

CHANGES IN THE DYNAMICS AND DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURES OF THE ROMANIAN URBAN POPULATION. AN OVERVIEW OF THE POST-COMMUNIST PERIOD

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In the present period Romania's urban system is undergoing a process of restructuring, the urban phenomenon acquiring new dimensions and characteristics. Thus, the industrial town – the representative type of urban settlement, has largely been replaced by the polyfunctional and services type, a trend that met the country's major economic and social-political targets, set early in the Third Millennium, in line with Romania's integration into the European urban system. Another trend, this time in rural-urban evolution, was to raise communes, viewed as local polarisation cores, to town status. Consequently, between 2003 and 2011, a number of 53 settlements (out of the 60 given town rank after 1989) were raised to this position. Although in the post-war period and up to the last 20th-century decade the share of Romania's urban population/total population was steadily growing (55% in 1997), yet the annual average growth rate was gradually declining, the numerical increase of townspeople slowing down. Since in the 1990–2011 interval, the urban population would even decrease, also the level of urbanization was slightly dropping (54%). The demographic structures themselves suffered some changes in that the female population increased, the young one decreased, while mature and elderly people became evermore numerous.

1. INTRODUCTION

Until mid-20th century, Romania continued to be a rural-agrarian country, with a low urbanisation level (23.4% in 1948). The geographical features of its territory and the turbulent history of this part of Europe made the Romanian society maintain its dominantly rural traits.

In the inter-war period, as industrialisation was progressing, urban development was boosted, the number of towns increasing from 119 in 1912 to 142 in 1930 and 152 in 1948. As a result, the town population grew by 1.8 times, at an annual average rate of 45,000 persons between 1912 and 1948, that is from 16% in 1912 to 23% in 1948.

In the second half of the 20th century Romania's economic and social development policies led to radical changes in these fields. There were two major transition periods, 1950–1960/1962 that marked the passage from the capitalist economy to the highly centralised plan-based socialist system, and the post-1989 period, when the socialist economy began being replaced by the market system. Between 1950 and 1989, Romania, like other Central-European socialist countries, opted for the extensive industrialisation model associated with explosive urbanisation and with territorial planning schemes. In the 7th, 8th and 9th decades, the creation of a balanced county structure helped strengthening the national urban system. As a result, by 1986, more than half the population of Romania lived in town.

It might be said that the aim of the post-war industrialisation and urbanisation policy was largely attained through gradual transition from the traditional rural-agrarian society to the urban-industrial society of the 1990s. It was a stagewise evolution that took on different forms, had a dynamics of its own, and in the course of urbanisation, developed specific socio-cultural features.

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2. URBAN POPULATION DYNAMICS AND URBANISATION LEVEL

One of the evolution trends in the rural-urban interface manifest on the vertical plane this time, is the increasing transformation of communes, viewed as local polarisation cores, into towns (*Law No. 351/2001, annex II-6.1.* designated 17 zones, with no town within a radius of 25–30 km, which were to develop urgently into localities with inter-communal servicing role). In this way, the Romanian urban system was enlarged (2003–2010) with 53 out of the 60 settlements raised to town status after 1989 (Săgeată R, 2012).

The consequence of this increase was, among other things, the strengthening of the county urban networks and their better balanced distribution within the national territory. The average number of towns/county rose from 3 in the early half of the 20th century to 7.8 in 2010, the majority of counties (over four-fifths from the total) listing between 4 and 9 towns (Table 2), more numerous in the counties of Suceava (16), Prahova and Hunedoara (14), Maramureş (13), and Constanţa (12), with Giurgiu (3) and Bistriţa-Năsăud, Brăila, Galaţi and Sălaj (4) standing at the bottom of the table.

Table 1

Counties grouped by town number in 2011

No. of towns	No. of counties	List of counties by number of towns
3	1	Giurgiu
4	4	Bistriţa-Năsăud, Brăila, Galaţi, Sălaj
5	10	Buzău, Călăraşi, Covasna, Iaşi, Mehedinţi, Neamţ, Teleorman, Tulcea, Vaslui, Vrancea
6	2	Cluj, Satu Mare,
7	5	Argeş, Botoşani, Dâmboviţa, Dolj, Ialomiţa
8	4	Bacău, Caraş-Severin, Ilfov, Olt
9	2	Gorj, Harghita
10	4	Arad, Bihor, Braşov, Timiş
11	4	Alba, Mureş, Sibiu, Vâlcea
12	1	Constanţa
13	1	Maramureş
14	2	Hunedoara, Prahova
16	1	Suceava

In 1990, Romania boasted a historic number of inhabitants – 23,206,720 persons. As of 1991, external migration getting momentum, natural growth declining (to negative in 1992), as did female fertility, and demographic ageing increasing, the country registered a numerical decrease of its population. In early 1992, the natural growth rate adding to external migration led to more than two million and six thousand fewer inhabitants between 1990 and 2011.

The *numerical evolution of the urban population* mirrors the growing level of urbanisation and, at the same time, the proportion of townspeople within Romania's total population throughout the 20th century, from a mere three million at the beginning of the century to 11.4 million in 2002 (Fig. 2). The absolute increase between 1912 and 2002 was of 9,371,338 inhabitants at an annual average of over 104,126 persons. Within the interval spanning the two censuses, the urban population fell from 11,435,080 in 2002 to 10,858,790 persons in 2011 that is by 576,290 fewer people, at an annual decrease of 64,032 inhabitants.

Although the share of urban population per total population had steadily increased in the post-war period, up to the 55% in 1997, by the end of the 1990s, the gradual diminution of the annual average growth suggests a slowdown of this process, and even an annual average numerical decrease of townspeople (by 97,700 persons up to 2002). As from 1999, this trend materialised in a slight decrease of the urbanisation level (54.8%) (Fig. 1). After 2002, the urban population growth (by 479,263 people in 2007) was the result of new towns emerging rather than a positive population dynamics. In 2007, the urbanisation level of 55.2% represented the maximum value ever recorded in

Romania, however, since in-between the last two censuses the number of urban population decreased, the level of urbanisation fell to 54.0%.

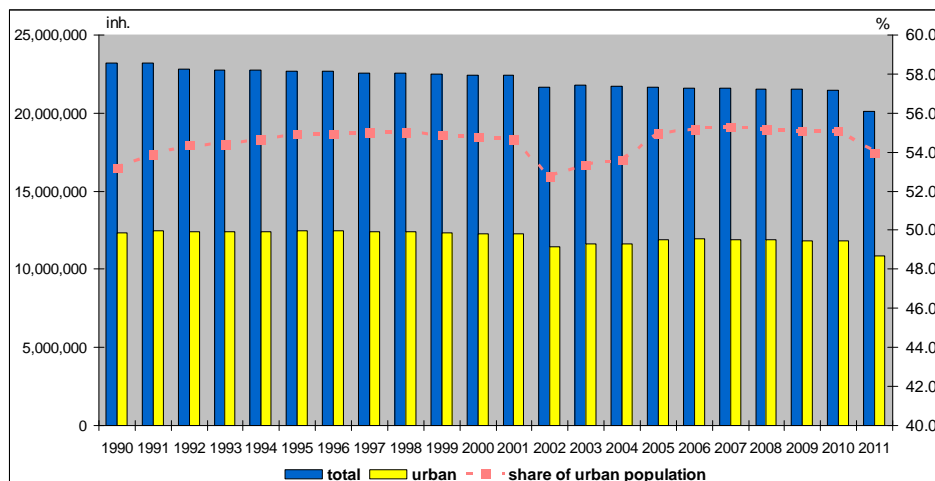


Fig. 1 – Urbanisation dynamics, 1990–2011.

Between 1992 and 2002, the permanent urban population dropped by 1.6%, compared to the rural one, in all counties, less so in Ilfov County where the number of townspeople increased by 11,166 persons (57.6%), steepest decreases being registered in Teleorman (-14.2%), Neamț (-13.4%), Caraș-Severin (-13.3), Satu Mare (-12.8%), Bacău (-12.1), Brașov (-11.0%), Vaslui (-10.7%) and Hunedoara (-10.3%).

Compared to 2002, the permanent urban population ratio rose (by 1.3%) to the detriment of the rural one. The number of counties which registered increases is almost equal to that with a decrease record. In the former category are the counties of Suceava (8.0%), Vâlcea (5.1%), Ialomița (4.9%), Maramureș (4.9%), Arad (4.7%), Botoșani (4.0%) and Gorj (3.2%). A special case is Ilfov County, in which the town attracted over 136,500 persons, this raising its percentage by 32.8% as against the 2002 census data. However, Bucharest's permanent residents dropped by 2.2% more than in the former census, one of the reasons being the City population migrating to neighbouring settlements in Ilfov County. Over 2002–2011, the lowest value of permanent population ratio had Bacău and Covasna counties (2.8% and 2.3%, respectively). Highest negative values compared to 2002 had the countryside (9.6% to 5.0% in the urban area). While in the majority of counties decreases affected both the urban and the rural environments, the situation in Cluj County shows that the permanent town population fell by 14,000 people and the village one by 2,600 people. On the other hand, a reverse situation is seen in the counties of Arad, Botoșani, Ilfov, Suceava, Timiș and Vâlcea, that is, greater numbers in town than in the countryside.

In 2011, highest urban population percentages had the counties of Hunedoara (75.0%), Brașov (72.3%), Constanța (68.8%), Cluj (66.3%), Sibiu (66.2%), Brăila (62.5%) and Timiș (61.8%). The closest difference between the permanent inhabitants of municipia, towns and communes registered Mureș, Bihor and Prahova (50.2%, 49.2% and 49.1%, respectively were town-dwellers). A number of 11 counties in Romania, had a town population below two-thirds of the county's permanent dwellers. It is the case of Dâmbovița (28.9%), Giurgiu (29.2%), Teleorman (32.4%), Neamț (36.0%), Vrancea (36.2%), Călărași (36.2%), Bistrița-Năsăud (36.7%), Buzău (38.6%), Vaslui (38.7%), Olt (39.1%) and Sălaj (39.3%).

The pace of *urban demographic growth* in the latter half of the 20th century differed with each category of town and stage, in line with the objectives set by the central power to balance the county

urban network by increasing the number of new towns. It also reflects the economic and social level attained by the urban system in various development stages.

Analysing the number of inhabitants is based on the rate of population growth in-between the 1992 and 2011 censuses surveys. The findings show that the average value of that interval was of -15.6%, with extreme returns for the towns of Bălan (59.3%) and Bragadiru (202.6%). Also, 90% of the 290 towns registered a demographic decline, with the exception of 30 towns, most of them situated in Ilfov County (the metropolitan area of Bucharest City), which had an increase record.

Urban centres with a positive or negative demographic growth record are listed below (Fig. 2):

a) Towns with big decrease (-59.3 – -30.1%). This category includes 37 towns (11.6%) located in the centre of Romania (Sinaia, Bușteni, Ștei, Cugir, Agnita, Tâlmăciu, Făgăraș, Victoria, Cisnădie, Azuga), in the west (Anina, Moldova Nouă, Bocea, Gătaia, Ciacova, Vulcan and Hunedoara – in the counties of Caraș-Severin, Timiș and Hunedoara), in the east (Solca, Milișăuți, Roman, Buhuși, Onești, Bicz, Broșteni – Moldavia Province) and in the south Sulina, Măcin and Turnu Măgurele.

b) Towns with moderate decreases (-30.0% – -1.1) are 249 (77.8% in the overall urban network), being relatively evenly spread in the territory.

c) Towns with stagnant evolution (-1.0 – 1.0%), no more than 6 (1.9% in the overall urban network): Șomcuta Mare, Seini, Eforie, Berbești, Turceni și Nucet.

d) Towns with moderate increases (1.1 – 30.0%, 19 towns – 5.9% of the urban network) can be grouped into four categories: the presence of an industrial or services unit (Năvodari, Băbeni, Odobești, Salcea, Vicovu de Sus, Podu Iloaiei); location in the vicinity of a large town (Ungheni, Buftea), tourism (Techirghiol, Amara), and positive natural balance (Bolintin-Vale, Mihăilești, Ștefănești, Topoloveni, Ulmeni, Tăuții-Măgherăuș, Fundulea).

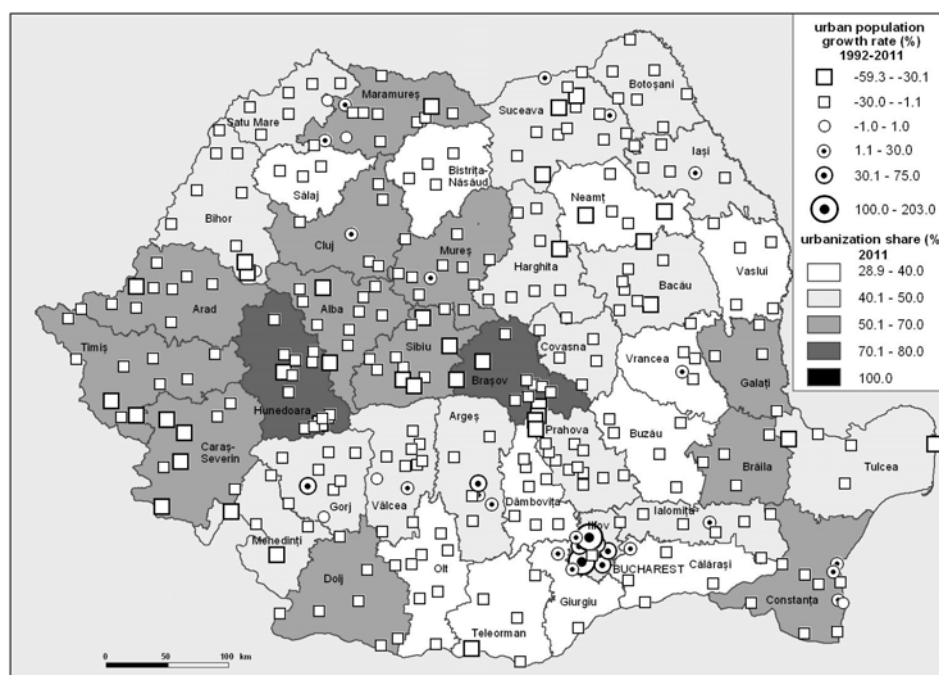


Fig. 2 – The territorial distribution of urbanisation in Romania, 1992–2011.

e) Towns with a big increase score (30.0 – 75.0%, 7 towns – 2.2% of the overall urban network) are concentrated in Ilfov County – Pantelimon, Popești-Leordeni, Voluntari, Chitila, and Măgurele. Once given town status, numerous Bucharest residents have developed new residential areas, thus

adding to the local population. An obvious phenomenon in Romania's large cities is migration from the centre to the outskirts and from blocks-of-flats to one-family dwellings, or to new residential districts (Stănculescu and Berevoiescu, 2004, Grigorescu et al., 2012). Generally speaking, residential suburbanisation is changing the spatial distribution of population according to its socio-economic status, thus reversing the traditional socio-spatial pattern of the socialist city characterised by the socio-economic status of population declining with distance from the centre (Sykora and Ourednicek, 2007, Grigorescu et al., 2012).

On the other hand, the population of Mioveni (Argeş County) grew owing to the presence of Renault-Dacia Car Factory. In the case of Rovinari (Gorj County), it was the development of a new district Vârț and the inclusion of Poiana Village administrative area into that town.

f) Highest values registered the town of Otopeni (100.5%) and Bragadiru (202.6%), both within the influence area of Bucharest Municipium.

The growth of the urban population was the outcome of a number of factors, such as natural increase, rural inflows into the town, urban status granted to some communes and the inclusion of some villages into the administrative perimeter of towns. The extent to which these factors contributed to the numerical growth of the urban population and to the urbanisation of townspeople's life depends on the geographical region and the type of town. Although the ratio between these factors registered temporal changes, yet the high proportion of villagers adding to the urban population growth was a constant of the 6th–9th decades of the 20th century.

3. TOWN HIERARCHY BY DEMOGRAPHIC SIZE

Romania's urban network includes mainly small and medium-sized towns (under 100,000 inhabitants) which represent 9/10th of the total town number, with more than 2/3 of this group having under 20,000 inhabitants (Fig. 3). Their share within the total urban population is quite significant, but their relative weight has continually declined over the past 50 years. Concomitantly with the numerical extension of the urban network in the territory, the role of large cities with over 100,000 inhabitants each was being consolidated. Over the 1966–2002 interval, the number of these cities doubled and they acquired a higher demographic rank, 8 of them counting 200,000–325,000 inhabitants in 2011 (Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara, Iași, Constanța, Craiova, Brăila, Galați, and Ploiești); Bucharest alone jumped at about two million, being the only very large city in this country (Fig. 4). However urban-rural migration and urban sprawl left Bucharest with fewer than 2 million inhabitants in 2011 (1,883,425 inh.).

There are few *large cities* with over 100,000 inhabitants (24 in 1992, and 19 at the 2011 census – therefore decreasing from 9.2% of the urban network in 1992 to 5.9% in 2011) (Fig. 3). These towns represented a distinct size-category within the national urban system in the post-war period. At present, this category includes part of the county-seats, important industrial and services centres, major national transport knots, university and cultural centres. An obvious demographic regress in the number of towns with over 300,000 inh., from 7 in 1992 to 2 in 2011 (Cluj-Napoca and Timișoara).

The geographical distribution of large cities is fairly uniform and they exert a greater or smaller influence over the activities discharged by the surrounding zones in larger or smaller areas. In terms of the economic basis and geographical expansion, large cities represent actual urban agglomerations with a distinct impact on the country's social and economic evolution. They are first-rank growth poles (Iași, Constanța, Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara, Brașov, Craiova, Sibiu, Galați, Brăila, Baia Mare) which have a strong influence on space organisation, modernisation of localities and urbanisation dynamics, balancing disparities between residential environments. The large Romanian cities have developed rapidly, simultaneously with the upsurge of the production forces across the country. Every second town-dweller and every fourth inhabitant of Romania is a large city-dweller. Their population dominates the urban settlement system and the territorial structure of the national economy.

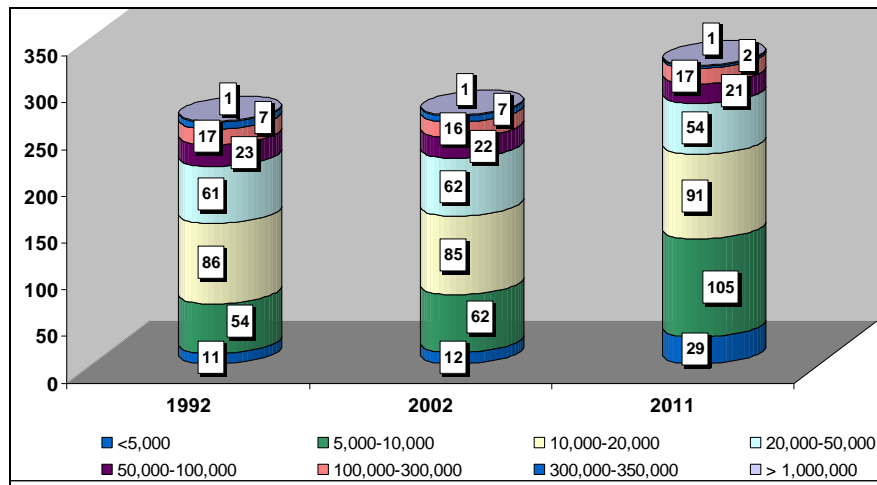


Fig. 3 – Towns grouped by demographic size, 1992–2011.

Medium-sized towns (75, 23.4% of the urban network in 2011 versus 84, 32.3% in 1992) number between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants. They play a major role in the national urban structure, given that 21 towns function as county-seats and are assigned the administrative co-ordination of the territory. The development of medium-sized towns goes back to Antiquity and the Middle Ages and was boosted by the 20th century industrial upsurge (Cugir, Codlea, Petroșani, Făgăraș, Reșița, Hunedoara, Mioveni and Săcele). But the massing of gigantic industrial units and the lack of functional flexibility makes this category of towns highly vulnerable, their future evolution depending on their ability to correlate industrial restructuring with the development of the tertiary sector.

This demographic category won either new county-seat municipia from the category with over 100,000 inh. (6 towns), or towns which in 1992 listed into the under 20,000 inh. category (3 towns).

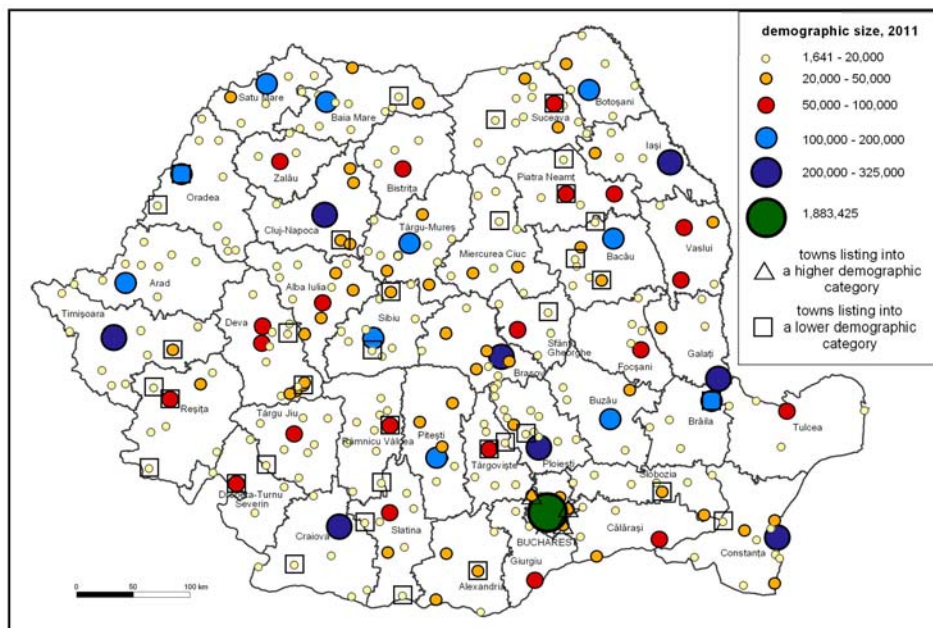


Fig. 4 – Towns grouped by demographic size, 2011.

Small towns (225, 70.3% of the urban network in 2011 versus 151, 58.1% in 1992) have a low demographic potential (under 20,000 inhabitants). This category, which has proved to be the most stable one in time and space, includes numerous new towns, as well as towns (20) with a long history documented in ancient or feudal times. During the socialist period, the 128 rural settlements assigned town status, would increase this demographic category. In the 20th century, despite absolute numerical growth, the share of small towns within the total urban population gradually decreased, from 33% in 1930 to 14.7% in 1980 and 14.4% in 2002. Since the settlements risen to town status after 2002 fell into the small-town category (except for Voluntari), they came to represent 19.3% of the overall urban population in 2010. It follows that small towns, inhabited by every seventh urban-dweller, hold a special place within the urban hierarchy, forming the base of the urban pyramid and discharging organisational functions within the national economy. The generic name of small towns comprises a huge variety of functional types: industrial, agro-industrial, spas and health resorts, the majority of them occupying a central position within the rural areas. The numerical growth of this category of towns over 1992–2011 was the outcome of some middle towns falling into this category and of low-demographic settlements being given town status.

Unlike the other two categories of town, small towns, left at the periphery of industrial and social progress, had to cope with many hardships in the course of their development. As a result, they are a pool of migrants for large cities. The difficulties of small towns reside in the irrational use of labour, the limited possibilities to use labour resources, the disproportionate sex structure of the workforce given the profile of the industrial centres (mining or textile), and the absence of a modern infrastructure, especially in the regions where the urban network is sparse. A special situation have the small industrial centres specialised in one branch alone. Here, there is a marked disproportion between the use of labour (by sex) and the mining centres based on exhausting resources, centres in which the population is on the decrease. Boosting their activity would require either to set up some complementary branches, or to strengthen their central role within the local systems.

Between 1992 and 2011, several towns (38) used to change their demographic category, but only three passed into a higher rank category (Popești-Leordeni, Pantelimon and Buftea in Ilfov County). The category of towns that declined to lower rank include the following: a) from 200,000 – 325,000 inh. to 200,000 inh. (Oradea and Brăila); from 100,000 – 200,000 inh. to under 100,000 inh., the case of county-seat municipia Târgoviște, Suceava, Piatra Neamț, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Reșița, Drobeta-Turnu Severin; from 50,000 – 100,000 inh. to under 50,000 inh. – these are either county-seat municipia (Alexandria and Slobozia), or former industrial towns under communism (Petroșani, Onești, Turda, Mediaș); from 20,000 – 50,000 to under 20,000 inh. – Drăgășani, Buhuși, Salonta, Moldova Nouă, Cernavodă, Târgu Secuiesc, Moreni, Băilești, Gheorgheni, Orăștie, Vișeu de Sus, Târgu Neamț, Balș, Corabia, Băicoi, Cislădie, Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Comănești, Bocșa, Motru, towns discharging generally industrial or mixed functions.

4. CHANGES IN THE DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURES

The dynamics of the population's sex and age structure is particularly important, it determining the evolution of the human communities and having profound demographic as well as social and economic implications.

The sex structure of the population, the outcome of the combined action of several factors (sex ratio of live newborns, distinctively different mortality between the two sexes, the population age structure) indicates the slight dominance of the female-to-male population, especially in town (Table 4). The evolution of the population's sex structure over the past 20 years revealed that, unlike in 1966 and 1977, the last three census data show a higher female ratio among the town population than the female ratio generally, irrespective of residential milieu (urban or rural, women are more numerous than men).

Table 4

Female population ratio to total population, census data over the 1992–2011 interval

Year	Total Romania	Urban
1992	50.8	51.2
2002	51.2	52.0
2011	51.4	52.2

In 1992, the urban population numbered 6,344,034 females (51.2%) versus 6,047,785 (48.8%) males. The increase of the female population over the 1992–2011 period compared to the male one accounts for the greater number of women per total urban population. The 2011 census data show 5,673,154 (52.2%) females to 5,185,636 males in the urban area, a situation found in all of Romania's counties. Bucharest Municipium tops the list in this respect (53.7%), another 15 counties standing between 52.0% and 53.0%. the same in 1992, in most counties, the urban female population representing over 50%, lest Gorj (49.8%) and Hunedoara (49.9%) specialised in the heavy industry (extractive, iron-steel), braches that generally require a male workforce.

Even through the male population ratio/total urban population was lower than the female one, yet it was the dominant element in a number of 57 towns (eg. Târgu-Ocna, Aiud, Rovinari, Mioveni). In 2002, only 21 towns, again heavy industry ones, had a similar record (Rovinari, Uricani, Vulcan, Borşa, Baia de Arieş, Vlăhiţa), as well as those raised tot town status after 2003.

The age structure of the urban population and of Romania generally, passed through significant mutations, owing mainly to severe demographic aging as the number and share of adults and elderly people, especially those aged 60 and over, would increase while the population under 15 years of age was decreasing. Compared to 1992, the 2002 ratio of the 0–14 year-group per total urban population fell from 24.3% to 15.9% simultaneoosly with the increase of the 15–59 group of adults from 64.1% to 69.3%.

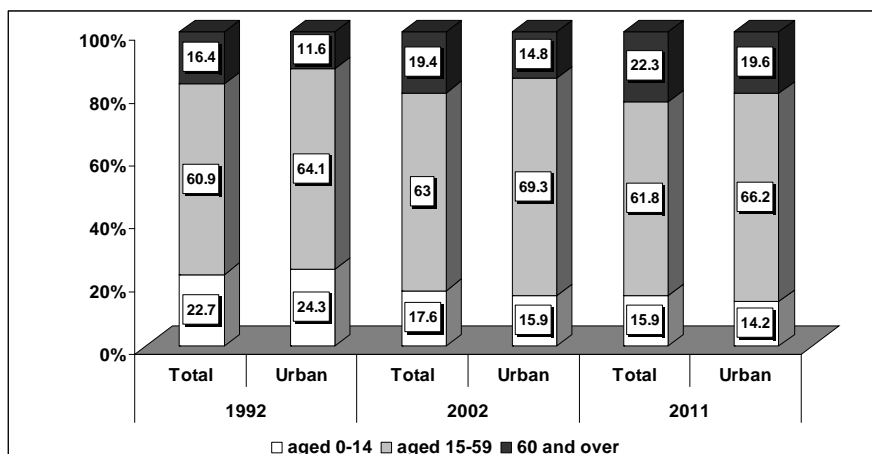


Fig. 5 – Age-group structure, census data 1992–2011.

In 2011, the ratio of the urban population aged 0–14 years/total permanent urban population was of 14.2%, the majority falling into the 15–59 age-group (66.2%), the 60s and over amounting to 19.6%, that is a nearly 5% rise compared to 2002 (Fig. 5). So, looking at the distribution of the permanent urban population by age-group comparatively with 1992 and 2002, it is quite clear that the urban population was ageing.

The distribution of the **urban population by religious belief** (1992–2011 census data) indicates that the overwhelming majority of the population are Orthodox Christians, yet from 86.9% in 1992, only 79.8 per cent were being registered in 38 counties and Bucharest Municipium in 2011. Compared

to 1992, slightly more people would declare themselves Pentecostals, Baptists, Adventists and Muslims, while Roman-Catholics, Reformed, Graeco-Catholics and Evangelicals were on the decrease. The proportion of atheists, or of no religion respondees rose by 0.1% and 0.2% against 1992 and 2002, respectively. Noteworthy, ever more people did not state their religious belief (0.1% in 2002 and 8.4% in 2011).

More than 97.0% of the total Orthodox permanent urban population was recorded in the counties of Argeş (93.2%), Gorj (92.8%), Vâlcea (92.7%), Buzău (92.2%), Dolj (91.7%), Prahova (91.6%), Dâmboviţa şi Brăila (91.1%) and Mehedinţi (90.2%). At the other end of the spectrum stood Harghita (16.2%), Covasna (21.8%), Satu-Mare (43.2%), Bihor (51.7%), Mureş (52.3%) and Sălaj (63.9%).

Roman-Catholics (4.0% of the total urban population in 2011) represented the majority in Harghita County (55.9%) compared to 34.9% in Covasna, 20.1% in Satu-Mare, 10.3% in Bihor and Mureş counties.

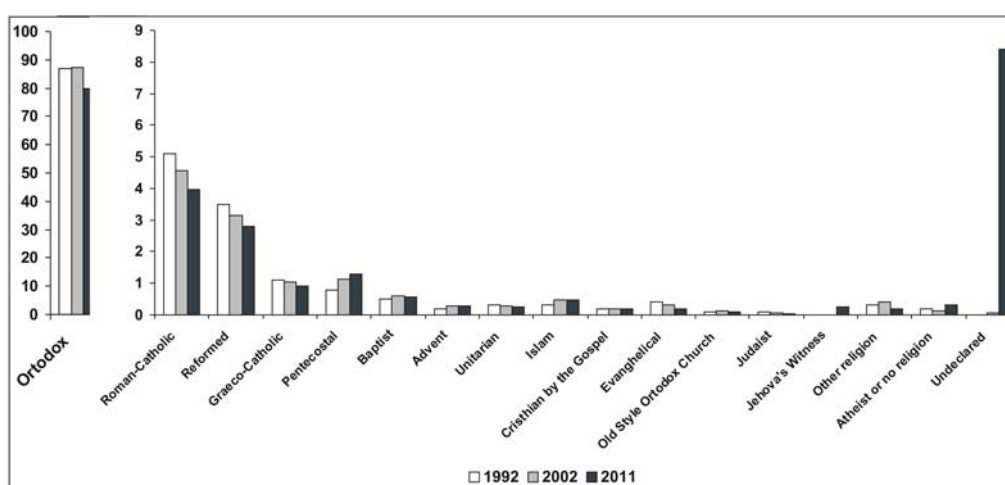


Fig. 6 – The religious structure of the urban population (1992–2011 census data).

In terms of the *urban population nationality structure and number* (2011 census data) the overwhelming majority are Romanians (8,974,284 persons, 82.6%) of all urban inhabitants. Looking at the previous census data, the number of Romanian nationals per total population dropped by 2,139,270 (7.1%) and by 1,326,777 (7.5%) versus 2002 (Table 5). This decrease, quite significant, matches the national trend, and is the result of external migration and of people who did not state their ethnicity (897,310). The ethnical distribution of population shows that Romanians are the majority in Bucharest Municipium (97.3%) and in the towns of 39 counties (between 93.7% in Argeş and 52.8% in Satu Mare), and of over 80% in 32 of the 39 counties.

Beside the 8.9 million Romanian town-dwellers (2011), nearly one million people belonged to other ethnical minorities.

Thus, the 2011 census registered town inhabitants of Hungarians (Magyar) nationality (631,670, 5.8% of the urban population), a figure higher than the national average, but by 282,000 (30.9%) fewer than in 1992. This nationals form the majority in Harghita (76.9%) and Covasna (71.5%) counties, with elevated ratios in Mureş (35.3%), Satu Mare (34.9%), Bihor (28.5%) and Sălaj (18.6%).

In 2011, the number of respondees declaring themselves of Roma (Gypsy) origin was of 230,670 (2.1% of the total urban population), by 28% more than at the 1992 census survey (1.3%). The numerical increase of this nationality is the result of higher fertility which is specific to this ethnicity and of more numerous Gypsies declaring their nationality. Their territorial distribution is relatively even, varying between 1.% in Argeş and 6.7% in Călăraşi counties.

Table 5

The ethnical structure of the urban population, 1992–2011 census data

	1992		2002		2011	
		%		%		%
Total	12,391,819		11,435,080		10,858,790	
Romanians	11,113,554	89.7	10,301,061	90.1	8,974,284	82.6
Hungarians	914,070	7.4	757,086	6.6	631,830	5.8
Roma/Gypsies	165,461	1.3	208,948	1.8	230,670	2.1
Germans	80,244	0.6	41,590	0.4	24,727	0.2
Ukrainians	10,682	0.1	8,832	0.1	5,683	0.1
Lippovan-Russians	16,231	0.1	15,540	0.1	9,644	0.1
Turks	23,481	0.2	24,934	0.2	21,213	0.2
Serbs	14,936	0.1	11,428	0.1	9,073	0.1
Tartars	17,525	0.1	17,298	0.2	14,557	0.1
Slovaks	8,290	0.1	7,007	0.1	6,100	0.1
Bulgarians	3,579	0.0	3,187	0.03	2,872	0.03
Jews	8,799	0.1	5,631	0.05	3,088	0.03
Croatians	516	0.004	873	0.01	560	0.01
Czechs	2,012	0.02	1,245	0.01	786	0.01
Poles	1,895	0.02	1,351	0.01	795	0.01
Greeks	3,490	0.03	5,152	0.05	2,601	0.02
Armenians	1,936	0.02	1,751	0.02	1,288	0.01
Italians	0	0.0	2,878	0.03	2,396	0.02
Chinese	0	0.0	2,229	0.02	1,675	0.02
Csangoes	0	0.0	491	0.0	577	0.005
Macedonians	0	0.0	0	0.0	1,016	0.01
Others	4,447	0.04	14,998	0.1	16,045	0.1
Undeclared	671	0.01	1,570	0.01	897,310	8.3

Source: data processed after 1992, 2002 and 2011 Censuses

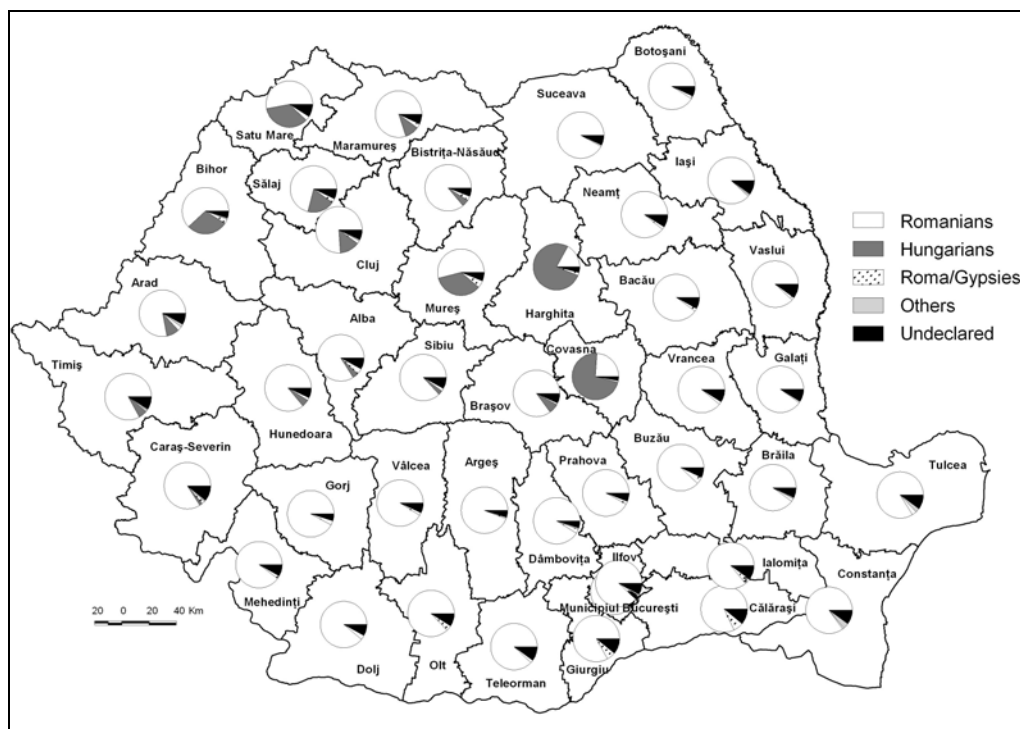


Fig. 7 – Ethnical structure of the urban population by counties, 2011.

The number of German nationals in town registered a steep decline, from 80,244 inhabitants in 1992 to only 24,727 in 2011, owing mainly to external migration. Nearly 70% are urban residents of Timiș (6,165 inh.), Sibiu (2,880 inh.), Caraș-Severin (2,374 inh.), Arad (1,989 inh.), Brașov (1,947 inh.) and Satu Mare (1,884 inh.) counties.

Speaking of the other nationalities, it appears that the number of Italians, Chinese and Croatians was on the rise compared to 1992. In the case of all other nationals, census data indicate depleted figures, particularly steep decrease for Jews, Czechs, Poles, Ukrainians and Greeks.

The proportion of Magyars, Germans, Turks, Tartars, and more especially of Jews, Greeks and Armenians in the country's urban population tops the average cross-country value.

Quite interesting, 8.3% of all town-dwellers did not state their nationality, this category rising from 671 people in 1992 to 897,310 in 2011.

Counties in which numerous other nationals are town-residents: Constanța (Turks – 15.1 mii inh., Lippovan-Russians – 1.0 thou. inh., Tartars – 13.9 thou. inh.), Tulcea (Turks – 1.5 thou. inh., Lippovan-Russians – 2.1 thou. inh.), Timiș (Ukrainians – 1.3 thou. inh., Serbs – 5.9 thou. inh., Bulgarians – 1.3 thou. inh.), Maramureș (Ukrainians – 1.0 thou. inh.), Brăila (Lippovan-Russians – 1.9 thou. inh.), Caraș-Severin (Serbs – 1.8 thou. inh.), Arad (Slovaks – 3.6 thou. inh.), Bihor (Slovaks – 1.1 thou. inh.), Bucharest Municipium (Germans, Roma/Gypsies, Italians, Turks, Chinese and Jews).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Post-war urbanisation in Romania was an up-going process, from 54.3% at the beginning of 1990 to 55.1% in 2007 (the year of integration into the European Union), which is a remarkable percentage compared to the inter-war period (21.4% in 1930). After 1989, the new socio-political conditions led to in-depth restructuring of the whole urban system, urbanisation itself acquiring new dimensions and particularities. The peak year of the 20th century – 1995 (54.9%) was followed by a slowdown of this process, the 2002 town population representing 52.7% of the country's total. As a large number of settlements (53) were given town status after 2002, urbanisation came to a record high of all times (55.2%) in 2007.

The towns' post-war functional profile was permanently changing, from the pre-war services-industrial and agrarian-services type to the industry-dominated type (specialised or diversified), or the mixed type (industrial-services, industrial agrarian) and the services type (specialised, or agrarian services). In the wake of the post-1989 economic and urban crisis and the functional destructuring of towns, the tertiary town model has become topical again.

One of the strategic objectives for 2013 inscribed in the National Strategy for Romania's Sustainable Development over 2013–2020–2030 is to support a balanced and sustainable regional economic and social development in order to meet each region's needs by creating urban growth poles. To this end, the provisions of the Regional Operational Programme shall be implemented, with highlight on enhancing the economic and social role of urban centres by a polycentric approach capable to create a better balanced regional development. Sixty per cent of the funds earmarked to urban development should be used to rehabilitate town infrastructure and improve municipal services, inclusive of transport; 25% to modernise the social infrastructure and 15% to improve the business milieu.

In line with spatial development strategies, one of the national objectives scheduled for 2020 is the formation, at regional level, of the polycentric system of urban functional areas (urban agglomerations) and of urbanisation corridors along the transport routes of European interest (network polycentricity).

The urban network appears to be insufficiently developed in terms of number of towns versus the total population of Romania. In 2010, there were 320 towns, when 400–450 would have been necessary, which is what a European country the size of Romania is expected to have. There are many

rural settlements whose economic basis, demographic strength and physiognomy are by far better than that of the towns granted this status in 1968 or before that date.

Planning and developing an extended network of urban and rural localities as a premiss for making Romania's regions dynamic, attractive and competitive, fully linked to the EU territorial management system, is a national objective for 2030. Orientative targets for urban centres have in view to raise the level of urbanisation up to 70% (by including some 650 rural localities into the town category) and providing for green-yellow belts around 2nd-rank towns (green area indicator: 35m²/inh. in 1st- and 2nd-rank towns) (2006–2007, *The Concept of Territorial Development of Romania and integration into the EU territorial structures, 2007–2030*).

At present, the urban system is being restructured, the urban phenomenon acquiring new characteristics and dimensions. Town dynamics was seriously influenced by the December 1989 events and by some new elements, such as the elimination of administrative restrictions to people's settlement in urban centres, overemployment in the urban economy; at the same time, the supply of goods for the population was being improved.

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