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## Natural Decrease of Population in Villages. Case Study: Ceanu Mare Village

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According to Law no. 351 from 2001, 45 villages belonging to Cluj county are at present characterized by a natural imbalance of population (29 in proportion of 50%, 16 over 50%).

The Official Gazette no. 308 from July 24 indicates the villages with a dramatic decrease of population during 1966 -1998, which calls for support and action.

For Cluj county, I have chosen Ceanu Mare village even if it is not characterized by the lowest percentage of decrease of population, but because I am a native of the village. Nevertheless, no matter which the proportion is (30%, 50% or over 50%), the process of decrease of population is a continuous one and deserves a special attention.

Registered on October 6, 1293 in a document given by the Chancellor of King Andrei of Hungary, where someone Stefan, Matei's son (*from Chan*) is mentioned, Ceanu Mare proves to have an old attestation.

Ceanu Mare village is situated in the South–Est part of Cluj county, in the low part of Transylvania Plain, 60 km from Cluj-Napoca city and 20 km from the nearest city, Câmpia Turzii. With 4.472 inhabitants (at 1992 Census), Ceanu Mare is considered to have a medium population, that represents 0,61% from the entire population of Cluj county and 1,87%, from the rural population having a density of 47,03 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>, greater than the rural average of the county (38,4 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>).

One can notice two peculiarities concerning the evolution of the population from Ceanu:

- **first:** Boldut village almost completely disappeared in 1660 - as population is concerned – and then “reappeared” in 1900;
- **second:** the villages that are part of Ceanu Mare commune registered increases and decreases in population, with time, some of them disappearing because of lack of population.

The data from the censuses illustrate a continuous decreasing in population because of migration processes from the old areas toward the centre of Ceanu Mare, Moară, Dosu Napului and Valea lui Kati, respectively. Another characteristic illustrated is the migration of the population, in great number, towards the nearest towns and cities (Câmpia Turzii, Cluj-Napoca) and to the nearest larger villages (Vișoara, Ploscoș, Frata).

If we take in consideration the whole population of the county in the last 20 years, a decrease with about 1.000 inhabitants can be highlighted.

At the same time, considering the evolution of population, between 1907 and 2002, interesting aspects can be revealed: the infantile mortality increased in 1934, in 1954 and in 1955, even though life standard was at low levels, however the natural increase was maintained at high quota, because of the contribution of a high birth rate.

Until 1990, natural increase was positive, motivated primarily by the law on the interdiction of abortion, but also by a better medical support.

One can notice that in those periods characterized by a low life standard - which meant low access to education - more children were born, even though the infantile mortality was high, natural increase was high; while in those periods of welfare, birth rate registered a decrease. That means there is a direct connection between welfare, education and birth rate.

This fact is reflected in evolution of the population from Ceanu Mare after 1990, when natural increase was negative, even though the infantile mortality registered a decrease.

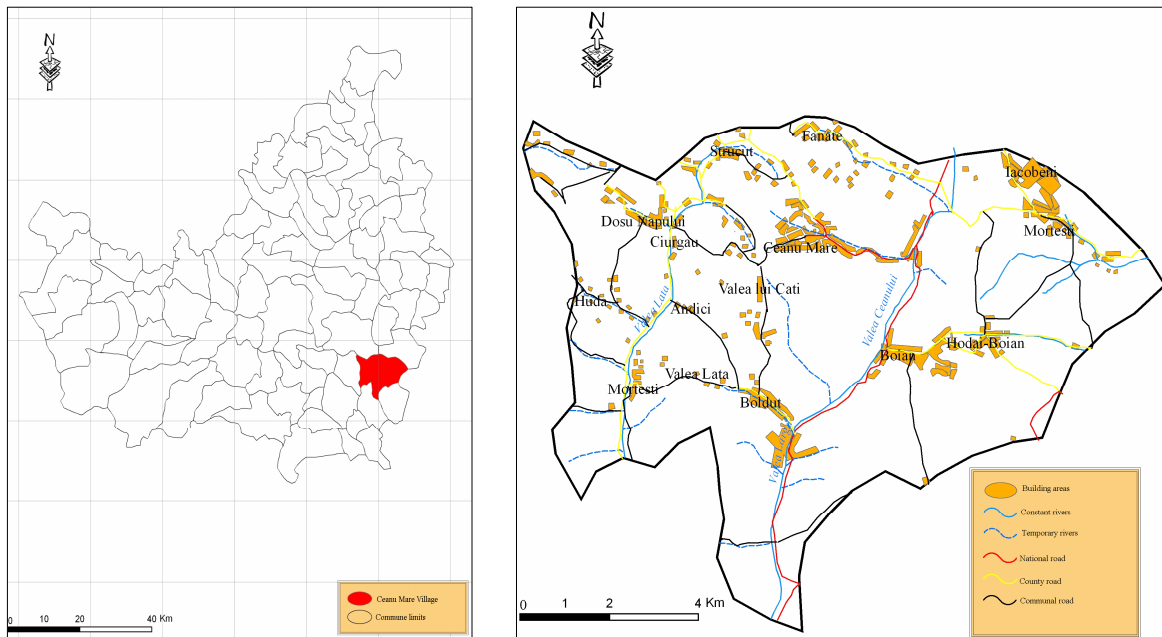


Figure 1. Ceanu Mare village – location within the county and local map

**Domain of activities - Ceanu Mare village**

According to the rural general census from 1992, out of the total population of 4.472 inhabitants, the active population was 2.133, that means 47,7%, working in different fields of economy.

In the small villages with a low number of inhabitants, as Andici is, the migration was so strong that, at present, the population lacks.

This small village had a short existence: it was established in 1938 only with the purpose of being closer to the agricultural land. People came from Boldut village - in the neighbourhood – as it extended its extra-territories to this area.

At 1956 Census, there were 122 inhabitants here, in 1966 – 79, in 1977 – 10, in 1992 – 0 inhabitation. Starting with 1970, some households migrated to the native places or to the centre of Ceanu Mare village or to Valea lui Kati or Ploscoș village.

The same process characterizes Bolduț, which in 1660 lacked population, but starting with 1900, the population reappeared. Today, Bolduț village occupies the fourth place in the hierarchy of villages by population from Ceanu Mare commune.

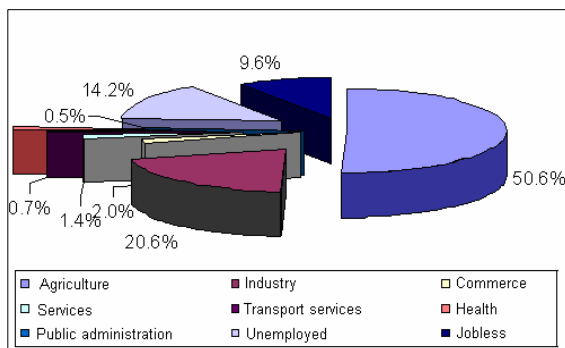


Figure 2. Economic structure of the population in Ceanu Mare village.

The natural increase was proportional until 1990 and that is the effect of several elements:

- the law against abortion;
- an old-fashioned mentality: more children, more people in the house available for work;
- some religious ideas: numerous

- children were considered as a God gift;
- eradication of the diseases (a medical unit was set up in the centre of the village, a dispensary - well equipped even for giving birth).

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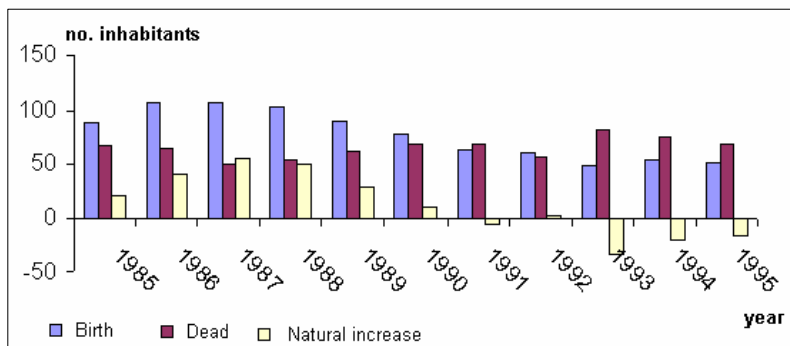


Figure 3. Natural increase of population (1985-1995) in Ceanu Mare village.

After 1990, the situation is a little bit different. For the first time, a negative natural increase is registered (-5), with a maximum in 1992 (-33).

The causes known are:

- the decrease of population because of lack of places for work (the village is located in an predominantly rural area, the main occupation being agriculture);
- the decrease of fertility, because of the predominance of aged people;
- the departure of the representatives of the segment of population able to give birth towards the nearest villages and cities (Câmpia Turzii, Turda, Cluj-Napoca, Alba Iulia), or abroad looking for a better life (Spain, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, Switzerland, Sweden etc.);
- a new mentality grew lately: families preferred 1 or 2 children instead of more;
- more attention to information, that meant higher costs for education;
- difficult access to water resources, it is known that Transylvania land lacks water.

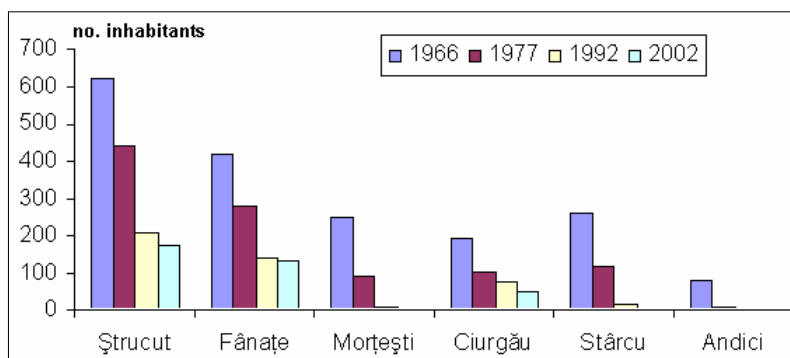


Figure 4. Pronounced decrease of population in Ceanu Mare village (1966-2000).

Considering the percentages, the distribution of population in Ceanu Mare commune is the following: Ceanu Mare 17,8%, Andici 1%, Boian 15,9%, Bolduț 12,9%, Ciurgău 2,6%, Dosu Napului 7%, Fânațe 5,85%,

Boian-Hodăi 4,7%, Iacobeni 17%, Morțești 1,4%, Stârcu 3,6%, Ștrucut 8,5%.