

Rural and urban population in the European Union

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the size of the rural population in Romania. If we define the rural community in Europe, we can say that more than half of the people in the 27 European states live in rural areas. As the surface of these rural localities occupies over 90% of the European Union territory, which is important because until recently, within the European Union's policies, the rustic was considered a sector, and no emphasis was placed on its character and spatial size. From this position derived from the available studies and statistics, the study adopts desktop research methods from reliable sources to retrieve verified data to complete this study. The findings of the study are also outlined in the paper as follows. The study finds out the opposite trend in urbanization in Romania as more people are settling in rural areas than the rest of the countries across the European Union. This paper entails a discussion section where the data is well presented and explained using tables, graphs, and images to relay the information. The report concludes by outlining significant findings of the study like the opposite urbanization trends in Romania compared with UE countries.*

Keywords: Rural Romania, Urban Romania, Romania GDP

JEL: J64, B16

1. Introduction

Rural population represents topic of interest in the literature. From an economic point of view, it stimulates the appearance of rural entrepreneurship and contributes to regional development (Burcea, Hudea and Toma, 2014).

If we define the rural population in Europe, we can say that more than half of the population in the 27 European states lives in rural areas. As the surface of these rural localities occupies over 90% of the territory of the European Union, which is important because until recently within the policies of the European Union, the rural was considered a sector and no emphasis was placed on its character and spatial size. The rural environment includes localities that have a population density of fewer than 150 inhabitants per square meter, thus being able to have a classification according to NUTS (3) (Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics at level 3 as follows:

Predominantly rural regions: Here over 50% of the inhabitants live in communes with less than 150 inhabitants per square meter

Rural regions: Here between 15% and 50% of the inhabitants live in communes with less than 150 inhabitants per square meter.

Urban regions: Here less than 15% of the inhabitants live in communes with less than 150 inhabitants per square meter.

2. Literature review

By 2015, just over a quarter of the EU-28 total population lived in rural areas. This distribution meant that the higher side of the community lived in urban areas. According to this study, over five years from 2010 to 2015, there was an escalation in the number of inhabitants living in rural areas across the EU-28, which saw the general increase up to 1.7% percentage points (Eurostat, 2015).

According to Eurostat (2015) statistics, over half of the people living in rural areas in Romania, Malta, and Bulgaria are at a high risk of social exclusion or poverty. Furthermore, the study reveals that most of the member states joining the union by the year 2004 record a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion.

According to another study by Shucksmith et al., (2009), the urban population's growth was even more significant after recording a rise of 4.7 points. This trend was attributed to the fact that most of the working population mover into suburbs to find better and affordable housing. The study ends by highlighting some of the urban growth projections, predicting a close to 5.2 points increase in the town population.

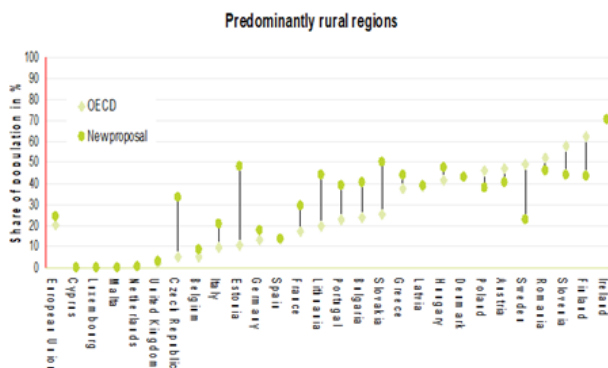
3. Research Methodology

This study utilized qualitative research methods to address the topic. Furthermore, an interpretivism study philosophy in the aim of addressing the subject holistically. Concerning the approach, the study utilizes an interpretive study approach to explore the different avenues related to the topic. It is also important to note that this study extensively uses desktop research methods in data collection and analysis. Most of these desktop methods included taking data from reliable sources such as magazines, journals, websites, and blogs.

4. Results and discussion

Southern Europe is facing productivity problems. One of the explanations given by the Wall Street Journal is that Europeans in the south of the continent work more on farms, and agriculture has low productivity. Eurostat claims that in 2010 12% of Greeks worked in agriculture, 7% of Portuguese, while the average in the euro area is 3%.

Figure 1. Rural regions in Europe 2010



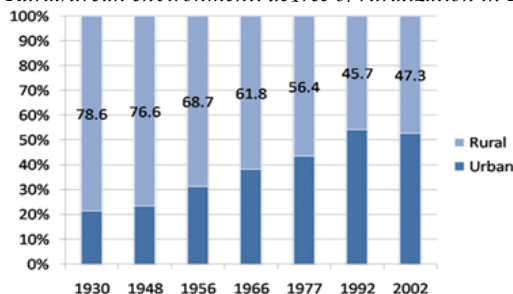
Source: Eurostat

In Germany, only 2% of employees work in agriculture. According to a study conducted by the Telegraph, the population living in rural areas has a life expectancy two years longer than in urban areas. The data needed for the study were collected over six years between 2001 and 2007. In the chart below, you can see the predominantly rural regions of the European Union, made by Eurostat for 2010.

Rural in Romania

At the level of 2005, 46.3% of Romanians lived in rural areas, increasing compared to the 2002 census of 44.8% similar to that of some African countries such as Zambia, Angola, Jamaica according to a study conducted at that time by the WORLD BANK. It is noteworthy that that share was growing even higher than the 1990 level of 45.7%.

Figure 2. Rural/urban environment: degree of ruralization in Romania, by counties.



Source: Eurostat

In the graph above, it can be seen that in the period 1992-2002 the rural population increased. At last census backed to 2011, the National Institute of Statistics expressed concern about the lack of homes in rural areas. How many rural Romanians found a job in 2011?

ANOFM answers according to the web pag www.realitatea.net Approximately 145,000 Romanians from rural areas have found a job, which means a percentage 30% lower than those from urban areas. Thus, a ranking by counties of the number of people from villages who found a job last census(2011) would look like this:

Table 1: Top rural employment 2011

Ranking	Top rural employment 2011	Top few jobs 2011
1	Suceava - 9.800	Covasna-975
2	Neamț - 9.200	Vrancea -1100
3	Timiș - 8.200	Mehedinti-1200
4	Prahova - 7.600	
5	Mureș - 6.600	
6	Iași - 5.400	
7	Buzău - 5.400	
8	Olt - 5.200	
9	Bihor- 4.600	
10	Dâmbovița - 4.500	

Source: Authors' own research.

While the percentage of employees is lower by 30% in rural areas than in urban areas, crime is found to have increased between 2005 and 2010 by 30 %; there are enough indicators that show a more than a downward trend in crime in rural areas.

The urban in Europe

The urban area/city is defined as a populated area where no activities related to agriculture take place. The city has a legal status provided by the government and is associated with specific administrative forms. The city is defined as a complex form of human settlement with industrial facilities, usually having an administrative, industrial, political, commercial and cultural function.

Urban expansion in Europe

The cities expand both vertically and horizontally (in Romania they expand more vertically) reducing the distances between them.

The European Environment Agency says that urban expansion continues rapidly and threatens the ecological, social and economic balance. The same agency claims that urban expansion in Europe reflects a new lifestyle and consumption pattern and not a growing population. The European Institute of Romania publishes a study conducted by various specialists dealing with urban expansion. According to him, one of the problems facing countries in the world is urban expansion. This phenomenon is mainly in developing countries. According to the website www.realitatea.net, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has revised its report

since 2011. It shows that urban areas of the planet will absorb world population growth in the next 40 years. The UN estimates that the world's population will increase in the coming years from 7 billion in 2011 to 9.3 billion in 2050, of which 6.3 billion will live in urban areas, an increase of 2.7 billion, or 75% of the current number.

The urban in Romania

In 1930, Romania's population was 18 million. Of these, 80% lived in the country and only 20% in the city. With the communist industrialization, the urban population increased rapidly in 1960, so the urban population was 5.9 million people and 12.3 million in 1989. According to the website of the European structural funds, the urban population of Romania was in 2005 of 54.9%, which places our country among the least urbanized in Europe. Sociologist Mircea Kivu, as hot news tells us, following last census(2011), the most surprising news is the reversal of the trend of the evolution of the urban population, rural population ratio. The results of the last census show that the urban population decreased to 52.8, with a migratory flow from urban to rural areas. The counties with the highest degree of urbanization according to the preliminary results of last census(2011) seem to be:

- Hunedoara (by 74.1%),
- Brasov (by 71.2%),
- Constanța (by 67.9%),
- Cluj (by 65.9%),

The counties with the lowest shares of the urban population are:

- Giurgiu (by 27.9%)
- Dâmbovița (by 28.3%)
- Teleorman (by 31.3%),
- Neamț and Călărași (by 35.0%)

Next, we will look at the map with the GDP by counties at the level of 2011:

Figure 3. .GDP level by counties (2011)



Source: www.econtext.ro.

Looking at the map, we notice that the top counties in terms of urbanization are quite good in terms of GDP.

If we look at the percentage of counties coded to urbanization, we would think that people in these areas live in villages and deal with agriculture, beekeeping or other activities not specific to an urban area. Still, if we look at the map with GDP by counties above we find that the respective counties are weak and very weak in terms of GDP, so we can conclude that the non-urbanized counties coincide with those with a low GDP.



Conclusions

The study unmasks that rural citizens find it harder to find a job compared to those in urban areas by less than 30%. Regarding urbanization in Europe and on the planet in general, massive urbanization is expected, which can have negative consequences in various forms. Unlike the general trend that emerges from various statistical studies, Romania registers an entirely different direction. Thus, while in other countries the degree of urbanization increased, in Romania the graphs showed the opposite, maybe also against the background of the economic crisis and poverty, the population being left without jobs and disposable income, who took refuge in the country, and started to make agriculture and animal domestication to survive the prevailing crisis. Also, the population that took refuge carries out subsistence agriculture mainly because it was advantageous to relocate without enough money at their disposal, which is also observed in the low GDP of the poorly urbanized counties.

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