



European and Balkan Ruralism. Differences in Theory and Practice

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ABSTRACT

In the last decades of the last century the ruralism started a second life. It was forgotten until World War II. The reason was the industrialization. The industrialization had its own way of life, culture. It was not just economics. In the organization of space and territory the scars of the past are visible. The territorial priorities change often and slowly, but are they successful? There are difficulties in the rural policy in Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia during the recent years. The rural area provides rest in the west while on the Balkans in these territories is the most intensive agriculture and it is a place to work. If there is western rural type policy for the development in the new period 2014 - 2020 in the European Union, the difficulties on the Balkans will continue. It requires flexibility, realism, compliance with the national specificities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The choice of the research topic was dictated by the need for emphasis and focus on the ruralism and its differences between Eastern and Western Europe. Today is a very topical question how and in what direction the ruralism is going to develop. The subject of this study are the rural territories and the ruralism. The main aim is to clarify the territorial specificities, problems and priorities in the development of the ruralism.

The tasks of the study are: Clarification of the main periods in the development of the ruralism, Analysis of the problems in the development of the rural areas, Clarification of policies, trends and prospects facing the development of rural areas. The following methods are used: Method of scientific abstraction, regional retrospective analysis, statistics - methods, comparative method, field studies. The European Union was created by the countries of Western Europe. Its basis is the Western Roman

Empire and the Catholic civilization. The Balkan Peninsula has had another civilization on East Rome /Byzantium/ - Orthodox and later - the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, there are significant differences between the western and the Balkan ruralism and rural development. In the Middle Ages in the West, the rural development was based on the small centers, which have religious and administrative functions. They were parishes and at the same time they were markets. Different communities were created on the Balkans by different ethnic groups, but these communities did not have administrative and political functions. The urbanization and industrialization began in the 16th and 17th centuries in the West, while these processes were delayed in the Balkans until the 19th century. While the rural territories and settlements on the Balkans were the foundation of the economy and society until World War II /pre-productivity and productivity paradigm of agriculture/, the same rural territories provided raw materials for the urban economy and urban migrants in the West. The ruralism

and agriculture were developed in the suburban areas. After World War II Western Europe recovered for ten years. The creation of the European Union helped to the agriculture. The aim was - from productivity to post productivity paradigm. There was a major problem at that time - the surpluses. The industrialization and urbanization were exhausted and they began to create problems. Thus, the interest to the ruralism revived and it found a place in the regional policy of the European Union. The communism and its development in the Balkans delayed the social development of Bulgaria, Romania and former Yugoslavia. The interest to the ruralism in Greece began in the 70s of last century, while in the former communist countries the ruralism began its development when these countries began preparation for accession to the European Union. There are three objectives in the west ruralism: income, education and health care equal to those in the big cities and in the urban areas. The main objectives on the Balkans are major economic goals and after that are the social goals.

2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Historically, the division of the Eastern /Orthodox / the Western /Catholic/ part of Europe reflected in settlements and territorial units. The great divide began in the XIV and XV centuries. The European east region was conquered by the Ottoman Empire, while the Western European region was oriented towards the conquest of new continents and colonies. Differences gradually increased and this gave rise to many researchers, such as Huntington, to write about two European civilizations - Orthodox and Catholic.

The big difference in the organization of the space and the territory in Europe came from the development of the industry and its technology [3]. The new economy of Western Europe is associated with the Great geographical discoveries, the development of industry and this develops new understandings of the space. The development of the space in the Middle Ages was supported by the role and the development of the settlements - centers. Many of them were new and they were related to the new potential of the territory. A new, modern phenomenon as urbanization gradually was evolved. It started with the Italian city-states and gradually it was oriented to the shores of Western Europe. The motors of the urban and regional development in the West were affirmed - they were the processes of industrialization and urbanization.

In this period the scientific knowledge of the area is developed "after" the events. Because of that the theory of J. H. Von Thunen was not universal. It remained only for the agriculture. J. H. Von Thunen wrote in the early 19th century and in this period "his country" in the Christian part of Europe could only be in the northern part of the continent, where the most

backward agricultural areas were situated. There were large industrial cities in the southern and western parts of Europe during this period. It was logically to be developed theories about industry. The authors are many - Laundhart, Weber and others. In fact, Thunen situated a second city in the "isolated state" in the second version of his theory. This is a sign of urbanization and strengthen the city's economy, which is not agricultural. There is no other settlement in the Thunen's theory - it is only a city!

During the 19th and 20th century the urbanization and industrialization created the impression that they were processes without competition and modern opposition. In all areas of human development, these two processes were announced only like positive processes. It was created an illusion that they were part of the "end of the world" as a process of improvement.

The concentration of population and economy in smaller metropolitan areas helped to explain why the colonies, which have a much larger area and population than metropolitan were controlled. These geographic understandings gradually conquered the whole world. The degree of development of society is measured by the degree of industrialization and urbanization. There were two World Wars in the 20th century. The main problem was colonial territories and their resources. The main difference between the metropolis and the colonies was the degree of urbanization and industrialization.

There was no influence of parishes and diocese of the Catholic Church in the organization of the space. Nation states were developed, but the traditions remained. Old "agrarian" borders were upgraded from the urbanization and the industry. They were the same, but the figures on the territory were new. Old boundaries built new units.

What happened in the East during that time? The shadow of the Ottoman Empire changed economic and political geography of Eastern Europe. Constantinople was named Istanbul and the territories, situated eastern of Vienna gradually emerged as the continent's periphery. Gradually, the gap between the East and West became so big, that the Orient was associated with lower Danube. In Western Europe was created a political concept about the Balkan Peninsula and in the late 20th century the concept of the Western Balkans was created there again.

In the East and especially in the Ottoman empire, the territorial processes were different than Western Europe. Eastern Europe did not take part in the Great geographical discoveries and colonial conquest of the world. After unsuccessful blockade of Vienna by the Turks in 1683, a slow Reconquista began. It remained unfinished. Today, Eastern Thrace occupies only 3% of the territory of Turkey, but with these percents the country pretends to be a European country

and a member of the European Union. While the empires of Western Europe fought for the colonies in other continents, the empires of Eastern Europe-Austria /Austria-Hungary/, Turkey and Russia fought among themselves. Backwardness of eastern empires grew louder. While the West benefited Catholic borders of the parishes and dioceses, in East and especially in Russia and Ottoman Turkey, the Christian heritage, created before the invasion of the Turks and Mongols, were destroyed and forgotten. Historical - geographical names from the time of Rome and the Great Migration were forgotten. Political - geography names created new concepts. For example, the notion of Romelia /Greek land/ was known as Thrace and Macedonia.

An illustration of the gap is the construction of the first industrial enterprise in the Ottoman Empire. This happened in 1836 in Sliven. The industrialization and the urbanization from Western type began in Eastern Europe several centuries later than in Western Europe. A particularly interesting example is Romania. "Austro-Hungarian" part evolved much earlier and much stronger as an industry and urbanization /Transylvania/ than "Ottoman" part of the country /Wallachia and Moldova/.

The question arises: what was the leading spatial phenomenon before urbanization and industrialization, which was their competitor during their development? The answer is the ruralism and the ruralization. Its origins come from the Roman Empire. Its importance is gradually declining. In the 19th and early 20th century an illusion was created - the urbanization and the industrialization were continuous processes and they led to disappearance of the rural regions. In the late 19th century began the creation of opposition versus industrialization and urbanization. It is seen first in art, where instead of works related to the industry and the large modern city began a description of abiotic and living nature. For example, van Gogh painted sunflowers instead chimneys...

The interest in rural strengthened, especially after the World War II, when the developed countries entered in a period of post-industrial society [12]. The various attempts to urban renewal did not provide the expected positive results and in the early 50s of the last century began a structural change in the typical suburban /periurban/ zone. Along with the traditional agrarian functions began development of the economy and health /tourism, resorts, mineral waters, sports/. At the beginning, retirees began to leave the noisy and dirty cities and to live natural in the rural settlements. The so called neoruralism began.

The retirees were joined by people of culture and art, the rich people. They left the traditional city center and went to live in rural environment around the city. This geographical change led to structural and territorial changes in the city and its economy, in the metropolitan area and in the whole rural space.

During this time in Eastern Europe, especially on the Balkans, the development of the society was delayed [12]. This part of the continent was agrarian, the majority of the population lived in villages and worked the land. Eastern European countries started to become industrial-agrarian after World War II. The former socialist countries developed slowly. The society development was stopped there until the socialist system of economy and regional development finished. First in the development were socialist countries of Central Europe, because of their borders with the countries of Western Europe: East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary. They are Catholic countries and they still keep the traditions of the Middle Ages. Their spatial patterns are similar to those of Western Europe. Last in the development were the orthodox socialist countries of Eastern Europe, Bulgaria, the former USSR and the former Yugoslavia and partly Romania /Wallachia and Moldova/.

Their industrialization and urbanization were not directed to the interests of citizens, but to the interests of the state and the Communist Party. The necessary geographical analysis was missing or it was a subject of political goals and it was in the service of the state administration. The understanding about the ruralism in East is deformed and it is associated with the agriculture. The local authorities of any village would like their village to become a city and to change its administrative and political functions. Then the economy from agriculture would change to industry and the third step of the development could be thinking about the inhabitants and their standard of living.

The fall of communism found Eastern European countries with incomplete industrialization and urbanization. Formally their societies resemble to those of Western Europe. The industrial sector makes a major part of GDP, the employment and the majority of the population lives in cities in Eastern Europe. The main difference is in the quality of life. The life outside the city continued to be associated with agriculture. There are prospects in ruralism and it is important in West Europe. In the East, it is understood as the traditional 'industrial' representatives, as a source of labor and raw material for the cities.

The adoption of the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe in the European Union faces their lower level of development to the level of Western Europe. The countries of the East are the poor relatives in EU policy. They are associated with emigrants, depopulation, poverty. Each one of the countries lost a few years until it reached the level of development since the end of the communism.

The EU was created and developed by the western countries without the countries of Eastern Europe. Today they make common policies. One of them is the policy about rural development. The west ruralism is needed and useful. The urbanization fight

with the urban problems, the industry gave way to services in the economy. There are great prospects in rural settlements and territories [1]. They could alleviate the cities and they could help in solving their environmental, food, energy, social and other problems. A policy is needed to attract urban people to the rural lifestyle. The social goals are three: equal benefits, equal health care and education.

The traditional Western ruralism is associated with agriculture as economy [12]. In recent decades, the economy moves into the background and begins to serve social goals. Rural heart of the economy-the agriculture goes through several paradigms. The first one is pre-productivity paradigm /from Antiquity to the 16-17th century/. The urbanization and the industrialization developed the productivity paradigm. It ended after World War II, when the West society first began to produce agricultural surpluses. Then, the EU was created. Since the late 60s and 70s, the west farming is in the post productivity paradigm. Public attention changed attitude towards the ruralism and it is seen as a key element of the organization of space, as a regulator and a competitor to the traditional urbanization and industrialization. Now, other processes are post: post urbanization and post industrialization with richer terminology and that shows the need of change.

Alongside this, the Western policy establishes a defect that, unfortunately, continues today. The ruralism still is understood as a part of agriculture and the Policy for Rural Development is developed as a part of agriculture and agricultural policy. For example, in Bulgaria rural areas cover almost the whole of the country, but they are not part of the regional policy, but they are part of the agricultural policy, which is generally sectoral policy? Under the pressure of public needs the agriculture is no longer looking for an increase in production. An extensive, polyculture agriculture is encouraged. Many environmental, aesthetic and other barriers are created against increasing surpluses in agricultural.

In the East, however, the situation was very different. It became clear that the economies of the former socialist countries are not prepared for EU membership and their markets are flooded with Western and Asian goods. Even Bulgaria, which was famous for its agriculture throughout the 20th century, now offers only 10% of its own agricultural production for Bulgarian consumers. The ruralism in the eastern countries is old, traditional, highly agricultural. There are two different pillars in modern "agricultural" policy of the EU: for agriculture and for rural development. The first is sectoral and the second is regional? While the West agriculture receives fewer subsidies and it is clear that the opening of the EU in global markets led to the termination of subsidized agriculture, the East finance are exclusively for agriculture and the share of

rural development is void! This situation hampers the eastern agriculture, because it is still in the paradigms that seek to increase domestic production. At the same time, it is embarrass from western cheap imports. This is assisted by the large differences in agricultural subsidies. They are very clear on the Balkan Peninsula, where on the one side are the farmers from Greece and the other are the farmers from Bulgaria and Romania.

A major reconstruction of regional and agricultural policy is needed. There is no reconstruction in the plans for the period 2014-2020. The policies are determined by Western countries and poor Eastern countries are bound to be peripheral, which is at least a step /paradigm/ backward in their regional and agricultural policy. And this is the judgment, that gives life to the nationalism and Euro-skeptics...

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A typical example of Balkan rural policy is the peripheral areas in Bulgaria. The problems of peripheral regions of Bulgaria are part of the problems of regional and local planning and development. The biggest gap between goals and results in sectoral and regional policies could be found in Bulgaria. Peripheral areas are "victims" of these differences. Why? What are the results?

a). *The increase between rich and poor citizens and territories continues.* There is no cohesion. The difference in GDP between the capital and the outlying areas is about 4 times! The capital Sofia and several large cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants concentrate more and more of the population and the economy in Bulgaria. For example, the capital concentrates over 60% of foreign investment. The rest of the country is marginal. In this periphery /which now do not have a precise definition/ are situated regional administrative centers of level NUTS 3 /Smolyan, the centers of the northwestern part of the country, Silistra/ and many municipalities /level LAU 1/ which have a larger share of the population, than in the economy. They give immigrants for the centers and abroad.

b). *The attention of the science and the government is directed to the larger centers, to the "motors" of development.* Even in the policies focused on peripheral areas, the scientists are looking for the opportunities of the centers. There is no legal regulation about the problem "center-periphery" in Bulgaria, the relations inside the territorial units are not regulated. For example, over 90 % of mayors and municipal deputies come from the municipal centers. In Bulgaria, on average level are administrative areas /NUTS 3/. Each administrative district "received" a manager by the central government... There is no control of the population, selected by election. There is no horizontal integration between territorial units, especially NUTS 3 and LAU 1.

c). *The main process that develops regional policies is urbanization. It is not over in Bulgaria.* The ruralization and ruralization are unknown processes. The scientists and the practice /regional development strategy/ are interested in urbanization, urbanization of centers and their influences. Meanwhile, the rural and mostly rural areas cover 92% of the total territory of the country. In other words, the interest in peripheral areas comes through the development of urbanization and economic centers.

d). *Due to the limited capacity of the national budget and the policy for development of the centers, outlying areas rely on grants and projects of the European Union.* We are already in the second half of 2014, but there are not approved programs and policies of the European Commission for the period 2014 - 2020 in Bulgaria. In Bulgaria we are still in 2013! Moreover, due to the mistakes, many projects and entire programs, transport, regional development, ecology are currently suspended and projects, approved in the last planning period are not executed.

e). *The statistical indicators of the municipalities from the outlying areas do not have practical value.* Human resources quantity, population and administrative capacity for development in the peripheral settlements and communities are limited. The process of depopulation is too big. For example, the projections show that in the next 5 years, about 5% of Bulgarian villages will lose their population! The announcement of the municipalities to self-governing territorial structures is fiction. Finances in Bulgaria are highly centralized. Real term which regulate the regional and local development is: finance minister - municipality. Financial power is at level government /annual budget approved by the Parliament/ and the municipalities. Each municipality in Bulgaria has its own revenues and state subsidies from the central government. The municipalities can not develop without this subsidy. All other territorial levels /planning, administrative, statistical/ have neither the finances, nor power. So they can not really participate in regional and local development.

f). *The peripheral settlements cover evenly the territory of the country, while a few large /national and regional/ centers are uneven.* There are two centers of regional growth in Bulgaria: the capital Sofia in the central-western part of the country and the cities of Varna and Burgas on the Black Sea - the eastern border of the country. Logically, as Bulgaria is the periphery of the EU, there are too many peripheral territories in our country.

g). *The studies of Bulgarian and foreign experts are usually limited to the confirmation of the definition, given by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development about rural /country/ region and the attempts for its enrichment.* In these studies are used different indicators: economic, social,

environmental. What are the results? There are different groupings of rural municipalities. In some projects even geographical indicators for nature are criticized. Some studies attempt to group the peripheral municipalities by isolating their centers, if they have a population of over 30,000 inhabitants. In other groupings the whole community advocates peripherals, including center with a population of over 30,000 inhabitants. There are similar grouping of the areas of level NUTS 3 whose centers are less or more than 50 000 inhabitants. These studies are not interested in electoral geography of rural municipalities. The results of municipal elections do not lead to specific development policies.

h). *There are leftist, centrist and rightist parties in Bulgaria. All of them win elections in certain municipalities.* There are no differences in the municipal policies. Problems are common, but the decisions also are common. This "unity" repels rural residents from the politics and the elections. At the European Parliament election in 2014 over two thirds of the population of Bulgaria did not vote. Electoral activity of the rural municipalities is the lowest. The election results in these territories are decided by the purchase of the votes of the Roma minority, although this is illegal. These municipalities have high criminality, people are not sure about their life and they decide to emigrate.

i). *In the peripheral areas over 99% of economic agents are small and medium enterprises.* They receive a negligible share of the European and national investment. The population is elderly, gypsies without education or lower education. Regional policies of the EU and Bulgaria rely on their regional development exclusively through agricultural development. But surely this is a sectoral policy! That is not European ruralization! The poor infrastructure, especially roads, hampers the development and leads to a lack of meaning of other development policies. For example, the average speed of passenger trains in Bulgaria is 44 km/h. The average speed of buses that connect the capital, NUTS 2, NUTS 3, LAU 1 is about 50 km/h. But the economic policy in Bulgaria is stronger than regional policy. There is no public transport in many villages, the roads are in poor condition. At the end of the last century many schools and churches were closed. This means to close our settlement. For example: there is no nonstop working pharmacy shop in the town of Targovishte /center NUTS 3. There is no pharmacy shop in 11 of 27 centers level NUTS 3. In two regions, level NUTS 3, there is no rural pharmacy. In 39 municipalities /15% of the municipalities in Bulgaria- all peripheral/ there is no pharmacy. This is according to the National pharmacy card.

The attempts to determine the administrative geography of services /hospitals, schools/ enhance the depopulation of peripheral mountain areas.

By the end of last and beginning of this century, the peripheral areas are subject, which was in the focus of regional planning and development. The base was the traditional center-periphery relations, which was inherited from the regional planning from socialism. In recent times this topic was transformed and it was presented in the National Spatial Development Concept of Bulgaria 2013-2025. According to it, there are "areas with specific characteristics" in Bulgaria. Actually, these are peripheral regions. They are designed as informal regions: the Black Sea coast, Danube coast, mountain communities, border communities, rural municipalities, communities at risk, areas of landscape conservation, cultural and historical values. It was passed a special law about the municipalities of the Black Sea coast. There are several understandings of the scope of the Black Sea coast. According to some documents, the coastal areas covered regions /level NUTS 2/ which have access to the sea. They include communities from the inside of the territory. According to NGOs the coast consists of only those municipalities that have access to the shore. Their nuclei are the municipalities of the regional centers of Varna and Burgas. Other municipalities are peripheral. All other areas with specific characteristics are determined as problem areas.

The municipalities along the Danube have national and international institutionalization. There are 34 municipalities members in The Association of Danube River Municipalities /NGOs/. Only municipalities with areas on the banks of the Danube river and the administrative district of Razgrad, Bulgaria /because it is very close to the river/ are included in the cross-border program Bulgaria-Romania. The national spatial development concept includes 28 municipalities. 4 of them are central /Vidin, Svishtov, Ruse, Silistra/ and the rest are peripheral. The Municipality of Lom, with its port, is added to the central municipalities, because it comes in the strategy of polycentric development of Romania. The main objective is the Danube axis of socio-economic development to become central. Now it has an ancillary matter in European territorial, especially transport development. There are also plans to build several new bridges on the river between Bulgaria and Romania: Oryahovo-Beckett, Silistra-Calarasi, the second bridge at Ruse-Giurgiu. The main principles are connectivity, environment and competitiveness.

Mountain communities. There are three technologies for their determination. The first one is NORDREGIO, the second one is the regulation for determining indicators for disadvantaged areas by 2008, and the third one is the National Regional Development Strategy 2012-2022. According to the concept of Spatial development, mountain municipalities are 109 with 1715 settlements. The basis

is the land of each settlement. To be one village a mountain village, it must corresponds to one of the following three criteria at least: an average altitude of over 700 meters and an average slope of 20 % over the territory, altitude 500 m with an average slope of more than 15 %. The opportunities for upland communities are limited. They are in tourism, protection of cultural and natural heritage.

The 43 municipalities are border municipalities. They are situated in the southern and western boundary of the country and they differ from the municipalities situated on the coasts. Most of them are mountainous. Only four of them are central - Smolyan, Petrich, Kyustendil, Blagoevgrad. Their biggest problem is poor infrastructure. For example, there is not railway line transitions in the state borders between Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from the time before World War II. Only Bulgaria's membership in NATO and the EU allows roads to be rehabilitating to the Aegean Sea in the south. The big problem is the border with Turkey. This border is strengthening at the moment, because many illegal immigrants from Syria and Middle East passes through it. Hence, animal diseases. In some of these communities live less than 10 inhabitants per square kilometer. There is not any capacity for development.

Rural communities. According to the Development Programme, rural areas in Bulgaria are 231 rural municipalities. They occupy 81% of the territory and they are home to 42% of the population of Bulgaria. The division of urban and rural territories is inaccurate and provisionally. There are lots of cities with populations of less than 30,000 inhabitants in the rural territories. There are many rural settlements in the urban communities. The national concept for extensive development perceived the following typology about the rural municipalities, which are generally peripheral. The first one group rural municipalities is in isochron of 30 minutes from the city. They could benefit from city's services and influence. The second one group of municipalities is further away from the isochron of 30 minutes. They are at risk because the big city could not influence. The third group is rural municipalities that have their own economic, environmental, tourism and other development resources. They can be developed independently.

Communities at risk. This group has additional significance and it covers the main border and mountain communities. This includes the municipalities with the following characteristics: environmental risk, floods, landslides, droughts, earthquakes, hail.

Demographic risk. The population has decreased by over 30% for 10 years.

Economic risk - unemployment, poverty and criminal background above average. There is many settlements in this group, especially those without potential for development. These are settlements with a

population of 100 inhabitants: the elderly, low education, pensioners, poor roads. Local resources are sought to attract investment.

Areas for the protection of the landscape, natural and cultural assets. Each case is specific. It is a basis for various national and international documents on the protection of nature and the settlements. Bulgaria has thousands of geographic objects that fall within the definition of conservation values. Their number is constantly growing.

4. CONCLUSION

Differences between Eastern European /Balkan Peninsula/ and Western Europe are very large. Western ruralism acquires social functions, in the economy agriculture is replaced by different services, tourism, health. The situation is different in Bulgaria and the Balkan Peninsula. Each government is working to transform the program for rural development in sectoral program to subsidize the agriculture. The funds for other activities are less. The peripheral areas are situated in more disadvantaged position. The centers attract attention, while the periphery is lagging behind. The difference between the central towns and municipalities and surrounding peripheral areas is growing fast. A change is needed. It can happen on the basis of more sophisticated understanding of the ruralism.

There is no common understanding and common rural reality in the European Union.

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