

EXAMINATIONS RELATED TO THE INVESTMENTS IN ÚJSZENTIVÁN

Brigitta ZSÓTÉR
Zorka SOPSICH
Constantin-Dan DUMITRESCU

***Abstract:** We examined the residential satisfaction related to some investments of the local government achieved in 2007-2012 in Újszentiván. We carried out a questionnaire survey. The leaders of the local government received a direct feedback about it. The majority of the respondents are satisfied with the investments achieved by the time of the survey – such as canalization, building and renovating bus stops, renovation of event houses, construction of a nursery, establishing a bike path, building parking lots, covering the pavements with paving stones, making new non-skid stairs, placing signs which make orientation easier (with Braille-writing), construction of a youth accommodation-, however, they would consider investments which create new workplaces of primary importance. In addition, our other findings are: 93% of the answerers like living in the settlement, and 74% of them have never even thought about moving to another place. Most of the earlier immigration was due to some family issues.*

***Keywords:** Újszentiván, local government investment, infrastructural investments, community development, residential opinions, showing-off investment*

1. INTRODUCTION

This study is part of a sequence of satisfaction surveys related to local government investments. We completed our research work in Újszentiván, after Sándorfalva and Abony.

Újszentiván is situated in the South of the Great Plain, in county Csongrád, in the angle between the rivers Tisza and Maros. It is only 12 km away from the county seat, Szeged. Újszentiván belongs to the South-Plain region (Nuts-2). Parts of the Nuts-system are different territorial units including the member states of the European Union, which helps harmonization and classification into a territorial information system (Kocziszky 2009). Within the South-Plain region, Újszentiván belongs to the subregion of Szeged (LAU-1). The subregion of Szeged includes the following settlements: Algyő, Deszk, Dóc, Domaszék, Kübekháza, Röske, Sándorfalva, Szatymaz, Szeged, Tiszasziget, Zsombó, and Újszentiván. It can be found between Szeged-Szőreg

and Tiszasziget. Újszentiván is ranked as a township which means that it has a defined area, independent political and administrative institutes, namely it has independent organizations, tasks, rights, electors, and several other institutions (Kovács, 2001). It is a relatively small town since the number of its inhabitants is only 1600 (about 550 families). Its area is 15,49 km².

In the past few years, between 2007 and 2012 the settlement experienced a huge development. Investments like this were for example canalization, building and renovating bus stops, renovation of event houses, and construction of a nursery. These investments did not pass unnoticed; therefore, we thought that it would be worth asking the residents' opinion in a survey about how much they are satisfied with the local developments. Our purpose was to assess the residential satisfaction related to the local developments, if they agree with the investments, if they regard them necessary or useful. We stated some hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: We think that the people in Újszentiván like living here since the town is not too far from Szeged, and the environment is peaceful and quiet.

Hypothesis 2: As a result, most of the people who come to live here, move to this town because of the cheap way of life, low property prices, and the calm, pleasant environment. It is an ideal place for families with children because of the green area and the good public safety.

Hypothesis 3: We assumed that the majority of locals appreciate the developments and/or consider them important since they make their environment more attractive and more comfortable, besides, it creates more livable conditions and potential workplaces (though temporarily: reconstruction of buildings). Consequently, it may attract people to come to live here.

Hypothesis 4: We assumed that the new bike path would be used by a lot of people as there are many of them who go to work by bicycle, also this way it will be safer to get to Szőreg. (At the time of the survey the bike path was under construction.)

We are aiming at either proving or rejecting these assumptions with our research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is essential to engage with the problems of community, regional and settlement network development for both social and economic development.

Being aware of these factors, we can set tasks to be performed which help us with transformation, modernization and sustainable development. It is a fact that the interpretation of sustainable development has become very diverse, that is why it is necessary to think according to the definition made by the UN (Simonyi 2014). This does not contradict to the principle that there is reduction of regional inequalities together with inequalities between settlements behind the coordinated development of settlement network (Kőszegfalvi 1983).

According to Bajmócy (2011), by regional development we mean influencing different spatial processes in order to develop them, which has three dimensions: social, environmental and economic perspectives. One of the basic documents of the regional policy of the European Union is the European Regional Development Perspective which involves the above-mentioned dimensions in our country, too (Bajmócy 2011). Majority of developments are financed from development funds of the EU. The usage of these funds is controlled by an organization independent from the regional development. As a result, regional development can influence the development policy only in an indirect way (Péti, Czene, Horkay 2009).

According to another definition, regional development has been created because of regions falling behind, thus supporting their catching up to more developed levels (Süli-Zakar 2010) (Kis, Nagy 2012). It is indispensable to face several factors to reduce regional inequalities, like functional connections between settlements, development of the local industry, the proportion of people living in the periphery (Krajkó, Mészáros 1978). To sum up, regional development is for fighting with inequalities, and for supporting disadvantaged regions (Kovács 2001). The monitoring processes need supporting by IT infrastructure and public administration system assists it (Gál 2001, Gál 2007). Today it is essential for a local governments and companies to have a computer system (Hampel, Nagy 2008) (Hampel 2014).

In a broader sense, the purpose of regional development is to improve life quality, health conditions, the environment and supply of the residents, and to secure sustainable development (Pap, Tóth 2006). To achieve all these goals, the conscious settlement forming policy of the local government leaders is of high importance (Csapó, Lenner 2015, Illés 2014), and the position of values in their leadership culture (Málovics, Kincsesné Vajda, Farkas 2015).

3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The primary data collection can be divided into two groups: qualitative and quantitative researches (Mason 2002). We carried out a questionnaire survey among the members of the local society (Kempf-Leonard 2005). We worked out a questionnaire with 22 questions involving the body of the local government representatives. The survey took place between 29 June and 2

September 2012. We had altogether 436 questionnaires completed 427 of which proved to be assessable.

The questionnaire included questions of demographic nature, related to the investments, also we asked people to express their personal opinions. As for closed questions, we applied two-ended, more-ended, selective and combinative questions. Most cases we applied a nominal scale with more ends where it is possible to choose only one option. However, the 10th question included a Likert scale which assessed the residential satisfaction in relation with the local services. In this case, they could choose one option from 1 to 5 option (1: strongly disagree; 5: strongly agree). We gave the opportunity to express personal opinions, too.

After compiling the questionnaire, we made a trial questioning which proved to be useful since we could correct the unclear or incorrectly asked questions.

After testing and correcting the questionnaire, it was followed by having it completed with the help of interviewers.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

In the framework of the Regional Development Concept of Újszentiván (2007-2013) and by means of the South Plain Operational Programmes of New Hungary Development Plan a number of investments was successfully performed between 2007 and 2012, the time of our research. The Care Centre was renovated. The whole area of the Care Centre, Health Centre and the Local Government Office became barrier-free. New parking lots were created, and the pavements were covered with paving stones. New non-skid staircases were built and ramps with guardrails were placed on their sides for the sake of safe and simple traffic. Buildings owned by the local government were painted, and signs which help with orientation (Braille-writing) and leading lanes were placed. A youth accommodation was established on the place of the old school. This building makes possible to accommodate camping schoolchildren. There are 30 places there for a whole class so they do not have to be lodged separately. Of course, besides other factors, they took the quality issues into consideration, too (Molnár, Marosi, Gál, Véha 2012). Mangalitzá pig and the foie gras like the national cultural heritages of Hungary have an important role in the sustainable rural culture and the rural economy, so the effectiveness of the sector investment can further strengthen the economy (Czibolya, Lendvai 2015) (Czibolya 2015). The kindergarten and the elementary school were renovated both inside and outside by painting them, giving them new furniture, renovating their fence, with insulation and with plaster. They paid attention to the town centre and to the renovation of bus stops, too. Main Square was covered with paving stones, in addition, a new fountain, benches and a bicycle storage were

placed there. A pergola was set up there which plants were trained on to give shadow for people relaxing there. Furthermore, a new bus stop, a parking lot for buses were built which were covered with aesthetic stones, also more litter bins were put there. The playing ground was modernized to make possible for children to play on safe toys which meet the EU standards. The nursery school of Újszentiván was built, too (Figure 1). By the time of the research most of the bike path had been finished.



Source: An image taken on my own
Figure 1 The new nursery school

Now, we are planning to show the results of the questionnaire survey. Only 61% of the respondents work, the other 39% do not. 119 of them do manual work, 133 intellectual work, and 7 people chose the other category, some of them said that both manual and intellectual work they do. 252 people work or study in Szeged, 28 in Újszentiván, 13 in Szőreg, and 22 in other settlements or at home. This high proportion was not so surprising for us since there are more job facilities in Szeged, and secondary and higher education are not available locally, since only the lower primary school (1-4 grades) exists in the town. 329 of the respondents immigrated into the town. They arrived mostly from Szeged and its environment (321 people), and from other settlements of Csongrád county (67 people). However, other settlements were mentioned, too (31 people), like Tiszakécske, Békés, Kunszentmiklós, Budapest and a lot of others. Despite of the fact that there is a relatively high proportion of immigrated people, they have been living here for a while as 241 of them said that they have been living here for more than 10 years, 65 people for 5-10 years, and 23 for 1-5 years. Most of the 398 people moved to the town because of family issues (179), the second argument was the calm and safe environment (154). 21 people moved there because of the low property prices, 18 chose the

cheaper way of living, 9 were attracted by the good living conditions, 7 came here because of good job opportunities. 10 people chose the other category, they were either born here, or brought up here. Family issues include probably marriages or that parents or grandparents moved here.

Locals think that the development level of the town is the same as the one of the neighbouring similar places (198 people), 72 think it more improved, 9 consider it more disadvantaged, and 148 respondents did not answer to this question, probably they could not judge it.

Our next questions related to the residents' opinion about the actual services. We used Likert scale here. In extreme cases we asked them to justify their opinion. The residents are relatively satisfied with public cleanliness of the town. Locals take care of keeping clean their environment and public workers perform their duties well. 7 people are not satisfied at all, 41 are only a little, 151 are moderately, 138 are very and 59 are fully satisfied, while 31 people did not have an opinion at all.

The police extremely pay attention to public safety with patrolling units, and locals with citizen soldiers, so the unsubstantial number of crimes has been reduced even more. Even the respondents may think so, since 9 are dissatisfied, 51 are satisfied only a little, 121 are moderately, 146 are very and 86 are fully satisfied with it, and 14 people did not express their opinion. Those fully satisfied think that public safety is appropriate, citizen soldiers patrol in the town, the number of crimes is extremely low.

People are satisfied with landscaping by and large. 18 of them are not satisfied at all, 82 are only a little, 114 are moderately, 143 are very and 64 are fully satisfied with it, while 6 did not form an opinion. The local government have recently created new green areas, so we think that our finding is understandable. Those fully satisfied residents consider it excellent work since a nice environment has been created. Those dissatisfied think that it is unnecessary, the local government just wasted the money on it.

The respondents had different opinions about the question on the quality of roads and pavements. It is so because the road network of the town has been asphalted again after works on the drainage channel, so now it is easy to access almost each street. However, conditions of the pavements are critical, there are several places where it is almost impossible to walk on them. 52 of the respondents said that they were not satisfied at all, 127 are only a little, 139 are moderately, 76 are very and 33 are fully satisfied with it.

The community is less satisfied both with the quantity and quality of local cultural and entertaining events, since 37 of them are not satisfied at all, 133 are only a little, 154 are moderately, 84 are very, and only 3 are fully satisfied with them. Those who gave extreme answers think that there is not enough entertainment facility. In addition, young people cannot choose from programmes organized for them.

Regarding their satisfaction with canalization, 25 of them are dissatisfied, 23 are only a little, 189 are moderately, 119 are very and 42 are fully satisfied with it, while 29 people did not have any opinion. Construction of the drainage system was problematic earlier, but today it works well.

The following question was directed to the standards of education in the primary school. 70 people are dissatisfied, 97 are only a little, 126 are moderately, 71 are very and 28 are fully satisfied with the local education. The issue of the primary school has shown a downward tendency in the past 5 years. There are few children; the costs of maintenance are high, so it is not worth keeping it open. First, they chose a cost-saving method merging the schools of Tizzasziget and Újszentiván. Children of the lower primary school attended the school in Újszentiván, while children of the upper primary school went to the school of Tizzasziget, and to realize it they were taken there by a school bus. However, in the past few years all eight grades have been reinitiated in Tizzasziget, and only the lower primary grades stayed in Újszentiván where even less children go now than before.

However, the local kindergarten works without any problem. Majority of residents are satisfied with it, meaning that 3 are dissatisfied, 62 are only a little, 82 are moderately, 142 are very and 81 are fully satisfied with it. Those giving an extreme positive answer think that the new building is beautiful, the atmosphere is friendly and the nannies are nice. Those assessing it negatively are not satisfied with its standards.

The next theme was the local health care which is not relevant now, since the old GP has finished his praxis in the town since our survey (2012), and there is a new doctor instead of him. However, the data refer to the former one.

There are various opinions about the dental care. 8 people are dissatisfied, 95 are only a little, 83 are moderately, 96 are very, 89 are fully satisfied with the care.

The local pharmacy got a very good qualification from the residents, as everybody is satisfied with it at a certain level. Nobody chose the option of dissatisfaction. 51 are satisfied only a little, 113 moderately, 157 very, and 82 people are fully satisfied with the work there. According to the respondents the service there is quick and precise.

People have different opinions about the activities of the local government office. 54 of them do not consider their activities acceptable. 89 are only a little, 103 are moderately, 117 are very and 38 are fully satisfied with the work there.

The next question wanted to find out if they think more local development necessary, and everybody chose the option 'yes'. It means that everybody thinks that it would be good to revive the town, making it more attractive for others.

However, to the question 'Do you find the recent (between 2007-2012) local developments good?' The answer was not so unanimous. So, not everybody agrees with the project which can be concluded from the following answers:

a.) If you agree, why do you so? The majority think that the town will be more attractive for others, it is developing, it serves the residents' interests, it makes a more livable environment possible, and as a result, it creates a more pleasant atmosphere.

b.) If not, why not? Because it would be necessary to put more emphasis on job creation. Showing-off investments do not boost the local economy. The local government opened the newly-built nursery after the time of the survey. The survey included the question which asked if the residents would use it, if they had a child of that age. 353 of the respondents said that they would use it, while 74 would not. The reason for it is that they have somebody (e.g. a grandparent) who can take care of their child, or they just want to stay home with him/her.

In 2012 the bike path which connects Újszentiván and Szőreg was under construction. 371 of the respondents will use it when it is finished, while 56 will not. Most of them will not use it because they travel with some means of public transport or by car or unfortunately, disabled. There are some who cannot ride a bicycle and there are some who do not have a bicycle.

The residential community would like to see more entertainment and sports facilities. They would like the level of primary school education to improve. They think that it is the duty, the responsibility of the local government to invite big enterprises, the capital into the town thus supporting the increase of employment.

316 respondents could imagine living in Újszentiván in their whole life (Ekéné Zamárdi, Illés 2012).

5. SUMMARY

The results of our hypotheses analysis are shown hereby:

1. We think that the people in Újszentiván like living here since the environment is peaceful and quiet. This assumption of ours proved to be true since 93% of the respondents confirmed it. It can be seen from the fact that the proportion of migration is relatively small, people have been living in the settlement for more years. The majority of them have never ever thought of moving to another place, since 74% would like to live here.

2. We assumed that most of the people who come to live here, move to this town because of the cheap way of life, low property prices, and the calm, pleasant environment. This hypothesis has been rejected since 44% of them

moved here for some family issues (they have been living here for more than 10 years), and 39% come for the calm, safe environment.

3. We assumed that the majority of locals appreciate the developments and/or consider them important since they make their environment more liveable, possibly it creates potential workplaces (though temporarily: reconstruction of buildings) thus attracting people to settle here. This hypothesis has been proved in 100%.

4. We assumed that the new bike path would be used by a lot of people as there are many of them who go to work by bicycle, also this way it will be safer to get to Szőreg. It proved to be true since 87% of the respondents said that they would use the bike path. This result reflects the utility and necessity of this development.

As a conclusion, the first hypothesis has proved to be true, the second one has been rejected, the third and the fourth ones have been proved, too. However, it can be concluded from the results that there are a plenty of things to do regarding the settlement.

Job creation would be the first and most important which is a problem not only at settlement but country level, too. It is not only the respondents' but our own opinion is that investments that create new jobs would be put into focus and not the showing-off investments.

References

- Bajmócy Z. *Bevezetés a helyi gazdaságfejlesztésbe*, JATE Press Szegedi Egyetemi Kiadó, Szeged, 2011.
- Csapó T., Lenner T. Székesfehérvár településfejlődése és funkcionális morfológiája. *Településföldrajzi Tanulmányok 4:(ksz.)* pp. 112—131, 2015.
- Czibolya A. *The local brands support for the cultural heritage of Hungary*. Tourism and Durable Development Lucrarile Simpozionului International al Facultatii de Management Turistic si Comercial Timisoara 7-9 Mai 2015 Timisoara ISSN 2286-3125. pp. 112-121. 2015.
- Czibolya A., Lendvai E.: Examination of Foie Gras Consumption Habits. *Analecta Technica Szegedinensia - Review of Faculty of Engineering*, Vol. 9, No. 1. 18-24, 2015.
- Ekéné Zamárdi I., Illés S. Some spatial aspects of ageing in Hungary. *Central European Regional Policy and Human Geography* 2(1) pp. 41-52, 2012.
- Gál J. Informatika az öko-controlling szolgálatában, Magyar Informatikusok II. Világtalálkozója, Budapest, 2000. június 5-8, LSI Informatikai Oktatóközpont, Budapest, 2001, ISBN 963-577-311-0, ISBN I. kötet 963-577-312-9, pp. 421-422.
- Gál J. A Kormányzati Ügyféltájékoztató Központ infologisztikai vizsgálata a lakosság szemszögéből, Agrár- és Vidékfejlesztési Szemle, 2. évf. 2. szám SZTE MGK, Hódmezővásárhely, 2007/2 ISSN 1788-5345, pp. 189-194.

- Hampel Gy. Gondolatok a vállalati információs rendszerekről. *Jelenkori Társadalmi és Gazdasági Folyamatok*. 9:(1-2) pp. 63-70. 2014.
- Hampel Gy., Nagy Elemérné Információs rendszerek a dél-alföldi élelmiszeripari társas vállalkozásokban. *Jelenkori Társadalmi és Gazdasági Folyamatok*. 3. évf. 1. szám pp. 90-99. 2008.
- Illés S. Local economic development and paternalism in Hungary. *Paripex Indian Journal of Research* 3:(2) pp. 122-123, 2014.
- Kempf-Leonard K. Encyclopedia of social Measurement, Volume 2, Elsevier Academic Press, University California, 2005.
- Kis K., Nagy S. A LEADER-megközelítés alkalmazásának tapasztalatai az eredményesség, hatékonyság és fenntarthatóság szemszögéből. *Közép-Európai Közlemények* 5:(2) pp. 159-168, 2012.
- Kocziszly Gy. *Mentholgy of Regional Develpoment*, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, 2009.
- Kovács Z. *Társadalomföldrajzi kislexikon*, Műszaki Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2001.
- Köszegfalvi Gy. *Településfejlesztés és településellátás II. kötet*, Urbanisztika - Infrastruktúra, Kézirat, Budapest, 1983.
- Krajkó Gy., Mészáros R. *Effects of industrialisation ont he economic and social changes in village area ont he South Hungarian Plain*, Department for Economic Greography of A. József University Szeged, Hungary, 1978.
- Málovics É., Kincsesné Vajda B., Farkas G. *Az értékek szerepe az innovációt támogató vezetési kultúrában*. In: Kovács Péter (szerk.): *Gazdasági és társadalmi elemzések és fejlesztési lehetőségek: Az ELI társadalmi, gazdasági megalapozása és multiplikátor hatása*. Budapest: Pátria Nyomda, pp. 213-228, 2015.
- Mason J. *Qualitative researching*, Sage Publication Ltd. Second Edition, London, 2002.
- Molnár P., Marosi T., Gál J., Véha A. Path to business excellence *Innovation and Quality. Review of Faculty of Engineering Analecta Technica Szegedinensia* 6:(1-2) pp. 5-13, 2012.
- Pap N., Tóth J. *Terület és településfejlesztés II.*, Alexandra kiadó, Pécsi Direkt Kft., Pécs, 2006.
- Péti M., Czene Zs., Horkay N., A területfejlesztés (örök?) dilemmái - Vitaindító, *Falu Város Régió Területfejlesztési és területrendezési szakmai folyóirat* 2009/03, VÁTI Nonprofit Kft., Budapest, 2009.
- Simonyi P., *Globális problémák és fenntarthatóság - Az élelmiszerfogyasztás és a fenntarthatóság egyes összefüggései*. In: Kóródi T., Sansumné Molnár J., Siskáné Szilasi B., Dobos E. (szerk.): *VII. Magyar Földrajzi Konferencia Kötet*. Miskolci Egyetem – Földrajz-Geoinformatikai Intézet, Miskolc. 746-756, 2014.
- Süli-Zakar I. *A terület és településfejlesztés alapjai II.*, Dialóg Campus kiadó, Budapest-Pécs 339-340, 2010.

NOTES ON THE AUTHORS

BRIGITTA ZSOTER (Dr. Ph.D.) economist, associate professor; University of Szeged, Faculty of Engineering Department of Economics and Rural Development, Mars ter 7. 6724 Szeged, Hungary; phone: +36 62 546 569; email: zsoterb@mk.u-szeged.hu.

ZORKA SOPSIK: She graduated from the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Szeged, as an agricultural engineer of economy and rural development in 2012. She started her scientific researches under the supervision of Dr. Zsótér Brigitta PhD. She had excellent results at Student Conferences of the Faculty.

CONSTANTIN DAN DUMITRESCU (Prof. Dr. PhD), engineer, University professor, “Politehnica” University of Timișoara, Faculty of Management in Production and Transportation,, Department of Management, Remus str. no.14. Timișoara, Romania, phone: +40721519295, email: danc.dumitrescu@yahoo.ro