

FACTORS AND IMPACTS OF MIGRATION

An Analysis of Structural and Institutional Change in Romania

Doru Irimie

NFP-UNCCD, Romania

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Environment, Forced Migration and Social Vulnerability

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Introduction

“Environmental migration” - reference in international law UNCCD, 1994
- new scientific issue: EACH-FOR, EFMSV

Theory-based assumptions

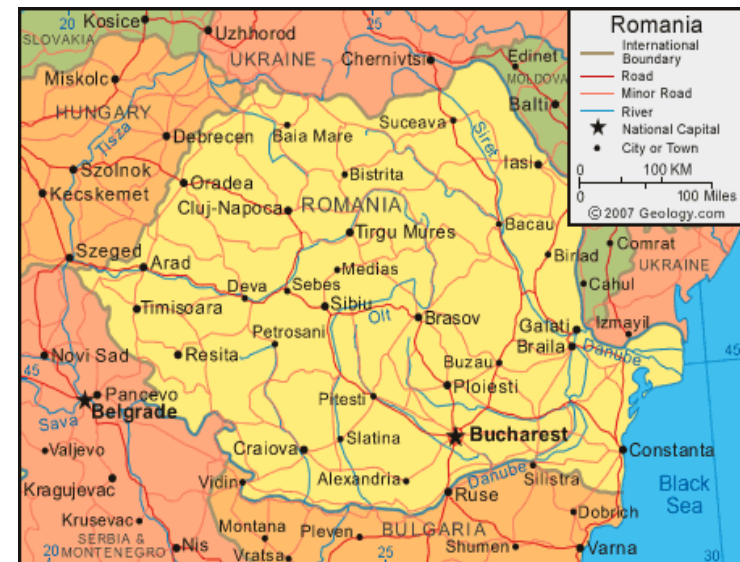
- Environmental factors – part of the complex of bio-physical and socio-economic factors of migration (i.e., ‘push and pull’)
- Environmental disturbances impact upon people displacement differently (i.e., erratic, unpredictable natural phenomena vs. long-lasting, recurrent environmental stress)
- ‘Environmental migration’ – not legitimized by international law

Objectives

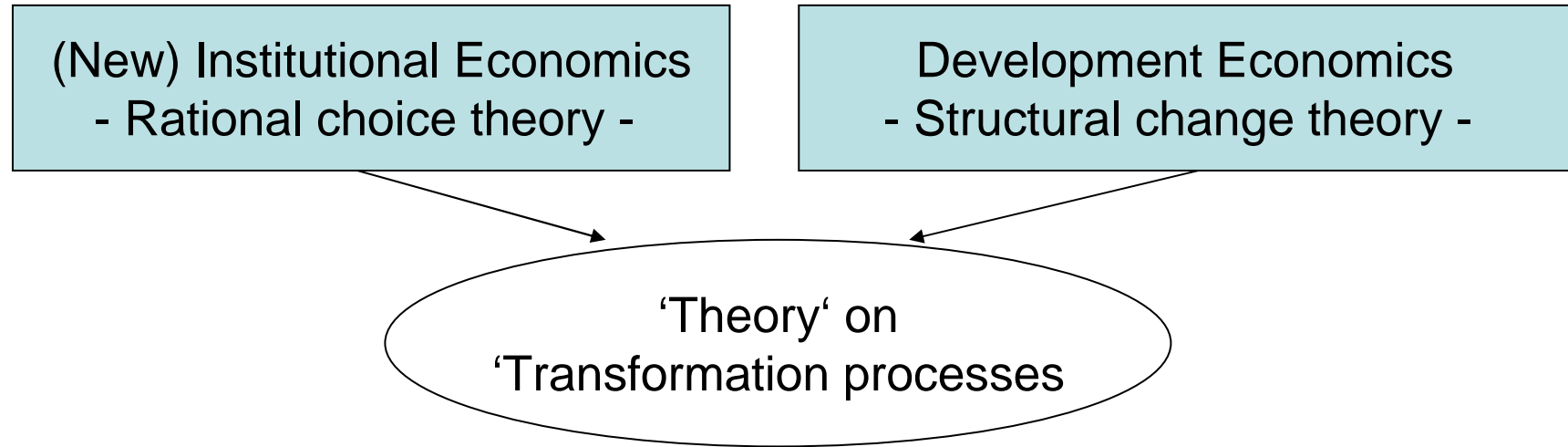
- Identify migration's underlying causes and favouring factors and distinguish the environmental component
- Analyse migration's impacts on ecological and socio-economic conditions

Material

- Transition countries: ideal opportunity for studying relationship institutions-development, i.e., impacts of structural and institutional change on migration
- Timeframe: from WWII to present



Theory



Data elicitation

- Secondary sources: published or unpublished writings
- Primary sources: informal interviews with key actors

Data analysis

- Content analysis

Results

1. Inland movement due to drought-related famine 1945-1946

- Excessive drought in East, causing famine
- Poor socio-economic situation, political uncertainty
- Government – reluctant/unable to impose coercion measures (e.g., quota on agricultural products elsewhere)

- Wanderers returned home in the aftermath of drought
- Degradation of environmental conditions and livelihoods

2. Forced communist urbanization starting with the 1950s

- Political objectives: 1) establishment of agricultural cooperatives and 2) industrialization
- Forced/induced displacement of poorly prepared people
- Underlying factor of the subsequent move

- Societal change: from 75% to 50% rural population
- In urban areas: inexpensive labour force, but crowding problems
- In rural areas: loss of human capital

3. Return to rural areas of people released from bankrupted industry in the 1990s

- Land reform (Laws 1991, 2000, 2005): from 10% to 90% private agricultural land; from large enterprises to subsistence farming
- Additional labour force needed in the agricultural sector, available with the bankruptcy of subsidised (COMECON-dependent), non-performing industry
- Some people adapted to the new life/economy in the cities, but many returned to the countryside
- Partly compensation through the continuous move of young people to cities
- Ageing of rural population, rural development programmes

4. Immigration of labour force to the West in the 2000s

- Partial removal of political barriers (e.g., travel requirements, 2002)
- In spite of EU Accession (2007), large disparities regarding BIP and wages between Romania and EU average (ca. 35%)
- Availability/surplus of qualified, inexpensive working force

- Over 2 millions Romanians abroad (e.g., 1.7 mil in SPA and ITA), more rural than urban, younger than elder, men than women, etc.
- Rapid change from exporter to importer of labour force
- Input of foreign currency (Euro), trade balance equilibrium, at the expense of socio-economic problems back home and political problems abroad

Centralised analysis of migration stages

Stage of migration	Underlying causes / favouring factors	Political barriers	Destination	Reversibility	Main impacts
Famine wandering 1945-1946	Drought, search for subsistence means, lack of salvation measures	Yes	Inland	Yes	Worsening of life conditions in affected areas, harmful experience for people
Urbanization from 1950s on	Agricultural collectivization and mechanization, industrialisation	Yes	Inland	Yes/No	Loss of human capital in rural areas, crowding of cities, gains in cheap labour force
Return to rural areas in 1990s	Industry bankruptcy, land restitution, intact relationships with rural areas	No	Inland	Yes/No	Available labour force for land coming from disassembling cooperatives, decrease unemployment in cities
Fleeing the country in 2000s	Opportunities for higher incomes and better living conditions, removal of political barriers	No	Abroad	? (Likely No)	Export of labour force, equilibrium of trade balance, scarcity of qualified workers at home, political problems

Conclusions & Discussion

- Large-scale natural disasters not characteristic for Romania, but environmental degradation (e.g., floods, pollution, DLDD) obvious
- Migration stages followed major socio-economic upheavals (i.e., dependent on the process of societal transformation)
- Only one stage caused by environmental factors, and favoured by lack of alleviation policies; others triggered by state policies and opportunities for better living conditions
- Political barriers – influential for decision, destination and reversibility

- Migration - solution for people, challenge/issue for governments
- DLDD – perceived as most important form of environmental degradation in Romania, i.e., social dimension of UNCCD
- Factors of migration are relevant, but management is more important