

## Impact of tourism on the structure of housing in the microregion Termal

MICHAELA ZONCOVA, ALENA DUBCOVA  
Department of Geography and Regional Development  
Constantine The Philosopher University in Nitra  
Tr. A. Hlinku 1, 949 74 Nitra  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

michaela.zoncova@ukf.sk

*Abstract:* The paper deals with analysis on development of housing structure in rural municipalities. Houses in rural space were built in order to fulfil a particular function (e.g. agricultural function). Whereas rural space fulfilled mainly productive, agricultural function in past, buildings were also adapted to this function, there was not any emphasis on visual aspect. Nowadays, rural space has changed to multifunctional system as a consequence of the decline of agriculture importance and new functions are coming to the fore.

In the study area of microregion Termal function of tourism comes to the fore, which also has influence on the structure of housing. Based on data from The Population and Housing Census (1991, 2001 and 2011), we looked over the development of building-up of houses in municipalities of microregion Termal, where we identified a strong building-up period and then we analysed the number of unoccupied houses and its trend in the period. Increase of the number of unoccupied houses is caused by the increase of share of houses which are determined for recreation. The tourism development has caused a change of visual side of rural houses and newly built houses do not fit into the former compact architectural concept. This disturbs the image of rural landscape and elements typical for cities get into rural space (e.g. multi-storey houses). Statistical data were analyzed also in terms of spatial allocation, which we presented using the cartographic methods. The aim of this paper is to point out changes in the rural housing, which has been forced to diversify their functions.

*Key-Words:* housing, rural landscape, tourism development, rural functions

### Introduction

The landscape is a dynamic system that varies in time and space. Rural landscape is a specific type of landscape that was perceived as a symbol of agriculture and rural area had initially the productive function. After 1989, there was a decline of agriculture and a collapse of cooperative farms, consequently. Rural landscape and rural municipalities were forced to change their character and perform also other functions.

A new phenomenon gains ground – rural diversification, i.e. changeover of agricultural (productive) rural space to multifunctional system that tries to take advantage of its potential and move capital to different activities. According to Šarafin [1] rural area passed into the world of globalization, it became part of a new dimension of economic processes. Agriculture stopped to fulfill the most important role in the rural space and the rural space was divided into suburban, recreational and stagnant.

Development of industry and concentration of population in cities has resulted in abandonment of

the rural houses, which were often located far from the workplace, especially in areas with dispersed settlement. Existing houses in municipalities, which lost its original economic function and had the prerequisites for the development of recreational activities, began to use for an individual recreation [2]. As a consequence of changes in the transformation and post-transformation period, housing in municipalities also undergone significant changes, as in the field of quantitative, qualitative, physical and spatial structures, too [3]. Period of socialism and ideology of rural-urban coequality significantly facilitated to replace the old buildings with new ones, peculiarity capitulated under the influence of expressive diversity of new houses [1]. According to Gajdos [3] presents rural area considerably differentiated type of settlement. On the one hand, there are municipalities where improvement of quality of housing was managed with the help of funds, but on the other hand, there are municipalities where the insufficient attractiveness for living appears.

Since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, high building-up is typical for rural municipalities, which are located in economically developing regions. It is directed to the reconstruction and modernization of existing buildings and reflects into the boom of building-up new residential houses. It is also reflected in investing to improvement of infrastructure facilities. By the lower level of economic activities in municipalities, these activities decrease and reflect into the reconstruction and modernization of houses. These activities are reduced in troubled regions, too [4]. Changes in the structure and condition of the housing are one of the consequences of transformation of monotonous, agricultural rural area to multifunctional system. Change of the function of rural area also reflected in state of houses and residential function is supplemented with recreational function.

Visual scene of rural landscape is also changed, where on one hand, there is the building-up of new houses and on the other hand, there occurs deterioration of old houses causing contrast in the rural housing. There occur also changes in architecture of houses. In the past, rural area had unvaried character, where was visible an architectural consistency of buildings. Over the long-term influence by man- householder on the surrounding countryside there established relatively stable typical rural landscape with a specific landscape impression. Characteristic relation with the environment, modesty in the pretensions, the criterion of functionality, quality and durability were typical signs of rural areas. The result was artistically, aesthetically and functionally balanced architecture. In consequence of pseudo-revolutionary trends in evolution of society and tendency to “approach rural area to city”, there was not respected any realities and necessities of life of the rural environment. The continuity of building development was significantly disturbed. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the traditional rural architecture becomes the symbol of poverty and backwardness in the inhabitant’s set of priorities [5]. The integration of new buildings to existing buildings and to landscape in such style which will not disturb visual aspect of rural landscape is very problematic.

### Material and Methods

To identify changes in the evolution of the structure of houses in municipalities of microregion Termal, we used statistical methods, where we analyzed data from the Population and Housing Censuses of 1991, 2001 and 2011 [1]. By this twenty-year period, we are able to analyze the changes that have occurred in the transformation and post-transformation period.

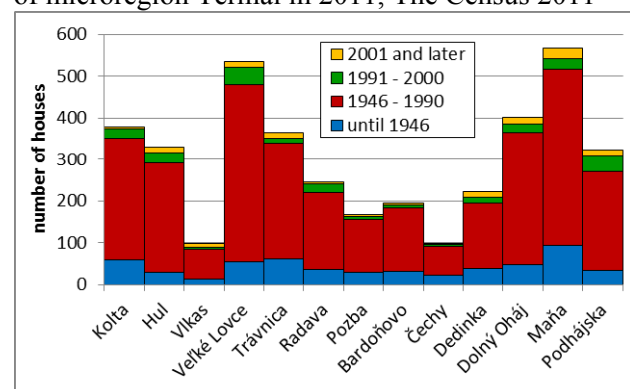
In this paper we look over the age of houses in rural area, the share of unoccupied houses of the total number of houses and share of the houses determined for recreation. Unoccupied house is defined as house determined for housing, where any dwelling was not permanently occupied during the Census. The data were expressed also spatially using cartographic methods, concretely using ArcGIS 10.1. Consequently, we analyzed information and searched for a correlation between changes in the structure of housing and the increasing importance of tourism in the observed micro-region. Microregion Termal is the area of interest, which consists of thirteen communities - Radava, Podhájska, Bardoňovo, Travnica, Bohemia, Hul, Pozba, Dolný Ohaj, Veľké Lovce, Dedinka, Kolta, Vlkaš and Maňa. In terms of regional classification, microregion is part of Nové Zámky district and Nitra self-governing Region. In the study area of the microregion there is an increase in importance of tourism. Podhájska is center of microregion and it is well-known because of thermal swimming pool and thanks to it journal TREND ranked Podhájska to 4<sup>th</sup> place of the most attractive thermal swimming pools and aquaparks in Slovakia in 2013 on the ground of income. These development trends had an impact on the character and scene of the rural landscape in the microregion, but also functions of housing.

### Results and discussion

#### Development of building of houses

Based on statistics from the 2011 Census, we can analyze the age structure of houses in rural municipalities of microregion Termal.

Fig. 1 The age structure of houses in municipalities of microregion Termal in 2011, The Census 2011



Age of houses in municipalities had an influence on the scene of municipalities, because many old houses under the influence of time left abandoned

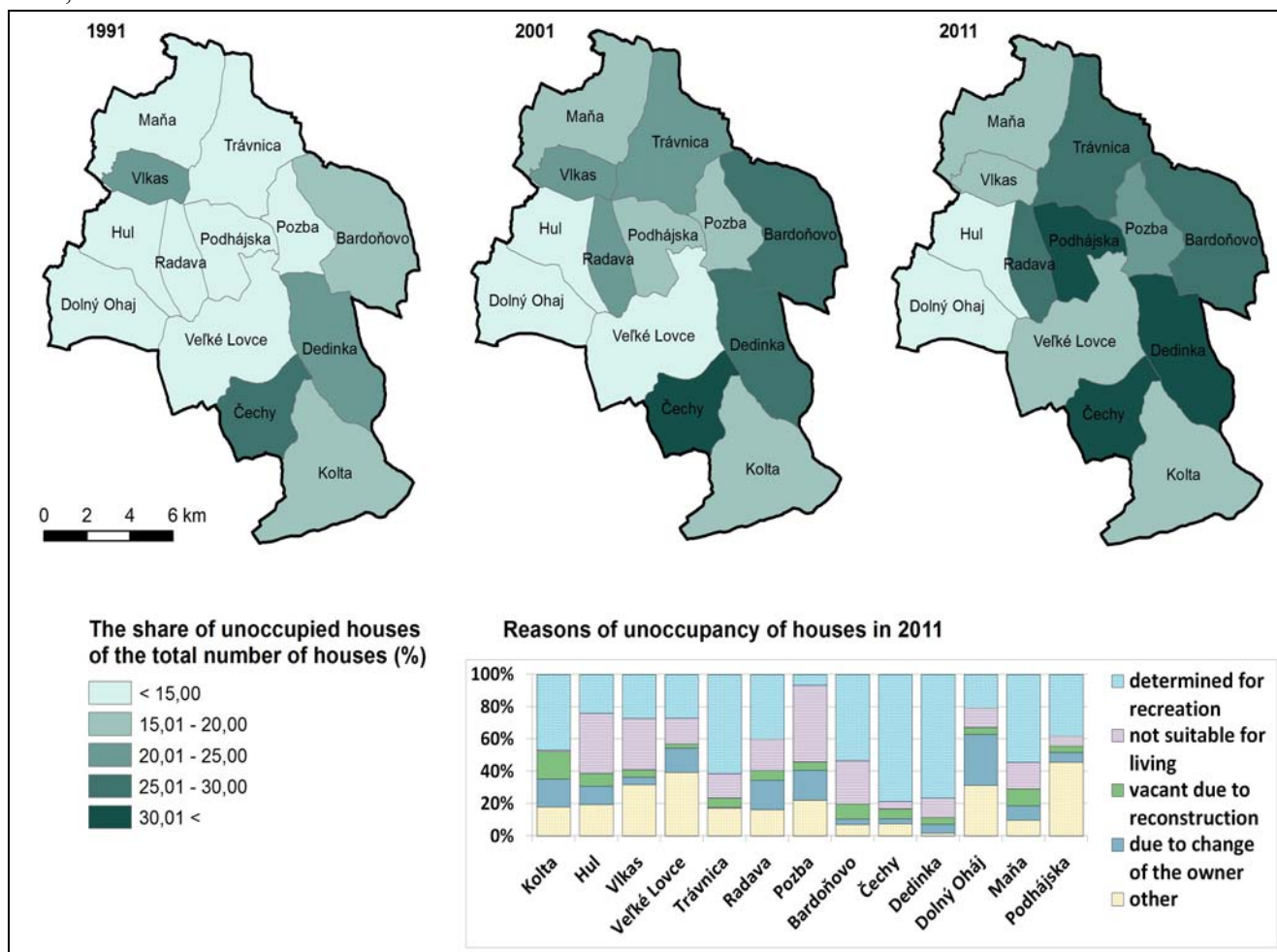
and they deteriorated. Instead of reconstruction of old houses the building-up of new houses began. The largest building boom started in the years 1946 – 1990, i.e. in pre-revolutionary period (Fig 1). In all observed municipalities approximately 2/3 of houses were built at this time. In the post-revolutionary period, there was a recession in building-up of new houses. In the monitored municipalities only 10% of the houses in average were built in this period. The most newly built houses can be found in the municipalities of Velké Lovce, Podhájska and Maňa, where more than 50 new houses increased in each municipality. At least new houses were built in the municipalities of Čechy, where only 7 new houses were built since 1991. This fact is also related to the size of municipalities. Percentage provides an undistorted view and therefore the most new houses of the total number of houses are located in the municipality of Podhájska (16.1%), Vlkaš (14.3%), Dedinka (12.2%) and Hul (12.1%), what indicates the development of municipality and interest of population to live in these municipalities.

There appears the building-up of new houses on "greenfield", but in the municipalities there are many dilapidated houses that distort the landscape scene and they are disruptive. Džupinová and Pšenka [7] dealt with research of the impact of tourism on development and changes in the structure of housing. They focused mainly on individual objects of recreation, so called "second housing". In analysis of the objects of second housing, they focused exactly on the category "unoccupied houses, determined for recreation", which was examined in the population and housing censuses of 2011.

### Development of unoccupied houses

In the process of transformation low social and economic situation appears in many rural municipalities. It accelerated to the other problems in the last decade of the last century. It was leaving young people to work, aging of population and dilapidation of rural houses.

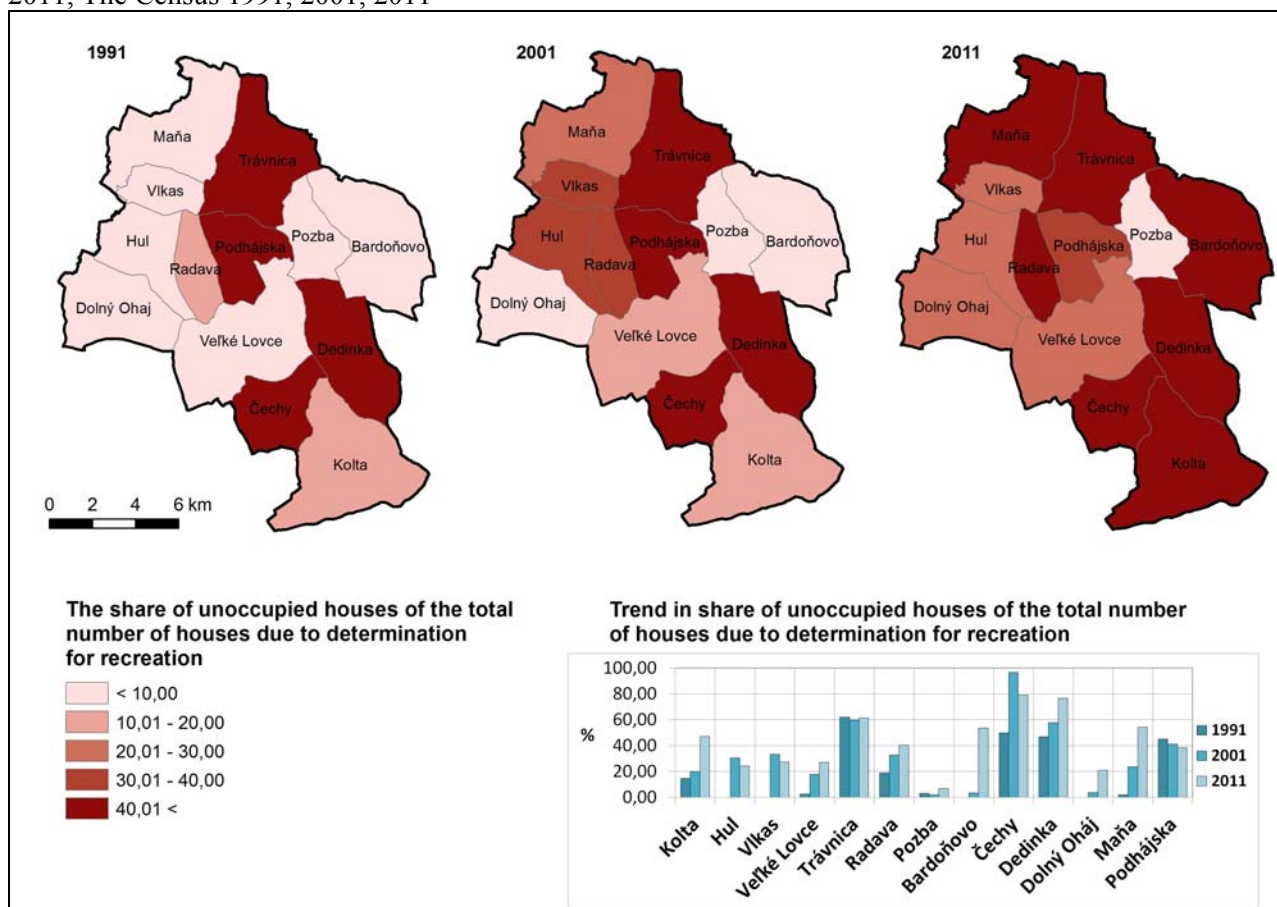
Fig. 2 Development of unoccupied houses in microregion Termal in 1991, 2001 a 2011, The Census 1991, 2001, 2011



Kuldová [8] states untidy areas and private parcels, neglected houses, manufacturing buildings, dilapidated monuments formerly important elements of tourism for the main problems of rural areas after 1989. In terms of the structure of housing fund, we can follow the development of the number of unoccupied houses that may be unoccupied for various reasons – due to change of owner, because of determination for recreation, vacant due to reconstruction, unsuitability for living, upon approval of building, due to inheritance or court action or for other reasons. Development of share of unoccupied houses of the total number of houses in municipalities based on data from The Census 1991, 2001, 2011 is shown in the Fig. 2. In the observed twenty-year decade is a high increase of unoccupied houses noticeable in some municipalities. In 2011, in municipalities of Čechy, Dedinka and Podhájka for more than 30% of the houses were unoccupied. In municipality of Čechy is this fact noticeable during the whole observed period, where the share of unoccupied houses reached in 1991 value of 21.1%, in 2001 it was 26.4% and in 2011 it achieved a value of 34.4%.

Houses were not vacant because of dilapidation, but because they were determined for recreation. The idea of “second housing” comes to the fore i.e. partial transformation of residential function of municipalities to the recreational function. Houses in rural area are starting to use as “weekend” housing and a cause of this phenomenon may be an "escape" of the working population from the busy cities to peaceful countryside. Municipality of Čechy provides a calm environment with potential enjoyment as in winter (local ski tow), as well as in summer (local pond, nearby aquapark in Podhájka). An interesting phenomenon is also evident in the municipality of Podhájka, where the share of unoccupied houses raised and in 2011 reached 32.4%. However, this is not because of dilapidation, but it may be caused by the development of tourism in the municipality and with the consequent demand for accommodation services. Hardly any house determined for recreation is not in municipality of Pozba, where houses are unoccupied because of unsuitability of living. Development of share of unoccupied houses, which are determined for recreation, is shown in the Fig. 3.

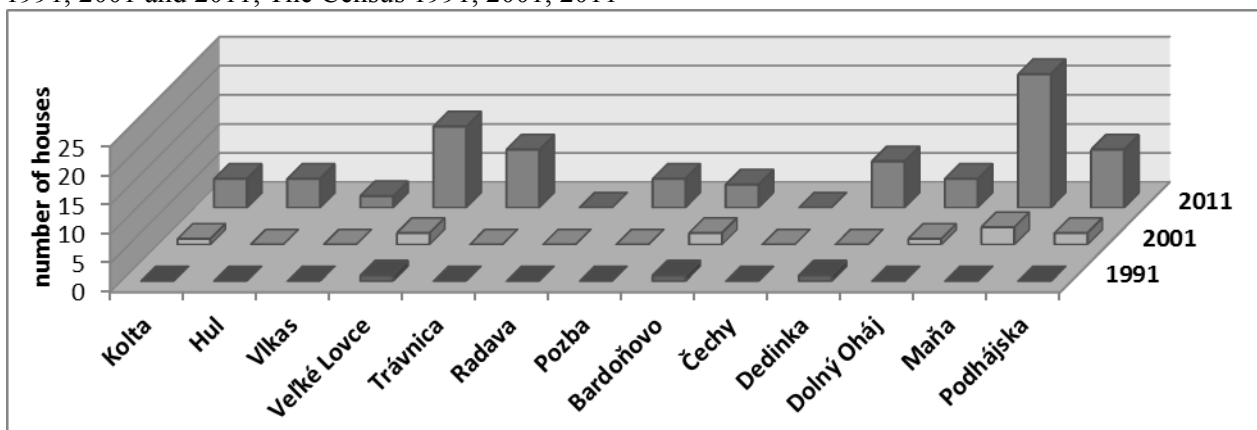
Fig. 3 Development of number of unoccupied houses due to determination for recreation in 1991, 2001 and 2011, The Census 1991, 2001, 2011



In the Fig.2, there is a noticeable increase in the number of unoccupied houses, but on the Fig.3 there is striking increase in the number of unoccupied homes due to determination for recreation. It follows that in the observed area does not occur to dilapidation and degradation of houses, but there appears a transformation of function of houses. Houses determined for recreation since 1991 have been concentrated in municipalities of Trávnice, Podhájska, Dedinka and Čechy and in 2011 the concentration also increased in municipalities of Maňa, Radava, Bardoňovo and Kolta. The opposite phenomenon is visible in the village Podhájska, where you can see a decrease in houses for recreation. But it is a very low drop, but it can also be caused by increases in competition in the village tourism. The opposite phenomenon is visible in the municipality of Podhájska, where you can see a decrease in number of houses determined for recreation. Nevertheless it is a very low decrease,

but it can also be caused by increase in competition in tourism. Objects of individual recreation recorded a decrease of their significance as a result of the increase of the number of providers of accommodation in the municipality. Based on the internal data of aquapark in Podhájska, this aquapark visit about 400,000 visitors a year. Because of it is necessary to provide accommodation services to visitors not only in newly built hotels and guesthouses, but private accommodation comes to the fore. The inflow of new functions to the rural area brings also a change in the appearance of houses. Houses does not fulfill initially only functionality, but comfort and visual aspect comes to the fore. Result of efforts to bring urban elements to the rural area is the construction of multi-storey buildings, too. Based on statistics, this phenomenon is also visible in the observed area of microregion Termal (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Development of number of three- and multi-storey houses in municipalities of microregion Termal in 1991, 2001 and 2011, The Census 1991, 2001, 2011



In the Fig. 4 a high increase of multi-storey houses in 2011 is noticeable. In 1991 there were a multi-storey houses only in the municipalities of Velké Lovce, Bardoňovo and Dedinka. Other municipalities had still rural appearance. Ten years later, there were added multi-storey houses in other municipalities, but still it was not as radical as in 2011. The most multi-storey houses were built in the municipalities of Maňa, Velké Lovce, Trávnice and Podhájska, where there are currently 10 and more of these houses. In Maňa, there were 23 multi-storey houses in 2011 and 11 of them had 5 or more floors. Such high houses architecturally fit not into the rural landscape, where a large proportion of houses have only one or two floors. In the rural areas small "housing estates" form, those are typical

for the urban environment. Not only that, the height of the houses changes, but changes their visual aspect, too. The emphasis puts on first impression, it means that the house should be striking, and different from others, but this is disruptive element in unified nature of rural area. Impact on the visual aspect of the houses also has a growing importance of tourism in the microregion, where houses determined for the accommodation try to attract a customer in the competition network also with its appearance. Illustrative example we can see on Fig. 5, where are houses determined for accommodation for tourists.

Fig. 5 Accommodation in Podhájska, Google streetview, 2014



Those houses do not fit among the surrounding houses on one side with appearance, but also with the height and with its function, too. By this style of architecture a uniform atmosphere of rural community is not kept and municipality is becoming an architecturally fragmented area.

### Conclusion

Rural area changed a lot in last decades, what influenced its internal structure and appearance. The greatest development of building-up of new houses in rural area was in 1946 – 1990, when the most part of houses was built. Subsequently, there was a sharp decline in building. Built houses began to dilapidate under the influence of migration of population to cities and instead of reconstruction of the old houses; new houses were built on "greenfield". As the rural space is gradually losing its primary agricultural function, the appearance of the countryside is changing under the influence of the inflow of new functions. Although a growing number of unoccupied houses is in the study area, a large percentage of these houses are determined for recreation. The municipality is losing permanent population, because people do not have in these objects a place of permanent residence and use them only for recreational purposes. In the observed area tourism develops successfully, because of the location of the aquapark in the municipality of Podhájska. Residential function of houses is partly converted into a recreational function under the influence of increasing competition of accommodation's owners and they are forced to attract the visitors, even by visual aspect of houses determined for accommodation. In the past, the typical low buildings have primarily served the purpose and functionally have been determined for the population engaged in agriculture and now they relegate into the background and modern houses of

different shapes, colors and sizes lead come to the fore. Instead of maintaining the uniformity of rural architecture, there occurs the fragmentation and the influx of new elements. Approval of new houses in the municipalities should underlie also to the approval of aesthetic side to fit harmoniously to earlier houses and the original character of the countryside should be kept.

### Acknowledgement

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