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The role of R&D and innovation networks in enhancing the scientific and technological capabilities of Hungarian enterprises: knowledge networks in the Hungarian automotive industry

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PHD ABSTRACTS

The role of R&D and innovation networks in enhancing the scientific and technological capabilities of Hungarian enterprises: knowledge networks in the Hungarian automotive industry

László Csonka

The topic of research, development and innovation (RDI) networking became relatively popular in the international literature. However there is only limited knowledge available about the functioning and internal characteristics of RDI networks. The main aim of the research is to reveal the structure and functioning of a selected type of RDI network in Hungary in the automotive industry and the development of the scientific and technological capabilities of the network member enterprises. The study broadens the empirical adaptation of network theories.

The research relies on a number of theories both from economics (evolutionary economics, economics of innovation, network economics) and sociology (e.g. social network theory). The subjects of this research are long-lasting horizontal relationships among independent actors from the business and scientific fields with the aim to enhance the position and knowledge base of the partners through common research and development and innovation activities. The nature of the work is mainly descriptive, and focuses on the structure, characteristics and impact of the networks. This requires in-depth information therefore the empirical research relies on case studies. The results obtained by the semi-structured interviews are complemented by the visualization techniques of social network analysis. The networks in their present stage do contribute to raising the level of activities in the core network members but the overall quality of projects among the partners is very uneven. The collaborations are a unique source of new knowledge and they support learning processes in the field of RDI and RDI collaborations. The investigated networks contribute more to the development of relationships, trust and to learning than to the development of world leading innovations. Thus they contribute to the development and establishment of new and relevant capabilities that could lay the foundation of more intensive and more substantial RDI activities in the future. The Hungarian networks, as well as their members, have to reach a level of maturity to be able to significantly enhance RDI expenditures and results.

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