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# The Geodemographical Characterization of the Rural Settlements in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova

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## Introduction

The contemporary network of the rural localities of Transnistria is made up of 147 localities, which are situated irregularly on the territory of the region. The average density of the rural population is about 1.5 thousand inhabitants.

The largest villages are situated in the Slobozia district, where the average density of the population is 3,8 thousand inhabitants. The lowest average density is represented by the Ribnitsa district with 0.7 thousand inhabitants. The density of the rural localities varies between 6,0 localities in the Dubossari district and 2,5 villages in the Slobozia district.

## Characteristic Feature of the Region

On the whole a characteristic feature of the region is the decrease of the density of rural localities in the northern part in favour of the southern part. Thus a regularity may be observed - the more populous the rural localities are the lower density is marked and vice versa.

The density, the topographical, genetical and functional type of the rural localities are changed under the influence of configuration and density of the hydrographical network, the relief division, the direction of the geodemographical and settlement processes, the structural and territorial shifts in the economy of the region - specially the agro-industrial complexes. As a result of the deep productive specialization of the rural settlements the hierarchical subordination becomes more complex through the enlargement of the intercommunication between the localities. These factors condition the attachment of the smaller settlements to the social influence of the larger villages, towns and cities, and lead to the formation of local, district, interdistrict and regional settlement patterns.

One of the most important indicator of the rural settlement pattern is the density of the rural population and its dynamics. On the whole it was observed that during the 1970-1999 period there was a decreasing of the density of the rural population in the region. The most considerable decrease of the density of the rural population was marked in the Camenca, Ribnitsa, Slobozia districts, what may be explained by the general depopulation change of the geodemographical situation and by the new administrative status of certain localities and their resubordination to the rural and town councils (1).

The first group of the processes is characteristic for the north of the region, while the second group to Slobozia district, where during this period there were created 4 towns on the basis of rural settlements.

A more representative spatial analysis of the changes in the rural population density is possible if we appreciate each economical unit. On the whole this appreciation was successfully used in 1978 by K. G. Matei in his Atlas of the Moldavian SSR. If we take as a basis those data it may be mentioned that the highest index of the rural population density was characteristic of the economical units situated in the Slobozia district, suburban units in

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Dubossari and separate units in Camenca districts, because these are the biggest economical units not only in this region, but also in Moldova.

Nevertheless if in 1970 only 8 units had a density of 150 inhabitant per 1 sq. km, then in 1999 their number rose up to 20 units. A stable high density of the rural population may be observed in the south-west part of the Grigoriopol district (70-100 inhabitants per 1 sq. km.) A considerable growth of the rural population density was remarked along the Yagorlik river, Dubossari district, (about 20-30 inhabitants per 1 sq. km) and the suburban villages round Ribnitsa city (about 50-70 inh. per 1 sq. km) The mentioned changes may be explained by a considerable delimitation of the borders of certain localities, by the restructuring of the land borders and the subordination of the economical units.

The second tendency characteristic for the rural area of the region was a radical decrease of the rural population density in the 1990s. But, if these processes are not evident for the Slobozia, Grigoriopol and Camenca districts and do not change considerably the "geodemographical lanscape", then the rural outlying areas (north and north-south parts of Grigoriopol district, the eastern parts of Slobozia and Dubossari districts, the bordering with Ukraine villages of Ribnitsa and Camenca districts) were subjected to a depopulation tendency (2).

It is important to emphasize the these changes have deep chronological roots, going back to the 1970s, when the geodemographical situation in the rural areas of the mentioned territories was characterized by a negative demographical change, which in the 80s-90s was aggravated by a general social and economical crisis.

The systems of rural settlement pattern in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova

### References

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