PERIPHERAL RURAL AREAS IN SERBIA –
THE RESULT OF UNBALANCED REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT1

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Abstract: The area of the Republic of Serbia shows inequality in using, organizing and area arranging. These effects are result of inadequate legislations or inadequate application of regulations. There is a considerable disproportion in socio-economic and demographic polarization on one side and undeveloped and problematic area on the other. Discord between processes of deagrarization, industrialization and urbanization of society indirectly led to the neglect of Serbian village, which is experiencing structural changes in spiritual, psychological and technological sphere. This paper refers to historical neglect of Serbian village in favor of cities. The consequent of this neglect is traditional classification of village as undeveloped, peripheral area of the country. Serbian village is dealing with numerous problems such as depopulation, fragmentation and extinction of some villages, low socio-economic development, low standard of living, undeveloped infrastructure and superstructure, ignominious looking on a peasant. These processes resulted in spatial-demographic imbalance and social disproportion on the territory of the Republic of Serbia.


Key words: regional development, rural areas, disparities, depopulation
Cuvinte cheie: dezvoltare regional, areale rural, disparități, depopulare

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1. THE PROBLEMS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Territorial organization of Serbia, and closely connected to it the question of regionalization and regional development, are regulated with numerous legal acts and bylaws. Serbia is a model of asymmetric territorial organization, whose structure is made of two autonomous provinces: Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohia, or more precisely, according to the administrative-division: there are 193 municipalities and 29 administrative districts. The Law on Territorial Organization (2007) also includes 23 towns and the city of Belgrade.

The first documents which in certain way treated the problems of the regional development and problematic areas in which negative effects were demonstrated, and we can call them undeveloped, were the Law on Insufficiently Developed Regions of the Republic of Serbia (1995) and the Physical Plan of the Republic of Serbia (1996). After it, when the development problems were more expressed in certain parts of our country as well as the emergency for finding solution for them, the Strategy of the Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia (2007), for the period from 2007-2012 was adopted. Eventually, the Law on Regional Development (2009) and as the most recent document: the draft of the Physical Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period of 2010-2014-2021- (2010) were also adopted.

According to the legal elements, fixed in 1995, 59 undeveloped municipalities were established on the territory of Serbia (37 in Central Serbia, 22 in Kosovo and Metohia), where half of the average income of the Republic of Serbia with extreme decrease of the number of population was used as the limiting value of the degree of the development. However, with this Law the problems of the regional development were not observed as integral elements of total socio-economic development, but partially and in cycles. (Miletić, Todorović, Miljanović, 2009) Still, this law as such, apart from identifying problematic areas, could not give adequate results, but only cleared the way for disintegration of space, to already, in those years seriously economically and demographically endangered, Serbia.

The problems of the regional development and the disparities created by inadequately led politics were more seriously dealt in the Physical Plan of the Republic of Serbia of 1996. This plan supposed certain measures for demetropolization of Belgrade’s agglomeration and for decentralization of the country, but also for the acceptance of the polycentric system of the settlement network as an objective for realization of balanced spatial development and higher degree of the functional integration of space. However, the suggested model and settlement systems as instruments for achieving even demo-economic

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2 The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (The Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia, number 98/06), The Law on Territorial Organization of the Republic of Serbia (The Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia, number 129/07) and the Decree on the Manner of the Business Performances of the Ministries and Special Organizations out of Their Head Offices (The Official Journal number 3/92)
3 The Official Journal of the RS, number 21/07
4 The Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia, number 51 /09
development were not realized due to the fact, as some authors state, it was false and not based on the relevant indicators.6

One of the first documents with the modified approach to the regional problems is certainly the Strategy of the Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period of 2007-2012, which defines the role of the state in eliminating and soothing the problems and weaknesses with which problematic areas are faced. In this strategy the development problems are observed through districts as statistic regions, and new dimensions of the development degree are introduced-the so called index of development risk which at the same time observes economic, demographic, infrastructural, but ecologic and educational dimensions as well. The categories of undeveloped/ endangered municipalities were singled out in this document and these are: 29 municipalities with the status of economically undeveloped, which have faced “economic (without industrial capacities, the collapse of big systems, undeveloped enterprise, slow process of privatization), social and demographic problems” and 8 municipalities which beside the aforementioned structural problems, have been mostly faced with intensive process of demographic discharge7.

The criteria used in singling out these municipalities were numerous. The half of the realized national income of the republic average was used as the base for the economically undeveloped municipalities, and more than 40 % of the decrease of population was used for demographically endangered municipalities or more than 20% if the unemployment rate is more than 60 % of the republic average. The category of undeveloped municipalities singled out with this strategy also included municipalities which gained the status of so called devastated areas8, whose municipality centers used to represent “industrial giants” and carriers of economic development of broader surroundings, but were faced with the series of unsolvable problems of property-legal, technological, personnel-educational and economic nature under the conditions of negative business performances at the end of 20th century and in the transition period at the beginning of 21st century, which caused “the decline” of dominant industry.

Adopting the Law on Regional Development (2009), the first step was made in creating efficient regional organization of the state, which helped establishing regions not as administrative, but as functional territorial entities for the needs of planning and carrying out the politics of regional development, in accordance with newly adopted Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics 9 (NUTS). In this Law, the limiting value of national income, taken for gaining the status of economically undeveloped municipalities, was shifted to 75 % of the republic average, the level which the EU also uses for defining undeveloped areas to which aid is directed. This Law realizes “institutional preconditions for reducing existing regional and inter-regional disproportions and prevents the conditions

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6 Basic remarks of the model of functional-urban areas of the areas given in the PPRS (1996) were made by Tošić D. and Nevenić M. (2007), stating that these instruments were not constituted according to the commuting of workers who are the best indicators of spreading of gravitational influences from some centre and which are in the countries of the EU used as base indicators.
7 This category includes three groups of municipalities: demographically endangered, peripheral regions with the structural and demographic problems and Serbian communities and municipalities of Kosovo and Metohia.
8 Devastated regions were established by the Decree on Categories and Indicators for Establishing the Devastated Regions of the Republic of Serbia (the Official Journal of the RS, number 58/04) and the Decision on Establishing Devastated Regions of the Republic of Serbia (the Official Journal of the RS, number 63/04).
9 The Decree on Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) established criteria according to which grouping per three levels is performed, according to the standards of the European Union.
for creation of new undeveloped areas and further differentiation on developed north and undeveloped south.” (PPRS, 2010).

The last document which contains the directives for establishing even regional development is the draft of new Physical Plan of the Republic of Serbia 2010-2014-2021. The indicators singled out according to the methodology of the Republic Bureau for Development, for measuring the level of the development of municipalities, were used in this document (the Group of authors, 2008). According to them 36 undeveloped local communities were singled out, classified into three categories of the areas with special development problems and they are: undeveloped, devastated areas and Serbian communities in Kosovo and Metohia.

![Fig. 1. The municipalities in Serbia with special development problems](image)

Undeveloped municipalities in Serbia have been characterized for several decades with poor infrastructure and superstructure, as well as poor personnel and economic potential. Their number has been changing in all existing documents. Of all economically undeveloped municipalities, even 26 of them were categorized as such in seventies of the 20th century, whose status has not changed since then (Tošić, Lukić, Ćirković, 2009), and even 94 municipalities were then included into institutional support (the PPRS, 2010) but their number has remained approximately about 30. The period of transition and accumulation of the effects of negative business performances which lasted for several decades, and the conditions of “transition poverty” created new problem areas- devastated areas which encompass 20 industrial towns that in the period of 1990-2008 lost more than 40 % of business income and more than 50 % of employees from the processing industry. Apart from these new forms of undeveloped regions, the so called traditionally undeveloped areas, which for a long series of years have kept their status and remained in the margins of
economical development of our country and on the edge of complete demographic discharge, are the most demographically and economically endangered regions. Traditionally undeveloped regions of Serbia are rural, hilly-mountainous and bordering regions, located in south (municipalities of Jablanica, Pčinj and Toplica districts) and south-western part of Serbia (peripheral, bordering municipalities of Zlatibor and Raška districts).

These mostly mountainous regions are characterized with “natural fragility, relative isolation and inaccessibility, traditional monostructure of economy, long-term and continuing decrease of population, fragmentation of settlements, the occurrence of spontaneously displaced rural settlements, and therefore, with the spatial-demographic imbalance in the settlement network, as well as with poverty, mostly emphasized in rural population” (Miletić, Todorović, Miljanović, 2009) These features today represent their main and apparently unsolvable development problems.

The politics of regional development of Serbia, led for several decades, was based on the support of insufficiently developed regions, through defining short-term support measures, with the absence of integral approach for the regional development, and no coordination between sector and regional politics. All of these contributed to the intensification of the several-year-long expressed regional disproportions,” directing economic and social activities and population to the developed regions and urban agglomerations, which then resulted in population and economic super concentration” (the PPRS, 2010).

2. THE LEVELS OF REGIONAL DISPARITIES

Regional dimension of development has become a subject of scientific interest in Serbia just recently, imposed by problems of inequality in the manner of using, organizing and arranging of area (Derić, Atanacković, 2000). Regional dimension, or structure, is determined by the group of socio-economic processes and their modifications, which are always the consequences of the change of concrete conditions, characteristic and specific for certain area. They are carried out from the aspect of the space-development relation, in terms of territorialization of the regional development, with large problems and conflicts which are hard to solve. (Derić, Perišić, 1995). The activities of these processes and conditions in some space cause certain disparities in the development of regions as territorial formations, expressed in different levels of intensity and polarization character of the space. Hence, large scientific and practical importance is devoted to the regional disparities as special development and spatial problems, considering the fact that they directly or indirectly influence social-economic, spatial-demographic and other space organizations. On the one hand, disproportional, asymmetric regional development is reflected on the social-economic and demographic polarization of significantly smaller space mainly limited to the urban environments, as well as on the relation: north-centre-south of the country. On the other hand, new problem areas appear, receiving from year to

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10 Disproportional development represents, according to the authors Miletić R., Todorović M., and Miljanović D. (2009) “general principle of total development which is in certain phases especially emphasized and manifested in polarization of economic activities and population, where some territorial entities remain on the periphery slightly or insignificantly developed.”
year some new epithets and categories: undeveloped, devastated, peripheral, critic, demographically and economically endangered and similar. Such asymmetry was created by: cause and effect activities of natural, socio-economic, social, demographic, cultural-civilization and political factors” (Miletić, Todorović, Miljanović, 2009).

Disparities in the realized regional development of a country are not only reflected on economic indicators, but on other indicators of work and standard of living (PPRS, 2010), especially in the segment of social and public aspect expressed in the level of poverty, spatial accessibility, social exclusion, accessibility of the institutions of superstructure, demographic characteristics, infrastructure potential, ecological predispositions and similar.

Disparities in regional development are visible on several levels. Generally speaking, regional differences can be ascribed to the relations: north-south, Belgrade agglomeration – the rest of Serbia, city agglomerations with closer surroundings-rural areas or centre-periphery, or as it is emphasized in the draft of the PPRS (2010) disparities are reflected on the relations: (a) economic disproportion between the Danube River-the Sava River agglomerations (Belgrade and Novi Sad) and the rest of region; (b) between developed and undeveloped regions (totally undeveloped southern and south-western region, bordering region, as well as the municipalities and Serbian communities of AP Kosovo and Metohia) and (c) intraregional, demographic-economic differentiations with the trend of fragmentation of settlements in the undeveloped areas. The ranking of districts based on synthesis indicators, according to Miletić R. (2006) speaks in favour of all of the aforementioned, where on the top of the scale is Belgrade and South Banat district, with the highest values of all used indicators and extreme dominance of Belgrade agglomeration, and on the bottom of the scale are districts of southern Serbia (Toplica, Jablanica and Pčinja) which show their underdevelopment and negligible role in agglomeration of population and activities.11

Some authors, like Milinčić (2004) for example, explain disproportional regional development with “push and pull” factors based on certainly parallel processes of industrialization and urbanization, which on the one hand were main carriers of territorial grouping and scattering or as the author states “hyper-trophic agglomeration of economic activities, settlements and population, and on the other hand, they produced settlement-demographic and economic devastation of the area”. In other words, macro and micro-regional polarization was performed towards lowlands and river valleys, where location factors are the most favorable, and micro-regional towards municipality centre and suburban settlements, and partly towards village communities. The roots of regional disproportions lie exactly in these polarization flows and, still in our country not overcome, dichotomy between village and city. Rural, especially hilly-mountainous areas were gradually late for development, which led to economic-demographic disintegration and increase of unvalorized potentials, as well as gradual discharge and complete neglect of traditionally undeveloped regions, or rural environments.

11 The dominance of the city of Belgrade is expressed in the concentration of 21% of population and labour contingent, 40% of highly educated population, 26% of employed and 30% of the income of the whole Republic of Serbia. On the other hand, the most undeveloped districts participate with only 10% of population of the labour contingent, only 6% of highly educated population, only 8% of employed and 7% of the income of the Republic (Miletić R., 2006)
3. RURAL AREAS IN SERBIA

Although Serbia has had long tradition in dealing with the regional questions, the politics related to the rural areas and irregularities of territorial development have not been sufficiently coherent. Bogdanov N. (2007) emphasizes that this dimension is marginalized and observed only as an accompanying part of other politics and development programs, which have always observed village as a problem, never as a resource. Such attitude towards rural region of our country contributed to the marginalization of villages, stagnation and decrease of vitality of rural areas, which have “apparent concentration and spatial expressiveness of numerous problems” (Stamenković S., 1999), such as: strong depopulation lasting for decades and unfavorable mono-functional demographic structure, weakly developed and mainly mono-functional economy and infrastructure and superstructure supply which goes from considerably weaker to unfavorable. But, as the aforementioned author states, the problems are also: the decrease and decline of rural residential fund and the objects of rural economy and the decline of the scope and importance of rural economy. The aforementioned problems are practically “the brake of the development of rural settlements, the cause of stagnation in the development or, in certain situations, the consequence of complete extinction of rural settlements” (Stamenković S., Bačević, 1992). The major obstacles in the development of Serbian village are continuing depopulation, conditioned by strong emigration flows in the past decades, which directly influenced fragmentation, and even gradual disappearance of rural settlements, and on the other hand also, complete neglect of agriculture on the part of the state, diminishing the role of peasants in the society and creating one new derogatory meaning which this notion has today.

About 85% of the territory of the Republic of Serbia is characterized as rural area; according to the OECD classification (population density is lower than 150 inhabitants/km²). There live about 55% of population of Serbia, and the average population density is 63 inhabitants/ha. According to this definition, 130 rural municipalities can be singled out on the territory of Serbia, or 3904 rural settlements (Bogdanov, 2007). If we observe statistic division on the territory of Serbia, without Kosovo and Matthias, 4715 settlements can be singled out, out of which 4527 are rural (The Plan of Strategies for Rural Development, 2009).

It has already been mentioned that lot of rural settlements in Serbia, especially hilly-mountainous and those which are distant from local and regional centers, are mostly disposed to depopulation flows. It caused their demographic discharge and fragmentation of large number of settlements, causing “significant disproportions in the degree of socio-economic underdevelopment and the level of demographic demonstration of settlements in geo-space” (Stamenković, 2004)\textsuperscript{12}. Depopulation is the basic demographic feature of numerous rural settlements in Serbia. Rural areas of Serbia received the characteristics of rural exodus even in the sixties of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, starting from the eastern and south-

\textsuperscript{12} The same author mentions that the change in the number of settlements on the territory of Serbia was caused by several reasons: territorial connection, planned emigrations, administrative connection of independent settlements, singling out of the previous parts of the settlements and gradual demographic extinction. (Stamenković, 2004). Therefore, false picture of the number of settlements is often given and our statistics cannot completely follow this. However, the relevant data are collected directly in the field when the insight into the disappeared settlements can be realized.
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eastern parts towards other parts of country. In the period from 1971-1981, 77, 6% of settlements were seized by depopulation, and in the following census period even 83 % of settlements. (Todorović, 2007). According to the Census of 2002 - 24, 6% of population lived in the so called middle -sized (with 2000-5000 inhabitants) settlements, or 65% of population lived in the settlements in the category between 500 and 5000 inhabitants. However, the biggest problem in the system of the settlement network of Serbia represent small and undersized settlements (less than 500, or 50 inhabitants), which are basic indicators of demographic risk for some parts of our country. In this group of settlements, with less than 500 inhabitants -7, 8% of population lived in 2002. The estimates are that the lowest number of small settlements are located in eastern, south-eastern and southern Serbia ( about 700), which are also characterized as regions with development problems for which is predicted to be on the threshold of complete demographic discharge in the following decade or two. Big problems particularly represent settlements with small number of inhabitants and extremely unfavorable demographic situation. It can be said that these settlements will soon disappear from the map of our country, containing settlements classified with less than 20 inhabitants. According to the data of Stamenković S. (2004) there were even 104 of these settlements in 2002, mainly low and middle mountainous (91) which were faced with constant decrease of population primary caused by emigration of the young, but also by increasing mortality rate in rural settlements. So, they are on the threshold of “withering away” or demographic “extinction”13.

The trend of fragmentation of settlements will certainly continue in the future period. The differences have already been noticed from the last conducted Census of 2002- since when the demographic picture of rural settlements of Serbia has considerably worsened. Milivojević, Milošević and Ćalić (2008), using the field research, identified additional 16 “extinct” villages, without any permanent inhabitants, and 19 more which have less than 10 inhabitants mostly older than the age of 60. The aforementioned authors have singled out three most endangered zones of demographic discharge: 1. along the administrative provincial border of Kosovo and the Central Serbia; 2. the region of the mountain Stara planina and 3. Vlasina and Krajiste (south and south-eastern Serbia). However, with new researches in south-western part of Serbia, one more potential zone of demographically endangered regions was also identified which is of mountainous character as well. All the aforementioned zones represent regions with special development problems, identified in the PPRS (2010), or so called- traditionally undeveloped regions. This tells us about direct condition of late economic development and demographic discharge.

The second mentioned, important problem for the economic development of Serbian village is certainly long-lasting institutional marginalization of agricultural production and parallel process of deagrarization. The process of deagrarization in Serbia has been very
The number of agricultural inhabitants has decreased to 3 million since 1953, and it culminated in the period of 1971-1981 when 1.4 million of population left agriculture in only ten years. Almost two thirds of population was employed in the primary sector of activities in 1981 and in 2002 that number dropped to 38%. Extreme process of deagrarization took place on the territory of south-eastern Serbia, where undeveloped municipalities are located, while in some devastated municipalities the increase of the share of the primary sector due to the decline of the dominant industry was also registered (Tošić, Lukić, Ćirković, 2009). Parallel to the process of abandoning of agriculture - the process of increase of the activity rates of agricultural population of Serbia and modifications in the socio-demographic structures also took place, as well as the process of so called feminization of agriculture which was reflected on the increase of the rate of women activities. One of “the fastest exoduses in economic history” was registered here (Todorović M., 2007), which was especially active in the areas with conditions for the process of intensive industrialization and tertiarization, as well as in the vicinity of traffic corridors. The aforementioned socio-economic and political-social flows in our country brought to the negative connotation and derogatory use of the term - peasant. The following statistic data demonstrate, in interesting way, the current state of Serbian village: every third village in Serbia has less than 200 inhabitants; every fourth village (26,4%) has inhabitants older than the age of 50; even in 191 (4,3%) villages there is no inhabitant younger than the age of 20; 30; in 800 villages of Serbia no baby has been born; in the last twenty years 9 villages have disappeared from the territory of Serbia. (Todorov, 2007). There is also one interesting comparison of the deserted houses and emigrated population from the rural areas on the part of Stevanović D. (2008), who states that according to the Census of 2002 there were 46814 disserted houses in the villages and 144178 objects which were registered as temporary unsettled, which is about 192000 disserted objects. According to the average size of households- 770000 inhabitants were missing in rural areas.

Recent planning practice and institutional framework of Serbia left villages on the margin of the development, without appropriate instruments and support which would enable more dynamic economic and social development, better communal supply and more qualitative environment. Considering their significance for total and proportional territorial development of the country, it is necessary that reconstruction, improvement and organization of rural areas in sustainable and socially rational way become one of the basic strategic priorities of Serbia. (PPRS, 2010).

4. MEASURES AND ACTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS

Therefore, village and peasantry in Serbia, depicted in such way, are overburdened with numerous problems which represent the obstacle for the development of the whole country. Hence, emergent and detailed measures need to be taken in order to remove and

14 Respecting the opinion of numerous scientists on the change of the meaning of the term “peasant” with some other sense which time and socio-political factors impose, as the problem of rural geography as a whole, is clearly studied in the paper of Todorović M (2007). Ruralna geografija i ruralno društvo u prošlosti i budućnosti. The collection of works of the Geographic Institute “Jovan Cvijić” SANU, book 57, page 45-55.
solve these problems, which “demand organized and pragmatic activity in numerous fields of political, social and economic life.” (Stamenković, Martinović, 2004). Reconstruction of rural society accompanied with the return to villages, demands more attractive, richer, versatile village which needs to be approached integrally from the complex rural development standpoint.

Considering this question, Serbia has for a long period lagged behind other countries of the EU and the countries in its close surroundings. Without institutional framework and appropriate strategy which would completely treat the problems of rural areas it was impossible to access certain funds for improvement of rural areas. It was only in the beginning of 2009 that the Ministry of Resources brought the Plan of Strategy for Rural Development for the period of 2009-2013, which has detailed analysis of the current limitations and potentials of Serbian village. According to the model of rural development, some types of rural areas were identified in our country which would, on the basis of local resources and specific problems, in the most favorable way, improve living standard in villages and soothe regional disparities. In this process four basic objectives were established: 1. improvement of the competition of agricultural, forestry and food-processing sectors; 2. protection and improvement of natural environment and making provision for sustainable use of natural resources; 3. preparation and promotion of local initiatives; and 4. improvement of the quality of life and promotion of diversification of activities in rural areas. Therefore, the economic development of villages will be based on the model of multifunctional agriculture and on the introduction of supplementary activities which would be solution for finding employment out of agriculture in rural areas and which would help bringing the process of depopulation to an end. As many authors state, alternatives of employment in agriculture, depending on characteristics of area, can be seen in activities connected to the agricultural production (food-processing industry, collecting forest products and healing herbs, production of healthy food and others), tourism (rural, ecotourism, hunting, fishing), recreation, handicrafts, handwork, trade, culture, other service activities and similar.

S. Agarwal, S. Rahman, A. Errington (2009) state that the key for successful economic transformation of rural areas lies in the accessible economic, human, cultural and environmental resources-capitals, which emphasize its multidimensional nature. It is difficult to measure the conducted performances due to the fact that all of these mentioned determinants differ between and inside rural areas, and they can carry different role in this process. However, the aforementioned authors tried to form the matrix based on three components: productivity, employment rate and the share of labor force observed in relation to the mentioned capitals, and to determine with it the degree of economic transformation of rural areas of England. They emphasize great contribution of this model in relation to the previous ones. However, something similar has not been used in our country.

With the Strategy of Rural Development (2009) four basic types of rural areas were singled out: 1. highly productive agriculture and integrated economy, 2. economy sector typical for smaller urban areas with agriculture in which labour is intensively used, 3. economic branches directed to the use of natural resources, mainly of mountainous regions and 4. big tourist capacities and poor agricultural structure, in which the municipalities from western, southern and south-eastern part of Serbia are classified in the last two categories of rural areas, mainly in the group of municipalities with the development problems.

Van der Ploeg et al (2000) also think that the concrete rural development cannot be realized only through “expropriation of agriculture”, but that it is necessary and the most important element in that conglomerate of rural activities. According to the authors, it is possible to realize its competition due to the fact that: agricultural households have the access to the resources and they possess needed experience for reconfiguration of the old and opening of new activities; that in this sector is possible to develop new practices step by step, which considerably lessens the risk and enables the process of learning through practice; and that agricultural workers have possibilities for founding associations and operationalization of these networks.
The Concept of the Development of Villages and Rural Areas in Serbia (2010) was set in the draft of the Physical Plan of the Republic of Serbia (2010) which is based on: the development of rural areas in accordance with the other strategic documents, respecting regional approach and recognizing structural characteristics of rural areas as the base for planned and programmed activities and concept of the development of functional urban regions. Also, the problem of revitalization of villages and removal of regional disparities have been tried to be solved using two concepts: with the help of the model of polycentric system of the settlement network achieved by appropriate instruments– functional-urban areas, and the second concept, contained in this first one, the so-called concept of micro development nuclei which are of great importance for the development of rural area, or decentralization of the Republic, cities and municipalities.

Ten years long experience shows that transition is a period in which a country must interfere in those segments in which market did not give the expected results. Still, the process of eliminating regional differences is very hard and slow, and demands several-year-long engagement of all levels of government. However, apart from the decentralization and the adequate territorial organization of state on regions, as fields on which all development, institutional, management and financial activities will take place, it is necessary, in solving complex system of problems of undeveloped problematic regions of Serbia, to especially draw attention to detailed solving of the question of Serbian village and elimination of traditionally established dichotomy between village-town and differences conditioned with it.

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18 Revitalization of villages Stamenković S. (1999) defines as “a set of planned out (occasional and continuing) measures, interventions and actions initiated on the different levels –state, regional, subregional and local, directed towards mobilization and rational spatial organization in the function of market oriented use of natural, demographic and material resources of rural settlements and territories which belong to them in administrative and functional way.”

19 Functional region, according to the Physical Plan of the Republic of Serbia (PPRS, 1996) is defined as “territorial grouping of several municipalities which are gravitationally and in the sphere of interest connected to stronger urban centre, or regional centre”. The European Spatial Planning Observational Network (ESPON) in the scope of project 1.1.1. “Potential for polycentric development in Europe” (2004), and in others, gave large contribution for defining and for typology of functional urban regions, establishing criteria which should be used in this procedure. The basic criteria are certainly daily migrations of workers (commuting). In the PPRS from 1996 the territory of Serbia was divided into 34 functional regions, but then this criterion was not used. Therefore, new functional organization of Serbia was made in the draft of the PPRS from 2010, where 32 functional regions were identified for the year 2009.

20 In the PPRS (2010), as the most suitable instrument for implementation of the model of decentralized concentration of micro development nuclei- the settlements with developed public-social infrastructure and activities from the service sector in which industrial sections are located, adapted to the modern technology and ecologic standards and autochthonous raw materials. They stimulate the process of production based on the local resources, opening of new job posts and the appearance of double professions of population. Great contribution to this model was given in the studies of the scientist PhD Dragutin Tošić.
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