# COMPLEX ANALYSIS OF THE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CSONGRÁD-CSANÁD COUNTY

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The study focuses on the county of Csongrád-Csanád and its districts, looking at the relative social and economic development of the districts and the direction of territorial changes in each district. The territorial development differences of the districts of Csongrád-Csanád county were mapped in two years, 2014 and 2020. Based on the indicators defined in Government Decree 290/2014 (XI. 26.), new indicators were developed. Subsequently, the economic, social, infrastructural and employment data of the districts were examined using a complex development indicator. The data for the analysis of the districts were provided by the Regional Statistical Information Database of the Central Statistical Office (KSH) and the National Spatial Development and Planning Information System (TeIR). The county covered by the study comprises seven districts: the districts of Csongrádi, Hódmezővásárhelyi, Kisteleki, Makói, Mórahalmi, Szeged and Szentes.

**Keywords:** complex development index, Csongrád-Csanád County, district, territorial investigation

## Introduction

### Territorial inequalities in international and national contexts

Spatial inequalities are the result of certain concentrations, such as globalisation, trends triggered by internal phenomena, clusters or the emergence of growth/development poles (Antonescu, 2012). Furthermore, inequalities in spatial development are influenced by favourable or unfavourable natural conditions, as well as landscape characteristics or even agricultural characteristics (Ritter, 2008).

The European economic and social space is highly fragmented (Horváth, 2004). The Western and Northern regions are more developed than the peripheral Eastern and Southern regions (Petrakos, 2008). The Western and Central European regions continue to develop dynamically (Heidenreich, 2003). The risks of poverty and deprivation are concentrated in Eastern Europe and employment risks in Southern Europe (Heidenreich, 2022). In the EU, regional disparities in economic performance and income are more extreme than in the US and Japan (Madanipour et al, 2022). Regional economic disparities are a threat to economic development, social cohesion, and political stability (Iammarino et al., 2019). The reasons for differences in economic structure, population composition, infrastructure, and settlement networks are related to the historical development of the continent. The territorial structure and development of each country has evolved differently. In polycentric countries such as Italy, Germany and Spain, the development of transport infrastructure and the industrial boom have affected several urban areas. These regions have followed almost similar development paths, with cultural, political, and administrative institutions taking decentralised forms. In single-centre countries such as France, Austria, Hungary, most of the Central and Eastern European countries and, to some extent, the United Kingdom, the peripheral regions outside the dominant capital cities were weak (Horváth, 2004). Three fundamental changes in the conditions for regional development in Hungary occurred in the short period after 1990. The emergence of a market economy put local economies under competitive pressure. Technological progress and changes in the economic structure have put sectors such as heavy industry at a disadvantage, while others such as business services and knowledge-based industries have emerged. These sectors have subsequently been forced to adapt to external economic influences (Enyedi, 2004b). Different regions of the country have responded to these changes in different ways. Successful regions adapted quickly, while large areas experienced economic collapse, poverty and mass unemployment. As a result, in Hungary, the dynamic regions of Western Transdanubia have expanded, while the industrial region of Borsod has added to the backward areas. The market economy has further increased social disparities, as well as territorial disparities in income, employment and health care (Enyedi, 2004a).

Today, disadvantaged areas are concentrated in the majority of counties in Northern Hungary and the Lowlands, typically in small rural areas (Komarek, 2019; Virág, 2006). These areas have been negatively affected by the consequences of the urban development ideas of the 1960s and 1970s known as zoning. As a consequence, in some parts of these areas, we can observe contrasting demographic and social trends. The resident population is rising due to an increase in the birth rate, which is linked to an increase in the number and proportion of gypsies. Within the total population, the increase in the Roma population is associated with labour market exclusion, very low employment and deepening poverty (Virág, 2006, 2009). The counties of Western and Central Transdanubia and the capital are among the most developed in the country. These areas have high investments, higher industrial production, lower unemployment rates, and more effective R&D spending. As a result, the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is also higher (Komarek, 2019; Komarek, 2023).

Territorial inequality is not just a problem in Hungary, but a global problem. These disparities are particularly evident in developing countries, which show constant growth and vulnerability. Tackling territorial disparities is an important task for the social and environmental sustainability of the planet (Fernandez-Manso et al, 2010).

### Csongrád-Csanád County

Geographically, Csongrád-Csanád County is located in the Alföld region (Figure 1) It is bordered by Bács-Kiskun County in the West, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Country in the North and Békés County in the East. Due to its border location, it borders Serbia (Southern Region) in the South and Romania (Arad and Timis counties) in the South-East. Csongrád-Csanád County forms the Southern Great Plain region with Békés and Bács-Kiskun Counties.

**Figure 1** Location of Csongrád-Csanád county
Source: Internet 1

The county is made up of 60 settlements. Szeged and Hódmezővásárhely have the title of towns with county status, and 8 other settlements have town status. One of the most important characteristics of the settlement system of the county is its farm character. Of the 60 settlements in the county, 32 are considered to be farms according to the 2011 census (Csongrád-Csanád Megye Előzetes Integrált Területi Programja 2021–2027, 2021). According to the current Government Decree 290/2014 (XI. 26.) on the classification of beneficiary districts, all districts in Csongrád-Csanád County are beneficiary districts except the Szeged district. The only district to be developed is Kistelek district. None of the districts is considered to be a district to be developed with a complex programme. Csongrád-Csanád Vármegye is the lowest-lying area of the country, where agricultural land dominates the land use with a share of 65.8%. It is one of the most important areas in the country in agricultural terms (Csongrád-Csanád megye területfejlesztési koncepció, 2020).

## Materials and methods

### Database and methodology for measuring complex development

The districts of Csongrád-Csanád county are compared using the indicators of the Government Decree 290/2014 (XI. 26.), creating new indicators. If no data is available for an indicator, it is not used or is replaced by another indicator. The data set used for the calculation of the complex indicator measuring the socio-economic and infrastructural development of the districts is summarised in Table 1. The indicators were compiled using data from the Regional Statistics of the Information Database of the Central Statistical Office (KSH) and the National Spatial Development and Planning Information System (TEIR).

### Step 1

Transforming the basic indicators into a scale of the same scope using a normalization process based on the following formula:

$$fa_{i,j,norm} = \frac{fa_{i,j} - \min\left(fa_{i,j}\right)}{\max\left(fa_{i,j}\right) - \min\left(fa_{i,j}\right)} \cdot 100$$

where:   $fa_{i,j,norm}$ – normalized base indicator; $fa_{i,j}$ – basic indicator; $\min\left(fa_{i,j}\right)$ – minimum value of the basic indicator; $\max\left(fa_{i,j}\right)$ – maximum value of the basic indicator

For those variables that have a negative impact on the development of settlements, such as the proportion of registered job seekers from the permanent population of working age, we used the reverse formula, that is, we subtracted the normalized base indicator from the highest value of the base indicator and divided it by the range.

**Table 1** Indicators used for the complex development assessment

| Name of indicators |
|---|
| 1. Economic indicators |
|    a) Registered enterprises (number/1000 inhabitants) |
|    b) Total number of nights spent (nights/1000 inhabitants) |
|    c) Registered capital of enterprises (1000 HUF/inhabitant) |
|    d) Registered enterprises in services (pcs/100 inhabitants) |
|    e) Local government business tax revenue (1000 HUF/inhabitant) |
|    f) Members of creative cultural communities (persons/100 inhabitants) |
| 2. Infrastructure indicators |
|    a) Dwellings connected to the public drinking water supply (%) |
|    b) Dwellings connected to public sewerage network (%) |
|    c) Household gas consumers (persons/100 dwellings) |
|    d) Completion of municipal pavements (%) |
|    e) Completion of municipal roads (%) |
|    f) Internet subscriptions on xDSL network (pcs/1000 inhabitants) |
| 3. Social and living conditions indicators |
|    a) Dwellings built during the year (pcs/1000 dwellings) |
|    b) Number of cars per thousand inhabitants (pcs) |
|    c) Internal migration balance, per thousand inhabitants (‰) |
|    d) Natural increase, decrease (‰) |
|    e) PAYE tax payers, per 100 inhabitants (persons) |
|    f) Net domestic income per inhabitant (HUF) |
|    g) Population aged 65 and over (persons/100 persons aged 0–14) |
|    h) Average monthly number of recipients of regular social assistance (from 1 March 2015, health care and childcare allowance) (persons/1000 inhabitants) |
|    i) Disadvantaged preschool children (%) |
|    j) Disadvantaged primary school pupils in full-time school (%) |
| 4. Employment indicators |
|    a) Registered jobseekers (persons/100 persons aged 15–64) |
|    b) Employed in high-prestige employment groups (%) |
|    c) Registered job seekers with 8 or fewer years of primary education (%) |
|       Registered jobseekers aged under 25 (%) |
|    e) Registered jobseekers aged 45 and over (%) |

Source: own editing based on Government Decree 290/2014 (26. XI.)

## Step 2

Calculate group indicators: the average value of the basic indicators within a group gives the value of the group indicator of that group based on the following formula:

$$fa_i = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{j=1}^{n} fa_{i,j,norm}$$

where: $fa_i$ – group indicator; $f_{ai,j,norm}$ – normalized base indicator; $n$ – number of indicators in a group

## Step 3

Calculation of a complex indicator: the average value of the four group indicators gives the value of the developmental complex indicator based on the following formula:

$$fi = \frac{1}{m}\sum_{i=1}^{m} fa_i$$

where: $fa_i$ – group indicator; $f_i$ – complex indicator; $m$ – number of group indicators

## Results and discussions

### Economic indicators

In terms of economic development (GDP per capita) of counties, the top and bottom rankings were stable in the 2010s. The least economically developed counties were Nógrád, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Békés, while Budapest and Győr-Moson-Sopron were consistently in the lead. However, for the other counties, there was a significant change in the ranking, with a spectacular drop in Csongrád-Csanád Country (Zsibók, 2020). When analysing the complex development index for economic indicators (Table 2), Szeged district took first place in Csongrád-Csanád County in both periods under examination. The outstanding performance of the Szeged district is due to the district centre, Szeged, where the University of Szeged and the service sector are very dominant (Vida, 2012). It is important to note that Csongrád-Csanád Vármegye follows Budapest in the ranking in terms of research – and development-related places (Páger, 2020). The knowledge base concentrated in the county, especially in the Szeged urban area, is significant both domestically and internationally, as it accounts for 8.7% of the country's total R&D jobs (Lengyel et al., 2018; Páger, 2020).

Szentes ranked second in terms of the group average calculated on the basis of the CDI for economic indicators. The city's outstanding performance is due, among other things, to its stable municipal administration, its extensive national political and professional contacts, which result in an outstandingly good advocacy capacity, and its balanced and cooperative local public life (Velkey et al., 2021). It is also important to note that Szentes has the largest industrial park in Csongrád-Csanád County, with more than 150 ha (Csongrád-Csanád megye területfejlesztési koncepció, 2020).

Every year, the Csongrád County Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the daily newspaper Délmagyarország publish a top 100 list of businesses based on their annual net profit. Based on this list, the spatial location of enterprises in Csongrád-Csanád County was examined. Based on the 2020 business data, more than 60% of the top 100 most successful businesses are in Szeged or the Szeged region. Of the first 100 enterprises, 15 are located in the district of Hódmezővásárhely and 9 in the district of Szentes. 6% of the companies in the top 100 are located in the Mórahalmi district, 5% in the Makó district and 2% in the Csongrád district. Kistelek district is the only one without a company in the top 100 (TOP 100 kiadvány, 2021).

The economic indicators include the number of nights spent in tourism (pcs/1000 inhabitants). According to the Regional Development Concept of Csongrád-Csanád County (2020), tourism is one of the most important sectors in the county. Among the surveyed districts, the city of Szeged has a well-developed tourism infrastructure. Domestically, the prestige of Szeged as an urban destination is growing (Juray, 2008). The Hungarikums and thematic tours are prominent in Szeged (Urbánné and Szabó, 2016). The county's intellectual potential and economic life provide the basis for the development of professional tourism, with most conferences in the fields of biology and medicine being held in Szeged. Health tourism is also favoured by the county's rich thermal and medicinal water resources (Csongrád-Csanád megye területfejlesztési koncepció, 2020).

### Infrastructure indicators

As regards the transport infrastructure of Csongrád-Csanád County, the county is crossed by important road connections for the main international traffic routes, such as the M5 motorway and the M43 motorway. M44 motorway improves the expressway connections in the Szentes area (Csongrád-Csanád County Preliminary Integrated Territorial Programme 2021–2027, 2021). Nevertheless, Szentes is in a peripheral position in terms of transport, as it is far from the centres of economic modernisation in the country (Velkey et al., 2021). In the case of the Mórahalmi district, there is no direct public transport connection between the settlement and the district centre, and thus social exclusion is observed due to transport (Lieszkovszky, 2020). The transport-geographical characteristics of the Kistelek district include

**Table 2** Group average and ranking of districts based on CDI for economic indicators, 2014; 2020

| Order | Area | 2014 (CDI) | Order | Area | 2020 (CDI) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Szegedi | 63.22 | 1. | Szegedi | 62.17 |
| 2. | Mórahalmi | 52.59 | 2. | Szentesi | 50.49 |
| 3. | Makói | 34.27 | 3. | Mórahalmi | 48.20 |
| 4. | Szentesi | 32.58 | 4. | Kisteleki | 30.19 |
| 5. | Kisteleki | 30.78 | 5. | Makói | 24.84 |
| 6. | Csongrádi | 26.23 | 6. | Hódmezővásárhelyi | 23.60 |
| 7. | Hódmezővásárhelyi | 20.23 | 7. | Csongrádi | 23.57 |

Source: own calculation and edition, 2023

**Table 3** Group average and ranking of districts based on CDI for infrastructure indicators, 2014; 2020

| Order | Area | 2014 (CDI) | Order | Area | 2020 (CDI) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Szegedi | 94.11 | 1. | Szegedi | 83.86 |
| 2. | Makói | 76.40 | 2. | Makói | 70.15 |
| 3. | Hódmezővásárhelyi | 73.51 | 3. | Hódmezővásárhelyi | 67.41 |
| 4. | Szentesi | 70.59 | 4. | Szentesi | 67.41 |
| 5. | Csongrádi | 64.29 | 5. | Csongrádi | 64.79 |
| 6. | Kisteleki | 33.64 | 6. | Kisteleki | 32.59 |
| 7. | Mórahalmi | 16.56 | 7. | Mórahalmi | 13.75 |

Source: own calculation and edition, 2023

**Table 4** Group average and ranking of districts based on the CDI for social and living conditions indicators, 2014; 2020

| Order | Area | 2014 (CDI) | Order | Area | 2020 (CDI) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Szegedi | 86.69 | 1. | Szegedi | 79.62 |
| 2. | Mórahalmi | 61.26 | 2. | Mórahalmi | 70.88 |
| 3. | Hódmezővásárhelyi | 61.09 | 3. | Hódmezővásárhelyi | 57.61 |
| 4. | Szentesi | 51.34 | 4. | Szentesi | 44.19 |
| 5. | Csongrádi | 37.64 | 5. | Csongrádi | 43.55 |
| 6. | Kisteleki | 33.75 | 6. | Makói | 40.05 |
| 7. | Makói | 30.03 | 7. | Kisteleki | 21.70 |

Source: own calculation and edition, 2023

the crossing of the Budapest-Szeged railway line and the M5 motorway (Járási Esélyegyenlőségi Program, 2015). In the Hódmezővásárhely district, the main road 47 bypassing the northern part of the Hódmezővásárhely area was opened in 2018 (Csongrád-Csanád megye területfejlesztési koncepció, 2020).

According to the CDI for infrastructure indicators (Table 3), the Szeged district ranked first in both periods under review, but in 2020 the indicator deteriorated compared to 2014. A significant drop is observed in the districts of Kistelek and Mórahalmi. Both districts have extensive farmland, which results in a much lower proportion of dwellings connected to the public water supply and sewerage network, and the number of household gas consumers is also lower than in the other districts of the county. Both districts also have very low levels of municipal road construction due to their farmland character.

## Social and living conditions indicators

The Szeged district ranked first in the indicators of social and living conditions (Table 4). The Szeged district is followed by the districts of Mórahalmi, Hódmezővásárhely, Szentes and Csongrád in 2014 and 2020. Makói and Kisteleki districts were ranked the last two positions in the period under review were.

The number of newly built flats was the lowest in the mid-2010s, but then increased steadily, reaching its peak in 2020, with a total of 1,249 flats built in the county in 2020. 82% of the flats built are related to Szeged. Szeged is followed by Hódmezővásárhely, where 4.8% of the flats were built in the year under review (TOP 100 kiadvány, 2021). In 2020, the immigration balance was negative for Hódmezővásárhely, Szeged and Szentes. The indicator was most favourable for the district of Kistelek. However, it is important to note that in disadvantaged areas (such as Kisteleki district), immigration may be in the hope of a cheaper life, but in the long run this may increase poverty in the settlement. Natural reproduction was negative in both years for all settlements. The share of disadvantaged kindergarten children and the share of disadvantaged primary school pupils in full-time education were both particularly high in Kistelek and Makó districts in 2014 and 2020.

## Employment indicators

The Szeged district performed exceptionally well in terms of employment indicators in the periods under review (Table 5). The largest employer in the county is the University of Szeged, with about 8,700 employees. The Szeged School District Centre is the third and PICK SZEGED Salami and Meat Factory Zrt. is the fourth largest employer in 2020. The district of Szentes was able to improve its position in the ranking and also in the complex employment development indicator. The HUNGERIT Poultry Processing and Food Industry Zrt. is located in Szentes, which is the fifth largest employer in the county (Csongrád-Csanád megye területfejlesztési koncepció, 2020). Makó and Kistelek districts were ranked the last two positions. The proportion of people employed in high-prestige employment groups is the lowest in these two districts. A contributing factor to the unfavourable employment indicators is the marked lack of labour market supply on the eastern periphery of the Makó district. However, the second largest employer in Csongrád-Csanád County is ContiTech Fluid Automotive Hungária Kft., which is located in Makó (Csongrád-Csanád megye területfejlesztési koncepció, 2020).

## Complex development ranking

On the basis of the group averages calculated on the the CDI (Table 6), the Szeged district took first place in both years under study. The Szeged district is highly ranked thanks to the district centre, Szeged, where the University of Szeged has a significant impact, as it has an outstanding research human resource, also by international standards. The University of Szeged is linked to a number of research centres (e.g. ELI-ALPS Research Institute, MTA Szeged Regional Committee, MTA Szeged Biological Research Centre), which together provide the R&D base of the county.

**Table 5**    Group average and ranking of districts based on CDI for employment indicators, 2014; 2020

| Order | Area | 2014 (CDI) | Order | Area | 2020 (CDI) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Szegedi | 91.09 | 1. | Szegedi | 91.68 |
| 2. | Hódmezővásárhelyi | 73.15 | 2. | Hódmezővásárhelyi | 64.56 |
| 3. | Csongrádi | 57.40 | 3. | Szentesi | 52.04 |
| 4. | Szentesi | 48.78 | 4. | Csongrádi | 42.84 |
| 5. | Mórahalmi | 28.32 | 5. | Mórahalmi | 32.55 |
| 6. | Kisteleki | 27.86 | 6. | Makói | 23.77 |
| 7. | Makói | 22.91 | 7. | Kisteleki | 22.34 |

Source: own calculation and edition, 2023

**Table 6**    Group average and ranking of districts based on KMF, 2014; 2020

| Order | Area | 2014 (CDI) | Order | Area | 2020 (CDI) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Szegedi | 80.78 | 1. | Szegedi | 79.33 |
| 2. | Hódmezővásárhelyi | 57.00 | 2. | Szentesi | 53.53 |
| 3. | Szentesi | 50.82 | 3. | Hódmezővásárhelyi | 53.30 |
| 4. | Csongrádi | 46.39 | 4. | Csongrádi | 43.69 |
| 5. | Makói | 40.90 | 5. | Mórahalmi | 41.34 |
| 6. | Mórahalmi | 39.69 | 6. | Makói | 39.70 |
| 7. | Kisteleki | 31.51 | 7. | Kisteleki | 26.71 |

Source: Source: own calculation and edition, 2023

It is also important to note that the Szeged district is home to the majority of the county's service sector, mechanical engineering, rubber products and construction industries (Csongrád-Csanád megye területfejlesztési koncepció, 2020). Szeged also has a dominant transport, economic-geographical and administrative role. Its hinterland covers almost the whole county (CSONGRÁD-CSANÁD MEGYE Előzetes Integrált Területi Programja 2021-2027, 2021).

Szentes district was able to improve its ranking and complex development index indicator. The city is a typical agricultural town in the lowlands, where after the 1960s modern large-scale horticulture based on thermal water, which is still of great importance today, was established (Velkey et al., 2021). The district of Szentes has significantly improved its economic and employment indicators. In terms of economic indicators, the number of overnight stays (persons/1000 inhabitants) and the registered capital of enterprises (pcs/1000 inhabitants) have increased, with a concurrent increase in local government business tax revenues (1000 HUF/inhabitant). Within employment indicators, the number of registered jobseekers decreased.

The economy of the Hódmezővásárhely district is very diverse, with a strong presence of agriculture and food industry (Csongrád-Csanád megye területfejlesztési koncepció, 2020). Nevertheless, in the list of economic indicators based on the KMF, the district ranked last in 2014 and second to last in 2020. The district had the lowest number of registered enterprises (pcs/1,000 inhabitants). The district centre, Hódmezővásárhely, is strong in terms of regional institutional functions and has a number of advantages due to its spatial links with the county capital (Csongrád-Csanád megye területfejlesztési koncepció, 2020).

The Csongrád district performed best among the indicator groups for the employment indicators, and in the other indicator groups it ranked in the bottom three. In Csongrád-Csanád County, 2% of the companies in the top 100 are located in the district. In terms of tourism, Csongrád, the centre

of Csongrád County, is rich in surface water and natural assets. Among the factors that determine tourism, it is important to highlight the Csongrád wine region (Urbánné and Szabó, 2016).

Mórahalom, the centre of the Mórahalom district, has undergone a unique development in recent decades (Kis-Förgeteg, 2017). This is due to its small steps forward, based on a well-thought-out strategy, and successful tendering activities (Perger, 2015). The local economy has been boosted by rethinking the importance of natural resources, especially medicinal water, and by making conscious decisions and taking steps to use them. The development of the spa has transformed and expanded the role of the town (Perger, 2015; Martyin, 2015).

The Makó district has a prominent agricultural sector and the associated manufacturing and food industry, as well as significant transport and commercial activity. The current situation in Makó district is largely contributed to by the unfavourable employment indicators, as there is a marked shortage of labour market supply on the eastern periphery of the district (Csongrád-Csanád County Spatial Development Concept, 2020). In terms of social and living conditions, the proportion of disadvantaged kindergarten children and the proportion of disadvantaged primary school pupils were the highest in Makó district, along with the Kistelek district, in both 2014 and 2020.

According to the currently in force Government Decree 290/2014 (XI. 26.) on the classification of beneficiary districts, in Csongrád-Csanád County only the district of Kistelek is a district to be developed. In terms of the economy of the district, Kistelek district is the only one from which no enterprise was included in the top 100 enterprises of Csongrád-Csanád County. The most significant company in the district is the cable factory (Csongrád-Csanád megye területfejlesztési koncepció, 2020). In the context of the social and living conditions indicator, it is important to mention the role of persistent social exclusion in the district, as the gypsy ethnic minority of 430 people live in the Máriatelep segregation of the village of Baks, which

has a population of approximately 2,000 (Hős, 2015.). More than 60% of the people living here has no regular income and almost 50% have no primary education (Járási Esélyegyenlőségi Program, 2015).

## Recommendations

In order to promote the economic and social development of the districts of Csongrád-Csanád County, it is important to develop micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in the region, which is essential for job creation and the stimulation of the local economy (Káposzta, 2015). To attract and stimulate the creation of enterprises, it is necessary to develop the appropriate infrastructure, such as the development of existing industrial parks in the region and the creation of new ones. In the county, Mórahalom is a good example of how tourism can help a town to develop and expand its role. The region is rich in natural and man-made values, which creates opportunities for the development of many forms of tourism. The strengthening of rural tourism in the county will ensure the preservation of rural tourism in villages and farms, the preservation of the traditional rural environment, agriculture, folk culture, architecture, and crafts. All these contribute to increasing the population retention of rural areas in Csongrád-Csanád County (Káposzta, 2015). The development of tourism also requires the creation of an appropriate background infrastructure, i.e. support for the creation of an adequate number and quality of accommodation and catering establishments, and the promotion of cooperation between catering establishments. The agricultural sector in the County benefits from a long agricultural history and favourable agro-ecological conditions. The strengthening of the region's agriculture can be achieved, for example, through a shift to organic farming, the production of organic products and efforts to process and consume locally, which will contribute to the revitalisation of the local economy by creating jobs and keeping incomes local.

## Conclusions

According to the currently in force Government Decree 290/2014 (XI. 26.) on the classification of beneficiary districts, all districts except Szeged district are beneficiary, and Kistelek district is the only district to be developed in Csongrád-Csanád County. In terms of the ranking by group averages calculated on the basis of the complex development indicator, the Szeged district took the first place both in 2014 and in 2020, with a significant impact of the University of Szeged, R&D activity and the role of the service sector. Also in the case of Csongrád-Csanád County, there is a significant development gap between urban and rural areas, with the Szeged district lagging significantly behind the other districts. In the periods under study, the districts of Szentes and Mórahalmi have improved their complex development index and their ranking. For the Szentes district, the economic and employment indicators developed favourably in 2020 compared to 2014. Mórahalom, the centre of the Mórahalom district, has undergone a unique development thanks to the development of the spa, which has transformed and expanded the role of the town. In terms of the complex development indicator, the biggest decline is observed in the district of Kistelek. Kistelek, the only municipality in the Kistelek district with urban status, is a service-poor urban centre. The district did not perform well in terms of enterprises, as no enterprise from the district was included in the Csongrád-Csanád County top 100 enterprises in 2020. Furthermore, the situation of the Roma in the Máriatelep segregation of the municipality of Baks will continue to affect the area. Overall, the complex development indicator in 2020 in Csongrád-Csanád County has decreased compared to 2014. In Europe, the coronavirus epidemic arrived in the spring of 2020, which contributed significantly to the negative development of the complex development indicator, as the biggest decline was in the employment indicators, in addition to the infrastructure indicators. There are significant territorial disparities in the County, due to the evolution of socio-economic trends.

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