. She differentiates between the direct payments to the enterprises and companies, and the cohesion subsidies, and analyses also the amount of subsidies gained by companies from different developmental programs. The paper aims at considering the role of national subsidies and supports. These are usually credits with favourable conditions, special, single subsidies, state or governmental guarantees. The author acknowledges the difficulty of assessing their value. And although central redistribution increased, it became more transparent in the first years after EU accession (Voszka 2006).

Similarly to Voszka, Lóránd (2009), Németh (2009) and a report of the Budapest Institute (2013) also show that more developed regions attracting more private investors are more active also in starting development projects and similarly, regions with better infrastructural conditions have a better development performance (Németh 2008, Lukovics-Lóránd 2010), than micro-regions in less-favoured regions.

The report of the Budapest Institute gives insight into the role of different resources in developments. It differentiates three resources: (1) private investments, community financed investments; (2) national and (3) EU resources. The following table shows the per capita subsidies in all of the micro-regions of Hungary in the first column, the average per capita subsidies from different sources in the 33 most disadvantaged micro-regions and in the non-disadvantaged micro-regions.

1. table per capita amount of subsidies and investment (in thousand Hufs)

	Average	33 Most disadvantaged micro-regions	non-disadvantaged micro-regions
NDP ²	10,93	11,7	24,67
National sources	8,11	9,53	12,54
Private investments 2004-6	90,22	27,04	152
Number / proportion of inhabitants (2004)	10116742	9,80%	69,10%
NHDP / NHRDP sources ³	123,03	183,63	404,93
National sources after 2007	1,76	2,17	6
Private investments after 2007	211,63	56,02	356
Number / proportion of inhabitants (2007)	10066158	9,50%	68,30%

Source: Report of the Budapest Institute (2013), Central Statistical Office⁴ own edition.

The report is the part of a broader evaluation: according to the results of the evaluation the per capita subsidies in the 33 most disadvantaged micro-region between 2004-11 were higher than in the disadvantaged micro-regions. It was a result of the special attention and direct assistance given to the most disadvantaged micro-regions (Lőcsei 2013), but despite all efforts, the per capita EU and national subsidies are the highest in the non-disadvantaged micro-regions. Furthermore two thirds of the private investments arrive into this latter group (Budapest Institute 2013: 40), and EU subsidies are around three times more than private investments (Voszka 2006). The role of national subsidies is small, and decreased rapidly after the crisis in 2008. Since then there is a consensus among economists that the steady growth of the GDP is based on the resources from the EU funds, but these funds arrive into county centres and regions with a higher economic performance (ibid 56.).

Another part of the report analysed the accession of Hungary to the EU, and argues that the closing up of the country is slower than the Central-Eastern-European average and is still ongoing (Balás 2013:

² National Development Plan (NDP)

³ New Hungary Development Plan (NHDP) & New Hungary Rural development Plan (NHRDP)

⁴ http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_wdsd004a.html

33). In fact, the differences within the country are actually growing (Balás 2013: 27). While the central region around the capital showed a dynamic picture, the rest of the regions lagged behind.

Having presented the macro-level trends, we briefly present the differences of development activity using the example of two, relatively small micro-regions. The case-studies were conducted between 2007 and 2012 and the more detailed description of the cases can be found in Megyesi (2012).

In paper two, relatively similar micro-regions are compared. Tourism facilities are similar, but none of the micro-regions are popular tourist destinations. In both cases industry is weak, a huge number of the population has to commute to neighbouring towns and county centres. Agriculture is characterized by big agricultural enterprises producing arable crops. The settlement structure is similar, but the relationship between the settlements is different: in one of the micro-regions there is trust between the settlements, in the other there is a lack of trust (Györi 2007).

The civic activity of the locals is also different (Megyesi 2014) in the two micro-regions; and while in the first one stakeholders feel able to influence and to improve local social and economic circumstances; in the second one stakeholders act separately, co-operation between them is rare and limited just to what is necessary. They feel desperate and do not believe that they or anybody else could improve local life. It is very interesting, that several actors did not agree that even the central government would be able to stop out-migration of younger generations or provide jobs in the micro-region.

There are also huge differences in development activity: in the first case the micro-region gained almost ten times more subsidies than in the second micro-region. The number of projects is also much higher, the stakeholders involved in projects, and the settlements in which projects were completed is much higher.

The results of this investigation show the role of social capital in rural development (Megyesi 2012, 2014). It also shows the role of networks (Murdoch 2000, 2006), and intermediate actors (Kristóf-Kováč 2009) in rural development. These new phenomena result in a new model of rural development described by Van der Ploeg et al. (2000). The development of knowledge networks (Kelemen et al, 2008), temporary organizations (Sjöblom-Godenheim, 2009) and the relevance of project class (Kováč-Kucerova, 2006) is also made visible by the micro-level analysis of development projects.

Conclusions

Family farmers confronted robust challenges in past decades. A rural crisis has emerged: economic decline, structural changes and intensive, pervasive privatisation first, later concentration of agricultural production and land use, and rates of rural unemployment which are much higher than in urban societies or in more developed EU member states. The management of rural development is primary and pressing. The further technical modernisation of agricultural production, stabilisation of land property and land use structure, the prevention (do you mean prevention of sales?) of land property in the next few years, future liberalization and opening of land ownership for EU citizens, searching for ways of managing climate change and generation change in agriculture and the development of local food production are the most challenging economic problems that farmers have to face. The uneven development of rural areas indicates dramatic social, economic and also spatial polarisation, regional disparities have

increased far too much. It is not only differentiation that is taking place in these areas generating varieties of rural spaces with varying potential to sell. Rather “class differences” are emerging between those with the potential to develop and those of the deprived. The role of agriculture has dropped dramatically in producing the county’s GDP as well as its employment capacities from around 10% and 15% respectively in the early 1990s to approximately 4% in 2008. Small-scale farming declined as well: the number of individual farming units dropped from 1,5 million in 1990 to 618 thousand in 2007. From among the three categories of individual farms considered by statistics, the number of subsistence plots declined the most, followed by semi-subsistence farms, whilst the number of purely commercial farms has increased. It is remarkable that both the decline and direction of change have been steadily the same for the last 1,5 decades. “Professionalization”, specialisation, property accumulation at one extreme, withdrawing from farming to garden-scale or abandoning cultivation altogether at the other. These are the prevailing trends regarding ownership and land use structures.

The interactions between urban areas is the other significant social challenge of rural areas in recent years. Several Hungarian studies show that people from the city buy houses in nearby smaller towns, while commuting to their urban jobs. Other urban citizens like to spend their increasing leisure time in rural places close to or also a little bit further from the city (Csurgó 2013). So urban people, their preferences and conditions have a strong impact on the rural environment, for example, in terms of the minimum level of infrastructure necessary. It clearly means a pressure for rural areas. However, there are benefits from these interactions for the rural population. Therefore, especially for rural entrepreneurs, it can be beneficial to strengthen the relationships with their urban consumers. Nevertheless, rural people also benefit from the opportunities and services of nearby cities, they use the city for jobs, specialized education or cultural entertainment (Overbeek-Terluin 2006). The synergies of urban-rural interaction have been proved. Rural areas benefit from having more urban neighbours in terms of residential development as well as a stronger tourism sector. At the same time, urban areas with more rural neighbours experience a higher level of employment and economic growth. The rural-urban relationship is beneficial to both urban and rural areas, which also means that remote rural regions are the losers of transitions characterised by population decline, growing poverty and economic crisis.

The final part of our paper showed that at the macro-level even between 2004 and 11, (1) private investments had the main effect on the economic performance of a region and (2) development policy supported competitiveness, despite cohesion, and at the micro-level (3) strategic planning, together with a dense network and trust among the different stakeholders could lead to sustainable developments. The case-studies show that it is worth stakeholders investing in (local) cooperation, because it helps them to find common goals and realize sustainable developments (Megyesi 2012). Hungarian rural development shares the elements of the Western-European patterns described by Ploeg et al (2000) and Marsden (2006).

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