

THE POSSIBLE ROLE OF PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT IN THE CLOSING UP OF UNDERDEVELOPED REGIONS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Labour force reserves have been consumed by the extensive economic development preceding the change of regime, which aligned with policy on all forms of employment. Ensuing extensive efforts forshadowed labour force shortage, yet employment policy tried to enhance them with full-time employment as an only alternative. Labour market research already in the 80s (KONCZ K. 1985) made it clear that the outcoming tensions resulted in further tensions on the level of the individual, the smallholder and that of macro-economy. A change in perspective was necessitated by effective employment fitting to prevailing economic needs and by the differentiated needs of employees. Along with the general expansion of full-time employment of women in the majority of the socialist countries, the employment of the retired constituted the security resources of the additional labour force demand: low pensions and the relatively low retirement age indeed fortified this tendency.

After the change of regime, with the appearance of massive unemployment, new reasons emerged for the expansion of flexible, part-time employment as a means to prevent unemployment. Still, the majority of the retired were squeezed out from the labour market. Parallel to this, several channels of „receding” had been formed in Hungary (retirement before time, elongated higher education, child care support). As a result, part-time employment did not expand faster; but the number of part-time employees did drastically decrease (FREY M. – GERE I. 1994), which is exactly contrary to the tendencies of the developed countries. Liquidation of the labour resources and staff reduction enhancing the implementation of market economy conditions did not help the expansion of part-time employment, either, since it mostly meant dismissing full-time employees. In the 90s, the time of massive investments, those areas where the conditions of part-time employment had otherwise been favourable were characterised by extensive development joined by exten-

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sively organised labour, that is, the demand for full-time employment was significant. Another feature of the period is the rapid increase in the number of small ventures. The potentials of part-time employment are more limited for smaller economic units, where work tasks are less differentiated functionally (SERES A. 2004).

The Hungarian legal system did not encourage the expansion of part-time employment, some parts of it even blocked it. At present, neither the employees, nor the employers are interested in introducing part-time employment. The government, in order to enhance the wide application of part-time employment decreed in 2003 the revision of the hindering factors of this employment form (health care contribution, retirement procuring time, the regulations determining the calculation of average wage as the basis of pension calculation) (FREY M. 2003).

Though researchers studying regional differences regarding interest in part-time employment (FREY M. – GERE I. 1994) have not found significant differences, yet the expansion of part-time employment still shows regional unevenness (Figure 1). Among the reasons for regional or county differences one is to look for the ratio of larger small retail chains and the differences in wages, in the level of income. The regional image is certainly modified by labour market conditions, since constrained part-time employment is a possible means of avoiding unemployment. Along with all that has been said above, the indices for the counties Baranya and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg are way over the national average. To have the complete truth, declared monthly incomes do not serve as good basis for genuine conclusions, since the choice of becoming part-time employees, i.e. whether the family can allow it, is not determined by the individual but by the economic status and value system of the family.

The examination of the regional differences between county towns and their environments has disproved the original expectations. Within the understanding of the sub-hypothesis, the rate of part-time employment in bigger cities should exceed the similar indices of their wider environment owing to the bigger rate of services and partly to the advantages present in the income level. The fact that this difference is not that harsh might be accounted for by the significant rate of part-time civil service employment at the local governments of smaller towns (Figure 1).

The present study, besides the understanding of the nature of part-time employment support, aims at assembling a dynamic regional analysis which would explain the regional or even settlement scale expansion/limitation of this flexible employment form. Besides the structural analysis of the characteristics of part-time employees and employers, this study is to reveal the reasons and motivations of part-time employment along with its characteristic, advantages and disadvantages affecting the employees, and also the hindrances to its expansion. A further aim is to outline how part-time employment can be enhanced more effectively in the future, since this means can help avoiding unemployment besides employing labour effectively and fulfilling the various needs of employees.

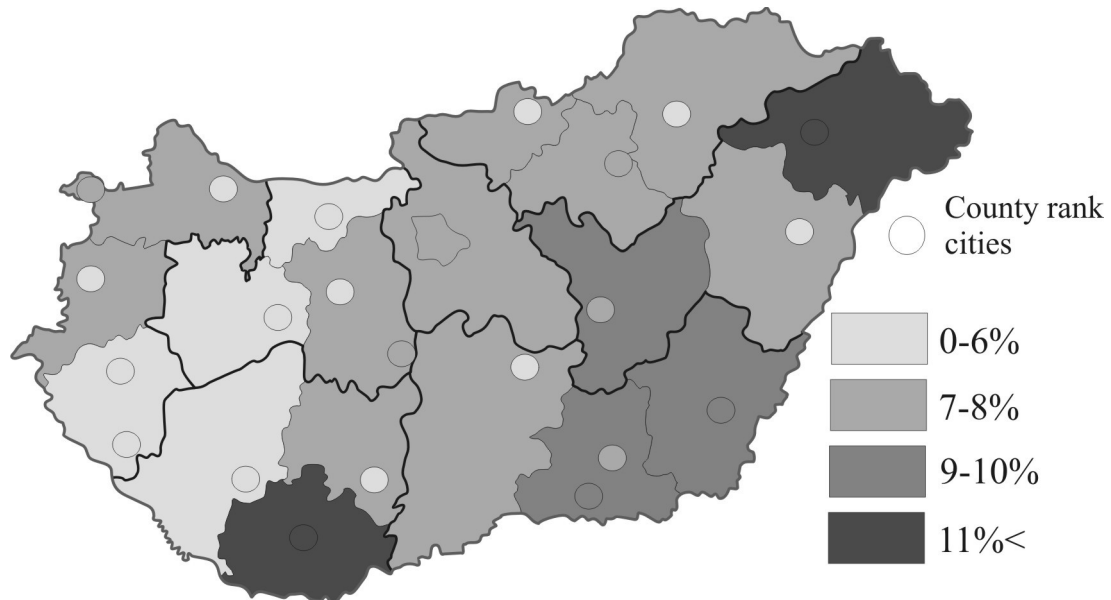


Figure 1
Regional differences of part-time employment (2005)
(Ed.: TÉSITS R.)
Source: Central Office of Statistics, regional list of data on the employed

2. RESEARCH METHODS

According to the definition of the International Labour Organisation, one can define part-time employment where working hours are shorter than what is typical for the sector or for usual full-time employment at companies (ILO 1992. in: FREY M. – GERE I. 2004 b). The ILO clearly

distinguishes shortened working hours – a substituting means for laying off – from part-time employment, which is understood as a permanent and voluntary way to divide the working hours and the income relating to them.

This study primarily examines the support scheme of part-time employment, and secondarily it analyses part-time employment within the salary support system as a means to promote employment, since a major part of Hungarian micro-regions have not gathered sources for applying it. Partly it is owing to the fact that the main aim is to reveal the possibilities of improving the conditions of the under-privileged regions at the labour market. Another reason is that two-third of the total job-seeking unemployed would be satisfied with part-time jobs, since for them – though it is a coercive solution – a four- or six-hour employment would bring a quality change (FREY M. – GERE I. 1994 a).

The examination of the mentioned method could take place within an period of two years, as the subsidy impleted at the end of 2003 could reach completion in 2004, yet, computerised data is only accessible from 2005. Since due to the reform on the system of means in 2007, the support of part-time employment has merged with salary support and thus it cannot be analysed as a single way of support any longer.

In order to dynamically analyse the expansion of part-time employment in Baranya, the change in the number of gained support and the regional factors and to define the structural characteristics of part-timers the following data were used: documents containing the support contracts of the Labour Centre of Baranya County, the users database of the decentralised employment subsystem of the Labour Force Fund and two further questionnaires of closed questions. The first interviewed job-seekers presenting at the labour force institution. The researchers thought it ethical to ask the unemployed about their willingness to take part-time jobs only where otherwise the choice of part-time jobs is significant considering support claims. In practice, it meant interviewing 1000 job-seekers from settlements belonging to Pécs and Komló centres. The other questionnaire inquired among the total population of Baranya county enterprises utilising part-time employment or, where it was not available, those utilising the salary support aiming at part-time employment.

Interviews taken with Baranya County Labour Centre experts responsible for measures served as basis for exploring the characteristics of methods in Baranya. And also interviews were made at enterprises receiving support in order to analyse the form of support, to outline the potentials in progress, and to explore the possibilities of part-time employment expansion.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Regional and structural characteristics of support

The program entitled „support of part-time employment” was introduced in Hungary in 1991, which essentially functioned as a supporting scheme preserving jobs and it was to solve the temporary transitional difficulties through preventing downsizing and through employing staff in shortened working hours. Should the employer employ his full-time employees or some of them part time in order to cope with occurring employment difficulties, and should the shortened working hours reach one-third of the total hours, he can claim the refund for the maximum 50% of the personal wages for the missed working hours of the employees. In this respect, shortened working hours cannot be regarded a voluntarily and permanently chosen part-time work with shorter hours, i.e. part-time employment (FREY M. 1994).

From October 2003, „real” part-time employment support can only be granted to those employers who are willing to employ those mediated by the labour centre who have been seeking jobs for not less than three months. A further opportunity for obtaining the support is employing those individuals who raise at least one child younger than 14 or receive a nursing benefit. In the case of employing a career-starter, there is an obligation for an elongated employment of a period equivalent to the supported one. The support can be granted for a year on the outside and can only reach to 75% of the total of the employee’s wage and the contributions after it.

Directives are outlined by the county labour councils concerning the decentralised use of the labour force fund. If subvention should bring about employment expansion, the permanent employment of the most under-privileged groups living in under-privileged regions are considered the trend in deciding about part-time employment support. It is obvious from the way the fund is distributed on a county level that certain regions use the sources applicable also to part-time employment for operating other measures and means. In some cases (Szentlőrinc, Sellye) it happens for the lack of support, elsewhere (e.g. *Szigetvár, Pécs*) it happens for preventing the fund from getting frittered away so that demands could be satisfied more variously. This is a step towards EU norms, since with fewer target groups or support forms the frittering away of the money can be avoided and the operation of the measures is more traceable. On the other hand, re-grouping makes the examination of part-time support claims possible within the „traditional” salary support scheme.

Regular social benefit – primarily for those single parents raising more children – can exceed the amount of the minimum wage. With this rate of the benefit, one can clearly see that an income offering a time proportionate part of the minimum wage is hardly appealing. Analysts have also reported on certain settlements of Baranya (*Siklós micro-region*) where a great many people change their marital status for the single status meaning a higher benefit.

The processing industry activities operating in the micro-region need the work to be organised in several shifts, so in this sector, part-time employment is out of the question. Part-timers (mostly students) working in small retail shop chains often take weekend or night jobs with physical burden. The not at all appealing image is further shadowed by the fact that a four-hour work not once takes more than six hours. On the other hand, an eight-hour, full-time employment is widespread at smaller shop chains.

Another hindering factor is that, considering the regulations on retirement, a four-hour employment is quite disadvantageous for employees. On the other hand, disregarding bigger towns and cities, in order to fill in for several part-time jobs one should travel a lot for the lack of substantial employers, which is also a setting back factor. Supported part-time employment takes the form of civil service in the Siklós region as well. Here, employers are exclusively local governments.

In the most under-privileged regions – primarily in the *Selnye micro-region* – there is no demand at all for supporting part-time employment, here what is frequent is agricultural odd jobs and seasonal work. Occasionally, employment with shortened working hours transformed from previous full-time employment is present. Since there are few employers in the region, employees are forced to travel. But travelling counter-effects part-time employment for its high specific costs. It is worsened by the fact that bus lines should be adjusted to shifts and village stewards' buses to the timetable.

Agrokémia working in the micro-regional centre is rather operating by lengthened and not shortened working hours, while construction companies cannot afford this form of employment for travel costs and strict deadlines. Demand-wise, it would mean a mid-term progress if food retail chain shops settled on the spot (Figure 3).

Similarly to the above, there is not any demand for part-time employment in the *Szentlőrinc region*, either. The local branch of the labour centre is trying to put „pressure” on the local governments by favouring part-time employment when judging support claims. On the other hand, micro-enterprises of a few employees are in an overwhelming majority in small retail, these ventures cannot differentiate the work process so minutely that it would be fit for part-time employment. Its support is realised on the outside within the support of employing the disabled or within the frame of civil service. In this case, the main employers are local governments themselves. The majority of ventures state that if they are to „bother” about administration and further obligations brought about by employment, then they rather do it in the frame of eight-hour work. If part-time employ-

ment means the division of working hours, it presents more inconveniences, training time and costs. Those, who nonetheless employ part-timers – often for lack of information – do not apply for employment support (Figure 3).

Naturally, the fact that the amount of regular social benefit is near or reaches the amount of the time proportionate minimum wage is a setting back factor. If this is joined by family allowance and by income after day labour, then income from part-time employment often requiring heavy physical work is not attractive. Part-time employment is not necessitated in light industry for organised shifts and in agriculture for the seasonal nature of work.

Part-time employment is only successful in *Komló and its environment*, where 4% of the decentralised fund is used for this purpose (Figure 2). Grantors and grantees find this form of employment more favourable than wage support since job-seekers with a three-month registration can be employed and support can be claimed for the contributions affecting wages. The involved ventures are mostly from the tertiary sector, most of them operate in the field of small retail and wholesale trade, human-, health- or social services, and education; while a minority is in metallurgy, light industry or construction. Even if this form of subventions is successful in this region, it enhances local employment since in the case of travelling, full-time employment is favoured.

It is eye-striking that Pécs and its environment – despite the larger population of the region – has a lower registered demand for part-time employment and a lower number of support applications. A feasible reason might be the fact that in this micro-region, owing to the county seat, the labour market is more active and that is why the ratio of supports is smaller compared to the demand for labour force. When observing the figure, one is to bear in mind that support applications and actual part-time employment do not match, since – especially where there is high mobility of labour – the obligations of elongated employment or a relatively low rate of support are not attractive in every case. On the basis of the above, the regional differences of supported – that is significant in reducing unemployment even in under-privileged regions – part-time employment can be outlined. Considering the structure of economy and labour market conditions, the majority of the applications and supports – primarily employing registered job-seekers – are concentrated to Komló and Szigetvár, secondly to settlements around them and to the centres of the Pécs and Mohács micro-regions and to their neighbouring settlements (Figure 3). It is necessary to mention that the ratio of part-time employment is fairly high in three settlements of Baranya with little population. In Kétújfalu located in the Szigetvár micro-region, three enterprises applied for the support, while in Nagyváty a local ltd. and in Hosszúhetény the local government, besides the ltd., employs part-timers.

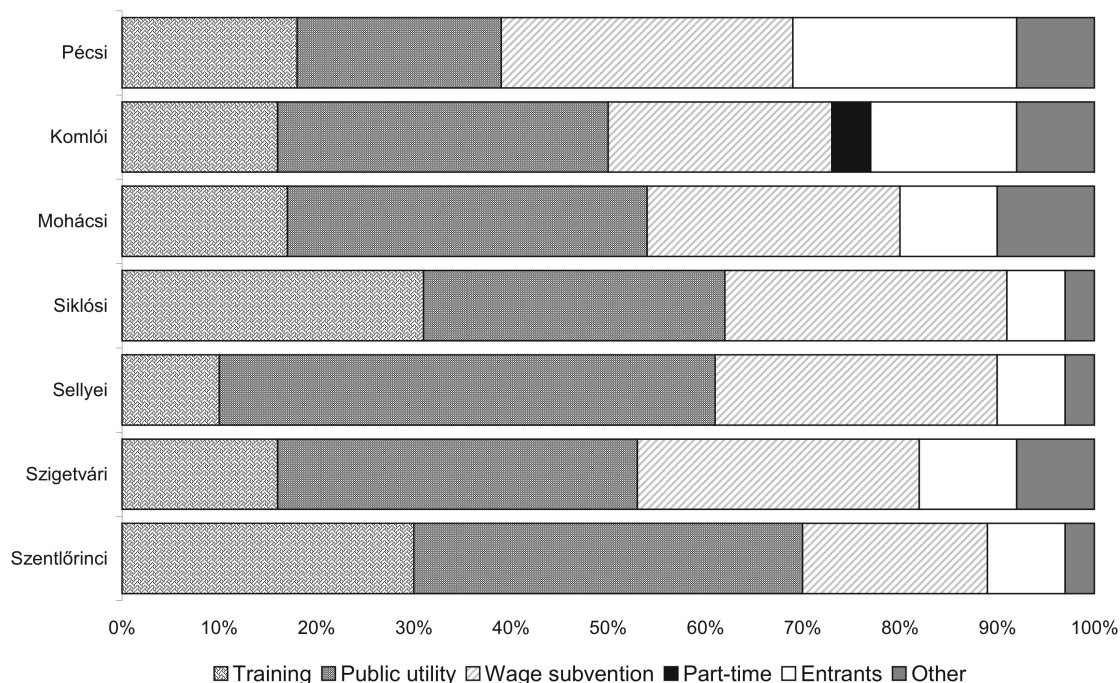


Figure 2
Division of the decentralised county sub-fund of the Labour Market Fund (2006)
 Source: Baranya County Labour Centre

3.2. Motivations of the unemploye

Seeking part-time employment

A great deal, more than four-fifth, of the job-seekers is looking for full-time employment, while the remaining 20% is in for an employment with work of shorter than eight hours. The two-third of this latter group are female employees who previously worked for minimum wage, and if we regard their qualification, the majority has vocational school or grammar school diplomas, a further one-third has trade school diplomas and almost the same proportion has elementary school

qualification. To complete the picture, the above proportions are owing also to the fact that the those with the highest level of education, i.e. grammar school, - as opposed to the more qualified – are over-represented among the unemployed and therefore among the job-seekers with assistance from the labour institution.

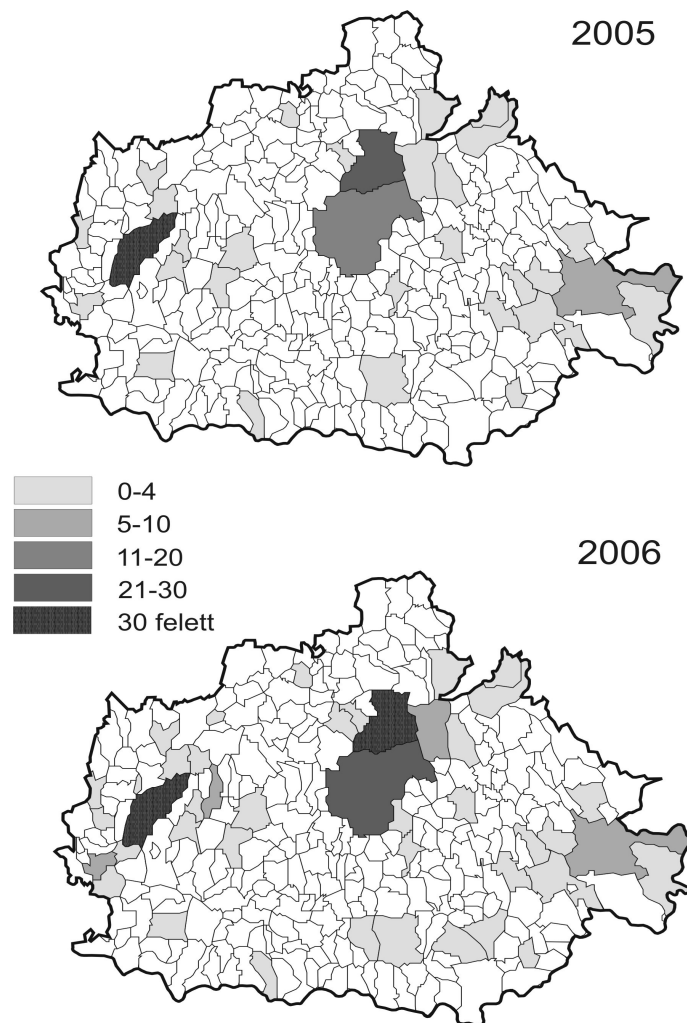


Figure 3
The number of supported part-time employees or that of those receiving part-time wage support in Baranya

More than half of part-time job-seekers would hardly take an eight-hour engagement because of their deteriorated health conditions; they are mostly over fifty and single unemployed, a little share of them is married in whose families there are no dependants. For them, the time proportionate income due after part-time employment means a less substantial problem. A smaller proportion of the job-seekers is young women, between 26 and 35, with lower qualification, living in marriage, raising 1-2 children, for whom the extra free time is valuable since they can spend it on their families and children.

Though the unemployed above examined were looking especially for part-time employment, the difficulties of organising babysitting and the unfavourable formation of the daily schedule are holding back factors for those raising children. For those seeking part-time employment for their health problems, among the negative aspects of a lower income and the fact that part-time jobs are frequently more physical manual jobs is a great difficulty. Regarding daily and weekly schedule, the two-third of part-time job-seekers would not take night jobs, while more than half of them would not take night or weekend jobs, either.

A further characteristic of the examined group is that the family they live in has a net monthly income of 40000 Ft. One-third of part-time job-seekers would gladly work in 6-7 hours and only one-fourth of them would choose a four-hour occupation, which is disadvantageous from the point of view of pension schemes.

One can say that their attitude is positive because 94% of the individuals surveyed think that their chances for a full-time employment in the future through accepting a part-time job are growing. That is, they see that if they have a job – even if it does not meet in all its aspects their original expectations – they stand a better chance of „negotiating positions” and have a bigger labour market potential on the way to getting an „envisaged” job.

Seeking part-time employment

Among the full-time job-seekers – compared to the above group – men are in greater proportion. Job-seeking women of the survey have better conditions for their highest qualification: more than half of them has a grammar school or university education, while only the one-fourth of men belong to this category. Compared to part-time employees – owing to higher qualifications – their income previous to unemployment reached one-and-a-half or even twice the amount of minimum wage. This also explains why jobs offering a time proportionate amount of minimum wage

are not appealing to them. Though the average income per head in the family is higher in this group, it still does not reach the level where time proportionate wage could suffice for securing a living for the family.

Considering genders, there are significant differences with respect to whether full-time job-seekers would take an occupation with less than eight hours of work. While one-third of women gave a definite positive answer, less than two-third of men thought it possible. Those satisfied with a part-time job are mostly unmarried or do not have to care for a dependant. The significant majority, almost 90%, of those who would take part-time employment envisage a daily 6-7-hour engagement. The reasons are in more favourable pension regulations and in a higher time proportionate wage.

Gender differences are also significant from the aspect of what per cent of the job-seekers would take a night or weekend part-time employment. One-third of women would not favour any of the two, they are mostly middle-aged, unemployed with 2 or 3 dependants. That 25% who would take both are of a lower average age (33); but they are majorly without children. The majority would only refuse night jobs; but they are willing to take weekend occupations. Mostly (54%), men – the middle-aged and mostly single – would accept night or weekend jobs. Those refusing both possibilities are mostly older since for them this way of daily or weekly work organisation would mean serious physical hardships.

Those job-seekers not willing to take part-time jobs see the reasons differently. Firstly, they all claim low wages; but while women consider the difficulties of scheduling work and babysitting as holding back factors, men highlight the lower prestige affecting part-time employment and the relatively higher costs of travelling to work.

Disregarding gender, job-seekers reckon that a wage contribution between 30 and 50 per cents would be enough to motivate those for part-time employment who did not give lower wages for their aversion. One-third of those job-seekers who refused part-time employment would take it if there was wage contribution.

Should the interviewed find no employment for a long time, 81% of women and only the two-third of men would take a job with a less than eight-hour engagement.

What is a just cause for optimism is the fact that the great majority of job-seekers think that they stand better chances of getting a desired job if they take part-time employment. Except for that one-third of men refusing part-time employment who are more difficult to motivate and who do not share the view that their positions will improve through „swapping” their unemployed status for part-time employment.

3.3 Motivations of the employers

Economic corporations of legal entity

Nearly 40% of the enterprises involved in the survey – irrespective of their size and form – carry out a certain type of trade activity, nearly one-third of them offer economic service, i.e. the great majority, as it was expected, works in the tertiary sector. Considering part-timers, this ratio is turned since almost the two-third of the supported employees in atypical forms of employment work in the field of economic services. Further typical fields are: agriculture, construction industry and light industry; but to make the picture complete, part-time employment is not linked to the core activities in the latter two fields, it primarily stands for activities of trade and service. The economic status of the enterprises surveyed is mostly stable, their annual income exceeds twenty million forints, only one-or two of them are faced with temporary problems. More than half of the employers, who at the time of the survey were employing two-three part-timers on average with support – had already had part-time employment experiences. At the time of the survey, one-third of part-time employees were women. The average daily occupation of the part-timers mostly with a secondary school degree either from a vocational or grammar school is six hours, where work is mostly in the morning. Disregarding whether night or weekend engagement is necessary or not, both intellectual and physical work are generally intensive.

Those flexibly employed are former full-time employees of the same venture, or registered job-seekers in other cases. Part-time jobs are created through shortening working hours in the first case, while in the second case full-time is divided or new jobs are created. Part-time employment was always the initiative of the employer, it is mostly due to the fact that a daily eight-hour work is not necessary. One is also to mention those cases where the need for flexible adaptation to seasonal or daily/weekly fluctuation is in the background. If economic hardships occurred in the venture, keeping the employees and gaining support were also serious motivating drives.

Only one form of discrimination could be observed at ventures of legal entity since part-timers do not lack the protection of interests. What is more, more than two-third of them get the time proportionate amount of their full-time salary. Nor those receiving the time proportionate amount of the minimum wage are subjects to wage discrimination if their full-timer colleagues get only minimum wage.

More than three-fourth of the ventures see that the main obstacles of part-time employment expansion are the present social security- and tax regulations. One-fifth of them mentions the support scheme and only occasionally can we find the unfavourable work schedule typical of part-time employment, the increased costs and the unsuitable labour supply as reasons. From the side of the employees, 50% blame the low level of part-time income insufficient for maintaining a family and the unfavourable pension regulations. The remaining 50 % emphasize high travel costs, the often hard physical work and the organisation of working hours and in some cases the linking problems of organising baby-sitting. Only a few employers think that besides the above aspects, the low prestige of part-time employment, the decreasing career opportunities and the potentially easier downsizing may create unfavourable effects.

The majority of employers – irrespective of the trading form – find that part-time employment is fit for preventing or lowering unemployment since also job-seekers are interested in gaining fixed wages besides claiming salary and contribution support which has permanent effects considering employment. All this, beyond an improved self-esteem and a more favourable labour market „negotiating position”, offers a more guaranteed income for soothing difficulties of living than the benefits. In addition to it, more than 50% of the firms see the „within” possibilities of part-time employment expansion including the employment of further unemployed and converting a part of the eight-hour work to part-time employment. Enterprises of legal entity have formulated several suggestions in order to enhance the expansion of part-time employment. Half of these suggestions aim at raising the current level of minimum wage significantly, which would entail the decrease in employers’ contribution, at least to a level proportionate to minimum wage. Technically, it means the abolition of double contributions. Another one-third of the suggestions would encourage employers as the contributions affecting part-time employment and employers’ supplementary benefits could be deduced from taxed and from contribution obligations. One-fifth of the ideas have the employee’ approach, these incentives encourage taking jobs through compensating partly for the most unfavourable concomitant of part-time employment. All this, complemented with an effective change in views, could help the expansion of part-time employment.

Enterprises with no legal entity

The economic conditions of the surveyed, mostly individual enterprises or occasionally deposit companies show a more unfavourable picture than that of enterprises with legal entity – mostly operating in forms of ltd. While annual income is far behind that of the previous group, 60% of the enterprises has to cope with difficulties. Employers, even despite the financial support, do not employ more than one or two part-timers, who mostly have trade school qualification. Still, there are no significant differences concerning part-time work organisation, schedule and type of work. Those employed part-timers were previously registered job-seekers in the majority, so through establishing part-time employment, new jobs were created.

Though part-time employment was initiated mostly by employers; yet the ratio of enterprises where the employee was the initiator of part-time employment is higher. In this case, disability, family commitment, raising children and the fact of job-seeking in itself played essential roles. The majority of the initiating employers emphasized unfavourable and decreasing trade, cost reductions necessitated by economical problems and preventing downsizing. Thus, among the reasons for part-time employment compensating for problems owing to economic difficulties, keeping jobs, reducing wage costs and claiming for support were the most important, though adjusting more flexibly to fluctuating needs was listed, too. Further employment cannot be expected due to the decreasing profitability of some of the enterprises. It can also be stated in connection with the economic situation and profitability that the time proportionate amount of minimum wage is typical in a larger part (50%). It does not necessarily mean wage discrimination if those working in eight hours get only minimum wage.

Individual entrepreneurs – beyond the corresponding regulations – see the obstacles of the regional expansion of part-time employment in specifically high travel costs. From the aspect of employees, low salary owing to time proportionate wage and unfavourable laws on retirement bear greater significance. On the other hand, understandably, issues like decreasing career prospects and professional progress and lower prestige linked to part-time employment do not even pop up.

It is unambiguous that near half of the interviewed would welcome a substantial raise in minimum wage following reductions in employers' contributions. Yet, it is obvious from the suggestions aiming at the enhancement of part-time employment expansion that enterprises of no legal entity would rather shift the task of enhancement to the state since salary supplementation interested them a lot more. Those who hold the reform on present system of wage and benefit contribution necessary, would find a form of better distributed support „stretched” longer than a year even to three years, more enticing. It could mean a support similar to the present from in the first year – a 75% subvention – which in the second year would be joined to the salary and in the third to contributions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

There are several factors counter-effecting the expansion of part-time employment in Hungary. The majority of the trade organisations is a micro-enterprise with less than ten people where the proprietor works either alone or with very few employees while there is a significant demand for shorter, supplementary temporary work. The viability of these enterprises decisively depends on whether they can employ labour flexibly, adapted to labour market demands. But they do not register the significant share of their temporary employees.

The implementation of the Temporary Employee (TE) Book is a step towards legal employment. The primary advantage of such an employment is that the total of the contributions due after the salary and the total of the personal income tax advance effecting the employee is paid by rates and taxes stamps collected that are adjusted to the amount of the salary paid after the temporary job. Here, the written contract is substituted by a note in the TE-book. The value of the rates and taxes stamp is smaller than the amount of the contributions affecting the salary and this simplified method can bring further advantages through avoiding drawing and paying the contributions and tax advance separately. Mainly this is accountable for having this atypical form of employment expand gradually.

The government has significantly reduced the costs of temporary employment in order to enhance employment with the temporary employment book. The price of a rates and taxes stamp after the salary of the lowest category was reduced from a daily 1200 to 500 forints. There is a further possibility of having more than half of the amount covered by the Labour Fund if a registered unemployed is employed. Figures have shown the favourable effect of the measure: the number of the TE-books taken out and the value of the stamps sold has been rising annually since 2001. Another advantage to it is the fact that employees can claim proper retirement benefits and they are not in need of social benefit. If temporary jobs are cheaper, theoretically, odd jobs can be reduced.

Still, to tell the truth, this also gives way for abuse and it often happens. Stamps are missing from a significant part of the books. While contracts of commission and labour contracts mean a burden to the employer, the above abuses affect the state budget. The picture is further completed by the fact that the flexibility and less rigid nature of the regulations on temporary employment make it more popular than part-time employment.

Regular social benefit – mostly in cases of single parents raising more children – may exceed the level of minimum wage. It is quite understandable that with the present rate of benefits an income offering the time proportionate share of minimum wage is not appealing. Analysts have reported on some villages in South-Baranya where people in masses changed their marital status in order to gain the single parent status which means better benefits.

The examination of the differences between county towns and their environment defied the original expectations. The fact that regional differences are not so harsh is most likely occasioned by a significant rate of part-time civil service employment at the local governments of smaller settlements. Among the reasons for regional and county differences one is to look for the ratio of service and within that the ratio of larger retail chains and for differences in income levels. The regional picture is further tinged by the labour market situation since one of the possible methods of avoiding unemployment is forced part-time employment. In accordance to the above, indices for Baranya and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg significantly exceed the national average. It is not surprising then that the structure of the economy is an effective factor in the formation of regional inequalities. Employment in light industry is in shifts, and in agriculture, its seasonal nature does not necessitate part-time employment. Part-timers (mostly students) employed in the trade network shops often take weekend or night jobs with heavy physical activity. More than once, a four-hour wage means an occupation taking even more than six hours, which is a further drawback in the not so fruitful situation. Yet, the eight-hour full-time employment is general in small chains. To top it, micro-enterprises of few employees are in the majority in retail, which naturally cannot differentiate labour to fit it to part-time employment.

A four-hour work is utterly disadvantageous for employees because of laws on retirement, which is another drawback. On the other hand, - disregarding bigger towns and cities – in the lack of more significant employers, one should travel a lot in order to fill in several part-time jobs, which again is a drawback.

It is proved to be true once more that since the mid-90s Szentlőrinc and Sellye regions of Baranya are the ones – except for their seats – that have not been able to respond positively in any way to the social crisis most severe exactly in these regions. There is no need whatsoever for part-time employment support in the most under-privileged regions, here, mostly agricultural odd jobs and seasonal employment is general. Since there are only few employers on the spot, employees are forced to travel. Transportation, for the well-known insufficiency of bus service and for its high specific costs counter-effects part-time employment. These drawbacks could be balanced if part-time employment could be combined with telework and working from home. The picture is brighter for large villages and small towns which could promote firms employing part-timers to settle.

The insufficient level of supply can partly be led back to the defencelessness of employees and to negative experiences. Even in the case of piece rate applied instead of time proportionate wage it happens that its maximum does not reach the level of minimum wage. Hidden part-time employment has to be mentioned here, where work with a 4-6-hour contract often means an eight-hour engagement.

Those who are not willing to take part-time jobs judge the reasons for it differently regarding their gender. The most hindering force is low, mostly time proportionate salary, yet, while women found the organisation of schedule and baby-sitting holding them back the most, men highlighted the low prestige and higher costs of travelling affecting part-time employment. Low salary is a hindrance especially for those who become unemployed from jobs with an income more than hundreds of thousands forints in the competitive sector.

There are several ways to promote part-time employment. One step is to make employers interested. Influencing the supply-side can happen through reductions, for example when employers can deduce the contributions paid from taxes. This measure could probably serve the „straightening” of odd jobs. Reductions are also necessary because financial support in itself is not sufficient in every case. If employers have no interest in employment, they cannot be triggered by support, either. Despite all these, it is worth considering higher support for those who decide to employ part-timers to a certain degree.

Another approach is increasing supplies through a significant raise of the minimum wage compensating it with a reduction in contributions. Without this reduction of contributions, a raise of the minimum wage in itself results in downsizing and the above mentioned „hidden” part-time employment or even the liquidation of small and medium size enterprises. On the other hand, from the aspect of the supply-side it is obvious that if, for example, the labour market re-integration of women was not a substantial question, i.e. if the income of the family afforded to have the urge for becoming a useful member of society to be the main motivating drive, then the level of part-time employment in Hungary would not lag so much behind the Western European level.

A further possibility is to compensate, supplement part-time income. A potential threat to it is possible wage tensions, what is more, it might even corrupt labour morale.

Another potentially significant step may be changing the views of the unemployed, since part-time employment could serve as an effective means to reduce unemployment. An approach evident from the survey, yet not present in real life, can be regarded positive: the overwhelming majority of even those seeking full-time employment think that taking a part-time job can increase their chances of getting a future full-time job. That is, they see that if they hold a job – even if it does not completely match in all its aspects their original ideas – they have a better „negotiating position” and stand better chances in the labour market for gaining an „envisaged” job. Men, rejecting part-

time employment, who do not believe that their labour positions improve through shifting from an unemployed status to part-time employment belong to the group where motivation is the most difficult.

In order to increase the rate of employment, to expand part-time employment, we find it important to have the conditions of the application of such an atypical form worthy of a better fate get synchronised to what is laid down in the ILO Agreements and Recommendations (Nr. 175 Agreement on part-time employment, Nr. 182 Part-time work recommendation) On the basis of the above and after the conclusions of the survey, we offer for consideration the examination and revision of the corresponding social security regulations and the rethinking of the methodical issues of support distribution.

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