

# Conceptualization of the Migration Phenomenon

Subjects: Business, Finance

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The migration process has become particularly important for Romania in the last 20 years, and its socio-economic, political and cultural effects affect the Romanian state. That is why flexible policies are needed in order to be coherent, to have as main purpose keeping specialists in the country in certain basic economic fields, as well to implement measures to determine the return of specialists and students who have left to study abroad.

Keywords: migration ; standard of living ; GDP per capita disparity

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## 1. Introduction

The international migration is global in nature, given that all countries are affected by this phenomenon—either as countries of origin, transit or destination. This phenomenon generates many positive and negative economic, demographic and political effects.

Considering that the forecasts regarding the reduction of the total population, especially of the active one in Romania, are pessimistic, and that the migration process has a special importance for the national economy <sup>[1]</sup>, this phenomenon overlaps with the accelerated aging of the population <sup>[2]</sup>.

Regarding the international migration after the 1990s as a result of the collapse of the communist regime and the opening of the country's borders, Romania faced a migratory process only to the West, mainly to the EU. Much of the migration process <sup>[3]</sup> arose from people's desire to have better paid jobs compared to the local ones, but also for family reunification.

The migration phenomenon has economic effects both for the economy of the countries of origin and for the destination countries. In view of the above, it is important to see what impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the evolution of migration from Romania and how it was reflected upon the economic growth and living standards.

From the perspective of Romania's national economy, migration has a series of positive and negative effects. On the one hand, migration leads to an increase in foreign currency remittances to family members in the country, which leads to an increase in income and living standards at the individual level and at a macroeconomic level. This leads to an increase in consumption, to a reduction in social benefits for low-income people, to the reduction of the unemployment rate as a result of the migration of the unemployed and to the increase of the foreign exchange reserves. On the other hand, at the macroeconomic level, migration has a series of negative effects, leading to an exacerbation of the lack of specialists in certain sectors of activity that were already deficient, but also to a change in the structure of the employed population, resulting in increased aging. At the level of individuals, migration has many negative effects because it leads to the breakup of families and the appearance of a whole generation of children who are raised without parents, go to work abroad and suffer psychological traumas that cannot be fully quantified. Only when these children become adults it will be possible to see the implications of the fact that they grew up without the support of their parents, which will make its mark on their adult life. Moreover, as a result of migration, many villages and communes in Romania become almost deserted, with implications for the local education system, because many schools have closed due to a lack of children and young people in those communities, and only the elderly remain, unfortunately without financial and family support. An increasingly worrying phenomenon is the emigration of very intelligent young people for university studies abroad and who in a very small proportion still return to the country due to cultural and socio-economic differences, value appreciation, but also professional opportunities.

## 2. Conceptualization of the Migration Phenomenon

### 2.1. Genesis and Evolution of the Concept

Migration processes have been known since antiquity, when people were forced to leave their country due to religious persecution, ethnic conflicts, wars or natural disasters. Over time, migration has evolved. In addition to the previous causes, people left their home country in search for a better paid job or more decent living conditions <sup>[4]</sup>. So, in the past, population migration was determined by non-economic causes, while current migration is mostly due to economic reasons <sup>[5]</sup>.

The first references to the migratory phenomenon, in an incipient form, appear in the work of A. Smith "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" (1776), which shows that there was a large wage gap between rural and urban areas in Great Britain at that time, leading to the onset of a large population movement.

The term "migration" first appeared in E. Ravenstein's "Laws of Migration" (1885), which analyzes data from the United Kingdom, but formulates a series of "laws of migration" that were later developed. According to this author, migration was mainly determined by external opportunities, and the volume of migration is inversely proportional to the distance. Furthermore, a characteristic of migration is that it is not continuous, but occurs in waves <sup>[6]</sup>.

The notion of migrant has its origin in Latin: *migrantis*, and refers to a person who moves from place to place <sup>[5]</sup>. Thus, migration means, in a broad sense <sup>[7]</sup>, "any form of territorial mobility of the population regardless of purpose, duration, regularity", and in a narrow sense "a movement of people from one locality to another".

Migration occurs for various reasons, such as: finding a better paid job or greater satisfaction, studying abroad, doing business, but also to achieve family reunification <sup>[8]</sup>. Migration gives rise to a series of negative reactions <sup>[9]</sup>, such as racism, xenophobia, discrimination, segregation, poverty and human trafficking, but also to a series of positive elements, such as those related to cooperation, diversity, tolerance, growth and mobility.

At the end of the 20th century–beginning of the 21st century, migration intensified as a result of a series of factors, such as globalization and the evolution of the means of transport and communication <sup>[10]</sup>.

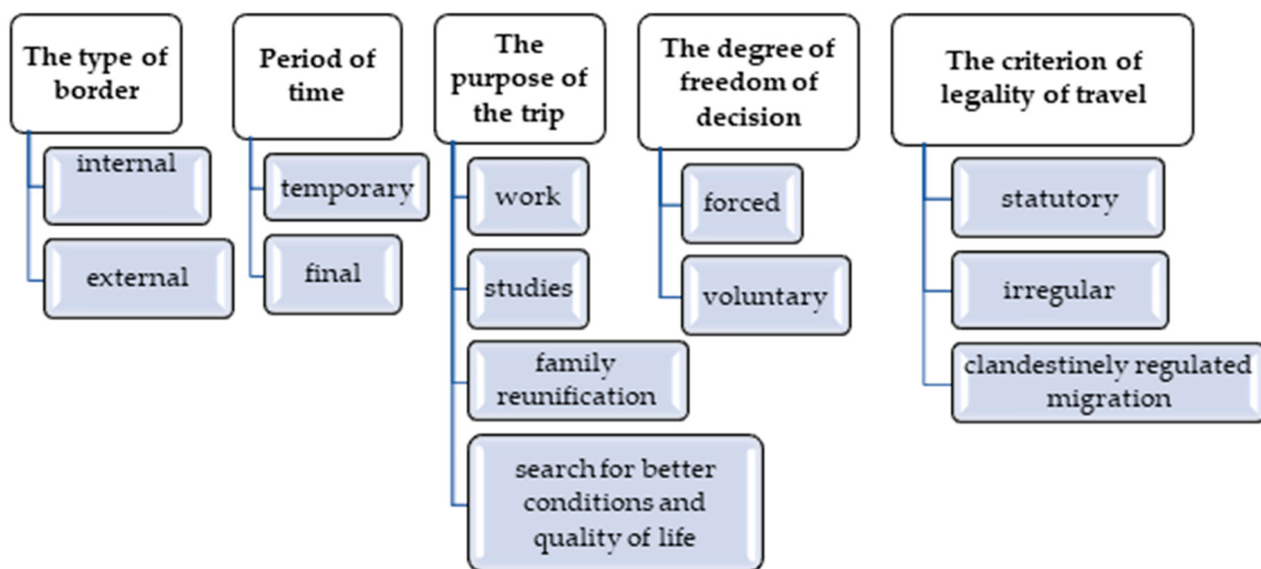
The 21st century is bringing a new wave of migrants to Western Europe. It has become the responsibility of the entire European Union <sup>[11][12]</sup> to find viable solutions, because the exodus from the Mediterranean basin is not just a problem for the countries in the region. As is well known, there are different reasons for migration: wars, conflicts, poverty, discrimination, violence and persecution, family, climate change and much more. Migrants from the East, North and Central Africa have changed their route to Western Europe, many of them no longer crossing the unsafe waters of the Mediterranean <sup>[13]</sup> but heading to Belarus, being attracted by opportunities to travel with a tourist visa to this country. Belarus is estimated to host between 5000 and 20,000 migrants and refugees from the Middle East and Africa. This new migration route has created tensions on the Belarusian border with other European states. However, it seems that this migration crisis in Belarus was artificially created by Minsk in response to the sanctions imposed by European states regarding the repression of a movement to challenge the political regime in that country in 2020. For now, the refugee crisis in the border between Belarus and Poland is solved because many of the immigrants agreed to go back to their countries, after the experience of living in the forests of Belarus in unfavorable weather conditions and without food, as some of them consumed all their savings in an attempt to reach the EU.

There is also a significant influx of migrants to the UK trying to enter France illegally, which has given rise to numerous tensions between the two states. This route is part of the map of illegal migration, and every day hundreds of immigrants try to cross the English Channel, in Calais, in makeshift boats, risking their lives and often losing them. According to statistics published by the British state, it seems that over 12,500 immigrants crossed the English Channel in 2021.

Therefore, international migration should be better regulated and enforced, as well as the dismantling of illegal migrant trafficking networks, as it must be guaranteed that, by virtue of the respect for the right to immigrate, the fundamental right of citizens is not violated. It should also be borne in mind that in a few decades Europe's religious structure may change as a result of waves of immigrants from outside Europe, and that the cultural and European values will not be affected.

## 2.2. Types of Migration

Migration can be classified according to several criteria, depending on the influencing factors <sup>[14][15][16]</sup>, as follows: according to the type of border that migrants cross, the period of time, the purpose of the trip, the degree of freedom of the decision to migrate, the legality of the trip <sup>[17][18]</sup>. This mode of classification is illustrated in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** Criteria for classifying types of migration Source: Prepared by the authors.

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