



GÖDÖLLŐ

GYÖRGY ENYEDI

PHD SCHOOL IN REGIONAL SCIENCE

THESES OF DOCTORAL (PHD) DISSERTATION

**THE OVERALL CONDITION OF THE TOWN OF SZÁZHALOMBATTA IN
THE 21ST CENTURY**

WRITTEN BY: ILDIKÓ LAKI

GÖDÖLLŐ

2015

PhD School

Title: György Enyedi Regional Sciences Doctoral (PhD) Scholl

Scientific field: Regional Sciences

**Head: Dr. habil Tamás Sikos T.
full professor, doktor of HAS
Szent István University
Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences
Institute of Regional Economics and Rural Development**

**Supervisor: Dr. habil György Csáki
full professor, head of department
Szent István University
Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences
Economics, Law and Methodology Institute**

.....
Approved by the head of PhD School

.....
Approved by the supervisor

1. INTRODUCTION

The number of academic publications, essays, and papers on forced industrialization, newly built industrial towns and their progress in time, the ideal ‘socialist’ man and his urban environment, socialist-realism, as well as social and economic conditions prevailing following the regime change has been quite substantial. The elevated interest in such a topic is well-founded even today as these towns also experienced a development process much akin to all other urban settlements in Hungary.

The current paper aims to present a detailed analysis of an industrial town, Százhalombatta, which on the one hand commenced its rapid development only in the 1960s as a newly-built industrial town, while on the other hand it was able to maintain its prosperity even following the regime change. To further the comprehension of the contemporary condition of the town, various economic and social indicators drawn from statistical data compiled recently will be elaborated on, focusing on the issues of sustainability and long-term viability of the town and its surrounding environment.

The topic selection is supported by the following reasons:

1. Százhalombatta even following the regime change and throughout the 1990s demonstrated an active development path. Such a success in itself is of interest, but in the paper it is intertwined with the spatial and social aspects of urban development.

2. I lived myself for fifteen years in the town and was an active member of the local community. As a former resident I may possibly view local problems and the peculiarities of the town’s functioning in a different light than researchers from the outside. Therefore, the specific subject could be of additional interest, to what degree personal experiences alter and shape the comprehension of a town’s essence, only visible or quite contrary unseen to a local.

After moving away from Százhalombatta my interest in the town persisted, i.e. I follow the past and present developments there, as well as the plans for future progress. The current paper is divided into *three main parts*. **In the first section (SURVEY OF AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTATION)** through the accessible research and academic papers, documents, and analyses, the historical peculiarities of European communist industrial towns will be discussed, focusing on the diverse eastern and western models in urban development and on the various factors that impacted Hungarian spatial development schemes in industrial towns. In this section the brief history of spatial development in Hungary will be discussed emphasizing the creation of industrial towns, the processes accompanying the interaction between industry and spatial development. Additionally, a separate subchapter will be allotted to the past and current status of post-communist industrial towns. This unit will be

concluded with the brief history of Hungarian industrial towns dissecting them from two distinct angles; firstly, reaching back to the historical roots of the establishment of the communist towns, secondly listing those features and attributes which influence towns in general, both directly and indirectly. The second part of this main section details the historical beginnings of Százhalombatta and the main industrial enterprises located in the town (*MOL – Hungarian Oil & Gas Company Plc. and the Danube Power Plant, part of the MET Power AG*) by utilizing *industry specific social and spatial characteristics*. Following the regime change these large industrial enterprises successfully adapted to the new market conditions, shedding their old communist style organization and management models, which had a major impact on the relations with the town itself, whereby the previously minutely regulated interactions between the corporations and the town took on a decidedly businesslike focus. The transformation of the organizational structure of these corporations following the regime change will be given laying the foundations of the current system of semi-independent business divisions. An additional interest of this section is the analysis of those institutions, social groups and networks which played a meaningful part in the development of the town, thus those initiatives will come to light which influence the daily life and social interactions of the local residents. Finally, the demographic indicators and the urban structure of the town will be discussed with its position vis-a-vis the surrounding countryside and its micro-region.

The second part (MATTERS AND METHODS) describes the current and expected future state of local actors on the labour market and includes the results of a related research study from 2012 and a 100-person survey conducted during the autumn of 2014. The results based on a representative sample aim to support the questions posed by the hypothesis of this paper by allowing both the local employers and employees voice their opinions and views while also evaluating them.

Finally, the **third main section of the paper (RESULTS)** –relying on the premises of the two prior sections – summarizes those novel initiatives which the town as well as all involved actors were forced or felt necessary to implement following the regime change. Such an initiative is the establishment of the new industrial park. The definition of new content and aspects in urban development and the definition of the town's new regional role are also accorded prime importance. The growth of the town thus far, as well as those indicators that make it still a sustainable but most of all liveable town to dwell in are also emphasized. The new investment projects, various community initiatives in the field of culture and education, the construction and successful population of new residential areas are all attempts to open up new horizons for the future of the town. This section is concluded with the not yet published Integrated Urban

Development Strategy of the town adopted during the summer of 2014 by the Municipal Assembly of Százhalombatta, whose relevant sections are analyzed in the current paper.

The paper outlines three main hypotheses:

H1. Of the traditional 'communist' industrial towns Százhalombatta was able to maintain its industrial functions even following the regime change. This fact is underlined by that even currently roughly 40% of the town's labour force is employed by its two main local corporations. The revenue generated by industrial activities (industrial parks and services offered by them), which are directly related to the two major companies, support the effective functioning of the town. It is important to note that according to the census of 2011 Százhalombatta is one of the municipalities of Pest County enjoying an over 50% employment rate (REGIONAL STATISTICS – COUNTY, 2013). My principal hypothesis in this connection is that *the town in the long-term will not be able to retain its population and living conditions merely by relying on industrial activities. By time it will become necessary to introduce new as of yet utilized activities to guarantee a secure future for the town.*

H2. Following the regime change – in contrast to the traditional 'communist' industrial towns – the already secured economic positions of Százhalombatta were not threatened. It seemed that by the turn of the millennium the town had been able to retain this advantageous position and since then has been even able to improve on it. To make this possible, the robust economic health of the MOL Plc., and the Danube Power Plant play a vital part. The hypothesis is based on the *results of the research data gathered and supposes that among the local residents in the past years weakened the trust in their employers, especially in the case of those currently or previously employed by the two large industrial enterprises, as the possibility of gaining and continuing employment locally is not guaranteed anymore. Furthermore, the social welfare services provided by the town merely sustain but are unable to provide security for the less affluent and the disadvantaged.*

H3. Connected to the second hypothesis, it is absolutely crucial for the proper operation of the town to find ways to ensure long-term economic prosperity based on innovative new and novel ideas. *In line of this my premise is that the urban development initiatives manifesting in the town energize it on local and regional levels, which impacts the various actors in Százhalombatta in a meaningful manner. For this reason it can be regarded as a liveable, dynamic, but most of all developing 'traditional' industrial town.*

The aim the paper is to survey the historical development of the town, focusing on the most important turning points in its past; while providing a detailed assessment of it as an industrial town, which has been able to survive following the regime change, and achieve sustainability in

its communal areas, industrial enterprises, local residents, and those employed in industry. The hypotheses enumerated above, nevertheless, also carry challenging dilemmas since in the 21st century the majority of towns based on the so-called traditional industries fell into a disadvantageous position from which some, e.g. Tiszaújváros, were able to extricate themselves, while others, e.g. Ózd, and Kazincbarcika, even 25 years after the regime change still languish in it. To demonstrate the various development trajectories in the dissertation, the former industrial towns will be compared and contrasted, including Százhalombatta. Currently it is a successful settlement with high employment rates, and economically ascending, however, the question can be posed about the long-term sustainability of this current enviable position. Lastly, it was also my intention to compile an academic paper that summarizes all the conducted research data, surveys, and analyses, thereby presenting a comprehensive picture of Százhalombatta in the 21st century.

2. MATTERS AND METHODS

The employment structure of Százhalombatta until the 1950s was primarily based on agriculture. However, with the establishment of the two great local industrial enterprises, the end of the 1950s, the significance of agriculture had ceased almost entirely. Within the span of a few years the number of those employed in industry has tripled; at the same time the total population of the town in 1949 was only 1,717 whereas by 1970 it increased to 7,742. The industrial character of the town has been maintained even today, although by time the reliance on a few monolithic industrial functions, dependent on prevailing economic needs, has altered.

Besides the traditionally present large industrial corporations a large number of private enterprises and sole proprietorships have appeared, which had a meaningful impact on the employment mix of the town effecting structural changes in it. Despite these changes the economic stalwarts of the town remained the large industries. In 1999 the town management established the Batta Industrial Park to provide a suitable location to settle for new local economic enterprises. The overall size of the park is nearly 2.5 hectares, thus, it has enough space to accommodate future developments as well. An industrial building of 2,200 m² has been completed, which is divided into two separate wings each housing eight 80 m² and 2 160 m² workshops satisfying any needs (www.bip.hu, 2014).

By the end of 2008 all the available production space in the industrial park had been occupied. At the beginning of 2012 a new 9.4 hectare addition to the park, adjacent to the original site and north of it, was opened for business, mainly catering for SMEs with all utilities available on site. From the summer of 2014 companies began to relocate here as well. Currently 64 firms are situated here, a part of them belong to or are subsidiaries of the MOL Plc., while the others are the properties of local entrepreneurs or investors from the surrounding countryside.

Between 1961 and 1967 at Százhalombatta the construction of the Danube Power Plant, now part of the MET Power AG group, was completed, which currently is the biggest coal fired power plant in the country. Its basic tasks, in addition to electricity production, are to provide reliable source of electric power and industrial steam to the local oil refinery of the MOL Plc. In 1995 the plant was acquired by the currently called GDF-SUEZ group. In 2008 commenced the G3-F8 development project with the goal of the construction of a high capacity combined cycle gas turbine unit, utilizing the advantages offered by both the older and newer technologies. Thanks to important technological investments of the past years all the auxiliary technological solutions of the plant now satisfy the highest contemporary technical and environmental standards. By modernizing the water extraction technologies used, the plant's operating costs have decreased

substantially. The dependability of constant water supply has been also raised since the plant, besides its own requirements, also supplies the MOL refinery with untreated water. The primary business partners of the Danube Power Plant are the Hungarian Independent Transmission Operator Company Ltd. (MAVIR), MOL Plc., and the town of Százhalombatta. The MET Power AG, part of the MET Holding Group, in February 2014 at first purchased a 24.5% stake in the Danube Power Plant; by July 1 it gained a 74.8% majority ownership. The MET Holding is planning to undertake additional modernization projects creating new jobs in the region (www.dert.hu, 2015).

The Danube Refinery located in Százhalombatta is part of the MOL Plc. The plant has been in operation since 1965 and currently its crude distillation capacity is 8.1 mtpa. In Hungary at the present this is the only functioning crude distillation facility. Besides fuel types it produces heating oil, propane products, bitumens, as well as a wide range of other petrochemical products. The town of Százhalombatta with these two large employers and coupled with the geographical proximity to Budapest is in a unique position; the nearness of the capital city offers opportunities to those who are unable to find employment locally. Additionally, shopping centres and warehouses (in this case at Budaörs) in the agglomeration of Budapest present further options for jobseekers.

As it was already mentioned in the introduction of the dissertation, the Municipal Government of Százhalombatta commissioned in the autumn of 2012 a telephone survey of 500 local individuals aged between 18 and 62 years to ascertain the employment conditions in the town. The survey was based on a representative sample of the active working age local population divided according to gender, age, and education.¹ During the summer of 2013 in-depth interviews were conducted with the town managers and other individuals, six people, in some form of 'leadership' positions concerning communal affairs affecting Százhalombatta. The research activities were concluded in the autumn of 2014 with a 100 person strong survey enquiring about local living conditions, the purpose of which was to identify any shifts which may have occurred in comparison to the study two years prior. The 2011 census data shows (REGIONAL DATA – PEST COUNTY) that 46.4% of Százhalombatta's total population was employed; whereas the town had a 0.5% unemployed, 23.5% inactive, and 25.6% dependent population.

Both of the studies, one on the employment characteristics of the town's between 18 and 62 year years of age population, the other conducted during the fall of 2014, were based on the gender, age, and educational qualifications the local active age population.² The results of a local labour

¹ In the sample the statistical margin of error for the entire working age population was +/- 4.5 percentage points; in a smaller sample, i.e. in a social or demographic group, the margin of error could be higher.

market study conducted in 2012 (500 respondents) further clarified the figures and it can be stated that of the active working age population of the town (in 2012 11,600 and in January 2014 10,985 individuals were active in the local labour market) 60% were employees, 4% were entrepreneurs; while 36% were either temporarily or permanently inactive. Of those in employment, 61% work locally while 39% commute.

The survey conducted during the autumn 2014 (100 individuals) showed that of the active age group 64 were employees, 5 entrepreneurs, and 31 either inactive or dependents.

² In the sample the statistical margin of error for the entire working age population was +/- 4.5 percentage points; in a smaller sample, i.e. in a social or demographic group, the margin of error could be higher.

3. RESULTS

“In Százhalombatta they realized during the 1970s that any settlement has hidden potentials which are rooted in its residents. If a municipality is able to recognize and actualize such concealed resources then these may impact the surrounding environment improving living conditions locally. The most important aspect is that the locals should be satisfied with their environment, which is followed by the will and intention to engage in further productive activities. They should possess a vision of the future that assigns an accentuated role to the local community.” (RUMI, 1998)

The “mission” of the town had been set by the creation of the industrial enterprises in 1958 and the Industrial Park in 1998. The local companies besides their economic contribution to the welfare of the town also play a prominent role in employment, housing and social welfare policies. In the case of Százhalombatta the past smoothly blends into the present. The modern development of the town has been in parallel with the prosperity of her major economic corporations, relying on the assistance of the local community and political goodwill. In the creation of this so-called town image, above the institutional structures, the role of newly arriving inhabitants is also of significance. From the 1960s until the middle of the 1980s 85% of these new residents of Százhalombatta arrived due to employment opportunities offered and settled both in large housing estates and suburban detached homes. However, the territorial stratification eventually led to the emergence of social segregation, which in turn produced the development of non-uniform urban spaces. In reality the town image could be identified mostly with housing estates and more recently with the newly built residential sections. Yet, it is the two main industrial enterprises which characterize the town’s character; the locals consider to this very day that Százhalombatta is mostly recognized as the home of these corporations. (LAKI, 2008)

In this topic the political identity of the town is also of prime interest. The pre-1990 homogeneous approach has been supplanted following the regime change by a similar town management strategy and line of thinking, although not based on socialist principles. The town’s administration follows the doctrine of managers and their charges, i.e. the mayor, his office, and the municipal council have tremendous impact on the life of Százhalombatta both from political and professional aspects. The self-professed identities of the locals are mainly based on the past achievements with their currently visible results, rather than on the creation of an ambitious, forward looking vision.

A town is alive if it has an integrated community and all-encompassing public spaces. In the case of Százhalombatta the various open plazas are fully functional and well-constructed serving the locals, however, the residents are unable to identify with these public venues. The various sections of the town function as separate units with no integration and social cohesion amongst their residents. The three thoroughly separate town sections of different character by the possible use of functional means should be assimilated into a more uniform and integrated cityscape, which may allow more pronounced cooperation among the town's districts especially by activating and elevating the sense of a united local identity. Closely intertwined with this is the creation of a proper town image, which steers away from the former identification of a purely industrial character. Especially so, as the traditional image the local residents hold of their settlement is that of a communist industrial town, which is still alive even presently. The sphere of social interactions, based on the two major industrial enterprises, make up the essence of the town and guarantee long-term prosperity of the community, this in turn holds the menace of a state of inactivity, the stalling of any value creation, and the development of stagnation and complacency. In the defining of the future vision of a town the current conditions should be used as a basis to fashion a comprehensive new image, the realization of which makes it accessible both for local residents and visitors. Such visions could be of varied vein depending on the goal set and in what direction should the town develop from its current state. (URBAN DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT, 2012) As it was already indicated the town's residents are not satisfied with an identity based on industrial character. The town possesses many qualities which could transform it into a more appealing and liveable urban environment. The key question of any future vision is how the town adapts to ongoing processes and to what extent and in what way it intends to regulate and direct them. A rather significant element – although previously it has not been underlined yet – is the geographical vicinity of Budapest; Százhalombatta being part of the southern agglomeration of the capital. Thus, all the developments occurring there (both spatial and social) have a tremendous impact on the parallel processes in Százhalombatta. For this reason it is important to enquire about the town's relations to its surrounding settlements, region, and the suburban commuter towns of Budapest. The town has a less pronounced relationship with its surrounding settlements and those in its micro-region, whereas it has closer links with the agglomeration, primarily in the areas of education and employment. The town management devised two distinct paths for future growth. Besides the divergence in their content, an additional indicator is the diverse type of activities they necessitate from the municipal government, i.e. the two strategies require the local government to engage in different activities involving an assortment of actors. (URBAN DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT, 2012) The passive future vision relies on a development plan based on residential and service functions,

only requiring the most essential involvement on the part of the municipality. This plan may diminish the inner tensions present in the town and at the same time makes the role of the residential commuter town more pronounced. In this model the main goals are the expansion of residential areas and the improvement of transportation infrastructure linking the town with the capital. The development goals are set to satisfy local needs. The active model is based on the utilization of the already existing positive attributes (transportation, urban spaces, and opportunities for developing inter-town relations) as well as on the actualization of still unrealized ones. This model recommends the furthering of links on a wider scale – on regional and micro-regional levels, which presupposes a central role for Százhalombatta. In this case the town's development is centred on the strengthening of external economic bonds and setting up of intervention strategies. The current development path, despite the ongoing development projects, follows the passive model. In the building of the town's image undoubtedly an active vision should be followed. Százhalombatta will only be able to forsake its past based on communist era industrial enterprises and at the same time create a contemporary, open community with an innovative economy.

3.1. Human scale developments on behalf of the town's residents

Every town is established, is born in a sense, then it begins to grow, may stagnate, eventually die or it can rejuvenate itself, prosper anew by utilizing the energy and resources available in its environment, by doing so it transform these into products it consumes and also markets, which leads to the generation of waste, it also comes into contact with other settlements and they establish – especially in terms of production and supplies – a certain division of labour. Its residents create a local community, which eventually founds its own history, culture, and traditions, thereby contributing to a uniquely complex living experience. Simultaneously, the town also functions as a set of urban engineering solutions, but beyond that it is a living organism. Such organism has to be maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the contemporary age. Development, especially nowadays does not necessarily or exclusively entail merely material growth but also qualitative enhancement. Urban development is the collection of all the knowledge, experience, means, and methods which may be indispensable for reaching a balanced state of sustainable development. Urban development on its own right became an essential facet of regional development: the fate and prospects of individual communities cannot be disengaged from those of larger units – town clusters and entire regions. (Meggyesi 2006)

In Százhalombatta the urban development initiatives aim to achieve sustainability and prevent the emigration of the town's residents by emphasizing, using the town management's own term,

the “focus on the principle of retention.” Százhalombatta became by the turn of the millennium one of the most affluent towns in Hungary with the best functioning local economy. (According to 2012 GFK survey on the wealthiest counties and towns in Hungary, Százhalombatta was the seventh most prosperous town in the country.) From the 1990s onwards a number of major investment projects have been realized in the town. Initially all of these have been carried out in the public spaces and institutions of the town, but later on the scope has been enlarged to include the revitalization of residential buildings and the modernization of town sections with mainly detached housing. Immediately following the regime change, in Százhalombatta, similar to other municipalities, there has been a wave of church building initiatives. The most optimal venue for such an undertaking was the main square where a twenty-year long modernization program began in 1993. New institutions were established – cultural as well as educational, municipal and other public service providers relocated to this space (supermarkets, a language school, and post office), the square became a public space for all – in theory following identical lines as previously, but in practice realizing it in a more humane, liveable manner. At the end of the 1990s commenced, within the scope of the renewal of prefabricated housing estates, the complete insulation of such buildings, the revitalization of the surrounding space; this project was later expanded to include detached family homes as well. By 2011 85% of flats in housing estates and 48% of detached houses have been completely renovated. Of elevated importance are the modernization of existing sports facilities and the construction of wholly new ones in the town. In the immediate vicinity of the Danube, at the suburb like area of Dunafüred, can be found the Town Leisure Centre with its continually developing public pools and beach, as well as sports facilities. The original facility had been built in the 1980s and is currently under reconstruction; at the present the town offers three main sport centres catering to the town’s inhabitants and visitors. At this time additional development projects target public education facilities, building renovations and reconstructions, modernization of cultural institutions to elevate them to 21st century standards, and the revitalization of entire town sections – including their built environment. All of these activities, however, only illustrate the town’s economic vitality, as one of our interviewees described; only serving the re-election bid of the mayor. Urban development in the case of Százhalombatta entails actual construction activity in the town, the building of new institutions and structures, the formulation of various support schemes, and the maintenance of the living standards of the local residents.

3.2. Successful urban development. Questions and answers

The findings of my dissertation are based on several years of research work, empirical research, the assimilation of academic papers, and finally the results of my research hypothesis. The main conclusions of my work are the following:

1. In the dissertation I explored **the current spatial-social conditions of Százhalombatta; no such comprehensive work was undertaken previously concerning the town.** This approach synthesizes the still traditional industrial town's operation in a novel way, which is not primarily critical, but is rather an evaluative analysis.
2. Through the survey of the past forty years of regional development in Hungary, I intend to emphasize, besides highlighting the most prominent interventions, those instruments and results (functional and social rehabilitation, creation of Integrated Urban Development Concepts) which generated domestically positive changes in regional and urban development. **In line with the topic of the dissertation I offer a framework for the regional-urban analysis of additional post-communist industrial towns in Hungary and for the comparative analysis of their positions in the 21st century.**
3. Through labour market research, by relying on group and personal interviews, I was able to map the shifts in the employment opportunities in the town on personal and community levels and employer and employee expectations and requirements. I also elaborate the position of those groups which due to recent loss of employment or long-term unemployment became the catalysts in the segregation and filtration processes now observable in the town and which as of yet have not registered in other town related surveys, analyses.
4. I summarize and present in a new light the town's social stratification, educational standards, spatial characteristics, and level of urbanization with all the responsibilities stemming from it. By presenting the housing conditions prevalent in the town I intend to demonstrate the extent of liveability it offers to its residents.
5. By the detailed examination and intertwining of the various issues presented in the chapters I provide a summary evaluation of the modern spatial-social transformations occurring in Százhalombatta with which I intend to contribute to the formulation of and adaption to additional development projects materializing in the town.

H1. For the supposition that the **town in the long-term will not be able to maintain its current population level and living environment by drawing exclusively on industrial activity and that by time it will be indispensable to devise new, currently not utilized activities for which Százhalombatta seemingly has not yet produced a tangible strategic plan** I respond that the modern history of the town clearly demonstrates that its existence and daily operation still depends on the two large industrial enterprises and the other businesses directly dependent on them. Based on the available historical data, research and surveys carried out, I believe that the town needs to devise within a short time span, 1-2 years, utilizing on the one hand the municipal government's leadership and on the other new external actors, a new range employment opportunities partially relying on the expert knowledge and professionalism accumulated in the MOL Plc. and the Danube Power Plant. This supposition seemed to be verified during the preparation of the current dissertation as at the end of summer 2014 the municipal government of Százhalombatta prepared a new Integrated Urban Development Strategy which defined eight points for the creation of a new activity model for the town.

H2. My second hypothesis was drawn from the **results of my personal research, which assumed that in the past years the faith of the local residents, especially those currently being or formerly employed, in the old-present large industrial enterprises has weakened as long-term employment in the town is not seen as a guaranteed fact.**

In the research segment the listed results indicate that there is significant apprehension among the active working age residents of the town. Of those working for the two large corporations, the employees of MOL Plc. feel more secure but not entirely certain about their continued employment at the company. Their stable socio-economic standard, inherited from the past – from the 1970s, is clearly compromised as well. The municipal government can be considered a secure employer as well; those working there have a higher level of trust in their employer in comparison with those employed by the two large corporations. Research in both instances indicated that beyond the two corporations and the town government the chance of finding work locally is rather meagre. Current employment opportunities entail the retail and services sectors; outside the two large companies securing employment in industry is virtually impossible. My hypothesis, thus, is clearly verified: the town's position nationally is above average; nevertheless, it struggles with a number of challenges locally.

H3. In connection with my second hypothesis I further presupposed that for the guaranteed functioning of the town it is indispensable to bring about a range of novel initiatives that could be translated to long-term success. *Therefore, I make the assumption that urban development*

initiatives manifesting in the town make it a more active environment both locally and regionally, which has an elevated impact on the various actors present in Százhalombatta and as a consequence of this it is considered as a liveable, dynamic, and most importantly developing municipality.

While describing the historical antecedents of the town's development I enumerate the latest development projects that have taken place, all of which clearly indicate an upward evolution trend there. In parallel, I paid consideration to the GKI Economic Research Co.'s 2012 research, which showed that according to the purchasing power parity of that year Százhalombatta was the seventh most affluent settlement in Hungary. New initiatives in the town may not necessarily be visible along these lines, individual and communal wellbeing signifies contentment and material security every day, as opposed to the town's actual labour-market conditions and the employment opportunities of the local residents. In this respect the vitality of the town manifests itself only partially since its job creation potential is weak. New investment projects and recently established businesses are not able to absorb all the active labour market participants who lost their employment in the two large local industrial enterprises. (See in the dissertation's chapter on research) Thus, my hypothesis seems partially contradicted as the opportunities present in the town, despite its dynamic growth, offer job security only partially to the local inhabitants.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Százhalombatta following the turn of the millennium a number of development projects commenced with the purpose of revitalizing the town, thus contributing to its appeal. The main elements of urban development are also success and innovation. The previously discussed economic foundations of successfulness emerged in full light, however, to use György Enyedi's terminology, the European model remained only a theoretical option, never really put into practice. (ENYEDI, 1997) György Enyedi in reference to the successful town suggested another indicator, based on the capacity for innovativeness. In a successful town the ability for innovation is high. It is also forced to constantly reinvent its economic basis and at the same time must be ready to absorb new, innovative solutions. To accomplish this, the introduction of new technologies, the presence of research and development capacities is crucial. (ENYEDI, 1997)

The third and for me especially relevant question is the motivation for decision-making in the large scale, intensive investment projects and their expected and actual outcomes. In the past 25 years these projects meant to be impressive and clearly visible for everyone. It is the responsibility of any town management in office to follow policies based on the highest possible level of consensus based on the resources and opportunities present for the realization of goals set; thereby contributing to the town's steady development. All the activities that aim to regulate and direct any settlements spontaneous line of development in order to follow strategic goals devised for its evolution are collectively called planning. The desire for conscious urban organization goes back far beyond our current era, however, the theories of modern urbanism made headway only in the last decades of the 20th century and are still having formative effect on urban landscapes in our time.

For Százhalombatta the existing capacities and opportunities coupled with appropriate development policies, especially if all of them could be maintained in the long run, will translate to growing prosperity placing the town far above the national average. The dynamism is unmistakably present; however, some obtrusions also emerge along the way. The creation of built environment is only one *tool* of urban development initiatives, even if it is most significant one. Intervention into the spatial makeup as a means of urban development must go beyond the mere accomplishment of the most optimal engineering solutions; rather it should aim to direct social conditions in the long-term toward a more beneficial course.

Urban development and construction in Százhalombatta refer to the improvements connected to the town without paying any attention to its immediate environment.

Such negative practice is not necessarily due to the political short-sightedness of the town's decision-makers, it also involves a number of other dominant factors which also influence it. A primary cause is the town's geographical-spatial location. It is only 27–30 kilometres away from

Budapest, clearly reinforcing the dominance of the capital city, which is further impacted by the town's own correlation to the labour market and educational institutions (it should be mentioned that in 2006 1,396 people commuted daily to Budapest that is 8% of the town's population – KSH, 2007, at the 2012 research survey this figure climbed to 2,500–3,000 people). In the surrounding area the physical proximity of the various settlements is very high, thus many daily service functions are shared among them. Százhalombatta exists in this environment as if in a vacuum; residents of the surrounding smaller settlements hardly or not at all use it for their needs, it is clearly only the local inhabitants who utilize the service sector facilities of the town. At micro-regional and regional levels another complicating factor for the town is that within a 40 kilometre radius, besides Budapest, two additional industrial towns are located, one of them being a county seat. Both Dunaújváros and Székesfehérvár possess a sizable drawing effect even on the regional level since they have large industrial potentials with sizable employment opportunities. Therefore, the assumption that Százhalombatta has an active effect on its immediate and wider environs is not substantiated, unless we refer to daily commuting or other intertwined activities. Due to this vacuum-like role the town's development path is necessarily internal, focusing on local initiatives, which trend is meant to be countered by the definition and implementation of the goals of the Integrated Urban Development Strategy for 2014-2020 adopted during the spring of 2014.

The strategy seeks to tackle the challenge of urban development and intervention in nineteen distinct entry points. On the one hand, by making interventions in the economic sphere more intense the 2014–2020 Development Strategy includes plans for the expansion of industrial zones, which entails in addition to the growth of the actual size of the town also the upgrading of various related services. The other element in the town's economic development are all the job creating and preserving measures embarked on by the privately owned local SMEs and large corporations. To preserve the industrial competitiveness of the town technological innovations must be encouraged, while one of the main tenets of sustainable urban development is the environmentally conscious industrial expansion. (IVS, 2014) A main pillar of Százhalombatta's dynamic growth is the reshaping of its living environment, developing it in a manner so as to provide a better quality of living for its population.

At Százhalombatta the service infrastructure is already present in every facet of life, thus, the emphasis must be on improving the level of services offered by satisfying shifting needs and demands. To maintain the town on a development trajectory, it is of high importance to provide and introduce the proper facilities for preventive medicine contributing to the general health of the local inhabitants. Another focal point of the coming period is the development of residential areas (see in detail in the section on the integral spatial parts of the town); this is one of the

prerequisites of offering a settlement with high quality of living, a town which is aesthetically pleasing, comfortable, and possesses strong communal cohesion. The long-term sustainability of the town can be only accomplished with significant intervention in the development of residential areas. For Százhalombatta the focus is on three primary areas: development of town sections threatened with segregation, rehabilitation of housing estates, and improvement of suburban residential zones. (IVS, 2014) The renewal of housing estates can be accomplished by utilizing complex urban rehabilitation schemes following five points: improvement of residential functions, the communal and social regeneration of housing estates, renewal of the natural environment, betterment of the surrounding physical space, and the improvement of the services offered to local residents. In the suburban residential districts the emphasis is on the regeneration of the surrounding physical and natural space. Simultaneously the possibility of the expansion of residential functions appears as well, although without any consideration to the social and spatial consequences of the departure of a segment of the housing estates' residents to other residential districts.

The third significant element of the Integrated Urban Development Strategy, discussed in the last hypothesis of the dissertation, is the creation of a representative environment, which emphasizes the presence of an appealing, aesthetically pleasing urban space where the unique spirit of the town with an authentic atmosphere is most tangible. To accomplish this it is necessary to revitalize the town's cultural heritage with the attendant identity formation, as well as the preservation of the natural environment and the connected strengthening of eco-consciousness. The strengthening of local identity is a primary tool in this endeavour and it seems that the improving social competitiveness is pointing toward a positive direction in Százhalombatta. In line of the various research activities and studies conducted and the already prepared Integrated Urban Development Strategy the problems representative of the entire settlement are the following:

The town is required to modify its growth strategy by instituting a new vision for the future as well as strategic goals in order to attain sustainable economic expansion. (IVS, 2009)

By the changing of the local business tax the town's revenue base may decrease, which threatens the array of welfare services provided for the local residents, which in the short-term may lead to forms of segregation and population loss. The local community struggles with serious dilemmas on the necessity of change both in its active and passive forms. The research studies and personal interviews clearly indicate that the local inhabitants are not satisfied with an identity simply based on the town's large industrial enterprises.

„One of the biggest problems of the town is that it lacks a local identity. A sizable portion of the town's current population originated from other places. Very few can say that their roots go

back several generations in Százhalombatta. There could not and has not developed a large degree of identification with the town among the locals, there is simply no specific attachment and loyalty. A town is only able to accomplish meaningful improvement if in the minds of the locals the desire to affect positive change spans several generations. The power and cohesion of traditional community can elevate towns, at Százhalombatta, due to exigencies of the local conditions, it is not going to materialize soon.

The town is not able to preserve its highly qualified labour force as many people commute daily to Budapest. At the same time local companies attract labour from the surrounding settlements, even from the capital. We can visualize the labour market condition of Százhalombatta as a reverse cone: on the narrow end workers come in and at the wider they leave the town.” (IN DEPTH INTERVIEW, 2014)

Employment: the number of those employed in the large local industries has been shrinking for the past seven years. This has been confirmed not only by the research study commissioned by the municipal government, but also by personal interviews undertaken. Such unwelcome situation needs to trigger further deliberation on the part of the town management about how to attract industry-independent work positions and new employment opportunities to Százhalombatta. A special focus must be placed on job creation requiring college/university level qualifications, which may keep the local intelligentsia in place or even drawing new entrants to Százhalombatta.

„The largest employers have been the refinery and the power plant. Unfortunately, it is all changing now. The power plant is being phased out, it is really a sad sight to walk by it and see the degradation. Many people spent their whole life’s work there, but it does not make any difference. A similar disappointment is the scaling back of the MOL operations in the town. Of course we know that times change, but I feel that the manner this transformation is forced through is utterly inhumane lacking any sense of decency.

For large employers in Százhalombatta I had these two in mind, which also have some roots here. Obviously, the municipal government also gives work to many people and then there are the schools with their teaching staff, which are also important of course.” (IN DEPTH INTERVIEW 2, 2014)

The economic and social cohesion of the town is rather poor. The services sector in the town centre is underdeveloped, unable to function as an economic and communal magnet. Employment at the municipal government and the few retail units there has only a limited capacity to alleviate unemployment or increase the town’s revenues. The town lacks its own agglomeration; in the past years it was characterized by inwardness, which cannot be explained

by its urban structure. Its role and position as a municipality at the outer edge of the metropolitan area of Budapest is still, after a several decades, an undecided issue.

The mission of a settlement is far more than to provide the mere means of livelihood for its residents. If it only provides that much, the locals will not be satisfied; at best they may not be displeased with negative forebodings. If the utilities function properly, the road network is in good condition then we can ascertain that that is the bare minimum to keep the town's leadership in office. Genuine satisfaction among the local population can be reached by guaranteeing a living environment conducive to a high quality of life; these include self-improvement and entertainment facilities, consistently high quality education institutions, high standard retail venues, and at least one but preferably more public areas, an agora, where the locals can congregate. Százhalombatta always provided for the material wellbeing of its residents and the opportunities for a high quality life are also improving.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION

Academic journals and conference monographs in foreign language

1. Laki Ildikó (2015): Communist Built Industrial Towns, the History of Newly Built Towns and Cities. *Belvedere*. 1.: 38-48.
2. **Laki Ildikó** (2015): Százhalombatta among the Industrial Cities. In.: Karlovitz János Tibor (ed.): Some Current issues in economic. Komarno, International Research Institute. 347-353.
3. **Laki Ildikó** (2011): Culture without borders. *Kultúra és Közösség*. 1.:23-27. http://www.kulturaeskozosseg.hu/pdf/2011/1/kek_2011_1_2.pdf

Academic books and essays

1. **Laki Ildikó** (2014): Két Duna menti település turisztikában betöltött szerepe. (The role of two municipalities in the vicinity of the Danube in tourism) In: Darabos F. – Ivancsóné Horváth Zs. (ed.): Nemzetek turizmusa. Tanulmányok. Győr, Nyugat-magyarországi Egyetem Apáczai Csere János Kar. 166-178.
2. **Laki Ildikó** (2014): Területi és társadalmi kérdések a mai Magyarországon. (Spatial and social issues in contemporary Hungary) Budapest, Zsigmond Király Főiskola
3. **Laki Ildikó** (2013): Környezeti értékelés az Országos Fejlesztési és Területfejlesztési koncepció című dokumentum. (Environmental Assessment – paper on the National Development and Regional Development Concept) Budapest, Nemzetgazdasági Minisztérium.
4. **Laki Ildikó** (2012): Gazdasági-társadalmi szerepváltozások az élettér és életkörülmények figyelembevételével. (Economic and social roles and responsibilities with attention to the living environment and conditions) In: Megfelelés a fenntarthatóság követelményeinek, az épületenergetikai felújítások területi-társadalmi hatásai, különös tekintettel a foglalkoztatásra, társadalmi kohézióra és párbeszédre. Budapest, Nemzeti Munkaügyi Hivatal Társadalmi Párbeszéd Bizottság. http://tpk.org.hu/engine.aspx?page=apb_epito_dokumentumok
5. **Laki Ildikó** (2011): Szakemberek véleménye a fenntarthatóságról, a fenntartható fogyasztásról. (The views of academic professionals on sustainability and sustainable consumption) In: Kraiciné Szokoly M. – Czippán K. (ed.): A fenntartható fogyasztásra nevelés kérdései: Tanulmányok a képzés és kommunikáció területéről. 52-59.
6. **Laki Ildikó** (2011): Sikeresség és innováció egy hagyományos iparvárosban. (Success and innovation in a traditional industrial town) In: Erdei Ferenc V. Tudományos Konferencia I. kötet. Kecskemét, Kertészeti Főiskolai Kar. 295-299.
7. **Laki Ildikó** (2010): Kistérségek változó szerepben. (The shifting role of micro-regions) In: Csapó T. – Kocsis Zs.(ed.):A településföldrajz aktuális kérdései. Szombathely. 360-371.
8. **Laki Ildikó** (2009): Paks az értékek városa. (Paks, a town of values) Budapest, Pallas Kiadó Kft.
9. **Laki Ildikó** (2008): Százhalombatta a fenntarthatóság jegyében. (Prospects for sustainability in Százhalombatta) Budapest, Pallas Kiadó Kft.
10. **Laki Ildikó** (2008): Dunaújváros a sikeresség felé. (Dunaújváros on the way to success) Budapest, Pallas Kiadó Kft.

11. **Laki Ildikó** (2007): Százhalombatta az élhető városok sorában. (Százhalombatta among liveable towns) In: Duna Térségi Kohézió. I. EU Interregionális Nemzetközi Tudományos Konferencia kötet. Dunaújváros. 59-65.

Academic journals

1. To be published: **Laki Ildikó** (2015): Magyarországi iparvárosok jelene és múltja. (The past and present of industrial towns in Hungary) *Polgári Szemle*
2. **Laki Ildikó** (2014): Százhalombatta iparvárosi szerepe a 21. században. (The industrial role of Százhalombatta in the 21st century) *Kultúra és Közösség*, 4.:27-37.
3. **Laki Ildikó** (2014): Százhalombatta sikeressége a 21. század elején. (The success of Százhalombatta at the dawn of the 21st century) *Polgári Szemle*, 3-6.:331-345.
4. **Laki Ildikó** (2011): Társadalmi fenntarthatóság Budapesten. (Social sustainability in Budapest) *Polgári Szemle*, 7.:39-52.
5. **Laki Ildikó** (2010): Térségi szereplők és térségi sajátosságok a Pilis-Dunakanyar kistérségben: kutatás a kreatív iparágak körében. (Regional actors and peculiarities in the Pilis-Danube Bend micro-region: research focusing on innovative industries) *Társadalomkutatás*, 3.:357-366.

Conference lectures related to the topic of the dissertation

1. **Laki Ildikó**: Title of presentation: Százhalombatta among the Industrial Cities. The presentation was made at the 2nd IRI Economics Conference in Komarno, 28 January 2015.
2. **Laki Ildikó**: The relationship between the dominant urban role and industry (The success of Százhalombatta at the beginning of the 21st century). The presentation was made in Budapest at the Báthory-Brassai Conference (BKK), 22 May 2014.
3. **Laki Ildikó**: A problematic legacy: the social impact of the inherited housing conditions in the former industrial towns. The presentation was made at the symposium on starter homes, housing concepts, and employment practices, 11 December 2012.
4. **Laki Ildikó**: The various types of communist industrial towns. Százhalombatta in the line of industrial towns. The presentation was made at the URBS Hungarian Town History Conference, 18 November 2009.
5. **Laki Ildikó**: Százhalombatta among liveable cities. The presentation was made at the I. EU Interregional International Professional Conference, 4 July 2007.

Other academic documents

1. **Laki Ildikó** (2013): A városfejlesztés lehetséges útjai egy Duna-menti iparváros tükrében: Százhalombatta sikeressége az ezredforduló küszöbén. (Possible urban development paths of an industrial town in the vicinity of the Danube: The success of Százhalombatta prior to the turn of the millennium)
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B88R87pnmNYxWExjZTF0Z2NwRDA/view>