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**THE HISTORY OF POLISH MINORITY IN ROMANIA.  
SOME GEOGRAPHICAL ASPECTS OF THEIR PRESENCE**

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**Abstract:** Romania is an unitary state, with a total population of almost 20 millions inhabitants. Of these, more than 3 millions are consisting of several ethnic groups, some of them with a long history on Romanian territory. Officially, there are 17 ethnic minorities recognized by the Romanian Constitution. Polish minority is one of the oldest and more representative, not by number but by quality of relations that this minority had with Romanian majority during last few hundreds of years. The complexity of the Polish-Romanian relations during the historical times made the existence of this particular minority a very interesting matter for historical and geographical study. In this article we tried to underline the realities and particularities of the Polish minority living on Romanian territory, as well as the demographic and emigrational particularities of this ethny during the time. A better understanding of the way Polish minority reported to the Romanian majority is the base of a better future relation between these two groups of population. We hope our study achieved this goal.

**Key words:** Polish minority, ethny, demography, historical presence, territorial spread

## INTRODUCTION

National minority is a group of people which is distinguished by a lower population number from the rest of the inhabitants of the particular country. Members of the national minority might have status of the citizens. In addition, they have long and strong bonds with the country and the ethnical, cultural, religious and linguistic features distinctive from the rest of the population. At the same time they express their desire to be recognized as a minority. These criteria are fully characterizing the ethnic minority of Poles in Romania<sup>3</sup>.

Currently Poles community in Romania reaches about 4,000 people. The main concentration of the Polish population is at the south Bukovina; others, not so numerous, are in Bucharest city, Hunedoara county and other. For many generations Poles in Romania have maintained an awareness of belonging to the Polish nation, as well as knowledge of Polish language and traditions.

Discussing this topic, "the Polish minority in Romania," we will refer to the territories that were at the time of the World War 1 and 2 within the borders of Romania. Because they represent important new chapters in the history of the presence of Poles in Romania.

Aim of this study is to obtain a cross section of life of Poles in Romania up to the present times using the methods of historical and demographical analysis. At this work were used various materials from the scientific symposium held in Suceava, studies of the Polish community by publishing house "Bezdroża", websites run by the most important Polish community organizations in Romania. Very important part of the study were the conversations with the Polish community and the possibility of using the MA thesis of

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<sup>3</sup> International laws protecting the rights of minorities (the definition of national minorities) [in:] society [in:] Eesti, [http://www.eesti.pl/index.php?dzial=spoleczenstwo&strona=regulacje\\_prawne](http://www.eesti.pl/index.php?dzial=spoleczenstwo&strona=regulacje_prawne).

Fr. Matei Catargiu under the title "The Poles in Romania until 1939". The changes of the number of Poles were taken from the Central Statistic Office in Bucharest.

In the first chapter at the background of the short history of the Romanian state are discussed first Polish-Romanian relations and the history of emigration over the centuries. The theme of the second chapter is the distribution and a number of Polish community in Romania in the twentieth and twenty-first century.

## **HISTORY OF THE POLISH EMIGRATION TO ROMANIA ALONG WITH THE HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN STATE**

Romania is a country situated on the Carpathian and Danube land, has a rich history of many centuries of which any European country would not be embarrassed. The history of Romania will not be the focus of our work, nevertheless we find it important to outline it as it forms the basis of the scientific argument. Thus, we will briefly describe Romanian international relations and influence of other countries as well as describe transformations which the country had overcome.

We can date back the origins of modern Romanian state from 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is when Wallachia and Moldova have emerged as political entities. Over the 15<sup>th</sup> century these Romanian lands were under the threat from Turks, Poles and Hungarians. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the threat were Russia and Austria. Transylvanian land was mainly influenced by the Hungarians and Austrians. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Transylvania was controlled by Habsburgs<sup>4</sup>.

Eighteenth century was a period of growing influence of Russia and Austria (Habsburg Empire). Habsburg, have managed to take control over Wallachia - Oltenia. In 1775, the Austrian empire occupied the north-western part of Moldavia (Bucovina), while the eastern part of the principality - Bessarabia - was occupied by Russia<sup>5</sup> in 1812.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Treaty of Paris (1854) granted the Ottoman Empire the control over Moldavia and Wallachia. In 1859 Alexandru Ioan Cuza became the prince of Moldova and of Wallachia too. This was recognized by Ottoman Empire and Cuza was able to announce national unification<sup>6</sup>. In this way, a state which has started using the official name of Romania was created<sup>7</sup>.

In 1877, Russia declared war against Turkey, this had prompted Romanian politicians to join the struggle against Turkey. As a result, Romania gained its independence in 1878 that was confirmed by the Congress of Berlin. The same year Romania had received the lands of northern Dobrudja. In 1881 Romania became a Kingdom, headed by Charles I (Carol I). Nevertheless, Transylvania and Banat had remained under the control of Habsburgs<sup>8</sup>.

Another important moment for the Romanian people, was the end of the World War 1. The territory of the country has expanded and Banat, Transylvania, Bukovina, the southern

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<sup>4</sup> History of Romania [in:] The Romanian Community of WA INC, <http://www.romwa.org/history.php>

<sup>5</sup> History of Romania, p.1.

<sup>6</sup> History of Romania, p.1.

<sup>7</sup> Catargiu M., Outline of the history of the Romanian state [in:] Chapter 1. History of emigration Poles [in:] Poles in Romania up to 1939 year, University of Adam Mickiewicz, Teology Facultate, Poznan 2003, page 12.

<sup>8</sup> History of Romania, p. 1.

part of Dobrudja and Bessarabia were joint. Great Romania (România Mare) was established with twice bigger territory and population than of the Kingdom that existed before the war<sup>9</sup>.

The end of the World War 2 was not as beneficial for Romania in terms of territory. On the basis of the Treaty of Paris of 1947, Romania lost Bessarabia, northern Bucovina, Hertza and southern Dobrudja. In the coming years Romania was under the influence of the Soviet Union, creating a Socialist Republic of Romania (1947-1989). Since the 1960s, the Romanian government managed to escape from the Soviet Union's direct influence. Nicolae Ceaușescu became the head of the Romanian Communist Party in 1965 and two years later he became the head of state. The year 1989 brought the end of the communist regime in Romania without any changes to its national territory. Today, Romania is a republic with parliamentary-presidential system (semi-presidential)<sup>10</sup>.

## **FIRST TRACES OF POLES IN ROMANIA. HISTORICAL ASPECTS**

The first Polish – Romanian historical contacts can be track back to the creation of the first units of the state on the lands of Romania - Moldavia and Wallachia, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Romania, for the first time, is mentioned in Polish writings in the early fourteenth century, when Poland was ruled by Casimir the Great (1333-1370), who in 1366 moved border of Poland up to Moldova<sup>11</sup>. This is when political and military ties between Poland and Moldova are starting to emerge with some regional differentiations. Weaker contacts occurred between Poland and Wallachia, while stronger between Poland and Transylvania. These ties have developed over centuries<sup>12</sup>.

Close neighborhood meant political influence: the Polish kings intervened in the affairs of the Moldovan principality very often. These interventions were part of the political program of the Jagiellonian dynasty, who wanted to gain control over the trade route, which linked the North Europe with the South, from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea<sup>13</sup>. The aim was to export Polish cereal crops from: Gdansk, Cracow, Lvov, Hotina, Suceava, Galați or Cetatea Albă to Constantinopol and Pery<sup>14</sup>.

Border fighting and an expedition into the Moldova occurred during 17<sup>th</sup> century. It should be emphasized that despite the wars, Moldovan-Polish relations were not always negative. From the beginning Moldavian rulers were interested in the Polish craft, as at that time it was respected for its quality. Privileges were being granted to Polish magnates in order to enable them creating trading houses in important cities. Sometimes Poles received lands

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<sup>9</sup> History of Romania, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> History of Romania, p 1..

<sup>11</sup> Rezachevici C., Polish Crown Relationship with Moldovan. Where the battle took place under "Plonini" (July 1368)? [in:] Closer together. Poles and Romania and the history and cultural heritage of Europe. Materials from the symposium. Wyd. Grup Musatinii, Suceava 2007, page 155.

<sup>12</sup> Catargiu M., Polish - Romanian Realties [in] Chapter 1. History of emigration Poles [in:] Poles in Romania up to 1939 year, University of Adam Mickiewicz, Teology Facultate, Poznan 2003, page 15.

<sup>13</sup> Catargiu M., p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> Petrică I., History of Polish community in Romania [in:] History. [in:] Union of Poles in Romania. Polish House in Bucharest, , [http://www.dompolskibukareszt.ro/istoric\\_pol.html](http://www.dompolskibukareszt.ro/istoric_pol.html)

from influential rulers in exchange for different favours. At that time cross Polish-Moldavian marriages was very common<sup>15</sup>.

Frequent political and cultural contacts created convenient conditions for the diffusion of Catholicism. The first Catholic diocese at the area of Moldova was created on 9<sup>th</sup> of March 1371 on the Siret County. The first bishop was a Franciscan monk, Andrzej Wassilo, from Jastrzębica, called as “Andrzej from Cracow”<sup>16</sup>. The later period the bishopric was transferred first to the Suceava, and then to Bacău, where survived up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the bishops at that territory were Poles<sup>17</sup>.

When it comes to Transylvania - the Polish Brothers or so called Arian Brothers, a religious community which was separated from the Evangelic – Reformists church, had come to this area to spread their religion. In 1658 the Polish Government motivated by Catholic principles has issued legal acts binding Polish Brothers to leave Poland. The Majority of them settled in Transylvania<sup>18</sup>.

To sum up, Polish-Romanian relations began with the Polish-Moldovan neighborhood. This relationship had had politico-military and economic (trade, crafts) character. There was also some religious influence of Polish Catholicism on Romania as well as influx of Polish Protestants. In the area of Transylvania, the first traces of Poles were associated with a group of Aryan (Polish Brothers), who were expelled from the country.

## **HISTORY OF THE EMIGRATION OF POLISH PEOPLE TO ROMANIA**

The first traces of Poles in the lands of Romanian goes back to the beginning of the thirteenth century - their character was military, political, economic, cultural and also linked to the development of the Catholic religion. However, emigration that is in the focus of this essay -that is the permanent settlement- had begun in the late eighteen century. We can distinguish two types of Polish emigration to the Romanian lands. The first group includes political emigration, the second is economic emigration.

Political emigration to Romania has been relatively small and it is not possible to determine how many of the immigrants settled permanently. Economic immigration presents a completely different picture - in terms of quantity and in terms of permanent settlement. While political emigration included mainly political intelligence, we can talk of economic emigration of mainly peasants, people without possession and seasonal workers<sup>19</sup>.

In 1669 Austria attached Transylvania and Banat areas to its Empire. In 1775 also north Moldavia was joined and since then the name Bucovina was given to the region. In this period the Republic of Poland was after the first Partition land (1772) in which Austria

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<sup>15</sup> Petrică I., p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Catargiu M., p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> Pieszczoł F., Moldovan-Polish relations in the second half of the nineteenth century [in:] Closer together. In the circle of Polish-Romanian relations. Materials from the symposium, Wyd. Grup Musatinii, Suceava 2005, p. 135.

<sup>18</sup> Petrică I., p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Catargiu M., History of emigration Poles in Romania [in:] Chapter 1. History of emigration Poles [in:] Poles in Romania up to 1939 year, University of Adam Mickiewicz, Theology Faculty, Poznan 2003, page 25.

grabbed the area of Polish Galicia to its territory. Bucovina and Galicia constituted one state ruled by one emperor. The Habsburg Empire had grown in power starting an intensive processes of changes of the new lands. This was particularly convenient in Bucovina - area sparsely populated with many areas for settlement<sup>20</sup>.

The first actions taken by Austrian authorities on newly gained territory were concerning the exploitation of natural resources - mainly salt deposits. In 1784 salt mines were built in Solca, Cacica, Slatina Mare, Slătioara, Trestioara and Pleșa. In 1792, authorities of the Austria officially brought to Cacica 20 Polish mining families from Bochnia in Galicia and later on from Wieliczka (Galicia) as well. The salt mine Cacica was developed rapidly under the guidance of Polish specialists. They contributed to the development of the whole village. In 1810 the numbers of inhabitants in Cacica village was 305 and in 1818 the village was almost entirely Polish<sup>21</sup>. Despite the salt mine, the important role in the life of the village played also a school and a church. During this period school classes were lead in four languages: Polish, Romanian, German and Ukrainian. The church was built between 1807-1810 mainly with the efforts of Father James Bogdanowicz, employee in the salt mine<sup>22</sup>.

In the early nineteenth century the first wave of emigration of Polish highlanders to Bucovina took place; it was followed by waves in 1860-1880 and 1900-1910. Most of the highlanders came from the northern part of the Silesian Beskid, Beskid Żywiecki and Kisucy River, from the area Czadeckiej. Since the year 1803, due to overpopulation in Polish villages, the migration was mainly made of highlanders czadeckich whose destination were Cernăuți, Cacica, Siret and Huta Veche<sup>23</sup>.

The rapid influx of Polish settlers was the reason of emergence of new villages and towns. In the year 1834 mining families created a new village called Solonețu Nou. Two years later the highlander families from Caliceanca moved to the south of Bucovina and this had started Pleșa village. Residents from Tereblești and Huta Veche had joined them later. In 1842 the other group of Poles from Tereblești and Huta Veche in cooperation with the German families founded the Poiana Micului village.<sup>24</sup>

In 1850-1870 the migration of Polish settlers from the area of Rzeszow and Tarnow took part<sup>25</sup>. This group of people came into the Bucovina and settled in villages such as Ruda (today is Vicșani), Bulai (Moar) and Mihoveni, near Suceava. They had emigrated from their fatherland due to natural disasters: epidemic outbreaks and locusts plague<sup>26</sup>.

The second most important destination of Polish immigrants was Moldova, and particularly Bessarabia. Most Poles in Bessarabia started arriving there in 1840 from the Duchy of Warsaw, among them were farmers, craftsmen and soldiers of the former Russian army. A large group of immigrants joined host country's intelligence circles: they became officials, doctors, teachers<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Catargiu M., p. 26-27

<sup>21</sup> History [in:] Polonia in Romania. Association of Poles in Cacica, <http://www.cacica.eu/>

<sup>22</sup> Petrică I., p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Catargiu M., p. 28-29.

<sup>24</sup> Ostrowski T., Polonia in Bucovina [in:] Bukovina region of gentleness, Tourist Guide, wyd. Bezdroza, Krakow 2001, p. 81.

<sup>25</sup> Catargiu M., p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> Ostrowski Tomasz , p. 81.

<sup>27</sup> Catargiu M., p. 33-34.

At the end of the nineteenth century Poles were coming to the lands of Romania looking for work in the oil industry. They mainly came from Galicia and as respected engineers, quickly found work in Ploești, Brazi, Câmpina and Bușteni<sup>28</sup>.

At the turn of the century emigration of Poles into Transylvania took place. It included mostly miners from the area of Rzeszow, Tarnobrzeg and Kolbuszowa<sup>29</sup>. Migrants were finding work in the coal basin, in cities such as: Valea Jiului, Petroșani, Lupeni<sup>30</sup>. At the same time, the glass industry developed on the lands of Romania (an example of glass factory is Turda) – this gave Polish workers more employment opportunities<sup>31</sup>.

Labor migration has resulted mainly in the settlement of Polish population in Romania. Nevertheless, this process can be simply called a ‘movement’ as Galicia and Bucovina formed one state between years 1849-1918. Emigration was caused by overcrowding of villages in Galicia, that was leading to famine and very high unemployment. Thus, labor migrants were mainly peasants, although there were some mine workers, steel workers who due to unemployment in Galicia were looking for opportunities in other parts of Habsburg empire. Emigration occurred first of all to the area of Bucovina, secondly to Moldova. This group consisted mainly peasant farmers. Another group of emigration, formed by miners and steel workers, settled in different towns of Romania, depending on job opportunities.

Political emigration occurred mainly after uprisings in Poland in the nineteenth century. The main group of immigrants were soldiers, refugees and the intelligent group of Polish. The first of this kind of migration took place after the Kosciuszko’s Uprising in 1794 and third partition of Poland in 1795, when Poland disappeared from the map of Europe. Insurgents emigrated following the motto: "Who loves the homeland lets hurry to Wallachia". Many Poles sought refuge in Moldavia and Wallachia<sup>32</sup>.

Further political emigration took place after the events of the November Uprising in 1830. Then, about 3,000 military soldiers escaped to Transylvania and Moldavia. The strongest group of Polish political emigration was concentrated in Moldavia; as Moldovan boyars were providing assistance for Poles<sup>33</sup>.

In 1863, in Poland, the January Uprising took place. Despite the initial successes it was ended with a defeat of the Polish Kingdom. Another wave of refugees moved to Romania: "the country which is friendliest and helpful". The largest Polish colony was in Bucharest (București). In 1883 it was estimated that around 1,000 migrants from Poland lived in there and in 1898 the number grew to about 3,000 people<sup>34</sup>.

The end of the World War 1 brought the independence to Poland while Romania regained the area of Bucovina, Bessarabia, Transylvania and the southern part of Dobrudja<sup>35</sup>. For both countries this meant many changes and transformation in the pattern of migration.

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<sup>28</sup> Catargiu M., p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> Catargiu M., p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Poles in Romania [in:] Consular Information, Polish Embassy, <http://www.bukareszt.polemb.net/index.php?document=93>

<sup>31</sup> Catargiu M., p. 34.

<sup>32</sup> Petrică I., p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Petrică I., p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Petrică I., p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> History of Romania, p. 1.

Romania has expanded its territory twice, which also meant increase in population and ethnic groups. For Poles it meant the possibility of going back to the country and for those who decided to stay in Romania had to fight for the preservation of their national identity. Emigration of Poles after World War 1 to Romania was weak, nevertheless it had occurred<sup>36</sup>.

Many Poles who returned to Poland, were primarily intellectuals, students and graduates. As a consequence, Polish population disappeared from Iasi, Suceava, Botoşani, Bucharest and from Bucovina area. Due to the loss of important societal group the social structure from the nineteenth century was disrupted<sup>37</sup>.

In the years 1922-1924 Poles, largely workers coming from Malopolska, were migrating mainly to Mediaş, where they were founding work in the glass industry. Another significant, but relatively migration group were Poles from Lodz and Bialystok looking for employment in textile factories<sup>38</sup>.

The period of the World War 2 was the time of emigration of a large group of Poles to Romanian land. This emigration did not have settlement character. Most of the arriving people were refugees escaping the harsh reality of War and early post-war years.

According to statistics available from the Polish Embassy in Bucharest, in September 1939 approximately 26,000 Polish civilian refugees arrived Romania. But by the end of 1939 most of them (about 11,000) left this country, followed in 1940 by approximately another 12,000 people. During the war, the number of refugees varied and by the end of the war in Romania there were about 5,000 of them<sup>39</sup>.

The first years after World War 2 brought significant changes in the structure of the Polish community in Romania. During years 1948-1950 few re-migration transports to Poland and Czech-Slovaks Republic were organized. Poles who decided to go back to Poland were arriving and settling in the west part of Poland, from Silesia up to Pomorze, as this newly gained by Poland territory offered them many opportunities. Many had decided to stay as they did not know what to expect from the post-war reality in Poland<sup>40</sup>.

People which decided to departure to Czechoslovakia encountered many problems. Among them the most important ones were first of all the language and secondly large Hungarian settlement taking place at the same time. It is proven that, the Polish language despite its similarities with Czech and Slovak, possess many differences – particularly when we take into consideration that very often arriving Poles had to learn existing dialects. At that time Hungarians who were expelled from areas of Slovakia, were hostile to the Poles settling in their homesteads. The issue of national identity came up - a lot of people decided to admit to different nationality as a result of pressure from their families or for the political reasons<sup>41</sup>.

Despite different doubts many Polish people went back to Poland. In the period from 1946 to 1950 about 9,000 Poles re-emigrated (according to data from the Polish Embassy in Bucharest). From this number, we can identify three groups of Poles; Poles with Romanian citizenship mainly from Bucovina region (4,858 people); Polish citizens who arrived to

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<sup>36</sup> Catargiu M., p. 34

<sup>37</sup> Catargiu M., p. 34

<sup>38</sup> Catargiu M., p. 34

<sup>39</sup> Poles in Romania, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Ostrowski T., p. 86.

<sup>41</sup> Ostrowski T., p. 87.



Romania before War World 2 (169 people); Polish citizens who arrived after the events of September 1939 (4,198 people)<sup>42</sup>.

After the re-migration to the Romanian territory in 1950 there were more than 6,000 former settlers mainly in the region of Bucovina and about 1,000 refugees left. Groups of refugees settled mainly in Bucharest, Craiova, Râmnicu-Vâlcea, Constanța, Ploiești and Pitești where today live their descendants<sup>43</sup>.

During the communism period the number of the Polish minority was steadily decreasing due to the difficult living conditions<sup>44</sup>. After the political changes in Romania, in 1989, there was a small increase of Polish population due to the re-organization of the structure of the minority which very quickly became active in all important fields for them<sup>45</sup>. As it was outlined in the history of Romanian lands, the largest group of Polish community still lives in the southern Bucovina (Suceava county); another region with high number of Poles is Bucharest city, Timiș county, Hunedoara county and others<sup>46</sup>. Currently, many Polish families are coming to Romania from various reasons and many students are staying temporarily for scholarship programs or internships. On the other hand, mainly young people from the region of Bucovina decides to go to Poland to study.

## **DISTRIBUTION AND TERRITORIAL SPREAD OF THE POLISH MINORITY IN ROMANIA**

Changes in the number and distribution of Polish people in Romania are related to the history of the Polish and Romanian states. Determining the precise changes in the number of Poles, within the boundaries of Romania, can be prove very difficult, as we cannot give reliable numbers of Poles; there are many sources stating different numbers. This chapter describes the demographic changes of the Polish minority in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, based on data from the Central Statistical Office in Bucharest. The Office draws its data from population censuses conducted in 1930, 1956, 1992 and 2002, carried out in regions (provinces); censuses conducted in municipalities and cities in 1930, 1966, 1977; and 1930 census conducted in regions and cities (data analysis was performed using program ArcMap and Excel).

In order to explain changes in the number of Polish minority in Romania in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we will use available, although sometimes biased, academic sources. For the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we will personally interpret due to the lack of academic sources that would deal with the subject.

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<sup>42</sup> Nowak K., Polish diplomacy and Poles in Romania after 1945 [in:] Closer together. Poles and Romanians and the historical and cultural heritage of Europe. Materials from the symposium, Wyd. Grup Mușatinii, Suceava 2007, p. 272

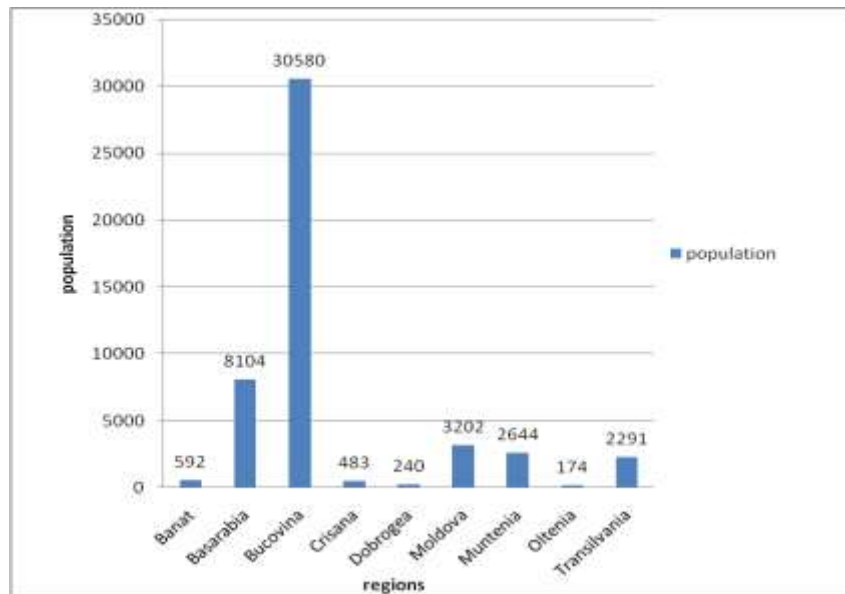
<sup>43</sup> Poles in Romania, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Data from National Statistic Office in Bucharest

<sup>45</sup> Ostrowski T., p. 88-89.

<sup>46</sup> Data from National Statistic Office in Bucharest

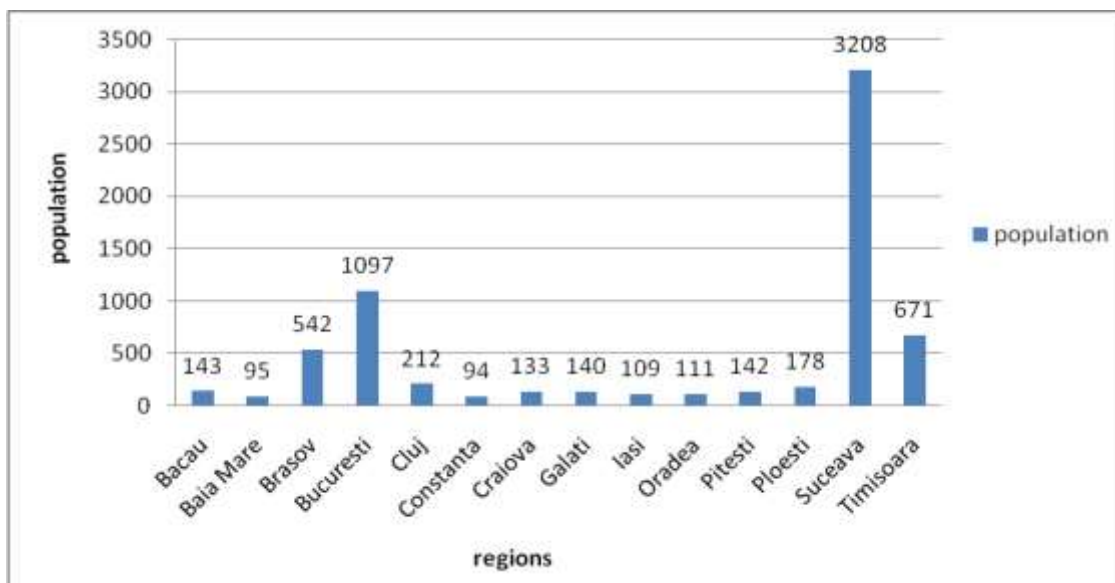
**Fig. 1 Number of Polish people in Romanian regions, in 1930**



*Source: data from The National Statistical Office in Bucharest*

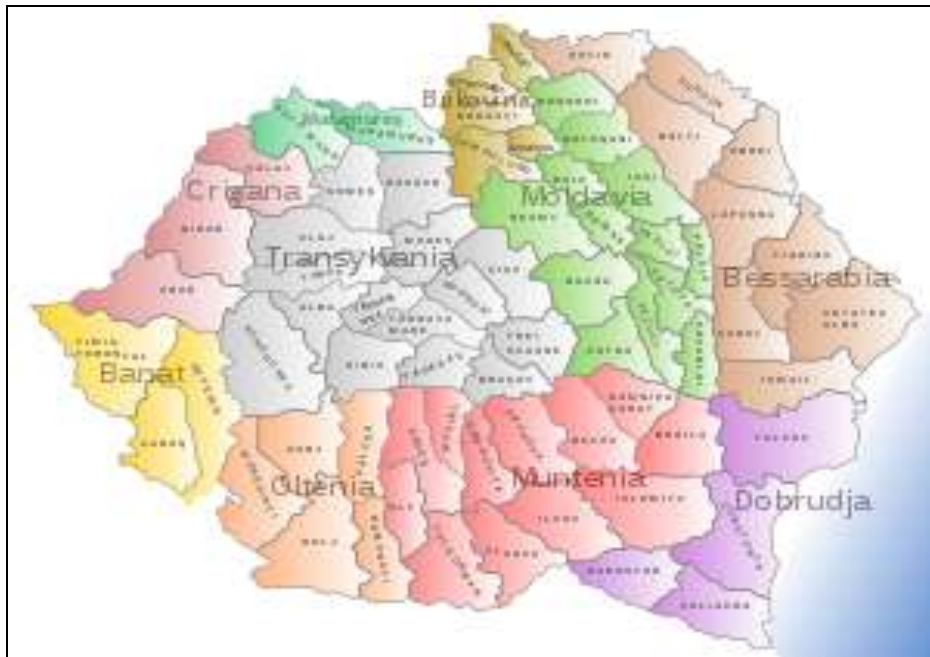
The above graph (Fig.1) shows the number of the Polish population in the interwar period. In these years, Bucovina and Bessarabia belonged to the Romanian Kingdom. These were the regions where majority of Poles lived since they immigrated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century motivated by economic and social factors (overcrowding, natural hunger, disease). In other regions the number of Poles did not exceed the threshold of 4,000, the largest number of Poles were in regions where the industry was developed. Also, in Muntenia, significant role was played by the country's capital, where during the war and during the interwar period there were created by Polish emigrants organizations.

**Fig. 2 Number of Polish people in Romanian regions in 1956**



*Source: data from The National Statistical Office in Bucharest*

**Map. 1 Romania regions in 1930**



Source: <http://www.romwa.org/history.php>

**Map 2. Romania regions in 1956**



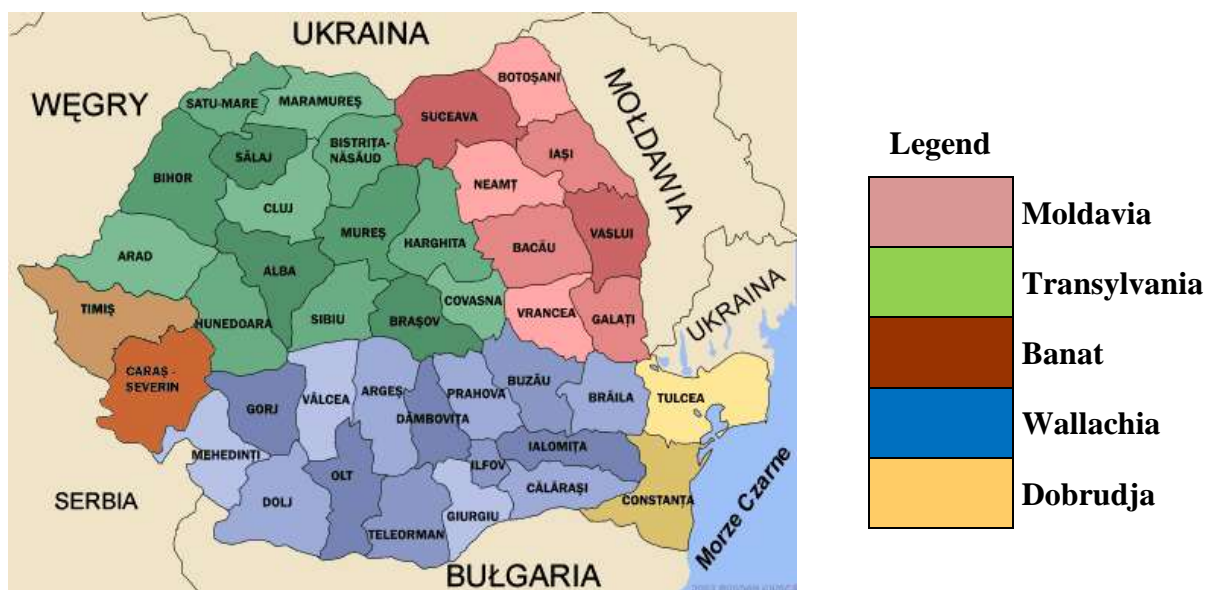
Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical\\_administrative\\_divisions\\_of\\_Romania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_administrative_divisions_of_Romania)

The above graph shows the population in 1956. We can see on the Map 1 and 2 that after World War 2 Romania lost the north part of Bucovina, Bessarabia and the southern part of Dobruja. The largest decline of the Polish population was in the Suceava County– from 30,580 people in 1930 to 3,208 people in 1956. The decrease in population was caused by different factors: changes in state borders, emigration of Poles to their country, reduction of

the population during the war. Another area of the high decrease was Moldova. Before the war in this area lived over three thousand Poles, but after the war only about 250 was left and they resided mainly in the Iași and Bacău counties. This was caused by the same factors as in the area of Bucovina. Before the World War 2 in Muntenia the Polish population had amounted to over 2,600 people, but after the war the number dropped by more than 1,000; this change possibly being based mainly on re-emigration. Changes in the number of Poles in Transylvania, and Crișana were due mainly to the repatriation in the years 1946-1950. In the area of the former land of historical Oltenia and Banat, the number of Polish population decreased slightly. In Dobrudja the state of the Polish population has not changed. An additional reason for the change of the number of Polish people was a change of nationality after the war, to Romanian, Hungarian or German and others<sup>47</sup>.

To sum up, in the first half of the twentieth century, changes in the number of Polish population occurred mainly due to the war, changes in state borders, organized re-emigration, and adopting other nationality.

**Map 3. Historical lands of Romania**



Source: ([http://wapedia.mobi/pl/Plik:Rumunia\\_mapa\\_administr\\_m2.png](http://wapedia.mobi/pl/Plik:Rumunia_mapa_administr_m2.png))

Map 3 presents the historical division of the Romanians, in which the color pink shows a region of Moldova, green - Transylvania, brown - Banat, blue - Wallachia, yellow - Dobrudja. The census on the basis of selected cities and municipalities carried out in 1930, 1966 and 1977, assigned the numbers to the various historical lands (Map 3). Changes in the Polish minority in these regions are as follows:

<sup>47</sup> Poles in Romania, p. 1.

**Tab. 1 The number of Polish people in Moldova  
cities and municipalities**

<b>Cities</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>1966</b>	<b>1977</b>
<b>Bacău</b>	210	13	16
<b>Bârlad</b>	29	1	-
<b>Botoşani</b>	137	13	9
<b>Cacica</b>	-	377	-
<b>Buhuşi</b>	222	4	-
<b>Câmpulung</b>	97	35	-
<b>Focşani</b>	54	9	-
<b>Galaţi</b>	330	30	6
<b>Gura-Humorului</b>	161	39	-
<b>Iaşi</b>	505	40	27
<b>Paşcani</b>	210	10	-
<b>Piatra-Neamţ</b>	130	11	6
<b>Poiana Micului</b>	-	333	-
<b>Rădăuţi</b>	184	74	-
<b>Roman</b>	148	14	-
<b>Suceava</b>	433	220	221
<b>Vatra Dornei</b>	153	24	-
<b>Vaslui</b>	-	2	1

*Source: data from The National Statistical Office in Bucharest.*

**Tab. 2 The number of Polish people in Wallachia  
cities and municipalities**

<b>Cities</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>1966</b>	<b>1977</b>
<b>Brăila</b>	139	14	5
<b>Bucureşti</b>	1650	655	319
<b>Buzău</b>	29	6	1
<b>Craiova</b>	73	24	8
<b>Dolj</b>	-	-	30
<b>Gorj</b>	-	-	4
<b>Ialomiţa</b>	-	-	6
<b>Mehedinţi</b>	-	-	7
<b>Olt</b>	-	-	7
<b>Piteşti</b>	34	9	-
<b>Ploieşti</b>	200	31	-
<b>Prahova</b>	-	-	19
<b>Târgu Jiu</b>	7	2	-

*Source: data from The National Statistical Office in Bucharest*

**Tab. 3 The number of Polish people in Transylvania cities and municipalities**

<b>Cities</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>1966</b>	<b>1977</b>
<b>Alba</b>	15	6	13
<b>Bihor</b>	-	-	17
<b>Braşov</b>	53	97	67
<b>Cluj</b>	76	72	42
<b>Hunedoara</b>	-	-	170
<b>Lupeni</b>	-	282	-
<b>Mediaş</b>	144	75	-
<b>Mureş</b>	-	-	36
<b>Oradea</b>	69	37	-
<b>Petroşani</b>	35	53	-
<b>Satu Mare</b>	54	4	3
<b>Sibiu</b>	62	-	96

*Source: data from The National Statistical Office in Bucharest*

The tables above show the number of population in selected cities and municipalities. We can see that between 1930 and 1960 there have been major changes in the number of Polish population in Moldova, Wallachia and Transylvania, caused by the war, re-emigration, change of nationality (for more information Fig.1 and 2).

Only in Cacica, Poiana Micului and Suceava (Tab.1) Polish population remained large as of 1966, and also in Suceava in 1977. In our opinion that is the result of a nostalgia and attachment to the region.

In the area of Wallachia, the greatest changes have occurred in the capital, and in the cities of Ploieşti and Brăila. In the capital remained a group of Poles who were linked to the organizational activities of the Polish community during the war. However, in 1977 we can see new places of settlement for the Poles, which may be due to the change work, for example, from the Craiova to Mehedinţi and others.

There were less Poles in Transylvania than in Moldavia and Wallachia. The biggest change in population between 1930 - 1966 had occurred in Oradea, Satu Mare, and Mediaş. The effect of the change in population in these first two cities, can be explained by their close to border location - parts of the population could settle in Hungary. Lupeni, Mediaş and Hunedoara are cities which were developed because of the glass and coal industry, where many Poles could find work, and this argument can explain such large numbers. Sibiu, Braşov, Cluj Napoca are also well-developed cities where the Polish minority could find work in other industries.

**Tab. 4 The number of Polish people in Banat cities and municipalities**

Cities	1930	1966	1977
Arad	106	101	49
Timisoara	101	149	90

Source: data from The National Statistical Office in Bucharest

**Tab. 5 The number of Polish people in Dobrogea cities and municipalities**

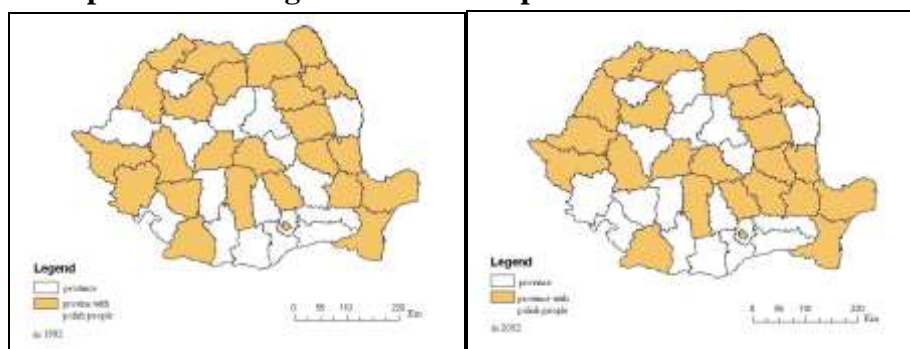
Cities	1930	1966	1977
Constanta	82	-	43
Tulcea	10	9	6

Source: data from The National Statistical Office in Bucharest

In the area of Banat, there were no major changes in the population of Poles. The reason for this could have been good living conditions and also the distance from re-emigration centers in Bucovina and in Wallachia that were spreading re-emigration ideas; as the result the Polish group tied to this land and did not think about returning to their country.

In Dobrudja, we can see a 50 per cent reduction from 1977 to 1930, which might be due to the change citizenship after the war, a change of residence, or return to the home country.

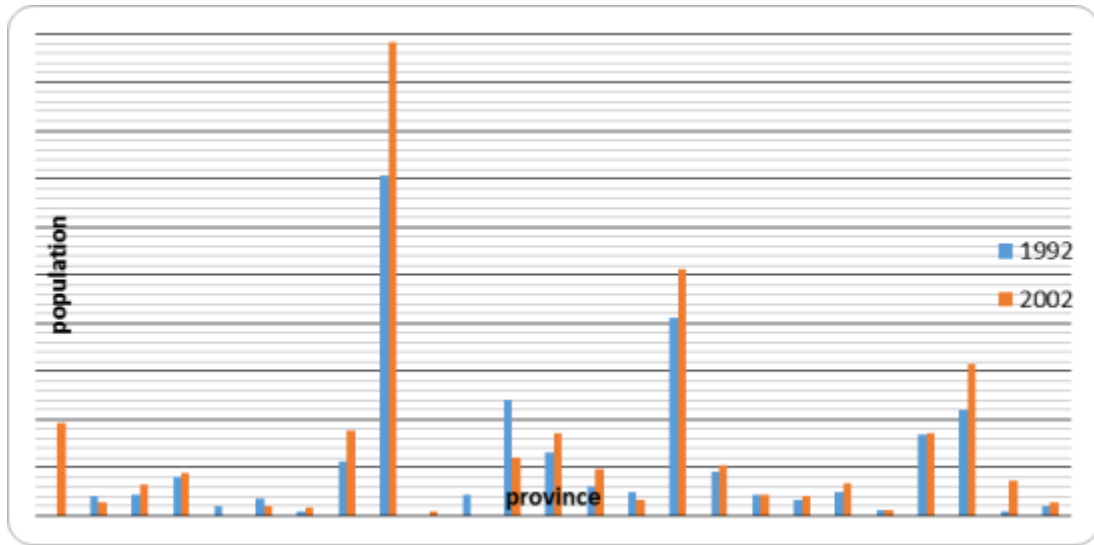
**Map 4. Poles living in the different provinces in 1992 and 2002**



Source: data from The National Statistical Office in Bucharest  
(in program Arc map)

These maps represent provinces inhabited by Poles. In Moldova the Polish did not change their residence during the analyzed decades. In Transylvania minor changes occurred: in 2002 the Poles no longer live in Bistrița-Năsăud region. The situation changed in the region of Banat; in 2002 Poles lived only in Timiș region. The reason might be the greater development in the northern part of Banat. The southern part of the country has changed more, the Poles live in the provinces Buzau and Gorj. This could be explained by employment migration.

**Fig. 3 Number of Polish people in Romanian provinces in 1992 and 2002**

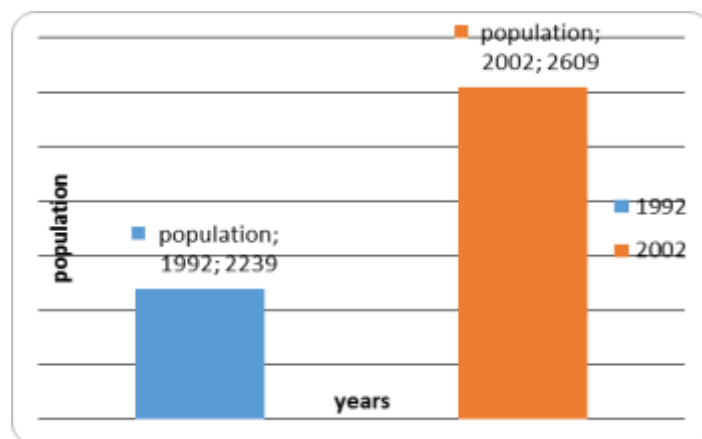


*Source: data from The National Statistical Office in Bucharest*

The above chart shows changes in the number of Poles in 1992-2002 (excluding the province of Suceava, which has been discussed in the Fig.4) In the capital, the number of Polish population increased by almost 100 people, which is due to the arrival of new families and the development of the Polish capital. Also, the reason for the increased number of Poles in the province of Hunedoara may be finding work in mining and metallurgy factories. The reason for the increased number of Poles in Constanța, may be the possibility to work in the tourism industry. A significant increase in the number of Poles has also appeared in Timișoara and Brașov; a smaller increase in Iași, Vrancea, Prahova, Dolj, Brăila and Bihor. These may be related to the development of these cities in the 90s. Population decline occurred in Cluj Napoca, Argeș and Botoșani.

Summarizing, the main increase in the number of Poles in the cities is due to better living conditions, the possibility of finding work, the development of cities and towns and active organization of the Polish community.

**Fig. 4 Number of Polish people in Suceava Province**

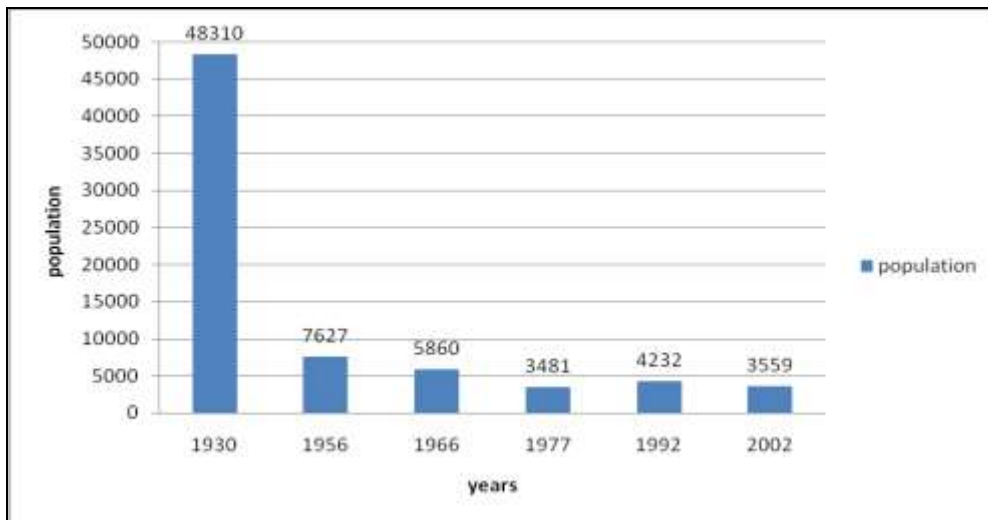


*Source: data from the NSO in Bucharest*



This figure shows the number of Polish people in the province Suceava between 1992 and 2002. Significant population growth is due to activation and joint action of the Polish community in the direction of the rebuilding of their life in Romania, as well as the improvement of living conditions.

**Fig. 5 Changes of number Polish people in Romania in the years 1930-2002**



*Source: data from the NSO in Bucharest*

The above chart applies to the overall change in the number of Polish population in Romania in the twentieth century. After the World War 1 the Polish minority was the largest in the Romanian Principality – the high numbers were especially in Bucovina and Bessarabia. After World War 2 the situation reversed. The number of the Polish population has declined several times, the reason being the change of borders, organized re-emigration to Poland, the change of the national identity, a time of war and human loses.

Under communism the Polish community steadily decreased. This was caused by restricted rights for minorities and poor living conditions. Since 1992, a slight increase in population can be noted. It is linked to the political changes and the activity led by minorities. A slight decrease in population in 2002, may be caused by trips to Poland. The Polish minority can be expected to grow because of the attachment to the region (particularly to Bucovina, and Bucharest region) and also because of the arrival of new families from Poland, due to the development of the capital and other regions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Polish - Romanian contacts started at the beginning of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Initially they had mainly political and military character. With the time flow mutual economical, cultural and everyday life relations continued to deepen. Parallel Catholic religion was developing on the Moldovan territory, which as well resulted in the presence of Poles. To the Transylvania's lands came group of Polish Brothers (Arian), Protestant followers which were expeled from Poland.

Polish immigration began with the joining Bucovina to the Habsburg Empire in 1775. First group of Poles came to Bucovina within the settlement policy pursued by the Austrians (forced emigration of miners to Cacica). Subsequent emigrations of the Polish population had mainly livelihood character. Beginning of the nineteenth century was a time of a settlements of highlanders from the Czadecki area. Successive waves of emigration of Polish highlanders had reached the land of Bukovina in years 1850-1870. In the mid-nineteenth century many Poles settled in Bessarabia. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century emigration of Poles have occurred in the area of Transylvania, where they settled mainly in the cities with developed mining and glass industry. Labour migration has resulted that mainly Polish people settled in the lands of Romania and the place of settlements was mainly Bucovina.

However, political emigration took place mostly after the events of the uprising in Poland in 1830 and in 1863. But it did not caused major settlements of the Polish population in Romania. After World War I, when Poland regained its independence, part of the Poles decided to return to their country. They were mostly refugees and a group of intellectuals. However, the most numerous returns to the Poland took place after World War II. At that time, more than half of Poles have returned to the Poland or Slovakia. During communism, there were no emigration or remigration of Polish population.

The largest polish concentration until the present time is the Bucovina (today Suceava region within the boundaries of Romania). The second region of polish settlements was Bessarabia which Moldova today. Beside of these regions there are few and scattered Polish centers throughout Romania which are mainly associated with the possibility of work in different industry branches.

Bucharest has never constituted the main place of polish settlement. Poles were mainly here because of the political emigration the majority of whom went back to Poland. The more important moments related with Poles was creation of Polish diplomatic activity. From 1919 Polish embassy started to function in Bucharest and in 1938 has been raised to the rank of embassy.

In 1990, in the capital was established the Polish Home and the Union of Poles in Romania which headquarter was moved in the following years to Suceava. Currently the activity of the Polish community in the capital is associated with a church and important patriotic celebrations. It is concentrated mainly around the Polish House, Polish Institute, the Polish Embassy. Learning Polish is possible at the school held at the Polish Embassy. Poles in the capital can be divided into 3 groups. Some of them was born in Bucharest and comes from Polish families, or mixed. The second part comes from the Polish community in Bucovina and the last one are countrymen which were born in Poland and for various reasons have settled in Romania.

This paperwork was a very important experience for the authors, comparing the strength of national consciousness compatriots residing abroad to the Poles living in the country. As authors we look with admiration at the fight and the activity of the Polish minority living in Romania for centuries. What is more we believe that the Polish community has a very good relationship with the Romanian government, evidence of which is the fact of possibility of association (the creation of the organization), possibility of voting in the parliament, the opportunity to learn Polish language in Romanian schools. These common relationship mean for me high tolerance and mutual respect. Our work does not cover fully all

the mentioned issues but we hope that the reader will become interested in the history of the Polish minority in Romania and that it will constitute a reason for others to deepen the knowledge of Polish minority of Romania.

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Map 1 <http://www.romwa.org/history.php>

Map 2 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical\\_administrative\\_divisions\\_of\\_Romania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_administrative_divisions_of_Romania)

Map 3 [http://wapedia.mobi/pl/Plik:Rumunia\\_mapa\\_administr\\_m2.png](http://wapedia.mobi/pl/Plik:Rumunia_mapa_administr_m2.png)