
THE "VOICES" OF THE ROMANIAN INTEGRATION INTO E.U.:

LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES IN A VILLAGE FROM DOBRUDJA

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In December 2002 the Romanian newspapers announced a second historical victory in the current transformation; firstly, Romania was accepted to be a member of NATO, and secondly, the European Union confirmed the date for Romania's integration as a member state of the EU. The latter would take place at the beginning of the year 2007. One sentence could summarize this victory: "we (the Romanians) are back in Europe, again."

Politicians, journalists, economists, and people in general were all convinced that Romania would join Europe in January 2007. The integration to the EU and NATO had been the main objectives of all democratic governments since 1990's and onward. However, is Romania ready to join the EU as it claims to be?

In my paper, I will highlight the differences between the official or public discourse and the local economic and environmental practices regarding the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) of the EU. I will focus on what people in rural areas expect of the state and how the state acts at the local level regarding property rights over land and lakes. Therefore, I will explore the two "voices" of the integration. Romania had closed the negotiations with the EU about some major changes in relation to Romanian economy, legislation, and politics. This voice is not only loud but also visible within the Romanian public space.

On the other hand, at the local level, the environmental and economic practices demonstrate the gap between the Romanian realities and the governmental claims. This is the other "voice," which very seldom comes through the public space and debate. In this paper one of the two voices, the official discourse, will be bleaker. This voice could be summarized with the recent words of the actual president of Romania. He said that Romania should not consider itself unworthy to join the European Union. Romanians have nothing to be ashamed of since there are no *deep* differences between Romania and any other European countries. This paper will focus more on the second "voice", the unheard in public

discourse and neglected by most of scientific research¹.

The ethnographic cases refer to two examples: the property regime and the environmental practices as carried out in southeastern Romania. It is essential to understand how people perceive property rights, as scholars have highlighted the link between property rights and the notion of citizenship (Hann 1996; MacPherson [1978] 1992). The economic integration on the supra-national level depends not only on the national politics but, on the property rights one has on the local level. However, it is the state and the law, which enforce one's property rights that becomes one of the most important social regulations. It shows the weakness of the state. A weak or unstable state would not be able to impose rules, or if it is able to impose rules, it may not enforce them at the local level (Wilson & Mitchell 2003).

Certainly, one can ask what the political relevance for Romania is to become a member state of the EU and what the gain is for a small village lost in the Danube Delta. In addition, the community I am describing here is Russian so it could be considered as irrelevant for the bigger picture. As other social scientists have reported, what I present here for Jurilovca is also quite common for other villages. The difference lies in the different local traditions. Verdery (1996; 1998; 1999; 2003; 2005) depicts a Transylvanian village where agriculture is the most significant economic occupation and in which property rights are very often neglected or hijacked by the local government and local powerful people in the village. Vintila Mihailescu (1996; 1997) discusses two villages in Wallachia in which, despite the different approaches to land, villagers still economically act *within* the household realm. Although the attitude to agriculture differs consistently in those two communities, what is common is that they are not yet integrated into the market. Sofer and Bordanc (1998) explore both the post-socialist household practices that are embedded in the customary and conventional historical household form of the village production and are exposed to the national policy constraints of the government. These two sets of factors, the

authors argue, impede the rural development in post-socialist Romania.

Abrudan and Turnock (1999), Turnock (1996) and Muica, Roberts and Turnock (1999) explore the fragmentation of agricultural land in a Transylvanian region of Apuseni Mountains. In this region, the lack of mechanization and the poor opportunities for tourism (lack of infrastructure, clear of woodlands, which is due to the severity of floods and to the desertification of the landscape, the pollution) make it impossible to restructure. Other authors (Carter and Turnock 1996; Turnock 2002; Ploaie & Turnock 1999; Ploaie 1996; Howarth 1998; Muica and Zavoianu 1996) discuss in detail the environmental problems that had taken place (deforestation, soil erosion, watershed pollution) in Romania and the close link between the past problems and the present ones in post-socialist Romania. In addition to the existing problems from the past during the economic transformations, Romania had to face other obstacles, such as the restitution of the private and collective forests, fragmentation of land, overgrazing, and the destruction of irrigation systems. All these scholars focus on various regions in Romania, and the same dilemmas are applicable to the village of Jurilovca that I studied. However, this paper brings a new aspect to these studies, which is a concentration on fishing communities in a region which has not been explored yet by these scholars.

Short account on prerequisites of accession²

As I mentioned above, I will keep this section very short. What is important here is just to illustrate some of the EU prerequisites for accession emphasizing three chapters (out of 31) which are important for this present paper: agriculture, environmental protection and fishing.

In 1995 Romania required officially to be accepted as a new member of the EU. The official negotiations with Brussels began in 2000 and on December 13, 2002 Romania and Bulgaria received the so-called "itinerary sheet" of objectives to achieve in the economic and legal domains, including legislation. In November 2004, the last chapter of the negotiation was closed. The date of accession was set for January 1, 2007. Basically, the chapter on agriculture points out that Romania has to develop a modern agriculture and to assure a decent life standard for its farmers. Brussels gave the coordinates of rural development, the organization of commune market, as well as the quality of the agricultural inputs and outputs.

The environment chapter proved to be the most difficult and the most challenging for Romanian government. The aim of the EU policy in respect to the environment is environmental protection. The most important principle could be summarized in these words: "who pollutes pays for it." There are four priority domains in the "acquis communautaire": the climate change, nature and biodiversity, health and environment, and also the waste and natural resources. To implement the European directives, Romania asked for periods of transition from 3 to 15 years.

The chapter on fishing industry focuses on the common market organization, the administration and the conservation of the natural resources. Its concerns are the administration, control and inspection of the national and international waters. The underlying idea is to *exploit* fisheries in a sustainable way.

The closing of negotiations in 2004 meant that Romania had a period of 3 to 15 years of transition for implementing the laws and establishing the EU practices throughout the national territory. Whereas the regulations concerning the production depend on the will of the political actors, the implementation of actual practices proves to be more complicated. These actual land practices concern property rights, which are deeply embedded in the local culture and history. In the next section, I will portray the life of a fishing village and emphasize the social and environmental practices in play there.

Jurilovca village: social and environmental practices

Jurilovca is a commune of 5,691 people lying 56 km away from Tulcea, the capital of the county. Tulcea is one of the two counties composing Dobrudja, a historical province in southeastern Romania. The community, which has two other villages (6 Martie and Visina) is on the border of Razelm Lake, the largest lake in Romania. Together with Sinoe, Zmeica and Galovita, they form one of the largest groups of lakes in Romania. The population of the village is 50% Romanian, 50% Russian. The Lipoveans³ are Russians who came to Dobrudja at the end of the 18th century (Chirita 1994) and became fishermen, while most of the Romanians were farmers. Their choice of occupation is explainable from a historical point of view; the Ottoman Empire allowed them to settle down in Dobrudja in the 18th century with one condition--they had to watch the frontier of the Empire. In exchange, they received the privilege of fishing in the lakes. The

Lipovean women were farmers, while men were fishermen and reed cutters. These used to be the main sources of the community's income as the agricultural cultivated land lessened and became of poor quality. All the village territory is 31,816 ha, but 67% of it is covered by water. The old social division of labor within their culture remained as it was in the 1950's. Namely, 95% of the Lipovean men were fishermen (Petrescu, Stahl, Dimboianu 1955: 48). The main data of the village are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

This increase of the village population was due to the agrarian reform of 1921. In 1921, after the First World War, the Romanian Parliament passed the agrarian reform. During 1925-1927 a large demographic movement occurred. The Romanian authorities offered the colonists 10 ha of land and granted loans for agricultural tools and house building. They settled at the periphery of the village. This was a deliberate policy of the Romanian state which tried to change the ethnic component of Dobrudja⁴.

During the Ottoman Empire (in 1877 the Romanian State took over the province and instituted new laws), land and other resources were the property of the Sultan. In exchange for the military and administrative services, he allowed people to use the resources (even the landowners were not actually owners of their land). Thus the land and the lake were the property of the Sultan; the village population was only users of those resources. But in terms of Schlager and Ostrom (1992 : 252), the Lipoveans were proprietors; they had the right to establish access to the resources of the lake, and they were the managers of the lake. They had the exclusive right but it was not an unalienable right. They established some *internal* rules, which allowed them to have an informal right to bequeath a part of the lake (and of course, the lake resources included). They "shared"⁵ in this way the lake surface and all other resources included. However, there was not an equalitarian way of living; wealthy people owned not a bigger surface but better fishing tools and boats. They hired the others to fish for them⁶. Before 1948 (the year of the nationalization of all plants and natural resources) villagers owned the water channels and the swamps. Everybody in the village knew which swamp belongs to whom. The "owner" was the only one who was allowed to cut the reed and to fish where his family established property rights (F. O., man, 60 years). Villagers did recognize these places, although from the legal point of view they belonged to the state. Even today they know exactly which part of the swamp their family used

to use. Today, only the old names of the swamps remain. Actually, every swamp or small lake around has a name (sometimes a nickname), which makes me believe that the swamps belonged to somebody. The villagers know every place by the name of its former owners. I found some hand-written documents in the archives, dating back to the 1950's, in which people declared that they gave up "their" swamp places because they had no official papers to certify ownership⁷. There were two ways of establishing "property rights" over a plot in the swamp. First, the newcomer had to be sure that the plot did not belong to anybody else. Then, he would build a small hut out of reed, proving in this way that he has the right to fish there and to cut the reed. A second possibility was to dig a water channel (*gârla*). One informant told me the story of the "Firchina water channel". Firca, he said, was his neighbor. In the 1930's, when my informant was a child, Firca worked several days to dig a water channel. At the moment he finished digging, everybody in the village named the channel "Firchina's channel" (*gârla Firchina*). He was the only one who had the right to fish and cut the reed in that place (F. O. man, 60 years).

This practice also has ancient roots. When Russian people were settled in the Ottoman Empire, they received not only the right to settle but also the right to fish in exchange for military service⁸. They also received the right to use the forests which were plentiful at the time. When the Romanian administration was installed in 1878, they lost their right to cut the forest. One of the informants said that his father had told him that there were problems with the Romanian administration when they tried to cut wood, namely without asking for permission, as they would have done during the Turkish administration system, the Romanians denied these permits. (C. N., women, 81 years).

The practice of establishing property rights in swamps could be linked to some oral inheritance. Before 1948 the young couples received a piece of land as their dowry, among other things. But it was only a verbally expressed inheritance, with no official papers written or signed. As one of my informants recalls:

"When one got married, the bride's parents provided some sheep, a cow and, if they had land enough, 1 or 2 hectares as dowry. My mother received 1.5 ha. Her father told her, 'You work this land now, it is all yours, it is for your family'. She worked

that plot until the 50's". (O.M, woman, 43 years)⁹.

The social practices of the Lipovean population encouraged the oral inheritance. This is explainable by the fact that until 1909 there was no school in the village. In the village archive I found documents (issued by the Romanian administration) which proved that in 1953 almost all women in the village were illiterate. Because of their religious beliefs¹⁰ women were forbidden to leave the village or to speak to strangers.

As for the land, the families used to own small plots of land which represented an alternative to fishing and reed cutting. Apparently there was a social division of work; while women worked the land, the males' occupation was fishing and reed cutting. It was a subsistence economy, since the largest plots were no larger than 15 ha.

Collectivization of the land in 1957 brought all the land into the Collective Farm. The lakes around the land belonged to the state and were transferred to Piscicola Jurilovca, the state's fishing company.

Land decollectivization: "how come they are so damn rich?"

This is the general situation of the village at the beginning of 1991, when the land was restituted to the former owners (by the law 18/1991 and the law 1/2000). The 18/1991 law stipulated that every family was to get back a maximum of 10 ha, regardless of how big the property was before collectivization. People who had no land before 1948 could receive up to 0.5 ha from the land reserved for the village.¹ The law 1/2000 stipulated that the maximum a family could receive was 50 ha, only if there was enough land.

The first difference we notice between Jurilovca and the other villages in Romania, as reported in the literature, is that here the people did not ask to have their land returned in 1991. When I asked them why, they answered, "*I was afraid that, if I would get the land back then I was not going to receive my pension anymore*". So, in the first phase, a lot of agricultural land remained to be redistributed to people who were not owners or users of the land but were politically influential in the village. As the mayor's office documents prove, 4,134 ha had been restituted to the former owners and 2,200 ha had been distributed to those which had no land before collectivization, among them, the vice-mayor, a member of the most

powerful political party in Romania and the head of an agricultural association (P. D., man, 57 years). Before 1990 he was a worker (mechanic) in an agricultural state enterprise. In 1991 he bought one stable and he founded an association with 60 ha; he is the owner of 10 ha, the other 50 ha are leased from other land owners. He describes the situation like this after 1990:

"...people destroyed the cooperative facilities. They said that their grandparents, their parents, and they had worked for the cooperative, so they had the right to take something home. So they took the bricks off the walls (chirpici). Now, those who bought stables and barns have problems with the people. They ask how we got rich, how we got the money to buy those facilities. I have lived in two political regimes: during the Ceausescu's regime and I had nothing, but now I have animals, cars and agricultural machines...you see...". He continues, "People who had land, carriages, and animals before the collectivization were forced to give them to the collective farm. In 1991 they were asked to give back those goods. But how can we give them these things? It is not right: if their parents were chiaburi (a rich peasant, kulak) they would receive 20-30 ha while people born after 1950, they would receive nothing. It is not fair. We have to give land in equal parcels of 10 ha. So would it be the right to return the land to those people who had it before 1948? But why give land to those who inherited it, the daughters or sons or grandchildren or nephews? I see what is happening in this village today; there are a lot of young people having no land at all. Those who had land have a good situation, but what about the others? They receive nothing? Because I belong to this category: my parents had no land at all. I do not agree with that".

This is a discourse of self-legitimization of what Alina Mungiu Pippidi called "the prey elite" (Mungiu-Pippidi, Althabe 2002). These persons gained their economic position due to the fact that they are also party politicians, which meant they had access to political information and subsequently political decisions. But what do the former owners think about it? I quote:

"They (the communists) took everything away from me: my animals, the last harvest, and my carriage. And today, people who did not work one single day for

the Cooperative, who brought nothing to the CAP¹¹, took everything for themselves after 89. I asked for 5 ha of land but they could not find my land. I worked in the CAP. This is our big problem. We have nothing. They (the rich people) have everything. They steal from us. We worked for nothing. Privatization, privatization, again privatization... 5 or 6 persons have private associations, but the others have nothing. They are poor... " (V. R., man, 68 years).

The social tensions within the village come from what Katherine Verdery (1998 ; 1999) called the struggle between collective and individual rights. As we can see in the villagers' discourse, they argue not only against the ways privatization was carried out but privatization itself. The idea that privatization is a way of getting poor is generally accepted in Romania, not only in the villages but in towns as well. They do not accept the private right to own land or lakes around. Again and again, we find a sort of mechanism: the poor people or the collectivity versus the rich people, we versus them. That is why most of the people refused to give their land for lease and, instead, began working on their plots. No matter if they have to work in an almost 'primitive' way, with no chance to produce for selling, it is mainly self-sufficient. The land fragmentation is a historical feature of Romanian agriculture. In Table 3 I present some data proving the land fragmentation in historical perspective.

As one may see, the fragmentation of land (plots less than 5 ha) represents the majority of landed properties. This is a feature impeding on a sustainable and modern agriculture.

People also believe that during the transition period it is not right for some individuals to get rich; it is the state (with a capital S) that should become rich and give equal share to everyone. One of the villagers told me: *"The State, mister, the state should be rich, not those people. How come they are so damn rich and I'm not? I worked as hard as they did."* And he concludes, *"They stole"*. The uncertain origin of wealth in Romanian villages is widely spread (this same situation is in Nicolae Balcescu Village, Constanta county). As we will see, they believe the same about the "privatization" of the lakes around.

The idea that some people got rich because they stole is deeply rooted in the villagers' minds. Many villagers regarded the cooperative not only as a communist institution but also as a collective institution of the village. That is why

many people I talked to believe those people who eliminated the cooperative were the enemies of the village.

P. D. is a leader of an agricultural association (there are only two associations and the other people from the village work their land by themselves). His association was founded with the help of his friends. In order to establish an association he had to take a large area of land. So, he leased without any official paper, without a contract, only by some verbal agreement. The harvest was shared equally, no matter whether the people leased plots of land to him or not. He said, *"I, too, had the same share, I did not want to have a privileged status. It did not matter if I was the head of the enterprise"*. In this way, the egalitarian ideology worked very well according to the ideology of most of the village people; richness is dangerous and seen as a felony.

The fact that the Lipoveans did not ask for their land back was due to their occupational structure. Before collectivization, the women were farmers and the men were fishermen. Even after the collectivization this social division of labor remained. All men were employed by the fishing state enterprise "Piscicola" Jurilovca. During the communist regime they kept their occupation, which gave them their social identity. One of the fishermen told me, "Only the women and 5 men, including the warehouse man, were employed at the cooperative. The other men were employed as fishermen" (L. P. man, manager of the enterprise, 45 years). Agriculture was for Lipovean people a secondary economic niche. It was a necessary diversification of their practices; when fishing was prohibited (the period of breeding) the men used to work along with women in agriculture. The restitution of land brought back the old problems: the fragmentation of land, the lack of technology (only the land had been restituted but not the productive assets), and the lack of access to credit or the market. But the "privatization" of the swamps is a heated debate among the villagers.

Privatization of Piscicola: "swamps belong to God"

In 1953 the communist regime created "Piscicola" as a state enterprise for fishing and reed cutting. The lake itself became a State property and Piscicola became the administrator of the lake resources (it provided also some tourism services, including the right to fish for anyone who was able to pay a small amount of money). Almost all men of the village were employed by the state fishing enterprise. After 1990, the enterprise,

having almost 1,200 people, was privatized. The new owners of the enterprise are investors outside of the village from Bucharest, and those owners are linked to politics. Today, only 176 fishermen work in the enterprise. The other ones are called "free fishermen", a kind of poacher¹² in the eye of the villagers. Now the lakes are privately administrated so there shall be no free fish anymore.

But they do not feel that they do anything wrong by poaching. As I already mentioned, before 1948 people "owned" the water channels and the swamps. They made profit out of the lake resources (fish and reed). The lake resources (mainly) and the agricultural production were the two economic niches they occupied in the region. Now, this diversification is not possible anymore. The lake remained State property administrated by some private companies. As for Piscicola, only the firm itself was privatized, not the surface of the lakes. But the new owners have the right to *exclude* the other fishermen from access to the lake resources. That means that they do not have the right to fish or cut reed anymore. Under these new conditions people from the village have only the alternative of poaching. The villagers believe God created the swamp, so nobody should be able to buy what belongs to God. That is why they do not feel that they are poachers; they only fish on God's swamp, not on a private or state property. These categories have no effective significance for them. The only consequence they consider is that they could be shot by the private guardians if they are caught. They go to fish on the swamp at night. The informal fish market is nearby the lake, next to the private building of Piscicola Jurilovca SA. This is an old informal market. When they worked at the state enterprise the agreement was that besides the salary they would receive a small quantity of fish. They used to sell the fish in this market. In 1997, when I arrived here for the first time, a real market was already in place. People came with trucks from all over the country to buy quite big quantities of fish. Another way of surviving is cutting reed (which formally belongs to the fishing enterprise and now to the new administrators) and sell it. These are small quantities of reed of lower quality. The high quality reed is sold by the enterprise to some western companies in Holland and Germany.

The picture is complicated by the fact that Razelm, since 1993, has been a part of the Danube Delta National Park, protected by national and international laws. This situation could highlight how a community that was once prosperous when

it managed itself and its resources (even if *de facto* and not *the jure*) was transformed into a very poor one when an external organization (the State) intervened in order to establish new rules.

We can speak now of a crisis of the lake resources because the owners of the new fishing firms are the only authorized users of it for certain periods of time. Under these conditions there is no incentive for improvements of the resources. They only have to take advantages of the resources the lake offers.

The difference before 1948 and now is that the community itself was aware that the resources of reed and fish should be protected for a long-term exploitation. So, they developed *internal* rules (the period during the fishing is forbidden, when to cut the reed in order to have a good production next year etc)¹³. The rules were enforced by the local culture; a rule-breaker would suffer the public opprobrium and the priest (an important character within the village) would refuse to step inside of that house. He would become socially marginalized immediately. The "privatization" of the lake transformed it from a State property (before 1948 a common-pool resource) into a private property. This transformation should not be seen in terms of *de jure* but *de facto*. Even when there are laws protecting the resources of the lake, the new owners are powerful political individuals, so state and local authority will impose any restrictions on them.

Moreover, the new enterprises are not faced with a number of strictures and obligations, as would be the case of a firm in a western society. To quote Bromley (1991: 24), "a private property is socially compelling as long as the general interests of the owner are rather in accord with the interests of non-owners". But the new owners provided a huge rate of unemployment among the villagers and excluded them from the only occupation people from Jurilovca had for centuries: fishing. In this way, the villagers are almost forced to poach in order to survive. Not to mention the fact that the new firms do not respect the rules of the National Park and are not interested in the long-term preservation of the natural resources of the lake. The outcome is that even the poachers say that "there are no fish anymore". The reed is also overexploited. In this way the lake itself suffers a process of continuum degradation after 1990.

Actually there are three main actors that could be interested in a sustainable exploitation of

the lake: the State (the owner), the administrators (the private firms) and the villagers. The postsocialist State is too weak to protect its own property rights. The corruption impedes the state to properly protect what it owns. The administrators have no incentives for protection. When the political power changes they could lose their advantages over night. We can talk about this case in its negative extremes¹⁴. The villagers have no more incentives to exploit sustainable lake resources, as they have to make their living out of agriculture. In this way, a State property becomes actually a non-property, an open access resource.

The National Park, including the swamp, which offers a wonderful landscape, should be at public hands. It means that it should be nonrivalrous in consumption and nonexcludable (Kaul, Gunberg and Stern 1999: 3). It means that the landscape is not "consumed" regardless of how many people watch it and nobody should be excluded from its benefits, such as breathing fresh air, resting in nature and having fun from watching flora and fauna. Nevertheless, the public good (which from the legal point of view remains so) has been transformed into a private interest (which is excludable and rivalrous). The fuzzy property (Verdery 1999), the weakness of the postsocialist State, the misunderstanding of the importance of local management of the resources (Ostrom 1990) led to the overexploitation of the lake resources, the degradation of its resources and to its transformation from a State property into a private property (with a negative externality).

This could be an example of how, in the past, a community solved the problem of natural resources by internal organization locally. The intervention of the State in 1948 (is the year of nationalization of all assets in industry, services, natural resources, etc.) changed the social and economic rules without affecting too much the resource itself. Only after the privatization of Piscicola Jurilovca SA, the lake resources suffered a process of degradation. Before 1948 only *the right* to use lake resources was divided while the resource itself remained undivided. After 1990 the four or the five private enterprises parceled also the lake, each having their own interest in exploiting the natural resources of the lake (this is also the reason they do not offer some tourist services although the landscape is wonderful). As McKean (2000: 36-37) pointed out, natural resource systems can be far more productive when left intact than when sliced up.

Conclusions

After the privatization of the fishing enterprise people turned more to the land which became the main way of surviving. There are only two economic niches for the villagers in Jurilovca: poaching and agriculture on small land areas. The first provides a small amount of money and the second provides food. The increasing importance of land led not only to social conflicts for acquiring land but to an overexploitation of the land as well. Traditionally, there was a lack of diversity of agricultural practices, which impeded the sustainable agriculture in the past as well as nowadays. The soil is poor, as well as the economic practices regarding the agriculture, which had always been regarded as a supplementary job. The destruction of the irrigation system in the village after 1989 made the soil quality even worse.

The state itself created conditions for an unsustainable agriculture (through the law 18/1991) and for unsustainable swamp exploitation through the fact they neglected the importance of local management for some resources (such as the lake and its resources). Analyzing the co-operative approach of sustainable agriculture, it has been mentioned that "the fundamental strength of co-operative approaches to resolving natural resources disputes is that they encourage the various stakeholders to identify with a particular place, environment, and resource, and to take responsibility" (OECD 1998: 18).

Instead, the Romanian government encouraged only a small minority to take advantage from the lake resources as well from the agriculture after the cooperative was dismantled in 1991. The few people from the village who succeeded to transform their position into a successful economic one belong to two categories of people: (1.) Those who understood that political power also offers the economic power, and (2.) Those that succeed to surpass the collective local attitude (as the manager of the local agricultural association).

Even if Romania is preparing to become a member of the European Union in January 2007, one can easily note that, at the local level, people and the local authorities are not yet prepared for this step. What I have described in this article demonstrates the difference between the local "discourse" of the integration (i.e. the economic strategies of surviving, the fuzzy status of the property, to quote Verdery, the unsustainable

resource allocation) and the public discourse, which minimizes these discrepancies.

Notes

¹ Generally, the Romanian scholars are trying to analyze the political and especially the economic aspects of the integration from a national perspective (Romania has the lowest standard of living in Europe due to corruption and the inefficient working of the national economy) but they very often ignore the local aspects of economy in a particular community. Foreign scholars, especially the anthropologists paid more attention to the local aspects. Among them Katherine Verdery (1996; 1998; 1999; 2003) and B. von Hirschhausen (1997) explored the agrarian local level practices and relationships in relation to the perception of property rights.

² All the information regarding the history of the Romanian-EU relations as well as the negotiations could be found on the web site of Euroinfo Center (http://www.eic.ro/extinderea_ue_ro.php).

³ *Lipa* means in Russian "linden tree". Their name, as the legends say, comes from the fact that they have been hidden in the 18th century in some linden forests. The migration of this population was occasioned by the religious reforms imposed by Peter the Great. A part of the population that refused to adapt to the religious reforms decided to run away. They had to settle in the neighboring states, including The Ottoman Empire. Thus, the legend continues, they built their houses from linden timber, icons and kitchen objects. Even their shoes were made from linden. This is an explanation for one of the most important resources in the local economy. They are famous wood workers and recognized by the other ethnic groups as the best boats builders. The Lipovan houses differ from the Romanian ones or any ethnic groups' living in Dobrudja by the way they built the roofs which were supported by beautiful carved wooden pillars. The house tympanon was also made of carved wood. I found documents dating back to 1948-1952, which seems to prove that after fishing, the most important trade in the village was carpentry.

⁴ The ethnic structure of this province has been dramatically changed since 1878. Whereas in 1878 the large majority of the population was Turks and Tatars, along with Russian population, Bulgarians etc., in 1913 already 41% of the population was

Romanians. The total population of Russian in 1913 was 22.66% (Manuil_ 1928).

⁵ Actually, this refers only to the males because only the men were allowed to fish and to cut the reed.

⁶ Even today the richness (and thus respectability) is "measured" in boats and fishing tools, not in land or other assets.

⁷ Here is the translation of such statement:
"Hereby I declare, E. I., habitant of Jurilovca village that I have used for 2 years a plot of 0.16 ha which actually belong to the Fishing Enterprise. I can't use anymore this land since it is not my property. Through this declaration I give back this plot to the Local Council of Jurilovca and I sign this declaration" (Declaration No. 33 found in *The Agrarian Books for 1956-1958*).

⁸ This was a quite common system within the Ottoman Empire. The empire was given the religious freedom for all non-Muslim inhabitants in exchange with different services these populations would provide for the empire.

⁹ All interviews have been taped. Thus, the quotations reproduce exactly the words of my informants.

¹⁰ The Lipovans are Christian Orthodox but keeping the old rites. Therefore, they have a strong endogamic behavior. The oldest document proving an inter-ethnic marriage is dated 1956. They call themselves *starovietii* meaning "ancient believer".

¹¹ CAP means *Cooperativa Agricol_de Produc_ie* (Collective Agricultural Farm).

¹² In order to understand better the situation I will tell a story from the village. One day, in a bar, a free fisherman asked me if I wanted to employ him to fish for me. He would use his own fish tools, which are strictly forbidden by the law. He asked me because he thought that if I was from Bucharest I was a sort of investor. "I know other people who can help us too, he said. In few months we will be rich, I know the best places for fishing, they (the authorities) will never catch us". This episode reveals the poverty degree in the village. These men do not know anything else but fishing. Without it they feel lost, with no other chance to survive. I have asked him if he is a part of the reorientation programs which supposedly to help unemployed people to learn a more appealing trade. The fisherman I was talking to never heard of such a program. But even he would, he continued, "he

is a fisherman, nothing less nothing more". The governmental programs which look very nice on paper have no significant results at the countryside.

¹³ During the "dead" periods, when fishing was prohibited men used to leave the village to work the land in other parts of Dobrudja, especially to the "Bulgarians" (which were very good vegetable cultivators).

¹⁴ "Externalities arise when an individual or a firm takes an action but does not bear all the costs (negative externality)" (Kaul, Grunberg and Stern 1999: 5).

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Tables

TABLE 1

The date (census 1992)	Jurilovca	6 Martie	Visina	Total
population	3282	1504	905	5691
households	1069	441	312	1822
arable land				6397
non-arable land				1789

Source: Jurilovca City Hall Archives.

TABLE 2

Years	1912	1930	1956	1977	1992
Jurilovca Population	2633	3611	6066	6620	5691

Source: Jurilovca City Hall Archives.

TABLE 3

Hectares	1918	1949	1999
Less than 5	75%	76.1%	81.6%
5-10	17.07%	17.8%	15.1%
10-20	5.49%	4.89%	3.1%
Over 20	2.54%	1.2%	0.2%

(apud A. Mungiu-Pippidi and G. Althabe 2002)