IMPORTANCE OF THE LOCAL TERRITORIAL LEVEL IN SHAPING THE QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS IN ROMANIA

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Abstract. Since the quality of employment has become the focus of attention among labour market analysts, policy makers, the researchers from many and diverse filed of sciences, the geographers included, are interested in studying this concept. The paper aims to emphasize the contribution of the local territorial level in setting up the quality of employment in Romania. Methodological aspects are discussed with focus on construction and computation of the so-called "index of the characteristics related to the quality of employment" (ICQE) which is considered at five territorial levels (national, macro-regional, regional, county and local). The largest part of the paper presents the analysis results, basically the spatial distribution of the quality of employment patterns at different territorial levels focusing on the role held by the local territorial level in shaping the spatial features of quality of employment. The study concludes that the local territorial level revealed the very low quality of employment pattern, which is hidden at macro-regional, regional and county levels.

1. INTRODUCTION

The broad field of employment is diverse and complex and is under constant development and reinvention (Townsend and Wilkinson, 2011). Employment represents a central element for the life of people, even the economists thinking that this importance consists not only in terms of time and providing income but in terms of influence on quality of life (Stiglitz *et al.*, 2009). The employment is the key to social and economic advancement and it provides identity to people and, at the same time, quality of employment influences in an important way the quality of life, employment being not without risk (*Statistical framework for measuring quality of employment*, 2012).

Since the quality of employment is an issue of importance to individuals, national and international institutions, governments etc, this concept has increasingly becomes the focus of attention among labour market analysts, researchers, policy makers in the European Union and worldwide. Decent work, quality of work, quality of working life, job quality, good jobs and bad jobs are the most important concepts related to the "quality of employment" (Sen, 1997, ILO, 1999, Clark, 2000, van Bastelaer, 2000, 2002, Johri, 2005, Burchell *et al.*, 2012). Among these, the concept of job quality appears to be important for our approach because, conceptually, it may be useful to divide it into two broad areas: quality of employment and quality of work. Quality of work focuses on the way in which the activity of work itself and the conditions under which it takes place can affect the well-being of workers (e.g. social environment, physical environment) (Contreras *et al.*, 2009). Quality of employment covers all the elements related to the employment contract, remuneration and working hours and career development. The quality of employment is defined as a set of characteristics that determine the capability of employment to satisfy certain commonly accepted needs (Van Bastelaer and Hussmanns, 2000). Over the last decades a vibrant body of research committed to investigating the concept of quality of employment (e.g. Herod, 1997, 2007, Harvey, 2001, Greenhaus *et al.*, 2003,

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Sehnbruch, 2004, Moretti, 2004, Andren, Martison, 2006, Gallie, 2007, Davoine *et al.*, 2008, Ferrante, 2009, Castree *et al.*, 2004, Castree, 2010). Territorially, the labour market, work, employment and quality of employment must be understood in the context of global production networks (Ellem, 2006). Worldwide, this type of approaches incorporates the geographical dimension as a central dynamic element (Herod *et al.*, 2001, Peck 1996, 2003, Martin 2000, Martin and Morisson 2003, Castree 2010, Weller and Campbell 2014).

Ever since the beginning of the 20th century, the idea that the labour market has an intrinsically local or spatially constituted level of operation and regulation (Allen and Henrg, 1977 quoted by Martin and Morisson 2003) was present in the Romanian social geography. In his work "Un proect de geografie socială a Romîniei"/"A Project on Social Geography in Romania" (*Buletinul SGR*, XXIII, I, 1902, Bucharest), Nestor V.A. Urechia proposes a study on the "work done by the head of the family and the family members" (p. 98) with focuses on the object of work, propensity for work, work-place, the tasks involved by work, organisation of labour, wages, social protection of working families, etc. Before December 1989, the Romanian geographical literature included labour studies with highlight on their quantitative and structural features, but never on the quality of employment or unemployment. Studies on the geographical dimension of the social phenomena, inclusive of the structure of employment and unemployment became ever more numerous in the post-December period (Cocean *et al.*, 1996, Popescu, 2001a) and b), 2003, Iaţu, 2002, Ipatiov, 2007, Ianoş and Heller, 2006, etc.).

The study of quality of employment is timely coming at a period when global labour markets are undergoing large scale changes in their form and composition (Janoski *et al.*, 2014). The economic crisis that led to recession worldwide in 2008–2009 impacted in multiple ways on work and economic life (Warren, 2015). In Romania, the beginning of the crisis (in the last trimester of 2008) was not accompanied by adequate measures to at least attenuate its economic and moreover social effects (Radocea, 2009). It was „a catastrophe with a negative impact on the economic development programmes and particularly on the growth of incomes for the present generations of employees" (Fota and Băcescu, 2009, p. 5).

In this study, the quality of employment assessment will be made by closely analysing the main features of employment at a micro-scale level (local administrative units – LAU). The process, phenomena and factors with an important role in designing the structure and functions of the territory (among other things, these being the outcome of labour market characteristics) can be identified at a local level, as a characterization of perceived influence, not physical measurable but it is what people accept it to be (Zermoglio *et al.*, 2003). The micro-scale is considered the spatial category allowing the most detailed analysis of the main processes taking place within nature and society, it "is the place where everything happens" (Ianoş and Popescu, 1997, pp. 41).

The aim of this paper is to analyse the importance of the local territorial level in setting up the quality of employment in Romania, objective which implies the assessment of the quality of employment from a multi-scales approach (national, macro-regional, regional, county and, finally, local level). The temporal dimension was selected to mirror the negative effects of the economic crisis and, simultaneously, to valorize the statistical data available at all territorial levels mentioned, provided by the Population and Housing Census (National Institute of Statistics). This moment is represented by the year 2011. Thus, the study is divided in two different parts: first one includes the identification of the statistical variables and indicators for measuring the quality of employment (available at all different territorial analysed); second one represents the assessment of the quality of employment at spatial levels analysed. Finally, how the spatial patterns of quality of employment changed from national down to regional and local territorial levels will be analysed. Specifically, the paper examines how the spatial patterns of quality of employment are changed once the analysis is extended to the local level, emphasizing the existence of very low quality of employment at this territorial level.

2. STATISTICAL MEASUREMENT OF QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT: GENERAL ASPECTS

Many international organisations emphasise the importance of quality of employment in their work (e.g. International Labour Organization, UNECE, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions). Establishing the principles for the statistical framework represents the first step of the elaborated process of measuring the quality of employment: the indicators of quality of employment should be organised in a transparent and logical structure; all indicators should have a clear relationship with quality of employment; the indicators should be sufficiently broad to allow a maximum choice for countries; the indicators should be developed, wherever possible, using international recommendations and guidelines on classifications, concepts, definitions and computation methods and definitions; the indicators should be those for which National Statistical Offices find appropriate in providing the data (Lozano, 2005, Cloutier, 2008, Muñoz de Bustillo *et al.*, 2011, *Statistical framework for measuring quality of employment*, 2012). The next step is to define the dimensions and sub-dimensions of the framework, which varies a lot worldwide. At international and EU levels, in developing the framework of statistical indicators for measuring the quality of employment three approaches are in use. The International Labour Organization's (ILO) have developed several indices and systems of indicators of „decent work" as follows: Ghai (2003) uses the variables in order to account for the employment, social security, workers' rights and the social dialogue dimensions; Bonnet *et al.* (2003) operate with seven different dimensions of security: labour market, employment, job, work, reproduction of skills, income and representation; Anker *et al.* (2002) propose a set of indicators based on aggregate data referring to eleven group of indicators (e.g. employment opportunities; unacceptable work; adequate earnings and productive work; stability and security of work; fair treatment in employment; social protection and social dialogue); Bescond *et al.* (2003) proposed an index which is based on seven indicators (e.g. the child non-enrolment rate, the share of low-paid workers (with earnings lower than 50% of the median), the unemployment rate, the youth unemployment rate, the male-female gap in labour force participation rates). The second approach on measuring the qualitative aspects of employment is due to the European Commission Quality of Work Indicators and Eurostat (EU statistics on labour force survey (EU-LFS) as core data source). They have defined a set of indicators to monitor quality of employment (indicators endorsed at the Laeken European Council in December 2001). The so-called "Laeken indicators" comprise ten dimensions of quality of employment (e.g. lifelong learning and career development, gender equality, inclusion and access to the labour market, work organisation and the work– life balance, diversity and non-discrimination and overall economic performance and productivity) (*Employment in Europe*, 2008). The "Laeken indicators" include 26 indicators. The third approach is due to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) which has identified three perspectives on the quality of work and employment (societal, corporate and individual). The proposed 62 indicators are primarily designed to measure quality of employment from the perspective of the individual or worker (*Measuring Quality of Employment*, UNECE, 2010).

It is very important to identify how to use these numerouse indicators. At the national level, the indicators can be used to identify labour market trends, the indicators are especially useful to identify groups with less favourable labour market situations and many different sub-populations could be considered in this context (sex, age categories, ethnic minorities, level of educational attainment, persons with a disability); a possible application of the indicators would be to use it to compare the quality of employment in different sectors of economic activity; another important comparison would be made between different categories of employed persons (the status in employment – employees, employers, own-account workers, contributing family workers) (*Potential indicators for measurement of quality of employment*, 2010).

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

It can be noted that all the possibilities to use the indicators mentioned above do not include the spatial dimension: the comparisons could be made between different groups or sub-populations, between different sectors of economic activity etc. but they not could be made between different territorial levels The main criticism of this international framework of statistical indicators is that they rarely applied in practice at micro-scale level (Johri, 2005). The cause consists in the fact that the indicators and indexes are constructed from statistical data measured at macro-level. Reviewing the existing job quality/employment quality indicators, results the conclusion that at EU level is still a need a worker-oriented, individually constructed and scientifically grounded job quality/employment quality indicator in order to measure, compare and monitor job and employment quality in the different Member States (Contreras *et al.*, 2009).

For measuring the quality of employment at different territorial levels, the international framework of statistical indicators should be supplemented by additional ones, resulted from the rule of availability concomitantly at national, macro-regional, regional, county and local levels (Davoine *et al.*, 2008). In this study, the main criteria for selecting statistical indicators to measure the quality of employment were their relevance to the Romanian labour market and the availability at all the different territorial levels considered in this analysis.

Two studies (Sehnbruch, 2004, Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007) have revealed that there are some indicators which might reflect the quality of employment at all territorial levels, at the same time meeting both the relevance for Romania, as well as the availability at all the different territorial levels. These indicators are: general rate of employment (EMPLOY), rate of unemployment (UR), rate of employment in agriculture (EMPLOYAGR), rate of employment in non-agricultural activities (divided into manufacturing sector – EMPLOYMANUF and tertiary sector – EMPLOYTERT) and the % of employees per total employed population (EMPLOYEES) (Mocanu, 2015). In our study, these indicators are computed from the statistical data available at macro-regional, regional, county and LAU2 levels provided by the National Institute of Statistics (TEMPO Online and the results of the Population and Housing Census, 2011).

The attributes of the quality of employment were synthesised into a complex index, the so-called "index of the characteristics related to the quality of employment – ICQE" (adapted from Sehnbruch, 2004), calculated as arithmetic mean (Arvigan *et al.*, 2005) between the relative distance to the national average for the territorial unit "*i*". With this methodological approach, the indicators selected for measuring the quality of employment are adapted to the purpose of the multi-level analysis, and compared to a common reference point (Goschin *et al.*, 2008), which is represented in this study by the national average of each statistical indicator selected.

D_{EMPLOY} = EMPLOY*i* / EMPLOY*nav*

$D_{EMPLOYMANUF}$ = EMPLOYMANUF*i* / EMPLOYMANUF*nav*

$D_{EMPLOYTERT}$ = EMPLOYTERT*i* / EMPLOYTERT*nav*

$D_{EMPLOYEES}$ = EMPLOYEES*i* / EMPLOYEES*nav*,

where:

– D_{EMPLOY}, $D_{EMPLOYMANUF}$ and $D_{EMPLOYTERT}$ are the relative distances of the general rate of employment, the rate of employment in the manufacturing sector, the rate of employment in the tertiary sector and $D_{EMPLOYEES}$ is the relative distance of the share per employees of the total employed population;

– EMPLOY*i*, EMPLOYMANUF*i*, EMPLOYTERT*i* and EMPLOYEES*i* are the values of the selected indicators in the territorial unit "*i*";

– EMPLOY*nav*, EMPLOYMANUF*nav*, EMPLOYTERT*nav* and EMPLOYEES*nav* are the national average values of the selected indicators.

The indicators "unemployment rate" and "rate of employment in agriculture" offer a different perspective on the quality of employment; unlike the other four indicators, the lower the unemployment rate and the rate of employment in agriculture, the better the quality of employment in a territorial unit. So, in the case of these two statistical indicators, the relative distance to the national average for the territorial unit "*i*" is adapted to this particularity by inverting the fractions:

D_{UR} = Ur*nav* / UR*i*

$D_{EMPLOYAGR}$ = EMPLOYAGR*nav* / EMPLOYAGR

where:

– D_{UR} is the relative distance of the unemployment rate and $D_{EMPLOYAGR}$ is the relative distance of the rate of employment in agriculture;

– UR*i* and EMPLOYAGR*i* are the values of selected indicators in the territorial unit "*i*";

– UR*nav* and EMPLOYAGR*nav* are the national average values of selected indicators.

ICQE = (D_{EMPLOY} + $D_{EMPLOYMANUF}$ + $D_{EMPLOYTERT}$ + $D_{EMPLOYEES}$ + D_{UR} + $D_{EMPLOYAGR}$)/6 (Arvigan *et al*., 2005).

The INQE values above unity indicate high quality of employment (1.001 – 2.99 = medium-high, 3.00 – 5.99 = high and 6.00 – 20.68 = very high) in differente macro-regions, regions, counties or LAU2, while the values below unity point show the territorial units with low or very low quality of employement (0.500 – 0.99 = low and 0.289 – 0.49 = very low) (Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4). All six indicators are equally weighted in the final index (ILO, 1999) and the resulting quality of employment patterns are: very low, low, medium-high and high.

4. RESULTS

National level. Once Romania joined the EU (2007), the country was included in the studies focused on employment in EU and the negative social and economic effects of the transitions period have reflected by these. Among the four employment quality systems in the EU (*Employment in Europe 2008*, Davoine *et al.*, 2008), one that is specific to Romania implied low productivity levels, low socio-economic security and unfavourable working conditions (e.g. high health risks), which are partly offset by the relatively low work intensity. Once the financial and economic crisis set on (2008), the growth rate of unemployment and the number of unemployed recorded a tendency to close to the situation existing at the end of the 1990s. One of the effects of the economic-financial crisis was the rise of unemployment throughout the country. At the same time, the crisis revealed the fragility of employment in some industrial (sub)branches known for almost explosive development prior to recession (e.g. car parts, garments, etc.), which, in the new global conditions, had to restructure or slow down their activities. In the counties that had a high unemployment rate and a low occupancy rate even before the crisis, imbalances in the regional or local labour markets became more acute (Mocanu, 2010).

At macro-regional level, there are two quality of employment patterns: low and medium-high (Fig. 1).

The macro-regions I, II and IV, which formed the low quality of employment pattern, yielded statistical indicators values with positive effect on the above-analysed index of the national average; the values of unemployment rate and of employment rate in agriculture, with negative impact on the quality of employment level, are below the baseline. Of these three macro-region, the Macro-region I is the only which registered a value of the computed index (0.944) very close to the unity (or to the baseline), which would indicate the medium-high quality of employment pattern. Macro-region II records the lowest value of ICQE (0.787), registering a problematic quality of employment. Macro-region III, which includes Bucureşti–Ilfov region, stands for the medium-high quality of employment pattern. In this macro-region, the general employment rate, the percentage of employees per total employed population and the rate of occupancy in non-agricultural activities have high values; at the

same time, the values of unemployment rate and employment in agriculture values are below the national average.

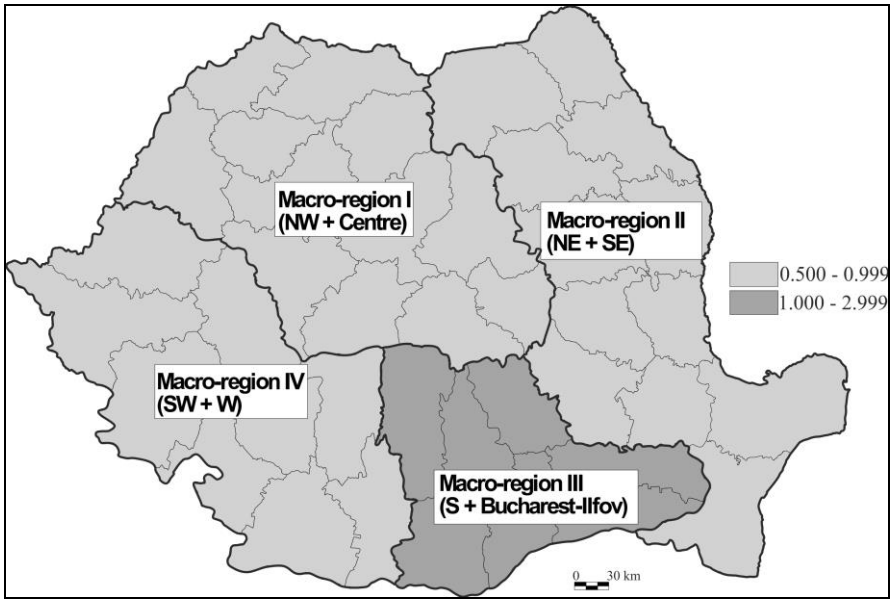

Fig. 1 – Index of the characteristics related to the quality of employment (ICQE) at macro-regional level. (*Source*: processed and mapped statistical data provided by the Population and Housing Census 2011, TEMPO Online, National Institute of Statistics).

The whole range of economic and socio-cultural changes is better perceived at regional level because this level can offer a better image of the whole (Ianoş, Popescu, 1997). At regional level, the quality of employment and of unemployment is influenced by current economic mechanisms and the legacy of an economic and social system specific to each region, of production factors and the sectoral structure of economic activities. The regional job-market is an intermediate entity between the national and the local markets, sectoral structure being the outcome of both market opening and the ever greater regional disparities in the development process (Bourdeau-Lepage, 2000). The quality of employment and the unemployment are a part of regional labour markets.

The eight regions of development are included in the same two quality of employment patterns as macro-regions are: low and medium-high (Fig. 2).

The North-East, South-East, South and South-West regions form the low quality of employment pattern, they having registered the following differences in terms of the indicators selected: comparing with the baseline, unemployment and occupancy in agriculture are higher, the general employment and the share of employees per total employed persons are lower; the structure of the employed population by economic activity sectors is different, but negative compared with Romania's structure (the manufacturing and tertiary sectors employ fewer persons than the national average).

The medium-high quality of employment pattern includes the Centre, West, North-West and Bucureşti–Ilfov development regions. These regions registered the highest values of indicators with a positive effect on the quality of employment and lowest values of indicators with a negative effect, a situation particularly evident in Bucharest–Ilfov region. In these regions, the general rate of employment, employment in non-agricultural activities and the percentage of employees registered higher values than the national average, Bucharest–Ilfov region having the lowest score for unemployment rate and occupancy in agriculture (2.7% and 3%), with the highest record for employment in tertiary activities and the percentage of employees per total employed population (70% and 74.4%, respectively).

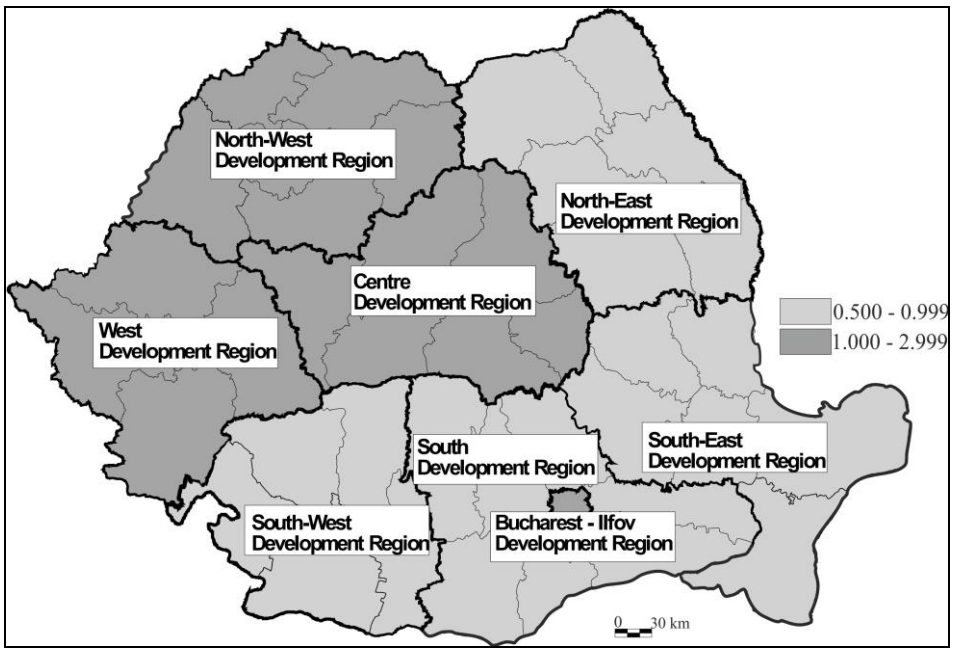

Fig. 2 – Index of the characteristics related to the quality of employment (ICQE) at regional level. (*Source*: processed and mapped statistical data provided by the Population and Housing Census 2011, TEMPO Online, National Institute of Statistics).

The county level has three quality-of-employment patterns: low, medium-high and very high (Fig. 3).

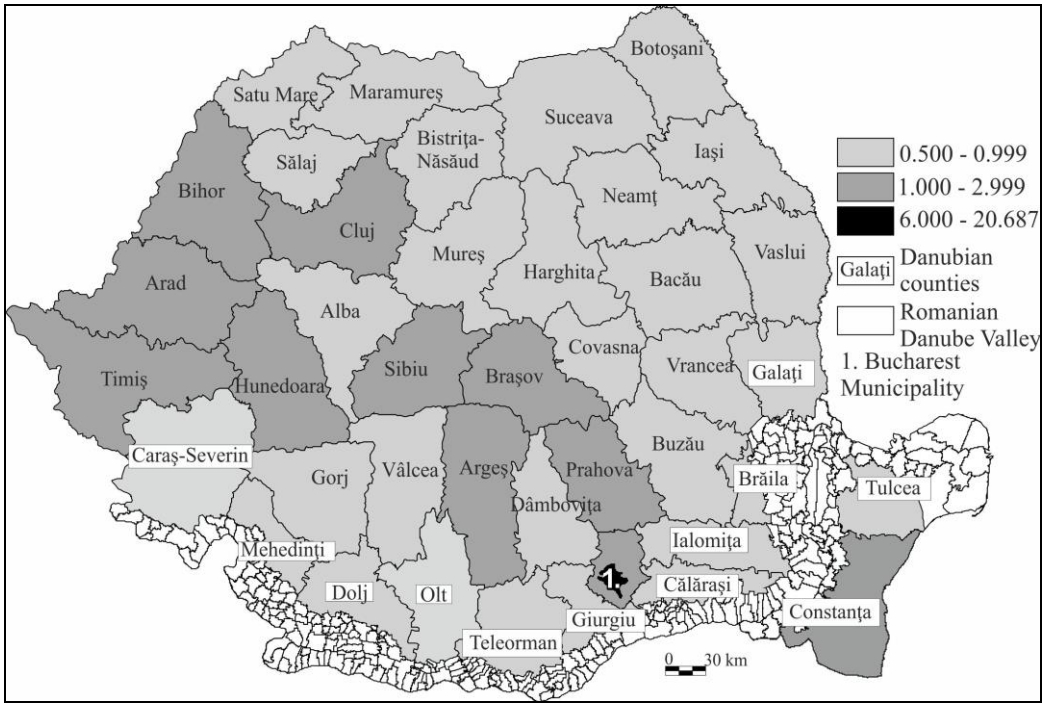

Fig. 3 – Index of the characteristics related to the quality of employment (ICQE) at county level. (*Source*: processed and mapped statistical data provided by the Population and Housing Census 2011, TEMPO Online, National Institute of Statistics).

The very low quality-of-employment pattern, exists in the majority of Romania's counties (31), and is scattered all over the regions. The counties from the eastern, south-eastern and southern parts of Romania fall into the very low quality-of-employment pattern. All across the Centre, West and North-West development regions had a medium-high quality-of-employment pattern, but in some counties this pattern was very low, indeed. In fact, only two counties in each of the North-West and Centre regions, have the same medium-high quality-of-employment pattern like the region they belong to (Bihor and Cluj in the North-West region and Sibiu and Braşov in the Centre region), the other eight counties of these two regions having a very low quality of employment pattern. In the West region, only Caraş-Severin County has this pattern, the other three counties of the region falling into the medium-high pattern. This pattern also is represented in the south and south-eastern parts of Romania (Argeş, Prahova, Ilfov and Constanţa). Bucharest Municipium stands out with a very high quality of employment, being a singular case among an extended pattern of very low quality of employment, in which some discontinuous areas of medium-high quality can also be detected.

Some Social Geography researchers view the local level as a true laboratory, or as a socio-"geographical melting pot" which reproduces social relationships in terms of the geographical space (Chevalier, 1986). Apart from its area proper, it encompasses lots of local places of variables size, depending on one another, and on which outside evolutions impose certain rates of a special dynamics.

In this study, the local level is represented by the 266 local administrative units of the Romanian Danube Valley (Fig. 4).

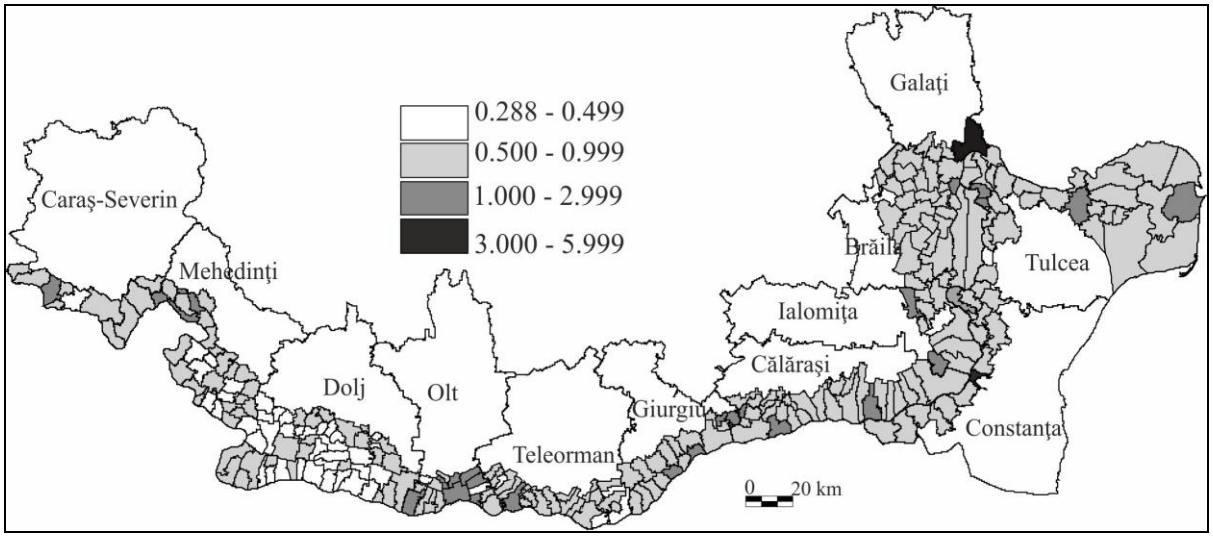

Fig. 4 – Index of the characteristics related to the quality of employment (ICQE) at local level.
(*Source*: processed and mapped statistical data provided by the Population and Housing Census 2011, TEMPO Online, National Institute of Statistics).

Out of the 12 Danubian counties, Constanţa alone falls into the medium-high quality of employment pattern, in the other 11 counties this pattern is low. The Valley's labour market in 2011 looked unbalanced because of disequilibrium between the quantitative and structural characteristics of labour: activity and employment rates had low and very low values (44.3% and 62.8%, respectively); the labour-force substitution index being sub-unity (population aged 15–29/ population aged 30–44 = 0.71) was an indication that the labour potential was incapable of maintaining its demographic and productive vigour. Comparing with the national average values, the unemployment rate (8.5%), the occupancy rate in agriculture (33.6%), the economic dependency rate (136%) and the inactivity rate were high and/or very high.

In terms of the quality of employment territorial patterns, what distinguished the Romanian Danube Valley were the following aspects:

– the very low quality of employment pattern included 47 rural LAU2, which numbered 53,894 economically active persons. These rural settlements registered high general employment rate values (due to the 80% – 90% occupancy in agriculture) and a high rate of unemployment (most values being above the baseline, with a maximum value in the Romanian Danube Valley, at Gârla Mare, Dolj County – 23.4%). Geographically speaking, this quality of employment pattern is concentrated in the western part of the Valley, especially in Dolj and Mehedinţi counties;

– the low quality of employment pattern comprised 190 rural and urban Danubian LAU2 with 283,687 economically active persons, concentrated especially in the eastern part of the Valley, and scattered in its western part, that is in some rural settlements and small towns of Dolj and Mehedinţi counties (e.g. Calafat, Băileşti and Vânju Mare).

These first two quality of employment patterns cover 89% of total Danubian LAU2 and almost 50% of all of the Romanian Danube Valley economically active population, characteristic features being the general employment rate, the employment rate in the manufacturing and tertiary sectors and the share of employees per total employed population, which registered values below the baseline. In the localities included in these two quality of employment patterns, employment in agriculture and the unemployment rate had high and very high values, above the national average.

The medium-high quality of employment pattern covers of 27 LAU2 which cumulate almost 40% of the total economically active Valley population. This pattern includes rural and urban settlements in which the share of employment in the manufacturing and the tertiary sectors was close to the national average. In those LAU2, occupancy in agriculture was no longer so high as in the localities from the first two patterns, but maximum values still ranged between 7080% (in some rural settlements located in the Olt and Giurgiu counties). The medium-high level of this indicator grouped important Danubian municipia (e.g. Brăila, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Tulcea, Giurgiu and Călăraşi), as well as some of the small town-ports (e.g. Orşova, Moldova Nouă and Măcin).

The high quality of employment pattern covers only two Danubian large municipia: Galaţi and Cernavodă, which register low employment values in agriculture, a high share of employees per total employed population and a high percentage of employment in the manufacturing and tertiary sectors; the unemployment rate is above the baseline.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The quality of employment index registered a geographical values distribution in terms of distinct territorial level considered. Generally speaking, the macro-regional and regional levels hide quality of employment territorial differences. In Table 1, this reality is mirrored by two obvious aspects: firstly, Romania`s four macro-regions and the eight development regions are divided only into two quality of employment patterns (low and medium-high) and secondly, their component counties are divided in three patterns (low, medium-high and very high). Moreover, an analysis at local level in the Romanian Danube Valley shows that the number of quality of employment patterns increases to four (very low, low, medium-high and high).

The very low quality of this pattern appears only in the local level analysis, and not at macro-regional, regional and county levels. In fact, the way in which the spatial patterns of job quality are changed once the analysis is extended to the local level is illustrated by analysing the Danubian "domain". The macro-regions II, III and IV, which the Romanian Danube Valley belongs to, are part of the low and medium-high quality of employment patterns. Macro-region III represents the medium-high quality of employment due to the Bucharest–Ilfov development region, which is not part of the

Danubian "domain". Also, the analysis of the Danubian development regions shows the same two quality of employment patterns: low and medium-high. The situation is similar to the macro-regional level: the medium-high pattern, registered by the West region, is due to the counties of Timiș, Arad and Hunedoara, which are not inside the Danubian "domain". The local territorial level of analysis revealed the very low quality of employment pattern, which is hidden at macro-regional, regional and county levels.

Table 1

Synthetic outline of different territorial levels in terms of quality of employment patterns.

ICQE values/ quality of employment pattern	**Macro-regional level**	**Regional level**	**County level & Bucharest Municipality**	**Local level (Romanian Danube Valley)**
0.289 – 0.499 = very low *(EMPLOY, EMPLOYMANUF, EMPLOYTERT and EMPLOYEES registered values below the baseline; EMPLOYAGR and UR registered high and very high values, above the baseline)*	–	–	–	47 LAU2
0.500 – 0.999 = low (*EMPLOY, EMPLOYMANUF, EMPLOYTERT and EMPLOYEES have values above of the national average*; *EMPLOYAGR and UR are below the national average)*	3 MACRO-REGIONS: I, II and IV	4 development regions:N–E, S–E, S–W and S	31 counties	190 LAU2
1 = baseline (*the national averages of each indicator)*				
1.001 – 2.999 = medium-high (*highest values of EMPLOY; EMPLOYMANUF, EMPLOYTERT and EMPLOYEES are close to the baseline; low values of EMPLOYAGR and UR*)	1 MACRO-REGION: III	4 development regions: Bucharest–Ilfov, Centre, W and N–W	10 counties	27 LAU2
3.000 – 5.999 = high *(low values of EMPLOYAGR, EMPLOYEES; high values of EMPLOYMANUF and EMPLOYTERT; UR is above the baseline)*	–	–	–	2 LAU2
6.000 – 20.687 = very high *(the lowest values of EMPLOYAGR and UR; the highest values of EMPLOYEES, EMPLOYMANUF and EMPLOYTERT)*	–	–	Bucharest Municipality	–

(Source: author`s compilation)

This conclusion is sustained by the average values of the index of characteristics related to the quality of employment (ICQE), computed for each territorial level discussed and, separately, for the so-called Danubian "domain" (Fig. 5). The general data show an increasing trend, from the low pattern registered at macro-regional level (ICQE = 0.925) to the medium-high pattern, specific to regional (ICQE = 1.221) and county (ICQE = 1.420) levels. The analysis of the Danubian "domain" revealed an average ICQE values fall with decreases at territorial levels: ICQE = 0.919 in the Danubian macro-regions and ICQE = 0.734 in Romanian Danube Valley. This last average value shows that the Romanian Danube Valley as a whole belongs to the low-quality of employment pattern. In fact, this average value hides the minimum values of the index, but also the medium-high and high ones.

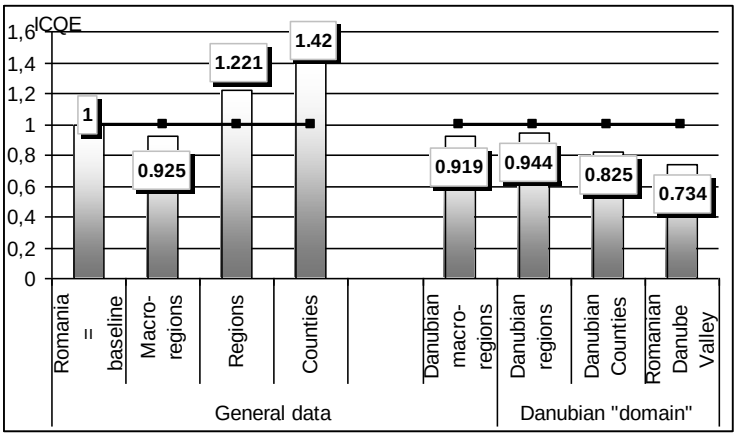

Fig. 5 – Index of the characteristics related to the quality of employment (ICQE) – average values of each territorial level. (*Source*: author's compilation).

Exploring the role of local territorial level in shaping the quality of employment is a difficult matter, because whenever at national level, this index is increasing, it may simultaneously decrease and increase at regional or local levels. The local territorial level emphasises the very low quality of employment patterns, which is hidden at macro-regional, regional and county levels; in the reverse situation, the macro-spatial analyses conceal and distort the dynamics and modelling employment quality indicators at lower territorial levels. Therefore, only a synthesis at national level of the regional and local trends is far too superficial and, having in view the impact of employment quality on the area, on communities and individuals, the importance and necessity for local studies becomes obvious.

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