SITUATION OF POPULATION EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE

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Abstract: We need to underline that economic development of agriculture, particularly of agricultural households, is closely dependent on each category of agricultural production resources. Without underestimating the role and importance of all resources, we need to mention that, of all resources and production factors, human resources have a decisive influence on productive factors in agriculture, no matter the agricultural system. This is the reason why the authors of this article present the evolution of population employed in Romanian agriculture based on their analysis.

Key words: people employed, diminution, constraints, share, youth

INTRODUCTION

Population is defined as a community of people that live within a certain geographical area.[5]. Socio-economically, population may be described as a social subsystem counting inhabitants, density, age and gender structure, birth rate and death rate, feminisation, migrations, ageing, and labour force renewal. [2]

In Romania, economically, there is still a poor diversification of economic activities since most localities still have an agriculture-based economy.[8] Non-performing agriculture still dominates with small size agricultural holdings that lack proper equipment and that can only cover family subsistence in most cases. [1]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Analysis of Romanian rural area allowed the caption of the main issues confronting our rural areas.

One of the methods used to prepare the raw analysis material was to document the official databases provided by the National Institute of Statistics (INS – time series Tempo Online), Romania’s Statistics Yearbook – collection, databases published by EUROSTAT, as well as different publications or complementary information retrieved from the Internet.

RESEARCH RESULTS

During the entire period after December 1989, agriculture has played a very important social role acting like an occupational buffer against transition socio-economic effects and absorbing an important share of the labour force released by urban industries. [6]

Thus, the decades of rapid industrialisation of our economy were followed by increasing decrease of the active population in agriculture, an extremely complex socio-economic phenomenon with huge implications in rural society. [7]

As for the quantitative and structural-qualitative evolution of labour resources in Romania’s agriculture, we need to mention that long-term labour force in agriculture follows the general trend of developing countries – absolute and relative diminution. The diminution of agriculture-employed labour resources started, practically, after the
establishment of agricultural cooperative system whose peak was in 1965. Between 1981
and 1989, the reserve of agricultural labour force kept relatively constant; starting with
1990, the trend reversed: there has been absolute and relative increase of active population
in agriculture (Table 1). At present, the share of population employed in agriculture in
Romania is much larger than the mean of the E.U. member states.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Rural population</th>
<th>Total population employed</th>
<th>Population employed agriculture</th>
<th>Rural population from total population</th>
<th>Population employed in agriculture from rural population</th>
<th>Population employed in agriculture from total employed population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>23,207</td>
<td>10,598</td>
<td>10,840</td>
<td>3,055</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>22,681</td>
<td>10,224</td>
<td>9,439</td>
<td>3,187</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>22,458</td>
<td>10,155</td>
<td>8,420</td>
<td>3,466</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>22,435</td>
<td>10,190</td>
<td>8,629</td>
<td>3,570</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>22,408</td>
<td>10,164</td>
<td>8,563</td>
<td>3,498</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>21,795</td>
<td>10,186</td>
<td>8,329</td>
<td>3,011</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>21,733</td>
<td>10,133</td>
<td>8,306</td>
<td>2,884</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>21,673</td>
<td>9,778</td>
<td>8,238</td>
<td>2,634</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>21,624</td>
<td>9,744</td>
<td>8,390</td>
<td>2,674</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>21,431</td>
<td>9,632</td>
<td>8,240</td>
<td>2,780</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>19,760</td>
<td>9,129</td>
<td>8,318</td>
<td>1,727</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: our own processing of Anuarul statistic al României, colecție, INS, BFM [10]

In Romania, the share of active population employed in agriculture was rather
stable until 1990, with about 3,000,000 people. Structural economic reforms and the
dismemberment of the production agricultural cooperatives at the beginning of the 1990s,
led to a drastic increase of the number of people employed in agriculture. [3].

The labour force in the rural area employed in agriculture is one of the major
constraints of local economy development. [4].

The share of population employed in agriculture of the total rural population has
increased significantly since 1990, from 28.8% to 35.0% in 2000, after which it diminished
gradually reaching 28.8% in 2010. After 2010, the decrease was even higher, reaching
18.9% in 2016.

Thus, after 1995, rural population decreased slightly due to the return to the
countryside of urban dwellers that had lost their jobs in industry. The attraction force of the
towns and cities decreased because of the increase of the living costs and of the dwelling
maintenance costs.

The evolution of demographics in Romania’s rural area has known lately a different
dynamics because of the trend to modernisation, of the trends during the previous period,
and because of the impact of the new economic, political and social factors.

About the same evolution characterised the share of population employed in
agriculture of the total population employed: it grew from 28.2% in 1990 to a maximum of
41.2% in 1999, to decrease in 2016 to 20.8% (Figure 1). The increase of the population
employed in agriculture in the last decade of the 20th century was determined not by the
needs of agriculture but by the licensing of labour force from other economic branches
during the transition period of Romanian economy.
Figure 1. Evolution of population employed in agriculture from total population employed

Source: our own processing of Anuarul statistic al României, colecție, INS, BFM [15], [11]

The fluctuating evolution of rural population is a consequence of migration, particularly of young people, to urban areas or abroad, in search for better jobs and for a more attractive way of living.

Migration is of particular importance for Romania: it has positive effects economically and socially due to the important financial resources. Such contributions are particularly important for rural economy because emigration helps changing mentalities and opening towards modernisation provided migrants come back home.

Table 2

Structure of population employed per economic activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economics activities</th>
<th>Employed population</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thousands of people</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8,317.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</td>
<td>1,726.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry – total</td>
<td>1,957.0</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Extractive</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Processing</td>
<td>1,717.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Production and supply of electricity and thermal energy, gas, hot water and air conditioning</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Water supply, sanitation, waste management, decontamination</td>
<td>130.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructions</td>
<td>684.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce and social services</td>
<td>3949.6</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce services</td>
<td>2400.7</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Whole and retail commerce, and motor repair</td>
<td>1,225.9</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Transport and storage</td>
<td>444.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hotels and restaurants</td>
<td>193.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information and communication</td>
<td>204.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Financing and insurance</td>
<td>105.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Real estate</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professional, scientific and technical activities</td>
<td>192.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In January 2017, of the total population employed (8,317,600), **20.8% worked in agriculture, 31.7% worked in industry and constructions, and 47.5% worked in commerce and social services.** Thus, 79.2% of total population employed worked in non-agricultural activities (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Structure of population employed per sectors](image)

According to Figure 3, the highest unemployment rate is within the 15-24 years range.

![Figure 3. Unemployment rate per age groups and age means in 2017](image)

*Source: our own processing of INS*
Analysing the structure of civilian population employed per economic sectors points out that the largest shares of people working in agriculture were 31.0% in the Region North-East and 30.5% in the Region South-West Oltenia.

Industry and constructions shared 37.7% each of the people employed in Regions West and Centre. Services shared over 40.0% of the people employed in the Regions Centre (45.5%) and West (44.8%), while the highest percentage in the field was in Region Bucharest-Ilfov (71.9%).

At the end of 2016, Region North-East shared 18.7% of the total number of unemployed people, followed by Region South-Muntenia (17.7%) and South-West Oltenia (16.5%), the smallest share was in Region Bucharest-Ilfov (4.9%) with 20,600 unemployed people.

Unemployment rate was, on December 31, 2016, the highest in Region South-West Oltenia (8.3%), while the lowest one was in Region Bucharest-Ilfov (1.5%).
CONCLUSIONS

We see that the main factors having contributed to the socio-demographic evolution of the population after 1990 are population natural growth that had negative values after 1990 and migration, particularly that of young people: they led to both a decrease of the total population and of the rural population.

The diagnosis analysis of the rural area shows that demographics is mainly a development potential factor, since Romania’s population is more rural than those of other E.U. member states, we believe it is necessary to get involved more in the development of rural areas taking into account specific economic activities, resources available and human resources available in rural communities to be maintained as rural areas.

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