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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses one of the most current and important problem of the Romanian rural space, whose study is absolutely necessary for the uniformous performance of the different types of socio-economic activities at rural communities level, namely **sustainable rural development**.

The motivation behind this PhD thesis is constituted by the relevance of the scientific and practical importance of the role that a formal proces of strategic management in sustainable rural development holds at rural communities level both from their development options point of view and, also, in its whole.

Extremely important for the strategic management of sustainable rural development are the analysis of the linkages that exist between rural communities and urban centres and their evaluation because, through this areas` specificity, both constitute environments that can easily influence development at individual and society level in case a way of harnessing them doesn`t exist. Thus, the implementation of the strategic management concept becomes necessary whose role is to manage and evaluate the previously mentioned phenomenon. From this point of view, strategic management can be defined as a set of rigurously established and organized activities which, starting from local existing conditions, analyze the needs and development potential of the rural community in a development vision in view of filtering and minimizing the negative effect of rural-urban linkages.

By choosing the **“Studies regarding the improvement of strategic management in sustainable rural development in the Jijia-Bahlui Depression”** theme I followed to highlight a problem by understanding which you can explain the causes of the socio-economic success or failure of rural communities. Choosing the research team regarding strategic management in sustainable rural development can be justified through the ever growing interest manifested at public level through the development of rural space and rural development support policies.

The main principle of the PhD thesis is constituted by offering a conceptual framework for analyzing and identifying the needs and the development potential of rural communities that are the basis of the strategic process.

The key words of the paper are: *strategy, rural, urban, rurbanization, rural-urban lonkages, strategic management, development, rural space, rural environment, rurality, quality of life, community, inhabitant, decision, decision making process, decision factor, needs, potential.*

Synthesis of the main parts in the PhD thesis



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First part, „*BIBLIOGRAPHIC STUDY REGARDING SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES*” consists of 2 chapters that hold theoretical aspects regarding sustainable rural development, ruralization, quality of life and strategic management.

Part II, „*OWN RESEARCHED, RESULTS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION*” is composed of 6 chapters that underline own researches carried out alongside the results and their interpretations.

The first chapter of the PhD thesis „*STUDIES REGARDING THE SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT*” is an introductory, explicatory one, realizing a general analysis of the basic concepts specific to the sustainable rural development process in local communities. In its evolution, *chapter I* presents a few theoretical aspects regarding the dimensions of sustainable rural development, also observing the functions and interdependencies that arise at its level.

Also, the first chapter refers to the evolution and state of knowledge regarding quality of life. The quality of life analysis in this chapter starts from presenting the concept in different forms, then continuing with its manifestations under the form of the poverty concept. Also, the quality of life indicators utilized at world level are presented, a plurality of approaches being noticed not just in regards to concept, but also from the phenomenon practicality point of view.

CHAPTER II – „RESEARCH REGARDING LOCAL ENVIRONMENT INFLUENCES ON THE SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS” defines the idea that, at local community level, there are influences of the internal and external environment on the socio-economic development on individual and society level. Harnessing these influences through adopting some strategies by the local public administration in this sense assumes the identification and their evaluation with great accuracy and, in their support comes strategic management which becomes an indispensable guide for management critical situations in the local socio-economic development.

The importance of this chapter derives from the fact that *strategic management*, as an essential tool in local public administration, holds as a purpose to streamline the local development process in order to realize the set objectives with maximum efficiency. Strategic management implies the establishment by local public authorities of the vision that is willing to assume and, also, concrete establishing of the strategic development objectives following a deep analysis of locally existing needs, and, also, of the individual and society potential.

Also, rurbanization has been defined, been identified key decision factors at local level, with a focus on public institutions representatives with a role in developing and implementing public policies.

CHAPTER III „PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHOD” reveals the main scientific purpose of the paper. *The needs and development potential of rural communities and, also, or rural-urban interactions evaluation* constitutes the main **scientific purpose** of the paper. *the main objective* of the thesis is represented by *the identification and evaluation and, also, of interactions that exist between rural communities and urban centres and adopting the adequate measures to adapt these to the specific of the local community. The specific objective* of the paper resides in applying the strategic management process in sustainable rural development at the Belcesti commune level through the prism of the two components: *analysis on the basis of the needs and development potential of the rural community and strategic management through rural-urban linkages and rural-rural flows.*

Overcoming the answers formulation difficulties assumes adopting decisions to the resources allocation method, optimizing local development strategies and, also, the ways of attracting at local level the positive rural-urban and rural-rural flows.

CHAPTER IV, named „THE ANALYSIS OF THE BELCESTI COMMUNE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT” presents a few aspects regarding the definition of the Jijia-Bahlui Depression rural environment, natural resources, human resources, economic resources, local economy, performances, risks and recent accomplishments of agriculture and, also, the agriculture market of Belcesti commune.

In this chapter the research area has been delimited, the analysis being oriented towards studying the way in which strategic management is done at local level, the main problems of local development, respectively infrastructure development, cultura and social cohesion.

CHAPTER V – „ANALZA NEVOILOR ȘI POTENȚIALULUI DE DEZVOLTARE A COMUNEI BELCEȘTI, JUDEȚUL IAȘI” is dedicated to the case study done in Belcesti commune, Iasi county. Belcesti commune corespunde to the demands regarding a complex and rigorous approach as constituted by the present paper.

The paper offers the theoretical-methodological framework necessary to the scientific and operational substantiation of the strategic management at commune level. The reasoning that substantiated this approach needed, on one side, the conceptual identification of the necessary methodology for evaluating the needs and development potential at local community level in five areas of activity proven of special importance for Belcesti commune.

The principle that stands at the basis of the Belcesti commune development is the continuous improvement of the local environment through the growth of the administrative



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capacity of the local public authorities, these trying to give citizens trust in the decision making process.

This chapter is dedicated to the evaluation of the needs and development potential of the community through the working groups methods as a response to the risk associated to the existing development discrepancies at this time in the North-East Development Region. The general local development strategies that presently exist in Romanian communes depend on the criterias used. Depending on the frequency and impact of the utilized analysis you can choose as response measures between prevention, avoidance and decisions transfer.

A sustainable rural development process must constitute a major component of any decision making process having an important role in accomplishing foreseen at its initiation.

The presented indicators have a relative common evolution tendency, the interactions between areas of activities and their areas of expertise being major influence factor.

CHAPTER VI – „THE ANALYSIS OF RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES AND OF THE RURBANIZATION EFFECT ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY – BELCESTI COMMUNE, IASI COUNTY” presents the importance of evaluating the existing rural-urban linkage between rural communities and neighboring urban centers.

These interactions present at local communities' level influence both the individual and society in general, their impact being analyzed through different methods. The isolation degree of a locality is the most direct way to evaluate it, the peripherality index and the distance-time one revealing the type of access to different types of services at local level and, also, the level of interaction between the analyzed commune and the surrounding localities.

In the case of Belcesti commune, the peripherality index has a value of 1.15 with a low to average degree of interaction with surrounding cities, respectively Harlau and Podu Iloaiei, being instead affected from an access to services point of view as the distance-time index analysis shows us.

CHAPTER VII – „SCENARIOS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCA COMMUNITY – BELCESTI COMMUNE, IASI COUNTY” summarizes the results of the realized analysis, conceiving, according to some prognosis of the effect of the evolution in three directions of the peripherality and distance-time indexes, 3 development scenarios for Belcesti commune.

The existence of such a prognosis reveals the fact that, due to a well substantiated analysis, different development visions of the rural community can be realized. In the realistic scenario, this vision present the implication framework of local public authorities in the diversification and growth of the local economy by supporting entrepreneurial initiatives of different types, key areas being agriculture and tourism.



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These scenarios were substantiated on the basis of opinions survey done on citizens and public institutions representatives, their opinions regarding the development visions of Belcești commune being able to influence decisively its direction.

CAPITOLUL VIII – „CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS” resumes the hypotheses from which we started, underlining own interpretations and their importance at rural community level.

The end of the paper is constituted in a set of conclusions regarding the impact of the strategic management process in sustainable rural development, the evolution of some socio-economic indicators, as a result of its action in the rural space and, also, the manifestation of different components of this (individual, decision group, society, public environment, private environment etc.) to the influence of rural-urban linkages.

The conclusions set out the personal contribution to solving problems generated by the sustainable rural development process and, indirectly, by rural-urban linkages, resorting to their utilization through filtering and recirculation in a positive manner.

BIBLIOGRAPHY – is composed from a number of 79 titles from the national and international literature and, also, from Internet research.