DIAGNOSIS OF THE FLOOD AFFECTED COMMUNITY IN 2005

DIAGNOZA COMUNITATII AFECTATE DE INUNDATIILE DIN 2005

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Abstract: *This paper seeks to examine the importance of the sociological approach in the study of the impact of the 2005 floods in Timiş County. In the first part of the article the process of defining the concept of community and sociological diagnosis is presented, followed by the presentation of some economic effects of flooding.*

Key words: *community, diagnosis, calamity*

INTRODUCTION

Accidental events, by their great variety, frequency and amplitude, are engaging a range of social and psychosocial phenomena and mechanisms. An important objective of this paper is to analyze the impact on human communities associated with accidental events. The reason of the scientific knowledge of the implications for communities is the possibility that based on accumulated statistical and scientific data to be able to intervene, influence and prevent the scale of the effects associated with disasters and calamities, caused by accidental events with a high risk factor.

Accidental events affect primarily people, respectively communities. The approach and analysis of incidental effects on communities, is at least as important as addressing any other disciplinary perspectives, the analysis of environmental effects on infrastructure, houses, etc.

THE COMMUNITY AS A STUDY SUBJECT OF SOCIOLOGY

The concept of community has been defined as a social entity that is constituted thanks to a special bond between its members, bond that is rich in feelings and is supported by a common goal. The base of the community therefore relates to a relational dimension that is both moral and is opposed to, making the definition more clearer, another social entity – the society -

based only on the reasons of the social contract and in which members have in common purpose.

Perhaps the most substantial contribution in defining the community was that of Ferdinand Tonnies (1887), who defined it as a particular type of social relations. This author uses the community-society couple to individualize two types of relationships based on two models of complex social organization, thanks to which it is possible to take into account developments made by the modern world. While society consists of a number of individuals and works automatically and cold, *community* is a living organism, a place for conviviality and of true life; she's confidential and intimate, yet at birth, men and women are in the community; living together in the community for better or worse.

The emergence of community depends on issues such as comprehensive interaction, commitment and responsibility. The association and the social action is a report based on an identity of interests or on a link of interest, reasonably grounded on purpose. Thus, specific behaviors arising from community life may appear in emergency situations such as: mutual assistance, altruism, sacrifice. Equally, emergency situations can change the social relations of individuals in the context of resource scarcity and the manifestation of behaviors that undermine community views on its members.

The community awareness as a defining element goes through three main states : the awareness of the community of origin (also called that of "blood"), the community awareness of language (also called that of "culture") and the community awareness of destiny (also called that of " historic designation").

The tendency to define the community through space is entitled inter alia that it would be the most suitable condition for setting up and supporting the community type life.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS OF COMMUNITIES

Beyond defining the community in this paper we care about the implications of these approaches on how to understand and analyze a particular community in a context of an economic and environmental disaster caused by an emergency situation, respectively floods. The purpose of sociology is to investigate communities to put a sociological diagnosis and to identify solutions to social problems. According to the Dictionary of

Sociology, the more appropriate and clearer the problem formulation is, the higher is the chance to identify the best solution.

The diagnosis contains usually possible alternatives that the decision makers will analyze to take the decisions afferent to their status-role prerogatives. Sociological diagnosis has, therefore, a decisive role in the substantiation of decisions by qualified advising offered to decision makers. In this context, it gives legitimacy to sociology to intervene in real-time to screen causes which determine negative effects in expectation of eradicating the sources of social deviance or social pathology. Mainly, the subject of sociological diagnosis are the social issues. A social problem is either a social process which is adversely affecting the community, or it is a development opportunity which should be exploited.

From the methodological point of view, making a sociological diagnosis of a social problem involves several successive operations[7]:

1. Estimating the size scale of the problem - Social statistics cover a wide variety of indicators that allow estimating the scale of social problems, its dynamics, determinants and effects.
2. Identifying causes - To act on an issue is first to act on factors that generate the problem, so the causes;
3. Identification of the effects – Estimating negative and positive effects, identification of unexpected effects;
4. Setting priorities - Not all the problems we face can be dealt with at a time. The resources available - economic, human and collective effort - are always limited. They may not be distributed equally to all the problems we assume, but differently, depending on the severity / urgency / importance granted. Prioritization is a crucial process in the design of a development process. The accuracy depends upon the overall effectiveness of the action.
5. Forecast of the dynamic of the problem - A correct forecast of worsening a problem may lead to preventive actions. Forecasting is also an important factor in setting priorities.
6. Community attitude - To what extent is the problem potential or assumed in the collective perception (latent, manifested or central). Citizens' opinions on social issues, differentiated in social segments, are important because they influence political agendas, which set priorities at the national / local level.

Every social problem tends to be associated with its own set of indicators, these reproduce the variation of the problem on the "social map", which includes the factors that produce / influence it, its effects, actions aimed at solving it, their effectiveness. Specific for the sociological approach is that importance is given to collective consciousness indicators on social issues, attitudes towards them and towards the associated priorities.

In the study of communities, we face a wide range of issues. The objectives of a study of communities can be, in fact, multiple:

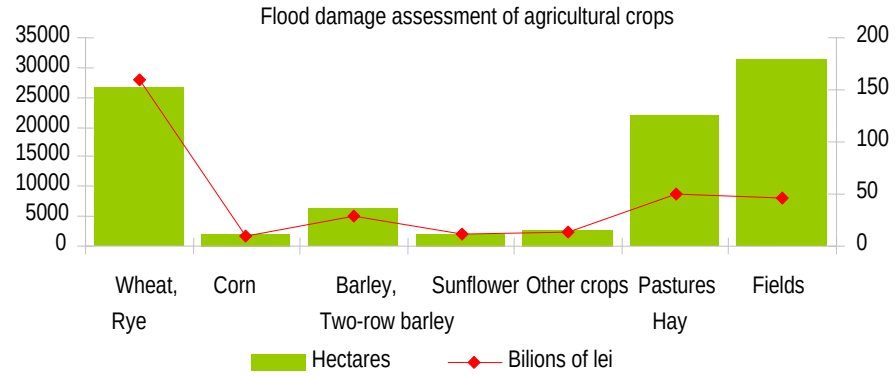
- of knowledge: to determine the needs (objective and subjective) of the members and explore the resources either the available and usable, or those that have to be found or developed;
- of policy: to involve privileged witnesses in research, key community figures, who, through their role or active integration , their availability, competence and personal motivation, can provide detailed data and become the privileged interlocutors of any initiatives, may be driving elements and reference points, may become the community spokespersons;
- of strategy : to activate a network of formal and informal relationships between professional researchers, between each individual service and community as a whole, to establish contacts and connection points between structures and services and to create synergies.

Community diagnosis is useful for various stakeholders who supported it and to amplify, to promote the construction of networks (networking) between services, institutions, voluntary action and other associations and among all key actors.

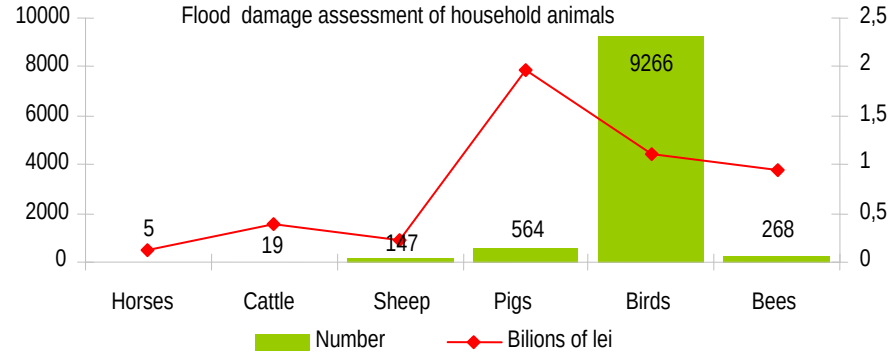
THE IMPACT OF THE 2005 FLOODS ON RURAL COMMUNITIES

From an economic point of view the effects of the floods were severe affecting in varying degrees a number of 52 localities, 16%, from a total of 324 as the county has. Most are located along the Timis and Bega valleys, namely: 84 localities in the near the Bega River , Timis River.

The floods caused significant damages. From the data of the ***Timiş County Inspectorate*** for Emergency ***Situations results that a total area of*** 92.456 ha was flooded, from which 39.432 ha were crops, 21.744 ha pastures, hay and 31.280 ha other agricultural land.



From the data of the ***Sanitary Veterinary*** Direction ***Timiş we can see that 479 animals died during the floods. The animals which have died and the destroyed crops show the diverse rural economy of the area.***



In the Infrastructure Domain the following effects have been reported: 96 damaged footbridges, 47 damaged bridges, 31 flooded communal streets, 40 km of damaged National Roads and 22 km flooded, 70 km of damaged County roads and 20 km flooded, 81 km of damaged communal roads, and 8,7 km of flood damaged rail road and 12 km flooded.

From the perspective of community opinion, an opinion poll that I conducted on a sample of 350 households in four villages, affected by floods, revealed an alternative perspective.

The first indicator expresses how respondents assessed subjectively the resumption of economic activities after flooding.

Over half say they that economic activities take place worser (51.8%) and 33.8% that they are the same as before. From this point of view, the floods affected a little over half the population, annihilating the possibility to carry out economic activities. (Fig.1.)

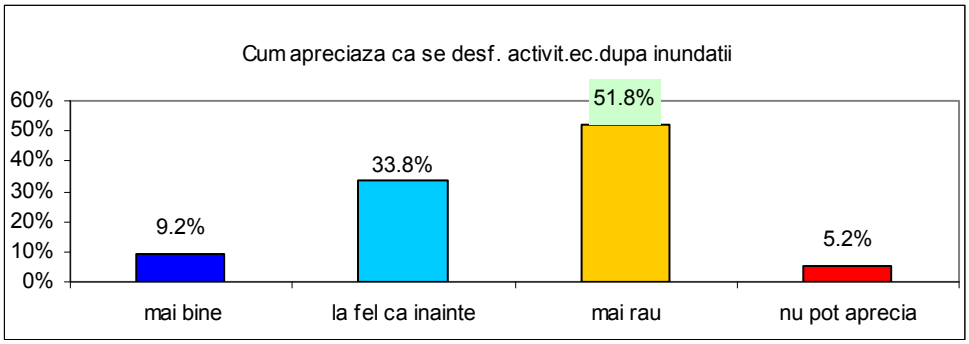


Fig. 1

Below is presented a cross-tabular operation between the variable that defines how to appreciate economic activities that take place after flooding and the area of origin.

In a descriptive analysis the percentages reveal a similar trend, so that:
•27.3% in the first two affected localities (Foieni, Cruceni) state that economic activities are carried out worse and 23.2% say they remain as before,
• the same percentage of 27.3% from the other two affected villages (Otelec and Ionel) state that economic activities are carried out worse and 12.5% say they remain as before. (Fig.2)

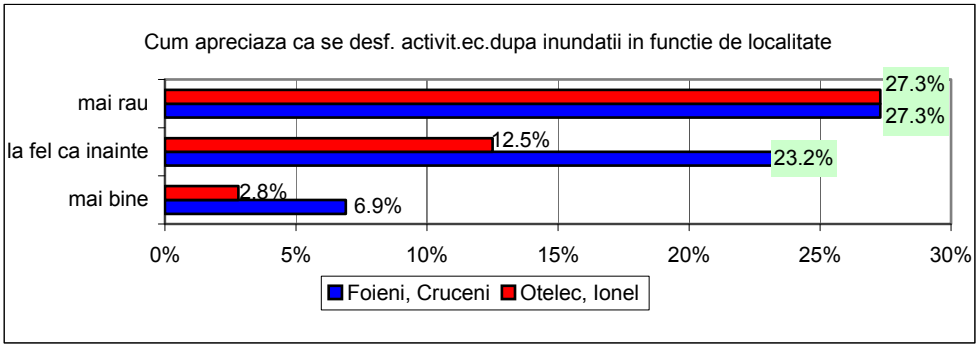


Fig. 2

Subsequently, to verify the correlation between the two variables the chi square test was applied. The value obtained is 8.258 with 2 degrees of freedom for a significance threshold of 0.16. Because the value is below 0.05, we say that the area of origin significantly influences the way to appreciate how the economic activities take place. Table 1.

	Value	Degree of freedom	Significance threshold
Chi square	8,258	2	,016
Likelihood Ratio	8,368	2	,015
Linear association	7,851	1	,005
Number of cases	289		

It confirms the assumption that there are significant differences between localities on how to measure the conduct of economic activities

Below is presented a cross-tabulare operation between the variable that defines how to appreciate economic activities that take place after flooding and the population's education. We believe that a high level of education encourages a better assessment of the existing economic situation.

In a descriptive analysis the percentages reveal a similar trend, so that:
• respondents having a minimum and average education tend to assess the current economic situation as worser than before;
• respondents with higher education tend to appreciate the economic activity at the same level as before. Table 2.

	Four grades	Gymnasium	High school	Vocational school	Post-highschool studies	University studies	Total
better	1,0%	1,0%	1,7%	3,5%	0,3%	2,1%	9,7%
as before	3,8%	12,5%	10,4%	5,9%	1,7%	1,4%	35,6%
worser	6,6%	21,5%	13,5%	11,8%	1,4%	0,0%	54,7%
Total	11,4%	34,9%	25,6%	21,1%	3,5%	3,5%	100%

After correlating the two variables we have obtained a significant negative Spearman correlation coefficient of - 0.167. Thus the higher the education level is, the more it tends towards a better appreciation of the situation, respective the more the level of education decreases , the greater is the negative appreciation. (Table 2). It must be noted that the value of the coefficient of correlation is very small, so that the identified relationship is very fragile, because the damages were large and affected deeply the economic life, affecting the whole structure of the community. It can be, however, that those who are university graduates have a higher living

standard than others, so they were less affected. Table 3

			Studies
Spearman Correlation	how do they appreciate the economic activities that take place after flooding	Coefficient of correlation	-,167
		Significance threshold	,004
		N	289

CONCLUSIONS

From the economical point of view it's obvious from those presented until now that the damages were significant. What is difficult to estimate is related on how much it will cost, to recover those strongly affected areas, from the economical point of view, in a manner that assures their sustainable development and if these investments are economically on long-term justified.

The Rural Economic Development in the flood affected areas should also respond to a sustainable need, otherwise the investments that will be made, will not be productive and will not maintain a critical mass of population in the area that can assure the future of the community.

Without arguments of this kind, the investments that will be made will have just a psychological function and not an economical one.

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