No. 3
November 2017

Newsletter

DISRUR

Demographic disparities in rural areas

Twilight of the Romanian Mountain Village

The paper published by the National Geographic Romania is the result of the qualitative research conducted by the members of the Centre for Regional Geography within Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in the Poiana Ruscă area. The paper emphasizes some of the characteristics of a representative demographic phenomenon: depopulation of villages.

Many of the mountain areas, overlapping a rural residential environment, have less and less articulated revitalization prospects. The Poiana Ruscă Mountains are no exception.

The lack of infrastructure and accessibility, doubled by the lack of a socio-economic cohesion, transforms these areas into repulsive areas in terms of the existing human capital. There are few exceptions from this rule and thesy are found in those villages where adventure tourism, suitable for minimal comfort conditions, attracts niche inhabitants.

Project coordinator:

Babeş-Bolyai University, Centre for Regional Geography, Cluj-Napoca , Romania

Partners:

West University of Timişoara, Centre for Regional Development, Cross-border Studies and Territorial Planning, Timişoara, Romania

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova

Université d'Angers, ESO-Angers-

For more details:

National Geographic Romania / Locuri şi oameni din România
https://www.natgeo.ro/romania/24323-24323

“Rural Development in Europe, Romania and France”

6 October 2017

At the beginning of the academic year 2017-2018, ESO-ANGERS organized a French-Romanian seminar, already traditional in the French scientific environment (since the 1990s). The theme of the event was focused on the development of the European rural environment, with case studies from France, Romania, Ireland, and Morocco.

The event was structured in three sections: problematisation of territorial development, especially of the demographic issues specific to the rural environment, presentation of the results of DISRUR project and identification of research perspectives on rural development from the point of view of social innovation.

Rural areas are in a continuous transformation so that the current reality redefines the term “village” from the perspective of its functionality and the living conditions it offers. The existence or the absence of policies dedicated to rural areas, in general, and to some concrete problems, in particular (population exodus, population ageing, depopulation of settlements, etc.), are automatic conditions for the viability of settlements. It is also the case of the Poiana Ruscă Mountains, where, regardless of the category of depopulated villages identified during the field research, the solutions for recovery, for the revitalization of villages are few and short-term.

The seminar was dedicated to the memory of Professor Jean-Baptiste Humeau, a reputable geographer, whose competencies have materialized into books, papers, projects and training of specialists in the field of territorial planning, territorial development in France and in the European Union and territorial impact of public policies.

Depopulation of Mountain Rural Areas. Case study on the Poiana Ruscă Mountains *Guidelines for local communities*

November 2017

One of the results of the project "*Demographic Disparities in Rural Areas*" is the elaboration of guidelines for the local communities, local authorities and other decision makers who can ensure the viability of rural settlements.

The presentation of the European context by offering examples of abandoned or shrinking villages is a mandatory step. The French, Italian or the experience of other European states demonstrates that this subject is not singular.

The research stages, methodologically illustrated by habitat observations sheets, direct observation or social surveys, have highlighted the causes and the consequences of the depopulation phenomenon in the Poiana Ruscă Mountains.

Human capital, aesthetics and functionality of settlements, but also the social cohesion of the local communities, have represented other research directions that are found in this guide.

The identified typologies of villages and the existing policies respond to the way in which rural governance in the rural areas is applied.

The guidelines represent an original research initiative, an alarm signal for the local stakeholders involved and an implicit testimony of the presence of some mountain communities.

Planned phases and activities

In order to ensure the interdisciplinarity of the created partnership and the transfer of best practice models from the partner states, three distinct work phases were established, each of them focused on a specific type of activity, as follows:

Phase I. Diagnostic analysis of the rural areas in terms of demographic disparities

I.1. Theoretical and methodological benchmarks on rural demographic disparities

I.2. Diagnostic analysis of some rural areas by addressing demographic disparities

I.3. Field research

Phase II. Best practices on alleviating regional disparities in rural areas

II.1. Identification of best practices in the European area on alleviating demographic disparities in rural areas

II.2. Elaboration of recommendations on alleviating demographic disparities in rural areas

Phase III. Dissemination of DISRUR project results

III.1. Elaboration and dissemination of studies

Contact persons

Professor Pompei COCEAN
Babeş-Bolyai University
Centre for Regional Geography
Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Tel.: (+40) 264 597570
E-mail: cgrcluj@gmail.com

Professor Nicolae POPA
West University of Timişoara, Centre for Regional Development, Cross-border Studies and Territorial Planning
Timişoara, Romania
Tel.: (+40) 256 592218
E-mail: nicolae.popa@e-uvt.ro

Associate Professor Valeriu SAINSUS
Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova
Chişinău, Republic of Moldova
Tel.: (+373) 22 224128
E-mail: sainsusvaleriu@gmail.com

Associate Professor Emmanuel BIOTEAU
Université d'Angers
Angers, France
Tel.: (+33) 241 226349
E-mail: emmanuel.bioteau@univ-angers.fr