A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MIGRATION PROCESS IN ROMANIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The study aims at a comparative analysis of the migration process in Romania and the Republic of Moldova in the recent years. The research studies the influencing factors of the migration phenomenon in the two countries considered in the analysis, as well as its economic and social effects. Given that migration has profound implications for all economies, decision-makers should adopt a strategy in this area to limit the exodus of skilled labor force from those strategic economic branches as well as incentive policies that lead to the return of diaspora specialists.

Keywords: migration, disparities, net migration, net migration rate

1. Introduction

The study aims at a comparative analysis of the migration process in Romania and the Republic of Moldova in the recent years. The research studies the influencing factors of the migration phenomenon in the two countries considered in the analysis, as well as its economic and social effects. Given that migration has profound implications for all economies, decision-makers should adopt a strategy in this area to limit the exodus of skilled labor force from those strategic economic branches as well as incentive policies that lead to the return of diaspora specialists.

2. The Migration Process

The process of international migration is found in almost every state in the world, and has profound implications for the economies of both the states from which the labor force generally departs, as well as for the destination countries.

Migration can take many forms, depending on the influencing factors, namely:

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• depending on the *type of border* that migrants cross, migration can be:

a. internal;

b. external.

• after the time period, the migration can be:

a. temporary – which can be:

i. short-term - refers to trips longer than 3 months, but less than one year;

ii. long-term - includes travel over one year. No upper time limit is set for distinguishing between long-term and permanent migration.

b. final. Definitive international migration is also called emigration / immigration. Emigration and immigration are ways of designating migration from the perspective of origin (place of departure) or destination (place of arrival). Emigrants are those who leave or have left, immigrants are those who are coming or came.

• according to **the purpose of the trip**, the most important migratory flows are:
a. for work purposes;
b. for family reunion;
c. for conducting studies abroad;

• according to the **degree of freedom of the decision to migrate**, this can be:

a. forced - includes refugees and asylum seekers;

b. involuntary.

• Depending on the **legality of the trip**, it can be:

c. Legal;

d. Illegal.

The economic causes of the international labour migration from Romania and the Republic of Moldova in the last two decades are related to the disparities between the standard of living, between the salary level and the

high unemployment rate among young people. Thus, the decision to emigrate is made to find a better paid job or to enable them to develop a professional career. Migration can also occur out of a desire for a better quality of life or for one's own or children's education, as well as for family reunification.

In the recent decades, Romania, unlike the Republic of Moldova, is facing an aging population due to the continuous decline in the birth rate, overlapping the migration process, which gives rise to a series of imbalances in certain areas of activity, such as: construction, medicine, HORECA.

3. Comparative analysis of the migration process in Romania and the Republic of Moldova

At the European Union level, a number of indicators are used for the statistical analysis of migration, such as:

- **emigrants** (E);
- **immigrants** (I);
- **net migration** (NM) - defined as the difference between number of immigrants and number of emigrants: **NM = I – E;**
- **emigrants rate -** defined as the ratio of emigrants to the average population (%);
- **net migration rate (**nmrate**)** - defined as the ratio of net migration to the average population (‰).

The analysis of the evolution of the migration process in Romania compared to the Republic of Moldova was made on the basis of statistical data obtained from Eurostat (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database) and the National Institute of Statistics of Romania (http: // statistici.insse.ro), for Romania, and the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (https://statistica.gov.md/)

Thus, based on statistical data from 2014-2020 processed using the statistical software EViews, the migration process in the two countries is as follows:

3.1. The migration process in Romania

Table 1. The evolution of the migration process in Romania

Year	Emigrants (e_ro)	Emigrants men (e_m_ro)	Emigrants women (e_w_ro)	Emigrants rate (erate_ro)	Immigrants (i_ro)	Net migration (nm_ro)	Net migration rate (nmrate_ro)
unit	persons	persons	persons	%	persons	persons	‰
2014	11251	4776	6475	0.056491	36644	25393	1.274976
2015	15235	6521	8714	0.076858	23093	7858	0.396423
2016	22807	10007	12800	0.115734	27863	5056	0.256566
2017	23156	10198	12958	0.118185	50199	27043	1.380243
2018	27229	11989	15240	0.139803	65678	38449	1.974101
2019	26775	11873	14902	0.138188	64479	37704	1.945929
2020	21031	9610	11421	0.109186	32250	11219	0.582451

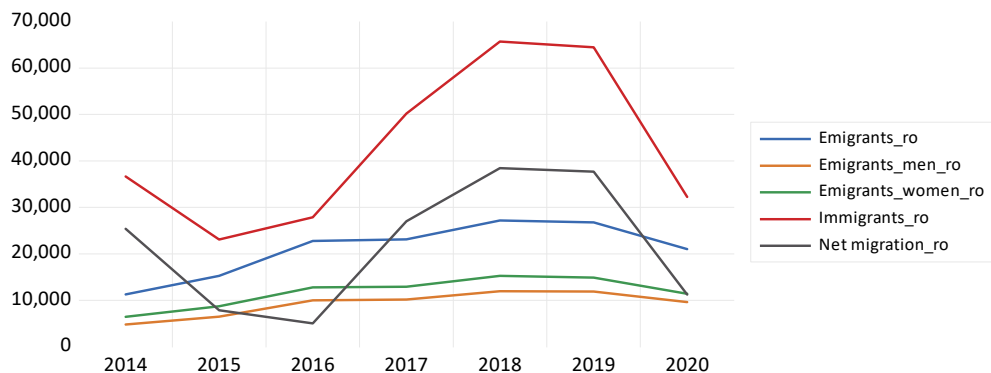* author's processing cu EViews

Figure 1. Procesul migrationist in Romania in perioada 2014-2020
*Author's processing with EViews

Based on the analysis of Figure 1, it can be seen that the number of female emigrants during this period was higher than the number of male emigrants, by about 30%, but both series had a trend similar to the total number of emigrants. It is found that in 2020 in the global context generated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of emigrants from Romania decreased by 5744 people compared to 2019, which represents a reduction of about 21.5% compared to the previous year.

Thus, the Covid-19 pandemic also affected the phenomenon of migration from Romania, because there were both those travel restrictions to other states, as well as periods of national lockdown, over which overlapped

people's uncertainty about their health, as well as the reduction of the activity in certain fields in the countries that were traditionally destination countries for the Romanian migrants, which led to the difficulty of finding a job.

It is also observed that during the entire analysed period, 2014-2020, net migration in Romania is constantly positive, i.e. the number of immigrants has constantly exceeded the number of emigrants. However, it is found that the lowest value of the net migration indicator was recorded in 2016, Romania facing a shortage of labour in certain sectors of activity vital to a national economy, which why during 2018, Romania amended the legislation regulating the right of work and residence of foreign citizens in Romania (Law no 247/2018). Thus, the number of immigrant workers increased considerably in 2018 and 2019, when the quotas of foreigners who could be employed in Romanian companies increased. However, the crisis generated by the pandemic context also affected the number of immigrants arriving in Romania in 2020, which decreased by about 50% compared to 2019, reaching 32,250 people compared to approximate 64479 in 2019.

3.2. The migration process in the Republic of Moldova

Table 2. The evolution of the migration process in the Republic of Moldova

Year	Emigrants (e_rm)	Emigrants men (e_m_rm)	Emigrants women (e_w_rm)	Emigrants rate (erate_rm)	Immigrants(i_rm)	Net migration (nm_rm)	Net migration rate (nmrate_rm)
unit	persons	persons	persons	%	persons	persons	‰
2014	2374	1119	1255	0.083096	4187	1813	0.634593
2015	2236	1032	1204	0.078884	4209	1973	0.696059
2016	2507	1211	1296	0.089466	4080	1573	0.561351
2017	2111	976	1135	0.076620	3708	1597	0.579640
2018	2243	1028	1215	0.082822	4223	1980	0.731109
2019	3660	1763	1897	0.137337	4875	1215	0.455915
2020	1067	731	876	0.040717	2875	1808	0.689946

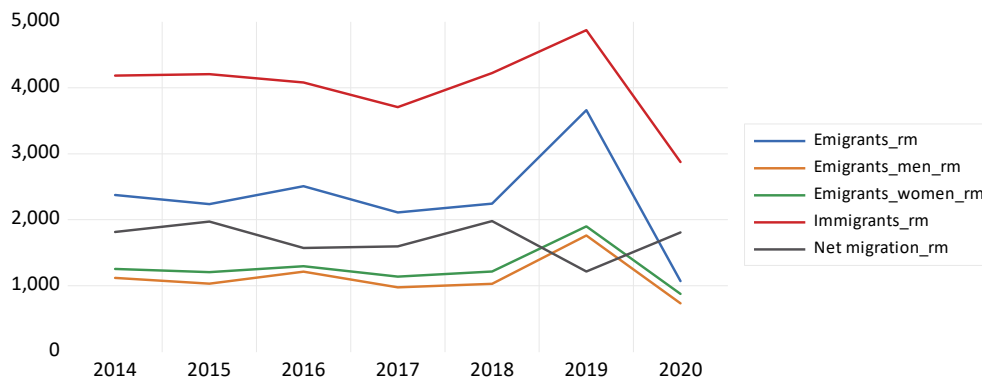* Author's processing with EViews

Figure 2. Procesul migrationist in Republica Moldova in perioada 2014-2020
* Author's processing with EViews

Based on the analysis of Figure 2, it is found that the number of female emigrants during this period was higher than the number of male emigrants, by approx. 15%, but both series had a trend similar to that of the total number of emigrants. It is found that in 2020 in the global context generated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of emigrants from the Republic of Moldova decreased by 2593 people compared to 2019, which is a reduction of over 70% compared to the previous year.

The current pandemic context has strongly influenced the phenomenon of migration from the Republic of Moldova, the number of emigrants decreasing as we observed, by almost a third compared to the previous year, due to national lockdowns, health uncertainties, but also due to increasing difficulties in finding a well-paid job.

Also, during the entire period 2014-2020, the indicator of net migration in the Republic of Moldova is positive, but registers the lowest value in 2019, due to the fact that in that year the number of Moldovan emigrants increased by over 63% compared to the previous year, 2018.

In the conditions of the current Covid-19 pandemic, the net migration indicator registered an increase compared to 2019 by approx. 50% due to the fact that the number of emigrants has decreased by much more than that of immigrants, by over 70% compared to the previous year, respectively 42%.

3.3.   Comparative analysis of the migration process in Romania and in the Republic of Moldova in a pandemic context

Starting from the statistical data on the migration process in the two countries in the period 2014-2020 and by processing them with EViews, a

comparative analysis of them can be made based on descriptive statistics, but also graphically.

The descriptive statistics for the migration process from the two analyzed countries are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Stats for procesul migrationist din Romania

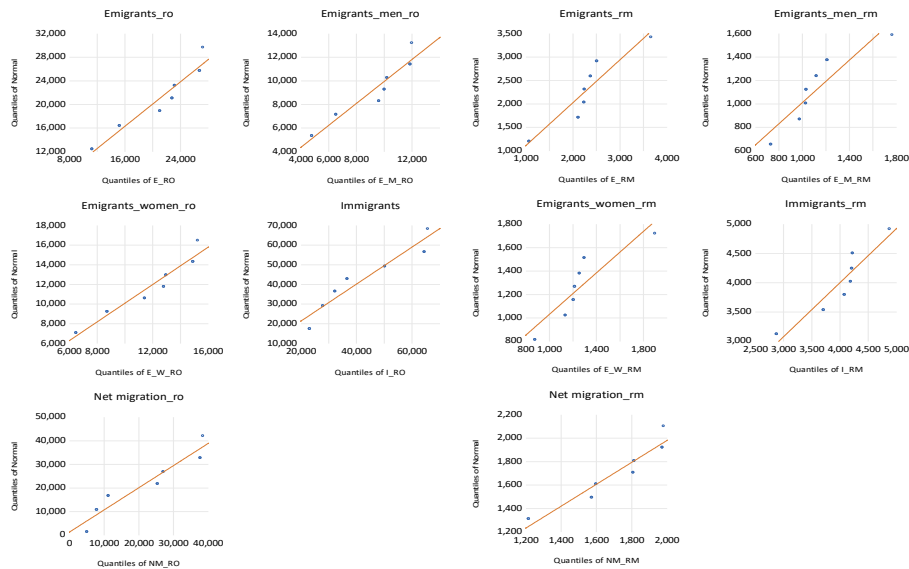| Indicator	Emigrants_rm	Emigrants_ro	Immigrants_rm	Immigrants_ro
Mean	2314.000	21069.14	4022.429	42886.57
Median	2243.000	22807.00	4187.000	36644.00
Maximum	3660.000	27229.00	4875.000	65678.00
Minimum	1067.000	11251.00	2875.000	23093.00
Std. Dev.	759.3756	5892.232	612.0691	17362.57
Skewness	0.204599	-0.625836	-0.708825	0.333780
Kurtosis	3.335129	2.093630	3.152080	1.516611
Jarque-Bera	0.081595	0.696555	0.592917	0.771773
Probability	0.960024	0.705903	0.743447	0.679848
Sum	16198.00	147484.0	28157.00	300206.0
Sum Sq. Dev.	3459908.	2.08E+08	2247772.	1.81E+09

*Author processing with EViews

Figure 3. Distribution Quintiles of migration series for Romania and Republic of Moldova

4. Results and discussions

Regarding the emigration rate, based on the statistical data processed with EViews, it is found that in Romania this indicator registered higher values than those in the Republic of Moldova for the entire analysed period, except for the years 2014-2015.

Table 4. Descriptive Stats for emigration rate in Romania and Republic of Moldova

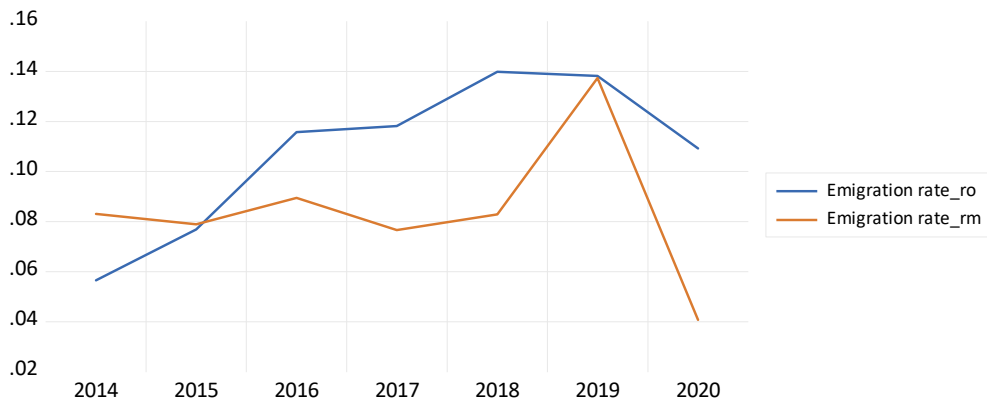|	Emigration rate_ro	Emigration rate_rm
Mean	0.107778	0.084135
Median	0.115734	0.082822
Maximum	0.139803	0.137337
Minimum	0.056491	0.040717
Std. Dev.	0.030850	0.028375
Skewness	-0.624547	0.538390
Kurtosis	2.094222	3.470454
Jarque-Bera	0.694361	0.402728
Probability	0.706678	0.817615
Sum	0.754444	0.588943
Sum Sq. Dev.	0.005710	0.004831

*Author's processing with EViews

Figure 4. Comparative analysis emigration rate in Romania and Republic of Moldova

Also, during the pandemic, the emigration rate decreased in both states, but the decrease is much steeper in the Republic of Moldova (0.04% in 2020 compared to 0.14% in 2019) unlike in Romania (0.11% in 2020 compared to 0.14% in 2019).

Based on the statistical data processed with EViews, the analysis of the net migration rate indicator can also be performed.

Table 5. Descriptive Stats for net migration rate in Romania and R. of Moldova

	Net migration rate_ro	Net migration rate_rm
Mean	1.115813	0.621230
Median	1.274976	0.634593
Maximum	1.974101	0.731109
Minimum	0.256566	0.455915
Std. Dev.	0.714296	0.095932
Skewness	0.033787	-0.557107
Kurtosis	1.431799	2.209024
Jarque-Bera	0.718615	0.544575
Probability	0.698160	0.761635
Sum	7.810689	4.348612
Sum Sq. Dev.	3.061309	0.055218

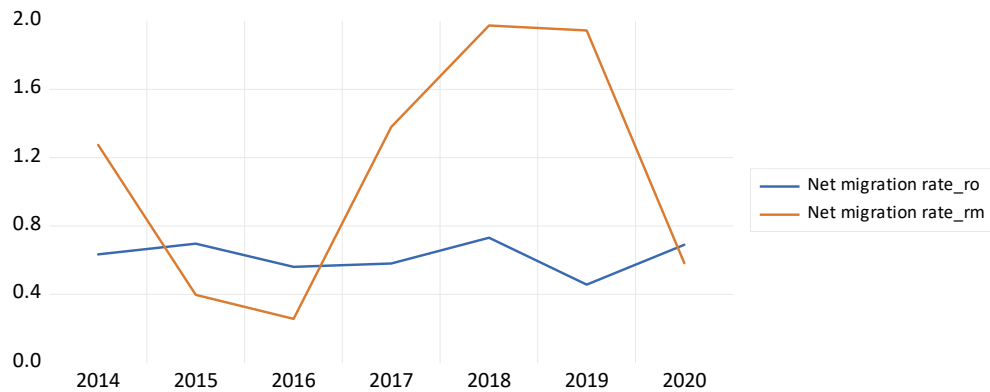* Author's processing with EViews

Figure 5. Comparative analysis net migration rate in Romania and Republica Moldova
* Author's processing with Eviews

Thus, based on Figure 5, it is found that the net migration rate indicator has a much more balanced variation in the Republic of Moldova between 0.45 ‰ and 0.73 ‰, unlike Romania, where the evolution of this indicator is

very fluctuating, registering in 2016 minimum values, of 0.25‰, and maximum values in 2018 and 2019, of approx. 1.97‰ and 1.95‰, respectively.

This evolution of the net migration rate in Romania can be explained by the fact that in 2018 in Romania the legislation regulating the right to work and residence of citizens was amended and as a result, the number of immigrant workers increased considerably in 2018 and 2019.

5. Conclusions

Summarizing the analysis performed on the migration process in Romania and the Republic of Moldova in 2014-2020, we conclude that migration from these two neighbouring countries and speaking the same language is generally for economic reasons, for a good standard of living. The study is current, because it addresses the phenomenon of international migration, as well as the reaction of emigrants in the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Both countries have in common that migration among women is higher than among men, because they find it easier to find a job in the countries where they emigrate, being often employed in the field of social services. Only then does migration occur for family reunification or for study abroad.

Migration in the two countries under analysis is a real phenomenon in the last 30 years, a large part of their population settling permanently abroad, which has profound implications on the workforce in the country, on the structure of the population, and on the families left at home.

On the other hand, migrations represent over time a natural process of development of human society, because in this way there are interactions between people of different ethnicities, different cultures and languages. A particularly important role is played by migrants returning to their country of origin and could have implications for the country's economic growth.

The socio-economic crisis, but also the lack of coherent employment policies, has accentuated even more in recent years, the trend of the migration process in the two countries. The pandemic has reduced the number of migrants for the time being, but as soon as conditions allow free movement to certain states in central and Western Europe, and the psychological impact of the pandemic on people will be reduced, emigration from the two countries will continue in the near future.

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