

## ROLE OF INHABITANTS LIVING OUTSIDE OF TOWNS IN RURAL AREAS

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**Abstract:** Since collectivization of the agriculture in the past few decades, scientific literature defines the population living outside of towns or villages agriculture peasantry. It is false, because it was not an occupational construction any more; all of them all changed a lot in the look of commerce. The peasantry got its share of a determining role in the Hungarian society's establishment in the course of the centuries; let it be an economy, sociology, a tradition, e.g. The last changes of twenty years did not let the farms untouched. New inhabitants arrived and others left this form of living, therefore nowadays it shows a quite heterogeneous picture to us considering their occupation, their conduct, their social role, appeared on the farms. By today everything has changed a lot from the aspects of both employment structure and farming activity. From the beginning of the 60s, for their children the school became the most important channel of social mobility. Its role was increased by two

factors, on one side mechanical and technological development together with industrialization, on the other side termination of private estate property which cancelled the question of inheritance. The young generation finishing schools meant the labour supply. They generally finished trade or technical schools. These young people did not move back to their parents' home, to the farm. They stayed in the town, started a family there and though they helped parents with the seasonal work, their children have become alienated from both this way of life and this view of life. The peasantry had a considerable role in formation of the Hungarian society throughout the centuries in the fields of economy, sociology, traditions etc. Changes in the last twenty years could not leave the farms untouched. There are new inhabitants on farms who can give a fairly heterogeneous picture regarding their trades, way of living or social role.

**Key words:** infrastructural conditions, population on farms, public security, resort farm, farm for agricultural production, dwelling farm

### INTRODUCTION

2% of the country's population live on farms which is 6-8% of the inhabitants of the Great Plain. It means that the farms give home for about 200.000 people, as well as means of subsistence, place of recreation for some, and the feeling of freedom for the others. (UHLIG R. 2008)

Social-economic judgement of farms has not been definite since the beginning of their existence. There were several pros and cons about their grounds. For the last 150 years the opinions have been varying meanwhile farms have been disappearing and appearing on the Great Plain.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

Putting the question of grounds away it is a fact that the populations who live there form, with their activity, an organic part of the Hungarian population and similarly to the inhabitants of closed settlements take their share in the everyday life of the country regarding both economic and social factors. All in all, it is important to keep in mind the question: is it reasonable to support the survival of farms as a unique settlement and economic unit, or to leave them alone in the flow of globalisation?

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regarding the formation of farms on the Plain it is necessary to lay it down that the towns with enormous outskirts had the most extended farm system. After the Turkish rule in the confines of the reviving settlements, periodically inhabited dwellings were built with the aim of cattle raising, then later so-called gardens were formed where plants were cultivated. This way of life meant a double bind. By home they meant the house in the market-town for grandparents who could not work any more or for the children who went to school there. Meanwhile „in the farmhouse only the peasant family members lived from springtime till nature's repose" (SZENTI T. 2001) who moved to the town house for winter, in the break of agricultural work.

In the last third of the 19th century the farm system on the Plain developed into a „world of farms" (SZENTI T. 2001). With the fragmentation of the lands, which is the result of distribution between heirs, the connection with the town loosened and so not every farm family had a house in the town. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the third part of the population lived on farms in the outskirts of market-towns. (SZENTI T. 2001) Dwelling and working place formed a unit that time where the peasant families cultivated plants and raised animals, selling their extra crop and livestock.

A special connection was formed between the town and its outskirts. Products of the guilds in market-towns and goods produced on farms were exchanged in the weekly markets and in the annual fairs. However, reality was never so ideal. Administration of the matters on the side of people living far from the town, schooling of their children (elementary schools), the condition of dirt roads; all of them emerged as just claims which were not solved by the leaders of the towns, although even the farm population took part in the general and proportionate sharing of taxation. Thus, it can be easily understood that it meant tension between the town and farm population.

„(the farmer) Wants to have a better road, wants to have an access to the postal services at least twice a week, wants the doctor to consult out on the farms...These are not really revolution wishes but strives to make just claims fulfilled for those financial support which is scraped together with much effort and with honest work from year to year by the Hungarian on the farm for the sake of the inner-city area" (GESZTELYI NAGY L. 1932).

In decades coming after this, life of the population in the outskirts did not become easier, in spite of the fact that schools were built in the world of farms. However, a great number of questions was not solved, thus for example, health and vet provision which could be found only in the village or in the town, maintenance of dirt roads and in several places even their development were abandoned.

After the Second World War a great number of poor peasant families could obtain a plot with land distribution, the long-time wished small estates could secure the living, the farm buildings were renovated, and houses were built on empty plots.

However, collectivisation in the 50s destroyed the development of the farm system. That time it was forbidden to build new buildings, it was only possible to mend the older ones. (SZENTI T. 2004)

To sum it up, „the earlier social-economic basis of the existence of farms has vanished, and as a result the process of destruction has started". (BECSEI J. 2002)

This process is still in progress, the bigger part of the farm population have moved to the nearby settlements, they have given up their earlier way of life and found work in factories. The older ones worked as unskilled or semi-skilled workers, the younger ones and children learned trades, the ones with excellent faculties graduated at a university or college. Among the farm population of the Plain the re-groupment of occupation passed off in a clear and direct way.

The much more comfortable way of life in towns, the infrastructural supply of higher level contributed so much to the diminution of population in the outskirts that some sociologists foreshadowed the final disappearance of the Hungarian farm system. (HORNYÁK S. 2009)

During the years of the political transformation a lot of people expected a kind of Renaissance of the farms. After dissolution of the co-operative farming system a lot of people moved to the farms. They made the effort to put the old, raunchy buildings into a habitable state, while the wealthier ones built new houses.

However, fate of farms did not change. Composition of the population in the outskirts is considerably homogeneous, so are their economic and financial situations. There is a lack of the necessary professional knowledge, the necessary capital and it is a frequent problem that certain layers are not interested.

Public security has ceased on farms, house-breaking and burglary are both frequent, so are theft, and production of forbidden products.

The speciality of the man-made environment on the Plain is the alternation of ruined, abandoned farmhouses and modern palace-like buildings.

In spite of these facts there is a change in migration of population. While, in earlier times people migrated from the farms or villages into the towns, nowadays this direction seems to turn round.

Examining the composition of the population on farms, we have to take into consideration several factors. First of all, the age composition seems to be important. 100-150 years ago, at the beginning of formation of farms, people at active age lived on the farms, while the older ones and children in the town.

From the 1950s only those workers at active age stayed on their farms who were somehow in connection with the land, working either at the local co-operative farm, or at the state farm, or in the town having a farmhouse together with a household land around it. In their case, even after formation of extensive farming, their household, much-demanding farms did not disappear. These families very often had a house in the town, in the nearby village where their old parents or children at school-age lived. It was typical of families who did not have an access to an elementary school in the outskirts.

In the 80s the original population grew old or died and their farmhouses were sold. These buildings were frequently bought by families who lived in the town-mostly in blocks of flats- with the aim of recreation or farming. The majority of these farms was inhabited provisionally at the weekends or during vacations. To the farms used for agriculture the owner went every day to feed the animals but not even these dwellings had permanent inhabitants.

In the years after the political transformation the population on farms increased. A part of the inhabitants of today's farms moved to the outskirts to take possession of the lands got back with compensation. Those with capital and professional knowledge established farms, horse and resort farms which work very well nowadays. Only these types of farms have a real chance to survive. (CSATÁRI et. al.2005)

Those with a smaller amount of capital, agrarian problems in connection with selling agricultural goods make production, life of farms impossible. There is no chance to improve the machine stock with the lack of capital. The lack of the suitable business federation of the farmers endangers the existence of their farms and their life there.

Others bought habitable farms in hope of cheaper living: lower general expenses, food that can be grown in the kitchen garden etc. Some of these farms have been renovated and they are inhabited even today with the hope of being able to move back to the town after saving some money. Other buildings, being in a dangerous state, were abandoned by their new dwellers who moved back to the town to live in lodgings or temporary accommodation.

Families who live in the social peripheries, in hard conditions belong to this group. (SZENTI T. 2004)

The older people who experienced the storms of the farm history in the last 40 years belong to the group of farm population which is in the most difficult situation. It is not their fault that their income is low, their dwellings are worthless and condemned, since because of their low income they cannot afford moving into the nearby settlements. What makes their situation even worse is that the infrastructural supply of their immediate environment is low, there is often the lack of even the fundamental services (electricity, road etc.). Their possibilities are limited and since they are stuck to their homes it is impossible to change their situation. All of these violate the interests of their everyday life because their environment not always and in not everything ensures to live the way of life which would follow from their social situation or which they would deserve. In their case social welfare and support would have an important role.

Role of the population on farms filled in society is undisputable. They have always played an important role in the circulation of country life with the agricultural products, taxes, surtaxes (GESZTELYI NAGY L. 1932), traditions and professional knowledge. During agricultural collectivisation both the co-operative and state farms were started with their personal belongings (machines, draught animals), livestock, besides their labour force and lands.

From the beginning of the 60s, for their children the school became the most important channel of social mobility. Its role was increased by two factors, on one side mechanical and technological development together with industrialisation, on the other side termination of private estate property which cancelled the question of inheritance. The young generation finishing schools meant the labour supply. They generally finished trade or technical schools. These young people did not move back to their parents' home, to the farm. They stayed in the town, started a family there and though they helped parents with the seasonal work, their children have become alienated from both this way of life and this view of life.

### CONCLUSIONS

The public opinion regards farms as appealing, romantic places which are condemned to death. After the political transformation glimmered the hope for a short while that they would regain their earlier, almost utopistic function. It is known that it is impossible because of the lack of both the suitable infrastructure and services. If these two factors are not improved, it is beyond question that the farms cannot survive. Thus, it is exposed to danger that the typical culture landscape on the Great Plain will soon disappear.

While in the western part of Europe the population migrate from the towns to the country, in Hungary it is not ensured to provide the existing values, farms with good economic and touristic conditions even the most fundamental provisions.

It is a complex task to solve these problems and politicians, settlement researchers, the farm-college have summarized the most important tasks. Thus, besides development of the infrastructure and basic provisions, it should be discussed how to improve the public security of farms, and in some parts of the Great Plain the real business federation of population in the outskirts has not been solved. It is necessary to create the conditions of sustainability taking the different natural-economic conditions of the regions with farms into consideration.

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