

## THE ROMANIAN COMMUNITY IN SPAIN. SHORT PRESENTATION

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### ABSTRACT

*The Romanian community in Spain represents the largest community in Spain (18,61%), surpassing the community of Moroccans, a demographic reality that resulted from the large migration movements registered after 1990. This article purpose is to describe in a synthetic manner, the issues of those Romanians who chose to emigrate to Spain, as part of Romania's economic diaspora. Starting from the law of sociological parallelism, the importance of the chosen theme is given by the fact that the phenomenon of migration indirectly represents an indicator of an internal imbalance of the Romanian nation, and directly, the magnitude and constancy of the phenomenon show that the mirage of the transition to democracy preserved the degraded status of the elites as well as the degrading status of the Romanian people. We will try to describe the current status of the Romanian nation succinctly using two key concepts: vitality (Nicolae Iorga) and nation (Dimitrie Gusti), both applied on the background of the law of sociological parallelism (Dimitrie Gusti).*

**Keywords:** nation, diaspora, Spain, migration, sociological parallelism.

### THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

It is well known that every nation tends to have its own independent life which gives it a distinctive advantage over other nations<sup>18</sup>. Currently, national sovereignty is no longer a strict political issue, but a matter that manifests itself in all fields of action<sup>19</sup>. An economically subjugated country, subjugated to foreign enterprises, indebted to other countries, is no longer fully in control of its destiny, even if politically it enjoys a government, a constitution, and a political organization<sup>20</sup>. Among all the manifestations of a nation, economic activity is the one that most ties a nation to its land, because all the resources that the environment provides, rightfully belong to the nation and are to be used according to the needs and level of development of the nation. An economic life ceded to foreigners has two unfortunate

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<sup>18</sup> Dimitrie Gusti, "Știința Națiunii" ["Nation's Science"], in *Romanian Sociology*, year 2, nr. 2–3, February-March 1937, p. 49, Available at: <https://sas.unibuc.ro/storage/downloads/Na%C8%9Biunea-5/DG37a.STIINTA.pdf>, Accessed on December 13, 2022.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

consequences: firstly, it is the unlimited exploitation of wealth, thus drying up the livelihood possibilities of future generations, and secondly, “some activities alien to the nature and stage of organic development of that nation”<sup>21</sup>, which leads to “internal disequilibrium and the disaggregation of the national community”<sup>22</sup>. Economic manifestations are therefore not random elements in the life of a nation, but constitutive parts through which a nation can preserve itself and develop but can also find its political degradation or even destruction<sup>23</sup>.

How do we know if a nation is developing or consuming? The historian Nicolae Iorga gives us the answer to this question, through the concept of vitality:

“True vitality is not when a man of great abilities, a Genghis of that time or a similar leader of today, challenges it, but when it succeeds on its own, from the mass of the people. (...) It must come from below, to reach the one who organizes and leads. Then there is vitality in a people, when even without a leader and organization, it is able to achieve something”<sup>24</sup>.

So, depending on the opportunities that a people have or acquires over time to manifest its internal vitality, the state can have a double role: a positive one, when it protects and encourages the unfettered manifestation of vitality in order to adapt and /or the change of certain states of fact, and a negative role, when the (over imposed)<sup>25</sup> elites of the state they do not facilitate the materialization of the organic manifestations of society. In the second case, the concrete consequence is as undesirable as possible, for without vitality, the state ceases to exist:

“Between the state and society there must be an osmosis, natural if the state is the emanation of society. Osmosis is impossible if the state is not the emanation of this

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Hotare și spații naționale. Afirmarea vitalității românești [Borders and national spaces. Affirmation of Romanian vitality]*, Porto Franco Publishing House, Galați, 1996, p. 223.

<sup>25</sup> “On the one hand, we have the Romanian race, with its past, identical in all the countries it inhabits, an honest, kind-hearted people, capable of truth and patriotism. We then have a superimposed blanket over this people, a kind of sediment of scumbags and cockroaches, born from the mixture of Eastern and Western streams, incapable of truth and patriotism (...) having neither traditions, nor homeland, nor determined nationality, we see them placing themselves at the discretion of foreigners (...) Inflamed with an instinctive hatred against all the historical and autochthonous elements of this country, I have seen them introduce into all branches foreign laws adapted neither to its interests nor to its nature. (...) But what is the sign by which these unassimilated people, of Transdanubian origin, are distinguished from the racial population? We ask that this be established in all points. We say by physical and intellectual sterility. (...) We then find in them permanent symptoms of intellectual weakness. With them, the mind is replaced by cunning. Cunning is a sign of weakness, for the true human mind is directly related to the ability to disinterestedly grasp a truth. Falsity should be mentioned as a weakness of character. Friendly, sticking up and flattering anyone they need, they really hate any superior power, either intellectual or character.”, in Mihai Eminescu in „Time”, July 29, 1881, in *Opere*, Vol. XII, Academy Publishing House, 1985, pp. 266–268.

society and does not make the effort to adapt to it. (...) Without the vitality of society, the state disappears”<sup>26</sup>.

Therefore, the phenomenon of emigration, if it does not experience a decrease in the pace we are witnessing until now, can constitute a real national security problem because through the emigration of the most effervescent social categories (both biologically and professionally) the very core of national vitality is moved outside the political borders of the Romanian state and we end up witnessing a historical fact that no one predicted 100 years ago. More precisely, if in 1918 the Romanians from all the Romanian provinces as well as those from the regions inhabited by Romanians gathered or sent representatives to Alba Iulia in order to achieve the Great Union (thus constituting a nucleus of vitality), the centenary of the Great Union is witnessing a dissolution of this core of vitality, a dissolution that is not limited only to the level of ideas and national feelings, but also to the most basic, biological level: the massive emigration of Romanians in order to ensure a better life. Starting from this state of affairs and focusing on the Romanian community in Spain, we want to answer to five basic questions: (1) who they are, (2) when did they choose to emigrate, (3) how did they succeed, (4) what was the motivation behind choosing to leave Romania and (5) in which areas did they settle in.

### WHAT IS THE NATION?

The nation is the only social unit that achieves itself, in the sense that it does not require a more comprehensive social unit for its full realization, being able to create its own world of values, to establish a goal in itself and to it finds the means of accomplishment, that is, the force of organization and progress in its own composition<sup>27</sup>. The special significance of the nation is given by the fact that it sums up all the creative efforts of individuals<sup>28</sup>.

“The nation is a voluntary synthetic creation, a social unit, which represents a voluntary system with a cosmic, biological and psycho-historical motivation, with social will as the *causa movens* of the nationalization process and with creative manifestations, in the spiritual, economic, legal realm and political of the national life, which forms the national culture”<sup>29</sup>.

Therefore, we could say that each individual who decided to emigrate, in relation to the Romanian nation, represents nothing more than a cell of Romanian vitality, which together with other Romanians in the diaspora, form true communities of Romanian vitality.

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<sup>26</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

## WHO ARE THEY?

As a result of Romania's accession to the European Union and the opening of borders, the tendency to emigrate has increased significantly among the working population. Thus, at the level of 2007, approximately 82% of the emigrant workforce from Romania was concentrated in Italy and Spain<sup>30</sup>. In 2010, Romanians represented almost half of Spain's immigrants (840,682)<sup>31</sup>, and the next step was to represent 1% of the total workforce in Spain in 2013<sup>32</sup>. Over time, by building networks based on family or neighborhood criteria, the number of Romanians choosing Spain as their destination grew exponentially, and that became a real phenomenon. Thus, on June 30, 2018, the year of the centenary, the community exceeded 1 million people<sup>33,34</sup>. Moreover, compared to the other communities of foreign emigrants on the territory of Spain, at the level of 2020, Romanians came to represent the largest community<sup>35</sup>, surpassing that of the Moroccans: 1.079.468 (18,61% from the total number of foreigners) or 1.074.868 according to other sources<sup>36</sup>, to which are also added those who "have no documents, work without a contract or spend short periods of the year with relatives in Spain"<sup>37</sup> – 400.000 (according to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the level of 2018).

At the time of 31.12.2020 the demographic situation in Spain<sup>38</sup> registered a total of resident emigrants of 5,800,468 people, of which 3,535,964 came from the EU area, and 2,264,504 from outside the EU. As for the Romanians, out of the total resident emigrants, they do not only represent the largest community, but also represent approximately one third of the total foreign residents in the EU (30.52%) and almost half of the total foreign residents outside the EU (47.66%).

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<sup>30</sup> Editors of CEPS Projects Sociais, "National Report Romanian immigrants in Spain", December 2011, Available at: <https://www.participation-citoyenne.eu/sites/default/files/report-spain.pdf>, Accessed on November 15, 2022.

<sup>31</sup> "Even though the 2.012.553 of EU Nationals that lived in Spain in 2010 represented the 40,85% of migrants, that figures Romanian immigrants on the first place with 840.682 inhabitants (17,06%), far from the second European country, United Kingdom, with 228.829 inhabitants", in *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>32</sup> "Migrants for work in Spain and Italy represent, according to Eurostat, approx. 1% of the labor force in Spain and 2% of the labor force in Italy, competing with the Moroccans, occupying the first 2 places among the total number of immigrants from these countries", in *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Editors of Periodico el Rumano, "Câți români sunt în Spania și câți dintre ei sunt activi pe piața muncii, statistici 2018" ["How many Romanians are in Spain and how many of them are active on the labor market, 2018 statistics"], in *Rumano en Espana*, December 14, 2018, Available at: <https://www.periodicoelrumano.es/cati-romani-sunt-in-Spania-si-cati-dintre-ei-sunt-activi-pe-piata-muncii-statistici-2018/>, Accessed on November 15, 2022.

<sup>34</sup> Romanian Embassy in Kingdom of Spain, Available at: <https://madrid.mae.ro/node/769>, Accessed on November 16, 2022.

<sup>35</sup> Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones, "Estadística de extranjeros residentes en España" [Statistics on foreign residents in Spain], p. 4, Available at: [https://extranjeros.inclusion.gob.es/ficheros/estadisticas/operaciones/concertificado/202012/Principales\\_resultados\\_residentes.pdf](https://extranjeros.inclusion.gob.es/ficheros/estadisticas/operaciones/concertificado/202012/Principales_resultados_residentes.pdf), Accessed on November 15, 2022.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

Table 1. Age groups (2019)<sup>39</sup>

Total		0 to 15 years		16 to 64 years		65 years and above	
Total	Average age	Total	Average age	Total	Average age	Total	Average age
1.070.090	37,3	122.404	8,8	919.708	40,0	27.978	70,1

The data of the Spanish structures fail, however, to determine the dominant type of residence in the case of Romanians, most likely due to the unregistered employment that our compatriots turn to at the beginning of their emigration.

“According to data published by the Permanent Immigration Observatory (March 28, 2018), 1.030.054 Romanian citizens have registered legal residence in Spain, according to a press release issued by Bucharest City Hall”<sup>40</sup>.

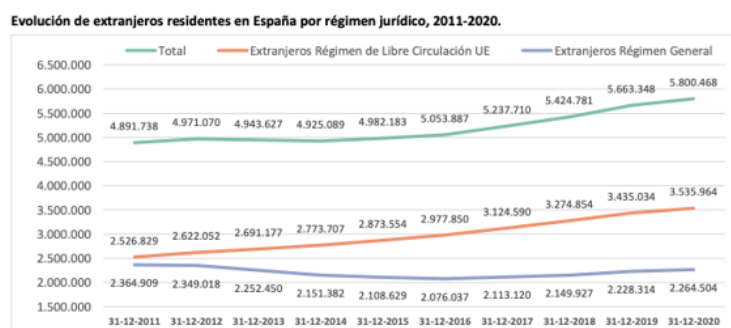


Figure 1. Evolution of residents in Spain 2011–2020<sup>41</sup>

Table 2. (Residence regime)<sup>42</sup>

EU citizens + AELC (European Free Trade Association)							
Total	Work for the employer	Self-employed work	Non-profit residence	Studies	Familial	Undetermined reason	Permanent residence
1.070.090	100.625	8.183	34.424	5.517	65.865	<b>601.839</b>	253.637

In terms of professional skills<sup>43</sup> of Romanians who have chosen the path of emigration, the following aspects can be noted:

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Andrei Mihai, “Câți români locuiesc oficial în Spania. Numărul este foarte mare” [“How many Romanians officially live in Spain. The number is very high”], in *Cluj News*, November 7, 2018, Available at: <https://www.stiridecluj.ro/social/cati-romani-locuiesc-oficial-inSpanianumarul-este-foarte-mare-1>, Accessed on December 12, 2022.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> “In the harsh economic context (in the period between 1990 and 2002 the employed population declined by 44% and more than 3.5 million jobs vanished, most dramatic decreases being registered in industry) of these first years of Romania’s democratic transition, highly qualified, young emigrants obtained long-term, legal residence in various European countries, but, more and more unskilled or poorly qualified persons from rural areas began to seek (mostly temporary) migratory arrangements”, in *Ibid.*

1. Between 1990 and 2002, approximately 44% of the employed population in Romania with higher qualifications in fields related to industry chose to emigrate.
2. If in the first period (1990–2002) the people who emigrated were highly qualified, after 2002 those who emigrated were increasingly from rural areas [unskilled].

In other words, after 2002 the appellative/label of “strawberries pickers”, which was applied to Romanians who went to Spain, appears frequently in the collective mind.

From a geographical point of view, at the level of 2015, the data showed that Romanians oriented towards Spain as a country of destination came from the following regions: Moldova (18%), Banat (17%), Dobrogea (16%), while those fewer who left were from the Bucharest-Ilfov region. The percentages have undergone substantial changes over the years, so that in 2020, those who chose Spain as their country of emigration came from the area of Muntenia and Transylvania, while Moldovans chose Italy as their preference.

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE COMMUNITY

Of the total number of Romanians present on the territory of Spain (1,079,468 – at the time of 31.12.2020), the Romanian population able to work represents 85.94%.

We present in the following the distribution for the years 2011–2020 of the Romanian population in Spain which, without exception, increased from year to year, as well as the distribution by age groups in 2020, where we observe high numbers not only among the active population, but also among minors. Thus, of the total Romanian population, the active, able-bodied segment represents 85.94%, children 11.43% and seniors 2.61%.

Table 3. Situation per year (population/year)<sup>44</sup>

1.079.726	1.070.090	1.054.458	1.030.054	1.005.564	979.245	953.183	928.217	915.673	910.657
2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011

To highlight the pace at which these figures were reached, the demographic evolution of the Romanian community in Spain looks as follows:

Table 4. Demographic evolution of the Romanian community in Spain<sup>45</sup>

YEAR	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Population	1.079.726	1.070.090	1.054.458	1.030.054	1.005.564	979.245	953.183	928.217	915.673	910.657
Absolute Variation	9.636	15.632	24.404	24.490	26.319	26.062	24.966	12.544	5.016	71.318
% Variation	0,90%	1,48%	2,37%	2,44%	2,69%	2,73%	2,69%	1,37%	0,55%	8,50%

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

## HOW DID THEY MANAGE TO GET TO SPAIN?

Spain was the first EU country to lift all employment restrictions for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens<sup>46</sup>, and this context was conducive to the emergence and development of the migration phenomenon regarding the Romanian community in Spain.

“It is important to remember that, in 1999, 50% of the Spanish population was in favor of Romania joining the EU, while, on the other hand, only 26% of the French population”<sup>47</sup>.

In the context of this openness on the part of the Spanish state, but also of the almost total absence of the Romanian state in this regard, the Romanians in the kingdom became more and more numerous. And their presence in Spain was due to efforts supported and coordinated by entire networks of family and acquaintances located throughout the continent. The migration phenomenon created in itself, beyond the numerous communities of Romanians, new methods, and tools to manage the new reality. Against the background of the absence of help from the official institutions, the informal “institutions” took this role and developed and adapted it to the reality outside of Romania in order to provide answers to the basic questions for all those who want to start on this path. The most important institution turned out to be the family<sup>48</sup>, and their informal ways of communication between families generated real networks of information and support across European continent.

Not only that, but the institution of the family also took on the mission of emotionally managing the new and harsh reality (the break from familiar people, familiar places, customs, etc.). Since this institution has expanded its activity in many branches, there are also natural gaps in what it should protect, namely the national identity among children. This is mainly due to the fact that not all communities have the possibility to study the Romanian language and, where it is possible, it takes place in a limited number of hours<sup>49</sup>.

In order to integrate into the labor market in Spain, most Romanian emigrants showed caution and made sure before their arrival that they benefited from:

- 1) relations in the area
- 2) a promise of work
- 3) an amount of money to support themselves until they find something to work

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<sup>46</sup> “Spain is the first EU countries to lift all restrictions on employment for citizens of Romania and Bulgaria.”, in Rafael Viruela Martínez *The Romanian migrants in Spain, an exceptionally migratory flow*, Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276528028\\_The\\_Romanian\\_Migrants\\_in\\_Spain\\_An\\_Exceptional\\_Migratory\\_Flow](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276528028_The_Romanian_Migrants_in_Spain_An_Exceptional_Migratory_Flow), Accessed on December 15, 2022.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Editors of *Adevărul*, “A doua generație de români în Spania” [“The second generation of Romanians in Spain”], October 24, 2020 in *Adevărul*, Available at: [https://adevarul.ro/international/inlume/videodouageneratieromaniSpania1\\_50ba026f7c42d5a663af9747/index.html](https://adevarul.ro/international/inlume/videodouageneratieromaniSpania1_50ba026f7c42d5a663af9747/index.html), Accessed on December 15, 2022.

“(…) more than 60% of emigrants from the Madrid area and 53% of those from the Rome area had or had secured their departure before: certain relationships (32% in the case of Spain and 25% in the case of Italy), had the promise of a job (21 % in Spain and 19% in Italy) or/they had the money ready (9% in both cases) to manage to live and look for a job”<sup>50</sup>.

Beyond the external manifestations of the family (support, support, communication) triggered with the creation of the phenomenon of emigration, the plane of immaterial reality becomes a new concrete reality in the lives of individuals. So that the value, importance, and role of the family is rediscovered, de facto, through the institutional absence of the Romanian state.

“The case of Romanian migration does not show any difference in the development of networks, but it is different if we look at the nodes that form these networks: in general, at the center of these networks we do not find the ‘individual’, but the ‘family’, which plays a decisive role in understanding comprehensive of the migration process. According to Suarez and Crespo, the family is used to acquire information and provide material and emotional support, creating a ‘family pattern’ of migration that can be observed in data on family structures”<sup>51</sup>.

In other words, the institutional absence of the state forced the “inner” forces of the family to manifest themselves outside it, to preserve and develop the family’s ability to adapt and create new realities. But, despite the rediscovery of the family essence, a weakening of the Orthodox Christian background can be identified, which leads to the emergence of a phenomenon of spiritual dilution of these families and their life principles. In other words, the emigration of Romanians to Spain can be read in a distinct note, that of a double assimilation: identity and spiritual.

The Adventist community had a special role in developing and strengthening support networks for Romanian immigrants in Coslada or in Castellón, but, as Sandu points out, the network of support is, in this case, social and familial rather than religious<sup>52</sup>. In this regard, future research focusing on who are and how the main family “agents who intermediate and recommend” others for future employment are and operate may prove interesting because, from an institutional perspective, the “human resource office” became the heart of the family.

“Empirical research carried out in different regions shows that at the beginning of their stay in Spain, family members and friends are the main source of information

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> „Cazul migrației românești nu arată nicio diferență în dezvoltarea rețelelor, dar este diferit dacă ne uităm la nodurile care formează aceste rețele: în general, în centrul acestor rețele nu găsim „individul”, ci „familia”, care joacă un rol decisiv în înțelegerea cuprinzătoare a procesului de migrație. Potrivit lui Suarez și Crespo, familia este utilizată pentru achiziționarea de informații și oferă, de asemenea, suport material și emoțional, creând un „model familial” de migrație care poate fi observat în datele referitoare la structurile familiale”, in *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*



for job vacancies; they act as intermediaries and pass referrals and sometimes act as a guarantee for candidates to the potential employer”<sup>53</sup>.

### WHY DID THEY LEAVE?

The main reason why Romanians chose to emigrate was the decrease in the ability to preserve and sustain the family, complemented by two other problems<sup>54</sup>:

- a. lack of infrastructure (hospitals, roads, administration, public order) and
- b. that of meaning in life.

Several studies on Romanian migration also pointed out that:

“Romanian migrants preferred locations where the native population was perceived to be more understanding, allowing foreign workers to live in normal conditions”<sup>55</sup>.

One of the main (but not the most important) reasons for leaving Romania turns out to be the difficult financial situation that generated the emigration of a family member, which in turn generated the emigration of other family members to reunite the family<sup>56</sup>. But it was not the economic factor that generated the feeling of blockage, but the impasse and the dangers to which the “idea” of the family was exposed: the lack of tools by which it can be taken care of.

“Thus, approx. 69% of the respondents from the Madrid area and 68% from the Rome area declare that the main reason for leaving was money, more precisely the lack of it. The second reason is family reunification (14% in the case of migrants from Rome and 15% in the case of those from the Madrid area)”<sup>57</sup>.

With the difficult and long transition to democracy, Romania lost a good part of its skilled workforce, along with the demolition/sale of the national industry. All these skilled people had no choice but to go abroad, which later led to the emigration

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<sup>53</sup> „Cercetările empirice efectuate în diferite regiuni arată că la începutul șederii lor în Spania, membrii familiei și prietenii sunt principala sursă de informații pentru locurile de muncă vacante; aceștia acționează ca intermediari și transmit recomandări și uneori acționează ca garanție pentru candidați potențialului angajator”, in *Ibid*.

<sup>54</sup> Editors of *Rumano en Espana*, “Ce spun Românii despre emigrarea în Spania? Cu sufletul între două lumi: Mesaje emoționante și dureroase” What do Romanians say about emigrating to Spain? [“What do Romanians say about emigrating to Spain? With the soul between two worlds: Emotional and painful messages”], in *Rumano en Espana*, October 11, 2021, Available at: <https://www.periodicoelrumano.es/ce-spun-romanii-despre-emigrarea-in-Spania-cu-sufletul-intre-doua-lumi-mesaje-emoționante-si-dureroase/>, Accessed on December 15, 2022.

<sup>55</sup> „migranții români au preferat locațiile în care populația nativă a fost percepută ca fiind mai înțelegătoare, permițând lucrătorilor străini să „trăiască în condiții normale”, in *Ibid*.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>57</sup> „Astfel, cca. 69% dintre respondenții din zona Madrid și 68% din zona Roma declară că motivul principal al plecării au fost banii, mai precis lipsa lor. Al doilea motiv este reîntregirea familiei (14%) în cazul migranților din Roma și 15% în cazul celor din zona Madrid”, in *Ibid*.

of the rest of the family members, who did not necessarily have the same high level of qualification, but rather turned to seasonal jobs, especially in agriculture.

“In the harsh economic context (between 1990 and 2002, the employed population fell by 44% and more than 3.5 million jobs disappeared, the most dramatic declines occurring in industry) of these first years of democratic transition of Romania’s highly skilled young emigrants have obtained long-term legal residence in various European countries, but more and more unskilled or low-skilled people from rural areas have started to look for (mostly temporary) migratory arrangements”<sup>58</sup>.

Regarding seasonal jobs, in 2008, Romanians occupied the first position among contract employees in the field of agriculture.

“According to the Aliens Law (Organic Law 4/2000 of January 11, 2000, Article 42.4), temporary jobs should preferably be directed to countries with which Spain has signed agreements to manage migratory flows. The employment of seasonal workers from the country of origin became more important at the beginning of the 21st century. Initially, Morocco and Poland sent most of the workers; from 2003 to 2008 Romania occupies the first position, despite the recent reduction in the number of contracts”<sup>59</sup>.

In addition, since 2003, Spanish entrepreneurs began to prefer Romanian workers because, with the integration of Poland into the EU, Polish workers became less sought after for financial reasons, while Moroccans were considered a community more prone to conflicts and restrictions. Similarly, the decision to hire work force from Romania rather than any Latin American country with which Spain had signed agreements proved much more profitable, as the Spanish government required the contractors to bear part of the cost of travel to employee, to the country of origin<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> „În contextul economic dur (în perioada 1990–2002, populația ocupată a scăzut cu 44% și au dispărut peste 3,5 milioane de locuri de muncă, cele mai scăzute dramatice înregistrându-se în industrie) din acești primi ani de tranziție democratică a României, înalt calificați, tinerii emigranți au obținut ședere legală pe termen lung în diferite țări europene, dar tot mai mulți oameni necalificați sau slab calificați din zonele rurale au început să caute (în cea mai mare parte temporare) aranjamente migratorii”, in *Ibid*.

<sup>59</sup> „Conform Legii de Extranjerie (Legea Organică 4/2000 din 11 ianuarie 2000, articolul 42.4), locurile de muncă temporare ar trebui să fie direcționate de preferință către țările cu care Spania a semnat acorduri pentru gestionarea fluxurilor migratori. Angajarea lucrătorilor sezonieri din țara de origine a devenit mai importantă la începutul secolului al XXI-lea. Inițial, Marocul și Polonia au trimis majoritatea lucrătorilor; din 2003 până în 2008 România ocupă prima poziție, în ciuda reducerii recente a numărului de contracte”, in *Ibid*.

<sup>60</sup> “Entrepreneurs prefer Romanian workers, since Poland’s integration to the EU made the Polish workers less ‘interesting’ for them<sup>22</sup> and because the employers’ perceptions of the Moroccans which depicted them as a group more prone to conflict and repining. Similarly, it is cheaper to hire workforce from Romania rather than from any Latin American country with which Spain has signed agreements, because the Spanish government requires that the entrepreneur supports a part of the travelling cost for the worker to the country of origin.”, in *Ibid*.

## WHERE DID THEY SETTLE?

One of the important criteria for Romanians in choosing their final destination was the size of the community in which they were to integrate. Thus, it can be observed that the Romanians chose to settle in localities with an average of less than 10,000 inhabitants, predominantly rural<sup>61</sup>. This can show the fact that there is a need for integration among the Romanian communities and not one of dissipation, characteristic of mechanical solidarity.

Also, also from a geographical point of view, Romanians have created over time approximately 2 relatively compact areas in Spain: 25% of them are in the Madrid region, and 20% in the Aragon and Lerida provinces<sup>62</sup>.

At the national level, the geographical distribution of Romanian communities is as follows (2018):

- 1) Madrid: 217.354
- 2) Andaluzia: 161.289 | >170.000<sup>63</sup>
- 3) Valencia: 153.178
- 4) Catalonia: 135.989
- 5) Castilla-La Mancha: 104.149
- 6) Castilla y León: 43.203
- 7) Aragón: 82.450
- 8) Murcia: 17.047
- 9) Basque country: 24.823
- 10) Navarra: 10.804
- 11) Extremadura: 17.194
- 12) Asturia: 11.043
- 13) Rioja: 15.746
- 14) Cantabria: 8.719<sup>64</sup>
- 15) Alicante: 3.000 [approximately]<sup>65</sup>.

Out of 51 Spanish provinces, in 39 of them Romanians are in the top three most numerous communities, most of them settling in economically prosperous areas. Moreover, they sought out rural areas, which were not as attractive to other foreign immigrants.

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

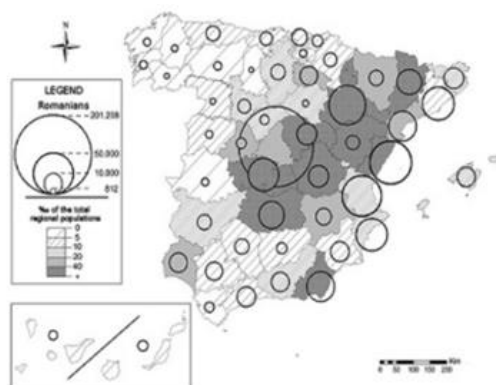
<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Department of Romanians from everywhere, “A doua zi a vizitei secretarului de stat Oana Ursache în Regatul Spaniei” [“The second day of the visit of the Secretary of State Oana Ursache to the Kingdom of Spain”], April 14, 2021, Available at: <http://dprp.gov.ro/web/a-doua-zi-vizita-Spania/>, Accessed on November 10, 2022.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> A. Rădulescu, “Luminița Mihai, profesoară de limba română la Alincante: vreau ca acești copii să știe despre trecutul țării noastre și despre geografia ei” [“Luminița Mihai, Romanian language teacher in Alicante: I want these children to know the past of our country and its geography”], October 27, 2022, Available at: <https://ziarulromanesc.es/luminita-mihai-profesoara-de-limba-romana-la-alicante-vreau-ca-acesti-copii-sa-stie-si-trecutul-tarii-noastre-si-despre-geografia-ei/>, Accessed on October 9, 2022.

“The Romanian community has become one of the most important communities in Spain, not only in absolute numbers, but also in spatial distribution, being one of the three largest in 39 of Spain’s 51 provinces and the largest community in 24 of them”<sup>66</sup>.  
“Romanian citizens have the particularity of being a vast and diffuse presence in rural areas and small towns that, until now, were less attractive for immigrants”<sup>67</sup>.



Source: INE, *Padrón de Habitantes* [www.ine.es]. The North African cities of Ceuta and Melilla (16 respectively, seven Romanian residents) are not represented. Graphic design: C. Andrés Langa.

Figura 2. – The geographic distribution of the Romanian population in Spain (January 1<sup>st</sup> 2009).<sup>68</sup>

Among all the provinces of Spain, we have the largest concentrations of Romanians in the provinces<sup>69</sup>:

1. Madrid: 217.354;
2. Valencia: 66.085;
3. Zaragoza. 62.480;

Among the Romanians in Spain, 25% are found in Madrid and 20% in the provinces of Aragon and Lerida. This could mean (hypothesis) that the 25% of Romanians probably come from the big cities of the country and are used to/looking for certain elements specific to a functional city: predictability, cleanliness, quiet, order, good feeling, style (architecture), market strong economy, etc. There is also a chance that these 25% do not know each other very well, except on a limited level, which may indicate a type of organic solidarity.

<sup>66</sup> „Comunitatea românească a devenit una dintre cele mai importante comunități din Spania, nu numai în număr absolut, ci și în distribuția spațială, fiind una dintre cele trei cele mai mari din 39 din 51 de provincii din Spania și cea mai mare comunitate din 24 dintre ele”, in *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> „Cetățenii români au particularitatea de a fi o prezență vastă și difuză în spațiile rurale și orașele mici care, până în prezent, erau mai puțin atractive pentru imigranți”, in *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Rafael Viruela Martínez, “The geographic distribution of the Romanian population in Spain”, Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-geographic-distribution-of-the-Romanian-population-in-Spain-January-1-st-2009\\_fig3\\_276528028](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-geographic-distribution-of-the-Romanian-population-in-Spain-January-1-st-2009_fig3_276528028), Accessed on October 9, 2022.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

“Of the entire Romanian community in Spain, about a quarter (25%) live in Madrid, and in the province of Aragón with its capital in Zaragoza and the autonomous province of Lerida, about 20% live”<sup>70</sup>.



Figure 3. Synthetic map of migration from Romania (2015).<sup>71</sup>

On the other hand, another quarter of the Romanian population in Spain chooses to “retire” to less populated residential cities, which do not have strong economic flows and where coexistence is closer to the principle of mechanical solidarity.

“As for the Romanians, a quarter of them live in localities with less than 10,000 inhabitants. A similar proportion of Romanians lives in residential towns. Thus, the presence of Romanian citizens is notable, especially in small municipalities; in rural communities (population less than 2,000 inhabitants), this constitutes at least a quarter of the foreign population, that is, double compared to Moroccans”<sup>72</sup>.

Also, beyond the Romanians from Romania, there are also those from the Republic of Moldova, who chose Spain as a destination for having a better living. Out of the approximately 4 million inhabitants of the Republic of Moldova, 1,5 million Bessarabians are abroad, that is, approximately 38%.

“(…) 1.5 million Bessarabians from Italy, Spain, Romania, Canada”<sup>73</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> „Din întreaga comunitate românească din Spania, aproximativ un sfert (25%) locuiesc în Madrid, iar în provincia Aragón și cu capitala la Zaragoza și provincia autonomă Lerida, locuiesc aproximativ 20%”, in *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Alina Mărculescu Matîș, “O altă hartă a României: peticele de Europă aduse acasă de diaspora” [“Another map of Romania: the patches of Europe brought home by the diaspora”], in *Panorama*, July 15, 2021, Available at: <https://panorama.ro/obsesie/alta-harta-romania-diaspora-europa/>, Accessed on November 11, 2022.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Editors of Romanian Global News, “Mircea Popescu despre alegerile din Basarabia: Speranța sunt cei aproximativ 1,5 milioane de basarabeni din Italia, Spania, România, Canada” [“Mircea Popescu on the elections in Bessarabia: The hope is the approximately 1.5 million Bessarabians from Italy, Spain, Romania, Canada”], in *Romanian Global News*, June 6, 2021, Available at: <https://rgnpress.ro/2021/06/02/mircea-popescu-despre-alegerile-din-basarabia-speranta-sunt-cei-circa-15-milioane-de-basarabeni-din-italia-spania-romania-canada/>, Accessed on November 11, 2022.

## CONCLUSIONS

The main reasons why Romanians chose to emigrate represent the needs that the Romanian state failed to satisfy among all citizens, being at the same time basic elements of the manifestation of vitality: infrastructure (from hospitals, roads, public order to administrative infrastructure) and securing a purpose in life.

The lack of these elements supporting the national vitality made it possible that in the year of the centenary (2018) the historical regression showed that in Spain alone there were over 1 million Romanians, who at that time represented 1% of the active population in Spain and relative to the population of Romania, approximately 5%<sup>74</sup>.

As for the Romanians, out of the total resident emigrants, they do not only represent the largest community, but also represent approximately one third of the total foreign residents in the EU (30.52%) and almost half of the total foreign residents outside the EU (47.66%).

One of the most important aspects is the fact that in relation to the total number of Romanians in Spain, the working population represents 85.94%, which shows the fact that beyond the level of significant remittances, in Spain there is one of the most active nuclei of vitality.

Not least, (1) *relations* in the area, (2) *a promise of work* and (3) *an amount of money* to support themselves until they find something to work represent the three elements of transfer of vitality from Romania to Spain. From this perspective, these three elements could represent the key to reversing the trend of emigration towards a step of immigration, back to Romania.

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<sup>74</sup> National Statistics Institute, “Populația după rezidență” [“Population by residence”], Available at: [https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/com\\_presa/com\\_pdf/popdom1ian2018r.pdf](https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/com_presa/com_pdf/popdom1ian2018r.pdf), Accessed on November 14, 2022.

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