EXAMINATION OF ECONOMIC-SOCIAL EFFECTS CAUSED BY THE MIGRATION OF THE UNILEVER FACTORY OF ROSZKE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of our research was to examine what social and economic effects the Unilever factory and grounds in Röszke has on the settlement, and to size up the consequences of a possible migration. Our hypotheses were the following:

Hypothesis 1: The majority of the Unilever employees come from three settlements around Roszke. Its catchment area spreads all over the county Csongrad. It is the most important residences of employees are Roszke, Szeged and Morahalom, though the catchment area of the factory is much wider, even Budapest can be found among the settlements, too.

Hypothesis 2: The employees go shopping to the groceries of Roszke on daily and weekly basis where they buy the basic foods in bigger amounts. Besides, they go to other shops, greatly contributing to the increase of income spent locally.

Hypothesis 3: The employees spend more than 10.000 HUF from their income in Roszke. The results, however, do not confirm this assumption, since 55 people chose the category under 5.000 HUF (< 20 EUR).

Hypothesis 4: While managing administrative affairs, the employees make use of the services of the settlement council. This assumption was rejected, as almost 60% of the responders do not manage their administrative affairs in Roszke at all.

Hypothesis 5: Regarding the employees with children, there are many commuters, besides local residents, who take their children to the local elementary school and nursery every day. If the factory migrated from Roszke, it would result in a significant loss in number of children in these institutions. According to the data collected by the research we have to reject a part of this hypothesis, too. There is no commuter who would take his/her children to the institutions of Roszke, and there are some local residents who chose an elementary school in Szeged to their children.

KEY WORDS: removal, migration, settlement, commuting, catchment area

INTRODUCTION

The settlement Roszke is located 15 kms from Szeged, in the south-west direction, between the backwater of the river Tisza at Gyal and the Serbian border. The small town spreads over 3.600 hectares, and the number of its population is about 3.400. The backwater of the Tisza gives natural beauty and rich stock of fish. One of the most important border stations of the country can be found here which has affected the development of the small town. There is a large number of trading and service companies, businesses.

The inhabitants of Röszke live from the agriculture, the factory unit of Unilever and also they utilize the proximity of Szeged.

We are aiming to size up what effects the Unilever company has on the settlement and thus to show the importance of its settling there. The factory has been at present in the local economy for long years. We would like to study how great its social and economic effect is. After the research we are trying to estimate the possible consequences of its removal from the area.

I would underline its role in reduction of unemployment which is a very important economic effect. One of the most significant current problems is unemployment. The Unilever Company employs 230 employees so it stands out from the local employers.

Local employment supports the increase of the income spent locally which affects the local enterprises positively. The income spent at the local small or medium-sized enterprises increases their annual revenue and thus also the one of the local council. From this revenue the local council maintains and develops the infrastructure contributing to the increase in the local standard of living.

In addition to the reduction of employment, the local business tax paid by the company is an important source of income. It is a substantial amount in this current situation of state budget since a half of the income comes from Unilever which means 50 million HUF annually for the settlement. The local council assigns this money to maintain itself, to improve the residents' living conditions and to other improvements.

The presence of the company Unilever has an important social effect, too. The employment stops the social tension caused by the hopeless feeling of being „in periphery" without working opportunities (Toth J. 1988). It helps a lot of families improve their financial position providing them with permanent income. It is interesting to analyze parallelism of international people's and knowledge flow. Are they going together or separately? That is why very important to keep companies in a country, mainly in a small rural settlement. (Gal 2006)

While preparing for the research several sources of the specialized literature proved to be essential: (Balogh 1996) (Barta, Enyedi 1981) (Dicken 1998) (Bernek 2002), (Bobvos, Siket 2011) (Enyedi 2000) (Gaspar 1993) (Laufer 2005) (Lengyel, Rechnitzer 2004) (Rechnitzer 1993) (Szabo, Pomazi 2003) (Toth 2002) (Toth 2003).

It is the tetrahedron-model elaborated by Toth Jozsef (Toth 1988) which shows the connection between the small town Roszke and the company Unilever from environmental, social, economic and infrastructural points of view. The essence of the model is that changes in any of the four areas affect the other areas, as well. If the company moved its operation to another settlement, it would affect the economic life negatively at once. Perhaps it would cause dismissals, and would mean a huge loss in tax for the local council. A change of such measure in the economy would affect the social sphere immediately. The permanent support provided by the company for the local inhabitants and institutions would stop, unemployment would rise, whereas the income spent locally (by both the local residents and the commuters) would lessen, situation of certain families would be in crisis (if it is their only source of income). Actually a significant stress would affect the local society. If this change really happened in these two spheres, the local infrastructure, too, would suffer its negative consequences. The local council would lose an important source of revenue. Besides its own maintenance, there would not be enough money to keep roads, pipes and public spaces in repair, to improve its institutions, to purchase new facilities, to develop human resources, to organize programmes, etc. Finally, this process would involve the environment, too. Out of the four spheres it would be the only one to benefit from the possible removal of the company, since the environmental impact would be reduced this way. The noise and air pollution which have harmful effects on the population would lessen, the traffic would decrease and last but not least this change would affect positively the state of roads. It is a social requirement and trend in Central and Eastern Europe. (Gál 2003) All in all, the tetrahedron-model can be excellently utilized to demonstrate the consequences of a possible removal in case of Roszke, too.

In our research work we aimed at either proving or rejecting the following points of hypothesis:

1. The majority of the Unilever employees come from three settlements: Roszke, Szeged, Morahalom. Its catchment area spreads all over the county Csongrad.
2. The employees go shopping to the groceries of Roszke on daily and weekly basis where they buy the basic foods, meat, vegetables, sweets, fizzy drinks in bigger amounts. Besides, they go to other shops, as well, greatly contributing to the increase of income spent locally. This way they contribute to help local enterprises.

3. The employees spend more than 10.000 HUF from their income in Roszke
4. While managing administrative affairs, the employees make use of the services of the settlement council (if it is possible at all).
5. Regarding the employees with children, there are many commuters, besides local residents, who take their children to the local elementary school and nursery every day. The parents are satisfied both with the quality of education at the local elementary school and with the quality of care at the nursery and kindergarten. If the factory removed from Roszke, it would result in a significant loss in number of children in these institutions.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

We applied a questionnaire form with the help of an interviewer. The examination was based on 154 questionnaire forms which were filled in in the community areas of the company. The employees were ready to cooperate. However, the answers showed the expected results only to some extent.

The questionnaire included altogether 18 questions which were grouped in four main categories: questions on places of residence and transport, on everyday affairs, on children's education and daily care, and finally, the ones on some demographical data.

It is difficult to process open questions, and they require subjective evaluation since the responder gives the answer in his/her own words (Majoros 2004). For this reason we asked only closed questions where the responder could choose from different ready options. There were simpler questions where it was necessary to choose only one option, though we applied the more complex solution, as well, where there is the opportunity to answer to the category „Other" (Majoros 2004) (Falus, Olle 2008). We used a third possible solution, too, in the frame of which more answers could be marked from the list.

We aimed at getting information on numerical data, too, when we inquired about the income spent locally per month, or when we asked about children's education.

We examined the responders from the aspect of satisfaction which involved questions on the services of the local elementary school, kindergarten and nursery. In case of the elementary school we utilized a scale from 1 to 15 where they have to mark the measure of satisfaction. In the other case which was in connection with the care in the kindergarten and nursery, it was enough to choose the subjective grade of satisfaction from only one list.

The exact evaluation of the answers is one of the most important tasks. The well-formed questions make it possible to carry out an excellent processing of statistical data (Majoros 2004).

Data processing has been executed with the SPSS programme system which is one of the most widespread programme systems in statistical analysis. Due to its frequent use, a lot of analyses have been accomplished with this programme since it offers the opportunity for comparative interpretation (Janosa 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: We assumed that the Unilever employees come from mainly three settlements: Roszke, Morahalom and Szeged. Besides, they commute from other settlements of Csongrad county too. As a result of the research it turned out that regarding the residence of the employees, other settlements of Csongrad county are involved with much wider importance than we have supposed earlier. Most commuters come from Szeged: 55 people. The number of local residents is 48, while 20 employees commute from Morahalom. There was a fairly big deviation in case of other settlements; even Budapest has been mentioned, too. Altogether 31 people come from other places, among them we can list: Bordany, Sandorfalva, Ulles, Asotthalom, Tiszasziget, Domaszek, Szatymaz and Klarafalva.

Hypothesis 2: Our opinion is that the employees go shopping to the shops of Roszke on daily and weekly basis. Before or after the shift they buy food or other goods in the local shops, thus contributing to the amount of income spent locally. The answers partially coincide with our preliminary opinion. 68,2% of the responders frequently do their shopping in the local groceries. They buy basic foods, meat, sweets, vegetables, fruit, cleaning and washing products, as we supposed. On the other hand, they hardly visit other shops in Roszke, beside groceries. It is typical that only local residents go to other types of shops. It is proved by the result that 58,4% of the responders (90 people) do not go to any shops there at all. They say that they do their shopping in the shops of their own settlements where they buy the above-mentioned products and services. thus our expectation that the Unilever employees represent a significant number of customers has been rejected.

Hypothesis 3: We assumed that the responders spend more than 10.000 HUF a month, as an average. Those who do not go shopping frequently in Roszke have been withdrawn. The result shows that most responders chose the category under 5.000 HUF, so our hypothesis has been rejected again. It is a further interconnection that the low income categories were marked mainly by the commuters, whereas the higher ones were marked by the local employees. The proportion of income spent locally by the commuters is not high so the company's removal would not mean a significant loss in business for the local shops. The employees of Roszke would continue to prefer the local shops independently from the removal of Unilever.

Hypothesis 4: The employees can utilize the opening hours of the local council to manage their official affairs. 57,9% of the responders do not do it locally, consequently there would not be a significant loss in clients in any of the institutions after termination of the employment by Unilever.

Hypothesis 5: We think that not only the children of the employees living in Roszke learn at the local elementary school but also the children of some commuters. When commuting they take their children to Roszke and after work they go home together. If the child is younger, the parents employ the services of the local kindergarten and nursery. We assumed the number of these children high, thus the termination of the working place would result in a reduction in children in the local institutions. As a result, some teachers would be dismissed or more groups would be in one room. The parents are satisfied with the quality of education, they think it rather excellent.

First, we intended to get to this conclusion in connection with the pupils of Orban Denes Elementary School. The answers showed that 56 people cannot be put under examination since they do not have children. The majority of the subjects are in their thirties and forties so their children do not belong to the examined age group. Only an extremely low number of answers could be utilized which did not bring the expected result. Out of 41 pupils only 26 were the children of local employees. Out of them 17 go to the local elementary school, while 9 chose Szeged. In addition, there were no commuters who would take their children to Roszke. Our assumption has not been proved.

Secondly, we examined the education at the kindergarten, nursery. The number of employable answers was very low. Altogether 28 children belonged to this age group. Similarly to the previous group of questions there is not a single commuter who would prefer the local institution, so 16 children should be excluded from the examination. The remaining 12 children, who are children of local employees, go to the local institution in 100%. The hypothesis has been rejected in this case, too.

In the end, the evaluation of the level of satisfaction proved to be right: the parents were satisfied with the work in the elementary school, in the kindergarten and the nursery, as well.

The results rejected the assumption that the loss in children would be significant if the company were liquidated. None of the questioned commuters chose any of the local institutions, and also there are some local employees who preferred certain institutions of

Szeged. In this case there would not be teachers' dismissals or group fusion if the company employment moved to another settlement, though this problem could not be avoided in connection with migration.

CONCLUSION

All in all, the social, economic role of Unilever is significant from the point of view of the settlement and also the area. Although a possible removal of the factory would not result a great loss in clients and children in the institutions of Roszke, it would decrease the working possibilities and also it would terminate the financial resources and support of the firm. It is a real purpose for the future of both the inhabitants and the local council to maintain and strengthen the partnership and cooperation even more.

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