

## DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS AND DEPOPULATION IN RURAL AREAS

Vasile D. GOGONEA

PhD Candidate

University of Craiova, Romania

[v\\_gogonea@yahoo.com](mailto:v_gogonea@yahoo.com)

**Abstract:** *The presented article establishes a series of essential coordinates regarding the demographic crisis and the depopulation in the rural area of our country, drawing attention to the fact that the Romanian village has always proved a landmark of our troubled history, that hidden secret of the soul of our Romanian nation. It was emphasized that Romania gives us the image of a country with an ever poorer population, increasingly old and more prone to migration to other countries, in search of a job, this being true, especially in the case of young people. In this way, a negative natural increase is recorded, which leads to the capture of phenomena and socio-demographic processes that attract attention and concern, especially when the results of the population census are underlined and interpreted. It becomes increasingly obvious that the villages, with their windows in which the collective memory breaks, seem to plunge into a valley of desolate carelessness, when impossibility seems to have included those who can, but will not, like those who they want, but cannot do something concrete for the benefit of the community. This causes the majority of the population to lose their identity and be reduced to the indoctrinated herd state and oriented in a specific direction to mass psychology.*

**Key words:** *demographic crisis; migration; aging population; collective memory; rural communities; demographic osmosis; socio-demographic processes; migration phenomena.*

### Introduction

From the perspective of the demographic crisis in the European space, with a clear demographic explosion in the south of the continent, due to the flows of Afro-Asian migrants and with a demographic deficit in the north of the continent, if we analyze the arrival of a large number of immigrants in a country, we find that this is equivalent to the effect of the birth of a significant number of children by the population of the respective country, because both at the territorial level, but, especially at the demographic level, the indigenous population stops births due to immigrants.

This is one of the conclusions that can be reached from studying the migration phenomena of today. The pessimistic prophecies of the self-liquidation of the European identity are proving more and more insistent in different sharpnesses, even talking about the dissolution of the spiritual landmarks of some nations!

Like an arch over the frontiers of the time, as a corolla that crowns the succession of generations, the Romanian village proves a landmark of our shaken history, that hidden secret of the soul of the Romanian people, the unaltered reflection of the green of the plains, of the forests on the hills or of the fir trees, mountain, so beautifully found in the crystal clear of the mirror of the running waters

and the source of the springs, through the repeated experiences of the succession of seasons and of the rich woolen fruits, associated with the fresh smell of mossy hay or of the flowering apple in which the rich and perennial scents abound of the ancestral land.

### **1. Knowledge of present realities**

In the constant effort to harmonize with the most refined and purifying tastes that are not disputed, but, too often only discussed, it seems that sometimes the outline of the "eternity that was born in the village" is supplemented by pure white or so brightly colored of the popular harbor, by the doina of mourning, sung near the flame of the sheep by the whistle or by the shepherds' horse, by the smoke that snakes on the misty sky of the long winter nights, by the booze that refreshes the forehead of the man in the hot summer evenings, through the dew that starts off with dreamlike brilliance in the mornings started earlier than anywhere else in the world, through the hours that are set for weddings or other holidays, all complementing what we have left from a picture of eternity in the village, through the bead of the images lived and always recreated in the cycles of life that always crown the dawn of seasons.

In analyzing the problem of depopulation of the rural environment, it becomes more and more important to identify the role that sociological investigation can play in the deeper knowledge of the causes of this phenomenon, especially since "sociological studies usually focus on the knowledge of present realities" (Otovescu, 2009: 22) and the characteristics of open systems, most often make impossible a supposed tendency to uniform.

Thus, for almost three decades, so, during the so-called transition period, after 1989, Romania gives us the image of a country with an ever poorer population, increasingly old and more prone to migration to other countries, in search of a place of work, this being true, especially in the case of young people. In this way, there is a negative natural increase, which leads to the analysis of phenomena and socio-demographic processes that attract attention and concern, especially when the results of the population census are underlined and interpreted.

Statistical data strongly show that during the interwar period, birth rates in Romania were several times higher than at present, being considered one of the largest on the European continent, despite the fact that healthcare was poor in the rural area, where it is found out more than three quarters of the population, the number of doctors being totally insufficient (Otovescu, Otovescu, 2019). In this sense, many solutions for stimulating encouraging public policies belonged almost exclusively to specialized medical professionals and generous people with the quality of large donors, so that the natural increase of the population during the interwar period was about four million people, which it meant an increase of 20% in a period of almost two decades. Because the number of medical professionals proved insufficient, special schools were set up at that time for those considered midwifery

graduates from nursing schools, as well as the establishment of future health colleges.

However, the villages, with their windows in which the collective memory breaks, seem to plunge into a valley of desolate carelessness, when an impossibility seems to have included those who can, but will not, like those who will, but we cannot do anything concrete for the benefit of the community.

## **2. The phenomenon of depopulation of the rural environment**

With a kind of embarrassing reluctance, there is also a trembling and worrying voice about the people of the country who feel the disappearance of villages passing by, especially when the aura of some basic institutions that once shed the light of the spirit, ie: schools , cultural homes, museums, libraries and churches, so that the phenomenon of depopulation of the rural environment in Romania, of the Gorjian village, in particular, gets the expression of a dramatic reality that makes us ask ourselves legitimate questions regarding the number of rural communities disappeared in the last half a century, either due to the systematization of the territory, or due to the migration abroad of entire families from our villages, against the background of the drastic drop in birth rates.

The statistical figures always give us the results of the census and they are the ones that illustrate alarming situations, especially since statistical or other data are based on sufficient arguments that point us to certain sociological research directions regarding the causes that have generated and continue to generate the phenomenon depopulation, especially in rural areas, precisely to highlight the general implications affecting the population as a whole!

Beyond the difficulties inherent in a scientific approach elaborated and structured on the use of appropriate concepts, the research activity starts from the premise that the depopulation of the rural environment represents a serious and profound alarm signal, because, in the last resort, it is a phenomenon that it has to worry about the decision-makers and which endangers the very existence and identity of the Romanian nation, as a distinct entity, because it is necessary to adopt a set of measures at the level of the social system and the decision-makers.

It is precisely in such a setting where a series of unpredictable phenomena can occur, any delay or even a delay due to the lack of financial resources, so necessary in adopting effective strategies and with immediate applicability, would mean, in the end, completing the painting illustrating the exacerbation of a real social danger!

An overall picture of the habitat from the Romanian rural area offers the edifying image of a living space of a great diversity and variety that emphasizes the individuality and the specificity of the way of life, through everything that we consider can mean the universality related to the daily activity. in which we all meet, as we were born and we are living on these lands of the Romanian space.

### 3. The elements that define the Romanian rural environment

Despite the fact that the rural area also offers those elements of attraction related to ancient traditions and customs, as much as they are preserved, beyond those served by a living that cannot be envied, we can also mention a kind of pressing sacrifice of the gift that certifies humanity, whether or not only to ignore the phenomena and destructive processes that affect the human frame of life in the country, a living environment that always takes us thinking about those possibilities and opportunities to investigate what it means to depopulate the rural environment from Our country.

Analyzing the elements that define the Romanian rural environment, the isolation status of some localities, due to living in a difficult accessible area, due to the deteriorated roads, due to the lack of means of transport, can be highlighted throughout, which confirms the existence of depopulated areas, located mainly in hilly or mountainous regions, to which we could add the precariousness of the resources strictly necessary for the daily existence, especially in forgotten villages of the world, in the valleys or on the mountain peaks.

It is worth remembering on every occasion that the philosopher of the Romanian mioritic space and the author of "Poems of light", Lucian Blaga, the one who launched and even consecrated the well-known emblematic expression according to which "eternity was born in the village", could also be considered the living thing these times of today, in a context in which the expression as such proves more than a metaphor that reveals its significance in the inevitable flow of time. In the large speech from the Romanian Academy, from June 5, 1937, suggestively called "Praise of the Romanian Village", the same poet and philosopher, Lucian Blaga, in his vision, based on an unmistakable poetic metaphor, also argued that in the living unchallenged, the Romanian village represents "the only living presence yet, though immortal, though so terrestrial, it is our unanimous first unnamed", (Blaga, 1937: 297), just to convince us that the entire village civilization in the Romanian space has nothing monumental, but instead, it has a harmoniously composed fabric that gives life, has a natural and full harmony, which makes it extremely interesting, especially through the spiritual life that is its own. After the Second World War, in Romania, as in the whole of Eastern Europe, the communist regime was established according to the Soviet model, which caused the overthrow of moral, social-political and human values, affecting the Romanian village, in the case our, the Gorjian village, by destroying its roots, by abolishing private property, by expropriating the land of peasants and setting up collective farms.

This process of combining the land areas held by the peasants is eloquently explained by Prof. Gheorghe Gorun, teacher and researcher, when he talks about "a real calamity that strikes the fate of the Romanian peasant who was forced by the conditions. historical to ensure their daily life from a piece of land with which he had been appropriated, either in 1864, or in 1921, or in 1945, precisely as a certification of the peasant's uninterrupted connections with the ancestral land, because it is

necessary to explain the historical facts, highlighting the relationship between the singular and the repeatable ones, to define the continuity of the historical process ... The historical fact is placed in systems of culture and civilization. An event becomes a historical fact, only if it has consequences in the course of the historical process. Historical facts, as human facts, have validity in time and space, validity given by the creative activity of man" (Gorun, 2008: 39), in order to highlight a number of significant aspects, beyond the ephemerality of the phenomenon of depopulation of the Romanian village.

This time of the ephemeral civilization and the shock of the prospect of the future, determines the person oriented to the research of the social fact to pass many times to the historical event that comes back today, because demographically, the depopulation of the country, the rural environment, in particular, always leads to highlighting the existence of numerically reduced families, consisting of one or two children, and families with fewer children are the result of some people's concern to increase the standard of living from one day to another or to be achieved professionally.

In most cases, the atmosphere of domestic violence, the audience and the culture of hyper-masculinity, associated with the demographic osmosis, seem to confirm the situations in which the alleged modern families with a smaller number of children, often reach a higher standard of economic life and social, although we also witness an undesirable effect, related to the fact that the rural localities lose the reproductive competition, because the children and grandchildren from the families of the villages have a very low reproductive capacity.

If we analyze the process of ensuring the continuity of the population in certain larger territories, it is found that families with more children benefit from this, who are considered to have an assumed risk of losing in the short term some social-economic advantages, because the ethnic groups of families with more children, seem to be gaining in the demographic race that takes place in the last half century in different areas of the world, where we can talk about a differentiated population split by races and cultures, some considered atypical in family structure.

Through multiple forms of quite ambiguous expression, the media in our country, as well as the western one, have carefully analyzed the process of systematizing the Romanian villages, showing that by adopting the administrative-territorial reform of 1968, the leadership has since overruled by a predominantly propagandistic approach, the need to systematize the rural localities.

For example, in the 1970s, much of the party and state leadership obstinately resumed this problem, promoting the idea of halving the villages in our country, in order to achieve the well-known modern agro-industrial centers, to be endowed with standard utilities, consisting of sewerage, asphalted roads, central heating systems, running water, like conditions in the western world.

Of course, at that time, the Western media did not react vehemently and promptly, but in 1988 and 1989 a true propaganda campaign was carried out through what was considered to be the erasure of rural civilization from the surface of the

earth from our country and the destruction of invaluable ethnographic values, therefore, the destruction of an entire wealth of traditions and customs inherited from ancestors.

Paradoxically, nothing was remembered about the end of such a civilization crushed as today under the heel of modernity and postmodernity in the western countries, but we were given lessons on the sociological monographs of the Monographic School in Bucharest, because the world of that time to realize how to extract spring water from the well with the cork and buy, how to use the ox cart or how the Oltenic cobil looks, maybe and how to work on the war of weaving at the Cooperative Art House, a series of heritage objects finding it was only in the village museums, thus highlighting the danger of uprooting, which, rightly, concerned the fate of the people from the villages.

Some journalists in the western press appreciated that the demolitions were carried out through a systematic campaign, especially in the villages where the population of Hungarian or German ethnicity lived, because, in the regime's campaign against the national minorities, there would have been a kind ethnic cleansing, and in this regard, in Germany, the Netherlands, France or Belgium, as in other states, some civic groups and organizations acted that sounded a serious alarm to save the various Saxon or Hungarian villages from destruction. In the pastoral and obviously biased view of some Western analysts, this meant one of the most obvious manipulations through the media, thus exerting pressures with great psychological impact on international public opinion and the way in which the Romanian reality was perceived.

## Conclusions

The analysis can be summarized by the fact that before 1989 it was intended that through the so-called system of village systematization, those old roots of village communities and rural settlements, those unbroken windows of the nation would be destroyed, diluting themselves. the vitality and the personal perspective of the nation, by systematically distorting the foundations that ensure the perpetuation of national traditions and customs, morals and values, so that the rural settlements have come to lose their belonging and twinning, and the urban ones sink into - a pathological amnesia, forgetting its consecration through the well-known fairs of the medieval era. This has caused the majority of the population to lose their identity and be reduced to the indoctrinated herd state and oriented in a specific direction to mass psychology.

Taking into account, even one aspect regarding rural youth, in the last decades it has been faced with the lack of concrete possibilities to engage in an activity that would provide the necessary income for a civilized life, or based on the absence of objective criteria for schooling and qualification regarding professional orientation, family living conditions or means of transport between home and school, in order to capture in detail the major shortcomings that are increasingly

manifested in the conditions of providing access to public utilities, to what we usually call the set of social services that undoubtedly enshrines the right to education, institutionalized healthcare or even social assistance.

Despite the demographic and identity metamorphoses that have become increasingly evident in European countries over the last two decades of the twentieth century and in the first two decades of the 21st century, a number of EU officials refuse to openly acknowledge and with legitimate concern the seriousness of the problems regarding the demographic evolutions, but, while such people prefer to remain silent and only always do not see the reality, the voices that perceive this are beginning to be heard, the voices of those who can afford it are heard. to tell the truth and to inform at a high level what is actually happening.

The precomprehensive effort to research for the purpose of scientific knowledge the social reality and the depopulation of the rural environment, without a doubt that it involves addressing important problems that seek to be solved at the level of the whole society or only at the level of a segment that can be considered more important, of the social system. Certainly, in the overall evolution of people's lives, if a certain problem is not solved in time, which the future of society itself depends on, it can generate other problems which exacerbate, as in a causal chain, the manifestation of imbalances leading to destabilization of social gear.

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