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THE RURAL ELITE

PhD THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The main topic of my thesis are the changes in the structure of the rural elite which occurred as a consequence of the longterm social and economic transformations within the rural society in Romania. Thus, traditional elites based on agriculture lost in significance and became just one of the many social groups. At the same, I argue that today's rural elite is the common result of elite reproduction and circulation processes that occurred after 1989.

In order to support my thesis statements, I analyze diachronically, on the one hand, the changes in the stratification of the rural society by completing a macro-level analysis of the present-day situation. On the other hand, by taking the organizational definition of elites as a starting point, I analyze the evolution in time of the main rural institutions. I increase our knowledge about the institutional elites by presenting two case studies and conclude the thesis with a more general case study, in the context of which I apply both an analysis of the social structures and institutions and a technique based on the analysis of community programs.

KEYWORDS

Rural elite, rural society, stratification in rural society, rural institutions, community programs, elite reproduction, elite circulation

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Thesis Summary

Relatively few research has been conducted over the last two decades on elites from rural localities and spaces; however, the importance of such research is increasing due to the problems of both the rural population and the rural areas. The depopulation and impoverishment of certain rural areas and the creation of disadvantaged regions are hard to solve problems for the economically developed societies as well. In western countries rural elites gained importance once the state-funded social services in rural areas (Kovács-Kucerova 2006) increased the need for local actors wanting and being capable of assuming community leading roles. Due to the abovementioned problems, however, rural areas become abandoned especially by the population segment whose members could become the active local actors. Of course, these leading roles need to be assumed also by the rural elites of the post-communist countries whose social importance has increased also because of the growing town-village differences, and also because of the fact that role models are disappearing due to a more homogenous economy and a more limited flux of information. Therefore, no wonder that a lot is expected from the elites of the post-communist countries; some authors even consider them being the driving forces of innovation and social renewal (Zulean 1996).

In my thesis, I have carried out a sociological analysis on the rural elite from Romania by focusing on two main issues: the structure of the rural elite (i.e. the social groups that form the present elite of the villages from Romania) and the recruiting basis of the rural elite (i.e. the groups from which members of the rural elite originate). The second includes also the perhaps most frequent aspect of research on post-communist elites, and namely the reproduction and circulation of elites in the social transformations after 1989. With regard to the structure of the rural elite, I hypothesize that the rural elites from Romania have become a heterogenous group where agriculture is no longer the dominant aspect; I set this argument against a widespread belief in Romanian rural sociology, according to which agriculture is decisive to the rural society in the sense that it enables the renewal of the rural and remains the key solution for the fundamental problems of rural areas (Kiss 2004C).

And, in what concerns the continuity of the rural elite, I argue that the present-day elite has been formed as a result of both reproduction and circulation processes; in other words, today's rural elite is comprising fractions from both the socialist rural elite and from the lower social strata.

I carry out a diachronic analysis by starting from the insight that the structure and formation of the present rural elite can be understood only if we are familiar with the social conditions of elite groups from the past. Therefore, at several points of the analysis, I focus on the transformation in time of the rural elite by pointing out the characteristics of elite groups and the relations between them in each of the referred historical periods.

The first chapter consists of a review of the sociological literature on elites. I treat macrosocial level theories and analyses only summarily but concentrate instead on reviewing the main theories and research carried out over the last two decades on elites from post-communist countries. I systematize classic theories primarily on the basis of a study by Takács (1998); then, I tackle the works of Iván Szelényi and his collaborators on Eastern-Europe (Szelényi 1996, 1998, Eyal et al. 2001), respectively I refer to Brucan (1996) and Paști (1997) from the Romanian specialized literature.

I analyze extensively the research on local elites by laying a special emphasis on certain methodological aspects, i.e. on the reputational method and on the analysis of decision-making processes (Bell-Newby 1971). In the last part of the chapter I treat at even greater length the rural sociological approaches on elites: I conclude the chapter by arguing that rural elites are usually identified in the relations between the local community and the larger social environment; to put it differently, members of the elite identify themselves through intermediary positions between these two.

Accordingly, I have grouped theories on rural elites into three categories: the first includes approaches that emphasize intra-community relations, the second is stressing the extra-community relations of elite groups, while the third encompasses both types of relations. The main conclusion of the subchapter is that, in late modern societies, the place of the elites based on relations within the local community (called also elites with 'power over') is increasingly being taken over by elites with 'power to', i.e.

those who rely on relations outside the community and so they are more capable of attracting external resources (Curtin-Varley 2002).

I have identified three types of conceptual approach which are adequate for studying rural elites as well: the first is the stratificational perspective, according to which the groups at the top of the local community's social structure are the elites. Thus, by reviewing analyses conducted on rural social structures over the last two centuries and by following the stratification criteria of the abovementioned timeperiod, I identify the stratification structure and the main economic and social processes influencing the formation of elites. In the last part of the chapter I analyze the stratification of the rural population in Romania on the basis of the national census.

Another frequently used approach which can be applied for rural elites as well considers that local elite's members hold institutional positions. Dedicating a chapter to deal with this approach I follow the evolution of the main rural institutions, with a special regard to the leadership positions and their power aspects. In the context of two case studies I analyze in detail the relationship of the rural elite with both the local public administration and the rural educational institutions. Throughout these case studies I gave special attention to changes in terms of both the structure and the leadership positions of the analyzed institutions within the transition period; however, I have focused mainly on the post-socialist period.

The third approach (which I call the 'leadership perspective') considers the elite as a group of persons who invent and carry out community programs; the term 'community programs', according to Wilkinson (1984), refers to actions of the local community members where both the participants and the target population are the members of the community, while the circle of beneficiaries expands beyond the participants. In the last thesis chapter I analyze the above-mentioned three approaches in the context of a case study on the elite group of a Transylvanian village.

I start the second chapter with a short synthesis of theoretical problems related to the stratification of the rural society and I give an overview of the analyses on the stratification of rural communities from

Romania: first, I briefly sketch the rural stratification over the last two centuries (in the estate society, the bourgeoisie society, the socialist and the post-socialist periods), where I lay the emphasis on the transitions between the various periods.

I argue that throughout time, changes in rural stratification (and consequently in the structure of rural elites as well) have been caused by several historical transformation processes; from these, the most important have been the following: the transformation of agriculture once the industrialization began; the creation of the non-agricultural economic sector in rural areas; the increasing integration of the rural economy into the formal economy, and the wider development of state institutions and services in rural areas.

As we have seen, agricultural, industrial activities and services have different effects on the organization of the social: agricultural activities result in a peasant organization (defined by the type of agricultural activity pursued and by the characteristics of the households; to put it differently, by the position in the division of labor and by the ownership of the cultivated land), while industrial activities and services result in a modern, bourgeois-type organization. Before the modernization processes, rural elites were constituted by two groups, namely by the landowners and by a peasant elite. The large distance between these two groups existed until economic changes occurred and caused a doubling of the social structure by setting up a new stratification based on the relationships of capitalist production. As a result, new social groups were created, including a few elite groups as well, i.e. the petit bourgeois groups consisting of small industrialists and merchants. The development of state institutions was the third defining process of rural stratification; at first, the result was the formation of a small elite group of office clerks and teachers; in time, however, this group grew in numbers.

Had the capitalist transformation processes continued, the petit bourgeois groups would have outnumbered the traditional, agriculture-based groups, just like they did in the western countries. However, the socialist reorganization of Romania set a new direction for the transformation of the rural society by affecting the most the landowners and the petit bourgeois, who practically disappeared from the social scene. Their place was taken by

the new group of the formal elite consisting of the regime cadres, who often were originated from lower social strata; we may conclude that this has been probably the most radical elite change that occurred within the rural society.

The intensive development of state institutional system determined the evolution of this group of apparatchik, which comprised and entered practically all domains of social life. Besides economic and political institutions – the most important pillars of political power – other state institutions, mainly social service institutions related to education and health, developed in the same period. They required an educated staff, a process that created an increasing group of rural intellectuals. Because of this growth, the group of elite became stratified: there was a group of formal leaders and the group of intellectuals holding university degrees, but no political position (the primary and secondary elite). And besides these two groups of elite and there were the traditional peasant elite, although in this period they were connected to collectivized agriculture (Sampson 1984).

While the new political order reorganized the elite in the manner presented above, the remaining structure of rural society was determined by continued modernization, within the planned economy for this time. Modernization decreased the importance of agriculture on behalf of non-agricultural economic spheres (Aluaş 2004). The number of people commuting to nearby cities and of local craftsmen varies according to the distance between rural communities and the town. However, their relative weight is growing continuously, which leads to restructuring of the traditional elite: craftsmen and skilled workers being majority compared to peasant elite.

The fall of the socialist system, breakdown of production cooperatives and privatization of the economy led again to radical restructuring of rural elites. Changes in agriculture have redefined the relationship between peasant and elite in agriculture. The peasant elite reborn or is consolidated. However, part of managers in former socialist agricultural units has become agrarian entrepreneur, fact that leads to tension between the two groups (Borsos-György 1998). In some cases descendants of former landowners reappear. There are no analysis about them and the current work remain indebted too in this sense. The objective situation of the secondary (or intellectual) elite, composed largely of teachers has not changed significantly.

In contrast, their relative position in local social structure has declined significantly. Under market economy, teachers lag behind entrepreneurs regarding financial power and status, in agriculture and non-agricultural domains as well (the relative loss of position is less true of other groups that comprise individuals with higher education).

Thus, in the last part of this chapter we analyze using census data this changed structure engendered by the transformations of the post-communist period. In the analysis I have differentiated between different elite groups based on categories such as occupation, employment status (employee / independent / employer) and employment sector (public or private), and then have looked at their material and cultural capital, based on an index of their material condition constructed from home equipment and level of education. Thus we distinguished five categories of rural elite. The category “*top elite*” consists of people that have exceptionally high amounts of both material and cultural capital. Members of “*economic elite with high level of education*” (a category made up of two types of managers) have as much economic capital as the top elite, but they possess to an average cultural capital, the “*cultural elite*” has more cultural capital than material capital. “*Middle elite*” has average material and cultural capital while the group of “*economic elite with no education*” consists of individuals placed in the middle strata of the rural population as their material capital is concerned (and this type of capital remains far behind the economic elite with high education level, their material condition is similar to that of middle elite, but possess less cultural capital).

An unexpected finding of this analysis was that although the state sector has decreased drastically, two areas of this sector – health and the remaining state agriculture – continue to provide the most prominent positions. The top of rural society is formed by people with high levels of both material and cultural capital; they are physicians, health system leaders and intellectuals in the state-owned agricultural sector.

The second conclusion is that after 12 years following the transformation of communist political system, cultural capital still has an important role in rural elite membership. Elite faction called “the economic elite with high level of education,” composed of managers in state sector agriculture and managers in the non-agricultural private sector, in addition to

material capital distinguishes itself because of their cultural capital and in general (on average) cultural elite is not lagging behind others in terms of material capital. True, in the latter group there are great differences, teachers' position is weaker than the other groups in this category (the private sphere of agrarian intellectuals, intellectuals in non-agricultural economic sphere, leaders in education and intellectuals in public administration). The fact that economic managers and technocrats are better placed than entrepreneurs are confirms Szelényi's thesis of managerial capitalism in Romanian rural society (Szelényi 1998). The prominent status of managers, technocrats is particularly spectacular in agriculture. However, there is one notable exception in the non-agricultural sector, this is the case of state sector managers. The situation of this group draws our attention to another component of processes leading to stratification, namely that state has preserved its dominant role in stratifying processes nowhere else but in agriculture, and there for a very small group. In non-agricultural economic sectors the state is not able to provide higher statuses than the ones in the private sphere.

And finally, the last conclusion of the analysis based on census data: the ability of agricultural and non-agricultural spheres to push individuals in the group of rural elite is very different, non-agricultural sphere is a more effective mobility channel. In particular the small number of agricultural entrepreneurs indicates weakness in this sector. I interpret these results as a macro level confirmation of our hypothesis on the structure of the rural elite.

In chapter three I treat the history of rural institutions, following time spans used in previous chapters, and I reserve separate parts for public administration and education, religious institutions, civil organizations and economic institutions. In each case the focus is on leadership in institutions, and the changes that occur in institutions over time. Of long-term changes I highlight bureaucratization. I interpret as trends of bureaucratization the Fordist organization of the economy and the centralizing tendencies of state institutions. I also show that the vertical relationships of these institutions have strengthened in the process of bureaucratization, due to weakening of horizontal relations between different institutions within the same locality.

Thus, bureaucratization in rural institutions has led to changing network of relationships between groups in rural society (of course, primarily among the leaders of these institutions).

In the case of economic institutions production units have reached maximum size in the socialist period, a phenomenon that influences village life by reorganizing agriculture in a Fordist-Taylorist manner. In state institution centralization and uniformity are means of enlightened state, by which justice can be distributed uniformly and the state can guarantee the uniformity of state services provided to citizens. After the crisis of the oversized centralized state (and depending on the aspirations and constraints of European integration) decentralization and privatization of institutions became dominant and privatization has led to decentralization from an organizational perspective.

If different rural institutions I consider the relations articulated within the community, external relations, and the changes of these types of relationships in the process of institutional changes mentioned above.

Non-economic institutions that integrate the entire local population of the local, or at least a substantial part of it, usually have a hierarchical structure, thus they carry important positions. However, local institutions as part of broader system of institutions and their leaders act as connection between the local institutional units and the next level of these institutions, and they can constitute extra-local horizontal relations among leaders of similar institutions elsewhere.

Administrative functions of the elected mayor and deputy mayor, i.e. the executive power, is vested with greatest positions of power within the local community. The source of this power lies precisely in the role as a connection between local city and county / national level administration units, a role played by the leader of the institution. These relations constitute an external source of power for the community (the mayor is the only one empowered to use legitimate coercion), but they are also means to accessing resources for community.

Those who occupy these core positions have the possibility to form horizontal relations. However, strengthening relations between rural mayors is not the explicit aim of public administration institutional structure, and many

factors prevent the formation and maintenance of these relationships. Opportunities to make new contacts provided by county meetings, are too broad, involve too many leaders, mayors, deputy mayors are there for a relatively short period (an election cycle or two), their socio-cultural background and educational level are different mayors, etc.. On the other hand these types of relationships gain popularity among formal and informal frames of micro-regional collaboration (inter-associations, applications and joint projects, etc.).

The position of local councilors, unlike that of mayor and deputy mayor, is not a position of power, despite the fact that the final decision-making power is in principle in the hands of councilors. Lack of real decision-making power – as the case study on the functioning of the Village Hall in Sălciud shows – is primarily a consequence of the low level of education of councilors. They can not participate in the preparation of decisions, and thus decisions are taken without necessary information. The same conclusion appears in the case study presented in chapter five, but here beside the above mentioned cause, another cause is that they hardly can form coalitions to make decisions favored by counselors. Making coalitions is a difficult enterprise because of the divergent interests of villages in a commune, and ethnic divisions in some of the cases.

The school, like the mayors office, is part of a larger institutional setting. The school principal has the strongest position, because he has two types of relationships. On the one hand, the principal connects local school to the next level institutions. Because of this, the principal's position is associated with an asymmetric network of relationships through which they exert external power to members of local unit. To a lesser extent, the power relationship exists in his relations with pupils' parents, meaning that the principal has the power constrain on parents, if they do not want to send their children to school. The principal creates and maintains extra-local relations during regular county consultations and meetings, where they can make informal relations too.

Usually, the principal has a network of horizontal relations besides the network of asymmetric relationships stemming from the position occupied in the institutional structure. This stems from their relation with professional peers. This network is the result of joint professional activities of teachers in

the same county, of training courses, some mandatory, but is significantly strengthened by the fact that these relations are also relations of friendships made during college years. Belonging to a network of horizontal relationships is therefore not only a feature of the principal, but of every teacher with university education. Principals stand out from the rest of the teachers because of the network of asymmetric relations, and the power derived from it.

In the second case study in this chapter we analyze the organizational changes in rural schools, its relations with higher levels of education system, the relationship between school and other rural institutions, and the relation between teachers (as an elite group of village school) and other members of the local community. Regarding school personnel I have found that after reducing staff following the elimination of classes 9-10, staff has not decreased. Depending on the number of children the number of educators and teachers has changed through the period, but this change proved to fluctuate rather than following a downward trend.

I tried to capture the trend of decentralization, the general features of state institutions in post-socialist, the relationship between local schools and the Inspectorate, and the relationship between school and local community. Regarding the change of school autonomy in the education system I note conflicting results: autonomy has not increased regarding the possibility of making their own personnel policy. Opportunities to support education in mother tongue have increased. (The case study was conducted in a village populated mainly by Hungarians.)

The relationship between school and local community has several dimensions. Within the institutional relations, the relationship between school and local government became necessary, but its strength is different for the commune and for the rest of the villages at the expense of the latter. The church can also be a bridge between local community and school. The analysis shows that due to the introduction of religion classes in school curriculum, rural schools developed contacts with local churches, because at the beginning first only the priests have been entitled to organize such classes. With the training of teachers of religion priests were gradually

pushed aside and this initial relationship between school and church has disappeared. In the case study, however, an economic relationship has been put in its place; the church became the owner of the school building and lent it to the school. The church gained financial support for renovation, maintenance, and development, etc..

Another possible link between school and local community can be set through cultural associations. This represents however a step back from the situation of the 80s, especially in villages that had no tradition of such activities, and where teachers are not from the local community. Where they have such conditions, teachers can develop close connection between school and local community through the organization of dance groups, choirs, theater for amateurs, etc..

Because bureaucratization of institutions means greater importance of professional knowledge in filling positions, I analyze the personnel's professional competence. Looking at the role of competence in entering the system (i.e. the employment of teachers) proves that this role has increased in recent decades, in areas within commuting distance there is no substitute teacher without adequate qualifications (at least in the villages included in the analysis). Instead we observe a decrease in emphasis on professional activities outside school, pedagogical associations and training courses.

At the end of the case study we treat changes in the position of teachers in the local community. We show that the number of local teachers decreased significantly in the period, the group of local educators became smaller and the average level of education decreased too. These changes result in lower prestige for the group.

In religious institutions usually there is only one elite position, the priest's, and even this is missing in neo-protestant communities. Priest's network resembles in many respects the ones already presented. This position links local religious community to church hierarchy. The church exercises power on local community through the priest. Through this link formal priest may receive external help in the exercise of their own power, and can defend local community.

As in the cases already presented, the position of the priest may have a network of horizontal relations that link priests of smaller regions. We

analyze this network for the reformed priest, where the network was strengthened by the fact that local religious communities formed an administrative unit within the church. The priests met monthly because meetings were included in job description. With these meetings priests get better knowledge of each others work, the network has produced a flow of information between network members, thereby helping priests in their strictly professional work. In addition, this network has contributed to strengthening the identity of the elite, by that it functions as a plausibility structure, within which members work always receive understanding and support.

Economic organizations are hierarchical structures of formal relations, which depending on their size integrate parts of the villages' population. Thus rural economic organizations may have different important power positions. The employer has a determining role in the everyday life of employees (and indirectly on their families), thus they might exercise on them an economic power, which increases as the number of employees increases. Usually, however, rural firms are small, employing only a small part of the local population and thus rural companies have relatively little power.

In addition to relations due to the internal structure of work organizations, economic institutions can have external relations of various extensions (micro-regional, regional, national), stemming from market relations. Building and maintaining these relationships is the task of company manager in small economic units. Thus an important feature of rural entrepreneurs is that they have external economic relations. In this respect, local entrepreneurs create bridges between local economy and its broader economic environment. However, the perception of local community is that the power of economic organizations is given primarily by the number of local employees.

The fourth chapter develops a third perspective, especially by presenting the conceptual framework in the study of community development (Wilkinson 1969, 1970, 1972, 1984). I have not found analyses that take this approach for Romania.

In the last chapter we analyze the transformation of rural elite in post-communism in a case study in a village in Transylvania. Research based on qualitative methods has made possible a deeper knowledge of elite transformation and the factors that caused this process, to include the analysis of a large number of features of the elite, and thus develop more detailed structure of the local elite than in statistics analysis. On the other hand we must consider the limits of qualitative methods, meaning the limits of the particular put on the generalization of results. In this regard we can not overlook that due to geographical location (proximity to the mountainous area) and agricultural conditions in Transylvania (highly fragmented agricultural land), agriculture plays a much more reduced role than in the general stratification of the local community in the country's rural area. Another exceptional feature of the village is the very rich and intensive cultural and community life. Because of these features, case study results are valid in particular villages which are at medium distance to towns, where agriculture plays is not that important and whose population is advanced in the process of modernization. Other limit to generalization comes from the fact that the village is inhabited mostly by ethnic Hungarians, and hence a special relationship between the local community and the surrounding institutional environment. Because of this ethnic political behavior of some factions of the elite community and local authorities are different from those common in Romanian villages in general.

In the analysis we used a technique based on objective indicators instead of subjective judgments based on reputational method, the most commonly used in community studies. I applied the technique in three different ways, according to the approaches already presented above. Through the stratification approach we classified community members starting from their material and cultural capital, distinguishing several factions of the economic and cultural elites. By institutional approach we analyzed the power residing in different positions, thus distinguishing several groups of elite institutions. In the analysis of community programs we defined groups of elite based on importance and frequency of participation in these programs. In describing the structure of local elite all three approaches were considered. We included all elite groups defined by the three approaches, so the elite

group thus described is probably more inclusive than would have been using the reputational method.

I have not elaborated a certain hierarchy of all elite groups, have not produced distinguished, but I distinguished three levels of hierarchy. Higher level *group* is made up of *entrepreneurs* and a fraction of the cultural elite, the one called “*vocational cultural elite.*” Entrepreneurs are positioned on top of local structure because of their wealth. They accumulated wealth over the past two decades, but being an employer and having economic power gives make them important. Their educational level is average and they do not participate on public events. Vocational cultural elite is distinguished from the rest of the elite because of university degrees obtained during socialism, by occupying the most important local institutional positions, by intensive participation in public life, and by their ideology of vocation to community problems.

Middle level elite group contains an economic and a cultural group. This part of the economic elite is composed of the most successful *small craftsmen* (primarily carpenters) and the most successful local *entrepreneurs in rural tourism*. Small craftsmen differ from entrepreneurs in less wealth and lack of company, in addition those in rural tourism make the only economic elite group composed of women. And this group is characterized by average level of education. The faction located at the cultural elite of the elite middle level is composed of highly educated persons in technical domains. They do not have a vocation to the community and have secondary roles in public life trying to work in the background. However, due to their technical knowledge, often find themselves in key roles in community programs. Their prestige is partly due to their important positions as engineers in socialism. They were important persons in factories in the nearby town, thus they belonged to apparatchik elite.

The lower level of the elite, called sub-elite (the name suggests that the inclusion of this segment of local elite is questionable) is composed of *clerks* of local government and the group of “*young leaders*” distinguished by the assumed roles in community life. The group consists of middle aged women and is characterized by university degrees obtained after 1989. Another specific feature of the group is the possession of a specific type of civil

servant power as defined in the analysis as characteristic of those people who are exclusive distributors of resources required of the community (social benefits, permits, certificates, etc.), they can also refuse this service, depending on personal interests. They get university diplomas to advance in office, thus graduation does not changed their occupation, lifestyle and identity. And finally, young leaders are people who distinguish themselves by taking leading roles in community programs, primarily through the leadership of permanent cultural groups. Group members often have higher education or are students.

Apart from these groups few people have been part of the elite, who – based on personal characteristics – could not be unequivocally included in any of the elite groups. We considered their cases of particular importance, because the situation is particular to some of them because of current social changes in community and elite. We believe that by analyzing their situation we can form an idea about how current social processes emerge in local communities. One such case is an entrepreneur, who is different from the group of entrepreneurs because he actively participates in community programs, and gained the recognition of cultural elite. Meanwhile he makes use of this recognition in his economic activity. His case shows that, assuming roles on behalf of the community, which is an innovation, can be reconciled with economic elite status. Moreover, it may be seized. Another exceptional case is the community facilitator, often called community developer, an employee of the municipality. He has taken this position recently, because of increased opportunities to obtain resources from the European Union. His goals are very similar to that of vocational cultural elite, i.e. the development of community programs. But against those elite, performs community programs as secondary activity, in principle without material gain. Community developer makes a living of designing and implementing these projects. He collects dislike from the cultural elite with the highest prestige. On the other City Hall leaders are not satisfied with the projects they won. They think the projects do not increase the political capital of the City Hall. The situation of the community facilitator signals conflicts surrounding the emergence of a type cultural elite, which elsewhere in EU appeared earlier (Kovach-Kucerova 2004) but is new here.

Comparing the structure of rural elite obtained from case studies to the results of statistical analysis the first visible difference is that the local structure lacks the top elite groups on macro level. The difference appears primarily because of the characteristics of village, here we do not find groups from agriculture that exist on macrostructure. Non-agricultural managers of private sector and state are also not present locally. This difference might be caused by the way we defined local community, excluding migrants that have settled in the village over the past two decades. Another difference between the two structures is that the kinds of elites who are in a village in limited number, such as doctor or mayor, in the case study are part of elite groups, but not form separate groups.

The cultural elite of the macro-structure is present in the local structure, but with the case study we obtained an image on the internal heterogeneity of this group. Midlevel elite of the macrostructure does not appear in local structure as a separate group; the few people who would comply with this were included in local economic elite, which in turn corresponds to the economic elite with low educational level of the macrostructure. It should be stressed that in this case study group consists primarily of non-agricultural entrepreneurs, and the group proved to be more important than macro-statistical analysis shows.

Case study made possible the analysis of the social background of elite. Thus we can answer whether the transformation of political system in 1989 reproduced or changed the rural elite. In the study the formation of the new elite was determined by the presence of a small number of apparatchik in the village in the last decades of socialism. This kind of elite belonged to commune. Therefore the new elite of the village comprise only few people who have had important functions in socialism, but these few have kept their leading position, and are still in the top of the local elite.

I found a more visible continuity between socialist and post socialist cultural elites respectively between informal elites, formed primarily by small craftsmen and economic elite. Differentiation of the latter in entrepreneurs, small craftsmen and entrepreneurs in rural tourism is the result of the last two decades. We interpret these results on the continuity / discontinuity rural elite as confirming the hypothesis on reproduction / circulation of elites. If we

define socialist elite as comprising primary , secondary and informal elite suggested by Sampson (1984), the new elite is the result of certain parts of the socialist elite and the mobility of fragments of socialist sub-elite.