

**GO WEST.
THE MIGRATIONS OF THE POPULATION FROM IASI TOWNSHIP (ROMANIA)**

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1. Premises

From one day to another the international migrations of the Romanians become, or at least tend to become a banal reality. Before passing the barrier of being admitted in the UE, Romanians have already learnt what this represents, towards what is it going and especially how present Europe functions – the wealthy, desired but also pretentious Europe. Yet this case of learning wasn't achieved on a classic, eventually didactic-theoretical path, but on an empirical one, in which the place of the school classes or of the sophisticated political conferences has ceded first place to the concrete economic activities from the post 1989 Occident. Till now, the adaptation, the bringing at the same denominator has necessitated not only intellectual exercises and academic endeavors, but mostly physical and nervous effort.

These migrants play an important role on the Romanian societal scene, that of a catalyst of our country's integration in a system proven to be functional at least from an economic viewpoint. More than anybody and anything, they have created the matrix that linked Romania with Europe in the last years.

In fact, there was a sudden passage from an internal circulation imposed by the political limitation of the movement in a confined space (with a dominant orientation rural-to-urban), to a more diverse structure in which the main element is represented by the reactivation of the fluxes with international destination. More, the

occurrence of this emigration wave was realized with an incomparable superior force than any precedent from the national scale. Once acquired, this type of migrating behavior tends to become, especially after 2000, one of the most characteristic socio-economical phenomena in present Romania.

But, in spite of the financial (and we hope positive, although the sociologists and economists haven't decided yet if the money sent by the migrants have or not a benefic effect) consequences, to regard emigration only from this perspective would be a mistake. In reality, these trans-boundary movements imply and a series of socio-demographic consequences less wanted, but inevitable, that become more and more characteristic for the Romanian contemporaneous society. Thus, the family separation (sometimes on long periods, either between husbands or between parents and children), the qualitative diminutions that mainly the age groups of the young adults suffer or the decrease in the values of marriage and birth rates are phenomena that on the background of a generalized social mistrust leave their print – in a more discrete or brutal manner, directly or indirectly – on the present realities and future evolutions. Unmistakably, the demographic crisis triggered in Romania after the fall of the communist regime has a series of explanations and in the trivialization of this type of territorial mobility.

2. Some historical details about Iași

From a historical point of view, the town of Iași has witnessed a period of glory beginning with 1564, when it became capital of Moldova province¹. This status attracted a quite accelerated demographic, economical and cultural development, materialized in the attraction of autochthonous and foreign human fluxes (Jews,

Armenians, Greeks etc.) of intellectuals, craftsmen, merchants and clerks, in a short period the town receiving the attribute of a regional metropolis. Now have arrived the first elements of social and economic modernity: the education develops extensively, as well as the transportation, occur new crafts and industries, the paid work extends and the population's socio-professional segregation becomes more accentuated.

Yet this growth period ended in 1862, when after the union of the Romanian provinces of Moldova and Walachia, the capital moves to Bucharest. In this

¹ In that time the province of Moldova included along the Northeastern part of Romania from the east of the Eastern Carpathians and the present Republic of Moldova (Bassarabia), as well as important areas of present day Ukraine (northern Bucovina, up to Cernăuți and the territories from the north of the Danube Delta).

new context, the excessively centralizing politics led by the new capital has negatively reflected on the large towns in the province, that register a profound decrease in attractively. More, the loss of Bassarabia (1812) to the Russian Empire gave the town of Iași a peripheral position in the new national context, the decapitation of its influence area leading to the disappearance of its economic metropolis role, and the decline to generalize. In this epoch the Iași industrialists, intellectuals and merchants have massively migrated towards Bucharest, and at the end of the 19th century the crisis was more acute through the massive emigration of the Jews to the American continent. Then, the human and economic losses suffered after the Independence War (1878) and the two world wars inhibited the continuation of the frail development attempts.

After the institution of the communist regime, Romania witnessed a period of accelerated and excessive industrialization, the occurrence of some great industrial units attracting towards Iași important fluxes of rural population, weakly specialized from a professional viewpoint, but bearing a strongly traditional natalist demographic model, encouraged and by the legislative rules of birth rate control². In consequence, the territory of Iași extended considerably (with 83.8% during 1944-1977), and the population witnessed a similar significant increase (from 94,075 inhabitants in 1948 to 265.002 in 1977).

After 1990, with the return to the free economy, the process of readjustment, of industry's adaptation to the new conditions has been a very difficult one, the decline and bankruptcy making numerous victims between the town's units. Unemployment became more and more frequent, a part of the previous industrial workers returning to the native villages, and another part alighting the emigration fluxes for work oriented mainly towards Western Europe.

3. What do we know about present migration? A method for supplementing information and its results

International migrations are usually a difficult phenomenon to quantify and even more to analyze. The fact that the statistic data are incomplete is motivated on one side by the illegal aspects implied by this type of circulation and on the other by certain methodological weaknesses of the population censuses (at the last census from 2002, the separation between external and internal emigrants was not quantified). Thus, the available official data are in reality much lower than the real ones,

² We are talking about the approval and application of the 770/1966 Law regarding the forbiddance of miscarriage, with the purpose of stimulating the demographic increase. As consequence, in the immediately following years the birth rate has registered at the national level record values, with a maximum of 27.4% in 1967.

fact that obviously obstructions any attempt of quantitative approach, mainly on the local scale. The lack of reliability of these data is justified and by the recent debut of this phenomenon, presently in full development after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

All these observations argument the necessity of obtaining credible data regarding this aspect, the correction method chosen in the present case being that of the *rational (guided) sampling*. This type of sampling presents the advantage that, in comparison with the random one, in furnishes much more representative samples about the interest subject, having as base a previously established principle – that of taking into account only the population sample involved in the analyzed phenomenon.

Using this method, we have registered for Iași a number of 1681 persons that have left definitively or temporarily during 1990–2006 the country, the motive of these departures being exclusively economic-financial. Almost entirely (93.1%) of this emigration has a temporary, pulsing character, most often with annual coming backs. Still it is often hard to tell where we may classify from this viewpoint the persons departed for a longer period, which already have a legal status in the residence country, but which also still want to come back in their country.

The definitive migrations, as we have seen, are mainly registered in the case of the persons that have chosen as destination North America or Israel (mainly Jewish ethnics) and register a much more reduced frequency in relation with the European states, situation in which dominate the marriages with citizens from the host country.

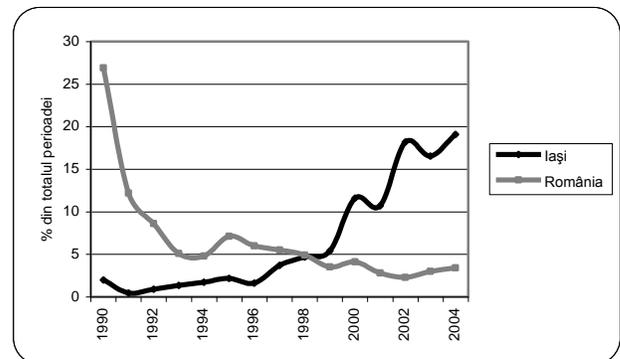


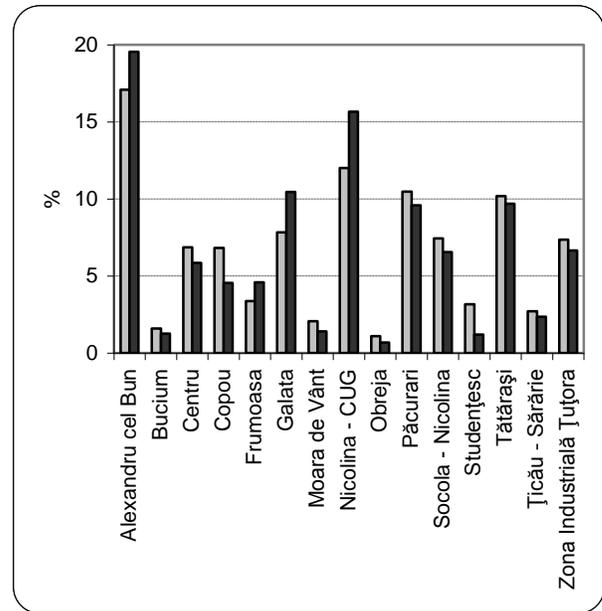
Figure 1 – A comparative look at the Iași emigration and the entire Romanian one

The official numbers, as they appear in the *Statistic annals of Romania – 2005* (fig. 1) show us that for the 1990–2004 period an evolution with quite a sinuous tendency, but generally of an ascendant character, with a maximum value in the immediately following year to the renouncement to the communist system, with an value of 96,929 persons, normal

expression of the regaining of the right of persons free circulation, but also an indicator of the post-revolution sympathy on the behalf of the Western Europe, materialized in an increased permisivity in what regards the acceptance of the Romanian immigrants. With all these, we must take into account and the ethnic composition of these primordial fluxes, with a pronounced alogene character, thus we now witness a regrouping of the main minor ethnics. Thus, at the level of 1990, the German ethnics represented 62.0% of the migrated population, and the Hungarians 11.4%, while the contribution of the Romanians was close to a quarter from the total (24.6%).

If these were the features of the national evolution, we may observe that in conformity with the results of our study, the dynamics of the Iași population migration is one of inverse sense, with certain ascendant characters. The common point of the two graphic lines are represented by the increase from 1995, as well as by the sudden decrease from 2000, interrupted till 2004 by two episode decreases. Anyway, the somehow abrupt evolutionary slope shows us the fact that the inheritance of this type of behavior was realized in the case of Iași with a remarkable rate, the most conscious subjects being logically the young.

Dar from being surprising, this mirror image is the effect of the socio-economic and cultural disparities existent in the country. If the first group of emigrants have been furnished by the intra-Carpathian regions, the east of Romania has suffered a process of slower modernization, the time difference being allocated in fact to the reconstruction or readjustment of the mental space needed for the beginning and development of the migration. In other words, this migrating resuscitation, much later than the average of the country, is a main feature of our interest area, visible even if the situation is analyzed on a regional scale (the case of Bacău and Neamț counties, remarked by I. Muntele, 2003).



Source: Census of population and inhabited places (2002)

Fig. 2 – The percentage on districts of the stable (bright) and migrating (darker) population (%)

According to our study, we may easily observe the correlation between the demographic size of each district and the degree of participation to the migration, even if the proportion is not always the same (fig. 2). Thus, for the proletarian districts Alexandru cel Bun and Nicolina-CUG (with block-type residences built in the years of communism), the shock induced by unemployment was felt much stronger, visible and in the large scale adoption of emigration. Similar characteristics are presented and by Galata district, even if here the inhabiting mode is a traditional rural one, with individual households and small agricultural terrain surfaces. Yet the inhabitants from here are mostly ex-workers of the industrial units from the southern part of the town, presently bankrupt.

As a difference, the smaller districts with an ageing population (Socola-Nicolina, Moara de Foc or Obreja), the luxury residential ones (Copou) or those that regroup a population of a special social status (the “Students” district) have a much lower contribution.

4. Structural characteristics of the migrant from Iași

If in what regards the dimension of the migration fluxes the official information sources have tried (but as we have seen with questionable results) to bring a plus of knowledge, in what regards the structures of the migrating population the interest was zero. This omission (negligence?) cannot be but regrettable, due to it the specialists – geographers, sociologists or economists – lacking an absolutely necessary instrument,

without which the analysis suffers an important qualitative minus.

In what regards us, the analysis of a smaller territory represents an advantage in the investigation, having in view these structural aspects.

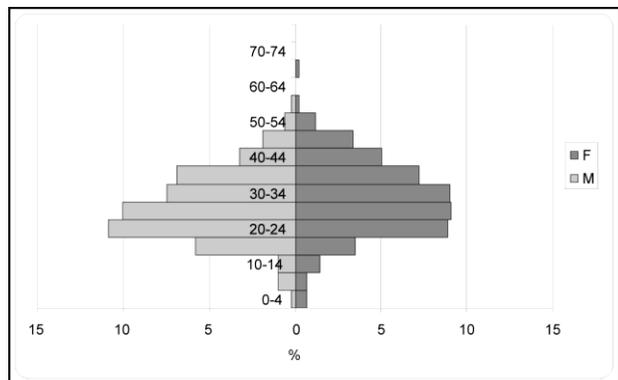


Fig. 3. Age groups and sexes structure of the population

In what regards the structural features of the emigrants, a special importance is held by the *age groups and sexes structure* (fig. 3). In this sense we observe a normal dominance of the young ages, mainly in the case of masculine population, while for women the pyramid is better represented inclusively at higher ages (in conformity with the professional specialization, most of them working in house-holding). The minors accompanying their parents are not lacking, as well as the older persons, especially women, situation explainable by the accompanying for the taking care of the small age grandsons (this is a sample of a traditional Romanian model transferred to thousands of kilometers distance!).

In comparison with other analyses of this type conducted by us (but on smaller towns), the attention is attracted by the quite high percentage of minor age population engaged in migration (7.6%). Obviously, the social climate of the great town, with a higher risk degree, with an incertitude much over the generally accepted average, cannot encourage a familial fractioning through emigration, in which to be engaged only the parents, while the parents remain at home. More, we must take into account and the origin of the population, with diverse provenience (as a consequence of the migrations from the communist period), thus the possibility of appealing to a close relative (grandparents, uncles etc.) for the taking care of the children being less frequent.

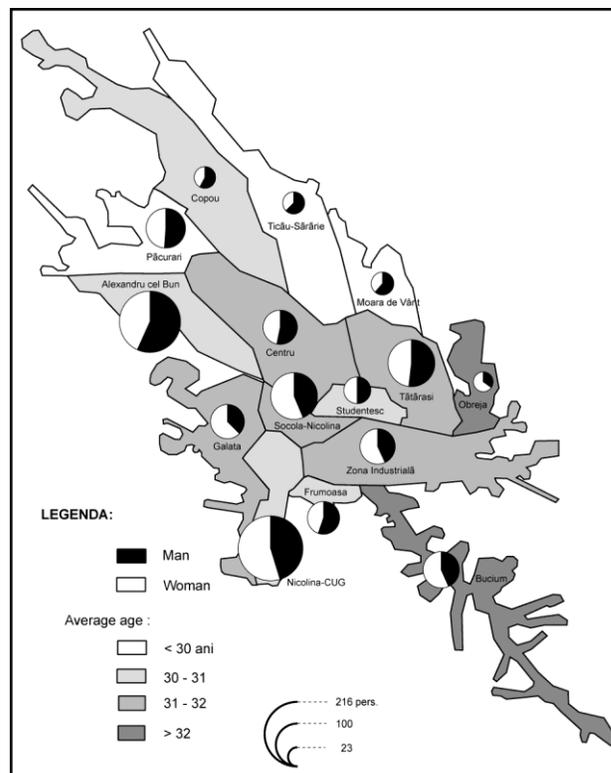


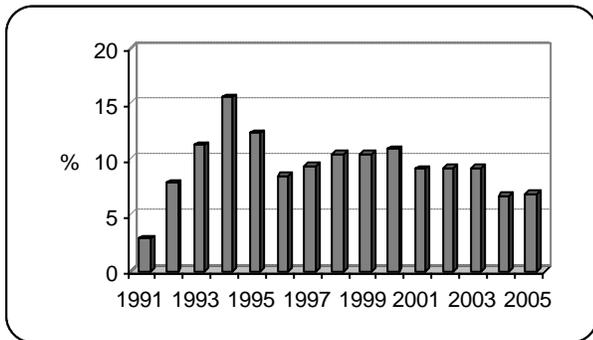
Fig. 4. Sexes structure and average age of the emigrants

On the average, we remark and a certain feminization of the emigration (50.7% of the total), but at a more detailed analysis level the situation is more diversified (fig. 4). Thus, for Obreja the migration feminization is extreme (65.2%) and most probably is due to the traditional way of inhabitation – a semi-rural one, in which the agricultural activities – specific masculine - still have an important percentage.

Men are dominant in Țicău-Sărărie district (62.5%), but the existence here of an important community of gypsies largely explains this situation, the social role and place played by women in this case being a traditionally lower one. A masculinization of the migrating population is observed and for Copou district, as well as for the central area, where mainly regroups the town's elite. In these two cases the abroad departures have a more selective and elitist character, including a higher proportion of intellectuals (mainly professors and engineers).

The average age of the emigrants is of 30.8 years, somehow more reduced for males (29.7) and higher for women (31.9 years). As it was expected, the total average age decreases in the case of the proletarian districts (30.5 years for the emigrants from Nicolina-CUG and 30.6 years for those from Alexandru cel Bun), while the semi-rural districts are remarked through an ageing of the fluxes (32.8 years for Obreja and 32.5 years for Bucium).

The professional structure of the population is imprinted on migration mainly as a repulsiveness factor of the origin area, practically being one of the main motors that launch and maintain this phenomenon. At this chapter very much counts the economic precariousness, statistically visible through the mean of the unemployment rate (fig. 5). In the case of Iași, the high values after the renouncing to communism (15.6% from the total active population in 1994) anticipate a sinuous decrease and is possible that this last descendant evolution to be due at least in part to this international vulgarization of the phenomenon.



Source: Statistical Direction of Iași county

Fig. 5 – The evolution of the unemployment rate in Iași

With all these, directly linking the emigration dynamics to the unemployment rate is not entirely correct. No doubt, unemployment is a major cause in taking this decision, but it's not the sole one and sometimes not even the most important one. Even if a person loses its working place, it may still have an acceptable living condition (at least locally), for example through the work in the field of agriculture. In this case the obtained incomes are not those that count, but the image of the individual in his own eyes and in those of the social group he is part of. If this thesis would be totally false, the poorer people should be those that leave in the higher percentage. Still the things aren't this way; the poorer and mainly that who gained a mentality according to this status cannot think at leaving. At the lack of money is added the fear of the unknown, the underestimation of the own person and (many times) the lack of dignity that makes impossible the choice of such a solution (for an immense majority, in the present Romanian society dignity and poverty do not held a common place but on an ideal plane).

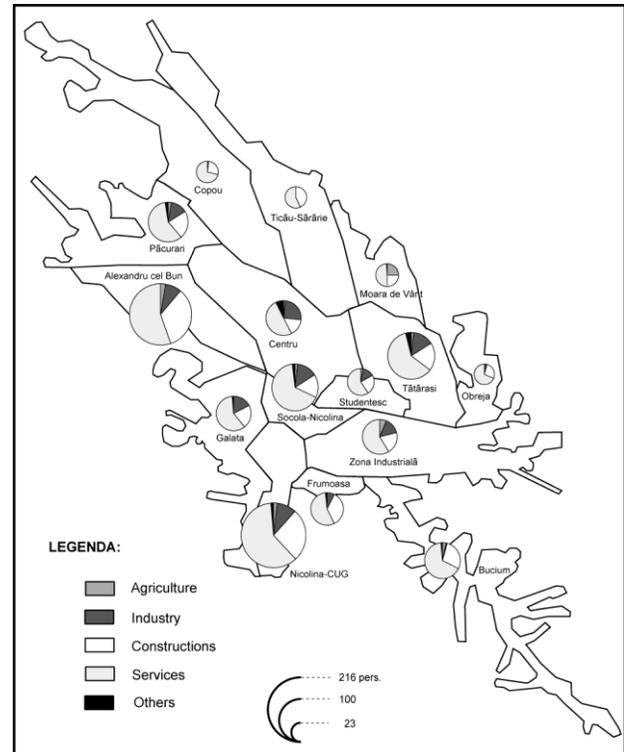


Fig. 6. Emigrants' structure according to the activity field

In what regards the emigrants' structure according to the activity domain from the destination country, we may see firstly a clear dominance of the tertiary sector (fig. 6). Yet, if in the case of the districts with strong traditional features (Bucium, Obreja) dominates the orientation towards banal services of lower quality (frequently in house-holding or merchandise), in the case of Copou the dominance is held by those that activate in education or research, while for Tătărași district very much matters the percentage of the persons working in the health field³.

Then, we may remark a maintenance of the activity field of the emigrants that came from the labor districts, that now furnish important numbers of active persons in industry (Galata, Nicolina-CUG, Zona Industrială Țuțora), as well as a similar orientation, but in the field of agriculture, for the emigrants that come from Moara de Vânt district (25.1%). The emigrants from Alexandru cel Bun and Frumoasa districts seem to adopt a certain specialization in the field of constructions, activity domain avoided by the emigrants from the central area or from Socola-Nicolina.

³ In this district are found most of the hospitals from the town, and thus, mainly due to the system of house repartition conducted by the local authorities, practiced in the communist period, here occurred a residential domination of the health working personnel.

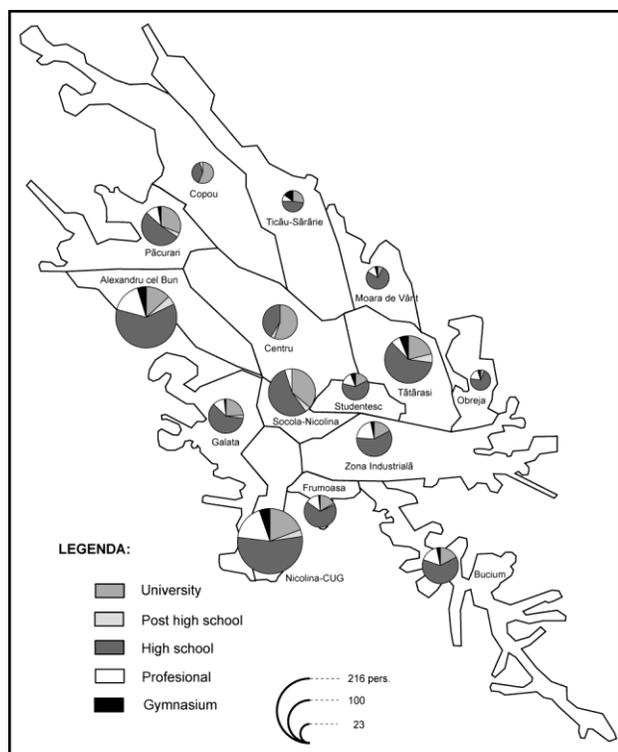


Fig. 7. Emigrants' structure according to the education degree

It is well known the fact that the average profile of the emigrant includes, among others, a higher representativity of the *average professional qualifications*, in our situation this being the case of the high school and professional schools graduates.

And this time the same discrepancy is observed between the semi-rural and labor districts, where the majority of emigrants holds an average instruction degree (88.5% in Obreja, 88.0% in Moara de Vânt and 77.1% in Alexandru cel Bun) and the luxury residential districts (in Copou this proportion is of only 43.4%, and in the central district of 41.3%). For these last districts the elitism of emigration is a certain thing, the percentage of intellectuals being over 55%.

From the viewpoint of *structure according to the civil situation*, dominant are the married emigrants (56.1% at the level of the entire town), the differences at the district level being less significant (fig. 8). Exceptional are again Obreja and Bucium districts (where the married emigrants sum up 74.5% respectively 65.1%), another proof of the traditionalism that defines these areas.

Yet the amplitudes to the average value prove to be very interesting and is very probable that this category of the married persons to have the best delineated attribute of an *etalon class*, with high reliability in what regards the emigration diagnosis. If the social resistance (above the average) of this class is exceeded, this means

that the daily material difficulties are difficult to support. On the other side, in the case of the unmarried young population we may still talk about a certain terribilism dose, about a supplementary taste for adventure, the level of this *nuclear corrosion* reflects best the intensity gained on a local plane by the *need to emigrate (emigration necessity)*.

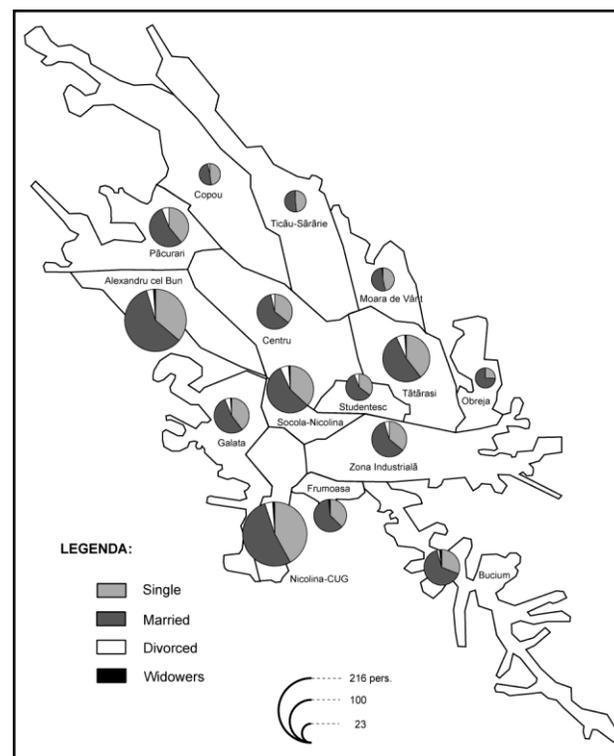


Fig. 8. Emigrants; structure according to the civil status

The married emigrants sum up 37.7% of the total volume, yet the highest percentages are registered in Țicău-Sărărie (48.2%, due to the gipsy community) and in Copou (47.8%, the higher instruction degree of these emigrants implying and a higher age of marriage) districts.

The last two marital categories –the divorced and the widowers, detains naturally much smaller proportions (5.4% respectively 0.8%), with minor variations from a district to another.

In what regards the *religious structure* of the emigrants, it is quite different to that of the stable population, the main difference being represented by the more active participation of the Roman Catholics, who sum up 6.2% of the total emigrants, in comparison with 3.0% in the case of the total population. This doubling of the percentage is natural, due to the more direct relations with the Vatican and implicitly with Italy, as well as to the existence in Iași of a quite active Caritas centre.

Also interesting is the territorial grouping of the emigrants, being remarked at the town's level the

occurrence of some communities strongly linked to the presence of this type of churches, especially in Nicolina-CUG, Socola-Nicolina and Frumoasa districts (fig. 9).

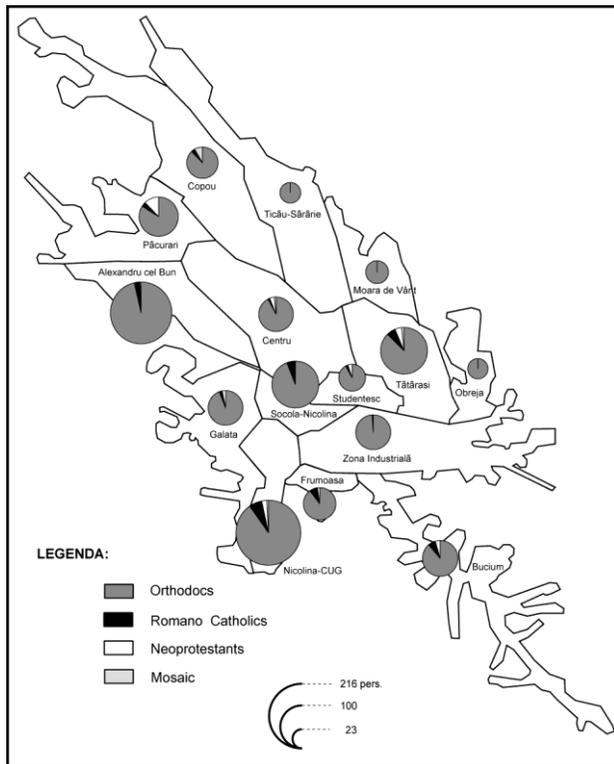


Fig. 9. The confessional structure of the emigrants

Also characterized by a better connectivity with the West are and the neo-protestant cults. Thus, neo-Protestantism is the religion of 3% of the emigrants from Iași, a percentage sensitively higher than that of the total population (0.9%). And in this case we witness a tendency of structuring of the urban territory induced by a certain grouping of the churches, this time in Păcurari.

These surpluses are inserted on the background of a certain under-representation registered by the Orthodox population in the case of migrations, this religion giving only 89.9% of the total fluxes, even if it represents 94.6% of the town's stable population.

5. Destinations

Yet all these migrations have obviously and a final point, and in the case of the emigrants from Iași the geometry of these destinations evidences a profound European character.

At the states level is evidenced the preference for Italy, where are registered 54.4% of the emigrants. The legislation of this country, less severe and more pragmatic in what regards the emigrants, the relatively easy possibility of obtaining a working place, but and the

presence of common cultural elements (that shortens the adaptation period) justify this major choice.

The main force lines of this real Italian magnetic field are mainly directed almost equally towards Rome (terminal point for 24.5% of the emigrants from Iași) and Turin (23.4%), indifferently of the provenience district (fig. 11).

Along the two mentioned poles, there are and other urban centers from north that are attractive, but of a secondary character: Florence (7.3%), Padua (4.5%) and Genoa (3.4%).

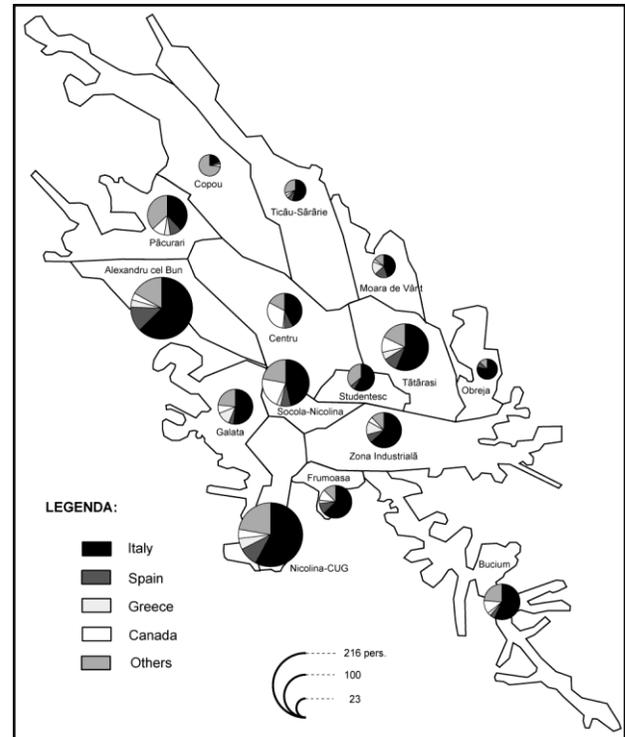


Fig. 10. Emigrants' structure according to the destination state

Yet, especially in the last years, we assist at the delineation of some southern groupings, attractive mainly because of the existence of available working places in agriculture and thus with a more diffuse territorial disposal, but having as main locations Bari (2.1%), Naples (2.0%) and Palermo (1.2%).

The general picture of this Italian distribution is completed by a series of less numerous communities, as in the case of those from Ancona, Parma, Vicenza, Venice or Perugia.

Our attention is attracted by the fact that the percentage of emigration towards Italy is larger with the degree of development of the leaving district is more reduced. This is the case of the Industrial Area-Țuțora (where 63.1% of the emigrants choose Italy) or mainly of Obreja district (78.3%). This fact must not be surprising, because the Romanian emigration to Italy already has a

certain age, that in the present case translates in a much larger probability that the potential emigrants to held here helping points (relatives, friends, neighbors). More, due to the relative closeness, the cost of immigrating to Italy are more reduce in comparison with other destinations.

The next destination in the order of importance – more recent and of a lesser consistency (coagulated only after 2000), but very active – is represented by Spain, nation that absorbs 9.2% of the volume of emigrants from Iași.

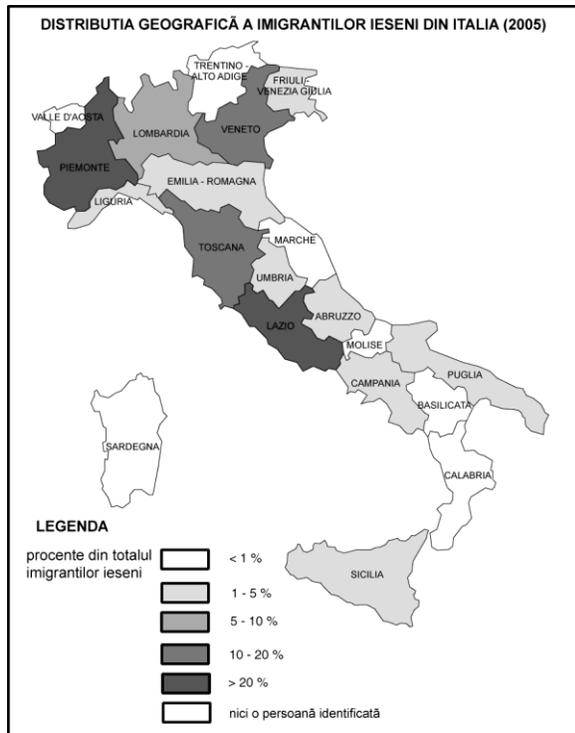


Fig. 11. Geographic distribution of the emigrants from Iași in Italy

Here too is remarked the same preference for the capital, where are located 32.7% of the total of persons that choose this country. Attractive are and the working places from the field of constructions and of the tourist services from the Mediterranean coast, Valencia being the second Spanish destination for the emigrants from Iași (18,7% din total).

Despite a somehow more aggressive nationalism, but also of some linguistic difficulties, the existence of available working places in industry makes that in Barcelona to be regrouped a quite significant percentage of emigrants from Iași (13.1%).

Spain's attractiveness is superior for the emigrants that come from the labor districts (Frumoasa and Alexandru cel Bun), but also for those from Moara de Vânt (that work in agriculture in Andalusia).

The economic reasons, doubled by an aggressive media mirage, stand at the base of

delimitation of the trans-Atlantic fluxes, with a Canadian finality (9.1%). But in this case the returning is less probable or, anyway, the staying periods are much longer. The large dimension of this country makes less probable the occurrence of territorial groupings of the emigrants from Iași, although we may observe a certain preferential localization in the large cities from the south and south-eastern parts (Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal).

Greece – older destination, activated at the beginning of the 90s, continues to attract emigrants from our interest area (5.1%), but with a more reduced percentage in what regards the preference for the capital (21%), in direct relation with the easier access to the area of Salonic, that retains a quarter of the volume of this flux. Much less attractive for the persons that come from districts with a higher development degree, Greece is a preferential target of the emigrants from Galata, Moara de Vânt and Zona Industrială-Țuțora.

The emigration from Iași is thus very diverse and fragmented, both at the level of Europe (Sweden, Austria, France, Belgium etc.), and on the other continents. The series of exotic destinations are not missing: Sudan, Madagascar, Nigeria (that attract medics and medium trained sanitary personnel), Japan (in the services field), India and the Republic of Korea (in industry), Singapore (in hotels) or Russia (more exactly Siberia, where the emigrants from Iași work in mining).

6. Conclusions

For the moment, it is quite difficult to appreciate the future of the migration from Iași. The negligence of the officials and the lack of reliability of the quantitative information on this phenomenon considerably blocks geographic analysis. The fact is sure that the long and difficult transition period traversed by Romania made that the economic repulsiveness from home, combined with the attractiveness of the destination countries, to generate appreciable human fluxes.

And because attractiveness as well as repulsiveness (in the end) are relative notions, it is very possible that the recent integration of Romania in the European Union to bring changes in what regards emigration.

Thus, the data furnished by the Police of Iași Township register the presence in the town for 2006 of a number of 2932 foreign citizens. The greatest part of these (1837) comes from the Republic of Moldova, favored by the small distance and by the linguistics communion. At a great distance follow the Israeli (265 persons), Italians (65), Jordanians (65), Albanians and Americans (54 both), to which are added and Malaysians, afghans, Chinese, Indians, Moroccans and Egyptians etc. In the largest proportion, this foreign mass is made of business people, students and persons married with Romanian citizens.

But, linked to the political modifications, to the demographic ageing of the population and to a future desired prosperity, is it possible that the town of Iași to soon become an attraction pole for emigrants?

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