

THE IMPACT OF THE HABSBURG GEOPOLITICS ON THE GEO-DEMOGRAPHIC EVOLUTION IN THE NĂSĂUDER BORDER DISTRICT

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Abstract: The establishment of the Năsăud 2nd Border District (or Năsăud Border District, as titled by the local intellectuals) caused a significant change in the demography of this particular spatial-geographic entity. The Habsburg geopolitics, imposed through strict military rules in an ethnic-cultural and – linguistic Romanian space, led many of the regions inhabitants to migrate to Moldavia – Bukovina or other regions with more endurable living conditions. The political exodus reached its climax in the military border's first three years, in order to decrease gradually, simultaneously with the increase of living conditions in the Năsăud Border District. The material and cultural emancipation of the indigenous Romanians effected an ascending tendency in the geo-demographical graph of the last decades of the Năsăud military border.

Keywords: demographic increase, military system, demographic level, soldiers-farmers, militarized settlements, political exodus, process of osmosis

Population and its evolution during the military border. The imperial authorities always focused on the evolution of the border population, which is also emphasized by the large number, at that time, of conscriptions and censuses which, besides their simple demographic statistics, had the merit of highlighting a continuous improvement of the living conditions of the population.

In order to illustrate the evolution of the population within the 44 border habitats, we have chosen five significant moments: a preborder conscription (1720/1721), the “Josefin” (or “Josefian”) census in 1784/1786, the conscription in 1830, the last border census (1850) and the first post border census (1857) (Table 1).

Table 1. The numerical evolution of the population of the border localities, during 1720-1857

Crt. no.	Locality	Number of inhabitants at the conscription or census in					Increase multiplied by	Types of increase
		1720-1721	1784-1786	1830	1850	1857		
1.	Șanț	120	320	360	481	604	5.03	Explosive
2.	Rodna	1020	1670	1910	2172	2399	2.35	Normal
3.	Maieru	817	1368	1580	1572	1751	2.14	Normal
4.	Sângeorz	1154	2050	1930	2179	2437	2.11	Normal
5.	Ilva Mică	371	714	720	785	962	2.59	Normal
6.	Feldru	760	1069	1260	1424	1552	2.04	Normal
7.	Nepos	260	550	830	944	962	3.70	Explosive

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8.	Rebrișoara	878	1570	1870	1965	2018	2.29	Normal
9.	Năsăud	693	1361	1520	1359	1532	2.21	Normal
10.	Salva	755	1194	1162	1160	1206	1.59	Slow
11.	Mititei	448	540	530	548	555	1.23	Slow
12.	Mocod	506	969	820	781	833	1.64	Slow
13.	Ilva Mare	330	680	854	1126	1373	4.16	Explosive
14.	Măgura Ilvei	260	482	502	590	679	2.61	Normal
15.	Poiana Ilvei	160	342	470	520	602	3.76	Explosive
16.	Leșu	269	626	540	621	697	2.59	Normal
17.	Rebra	468	540	570	708	740	1.58	Slow
18.	Parva	190	280	320	393	423	2.22	Normal
19.	Hordou	390	564	504	522	627	1.60	Slow
20.	Telciu	612	1258	1440	1555	1789	2.92	Normal
21.	Romuli	110	240	280	334	379	3.44	Explosive
22.	Bichigiu	375	441	506	606	670	1.78	Slow
23.	Runcu Salvei	284	695	646	767	829	2.91	Normal
24.	Zagra	827	1057	940	965	1047	1.21	Slow
25.	Poienile Zagrei	162	235	290	319	383	2.36	Normal
26.	Suplai	122	150	226	241	269	2.20	Normal
27.	Găureni	160	140	170	192	238	1.48	Slow
28.	Rusu Bărgăului	360	605	740	787	840	2.33	Normal
29.	Josenii Bărgăului	486	625	1040	1047	1091	2.24	Normal
30.	Mijlocenii Bărgăului	310	645	820	842	947	3.05	Explosive
31.	Susenii Bărgăului	445	465	550	543	610	1.37	Slow
32.	Prundu Bărgăului	440	785	1520	1519	1668	3.79	Explosive
33.	Tiha Bărgăului	485	795	1170	1384	1521	3.13	Explosive
34.	Mureșenii Bărgăului	210	314	360	518	547	2.60	Normal
35.	Bistrița Bărgăului	395	685	1180	1437	1555	3.93	Explosive
36.	Ragla	165	219	290	373	399	2.41	Normal
37.	Budacu de Sus	135	360	420	719	727	5.38	Explosive
38.	Mărișelu	371	394	610	663	741	1.99	Slow
39.	Sântioana	234	248	330	411	483	2.06	Normal
40.	Șieuț	388	560	713	756	800	2.06	Normal
41.	Monor	467	630	1030	1121	1192	2.55	Normal
42.	Gledin	446	650	710	830	905	2.02	Normal
43.	Morăreni	138	157	248	337	398	2.88	Normal
44.	Rușii Munți	275	398	607	796	857	3.11	Explosive
TOTAL		18248	29640	35088	38912	42837	2.34	
Absolute increase		11392	5448	3824	3925			
Increase percent		62.42	18.38	10.89	10.08			
Annual average increase		178	121	191	560			
Annual average increase in %		0.97	0.40	0.54	1.44			

Even if, on the whole, the border period was characterised by relatively modest demographic increases (Fig.1-2), we can conclude that the existence of the organizational and functional military system of the district generated several implications, profitable for the whole society of that region, inclusively on the demographic level. The spectacular rise of the demographic curve between the last border census (1850) and the first postborder census (1857) allow us to state that the military border laid the foundations (through the stability and discipline of the economico-social climate promoted) for a unprecedented development of all the habitats within the Năsăud area.

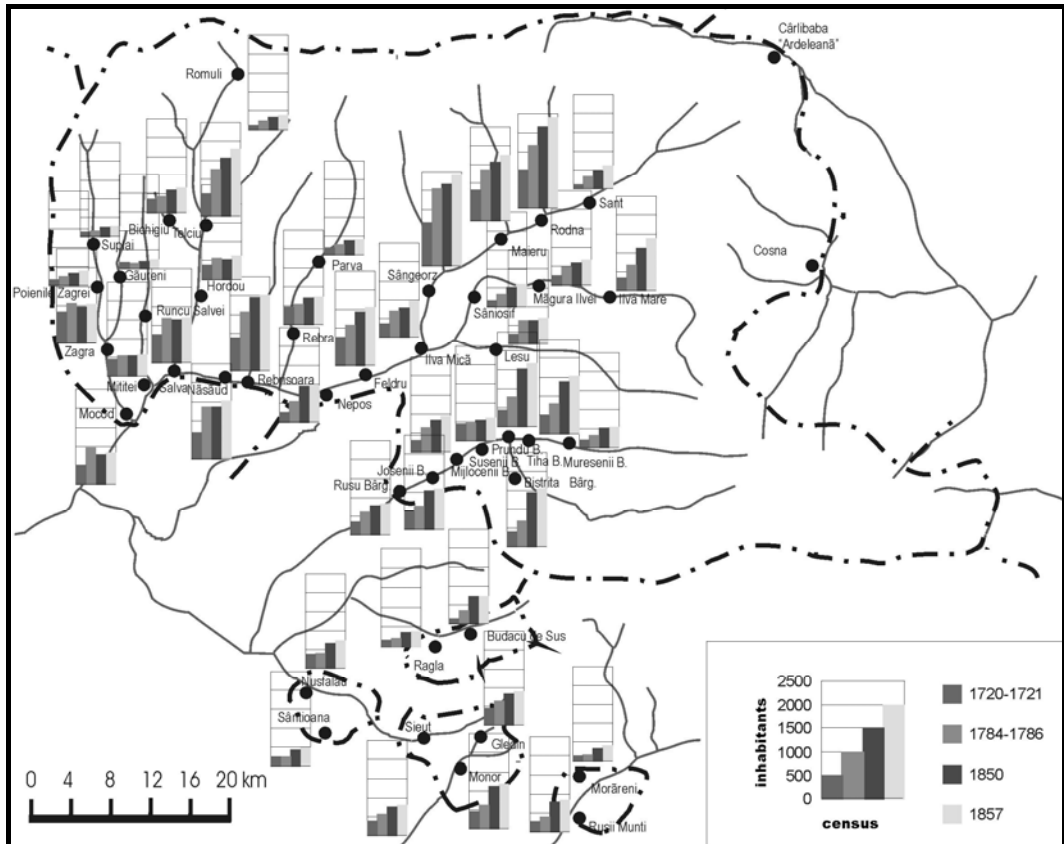


Fig. 1. The evolution of the population of the border settlements according to the statistics of the years 1720/1721, 1784/1786, 1850, 1857

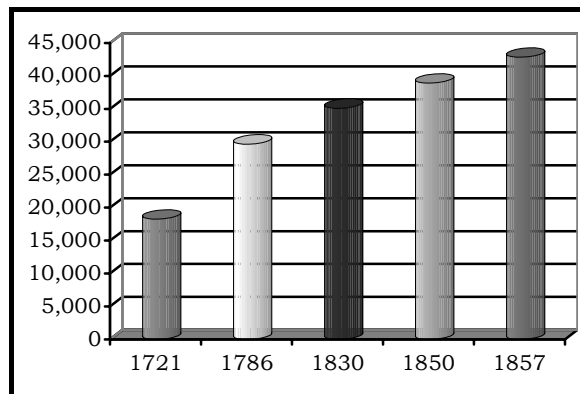


Fig. 2. The evolution of the population of the Năsăud Border District

Aspects concerning the structure of the population. At the level of the population's structure, the militarization was characterized by certain special and specific fundamental aspects, such as:

- the appearance of a particular category of population, soldiers-farmers or simply border people (although that was a comprehensive nation, referring to the majority of the inhabitants in the militarized settlements);

- a prevalently Romanian (95%) ethnical structure (Fig.3);
- a remarkable confessional homogeneousness, with 82,47% Romanian population of Greek-Catholic religion (gipsies included) and 15,21% Romanian population of orthodox religion (Fig.4).
- an occupational structure of the male population, with only 40% of it belonging to a well-defined active group, while the rest comprised old, unfit for work, invalids, sick and under age persons.

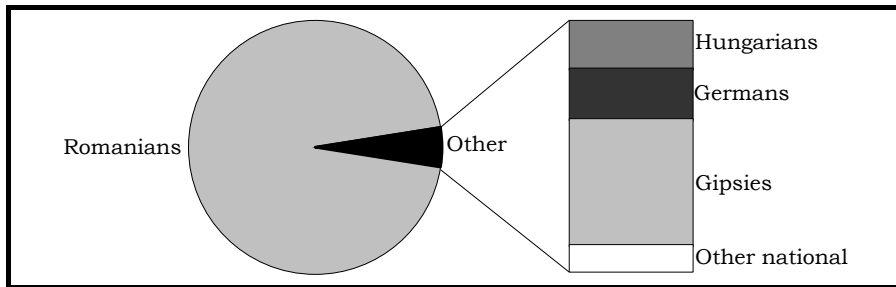


Fig. 3. The population's ethnical structure of the district in 1850

Having analysed the general picture of the population structure in the Năsăud Border District, we can conclude that the numerical predominance of the borderers conferred a remarkable homogeneousness to this regiment, and a clear-cut military character to the district.

The political exode or the geography of the population's trek. Present in the Romanian geographical and ethnocultural area over centuries, the individual or the group exode, also called exodus or trek, generated by politico-economical factors and, sometimes, by the cultural-confessional ones of the period, had a maximum intensity during the XVIIIth century.

If, during the preborder period, trek had become one of the most frequent forms of antifeudal and antihabsburgic fight, then, during the first decades of the military border, the intensification of such a phenomenon was a result of the ignorance of the living norms in the militarized regions, and particularly of the fear against conscription (military service).

The movement of the emigrants had multiple directions, but the greatest part of it belonged to Bucovina and Moldavia.

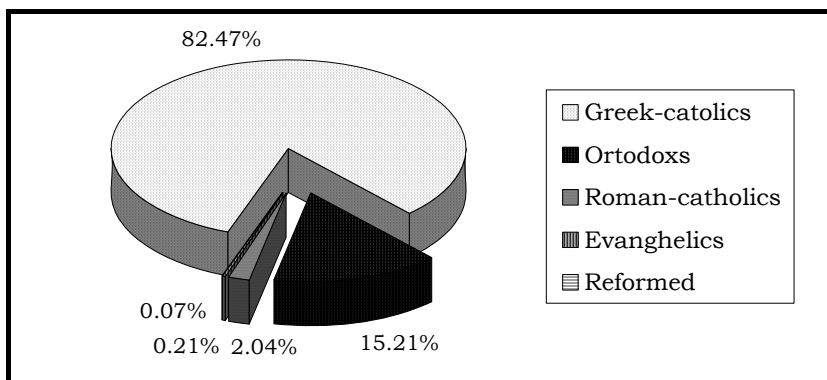


Fig. 4. The confessional structure of the district population in 1850

Table 2. Families of the farmer border villages which moved to Bucovina
(according to I.Nistor, 1926)

Crt. no.	Locality	Total number of families	1735-1750	1751-1761	1762-1764	1765-1770	1771-1775	1776-1777
1.	Rodna	28	4	5	9	7	2	1
2.	Ilva Mare	88	-	3	56	13	14	2
3.	Măgura Ilvei	6	-	-	4	2	-	-
4.	Maieru	47	1	2	24	16	4	-
5.	Sângeorz Băi	86	1	10	45	22	7	1
6.	Ilva Mică	5	-	1	-	1	2	1
7.	Leșu	31	1	1	12	12	3	2
8.	Poiana Ilvei	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
9.	Feldru	5	-	1	2	1	1	-
10.	Rebra	39	1	-	36	-	2	-
11.	Rebrișoara	4	-	-	2	-	2	-
12.	Năsăud	2	-	1	-	-	1	-
13.	Salva	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
14.	Telciu	4	-	-	3	1	-	-
15.	Romuli	2	-	-	-	-	1	1
16.	Zagra	5	1	-	-	1	1	2
17.	Poieni	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
18.	Mărișelu	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
19.	Sântioana	7	1	1	1	1	2	1
20.	Șieuf	20	2	2	1	-	1	14
21.	Budacu de Sus	7	-	1	1	-	3	2
22.	Bârgău	37	4	1	6	4	18	4
23.	Bârgăul de Jos	9	-	-	-	-	8	1
24.	Rusu Bârgăului	4	-	-	-	-	4	-
Total families		440	16	29	202	82	77	34

From a statistics presented by Ion Nistor (1926) for the period 1735-1777, when the migrants' families from 24 villages of the border were gone to Bucovina, it results that the phenomenon was considerably rising until the first 2 years of the border period (1762-1764), when it reached its peak (202 families); then it maintained relatively high in the first decade of the militarization period (82 families during 1762-1770 and 77 families during 1771-1775), to reduce to 34 emigrant families in 1776/1777, after which the phenomenon became sporadic and irrelevant (Fig. 5).

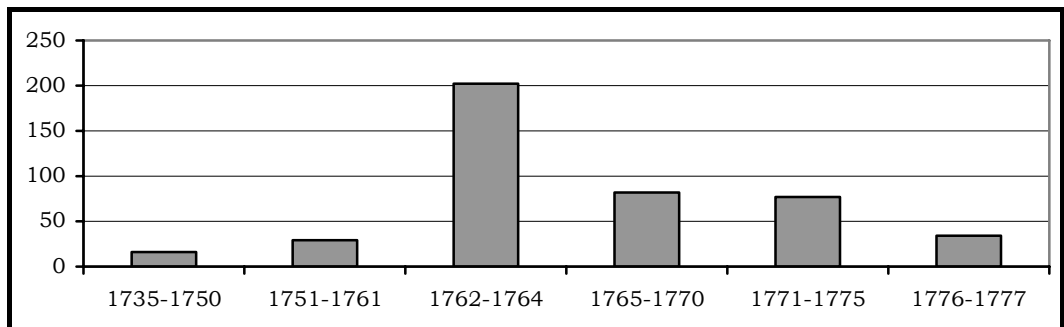


Fig. 5. The evolution of the number of the families emigrated to Bucovina during 1735-1777 (according to the data of Table 2)

The politico-economical and socio-cultural consequences of the trek.

The analysis of the consequences of the trek should be made from at least two points of view: the politico-economical implications of this phenomenon for the imperial court and, not least, the politico-administrative and socio-cultural consequences of the emigration for the Romanian ethnical entity and the Romanian geographic and ethnocultural area.

For the Habsburg authorities. It was obvious that, because of the demographic reduction within that territory of great politico-economical and military-strategical importance, the Imperial Court could not longer exploit, to desired degree, its agropastoral, forestial and mine riches, the military potential of the whole viennese construction being also diminished. Studied from this point of view, for the authorities, determining, besides its severe, repressive measures for the emigrants and their families, the motivation for a reform meant to stabilize the autochthonous population within their original territories.

For the majoritary Romanian ethnics, the exodus implied a series of **negative consequences**, from among which we can mention particularly those of **social nature** materialized into the disintegration of some families and the persecution, by the authorities, of the people remained at their homes, as well as the **economical ones**, extremely severe, consisting in finding or labour sanctioning of the families or their relatives left home, as well as of the entire local community, from the mayor to the border guard.

But the exodus also had for the Năsăud Romanians a **positive role**, a profitable one, as long as the phenomenon of pendulating of the people of the same ethnicity, obliged to live in different politico-administrative entities for centuries, emphasized the idea and strengthened the feeling of membership of all the Romanians of this area to the large family of oriental romanity. Besides strengthening the colonization over the Carpathians, the exodus also represented a fundamental element in the process of osmose of the Romanians all over the ancient homeland.

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