

Post-communist Romanian migration patterns: dynamics and territorial perspectives

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Abstract

The paper addresses a problem of great importance for Romania, that of the international migration that is in a continuous process of exacerbation after the collapse of the communist regime, but with important spatial differences. The analysis of the situation has led to the need for a series of spatial representations to highlight the typology and structure of migratory flows across the country in the post-communist period, as well as changes in direction or intensity.

In almost three decades, more than 550,000 people emigrated from Romania, while almost 240,000 were temporarily abroad in 2017, according to official statistics, but in fact, their number is much higher. The international migration of Romanians has particular characteristics, with four distinct periods, characterized by demographic characteristics and specific territorial distribution. On the whole, a mutation of emigrant areas from the west and center of the country is noticeable after the fall of communism to the eastern and southern regions in recent years, with predominant involvement of young adults.

Keywords: *emigration, temporary migration, regional disparities, post-communist period*

Rezumat. Tipare postcomuniste ale migrației în România: dinamică și perspective teritoriale

Lucrarea abordează o problemă de mare importanță pentru România, aceea a migrației internaționale, aflate într-un proces continuu de exacerbare după prăbușirea regimului comunist, dar cu diferențieri spațiale importante. Acest demers a impus necesitatea unei serii de reprezentări spațiale menite să evidențieze tipologia și structura fluxurilor migratorii la nivelul întregii țări în perioada postcomunistă, dar și schimbările de direcție sau de intensitate ale acestora.

În aproape trei decenii, din România au emigrat peste 550.000 persoane, alte aproape 240.000 persoane fiind plecate temporar în străinătate în 2017, conform datelor statistice oficiale, în realitate numărul acestora fiind mult mai mare. Migrația internațională a românilor prezintă caracteristici aparte, putând fi individualizate patru perioade distincte, caracterizate prin caracteristici demografice și distribuție teritorială specifică. În ansamblu, se constată o glisare a zonelor emițătoare de emigranți dinspre vestul și centrul țării imediat după căderea comunismului către zona estică și sudică în ultimii ani, cu antrenarea predominantă a adulților tineri.

Cuvinte-cheie: *emigrare, migrație temporară, disparități regionale, perioada postcomunistă*

Introduction

Stories about migrants, whether legal or illegal ones, originating from peaceful or conflict ridden regions, abound in media worldwide, as human mobility is an established part of mankind history. International migration is a complex phenomenon that touches all states, with multiple social, economic, security consequences involved and affects our daily lives more than ever before, in an increasingly interconnected world (IOM, 2018, p. 15).

In the context of the long-term crisis situations of migrants and the tense political situations generated by it at the level of economically developed European states, caught between pro-immigrationists and anti-immigrationists, migration remains one of the most fervent challenges for the European construction. The already known patterns address conceptual, procedural and economic migration issues throughout the 20th century, not anticipating the fluidity of the phenomenon imposed by new economic theories and multifactorial implications of migration in the context of free post-Fordist mobility.

There are two perspectives that dominate in defining the concept and way of analysing the phenomenon of contemporary migration: the first, predominant, is sociological, investigating the mechanisms and implications of migration at different scales.

The second perspective - geographical - involves spatial references to the size and regional differences caused by migration. A predominant east-west shift during the period of post-communist transition is articulated in research studies with significant intra-regional peculiarities in Central and Eastern Europe. An increased intensity and continuity of population movements, accompanied by increasing diversity of the form of these movements and their geographical directions, as well as a greater complexity of factors underlying migration come into reflection in the previous years (Black et al., 2010; Favell, 2008a, b; Burrell and Hörschmann, 2014). The question regarding the Central and Eastern European countries remains if they are acting as a buffer zone between the European Union and the countries on their eastern and southern borders or if they constitute a real migration pole (OECD, 2001).

Beyond the classical theories on migration, which provide insights into the context, processes and

categories of mobility, as with any territorial mobility, migration is a spatial phenomenon, involving the movement of people from one place to another, referring to the change of ordinary residence, assuming this not only a new physical structure, but also a sense of the renewed community. Thus, the term is associated in the literature with crossing a certain type of socially significant frontier (Lindley, 2014, p. 7). Increased mobility could be an inevitable and necessary part of the transition to a post-modern social order, but the phenomenon continues to be associated at European level with the spectrum of the socio-political crisis. Migrants are still seen as "poorly integrated in the national culture, emblematic for their anomalous existence, a real challenge for the cohesion of national policies, a "reserve" of the labour force that helps fill the gaps in the labour market, recruited or discharged in response to fluctuations in the economic cycle and contributing to maintaining low wages (Lindley, 2014). Thus, migration is regarded as a symptom of non-uniform global development, which tends to serve the interests of capital (Black et al., 2010; Lindley, 2014; Burrell and Hörschelmann, 2014; Favell, 2008).

Literature review

During the last decades, as more and more countries become part of this process, ever more researchers have focused on international migration from the demographic (Coleman, 2008), economic (Potot, 2010; Black et al., 2010; Atoyan et al., 2016), sociological, cultural-anthropological (Cvajner, 2012) or psychological point of view (Boneva et al., 1997), the 21st century migration experience being quite different from that of previous generations, present day migrants being seen as 'agents of change' and 'enablers for development in countries of origin, transit and destination' (ILO, 2017).

Following the fast advances in transportation and communication technology, present migratory movements are no longer concentrated in a few corridors and no longer follow historical links, being widely assumed that the volume and diversity of people mobility has been increasing. Still, an extensive study conducted by Czaika and de Haas (2014), using three different measures capturing three different reference points for global emigration spread and global immigration spread, concluded that 'the world has not become necessarily more migratory, but the migration has become more 'skewed' on a global scale' and that migration has globalized from a destination country perspective, but hardly from an origin country perspective, the global migration map becoming only more skewed.

Great number of research has piled up analysing the globalization of migration, defined as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide

interconnectedness (Czaika and Haas, 2014), as all countries engage in migration systems growing in size and complexity, producing an increasing diversity of flows (Salt, 1992; Cast and Miller, 2009). Czaika and Haas (2014) aggregated the central concepts of intensity, diversity and distance into one composite measure of migration globalization, thus defining and conceptualizing migration globalization as functionally related processes of emigration dispersion and immigration diversification (p. 9). Analysing the unprecedented degree of immigrant diversity in Britain (considering that 'diversity is endemic to Britain – p. 1026) and other immigrant receiving societies, Vertovec (2007) coined the notion of super-diversity, referring to the increasing number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants. Globalized migration is more feminized, as there are more and more independent migrating women instead of dependent family migrants (Ramirez et al., 2005).

As early as the 1960s, researchers started to analyse chain migration and the role played by personal networks (family members and friends) (kinship – Tilly and Brown, 1967) for explaining the origin and dynamics of migratory flows, as these networks play an important role in assisting the short-term adaptation of internal and international migrants (Tilly and Brown, 1967), while also exerting a powerful influence over the selection of who migrates and when (Gurak and Caces, 1992).

Faucet (1989) identifies family and personal networks as one of the four major categories of linkages in a migration system, along with state to state relations, mass culture connections and migrant agency activities, arguing that there are tangible (monetary remittances, gifts and written communication among network members), regulatory (which may dictate the priorities for sponsorship of new immigrants by former immigrants) as well as relational linkages, involving the socio-economic status of migrants.

Referring to the migration decisions that are made by individuals or groups, Boyd (1989) points to the fact that at this microlevel, the decision to emigrate is influenced by the existence and participation in social networks, which connect people across space and provide resources in the form of information and assistance. Migrant networks, interacting with both destination and origin societies, facilitate the formation of ethnic communities in the destination society (Gurak and Caces, 1992).

Migration networks, as a form of social capital (Marcu, 2011), play a vital role in supporting and protecting their members' sense of self-worth, even when unable to provide access to significant material resources (Cvajner, 2012). Salt and Almeida (2006) point that Romanians have been circulating within

informal transnational networks which they use to exploit 'work niches' opened to illegal workers. Studying the circular migration pattern of Romanians in Spain, Elrich and Ciobanu (2009) conclude that migration networks are powerful mechanisms that countervail laws and regulations, very effective in nurturing migrants' adoption of permissive migration policies and cause migrants to stick to certain migration strategies.

Social networks, i.e. social interactions through which migrants obtain information and material resources that facilitate their movement and the process of adaption to conditions in the destination country (Elrich and Ciobanu, 2009) are usually seen as more important for women, who rely more strongly on relatives and friends for help, information, protection and guidance at their destination (Docquier et al., 2009).

Studies on human trafficking, although not per se on issue of migration but rather one of economic survival strategies on the part of both traffickers and those being trafficked (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006), as a result of the existence and enforcement of legal barriers regarding migration worldwide, have also began to pile, focusing on either the economic perspective, i.e. trafficking as business (Salt and Stein, 1997; Mahmoud and Trebesch, 2010; IOM, 2006; Baldwin-Edwards, 2006), or on the legal aspect, focusing on trafficking and human smuggling as criminal activity (Salt, 2000). A survey conducted by I.O.M. (2006) to evaluate human trafficking prevalence in Eastern Europe pointed that potential victims of labour exploitation come from a wider social group, including both men and women and young and middle age persons as well. Mahmoud and Trebesch (2010), using datasets from 5 Eastern European countries (including Romania), since the Eastern bloc has been a major origin region of forced labour migration and human trafficking soon after the fall of communism, emphasized that the risk of human trafficking is highest in areas with high rates of out-migration and that the restrictive immigration policies push would-be immigrant into illegality, thus increasing the phenomenon.

Worldwide, there have been identified several regional migration hubs, which receive a highly diverse immigrant population and which also act as places from where people flow all over the world (Czaika and Haas, 2014, p. 31). Europe is most definitely such a regional hub, shifting from a global source region of emigrants to a global migration magnet (Czaika and Haas, 2014). The nature and scale of migration in Europe over the last decades has changed significantly, the continent witnessing large waves of migration from both within and outside the European Union, several major types of migration being identified (E.C., 2011): i) labour immigration, permitted and even encouraged by some destination countries to fill in the gaps in the

national labour market; ii) student migration, which despite temporary in nature, tends to become rather permanent for an increasing number of people; and iii) asylum seekers. Thus, the successive enlargement of EU has completed a geo-political shift in post 1989 Europe, due to its almost desperate structural need in terms of demography and labour force for increased intra-European population movements (Favell, 2008). Still, the diversity of migration experience across Europe, characterised by new forms and dynamics, is always in focus, as politically, much has changed in 10 years and the burning issues of today migrants are no longer those of 10 years ago (Salt and Almeida, 2006).

The East-West migration in Europe following the fall of communism has been unprecedented in terms of speed, scale and persistence compared to emigration experiences elsewhere, due to the big-bang nature of reintegration of former communist countries into the global economy (Atoyan et al., 2016). Romania is one of main ex-Communist European countries sending large flows of migrants to the countries in the Western and Southern Europe, the phenomenon being thoroughly documented for more than two decades by Romanian and European researchers as well (Sandu, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010; IOM, 2006; Wiskow, 2006; Sandu and Alexandru 2009; Radu, 2003; Potot, 2010; Baldwin-Edwards 2006, 2008; Marcu, 2011; Galan et al., 2011; Martin and Radu, 2012; Suditu et al., 2013; Roman and Goschin, 2014; Goschin, 2018).

The present paper deals with the spatial articulation of migration in Romania rather than the social transformations associated with the regional particularities of the phenomenon, highlighting the areas with significant population loss caused by migration and the demographic crisis potential implied by the large-scale migration in the years following the 1989 revolution and integration into the European Union in 2007. It is an attempt to bring together a generous, challenging scale of analysis, the national one, with the interface of international migration.

Data and methodology

The statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, the Tempo-online data series, as well as statistical results available online from the last three censuses (1992, 2002, 2011) were used to create a full database regarding migration in Romania, in the period comprised between 1990 and 2017. This first step was also the first major difficulty in structuring and achieving the purpose of the paper because generating detailed maps was hindered by the problem of lack of data at the level of the lower-ranking administrative-territorial units (at the beginning of the transition period) or localities that

have changed their administrative status especially after 2004 which made the available data unusable because to their lack of continuity.

In this respect, specific geographic information systems have been used to analyse the dynamics and territorial disparities at national level. Spatial and statistical data were processed using the ArcGIS 10.5 tools. In addition to the actual analysis based on spatial data available in vector format, a number of relevant indicators were used to analyse the spatial implications of international mobility types (temporary migration and permanent migration, in particular). Thus, the NUTS III units in Romania (counties) was used, allowing the analysis of the complete dynamics of the demographic indicators.

The cartographical materials obtained were a useful tool in deciphering the spatial trends of population mobility at national level, by highlighting the counties that had the most to lose from the overwhelming negative balance sheet of international migration.

Position and demographic profile of Romania in the spatial structure of the European Union

The effects of international mobility on the demographic evolution of the Romanian population gained importance in the post-communist period, being considered one of the main causes of demographic decline. While during the first years of transition the demographic decline based on migratory outflow was decisive, starting with 1994 it was mainly due to the natural deficit (Fig. 1). There was a negative natural increase starting with 1992 which increased during the following years, with obvious negative peaks in 1996, 2002, 2011 and 2014 onwards. Added to this, the negative migration balance amplifies the demographic decline until 2007

(-3.25‰ in 2006) when the extent of decline is mitigated by massive immigration (-1.28‰ in 2017). This contrasting evolution demonstrates the complexity of the factors and their territorial reflection in the post-communist period, but also the effects of a changing European construct on Romania: opening borders after a coercive communist regime in 1989, industrial restructuring and rising unemployment in the first decade, changing migration policies and eliminating visas in the Schengen area in 2002 and EU integration in 2007.

The extent of the migratory flow from Romania can be settled even more objectively if we analyse the foreign-born population residing within the EU-28 and EFTA in 2017 and its rising values as compared to the effects of its last accession wave (Fig. 2). Thus, the European continent becomes heterogeneous and multicultural if we look at the statistical overview which proves that in 2017, at least 5 out of every 100 people of working age born in an EU-28/EFTA country resided in an EU-28/EFTA country other than their country of birth and about 35 per cent of the total EU-28/EFTA foreign-born population were born in an EU-28/EFTA country, while the remaining 65 per cent were born elsewhere in the world (Eurostat). Both in 2008 and 2017, Romanian-born citizens residing in an EU-28/EFTA country remain most numerous as in 2017, Romanian-born population accounted for 18.4 per cent of the total intra-EU-28/EFTA foreign-born population, representing the largest foreign-born group originating in an EU-28/EFTA country residing outside their country of birth. According to Eurostat, the Romanian group recorded the biggest increase in share of natives residing within the EU-28/EFTA but outside their country of birth: about 1 in 13 Romanian-born people did not reside in Romania in 2007 and the per cent increased to about 1 in 5 Romanian-born people in 2017.

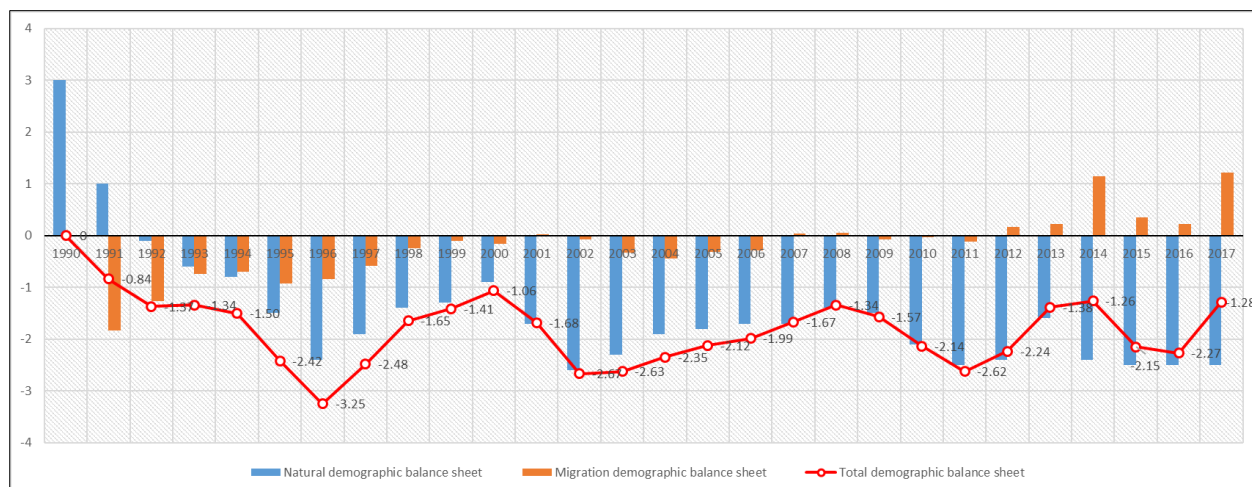


Figure 1: Total demographic balance sheet of Romania between 1990-2017 (Data source: INS, 2018)

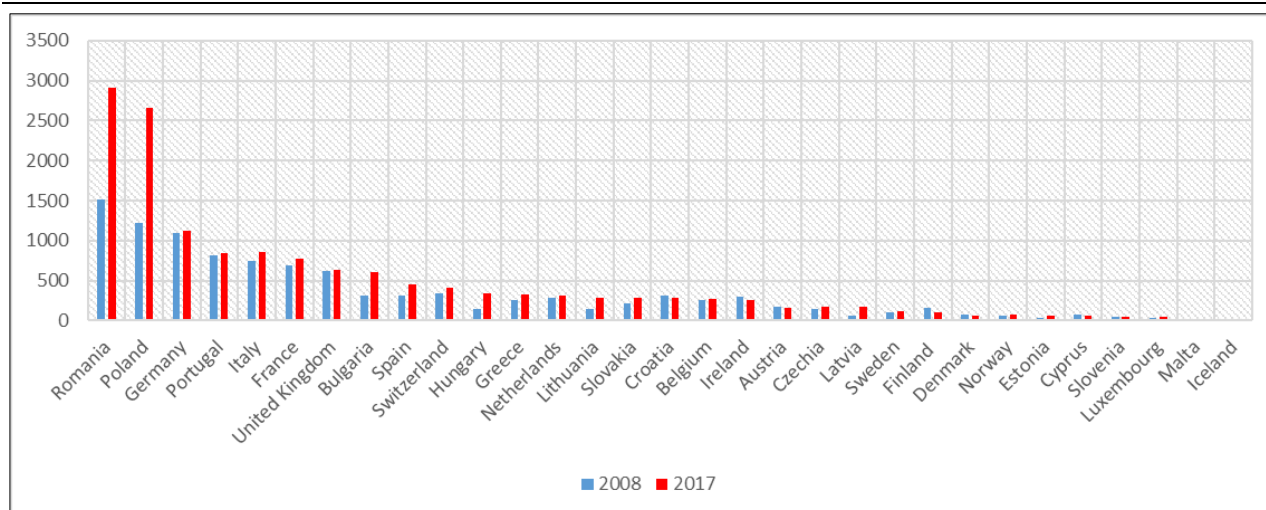


Figure 2: EU/EFTA born population of working age who usually resides in another EU/EFTA country (thousands) (Data source: EUROSTAT, 2018)

Intensity and migration pattern in the post-communist period

Although Romania was predominantly a country of emigration for more than one hundred years, with a rather impressive record regarding the number of persons involved (Horvath, 2007), the intensity and migration pattern in the post-communist period is detrimental as a worrying phenomenon for Romania given its significant contribution to the demographic decline. Still, Romanians are a nation without a tradition of international migration (Sandu, 2007, Marcu, 2001), during most of the 20th century being mainly ethnic minorities representatives that fled the country.

The fall of communism and disappearance of many restrictions regarding people mobility within and outside the country triggered significant structural changes in the migration flows. On the one hand, permanent emigration was a large scale phenomenon for the ethnic minorities living in Romania in the beginning of the 1990s, and to a much lower extend for 'pioneer migrants' who could find solutions for working and living in a completely different society. On the other hand, in and out-migration also experienced a peak in the first years of the 1990s, as all the major towns in Romania registered extremely high in-migration rates, sometimes exceeding 100%. In fact, there were no massive movements from smaller towns or villages to the larger towns, but rather a de facto situation that finally became official – before 1990, the large towns in Romania were closed for migration, people not being allowed to move officially to these towns, even if they had a job there and were practically living in the town. Towards the late 1990s, with the crumbling of the Romanian economy, increasing unemployment

rate and living costs in the urban area, many of the unemployed adults decided to move back to the rural area of origin, from where they had left during the communist industrialization period, or try their luck abroad, with a rather frequent clandestine character.

For Romania, there can be distinguished three different types of migration: permanent emigration, trafficking (affecting to a certain extent all the countries in the Balkans and Eastern Europe) and temporary/incomplete/circular migration, typical of voluntary population movements from the CEE region since 1989, having a clandestine character and involving semi-skilled and unskilled people, Romania and Bulgaria being a major source country (Baldwing-Edwards, 2006).

Romanians' emigration was generally directed towards European countries, where significant migration networks were created during the last two decades, being characterised by temporary labour that is expressed as intense circular migration (Marcu, 2011).

The emigration flows can be divided into four distinct periods (Sandu, 2006, 2007; Horvath, 2007):

- **1990-1996**, considered an 'exploration phase' (Sandu, 2007), a particular type of emigration dominated migratory flows as many Germans, Hungarians and Jews decided to leave the country. This particular form, which did not repeat in the following years, can be considered a "waiting" migration and it is directly connected with ethnic minorities, characteristic for other countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe (Kurkó, 2010; Horvath, 2007). These minorities moved to countries they had historical connections with (Germany, Hungary, Israel, USA). Ethnicity was a major discriminating factor (Sandu, 2007), since in 1990, out of the approximately 97,000 emigrants, 60,000 were German ethnics, and another 11,000 were Hungarian ethnics. Until 1996, the Germans were the second

largest ethnic group leaving Romania, followed by Hungarians. Although there were mainly young adults that left the country, the share of the older persons (60 years old and over) is considerably higher (there are no statistical data available for the first two years, 1990 and 1991 when the largest contingents of people left the country, but for the 1992-1996 interval, it is two times higher compared to the current period (8% and 3.6% respectively).

- **1997-2001** was characterized by a long, chaotic process of transition to a market economy, that generated fewer jobs available on the Romanian labour market, determining an important number of Romanians affected by industrial restructuring to emigrate mainly in the Western European countries. Young people (less than 15 years) held a particularly large share (27%) compared to the other periods, while the adults registered the lowest proportion (only 65%). Hungarians were more numerous than Germans, being ranked second after Romanians, Transylvania and the western regions providing the majority of emigrants, while the southern and eastern regions were quite unfamiliar to this phenomenon. Regarding the temporary migration, since Romanians were allowed to stay for only 3 months as tourists, there emerged circular migration patterns, Romanian migrants being highly flexible in adapting their migrations strategies to the new legislative situation (Elrich and Ciobanu, 2009). It included a great amount of clandestine activities.

- **2002-2006** is marked by the removal of visa requirements for Romanian citizens within the countries included in the Schengen space, which lead ever more Romanians to leave the country for working abroad, eventually staying there for good. It is during this period that Italy and, to a lesser extent, Spain became major destinations for Romanian emigrants, together with Germany, USA and Canada. Beginning with 2002, the number and share of German, Hungarian and Jews ethnics leaving the country decrease considerably. Consequently, apart from Transylvania and the western regions, Moldova in the east became an important source of migrants.

- **2007-2017**, due to joining the European Union and free movement of people, brought a new momentum for the Romanian emigration abroad, all the counties registered increased flows; thus, some of the counties in the central and western part of the country, which were ranked first during the 1990s, as well as most of the counties in Moldova have the highest migration rates in the country. Italy and Spain are major destination countries, with significant number of Romanians temporarily absent indicated by 2011 census (in Italy, Romanians form the most numerous ethnic minority, with almost 170,000 persons and over 71,000 persons in Spain), most migrants taking positions already tested by the network they are affiliated with and in locations

where they already have friends who provide information, each experience enriching the stock of shared knowledge, orienting new migrants in the same direction (Potot, 2010).

The economic crisis from 2008-2009 and afterwards, due to restrictions and growing scepticism around immigration problems affecting the European continent, the number of permanent Romanian emigrants declined, but the temporary flows experienced an unprecedented explosion, working abroad turning into a mass phenomenon with major social, economic and psychological implications.

Surprisingly, an important aspect of recent migration refers to the number of immigrants in Romania, not at all quantitatively negligible after 2012. Their territorial concentration (counties in the North-Eastern region, but also Bucharest) clearly suggests important flows originating in the Republic of Moldova, respectively West-European businessmen or foreign-born students searching opportunities in Romania.

Permanent migration

According to the official statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, there were around 550,000 Romanians that left the country for good since 1990, most of them originating from Transylvania (24%), Banat (20%) and Bucharest (18%), the top sending counties being Timiș (around 60,000 persons), Sibiu (51,000 persons), Brașov (34,000), Arad, Mureș and Cluj (more than 20,000 persons), while most counties in the southern part of the country had less than 3,000 permanent emigrants.

In the early 1990s, permanent emigration registered in Romania was more of a family reunification nature, but in time, its economic, cultural and educational motivations gained importance. The highest numbers of permanent emigrants were registered in the first years after the fall of communism, in 1990 the number peaking at 96,929 persons. For the 1990-1996 period, the total emigration rate for Romania was 11‰ – the highest for the entire analysed period, but the differences between regions were staggering – while some of the counties in Transylvania and Banat had emigration rates above 30‰ (reaching 85.7 in Sibiu and 57‰ in Timiș) (Fig. 3), more than half of the counties, located mainly in the southern and eastern part of the country registered emigration rates below 2.5‰, with many counties even below 1‰. It is during this first interval that approximately half (46%) of the total permanent emigrants left the country, most of them being German ethnics, and to a lesser extent Jews and Hungarians. Almost a quarter left Transylvania (Sibiu almost 40,000 persons and Brașov) and another quarter Banat (Timiș 40,000 people), Bucharest also registering important numbers (33,000).

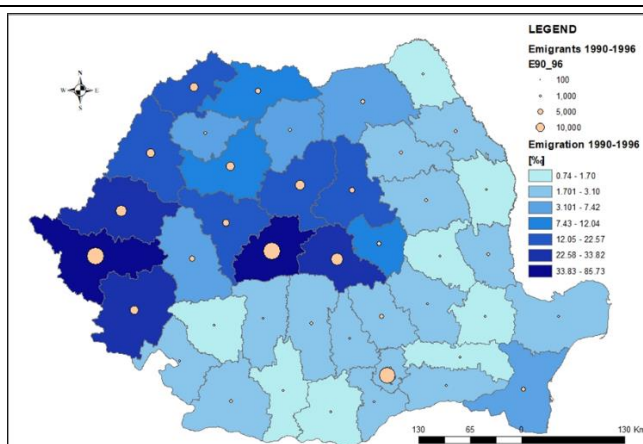


Figure 3: Permanent emigration during the first stage (1990-1996)

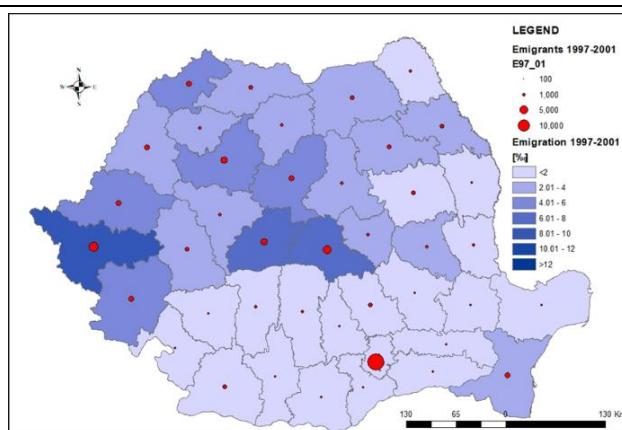


Figure 4: Permanent emigration during the second stage (1997-2001)

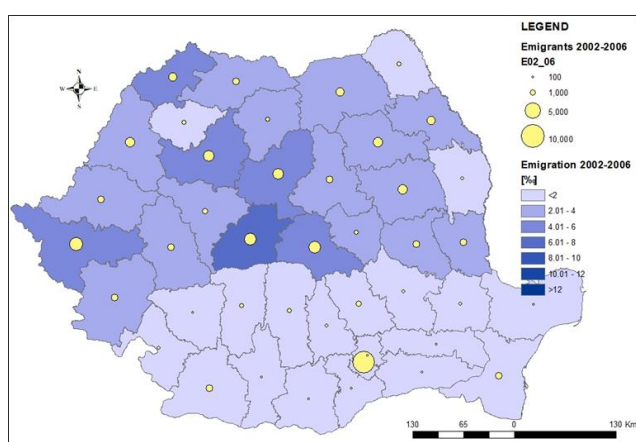


Figure 5: Permanent emigration during the third stage (2002-2006)

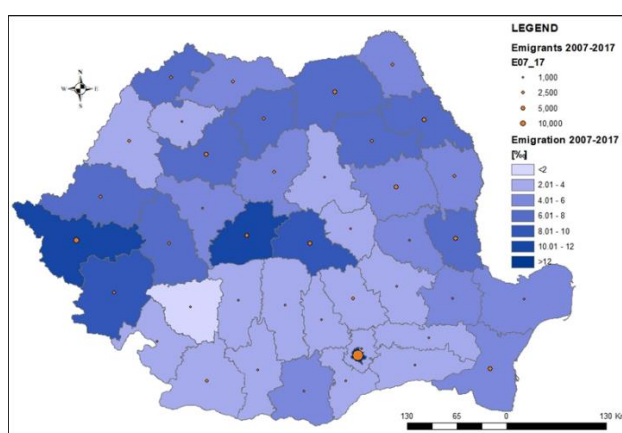


Figure 6: Permanent emigration during the fourth stage (2007-2017)

During the following two periods, 1997-2001 (Fig. 4) and 2002-2006 (Fig. 5), migration considerably decreased, with a total emigration rate of just 4.2‰ and 2.5‰, respectively, Sibiu and Timiș leading with the highest number of emigrants, although the phenomenon lost its momentum. It increased to a certain extent after Romania joined the European Union (Fig. 6), all the regions showing an increasing trend for the permanent migration, although at a different pace: highest for Bucharest and Moldova, a bit slower for Banat, Muntenia, Transylvania and the South-Eastern region, while the slowest is registered for Oltenia.

On the whole, from 1990 until 2017, there is a decreasing trend for permanent migration at national level, most of the regions showing the same trend, but for Moldova and Muntenia, where there is a slightly increasing trend.

It is important to note that unlike the temporary migration, most of the permanent migrants during the 1990-2017 period were women (54.6%), with quite significant differences from one period to another

and, most importantly, from one region to another (Fig. 7). Thus, for the first period, 1990-1996, the male migrants held the highest share (47.8%) from the entire analysed time frame, but it should be mentioned that for only 9 out of the 41 counties the male migrants exceeded 40%, all of them located in the southern and eastern part of the country, while the counties with the highest emigration stocks, characterized by a heterogeneous ethnic structure, registered much lower shares of male migrants (for six counties it was less than 30%, dropping in Sibiu at just 22.8% male migrants).

Only during the second period, 1997-2001, there were counties where the male emigrants were more numerous than their female counterparts (but only for 12 out of the 41 counties), all of them located in Muntenia and Moldova, while those in Transylvania and the western part had also much lower shares. However, after 2007, it is exactly those regions that at the beginning of the analysed period were ranked first in terms of highest share of male migrants that are now ranked last (Botoșani, Gorj).

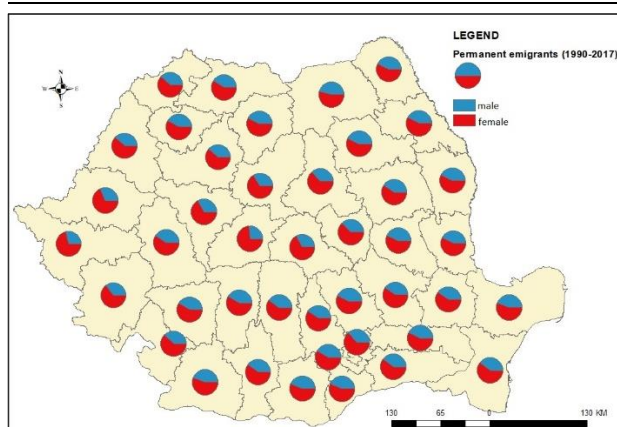


Figure 7: Gender structure of permanent emigrants (1990-2017)

The main destination countries (Table no. 1) for the Romanian emigrants were Germany (a third of the migrants, thus exceeding by far all the other countries), followed by the US (10%), Italy (9.3%) and Canada (8%). Still, there are some major differences from one period to another; thus, for the first period, 1990-1996, Germany was the main destination for more than half of the emigrants (50.6%), considering that German ethnics leaving Transylvania and Banat were the most numerous during the first two years, exceeding 60,000 persons, accounting for 62% of the emigrants until 1994. After 1996, although the share of emigrants heading for Germany decreased, it was still considerable (up to 16% during the last years). The US and Canada received almost 100,000 emigrants, most of them leaving the country between 1997 and 2007, while Italy and Spain became major destinations after 2002 (Table no. 1). Other countries receiving large number of Romanian emigrants are Hungary (mainly in the early 1990s), Austria, France and Israel. It should be noted that there are increasing differences between overseas and European destinations, as permanent migrants targeting overseas destination are on average much higher skilled (Radu, 2003). Thus, the phenomenon of brain drain has particularly important implications for productivity, considering the already low share of people with tertiary education (Atoyan et al., 2016), also inducing a decrease of the per capita endowment with human capital (Radu, 2003). Romania and Poland are by far the most affected countries in the Eastern Europe by the brain-drain phenomenon (Ionescu, 2014), Romania being ranked among the top 30 countries in the world in terms of skilled emigration

stock (Docquier et al., 2009). Moreover, the reasons for migration are much more complex and diverse and do not concentrate only on the wage factor, better work conditions and possibility for an international career, as well as family reason being equally important (Nae, 2013; Roman and Goschin, 2014).

Table 1. Destination countries of permanent emigrants

Destination	1990-1996	1997-2001	2002-2006	2007-2017	1990-2017
Canada	13004	10903	7201	13201	44309
Austria	17114	3397	2112	9001	31624
France	9716	3957	1879	6669	22221
Germany	129166	15146	11256	26066	181634
Israel	3684	2155	547	8141	14527
Italy	9114	8626	12037	21547	51324
Spain	...	616	989	32147	33752
Hungary	29235	4885	5353	3799	42272
USA	20590	12714	9078	13031	55413
Other countries	23411	12350	6592	29897	73250
Total	255034	74749	57044	163499	550326

(Data source: INS, 2018)

In terms of age groups structure, a high percentage of emigrants aged 20-49 can be deduced, causing certain economic loss of most active age-groups. Throughout the entire analysed period, the emigrants aged 25 to 29 and 30 to 34 are the most numerous. The fact that these emigrants are young makes them ideal for Western countries, with more and more selective immigration policies in relation to their age and level of training.

In what concerns permanent immigration dynamics (Fig. 8), there are successive and quite large variations throughout the post-communist period: an obvious increase of immigration flows during 1998-2000, a further, even more prominent increase in the period 2006-2010, followed by a decrease until 2014 and then an explosive increase after 2015. Thus, three decadal periods were established for analysis, each of them including a convex ripple of immigration flows. Yet, although repetitive, the difference between these three periods is that succession of flows becomes more accentuated in a shorter period of time suggesting a complex variation of motivations and national economic, political, educational factors influencing Romania's external attractiveness.

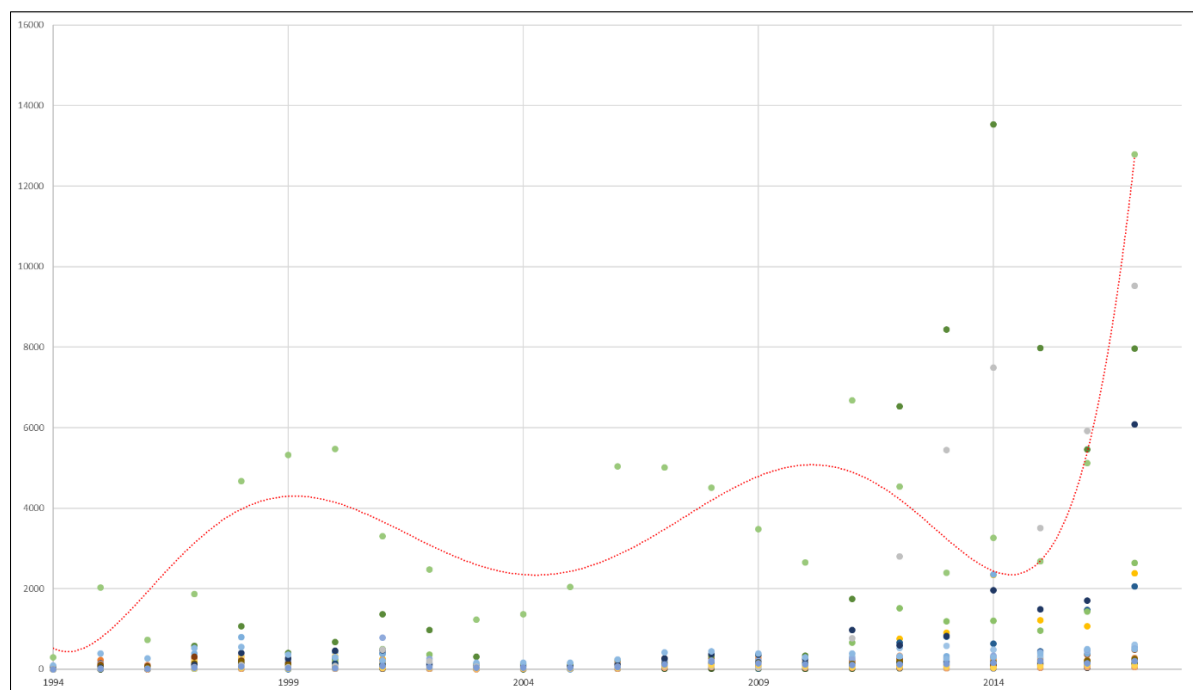


Figure 8: Variation of permanent immigrants number during 1994-2017 period

During the post-communist period, most permanent immigrants were young adults (20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 years old mostly), predominantly male and most of them coming from Germany at first, then Ukraine, Italy and the Republic of Moldova being the main sources of immigration.

Regarding the spatial differentiations of permanent immigration, most regions in Romania were characterized by extremely low rates in the first years of post-communism: Botoșani, Buzău, Giurgiu, Olt, Vaslui; only Caraș-Severin (0.16‰), Timiș, Bucharest (0.13‰) and Arad (0.11‰) registered some inflows, being border counties or as a result of greater political, economic and cultural openness (1994). At the end of the first decade, in 1998, Bucharest and counties in the West and Center Romania maintain high rates of emigration (Bucharest: 2.93‰, Timiș: 1.82‰, Sibiu: 1.64‰, Brașov: 1.45‰, Satu Mare: 1.23‰, Caraș-Severin: 1.2‰), while immigration concentrates in the same areas but also increase in the amount of flows, especially in Bucharest (2.16‰) and several well-developed counties (Fig. 9): Iași (1.28‰) and Cluj (1.1‰).

During the second analysed decade (Fig. 10), Timiș, Neamț, Iași and Bucharest register the highest rates of permanent immigration – over 3‰, while most southern counties maintain rather low rates (below 1‰). Overall, their poor social and economic development, the small number of larger, well-industrialized towns and the under-development of tourism all contributed to insignificant flows of permanent immigrants.

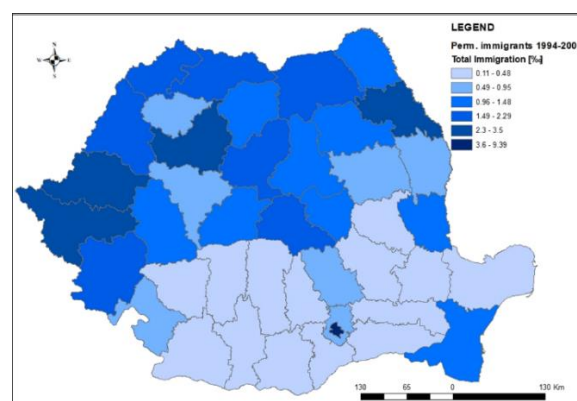


Figure 9: Permanent immigration during the first decade of the post-communist period (1994-2000)

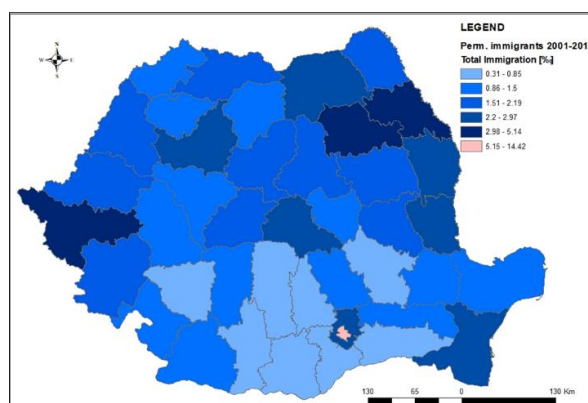


Figure 10: Permanent immigration during the second decade of the post-communist period (2001-2010)

A particular and surprisingly rising evolution is recorded in terms of the immigration rate after 2011 (Fig. 11) especially at the level of counties included in the North-East of Romania, due to the proximity of an EU country to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova and their historical and cultural affinities with Romanians. While counties such as Timiș, Brașov and Cluj, but also Bucharest and Ilfov register immigration rates comprised between 2.84-6.23‰ due to their economic development and ethnic heterogeneity, most counties in North-East Romania have a potential proximity attraction.

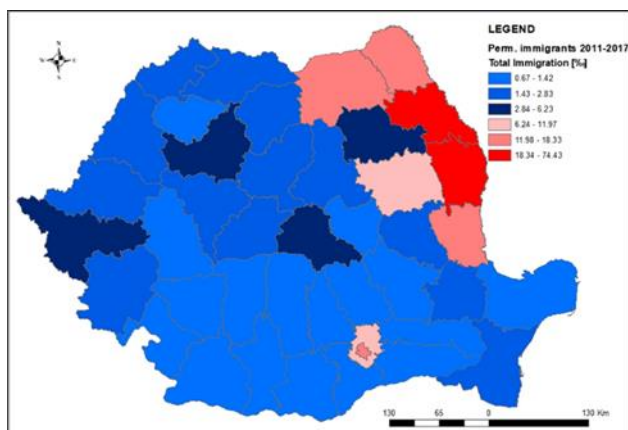


Figure 11: Permanent immigration during the third decade of the post-communist period (2011-2017)

Temporary migration

Temporary migration in the 1990s and early 2000s was both legal, following various bilateral labour recruiting agreements with Germany (1990, 1993) and later on with Hungary (2000), Spain (2002) and Portugal, as well as illegal, Romanians adapting their migration strategies and benefiting from the tourist visas within Schengen area, leaving the country as fake tourists, being illegally employed in the western countries (especially Italy).

The first official reliable statistical data referring to temporary migration were provided by the 2011 census, which revealed the true and frightening scale of temporary migration – there were some 685,000 persons that were temporary absent from home, more than half (58.7%) being abroad, and more than 900,000 persons that were absent from home for more than 12 months, out of which 728,000 were abroad. What is more, there was a significant under-registration of the absentees for more than 12 months, since at the time the census took place, more of these persons were abroad together with their entire family and there were no other family members in Romania to provide the necessary information about them (INS, 2012).

At national level, most of them were predominantly young adults: almost half (46%) aged 20 to 35 and another quarter aged 35 to 44, with a fair share between men (50.2%) and women. Just like in the case of permanent migration and long-time absentees, most temporary migrants are a significant part of the active population, but besides 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 age groups, there is a generous share of temporary migrants in higher age groups (over 35, even over 40) that demonstrate their previous difficulties to integrate on the national labour market, gaining satisfactory wages that could permanently keep them at home (Fig. 12).

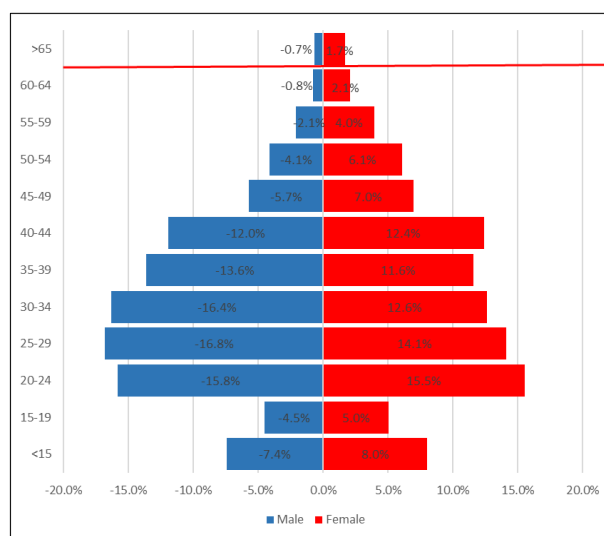


Figure 12: Population pyramid of temporarily absent persons (less than 12 months) at 2011 census

Originating mainly from urban areas (54%), and particularly from the eastern region of Moldova, where not only the highest contingents and shares are registered at county level, but also the communes with staggering proportions of population being abroad for more than one year. Neamt county includes 14 communes where more than 20% of the population was absent for a long time, with shares as high as 40% (Piatra Șoimeni 48%, Tămășeni 44%, Podoleni 36%), another 32 communes having shares between 10 and 20%. Similar situations are registered in Suceava (7 communes with more than 20% and another 35 between 10 and 20%), Vrancea and Galati, while in Ilfov, surrounding Bucharest, and the countries in Transylvania – Harghita, Covasna and Mures, where Hungarians form compact nuclei of ethnic minorities, the number of long time absentees is negligible (in Harghita, for instance, there are only 3 communes with higher shares, between 5 and 10% of the population).

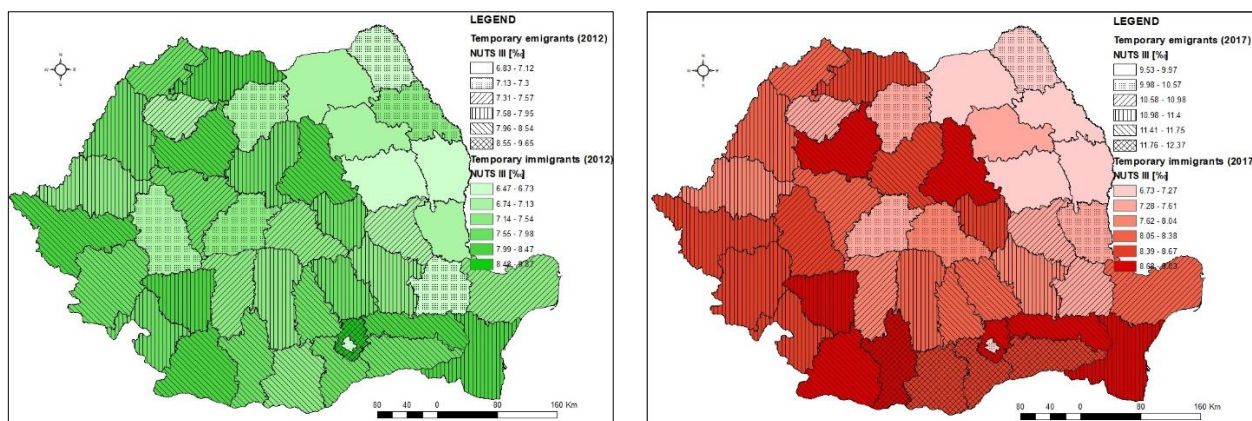


Figure 13: Temporary migration by counties in 2012 and 2017

In terms of temporary migration (less than a year), the 2011 national census primarily showed less organized territorial patterns than in the case of permanent migration, but also a significant increase during the years following EU integration, especially in economically less-developed regions and counties, situated in the Eastern, Southern and South-Eastern parts of Romania (Fig. 13). Maramures (with some 30,000 persons) and the counties of Moldova ranked first, with the highest numbers of temporary migrants (more than 20,000), while the countries in the southern part had much lower figures (Ilfov and Giurgiu around 1,000 persons).

At national level (Fig. 14), most temporary emigrants were male (53.5%) and coming from rural areas of Romania (65.2%), with a rather short period of stay (2-3 months). It should also be noted that the number of female migrants over 50 years old is more than double than that of the male migrants.

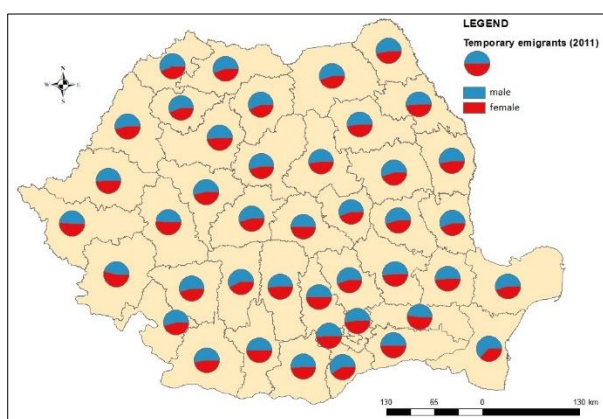


Figure 14: Gender structure of temporary emigrants (2011 census)

Out of the almost 30,000 children that were abroad during the 2011 census, 44.6% were in Italy, 21.6% in Spain and 9% in France, the numbers mirroring the main countries of destination of the parents. Still, the largest share of Romanian is found

is Ireland, Portugal and France (over 12% of the total population), while Germany and the Czech Republic are ranked last (3% and 1.5%, respectively).

There is no doubt about the economic reasons as the main cause for leaving the country, 70% of the temporary migrants already having a job abroad or were looking for one, with a higher share among the rural (74%) and male (77%) population compared to the female one (63%), for whom family reasons held a significantly higher proportion (21%). While the economic reasons account for the vast majority of people originating from the eastern part (more than 75%), their share in the western and central part of the country is much lower (less than 65%), the proportion of persons for educational purpose increasing.

Regarding the education level of the temporary migrants, the average urban migrant has mainly completed upper secondary education (63% being ISCED level 3-45% general upper secondary education and 18% vocational education), those with tertiary education being quite numerous (13%), while the rural migrant has generally completed lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) (42%), although there is a significant high share of upper secondary education as well (especially vocational education). It is also worth mentioning the fact that generally, the share of highly educated migrants originating from the counties in the western and central part of Romania is double and even three times higher than the national average of 6% (Cluj 18%, Brasov 16), unlike the counties from the Eastern and Southern regions, where the numbers are well below the average (Giurgiu 2.6, Botoșani 2.9%).

Also, similar to permanent migration flows, the favourite destinations (Fig. 15) of temporary migrants were Italy (the first destination country for Romanians originating from 28 counties out of 41 and the second choice for another 11 counties) and Spain (first destination for 7 counties, and second choice for another 27), except for the residents of Harghita,

Covasna and Mureş counties on the one hand and Braşov, Sibiu and Timiş counties on the other hand, which also manifested a clear preference for Hungary, respectively Germany, which is also ranked the third destination for 15 counties, some of them with quite significant shares.

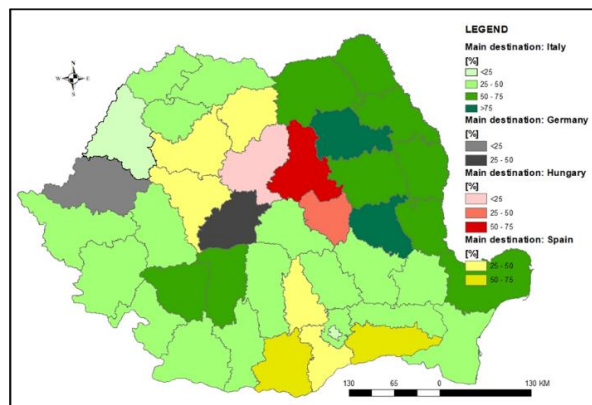


Figure 15: Main destinations of temporary emigrants (2011 census)

In- and out-migration

The dynamics of in and out-migration at county level between 1992-2017 (Fig. 16) shows the intensity of the overall territorial mobility of Romanian counties, including both internal and external migration.

Out-migration during 1992-2017 was higher in the counties most affected by population loss: either in favour of other more developed regions of the country (as it is the case for most counties located in the south-west Oltenia), as a result of suburbanisation (from Bucharest to Ilfov county) or in favour of external flows part (Hunedoara and several counties in Moldova: Vaslui, Botoşani).

On the other hand, the highest in-migration flows reflect of the better economic dynamics and performance of some of the towns in Romania (located in Timiş and Cluj counties), the intensity of external flows recently specific to the North-Eastern border counties such as Iaşi and Vaslui, an obvious preferred destination for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova.

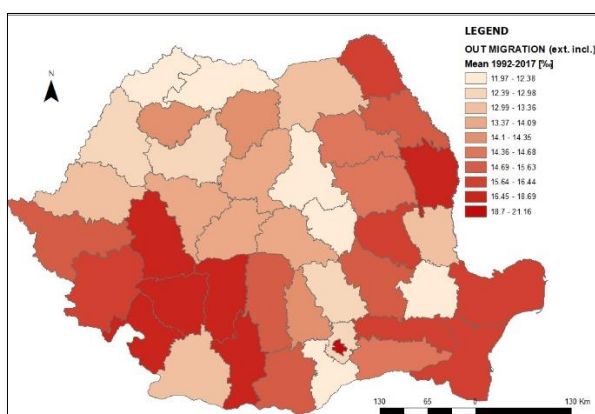
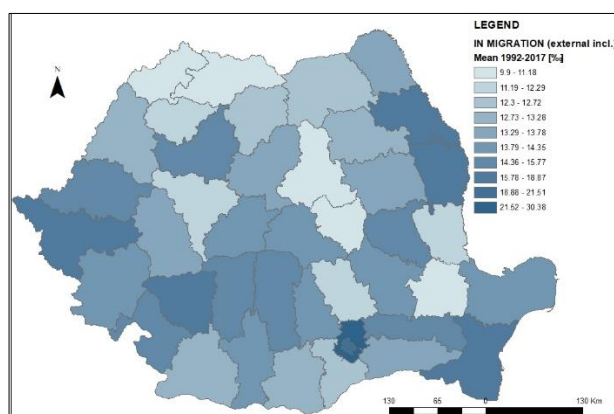


Figure 16: In- and out-migration (average 1992-2017)

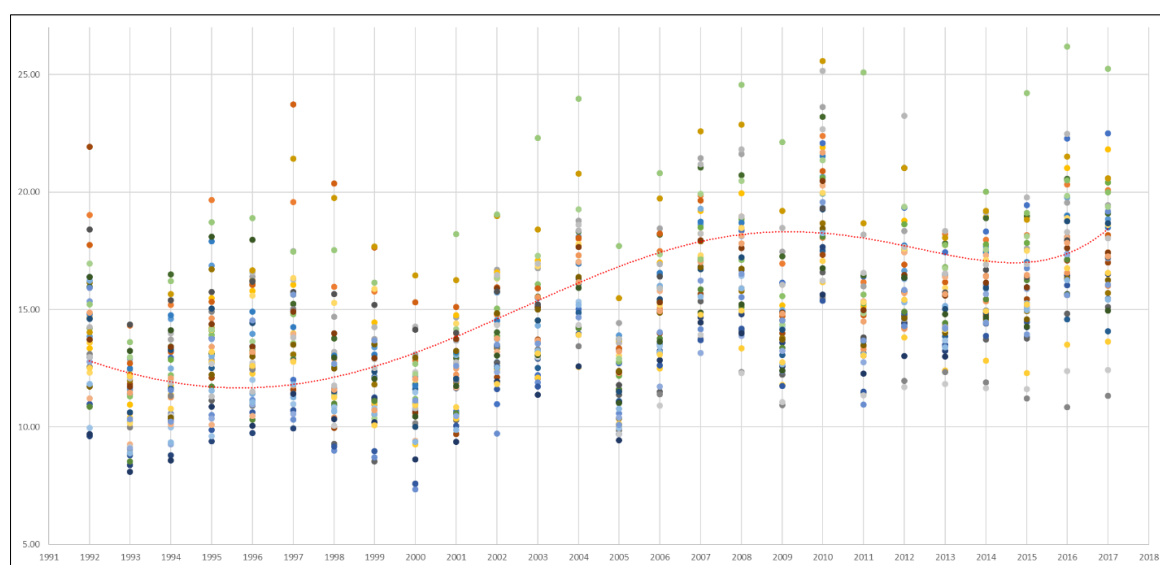


Figure 17: Dynamics of out-migration (including external migration) at the level of Romania's counties, between 1992-2017 (‰)

The temporal dynamics of out-migration (including external mobility) between 1992-2017 (Fig. 17) reveal some peaks in territorial mobility for most counties: 1992, 1997, 2004, 2010 and 2017. Regardless of the various motivations it was based, out-migration rates of over 20‰ are highly noticeable for Sibiu county, in 1992 and in the south-western and north-eastern parts of the country in 2010 and 2017-2018. The intensity of out-migration flows was reshaped during the post-communist period by permanent transformations of both internal and external legal conditionings and economic constraints, migration policies and mobility opportunities.

Conclusion

During almost three decades following the 1989 Revolution and changing political regime, Romania has clearly been a migrant sending area. Although the deficit of international migration has been counterbalanced by massive immigration from the Republic of Moldova starting with 2012, nonetheless, the phenomenon of emigration is not reversed or even attenuated.

Emigration peaked in the early 1990s, with the central and western part of the country providing most of the emigrants, while the southern part of the country is characterised by a much lower propensity for emigration. Most of the emigrants are women, of German, Hungarian and Jews origin during the first decade, while for the last 20 years Romanians accounted for more than 90% of the emigrants, targeting both European destinations (Germany, Italy, Hungary) as well as overseas countries (mainly USA and Canada). Three counties – Timis, Sibiu and Brasov rank first during the entire analysed period for permanent emigration, but also for international immigration (along with Cluj). Temporary migration is on the rise after Romania joined the European Union, most migrants being males, moving mainly to Italy, Spain, Germany and France.

Analyzing the phenomenon from a regional point of view, territorial disparities have been found to be increasing especially in the last 10 years: economic differences were amplified because previously less developed Romanian regions became more and more centrifugal as a result of both internal and external mobility, demographical loss in rural areas exacerbates more than in urban areas and population ageing protrudes at a national level.

The central and western part of the country (historical regions of Transylvania, Banat, Crisana and Maramures) are the main source region for emigrants, leaving for the most diverse destinations, in terms of both permanent and temporary migration. Still, Transylvania and Banat are also the

first destination for immigrants and in-migration, due to a much more dynamic and competitive economy, and also due to the needs of the labour market.

The eastern part of the country, Moldova, is characterised by high out-migration and high temporary migration (the region with the highest number of officially recorded temporary migrants, more than 370,000 persons for the last 6 years), targeting mainly Italy (with values as high as 87% of temporary migrants from Vrancea county heading for Italy). After 2007, it is also the main immigration region, mainly for people coming from the Republic of Moldova.

The southern part of the country (Dobrogea, Muntenia, Oltenia) is the least dynamic region in terms of migration, but during the last 10 years, it shows an increasing trend for both permanent and temporary migration, being also a major source for out-migrations (especially Oltenia and Dobrogea) and the least attractive area for immigrants.

One of the key consequences of international migration is the unfavourable contribution to demographical decline, which totalized over 500,000 permanent emigrants during the post-communist period (at least in official statistics) and a migration deficit which places Romania among the European countries with the strongest propensity of the population to move abroad. This evolution of Romania's migration status also has negative effects on demographic structures and population components as most migrants are young, well-trained and economically-active persons, which evinces in both a quantitative and a qualitative downshift.

Although in the post-communist period Romania has progressively become an interesting destination for business or studies, a well-founded migration strategy should be a national priority for policy-making actors and responsible institutions due to the recent evolution of the phenomenon. Reducing territorial discrepancies, encouraging return migration, keeping a stable, constant, safe and trustful political and economic environment, paying more attention to integration of immigrants in Romania could be possible solutions.

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