

# THE INTENSITY OF THE CIRCULATORY EXTERNAL MIGRATION FLOWS IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract:**

*The present paper sets forth only a part of the scientific report that corresponds to the first stage of the "Functional model of estimating the size of the labour force available in the rural environment" project (DALFI). It emphasizes the volume, the specific forms, the intensity and direction of the migratory flows, the main areas that concentrate the migratory population, the mutations regarding the demographic characteristics as well as the education and jobs of the migratory persons.*

**Key words:** *circulatory migration, emigration, migration experience, rural community*

**JEL classification:** J61, R23

International migration is an important part of the present globalization phenomenon, with major implications for the welfare of the population and for the economic growth, both in the origin and in the destination countries. One can assess the fact that, in the present, the international migration has become an essential, unavoidable and potentially positive part of the social and economic life in each country and region.

In the case of international migration, there are two processes strongly interconnected: immigration and emigration (Dumitru, 1998: 65).

Immigration consists in receiving the population arrived in the destination country, either temporary or forever. From the economic point of view, the receiving country or the immigration country is characterized by the following elements:

- a relatively higher economic development level;
- the greatest labour force, as compared to the national availabilities;
- a reduced share of youngsters and population able to work in the total population.

Emigration consists in the oscillating movement of the population between the origin country (residence) and the place of work (receiving country). In this case, the origin country is characterized by a smaller degree of economic development, a high share of youth and of the population able to work in the total population, high birth rate, the absence of the possibilities of using the available work force on national level, the absence of investments in some economic sectors. At the same time, the origin country, from which the labour force leaves, is called emigration country.

The multiple and complex dimensions of contemporary migration include (Papuc, 2006: 107):

- circulatory migration- continuous oscillating movements between the origin country and one or several destination countries. The period spent in different locations is, as a rule, determined by the preferences to earn money in the destination country and to spend it in the origin country.
- transborder commutation- regular movements to carry out activities in another country, without changing the residence in the origin country. A similar category is that of the working tourists and that of those that make commerce: persons

that earn the most part of their existence as a result of the short-time visits in other countries. The status of these persons can be easily mistaken for that of the migrants.

- the brain flight- consists in the departure of the workers that have been educated in a country, economic sector or field, in order to earn much money and to have a higher standard of living.

- the waste of brains/ deprofesionalization - the loss of skills which occurs when highly qualified workers migrate towards jobs that do not require the use of their skills and experience acquired at the former job.

It is to be noted the fact that, as compared to the population in several other countries, Romania's population has always had a natural, relatively small, inclination towards migration in spite of some up and down oscillations (Pert et al, 2004: 17). Apart from this, a long period, because of the communist regime in Romania that, out of political reasons, did not allow its own citizens to leave the country for any reason, not even for touristic purposes, the migration phenomenon was almost inexistent, being allowed only in special cases. Even after the collapse of the communist regime, in the first years of transition, because of the restrictions imposed by the western countries, the migration flows were diminished. Only after the elimination of visas by the countries that are members of the European Union, the migration phenomena towards these countries have intensified. Under these circumstances, an important vector of emigration is the movement rural-abroad, the main reason for this being the low living standard in the countryside.

After 1989, the migration phenomena from Romania's territory or originating in Romania have been subjected to ample changes (Sandu, 2000a: 9):

- the passing from an internal migration dominated by the village-town movement to a reverse movement, from town to village;

- the commutation between the rural living place and the town working place has dramatically diminished, about three times, in the period 1989-2000;

- although the irrevocable external migration still has small values, the circulatory migration between Romania and other countries, for touristic purposes, work or business, is in a permanently social expansion.

In the period 1991-2001, more than one fifth of the adults living in Romania traveled abroad. The cultural and social dimension of the phenomenon can be better underlined by analyzing the situation of households: about 35% of the non institutionalized households of the country have had at least one member of the family who traveled abroad in the above mentioned period (Sandu, 2000a: 9). The intensity of the phenomenon is rather surprising in the case of a country with no tradition in point of external migration in the communist period, with a relatively high level of poverty, having serious legal barriers and a serious decline of inner circulatory migration.

The desire of working abroad and that for tourism are the main reasons for the circulatory migration projects. In the decreasing order of intensity there come the work and tourism motivations, work, tourism and education. The last places in this hierarchy are occupied by the motivations that include education or education combined with work or tourism.

In 2001, there are significant differences between town and village, from the point of view of the circulatory migration projects; the intention of temporary migration abroad is about three times stronger in towns than in villages, if we take into account the ratio between the existing population and that which has in mind to go abroad, on each of the two residential environments. From the point of view of the volume, the potential migrant persons from the urban environment are about 79% out of the total of the persons who would like to leave abroad in the near future. Not only the volume and the intensity of the potential migration differ considerably on the two residential environments, but also the structure of the phenomenon. In the case of villages, the

economic motivation, the desire to go abroad for work (40% of the total potential migrant persons in the rural environment) prevails. In the case of towns, the most important share is that of the persons that want to go abroad for touristic purposes (30%). The desire to live abroad for a while in order to improve education is, at the same time, much stronger in towns than in villages.

The first communitarian census on temporary external migration of population in the villages of Romania after 1989 has mainly emphasized the circulatory transnational migration of Romania's rural population after 1989 (Sandu, 2000b: 16). The stress is laid on identifying the structures of external migration defined not in terms of persons but in those of communities and regions. It is about the role played by the state, as local community –by the localization, resources and population it has - in influencing the flows of transnational circulatory migration.

In December 2001, about 200 thousands persons from Romania's villages were abroad with various motivations. It is a rather high rate of temporary migration (19%), with only 6 percentages less than that recorded, in the same time, in the small towns (under 20 thousands inhabitants). In the case of the temporary migration abroad, the circulatory one prevails, with several returns in the origin country during the period spent abroad: about 59% of the total of the persons living in the countryside that have left abroad have come back in Romania at least once, and 37% at least twice (Sandu, 2000b: 18 – 19).

The circulatory migration can be calculated more accurately by means of the number of persons that have spent some time abroad and have returned. This number represents about 120 thousands persons. The intensity of the circularity degree of their migration is given by the fact that 47% of them have come back at least twice in the country during the period of time spent abroad (Sandu, 2000b: 18 – 19).

The regional representations of temporary/circulatory migration suggest its overwhelming presence at the level of the country. As a matter of fact, once the unit of analysis is changed, by passing from region to village, the image changes. At the moment of undertaking the survey which underlies these data, the migration phenomenon was relatively limited, but with a high degree of concentration. About 530 villages (4, 5% of the total villages in the rural environment) had about 60% of the total coming back migration and fewer than 20% of the temporary leavings (table no. 1). The respective countries, with a maximum circulatory dynamism, have, on average, more than 2000 inhabitants as compared to the national average of 800 inhabitants on village (Sandu, 2000b: 26).

**Table no. 1. Indicators of the concentration degree of the circulatory migration in villages**

Village category, depending on the number of persons that have left the country and come back.	Villages			Migration			
	Number of villages	The share of villages	Average size of the village	Share of persons that have migrated and come back in their country	Share of persons that have left the country	The average rate of the coming back migration in the case of a village (‰)	The average rate of departures in the case of a village (‰)
0	5252	43,3	501	0	14,2	0	8,87
1 – 10	4869	40,2	771	15,7	23,3	9,10	14,08
11 – 40	1463	12,1	1451	25,5	26,5	24,64	26,38
41 – 100	369	3,0	2057	19,7	17,6	54,54	45,28
101 +	165	1,4	2705	39,1	18,4	139,81	77,16
Total	12118	100	802	100	100	10,22	15,13

Source: Dumitru Sandu – *Romanians' Transnational Migration Seen from the Point of View of a Communitarian Census*, Romanian Sociology Review, no. 3-4/ 2000, p. 27.

The typical profile of the villages that had a huge transnational migration experience at the end of 2001 was given by the presence of a large number of ethnic and religious minorities and by the specific localization of the respective villages. The villages with the richest migration experience are mostly located near small or medium-size towns. The temporary departures abroad usually characterize those villages having a large number of inhabitants and an important share of young population, being located in relatively developed counties (Sandu, 2000b: 30).

The research made on the migration flows from Romania's villages abroad shows significant differences of the phenomenon (Sandu, 2004). There are villages without migration experience, with incipient experiences, well or very well structured. The latter have been considered villages having a high probability of being integrated in transnational migration systems (Sandu, 2003: 214 – 221). It has been noticed that the villages with a very high rate of migration have a specific profile due to ethnic and religious diversity, high stocks of education, high shares of persons that have come back from the town and ex-commuters, central location of the respective village in the county it belongs to (Massey et al, 1994). Therefore, there is the idea of a selectivity of the circulatory migration depending of the type of community.

When the population and residence census was made in 2002, about 149 thousands persons have been temporary left from rural environment abroad. If one adds to the temporary departures the number of persons that have come back from abroad, one obtains a much stronger indicator of the local migration experience, indicator called migration prevalence. By relating it to one thousand inhabitants, one obtains the prevalence rate, estimated at 26, 5% at the beginning of 2002 (Sandu, 2004: 2).

The communitarian migration experience is strongly differentiated among villages (table no. 2). About 2200 villages concentrated about 70% of the total circulatory migration from villages abroad.

**Table no. 2. Types of villages depending on the experience of the temporary migration abroad**

	The type of village in accordance with the migration experience				Total	
	With no migration experience (under 1‰)	In the early stage (1‰-10‰)	In intermediate stage (10‰-30‰)	In advanced stage (over30‰)	%	N
Village share, 2002	22,6	29,9	28,8	18,7	100	12091
Share of temporary departed abroad persons	0,1	7,8	22,8	69,4	100	147256
Share of persons that have temporary left abroad and come back	0,1	6,9	21,3	71,7	100	266000

Source: Dumitru Sandu – *Culture and Migration Experience in Romania's Villages*, Romanian Sociology Review, no. 3/2004, p. 3.

One can distinguish four types of rural communities from the point of the external migration intensity: villages with no migration, villages with a low level of migration, villages with a medium level of migration and villages with a high level of migration. The last three types correspond to the three stages of the process of acquiring the communitarian migration experience: beginner, intermediary and advanced.

In 2000, the maximum concentration of the migration experience from rural environment abroad was recorded especially in Western Moldavia and in the North-Eastern Transylvania. The following places, in descending order, are occupied by the villages in the South-Western Transylvania, Banat and Ardeal. One could also notice an

intense emigration in the case of the villages in Sălaj, Iași and Tulcea. The smallest degree of migration is to be found in the Southern part of the country, especially in the villages in Argeș, Olt, Ialomița and Călărași (Sandu, 2004: 5).

Another study (Sandu, 2005) underlines the fact that the type of community and the historical regions are the strongest elements that influence emigration. The rate of temporary emigration for work is differentiated on types of communities and historical regions. The developed villages and the towns with a population between 100 millions and 200 millions are the places with the highest degree of emigration. The most important regions for this type of emigration are Moldavia and the western regions Banat, Crișana and Maramureș (table no. 3).

**Table no. 3. The temporary migration for work on types of residence and regions**

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The type of the community	Moldavia	Southern regions	Transylvania	Western Regions	Bucharest	Total rate	% emigrants
Poor village	6,6	1,1	4,0	3,0	0,3	4,7	11,7
Medium developed village	13,5	1,3	6,1	6,5	0,3	5,6	16,6
Developed village	17,7	2,4	6,8	11,4	0,9	6,1	22,5
Town under 30 thousands inhabitants	7,5	2,0	5,1	13,5	0,7	5,9	12,8
Town with 30 – 100 thousands inhabitants	4,8	2,9	5,4	3,0	-	4,1	8,7
Town with 100 – 200 thousands inhabitants	21,2	2,1	3,0	6,3	-	9,5	15,7
Town with over 200 thousands inhabitants	3,9	4,2	4,9	2,3	1,3	2,8	12,0
Total rate	9,8	2,3	5,4	7,6	1,2	5,2	-
% emigrants	41,1	15,7	20,8	20,0	2,4	100 N= 111832	

Source: Dumitru Sandu - *Patterns of Temporary Emigration: Experiences and Intentions at Individual and Community Levels in Romania*, Prague, 2005, p. 5.

The rate of emigration for work is three times higher in the developed villages in Moldavia as compared with the national average (17, 7‰, as compared with 5,2‰). This rate is higher only for the large towns in the historical region Moldavia. In the western part of the country, Banat and Crișana-Maramureș regions record the highest rate of migration in the towns with a population of less than 30 thousands inhabitants. In the point of view of counties, the highest rate of migration is recorded in 6 counties: three in Moldavia region (Vrancea - 35‰, Bacău - 13‰, Suceava - 13‰), two in Crișana-Maramureș (Satu-Mare - 23‰, Maramureș - 18‰) and one in the northern part Transilvaniei (Bistrița-Năsăud - 15‰) (Sandu, 2005: 6).

The rate of emigration for work specific to the rural environment is differentiated not only from the historical region to which the respective rural place belongs, but also from the development level of the rural area. Thus, the highest rate of migration for work in the rural environments can be found in the villages with a high development level (national level - 6, 1‰). The most developed villages are to be found in Moldavia (17, 7‰) and those in the western regions (11, 4‰). In low developed rural places, the rate of migration for work is much diminished (national rate – 4,7‰), the lowest level (except Bucharest area) being recorded in the southern regions (1,1‰).

If one refers to the periods of temporary migration abroad (Sandu et al., 2006), the period 1990-1995 was one of primary exploration, the rates of annual emigration in this period did not exceed the level of 5%. The second stage of exploring Europe by the Romanians after 1989 is between 1996-2001, when the temporary emigration rate reaches values between 6-7%. After obtaining the access to the Schengen area, in January 2002, the process has amplified, working abroad becoming a mass phenomenon, with a rate of temporary emigration varying between 10 and 28%. If up to 2001, the three historical regions of Romania (Moldova, Muntenia și Transilvania) had relatively equal intensities in point of temporary emigrations abroad, after that period the most important exporter of workers abroad becomes Moldavia (the poorest region having the highest share of rural population).

At least 10% of the living adults have been abroad to work. The authors state the real share of those that have worked abroad may be higher (Sandu et al., 2006: 18). Apart from this, the option to work abroad has had a considerable variation on population categories (table no. 4):

- especially the young persons have left to work abroad, not the adults or the elders;
- men had a higher share than women as regards the emigration for work;
- it is from villages that the men ageing between 18-59 years left abroad;
- in the case of women, the residential model of migration is more differentiated: temporary emigration abroad is more frequently met in the case of the women ageing between 18-29 years coming from villages than in the case of the young girls ageing between 18-29 years coming from towns; however, the temporary emigration is to be found in the case of those women ageing between 30-59 years coming from towns, as compared with the ones coming from the rural environment.

**Table no. 4. The share of the persons that have worked abroad depending on the following categories: age, residential environments, sex in the period 1990 – 2006**

- % -

Age	Left from	Men	Women	Total
18 – 29 years	Rural environment	19,0	15,7	17,4
	Urban environment	13,7	11,2	12,5
30 – 59 years	Rural environment	17,5	4,3	11,1
	Urban environment	11,4	9,6	10,5
60 years and above	Rural environment	0,4	0,7	0,6
	Urban environment	0,5	0,5	0,5
<b>Total</b>		11,8	7,1	9,4

Source: Dumitru Sandu (coordinator) – Temporary Living Abroad. The Economic Migration of Romanians: 1990 – 2006, The Foundation for an Open Society, Bucharest, 2006, p. 30.

The share of those leaving for work abroad from villages, from the total population, exceeds the share of those leaving for work abroad from towns (52%, as compared to 48%), but for the 15-29 age category, the value of the indicator is higher in the rural environment as compared to that in the urban environment (21%, as compared to 18%, during the entire analysed period); apart from this, the analysis on stages shows an important increase, both for the urban environment but especially for the rural one, of the share of the population ageing between 15 and 29 years of the total departures (in the case of the rural environment, from 5% in the period 1990-1995, to 26% in the period 2002-2006). Apart from this, the share of those living to work abroad from the rural environment is increasingly higher (Sandu et al., 2006: 31).

As regards the dimension of the migration potential on short term and its implications on the demographic and occupational structure of the labour force in Romania, one can underline a few results regarding the dimension and the evolution trends of the work migration phenomenon (Zamfir et al, 2008):

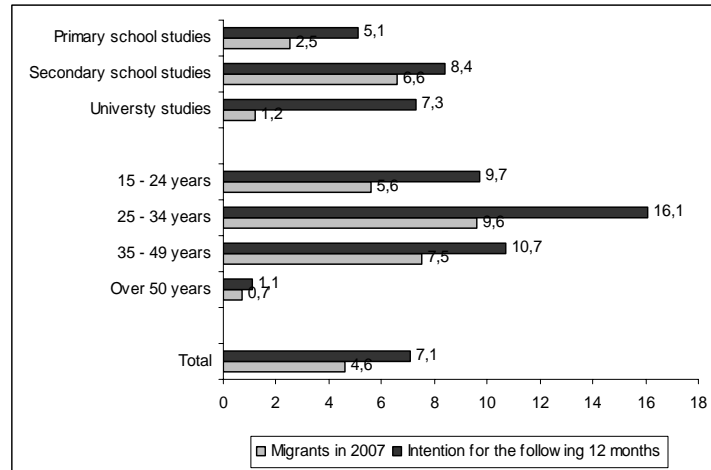
- in the present, 11, 2% from the households with at least 2 members have at least one member left to work abroad. Most of the households ‘‘having migration experience’’ have only one member left to for abroad (about 80%);
- in the urban environment, only 8,7% of the households have their members left to work abroad, whereas, in the rural environment, this percentage reaches 14,2%. The lack of real opportunities for a quality occupation in the rural environment proves to be the most important reason for the migration from the rural environment;
- at the very moment of making the research, the highest rate of households with ‘‘migration experience’’ was recorded in Moldavia (17,5%), followed by Dobrogea (15,9%) and Oltenia (14,6%). The smallest shares of the households with members working abroad were recorded in Bucureşti-Ilfov (2, 4%), Crişana-Maramureş (4,8%) and Transilvania (7,1%);
- regarding the evolution of the phenomenon on the short term, one can notice an increase of the migration flows, 14,2% of the households having members that intend to work abroad in the next 12 months. The increase of the number of migration flows seems to be similar in the urban environment as well as in the rural one;
- from the regional point of view, on short term, one can foresee the increase of the number of migration flows in Bucharest, Transilvania, Banat and Oltenia;
- the migration for work is and will continue to be in the near future men’s option, especially that of the men living in the rural environment;
- the tendency towards migration is to be found especially in the case of the persons aging between 25-34 years and in the case of the persons that have graduated a university.

At the same time, there are results about the proportion of the work migration abroad and about the intentions of leaving abroad for work in the next period. Thus, (Ciucă et. all, 2008):

- in 11,3% of the investigated households there is at least one member that works abroad whereas 16,5% have at least member that intends to migrate for work in the next 12 months;
- 14,9% of the households in the rural areas have members that work abroad, as compared to only 8,5% in the urban environment. But in 20, 5% of the investigated households in the urban environment have at least one member that intends to leave to work abroad, the percentage being much smaller in the urban environment (13,5%). It is obvious that the list of hiring opportunities in rural areas makes the inhabitants of these areas to migrate towards areas with available working places;
- most of the migrants come from households located in Moldavia, Banat and Dobrogea. Based on the migration intentions for the next 12 months, one can anticipate an increase of the migration flow in the case of Banat and Oltenia, whereas Moldavia will remain the most important area for emigration in Romania (especially the rural areas).

The above mentioned paper also provides information about the external migration phenomenon (figure no. 1).

**Figure no. 1. The share of the persons left to work and the share of the persons that intend to migrate to work in the following 12 months on age groups and education level**



Source: Vasilica Ciucă, Speranța Pîrciog, Ana Maria Zamfîr, Cristina Mocanu – *Migration Flow for Work – the Romanian Case*, “European Migration Comparative Advantage versus Cherry – Proking Policies” International Seminar, Bucharest, 2008.

The number of migrants with working purposes represents, at national level, 4,6% of the total persons that live in the interviewed households; 7,1% intend to leave to work abroad in the following 12 months. On the base of the migration intention on short term, one can assert the fact that the number migration flows will increase in the case of young people, especially in the case of those that have graduated a university. Therefore, we can anticipate a “brain migration” phenomenon in Romania. About 70% of those that come back from abroad intend to leave abroad again in the following 12 months.

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