

RURAL LABOR FORCE-FEATURES AND SITUATIONS

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Abstract: Rural communities are characterized by a weak economic diversification. The access on the labor market for rural people is generally difficult in many ways, being more difficult than in urban areas. The majority from the rural population is employed either in (informal) agricultural activities or in public activities, the spectrum of occupations and trades required in rural area being narrow.

Key words: rural area, labor force, features

INTRODUCTION

Rural communities represent the most sustainable, purest and most original forms of life (in contrast, society is transitory, superficial), in which relationships between people are stronger, more alive, making communities a living organism (while society is a mechanical aggregate). [2,6]

The main characterization of the community is the social coherence, which can be higher or lower, and its pillars are the locality and the feeling of community. Every human community has a space, a geographical area. The occupation by the members of the community of a well-defined place, gives the chance of intense human relations. From the common environmental conditions, are born similar life patterns and also from them, strong bonds of mutual help and solidarity appear. However, they are beginning to weaken in the contemporary world, due to the growing influence of means of transport and communication.

Modernization of the countryside by acquiring some features typical of the modern world has several significances:

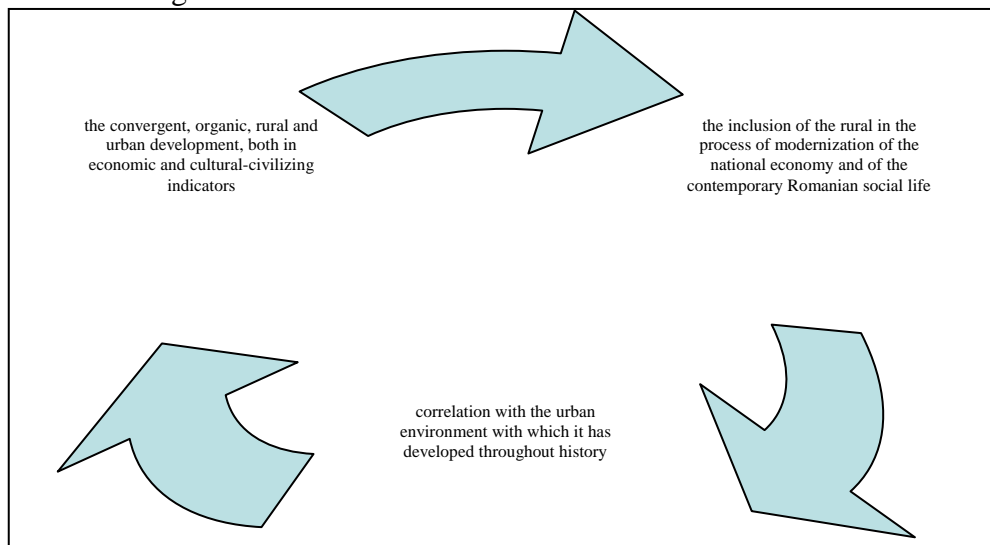


Figure 1. Modernization of the countryside-features

Source: own processing

a) A significance refers to the inclusion of the rural in the process of modernization of the national economy and of the contemporary Romanian social life and, at the same time, the preservation, of the own features with which it came from ancestral times and which give it originality.

b) Another meaning involves its correlation with the urban environment with which it has developed throughout history, even if not in different rhythms and proportions.

c) The third meaning would be that of the convergent, organic, rural and urban development, both in economic and cultural-civilizing indicators called "indicators of human development", which includes: education, health, culture, leisure etc.

The access on the labor market for rural people is generally difficult in many ways. There are areas, especially in rural environment that are not properly developed and local peoples, even if they want a job, have nowhere to work. Lack of skills and qualifications is another cause of limited access to the labor market for people from rural areas. Too much distance from a heavily industrialized city or area is another factor that limits the employment of rural people. There are also situations in which people from rural areas are not qualified and enrollment in training courses becomes impossible because these courses are expensive and do not take place near the town or in their place of residence, so they have to supports and transport costs. [1,10,12]

At this moment, the rural environment from Romania is characterized by a weak economic diversification and thus the rural people are forced to practice subsistence agriculture in order to survive. Thus, unemployment in rural areas is registering higher and higher levels. [4,6,7,8]

The labor market essentially differs compared to other markets, and has the following features:

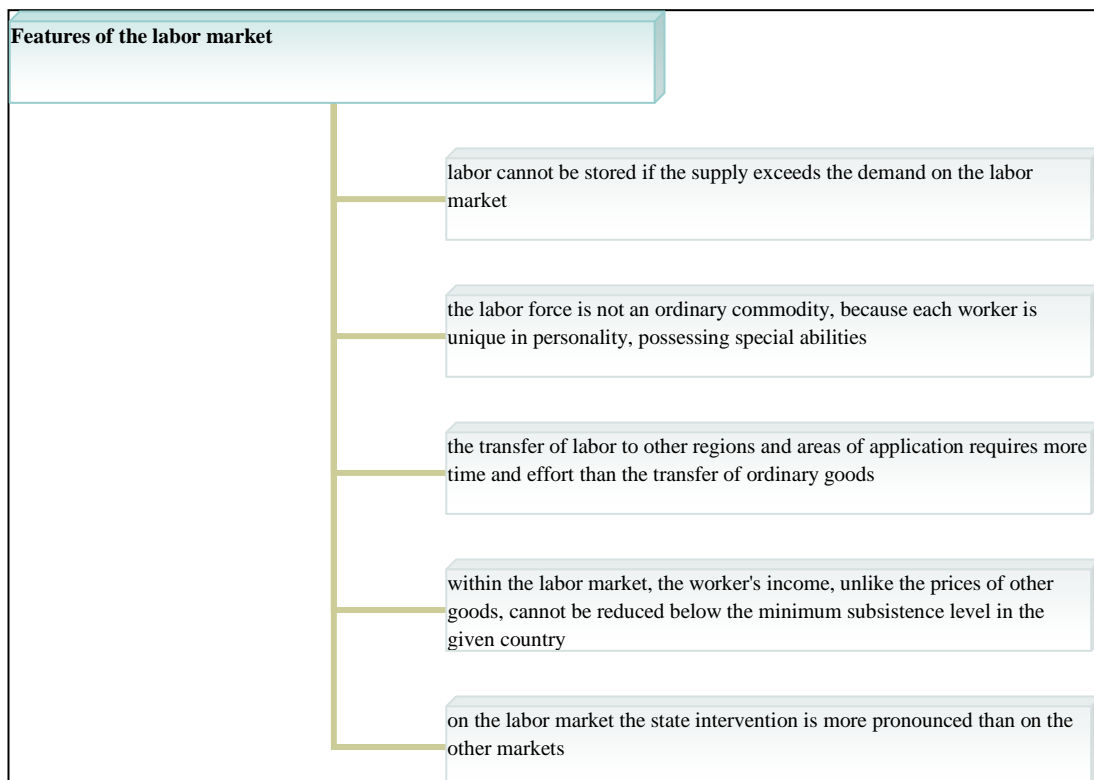


Figure 2. Features of the labor market

Source: own processing

➤ the labor force is not an ordinary commodity, because each worker is unique in personality, possessing special abilities (physical and intellectual) and having his own attitude towards work, and each job provides specific conditions and requirements for the worker;

➤ labor cannot be stored if the supply exceeds the demand on the labor market;

➤ the transfer of labor to other regions and areas of application requires more time and effort than the transfer of ordinary goods;

➤ within the labor market, the worker's income, unlike the prices of other goods, cannot be reduced below the minimum subsistence level in the given country;

➤ on the labor market the state intervention is more pronounced than on the other markets.

The development of the labor market, the increase of investments in villages, the need for specialized and trained labor force, can change the image of the village and its inhabitants. An important role in this process will be played by education, school, whose objectives, especially in terms of our country's accession to the EU, are:

- ensuring elementary education for all, with a special emphasis on the reintegration of those who have temporarily given up their studies and of vulnerable groups, especially people with special needs.

- development of education in rural areas, in order to ensure equal access to higher levels of education.

- development of preschool education.

- promoting the use of information technology to ensuring internet access in pre-university education.

- the creation of a coherent system of permanent training of the principals in education and of the teaching staff in the pre-university education.

The representatives of the European Union consider it necessary to make further progress in areas such as: [13,14,15]

- creating a national framework for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications (between Romania and EU member states).

- creating a structured training system for adults.

- strengthening the cooperation between the responsible factors in the field of human resources development (education, work and social partners) in order to improve the relationship between education and the requirements of the labor market.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The authors of this scientific paper authors looking for identification of some features typical of the modern world, some features of labor market, some situations of employment in rural area, the employment rate, advantages of rural small businesses. In order to achieve this desideratum we have used as data base sources, provided by the National Institute of Statistics (through statistical yearbooks, surveys and thematic reports and longitudinal data available through the Tempo online platform).

RESEARCH RESULTS

The employment situation in rural areas is much more difficult than in urban areas. The majority from the rural population is employed either in (informal) agricultural activities [9] or in public activities, which have a rather small share, and wages depend on the limited possibilities of local budgets, which cannot provide the necessary income for a decent living. The economically active population in rural areas is practically faced with a dilemma: to accept a job, which brings them a modest and insufficient income to recover

the workforce, or to immigrate, in order to obtain a more favorable job/to go abroad in search of a more attractive and better paid job. As a consequence of this situation, we can see a worsening of the demographic situation, the emigration of suitable workforce, depopulation of rural localities and their unattractiveness.

Of course, there are other factors that have a negative impact on the unattractiveness of village localities, such as the narrow spectrum of occupations and trades required in rural area.

In 2018, the active population was 9069 thousand people, decreasing (-51 thousand people) compared to 2017. Majority shares in the total of active population were held by people with average level of education (60.6%), males (57.2%) and those domiciled in urban areas (54.6%). Among the active people, 96.6% were of working age (15-64 years). Young people represented 6.8% from the active population, two thirds of them (67.3%) living in rural areas.

The activity rate of the population aged 20-64 was 72.8%. This indicator registered higher values for males (82.6% compared to 62.7% for females). By areas of residence, the indicator registered close values (72.9% in urban and 72.6% in rural area).

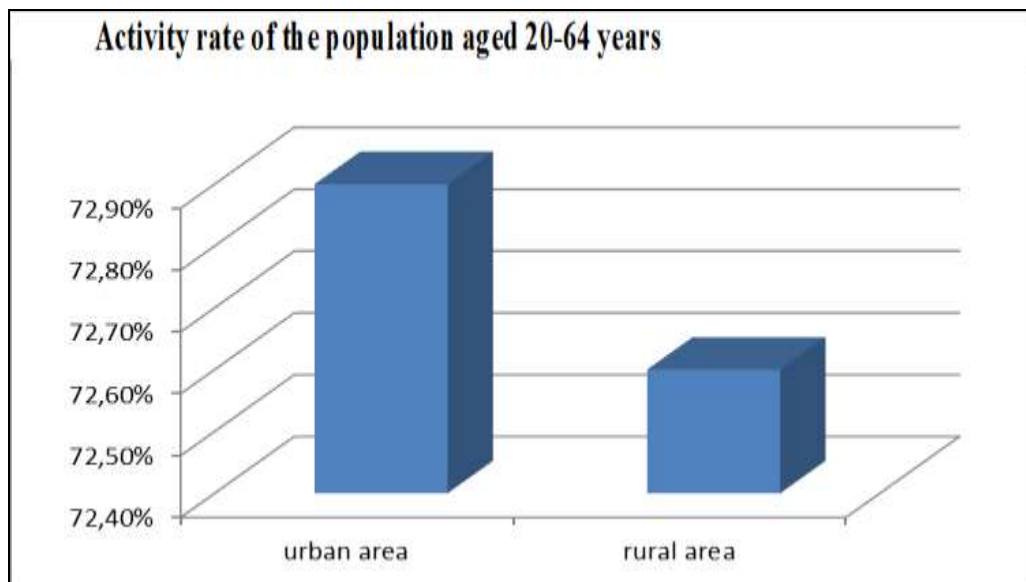


Figure 3. Activity rate of the population aged 20-64 years

Source: own processing

Depending on the level of education, the most economically active was people aged 15-64 with a higher level of education (short and long-term university, including master's, doctorate, postdoctoral and postgraduate studies), the rate of their activity being 90.3%. People with an average level of education (specialized post-secondary, high school, including first grade and vocational, complementary or by the disciples) were active on the labor market in a proportion of 71.8%. The participation in the economic activity of people with low level of education (gymnasium, primary and without school) was only 45.6%. As the level of education of older people decreases, gender and media disparities are deepening.

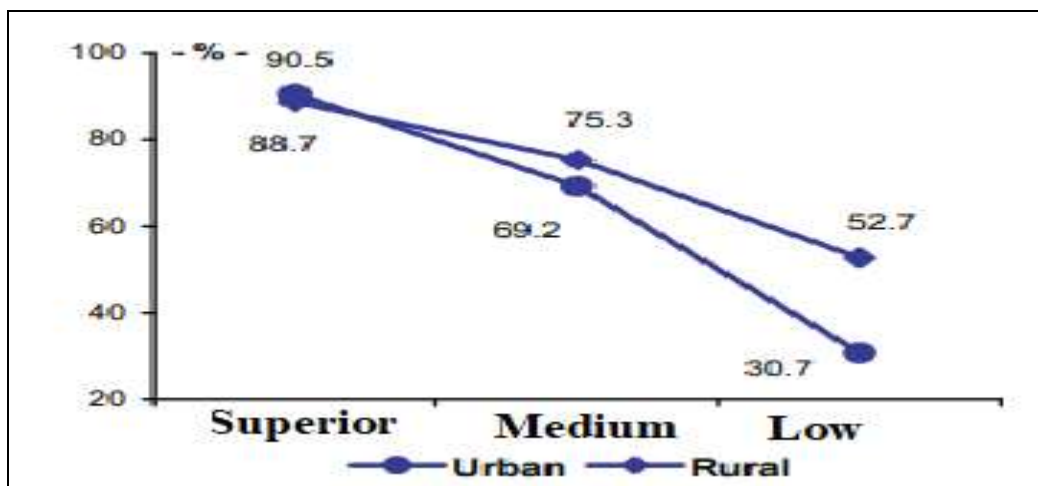


Figure 4. Activity rate of the working age population by level of education

Source: processing after information from <https://insse.ro>[16]

In 2018, the employed population included 8689 thousand people; of these, the working age people (15-64 years) represented 96.5%.

The employment rate of the working age population (the proportion of employed people in the total working age population) was 64.8%, with higher values for male employed people (73.2%, compared to only 56.2% in the case of women) but close by areas of residence (65.8% in urban area compared to 63.5% in rural area). The employment rate of people aged 20-64 was 69.9%, registering higher values for male employed persons (78.9% compared to only 60.6% for female persons). By areas of residence, the occupancy degree in urban area was 70.3%, compared to 69.3% in rural area.

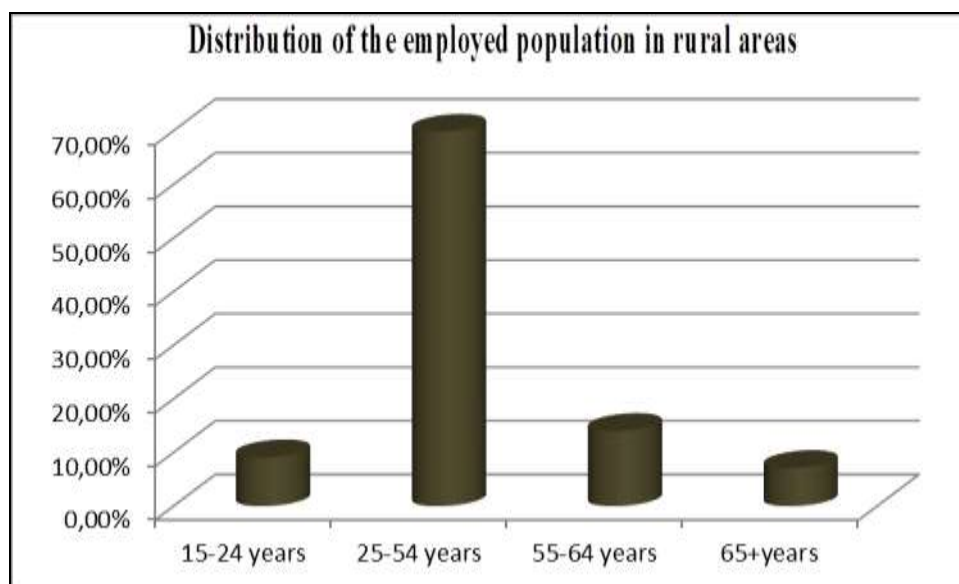


Figure 5. Distribution of the employed population in rural areas

Source: processing after information from <https://insse.ro>[16]

Based on the regional profile analyzes, identifies six dominant profiles for the employment characteristics of the rural population:

- "Local agricultural occupation" (Botosani, Iasi, Suceava, Vaslui, Galati, Braila, Mehedinti Dolj);
- "Agricultural and extra-local employment" (Olt, Teleorman, Bacau, Timis);

- "Local-mixed occupation" (Buzau, Salaj, Ialomita, Cluj, Calarasi, Satu-Mare, Tulcea, Neamt);
- "Extralocal-mixed occupation" (Valcea, Alba, Arges, Hunedoara, Dambovita, Caras Severin, Giurgiu, Bihor, Mures);
- "Local-non-agricultural occupation" (Constanta, Arad, Mures, Harghita, Covasna);
- "Extra local-non-agricultural occupation" (Sibiu, Prahova, Brasov, Ilfov and Gorj).

The rural environment is characterized by higher unemployment rates compared to the urban environment, in six of the country's regions, the largest difference being registered in the Center region (3.3 percentage points). The highest unemployment rate in urban areas was registered in the South-West Oltenia Region (6.6%), and the lowest in the North-West Region (2.6%).

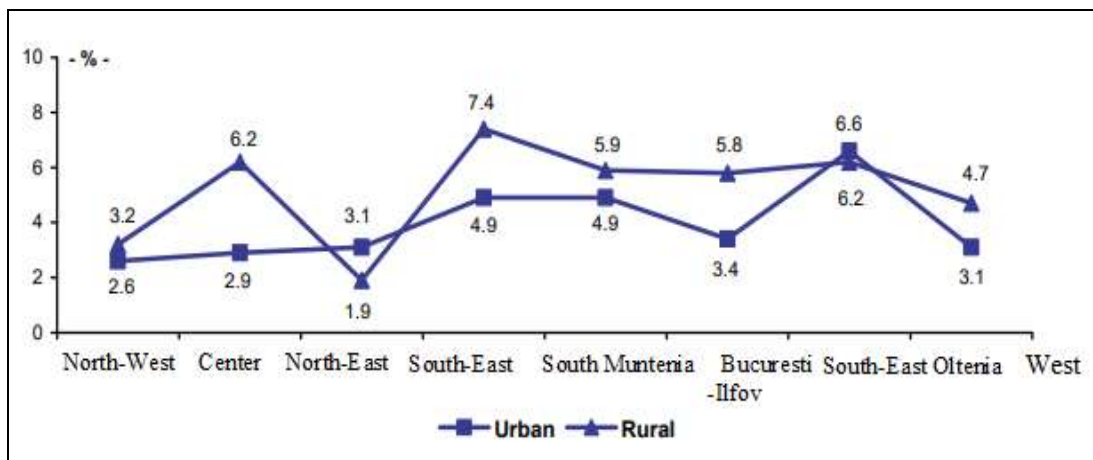


Figure 6. Unemployment rate by regions and areas

Source: processing after information from <https://insse.ro>[16]

For most of the rural localities, the non-agricultural sector is underdeveloped, being represented mainly by the activities in the public sector (administration, education, health) and by the activities in the area of retail trade. A privileged situation is recorded at the level of peri-urban localities which, taking advantage of the location in the vicinity of important cities, have experienced in recent years important developments in the activities of the secondary and tertiary sectors. Even if these cases represent isolated situations, which cannot substantially change the economic profile of the rural area, recent developments illustrate the increase of such investments in communes strongly connected to nearby cities. Whether we are talking about the relocation of production facilities from cities to rural areas or we are referring to green-field investments, the process of increasing the economic importance of peri-urban areas is obvious, its continuation can produce on the radical transformations medium and long term at the level of the localities in question, bringing them very close to the profile of urban localities.

The development of rural area on a non-agricultural basis strongly depends on a number of structural factors and the regional context. [2,5,11] Among the most important structural factors are those regarding the transport and infrastructure, existing public utilities locally and the demographic dimension, and in the category of regional factors, of utmost importance are the degree of development of the area, the economic power of urban centers in the region and existing economic networks. In many cases, the insufficient level of public infrastructure slows down the development of non-agricultural activities in communes. Thus, measures to support the development of the non-agricultural sector in

communes must focus on ensuring an optimal level of rural infrastructure, the role of local government in this endeavor being central. Financial barriers are, in most cases, very difficult to overcome, given that only a small part of the communes can afford to invest in large infrastructure works on their own funds. In this situation, the only viable ways to ensure the financing of such projects are represented by the allocation of sums to the central budget or by accessing European funds for the modernization of rural infrastructure. [3]

The advantages of rural entrepreneurship for the community, the national economy, for the entrepreneur and for the clients of the new companies:

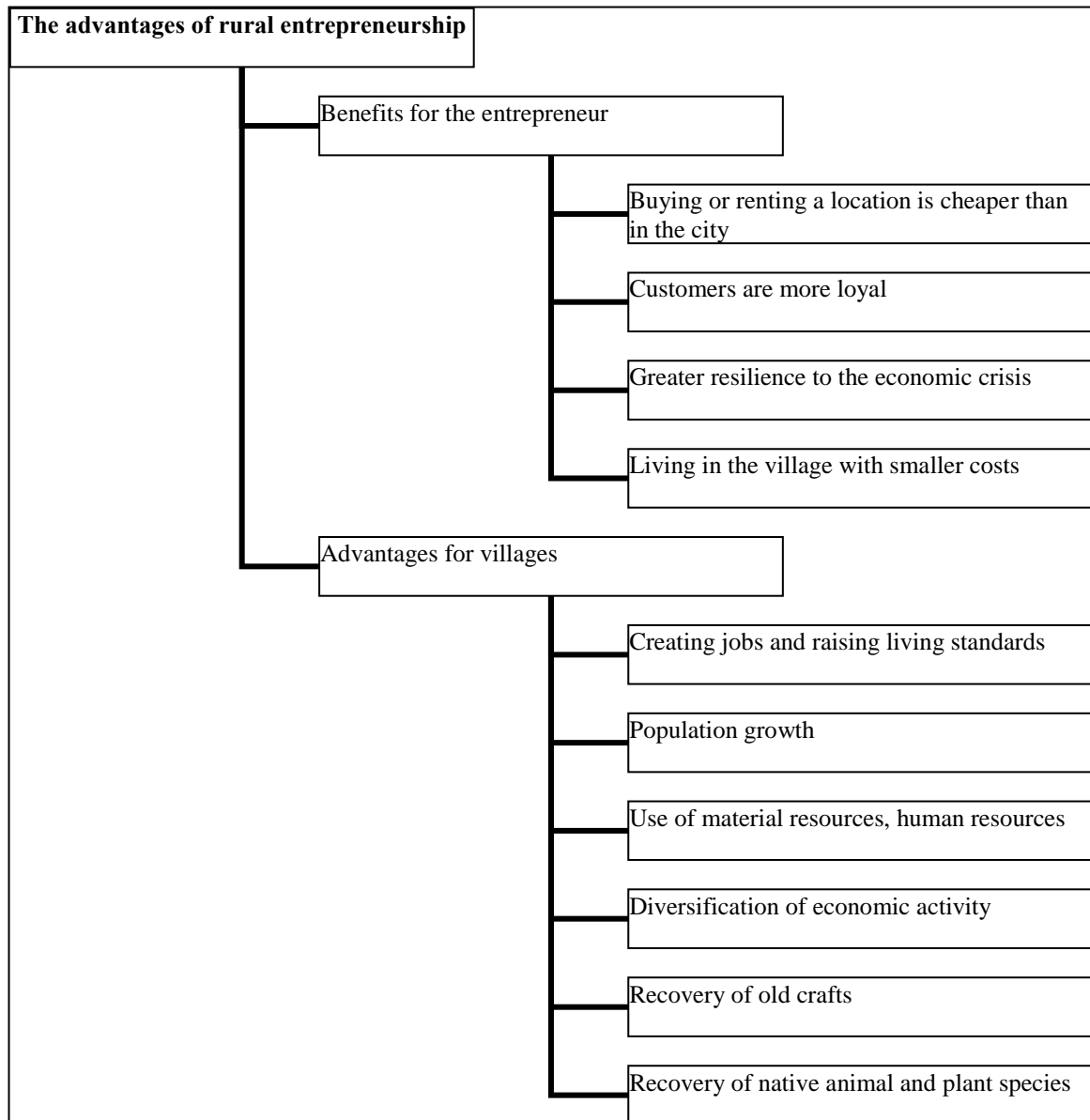


Figure 7. The advantages of rural entrepreneurship

Source: own processing

- Benefits for the entrepreneur
 - Buying or renting a location is cheaper than in the city.
 - Customers are more loyal.
 - Greater resilience to the economic crisis.
 - Living in the village with smaller costs.

- Advantages for villages
 - Creating jobs and raising living standards.
 - Population growth.
 - Use of material resources, human resources.
 - Diversification of economic activity.
 - Recovery of old crafts.
 - Recovery of native animal and plant species.

In our view, the main aspects of business development in rural areas are: developing of economic potential and increasing the competitiveness of rural enterprises, increasing the revenues in the budgets of rural areas, increasing the efficiency of rural management.

CONCLUSIONS

At the level of employment of the rural population, the main trends highlighted during the transition period were those of increasing the inactive population segment, simultaneously with the reduction of the number of employees and with the increase of the employed population segment in the agricultural sector. In addition to the reduced supply of jobs, the main problems affecting the employment opportunities of the rural population in the non-agricultural sector were the low lucrative experience, the poor level of formal training and a number of problems related to the accessibility of existing employment (in particular, transport and family situation). Lack of local opportunities, poor infrastructure and, last but not least, the level of vocational training and poverty were, for the period after 1990, the main barriers faced by rural jobseekers. in non-agricultural economic spheres. Previous research has shown that, in absolute terms, the rural population employed in non-agricultural activities at the beginning of the 21st century was close to those recorded in the 1930s.

The non-agricultural sector in rural Romania has not had a significant development over time. For centuries, the main activity in the villages was agriculture. At the level of political discourse, there has almost always been an interest in the development of industry and services in rural areas.

Emblematic for the recent evolution of rural areas is the process of differentiated development of rural communes and regions, which has led to the emergence of structural gaps at their level, which are highlighted in the population by different living standards and opportunities for personal affirmation. Thus, we are talking about the existence of a developed countryside, represented by peri-urban areas, which constantly attracts new residents and whose economic life is no longer dominated by agricultural activities and, on the other hand, by the traditional countryside, characterized by low living conditions and dependence by the agricultural sector. The period after 1990 did not make significant progress in resolving this structural gap, but on the contrary, in the context of the economic transition, large sections of the rural population and a large part of the localities came to face problems they did not know in the previous period. In this way, the economic transition has significantly contributed to the vulnerability of rural areas by placing the largest part of the population in a relationship of dependence to traditional agricultural practices.

We believe that in rural areas it would be good to practice family business more intensely. First of all, family businesses would be advantageous, because they are characterized by sustainability over time. At the same time, family business is based on the trust born in the family, which determines mutual support, especially at the early stage of business development, when it is most vulnerable. Also, family business would generate a

lot of new jobs - an essential advantage for rural areas. The development of family business would also solve one of the major problems of our country - emigration abroad

The fields in which businesses can be developed in rural localities can be: the agricultural production processing industry; trade and public catering; social services (hairdressing, tailoring, shoemaking, etc.), rural tourism; handicrafts and crafts; servicing and repair of cars, agricultural machinery and long-lasting household items (furniture, refrigerators, televisions, computers, etc.).

In conclusion, for large, developed localities, directly connected with large nearby cities, the problem of the dominant agricultural economic profile seems to be solved, going towards a model of urban development, based on activities located predominantly in the secondary and tertiary sectors. On the other hand, the large mass of rural localities and especially those in the plain area, which are located at medium and large distances from cities, maintain a pronounced agricultural profile.

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