

ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHICAL DISPARITIES WITH INDUSTRIAL SPECIFICITY IN CRASNA BASIN, SĂLAJ COUNTY

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ABSTRACT. – **Aspects of Economic Geographical Disparities with Industrial Specificity in Crasna Basin, Sălaj County.** Before the 1990s, the drivers of economic development in the county of Sălaj were mainly based on industrial activity, which also generated a rupture compared to the lifestyle and traditional mentality of the inhabitants. The only outlined direction of progress was the industrialization with a powerful multiplying effect which was shaken by the legislative and managerial decisions, national and particular decisions, following the changes of the last 26 years (privatizations, lack of outlet, migration of workforce, technological and entrepreneurial innovations etc.). Through the thematic of this research paper, the analysis of economic geographical industrial disparities, in the basin sector of Crasna River highlights the territorial administrative structure and historical specificity in the economic context of the area; pursuing the identification of industrial entrepreneurships from the research perimeter, which was dominantly rural. The presence of industrial activities is defining for the town of Șimleu Silvaniei, found on the second place as importance in the county, after the city of Zalău. Another perspective will be offered through the analysis of disparity aspects as a result of the accounting of the data of companies with industrial profile.

Keywords: *industry, development, economic geographical disparities, Șimleu Silvaniei, Crasna, Pericei.*

1. THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION OF RESEARCH

Regional development represents an assembly of factors by which the geographical space suffers permanent anthropogenic changes, focusing or dissipating the potential of value available, introducing qualitative and quantitative discrepancies at the level of each economic sector. Thereby, the uniformity of the rate of development by applying coherent levers becomes a clearly defined purpose in well-determined competition conditions.

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Having in view the possibility of attracting non-refundable European funds for development of national, regional and local economic structure, we can emphasize the need for realization of concrete studies regarding the economic, geographical and sector disparities, reaching the fields of interest expressed hierarchically. Therefore, the use of structural funds can offer solutions for the unblocking of some economic activities, producing a sustainable effect in regional development.

“The policy of the EU which has the purpose of reducing the lags that exist between the regions of Europe is known as cohesion policy, being first of all, a solidarity policy. It is mainly based on financial solidarity, i.e. the redistribution of a part of the community budget achieved through the contribution of the member states, to the less prosperous regions of the EU, for the purpose of promoting a high level of competitiveness and workforce occupation” (Elena Ionescu, 2009, p. 2).

Therefore, the pace of regional development at the EU level is determined by the stimulation of local efforts of initiation and implementation.

The highlighting of regional and national disparities in the EU is achieved through data converted into macroeconomic language, which represents the value of goods and services created at national and regional level, estimated for a period of time, related to the total number of inhabitants. But, on the other hand, this formula used by Eurostat does not offer concrete radiographies regarding the potential of the development of regional or local economic structure, generating the illusion of equal benefits of all the inhabitants, directly and unconditionally for gross domestic product without being able to distinguish the regional economic structure from the economy structure applied at household level.

Having in view the historiography of the issue we can see that the researchers preoccupied with the study of disparities have the tendency to operate with statistical data applied at the EU level, by comparing the average of gross domestic product per capita from various geographical perimeters, and they notice that the development regions overcome statistically the areas with low potential. Therefore, we can see the need of application of a research method by which we analyze the economic geographical structure of the region, in the context of processing the statistical data of economic sectors.

This present work consists in the application of methodology of investigating of disparity issues, elaborated as a result of the PhD studies regarding the “Economic geographical disparities in the North-Western Region of Romania” (Rozalia Benedek, 2013).

Procedurally the research requires the accountability of statistical data of economic structure and the hierarchical highlighting of development level of administrative areas from the geographical area studied, which became useful in the strategic management of development of the region in question.

The premise of research is the application of the calculation method of disparity (Rozalia Benedek, 2013- Ph.D thesis, p. 26-38; Rozalia Benedek, 2013; Rozalia Benedek, (I), 2014, p. 633-634) and differences at the micro region level of the upper valley of Crasna River with potential of easy application in the development projects.

The objectives proposed in the analysis are: general illustration of the regional identity elements, identification of the industrial development level of administrative areas and their typological integration in disparity.

2. DEFINING ELEMENTS OF REGIONAL ECONOMY

The regional microsystem of Crasna Basin (fig. 1), in Sălaj County, Romania, represents the central part of Șimleu Basin, being bordered in the South by the Oșteana Piedmont (F. Bește, 1974) and Măgura Priei (997 m), the components of Northern digitations of Apuseni Mountains, composed of Meseș Mountains, to the east and Plopiș, to the west; and in the north it “closes” by epigenetic strait sawn in the crystalline structure of Măgurii Șimleului (597 m), between the town of Șimleu Silvaniei and the village Uileacu Șimleului. The boundaries on the east side and the west side are marked by hilly watersheds with average altitudes of 300 to 400 m, between the rivers Crasna and Zalău (hills: Viilor-387 m, Rotund-358 m, Carpenilor-335.2 m), respectively between the rivers Crasna and Barcău (hills: Crasnei-388.6m, Bănișorului-389.8 m etc.).

The toponymy of the analysed region, although has a Slavic resonance, with the meaning “beautiful, pleasant” (Gh. Chende-Roman, 2006, apud. I. Iordan, p. 126), is generated probably by the presence of the Stronghold of Crasna (*idem*), a centre of habitation and economic development, completed by the median localization of the homonymous river, in the direction south-north, east-west. The whole regional assembly covers 39% of the area of the “neogenic golf” (E. Nicorici, 1972, p.13), of Șimleu.

The economic support of the natural framework (fig. 1.) is assured by the favourability of conditions for the establishment of human settlements by morphological and morphometric elements of basin area and a shelter climate with oceanic influences against the temperate continental climate. Thus, the basin sector of Crasna along with the small basins of its tributaries, is structured on 9 administrative units, coordinators of development plans. The economic, social and cultural polarization of the region is assured by the town of Șimleu Silvaniei and the small town of Crasna, being followed by the administrative centres: Pericei, Vârșolț, Horoatu Crasnei, Meseșeni de Jos, Bănișor, Cizer and Sîg. Thanks to localization and spatial extension, Sîg commune overlaps partially on both catchment areas of Crasna and Barcău, but from economic, medical and educational perspective it gravitates towards Crasna and Șimleu Silvaniei, and extra-regionally to Zalău.



Fig. 1. *Crasna Basin. Territorial delimitation of industrial development framework*

The main collector of the valley is Crasna River with its source in the plateau sector of Cizer commune, at 475 m altitude. The asymmetric form of the valley, with the development of series of extended terraces on the left side of the river in the plateau area and eastern slopes and the relief of marbles is developed on the subsequent sectors of the valley, downstream from Horoatu Crasnei (F. Bențe, 1974, p. 14), in Șimleu Silvaniei, Pericea and Recea, being facilitated by the presence of underlayer composed of Pliocene deposits. The watershed hills and the plateau units are dominated by plantations of fruit-bearing trees and vineyards, especially in the area of Șimleu Silvaniei-Pericea and Crasna-Bănișor. Sylvania vineyards on the western and southern slopes of Măgura Șimleului, but also from the neighbouring areas represented the foundation of their industrialization under the form of carbonated wine, the “Sylvania” brand, with tradition in the region since the 1970s.

The local economy capitalizes the water reserves both for irrigations, water supply for households, entertainment and for industrial activities or tourism (Șimleu Silvaniei, Crasna, Meseșeni de Sus, Vârșoț). Water resources are collected either directly from the source (spring, fountain, drill), or by the centralized system of

water supply, from the accumulation lake of Vârșoț, built to assure the consumption needs of the inhabitants and industries from the county seat, the city of Zalău, and the town of Șimleu Silvaniei, the only urban centre of the analysed perimeter.

The infrastructure is mainly represented by roads. The links of the town of Șimleu Silvaniei with the neighbouring polarization centres Zalău and Nușfalău are made through DN 1H national road, having a northern location in the region of Crasna, on the east-western direction, on the axis Zalău – Hereclean - Vârșoț - Pericei - Șimleu Silvaniei - Nușfalău - Aleșd, which makes the connection to the European traffic on E81 at Hereclean and E60 at Aleșd.

Crasna, the second regional centre in the homonymous basin, located 20 km away from Zalău and at 17km away from Șimleu Silvaniei, is connected with them by the county roads 108G in Vârșoț, connecting to DN 1H and E60, in north-south direction, and the county road 191C, connecting to E81 in Zalău.

The connection to railways is made via the town of Șimleu Silvaniei, allowing for the access to the area regarding the economic development before 1989. Now, in the region, the transport of merchandise and passengers on railway is difficult. The few passengers of railway transportation in the area are students, coming from the towns connected by this transport system and who commute to the high schools in Șimleu, which offers the possibility of primary qualification of workforce both in agricultural and industrial fields.

Therefore, by taking into account the territorial concentration of factors mentioned, one can outline the existence of two polarization centres of the region, both being not only economic centres and “markets” but also educational centres of regional importance marked by the town of Șimleu Silvaniei, and local importance marked by the small town of Crasna.

3. DIFFERENCES OF DEVELOPMENT AND DISPARITY ASPECTS IN THE SECONDARY SECTOR

The basis for development of industry regarding the researched area is found in the period before 1989, being the beneficiary of a centralized planned development. This period includes the years 1950-1989, when the national development orders were expressed by five-year plans which targeted a series of investments in territory following the concentration of industrial activities, respectively the “welfare” offered and by the infrastructures built for the purpose of economic growth and urbanization level.

The economic specificity of the rural is described by maintaining the agricultural tradition, which knows different forms of application, in Communism, including expropriations and amalgamations. But, with the passage to market

economy, the economic aspect changes, some activities are maintained, others disappear according to the criteria of their profitability.

In the year 2013, the economy of the basin area of Crasna was maintained and developed by the foreign and local investors, entrepreneurships which managed to attract certain amounts from structural funds, by developing 80 companies, some of them lhon type, which assured a total number of 1508 jobs, engaging in the industrial production 6.36% of the active population (data calculated, from the statistics of Tempo online), which represents 3.43% of the region's residents, region which has 43,404 inhabitants. The companies recorded operate in the following fields of industry: food industry (Șimleu Silvaniei, Crasna, Meseșeni, Horatu Crasnei and Bănișor), manufacturing of beverages (Șimleu Silvaniei and Crasna), manufacturing of textile products (Șimleu Silvaniei), manufacturing of clothes (Șimleu Silvaniei, Crasna, Pericei), leather dressing and finishing (Șimleu Silvaniei), wood processing (Șimleu Silvaniei, Pericei, Cizer), manufacturing of rubber and plastic products (Crasna, Bănișor and Meseșenii de Jos), industry of constructions and metal products (Șimleu Silvaniei, Pericei and Meseșenii de Jos), manufacturing of electric equipment (Șimleu Silvaniei), manufacturing of furniture (Șimleu Silvaniei, Pericei), and other industrial activities (Șimleu Silvaniei, Crasna).

The industrial environment of rural administrative units represents a series of enterprises with food profile, wood processing and production of furniture, which represent 22.5% of the number of companies and 11.27%, of the number of employees involved in the activity of companies in the region.

Worth mentioning for the region are the company brands which activate in this area among which the luxury furniture producer "Simex" and the unit of shoes producer "Ara" with production in lhon regime in Șimleu Silvaniei, and the industrial unit of swimming pools and bathtubs "Fibrex" in Crasna.

According to the research methodology the determination of the level of differences from the economic sector approached is shown by the calculation of difference in value of the economic structure, processing in brief the statistical data of indicators expressed by: number of companies, number of employees, turnover – representing the capital of the company, to which we add the profit earned in a calendar year. Thus, one obtains an expression of economic superstructure called by us (Utf) – Units total final.

The need of identification for the superstructure expressed by the value of Utf, is confirmed by the success of concrete radiography of economic geographical space investigated, making visible the development stage of administrative area, potential interregional competitors and polarization centres. Another beneficial hypostasis of the methodology applied makes possible a hierarchization as a whole of capital attracted in administrative area, which expresses the profitability of the activities carried out.

The representation of economic superstructure expressed by the selected indicators and the amount (Utf), can materialize by using a table for illustration in hierarchical order or certain graphic illustrations from accounting field and the geographical field is shown by cartographic illustration with GIS programmes.

The hierarchization of administrative areas (Z), from the economic space investigated is made by an accounting system in the table below (Tab.1.).

Table 1. Table instrument for hierarchical accountability of economic industrial superstructure-Utf, in 2013

Rank	Hierarchization of administrative areas (Z)	Number of companies	Number of employers	Capital of the company	Profit	Σ Ut industrial
1	Șimleul Silvaniei	41	1121	84799888	5195132	89996182
2	Crasna	13	210	25671147	1333386	27004756
3	Pericei	8	100	9207652	121202	9328962
4	Meseșenii de Jos	9	66	7526400	131107	7657582
5	Bănișor	3	4	3250456	30560	3281023
6	Cizer	5	6	268956	1006	269973
7	Sâg	1	1	9480	0	9482
8	Horatu Crasnei	0	0	0	0	0
9	Vârșoț	0	0	0	0	0
Sum of Units (U)		80	1508	130733979	6812393	Utf=137547960

Source: data processed from the database of Lista firmelor.ro (February 2015)

On top of the classification is the town of Șimleu Silvaniei, being followed by Crasna commune – with a proportion of 70% difference (Utf), which represents the two intraregional polarization centres. The communes Pericei, Meseșenii de Jos, Bănișor, Cizer and Sâg, occupy the remaining positions of hierarchy. Yet, on the radius of administrative units Horoatu Crasnei and Vârșoț, we do not record economic activities in the field of industry.

The cartographic representation of development lags is made by using a code of colours, indicating by dark hues the high values of economic superstructure expressed by the value (Utf), the light hues represent the descending hierarchical rows of the values of superstructure Utf, and the areas represented by a white field express the lack of activities in the investigated field as it results from the figure (fig. 2).

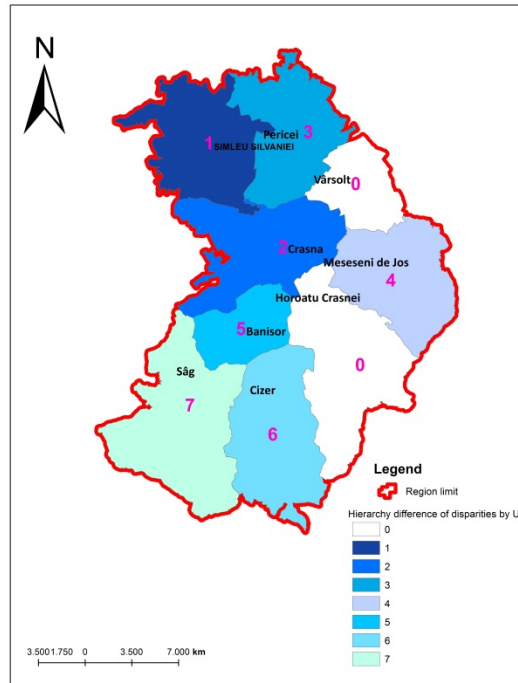


Fig. 2. Economic geographical hierarchical disparities in the industrial superstructure in 2013

Following the hierarchization of administrative areas, according to methodology, we established the average of disparity aspects (M_{Ad}), calculated as average of development ratio between the value Utf of administrative area which reached the maximum value of industrial superstructure and the area with minimum development value.

The average value of disparity aspects proposes to be the reporting norm for the administrative areas of hierarchical row which represents the average of development potential, as you can see in table (table 2).

The administrative areas which exceed the M_{Ad} value remove the surplus of optimal potential of development of analysis perimeter, which represents the average descending disparity aspect. The administrative areas which range in value below M_{Ad} level have to grow to reach the balance level established by M_{Ad} , being called average ascending disparity aspects.

The value Utf of the town Șimleu Silvaniei, exceeds the average of disparity aspects (M_{Ad}), with a value of 0.03%, being an average descending disparity aspect and in the case of the other administrative areas we can see average ascending disparity values.

Table 2. Differences and disparity aspects shown at superstructure level (2013)

Rank	Hierarchization of administrative areas (Z)	U _{tr}	A _{dif}	Disparities aspects
1	Șimleul Silvaniei	89996182	44993350	99.97%
M _{Ad}		45002832		100.00%
2	Crasna	27004756	17988594	39.97%
3	Pericei	9328962	35673870	79.27%
4	Meseșeni de Jos	7657582	37345250	82.98%
5	Bănișor	3281023	41721809	92.70%

Source: author, data processed based on Lista firmelor.ro (February, 2016)

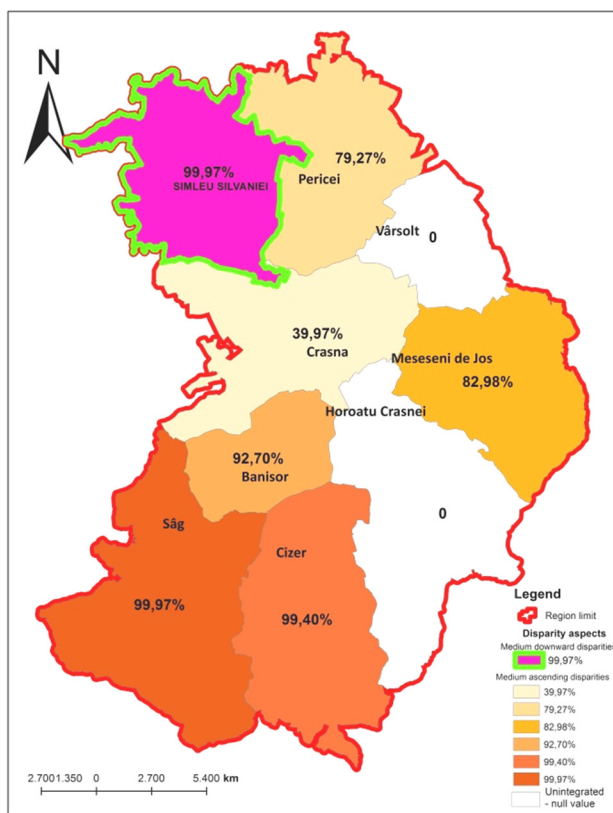


Fig. 3. Cartographic illustration of average ascending and descending disparity aspect of industry in 2013

4. CONCLUSIONS

Whereas the difficulty given by processing of accounting statistical data to succeed in highlighting the difference aspects and disparity aspects, the research of economic geographical disparities requires a multidisciplinary approach, generating avoidance among researchers. But from the point of view of management of regional development, the application of this methodology confers the logistic basis in the geography of economic progress, being recommended to specialists concerned with the clear illustration of economic structures at the level of spatial scales.

Crasna Basin is a central component of Sălaj County and it is located in one of the geo-strategic important areas of North-Western Development Region of Romania, because of its natural, cultural, multi-ethnic values, but also the economic branches developed in the town of Șimleu Silvaniei. However, the specialized literature gives few perspectives for the development of this area.

By applying the methodology of doctoral research, we obtained several results regarding the development of the industrial sector in Crasna Basin and we identified the development level of administrative areas.

The realization of objectives proposed in the theme of work was assured by the presentation of a new method of approaching disparities, trying to introduce the analysis of disparity aspects, separating methodologically the macroeconomic approaches from the illusion that the industrial production data could influence directly the household economy of population.

It is worth mentioning that the study of economic geographical disparities receives a new outline because the entrepreneurship is interested in all the information of regional economic structure that can be approached in view of increasing the efficiency of the business.

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