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The Industrial Commons' Workforce Needs and Their Impact on The Hungarian Labour Force

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Abstract

In 2015 the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found disturbing data from many Volkswagen Group vehicles. The analyzed cars had a special device which controlled the vehicle's gas emission during the tests but after that it automatically shut down. After these news reports the trust disappeared away from the diesel-car industry. The former Comecon countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Poland) had a difficult time after the Diesel incident, because their industry relied on vehicle manufacturing and exporting. In the same year the British vote about the European Union membership (so called "Brexit") also became a threat to the automobile industries around the world. The new global and European green polices also challenged the diesel-fuelled vehicles status in the automobile sector. Old competitors (petrol-fuelled cars) and new challengers (electric cars, hybrid cars, ethanol-fuelled cars) came into play as the market and the customers decide. According to the latest surveys the East-Central European Region ("Visegrad Countries") will have a dedicated place in the new "e-engine" production and in the accumulator production. These surveys also show, that the region will be the 2nd largest electric car accumulator producers by 2025. In my presentation I would like to show how outsourced technologies and methods can be settled down in other countries and what are the possible ways to improve them to a different economic scene.

Keywords: strategic management, car industry, economics, industrial commons, manufacturing, key competences, electric cars

1. Introduction

The automobile and vehicle manufacturing industry have a huge demand of active workforce in Hungary In my paper I would like analyse the Hungarian workforce after 2010. The drecreasing numbers in population have a huge impact on the Hungarian social and industrial policies. The growing area of the automobile industry requires well qualified and available workforce in greater numbers. Hungary has many challenges to face this threat. The first is the decreasing population (under 10 million), the aging population and the reform of the pension system and the language learning scene.

2. The concept and use of industrial commons 2.1. The concept of industrial commons

Pisano and Shih (2012) refer to industrial commons as a critical mass of suppliers, customers, competitors, skilled labour, universities, and infrastructure that belong to the same industry and are situated in the same geographical area. While Porter (1993) mainly emphasized the competition between competitors, Pisano and Shih (2012) show the symbiotic relationship between economic and state actors within these industrial communities.

These commons are created due to the fact that the companies want to be close to their customers. This attracts their suppliers to them, as companies are customers at the suppliers' market and the suppliers also want to be close to their own customers. When a new competitor enters the market, the most logical step according to game-theory is to be situated in the proximity an existing competitor's supplier network, however, this network will be unable to supply for two companies. This will attract additional suppliers and skilled workforce to the region, and sooner or later the emerging universities and infrastructure will emerge to provide professionals to the industrial commons. It is evident, how this virtuous circle gains momentum.

An essential feature of industrial communities is that all economic operators benefit from their existence, for example by having more workforce available, their transfer between firms allows knowledge to be spread, or due to the concentration of the supplier system, according to the five forces by Porter (2008 [1979]) competition is getting fiercer, which in turn will reduce the cost of raw materials for the company concerned and reduces the bargaining power of suppliers.

The process of evolution also shows how an industrial commons can disintegrate. An economic downturn or, for example, outsourcing may result in the stopping or even reversing the process above (Pisano - Shih, 2012). When companies quit or cease their activity, suppliers and skilled labour will move away. The declining labour supply and increasing bargaining power of suppliers will intensify competition within the industry concerned (Porter, 2008 [1979]). This can encourage companies to outsource their business or can make further companies go bankrupt. While the evolution of industrial commons is a virtuous circle, their evolution, is just the opposite: a vicious circle.

The evolution process described above is typical of Western Europe and the United States. According to Khanna (2014), distance, including cultural distance beyond geographical distance, makes it difficult to apply certain results, considerations and models. The emergence of industrial commons by Pisano and Shih (2012) is a concept not easy to interpret and apply in Eastern Europe, for example. In contrast to the above organic process of evolution, it is more common in this area that governments of individual nation states invest heavily in the establishment of business units outsourced from Western Europe and the United States.

2.2. The automotive industrial commons of Slovakia and Hungary

Table 1 shows the magnitude of exports and imports of Hungary's products in billions of HUF in 2018 and their percentage distribution within total exports and imports. According the table, imports and exports of vehicles and other machineries in Hungary's foreign trade account for 55,7% of total export and 47,7% of total imports (Central Statistical Office, 2019a).

Major export categories	Export	Percent- age	Import	Percent- age
Food, bever- ages, tobacco	2266,6	6,8%	1635,4	5.2%
Crude mate- rial	751,8	2,3%	676,6	2.1%
Fuels, electric energy	943	2,8%	2589,9	8.2%
Manufactured goods	10830,3	32,4%	11656,3	36,8%
Vehicles, ma- chinery	18617,4	55,7%	15098,4	47,7%
Total	33409,1	100.0%	31656,7	100.0%

Figure 1. Distribution of Hungarian foreign trade in goods by category, 2018 (HUF billion)

Source: Central Statistical Office (KSH), 2019a

Table 2 shows a closer look to the Hungarian vehicle and machine industry. According the table, imports and exports of road vehicles in Hungary's foreign trade account for 16,5% of total export and 10.3 of total imports (Central Statistical Office, 2019b).

Category	Export	Percentage	Import	Percentage
Road Vehicles	5502,8	16,5%	3260,6	10,3%
Electric machines, devices	4260,7	12,8%	4523,3	14%
Total	33409,1	100.0%	31656,7	100.0%
Figure 2. Distribution of Hungarian foreign trade in goods				

by category, 2018 (HUF billion)

Source: Central Statistical Office (KSH), 2019b

While this is a source of risk to Hungary, as the lack of export diversification strongly exposes the Hungarian economy as a whole to the shocks of the global automotive industry, it is undeniable that it is highly dominant in Hungary and this dominance is likely to increase even more due to investments in Debrecen and Kecskemét.

As both countries are strongly integrated, the notion by Pisano and Shih (2012) that industrial commons may spread across borders, has to be taken into account in that Slovakia and Hungary has to be examined together.



Figure 3. The automotive-industry industrial common of Hungary and Slovakia and its peripheral area.

Source: designed by the author based on Invest in Austria (2018), Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (2018) and Hungarian Investment Promotion Agency (2012)

Figure 1 shows the Hungarian and Slovakian automotiveindustry industrial common. Pisano and Shih (2012) point out that industrial commons often disregard national boundaries and intertwine through them. Ghemawat (2013), in general, states that there are factors that influence the intensity of trade between two countries. There are several factors that make trade between Slovakia and Hungary more difficult - the lack of a common currency, the lack of a common language - while many factors have a positive impact on it, such as belonging to a common border. The two industrial commons are thus become intertwined.

Against this backdrop, Ghemawat's statement (2013) i.e. that the lack of a common language reduces the intensity of trade has major importance. As both the industrial commons of Hungary and Slovakia join the German car industry, it is necessary to establish a common language between these countries. In practice, of course, they use German and English, as the latter has a prominent role in other industries, in the surrounding countries and the United States, which is a major player in the global economy (Education First, 2018).

3. The current state of Hungarian labour market 31. Data of Hungarian Population

Hungary has a decreasing tendency in population numbers according to the latest statistics. Both the Hungarian Centre and the World Bank database agrees on this fact. The population has fallen under 10 million in 2010-2011, reaching the number of 9.7 million. Recent studies show that the Hungarian workforce is under heavy pressure. There is a less available workforce in the country, which would have a negative effect on the Hungarian industry. The second biggest issue is the aging population, as the market also has workforce-needs because it raises the question of the possibility of further reforms of the pension system. (12-13)

Based on the data of the HCSO, the development of the Hungarian labour market can be traced. At the time of accession to the European Union (2004), the Hungarian employment rate was 50.5%, while unemployment rate was of 6.1%. Taking a closer look at the long-term data, the country's labour market situation started to increase, especially after the 2008 global economic downturn, until 2010, while the employment rate started to decline (figure

Period	Activity rate	Unemployment rate	Employment rate
2004	54	6	51
2010	55	11	49
2018	62	4	60
Change in percentage points between 2010 and 2018	7	7	11
Change in percentage between 2010 and 2018	increase of 12,7%	decrease of 63.6%	increase of 22%

Figure 4. Evolution of the activity rate, unemployment and employment rate of the Hungarian economy between 2004 and 2018. Source: KSH 2019c.

Explaining the details of the changes seen between 2010 and 2018 is inevitable for the purpose of the current study. In 2010, the number of the employed was 3.7 million, while there were 3.4 million people who were inactive in terms of the economy. In 2018, these proportions started to change: with 4.4 million employed, the proportion of the economically inactive population changed to 2.8 million.

In the first year (2010) the employment rate was 48.7%, which changed to 60% by 2018 (see Figure 2). Statistics show that there has been a steady increase in this area since 2010, which is not clearly explained by the decline in the population between the age of 15 and 74, which is the age-group the survey is based on. At the same time, the unemployment rate dropped significantly from 11.2% in 2010 to 3.7% in 2018. According to the latest statistics published by the CSO, covering the period between March and May 2019, the Hungarian labour market employed 4 million 500 thousand people, expanding the market even further. The biggest change came from channelling into the primary labour market (resulting in an increase of about 84,000) and a decrease of 48,000 people in the number of public employees. As a result, the employment rate of the population aged 15-64 increased to 69.9%, where the proportion of men is higher than that of women, but the growth of the latter is more significant.

Hungarian data may in itself represent local labour market characteristics, but it may be worthwhile to have an outlook at Hungary's immediate and broader geographical environment. This is illustrated in Figure 5, which is based

on Eurostat data.

	2010	2017	2018	Change between 2010-2018 (%)
Czech Republic	63,1	65,7	66,4	3,3
Hungary	54,8	61,8	62,5	7,7
Poland	59,7	61,6	61,5	1,8
Slovakia	62,8	64,4	64,3	1,5
European Union (28 countries)	63,2	64,7	64,8	1,6

Figure 5. Economic activity of population aged 15-74 (%) Source: *Eurostat (2019a)*

According to the data, the expansion seen in the labour

Market since 2010 was the most significant in Hungary compared to the neighbouring Visegrád countries. Given the country's economic location and interests, it might be worth examining such indicators for neighbouring countries. The Visegrád countries – the "V4s" - are political allies within the European Union system of lobbying, while, as far as economy is concerned, they are also competitors to one another in the long run. Therefore, they may need examining this way, as we can determine Hungary's place in this "struggle".

Of course, this does not mean the number of people in work, but the proportion of the population as a whole. In the base year it is evident seen that the Hungarian figures are significantly - almost ten per cent - lagging behind the others, while this ratio was at least 9% below compared to the European average. By 2018, this figure is much closer to the values of the EU countries, while representing almost the same magnitude as those of the neighbouring countries. Further statistics show that Sweden (73.2%) boasts the highest activity rate, while Italy (57.3%) has the lowest rate, therefore the Hungarian figure (62.5%) is considered average. It is important to note that same figure for Austria, often seen as a positive role model to be followed, was 68.2% in 2018. All in all, it can be said that the Hungarian labour market development is remarkable not only locally but also in the context of the region of the neighbouring countries. It shows not only a positive trend in absolute terms, but it is also improving in comparison to its competitors, while there is still potential for further development in the Hungarian labour market.

In the following, I would like to present the governmental efforts that have led to the improvement of the statistics seen in Hungary's labour market. It is evident that not only the favourable economic situation but also government decisions and programs have contributed to the lasting changes of such volume. In the following, we present a list of possible aspects of the development for the Hungarian labour market below as seen by the Hungarian government through a holistic approach. I would add that this list is not exhaustive and can be expanded with more elements and details, which may provide further research topics in the future.

The main elements of the Hungarian government's labour-market strategy include:

• Improving the social perception of work ("education" and reintegration)

• Reducing passive unemployment (reintegrating the people concerned into the system)

• Decrease the number of active job seekers (job seekers must be provided with supporting programs and

subsidies)

•

• Increasing territorial mobility (transporting labour to the workplace, as seen in industrial commons, which can be solved easily)

Involving pensioners in the labour market

• Introducing young people, students and fresh graduates into the labour market

• Employment opportunities and benefits for young mothers and recipients of childcare allowances

 Taking people in correctional institutions into consideration Based on the CSO report for 2019, it can be seen that the Hungarian population of active age (aged 15-74) is 7 million 432 thousand. Of this, 4 million 469 thousand are considered employed, 172 thousand are unemployed and 2 million 791 thousand are inactive. Taking into account the potential opportunities for expansion, this division can be broken down even further. Accordingly, 29 thousand of the employed are considered to be underemployed, which means that the state should pay attention to their (further) education. Within the inactive population, 9,000 people were identified as jobseckers and could not get a job within 2 weeks, while 105,000 could find a job, but they are not trying to find themselves. The potential groups and programs intending to involve these potential candidates to the labour

Period	Employment	Unemployment	Economically active population	Economically not active population	Passive unemployment	Population (15-74)
2004	3 900	253	4 153	3 568	109	7 721
2010	3 732	469	4 202	3 461	117	7 663
2018	4 469	172	4 642	2 791	42	7 432

market will be reviewed later.

Figure 6. Economically active population (thousand persons). Source: KSH 2019c

Taking a closer look at the national trends, one can see what anomalies and disproportions exist in the structure of the Hungarian labour market. On the one hand, it can be clearly seen what kind of market needs affect the people in the country. Such indicators can be the number of vacant jobs recorded by the CSO in separate statistics. Figure 7 shows the data for the national economy as a whole.



Figure 7 Number of vacant jobs in Hungary (2015-2018, thousand persons) Source: KSH 2019d

The upward trend shows that the market needs to attract additional manpower to be able to perform its core tasks. There are two ways to do this: by internal redeployment or by recruiting from abroad. Due to the need of the market, the Hungarian government also considered it timely to intervene in this relationship and to orient the remaining uninvolved population towards the world of work. With this, in my opinion, the government has contributed to the joint development of the new industrial common by using a topbottom strategy instead of the classic bottom-up approach. with this, it creates the "skilled workforce" needed to operate the system.

The population considered to be a reserve for the primary labour market is mostly concentrated in the north and northeast of the country. It is important to note that the South Transdanubian region can form such a reserve as well, since the potential labour reserve is high here, too. Based on this, the largest labour shortage is seen in the capital, while the labour reserve is found in the country. This further reinforces the "capital vs. countryside" conflict that the government – and the European Union – wants to tackle with by providing development subsidies and tenders. This is why the emergence of industrial commons and their support and encouragement by the government becomes relevant, as it is relatively easy to attract large foreign companies to potential labour reserves, which can further improve the state of the economy, as outlined above.

It is already clear from the concept of industrial

commons that organic or top-down design can offer great economic benefits. Attracting certain industrial activities to countries can further develop the economy, bring new research institutions to life, and thus increase people's welfare index. At the same time, the process may cause difficulties for certain regions within a national economy. As seen in the case of the "capital vs. countryside" conflict mentioned above, the involvement and resettlement of industrial commons can only bring additional benefits to a specific geographical unit. In fact, the emergence of such an industrial common also "steal the thunder" of other regions - that is, attracts capital, suppliers, competitors and the workforce itself. Having the chance to influence the domestic affairs can bring economic prosperity and a bright future for winners, while those who may be left out of it have to face stagnation, setbacks and a darker vision. While this process is unfavourable to such lagging regions, the areas of industrial commons may also face less dangerous but, in the short term, significant problems. They need to be helped by the government, for example, through the development of infrastructure or education (Figure 7).

The CSO's statistics quoted above also addressed the issue of why people are inactive in the labour market. The two largest groups are made of students and retirees (including early retirees receiving a pension); their number was estimated to be 1.2 million in 2018. They will be described in more detail later in the section about reserves. What is certain, however, is that this figure changed compared to 2017, i.e. it decreased. The HCSO has also conducted research to explain the reasons for why economically inactive people stay away from the labour market, as illustrated in Figure 6.

4. Language teaching in Hungary

4.1 Hungary's status in Europe

The aim of this section is to present the general situation of Hungary in European context in terms of language teaching.



Figure 9: English Proficiency Index of Europe. Source: Education First (2018), pp. 22-23.

English Proficiency Index is the average score of a 100-point test of English proficiency in the scope of the responders within a country. The test basically assesses the passive knowledge, reading and listening comprehension of the participants. (Education First, 2018).

As pointed out by the study by Education First assessing

the results (2018), the average score for countries outside the European Common Market, such as Albania (51.5), Ukraine (52.9), Belarus (53.5) or Turkey (47, 2) is low. The lack of a common language, according to Ghemawat (2013), makes it difficult for these countries to trade with the European Common Market.

It is evident that in the Central European countries the scores range from 57 to 63; Hungary's performance in this regard is considered average, with 59.5 points. Slovenia stands out from the line up with a score of 64.8 points. (Education First, 2018)

Slovenia's outstanding achievement is due to the introduction a number of measures in elementary schools, secondary schools, universities and also in adult education in 2004 that enable efficient language teaching. Such measures include, for example, the external examination institute is required to conduct the secondary final examination, i.e. the educational institution cannot fulfil the examination function at the time of graduation or that there are clear curriculums from primary to adult education. (Republic of Slovenia: Ministry of Education and Sport, 2005)

There are two things worth noting and highlighting regarding the Slovenian result.

On the one hand, in Slovenia, the average number of weekly classes in primary and secondary schools is approximately three (Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Education and Sport, 2005), which is not significantly different from that of Hungary (Öveges and Csizér, 2018). Second, in both Slovenia and Hungary, education spending, as a proportion of GDP, fluctuates around five per cent, with no significant differences between them (The Global Economy, 2018a, The Global Economy, 2018b)

This way, there is the possibility that the primary solution in Hungary is not to increase the number of classes, but to use the time devoted to education more efficiently and to create the necessary environment for this.

	English learners (%)	German learners (%)
Hungary	84.8%	45.5%
Bulgaria	90.3%	36.2%
Czech Republic	99.9%	61.6%
Estonia	97.1%	23.3%
Croatia	99.7%	64.1%
Latvia	98.3%	27.0%
Lithuania	96.0%	7.1%
Poland	96.4%	46.3%
Romania	100.0%	14.5%
Slovenia	96.8%	67.9%
Slovakia	98.8%	59.6%
Average	96.0%	17.2%

4.2. Distinctive features of Hungarian-language education

Figure 10. English and German language learners in Europe. Rate.

Source: Eurostat (2019b)

Table 2 shows the popularity of English and German in Hungary and other Eastern European countries, based on the percentage of all high school students studying the languages concerned. In Hungary, for example, 84.8 per cent of students study English and 45.5 per cent learn German. The proportion of students studying English is much lower in Hungary than the EU average, but the proportion of students studying German is much higher. The reason for this is on the one hand the proximity and economic weight of Germany and on the other hand it is due to historical roots.

Based on Öveges and Csizér. (2018) several problems can be identified that hinder the success of Hungarian foreign language acquisition. According to the students, for example, most of their time is spent solving grammar tasks and most of the time it is the language teacher who does the speaking at classes. This way, there is relatively little opportunity for students to practice their active language skills. The proportion of group work and group discussions is relatively low, but the proportion of tasks solved in a workbook is very high.

However, teachers blame the lack of technical facilities, the lack of motivation of students and the lack of proficiency in Hungarian grammar as the biggest drawbacks (Öveges & Csizér, 2018). There are large differences in terms of average group size, and, accordingly, some teachers are satisfied with the size of the groups while others are not. In the opinion of the teachers, the appropriate group size is between 11 and 15 students.

Also, in accordance with Öveges and Csizér (2018), both teachers and students agree that the success of language learning depends primarily on the amount of time students spend learning a language outside of school. According to students, listening to music in a foreign language is the most popular activity, followed by computer games, movies and series, and websites.

A halt can be seen during elementary school performance. In primary school, the goal for Grade 6 is to reach level "A1" and for Grade 8 to reach level "A2". According to surveys, nearly 80 per cent of 6^{th} -grade students are able to reach the designated level by the end of their studies, but this figure falls back to 50 per cent by the end of elementary school. These results refer to English language competences. As regards to German, approximately 70 per cent of 6^{th} -grade students reach the designated level. (Öveges and Csizér, 2018)

Students are required to reach 'B2' level in secondary school, however, as some students lag behind in their studies quite early, and many of them change schools as a consequence, it is difficult to implement the plan of the Hungarian Government by 2020, i.e. all students have to acquire a 'B2' language exam before beginning their highereducation studies. It is worth mentioning that most teachers think that this condition is realistic and achievable (Öveges & Csizér, 2018).

5. Conclusion

At present, Hungary shows a slightly below-average performance in the Central European region, while it lags behind the European Union as a whole even more.

In order to have industrial commons flourish, it is inevitable that the lack of language competencies should not hinder their development; on the contrary, they should boost trade and thus the intertwining of different countries. This means that language teaching in different countries has a key task.

Currently, Hungarian language teaching is highly text, translation and grammar-oriented, whereby the active knowledge of the Hungarian population, which would be most needed in building business relationships, for example, is below the expectations. In my opinion, the most important task is thus to shift the emphasis to improving speaking skills. Since both language teachers and students agree that the most important factor is practicing at home, I consider developing a system that supports and rewards such activities the second most important task to fulfil.

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