

# Approaches to Occupational Mobility under the Conditions of the Current Economic Crisis

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## *Abstract*

*The objectives of economic development in the modern world demand new approaches in the study, analysis and research of social aspects, labour markets and local and regional economic development in the context of the new transformations, the multiple crises that humanity is going through today. For the labour market, the geographical approach opens up the lens of analysis, formulation of priorities and the development of new methodologies that will help us build new theories and policies of local and regional economic development, the development of a labour market through the prism of economic geography. This approach will allow us to analyse the migration processes of occupational mobility and to develop viable policies and measures to create new jobs and ensure sustainable, smart and inclusive economic growth.*

**Keywords:** *Occupational mobility, migration, economic crisis, geographic labour mobility*

**JEL classification:** O1, J0, J4, J6

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## 1. Introduction

For the development of a modern labour market, in the current contradictory conditions of evolution and development, in the current conditions of population disturbances, intercommunity migration within the composition of EU countries, but also migration from other non-European countries, supporting Ukrainian migrants.

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We proposed study aspects regarding the geographical mobility of workforce through the prism of theoretical and methodological approaches. Let us address aspects of the new economic geography in economic theory, the geographic mobility of the workforce through the prism of theoretical and methodological approaches, let us address aspects of the new economic geography in economic theory, the geographic mobility of the workforce.

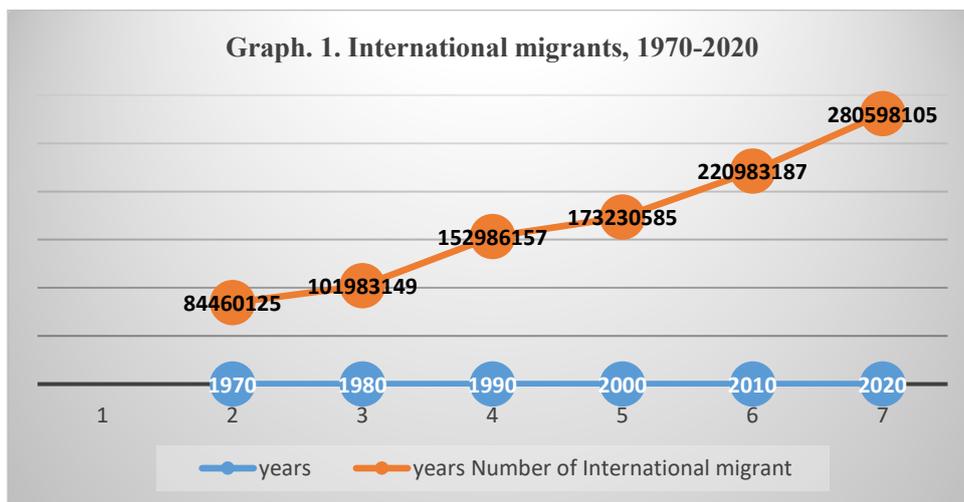
Improving social mobility is a challenge, considering the policies that are to respond to the existing challenges in the current development conditions according to the various situations, problem and level of development in different regions, in different urban and rural localities, developed or in difficulties (Burlacu et al., 2021; Ladaru et al., 2022). Improving social mobility is a challenge, considering the policies that are to respond to the existing challenges in the current development conditions according to the various situations, problem, and level of development in different regions, in different urban and rural localities, developed or in difficulties (Profiroiu et al., 2020; Sarbu et al., 2021).

Therefore, in this article we review the latest developments in migration in Europe, the evolution of labour mobility within the EU. We review the bibliographic study of Geographical labour mobility - theoretical and methodological approaches, new economic geography in economic theory, the changing geography of economic activity generating opportunities, internal migration - a form of geographical mobility.

## **2. Migration in the European Union**

According to the annual World Migration Report (McAuliffe and Triantafyllou (eds.), 2021), we would like to highlight some important moments. Around 87 million international migrants lived in Europe in 2020, 16% more than in 2015, when around 75 million international migrants lived in the region. More than half of these (44 million) were born in Europe; as of 2015, there were 38 million people, their number has increased. In 2020, the number of non-European migrants in Europe exceeded 40 million people. In 2020, around 19 million Europeans lived outside the continent, mostly in Asia and North America. Many Eastern European countries, for example the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Poland and Romania, are the countries of origin of the largest stocks of emigrants in the region. In 2020, the Russian Federation is the country of origin of almost 11 million emigrants, ranked first in Europe by the number of its population living abroad. Ukraine (with about 6 million people), being the third and Poland - the fourth largest number of employed European emigrants (4.8 million people) and the United Kingdom in fifth place with a number of 4.7 million people. Compared to the total population in 2020, Bosnia and Herzegovina had the largest share of emigrants, many of whom left during the fall of the former Yugoslavia. Portugal, Bulgaria and Romania had a large proportion of their population living abroad. About 16 million migrants in Germany in 2020, which had the highest number of foreign-born of any European country. The number of immigrants in Germany increased by more than 5 million people between 2015

and 2020, migrants arriving from Poland, Turkey, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and the Syrian Arab Republic. From the United Kingdom there were 9.4 million Personae, and from France respectively 8.5 million Personae. In Spain and Italy, the origins of the migrants come from other European countries, a large number come from Romania, Albania, but also from North Africa, Latin America (countries such as Morocco, Colombia, Ecuador). Migration of the people, from the countries of the ex-Soviet Union space, represented by a large number from Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan. Switzerland is ranked first in terms of the share of migrants in the population (29%), followed by Sweden with a share of (20%), Austria (19%) and Germany (19%). As result of the Covid-19 Crisis, European controls on international and domestic travel come into force in early 2020, peaking between March and May 2020. Travel restrictions within Europe have increased rapidly, to countries targeted by the pandemic, from outside the region have exceeded intra-regional travel restrictions for most of 2021. An important phenomenon concerns remittances related to the wages of cross-border workers working in Switzerland and residing in France and Germany. As a percentage of GDP, the first recipients of remittances in 2020 were the Republic of Moldova (16%), Montenegro (13%) and Ukraine (10%). In 2020, France was the largest recipient of remittances in the region, receiving about 25 billion dollars, down 9% compared to 2019. In 2020, Switzerland is a source of almost 28 billion dollars in remittances, becoming the largest sender in Europe. It is followed by Germany; Russian Federation, France and Luxembourg. With the exception of Luxembourg, the top five remittance senders saw a decrease in outflows in 2020 compared to 2019. The impact of the pandemic on migrant workers in different parts of the EU influenced by significant return migration. Migration dynamics in South-Eastern Europe; historically have been characterized by emigration, not-immigration, and effects of 2020 pandemic have largely halted and even reversed this phenomenon. Many migrants from Bulgaria, Serbia returned home due to unemployment, lack of social protection or the desire to be with their families. According to estimates between March and May 2020, over half a million Bulgarians returned home. The same trends were also visible in Romania, where approximately one million citizens returned to the country in 2020. However, globally, it had estimated that COVID-19 could reduce the growth of international migrants by around two million people. In other words, had it not been for COVID-19, the stock of international migrants in 2020 would probably be around 283 million.



Source: World Migration Report, McAuliffe, M. and A. Triandafyllidou (eds.), 2021

From this table we observe the increasing trends in the number of migrants from the 1970s, until 2020 from 84,460,125 migrants, which constitutes. Analysis of international migrant populations by United Nations region reflected that Europe is currently the largest destination for international migrants, accounting for 87 million migrants (30.9% of all international migrants), followed by Asia with 86 million international migrants (30.5%). North America is the destination for 59 million international migrants (20.9%), followed by Africa with 25 million migrants (9%). In the 2018 there were 17.6 million 'moves' from the EU-28, of which 12.9 million people were of working age (20-64). The number of displaced people of working age increased by 3.4% compared to 2017. 4.2% of the total working-age population in the EU live in a host Member State. In 2018, about half of all intra-EU movers lived in Germany, the United Kingdom, and another quarter lived in Spain, Italy or France. Mobility periods are shorter, according to the report, with 50 percent of those who move staying in the host country for one to four years. The analysis includes the mobility of all EU citizens of working age (20-64 years), and the mobility of EU citizens in this age group, and they are active (employed and unemployed). In 2019, intra-EU mobility continued to grow, at a slower pace than in previous years.

**Table 1. Composition of intra-EU mobility, 2018- 2020**

Type of mobility	1 January 2015	1 January 2017 EU - 28	1 January 2018 EU - 28	1 January 2019 EU - 27	1 January 2020 EU-28
<b>Long-term movers according to Eurostat population statistics</b>					

Type of mobility	1 January 2015	1 January 2017 EU - 28	1 January 2018 EU - 28	1 January 2019 EU - 27	1 January 2020 EU-28
<b>all ages</b>		17 million	17.5 million	13.2 million	13.5 million
<b>Working age (20-64 years)</b>	11.3 million	12.4 million	12.9 million	9.8 million	9.9 million
working age movers as share of total working age population	3.7 %	4.1 %	4.2 %	3.7 %	3.8 %
<b>2. Long-term movers according to EU-LFS</b>					
working age (20-64 years)	10.5 million	11.5 million	11.6 million	8.9 million	8.7 million
...of which active movers (employed or looking for work)	8.5 million	9.5 million	9.6 million	7.3 million	7 million
<b>Active movers as share</b>	3.6%	4 %	4.1 %	3.6 %	3.4 %
... of which born outside the country of residence	8.5 million	10.8 million	10.9 million	8.2 million	8 million
<b>3. Cross-border workers (20-64 years)</b>					
	1.3 million	1.4 million	1.5 million	1.6 million	1.5 million
(as share of total employed EU-28 citizens in the EU – 28)	0.6 %	0.7 %	0.7 %	0.9 %	0.8 %
<b>4. Number of postings (of employed and self employed), all ages (no. of PDs A1)</b>					
.. equals approximate number of persons (estimated number)	2 million	2.8 million	3 million	4.5 million	3.7 million
		1.8 million	1.9 million	3.06 million	
<b>5. Annual return mobility (20-64 years)</b>					
	630,763	680 000	723 000	677 502 (2018)	720 915 (2019)
(as ratio to EU-28 nationals leaving their country of origin in the same year)	59 %	66 %	72 %	66 %	71 %

Source: Annual report on intra-EU labor mobility, 2015-2020 year

In 2019, about 17.9 million people move in the EU-28, of which 13 million people move in the EU of working age (20-64 years), according to Eurostat regarding the population.

The stock of EU migrants of working age increased by 1.2% in 2018-19, which is substantially lower than the 3.4% in 2017-18. In 2019, the distribution of women and men among displaced persons in the EU-28 remained at 51% women and 49% men, as in the last two years. The highest proportions belong to women in Greece, with a share of (72%), Italy (59%). Men are the majority in Finland (65%), Sweden and the Czech Republic (55% for both).

### **3. Geographic labor mobility – theoretical and methodological approaches**

#### **3.1 The new economic geography in economic theory**

The new geography of jobs since the end of the 1970-s, reflects the revival of the process of globalization, of the technological transformations that affected the rich rural areas, due to the loss of jobs, with low incomes per capita, compared to the national average (Moretti, 2012).

The traditional economic thinking of the dispersion process, reflected in the neoclassical growth model, in which favorable interventions for underdeveloped regions are not necessary. The agglomeration phenomenon, the high costs of production factors in richer regions, plus perfect competition, plus mobility of factors, contribute to a constant, decreasing profitability, which ensures the diffusion of prosperity, to the convergence of incomes, to the real regional sources of spatial balance (Profiroiu, Radulescu & Burlacu, 2020).

The importance of geography, space and location, reflected in the new theory of trade, and in the new economic geography of Krugman (1980), which not so appreciated and supported by specialists in economic geography. In the opinion of these specialists, the combination of the notion of equilibrium in the New Economic Geography, of multiple equilibria, of evolutionary economic perspectives, is difficult due the fact that it reduces the capacity of self-transformation and endogenous changes (Boschma, Frenken, 2017). Evolutionary economics supports the spatial distribution of routines over time, and is interested in new routines in space, while also investigating the formation process and mechanisms by which more suitable routines diffuse (Burlacu, Oancea et al., 2020). Analysis of spatial agglomeration and the emergence of dispersion does not require rational location decisions (Boschma, and Frenken, 2017). Universal regional policy is no longer valid due to various regional characteristics such as the geographical position is important, not least, the institutional structure and regional diversification (Ionita, Ursacescu et al., 2009). Boschma (2009) suggests that the diversity of potential innovators from different regions should take into account. In the opinion of the Asheim et al. (2011), in regional policy, specific regional endowments are welcome to be considered, as a means of consolidation, for the expansion of regional economic foundations (Bodislav et al., 2019).

The regional context does not determine the available options, results that may be the result of promoted policies (Bodislav et al., 2020). The promotion of

regional policies must start from the endowment of the region, from regional resources, requirements and institutional potential (Boschma, 2001).

### **3.2 Geographical labor mobility**

The production factor (Conseil Central de l'Economie, 2009) it is not a homogeneous date: the labor force differs according to the level of education, skills, age, place of residence, language, etc. It may be since the profile of the workforce available on the local labor market does not coincide with the profile desired by employers (Faggianelli et al., 2018). For jobseekers, it may be necessary to search for a job matching their skills in a wider geographical area, or to follow the necessary training that will allow them to acquire new skills better adapted to the needs of businesses and that can concretely lead to employment (Belostecinic et al., 2022). Labor mobility, like vocational training, is a response to the heterogeneity of the production factor (Radulescu et al., 2021). Usually, the specialized literature distinguishes between four forms of labor mobility: geographical mobility, socio-economic mobility, functional and occupational mobility. Geographic labor mobility refers to physical movement between home and work. In this respect, a distinction should be made between, on the one hand, residential mobility (i.e. a job closer to the workplace) and, on the other hand, daily mobility (i.e. daily or almost daily travel between home and place the work). Geographic labor mobility can contribute to reducing labor force, geographical mismatches in the labor market, as local vacancies can be filled by people who have the necessary skills but live elsewhere.

### **3.3 The changing geography of opportunity-generating economic activity**

In the US, intergenerational social mobility has declined over the past century sparking a national debate about how to improve equality of opportunity (Connor, D.S. and Storper, M., 2020). Analysis of 20th century data demonstrates strong temporal patterns operating across regions. Some areas of the US have seen significant declines in social mobility, while others have had persistently low levels all along. It follows that improving social mobility will be a challenge, as policies should respond to both forces and do so according to their different mix in different regions.

### **3.4 Internal migration - a form of geographic mobility**

Internal migration is an important factor in the development of countries' development models, in ensuring sustainable growth and in developing an inclusive labor market (Pelikh, Borkowska, and Patel, 2020). In the year ending June 2014, for example, there were approximately 2.9 million internal migrations. As the economy and society change, so does the spatial distribution of people, firms, and social institutions over time – with push and pull factors influencing the pattern of

internal migration. The authors (Asadi and Jafari Samimi, 2022) claim that the regions left behind, of the failure of convergence in a country, many experts in the field who promote strategies and policies, in ensuring sustainable economic growth. The study focuses on policy proposals in the context of the new economic geography and the evolving economic geography for areas left behind.

Industrial agglomeration - as an essential element of the new economic geography, has restricted the potential of developing development policies in underdeveloped regions. The failure of convergence taken seriously in recent years in developing and developing countries (Iammarino et al., 2018). The aggregated indicators suggest a positive picture of macroeconomic performances, of regional development, and reflect a different perspective, the position of the groups left behind in development (Bussolo et al., 2018) rejected by the New Economic Geography, by the Evolutionary Economic Geography.

The ideas supported that agglomeration forces can ensure a dominant balance in economic geography. From Krugman's seminal Core-Periphery model, the new economic geography developed over two decades, paving the way for a mature conceptual framework that is attracting mainstream attention economy. Developed in 1991, the model of the new economic geography criticized and then modified in the field.

The first criticism was the bias of the model towards full agglomeration, as it depends on the cost of transport, which is a set of theories of agglomeration economies. As transport costs fall below the value threshold, the inevitable result would be complete crowding.

This current economic geography of opportunities is something new and reflects the continuity of development trends. This confirmed by the construction of social mobility policies in the American regions during the 20th century. The changing geography of economic activities, which generates opportunities and restructures intergenerational mobilities, considering factors associated with regional specificity, structures of interpersonal and racial inequality. The sharp decline in social mobility in the Midwest reflected as economic activity moved away from social mobility, also decreased opportunities. The long-term geography of social mobility can understand through the roots of the economic problems existing at the local and regional economic level.

### **3.5 Methodological approaches**

The new economic geography and Evolutionary economic geography (EEG). Some voices argued that agglomerated forces a dominant balance in economic geography. However, NEG and EEG differ in approaches and policy recommendations. NEG is interested from the perspective of spatial approaches, and EEG tends to consider space as an important factor in regional development.

Value, the inevitable result would be complete congestion. Multiple evidence supports, that intergenerational social mobility, birth rate, poverty, climbing the income scale - varies considerably in the United States. (Connor &

Storper, 2020). Analysis of 20th century data reflected temporal patterns operating across US regions. In some regions of the US, where social mobility has decreased, they have permanently registered a low level of development. Therefore, the improvement of social mobility remains a challenge, because the promoted development policies must respond to the development requirements of each region with the potential and the opportunities it has.

Using some of the unique properties of longitudinal data, (Pelikh, Borkowska, and Patel, 2020). This data note uses Understanding Society data collected over 9 years to provide high-level information on residential moves and internal migration. Internal migration is affected both by changes in the composition of the population and by changes in people's behavior. Internal migration is only one form of geographic mobility – commuting can also be an enabler of mobility. A wide range of factors: jobs and technology, housing, age, gender, income, family formation and separation, schools, health and environment, retirement, caring responsibilities, social networks and transport influence the decision whether to move and how far. There are a number of long-term imperatives for a better understanding of the drivers and consequences of residential, short- and long-distance mobility and the effects on individuals, families, communities and economies, such as:

- (A) Spatial inequality and development economic: Across a very wide range of 28 indicators, the UK is more unequal across regions than 28 other advanced OECD countries. (McCann, 2019)
- (B) An aging society: Increasingly, the age profile of places is polarizing - cities are becoming younger, while most coastal cities are getting older.
- (C) Diversity, cohesion and well-being.
- (D) Transport, environment and climate change: climate change in particular is a threat, therefore the Government has committed to achieving zero emissions greenhouse effect by 2050.

Creating regional advantages, by promoting policies in the evolution of economic geography, offered diversified policy options, especially for underdeveloped regions. That approach faces challenges at different levels of development of underdeveloped regions. There is also the lack of a critical mass in terms of low diversity, the knowledge gap between developed and underdeveloped regions. Those policies could support the creation of regional objectives, which would provide a structure for simulating external knowledge links and distinguishing the nature of different related industries.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The current problems related to the development of the new economy, both at the national, regional and local level, are in close correlation with the new economic geography. Therefore, in this work I highlighted the priority aspects. Supporting the models was the bias of the model the model of a full agglomeration, because it is dependent on the cost of transport, which represents a set of theories of

agglomeration economies. Considering the transport costs fall below the value threshold, total congestion is the inevitable result. We found that the changing geography of economic activity, generator of opportunities, restructures the mobility between generations, the factors associated with the specific regional structures of interpersonal inequality and of different social groups of the population that in certain situations create difficulties in communication and economic and social activity. Internal migration is affected both by changes in the composition of the population and by changes in people's behavior. There are several long-term imperatives for a better understanding of the drivers and consequences of residential mobility: 1) Spatial inequality and economic development; 2) Society in the trend of population aging. 3) Diversity, cohesion, and well-being. 4) Transport, environment, and climate change. The creation of regional advantages, as policies in the field of development of applied economic geography, will offer diversified options for regions in difficulty of development and facing poverty and social, ecological and social, digital and financial exclusion difficulties.

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