

ON THE BORDERLINE BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY. THE SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SĂLAJ POPULATION BETWEEN 1880 AND 1941

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Abstract The main purpose of this study is to capture the evolution of the socio-professional composition of the shire population and later of the Sălaj County between 1880 and 1941. In this approach, we used the censuses carried out by the Austro-Hungarian state in 1880, 1890, 1900 and 1910. For Transylvania after the Great Union, we used the census volumes made and published in Romania on the population records of 1930. Following the Vienna Diktat of August 1940, Sălaj was part of the Romanian territories in Transylvania given to Hungary. In January 1941, the census of the population of Hungary took place, in which the Sălaj population was recorded.

Keywords Sălaj, demography, population, professions, censuses.

1. The administrative-territorial evolution of Sălaj between 1876 and 1941

The territorial-administrative organization of the Transylvanian counties has undergone various modifications, adaptations or adjustments over time, depending on the interests of the moment. This is the case of the Sălaj shire, one of the larger counties on the north-western border in the interwar period.¹

For Transylvania, the Ausgleich of 1867 meant the loss of political and institutional autonomy and its administrative inclusion in Hungary (Transleithania). According to the laws XXX and XXXIII of 1876, the shires, districts and chairs that formed Transylvania and the Partium were abolished, their place being taken by 16 shires: Alba de Jos, Bistrița-Năsăud, Brașov, Ciuc,

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¹ Cornel Grad, "Structurări și restructurări teritorial-administrative în NV României: proiecte, dispute și realizări în secolul XX (studiu documentar, partea I – județul Sălaj)" (Territorial administrative structures and restructurings in the NW Romania: projects, disputes and achievements in the 20th century (documentary study, part I – The Sălaj County), in *Lucrările Simpozionului Științific 27-28 mai ediția 2006*, (Cluj-Napoca: Risoprint, 2006), 135.

Făgăraș, Trei Scaune, Hunedoara, Târnava Mică, Cojocna, Mureș Turda, Târnava Mare, Sibiu, Solnoc Dăbâca, Turda-Arieș, Odorhei and Sălaj.² In the past, in the region of the Sălaj shire (founded in 1876) and even on a larger stretch, there were the shire Solnocul de Jos and the shire of Crasna.³ The Sălaj shire was founded on September 4, 1876. Then the shires of Crasna and Solnocul de Mijloc were abolished and, instead of adding 27 communes from the county of Dăbâca and two from Cojocna shire, the Sălaj shire was formed.⁴ The first 15 shires in the so-called "Királyhágontul" (beyond Piatra Craiului) appear in the statistical publications of the period under the name of Erdély (Ardeal), with an area of 55.731 km². At the same time the Sălaj shire was included in the area of "Tisza bal partija" (the left side of Tisa), with an area of 3.671 km².⁵

At the censuses of 1890, 1900 and 1910, the same administrative structure was maintained. However, there was a slight variation in the area of the 16 shires at each of the three censuses. At that time there were reorganizations concerning the number of nets, minor corrections between the borders of the localities, including those situated on the border with other shires of Crișana or Banat. At the 1890 census, the area of the Sălaj shire was 3.629 km². The area of the Sălaj shire at the 1900 and 1910 censuses remains relatively constant: 3.818 km² and 3.815 km².⁶

Essential changes in the composition and territorial-administrative division of the county occurred after the Great Union of 1 December 1918. In 1925, the configuration of the county was changed by joining the two border posts, Carei and Valea lui Mihai.⁷ The area of the county increased to 5.191 km² and thus became one of the country's largest counties.⁸ Following the Vienna Dictate in 1940, the Sălaj County, being part of the Romanian territories in Transylvania joined by Hungary, came under Horthyst domination for four years. The territories were abolished and the powers of the counties were taken over by the "municipalities" of the former Hungarian shires before the Great Union in 1918. Carei and Valea lui Mihai were re-classified in the counties of Satu Mare and Bihor. The Sălaj shire was

² Ioan Bolovan, "Organizarea administrativă și dinamica populației Transilvaniei între Revoluția de la 1848 și Primul Război Mondial" (Administrative organization and dynamics of Transylvania's population between the Revolution of 1848 and the First World War), in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "George Barițiu" din Cluj-Napoca*, 37, (1998), 152-153.

³ Vasile Meruțiu, *Județele din Ardeal și din Maramureș până în Banat. Evoluția teritorială*, (The counties of Ardeal and Maramureș to Banat. Territorial evolution), (Cluj: Institutul de arte grafice „Ardealul”, 1929), 37.

⁴ Dănuț Pop, *Prefecții județului Sălaj. O istorie în documente* (Prefects of the Sălaj County. A history in documents) (Zalău: Caiete Silvane, 2007), 37.

⁵ Ioan Bolovan, *Organizarea administrativă și dinamica populației...*, 153.

⁶ Idem, *Transilvania între Revoluția de la 1848 și Unirea din 1918. Contribuții demografice* (Transylvania between the Revolution of 1848 and the Union of 1918. Demographic contributions) (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2000), 31.

⁷ Dănuț Pop, *Prefecții județului Sălaj...*, 41-43.

⁸ Idem, *Biserică și societate în Sălaj. Protopopiatul ortodox Românași* (Church and society in Sălaj. The Romanian orthodox deanery) (Zalău: Caiete Silvane, 2002), 17-18.

divided into eight plaques, with two county towns: Zalău and Şimleu, 73 cercals notaries, six municipal notaries and 251 communes (of which six large communes).⁹

2. The socio-professional structure of the Sălaj population between 1880 and 1941

The information regarding the structure of a country or a county based on socio-professional classes and categories is of particular importance due to its many influences on demographic behaviour.¹⁰

The structure of the population, from the viewpoint of its sources of subsistence, is established by dividing the human community into two main categories: people who earn their own income and people who do not have an income (dependents). Those in the first category make up the active population and the latter form the inactive population.¹¹ An active population is understood as all individuals working in any of the fields and sectors of the national economy. The percentage of the active population is an indicator determined by censuses and it shows the relation between the respondents and the economic and social activity, and the way in which they ensure their own livelihood necessary for their everyday lives. The inactive population or the inactive economic population includes those that only take on domestic activities that are not considered to be professional activities. This category includes students, annuitants, retired people, and those who are entirely dependent on others.¹²

A comparative examination of the socio-occupational structures in Sălaj between 1880 and 1941 is hampered by the fact that the censuses that recorded information about the demographic category in question did not operate consistently with the same concepts. For this reason, the censuses of 1880, 1930 and 1941 will be analysed separately, and those from 1890, 1900 and 1910, conducted in accordance with the same rules and concepts, we will examine together. For the localities that make up the control sample¹³, we have information about the socio-professional structure only at the censuses of 1900 and 1910.

⁹ Idem, *Prefecții județului Sălaj...*, 46.

¹⁰ Ioan Bolovan, *Transilvania între...*, 226.

¹¹ Virgil Sora, Ilie Hristache, Mircea Paul Despa, *Demografie* (Demography) (Bucharest: Didactică și Pedagogică, 1983), 71.

¹² Mihai Țarcă, *Tratat de demografie* (Demographics treaty) (Iași: Junimea, 2008), 462-463.

¹³ Eșantionul de control este compus din 7 comunități sălăjene după cum urmează: Bălan, Bulgari, Deja, Carastelec, Crasna, Biușa și Nușfalău (The control sample is composed of 7 villages of Sălaj as follows: Bălan, Bulgari, Deja, Carastelec, Crasna, Biușa and Nușfalău).

Table no. 1. Socio-professional composition of Sălaj in 1880¹⁴

The basic sector	Occupations	Number	Number	%
Intellectual professions	Priests, pastors	217	1.325	0,77
	Officials	327		
	Teachers, professors, educators	414		
	Writers and artists	2		
	Lawyers and Notaries	37		
	Health personnel	113		
	Engineers	15		
	Others	200		
Agriculture, Forestry	Owners	19.905	84.791	49,56
	Tenants	251		
	Officials	226		
	Annual servants	7.007		
	Workers	9.776		
	Day labourers	75		
	Household work (women)	41.952		
	Work in agriculture (women)	5.599		
Industry	Independent entrepreneurs	3.012	5.114	2,98
	Officials and workers	1.595		
	Work in industry (women)	507		
Mining and metallurgy	Independent entrepreneurs	-	-	-
	Officials and workers	-		
Trade and transports	Independent entrepreneurs	509	805	0,47
	Officials and workers	220		
	Work in commerce (women)	76		
Annuitants	Homeowners and renters	768	768	0,44
Other services	Domestics, servants, and day labourers	24.715	24.715	14,44
Others	Over 14 years old, without occupation	1.932	53.561	31,30
	Under 14 years old	51.513		
	Arrested	116		

¹⁴ The calculations were made following: *A Magyar Korona országaiban az 1881. év elején végrehajtott népszámlálás eredményei némely hasznos házi állatok kimutatásával együtt*, I kötet, (Budapest, 1882).

Table no. 1 shows the socio-professional structure of the Sălaj shire four years after its establishment. Following the socio-professional structure of Sălaj in 1880, we must note that out of the total population, 53.561 persons (31,30%) did not have a specified profession or were maintained. The active population consisted of 117.518 people (68,69%). In agriculture and silviculture there were 84.791 people, meaning 72,15% of the total active population. Regarding professions specific to the bourgeois society (industry, commerce, transport, intellectuals, retirees), 8.012 people practiced these professions, meaning 6,81% of the total active population. Mining was non-existent in the Sălaj shire in 1880, the census did not record any person to have a profession in this field. In 1880, Sălaj had a traditional social and professional structure, almost exclusively based on agriculture.

Table no. 2. Socio-professional structure of Sălaj in 1890, 1900 and 1910¹⁵

Field	1890				1900				1910			
	With income		Maintained		With income		Maintained		With income		Maintained	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture, gardening, silviculture	65.448	83,10	96.804	85,97	73.193	82,59	99.201	83,58	74.673	80,09	112.108	81,88
Mining, metallurgy	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	0,00	61	0,06	133	0,09
Industry	5.717	7,25	8.459	7,51	6.283	7,09	9.182	7,73	8.160	8,75	12.428	9,07
Trade, credit	1.020	1,29	1.630	1,44	1.095	1,23	1.943	1,63	1.644	1,76	2.851	2,08
Transports	338	0,42	712	0,63	518	0,58	1.233	1,03	744	0,79	1.874	1,36
Public services, army, freelancers	1.728	2,19	3.036	2,69	2.160	2,43	3.750	3,15	2.548	2,73	4.216	3,07
Day labourers	724	0,91	499	0,44	1.221	1,37	1.222	1,02	881	0,94	850	0,62
Servants	2.766	3,51	-	-	3.265	3,68	415	0,34	3.185	3,41	349	0,25
Other occupations, unknown	1.009	1,28	1.460	1,29	882	0,99	1.725	1,45	1.338	1,43	2.097	1,53
Total population	78.750	100,0	112.600	100,0	88.617	100,0	118.676	100,0	93.234	100,0	136.906	100,0

¹⁵ The calculations were made following: *A Magyar Korona Országainak 1900. évi Népszámlálása Második Rész. A Népeesség Foglalkozása Községenkint* (Budapest, 1904) (*Magyar Statisztikai Közlemények. Új Sorozat, 2 kötet*); Adam Iosif, I., Ioan Pușcaș, *Izvoare de demografie istorică. Secolul al XIX-lea-,1914. Transilvania* (Sources of historical demography. 19th Century, 1914. Transylvania), vol. II (Bucharest: Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului, 1987).

Following *Table no. 2*, we can analyse the socio-professional structure of the Sălaj shire at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Analyzing the data from the above table, we must note that between 1890 and 1910 the Sălaj shire maintained its predominantly agrarian character. After 1880, the economy of Transylvania shows a growth in the industrial development, in the transport and communications network, etc. Law XLIV of 1881 and law XIII of 1890 stimulated the development of the industry, increased the accumulation of capital and, implicitly, the widening of the network of credit institutions, trade intensified, etc.¹⁶ All these transformations have also had repercussions at the Sălaj shire level. In 1887, the railways that pass through Sălaj: Carei-Zalău and Sărmășag-Șimleu were inaugurated. Thus, an important railway artery was opened on the Zalău-Jibou-Dej route, built between 1887 and 1890, which gave the possibility to supply the new enterprises.¹⁷ Creating credit institutions became a necessity for all social categories in the second half of the 19th century. In 1887, the foundations of the credit and savings institute, *Silvania*, were established, based in Șimleul Silvaniei.¹⁸ In 1897, the *Sălăjana* bank was organized in Jibou.¹⁹ The establishment of the Sălaj banks in the last decades of the 19th century contributed to the economic development of the Sălaj shire.

On an industrial scale, the Sălaj shire has developed in the last decades of the 19th century. During this period, factories equipped with steam engines were opened: the Jósika sugar factory in Gârbou, the Jibou and Șimleu cooperage workshops, Cehu Silvaniei vinegar factory, etc.²⁰

The transformations in the structure of the Transylvanian society, in the direction of modernising the socio-professional profile, had a more rapid rhythm in the first half of the 20th century than in the second half of the 19th century.²¹ Between 1890 and 1900, the Sălaj shire suffered a percentage reduction of the employed population in agriculture from 83,10% in 1890 to 80,09% in 1910 (*Table no. 2*). Such a reduction of the employed population in agriculture was also noticeable in the control sample in four villages. Thus, between 1900 and 1910, the ratio of the employed population in agriculture decreased in the following localities: Bălan from 52,62% to 31,63%; Bulgari from 46,76% to 38,96%; Deja from 45,32% to 26,74%; Nușfalău from 34,54% to 28,63%.²² The same happened at the level of the whole of

¹⁶ Ioan Bolovan, *Transilvania între...*, 232.

¹⁷ Ioan Ciocian, *Biserica și societatea românească din Transilvania. Vicariatul Silvaniei în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea* (The Romanian church and society in Transylvania. The Vicariate of Silvania in the second half of the 19th century) (Arad: Vasile Goldiș University Press, 2000), 19.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹⁹ Dionisie Stoica; Ioan P. Lazăr, *Schița monografică a Sălajului* (The monograph of Sălaj) (Zalău: Caiete Silvane, 2016), 175.

²⁰ Ciocian, 19.

²¹ Ioan Bolovan, *Transilvania între...*, 233.

²² The calculations were made following: Traian Rotariu (coord.), *Recensământul din 1900, Transilvania. Populația după ocupații* (Census of 1900, Transylvania. Population by occupation), vol. II (Bucharest: Staff, 2006), 526, 546, 550. Traian Rotariu (coord.), *Recensământul din 1910, Transilvania. Populația după*

Transylvania between 1900 and 1910. The phenomenon was recorded throughout Transleithania and was a consequence of the socio-economic mobility during the construction of the new capitalist system. Some of the people engaged in agriculture migrated towards the industrial sector, but most of the poorer peasants preferred foreign emigration.²³ The emigration of the employed population in agriculture can also be observed in the Sălaj shire in the first decade of the 20th century. Between 1905 and 1907, 1.320 people immigrated from Sălaj to America. Of these, 81,21% were working in primary production (agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry), 7,65% in mining, industry and commerce, 8,63% were day labourers, 1,21% were servants, 28% had other occupations. Between 1911 and 1913, 81,14% of all immigrants in America were employed in primary production, 6,41% in mining, industry and commerce, 8,91% were day labourers, 0,72% were servants, and 2,79% had other occupations.²⁴ Since most of the day-labourers and servants worked in agriculture, almost 90% of these emigrants were peasants. If, between 1890 and 1900, in the Sălaj shire there was an increase in the ratio of the population in the total population from 0,91% to 1,37%, in 1910 their ratio was only 0,94%. Similarly, the proportion of servants in the total population decreased from 3,68% in 1900 to 3,41% in 1910 (*Table no. 2*).

Between 1890 and 1910, the Sălaj shire moved towards a modern bourgeois system. The percentage of the active population employed in industry increased from 7,25% in 1890 to 8,75% in 1910. Industrial sector development is mainly present in urban areas. For example, the number of people employed in industry grew in Şimleul Silvaniei from 765 people in 1900, to 1.080 in 1910.²⁵ In rural areas, there is also an increase in the number of people employed in industry. In all the villages constituting the control sample, there is an increase in the number of the employed population in this sector. For example, the number of people employed in industry increased in the village of Crasna from 82 people in 1900 to 235 in 1910. The same is true of Deja village, from 5 to 91 people.²⁶ The steady development trend of the industry, which began at the end of the 19th century and was temporarily discontinued during the overproduction crisis of 1900-1903, continued with much force until the outbreak of the First World War.²⁷

Progress can also be seen in the commercial and financial sector, which increased from 1,29% in 1890 to 1,76% in 1910. Between 1890 and 1910, the share of the occupied transport population increased from 0,42% to 0,79%, and the public services and freelancers category from 2,19% to 2,73% (*Table no. 2*).

ocupații (Census of 1910, Transylvania. Population by occupation), vol. II (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2006), 508, 532, 528.

²³ Ioan Bolovan, *Transilvania între...*, 233-234.

²⁴ Iosif, I., Pușcaș, 711-715.

²⁵ Rotariu (coord.), *Recensământul din 1900, Transilvania. Populația după ocupații*, 522; Rotariu (coord.), *Recensământul din 1910, Transilvania. Populația după ocupații*, 504.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 530, 550; *Ibid.*, 512, 532.

²⁷ Ioan Bolovan, *Transilvania între...*, 235.

In *Table no. 2* we can see that the number of people cared for increased from 112.600 in 1890 to 136.906 in 1910. The tendency of those who carried out the censuses to include women working in the primary sector in the category of dependents is the explanation for this increase.

Table no. 3. The occupied and maintained population in 1900 and 1910 at the level of the control sample²⁸

Sample	1900				1910			
	Occupied		Maintained		Occupied		Maintained	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bălan	750	54,74	620	45,25	507	33,91	988	66,08
Biuşa	311	45,53	372	54,46	314	44,79	387	55,20
Bulgari	172	48,45	183	51,54	160	41,55	225	58,44
Carastelec	672	40,23	998	59,76	867	47,32	965	52,67
Crasna	1.3 56	38,46	2.169	61,53	1.542	39,70	2.342	60,29
Deja	289	46,61	331	53,38	292	40,05	437	59,94
Nuşfalău	1.0 01	46,23	1.164	53,76	1.034	41,24	1.473	58,75

Following *Table no. 3*, we must note that there is an increase in the population maintained between 1900 and 1910 in most of the localities that make up the control sample. Except for the villages of Carastelec and Crasna, in the other five localities there was an increase in the number of people maintained and a decrease in the employment.

At the first census conducted after the Great Union, Sălaj retains its predominantly agrarian character. The agriculture of the Sălaj County was a particularly important sector in the county economy.²⁹ In 1930, most of the population was employed in agriculture. Of the total active population, 200.508 persons, 85,49% were employed in agriculture (*Table no. 4*). The passive population numbered 142.839 people, meaning 41,60% of the total population. A very large number of these people represented pre-school and school-age youth.³⁰ Only those aged

²⁸ The calculations were made following: Rotariu (coord.), *Recensământul din 1900, Transilvania. Populația după ocupații*; Rotariu (coord.), *Recensământul din 1910, Transilvania. Populația după ocupații*.

²⁹ Eugen Mewes, "Agricultura sălăjeană în anii 1929-1932" (The agriculture of the Sălaj County between 1929-1932), in *Acta Musei Porolissensis*, XII (1988), 651.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 606.

between 0 and 12 years numbered 108.545 people, meaning 75,99% of all non-active and maintained people.³¹

Table no. 4. The socio-professional structure of the Sălaj County in 1930³²

Classes of professions	Active population		Passive population	
	Number	%	Number	%
Soil exploitation	171.432	85,49	103.978	72,79
Exploitation of the underground	445	0,22	843	0,59
Metallurgical industry	1.745	0,87	2.201	1,54
Wood industry	1.582	0,78	2.277	1,59
Constructions	1.672	0,83	2.503	1,75
Textile and manufacturing industry	3.674	1,83	3.858	2,70
Food industry, tobacco	1.463	0,72	2.069	1,44
Chemical industry, paper, printing	271	0,13	324	0,22
Other industrial enterprises	78	0,03	80	0,05
Credit, dealerships, trade agents	337	0,16	419	0,29
Trade	4.329	2,15	4.618	3,23
Transports and communications	1.636	0,81	3.488	2,44
Public institutions	5.482	2,73	5.411	3,78
Miscellaneous	5.568	2,77	10.085	7,06

³¹ *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 decembrie 1930. Profesioni. Populația pe clase și grupe de profesioni după sexe, vârstă, instrucție și neam; situația în profesie a activilor* (The general census of the Romanian population of December 29, 1930. Professions Population by classes and groups of professions by gender, age, education and nation; the profession's actives situation), vol. VII (Bucharest: Institutul Central de Statistică, 1940), 402.

³² The calculations were made following: *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 decembrie 1930. Profesioni. Populația pe clase și grupe de profesioni și situația în profesie pe sexe* (The general census of the Romanian population of 29 december 1930. Professions. Population by classes and groups of professions and situation in the profession by gender), vol. VI (Bucharest: Institutul Central de Statistică, 1940).

Unreported	794	0,39	685	0,47
Total population	200.508	58,39	142.839	41,60

The 1930 census shows that 29.076 people, meaning 14,50% of the total active population, were employed in non-agricultural, industrial, construction, transport, credit, commerce, administration and other activities. These data show the low level of development of the county in these branches.³³

The industry was poorly represented in the Sălaj County in 1930. It was divided into three groups: large, small and domestic. The first group contained: alcohol, brick and tile factories, timber, steam or engine mills and mining industries. As far as the small industry is concerned, it was represented by traditional water mills, oil presses, workshops for cotton fabrics, flax and hemp, lime factories and workshops for making wine barrels. The Romanian craftsmen were few, most of them being of Hungarian nationality.³⁴ In the textile and manufacturing industry, most people were employed in 1930. There were 3.674 people in the sector, or 1,83% of the total active population (*Table no. 4*).

In 1923, in the Sălaj County there were 19 banks and branches of certain banks. In 1937, the Romanians controlled four banks and six branches and the Jewish and Hungarian minorities controlled seven banks and seven branches of certain banks.³⁵

In the interwar period, the number of industrial and trade enterprises in Sălaj constantly increased.³⁶ At the 1930 census there were 2.681 industrial enterprises, 1.776 commercial enterprises, 66 credit institutions (banks, cooperatives, subsidiary companies, etc.) and 113 other businesses with other activities (hygiene, public health, education, etc.).³⁷ Regarding the number of employees, no company in Sălaj had over 500 workers in the 1930s. As was the case of finance, the industry and commerce also belonged mainly to the Jewish and Hungarian minorities.³⁸

³³ Vasile Ciubăncan, „Date noi demografice, socio-economice despre populația Sălajului pe anii 1910-1941. Poziția și contribuția ei în problema apărării graniței de vest a țării în perioada interbelică” (New demographic, socioeconomic data on the Sălaj population over the years 1910-1941. Its position and contribution to the defence of the western border of the country in the interwar period), in *Acta Musei Porolissensis*, IV (1980), 607.

³⁴ Dănuț Pop, *Cultură și societate în județul Sălaj (1918-1940)* (Culture and society in the Sălaj County (1918-1940), (Zalău: Caiete Silvane, 2000), 65-66.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 66-67.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

³⁷ *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 decembrie 1930. Intreprinderi industriale și comerciale* (The general census of the Romanian population of 29 December 1930. Industrial and commercial enterprises), vol. X (Bucharest: Institutul Central de Statistică, 1938), 490.

³⁸ Dănuț Pop, *Cultură și societate...*, 67.

The census conducted by the Hungarian authorities in 1941 shows that the majority of the Sălaj shire population was employed in agriculture. Of the total active population, 125.437 persons, 105.723 persons, respectively 84,28% were employed in this sector. In the other branches: mining, industry, commerce, credit, transport, administration and others, active 19.714 persons, i.e. 15,71% of the total active population (*Table no.5*). This shows that in 1941 these branches continued to be poorly developed on the territory of the Sălaj shire.

Table no. 5. The socio-professional structure of Sălaj in 1941³⁹

Field	With income		Maintained	
	Number	%	Number	%
Soil exploitation	105.723	84,28	135.005	85,37
Mining and metallurgy	445	0,35	1.053	0,66
Industry	7.103	5,66	10.669	6,74
Trade and credit	1.845	1,47	2.964	1,87
Transports	1.307	1,04	2.196	1,38
Public services and freelancers	2.613	2,08	3.374	2,13
Day laborers	263	0,20	240	0,15
Retirees and annuitants	1.022	0,81	1.055	0,66
Domestic servants	2.031	1,61	215	0,13
Other undeclared occupations	3.085	2,45	1.352	0,85
Total population	125.437	44,23	158.123	55,76

In the report on the state of affairs (administration, economy, health, culture, etc.) of the Sălaj County in 1938, submitted to the Royal Resident of Someș on February 5, 1939, by

³⁹ The calculations were made following: *Magyar Statisztikai szemle*, VI szám, (Budapest, 1944).

the Sălaj County prefecture, it is claimed that, in agriculture, the situation was satisfactory. The exceptions were made by 25 communes, where hail destroyed the whole grain and fruit harvest. Concerning the county industry, the report states that: “the big industry is totally missing from the county, and the trade is concentrated in the three urban communi- ties. But even in these centres, although 20 years of Romanian rule, Romanian trade and industry, we can say, rightly, that we are only at its beginnings. Of the total of 2.804 companies that existed in the county, only 382 were Romanian companies, of which the overwhelming majority were “small groceries, anaemic cooperatives and public banks from villages.”⁴⁰

The analysis of the socio-professional structure of Sălaj between 1880 and 1941 highlights the fact that it retains its predominantly agrarian character throughout this period. The censuses carried out between 1880 and 1941 show that the vast majority of the Sălaj population was employed in agriculture. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Sălaj made steps towards a modern bourgeois system. Progress can be seen in the industrial, commercial, financial, etc. sectors. However, at the censuses carried out in 1930 and 1941, these branches are still poorly developed in Sălaj.

3. The socio-professional structure of Sălaj compared to that of Transylvania and other shires at the beginning of the 20th century

The socio-professional structure of the Sălaj shire follows the model of Transylvania at the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, in the Sălaj shire, there is a percentage reduction of the active population employed in agriculture from 82,59% in 1900 to 80,09% in 1910. This reduction also occurs in Transylvania from 77% in 1900, to 71,3% in 1910.⁴¹ Such a decrease was also recorded for the Alba de Jos shire, from 77,6% in 1900 to 74,8% in 1910.⁴² The census carried out in 1900 also recorded a significant decrease in the share of the active population in the agricultural sector at the level of the Arad shire.⁴³ This is a direct consequence of the socio-economic mobility during the construction of the new capitalist system.⁴⁴ Between 1901 and 1910 Transylvania is firmly evolving towards another occupational model⁴⁵, as in the Sălaj and Alba de Jos shires. In this decade, in Transylvania and in the aforementioned shires there is a modernization of the socio-economic profile. Between 1901 and 1910, in Transylvania, the

⁴⁰ Cornel Grad, Doru E. Goron, “Un raport despre situația Sălajului în anul 1938” (A report on Sălaj's situation in 1938), in *Limes* II, no.1-2 (5-6) (1999), 30-31.

⁴¹ Ioan Bolovan, *Transilvania între...*, 233.

⁴² Elena Crinela Holom, *Individ, familie, comunitate. Comportament demografic, relații familiale interetnice și interconfesionale în satele din trecutul Albei (1850-1910)* (Individual, family, community. Demographic behaviour, inter-ethnic and inter-confessional family relations in the villages of Alba's past (1850-1910), (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2009), 120.

⁴³ Cornelii Pădurean, *Populația comitatului Arad în secolul al XIX-lea* (The population of the Arad county in the 19th century) (Arad: Universității „Aurel Vlaicu”, 2003), 280.

⁴⁴ Ioan Bolovan, *Transilvania între...*, 233.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 234

population of mining, iron and steel, industry and crafts grew from 9,2% in 1900 to 13,2% in 1910.⁴⁶ Between 1900 and 1910, the population of the Sălaj shire in industry increased from 7,09% to 8,75%. Similarly, in the shire of Alba de Jos, the percentage of those working in the industrial and crafts sector increased from 7,5% in 1900 to 8,8% in 1910.⁴⁷ At the beginning of the 20th century, Transylvania continued to be a predominantly agrarian area⁴⁸, as one could also observe in the Sălaj, Alba de Jos and Arad shires.

4. The socio-professional structure of the Sălaj County compared to that of Transylvania and other counties in the interwar period. Considerations based on the 1930 census

The 1930 census shows that 70,98% of the active population of Transylvania was employed in agriculture.⁴⁹ In the Sălaj County, the employed population in agriculture accounted for 85,49% of the total active population. In the Alba County, the population that worked in agriculture accounted for 78,66% of the total assets.⁵⁰ Similarly, in the Arad County, 75,74% of the total active population was active in agriculture.⁵¹ In the Maramureş County, the active population in agriculture accounted for 77,73%⁵², and in the county of Bihor, it represented 77,19%.⁵³ With 85,49% active population employed in agriculture, the Sălaj County is above the percentages registered in Transylvania and in the aforementioned counties, where the ratio of the active population in agriculture was below 80% in 1930. From the data we hold, it results that the only complete census of the large Romanian population of the interwar period, Transylvania, Sălaj and the other mentioned counties preserve their predominantly agrarian character. From an industrial point of view, most of them worked in the textile and manufacturing industries. Thus, in Transylvania, 3,07% of the total active population was active in the textile and manufacturing industry, 1,87% in the Sălaj County, 2,60% in the Alba County, 3,12% in the Arad County, 2,23% in the Maramureş County and in the county of Bihor 3,09%.⁵⁴

5. Conclusions

All the sources consulted for this study show that from a socio-professional point of view, Sălaj retains its predominantly agrarian character between 1880 and 1941. The censuses carried out by the Austro-Hungarian state between 1880 and 1910, the census volumes made and published in Romania on the occasion of the population records of 1930 and the census of the

⁴⁶ Ibid., 234.

⁴⁷ Elena Crinela Holom, *Individ, familie, comunitate...*, 121.

⁴⁸ Ioan Bolovan, *Transilvania între...*, 234.

⁴⁹ *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 decembrie 1930. Profesiuni...*, 16.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 22.

⁵¹ Ibid., 33.

⁵² Ibid., 307.

⁵³ Ibid., 66.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Hungarian population (Sălaj being part of the Romanian territories of Transylvania handed over to Hungary) carried out in 1941 show that the majority of the Sălaj population was employed in agriculture. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Sălaj made progress towards a modern bourgeois system. It can be observed in the industrial, commercial, financial sector, etc. However, at the censuses carried out in 1930 and 1941, these branches are still poorly developed in Sălaj.

The socio-professional structure of the Sălaj shire follows the model of Transylvania at the beginning of the 20th century. In the Sălaj shire there is a percentage decrease of the active population employed in agriculture, as seen in Transylvania, but also in shires such as Alba de Jos and Arad. This reduction was due to the decision of a part of the rural population to abandon the practice of agriculture. They turned to other professions in the urban area or chose foreign emigration.

In the interwar period, the 1930 census shows that Transylvania, Sălaj and other counties, such as Alba, Arad, Maramureş or Bihor, remain predominantly agrarian.