

THESIS

Territorial inequalities and tendencies of the most characteristic processes of unemployment in the period 1992-2002

1. Reasons for the choice of subject, objectives

The permanent unbalance in the labour market, the appearance of mass unemployment have affected practically every family in Hungary to a degree during the last few years, and because of the long lasting employment problems it is not surprising that the studies, newspaper articles, reports etc. dealing with the actual labour market situation attract the attention of the general public. A number of researches proved that the disadvantageous employment situation is usually one of the most important consequences of the underdevelopment caused by complex reasons; at the same time because of the permanence of it and the widely perceivable effects (social deviancies, impoverishment etc.) of the appearance of the unemployed in large numbers it became a major factor, a structural element of underdevelopment.

In consequence of this the operation of the labour market, or just the spectacular disorders of it always gain publicity, and because of its serious influence on the standard of living, the raising of the employment level, the reduction of unemployment is among the most important priorities in every development document. Either the local social tensions, the migration inside and outside the country or the intensification of the competitiveness of human resources are under discussion, the labour market and the characteristics of employment and unemployment will be in the field of interest of the general public and the experts who deal with this topic from any aspect for a long time.

Unemployment in the European Union causes serious problems and a number of practical proposals were elaborated – partially based upon theories regarding the operation of the labour market – which aimed the treatment of these problems, but according to the observations a generally applicable, really successful “cure” does not exist. On the other hand geography with its special approach, which examines socio-economic processes in a spatial context (and incorporate it with research methods of other areas of science) can lend a helping hand for the development of really effective programs considering the territorial features as well.

The subject of the doctoral thesis is essentially the presentation of the labour market models based on theoretical or practical considerations, the examination of these models’ applicability in the present situation in Hungary and the accentuation of the Hungarian particularities. The latter does not simply mean interpretation from several aspects of the already existing models, but also from the aspects of the evolution of market processes, which change in time and space and fundamentally differ from the Western patterns.

After a summary of the available special literature in reference to the labour market models created so far, and based on various aspects, the most accented part of the paper is the review of the spatial structure as well as the observable changes and characteristics of the most important processes’ and indicators’ development in time regarding to the Hungarian labour market (or rather the unemployment, as a result of the lack of data). The analysis focuses on the micro regions and settlements affected by unemployment permanently and to a larger extent than the national average, while the summary of the most significant problems and practical experiences regarding to the border region of the North-Tiszántúl area are presented

in a separate chapter. It is not the aim of the doctoral thesis to give an all-embracing explanation of all causal connections which can be found in the background of these processes, but we intend to mention the most obvious and/or neuralgic points anyway.

2. Methods of research

As a result of the characteristic of the thesis several complementary methods were applied during the research.

- In course of the review of the functional labour market models I certainly relied on the Hungarian and international (principally English and German) papers connected to this topic. I could also build the summary of the Hungarian labour market's characteristic processes and features since the democratic transition mainly upon the affluent special literature.
- For the classification and processing of the various available databases (census data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO), the HCSO's T-star databases, the data of the Employment Office) I used the programs Datastar 2.1, SPSS for Windows 9.0, and Microsoft Excel 2002.
- For the presentation of the processed data on maps I applied the OTAB geographic information system, Microsoft Excel 2002, and the Mapinfo Professional 6.5 software.
- In order to complete and specify the available statistical data and to reveal the real labour market processes in the study area more extensively I participated in several questionnaire surveys carried out by the Debrecen Department of the Centre for Regional Studies of HAS among local inhabitants, local governments and other target groups, and in connection with these research projects I interviewed prominent experts involved in employment issues (leaders of the local employment offices, mayors etc.).

3. Research results, usability

After the review of the theoretical models concerning the functioning of the labour market the thesis set as an aim the summary of the main characteristics of the unemployment in Hungary in the modern age, the examination of the usability of various theories and the systematization of the practical experiences regarding to the reasons and special characteristics of unemployment, which originated from the areas in a cumulatively disadvantageous situation in the Northeastern part of the Great Plain. According to the above mentioned aims the most important conclusions can be summarized as follows:

1. The characteristics of unemployment in Hungary

The employment problems emerged in the period of the democratic transformation were accompanied by a new, till then unknown social phenomenon, the unemployment. The unfolding employment crisis had some special features in comparison with the situation in Western Europe.

- ◆ The unexpected, explosion like increase of unemployment experienced in Hungary was till then unprecedented in the operating market economies, since there the

decision makers did not intervene in the mechanism of the labour market as drastically as in the countries of the socialist block, where the existence of the market was denied because of ideological reasons.

- ◆ Unemployment could be characterized by significant spatial differentiation in the early period already: the so called “West-East declination” emerged at the beginning of the 1990’s already, that is to say that in the Eastern and Northeastern part of the country the unemployment rate exceeded the rates of Budapest and its conurbation or the rates in the Northwestern part of Transdanubian regions several times. Nevertheless the significant dissimilarity is not observable at the macro level only, the polarization is just as strong inside every region, county and micro-region as well.
- ◆ The low level of the mobility of the labour force (beside a number of other factors) made significant contribution to the formation of the closed labour markets which function more or less separately from each other. At the same time the drastically worsening conditions of commuting and the considerable territorial segmentation caused by the differences between the regions in the economic situation and the living standards conserve the unfavourable and very rigid spatial structure of the labour market.

2. Main characteristics of the unemployment’s territorial processes between 1992 and 2002

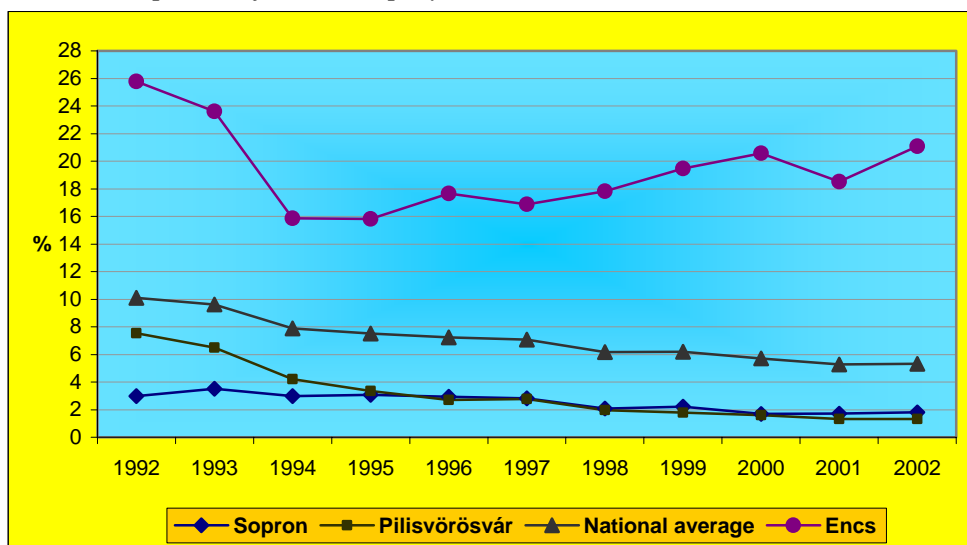
In the first years of the 1990’s the economic structure changed radically and very rapidly at the same time as a result of the post-socialist transformation and this process was evidently followed by the changes of the spatial structure of the labour market. In the period between 1992 and 2002:

- ◆ The spatial structure of unemployment barely changed. The areas afflicted by the highest level of unemployment (analogously to the circumstances at the starting point) are still in peripheral situation nowadays and they are mostly rural areas with small villages near the border – except the regions at the Western borders of Hungary, which have, together with the Central Region the lowest level of unemployment (that means the rate of registered unemployed within the people of working age). 20 of the 32 micro-regions with the highest unemployment rates in 1992 belonged to this category ten years later, too, and this ratio is very similar (21 micro regions) on the other side of the scale, among the micro-regions with the lowest level of unemployment.
- ◆ The number of registered unemployed in the files of the Labour Centers decreased from 660,321 in December 20th, 1992 to 344,901 in the same date in 2002, that means it fell back to almost the half of the original number, and in compliance with this, the unemployment rate eased down from 10.1% to 5.3%. It was a pleasing step forward even if we know that in this process – beside the successful application of various tools of the active employment policy – the administrative changes, which resulted the decrease of the number of registered unemployed in many instances (the cessation of the income-substitutive support and the unemployed pay for the entrants or the repeated reduction of the period in which

the unemployed were entitled to the various subsidies) played an indisputably significant role, too.

- ◆ On the other hand parallel with the decreasing tendency at the national level at the micro-regional and the settlements' level the rates moved toward the end values, that means the differences between certain territories increased. This process can be traced back to the fact that in the areas, which are in a better position anyway (e.g. Budapest and its conurbation or Western Hungary) unemployment rates decreased permanently, while in the regions afflicted by high unemployment rates (Northeastern Hungary, South Baranya etc.) the number of unemployed decreased slower than the average or did not decrease at all.
- ◆ The slower decrease, stagnation or even increase of the number and ratio of unemployed people in some cases did not increase the number of the micro-regions and settlements in unfavourable position only, but also the amplitude of the deviation from the national average in the negative direction. While in 1992 the largest deviation from the average was only 2.5 at the micro-regional level, in 2002 this value increased to almost 4.

*The development of the unemployment indicator between 1992 and 2002 **



*: Data from 1992 and 2002 from the micro-regions with the lowest (Sopron and Pilisvörösvár micro-regions) and the highest (Encs micro-region in both years) rates are presented in this diagram as well as the national average

Source: Created by the author, based on the data of the Employment Office

- ◆ The value of the unemployment index became more homogenous in both the micro-regions in favourable and unfavourable position, because in the earlier case the areas with lower, in the later case the areas with higher unemployment rates increased their territorial extension significantly, and in Eastern-Hungary clearly visible dislocation from the West to the East and from the South-West to the North-East occurred. As a result of this the regions with different potentials segregate from each other more and more sharply, and at the micro-regional and settlement level the gradual abruption of the territories affected by the employment

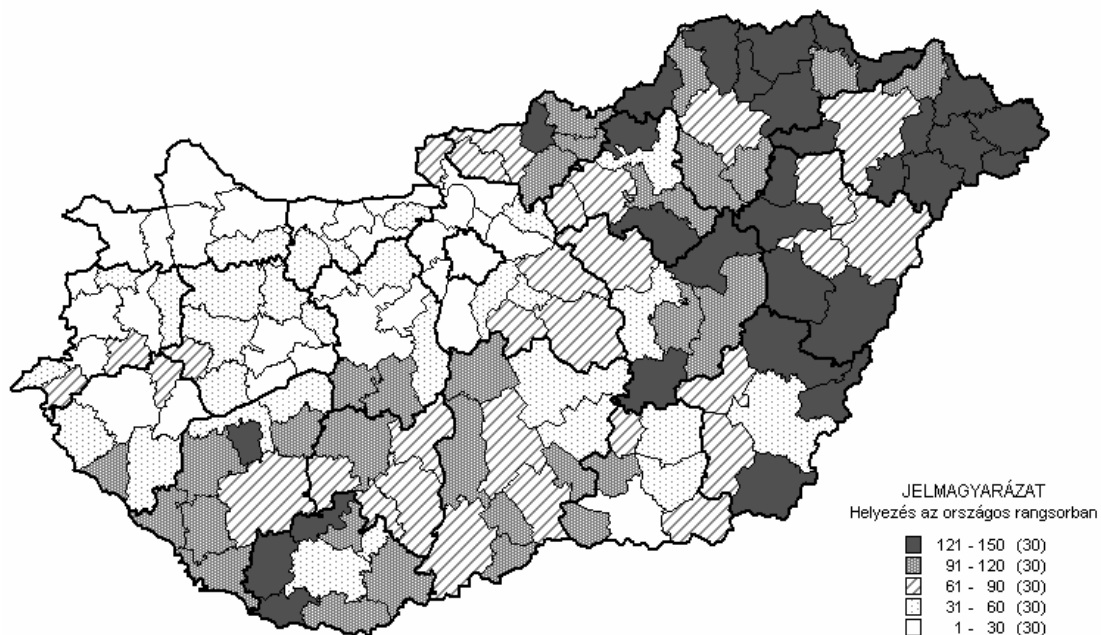
crisis is even more perceivable. The above mentioned processes did not rearrange the spatial structure of unemployment in Hungary; moreover they made the segregation of the regions in advantageous and disadvantageous employment situation more explicit.

3. Powerful segmentation – complicated connections

The stiffening of the labour market's territorial structure and the increase of territorial inequalities point to an immensely complex system of interconnected issues. The unfavourable employment situation is one of the most significant consequences of the backwardness of these regions, rooted in the complex situation. At the same time as these conditions become permanent, and as the consequences of mass unemployment (social deviations, impoverishment etc.) appear, this unemployment situation turns into one of the main factor, a structural element of the backwardness, and almost all of its components are characterized by huge differences.

Consequently the most serious employment problems remain typical for the regions struggling with multifactoral backwardness. This is sustained by our research, in which we considered the ranking of the combined mean of 12, from the aspect of employment and unemployment prominently important indicators (the number of employed, Romas, the rate of those, who finished maximum 8 years of the primary school in comparison with the whole population, the rate of permanently unemployed in comparison with the whole number of registered unemployed, the income per capita, which is considered at the calculation of the income-tax, the number of active enterprises per 1000 inhabitants etc.), which are closely correlated with the unemployment indicator.

The position of certain KSH micro-regions based on the ranking of the combined mean of the selected indicators



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Source: Created by the author, based on the data of the Employment Office

If we check the position of each micro-region in the national ranking based on the combined indicators, we can see that the areas in the most disadvantageous situation are usually located in closed blocks, mainly along the Eastern-Northeastern section of the state border. Only the Southwestern border region of Hungary, an area with small villages and the Middle-Tisza area are in a similarly disadvantageous position, and an evidence of the powerful polarization of the labour market is the fact that only micro-regions from these areas can be found in the last 30 positions of the national ranking.

4. The most significant factors influencing the functioning of the labour market in the peripheral areas of the Northeastern Great Plain – as seen from empirical surveys

By the help of miscellaneous questionnaire surveys and shorter and longer interviews carried out in the Northeastern regions of the Great Plain in the past few years we managed to accomplish a detailed, nevertheless appreciable description about the perceptions of the experts, local officials, and partly the local inhabitants themselves in reference to the permanent employment problems in a region, which is at a disadvantage and can be considered as a periphery from the labour market's aspect from the very beginning. We also defined the most important reasons, which are responsible for the persistence of the disadvantageous processes.

The Debrecen Department of the Centre for Regional Studies of HAS carried out two complex questionnaire surveys at the local authorities of 199 settlements in the border regions of Hajdú-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties in 1999 and 2002, which studied the socio-economic situation of the region. These surveys were supplemented by another questionnaire survey, which was carried out in 4 pairs of settlements in both sides of the Hungarian-Ukrainian border among the local inhabitants (in the Hungarian side 520, in Transcarpathia 560 questionnaires were filled) and studied the characteristics of cross-border connections. In connection with these surveys a series of interviews were carried out as well in early 1999 and in the summer of 2002, which focused on the effects of the peripheral situation in the border region (in the framework of this research we visited the leaders of the local employment offices of all micro-regions, which have connection to the state border and in the second wave some micro-region managers, too). Based on these surveys we define the most significant problems of this area as follows:

- ◆ According to concurrent opinions the factor which affects the working opportunities for the most part in every region and especially in the settlement near the border is the remarkably unsuitable accessibility (incomplete and/or low-grade road- and railway network, low density of services, which have negative affects of employment etc.). This is not a new problem, and the local inhabitants have considered long-distance commuting as the only solution. However the events of the 1990s were not favourable to this way of life and the number of commuters decreased drastically. Because of the permanently growing travelling expenses the employers terminated contractual passenger transport almost everywhere, and in favour of the reduce of the costs, they fired the commuters first.

- ◆ The general problems caused by the geographical location fundamentally determine the functional conditions of the labour market in the region. As a result of the unfavourable macro-economic characteristics the number of legal possibility of employment is amazingly low on both national and regional scale. The lack of jobs is one of, if not the most significant reason of the permanently high unemployment rates in the study area in comparison with the national average. The lack of multinational firms, the scarcity of capital of the local entrepreneurs and other factors almost inevitably lead to the situation that in the study area – especially in the separated villages near the border – local governments (namely the social labour market) became the largest employer.

Considering the number of registered unemployed per one actual vacancy in Hajdú-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties in the studied period took position 2 and 3 behind the extremely high rate of Somogy County. In Hajdú-Bihar County this rate is 2.7 times, in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg 3.7 times higher than the national average. The anomalies are indicated by the fact that there was a micro-region, where no free position could be offered at all (!) for 1622 registered unemployed.

- ◆ The role of the Roma ethnic group in this area was mentioned in every conversation about the unemployment problems of the border region; actually it was an unavoidable topic. According to the census in 2001 and the estimations based on the studies of the local governments and the researchers, which reflect the actual situation better, the rate of the Roma population in the Northeastern part of the Great Plain, especially in the areas with small villages near the border is much higher than the national average and in many cases the sign of territorial segregation can be observed in contiguous areas, which extend to several settlements.

If we analyze the employment situation of the Roma ethnic group we can say that according to the authentic estimations of the interviewees approximately 70-80% of them had to leave the legal sphere of the labour market permanently, and they have precious little chance to get back there. More than two third of the permanently unemployed belongs to this group, and rather grounded assumptions say they are the majority among the latent unemployed, too. This situation has several reasons: the distressfully low level of education, the often argued work morale, and the negative prejudices connected to them can be mentioned.

- ◆ The very high number and rate of permanently unemployed cause as many serious problems in the study area as the above mentioned elements – so it is not surprising that every interviewee emphasized the significance of this topic. The present-day situation is an evident consequence of the fact that in the regions along the Eastern borders the number of unemployed increased to a high level rapidly and instead of the occasional decreases the unemployment rate remained high. Further problems are caused by the fact that because of the disparaging educational level and the age composition of these people (the rate of the elderly generation, which consist of people who cannot find a job is high) in comparison with the whole group of registered unemployed, they can be employed only in the framework of public projects and/or jobs of public utility, as the demand for them in the labour market is rather slight despite the support programs.

The causes of permanent unemployment, the possible management of it and its negative effects on both the individuals and the whole society were described by many authors, but on the basis of the observations of the interviews it is worth while to emphasize among the most serious effects taken on the individuals the feeling of preterition and becoming unnecessary, which often leads to the fossilization of the unemployed or to harmful habits. As a result of the extended unemployment the deterioration (both mental and physical) of the individual begins, therefore in many instances the establishment of new jobs doesn't necessarily mean a certain solution, because these people would not be competitive in the market. Among the harmful consequences for the society we must emphasize the decrease of the aspiration level, the alignment of the living standard to the income, because they conduces to dereliction, and generate further pauperization in the areas mostly afflicted by this problem.

The opinions, which presume close connection between the limited employment opportunities, the high unemployment rate and the high number of permanently unemployed and other serious problems, are also concordant. As there is no real chance of the remarkable betterment of the actual situation (bad accessibility, worse living conditions, low salaries etc.) in the near future, the starting and the existence of the selective migration from this area is a natural process. Beside migration the fact that a lot of people "escaped" to inactivity to avoid unemployment also causes great anxiety and at the same time the number of persons with a reduced capacity for work, which have only minimal chance to find a job is increasing permanently. The difficulties are also increased by the fact that children growing up in one-parent families, where the main income is often the unemployment aid or other benefit and the living standard is decreasing, have no chance to go on studying and cannot obtain the qualifications necessary for finding a job – and this may contribute to the reproduction of the current problems.

- ◆ As a result of the limited number of work opportunities, the unfavourable living conditions in comparison with the entire country it is not surprising that – especially for the local inhabitants – the employees, who arrive from the other side of the border legally or illegally are considered as sources of serious problems. The aversions to the "aliens" are mainly kept alive by the bread-and-butter worries and the fears of the loss of the uncertain jobs, as these people are willing to sign on for jobs for a shred of the usual salary in Hungary. Nevertheless official data and data based on questionnaire surveys show – although the local inhabitants' opinion is usually different – the Eastern border regions, similarly to the preceding years are considered as a spring-board in the eye of those arrived from the neighbouring countries to engage themselves to work.

5. Labour market models and the Hungarian reality

So to say as a summary, which may provide a frame for the whole work we made an attempt in the closing chapter of the thesis to unfold to what extent the conclusions of various labour market models reviewed in the first thematic unit can be adapted to Hungary and the research area. As a theoretical establishment for the thesis in the course of the review of the theoretical models from the neoclassical model – which has the oldest historical roots – to the various segmentation models we presented the various

viewpoints regarding to operations and structure of the market and the characteristics of the connection network of the market actors, and based on these conclusions in the final part of the paper we tried to present they main characteristics of the partial markets of the areas afflicted by high permanent unemployment rates from a “model-approach”.

Based on the data collected by the help of statistical and empirical methods, the in-depth interviews and our own experiences we can formulate the following statements:

- ◆ The dynamic market balance, assumed by the neoclassical model practically does not exist neither in any part of the research area nor in the whole area. In the past one and a half decades were rather about the unbalanced situation of the supply and demand side caused by the post-socialist transformation crisis, and not merely the self-regulating mechanisms of the market, but also the intervention of the government, the strenuous work of the employment organization were unable to successfully draw the two sides together.
- ◆ On the other hand the accomplishment of partial markets, substantiated by the segmentation theories is perceivable in everyday life and can be sustained by empirical data, moreover the accumulation of various segmentation factors inside the country and the region promote the formation of specific partial markets even more. In consequence of the above mentioned statement we can say that more or less every segmentation theory can be used for emphasizing or explaining certain problems in the studied peripheral border region, but they cannot provide a completely realistic image even if we apply them combined.
- ◆ On the basis of the criterions considered by the dual-segmented labour market model and the factors which produce the segmentation, clearly the secondary partial market (with unfavourable features) is dominant in the study area. In the peripheral areas we can observe the accumulation of the disadvantages almost every time: the market is characterized by its unstructured nature, low wages and worse working conditions than the average. The geographical location of the study area is one of the most significant segmentation factors in this case: the Northeastern border region is far from the Western border (this factor and the accessibility – beside several other factors – have a decisive effect on the capital attracting ability), therefore the preferred sectors, which could encourage the development of the primary market by means of their technological level are completely absent in this area.

If we examine the main characteristics of the actual vacancies, it can be laid down as a fact that their structure in the study area is more disadvantageous than the average in every respect: the utilization of the support programs aiming the establishment of jobs is not typical here, there are far less so called “general” positions, which are offered without any subvention, whereas the rate of people employed in the framework of public projects and jobs of public utility is much higher – that indicates the accentuated role of the social labour market in this region.

An even more unfavourable factor is the concentration of the population without elementary education in the peripheral area. This is the reason and the consequence of the development of the secondary market at the same time: the labour force with low qualifications does not attract the investors with high

employment potential, at the same time the unfavourable labour market-living conditions catalyze powerful demographic erosion through the strengthening of the selective out migration. Thus the potential workforce basis has firm secondary characteristics, and a number of research results sustain that in these areas no new jobs can be created in spite of the existence of the necessary intentions and opportunities, because on account of the qualification or the employment attitude, simply no employees are available in sufficient numbers.

- ◆ Although the macro economic environment, which determine the working conditions of the labour market, and the labour force basis itself has firm secondary characteristics, nevertheless as a result of the powerful and specific role of the social market, some unique characteristics can be observed here, which radically differ from the experiences gained in the mother country of the theory. According to the model, as a result of the clearly disadvantageous circumstances the characteristic of the secondary market is the weaker linkage of the employees and the high level of fluctuation, which is a consequence of the first factor. On the other hand these statements are not, or only partially characteristic of the study area.

Most of the available data clearly show that in the peripheral areas near the border practically only the secondary market works indeed, but it determines the employment-unemployment characteristics in any case. Therefore even if the specific “social” partial market has secondary characteristics in almost every respect, considering the strength of the linkage of the market actors and their fluctuation the situation is the opposite of the Western model.

The so called secondary labour market, which fundamentally based on the German model provides a temporary solution according to the original conception (and if everything turns out well) in the transitory state between two jobs, therefore the level of fluctuation is high, and nothing keeps the actors here. On the other hand in the regions of Hungary with permanent employment crisis the market with secondary characteristics became primary as regards its actual functions, as the long-term subsistence of a large, sometimes decisive part of the population depends on it. A stationary core of the unemployed established, the members of which cannot and do not want to leave the secondary market, and the lifestyle partially based on the financial support provided by the social labour market is widespread. Therefore the average time spent in the labour registry is several times longer than in Western Europe (one and a half years instead of three months), that is the fluctuation typical there is on a minimal level in this case.

The strength of the links has – mainly because of the above mentioned conditions – some specific characteristics. In most of the study areas only the local authorities are capable of offering jobs, which are necessary for the staying inside the subsidy system and for the subsistence, thus the actors of the social market – as they have no other choice – have strong links with the institutions, which provide their sustenance, as a result of their exposedness. It is another issue that in certain cases these strong links are not necessarily consequences of the exposedness, but rather outcomes of a deliberate undertaking, which is based on precise reckoning, but these events do not substantially change the fundamental circumstances.

As these two characteristics of the secondary labour market recall rather the Western primary partial market, it is not surprising that the primary market here is practically the opposite of its Western counterpart. In the atomized enterprise structure the labour force with typically low educational level fluctuates rapidly (otherwise the employers do the same), and this as well as the competition caused by the considerable oversupply resulted that in spite of the intentions of the employees, no definitive links can form with the employer, moreover the theoretically guaranteed benefits suffer significant damage.

- ◆ The neo-institutionalist model, which emphasizes the institutions' effect on the operation of the labour market, can be applied in the study area successfully, since state intervention has a significant role in the improvement of the chances of finding a job. All this is easy to see, if we take it into consideration that in most settlements the local governments became the most important and in several cases the only employer, and the so called social labour market, which is maintained by the state has dominant role – practically they are the public projects and jobs of public utility.
- ◆ The discrimination theory of the labour market can be applied for the analysis of the real market situation from several aspects, as in the case of most of the employees living in the Northeastern areas of Hungary we can talk about the lack of the equal opportunities or the considerably limited character of it as regards the possibility of getting a job and the preservation of the position, or even the salaries. Moreover the discrimination factors not only observable to a greater extent in comparison with the more developed areas of the country, but as a result of the social tension produced by the worse living conditions they have determinant role in these regions as well, and the unemployment and the poverty trap reproduce the disadvantageous situation as a self-generating process, while it decreases the chances of closing up more and more as the years pass.

It is not a unique phenomenon that the handicapped people, employees and unemployed over 45 years, mothers with several children, career-starters, people living in out-of-the-way settlements and especially the Romas have more difficulties in finding a job than their competitors in the market, but the large-scale unemployment, the multitudinous impoverishment, the uncertainty of existence and hopelessness, just as the high rate of Roma population, which exceeds the national average significantly may encourage witch-hunt, development and remaining of prejudices among the members of the society, therefore the higher degree of discrimination can almost be considered as a natural phenomenon

Based on the findings of the research work up to the present, shortly summarized above, the long-range usefulness, which points beyond the doctoral thesis, or some sort of “mission” can possibly be apprehended through the fact that as a result of the comparison of various labour market models, mostly founded on Western European experiences and the Hungarian reality we can highlight an important statement that is often pushed into the background. This statement says that the solution of the employment problems, which cause serious trouble in our country, does not mean the reception of the “Western patterns”, originate from a different environment in the first

place, but preferably the as thorough revelation of the local elements and the casual relations as possible, and by this means the preparation of local, specific models and programs will be possible.

The list of publications published in this subject area:

1. Balcsók, István: Borderland Situation and Periferality in the North-Eastern Part of the Great Hungarian Plain. Pécs: Centre for Regional Studies, 1999. 85 p. (Discussion Papers, 31.) (Baranyi Bélával, Dancs Lászlóval és Mező Barnával közösen)
2. Balcsók István: Hátrányos helyzetű társadalmi rétegek az Északkelet – Alföld határ menti térségeinek munkaerőpiacán. Ifjú Regionalisták II. Konferenciája. Győr, 2000. In: Tér és Társadalom 2000/2-3 285-294. p.
3. Balcsók István: A határon átnyúló kapcsolatok jelene és jövője Hajdú-Bihar megye határmenti településein, különös tekintettel a munkaerőpiaci lehetőségekre. In: Integrált vidékfejlesztés V. Falukonferencia (Szerk.: Kovács Teréz) MTA RKK Pécs, 2000. 311-317. p. (Dancs Lászlóval közösen)
4. Balcsók István: A szerencsi kistérség munkaerő-piaci jellemzése az 1995 szeptember–1997 május közötti időszakban. Magyar Elektronikus Könyvtár, 2000/05. <http://www.mek.iif.hu/porta/szint/tarsad/kozgazd/munka/szerencs>
5. Balcsók István: Sokasodó gondok - szerény lehetőségek az északkeleti határ mente munkaerőpiacán. In: A határmentiség kérdőjelei az Északkelet-Alföldön. (Szerk.: Baranyi Béla.) MTA Regionális Kutatások Központja Pécs, 2001. 170-215. p.
6. Balcsók István: A határmentiség és a határon átnyúló kapcsolatok jellemzői az Északkelet-Alföldön. = INCO. Első magyar internetes folyóirat az információs korról. 2001. 2. <http://www.inco.hu/inco6/fooldal.htm> (Baranyi Bélával és Dancs Lászlóval közösen)
7. Balcsók István: Gúzsba kötött óriás – avagy az észak-alföldi régió munkaerőpiacának évtizedes gondoljai. In: Területi Statisztika 2002/1. 44-62. p.
8. Balcsók István: A mátészalkai kistérség foglalkoztatási helyzete az empirikus kutatás tükrében. In: A nyelv szerepe Európa kultúrájában. A "Magyar Tudomány Napja 2001" alkalmából rendezett Szabolcs–Szatmár-Bereg megyei tudományos konferencia anyagának bemutatása. Szerk.: Vass L.-né. Nyíregyháza: Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Megyei Tudományos Közalapítvány Kuratóriuma, 2002. 120-121. p. (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Megyei Tudományos Közalapítvány füzetei, 15.). (Hüse Lajossal és Szarvák Tiborral közösen)
9. Balcsók István: A tartósan munkanélkülivé váltak esélyei Szatmár szívében. In: A tartós munkanélküliség kezelése vidéki térségekben (Szerk.: G. Fekete Éva) MTA Regionális Kutatások Központja Vidékfejlesztési Műhely Miskolc-Pécs, 2002. 246-261. p.
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