ANALYSIS OF STATISTICAL DATA CHARACTERISING THE ECONOMIC-SOCIAL INEQUALITIES (DIAGNOSIS) IN THE REGION SOUTH –WEST– INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING CRITERIA

ANALIZA DATELOR STATISTICE CARE CARACTERIZEAZĂ INEGALITĂŢILE ECONOMICO – SOCIALE (DIAGNOZA) DIN REGIUNEA SUD – VEST - CRITERIUL INFRASTRUCTURĂ ŞI LOCUIRE

CRISTINA FLORENTINA BÂLDAN[1], T. C. AVRĂMESCU[1]

[1]University of Pitesti, Romania; baldan.cristina@gmail.com

Abstract: *From the point of view of economic and social development, the rural area is still dependent on agricultural activities based on primary exploitation of natural resources. The requirements for an improved rural infrastructure are evident and through upgraded water supply systems, through sewerage systems, must be resolved some serious social problems that exists in rural areas at the regional social level. Developing and upgrading physical and social infrastructure is a first step that must be taken, leading on one hand to an increasing of rural activities, and on the other hand penetration of private capital on the agricultural market.*

Keywords: *infrastructure, housing quality, rural environment, economic development*

INTRODUCTION

This paper is structured in two parts. In the first part we did an analysis of the statistic data which characterizes the economic - social inequalities from the region South – West from the point of view of infrastructure – housing criteria, and in the second part we achieved the SWOT analysis for the analyzed region in the criteria of infrastructure and housing in the view of delimitating and building the regional profile of the disadvantaged groups from the rural area.

Oltenia region is located in the south west of Romania and is composed of five counties: Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinți, Olt si Vâlcea. The region has an area of 29.212 km^2 equal with 12.25 % of Romania's total surface).

The Carpathians and the Danube form in the north and south of the region, the natural borders of Oltenia. The Danube represents an important regional resource and fallows the border with Bulgaria and Serbia on a distance of 417 km.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Analyses of statistical data characterizing the economic – social inequalities

1. Access to road networks

Quality of road networks

South – West region has a relatively well developed transport infrastructure, the region's territory being crossed by four European roads: E 70, E 79, E 81şi E 574 and by the 3 priority Axes of European transport network (TEN-T):

- Priority Axis 7 (road) – the former Pan-European Corridor IV
- Priority Axis 18 (Danube river) – the former Pan-European Corridor VII
- Priority Axis 22 (rail)

A major disadvantage is that there are no border crossings on the railway from Drobeta Turnu Severin to Yugoslavia and to Calafat and Corabia to Bulgaria. As a result, the trades between the region and the neighboring countries are difficult. O solution for this situation represents the construction of the Calafat – Vidin Bridge (priority axis TEN-T 22) by the Bulgarian side, financed by ISPA, whose closure is planned for the end of 2010.

Development of the national and European interest infrastructure is a national objective of the national transport policy of achieving, developing and modernizing the transport network of national and European interest.

Thus on the list of priority projects identified by Romania along with the European Union, that are to be carried out until 2015 are mentioned the fallowing rail roads at the level of the south-west region:

- Vîntu de Jos-Sibiu-Râmnicu Vâlcea-Vâlcele-Pitesti-Bucureşti;
- Arad-Timişoara-Caransebeş-Drobeta Turnu Severin-Strehaia-Craiova-Calafat;
- Craiova-Roşiori-Videle-Bucureşti/Giurgiu.

Table 1. Public roads in South West region in the period 2000-2006

	2000	2003	2006
Public roads – total:	10161	10480	10478
• Modernized	2551	3323	3447
• With light road asphalt	2879	2266	2322
National roads*:	1944	1983	2043
• Modernized	1658	1666	1665
• With light road asphalt	187	215	266
County and local roads:	8217	8497	8435
• Modernized	893	1657	1782
• With light road asphalt	2692	2051	2056
Public roads density on 100 km^2	34,8	35,9	35,9

* *Including highways and European roads*
Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania, INSSE.

The length of the public roads at the end of 2006 was of 10478 km, increasing from the years 2003 and 2000, when the length of the public roads was of 10480 and 10161 km.

In the structure of the public roads network, the national roads whose length was of 2043 km, in the year 2006, having a share of 19,50%, the remaining 80,50% are county and local roads.

In terms of technical aspect the most county and local roads are inadequate, which determines that the access of rural population from some communities at the national roads network to be quite low.

The share of national roads in total public roads increased in the year 2003 comparing with the year 2000 from 19,13% to 18,92%, increasing in 2006 – 19,50%.

The share of county and local roads has increased in the year 2003 comparing with the year 2000 from 80,87% to 81,08%, and in the year 2006 arrived to 77,31%.

Public roads density is in the year 2006 reduced from 35,95 km/100 km^2, at the level of 2003 increasing by 1,1 km/100 km^2 from the year 2000.

The technical estate of the public roads network is generally poor, modernized roads with a length of 3 447 km representing 32,9% from their total length, and the ones with light road asphalt coat 22,16% (2322 km).

The national roads within the region are modernized up to 81,50%, and the county and local ones 21,13%.

The existing road network and the geographical position of the

region provide a good internal and international opening.

2. Municipal technical equipment

Share of the localities where natural gas is distributed.

Public utilities, due to their major role in reinvigorating the region and increasing its economical performances, requires special attention, providing and improving the contribution to the region's economic development, improves the inhabitants standard of living and to protect the environment.

Thereby, the region's urban centers, within the region, real poles of economic and social activities concentration and in the same time leaders of the changing process, requires multiple interventions to ensure the upgrading and extension of public utilities.

However, insufficient, and often, the lack of public utilities from the rural area, requires major investments in this area with the purpose to ensure to the rural communities the optimum conditions for socio-economic development and in order to facilitate their presence and active participation to region's economy.

Regarding natural gas supply, within the region are connected to the national gas distribution system a number of 55 localities, in the year 2006, representing 7,11% of country's total, of which 35 were from rural villages areas. The length of the gas distribution network at region level is about 1 706 km.

Table 2. Localities where natural gas is distributed in the region South – West, in the period 2000 – 2006

	2000	**2003**	**2006**
Number of localities where natural gas is distributed – total: • **rural**	**36** **22**	**44** **27**	**55** **35**
Localities share where natural gas is distributed – total: • **rural**	**6,64%** **5,90%**	**3,60%** **2,60%**	**7,11%** **6,36%**

Source: TEMPO – ON LINE Data base, INSSE.

Localities share where natural gas is distributed declined in 2003 compared with 2000 both per total, from 6,64% to 3,60%, and also in rural areas, from 5,90% to 2,60%. This share reduction was achieved on the base of the increasing localities where natural gas is distributed both per total, from 36 to 44, and also in the rural area, from 22 to 27.

In 2006 the share of localities where natural gas is distributed increased in 2006 compared with 2003 both total, from 3,60% to 7,11%, and also in rural areas, from 2,60% to 6,36%. This share increase was achieved on the fond of localities reduced number in which natural gas is distributed both per total, from 44 to 55, and also in rural areas, from 27 to 35.

Overall length of the simple distribution network for drinking water

South – West region has in total the smallest locality number supplied with water from Romania.

Regional network of drinking water distribution has a total length of 4728,3 km, of which 2382,9 km in rural areas.

Evolution of the quantity of water distributed to the population shows a decline over the past 10 years, at regional level. The proportion of household water from the total distributed water showed slight changes over the last decade.

Table 3. Overall length of the simple distribution network for drinking water in South West region, in the period 2000-2006 (km)

	2000	**2003**	**2006**
Overall length of the simple distribution network for drinking water – total:	**3053,1**	**3460,2**	**4728,3**
urban	**1925,5**	**2127,2**	**2345,4**
rural	**1127,6**	**1333**	**2382,9**

Source: TEMPO – ON LINE Database, INSSE.

Overall length of the simple distribution network for drinking water registered an increase in 2003 compared with 2000, from 3053,1 km to 3460,2 km, per total and from 1127,6 km to 1333 km, in rural areas.

In 2006 compared with 2003, the total length of drinking water distribution network registered an increase from 3460,2 km to 4728,3 km, per total and from 1333 km to 2382,9 km, in rural areas.

A general characteristic of drinking water supply networks in particular of those in urban areas is the high rate of wear and age, with major implications in terms of ensuring the necessary drinking water of the population. With regard to public sewerages their total length is approximate 1466 km, with 58 receiving localities, of which 39 cities.

Also from the point of view of public sewage the population in rural areas is disadvantaged, in the region benefiting from such a network a number of 19 communes. The public distribution network for drinking

water, plant capacity and the volume of drinking water distributed to consumers can not provide the utility needs of the rural population, both in number of inhabitants, but also as proportion of endowed rural localities.

3. Quality of housing

Number of rooms/person

In the period under review has increased the number of rooms/person, both per total but also in the rural area. This growth take place on the increased number of dwellings both in rural, but also per total. This increase was also due to the increased number of people living in rural areas and to the room number growth from rural area.

Table 4. Number of rooms/person in the region South – West, in the period 2000 and 2006

	2000	**2003**	**2006**
Population, from which:	**2403632**	**2336018**	**2301833**
rural	**1309413**	**1277847**	**1206148**
Number of rooms, from which:	**2315213**	**2498936**	**2516438**
rural	**1451251**	**1518208**	**1521707**
Number of rooms/person, from which:	**0,96**	**1,07**	**1,09**
rural	**1,11**	**1,19**	**1,26**

Source: TEMPO – ON LINE Database, INSSE.

In the analyzed region the number of rooms/person increased in 2003, by comparison with 2000, totally but also in the rural regions. In rural regions raised from 1,11 to 1,19, and in total from 0,96 to 1,07. This increase was due both to the increased number of rooms and also to the reduced population from one period to another.

In 2006 compared with 2003 has increased the number of rooms per person both per total and also in rural areas. In rural areas increased from 1.19 to 1.26, while the total from 1.07 to 1.09. This increase was due to both the increased number of rooms and also by the reduced population from one period to another.

RESULTS AND DISCUTIONS

Swot analysis of South – West region– infrastructure and housing criteria

SWOT analysis, is not a simple presentation of the factors which describe the situation of infrastructure and current housing and the potential

conditions of South – West region, being a basic tool in the process of identification of the most important strategic directions and priorities which will conduct to economic development and social cohesion of the region in the fallowing period.

Starting from the SWOT analysis of the South – West region – infrastructure and housing criteria we can say that the economic development of rural areas is affected by multiple problems generated by the access roads condition, the lack or insufficiency of public utilities and by the social infrastructure. Also, the life quality is strict determined by the distance where are the products and services necessary for the peoples. Taking into consideration the actual economic conditions, the development of rural areas under all these aspects, may and must have a socio-economic alternative of the urban areas.

Strengths

- Transport infrastructure (road network) well developed compared with the national average but concentrated only in certain areas.
- Well developed electricity distribution network
- Key transit region between Banat and Muntenia (Bucuresti) located at the confluence of the Pan-European transport corridors IV and VII
- Located at the intersection of two from the three European corridors that cross Romania

Weaknesses

- Poor quality of roads. In mountain areas, poor developed forest road network (difficulties in the efficient exploitation of wood)
- Lack of a motorway in the region
- Large weaknesses in supplying drinking water and an underdeveloped sewerage network
- Underdeveloped gas network
- Lack of basic infrastructure in rural area impede industrial development outside the major cities

Opportunities

- Potential to exploit the Danube as a low cost transport corridor
- Significant investments flow concerning the main transport infrastructure

Threats

- The region can be excluded from the informational society due to the

low possibility to purchase computers, low internet access etc.

- Increased inter and intra regional disparities
- Lack of research facilities may impede the progress towards industrial operations with high added value

CONCLUSION

The rural infrastructure from South – West region is underdeveloped and has big disparities between the north part of the region, which is more industrialized and the south part which still is predominantly agrarian.

In most parts of the rural area we can note not modernized local roads and dust or gravel roads which have a negative impact on direct access to the national road network or to the railroad. Significant deficiencies are found also at those which ensure circulation in rural areas and/or serve access to farms. Also, water supply networks in a centralized system, sewerage and sewage treatment plants are almost absent. Thus, in most municipalities lack sewer systems and wastewater treatment; wastewater being usually discharged into the rivers crossing the region.

Under these conditions, many rural households don't have the possibility and/or the opportunity to access extended agricultural services, opening markets, and thus they can't sell their agricultural production and generate alternatives at the subsistence environment. In terms of economic and social development, rural areas are still dependent on agricultural activities based on primary exploitation of natural resources.

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