

RECENT MIGRATION DYNAMICS IN REȘITA CITY AND ITS AREA OF INFLUENCE

DINAMICA RECENTĂ A MIGRAȚIILOR ÎN MUNICIPIUL REȘITA ȘI ZONA SA DE INFLUENȚĂ

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Abstract: The main goal of the work is to analyze the dynamics of migration in the Resita city and its area of influence. The need for this study is relevant in the context of the current development of the case study area, marked by economic changes that have brought about effects in the demographic, social and cultural fields as well. The case study selected is a geographic area with a relatively large spatial extension, where the historical and political factors visibly marked socio-cultural aspects of human habitation. Resita's industrial past left marks on the current economic landscape because of the fact that, although the industrial nature has remained dominant, nevertheless, influenced by economic reorganization, it has required an apparent downsizing, from the point of view of both production and workforce. The economic and social evolution of the Resita city influences also the rural space located in its area of influence. This situation was reflected in a decline of the migration of workforce drawn by Resita from the surrounding area.

Key-words: *economic restructuring, migration, population, urban dynamics, urban-rural interface*

Cuvinte cheie: *restructurare economică, migrație, populația, dinamică urbană, interfață urban-rural*

I. INTRODUCTION

Migrations have played an important role and have continually played in shaping the populations at international level.

The human component is the central element in the development of civilization and culture in each territory. Population dynamics is the result of the interaction between economic development and social structure, two important factors that have acted permanently in various ways from one phase to the next (Ceașescu, 2011).

Migration occurs for various reasons and its determinants or factors vary from country to country and even within a country; it varies depending on the socio-economic (Ianoș, 2004; Iancu, 2007; Vitsenets, 2013; Istiaque&Ullah, 2013; United Nation report on population and migration, 2013), demographic (Iancu, 2007; Ceașescu, 2011; United Nation report on population and migration, 2013) and

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cultural reasons (Jamie et al., 1998; European Migration Network report, 2006; Dimitriu, 2010; Saggar et al., 2012).

Migration influences the fluctuation in numbers, structure and spatial distribution of a population, while at the same time having effects in the social, economic and political fields.

The development of cities is intrinsically related with migration, especially with rural-urban migration (Popescu, 2009), with rural areas fulfilling the labor requirements of urban centers (Istiaque&Ullah, 2013). Migration from rural to urban areas has been a major concern in the past and even at present.

The purpose of the present study is to analyse the evolution of the migration in Reșița city and its area of influence. A several indicators (the criterion of convergence of transport systems, the demographic, economic, socio-cultural criteria) (Ianoș, 1987; Rusu, 2007; Pintilii, 2008; Șoșea, 2013) were used to define the city's area of polarization. The urban influence area of Reșița city includes: 2 towns and 13 communes (Merciu et al., 2012).

Extending the analysis of polarized territory by an urban center, it can help to identify the socio-economic difficulties of rural area polarized by it and possible disruptions in the relations between the city and its area of influence (Merciu et al., 2012). Population is the most active component in the dynamics of an area of influence (Cicharska, 2011 quoted by Drăghici et al., 2012).

Most of the time, the relation between the polarizing city and the surrounding rural area reveals that rural areas are vulnerable to changes of an economic nature in the city, with direct consequences on the demographic potential (Zamfir et al., 2011; Morar, 2012) or on the economic development of the adjuvant area (Stașac, Bucur, 2010).

Over time, the area of influence of Reșița city has represented an evolution in economic, political and social terms, an evolution that was directly reflected in the dynamics and migration of population.

From the economic point of view, the area of influence of Reșița city, as part of the Banat highlands, has been a center of attraction from the earliest times, as a result of its permanent demand for workforce up through to the present times. Industrial activity has been an attraction for working-age people in other regions of the country, even people already employed in various industries in their home-regions.

The evolution of population and the migration were tracked from the time of the annexation of the Banat by the Austro-Hungarian Empire and later by the Habsburg Empire. During the respective period of time, Reșița and the rural area it dominates saw the inflow of important groups of colonists settling in the area (Fig. 1).

Reșița's link with the settlements inside its area of influence – as far as absorption of manpower was concerned – was essential with driving the town's growth on the industrial market into one of the most important industrial centers in the country. Surrounded by settlements that also supplied the raw materials needed, both Reșița and its adjuvant area were the recipients of important manpower resources – from the point of view of both quantity and quality. In order to illustrate Reșița's capability to draw in an impressive workforce, it should be mentioned that,

at the time of its administrative consolidation (in 1910 it was declared a commune, and in 1925 it was declared a town), the non-native population outnumbered by far the local population. This is a feature typical, in most cases, of industrial areas (migrants, coming in even from remote regions, outnumbering the local population). Later on, the native population would become predominant, as a result of the fact that during the Communist period the development of heavy industry in Reșița attracted an important number of workers from other industrial regions of the country.

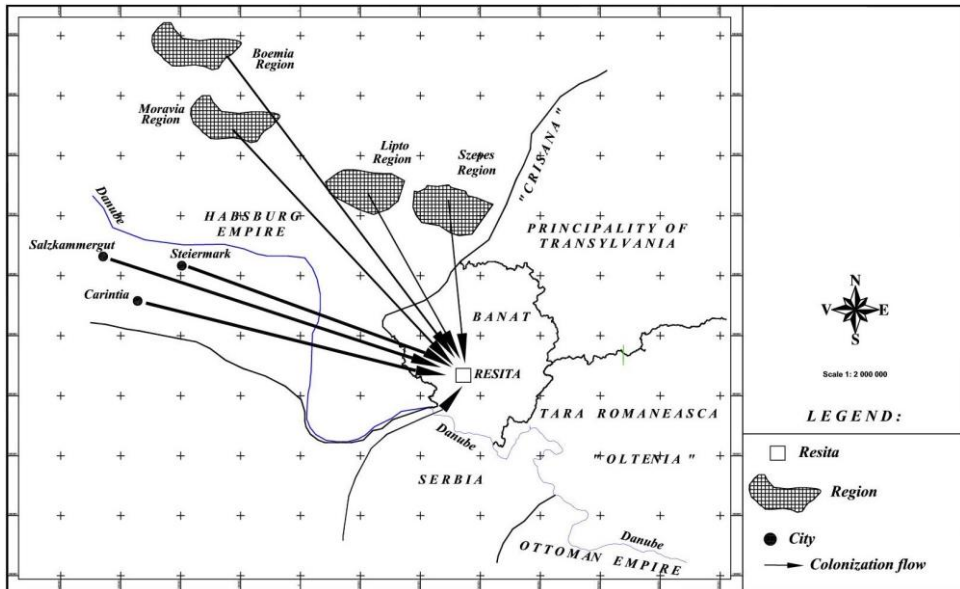


Fig. 1. Map of colonization flows bound for Reșița (17th-18th centuries)

After 1990, the economic restructuring process encompassed all of Romania and the most affected areas are those where industrial activities prevail. Industrial reorganization had an impact on the town of Reșița too, a situation that brought about a reverse migration (the population's return to their home regions, with migration flows predominantly heading from urban to rural areas). Moreover, cross-border migration has reached very high levels in the past few years.

II. DATA AND METHODS

The analysis of the dynamics of migration in the town of Reșița and its area of influence was achieved by calculating statistical data (calculated as a rate of growth or decline). The statistical data was collected for the 1990-2011 period, a time span divided into two phases so as to more accurately capture the causes and changes occurring in the population's mobility during this time span.

Raw migration data were processed and mapped by means of GIS techniques and later on they were interpreted from the perspective of the factors that influenced the evolution of the migration for the study area.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The area under study shows a negative migration balance by the beginning of the 1990s (-209.60‰), with the balance value then starting to rise from 1994 onwards, with slight fluctuations during 1996-2001. Later on, the migration balance registers positive values (with a peak value in 2004 – 366.5‰) (Fig. 2).

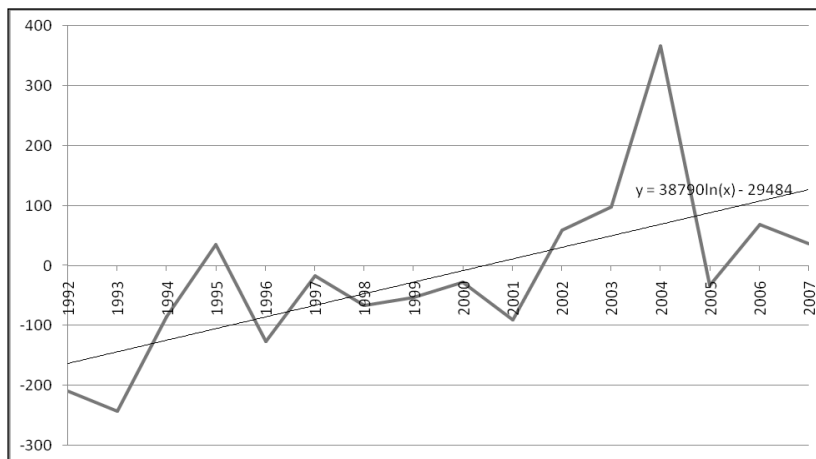


Fig. 2. Evolution of the migration balance in the area of influence of Reșița city

During the early 1990s, changes occurring in the political field as well as the relative instability of the economic climate provided the drive for the population's mobility flows in the area under study. One should also mention the definitive departure of the German minority, which determined the negative value of the migration balance in the early 1990s in the area under study (Fig. 3).

Population mobility during 1992-2007 features the following characteristics:

- transition from rural-urban migration to urban-rural migration;
- decline of the circulatory migration of the workforce (commuting);
- population mobility for studies performed by school-pupils and students attracted by education centers. For the students in secondary-education, these movements are carried out mainly in Reșița; in the case of superior-education students, the main university centers that attract students are Timișoara and Reșița.
- an increase in cross-border migration to the European-Union member states;
- definitive intraregional migration out of the settlements in the area of influence and bound for Timiș and Arad counties.

The decline of commuting and the growth of cross-border migration are direct results of the ways found by the people in the area studied to adapt to the difficult socio-economic situation.

At the same time, the final period of the time span analyzed saw the intensification of migration out of urban areas to rural areas as a result of industrial-

sector layoffs and the return of a significant part of the population previously employed in the industrial sector in urban centers to their rural-area home regions (Fig. 3).

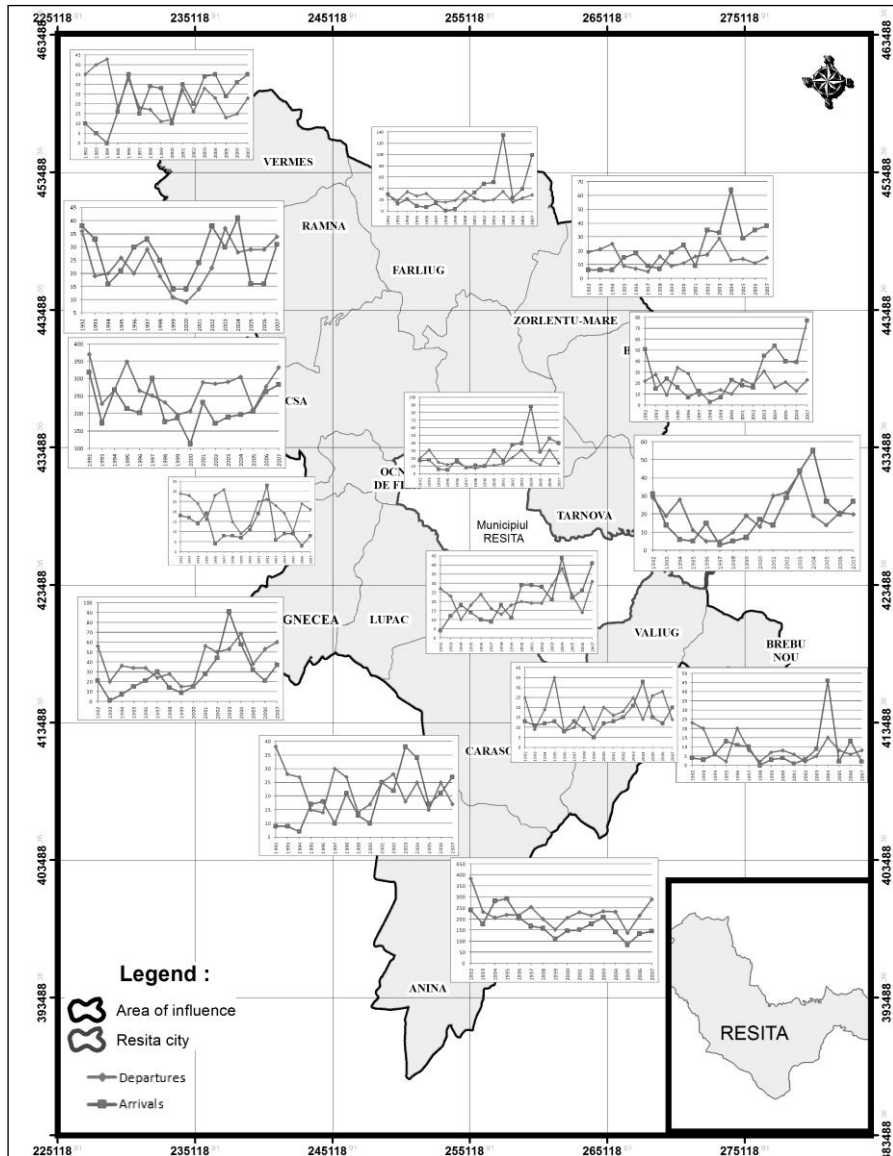


Fig. 3. Migratory balance in the area of influence of Reșița city (1992-2007)

This trend is confirmed by the analysis of charts depicting most of the rural settlements that served as sources of manpower for the Reșița industry (Târnova, Fârlug, Zorlențu Mare, Lupac, Carașova) (Fig. 4).

In these communes, the number of people arriving is higher than the number of people leaving. It is noted that in those communes and towns with an industrial profile, the number of people leaving is higher than the number of people arriving (Fig. 5) (the trend is also valid for the Reșița municipality).

As a rule, most of the people leaving chose either intraregional migration or cross-border migration.

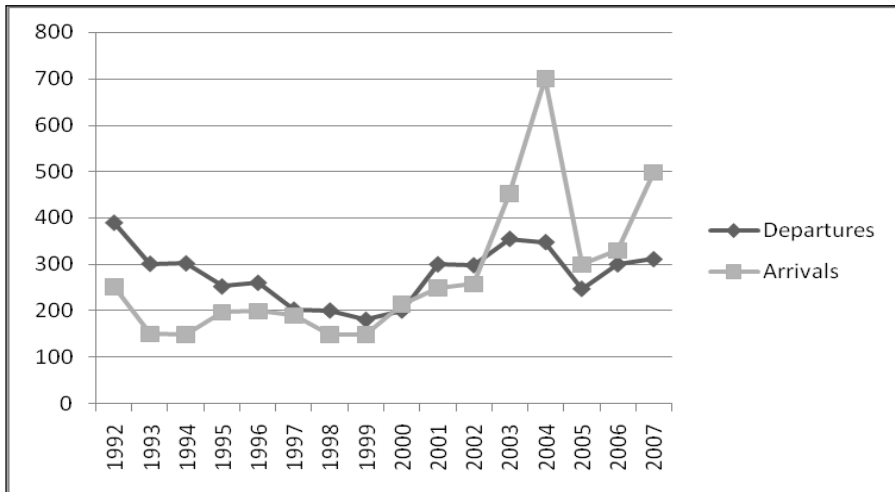


Fig. 4. The migratory balance at rural-space scale (1992-2007)
(Data Source: Caraș Severin County Statistics Department)

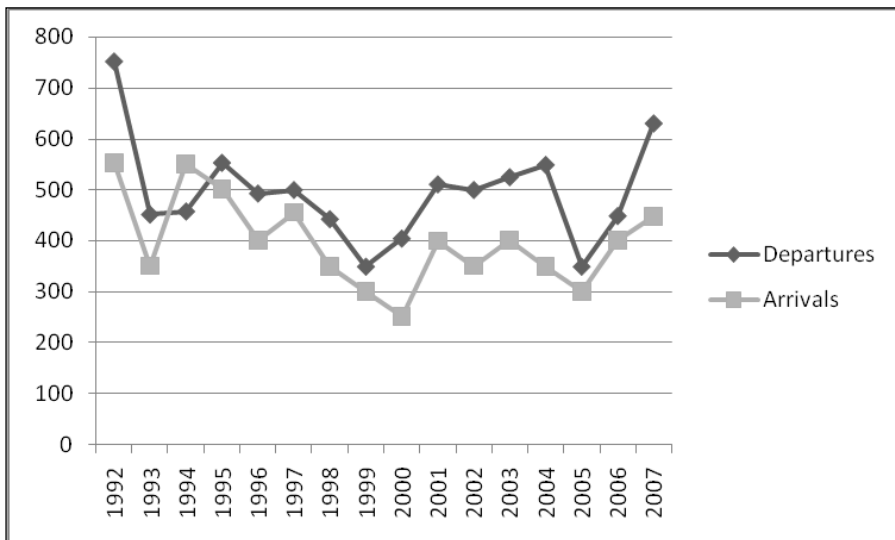


Fig. 5. Migratory balance at urban-area scale (1992-2007)
(Data Source: Caraș Severin County Statistics Department)

The analysis of the trends in the evolution of the migration growth rate in the settlements inside the area of influence of the city of Reșița had resulted in identifying several typologies:

- upward configuration: it is typical of 11 communes in the area under study (Carașova, Brebu, Brebu Nou, Ezeriș, Lupac, Fârlig, Vermeș, Zorlențu Mare, Târnova, Văliug, Dognecea) (Fig. 6). Most of these communes are part of the nearest ring of settlements around the town of Reșița; they register successive waves of populations returning from the industrial hub after the significant decline in the activity of the steelworks.
- configuration with at least one convexity is typical of the town of Anina town (Fig. 7).

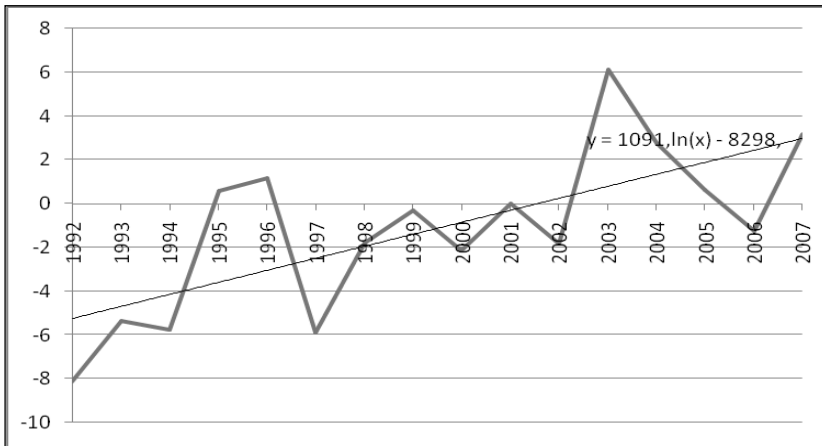


Fig. 6. Evolution of migration growth rate - Carașova commune (1992-2007)

(Data Source: Caraș Severin County Statistics Department)

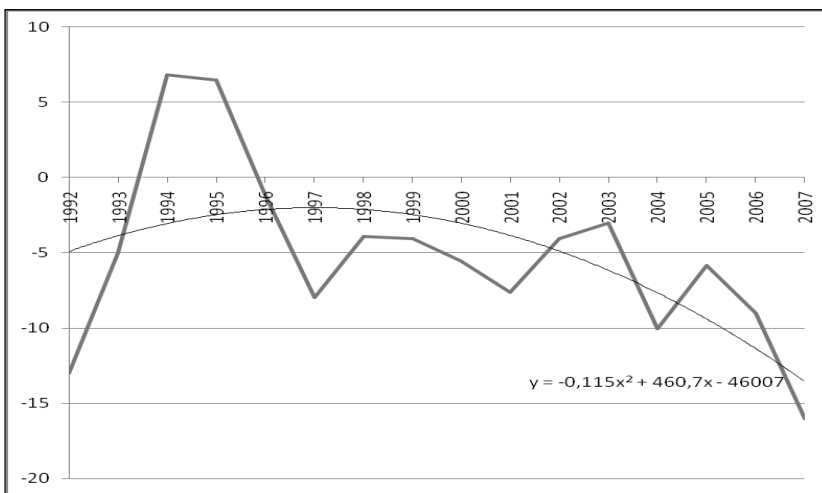


Fig. 7. Evolution of the migration growth rate for the town of Anina (1992-2007)

(Data Source: Caraș Severin County Statistics Department)

When analyzing the evolution of the migration rate in Anina town, one notices that a slight upward trend persisted during 1992-1999, when Anina was an active mining center, followed by a decline starting 2002, with a more obvious downward curve starting in 2006 when the coal mine was shut down, which brought about a negative migration balance as a result of definitive departures or the population's migration abroad.

- linear downward configuration: this category comprises 2 communes (Ocna de Fier and Râmna) and 2 towns (Bocșa and Reșița) (Fig. 8).

Typically, administrative units characterized by this evolution, register a positive migratory balance in the first part of the time span analyzed, and later record a downward trend. Most of the administrative units that feature this evolution of the migration growth rate used to have industry-based economies. As a result of the effects caused by industrial restructuring, these administrative units registered a negative evolution of the migration balance since 2000.

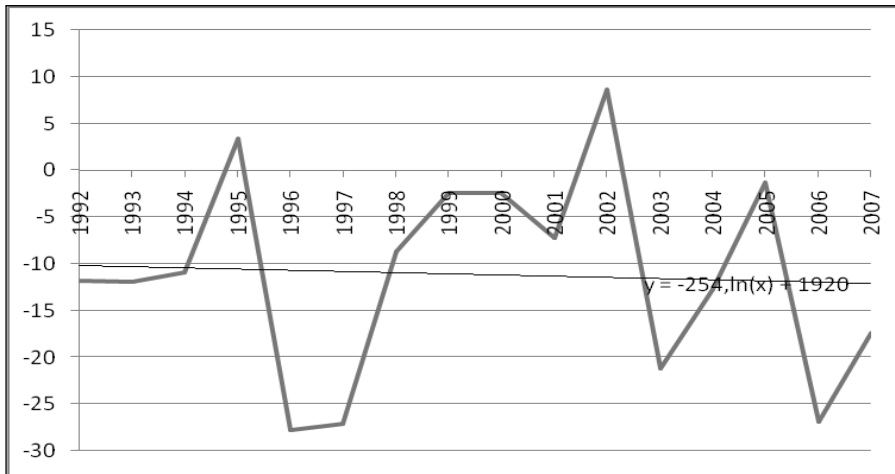


Fig. 8. Evolution of the migration growth rate in the Ocna de Fier commune (1992-2007)

(Data Source: Caraș Severin County Statistics Department)

An analysis of the trends of the administrative units located within the area of influence of the town of Reșița indicates that as far as towns are concerned the ratio of people leaving is lower than the ratio registered in communes.

The Reșița municipality registers, in the early 1990s, an oscillating evolution, marked by a slight rise (positive values reached in 1994: 0.64‰), followed by a sudden drop in the migratory balance, registering negative values. Later on, the migratory balance continued to oscillate, with brief periods of rise and fall, predominantly during 1995-2001 (Fig. 9). It was only in the second half of the time span analyzed that a negative balance was registered, which remained on a constant downward course.

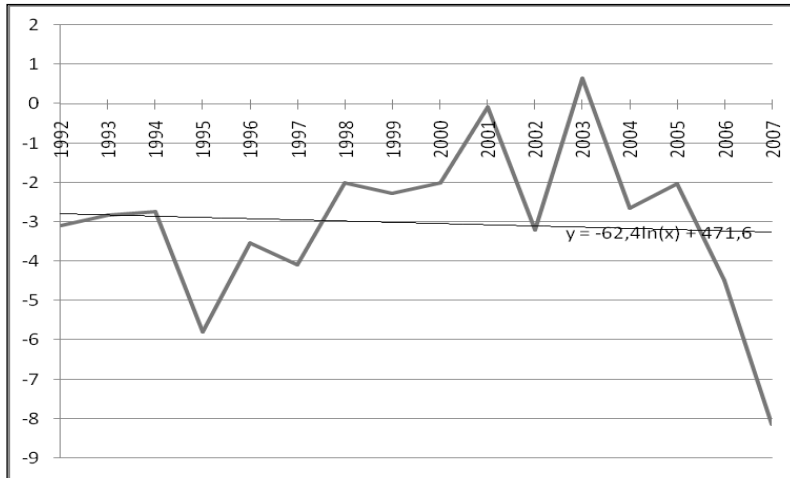


Fig. 9. Evolution of the migration growth rate in Reșița city (1992-2007)
 (Data Source: Caraș Severin County Statistics Department)

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of migrations at the level of the Reșița municipality and its area of influence, per distinct phases, reveals that each time interval had its own specific population movements. From its earliest times, the area under study has seen important population-mobility flows (foreign populations colonized in for political reasons) that have had manifold effects in demographic terms (from population growth to changes in the ethnical and religious structure, and so on). As a result of its economic development based on industrial-production, Reșița has attracted, over time, Romanian-population flows from various regions of the country and from areas around Reșița, in order to find a stable employment.

The past few years have seen reverse migration (urban-rural migration) and international migration as a direct result of reducing the industry's importance of in the economy of the area of influence of the Reșița municipality. Although the effects of the restructuring of industry have left visible marks all across the area of influence and even inside the Reșița urban space, the town is the sole settlement where industry has remained a functional activity through to the present. This situation draws attention to the town's productive capacity and its infrastructure, which have been constantly upgraded and brought up to date to keep with advancements in technology specific of each distinct period in time.

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