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WORKFORCE QUANTITY AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT FOR THE SĂRĂŢEL DRAINAGE BASIN (BUZĂU SUBCARPATHIANS)

EVALUAREA CANTITATIVĂ ŞI CALITATIVĂ A FORŢEI DE MUNCĂ DIN BAZINUL HIDROGRAFIC SĂRĂŢEL (SUBCARPAŢII BUZĂULUI)

Valentina Ilinca STOICA[1], Adrina Iustina UNGURAŞ[2], Florentina Cristina IANCU (MERCIU)[2]

Abstract: The biggest part of the Sărăţel drainage basin is located in the Buzău Subcarpathians (part of the Curvature Subcarpathians); the area encompasses 26 villages, with another few rural settlements located on the border with other river basins and only partly inside the area analyzed; these settlements were not considered because they are bound to other economic and social centers. This study assesses a set of synthetic indicators, which allow for a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the workforce, including population employment rate; the structure of the population in terms of the fields of trade they work in; economic dependence rate; workforce renewal rate; population structure in terms of training; tertiary sector employee structure in terms of fields of trade. Information on the workforce volume as well as its characteristic features is important because territorial development strategies are impossible to draw in the absence of information on the human resources available in a certain territory.

Keywords: Sărăţel drainage basin, workforce, quantity and quality assessment
Cuvinte cheie: bazinul hidrografic Sărăţel, forţă de muncă, evaluare cantitativă şi calitativă

Introduction

The Sărăţel drainage basin is located in south-eastern Romania, and most of it is part of the Curvature Subcarpathians, the Buzău Subcarpathians, more accurately. The Sărăţel river springs from the Ivăneţu ridge, part of the Buzău mountains (a section of the Curvature Carpathians), and is a left-side tributary of the Buzău river, with the two rivers' confluence inside the limits of the Berca locality.

[1] University of Bucharest, Faculty of Geography, CICADIT (The Interdisciplinary Center for Advanced Researches on Territorial Dynamics), stoicailincavalentina@gmail.com
[2] University of Bucharest, Faculty of Geography

In terms of territory administration, the area analyzed is located in the center-north of Buzău county (Fig. 1); 26 rural settlements are entirely encompassed in the area analyzed, most of them grouped together in the communes of Scorţoasa (11 villages), Chiliile (7 villages) and Căneşti (6 villages). In addition, there are 2 other settlements, part of the Berca and Odăile communes, and several villages (Potecu, Fundata, Plaiu Nucului) located on the border with other river basins, which are not included in the analysis, because in economic and social terms they are subordinated to centers outside the area analyzed.

The settlements completely encompassed by the Sărăţel tend to find their functional center in the Sărăţel valley, and further on in Berca and the city of Buzău, the main catalyst center of Buzău county, a function enhanced by its administrative role as a county seat for more than 40 years.

Villages in the area analyzed are mainly built alongside valleys and mountainsides, with their features strongly influenced by the characteristics of the landscape, which led to the coexistence, in the same village, of several types of pattern or structure, enforcing a certain manner of land use.

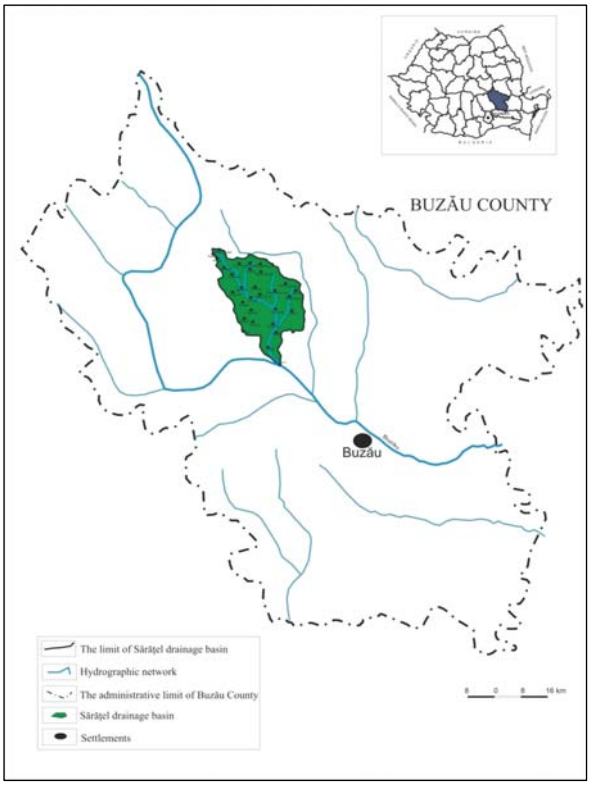


Fig. 1 Administrative location

Most villages are small-sized, with their bulk (73%) having less than 300 inhabitants; the villages of Scorţoasa, Policiori and Joseni alone are included among medium-sized villages, with more than 500 inhabitants. The latter group of villages is geographically located in the middle and lower section of the Sărăţel drainage basin, along the main route of access, which proves there is a direct connection between the size and development of villages on the one hand, and ease of access, on the other hand. At the same time, due to the relatively easy access to Berca and Buzău, inhabitants of these villages prefer to commute rather than relocate and live in other localities.

The settlements in the area under analysis, like the entire Carpathian rural piedmont area, have accumulated during the transition from socialist economy to

free market economy multiple dysfunctions which are reflected in living standards; their elimination requires finding viable solutions, matching the local potential while preserving the specific traditions of the area.

The key problem is that the area analyzed has a series of resources (such as the mud volcanoes, the picturesque landscape and the well-preserved folk customs) later development could be grounded in, but which are not properly harnessed to best use.

The current configuration and structure of the villages has been strongly influenced by the high emigration rates typical of the communist period, with migrant groups generally heading towards the cities of Buzău, Râmnicu Sărat, and towards the town of Berca. To a lesser degree, the population also headed towards Bucharest, Ploieşti, Braşov and other cities farther away. The consequences of the high migration rates of that time are now felt in terms of a drop of the population, low birth rates, a rise in mortality, a drop in workforce and therefore in the active population, and a rise in the age of land-owners, among others. (Stoica Ilinca-Valentina, 2008).

Overall living standards are low and even very low, with the current state of things being the result of the contribution of the above-listed factors; another cause contributing to the state of things is the low initiative, with a mere 3 or 4 individuals accessing European funds in the past 2 or 3 years, a situation that will probably continue in the near future as well.

In terms of sectors of the economy, agriculture is the most important; the type of agriculture used is subsistence farming, usually with traditional tools, on small tracts of land, a situation that is generated and perpetuated by several factors, including the absence of financial resources, the poor quality of farming produce, the inexistence of a market to retail produce, the inefficient use of the resources available, limited management skills, among others. At the same time, part of the inhabitants of the area analyzed own land in the Buzău county plains, awarded them in the wake of land grants after the two World Wars, land which is now cultivated by farmers' associations.

At the same time, there are few companies and activities in the area analyzed that would offer an alternative to subsistence farming and that would allow the workforce to remain on the premises; part of the young population is compelled to go to work in other localities.

Assessing the workforce

Assessing the workforce in a certain area is very important because it allows one to highlight the characteristics of the available human resources, which may act as the foundation of economic activities, and thus play a decisive role in drafting rural development plans. Workforce characteristics are influenced by factors of a demographic, economic and social nature.

In any causal model, living standards will be influenced by the existing human capital, the quantity and quality of workforce resources (Chirca C., Teşliuc E.D., 1999). The volume, structure, training level and professional skills or workforce, and the manner the workforce is used exert an important influence on the gross

domestic product (GDP), on the overall economic, social and cultural development (Mihăescu Constanţa, 2001, page 141).

Workforce analysis can be carried out in both quantitative and qualitative respects, by analyzing certain relevant indicators, in order to get as accurate as possible an image of the area analyzed.

The quantitative assessment of the workforce was carried out by calculating sets of synthetic indicators and interpreting their results over a longer period of time, as evaluation on a single year can capture an atypical situation; an analysis that would allow identification of the causes that brought about a certain type of evolution, and in addition present the current situation, would be more relevant. Due to the fact that the scope of the analysis is detailed to go to the level of the smallest administrative unit, the most recent reference year is 2002, with later data only approximations resulting from fieldwork done.

At the same time, because of discrepancies in the available data from one census year to the next, the qualitative analysis of the workforce could only encompass 2002 alone.

The importance of approaching such a matter lies in the fact that it can be collated into a preliminary study to be used as a stepping stone for rural development strategies drawn later and implemented by local policy-makers.

The quantitative assessment of the workforce

Working-age population (ages 15 to 64) makes up for th e main group of the available workforce and is known in specialized body of works as potentially active population. It comprises the population of those age groups that register significant activity rates (Zamfir Daniela, 2007, page 155). This is the result of the coexistence of 50 generations, distinct in terms of the biological, sanitary, demographic, economic, cultural and environment factors that influenced them since their very birth (Mihăescu Constanţa, 2001, page 149).

The potentially active population in the area analyzed dropped by more than 3,000 individuals during 1966-2002, due to various causes including the migration of the young population during the communist period and the demographical ageing of the population.

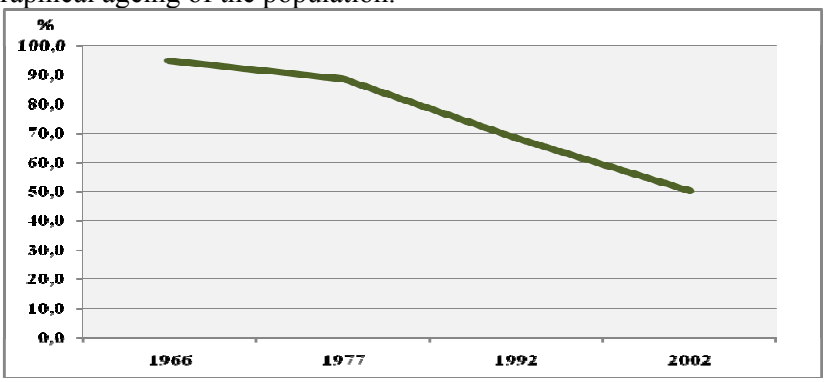


Fig. 2 The ratio of active population out of the total working-age population

If one considers the active population out of the total working-age population, throughout the years of reference, one notices that the former group gradually dropped from 94.8% in 1966 to 50.2% in 2002 (Fig. 2), which means the ratio of inactive population rose steeply, on the one hand because of the shortage of workplaces, in the context of the absence of viable economic assets, and the gradual rise of school attendance, which delayed the time of joining active working population, as well as changes in legislation concerning retirement age. The steepest drop was registered starting 1992, one of the reasons being that censuses prior to 1989 overestimated active population by including all working-age people involved in agriculture, irrespective of whether they were involved in paid-for activities, earning them money or produce, or merely working on their own households.

In order to assess the workforce in terms of quantity, indicators calculated were population activity rate; the structure of employed population in terms of distribution in sectors of the economy, which included highlighting education levels; economic dependence rate; and workforce renewal rate.

Population activity rate

Fig. 3 Population activity rate (1966, 1977, 1992, 2002) (%)

In economic terms, active population is the most important demographic category (Trebici V., 1971), as it offers information on the existing workforce in a certain area, which can be used for economic activities. Active population comprises the working population (employees and other categories of working individuals), as well as the unemployed or people looking for their first jobs. Information on active population numbers is vital for local authorities, who should consider it when drafting local development strategies.

Activity rate is an indicator used to highlight the active population's ratio of the total population; activity rate in the area analyzed gradually dropped by around 71% during the 1966-2002 period (Fig. 3), due to the emigration of the mainly young population, the onset and worsening of demographical ageing, and the negative natural growth rate – which started registering a slight negative trend after 1975, which gradually grew more severe after 1982, and now no longer allowed the reconstruction of the human capital existing before.

By 1966, the active population amounted to around 6,200 individuals, and the settlements registered 50% plus activity rates, with a sole exception, the village of Beciu, which registered a much smaller value (28.8%).

By 1977 these levels had dropped, with more than half of the villages registering values below 50%, because of intense emigration, whose dominant feature was the departure of the especially active population.

By 1992 only 5 villages had values above 50% : Plopeasa, Grabicina de Sus, Grabicina de Jos, Golu Grabicina, Balta Tocila, villages mainly located in the center area of the basin. The onset of this downward trend is due to early retirement, in the context of business reorganizations that impacted on the Buzău county industry, but also to the passing of a very permissive bill in April 1990, allowing very relaxed for early retirement.

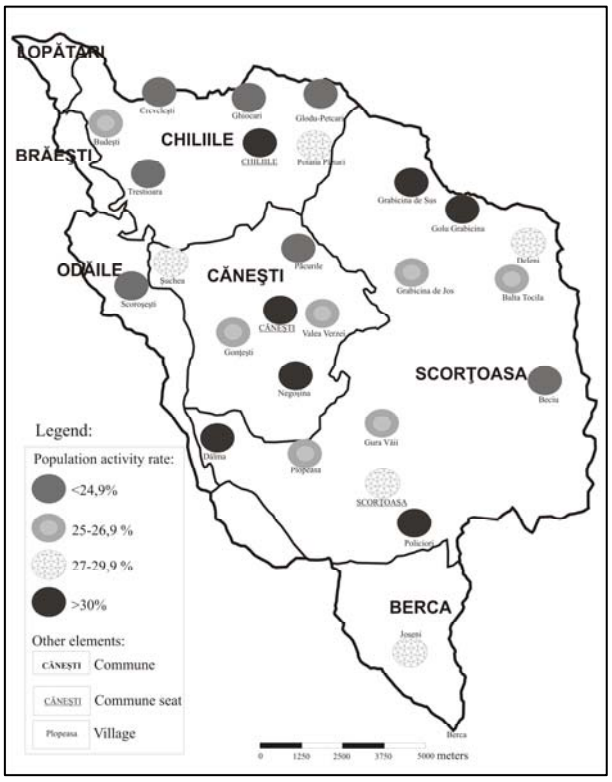


Fig. 4 Population activity rate in 2002

By 2002 (Fig. 4) the downward trend had grown steeper, with all villages registering population activity rates below 33.9%, because of the rise in the number of pensioners, the drop in birth rate, demographic ageing, and the negative balance of migration trends, in the context where the youth would migrate away, and the pensioners would return home; pensioners, if they work, are illegally employed, and therefore not included in official statistics. The number of people involved in farming activities limited to their own households is high. However, the majority of the settlements (76.9%) register activity rate values below 29.9%.

As far as active population numbers in 2002 are concerned, there are high differences, with the highest number registered in Joseni and Policiori (amounting to more than 500 people), followed by Golu Grabicina and Scorţoasa; between them, they make up for 43.9% of the active population of the area analyzed; at the opposite end, the commune of Chiliile registered a mere 197 active people.

The general centralization of this indicator's data in the area analyzed resulted in models for the dynamics of the population activity rate, which can be divided into several subtypes:

- in most villages (53.8%), there is a similar evolution, characterized by the drop of values throughout the entire interval analyzed, due to the drop of birth rates, the negative migration balance, and the low or inexistent work availability, which drove young locals to turn to other localities, with a much better situation in this respect. A special situation is registered in the village of Păcurile, which, although it registered high activity rate values in the first two reference years, had come to feature the lowest values by 1992 and 2002 - 15.3% and 14.5%, respectively - mainly due to the high rates of demographic ageing.

- the values of this indicator for the villages of Gonțești, Dâlma and Șuchea were on a downward trend up to 1992, followed by a moderate recovery, due to the rise of mortality and the return home of part of the active population, who had migrated during the communist period.

- the evolution of this indicator in the villages of Golu Grabicina, Grabicina de Jos, Policiori, Scoroșești and Trestioara featured numerous fluctuations, with a drop until 1977, followed by a rise in 1992, followed by a new and steeper drop in 2002.

- in the settlements of Poiana Pletari, Balta Tocila and Beciu values were rising up to 1977, with an increasingly steep drop registered thereafter. The same category may be said to include the village of Deleni as well, which registered an upward trend up to 1977, followed by a drop by 1992 and then a slight recovery by 2002.

Workforce renewal rate

Workforce renewal rate is the ratio between the population aged 15 to 29 and the population aged 30 to 44; it offers information on the workforce's capacity to renew itself, using the human capital of a certain area, a process that ensures the perpetuation of creative and productive forces and, implicitly, the development of the economy and the society (Mihăescu Constanţa, 2001 quoted in Mocanu Irena, 2008, page 100).

The values of this indicator feature a similar evolution in most villages in the area analyzed; one can identify a downward trend during the 1966-1977 period (figure 5), in the context of the negative migration balance, then a rise up to 1992, and then a second downward trend during the next period. A few settlements are the exception to this general situation, such as Poiana Pletari and Crevelești, where the values register a downward trend up to 1992, followed by a slight recovery by 2002, for the former village, and a steeper rise – to 1.81 – for the latter.

The opposite situation is typical of the villages of Scorţoasa, Deleni and Golu Grabicina where the values were on an upward trend up to 1992, and then dropped by 2002; in the case of Balta Tocila the values were on an upward trend throughout the time interval analyzed. One other instance concerned the villages of Chiliile and Budeşti, where values dropped up to 1977, with a time of recovery registered later.

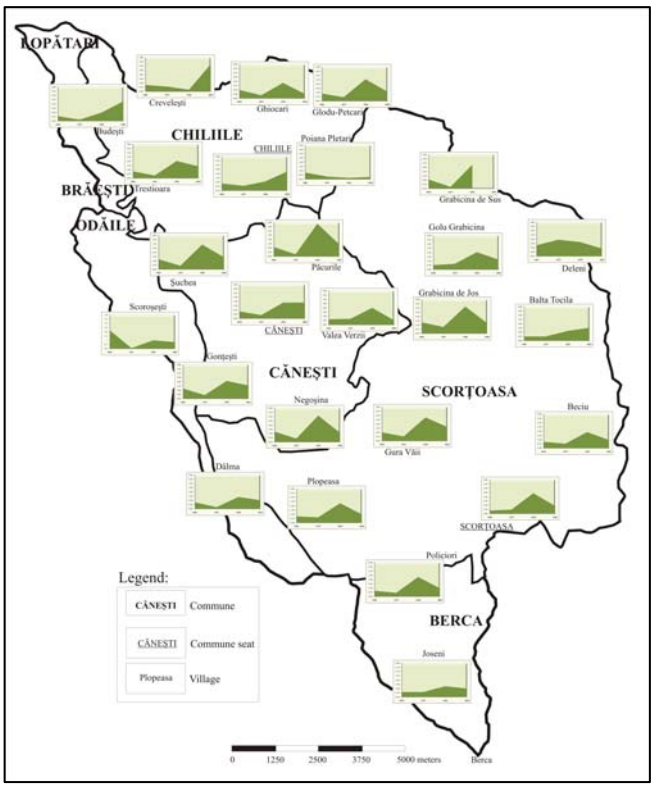


Fig. 5 Workforce renewal rate (1966, 1977, 1992, 2002)

By 1977, values in most villages were lower as compared to the previous time period, with the only exceptions being Căneşti, Valea Verzei and Scorţoasa, characterized by slight rises, and Deleni, which is the sole case with values above 1.

Monitoring the evolution of this indicator throughout the time period analyzed indicates that the peaks are reached in 1992, when the highest values are registered in the village of Păcurile (2.71), with all settlements registering values above 1, with the exceptions being the villages of Poiana Pletari and Creveleşti.

This is because the 15-29 age group matched the generations born during 1963-1977, when the effect of the pronatalist policies was becoming felt, while the generation aged 30 to 44 was born during 1948-1962 when birth rates were lower because of problems of economic nature (drought), or of precarious sanitary conditions; the same generation also lived through the early industrialization phase, when migration was much easier.

In 2002 (Fig. 6), general values are lower as compared to the previous period, with an upward trend only identified in six villages. There are also extreme situations where values dropped by more than half as compared to the previous reference year, mainly due to the drop of birth rates during 1973-1987 and therefore the limited new additions to the 15-29 age group, while additions to the 30-44 age group remain high.

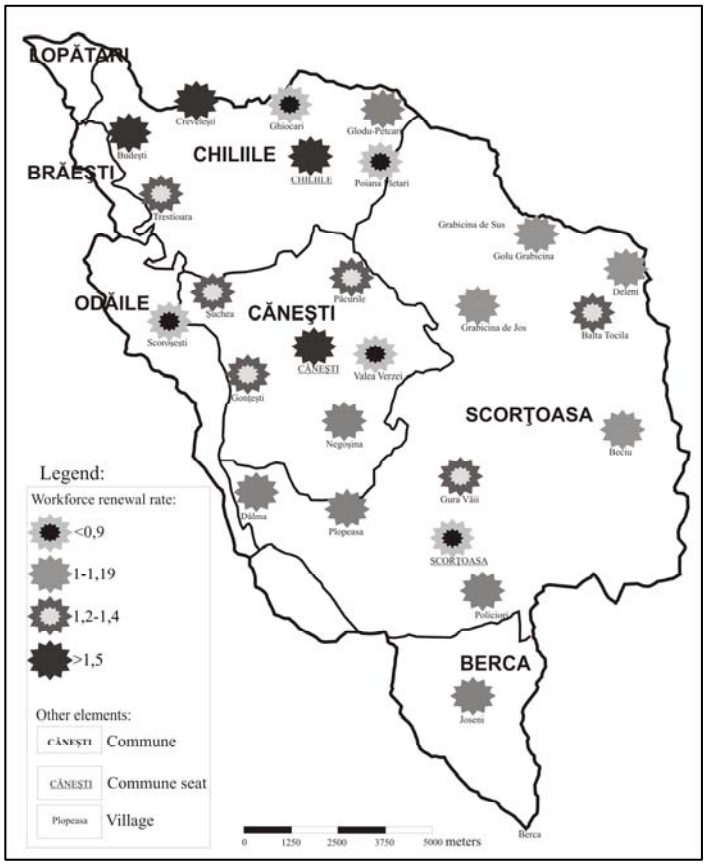


Fig. 6 Workforce renewal rate (2002)

The highest characteristic values for this year (above 1.5) are found in the villages of Căneşti and Chiliile and, paradoxically, also in Budeşti and Creveleşti, where, although the two groups are poorly represented, the population aged 15-29 outweighs the population aged 30-44. Actually, the highest value for all of the basin is registered in the village of Creveleşti (2.3), while the lowest value is the 0.6 registered in Poiana Pletari.

Most villages (76.9%) register values above 1, which proves that in the immediately coming period there are still workforce resources available at approximately the same level as the current one.

Working population

Awareness of the working population percentage is necessary in order to identify the ratio of the population involved in economic activities, and the fields they work in. An analysis was thus carried out of the working population's distribution into the main sectors of the national economy (primary, secondary and tertiary, with the mixed sector located at their intersection), covering 1966-2002, using population census data; results indicated that in most villages the population was and is involved in the primary sector, which can be explained by the fact that the area is a rural region, plagued by infrastructure problems and benefiting from a minimal level of investments. Therefore, a large part of the rural-area population

faces a limited range of occupations and has to work in low-productivity fields in order to secure minimal means of subsistence (Chirca C., Teşliuc E.D., 1999).

However, there are a few exceptions too, among them, such as the village of Joseni, where by 1966 the working population was mainly active in the primary sector; during the next censuses, the population was included in the mixed functional category; a rise in the weight of the secondary sector was visible mainly due to the geographical position of the village, located close to the locality of Berca, which allows one's working in various fields of trade, and also due to the low costs of commuting.

At the commune level, during 1966-2002 the working population was mainly involved in the primary sector; mention should be made that by 2002 the Chiliile commune was included in the mixed sector, due to the rise of the tertiary-sector employee ratio. The Scorţoasa commune was included in the primary sector, with the exception of the 1977 reference year, when it was part of the mixed sector, as parts of the population were working in both the primary and secondary sectors, especially in drilling and processing crude oil; the same structure is to be found in Scorțoasa village.

At the same time, in certain settlements, depending on their economic characteristics, the secondary or tertiary sectors were predominant in certain periods of time. In the villages of Căneşti an Chiliile, during 1966-1992, the working population was mainly involve in the primary sector; by 2002, those involved in the tertiary sector had grown dominant, due to the fact that the respective villages are commune seats and therefore have higher numbers of people in administrative positions.

By 1966 the only village where another sector than the primary one was dominant was Beciu, mainly because of the working population involved in the oil field installations specific to the secondary sector. By 1992 the villages of Şuchea, Păcurile, Valea Verzei were part of the mixed sector, because the number of (especially) industrial workers was still high; later on they were either laid off or retired, so that by 2002 the primary sector was dominant once again.

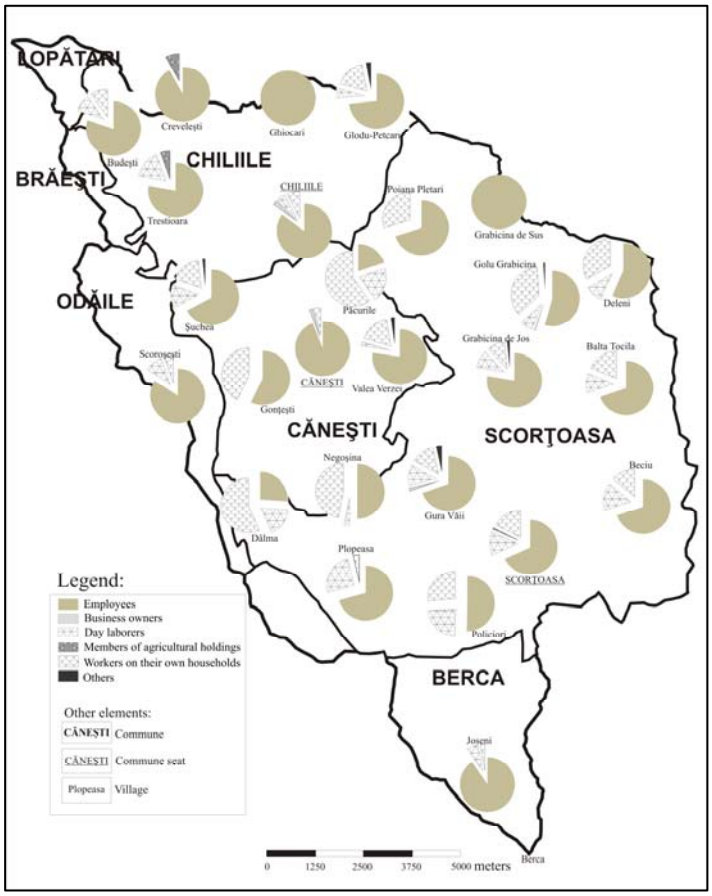
In the villages of Trestioara, Grabicina de Jos, Gura Văii, the working population was involved in the primary sector; starting 2002 the mixed sector became dominant, in the context of certain people becoming active employees once again.

Atypical situations as compared to the other settlements were to be found by 2002 in Ghiocari, where all working population members were involved in the tertiary sector, and in Scoroşeşti, where the secondary sector was dominant.

For better comprehension of the rural sector's level of development, one should be familiar with the level and structure of workforce resources, socio-professional diversity, in terms of the range of trades and training levels, and the distribution of the workforce in the territory (Chirca C., Teşliuc E.D., 1999).

The population's structure function of the working people's professional status can serve as a unit to measure both entrepreneurial spirit (in terms of the number and ratio of business owners) and the security/insecurity of income needed for one's subsistence, the balance/frailty of the labour market (for instance, unpaid

household workers are involved in farming activities that earn them an insufficient and uncertain income but they help lower pressure on the labour market, because they are not included among the unemployed, although their income is lower than social security offered to the unemployed)(Mocanu Irena, 2008, page 229).



By 2002, the bulk of the working population (68.7%) in the area analyzed (Fig. 7) was made up of employees, with 50.1% of them concentrated in the Scorțoasa commune. Employees are dominant in most villages, in some villages reaching up to more than 80%; the exceptions that stand out are the villages of Păcurile and Dâlma, where the respective values are much lower (below 26%). Ghiocari also stands out as a settlement where the population is exclusively made up of employees.

Fig. 7 Structure of the working population in terms of professional status(2002)

A high proportion is made up of workers on their own households, who make up for even more than 50% in the villages of Păcurile and Dâlma. In addition, there are day laborers, who make up for more than 10% in most villages.

By 2002 business owners were only present in the villages of Cănești, Chiliile, Golu Grabicina and Gura Văii; at the moment, new business owners have risen in numbers with the addition of microenterprises and small businesses mainly involved in retail trade.

Economic dependency rate

Economic dependency rate is calculated by matching inactive population – combined with unemployed population – against active employed population; the

figures are calculated for 1992 and 2002; earlier data are not available, as there were no records of unemployment kept.

Economic dependency rate expresses the role of support a working person offers to some other person, not involve in any paid work (Mocanu Irena, 2008, page 102).

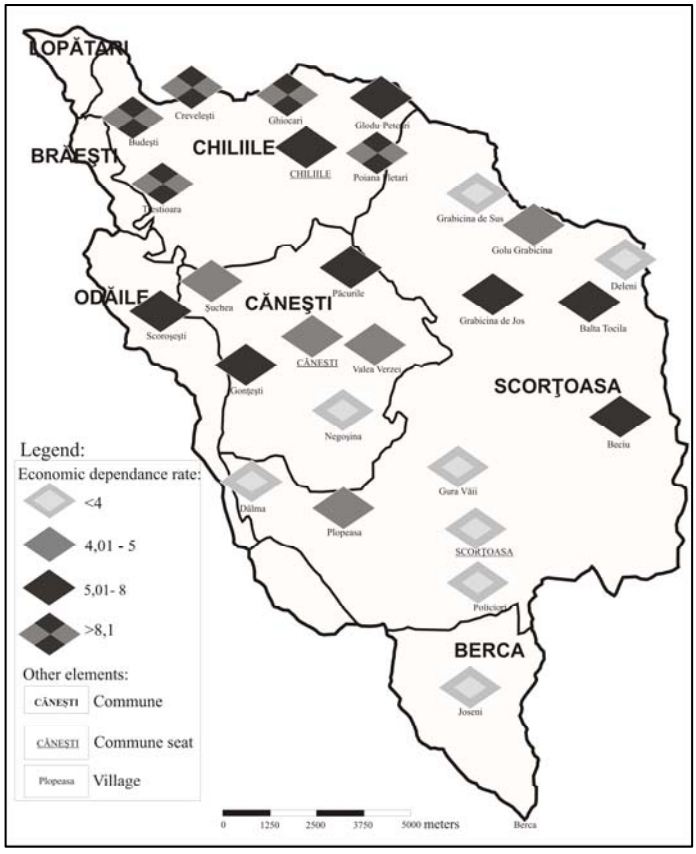


Fig. 8 Economic dependency rate

This indicator's values rose between the two reference years in most villages (with the exceptions of Dâlma and Şuchea), with the highest differences registered in the villages of Budeşti and Ghiocari.

By 2002, the highest values were registered in the Chiliile commune (Fig. 8), where all villages except the commune seat feature values above 8, due to demographic aging and the rise in the number of pensioners, and also because of layoffs and a drop in the number of workplaces. In addition, some locals gave up on jobs located in localities outside the area analyze because of the high costs of commuting.

One could say that these causes are typical for all villages analyzed, but the existence of particular local factors brings about their occurrence at distinct scales and with distinct consequences, which allows for the presence of areas where the values are lower than 4, mainly located in the Scorţoasa commune, and the villages of Joseni and Negoşina. 50% of the villages range between these two extreme values, with the lowest value being 2.5 (Dâlma), and the highest value 19 (Budeşti).

Qualitative assessment of the workforce

The qualitative assessment of the workforce is achieved by analyzing the education levels, and the structure of the tertiary-sector employees' activities by

2002, in addition to fieldwork analyses.

Population structure in terms of education levels

The quality of the human factor, expressed foremost by the structure and consistency of the education-training status, is the decisive element of any phase in the development of the society (Braghină C., 2000, p.78), as, no matter the strategies advanced with a view to developing a certain area they should consider the existing human resources, which come with a certain educational and professional training, which can be used to support viable economic activities.

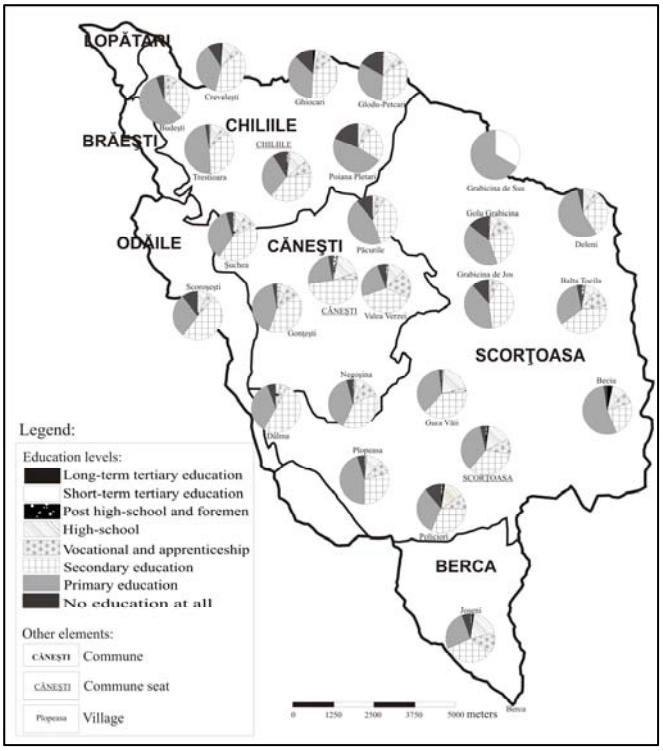


Fig. 9 Population structure in terms of education levels (2002)

The education rate of the population in the area analyzed has been influenced by several factors, including infrastructure, the quality of education (Mărginean I., Bălaşa Ana, 2005), the parents' and children's mindset, available family resources, poverty rates, and the usefulness of studies on the labor market, among others.

In the absence of data strictly referring to the workforce education levels, use was made of the population structure in terms of education levels; its analysis led to a series of relevant conclusions.

This information was used alongside information collected during fieldwork. These indicated that there are no higher-education graduates in half of the villages; the highest higher-education graduate rates were 3.4% in the Cănești village and 2.1% in Balta-Tocila village.

These figures usually stand for the schoolteachers most of the times living and working in the area analyzed, plus higher-education pensioners. Overall, 8.5% of the inhabitants of the area analyzed attended some form of higher education or another.

It was noticed that in all villages primary and secondary education graduates (Fig. 9) make up for more than 59% of all population members aged 10 and over;

in 69.2% of the villages they make up for more than 70% of the total population, due to the shorter duration and the presence of teaching facilities in their home localities or in the relative vicinity.

Secondary education encompasses less than 10% of the total population in 79% of the settlements; tertiary education and vocational-school training is better represented in the village of Beciu (3.7%); in 34.6% there are no graduates of such an institution. Education levels are higher among the younger population, as a result of the much richer range of education opportunities, per-1989 compulsory school attendance, and children's state allowance, nowadays conditioned by the children's attending classes.

The fact that high-school and higher-education graduates make up for a low percentage does not indicate that the inhabitants of the area would not attend such studies, but merely that there was no compatibility between the disciplines graduated and the range of available jobs, which caused, in most cases, definitive migration to other localities. At the same time, the living standards found in urban areas were much better, especially in the communist period, which enhanced the urban environment's attractiveness.

Fieldwork analyses indicate that part of the population, especially the elderly, wanted to have their education furthered, but failed to do so because of the low levels of the parents' income, and also the parents' mindset, who deemed, in the context of 50 years ago, that it is much more useful for a child to specialize in being a farmer or possibly be accepted as an apprentice with one of the village craftsmen.

Although it has been dropping throughout the latter half of the past century, illiteracy rate still remains at high levels, above 10%, in certain areas, due to the accentuated rate of demographic aging and the migration away of the higher-education population, who lacked the premises to practice the skills they had studied in the area analyzed.

The structure of activities of tertiary-sector employees

The tertiary sector plays an important part in the current economic context, because it could absorb part of the existing available working population. Most tertiary-sector employees in the area analyzed work in public administration (20.8%), followed by retail trade, as well as transportation, storage, communications and education. All these branches amount to 77.9% of the total tertiary-sector employees, with more than half of them (39.3%) working in education and public administration, that is activities that do not involve entrepreneurial spirit and subsist on the minimal services available at the level of each administrative unit.

Hotel and restaurant employees are very poorly represented, and so are those involved in financial activities, with these sectors amounting to a rough total of 2.64%.

In terms of distribution on communes, most tertiary-sector employees (45.21%) are found in Scorţoasa commune, with their distribution in fields of trade

reflecting that of the entire basin, with a higher rate of people working in healthcare and social assistance.

The number of tertiary-sector employees is influenced by the general economic context, with their number being higher in those areas where specialized businesses developed. For instance their numbers in the Chiliile commune is 68.2% lower than in the Joseni village, which proves that – in the first instance – the absence of available jobs, the significant isolation of the area and difficult access to localities where such activities develop have left an imprint on the locals' occupations. As a term of comparison, Joseni features the highest number of employees, part of them working in Berca or nearby localities that allow commuting. The second place in this classification goes to Policiori; the two villages make up for 38.9% of the total, between them.

Mention should also be made that most villages (65.4%) have fewer than 10 employees in the tertiary sector, with a critical situation to be found in Păcurile village, with no such employee, which is partly due to the high number of pensioners and partly due to these locals' working in the secondary sector.

Conclusions

The qualitative and quantitative assessment of the workforce is a necessary preliminary task that should be submitted to local policy-makers before their drawing and implementing any rural development strategy. The quantitative assessment indicated that the volume of the active population dropped during 1966-2002, while also registering a drop in the ratio of the working population as a result of various causes such as demographic aging, the absence of workplaces and migration during the communist period, among others. As far as distribution into sectors of the economy is concerned, the working population is mainly involved in the primary sector, predominantly subsistence farming, which perpetuates and accentuates the low living standards, typical of the majority of the population.

Calculating the workforce renewal rate indicated that in the coming period there are still resources – in most villages – available at around the same levels as at the moment; economic dependence rates indicated that its values rose during 1992-2002 in 92.3% of the villages, rising to very high rates in isolated settlements (for instance Budești).

In terms of quality, an analysis of education levels highlighted the existence of a small percentage of higher-education individuals, a situation that will persist in the absence of workplaces matching the education degrees. At the same time, the tertiary sector is mainly represented by the minimal set of compulsory services, and not by facilities that would create viable jobs; at the level of communes the number of employees drops in direct proportion with ease of access, from the lower part of the basin to the higher part. Considering the low degree of initiative, the tertiary sector will probably continue to play a small part in the overall balance of the economy in the near future.

Nevertheless, although the workforce has shrunk over a period of time, the problem is that at the moment there are no workplaces that would absorb existing

offer, which leads to the perpetuation and accentuation of poverty, and to a rise in the inactive population rate.

To conclude, it is necessary to identify viable alternatives that would allow for the use of human resources, which would have large-scale effects on living standards and general welfare.

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