Chapter 3

The Evolution of Agrarian Structures in Romania: From Socialism to the Beginning of the Free Market Economy

Andrei Jean-Vasile
Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti, Romania

ABSTRACT

The agricultural potential, and especially valuing its main components, represents one of the major challenges for a country with great accent on agriculture in condition of achieving best outcomes with high impact on inland economic developments. The evolution of the agrarian structures in Romania reveals the main economic and political changes of the last fifty years and two administrative regimes. In this context, the main aim of the present chapter is to analyze the evolution of the Romanian agrarian structures and the main changes which took place in the agricultural system, and the structural implication of the transition to the free market economy in the agricultural sector.

INTRODUCTION

Socialist agriculture represents, not only a period of centralized agriculture in Romania, but also a reference period when comes to understand the recent evolution of the inland agriculture in a large context of land consolidation process. Despite of a numerous studies, the problem of organizing agriculture in socialist period still represents a very actual debate subject. It can be mentioned studies as: (Rizov, 2008; Roberts, 1991; Frohberg and Poganietz, 1998; Frohberg and Weingarten, 1999; Sotiropoulos et al. 2003, Stoica, 2013).

The establishment of the socialist agriculture in Romania, until the Revolution of 1989, determined and imposed significant changes to the national agricultural sector, both at the level of agricultural property and the rural space and population. As Grigorescu (1984, p. 27), remarks, thus, “the socialist property of the whole people and cooperative property ownership became fundamental forms of property in agriculture”.

Socialist agriculture was formed by decision of state, governmental power which has assumed the mobilization and organization of the sector and its transformation, without regarding to the secular
tradition of Romanian agriculture. Formal argument used in the promotion of socialist agriculture was that, “from the economic point of view, the need of collectivization was supported by the belief that small property of peasants was in essence unprofitable and could not adapt to the modern economy, being sentenced to disappearance by technological progress” (Grigorescu, 1984; p.26).

The socialist transformation of agriculture began in 1949 and aimed to abolish private ownership of land and means of work and establishment of collective farms, on the premise of an alliance between the working class and poor peasantry. New socialist agriculture forced achieved by bringing together individual agricultural properties and neglecting to abolish the individual ones was constructed and oriented only to have an intensive industrial character.

In the socialist transformation of agriculture and its collectivization, specialized studies such as Dobrincu and Iordachi (2005), identified two main stages of this process. The first stage corresponds to the period 1949-1953 of massive and rapid collectivization of agriculture, the violent abolition of smallholders and the period 1953-1962, when the process was promoted by political considerations, through the total allegiance of political elites in Romania towards the Soviet Union. As shown in previous studies, (Comisia Prezidenţiala pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România, 2006), “although the collectivization of agriculture proved to be a negative factor in the USSR, it was imitated and Eastern European countries after the Second World War. Romania was no exception, the official kicking off of the collectivization was to the Central Committee Plenum of the PMR in 3 to 5 March 1949”, (Comisia Prezidenţiala pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România, 2006, p.127).

Farm developments during 1960-1989 is the concrete result of government agricultural policies of agricultural property aggregation for creating industrial agriculture, and the steps of crossing the grand socialist agriculture that requires large agricultural areas and appropriate technical equipment.

The measures taken by the state to ensure favorable conditions to achieve a centralized socialist agriculture, took into account not only to ensure adequate technical facilities by extending the degree of mechanization of farming and the use chemicalization in agriculture, but also land improvement works, which imposed a considerable financial effort from the state.

Understanding the mechanisms and reasons that led to the creation of this type of agriculture, nonspecific to Romania is difficult to decipher, in the context in which they were tested and then imposed and applied without resulting in Russian agriculture.

During the period 1960-1989, the Romanian agriculture, three major categories of establishments that provided the potential of national agriculture were organized and operated (N.N.Constantinescu, 2000):

- Cooperative agricultural units CAP;
- State agricultural enterprises;
- Stations for agriculture mechanization.

Organization of agriculture and agricultural structures which exploit the agricultural potential were realized through administrative, human and financial effort. Table 1 presents the evolution of the main types of farms existing in Romania during 1960-1989.

Evolution of the number of agricultural units reflects the model of organization required to national agricultural sector by the socialist economy. Centralization of political and administrative power imposed to the national agricultural sector a specific organization, the individual peasant household was replaced by agricultural cooperative unit.
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