

## **TERRITORIAL MOBILITY OF THE RURAL POPULATION OF THE BURNAZULUI PLAIN AFTER 1990**

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**Abstract.** Territorial mobility represents a factor of increase or decrease of the population size. After the 1989 political regime change, there is a reverse process of returning to the native villages, motivated by the acquisition of ownership of the lands seized by collectivization, their sale or purchase of new lands. The repopulating process of the villages of the Burnaz Plain has continued; between 2002-2005 there was a setback of this process which intensified in the recent years as young retirees have migrated from urban to rural areas. The global economic crisis has put a full mark on the national economic system. While in 1990, the average rate of departures had the highest value in all segments analysed, respectively 54.4‰, in 1992 this phenomenon slowed down, reaching a rate of 11.9‰ in 1995. The lowest average rate of departures, 7.5 ‰, was recorded in 2000 and a further increase to 14.3‰, in 2008. Dynamics of rural population migratory balance of the Burnaz area, between 1990-2008, we find two phases: the period between 1990-1995, when the migratory balance was negative and the period after 1995, when it had positive values, because the rate of arrivals has exceeded that of departures.

**Keywords:** *territorial mobility, residence establishments, residence relocations, migratory balance.*

### **Introduction**

As special component of the population dynamics, the territorial mobility represents a factor of increase or decrease of the population size. These voluntary movements, whether they are usual movements or migrations, internal or international, short or long-term, are based on people's motivations according to their own interests, needs, expectations, age, sex, occupation, income, level of education. An international migration flow is usually formed by language and culture affinities, historical relations, proximity, areas of influence of the great powers of the world. Generally, immigration is an economic and demographic gain for the receiving country and a loss for the country of origin. The migratory balance is complementary to the natural balance, its positive or negative value generating effects in the arrival as well as in the departure areas.

The forced industrialization of cities under Communism led to the absorption of labour force from the rural areas of the Burnazului Plain, especially from the peri-urban area. Young families migrated to Bucharest, Giurgiu, Alexandria, Oltenița, Călărași, but also to Zimnicea, Turnu Măgurele, Videle, Roșiori de Vede. Therefore, there has been a rural exodus, the young adults migrated temporarily and then permanently to cities in order to practice non-agricultural activities. This fact demonstrates the close relationship between industrialization, increased internal migration and urbanization. Consequently,

it created an imbalance in the age-sex and socio-professional structures of the rural population, but the migration phenomenon generates demographic, social, economic and psychological effects also on the destination localities.

The severe restrictive politics, lack of freedom of speech, closing of the borders, the starving of the population and the poor living conditions are just a few of the oppressing methods used by the communist dictatorship which resulted in an increasing number of Romanian emigrants at that time. In the early years of transition to the democratic regime, the political instability in our country determined the increase of asylum applications to the immigrant receiving countries, such as Germany, France, Sweden and Switzerland. Note the blocking of the migration flow to the U.S.A., Canada and Australia during the socialist regime in Eastern Europe which restarted after 1990.

The 1989 political regime change led to a declining national economy in a very short period of time. The number of unemployed people increased while others applied for professional conversion programmes, but a large proportion of the country's working population chose to migrate abroad looking for a better paid job. Some of the Romanian migrants settled permanently in developed countries which were more than willing to accept the cheap and qualified labour force of the immigrants. Moreover, the immigrants were mostly young adults who contributed to the rejuvenation of the Western population due to their availability to integrate, higher level of education and age-specific dynamics.

#### **Evolution of residence establishments**

Until 1990, during the communist period, the dominant phenomenon was that of people moving into towns due to industrialization and the fact that newcomers would get a housing grant after accumulating a length of service. Therefore, only 5.9‰ settled down in the rural area of the Burnazului Plain in 1977. After the political regime change, once started the transition to a market economy, there is a reverse process of returning to the native villages, motivated by the acquisition of ownership of the lands seized by collectivization, their sale or purchase of new lands. The repopulating process of the villages has continued; between 2002-2005 there was a setback of this process which intensified in the recent years as young retirees have migrated from urban to rural areas. The global economic crisis has put a full mark on the national economic system. The compressions, mergers and restructuration undertaken in many sectors of activity and also layoffs maintain this process of moving back to the rural areas.

Specifically, the evolution of the average rate regarding the people who settled in the rural areas of the Burnazului Plain between 1990-2008, is the following: from 5.6‰ in 1990, the rate nearly doubled in 1992, so in just two years. The situation remains in balance until 1995 (11.0‰), after which the average rate increased significantly, reaching 17.1‰, in 2002 (Fig. 1). Thereafter the numbers decrease down to a minimum of 12.6‰, in 2005. In a short span of just three years this process of mobility of the population amplified to a maximum value of 21.4‰, in 2008. One can appreciate that there has been an "exodus" of people moving back to villages, especially to those located near the urban areas with direct access to the national roads and/or railroads. In absolute values, there was a total number of 1194 relocations to the rural areas of the Burnazului Plain in 1990, then 2296 in 2000 and a total of 3290 in 2008. The statistic data include also external migration.

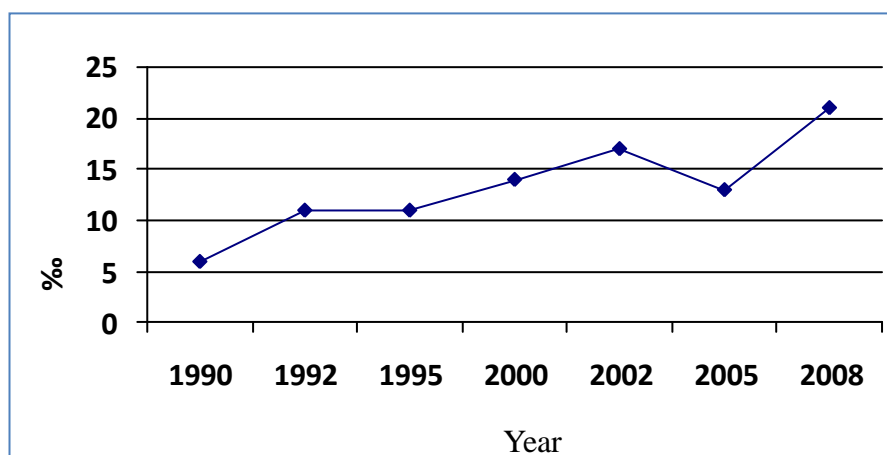


Figure 1 Evolution of residence establishments in the Burnazului Plain (1990-2008)

Regarding the rural administrative units in the latest year studied, the analysis of this rate emphasizes the large number of relocations to the communes of Comana, Frătești, Ghimpați, Călugăreni, Mărzănești, Chirnogi, Băneasa, Vitănești with a maximum of 43‰ in the commune of Stănești, located near the city of Giurgiu. Moreover, this value is the highest from 1990-2008. At the opposite end, still in 2008, we find the communes of Ștorobăneasa and Gostinu with a relocation rate under 12‰, the limiting factor being the lack of jobs in the locations.

The lowest rate from this period, 0‰, is found in the commune of Răsmirești, Teleorman County in 1992. As expected, the lowest rates recorded at the beginning of the '90s when the dominant phenomenon was that of departures (Cervența, 0.2‰, Răsmirești, 1.5‰, Smârdioasa, 1.7‰, Stănești, 1.8‰, Stoeni, 1.9‰, Greaca, 2‰, in 1990, Prundu, 1.2‰, in 1992), and the highest values appear in recent years (Slobozia, 42‰, in 2002, Stănești, 39.1‰, in 2005, Răsmirești, 37.2‰, Gogoșari, 36.8‰, in 2008, Bujoru, 34.2‰, in 1995).

### Evolution of residence relocations

The demographic phenomenon represented by periodic (seasonal and temporary) and permanent movements, within a country's borders or abroad, depends on the decision of the individual or his family, influenced by economic, political, social and demographic dynamics but also by natural factors such as grade terrains and poor accessibility, lack of agricultural land, reduced soil fertility and degradation, harsh climate, vulnerability to natural hazards (floods, earthquakes, avalanches, landslides). Therefore, a basic reason for moving from rural to urban areas and vice-versa or between the same type of living environment is the attractiveness or the restrictiveness of the territorial factors.

Material and social well-being intertwine. Romanian rural environment is not abundant in social and cultural activities so that young people and adults migrate from villages to cities, eager to see and take part in educational and socio-cultural

manifestations. Looking for a better life these people have big expectations from their place of destination.

In the case of international migrations, whether they are short-term or periodic and long-term or permanent, the economic factor is decisive when opting for another living space, where the immigrant would completely integrate. Young adults, aged between 20 and 40, are more receptive to relocation and change of mentality, behaviour and even lifestyle in the case of adapting to the new socio-cultural and economic conditions imposed by a foreign destination. Therefore, the actual immigration is not only spatial but also psychological. A sensitive problem is the social risk assumed by parents who work abroad and leave their minor children home alone or in the care of their relatives. Another issue is that of Romanian children born in a foreign country who stay there for a while or even permanently and are practically uprooted.

People with a high level of education have greater chances of being recruited, selected for better paid jobs in the most developed countries, while the unemployed are more likely to migrate abroad. A special category is represented by the desirable immigrants (scientific, artistic and sporting elite, investors), in high demand, because they sustain their new country's global prestige in the scientific, economic and cultural fields. This phenomenon called "brain migration" or "brain drain" appeared in the '70s and consists of migration flows of worldwide specialists (doctors, engineers, teachers, technicians) to the USA, the main receiving and beneficiary state, Canada, Western Europe. After 1990, freed from socialism, Eastern Europe refreshes overseas migration, especially to USA, Canada and Australia.

The world economic crisis occurred in 2008 caused an increased emigration process in our country, due to severe wage cuts not only in the public sector, low incomes, poverty, inflation. Economic restructuring has led to massive layoffs, recruitment limitation, rising unemployment, failure of some companies. The obvious disparity between the precarious state of the Romanian economy and the high level of development of the receiving countries, the major contrast between the living standard in a former communist country and a capitalist state with a tradition of democracy, stimulate migration flows.

Increased scale of these problems led to "brain drain" or "brain migration" and many people with high professional qualifications acquired in Romania have already emigrated or are seriously thinking about professing in a Western society which offers them special work conditions, substantial revenue, self esteem, the opportunity to advance their careers. Also, a growing number of young people want to study abroad and settle there after graduation.

The mirage of the foreign countries attracted also people with secondary education, from different sectors of activity (nurses, for example), but also poorly trained people such as farmers, unskilled workers, concentrated in colonies, who represents cheap labour force. The most popular destinations for Romanian workers are Italy, Spain and Greece. An economic advantage of this seasonal or temporary migration lies in the investment of income in their native places, reducing the poverty and increasing the living standards and the quality of everyday life. It is also worth mentioning the architectural influences acquired by such persons, visible in some new houses which stand out in the Romanian rural landscape.

By 1989, the rural population, especially that of the peri-urban area, went heavily into cities to provide labour for industrial units built under socialism. Also, co-operativization of agriculture prompted the exodus of young people to urban settlements. In the midst of the communist period, in 1977, the average rate of departures was of 20.4‰. The evolution of this rate experienced an oscillating trajectory between 1990-2008, especially in the first part. Thus, while in 1990 the average rate had the highest value in all segments analysed, respectively 54.4‰, in 1992 the phenomenon of departures slowed down, reaching a rate of 11.9‰ in 1995 (Fig. 2).

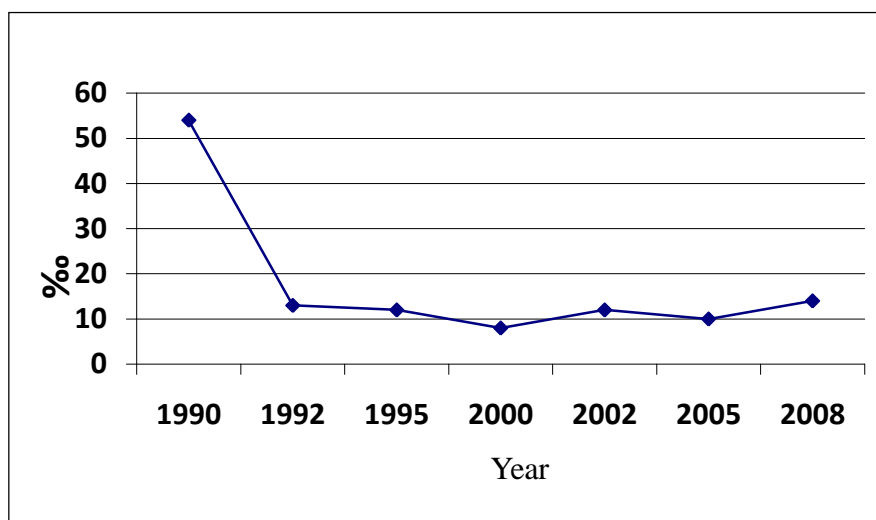


Figure 2 Evolution of residence relocations in the Burnazului Plain (1990-2008)

The lowest average rate, 7.5 ‰, was recorded in 2000, and then migration rate increased reaching the threshold of 12.1‰ in 2002. Furthermore, the average rate values of departures fluctuate causing a decrease to 10.2‰ in 2005 and a further increase to 14.3‰ in 2008. It wasn't possible to make an analysis of the immigrant stock, because statistics are not collected according to this criterion, but taking into account internal and international migrations.

The number of people who left the rural areas of Burnazului Plain in 1990 was of 10.733, then it dropped to 1.335 in 2000, and in 2008 there were 2.266\* departures. On rural administrative units, the average departure rate in 2008 had high values in the communes of Răsceni, Bujoreni, Răsmirești, with a maximum rate of 28.6‰ in the commune of Bujoru, Teleorman County. At the opposite end, the same year, we find the communes of Cervenii, Stănești, Herăști, Gostinari, Isvoarele, Frumoasa, with a rate under 11‰, the lowest being 8.5‰ in the commune of Brânceni. The main factors for population stability are the presence of jobs in these places, very fertile soils, allowing a large vegetable production, improved transportation infrastructure.

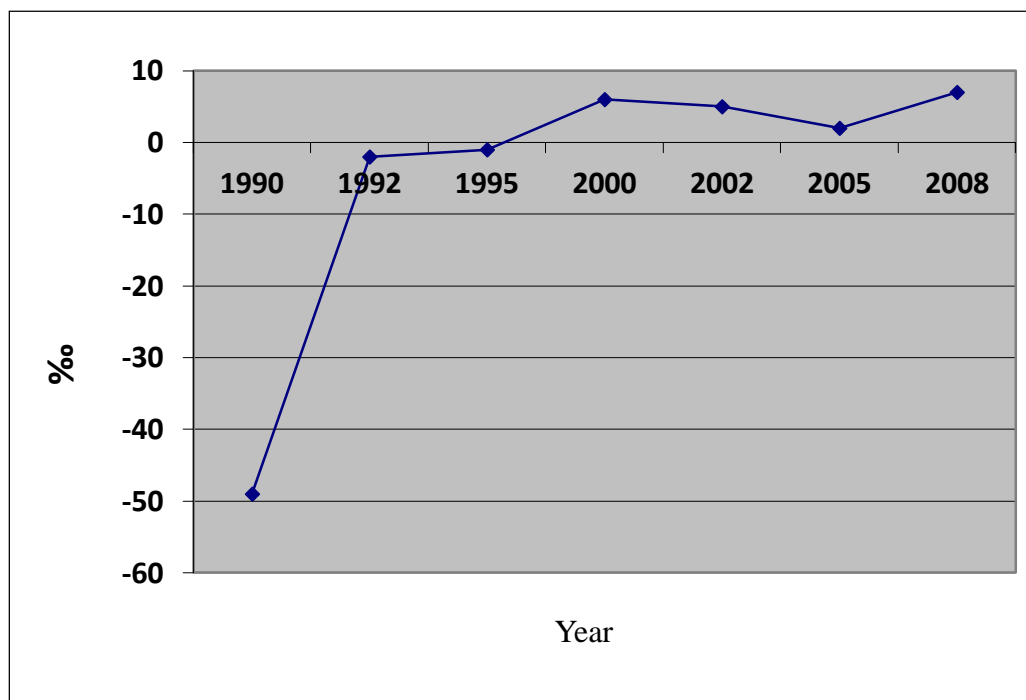
It is noted that the highest rate of departures from the whole range studied, was of 144.6‰ in the commune of Rasuceni in 1990 and the lowest rate was of 1.6‰ in the

commune of Comana in 2005. The highest rates were recorded in 1990, when there was an exodus of people who left due to the opening of the borders (the communes of Stoenеști, Gostinari, Ghimpați, Schitu, with rates over 107‰, and Bujoreni, Răsmirești, Hotarele, more than 80‰ ) and the lowest values recorded in the second half of the reported period, against a relatively stabilised transition in our country were (Frumoasa, 3.7‰, Schitu, 4.2‰, Brânceni, Stănești, Gostinu, 4.5‰, Izvoarele, 4.8‰ in 2000, Isvoarele, 4.1‰, Bujoreni, 4.3‰, Herăști, 4.9‰, in 2005).

### **Dynamics of rural population migratory balance**

The migratory balance is a demographic indicator obtained by calculating the difference between the arrival rate and that of departures from a territory in a given period. Migrations are complementary to the natural growth of population and highlight its increase or decrease, through its positive or negative values.

Summarising the information about the number of arrivals and departures in and out of the Burnazului area, between 1990-2008, we find two phases: the period between 1990-1995, when the migratory balance was negative, and the period after 1995 when it had positive values, because the rate of arrivals has exceeded that of departures.



*Figure 3 Dynamics of rural population migratory balance in the Burnazului Plain (1990-2008)*

Thus, from a worrying negative balance of -48.8‰ in 1990, which exposed the rural settlements of the Burnazului Plain to depopulation, the values of the two rates of the migratory growth got closer in the following years, reaching a difference of only

-0.9‰ in 1995 (Fig. 3). Then there were positive values of this balance, a significant increase taking place in 2000, to 6.3‰ when the number of arrivals was almost double than that of people who left the villages of the Burnazului Plain (Table no.1).

After this moment, there was a slight decrease in the migratory balance in 2002, and the phenomenon continued until 2005, when it registered the lowest positive value of 2.4‰. However, the period that followed was marked by a revival of arrivals, culminating with the highest migratory growth of 7.1 ‰ in 2008. After the share of communes with positive balance, from no administrative unit with the arrival rate higher than that of departures in 1990, the situation is gradually straightening reaching 40% in 1995, 93% in 2000 and 83% in 2008.

Table no. 1 Migratory balance in the Burnazului Plain (1990-2008)

Year	1990	1992	1995	2000	2002	2005	2008
No. of arrivals	1 173	1 915	1 979	2 296	2 735	2 096	3 290
Arrival rates * (‰)	5,6	10,7	11,0	13,8	17,1	12,6	21,4
No. of departures	10 733	2 268	2 149	1 335	3 367	1 680	2 266
Departure rates * (‰)	54,4	12,6	11,9	7,5	12,1	10,2	14,3
Migratory balance * (‰)	-48,8	-1,9	-0,9	6,3	5,0	2,4	7,1
Positive balance(% communes)	0	20	40	93	78	71	83

Source: NIS; \* Calculated data

The spatial distribution of the migratory balance in 1990, in the plain studied, has several distinct features (Fig. 4). As far as the rural population is concerned, the migratory growth has negative values in all communes with a rate of -48.8‰. 42% of the rural settlements provide a balance over -30‰, the lowest discrepancies between the rate of arrivals and that of departures being in the communes of Țigănești (-9.2‰), Poroschia (-9.8‰), Chirnogi (-10.7‰) and Slobozia (-11.2‰).

The most severe instability of the internal and international migration phenomenon occurs in the following administrative units: Răsuceni (-140.9‰), Stoenesti (-137.8‰), Gostinari (-113.7‰), Ghimpați (-103.4‰), Schitu (-103‰), Răsmirești (-89.8‰), Bujoreni (-88.5‰), Hotarele (-75.4‰), Purani (-74.9‰), Greaca (-70.1‰), Radovanu (-69.7‰).

In 2005, the dynamics of migratory balance in the area investigated (Fig. 5), shares again positive values from 0.0‰ in the commune of Frumoasa and 0.4‰ in Măgura, to 30‰, in Stănești, located near the city of Giurgiu. The average rate of the migration rate was of 2.4‰.

Beyond this value there are situated 48% of all the administrative units of the plain. The lowest migratory growth is found in the commune of Răsuceni, -11‰.

The migratory balance is part of the population total balance together with the natural growth. The total increase of the rural population of the Burnazului Plain, between 1990-2008, had a negative value of -35.263, from 197.350 to 162.087 people. It was noted a negative natural increase of -45.847, only the migratory increase had the positive value of 10.584.



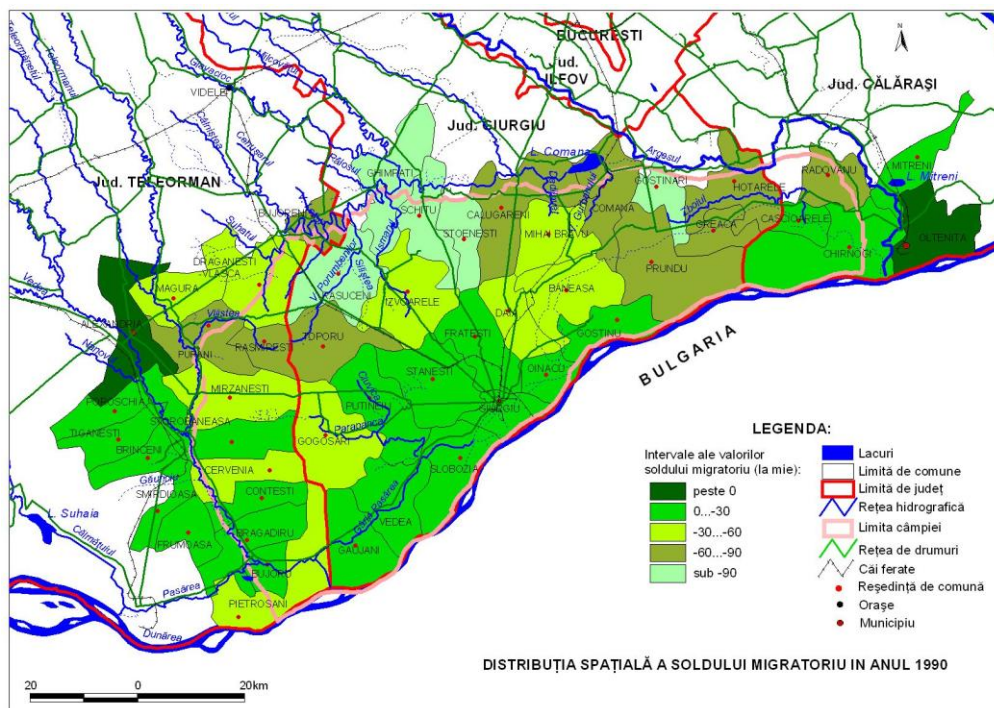


Figure 4 The spatial distribution of the migratory balance in 1990

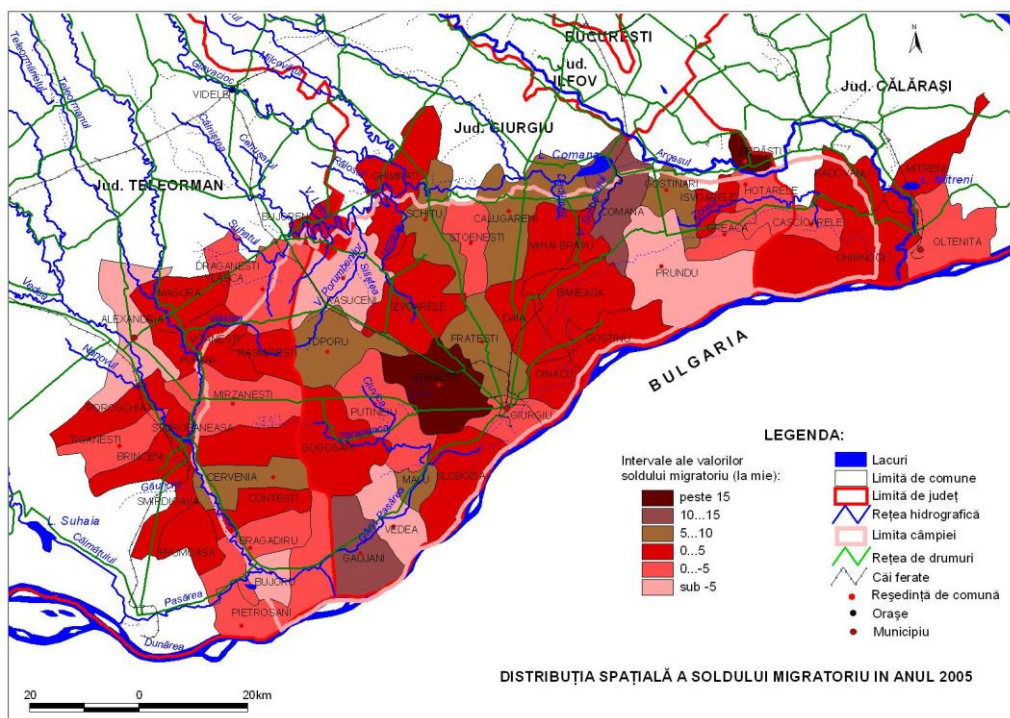


Figure 5 The spatial distribution of the migratory balance in 2005



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