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1. Introduction

The streams of refugees report about deserted cities and territories, uncultivated acres and pastureland, about failed states, war and terrorism and a huge amount of wasted capital. Today, the **under-used areas or even abandoned fallow land are the outward sign for rural depopulation as a global phenomenon.**

The rural depopulation often is anticipating the streams of refugees, triggered by the hope for a better life in town. It is taking place even in developed countries. This worldwide trend is leaving behind dead capital of real estates.

Even in the highly developed countries, the public institutions are with extreme care rarely in a position to hold the people in the country side. The problems are just existential as then in the Roman times. In addition, today, the industrially structured agricultural economy gives no space for existence to the traditional way of farming. The consequences of such a development are severe. Poverty and overpopulation in the cities, lack of progress and freedom of movement on the country side. The reasons for that often lie in a retardation of the real and legal infrastructure and nonfunctioning markets of the agricultural products.

How is it possible to master this negative trend? How can we bring up jobs and reduce poverty?

2. An age-old phenomenon

Not only in the times of slash-and-burn farming the population left behind burnt out and devastated places. They came back, when the nature had recovered.

No, even in a highly developed state like the Roman empire, where the people enjoyed central heating, warm bathes and even service people like image consultants the agriculture was highly developed. The farmers knew sophisticated technologies of cultivation; the property of the Roman citizen never was as secure as before or after. But they knew the phenomenon of “**agri deserti**”, triggered by the involvement in hostilities or by economic change, when the local agriculture was no more profitable because of new street building and cheaper fruits from other regions. The population in the cities had to be nourished and entertained – that is well known. But the necessary food products had to be carried from far places like Karthago. The fields in the neighborhood of such cities became waste grounds. The imperial administration tried to resist that development by the settling of veterans and used their ability to coerce the *coloni* to stay where they were, to preserve this tax source.

When the west – Roman empire was nearing its decline in 376 nChr., some reports say, that there were 200.000 gothic arrivals waiting at the opposite shore of the river Donau. They were seeking asylum to reach safety from the Hun's violence. Whilst the emperor Valens welcomed the refugees hoping for cheap soldiers and for gaining a lot of gold with them – the history took a different course. If it was the lack of fortune in the hostilities or if the big shortcoming of the Roman society came into effect, that only a small group of Roman citizen lead a life worth living and that the major part of the population was active in the insurgency or at least were not defending energetically their Roman system, that is not easy to decide today. It is a fact at the end, that the Roman way of life and culture started to decay.

The phenomenon of “agri deserti” is not a phenomenon of the agriculture only, it takes place in the whole economy from day to day in width and depth. The socialism had no means against it and declined. In the market economy it is accepted as necessary form of living and dying. Market economy produces surpluses by its nature. Where people earn money, other people approach, produce surpluses and the prices inevitably decline. Even more it happens in the globalization; the economy cannot exist with the low prices and has to give up.

When we built in my firm 1998 our first GPS device we did not know, that in a time span of 4 years we were no more able to produce it in Europe; the production went to China. It was the same process as in the textile or photo-industry – all ingenuity did not help to stem against this trend.

3. What can we do?

To stop such detrimental processes the **interaction between most different counter measures is necessary**: Establishment of basic state structures such as property and mortgaging evidence, principled and thorough daily work, so that even small credits can be executed cost-effectively. Social housing in the local scale and the use of re-

renewable energy are important factors for the development of the future economy. The unimpeded use of media as well in the country side, transparent methodology for the evaluation of local real estates and the securing of their application by education and – very modern – application of App's are necessarily confluent methods.

All organizational provisions do not change anything as long as value added chains do not exist in the different layers of the economy.

For that it is not enough to establish a law for the country's culture and economy instead it is necessary to strengthen the brisk communal life and **reinforce the self-esteem of the population.**

It is necessary to support the professional structures in their abilities to control their professions and stem against the tide of corruption. If this happens, the game can be won.

Entrepreneurial people stem against such negative trends. Diligence combined with physical and mental effort enable increase in capacity and production. A wheat corn today produces 48 wheat corns in one growing season; the cows became real production machines, bringing six to eight times more milk than a normal cow. The biggest chance for the improvement of the situation lies in **the internet.** It **makes services possible, which are far from the target persons.**

When I became Public Appointed Surveyor in 1973, we measured and adjusted some 20 or 30 coordinates a day; today, we harvest with one turn of the laser scanner 5 Million coordinates and the evaluation of the point cloud is not much slower. If we cannot withstand the competition, we try to occupy a lucrative niche and try to be king in that smaller area.

The developed states try to establish a best possible infrastructure, so that the domestic, local production agricultural, industrial, commercial and medial hopefully will not come to its end.

Beginning with the building of railways and streets until the latest media the efforts of the government are over the decades necessarily huge.

It is a common knowledge today that the **establishment of a securing system for property is necessary for the economy nowadays.**

More than 1000 years after the Romans we succeeded to install a just ground tax system, which became very important for the public household and as well the economy. An overall soil fertility appraisal system happened to be installed in Germany as late as 1925!

This sort of systems were going to be installed in many countries, but in as many countries the systems became ineffective or were going to be destroyed. The huge amount of public money unsuccessfully invested lead to a policy under the principle "fit for purpose", which only means that the invested capital must meet the function

and not more. In other countries property system with nationwide coverage are opposed by the class of big owners or pressure groups of professionals like the lawyers.

It is for me an open question, if doing the bare minimum will save or improve the situation, because the sector of the **geodata infrastructure is small compared to other parts of the government and the technical and societal impacts are breathtaking**. The fate of the investment is related to the fidelity in principles, diligence, precision, ongoing investments and thoroughness in handling the systems in a corruption free space over a long time. **E-government can be performed by public or private servants**.

In many countries the dealing with public loans is careless, even reckless to other people; it lead to a huge accumulation of debts, which cannot be paid off under regular circumstances. Often the creditor countries waive repayment to make the situation bearable for such countries.

Of course economizing is a wholesome principle, but it is not enough to put the economy sufficiently in operation. Before that happens the organizational frame- and preconditions in a society must be in order.

Until now the measures focus on improvement of the infrastructure, which gives the rural population unhindered and quick access to the municipal until world-wide markets. Quick internet makes service people compatible in their service work even if they live at the country side.

The artificial partitioning of local and international markets by regulation is a double edged sword. The bigger the concerns about unfair competition in the economy, the more the politics is willing to speak for artificial partitioning. In connection with the international aid we speak about the so called **micro-macro paradox**, which shows that well meant help out of subsidized agricultural markets destroy the local markets. As often experienced – this is not the solution. The solution lies in a wise policy and well scaled political measures. The social market economy has proven its ability, but the market regulations like barriers must be wise and thoroughgoing.

4. The social and economic interrelationships.

It should not be forgotten, that the democratic togetherness as well as the acceptance of competition combined with altruism and the open market economy system, they all live of social preconditions, which they have not made by themselves nor they are able to produce: Ethical human image based on natural law, perceptions of a good society order and the willingness to subordinate the own properties to the common good.

The loss of ethical certainty characterizes the societies today.

One must acknowledge that democracy and social market economy – despite being areligious - depend on such preconditions which they cannot create within themselves. This is a dogmatic idea of the federal judge Dr. Böckenförde and concerns the ethical attitude of the human being entering their “business” democracy and market economy. The different experiments and hopes the human beings would acknowledge a “world ethos” (Küng) or come to a world ethics (Dalai Lama) did not make profound impact. But it is understandable that the political developments in Europe and America in direction of democracy and market economy are based on the fundament of a Christian ethics.

Their aberrations and confusions happened in the times of the heavy negation of the Christian heritage. Japan and India show in contrast, that other religions can serve basic values, which impact stability in democracy and economy. In China this remains to be seen. The school of Mao Tse Tung has not been able to teach the people in the difference between Mine and Thine.

The effect of the dogmatic sentence of Dr. Böckenförde is the question, if the people in the lowest to the uppermost societal layer accept deeply the constitution and the laws set upon.

Such aberrations are normally called “**Corruption**”. This disease has a lot of different faces. It is usually **spreading from the top to down in the society and permeates through every crack**. It means that every person has to give gratuities for every official act.

It is unbelievable to observe how the refugees just coming to Germany are ready to pay all their money to suspect persons, hoping to circumvent laws and regulations, which seem to keep them from their luck. In their eyes laws and regulations are set in by governing people for their advantage. Such regulations deserve to be circumvented.

But even the proven, representative democracies are not free of that disease. I learnt it in my own profession: When I started my business, to my astonishment, I realized that in some surrounding cities the official siteplans were designed in the public offices against gratuity and given to the clients without an invoice. For the applicants this was advantageous, for they could be sure, that obstructive facts would not be recorded and the building application has the best chance to be approved. The building approval has a big value for the applicant with comparatively big sums of money.

There were cases as well, in which the official surveys were performed by public servants in private order and the result of the survey was signed by private colleagues for a small gratuity. These times are gone since three decades, but it shows that **no nation has the right to waive its nose in the air**. Nowadays the German public servants are better paid and our colleagues are better controlled. Effectual control is an important part of the market economy.

Despite such insights governments face serious challenges with the enforcement of a sentence like: “**consequent separation of consulting and decision**”. There are countries like Armenia even ahead. The acknowledgement and enforcement of such a sentence is important for the acceptance of laws and regulations by the citizen. He will fight for his survival on his own land, as long as he acknowledges the governmental regulations as protective and fair.

The municipal building and planning regulations impact big differences between the value for the citizen's land, if he enjoys to own residential land or only communal or agricultural use. Numerous nuances are possible. But even if the land allows residential use, the market or better the supply must exist, to convert the official classification into cash. The generous designation of building land is not a solution. For it needs public investment, it has to be scarce.

Under the political and economical circumstances of the Federal republic of Germany things are easy: new people bring supply for living room, even if it is paid by the public. The homeowners can fill their vacancies and all the economy around the real estate is pawing full of pleasant anticipations. The aged society is hoping that the new offspring will pay in future their pensions and the political parties hope form votes.

The expectations of the emperor Valens are not far from that. The dual citizenship nowadays shows the susceptibility of the political parties to such foolishness.

The kings of Prussia – Prussia is since a long time erased from the map – acted wisely and generously with the impoverished land (“sand box”). They domiciled the refugees of their time and gave them building material, cattle and agricultural implement as basic facilities and they could estimate that the agricultural and skilled knowhow would bring the success for their countryside. The religious belief of such people was an additional element, which made it easier on the basis of the 10 biblical commandments to integrate the people into their state.

The Germany of the 19th century with its explosive growth of the population had America as an outlet – like the whole Europe, but it mastered the challenge of the rural depopulation very well.

As well the domiciling of the polish workers at the end of the century was a masterpiece of the settlement policy and management.

With affordable housing, pig and chicken the settlers were content and hardworking in a longer lasting integration process.

The reality nowadays looks different: **The fallow land or the vacancies do not nourish the refugees**, even if they would have a basic hardware. The difference of knowledge to fill up modern working places is huge.

The necessary helper jobs, which could solve the problems are not any more existing. The German economy has dragged itself out of the swamp after the war, when 12 Million refugees came and wanted to be integrated. The new technology has substituted such jobs meanwhile.

5. The regulatory policies

The phenomenon of “agri deserti” is old. As we have seen the old methods do not cover the questions nowadays. Young people run around with smart phones, goggle at them, search Pokémon, but they communicate on a low level of civilization. The fallow land is more an indication of idle time. Therefore we have to **find new answers how to develop the capabilities** of people so that they can use their time to earn their own living and find their chance for getting their piece of added value, which is necessary for a life integrated in the society.

For that regulatory preconditions have to be set, which demand achievable tasks from the people or refugees and bring them so in a position for getting a chance for the development of their personality, their economic and intellectual life.

The Prussian state mastered this task with a stern discipline in school and a rigorous education to the secondary virtues: diligence, honesty and parsimony. In the confusion of the mental dispositions this task is nowadays definitely more complex and difficult.

The modern state needs institutions, in which the people trust, because of their just and effective operating. These institutions must be represented by leaders, which noticeably and credibly are oriented to a well functioning state; no matter whether they are public employees or performing public duties entrusted with official tasks.

Such institutions in our professional sector are land registry and Cadastre, public mapping & control and the valuation practice, altogether the public geo-information. It can be organized in a public or partly private way, but the institution has to be strengthened and controlled.

The economy needs geo-information as a secure and transparent basis, the clearness and legal consequence of all measures are necessary. In this respect all procedures must run-off in a principled way, if the economy shall orientate itself on the legal situation. In many countries such principles are lacking. The control of the real estate market has to be firstly channeled by certain **principles, which are proven to be just and adequate**:

What are such principles for the land registry and cadastre ?

- **Absoluteness of Real Rights**, which means, that the content of the register applies to everybody, has to be observed by everybody and is protected against everybody. This concerns the content of the registry and also the site of the boundary border.

- **Numerus Clausus of Real Rights**, which means that nature and content are regulated by law, that real rights to be registered must belong to a legal catalogue. There exists legal compulsion of using special types of rights to be laid down in the register.
- **Principle of clarity and definiteness** – extent and content must be clear and definite.
- **Principle of the “abstract nature in rem”** – the transaction on legal rights has to be separated in “obligation” (formal) and “execution” (conveyance).
- **Principle of legality** – the land registry as a guardian has to check each entry or application concerning legality. The same concerns the definition and legal fixation of the property border and parcel border. No boundary or parcel border in the cadastre without the written will of the neighbored owners.
- **Principle of public disclosure**, which means, that all transactions and creations of legal rights are subject to formal, legal acts. Only the chartered owner or holder of legal rights can provoke changes.

In addition some principles are important for the real estate cadastre:

- **Property boundaries** have to be acknowledged in a formal act by the neighbored owners of property – equivalent rights.
- **Property cadastre and property register** must correspond sharply.
- **Survey methods used** must deliver results on-to-one.
- **The surveyor’s decision and result of fixing** the border may not be questioned by other surveying being secured by tolerance of errors in the right way. Any court then can follow the experts opinion about the legal boundary border.
- **Mistakes** must be solved and removed by legally defined procedures. Mistakes, which get obvious, have to be removed by
 - a) the relevant persons,
 - b) following written and legal procedures,
 - c) such procedures must be documented.

Following these procedures consequently, property register and property cadastre will survive a long time.

6. Hope for the future?

But there is hope as well:

The refugees coming to Europe in these days show impressively how admirably well they are exploring the standard of living and all possibilities in the European countries. There are huge educational reserves, which can be used for the reconstruction of their home economies in towns and country side. Such mental properties will pay

off in the fight against “agri deserti”. Our support of the refugees will deliver the ethical base.

In Roman times “agri deserti” were defined as parcels, which did not bring any fiscal revenue. Nowadays the problem is not the fiscal revenue, because the tax for fallow land is minimal. The problem is that being an owner of fallow land, the land does not help to get a new basis of life. On the contrary, the ownership more and more is burdened with public duties demanding measures against contamination or treating the environment or maintaining the ways and waters, sometimes in neighborhood assistance.

So the following **chances remain** for the owner of fallow land

- a) Getting revenue from the work on a fallow land is very difficult.
- b) The role of the fallow land as a mortgage object is reduced to nearly zero because of the new banking regulations in Europe, which do less refer to value of the land but on the long time ability to repay the mortgage out of other sources of money.
- c) So there remains the speculative illusion, to push the land in a higher class of legal use. The best one is the residential use.

In the developing countries there is a chance still for the way a) as long as the policy is wise, the political measures are scalable and the collateral local regulations are adapted.

Looking back to the centuries of international aid to undeveloped countries one must notice that the lent money from the rich nations did not reach to the small peasant or establish the right economic surrounding for the farmer. The international aid has only success in a good policy environment.

Only when capital is allocated to its most productive use, it will generate an economic benefit; and this only can happen, when governments are given incentives to respect and to support those industries, which can contribute to a countries longer-term potential. The hard part is the longevity of infrastructure, which can only be achieved, if the economy on the whole is growing.

The right measures make the commercial life on the country side survive.

Foreign development investment FDI is welcome, if it is scalable conditioned.

The remittance of the people abroad cannot be underestimated, because it really helps the families to develop their existence at least their survival.

At least the infrastructure for micro-finance and savings has to be developed as well in a scalable way.

No market ideology other than one rooted in the movement of capital and competition has succeeded in getting the greatest number of people out of poverty, in the **fastest time**. But social market economy needs sharp borderlines and control by strong institutions.