

POPULATION OF THE OHABA COMMUNE

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ABSTRACT: The last century's progressive development of cities associated with the expansion of the industrial society, has led to a corresponding decline of the rural areas. Rural space has lost and loses its most important resource, the human resource. Without this critical resource, expressing the value of its riches becomes a difficult to almost impossible task.

Keywords: regressive dynamics; depopulation; demographic aging; migration;

1. Location and geographic location

The commune of Ohaba is a setting of Alba County, located in the Colina Depression of Transylvania (Secaşelor Plateau), in the Mureş river basin, on the Secaşului Mic course.

It consists of four villages (fig.1, 2): Ohaba (Fig. 3), Colibi, Secaşel and Măghierat, occupying a total area of 40,5 km². The geographical coordinates along the commune's territory are the parallel of 46° 04' 30" north latitude and the meridian of 23° 47' 24" east longitude.

The neighbours of the commune are as

2. Evolution of the population numbers

The analysis of the numerical evolution of Ohaba's population includes censuses ranging from an estimated date of 1733 until 2011 (Table 1, 2).

From the data presented (Fig. 4) one can see an increase in the number of inhabitants between 1733 and 1911. This period is followed by a value decrease due to deaths recorded in World War I (43 from the village of Ohaba) and departures to other countries. Until 1941 the population is again growing numerically, but it will decrease dramatically

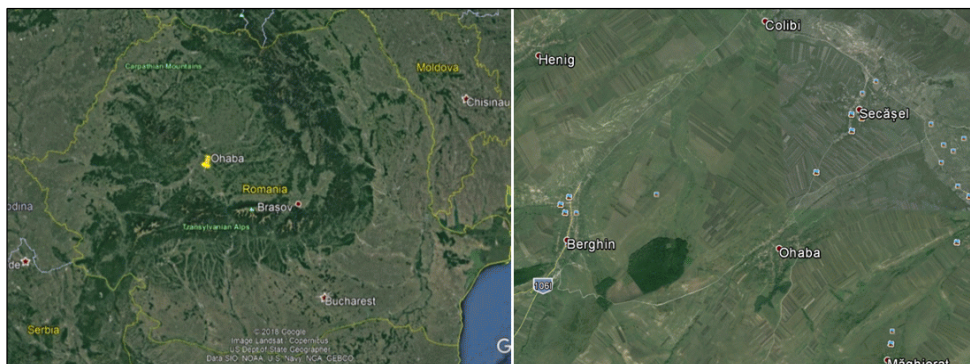


Fig. 1. The position of Ohaba commune within the country (left), the component villages of the commune (right)(Source: Google Earth)

follows, in the NW the setting neighbours the Mihăiţ commune, in the W the commune of Berghin, in the S, the Şpring commune, and in the E, is being bordered by the commune of Roşia de Secaş, while in the NE by Blaj municipality.

due to the massive casualties of the Second World War.

The most spectacular growth occurred in the year 1956, when the population reaches a record number of 3157 inhabitants. From that year until the present day, the



Fig. 2. Ohaba in the Iosephine Map of Transylvania, 1769-73

(Source: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohaba,_Alba)

Fig. 3. Panoramic of the Ohaba village

Table 1. The numerical evolution of the population between 1733-1941

Year Village	1733	1760	1818	1854	1880	1900	1911	1920	1930	1941
Ohaba	380	420	755	992	1385	1474	1670	1563	1651	1862
Secaşel	175	190	360	445	710	801	904	860	910	836
Colibi	-	-	126	166	232	250	274	254	290	312
Măghierat	-	-	32	40	48	50	54	49	65	79
Total	555	610	1273	1643	2375	2575	2902	2726	2916	3089

(Source: Rusan, N., Ohaba Commune)

Table 2. The numerical evolution of the population between 1948-2011

Year Village	1948	1956	1966	1977	1986	1992	1997	1999	2011
Ohaba	1604	930	1605	1255	1063	715	706	678	481
Secaşel	720	825	686	623	418	346	204	196	221
Colibi	271	320	287	168	70	94	99	97	44
Măghierat	78	82	54	34	17	12	9	9	11
Total	2673	3157	2632	2080	1562	1167	1018	980	757

(Source: Rusan, N., Ohaba commune - complex geographical study and <http://www.insse.ro/cms/>)

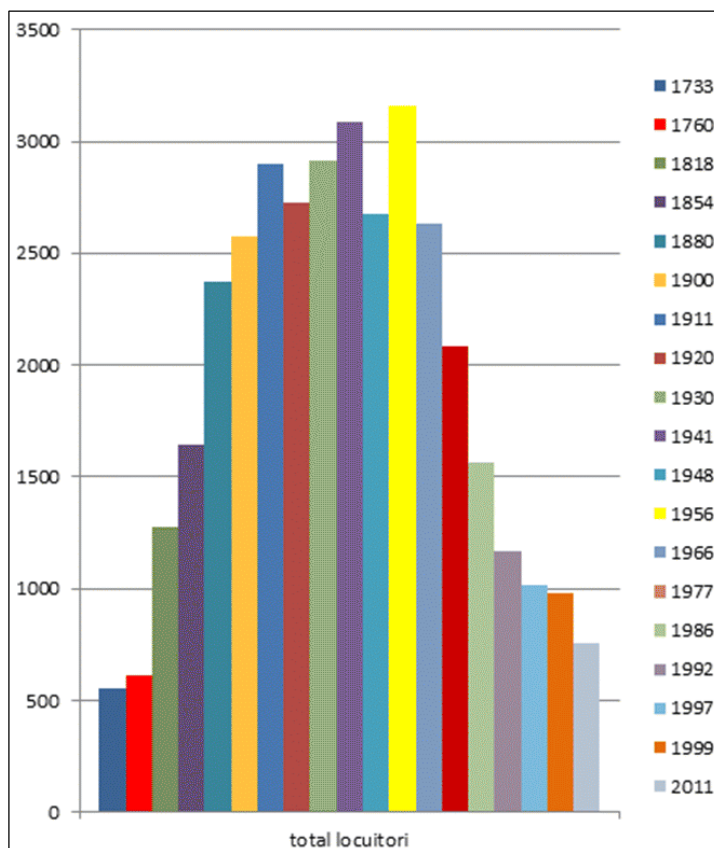


Fig. 4. The numerical variation of the Ohaba population between 1733-2011

commune's population follows a continuous decline. As in the case of the present commune, the demographic decline which in many cases is irreversible, will continue in other villages as well and one will possibly witness the total disappearance of population in some villages.

3. The natural movement of the population

The development of the demographic phenomenon in Ohaba has been and it is still influenced by the existing demographic policies at both country and local level. The economic structure, living standards, and health care are directly reflected in the main elements of the natural movement.

The birth rate between 1930 and 1982 was similar to the national one, with values between 30‰ and 18‰. After the 1990s, it dropped dramatically from 14.6‰ in 1990 to 1.002‰ in 1999. Relative to the four localities, the birth rate is absent in Măghierat, where the population is predominantly elderly, while in Ohaba and Secășel, chances for recovery still exist. In 1998 and 1999 there was only one newborn per year. The 4 children born in 2011 led to a birth rate of 0.53‰.

Mortality between 1930-1982 in Ohaba, was situated at threshold of 21‰ and 9‰. In 1983 mortality was 8‰, in 1989 was 11‰, in 1993 was 31.8‰, and in 1999 the death rate ranked at 19.3‰. At the 2011 census, mortality rate fell at 4.76‰.

The natural increase in the commune was directly influenced by fertility, divorce, marriage, birth rate, mortality, morbidity, etc. A significant negative impact on this differential was taken by wars, industrialization, collectivization and by the fall of the socialist system.

In 1930, the natural increase was 9‰, in 1982 rose to 11‰, value retained until 1983, then reduced to 2‰ as of 1989. The first negative value of -1‰ was registered in 1990, so that in 1999 reached a maxim negative threshold of -18,298‰, gradually recovering in 2011 to negative -4,23‰ (fig.5).

Male birth rates increase in the places of work arrival, but it is reduced in the commune. The young and fertile population migrates frequently from Ohaba, and this leads to a natality crisis state due to the imbalanced increase of female birth rate compared to a decreasing male birth rate, in the commune.

Territorial Mobility of the Population of Ohaba at the end of the XIX century and during early XX century, has two directions:

- internal – towards the surrounding cities, but at a slow pace, governed by the tradition homeland attachment;
- external – spreading towards the Western Europe and the U.S.A.

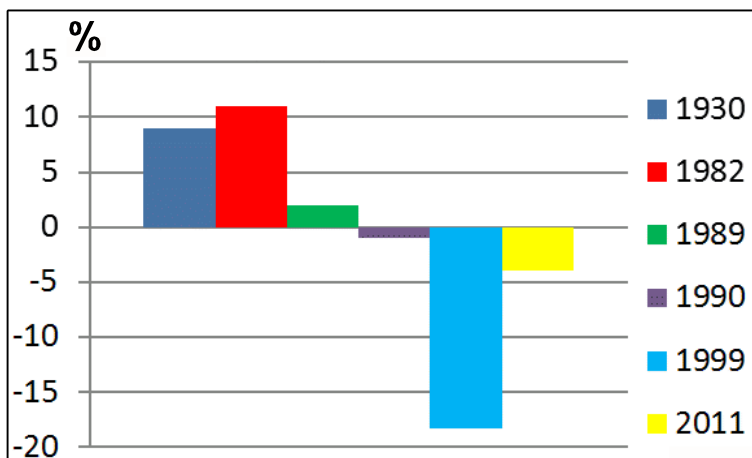


Fig. 5. The variation in the natural increase between 1930-2011 in Ohaba

4. Territorial mobility of the population

The process of territorial mobility has demographic, economic and social implications for the Ohaba commune - the leaving point for a large number of inhabitants, as well as for urban centers - as the place of arrival.

This phenomenon causes a territorial redistribution of the population and a disturbance in the number of inhabitants in the departure and arrival areas, with implications in the structure of population groups and genders.

Following 1918 there was a relative stability until year 1949. Between the years 1950-1990, occurred one of the largest population movement in the country, and in consequence, the vast majority of the young people have left the village for good. The estimated definitive migratory movement is situated at 35% of the entire population born in the commune. In the year of 2011 there were no emigrants in the commune, the accounts indicating only 11 people who migrated within the country.

Daily commuting engaged and engages a large number of people. Between years 1956 and 1982 the numbers increased from 40 to

670, the value dropped to 200 in 1989, and now the value has fallen below 50 people.

The majority of the population shift is directed towards the towns of Blaj, Sebeș, Alba-Iulia, Sibiu and less to Mediaș, Cluj-Napoca, Deva, Bucharest, Brașov and Timișoara.

5. Density of the population

Population density increased in 1956 when it reached a value of 122.7 inhabitants / km², while in 1999 it dropped to a value of 23.2 / km², currently ranking to a threshold of 18.69 inhabitants / km².

There is a decline in population density values since the 1990s, which is explained by the reduction in the population as a result of the aggravation in the demographic aging phenomenon and of the negative growth rates.

The agricultural density, which represents the ratio between the number of inhabitants and the agricultural area, compared to the value of 37.75 km², reveals values of over 50 inhabitants/km² in 1977, dropping to 24.35 inhabitants/km² in 1999, and currently ranking at 20.05 inhabitants/km². Due to the demographic decrease, the loading pressure on the ground is also lower.

6. Population structure

The main demographic structures investigated for Ohaba are as follows. The structure by age group and gender; ethnic; confessional; the structure of the education level of the stable population for over 10 years; the active workforce structure; the structure by the sectors of activity.

6.1. Structure by age groups

For the year 1992, Ohaba records the following values for the main age groups:

- Young 0-19: 196 inhabitants (16.79%);
- Adults 20-60 years: 595 inhabitants (51.01%);
- Elderly > 60 years: 476 inhabitants (32.2%)

In 2011, the following values were obtained for the same age groups:

- Young 0-19: 108 inhabitants (14.27%);
- Adults 20-60 years: 244 inhabitants (32.23%);
- Elderly > 60 years: 405 inhabitants (53.5%)

From the presented data there is an evident decrease of the young and the adult population, but an important increase of the elderly population, which proves that the population is significantly aged (fig.6)

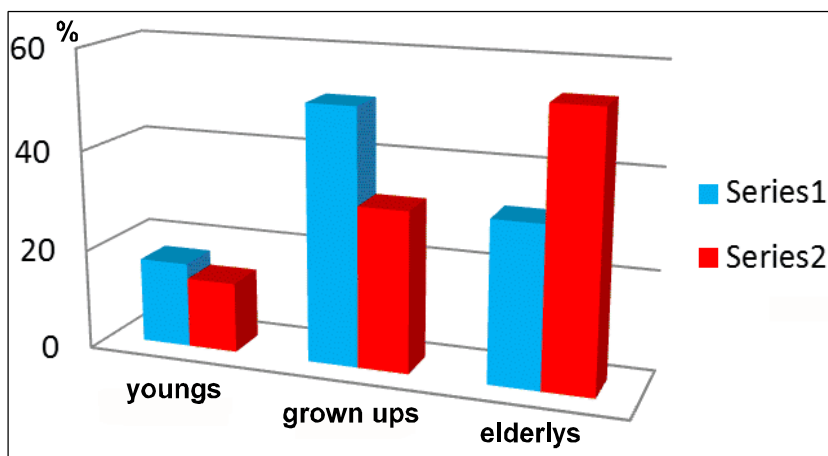


Fig. 6. Structure by age group of Ohaba commune in 1992 and 2011

Other issues that affect the demographic fluctuations are the large number of annual illnesses and the poor overall economic condition. The village's life expectancy ranks also low.

6.2. Structure by gender

In 1992, out of a total of 1167, the male population was 558 inhabitants (47.81%) while the female population scored 609 inhabitants (52.19%). In 2011, of the 757 inhabitants, the male population registered 365 inhabitants (48.22%) and the female population recorded 392 inhabitants (51.78%). It can be noticed therefore, that in the village of Ohaba the feminine population prevails, fact explained by the migration of the young population, especially of the male one seeking employment.

6.3. National structure

In the Secaş region and especially in Ohaba, the predominant population was that of Romanians while the Hungarian minority held administrative functions. If the year 1992 records 1166 Romanians (99.91%) and 1 Hungarian (0.09%), in 2011, the majority of the inhabitants are Romanian (92.73%), with a minority of Roma nationals (2.51%).

For 4.49% of the population ethnicity is unknown and a percentage of 0.26% has other ethnic backgrounds (fig. 7).

6.4. Confessional structure

From the confessional point of view, most of the inhabitants are Orthodox (84.67%), but there are also minorities of Greek-Catholics (4.62%), Baptists (3.83%) and Pentecostals (1.32%). For 4.75% of the population, confessional membership is unknown, and 0.79% have other religious affiliation (Fig. 8).

6.5. Structure by education level of stable population over 10 years

In the 1859-1860 school year, in Ohaba there were 146 children aged between 6-15 years old. Of these, 96 children were enrolled and the rest remained unschooled. In 1930 records indicate the existence of 346 literate men and 277 literate women (General Census of the population of 29.12.1930, Bucharest, p.222). The number of illiterates remains high up to the year 1948. At this time the national and social oppression of the commune's population was at its peak and the general social context was also complemented by the poor material educational

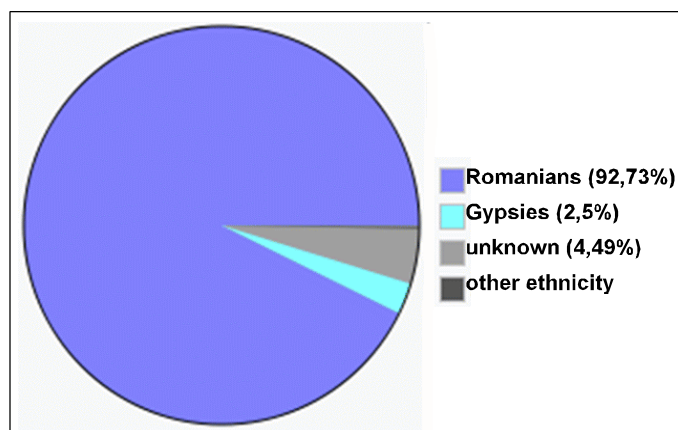


Fig. 7. The ethnic component of Ohaba commune
(Source: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comuna_Ohaba,_Alba)

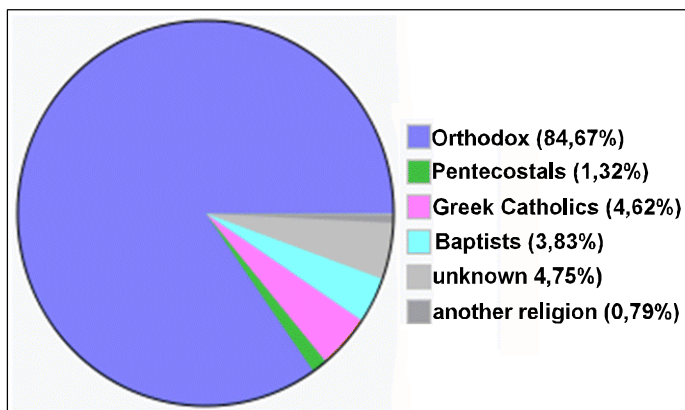


Fig. 8. The confessional component of Ohaba commune
(Source: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comuna_Ohaba,_Alba)

infrastructure needed for class teaching.

Between the years of 1950 and 1951, a number of 235 students enrolled in alternative education face the lack basic utilities, particularly that of electricity. This situation lasted through the year 1968. In the 1975-1976 school year, a total of 54 students graduated the 8th grade.

For the academic year of 2011, the following values become relevant. Out of the total number of 707 inhabitants for over 10 years, 17 have higher education (2.4%), 10 (1.41%) post-secondary studies and foremen, 81 (11.46%) possess a baccalaureate, 122 (17.26%) professional studies, 282 (39.89%) gymnasium education, 159 (22.49%) primary education and 36 (5.09%) without school.

These numbers indicate that the vast majority of the population is limited to the primary and gymnasial education, and pictures the image of a low level educational level for the majority of the population.

6.6. Structure by occupation and by sectors of activity

For the year 1992 the employed persons accounted for 45.16% of the general population, while the unemployed accounted for 6.84%, and the inactive persons (students, retired, socially assisted,

housewives) accounted for 48% of the total population.

The active persons were distributed as follows:

- in the primary sector, 55.52%;
- in the secondary sector, 2.52%;
- in the tertiary sector, 41.96%.

In the year 2011, the active population accounted for 39.37% of the total (298 persons), the unemployed ranked at 3.17%, the inactive population 54.43%, and the population with another economic situation indicated values of 3.03%.

The 298 people representing the active population are divided into sectors of activity as follows:

- in the primary sector 81.88%;
- in the secondary sector 5.7%;
- in the tertiary sector 12.42%.

Conclusions

Regarded from a country-level perspective, the rural areas had a gradual demographic increase until 1930. Following this period, the rural setting is marked by general social convulsions and transformations. This latter trend was being followed in turn by a regressive dynamic that tends to increase over the recent period of time. This state highlights the fact that at the level of the municipality of Ohaba, a decrease

of the population is marked by aging and massive migration of the young population towards the urban settlements.

In the period of the years 1910-1930, as a result of the administrative-territorial reorganization and the change of the command poles in the territory and adding to the losses generated by the First World War, while at country level, there is a registered tendency of a decreasing population growth rate, the general number of population in Ohaba continues to grow.

Between 1956 and 1966 the first stage of demographic concentration was completed by means of nationalization of production and forced collectivization of the rural areas. This led to deployments of large masses of population and its transposition on the coordinates of the migratory flow adjacent to urban centers where the industrialization process has already begun.

Between 1966 and 1992, the second stage of concentration of the population in urban centers unfolded. This process started with the forced industrialization process of the national economy and ended practically in

the late 1980s with the fall of the political regime in 1989.

During this interval the rural area is almost abandoned, especially by the middle-aged economically active population. This sector becomes increasingly rooted in the urban residential environment where the diversified economic branches required an ever increasing number of workers.

Between the years of 1992 and 2011, an interesting demographic phenomenon can be identified. In rural areas that have experienced massive flows of young and adult population towards the urban residential environment between 1966 and 1992, which led to a decline in the demographic stock of fertile age and at the same time to a decline in birth rates, the demographic aging phenomenon has become even more acute. This phenomenon has notable repercussions still visible in the alarming fall of natural growth to continuous negative values. These values maintain negative population growth rates and reduce the demographic dimension of localities, many of them approaching the critical threshold of disappearance.

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