

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION PHENOMENON IN ROMANIA BETWEEN 1991 AND 2008

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Migration represented and represents a very important phenomenon at global level, taking into consideration besides its demographic implications, its extremely diverse implications such as socio-economic, socio-cultural, territorial, or environmental. This represents, probably, the main reason why the research on migration is interdisciplinary, having strong connections with sociology, political sciences, history, economics, geography, demography, psychology, or law, among others. All these disciplines target different aspects of population migration, and a proper comprehension of the phenomenon implies a contribution from the part of all of them. Although migration represents a phenomenon manifested since ancient times, it has never been such an universal or significant phenomenon from the socio-economical or political perspective, as it is in present times. International migration has both a negative and positive impact on both provider and receiving countries, in general playing a very important role in the structure and dimension of the population of a country. Romania is not an exception to the previously expressed statement; furthermore, after the fall of the communist regime, migration became for Romania one of the most important socio-economical phenomena. The present paper aims at analyzing in a descriptive manner the international migration phenomenon in Romania between 1991 and 2008, from quantitative perspective. Based on data identified in the "Statistical Yearbook of Romania" - 2008 and 2009 editions - the analysis revealed the fact that both immigration and emigration flows registered oscillatory evolutions in the analysed period, but the general trend of immigration was of increasing, while the one of emigration was of decreasing. Immigration was dominated by the presence of males, of persons aged between 26 and 40 and of persons coming from the Republic of Moldova. On the other side, in the case of emigration the significant presence of females, of persons aged between 26 and 40, of persons of Romanian nationality and of those who preferred as main destination country Italy, was remarkable.

Keywords: international migration, immigration, emigration, Romania, descriptive analysis.

JEL Classification: F22, O15

Introduction

After the fall of the communist regime in 1989, migration represents one of the most important socio-economic phenomena in Romania. For many years, the high migration potential and the supposed permeability of the Romanian borders represented one of the main reasons which lead to its late adhesion to the European Union (EU) as, in general, West countries were "frightened" of the potential number of Romanian immigrants associated with a high robbery rate, expected as a consequence of the adhesion (Michalon 2005 cited in Potot 2008: 88). In the actual international frame, the migration phenomenon in Romania represents a process which, managed in a proper manner, can become an important generator of prosperity for our country. Taking into

consideration the major economical implications of migration - especially on the labour market - the present paper intends to analyse the international migration phenomenon in Romania between 1991 and 2008 in a descriptive manner from a quantitative perspective, in order to provide it a comprehensive image and to represent a starting point for potential future research on the economical implications of migration in Romania. In this sense, the present paper is structured into two parts. The first one puts forward a series of methodological aspects associated to the conducted analysis, while the second one presents the analysis' main results. The paper ends up with a series of final considerations.

Methodology

For the descriptive analysis of the international migration flows in Romania, data identified in the "Statistical Yearbook of Romania" – 2008 and 2009 editions – was processed. According to the National Institute of Statistics (2010: 39), the terms used in this paper, associated to international migration, are defined as follows:

- "International migration represents the change of permanent residence to another country or, from another country to Romania.
- Data on emigrants refer to Romanian citizens who settled their permanent residence abroad.
- Data on immigrants refer to citizens from another country who settled their permanent residence in Romania."

Furthermore, it is necessary to specify the fact that, whenever the terms of "immigration" or "emigration" are used, they refer to the number of immigrants, respectively emigrants registered during the year. Taking into consideration the above presented definitions associated to international migration, it is mandatory to outline the fact that the statistical data utilized in the analysis refer only to legal definitive migration.

Another series of data utilized in the analysis refers to population. In this sense, according to the National Institute of Statistics specifications, the population has as reference period the 1st of July of each year. "For intercensus years, the inhabitants' number has been determinate based on data from censuses and those from current evidence referring on vital and migration statistics. The inhabitants' number was calculated from data of the Population and Housing Census regarding the population with permanent residence in Romania, plus natural increase and balance of international migration determined by permanent residence changes, for population at national level" (National Institute of Statistics 2010: 37).

Before presenting the descriptive analysis, it is important to mention that the identified data were utilized for processing in the same manner they were identified in the previously mentioned sources; no transformation occurred on them.

Descriptive analysis – main findings

Between 1991 and 2008, both immigration and emigration flows registered oscillatory evolutions (Figure no. 1). In what concerns their trend orientation, in the case of immigration this was positive (the number of immigrants varying from one year to another in average with 496 persons), but in the case of emigration this was negative (the number of emigrants varying from one year to another in average with -2084 persons). Thus, it can be appreciated that, between 1991 and 2008, the general trend was of decreasing the number of persons who legally emigrated definitive from Romania. Legal immigration to Romania registered the highest value from the analysed period in 1998, when it increased with 643.26% in comparison with 1991. Starting with 2005, immigration to Romania was in continuous growth, this being potentially explained by a series of progresses associated to the regulation in the field of migration in Romania, especially in the frame of its adhesion to the EU; over the years, the regulation on migration in Romania has been improved in order to adopt the communitarian *acquis* in this field. Also, another factor for explaining the increase in immigration in Romania in the previously mentioned period could be

represented by the fact that, starting with 2004 the Romanian labour market expanded. In 2006, a series of branches (such as constructions or confections) were confronted with a lack of labour force; in order to solve this problem, entrepreneurs active in these branches resorted to immigrants supplying labour – especially from Turkey and China (Horváth 2007: 4). In what concerns the evolution of emigration in the analysed period, although the year 1990 was not included in the analysis, it is mandatory to outline the fact that this was the moment when legal definitive emigration from Romania reached its highest value (96929 persons). From the analysed period, the years 1991 and 1992 were the ones when were reached the highest values of emigration from Romania, the maximum being in 1991. The unstable economic and politic environments, emphasised by the political violence and interdiction generated by an administration, in general, inefficient could represent potential causes of high emigration immediately after the fall of the communist regime (Horváth 2007: 1). Also, after the fall of the communism, the free movement of the population was guarantee by the Constitution (Săseanu, Neagu and Petrescu 2010: 778). The years post-accession (2007 and 2008) represented for Romania period of increase of immigration and decrease of emigration; the quality of EU's member, emphasised by the disequilibrium on the labour market and by the clear trends to a demographic crisis, lead to the becoming of immigration an ongoing demographic phenomenon in Romania (Neguț, di Comite and Neacșu 2010: 577). A factor of explaining the increase in immigration in Romania in 2008, could be represented by the openness – more than ever – of the labour market for individuals supplying low and medium labour (Ministerul Administrației și Internelor 2011). In what concerns the international migration balance, between 1991 and 2008, it was negative expressing a number of emigrants higher than the one of immigrants, leading to the idea according to which Romania represents a provider country of immigrants. Exceptions were registered in 2001, 2007 and 2008 when immigration surpassed emigration; 2001 being a year when the two flows tended to equalise each other (Figure no. 1).

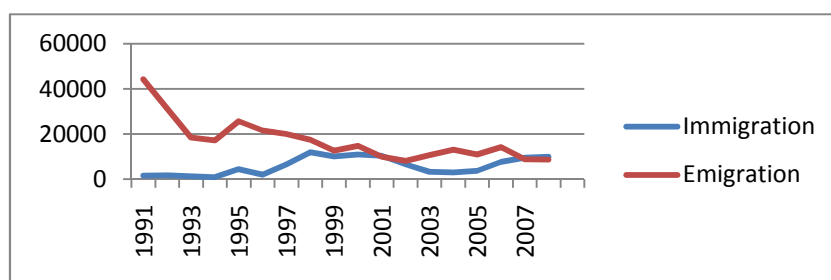


Figure no. 1: Evolution of the international migration flows between 1991 and 2008 (number of persons)

Source: produced by the authors based on data from National Institute of Statistics 2008, 2010

In what concerns the description of the international migration flows by gender, the situation is different in the case of immigration and emigration. In what concerns immigration, in every year of the period 1992-2008, the majority of immigrants in Romania was represented by males. In 1991, males only represented 36.27% out of the total immigrants (Figure no. 2). Thus, it can be stated that, during the whole analysed period, males represented the majority of immigrants to Romania, respectively 55.52%. According to the Ministry of Administration and Interior (2007), the high share of males in the total of immigrants in Romania could be explained by the migration for business; male entrepreneurs immigrants (especially those from Turkey or China) initially migrated in Romania in order to start and to develop a business, and only after reaching a stability point they proceeded to family reunification. In the case of emigration, in each year from the analysed period, females registered a higher share in the total of emigrants from Romania, in

comparison to males; the only exceptions were the years 1992 and 2001, when only 48.37%, respectively 49.49% out of the total emigrants were females (Figure no. 3). Thus, it can be appreciated that, during the whole analysed period, the highest share in the total of emigrants from Romania was represented by females (54%).

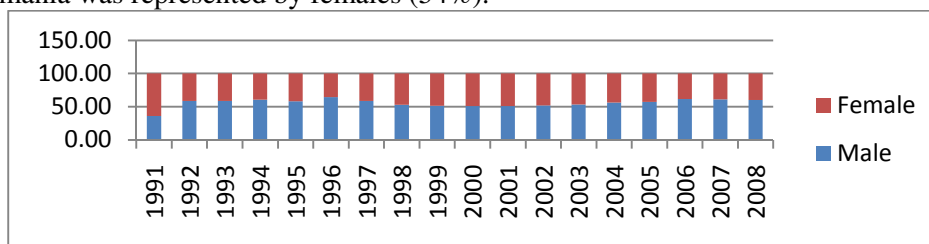


Figure no. 2: Immigration flow's structure, by gender (%)

Source: produced by the authors based on data from National Institute of Statistics 2008, 2010

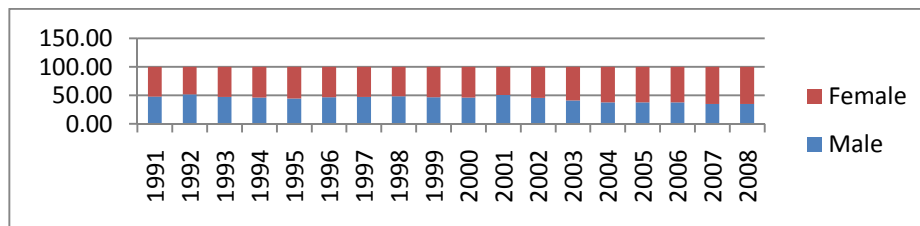


Figure no. 3: Emigration flow's structure, by gender (%)

Source: produced by the authors based on data from National Institute of Statistics 2008, 2010

Also, by dividing the total number of immigrants, respectively emigrants to Romania between 1991 and 2008 by the total population of Romania at 1st of July of each year from the mentioned period, it resulted that, in general, immigrant males have a higher share in the total of males in Romania than have the immigrant females in the total of females in Romania, while in the case of emigration females were more migratory than men in the analysed period.

Furthermore, analysing the international migration flows by age revealed the fact that in the case of immigration and emigration flows, the highest share in the total was represented by the persons aged between 26 and 40, during 1991 and 2008. This category presents a high level of interest for the labour market and it also represents a category of persons already trained, with a high innovation and work potential and extremely flexible (Constantin et al. 2004: 75) (Figure no. 4 and Figure no. 5)

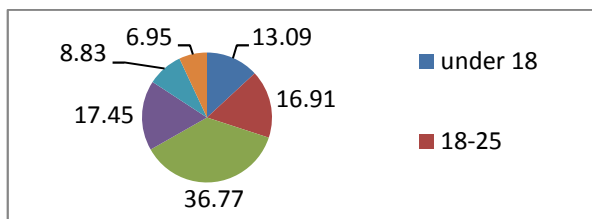


Figure no. 4: The share of the persons from the analysed age categories in the total of persons which immigrated in Romania between 1991 and 2008 (%)

Source: produced by the authors based on data from National Institute of Statistics 2008, 2010

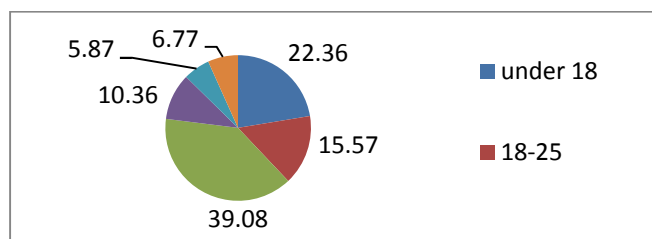


Figure no. 5: The share of the persons from the analysed age categories in the total of persons which emigrated from Romania between 1991 and 2008 (%)

Source: produced by the authors based on data from National Institute of Statistics 2008, 2010

In what concerns the analysis of the immigration flow by origin country, it could be accomplished only for the period 1994-2008 when, the majority of immigrants in Romania were coming from the Republic of Moldova (Figure no. 6).

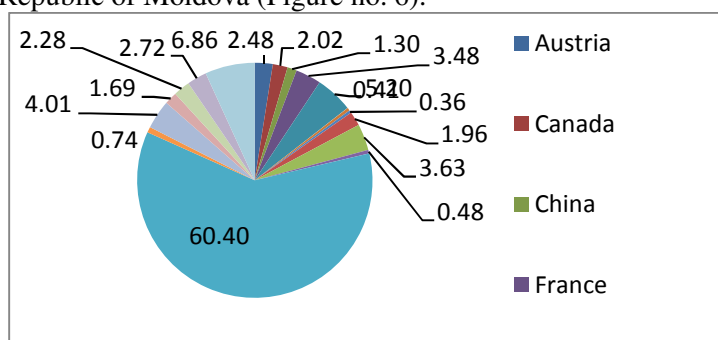


Figure no. 6: The share of the persons coming from the analysed countries in the total of persons which immigrated in Romania between 1994 and 2008 (%)

Source: produced by the authors based on data from National Institute of Statistics 2008, 2010

The descriptive analysis of emigration by nationality, revealed the fact that in all the years between 1991 and 2008 the highest share in the total of emigrants from Romania was represented by Romanians; in 2007 and 2008 they had a share of 97.27%, respectively 97.09%. Also, it is mandatory to outline the high shares of Hungarians and Germans in the total of emigrants from Romania after the fall of the communist regime, respectively the period 1991-1994, in comparison to more actual years like 2007 or 2008 (Figure no. 7). Thus, it can be appreciated that, at the beginning of the '90s, emigration was marked by the ethnic factor; on the basis of ethnic discrimination and hoping for better lives, the ethnic minorities from Romania migrated to countries to which they were historically connected (Horváth 2007: 1; Constantin, Nicolescu and Goschin 2008: 33).

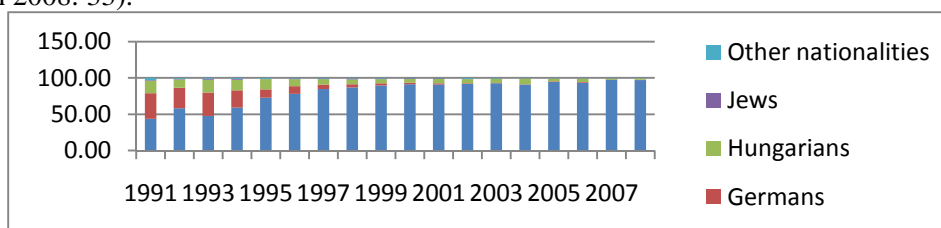


Figure no. 7: Emigration's structure between 1991 and 2008, by nationality (%)

Source: produced by the authors based on data from National Institute of Statistics, 2008 2010

Also, analysing the emigration flow by destination country, it revealed the fact that between 1991 and 2008, the vast majority of emigrants preferred Italy, followed by the U.S.A and Canada (Figure no. 8).

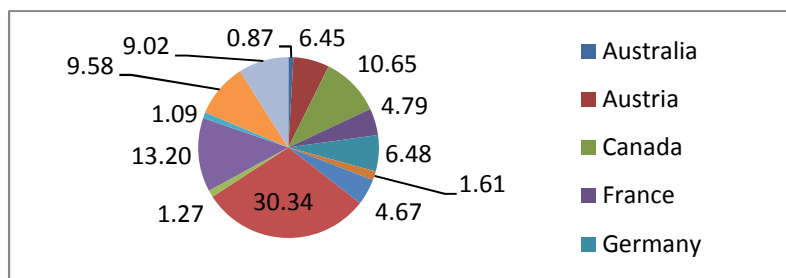


Figure no. 8: The share of emigrants from Romania in the total emigrants from Romania during 1991-2008, by destination country (%)

Source: produced by the authors based on data from National Institute of Statistics 2008, 2010

Conclusions and limits of the analysis

The descriptive analysis revealed the fact that both immigration and emigration flows registered oscillatory evolutions between 1991 and 2008. The general trend of immigration was of increasing, while the one of emigration was of decreasing. Immigration was dominated by the presence of males, of persons aged between 26 and 40 and of persons coming from the Republic of Moldova, while emigration was dominated by the presence of females, of persons aged between 26 and 40, of Romanians and of those who preferred as main destination country Italy. The major limit of the analysis is represented by the fact that, as the used statistical data refer only to legal definitive migration, the analysis does not reflect the real dimension of the phenomenon. Also, another limit refers to the fact that the period of analysis has as final point the year 2008. In this sense, future direction of analysis is represented by updating the series of data - as much as possible - in order to offer a more adequate image of the migration phenomenon in Romania, especially for analysing its evolution in economic crisis period.

Acknowledgements

This article is a result of the project POSDRU/88/1.5./S/55287 “Doctoral Programme in Economics at European Knowledge Standards (DOESEC)”. This project is co-funded by the European Social Fund through The Sectorial Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013, coordinated by The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies in partnership with West University of Timisoara.

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