



Types of Rural Population Dynamics in Crasna Hills

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The numerical evolution of the population determines the interconditioning between the natural (birth rate – death rate) and migratory movement (emigration – immigration). Generally speaking, within the interval 1880 – 1956 it had an upward tendency, but in the last four decades it registered a strong decrease of the number of inhabitants that live in most of the region's villages. Although the exceptions are few, the rural settlements from the Crasna Hills can be broken down into three categories, according to the numeric evolution of the population in 1956-1992 period.

1) The rural settlements with an upward numerical evolution are very few. In this category are generally included the settlements with a 10 % growth.

Săcueni has registered an increase of only 5 %. Because it is the largest rural settlement of the region (7,260 inhabitants) it can be included in this category. Considering the rich agricultural resources and the more recently discovered hydrocarbons in its contact region, as well as its role as a communication network, it displays a well defined supracommunal polarizing role and good development chances or, at least, preserving its present status (fig. 1).

This commune is joined by other two very big rural settlements: Sărmășag – with a population growth of 26 %, resulting primarily from the mining activity, and secondarily, from its role of transport network – and Arduș (+12.4 %) – which is a centre of supracommunal influence situated at the contact area of Colinelor Codrului with the highest part of the Someșului Plain (Ardudului Plain). The latter is characterized by harmoniously mixed diversified activities (fig. 2).

Though Diosig has over 6,200 inhabitants its population dropped with 11,5 % as compared with 1956 (7,053). It has the same value as the value registered in 1910. This figure indicates the slightly regressive tendency of this settlement, determined till now by the attraction exercised by Oradea (this influence was stronger than that exercised upon Săcueni).

Seven more large villages belong to 13 rural settlements, which have an ascendent evolution. They represent 62 % from the total number, ranking first according to its industrial importance: Poiana Codrului, Ulmeni (with a complementary function of services in transports), Fărcașa. Other communes are located in the influential area of Zalău or Marghita – Borla, Petreu or among the industrial rural centres and on the traffic axis – Gărdani. The numerical growth of Derșida population (with 42%) was facilitated by the mining activities carried out in the vicinity, and also influenced up to a certain degree, by the ethnical component, with a Gypsy rate of 22 %. A more clearly contoured role in the rapid growth of population was played by this ethnical group within Pusta, where it represents 74 %. This locality registered the most important increase within the interval 1956-1992 – with 2.7 times (from 483 to 1 312 inh.), being also favored by its status of subcomponent of Șimleul Silvaniei town. Poiana Codrului occupies the second place, with a growth of 2,3 times, also explained by the viability of glassware factory.

An exception from the situation of the settlements situated in the relatively isolated regions is given by Dej a locality from Sălajului Hills (with 1 250 inhabitants and an increase rate of 15 %), mainly explained by a strong conservatism. Țicău is

considered the single middle-inferior rural settlement with a significant increase (26 %) due to its geographic position on Someș axis, and secondary because of its high rate of Gypsies.

The growth of the population registered 23.5 % on the whole of category. The rising numerical evolution of the population from all these settlements was the result of the natural increase, which exceeded the losses registered through emigration, which have not been negligible, except Poiana Codrului, Sărmășag and Pusta. They belong to the category of rural settlements with a balanced structure of the population on age groups.

2) Rural settlements with a geodemographic constant evolution have also a very reduced proportion -7.1 % (15). Their population oscillated slightly, within the limits of maximum + - 10 % (it decreased only with 1.2 %, namely with 215 inhabitants on the whole).

The main factor which determined the preservation of the population in these settlements is the favorable position near towns and rural centres with industrial activities and complementary of services: Crișeni and Panic - next to Zalău; Cehei - in the vicinity of Șimleul Silvaniei; Bârsău de Sus, Iegheriște and Crucișor - near Poiana Codrului; Mânău, Arduzel and Vicea - close to Ulmeni and not far from Baia Mare; Motiș and Ulciug - in the near vicinity of Cehului Silvaniei. Ardușat and Sălsig are placed in Someșului Valley, with fertile soils, on an important axis of circulation and at a convenient distance from Baia Mare that permits commutation. It represented even a small centre of local attraction through the mining activity.

The relatively favorable position of these settlements ensured to a large extent the preservation of the population in these places as compared to the situation dominant in most villages, although emigration here was more significant than the one characterizing the localities of the previous category (generally between -5 and - 10 % yearly, within the interval 1970-1990), balanced through the natural increase.

The high values of birth rate and natural increase have been decisive for the maintenance of Băița de Sub Codru at the same level. This locality was disadvantaged by its geographical position. The result was massive losses through departures.

3) The rural settlements with regressive dynamics submitted to the general rule that acted in the rural environment over the last decades, reached 86.7 % from the total number (183 from 211).

Rural migration brought a population decrease of 34,2 % to the localities of this category - from 996 inhabitants/settlement in 1956 to 655

in 1992. In most of the cases the population of these localities was reduced to half, a third or even a fourth (sometimes under this value). The yearly medium migratory balance for the period 1975-1990 reached - 16 ‰, and the natural increase only + 2.4 ‰.

The most affected settlements have been the very small, small and middle ones from the areal of maximum isolation. A series of settlements that are not residences of communes, small and low-medium, have registered decreases between 50 and 60 %: Colinele Codrului (Racova, Mediaș, Tătărăști, Necopoi, Chilia, Sâi, Măriuş), Piemontul Tășnadului and Camărului Hills (Supuru de Sus, Orbău, Silvaș, Izvoarele, Dijir, Mălădia, Doh, Cristelec), Sălajului Hills and Culoarul Sălajului (Firminiș, Cuceu, Bârsa, Domniu, Mineu). The population of the Gârceiu and Chilioara villages was reduced to a third and that of Chegea locality to a quarter.

Some centres of commune suffered a dramatic decrease being consequently included in the category of small villages - Coșeu (from 116 to 498 inhabitants), Săuca (with 50%), Dobrin, Socond, Hereclean. Other communes, situated in the category of middle-superior and large - Hodod and Carastelec (with 50-51 %), Camăr (with 43 %): Beltiug, Săcășeni and Sălacea (between 37 and 33 %) - or middle-inferior (Boianu Mare, Băsești, Homorodu de Mijloc, Bicz, Oarța de Jos) have undergone the same process.

The very small rural settlements, regarded in the context of rural manifestation during the last decades, with a maximum rate of isolation and unviable, registered the most serious decreases. The population from the localities Acina, Ardud-Vii, Bolda, Șandra, Rațiu, Bocșița, Naimon reached 30-40 % in comparison with that of 1956, while the settlements Reghea, Delenii and Poiana Măgura was reduced to a quarter. The most serious tendency of depopulation within this category was manifested in Camăr-Viișoara Hills: two settlements literally disappeared - Pădurenii (Satu de Năcaz) from Viișoara commune (2 inhabitants in 1992); Țărmure 5, Rugea - 10 from 104, and Huta, 29 inhabitants compared with 151 in 1956.

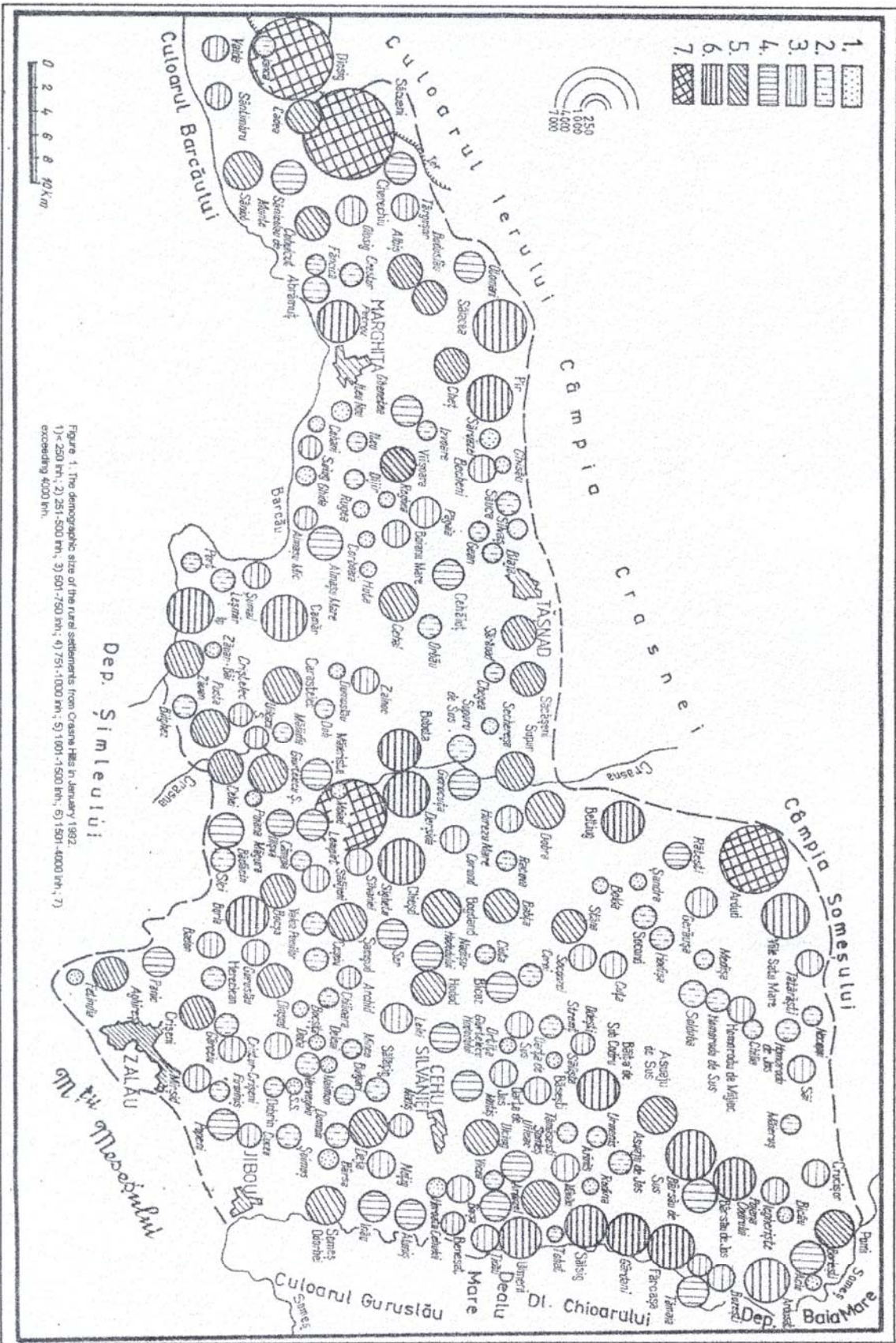


Figure 1. The demographic size of the rural settlements from Crasna Hills in January 1992. 1) $1-250\text{ km}$; 2) $251-500\text{ km}$; 3) $501-750\text{ km}$; 4) $751-1,000\text{ km}$; 5) $1,001-1,500\text{ km}$; 6) $1,501-4,000\text{ km}$; 7) exceeding $4,000\text{ km}$.

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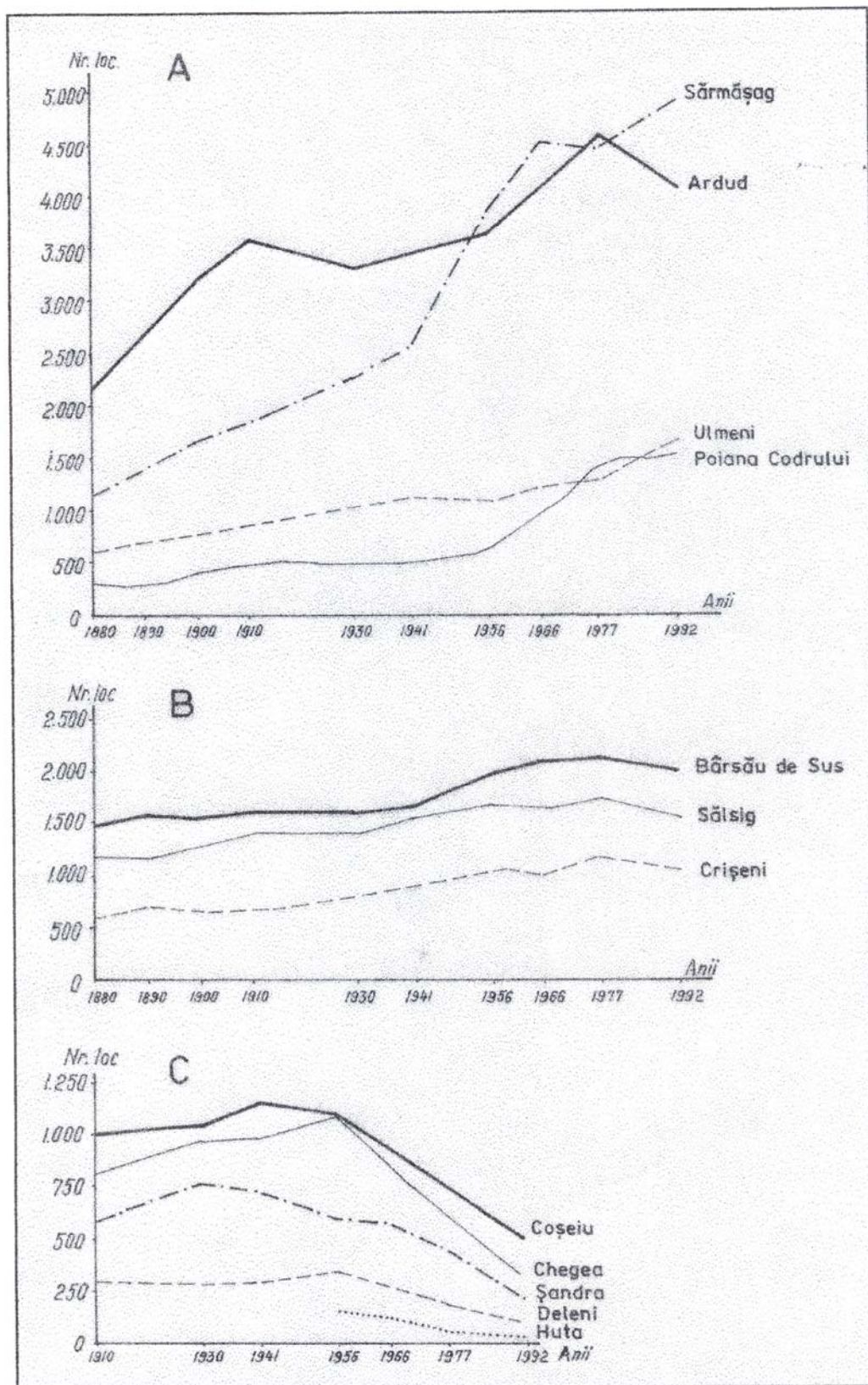


Figure 2. Types of numerical evolution of the rural settlements' population from Crasna Hills. A. ascendent evolution; B. constant relative evolution; C. regressive dynamics.

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