

EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY IN THE CURRENT ROMANIAN VILLAGE

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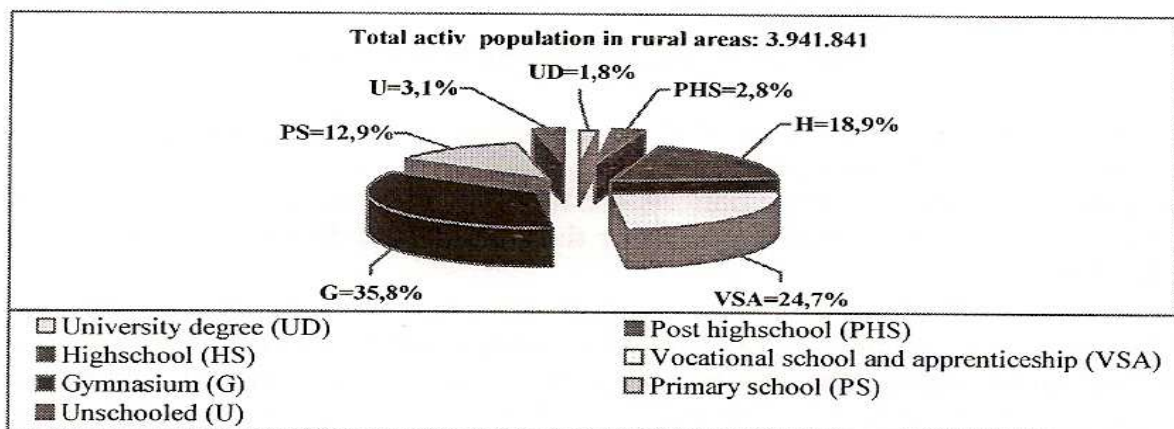
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This article analyses the main tendencies in socio-occupational and educational mobility in Romanian rural areas. It is presented, also, the evolution of the education stock in the rural and urban areas in the last 50 years. The most basic conclusion of this study is that reduction of the stock of knowledge in the rural communities have led to one significant slowing down of the rhythms and proportions of education and occupational mobility, both in an intragenerational way (along one's career) as well as in an intergenerational way.

While it is developing, any society witnesses a growth in the number of workers with medium and higher training. From this point of view, Romania's evolution in the last ten years does not show clear signs of development compared to Western European countries but also to countries in Central and Eastern Europe, although the latter have known the same change of political regime at the beginning of the 90s. As such, Romania continues to be among the last in European statistics regarding the number of graduates from university and post-university studies. The distribution of these graduates in the territory shows serious discrepancies both between counties and between historical regions. *The indicator that mostly discriminates the current Romanian society is the social-residential environment, namely the distribution of graduates from medium and superior studies in the rural and urban areas.* The impact of these discriminations eventually consists in the different quality of the human capital in the two communities and of the social and occupational structures in the village and in the city.

The education stock in the rural areas

In an epoch in which knowledge tends to become people and societies' main capital, and the most profitable source of income, the Romanian rural society is facing a profound crisis of its cultural capital. In the last ten years, there was a *massive de-schooling and, therefore, a decrease in the importance of school.* This process is the consequence of the simultaneous action of several factors and leads to the *dramatic decrease of the education stock in the current Romanian village.*



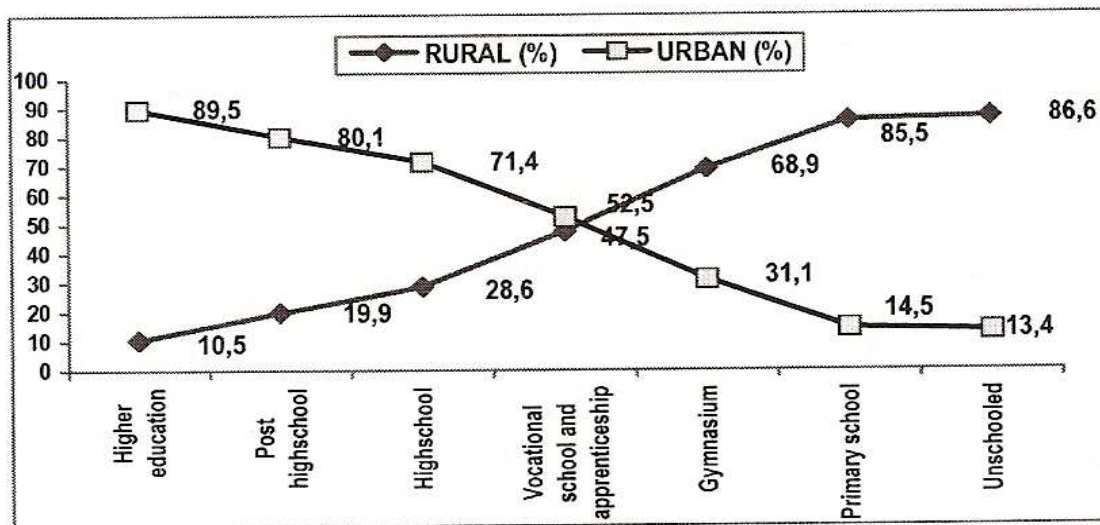
Graph 1. The structure of the education stock for the active population in the rural areas

The analysis of the educational level of the active population in the rural areas emphasizes the following aspects:

- a very high share of those who have a low level of education (more than half of them did not go to highschool)
- a very small share of higher education graduates
- once again the rural area proves to be a pole for poverty also from the point of view of education (type III poverty).

The general situation of the education stock in the rural environment hides *significant differences between women and men*:

- in the rural areas, of the number of unschooled people, 8 of 10 are women
- the number of unschooled women and of women with only primary school is double compared to the number of men in the same category.



Graph 2. The education stock of the active population in the rural and urban areas (2002)

As it has been mentioned already, in the Romanian current society, comparative analyses for villages and cities show severe discrepancies between the two areas, including in the case of comparing the seven educational levels of the population. As it results from Table no. 2, the educational pyramid – at least for extreme levels (high and low) – is reversed in the rural area compared to the urban area:

- from the current graduates of higher education in Romania, almost 90% live in cities and only 10% live in the village
- on the contrary, from the total of the category “without having graduated,” 87% live in the village and only 13% live in cities
- equally important differentiations are to be found also in the case of graduates from high school and post-high school studies: for the former, the fraction is 8 to 2 for the urban area and for the latter is 7 to 3
- the educational categories in which the shares urban-rural are closed refer to graduates of secondary school or high school, of vocational or apprentice schools.

It has to be noted that the relations between the educational stocks in the rural compared to the urban areas have known since 1991 up to the present a *dynamics that was unfavorable to the village, especially regarding those who graduated from higher education institutions*:

If in 1991 the relation between the population with higher education in the village and in cities was of 3 to 7 in favor of the city, in 2002, this relation (distance) has grown, becoming 10 to 1 in the favor of the urban (Calculations according to the Census of populations and houses, March 18, 2002, vol. 2, 2003 and Cartana C., Social Mobility in Romania, in the review *Sociologie Romaneasca*, 1, 2000, 110).

The evolution of the education stock in the rural and urban areas in the last 50 years shows that there is a constant educational gap between the village and the city, which is determined by the unequal distributions of opportunities and resources. However, it has been noticed lately that there is a clear tendency towards the growth of the social distance between the two types of communities. For example, the group of young people in the urban area has today three times less unschooled individuals or individuals with only the primary school compared to young people in the villages. At the same time, the share of those who have graduated a faculty is five times bigger with young people in the cities than with those in the villages. This distance (difference) is smaller with the people who were born before 1939 up to 1968 (adults and old people) which confirms one of the hypotheses of this study, namely the growth in the distribution of educational chances between the rural and urban population.

Educational mobility between generations in the Romanian village

The tendencies of reduction for the stock of knowledge in the rural communities (by reducing the educational stock) have led also to the significant slowing down of the rhythms and proportions of educational and occupational mobility, both in an intra-generational way (along one's career) as well as in an inter-generational way.

Certain methodological specifications. This work is based on the investigation of a rural sample representative at national level of 15,791 subjects. For each of the analyzed levels and aspects, whether it was the total mobility (of the rural population), or men or women, or young, adults and old people, or whether it was the territorial mobility on the 8 historical regions, all the series of data regarding the village have been compared to the situation of the same aspects in the urban areas. *In this latter case, the witness sample that was used included 18,111 subjects.*

It also has to be mentioned that the investigation was made in June 2003 by C.U.R.S., a poll center which appreciated for the correctness and methodological accuracy of its investigations.

Table 1. Indicators of inter-generation educational mobility in the rural and urban areas

| | Total imobile | Total mobile | Ascending mobility | Descending mobility | Structural mobility | Net mobility |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Rural | 39,9 | 60,1 | 56,5 | 3,6 | 38,8 | 21,3 |
| Urban | 32,9 | 67,1 | 60,8 | 6,3 | 32,9 | 41,5 |
| Difference compared to urban | +7,0 | -7,0 | -4,3 | -2,7 | +5,8 | -20,2 |

The total mobility rates in the rural environment remain quite high, even if they have decreased compared to the previous decades (for example, at the beginning of the 80s, sociological researches done by the Institute of Sociology of the Romanian Academy were showing a institutional mobility rate of 70%).

Today, the rural population presents a rate of 60% educational mobile people, which means that a little less than two thirds of the active inhabitants of the villages have a different educational level than their parents (fathers).

Most of these mobile people have underwent an ascending trend of change, in other words, they are one step or more above the origin level.

Structural mobility in the rural environment is significantly bigger than the net one. In other words, educational changes are more due to the macro-structural reforms and less due to the free movement between educational layers or stages.

The comparison with the urban area highlights that there are more reduced mobility rates in the rural areas. Thus, with the exception of the structural mobility, all the other indicators of inter-generation educational mobility have more reduced values in the rural areas compared to the urban areas.

The fact that net or circulatory mobility is smaller in the rural areas means that the educational layers in the rural areas are less permeable than in the urban areas, or that, in terms of equality of chances, that the chances of the rural population to exceed its original educational status are more reduced than those of the urban populations.

The tendency stated before also means that the total mobility, which is apparently quite big in the rural areas, is more due to society-related structural mutations and less to the free movement between the existing positions. This is precisely why net mobility is two times higher with the urban population than with the rural one, despite the fact that total mobility is not itself two times bigger.

Table 2. The chances of surpassing/ reproducing the original social status in the rural area

Number of subjects: 15,791

| | | CHILDREN | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|
| | | DESTINATION CATEGORIES | | | | | |
| | | No primary school | Secondary school, vocational school | High school, post high school | University studies | TOTAL | |
| | | I | II | III | IV | NR. | % |
| FATHERS | ORIGIN CATEGORY | | | | | | |
| | I. Without and primary school | 31,5 | 55,9 | 11,4 | 1,2 | 9282 | 100,0 |
| | II. Secondary school, vocational school | 4,1 | 52,1 | 38,9 | 4,9 | 5477 | 100,0 |
| | III. High school, post-high school | 1,9 | 24,5 | 55,2 | 18,4 | 831 | 100,0 |
| IV. University studies | 0,5 | 18,9 | 44,3 | 36,3 | 201 | 100,0 | |

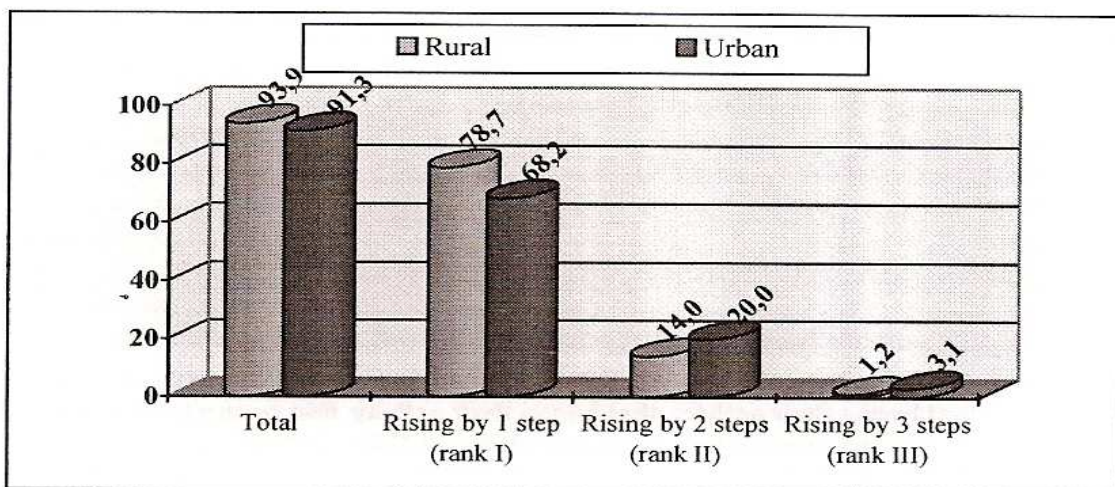
Table 3. Chances of surpassing/reproducing the original educational status in the urban area

Number of subjects: 18,111

| | | CHILDREN | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|
| | | DESTINATION CATEGORY | | | | | |
| | | Without primary school | Secondary school, vocational school | High school, post-high school | University studies | TOTAL | |
| | | I | II | III | IV | NR. | % |
| FATHER'S ORIGIN CATEGORY | I. Without primary school | 13,9 | 51,1 | 27,6 | 7,4 | 5571 | 100,0 |
| | II. Secondary school, vocational school | 1,6 | 32,0 | 52,6 | 13,8 | 7733 | 100,0 |
| | III. High school, post-high school | 0,9 | 8,1 | 57,2 | 33,4 | 3194 | 100,0 |
| | IV. University studies | 0,3 | 4,3 | 39,9 | 52,2 | 1613 | 100,0 |

The two mobility tables show the real chances of surpassing/reproducing each of the educational levels considered as inherited (original) for the current rural and urban population. The main regularities that were noticed are:

- The inter-generation reproduction (between ascendants and descendents) of the inferior levels of education is higher in the rural area compared to the urban.
- In exchange, the reproduction of superior levels of education is more present in the urban compared to the rural: it is more likely in the urban that intellectuals come from intellectuals.
- In the rural areas, the highest educational reproduction, compared to the parents, takes place in the “graduates of secondary school” and “graduates of high school and post-high school” categories.
- In the urban areas, the highest educational reproduction takes place in the categories: “graduates of high school and post-high school” and “graduates of universities.”



Graph 3. Ascending educational mobility in the rural and urban areas, on ranks (rising by 1, 2 and 3 steps), of the total of mobile people

Table 4. Descending educational mobility in rural and urban areas (from total mobile people)

| | Total | Falling 1 step | Falling 2 steps | Falling 3 steps |
|-------|-------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Rural | 6,1 | 5,4 | 0,7 | - |
| Urban | 8,3 | 7,9 | 0,8 | - |

• The educational mobility which has an ascending inter-generation trend (one ore more stages above the parents) has a higher value in the rural than in the urban (93.9% compared to 91.3% of the total of mobile people).

• The descending educational mobility (falling one or more educational steps below the parents) has a lower value in the rural areas than in the urban areas (6.1% compared to the total of mobile people).

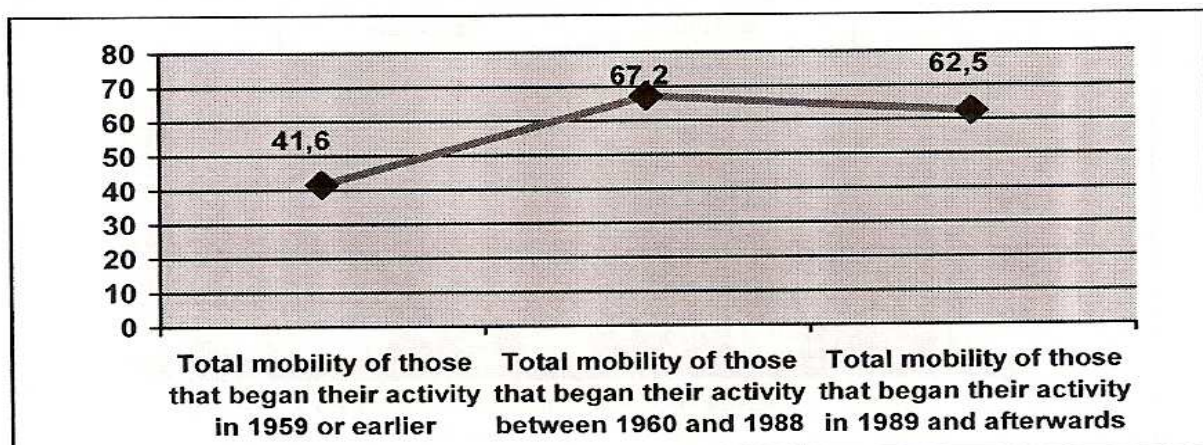
If ascending mobility of rank I is higher in the rural area, the other two types (ranks) have lower values in the rural than in the urban one: in other words, *in the rural area, young people who manage to surpass the inherited educational status by more than one level are fewer than in the urban areas.*

In exchange, *the falls compared to the level of the fathers are less numerous* in the rural areas than in the urban ones, this means that descending educational mobility is more reduced in the rural than in the urban.

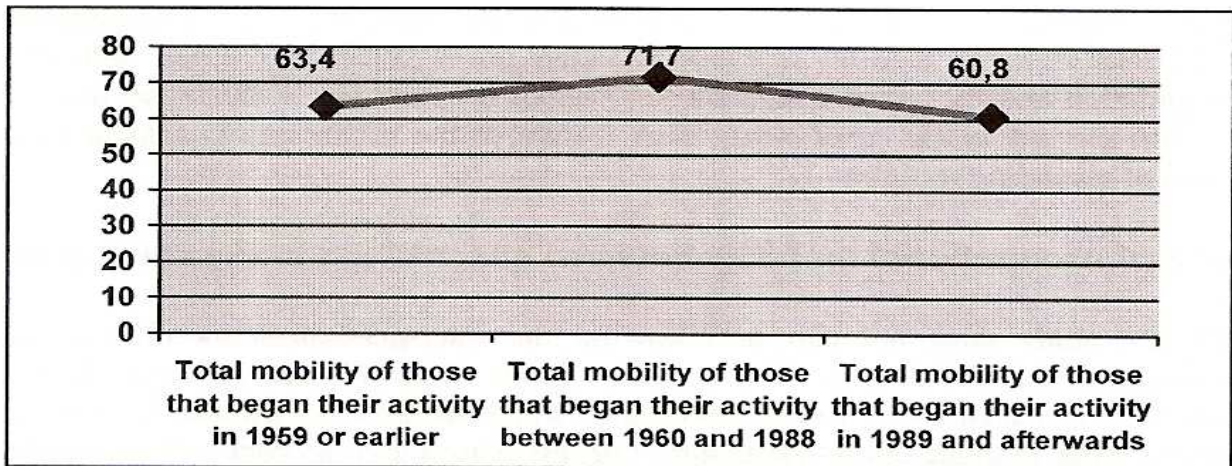
The dynamics of inter-generation educational mobility reflected in the mobility of three groups of age. The evolution of mobility processes has been analyzed by comparing the values of the six indicators of mobility in three groups of age:

1. those who began their activity in 1959 or earlier
2. those who began their activity between 1960 and 1988
3. those who began their activity in 1989 and afterwards

Rural



Urban



Graph 4 and 5. The dynamics of inter-generation educational mobility reflected in the mobility of three groups of age

Romania's economic and social evolution in the last five decades is also reflected in the evolution of mobility processes. The massive industrialization and urbanization, the reforms in the education system (the obligation to graduate 7-8-10 grades, the explosion of vocational education, of the evening classes and of the low attendance education), the migration from the rural areas to the urban ones and so on) in the post-war years have permitted and determined spectacular growths in the inter-generation educational and occupational mobility.

The great social, political transition that Romania entered at the beginning of the 90s has troubled society's both economic and social structures. As it was also underlined at the beginning of this study, both the village and the city, in different proportions, are undergoing the phenomena of a more or less generalized crisis. Because of this, school attendance could not have not been affected by the social and economic macro-processes.

The values of inter-generation educational mobility tend to decrease both for the city and for the village, as well as the values of social and occupational mobility. As it has been underlined, the economic impoverishment of a part of the urban and rural population has determined that school be more or less discarded - willingly or forced. Poor individuals will not or / and cannot accede to superior forms of education and they are not as motivated as they were until 1990 to surpass their original condition. Among the causes for these falls in the schooling rates are both material and economic restrictions but also the decrease in the belief in values in the Romanian society. The influence, not always positive, of the models of social success offered by the mass media has led to questioning the very value of education as a means of success. To this is has been added the material restriction, since it is known that today education is costly, even if it is considered free of charge. This is why the stock of education has generally decreased and it has decreased more in the village, a phenomenon which implicitly triggers the processes of mobility, be it occupational or territorial mobility (migration).

By comparing the dynamics of school mobility in the urban and in the rural it can be noticed *that from the point of view of mobility in the communist period the great winner was the village: it started from mobility rates of 40% and it has come to rates of 70% at the middle of the*

80s (researches of the Sociology Center and not only have revealed very big mobility rates in the rural areas between generations, both as far as education and occupation are concerned).

In the last ten years we can no longer speak of winner, we can no longer speak of communities that are favored by the social and economic evolution of the Romanian society, but only of losers: as far as mobility is concerned there are important decreases, both regarding the rural population and the urban one, *with the rhythm of decrease in the urban area being even bigger than the one in the rural area.* This feature of the urban area is also supported by the dynamics of ascending mobility.

Social and occupational mobility between generations in the rural areas

The present study does not aim at following the inter-generation mobility of all existing occupational categories but only of those with a larger range. We deal here with those categories – which we have called social and occupational – which are usually also used in analyses of social structure or even in those of class structure. For this reason and in order to increase the accuracy and expressiveness of the mobility indicators that will be calculated, of the total of the 18 occupations that exist in the basic questionnaire we have eliminated a part and the other part have been grouped on the following big categories which can be considered **social categories**.

This grouping and regrouping has taken into account several combined criteria, the first being the one of making a hierarchy on five steps scale function of the following: the manual/non-manual character of the activity, the level of educational and professional training, the domain of labor, but also, in a smaller way, of the income of the respective social-occupational category (by self evaluation).

Following this selection, we have an analysis group in the rural of 5,862 subjects and in the urban a comparison group of 7,415 subjects.

Table 5. Indicators of social and occupational mobility in the rural and urban areas

| | No. rural = 5.862 | | | No. urban = 7.415 | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| | Total mobile people | Total immobile people | Ascending mobility | Descending mobility | Structural mobility | Net mobility |
| Rural | 50,9 | 49,1 | 34,4 | 14,7 | 20,0 | 29,1 |
| Urban | 44,1 | 55,6 | 46,7 | 9,2 | 34,0 | 22,0 |
| Difference | +6,8 | -6,8 | +5,5 | -7,7 | -13,9 | +7,2 |

Table 6. Chances of surpassing/reproducing the original social status for men and women (2003)

| - Rural - | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| | MOBILITY INDICATORS (%) | | | | | |
| | Total mobile people | Total immobile people | Ascending mobility | Descending mobility | Structural mobility | Net mobility |
| Men | 48,3 | 51,6 | 35,2 | 13,1 | 13,1 | 35,2 |
| Women | 49,9 | 50,1 | 33,3 | 16,6 | 32,3 | 17,6 |

Source: Calculations made by the study's author after the nationally representative investigation made by CURS in June 2003.

Surpassing the inherited social condition, namely the change of the original social-occupational status is more present in the urban area than in the rural area;

The quite important differences are noticed also in the descending trend of social mobility: the people in the rural area have more the tendency to fall on step or more in the social hierarchy compared to the origin category;

Social-occupational mobility of structural type is better represented in the urban population while free circulation mobility is higher in the rural area (by 7%);

The most important differentiations as far as sex is concerned are noticed in the values of the net and structural mobility rates for the men and women in the rural environment: in this case too *the disadvantaged people are women who have half of the men's net mobility. In other words, circulatory or free mobility between different social positions is more frequent in the case of men and forced mobility, most of the cases due to macro-structural mutations is more frequent in women.*

Chances for surpassing / reproducing each social category

- In the rural area, *the highest inter-generation reproduction* belongs to the categories “workers” and “workers in agriculture” (more than half of the total of each category).

- The lowest inter-generation social reproduction belongs to the category “owners” (inexistent with the previous society) and “averagely trained personnel” (technicians, clerks, qualified workers); in other words, most of the current “averagely trained personnel” and “owners” come from parents (fathers) with different occupations.

- Half of the children of intellectuals (49.6%) also become intellectuals (namely personnel with higher education)

The comparison with the urban environment permits the deciphering of the following differentiation: the reduction of intellectuals between generation is stronger in the urban environment (64%) than it is in the rural area.

Table 7. Mobility table in rural areas (%)

| | | CHILDREN | | | | | Total |
|---------|--|----------------------|-------------|---|---|------------|-------|
| | | DESTINATION CATEGORY | | | | | |
| | | Farmer 1 | Worker 2 | Office worker, technician, foreman 3 | Personnel with university studies 4 | Owner 5 | |
| FATHERS | 1. Farmer | 50,5 | 34,4 | 9,7 | 3,9 | 1,5 | 100,0 |
| | 2. Worker | 21,7 | 54,4 | 14,3 | 7,5 | 2,1 | 100,0 |
| | 3. Office worker, technician, foreman | 16,4 | 24,4 | 31,0 | 24,4 | 3,8 | 100,0 |
| | 4. Personnel with university studies | 9,9 | 20,6 | 12,8 | 49,6 | 7,1 | 100,0 |
| | 5. Owner | 25,0 | 45,0 | 25,0 | 5,0 | - | 100,0 |

Table 8. Mobility table in urban areas (%)

| | | CHILDREN | | | | | Total |
|---------|--|----------------------|-------------|---|--|------------|-------|
| | | DESTINATION CATEGORY | | | | | |
| | | Farmer 1 | Worker 2 | Office worker, technician, foreman 3 | Personnel with university studies 4 | Owner 5 | |
| FATHERS | 1. Farmer | 3,5 | 60,9 | 19,8 | 13,8 | 2,0 | 100,0 |
| | 2. Worker | 1,7 | 55,1 | 23,1 | 16,8 | 3,3 | 100,0 |
| | 3. Office worker, technician, foreman | 1,5 | 23,4 | 33,5 | 37,6 | 4,0 | 100,0 |
| | 4. Personnel with university studies | 2,1 | 14,0 | 15,9 | 64,1 | 3,9 | 100,0 |
| | 5. Owner | 5,2 | 13,8 | 17,2 | 43,1 | 20,7 | 100,0 |

- In the urban area, compared to the rural, we encounter the phenomenon of reproduction for the “owners” category, with reference to the parents who have become owners after 1989 and their children have reproduced their status in a proportion of 20%;

- The category “workers in agriculture” is not reproduced in the urban environment either because of the specificity of urban economy which almost excludes agriculture as an occupation.

- Surpassing the inherited social condition is higher in the urban area than is in the rural area.

Romania’s social-occupational mobility in the territory

The map of Romania shows the following specific tendencies for the eight historical regions that were analyzed:

- *The total social mobility of the rural population is higher in the rural areas of Moldavia and Dobrogea and lower in Muntenia, including in Ilfov county, with the other regions having values between 45 and 50% for the total mobility of the rural population*

- Ascending mobility has a quite important variation range, between 27% and 43%. Thus, there are areas where there is a *high ascending social mobility such as Crisana-Maramures, Moldavia and Dobrogea*, and rural areas with lower ascending social mobility such as Banat, Oltenia and Muntenia.

- The regions in which people have gone down more than they have gone up compared to the original social category are Oltenia, Banat, Muntenia and Moldavia

- Structural and net social mobility are also unequally distributed in the eight analyzed regions. Thus, there are three categories of rural areas: one in which *structural mobility is strongly dominant in relation to the net one – such as Muntenia (including Ilfov), Crisana-Maramures*, one in which *net mobility is strongly dominant such as Moldavia, Oltenia, Dobrogea and Transylvania*, and one in which the values of the two indicators are closer

(around 20%) which includes the rest of the regions which were not mentioned in the first two categories.

The dynamics of total social mobility in the rural areas reflected in the mobility of three groups of age

According to the graph below, there are certain tendencies that have to be noted:

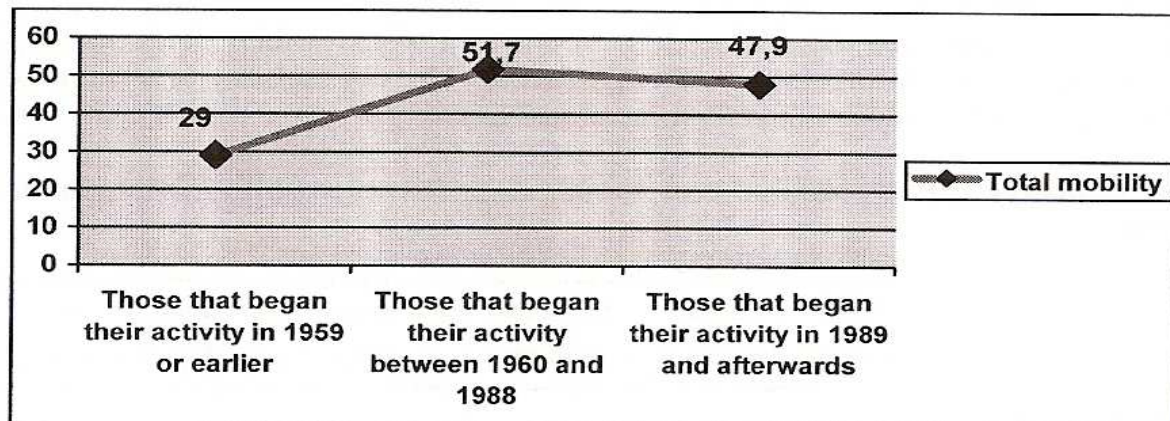
➤ The ascending dynamics of the volume of mobility in the first two intervals that were analyzed is replaced by a dramatic decrease in the rates of total mobility for the rural population in Romania. Practically, at the moment the population in the villages has a lower mobility than the one at the beginning of the communist era and, of course, lower than the one in the period of industrial expansion (the 60s to the 80s).

➤ *Ascending mobility shows even more dramatic decreases in the rural areas, in the sense that in the years of industrial expansion the volume of this mobility was of 37%, today it has decreased almost three times, reaching 13.5%.*

➤ Descending social mobility has today higher values than in the first years of the communist regime, reaching the value of 16.2% of the total of the young population in the group of those who have begun their activity before 1989. In other words, *in today's rural world, the possibility of young people not even reaching the occupational level of the parent has increased.*

➤ Net or circulatory mobility has decreased spectacularly in the rural area, especially if we compared to the interval between the 60s and the 80s. *The value of net mobility is more reduced with the young generation than with the population that started its activity in 1958 and before.*

➤ An interesting evolution is that of the relation between structural and net mobility. Thus, if in the 50s structural mobility was higher, in the 60s-80s net mobility was the double of the structural mobility. At the moment the two types of mobility have quasi-equal values.



Graph 6. The dynamics of total social mobility in the rural area reflected in three groups of age

The relation between educational and social-occupational mobility between generations in the rural area

Although the two forms of mobility have a distinct content they still condition each other. Thus, *in order to change in an ascending way a step of the social (social-occupational)*

hierarchy there is usually need of an educational and professional training that is higher than the origin status. The same thing happens in the case of mobility along one's career (the intra-generational mobility). The great social-occupational categories, more than occupations and more than jobs and professions, claim for different and hierarchical levels of education. This is what social stratification means: the existence of superior and inferior social strata, function of a series of parameters, including the attained educational level.

With all the inter-dependency between the two forms of intra- and inter- generation mobility, comparing the specific indicators shows that they do not always have synchronic evolutions. Between the two types of movement in the social space there is synchrony but also asynchrony.

The indicators of educational and social-occupational mobility between generations in the rural

In general, *the total educational mobility is bigger than social-occupational mobility first of all because the change of a social position means not only changing the educational level but also, most of the times, something more. Social mobility is, therefore, more restrictive, harder to achieve than educational mobility.*

The significance of indicators in table 9 shows the following aspects:

- The chances for educational mobility not being accompanied by social immobility is of 20%.
- On the other hand, the chances that educational mobility be higher than the occupational one are of 11.0%
- Ascending mobility is significantly higher as far as education is concerned compared to the social-occupational level (difference of 20.1%)
- In exchange, descending mobility, in other words, the fall in the educational hierarchy, is a lot lower than the fall in the social (social-occupational) hierarchy.
- As it was expected, structural mobility is higher in education than in occupation. This happens because the level of education is easier to modify at the level of the society by laws and reforms leading to changes which affect the entire population participating in the educational act through school. The net mobility is a more adequate indicators for social mobility than for educational mobility.

Table 9. Indicators of educational and social-occupational mobility intergeneration in rural areas

| | Total immobility | Total mobility | Ascending mobility | Descending mobility | Structural mobility | Net mobility |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| I. Educational mobility | 30,9 | 60,1 | 56,5 | 3,6 | 38,8 | 21,3 |
| II. Social-occupational mobility | 50,9 | 49,1 | 34,4 | 14,7 | 20,1 | 29,0 |

Conclusions

The aspects presented in this study lead to the following question: What are the chances for the development of the Romanian village at economic, social and spiritual level taking into account that *no society or community can have an enduring development if it does not have a high-quality human capital?*

The constant weakening of the labor force quality in the economic, agricultural or non-agricultural structures of the rural environment must alert Romania's political decision makers, starting with those who are building and set the bases of the reform in the current Romanian education system. This reform should promote a *policy of positive discrimination for the young people in the village, the only policy that could lead to the increase of their access to superior levels of educational and professional training.* This would also increase the chances of young people graduating from higher education to return to the village in order to work in the rural economic structures, first of all in agriculture but also in non-agriculture domains – including in schools as well trained teachers, in the village medical centers and so on. Unfortunately, at the moment *one can notice a negative selection of these professional categories* in the village because there is no adequate motivation for people settling in the rural areas.