

3. SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Program leader: **Dr. Gábor Kozma**, DSc

Aims of the program

Development of research meeting the new challenges of social geography (human geography) together with preserving the valuable traditions. Maintaining and further developing the research orientations of modern regional development with following continuously the new research methods.

Research fields associated with the program: social geography, regional development, tourism.

Role of already performed research in the program

Research of the teachers associated with the PhD program is wide ranging considering both geographical, regional development disciplines and the selected geographical regions. Regarding the selection of geographical regions, although it is focused on Northeast Hungary it still covers the entire country and in many respects it extends to Europe and even other continents. Three lines are markedly separated in the thematic diversity. One of them focuses on traditional social and economic geographical research with up-to-date content and methods (demography and settlement geography, village geography, lifestyle studies, regional relations of industry, regional effects of tourism); the other opens towards completely new social geographical sub-disciplines (geopolitics, cross-border relations, labour market studies); while the third contributes to the scientific grounding of regional and settlement development. Considering the methods, apart from using the officially collected statistical data (e.g. Regional Information System, company information databases) “soft” study techniques (questionnaire survey, interviews) taken from social sciences are applied increasingly. Geoinformatic and modern data processing methods also gain focus increasingly in the analyses.

Research areas of the teachers in the PhD program cover the following fields:

- Interethnic research in the NE part of the Carpathian Basin;
- Euroregions as successful participants of international co-operation;
- Transformation of village space in the northeastern regions of the Carpathian Basin;
- Research grounding the regional and settlement development of East Hungary;
- International migration and minorities;

- Employment policy issues in Hajdú-Bihar county;
- Studying the marketing policy of local governments in Hajdú-Bihar county
- Recent research directions in political geography; geopolitics in Central Europe;
- Human resources in East and Northeast Hungary;
- Regional characteristics of the transformation of the industrial structure;
- Specifics of today's urbanization;
- Inequalities in social-economic spatial processes;
- Foreign trade characteristics of Eastern-Central countries;
- Studying the spatial effects of tourism.

Topic groups of the program

The scientific activity of the PhD program since 1990 can be grouped into the following topics.

1. Focusing on the regional and settlement development of different regional levels is justified by Hungary joining the European Union. Colleagues of the Department regularly participate and give lectures at Alföld Congresses. Research at the department significantly contributed to the documentation of the intensifying economic-social changes and also to the development of the methodology of delineating underdeveloped regions. The success of the work of the Department is indicated by that the colleagues were involved in creating several county regional development concepts and programmes and settlement development concepts and also in working out documents steering the transformation of villages into towns.
2. The detailed study of Debrecen, the second city of Hungary, the regional centre of the Tiszántúl and the scientific analysis of the changes in the last decades are included among the tasks in the program. Associated research results were presented at several scientific meetings and were published in three volumes entitled „Studies on the urban geography of Debrecen”. The lecturers at the Department have been honoured to take part in working out several documents founding the development of Debrecen and its wider environment (e.g. Integrated Urban Development Strategy, Integrated Settlement Development Strategy).
3. The third major field of scientific study at the Department is research of crossborder relationship and the possible ways of co-operation. This includes both direct relationship and co-operation in joint research programs with other universities abroad. Colleagues of the Department worked in several INTERREG projects and aim to become an important scientific base for the main priority of the Regional Co-operation of the EU.
4. Human resources present a very important basis for recent development therefore – co-operating with the Institute of Education at the Faculty of Arts – great emphasis is given to expose the regional differences in the education level of the population and

associated with it the employment conditions with special regards to the Roma population.

5. The fifth focus point of the Department is closely associated with the recent industrialisation of the Eastern-Central European region started after 2000. The appearance of global value chains in Hungary, the development of the sub-contractor system and the regional consequences of solutions associated with the „Industry 4.0” programme have been studied.

Program courses

- Methodology of social geographical research (Károly Teperics)
- Data collection in social geography (Károly Teperics)
- Human resources and regional development (Károly Teperics)
- Geographical diffusion of innovation (Gábor Kozma)
- Migration and Hungary – Migration (Mrs Pál Eke)
- Problems in the social, economic development of East Hungary (Ernő Molnár)
- Geopolitics (Zsolt Radics)
- Regional processes (Gábor Kozma)
- Regional development inequalities (János Péntes)
- Methodology of studying urban functions from regional planning point of view (Zoltán Bujdosó)
- Crime geography (Szabolcs Mátyás)
- Development possibilities in borderside regions (Klára Szilágyi-Czimre)