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**Population change on national and regional level**

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**Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI)**

**Paper 1**

**Strange reversal of internal migration flows between  
urban and rural areas in Romania in the context of  
post-communist economic and social transition**

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# Contents

- I. The Romanian population crisis
- II. Population decline and its components:  
national level
- III. Strange reversal of Urban – Rural internal  
migration flows: the general level
- IV. Strange reversal of Urban – Rural internal  
migration flows: the regional level
- V. Concluding remarks

# **I. The Romanian population crisis**

Any analysis and evaluation of internal and external migration in Romania cannot be dissociated from the deep political, economic and social changes Romania experienced after 1989. Under the pressure of economic and social factors defining the transition-crisis, including the painful economic reforms, Romanian society is looking for a new equilibrium. But the way is hard and a lot of unknown developments are in front of us.

Economic and social transition has overturned the demographic landscape of Romania. Fall in birth rate, upsurge in mortality and negative international migration have deeply deteriorated the demographic panorama of the country. Population decline and increasing population ageing can be viewed as the most noticeable immediate objectification of this deterioration.

## **THE ROMANIAN POPULATION CRISIS**

The Romanian demographic landscape deeply changed during the 1990s and it continues to change in this first decade of the new century, by internal dynamics or by the action of a permanently changing socio-economic context. Some changes are common with the mutations having taken place in all other ex-communist central and eastern European countries being in political, economic and social transition after the collapse of the communism. It is, mainly, the case of a large fall in births number and, with a few exceptions, an upsurge of mortality. But, one can notice at the same time important national particularities arising from the manner in which the political and economic reforms have been conceived and implemented, from gaps in general economic, social and cultural development, as well as from other factors having an historical nature.

A summary view on the degree of demographic deterioration in Romania vis-à-vis of the other countries of the region shows a median position, either concerning the magnitude of birth rate decrease or the increase of mortality (Council of Europe, 2005). A population decline installed in 1990, due to negative net external migration during the whole period and by natural decrease since 1992, and the accelerating population aging are the most visible characteristics of the present Romanian landscape. This landscape is the result of the political, economic and social environment having shaped the population and the demographic phenomena and this environment was, essentially, a crisis one. Economic crisis, but also social crisis.

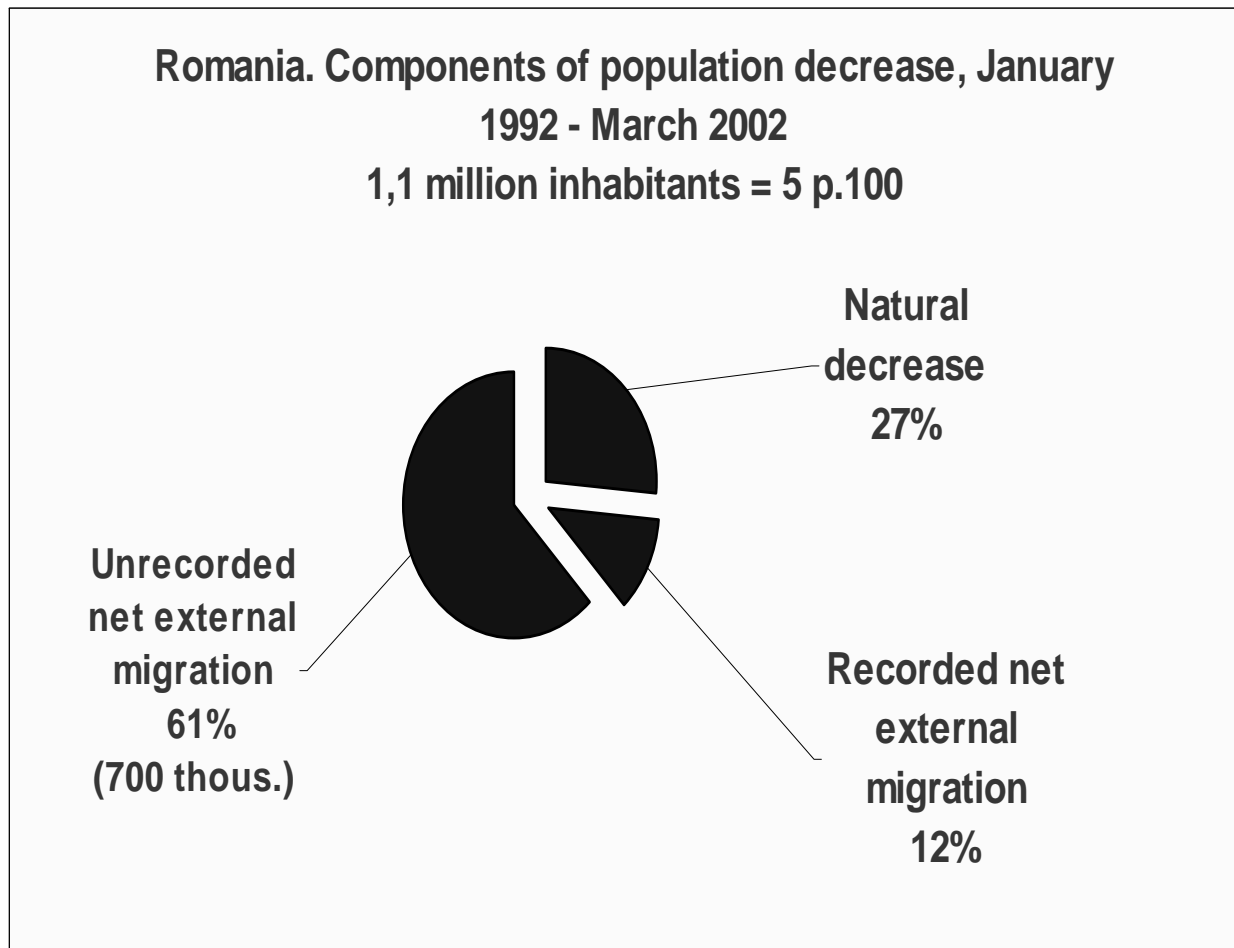
## **II. Population decline and its components – national level.**

**Role of international migration.**

**Some of its characteristics.**

# Romanian population decline

Between the last two population censuses – January 1992 and March 2002, Romania lost 1,1 million inhabitants (5 p.100 of its population):



## **A few words about the 3 components**

**The natural decrease is the result of a downward trends in birth rate and an increase of mortality. The stable values of these two components after mid-1990s – around 10 ‰ – for birth rate, and around 12 ‰ – for death rate – give an annual population decrease of 40-50 thousand inhabitants.**



**The known, recorded external migration** is not very important as size after mid-1990s: 10 to 15 thousand of emigrants by year and 1 to 2 thousand of immigrants.

### **The emigration:**

- the propensity is certainly higher than the real level but the immigration policies of western countries have become more and more selective and restrictive;
- the share of young emigrants is increasing, as well as the proportion of highly educated persons;
- the destinations are more numerous and Germany, the main destination of emigration for many decades, has lost that position, as the number of emigrants to Germany, USA, Italy and Canada is now well balanced (1500-2000 by year);
- about 90 % of emigrants are of Romanian ethnicity.

### **The immigration:**

- mainly, a return migration, from USA, Germany, Canada, Israel; an important number of immigrants from Moldova in 1998-2002.

## **The temporary labor migration:**

- the most important component of external migration;
- the true number of labor migrants is unknown; but we know this number was increasing after the annulment of entry visa for almost all European countries;
- an escape valve for a bad managed and underdeveloped economy and the main investor today.

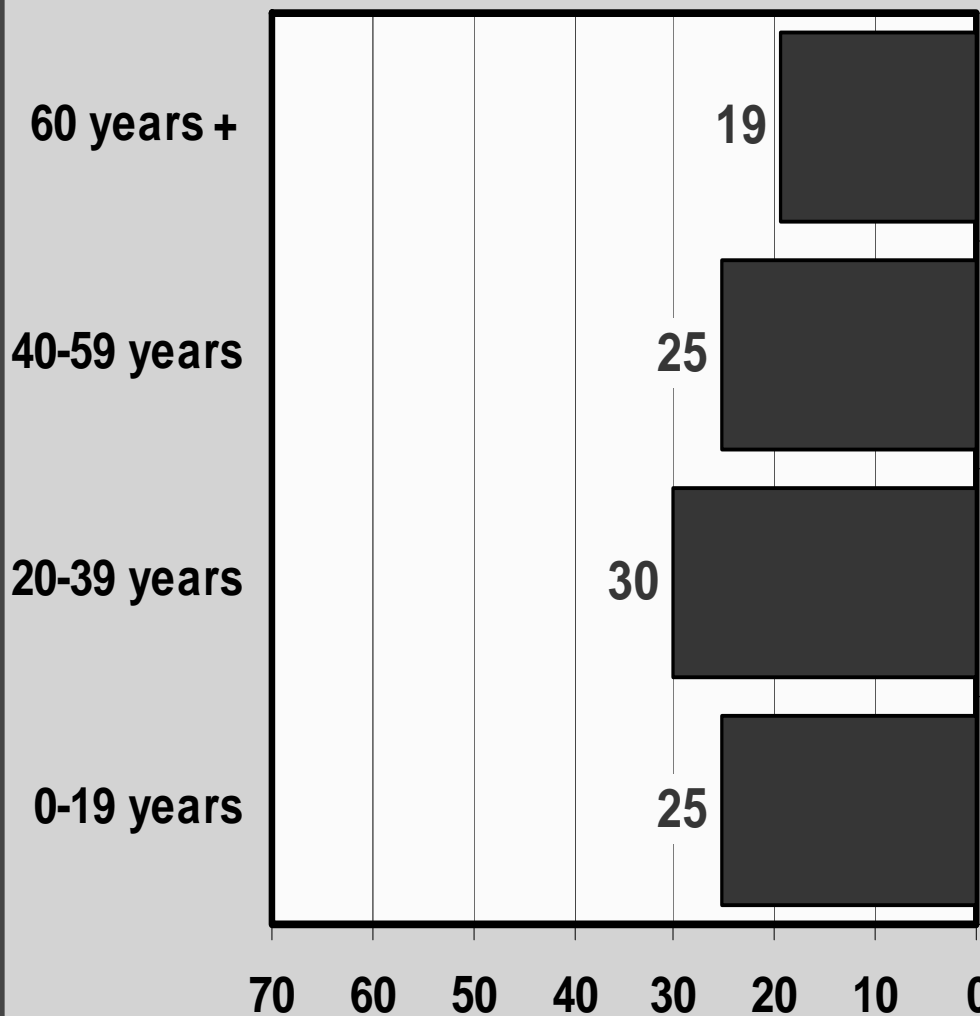
## Who are the movers?

We don't have enough statistical information about their characteristics. In fact, the present national statistical system cannot to collect information on this population.

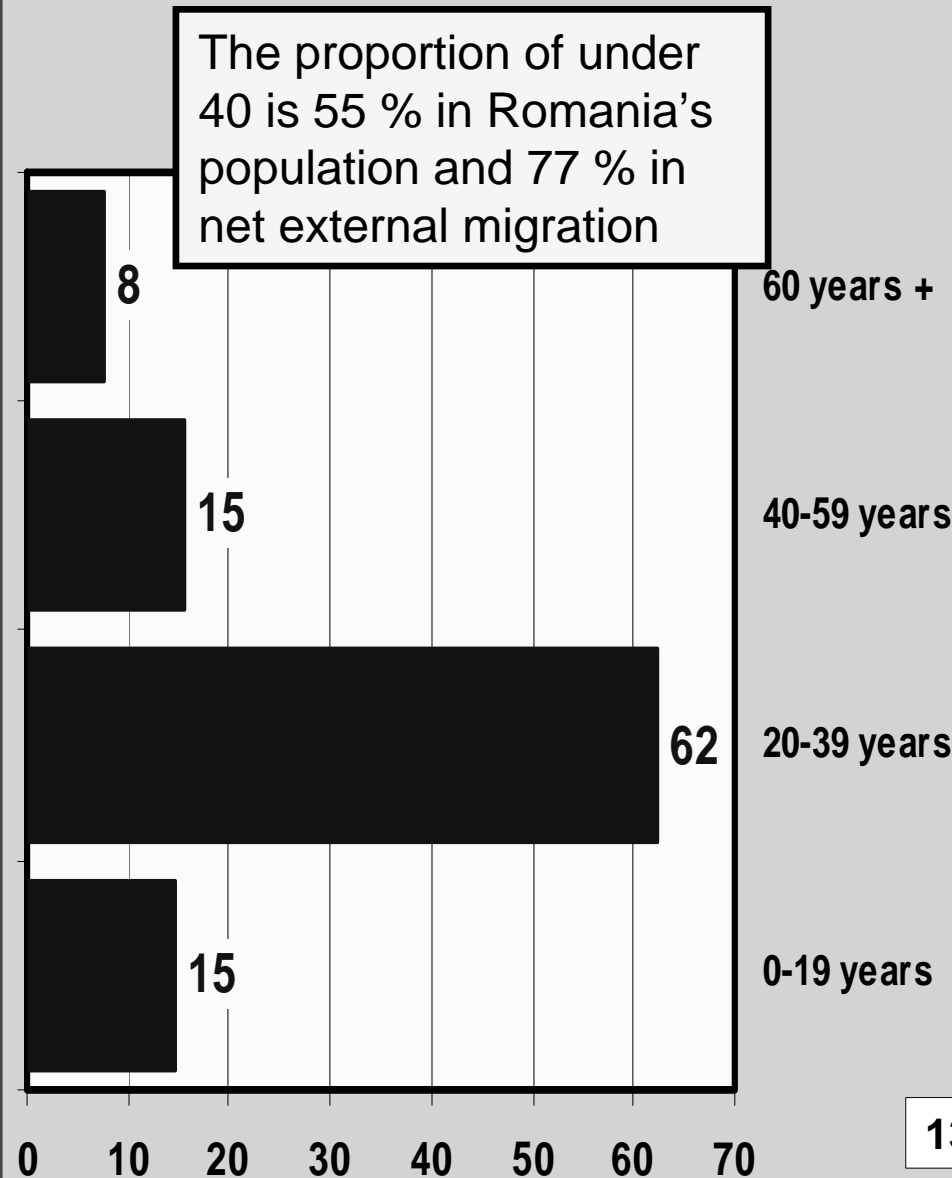
Moreover, the status of this population is a very strange one. The 700 thousand missing inhabitants at the 2002 census by temporary migration, don't belong to the *de jure* population of Romania, as they have not been registered during the census (for various reasons); but they belong to *de facto* population of Romania, as they may to return back any time; only, coming back, they will not be re-included in the *de jure* population of the country (there is no statistical instrument); if we take the assumption most of them will return one day, their exclusion of Romania's population is an incorrect statistical fact.

We can to present now exclusive data on the age structure of labor migrants. These data are the result of a cohort approach of population change between the 1992 and the 2002 population census.

Age structure of population, census of March 2002 - %

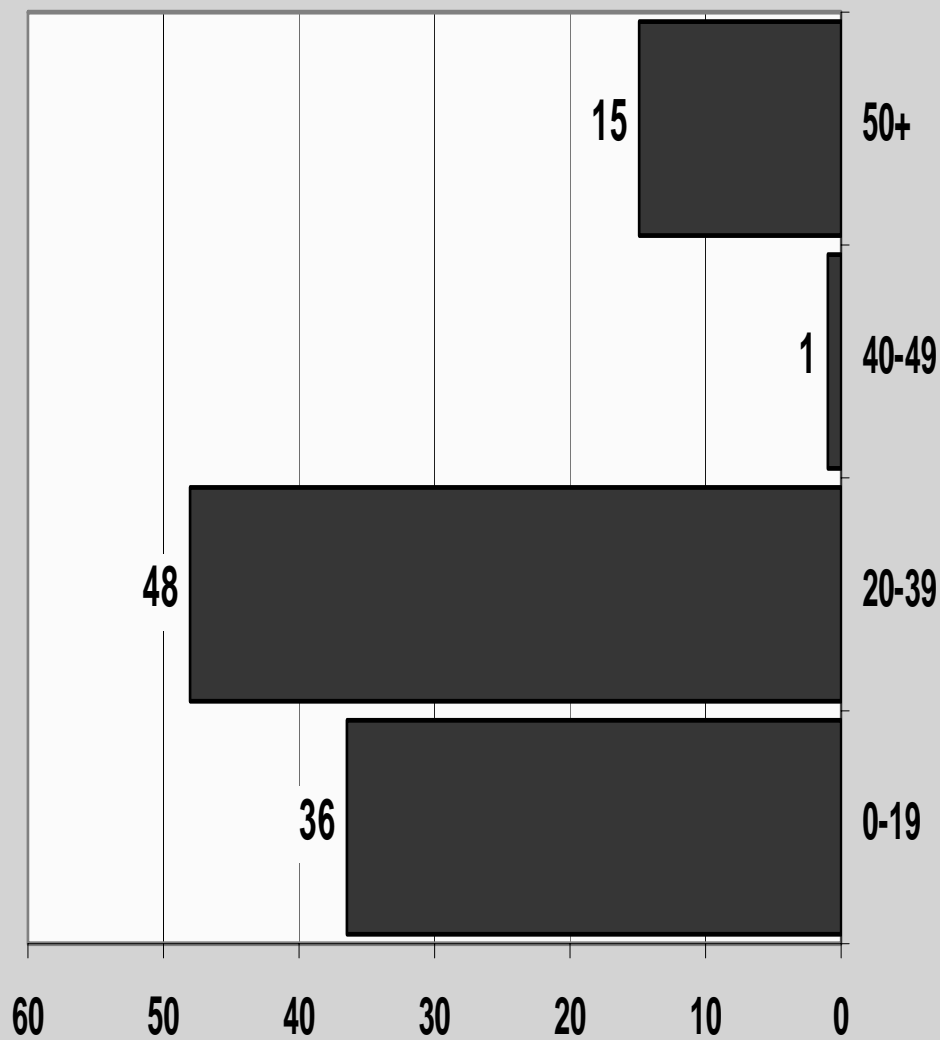


Age structure of TOTAL net external migration between the 1992 and the 2002 census - %



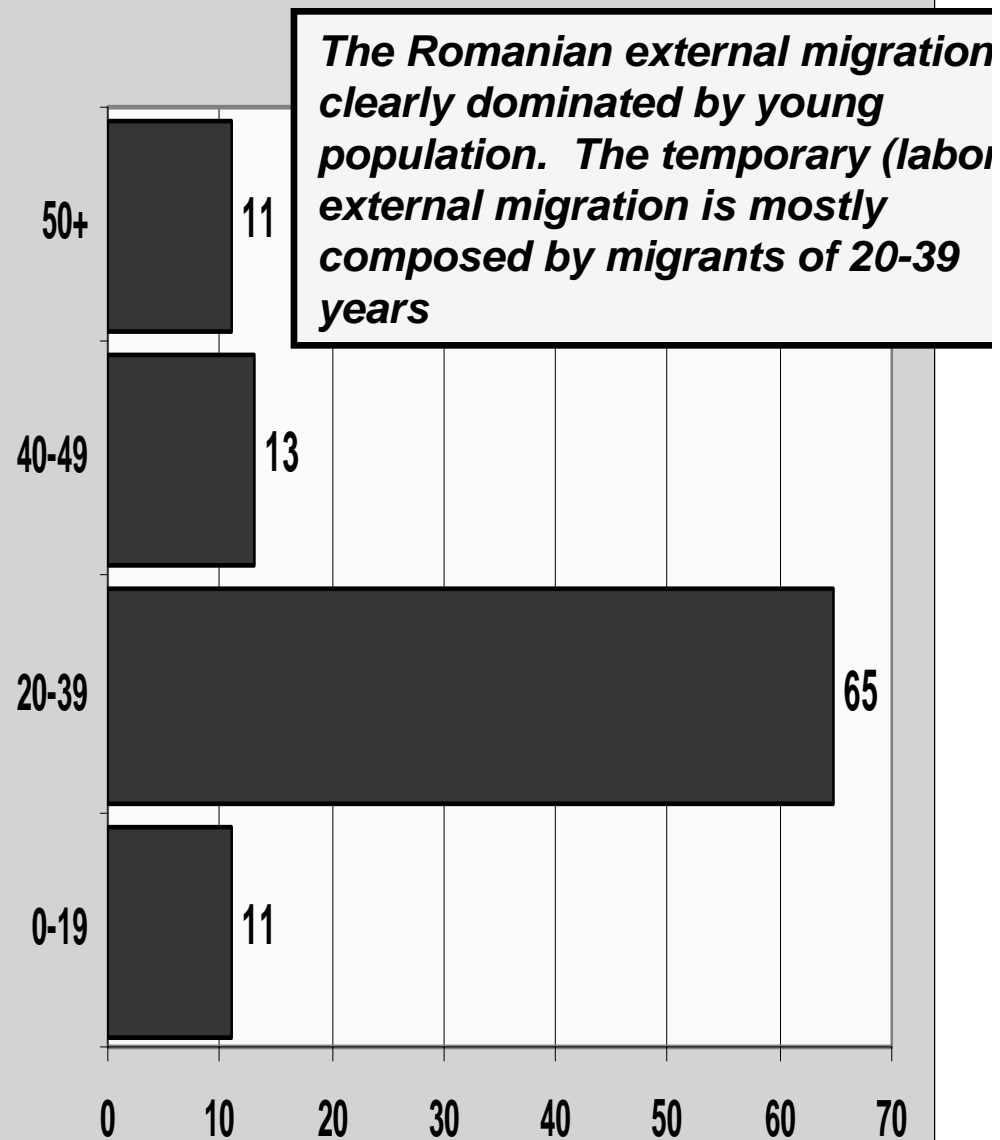
### Age structure of recorded net external migration

1992-2002 - %



### Age structure of temporary net external migration

1992-2002 - %



*The Romanian external migration clearly dominated by young population. The temporary (labor) external migration is mostly composed by migrants of 20-39 years*

# **III. STRANGE REVERSAL OF INTERNAL MIGRATION FLOWS BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS**

**The general level**

The population decline of 1.1 million between 1992 and 2002 is the combined result of natural decrease and international migration at national level.

If we push this dynamics at urban / rural or regional level, what we can see is a more complex panorama and the important contribution played by a third component – the internal migration



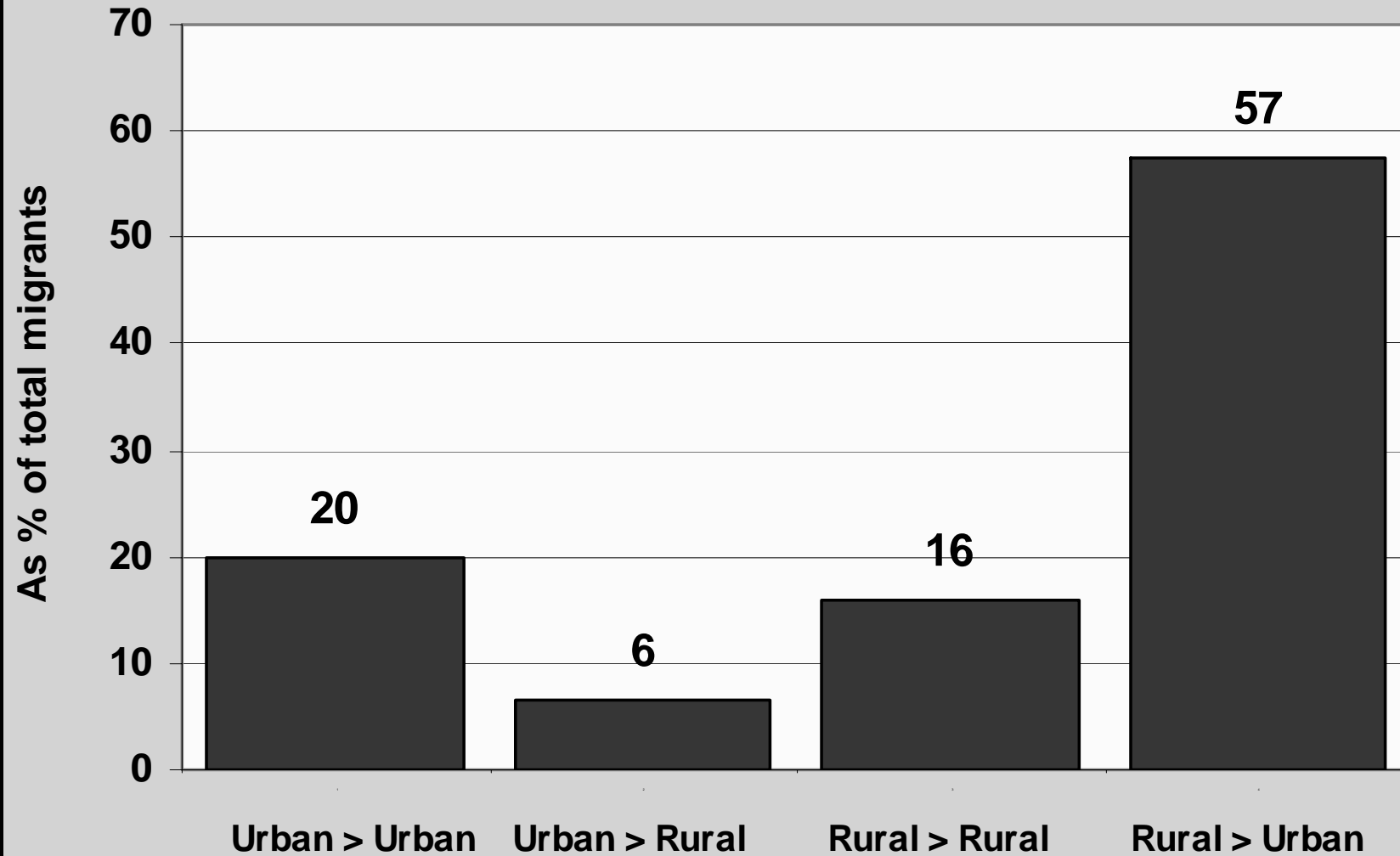
**What is Urban and what is Rural in Romania?**

The Urban is composed of towns only; no suburban areas. A settlement receives the quality of town by law. On January 1, 2005, the number of towns was 314. The most important towns represent municipalities (96). The Rural is composed of villages (2827).

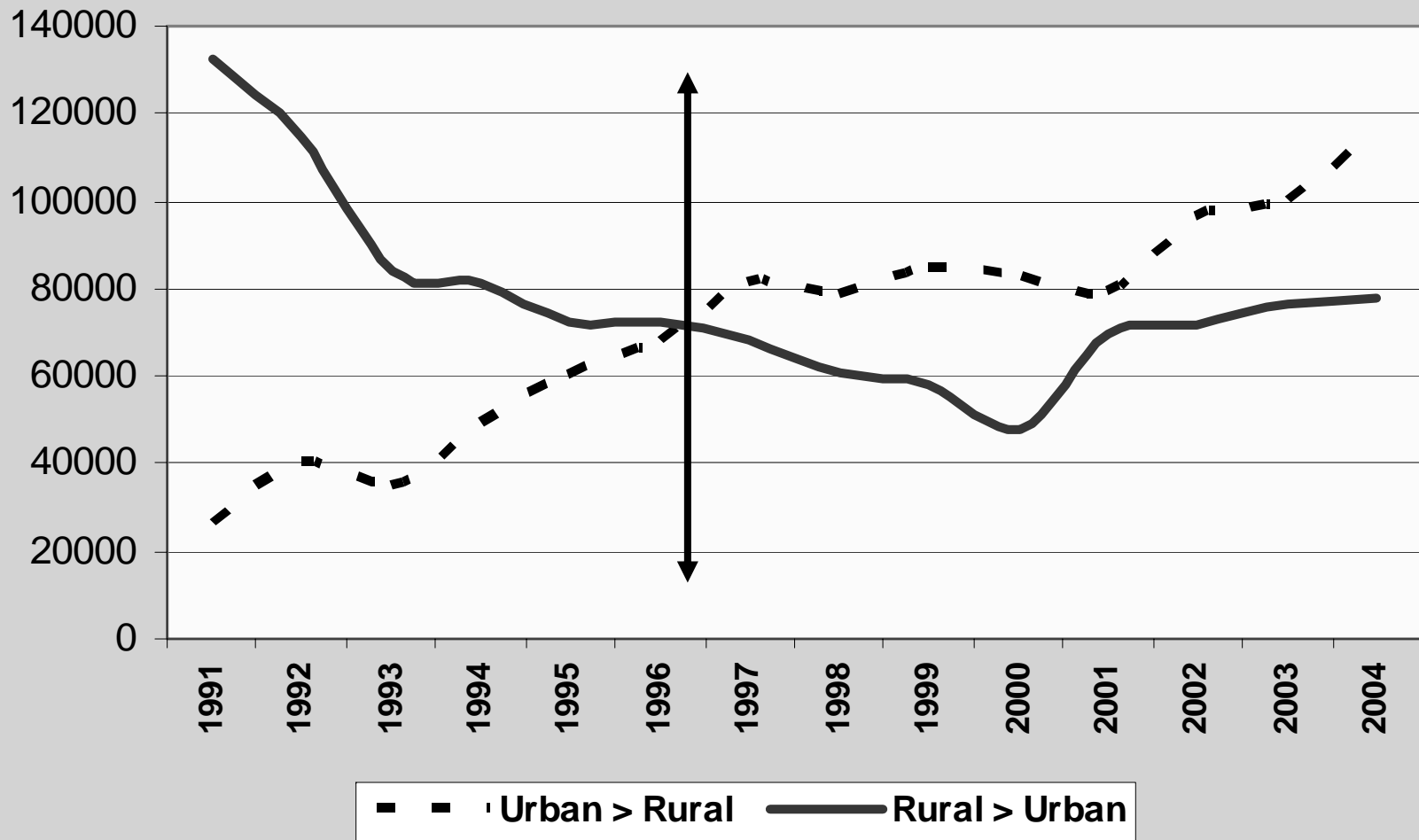
Towns and villages, January 1, 2005

Les villes - Towns			Les communes - Villages		
Taille – habitants Size	Nombre Number	Population	Taille – habitants Size	Nombre Number	Population
Total	314	11 901 033 (54,9 %)	Total	2827	9 757 495 (45,1 %)
Moins de / Less than 10000	115	776506	Moins de/ Less than 1000	63	46693
10000-19999	93	1244347	1000-2999	1312	2789446
20000-49999	60	1812545	3000-4999	980	3773418
50000-99999	21	1491949	5000-6999	318	1833071
100000-199999	14	1875946	7000-8999	113	886677
200000-299999	9	1542213	9000-9999	19	179663
300000-399999	4	1230079	10000-11999	17	183940
400000 et plus / and over	1	1927448	12000 et plus / and over	5	64587
Taille moyenne Average size		37901	Taille moyenne Average size		3451

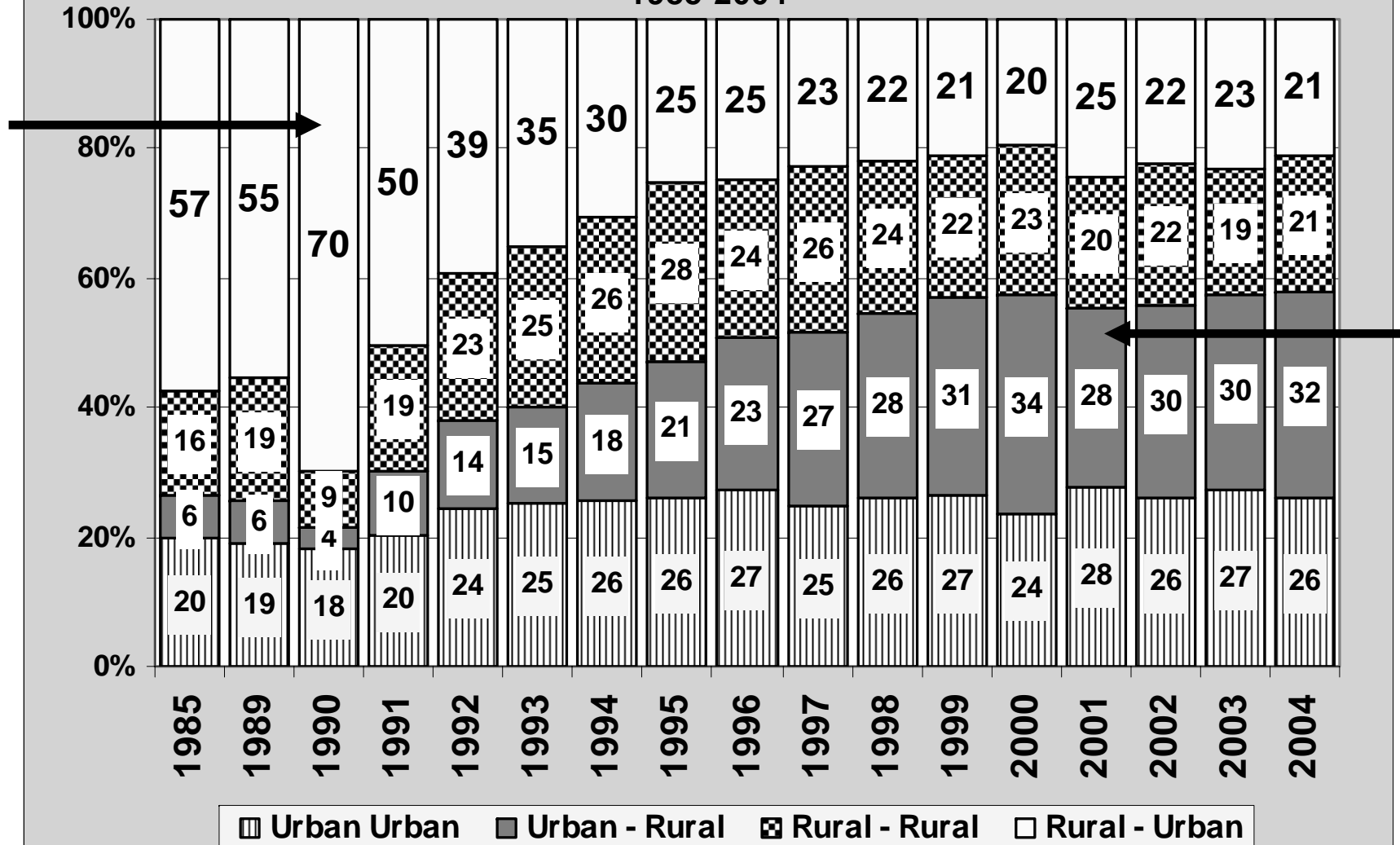
### Romania. The typical annual urban and rural internal migration pattern before 1990



### Romania. Migration flows (with change of permanent residence) Urban > Rural and Rural > Urban, 1991-2004



Romania. Structure of internal urban and rural migration, 1985-2004



# **Factors and mechanisms of change:**

## **1. Urban push factors:**

**increasing unemployment; low income; erosion of standard of living; jumping costs of housing utilities (heating, electricity, gas, hot water); violence.**

## **2. Rural pull factors:**

**land reform (return); lower cost of food; preservation of family / household relationship.**

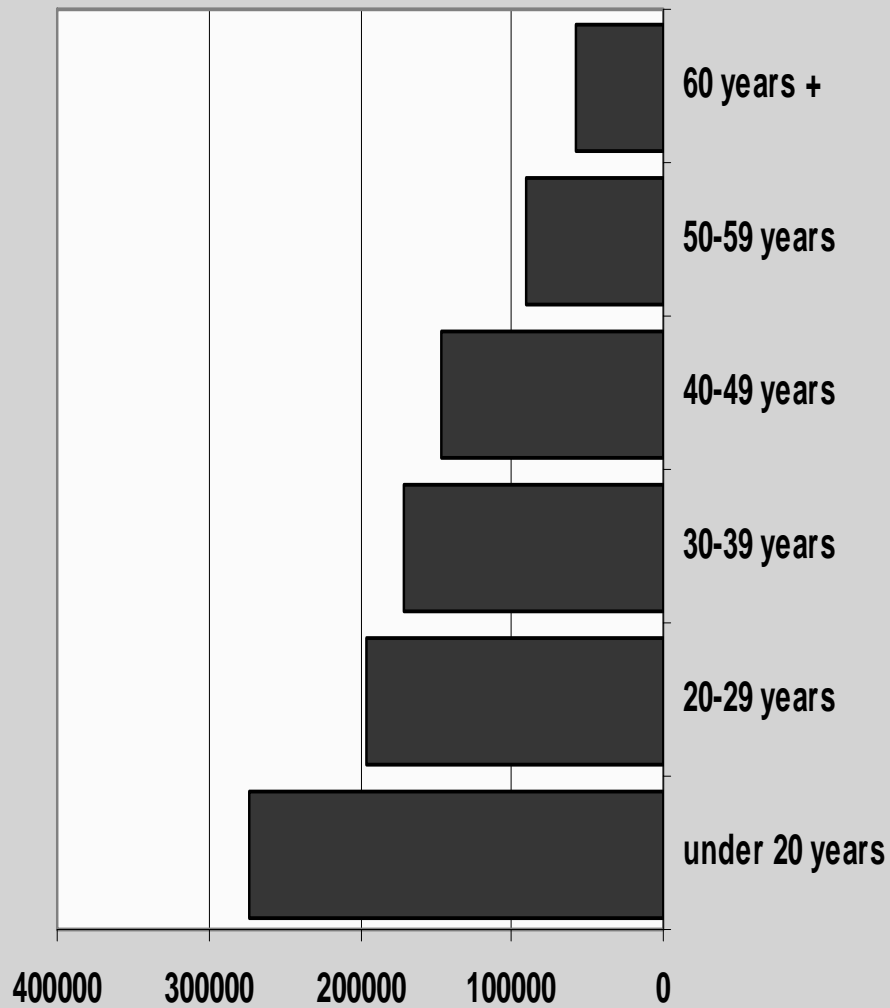
Who are the  $U > R$  movers?

Unfortunately, the available statistical data are limited

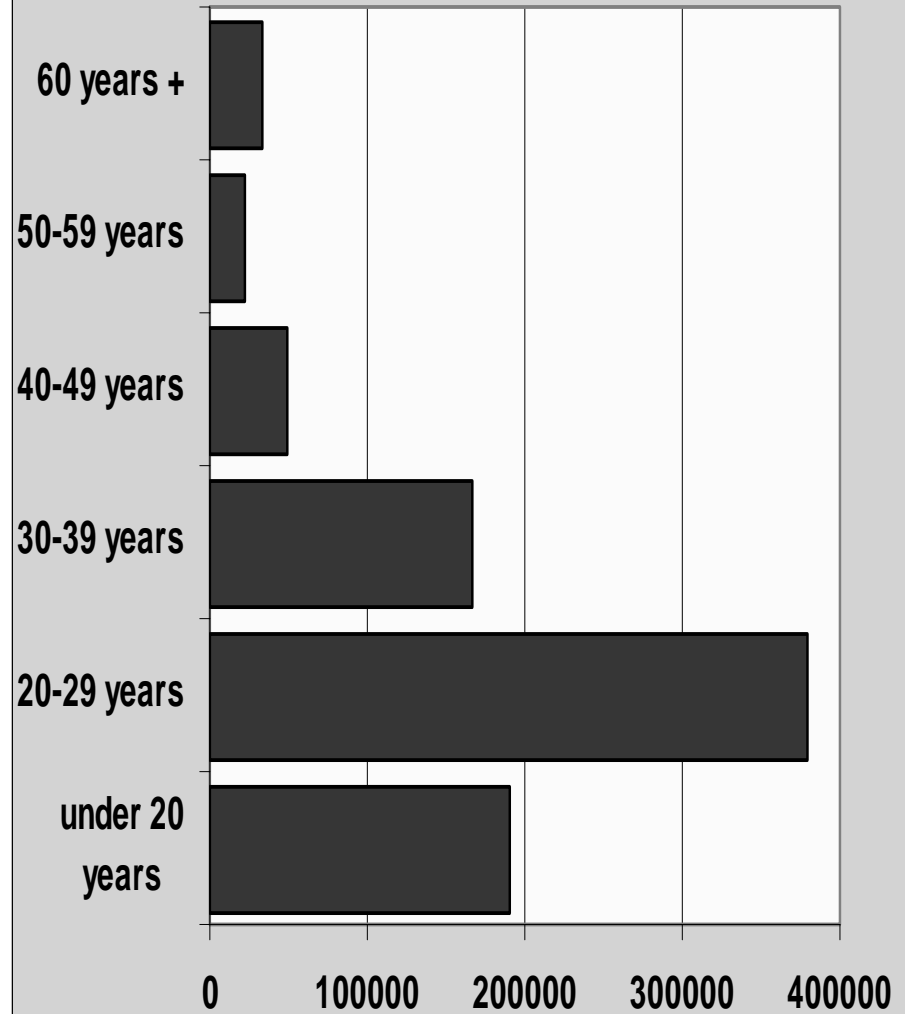
*(although for each change of permanent residence there is a statistical registration)*

The demographic side

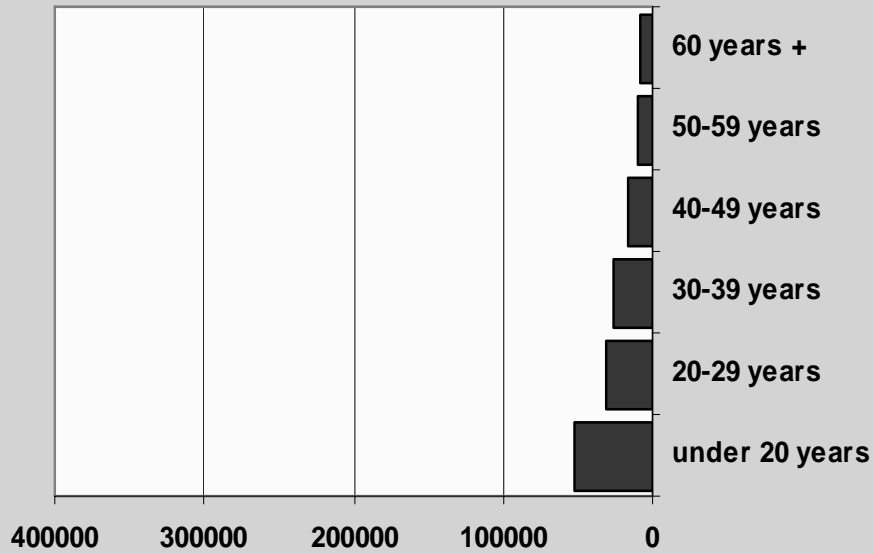
**Migrants from urban to rural, by age, 1993-2004**  
 (934 thou) (U=+92 thou)



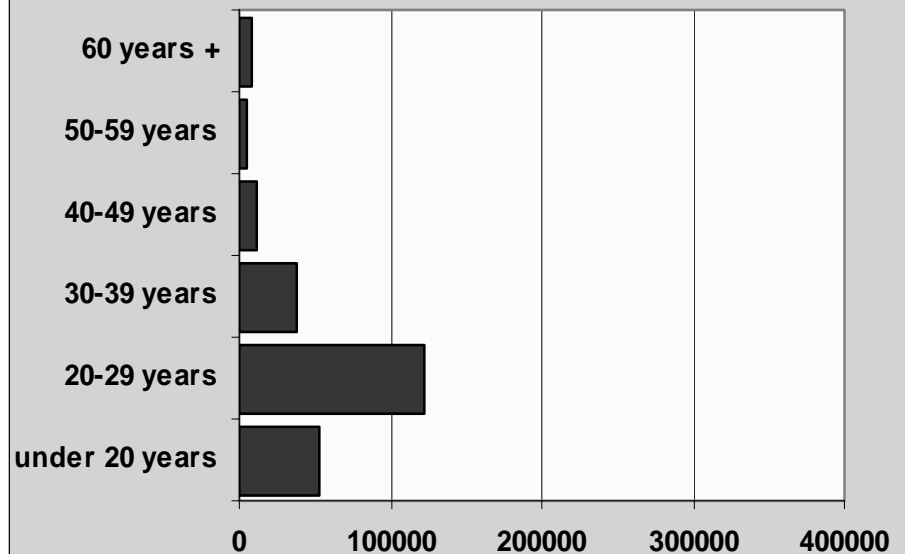
**Migrants from rural to urban, by age, 1993-2004**  
 (842 thou)



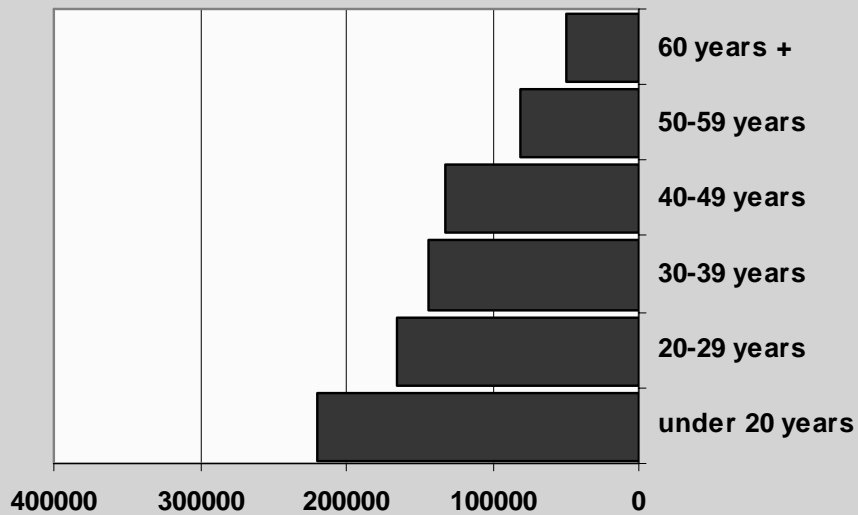
**U > R 1993-1995 (144 thou)**  
**(U = - 94 thou)**



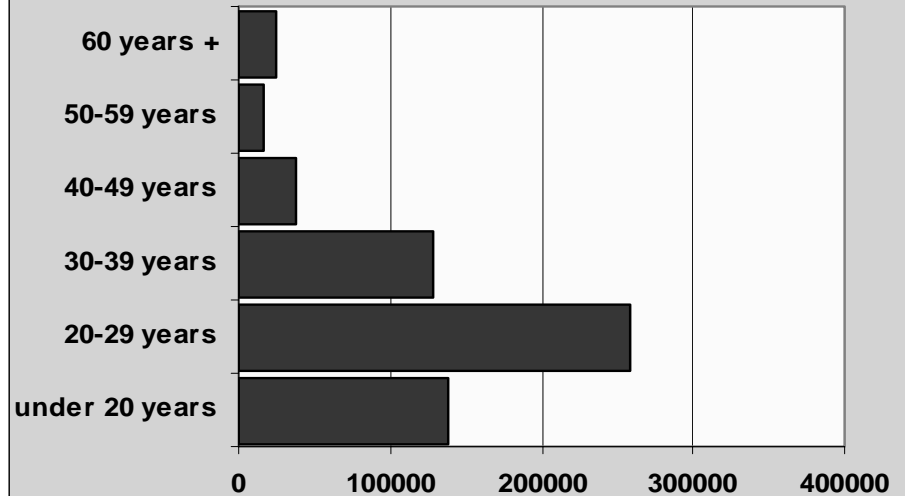
**R > U 1993-1995 (238 thou)**



**U > R 1996-2004 (789 thou)**  
**(U = + 185 thou)**

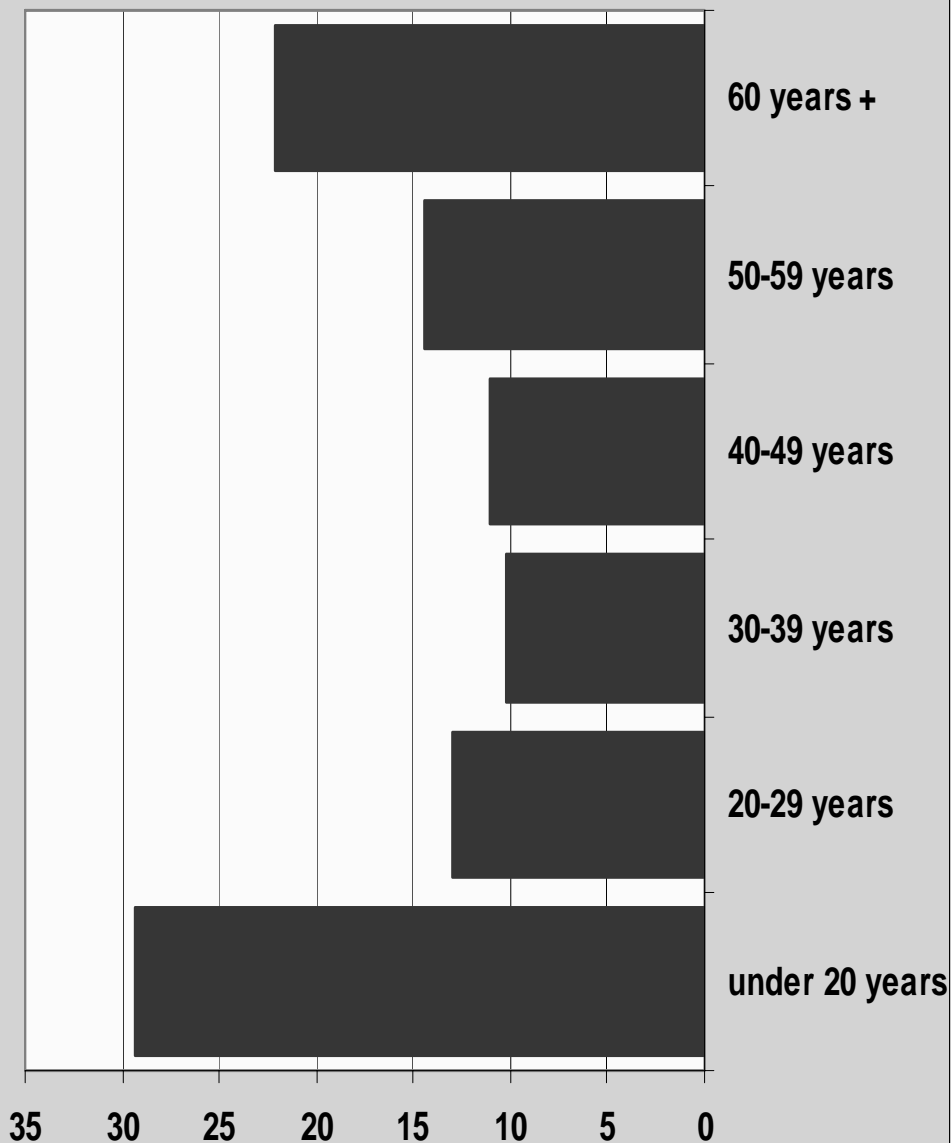


**R > U 1996-2004 (604 thou)**

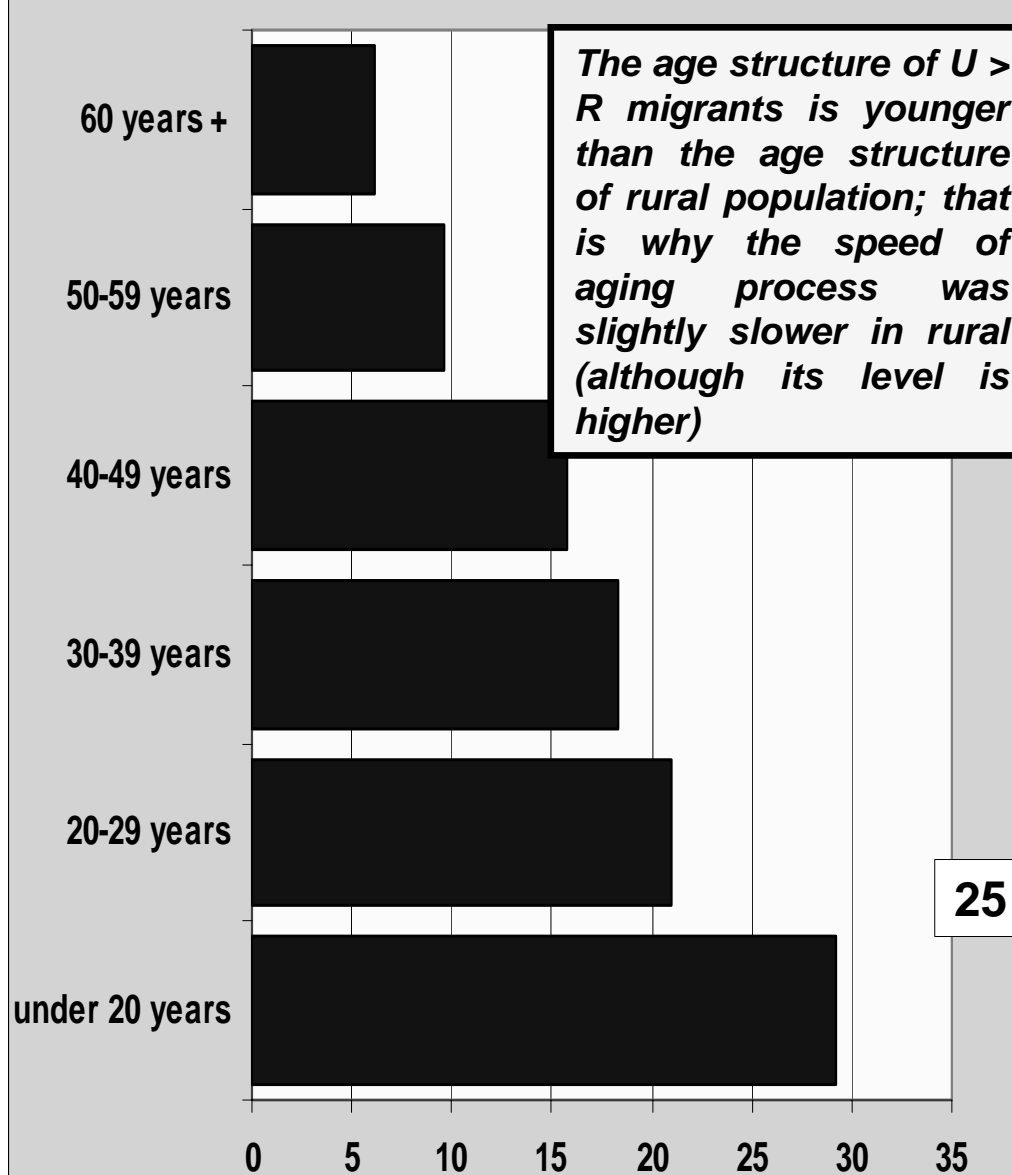




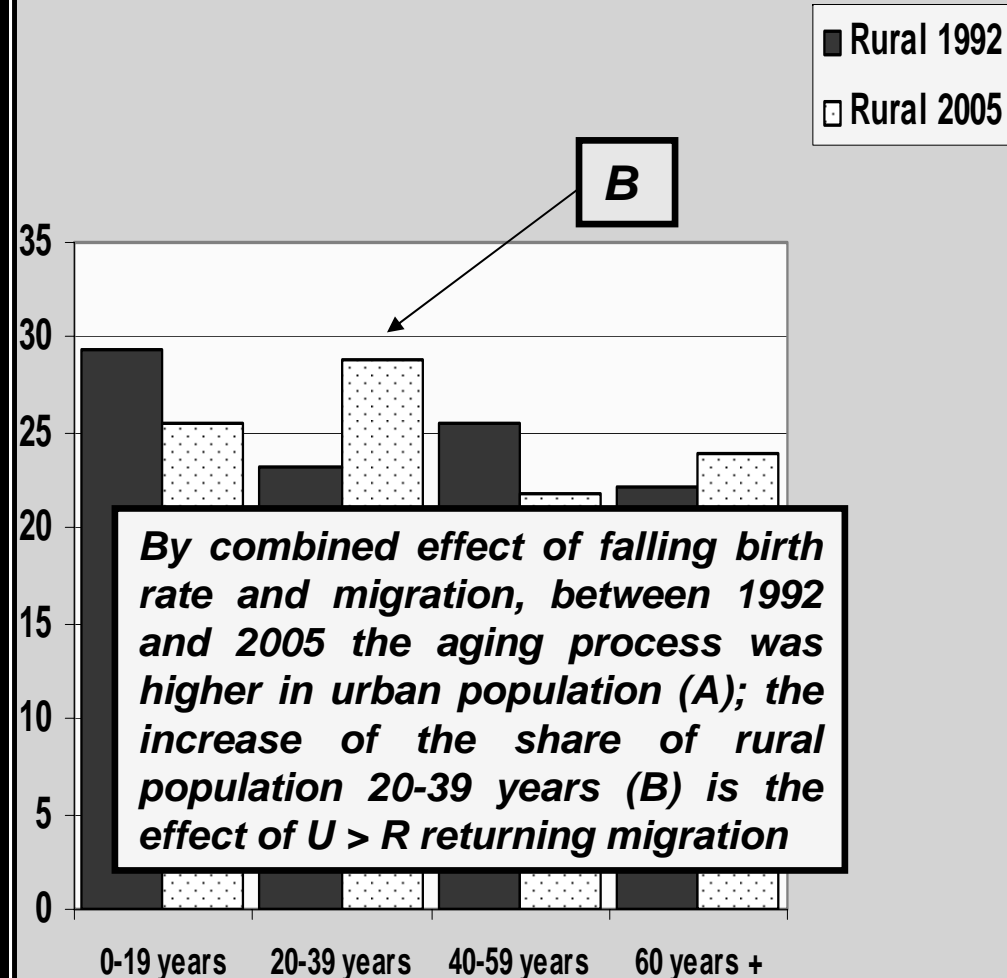
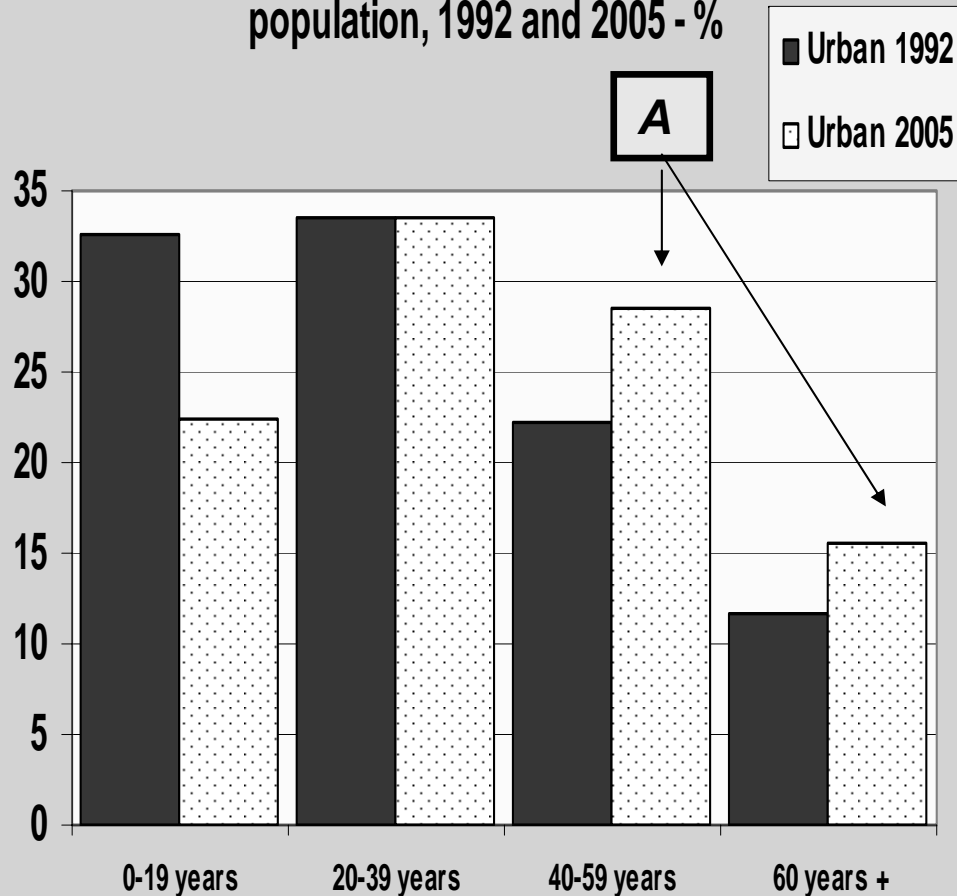
Age structure of rural population 1992 - %



Age structure of urban > rural migrants 1993-2004 - %



Romania. Age structure of urban and rural population, 1992 and 2005 - %

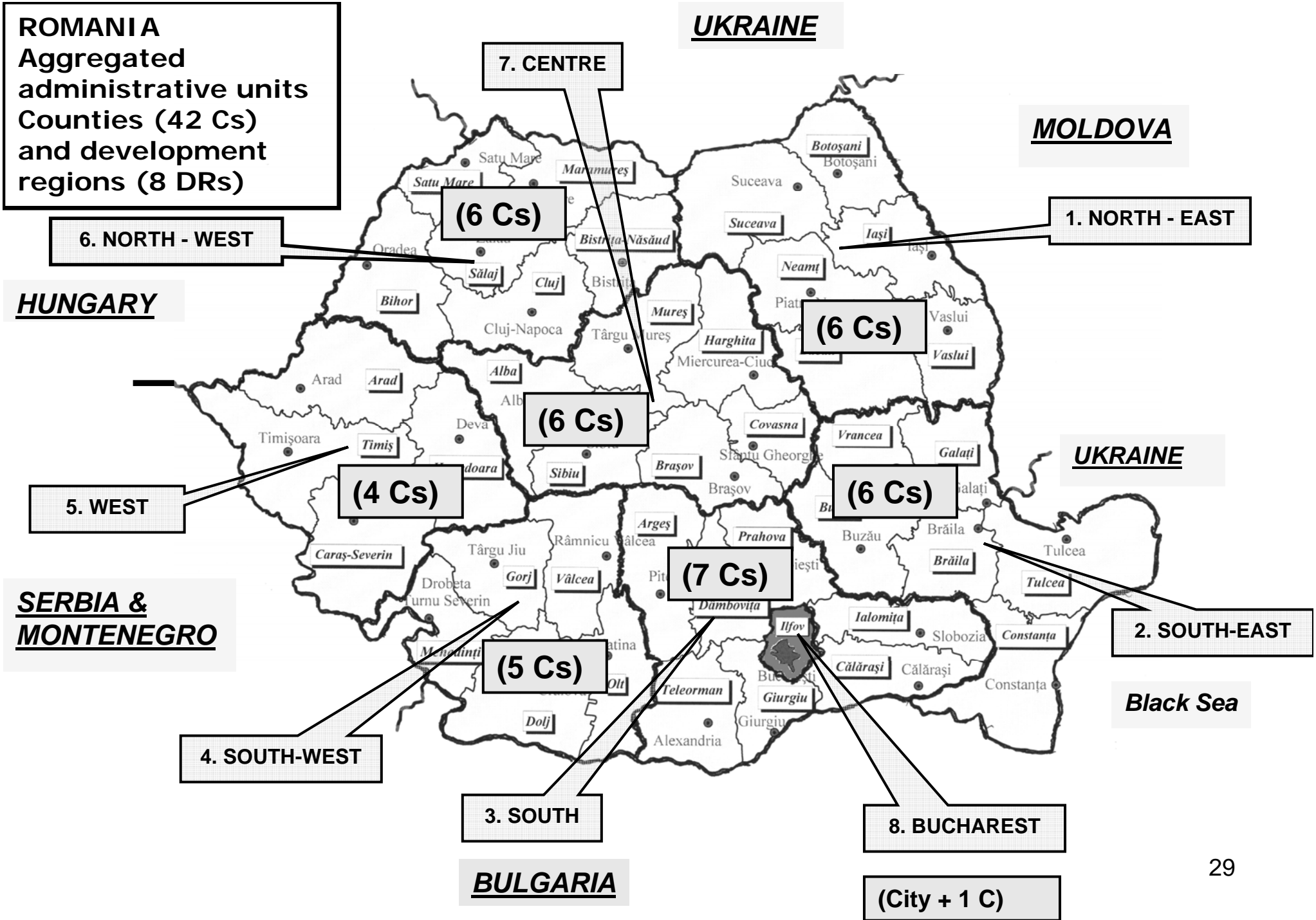


Finally, one more piece of information about the U > R migrants.

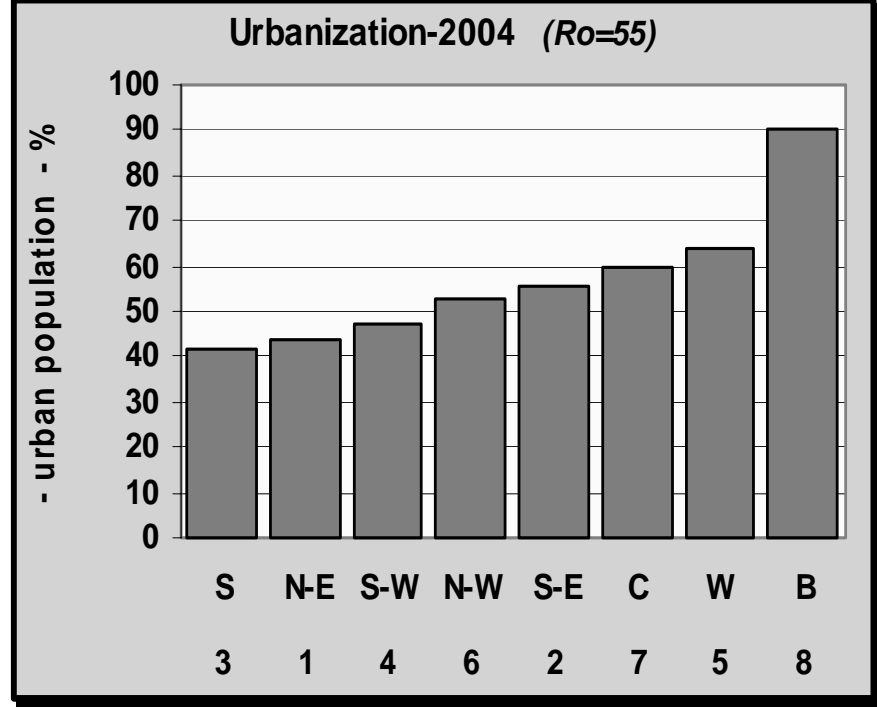
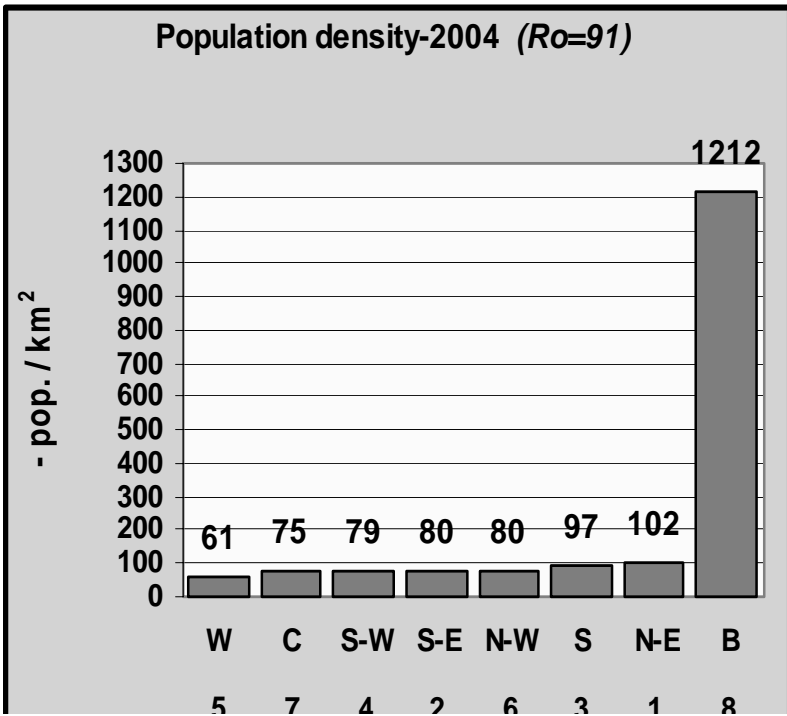
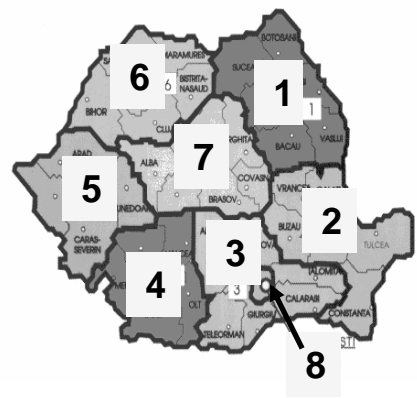
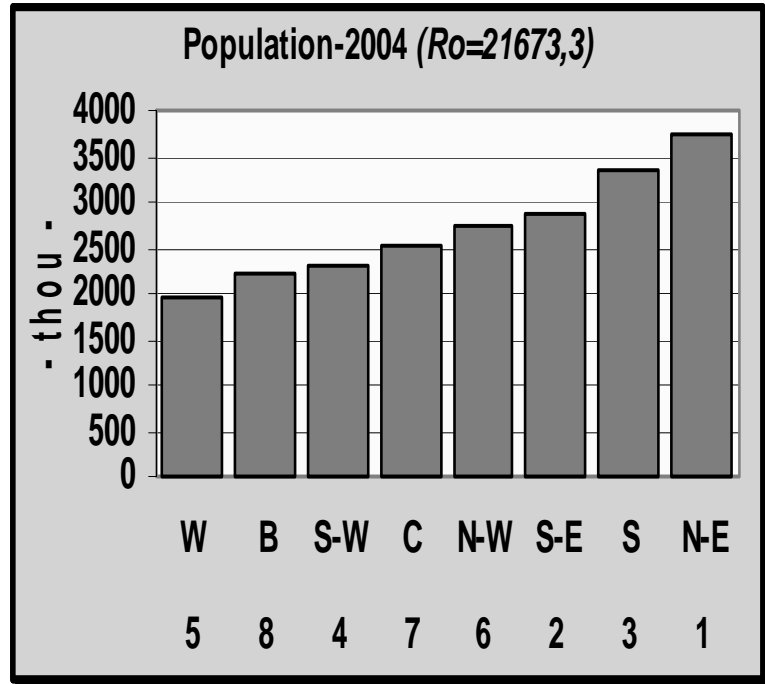
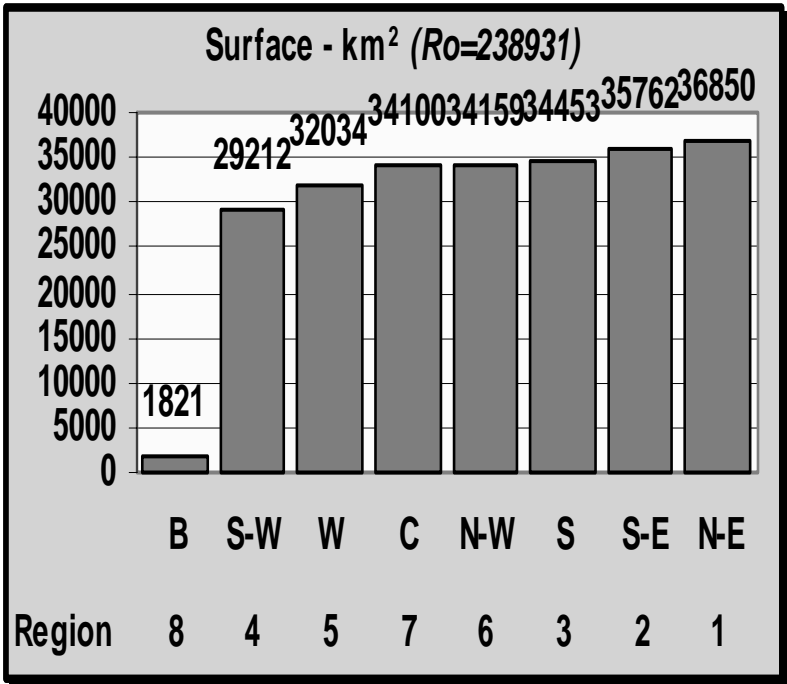
For the **total migrants to rural**, 53 % of them are married; the proportion of married was 48 % only in both urban and rural population in 2002; we suppose this proportion should be similar or very near for the U > R migrants; if we combine this information with the age structure of U > R migrants, we may say the pressure to move from towns to villages was stronger among the families having children, the most stroked group of urban population (by the transition crisis).

# **IV. Strange reversal of internal migration flows between urban and rural areas**

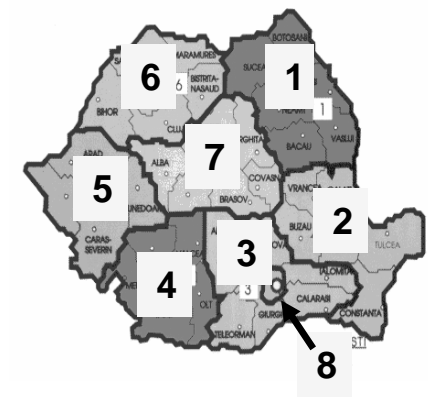
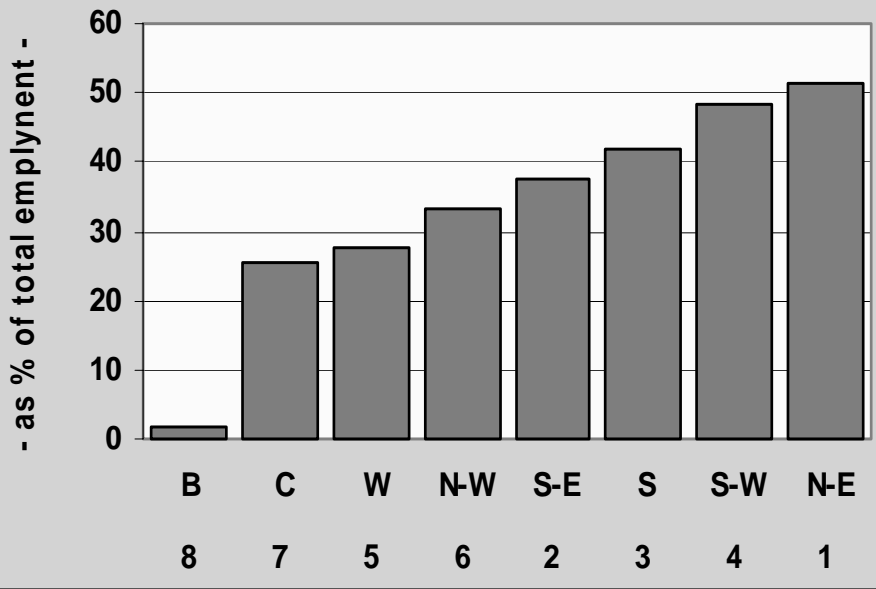
## **The regional level**



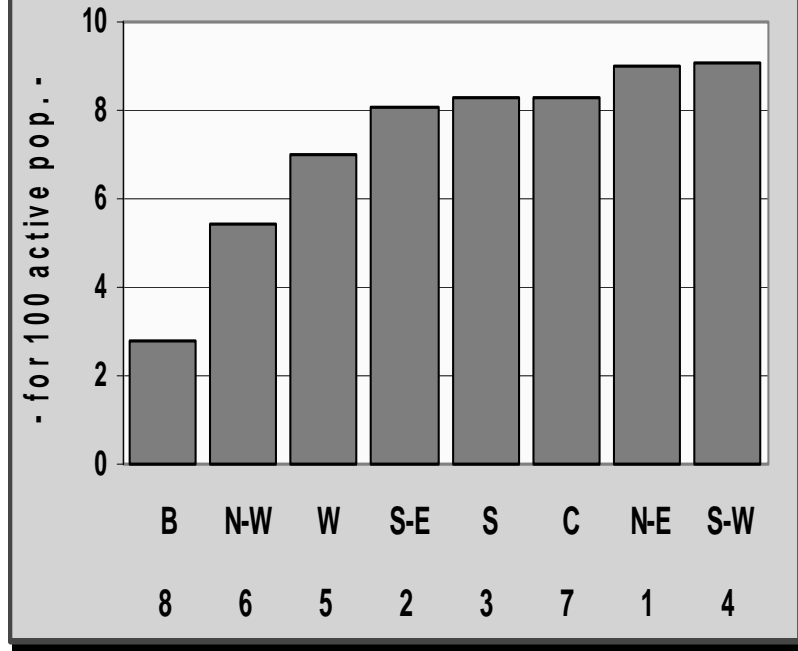
# **DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE 8 DRs**



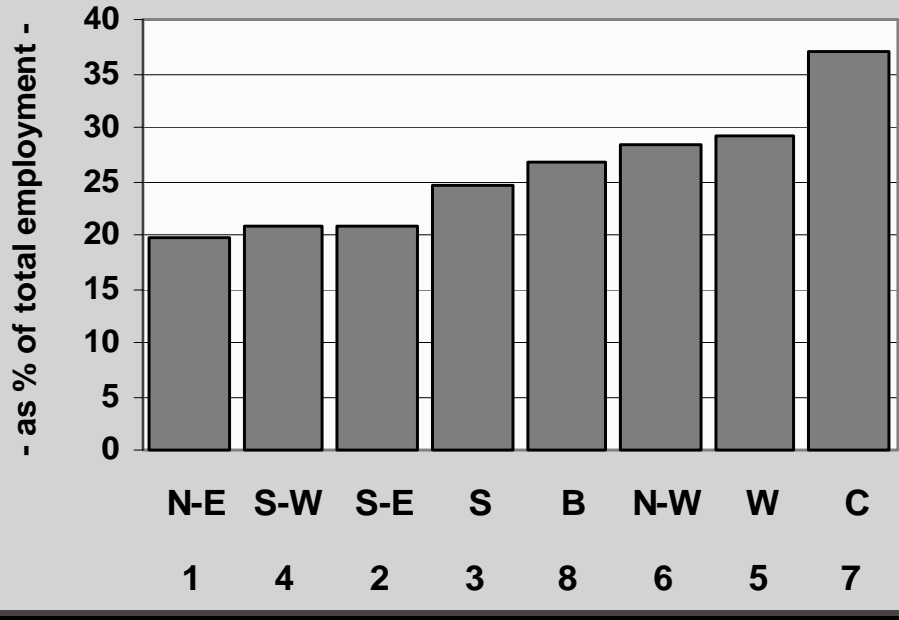
Share of employment in agriculture-2003 LFS



Unemployment rate-2003 LFS

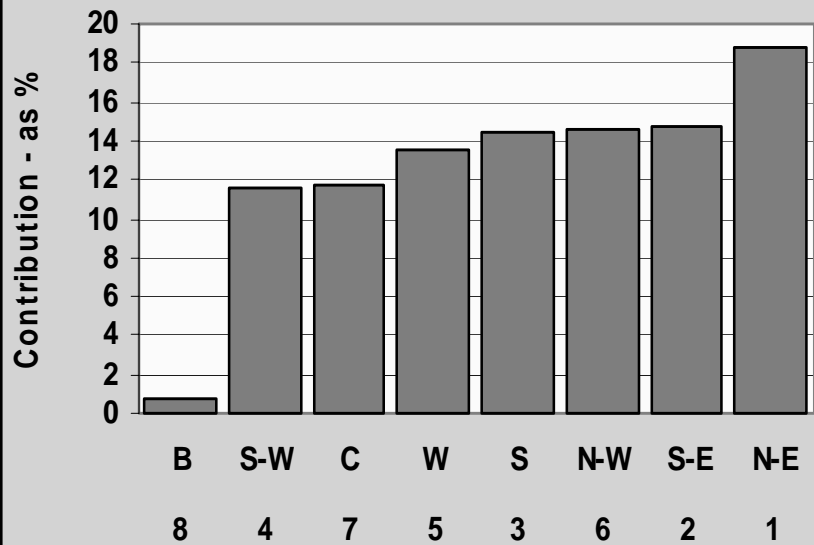


Share of employment in industry-2003LFS

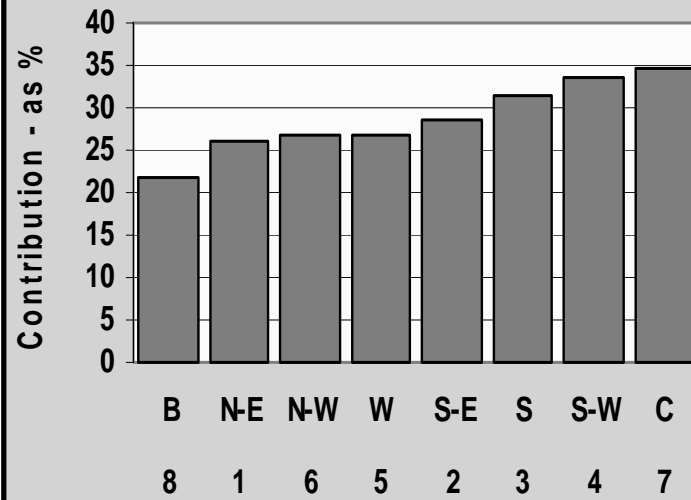




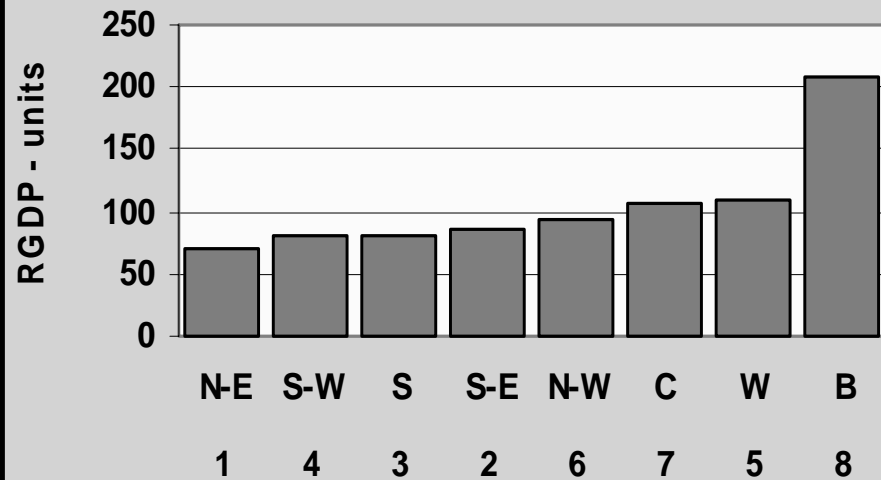
Contribution of agriculture to RGDP-2002



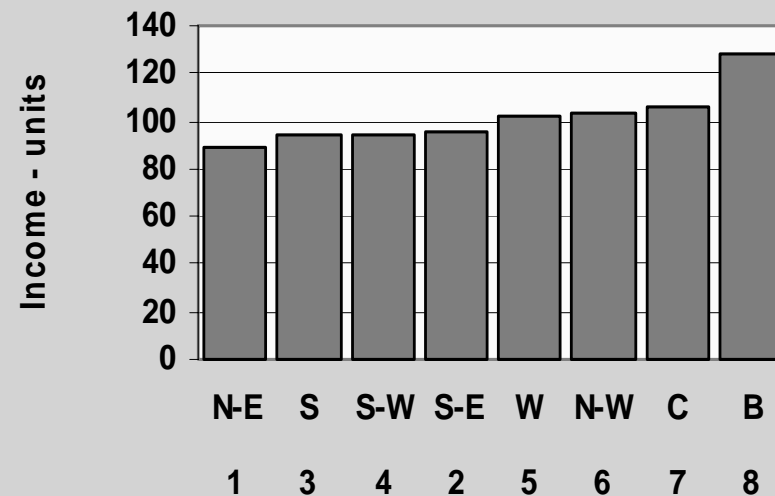
Contribution of industry to RGDP-2002



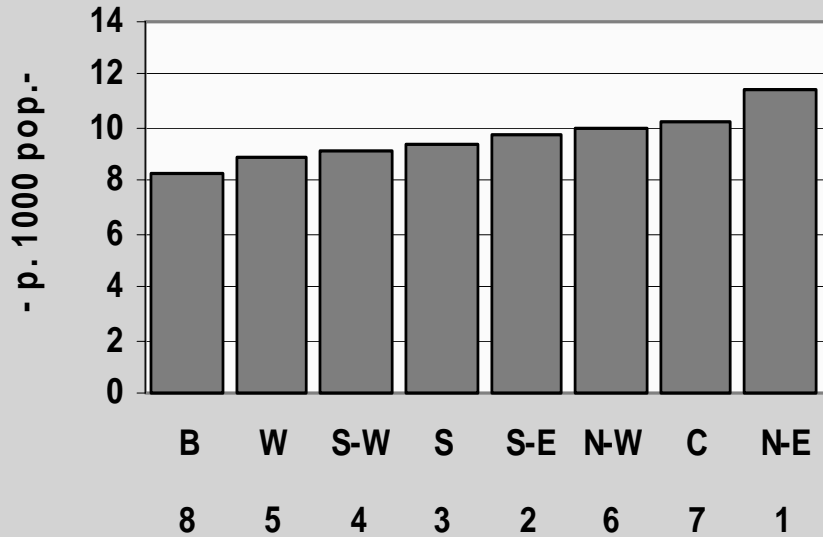
Regional GDP / inhabitant-2002  
National average=100 units



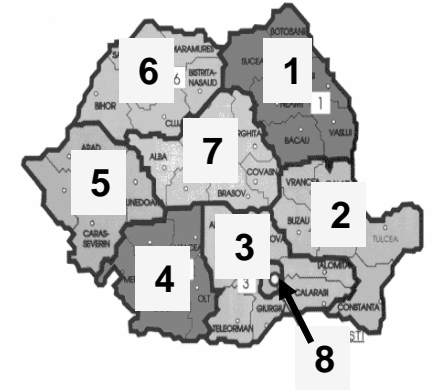
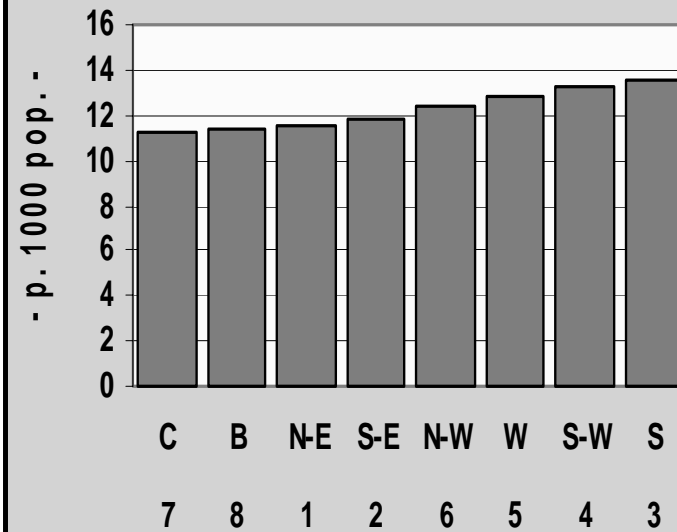
Monthly total income / person-2002  
National average=100 units



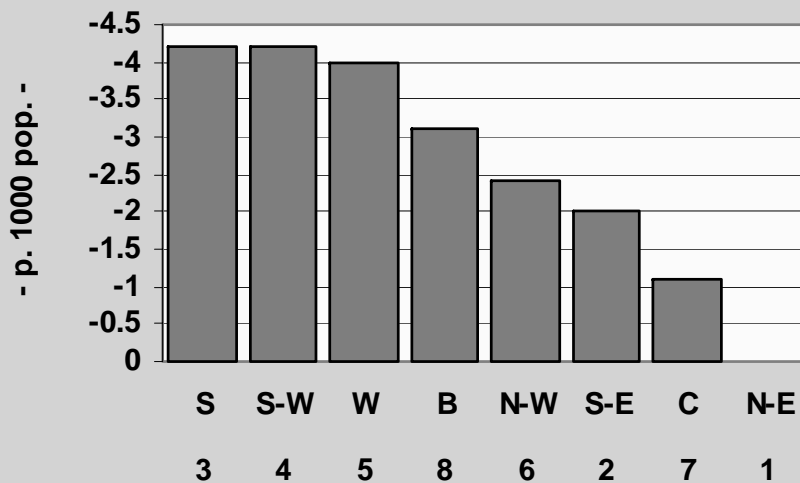
Crude birth rate-2003 ( $R_o=9,8$ )



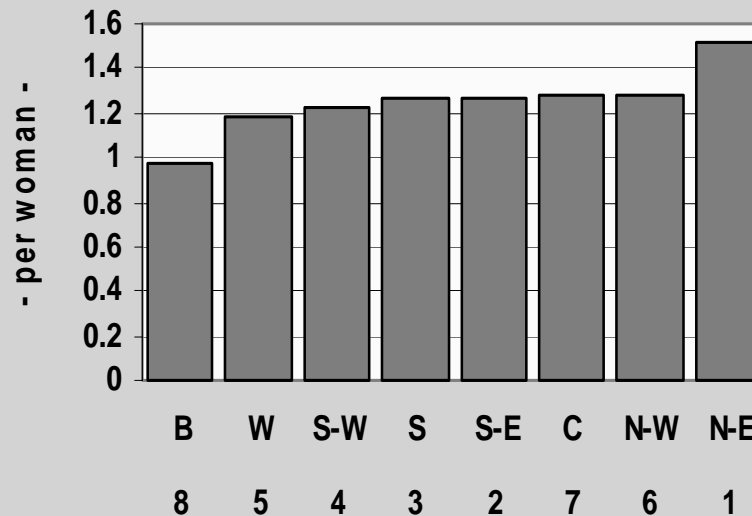
Crude death rate-2003 ( $R_o=12,3$ )

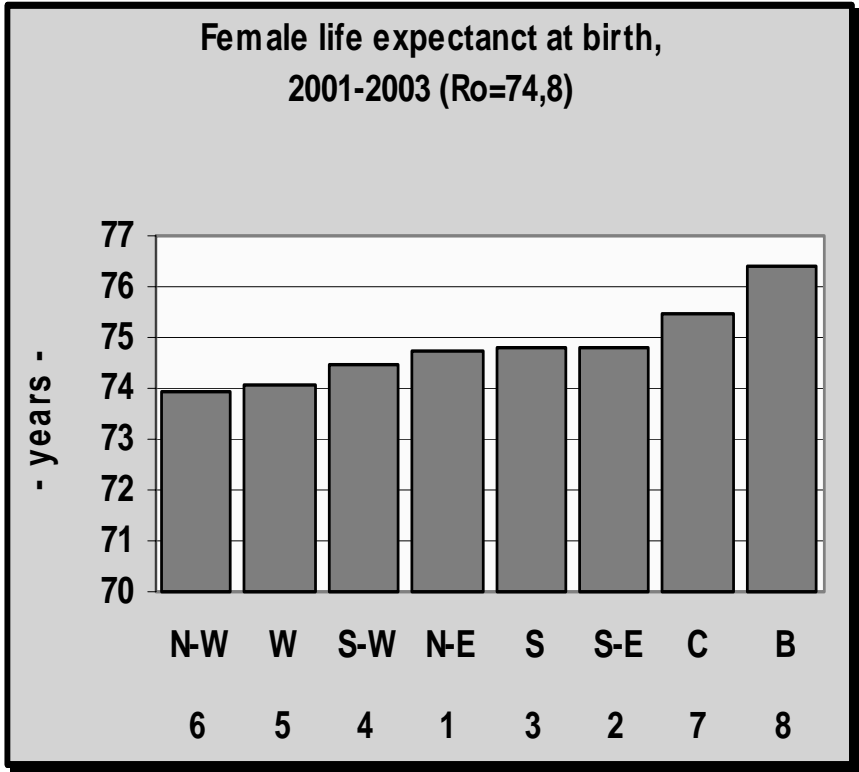
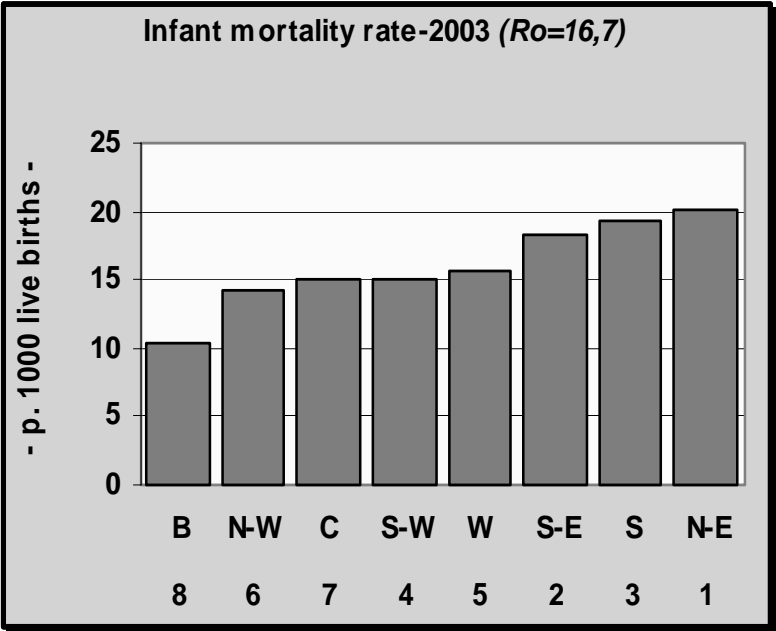
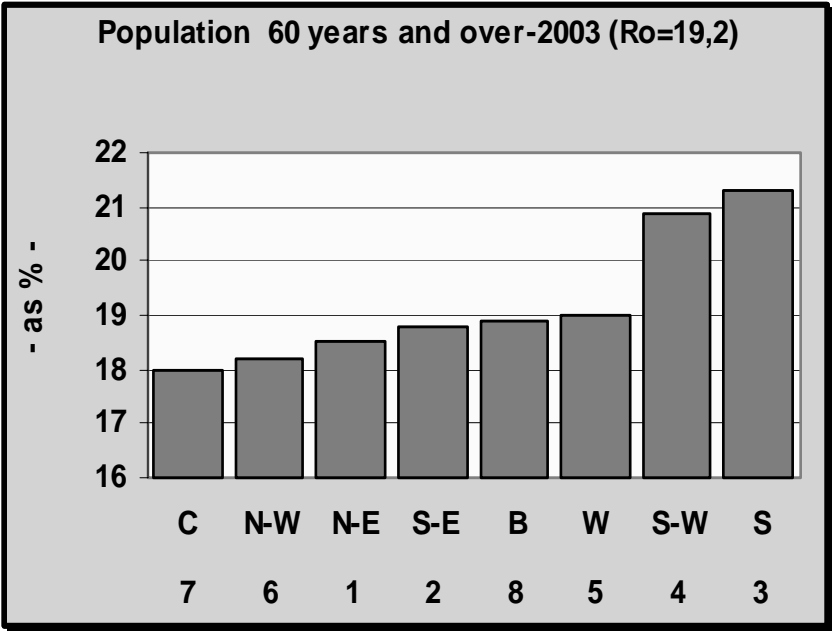


Natural increase rate-2003 ( $R_o= -2,5$ )



Total fertility rate-2003 ( $R_o=1,23$ )





# The 8 DRs. Summary

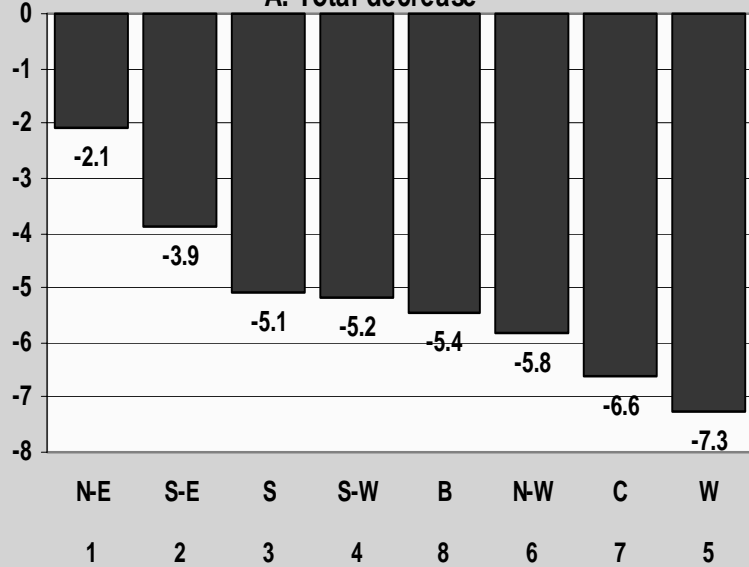
DR1. North-East has the lowest level of economic development; it is followed by the 3 DRs of the southern part of the country; the transition crisis, and the fall of industrial activities particularly, have touched these regions to a higher degree.

DRs 8. Bucharest, 5. West and 7. Centre have the highest level of economic development. The economic recovery is stronger.

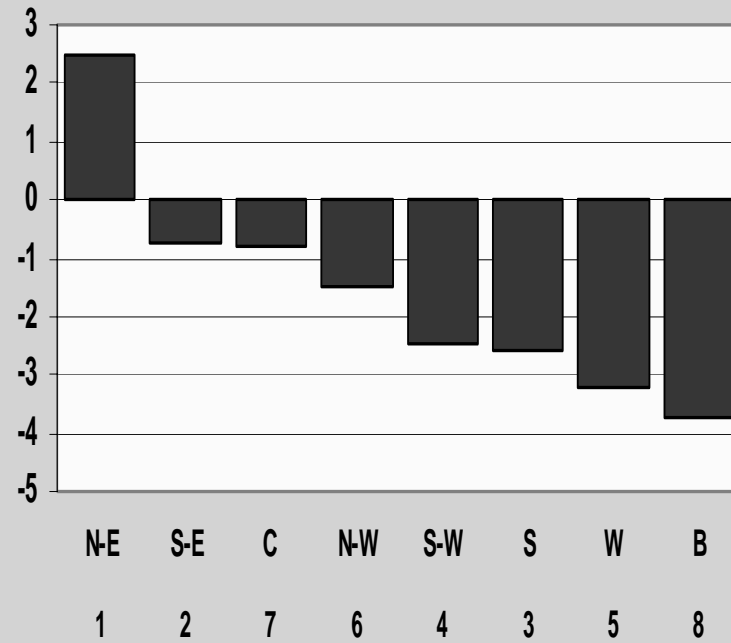
DR 1. North-East conserves a higher level of birth / fertility level and is the only one still having a small but positive natural increase of population; the region was in the past a true demographic reservoir for other regions.

Romania. Decrease in population number of 8 DRs 1992-2002  
and components of change  
- percentage with regard to 1992 -

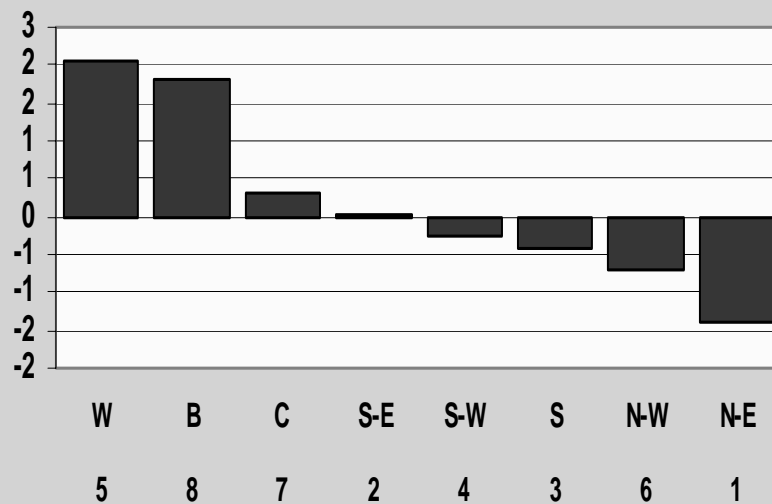
A. Total decrease



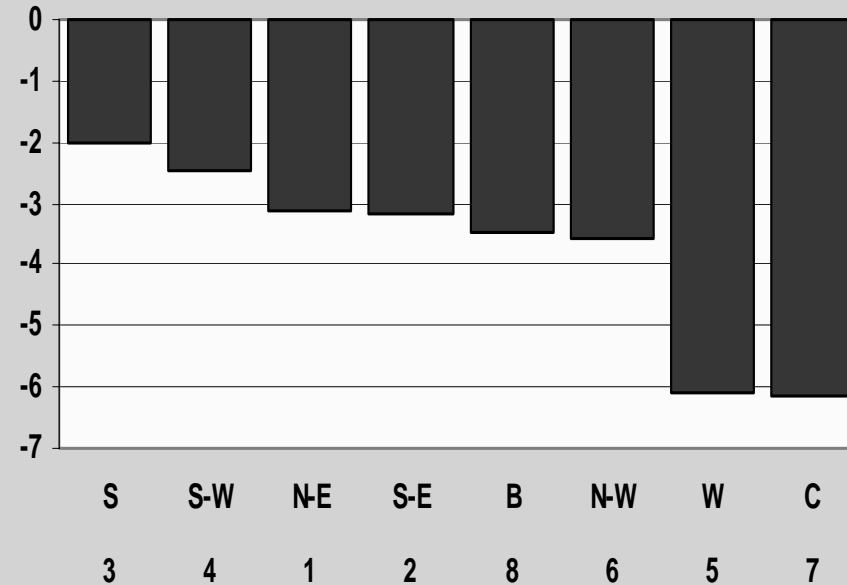
B. Natural increase / decrease



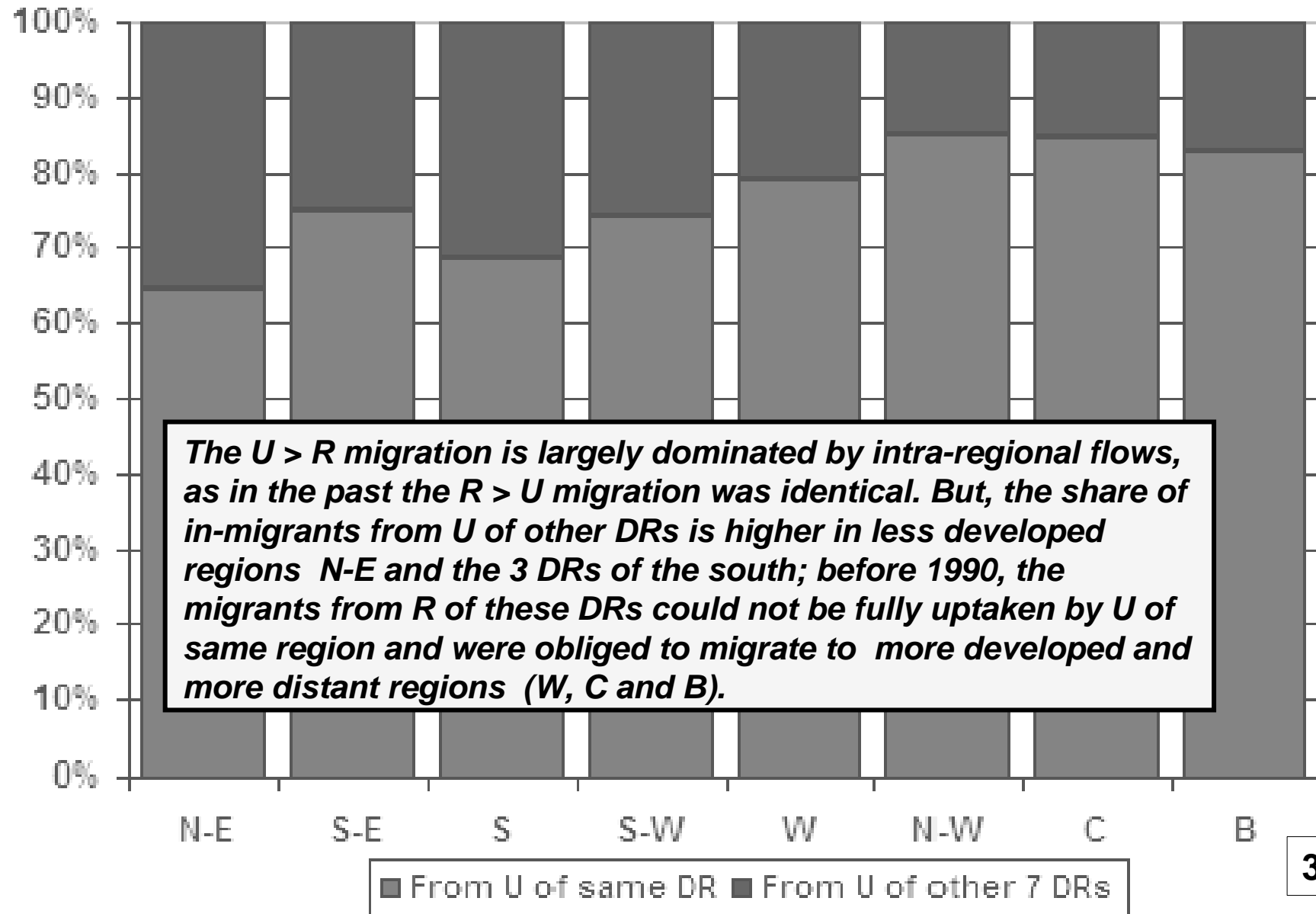
C. Internal net migration



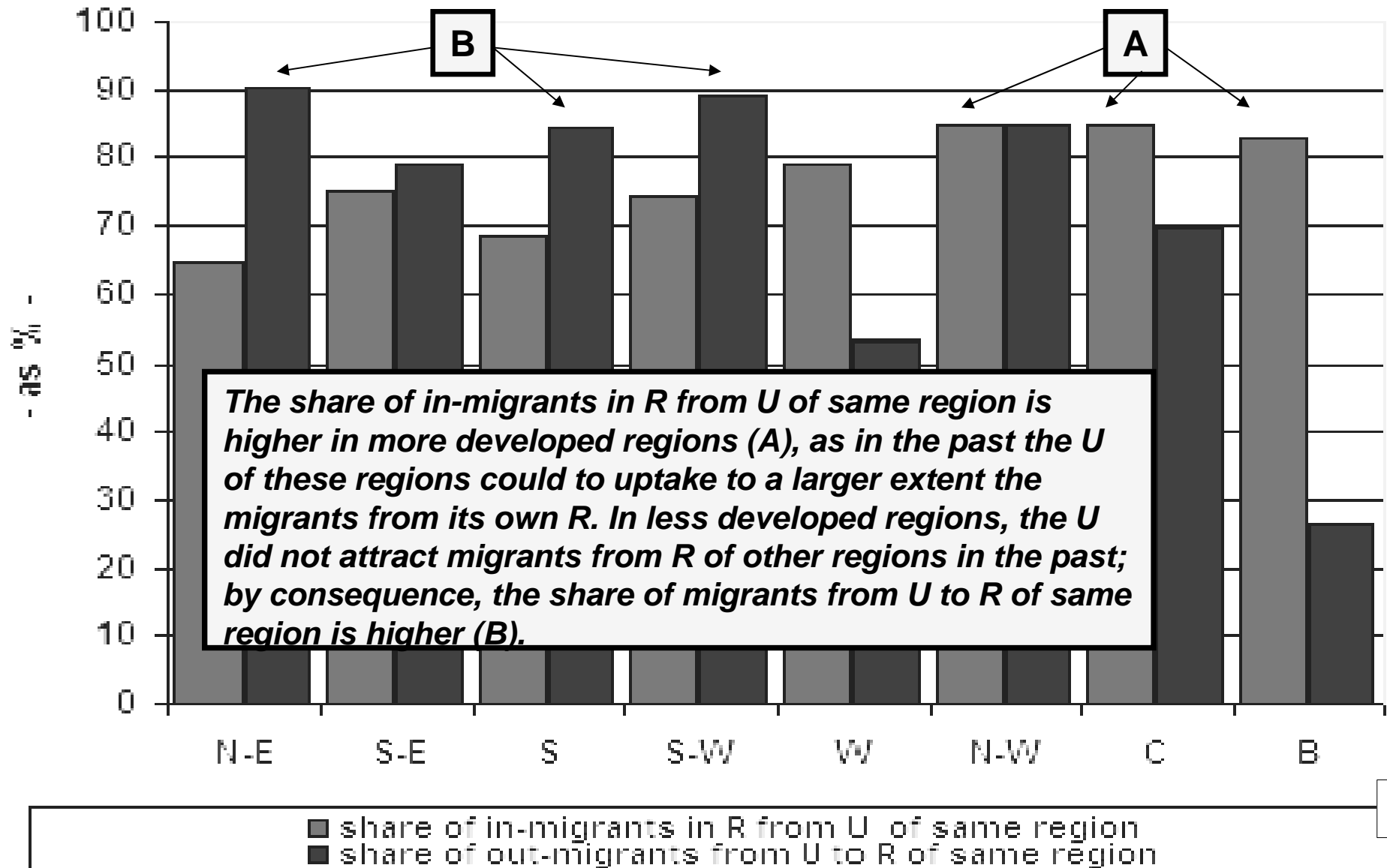
D. External net migration



In-migrants in Rural from Urban of the same DR and from the Urban of the other 7 DRs, 1992-2003 - as %

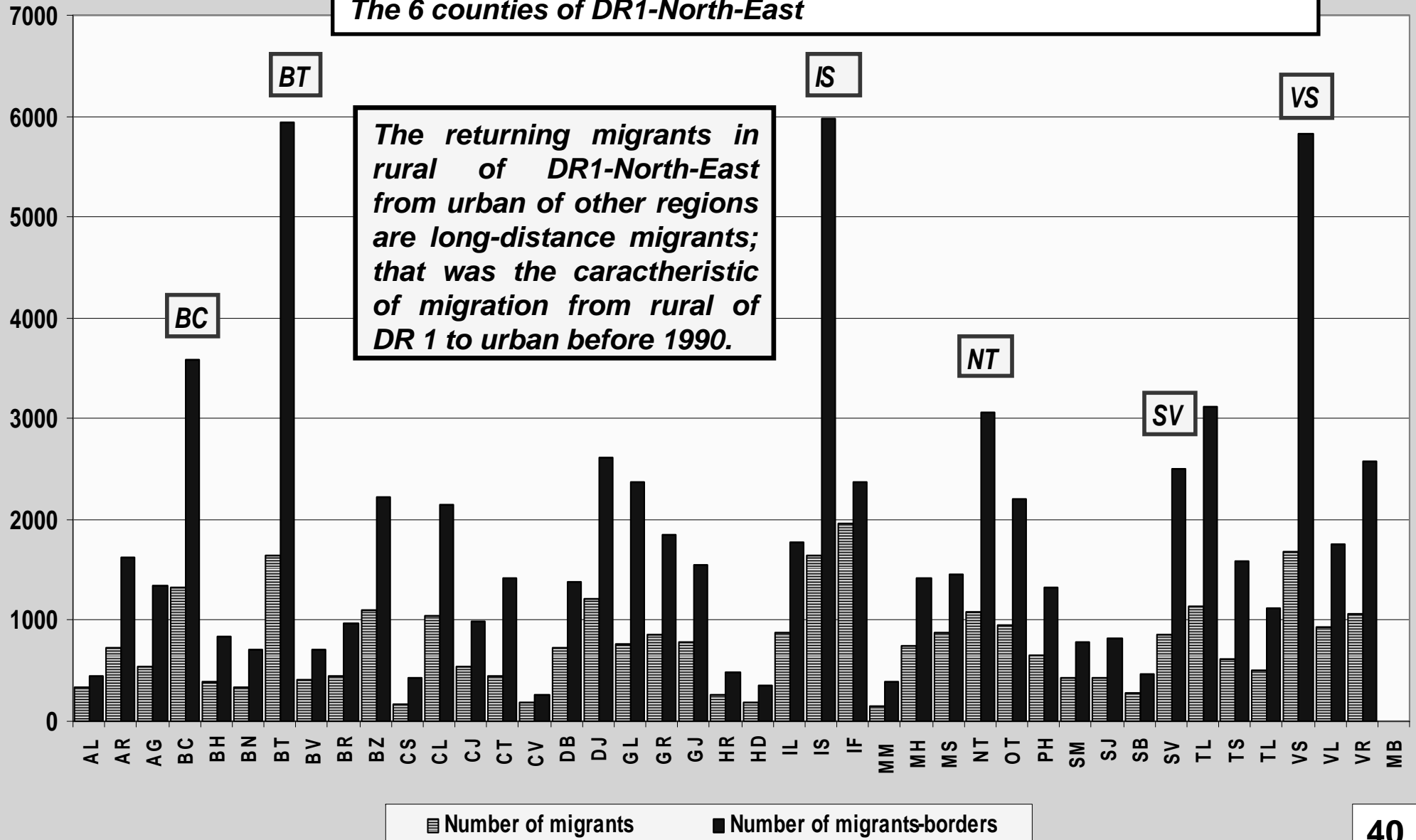


Share of in-migrants in R from U of same region and of out-migrants of U to R of same region, 1992-2003 - as %



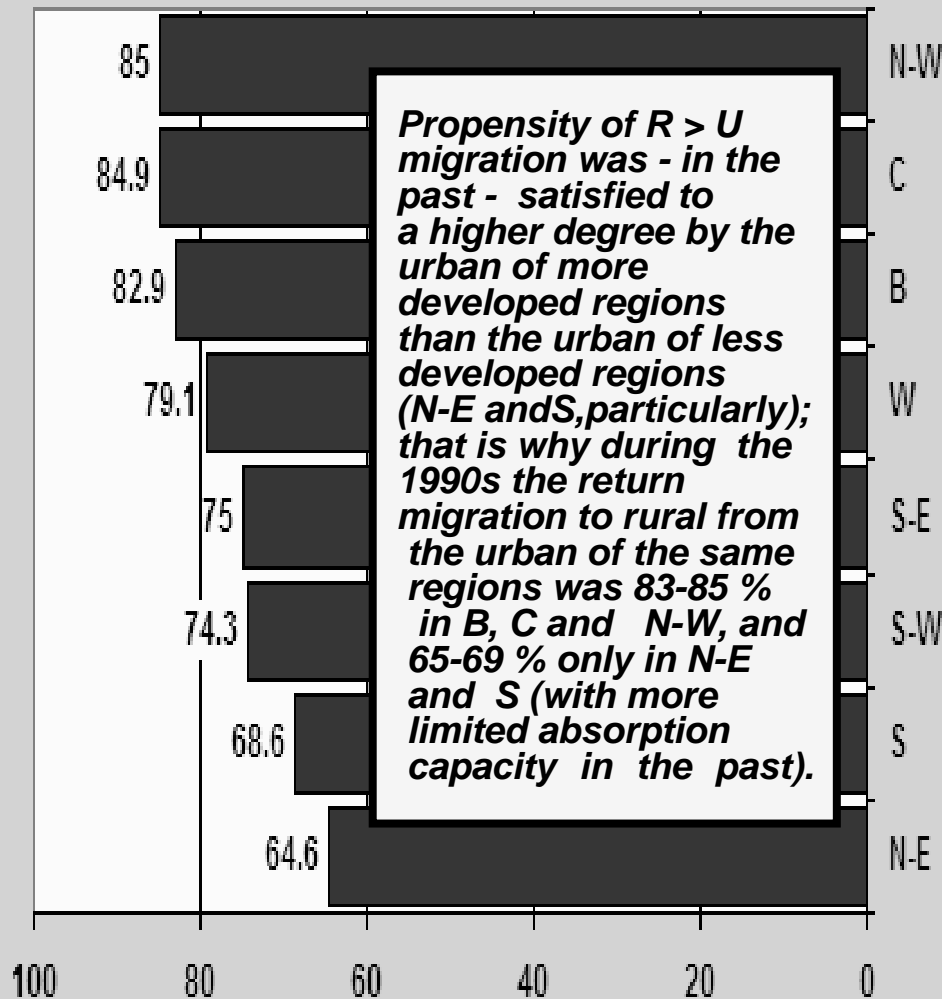
Romania. In-migrants in rural from urban of other counties, 1999. Number of migrants and number of migrants-borders (between county of destination and county of origine)

*BC=Bacau; BT=Botosani; IS=Iasi; NT=Neamt; SV=Suceava; VS=Vaslui*  
**The 6 counties of DR1-North-East**

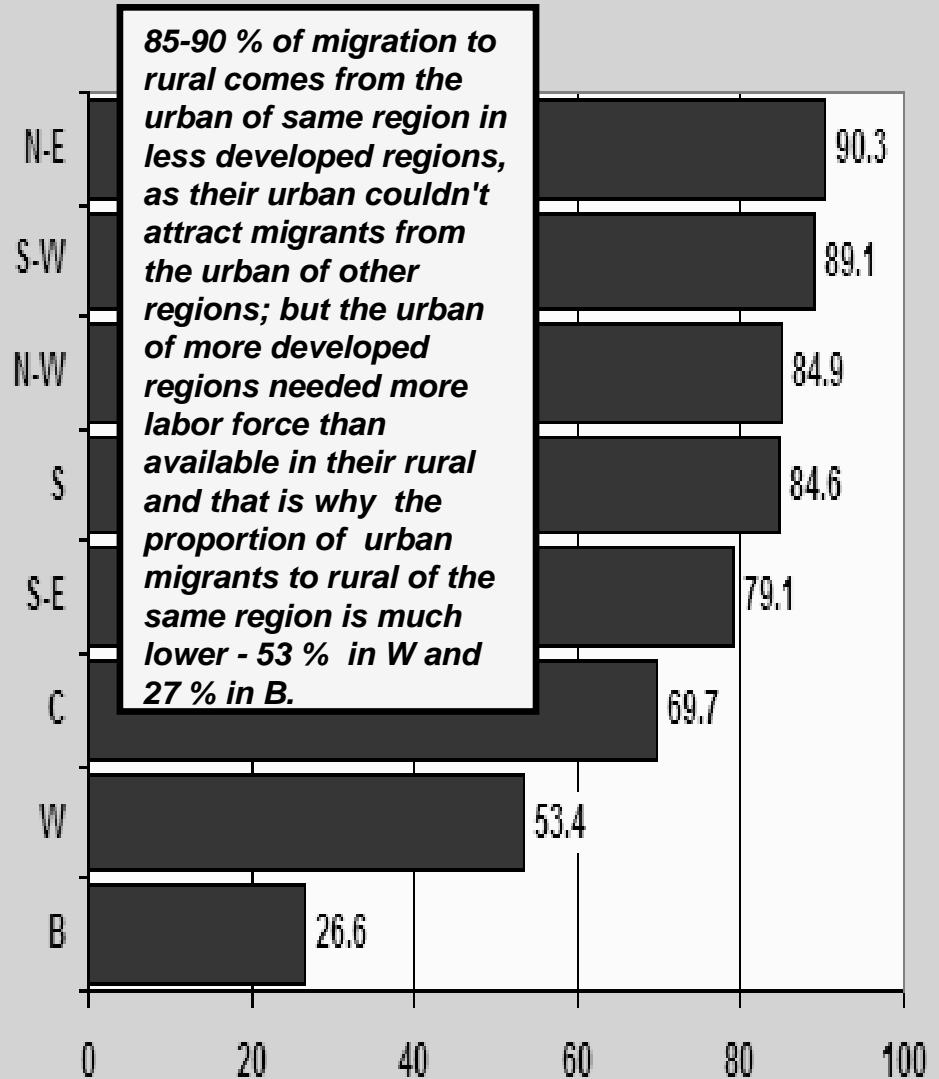




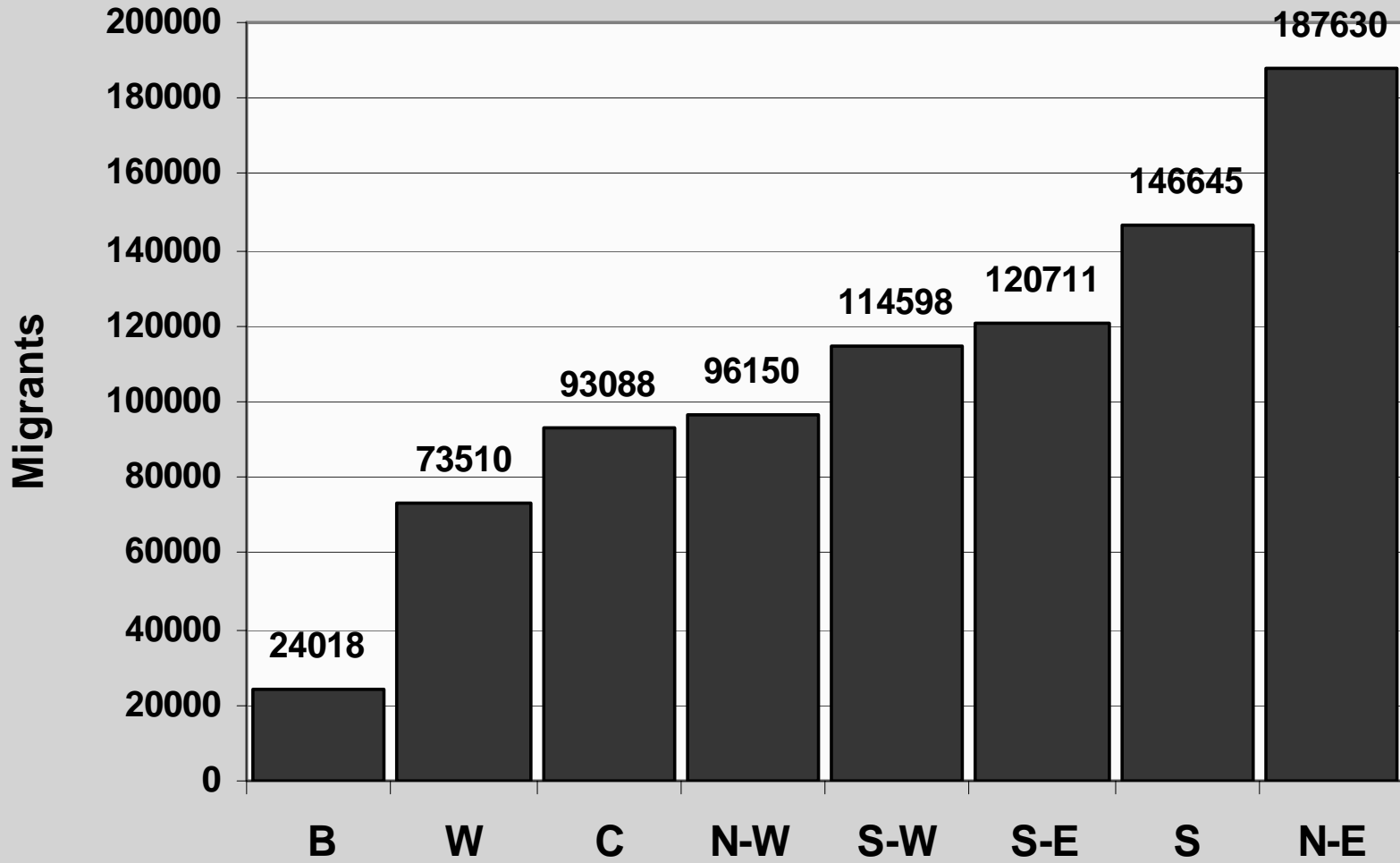
In-migrants in rural from urban of same region -  
as % of total in-migrants U > R of region , 1992-  
2003



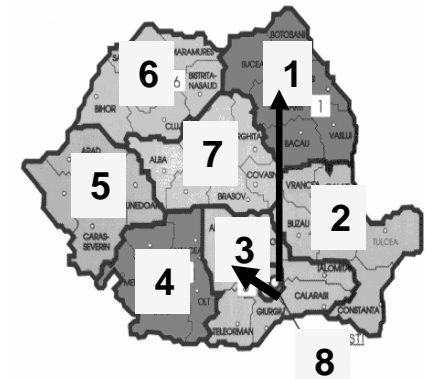
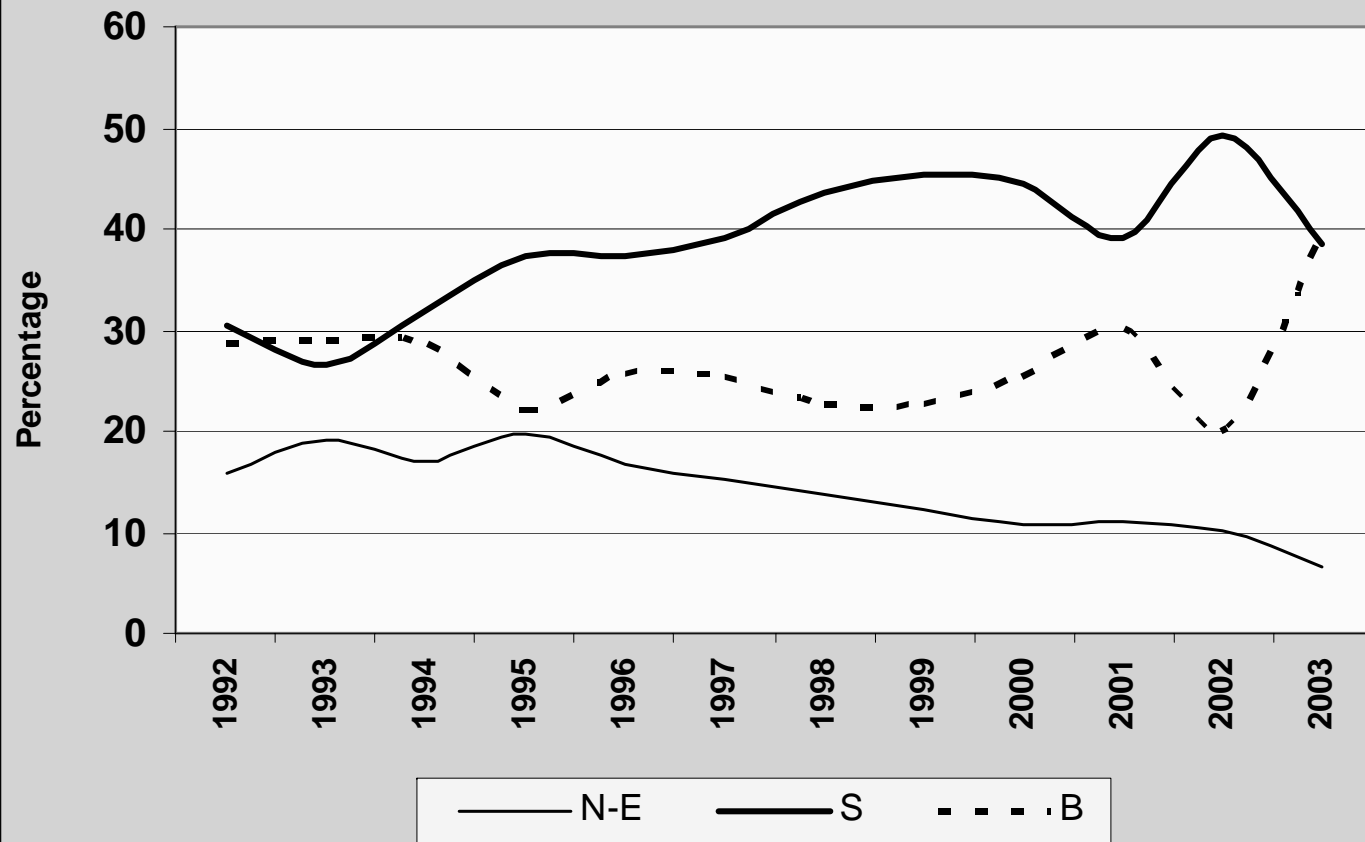
Out-migrants from urban to rural of same region -  
as % of total out-migrants U > R of region, 1992-  
2003



### Total number of migrants from urban to rural by region of rural destination 1992-2003



**Migrants from urban of region Bucharest to rural of regions B, S and N-E - as %, 1992-2003**



*The large rural region South, surrounding Bucharest town, was the main destination of migrants from Bucharest; the proportion of migrants to rural of region Bucharest – that is the county of Ilfov, has an increasing share mainly by strong housing development around the Capital (the Northern part, particularly); the trends is well installed and it will certainly continue in the future; unexpectandly appears the importance of region N-E*

## *V. Concluding remarks*

1. The strong deterioration of Romanian demographic landscape has several origins and mechanisms. The most responsible one seems to be the economic and social crisis Romania experienced during the transition period (coming from objectives painful changes but also from the bad manner in which the reforms have been conceived and implemented).
2. The population decline and the worsening of age structure are the most visible immediate exercise of that deterioration.
3. The stability in number of births and deaths during the last years might be the face of a reduction in the speed of deterioration. But one must be prudent. Besides that stability the internal dynamics of the demographic machine works and the deterioration will be retaking to a larger scale on medium term when the cohorts born after 1989 will reach the marriage and the childbearing age.

4. The external migration has increased the magnitude of deterioration. The future of Romanian international migration remains an unknown area but western countries need immigration for economic reasons and for demographic reasons, as natural increase starts to become negative and the aging is in full progress; both movements will increase in the future.
  
5. The strange reversal of internal migration flows between urban and rural areas is straightly connected to the economic and social crisis and to the rapid changes the country is experiencing; this migration is consistently a return migration and it affects, mostly, the less developed regions.

6. At a first glance, the dominance of urban – rural migration flow seems to be an advantage for the rural areas. But a number of questions arises:

(i)-are the migrants from urban to rural really settled in rural areas, or have they continued their mobility to western countries for work, pushed by poverty and lack of better prospect? by partial information given by media, the second assumption seems to be the true one;

(ii)-30 p.100 of Romania's active population and 35 p.100 of its employed population is in agriculture; what future for Romanian agriculture and for this overpopulation when Romania will be an EU member as the agricultural dossier is one of the most sensitive matter of the Union?

(iii)-the present structure of internal migration cannot continue; will the towns become again attraction-poles for an exceeding rural population? should the economic strategy stress on development of non-agricultural activities in rural areas for absorption the exceeding labor force?

All these questions (and other) should be of urgent action from government and policy makers.