

# GOLD AND DISPLACEMENT IN EASTERN EUROPE: RISKS AND UNCERTAINTY AT ROȘIA MONTANĂ\*

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The Canadian-Romanian gold mining project at Roșia Montană in Romania is known as the largest opencast gold mine being planned now in Europe. It involves the displacement of several thousand inhabitants, mostly former gold miners and a smaller number of farmers. The land and houses of more than three quarters of this population have already been acquired by the project owners, although the project has not yet received its formal environmental clearance. The paper analyzes the risks facing the displaced population of Roșia Montană, employing as analytical methodology the Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model, developed by Michael M. Cernea. The paper argues for an expansion of the IRR model. By taking into account the macro (extralocal) forces that shape displacement and paying closer attention to the micro (subjective) experience of this process, it becomes possible to understand the effects of uncertainty and vulnerability in displacement. The author's participant observations and in-depth interviews with local families are complemented with secondary analyses of data from several other socio-economic surveys and with the analysis of the Resettlement and Relocation Action Plan of the project owners.

**Keywords:** Displacement, risks, IRR model, uncertainty, vulnerability, peripheralization.