

Jan WENDT
University of Gdańsk, POLAND

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THE DEMOGRAPHY OF ROMANIANS IN BESSARABIA AND NORTHERN BUKOVINA

Due to certain circumstances a number of Romanians live outside the present national boundaries of the Romanian State. While the history has the duty to point out and to explain the factors determining the situation changing in time, political geography and demography has the duty to seize this process and to stress the role played by the demographic factors. The study of other problems, such as cultural models, can not be undertaken without the help of psychological and sociological science. Since the main characteristics identifying a nation are nationality and mother tongue, the involvement of linguistics is needed in this approach. The conclusion is that this kind of study implies necessarily the interdisciplinary co-operation between different sciences, as demography, political geography, linguistics, anthropography, ethnology and political sciences. The Romanians who lived outside the national frontiers in Moldavia, Ukraine and the Balkan Peninsula represented native populations. First of all one problem must be enlightened. The problem refers to the population censuses from the last century as main information sources. The registered characteristics are citizenship, nationality, ethnic origin, mother tongue, language and religion. However in many cases the data do not reflect the reality, except the cases when the population is obliged by the authorities to declare themselves as members of the majority nation. The national question in Romania, because of its complicated structure, has always captured the interest of geographers in the last century. Especially that Bessarabia and north Bukovina were a taboo subject for the last fifty years. First of all because of the communist system in the country, second because the territory belonged to the Soviet Union before 1940 and between 1945-1989. After the Moldavian Republic declared its independence on the 27th of August 1991 a second Romanian state appeared in Europe, because about 64% of Moldavia populations are ethnically Romanians.

Before 1812, when Russia has captured Bessarabia, this region has been a part of the Duchy of Moldavia under the rule of local prince. After establishing Kingdom of Romania from Wallachia and the remaining part of Moldavia

Bessarabia still existed as a part of Russian Empire and north Bukovina has been a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After the Crimean War and the Paris conferences Russia has lost south part of Bessarabia (three regions), which has been captured again by Turkey. After Russia won the war against Turkey (1877-1878) and the San Stefano treaty was signed, Romania got the province of Dobruja and the Danube delta while Russia got back south part of Bessarabia.

During the First World War, while standing face to face with the Entente's successes, in September 1916, Romania declared war against Austria-Hungary, justifying the decision with the situation of the Romanians behind the Carpathians. But after the first successes in Transylvania, the Romanian army had to retreat. The Romanians lost their capital and were displaced to Moldavia. After the October Revolution broke out, with the Entente's approval, Romania lost their military support in the East and signed the armistice. Romania lost Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria's advantage, the Carpathian passes to Austria-Hungary's advantage, but at the sacrifice of the USSR, Bessarabia - which was declared the Independent Moldavian Republic - was incorporated to Romania. One year later though, after the Entente's victory, the structure of power in the Balkans changed. In Alba Julia, the historical capital of Transylvania, the National Congress was held and decided about unification of Transylvania and Banat with Romania. Thanks to treaties with Austria, Bulgaria (1919) and Hungary (1920), Romania took the whole Transylvania, all Bukovina, south part of Dobruja and a part of Banat, keeping Bessarabia in its possession. In this way, the conception of 'Great Romania' - Romania Mare was realised. The 'Great Romania' had about 300,000 km² and about 17 millions of population including about 30% of ethnic minorities (Hungarians, Seklers, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, Turks, Bulgarians). The USSR opposed the incorporation of Bessarabia, Hungary did not agree with the incorporation of Transylvania but Romania did not want any plebiscite on the controversial territories and the government started to Romanize the annexed lands.

During the interwar period Romania was forced to sign a minority agreement, which guaranteed rights to national minorities living on its territory. To secure its eastern border and keep Bessarabia, Romania signed a political and military pact with Poland that guaranteed mutual help in case of possible aggression Russia. To secure its acquisitions, at the sacrifice of Hungary, Romania had a military pact with the Czech Republic and SHS Kingdom (later Yugoslavia) and created the so-called 'Little Entente' directed against Hungary. The last step had also anti-Bulgarian consequences, very important to Yugoslavia and Romania. In the 1930s, another pact was signed with Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey (the so-called Balkan Entente). This pact was also directed against Bulgaria. In this way Romania wanted to secure integrity of its territory. Romania wanted to renew the pact with France, which approved incorporation of Bessarabia. But the increase of fascist tendency, influence of

German capital, signing the economic pact with the Third Reich, and the incorporation of Austria by Hitler, led to the breaking up of the pro-French policy. Also, it was very difficult to count on French support after the incorporation of the Czech Republic. When Germany attacked Poland, Romania decided to remain neutral.

In 1940, under the influence of German successes and defeat of France, Romania carried out stronger pro-German foreign policy. An 'oil' pact was signed and after that a 'cereal' pact, which guaranteed oil and cereal supply to the Reich in exchange for Romanian army's reinforce. But the pacts and the pro-German policy could not stop the oncoming catastrophe. The USSR, abiding by the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, put forward an ultimatum to Romania and demanded giving back Bessarabia and North Bukovina. In these circumstances Romania had to agree with it. Bessarabia was then incorporated to the Socialistic Republic of Moldavia (created in 1924) while Bukovina was annexed to the Ukrainian SSR. To complete the national tragedy, under the influence of German aggression, Romania had to give back Maramureş (30.08.1940), Crisany and North Transylvania (with the cities of Oradea, Satu Mare, Kluz, and Bistrita) which were inhabited generally by Romanians (Tab. 1).

Table 1. Changes of attachment of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina's in the years 1812-1991

Years	Bessarabia	Northern Bukovina
1812-1916	Russia Empire	Austrian Empire
1917-1918	Independent Republic of Moldavia	Austrian Empire
1918-1940	Kingdom of Romania	Kingdom of Romania
1940-1941	USSR	USSR
1941-1945	Kingdom of Romania	Kingdom of Romania
1945-1989	USSR	USSR
1989-1991	Moldavian SSR	Ukrainian SSR
After 1991	Republic of Moldavia	Republic of Ukraine

Source: Author's own elaboration.

In November, the Romanian government joined the Axis Powers, which were attacked by the USSR in 1941. During the first few months, Bessarabia and northern Bukovina were occupied and incorporated to Romania. The territories between the Dneestr and Boh Rivers became a separate administrative unit of Transistria with the centre in Odessa. As a result of the Reich's defeat, a resistance against the war increased in Romania. When the Red Army was coming into Moldavia, in September 1944, King Michael started a revolution and arrested General Antonescu. The regular army detachments stopped fighting against the Red Army. The German reaction was very quick. The Germans bombed Bucharest and the Romanian army started the war against the Germans.

When the USSR's army entered Bucharest, Romania officially was on the Allies side and declared a war to Hungary. At the end of October, Romanian army, in spite of German and Hungarian counterattacks, annexed the whole Transylvania. According to the peace treaty signed in Paris (February 10, 1947) Romania kept Transylvania, whereas Bessarabia and Bukovina were incorporated to Russia.

The territory occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940 covered 50,8 km², with population of 3.41 million in 1930 and 3.78 million in 1940 (estimated) (Golopenția, 1941). The share of Romanians increased from 52.5% (1930) to 53.5% (1940). Carpatho-Russians, Ukrainians and Russians decreased from 26.2% (1930) to 25.8% (1940), although their absolute number grew from 894,000 to 978,000. The Romanians from the territories included in the Soviet Union represented more than a half of total population (Tab. 2).

T a b l e 2. National composition of population on the territories annexed by the Soviet Union

Nationality	1930		1940		Increase 1930/1940 (%)
	thousand	%	thousand	%	
Romanians	1,787	52.5	2,020	53.5	13.0
Carpatho-Russians, Ukrainians	537	15.7	587	15.4	9.3
Russians	357	10.5	391	10.4	9.5
Jews	275	8.1	274	7.3	0.0
Bulgarians	164	4.8	186	4.9	13.4
Germans	111	3.5	125	3.3	12.6
Gagauz, Poles, Gypsies	179	4.9	193	5.1	7.8
Total	3,410	100.0	3,776	100.0	10.7

Source: Golopenția, 1941.

Under normal circumstances the number of the population is influenced by two factors: the birth rate (the balance between births and deaths) and the external migrations (the difference between emigration and immigration). However the complete analysis of number of Romanians in Bessarabia and northern Bukovina during the 1940-1990 period must take into account the following factors: the Romanian refugees from 1940 and 1944; the deported Romanians; the murdered ones (1941); the result of the Romanian denationalisation process and its impact. Unfortunately, the contribution of these factors to the evolution of the Romanian population is only partly known failing precise data on each of them.

From the administrative point of view, the territory occupied by the Soviet Union has been divided between the Moldavian and the Ukrainian SSR. To the Moldavian SSR belong historical Moldavia and a part of the territory across the Dneestr, whereas to the Ukraine SSR belong the Cernăuți region (northern

Bukovina - former counties Cernăuți and Storojineț, part of Rădăuți and Herta region) and the Odessa region (part of Southern Bessarabia - most of Tighina, Cetatea Albă and Ismail counties). A bigger group of Romanians live in the Transcarpathian region (part of Maramureș) included also to the Ukrainian SSR.

Under these circumstances, we can stress some reference points related to the evolution of the number of Romanians (in Moldavia officially called 'Moldavians'), at the census 1959, 1979, 1989 (Tab. 3).

Table 3. The number of Romanians and 'Moldavians' in the Soviet Union and the Moldavian SSR (thousands)

	1959	1979	1989
Soviet Union	2,320	3,097	3,498
Moldavian SSR	1,887	2,536	2,795
% in relation to the Soviet Union	81.3	81.6	79.9

Source: Trebici, 1991, p. 11.

Almost four fifths of 'Moldavians' had their places of residence in the Moldavian SSR. Although it is artificial we go on making the distinction between 'Moldavians' and 'Romanians' as they usually appear in the Soviet statistic sources. In the Moldavian SSR and then in the Republic of Moldavia there were only 'Moldavians'. From the total 3.35 million Moldavians the census registered only 83.4% 'at home' and about 0.5 million on the whole territory of the USSR, most of them in the Ukrainian SSR (9.7%), the Russian Federation (5.2%) and Kazakhstan (1%).

The Republic of Moldova has area of 33,700 km² and 4,338 thousand inhabitants. As regards the ratio of Romanians by counties in 1989, in six centrally located counties Romanians make up over 90%, only in the three counties situated in the south of the territory they represent less than 20% of the population. The counties in which the Romanians account for less than 50% of the population are situated in the south and eastern part of Moldova, and are a result of Russian and Ukrainian settlement policies.

Despite historical calamities and complications, there is no doubt that the Romanians had been and continue to be the majority population, representing two third of its total population. Moreover, the number of ethnic Romanians has been steadily growing since 1930 (Tab. 4).

The proportions of the each group fluctuated over time. Ukrainians and Bulgarians reached a peak in 1941, Russians and Belorussians in 1989. After 1941 many Germans have been resettled to the German Reich and many Jews escaped to the USSR and Asia Minor. Gagauz, Gypsies and Poles are all the time on the same level. After 1941 Bessarabia was a subject to tough policy of denationalisation with the Soviets bringing into the province his citizens from

all over the Soviet Union. But in spite of this allochthonous influx, Romanians have remained the largest ethnic group.

T a b l e 4. Population evolution in the 20th century in Bessarabia (Moldova) in %

Nationality	1919	1930	1941	1959	1970	1979	1989	1993	1995
Romanians	64.0	56.2	65.6	64.4	64.5	63.9	64.5	64.5	64.5
Ukrainians	9.7	11.0	16.4	14.6	14.2	14.2	13.8	13.8	13.6
Russians	2.8	12.3	6.0	10.2	11.6	12.8	13.0	13.0	13.0
Gagauz	.	3.4	4.2	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Bulgarians	5.6	5.7	6.5	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Jews	10.2	7.2	0.3	3.3	2.7	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.8
Gypsies	.	0.4	.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Belorussians	.	.	.	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4
Poles	.	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Germans	3.0	2.9	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1
Others	4.7	0.8	0.6	1.3	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.6

Source: Cobanu, 1992, p. 63; *Moldavian national census 1997, 1998*.

The spatial distribution of the Romanians and Moldavians is very different in the six counties of Cernăuți region (northern Bukovina). From the total of 417 localities of the region Romanians (Moldavians) are found in 87 located in Hliboca county (45), Noua Suliă (29), Storojine (11) Hotin (1) and Securenii (1). In Comani county Romanians are found in one locality only.

The most striking difference between Romanians and Moldavians in the Cernăuți region concerns the mother tongue. The 95% of Moldavians declare Moldavian (Romanian) as their mother tongue and 53% Romanians admit that their mother tongue is Romanian. This ratio is decreasing from one census to another (Tab. 5).

T a b l e 5. Main nationalities in the Cernăuți region in 1989

Nationality	Number of population	
	in thousand	in %
Ukrainians	666.1	70.8
Romanians	100.3	10.7
Moldavians	84.5	9.0
Russians	63.1	6.7
Jews	16.5	1.8
Others	10.3	1.0
Total	940.8	100.0

Source: Trebici, 1991, p. 16.

The process of 'Ukrainisation' is very fast, reminding of period of Habsburg domination in the historical Bukovina (1773-1918). In the middle of the 19th century old Romanian settlements have been entirely assimilated by Ukrainians. In the years 1940-1990 this process was going on more quickly. It can be partly explained in terms of strong immigration in the Cernăuți region and mixed marriages. However, the main reason is the lack of education in the Romanian language, the pressure exerted by the local administrative authorities, church and school on the Romanian population, especially in the Lviv region, where the majority are Ukrainians, Greek-Catholic anti-Russian and anti-Romanian nationalist extremist (Trebici, 1991, p. 18). Such ethnic policy and lack of foreign investigations caused a disruption of international relation between the two regions (Moldavia and northern Bukovina). There is only one transborder region (the Carpathian euro-region) with participation of Cernăuți region whereas on the Moldavia border there is none.

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