
The Population Quality as an Effectiveness Factor for the Spatial Organisation

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The term “quality” is very often used. In the dictionary it is defined as: “1. How good or bad something is; 2. Something that people may have as part of their character; 3. Something that is typical of one thing and makes it different from other things (...)”.

But the term “quality” receives new connotations when it refers to population. From the geographical point of view, the population quality refers to the analysis of several demographical indexes, such as:

- gender structure;
- age structure;
- socio-professional structure;
- level of education.

These indicators have a great impact on the life standard because they express the ratio of the financially sustained persons, levels of income, the development level of the analysed area and even more than that, due to the people’s education its adaptation capacity to the new possible situations can be appreciated. Therefore the analysis of these indexes is very important in the population evolution as well as in the evolution of space and its organisation.

As Mr. Ianos has observed, the concept of spatial organisation involves many theoretical, methodological and practical aspects because it is closely connected to the way in which the geographical space organisation involves the social and variable usage of the virtual possibilities that are included in this space (Mihailescu, 1968). So, the geographical space organisation implies a particular point of view and an action upon nature and – generally – upon each relation and dynamics of the spatial elements.

There is a natural organisation of the space and an anthropic one depending on the interference of the rational factor and its capacity to influence the natural relations between geographical elements.

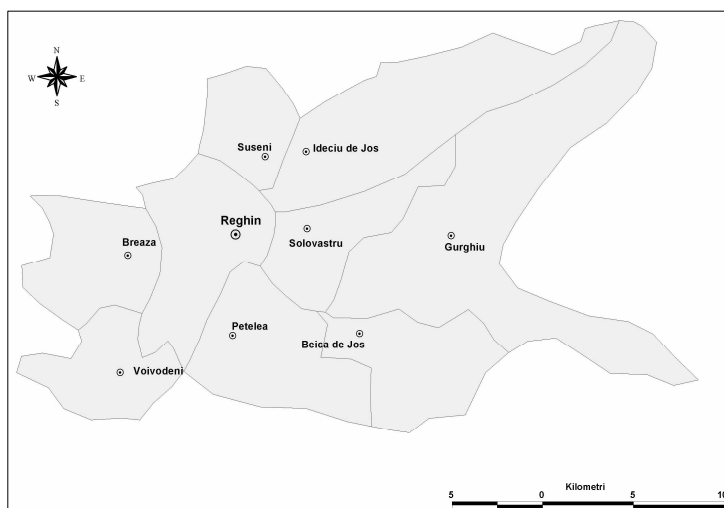


Figure 1. The Reghin Microregion map.

This paper is concerned with the anthropic organisation of the space because it involves the people’s conscience action on the elements of the space; the aim of human action upon space is the growth of the economical and social efficiency without creating unbalances in the natural organisation of the space. Unfortunately, the human action upon nature has frequently had negative consequences because not all possibilities had been taken

into account or because the action had not been under control.

The population quality is again under discussion in what education, the attitude towards nature and the perspective thinking era concerned.

No matter the consequences of the human intervention on space, the territorial distribution of the production forces, the urbanisation and the technical endowments of the geographical space involves the individualisation of some entities in the territory with a great impact on the process of territorial organisation (Ianoş, 1987).

In Reghin Microregion (Reghin and the following communes: Beica de Jos, Breaza, Gurghiu, Petelea, Ideciu de Jos, Suseni, Solovăstru, Voivodeni), the Census from 1966 showed the dominance of the male gender, the female one representing 49,8%.

Despite the economic and political transformations in the period 1985–1995 male domination is still maintained in the population strata. The male population is slightly higher (50,2%) in 1995 and only in the rural areas.

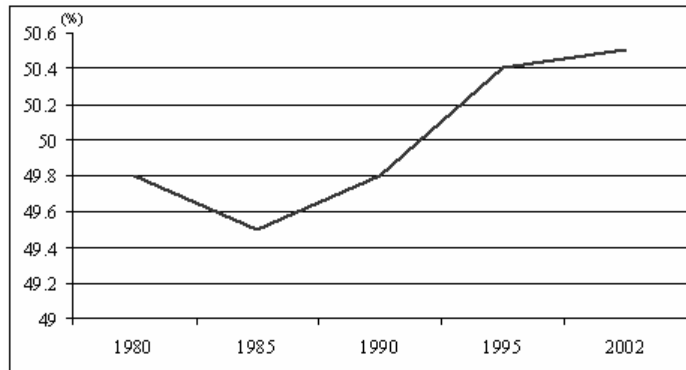


Figure 2. The percentage evolution of the female population in Reghin Microregion.

Beginning with 2002, there is a clear dominance of the female population in the both areas (rural and urban): in the rural space it is of 50,5% and in the urban space 50,8%. Higher values of the female population show the tendency of development and improvement of the living conditions. The Suseni

commune recorded the highest value in the microregion: 50, 9% female population.

Table 1. The population structure on age levels.

Age level	Area	0-19 years		20-59 years		over 60 years	
		urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural
1992		38,8	30,4	54,7	50,8	11,3	18,7
2002		25,7	25,9	59,3	51,3	14,9	22,7

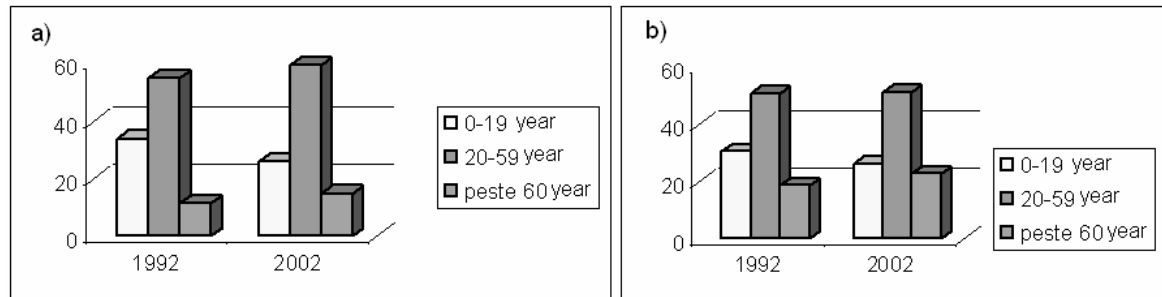


Figure 3. a). The population structure on age levels in urban area; b). The population structure on age levels in rural area.

The population structure on age levels is an important aspect because the potential labour force depends on it and because the socio-economic planning is based on the potential labour force.

In 1992, the percentage of the population between 20-59 years was of 53,2%; it is the segment that sustains the young and the old population. The percentage has increased between 1992–2002 to 56,2%. The percentage of the old population has increased with 3,8% – a higher value than the increase of the adult population – 3%.

The percentage of young population decreased from 32,5% in 1992 to 25,7% in 2002 due to the reduction of birth-rate.

There are great discrepancies at the commune level: in 1992 Solovăstru was the settlement with the highest percentage of adult population (65,9%) whereas Beica de Jos

presented the lowest value in the microregion: 45,2%. The percentage of the adult population was of medium values 54,7% in Reghin. 2002 had higher values of this age level. Except for Beica de Jos (45,8%) all settlements had higher values (over 50%) of the adult population. Reghin showed the highest percentage in the microregion 59,3%.

These facts reflect the development process of the city and of the microregion as well.

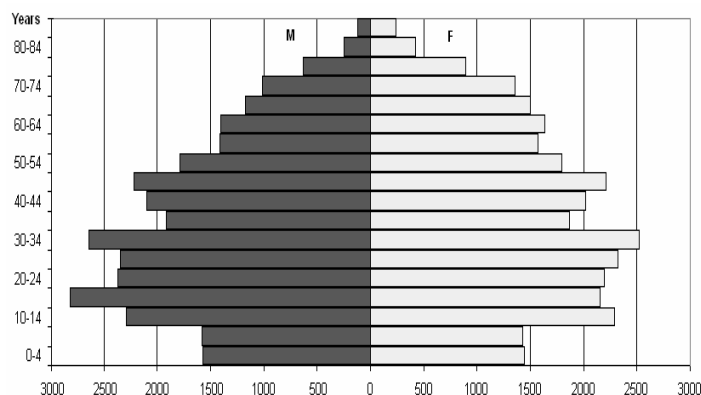


Figure 5. The age pyramid in Reghin Microregion (2002).

The ratio of dependence (inactive/active population) has various values through the region. The ratio illustrates the number of inactive population – economically supported (children and pensioners) in relation to the active adult population, according to the formula is:

$$R.D. = \frac{P_{0-19} + P_{\geq 60}}{P_{20-59}} 100$$

The ratio of dependence was of 87% in 1992, which meant that 100 persons with the age of work sustained 87 persons over or under the age limit. The ratio of dependence decreased to 77% in 2002 because of the high values of the young population in 1992. In the urban area 100 working persons sustained 67 young or old persons; in the rural area the ratio of dependence was closely to the ratio 1 to 1: that means 94%.

There is a close connection between the evolution of the population in a region and its level of economic development expressed by:

- the ratio between the population growth and the rhythm of economic growth;
- the ratio between the growth of the population and the life standard;
- the growth of the population and the Gross Domestic Product.

The higher percentage of the population working in socio-economic activities (people that produce) means a higher volume of production and services and its effects on the living standards.

Table 2. The distribuion of active population on sectors of activity.

The area	Agricultural sector (%)	Industrial sector (%)	Services sector (%)
Urban	0,1	42,2	14,7
Rural	41,0	25,8	5,7

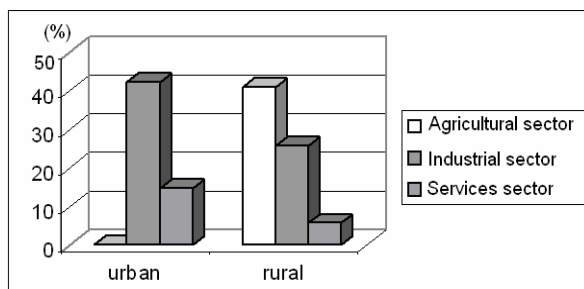


Figure 6. The distribution of the active population on sectors of activity (2001).

Generally, it is considered that the active population is represented by all persons of a certain age that have their own incomes as a result of a useful work for society.

The active population presents several major changes in Reghin Microregion: in 1966 the active population represented 52,3% but it decreased to 47,5% in 1992. The high percentage in 1966 is explained by the Socialist type of social organisation which considered that the active population must have a job (no matter the economic sector). The result was the so called hidden unemployment because this was an extensive low productivity type of economy.

There are great discrepancies regarding the general rate of activity within the geographical areas: 58% in the urban area and 47% in the rural areas.

In 2001, the unemployed population had very small values: 1,88% in Beica de Jos and 10, 59% in Gurghiu and just a little smaller in Solovăstru. Most values are below 5% in Ideciu de Jos, Petelea, Voivodeni, Suseni and Breaza. The Reghin urban area showed much higher values than the rural areas: 35,07%.

The low values of the employed population in the rural areas can be explained by the fact that farmers don't have permanent incomes thus they declaring unemployed. An additional fact explaining this phenomenon is the producers hiring for periods of only three months. A third reason would be that the population in agricultural sector work on their own.

The distribution of the active population on sectors of activities from the period after 1990, especially in the industrial sector, presents great discrepancies with the situation from the Communist period.

The forced industrialisation during Communism triggered high values of workers for the second sector; in 1985 there were 58,3% employees in the industrial sector from the urban area. The labour force needed here was supplied by the rural population. The post-communist period meant the fall of the great industrial units, the result being a lower value of the population working in industry: 42,2%.

The agricultural sector experienced an opposite situation: the farmers were employed during Communism in industry, this causing low value of the workers in agriculture, and who became unemployed after 1990 (higher values in the first sector).

The third sector, that of services, has always had low values; however, there were 12, 3% in Reghin (urban area) during Communism and surprisingly it increased to 14,7% in 2001.

2001 is characterised by a decrease of the population working in agriculture (to 0,1%) in the urban area – which is normal, and in the rural areas there is an increase to 41% (from 38% in 1985); services represent only 5,7%. The majority of the rural population declared to be unemployed, but many were practicing individual agriculture; selling their products on the local market.

The majority of people in rural areas graduated high school. A lower percentage is represented by people who graduated only 4 classes, most of them being old, due to the period before communism when only 4 classes were compulsory. The third category represented by people who graduated university studies holds the lowest percentage. It should be mentioned that nowadays more and more teenagers have university studies or they are still students. The fact is explained by the large number of universities and faculties.

Table 3. The numerical evolution of the unemployed persons.

Localitatea	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Reghin	970	398	783	774	590
Breaza	68	113	67	25	123
Beica de Jos	38	332	223	46	24
Idecu de Jos	50	88	115	46	87
Gurghiu	159	374	275	62	86
Petelea	62	316	319	156	47
Suseni	38	115	109	32	51
Solovăstru	68	133	94	37	51
Voivodeni	51	182	181	22	32

The evolution of unemployment reflects the economic problems and those regarding the restructuring process that characterise the post-communist period.

In 2001, there is a great number of unemployed persons in the urban area as a consequence of collapse of the industrial life. The continuously decreasing number in the following year is due to the migration of the unemployed persons towards the rural areas where they began to work the land. There is a reverse situation in rural areas: a low rate of unemployment in 2001, followed by a high increase in 2002 as an effect of the migration of the unemployed people. The unemployment rate was high until 2003, but in the following 2 years the situation stabilised.

Courses of re-qualification have been organized in the following settlements of the Reghin Microregion: Reghin, Breaza and Ideciu de Jos. The people were trained for free in the

following fields of activity: commerce/trade and tailoring. Out of 21 people who attended the courses in 2002; two of them refused to get employed in the field they were trained and consequently, they had to pay for the course. In 2004, 15 persons attended the commerce course. In Breaza, 12 persons attended the tailoring course and in Ideciu de Jos 28 persons attended the commerce course. And yet, all of them have certificates for small producers in agriculture.

Conclusions

- the decrease of the birth-rate was the first effect in the process of adaptation of the population ;
- there is a slight domination of the female population percentage (50,6) compared to the male one;
- there is a domination of the industrial sector in the urban area, whereas in the rural one there is a clear domination of the population active in the agricultural sector;
- despite the high number of the unemployed, few persons attended re-qualification courses.

At a first glance, the quality of the population living in the area under analysis and its capacity to adapt to the new realities are questionable. However, there are several issues that should be highlighted:

- the great majority of the population working in the industrial sector is employed by private units; many of them have foreign capital and international connections;
- most of the population in the agricultural sector has certificates of small producers in agriculture and the number of the small farms such as family associations is increasing;
- of great perspective is the rural tourism due to the beauty of the landscape and traditions.

The private initiative existed from the beginning. The results are firms with private capital which are still exporting.

Statistically speaking, the quality of population, its adaptation and, as a consequence, the spatial organisation, it still seems to be in a period of changes. However, there are solutions and many of them are put into practice while others should be made public.

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