
Mobility patterns and isolated villages in rural Hungary. A case study from North-Baranya

Éva Máté*¹

¹Alpek, B. Levente – Hungary

Abstract

When defining rural spaces, geographers have to face with the challenges of differing statements and ideas. In this paper we try to define, or rather classify, in a way, when the meaning of rurality is rather a qualitative approach than statistical or economic. Thus, rural area is a space of decreasing population, declining economy, lack of infrastructural amenities and other facilities, furthermore, a space of social exclusion. What makes the situation in the Hungarian countryside even more stressful is the presence of numerous low level centres all over the country with less and less central functions. That means, that not even the problem of rural settlements rose, but they are suffering from the weakness of small towns and their shrinking capture areas. According to these processes, we assume, that some of rural settlements could easily get isolated, which means, that social and spatial marginalization and disconnectedness into local networks could arise. We used an expression for this phenomena after the concept of perforated cities the perforated region.

We assumed that due to the shrinking processes of a rural Hungarian area in North-Baranya some settlements are getting isolated and disconnected from the regional labour network. To prove this statement we made an empirical and statistical research, in which we examined the mobility patterns and intensity of settlements in this area. Mobility index was the tool with which, we tried to prove that many of the small villages are under a level of mobility, thus, they are affected by the perforation processes. To verify our empirical experiences we made in-depth interviews with certain employers from the local small towns. The aim of the interviews was to verify, that due to the shrinking processes and the possible isolation of some villages, the local labour force declines. According to that, local employers are to face with the emergent lack of qualified employees and other obstacles.

Keywords: rural Hungary, shrinking, crisis, mobility index, spatial exclusion

*Speaker