



The Systems of Rural Settlement Pattern in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova

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The Transnistrian region has a strictly expressed territorial differences in the matter of rural settlement patterns, which are characterized by a differentialized rural population density, population number, rural localities network, functional hierarchy and by the problems and perspectives of the rural localities development.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned features we may distinguish three major zones of rural settlement patterns: South-Nistrian (the areas of the Slobozia and Grigoriopol districts) and the North-Nistrian (the areas of the Ribnitsa and Camenca districts. The Dubossari district due to its situation at an equal distance from the centers of the above-mentioned zones and the specific demographical and settlement indices, as well as a particular type of economical, cultural, labour, transportation system between rural localities may be attributed to a intermediar zone of rural settlement (1).

The South-Nistrian zone of rural settlement is characterized by a high population density, large rural localities, scarcity of the rural locality density. The system of the rural settlement pattern of this region is based on a framework formed by the Benderi and Tiraspol cities, by the Slobizia and Dnestrovsk towns and by large villages with a population number of 4-10 thousand inhabitants. The largest villages of Moldova and Transnistria are situated here: Sucleia, Parkani, Kitscani with a population of more than 10 thousand people.

The decrease of the rural population number in the 1970s was more characteristic of the rural outlying areas. Still this tendency was preserved in the 1990s by the depopulation of the basic framework of the rural settlement i.e. of the cities and towns. One characteristic feature for the small, large and the largest rural localities is the stable population number and a rigid rank hierarchy, while for middle, large and gigantic rural settlements a unstable population number and a specific inter-rank mobility. As a whole the South-Nistrian rural settlement zone is characterized by a large range of localities of a various population number, as well as of the predomination of large and gigantic villages in the overall rural population number (2).

Another feature is a high level of rural localities with a mixed fuctional specialization. First of all these are the villages, combining agricultural production with an industrial processing of agricultural raw products (e.g. Kolosovo, Chobruchi, Glinoe, which process amounts of fruits, vegetables, grape, essential and oil plants). Secondly: in the rural localities situated round industrially developed centers such as Tiraspol and Bender are located branches and divisions of the urban enterprises, which do not need heavy equipment for its production (for example the clothing factories in Sucleia, Blijnii Hutor, Parkani). Some suburban localities of the Tiraspol-Benderi agglomeration carry out both an agricultural and an industrial function, because the majority of their population work in the nearby cities (e.g. Nezavertailovka, Sucleia, Blijnii Hutor, Parkani, Chitkani and many others).

The North-Nistrian rural settlement zone is characterized by a rather low rural population density. The maximum population number of the rural localities is not more than 3,5 thousand people. About one half of the villages situated in the Camenca and Ribnitsa districts has a population of less than 500 people. The basic framework of the rural settlement pattern in these districts is not developed. The Ribnitsa city and the Camenca town comprise the major cultural, organizatinal, management and industrial institutions. The excessive concentration has a negative impact upon the settlement and geodemographical processes in the northern part of

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the Transnistrian region. As it was mentioned a characteristic feature of the rural localities of these districts is a growing depopulation tendency.

The depopulation processes have a stronger impact on the small and tiny villages. The lowering of the population number of the rural localities of this part of the region has a stable character. If in the 1980 the depopulation affected only the outlying villages, then in the mid 1990s only the suburban rural localities could maintain an insignificant population growth. Certain rural settlements of this area (Suhaia Ribnitsa, Voitovka, Sadki) lose their demographical and production perspectives of development, which is caused by a high expenditures of their maintenance and reflect a general economical crisis of the region and of the agricultural production in particular. The population density in this zone is much higher than in the south of Transnistria, but the level of the economical, social, transportation infrastructure development is much lower. In comparison to the Slobozia district the agro-industrial specialization of the rural settlements is less expressed.

The Dubossari district rural settlement pattern possesses an intermediary character, due to a high average population number in the villages and an exclusively high density of the rural localities network. If the indicator is characteristic for the South-Nistrian rural settlement zone, then the second for the North-Nisrian zone. It should be mentioned that the largest villages situated on the left bank of Dniester were transferred under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Moldova (their total population number was about 20 thousand people), a fact led to the breaking of the existing links within the district system of the rural settlements, to the loss of its unity -one of the most important feature of any system, defining its vitality. As an axis of the rural settlement of this region may serve the Dniester and Yagorlic river valleys and the main road Sofia-Kishinev-Kiev. As a conclusion the rural settlement pattern of the region needs to be reconstructed. In a situation of the loss of economical links, unfavourable conjuncture of the agricultural and industrial market, a general decrease in the agricultural production, the development of the rural settlement of Transnistrian region depends wholly on the perspective of the solving the social and economical crisis.

References

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