

## Article

# Exploring Hidden Costs of Seasonal Migration in Agriculture within Roma Communities of Origin: Evidence from Romania

Sorina Corman \* and Alin Croitoru 

Center for Social Research, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, 550169 Sibiu, Romania; alin.croitoru@ulbsibiu.ro

\* Correspondence: sorina.corman@ulbsibiu.ro

**Abstract:** The article is focused on researching the hidden effects of seasonal migration in agriculture on Roma communities in Romania. The theoretical framework considers the specific nature of seasonal migration in agriculture and includes elements relevant to understanding the seasonal migration patterns of the Roma population from Romania. The research is based on a qualitative methodological design and over 120 interviews in four communities with Roma individuals and key actors at the community level (e.g., local authorities, teachers, priests, and social workers). The interviews are thematically analyzed, and the hidden costs of seasonal migration are discussed at three levels of analysis: individual, familial, and community. First and foremost, the analysis emphasizes that migration is the most significant factor of social change in the studied Roma communities, and its effects are multifaceted. The analysis reveals significant negative costs of migration in terms of health, education, employability, family, and community life. In the medium and long term, these effects decrease the positive aspects linked to the material gains from migration, making these Roma communities more vulnerable and dependent.

**Keywords:** seasonal migration in agriculture; Roma migrants; Romanian migration; intra-European migration; migration's effects



**Citation:** Corman, S.; Croitoru, A. Exploring Hidden Costs of Seasonal Migration in Agriculture within Roma Communities of Origin: Evidence from Romania. *Societies* **2023**, *13*, 239. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc13110239>

Academic Editor: Nick Osbaldiston

Received: 12 September 2023

Revised: 3 November 2023

Accepted: 6 November 2023

Published: 9 November 2023



**Copyright:** © 2023 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## 1. Introduction

Current East-to-West intra-European patterns of migration are highly diverse in terms of motivations, temporality, destinations, and outcomes [1–3]. This is the result of several decades of massive migrations generated by significant imbalances in terms of economic well-being, labour market opportunities, the functioning and quality of public services in education, healthcare, social protection, etc. Moreover, the recent series of crises have further aggravated such imbalances and disproportionately affected already vulnerable populations in less developed European countries [4]. In this context, the agriculture–migration nexus in Europe developed and embedded a set of mechanisms aimed at facilitating temporary (especially seasonal) migration for low-wage workers and under relatively poor working and living conditions [5,6]. This framework facilitates the international mobility of low-skilled workers, primarily from Eastern Europe and third countries, to meet the labour demand in highly developed European Union (EU) countries where the local population is no longer interested in undertaking demanding jobs, such as those in the agricultural sector. Recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has perhaps become more evident than ever how crucial these migrant flows within the EU are, as their mobility was facilitated by European regulations, even when most countries closed their borders [7–9].

Romanian migration developed after the fall of the communist regime in 1989 and became substantial after Romania's accession to the EU (2007), when Romanians gradually acquired European citizenship rights across all EU states [10,11]. However, migration in agriculture had been significant for Romania even before joining the EU, due to multiple bilateral agreements between Romania and other EU countries (such as Germany, Spain). These bilateral agreements allowed hundreds of thousands of Romanians to work

seasonally in agriculture in EU states [12] and represented important roots for further developments of the flows of international migration.

The importance of ethnicity in Romanian migration has led, on one hand, to migrants being oriented towards specific destinations—Germany, preferred by those of German ethnic origin; Hungary, preferred by those of Hungarian ethnic origin; and certain destinations preferred by the Roma minority [11]. On the other hand, it has resulted in a stratification of migrants based on the jobs they performed at their destination and the most disadvantaged minorities, such as Roma people, more often accepting to do challenging jobs, such as agricultural work, at their destination [13–15]. The European Commission estimates the European Roma population to be 10–12 million people, with Romania being the European country with the largest number of Roma within the EU [16]. The Roma ethnic minority in Europe is not homogeneous, but there are high levels of exclusion and precariousness in the Roma communities in any country [16,17]. For Roma in Romania, the seasonal work abroad, combined with local casual work and social benefits, plays an important role in providing income and improving housing conditions for disadvantaged people and their families [14,18].

While a significant portion of the knowledge regarding the risks and effects of seasonal migration is derived from research conducted in the destination country on active migrants, there exists a gap concerning longer-term effects on individuals who return to their place of origin, as well as on the families and local origin communities they belong to. Against this backdrop, the article offers an exploration of migration's impact on social structures at the individual, family, community, and societal levels. It explores the intricate mechanisms accompanying migration, providing context-specific insights into affected processes and phenomena. By sharing experiences of Roma communities facing migration challenges, the research highlights their cultural and social dynamics. The next section of literature review introduces a series of useful concepts for understanding seasonal migration in agriculture and the specifics of Romanian Roma migration. Methodological details are presented in a distinct section of this article, followed by a section of qualitative analysis and findings. This article's conclusions discuss the main research results in relation to implications for origin communities.

### *1.1. Seasonal Migration in Europe: Current Challenges*

The way it is organized and the recruitment methods in agriculture make seasonal migration a phenomenon in which those in vulnerable categories from origin communities are more frequently encountered [19,20]. This happens because they are the ones most willing to accept demanding manual work at the destination, periods of intensive labour, poor living conditions, and periods of separation from their families. In circumstances where agricultural work is much better paid abroad and their living and working conditions are often precarious both at home and abroad, individuals from socio-economically vulnerable categories show a greater interest in working abroad, even if it means temporarily giving up their social life and the little comfort and well-being they have. Additionally, the social pressure for these individuals can be significantly higher at the family level, as the earnings from working abroad can ensure the short-term fulfilment of basic household needs. The decision to emigrate can thus be interpreted in the terms of the New Economics of Labor Migration [21,22]. This implies that at the household level, certain strategies are adopted to diversify sources of income and to access job opportunities abroad. However, it should be noted that this type of migration is often necessity-driven, given that individuals frequently live in economically challenging circumstances, and seasonal migration can provide them with an additional source of income in a relatively short period of time.

The definition of seasonal work in EU legislation refers to a type of employment contract (seasonal basis on fixed-term contracts) in economic sectors characterized by seasonality and the distinction between intra-European migrant workers compared to third-country nationals [19]. In terms of job market opportunities, it should be noted that migrants face multiple constraints they must accept to work seasonally in agriculture in other

countries. Firstly, there is a need for workers only during specific periods (seasons), and this entails individuals giving up certain aspects of their personal lives to take advantage of such work opportunities. Secondly, the act of migration under a contractual framework not only establishes a formal commitment between migrants and their employers but also anchors them to specific geographical locales. This linkage, while ensuring a structured work arrangement, often engenders a constrained ability to address and mitigate potential instances of exploitation or abuse [5]. Finally, there is competition between intra-European mobile workers and third-country nationals, serving as a mechanism whereby those seeking intra-European migrants must accept relatively poor working and living conditions [20], or else they risk losing access to these jobs if they are instead offered to individuals from third countries.

At the EU level, there are countries with a long tradition of utilizing seasonal workers in agriculture (such as France and Germany), and after 1990, the map of EU destinations for this type of migration has diversified. An important factor contributing to this diversification was the new phase of agricultural industrialization that Mediterranean countries have entered. The other component of the process is associated with the countries of origin of intra-European seasonal migration in agriculture. In this case, the Central and Eastern European states have become significant sources of migrants, even during the EU's expansion towards the east [19]. The bilateral agreements prior to their entry into the EU provided a clear picture of the scale of such migrant flows. However, a secondary effect of the Central and Eastern European states' EU accession is linked to the disappearance of intra-European seasonal migrant workers from these countries in official public statistics towards other European destinations. Recent studies estimated the number of intra-European seasonal migrants between 650,000 and 850,000, with Romania, Poland and Bulgaria being the countries that have the highest emigration numbers in the EU [23].

Seasonal migrant labour in agriculture, often originating from socio-economically vulnerable groups, entails a series of risks and challenges. Firstly, individuals with lower levels of education struggle to comprehend the information in contracts and legislation. Within the sphere of risks stemming from inadequate knowledge or misconceptions of legislation, scenarios emerge wherein seasonal migrant workers encounter situations where the rightful disbursement of social contributions is circumvented. As a result, these migrants find themselves deprived of the encompassing shield of social protection rights that would ordinarily be bestowed through such financial contributions [20]. Secondly, the demanding nature of the work increases the pressure to violate rights (e.g., working beyond scheduled hours and residing in substandard conditions). Thirdly, there is lower attention given to the health and safety of the workers, e.g., ergonomic conditions, injuries, mental health issues caused by separation from families or by the working group at the destination [5,20,23]. The unique challenges inherent in agricultural labour contribute to the heightened vulnerability of individuals already grappling with socio-economic precarity. Furthermore, beyond the immediate risks inherent in temporary seasonal work abroad, a multitude of enduring adverse repercussions are associated with these labour experiences. Termed "hidden costs", these long-term negative effects warrant an in-depth exploration within the context of this scholarly article.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, seasonal migrant workers in agriculture were quickly labelled as essential workers for ensuring food security in EU member states [24]. They received increased media attention both at their destinations and places of origin [8]. However, studies indicate that insufficient measures were taken to effectively safeguard their well-being and rights [9]. The lifting of international travel restrictions for these workers had a dual effect. On one hand, it ensured their visibility in the public sphere and drew some attention to the extremely dire living and working conditions they face in destination countries. On the other hand, individuals who lacked the courage or necessary health to undertake seasonal migration risks during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced more pronounced negative effects. This was because many of the social protection schemes implemented in host countries, such as Romania, targeted individuals with suspended

professional activities within that country and did not include special measures for those engaged in seasonal work abroad. Furthermore, Rasnača [9] highlighted that certain countries heavily reliant on seasonal migrant labour have altered their legislation. In Germany, this change aims to prolong the stay of seasonal workers, thereby reducing the risk of additional movements that could potentially affect local populations. However, it is worth noting that despite this extended stay, these workers do not receive any supplementary welfare benefits. Both at their origin and destination, these seasonal agricultural workers have become even more vulnerable and have received less assistance compared to other categories of workers [5,9]. The exemption from cross-border movement restrictions was significant only for those seasonal migrants who could benefit from it. However, there were also individuals who, in the context of the pandemic, temporarily interrupted this cycle of seasonal work abroad.

### *1.2. The Romanian Seasonal Migration: The Perspective of the Origin Country*

Within the context of Romania, a substantial proportion of seasonal migration comes from regions characterized by heightened agricultural involvement and relatively underdeveloped rural localities [11,25,26]. This dual perspective implies, firstly, that prior agricultural work experience plays a pivotal role in facilitating the adaptation to the labour demands at their destination. Secondly, a compendium of case studies has elucidated the intricate interplay through which migration networks, nurtured within the community, exert a central influence in both the emergence and perpetuation of these migratory pathways [12,13,15]. Moreover, this phenomenon is accentuated by an escalated necessity within these communities to explore work opportunities abroad, particularly due to their constrained local employment options and the deep-seated migratory culture. In a broader sense, this signifies that local establishments in these regions grapple with limited resources to mitigate the adverse repercussions of emigration within the active population. Consequently, a comprehensive examination of these multifaceted dynamics is imperative to forge informed policy measures and ameliorative strategies.

The consequences of temporary migration abroad and seasonal migration on migrants, their families, and the communities of origin (and return) have started to be studied in the case of Romania. A significant part of this literature is based on community case studies and examines how these localities develop and how returning migrants assume roles as agents of change. In this context, attention was mainly paid to changes in values during migration [27,28], improvements in social status, and the reorganization of existing social stratification [13–15,29], as well as the higher propensity in terms of entrepreneurship orientation and propensity towards self-employment [30–32]. Many of these effects are seen as relatively beneficial for migrants and the communities, being labelled as forms of modernization [33].

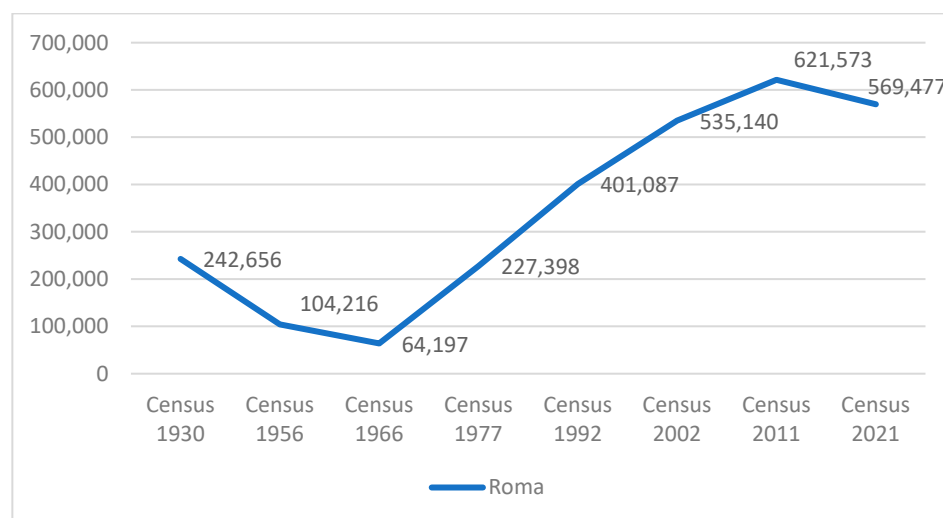
While less attention has been devoted to the negative long-term effects experienced by migrants and the consequent impact on the social–cultural life of communities of origin due to the absence of migrants from the locality for certain periods, certain adverse effects at the family level have been reported. For instance, studies by Botezat and Pfeiffer [34,35] have documented cases where children are left in the care of others or unattended for extended periods of time. These studies have indicated that parents' migration is associated with more severe self-assessed health problems and an increased likelihood of experiencing depression. Moreover, these effects are even more pronounced among children living in rural areas of Romania. Additionally, the lack of care for elderly family members during the migrants' absence has been highlighted by Vianello [36]. When other siblings are living in proximity to the elderly, the migrants provide the necessary economic support, while the remaining family members attend to the daily needs of their elderly parents. At the same time, she found evidence to point out that the lack of care among the elderly left behind exhibits an economic stratification, primarily impacting elderly individuals whose children work as low-wage migrant workers. Last but not least, the specialized institutions for elderly care and support are virtually non-existent in these communities

of origin. In both the cases of children and the elderly, scholarly investigations highlight the imperative for migrants to devise strategies to confront the risks and challenges they encounter [34–36], given the lack of comprehensive support policies in their communities of origin. In the context of the Romanian state, its orientation has been predominantly geared towards extracting benefits from migration, primarily through economic remittances, and by designing selective programs aimed at encouraging the return of specific Romanian citizens deemed valuable, such as renowned researchers from the diaspora or individuals interested in launching businesses in Romania after residing abroad [37]. Consequently, the most vulnerable individuals, particularly those in dire need of assistance upon their return, find themselves left to independently manage their own necessities or those of their families.

### *1.3. Roma Population in Romania and Seasonal Migration*

The Roma population constitutes a significant segment of Romania's general population, both in terms of percentage and in terms of their economic, cultural, and social distinctiveness [16,38]. Although today there is a dispersion of the Roma population throughout the country, a substantial portion of the Roma population still resides in relatively segregated and marginalized communities [14,38].

In historical terms, the Roma population has been recorded in Romania's censuses since 1930. Figure 1 provides an overview of the formal number of individuals registered as being of Roma ethnicity in Romania's statistics. However, sociological studies indicate that mainly due to structural discrimination, there is a consistent underestimation of the Roma population in official statistics [39,40]. According to some estimates, the real number of Roma population from Romania can be between 620,000 and 1.85 million individuals [39] or between 6 percent and 12 percent of the population [41]. While during the Second World War, the Roma population was subjected to physical extermination and deportations, and during the communist era, they underwent a lengthy process of forced assimilation [42], after the establishment of a democratic regime in Romania, the Roma population continued to face structural discrimination, although through less direct mechanisms. In this context of historical evolution, it is understandable why public statistics provide data that do not entirely correspond to the reality in Romania. Using only the data from those who identified themselves Roma would limit both the target groups we could reach as well as the understanding of the lives of those more socially included. The latest therefore prefer "Romanian" as a designation of belonging to and participating in Romanian society. That is why we decided to take into account both the self-identification and the heteroidentification (by co-researchers of the project, formal and informal leaders, institutions, professional neighbors etc.) in the description of the localities and the interviewees. Thus, this paper identifies subjects as "self-identified" and "heteroidentified" Roma. This is especially true when it comes to temporary and seasonal migration, rather than a permanent change of residence. Thus, the statistical data available on Roma migration do not allow for a realistic estimation of the current extent of this phenomenon but only show that the Roma population is present in migration [43]. In the most recent census conducted in 2021, only 10,797 individuals of Roma ethnicity were registered in Romania as having had previous residence abroad. Certainly, the actual number of individuals who lived abroad and have returned to Romania is much higher.



**Figure 1.** Roma population in Romania's censuses (1930–2021). Source: Romania's National Institute of Statistics (2023).

In 2018 a World Bank's report [41] provides comprehensive statistics about the socio-economic disparities faced by the Roma population in Romania. One of the most evident issues is that 70 percent of Roma were at risk of poverty, and this is a substantial gap to the national average (25 percent). Moreover, 68 percent of Roma lived in segregated neighborhoods, and employment data revealed that only 46 percent were employed, compared to the national rate of 66 percent. The same report emphasizes that the education gap is equally concerning; while 86 percent of non-Roma children participate in early childhood education, only 38 percent of Roma children were enrolled in such programs. Only 77 percent of Roma children who should have been attending school were enrolled, with 77 percent of Roma aged 18–24 dropping out early. Alarming, 15 percent of 7-to-14-year-old Roma were not attending any educational program. Equally troubling is the fact that 63 percent of Roma in the 16–24 age group were not in employment, education, or training. A survey conducted in 2011 indicated that a significant 13 percent of Roma were contemplating moving to another country, reflecting a greater aspiration for migration compared to the non-Roma population in nearby areas, which stood at 9 percent [44].

First and foremost, there exists a long history of discrimination against the Roma community, leading to increased socio-economic vulnerability within this group [45–48]. During the communist era, multiple assimilation policies were implemented as part of the broader process of homogenizing and controlling the country's population. After the collapse of the communist regime and during the transition to a capitalist economy, the Roma population was largely left out of development policies for a considerable period. Moreover, during the communist era, the Roma population in rural areas worked on collectivized farms alongside other rural residents. After the dissolution of these collective farms and the transfer of agricultural lands to private ownership through land restitution and privatization, the Roma population was among those most affected [49]. This was because most of them did not have agricultural lands to be restituted to them, and the jobs that were available during the communist period disappeared. At the same time, following the opening of Romania's borders, the Roma population was among the first to explore the opportunities presented by international migration [11]. Consequently, the post-communist decades were a period of increased mobility for the Roma population. It was only after Romania's accession to the EU that some national policies began to be implemented to reduce discrimination and enhance the integration of the Roma population, but their effects were rather modest if we consider the amplitude of these structural challenges [46–48,50].

The primary socio-economic challenges for the Roma population in Romania are closely linked to low levels of education, low employment rate in the formal economy and lack of satisfactory job opportunities, as well as difficult access to healthcare infrastructure.

Behind these issues lies a complex set of structural barriers that have hindered the Roma population's access to education and the acquisition of qualifications needed for access to satisfactory employment [51]. In this context, seasonal migration, due to its lower economic costs, has been one of the significant migration options within Roma communities [14,15]. Furthermore, the fact that recruitment for seasonal agricultural work often relies on social networks has facilitated its rapid spread within Roma communities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation worsened significantly for vulnerable populations compared to the general population. In Romania, the Roma population found themselves in such a situation, and life in Roma communities became more challenging than before [18,50]. Among the dimensions of life that were most severely affected were health, education, and social protection. Living conditions in Roma communities and overcrowded housing created favorable conditions for the virus's spread and exacerbated pre-existing health issues [50]. The shift from in-person to online education posed greater difficulties in Roma communities because many students lacked the necessary digital devices and skills, and parental support was less prevalent [52]. Last but not least, the fact that the Roma population has higher rates of informal labour and seasonal migration for work meant they were often overlooked by government programs aimed at providing social protection to those whose employment was suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic [18].

To sum up, the context in which the seasonal agricultural migration of the Roma population in Romania can be understood requires considering several factors. First, discrimination and structural barriers have caused lower levels of education and qualifications and have limited the Roma population's access to the Romanian labour market. Second, migration within Roma communities emerged immediately after the opening of borders (1989) and has remained a significant option due to the persistent poverty at their place of origin. Also, social networks within these communities facilitate the rapid spread of information about opportunities abroad. Additionally, Roma communities were marginalized and excluded from national, regional, and local development policies and programs because this population segment was constantly underrepresented in political power structures [46,53]. These factors have combined to create a situation where seasonal agricultural migration has become a key strategy for many Roma individuals and families, offering a means to escape economic hardship and discrimination within Romania.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This paper is underpinned by a qualitative methodology and fieldwork conducted within four Roma communities in Romania, situated within the overarching framework of the research project entitled "The role of religion and religious actors in Roma social inclusion: towards a participatory approach" (PARI Project). While the project primarily aimed to comprehend the multifaceted challenges that Roma communities currently encounter across various dimensions of their lives, including economic, social, and spiritual aspects, the overarching objective of this study is to uncover the hidden effects stemming from seasonal agricultural migration within Roma communities in Romania. This research goal emerged after a preliminary analysis of the gathered data, as we recognized the pivotal role of migration within the communities under study as well as their multi-dimensional consequences. Although the study does not disregard positive outcomes or neutral transformations, these aspects have been more comprehensively addressed in existing literature. In pursuit of our research objective, the investigation is guided by the subsequent research questions: (1) What are the principal negative consequences of migration within Roma communities? (2) How do the migrants themselves, the families left behind by migrants, and relevant community-level entities (such as municipal bodies, schools, and churches) discuss these challenges?

The research design incorporated in-depth interviews with members of the Roma community and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including representatives from public authorities, social workers, religious leaders, and school educators, alongside fieldwork notes compiled by the researchers engaged in data collection. Access to the

communities and the selection of respondents were facilitated by local co-researchers, who were trained as part of the project. These local co-researchers acted as intermediaries between non-local researchers and the community, and on some occasions, they were present during interviews to ensure the psychological comfort of less-educated Roma participants.

Data collection was between March and November of 2022, yielding a comprehensive sample of 123 interviews. The structure of the sample is detailed in Table 1, elucidating the relationship between the county, the locality, the total count of interviews, the number of interviews conducted with Roma individuals, and the number of interviews conducted with key stakeholders.

**Table 1.** Composition of the research sample.

County	Brief Locality Description	Total Interviews	Interviews with Roma Individuals	Interviews with Key Stakeholder
Sibiu	S1. A village with about 1300 residents, the majority of whom are Roma as “self-identified” and “heteroidentified” Roma. The Roma population is segregated in the area bordering the village, towards the end of the village, but they also live in other areas of the village.	50	30	20
	S2. A village with about 600 Roma out of 900 residents. A significant part of them wear traditional clothing and respect Roma traditions.	21	16	5
Valcea	VL1. A small city with 9000 residents, including approximately 1400 Roma. The Roma population is spread throughout the city, but a few hundred live in a segregated community.	28	22	6
	VL2. A rural municipality with about 5000 residents, including 1800 Roma. A part of the Roma population is composed of descendants of slaves from the monasteries. The Roma community can be found all over the commune, but there is also a segregated community.	24	17	7

Source: Authors’ elaboration based on the data collected in PARI Project.

The selection of the two counties and of the four communities where the data were collected was made considering several aspects. Firstly, the aim was to cover, to the greatest extent possible, the diversity of historical, social, and economic contexts in Romania. Although the two neighboring counties belong to different historical regions and are inhabited by distinct groups of Roma people with historical, cultural, and social differences, the study did not intend to be nationally representative. We attempted to avoid being anchored to overly specific local contexts in this qualitative study and to move beyond the local case studies, which are most common in researching Roma communities in Romania. Secondly, there was openness within these Roma communities towards the research themes, allowing for the recruitment of co-researchers who could facilitate community understanding and participate in data collection. Within these communities, efforts were made to engage

with individuals representing diverse socio-demographic backgrounds (Table 2 provides a detailed overview of the ages of those interviewed in each community). Key stakeholders were selected based on their frequent interactions with Roma individuals, ensuring they could provide valid and complementary insights into life within these communities. The number of interviews in each community was planned from the outset, taking into account the research resources available and ensuring a sufficiently large number of interviews to facilitate potential comparisons across specific dimensions of analysis.

**Table 2.** The age structure of the sample within each community.

Community Age	S1	S2	VL1	VL2	Total
18–29	8	4	3	3	18
30–39	7	4	2	3	16
40–49	9	7	3	7	26
50–59	5	2	10	3	20
60–69	8	2	4	7	21
70–79	4	2	4	0	10
80–89	2	0	1	0	3
N.R.	7	0	1	1	9
TOTAL	50	21	28	24	123

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the data collected in PARI Project.

The analysis was performed on verbatim transcriptions of audio-recorded interviews, augmented by the incorporation of research notes compiled by the researchers. Notably, the interpretation process considered both these transcriptions and the researchers' field notes. The interviews, on average, spanned a duration of approximately 50 min each, contributing to a wide-ranging exploration of the topics. The thematic data analysis was performed by using the NVivo software (v11).

The research design and the whole data collection procedure received ethical endorsement from the Ethics Committee for Social Sciences at Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu.

### 3. Results

The data analysis is guided by the research objectives of this article and was executed through the coding of transcribed interviews. In this context, the codes emerged from a thematic analysis [54] of the interviews and enabled a deeper comprehension of how the effects of migration manifest at the individual, familial, and community levels within the migrants' local origins.

To depict the extent of the phenomenon, we can resort to the words of a local Roma resident who states: '... [during some periods of the year] the village remains empty... Excuse my frankness, one could even walk around naked without anyone noticing!' (Roma individual, Age 61). However, one of the key actors adds 'they don't leave for a period of 1 year, 2, 3, 5... we believe that 80% were those who engage in seasonal migration'.

#### 3.1. Individual Level

In the context of economically motivated migration, the individual often assumes the decision to migrate and simultaneously foresees, to some extent, the outcomes associated with the migration experience. Through the lens of a cost–benefit analysis, it is expected that the individual will migrate when the benefits outweigh the estimated costs. However, as we will observe, certain negative effects exist, representing the less conspicuous facets of migration that migrants frequently overlook for financial gain from overseas migration. In Romania and other societies, there is documented evidence of a tendency for individuals of

Roma ethnicity to drop out of school more frequently or exhibit higher rates of absenteeism. This can be partially explained by the cultural specifics of Roma communities, which include significant gender differences regarding the education of boys and girls. However, migration adds a new element of pressure on the school involvement of Roma children. Firstly, the prolonged absence of parents can facilitate absenteeism or dropping out for children. Secondly, the pursuit of academic success and building a professional career through education becomes less valued if the economic model of success in the community is offered by those who work seasonally abroad and return with sums of money that others cannot earn within the same timeframe in the home country.

*Well, many people are engaged in migration, because they are not satisfied with the wages here in Romania. What can they do with 15 million [about 300 EUR], and a 2–3 million [about 50–75 EUR] bonus in a month? Over there, in a month, they bring in three times what their salary is here—it is quite substantial. Going abroad suits them better because they earn much better there, even with the same salary they would get in Romania. . . . They work for two or three months there, the money they make lasts for about a month here, and then it's the same cycle again. (Type of interview—key actor, Age 30)*

*[Interviewer] And do you happen to know, did any of them drop out after elementary school [end of fourth grade] before middle school?*

*Some of them dropped out, yes! . . . but because of the parents. . . the parents went abroad and the grandparents, well. . . they didn't send them to school anymore. . . so migrating abroad has a significant impact on children. (Type of interview—key actor, Age 48)*

The lack of interest in jobs in one's country of origin carries hidden costs for migrants. In the literature review, we presented studies that documented a long tradition of discrimination against Roma on the Romanian labour market. However, the emergence of new factories in peri-urban areas in Romania and the scarcity of labour force created new employment opportunities [55]. These businesses provide transportation for workers through minibuses, facilitating their commute from further rural areas, and they are also interested in employing low-skilled Roma individuals and provide them with qualifications through different training programs. Certainly, the wage levels are lower compared to those abroad, but local employment comes with the attendant benefits arising from contributions to the social protection system—unemployment benefits if an individual remains jobless, child-rearing allowances for the first two years following a child's birth, pensions, and so forth. Earnings from working abroad are quickly allocated to the daily household needs, thus preventing savings for the post-retirement period. In this scenario, the pension system should cater to the needs of those who amass sufficient work experience. By engaging in foreign agricultural labour, the obligation to contribute to the pension system is avoided, leaving long-term vulnerabilities for individuals practicing this form of migration.

*It's very difficult. . . . To tell you the truth, I go to the store many times. Do you think I came back without any meat? Because it's incredibly expensive. Well, when I think about having to pay for electricity, TV cable, and water. . . . And not just now, for instance, if the children weren't working [abroad], what would I use to pay? I have no income. I am fortunate that they go away and send money home to cover everything. (Type of interview—Roma individual, Age 54)*

As indicated by studies referenced in the literature review section, seasonal migrant workers in agriculture endure challenging working conditions abroad. They often work beyond regular hours and face higher risks of workplace accidents than others due to laboring under conditions of fatigue and occasionally operating machinery they are not adequately familiar with. Additionally, they are compelled to work in unfavorable weather conditions and adopt physically demanding postures. Many of these challenges are anticipated by those engaged in seasonal agricultural labour and are somewhat accepted at the time of departure. However, the negative health effects can persist over the long term, as working under such conditions generates enduring difficulties. In the case of

the Roma minority, this is exacerbated by the fact that many of them do not seek medical treatment or preventive care; instead, they often only resort to emergency rooms in critical situations [56]. By correlating these factors, it becomes apparent that many of the health conditions that seasonal Roma agricultural migrants develop during their work experiences remain untreated and worsen over time. This strongly impacts their quality of life and healthy life expectancy.

*... two years ago, I was in Denmark, and I tell you honestly, with my hand on my heart, that we used to go and search for carrots, peppers, vegetables—we would take them from the trash can. And I used to wash them because it was very expensive; with the money we earned there, we couldn't afford it, as I also had to send money to my children and grandchildren in the country. And I genuinely tell you that some took expired meat and salami, even if it was two- or three-days past expiration—they would take the meat. But I didn't take meat. I couldn't do that. There were about 400 Romanians all together. . . . Poor us! There were no proper conditions, nothing. I stayed and endured because living here in Romania is very difficult. (Type of interview—Roma individual, Age 54)*

*There are many who went abroad and came back dead. (Type of interview—Roma individual, Age 52)*

Without questioning that seasonal Roma migrants earn more abroad than in Romania for the periods they work, individual-level analysis reveals that there are also relatively hidden costs associated with this migration. Thus, we can observe patterns of negative thinking about job opportunities at home or possibilities for further education. Attention can also be drawn to the impact on health and the lack of concern regarding these consequences upon return.

### 3.2. Family Level

In the existing literature, certain positive effects have been documented (e.g., increased economic resources within the community, the renovation of homes, and the improvement of living conditions), as well as some negative effects (e.g., higher divorce rates, and inadequate care for children and the elderly). Beyond these, we propose the examination of less visible aspects such as tensions within families due to the excessive burden placed on women, the transformation of marital supervision, and the overall vulnerability of the family in the face of crises that jeopardize the cyclical nature of seasonal migration.

The separation of migrants from other members of the family, whether nuclear or extended, has profound implications for family organization and for each member of the family. If infidelity or presumed infidelity occurs between the couple, it can lead to instability, conflict, divorce, abandonment. At the family level, we can cluster the negative effects of migration on migrant children, spouses/partners left at home, and non-migrant elderly parents/grandparents.

In terms of the effects on migrant children, migrant children are the most affected, whether accompanying their parents or staying at home. There are obstacles to school reintegration for Roma children who accompanied their parents abroad for seasonal work. Children who accompany parents on seasonal migration sometimes remain out of school and many are forced to drop out.

*They did not let the child attend education because they were somewhere . . . in the sheepfold and they took the children with them and because of that they interrupted . . . the educational cycle, because of that. . . pity, pity (Type of interview—key actor, Age 48)*

In Roma communities, a traditional family model still predominates. This entails well-defined gender roles: the man is tasked with providing the necessary income for subsistence, while the woman is responsible for raising children and managing the household. There exists an unequal power dynamic, with the man being the primary decision-maker for the family. Furthermore, families are relatively large and often involve multiple generations living together. For a significant duration, the Roma population has engaged in forms of extended family group migration: several families accompanied by children and, at times,

the elderly. In this context, seasonal migration for agricultural work disrupts family life as it is typically practiced by one member of the household (usually, the man capable to work). Within our sample, one of the issues of this nature pertains to the transfer of supervision of women from their partner to his family remaining in the home country. Even if the woman accepts this type of arrangement, the situation generates significant discomfort and represents an additional pressure on the Roma woman who is already overloaded with tasks and responsibilities. Furthermore, the absence of the husband from the household leads to a state of social isolation for the Roma woman because it is not customary for her to participate in social events without a husband, and involvement under the supervision of in-laws or extended family can be avoided when relationships are not at their best.

*... If he [the husband] is away and I want to go somewhere with my father-in-law, I can. But if there is a wedding, a christening, or events, and he is not at home, no. It is not considered very appropriate for a woman to walk alone. ... It's somewhat frowned upon for a woman to go without her man. (Type of interview—Roma individual, Age 27)*

*In the case of a young man. ... The time for marriage came, and he took a young girl, but not from his village, from another village, and they didn't get along. ... every time he went abroad, she would run to her parents, and he was unhappy about this. He noticed it once, twice, and tried to have a family meeting. ... The point is, one day, she went to her parents and didn't come back. When he returned from abroad, he tried to go get her back. The family didn't agree anymore. And so, to put it that way, a dispute began. (Type of interview—Key actor, Age 47)*

As both the literature review and the fieldwork indicate, migration for work in agriculture is practiced for economic reasons in these Roma communities, and the money earned from migration are essential for covering the current household expenses. In this context, even the temporary abandonment of seasonal agricultural migration (quite common during the COVID-19 pandemic) has generated complex and dramatic situations within families who depended on these incomes. Not only have those who could not leave become more vulnerable, but their entire families as well.

*During the pandemic time it was very difficult for them. Whereas before, they could work as daily laborers in the summer or anytime during the year, during the pandemic, due to restrictions, they couldn't even work as daily laborers anymore, because, you know, it was like that time when the police were checking everywhere, which. ... And then, almost all of them were close to starving. Abroad, they couldn't go anymore because the borders were closed. They couldn't work as daily laborers anymore either, due to the situation with the restrictions that were in place. So, it was an extremely tough period for them. There were times back then when they almost had nothing to put on the table, they couldn't even come to beg in Sibiu because they couldn't. ... the police would catch them. (Type of interview—Key actor, Age 47)*

*Those who are left are old, they are old, and they are lonely, they must be visited, they have to ... they are helpless, some are barely moving around the house. ... (Type of interview—Key actor, Age unknown)*

### 3.3. Community Level

The impact of migration on communities of origin around the world has been identified at several levels and dimensions of social life. Seasonal migration affects local and national economies and can transform the political landscape [6,57]. The labour market at origin is affected by seasonal migration [58]. There is a negative effect of seasonal migration on the labour supply of non-migrants. To put it in Roma individuals' words:

*the oldest, the sick, those who still have a helper remain ... Now no one works anymore, the land is not worked anymore either—no one has dinner anymore, all the young people have left. Old people can't do it anymore. (Type of interview—Roma individual, Age 52)*

At the community level, our data reveal at least two hidden effects generated by this type of migration within the studied Roma communities. The analysis focuses on effects related to social stratification within these communities and on unanticipated consequences that arise in the implementation of development programs by public authorities.

Even though other studies have documented changes in status and transformations regarding social stratification at the community level [14,15], evidence indicates that these changes give rise to a range of new social tensions within the respective Roma communities. Such attitudes are evident in the negative judgments expressed about those who engage in migration—portrayed as driven solely by monetary greed. Additionally, migration is responsible for generating economic inequalities in communities that were previously relatively homogenous. Individuals who accumulate more than those who do not participate in migration are perceived as more prosperous and are subject to community-level judgments.

*I wouldn't go anywhere else; I don't like going abroad. I grew up here, and I've stayed here. I prefer being at home. . . Here, you know everyone personally, and this is home. I believe that those who work hard can earn money, and they don't need to go abroad for that. However, perhaps people have different ideas, and they chase after money, losing touch with life—they're just chasing money. (Type of interview—Roma individual, Age 33)*

*You see, it's not long before this community will be divided into two classes—a wealthier one when people return with income from abroad, and a poorer one. Do you understand what I'm saying? Envy naturally emerges. . . (Type of interview—Key actor, Age 45)*

In a somewhat different vein, hidden effects of this type of migration can be identified concerning the attitude of public authorities and the programs they implement within Roma communities. Given limited community resources, public authorities appear relatively content with migration seemingly alleviating extreme poverty and relieving them from the social pressure that otherwise would have demanded solutions to various issues. Evidence indicates a preference for relatively passive roles, where individuals and families are left to seek solutions for poverty on their own, and integrated public programs are exceedingly rare.

*The community has changed a lot in the last 15 years. . . Here are people who work very hard. . . but I believe they were disadvantaged because I think even the municipality did not invest in them. They still have unpaved roads. Many have worked abroad and have properly set up their homes. (Type of interview—Key actor, Age unknown)*

Qualitative data analysis reveals multiple facets of seasonal migration within the Roma communities in Romania. Beyond the generally acknowledged positive economic effects associated with migration to countries with better-paying work opportunities, it becomes evident that individuals are discussing seasonal migration in agriculture as having some detrimental medium- and long-term effects on individuals, families, and communities. These constitute hidden costs of migration, and often, individuals or families engaged in migration do not consciously assume them.

In order to provide a quantitative overview of the results, we synthesized the coding process outcomes in Table 3

**Table 3.** Summary report for the coding activity.

	<b>Thematic Codes Arising from the Coding of All References to the Effects of Migration</b>	<b>Number of Words Coded</b>	<b>Number of Paragraphs Coded</b>
Effects at individual level	Economic earnings from abroad and their roles in individual's life	1284	63
	Negative effects of migration on individuals' health	1017	31
	Lack of social protection and pensions in relation to migration	867	36
	Disruption of educational pathways due to migration (including school dropout)	1778	74
Effects at family level	Childcare or elderly care taken over by the extended family (mostly during certain periods of the year)	6532	280
	Tensions and conflicts within families caused by migration	2009	60
	Roma women—social isolation and additional social pressure placed on women (mostly during certain periods of the year)	398	17
	Exacerbation of family vulnerability—especially during the COVID-19 pandemic due to obstacles arising in seasonal migration	577	5
Effects at community level	Depopulation of the community due to the departure of young people (mostly during certain periods of the year)	3376	231
	Process of ethnic (re)stratification at the community level	868	15
	Lack of community support networks and the absence of physical-presence-dependent assistance (mostly during certain periods of the year)	569	37
	The presence of negative attitudes towards those involved in migration within the community	1024	42
	Absence of satisfactory job opportunities within the community (cause and effect of departures)—people leave due to lack of employment, but in the absence of a workforce, businesses cannot develop	1802	87

Source: PARI Project—authors' elaboration.

#### 4. Discussion

The article aims to make a significant contribution to the critical discourse surrounding seasonal migration in agriculture and its ramifications at the point of origin. Specifically, the focus is directed towards Roma communities in Romania, which are deeply entrenched in this contemporary phenomenon. By drawing upon the existing body of literature and leveraging recent qualitative fieldwork, our primary objective was to discern the less conspicuous impacts of this form of migration.

Seasonal migration in agriculture represents a highly distinctive type of international mobility due to its inherent temporality, cyclic nature, as well as the associated labour and

residential conditions. The periods of intensive work entail elevated risks for individuals and give rise to a spectrum of enduring consequences. The demanding nature of such labour predominantly attracts individuals from low-skilled and economically vulnerable categories of people. While research within the EU context has predominantly centred on labour dynamics and living conditions at the destinations, relatively limited attention has been directed towards the longer-term effects on individual migrants, families left behind, and the local communities of origin. The originality of our paper lies in the exploration of these hidden effects. Moreover, the article complements the recent research conducted in destination countries [5] and provides an origin-grounded perspective on the transfer of some production costs from producers to seasonal laborers. By delving into these consequences at the individual, familial and community level, our study poses a challenge to existing policies and the optimistic comprehension of intra-European seasonal mobility flows for work in agriculture.

The methodological design of this study allowed us to employ a comprehensive perspective on the effects of seasonal migration at origin. The substantial number of in-depth interviews conducted within four Roma communities, along with the semi-structured interviews involving key actors from the community, unveiled real issues stemming from seasonal migration. To enrich the existing literature in the field, the analysis was structured around the three dimensions (individual, family, and community) and focused on hidden costs (negative effects) of migration. On one hand, the article gives voice to Roma migrants and their families, while on the other hand, it provides an insight into how key actors within the community describe the effects of seasonal migration on the community's life.

At an individual level, seasonal migration enables individuals to earn significantly more abroad during the seasonal work than they would have earned at home [14,59]. However, the costs for these earnings are higher, and some of these costs are paid long after the migration experience has ended. Firstly, physical health is affected by the physical strain during these periods, and health issues persist for the individual to be addressed upon their return. In terms of education, young people who opt for a path of seasonal migration and forego educational prospects lose the opportunity for professionalization and access to better job opportunities in the future. Finally, we have shown that seasonal work abroad deprives individuals of access to certain social protection systems for situations when they are unable to work for a period.

At the family level, empirical evidence aligns with the consulted literature, highlighting that seasonal migrants delegate certain caregiving responsibilities for children and the elderly during their periods abroad. Regarding its impact on families, we have provided insights into the effects on family life and childcare when parents temporarily migrate abroad, shedding light on a distinct population group in addition to the findings revealed by Botezat and Pfeiffer [34,35]. Furthermore, while the relationship between spouses in the context of temporary migration and return has been discussed in the case of the general population of Romanians by Vlase [27,60], our study offers insights into how the migration experiences described in the article restructure certain aspects within Roma families. Our research introduces novel elements concerning the transformation of partner relationships and social tensions arising from the extended family's supervisory role over the spouse remaining in the home country. Furthermore, recent evidence during the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed us to observe that any disruption in the cyclical nature of seasonal migration generates detrimental effects for the entire family, as they have become financially dependent on migrant earnings and have forsaken local commitments.

Roma communities also suffer due to seasonal migration. Our study contributes to a better understanding of the effects of seasonal migration on communities and adds new knowledge beyond what has been previously documented [13,15,29]. Also, it develops the knowledge about the migration's consequences in central region of Romania [30] and in Romania as country of origin and return [11]. Beyond the evident depopulation during certain seasons and the absence of young individuals as a source of support for household and communal activities, there are social tensions arising from envy and social re-stratification.

Those who do not have access to migration for various reasons tend to negatively view those who do practice it, highlighting that they leave their children or the elderly in the care of others. Another significant effect that we have identified pertains to how local authorities tend to overlook the issues faced by Roma communities, as seasonal migration ensures their subsistence and diminishes their acute social problem status. This complements the prior research focused on the political under-representation of Roma in local and national administrations [46,47,53]. The lack of programs and investments in these communities will lead to major long-term issues and perpetuate a cycle of underdevelopment.

The topic addressed in the article lies at the intersection of European Union policy instruments. On one hand, it pertains to policies aiming to reduce poverty and enhance the social integration of the Roma population in Romania. This has been translated into a national strategy already implemented in Romania, funded both through national resources and European framework programs. On the other hand, the focus of this study falls within the realm of European policies directed towards the better management of intra-European seasonal migration flows and how mobile European citizens working in agriculture can enjoy improved social protection both abroad and in their home countries. In fact, our study bridges these two significant domains of European policies and highlights the need for integrated policies to alleviate the vulnerability of populations living in precarious conditions, resorting to mobility as a last alternative [43].

#### *Limits of the Study*

The limitations of this study are associated with qualitative research methods and the non-extrapolation of the findings. Certainly, the seasonal migration in agriculture from the perspective of its origin should consider the contexts from which individuals depart and to which they return and important differences can occur between communities of origin. Furthermore, the concentration of interviews within Roma communities hindered the comparison of identified effects with realities in Romanian non-Roma communities, which are in general more developed in terms of housing, labour market, and the quality of local institutions.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, S.C. and A.C.; methodology, S.C. and A.C.; software, S.C. and A.C.; investigation, S.C.; resources, S.C.; data curation, S.C.; writing—original draft preparation, S.C. and A.C. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** Data about the situation of the Roma population were collected within the project “The role of religion and religious actors in Roma social inclusion: towards a participatory approach” PARI—RO-NO-2019-0586 administered by UEFISCDI (contract no. 38/2021) and financed by the funds of the Research Program associated with the EEA Grants 2014–2021 and the state budget through the Program Operator UEFISCDI.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Ethics Committee in Scientific Research for the Social Sciences and Humanities and other non-medical fields involving human subjects and/or experimental animals of LUCIAN BLAGA UNIVERSITY OF SIBIU (no. 13/04.03.2023).

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** Raw data are unavailable due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

**Acknowledgments:** We thank Stefan Tobler, the project manager; the researchers; and co-researchers who carried out the mapping of the four Roma communities. We also thank the colleagues from VID Specialized University of Norway who made important contributions towards the development and implementation of this project.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

1. Becker, R.; Teney, C. Understanding high-skilled intra-European migration patterns: The case of European physicians in Germany. *J. Ethn. Migr. Stud.* **2020**, *46*, 1737–1755. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
2. de Jong, P.W.; de Valk, H. Intra-European migration decisions and welfare systems: The missing life course link. *J. Ethn. Migr. Stud.* **2020**, *46*, 1773–1791. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
3. King, R.; Okólski, M. Diverse, Fragile and Fragmented: The New Map of European Migration. *Cent. East. Eur. Migr. Rev.* **2018**, *8*, 1–24.
4. Jakobson, M.-L.; King, R.; Moroşanu, L.; Vetik, R. (Eds.) *Migration and Integration in Turbulent Times*; Springer: Cham, Switzerland, 2023.
5. García, M.F.; Molinero-Gerbeau, Y.; Sajir, Z. ‘They think you belong to them’: Migrant workers’ perspectives on labour exploitation in Spain. *J. Ethn. Migr. Stud.* **2023**, *49*, 3976–3995. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
6. King, R.; Lulle, A.; Melossi, E. New perspectives on the agriculture–migration nexus. *J. Rural Stud.* **2021**, *85*, 52–58. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
7. Fiałkowska, K.; Matuszczyk, K.; Szulecka, M. Agricultural Exceptionalism, Migrant Farmworkers and The Pandemic—Evidence from Poland as a New Immigrant Destination Country. *Estud. Geográficos* **2022**, *83*, e110. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
8. Şerban, M.; Croitoru, A. The COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to bring the migration of agricultural workers into focus through media coverage. *Estud. Geográficos* **2022**, *83*, e111. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
9. Rasnača, Z. Essential but unprotected: Highly mobile workers in the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic. *ETUI Policy Brief Eur. Econ. Employ. Soc. Policy* **2020**, *9*, 1–9. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
10. Anghel, R.G.; Botezat, A.; Cosciug, A.; Manafi, I.; Roman, M. International migration, return migration, and their effects: A comprehensive review on the Romanian case. *IZA Discuss. Pap. Inst. Labor Econ.* **2016**, 1–49. Available online: <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/10445/international-migration-return-migration-and-their-effects-a-comprehensive-review-on-the-romanian-case> (accessed on 1 September 2023). [\[CrossRef\]](#)
11. Sandu, D. *Lumile Sociale ale Migrației Românești în Străinătate*; Polirom: Iasi, Romania, 2010.
12. Şerban, M.; Molinero-Gerbeau, Y.; Deliu, A. Are the guest-worker programmes still effective? Insights from Romanian migration to Spanish agriculture. In *International Labour Migration to Europe’s Rural Regions*; O’Reilly, K., Rye, J.F., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 2020; pp. 22–36.
13. Anghel, R.G. Migration in Differentiated Localities: Changing Statuses and Ethnic Relations in a Multi-Ethnic Locality in Transylvania, Romania. *Popul. Space Place* **2016**, *22*, 356–366. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
14. Anghel, R.G. When the Poor Migrate and Return: Class and Status Repositioning among Roma Transnational Returnees. In *Transnational Return and Social Change Hierarchies, Identities and Ideas*; Anghel, R.G., Fauser, M., Boccagni, P., Eds.; Anthem Press: London, UK, 2019.
15. Deliu, A. Community Frames of Migration: The Path from Seaca to Spain. *Soc. Change Rev.* **2015**, *13*, 29–54. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
16. EC. Overview of the Impact of the Coronavirus Measures on Marginalised Roma Communities in the EU—European Commission. 2020. Available online: [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-05/overview\\_of\\_covid19\\_and\\_roma\\_-\\_impact\\_-\\_measures\\_-\\_priorities\\_for\\_funding\\_-\\_23\\_04\\_2020.docx.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-05/overview_of_covid19_and_roma_-_impact_-_measures_-_priorities_for_funding_-_23_04_2020.docx.pdf) (accessed on 1 September 2023).
17. Cârstocea, R. War against the Poor: Social Violence Against Roma in Eastern Europe during COVID-19 at the Intersection of Class and Race. *J. Ethnopolitics Minor. Issues Eur.* **2022**, *21*, 81–109. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
18. Veres, V. Livelihood Strategies during the COVID-19 Epidemic in Materially Disadvantaged Roma Communities from Covasna County, Romania. *Soc. Sci.* **2023**, *12*, 268. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
19. Commission, E. *Report on Mobile Seasonal Workers and Intra-EU Labour Mobility*; Publications Office of the European Union: Luxembourg, 2023.
20. Nori, M.; Farinella, D. Mobility and Migrations in the Rural Areas of Mediterranean EU Countries. In *Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development*; Nori, M., Farinella, D., Eds.; Springer: Cham, Switzerland, 2020; pp. 39–67.
21. Stark, O. *The Migration of Labor*; Basil Blackwell: Cambridge, UK, 1991.
22. Stark, O.; Bloom, D.E. The New Economics of Labor Migration. *Am. Econ. Rev.* **1985**, *75*, 173–178.
23. Fries-Tersch, E.; Siöland, L.; Jones, M.; Mariotti, C.; Malecka, M. *Intra-EU Mobility of Seasonal Workers: Trends and Challenges*; European Commission (DG EMPL): Brussels, Belgium, 2021.
24. Bergfeld, M.; Farris, S. The COVID-19 Crisis and the End of the “Low-skilled” Worker. *Spectre J.* **2020**. Available online: <https://spectrejournal.com/the-covid-19-crisis-and-the-end-of-the-low-skilled-worker/> (accessed on 1 September 2023).
25. Sandu, D. Social Disparities in the Regional Development and Policies of Romania. *Int. Rev. Soc. Res.* **2011**, *1*, 1–30. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
26. Mihalache, F. Mediul rural între 1990 și 2020. In *Transformări și decalaje*; Presa Universitară Clujeană: Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2020.
27. Vlase, I. ‘My husband is a patriot!’: Gender and Romanian family return migration from Italy. *J. Ethn. Migr. Stud.* **2013**, *39*, 741–758. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
28. Vlase, I. Women’s social remittances and their implications at household level: A case study of Romanian migration to Italy. *Migr. Lett.* **2013**, *10*, 81–90. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

29. Șerban, M.; Deliu, A.; Manoilă, M. Impactul migrației în agricultură asupra dezvoltării în comunitățile de origine a migranților. Analiză comparativă în două contexte rurale din România de astăzi. In *Dezvoltare Comunitară în România: Concepte, Procese, Modele de Analiză*; Croitoru, A., Iorga, A., Eds.; Tritonic: București, Romania, 2022; pp. 201–231.
30. Croitoru, A. Great Expectations: A Regional Study of Entrepreneurship Among Romanian Return Migrants. *Sage Open* **2020**, *10*, 1–18. [CrossRef]
31. Cosciug, A. Transnational Motorways: The secondhand car trade in a country of emigration. *Anthropol. News* **2017**, 590–594.
32. Cosciug, A. Religion, Return Migration and Change in an Emigration Country. In *Transnational Return and Social Change: Hierarchies, Identities and Ideas*; Anghel, R.G., Fauser, M., Boccagni, P., Eds.; Anthem Press: London, UK, 2019; pp. 85–102.
33. Sandu, D. Modernising Romanian society through temporary work abroad. In *A Continent Moving West?: EU Enlargement and Labour Migration from Central and Eastern Europe*; Black, R., Engbersen, G., Okólski, M., Panțiru, C., Eds.; Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2010; pp. 271–288.
34. Botezat, A.; Pfeiffer, F. The impact of parents migration on the well-being of children left behind—initial evidence from Romania. *ZEW-Cent. Eur. Econ. Res. Discuss. Pap.* **2014**, 1–24.
35. Botezat, A.; Pfeiffer, F. The impact of parental labour migration on left-behind children's educational and psychosocial outcomes: Evidence from Romania. *Popul. Space Place* **2020**, *26*, e2277.
36. Vianello, F.A. International migrations and care provisions for elderly people left behind. The cases of the Republic of Moldova and Romania. *Eur. J. Soc. Work* **2016**, *19*, 779–794. [CrossRef]
37. Croitoru, A. Diaspora Start-Up Programs and Creative Industries: Evidence from Romania. *Transylv. Rev. Adm. Sci.* **2021**, 63E, 5–29.
38. Preda, M.; Zamfir, C. *Roma in Romania*; Expert Publishing House: Bucharest, Romania, 2002.
39. Cernat, V. Roma undercount and the issue of undeclared ethnicity in the 2011 Romanian census. *Int. J. Soc. Res. Methodol.* **2021**, *24*, 761–766.
40. Rughiniș, C. The forest behind the bar charts: Bridging quantitative and qualitative research on Roma/Țigani in contemporary Romania. *Patterns Prejud.* **2010**, *44*, 337–367. [CrossRef]
41. World Bank. Romania Systematic Country Diagnostic. Background Note—Roma Inclusion. Available online: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/160691531142484229/pdf/128105-SCD-PUBLIC-P160439-RomaniaSCDBackgroundNoteRomaInclusion.pdf> (accessed on 1 September 2023).
42. Toma, S.; Tesăr, C.; Fosztó, L. The immigration of Romanian Roma to Western Europe: Causes, effects, and future engagement strategies (MigRom). In *Unlocked Cultures Romanian Roma Migrants in Western Europe*; Matras, Y., Leggio, D.V., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 2018; pp. 57–82.
43. Cherkezova, S.; Tomova, I. *An Option of Last Resort? Migration of Roma and Non-Roma from CEE Countries*; UNDP: Bratislava, Slovakia, 2013.
44. FRA Survey on Discrimination and Social Exclusion of Roma in EU. Available online: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-discrimination-and-social-exclusion-roma-eu-2011#2011> (accessed on 1 September 2023).
45. Duminiță, G. *The access of Roma to Social Services*; “Împreună” Agency for Community Development: Bucharest, Romania, 2006.
46. Anghel, I.-M. Contesting neoliberal governance. The case of Romanian Roma. *Soc. Change Rev.* **2015**, *13*, 85–109. [CrossRef]
47. Anghel, I.-M. Politici publice adresate minorității rome în perioada postsocialistă: Între europenizare și deresponsabilizare. *Sociol. Românească* **2019**, *17*, 92–117. [CrossRef]
48. Lazăr, T.-A. Active Labour Market Measures for Vulnerable Categories of Population: Area of Expertise for Social Workers. *Rev. De Asistentă Soc.* **2020**, *19*, 63–77.
49. Berevoescu, I.; Cace, S.; Costin, D.S.; Ilie, S.; Mărginean, I.; Dan, A.; Preda, M.; Surdu, M.; Șerban, M.; Voicu, M.; et al. *Indicators Regarding Roma Communities in Romania*; Expert: Bucharest, Romania, 2002.
50. Roma, N.A.F. *Raport al Agenției Naționale Pentru Romi cu Privire la Necesitatea Intervenției Autorităților Competente în Beneficiul Membrilor Comunităților Vulnerabile cu Romi în Contextul Implementării Măsurilor de Prevenire a Răspândirii Virusului COVID-19*; Agenția Națională pentru Romi: Bucharest, Romania, 2020.
51. Mara, D.; Corman, S. Aspects concerning the social and educational integration of the Roma children in Romania. *Educazione* **2012**, *2*, 61–72.
52. Florian, B.; Țoc, S. Educația în timpul pandemiei. In *Răspunsuri la Criza Nesfârșită a Sistemului Educațional Românesc*; Școala Națională de Studii Politice și Administrative: București, Romania, 2020.
53. Rostas, I. *A Task for Sisyphus: Why Europe's Roma Policies Fail*; Central European University Press: Budapest, Hungary, 2019.
54. Grbich, C. *Qualitative Data Analysis. An Introduction*; Sage: London, UK, 2013.
55. Cristea, M.; Mare, C.; Moldovan, C.; China, A.-M.; Farole, T.; Vințan, A.; Park, J.; Garrett, K.P.; Ionescu-Heroiu, M. *Magnet Cities: Migration and Commuting in Romania*; World Bank Group: Washington, DC, USA, 2017.
56. Briciu, C.; Grigoraș, V. *Evaluarea Impactului Programului de Mediere Sanitară*; Centrul Romilor pentru Politici de Sănătate SASTIPEN: București, Romania, 2011.
57. Toma, S.; Fosztó, L. Roma within Obstructing and Transformative Spaces: Migration Processes and Social Distance in Ethnically Mixed Localities in Romania. *Intersect. East Eur. J. Soc. Politics* **2018**, *4*, 57–80.
58. Pantea, M.-C. Precarity and the social mobility nexus for young Roma in vocational education and training. *Comp. A J. Comp. Int. Educ.* **2022**. [CrossRef]

- 
59. Anghel, R.G.; Vesalon, L.; Toma, S. Romania's agricultural workers. Return mobilities and modes of food production. *Int. Migr.* **2023**. [[CrossRef](#)]
  60. Vlase, I.; Voicu, B. *Gender, Family, and Adaptation of Migrants in Europe*; Palgrave Macmillan: Cham, Switzerland, 2018.

**Disclaimer/Publisher's Note:** The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.