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DOKTORI ISKOLA

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The Smallest of the Small – Key Factors in the Success of Tiny
Villages

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1. The Objective of the Doctoral Research

The objective of my doctoral research on the one hand is to confirm or reject the assumptions I made in the hypotheses and, on the other hand, to answer the scientific questions formulated herein with the help of scholarly literature and the research I have carried out. Based on the knowledge and experience I have accumulated and relying upon the findings stemming from the ongoing studying of scholarly literature, I have formulated the following questions:

- What are the forms and components of territorial capital as a complex concept, and how can it be connected to the factors of success? An analysis of the theoretical and primarily foreign scholarly literature provides a good basis and offers a good foundation for answering these questions on the basis of the conceptual systems of immaterial types of capital, territorial capital and territorial success.
- How did the situation and fate of tiny villages¹ evolve during the last few years and decades within the system of settlements in Hungary? How did the function of the villages change concurrently, and what new functions have emerged? What is characteristic of the demographic condition tiny villages nowadays? My goal is to use independent analysis, relevant diagrams and figures to demonstrate real trends prevailing and still effective today. I have had access to a wide scope of Hungarian scholarly literature to compile the data. The latest figures came from the nationwide and county-wide statistical yearbooks and volumes of census issued by the KSH, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.
- What is the condition of tiny villages nowadays? Is the situation really almost completely hopeless? In order to answer this question, I have conducted a situational and functional analysis, focusing on all – approx. 1,109 – tiny villages in existence today, assessing them in an interval between 2001 and 2011.
- Why are there still exceptions, and which tiny villages are the ones that, despite their small size, are still able to progress and function successfully? Specific practical examples from Hungary help to answer these questions, serving as a basis of my conclusions concerning the presence or absence of factors for success of tiny villages.

¹ Tiny villages are categorized as settlements with population between 0 and 499.

- Can such success factors be generalized? And if so, how and in what form can they be described? Are these success factors identical in Hungary's more developed regions and in the tiny villages of the regions lagging behind? Can these factors be depicted by means of a model, which can subsequently be used as a guideline also serving as an example that other small settlements can follow?
- Can we measure success in such small settlements with a population under 500, and if so, how?

2. Hypotheses

I have divided my hypotheses into three topics: first, success and the settlement (Hypotheses 1 and 2); then, success and territorial capital (Hypothesis 3); and finally, an assessment of the relation between success and the tiny villages based on the above (Hypotheses 4 and 5).

- 1) Success can be demonstrated, described and explained as a method for evaluating the development of a settlement (H1).

The scientific literature on the changes of the territorial system, the factors influencing them, and the territoriality of success is extensive (Enyedi 1995, 1996, Rechnitzer 1993, Lengyel 2000, Tímár and Velkey 2003, Mezei 2006, Lukács 2008, Szörényiné 2010, and others). I assume that the introduction of the scientific literature on the success of settlements and rural areas provides a clarification of the factors of success relevant at the level of settlements.

- 2) There is a correlation between the factors of success and the subsystems of the settlement, which can be derived from the system-model of the settlement and thus become measurable (H2).

In my assumption, the success factors of a settlement can be grouped along six topics, which are the determinants of the six settlement subsystems according to the Rechnitzer-Smahó (2011) percept. In fact, I would like to prove that in order to investigate the factors of success in tiny villages and the underlying causalities, the settlements must be considered as subsystems. I shall identify the components and elements of success factors in respect of the settlement subsystems, pointing out the

correlation thereof. The thought process shall assess how the recognized factors of success can be connected to the settlement subsystems and its components. In my assumption, statistically determinable indicators and index numbers can be provided for the various subsystems.

- 3) In the case of the villages the territorial capital factors can also be interpreted and associated with the success factors of this settlement type as well (H3).

I consider the detailed explanation of the complex system of territorial capital and the connection thereof to the success model of a settlement to be of outstanding importance, since in my assumption, the development of the territorial capital of a given area is not entirely a function of the available material resources, but – similarly to the success of the territorial system – also depends on the interconnection of the tangible and intangible elements rooted in the economic and social sphere. Accordingly, the success models of settlements can be described in terms of the territorial capital and can be associated with the hard and soft success factors. In my assumption, the territorial capital factors can consequently be also interpreted in case of settlements and villages, and may be connected to the success factors of the given type of settlement. I consider the demonstration thereof to be important because the condition of the settlement and the territorial processes can in this way be better understood, thus territorial tensions may be relieved since the mapping of the territorial capital and the local potential enables an organized intervention into the system.

- 4) Success can be demonstrated even in the case of tiny villages in Hungary (H4).

In my assumption, the specifically territorial-oriented version of classical market competitiveness does not exclude the inclusion of tiny villages' circle into the studies. Success of settlements and territorial competition can be interpreted and examined on the level of small settlements as well, therefore the territorial success model can also be applied to tiny villages. In order to prove the above position, a number of Hungarian tiny villages and small villages, showing progress and success in the recent years, will be examined through the methods of press analysis and literature research, with a view to testing the model in tiny villages. The testing of the model may lead to the assumption that the number of success factors may be

extended in case of tiny villages, while certain success factors previously included in the original concept will be discarded.

- 5) In more developed western regions more innovation reaches the phase of implementation, therefore functional changes occur more rapidly than in tiny villages located in peripheral areas (H5).

In my assumption dynamic areas, such as the western developed region and its settlements, are able to adapt to new circumstances and changes more rapidly, there is more innovation as well; consequently, the changes of functions are also more rapid, thus the transformation of success factors of tiny villages also comes about faster. In tiny villages located on the peripheries of the country this happens more slowly, and such rapid changes, affecting the alteration of functions of villages, are absent.

3. Timeliness of the Subject of Research

In my doctoral dissertation I am researching the success of small settlements and especially tiny villages herein. The situation of villages and tiny villages is always a timely topic, since the support of underdeveloped homesteads and villages or more developed settlements is a constantly recurring dilemma of regional politics. The issue currently is all the more relevant, since we are facing the new European planning period for 2014-2020, when the determination of priorities for funding is becoming crucially important. In the course of the preparations for the planning period, the strategic evaluation and planning of the different sectors and domains is becoming to the forefront of attention.

The sectors most sensitive with regard to economic and social development are therefore of essence, while the situation of rural areas and villages, where community innovation may be key to survival and competitiveness, is of outstanding importance. The emergence of the so-called “place-based” approach can also be traced back to the international experiences of the last twenty years, which has also brought about an increase in importance of local resources. According to the new European Union development policy paradigm – which is explained in details in the Barca Document, one of the basic papers of the European debate on the future of the union’s cohesion policies –, the appropriate territorial unit for regional development is the local level, the functional region. The

development policy interventions must be shaped to match the local circumstances, with solutions tailored to the particular regions (Barca 2009).

As opposed to the focus of traditional research carried out previously, generally concerned with the disadvantageous situation of tiny villages and the underlying causes, I am rather interested in the new opportunities they may be faced with. Inverting the approach of foregoing research, I focused mine on success instead of failures and, although the number of such good examples is rather small, I have still chosen those tiny villages as the subject of my research that are able to showcase progress and success.

The methods I applied in the analysis of these villages were not traditional either, but were rather using the newly emerged and fashionable concepts of territorial capital and success, willingly preferred and embraced by researchers. The novelty of these concepts lies not only in their recent appearance, but also in the fact that they have not been applied so far to rural areas and small settlements, and also not to tiny villages. Although it is not precluded content-wise to interpret these concepts when applied to small settlements, up until now they have predominantly been applied and assessed in respect of towns, larger cities and metropolitan areas only.

In my doctoral dissertation I will set out the complex meaning of territorial capital and assess its elements and components. This will be followed by interpreting success, as a category of development and quality of life, moreover, the analysis of the territoriality of success and its appearance in the countryside, and as part of this the success of settlements and villages. I will also examine the correlations between the concepts of territorial capital and settlement success.

A further relevance of the dissertation is that a model for success and territorial capital will be drawn up by means of the above mentioned concepts, setting forth the hard and soft factors and means thereof. I will then present their characteristics, theoretical background and the potential domains of their practical application.

Based on the delineated success model, I will analyse and categorize the tiny villages considered to be successful in Hungary with the help of press analysis, after that some tiny villages will be empirically analyzed in the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg. I consider it important to sample settlements from the two extremities of Hungary for the purpose of comparison, i.e. the central region showing western-type of development, and the disadvantageous north-eastern part of the country, with a view to examining the similarity and differences of their success factors. My ultimate goal was to establish a success model that could equally serve as an example for tiny villages in

developed and less developed regions of Hungary. Up to now, none of the analyses of tiny villages in Hungary has had the objective of revealing the success factors of small settlements and their correlation to territorial capital.

4. Methodology

The research I carried out in the course of writing the dissertation was based on the following methodological foundations:

- 1) Analyses of the domestic and international pool of scholarly literature pertaining to the following themes:
 - definition and characteristics of territorial competitiveness and success,
 - linking the factors of territorial capital and territorial success,
 - determining success for small settlements,
 - providing the definition of a village and presentation of the general demographic situation of villages,
 - assessing the situation of tiny villages in Hungary and outlining the changes of village functions in a historical dimension,
 - providing an exact definition of the concept of a tiny village,
 - presenting the various types of villages in Hungary.

The domestic and international scholarly literature served as a basis for compiling the theoretical parts of this thesis. Although the concepts of regional and territorial competitiveness and success have often been researched in Hungary, yet such research has not specialized in rural areas, settlements and small settlements. Fortunately, a number of relevant pieces of literature has appeared during the last one and a half decade, including the works of *Ferenc Bódi and Antal Böhm (2000)*, *Cecília Mezei (2006)*, *Katalin Kovács (2008)*, *Ferenc Glatz (2010)*, *János Rechnitzer (2010)*, and *Irén Kukorelli Szörényiné (2010)*.

I have also used the concept of territorial capital in my work. I assume that the territorial capital factors can also be interpreted in the case of villages and connected to the success factors of this particular type of settlement. Furthermore, territorial success triggers the activation and, through synergetic processes, the generation of territorial capital elements

The “basic” literature regarding the concept of territorial capital is currently emerging on the international level, the greatest challenge, however, was finding the literature in line with my own research concept, like the publications of *Rudolf Giffinger* (2007), *Roberto Camagni* (2008), *Roberta Capello* (2005 and 2009).

A wide range of domestic studies and secondary literature pertaining to the system of settlements, villages and tiny villages, their classification and development was elaborated; *Péter Bajmócy and András Balogh* (2002), *József Kóródi* (2004), *Tibor Kovács* (2004), *Pál Beluszky and Tamás T. Sikos* (2007), *Katalin Kovács* (2008), *Mónika Váradi, ed.* (2008), and *Éva G. Fekete* (2009) have provided in depth elaborations of the topic. I took several points of view into consideration for my own definition of tiny village, finally choosing the concept I considered most appropriate, one also used in the course of research by the KSH. On the basis of elaborating the literature, I developed my definition for settlement success regarding tiny villages, which proved to be a useful guideline for the subsequent research, helping the separation of elements seemingly comprising local success, however not belonging there. I examined the results of numerous domestic efforts to typify villages and their methodologies, a number of which is presented herein, with some others being incorporated in my own empirical research.

2) The Analysis of the Scholarly Literature and the Press

- examples of success of settlements in domestic scholarly literature,
- examples of success of small settlements in the domestic press.

The analysis of the domestic literature and press formed an important part of establishing a model describing the success of tiny villages, setting up the definition of success and, subsequently, carrying out the testing. I searched out nationwide and then county-wide media coverage on successful tiny villages in Hungary, both in print and electronic media, as well as on television, radio and relevant documentaries. These sources then constituted one of the bases and starting points of the research for the purpose of the interviews.

3) The Analysis of the KSH data:

- National statistical yearbooks (2001-2011),
- County statistical yearbooks (2001-2011),
- KSH census data (2001 and 2011).

Using and elaborating the data from national and county statistical yearbooks, I carried out a functional analysis of 1,109 tiny villages in Hungary in 2011, and compared the results

with the data from 2001. As a part of my independent research, I established timelines depicting the changes in the number, demography and functions of tiny villages in Hungary.

- 4) The observation of participants, interviews in depth and discussions with focus groups.

Questions that could not be answered by statistical data, were answered by observing the participants, were asked during the interviews in depth and discussions with focus groups, defining the following criteria:

- the settlements examined were located in Győr-Moson-Sopron and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties,
- I determined the size of the sample to comprise 10 tiny villages²,
- I raised the questions to mayors of the tiny villages, the rural development professionals of the municipalities, the leaders of civil organizations and foundations, the entrepreneurs of the village and members of the local community.

The most significant result of the research was the assessment through the interviews, providing unique information on the factors of success of tiny villages in Hungary and especially in Győr-Moson-Sopron and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties. The research was conducted between January 2012 and June 2013.

The purpose of the research is to discover the attitudes, opinions, views, vision and personal characteristics of the target group. Furthermore, the research focuses on assessing the actions of the target group, exploring the relations between the mayor, the members of the local government, the leaders of foundations and civil organizations, the entrepreneurs and the local population, moreover on analysing the community life of the villages. It was essential to do primary collection of information, also with a view to understand their position on the situation of the settlement and their way of thinking about, and attitude to cooperation. I extended primary research adding the observations of participants and joined in into the daily life of the village, taking part in local events (village festivities, celebrations of the elderly and local festivals). In addition to the methods described earlier,

² Seven settlements were in Győr-Moson-Sopron County and three in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County.

I also extended the research method to include interviews with focus groups, which was to be used draw up a map of the social and historical characteristics of the settlement, as well as its current situation.

The first step of the research was the selection of the settlements along the following criteria: they had to be located in Győr-Moson-Sopron County, with a population under 500 inhabitants. There were two exceptions in Győr-Moson-Sopron, Lipót, with a population of 675 and Mecsér with 589³ inhabitants. There were two exceptions in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county as well, Rozsály, with 751 inhabitants and Túristvándi with 660⁴. This demographic limit was due to the purpose of the research, which was precisely to examine in detail the success factors of the smallest units of the settlement system, i.e. the tiny villages. On the other hand I also found it justified to examine some settlements with a population between 500 and 999⁵ because during my research it became clear that this settlement type was endangered and could very quickly slide down into the category of settlements with less than 500 inhabitants.

Selection criteria of outstanding importance for tiny villages in Győr-Moson-Sopron County included:

- proximity to the western border (Hövej and Dénesfa),
- building on traditions (Hövej),
- the presence of tourism (Lipót),
- village with a history of being a part of an agglomeration (Mecsér and Répceszemere),
- one settlement participating in the START employment program (Rábaszentmihály),
- one village with a population under 250 (Rábcaakapi).

I selected Győr-Moson-Sopron County because:

- I was looking for dynamically developing tiny villages located in the central region,

³ Based on KSH census data from 2011.

⁴ Based on KSH census data from 2011.

⁵ Small villages are categorized as settlements with population between 500 and 999.

- I wanted examples where an intensive symbiosis between the tiny village and a large city could be observed, because I was interested in the potential spreading success to the tiny village near large cities,
- settlements where border-proximity played a role,
- where the region features western development.

For my dissertation, I deliberately sought out tiny villages and examples of success from a developed central region, from a successful area, and from the vicinity of a large town. I wanted to know if there were any tiny villages that were able to take advantage of being situated this way and of the opportunities that such a condition provided. Simply put, I was looking for success amid success.

On the other hand, I consciously selected as the focus of my research a disadvantaged region, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County. I wanted to know how much different the factors of success for tiny villages were in this area compared with those of settlements located in more developed regions, i.e. to what extent does geographic location determine the success of a small settlement and to what extent can those success factors be generalized. My goal was to compare the success factors of tiny villages in the central region and the periphery. Furthermore, I considered it important that the selected villages be in the focus of the media with their activities, progress, future plans and concepts. Ethnic composition was not taken into consideration in making the selections.

A total of 46 individual and 7 focus group interviews were made. *Table 1* shows the summary of number of interviews.

Table 1: The Numbers of Those Interviewed in Tiny Villages

Individuals/Villages	Dénesfa	Lipót	Hövej	Mecsér	Rábca kapi	Rábaszentmihály	Répceszemere	Rozsály	Zajta	Túristvándi
Mayor	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Members of Local Government	2	1	1			1		2	2	1
Businessmen	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1		2
Local Inhabitants	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
Civic Organizations Foundations		1						1	1	
Number of Interviews (in 10 villages)	5	5	4	3	4	4	3	7	6	5
Total Number of Individual Interviews						46				
Focus Groups	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	1
Total Focus Group Interviews						7				

Source: own compilation

5. Evaluation of the Hypotheses, New Results

I carried out a wide-ranging study of the secondary literature and empirical research in order to test the five hypotheses that I posited at the beginning of my dissertation. My hypotheses focused on identifying the factors that determined success for tiny villages in Hungary, and my predication were based on my knowledge stemming from the scientific literature and my previous research experience.

In hypothesis 1 I stated that success, as an evaluation method depicting the development of a settlement, can be presented, described and analysed by certain factors (H1).

This hypothesis has been clearly confirmed, using domestic scholarly literature and rural and settlement success theories as evidence. With the help of these theories, I collected the factors of success, which I organized and categorized to be depicted in a settlement success model. The hard and soft factors of success were defined in the model, upon which tools were assigned to them, followed by determining the ultimate purpose of success. On that basis, I confirm the predication that the factors of success can be identified and described.

According to hypothesis 2, a correlation exists between the factors of success and the subsystems of the settlement, which can be derived from the system model of the settlement (H2).

I chose the system model of Rechnitzer-Smahó (2011) to confirm this hypothesis. I have proven that in order to investigate the underlying causalities of success, the settlements must be considered as subsystems. I divided the success factors measurable by statistical data into six thematic categories, which are the determinants of Rechnitzer-Smahó's (2011) six settlement subsystems. I then assigned conceivable and statistically collectable indicators to each of the subsystems. Through the categorization of the latest statistical data, the above mentioned indicators made the factors of success measurable. Those questions of mine that could not be answered on the basis of the statistical data, were posed in the course of interviews and focus group discussions in the tiny villages, inquiring the mayors, local entrepreneurs and inhabitants on the spot.

In hypothesis 3 I posited that the factors of territorial capital are also conceivable in case of villages and can be associated with the success factors of this settlement type (H3).

I have proven my hypothesis by examining in detail, on the basis of the domestic and foreign professional literature, the appearance of new types of immaterial capital, and specifically the latest one, the concept of territorial capital, its components and its complexity. My assumption was that the development of the territorial capital of an area, similarly to the success of the territorial system, does not depend entirely on the material resources, but also depends on the interconnection of the tangible and intangible elements rooted in the economic and social sphere. I have confirmed that the concepts of territorial success and territorial capital are converging, and that their factors are interchangeable. I depicted the success model of settlements through territorial capital factors by assigning them to hard and soft success factors. I thus proved, that the factors of territorial capital are also conceivable in case of villages and can be associated with the success factors of this settlement type.

Hypothesis 4 posited that success can also be demonstrated in case of tiny villages in Hungary (H4).

The hypothesis came to be confirmed in several steps and through the process of creating a model. The success factors of settlements and rural areas, introduced in chapter 1, were depicted in a settlement success model. This model of success was further elaborated in chapter 4, using the methods of press analysis and research of literature to examine Hungarian tiny villages showing progress and achieving success during the last few years, thus testing my model in those tiny villages. The testing of the model revealed, that the success model for settlements can be applied to tiny villages as well, and that the factors of success can be extended in case of tiny villages. Consequently, using the example of small settlements, I customized the model in chapter 4, and re-categorized the factors influencing the success of tiny villages. In chapter 5 upon the empirical study of the tiny villages in Győr-Moson-Sopron and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties it was proven that the ultimate purpose of my success model for tiny villages, originally set forth in chapter 4, i.e. good quality of life and sustainability was valid. A large part of the factors influencing success also appeared to be confirmed. Nonetheless, since a significant factor, essentially affecting the success of small settlements, appeared in the model - which factor was not entirely new, but included among those already mentioned -, it had to be modified accordingly. My final model therefore was based on a perspective different from the one I had originally

started from, and which model was subsequently continuously amended. This model focused on the leader of the settlement, that is the mayor, with the hard and soft factors defined in my original model and the instruments for implementing them branching out from here. It was proven that the success factors for tiny villages in the developed central region of Hungary, Győr-Moson-Sopron County and for tiny villages in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, one of the most disadvantaged regions in the country are in many ways identical and can be drawn up in the same model. Hypothesis 4 was thus also adopted.

In hypothesis 5 I posited that in the more developed western regions a higher number of innovations reach the phase of implementation, therefore functional changes occur more rapidly than in tiny villages located in peripheral areas (H5).

In order to prove this hypothesis, I examined in detail the current and past functions of tiny villages in Hungary and evaluated the changes thereupon. In my success model for tiny villages, I included the development of new or potential economic activities and functions as separate success factors.

Examination of the tiny villages in Győr-Moson-Sopron and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties clearly proved that the appearance of new innovations largely determined the success of small settlements. I demonstrated that the introduction of innovations was highly present in the tiny villages of both regions. The types of innovations, however, were different in the two regions, a fact which further influenced the changing of functions.

The appearance of tourism, services and ecological functions was typical in case of settlements in Győr-Moson-Sopron, because they were located in a more dynamic and developed western region, and the settlements could adapt faster to the changes generated or transmitted by the central region. Innovation and impulses connected to the central region are different in the more developed areas, therefore functional changes and the transformation of the success factors of tiny villages are implemented faster.

It can be concluded that the appearance and spread of innovations in the successful settlements of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County were also highly characteristic, the type of innovations, however, were different from those of the developed areas.

This in part is due to the fact that the villages are relatively isolated and are distant from larger towns. The local communities are more resistant to the impacts of the outer world. They are far from the central areas of large cities, and the social cohesion and respect of traditions of the local inhabitants is stronger. In this region farming settlements are typical, and the segmentation of occupations is less apparent. In Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County

novel activities were triggered by returning to self-sufficiency and agriculture, generating innovation and new economic activities thereby. Simultaneously, these tiny villages also serve as examples of how up-to-date innovations rooted in traditions and legacy can be in the modern world. In addition, tourism appears increasingly as a new type of economic activity. Through examining more and less developed regions of the country, it turned out that tourism and services as functions appeared earlier in the western part of the country than in the settlements of the northeast, where these types of novel economic activities and initiatives appeared during the last few years only. Consequently, the emergence of new functions was slower in the settlements of the peripheral Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, since functions connected to traditional agriculture (e.g. self-sufficiency) were the ones having a renaissance.

Based on these observations, the first part of hypothesis 5 was rejected, while the second part was confirmed.

The *novel scientific results* of this thesis are related to the evaluation of the professional literature, on the one hand, and to empirical research on the other. Please find a summary of the above below.

The most significant and novel outcome of my dissertation is that this thesis is the first study with an in-depth focus on the issue of the success of tiny villages. Most of the latest studies on tiny villages (Bajmóczy and Balogh 2002, Ignits and Kapitány 2007, Beluszky and Sikos 2007, Kovács 2008, Váradi ed. 2008, G. Fekete 2009) centered around the negative trends characterizing tiny villages, and elaborated on the underlying causes and consequences of their demographic erosion, loss of functions and insufficiency of their institutions.

In my dissertation I placed the emphasis on the introduction of a new perspective, and have researched the success of tiny villages.

In contrast to earlier traditional studies, which were generally concerned with the disadvantaged situation of tiny villages and the causes thereof, I was eager to understand what new opportunities they were faced with. Breaking with previous approaches, I focused my research on success instead of failure, with specifically those tiny villages in the forefront of my attention, that could showcase progress and success.

My research has pointed out that elements of success and a potential for territorial capital can be identified even in the smallest settlements and tiny villages. In order to investigate these, I created a success model specifically applicable to tiny villages, defining and

categorizing the hard and soft elements and tools of success. With a view to specifically defining factors of success, the instruments and means of development were also identified. In the process of depicting the success of tiny villages, the following new interim results also emerged:

- I interpreted the complex concept of territorial capital within the context of territorial success, substituting the elements of the former into the concept of success factors,
- I evaluated the territoriality of success, its forms of appearance in rural areas and, within that, in settlements and tiny villages,
- I categorized and updated the latest demographic and macro- statistical data in respect of all tiny villages – some 1,109 settlements –, and carried out their status and functional analyses based on 2001 to 2011 figures,
- I tested the applicability and functioning of the settlement success model on tiny villages in Hungary,
- I derived and defined the new concept of success regarding small villages, and included the common success factors of tiny villages into a model.

Another novel finding showed that the success factors of tiny villages located on two opposite poles of country, seemingly in contradiction, may be depicted and presented in the very same model. The success factors of tiny villages located in the developed central region County of Győr-Moson-Sopron and those of tiny villages in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, one of Hungary's most disadvantageous regions, show similarities from several aspects.

In both regions it became clear that the simultaneous presence and synergic effect of factors previously defined as soft, such as human capital, natural capital, social capital, etc. in particular, are indispensable for success.

We also learned that the effects of human resources had a greater impact in the less developed Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County than in Győr-Moson-Sopron County. In both regions the mayors play a crucial role in the success of tiny villages; it became evident that they are the ones who generate, promote and implement innovations in both counties. The personality, commitment and innovation focus of the leader of the settlement appeared to be more significant in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County than in the villages of the more developed central region.

While one can differentiate various types of attitude of the mayors of Győr-Moson-Sopron County, e.g. entrepreneur, great planner, committed, community-minded mayors, the mayors in the selected villages of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County were all characteristically managerial types.

The interests and interest relations of the mayors of the settlements in Győr-Moson-Sopron County demonstrated a strong link to the territorial capital of the village, which the mayors linked to their own business interests through establishing enterprises. It was interesting to note that while the leaders of the settlements of Győr-Moson-Sopron County operated family businesses alongside their careers as mayors, the leaders in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County organized their friends and family members around their offices and in the interests of the village.

The appearance of innovations and new economic activities was also characteristic in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, which, however, were predominantly not related tourism, but rather to traditions and activities for self-sufficiency. In these villages the social cohesion of the local population and the cling to traditions was more accented, consequently the role of civil organizations, foundations and associations was stronger.

Examination of the success of tiny villages in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County showed that success could generate a multiplying effect as well. That is, the impact of soft, human factors in these tiny villages is so powerful that success, as innovation, could spread from the inside outward. I quoted the settlement of Zajta as an example, which considers Rozsály as a model to emulate and launches initiatives which have already been successfully implemented in the model village and have been successfully integrated into its development.

6. Conclusion on the Success of Tiny Villages

My doctoral thesis fundamentally had three main goals: first, it intended to introduce territorial success and the associated conceptual systems, e.g. village and rural success, as well as its correlations to the complex concept of territorial capital. Second, I wished to analyse the current situation of Hungarian tiny villages by means of listing and categorizing the latest statistical data and timeline, in addition to completing a functional analysis of all small settlements in Hungary. Third, my goal was to establish a success model applicable to tiny villages and to describe, by means of secondary and empirical research, the hard and soft success factors and instruments determining the successes of small settlements. This was to prove that there are a number of tiny villages in Hungary that are successful and can show progress, contrary to the general situation of small settlements. These success stories can be modelled and used as examples by other small settlements.

In the theoretical part of the thesis (Chapter 2), I introduced and explained the complex concept of territorial capital, examining the elements thereof. This was followed by the interpretation of success as a category of development and quality of life and the analysis of the territorial nature of success, with its forms of appearance in the countryside, including the success of settlements and villages. I also touched upon the correlations between the conceptual systems of territorial capital and settlement success.

I formulated a conceptualized settlement success model and defined its hard and soft factors and instruments. I explained their characteristics, theoretical background and the potential fields of practical application.

In the second part of the theoretical section (Chapter 3) analysis of secondary literature was used as a means to provide the definition of villages with a description of their general demographic situation, a historical analysis of the transformation of village functions with a constant focus on the situation and changing functions of tiny villages, followed by an analysis of new village functions. I reviewed the village typologies published so far and provided a chronological and methodological overview and categorization thereof. I then provided a precise definition of the concept of a tiny village and described their locations within the country; I analysed timelines and maps regarding demographic changes and the

evolution of the number settlements. I carried out a status assessment with the help of the latest census data from 2001 to 2011.

I carried out individual research covering all, approximately 1,109 tiny villages in Hungary by examining their functions, the changes and the dynamics thereof between 2001 and 2011 through functional analysis.

In chapter 4 I carried out the testing of the applicability of the success model on tiny villages considered to be successful in Hungary. I carried out research of some half dozen settlements through the analysis of literature and the press. The experience I gained from the research revealed that the settlement success model had to be modified for tiny villages, thus an amended newly prepared success model was developed for tiny villages.

In chapter 5 I completed the empirical assessment, that is, the testing of the settlement model for tiny villages in Győr-Moson-Sopron and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties. In order to establish a measurement model I employed the Rechnitzer-Smahó (2011) type of settlement subsystems and followed the numerical indices determined therein. The statistical data assigned did not prove to be sufficient despite the careful research, and did not provide enough appropriate information on the situation of the small villages. The use of the model therefore had to be complemented by an interview-based methodology.

I first examined seven tiny villages in Győr-Moson-Sopron County through the methodology of observation, focus group discussion and interviews. As a result of my empirical research, I could identify the success factors in the individual villages and the extent to which such factors influenced the success of the given settlement. I examined three villages in depth and developed their customized success model. I then briefly described the success factors of the four other tiny villages. This was followed by the empirical examination of three tiny villages located in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, since I considered it important to point out the success factors of tiny villages demonstrating success on the basis of the media analysis, however, located on the periphery, identifying the similarities, differences or modifications of such. I displayed the results of my research in this area in the form of case studies as well, and depicted them in models. Although the research did not constitute a representative sample, it can be established in general that the model I developed for tiny villages does work in practice.

7. Current Problems Formulated During the Research, Deficiencies, Recommendations

I would herein like to demonstrate the problems and deficiencies I encountered in my research, approaching them from an economic and social perspective:

- In tiny villages the social and demographical problems are jointly presented.
- Based on the result of situational survey it can be stated, that the current status of tiny villages are still unpreferable compare to the countries average in terms of aging, migration, social situation, education and unemployment as well.
- The geographical location of tiny villages has not changed in the past 40 years, those territorial specificity can be clearly described also for the future.
- Tiny villages lost quite a significant number of functions in the last few decades. Most of them can not provide for their inhabitants other alternative employment opportunities and institutional coverage out of agriculture and tourism.
- Decision makers and masters of regional policy regard and treat them as problems exclusively, and at best they consider transformation into a resort village as the only feasible solution (G. Fekete 2009).
- The tiny villages are not able to thrive on their own, since they often lack the motivation, the necessary information and the liquid resources, while their ability to promote their interests and/or form alliances is also weak.
- The availability and use of the various agricultural work programs and public employment projects is of essence regarding the self-preservation of tiny villages, in the absence of which the system would not be sustainable in the beginning.
- These villages are usually offering programs and actions to settle new inhabitants there, although they can not always reach their original target with it. From one side it can be described with missing attraction power of these settlements. In case of arrival of new inhabitants, they are mostly disadvantaged people, who can not keep themselves alive in another place.

I also set forth *recommendations* for the development and successful functioning of tiny villages, as well as the necessary instruments:

- I believe that an integrated “attack” on several fronts should be implemented with a view to strengthen the human factors, preserve the quality of the environment and establish the foundations of the economy.
- Human factor proved to be the most essential success factor in the success model, therefore I consider the selection of the local leadership of tiny villages and the sustainability of its functioning to be of primary importance.
- I concluded that special attention has to be paid to exploring the specific advantages of tiny villages, with emphasis on the precise identification of their territorial potential and territorial capital, moreover on the development of a long-term strategy relying thereon.
- Ensuring local employment based on the above local resources may constitute the solution for the tiny villages.
- Revert to traditional agriculture, production and sale of locally processed goods, creation of a local market and self-sufficient farming may have additional potential.
- There are particularly sensitive areas for development in small settlements, e.g. tourism, development capacities, the exploitation and preservation of environmental and cultural values, also made available for the public.
- Influx of innovation to tiny villages shall be promoted by means of exploring the external initiators and helpers, using internal assessment and identifying local capabilities.
- The dissertation revealed the importance of promoting the adoption of good practices as a means to advance progress in tiny villages, moreover to introduce and implement innovations.
- I therefore consider the popularization of good practices to be very important, along with the development of professional methodological support networks assisting wider adoption and implementation of such good examples.
- The budgets of tiny villages are insufficient to fund new investments or eventual implementation of new ideas and innovations, therefore active participation in national and European Union grants schemes is of key importance.
- Thinking in terms of networks and establishing relations with cities and neighbouring settlements is indispensable both in terms of market creation and as regards implementation of new functions or local business activities.

- The preservation, cultivation and display of traditions is equally important for the preservation of the local community and for eventual strengthening of the tourism function.
- Settlement marketing, positive image and promotion of interest of key importance.
- The strengthening of public work and agricultural programs and the creation of such programs tailored to tiny villages is advisable.
- The education of the local society, incentives to promote the settling down of educated youth and strengthening local communities require special attention.
- Sustainable grow this particularly important in case tiny villages, both regarding natural and cultural values, and economic considerations and human factors.

8. Areas for Future Research

Based on a wide pool of literature I investigated a small slice of the materialization of territorial success, i.e. the situation of tiny villages in Hungary and the components of their success. Several ideas and potential directions of research came into mind in the course of the research already, which could further extend and deepen the knowledge obtained on the success factors of tiny villages in Hungary.

Possible directions for future research may include:

- As described in the dissertation, sustainability of success depends on individuals, i.e. the mayor is at the centre. An important area for future research could be the examination of the scenario where the mayor drops out from the model, posing the question whether the system would collapse as well, or whether the other success factors of the model are strong enough to ensure the sustainability even without the human factor?
- The research made it clear that sustainability is indeed a problem for tiny villages, similarly to the change of generations in case of SMEs, where the next generation, that is, the son of the entrepreneur does not wish to run the business, putting the future of the firm at risk. These are the so-called “gazelle” firms, which developed fast and became successful very quickly. Does the same rule apply to “gazelle” tiny villages as well? I would recommend a representative research on this topic among the tiny villages using interviews and questionnaires methodology-wise.
- Further interesting topic of research might include a more detailed investigation and categorization of the personalities of settlement leaders.
- Additional research could focus on a more in depth understanding of the mayors’ interests and the intertwining of personal and settlement interests.
- Research of successful tiny villages abroad, especially in other European countries, assessing their factors of success.
- The development of a success index providing a more detailed and specific description of the factors for the success of a given settlement, offering numeric indicators as well.

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