

# EMIGRATION FROM THE ROMANIAN VILLAGE - THE EFFECT OF THE DISORGANIZATION OF THE TRADITIONAL SCHEMES

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this article is to draw an overview of a major cause, which, in our opinion, determined, at different times, the emigration processes in the Romanian villages, especially after 1989 - the disorganization of the traditional models. In this approach, we proceeded from WI Thomas's social disorganization theory, which showed that European peasants emigrated from the process of reorganizing their lives on new foundations after many of their traditions had been rejected. Thomas's thesis is of great relevance to the crisis of the Romanian village after 1989, generated by the models of social guidance that destroyed the peasants of the spiritual cadres of life without generating even economic welfare.*

**Key words:** *emigration, migration, Romanian village, social change, traditional patterns, statistics, depopulation, ideology.*

**Motto:**

*"Until the last moment, the man must keep his point of view, even though we don't know what might come to an end " ... "That you come and tell me that we are the last peasants in the world and that we must disappear And why do you think you would not be the last fool in the world and that you should rather disappear, not me?" (Marin Preda, "Morometii", vol. II)*

## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of migration from Romania abroad has recently become one of the most approached themes by students, PhD students in social sciences, sociologists, economists, and the media and even by the political class. Considered the biggest problem of Romania at this time and the main cause of the country's depopulation, emigration seems to be a generous subject for articles, studies, papers, as statistical data began to appear and the authorities can no longer keep discretionary suspicion of this phenomenon with hardly quantifiable effects.

The research carried out so far has been fragmentary, without an approach to the historical dimension of the phenomenon and has mostly focused on some aspects of the life of Romanian communities living in different countries,

how to integrate them into the communities and countries where they were established, and the interpretation of opinion polls. However, the community of scientists has not yet managed to come up with a systematic approach to this phenomenon unprecedented in Romania. In the absence of official statistics that are hard to realize on the number of Romanians who left the country, the estimates indicated around 5 million people by 2017, a figure that placed Romania in the second place in the world after Syria in terms of emigration, according to the UN. If social sciences have now come to occupy "the central position in knowledge" (Wallerstein in Otovescu, coord., 2010: 106) and overcome the status of "poor relative" they have had since the end of the 18th century when philosophy separated from science, and scientists can no longer claim to be "neutral, that is, deprived of their social reality" (Ibidem), it is time for the Romanian sociologist to overcome positivist dogmatism and assume positions, including addressing the migration problem that is almost every family in Romania and is no longer postponed.

Emigration from the Romanian village is part of the series of emigration of European peasants determined, according to Thomas, of the disorganization of the traditional schemes (Bădescu, 1996:311) that can lead not only to "disorganizing a society, but even to blocking and abolishing it" (Bădescu, 1996:312)

## 2. Emigration from rural areas in statistics

The population by country of residence on July 1, 2017 was 22,201,702 persons, out of which 12,511,238 persons were in the urban area and 9,690,464 persons (43.65%) - in rural areas. The resident population, however, was 19,706,529 persons from which 10,585,664 persons were in the urban area and 9.120.865 persons (46.28%) were in rural areas, but this statistic figure also includes foreign citizens in Romania (immigrants), as well as Romanian citizens going abroad for a period of less than one year.

<i>Genders</i>	<i>Places of residence</i>	<i>Year 2017</i> <i>UM: Number of persons</i> <i>Number of persons A</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<u>22201702</u>
-	<b>Urban</b>	<u>12511238</u>
-	<b>Rural</b>	<u>9690464</u>
<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>	<u>10838569</u>
-	<b>Urban</b>	<u>5972947</u>
-	<b>Rural</b>	<u>4865622</u>

<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<u>11363133</u>
-	<b>Urban</b>	<u>6538291</u>
-	<b>Rural</b>	<u>4824842</u>

**Tab. 1.** Population of Romania by place of birth, Source: INS

The population by country of Romania includes Romanian citizens who are domiciled in Romania, proven by an identity document (CI, BI) issued by the competent authorities in Romania. In determining the value of this indicator, the INS does not take into account the residence, period and / or reason for absence from home. Therefore, the following categories of persons with Romanian citizenship are included in the population by residence: persons left to work in the country or abroad; people leaving for studies in the country or abroad; people going to treatment in the country or abroad; Romanian militaries working with international organizations located on the geographical territory of other countries; members of national armed forces stationed in other states; national staff of national scientific bases established outside the geographical territory of the country; national diplomatic staff in post abroad; crew members of fishing vessels, other vessels, aircraft and floating platforms operating partly or wholly outside the territory; tourists.

**Tab.2.** The resident population of Romania, Source: INS

<b>Genders</b>	<b>Places of residence</b>	<b>Year 2016</b> <b>UM: Number of persons</b> <b>Number of persons</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	19706529
-	<b>Urban</b>	10585664
-	<b>Rural</b>	9120865
<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>	9628271
-	<b>Urban</b>	5053625
-	<b>Rural</b>	4574646
<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	10078258
-	<b>Urban</b>	5532039
-	<b>Rural</b>	4546219

The resident population of Romania includes persons, irrespective of their nationality, with their usual residence in Romania. Therefore, this includes Romanian citizens who are abroad for a longer period less than 12 months (frontier and seasonal workers, people going to study, treatment or tourism, etc.); persons of foreign nationality established in Romania for a period of at least 12 months (including personnel the European Union institutions and civilian international organizations located on the geographical territory of the

country); the military of foreign citizenship, working with international organizations located on the geographic territory of Romania, for a period of at least 12 months; technical assistance staff of foreign citizenship on mission in Romania, for a period of at least 12 months, and which is considered to be employed by the Government of Romania on behalf of government or international organization that actually finances its work; members of the armed forces nationally stationed in the rest of the world; national staff of national scientific bases established outside the territory geographical location of the country; national diplomatic staff in post abroad; Romanian citizens who are members of the crews of fishing vessels, other aircraft vessels and floating platforms operating in part or in entirely outside the territory.

In other words, we do not know how many Romanian citizens are currently in Romania. As for the number Romanians everywhere, it is estimated, according to the National Strategy for Romanians Abroad for the period 2017 - 2020 to almost 10 million - including both Romanians living in diaspora communities, as well as those who live in the historical / traditional communities in the countries neighbouring Romania. (Ministry of Romanians Abroad, National Strategy for Romanians Abroad for the period 2017-2020, 2017). "Official statistics of Romania and other states or of international institutions (such as UNStat, Eurostat, etc.) are useful indicators, but they do not capture the statistical reality, either because of the periodicity with which they are carried out (there are states where the censuses have not been carried out for more than 10 years), or because of the reluctance authorities to present real figures on minorities. But they provide a basis for estimates and for identifying trends "(Ibidem).

"The villages are dying one by one!", "The Romanian village was destroyed and now we are looking for it", "The Romanian Renaissance from the village will come" are only some views of some people promoted by the media as witnesses in the last 30 years in the process of transforming the Romanian village. In order to study the emigration phenomenon in the Romanian village, the official statistical data are quite insignificant: the statistics show how many people in the rural area and in the urban environment emigrated in a certain period, without saying what these figures represent to the active population. Also, the official statistical data refers to the rural-urban distinction as a form of administrative organization and not as a form of cultural organization, "because the division of the territory of the country into urban and rural areas was not based on a specific, a certain pattern of living and thinking of the townspeople and the villagers, but according to the size of the locality and their administrative importance." (Bădescu, 2006: 188).

### 3. Stages of social change in the Romanian village

According to the National Bank of Romania, "about 30% of the workforce and 13% of the Romanian population work abroad, and this is the lost Gross Domestic Product of Romania" (Liviu Voinea, BNR Deputy Governor at the 10th Anniversary Conference since Romania's Accession to the European Union: from cohesion to convergence, nov.2017. Liviu Voinea said that Romania, in the 10 years since joining the EU, achieved "nominal convergence, part of real convergence, financial stability, gained market confidence, made structural reforms" (ibidem), but it is far from full occupation because it has "a very important demographic issue that we have been talking about so far, namely: about 30% of the workforce and 13% of the Romanian population work abroad" (ibidem).

He drew attention to the fact that even now, when economic growth rates are above potential, Romania continues to report negative birth rates. The problem of aging populations affects potential GDP and the aging is doubled by a high rate of people at risk of poverty. "In fact, an estimate made by our colleagues at the bank shows that a 1% increase in the share of the population aged over 65 leads to a potential GDP drop of 1.3%. The estimate is made over the last 12 years and on six countries in the region," Voinea said. From the point of view of the NBR official, living standards and salary differentials explain the emigration wave in Romania, even on the background of high rates of economic growth, this being an uneven growth at interregional and intergenerational level, unbalanced as a structure that deepens inequality in society. This would be the position of Romanian officials regarding the causes of emigration in Romania and the economic effects of this phenomenon. There is little talk about the causes and effects of the migration phenomenon in the Romanian village, both as an administrative-territorial entity and as a cultural organization that has joined the trend of departure from the country. Transformations at the level of societies do not happen from one day to the next, and the emigration trend to which the Romanian village has been allied in the last almost 80 years has been determined and amplified by the peasant's constraint to alter the essential relations of his existence: earth (its source of life), attitude to traditional norms, and attitude towards God.

The process of collectivization (1949-1962), whereby the communist regime almost seized the agricultural properties in Romania and merged them into state-run agricultural farms (agricultural production cooperatives - CAPs and state agricultural holdings - IAS- ) on the USSR colossus model, with thousands of abuses, deportations, acts of violence, crimes, arrests, seizure of the fortunes of the opposed peasants. "June 18/19, 1951, three counties of Romania, 12,791 families, 40,230 people, 2,656 wagons and 6,211 trucks; the destination - Baragan's barren field. These are the coordinates of the most

terrible wandering of the Romanian village" (Historia Magazine, "Cumplita noapte de Rusalii..."). "Deportation, forced alienation, and the breaking of holy bonds with the earth are injustices and humiliations that should never be forgotten," says Silviu Sarafolean, President of the Association of Former Deportees in Bărăgan, Timișoara Branch" (Ibidem). The stated goal of collectivization was that small-scale farming was unprofitable, and the solution was large-scale agricultural exploitation, made up of the assembly of all small entities, and effectively managed by the state. The peasants were brutally and violently dispossessed by land, tens of thousands were deported to the open skies, and many were even tortured. The peasants who remained at home could only keep their house where they were forced to either go to cities to work in open factories through the industrialization process, or stay in the villages working at the CAP for much lower salaries.

In the process of collectivization, the departure of the Romanian peasant from the village to the town (a developing town that could not afford all the dwellings, which is why most of them commuted) and deportations in places established by the authorities, under the free heaven, without any minimum condition of existence, are processes of persecution and extermination of this category by their own leaders with criminal conducts and no God. In the light of migration theories, the deportation process in Romania goes beyond the sphere of migration, which also includes a volitional component, with deportations falling under the category of genocide. As regards labour migration in industrialized urbanized areas, this was a form of survival for rural families whose members were very poorly paid for their work in CAPs, which, when they left the labour market obtained better pensions than those who worked in agriculture.

After the collapse of communism, the new regime began the process of restitution of the land by controversial, incomplete laws, destroying everything built in about 40 years of collectivization and returning the peasant back so many years ago, as it was no longer the same. Thus, the new order deprives peasants of agricultural tools (as did their predecessors in the collectivisation process), the land is again broken down into subsistence farms (nearly two-thirds under three hectares), and the peasant's access to markets selling becomes impossible. According to the experts, the agricultural reform in Romania after 1989 meant "the destruction of technical facilities in agriculture; disorganization of agricultural production; the overgrazing of agricultural land in the re-ownership process, so that the total area of 8,000,000 ha was still sprayed in 1996 in over 30,000,000 plots with an average area of 0,26 ha / household" (Dr. Traian Lazar, the director of the Agricultural Economics Institute - ASAS, The Fragmentation of Agricultural Areas, as a Factor of Crisis, in "Adevărul Economic", no.35, 30 aug-5 sept.1996: 10).

The new order, in a barbarous assault on the demolition and dumping of all that had been built in 40 years, transforms the Romanian villages, as well as the whole country, into spaces of disorder and chaos, in real "villages without dogs" (abandoned villages): The premises of the former CAPs are demolished at the authorities' urge (everybody goes home with what he seizes) and the peasants are left to the fate, to do as he can. However, most of them start to work their land: many, in the absence of insufficient funds for agricultural machinery) buy their livestock for farming (the use of animals in agriculture becoming the subject of disgraceful irony in humorous programs and dubious comedies promoted by the media) a phenomenon of return from the town to the village of those who worked in agriculture, as the large industry was privatized, restructured, closed, and the unemployment rate was rising year by year. In the early 1990s, in the streets of the countryside, in the streets of the Romanian villages there were horse-drawn carts full of families - parents, children and even grandparents - who went to the work of the field: people had resumed their old tradition of working their land in the family. When they realized that what earns on the obtained products is much lower than the production costs and they no longer have the resources to work their land, the peasants are gradually giving up their land. The phenomenon of population aging, the decline in birth rates amid the liberalization of abortion and demographic decline are beginning to emerge. People are starting to look for solutions for survival: urban jobs that are not bidding for this, and emigration to other countries. The peasants begin to sell their land, the state starts to encourage rent and put off the name of "peasant" replacing it with the "farmer". Thus, in Romania in 2018, according to the Agency for Payments and Intervention for Agriculture, there were 866,749 farmers in Romania, and the area declared was about 9,648 million hectares. "In Europe, the owner is called" Bauer "in Germany, that is, peasant, in France he is called "paysan", a peasant, while in Romania, we who were the biggest and greatest owners of Europe, they changed their name and told us "farmers". In Romania, we had 4 (four) million farms in 1990, and now we have 900,000 farmers. And for the communist system, and for the ultraliberal one, the earth, that is, the peasant was his enemy of force.

The reason why the Communists dealt with the problem trying to destroy this rebellion from the national gear and obviously the ultraliberal systems do everything they can to get the last Romanian soil resource, starting from the arable land for which we do not even have a figure, up to the biggest fortune of Romania that is the pasture, land plots of tens of hectares up to a thousand that are in the pen of a mayor to be given in concession" (Professor Avram Fițiu, the program "Jocuri de putere", Realitatea TV, August 2016).

Another land-related phenomenon is that of selling the land to foreigners on the basis of the Romanian Constitution, revised in 2003, where Article 44

"Private property rights", paragraph 2, states that "Private property is guaranteed and protected in a way equal to the law. Foreign citizens and stateless persons may acquire the right to private land ownership only in the conditions resulting from the accession of Romania to the European Union and other international treaties to which Romania is a party, on the basis of reciprocity under the conditions provided by organic law, as well as through legal inheritance." So, in Romania, the percentage of land sales is, according to the speculators, 40% unofficially, because there is no official statistic in this respect, and the Ministry of Agriculture does not know the exact area of land that foreigners bought it and does nothing to establish a moratorium to suspend any purchase until it knows exactly how much land was bought in Romania, a lot of land being bought not on land, but only on legal / notary documents, which is why it is not recorded anywhere that the state knows exactly the surface.

These are some aspects of the transformations to which the Romanian peasant and the Romanian village have been subjected and to which the researchers have to resort systematically to the theorisation of historical facts, biographies through in-depth investigations and thus exceed the scope of individual studies and fragmentation. "Where is the researcher of this age?" (I Corinthians, I, 20).

On this foundation, Romanian villages began to disappear one by one because "traditional civilizations and cultures evolve through refinement, not by continuous innovation as it happens in modern societies where the replacement of the action scheme is the solution to the problem of efficiency." (Otovescu, 1999: 86).

In some American animated films, frequently appeared the image of a human, of a living being, who ran desperately out of fear and at a certain moment passed the edge of the canyon, but he continued to run, though he had nothing under his feet. When he looks down and realizes, he collapses in the underpass. That's how the models of society have been imitated in Romania and imposed as a model for the Romanian peasant: they only have nothingness as foundation. The imposition of models without a foundation in the idea - religious, philosophical, theoretical - integrating in the Cosmos, as was the usual peasant to live for centuries, resulted in emigration, to areas they thought were more attractive, friendlier.

Other examples of disorganizing traditional patterns and pushing the peasant to leave the village are the decapitation of elites that the village had generated and which, by their intellectual strength, had the capacity to be the lawyer of the village, and the prohibition of religion.

This is what the president of the Association of Former Political Prisoners in Romania, Octav Bjoza says: "After the end of the Second World War, everything this people had from a moral, worthy, holy point of view and better

prepared professionally has been assassinated or arrested, judged, politically condemned in years of hard labour or imprisonment. The rocks of this country were taken by the chaff of society, by the drunks and mourners of the villages or factories. They got their hands. But the conductors were trained between 1935 and 1945 in Moscow, and in an important report it was said that they were not Romanians: they were Bulgarians, Hungarians, Gypsies, Jews, Ukrainians who took over key functions. When I say key functions, I refer to political functions and especially to the leadership of the people's security that came into being in the summer of 1948. But do not think that things were better between 45 and 48, because the state's security was well "stuffed" by the people of the Communist Party, and when the security of the people came into being, they could take things, that is, terror." (Octav Bjoza, Conference "Fight and suffering of former political prisoners in Romania", Piatra Neamt, April 2016).

All these stages of social change in the Romanian village, generated by ideological factors and carried out at a brutal pace amid the disorganization of the traditional schemes, had as final effects and the migratory processes of the inhabitants of this space: rural-urban, urban-rural, external. The individual could not reorganize his life in the same frame, because the new schemes did not take into account his "internal order structures" (Badescu, 1996: 312) and were completely hostile to him.

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