RURAL VERSUS URBAN IN ROMANIA

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Abstract Romania presents great differences between the rural area and the urban area both from the point of view of physical infrastructure and the social infrastructure. The lack of basic equipment like refrigerator, washing machine or gas stove, from the rural homes increases the risk of sickness of the population. The power of defending the life are totally down in the whole rural area, this needing special demographic policies for the 46% of the Romanian people living in the rural area.

INTRODUCTION

After the communist period the Romanian rural space was characterized by a very high degree of underdevelopment, accentuating the differences compared to the urban environment and also to the European rural environment.

After a long period the rural was the victim of the “industrial explosion” and of the “exodus of the rural”, in the developed countries began a reconsideration process for this environment, a keeper of some unique cultural values and traditions. So, the period of “urbanocentric orientation” was replaced slowly and in different ways from one country to another and according to the development degree by a rural “reconstruction”, reducing the differences between the town and the village. This action of reinstatement of the rural, starts with the principle of the implication of all citizens, whether they live or not in this space.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Denominations of the human settlements

Source: Marioara Rusu, Agriculture economy treaty, rural space development policies
The settlement systems have two important characteristics: the hierarchy and centralism. They are characterized by a large diversity, determined by the various conditions they appeared and developed. So we can identify the following topologies:

a). Considering the settlement types: urban system and rural system
b). Considering the geographical level: local system, regional system, national system

(source I. Ianos 2000)

The definition of the rural systems is a process difficult to realize, considering the fact that the majority of the classical and modern theories are referring explicitly to the urban systems.

Ioan Ianos considers that this term can be used only in different situations:

a). The most favorable is where the ensemble of rural settlements is hierarchically structured and where on the top of the pyramid is the most developed village, having inter-communal functions; this is specific for the cases of profoundly rural areas; comparing to the urban systems, these systems are considered to have a high degree of stability but slow dynamic

b). Another case presented is that where the rural system has as central place a town at the bottom of the urban pyramid; in this case, on the top of the pyramid is the smallest town which has as subordinate the village with inter – communal functions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The relation rural – urban in Romania

Studying this relation, we must not forget the distinction of the present rural versus the rural from some decades ago, from the point of view of the configuration and of the economic, cultural, infrastructural and supra-structural manifestation.

Analyzing this relation we have to consider that in Romania the rural space represents the largest part of the national territory (93.7%), and the population was placed in a continuous diminution process from 83.7% (1912) – 68.7% (1956) – 56.4 % (1977) to 47 – 48% in 2002, where 32.7% are occupied in rural space activities. The share of the agriculture at the realization of PIB (gross internal product) represents only 13.4% in 2002.

In the “Principles of rural – urban sociology” study, P. Sorochin and C.C. Zimmerman identify a series of criteria differencing the rural and the urban, criteria that did not lose their importance and can be classified as follows:

- the occupational criterion (agricultural occupations in rural space, non-agricultural occupations in urban space)

In Romania we can notice an increase of the unpaid rural population (living only from the results of their own farm) with a rate of 700% in the first seven years of the transition (after 1989). So, the majority of the population from the rural space lives from the results of the unpaid family work and from the independent work, covering 68.2% of the whole rural population in 2003. (Source: Geopolitics, no. 1(5)/2005 – the geopolitics of the rural space)

- human relations criterion (direct and continuous relation in the rural environment; a relation characterized by distance and isolation in urban)

- demographic criterion (low density of the population in the rural space, high density in the urban space)

- social satisfaction criterion (low stratification in the rural space and high stratification in the urban space)

- structure criterion (dominant native population in the rural area, non-native population dominant in the urban area)
the interaction criterion between the human communities (direct interaction in the rural and anonymous interaction in the urban)

According to the data of the census of population and houses of March 2002, in Romania are 8107.1 thousand houses where 3847.5 thousand are in the rural space.

The highest part of the houses is defined in the urban area of the country (over 50%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>4,076,335</td>
<td>53.22</td>
<td>4,259,574</td>
<td>52.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>3,582,668</td>
<td>46.78</td>
<td>3,847,540</td>
<td>47.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,659,003</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>8,107,114</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INS – Life conditions of the Romanian population, 2002

The investigation concerning the Life conditions of June 2003 shows that almost half of the total number of families in Romania consists in 1 or 2 persons (23.2% and 24.3%) and 20% consists in 3 persons. The large families of 6 persons and over represent 6% of the total.

In the urban environment 48.9% of the number of families consist in 2 or 3 members; while in the rural environment most frequent are the families of 1 and 2 persons (49.3%). The families consisting in 5 or more persons are most frequent in the rural area (20.1% versus 8.4% in the urban area).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homes</th>
<th>Rural environment (%)</th>
<th>Urban environment (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 person</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 persons</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 persons</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 persons</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 persons</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 persons</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INS – Life conditions of the Romanian population, Bucharest 2004

Considering the age, the structure of the population is as follows: 68.8% are aged of 15 – 64 years insuring the work force, 17% are persons aged of less than 15 years and 14.2% aged of 65 years and over.

In the rural environment, the extreme age groups are better represented: the percentage of persons aged of 15 years (19%) is higher than in the urban environment (3.7%).
In the present time, the village is the main generator of life of our country. The vital potential is double at the village compared to the town, according to the fertility percentage of 51.55% in the rural area vs. 28.62% in the urban area. This information shows that the village people are more interested in children than the town people because the birthrate is 10.88‰ in the village and 8.76‰ in the urban area.

From the point of view of house equipment, the village is not in good position either. In the rural environment, the houses with kitchen represent 81.5% vs. 95.62% in the urban environment.

### Number of equipped rural homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Urban environment</th>
<th>Rural environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with kitchen</td>
<td>4,073,210</td>
<td>95.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with bathroom</td>
<td>3,600,078</td>
<td>84.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with toilet with water</td>
<td>3,701,582</td>
<td>86.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculation according to the population and houses census, Romania 2002

Analyzing the equipment of long-term use goods we can notice that 93.4% of the houses have TV sets (black and white, color), 89.9% have gas stoves, 85.0% have refrigerators and 55.5% have washing machines.

- refrigerator 70.5% (rural) and 96.5% (urban)
- washing machine 31.5% (rural) and 74.7% (urban)
- aspirator 14.5% (rural) and 61.4% (urban)
- microwave stove – is almost unknown in the rural area (0.9%)
CONCLUSIONS

Romania presents great differences between the rural area and the urban area both from the point of view of physical infrastructure and the social infrastructure. The lack of basic equipment like refrigerator, washing machine or gas stove, from the rural homes increases the risk of sickness of the population.

The power of defending the life are totally down in the whole rural area, this needing special demographic policies for the 46% of the Romanian people living in the rural area.

I have some propositions in order to solve this problem:
- the improvement of the life level and quality of life of this people in order to ensure the continuous increase of the rural population income; this increase conditioned by two measures:
- increase of the efficiency of the agriculture by a better management based on adequate organization and equipment
- creation of small and middle enterprises for the primary agricultural products processing or other non-agricultural profiles, leading to the integrated use of human resources from the rural communities, to the increase of rural production value and the gradually decrease of the percentage of the agricultural production value in the total rural production structure.

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