



FROM SOCIALIST UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TO CAPITALIST SOCIAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT. POST-COMMUNIST EVOLUTION OF TWO SMALL CITIES: ANINOASA AND BUDEȘTI¹

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Abstract: *In a recent Report of The World Bank (Stănculescu (coord.), 2014), that intends to describe in depth the urban marginalized areas, the small towns are presented as disadvantaged on all the dimensions of social inclusion (synthesized by the authors of the mentioned report in 3 categories: inhabiting, occupation on the formal labour market, human resources). On aggregated level, correlated with the low level of development operated on the three dimensions, the respective towns represent the highest percentage of population living in areas considered marginalized (for 5 towns, all from this category, more than one third of population lives in such marginalized areas). This article is focused on two of these five towns (Aninoasa, Hundoara County and Budești, Călărași County), from the perspective of the relation between economic development and social development.*

Both towns achieved the status of city in the last year of the communist regime, 1989. Aninoasa is one of the mono-industrial towns created in the mining area of Valea Jiului and its post-communism evolution is very affected by this statute. The town faced a socio-economic regress caused by the desindustrialization from the post-communist period that led to its official ruin. It is the first town in Europe in this situation. Even though the entire area was affected by the restructuring of the mining, there are significant differences regarding the development and the percentage of population living in marginalized areas among the towns of Valea Jiului. According to the mentioned above report, this percentage varies between 2,65% in Petrila and 47,16% in

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Aninoasa. Hence, in Aninoasa, almost half of the population lives in areas that are defined now as marginalized. Budești was defined in 1989 as an agro-industrial city and the both dimensions which define this type of economic development have been affected by a major decline in the post-communist period. The analysis of two different types of unsustainable development aims to present a common pattern of social underdevelopment.

Keywords: *deindustrialization, social development, communitarian development social change, underdevelopment*

Introduction

This analysis is made from the perspective of the social development paradigm. The general objective of the project is circumscribed to the accomplishment of a typology of underdevelopment in post-communist Romania. The accomplishment of such a typology comes from the necessity to have an innovating tool of shaping the strategies and the policy of response to the negative impact of social transformations. „The increase of social polarization and local disparities as effects of unindustrialization and return to agriculture, illustrates on one side the development of a certain pattern of the strategies of response to social transformations and on the other side, the low efficiency of the policy of support for the groups affected by the transition” (Preotesi, 2014:579). The analysis of two different types of unsustainable development aims to present a common pattern of social underdevelopment.

Theoretical frame

The two pillars which configured the theoretical frame are the social development theories and the functional classification of the towns.

Social development. Communitarian development

The communitarian development represents a particular case of social development. The communitarian development programs address “the communities with a marginal position within the market economy system” (Zamfir, in Pop (coord.), 2002: 252)

The concern for measuring the communitarian development led to the elaboration of some local indexes of development. The models for measuring the communitarian development, like that suggested by Sandu D. (Sandu, 1999), proposed a multi-dimensional perspective, reflected in synthetic indexes aggregating scores of sets of socio-economic indicators. The mentioned author identifies two types of structural factors of communitarian development: human capital, respectively, infrastructure, on communitarian level. Among the predictors of the level of development of the communes evaluated on these synthetic indexes are: the distance to the nearest town with over 30.000 inhabitants; the percentage of the persons over 60 years; the marginal position within the county: the location near a European road; the historical region. On other side, there are also ambiguous or ambivalent factors, in reference to the social

development: the distance to the nearest town with over 30.000 inhabitants and the percentage of the persons over 60 years have ambivalent characteristics, in reference with the communitarian development.

The data regarding the poverty rate in the communes with the lowest index of development shows that this is not always correlated with the development index. An example in this case is the commune Pietroasa, Timiș county, that has the highest rate of poverty (87%) and a negative moderate index of development (-0,29%), much higher than communes with a poverty rate under 50%. On the rural local administration, the poorest, according to Mihalache, (2013) are in the counties Alba, Caraș-Severin, Ialomița, Olt și Teleorman, with values of 2-3 million lei). The median of the incomes is between 3-4 million (21 counties). On the opposite pole are the developed counties like Ilfov (20 of the 32 communes had in 2010 incomes over 20 million lei). The percentage of their own incomes in the total budgetary incomes exceeds 50% in the developed counties, while in the poor counties does not exceed 1/5 of the total income: in 2010, the highest medium percentages of these were in Ilfov (67%), Timiș (59%), Cluj (53%), Sibiu (51%), Brașov (51%) and Constanța (50%). The minimum values corresponding to the highest levels of dependence to the central budget were in Vaslui (17%), Botoșani (19%), Iași (23%), Olt (23%) and Maramureș (25%) (Mihalache, 2013).

Beside the level of own incomes, an important indicator of social development is the percentage of categories of expenses on local level. According to the quoted author, the main direction of using the money from the local budgets is the expenses for the budgetary employees in communes (this is between 58% in Vaslui and 33% in Constanța, Brașov, Sibiu, Tulcea and Timiș) The expenses for insurance and social assistance (the expenses for the minimum guaranteed income are the most important part) and the contributions for persons with disabilities exceed 125 lei/inhabitant in Mehedinți, Vaslui, Satu Mare, Vrancea and Călărași.

A distribution “in the mirror” is that of expenses for public development services; the percentage of this type of expenses is more important in the developed counties, while in the poor counties “the structure of budgetary incomes does not allow ample investments in projects of infrastructure or in systems of public utilities because the taxes collected by the authorities are very limited and the redistribution of public funds are insufficient for these activities” (Mihalache, 2013:132).

Even if this analysis is referring to the rural communities, and my analysis is referring to an urban space, the mono-industrial area Valea Jiului, the post communist evolution of this zone balances the report among different aspects of the rural and urban. Such an illustrative example regards the local budget of some small towns like Aninoasa, which have under 3 million lei (in 2014, before the redistribution from the central budget) while most of the counties have an average budget of the rural localities of 3-4 million lei (21 counties, according to Mihalache, 2013:135). A resembling pattern is registered also in a large part of small towns, under 10.000 inhabitants. In a recent Report of World Bank (WB, 2014) that intends to describe in depth the marginal urban areas, the small towns are presented as disadvantaged on all three dimensions (inhabiting, occupation on the formal labour market, human capital). At aggregated level, in correlation with the low level of development operated on the respective three

dimensions, the towns under 10.000 inhabitants contain the highest part of the population that lives in areas considered marginal – in 5 towns within this category more than a third of population lives in marginal areas. Among these 5 towns are those two that are the object of this analysis - Budești in Călărași county and Aninoasa in Hunedoara County. Even though both became towns in the last year of the communist regime (1989), these towns are very different as regards their history and their pattern of development, but they are similar as regards the low degree of development at this moment.

The functional classification of the towns

The topic of the social development of the towns is approached in the specialty literature from different perspectives – the economic perspective, the urban sociology perspective, the anthropology perspective or the urban geography perspective.

The functional classification of the towns operates with categories elaborated on basic elements defining their socio-economic profile. The relation between the profile of the labour force and the dominant economic activity was conditioned by the socialist project of fast urbanization combined with the extensive economic development.

During the communist period this process of urbanization evolved in strong connection with the process of industrialization. The active population of the towns was subjected to an urbanization process of industrial type that led to its concentration in the respective industrial branches. According to the percentage of the 3 large sectors of activity (industrial, agrarian and services) we may identify several categories of large towns (Dumitrescu, 2008):

- industrial towns (over 50% of the occupied population is in industry and constructions);
- agrarian towns (over 50% of the occupied population is in agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing);
- services towns (over 50% of the occupied population is in third sector);
- mixed towns (none of the economic sectors has 50% of the occupied population).

Beyond these categories of towns defined from functional perspective there are also combined forms, the so called agro-industrial towns, where the agrarian component is subordinated to the industrial one. Budești, Călărași County, represents such town and is one of the two cases selected to illustrate this analysis. The other town, Aninoasa, is an industrial town, more precisely a mono-industrial town. In Romania, according to quoted authors, the general criterion for a town to be industrial is to have over 50% of occupied population in the second sector.

The mono industrial towns are those where the economy is based mainly on a single industrial branch; the inclusion within this category is based on the so called index of mono-specialization. Mono-industrial towns represent particular cases of industrial towns. The concepts of mono-specialized town and that defining the particular case of “mono-industrial towns” are elaborated from the perspective of functional

classification of the towns, as a tool used for defining the socio-economic profile of a town or a net of towns

The mono industrial towns are those where the economy is based mainly on a single industrial branch, and sometimes only one company; the inclusion within this category is based on the so called index of mono-specialization.

In defining a town or a zone as mono-industrial we have to consider several factors (Dumitrescu, 2008):

- structure of occupied population;
- percentage of the population occupied in only one industrial branch
- percentage of the value of the production and the amount of money in only one industrial branch;
- index of localization and specialization aggregated in the so called index of mono-specialization.

Another functional criterion in defining the mono-industrial character is the existence of an extra-urban function of the respective industry (the goods must respond to an external demand and not exclusively to the internal need of the town). Aninoasa belongs to the category of towns established as mono-industrial in the mining area of Valea Jiului and its post-communist evolution is marked by this statute. Budești was included in the category of the so-called agro-industrial towns. Both towns faced a significant socio-economic regress caused by the de-industrialization from the post-communist period. The impact was much stronger on the mono-industrial mining town, which was higher developed and ended in declared insolvency – the first European town facing this situation. Budești is a so called agro-industrial town. In 1989 when it became town there was a IAS-enterprise specialized in mechanized services for agriculture (AGROMECA) as well as several a mall industrial objectives.

Data Analysis: Budești versus Aninoasa¹

The methodological perspective is mainly qualitative. Hence, beyond the documentary analysis completed with statistical data gathered directly from local authorities, data were collected by semi-structured interviews with the institutional representatives and in-depth interviews with the inhabitants of the 2 towns. The collected data were completed and validated by semi-structured observation made during a field research within the respective 2 projects.

¹ Data to be analyzed in this paper were gathered within 2 projects:

- Case study - Budești, Călărași county, the project Sărăcie și dezvoltare comunitară în ruralul românesc (Starea comunităților ICCV, 2014, coordinator Cătălin Zamfir)
- Case study - Aninoasa, Hunedoara county, the project Deindustrialization and underdevelopment in the Romanian Transition. Individual/Collective Strategies/ Reply Policies. Case study: Valea Jiului, within the project ID- 141086 „Plural- and inter-disciplinarily in doctoral and postdoctoral programs”.

There are few common elements for the 2 towns that will be compared based on the perspective suggested by the theoretical and methodological approach enounced at the beginning of this paper:

- Both towns are old localities, documentary mentioned since the 16 century;
- Both towns became town in the last year of the communist regime, 1989;
- Both towns are small, with less than 10.000 inhabitants.

Even though both cases illustrate the relation enounced in the title of this paper, between the unsustainable communist development and post-communist under-development, the selection of these two towns intends to present differential pathologies of this evolution. The differences refer both to elements defining the unsustainability of the development and the negative socio-economic effects of the particular manner of the communist transition.

First major difference refers to the history and economic tradition of the two localities. Even though they were established in about the same period, Aninoasa developed around the coal mine, Budești is a traditional area of cultivating cereals. The population of the center of Aninoasa, Iscroni area, has a dual tradition – raising animals and mining; the communist project of modernization finds a rural population of farmers and rural artisans in Budești area. Beyond the differences related to the natural opportunities (relief, climate and subsoil) the experience and occupational tradition represented and still represent important elements that influenced on local level the effect of the socialist modernization project and the socio-economic impact of the post-communist transition.

Aninoasa belongs to the category of towns established as mono-industrial in the mining area of Valea Jiului and its post-communist evolution is marked by this statute. Budești was included in the category of the so-called agro-industrial towns. Both towns faced a significant socio-economic regress caused by the de-industrialization from the post-communist period. The impact was much stronger on the mono-industrial mining town, which was higher developed and ended in declared insolvency – the first European town facing this situation.

Budești is a so called agro-industrial town. In 1989 when it became town there was a IAS- enterprise specialized in mechanized services for agriculture (AGROMECA) as well as several industrial objectives, the most important being a mill, a boarded floor factory and a furniture factory. Now the basic economic activities in Budești are the small trade and the furniture production carried out in small family enterprises without any employees, just the person in charge and, sometimes, the family.

The specificity of this town is the high percentage of Roma population – over one third of the population, according to the census in 2011, over half of population according to the local administration representatives. An indicator of the low rate of development of the town is the percentage of social assisted people, over a fifth of the 7000 inhabitants, plus the 2000 inhabitants of the villages Aprozi, Buciumeni, Gruiu. According to the same source, about 90% of the Roma population receives social allowance.

The agrarian dimension of the town is preserved by the included villages Buciumeni, Gruiu and Aprozi and by the agrarian activity continued on a diminished level comparing with the communist period. Most part of the agrarian land owners leased the land to the only large farm of the town (AGROMIXT) that has several tens of workers, all from Buciumeni where the farm is located. For the active part of the population the working places are quasi-inexistent. The closing in 2009 of the knitting factory where worked 90 women of Budești had a negative socio-economic impact that could not be enough compensated in the post-crisis period. Now, the active population in Budești commutes to work in constructions, insecure jobs, occasional and on black. The same happens in rural adjacent localities in Călărași County. The relative high distance (36 km.) to Bucharest implies certain costs that limit the efficiency of this choice. From the interviews made with the institutional actors and the Budești population representatives the work “on black” with all the related vulnerabilities is preferred to a stable and legal contract paid with minimum wage comparing with the higher salary on the black that also ensures the preservation of certain social compensations.

The decline of Aninoasa started at the end of the 90’s when it was initiated the accelerate restructuring of the mining end it grow when the mine Aninoasa was closed in 2006. Aninoasa is the smallest town in Valea Jiului; its population never exceeded 6000 inhabitants and now is under 4500 people. According to one of the interviewed institutional representatives, almost half of the inhabitants are retired while the employees are under 20% of the active population. The large number of retired people does not necessary reflect a deep ageing of the population, but is caused by the special conditions of retiring offered to those restructured in 2006, which could retire before time at 45 and in normal conditions at 50 years. According to the interviewed institutional representatives if in 1997 the employees were restructured regardless the pensioning conditions, in 2006 almost all restructured persons retired directly. In the area there are a factory of metallic confections (ADARCO), a factory of car covers, a factory of electric components (ELECTROUTIL) and a factory producing sofas and a bed and breakfast motel. Together with the 100 miners (the closest mine is at Livezeni) the total amount of employees is under 400. If we compare with 20 years ago when only in Aninoasa worked 8000 people, the decline is obvious. But if we compare the current situation of Aninoasa with the similar localities, the insolvency that was declared in 2013 seems hard to explain. A first explanation, in agreement with the Mayor’s position, is that the failure is mainly on communitarian level, especially on local administration rather than on population’s level. Considering that there are 2000 pensioners and the average pension is a little higher that the national average, the failure of the community seems to be a paradox.

The insolvency may be partial explained by the very important budgetary impact of a un-performing credit contracted by the mayoralty in the year when the mine Aninoasa initiated the closing procedures.

The insolvency as is defined by the Govern Order of Emergency no 46/2013 regarding the financial crisis and insolvency of the administrative territorial units was caused by several factors among whom are mentioned (in H.G no 804/2014 cited in extensor in Preotesi, 2014: 60-61):

- over indebted of the public institution by contracting a credit for investments in 2006 and the lack of necessary resources to cover the rates and the interests unsatisfactory degree of covering the debts from own income;
- low degree of collecting taxes and imposts;
- difficult economic situation on zone level considering that the budgetary incomes diminished considerable because many companies in the area entered in insolvency and the chances to obtain the debts were very low and the percentage of these debts represented 66,95% of the total incomes at 31. 03.2013;
- decrease of the amount receive from the county council budget for balancing the local budget due to difficult economic situation on national level;
- high percentage of expenditure for employees of the total budgetary expenditures caused by the high number of employees comparing with the real need of the administrative territorial unit (which decrease from 126 employees in 2010, to 47 employees in 2015).

Hence, beyond the increased expenditures and the drastic decrease of the local budget incomes, among the mentioned aspects there are some relating to the inefficient functioning of the relation between the local administration and the population. The low degree of voluntary conformation to paying fiscal obligations is one of the indicators and also one the effects of this dysfunctional relation. The discussions with the institutional representatives confirm this situation and the attitude of a part of the population towards the fiscal obligations.

There were registered situations when pensioners with a pension of 2000 lei refuse to pay the loan of 20 lei to the mayoralty's apartments, sometimes for a period of 5-6 years. One of the explanations offered by those interviewed is that they "people were used to have only rights and only one obligation-to provide as much coal as they could". The social importance of coal extraction was highly exaggerated during the socialist economy and perceived by the miners as so and now is a persistent residue in the collective mental.

Authors like Kidekel D.(2010) or Stegar I. (2014) analyse the psychological effects of the dramatic changes in the manner of promoting the social importance of the miners' work and their image as a professional body. Together with the economic arguments like the decreased demand for coal caused by the de-industrialization from the post-communist period and the lack of efficiency of the extractive industry, the "miners' riots" led to a negative image of the miners, mainly of those in Valea Jiului. A complementary explanation is provided by the analysis of the data from the interviewed institutional representatives and also by the WB-MDRAP Report. Disregarding the 3000 pensioners and employees and the minors, we have more than one third of population of active age that are without any occupation. Part of these persons without occupation and income share their parents, spouses or grandparents' pension.

Another part (200 people, mainly Roma according to the data from the local authorities) has social allowance. It should be mentioned that the institutional

representatives appreciate that there are working opportunities in the area and those who do not work choose to do this, is not the lack of jobs.

According to Raluca Popescu (Popescu, 2014), Romania has an interesting pattern compared to the European trend regarding the support for the vulnerable families: “it is clearly oriented on financial aid (financial support especially for poor families, but also for families in general or specific types of families) and at-risk groups – children (in institutions) and women. The majority of European countries have also the objective of financial aid for families, but the second interest is in the reconciliation of work and family life and the provision of services. Hence, if the EU pattern in family policy objectives is less passive, considering the focus on work/life balance and services provision, the Romanian policy is just reactive, focusing on the passive support of money and on the protection of at-risk groups” (Popescu, 2014: 103-104).

On the contrary, in Budești the institutional representatives appreciate that the lack of working opportunities generates a low rate of occupation. Analysing the data from the mentioned Report we notice an obvious contradiction between the data and the perception measured by subjective indicators on the vulnerability of the population related to occupation in the two localities.

Table1. Indicators of marginalisation - Aninoasa versus Budești

Town	Population	% marginal occupation	% marginal Human capital	% residents in marginal areas
Aninoasa	4360	35,28	6,31	47,16
Budești	7725	8.8	52,19	36,47

Sources: Atlas of urban marginalized areas

The analysis of this contradiction reveals important contextual differences that are premises of the explanatory model suggested below. The construction of this explanatory model is based on three data sources with three complementary approaches of the same socio-economic reality: the statistic data, the qualitative data collected in face to face interviews and the direct observation made during the field research. The context will be operated of two dimensions: opportunities and constrains, with important elements of difference between the two localities on each dimension. Among these opportunities are the income sources like the miner’s pension - enough to secure the living for an extended family. Unlike Aninoasa, in Budești the percentage of pensioners is lower and the medium value of the pension (numerous farmer pensions, under the minimum income) is significantly lower. It is true that not all pensioners miners benefit of high pensions, but only those fulfilling the condition of 25 years in mine, but also those who worked on surface in the so called coal preparation plants have pensions more than double than farmers.

The discussions with the institutional representatives showed that for over 80% of the inhabitants in Aninoasa the mining and the activities in the related industries represented the only sources of income considering that only a fifth of the population, the so called “momarlani” had the means and the tradition to be involved in

complementary activities, like raising animals. The working force flexibility is higher in Budești where an important part of the population was involved in agriculture and, collateral, in traditional rudars trades like working the wood of soft essence. Both agriculture and traditional trades were activities low paid and without an important social prestige. Unlike the miners that worked in well-formed teams and depending on each other, sometimes even for their physical integrity, the occupations of those in Budești, which worked in/with the family, represented premises for developing a certain individualism and, on the other side, of an entrepreneur spirit. While in Valea Jiului, in spite of the governs' naïve suppositions, the percentage of those former miners who became entrepreneurs is very low; in Budești is a higher rate of those who opened small business in the post-communist period. On the other side, the territorial mobility of the working force in Budești is much higher than in Aninoasa. Even though Bucharest is 30 km away from Budești and Petroșani only 10 km from Aninoasa, commuting to work is more frequent in Budești.

In Dumitru Sandu's words, Bucharest is a city "radiating development" in a significant higher measure than a town with under 40.000 inhabitants like Petroșani. Beside that there are more available jobs in Bucharest than in Petroșani, the data collected on field shows a lower interest of the unemployed in Aninoasa for territorial mobility. A pole made in 2014 (the results are presented and analysed in Stegar, 2014) at the mines still functioning in Valea Jiului, 3 of those are to be closed starting this year, shows that from the 50% of the miners that intend to search for a job, more than a third would search only in Valea Jiului, while under a third would look anywhere in the country. Among the determinant factors in accepting a job at a high distance from home is the salary, a motivating package is the basic condition in accepting such offer. Considering that the level of average wage in Valea Jiului is even today higher than the national level, it is to be expected that the offered package should be higher to stimulate the mobility in Valea Jiului. In Budești never existed such high standards. This mechanism is presented also in the case of the massive restructuring in 1997 (Stegar, 2000), and is also validated by the data collected on the mentioned field research made this year – for instance, some of the interviewed institutional representatives in Petrila told about many cases of persons without occupation and without any stable income that refused offers in Timisoara paid 2000 lei per month, because they appreciate that this amount does not compensate enough the difficulty of commuting. In synthesis, we may say that on one side the unemployed active persons in Budești are forced in a higher degree to look for a job and more willing to accept low paid offers and to commute. The significant lower educational stock in Budești than in Aninoasa represents another favouring factor in accepting some offers of unqualified works, low paid and without any element of social security. On the other side, the job offer is much higher in Bucharest than in Petroșani. Even though the situation presented briefly above explains somehow the differences regarding the indicators of the marginalization from the perspective of labour market accessibility, looking in depth we may draw some conclusions relevant from the perspective of the pathology of the underdevelopment of these communities.

Conclusions

The first conclusion refers to some common elements that worked as premises of the underdevelopment. Gaining town status in 1989 can be considered a strictly political

decision, in both cases this decision not being correlated with the socio-economical situation of the 2 towns. Besides the fact that the two areas still keep almost exclusively rural areas on their territory, an important part of the Iscroni area, the village of Aprozi in the case of Aninoasa and Buciumeni for Budești, the urban area of the two towns is very poorly developed regarding road infrastructure, inhabitancy, access to public utilities, the sewer system and the natural gas network. It is relevant that in both cases the only paved street was the main road. In 1989 both settlements had a relatively low stable population of under 10.000 and a low educational stock (even if the educational stock was higher in Aninoasa, the percentage of those who did not graduated high-school was over 50%, a similar percentage to the miners in Valea Jiului today (Stegar, 2014:55). The even lower educational stock of Budești can be correlated with the large Roma population, which had a significantly lower educational stock, compared to the majority. (ANR, 2014). The low educational stock works as an important premise of under development, according to the community development model shown in the presentation chapter of the theoretical frame of this analysis. What's more, in the case of Budești, another element which favours underdevelopment (identifiable in the model proposed by Dumitru Sandu) could be the large percent of agricultural workers. The disastrous evolution of the city of Aninoasa can be largely blamed on the context in which the massive restructuring of the Valea Jiului mining industry, the context being configured by a few aggravating elements in the case of this town. Mining towns were small settlements (the smallest in the socialist space (according to World Bank, 2003), lacking not just economical alternatives, but also economic potential (including in regards to consumption).

Aninoasa was the smallest of these mining towns, and had the least alternatives to mining. The workforce, concentrated on mining and overall poorly qualified represented an important negative premise of the socio-economical regress of the small towns of Valea Jiului. In Aninoasa, the percent of workers out of the total number of employees was significantly larger compared to the other towns of Valea Jiului. (Krauss, apud. Stegar 2014).

In Budești, besides the low level of infrastructural investment and human capital, the post-communist transition signaled a rupture of relations between agriculture and industry, as in the case of the mining industry restructuring, without compensating for the negative socio-economic effects by developing viable alternatives. The result of this process of community decline materialized through the transformation of a quarter of the city population in socially assisted citizens and the increase in vulnerability of the workforce in relation to the labour market. The alternatives of occupation are precarious, like commuting to work in constructions, in unsecure jobs, temporary, on "the black". If in Aninoasa bankruptcy is present more on an administrative level rather than among the population, in Budești a quarter of the population can be considered bankrupt through their socially assisted status. With regards to the fact that the main source of income for the people of Aninoasa is represented by the pensions of former miners, a large part of the active population being dependent on this source of income, lacking a development strategy for the area would mean that the disappearance of the 2000 retired miners would generate, in the current situation, the bankruptcy of this town, through the percentage of social aid beneficiaries, which could significantly outnumber the 25% of the population already in this situation in Budești.

From a different perspective, compared to Aninoasa, where the current local administration seems to have a local development plan, in Budești interacting with the representatives of the local authority didn't leave the impression that they have any intention of configuring a local development strategy. A single person from the Mayoralty ("the tax lady") knows what EU financial funds have been (unsuccessfully) accessed. Certain mechanisms of implicating the inhabitants were built, strictly formally, but they aren't functional – the local initiative group only exists on paper -, the consequence being the total failure of the European Council's ROMED-ROMACT projects implemented in Budești. The analysis proposed here shows the impact and function of some underdevelopment mechanisms, whose action could be amplified in the future without a coherent development strategy, which would integrate the community level with the area level and the centrally elaborated policies and programs.

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