

PRESENCE AND ROLE OF MINER MENTALITY IN THE SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT OF RECSK

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ABSTRACT

Recsk became central in the non-ferrous metal mining of the Mátra hill. The change of regime in Hungary and shutdown of the ore mine had a lot of negative impacts on social and economic sectors. Unemployment is high in this area and there are only a few profitable companies. The mining had affected significantly on community spirit. Nowadays mining is very uncertain development opportunity in the life of the settlement.

In my recent study I strive to explore new ways and chances, which clearly point to the complexity of the situation. I used several research methods of social sciences. In my study I compare the concept of miner spirit before deterioration of mining, its presence and role in the settlement development.

I formulated a few preliminary assumptions. The mining spirit has less prominent force in community shaping. According to changing social environments, future visions of the settlement and community have been transformed.

Recsk is located at Northern Hungary, Heves County, Pétervására small region. In my study I made practical and complex surveys (individual and focus group interviews, widespread questionnaire examination, calculations, field trips, overview of professional studies)

Changes generated negative economic and social situations, but Recsk has important role in the neighbourhood. The interviews also confirmed deep social and existensial crisis in the life of people. The mining such as future potential possibility is far from younger age group. The mining spirit still lives by the traditions of the village. Based on my variance and other calculations, experience, binding to the settlement had a positive result, but it is not in relationship with miner spirit in the local community.

Based on the results, the miner mentality concerned several society groups. It is necessary to stabilize community and social circumstances. Nowadays mining spirit is existing in local population, but mostly in cultural field. Recsk needs to wide community cooperation and develop its partnership interactions.

Keywords: Recsk, miner mentality, settlement development, community, social effects

INTRODUCTION

Mining such as a work system had a prominent role for a whole time in the life of continents and countries. This sector was revived very much by technology development. Mining of Hungary had a bigger role before 1989. Gyöngyösoroszi and Recsk became central regions for the non-ferrous metal mining in the Mátra hill. Life and view of Recsk is in connection of industry and ore mining, and nowadays many people think the same. Decreasing of negative mining effects has been tourism developed in the neighbourhood. The mining is a very complex sector. Primarily it provides raw materials for industry, later it will be usable for processing. Mining has a lot of attachment points so it determined view of areas and regions. Thus were formed „mining settlements”, such as Tatabánya, Oroszlány, Pécs, Bükkábrány etc. and it was in connection of developing of institutions, culture, community. Mining such as part of national economy belongs to primary sector (GOODLAND, 2012).

Decades ago there were similar aspects in Recsk Ore Mine. In the place of Mining Site II stopped underwater suction before the millennium. Thanks to this method, the output of thermal wells increased. Tourism developed in the last 15 years. Geological conditions have been changed, and it affected for example pressure conditions (Mátraderecske – carbon dioxide bath) (CSIFFÁRY, 2009).

Social effects of mining

The mining affects directly environmental and economic sections, but it has large impacts on other aspects of society. Each of the operation, as well as the closure or shutdown of mine, or the recultivation affected workers, local organizations, and residential community. During the extraction and processing, if it is operable and profitable mine, then this could be a major initiator of social processes.

The positive economic impact of mining – in addition to the contribution to the export income of the country -, appears in the local economy. It is provided job for many people, ranging from engineering works to office projects. Then it became necessary to train specialists that brought the development of education.

Along with the improvement of living and working conditions can be observed positive immigration rate, increase of number of the resident population and births in the settlements.

Social-local mining traditions can strengthen community of residents. For example, before changing of the regime, mining companies supported significant the institutions of the settlements (child garden, school etc.), sport associations, youth and cultural programs. Over and above, these companies had own cultural, sport, other clubs and associations.

Workers could be participate in official or private vacation of labor union and in community programs. Since the late eighties, after changing the regime, it was observed negative social effects. The mines were closed, and by the reason of unsuccessful privatization and downsizing of staff, started contrary processes. Massive emigration has been started from these areas, especially among young people.

Over time, the resident population in Recsk is aging continuously. Allowances have been ceased which have boosted the local residential communities, culture, youth and sports life. Although today is existing, or surviving a few traditionalist groups, that preserve the mining traditions, nevertheless it has much less unifying and motivating force.

Due to the economic problems, deep social troubles have emerged in these settlements.

The unemployment rates are high and there will be a layer in the society who can not work. Latter-born generations feel hopelessness. Because of the less income, public safety will be weaker and the settlements will be less livable.

Miners had early retirement. It served the purpose that can compensate for a much greater negative impact of the difficult and dangerous mining conditions on health (SISKÁNE, 2008).

The importance of mining in settlement development

After the change of regime, the economy of the former mining settlements declined. They were not able to recover from the bad situation in this twenty years, and huge debts were also accumulated. Nowadays these are backward areas, their catch-up must be helped.

In rural development such areas are called peripheral, semi-peripheral zones.

These are socially typical: the aging of the settlements, significant migration, and high unemployment rate. The role of settlement and rural development is to help promote these regions both economically and socially. National measures are also important here.

Mining establishments which are built earlier and are in good condition, should be used for other purposes. Cooperation between the different segments should be strengthened. (SISKÁNE, 2008, MEGGYESI, 2006, G. FEKETE, 2013)

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Short display of Recsk Settlement

Recsk is located at Northern Hungary, Heves County, Pétervására small region (Figure 1). The village lies on the northeast part of the Mátra Hills. Pétervására is the smallest town in Heves County. Recsk is 20 km far from Pétervására. There are weak transport and other functional connections between the settlements. Recsk is located along the No. 24 Highway and railway line between Kisterenye and Kál-Kápolna stations. First of all, it seems to be these are preferential transportation conditions, but 24 Highway has bigger touristic relevancy and the passenger traffic on the railway line was ended in 2007. Communal services are available in Recsk, but these enterprises struggle with quality problems. The municipality had notable attraction zone earlier, nowadays it spreads for 4-5 villages in the neighborhood. The closure of Recsk Ore Mine and other changes generated negative economic and social situations.

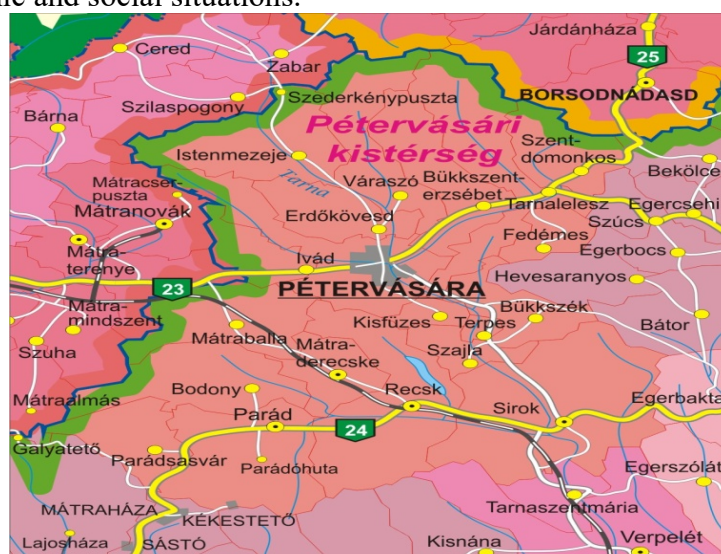


Figure 1. Pétervására small region

Source: <http://www.pvkisterseg.hu/new/pic/terkep.jpg>

Methods

In my recent study I strive to explore new ways and chances, which clearly point to the complexity of the situation. I used several research methods of social sciences. In my study I compare the concept of miner spirit before deterioration of mining, its presence and role in the settlement development.

In the last years I was several times in Recsk, when I personally kept in touch with inhabitants. In my study I made practical and complex surveys (individual and focus group interviews, widespread questionnaire examination, calculations, field trips, overview of professional studies).

12 individual interviews were made, the focus group interview involving 5 people.

Widespread questionnaire examination

It was necessary to make a complex viewpoint system for workmanship of settlement situation analysis. The questionnaire I had consisted of 17 questions. The questions focused on the relationship between the ore mining and settlement, the current situation of the village and its future possibilities. The questionnaire research took place on several

occasions between December 2015 and January 2016. 221 questionnaires were included in the database.

RESULTS

The social situation of the settlement

The population of Recsk has decreased by more than 400 people since the mines' downturn (population in 2000: 3045 person, population in 2015: 2627 person), and this trend has continued since. This is comparable to the national average. It exemplifies the lives of settlements that have to be calculated with a decreasing number of people by falling down a decisive sector. Natural growth is also negative. The number of deaths is relatively constant, however, due to higher emigration, the number of births gradually decreases.

Unemployment rate has increased until 2010. That year, the first time the public work programs were launched, which provisionally, by certain periods, actually give rise to improvements, but as it is not a value-creating job, it will not solve the settlement problem in the long run. This option does not contribute to raising national income either. The number of registered unemployed does not really reflect real numbers because there are many who can not be registered. There are also many job seekers who are looking for temporary jobs and their families, but since they are not listed in the statistical system, this indicator always shows less than the real value.

Conception of miner mentality

Miner mentality does not have concrete and fixed conception. It is difficult to be accurately described. Mining and industry were also typical for cities and villages. Mining had a community building effect, and it was stronger in smaller settlements. Through work, families and friends were people twitted with each other. Special traditions were found in mining. Cultural and community programs have strengthened the community consciousness. They also had peculiarity in music and clothing on feast days. However mining meant very hard work, miner mentality carried also pride.

On the whole, external and internal factors create together miner mentality.

Results of interviews

Participants of individual interviews: two former mayors, former deputy mayor, colleague of family support service, shoe reatiler, deputy director of the primary school, leader of Recskért Hórukk Egyesület (civil asscotiation), leader of the local inn and restaurant, local forester, houswife, old couple who worked by ore mine.

Focusgroup interview: members of the local civil associations, 3 of them worked by the ore mine

All said that the ore mining was decisive in the life of the settlement, mainly because of the traditions and memories. They felt deep social problems. There are less co-operations, only in cultural and civil fields are more. It was observed during the interviews, they thought mining spirit was stronger earlier, today lives only in traditions and culture. With the disappearance of the usual circumstances, uncertain conditions have emerged

Connection of the age and industry, mining

Shutdown of the ore mine caused break in convergent community. Because of the economy, technology and global changes younger generation does not feel strong attachment to their birthplace. This statement is interpretable not only at local level, but also at small region, county and national level. In the variance analysis, I compared the *Age*

factor to the *Local community* factor. Investigating their effect on each other has resulted: in reality, attachment is weaker in younger ages. However, this result can not be clearly demonstrated by the complete questionnaire. This also contributes to the relatively good evaluation of the local community in two categories. Other tendencies can be found in the SPSS research results, but this result is not significant and contains fewer number of elements (F value= 1,527). 127 person think to develop industry and mining in the next 5 years, but age affect answers. It is more common among the elderly to urge the possibility of reopening the mine, which is far behind the attitudes of the younger generation, but the disillusionment does not appear, as industry can be an important employer area for the neighborhood.

Changes generated negative economic and social situations, but Recsk has important role in the neighbourhood. The interviews also confirmed deep social and existensial crisis in the life of people. The mining such as future potential possibility is far from younger age group. The mining spirit still lives by the traditions of the village. Based on my variance and other calculations, experience, binding to the settlement had a positive result, but it is not in relationship with miner spirit in the local community.

Results in connection of society

The view of settlement was completely transformed. There are similarities to what US sociologists have revealed (Lester F. Ward, Franklin H. Giddings, William I. Thomas). The population of basically agricultural areas had to face new hardships with industrialization. In depressed areas, such as in many regions of the Northern Hungarian region, the new problems are deepened.

The local community has developed a community approach that has been a major driver of locality. It is worth to mention, however, that the "spirit" and belonging to the group formed in the socialist era, it could evolve exclusions, because these organizations were basically derived from the top management.

Sociology defines the concept of community: A community of individuals in which people recognize each other, interact with another, meet the needs of members in a way that is organized by them, they have a common purpose and are interdependent.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results, the miner mentality concerned several society groups. It is necessary to stabilize community and social circumstances. Nowadays mining spirit is existing in local population, but mostly in cultural field. Recsk needs to wide community cooperation and develop its partnership interactions.

When the ore mining was closed, many professionals left the settlement and migrated to other similar places (for example: Pécs, Mecsek). Occupational stratification was not successful. The unemployment rate is steadily rising, which has further strengthened as a result of the 2008 economic crisis. The shortage of job opportunities has a strong impact on today's generations as well. As a primary cause, this is included in the move. It is similar to the settlements on the periphery.

Mining as a future option is far from age 18-35. Taking this factor into consideration, the future possibilities of the settlement are not imagined.

Nowadays, the notion of **memory community** comes to the fore instead of the experience community, since the second generation of the settlement is already being established in the settlement, where only their grandparents are tied to mining.

This factor lives in traditions and culture, and it is also changing. There are practically few families in Recsken even today, whose ancestors or current residents were not directly involved to the ore mines. It was not just a matter of work, profession, vocation, but more. Among other things, there were several events and holidays for families, for example by the trade union.

In Hungary, former mines had their own trade unions, which provided protection and other opportunities. With the decline of the mining industry, this background has also been greatly shaken, but today there are organizations (eg Mining, Energy and Industrial Workers' Union, Hungarian Mining Association, National Mining and Metallurgical Association of Hungary).

Local patriotic movements concentrate on the operation of local activities and features. There is a need for these, especially in the field of civil society organizations, since they are engaged in activities that the state and the market can not or do not have in their interest as these organizations work on a non-profit basis.

Overall, my point is that the past 15 years and the changes have significantly transformed the community and the population of the settlement and its surroundings. These new challenges will have to face a whole new form.

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