

Dynamics of Rural-Urban Relations in Urbanization Context

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to outline the actual situation in the rural-urban relationship by showing how the two key elements interact with each other and by highlighting the main dysfunctions resulting from the interplay of the two entities in terms of the dispute over the land fund they need. The purpose of this study is to highlight types of connection established between villages and towns- specific symbols for urban on one side and rural on the other-thus explaining the way the entities subjected or not to the continuous process of development, starting from economical and social level changes which the new urban-rural relation requires. By determining the impact that urbanization process has on agricultural land fund, the suitable environment for openness and adaptation to modern society requirements can be created. In the same time, this complex process involves a clear shaping and the completion of indispensable connections between rural and urban areas.

KEYWORDS: *development plan, land fund, phenomenon of urbanization, rural-urban, sustainable development.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *R12, Q15, Q25.*

INTRODUCTION

This article aims to outline the actual situation in the rural-urban relationship by showing how the two key elements interact with each other and by highlighting the main dysfunctions resulting from the interplay of the two entities in terms of the dispute over the land fund they need.

The title highlights a major problem in Romania, expressing the result of faulty, but often successful, urban areas attempts to impose itself over the countryside.

Starting from this premise, by capturing the functional and relational mechanisms operating between the two environments, the identification of an eligible option for reformulation and restructuring of the relationship between rural and urban areas is considered to be mandatory.

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Specifically, the research starts from economical and social changes by establishing the nature and components that the new rural-urban relation imposes.

The purpose of this study is to highlight types of connection established between villages and towns- specific symbols for urban on one side and rural on the other- thus explaining the way the entities subjected or not to the continuous process of development.

By determining the impact urbanization has on agricultural land to create conducive environment for opening and adjusting to modern society. In the same time, this complex process involves a clear shaping and the completion of indispensable connections between rural and urban areas.

1. ROMANIAN CURRENT TERRITORIAL SITUATION

A region, regardless of its physical belonging, represents a well-defined physical territory, an entity with its own personality, with multiple specific organizational features in the frame which it belongs, but as an integral part of the community. One of the main objectives for regions, common to all, is to ensure at least decent living conditions for its members. To achieve this objective, similar to economic, social and cultural development, a region is required to exploit all available resources rationally and efficiently.

However, regions cannot be regarded as independent entities, and the successful completion of the above objective cannot reach the same levels in all cases. In this respect, the European Union Treaty Article 130 A(158) introduces the concept of economic and social cohesion to promote harmonious development of the entire Community, it shall develop and pursue actions that tend to strengthen economic and social cohesion. In particular, the Community aims to reduce the gap between development levels of various regions and backwardness of the less developed regions, or islands, including rural areas.

For Romania, these gaps are particularly noticeable when we talk about a comparison between urban and rural areas. In an attempt to identify potential sources or causes that generate these differences, the incorrect territorial dispute between rural and urban areas is highlighted. Bryson (2002) comes to strengthen the above, clearly explaining regional development issues concluding that *we are faced with so many conflicting requirements that we need a process to establish our priorities*. The message that Bryson wants to send reflects the necessity of effective organization, regulatory legislation under which decisions are made on the territories and, even more than that, he induces the idea of territorial and space planning, by setting clear priorities.

Virtually, in the case of Romania, issues emerge from the transition mode of action from rural to urban, with profound implications on all levels. Although the urbanization process in Romania was manifested at a lower level than in other European countries, the consequence it has on agricultural land fund is a key issue today so identification and analysis of this phenomenon is required.

1.1. The land - dispute element between rural and urban

In terms of identifying the phenomenon, this paper classifies the specific components of the relationship between rural and urban. This step helps to highlight the impact of urbanization phenomenon in all its aspects: methodological, economic, social, cultural and environmental. Importance of identification is given by the necessity to know the current

state of manifestation of the urbanization process in order to put in front the causes and factors that led to its production.

In order to be able to perform the functions it holds, the rural area defines the land fund, or land, as the most important factor of production, with some specific features: a pre-existing factor, an item not produced by man. Human society is impossible without the Earth, which is: the location of human society itself, material support of any activities, raw material supplier given once and for all or once a year reproducible (the harvest), the place where tools were always found. Earth is a durable, virtually indestructible, but limited element.

Earth is the main form of natural factor which broadly means: soil, subsoil, air, water, fauna, flora, etc., and only narrowly only soil, which bears the name of Land Fund. The land fund, as was shown above, includes arable land, pastures, meadows, vineyards, orchards, forests, inland water surfaces and other surfaces.

On the other hand, the land represents the key element in the development of the urbanization phenomenon. Basically, it can be understood as a process of human settlements development, a very long historical one, in which we find, in an extremely complex mixture, a series of specific human needs or spiritual and material social acts. I. Alecu (1994) said that the urbanization process increases its complexity and gets an unpredictability feature due to synergistic effects of different actions and the novelty through combination, which makes it more difficult to analyze and resolve issues raised in relation to the source that generates them. This is evidenced by the multitude of information regarding urban development that experts in this field have acquired over time, which, paradoxically, are not sufficient to make us less vulnerable to the alarming signals in our environment.

In order to characterize the elements that influence rural-urban relationship is necessary to define the two spaces in terms of how they interact, as part of society, in an complex interdependency. The two elements characteristics determination involves, firstly, the identification of differences between the two types of territorial collectivities. On a first view, discrepancies refer to the level of economic development, with a special feature, namely the hierarchy. For Romania this hierarchy requires an obvious distinction between rural and urban, but also a significant one through components on each side.

1.2. Carrying out the relationship between rural and urban

To make an accurate analysis of what is rural, with all its characteristic elements, we cannot differentiate rural areas from urban ones. Most often, rural interacts with urban space. Knowledge of rural, in all its dimensions, requires, in many respects, a comparative "rural-urban" analysis. Differences between rural and urban areas, in terms of economic and social organization, and also development issues are the result of the "rural-urban" distinction. Views on the conduct of the relationship are shared. For example, Badouin (1971) defines rural as opposed to urban areas, designating through this concept ... *popular areas characterized by a relatively weak density and prevalence of agricultural activities. Rural areas, unlike urban space, do not imply strong concentrations of people. Clusters are limited to the size of the village. It is represented by a form of scattered habitat in the form of hamlets or farms disseminated in nature. Rural areas are suitable for agricultural activities ... On the other hand; if rural space favors land as a production factor ... rural area is simultaneously settlement and environment.* On the other hand, Meves (1981) trying to rekindle the interference between rural-urban terms, explains that this relationship tends

to integrate in *both ways: urban in rural and contrary*. In addition, the author makes a reference to agriculture *as plant and animal production process* that although *plays a determinant role, the phenomenon is only part of agriculture* it is *inextricably linked to the rural environment but not necessarily to the urban one*.

Analyzing the two views from the perspective of Romania, we can quite easily identify a paradox which is responsible to an extent for today's situation. For us, the normality required by the interference between rural and urban areas is hampered by the current opposition between the two. We can consider that this phenomenon is due mainly to rural environment that fails to keep pace with urban development, a claim which does nothing but to certify, once again, the gaps between the two environments.

Equally we believe that urban areas are to blame for the current situation, which has opted for development for its own direct benefit, leaving rural areas without labor, so by default in freefall. It is obvious that, in Romania, the only option for equilibration of the balance is a correct regional land design, a rational planning, which may entail a reduction of existing gaps, and thus lead to a harmonious development. Reality shows however that the situation of opposition between the two areas is only an extremist tendency, because rural and urban areas need each other, being totally dependent.

1.3. Industrialism- urbanization relationship in rural areas

Viewed from theoretical perspectives, urbanization is a process of industrialization, modernization and development of rural areas that refers to specificity of activities within the area subjected to transformation by replacing those activities related to agriculture by service and industry ones.

It follows that the relationship between rural and urban areas could take place in two directions aiming, in particular, to eliminate differences between frames. Rural sociology describes two theories of work, urbanization and modernization of villages, thus explaining the fact that the urbanization process of the Romanian village involves more than just its modernization through industrialization, primarily implying agricultural development.

Urbanization can be defined as a phenomenon whose implications are being felt on all levels. It requires a great need of consumer goods, resulting from the transformation through the process of industrialization of materials and energy resources. The problems it brings into question are multiple and complex, involving both the supply of material goods, utilities and energy and also space problems, stress or cohabitation.

It is undisputed that industrialism entails the application of new working methods, generated by technical, economic and social processes and phenomena that have immediate and long-term consequences over the space in which they are implemented. The technical nature require the use of various production machines and mechanisms through which one can obtain a much larger quantity of products at much lower costs. This automatically implies a different economic and social vision of the entire production process, resulting in a change in human thinking and action by abandoning old traditions in favor of the new vision of the future.

The only chance that Romania has to save itself from the situation remains the help offered by the European Union, which can be considered our only way to catch the differences that currently exist. The indulgents talk about the gap recovery between the degree of

development of rural and urban, while the realists added above also the visible gaps between Romania and other European Union countries, on most plans.

Moreover, we have the advantage of being able to find clear examples in history, economic models of transition to normality, as most developed countries had a predominantly agricultural economy. Internationally, the transformation of agriculture through industrialization process involves replacing the old methods and techniques of crop land with those which could provide a significant increase in agricultural production and industry development even further. In Romania, however, the industrialization of agriculture is low and much delayed; using outdated technology and equipment, little fertilizers and so fewer areas cannot meet the new requirements.

Although the development of industry entails the development of services and commerce, when we talk about demographic relations between rural and urban this phenomenon directly promotes the urban concentrations of newly formed activities. The need for labor, higher and relatively safe earnings, and the convenience of the city caused a strong migration of rural population to urban areas, resulting in the depopulation of rural areas.

In the short term, this process results seem devastating to rural areas. But the idea of industrial development is based and guides on certain principles, among which: -selection of location for new objectives, in order to become more attractive for investors; - demarcation of industrial centers;-structure and infrastructure improvements; - agreement and support of public authorities.

Through these principles, industrial development aims directly to elements related to agriculture. Thus, if we consider the significance of agriculture in the rural economy, we can say that the effects of such process can have beneficial outcomes for rural, by developing the agricultural sector, in a way that increases the demand for agricultural products, by providing efficient means, and by forming of large farms or commercial association of workers to carry out works of common control, for example, soil erosion.

But all the shares of industrial development might not materialize if rural areas would not contribute to employment, whose dynamics is given by the growth of non-agricultural activities. In this context it may be considered a stimulus, representing a positive influence coming from rural areas, through agriculture in particular, reflected on the whole process of industrialization.

Another aspect that should be mentioned, which comes as a consequence of industrialization phenomenon, refers to the development of agricultural processing products industries. The direct result is considered to be, on the one hand, stimulation of agricultural production growth, and secondly, the effect on certain production industries producing inputs required by farmers for processing raw materials, achieving a vertical development.

This development is beneficial for both agriculture and industry as a whole. We're talking basically about a joint field between the two elements, which have some significant advantages for each of them. But in order to reach this point, the vertical development must be based on specific sources of work such as: -increasing the amount of capital for agriculture to increase agricultural productivity potential; -the tendency of commercial enterprises and providers of inputs for agriculture to impose their control over agricultural production; -marketing organization and specialization of agricultural products units.

From the above we can say that the most viable solution for agricultural development is the rapid expansion of industry, services, road rehabilitation and infrastructure of rural settlements. Thus, between agriculture and other non-agricultural activities (industry,

services, transportation) is established a relationship with double meaning, implying that industrialization can be felt positive and successful in agricultural development. The rapid development of industry and services is mandatory for agricultural development and hence the countryside.

2. OPTIMIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN, IN THE CONTEXT OF URBANIZATION

Speaking about the relationship between urban and rural areas, about the proper organization of the territory, we consider that the planning stage is set up as a premeditated and volitional human action, in order to obtain a new organizational framework, a new organization. Benedek (2004) states that *arrangement of territory is the planning or design of concrete actions with a territorial component, is a rational systemic operation, transposed into practice through public works and through control over spatial phenomena (expansion of cities, industrialization, environmental pollution, etc.)*.

Benedek (2004) proposes *territorial planning (as) the definition, formulation and implementation of goals, objectives, methods and practical tools that seek to solve problems seen as dysfunctions in the organization and functioning of society, fighting some forms of organization of space that are consistent with public expectations*. Also included in land-use planning are institutions and laws that ensure permanence and consistency of territorial interventions, all contributing to exercising the control function of the society over the space and its components. Such a definition of the concept of planning is synonymous with the French term "aménagement du territoire" and "territorial planning" in the Anglo-Saxon school. Currently, it deals with the technical sense of the term arrangement for the intention of reporting it to concrete purposes and goals.

We can say that territory arrangement is a complex set of activities that leads to the economic, technological, social, cultural and environmental policies, seeking to harmonize the natural and human activities, in line with the general values of society.

Currently, according to Law no. 350/2001 regarding Planning and Urbanism, updated in 2008, territory arrangement pursues these objectives as balanced socio-economic development of regions, the modernization of the countryside, responsible management of natural resources and environmental protection, rational use of land (particularly agricultural and forestry), selectively linking sectoral development plans in the landscaping plans. Territorial planning, as seen by Benedek (2004) requires a *spatial development planning and a systematic promotion of social and economic progress*. This is circumscribed to a desirable policy of ecological construction and reconstruction, with the purpose of establishing a harmony between society and nature, and by placing human evolution on a sustainable development path.

At the same time, Gusti (1974) addresses the concept from the perspective of global issues, stressing that territorial organization as a hypothesis is valid in all situations, regardless of social system and form of government, because there are always and everywhere imperfect forms of resources use.

However, the shortcomings of existing legislative and regulatory framework as well as loose or even abusive interpretation of it by local authorities and sometimes by the courts, continues to generate and produce adverse effects and, in some cases, irreparable loss of rural in favor of the cities.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion which can be drawn from these ideas is provided by Bold (1973), who believes that *the achievement of territorial synergy may result from these plans if they are dominated by a real scientific foundation. "Standardization" of these plans at various operational and administrative levels, ensures optimal local couplings, which can be harmonized at superstate levels such as unions or communities of states.*

Following the study, we conclude that, in Romania, we can see a very large gap between rural and urban, which has its roots in faulty mode of action over the two elements in their battle for the land. By changes generated at economic, social or cultural level, the urban succeeds in breaking through the rural areas causing damages hard to be recovered. Due to the urban area characteristics it presents, it will always be an attraction for the elements that make up the countryside. Moreover, the intensification of industrialization in the cities tends to create a greater disparity and opportunities for fighting back from rural areas are scarce.

Rapid and uncontrolled urban development inevitably leads to an increased demand for land, which means an intensification of the dispute between rural and urban areas regarding land fund that Romania has. Combining economic, geographical and social effects there will always be a winner and a loser.

In order to provide a balance between urbanization and rural areas, it is essential to establish a correct way of land management, as part of the management of urban development with land market mechanisms, emphasizing the impact of zoning regulations on land prices and hence on urban development. In this case, the balance can be achieved through urban land demand regulation which is currently determined by the method of its use. Demand is influenced by site characteristics, but is affected by demographic and economic variables, such as capital market rate, the income level of population, level of money savings and access to credit. But it that has a hard word to say is the price that the urban area is willing to pay to dispose of the rural representative component, agricultural land.

By establishing a proper legal and methodological framework we will be able to clearly define the priorities of this sector, thus achieving the future of harmonious relations between rural and urban areas, which, above all, involves a process of integration in both directions: rural into urban and urban into rural.

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