

# The Romanian Rural Economy – a Resource of Growth and Regional Cooperation, or a Source of Conflicts and Insecurity?

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*In an attempt to answer such a delicate question, we try to present the characteristics of Romanian rural economy, underlining its political, social, demographic, cultural, and even religious specificity. It is a thorough analysis of the diminution of the force and impact of the rural traditions, of the inflexion in the dynamics of rural overpopulation, of the reduction of the aversion in comparison with the urban, which confers a new identity to the Romanian countryside. The rural economy is also made up of the aggregation of the peasant's economic behaviour and attitudes. The new rural-urban relationships change the identity-perishability antinomy. We try to use statistical arguments and to establish some important axes of the new programmes and projects, apt to reveal through the urban-rural convergence and through the downgrading of the discrepancies between the two kinds of environment.*

*Key words: rural economy, rural-urban convergence and discrepancies, statistical indices and arguments.*

*JEL classification: R13*

## I. Introduction

The Romanian rural community, whose relative weight was prevalent before 1986, was structured around the axis of the village as a phenomenon of special economic and social complexity, defined by its own demography, by the traditional precincts of the village, as the passive geographic area where the peasant dwellings were set, and the farming land, as the active geographic area where the villagers' working places were spread. Hence, saying that a significant part of an economy like that of Romania is rural or traditional, or that the individual who runs a rural husbandry, and not a business in the economic sense proper, i.e. the farmer / villager, is its principal element, does not automatically explain why this traditional *rurality* still persists, and which is the distinctive mark of the villager who allowed it to be so longevous. The main studies conducted on rural economy are focused on three directions. The first – specifically economic – direction belongs to Virgil Madgearu, who expounded it in his 1940 book *Evoluția economiei românești după războiul mondial* (*The Evolution of the Romanian Economy After the World War*). The second, a predominantly statistical one, is that adopted by Nicolae Georgescu-

Roegen, which was presented in *The Encyclopaedia of Romania*, volume III, entitled *The National Economy*, published in 1940; subsequently, its orientation was biologically and entropically derived, as presented in his 1960 *Teoria economică și studiul economiei agrare (The Economic Theory and the Study of Agrarian Economy)*. The third direction is traced culturally, ethically and economically by Mircea Vulcănescu in his work *Prolegomene sociologice la satul românesc (Sociological Prolegomena to the Romanian Village)*, republished in 1997; it was rounded off from a demographical perspective by Anton Golopenția, through his *Complete Works*, republished in 2001, and from a sociological perspective by the prominent members of the sociological school, through their works and papers issued as a result of the monographic campaigns, in *the Journal of Romanian Sociology*, between 1937 and 1943.

Twelve characteristic features of the Romanian rural communities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be revealed, in a synthetic sketch:

1. The economic relationships based on constraint; the social relationships of dependence in the production system of the Romanian rural husbandry were relatively limited.
2. As the incentive provided by the exchange having as an object the products was comparatively absent, a natural tendency was noted to limit the production of goods to those meant for self-sufficient-consumption. It can be said that, at best, most of the production was used either to the producers' benefit, or to pay back their debts, as it was intended for neither exchange nor gain.
3. Although the control exerted on the production means was decentralized, the peasants remained the rural cultivators whose surpluses were transferred to a group of elderly people, initiators or descendants of the village or the main precincts of the village, a group who used those surpluses for themselves, but also to redistribute them towards those who were unable to produce, but had to get food and sustain themselves, and the transfer took place in exchange for various services. That group generated the funds destined to old traditions (viz. the series of ceremonial rituals), which underlined the economic, religious and cultural solidarity of Romanian rural community.
4. Still the Romanian peasant was a farmer / land cultivator as well as an animal breeder holding a long-term relationship with the urban area. There was no urban milieu without a rural milieu, and neither will their be in future, unless the urban succeeds in taking over the function of land cultivator and of breeder of stock through the agency of the modern agricultural farm, based on relationships determined by the equilibrium between demand and supply, with ensuing profit, or on the existence of state subsidies, in those cases where this is imposed by the intervention of the state. The Romanian peasant was also compelled to maintain a supplementary relationship of equivalence between his own demand and the requirements of the urban milieu, thus being under inherent pressure meant to preserve the right balance with respect to his limited resources.
5. The Romanian rural economy centred round the family, the kinship relations, and its whole structure and organization was determined by the size and the coordination between the consumption needs and the number of the hands (i.e. the labour-worthy members). This is what can account for the importance of rural overpopulation, which used to connect the density of the village population with its agricultural land area during the pre-war and inter-war periods. The symptoms characteristic of agrarian overpopu-

lated territories were: *“the fragmentation of the farming land, the high prices the plots of land were sold or leased for, emigration, the spreading out of the connected agricultural occupations, low salaries, low agricultural income reports, receding commons-land, pasture, and individual plot areas, diminution of the livestock, and decrease in gross incomes”* (Virgil Madgearu, 1940, p. 25).

6. Out of the typology of the eco-types as systems of energy transfers from the natural environment to the human milieu, one can distinguish the paleo-technical one, marked by the use of human and animal labour force, and the neo-technical one, based on the energy supplied by fossil fuels and technology. The eco-types of rural economy represented ecologic adaptations by the village inhabitants, materialized in a number of transformations of the products, and a set of means intended to attract the inorganic sources of energy into the productive process. In the Romanian paleo-technical rural ecotype, both the farmer / cultivator, and the non-cultivator lived together being sustained by the same crops. The relative degree of using a certain plot of land through time generated a whole series of subclasses of paleo-technical eco-types [1], whose fundamental distinctness is given by the area of land used, the duration of vegetation specific to the stated tilled plant, etc. Out of the five types of village paleo-technical eco-types, only three held a major significance in Romania's rural economy, all over its historical and traditional cultural evolution: the system of burning vegetation (also called, in Romanian “pârjol, arșiță, jariște”), short-term fallowing / upturning of the land, or the peasant system of lay land (followed by fertile crops when on fallow land, and less fertile ones on ploughed and seeded fallow land, and then by abandon in the after-cultivation by seeded fallow land, and the self-sown plant stages), and the hydraulic system (Stahl H.H. and Stahl H.P., 1968, p. 20-26). These pure ecological eco-types, turned to account in the peasant husbandry, allowed the villagers to preserve high quality soils until the advent of forced chemical fertilization and mechanization of agricultural crops in rural cooperatives. The eco-type centred on the cooperative hydraulic system was impossible to continue as a result of the destruction of the irrigation installations (a consequence hard to imagine of the restoration of private property against the background of the deteriorated property instincts of an absenteeist cooperative type). On a broader European plane, the Romanian rural eco-type combined elements of the Mediterranean eco-type with elements of the trans-Alpine or continental one. The neo-technical eco-types, resulting from the second agricultural revolution that took place at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century appeared in Romania's rural economy as late as the 20<sup>th</sup> century, being maintained on restricted areas, and aimed at tilling arable land all through the year, systematic multiplication of plants and animals, introducing new crops, coming from other regions of the world, and the growing tendency of regional specialization of certain crops (e.g. specialized horticulture, viticulture and pomiculture), introducing new implements, such as the iron plough drawn by two horses, the threshing machine, the harvesting machine, furrowing machines, introducing steam engines, and a new kind of agricultural management including the optimal dimensioning and dividing properties, which transformed agriculture into an economic enterprise pursuing maximization of production. The predominant neo-technical eco-type gradually becomes the mixed agriculture type, where both plants and animals are grown (and raised, respectively) for commercial ends.

7. “Although the form of property is relevant for the manner in which a peasant ecosystem is organized, serving as a model for the social relationships, what is decisive in order to prefigure the profile of a system of rural economy is the way the holders of power use that model” (Eric Wolf, 1970, p. 57). Three types of property have affected the peasantry: the patrimonial property, where the control over the inhabitants of that land is held by the owners of the land as such, the acquired property, where the land cannot be inherited, but is guaranteed for the authorities, who collect the taxes from the peasantry (Max Weber, 1947, pp. 378-381), and commercial, where the land is considered the private property of the land-holder, an entity which can be sold or bought in order to get a profit. Collecting rural taxes was the usual form of acquired property in the Romanian rural economy of the past century, and it dominated the inter-war period, jointly with the commercial property. After the process of co-operativization, i.e. from 1962 till 1989, the new type of property can be defined as administrative property, borrowing some characteristics from the acquired property, with the state holding the supremacy over the land, and the produce obtained being taxed by the state by means of a hierarchy of officials, while generating a rapid development of the state-run farms, which are led by a group of technicians trained by the state, and leaving little room for the private farms. Cereals are cultivated collectively, while each worker also possesses a small private plot, where they till their subsistence crop or the perishable produce that can be sold on the local market. The economic reality showed that, at the same time, the private lots allotted or not taken over from the cultivators proved more productive than the collective farms called *state-run agricultural farms*.

8. The Romanian rural husbandry joined together several family nuclei, and implicitly several generations. The educational aspects and the common life of the different generations were permanently favoured. An extended husbandry centred on a numerous family nucleus did not automatically generate well-being. The extended husbandry characterized the well-to-do villagers, those belonging to the rural middle classes, who owned land. The conclusion is that the accumulation of labour in a husbandry was an immediate consequence of the peasant husbandry's economic well-being. The head of the household / husbandry had to relatively persist in time, as his replacement by one of the members of the younger generations was regulated by strict customary laws / rules, which controlled the transfer of the resources and of their administration, from the elder to the younger individual. In the Romanian rural economy, for a long period of time co-existed the transfer of the resources towards a single inheritor, or the *indivisible heritage* (preponderantly towards the first-born sibling, and more recently to the last born sibling, who undertook the obligation of looking after their parents), with the transfer involving more than one inheritors, or the *divisible heritage* (which was dominant to the profit of maintaining the unity of the husbandry). The rights ensured only to the male individuals represented the most common situation, as compared with that of the general inheritance, where the daughters received compensation in the form of a dowry.

9. In the Romanian monographic research, the characterization of the economy, and especially of the village structure, identifies two fundamental types: the structural-economic type, and the homogeneous-unitary type. Both typologies are however the expression of a closed economy, of a rural type, characterized by the poor use of currency

in the exchange relationships. *“If we understand by the economy the set of the implements used by a group to achieve their aims, village life is much more an-economic than that in towns and cities. The ethic prices are indissolubly linked to the economic ones... Hence, if a commodity is cheaper on the town market, the individual who does not make it at home, but buys it passes for an “unthrifty” man, and is railed at by his fellow-villagers.”* (Mircea Vulcănescu, 1997, p. 186).

10. In the studies of ethic and rural economic typology, the dependence of the rural community was analyzed by means of the village's economic balance, which delimited, through the balance surplus, an autarkic or closed village from a village defined by commercial exchanges that were concluded, with a deficit or a surplus, with other rural regions or urban activities.

An illustration of the increased dependency of the village on the market

Table no. 1

No	Category	Village Import	Village Export	Increased dependency means: $\Delta = \text{village import} - \text{village export} > 0$ $\Delta = (n_1 + n_2 + n_3) - (n_4 + n_5 + n_6) > 0$
I.	Money	+ n <sub>1</sub>		
II.	Products			(deficit in the external relations in the village analyzed)
	-maize	+ n <sub>2</sub>	+ n <sub>4</sub>	
	-fruit and vegetables		+ n <sub>5</sub>	
	-other products		+ n <sub>6</sub>	
III.	Services	+ n <sub>3</sub>		

Source: Mircea Vulcănescu, *Prolegomene sociologice la satul românesc*, Ed. Eminescu, București, 1997, p.108

The questions asked by the economists and the statisticians of the Romanian monographic school identified quite numerous paradoxes of the rural economy, be it autarkic or isolated. *“The traditional character of the customs of an irrational nature bring forth a normal question, ‘Does the law of the minimal effort still preside over the activity of a closed economy?’, ‘Does the need of maximal production still exist? What for – just taxes and debts?’* (Mircea Vulcănescu, 1997, p. 101-109).

11. If Virgil Madgearu concentrated on rural demographic pressure, on the correlations between the density and the farming land, or rural living standards, natural growth and emigration, rural density and structure according to the residential environments, emitting a number of predictions and estimations with a historical character, which in today's context are superannuated, the sociological school had already developed and detailed the demographic analysis of the rural economy starting from the prevalent principle of



the multi-causality of a statistical type, as can be seen in the example presented in the following table:

Table no. 2

	Village	<i>Plasa</i> / Sub-district	<i>Județ</i> / County / District	Historical region	Romania
Nativity / Birth rate					
Mortality / Death rate					
<i>The maximal demographic level</i> defines the limit of the population that can find favourable life conditions within the economic situation of the village					
<b>Causal demographic analyses</b>					
Emigration	Abortion	Lack of land	Education	Traditions of occupation	

Source: The monographic model of the campaign carried out in the village of Șanț, in the Năsăud county, in 1935

12. Maybe the most realistic economic contribution with respect to the rural economy belongs to Nicolae Georgescu–Roegen. Virtually dismantling the theory of rural overpopulation in Romania, finding that agrarian economy still remains a reality without a theory, identifying no fundamental taxonomy of the villages centred around a certain evolutionary function-force, but on purely topographical criteria (villages situated in the hilly, plain, or mountain regions), around the predominance a typical crop or agricultural activities (e.g. cereal-growing, fruit-growing, vegetable-growing, viticultural, stock-breeding villages) and the location of the village inner precincts (in a compact or dispersed manner), studying and detailing the anatomy of the village, indivisible through blood relationships, village situation and activities, and starting from the specific geographic conditions, he remarked that “*agriculture will long represent a primordial economic activity for some communities, which will not be able to develop along the guideline specific to the industrialized nations*” (Nicolae Georgescu–Roegen, 1976, p. 214).

The Romanian village remains dominated by the flows of property, by the repartition of the usufruct, and not by the principles of marginal productivity, relatively inoperative in the last century, but which can represent major landmarks of the new agricultural policies in a Romania that has completely outgrown the sphere of agrarian overpopulation.

Pointing out to the complexity of the rural economy, in addition to the lack of an economic theory and a set of data with an acceptable degree of coverage, the sociological school noticed, through the voice of its most remarkable researchers, “*There no such thing as THE Romanian village, there only are Romanian villages*” (Henri Stahl, 1946, p. 40). Hence then the obsessively informational appetite of the monographic school in connection with ensuring statistical, economic, cultural, religious, etc. data, i.e. the succinct presentation – so necessary – of this component of the contemporary Romanian agrarian economy, of the rural residential milieu, in comparison to the urban one.

## II. Demographic, economic and political realities of the contemporary Romanian rural economy

The significant rural dimension of the national economy constitutes an economic and social reality with important consequences, to be continued in the period that will mark Romania's actual integration into the European Union. Though there are copious arguments at a demographic, economic and political level, only as few as twelve aspects have been selected and presented below, which synthetically reflect both the specificity, the weight and the main disparities between the rural and the urban residential milieu / environment.

I. The forced cycle of urbanization, to be noticed between 1948 and 1992, was followed by inertial recoil of *rurality*, as the population of this residential milieu, which saw a mostly descending dynamics after 1930, developed upwards during the transition period, in an abnormal loop, slowly consumed after approx. 15 years:

### Population according to the last 7 censuses, and on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2007, by residential milieus

Table no. 3

Census	Total population	No. of inhabitants, out of which in:		Weight of residential milieu:	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
29 December 1930	14280729	3051253	11229476	21.4	78.6
25 January 1948	15872624	3713139	12159485	23.4	76.6
21 February 1956	17489450	5474264	12015186	31.3	68.7
15 March 1966	19103163	7305714	11797449	38.2	61.8
5 January 1977	21559910	9395729	12164181	43.6	56.4
7 January 1992	22810035	12391819	10418216	54.3	45.7
18 March 2002	21680974	11435080	10245894	52.7	47.3
1 January 2007*	21565000	11915000	9650000	55.25	44.75

Source: [www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro) \* In keeping with the data presented during the INS conference, on September 20, 2007.

II. The rural dominant component of the localities has been stabilized, and it belongs to the interval between 2,000 and 5,000 people, immediately below the modal level of the urban localities, situated between 5,000 and 20,000 inhabitants, although there is no possibility of comparing their infrastructure and specific services, from any standpoint.

III. With a sharp increase in the ageing rate of the population, synthesized in the weight of the respective section, which is greater by 10% in the 65, and over 65 years age-groups, with a life expectancy virtually two years lower, and a mortality rate, both general and infantile, higher by nearly 50%, with an illiterate population 3.3 more numerous than that in the urban milieu – a category that holds a weight of nearly 4.5 % out of the total population aged 10 and more, the rural population is still defined, in its majority, by the Romanian villager's traditional husbandry, and to a much smaller extent by the modern agricultural farm.

IV. With twice the ratio of activity and of occupation along the lower educational segment, the rural population experiences only one third of the ratio of urban unemployment, within the same segment of low educational level, in accordance with the date recorded in the AMIGO inquiry, in the first trimester of the year 2007.

### The ratio of activity, occupation and unemployment, in keeping with the AMIGO survey

Table no. 4  
%

	Total	out of which, in keeping with the educational level:		
		Higher	Medium	Lower
<i>Ratio of activity</i>	61.7	87.8	68.3	41.6
- urban milieu	61.1	88.1	66.2	25.6
- rural milieu	62.6	84.5	72.1	51.4
<i>Ratio of occupation</i>	57.2	85.0	63.1	37.6
- urban milieu	56.2	85.4	60.7	20.7
- rural milieu	58.6	80.7	67.6	47.9
<i>Ratio of unemployment BIM*</i>	7.0	3.1	7.5	8.0
- urban milieu	8.1	3.0	8.3	18.3
- rural milieu	5.8	4.3	6.2	5.4

Source: www.insse.ro \* According to the data presented during the INS conference, on September 20, 2007.

V. The house specific to the rural milieu is situated, as a rule, singularly within a dwelling building, mostly erected over the interval between 1945 and 1970, and endowed with water supply installations and sewers in a low proportion, under 15%, with gas supply installations – under 10%, and central heating installations – nearly 2%.

VI. The general budget of the rural households strikes through the prevalent weight of the incomes in kind and resulting from agriculture, and also through the high amount of self-sufficient consumption, still lying around 1/3 of the total expenditure, as well as the low percentage of money spending, taxes and imposts.

### The Level and Structure of the Expenses of the Romanian Households, according to the ABF 2006 survey

Table no. 5



	Total spending lei (RON)	out of which, in %:			Consumption out of own resources (%)
		Money spending	out of which:		
			Consumption spending	Taxes and imposts	
Total	1305	83.0	62.5	13.5	17.0
Urban	1459	92.5	69.9	17.5	7.5
Rural	1104	66.8	49.8	6.6	33.2

Source: www.insse.ro

Approached typologically, the money income of the rural husbandry reflects a net salary level of only 72,4% of the national average as on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007 (viz. 753 lei / RON as compared to 1,040), and a pension level of 38,4% of the average state-administered social welfare pension at the end of the first semester of the same year (viz. 140 lei / RON as compared to 365).

VII. Starting from the hypothesis of the contribution of the rural residential milieu to the formation and the dynamics of the prices for food products (identified as rural export), and that of the urban milieu, especially within the range of the non-food products (identified as rural import), we can redefine a rural-to-urban price shears (PS), starting from the detailed PCIs (i.e. price consumer indices), as follows:

$$PS = (1 - IRSN) \times 100 = \frac{I_{\text{non-food goods}}^P - I_{\text{food goods}}^P}{I_{\text{non-food goods}}^P} \times 100 = \quad (306347.26 -$$

223759.08):306347.26=0.27 (respectively 27%) over a 17 year period, starting from the PCI values in June 2007, as compared to October 1990, for food commodities (223,759.08%), and for non-food commodities (306,347.26%). A price shears of the rural husbandries actually reflects the village-dwellers' much bigger effort, resulting from the territory distribution of inflation, as their incomes, low as they are, additionally lose substance by approximately 27% more than those in the urban milieu, as a consequence of the much steeper increase in the price of the non-food goods. The tradition of the price shears, maintained in the national economy to the detriment of the rural milieu, is also recorded and assessed between 1929 and 1938, oscillating between a minimum of 23.35 and 36.2 % (Virgil Madgearu, 1940, republished in 1995, p. 61, and Nicolas Georgescu-Roegen, 1943, republished in 1997, p. 81).

VIII. The structure of the gross national product by categories of resources reveals an oscillating contribution of the aggregate of activities like agriculture, sylviculture, fishery and pisciculture, which abruptly augmented from 14.4% in 1989, to 21.8% in 1990, at the expense of a GNP which decreased by an average of 7% in the first two years, as well as an industry which has been continuously re-structured, losing 50% of its structural contribution, in favour of the field of the services. Since 1994, the dynamics and the rate of that contribution have been clearly and firmly descendant, as the aggregate of activities described above has been plummeting towards 11%. The agricultural activity, dramatically subject to cyclicity, has decreased, in point of specific weight in the make-up of the GNP, to 8,1%, and, over the first semester of the year 2007, to 3.4%, against the background of a drought which will surely diminish it further.

IX. The villager's economic behaviour has evolved from an involuntary inactivity imposed by the limited character of the soil resources and the farming equipment (Nicolas Georgescu-Roegen, 1960, p. 264) to adopting a strategy centred around working so as to stay poor in order to avoid the excesses of the urban fiscal system, the socialist agrarian policies aimed at proletarianization, and the random distribution the property of an absenteeist kind, typical of forced cooperativization campaigns, and, over the past 17 years or so, to a transition from the agrarian communism, with its imposed forms of collective and communitarian property, to the private land property. The tradition of rurality, re-born again and again, created the feeling that *the peasants form the most durable class* (Oswald Spengler, 1929, p.26), and *when the last peasant on earth disappears, the last human will disappear, too, and, with him, the human species* (Petre Țuțea, 1993, p.105). The topic was obsessively revisited during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in economics, sociology and philosophy, as an assertion in support of authenticity [2] and traditionality, being expressed as early as the first post-2000 years, right in the middle of a new Romanian transition.

X. After the year 1990, once with the completion of the five electoral cycles, the split of the national economy into two distinct parts, defined by the residential criterion: an urban Romania, on the rise, with a strong liberal component, which expects from the state opportunities rather than support and assistance, and a conservative rural Romania, typically represented by people in the 65 years-and-over age group, as well as people living under the poverty threshold, who need to be supported, not only to develop their husbandries, but mostly in order to survive. The elections to come will surely add another variable of political division, in accordance with the electorate's preference for an excessively presidential, or an excessively parliamentary Romania. Econometric modelling becomes almost impossible when the structure of rural economy is, as can be easily noticed, rapidly changing, which is an obvious thing when it comes to nations and countries in transition. The current state of agriculture is due to the countless changes in the agricultural politics. The political factors having a major negative influence are still acting on Romanian agriculture, continuing to generate the under-use of the existing production factors as well as poor complementarities. The turnouts in the 2004 parliament election, cumulated at horary intervals offer significant differences between rural and urban (final information: 60.84 % urban, and only 54.41 % rural).

XI. The religious structure recorded by the 18 March 2002 census reflects a strong concentration within the class of the Orthodox denomination. The diversity of the denominational weights is a little higher than that recorded by the 7 January 1992 census, but much smaller if compared to the data of the 1930 census, although the information is not rigorously comparable. The rural environment includes 86.2 % Orthodox population, as compared to 87.2 % in the urban areas.

XII. After the year 1999, the totally irrational or aberrant economic behaviour generated a rural crime rate slightly diminished (cca. 15% less) as to the urban environment: the number of those convicted by definitive decisions of the court, as on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006, was 30,146 in the rural localities, as against 35,536 in urban areas, except for the category of the offences against the individual, where the number of the villagers convicted is double that of the town-inhabitants convicted.

### III. Most Recent European Point of View for the Romanian Rural Economy

The most recent survey on the structure of agricultural holdings in Romania was carried out in February and March 2006 on a sample basis, and the reference date of the farm structure survey for livestock, structural data and organic farming was 31 December 2005.

There are some distinguished signs of post transition Romanian rural economy[3], from european point of view (Benoist György and Marquer Pol, 2007, p. 1-7):

1. About 1.24 million agricultural Romanian holdings had an economic size of at least 1 ESU (European Size Unit).
2. A strange trend of concentration of the average area of holding (from 8.8 ha in 2003 to 8.4 ha in 31 december 2005).
3. The real Romanian holding is made of means less than one AWU (annual work units). Among 1.24 million agricultural Romanian holdings, 55% made use of less than one AWU, while only 9% made use of 2 or more AWUs;
4. The modern holding means only 1% in Romanian rural Economy (from 1.24 million agricultural holdings just 1% used 100 ha or more, and 74% used less than 5 ha agricultural area).
5. Nearby 69 % from Romanian holdings produce mainly for their own consumption (*subsistence farming*).
6. Romanian rural Economy in traditional point of view is so aged, full of women and alternative, that it will disappear in a short period of less than one generation (among the 1.24 million sole holders: 20% were women, 71% were aged 55 or more, and only 4% were younger than 35 years, 16% had another gainful activity as their major occupation).

Perhaps after 20 years, no more traditional rural economy will be found in this part of Europe. But who is able now to use these statistical arguments and to establish some important axes of the new programmes and projects, revealing through the Romanian rural -European agricultural economy and convergence and through the downgrading of the discrepancies between the two kinds of organizing farms and working the land?

### IV. Conclusions and Final Remarks

A natural, fundamental conclusion can be inferred to the effect that the structural changes that are about to occur in the 2007-2027 period can trigger a series of processes of social alienation by certain segments of the population living in the rural areas, who suffer significant, far-reaching mutations as compared to the situation in the past century. The advent of comparatively high unemployment (if compared with the usual rate), and its rising evolution in the rural economy, determined by the general re-structuring, viz. the restriction of maintaining the inflation indices at acceptable levels, the price shears for the agricultural products coming from the rural areas in comparison with the prices of the industrial goods coming from the urban areas, the lack of resources destined to the degraded or non-existing rural infrastructure will even influence in a negative manner the *vulnerable* components of the traditional peasant society, will cause increasing outward migratory flows, and also an ascending criminal behaviour, expressed

as both impact and indicators, migrating from the offences directed against the individual towards those directed against the patrimony. Though the identification and the attempts at evaluating and turning to account Romania's competitive advantages in the European Union confer to agriculture a priority position through the fields of ecological agriculture, centred around natural food produces, viticulture, as a resource for the wine industry, horticulture and nature pharmaceutical products, etc., the concrete preoccupations and programmes are insufficient within the rural space.

Yet the attraction exerted by the Romanian village seems not to have ceased. Villages continue to animate the younger generations, who are exploring, and trying to identify their cultural roots, which are probably located in plain or mountain villages, along river meadows or on hill slopes, in outspread groups of houses or in isolated homes, gathered together or spread like flocks of birds, or in groves. The Romanian rural economy still remains both a resource of economic development, or else of regional collaboration, and a source of conflicts and insecurity.

### Notes

[1] The classic paleotechnical eco-types are: the systems of lasting turning-up / fallowing, or fallowing through burning (cleaning by fire, and then tilling by means of hoe), the systems sectorial turning-up / fallowing (the land under crop is divided into two or more sectors, which are cultivated for two or three years, and left to go into fallow for another three or four), the systems of turning-up / fallowing over a short period of time, or of Eurasian cereal agriculture (the land, cultivated with the plough drawn by animals for one or two years is re-used after another year meant for regeneration), systems of permanent cultivation, or hydraulic systems (centred around building mechanisms supplying water), and systems of permanent cultivation of the favoured plots (which turns to account alternative plots, in combination with the sporadic utilization of the less productive plots).

[2] In view of which idea, the realism of Lucian Blaga's statements becomes all the more suggestive and revealing: *"The Romanian village, in spite of its poverty and all the shortcomings which came to drill into it through the grievous concourse of the centuries, is to an exceptional extent worth of the epithet of genuineness... This should not be understood as a desire to maintain ourselves within the village achievements."*

[3] Some methodological information becomes obviously necessary. For each activity on a farm (for instance wheat, or cow), a *standard gross margin* (SGM) was estimated, based on the area (or the number of heads) and a regional coefficient. The sum of such margins in a farm is its economic size, expressed in *European Size Units* (ESU). 1 ESU is equal to 1200 euros. Each farm is classified in the community typology by its economic size and its type of farming, depending on the share of each enterprise in its economic size. Depending on the level of aggregation, farms are grouped into 8 to 70 types. *Annual work unit* (AWU) is equivalent to a worker employed on a full time basis for one year. In Romania it is 1960 hours (245 working days of 8 working hours per day). *Livestock Unit* (LU) is equivalent to a dairy cow. The number of animals (number of heads) is converted into LU using a set of coefficients reflecting the feed requirements of the different animal categories. *Subsistence farming* refers here to all farms below 1 ESU eco-

conomic size. Note that the number of farms cannot be compared between countries due to the differences in coverage of FSS.

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