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Chapter 3

The Directions and Socio-Economic Effects of the External Migration from the Romanian Countryside

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Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of socio-economic phenomena in the post-communist era, as a risk management strategy, a true culture of migration toward the developed West has emerged in Romania. This study will explore the particularities of external migration in the rural areas. The main objective is to find what are the most important socio-economic phenomena that shaped the Romanian rural society. The methodology includes a vast documentary, quantitative, and statistical research. The rural areas have a very low quality of life: 5 in 10 people work in agriculture, which only contributes 4% to the GDP. The main beneficiary countries are Italy and Spain. Temporary migration provides a context for social learning. The most worrying effects are physicians' exodus, family abandonment and breakdown, forced modernization of rural areas, dropout rate, and youth exodus. There is a trend toward feminization of migration, due to a lack of opportunities home. Few migrants return home; 4 out of 10 people want to emigrate and 9 out of 10 know somebody abroad, half have relatives there. Authorities need to take measures at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels to slow down the emigration rate (organization of (re)qualification courses, investments in infrastructure, education and health, supporting medium-sized farms, and cooperatives).

Keywords: rural migration, regional impact, migration directions, migration effects, Romania

1. Introduction

The current chapter comes as a necessity for the better understanding of the phenomena that are underpinning migration from one of the medium to large countries in the European Union (EU), Romania.

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Coming from the Eastern European Block, with an accentuated lagging behind in structural reforms and development, compared to West European countries, and with a tumultuous recent history, caused by the reminisces of the communist regime that lasted from 1948 until 1989, and the mistakes made by the democratic system that came after, Romania's international migration is one the most complex population movements in the EU, exporting, especially from rural areas, unqualified workforce, and, mostly, specialists from the more developed urban localities.

From a geographical point of view, Romania has a predominantly rural outline, and 46.2% of the population is living in the countryside [1]. The structure of property in the rural area has gone through several profound changes that have managed to hinder its natural course of development. Changes such as forced collectivization, forced industrialization and urbanization, and an abrupt twist of those processes through retrocession of private property to its legitimate owners, without any consideration for the effects on the national economy, has left the population in this area confused, facing major existential fears for tomorrow, on account of the difficulties of making a living from the small number of products generated by performing agriculture on small plots of land.

In this case, searching for a better life elsewhere is a natural consequence that could be addressed through a series of national policies, including investments in the rural infrastructure, in education, and social services. These directions or policies are included in the national development plans for the rural area, and since 2000 they have been financed through European funding, based on development project requests. Nevertheless, the post-communist evolution of the Romanian rural areas has not been remarkable. Most of the rural population, 53% (4.1 million people) still works in agriculture—or the "Cinderella of the economy" [2]—whose contribution to the GDP is only 4% [3]. These workers have little perspective, considering that the EU-funded projects are mostly addressed to educated people, who can implement specific measures, therefore making these programs unattractive for most of the rural population.

While international migration to other EU countries has become the solution for quality of life improvement for many rural inhabitants, its effects on the origin society are both positive and negative. The main objective of this study is to identify the most important socio-economic phenomena that shaped the Romanian rural society in the last 20 years.

The secondary objectives of this study are: to describe the particularities of the Romanian countryside; to evaluate the Romanian strategy for rural development, and to discover to what extent the National Rural Development Program (NRDP) may reach its goals; to describe the main directions of the Romanian international migration from rural areas; to analyze the main socio-economic effects of migration in the countryside; to determine Romanians' attitude toward emigration; to identify the regions, genders, and age groups that are more vulnerable to migration push-pull factors; and to determine the main reasons for the feminization tendency of external migration.

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2. The social and economic framework of the post-communist Romanian rural area

As a member of the European Union since January 1, 2007, in Romania, the rural area is defined as all areas outside urban clusters, according to the Eurostat database. Romania fits into the NUTS 3 regional classification with 67.8% or 161,678 km^2 of its territory being predominantly rural, 29.4% or 70,127 km^2 being intermediate, and only 2.8% or 6587 km^2 being predominantly urban, according to the CAP context indicators.

The Romanian Statistics Institute considers the village as the basic territorial unit and the commune as a gathering of villages, and the two describe the rural area. In this case, Romania has a total of 12,957 villages reunited around 2861 communes.

Defining the rural area has always been a challenge, researchers around the world having different understandings of it, and moreover, each person has their own view of the rural area. Agriculture, as a basic economic activity of this area, lays a common ground for everyone. Surely, one may say that the rural areas are where agriculture is the predominant economic activity of the population.

Since they occupy a significant proportion of the EU territory, rural areas stand today as a central piece in the European discussions regarding sustainable development, and Romania is one of the main actors. The 2020 Strategy and The National Rural Development Program consider rural areas as the main resource providers for the industry and for ensuring the food security of the Union. Even more, institutions such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) amplifies this expectation, emphasizing the need for agriculture to develop to help eradicate the extreme poverty, or to provide food security around the globe [4]. In this context, we must ask ourselves if the Romanian rural areas are ready to meet these intentions, considering the difficult changes it has already been through, which have left serious psychological and economic scars.

While in general, rural areas are known for their traditionalism, in Romania they have been greatly shaped and reshaped, in no longer than 70 years, through the profound changes generated by forced collectivization, industrialization and intense urbanization, retrocession of agricultural lands to their legal owners after 1990, people's return to pre-industrial activities, the destruction (deindustrialization) of the former communist economy, and the massive external migration enhanced by the 2007 EU adherence. On the other hand, there are also voices saying that the situation of the Romanian rural areas has remained the same for the last 25 years because people remain reluctant to trusting the authorities, and prefer to work on their own, rather than in groups or cooperatives.

After imposing the forced collectivization, by creating communist cooperative structures and state enterprises that hired, and oppressed, more than 3 million people (28.9% of the working population at that time), the philosophy of the Romanian leaders was to destroy the family farm,

a structure that had survived through times, and ensured the families with food, because this meant that the last resource of the peasants would disappear, and they would finally accept their faith. To build factories, power plants, and other urban structures in the villages, the regime created blocks of small flats around them and populated them with workers. The agricultural lands no longer belonging to their owners, but to the state, and the former owners were forced to work without pay in the new oppressive structures. Șandru, in Dobrincu and Iordachi [5] and Popescu [6] underline that 80% of the agricultural areas were collectivized by 1962.

Even if the economic intentions were theoretically correct—the Romanian industry grew by 545% [7]—this policy has failed and has hurt millions of people. In a few numbers, it meant leaving 697 villages with no more than 50 inhabitants, killing 800,000 horses, advanced soil erosion, diminishing an ancestral occupation as sheep herding, the loss of interest in agricultural activities, dramatic changes in the family structure, and the loss of rural hierarchy.

From an 80% population living in rural areas prior to communism, in 1990, when that period had ended, 45.7% of the population lived in urban areas, mainly as a result of a false urbanization process, proved by the fact that after the falling of the regime, these areas have turned into hybrids. The people living in former industrial worker flats are now raising animals and crops in small plots around the building, and the industrial mammoths serve as a source of iron and other construction materials.

In the past 10 years, the National Institute of Statistics has recorded little variation in the rural population share; in 2017, after a constant drop in absolute numbers, 46% of the population, which means more than 9 million people, still lives in rural areas [1].

It is obvious now why the rural population is still reluctant in trusting the state or the authorities, many of them having lived the communist times and having experienced the psychological trauma. Even more, the same attitude is passed down to their children, raised to avoid working with other people as much as they can.

In a previous study by the authors on this topic, with a sample of 249 respondents, relevant for the rural population with Internet access, from the 21.3% who are farmers, 5 out of 10 prefer an individual work form, and only 1 out of 10 works in an associative form, while 3 out of 10 do not have any legal work form, and the rest preferring other types of work.

The communist period is not the only one that contributed to the current state of the Romanian rural area. The policies issued after the fall of the communist regime have the same importance. What was called the economic restructuring of Romania has turned out to be a chaotic fight for keeping more of the loot. Returning the agricultural lands to the rightful owners or their children was made with no economic principles in thought, by Law 18/1991. As a result, a massive migration from urban to rural and a massive land fragmentation ensued. More than 3.4 million people were working in agriculture in 1992. The difference is that the organized and forced agriculture with significant productions was turned into subsistence farming with millions of new landowners and farm managers with no formal training.

The primary economy is formed out of agriculture, forestry, and fishing, which are economic activities that predominate in the rural areas, rather than the urban.

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While the total occupied population register a drop in the last 10 years of 1.5 million persons, the rate of occupation in agriculture is still at the highest level in the EU (no other member country registers such a phenomenon). There has been an obvious decrease since the year 2000. About 27% of the occupied population in Romania works in agriculture, most of that percentage being represented by subsistence or small farm owners and not by salaried workers.

The general trend is a decrease in agricultural workforce and an increase in service related areas.

After 2000, a clear increase became visible in the service economy, and this is natural since services like insurance or consultancy have turned out to be a profitable business. Even so, the agriculture-based economy has kept on a relatively steady course, hiring more of one-quarter of the occupied population.

In the last 27 years, the Romanian agriculture went from a statist system which gave significant economic results to the practice of subsistence agriculture in over half of the arable land area, which left millions of farms with very low production, and so with low economic performance, while the European countries were already on a different path, one of competitiveness and sustainability.

Another problem that occurred after the regime change was migration. If during the communist period it was almost impossible to leave the country, after 1990, people had more freedom to visit or work in another country. This phenomenon has slowly turned into a western fear of invasion from the east.

Meanwhile, in the EU, the Common Agricultural Policy appeared. When World War II ended, a series of measures were structured that aimed at stimulating agricultural production and at regaining food security in the EU through its main actors, the farmers. The measure of guaranteeing a minimum price at the farm gate [8] had unexpected results, leading to overproduction, especially when the members' number started to grow. In 1992 that measure was replaced with encouraging the retirement of older farmers for a pension and their replacement by younger ones [9].

These actions also had adverse effects such as differences in regional development, environmental pollution caused by intense agricultural activities [10], and population migration from less developed areas to more developed ones [11].

Acknowledging the adverse effects led to the EU's 2000 Agenda [12], a new document with measures for supporting sustainable agriculture, reducing the regional gaps, and social cohesion. The Common Agricultural Policy was then split into two pillars. First, regarding direct payments to farmers, remaining on the economic side, and second, regarding rural development (European Parliament, 2016) with a clear turn to the social life of the rural area. Since 2000 (the year when this split took place), the financial measures included in the second pillar have not changed much.

Investing in the rural area from national funds was not a priority since funding was given by the EU through the SAPARD program. The SAPARD program was implemented in the

2000–2006 period and had the role of preparing farmers for the competitive European market. It was structured on the same basis as the National Rural Development Programs destined for the EU members, having 4 priority Axes and 10 action measures, plus the technical assistance measure.

The four Axes split into two significant development areas: the first referred to enhancing the productive capacity of local producers—through Axes 1 and 3; and the second, to increasing the quality of life in rural areas—through Axes 2 and 4.

Axis 3 intended to increase the number of rural jobs, while Axis 1 had measures of increasing product quality, and Axis 4 of increasing human resources quality. Axis 2 aimed, more than 15 years ago, at solving or diminishing several rural area problems like transportation, sewage infrastructure, and educational infrastructure, however, these problems are still present. The evaluation of this Program exposed a long series of challenges regarding the inefficient fund use [13]. Still, few or no measures of liability were taken afterward.

The assumption of unrealistic objectives caused by the lack of a rigorous analysis of the situation before implementing the program resulted in 9 years of reckless use of funds (the funding continued until 2009). The increase of rural jobs after the implementation of SAPARD projects was only 1.8% with an approximate cost of 18,500 euro/job created according to the Ex-post Evaluation [13].

Considering that the funding also aimed at reducing the possible number of Romanian rural migrants who were supposed to invade the developed EU countries once the borders were free, in 2007, the SAPARD evaluation (2011) mentions it could not stop the migration "exodus", but it contributed to a limitation of the trend. During its implementation, the number of people from rural areas who chose to leave Romania for another country increased by 5.2%.

After 2007, when Romania earned full member rights in the EU, the National Rural Development Program was implemented for the 2007–2013 period. The priority axes remained the same as in the SAPARD program. Unlike the first program, an evaluation of the rural area was made to set realistic development targets. Therefore, in the expected results chapter of the 2007–2013 program, the phrase "in the next decade, it is estimated that the number of migrant workers will register a certain decrease, due to the certain and progressive development of the Romanian economy, which will offer more job opportunities and individual performance" is stated. The external evaluation of the program, at the end of the implementation period, registered minimum achievements, such as a 1% increase of jobs in the secondary and tertiary economy. An independent study [14] with the purpose of evaluating the most accessed measure in the program, 112—*Installing young farmers*, states that most of the questioned farmers consider the measure as an aid for remaining in their homelands instead of migrating. Even so, the measure had little impact since the maximum amount was 40,000 euro/unit, a small amount of starting a competitive farm.

The general state of education and formal training in the Romanian rural environment supported the preference for accessing measures such as the installation of young farmers and the financing of subsistence farms, which required fewer responsibilities from their beneficiaries, but which yielded little structural gains.

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For the current funding period, 2014–2020, Romania has 15 active measures out of which knowledge transfer and agricultural cooperation are central interests. These are basic development agents for each community. The funding for subsistence farms disappears. The new version of the Program assumes the fact that farmers have learned how to respond to market demands and develop their business, but low training and skill levels are omitted, an omission that can prove to be vital at the end of the period.

Looking at statistical trends, the labor input in agriculture has followed the same path as the EU (28) average in the last 10 years.

Even if the total labor input in the agricultural sector in descending, as it is in the EU, reported to the total employment, Romania has the highest rate of people working in agriculture out of all EU members: 27%, while the EU average stands at 4.2% [15]. While the EU (28) average of annual work units in agriculture is 335,370 in 2016, in Romania it is almost four times higher after a steep decrease.

Considering that at the last census approx. 3,629,660 farms were registered in Romania, the difference between the salaried and the non-salaried must be known. The last 10 years show a 9% increase in salaried workforce. The clear majority (more than 80%) of the annual work units in Romanian agriculture are non-salaried, either working on subsistence farms in which they are associated to the farm manager, or being day laborers, without a legal employment form. These are people not bound to their homelands—on the contrary, it is likely for them to leave the rural areas, or even the country, searching for better payment and implicitly a better life. Moreover, how could it be different when the average income for the Romanian farmer is 4000 euro/year while the EU farmer earns around 120,000 euro/year?

Could these 81% non-salaried agricultural workers get another job in rural areas? Not really, a study of Diaconeasa and Chirculescu [16] shows that the employability level, based on six basic factors—as considered by Cohen [17]—education and training, personal development, family, financial stability, health and the inheritance of these workers, is very low and without serious investment in the education, transportation, and health systems they will not be able to get a salaried job in another field other than agriculture. Since the educational infrastructure is very poor, most high schools being in the urban area, it implies additional costs for a person living in the rural area to pursue a better education; moreover, there are no universities in the rural area. In this case, it is tough for a young person living in the rural areas to study for a better job.

More on this, the EU Skills Panorama [18] predicts an increase in the knowledge demands for the agricultural workers by 2025 and a drop of almost 13% in the rate of occupation in agriculture, so basically, the farm workers will have to be well prepared, and that will cause a severe loss of jobs in this area, which will cause new migration waves if no national investment is made soon in the education, transportation, and health infrastructures.

The average size of the Romanian farm is of 3.6 hectares of utilized agricultural area, 12.5 hectares less than the average EU farm, as the CAP context indicators register. The same statistical indicators show a remarkable difference in the farm manager's formal training. In the EU, practical experience is essential for 69.8% of the farmers, 20.2% have basic training, and

8.5% have full agricultural training. In Romania 96.4% of the farmers rely on practical experience, 3.1% have basic training, and only 0.5% have full agricultural training. In this case, the possibility of producing high-quality crops and animal products is very low.

As the costs for supporting a small farm are sometimes higher than the incomes, farmers have little options for investing in enlarging the farm or for investing in their education to produce better crops, therefore their choices are limited. Either they struggle in this situation or they leave the country for a few years, working for western farms where they have a double advantage: first of saving some money and second, of learning new techniques and agricultural practices, basically trying an empirical form of tacit knowledge transfer. Even if that is not the case for all the possible rural migrants, it is close to the story they leave with.

3. The latest directions of the international migration of human resources in the rural areas of Romania

As a general rule, migration flows from regions with high natural growth and low economic, and social development are moving toward regions with low natural growth and high level of socio-economic development.

3.1. Internal migration

Domestic migration, through the change of environment, revolved post-1990 around a predominantly urban to rural route. The domestic exchange rates have been in the past few years about 4% higher for migration from cities to communes, than for the reverse. This population movement trend is explained by the development of residential areas, which are situated in the rural areas near urban localities and are characterized by a high living standard.

3.2. External migration

The stages and characteristics of the post-December Romanian international migration are:

1. 1990–1993: massive deindustrialization, privatization, social and political instability; emigration has an ethnic character; emigrants are male in search of political asylum, because of the violent events of the 1990s; Germany, Hungary, France, and Belgium were the main destinations.
2. 1994–1996: massive deindustrialization, privatization, social and political instability, regional instability; migration for work and study is at an early stage; Hungary, Israel and Turkey are the main destinations.
3. 1997–2001: massive deindustrialization, privatization, social and political instability, the alternation of government, the Asian financial crisis (1997); trafficking, circular and illegal migration are higher; working agreements are signed with Germany, and Spain, Hungary, Italy, Spain, and Ireland are the main destinations.

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4. 2002–2006: the right to free movement in the EEA, the labor migration of low-skilled people is intensifying toward Italy, and Spain, those with higher qualifications are heading to France, the United Kingdom or Germany, Italy and Spain are the main destinations.
5. 2007–present: Romania's accession to the EU, the economic and financial crisis of 2008, austerity measures adopted by the Government, economic recovery in recent years, feminization of migration; Italy and Spain are the main destinations, and after the crisis the UK becomes one of the most desirable destinations in 2015.

3.2.1. Definitive migration

In 2015, the main destinations were the UK, Italy, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, and Sweden. The latest data from NIS certify that the total number of permanent emigrants, between 2010 and 2015, with an annual average of 181,000 emigrants, decreased in 2012 and 2013 and increased in 2014 and 2015, but without reaching the 2010 departure figures.

From a numerical (not weighted) perspective, between 1991 and 2015, the feminization of emigration at the national level can be noticed. The peaks are in the years 1995, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2010, 2013. For men, a more significant decrease is registered in the 2006–2010 period.

The age group distribution of the external migration in the 2010–2015 period, once again, reveals that most people who are leaving are young, but there is also a slight increase in the outflow of people over 45 years of age.

3.2.2. Temporary migration

Between 2009 and 2014, as a result of the economic crisis, we are dealing with a feminization of temporary rural external migration. From 2015, this trend stopped. Regarding the share of regions in the total temporary rural migration, between 2012 and 2015, there are very small fluctuations from year to year. In 2015, 13.4% of the total number of temporary emigrants left from the North-West Region, 11.2% from the Central Region, 20.1% from the North-East Region, 12.9% from the South-East Region, from South-Muntenia 20.2%, from Bucharest-Ilfov Region 2.4%, from South-West Oltenia 12%, and from the West Region 7.6%.

Regarding the share of each age group from the total temporary external migration, between 2012 and 2015, we notice that: those aged 15–24 represent between 27.3 and 24.2% of the total circulating migrants; the 24–34 segment between 31.3 and 42.2%; those aged 35–44 between 20.8 and 19.5%; those over 45 years between 20.5 and 14.1%. We highlight the increase in the 24–34 age group and the decrease of those over 45 in 2015.

On the other hand, we note the existence of a negative balance of migration, between 2010 and 2015, with the deficit ranging from 48,100 in 2010 to 57,932 in 2015. The situation is extremely unbalanced at the level of entry and exit of men and women: there is a loss of 47,923 women in 2010 and 31,952 women in 2015. The external contribution of men in 2012 and 2013 has not been able to fully balance the deficit caused by the feminization of emigration. However, the latest figures in 2015 show a rebalancing of external migration by gender. Given that external

female migration is more damaging than male migration at the family level, promoting measures to create attractive career opportunities for women could slow down their exodus, knowing that women in rural areas who leave work for the very first time abroad, which highlights the lack of jobs for them in the country.

4. Field research: the push-pull factors of the Romanian rural migration

In the context of the massive external migration analysis of the 1990s, both socio-economic causes and geographic neighborhoods or the development of social networks are important.

The push and pull migration factors can be divided into: (a) socio-economic (places and working conditions, salary levels, and remittances); (b) policies (legislative framework, ethnic, cultural, religious persecution, or wars); (c) environmental (climate change); (d) ethnic (linguistic, employment facilitation and expansion of social capital, access to citizenship and rights, and other opportunities); (e) cultural (migration takes place between countries with a similar or related cultural identity).

1. Method: Sociological inquiry
2. Technique: Self-administered questionnaire
3. Objective: Push-pull factor analysis; migration network analysis
4. Main research questions: (A) What are the main directions of labor migration in Romanian rural areas? (B) What are the main socio-economic effects of labor migration in Romanian rural areas? (C) What is the influence of demographic variables on the intensity of the push and pull factors? (D) What are the preferred means of communication within migration networks? (E) What is the respondents' attitude toward migration? (F) What is the attitude of the interviewees on the effects of migration?
5. Population: Residents of rural areas in Romania
6. Sample: A representative sample at the national level for rural residents with Internet access; the volume of the sample was 249 persons, over 18 years of age. The sample error is ±6% with a 95% level of confidence.
7. Sampling technique: The sample was established in a non-aleatory manner using quotas; 75% of respondents come from the Research Romania panel, while the rest responded to our Facebook and Google AdWords advertising campaigns; Weighting of the final results on the population distribution at the national level in the rural areas by gender, region, and age.
8. Findings
   (8.1) The main European Economic Area (EEA) destinations are (in the order of importance given by the respondents): Italy, Spain, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Austria, Portugal, Belgium, Finland, Slovenia, Iceland, Cyprus, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Hungary, Ireland, Sweden, Malta, Poland, and Estonia.

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(8.2) The most developed countries in the EEA are in respondents' perception (in the order of their preference): Germany, Austria, The United Kingdom, France, Italy, Norway, Spain, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Liechtenstein, Portugal, Croatia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Estonia, The Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Greece, and Latvia.

(8.3) In **Table 1**, we notice that most respondents feel that emigrants' families live better due remittances, while transnational families, with children, face-specific difficulties managing the day-to-day family life. Also, depending on remittances can be a problem, since people who benefit from them directly tend not to work (some even receive social aid on top). The effects of emigration in the origin society are also quite visible to our respondents (5 from 10 versus 2 from 10). Also, 4 out of 10 people (versus 2 out of 10) agree that emigration influenced knowledge, habits, principles and values, beliefs and the social order.

(8.4) The intensity of the push-pull factors can vary depending on demographic variables. Our data (**Figure 1**) suggest they are more powerful for people living in the South-West, South, and South-East development regions, rather than those living in Bucharest-Ilfov and West. Furthermore, they have a more noticeable influence on women, than on men, because of the rural patriarchal society, and the evolution of the labor market after the 2008 Crisis. Regarding the group ages, 18–25, 26–35, and 46–55 are more prone to being affected, while 55+, and 36–45 are a little less. Education also plays a role, respondents with superior studies being less vulnerable than those who only have high school or gymnasium education. While

What are the most important effects of emigration in your hometown?	Agreement (%)	Neutrality (%)	Disagreement (%)
Life conditions have improved for emigrant families	74	21	5
Children of transnational families encounter specific problems	71	17	12
Many families have become dependent on financial remittances	68	22	10
The population of the home town has fallen	54	24	22
Many families are living apart due emigration	51	28	21
Emigration has influenced knowledge, habits, principles/values, beliefs, the order in society in your locality	43	32	25
The number of jobs has dropped in the locality of origin	39	35	26
Town home economy suffers from a lack of skilled labor force due to emigration	32	34	34
Health services have worsened	30	37	33
The economy of the home town has improved due to financial remittances	29	36	35
Overall it is good for the locality of origin that many people emigrated	26	37	37
Emigrants and/or their families have opened businesses in their home town	22	36	42
Those who have an emigrant or their families have helped improve the infrastructure in their home town	11	27	62

Table 1. Effects of emigration on the origin society.

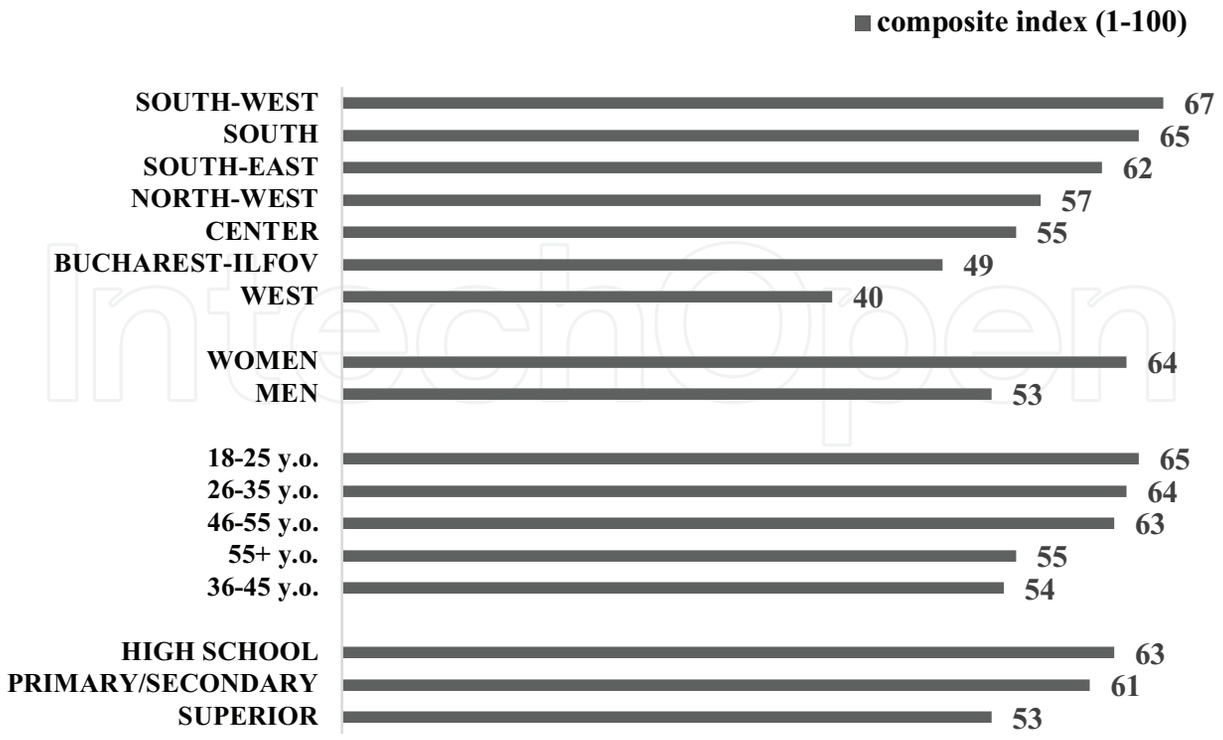


Figure 1. Intensity of push-pull factors in relation to demographic variables.

we measure the push-pull factors together, it is important to notice that their effects are not equal, for instance, people from South-West are most affected by push factors (72 out of 100 in intensity), while being only moderately attracted by the presumed benefits of the destination countries (62 out of 100 in intensity). Of course, this can be explained through geographical vicinity and the availability of migration networks.

(8.5) To communicate with their friends and family from abroad, our respondents use (in the order of importance given by the respondents): phone, Facebook, Email, WhatsApp, SMS, face to face, and blogs. Nine out of 10 know people live abroad, 5 out of 10 have family there, and 9 out of 10 communicate with their family or acquaintances.

(8.6) In terms of their feelings toward migration, in the order of importance given by them, respondents believe that: young people emigrate, migration brings prosperity, the effects are negative for the origin country, migration networks are essential for a successful migration, emigrants become more respected in their communities, there are no attractive economic opportunities in the source country.

(8.7) Regarding their migration historic, 3 out of 10 study participants took part in internal migration, 2 out of 10 in international migration, and 3 out of 10 have tried to emigrate, but without managing to. Most failed projects occur when it comes to migration toward Germany, Spain, France, and Italy, and the main reason is of financial nature.

(8.8) With respect to the intention of migrating, 42% wish to emigrate, and 20% have taken concrete steps toward their goal.

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(8.9) On the topic of migration return, 7 out of 10 respondents know migrants who came back (on average they know 6 people that returned). Six out of 10 know a returned migrant who opened a business in their village (on average the respondents know 2 such people). Most return to reunite with their significant others, and to take care of their children.

9. Limitations: Our sample is representative only of the people with Internet access (around 60% in rural areas in Romania). The educational profile of our respondents is not representative of the rural population.

10. Conclusions: The impact of migration on rural labor is considerable, both on a quantitative and on a qualitative level. The lack of jobs and opportunities for professional development in the country and the possibility of earning money abroad remain the main motivations of emigration.

Most worrying is the emergence of an emigration culture in the most vulnerable areas and social groups.

Migration is for our respondents a risk management strategy.

Social networks are catalyzers of migration.

The data underline the importance of entrepreneurship of returning migrants, even if this is rare.

Children of transnational families who have remained home encounter specific problems (educational, emotional, and behavioral), which the authorities must address with greater conviction.

The results of the push-pull factors analysis need to be further researched to counter their influence in the most affected areas and groups. The authorities need to adjust the migration policy to address the causes. Also, more attention needs to be paid to immigration, which can be a solution for the lack of workforce in the country.

5. Socio-economic effects of the Romanian rural migration on the origin society

The effects of the migration phenomenon occur as soon as it begins to manifest itself. They can have positive or negative meanings and they can be felt on the long, medium, or short term. Identifying and analyzing the effects of migration can raise several issues. Communities of origin are developing because a large part of the population migrates; therefore migration becomes a means of ensuring not only the survival but the chance of improvement of the migrant's life. Certain communities provide opportunities for local long-term development, job creation and even economic opportunities and investment from migrants. Thus, we can see these effects as changes in the life of the individual, the family, or the migrant group, but also in the life of the community to which it belongs or in which it is to integrate. The adverse effects of migrating highly skilled labor force for the country of origin increase especially when

emigrants have professions that are essential for the economy, affecting the development of the whole society (and not just financially), both on the short and medium term, as well as on the long term. Instead, it is noted that the destination countries of highly qualified professionals have registered substantial economic growth due to the unique creative capacity of the human capital of immigrants.

5.1. Positive effects

The study of the effects of external migration of the workforce on Romanian rural areas has developed over the last few years. Researchers distinguish between short- and medium-term, and long-term effects [22]. In the short term, the labor market in the home country calms down, and remittances help to improve the material state of the population. In the long run, many effects may be negative due to the reduction in the active population, and to the brain drain.

It is estimated that at the beginning of 2000, about 34% of migrants were highly trained. Likewise, almost 30% of Italian emigrants and 24% of Spanish ones had previously had no jobs [22]. By 2015, 52% of migrants held positions requiring specialization and 39% did not have medium or higher education. Interestingly, 25% of Romanian emigrants said they worked illegally; 60% of women working in Italy in the care sector did not have employment contracts (2012).

Petru Dandea, Cartel Alfa trade's union leader, said that more than 3 million employees are no longer working in Romania. If they were planning to return to the country, the unemployment figure would explode. Concerning unemployed, in almost all European countries, young people form the majority, but the number of jobs has been reduced in the EU by delocalization to Asia. Many times, young people prefer to remain unemployed, becoming daydreamers [19]. We note that most Romanians working abroad do not benefit from EURES-guaranteed jobs.

Interestingly, the birth rate of Romanians in the host country is higher than at home [20]. In 2012, the birth rate of Romanians living abroad was 12.5 per 1000 inhabitants, while in Romania it was only 9.3 [21]. In recent years, hundreds of thousands of Romanian children have been born in host countries. "There are two possibilities to fill the gap left by external migration: the economic development of the country, supplemented by demographic policies to encourage birth, and the return of the Romanian emigrants to the country, and to import people from Moldova, the largest source of immigration in Romania, or even from other states outside the European Union," says Prof. Dr. Monica Roman from ASE [20].

5.1.1. Transnational remittances for household support

It is appreciated that emigration, whether temporary, has reduced social tensions in Romania, and especially the over-population in rural areas. Romanian migrants have the right to participate in local elections in EU countries, conclude labor contracts, and hold bank accounts. Transnational remittances are carried out whether migrants intend to remain outside, or have settled there only temporary. There are migrants who have flexible employment contracts in Italy or Spain and other places. In migrants' locality of origin, the financial flow increases, with

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local economies monetizing and substantially increasing the consumption outside survival conditions.

Remittances have increased since 2004, amounting to 3.3% of GDP in 2008. These remittances are substantial because they run through both specialized institutions (Western Union, Money Gram) and emigrant networks. A peak of remittances was recorded in 2008 with $ 9.4 billion [22]. Most financial resources are destined for consumption and only a small part for bank savings. About 50% of consumption is directed toward household needs, 37% for real estate, and 16% for car purchases. Remittances support local development by solving labor market problems and contribute to reducing social inequalities [22].

5.1.2. Private investment strategies and social remittances

After 2002, the construction of houses commissioned by migrants increased. They considered the real estate as safe investments, unfortunately, the market boom between 2005 and 2008, which led to an unsustainable increase in housing prices. Other migrants have invested in tourist locations, in small and medium-sized agricultural exploitations, or agricultural techniques. Family changes are also often recorded. Many times, migrants have had to ascribe a superior place in society and family to women. The critical spirit has also been directed more toward the local authorities.

The population frequently criticizes the state of the roads and the lack of modernization in the localities that are financially dependent on the money transfers from the migrants. At the same time, there are differences in wealth and income between migrants and non-migrants, which often lead to conflicts.

5.1.3. Cultural effects

Temporary migration provided a context for social learning for Romanians, and also strengthened their social confidence and participation in the activities of the civil society. Opinion polls underline the assimilation of modern democratic and constitutional governance values [23].

Work mobility also contributes to lifestyle changes, increased civic engagement, social trust, and tolerance toward minority groups. However, the most powerful cultural influences are by mass media, TV broadcasts, the internet, social networks.

5.1.4. Other effects

After the outbreak of the financial and economic crisis in the US and the EU (2008), some migrants returned to Romania. Part of the 48,000 owners of Italian firms with Romanian titles returned to the country between 2010 and 2014. In 2012, several employees from construction companies in Spain and Italy returned to Romania. Testimony from Romanian worker in Düsseldorf in June 2011 reveals the point of view that situation of the Romania exodus will turn out good when more and more co-nationals will return to the country. At the same time, the results of a sociological survey conducted in 2008 in Madrid, Spain, showed that 42% of the single Romanian migrants would want to return to the country after some years [23].

It is significant that 45% of migrants associated the future of their children with Romania and 24% considered it to be shared between Spain and Romania. Many migrants did not return to the country because they found lower paid jobs than those in the Madrid area. In Italy, some of the workers from foreign construction companies returned to Romania; these firms have often subcontracted works in Romania. Interesting are also the cases of Romanian citizens who bought apartments in the country, with funds from Italy and Spain, in order to rent them.

It seems that the future migration of the Romanians will rely more heavily on the policies of the destination countries. Most migrants have taken their families with them and had or are looking for a job. Residents also have social protection. However, migration will no longer reach the 2001–2008 quota.

At the same time, we note that 2010 saw the return of more than 300,000 Romanian migrants. In 2010, the Spanish Labor Ministry demanded that the unemployed Romanians return to the country to avoid long-term retention in the labor shortage. Of the 900,000 Romanians, only 237,054 contributed to the social security system and 59,395 received unemployment benefits. In Spain, a government repatriation program was implemented in 2008.

We also highlight the conclusions of a 2010 study: "Bound between the current economic crisis, domestic tensions and gender inequalities that influence women's opportunities to earn income in the country, returning migrants (however many) may become a new vulnerable category in Romania. So far, no special measures taken by state institutions regarding the reintegration of returning migrants are known. Although in 2008, ANOFM organized job fairs in Italy and Spain to encourage Romanians to come to the country, we are not aware of the results of these measures, but very likely from the echoes received, these measures have not been successful. The idea that migrants would be an interesting maneuver for politicians does not seem to be based on scientific studies showing a weak (non-existent) political trans-nationalism of Romanians abroad. No NGO programs to support integration into the country have yet been identified in Romania. Therefore, instead of posting development potential, our migrants risk being ignored by economically marginalized and marginalized politicians. However, neither in Italy nor in Spain is there any exodus toward migrants' country" [24].

"The number of Romanians who left Italy between 1995 and 2007 is rising. During this time, 20,588 Romanians probably returned to the country. On the other hand, the number of those going to Italy is still significant, which explains the evolution of the Romanian migrant stock in Italy in recent years. Romania has been for the first time among the biggest immigrant communities in Italy, representing 21% of all immigrants. As far as Spain is concerned, Romanians continue to hope for a job, even if it pays less than to return to the country, if they do not know the success patterns of other returning migrants. Figures provided by the Spanish Institute of Statistics show that around 5,500 people left Spain in 2009 to settle in Romania, most of them retired. Among those returning from Spain, men (3,200) are predominant, compared to 2,300 women" [24].

5.1.5. Negative effects

"Strong emigration affects human capital and further complicates the aging of the population. It is estimated that in 2013, 2.5 million Romanians (approximately 12.5% of the population)

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lived abroad. (…) Emigrants are often poorly qualified, but there are many highly qualified workers who have left the country. This further complicates the problems related to the decline in the working-age population in the context of an aging society. Faced with this challenge, the government intends to implement a program to stimulate internal and external mobility, focusing on highly skilled workers" [8]. Youth unemployment is still high, with 12% not in education.

Emigration has negatively impacted the demographic and the socio-economic situation. It is an essential cause of the population decline, as it mainly affects young people, 62% of whom are of fertile age. The decrease in population has also reached a negative value of 0.2% per year. Areas with high internal and external migration have suffered a decline in their fertility rate (Botoșani, Vaslui, Buzău, Tulcea, Vrancea, Călărași, Giurgiu, Teleorman, and Olt counties). Higher rates of fertility, however, were recorded in Suceava and Iași. Internal migration has complemented population losses in western and central areas. "In general, the older emigration is, and if it affects both sexes, the more severe its demographic effects are" [25]. To the question of whether migration causes social harm to families, 45.4% of respondents underlined benefits, 30% negative, and 24% being neutral [26]. The particularly well-known problem of children who grow up without parents was highlighted. In 2008, UNICEF estimated that 350,000 children out of 4.4 million live in migrant families. Moreover, it was added that migrants postpone marriage and procreation decisions. Such effects will worsen in the long run.

International mobility puts pressure on local employers (from small and medium-sized enterprises), forcing them to choose between wage growth and bankruptcy or business closure. The European Commission (EC) draws attention to the fact that key measures that support apprenticeships, skills certification, and mobility packages are less used. Cooperation between public institutions, education, and private employers is underdeveloped. Pilot measures hardly reach interested young people, many not registered in public services. A national apprenticeship program linked to the National Competitiveness Strategy is announced. The EU also supports programs for youth not professionally employed.

Under these conditions, the participation of older workers in the labor market will increase, given that the elderly dependency ratio will double by 2050. Without the law equalizing the retirement age between men and women, women participation in the labor market will continue to decrease. Moreover, national spending on active labor force policies has fallen to 40% since 2004. At present, the focus is on the European Social Fund (ESF). The internal and ESF measures are not correlated.

Most short-term unemployed are not covered by unemployment benefits. Passive policies continue to absorb 85% of national spending on labor market policies. Since 2014, employers have received social contributions cuts that have lowered the revenue of the social security administration. At the same time, the rural labor force is also affected by the school dropout rate, reaching 18.1% in 2014, which is higher in the countryside.

The labor force is mainly created in the urban area, and the rural area is still losing jobs. Labor productivity in agriculture is five times lower than the national average [22]. This is how the main development disparities between rural and urban are maintained in our country. The

country is lagging in combating poverty, in providing employment, education and access to services, and basic infrastructure.

After the EU accession, programs to reduce urban-rural gaps have multiplied. CAP funds were obtained, and a Rural Development Program was implemented, supporting the Sustainable Development Program. If the EU has allocated more than €8 billion in 2007–2013, the same amount was earmarked between 2014 and 2020, geared to increasing agricultural productivity, encouraging small farms, increasing the added value of agricultural products, creating jobs, making rural development worthwhile. At the same time, prospects for agricultural modernization are anemic due to proper fragmentation (over 3.2 million farms) or limited access to credit (14% in the eTerra database).

Also, poverty affects 50% of the mass of rural inhabitants (28% in cities) and feeds emigration. About 80% of the beneficiaries of social aid are from the countryside. The rural population has a significant share of the informal economy and a little participation in the contributory pension system. Moreover, the low level of training in the countryside makes it harder to develop human capital. In 2013, only 22% of second-chance learners came from rural areas. In 2013, 5% of rural youth graduated from faculties (20% in urban areas). On the other hand, one out of three rural children drop out of school before the ninth grade; rural schools hardly provide normal specialist services [26]. It is also known that the countryside faces mediocre health services, which are vital for the aging workforce (60% of the beneficiaries of direct payments for agriculture are over 60 years old). Health insurance covers 78% of the population, while emigrants are forced to support the treatment of their relatives more seriously.

Moreover, the departure of tens of thousands of health professionals to foreign countries is due to be among the vulnerabilities generated by emigration. Also, medical professionals tend to permanently move to other countries, so their remittances are less important. The medical staff exodus may also translate into an increasing infant or even adult mortality rate, rates which are already higher in the rural areas (with over 5% more deaths than urban areas).

Negative demographic effects should be added to depopulated rural areas, deserted villages, abandoned land, and visible deterioration. Apart from the population, it is important to have productive activities (in Apuseni Mountains, Tutova Hills, Cotmeana Plain, and Colinar Plain of Transylvania). There are also conservative rural spaces, which, despite experiencing a rural exodus, maintain their relative demographic vitality, for example, North-Eastern Moldova or Northern Transylvania. A certain demographic balance is ensured in the interstitial rural areas with temporary bidirectional migration (Transylvania and Banat). Suburban areas are of course favored [25]. The uneven diffusion of the techniques leading to the insertion of rural areas into the national and international exchange circuit, which materializes in different degrees of equipping agricultural holdings, also counts. Isolated and partially isolated spaces are disadvantaged.

On the other hand, the changes caused by the behavioral urbanization of the rural population have positive effects in eliminating demographic and illiteracy explosions. Local and national identity, however, have to suffer. The most developed are the suburban communities.

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We cannot ignore the brain drain in the West—over 200,000 university graduates left Romania after 1990—and the temporary settling in the West of tens of thousands of physicians and nurses. At the same time, severe gaps have been created in the national labor market.

On a broader scale, natality in Romania has diminished, and so has the future labor force that can be hired. We emphasize that over 10% of Romanians work abroad [27]. The tendency to remain definitively in the countries of destination is a part of the future of Romania. Emigration countries are increasingly confronted with an aging population, and with a diminishing economic and social growth rate.

Of course, there is an over-representation of farmers among people returning to the country. Strawberry pickers are more likely to go back to the country than other occupational categories. Most of those who have worked in agriculture have practiced circular migration, and the return of migrants from agriculture is temporary, with the probability of returning abroad being quite high. Another possible explanation is that their work in Western Europe farms is usually their first job abroad. The more diversified the economic activities are in destination countries, the lower the return rates are in the origin country. In Romanian migrants' decision to return, individual factors will prevail, amid the extended economic crisis in the country. The economic opportunities in the home community are closely related to the emigration decision, and return to the country.

Among the main factors that discourage migrants' investment in Romania is not the lack of financial resources or of an entrepreneurial spirit, but the bureaucratic obstacles, cumbersome and discretionary procedures, and corruption in Romania. That is why the number of emigrants who do not want to return to the country has increased. About 13% of them are still looking for secure salaries in the West, 13% are looking for a decent pension, and 47% have achieved savings plans.

The migration of the rural labor force can have dire adverse consequences in rural and territorial terms. The departure of the young and adult population may reduce the capacity of rural communities to support themselves economically and financially. Today only 1500–1800 communes have the real capacity to be supported by their people; there are villages that are practically depopulated. The official reduction of the number of small cities and communes is in part blocked by the interests of local governments and their lobbyists not to dismantle such structures.

Emigration processes contribute—together with other transformations in the Romanian society—to the amplification of competition for the provision of development conditions between the areas of Romania. A similar competition will continue to manifest itself between the Romanian and European provinces.

6. Conclusions and proposals

It must be said that the Romanian authorities have been faced with new internal and external socio-economic realities since 2007: (1) the decrease of the remittances, the Romanians who go

to work abroad do not have a predetermined plan of return; (2) migrants' children learn in foreign schools and integrate there; (3) localities, although benefiting at the level of individual households from emigration, do not do so in terms of community sustainability, especially at regional level; (4) migration flows involve more and more diverse population categories, young people, and families with children are the most numerous classes in terms of population loss through emigration; (5) regarding the category of those with higher education, the state is confronted both with the brain wasting phenomenon (inflation of diplomas in the country, uncoordinated with real needs, and not adapted to the labor market) and with brain drain caused by emigration; thus the investment in the development of capital human and education becomes a national cost, harder to recover on the long term [28].

In theory, there is an extraordinary amount of labor in the countryside, so the migration of some categories to cities and to other countries should have beneficial effects on the labor market. However, only small steps have been taken for creating and developing jobs in the SME system, transferring knowledge, advising, and managing farm businesses. In 2013, statistics already showed that 60% of the rural population was working in agriculture. Also, 65% of unskilled workers in the country came from the countryside. At the same time, it is noted that the rural environment remains a labor resource for mining, construction, support services, manufacturing. In 2015, about 2.18 million people were still working in agriculture. If there were about 500,000 unemployed, this number did not include people living from small plots of subsistence farming (300,000), some of who work temporarily in the country or outside of it.

In practice, the impact of migration on the Romanian labor force is considerable; in rural areas, it not only refers to the size of the workforce but also to its quality. Firstly, it draws attention to the significant figure of the population involved in internal and external migration, of over 3.5 million people. In an active population of 8–12 million inhabitants, it is detrimental that 3.5 million people are trained in the migration process. It is also worrying that hundreds of thousands of highly skilled people have gone abroad.

There are rural areas where labor is lacking because of the migration of young people in the country and abroad, especially skilled labor. We recall that most of Romania's poor live in rural areas. The participation rate in early education is 76%, the motivation for education being lower due to economic reasons (lack of employment in the countryside). It is considered in the specialty studies that each school year reduces the unemployment risk by 8.2% [29]. Also, a person with higher education earns 1.36 times more than an average high school graduate. An individual in the last category earns 1.77 times more than one without studies.

Furthermore, we consider that it is hazardous that emigration intersects with the tendency of decreased birth rate and the aging of the Romanian population. This aging of the population is even more visible in rural areas. Moreover, there is an increase in the phenomenon of the old population settling from urban to rural and suburban areas. Thus, the high proportion of the population in rural areas (46%) remained the same. Even more serious is the fact the young migrate not only internally but also externally, while the urban population moving to villages and communes is usually inactive. In 2015, 100,000 people opted for the countryside, while 78,000 moved to cities. There is an improvement in infrastructure and living conditions only in suburban areas: this is rather the transformation of these regions into residential districts

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adjacent to the main cities. Professor Gheorghe Zaman pointed out that the transfer to the countryside will increase in the coming years, in the search for a more affordable living. Economists believe this trend will reduce the consumption of food, fuel, credit, and will have negative economic effects. Migration movements, especially among rural youth, are caused by poverty and lack of employment opportunities, while the return is conditioned by the creation of a more efficient local and central government, or by the emergence of possibilities on the rural labor market (through diversification of rural economic activities).

At the same time, we draw attention to the fact that emigration affects the age groups with high fertility rates, decreasing the potential of newborns in Romania. Over 58% of migrants are women in the 26–46 age group, which has severe effects on birth rates and fertility rates [30].

A perverse effect of work mobility is that it reduces the pressure of society on the government's obligation to modernize the economic, social and cultural aspects of Romania. Mainly based on the transfer of remittances by migrants, it shows poor managerial capacity at government level and beyond. "Romania's external migration will be influenced in the next period by how high, and sustainable the economic growth rate will be, the extent to which this increase will significantly increase the standard of living and, of course, the immigration policies of the Western countries. According to the existing scenarios, after a severe destabilization caused by the economic crisis, in Romania the first signs of recovery are extremely uncertain" [30].

Authorities should, among other things, try to develop local inclusive societies and fight against poverty. Attention seems to be given to training young farmers, providing support for business plans. At the same time, both the government and the EU show concerns about investments in basic infrastructure, roads, water supply, and educational infrastructure.

Since it is known that LAGs can associate local, public and private sector initiatives to support small rural businesses. Moreover, LEADER aims to maintain the local workforce, especially by diversifying non-agricultural activities. Equally, the country still lacks enough agronomical high schools and vocational schools. The same adverse conditions for medical staff mainly explain their departure in urban areas and outside the country.

A significant transfer of labor from agriculture to other sectors of activity will be needed. This transfer involves major investments in various sectors of activity, including in rural areas. Modernization in the agricultural sector can also lead to declining seasonal fluctuations, which mark the GDP, yearly budget revenues, many people's incomes, exports, transport and services [30].

Further, there is a high productivity gap between agriculture and other economic sectors. Part of the population in the agricultural sector is under-occupied, resulting in lower productivity than the national average. However, the occupied population in agriculture is oversized. Even Bulgaria had a threefold productivity higher than Romania. After all, practically the entire occupied population aged over 64 is working in agriculture.

It is also proven in UNICEF studies that Romania should invest at least 6% of GDP in education in the years to come, to reduce social disparities, improve the health of the population, reduce dependency on welfare benefits and combat crime, and record higher public

spending in infrastructure. Priority should be given to pre-primary and primary education, vocational and technical education [29].

However, in the agricultural sector, there are young people under 35 (27.9%) who have a low level of education and qualification. This population has low income and is forced to migrate to cities or abroad. This workforce mobility and its flexibility is influenced by income; therefore, the migration trends will not be reduced in the near future. Also, there are income disparities between regions, Bucharest-Ilfov and North-West, for example, in North-West, income is 70% lower than in Bucharest-Ilfov.

On the other hand, "the economic crisis has had multiple negative effects on Romanian migrants working abroad. People who are marginalized on the labor market, with low human capital and low material income, are those who are perceived to be the categories of migrant workers most affected by the crisis. Those who experienced the crisis most severely were Romanians who worked as unskilled workers and those who worked in the informal economy of destination countries. Migrant business sectors, such as hotel buildings or services, along with other areas that depend on economic cycles, have been hit hardest by the recession, causing job losses and a higher rate of unemployment among the migrant workers than in the case of local workers" [31].

On the other hand, we must take into consideration that in Romania the labor force in rural areas is also under-used. This explains why not only emigration abroad should be encouraged, but also labor transfers from agriculture to other sectors. Public policies and active labor market measures are needed.

We believe that employment measures in rural non-agricultural sectors should firstly be adopted by organizing training courses in services; expanding infrastructure networks; encouraging SMEs in the countryside; stimulating the hiring of the rural population; attracting European funds for business and jobs in the rural areas; improving access to utilities (especially Internet access).

Taking into account the youth unemployment rate, it would be necessary to promote youth employment in rural areas by applying for vocational retraining programs and encouraging the implementation of programs for young farmers and entrepreneurs [30].

Equally, the levels of specialization and professionalization of rural labor should be increased. Better measures are needed to combat black-outs and the non-tax economy, which is about 30%.

Despite these analyses, Ilie Ştefan argued that migration processes would be difficult to stop in Romania, since migration is fed by the lack of jobs, low levels of living and poverty. There is a considerable lack of jobs in agriculture, where production is excessively dependent on environmental conditions. The post-communist reforms failed in merging the land in such way that it would have led to the establishment of medium-sized farms that could provide jobs. Real support programs for farmers are also lacking: credit for machinery, storage facilities, and irrigation systems. In part, these shortcomings could be remedied by establishing cooperatives (particularly on distribution).

The still significant contribution of agriculture to GDP shows the inefficiency of the national economy, rather than the exceptional performance of agriculture. While, the agriculture is

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somewhat industrialized in Romania, half of the country's arable land being exploited in a traditional system and a half in the industrial system, 50% of agricultural exports are gross commodities and not finished products (which also have high added value). Besides, we import agro-food products.

Emigration is also encouraged by the lack of real competition in public service employment; these jobs' distribution is excessively politicized [32].

Ineffective health and education policies send tens of thousands of specialists abroad. Also, anemic technology transfer urges many young people to study abroad. Romania allocates the lowest funds for research and development in the EU. Moreover, the state continues to show insufficient concern in this direction.

Another specific problem of the countryside is the fact that women are far more likely to leave than men, to cities in the country or abroad (the feminization of migration). Mainly, there is a lack of local (rural) opportunities, the collapse of the post-crisis construction market in Spain, which has led to significant income losses for the families whose men worked there, but also the existence of women's specific job opportunities abroad, the access being facilitated by the well-structured migration networks from Spain and Italy. For most of them, it is their very first job, as before they preferred to live from social remittances and social assistance in Romania. In guest societies, they are mainly engaged in social care and agriculture.

Emigration also causes problems among transnational families, concerning children's education. We believe it is important to support the children left at home, but also the parents left for work. These difficulties could be addressed through the development, among other things, of tools designed to support remote parent education and improved communication with the school. At the level of the education system, a solution could be to strengthen the relationship between school and social assistance by outlining communication methods and procedures between teachers, school directors, school psychologists and social workers. In the rural area, the role of the school counselor should be increased [33].

The balance of negative and positive consequences of short-/medium- and long-term migration reveals: (a) positive consequences are remittances, family welfare, improving education, professional development, trying another lifestyle, plus social value and civics, improving women's empowerment, additional chances of development for discriminated social categories (e.g., Roma); (b) negative aspects are the unrecovered investment in labor, demographic loss, drain of specialists and talents, non-recovery of taxes and duties, remittance trap, false social development, adverse effects on children with parents who have left abroad, the black economy, drugs, and denial of identity.

On the other hand, migrant investment has contributed to the development of the construction sector at the local level, but also to the rise in the prices of construction land, building materials and labor. Also, migration has favored the import of new construction systems, construction techniques and equipment, as well as more economical or better water, electricity and water heating systems [34].

To counteract the negative impact of emigration, measures should be taken at: (a) macro-level: absorption policies and benefits to stay in the country's labor market, policies to create

opportunities and counteract the loss of brains and skilled workers, public policies based on the exploration of the motivations and the pull and push factors, state institutions have to cooperate through policies of exchange of information and coordination of elements of demographic/population and politico-economic movements; (b) at the mezzo level: public policies and communication—focusing on clear medium and micro-level issues, NGOs and other types of associations, supporting the local economy through development policies, tailored policies for each region with community involvement, policies created by specialists associations to serve the individual or groups accurately; (c) at the micro-level: social policies for remediation in specific dysfunctional situations related to migration (children, family, Roma issue), collaboration strategies between specialists and institutions for problems and particular cases [27]. In health, the problems caused by the massive migration of specialists, the relevant policies should: (a) harmonize the health needs of the population by ensuring the need for medical personnel at national level; (b) create a coherent system capable of keeping health professionals in the country by supporting them and taking measures to motivate the youngest (doctors and nurses) [35].

On the other hand, it can be said that the most alarming characteristic of the effects of emigration is the social restructuring in the locality of origin, building a real culture of migration, especially in rural areas [36].

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