

MITOC VILLAGE - A SOCIAL-ECONOMICAL ANALYSIS

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REZUMAT. Modificările în structura familiei și funcții sunt datorate modificărilor care au avut loc la nivelul societății. Pentru a înțelege tipul de organizare a familiilor din mediul rural este necesară o analiză atentă a societății în sine. Acest studiu este o analiză socio-economică strânsă a gospodăriilor rurale din satul Mitoc. Comunitatea Mitoc este situată într-o zonă de câmpie, în apropiere de granița de nord-vest a României, județul Botoșani. Având în vedere faptul că resursele umane sunt principalul factor în dezvoltarea și modernizarea spațiului rural, acest studiu are drept scop de a investiga, de asemenea, posibilitatea de a diversifica ocupațiile locuitorilor în funcție de resursele psihologice, sociale și economice.

Cuvinte cheie: resurse umane, spațiu rural, diversificarea locuitorilor, familii rurale

ABSTRACT. Changes in family' structure and functions are due to changes which occurred at society level. In order to understand the organizational variety of rural families a close analysis of society itself is required. This study is a close social-economical analysis of the countryside households of Mitoc village. Mitoc community is located in a plain area, near the north-west border of Romania, Botosani County. Considering that human resources is the main factor in developing and modernization of rural space, this study is aimed to investigate as well, the possibility of diversify inhabitants' occupations according to psychological, social and economical resources.

Keywords: human resources, rural space, diversification of occupation, rural family.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research of Romanian agricultural households revealed their change potential concerning dimensions of land in property. Small, subsistence households, assuring day-to-day living for many rural inhabitants, will be comprise into bigger ones, more effective economically. This tendency in Romanian agriculture will transform the existing households into farms more alike with those west-european ones. One of the outcomes of those structural modifications will be that a large number of manpower will remain without its main income source. Indeed, a huge negative impact will suffer especially the most necessitous households. A possible solution for this excess manpower might be engaging it into non-agricultural activities.

Considering that in rural areas of Romania, concealed unemployment is wide-spread and increasing, the developing of non-agriculture economy in rural areas is crucial. For this reason, in order to encourage agricultural households to unfold non-agricultural activities, economical policies are focused on improving standard of living in rural areas by investing in education and infrastructure.

2. RURAL NON-AGRICULTURE ECONOMY

The theory which best explain the existing characteristics and tendencies of Romanian rural space is called Rural Non-agriculture Economy.

Rural Non-agriculture Economy may be defined as comprising all those activities, for which an

individual might be paid or is self-employed, associated with rural areas excepting agricultural activities.

According to David and Pearce, there are some examples of non-agriculture activities:

- processing of agricultural products;
- developing of a small business;
- obtaining incomes such as: pensions, interests and dividends;
- obtaining revenues from engaging yourself in temporary jobs within urban areas.

According to N. Islam, there are 5 main non-agriculture activities which generate income non-agriculture activities developed within agricultural households;

- activities developed into small towns located in urban areas ;
- activities unfold in big cities which imply seasonal migration of manpower;
- permanent activities developed into big cities;
- activities unfold overseas.

Furthermore, specialists are trying to identify potential income sources for rural households (as illustrated below in Chart 1). A supplementary parenthesis is needed: traditional income source for rural households is generated by agriculture activities developed on lands in property; the main purpose of agriculture activities is to acquire agricultural products and fibres.

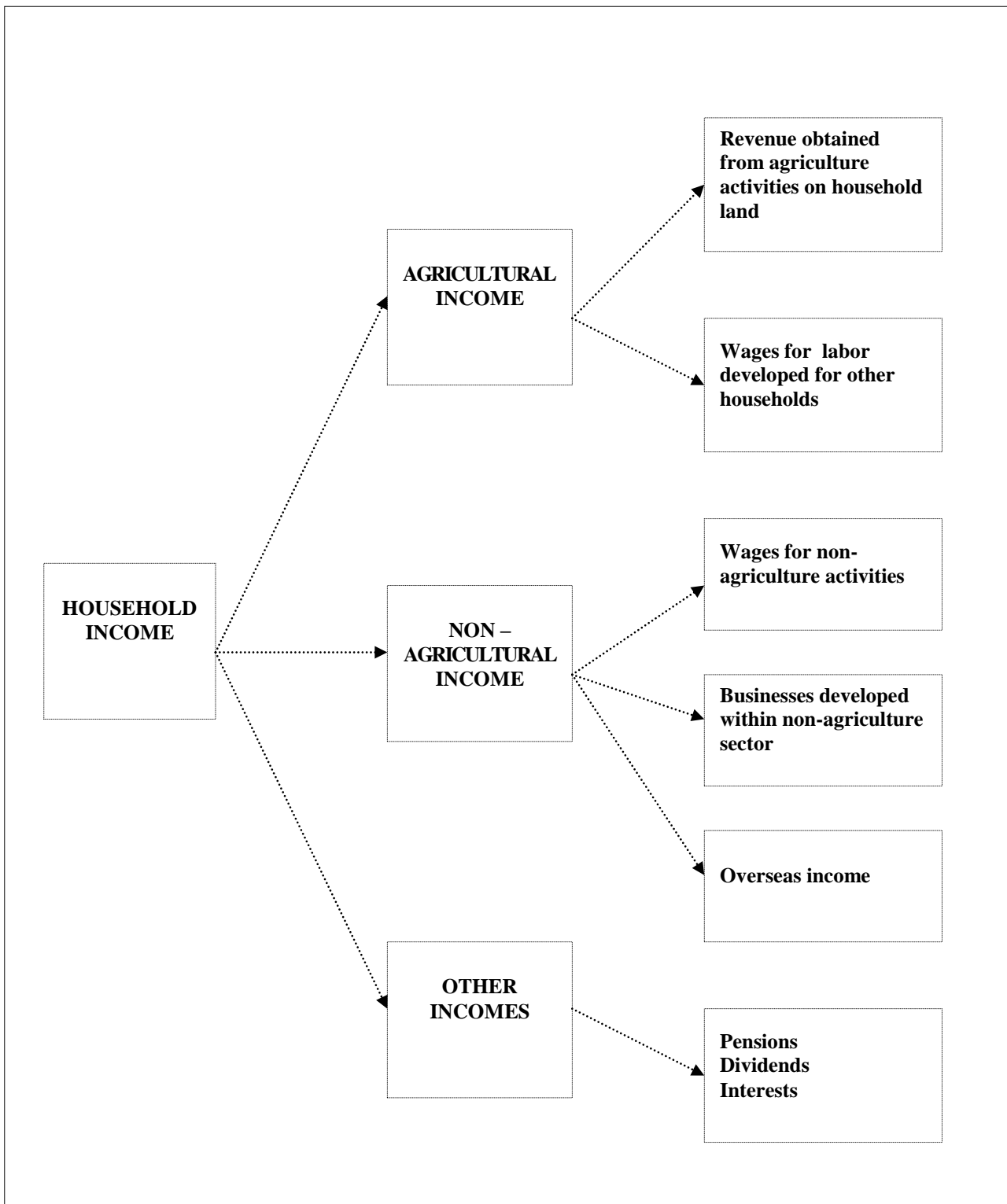


Chart 1. Potential income sources of rural households; Source: Davis&Pearce, 2000

Non-agricultural potential income sources can be divided into 3 groups:

- wages for labor developed within non-agriculture sector;
- businesses developed within other sectors (except agriculture);
- incomes obtained overseas or received from overseas.

3. METHODOLOGY

Multiple criteria approach takes into consideration demographical, economical, social and sociological criteria to identify general and specific objectives of development. Only after a close appraisal of human, economical and natural resources at a local, regional level, endogenous development plans can be outlined.

Research units are township and rural household.

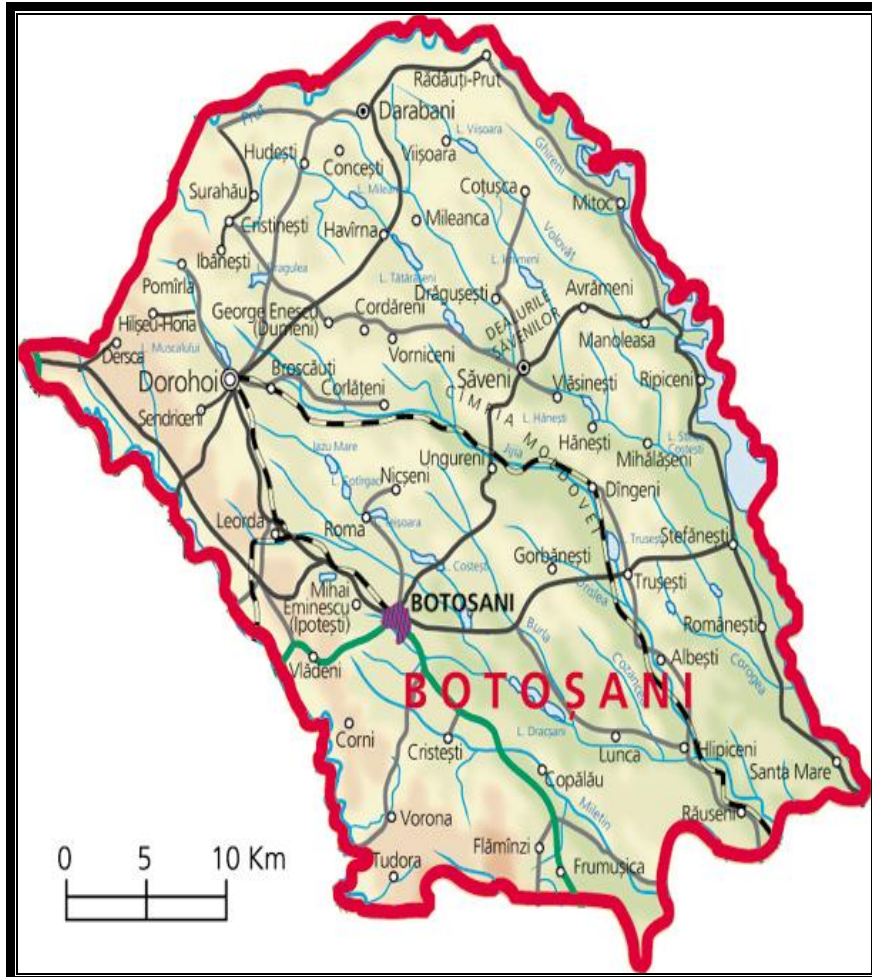
For this sociological dissection due to manifold requirements the following research instruments were used:

- village file;
- household questionnaire;
- focus group.

Mitoc Township, Botosani County

Qualitative analysis

Chart 2. General data



Located about 80 km from the county seat and 12 km from the closest inhabited place (Avrameni) this township is made up of two villages: Mitoc and Horia. Having only backroads at their disposal and the closest railway station and gas station at the

adjacent town of Saveni (30 km), the town dwellers without personal transportation are left with a bus twice a day in order to reach the capital of the county.

Chart 1.2. Opportunities and Obstacles for Development

Opportunities	Obstacles
Diversifying traditional occupations into modern ones	Spatial – Isolation “Long distance to town, close community, poor roads”
Animal husbandry “It is very hard nowadays to get a return on investment from animal raising, that’s way the livestock is dwindling”.	Economic – “Foreign Investors come but go away after facing the reality”, “No market is available”
<i>Cattles: “Raising bovines is growing in popularity because it gives the most benefits”</i>	Political – “Many peasants are upset when they see how little they get in return for their hard work”
	Sociological factors Habits – “the old traditional methods are ingrained, they are reluctant to new”

Quantitative analysis

A main factor toward diversifying the rural economy is population age. While median household age is 41.25, it is only 35.24 for Mitoc.

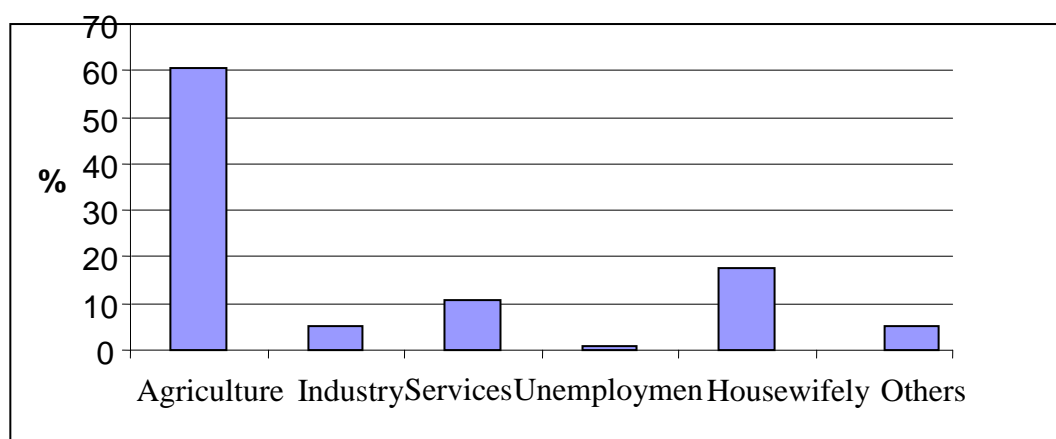
A sign showing the chance for demographic increase is the number of under-15 year old children per household (40% percent in Mitoc)

In Mitoc the average family has a higher than average number of members. This shows that despite a countrywide shifting from the traditional

family model, Mitoc still follows it. One of the reasons of higher than average number of children per family is a very practical one: they are used to help with the manual labour without being paid.

Active occupational structure is almost balanced at the sample level: 26.9% of the active population percent is involved in agriculture, the same percentage involved in services with the remaining 23.3% involved in industry and other type of activities.

Chart 3 Mitoc population structure as the main activity



Mitoc township has its occupational structure dominated by agriculture.

Occupational mobility is a sign of diversifying the economy and increase the number of income sources. According to sociology studies we can say that the advent of innovation on rural communities is done especially by migrants. The mobility affects 15.6% of the households included in the sample, Mitoc being a township with reduced occupational mobility.

4. CONCLUSIONS

1. The main characteristic for perception of the community and personal status is a negative one and is related to the economic development.

2. Obstacles in the township development are isolation, the lack of investors and markets, price policy, mentality, reluctance regarding novelty, traditional thinking

3. The number of animals per household is growing significantly in Mitoc, confirming the importance of live stock in terms of personal consumption in rural households. Townships located in the vicinity of towns tend to have less land and animals than the ones that are further from cities, so

they have to rely on agriculture and animal husbandry.

4. The Mitoc workforce has scant job options while choosing to work in non-agricultural activities: a timber yard, one forge and milk storage, a corn mill and several oil presses. There are also 23 shops and the same number of bars.

5. The main problems as seen by the people of Mitoc are: poverty, poor educational infrastructure along with a precarious informal process

6. The change in traditional occupations is seen in modern terms: raising bovines is about to become a profitable activity, corn and sunflower cultures are starting to be done on big surfaces, more and more one animal type farm: only cattles, only sheeps.

7. In terms of occupational mobility Mitoc can be seen as having a low one: only 15.6% of the households are affected.

8. Mitoc has workforce surplus, thus a high unemployment. This is related to the low median household age (35.3) characterized by a poor skill set. The majority of them have no higher than an 8 grade diploma: 36.5% have graduated the gymnasium while 22.8% finished only primary school.

9. The non-agricultural choices are showing up due to existence of natural resources quarry

extraction, manual wicker furniture, honey as an ecologic product, industrial fishing, textile industry, meat processing.

10. Most of the investments in Mitoc are in the agricultural field (vegetal, animal, and equipment) while trying to get the most out of existing resources (land, peoples). In contrast investments that require a good infrastructure are limited (rural boarding housing, industry) .

11. In Mitoc the majority is involved in agriculture (44.44%), 27.77% are retired while 11.11% are home-keeping. The ones that work in non-agricultural jobs (trade, construction, services, administration) are only 11.10% showing a weak development for the secondary and tertiary sector.

12. The two organizational types which may contribute to diversification of inhabitants' occupations in rural areas are associative and co-operative ones.

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