



ORIGINAL PAPER

Socio-Demographic and Regional Analysis of Internal Mobility in Romania Between 1990-2020

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Abstract:

If we take into account the number of those who have left the country or abroad temporarily or for longer periods, we see that migration is a reality that involves a large number of Romanian citizens, which requires a careful analysis of its social, demographic and economic effects. In this article. We focused on the evaluation of internal migration in Romania and its relationship with demographic and economic transformations at the regional level in Romania. Using official sources of statistical data on urban-rural, urban-urban, rural-urban, rural-rural migrations, we considered that their analysis will lead to the understanding of the associated demographic phenomena, but also to the shaping of regional territorial disparities. We have also analyzed the regional demographic imbalances induced by migration and identified a number of ways of eliminating these effects.

Keywords: *migration; mobility; internal migration; Romania.*

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Introduction

While in the works published at national level the scientific interest has been oriented towards the analysis of the dynamics and effects of Romanian migrant flows to and from the European Union, we propose to make an assessment of internal migration in Romania and its relationship with demographic and economic transformations at regional level in Romania.

Observing the demographic movements that have affected Romania's regions, cities and rural areas, we considered it necessary to carry out territorialized analyses of the phenomenon of internal migration at regional level. Using the official sources of statistical data on urban-rural, urban-urban, rural-urban, rural-rural migration, we considered that their analysis will lead to an understanding of the associated demographic phenomena, but also to an outline of regional territorial disparities. The demographic imbalances induced by differentiated migrations and the implications of the migration phenomenon on economic development and structural changes were also analyzed in regional profile (Pirvu, 2007; Pirvu *et al.*, 2011; Jianu *et al.*, 2021).

If we take into account the number of those who have left the country temporarily or for longer periods of time, we see that migration is a reality that involves a large number of Romanian citizens, which requires a careful analysis of its social, demographic and economic effects.

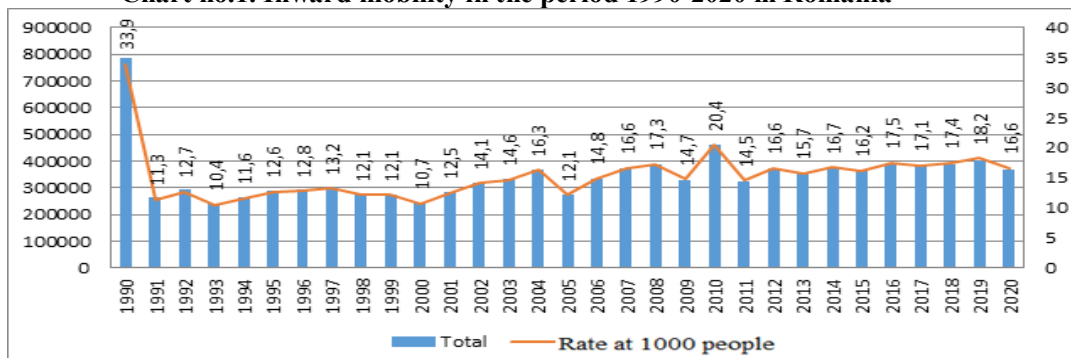
Analysis of Internal Migration Flows with Change of Residence

In the analysis of internal mobility in Romania, we must take into account the internal economic and social transformations that have taken place in the period under review (industrial decline, economic restructuring of urban centers, rising unemployment, etc.), and the legislative changes, particularly with regard to the free movement of persons and the liberalization of access to the labor markets of other countries (Constantin *et al.* 2004; Pehoiu, Costache, 2010; Șerban 2011, Constantin *et al.*, 2002).

Since the beginning of the 1990s, as a result of legislative changes that provided for the free movement of persons and freedom of movement of persons, Romania has seen a spectacular increase in internal migration from 8.6‰ in 1985 to 33.9‰ in 1990. (Suditu *et al.*, 2012: 83)

This increase can be interpreted as a reaction of freedom, as it was specific to the year 1990, since in the last 10 years, 1991 - 2000, the volume of territorial mobility decreased considerably compared to 1990, maintaining between 10 and 13 changes of residence per 1,000 inhabitants. Since 2001, there has been a tendency for internal migration flows to increase, often exceeding 16‰ in periods of economic growth, while the onset of the global recession in the first year of economic recession led to a decrease in population mobility (only 14.7‰ in 2009). During the period of continued economic recession, the population's desire to change its place of residence was 20.4‰ in 2010, the highest rate of internal migration since 1990, and by 2020 internal mobility will be around 17‰, with an expected level of 18.2‰ in 2019 (Chart 1).

Chart no.1. Inward mobility in the period 1990-2020 in Romania



Source: processing based on INSSE data

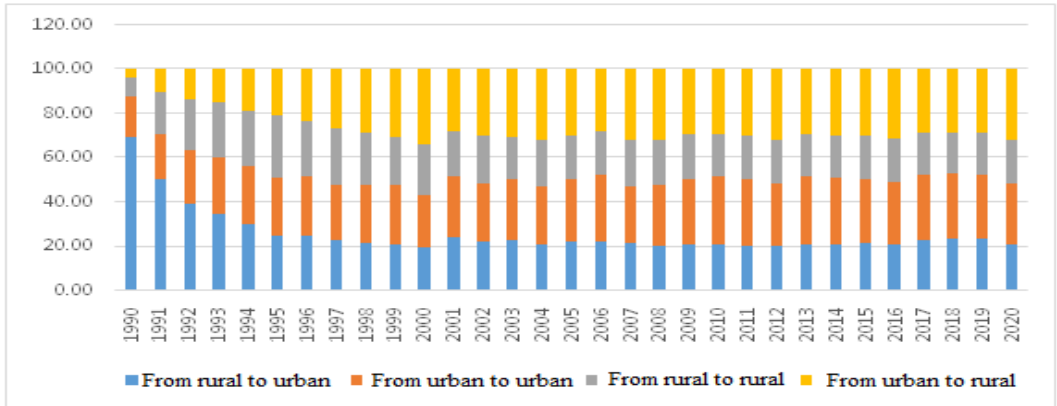
While in 1991 more than half (70%) of the internal migration volume went from rural to urban, in recent years rural to urban migration has decreased from one year to the next, reaching 19.5% in 2000, while the share of urban to rural migration increased from 10.1% in 1991 to 33.8% in 2000.

The factors determining the change of residence from urban to rural areas are diverse, different and depend on the categories of persons involved. These may be economic restructuring leading to job loss, the resources needed to live in the city being greater than in the countryside, the desire to leave congested areas (cities) and move to the countryside, thus having access to a more environmentally friendly environment and larger living spaces. When people move from rural to urban areas, it is most often young people who move to urban areas, either to study or to find a job. This migration of young people from rural to urban areas also has a significant impact on the birth rate and usually leads to demographic ageing in rural areas.

Since 2001, migration from rural to urban areas and vice versa has been more or less constant, accounting for around 20% (rural-urban migration) and 30% (urban-rural migration) respectively of total migration flows, as shown in Chart 2.

In order to understand the changes in the direction of migration flows from rural-urban to urban-rural we have to take into account the elements that acted on the Romanian economy and society in the first post-communist years: privatization of industry, restitution of agricultural land following the implementation of Law no. 18/1991 Land Law, but also the difficult professional integration of the population made redundant as a result of the restructuring of some branches of industry.

Chart no. 2. Structure of internal migration flows by residence environment between 1990 and 2020 in Romania (% of total migration flows)



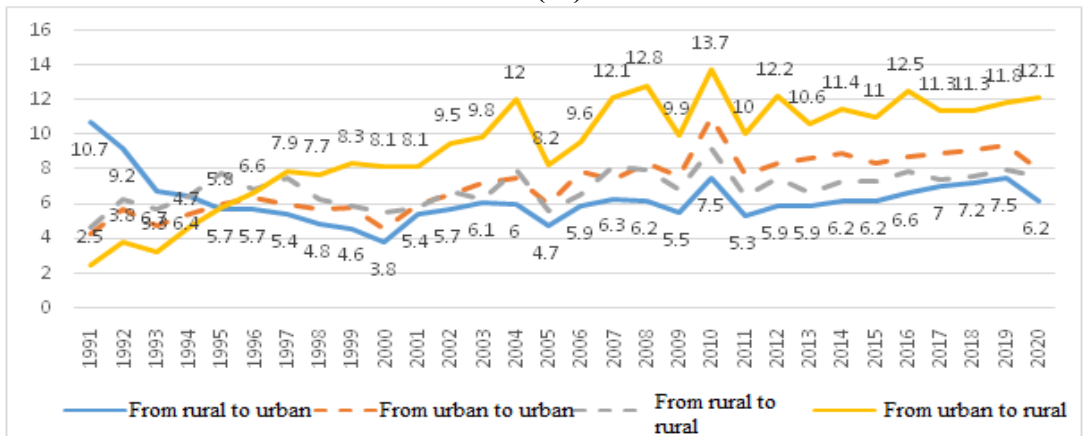
Source: processing based on INSSE data

From Chart 1.3 we can see that the main direction of migration until 1995 was represented by the flow from rural to urban, since in 1991 there were about 10 changes of residence per 1,000 inhabitants from rural to urban and only 2.5 changes from urban to rural.

After 2010 we observe an evolution around the value of 11 changes of residence per 1000 inhabitants, from urban to rural, with an increase in 2016 to 12.5%. This trend calls for more attention to be paid to investments in rural areas so as to provide adequate infrastructure and education and health services similar to those in urban areas.

Also, as can be seen in Chart 3, urban-urban and rural-rural flows increased slightly, as the movement of population from rural to urban areas continued to decrease in intensity, peaking in 2010 after a decrease in 2009.

Chart no. 3. Evolution of internal migration flow rates in Romania between 1991 and 2020 (‰)

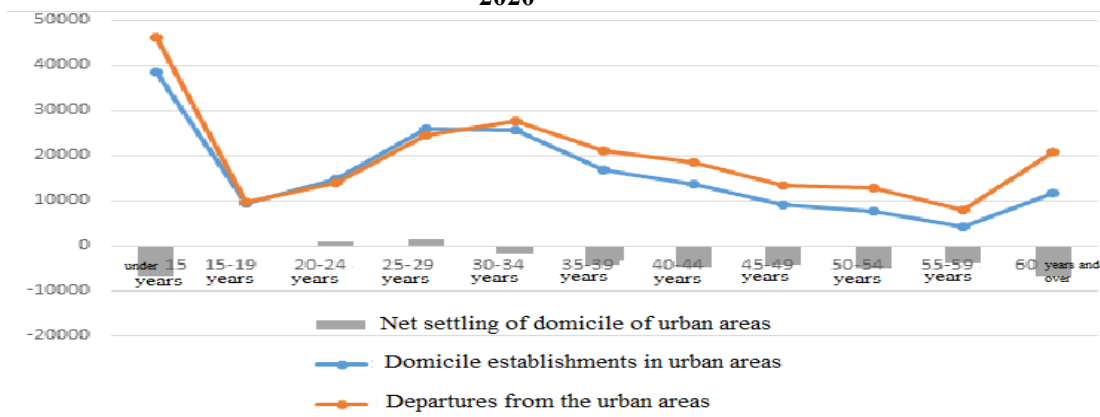


Source: processing based on INSSE data

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In 2020, but the situation is similar in the other years as well, the most intense flow of changes of residence occurs in the case of children (under 15) and young people aged 25-29. The situation for children can be explained by the change of residence by their parents, but for young people the situation is different, as they are in a position to decide for themselves on their residence. Young people are tempted to change their lives and residence much more easily than other groups.

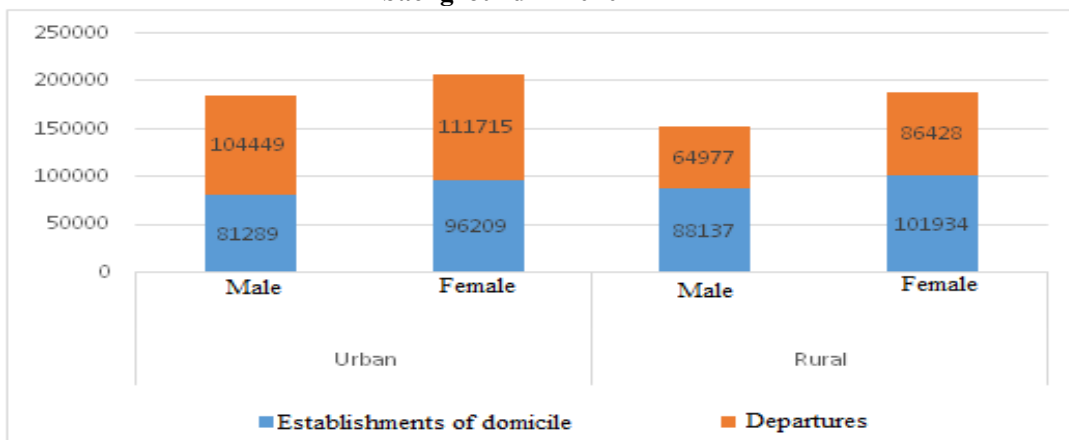
Chart no. 4. Structure of internal migration flows to urban areas by age group in 2020



Source: processing based on INSSE data

Chart 4 shows that young people aged between 20 and 29 are the only category in which the balance of changes of residence in urban areas is positive, the explanation being their desire to improve their skills or to find better-paid jobs. In the case of the adult and elderly population (aged over 35), there is a shift from urban to rural areas, probably because they want to escape from crowded and polluted areas to rural areas where they can enjoy fresh air, more living space and opportunities to move around in nature.

Chart no. 5. Dynamics of the structure of internal migration flows by gender and background in 2020



Source: processing based on INSSE data

If we analyze migration flows taking into account the gender gap, we observe that in 2020 women were more likely to change residence than men. The explanation may be that women are motivated by family interests, as they tend to follow their husbands when starting a family.

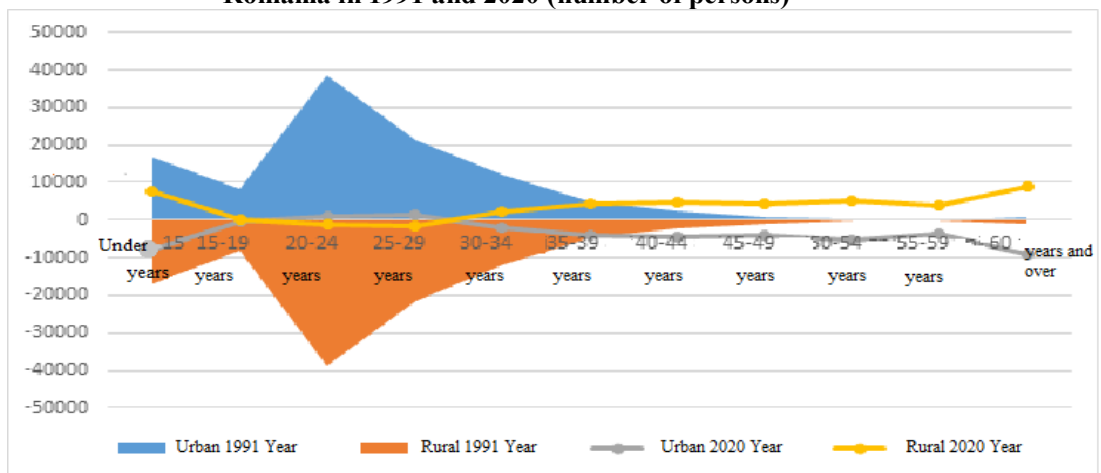
For both men and women, Chart 5 shows that more people leave urban areas than come to urban areas, while in rural areas the situation is reversed: more people arrive than leave.

Analysis of Migration Balance in Romania - by Residence, Age Groups, Development Regions and Counties

If we analyze the migration balance of the population determined by age groups in Chart no.6, we can see that there are radical changes in the period under analysis. Thus, while in 1991 the balance of migration from rural to urban areas was very high among young people aged 20-24 (the balance of changes of residence in rural areas was negative, while that in urban areas was positive and the values were equally high), there was a decrease as age increased (for people aged over 50, the values were close to zero, but the balance of migration to urban areas remained positive).

In the year 2020, the shift towards urban residence can be observed only in the category of young people aged 20-29 years (mostly students or at the beginning of their working life), while in the other age groups the tendency is to move from urban to rural areas.

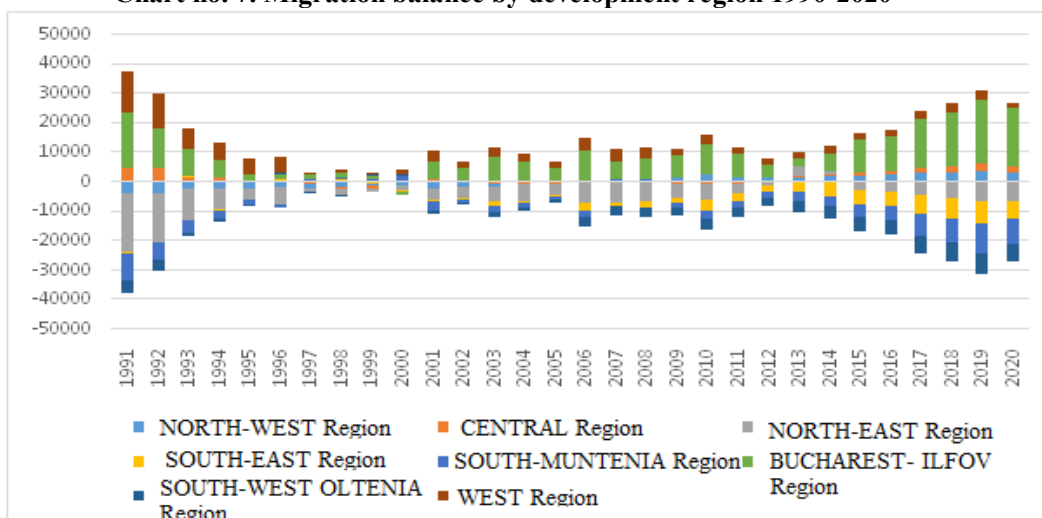
Chart no.6. Balance of changes of residence by residence and age group in Romania in 1991 and 2020 (number of persons)



Source: processing based on INSSE data

It can also be noted that for the age group over 60 the tendency to migrate from urban to rural is increasing, explained by the desire to retire to rural areas after leaving the labour force.

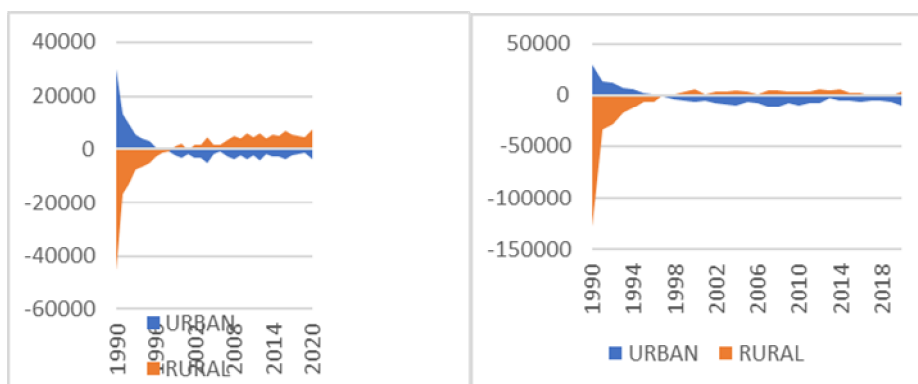
Chart no. 7. Migration balance by development region 1990-2020



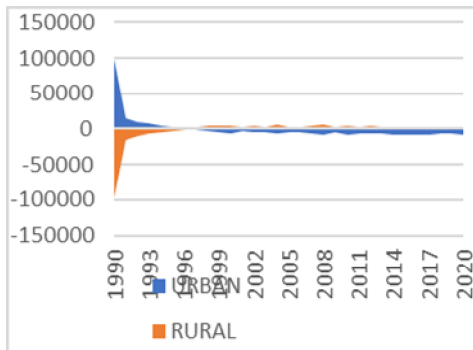
Source: processing based on INSSE data

From the analysis of the migratory balance by development regions, Chart no.7, we observe a trend of population migration towards economically developed areas or rural areas. Thus, in the case of regions with a high level of economic development and with job offers in various fields of activity, such as West Region and Bucharest Ilfov, we observe a positive migration balance with high values throughout the period, while less economically developed regions such as the North-East, South-East, South-West Oltenia regions record a high negative migration balance in almost all the years analyzed. In the North-West and Centre regions, the migration balance changes over the 31 years, going from negative values at the beginning of the period to positive values today, respectively from high positive values in 1990 to a balance close to zero in several years.

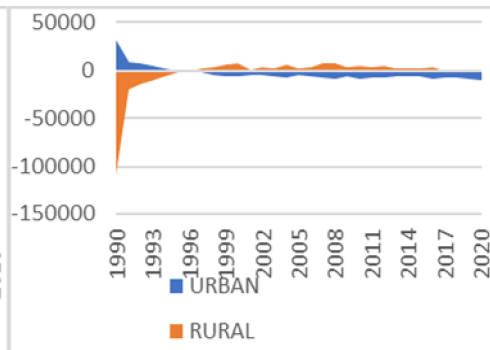
Chart no.8. Regional balance of residential changes (persons) by residence in Romania in the period 1990-2020



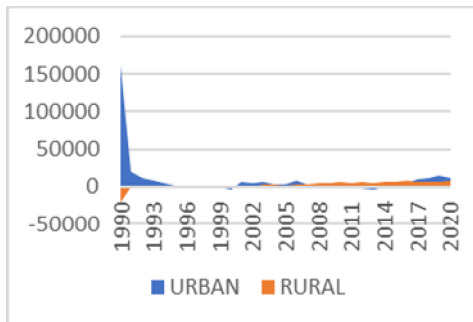
NORTH-WEST Region



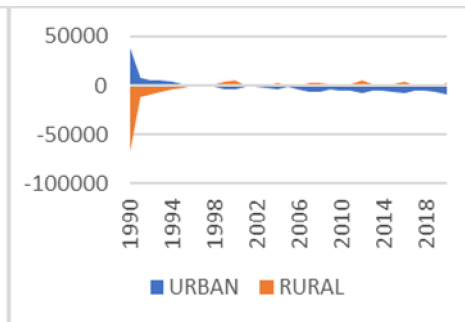
NORTH-EAST Region



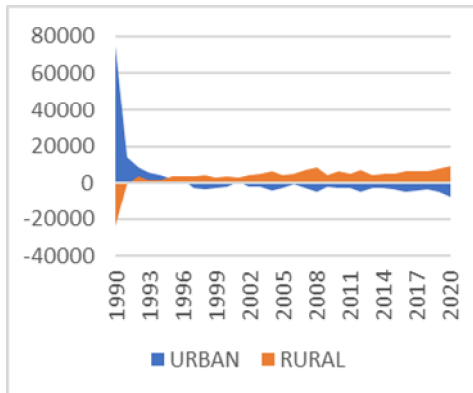
SOUTH-EAST Region



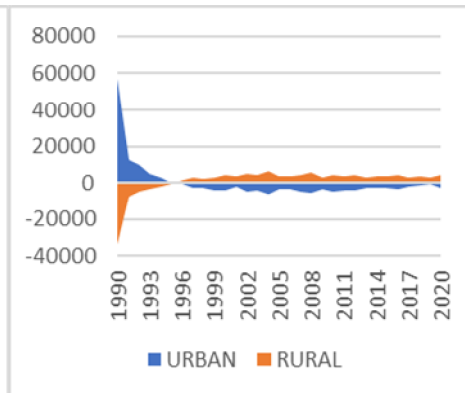
SOUTH-MUNTENIA Region



BUCHAREST- ILFOV Region



SOUTH-WEST OLTENIA Region



WEST Region

CENTRAL Region

Source: processing based on INSSE data

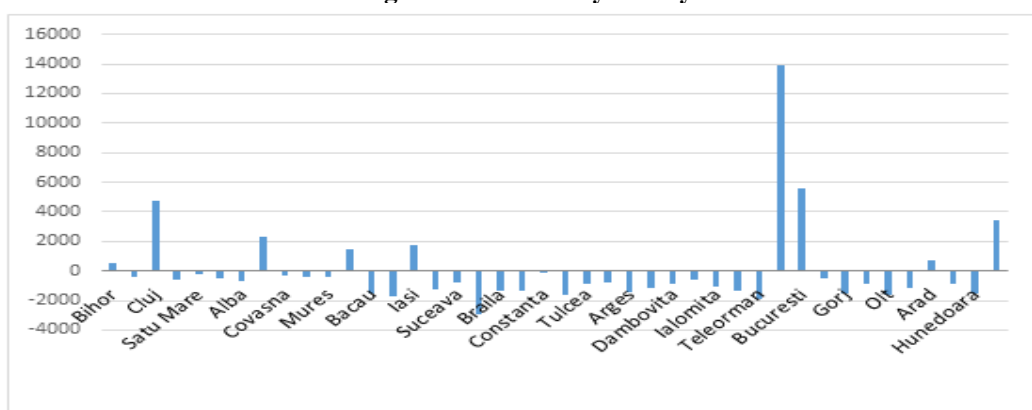
The balance of changes of residence by region highlights the existence of several regions where there are intensely urbanized counties, which are attractive for

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migrants, leading to an increase in the flows of arrivals with residence. One such example is Ilfov county, which, due to its economic potential and its proximity to Bucharest, has led to the settlement of migrants in significant proportions in both urban and rural areas. There are other regions where counties have proved attractive for rural migration, such as Cluj and Timis.

The sequential analysis of regional migration flows can be explained by the social, economic and demographic realities in Romania after 1990. The 1990s are characterized by the situation caused by the closure of the large industrialized centers, which led to increased unemployment in urban areas, and implicitly to people migrating in search of a job or returning to their places of origin through urban-rural migration and interregional migration.

Chart no. 9. Migration balance by county in 2020



Source: processing based on INSSE data

In 2020, 367,569 persons, i.e. almost 2% of the population residing in Romania, were registered as having changed their residence in Romania. From the analysis of mobility between counties, according to Chart 1.9, only 8 counties show a positive migration balance. These counties are the ones with the highest level of economic development, important university centers but also the counties with the highest level of investment (Bucharest, Cluj, Iasi, Timisoara, Sibiu, Arad, Ilfov, Brasov). The only county that does not fall into these categories is Bihor, where the positive balance of internal migration is explained by the high development potential. We believe that if this trend of migration from poor counties with a low level of economic and social development to developed counties continues in the future, it will lead to even greater disparities than at present.

Conclusion

By age group, young people tend to move to urban areas, while people aged over 35 migrate to rural areas, and women tend to move more often than men.

We think it is absolutely necessary for the institutions responsible in this area to be aware of the current demographic crisis looming in Romania and, by implication, to identify public policies to improve migration and demography.

In order for internal mobility to develop towards less attractive areas, in addition to offering jobs, it is also necessary to provide easy access to housing both by renting and by purchasing, and possibly to develop rental subsidy programs for young people at the start of their careers. Work and family life must be harmonized, which will generate demographic growth in communities. In areas with an ageing population and depopulation trend, measures must be identified to ensure that young people stay in these areas - both in terms of the attractive jobs on offer and the appropriate education and health infrastructure, and in terms of attracting young professionals to these areas - by offering unbeatable financial conditions in the fields of health and education.

Acknowledgement:

This work was supported by the grant POCU380/6/13/123990, co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Capital 2014 – 2020.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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Article Info

Received: February 14 2022

Accepted: February 20 2022

Socio-Demographic and Regional Analysis of Internal Mobility in Romania...

How to cite this article:

Pîrvu, R., Murtaza, F.A., Toma, O. (2022). Socio-Demographic and Regional Analysis of Internal Mobility in Romania Between 1990-2020. *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, no. 73/2022, 21-31.