

EUROPEAN RURAL AREA AND THE CONCEPT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT. INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES¹

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Abstract. *The rural space is not a material and uniform space. Uniformity can be considered in two aspects: the first is related to physical space - topography, basement, soil and microclimate; the second refers to demography - density, polarization from small communities to large urban areas. Through this article, we propose a conceptual analysis of rural Europe from the perspective of five disciplines: historical, geographical, sociological, political and functional economic. The purpose of this conceptual analysis, in which the literature has been used, is to understand the evolution of European rural space and rural development in the context of the transformations to which it has been subjected*

Keywords: *rural area, evolution, European, rural development, interdisciplinary*

The historical perspective on the rural space

An investigation of the European rural area in general, of rural development in particular, from a historical perspective is a great challenge, an area of interest whose roots can be found in all historical periods.

In the opinion of the French historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, rural civilization is first and foremost the product of a history. He proposes a stratigraphic history, developing this concept based on the specific contributions that rural civilization receives from each century or group of centuries and from each millennium (Le Roy Ladurie, 2020).

Historians concerned with the history of Europe, the evolution of civilizations in rural Europe notice first a development, as was natural, of primitive forms of organization influenced by climate change to which the European continent has been subjected. Among them are Jean Carpentier and François Lebrun who attach special importance to the way of life of people without history. At the beginning of the tenth millennium, the last hunter-gatherers change their living conditions and living environment according to the rate at which the cold decreases in intensity, a process that varies by region. Europeans have continued to hunt for fish since then, evolving their equipment while still maintaining their traditional techniques of subsistence. In this context, according to the French modernist historian Jean Carpentier, in the European space, on the territory now owned by Ireland, England, North Germany, Scandinavia, Poland, Russia, new areas of superior civilization appear in socio-economic terms. Certain groups, well adapted to the environment, which live isolated from dynamic areas, are maintained until the fifth century BC. and sometimes

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even as far back as the 4th century BC, even though it suffers from some influences of the Neolithic environment (Carpentier, 1997: 30).

Starting from the incipient forms of living specific to the historical periods, the appearance of the village as a form of organization of social life is a qualitative leap (Socol, 2006: 10). In the 5th century BC. with the discovery of agriculture, nomadic life is partially transformed into sedentary life. Testimony are the durable adobe constructions in Calabria (Italy), the Iron Gates on the Danube (Balkans), (Carpentier, 1997: 31).

In antiquity the evolution of the European rural space is determined by the appearance of agriculture, by the spread of the metal that registers an increase of the rhythm of the agricultural works, the construction technique demonstrates the adaptation to the new interactions and living conditions and organization. The originality of each cultural ensemble knows its own evolution borrowing techniques from the contact between the Mediterranean populations, from southern Russia, those from the shores of the Baltic Sea, those from the Atlantic coast of Portugal and of course those from the Middle East.

Since the I-III centuries as the Roman state expanded the reforms imposed in the two areas of domination, namely the space in the west and in the east are different. In the west of the Roman Empire, for example, the share of the rural element increased during the attacks of migrants, in relation to urban areas, the latter being abandoned or transformed into fortified units. The local elites formed in those times as "landlords" relied on the protection offered by the state. In the east, cities continued to develop, being more protected from migrant attacks - with the exception of the Bacchanals (Rădvan, 2010: 19).

In the medieval rural area, the innovations registered over time, the "plowing machine", the "Gallic reaper", culminate between the 5th and 13th centuries with changes from Asia, China or India, others from Central Europe. The introduction of the machine with three functions plug-coulter-die with medieval wheels (Ladurie, 2020) but also by multiplying the wind and water mills, led to the increase of wheat and bread production. During the Middle Ages, the rural space is dominant in relation to the declining cities, the urban civilization being affected by epidemics and migratory invasions. Rural communities survive the black plague by being more physically scattered and far from the major port cities on the European Mediterranean coast, while large European cities are ravaged by the pandemic, losing their dominant role (Platon et al., 2010: 418).

Undoubtedly the classical epoch of rural civilization can be divided into two stages, namely: between 1300 -1700 during the great progress and 1700-1900 the period of progressive disintegration of rural civilization by industrial and post-industrial society. By analyzing the two periods from the perspective of revolts and peasant wars in Europe (Firnhaber, 2016) we see that rural societies have the ability to organize to defend or demand rights when the state, the Church, the nobles change the organization of economic or social processes, increase taxes or the transformation of free people into serfs (Graus, 2008). Such rustic revolts take place in several areas of the European space: in Transylvania took place in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the uprisings in Bobâlna (1437), or Gheorghe Doja (1514). "In 1525, the German peasants, grouped around the communities, fought on several fronts; it protects itself both from the senior power that oppresses them and from the Church" (Ladurie, 2020). In France, due to the problems caused in 1775 by Turgot's edict, which frees the grain trade from within the kingdom, the increase in grain prices led to the outbreak of the "Flour War" (Trenard: 2020).

As for the cellular structures of the rural settlement in the northern part of Western Europe, the rural family is nuclear, it is mainly focused on the married couple of small farmers or agricultural workers. The nuclear family, as a predominant model since the 13th

century, is found in the northern half of France, as well as in England, the Netherlands and, in its entirety, in the vast areas of the most developed peasantry. In the northern part of the Massif Central (Auvergne, Nivernais), extended families are identified since the eighteenth century they are organized in a style that is neither patriarchal nor paternalistic, but very close to the Balkan *zadruga*, a form of organization which involves an intra-family collaboration of three, four or five married couples, linked together by siblings. In the second half of the 19th century in the Balkans, in Transylvania the traditional family model is characterized by the authority of the father, the emotional devotion of the mother, obedience and respect for children towards their parents (Brie, 2011).

In south-eastern Europe the forms of living and organization are different. In the Balkans *zadruga* is specific to Slavic and Albanian populations. It can be considered as a household composed of two or more biological families or small families, strongly related by blood or adoption, having in common the means of production, regulating property, work and existence in general (Mosley, 1976). Within Serbian serfdom (*zadruga*), the hereditary patrimony is inalienable, it shares agricultural lands, the house, the yard and is passed down from generation to generation. In Albania, these forms of organization evolve into fortified settlements built in the middle of arable land. This form of organizing peasant life is dominant in rural areas, but is also present in cities among people who have nothing in common with agriculture; craftsmen, seafaring merchants lived and worked in households organized on the principles of *zadrugii* (Sthal, 2018: 88).

Until the 16th century, the Romanian rural area in Wallachia and Moldova was dominated by free villages and ruins, the land was jointly owned and each used as much as he needed. "The village of Devălmaş is an association of family households, based on a jointly owned territory, in which the community as such has previous and superior rights to the constituent households, rights exercised by a governing body called the community (*obşteie*)", (H. Stahl, 1959). Within the Romanian village of Devălmaş, the domestic group is based on the existence of a single married couple with its unmarried children, unlike the *zadruga*, which is always made up of several married couples. Between the 16th and 19th centuries we witnessed a dissolution of this type of organization, some villages became enslaved, and in others the villagers became individual owners, and the division of land generated major dysfunctions (Pitulac, 2009: 228).

Starting with the 18th century, with the appearance of the concept of industrialization, the Industrial Revolution in the United Kingdom, with the introduction of medicine in the villages, with the technological progress, the rural civilization registered economic and demographic growth, without losing its original character. The surplus population with labor force is absorbed by the development of cities, new job opportunities appear in organized institutions. Instead, the wars lead to demographic changes among the young male population in the villages, only in the First World War it is estimated that out of the 9 million victims over 70% would have been from rural areas. Between the two world conflagrations the evolution of the rural space is different in Europe. After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Eastern Europe, there are states that, in addition to increasing the territorial area, also register significant demographic increases in both rural and urban areas. Agrarian reforms are beginning to emerge, which have more or less solved the problems of the peasantry. After the Second World War, the situation of the Eastern European countryside, still in transition and reform after the great economic crisis of the 1930s and the war, changed again due to collectivization. Collectivization was achieved in several stages, it was imposed from outside, by the Soviet Union to the states of Eastern Europe but also to East Germany, being

considered by historians a concept of development different from the West. Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery in the volume "The Peasants Under Siege". The collectivization of agriculture in Romania (1949-1962) deals extensively with the phenomenon: "Soviet collectivization took place in the context of a crisis of grain proportions due to drought and fueled from the outside by policies of major European powers seeking to destabilize the Soviet Union. In the East, despite the shortage of war and post-war reparations paid to Moscow, the situation was incomparably better, especially since states such as Hungary, Poland and the German Democratic Republic were already relatively industrialized compared to the Soviet Union in the early 1930s and did not depend. as much as rural food to grow"(Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, 2015).

In Romania, the collectivization of agriculture was launched by the communist regime in 1949 and lasted until 1962, when more than 85% of the country's agricultural area was included in the socialist economy. Collectivization was a process that consciously ruined the peasantry class, affecting, first and foremost, its most dynamic members, the so-called *chiaburi*, peasants who, in reality, had best adapted to the demands of an economy. European market. "The communist agrarian reorganization took place using violence against both the peasantry and other social categories (Socol, 2006: 30). At the same time in Western Europe after the Second World War, European politicians pay special attention to rural development and agriculture on the principles of a balanced market economy, later introducing into the Common Agricultural Policy the concept of sustainable development according to which the environment is not affected.

Geographical perspective on the rural area

The development of rural space in Europe has been and is different being influenced by the great diversity of geographical environment, soils, climate, population, agricultural development. Analyzed from a geographical perspective, the European space is characterized by complex landforms that have allowed the inhabitants, since ancient times and until today, to practice subsistence farming activities.

Din punct de vedere al exploatațiilor agricole, Europa poate fi împărțită, în ceea ce privește relieful, în două părți. Exceptând nordul Rusiei și țările scandinave, prima parte exploatabilă pentru agricultură cu arii vaste muntoase este situată la peste 500 de metri deasupra nivelului mării și cuprinde spațiul fizic al Portugaliei, Spaniei, al sud-estului Franței, al Italiei, Greciei și Peninsula Balcanică până la sud de Carpați. Această zonă cu climat mediteranean are două anotimpuri, ierni blânde și veri calde și secetoase favorabil culturilor de fructe exotice, a viței de vie, etc. (Le Goff Jacques et al.,1999:111).The second geographical part is located north of the first and starts from southern England continues to the west coast of France and extends to the Urals and the Caucasus benefiting from the two types of climate, the oceanic temperate and continental temperate with mild winters , abundant rainfall and cool summers favorable to cereal crops and grazing.

Twenty years after the Second World War, the main objectives of rural development in the EC have been to improve agricultural production structures and improve the conditions for processing and selling agricultural products. The emphasis was on investments in means of production, both at the level of individual farms and at the level of processing and sales enterprises (Bleahu, 2005: 5).The development of agricultural activities generated mass production through the use of pesticides, and the emergence of industry in rural areas created changes in the rural landscape. Sloping fields, shrub lands and meadows have been largely transformed into control dam lands, and soil quality has declined due to the use of chemicals by large farms (Riccioli et al. 2109: 93-

110). In this context, in the European Union, the concept of rural development is integrated in a new innovative concept, that of sustainable development, being approached from the perspective of environmental protection. With the Meadows Report of 1972, the strong impact of human activities on the natural environment and the importance of unifying the environmental, social and economic fields in the territorial planning process were realized (Petre, 2016: 5). Translated into legislation, these new approaches to rural development create the premises for new types of capitalization of physical space.

Sociological perspective on rural space

From a sociological point of view, approaches to the rural environment fall into three categories of research: on the economic functions specific to rural areas, those that emphasize land use, and those that highlight the way of life and cultural identity of rural areas. Each of them relates the rural to the characteristics of the urban. Contemporary socio-economic analyzes of rural areas no longer consider as self-evident the equivalence between rural and agricultural occupations, but, on the contrary, they emphasize the multifunctionality of this space (Mihalache, Croitoru, 2014: 57).

From the theory of the Romanian sociologist Ilie Bădescu we deduce the idea that any society is distinguished by its ability to use natural, human, worldly and superhuman resources and to coordinate the different ways of using these resources so that everything allows a historical progress without declines and disasters and avoiding those uses that lead a system to extinction, as happens today with some dying ecosystems of the earth, increasing devastating disasters on a planet with limited resources (Bădescu, 2011: 331). Basically, the main role is given to the social, economic, ecological and cultural characteristics of the population living in a certain area and which make up a certain type of space, in our case the rural area. It is estimated that 8-10 thousand years ago, when the first forms of rural civilization began to appear, there were about 4 million inhabitants on Earth. At the beginning of the current era, the planet was inhabited by 100-250 million people, so that after 1000 years it will reach 300 million. At the beginning of the existence of the human species, the population grew particularly hard due to very difficult living conditions. After the first millennium of our era, the growth process of our population has accelerated. If until the seventeenth century, the annual growth was 30-40 million per century, after 1650 the pace accelerated, so that in the last century, the growth was 4.4 billion or an annual growth of over 70 million, this for the last half century. After 1900, the planet's growth rate was almost explosive.

Population growth in the future is not an exponential process where a constant growth rate is maintained. However, in developing regions growth rates will remain very high, will begin to decline in the first 2-3 decades of the current century and is likely to reach a stability after 2075. The evolution of rural areas is addressed in the literature through the dynamics and depth of the transformations that it registers, especially lately. The assessments considered essential refer to the "demographic shock" that characterizes the contemporary countryside (Agenda 2000), to the peasant archipelago, respectively to the registration of specific mutations, sometimes even different from the other components of the socio-economic life. ruralities ", ie rural areas that are undergoing profound transformations, due to the impact of globalization of technology, environmental restrictions, economic developments and cultural values.

According to sociologists, the rural environment is the one in which co-participatory sociological research is the most frequent, thus there are several proposed research models. The traditionalist model considers the rural environment, respectively the

village, as the true keeper of the spirituality, specificity and originality of a culture, of a society, researches of this kind seeking to reveal traditional rural values, behaviors and symbols. The meliorist model, which considers the rural environment as the genetic form of an insufficiently evolved society and which must be brought to the urban level; research in this field generally measures the gap between urban and rural, in terms of income, education, comfort and productivity. The ecological model, which reveals the specificity, peculiarities and advantages of the contemporary rural way of life integrated into the environment. The chronoregressive model, used, in general, in settlement monographs, based on recordings of events in chronological order (Zamfir, Vlăsceanu, 1994: 580).

In Europe, two great French rural sociologists, Henri Mendras and Maurice Jollivet, although in unison arguing that a scientific, sociological, interdisciplinary approach to rural space was needed, had differing views on changes in agriculture and theories of peasantry in France. They practically approached differently the French rural realities of the period 1960-1970, a period in which in the society of France there are changes in the whole, and in particular, in agriculture, being a period of intense social mobilization of farmers.

Henri Mendras developed a theory of peasantry influenced by the American anthropological school. Adherent to the thought of Anglo-Saxon cultural anthropology, he applied to the French realities the differentiations proposed by the American anthropologist Robert Redfield in 1967, regarding the concepts of primitive (*sauvage*), peasant (*paysans*), adding that of farmer (*agriculteurs*). The modern notion of "farmers" is, in Mendras's view, a social and professional category among others, it does not have the same complex semantic load as that of peasant (Mendras, 1958). In America peasants are not defined by Redfield or *sauvages* (primitives). nor "modern," but a different "social species" (Redfield, 1967).

Maurice Jollivet contradicts Mendras by considering the typology of the latter an evolutionary scheme, which shows that the peasants are "savages" on the way to integration into a global society, whose unity is generally expressed through the state, and farmers would appear at a later stage of social dynamics, when the process of integration into a "modern" society takes place. In addition, the ideal type of Weberian origin present in the Mendrasian trilogy is considered by Jollivet to be descriptive and static and removes from the sphere of analysis access to knowledge of the mechanisms of change in society. In his opinion, the weakness of Mendras's approach consists in considering the Weberian source analysis of "ideal types" as unique and infallible (Petre, 2008: 523).

Regarding the approach to the changes in agriculture to which agricultural social groups in France were subjected in the middle of the twentieth century, we also notice here a difference of approach. Jollivet's conceptions are oriented towards an economic sociology of the countryside, and Mendras moves towards the area of political sociology. The development of rural areas is influenced by politics in the sense that decisions belong to the political society in setting minimum prices, ensuring agricultural production and compensation in case of natural disasters, interventions on innovation in agriculture. It is a matter of progress in which state officials prevail and not farmers. While the Jollivetian economy offers us a kind of agricultural socio-economy, relating the following three dimensions: 1. the evolution of the farmer's place in the national economy; 2. transformations of social strata and social groups within the agricultural population; 3. transformations of the social relations of production within the agricultural exploitation.

Other French sociologists G. Bauer and J. M. Roux noted that cities, especially French ones, do not only grow by absorbing their rural space immediately. They are developing over a wide area, with widespread extensions, which involve a growing

number of new constructions. The two use for the first time the term urbanization, a process of intertwining rural spaces with urbanized ones. In the opinion of the two, the rural area can be urbanized only if it has the following characteristics: 1) they are close to urban centers and support the residential contribution of a new population, of urban origin; a declining proportion of farmers and rural artisans in the population; a strong transformation of the land market; a massive construction of detached houses in rural communes located less than half an hour from the urban agglomeration that is the pole; 2) the subsistence of a dominant non-urbanized space, it differs from the traditional peripheries which are in total continuity with the mother city, from where they appear as a spatial extension; the inhabitants of the new neighborhoods are sub-citizens (Bădescu, 2011: 307). The rural sociologist Henri Mendras considers that this concept, proposed to his compatriots, once put into practice, will save French society from the conflict between urban and rural inherited from the Romans (Mendras, 1977: 149).

Across the ocean, in America such a reality is called the Metropolitan Area, a phenomenon that appeared in the 40s of last century. According to American and French sociologists, these areas are made up of people living in rural areas and working in the city. In this context in Romania we can currently speak of 22 metropolitan areas that operate based on law no. 351/2001 regarding the approval of the Plan for the arrangement of the national territory - Section IV The network of localities. Unlike America or other Western European states, this new type of territorial organization is legally established in our country only in 2005, four years after the adoption of the law. The first inter-community development association with legal personality in Romania, in metropolitan area format, is the Oradea Metropolitan Area (Oradea Metropolitan Area, 2020). According to law 351/2001, the metropolitan area is that "area established by association, based on a voluntary partnership between large urban centers (Romanian capital and first rank municipalities) and urban and rural localities located in the immediate area, at distances of up to 30 km, between which cooperation relations have been established on multiple levels" (legislatie.just.ro, 2020).

The difference between the American, French and Romanian metropolitan areas consists in the fact that in our country the absorption is made directly from urban to rural, not posing the problem of suburbs as in other parts of Europe or America. For the time being, the way of life of the natives from the Romanian countryside being less influenced by the urban habits. One can observe the transformation of arable land into construction land, or even the change of the rural landscape due to the new fields of solar panels.

American sociologists approached rurality from the perspective of the concept of "folk society", developed in 1967 by Robert Redfield. He argues that with the evolution towards modernity, these "folk societies" either disappear or transform into urban societies or communities (Redfield, 1967).

The political perspective on the rural area

The agrarian and rural issues are found in European political ideas and doctrines since the eighteenth century. After the French Revolution, the interests of the peasants were represented in the parliaments of European states by their masters. At the end of the 18th century, the peasantry had no market relations, becoming politically passive, a state that changes when in contact with the market. This social class lived in its own household, was not in frequent contact with the market, had known no other exploitation than its master and gifts, so that its only antagonism was against the feudal regime. During the French Revolution the peasantry did not have a political role, it participated in the

destructive rebellions during the demonstrations only after the fall of the Bastille, practically contributing to the destruction of some castles. It is worth noting the insignificant political role of the peasantry in the conditions when France was at that time in a serious economic crisis, the development of agriculture was slow, and the development of crafts and trade was slowed by maintaining guilds and internal customs.

In the second half of the 19th century, when the peasant entered the gear of the market economy, money and new forms of exploitation of the peasantry appeared: usury and the grain trade, new political tendencies of the peasantry were signaled, but this time with anti-capitalist tendencies. .

In Denmark, even before 1849, there is a peasant program. This program provided for a wider culture of the people, professional freedoms and the transfer of land, given to the leased peasants, in permanent ownership. Following the liberal constitution of 1864, a privileged senate was created. Economist Virgil Madgearu considers the Danish senate "a fortress of conservatism designed to prevent the development of the free forces of the people, due to the fact that the king, the ministry and the conservative senate ruled absolutely." In 1870, Danish intellectuals attracted by the peasants' program joined ideology and fought alongside them for thirty decades until parliamentary democracy was established in Denmark.

Before the First World War, under the pressure of economic circumstances, the peasantry changed its political attitude. American competition has forced an intensification of peasant households in central and western Europe. After the First World War, the "big peasants" of Bavaria, assimilating the ideal of the petty bourgeoisie, tried unsuccessfully to represent the interests of farmers. This is also demonstrated by the sociological study carried out during the German revolution by Wilhelm Mattes. He finds that the peasants were divided into three or four bourgeois parties and some even into the socialist party. He discovers the causes of these political weaknesses, namely: the lack of leading personalities, of those representatives able to bring services in political issues specific to the class to which they belonged.

In the same context we must remember Marx who in the second half of the eighteenth century in the work *Eighteen Brumaire* (*Der 18-te Brumaire*) denied the political capacity of the inhabitants of the countryside "peasants are unable to capitalize on class interests in their own name , either in a parliament or in a convent "(marxists.org/, 2020).

Starting from the social ideals of the peasant, labor-socialist parties, class parties in the sense of Virgil Madgearu, which aims to transform the social order in favor of those who exploit the land, we can say that these two doctrines are a response to liberal doctrines and conservatives who advocate for the maintenance of existing order. The program of a class party is made up of elements belonging to the same class, the adherents being partisans not only of economic demands, but also of political and philosophical conceptions that are based on a social ideal.

Russian populism, an ideology springing up in response to European capitalism, claimed that Russia had its socialist destinies, different from those of capitalist Europe, namely that it was believed that Russia would evolve towards socialism without going through the capitalist phase. Russian populism supported this idea by claiming that in Russia there was no capitalism, no bourgeoisie, no strong proletariat. Moreover, the terrorists of populism tried to prove that there were no possibilities for the development of capitalism in Russia. The Russian populists also relied on the deep hatred that existed in the Russian peasant against the state administration ", but also on the big owners, says

Virgil Madgearu, as well as on the belief among the peasant masses that the land must belong to the one who works it.

In Romania, the populist ideology was theorized by the lawyer and journalist Constantin Stere in the spirit of Russian narodnicism and traditionalist currents. Stere built an ideology around the concept of uniqueness of the Romanian rural civilization, which he exalts and considers authentic, organic, in opposition to the urban civilization considered to be foreign to the Romanian reality, being an imported civilization, therefore inorganic (Virgil Madgearu, *The Agrarian Revolution and the Evolution of the Peasant Class*, (1923), Stere argues that the only viable social and political form in late nineteenth-century Romania could only be rural life, in which the peasant and the traditional village were to be the main actors in development.

The Romanian thinker, although a follower of socialist theories, stated at the beginning of the twentieth century in the study "Social democracy or populism?" that in our country the conditions of using social-democracy in the analysis of society and development on the socialist path predicted by Marx and Engles are not yet met. Stere believes that Romania needs a different ideology, and in order to develop, it must follow a different line of evolution from that of the industrial and working-class West. The ideology proposed by Stere, corresponding to the Romanian socio-economic realities of the mentioned period, is populism, and the society was to be built, in Romania, on a "peasant society".

In this context, we notice that in Stere's conception the peasant household is superior to other forms of organization because: "it does not seek to obtain rent and interest on capital, it produces cheaper; the small Romanian household has the more intensive labor power of the man who works for himself, the peasant household makes possible the use appropriate to its nature of each piece of land" (Stere, 1996: 58).

The socialist current is another ideology concerned with the future of the peasantry in Romanian society at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Constantin Dobrogeanu Gherea, contemporary with Stere, delimits himself from the populists and remains faithful to Marxist ideology. He finds that after the agrarian reform of 1864 and the multiple laws issued for the capitalist development of agriculture there are feudal remnants, ie the relations between peasants and landowners continue to develop through relations of obedience, through relations of production advantageous only to the masters, laws disadvantageous in practice to the peasants. In this context, Gherea considers that Romanian society has to do with a new social form, namely neo-slavery, "a mixture of capitalist form and serfdom background" (Gherea, 1910: 35). The Romanian socialist, born in a Jewish family in the Russian Empire, today Ukraine does not see in the peasant property nor in the Romanian village the solution of the problems of our agriculture. This is possible only after the elimination of feudal remnants, and the final solution to the problem of agriculture is for Gherea the Marxist theory, the socialization of agriculture (Socol, 2006: 39).

We can talk about the consolidation of the peasant position in Romania after the reform of 1921, on which occasion over 75% of the arable agricultural land became the property of the rural inhabitants. Two years later, after the reform, during which the administrative reform of the country continued, the foundations of the peasant doctrine were laid. The promoter of this ideology is Virgil Madgearu, a member of the National Peasant Party, who believes that "the birth of the new agrarian regime in eastern Europe after the First World War was made under a revolutionary aegis" practically created "the peasantry of agriculture" (Madgearu, 1923: 100). . The central element of this "agrarian revolution" refers to the replacement of "exploitation property by peasant labor

ownership." This refers to an economic reality distinct from both the large agrarian exploitation and the "capitalist exploitation".

In the opinion of the dominant conservatives in the second half of the 19th century and in the early years of the next, an opinion shared somewhat later by agrarians and, after the First World War by peasants who advocated the primacy of agriculture, there is confidence that agriculture can generate economic growth and economic development of the country. Their arguments being the richness of land resources, the cultural and traditional accumulations in the villages, the large proportion of the rural population "(Popescu, 2019: 586).

Foreign observers, who developed their political and social conception in environments quite different from those of the agrarian states, such as an English sociologist Dr. L. Haden Guest, who in 1921 traveled through all the newly formed countries and Russia, In this regard, I argue that in rural areas, democracy is found in peasant parties, which although generally willing to approve socialization or municipalization in cities or social control over industry, are in fact partisans of peasant land ownership and free trade.

On the other hand, the liberals were winning over industrial development, that is, the modernist current. This fact became a reality around the outbreak of the Second World War, when the profile of the Romanian economy became eminently agrarian, agrarian-industrial, remarks the same author.

The development along the lines of industrialism was also maintained by the communist regime for almost 50 years, between 1945 and 1990. was the network of large, state and cooperative units, they created an imbalance in rural areas.

The economic perspective on the rural area

After the Second World War, the rural economies of European countries turned to mass production through agricultural farms, diminishing the production character of small family farms. The latter are reoriented towards non-agricultural activities, and farmers towards multi-active activities. The lack of post-war food was common, and they helped to convince most European governments that increased intervention was needed in the production and marketing of agricultural products.

In rural areas, there are increases in cereal crops, livestock, meat and milk products based on massive technological changes in agricultural practice, introduced into the market economy with the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. After 1948, cereal production increased on average "by 30% between 1948/50 and 1958/60 in the 16 countries of Western Europe, with increases closer by 50% in Austria, France and Greece" (Hoggart et al., 2015: 146). Compared to the United States where the increase in agricultural productivity has been achieved through the widespread and large-scale use of mechanization in Europe, the increase has generally come from the introduction of a "nitrogen saving" of chemical inputs (Hoggart et al., 2015: 147). This Fordist economic system which replaces the classical production necessary for its own consumption in mass agricultural production through the use of artificial mechanisms and which has kept Europe in an insecure and competitive market system has led to state intervention to ensure the stability of agricultural commodity markets. rural development, a trend that the CAP has taken over. For smaller producers, mass agricultural production meant the development of non-agricultural activities as a means of economic survival. Gradually, in the process of European rural development, the initiatives that led to the creation of a rural industrial system appear. An example is the case of rural areas in the west of Ireland

where state initiatives are identified in the sense that from 1932 until the mid-1980s successive governments pursued a policy of pro-rural industrialization, granting preferential subsidies to rural areas. , even though in the second half of the 50s they were reduced. Between 1964 and 1984 the Irish government's economic expansion program provided special aid for the dispersal of industrial sites. And after 1984, government policy shifted from rural areas to attracting domestic investment in high-tech industries to serve an international market.

After 1947, the Economic Commission for Europe was created at European level as a body of the United Nations, being the first step towards the integration of the European market. At the time of the establishment of the common market by the Treaty of Rome in 1958, the agriculture of the six founding Member States was characterized by strong state intervention. Given that agriculture is now only a small part of the European Union's economy, public intervention has recently been strengthened by agro-rural policies with other dimensions, including sustainable development, combating climate change, landscaping, diversification and revitalization. rural economy or the production of energy and biomaterials. (Articles 38-44 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). Analyzing from the economic perspective the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) we notice that it aimed and aims at supporting farmers (subsidy system) and price control in the agricultural and food area, while registering dysfunctions contrary to the fundamental principle of the free market. "The relatively complicated mechanisms for granting subsidies have made it possible to estimate that half of their amount reaches the possession of anyone else related to the system than directly in the hands of farmers, the essential recipients" (Maniu, 2017: 599).

Evolved societies operating on the classic national models of socio-economic development of the American liberal, Japanese corporate type, oriented towards the private sector but coordinated by state legislation, the Rhine model represented by the combination of economic freedom and social equality present in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, or the French "statist" model, a type of economic system that combines liberalism and protectionism into a "state capitalist" system with a managerial tinge, goes through a transition stage "from a production-based economy to a service-based economy" (Bell, 1976).

Contemporary economic transformations, taking place in developed countries, are evidence of society's transition to a new principled stage. The appearance of such situations is related to the change of the material-technological base of production and to the formation of the "new economy". In mid-1994, the American magazine *Fortune* published the article "Awakening to a New Economy" (Fortune, 1994), which mentioned the emergence of the new economy in the United States, which differs from both the automobile era and that of agriculture. Reactions to the protests of the supporters of the old economy did not take long to appear. Proponents of the "new economy", especially the directors of IT companies such as Andy Grove, CEO of Intel, the world's largest chip maker and a true source of the new economy, say the new economic concept is not so dramatic, the new economy is just the old economy that uses technology as a competitive means of survival" (Fortune, 1994).

From the perspective of the Romanian economist Ion Bari we can define the new economy as a concept in which "the economy in which modern digital technologies offer worldwide access to all the information available at a given time. These new technologies have the role of ensuring efficiency in conventional and traditional business practices and facilitating the emergence of new products" (Bari, 2001: 92).

Conclusions

The European rural area has gradually changed from one stage to another of the development of European civilizations in socio-economic terms. The economic transformations in the developed countries are a proof of the transition of the society to new stages, oriented towards services. Demographic changes in rural areas located in different geographical areas have led to the emergence of new concepts of rural development, but also the emergence of ideological currents focused on the rural problem. The article emphasizes that the principles of sustainable development must be reflected in all policies applicable to rural areas, and these policies need to be integrated into national policies. Innovations in agricultural techniques, the transition from subsistence production to mass production have generated tools and mechanisms that will be researched based on other methodologies.

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