

## HOUSEHOLDING.

### STRUCTURE AND CULTURE IN THE ROMANIAN RURAL SOCIETY

Prof. Vintilă Mihăilescu, Ph. D.

*The paper addresses, by an anthropological approach, the topic of long lasting culture of rural Romanian households and its present time forms. The ethos of the good householder seems to be still important for a large part of the rural population (and probably not only) of Romania. Proposing or even imposing some kind of convergent meaning for human action, it is nevertheless contextual: the traditional household, the diffuse household and mere householding are but three possible "ideal relations" trying to achieve this goal in rather different social contexts, following a more or less common meaning of action through different kinds of interactions. Households are the partners of weak state in nations with a strong rural past, trying to oppose individual networks of security to the collective feelings of insecurity. In a way, the symbolic centrality of households stands for the evanishing centrality of the state and not yet emerging centrality of the market.*

#### A case study

Let's first take a look to a household.

V.N. came in Tismana, a large village in the center of Romania, in 1971 as a skilled worker and married a woman from the village. The first three years, as he says, he did not know what to start with – meaning beside his job in a small industrial unit near the village. He tried gardening, but it did not work. Then he started a bee culture and begun to sell the honey – and it worked very well, in one year his honey getting even the first prize at an international competition in Germany.

His wife was working in a local traditional carpets manufacture. The nuns from the Tismana monastery were teaching the women how to weave and a former "bourgeois" tradesman was hired (after some years of prison) by the party's local leader to run the enterprise. They become a quite prosperous manufacture, selling their carpets in many foreign countries. N's wife was a kind of team leader, distributing the materials to the women who were working at home.

Together, they developed their household and started to build a new house, "bigger than the doctor's one" and, "probably, with the first bathroom in the village". In one year, they lost all their bees so that N. tried to help