

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY, CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF GEOGRAPHY
HUMAN GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT

PhD THESIS

Summary

THE URBAN NETWORK OF ALBA COUNTY

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Key-words: *urban, urbanization, urban network, Alba county, historical perspective, urban populations, urban-rural relations, zone of influence.*

1. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

This chapter has as scope the theoretical and methodological foundation of the present doctoral thesis. In consequence, it tries to define concepts such as: urban, urbanization, urban network and at the same time it specifies the theories of urban development. It is also concerned with the main research methods and sources of data and the scope of research itself.

1.1. The concept of urban

The specialty literature offers a multiple examples regarding the difficulty of defining the concept of urban. Among the researchers preoccupied with the city, Whilliam H. Frey and Z. Zimmer (2001), believe that analyzed from the historical time perspective, the urban is a new phenomenon and therefore hardly to define. From this perspective they argue that only recently, if we consider the entire history of human evolution, the individual started living in dense urban agglomerations.

Beginning with the 19th century, the analysis of the city became a constant occupation for the urban geography. The 20 century, marked by the „urban explosion”, intensifies these preoccupations, generating new approaches of researching the urban organism, some based on diverse philosophical concepts (for example the positivists ones), new interpretations of the term itself and establishing a research methodology. Therefore, we can distinguish between standard definitions of the concept and definitions that vary with the mean of research.

The research tendencies of the urban, generally, deal with two objectives. The 1st one tries to answer the question “**how and where has the city appeared?**”, looking to identify the origin and the right phenomenon that made possible the emergence of the city. The 2nd one tries to find answers to questions such as: “**which are the common characteristics of cities?**”, “**what differentiates them?**”, “**how did the city evolve?**”, “**which is its structure and organization?**”, “**what is the role of technology, the social and natural components in the context of city as a system?**”. All these questions represent the laws that lay at the level of

urban development. In consequence, the specialty literature suggests two types of theories: the theories of urban origin and the urban development theories.

The theories regarding the urban origin, which are presented at large in the thesis, are:

- **The hydraulic theory**, known also as the *environmental* or *ecological* theory;
- **The economic theory**;
- **The military theory** or the *defense* theory (P. Wheatley, 1971);
- **The religious theory**.

This subchapter analyses and presents the emergence and the evolution of the studies regarding the research of the city from the Romanian urban geography perspective. Therefore, the main and the most important works that funded this science in Romania, starting with the 2nd decade of the 20th century, are presented here.

1.2. The concept of urbanization

Some researchers understand the process of urbanization from the physical point of view, meaning the continuous growth of the land used in urban purposes. Others interpret the phenomenon from the social perspective, whereas urbanization is a social process of people, which adopt customs and traditions specific for the urban lifestyle, regardless the region where they live (Linteau, Durocher, 1979, Champion, 2001).

We can identify two different perspectives of interpretation of the urbanization process:

- **From the distribution and growth of the population perspective**- Urbanization is a process of population concentration, which produces in two ways: by multiplying the concentration points and by the growth of the size of the individual concentration (Tisdale, 1942).
- **From the migration of the population and the influence of the settlement size perspective**- Urbanization produces where there is a direct positive relation between the net migration rate and the urban statue (Fielding, 1989) (Fig. 1a)

The process of urbanization is in a strong relationship with the rural-urban migration. In this context, the urban centers become important attraction poles for the rural population, eager to improve its lifestyle conditions. The agglomeration advantages are therefore essentials, differentiating the urban region from the origin (rural) locality of the migrants. According to A.

Boskoff there is continuing change in the professional predominance, division of labor and the density of the population once we move from the village to the urban region, through the intermediary position of the small cities (Boskoff, 1970, quoted by Sharma, 1989).

Urbanization has a lot of aspects. In the context of this phenomenon, the migratory flows have multidirectional and diverse orientations. From this perspective, the specialty literature suggests new concepts, capable of capturing the angle of incidence of the migration: **polarization reversal** (Richardson, 1977, 1980), **counterurbanization** (B.J.L. Berry, 1976) and **reurbanization**.

1.3. Theories of urban space

The urban theories can be defined as a set of perspectives and interpretations of the urban world, their final scope being the understanding of the urban life and the definition of its essential characteristics. They have their origin in: the researches undertaken by the geographers and urbanists regarding the dynamic and the structure of the city, in the researches of the sociologists on the way the urban organism influences the life and the behavior of the individual, in the researches regarding the transformation and the occupation of the urban space, that concerned the economists or analysts of space or in different philosophical ideas.

From those concerned with the way the urban transforms and influence the space, the individual and the society we mention: Patrick Geddes, Robert Ezra Park, Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Christaller, Louis Wirth, Charles Tiebout, Kevin Lynch, Louis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, W. Alonso, Peter Mann, Peter Hall, Walter Isard, B.J.L. Berry, John Friedmann, Stephen Graham & Simon Marvin, Michael Dear & Steven Flusty, Ian Mcharg, Herbert Gans, David Harvey sau Richard Sennett (Fig.1).

A great importance in understanding the urban world has the models developed on the way the cities are structured. These models of space use (the concentric circles model, 1923; the sectorial model, 1939; the multiple nuclei model, 1945; the synthetic model, 1965, the quantitative, 1960 or cultural, 1969, 1986 models) raised multiple questions and they tried to find a reasonable and rational explanation for the way of evolution and configuration of the city.

1.4. The urban network of Alba County in the specialty literature

This subchapter tries to identify the scientific works in which the urban space of Alba County was analyzed. Some major characteristics of these works results:

- The majority of the studies interested in this area have a historical character;
- The urban centers of Alba County are analyzed from monographic perspective in the 1980;
- The urban phenomenon of Alba is mentioned in the urban geography and demographical studies, but there aren't any studies capable of exclusively analyzing in details these cities.

1.5. The subject of the thesis and the scientific and methodological process

Taking into account the data and information available, the specialty literature and the objective research perspective of the analyzed space, this thesis wants to:

- Build a complex image of the demographic, territorial and economic evolution of the cities of Alba county;
- Establish an evolution model of the urban centers in the context of political, economical and social factors;
- Identify which are the mechanisms and phenomenon responsible for the urban phenomenon in Alba County.

METHODOLOGY

The data and information used in this research are multiple and complex: censuses, statistical almanacs, localities' cards, The General Urbanistic Plans, different laws, documents and rapports elaborated by the local, regional and national authorities.

This research also implies some research methods such as:

- Survey method;
- Deductive and inductive judgments;
- Analysis method;
- Comparative method;
- Historical method.

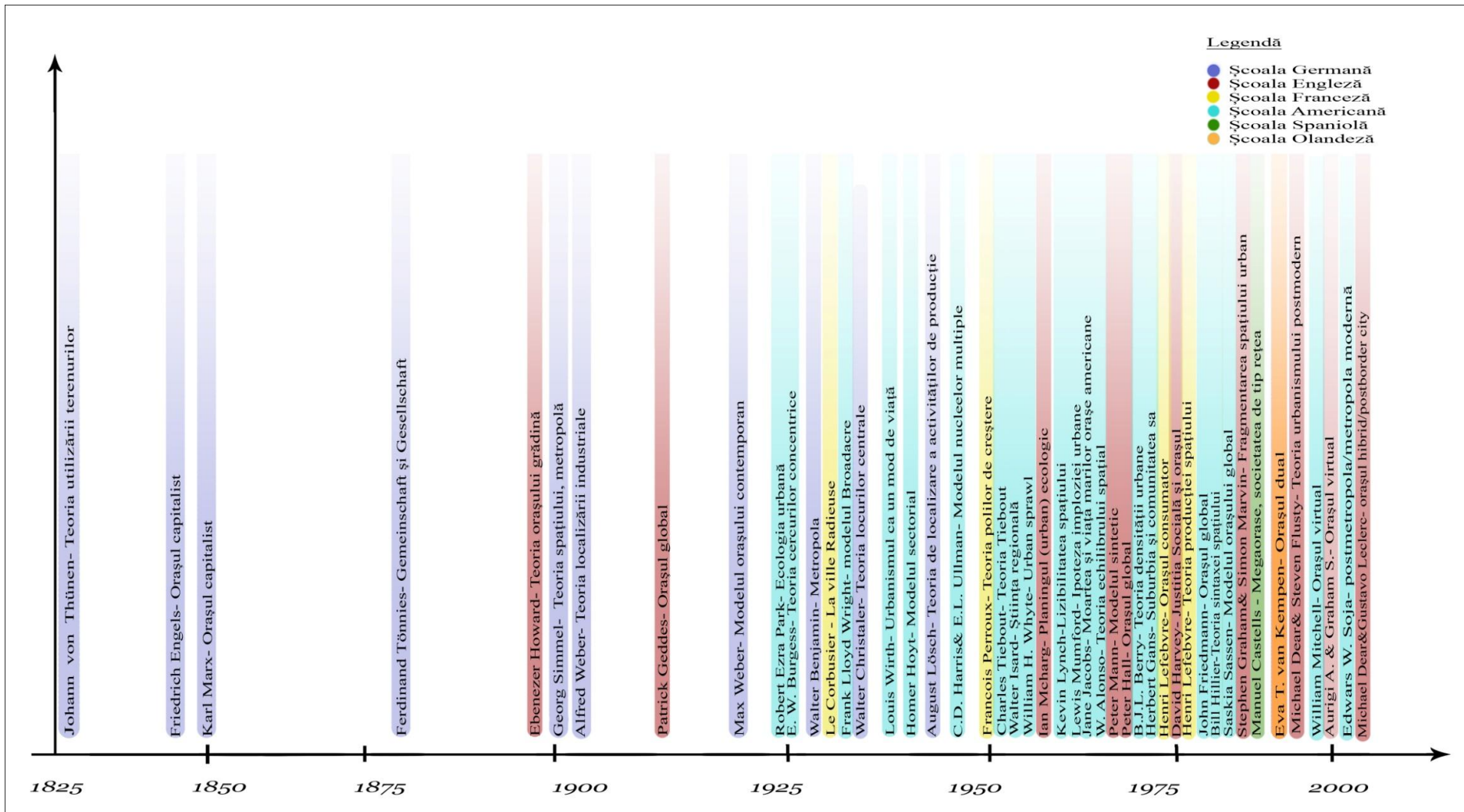


Figure 1 Theories, models and concepts regarding the evolution of the city (1826-2000)

2. THE EVOLUTION OF THE URBAN NETWORK OF ALBA COUNTY

This chapter reviews the emergence of the Albean towns starting with the Daco-Roman period. The central idea is: the continuity of living of the urban Albean space from the earliest times until the present. The historical analysis is the main research method involved in writing this chapter.

2.1. Daco-Roman period

This chapter uses as sources the following: archeological excavations, antique literary sources and historical compendia. Taking into account all these, the main settlements that connect their names with the Daco-Roman period are: *Apulum* (Alba Iulia), *Ampelum* (Zlatna), *Auraria Maior* (Abrud), *Brucla* (Aiud), *Salinae* (Ocna Mureș), *Cetate* or *Singidava* (Cugir) and *Sabesium* (Sebeș). Some of these settlements receive important urban statuses. The Roman urbanism marked especially the evolution of *Ampelum*, an important administrative, military and commercial centre at the time.

2.2. The Middle Ages and Renaissance period

The research perspective in this chapter is from the migratory population point of view and from the Hungarian and German domination one. The way these cities evolved, configured in territory and developed is influenced by the presence of these mentioned factors, which in time assimilates and harmoniously cohabitates with the endemic population. The foreign influence is strongly visible in the architecture and the structure of the Albean cities. Among the most important characteristics the following dominate in the urban landscape:

- The fortification and the church which predominate over the city shape;
- The regulatory division of the land, in elongated lots, but incapable of offering a clear zoning of the city;
- Aligned-to-the-streets houses, sometimes united by walls;
- The presence of a central square, where there is situated the church.

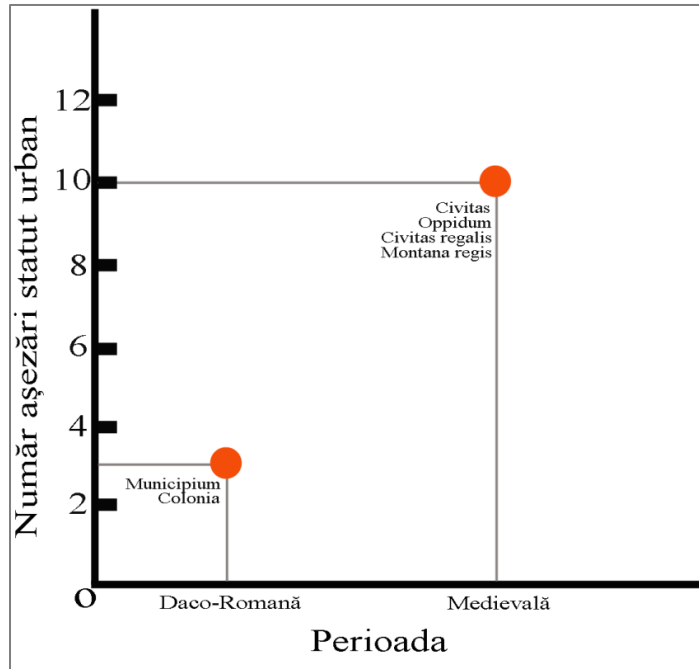


Figure 2 The evolution of the urban settlement in the Daco-Roman period and the Middle Ages

2.3. The Communist period and the effects of totalitarian system upon the evolution of the urban network

The Alban cities are analyzed in this subchapter from the perspective of the forced industrialization process and the Communist urbanization, similar processes, specific for the Communist state. Also the principles of the socialist state are presented, according to which the cities and the Romanian society are developed and organized, principles that makes a clear distinction between the East and Central European city and the Western European one.

2.3.1. The Alban cities and the Communist state's investment

In this section the cities from Alba County are researched within the context of planification (planificare) process, which meant the allocation of financial resources by the Socialist state, with the aim of industrializing the entire country. In the new political-administrative context, Alba Iulia, gets a favorable position, the 1968 Law, offers the city the statue of county seat. In comparison with the county seat, the other cities will benefit from

modest financial investment, their development becoming an important objective only after the 1970. All the urban centers will develop in this period an important industrial base.

2.3.2. The territorial development of Albean cities under the Communist factor

Two processes will shape from the territorial point of view the Albean cities:

- The construction of the Socialist buildings and neighborhoods, strategically located and linked to the industrial zones'
- The systematization process.

These two will have important consequences upon the zoning process of the cities, over the urbanistic development of them and over the transformation of the urban profile, which, once with the Communist urbanistic norms, will have an irregular aspect.

2.4. The Albean urban system in the context of market economy

In this chapter are mentioned the factors responsible with the transformation of cities, in the new economical context:

- The market economy and the economical restructuration;
- The decentralization of power and the new financial and decision-making power the of the local authorities;
- The privatization of the economic units according to the 15/1990Law;
- De development of services;
- The new class of the private actors and entrepreneurs, with important roles in the territorial evolution of cities;
- The emergence of foreign investors.

The level of urbanization of Alba county changes under the impulse of 1994 and 1998 laws, according to which Teiuş and Baia de Arieş become cities.

2.4.1. The economic profile of the Albean urban centres in the new economic context and its effects on the internal dynamic

After 1990, the economy of Alba County cities is influenced by the economical restructuration, a condition of the privatization process, but also by the decentralization of power,

which offers financial autonomy to the local authorities. Taking into account these two processes, some important phenomenon will happen, with the aim of improving the quality of urban life and the business climate in order to attract private investors.

The restructuration process will have negative impact on the evolution of cities, especially the small ones like: Abrud, Baia de Arieș, Zlatna, Cugir and Ocna Mureș. The municipalities, of which 3 (Aiud, Blaj și Sebeș), are declared in the 1990s, will manage to attract foreign investors. The component localities of the municipalities will develop, especially in the services area.

2.5. The territorial distribution of the cities. The relations of the cities with the territory

From the location in the territory perspective the cities of Alba County were divided in two:

- The cities along Mureș Valley and its left tributaries;
- The cities along Arieș Valley and Apuseni Mountains (fig.22)

2.5.1. The cities along Mureș Valley and its left tributaries

The main difference between these cities and the ones from the Arieș Valley and Apuseni area is their great level of accessibility. In consequence, the centers located here had the advantage of less abrupt relief, which permitted the development of a dense road network that connects the cities with the rest of the country. Therefore, the cities that are more developed are the municipality of Alba Iulia, Blaj and Sebeș, situated along Mureș corridor. Teiuș, the smallest city located here, is limited in its development by the presence of Alba Iulia municipaliy located in the southern part and Aiud municipality in the north.



Figure 22 The position of the urban network in Alba County

2.5.2. The cities along Arieșului Valley and Apuseni Mountains

In comparison to the cities located on the Mureș Valley and its tributaries, the urban centres from this category are small, with a modest economic development, unable to develop strategies in the new competitive economic context. The processes of deindustrialization and tertiarisation had a negative impact on the evolution of these centers, of which the urban population employed, in the past, in the main industrial unit in the city, doesn't have the experience and necessary qualification required by the services jobs, created in the context of

market economy. The quality of urban life and of living, both with important consequences on the image of the city, which becomes an integral part of the urban regeneration process (Hall, 1998), are modest and unattractive from the possible investors perspective.

Because of the abrupt relief these urban centers didn't develop much. They are: Abrud, Baia de Arieș, Câmpeni and Zlatna.

2.6. Conclusions

The actual evolution of the urban network is a consequence of the political and economical factors, which worked in time. The cities from Alba County owe their present location to the natural factor, expressed in territory through the presence of moderate and low heights (corridor, depression, and plateau) and through the presence of natural resources (fertile soils etc.)

At the regional level, specific is the great number of cities, of different territorial influence. The way they become convergence centers is discussed in Chapter 4.

3. URBAN POPULATION

This chapter analyses the urban population from two perspectives:

- Its evolution in time, numerically, but also its structures on sexes and age groups;
- Its dynamic, especially from the point of view of external migration.

3.1. Aspects regarding the structure of the urban population

3.1.1. The evolution of the urban population

This subchapter focuses on the evolution of urban population of each urban center, from 1850 to 2012. In this context 2 groups emerge:

- The one of the urban centers located in the Apuseni Mountains. These cities are characterized by important population growths between 1880-1900 and under the Communist state because of the natural resources exploitations, but they are the first to lose population after the 1990.

- The one of the centers located on the Mureş Valley and plateau area, which records important growths of populations under the totalitarian system.

After 1990 all these urban centers experience important population loss because of the external migration intensification and the reduced birth rates and fertility processes.

3.1.2. The evolution on age structure of the urban population

The analysis of the urban population' age structure generally shows the same directions. There are important young population stocks in 2002, a consequence of the pronatalist policy of the Communist system, but they reduce in 2012, graphically being represented by the contraction of the ages pyramid at the base. This fact has important consequences upon the urban population stocks and quality, also generating the process of demographic ageing. There is also a reduction of the adult population stock in 2012 because of the intensification of the migratory process.

3.1.3. The evolution on sexes of the urban population

The evolution of the masculine and feminine stocks of the urban population is affected by the migratory process and low birth rates. This generates the reduction of the two sexes between the analyzed intervals 1990-2011. The most affected are the small cities that experienced important masculine population stocks once with the development of heavy industry. This subchapter offers an inventory of the evolution of masculine and feminine population between 1990 and present time.

3.2. The dynamic of the population

Two aspects are of great importance here: the internal and the external migration, capable of offering information about the temporary and permanent mobility of the urban population. External migration is interpreted also from the perspective of the host countries and the profile of the migrant.

3.2.1. Internal migration

Because the internal migration is quantified together with the external migration, the two phenomenon are analyzed in the next subchapter, which deals with the international migration. There are some aspects regarding the migration in the Socialist period and after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The migratory flow regarding the internal migration is less intense in comparison with the Communist time, but, it plays a very significant role in the dynamic of the urban population. Also, this subchapter treats the problem of the floating population.

3.2.2. The external migration and the evolution of the ethnical structure of the urban centres

There are differences between the totalitarian system period and the period after the 1989 regarding the external migration. In the first case, the migration was controlled by the state, only family reunification and the migration of the ethnic population was accepted. After 1990, the process intensifies because the restrictions regarding migration are removed.

Other relevant aspects of this section are: the analysis of the pull and push factors of the migratory process, the destination countries and the job offer for the migrants in search for employment. Another analyzed issue is the departure of the ethnic population (Germans, Hungarians) in the 1850-2012 interval.

3.3. Conclusions

The main characteristic of the urban population of Alba County is its evolution in strong connection with the political and socio-economic factor. Its ethnic structure, at first extremely diverse, tends towards the domination of the population of Romanian origin and therefore a greater homogeneity.

4. URBAN-RURAL RELATIONS

4.1. Urban-rural relations in the specialty literature

This chapter creates a picture of the research activities concerned with the relationships between the urban and rural environs, both at the level of European, American and also Romanian geography. A special place in defining these relations had the Central Place theory, elaborated by Christaller, which analyses cities as central places, capable of offering complex services to the surrounding rural space. Furthermore, this chapter suggests an inventory of the methodology regarding the research of the urban-rural relations.

4.2. Methodology

This chapter was founded using the survey method, applied, directly and indirectly, on 567 individuals from the rural environ. The questioning localities were chosen according to some methods such as: areolar method, accessibility, distance and population criteria. This study was conducted in the base of some primary and secondary hypothesis, which confirm themselves along the research process.

4.3. The relations between the urban centres of Alba County and the surrounding rural space

These types of relations have a double sense because they are realized from the urban-to-rural space (e.g. the transfer of technology) and vice-versa (e.g. the supply of the city with natural resources, raw materials or labor force). The intensity, orientation and frequency of these relations are determined by the personal motivations of the individual, but also by the rank of the urban center and its complexity regarding its services.

4.4. The commercial relationships

They produce themselves in both directions, the urban space offering some commercial services and products that lack in the rural space, while the last one supplies with food and other

raw materials the urban space. The general tendency is the movement of the rural population towards the nearest centre and then, to other centers from Alba county but also from other neighbouring counties.

4.5. The educational relationships

They are realized in the context of the endowment of the urban centres with educational institutes and other educational facilities. In this context, all the urban centres from the Alba County attract young rural population, especially the municipalities, which have a wide variety of educational units. The endowment with universities is reduced, only Alba Iulia, the county seat, and Blaj have this type of educational level. Therefore, the rural population chose the university centres with tradition from the region and from other regions.

4.6. The cultural relationships

They have the same, as the previous ones, rural-urban orientation. The main research idea was the capacity of attraction of the urban centres from the point of view of their cultural offer. The county seat, Alba Iulia, and also other urban centres from the neighbouring counties are the winners.

4.7. The medical relationships

Two aspects were analyzed from the perspective of medical relations: the medical and the pharmaceutical ones. In the case of medical services the rural population goes not only to the nearest centres, but also to the better equipped municipalities, and especially to cities from other administrative area such as: Cluj-Napoca, Sibiu, Timișoara or Târgu Mureș. In the case of pharmaceutical services, we can observe the tendency of the rural population to go to the commune centres, which in this case assume some of the urban functions.

4.8. The administrative-juridical relationships

At the level of these relations, on the one hand, the research is concerned with identifying the level of dependence of the rural space regarding the usage of the juridical and administrative institutions, especially because some are to be found only in some urban centres (court houses). On the other hand, this chapter tries to identify the degree of availability of the rural population to appeal for administrative and juridical problems to the local authorities from the communes and cities. Therefore, there can be estimated the proportion of the two environs, urban and rural, from this perspective.

4.9. The mobility relationships

The accentuation of these is in a directly proportional relationship with the size of the urban centre and the opportunities offered by it. In the context of these relations, the displacements of population for work and other occasion were analyzed.

4.9.1. The displacements for work

At the level of the questioned population, the displacements to the urban centres, for work represent 38% Firstly, the rural population goes to work to the nearest centre, while the 2nd place its won by the municipalities, much more developed in comparison to the small centres. Some urban centres from other nearby counties are targeted. The commune centres, in the case of this type o displacement of the rural population, detain 7%.

4.9.2. The frequency of displacements for work and other occasions

This chapter deals with the daily, weekly, monthly, trimestral, biannual and annual displacements of the rural population towards the county seat and the other urban centres. A great role in the context of these relations has the accessibility of the relief, which affects some rural settlements regarding the quality of their infrastructure.

4.10. The commune seats and their role as intermediary centres in the settlement network of Alba County

The commune seats have a significant role in the settlement network of Alba County, because they assume some urban basic functions. In some cases they are the main destination of the rural population because of their proximity to the villages and therefore the reduction of the transport costs and of time. In order to see the dependence of the rural population in relation to the commune centres other aspects, such as the frequentation of different public events, were surveyed.

4.11. The zones of influence of the Albean cities

According to the surveyed aspects, the quantification of the answers and the inventory of the facilities of the cities the real zones of influence of the Albean cities can be deducted. Alba Iulia has larger zone of influence, the city being able to polarize the entire space of the county. The county seat is followed by Aiud, Blaj and Sebeş, of which influence varies according to the different services. The other centres have reduced influence in the territory, Baia de Srieş having the smallest influence among all. The influence in rural territory of Teiuş is limited by the presence in its proximity of two municipalities: Alba Iulia in south and Aiud in north. In the case of some services, the regional centres such as Cluj-Napoca or Sibiu overlap their zone of influence over the ones of the Albean centres.

4.12. The quality of living in the Albean rural milieu in the context of interaction with the urban one

This chapter highlights the differences between the villages located in the mountainous area, those located at medium altitudes (hills, corridor and plateau) and the component localities of cities regarding the quality of life.

4.13. Conclusions

This subchapter analyses the manner in which the initial hypothesis confirm themselves. It also highlights some specific features of the urban centres of Alba County and also some particularities of the rural population.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The general conclusion is that the high number of cities on the territory of Alba County impose a *selective character* of them in the frame of the regional settlement system. This selection is a consequence of the capacity of these centres to find a balanced state and to identify the necessary mechanisms capable of maintaining and improving this state. Altogether, these cities are characterized by the continuity of living from the ancient times until present which offers them some specific particularities. They also have a balanced distribution in the region, but from the perspective of their typological (size) distribution there appears a sort of disequilibrium, especially if we contrast the eastern and western part.

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