

## A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH ON MIGRATION

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### Abstract

*Labor force migration is a complex and dynamic process. The dimension of the migrationist phenomenon depends on endogenous and exogenous factors, generating in time and space, for the host and destination country, economic and social costs, as well as a series of political challenges. At the same time, the positive outcome must not be neglected, and managed in an appropriate manner, at social, community and individual level, for the countries involved in the process.*

**Keywords:** migration, contemporary age, emigrant, immigrant, Diaspora

**JEL Classification:** F22, J15, J61.

### 1. Introduction

The concept of external migrationist movement is based on two similar sub concepts in the specialty literature: the emigration and the immigration of the persons within a certain area. In the economic specialty literature, migration is defined as a process of moving from one town to another or from one country to another, together with the change of the residence of the person involved, for a definite amount of time.

The evolution of migration in the contemporary age is limited in time and space by the current political systems in every type of regional economy. The target of this paperwork is to define the theoretic concept „contemporary migrationist phenomenon”, referring strictly to our country. This paperwork brings into attention the main factors determining the migrationist exodus, the particularities of the Romanian migration, together with its main phases, and the brief characterization of the Romanian migrant.

### 2. Migration in the current global context

Migration can no longer be seen as a residential movement because the person involved may change the residential information for a period of time; therefore,

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determining the geographic and administrative area and identifying the trends in population movement are necessary.<sup>2</sup>

According to Sandu Dumitru and Monica Șerban „migration is a normal phenomenon... taking place at human collectivity level, with a natural trend of moving of a certain part of the individuals, not being based on exclusive stability...”

Bocancea Silvia considers that migration is a process, a phenomenon that took various forms during each age or historical period, be it violent or peaceful, ending up to be either colonization wars or peaceful migrationist phenomena<sup>3</sup>. According to Valentina Vasile „emigration is the process of leaving the origin country to settle in another one, which implies a change of residence, most of the time permanent. Emigration is permanent, in most cases being associated with and accompanied by receiving the citizenship of the adoptive country and respecting the laws of the new country of the emigrant”<sup>4</sup>

According to the same author Valentina Vasile, the term immigrant is often mistaken for the term emigrant. The term immigrant may be defined as a „process of entering and settling in another country (other than the country of origin or the previous country of adoption), of changing the residence of the immigrant, temporary or permanent”<sup>5</sup>

## **2.1. Determinant factors of the contemporary migrationist phenomenon**

After 1990 Romania experimented absolutely every particularities of the migrationist phenomenon, in the most diversified forms. Very few of us know the fact that after 1990, ethnic migration was one of the most preferred ones by our fellow citizens.

Ethnic migration represents a definite characteristic of the European migration in the 20th century. According to official statistics, during the last century, more than 60 million people belonging to certain ethnic minorities left their country of origin for another region or country.

Horváth István started from the definition of nationalism as: „aspiration to full overlapping, an ideal congruence between a state and a nation, definitely ethnic migration is associated to nationalist political processes of some countries.”<sup>6</sup>

Ethnic migration is often seen as a simple result of a „constraint process” coming from states, applied to some people belonging to certain minorities.

<sup>2</sup>Roșca, Dan (2007), *Introduction in the population's sociology and demographics*, Published by: Romania de Mâine Foundation, 4<sup>th</sup> edition Bucharest, p.96.

<sup>3</sup>Bocancea, Silvia (2011), *One way ticket Romanian migration at the beginning of the 20th century*”, Magazine: Sfera Politicii, Nr.166, pp.106 - 107

<sup>4</sup>Quote from Vasile, Valentina; Zaman, Gheorghe(2006), “*Labor force migration and Romanians sustainable migration. A theoretical and methodological approach. Indicators systems and analysis models*”. National Institute for Economic Research, National Institute for economy, Publishing House: Expert, Bucharest, p.108.

<sup>5</sup>Ibidem 4 Vasile, Valentina; Zaman, Gheorghe(2006), p.108.

<sup>6</sup>Horváth, István(2009), *Romanian ethnic migration: between exile and search*, Magazine Sfera Politicii, Issue 137 București, pp.34-38

The attraction of people of different ethnic groups towards their own „country of kin” cannot always be reduced to ideological, symbolic, religious and affective factors related to ethnicity.

The motivation behind the migrationist phenomenon is the main tool that offers the individual involved in this process, the possibility to move to a place that offers him more opportunities regarding his work, professional training, political and social rights, and health. All these offer the people the ability to self-motivate for emigration, by increasing their own social, economical and political freedom.<sup>7</sup>

One of the most important factors triggering the migrationist phenomenon is the economic one. This gives migration a present feature, at the same time being the most important one in taking the migrating decision. From a political, social, xenophobic and religious point of view, people leave an area they feel persecuted in, or an unsafe, tensioned environment.

The factors that determine the internal and external migration of the populations include a large series of interconnected economic, social and ecologic elements, taking the most various forms, on micro and macro levels both in the host and origin countries.

According to Nicolae Flavia, the causes of migration may be diverse, from economic to social and political ones. People leave an area because either they are searching for development opportunities and a higher economic and social level, or they take refuge in another area because of certain disasters or calamities: wars, religious or even political persecution. From a macroeconomic point of view, migration may be explained as a way to balance certain deficiencies on the labor force market resulting from the lag between supply and demand.<sup>8</sup>

Bogdan Voicu considers that permanent migration may be defined as: „a total protest, compared to temporary migration that expresses a partial contempt regarding the origin society”. In his opinion, permanent migration is the most selective one, because it requires „a lot of courage and certainty, hope for a better future”

All these things are compared to complete abandonment of the family left behind in the origin country, the attempt to re-build a new family environment, to easily adopt, by acculturation a new system of values of a country and to regain a new social position in an unknown social environment. According to him, the characteristic of temporary migration (be it internal or external) is the one that the emigrant leaves his family, relatives, properties, friends in the origin country, but keeps communication with the ones left at home

For both cases (internal or external migration) we find the same motivations: better possibility for income, opportunities for a better life for the immigrant and his family.

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<sup>7</sup>Hein de Haas (2009), *Mobility and Human Development*, Research Paper, United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Reports Research Paper., p.22.

<sup>8</sup>Nicolae, Flavia, Bristena (2009), *Labor force migration and human resources – geostrategic impact*, Revista: Sfera Politicii București, Issue 137, pp.28-33.

## 2.2 Particularities of the Romanian migration

The migrations phenomenon attracts a series of „mysteries” regarding the immigration and emigration statistics, but one thing is certain: the migrationist flow „knew” in Europe the massive movements from East to West and from South to North.

The most important characteristic of the European migration is its diversity, based on the inhomogeneous mass of people coming from most of the countries in Europe. This diversity was formed of European immigrants that came from various social classes, had different trades (qualifications in various fields). Some of them, the more lucky ones, might become pioneers in the places they settled in.<sup>9</sup>

Stephen Castles and Mark J Miller, in their work *„The age of Migration International Population Movements in the Modern World”* claim that „mankind has entered a new era of migration, in which the process itself goes through a series of particularities, generated by the increase of the number of migrants, of the regions involved in migration processes, diversification and dynamics through the heterogeneity of the destinations and the structure of the population involved and of the goals targeted.”<sup>10</sup>

Looking back to the past, we notice that the Romanians from Transylvania have been pioneers in migration, starting from early 20th century. For this we may argue that the main economic cause determining them to emigrate was mainly the lack of a certain income. The lack of a stable income resides in the lack „of their own property on a piece of land to work on”, but also in the religious and social persecutions.

Considering the historic and social context from the beginning of the 20th century, we may determine that the main factors that influenced the Romanians from that time to immigrate to the New World. I am referring here especially to the Romanians in Banat and Transylvania (provinces attached to the Austro – Hungarian Empire), the main factors that contributed to the emigration decision being especially the economical and social ones.

We must mention that the Romanians from Transylvania were under the occupation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the plots of land they were working on belonged to Hungarian nobility or to Roman-Catholic or Greek-Catholic Church in Transylvania.

It is easy to see that at that time, the living means for a family of Romanian peasants from Transylvania were almost none; they were working someone else’s land, the production was sold for very low prices and they were forced to buy certain products at a very high price.

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<sup>9</sup>Baines, Dudley (1995), *New studies in Economic and Social History. Emigration from Europe 1815 -1930*, Cambridge University Press Edition, pp.5-7.

<sup>10</sup>Castles,Stephen; Miller, J.Mark (2003),*The Age of Migration.International Population Movements in the Modern World*,New York Guilford Press, p.13.

All these economical, social and religious causes were presented by the most important newspapers of those times, which repeatedly tried to „pull a signal” on the situation of Transylvanian Romanian, but also on the increase of the number of emigrants.

The same motivations, political, social and religious determined the Romanians from Dobrogea, Muntenia, Oltenia and Moldova to emigrate, only that this reasons added to the spirit of adventure and freedom.

Robin Cohen in *Global Diasporas: an introduction* identifies a new term for the geographic movements that took place in time in Europe, a new term that would unite the whole migrationist experience of a people: „Diaspora”. The author believes that Diaspora is that „group of individuals or a whole community that are forced to leave their origin country to live abroad, from a series of different reasons: from religious, racial, ethnic imperialistic-colonialist reasons, war, to poverty or the need to search for a job or a between way of life...”<sup>11</sup>

### 2.3. Phases of Romanian migration

Regardless the age or the gender of the emigrant, now as 200 years ago, the main causes that stay behind the decision to emigrate are the economic and social conditions in the host country.

The condition of the emigrant when he takes this decision is unclear; by the nature and dimension of this phenomenon, he is now facing maybe one of the biggest and most important decision in his life.

After 1990, the official attitude of the Romanian authorities towards the migration of Romanians was rather passive. This is easy to understand, because the Romanians were seeing then an almost impossible dream coming true: the freedom to travel to foreign countries.

This attitude was kept for a rather long period of time, fact that was explained by the transition the economy was going through after December 89.

In a period marked by many transformations that Romania had, from a centralized economy to a transitional one, the migration of Romanians took a background role, being considered at that time as a good thing for our country, as a way to economic recovery and a method to increase the spirit of adventure of the Romanians.

From 1990 until 2012, Romania passed through a lot of changes and transformations, with positive or negative impact on our people. All these changes affected the income of the citizens and the labor force market.

In communist Romania, the main trend was internal migration, from the countryside to the city (to the big industrial cities).

Now, the main trend is the temporary migration, as a consequence of regionalization and Romanian’s ascension to the European Union.

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<sup>11</sup>Cohen,Robin (2008), *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*,Second Edition: Seattle – University of Washington Press, USA ,pp.13 -14.

The main trend that remains unchanged in Romania is the existence of regional and territorial disparities, strongly differentiated between Moldova, Transylvania and Banat.

Dimitriu Radu in his work: „*The Recent Dynamics and Structure of International Mobility of Moldavian Population*” emphasized that the economic underdevelopment of the northern part in Moldova is caused partly by the lack of natural resources, by the geographic location and by the fact that throughout history it was under the influence of the Soviet Union (today, Russia) <sup>12</sup>

Therefore, if the capital and the South-West region (Transylvania and Banat) had a high living standard and low unemployment, this cannot be said about the northern part of Moldova (Botosani- Vaslui).

According to Daniela Dănăicică there are four phases (migration „waves”) in the postcommunist Romanian migration history, which had an important impact on our country and led to creating favorable grounds for the current migrationist phenomenon<sup>13</sup>:

In the first phase, in the early '90s, the ethnic motivation was the main factor for maintaining a high level of external mobility by changing the residence. The biggest departing flows started in the regions with high ethnic concentration in Transylvania, leaving for Hungary and Germany.

The second phase of external migration is mainly temporary. This phase was based on the „walked path” principle, based on kinship, friendship, neighborhood, on the novelty element of a „new gate to West”, opening the appetite and curiosity to travel and work of the Romanian deprived from freedom in the communist era. .

The expansion and prosperity of the European Union culminated in that time with the accession of new member states, with a large number of emigrants. In time this led to emphasizing the positive and negative consequences. In the case of the European Union one cannot determine a definite internal or international migration which took place inside the same community.

The third phase of external migration started with an increased growing of the migrationist. It started after January 1st 2002 as a consequence of lifting the Schengen visa for the Romanians. Between 2002 and 2006 the migration is mostly temporary, characterized by massive flows to Italy, Spain, Israel, Germany, Hungary, Great Britain and Portugal.

The fourth phase of external migration is considered to be the one after Romania's accession to the European Union (January 7th 2007), and still in progress. The period between 2007 and 2012 is represented by the external migration of doctors and high educated persons. This last phase is known as the „brain drain” phase.

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<sup>12</sup>Dimitriu,Radu(2010), *The Recent Dynamics and Structure of International Mobility of Moldavian Population, Human Geographies, Journal of Studies and Research în Human Geographie* 4.1, pp.89-104.

<sup>13</sup>Dănăicică, Daniela (2010), *Characteristics of Romanian migration*, Constantin Brâncuși University, Târgu Jiu, Economics, Nr.2, pp.189-201.

#### 2.4. The profile of the Romanian emigrant

Many of the Romanians leaving to work abroad and cross for the first time the borders of another country bring with them their children, relatives, friends, start „colonies”. These colonies later become Diasporas, generating a real clash of civilization and of assimilation of a new culture, tradition and customs.

Once arrived „on the promised land” our fellow citizen rewrites his biography, changes his looks, is ashamed of his origin, of his home country, of his fellow citizens and even of the belief of his ancestors and prefers to hide in an unknown place. These losses of country identity makes most of the Romanian immigrants, even the ones with a strong religious conscience, become prostitutes, thieves, beggars, criminals, or become involved in human trafficking.<sup>14</sup>

Professor Vasile Miftode in his paperwork „The personality of the Romanian migrant and the destiny of the abandoned children” puts together an empirical and factual analysis of the group of Romanian migrants, thus offering the possibility to identify some personality patterns<sup>15</sup> A first category of migrants is the one of the people with a strong determination to change the living environment and even of the „inter-human relations”, which in time generates bureaucracy, corruption, physical and verbal violence and poverty. A second category is the „folkloric” one, specific to the migrants that want to „get lost” and they use migration to „run” from responsibility in an unknown world, so that they would not be held responsible for the „disaster in the country”.

Maybe the largest category of migrant Romanians, with a strong impact on the origin community is the one of the nostalgics, „incapable of integrating in the host country”.

These, despite their efforts to integrate, visit their country of origin very often. They bring their children with them abroad, they integrate them in the school of the community where they work, create friendships within the local population.

In the last decades of the 20th century, the labor force migration was considered as one of the main causes of the increase of income disparities in the developed countries and in the developing countries.

From a socio-economic point of view, a country gains if the immigrants have an education and professional training level higher or at least the same as the one of the local active population.

The existence, at a global level, of the economic, social, technological and environmental disparities especially between the developed countries and the developing or poor ones, prove that international migration will be completely stopped in the next three decades of the 21st century.

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<sup>14</sup>Sorlescu, Mariana; Cristian, Elena, Raluca (2009), „*The Romanian Migrational Evolution Phenomenon*”, pp.579-585.

<sup>15</sup>Miftode, Vasile (2007), „*The personality of the Romanian migrant and the destiny of the abandoned children*”, Univesitatea Al. I. Cuza, Iași, pp.17-24.

### 3. Conclusions:

International migration implies a series of major changes in the life of the migrant, his separation from the family, a new residence, a new language, a new culture, another civilization, the migrant being forced to integrate in a new environment which is relatively new and unknown to him.

The decisive role must be played by the states involved in this process, these being forced to undertake a series of measures for stopping the migrationist phenomenon, through social measures applying to the local labor force, creating new jobs, encouraging the investors, stimulating the productivity, consumption and income.

At least in our country, migration is not only a simple phenomenon that grew during the last 24 years since the fall of communism. It is a well-known phenomenon throughout the history of many countries.

The motivation is the only act that makes the difference between the countries of the world. For many of those, migration became in time an aspiration, an almost unreal process

The dimension of the migrationist phenomenon is closely connected to the fiscal systems in use.

All these add to the ecologic issues, major natural calamities or some humanitarian aspects (worsening of the living conditions, high national or local unemployment, dramatic drop of income level, the ageing of the population, high mortality rate combined with low birth rate).

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