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Vera Gáthy

Editor's Note

The Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences published its first Almanach in 1988 and promised then to publish one each year. However, the rapid changes in Hungary have embarrassed the researchers who either got involved in the exciting process of political transformation or felt their writings suddenly become obsolete. Thus no 1989 Almanach could be produced. Yet we hope that the present collection of papers reflects the steady work being done by the associates of the Institute as well as the atmosphere of the nascent new reality.

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Heller: control of share trade has to be directed by "allowing the sale of shares of only viable enterprises on the stock exchange". This requirement has not been met by the majority of either the enterprises already transformed, or those only intending to change. The 'change of form' into share companies fails to solve the problems of efficiency discussed above, or does so only insignificantly, and the same might apply to the trustee institutions. Naturally, the capital interest of private people cannot be replaced by 'simulated' organizations of ownership, because the latter ones – especially in critical situations – would be subordinated to the logic of state administration, the 'requirements' of economic control.

It is obviously apparent that there are still difficulties on the way towards extending private ownership, which is believed to be the only feasible solution. But as the above analysis has argued, the half and pseudosolutions introduced an yet to be introduced for establishing ownership interest are not suitable for solving the present social and economic crisis.

## Some Socio-Economic Aspects of Unemployment

By

Csaba Makó and Tamás Gyekiczky

### Notes

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In this study we try to summarize the most important sociological experience and alternative employment policies that seem to be indispensable for the analysis of unemployment. This study does not work up the thematic attempt to cover all aspects of the subject. We have divided our subject matter in two and arranged the problems around two focal points, firstly social questions and secondly the employment relations themselves.

### 1. Unemployment as a Social Problem

The literature on unemployment makes a distinction between the sociology of *unemployment* and that of the *unemployed*. This distinction suggests that programmes aimed at easing the social problems of the unemployed are not inter-linked with the strategy for handling unemployment. Besides, the description of unemployment is more closely connected to the major theoretical trends of economics than is the investigation among the unemployed. In fact complex processes and differentiated social relations lie behind both the concept of unemployment and the social status of the unemployed.

In the industrially developed societies the causes of *unemployment* in the eighties are considered to be fundamentally different from those in the 19th century and those in the middle of the 20th century. The difference is shown also by the fact that unemployment arises in prospering economies (FRG, USA) and under the circumstances of a balanced budget (FRG) as well. Moreover, the developed technological systems, the spread of automated production lines and

the forums representing the workers' interests do not exert any influence on the increase in the number of unemployed. In spite of the trade union struggles, actions, and legislation there is an increase in the number of the workers who have been dismissed at least once during their life.

A number of schools of sociology have so far tried to explain this situation. The standpoint of sociology can be put as follows. The causes of *unemployment* are deeply embedded in the systems of social institutions that make the modern industrial societies function. Among them the labour market can be considered the most important. This market differs fundamentally from the other kinds of market, i.e. the commodity market, the capital market and the money market.<sup>1</sup> Put briefly, the difference is that the relation between demand and supply on this market is inherently asymmetrical, i.e. the strategic programmes of action of the employees can never compensate for the disadvantages arising from the monopoly of the employers on the market. The asymmetry is manifested in the power relations, in the corporate systems, in the institutions established for the assertion of interests and also in the social conflicts. As a result of the different ways of settling the conflicts, these asymmetrical relations will be rearranged and, as a consequence of the new consensus, a socially acceptable level of conflicts – conflicts due to the functioning of the labour market – will develop.

Not only are demand and supply asymmetrical on the labour market but also the supply side in itself – i.e. the relations among the employees – appears to be asymmetrical as well. The relations among the employees and the success of the actions on the labour market of the different groups of employees depend on the social system of relations that extends beyond the labour market and the economic system in the strict sense of the word and that is reflected in the *social existence of the employee*. On the labour market the social scale of values, standards, cultural and educational traditions, attitudes and behavioral strategies, *as a whole*, are valued, rewarded or even punished *in a complex manner*, contrary to other types of market. Economics, too, directs its attention mainly to the asymmetries of the labour market. Since the flexibility of the labour market must be ensured, it also deals with the question, of where the limit between desired and detrimental unemployment is to be set.<sup>2</sup>

The descriptive notions of political economics are as follows: supply, demand, value of manpower, capital goods, intellectual capital and instrument-capital.<sup>3</sup> Unemployment originates from an imbalance between demand and supply on the labour market. On the one hand, the cost of manpower is too high and on the other hand, due to the slow adaptability, manpower is able to adapt itself to the demand-side only roughly, slowly and with time-lags. According to the majority of economists, the labour market is based on a series of self-acting automatisms. State intervention, and the wage disputes of the trade unions will only disorganize the system of automatisms. Briefly, unemployment stems from a disorder in the self-regulation of the labour market.

Many schools and trends make use of the common terminologies of economics and sociology for the analysis of the labour market.<sup>4</sup> The segmentation of the labour market and its structural nature, that, for more than one reason, tends to be organized, in independent sub-systems, appear to be the starting points of this

third system of ideas. Thus we can speak of an external and internal labour market, regional and professional labour market, large-scale or micro-scale labour market. Unemployment can be attributed to the disorder in the 'adjustment' of the segmented labour markets and the partial labour markets. Thus, for example, due to a bankruptcy, the internal labour market pours out on to the external labour market a large number of employees, who, on the basis of their qualification belong to the working elite. The external labour market, however, values manpower according to other priorities, and the different types of trades, professions, knowledge and abilities that were highly respected on the internal labour market become valueless on the external one. Therefore it is not at all unlikely that for a significant number of employees there are no possibilities to find employment on the external labour market.<sup>5</sup>

The *types* of unemployment can be determined according to different standards, standpoints or social characteristics. Thus, besides the types determined according to the age – juvenile unemployment, unemployment at old age – that are considered to be independent sociological groups, we can draw distinctions among seasonal unemployment (for which period of the year the unemployment falls), unemployment of the boom (unemployment linked to the economic cycles), unemployment according to the sexes (unemployment affecting women or men), structural unemployment (that has two senses), unemployment according to its duration (long-lasting unemployment and unemployment lasting for a short period), unemployment as a result of the processes of the internal labour market (for example unemployment due to a change in the technology), etc.

The sense of model-creating lies with the fact that the different types of unemployment can be attributed to social conditions and processes of different character. Consequently, the therapies offered for each of the above types will differ from one another. These types have their own particular features and give rise to different social processes. Thus, for example, seasonal unemployment offers employees for the second labour market or for the labour market of the non-industrial professions. Or the unemployment of the boom may launch the innovation of the institutions, teaching and certain channels of the knowledge transfer of several professions.

One of the hotly debated and most ambiguous concepts of the literature is '*structural unemployment*'. Generally, it is used in a double sense. According to one of the interpretations, structural unemployment is the asymmetry between the knowledge-structure and the ability-structure of manpower supply and demand. In this sense, for example, unemployment is considered structural when the technological process exceeds the ability and knowledge-structure of the young generations entering the labour market. Or when, as a consequence of industrial development, the professional structure of employment is changed and the professional ability-structure of manpower does not meet the new demands.

The concept of structural unemployment can, however, be used or interpreted in the context of another system of criteria.<sup>6</sup> In this system we talk about structural unemployment if unemployment is produced by the functioning of the systems, partial or sub-structures and segments of the society. It is not only the systems of the labour market we are talking about but also the strata relations and inequality

relations of the society, the cultural and qualification relations, the social distribution of knowledge and ability structure, the distribution of power and ruling relations, the social organization of the way of life and that of life-style and the prospects for the formation of cooperative institutions for social activities. To sum up, structural unemployment stems from the functioning of the society, the dysfunction of the historical processes of the society and the segmentary and selection processes taking place inside (and outside) the society. Unemployment and the unemployed appear to be the consequences of social mechanisms.

It is the social position behind the behaviours and activities on the labour market that is considered to be the source of the role played on the labour market. A disadvantageous position on the labour market can be attributed to a socially disadvantageous position. However, these (two) position-systems don't necessarily fit one another. Among the intermediary mechanisms we must mention the workshop organizations, the state and political sphere, the educational and training systems and also other systems of institutions ensuring social cooperation.

Coming to the point of the *sociology of unemployment* we would like to emphasize the fact that the group of *workers deprived of the possibility to work* generally belongs to the groups whose strategies and possibilities to act are severely affected by the above-mentioned asymmetrical relations and social disadvantages. And the group *threatened* by unemployment belongs to the employed stratum that can be *replaced* at work at any time, since its position in the workshop organization, its qualification, and its ability to adapt are rather negligible factors as regards the efficiency of the production system.

The strategy of dismissal (transfer to the labour market) is the result of the functioning of the economic organization of the company. The weakness of the strategy of the employees on the labour market appears to be extremely striking in the case, for example, of the application of new technologies since in this case, in order to minimize the conflicts, the company management can find a new labour force that will be able to use the technology in question. The company management applies a selective strategy towards the different groups of workers (groups of employees). Therefore large numbers of the elder employees, women, *migrant workers* (the ethnic minorities) and employees having a household plot of their own are forced to face dismissal. A network of implant relations is hidden behind a management practice like this. It is not only the aspects of productivity that are to be found in the centre of this web but also the valuation of the adaptation of the groups of employees or workers, the influence exerted by company decisions and the processes of the representation of interests. Here we must mention the *tactics used to defend their job and position* by the company's 'old hands', who are considered to be the number one partners of the company. In order to maintain its influence, the trade union, that should represent the workers' interests, will often support the management decisions or it may even take part in the shaping of the labour-force policy.

The inequality of positions and of other social prospects determines the success of the influence exerted by the participants of the labour market on the sphere of the state and that of politics. State interventions – besides the above-mentioned strategies – are aimed at supporting and retraining the unemployed and encourag-

ing their re-employment. State interventions bring about a number of dysfunctions. Thus for example subsidies do not make up for the financial loss of the unemployed, and the demand on the labour market, reflecting the requirements of the government, *represents and preserves* the asymmetrical inequalities of the labour market. Further problems are created by the fact that state supports are concentrated on the individual. The financial consequence of unemployment cannot be neglected either. It is not only the income-raising nature of premiums and allowances that the unemployed is deprived of, but his 'household economy' may collapse as well. The abandoning of an economizing way of life, indebtedness, financial difficulties can be observed mainly among people without jobs for a long period. The loss resulting from the narrowing down of the scale of goods and consumer goods, cannot be assessed either. It is the everyday level of needs and living standards that falls victim to this narrowing down.

In the thirties unemployment was accompanied by the political activities of the unemployed. Nowadays we can witness a process in the opposite direction. Political resignation, apathy, absence from political organizations and withdrawal from political life are considered to characterize the majority of the unemployed, while it is only the minorities that tend to become involved in political activities.<sup>7</sup>

The greatest changes can be observed in the health, social and psychological condition of the unemployed. Illness is more frequent among the unemployed, especially the kind of illnesses the causes of which can be attributed to social problems (neurosis, gastric ulcer, etc.). The personal identity is also endangered as a result of unemployment, which stems from the fact that in the modern industrialized societies work is not only the economic basis of social reproduction but also one of the central structuring values of the *personal self-identity* of the worker. The loss of identity among the unemployed may often lead – through resignation and apathy – to suicide or to the development of other forms of deviancy: alcoholism and delinquency.

The psychological disorders of the personality arise from the fact that the social relations of the unemployed are reduced in number.<sup>8</sup> On the one hand, having lost his job, the *unemployed drops out of the circles that ensure a collective field of behaviour, and on the other hand he has to face a prejudice prevailing in the society.*

It is borne out by analyses that the social judgement of the unemployed is rather negative; the large groups of the society – in order to defend their own position – do not tolerate the problems and life-situation of the unemployed. The scale of prejudices very often goes as far as looking for a scapegoat.<sup>9</sup>

This negative change in the way of life and the break in the personality of the unemployed dramatically imposes heavy burdens on his family. As a consequence of unemployment not only the financial burdens grow inside the family but the members of the family have to face the intolerance of public opinion as well. We can witness the growth of marriage conflicts, an increase in the number of divorces and also a growth in the incidence of deviant behaviour among the children of the unemployed.

One of the most important endeavours of the unemployed during the time of their unemployment is – and this is not a paradox – to find a job. Their efforts may, however, fail because of the above-mentioned breakdown of the personality,

since the unemployed status destroys the competitiveness of the unemployed on the market. The outward form – dressing, gestures – of the personality erodes, which is followed, consequently, by a lack of self-confidence and a loss of standing in the society. Besides personality problems, the greatest concern of the unemployed is that his professional knowledge and abilities do not meet the requirements of the labour market. These difficulties can be overcome by a system of retraining and further training; however, the fact that courses have been completed does not ensure the success of the search for a new job.

The tribulations of the unemployed do not come to an end when he finds a new job. At the new place of work the process of socialization starts all over again and there are no guarantees ensuring that the newly employed will not be affected by a new wave of dismissals. Moreover, in all probability, this group will be the first to be dismissed as a result of the brief past, the relatively low adaptation level and other reasons to be detailed further on.

As a consequence of what has been written above a *social cycle* of unemployment will emerge, which means that the same group will be steadily exposed to unemployment, i.e. the group of the unemployed, which is not a paradox either. This group is predestinated for repeated dismissals. Their life and social fate is divided into periods of searching for a job, finding employment and being dismissed.

## 2. International Experience on Unemployment and on the Effects of Labour Market Policies

In the second half of the eighties, in the Hungarian society just like in the majority of the industrialized societies, unemployment has tended to be a real danger for more and more groups of qualified workers. The attitude of Hungarian public opinion to unemployment has changed. "By 1987, the fact that unemployment existed was openly declared and, to a certain extent, the concept lost its character of taboo in the official terminology."<sup>10</sup> At the same time, the analyses examining the genesis of the problem of unemployment reminded us that there was a danger of giving a simplified diagnosis according to which the difficulties connected to holding down a job were considered to be of an individual nature. And an even more serious symptom: studies written on unemployment tension suggest that we are possessed by the vision of a *society with few 'actors'*. This means that in addition to the well-known actors of industrial relations – employees, the organizations of the employees and state institutions – the other actors of the society are *not considered to be real actors but they are the helpless media of social and economic changes*.

When describing the richness in the practice of employment policies in the developed industrial countries we try to call the attention to the possibilities of elaborating and applying different devices and methods to handle unemployment. Primarily, we attempt to set forth the experience of the countries that have been

able to ensure an exceptionally high level of employment simultaneously with their remarkable economic results.

From the middle of the seventies unemployment was one of the most important political problems of the developed capitalist countries. The low rate of inflation, the improvement of the level of employment, economic growth and the balance of payments are equally included among the government objectives of the last decades. It is, however, impossible to realize the above-mentioned endeavours of the economic and social management simultaneously since these objectives are in contradiction with one another. One group of economists, for example, considered the raising of the level of employment and the reduction of the rate of inflation to be incompatible objectives. In this sense they recommend tolerating a higher level of unemployment in order to be able to control the inflation rate. As regards time, the acceptable proportion of unemployed is also changing as a function of the general economic conditions. At the end of the Second World War, in the American economy unemployment of 2 per cent of the civilian population was considered to be equal to full employment. The stabilization of a relatively high scale of unemployment gave rise to a new concept among experts dealing with employment policy: the term of the *standard level of unemployment* was increasingly used.<sup>11</sup> Naturally, the government objectives of different type were gradually changing with the economic conditions and the socio-cultural attitudes characteristic of the society in question.

In the case of the British government, the reduction of the inflation rate took priority at the beginning of the seventies; in the eighties, however, it was unemployment that came to the fore. In all the advanced industrial countries, without exception, the *eighties appeared to be the period of government programmes aimed at the reduction of the unemployment level*. And this was not a coincidence because at the end of 1983 35 million people were hit by unemployment in the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development). When mentioning this startlingly high unemployment rate we must immediately add that, due to the influence in the developed countries of the institutions in charge of the handling of unemployment there is a tolerance – that must not be disregarded – in public opinion – and not only among the economists – towards large-scale and steady unemployment.

We will now turn our attention to the methods applied in the employment policy of the developed capitalist countries to control the labour market. We will emphasize the different methods applied to influence the labour market rather than dealing with the short-term methods of handling unemployment. What we would like to indicate is that the appearance and persistence of unemployment are only surface symptoms.<sup>12</sup> The factors of its origin are rather complex and can be modified only with difficulty. We consider that *unemployment indicates troubles in the functioning of the allocational, distributive and regulating mechanisms prevailing in the economy and in the society, which is – among other things – reflected by the under-utilization or rather the waste of human resources available*. Thus we agree with the theories according to which *unemployment itself is not the 'disease' but only its visible symptom*. The source of the real illness is: *the helplessness and short-term attitude of the society management, that, consequently, is unable to foretell and*

*influence the direction of development. So we must speak of a disease that is experienced not at the stage of its origin.*<sup>13</sup>

Describing the labour market relations and the international experience on the methods of employment policies applied to influence the level and structure of unemployment we wish to call attention to the dangers of holding views like: 'the single and best' solution and the 'automatic realization' of a balanced labour market. The first group of ideas tries to solve the difficulties of employment policy by concentrating on the short-term solution of the visible and obvious 'main concerns'. According to the second group of views, however, unemployment must be accepted as a natural phenomenon and, consequently, its elimination or at least its moderation can be realized only by the functioning of different market mechanisms. The common point in these two groups of ideas is that they pay minimum attention to the so-called active labour market policy that plays an important role in the long-term formation of labour market relations. A long-term employment policy of this kind considers the relations between qualification and the social and financial policies to be complex and it strives to handle them all together.

Since the employment policy of the developed capitalist countries was implemented by a varied practice of manpower utilization, even three or four models were insufficient to describe them as none of the countries can be characterized by the application of a single method that can be well identified and that is considered an exclusive long-term solution. It is not only the variety of the devices applied that is striking but also that of the contents and effects of the solutions that often do not seem differ from one another. The patterns of manpower utilization mentioned below are not of model-quality either, they can be considered merely as indicators. Nevertheless, they exert considerable influence on the national characteristics of the methods of utilization.<sup>14</sup>

The pattern of manpower utilization that has been applied since the foundation of the United States is as follows: the scale of manpower mobility in terms of geography and employment is not characteristic of the European OECD countries. In contrast, the flexibility of manpower utilization within the company is incomparably lower than that in Europe.<sup>15</sup>

After the Second World War one of the most remarkable features of Japanese employment relations was that the security of the employees in the sphere of the large enterprises was accompanied by the flexibility of manpower utilization within the company: this is almost inconceivable in other countries.

In the FRG, employers and employees agree as regards the principle of the joint shaping of production and distribution policies. In the course of the wage negotiations, for example, they show 'mutual understanding' towards each other's endeavours and concerns, contrary, for example, to the practice of British industrial relations, where a strict separation and confrontation can be witnessed in the relations of the employees. The result is: the social partners in the FRG are in a position to exert a more successful long-term influence on the relations on the labour market.

In France the state has a more important and indirect role in the development of employment policy than it does in the FRG, which can be attributed, to a considerable extent, to the relative weakness of the organizations of the employers

and the employees.<sup>16</sup> Thus the state-level agreements of the social partners may substitute for local negotiations.<sup>17</sup> Finally, it must be mentioned that especially in the small European countries, the trade unions, the employers and the state – the main actors in industrial relations – conclude publicly announced or tacit agreements, furthering thereby the elaboration of collective strategies that result in a relatively high employment level.

As a consequence of the different social and cultural patterns of the countries there is no *standard package in employment policy* that, upon proper arrangement and adequate presentation, could be applied successfully in every country. The theories and technique regarding employment policy must be reconsidered and applied according to the conditions and potentialities characteristic of the national societies. In this context we draw attention also to the fact that the unique, cultural potentialities, characteristic of any country, region or local community may appear to be the sources not only of the difficulties due to the change of the conditions but also of the acceleration of adaptation. The innovative methods of manpower utilization, promoting successful adjustment to the crisis, are numerous, i.e. *economic efficiency and a high level of employment can be ensured in many ways*. The OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) grouping the developed industrial countries since the beginning of the sixties considers that the most important challenge of the eighties and nineties is to overcome persistent unemployment. It is one of the priorities of the government policy of the countries participating in the organization to create the practice of a flexible utilization of manpower.<sup>18</sup> Before entering into the methods of employment policy we must briefly mention the *concept of 'flexibility'*, and also the relation between flexibility and stability. The classification of the dimensions of flexibility is especially justified because of the wide-spread theory emphasizing the individual and psychological projection of the problems, overstating thereby the role of the individual responsibility of the unemployed. *We consider that the concept of flexibility is more acceptable and can be better interpreted in sociological research on the subject; it means partly individual ability and skill, partly the results of socio-economic circumstances independent from the individual. Thus individual and personal abilities include not only the skills and qualification of manpower but also the motivations in the domain of the social and political conditions.* In this way the concept of flexibility includes the interaction among the employees, the employers and the different institutions of the society.

Contrary to the public belief, *the flexibility of manpower and the security of employment are factors preconditioning – and not excluding – each other.*

The policy of flexibility and stability – preconditioning and strengthening each other – on the labour market predominates only in the minority of the developed industrial countries. The examples – that will be described hereunder – well illustrate the fact that the amount earmarked from the gross national income for the elimination of unemployment, in itself, cannot be considered as a 'certain solution', necessary for the flexible utilization of manpower. The social relations determining the flexibility of manpower utilization function as a totality of conditions constantly orienting the behaviour of the employee and the employer, i.e. as the stabilizers of employment relations.

## Labour-Market Expenditure of OECD Countries in 1986 (% of GDP)

Country	Employment service administration (1)	Manpower training (2)	Special programme for the young (3)	Workplace creation (4)	Special programme for the handicapped (5)	Active labour market policy (6) [1-5]	Unemployment allowance (7)	Early retirement (8)	Income preservation (9) [7-8]	Total (10)	Active** labour market policy (6/10)
Australia	0.11	0.02	0.07	0.15	-	0.35	1.30	-	1.30	1.65	21.2
Austria	0.11	0.11	0.03	0.16	0.02	0.43	0.83	0.14	0.97	1.40	30.7
Belgium	0.17	0.08	n.a.	0.85	0.15	1.25	2.50	0.85	3.35	4.60	27.2
Canada	0.22	0.19	0.06	0.12	-	0.59	1.84	-	1.84	2.43	24.3
Finland	0.09	0.28	0.03	0.58	0.02	1.00	0.99	0.56	1.55	2.55	39.2
France	0.13*	0.28	0.17	0.10	0.05	0.73	1.25	1.23	2.48	3.21	22.7
FRG	0.22	0.23	0.05	0.19	0.20	0.89	1.30	0.01	1.31	2.21	40.3
Ireland	0.16	0.60	0.44	0.34	-	1.54	3.80	-	3.80	5.34	28.8
Holland	0.07	0.17	0.06	0.07	0.74	1.11	2.98	n.a.	2.98	4.09	27.2
New Zealand	0.07	0.26	-	0.37	0.02	0.72	0.93	-	0.93	1.65	43.7
Norway	0.13	0.10	0.05	0.06	0.20	0.54	0.39	n.a.	0.39	0.93	58.1
Portugal	n.a.	0.19	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.31	0.41	-	0.41	0.72	41.3
Spain	n.a.	0.07	0.20	0.37	0.01	0.65	2.74	0.03	2.77	3.42	19.0
Sweden	0.26	0.51	0.18	0.35	0.77	2.07	0.72	0.12	0.84	2.91	71.1
United Kingdom	0.16	0.10	0.26	0.33	0.04	0.89	2.03	0.03	2.06	2.95	30.2

Notes: \* Data referring to France are for 1985

\*\* Calculation done by us.

Source: Profiles of Labour Market Budgets, Paris: OECD, Manpower and Social Affairs Committee, 15th February 1988.

Consequently the methods applied to decrease or moderate unemployment are of varied character. The aim of the employment policies applied is, on the one hand, to moderate steady unemployment (by means of a search for possibilities of employment, the retraining of the permanently unemployed) and, on the other hand, to stimulate working possibilities. In this context we must firmly emphasize the characteristic feature of the employment policy applied in part of the developed industrialized countries: the so-called *active labour market policy takes priority over the passive policy*. Among the means of the latter the unemployment allowance and administration dominate. The so-called active labour market policy concentrates on the elaboration of programmes, furthering the extensive utilization of manpower. It must be remarked that in order to create flexible relations on the labour market, the so-called *second best solution* is preferred by the majority of the countries under survey. They offer active employment possibilities, which, however, do not ensure automatically that people in search of a job will find one in the most advantageous part (segment) of the labour market. In this context one of the most popular patterns is the stimulation of small private enterprises. It is worth mentioning as an indication of the order of magnitude that small and medium-sized firms play an important role in the structural change of the economy because of their leading role not only in technological and organizational innovation but also in employment and the creation of jobs. For example, half to two thirds of the manpower employed in the OECD countries work for companies employing less than 500 persons.

The role of active and passive labour market policies, determining the character of the employment policy of different countries is well demonstrated by the following table, that shows the expenditures of OECD countries on the labour market in proportion to the gross domestic product.

In the following we give a brief summary of the contents of the items of the chart:

1. *Employment service*: finding employment, advising, education, furthering mobility, gathering information on the labour market.

2. *Manpower training*: assisting the participants in training courses, covering the expenses of the different courses for the unemployed, aid for the companies organizing the courses.

3. *Special programmes for the young*: programmes encouraging young people leaving school to go and find employment. The purpose of the majority of the programmes is to provide training to improve the chances on the labour market of young people finishing their studies.

4. *Workplace creation*: programmes aimed at the immediately perceptible improvement of employment opportunities.

5. *Programmes broadening the possibilities of people with partial incapacity for work to find employment*.

6. *Unemployment allowance*: includes all kinds of solutions except early retirement.

7. *Early retirement*: on labour market considerations.

According to the data of the table the scale of government aid provided for the unemployed ranges from 5.34-4.00 per cent of the gross national product (Ireland,

Belgium, The Netherlands) to less than 1 per cent (Norway, Portugal). The majority of the countries examined spends about 2-3.5 per cent for labour market expenses. Significant differences can be observed in the structure of the expenditures. It means that it is not the spread of financial policies but the effects of employment policies largely differing from one another that are reflected in the structures.

The largest item of the expenditures is aimed at preserving the income position of the unemployed. Its volume is determined, on the one hand, by the proportion of the unemployed, and on the other hand, by the conditions of the availability of unemployment allowance. The volume, in itself, of the expenses of the labour market is considered inadequate to demonstrate the importance of the so-called active labour market policy. In this context, three groups of countries, belonging to three expenditure groups, can be distinguished as follows:

(a) Less than the average is allotted to *active labour market policy* by: The Netherlands, Portugal, Canada. A relatively small amount is allotted to programmes for the support of young people leaving school in Austria, Australia and the FRG. In the case of the FRG we must remember that there is a tendency to integrate young people in higher education, so that they appear in the labour market relatively late.

(b) Significant amounts are granted for *employment creation in the public sector*: Belgium, Spain and the UK. In contrast they are less concerned about adult training.

(c) The FRG, New Zealand, Norway and, above all, Sweden encourage significant *training programmes guaranteeing the stimulation of the creation of state employment, greater mobility on the labour market and greater flexibility* of manpower utilization. In Sweden the budgets allotted for actively influencing the labour market represent nearly three quarters of the total expenses.

We will now try to characterize some 'pillars' of the Swedish employment policy as the most up-to-date one, which exerts an active influence on the labour market. As regards employment, the 'productivity' of this country, described as a 'mature industrialized country', is more than impressive: 1.7 per cent unemployment and the appearance of a shortage of manpower – in the field of qualified manpower – in the developed industrial regions of the country, in Göteborg, Uppsala and Malmö. No wonder that the employment system of this country having a well-qualified manpower with high wages and the most advanced welfare policy in the world became the centre of interest in the eighties. Surprisingly, the well-known means of flexible manpower utilization – like, for example, flexible working hours, different forms of employment by contracts, etc. – cannot be found among its means and devices.<sup>19</sup> Actually, employers have little possibility of dismissing anyone on the grounds of economic difficulties. Despite the restrictions listed above the practice of manpower utilization of Swedish companies – the closest parallel to which can be found in the employment policy of German and Japan large enterprises – is not without a flexible manpower utilization system. It is the creation of a *functional flexibility* based on the development of manpower abilities that is in the centre of the Swedish employment policy. This means that the method of so-called *external flexibility*, ensured by means of simple liquidation of work-

places, is considered acceptable. They emphasize *the importance of the development of steadily predominating qualitative factors of manpower adaptation. The role of the partner and co-operative relations of the participants of industrial relations*, the emphasis on management of human resources in the company strategies and, in this context, the importance of the investments in training are all worth mentioning and publicizing. The trade union activists of the companies are in possession of information on the economic, financial and social position of the company of the same origin and quality as that of the company management. This fact appears to be one of the most important sources of the co-operative and correct relations predominating in industrial relations and automatically guarantees the elimination of suspicion and mistrust as regards the information available. Consequently, it is not surprising that sometimes it is the trade union itself that takes the initiative and proposes the regrouping of the staff or the reduction of the working force in order to maintain the efficiency of production and the competitiveness of the company. In the case of reduction in the working force necessitated by a decline in the economic position of the company, the general rule followed by the trade union is: 'those to be dismissed must be chosen from among the newcomers'.

There is no question at all of the enforcement of the so-called 'seniority principle',<sup>20</sup> well-known in the trade union movement. *In this case it is again the long-term labour market approach of the Swedish trade unions that comes to the fore: there is no sense in supporting a policy of safeguarding interests that tries to press young people to stay and work for companies in a declining sector. On the contrary, by ensuring adequate training and further training it directs young people towards branches with perspectives.* In order to reduce the objective tension between the 'leading' and 'declining' sectors, trade unions try hard to balance the wages offered in the different branches. The company-level search for and application of long-term means and devices for manpower utilization – that moderate at the same time the level of confrontation with the trade unions – are encouraged by a *special company management practice*. The experts engaged in the development of human resources and in strategy planning play an important role in the decisions concerning company management. In the course of technological development, they pay particular attention to training programmes and organization-development programmes. It is a well-known fact that in Swedish industrial practice, manpower utilization has been realized for several decades by management systems based on the participation of workers, by autonomy and by the 'team' concept.<sup>21</sup> (For example, in the autumn of 1988, the managers and the general director of the division of the Göteborg human resources centre of the Volvo works moved to one of the plants in the country. The fact of 'moving' leads us to the conclusion that the decentralization of activities in connection with development, production and marketing, can be successfully realized only simultaneously with decentralization of the same nature of the activities concerning human resources. The well-known organization of large enterprises will function in the future as a complex network of autonomous plants, specialized in the manufacturing of different products and services.)

The importance of methods furthering and maintaining the functional flexibility of manpower utilization will increase, since the role of other factors ensuring the

external flexibility of manpower utilization is limited. The role of 'internal flexibility' is increased by the relative underdevelopment of the geographical mobility of manpower.

The potentially unemployed cannot refuse participation in the training necessitated by the transformation of the economic structure. Similarly, manpower transfer, proposed by the management in the different production or service sections, cannot be rejected either. The workers refusing to participate in the training will be deprived of the unemployment allowance. Social standard: everybody – both the employer and the employee – is fully responsible for the society which itself bears responsibility for its members. Communities showing great structural adaptability will call forth the constraint of personal participation and solidarity. In this complex system, the 'fixed points' of employment policy and its inflexibility will result in the long run, in unprecedented flexibility of the utilization of human resources. The particular emphasis laid on the human factor is not only a slogan of the employment policy, but it appears to be a readily applicable method in the practice of manpower utilization.

Summarizing the factors contributing to the success of the Swedish employment policy we must emphasize the following facts:<sup>22</sup>

(1) Companies belonging to the declining sectors of the economy have been closed down at an accelerated pace. Different types of capital have been directed towards new fields of activities and services.

(2) Substantial investments have been made in the sectors with perspective.

(3) The training of manpower has been realized in the progressive sectors. Significant investments have been made in the professional and technical knowledge of manpower.

We would like to emphasize repeatedly the fact that solidarity, co-operation and coordination play a determining role in the establishment of a stable environment for manpower utilization. The values and standards, reflected in the attitudes and standpoints of the social partners will, however, bring about a stable and consequently, foreseeable environment if they are not connected to abstract ideologies and serve as a tangible guide for the people concerned. *If solidarity or co-operation remains on the rhetorical level, positive effects cannot be expected. On the contrary, the 'agreements', concluded in the spirit of the slogans listed, will create and stabilize the atmosphere of scepticism and mistrust in the economic and social system. The experiences of the past and present show that very often in spite of certain efforts made to propagate the concepts of solidarity and co-operation, the different social groups (and sometimes countries) have striven and strive resolutely to enforce their interests.*

Last but not least, we would like to call attention to the fact that the role of the region in the present economic and socio-cultural development and also in the solution of the problems concerning employment, has been continuously growing. On the one hand, the state has to make use of its role as an 'employer' and, on the other hand it has to enable its local institutions to exert real influence on the development of the economy and, in this context, on employment policy. In the eighties the role of local politics in the stabilization of employment relations has been upgraded in the developed capitalist countries.<sup>23</sup> The political tension that follows the shutting

down of factories and plants may result in social disequilibrium in the region. The local political forces are interested in avoiding such situations. As a result of this process, the emphasis will be shifted from supporting developments having priority on national level to supporting local initiatives and innovations. The decentralization predominating in economic and social development reflects the modification of the role of the state, i.e. it is less and less in a position to exercise control over social and economic development with the help of the former administrative and coordinating mechanisms. The rearrangement has been accelerated by an unprecedented instability of market relations and also by the possibilities inherent in the utilization of new technologies. One of the most important characteristics of local mobilization is: the local political leadership ('autonomy') tries to win the favour of different firms (especially the small and medium-sized companies) by improving the quality of services and the infrastructure, understood in the full sense of the word (qualified manpower, excellent conditions for communication, etc.). On national level it seems reasonable to ensure financial resources for local development along with a general framework for the utilization of these resources.

The allocation of the resources made available in this way is effected by the local authorities (governments). In other words, this means that the responsibility of the central government for economic development and employment is delegated to and shared with the local 'governments'.

### 3. The Present Unemployment in Hungary

In this short chapter of our study we do not intend to analyse and describe all the components of unemployment in Hungary. This is a subject with no bounds – it is treated as such by the special literature too – but we would like to outline the socio-historical reasons of unemployment in Hungary. The legitimacy of the socio-historical approach is demonstrated by the fact that unemployment is always the consequence of a former period of economic and social history. In our case it is that of an age – with a mentality and actions of closed economic models – which, as a result of the policy of extensive economic development launched the double process of drifting towards the *periphery*. The one side of this process can be seen in the relations with the world economy and the world market, while the other side in the internal structure of the society. The knowledge- and profession-structure, the employment structure and the sectoral structure of economy – the development, maintenance and propagation of which was supported by a significant quantity of development programmes and investments – were already in a peripheral situation when industrialization was started in Hungary. Consequently, in spite of the fact that a given profession or branch of industry was to be found in the centre of the value-systems of Hungary, the handicap of the main economic activities was considered as existent on the world market. The drastically accelerated 'drafting out' could not be stopped during the past years and the scale of

values of the economic and employment policy giving rise to the drift towards the periphery could not be destroyed either. So in the present situation only one strand, one tendency and one real situation have become obvious.<sup>24</sup>

The history of the *internal relations* of the Hungarian society is characterized by a steadily increasing *process of division*. It was in this process that the range of social and professional groups that were ousted from the system of the primary and secondary (multiple) distribution and redistribution of material, intellectual and power-related goods steadily grew. Unemployment has made this internal process of remarginalization an open one since the majority of the unemployed come from this social group in a rather *disadvantageous situation*. By now the social integration of these groups is endangered. It is precisely the analysis of these groups that allows us to say that unemployment always existed in Hungarian society, even in the periods when it was claimed that there was full employment. Yet, it was not only the structural type of unemployment on the external market but other types as well that was the question. Thus, for example, economists often speak of 'concealed, in factory' unemployment, or we heard of unemployment affecting the young, and unemployment of the boom.

*The present unemployment in Hungary can be considered as a type of structural unemployment.* This definition means that everything that has been said about structural unemployment can be considered as true in Hungary as well.

The present unemployment is determined to a large extent by the socially typical organization of the labour market systems. One of the characteristics of the history of the Hungarian labour market after 1945 is that on the one hand, the external labour market has no institutional organization – in the fifties administrative labour exchange did away with and blocked even the possibility of such an organization – and, on the other hand, where an institutional organization was established, it gave rise to great inequalities in the field of professions, occupation, knowledge and abilities. Unlike the external labour market, the internal labour market develops, exerts an influence and functions within the internal society of enterprises and factories. This labour market creates independent priorities and determines the social value of professions, occupations and working abilities.

The process of peripheralization that has its roots in the world market, is *breaking down* the system of internal labour markets. Thus the process of being forced to the periphery of the social groups dominating the internal market will be started. The *process of losing status is dragging new groups* down to the verge of uncertainty of existence.

This trend is definitely a *new* phenomenon in the history of Hungarian society. It is fundamentally different from the 'drifting out' of the unqualified workforce or from the stages of employment of the social groups on the contact points of agriculture since on the one hand we speak of the loss of the previous central position and on the other hand, we speak of a stratum that became a group of industrial workers (maybe generation by generation). The real losers of the present unemployment are the members of these social groups, even where possibilities for retraining or learning a new profession are provided. On the one hand, they can make use of these possibilities only to a limited degree and on the other hand

the effectiveness of the possibilities is reduced by the shortage (housing, infrastructure) in other domains of the society.

The institutionalization of the external labour market, taking the form of something like vestiges or embryos, has so far been hindered by the structure of the political power. On the one hand the labour market is the scene of solidarity and of the employees' co-operation, which brings about alternative strategies of employment-, wage-, and distribution-policy. Obviously, the monolithic power structure did not tolerate these rival strategic alternatives. On the other hand, the party of the labour market – the trade union – has been banished to the internal labour market where its activity and behaviour is automatically condemned to failure. Owing to these structural reasons – not to mention the lack of a labour market service on the part of the state – there is no flexible, dynamic and, at the same time, integral labour market system. The formation of a flexible labour market system, the establishment of its institutions will be the task of the years to come. It is also the task of the following years to create a socio-political projection to help solve the problems of the unemployed as regards their existence.<sup>25</sup>

## Notes

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## Medical or Social Responsibility?

(Some Notes on the Multi-Functional Social Roles of the Psychiatric Outpatient Clinics in Hungary)

By

Julia Szalai and Ágnes Vajda

In Hungary nowadays there is a wide discourse on the broadly shared painful experience of facing the urgent need for help of thousands and thousands, who are deeply troubled and in serious personal crisis. A striking feature of social malaise over the last few decades has been the fact that many unsolved, often even unidentified conflicts put a heavy burden on individuals and families, causing obvious disturbances to large numbers and giving rise to serious problems that often lead to a tragic end. One indication of the presence and intensification of social constraints which cannot be coped with on an individual level is the increase in frequency of *mental disorders*. It is a well-documented fact, even in cross-national comparisons, that the rates of alcoholism and suicide in Hungary are exceptionally high. There is more and more talk in public Hungarian forums about the high prevalence of neurosis, which has become a new 'epidemic disease'; on the widespread occurrence of lasting headaches, the wide use of sedatives and sleeping pills, rapidly spreading drug-addiction as well as about people's overused and consequently reduced endurance. Statistics give somewhat more precise information about these symptoms and support facts already well-known to the public:

There is a steady annual increase in the take-up of disability pensions due to psychiatric illness; the number of those on sick leave because of mental health problems is rising; the turnover in mental wards of hospitals increases continuously and the number of suicides per 10.000 inhabitants has nearly doubled over the past twenty five years.

It is hard to determine precisely how far the worsening statistical indicators are direct expressions of deteriorating health conditions and to what extent they reflect social recognition of those conditions. Even if there are various explanations for the numerical increase in mental disorders and the phenomenon is regarded as