TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT WIEN
Vienna University of Technology

Dr. DI Meinhard Breiling (Koordinator)
Technische Universität Wien
Operngasse 11, 1040 Wien
Tel.: +43-1-58801-26114
e-mail: meinhard.breiling@tuwien.ac.at

Change and Outlook in the Danube Delta

-

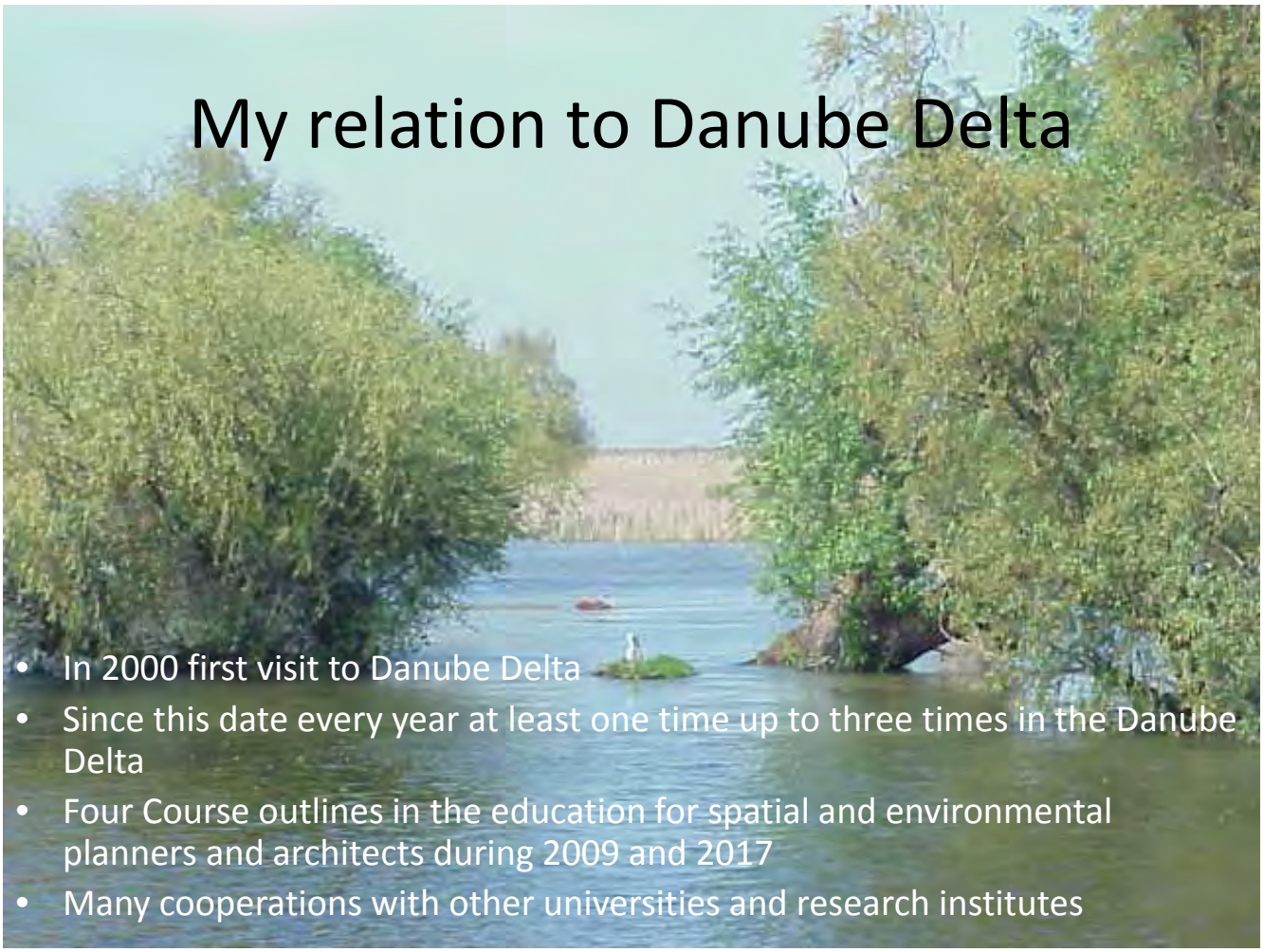
Sfiştofca Village in C. A. Rosetti Municipality, Romania

Meinhard Breiling

Technische Universität Wien – TUW
Department for Urban Design and Landscape Architecture

Visiting Professor, Keio SFC, Ichinose Lab

East Asian Rural Planning Conference on Disaster Resilience,
Kumamoto,
Dec. 9th, 2017



Why is this contribution in a Rural Planning Conference about Natural Disasters?

Answer

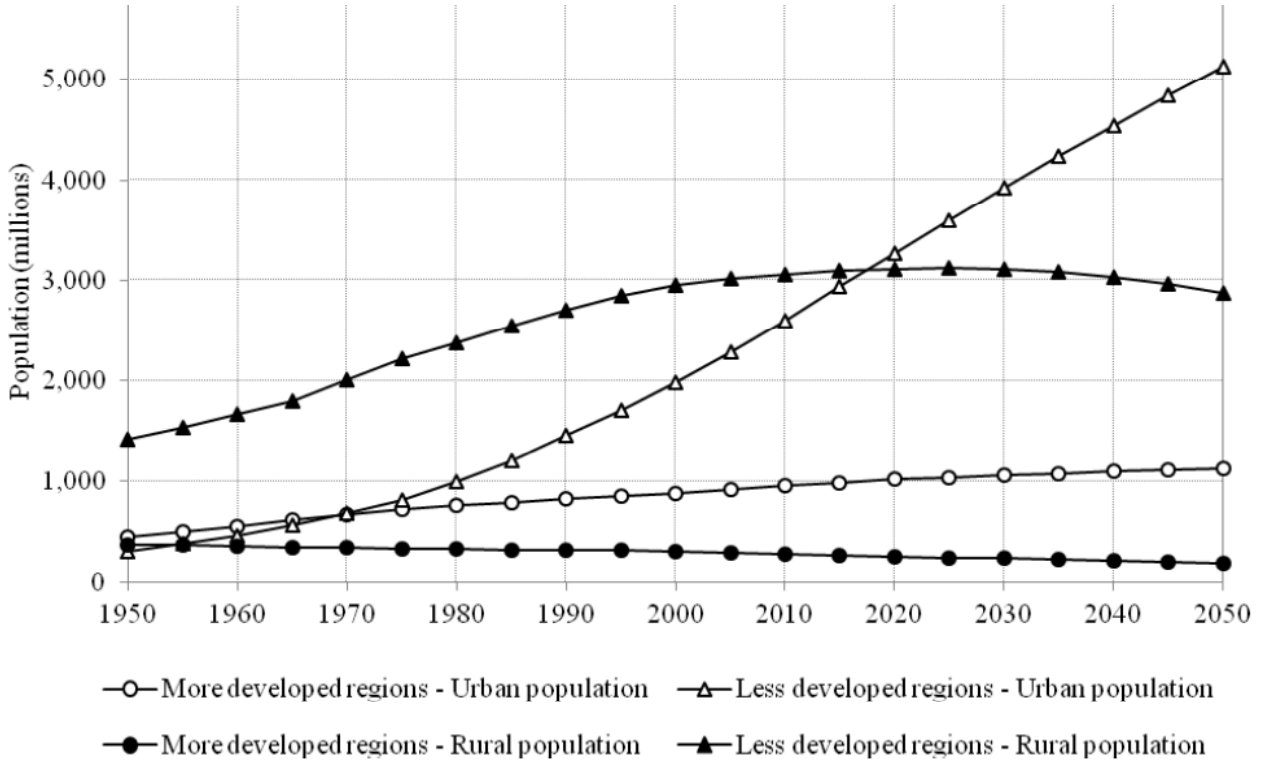
- You may find out that the situation in rural Europe can be as critical as in Japan and Korea or elsewhere in Asia
- There is a connection between natural disasters and the decline of local communities in rural municipalitis
- You may realize that the current level of poverty can be considered as social disaster
- Proven instruments of planning – such as public participation in environmental and social planning processes do not necessarily work out.
- Even in a very bad situations there are several means to improve the lives for locals. Doing a little bit is better than doing nothing.

Why someone from Austria talks about remote municipalities and villages in Romania?

Answer

- So far, rural decline works much faster in poor countries than in richer ones
  - As a foreigner one can learn about particular problematic development context conditions
  - The rural context in wealthy European nations like Austria got worse
  - Many good minded development programs do not work in etreme environments
- Romanians in average enjoy only one fourth of the GDP of Austrians
  - They are widely in an adjustment process to get equal to the richer states of EU
  - Clever young people leave the country to work in Europe or even in Asia
  - There is hardly money to simulate an endogenous development

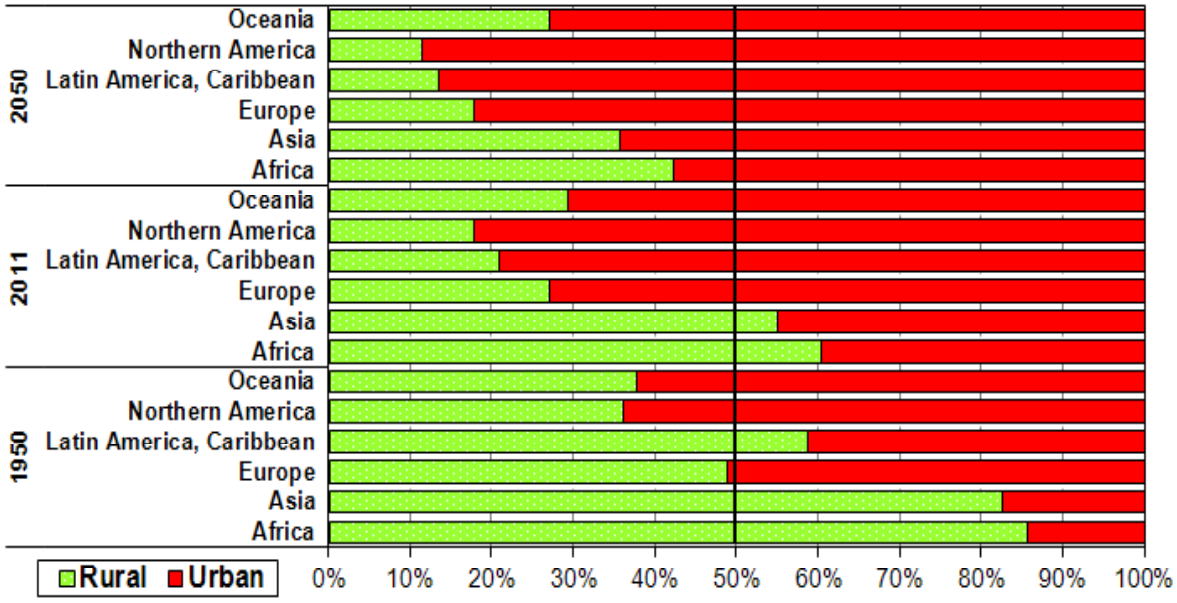
Global„Peak Rural“ is Now



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division: World Urbanization Prospects, the 2011 Revision. New York, 2012

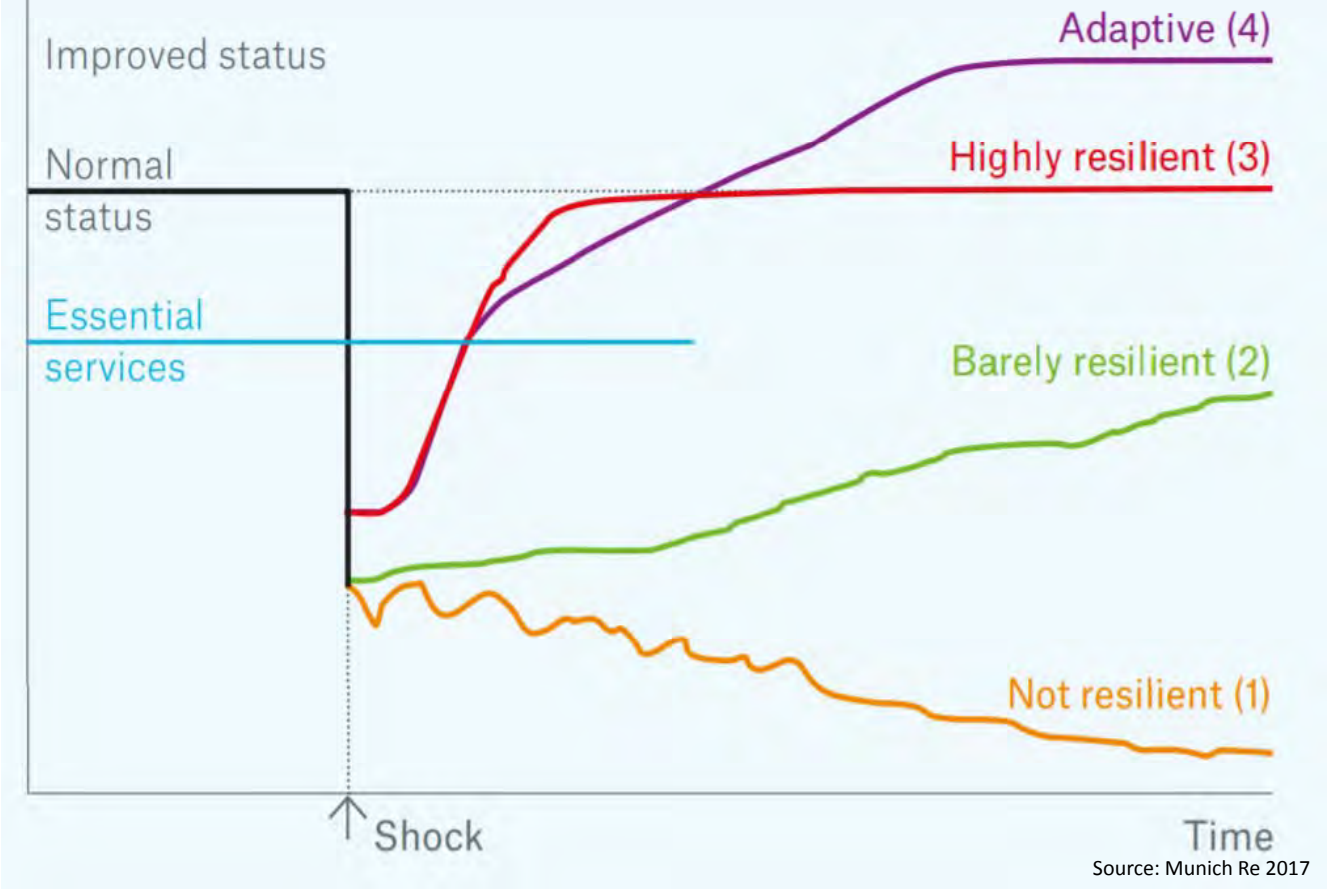
World Regions: Urban vs. Rural in % Ratio

- Change in Ratio Rural and Urban population by major regions, 1950, 2011 and 2050



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division: World Urbanization Prospects, the 2011 Revision. New York, 2012

Principal directions after natural disasters



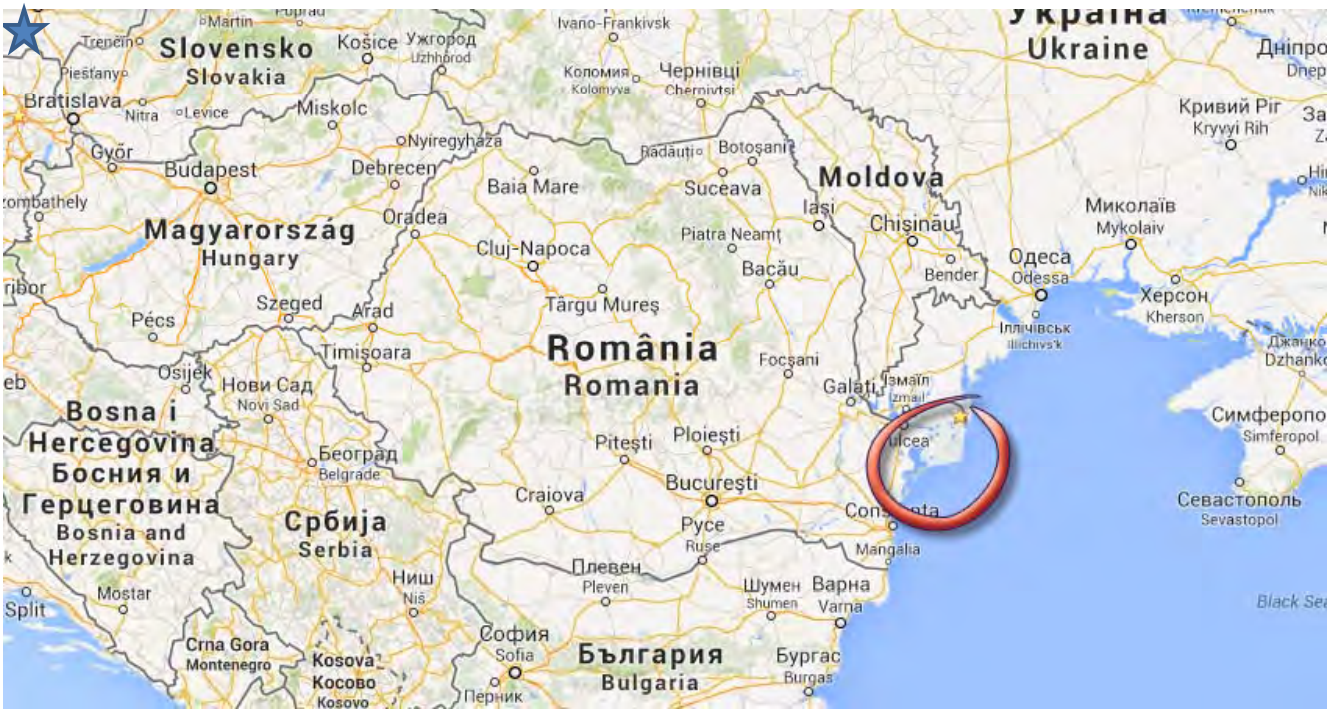
Source: Munich Re 2017

Flatlands in the Danube Delta (sometimes floodlands like in April 2000)

Political System and Disaster in Sfiştofca

- The village is inhabited by Russian people belonging to the religious minority of old believers
  - Founded some 200 years ago
  - The landscape is
- 70 years ago there were plans to change wetlands into agricultural land
  - People came by incentive or force to the Danube Delta
  - Political prisoners built out water channels as main transportation lines, many of them died
- More than 40 years ago during the 1970ies Sfiştofca was hit by a major flood
  - From 200 houses perhaps half of them were destroyed
  - Instead of reconstruction many families used the disaster event to leave the place
- Every further shock put more damage on the village
  - Collapse of communist system in 1989 and loss of economic support
  - Unfavorable - capitalistic - system for villagers until 2007 with loss of informal rights
  - Overload on administrative complexity for village people and impossibility to take part in political discussion

The Danube Region and the Danube Delta



Sulina Channel is main connection for ship traffic

Winter Landscape – Limited Access

Horse coaches are still used as a means of transportation

Cattle herds in Sfistofca

Local Lipovan people

Sfistofca Village from Clock Tower

Sfistofca Village from the Ground

Continously Changing Environment

- 80% of land are temporarily flooded

Preparing for Artistic Interventions

Architect Students from Bucharest Studying Nature Near Construction

Transforming Waste to Art

Workshop with Artists

Lessons Learned so Far

- The situation can be improved by involving people from outside the region
- There is limited hope that the village can be maintained
- More people have to think about the future of the village
- Artistic interventions and practical projects to improve the situation from locals are required

TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT WIEN
Vienna University of Technology

Dr. DI Meinhard Breiling (Koordinator)
Technische Universität Wien
Operngasse 11, 1040 Wien
Tel.: +43-1-58801-26114
e-mail: meinhard.breiling@tuwien.ac.at

TTL

Thank you for your attention

E-Mail: meinhard.breiling@tuwien.ac.at