

**SZENT ISTVÁN
EGYETEM**

**Analysis of the social situation
in South-Heves**

Tünde Bogárdi

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Name: Enyedi György Doctoral School of Regional Sciences

Scientific field: Regional Sciences

Head of the School: Dr. habil. Hajdú Zoltán

professor, Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Szent István University

Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences

Institute of Regional Economics and Rural Development

Supervisor: Dr. Nagyné Dr. Molnár Melinda

associate professor, PhD.

Szent István University

Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences

Institute of Regional Economics and Rural Development

.....
Approval of Head of the School

.....
Approval of Supervisor

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1. HISTORY OF WORK, PURSUED OBJECTIVES

In Hungary, and especially in peripheral and semi-peripheral regions, the phenomena of withering is not the result of the past decades. The anti-rural politics of the state socialism of 40 years, the collectivization process decapitating the traditional agrarian society of villages, and urbanization caused enormous damage. The situation was further exacerbated by the disappearance of about one third of workplaces. As a consequence, the previously officially non-existing unemployment increased to an extreme extent. Though we cannot generalize that this decline took place everywhere, since there are prosperous rural areas – the lack of prospect and vision prevails in the majority of our settlements. While in a number of villages the only reason why we cannot claim that depopulation or extinction will put an end to the fate of the village is that extreme poverty keeps on reproducing itself.

All of this characterizes the internal periphery of South-Heves, which is considered to be a special marginal area at the Great Plain, but also located in the North-Hungarian planning-statistical region. South-Heves basically covers the district of Heves – the subject of my study.

In order to better understand the problems present in the area, I have conducted a thorough situation analysis at three settlements (Átány, Kömlő and Tiszanána), with the purpose to map the social, economic and spatial dividing lines, to interpret local problems and perceptions, and to critically evaluate the locally examined social and economic inclusion processes. I have also set out the goal to elaborate proposals on eliminating the disadvantages of the sample area, and by that, of all disadvantaged areas, in order to determine the fields and instruments of intervention which could help in stopping and reversing the problems introduced in the situation analysis.

I have composed the following hypotheses along the above mentioned objectives:

1. There is a ghettoization process in the South-Heves region, which is present and perceived in the mental space as well.
2. Accessibility problems contribute to maintaining the process of ghettoization.
3. The set of problems and disadvantages place an extra load on the social care system.
4. The weakness of labour market potential forces alternative employment solutions.
5. The situation and vision of youngsters at South-Heves reflect well the hopeless labour market potential of settlements.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Since according to my initial hypothesis there is a ghettoizing micro-region being formed at the internal periphery of South-Heves, the subject of my analysis, and also at the Mid-Tisza region, that I intended to compose the sample out of direct neighbouring settlements. Since the process of ghettoization does not only threat micro- and small villages, the main principle for selecting the sample was to include settlements of a different population size. Based on these aspects, I have decided to analyse the Átány-Kömlő-Tiszanána block of villages. In my research I analyse the region, but I dig deeper at three settlements: Átány, Kömlő and Tiszanána. I decided to select sample locations and to perform detailed field work there in order to determine useful consequences not only on a theoretical, but at a practical level as well, in terms of the local and global measures to be taken. This method enabled me to evaluate the situation more accurately, which is crucial for progressive rural economic and social developments.

I have applied the following research instruments in my study, with the below objectives:

1. **Statistical analysis** in order to get to know the former and present social state of settlements. Databases used: the databases of the Central Statistical Office (KSH) and the National Regional Development and Planning Information System (TeIR) have been analysed. Besides population census data I have based my research on the data provided by the Regional Statistical Data System (TSTAR).
2. **Questionnaire survey**: questionnaire survey conducted in schools at Átány, Kömlő and Tiszanána, amongst grade 7-8. students, including high school students living and studying in South-Heves as well, and also a public survey of residents, adapted from the standard questionnaire survey of the village seminar research (SZIE GTK) conducted since 2008. The purpose of the questionnaire survey is to gather information for the following investigations:
 - Problem-perception analysis
 - Satisfaction analysis
 - Settlement vision analysis
 - Mental mapping

Table 1: A summary of the questionnaire surveys conducted within the frame of the research

		Goal	Time of research	Sampling	Number of questionnaires
School	High-school students who live and study at South-Heves	To explore the perspectives of the young generation	2013 autumn	Complete survey	501
	7-8. grade elementary school students who live and study at Átány, Kömlő and Tiszanána		2015 spring	Complete survey	106
Residents	Átány	Comprehensive situation exploration	2014 summer	20% of households	107
	Tiszanána		2014 autumn	10% of households	96
	Kömlő		2015 summer	10% of households	63

Source: own editing

3. **Prominent interviews:** I have discussed with leaders of settlements, and professionals working in the field of local education, social and health care systems (school directors, kindergarten leaders, associates of family care and child welfare services, nurses).
4. **Analysis of documents:** secondary analysis of former researches (TUTOR Foundation, Hungarian Youth 2012), and the annual reports prepared by the local social care system.
5. **Space-value analysis:** Before the field research at Átány, Vitéz (2014) elaborated a plan with his topic leader (Melinda Nagyné Molnár), in order to grade the state of houses, the forefront of houses and its overall image. Within the frame of the field research, we have indicated the place of houses on the analysed settlements – in case of Átány together with Bálint

Vitéz – and on a separate sheet we have marked the grades and the final grade of the overall image. The purpose of the space-value analysis was to document the spatial organization of social groups of lower social status, and the transformation of the settlement’s spatial value

Table 2.: The matrix used for the space-value analysis

House	Front yard	Space in front of front yard	Overall image (final grade)
House in ruins	Apparent hygienic problems	abandoned, neglected	1
Uninhabited, but complete house in a neglected state	Apparent hygienic problems	abandoned, neglected	2
Inhabited house in a neglected state	unsettled	abandoned, neglected	3
Old building, not taken care of, but habitable	a) unsettled b) tended	a) tended b) abandoned, neglected	4
Old building, in a good state, habited Newly built, uninhabited house	Tended	a) abandoned, neglected b) tended	5
Newly built, habited house	tended	Tended	6

Source: Vitéz (2014, 80)

Considering my analysis methods, I have recorded and analysed the data of the questionnaire survey with the SPSS statistical program. I have applied one- or multi-variant (typically two) methods throughout the data analysis. Depending on the measurement levels I also used frequency distribution analysis or mean value analysis (mean, mode, median) and analysis of variance. Regarding the methodology of correlation analysis, my objective generally was to explore correlation with sociologic background variants. In order to analyse correlations – as a result of the variant’s level of measurement – I have usually applied cross-tabs, and calculated Pearson’s Chi-square value, and performed – where it was justified by the level of measurement – t-test.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Analysis of the first hypothesis

There is a ghettoization process in the South-Heves region, which is present and perceived in the mental space as well.

For the analysis of my first hypothesis, I have applied the following **research methods** previously detailed in the chapter Material and method:

1. Space-value analysis

Objective: to evaluate the space of the settlement

2. Analysis of documents (TUTOR Foundation survey)

Objective: preparation of the problem-perception analysis

3. Questionnaire survey:

a. Problem-perception analysis

Objective: to explore problems

b. Mental mapping

Objective: to explore the reasons of ghettoization

c. Analysis of the settlement's vision

Objective: to find the most probable script of the future, as perceived by locals

Analysis methods: frequency distribution, correlation analyses.

In the course of analysing this hypothesis, my main line of thought was that the image of the street – as it is also revealed by Vitéz (2014) – does not only mean the use of space, but it also reflects on internal relations, and the co-existence of various social classes (Kovács-Vidra-Virág 2013; Virág 2015). For the evaluation of the street image I have applied a space-value analysis, which I shall present through the example of Átány. (figure 1.) The amortization of the built environment is apparent on the map of the village, indicated with the red lines.

Figure 1.: Space-value analysis and perishing parts of the village at Átány



Source: edited by Vitéz Bálint – Bogárdi Tünde (Vitéz 2014, 80) based on the street image analysis

Note: the lines marked with red represent the ghettoizing parts of the settlement

The amortization of houses shows a correlation with the intensification of the spatial density of the local Roma population. Based on my research, the liquidation processes initiated 50 years ago aiming to improve living conditions did not quite work out in terms of rural ghettoization. On the contrary, at the majority of settlements, a ghettoization process started, which means that the smaller amortized parts of the village had formed extensive ghettos over time. It is reflected also in the degradation of the space value, and the transformation of the ethnics of the village space.

The purpose of the mental mapping process was to explore the picture formed in the collective mind of the society about the world in which they live (Bogárdi-Molnár 2014). The most important result of mental mapping is that locals generally perceive their own villages negatively, and usually they bear a quite enclosed mental space-knowledge limited to the neighbouring settlements.

The problem-perception analysis revealed that the examined settlements more or less share the same set of problems, only the emphasis on its various elements is different. In all three villages, unemployment represents a great problem. This problem is perceived similarly by respondents of all social classes. The “Roma population” was also mentioned as a frequent cause of problems. It might sound

weird that an entire minority represents a negative value within the responses. However I must note here that these respondents from the majority of the society do not judge the minority based on their race, origin or culture, but they object against the disruptive lifestyle-like behaviour of a part of the Roma population, infringing public order. I shall also state that when public order and public safety is compromised, and appear as a source of problems, it directly results in social exclusion and deprivation.

The local society can only plan their future if they feel safe both from a material and physical point of view. Since they lack both in this region, it is understandable that questionnaire respondents vision a continuing exclusion and ghettoization for the future of the village and the region. (Instead of the withering of villages, a ghettoization process is projected for the future, based on demographic factual data as well.)

3.2 Analysis of the second hypothesis

Accessibility problems contribute to maintaining the process of ghettoization.

When answering my second hypothesis, I have applied the following **research methods** out of the ones introduced previously in the chapter Material and method:

1. Analysing the time distance of the examined villages from the district centre and country centre, in order to explore their accessibility.
2. Examining the accessibility of the villages by car/bus in the residential questionnaire, in order to reveal how satisfied respondents are, and what kind of problems they see.
3. Based on the questionnaire survey, mapping the spatial relations of the residents who lived at the analysed villages (food supply, medical care) in order to get to know the spatial movement of residents.

Analysis methods: frequency distribution, correlation analyses.

In case of perishing, disadvantaged regions, accessibility by traffic is of key importance, as well as the matter of liveability, which is linked closely to the former.

The South-Heves region is a great example on how regions where the significant majority of roads are in an extremely poor condition become periphery. Furthermore, public transportation opportunities, especially buses, are also insufficient. Besides the problem with the frequency of service, we must also

mention its high costs, which also makes it quite difficult for people who live in the villages of South-Heves to commute to work and to access various services. The reparation of roads is becoming an increasingly urgent matter, not only in order to facilitate the everyday life of those who live in the region, but also to enhance the tourism of the Tisza-lake, as a declared objective. Managing public transportation related problems on the other hand is a more complicated issue, since the operating company is profit oriented, and it cannot be expected from them to offer its services on a social base. The interest of residents and companies therefore conflict in many cases.

I have analysed the correlation between the problems of accessibility and exclusion through the examination of two basic services. The lessons learned from how locals of the analysed villages obtain food are the following:

The target location for the everyday necessity of food is the home village. There are practical reasons for this: the main one is that it is not worth traveling to the district centre only for a few items, since the price of public transportation wouldn't even be compensated by the lower price levels offered in the large stores (Lidl, Spar) at the district centre. On the other hand, another significant reason for buying locally is that we have found stores in all three villages, where it is possible to write a list of the items to be purchased, and to pay for it in advance or posteriorly. An example for the previous is the "bread ticket" at Átány (they pay for the total monthly cost in the beginning of the month), and for the latter both at Kömlő and Tiszanána. This "notebook" does not necessary imply the suspicion of usury, nevertheless there were respondents who claimed that it does exist at the settlement.

Other targets to satisfy the need for food less often are the large supermarkets offering cheap mass products in large towns (Heves, Eger). It is important to note that according to the responses of people, they do not seek for quality in the services offered in towns.

When analysing the medical attendance of residents who live in the examined villages, the basic fact is that people receive medical care at spatially diverse locations, mainly where the institution with the obligation to perform regional care services is located. Experiences contributing to the intensification of exclusion are the following:

- The accessibility of service centres with patient transporting vehicles is not resolved: throughout the residential questionnaire survey, the number of those who use National Health financed or paid patient transfers is minimal. One reason is that the minibus "collects" patients from the region by traveling to many settlements, transporting them to the various institutions, and at the end, they transport patients home the same way.

Those who cannot or does not want to use public transportation rather ask for the help of family and relatives, or “pay for a ride”, and ending up usually paying a multiple amount of the fuel used. (Just as in case of major shopping errands.)

- Accessibility by public transportation is also not ensured in both directions and all times of the day. There is a problem especially towards Miskolc.
- Due to unfavourable accessibility, those who are in the worst state of health can use these services the least. Maintaining good health and prevention are almost unknown concepts. As a result, what is left is a mentally and physically deficit society.

3.3 Analysis of the third hypothesis

The set of problems and disadvantages place an extra load on the social care system.

When answering my third hypothesis, I have applied the following **research methods** out of the ones introduced previously in the chapter Material and method:

1. Statistical database analysis

Objective: analysis of the social care system

2. Analysis of documents (institution reports)

Objective: to examine the local social care system, to reveal problems

3. Prominent interviews (institution leaders, mayors)

Objective: to explore the situation, to present possible alternative solutions

4. Questionnaire survey

Objective: to analyse the satisfaction of residents and perform a problem-perception analysis

Analysis methods: frequency distribution, correlation analyses.

By examining the challenges present in the field of education, the interviews clearly reveal that there is a complex set of problems, which can only be dealt with in a harmonized manner. However, my interviewees also confirm that a systemic approach is missing from all the solutions. There are institutions/organizations of the state, local government, church and civil sphere, who aspire to achieve results in an ad hoc manner – based on the tenders they

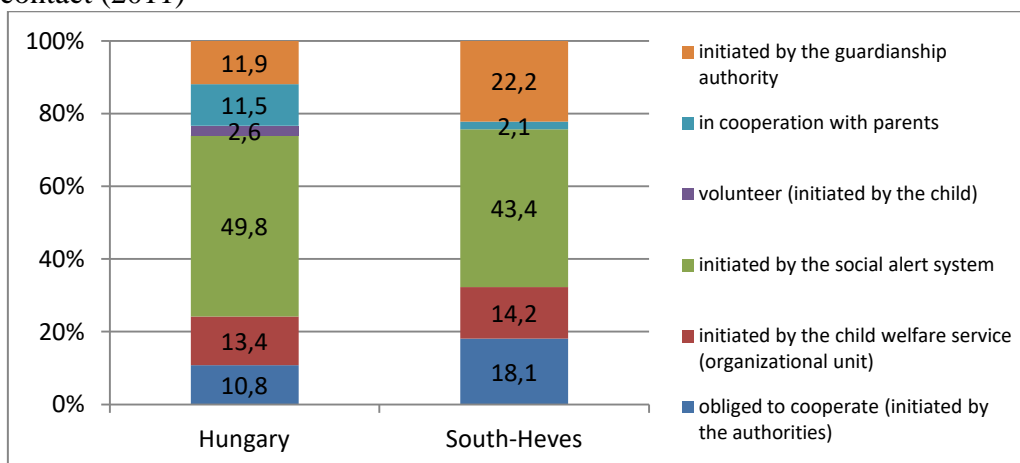
win at that moment. The willingness to help is of course commendable, but it is not enough.

And the one institution which is responsible for dealing with all these problems which go way beyond only providing help, fails to work properly at present.

Based on my survey it seems that in the state-owned elementary schools at disadvantaged settlements deviance is prevailing amongst students, driving away all of those with ambitions. This phenomena results in segregated Roma-schools. It is important to note here, that ethnic aspects are not amongst the reasons for segregation. The reaction to escape is triggered by the fear from the prevalence of deviation. It is also confirmed by what I had experienced in the region, since the students of the Reformed Church school at Átány opened in 2004 do not only come from Átány, but from neighbouring settlements as well, and are not only from an environment of the majority of the society. In relation to the formation of these segregated schools, I believe that the problem is not interpreted well when they try to approach it from the aspect of problems generated by the coexistence of Roma and Hungarian people. The problem is that segregated schools produce a contra-selected group of students, where such problems are present to an even greater extent.

Throughout the analysis of the social care system it was confirmed, that necessities and social problems ignored and unsatisfied on a global and national level will localize, at the same time placing an unbearable burden on local social care systems, which they will not be able to cope with (Farkas 2012, 268).

Figure 2.: The number of cases of the child welfare services, by the means of contact (2011)

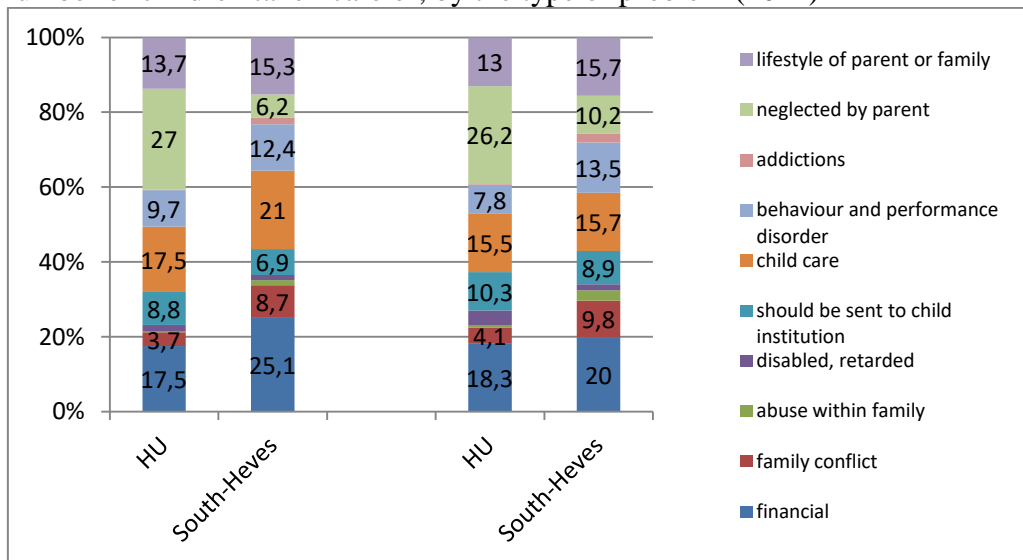


Source: own editing, based on the data of the TeIR – Social Branch Information System

The 2. Figure demonstrates the type of cases of child welfare services, by how they were initiated. Both on a national level, and in South-Heves, about half of the cases are initiated by the alert system operated mandatorily by the relevant legislation. Besides, in South-Heves, the number of cases initiated by the authorities for cooperation, and initiated by the guardianship authorities are both extremely high (the latter is about twice as much as the national data). Also the number of contacts made together with the parent (volunteer) is only a fragment of the national statistical data, and we do not know about cases initiated by the child.

Since the obligation to cooperate is typically initiated by authorities, and not voluntarily in the region, the social care workers at local child welfare services address a number of challenges. Their future and existing clients are therefore less, or not motivated at all, regarding their involvement in the assisting procedure.

Figure 3.: Child welfare services – Number of managed problems and the number of children taken care of, by the type of problem (2011)



Source: own editing, based on the data of the TeIR – Social Branch Information System

The *number* of managed cases and of children taken care of shows a similar proportion in the researches of South-Heves and the country, however there are significant differences in the type of problems. The most typical ones in South-Heves are financial troubles, family conflicts and child care problems, while being neglected by parents is only one fourth of the national amount (figure 3.)

By analysing the situation of the local social care system, and exploring the opinions and experiences of people working in the social-health-education fields, we observe an institution system which is able to operate properly in the majority of the cases, but it is much overburdened. We can state that the majority of professionals involved in the research are satisfied with the operating conditions of the local care system, and it is confirmed by the opinion of residents as well, according to the questionnaire survey. Nevertheless, there are trends which reflect the deteriorating situation of the local society. The greatest challenges are caused by the problems linked to the reproduction of poverty, which shall not decline. Another problem is that there are not enough professionals available for the maintenance and management of this increasing number of social problems.

3.4 Analysis of the fourth hypothesis

According to my hypothesis, the weakness of labour market potential forces alternative employment solutions.

When answering my second hypothesis, I have applied the following **research methods** out of the ones introduced previously in the chapter Material and method:

1. Statistical database analysis

Objective: to analyse the employment situation

2. Questionnaire survey

Objective: to perform satisfaction and problem-perception analysis amongst locals

3. Prominent interviews (mayors)

Objective: to explore the situation, to present possible alternative solutions

Analysis methods: frequency distribution, correlation analyses.

During problem-perception analyses, unemployment and the lack of job opportunities were strongly present (with the greatest number of mentions at Kömlő and Tiszanána). The level of employment in South-Heves is low, being in close correlation with the typically low level of educational attainment and gaps within schools, also backed up by statistical data. There are not enough job opportunities in the region which could “absorb” this mass of people with a low level of education, minimal work experience and lack of discipline. For them, being employed on the primary labour market is although quite tempting, but

not really viable at the moment. As a result, **public employment** plays a crucial role in compensating the lack of workplaces.

At Átány – though it could be concluded from the size of its population – a significantly lower number of public workers are employed compared to the other two settlements, they attempt to establish a viable system should the number of public employment programmes decrease in the future. The strategy of Tiszanána is similar, rationalizing to a certain extent the number of people involved in public employment. However, the third settlement in question, Kömlő decided to take an entirely different approach: the previously high level of unemployment has practically ceased at the settlement by now, which can only be partially explained by the absorbing effect of the primary labour market. There are currently 350 people working at the settlement within the frame of public employment, with a variety of tasks: pavement construction, renovation of public buildings, construction of bus stops, glasshouse management. The “strategy” of Kömlő is definitely positive regarding the situation of the settlement and its residents, however it is probable that should the state aid for public employment decrease, the level of unemployment could increase again in the village.

It is apparent not only at Kömlő, but at Átány and Tiszanána as well, that the work performed by public workers go way beyond the works regarding the image and cleanness of the settlement. Though such activities are also necessary, it is important that public workers perform work within the frame of public employment which create value, since it supports their integration to the labour market.

In order to make job creation viable not only within the frame of public employment, but on the primary labour market as well, it is essential to attract business ventures there (lure them back). The problem is that disadvantaged regions – obviously – are less or not attractive at all for profit oriented companies. To amend this situation and to develop disadvantaged regions, so-called free entrepreneur zones were established in Hungary in the January of 2013, where entrepreneurs who take their business there receive tax exemption. (This initiative was definitely successful at Átány, since the support of the state made it possible for a pasta manufacturing company to open.) However there is further need for the intervention, incentives and assistance of the state, also because the accessibility of these regions is very difficult, they have a poor infrastructure.

Considering the (employment) situation of the region, tourism could be another crucial factor, since the touristic development of the Tisza-lake region is an important element of the county development plan. However, what makes the

development of local tourism difficult is that these settlements should bear a positive image. One condition for this is the mapping of local values (it had been conducted in the past years, but in the “heads”, the mind of outsiders (subconscious), instead of information about the values, the worrying news about the symptoms of social and economic downfall were remembered). Therefore, in order for these settlements to achieve their goals, and for Tiszanána to be able to make better use of the opportunities lying in its vicinity to the Tisza-lake, or for Átány to build up its new profile based on its agrarian past and image, substantial marketing activity is required on one hand, and on the other hand, local social and economic problems must be remedied to improve the currently unfavourable image of the villages.

As a summary we can state that currently it is not possible to draw obvious conclusions about the success of local initiatives, there are “only” partial results.

3.5 Analysis of the fifth hypothesis

The situation and vision of youngsters at South-Heves reflect well the hopeless labour market potential of settlements.

When answering my second hypothesis, I have applied the following **research methods** out of the ones introduced previously in the chapter Material and method:

1. Questionnaire survey (amongst locals)

Objective: to examine the intention to migrate

2. Questionnaire survey (at schools)

Objective: to map perspectives on education and employment (7-8. Grade students and high-school students)

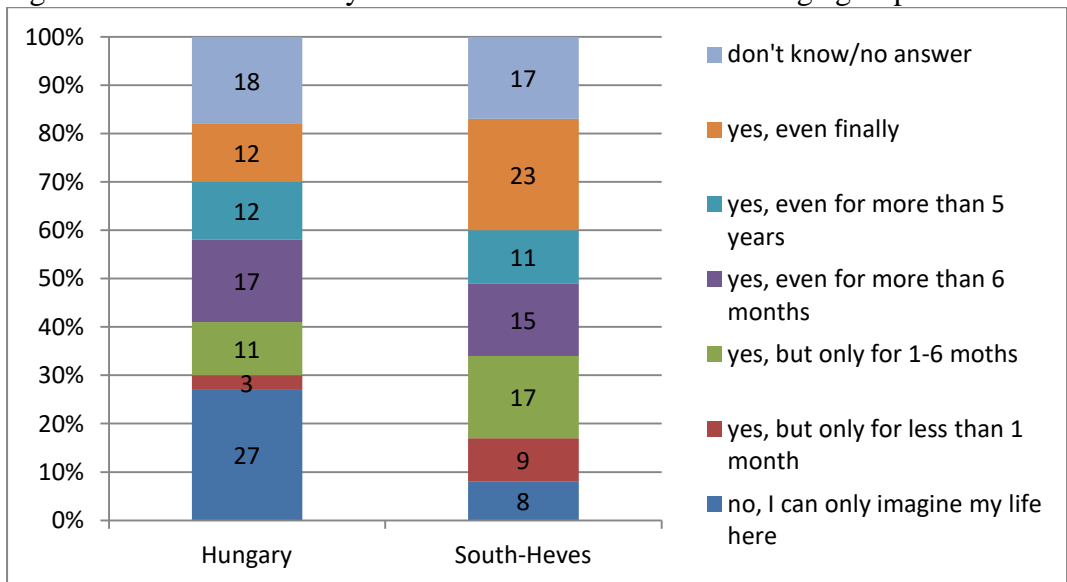
Analysis methods: one variable data analysis (mean and deviation analysis, frequency distribution), statistical correlation analyses

Regarding the future plans on education and employment, I have enquired about the plans of elementary school students after they finish the 8th grade. 44.4% of the involved students desires to obtain a profession, 42.2% wants to have a profession and high school diploma as well, and the proportion of those who intend to pursue studies in tertiary education as well is 8.9%. The fact that they have claimed to have plans exceeding the level of education of their parents is an important step. Examining the professions they desire, the majority mentioned occupations which require a secondary level educational attainment. Their replies generally cover the majority of professions present in their everyday lives, and they also match the courses available in the only high school

of the region, or the trainings offered in the vocational school of the country seat the most accessible to them.

To examine their intention to migrate, I suggested that the region where the villages involved in my research are found fight for their existence, and are full of social conflicts, therefore young people will move away, if they can. I shall demonstrate the experiences obtained from high-school students, compared with the results of the Hungarian Youth 2012 research.

Figure 4.: Intention to study or learn abroad in the examined age group



Source: own editing based on the questionnaire survey

The comparison demonstrates well (figure 4.) that while in the national, representative sample, every fourth respondent claimed that they could only imagine to live in Hungary, it was only less than every tenth in case of South-Heves. The responses also revealed that participants from South-Heves prefer shorter-termed periods abroad, while there is no significant difference regarding long-term residence. It must also be emphasized that the proportion of those who are willing to leave the country even for good is the double in case of them. It projects extremely serious consequences for the demographic and intellectual renewal of the region in the future.

The intention to move, to migrate is much higher amongst the young people in South-Heves than in the country, even though its actual implementation is

obviously prevented by their lack of language skills and financial reasons (probably again to a greater proportion than on a national level). The replies clearly reveal that respondents – despite their young age – understand very well that the creation of jobs would be required for high-school graduates and youngsters with profession and diploma to make them remain in their home country.

Convincing those who migrated inland or abroad to come back seems to be an even greater challenge: respondents explained that when someone establishes an appropriate existence, and starts a family abroad, it would be very difficult to make them come home. And even if they returned to Hungary, as participants confirmed my hypothesis – they would not choose to live in the region of South-Heves, but rather in Budapest or the western part of the country.

3.6 New and novel scientific findings

The most important new and novel results of my examinations conducted amongst the entire population are the following:

- The process of ghettoization does not only endanger micro-and small villages anymore, and it has also gone beyond the extent of a single settlement in the Mid-Tisza region.
- Mental mapping revealed that a new kind of rural ghetto is being born, which will most probably soon become the largest problematic zone along with other settlements at the Mid-Tisza region.
- The process of ghettoization is present in the collective mind of communities as well.
- A special characteristic of the local society's intention to migrate is that the actual migration target is limited to a quite narrow geographic area.
- Residents from regions with multiple disadvantages will obviously not join in international migration processes, but will rather infiltrate neighbouring regions, causing social and economic problems there.
- The success of the social care system depends on whether they shall pursue a systematic approach or not. In my dissertation I have pointed out that even though there are institutions/organizations of the state, local government, church and civil sphere, who aspire to serve social inclusion, these actions rather occur in an ad hoc manner – based on the tenders they win at that moment. A systemic approach is lacking from these solutions.
- Public employment programs are a transition state in the social and economic close up process, however every good practice based on public

employment programs endeavours to shift these activities towards the development of the local economy.

Since the future of South-Heves (also) depends on the young people of South-Heves, I have conducted a thorough research on them. The most important new and novel results of the research regarding 7-8. grade and high school students are the followings:

- My survey conducted amongst 7-8. grade students completely refutes the common belief claiming that young people do not have a vision in ghettoizing areas.
- I also managed to reveal that opposed to this common belief, young people have a more realistic understanding about opportunities, the future of the region, compared to the sceptic explanations of the generation Z. They have clearly expounded that:
 1. The creation of jobs would be required the most in order for young people with high school or university diploma or a profession, to not leave their home land.
 2. If someone establishes an appropriate existence and starts a family somewhere abroad, it will be quite difficult to make them return.
- Our experiences show that even though the intention to migrate is great amongst students of disadvantaged regions, but the majority of them will not be able to do so, they will accumulate there, thus intensifying the already existing local social and economic problems.
- Disadvantaged young people living in disadvantaged regions also desire a balanced environment and family, they do not wish to copy the pattern of their parents' generation. This is definitely commendable, since it could help avoiding the reproduction of poverty.

4. CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS

In my study I have performed the social situation analysis of villages located at South-Heves. The social structure of the majority of the 15 villages found here is distorted: either through ageing and depopulation, or – and this is more typical – due to the increasing proportion of the Roma population, the age structure is becoming younger and younger. New social tensions arise, which are not solely socially based. In the region, there proportion of the Roma population is increasing within lower level social classes.

In the examined region, the level of migration is high, resulting in a contra-selected society in case of more and more settlements, where on one hand the proportion of the elderly (pensioners), and on the other hand, the proportion of the Roma population with a young age structure is high. In regions such as South-Heves, ambitious young people will find their way in other areas, towns. Only the elderly, and out of the young people only those social groups will stay, who have not actually wanted to change their fate so far anyway. These communities are therefore characterized by ageing, or a young age structure, but with a high level of social welfare dependants and/or high number of public workers.

There are limited opportunities to make an existence, intervening measures to boost the local economy had little success. Social and economic problems strengthen each other. If the opportunities of the region and the people who live there is not improved within a short term, “people who would be willing to act will keep on escaping” (Győri-Nagy 2003, 2). It will further shift the balance towards the excess of low status social groups, dooming the fate of these villages with an already distorted demographic structure.

Results of the hypothesis analysis

H1: There is a ghettoization process in the South-Heves region, which is present and perceived in the mental space as well. (Confirmed.)

With the public survey conducted amongst locals, I have analysed the picture formed in the collective mind of the society about the world in which they live, and with this I revealed the differences of values in the internal space of the villages, and also the place where respondents feel their own village belongs. Based on these results and the analysis of the settlement’s vision, the hypothesis is confirmed. In the examined area, the transformation of the space-value as a

result of ghettoization is apparent not only in the geographic, but the mental space as well.

H2: Accessibility problems contribute to maintaining the process of ghettoization. (Confirmed.)

I have investigated the transportation situation of Átány, Kömlő and Tiszanána. I examined the accessibility of Heves, the district centre, and of Eger, the county seat, from the aspect of the number and duration of bus lines, and also the spatial relations of locals regarding how they obtain food and medical care services. Infrastructural failures, the poor condition of roads and bus lines make the accessibility of the various services difficult, but also the commuting to work and taking up jobs as well. The hypothesis was confirmed, conserving the situation of the life of locals, further narrowing their mobility opportunities.

H3: The set of problems and disadvantages place an extra load on the social care system. (Confirmed.)

Throughout the analysis of the social care system's situation I have explored the existing requirements regarding social care, child welfare, health and education. Based on the available data, despite the demographic, educational and employment related peculiarities, poor transportation and other difficulties, there are former and new challenges in the examined region, which are becoming more and more intense. The interviews conducted by professionals and also statistic data confirm that the conditions regarding the personnel (and what the statistics cannot describe, the object) related conditions for human resources are also insufficient for efficient performance. Based on these, the hypothesis is considered to be confirmed.

H4: The weakness of labour market potential forces alternative employment solutions. (Confirmed.)

The aforementioned matter of financial security is also part of the local society's plans for the future. With the gaps in school, and in close correlation with the statistically confirmed, typically low level of educational attainment, the level of employment is low in South-Heves. Public employment plays a crucial role in the employment of this mass of people with a low level of education, minimal work experience and lack of discipline. Beside this – and in combination with this – local economic development initiatives are presented (e.g. the Átány model), but “only” as an experiment at the moment, which are obviously explained by the quality of the local human resources and the job opportunities available for them. As a consequence, the hypothesis is confirmed.

H5: The situation and vision of youngsters at South-Heves reflect well the hopeless labour market potential of settlements. (Confirmed.)

The vision of young people living at the analysed disadvantaged region is surprisingly positive in the elementary school age groups. Despite stereotypes, what they lack is not a vision, but the instruments for making it happen. It is reflected in the research conducted amongst high-school students as well. Their vision is much more realistic: their intentions to move away, to migrate is much higher compared to national data, though its actual implementation is obviously inhibited by their lack of language skills and existential reasons (presumably again to a higher extent, than in the national statistics). Their desires to continue learning/work show a much differentiated picture, however in total it is also apparent that young people in the South-Heves region has an unpredictable vision. Based on this, the hypotheses is confirmed.

Recommendations

R1: The social indicators of the analysed region, results of the problem perception research, and survey conducted amongst locals and students clearly reveal that the current situation of the region's villages will not be able to stabilize itself. Villages has still not reached rock bottom. In order to reverse the fate of these and similar villages, the existence of development plans and strategies are not enough in order to improve the situation of disadvantaged regions. The problem is not with the definition of the set objectives. The vast majority of objectives are still valid today, but the actual resolving of issues, problems is still missing. According to my experiences, one of the main reason is that education, employment and social-policy related issues can only be addressed and dealt with as a complex set of problems. Separate measures can only bring forth partial results, which are not sufficient at all to slow down, stop or reverse this declining trend which has been going on for decades.

R2: If we imagine these disadvantaged regions, villages as a barrel – using the Liebig's law of the minimum – with staves of different state, some are more, some are less rotten, representing the various local attributes, it is easy to see that the functionality of the “system” depends on the weakest “stave” (Nagyné Molnár 2012). The problem is that on the level of decision making, the focus is placed only on certain stave elements. For example there could be, and there are infrastructural developments, attempts for the development of local economy, job creation, however the results of these will be limited as long as the weak

stave elements of the local society, e.g. mental state, the lack of social cohesion and internal conflicts remain unsettled.

R3: The deteriorating state of the local society suggests an increasing level of care requirements. Analysed settlements demonstrate well the typical problem of the rural social, educational and health care system, that there are not enough professionals to do these jobs, their tasks are much more complicated than in an average regions, due to the size and accumulation of problematic cases. If there is more emphasis on the management of problems, for example expanding their status, financial acknowledgment, then the support of this narrow target group whose problems go way beyond their low level of education and unemployment could become more efficient. For this, the financial and moral support of the professionals who work in the field of social services, education and health care is needed.

R4: For addressing this present situation, a regional approach should be applied in the human care system as well, with which local problems could be managed with better results.

R5: We must face problems which are not defined or managed properly at the moment, such as extreme poverty or the Roma population. In the South-Heves region – as it is defined in the description of the situation – the proportion of the Roma population shows a faster growing trend compared to the national average, and the issues of extreme poverty and the Roma people cannot be separated completely. In order to combat social disadvantages, the origin of the problem must be clarified. The “simple” practices of dealing with extreme poverty will probably prove to be inefficient in such regions.

5. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

Articles in scientific journals/books in a foreign language:

1. **Bogárdi, T.** (2013): Labour market changes in rural areas of Hungary: past, present, future. (A vidéki munkaerőpiaci helyzet változásai Magyarországon: múlt, jelen, jövő.) In: *Visegrad Journal on Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development*. Vol. 2., Number 2., pp. 64-67., ISSN 1338-8339 (nyomtatott), ISSN 1339-3337 (online)
2. **Bogárdi, T.** – Molnár, M. (2014): The barriers to economic development through the example of a Hungarian internal periphery. (A gazdaságfejlesztés korlátai Magyarország egy belső perifériájának példáján) In: *Agricultural Bulletin of Svatropol Region*. pp. 52-55. ISSN 2222-9345
3. **Bogárdi, T.** (2015): Analysing the demography and migration related challenges within the internal periphery of South-Heves. (A dél-hevesi belső periféria demográfiai és migrációs kihívásainak vizsgálata) In: *DETUROPE – The Central European Journal of Tourism and Regional Development*. Volume 7, Issue 1, pp. 6-20. ISSN 1821-2506
4. Molnár, M. – **Bogárdi, T.** (2016): Researching the spatial aspects of the Romani-Hungarian coexistence by the means of mental mapping. (A cigány-magyar együttélés térbeliségének vizsgálata mentális térkép segítségével) In: *DETUROPE – The Central European Journal of Tourism and Regional Development*. Volume 8, Issue 3, pp. 170-184. ISSN 1821-2506

Articles in scientific journals/books in Hungarian:

1. **Bogárdi T.** (2014): Átány demográfiai, iskolázottsági és foglalkoztatottsági jellemzői. In: *Acta Regionis Rurum*. 8. kötet, 10-19. pp. ISSN 1789-5588
2. **Bogárdi T.** (2014): Az átányi humán ellátórendszer – szociális, egészségügyi és oktatási helyzetkép. In: *Acta Regionis Rurum*. 8. kötet, 98-109. pp. ISSN 1789-5588
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4. **Bogárdi T.** (2015): A leszakadó, szegregálódó térségek falvainak közbiztonsági helyzetképe. In: *Magyar Rendészet*. XV. évfolyam, 2. szám, 31-44. pp. ISSN 1586-2895
5. **Bogárdi T.** (2015): Jövőorientáció-vizsgálat a dél-hevesi fiatalok körében. In: *Észak-magyarországi Stratégiai Füzetek*. XII. évfolyam, 1. szám, 59-69. pp. ISSN 1786-1594
6. **Bogárdi T.** (2016): A jövő generáció problémakezelési és jövőorientációs dilemmái egy hátrányos helyzetű térségben. In: *Studia Mundi - Economica*. Vol. 3. No. 3. 15--25. pp. ISSN 2415-9395

Presentations published in conference proceedings in Hungarian:

1. **Bogárdi T.** (2013): Területi szemlélet indokoltsága a gyermekvédelemben – gettósodó falvak és egyéb kihívások. In: Karlovitz J. T. – Torgyik J. (szerk.): *Vzdelávanie, výskum a metodológia/ Oktatás, kutatás és módszertan*. International Research Institute s.r.o., Komárno/ Révkomárom, 752-760. pp. ISBN 978-80-971251-1-0
2. **Bogárdi T.** (2013): A foglalkoztatottság-növelés kihívásai és kilátásai a dél-hevesi falvakban. In: Rechnitzer J. – Somlyódyne Pfeil E. – Kovács G. (szerk.): *A hely szelleme – a területi fejlesztések lokális dimenziói*. Széchenyi István Egyetem Regionális- és Gazdaságtudományi Doktori Iskolája, Győr, 47-59. pp. ISBN 978-615-5391-10-1
3. **Bogárdi T.** (2014): Dél-Heves, mint egy speciális marginális térség szociális válságkezelési lehetőségei. In: Nagy E. – Nagy G. (szerk.): *Polarizáció–Függőség–Krisis – Eltérő térbeli válaszok*. MTA KRTK, Budapest – Békéscsaba, 67-76. pp. ISBN 978-963-9899-86-5
4. **Bogárdi T.** (2016): A dél-hevesi falvak társadalomszerkezeti változásainak vizsgálata. In: Pap J. – Tóth Á. – Valuch T. (szerk.): *Vidéki élet és vidéki társadalom Magyarországon*. Hajnal István Kör – Társadalomtörténeti Egyesület, Budapest, 394-408. pp. ISBN 978-963-89463-4-8
5. **Bogárdi T.** (2018): Falvaink sorsa a Közép-Tisza-vidéken. In: Fata I. – Gajzágó É. J. – Schuchmann J. (szerk.): *Regionális folyamatok a változó világban és Magyarországon: Tanulmánykötet Enyedi György professzor emlékére*. Tomori Pál Főiskola, Budapest, 116-125. pp. ISBN 978-615-80727-2-4

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1. **Bogárdi, T.** (2013): The twenty years of human resources of rural areas, with special focus on employment within agriculture. (A vidéki humánerőforrás húsz éve, különös tekintettel a mezőgazdasági foglalkoztatásra) In: Káposzta, J. (ed.): *Multifunctionality and Regional Development*. Conference Proceeding. Szent István University, Gödöllő, pp. 51-57. ISBN 978-963-269-376-7
2. **Bogárdi, T.** (2015): „A village in the country” – The past, present and future of Átány („Egy falu az országban” – Az átányi múlt, jelen, jövő). In: Csata A. – Fejér-Király G. – György O. – Kassay J. – Nagy B. – Tánczos L. J. (szerk.): *Challenges in the Carpathian Basin: Global Challenges, Local Answers*. Risoprint, Cluj-Napoca, pp. 325-333. ISBN 978-973-53-1565-8
3. Molnár, M. – **Bogárdi, T.** (2016): Investigating provincial Hungary: social recovery or recession? (Mérlegen a magyar vidék: társadalmi felzárkózás vagy leszakadás?) In: Witold Jedynek - Jaroslaw Kinal (eds.): *Society – Modernity – Change*. Selected issues from Central Europe. University of Rzeszów, Rzeszów, pp. 93-104.