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**PRESERVING AND ENHANCING SOLIDARITY AND THRUST
CAPITAL IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. A SHORT ANALYSIS IN THE
GENERAL CONTEXT OF AGRICULTURE BASED ECONOMY**

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PRESERVING AND ENHANCING SOLIDARITY AND THRUST CAPITAL IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. A SHORT ANALYSIS IN THE GENERAL CONTEXT OF AGRICULTURE BASED ECONOMY

Abstract

It has become a well known fact that a sustainable development of humankind resides not only in preserving the environment but mainly in preserving solidarity between generations or within a generation. This sustainable development defined as a productive cooperation between generations implies a man nature relationship where the man is an element of nature not its master. The place where the interests of several generations come together as a whole is the countryside, for here the connection between nature, work and capital has a permanent and direct character. Therefore it is not by chance that man and land are primary components of a nation wealth. For the Romanian people eternity was born in the countryside, and the sacred aspects of life are better preserved here. In this context it is a priority to determine the real contribution that it has to Grass Domestic Product, the contribution it has to the preservation and augmentation of the national wealth, as basis for an increasing thrust capital.

Key words: rural solidarity, thrust capital, rural family, social dialog

Introduction

In the general context of amplified and diverse relationships between economic agents, of markets globalization and increasing level of national economies interdependences, the role of the social capital has gained new and meaningful valences. The wish to differentiate between different capital configurations has been stronger than anytime before. We consider that the main component of the social capital, in the context of what we presented so far, is the thrust capital. One can not define the thrust capital unless one considers the nature of the interests involved, as well as the relationships between individuals on one hand and the relationships between individuals and their community, The last ones should be considered taking into account all structures which govern in an hierarchical order of power, starting with individuals and immediate human collectivities (family, street, town, region, etc) and ending with the relationships interdependences generated by the existence of different economic spaces.

The existence of the thrust capital implies the generation of specific states where these interests exist and manifest according to their innate metabolism with no conditioning generated from the exterior. Those who have interests, whether they are individuals, families, communities, public authorities, economic agents, act mainly according to their own objectives which they tends to accomplish. The existence of such group of interests implies the existence of well determined principles which guarantee the

gratification of the group interests as well as the general ones which result from inherent interdependence conditions. Therefore thrust must be established in the area of principles, of common values according to which one acts. The analysis of the thrust capital in rural communities is needed more than ever because agriculture is no longer the main economical branch sustaining the Gross Domestic Product in a market economy and because the countryside loses what it symbolizes. As a result thrust becomes the bonding element in rural communities. Placed at the junction between tradition and modernism, the rural space and especially the rural society have to face significant changes at the beginning of the XXI century. Built on the thrust between its members the rural community represents for any economy the image of solidarity and communion of interests.

The Impact of the Thrust Capital on Rural Communities

Economic development means, due to its essential coordinates, the existence and development of agriculture, because agriculture owing to its nature has contributed to the birth and consolidation of profound and ageless principles and values for the existence of each and every state. In this context, the rural communities established a strong relationship with the land-sacred element for any society- and a set of principles and values emerged, set which leads beyond the immediate need for survival into a sacred and eternal spiritual world. The rural community develops in time strong and profound relationships between its members. As a component of society the peasant is indissolubly connected to his family, his land, the church and neighbors, to the natural element which marks his personality. Concerned with providing him a decent living, identifying him with nature and the way nature works, driven by the hope of a better tomorrow, Thrust is the value in which all the peasants' hopes reside. Placed at the junction of modernity and traditional values, the rural community is nowadays exposed to the ever growing tendencies of renouncing to the activities which used to define it. The intrusion in the rural communities of the "urban virus" changes the former unaltered core of a society which is in search of its own values, due to the fact that these values are so often negated or replaced with imported ones. What those in power could not change for centuries is now done with no discrimination by appetite for gain. Why talk about the thrust capital when it comes to the rural community? Isn't it enough to perceive and display the peasant as the representation of what a society holds as sacred and valuable? Isn't the countryside the last line of defense for a society torn apart by financial or economic crises? Isn't it enough that the countryside offers the certitude of a life based on respecting towards nature fundamental social values?

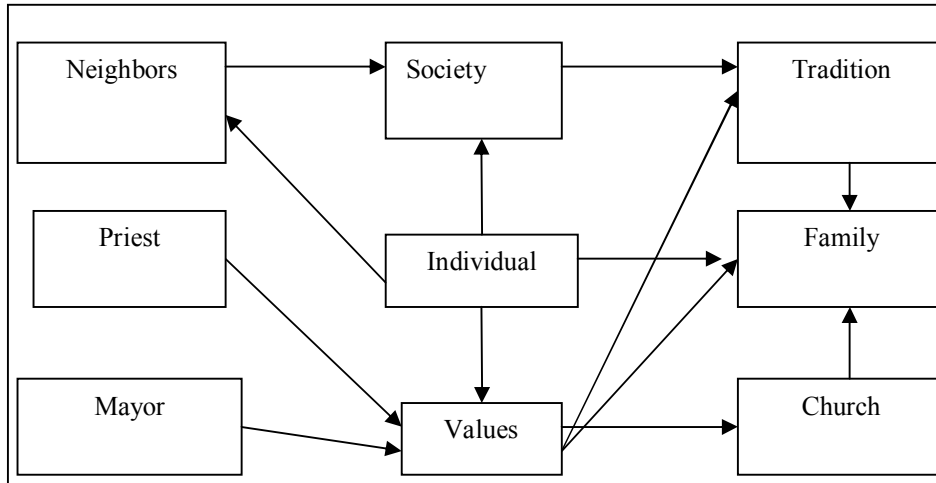
Trying to answer these questions we unveiled the image of an environment taken from a reality which differs a lot from the urban space where we live. Without trying to idealize this environment, we set ourselves to analyze the group of interrelationships

that are born, shaped and developed in the countryside by means of a sacred and eternal value, which gives cohesion to rural communities and allows them to display the current image of the peasant and of the countryside. Maybe more than ever thrust gets new and meaningful valences in the countryside, where everybody knows everybody, where the respect for life and nature is more vivid than anywhere else. Conscious of the impact he has on his community the individual in the countryside act in such a manner so that no harm is done to the balance between life and nature. The role thrust has in the mechanism of social alteration to which peasants and the rural community come under for a long period of time, had as a result their transformation into a dives generates rural continuity.

The impossibility to transform the thrust capital into a money based equivalent is not a restriction when it comes to turning it into the essential factor which leads to the development of interrelationships that manifest themselves in the countryside. The role of the historical experience in determining and forming the thrust capital and of the major implications it has over the countryside as a whole. Related to the space-time relationship in the rural community a powerful thrust capital comes to life, having as background collective actions and thinking which will later control their actions. Therefore thrust has its source in the crystallization of a way of life specific for rural communities, based on the family, church and nature or land.

Benefiting from a capital superior to others- the thrust capital- a society may develop in harmony with its own values, setting the architecture an own socially and economically accepted model. Thrust, as a result, determines the establishment and the preservation of the relationships related to agricultural production and to the countryside social bounding (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - The group of relationships determined by rural existence



Rural society represents more than a human community. The action environment gains new valences benefiting from the thrust existing among individuals. Thus tradition and family are place in the very core of the peasant's existence. The high level of cohesion which characterizes rural communities, marked by the thrust capital its members are enjoying, is subject to a constant process of alteration and dilution. We are witnessing the reconfiguration of the countryside according to new demands, a process which is characterized by a series of "significant ruptures", on one hand the rupture between the countryside and the demographic space- due to a migration from the urban to the rural environment which leads to the rarefaction of the existent thrust capital, an on the other hand a rupture between the rural community and the agricultural development pattern, due to use of methods and techniques of production which include elements incompatible with the traditional and sustainable production process. Having in mind the above, the impact of the thrust capital in the countryside can be analyzed taking into account many coordinates, respectively the property, the ecologic agriculture, the state intervention, and the role of society elite generation

The family private property - the base of rural trustworthiness

Besides family and tradition, property is for rural communities the central element around which the interpersonal relationships revolve, including the ones related to marriage and having a family „What strikes you first when we are talking about the Romanians ownership rights is not a reminiscence of joint ownership, but the sense of rural solidarity, deriving from the common origin of all the village inhabitants, from the existence of one or

more creators of land in the wilderness."¹. In this context thrust is the one that puts together a community, making simple individuals into neighbors. More than anywhere else in the countryside the neighboring relationships gain an important significance because the neighbor validates an ancestral interconnection, he is the proximate element in the personal space of the individual, having the benefit of thrust and showing thrust.

Economic theory and practice illustrates the existence of numerous combinations of various forms of property, the most efficient structures being the ones which are mainly private. Referring to Romania, in non agricultural activities, we, in an overwhelming manner, mainly come across private properties based on partnerships, while in the countryside the property is individual or belongs to the family. Rebuilding and reactivating the thrust capital in rural collectivities from Romania can not be resumed to the reintegration of private property, even if this is a fundamental process which is still unfinished. In this context, it is necessary, *first of all, to revive the potential of family private property, so that it will ensure for each homestead, based on the family's work, an autonomous, dignifying existence.* As a practical example, the physical architecture of the property must be rebuilt: the home yard, the croft, the orchard, etc- as a condition for establishing self-confidence. On these premises the immediate good neighbor policy will be activated, and this will vivify the village's family- the basis of countryside solidarity. **Secondly**, thrust among countryside people is the foundation of free consent reunion of land, so that the three elements of working the land to be balanced. The three elements are: the area where people have their homes, with all that is related to household work, the biological agriculture adjacent area which includes pastures, forests, reservations or spaces dedicated to tourism and the biological agriculture area in which besides the land used for crops there are included areas dedicated to animal breeding the industrial processing of agricultural products. **Thirdly** research and studies are necessary in order to improve the size of agricultural areas in terms of the involved factors, from which the following should not be absent: crop rotation, the efficient use of the technical capital, the existence of a circular and active process of the resources and production outcomes based on the organic junction of the agricultural, commercial, touristic activities and a relative economic-financial autonomy of the rural settlements, by means of substantial glut of the agricultural- commercial balance. **Fourthly**, the legal and technical process that governs the land leasing activity must come to an end because the peasant is willing at the most to allow somebody else to use his land. There are, when it comes to land leasing, some potential conflicts related to the establishment and the payoff of the lease, related to the rights and obligations of the parties and also to the leasing importance when it comes to agricultural costs and incomes.

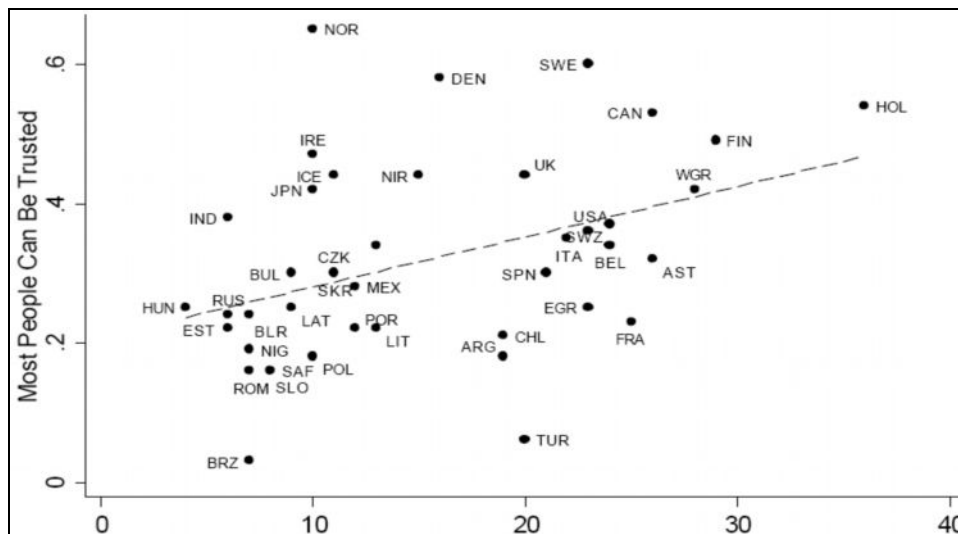
¹ Iorga, N., Anciens documents du droit roumain, vol. I, p. 3

Democracy, rural solidarity development and post material values

Without detailing the primary role of the countryside, the role of rural solidarity in the development of humankind, we consider that we are living times when the agricultural economics play a decisive and primary role at least for the following reasons, the countryside reproduces, preserves and develops ethnicity, the liaison between ideas and life, and therefore it is the source of cultural diversity- an essential element when it comes to an efficient and constructive integration within a certain economic environment, agricultural economics it is the only branch that acts against entropy by producing more energy than it uses.

The modern age, although it sustains the interrelations between different fields of activity, in order to have efficiency and proficiency imposes the **detail** as the central figure. As a matter of fact, to have a lasting and competitive production it certainly implies a number of variables, increasing in number, each, in the name of the system's proper functioning, becoming more and more important. In this context the rural development according to the native values of the rural society (Figure 2) will determine the preservation and augmentation of rural solidarity, because it involves at the same time all economic agents, all the people from the village, no matter what social and professional status one might have.

Figure 2 - Trust in people and post material values



Source: Eric M. Uslaner, *Trust and economic growth in the knowledge economy*, International Forum: The Role of Social Capital in Economic Revival of Japan, 2003, available at www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/uslaner, Accessed on: 12.10.2009

By augmenting the level of solidarity and thrust among the members of rural collectivities, the agricultural market will become functional, the producers will not

stock products because the prices will be real, payments will be done integrally and in time, including the ones related to the state intervention. The force of rural communities, based on solidarity and thrust, will lead to equivalence between the prices of agricultural products and the industrial and service based ones, fact which will limit up to its disappearance the system of governmental subventions- element which is not compatible with the equivalence and the equality among partners. In this context presents a special importance the perception about the optimistically way of life for peoples on social levels and genders, which according to the table no.1 scores the lowest level for the second quarter of year 2008, from the individual point of view.

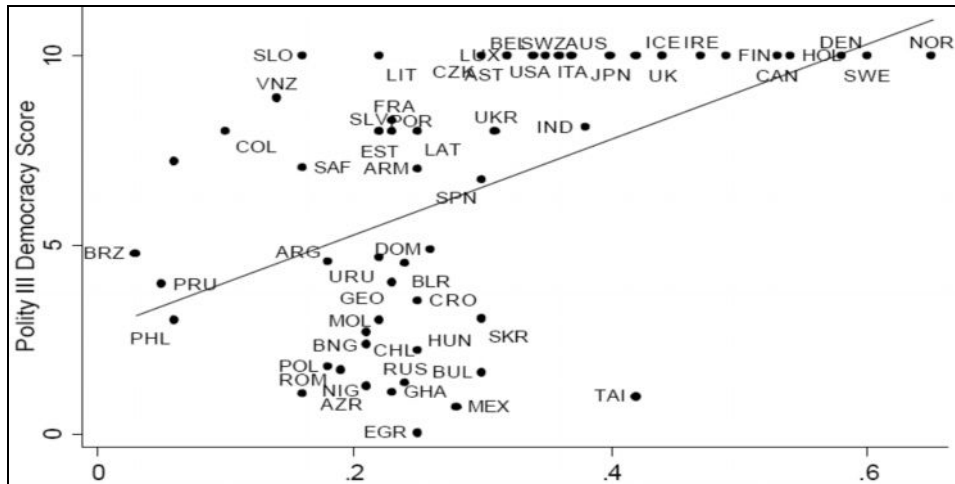
Table 1- The optimistically perception of life according to age and gender

| Resident ship | Age | Gen | 2008/1 | 2008/2 | 2008/2 - 2008/1 |
|---------------|----------|-------|--------|--------|-----------------|
| Urbane | 55 and + | Women | 24 | 12 | -12 |
| Countryside | 55 and + | Men | 29 | 13 | -16 |
| Urbane | 35-54 | Women | 39 | 30 | -9 |
| Countryside | 35-54 | Women | 43 | 16 | -27 |
| Urbane | 35-54 | Men | 44 | 33 | -11 |
| Countryside | 15-34 | Women | 49 | 36 | -13 |
| Urbane | 35-54 | Men | 50 | 36 | -14 |
| Countryside | 15-34 | Men | 56 | 46 | -11 |
| Urban e | 15-34 | Men | 63 | 37 | -25 |
| Countryside | 15-34 | Women | 64 | 44 | -20 |
| Total | | | 44 | 29 | -15 |

Source: European Commission, Euro barometer No.70, and national report

The transition from a governmental governed economy to a competitive and sustainable market economy led to series of significant changes in the national economy as a whole, but also in the rural communities. The shift of power and decision from government to communities required the modernization and adaptation of decision making structures so that the mechanism to be closely related to traditional values system, specific to a certain area. This is directly related to the manner in which the local administrative elite comply with the cultural model. It will probably be a good idea to choose the local leaders from the people that were born and raised in the rural community. At the same time the rural leaders will determine a higher level of solidarity in the community and they will set the premises for a correct dissemination of local and national resources while facing a crisis no matter what its cause may be. To insist in state involvement as source of rural solidarity revival, it might be motivated by the fact that society, despite its constant reorganization especially in the field of resources and financial assistance, is a beautiful structure , but not a functional one when it comes to acting upon attitudes and behavior.

Figure 3 - Democracy and trust in people



Source: Eric M. Uslaner, *Trust and economic growth in the knowledge economy*, International Forum: The Role of Social Capital in Economic Revival of Japan, 2003, available at www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/uslaner, Accessed on: 12.10.2009

Numerous European barometers like Euro barometer no.70 emphasizes the thrust crisis which manifest itself at a global level. If we take into account the fact that the moral relationships among people are included in the thrust capital we may consider that the thus development strategy and solidarity depends on the cultural pattern. If we consider as reference the Romanian cultural model, we may state that the incoherent way of establishing institutional stability in the context of thrust capital development. As we previously emphasized, in the majority of states, there is a crisis generally related to the social capital, and to the thrust capital in particular the source being also the international financial crisis. The thrust status has significant alterations as it results from the table below.

Table 2 - The level of the main trust indicators for Romania and EU Macro regions in 2008

| | Romania | Bulgaria and Baltic countr. | East and Central Europe | South Europe | West Europe | North Europe | EU-27 |
|--|----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| % complacent | 47 | 49 | 73 | 69 | 84 | 89 | 77 |
| % optimists | 29 | 20 | 22 | 24 | 21 | 20 | 24 |
| % trusting in justice | 25 | 24 | 35 | 42 | 57 | 60 | 48 |
| % trusting in Parliament | 19 | 11 | 17 | 33 | 42 | 39 | 34 |
| % trusting in EU | 63 | 57 | 56 | 48 | 47 | 32 | 47 |
| % concerned about monthly tax paying | 57 | 65 | 45 | 60 | 37 | 37 | 46 |
| % concerned about purchase power decrease | 30 | 48 | 36 | 53 | 61 | 44 | 51 |
| % concerned about the working place safety | 32 | 40 | 28 | 40 | 18 | 18 | 26 |

Source: European Commission, Euro barometer No 70, and national report

There are still some significant reminiscences of the centralized leadership when it comes to the decisions taken in the capital city. It is not by chance that in Bucharest we come across the highest levels of incomes and investments and the lowest rate of unemployment. At the same time we believe that local autonomy, even though it has the support of democratically involved elements, should not be forced into existence in the context of limited resources. Having in mind what we previously mentioned, we may consider that the rebuilding of the thrust capital cannot be done simply by emphasizing the virtues of the local financial autonomy, but by employing of different kinds of founding mixtures, both central and local, investments provided by either regional, national or European funds.

Thrust is gained in time and it implies enormous spiritual and material efforts. In the 90's a former German Minister of Agriculture, criticizing the uncontrolled disappearance of common agriculture enterprises, emphasized the fact that in western countries it took 30 years of founding and rewording to create the architecture of medium sized agricultural enterprises, of around 50 acres. On the contrary, in Romania rewording measures for creating such

medium sized enterprises is just a project, and when such rewording is done the process is not fully completed. For example the funds given as reward to buy agricultural devices did not have as a guarantee the production like in the western countries, but the land and the houses. As a result this type of founding was not well perceived by the peasants, because they considered it an attack towards life and what is sacred.

Conclusions

In the general context of agricultural relationships development, as well as the increasing role the rural communities play in the Romanian economy, **thrust** is the defining constituent of rural cohesion establishment. Theory as well as practice prove that preserving the rural solidarity leads to an enhancement of the thrust capital, this being the primary condition for national wealth development any time in the history of humankind. In this context, we consider that a nation can not step out in an era of globalization without respect for nature and furthermore the countryside and its communities. Whether we like it or not, we believe that the fourth wave, the contemporary one, accepting the other three waves identified by A Toffler, is probably connected to the first wave represented by agricultural economics due to cyclicity. Without detailing the primary role of the countryside, the role of rural solidarity in the development of humankind is great.

So the main conclusions of this working paper are:

- The countryside reproduces, preserves and develops ethnicity, the liaison between ideas and life, and therefore it is the source of cultural diversity- an essential element when it comes to an efficient and constructive integration within a certain economic environment;
- Agriculture is the only food source compatible with the human genome and the man the active and determinant factor of production is a part of nature and as a result man is bound to husbandry.

Therefore, thrust constitutes the bond among individuals, the premises for a sustainable development of the rural space as the recipient of tradition cultural values. Acting according to this primary criteria, land and tradition, the individuals turn thrust into the may mean of reaching success in their community. The Church and the family, two other fundamental pillars in a community, mark as well the individuals' existence in a community in a profound manner.

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