

**EXAMINATION OF THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM IN THE SETTLEMENTS OF LAKE VELENCE**
A TURIZMUS ÉS A TERÜLETFEJLESZTÉS ÖSSZEFÜGGÉSEINEK VIZSGÁLATA A
VELENCEI-TÓNÁL

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Összefoglalás

Az elmúlt néhány évben számos olyan fejlesztés történt a Velencei-tó településein, ami a jövőben megalapozhatja a település turizmusát. A turizmust azonban a gazdaság többi ágazata nélkül nem lehet hatékonyan fejleszteni, ezért meg kell találni a kapcsolódási pontokat. Tanulmányomban a turizmus és területfejlesztés összefüggéseit vizsgálom ebben a kicsi, de mégis komplex területi egységben. A kutatási eredmények gyakorlati hasznosíthatóságát a vizsgált települések fejlesztésében érintett valamennyi cég, szervezet, vagy döntéshozó szempontjából is fontosnak tartom.

Abstract

Numerous improvements have been made in the settlements of Lake Velence over the last few years, which will lay a good foundation for the tourism of Lake Velence in the future. The tourism industry cannot be effectively developed without developing other sectors of the economy, so links should be found. In my study I analyse the connection between tourism and regional development in the settlements of Lake Velence, in this this small, although complex territory. The results obtained during the research can contribute to the creation of the future development concept.

Keywords: regional and tourism development, Lake Velence

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Introduction

In the tourism of Lake Velence – which belonged to one of the most successfully developed holiday resorts in the 1980s – there has been a notable decline due to the fewer guest-nights, the less average time of staying, the setback of camping tourism, which had been flourishing since the 1960s and the continuously deteriorating conditions of tourism infrastructure.

Several institutions, the local government and businesses deal with the problems of this region. In recent years the role of local developments has grown, as bigger local investments and the activity of TDM associations show.

Aims, methods, sources

The aim of this study is to introduce the connection between tourism and regional development in the settlements of Lake Velence. I consider the practical use of the research results in the development of the examined settlements important from the point of view of every company,

association, or decision-maker. In my opinion, the efficient operation of townships can have a big influence on the settlements of Lake Velence, so this research discusses the settlements of Gárdony township, with emphasis on those seven settlements – Gárdony, Kápolnásnyék, Nadap, Pákozd, Pázmánd, Sukoró, Velence – which have obvious tourism functions as for accommodation of commercial and private and guest turnover.

The use of references and statistics data formed the basis of my research, with special attention to KSH and TeIR sources. For analysing the demographic and economic processes I used the Geomarket GIS software.

This study covers the following, considering the meeting points of tourism and regional development in settlements at Lake Velence:

- Analysing the migration in the settlements of Lake Velence is important when we want to examine the relationship between regional development and tourism. This migration has a considerable impact on the local settlement structure and society as well as on local economy and tourism.
- Due to the results of the system-theoretical research, I consider tourism a complex, intersector and an open system, so I examined the possibilities between the economic functions of Gárdony township settlements and also the co-operation of tourism and other branches.
- Given that the determining function of the settlements at the Lake is tourism, the tourism suprastructure and seasonality probably influence the whole local economy. The small retailers outnumber the bigger businesses in this area. These enterprises are very sensitive to economic changes and processes, so I relied on their experiences and impressions when examining the settlements at Lake Velence, the operation of their local economy, its state and the possible development. I carried out my research in questionnaires with retailers of the Lake in towns like Gárdony, Velence, Sukoró, Pákozd and Kápolnásnyék, which is closely connected to Velence. I enquired 60 owners of retailer units including ones that deal with hospitality. According to TeIR database, the number of shops in the above-mentioned 5 settlements is shown as follows:

Type of shop	The number of shops
Retailers	300
Restaurant and buffet	180
Groceries	10
Bottled-drink shop	10
Sports shop	15
Confectionary	28
Bookshop	1
Clothes shop	19
Household shop	12
Total	592

Table 1. Type and number of retailers in the settlements of Lake Velence.

Source: private editing according to TeIR data.

The statistics shows that the examined retailer units are of a total of 592, from which the 60-person, over 10 percent sampling lead to a representative, reliable result. The 60 questionnaires were completed in the presence of shopkeepers and owners. The survey contained 12 questions about local economy, the retailers' connections, and the state and influence of tourism. This research took place between 16 July and 9 August, on weekdays, weekends and bank holidays, in the main tourism season.

During this research I interviewed those persons and enterprises who determine the economic development of the settlements of Lake Velence.

The status of Lake Velence settlements and the role of regional development in the view of specialist literature

The biggest settlement of Lake Velence is Gárdony, which gained the town rank in 1989. The "Capital of Lake Velence" consists of three settlements: Agárd, which has been a special holiday resort from the 1930s; and Dinnyés, which lies at the junction of Dinnyés-Kajtor canal. Gárdony belongs to those 9 town ranked settlements in Hungary whose "leading and only function is tourism (this is 4.5 % of our towns)" (Beluszky, 2003: 424) The originally agriculturally functioning towns, Gárdony and Agárd, became towns due to tourism. The appearance of tourism reformed not only the face of these towns but also their economical structure. Gárdony, as a holiday resort, is a dynamic element of Hungarian towns, the number of entrepreneurs is high here, the number of population is growing, the town's role is gradually more and more important. (Beluszky, 2003).

The other significant settlement in Gárdony township is Velence, which was declared to be a town in 2004. To gain this rank, the settlement's tourism function played an important role. The specialist literature claims that Velence has few "town-like" features on the basis of its role in the settlement system and its functions as a town, as well as its visual appearance. (Beluszky – Győri, 2006). When discussing the tourism role of Lake Velence, we have to mention that among the most important holiday resorts Lake Velence has the fewest settlements. (Aubert, 2011) Suburbanization and the growing importance of tourism have changed the size and structure of the towns at Lake Velence. The built-in territories of the settlements are linked up today. (Tamáska, 2006)

Many authors working in the field of tourism and regional development emphasise that tourism can play an outstanding role in local and regional development. Without proper terms and conditions it is impossible to make tourism and generate tourism income in every settlement but "with the help of tourism those resources can be used that would be neglected anyway" (Lengyel, 2004: 59), so when elaborating the development concepts, the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in the given settlement should be taken into consideration. The meeting points of different types of tourism and agriculture are well known today, however this type of development can be efficient only with proper infrastructure. (Lengyel, 2004). When examining the relationship between tourism and local employment, creating workplaces can be possible only if we take the economic, social and environmental conditions into account, as well as considering the labour market.

Results

The relationship between population change, economy and tourism

I examined the population change in Gárdony township with the help of TeIR data and Geomarket GIS software.

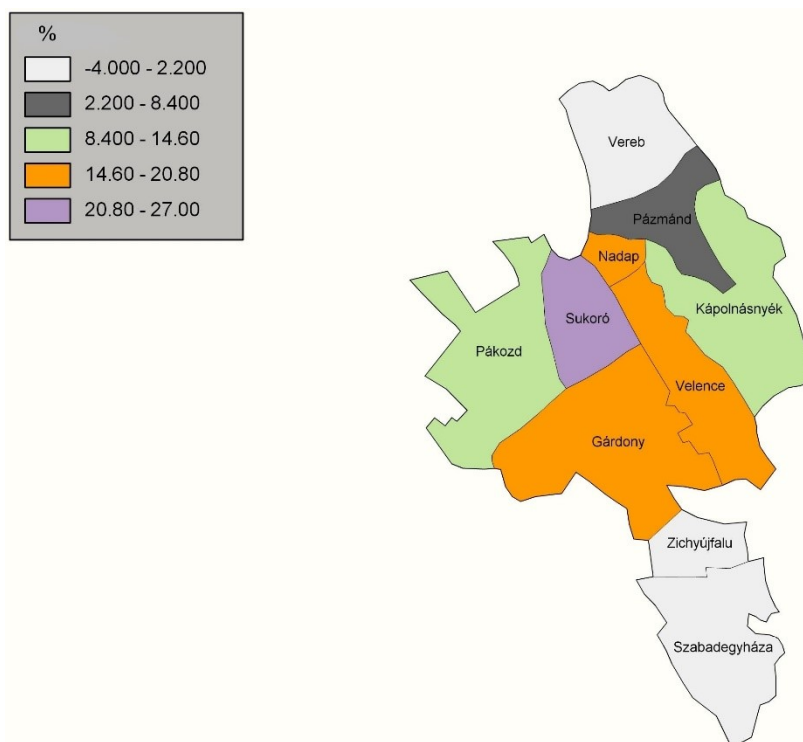


Figure 1: ratio of population change in the settlements of Gárdony township between 2004 and 2013.

Source: private editing, Geomarket software and TeIR data.

Figure 1 shows the population change within a decade between 2004 and 2013 in the settlements of Gárdony township. Despite the European and territorial demographic trends, population growth can be seen in these settlements. The most salient settlement is Sukoró, where the population had grown by 27.53 % by 2013, comparing it to the year of 2004. This fact supports the tendency given in specialist literature: the majority of Lake Velence settlements are attractive destinations for those who would like to leave cities. Many facts explain the population change of this settlement: the advantageous transport and geographic situation (M7 motorway, closeness to Budapest and Székesfehérvár), attractive environment and the suburbanization process.

During the examined 10 years the population of Velence grew by 15.74 %, and of Gárdony by 17.5 %. The No 7 main road – which runs through these two towns – offers quick travel for not only tourists but also for locals because it gives the possibility for them to commute to workplaces or schools. The population growth in most of the settlements of Lake Velence is caused by migration as seen from the demographic data of KSH and from the interview with the mayor of Gárdony. István Tóth, the mayor of Gárdony, states that “in the past one or two years the population of the area has grown with 150-200 inhabitants annually. In general, mostly young families move to Gárdony from Budapest and the number of elder couples is also significant, they make their weekend houses insulated and they move there. The leaders of the town expect more people to settle down here due to the development of rail transport. (Tóth, 2013) Before 2002 Pákozds used to be an ageing settlement with 2500 dwellers but by 2013 this situation had changed and the number of official inhabitants was over 3300. Now we are talking about a youthful settlement, which is proved by the number of newborns, 40-45 each year. However, there are other factors that form the basis of the new inhabitants. According to the Mayor, this basis is rooted in “the closeness of workplaces and their existence, and also the

advantageous circumstances". (Takács, 2015) People move to Pákozd from the neighbouring areas and especially from Székesfehérvár. As for their social status, mostly the upper middle class move to Pákozd. (Takács, 2015) The population change rate in the examined settlements is in close relationship with the newly built 4- and 5-bedroom flats. In Gárdony 198, in Velence 138, in Kápolnásnyék 78 four and multi-room apartments were built between 2005 and 2013; Pákozd, which is accessible from highway M7 was attractive too with its 65 newly-built apartments. (www.teir.hu, 21.09.2016) This fact also shows that mostly young couples and families, as well as the elderly who make their weekend houses suitable for the winter period choose to live in the settlements of Lake Velence. Their increasing presence means new demands for retailers and service suppliers.

The economic functions of Gárdony township settlements

I examined the economic structure of Gárdony township settlements by the TeIR-registered enterprises in 2013.

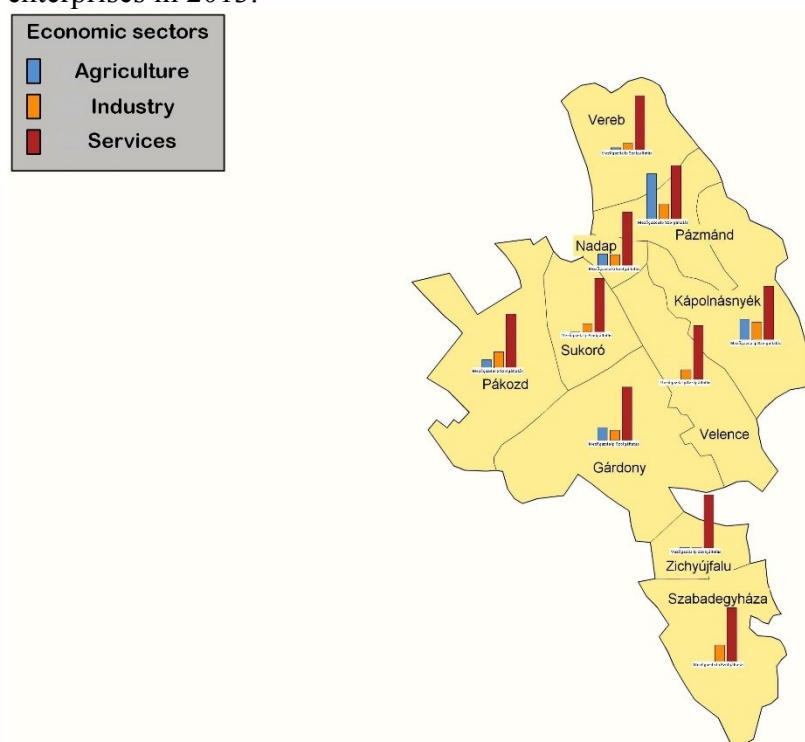


Figure 2: Ratio of employment in the economic sectors in the settlements of Gárdony township, 2013 (%).

Source: private editing by Geomarket software.

In the view of the township data it is seen that besides the activities in the tertiary sector, the traditional agricultural function determines the life of some settlements. In Pázmánd, Kápolnásnyék, Nadap, Gárdony and Pákozd the number of people working in agriculture is quite high. The area has a very advantageous climate, its soil is perfect for quality agricultural production, and these facts could be important parts of the future development plans. The accommodation and hospitality industry have a crucial role mainly in the settlements near to Lake Velence. Moreover, the service sector in the background settlements also plays a conclusive role and so these areas can have the opportunity to join the tourism of Lake Velence.

The number and activity of the businesses in the tertiary sector is determined by the good transport infrastructure and the local features, besides the tourism role.

In those settlements that are situated farther from the Lake the agricultural sector is smaller. In Zichyújfalu, where the population has been decreasing, the agricultural and industrial activity nearly vanished (2-2%), in Vereb, where the number of population is stagnant, the role of the primer and secondary sectors is little. These settlements have worse transport accessibility than those that are near or just by the Lake. However, the agricultural function is present in all of the settlements of Lake Velence because of the good climate, soil and geographical makings. In 2002 the Agárd Pálinka Brewery was built in the Steiner Farm as a new investment, and it has won several international prizes. (www.agardipalinka.hu, 21.09.2016)

Tourism and economic development

As seen from the interview with the mayor of Agárd, seasonality refers not only to tourism but also to the whole economy of the area. Lake Velence is the main tourism attraction in this region and it attracts quite a big number of tourists. This leads us to suppose that seasonality has a great impact on local economy as well. The influence of seasonality on local businesses formed a part of my questionnaire too, and it helps to form a picture about the relationship between tourism and the local economy.

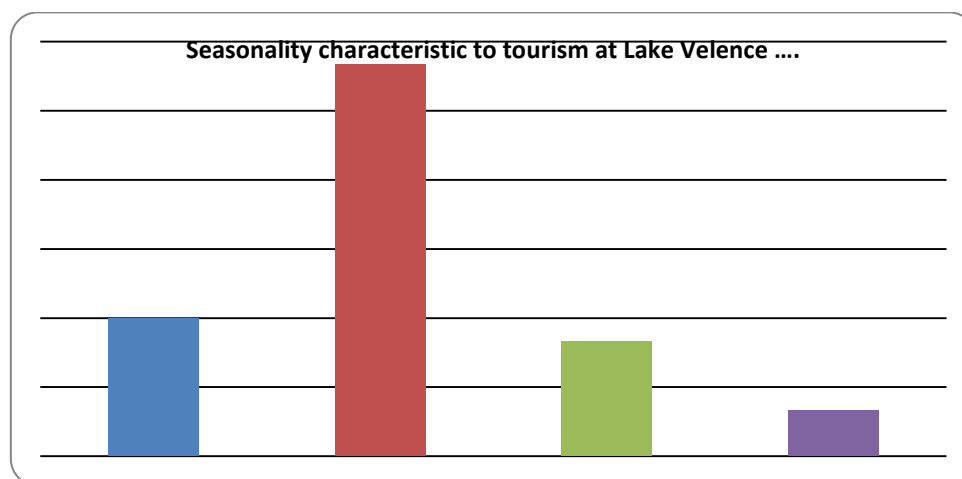


Figure 3: The influence of seasonality on the small businesses at Lake Velence.

Source: private editing on the basis of my own reearches.

Seasonality influences basically 20% of small businesses at Lake Velence (so every 5th), significantly 56.7 %, to a small extent 16.7 %. Only 6.7 % of the interviewed think that the seasonality of tourism does not influence their activities. This shows that the success of local enterprises is in close relationship with the results of tourism developments.

Tourism has a significant role in the society and economy of Lake Velence and this is the reason why I deal with this branch as a special field when examining the economy development possibilities.

Besides the fact that many people move from the noisy capital to the calm Gárdony, Velence, Pákozd, Sukoró or Pázmánd, there exists a “non-classical” tourist crowd, the “weekenders”, who spend their weekends or free-time in these settlements. Relatives, friends obviously do not pay for the accommodation, but they spend their money and time – together with their hosts – locally and on sights in the area. Among the number of flats, the number of weekend houses

varies considerably. According to TeIR 2011 data, in Pázmánd there are 893 flats, of which 15 % are weekend houses. Gárdony has a higher percentage: 62.6 % (Michalkó-Rácz, 2011). There are big differences in the tourism functions of the settlements at Lake Velence. These determine basically the role of tourism in the regional development. Gárdony and Velence, of town rank, can generate more visitors. This is proved by the number of guest nights and guests. The other lakeside and background settlements of some tourism functions have little role in the tourism of the area.

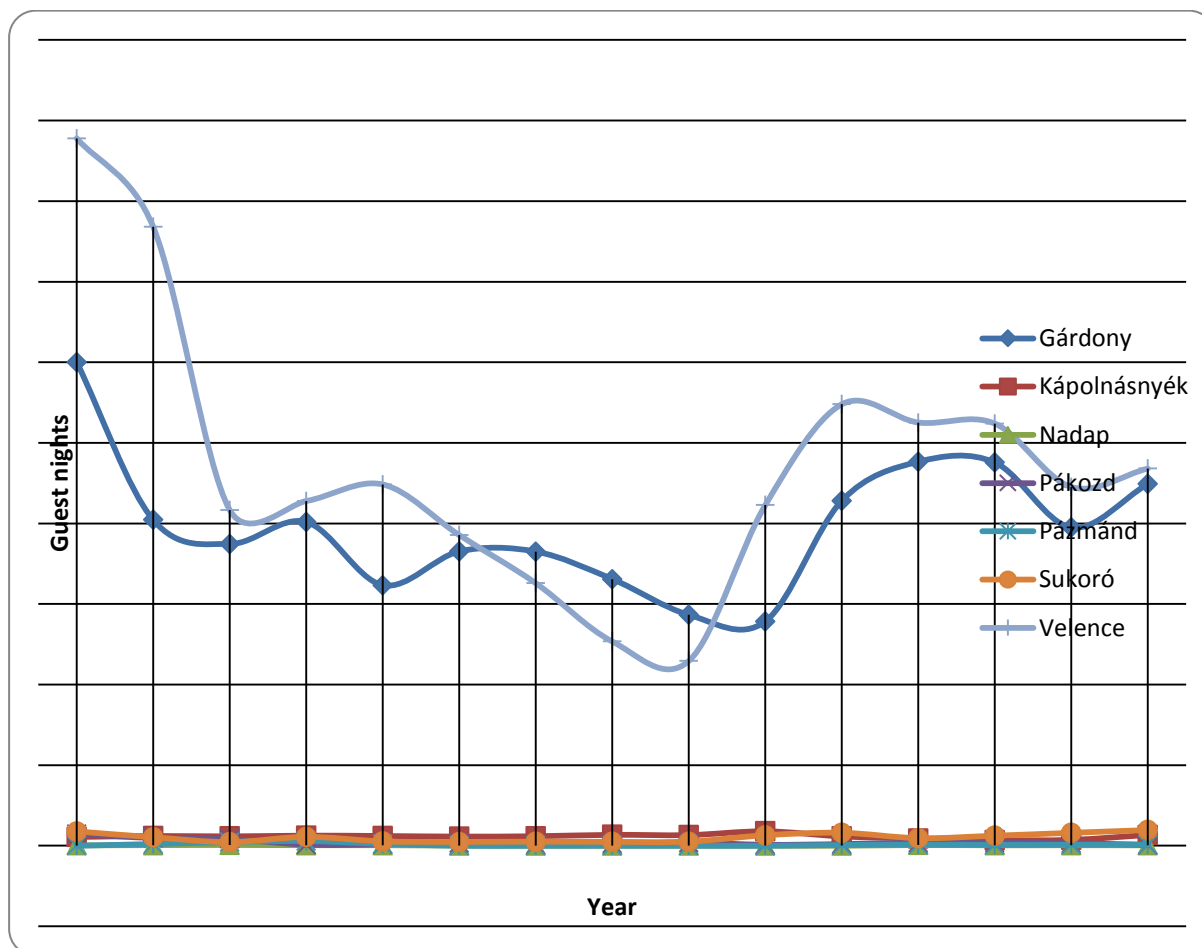


Figure 4: the number of guest nights in the settlements of Lake Velence

Source. own editing according to TeIR data

In 2009, the busiest year in Kápolnásnyék (virtually connected to Velence), 3585 guest nights were counted. This number is well below the amount of guest nights in Velence (84559) and Gárdony (55693), although in these towns the year of 2009 was not the best. In the tourism of Nadap and Pázmánd the lack of accommodation was the problem. Between 2006 and 2011 in Nadap and between 2005 and 2010 in Pázmánd there was not a single commercial or private type of accommodation. The number of guest nights decreased between 2000 and 2014 from 2901 to 220. This result shows the need of tourism development.

The first years of the 21st century indicate a significant downturn in the tourism of Lake Velence. Between 2000 and 2001 the number of guest nights lessened in Gárdony and Velence. This phenomenon reached its lows in 2008 and 2009, possibly partly because of the recession in the World's economy. The renewed and enlarged Agárd Thermal Spa opened its gates again in 2005 – supported by the Széchenyi Plan. A new indoor wellness department was added to

this spa in 2008. (Vitek, 2009) Guests visit this spa mostly from Székesfehérvár and Budapest and its suburbs. (Szigetvári, 2013) The next years brought an increase in the tourism palette, which was consciously widened. The number of guest nights in the Hotel Vital Nautis and the Velence Resort&Spa show this development.

In 2011 73,5% of the hotel guests (16015 people) stayed in wellness hotels in Gárdony. 84.66% of the hotel guests (31847 people), that stayed in Velence chose Hotel Velence Resort&Spa. (www.teir.hu, 21.09.2016)

In the 20th century the bathing town character was typical of the Lake, as the most important attraction. Its beaches and weekend houses were popular. At the end of the first decade of the 21st century the emphasis was on thermal and wellness services along with some extras, like local gastronomy. The Sport Beach, the Agárd Thermal Spa, the Hotel Vital Nautis, the Velence Resort&Spa, the Velence promenade, the Agárd Pálinka Brewery, L. László Simon's Wine House and the Pázmánd Borárium unquestionably determine the tourism of Lake Velence. (Sárkány, 2013)

The new bicycle road, and the Velence-lake Gate project (which met a lot of difficulties), the Velence promenade and the free beach lure numerous guests to Lake Velence, although their number cannot be seen by the guest nights. This is because of the good transport system – the one-day visitors come mainly from Budapest and from Székesfehérvár. They visit typically Gárdony and Velence.

Local tourism development focuses on the lengthening of time of staying. However, if we take the history of tourism at Lake Velence into consideration: from the 1970s there was a boom in beach visits, the perfect accessibility from Budapest and Székesfehérvár, which is getting to be even better due to rail reconstructions and so providing less travel time – this time of staying cannot be extended. This is supported by the data from 2014, when the average time of staying in Gárdony was 2.12, and in Velence it was 2.20 days. The farther background settlements, which are important village/rural tourism areas, this time is 2.56 days (Pázmánd) and 2.68 days (Sukoró). (www.teir.hu, 21.09.2016)

Besides the local governments, several associations deal with tourism and economy development in the Lake Velence area. Gárdony and Velence have their own TDM body, the Okos Régió Klaszter (Clever Region Cluster) aims to work on a “local brand” and international economic connections. To reach this goal the following conditions should be fulfilled: “The success of clusters depends on their self-organising ability, the participation of partners, and also the successful learning process. The strong, efficient institutional environment plays an important role in the development. These statements raise the importance of incubation in regions of early cluster phase or of weak critical mass. Also, institutions connected to regional economy are essential to coordinate the innovation process.” (Lux, 2013:69)

As the results of the survey show, this idea is not yet totally known and supported in the region of Lake Velence. 52 % of the examined small businesses do not have any information about the clusters and they do not think that cooperation with small businesses of the same branch is important and only 3 % of asked are members of a cluster.

It is very essential to know the needs and imaginations of those who live in settlements to be developed, and to know all this is crucial to build up a development concept. Developments based on tourism have to be harmonised with the need of creating liveable circumstances. (Tóth, 2014) 46.34 % of entrepreneurs would develop the local economy with the help of tourism, 9.75 % see a potential in good marketing, and also 9.75 % see the possibility of development with constraining the activities of multinational companies. Besides these, even the specialist literature emphasises that we should not make a mistake with concentrating only on tourism, neglecting other activities that contribute to the sustainability of the region. Developing tourism is “only a sub-system of the whole circle of problems in developing the countryside”. (Goda,

2013:77). This is a very important question at Lake Velence because its regional economy has depended unquestionably on tourism from the 1970s.

The leaders of town Gárdony, together with the entrepreneurs, have close working partnership with the local government and MPs. However, there is no any association especially dealing with economy or regional development in Gárdony. The local government work with architects, economists and civil associations besides their own administrative staff. The Mayor of Gárdony says that Pákozd, Sukoró, Velence and Gárdony – these four lakeside towns – cooperate with one-another in numerous projects, for Lake Velence can be “sold” only as one, not as different settlements. We would like to achieve that the settlements would not provide the same tourism offers, rather they should provide high-quality special ones. The economic-social examination of the lakeside towns supports the fact that the initiation referring to only these towns is not able to develop the whole region, because it neglects the background settlements with their connection to the lakeside towns. Public transport is poor in case of Pázmánd and Nadap, and the tourism and catering facilities are rare. There are two direct trains a day from Pázmánd to Székesfehérvár and people have to change trains at Kápolnásnyék in they want to travel to Budapest.

Local winemakers have discovered the potentials of wine-tourism in Pázmánd and at Lake Velence. Wine-tasting tours are very popular with wines from the local vineyards.

Besides wines, more different agricultural products can be introduced in the system of tourism. The Lake Velence region is perfect for agricultural production, but it has no “local brands” comparing it to Lower-Austria, where local brands are closely connected to tourism. Local accommodation and restaurants are full with local products, creating “regional values”. (www.noe-laendlicher-raum.at, 20.09.2016)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Borárium is a good example for how to protect local wines and it can help in creating a local brand. So the next step in the development of local tourism could be that there, on the spot, a system of market for agricultural products for tourists in Pázmánd should be created. This system has had roots here already: Natúrkosár (NaturalBasket), which became independent from Szatyorközösség (BasketCommunity), is based on the commerce of home- and free-range products, and trust plays a very important part in this system. The “exchange” takes place at certain times in Budapest, and so the connection between Pázmánd and South-Buda, Budaörs, Budafok, Érd Diósd and with some more towns in Pest county becomes tighter.

It is important to liven up and widen the scope of the domestic and international export of agricultural products, but it can be possible only if there is enough quality accommodation in the country in the system of village tourism.

The concept of ecotourism should be defined precisely when we are talking about development. The Hungarian specialist literature calls tourism aiming the values of nature, ecotourism. On the contrary, the German specialist literature makes a distinction between “natural tourism” and ecotourism. (Gyuricza 2008: 44.) This is important because the National Regional Development Concept (Országos Területfejlesztési Konceptió) states that “preserving local values and providing advantages for rural communities” can be carried out only with harmonising economic and social functions in practice. These “meeting-points” are important to highlight. In German and Austrian specialist literature agriculture, gastronomy, tourism and ecotourism correlate with each-other, their eco-restaurants offer local agricultural products and they optimize the number of tourists visiting the given destination.

Equestrian tourism could play an important part in the background settlements of Lake Velence. Besides the advantageous features of the region and our traditions we should develop this kind of tourism because this activity can be combined with other different tourism types such as village tourism, sports tourism or eco-tourism.

Summary

Summarising the results of the research we can state that the settlements in Gárdony township do not show a uniform picture as for demography, economy and social changes. This is because tourism has not changed the economic structure of these towns equally. The present development concept aims to widen the number of accommodation and to lengthen the time of staying. Associations dealing with tourism would like to develop many tourism types at the same time but it is hardly possible due to the lack of enough human and financial resources. Instead, we should find priorities that can be proved by research. Also, the problem can be that too many associations deal with this small but complex region, very often independently from each-other. Recently there have been examples of successful projects, like the bicycle road, but most of them have been individual results and they have been carried out without the mutual development of the settlements. To develop the Lake Velence region, a certain association with its own power is missing. The number of complex tourism products is few, or not available, and this is a national phenomenon (Pupos, 2007). This fact reduces the chances of Lake Velence to become a successful destination.

The above-mentioned facts show that the Lake Velence region has to wait for the breakthrough. Gárdony and Velence – the two settlements with town-rank – have the biggest responsibility in elaborating the future developments. The most important questions of the future will be if the TDM bodies, who have little potential, and the different regional associations will be able to work out a proper system approach, a uniform and adequate concept.

The future developments should refer to the background settlements of the lake too, to become parts of the tourism system here. The different functions should be developed together with the most dynamic and seasonal branch, tourism. The agricultural sector can join tourism and hospitality with local products. All in all, we can state that the settlements of Lake Velence and Gárdony township can be marketable only with a pre-planned, long-term concept, with a product range of sustainable tourism and economy, and, last but not least, with an association which can coordinate different economic branches. The breakthrough of tourism of Lake Velence is to be waited for because there are such infrastructural areas which cannot be modernized by local power, tenders, local government subsidy and entrepreneur backing.

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