

FAMILY HOUSEHOLD BETWEEN SUBSISTENCE AND SOCIAL STABILITY

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Abstract: *For many analyzes, evaluating the rural households is based on their understanding as agricultural units involving subsistence which implies production capacity to provide general needs for permanent or alternating working families in this area. From the analysis of family budgets results really that a large part of income, both as product and as cash is allocated to cover the two primary needs: food and clothing, but remains a consistent part for maintenance, renovation and modernization of housing - house plus annex serving dwelling. This contributes to increasing the comfort of the family - embracing a lifestyle distinct from strictly rural - with inductions into the modern urban and household items that are totally different then the ones in those areas - stove, central heating, cable TV, domestic appliances for various services, etc. Even if we consider another criterion proposed by the well-known sociologist Sandu starting from the variation in size, which means the change of human capital - in Romania a small village with few inhabitants is considered a poor village - (Sandu, 1999) nor it does induce to a placement of such villages as poor, each being less numerous, they having other indicators that place them above these limits.*

Key words: *Family, households, subsistence, enterprise, village.*

The evolution of agricultural activities in terms of households functionality as legitimate forms of consuming goods production, using and exploiting not only areas of land, animals, birds but an inventory of owners and/or other workers work have taken shapes, sizes, according to rural and human factors that populated society's communities and villages.

For many analyzes, the evaluation of these rural households is based on their understanding as subsistence agricultural units which imply production capacity to provide general needs for permanent or alternating working families in this area. In

this sense we can discuss about some criteria of such households classification in the category of subsistence:

- Activities and work are carried out by family members of those units;
- Technical equipment level is low - most of the work is manually carried or using machines and animals, especially without a proper specialization of the workers;
- The products are the capital resources meant to satisfy family needs;
- The living standard reflected in indicators of consumed goods is low;
- Housing and annexes present a limited degree of maintenance – they are quite old,

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without repair and construction in the current context;

- Product sale on the market or interpersonal is done only sporadically either in terms of accidental surpluses or due to pressing needs;

- Access to credits is limited either because of bank imposed conditions that population cannot meet or because of limited household growth projections;

- Social policies that are meant to induce active behaviors of the owners have limited influence also due to a minimal education and culture, but also due to the fact that there are no specialists in the field in these areas. Those in the budgetary field are being fired and those in the governmental sphere don't consider such dimensions as being suitable. Most organizations in these categories operate in urban areas with specific purposes;

- Productivity of economic activities is low not only because of rudimentary technical level but also due to the quality of the land used for various works, which has a limited degree of fertility, is rough, ranged as a property. It affects the mechanization of agricultural work;

- Even if the owners' exercise is consistent, certain mentality and also traditional rural environment specific beliefs emphasize the resistance to certain changes in the type of crop varieties, animal breeds and birds due to low media consumption in these areas (Voicu, 2006);

- The aging of the population is specific to Romanian rural area and this causes the limited capacity of effort, minimum perspective of certain way of life, limited in terms of duration. Moreover, there is another demographic dimension – the feminization of active population in agriculture. Most men refer to other fields like constructions, industries etc, which are better paid.

Analyzing the evolution of agricultural households in different areas, Sandu

discusses certain aspects comparing types of subsistence farms with the entrepreneurial ones.

Thus the author differentiates:

- Integral subsistence farms that correspond to traditional models of development and too little open to change, satisfying the needs for life mostly with their products;

- Partial subsistence farms are dominated by conditions, traditional factors but whose actors have access to other sources of income - workers, laborers, craftsmen, workers with equipment, etc.

- Households enterprise organized among which we distinguish: Contractors commercially oriented: to short-term profits and entrepreneurs with focus on investment – they aim the long-term activities, using modern technical means and thinking of profits rhythmically and successively obtained, according to certain periods and stages of various sectors in which they activate.

Nowadays, a distinct and extended development mode of some farms is represented by the lease by which a person (physically dominant, but there are companies that have engaged in this form) contracts a surface of land in various shapes and conditions, on which it operates, giving the owner a part of the profit - percentage or fixed.

Exploitation of land lease is facilitated by certain conditions, factors and contributes to the expansion of the ongoing agricultural activities:

- limiting surfaces in small properties that disadvantage mechanic works, chemisation, irrigation, etc.;

- Aging agricultural population who prefer to accept the lease of areas in order to have secure income even if it is lower;

- Depopulation of villages due to internal and external migration of the population;

- Immediate use possibilities of a technical, cash capital, resulting in short-term profits;

- Access to certain credits in acceptable conditions for tenants;
- Access to European funds in favorable terms.

Although there is a law of rent published in 1994, it cannot be said that this process has effectively developed both for owners and tenants investors because:

- there are deficiencies in the documentation of ownership - not enough property titles, dismantling of properties is not certified, there are no documents about property as a result of land reform (after the Second World War);
- The conflicts of interest between the land owners (large areas) and tenants are stressed. There also conflicts between those who will buy lands and them;
- Following the specific legislative gap after 1989 and the disintegration of state farms and collective farms, some areas have been improperly introduced to various economic circuits, and others - with some shortcomings - remain uncultivated;
- There is no large enough capital for lessees to develop modern extended works for production to be profitable in appropriate markets. There is a need for storage with hygienic and technical normative requirements, processing products required on the market;
- Disappearance of some elements of necessary infrastructure - access roads, means of irrigation, etc;
- The agricultural land differential rent is prevalingly dependent on natural conditions the tenant also reports to and thus not every surface of land is of great interest.

Related to the economic status of these villages we can state that they are far from being considered poor ones, given the continuity of productive activities that do not reproduce a subsistence economy, but a productive economy, which results in not only primary resources required for the

entire satisfaction of family needs, but also in income and resources that provide both a development of households and a qualitative change of families lifestyle.

From the analysis of family budgets indeed results that a large part of income, both as product and as cash is allocated to covering the two primary needs: food and clothing, but there remains a consistent part for maintenance, renovation and modernization of housing - house plus annex which serve the dwelling. This contributes to increasing the comfort of the family - embracing a distinct lifestyle from the strictly rural one - with inductions into the modern urban and household items that are totally different then the ones in those areas - stove, central heating, cable TV, domestic appliances for various services, etc.

Moreover, in each of these villages there are houses that have been subject of renovation and modernization in the last 10-12 years, consisting of:

- development and use of housing annexes;
- restoration of housing infrastructure;
- provide homes with both new, modern or traditional furniture and elements and ensuring a distinct 'imaging';
- increase housing capacity of each house by adding new rooms or floors.

We can highlight families tendency to allocate a large part of resources and revenues for the development of households - not just for the dwelling (for trial implementation of everything that household means).

Modernization of some activities through the acquisition of mechanized modern inputs in order to lessen exercise, that increase product quality by increasing work efficiency, also change the whole look of household space, ornaments, flowers. In this context it is necessary to

prepare families for adopting new roles - against mechanized means of production as for acquiring certain abilities, skills to ensure their normal use.

If we talk about the development standard of these villages and try to delimit the villages with strong social- economic development that would meet a decent way of life for most people from poor villages, which would include most of the population under decent living standard, analyzes lead us to searching and understanding quite particular from community to community.

Thus, based on the criteria proposed by Sandu through which we can identify poor villages, such a village must meet at least three of them (Sandu, 2003):

1. Less than 50% of households have access to drinking water in the yard or at the gate.
2. More than 60% of households are not connected to the electricity grid.
3. More than 50% of children in primary and secondary schools spend more than an hour to get to school using normal means of transport.
4. To get to a medical examination, most villagers need more than two hours.
5. The distance to the nearest town with more than 50 thousand inhabitants exceeds 25 km.
6. Public transport is the most deficient so there is no means of transport (public or private) to ensure, at least once a day trips from the village and into the village.
7. Less than 5% of households have functional phone.
8. There are no other economic agents to carry out business outside the commerce and public alimentation.

Proceeding the same on each village separately, we can sustain that none of those listed meets four of the eight criteria in accordance with the type of evaluation proposed, based on economic and social conditions. Most of them have relevance to the economic life move away from these criteria limit, while others are no longer current criteria.

Discussing the criterion of functional handset, this becoming mobile phone, produced a radical change in the mode of communication between the inhabitants of these villages and those in other communities - More information is transmitted without any problem for most of the villagers.

We must admit that in the last 3-5 years (sometimes earlier) elementary and secondary schools have closed in most villages due to economic measures (very few students who incurred high costs while transportation of students to other schools is done by minibuses (special or common) and/ or in private).

We mention these villages with population demographically aging and therefore with a very small school population, even zero, but there can be no state of poverty, but rather of a low social comfort.

Although the distance from many villages to the largest cities in the area is more than 25 km, Poiana Sibiu - Sibiu, Jina - Sibiu, these places cannot be considered poor, but rather rich which cancels this criterion also.

The more distant some villages are from the large urban areas, the more they have caused the attractions for certain groups or families to ensure their more "personal" leisure, buying or building holiday homes, starting tourist activities, pensions in more and more attractive environments, and thus the standard of local people increased, providing employment and access to consuming goods being easier.

Even if we consider another criterion proposed by the same known sociologist, starting from the variation in size, which means the change of human capital - a Romanian small village with few inhabitants is considered a poor one - (Sandu, 1999) not even this one induces to a placement of such villages as being poor, each of less numerous ones having other indicators that place them above these limits.

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