

ASPECTS REGARDING THE POTENTIAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC HILLY AREAS OF THE TIMIS COUNTY

**Simona-Cosmina TOADER¹, Ioan BRAD¹, Tabita-Cornelia HURMUZACHE¹,
Remus GHERMAN¹, Sebastian MOISA¹**

E-mail: cosminatoader2003@yahoo.com

Abstract

Timis County's hilly area is located at a junction of influences that could be fructified in its benefit, influences that are carried out by some of the important cities in the county, like Timisoara and Lugoj, cities that are located at relatively small distances from the studied communes.

In the present paper, the authors achieve a diagnosis analysis of Timis County's hilly area, aiming to point out its socio-economical potential. The studied area is formed from 27 administrative units (communes, cities), which occupy 30.4% of Timis County's total surface and where 72.186 inhabitants live, this representing 10.6% of Timis County's population. From an economical point of view, like the entire rural space, the hilly area of Timis County is featured by a lack of diversity in economical activities, which determines an excessive dependency on agriculture, a diminished economical efficiency of agricultural activities, a defective way of exploiting the land and turning to profit agricultural products. In terms of infrastructure, concerning urbanistic facilities, the studied area is slightly inconducive, considering the fact that many communes have known a rapid development, due to access to European funds and approaching urban centres, which offer them the opportunity to become a habitat for a large part of the city inhabitants.

Key words: potential, hilly area, socio-economic development

The Romanian explanatory dictionary defines „hilly” as a landscape form that is smaller than the hill. This definition, alongside the physical and geographical characteristics that Timis County presents, stood at the base of delimitating the studied area. Timis County's hilly area is located in the N-E part of the county, being the contact part for the last extensions of Lipova Hills, which are continued by a high plain (Vinga Plain) and the Timis Plain, with a surface of 1.598.100 ha, representing 30.4% of Timis County's total surface.

At the area's delimitation it was avoided the separation of localities within the same commune, including all component villages, even if some have lands in the depression, being considered that the economical and social disfunctions manifest in a unitary form, common features being related to the economical decline, the accentuation of the area's depopulation phenomenon and the underuse of the natural potential.

It has to be considered that maintaining historical connections between the included localities, considering the eventuality of applying regional development programs, and being unable to a discriminatory applying of these for villages belonging to the same commune.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The informations that stand at the base of the present paper originate from various sources: speciality literature (books, publications, articles, studies), the information obtained from ordinary means through which operators rise awareness on various situations they run into and the problems they confront with (informational bulletines, annual statistics, statistical breviaries) and field research in the studied area. The used methods include a diagnosis analysis, a critical and analytical approach to the reference material, presented in a comparative perspective and also a diagnosis analysis of the hilly area of Timis County.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The studied area is formed from 27 administrative units (communes, cities), with a surface located in the hilly side of Timis County. The repartition of the territorial administrative units in Timis County's hilly area is presented in table 1.

The component administrative units present a series of common features, but there can be distinguished a series of differences generated by different economical conditions, natural factors, the way socio-economical phenomena manifest and the influence altitude has over them.

¹ University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Banat, Timisoara

Table 1

Territorial-administrative units in the hilly area of Timis county

Crt. No.	Administrative units included in the hilly side of Timis County	Belonging villages
1	Balint	Bodo, Fădimac, Târgoviste
2	Bara	Dobresti, Lăpusnic, Rădmănești, Spata
3	Bârna	Botesti, Botinesti, Drinova, Juresti, Pogănești, Sărăzani
4	Belint	Babsa, Chizatău, Gruni
5	Bethausen	Cladova, Ciciova, Cutina, Leucușești, Nevrincea
6	Bogda	Altringen, Buzad, Charlottenburg, Comeat, Sintar
7	Boldur	Jabar, Ohaba Forgaci, Sinersig
8	Brestovăt	Coșarii, Hodoș, Lucareț, Teș
9	Costeiu	Hezeriș, Păru, Țipari, Valea Lungă Română
10	Darova	Hodoș, Sacosu Mare
11	Dumbrava	Bucovăt, Răchita
12	Făget	Bătești, Begheiu Mic, Bichigi, Brănești, Bunea Mare, Bunea Mica, Colonia Mica
13	Gavojdia	Jena, Lugojel, Sălbăgel
14	Ghizela	Hisiaș, Paniova, Șanovița
15	Giarmata	Cerneteaz
16	Margina	Breazova, Bulza, Colevita, Colteiu de Sus, Grosi, Nemeșesti, Sintesti, Zorani
17	Masloc	Alioș, Remetea Mică
18	Mănăstir	Pădurani, Remetea Lunca, Topla
19	Ohaba Lungă	Dubesti, Iersnic, Ohaba Romană
20	Ortisoara	Calacea, Cornesti, Seceani
21	Pischia	Bencecu de Jos, Bencecu de Sus, Murani, Salciua Nouă
22	Recas	Bazos, Herneacova, Izvin, Nadăș, Petrovaselo, Stanciova
23	Secas	Checheș, Crivobara, Vizma
24	Stiuca	Dragomiresti, Oloșag, Zgribesti
25	Topolovătu Mare	Cralovăt, Ictar-Budinț, Iosifălău, Sustra, Topolovătu Mic
26	Traian Vuia	Jupani, Saceni, Surducu Mic, Susani, Sudriaș
27	Victor Vlad Delamarina	Herendești, Honorici, Pădureni, Petroasa Mare, Pini, Vișag

Source: <https://adetim.online.ro/adetim/Welcome.do>

From a geomorphological point of view, the studied area belongs to The Western Plain, being the contact part between the last extensions of Lipova Hills, which continue with a higher plain (Vinga Plain) and Timis Plain. The Vinga plain has a general orientation from North-East towards South-East, the average altitudes being between 100 and 150 m, with very large interstreams, inslanded with depressionary areals and a reduced fragmentation and landscape energy. It was formed by the redrawing of waters, at the beginning of the quaternary, towards West, and is formed by layers of soft sediments (clay, sedimentary rock formed from calcium carbonate and clay, sands and aggregate).

The area's climate is temperate continental, with a slight mediterranean influence, with warm winters and hot summers, long autumns and sudden passages from winter to summer. The sum of average annual rainfall varies from 500 to 700 mm. The average annual temperature in this area is 8-10°C. The winds are not frequent and of low intensity.

The vegetation varies from tall trees to small grassy plants. The area's characteristic is a grassy mezoxenophile vegetation in the Northern plane and a hydrophile vegetation in alternance with mezophile groups in the grassland.

The fauna is represented by a variety of wild and domesticated animals found near the course of waters, near plains as well as near the human establishments. Due to intense human activities and deficitary ecological conditions, their number and variety decreased.

The hydrographic network is well developed, the hilly area of the county being crossed by the Timis and Bega rivers. The predominant soils are mollisols and claysoils.

In the hilly's area basement the following can be found: basalt (Lucaret - Sanovita) and sand for glass making (Grosi). The mineral waters from Calacea and Bogda are also being exploited.

The natural reservations are: The Bazos Stand, The fossiliferous place Rădmănești, The Murani Swamps.

Population

Timis County's population from the hilly area, at January 1st, 2010, numbered 72.186 inhabitants, representing 10.6% of Timis County's population.

From data analysis provided by Timis County's Regional Direction of Statistics, we notice that in the majority of communes in the area the population has a slight decrease tendency, exception making some communes located nearby cities, these becoming a habitat for a part of the habitat for some of the population that occupies cities. There is also a tendency in folksmen, especially elders, to retire in less populated villages, due to low housing prices and a special natural frame (Șecaș, Bogda, Stanciova etc.)

At January 1st 2010, the population's density was 27.29 inhabitants/ km². At the present time, the birth rate is of approximately 10 (9.53) children born alive at 1000 inhabitants and the death rate is approximately 16 deaths (15.57) at 1000 inhabitants, which shows that the natural increase rate is negative, which is available for the entire Timis County.

Economy

Timis County's hilly area is characterized by a lack of economical activity diversity, which determines an excessive dependency of agriculture, a reduced economical efficiency of the agricultural activities and a defective way of exploiting lands and turning to profit agricultural products.

Within the studied area, the branch of agriculture dominates as an economical activity, being the basic developed activity and occupying the majority of the land and the occupied population. Although agriculture represents the main income source for most inhabitants, the population that is actually occupied in agriculture has a low weight factor, this being explained by the fact that most people working in agriculture are working part-time and thus are not included in statistics.

From the total population taken into study, 14% are occupied in various sectors of the economy, so that 7% of the population works in agriculture, 34% in the secondary sector (industrial and constructions) and 59% in the service sector.

In the analysis of the economical agricultural potential, the starting point is represented by the territorial fund, as seen from the perspective of the property form, soil quality, agricultural exploitation structure and agricultural production.

The agricultural resources in the studied area are of a lower quality in comparison with the plain area, which attracts inferior efficiency. At the same

time, the agricultural surface is not entirely cultivated and the thermic regime restricts the agricultural crop assortment.

The agricultural surface of 203.271 ha represents 76.85% of the total surface and is located above our country's average at the total agricultural surface weight factor, which is nearly 62%.

According to the General Agricultural Census in 2002, almost 27.578 agricultural exploitations activated in the hilly area of Timis County and organized, as according to the Terrain Fund Law, in individual households, familial associations without juridic personality and agricultural societies with juridical personality. From the total of these agricultural units, the exploitations/individual households (without juridical personality) number 27.305, which means a weight factor of 99%, while the units with juridic personality sum only 273 units, holding a 1% weight factor. The average agricultural surface per agricultural exploitation was 6.8 ha in 2002, in comparison with the European average of 18 ha. Between these exploitation categories, the agricultural surface per exploitation is very differentiated.

A negative aspect of practiced agriculture is the crumbled character of the agricultural terrain. Even though the average size of exploitations in this area is of approximately 6.6 ha, they are not found in the same place, being divided in 4-5 parcels, which leads to a productivity downsize.

The services in the area are underdeveloped, repairment shops or financial services being almost inexistent. Agricultors appeal in a very low proportion, more precise to the specialists in the domain. The ones that appeal to agricultural chambers or agricultural engineers are only a few, most of them appealing to the veterinarian.

Young households, formed by agriculturers, are more „open”, applying in a larger proportion to the help of specialists. This „lack of interest” may have as explanation, on one side, the fact that they are unaware of the role of consultancy in obtaining higher productions and that qualified resources represent a condition in the agricultural household development. On the other side, agricultural specialists have a limited training in the economical sector and a limited technical competence, which does not enable them to offer advice to small agriculturers, starting from the rentability principle.

The renewal of this important sector is necessary as a condition of economic rehabilitation of this area and presumes the following:

- The development of consultancy centres for business orientation and establishing programs for obtaining European funds;
- Extending the financial, insurance and banking network in large communes with an economical potential;
- Rebuilding units for traditional services in the area etc.

As far as the tourism practiced in the area is concerned, it can be observed that it is insufficiently developed, due to an inadequate infrastructure for transportation, telecommunication and accommodation, though the area presents possibility for practicing rural tourism.

The area has a number of 4 housing units that offer 270 accommodation places. The structure of the housing units is formed by: 1 hotel, with a housing capacity of 35 places, 1 motel and 2 touristic villas. The housing places are concentrated in the localities: Făget, Margina and Ortisoara.

The area's touristical objectives are mainly represented by Calacea Bays (Ortisoara) and Recas, their main feature being cultivating grape vine, but we can affirm that each of the communes, alongside belonging villages, have something to give back to potential tourists. More precise, practicing agrotourism can be completed by cultural tourism, which mainly implies using the land's cultural resources (artistical and historical, customs) and maintaining and preserving them.

Considering that nowadays tourists do not desire a standard and rigid tourist package, in which the sun is the main attraction, they prefer to feel different and thus choose a customized tourism, manifesting an increased interest for quietness, direct contact with nature and culture. It can be affirmed that all these can be a beneficial situation for the area's economy, which is mainly agricultural.

While covering steps in developing this area's tourism, the following measures should be taken into consideration:

- modernizing housing capacities and meals;
- adding value to insufficiently exploited resources;
- extending agrotourism;
- enhancing infrastructure;
- founding information and organization centers and promoting the touristical offer.

The specific economy of the studied area belongs to the farming type. The insured accessibility of some communes to be located on a national road enhances the commercial behaviour of agricultural producers. Stopping the flux of regular travellers, due to a profound restructure in the nonagricultural branches has condemned a large

part of the area in study to an endogenous development that has not yet found the most efficient forms of execution, a consequence of the comeback to a subsistence and nonperforming agriculture.

Infrastructure

The locative fund. For evaluating aspects concerning living conditions we followed the accommodation surface per inhabitant, in order to evaluate the comfort degree and number of persons that is allocated, in average, to an establishment. According to Timis County's Regional Direction of Statistics, the hilly area had, in 2008, a number of 27.742 establishments, from which 26.762 private properties and 974 public properties.

The number of people allocated, in the area in study, to an establishment, is of 2.6 persons, smaller than the country's average, of 2.85, and the accommodation surface per inhabitant is 16.89 mp. A positive element recorded in the area is represented by the construction of establishments. According to data originating from the Regional Direction of Statistics in Timis, in the year 2008 a number of 50 establishments were finalized.

The main issues of accommodations in this area are related to a low degree of facilities and housing equipment with fixtures and installations (kitchen, bathroom, W.C. with water, drinkable water alimentation, sewage, central heating or natural gas furnace), as well as their high level of depreciation. Solving these issues presumes:

- renovating accommodations;
- enhancing the equipment and facility degree;

Sewage networks, water conduit and gas. In 2008, the length of the drinkable water delivery network in the hilly area of Timis County measured over 380 km, and the number of localities that disposed of a distribution network for drinkable water was 25, representing 92% of the total analyzed communes. This aspect that cannot be overlooked is the fact that in the 25 communes that enjoy a network for drinkable water delivery, not all households are wired up to it.

We believe that the drinkable water delivery system represents a major constraint in the economical development of this area, this conclusion being based exclusively on a quantitative evaluation, without taking into consideration the quality standards for drinkable water, which are required for food processing activities.

The sewage network is found in an incipient stage within the studied area, only 7 localities disposing of a sewage network. It is important to underline the fact that only 28% of the localities

connected to the water network also dispose of a sewage network.

The natural delivery network is less developed at the area's level, only 10 communes benefiting from it. In these conditions, most households use wood furnaces for heating and are forced to use cooking machines based on wood, gas-oil or butane gas.

The only utility that households in this area benefit from in an overwhelming proportion is electrical energy, the coverage degree being of approximately 98%, as a consequence of a public electrification program developed between 1950 and 1970. However, most networks are old and need updating.

The work force's education and training are essential factors in assuring an economical and social progress, in the conditions of an elevated performance in all social domains, including rural communities.

In many communes, education units (or the number of classrooms) in rapport to the number of inhabitants (or the number of students) are abundant, as a consequence of decrease in the number of young people. If in the past a qualitative analysis revealed severe degradations in the educational system, an obvious contradiction between the services offered by this domain, in comparison with the urban environment, as a follow up to the numerous differences between the educational system's infrastructure and the level of qualification of the teaching personnel. At the present moment, the vast majority of schools have been renovated and equipped with current water, central heating, sanitary groups, furniture and learning materials. It can be remarked that the student's performance is better in the schools where a large part of the teachers live in the certain commune and also in schools where the community is actively involved in the school activities. Adjusting incomes within the household has a strong effect upon participating in the educational act. Children from families where the parents are unemployed, retired or patrons are more exposed to the risk of not attending classes in comparison with children from households with a regular source of income.

Reporting to the urban environment, medical and sanitary assistance is way behind. In most communes taken into study only the basic sanitary services are provided.

At the moment, telecommunications cover telephonic and radio and television services. Almost all communes benefit of a steady telephone line. Almost all communes benefit of a steady phone network, the degree of connection being approximately 98%. The radio and T.V. programmes

are accessible to all households connected to the electrical energy network, which enables the village population to dispose of information and assure a proper educational level. Concerning the number of postal units, almost all villages belonging to communes dispose of a postal unit.

From the description of infrastructure we can say that, from the point of view of urbanistic equipment, the studied area is slightly deficient, considering that many communes have known a faster development, due to accessing European funds and approaching urban centres, which offered them the chance to become a habitat for a large part of the city inhabitants.

CONCLUSIONS

The hilly area of Timis County is situated in the N-E side of the country, being the contact part between the last extensions of Lipova Hills, that are continued by a high plain (Vinga Plain) and Timis Plain, its surface being of 1.598.100 ha, which represents 30,4% of Timis County's total surface. The population in this hilly area, at January 1st 2010, numbers 72.186 inhabitants, representing 10,6% of the county's population.

The hilly area of Timis County deatures a lack of diversity in economical activities, determining an excessive dependency towards agriculture, a reduced economical efficiency of agricultural activities, a defective way of terrain exploitation and turning to profit agricultural products.

From the total population of the studied area, 14% is occupied in various sectors of economy, 7% working in agriculture and 34% in the secondary sector (industry and constructions), while 59% work in the service sector.

The type of the specific economy is a farming one. The commune's assured access towards locating on a national road enhances the commercial behaviour of agricultural producers. Stopping the flux of regular travellers, due to a profound restructure in the nonagricultural branches has condemned a large part of the area in study to an endogenous development that has not yet found the most efficient forms of execution, a consequence of the comeback to a subsistence and nonperforming agriculture.

The communes located in the studied area present differences under a demographical, economical and infrastructural aspect, thus making it extremely hard to identify all the problems existent in the area. In order to make a better identification of the issues the studied area confronts with and for an efficient solution to all of them it is imposed the elaboration of a

development strategy adapted to each commune that belongs to the hilly area of Timiș County.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mateica, Cosmina-Simona, 2010 – *Managementul dezvoltării rurale durabile în zona colinară a județului Timis* - Teza de doctorat, USAMVB Timisoara.

Toader, Cosmina-Simona, Brad, I., Adamov, Tabita, Găvrută, Adrian, 2007- *Ways and actions mechanisms in the development of the Timis County Hill*, Analele Universității din Craiova – Seria Agricultură, Montanologie, Cadastru, Ed. Universitaria, Craiova.

***, **2000** – *Breviarul Statistic al județului Timiș 2000-2009*, Direcția Județeană de Statistică Timiș.

***, **2007** – *Dicționar explicativ al limbii române ilustrat*, Ed. ARC&GUNIVAS.

***, **2010**– *Populația României pe localități la 1 ianuarie 2010*, INS, 2010

*** - www.adetim.ro.

*** - www.banaterra.eu.