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SEASONAL EFFECTS IN THE BALATON RESORT AREA – THE MARKETPLACES' CHARACTERS IN PRODUCT AND TERRITORIAL ASPECT

Nowadays touristic areas face many challenges regarding capacity utilization, competition and the seasonal fluctuation of touristic products. In Hungary, the Balaton Resort Area (BRA) illustrates the seasonal differences well both in the demand of touristic products and in the visits to the particular attractions. The aim of this study is to present the seasonal characters of the consumers' usage of space and its appearance in the consumer trends and products. The market operators' aspect shows the role of management in this case. The own face-to-face survey and researcher observations can interpret the differences between the three measured intervals (preseason, season and off-season). Although the satisfaction of local needs is considered as the main role of marketplaces in preseason, in the peak season touristic effects can be observed: the touristic demand occurs mainly by the low intensity catchment area of property owners and visitors. The off-season combines the previous periods with their characters. The supply and demand of marketplaces may involve a few niche opportunities which could vary the product portfolio. The market food supply is provided by both local producers and traders, not only from the region but also from wider zone. The appearence of goods in the market depends on the national laws restricting the status of vendors, the selling types of goods and the management side (attitude, activity of operators, etc.).

Keywords: local product, horticulture, home made product, seasonal difference

Introduction

The development of marketplaces, which meant the indirect points of the supply and demand of material goods, has a huge history. During the centuries the market(place)s had varied on the basis of the product type and the availability of consumers. These differentiated markets also had variable catchment areas in both producer and consumer contexts. In the popular Hungarian touristic destination (Lake Balaton) analyzed hereby, the growth of population resulted in the dynamic appearance of regional markets in the 19–20th centuries. These points were not only food retailing points in the inhabitants' life, but also represented common interaction forms. Their attractiveness covered for a district in case of foodstuffs, while larger sites for the sales of food and other goods served a more extensive area than a county. The most comprehensive picture of historical regional marketplaces was presented by the tax census in 1828. According to this research, only Keszthely, Veszprém and Marcali were regarded as important markets at that time. The number of marketplaces began to grow in the first decades of the 20th century when they granted catering for the periodically appearing population (e.g. vacationists). The operation of the marketplaces was only seasonal though due to the low demand for annual functioning. The official archival documents of building and retailing licenses give considerable evidence about the contemporary situation [Somogy County Archives (=SML) XXIII. 335]. The backyard farms launched in the 1960s and the sideline establishments promoted the operation of markets that completed large-scale farming. The latter did not subserve the labour-intensive agricultural sectors such as gardening, etc.. The small-scale and backyard farms ensured the production of marketable goods including fruits, vegetables, etc. (Buday-Sántha, 2001). The local markets were already the direct purchasing points of final consumers leading to the improvement of life standards in the neighbourhood of cities and towns (suburban area) due to backyard farming. In the 1970s, the so-called Polish markets (e.g. in Fonyód) emerged in the resort area, where visitors could also purchase a wide range of useful items. After the regime change the domestic creation of the market economy gave rise to the settlement of multinational commercial chains and the differentiation of sales channels. People started to prefer the various sales channels to the marketplaces, however, there has been a revival – both in terms of catering (food safety) and recreation – nowadays. Their renaissance is explained by increased consumer awareness, the requirement of higher food safety and nutrient level in foodstuffs as well as the concept 'Farm to the Table'. Besides, different reasons such as individual or rare product types result in a special demand for these spaces.

The mostly consumer-side approaches of the Hungarian market researches can predict the formation of supply and demand and provide opportunities to demonstrate regional development impacts. Because of the more extensive product profile of markets, different consumer groups appear there (Szakály, 2004) thus the purpose of visits can become one form of recreation or attraction. The quality, individuality and marginal utility of the products can also influence spatial mobility through personal and financial conditions (including work order, discrecionary income, availability of vehicles, health, etc.). In Hungary, the farmers' markets are very popular right now because of the western european trends as eating local food, supporting local economy or living healthy.

According to the desk researches and experiences, the present study examines the following issues:

- How does seasonality shape the catchment area of the investigated markets?
- What product groups are placed into the consumers' basket during the different touristic seasons?

- Is there any relation between the catchment area and the market demand, and how does the management appear on marketplaces?

The aim of this paper is to analyze the temporal changes in spatial mobility, which also serves as the reflection of the market demand's seasonal modification. Conclusions may be of interest to both professionals and non-professionals since the interpretation of the seasonal market demand can contribute to the efficient future development adapted to consumer expectations regarding these places.

Methods

The definition of the Balaton Resort Area's catchment area and the market product demand is based on the own face-to-face survey (n = 454) made in 2016. The respondents could express their age, gender, educational level, economic status, the vehicles used to reach the market, residence and their impressions about these places. To illustrate the seasonal differences, the survey was carried out in three seasons (preseason, season and off-season) at the same measuring points[1] (in May, July and September; n = 90; 179; 185). The measuring points (three in preseason, seven in season and seven in off-season) were the same in order to observe not only the timely characters but also the spatial ones. While the preseasonal measure focused only on the western part of the Balaton region, the additional measuring points were placed throughout the whole region. During the research, a further aspect was the type of markets, which led to the analysing of two farmers' markets, three typical markets and two market halls *(Tab. 1)*. The typical and farmers' markets open only a few days with wide product range to fit people's freetime. The status of operators is relevant because of the development opportunities (e.g. supporting or positioning).

Table 1: Some data of the measured points
(Source: By dataset of NÉBIH and NAK and own survey)

	Tapolca	**Keszthely**	**Fonyód**	**Siófok**	**Balaton füred**	**Tihany**	**Káptalan tóti**
Market type	Typical	Typical	Typical	Hall	Hall	Farmers	Farmers
Open interval (days/week)	2	2	2	6	6	1	1

1 In May, there were analyzed only three settlements (Fonyód, Keszthely, Tapolca) because the other markets were closed yet. In July and September, there were analyzed seven-seven marketplaces (not only Fonyód, Tapolca and Keszthely, but also Balatonfüred, Káptalantóti, Siófok and Tihany).

Sample number	84	71	105	55	56	35	48
Measured month	May, July, Sept.	May, July, Sept.	May, July, Sept.	July, Sept.	July, Sept.	July, Sept.	July, Sept.
Status of the operator	Enterprise	Enterprise of local govern-ment	Local govern-ment	Enterprise	Enterprise of local govern-ment	Civil	Cooperati ve

Table 2: The number of respondents by counties (Source: Own survey)

County	**Spring**		**Summer**		**Autumn**	
	Settlement	**Person**	**Settlement**	**Person**	**Settlement**	**Person**
Veszprém	10	26	11	45	14	50
Pest	2	6	7	39	6	41
Somogy	9	29	10	34	13	49
Zala	2	15	3	26	2	25
Győr-Moson -Sopron	1	1	3	7	1	4
Tolna	1	2	2	3	2	2
Baranya	1	1	2	3	0	0
Bács-Kiskun	0	0	3	3	1	2
Vas	1	1	2	2	2	4
Fejér	0	0	2	2	1	1
Komárom-Esztergom	0	0	1	1	1	1
Békés	0	0	1	1	1	1
Hajdú-Bihar	0	0	1	1	0	0
Nógrád	0	0	1	1	0	0
Csongrád	0	0	0	0	1	1
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	1	1	0	0	0	0
Abroad	*0*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*
Unknown	*N.d.*	*8*	*N.d.*	*10*	*N.d.*	*4*
Sum	***28***	***90***	***50***	***179***	***45***	***185***

In the spring phase of the survey, 90 persons responded (19.8%) from 28 settlements and 9 counties *(Tab. 2)*. In the summer period of the survey, 179 persons were interviewed (39.4%) who came from 50 settlements and 15 counties, while the figures of the autumn one did not mean any change from the previous results [185 respondents (40.7%), 45 settlements, 12 counties].

For the sake of choosing the markets to be analyzed, another survey was made featuring the markets' operators. The main consideration was the number of visitors and consumers. The negative disposition of consumers and those group which visiting markets have led to a not representative (homogen) pattern. According to the preconception, the target group of the survey was the Hungarian adult population (over 18 years of age), apart from persons of foreign nationality, nonetheless tourism is the most important sector of the analyzed area. The similar national analysis has the same conception, too.

Besides the surveys mentioned above, the questionnaires were accompanied by researcher observations, non-structural interviews conducted with producers and consumers, and fotodocumentation. In the definition context, the market denotes the marketplace which is used synonymously.

To register, analyze and illustrate the collected data, spreadsheets as well as geoinformatical and vectorgraphical programs (MS Excel, ArcMap and InkScape) have been used.

Desk research

The development of Balaton coast was preferred after the first World War in the 1920s when the aim was to promote waterfront tourism within the national borders because of the borders' changes. The different socio-economic changes (e.g. phylloxera) in the region and the political aspects of coastal tourism development led to the increase of both temporary and permanent population. This situation needed the solution of the regional inhabitants' catering around the lake. All these factors were regulated in the Cabinet Decision No. 1013/1979. (VI. 20.) setting forth a control of landuse for the local population and the first definition of Hungarian resort areas was also laid down [51/2010. (IV. 28.) Alkotmánybírósági (AB) határozat, pp. 401–414]. In these years the regional divergences in catering, development and controlling influenced the spatial image and the visitors' social status (mass tourism, settlement developments, etc.) (Jelenka, 2008).

With the provision of the population, the emphasis was put on the development of infrastructural networks, the quality of catering and accommodation services as well as food supply, especially with the aspirations aimed at land use changes or the appearance of the sales channels. Among the sales chains, the demand for markets was generated by the availability of fresh products and the obtainability of other items. Their initial significance is indicated by commercial and construction permits for the establishment of marketplaces (SML XXIII. 335; IV. 418. a) and their territorial location (shoreline concentration), too. As a result of seasonal demand, the market licenses were issued for a period of time only, limiting the timely sale of the products. According to plan management, regional co-operatives and state farms were to accomplish self-sufficiency. Their role was demonstrated through their product range in the 1950s (experimental crop production, maximum area utilization) (Koncz, 1970; Nezdei, 2016). Production in these co-operatives and state farms matched the food demand of increased population in coastal settlements, however, by using chemicals in agriculture, the regional purveyance led to the contamination of waters in the catchment area (or threatened to endanger them) by the 1970s and 1980s. Because of the pollution, the need of realignment in large-scale farming appeared in the regional development documents (Sántha, 1983; Vuics 1985). Instead of growing manually labor-intensive plants (vegetables, fruits), crops that are easily and economically suitable for large-scale farming became prevailing (wheat, corn, sunflower). This change resulted in valorizing the 'second shift' (backyard farming) which produced the fresh goods for marketplaces in addition to the foodstuffs for the wholesale markets. The problems of food and fresh produce supply implied labor shortage, legal changes, deficiency in optimal crop structure, the length of and obsolete technology used in the supply chain and the lack of necessary facilities (e.g. refrigeratories). These factors hindered the needed extent of stockpiling and adversely affected the low producer spirit as well (Vuics, 1985). Several agri-economic interventions (e.g. change in the structure of cultivation branches, tourism-oriented enhancement of agricultural production on the background settlements) were applied so as to improve the producer-consumer relationship.

After the regime change (1990's) the role of marketplaces decreased considerably due to additional product purchasing points and consumer multichannel usage (Törőcsik, 2011). The higher prices on markets led to a drop in consumer demand.

Different forms of food purchasing including domestic and international trade chains, retail units or other alternative opportunities can also be seen in the Balaton region. Indirect sales channels are detrimental to the competitiveness of the producers due to the low priced purchase, hence favourable price conditions experienced by producers can be an incentive for encouraging marketplace sales (Buday-Sántha, 2011; Csíkné Mácsai – Fehér, 2012; Csíkné Mácsai – Lehota, 2013). In the regional markets, tourism contributes to higher consumer prices to varying extent depending on the type of the sales point.

The local producer markets (introduced in 2011) were intended to benefit the producers, focusing increasingly on direct sales and conscious consumer behavior. Their product range is very wide due to handicraft fairs or other occasional events, therefore, besides the traditional motives, they offer further kinds of recreational options for the target group of gourmets, especially in the analyzed area. The tourism-generated large catchment area can lead to different customer requests regarding the market goods. It is attested by the fact that the two most significant farmers' markets (Káptalantóti, Tihany) on the northern part of the region have been indicated on the gastromap of Balaton (Balaton Gastromap 2017). However, it must be taken into consideration that the tourist attraction feature of marketplaces depend on the operators' intentions and their success relies on the operators' response to consumer demand (Rekettye – Hetesi, 2009). There are numerous local examples for both cases and this means the biggest challenge for the sales and service sectors in the summer peak season; it can even arise in the periodical growth of consumer food demand. The functions of management are provided by the market operators who arrange for market events. They may influence the catchment area and product demand through determining the types of products and the status of producers appearing on the market. The market types examined in the present study have to operate with variant legal regulations which also effect the target group segmentation indirectly. The establishment and reduction of farmers' markets refer to the efficiency of the related management activities, which raises the question of the unexplored nature and unfavorable positioning of the producers and consumers' real needs (Rekettye – Hetesi, 2009). However, the national government's supporting policy can be observed by the marketing campaigns of local products and producers, and their financial support, but it takes time to accomplish the conscious consumer behaviour as a daily routine (to create the economic and intellectual conditions).

Seasonal effects

Characters of the catchment area in periodical aspect

As a periodical aspect, there is a seasonal deviation concerning the number of both settlements and respondents in the consumer catchment areas of marketplaces.

The summer dataset showed the most extensive catchment area. Only the population of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, Heves and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties was not represented in the pattern. In contrast, Veszprém, Somogy, Pest and Zala had a considerable rate in the number of respondents, however, the settlement indicators of all the other administrative units remained below three percent (low intensity).

The most significant sender sites accounted for 88.5% of the total data including Veszprém with 30.1%, Somogy with 27.9%, Pest with 21.4% and Zala with 16.4%. The one-third shares of Veszprém and Somogy counties can be explained by the high number of holiday resort settlements indicating the fact that the motivation of the services rendered by these markets are based on inter-municipal relations (local and suburban residents, resorts and their owners). Naturally, the catchment area is influenced by the location of market, but the different types of them present other spatial scopes (farmers'market/market hall/typical market). The location's role can be observed between the north and south part while the lake can be seen as a symbolic border. This situation can also justify due to the residents of the resort owners.

The places of residence designated by respondents were located adjacent to or within 25 to 30 kilometers from the measuring points in the course of the survey that was carried out in May. The proximity refers to the market demand for predominantly vegetables and fruits and those fresh foods which are not produced by themselves. In parallel, besides the dominant product profile, the target of visits was shopping fresh foodstuffs in preseason. The marketplace-favouring inhabitants of Pest county and the Hungarian capital meant the fourth place among the counties. They visited the markets of Tapolca, Fonyód and Keszthely less in preseason, so they were registered in the dataset to a small extent only. The locations of the spring measuring points were in the western side of the resort area which resulted in different rates compared to the further two seasonal data.

In the summer phase of survey registered the most significant rate of Veszprém county (25.1%), followed by Pest (21.8%) Somogy (19.0%) and Zala (14.5%). The local inhabitants' appearance was remarkable which indicates the role of markets in local life, but locals and non-locals' rates are balanced according to the sellers' responds. During the main season, non-shopping visits are conspicuous and this fact is explained by the number of those respondents who stated their presence was due to non-consumption purposes (family program, recreation).

The respondents who combined their shopping with recreation (10.1%) or spending freetime (10.6%; 2.8%) presented a lower data than those with the aim of doing the shopping (73.7%). Although the results cannot provide a clear conclusion on the consumer quality of leisure time, the secondary attraction-focused interpretation of markets can be justified in relation to summer spatial usage features.

Most of the visitors in the peak season were sent from the same counties as in the preseason; the main change was observed due to the increasing number of Pest county and capital (Budapest) residents (21.8%). At the seven sampling points, the outstanding appearance of the capital (Budapest) inhabitants was registered, primarily on the local farmers' markets. Their proportion was extremly high on the latter ones (37.5% and 48.6%, respectively). In seasonal comparison, the rates measured at the further five sampling points were also the highest in the peak- and off-season *(Tab. 3)*.

The data collected in the off-season cover a smaller catchment area where the markets were visited with both shopping and recreational motivation (relaxation, family program or their combined form).

Table 3: The interviewed capital residents by seasons and measuring points[2]
(Source: Own survey)

Sampling point	**Capital residents (%)**		
	Preseason	**High season**	**Off-season**
Fonyód	3.33%	4.47%	2.16%
Tapolca	1.11%	1.12%	1.08%
Keszthely	1.11%	0.00%	1.08%
Balatonfüred	N.d.	3.35%	2.16%
Siófok	N.d.	1.12%	1.62%
Káptalantóti	N.d.	4.47%	5.41%
Tihany	N.d.	3.35%	5.95%
Sum	*5.5%*	*17.8%*	*19.5%*

During the pre-, peak- and off-season periods, locals and non-local residents used nearly 50–50% of the supply available on the market. According to the spring catchment area, the second quarter of 2016 was determined by local demand with suburban concentration *(Fig. 1)*. The differences in the settlement size of the three small towns are less noticeable from the aspect of operators' management: Fonyód has a more extensive retailing relationship while this link is more concentrated around Keszthely and Tapolca.

2 These data are divided by the aggregated number of seasonally recorded figures.

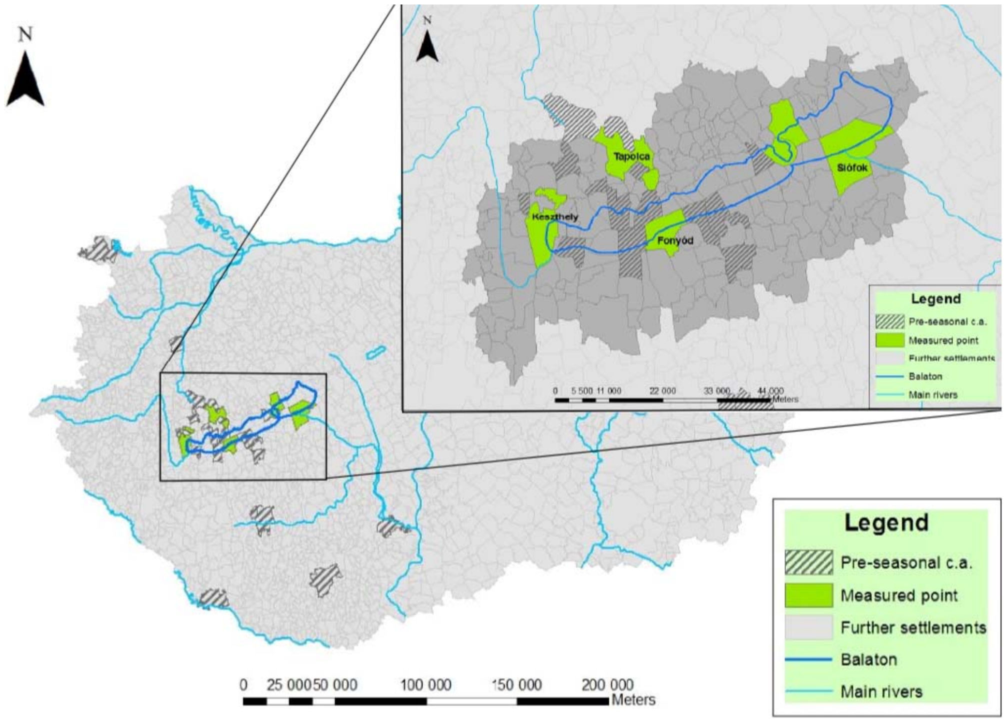

Figure 1: The preseasonal catchment area based on the face-to-face survey
(Source: Own survey)

From the summer results *(Fig. 2)* we can conclude that the number of the settlements specified in the resort area is lower and that of the towns and villages out of the analyzed region exceeds the values of the May sample, referring to the influencing role of tourism. The scattered character of the catchment area is caused by the region's recreational nature. The involvement of cities and villages with larger population in Transdanubia can be traced back to their more favorable territorial and social mobility attributes.

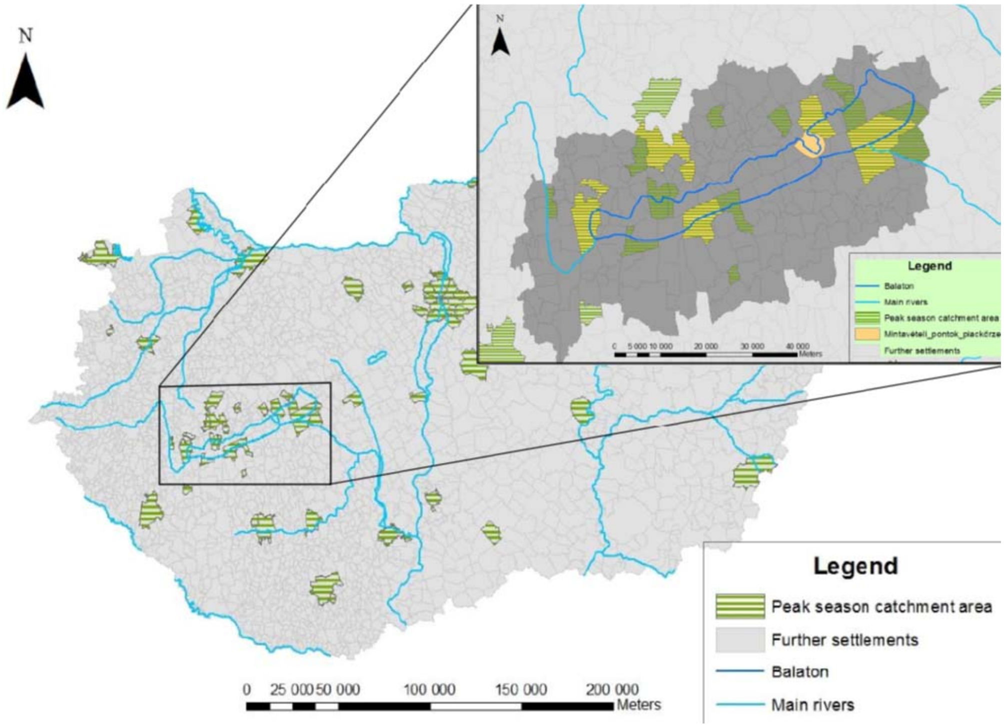

Figure 2: The catchment area of the peak season based on market survey
(Source: Own survey)

In the autumn sample, an increase can be observed in the demand within the resort area, accompanied by a scattered customer catchment area extending beyond the Balaton region *(Fig. 3)*.

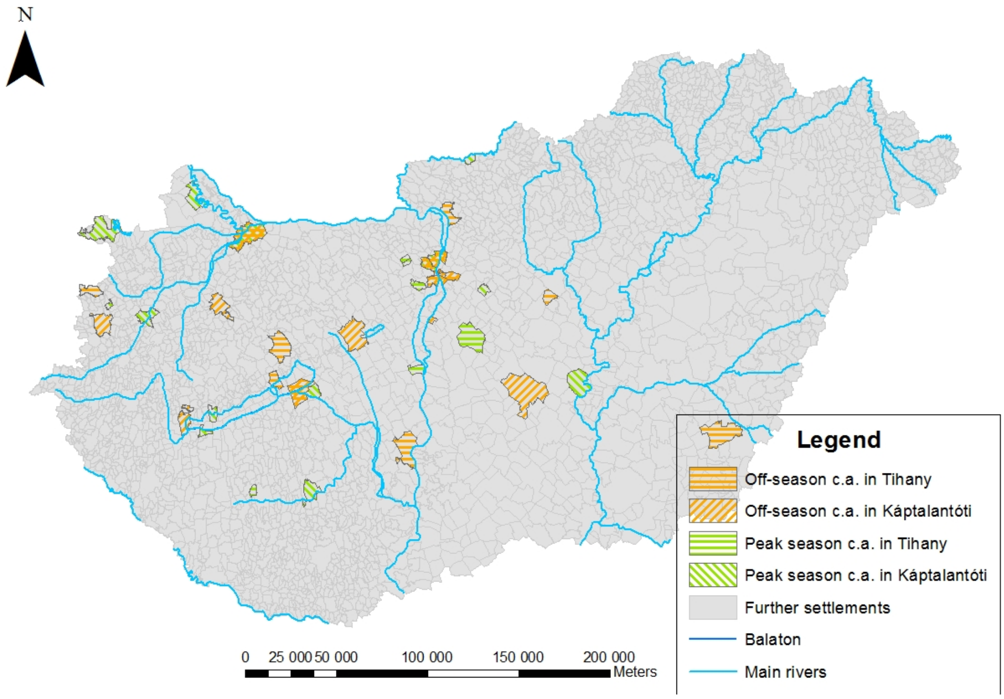

Figure 3: The peak- and off-seasonal catchment areas of the analyzed farmers' markets
(Source: Own survey)

The latter indicates the re-emergence of local demand while the non-local people visiting show a lower intensity. The increased demand observed in the post-season and the higher number of elements can bring about the similarity between the later patterns.

Characters of goods' demand in periodical context

On the regional marketplaces there are various kinds of food and non-food products including daily consumption goods, particularly fresh vegetables and fruits, meat products, honey and eggs. Only the demand for horticultural goods and flowers is dynamic among non-food products. In accordance with the total dataset of the research, there was no considerable discrepancy detected: the best selling foodstuffs appeared to be the fresh produces (vegetables, fruits) but eggs, different meat products and honey were also popular *(Tab. 4)*.

It can be stated that, beyond gardening or horticultural articles, there were not any non-food item that could have determined the customers' market appearance.

The horticultural products showed a rich choice available on markets leading to a boost in their sales. Their prices were competitive compared with other sales channels, too. The horticultural goods were more popular in the spring period due to the household management and the decoration of the properties (industrial crops and ornamentals).

Table 4: The best selling product groups periodically (Source: Own survey)

Season/ product group	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Product group 1	Vegetables, fruits	Vegetables, fruits	Vegetables, fruits
Product group 2	Flowers, other gardening goods	Meat products, pastries, eggs, dairy products/Flowers, other gardening goods	Meat products
Product group 3	Honey	Honey/ Non-food goods	Flowers, other gardening goods
Product group 4	Eggs, meat products	–	Honey, pastries, eggs

The diversity in the data of the settlements occured due to the difference of product demand by marketplace type, particularly between the farmers' markets and further sales points. The consumer basket of local producer markets was characterized by differentiated demand: the non-food products had the same importance as the daily food supplies in suburban villages. In their case, the trend was identical in the figures recorded in the peak- and post-season *(Fig. 4)*. In the customers' opinion, not only fresh produces, but also processed goods (e.g. fruit syrups, handmade dairy products) generate the demand on farmers' markets as shown in the case of Káptalantóti's market, too.

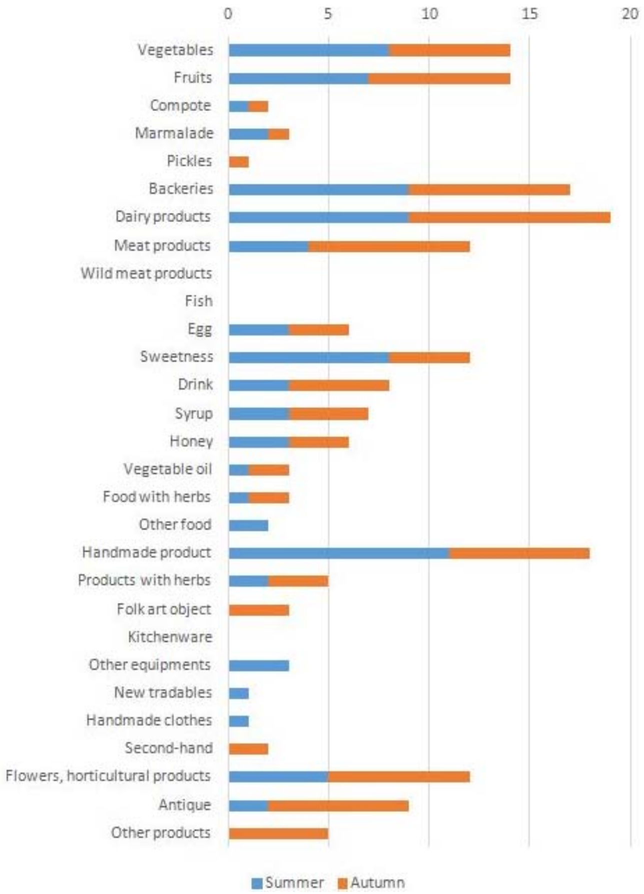

Figure 4: The summer and autumn product demand on the market of Káptalantóti
(Source: Own survey)

The market halls (Siófok, Balatonfüred) offer a range of choices suitable for meeting the food needs of local inhabitants (seasonal goods, meat products, pastries, eggs, honey), but the variety of other items falls behind the supply of traditional and producer markets. The portfolio of the halls is defined by the geographical positioning within settlements where the target group consists of local residents predominantly. Within the product groups no periodical change can be discerned, only 5% deviation was registered in their sales.

In the supply of traditional markets, the largest turnover is generated by fresh foods in spring, in addition to horticultural products and seasonal goods increasing in autumn (honey, etc.) *(Fig. 5)*.

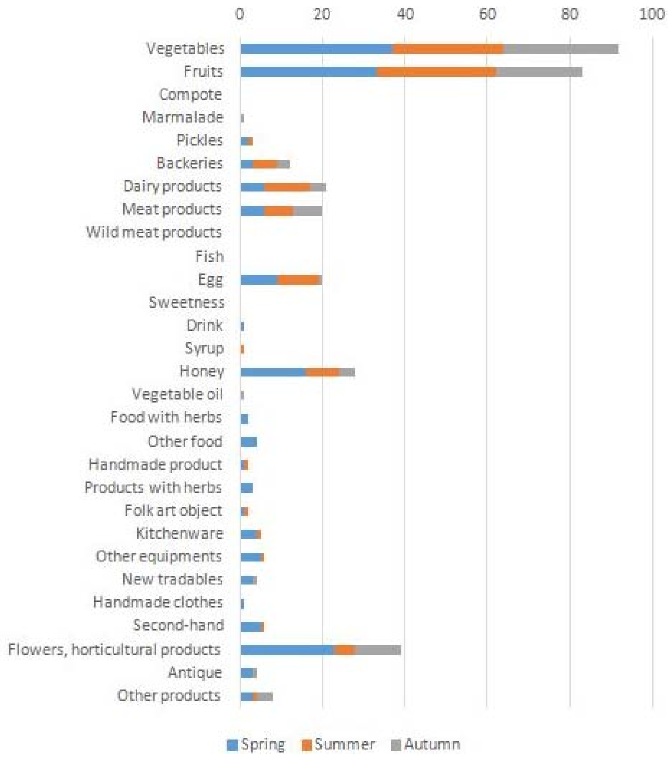

Figure 5: The periodically changing demand on the market of Fonyód (Source: Own survey)

The market of Fonyód illustrates the product demand of traditional markets: its popularity is the consequence of fresh and qualified vegetables, producer honey, eggs or certain kinds of fresh pastries, dairy (cheese) and meat products.

The remarkable degree of demand for fresh seasonal products is the result of direct consumption as well as the purchase of primary materials necessary for the production of own processed merchandise (jam, pickles, bottled fruit). Because of own production, these processed foods were mentioned by customers only a few times at traditional direct sales points.

The regional catchment areas are based on the inter-municipal relationships which are influenced by tourism and different consumer motivations. The periodically diverse customer catchment areas did not present any significant disparity in the demand for food and non-food goods because of the high rate of local inhabitants in the dataset pattern. However, the pattern does not allow the extrapolation of the results; the figures of the farmers' markets illustrate the influencing effect of the tourism sector. Another peculiarity is the strong demand for both of the processed and non-food commodities, which can be justified by the recreational role according to the consumers' opinions.

To motivate the consumers to go to marketplaces, it will be important a well organized marketing campain by the owners or operators of marketplaces. The markets' images are such various because of the different operator' attitude. Those places in which the producers interested more in organizing (e.g. cooperative) have better 'soft' environment. These are often not only markets, but also small communities. To manage the marketplaces is a difficult task, in which the personal attitude and the local government have an important role. Because of the different motivations which depend on the profit or nonprofit focus we can say, that every marketplaces have an individual identity.

Conclusion

Marketplaces have a dual role actually. They are a venue for selling fresh foods (vegetables, fruits, etc.) or other individual goods, especially those wich are hardly available on further sales channels on one hand, and also a good opportunity to experience the rural life, tradition and spend time in a pleasant enviroment as at a farmers' market on the other hand. Depending on the supply of producers, fans of culinary experience can be addicted to their gastronomic interest as a special form of recreation on these places. The Balaton Resort Area is a favoured target area particularly in the peak season, therefore, the consumer expectations of market sales points may result in seasonal differences.

The results, which are based on face-to-face surveys and interviews with market operators, denote that the marketplaces are mainly the shopping points of local inhabitants. Because of this fact, their catchment area is smaller with higher intensity and the demand for daily goods is more considerable. Although a wider low-intensity area was observed in the main season, it still indicated the residence of locally affected property owners. The tourist rate amounted to only below 5% because of the respondents' negative willingness which have led to minimal seasonal divergences in consumer demand. The analyzed three types of marketplaces have not demonstrated significant differences though the consumed product range was wider on farmers' markets similarly to the outcomes in international publications.

Summarizing the seasonal changes, we can point out that the differences are mostly due to the market types and not owing to the settlements in rural areas or seasonal periods. Regarding the periodic demand change, the positioning of marketplaces is decisive which can forward the efficient and long-term development of these ones. This is the partial responsibility of the market operators' approach, as well.

In spite of the decrease of markets in rural territories, the regional analysis illustrates their role in inhabitants' life when it comes to both the produces they buy and the consumer motivations (fresh, quality and locally produced goods). These market points' position could be strengthened by the evolving consumer awareness as well as the the special experiences customers can get there.

In the (intermittent) commodity demand of markets, an increasing emphasis is put on the items made locally and with high added value on the one hand, and non-chemical products on the other hand. The latter may offer one of the future alternatives to market development, but it is worth considering Buday-Sántha's thoughts (2004): organic farming and intergrated crop production are two complementary forms of farming with different target groups. Based on the own research observations, the more intensive activity of operators' could contribute to the growth of market turnover in rural areas by providing more accurate and varied information to consumers. The management field will be important by the mediation between producers and consumers throught the creation of infrastructural needs and relationship. The financial conditions could even be provided by tenders extending the currently narrow circle of beneficiaries.

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