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Etnološko istraživanje kao izvor podataka za planiranje strategije održivog razvoja ruralnih područja Ogledni slučaj: Žumberak

U ovom se radu preispituje razvojna uloga etnologije kao znanosti te predlaže metoda kojom bi se podaci dobiveni etnološkim istraživanjem iskoristili u svrhu stvaranja strategije razvoja ruralnog područja. Kao ogled za ilustraciju rečenih ideja poslužio je slučaj žumberačkog područja koje je zbog povijesnih, zemljopisnih i socioekonomskih razloga u posljednjem stoljeću doživjelo ubrzano ruralno propadanje. Prilagodivši metodu SWOT-analize, uzetu iz ekonomije, autor je koristi kako bi napravio snimak današnjega društvenog stanja na Žumberku i širih okolnosti koje utječu na njega te dobivene rezultate uz pomoć predložene metode SWOT-relacijskog dijagrama koristi za sintezu ogledne strategije održivog razvoja žumberačkog područja.

Ključne riječi: Žumberak, ruralno propadanje, održivi razvoj, SWOT-analiza, seoski turizam, tradicionalna proizvodnja

Etnologija je znanost od koje se rijetko traži razvojni doprinos društvu. Čak je rašireno viđenje da su razvoj i očuvanje tradicijske kulture kojom se etnologija najčešće bavi dvije suprotstavljene težnje. Djelomično je to i rezultat stavova, koje ponegdje promiče i sama struka, što tradicionalnu kulturu tretiraju kao skup obilježja zamrznutih u jednoj vremenskoj točki, a jedini se doprinos razvoju nalazi u njenoj upotrebi u turizmu kao dijelu suvenirske ponude. Svaka je kultura živ proces kojem, da bi opstao, moramo uvažiti pravo na razvoj. A gledajući na širi društveni razvoj iz etnološke i

antropološke perspektive, uvjeren sam da je za njegovu održivost potrebna i podloga u obliku zdrave i autentične kulture i identiteta.

Ovo je posebno istinito kada govorimo o marginalnim krajevima podložnim ruralnom propadanju. U njihovoj razvojnoj problematici bavimo se veoma kompleksnim međuodnosima koji rade na načelima povratne sprege. Odumiranje nekog područja može biti uvjetovano raznim promjenjivim okolnostima: ekonomskim, ekološkim i kulturnim. No, ono što je krajnji rezultat svih tih utjecaja jest slom tradicionalnog sustava vrijednosti na kojem je počivalo funkcioniranje zajednice. Za obrat negativnih trendova ključno je preispitati taj sustav vrijednosti i pomoći mu da se prilagodi novonastalim okolnostima – pomoći lokalnom stanovništvu kako bi povratilo osjećaj smislenosti i perspektivnosti svoga života i rada.

Smatram da ovo uvelike pripada domeni naše znanosti te da je zadatak etnologa da ukažu na tu perspektivu razvojne problematike i pronađu sredstva koja bi potpomogla njezinu rješavanje. Ovaj rad mali je ogled o tome.

Za ilustraciju tih ideja odabrao sam Žumberak kako zbog osobnog poznavanja toga kraja, tako i zbog mišljenja da je od mnogih područja Hrvatske upravo Žumberak u poziciji da profitira njihovom primjenom.

I. Žumberak – povijesna pozadina

Već i za površnog posjeta Žumberku posjetitelj može primijetiti da se radi o kraju veoma privlačnu kao ljudskom obitavalištu. Reljef ispresijecan brojnim vodotocima nastanjenim ribom i rakovima uzdiže se u pošumljena brda koja su okrovljena blagim padinama bujnih pašnjaka ili kotlinama u kojima se nalazi kvalitetno poljoprivredno zemljište. Brdska klima, s hladnim ali ne predugim zimama, blagim ljetima te obilnim padalinama, pogoduje rastu pašnjaka punih eteričnog bilja i cvijeća, što je osobito pogodno za stočarstvo i pčelarstvo, a južne padine brda čini dobrim voćnjacima i vinogradima.

Prvi ljudski doseljenici na ovo područje nisu ga zatekli ovakvim kakvim ga vidimo danas. Trideset posto današnjeg teritorija Žumberka, kao plod ljudske kultivacije, pokriven je livadama i poljoprivrednim čistinama dok je u svom izvornom stanju bio pokriven šumom. Tijekom tisuća godina oko njih se uspostavio stabilan ekosustav u kojem je lokalna ljudska populacija krčenjem sprečavala povratak šume i time stvarala životnu nišu za mnogobrojne biljne i životinjske vrste. Ovom biološkom bogatstvu Žumberka moramo pribrojiti i ono geološko: dolomit i ostale vapnenačke stijene kojima ovdašnje tlo obiluje pokazale su se kao izvor kvalitetnoga građevinskog materijala, a prisutnost bakrene i željezne rude pridonijela je tome da stanovnici ovih krajeva među prvima na ovom prostoru ovladaju vještinama obrade metala.

Na Žumberku su se tijekom daljnje povijesti izmjenjivali razni narodi: Kelti, ilirska plemena, rimski doseljenici i, najzad, Slaveni. Nakon depopulacije ovog kraja koja se

zbog čestih upada Turaka počela odvijati prije petsto godina, carske vlasti odlučuju riješiti problem manjka stanovništva usmjeravajući ovamo zbjeg iz područja koja su okupirali Turci. Taj posljednji val migracije na Žumberak postavio je temelje današnje populacije i njene lokalne kulture. Bilo je to stočarsko stanovništvo dinarskog područja, naviknuto na sličan prirodni okoliš. Sa sobom su donijeli karakteristične načine gradnje, tehnike obrade i ukrašavanja tekstila, te mnoga ostala gospodarska i kulturna obilježja. Kao području Vojne krajine, Žumberku je carska uprava ponajprije namijenila obrambenu funkciju te ga je zaobišlo ulaganje u obrazovanje stanovništva i modernizaciju gospodarskih praksi, karakteristično za doba prosvjetiteljstva u ostatku Austro-Ugarskog Carstva. Tako se, ukidanjem Vojne krajine i vojničkih prihoda u drugoj polovici XIX. stoljeća, žumberački kraj našao u poziciji gospodarski zaostalog područja.¹

U razdoblju nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata, kada je seljaštvo bilo dodatno osiromašeno ratnim zbivanjima, svjedoci smo masovne depopulacije žumberačkog područja. Kako mlađi naraštaj migrira, dolazi do opadanja reproduktivnih potencijala lokalne populacije. Djece je sve manje te dolazi do zatvaranja lokalnih škola, što, stvorivši svojevrstan začarani krug, daje mlađem stanovništvu još snažniji motiv za iseljavanje.

Žumberak je danas rijetko naseljen ostarjelim stanovništvom koje više nije u stanju adekvatno iskoristiti te skrbiti za poljoprivredno i pašnjačko zemljište. Zbog tog manjka poljoprivredne i stočarske aktivnosti dolazi do obrastanja livada i pašnjaka u šikaru i grab. Na Žumberku danas ne umire samo ljudska zajednica, već i karakteristični krajjobraz koji je ovisio o simbiozi s ljudima.

II. Analiza trenutnog stanja

Sliku o trenutnoj situaciji, problemima i perspektivama Žumberka nastojao sam izgraditi iz više izvora: od osobnih terenskih zapažanja, faktografije sakupljene iz literature, dokumentacije i razgovora s djelatnicima Javne ustanove "Park prirode Žumberak i Samoborsko gorje". Najznačajniji je izvor niz strukturiranih intervjua s lokalnim stanovništvom sakupljenih tijekom desetodnevnog terenskog istraživanja u svibnju 2005.

Etnologija u svom arsenalu analitičkih metoda ne posjeduje nijednu izravno namijenjenu aktivnom promišljanju razvojnih strategija. Stoga sam iz svijeta poslovnog upravljanja za ovo istraživanje posudio i upotrijebio metodu SWOT-analize. SWOT je akronim od engleskih riječi za: prednosti (*strengths*), slabosti (*weaknesses*), prilike (*opportunities*) i prijetnje (*threats*).² Ova metoda služi za evaluaciju trenutnog stanja pri strateškom planiranju. Nakon što postavimo krajnji cilj koji želimo postići, u našem

¹ Štambuk, M. (1996.) Uvod; 7-9

² T. Šola, 2001; 229

slučaju održivi razvoj žumberačkog područja, čimbenike koji utječu na ostvarenje tog cilja dijelimo prema porijeklu (unutarnje i vanjske) te prema utjecaju koji imaju na to ostvarenje (pomažući ili odmažući).

Budući da me akronim SWOT u biti ne obvezuje na redosljed izlaganja ovih kategorija, odlučio sam, shodno žumberačkoj situaciji, započeti od negativnosti.

II.1. Slabosti

II.1.a) Mala i ostarjela populacija

Prema posljednjem popisu stanovništva učinjenom 2001. godine, prostor općine Žumberak nastanjivalo je 1.185 stanovnika, od čega 533 osobe starije od šezdeset godina.³ Ukoliko bi se tendencija odumiranja nastavila trenutnim tempom, ova bi općina tijekom nekoliko desetljeća ostala gotovo potpuno nenaseljena.

U razgovorima s lokalnim stanovništvom otkriva se bolna ljudska dimenzija ovih brojki. Starac iz Kekića, koji je poput svojevrsnog čuvara ostao zadnji stvarni stanovnik toga sela, o svojoj egzistenciji kaže: *“Tužno je ovdje. Nisam se ženio pa sam jedini ostao. Moji su ti pošli u Kanadu, a ovi ostali kuda-kamo. Ponekad mi šalju dolari ali i to je rijetko. [...] Kad mi dođe kakav dinar, obično odem četiri kilometra u Sošice na piće samo da bi pričao s nekim.”*

Ukoliko bih naišao na kojega mlađeg sugovornika, nerijetko bi se odmah po susretu otkrivao izravan razlog njegova ostanka na selu: gluhoonijemost, fizički deformitet, alkoholizam i sl.

Kao nijemi svjedoci ove demografske propasti, sablasno stoje napuštene lijepe seljačke kuće, te livade i polja koja zarastaju u šikaru.

II.1.b) Krah zajednice – defetistički stav i razjedinjenost

“A zašto bi se iko vrać'o? Bjež' i ti dok možeš!”

Starac iz Cernika

Vjerojatno najteži zadatak u mojim razgovorima sa Žumberčanima bio je pokušaj da od njih dobijem pokoju ideju o žumberačkim prednostima i prilikama. Većina mojih sugovornika, poučena dosadašnjim iskustvom, bila je krajnje skeptična prema bilo kakvoj mogućnosti oporavka.

Ovo nisko vrednovanje vlastitih mogućnosti i perspektiva ključan je čimbenik žumberačke propasti. Dio problema svakako leži u slomu tradicionalnog sustava vrijednosti. Seljaci ovdje nikad nisu bili bogati, ali ranije je nahraniti i okučiti svoju obitelj

³ <http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/Popis%202001/popis20001.htm>

vlastitim radom bila dovoljna i društveno cijenjena ekonomska aspiracija. I druge životne potrebe, kao što su razonoda i duhovnost, lokalna zajednica i kultura zadovoljavale su se unutar svojih okvira. No, došlo je doba kada je ekonomsko mjerilo postao novac, razonoda ono što se prikazuje na televiziji, a kulturno stvaralaštvo nešto o čemu, po danas dominantnom viđenju, seljaci pojma nemaju. Prema riječima gospodina Marijana, vlasnika dućana u Kalju: *“Mi smo bili siroti, ali život je ipak bio lijep. To kako smo se mi družili i pomagali ... Sve je ošlo’ kvragu kad su se ljudi počeli iz Njemačke vraćati s autima, s televizorima ... Odjednom ovo staro više nikom nije valjalo.”*

Kultura koja je nekad pružala okvir za težak, ali ispunjen život odjednom je postala nazadnom, besperspektivnom te osuđenom na polagano odumiranje – mnogi bi joj njeni današnji baštinici, poput citiranoga gospodina iz Cernika, najradije prikrali muke. Iz svega toga izlazi i danas prevladavajući stav “svako za se” – propadanjem starog osjećaja zajednice ljudi su se uglavnom prepustili životu u kojem pokušavaju u svojoj osobnoj teškoj egzistenciji skrpati kraj s krajem i ne vide kako mogu jedni drugima pomoći ili zajednički nastupiti u obranu svojih interesa.

II.1.c) Neobrazovanost i loša kultura življenja i proizvodnje

U posjeti žumberačkim domaćinstvima koja su još gospodarski aktivna, često bi se razgovor okrenuo na perspektive lokalnog mljekarstva ili seoskog turizma te raznih drugih mogućnosti dodatnih prihoda. No, nerijetko sam se našao u neugodnoj situaciji da još za vrijeme razgovora vidim ogromnu prepreku realizaciji takvih planova, a da je svojim sugovornicima u tom trenutku nikako ne mogu taktično pripomenuti. Radi se o problemu higijene – kako nekome pomoći da plasira svoj sir na tržište a nikad ni ne opere kravlja vimena i ne pita se o vlastitoj odgovornosti za moguće posljedice? Kako u domaćinstvo u kojem se ne prakticiraju osnovne higijenske mjere poslati goste? Daleko od toga da je ovakva situacija norma za Žumberak. Većina kuća u kojima sam bio odlikovala se zavidnom razinom urednosti, no ipak, ova je pojava u mome zapažanju suviše učestala, a da se ne bi tretirala kao problem.

Za ovo stanje, dakako, postoje razlozi i u njegovu rješavanju treba pokazati veliku dozu razumijevanja za prilike u kojima se ti ljudi nalaze – tko im je uopće nastojao pružiti neki bolji ideal životnih i radnih navika i dati im razloga i sredstava da ga prihvate?

II.1.d) Reljef otežava prometno povezivanje i izgradnju infrastrukture

Da bi se iskusio ovaj problem koji lokalni stanovnici često ističu, dovoljno je sjesti u automobil i odvesti se iz Zagreba u Budinjak. Prvih trideset kilometara puta od Zagreba do Bregane proći ćemo modernim autoputom za kakvih petnaestak minuta. Za daljnjih trideset kilometara zavojite brdske ceste do Budinjaka bit će nam potrebno otprilike sat vremena. Pokušate li taj put reproducirati sredstvima javnog prijevoza, uvidjet ćete da se radi o za svakodnevne uvjete sasvim nepraktičnom pothvatu. Dok neka od Zagreba udaljenija područja mogu računati na prednosti blizine glavnog grada, u Žumberku je to danas još jedan razlog da se otamo odseli.

II.1.e) Neadekvatnost kraja za razvoj moderne industrije

Zbog svojega specifičnog reljefa, prometne nepovezanosti i demografske slabosti, Žumberak nije područje koje privlači tipične investicije. Većina današnjih industrijskih grana svoje će proizvodne i uslužne djelatnosti mnogo jednostavnije i efikasnije obavljati u prometno povezanijim područjima s većim fondom mlade i obrazovane radne snage. Isto važi i za modernu industrijaliziranu poljoprivredu, koja uza sve to na Žumberku teško može okupiti dovoljno velike zemljišne parcele za učinkovitu proizvodnju.

Dok se ove činjenice uglavnom promatraju kao slabost te još jedan čimbenik u pesimističnim predviđanjima žumberačke budućnosti, konstruktivnije je na njih gledati kao na lokalnu specifičnost koja zahtijeva drugačije razvojne pristupe. Na kraju, upravo je nedostatak moderne industrije pridonio tome da Žumberak ostane ekološki i kulturno nezagađeno područje.

II.1.f) Parceliziranost zemljišta i nedefinirano vlasništvo

“A ti bi to kupiti htio? A od koga ćeš? Njih ti je pola u Kanadu ošlo, a pola ne znam gdje.”

Starac iz Cernika kao odgovor na moj usputni interes za jednu lijepu seosku kuću

Problem premalih zemljišnih čestica takvih je razmjera da dovodi u pitanje normalnu seosku egzistenciju. Parceliziranje zemlje radi nasljedstva dovelo je do toga da većina Žumberčana posjeduje nekoliko malih i raštrkanih čestica⁴ koje je vrlo teško adekvatno iskoristiti. A ako bi netko i htio kupiti ili razmijeniti zemlju, u svrhu povećanja svoje poljoprivredne proizvodnje, često se javlja problem neriješenih vlasničkih odnosa.

Taj problem velika je zapreka i u pokretanju seoskog turizma. Za mnoge stare seoske jezgre potrebno je minimalno ulaganje da bi se pretvorile u prvorazredne turističke atrakcije, za što čak postoji i volja lokalnih stanovnika. No, element nesigurnosti u te ideje unosi činjenica da su potencijalni polagatelji vlasničkih prava na pojedine objekte razasuti svijetom od Zagreba, preko Njemačke pa sve do Kanade i Australije.

II.1.g) Administrativna razjedinjenost

Godine 1995. Žumberak je podijeljen na tri administrativna područja – Grad Samobor, Općinu Žumberak te Grad Ozalj. S obzirom na to da se nedvojbeno radi o kulturno i geografski cjelovitom području koje zahtijeva i cjelovit razvojni pristup, ovo i nije najsretnije rješenje. Stanovnici Gornje Vasi i Novog Sela Petričkog žive slične živote, obavljaju svoje djelatnosti na istoj zemlji, čak i kupuju potrepštine u istom dućanu. Pa, ipak, razdvaja ih administrativna granica te jedni moraju svoje probleme rješavati u Samoboru, a drugi u Sošicama, sa svojim zasebnim garniturama lokalne vlasti koje nemaju previše formalnih kanala međusobne komunikacije.

Tu je i pitanje državne (a trenutno i schöengenske) granice koja dijeli Žumberak od slovenskih Gorjancih koji su također geografski, kulturno i turistički slično područje.

⁴ Magdalenić, I., Župančić, M. (1996.)

Stojdraga i Kamence susjedna su sela, svako sa svoje strane granice, koje spaja petsto metara dugačak makadam i među kojima su tradicionalno vladali dobrosusjedski odnosi i gospodarska suradnja. No, ako bi danas htjeli legalno posjetiti svoje susjede, Stojdražani bi morali napraviti kružni put od oko osamdeset kilometara preko najbližega službenoga graničnog prijelaza.

II.2. Prednosti

II.2.a) Atraktivan i ušćuvan prirodni krajolik

Kada se nekog po prvi puta povede u Žumberak, dotični se obično ne može načuditi kako tek četrdesetak kilometara od Zagreba postoji tako netaknut krajolik u kojemu možete piti vodu iz potoka, kupati se ispod slapa, hodati satima bez da nađete na ikakav znak civilizacije te susresti divlje svinje, srne, sokolove pa čak i medvjede. Prirodna baština Žumberka čini ogroman ekološki i društveni kapital, kako toga područja tako i cijele Hrvatske, koji čeka da bude adekvatno i razumno upotrijebljen.

II.2.b) Entuzijazam pojedinaca i ponos lokalnih stanovnika na svoj kraj

“Mi smo se ovdje vratili kontra svih onih koji odlaze. Smatrali su nas za lude, i smijali nam se iza leđa.”

Gospodin Subić iz Stojdrage

U suprotnosti s prevladavajućim defetizmom, u Žumberku, istina rijetko, možete naići na pojedince koji iskazuju neizmjernu vjeru u svijetlu budućnost ovog kraja. Među ljudima koje sam upoznao tijekom svoga kretanja po Žumberku, tu kvalitetu dobro utjelovljuje obitelj Subić iz Stojdrage. Školovavši svoju djecu u Bregani, oni su se odlučili na povratak u Stojdragu, odakle potječe gospođa Subić, te pokretanje obrta. Budućnost takvoga prekrasnog i kulturnom te prirodnom baštinom bogatog kraja koji je istodobno toliko blizu glavnoga grada, u njihovim je očima zajamčena – samo je pitanje vremena kad će se taj potencijal prepoznati i te njihove ideje dobiti smisao.

Ovakvi sentimente o Žumberku kriju se i u mnogim pojedincima koji su na prvu ruku potpuni defetisti. Potrebno je samo malo zadrijeti ispod te pesimistične površine, predstaviti nekoliko mogućih ideja, potaknuti ih da i sami razmisle o bogatstvima i mogućnostima Žumberka i susrest ćete se s nadanjem i ljubavi prema svome kraju. Makar će na kraju mnogi, poučeni dotadašnjim razočaravajućim iskustvom, ipak rezimirati takav razgovor kao, primjerice, gospodin Marijan, vlasnik dućana u Kalju: *“Ja se toliko nadam da je to što govorite moguće, ali bojim se da ste došli prekasno.”*

Ovakvi sentimente lokalnih stanovnika, tolika ljubav i entuzijazam, iznimna su kreativna energija koju treba usmjeriti prije nego što zaista postane prekasno.

II.2.c) Specifična lokalna kultura neobične povijesti

Povijest ljudskog naseljavanja Žumberka višeslojna je i dramatična, o čemu svjedoče brojni arheološki spomenici. I današnji stanovnici Žumberka kao baštinici te povijesti očuvali su svoje specifičnosti koje ih izdvajaju iz okolice – grko-katoličku vjersku pripadnost te zanimljivu mješavinu dinarskih i pred-alpskih kulturnih obilježja i gospodarskih praksi. Ova jedinstvena i endemična lokalna kultura može poslužiti kao odličan temelj za izgradnju specifičnoga žumberačkoga turističkog identiteta te inspiracija za poduzetničke pothvate i održivi razvoj kraja.

II.2.d) Uščuvanost kraja za tradicionalnu i ekološku proizvodnju te seoski turizam

Razvojna zapostavljenost Žumberka imala je i jedan donekle pozitivan učinak – izolirala ga je od stihijske promjene načina života i modernih gospodarskih praksi čija se održivost potencijalno može pokazati veoma upitnom. U Žumberku nema propalih mastodontskih industrijskih postrojenja iz ere socijalističkog napretka. Žumberačka polja i vodotoci nisu natopljeni insekticidima i umjetnim gnojivima što daje osnovni preduvjet za pokretanje ekološke poljoprivrede. Stare kuće, vodenice i sjenici u Žumberku jesu oronuli, ali barem nije izbrisan svaki njihov trag kao što se to znalo događati drugdje.

II.2.e) Ujedinjujuće inicijative i ustanove

Usprkos administrativnoj razjedinjenosti Žumberka, u mnogim je aspektima bilo nemoguće zanemariti očiglednu jedinstvenost ovog područja. Tako je 28. svibnja 1999. u svrhu zaštite prirodne baštine Žumberka i Samoborskoga gorja zakonom proglašena Javna ustanova „Park prirode Žumberak – Samoborsko gorje“. Park prirode nije organ lokalne vlasti i izvan svoga primarnog djelovanja, a to je zaštita žumberačkoga krajolika, nema specifičan autoritet i ovlasti, no može služiti kao koordinacijska ustanova za pokretanje projekata održivog razvoja koji bi obuhvaćali cijelo žumberačko područje. Ova ustanova već igra ključnu ulogu u stvaranju turističke i rekreativne infrastrukture označivanjem i održavanjem planinarskih i biciklističkih staza, označivanjem mjesta od baštinske važnosti, tiskanjem turističkih karata, otvaranjem informacijskih centara, izložbenih prostora i suvenirnica u svojim ispostavama te brojnim drugim aktivnostima. Park prirode ujedno je i potencijalni glavni kanal za predstavljanja Žumberka svijetu – kroz medijsku promociju kraja, organiziranje javnih rekreativnih i kulturnih aktivnosti te promoviranje lokalnih proizvoda i usluga.

Druga inicijativa vrijedna spomena jest utemeljenje Turističke zone po Kupi i Žumberku (Gorjancima) i Turističke zone po Sutli i Žumberku (Gorjancima).⁵ Cilj je ove inicijative, koju je pokrenula Hrvatska gospodarska komora Zagreb, Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije i lokalne planinarske udruge, turističko povezivanje Žumberka s hrvatske te Gorjancih sa slovenske strane granice. U sklopu te inicijative zajednički bi se radilo na obogaćenju i promociji turističkih sadržaja ovog kraja, a posjetiteljima i stanovnicima omogućilo bi se nesmetano prelaženje državne granice. Ovo se može

⁵ http://www.smallisbeautiful.org/publications/essay_currency.html

smatrati i vrstom pripreme lokalnog turizma za očekivanu liberalizaciju graničnog režima koju donosi ulazak Hrvatske u Europsku uniju.

II.3. Prijetnje

II.3.a) Kultura masovne proizvodnje i potrošnje

Razvoj potrošačkog društva u Hrvatskoj krenuo je razmjerno kasno no iskazuje zapanjujuće brz napredak. U Hrvatskoj još uvijek žive i nalaze tržište mnogi oblici tradicionalne ekonomije, u što ćemo se osvjedočiti posjetimo li koju od gradskih tržnica te tamo (danas već uz nešto traganja) izravno od seljaka kupimo povrće, med, mliječne proizvode i slično. No, ovaj sektor iz dana u dan prima nove udarce pred navalom industrijskih proizvoda i njihova agresivnog marketinga ili jednostavno niže cijene. Sve više potrošača, iz čistog komoditeta, danas preferira proizvode tradicionalno dobavljane na tržnici kupiti u kakvu trgovačkom centru, a čak i samom tržnicom danas dominiraju prekupci.

Hrvatsko društvo danas je na raskrižju na kojemu bira hoće li jednom zauvijek odbaciti ove tradicionalne oblike ekonomije ili će ih, poput nekih drugih europskih država, prigrliti kao jedinstvenu kulturnu, zdravstvenu i ekološku vrijednost. Iznimna je važnost ovog pitanja za daljnju sudbinu Žumberka. Ovako korjenita promjena naših potrošačkih navika ustvari je potpuna promjena naše kulture življenja te, nastavi li se takav trend ka svojoj hipotetskoj krajnosti, razmatranja o budućnosti Žumberka kakvima se ja bavim u ovome radu uistinu će biti potpuno bespredmetna.

II.3.b) Zagađenje okoliša i kulture nekontroliranim turizmom

Lijepo je vidjeti kako negdašnji “samoupravni” ideal obiteljskog boravka u prirodi, s osobnim automobilom, sandukom piva i mesom s roštilja, krasno koegzistira s tekovinama potrošačkog društva. Na kraju krajeva, automobila koje možemo parkirati po zelenim livadama više je nego ikad, kao i plastične ambalaže i ostalog smeća koje možemo razasuti po obližnjem grmlju.

Prirodni okoliš nije jedino što se nalazi u opasnosti od nekontroliranog i bezglavog turizma. Kao što se možemo uvjeriti na primjeru naše obale, betonizacija nekad lijepih seoskih naselja i izguravanje lokalne kulture instant turističkom ponudom također su neke od njegovih uzgrednih pojava. Da Žumberak nije imun na te pojave, svjedoče lokaliteti poput gabrovičkog “Eko parka Divlje vode”, u osnovi velikoga betonskog ribnjaka s upitnim utjecajem na čistoću rječice Bregane i sa zabavnim elementima koji podsjećaju na minijaturni Disneyland.

II.3.c) Blizina velikoga grada kao migracijskog atraktora

Čimbenik u depopulaciji Žumberka jest, ironično, i blizina modernog velikog grada – Zagreba. Makar bi se ta činjenica danas mogla promatrati isključivo kao prednost, kontrast životnog standarda i gospodarske perspektive između Žumberka i ostatka

gradske okolice, uz spomenutu prometnu izoliranost pokazao se prevelikim. Zagreb i manja urbana središta u njegovoj okolici iskazali su ekonomsku privlačnu silu kojoj lokalne perspektive nisu mogle konkurirati.

II.3.d) Rast cijena nekretnina zbog kupovine kuća za odmor

Jedna od vizija žumberačke budućnosti jest i ta da se proces iseljavanja i odumiranja lokalnog stanovništva nastavi, a da nekretnine i zemlju otkupljuju gradski stanovnici u svrhu imanja za odmor. Motivacije za posjedovanje jednoga takvoga mirnog utočišta na selu u osnovi su pozitivne. Problem leži u tome da, ako nije kontroliran i kontriran lokalnim perspektivama za starosjedilačko stanovništvo, ovaj trend teži istiskivati autentičan ruralni život – cijene koje su gradski stanovnici spremni platiti za seoske nekretnine rastu do mjere potpuno neprihvatljive lokalnom stanovništvu te postaju još jedan poticaj za prodaju vlastite zemlje i iseljavanje. Rezultat su tog procesa lijepa, ali mrtva sela koja stoje poput kulisa negdašnjeg života i čekaju svoje povremene posjetitelje.

II.4. Prilike

II.4.a) Potreba za proizvodima tradicijske kulture i ekološkim proizvodima

Većina će se potrošača makar izrijekom složiti da su nam u našem svakodnevnom životu potrebni zdravi proizvodi dobiveni održivim proizvodnim metodama. I proizvodi tradicijske kulture kako zbog svojih osobitih kvaliteta, tako i zbog sentimentalnih i kulturoloških razloga, imaju svoju vrlo realnu tržišnu nišu. Ekološka i tradicionalna proizvodnja kategorije su koje se idealno preklapaju i oslanjaju jedna na drugu: tradicionalno gospodarstvo oslanjalo se na biljne i životinjske vrste koje su bile prikladne za uzgoj u neposrednoj okolini te na sirovine koje su se tamo mogle naći. Upravo takav pristup jedna je od osnovnih ideja većine pristupa ekološkoj proizvodnji kojoj pečat tradicije daje i dodatni tržišni kredibilitet. A s druge strane, održivi i ekološki pristup gospodarstvu obično se pokazuje mnogo kompatibilniji lokalnoj kulturi i načinu života nekog područja od industrijskog uzgoja.

II.4.b) Potražnja za seoskim turizmom

Iako većina gradskog stanovništva vjerojatno nije spremna zamijeniti svoju urbanu egzistenciju ruralnom, čini se da dosta njih ipak žudi za povremenim iskustvom “pravog” seoskog života. Susjedna Slovenija vrhunski je kapitalizirala svoju tradicionalnu kulturu i prirodni okoliš: gorjanska sela nude prihvatljiv smještaj, odličnu tradicionalnu prehranu i mnoštvo kulturnih, rekreativnih i prirodnih sadržaja.

II.4.c) Društvena potreba za prirodnim rekreativnim prostorom

Uz današnji fizički neaktivan način života tipičan za gradske stanovnike, neporeciva je dodatna potreba za kretanjem i rekreacijom. Za mnoge je kretanje u prirodnom

okolišu – planinarenje, biciklizam, sportsko penjanje i sl., najprirodniji i najpotpuniji oblik rekreacije.

Infrastruktura za ovakve oblike rekreacije ujedno je i infrastruktura za izgradnju seoskog turizma i plasiranje lokalnih proizvoda. Na kraju krajeva, ako ste se već popekli do Budinjaka biciklom, vjerojatno niste tamo došli sa željom da pojedete hamburger, već će vam više odgovarati tradicijska hrana i piće ovog kraja.

Općenito, u društvima zdravog blagostanja i kulture kvalitetnog života primjetan je trend ovakva punog uživanja svoga prirodnog okoliša, što je sve zamjetljivije i u Hrvatskoj. Žumberački kraj zbirom svih već nabrojanih kvaliteta izvanredno je područje za tu vrstu aktivnosti.

II.4.d) Blizina velikoga grada kao gospodarskog i socijalnog pokretača te potencijalnog tržišta

Tehnološki napredak koji je dosad usmjeravao društvo ka sve većoj populacijskoj, gospodarskoj i kulturnoj centralizaciji, u posljednje je vrijeme postao vrijedno sredstvo distribucije informacija, kreativnosti i društvene participacije. Uza sredstva komunikacije, kao što je internet, i široku rasprostranjenost osobnih vozila, Žumberak se danas, možda po prvi put, nalazi u situaciji da profitira od relativne blizine velikoga grada.

Makar je i dalje činjenica da je velik broj ljudskih djelatnosti lakše i učinkovitije organizirati bliže većih prometnica i populacijskih središta, Žumberku je danas kroz te nove potencijale povezivanja otvorena mogućnost da postane prostor od izrazitoga društvenog značaja. Tu veliku ulogu igraju spomenuta ekološka i tradicionalna proizvodnja te seoski turizam, no perspektive održivog razvoja zapravo su mnogo šire od toga. Žumberak s minimalnim dodatnim infrastrukturnim investicijama može biti okoliš za mnoge djelatnosti i načine života na koje se dosad gledalo kao na isključivo urbane pojave.

Kako pokazuju mnoga inozemna, ali i neka hrvatska iskustva, uz današnju novonadenu povezanost, ovakva ruralna područja mogu poslužiti kao jedinstveno pogodan i stimulativan okoliš za uspostavu nebrojenih oblika kreativnoga malog poduzetništva, koje će svoje tržište naći kako u obližnjem velikom gradu, tako potencijalno i diljem svijeta.

II.4.e) Mogući priliv mlade i obrazovane populacije koja traži alternativu urbanom življenju

Danas postoji čitava subkultura mladih ljudi koji su iz različitih razloga nezadovoljni urbanom egzistencijom te imaju aspiracije ka životu na selu. Ivan i Cvijeta mladi su visoko obrazovani stručnjaci koji su prije nekoliko godina odlučili ispuniti svoje težnje o životu u prirodi, kreativnom miru i vlastitom povrtnjaku. Evo njihove priče Ivanovim riječima:

“Tražili smo jeftini objekt na selu, a prednost su imali brdski krajevi ... Također nas je privukla lokalna varijanta drvene tradicionalne gradnje, s prostranim sobama i kamenim podrumom.

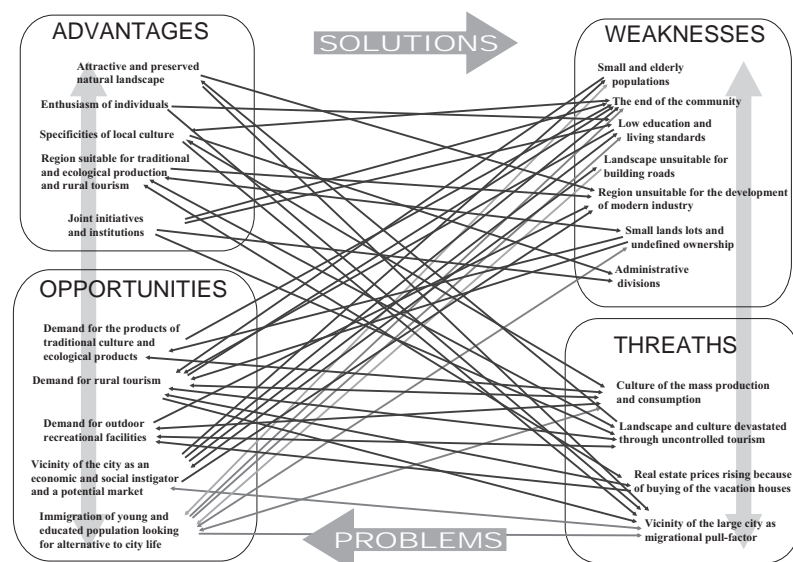
Kao plus smo držali i činjenicu da je bio proglašen Park prirode. Na kraju smo se odlučili za 130 g. staru kuću u najudaljenijem dijelu Žumberka, u selu Dučići u Radatovičkom kraju.

... Žumberak mi se čini kao idealno mjesto za boravak. Prednosti su vrlo niski troškovi boravka u usporedbi s gradskima, niske režije, obilje drva koje treba krčiti od čega se dobiva ušteda na grijanju, potpun mir i tišina, idealno rekreativno područje, čista i kvalitetna zemlja za poljodjelstvo, obilje padalina tokom cijele godine, dobar mentalitet lokalnog stanovništva, niske cijene nekretnina ...”

III. Sinteza strategije

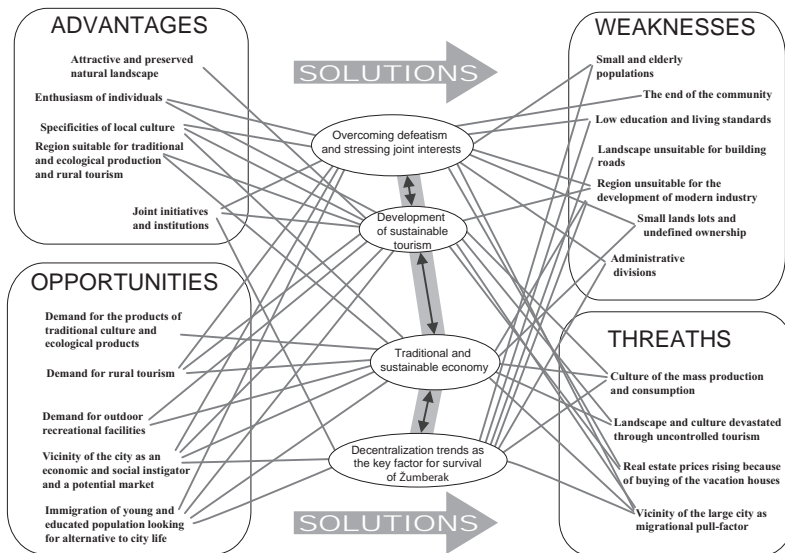
Rezultati SWOT-analize nam u vrlo jasnoj formi daju popis problema koje nastojimo prevladati te kojim resursima raspolazemo da dođemo do njihova rješenja. Teško je dalje formalizirati načine donošenja strategije za njihovo rješavanje. S obzirom na to da su čimbenici koji se pojavljuju u različitim situacijama previše raznovrsni, ovo je proces koji se najviše oslanja na kreativno razmišljanje – potrebno je iz danih podataka stvoriti hipoteze i logički ih testirati. No, postoje metodološka sredstva koja olakšavaju ovaj rad. U klasičnoj poslovnoj upotrebi rezultati SWOT-analize uvrstavaju se u matricu kojom se mogućim akcijama uspostavljaju relacije između zadanih problema i resursa koje imamo na raspolaganju za njihovo rješavanje. S obzirom na kompleksnost problematike društvenog razvoja nekog područja i velikog broja međusobnih sprega koje se u njoj javljaju, osmislio sam svoj način vizualizacije rezultata koji se jednostavno može izvesti olovkom i papirom te ga nazvao SWOT-relacijskim dijagramom.

Dijagram 1. SWOT-relacijski dijagram, faza 1.



U prvoj fazi, stavke uvrštene u dijagram stavljamo u međusobne relacije ovisno o utjecaju jednih na druge. Kategorije u istom stupcu teže biti u međusobnoj pozitivnoj sprezi. Tako će atraktivan i ušćuvan prirodni krajolik imati pozitivan utjecaj na priliv mlade i obrazovane gradske populacije na Žumberak, a krah zajednice pojačati utjecaj velikog grada kao migracijskog atraktora. Stavke koje se nalaze u suprotstavljenim stupcima međusobno iskazuju negativnu spregu koja može biti obostrana (specifična lokalna kultura \leftrightarrow krah zajednice) ili jednostrana (priliv mlade i obrazovane populacije \leftarrow reljef otežava prometno povezivanje). Kada dijagram popuni-mo s ovakvim relacijama, dobit ćemo pregled međuodnosa resursa koje posjedujemo i problema koje pomoću njih moramo riješiti.

Dijagram 2. SWOT-relacijski dijagram, faza 2.



U drugoj fazi preostaje nam da racionaliziramo dobivene međuodnose te s pomoću toga osmislimo proaktivne pristupe kojima ćemo pojačati pozitivan utjecaj resursa koje imamo na raspolaganju na rješenje problema, a neutralizirati njihov negativan utjecaj na naše resurse. Pri osmišljavanju traženih pristupa, važno je da kao cilj postavimo i to da se oni nalaze u međusobnoj pozitivnoj sprezi.

IV. Rezultati

Kao jednu od prvih stavki svake razvojne strategije važno je odrediti njezine provoditelje. Ne umanjujući ulogu drugih institucionalnih aktera (lokalne vlasti, županije, države i sl.), koordinatora provedbe razvojnog okvira dobivenog ovim postupkom vidim u "Parku prirode Žumberak i Samoborsko gorje". Tomu je više razloga:

Parku prirode dana je ingerencija nad gotovo cijelim žumberačkim područjem i bliskim Samoborskim gorjem – za razliku od lokalnih vlasti i njihove tri zasebne administrativne jedinice ili države i županije čije je područje djelovanja mnogo šire. On može upotrijebiti svoj konzervacijski i stručni autoritet za pokretanje i nadziranje zajedničkih inicijativa između tih razina i jedinica vlasti.

Park prirode već okuplja stručni kadar koji je kvalificiran za brigu o žumberačkom okolišu, kulturnoj baštini te za razvoj lokalnih rekreacijskih i turističkih potencijala. Za daljnje proširivanje njegove misije na područje očuvanja i revitalizacije lokalne kulture te održivog razvoja potrebno je samo minimalno jačanje toga kadra.

Park prirode ustanova je čiji je osnovni cilj zaštita prirodne baštine, no na područjima na kojima stoljećima žive ljudi prirodna i kulturna baština nisu aspekti koje možemo čuvati odvojeno. Ukoliko Park prirode prihvati ovu svoju cjelovitu konzervacijsku ulogu, on ne može pobjeći i od one razvojne: da bismo istinski očuvali ovu kulturno-prirodnu baštinsku cjelinu, potrebno joj je omogućiti okvire za održivi razvoj.

IV.1. Prevladavanje defetizma te osvještavanje zajedničkih interesa

Kako uz spomenuti općerašireni defetizam potaknuti preostalo lokalno stanovništvo da krene u zajedničku akciju spašavanja svoga kraja i kulture? Da bismo dali odgovor na to pitanje, moramo shvatiti da taj osjećaj poraženosti nije nešto za što su Žumberčani sami krivi, već je nametnut promjenama širih društvenih okolnosti te nedostatkom razumijevanja i potpore struktura ekonomske i političke vlasti. Žumberčani uglavnom gaje vrlo nostalgичne osjećaje o svojem kraju i kulturi, no okolnosti su ih uvjerile da se tu više nema što spasiti. Ključ rješenja krije se u riječima Zvonka Šiljka, novoizabranog načelnika općine Žumberak: *“Pedeset godina se sve odnekud obećava i obećava, a ništa nije učinjeno. [...] treba ići s ljudima osobno razgovarati, pitati ih gdje su problemi, kako to zajedno možemo riješiti [...] a to do sada nitko tu na Žumberku nije učinio.”*

I zaista, iz mojih razgovora sa Žumberčanima čini mi se da i nije potrebno tako mnogo truda da se probudi njihov entuzijizam – ukoliko im argumentirano predočite da njihov kraj ima što ponuditi svijetu te predložite neke moguće oblike suradnje u kojima bi mogli sudjelovati, obično će se, uz dozu skepse i opreza, zainteresirati za takve prijedloge.

Među lokalnim stanovništvom postoje i entuzijasti. Volju tih ljudi treba adekvatno iskoristiti – oni mogu mnogo učiniti na pridobivanju povjerenja i suradnje ostatka zajednice. Uz njihovu pomoć mogla bi se organizirati mreža angažiranih lokalnih stanovnika koja bi ravnopravno surađivala s Parkom na razvojnim i konzervacijskim inicijativama. Time ne bismo dobili samo vrijedne suradnike i osnovni instrument za obnovu Žumberka, već bismo vjerojatno napravili i velik korak u obnovi osjećaja smisla, jedinstvenosti i emancipacije lokalne zajednice koja bi opet dobila priliku da sama sudjeluje u krojenju svoje sudbine.

IV.2. Razvoj održivog turizma

Park prirode već je mnogo učinio u stvaranju rekreativne i turističke infrastrukture i lokalno stanovništvo prepoznaje tu činjenicu kao pozitivan pomak. No, treba poraditi na stvaranju pristupa razvoju turizma koji bi bio koordiniran s lokalnim stanovništvom kao bi oni od svega toga ubrali što više koristi. Kao skromni početak, nameće se ideja organiziranja sajмова i rekreativnih događanja poput biciklijada i planinarskih pohoda, koje bi lokalno stanovništvo moglo iskoristiti za prodaju vlastitih prehrambenih i drugih proizvoda te turističku promociju svoga sela.

Potrebno je s lokalnim stanovništvom razraditi koordinirani marketinški nastup Žumberka, utvrditi kakav identitet i koje turističke proizvode žele predstaviti svijetu te im dati potporu u širenju te poruke – kako kroz ustanovu Parka prirode i njegove komunikacijske materijale, tako i kroz medije. Moglo bi se, na primjer, popisati domaćinstva zainteresirana za ugošćivanje turista te zajednički utvrditi neke osnovne odrednice takve djelatnosti i njihove ciljane publike. Nakon što se izvrše odgovarajuće pripreme, Park prirode može poslužiti kao veza tih ljudi s njihovom publikom, promovirajući njihovu djelatnost kroz vlastitu internetsku stranicu i druge komunikacijske materijale, te posredujući u njihovim kontaktima s ostalim medijima.

Pod odgovarajuće pripreme svakako bih ubrojio i podizanje ugostiteljske kulture stanovništva. Spomenuta je potreba za podizanjem higijenskih i smještajnih standarda. No, pitanje ugostiteljske kulture svakako ne staje samo na higijeni. Lokalno stanovništvo potrebno je potaknuti da postanu glavni interpretatori svoje kulture i krajolika svojim gostima. Naravno, potrebno je ponuditi im ispravne i potpune informacije koje im ranije nisu bile dostupne, na primjer, o prapovijesti njihova kraja, ekološkim vrijednostima i problemima itd. No, ostavimo njima da ih interpretiraju i upletu u svoju osobnu priču i izravno životno iskustvo – takva vrsta naracije posjetiteljima je najzanimljivija i najautentičnija.

Turizam je potrebno maksimalno povezati s održivim oblicima lokalne ekonomije, kako zbog promocije njenih proizvoda, tako i zbog stvaranja cjelovita turističkog proizvoda. Domaćinstva koja bi se bavila ugostiteljstvom po pitanju nabave sirovina i kućnog inventara treba što više povezati s lokalnim proizvođačima. Kao što je više puta napomenuto, ljudi će u Žumberak vjerojatno doći da bi jeli domaći sir i povrće, a ne ono kupljeno u velikome nabavnom centru. Ako je još posluženo u lokalnoj grnčariji ili drvenom posudu, ugođaj će biti potpun, a lokalna ekonomija i kultura nešto bogatiji.

IV.3. Tradicionalno i održivo gospodarstvo

Razvoj turizma valja iskoristiti i za osvještavanje stanovništva o tržišnim prilikama koje proizlaze iz njihove tradicionalne kulture i krajolika, a koje su šire od same turističke ponude. Ako bi kroz turizam lokalni stanovnici prepoznali tržišnu potražnju za svojim proizvodima, bio bi to najbolji poticaj za pokretanje malog poduzetništva koji Žumberak može dobiti.

Park prirode bi stanovnicima po tom pitanju mogao organizirati vrijednu potporu i stručnu pomoć u pronalaženju održivih i modernom tržištu primjerenih ideja i proizvoda, stvorivši neku vrstu referalnog centra za održivi razvoj. Smatram da je ovdje opet veoma bitno ne ponoviti greške iz prošlosti – seljacima su strukture vlasti tradicionalno dekretima nametale nove gospodarske prakse uz objašnjenje da je ono što su dosad radili glupo i nazadno, a takav odnos samo produbljuje duh defetizma i pasivnosti. Stoga nove ideje stanovništvu ne treba prezentirati u obliku njima zamornih, nerazumljivih i patronizirajućih predavanja, već u duhu interaktivne komunikacije – polazeći od postavke da dok stručnjaci posjeduju stručnost, lokalni stanovnici ovdje žive stoljećima i najintimnije poznaju svoj kraj i svoju kulturu.

Sa zainteresiranim lokalnim stanovništvom mogao bi se organizirati niz sastanaka gdje bi sa stručnjacima i praktičarima u tom polju mogli razgovarati o stvaranju uvjeta za pokretanje ekološke poljoprivrede s naglaskom na prilagodbu tih metoda njihovom podneblju i vlastitom poljoprivrednom naslijeđu. Umjesto da im se nameće neki uniformni recept u kojem moraju slijepo slijediti upute stručnjaka, ljude bi trebalo potaknuti da u svojem naslijeđu prepoznaju i upotrijebe one dobre i razumne ideje koje su nastajale tijekom višestoljetnog iskustva života u ovom kraju te ih kombiniraju s održivim aspektima modernoga poljoprivrednog napretka.

Zanate i rukotvorstvo moglo bi se potpomoći da postanu više od proizvodnje suvenira tako da se ljudima koji se njima bave daju ideje o tome kako njihove tradicionalne proizvode prilagoditi potrebama modernog života. Ako se izvedu s dobrim ukusom i poštovanjem prema izvornim oblicima i materijalima, ovakve inovacije i dalje zadržavaju obilježja lokalne kulture, te je na neki način odmrzavaju, otvaraju njen razvojni kontinuitet i uvode u moderno doba.

Bilo bi korisno sa stanovništvom poraditi na obnovi sustava lokalne razmjene i nabave sirovina. Tako bi se povezale lokalne primarne, sekundarne i tercijarne djelatnosti, obnovila fragmentirana ekonomija ovog kraja, a što više svojih potreba ljudi bi zadovoljavali u vlastitoj zajednici i na međusobnu korist. U svijetu postoje i mnogi uspješni primjeri stvaranja tzv. “lokalnih valuta” koje se koriste kako bi lokalnu ekonomiju podigle na višu razinu koju izravna razmjena ne može pokriti. Iza ovog koncepta stoji vrlo ozbiljna ekonomska teorija,⁶ i mnoge priče o uspjehu koje vrijedi proučiti.⁷

Vrijedilo bi na razini Parka prirode razmisliti o stvaranju kontroliranoga žumberačkog “branda”. Ovakva marka trebala bi utjelovljivati identitet i kvalitete kojima se Žumberak predstavlja svijetu: kao mjesto čiste prirode, autentične tradicije, gostoljubivih ljudi, zdrave hrane ... Kao takva bila bi sredstvo kontrole i poticanja kvalitete lokalnih proizvoda i usluga te vrijedno sredstvo njihove promocije. Dok je važno osigurati nepristranost i stručne kriterije, bitno je u kreiranje i dodjeljivanje takve marke neizostavno umiješati lokalnu zajednicu: ona je stvarni nositelj i vlasnik identiteta koji se kroz tu marku izražava. Marku ne bi trebalo rezervirati samo za proizvode

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_currency

⁷ <http://edupoint.carnet.hr/ond/ond.html>

žumberačke tradicije, već je iskoristiti i kao sredstvo poticanja održivih inovacija koje su u skladu s identitetom koji ona izražava.

IV.4 Decentralizacijski trendovi kao ključ preživljavanja Žumberka

Želimo li istinski održivu budućnost ovog kraja, potrebno je osigurati infrastrukturu koja će zadovoljiti sve potrebe i otvoriti sve perspektive modernog življenja. Od osnovnih potreba koje treba zadovoljiti, nameće se mogućnost normalnog školovanja, energetska i vodoopskrbna infrastruktura, adekvatna prometna povezanost i moderna telekomunikacijska sredstva.

Ovdje dolazimo do još jedne žumberačke slijepe ulice. Kao preduvjet za stvarni razvoj i populacijsku obnovu Žumberka potrebno je zadovoljiti sve te potrebe, no zašto bi država ponovo otvarala škole za koje nema učenika i gradila ceste za tako mali broj korisnika? Zašto bi komercijalne telekomunikacijske kompanije dovele modernu masovnu infrastrukturu na Žumberak gdje od nje nikako ne mogu zaraditi? Moralni je odgovor na to pitanje jednostavan: zato jer svaki građanin ove zemlje i svaka njezina regija imaju pravo na jednako sudjelovanje u tekovinama modernog života i jednake mogućnosti razvoja. No, na osnovi moralne utemeljenosti takvih zahtjeva teško će biti dočekati njihovo ispunjenje u dogledno vrijeme.

Makar se čini da nema previše dodira s današnjom žumberačkom zbiljom, internet je neobično važan za žumberačku budućnost. Istina je da je malo vjerojatno da ćemo pridobiti starije poljoprivrednike da ga rabe, no internet je ključan preduvjet za ostatak i dolazak mlađe populacije. Osim što otvara interaktivni kanal komunikacije s cijelim svijetom koji omogućuje lokalno obavljanje mnogobrojnih poslova za koje je prije bilo potrebno putovati u grad, internet ima golem obrazovni potencijal kako u formalnom, tako i u neformalnom smislu. U neformalnom smislu, on je izvor nepreglednog mnoštva informacija, širitelj ljudskih obzora i interesa. U formalnom smislu, mnoge zemlje koje iz geografskih i demografskih razloga imaju potrebu za daljinskim obrazovanjem, upravo su u internetu naišle idealni medij za tu svrhu. Internet nije potpuna zamjena za izravan pedagoški kontakt, no sudbine djece koja svaki dan moraju prelaziti šezdeset kilometara zbog školovanja značajno bi olakšalo sredstvo koje bi im omogućilo da to moraju raditi samo dvaput tjedno. Za takvu praksu postoje već i primjeri unutar Hrvatske, a CARNET-ov edukacijski centar EduPoint⁸ aktivno radi na širenju upotrebe ove tehnologije.

No, dok je malo vjerojatno da se izvan uobičajenih sporih i neučinkovitih političkih kanala može napraviti mnogo po pitanju asfaltiranja cesta i kopanja vodovoda, što se modernih telekomunikacijskih sredstava i interneta tiče, danas postoje tehnologije⁹ koje omogućuju da se uz pomoć relativno malih sredstava i malo stručnosti neki od ovih problema počnu rješavati i na razini Parka prirode i lokalne zajednice. Ako

⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WiFi>

istinski razmatramo budućnost ovoga kraja, moramo biti svjesni da se nitko u njega neće vratiti niti će u njemu ostati da bi vodio srednjovjekovni život zasnovan na poljoprivredi preživljavanja – internet je ključan infrastrukturni preduvjet moderne egzistencije.

IV. Zaključak

Kada bi se realizirali potencijali izneseni u ovoj studiji, Žumberak bi na mnoge načine mogao društvu višestruko vratiti ovu “investiciju”. Ovakav održivi razvoj Žumberka bio bi svojevrsan presedan održivom razvoju mnogih drugih krajeva Hrvatske. S obzirom da većinu našeg teritorija čine ruralna područja, koja su sva u većoj ili manjoj mjeri ugrožena naglim promjenama koje nas okružuju, uspješan razvoj Žumberka stvorio bi pozitivan primjer kako vratiti izgubljeni smisao ruralnog života, dati mu gospodarski zamah i šansu da doprinosi dobrobiti šireg društva. No, možda i najvažnije, postavljanjem Žumberka na noge, društvo bi dobilo jedinstven prostor za zdrav, kreativan i ispunjen život svojih članova.

Naša znanost morala bi prepoznati dio svog društvenog poslanja u ovakvim razvojnim projektima, poticati njihovu provedbu te nalaziti za njih “građevni materijal” u lokalnoj kulturi i baštini. Kao preduvjet za takvo što daljnji je razvoj metoda kojima spoznaje dobivene etnološkim istraživanjima možemo pretočiti u razvojne strategije.

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Ethnological Research as a Source of Data for Designing Strategies of Sustainable Development of Rural Regions

Case study: Žumberak

This article questions the developmental role of ethnology as a science and suggests a method by which the data obtained through ethnological research could be used with the purpose of creating a strategy for the development of rural regions. As a case study for the proposed ideas, I have used the example of Žumberak which, during the last century, has been experiencing rapid devastation of rural regions due to historical, geographical and socioeconomic regions. The author adapted the method of SWOT-analysis, which he borrowed from the language of economy, and used it to make an overview of the current social conditions in Žumberak and wider circumstances influencing it. He used the results obtained by the suggested method of SWOT relational diagrams for the creation of the experimental strategy of sustainable development of Žumberak region.

Key words: Žumberak, rural devastation, sustainable development, SWOT-analysis, rural tourism, traditional economy

Ethnology is a science which has been seldom asked to contribute to the development of the society. There is even an opinion that the development and the preservation of traditional culture, which is the object of ethnology's interest, are two opposite agendas. Partly this is the result of the attitudes, some of them advocated by the discipline itself, which treat traditional culture as a collection of phenomena frozen in one point in time, and that its

only contribution to the development could be found in its usage in tourism as part of the souvenir offer. And taking into account the wider societal development from ethnological and anthropological point of view, I am certain that its sustainability requires a firm basis in the form of a healthy and authentic culture and identity.

This is especially true when talking about secluded regions prone to the devastation of rural areas. In their developmental issues we are dealing with complex interrelationships functioning as a feedback. Dying out of a certain area can be the consequence of a number of changing circumstances: economic, ecological and cultural. However, the final result of all these influences is the disappearance of traditional system of values on which the community was based. To reverse this negative trend it is necessary to analyze this system of values and enable it to adapt to the new situation – to help local population restore the sense of purpose and aim in their lives.

I think that this belongs under the framework of our discipline and that the role of ethnologists is to point to this perspective of the developmental issues and find the means which could aid in finding the solution. This article is a small overview of the related issues.

To illustrate my ideas I have chosen the example of Žumberak, partly because of my personal familiarity with the region and partly due to my opinion that out of many regions of Croatia, Žumberak is best suited to profit from the application of new developmental strategies.

I. Žumberak – a short history

During just an occasional visit, a visitor can readily observe that this regions is very appealing as a human habitat. The relief is broken by numerous waterways abundant in fish and freshwater crabs which rises up into the forested hills roofed by mild slopes of rich pasture or by valleys of cultivated soil. Mountainous climate, with cold, but not too long winters, mild summers and plenty of rain, is favorable for the growth of pastures full of herbs and flowers, which is good for cattle breeding and bee farming, while southern slopes are suitable for orchards and vineyards.

First human settlers of this region did not see it as we see it today. Thirty percent of the territory of Žumberak is today covered by meadows and agricultural land, as a consequence of human cultivation, and originally it was covered with forests. During thousands of years a stabile eco-system was formed here in which the local human population prevented the return of the forested land by land clearing and thus created a living space for numerous plant and animal species. To this biological variety, we have to add geological: dolomite and other limestone rocks, which are characteristic for this area, have proven to be a valuable source of high-quality building material, and the presence of copper and iron ore contributed to the fact that the in-

habitants of these regions were among the first in these regions to master the skill of metal processing.

Different peoples passed through the region of Žumberak in the long course of history: Celts, Illyrian tribes, Roman settlements, and, finally, the Slavs. After depopulation of these regions which started roughly five hundred years ago due to the constant Turk raids, the Royal government decided to solve the problem of the lack of settlers by directing here the exodus from the regions occupied by the Turks. This last migration wave to Žumberak has set the basis of today's population and local culture. These were the cattle breeders from the Dinaric regions, accustomed to the similar natural surroundings. They brought with themselves characteristic ways of building, techniques of textile manufacture and decoration, as well as many other economic and cultural characteristics. As part of the Croatian Military Border (Vojna Krajina), Žumberak was assigned by the Royal government a defensive role and was bypassed in the projects of investment in education and modernization of economy, which were quite common in the rest of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during Enlightenment. Hence, when the Military Border was abolished in the second half of the 19th century and the military salaries gone, Žumberak found itself in the position of economically underdeveloped region.¹

In the period after the Second World War, during which the rural population was additionally pauperized, Žumberak has suffered mass depopulation. Since younger generations are also migrating, the reproductive potential of the local population has fallen. The number of children is declining, local schools are being closed because of that and this, in a vicious circle, is just an additional motif for younger people to emigrate.

Žumberak is today an underpopulated region with mostly elderly people who are not capable of using and caring for the agricultural land and pastures. The lack of agricultural and cattle-breeding activities causes the meadows and pastures to turn into underbrush and hornbeam bushes. Today on Žumberak we are not witnessing only the disappearance of people, but also of the characteristic landscape which depended on the symbiosis with the inhabitants.

II. Analysis of the current situation

My analysis of the current situation, of problems and perspectives of Žumberak I have based on different sources: personal field notes, data from literature, documentation and my interviews with the staff of the Public Institution 'Nature Park Žumberak and Samobor Mountains'. The most relevant source of data were structured interviews I conducted with the members of the local population during my ten-day fieldwork in May 2005.

¹ Štambuk, M. (1996) Introduction; 7-9

Ethnology in its arsenal of analytic methods does not possess a single one which would be directly concerned with active analysis of developmental strategies. Therefore for the purpose of this research I have borrowed from the world of business management the SWOT-analysis. SWOT is an acronym of English words: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.² This method is used for evaluation of current state of affairs in strategic planning. After setting the final aim we wish to achieve, in our case the sustainable development of Žumberak region, the factors influencing the fulfillment of this aim are divided according to their origin (internal and external) and according to the impact they have on this achievement (positive or negative).

Sine the acronym SWOT does not oblige me to analyze these categories in the same sequence, I have decided, in accordance with the Žumberak situation, to start with the weaknesses.

II.1 Weaknesses

II.1.a) Sparse and elderly population

According to the last census from 2001, the county of Žumberak was inhabited by 1185 inhabitants, out of which 533 people were older than 60.³ If the tendency of depopulation continued in this way, this county could remain completely desolated in the next few decades.

The painful human dimension of these numbers is revealed in conversations with local population. An old man from the village of Kekić, who remained as a keeper - the last inhabitant of his village - described his life: *'It is sad over here. I never married so I stayed as the only one here. My family went to Canada, and the rest every which way. Sometimes they sent me dollars, but that also happens rarely. [...] When I get a dime, I usually go four kilometers to Sošice for a drink, just to talk to someone'*.

If I managed to find a younger informant, very often I would reveal right after meeting them the primary reason for their stay in the village: deaf-muteness, physical deformity, alcoholism, etc.

Once beautiful, now deserted, houses are eerily standing as mute witnesses of this demographic catastrophe, and meadows and fields are turning into wild underbrush.

II.1.b) The end of community – defeatist attitudes and division

'And why should anyone return? Run while you can!'

An old man from Cernik

² T. Šola, 2001:229

³ <http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/Popis%202001/popis2001.htm>.

Probably the most difficult task in my talks with people of Žumberak was the attempt to get from them some ideas on benefits and opportunities of life in Žumberak. The majority of my informants, based on their past experience, were skeptical towards any kind of possibility of a better life.

This low esteem of their own possibilities and perspectives is a key factor of Žumberak ruin. Part of the problem definitely lies in the disappearance of the traditional system of values. Rural population here was never very rich, but in the earlier times the economic aspiration to feed your family and put a roof over their heads was considered adequate and socially appreciated. Other life demands, such as entertainment and spirituality were satisfied under the frameworks of the local culture and community. However, the time has come when money has become the primary economic standard, entertainment is what you see on TV and cultural creativity is something, according to the dominant attitude, rural population knows nothing about. According to Marijan, the owner of the shop in the village of Kali: *'We were poor, but life was beautiful nevertheless. How we socialized and helped each other... Everything went to hell when people started returning from Germany with cars, TV sets... Suddenly old stuff wasn't good for anyone anymore.'*

The culture, which once set a framework for a hard, but still fulfilled life was suddenly interpreted as backwards, without prospects and sentenced to slow death – many of its heirs, just like the old man from Cernik I quoted, would gladly put it out of misery. From all of this stems the current prevailing attitude of 'anyone on his/her own' – when the sense of community has disappeared, people have mostly caved in to life in which they are trying to make ends meet in their personal hard existence and do not see how they can help each other or organize themselves to fight for their interests.

II.1.c) Lack of education and low standards of living and production

When I was visiting Žumberak households which were still economically active, the conversation would often turn to the perspectives of local dairies or rural tourism and other possibilities for obtaining additional income. However, I have frequently found myself, already at the interview, in a situation where I have seen large obstacles to the realization of these plans, which, at that moment, I could not tactfully mention to my informants. The problem was the hygiene – how can I help someone to offer their home-made cheese at the market if they never wash cow's udders and do not even realize their own responsibility for the potential consequences? How can you send guests to a household where the basic hygienic criteria are not met? Far from that that this situation is typical for all of Žumberak. Most of the houses I have visited were considerably clean and neat, but I have noticed this situation a bit too often not to treat it as a problem.

There are reasons behind this, of course, and when we are attempting to find a solution for this situation we have to show a high amount of understanding for the conditions in which these people live – have they ever been presented with a model of better living standards and working habits and given a reason and means to adopt them?

II.1.d) Landscape not suitable for building or roads and infrastructure

To gain practical experience of this problem often emphasized by the local inhabitants, it is enough to sit in a car and drive from Zagreb to Budinjak. The first thirty kilometers of the road from Zagreb to Bregana will be passed on a modern highway for some fifteen minutes. Next thirty kilometers of a curved hilly road to Budinjak will take approximately an hour. If you attempt to pass this way by means of public transportation, you will see that in everyday conditions, this is an impossible endeavor. While some regions which are further away from Zagreb still benefit from the vicinity of the capital, in Žumberak the bad road link to Zagreb is just another reason for emigration.

II.1.e) Region not suitable for the development of modern industry

Due to the specific landscape, lack of roads and depopulation, Žumberak is not a region which attracts typical investments. Most of today's industries would conduct their businesses more easily and effectively in regions with better road connections and with a greater pool of young and educated labor force. The same goes for the modern industrialized agriculture which in Žumberak simply cannot amass land lots large enough for cost-effective production.

Since these facts are usually perceived as weaknesses and another contributing factor for the pessimist predictions for the future of Žumberak, it would be more constructive to perceive them as local specificities which demand different developmental approaches. After all, it was the lack of modern industry that enabled Žumberak to remain ecologically and culturally uncontaminated region.

II.1.f) Small land lots and undefined ownership

'And you want to buy that? From whom? Half of them went to Canada, and half of them who knows where'.

An old man from Cernik commenting my passing interest for a nice country house

The problem of too small land lots has now become so serious that it is questioning the normal, everyday existence in the region. Division of land into lots has resulted in the situation where the majority of the people of Žumberak have a few small, scattered lots⁴ which cannot be adequately used. And if someone decided to buy or exchange land, in order to increase their agricultural production, they would encounter the problem of undefined ownership over land lots.

This problem is also a big obstacle for the development of rural tourism. For many old village sites, the minimal investment is necessary to turn them into first class tourist attractions, for which there is even the good will of the local population. However, the element of insecurity in these projects is the fact that the potential owners of

⁴ Magdalenić, I., Župančić, M. (1996)

these lots are scattered all over the world, from Zagreb, through Germany and as far as Canada and Australia.

II.1.g) Administrative divisions

In 1995, Žumberak was divided into three separate administrative areas – the Town of Samobor, the County of Žumberak and the Town of Ozalj. Since Žumberak is undoubtedly culturally and geographically integral region demanding a unitary developmental approach, this does not seem to be the best solution. The villagers of Gornja Vas and Novo Selo Petričko live similar lives, they work on the same land and they even buy their groceries in the same local shop. However, they are separated by an administrative border, so the former have to solve their problems in Samobor, whilst the latter have to go to Sošice, with their separate ensembles of local bureaucrats who do not have too many formal channels of communication between themselves.

There is also the question of the state (and currently also Schöngen) border which separates Žumberak from the Slovenian region of Gorjanci which is geographically, culturally and in terms of tourism development related to Žumberak. Stojdraga and Kamence are neighboring villages, each on its side of the border, connected by a country road 500 meters long, which have been traditionally linked by good neighborly relations and economic cooperation. However, in order to visit their neighbors legally, the villagers of Stojdraga would now have to make a circular trip, around 80 kilometers long, over the nearest border crossing.

II.2. Strengths

II.2.a) Attractive and preserved landscape

When a person visits Žumberak for the first time, the person is usually completely astonished how just 40 kilometers away from Zagreb, there exists such an untouched landscape where you can drink the fresh water from the brook, take a shower under the waterfall, walk for hours without any signs of civilization and meet wild boars, does, falcons and even bears. Žumberak's natural heritage is an enormous ecological and social capital, of this region and of Croatia, waiting to be adequately and sensibly used.

II.2.b) Enthusiasm of individuals and pride of the local people in their region

'We returned contrary to all those who left. They considered us lunatics and laughed behind our backs'

Mr. Subić from Stojdraga

Contrary to the prevailing defeatism, in Žumberak you can sometimes find, even though rarely, individuals displaying immense faith in the bright future of the re-

gion. Among the people I met during my Žumberak wonders, was the family Subić from Stojdraga. They put their children through school in Bregana and decided to return to Stojdraga, the birthplace of Mrs. Subić, and to start a business. The future of this beautiful region, of rich cultural and natural heritage, which is so close to the capital, is for these people guaranteed – it is just a matter of time when this potential will be recognized and their ideas start making sense.

These sentiments about the future of Žumberak are also present with the individuals who are at the first instance complete pessimists. You only have to scratch this pessimist surface, present a few ideas, encourage them to think for themselves about the advantages and possibilities of Žumberak and you will find hope and love for their own region. However, many of them will at the end, warned by their past disappointments, conclude such a conversation, just like, for example, Mr. Marijan, the owner of the shop in Kali, by saying: *'I hope so much that this what you are saying is possible, but I'm afraid that you have come too late.'*

Similar sentiments of the local inhabitants, so much love and enthusiasm, are an immense creative energy which should be channeled in the right direction, before it would really be too late.

II.2.c) Specific local culture with a strange history

The history of the human settlement of Žumberak is multilayered and dramatic, and many archeological finds confirm the fact. Today's inhabitants of Žumberak, as the heirs of that history, have preserved their specificities which distinguish them from the surrounding population – Greek Catholicism and an interesting mixture of Dinaric and pre-Alpine cultural traits and economic practices. This unique and endemic local culture can serve as an excellent basis for the building of specific Žumberak tourist identity and as an inspiration for business and sustainable development of the region.

II.2.d) Region preserved for traditional and ecological production and rural tourism

Developmental backwardness of Žumberak had one somewhat positive effect – it isolated it from the rapid change of the way of life and modern economic practices the sustainability of which can potentially prove to be very dubious. In Žumberak there are no bankrupt industrial giants from the era of socialist progress. The fields and waterways of Žumberak are not soaked in insecticides and artificial fertilizers, which provides them with the basic prerequisite for the development of ecological agriculture. Old houses, mills and hay storages in Žumberak are shabby, but at least every trace of them has not been erased as it has happened in other regions.

II.2.e) Joint initiatives and institutions

Despite of the administrative division of Žumberak, in many aspects it was impossible to ignore the self-evident unity of this region. Hence, on May 28, 1999, the Public Institution 'Nature Park Žumberak – Samobor Mountains' was officially founded with the purpose to protect the natural heritage of Žumberak and Samobor Moun-

tains. The Nature Park does not belong under the jurisdiction of the local government and, besides its primary function, the protection of the Žumberak landscape, it does not have any other authority or jurisdiction, but it can serve as an institution for coordination of different projects of sustainable development which would include the whole region of Žumberak. This institution is already playing a key role in the establishment of tourist and recreational infrastructure by marking and sustaining hiking and biking tracks, places of heritage, by printing tourist maps, opening of information centers, exhibitions and souvenir shops in its branches and through other activities. Nature Park is also potentially the key factor in presenting Žumberak to a wider public – through media presentation of the region, organizing of public recreational and cultural activities and promotion of local products and services.

The second initiative worth mentioning is the establishment of the Tourist Zone on the River of Kupa - Žumberak (Gorjanci) and the Tourist Zone on the River of Sutla – Žumberak (Gorjanci). The aim of this initiative, developed by the Croatian Chamber of Economy Zagreb, Chamber of Economy of Slovenia and local hiking organizations, is to link tourism in Žumberak on Croatian side with the tourism in Gorjanci from the Slovenian side of the border. Part of this initiative would be a joint effort at the improvement and promotion of tourist offer of this region, and the visitors and local people would be able to cross the border freely. This could also be considered as a preparation of the local tourism for the expected liberalization of the border regime which will be enforced after Croatia's entry to the EU.

II.3. Threats

II.3.a) Culture of mass production and consumption

The development of consumerism in Croatia has started relatively recently, but it has shown a remarkably rapid development. Many forms of traditional economy are still present in Croatia and they still manage to find buyers, which we can see if we visit one of the Zagreb open markets and there (today with some difficulty) we can still buy, directly from the peasants, home-grown vegetables, honey, dairies, etc. However, this market niche is receiving daily blows from the industrial products with their aggressive marketing or, simply, with lower prices. An increasing number of producers, from sheer laziness, rather buy the products which could be traditionally obtained at a market, in large shopping malls, and even the markets today are dominated by middlemen.

Croatian society is today on a crossroad where it chooses whether it will once for all discard all these traditional forms of economy or whether it will, like some other European countries, exploit them as a unique cultural, health and ecological value. This question is extremely important for the future of Žumberak. Such a major change of our buying habits is also a complete change of our way of life, and if this trend con-

tinued to develop towards its hypothetical extreme, the discussions on the future of Žumberak such as this one would be completely pointless.

II.3.b) Pollution of environment and culture by uncontrolled tourism

It is nice to see how once popular 'socialist' ideal of spending time outdoors with the family, in one's own car, a few beers and a barbeque, nicely co-exists with the modern trends of the consumer society. After all, there are more cars than ever which we can park on the green meadows, as well as the plastic bottles and other garbage which we can throw in the near-by bush.

Natural surrounding is not the only thing which is in danger from the uncontrolled and unplanned tourism. As we can see on the example of our coast, too much concrete in the places where there were once beautiful villages and pushing away of the local culture by instant tourist offer are also some of the side effects. That Žumberak is not immune to these phenomena, we can observe in the localities such as the Gabrovica 'Eco Park Divlje vode', basically a large, concrete fish pond which has a questionable influence on the purity of the river of Bregana and a playground which looks like a miniature Disneyland.

II.3.c) The vicinity of the large city as the emigrational pull-factor

One important factor in depopulation of Žumberak is, ironically, the vicinity of the large urban center – Zagreb. Even though this fact could be seen as an advantage, the contrast in the living standard and economical development of Žumberak and other regions around Zagreb, together with the already mentioned bad road connection, has proven to be too big. Zagreb and smaller urban centers in its vicinity have become the economically attractive pull-factor with which the local perspectives could not compete.

II.3.d) Real estate prices rising due to the increased interest in vacation houses

One of the visions of the future of Žumberak is to let the process of emigration and depopulation continue, but to encourage the people from the city to buy off land and real estate with the purpose of turning them into vacation houses. Motivations for owning such a peaceful retreat in the country are basically positive. The problem is that this trend, if it is not controlled and contrasted by positive perspectives for the local inhabitants, tends to suppress the authentic rural life – prices the people from the city are prepared to pay for rural real estates are growing to the level unacceptable to the local population and are thus becoming another incentive for selling one's own land and emigrating. The result of this process are beautiful but deserted villages standing like movie sets of the past life and waiting for the temporary visitors.

II.4. Threats

II.4.a) Demand for the products of traditional culture and ecological products

Most of the producers would agree, at least in words, that in our everyday life we need healthy products produced through sustainable modes of production. Products of traditional culture also have their market niche, partly due to their specific qualities and partly to their sentimental and cultural value. Ecological and traditional production are categories which ideally complement and supplement each other: traditional economy relied on plant and animal species which were suitable for being grown in the immediate vicinity and on raw materials which could be found there. This approach is found in the majority of the projects of ecological production to which the market credibility gives a certain traditional marker. And on the other hand, sustainable and ecological approach to the economy usually proves to be more compatible with the local culture and the way of life in a certain region than industrial production.

II.4.b) Demand for rural tourism

Even though the majority of the city inhabitants is not ready to replace their urban existence by rural, it seems that a lot of them are still yearning for the occasional experience of the 'real' rural life. The neighboring Slovenia has masterly capitalized its traditional culture and natural surroundings: villages in the mountains are offering the acceptable accommodation, excellent traditional cuisine and a lot of cultural, recreational and natural attractions.

II.4.c) Social demand for natural recreation

With today's physically inactive way of life typical for the city inhabitants, the need for additional physical exercise and recreation is undisputable. For many people the physical exercise in natural surroundings – hiking, biking, free climbing, etc, is the most natural and the most complete form of recreation.

The infrastructure for this type of recreation is in the same time the appropriate infrastructure for the development of rural tourism and placing local products on the market. The point is, if you had already climbed to Budinjak by bicycle, you probably did not come there to eat a hamburger, but you would rather prefer traditional food and drinks of the region.

Generally, in the societies of good living standards and quality of life, this trend of enjoying one's natural surrounding is increasing, and this is becoming more popular in Croatia, too.

II.4.d) The vicinity of the large city as the economic and social initiator and a potential market

Technological development which has up to now directed the society towards an increased populational, economic and cultural centralization, has lately become a valuable tool for the distribution of information, creativity and social participation. Through

the modern communication channels, such as internet, and a large number of private cars, Žumberak is today, maybe for the first time, in the situation to profit from the relative vicinity of the large city.

Even though the fact remains that it is easier and more effective to organize a large number of human activities closer to large highways and population centers, Žumberak is today, through these new forms of connections, given the opportunity to become a place of emphasized social importance. The already mentioned ecological and traditional production and rural tourism play here the major role, but the potentials of the sustainable development are much bigger than that. With minimal investment in infrastructure, Žumberak could today become the setting for numerous activities and ways of life which were up to now perceived as exclusively urban.

As shown by many foreign and certain Croatian experiences, with the newly established connectivity, these rural regions could serve as a uniquely suitable and stimulative setting for the establishment of numerous forms of creative small enterprises, which could find their markets in the near-by large cities, but also potentially throughout the world.

II.4.e) Possible arrival of young and educated people looking for alternative lifestyles

Today there exists a whole subculture of people who are for various reasons dissatisfied with the urban existence and have aspirations towards rural life. Ivan and Cvijeta are young highly educated experts who have decided a few years ago to fulfill their dreams of living in the country, in creative peace and with their own kitchen garden. Here is their story as told by Ivan:

'We were looking for a cheap house in the country, primarily somewhere in the mountains... We liked the local variant of the traditional wooden houses, with spacious rooms and a stone cellar. A positive thing was also that the region was proclaimed a Nature Park. At the end we chose a 130-years old house in the remotest part of Žumberak, in the village of Dučići in Radatović region.

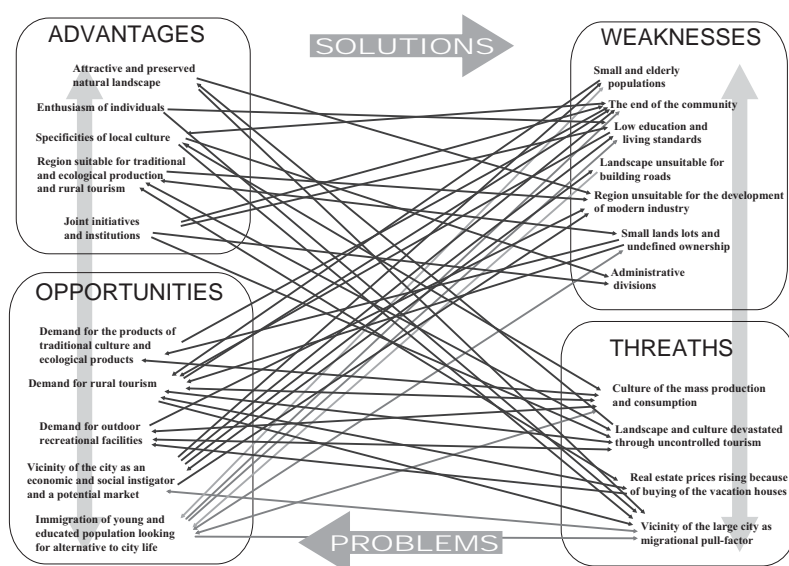
...Žumberak seems as an ideal place for living. The advantages are the low cost of living, as compared with the cities, low overheads, a lot of wood which has to be cleared which saves a lot of money for heating, complete peace and quiet, ideal place for recreation, pure and high-quality land for agriculture, a lot of rain during the whole year, hospitable mentality of the local people, low real estate prices...'

III. Summary of the strategy

The results of the SWOT-analysis provide us with a list of problems which we are trying to overcome and a list of resources which we can use to find the solutions. It is difficult to formalize the creation of the strategy for finding their solutions any further.

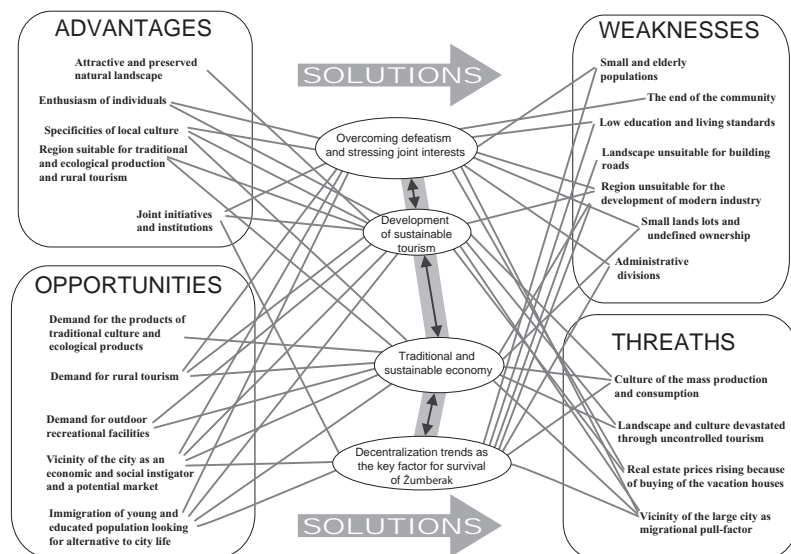
Since the factors appearing in different situation are various, this is the process which mostly relies on creative thinking – you have to create hypotheses from the available data and test them logically. However, there are methodological tools which facilitate this process. In the typical business analysis the results of the SWOT analysis are entered into a matrix which is used to establish relations between the given problems and the available resources. Taking into account the complexity of the social development of a region and a large number of interrelations, I have created my own way of visualization of the results which can simply be created using a pen and paper and I called it a SWOT-relational diagram.

Diagram 1. SWOT-relational diagram, phase 1.



In the first phase the items in the diagram are put in relations depending on the ways they influence each other. The categories in the same column are trying to be in a positive interrelationship. Therefore, an attractive and preserved natural landscape will have a positive impact on the arrival of young and educated city dwellers to Žumberak, and the destruction of the community will increase the influence of the large city as the emigrational pull-factor. The items in the opposite columns are in negative interrelationship which can be reversible (specific local culture ↔ the destruction of the community) or irreversible (arrival of young, educated people ← landscape not suitable for building better roads). When we fill in these relations into the diagram, we get an overview of the relationships between the resources we have and the problems which we can solve by using them.

Diagram 2. SWOT-relational diagram, phase 2.



In the second phase we only have to rationalize the resulting interrelationships and use them to design proactive approaches through which we would strengthen the positive influence of the resources we have for finding the solutions to the problems, and neutralize the negative influence on our resources. In creating new approaches, we have to set ourselves the goal to place them in positive interrelationship.

IV. Results

As one of the first items in a developmental strategy, we have to determine its executives. Not undermining the role of other institutions (local government, county, state, etc.), as the coordinator of the implementation of the developmental frame obtained through this analysis I see 'Nature Park Žumberak and Samobor Mountain. There are several reasons for my choice:

Nature Park is given jurisdiction over the whole region of Žumberak and the neighboring Samobor Mountain – unlike the institutions of the local government and their three separate units, or states and counties having jurisdiction over much wider regions. Nature Park can use its conservational expertise and professional authority to create and implement joint initiatives between these institutions and local authorities.

Nature Park already employs experts qualified to take care of the Žumberak landscape, cultural heritage and to develop local recreational and tourist potentials. For

further expansion of its mission to the field of preservation and revitalization of local culture and sustainable development, only a minimal improvement of the staff is necessary.

Nature Park is an institution whose main goal is the protection of the natural heritage, however, on the places where people have been living for centuries, natural and cultural heritage are not aspects which can be preserved separately. If the Nature Park accepts its conservational role in its entirety, it will not be able to escape the developmental one: in order to truly preserve this unity of cultural-natural heritage, we have to create frameworks for sustainable development.

IV.1. Overcoming defeatism and raising awareness of joint interests

Taking into account the already mentioned defeatism how can we motivate the remaining local population to start with their own action of salvation of their own region and culture? To answer that question we have to realize that this feeling of defeat is not something the people of Žumberak are to be blamed for, but that it was enforced through the changes of wider social circumstances and the lack of understanding and support from the institutions of economic and political government. The people of Žumberak are generally very nostalgic towards their own region and culture, but the circumstances have convinced them that there is nothing more to save. The key solution is hidden in the words of Zvonko Šiljak, the newly elected president of the Žumberak County: *'For fifty years we have heard promises and promises, but nothing was ever done (...) you have to go and talk to the people yourself, see where the problems are, how we can solve them together (...) and up to now nobody has done that here in Žumberak'*.

And really, judging from my conversations with the people of Žumberak it seems that it does not take much to incite their enthusiasm – if you present them through arguments that their region has a lot to offer to the world and propose certain possible forms of cooperation in which they could participate, they will usually, even though with a certain amount of skepticism and caution, take interest in such proposals.

Among the local population there are also enthusiasts. The good will of these people should be adequately exploited – they can do a lot to gain the trust of the community and ensure cooperation of other members of the community. With their help, we could organize a network of the interested members of the local community who would cooperate with the Park on developmental and conservational projects. Hence we would obtain not only valuable assistants and the major instrument for the revitalization of Žumberak, but we would also probably make a big step in regaining the feelings of sense, unity and emancipation of the local community, which would be given a chance to participate in the creation of its own future.

IV.2. Development of sustainable tourism

Nature Park has already done a lot in creating the recreational and tourist infrastructure and local population recognizes this fact as a step forward. However, we should

attempt at creating an approach to the development of tourism in coordination with local population, so that they could benefit from it to the greatest extent. As a modest beginning, we could organize fairs and recreational activities, such as biking and hiking events, which the local population could use to sell their own food and other products and for the tourist promotion of their own village.

Together with the local population we have to create a coordinated marketing image of Žumberak, determine what kind of identity and what types of tourist products they would like to present to the world and give them support in spreading the message – through Nature Park and its communication materials and through media. We could, for example, list the households interested in accommodating tourists and jointly establish the basic outlines of such an activity for their target audience. After completing the necessary preparations, Nature Park can serve as a link between these people and their ‘audience’, by promoting their activities through their own web-page and other communication materials, and acting as mediator in their contacts with other media.

Under the necessary preparation, I would definitely include the raising of the hosting culture of the local population. I have already mentioned the need to increase hygienic and accommodation standards. However, the question of the hosting culture is not only about hygiene. Members of the local population should be encouraged to become the major interpreters of their own culture and their landscape. Of course, they should be provided with the correct and complete information which were unavailable to them before, for example, on the prehistory of their region, ecological values and problems, etc. But we should leave it to the locals to interpret them and intertwine them with their own personal stories and their own living experience – this type of narration seems the most interesting and most authentic to the visitors.

Tourism should be linked to the sustainable forms of the local economy to the greatest extent, not only because of the marketing of the products, but also because of the creation of a wholesome tourist product. Households which would engage in rural tourism should be linked with local producers for obtaining foodstuffs and house inventories. As it was mentioned before, people will visit Žumberak with the desire to taste homemade cheese and vegetables, and not the ones bought in the large shopping malls. If served in traditional pottery or wooden plates, the atmosphere would be complete, and local economy and culture enriched.

IV.3. Traditional and sustainable economy

The development of tourism should be used for raising awareness of the local inhabitants on the market opportunities arising from their traditional culture and landscape, wider than the tourist offer itself. If, through tourism, the locals recognized the market demand for their products, this would be the best incentive for starting small entrepreneurship which Žumberak could obtain.

Nature Park could in this extent provide the local population with the valuable support and expert help in finding sustainable and, to the modern market, applicable ideas and products, creating a kind of referential center for sustainable development. I think that here we should be careful not to repeat our mistakes from the past – different governments would traditionally impose new economic practices to the peasants through different decrees, with the explanation that their old ways were stupid and backwards, and such a relationship only deepened the spirit of defeatism and passivity. Therefore the new ideas should not be presented to the local population in the form of dull, incomprehensible and patronizing lectures, but in the spirit of interactive communication – starting from the premise that while the experts know their field, the locals have been living here for centuries and they know, very intimately, their culture and their region.

With interested members of the local population we could organize a series of meetings where they could talk with the experts and the practitioners in the field about creating conditions for starting ecological agriculture, with the emphasis placed on the adaptability of these methods to their own region and their own agricultural heritage. Instead of being offered a uniform recipe where they would have to simply follow the instructions of the experts, the local people should be encouraged to recognize and use the good and valuable ideas in their heritage which were created during several centuries long experience of living in this region and combine them with sustainable aspects of modern agricultural progress.

Trades and crafts could be encouraged to become more than just the production of souvenirs, so that the people engaging in them could be given an idea on how their traditional products could be adapted to the demands of modern life. If performed in good taste and with respect towards the original materials and forms, such innovations still preserve the elements of the local culture and, in a way, ‘defrost’ it, open up its developmental continuity and introduce it to the modern times.

It would be useful to work with the local population to restore the system of local exchange and provision of the raw materials. Hence we would link primary, secondary and tertiary activities and renew the fragmented economy of the region, and a large number of their needs people could satisfy in their own community and to their mutual benefit. In the world there are many successful examples of creation of the so-called ‘local currencies’ which are used in order to rise the local economy to a higher level than can be achieved through direct exchange. Behind this concept there is a very serious economic theory and many success stories which are worth studying.

We should also think about the creation of a controlled Žumberak ‘brand’, at the level of the Nature Park. Such a brand should embody the identities and the qualities by which Žumberak is introducing itself to the world: as a place of preserved nature, authentic tradition, hospitable people, health food... As such it would be a means of control and of encouragement for the high quality of the local products and services and a valuable tool for their promotion. While it is important to ensure objectivity and expert criteria, it is also important to include the local community in creation of

such a brand: it is the real carrier and the owner of the identity represented by this brand. The brand should not be reserved only for the products of Žumberak tradition, but it should be used as a means to encourage sustainable innovations which are in accordance with the identity it represents.

IV.4. Decentralization processes as the key for the survival of Žumberak

If we want the truly sustainable future of this region, it is necessary to ensure infrastructure which will satisfy all the demands and open up the possibilities for a modern living. From basic needs which should be satisfied there is the possibility of regular education, energy and water supply, appropriate road connectivity and modern means of telecommunication.

Here we are coming to another Žumberak dead end. As a prerequisite for the real development and demographic revitalization of Žumberak it is necessary to satisfy all these demands, but why should the state open up schools for which there are no pupils and build roads for such a small number of users? Why would commercial telecommunication companies bring their mass infrastructure to Žumberak when they could not profit from it here? The moral answer to this question is simple: because every citizen of this country and every region have the right to equal participation in the achievements of the modern times and equal possibilities for development. But the moral basis of such demands would hardly suffice to see them become true in the nearby future.

Even though it seems that it does not have too much in common with the recent situation in Žumberak, internet is very important for the Žumberak future. It is true that we have very little chance to encourage some older farmers to use it, but the internet is crucial prerequisite for arrival and permanent stay of younger people. Besides opening an interactive channel of communication with the whole world which enables people to complete a lot of activities for which they would have to go to the town in the past, internet has an enormous educational potential on formal and informal level. On informal level, it is a source of a vast array of ideas, widening human horizons and interests. On the formal level, many countries which have had, due to the geographical and demographic reasons, the need for distance education, have found the internet to be the ideal medium for that purpose. Internet is not a supplement for the direct pedagogical contact, but the fate of the children who would have to travel 60 kilometer every day to school, would be significantly improved if they had a tool which would enable them to do that only twice a week. There are examples of such practice already in Croatia, and CARNET's educational center EduPoint is actively working on the spreading of the usage of this technology.

However, even though it is unlikely that outside of the generally slow and inefficient political channels we can do a lot on the question of building roads and adequate plumbing systems, as far as the modern telecommunications and the internet are concerned, today there are technologies which are insuring that some of these problems, with the help of some finances and expertise, are being finally resolved on the

level of the Nature Park and the local community. If we truly question the future of this region, we have to be aware that nobody would return to it or stay in it in order to lead a medieval life based on the 'survival' agriculture – internet is the key infra-structural prerequisite of modern existence.

IV. Conclusion

If the possibilities presented in this article would be realized, Žumberak could in many ways return this 'investment' to the society. Such a sustainable development of Žumberak would be a kind of precedent for the sustainable development of many other Croatian regions. Since the majority of Croatian territory are the rural regions, to a lesser or a greater extent endangered by the rapid changes surrounding us, the successful development of Žumberak would create a positive example how to return the lost purpose to the rural life, give it an economic incentive and a chance to contribute to the benefit of the wider society. However, and maybe the most importantly, by raising Žumberak back to its feet, the society would obtain a unique space for healthy, creative and fulfilled life of its members.

Our science should recognize a segment of its societal purpose in this and the similar developmental projects, encourage their implementation and provide them with the 'building material' from their own local culture and heritage. A prerequisite for something like this is the continued development of the methods through which the findings obtained through ethnological research could be transformed into developmental strategies.

Translated by Tanja Bukovčan