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**INDIVIDUAL FARMING
– A HINDRANCE IN DURABLE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT?**

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Transformations from the present society and the interdependence's manifestation between economic, social and space organization are emerging towards the necessity of optimizing the space use depending on the present and future requests of the society.

The desirable finality of the space modeling represents a convergence of the human needs with the resources backed up by the harmonization of the real potential of the natural or built environment with the technological level and the available financial resources.

In Romania the right of private property upon the lands and real estates together with the desire of improving life conditions, responsibility in administrating the natural resources and the environment protection accentuates the importance and complexity of the territorial developing programs. This is seen as "an internal increasing process and structural changes, which are leading towards an improved standard life inside of the regional and local communities"¹.

A special attention in the framework of complex process of territorial development must be given to the rural space, seen as "a social existence way, support of human life and base of alimentary resources and raw materials for the industry"².

Sustainable development of the rural spaces is dependent of the actions orientated towards improving the quality of population life from the rural environment and keeping the natural and cultural landscape and it is marking more sectors: agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, entrepreneurship, community development and others.

Although the terms of rural space and agriculture are not synonyms, the occupational alternatives to the last one are extremely reduce and dependent of its development.

In the national economy the agriculture is accomplishing three functions, so:

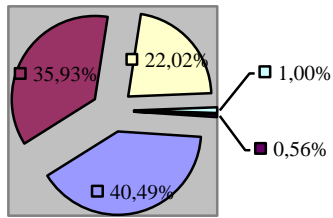
- Alimentary function: agriculture is satisfying the stringent human needs of which diminishing or absence can determine perturbances in the human organism and social tensions;
- Socio-economic function brings the agriculture in the place of being incomes source and working places creator, being pointed out as its quality of valorizing the rural life;
- Environment protection and sustainable development function: the exigencies regarding the environment protection needs coordinating norms and settlements of the agriculture meant to minimize the negative effects of its intensification and development (un-corresponding use of the chemical substances, water and ear pollution with zoo technical waists, soil's negative effects). Also through this function the agriculture, though its' designing systems of the agricultural systems, makes possible the valorization of the spaces and landscapes and their protection.

An ensemble view upon the Romanian agriculture revels among others: excessive ruptures of the agricultural land occupied especially with cereal cultures and less with win yards and orchards, the absence of the modern agricultural techniques, the absence of some organizational structures which should collect, store and process the agricultural products, the assigning of the property right to some old persons or which have no relation with the agriculture and, not at last, the preponderance of subsistence country household.

In the studied territory, respectively Ighiu, Micesti, Sard, Oarda, from Alba County the structure of the agricultural land occupied way (which represents 53% from the total surface) is presented as it follows:

¹ M. Cădea, F. Bran, I. Cimpoeru, *Organization and sustainable development of the geographical space*, printing House Universitară, Bucharest, 2006, p. 56.

² *Idem*, p. 99.



Graphic no. 1. Agricultural land occupied scheme for the territory situated between Ighiu, Micești, Șard and Oarda

Excessive splitting of the agricultural land, generating difficulties regarding its exploitation, results from the data presented in the table below:

Surface and number of agricultural land slices

Locality Specification	Ighiu	Micești	Șard	Oarda
Agricultural land surface	3.568	1.828	1.702	2.885
Slices' number	1.980	1.020	952	1.606

Data from the table reveals an average dimension of one agricultural land slice of 1,79 ha, which makes difficult to introduce modern techniques of exploiting the resources offered by the agriculture.

The anterior considerations represents the basis for which the valorization of the agricultural potential (appreciated as being considerable) is transforming in an imperative reason, between which's faces we are finding: consolidation of the agricultural exploitations, compacting the lots through exchange between owners, developing associative structures for raw materials supplying activities and selling agricultural products, promoting the agricultural consulting activity, rebuilding the irrigation system. There are not neglected nor reconsidered the traditional jobs and the touristy potential.

First two action directions are pointing out the necessity of increasing upon the dimensional aspect the property and the middle agricultural exploitations forming, either through land acquisition, either through agricultural land renting, which makes possible the creation of a competitive agriculture generating an economic plus.

Presently the Romanian agriculture is in full process of structural reforming, focused on two elements: developing the private sector and economic organization of the agricultural exploitations.

In the framework of the first element we are identifying more action ways, between increasing the - agricultural exploitations' dimensions, production's identification, producers' association, privatization and restructure of the agricultural state sector, organizing fillers of products in the framework created by the economic privatization and restructuring process and others.

Not like the countries from the European Union where the agricultural structures have a relative stabile level, and the economic efficiency is limiting the increasing of the agricultural exploitations' dimensions, in Romania the agricultural structures based on private property are in a hybrid stage. We can talk about the wick use of the concentrating the land (renting,

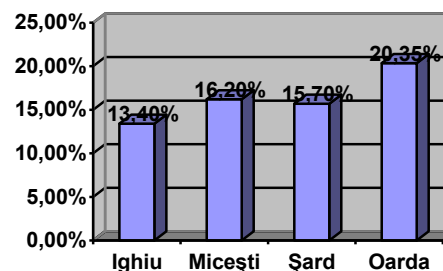
selling-buying, association, inheriting and others) in modern exploitation shapes. If at the communitarian level the average surface of an agricultural exploitation is almost 18.4 ha (varying from a country to another, respectively 4.3 ha in Greece and proximally 70 ha in Great Britain), in our country this dimension goes only to 1.63 ha, being situated at a long distance from the European agricultural model.

Amplifying the agricultural exploitations dimensions is not sufficient in the reforming process. It must be replaced with capitalization, optimal combination of the production factors, producers' responsibility, as well as a better relation between them and the organisms that are applying agricultural policies. As well, it is necessary to elaborate an appropriate legislation that will allow the correct formation of the prices for the agricultural products, competition's stimulation, clarity and transparence in the direct negotiation process between the producers, pre-workers and sellers. Agricultural producers can use the land in multiple ways: owners, administrators, leaseholder or entrepreneurs.

The property upon the land, identified with the possession, using, and availability right gives to the owner multiple choices of exploiting the essential element of the agricultural activity – the land, respectively self exploitation, giving in administration or renting.

Renting is very common at the European Union level, proximally two thirds from the agricultural land being exploited through this way. It is realized based on the contract signed between owner and leaseholder (which have to have solid knowledge in the agricultural area if it is physical person or to have as activity object the agricultural products exploitation, if it is juridical person).

At the studied territory area the average of the agricultural land rented is, as it results from the graphic below:



Graphic no. 2. Average of the agricultural land rented for the studied territory

Between the socio-economic organization shapes of the agricultural producers we are meeting: country subsistence household, family agricultural exploitations, family associations.

Country individual household (subsistence) has under 5 ha of land, produce mainly for self consumption or it realizes the combination of the autarchic side with the commerce of some variable quantities of products. They are dominated in Romania for transforming in viable agricultural units which should produce also for the market it is imposing the numerical reducing, technical and economic modernization, and, not at last, their professionalism.

The dimension of an individual agricultural household by reporting it to the studied territory is situated between 3,53 and 3,85 ha, data from the table nr. 2 being relevant in this sense:

The dimension of an individual agricultural household by reporting it to the studied territory

Locality Specification	Ighiu	Micești	Șard	Oarda
1. Exploited surface by the individual agricultural household	2.839	1.454	1.352	2.302
2. Households' number	777	395	351	652
Report 1/2	3,65	3,68	3,85	3,53

The absence or modernization of the subsistence household is nothing but the result of a normal process of functioning of the free market.

The base shape of the Romanian agriculture considering the perspective of integration into the European Union is represented by the *family agricultural exploitation*, which has to have at least 10 ha of land or it growing a large number of animals. For its modernization it is necessary to develop the market relations, land and capital concentration. For this the land policy (supporting) and the financial policy (credit) must be orientated towards retiring the old persons and giving the households to the young farmers, and the structural policy must be focused on the complementarity of the land transfer with the other production factors.

Number of family agricultural exploitations is relatively reduce (20), but the average of their surfaces in the total agricultural surface is situated over the national average:

**Family agricultural exploitations:
number, average surface, average in the total
agriculture surface**

- Table

no. 3 -

Locality Specification	Ighiu	Micești	Șard	Oarda
Family agricultural exploitations' number	4	4	5	7
Average surface of an family agricultural exploitation	15,1	15,0	14,90	15,30
Average in the total agriculture surface	1,7	3,2	4,3	3,7

Family associations are forming as a result of the consent of more families that are

establishing alone their object and activity's conditions. At the 2000 year level these ones were keeping only 17.9% from the agricultural land, which is meaning, among others, that: the insufficiency of the stimulating ways of perfecting the associative economic structures, the lack of interest of extending some modern methods and verified methods of framing the Romanian agriculture on the competitive growing path.

For the studied territory the average of the agricultural land belonging to the family associations is situate dat values close to the ones recorded at national level.

Sustaining the agriculture's development can be done through more shapes, so:

- Direct sustaining of the agricultural producers through value coupons, being facilitated in this way the acquisition of seeds, chemical substances, fuels. This shape of supporting the agriculture presents the following main discrepancies: owners' subvention and not of the direct producers, insufficiency of the value level of the coupons reported to the expenses claimed by the agricultural cultures, the reduce area of the expenses that can be covered through coupons, the impossibility of pointing out the performing producers and others;
- Using the budgetary resources for subvention the interest rates for the given loans for buying agricultural machines. Exploitations' capitalization represents an aspect in which we are finding two polarities: one, the stringency of some crediting policies favorable for the producers, mainly for new investments, and two the reticence for appealing to loans, considering the difficulties related to the generated duties' payment.

In the Adhering Treaties of Romania to the European Union, VIII th annex, are written

a series of directions³ referring to the rural development:

- Offering, based on a business plan, and yearly support for the ranches that are producing for self-consumption, but that can commercialize a piece of the obtained production. This help is given for five years; until the limit of the amount of 1.000 Euro per year. The business plan is analyzed after three years, and the non-realization of the intermediary objectives leads to the end of the given support without the obligation of the beneficiaries of giving back the amounts received anterior;
- Official recognized producers' groups can benefit of a forfeiter help for building and administrating associations that should make possible the production's adjustment to the market's requests, a common mechanism for launching on the market, sells' centralization and others. This help is given in annually hunks for five years and it represents at most 5% fro the value of commercialized production;
- Through the "LEADER +" measures it follows to support the rural communities in conceiving and applying new strategies of local development that are regarding: technical area, local realities and necessities' analyze, demanding and obtaining the necessary finances and others;
- Developing agricultural consultancy measures and public informing for the farmers as well as technical assistance, support for the studies, experience and information exchange and others.

It is very important that these sustaining shape of the rural communities to be recognized by the human factor for being operational in practice.

Informing is for revitalizing the agriculture and territorial sustainable development, because in

the present progress conditions, human kind emerges towards the stage of an economic sustainable society (and not only), and the society based on information represents a real source for the competitive advantage. The cross point of the post industrial society is represented by the fact that information becomes strategic and transforms the society's resources, as well as the capital and labor have been a while ago strategic and had transformed the industrial society. We are the witnesses of a historical transformation of the traditional shapes of power. The present is based less and less on the physical and material parameters (...) and more on the factors that are regarding the memory, administrating, distribution and information creating capacity.

The modifications in the property shape and structure must have their completion in a corresponding approach of administrating and management way, as well as in applying new technologies.

Creating and organizing an agricultural exploitation depend first on the land capital. Exercising the property right represents an economical issue and a social one as well, raison for which is being preferred land acquisition and not rent.

Although we cannot give definitive verdicts related to the most efficient shape of land exploitation we consider that this one is regarded as a way of obtaining incomes and not as a purpose.

Of course that we do not have to neglect the other elements of the capital, respectively the agricultural instrument (machines, reproduction and labor animals) and exploitation capital (seeds, planting materials, chemical substances, water and others) which inconsideration has as consequence the manifestation of absorption possibility of the available labor force eliminated from the regression sectors, unemployment diminishing and young's returning towards agriculture.

³ N. Todea, *Necessity of a new approach of the problems regarding the Romanian rural environment*, Review Procont, nr. 3, Alba-Iulia, 2005, p. 32-33..

It is considered⁴ that for minimizing the “victims” from the Romanian rural medium it is necessary a government strategy. Why? Because:

- Romanian medium’s problems are too complex for being solved through the market’s forces action;
- A very important issue of the Romanian villages is the one of infrastructure that supposes huge costs, for which covering it is necessary the public-private partnership;
- Competition accentuation after integration will have a negative impact on the producers from the agricultural individual households and not only;
- Considering the economic aspect the Romanian village, generally, disposes of an economic potential allowing for valorizing the specific traditions, inclusively through varying types of tourism and others.

The mentioned aspects are leading to the conclusion that the agricultural individual households do not represent a barrier in the way of territorial sustainable development, because it is not referring only to the agriculture development, but it regards also a complex aggregate in which we are finding: natural resources’ administration, agriculture development adjusted to the local reality, developing the small and medium enterprises, pointed out natural and cultural medium’s values and others.

All these desiderates underlines the idea that the agriculture can not be seen as a familiarly business only that leads mainly to consumption, and the alimentary security based on a sustainable agriculture needs fundamental changes regarding the property right upon the land, offer’s concentration and the professionalism of the agricultural producers so that these ones can face out the competitors on the concurrent markets.

A modern agricultural system does not exclude the existence of agricultural individual households, but these ones have to dispose of the capacity of valorizing the local resources and of surviving. It the same time they are assuring the political and social stability in the measure in which they are competitive on the market, economic justice for the agricultures. Change in the “agricultural landscape” structure is inevitable, with all opposition manifested of a big part of involved factors. Although, peoples say that they desire change, in reality they are refusing it for not being imposed the creation of new behaviors and values systems. Change resistance is nothing else but the expression of the attempt of maintaining the equilibrium inherent to the function of any social organization and it is manifested through a justifying reaction contradictory with the perturbing initiatives.

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⁴ N. Todea, *Necessity of a new approach of the problems regarding the Romanian rural environment*, Review Procont nr. 3, Alba-Iulia, 2005, p. 31.

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