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INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND GLOBAL DEMOGRAPHIC PROCESSES

Abstract: This article examines international migration as a global phenomenon, drawing on data from important documents that present it: World Bank World Development Report 2023; UN International Migrant Staff Report 2024; ILO Global Assessment Report 2019. The text also includes data on international migration in Bulgaria. The pros and cons are shown for both international migrants from the countries of origin and the host country.

Key words: migration, international migration, migration processes, labor migrants, sustainable development, statistical data.

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Introduction

Migration processes are an integral part of the history of human civilization. In the ancient world, these were transitions to places for hunting or gathering. During the Great Migration of Peoples (IV-XIV centuries), the phenomenon acquired gigantic proportions, as previously uninhabited territories were settled. In the modern world, migration remains the most important socio-economic factor, significantly influencing the development of society. Migration is part of modern globalization. International migration and its influence on world demographic processes is an example in this regard.

The prominent Bulgarian demographer M. Minkov defines the features of international migration as follows: "The movement of the population between individual countries is an objective process, determined by the international division of labor. At the heart of this process, however, are the socio-economic conditions in individual countries and the relationships created. Differences in natural conditions and economic potential cause the movement of the labor force from one country to another." [4, p. 227].

A distinction should be made between a migrant and a refugee. On this issue, V. Ilieva writes: "Refugees are part of the broader group of displaced persons. They differ from economic migrants in that the latter voluntarily leave their country for economic reasons." [1, p. 9].

In modern times, international migration is studied, analyzed and supported by various **organizations dealing with migration issues**. The key international organizations working on migration issues are:

1. *International Organization for Migration (IOM)*. Since its founding in 1951, IOM has worked on a wide range of migration-related issues. It works with governments and other organizations around the world to address the challenges associated with the movement of people.

2. *UN Migration Network*. This is a framework that brings together UN agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to migration issues. It includes organizations such as: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); International Labour Organization (ILO); The United

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Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The Bulgarian Council for Refugees and Migrants (BCRM) is represented in this area. This council works to advocate, lobby and support refugees, migrants and third-country nationals for their protection and integration into Bulgarian society.

There is also a growing number of serious scientific works on a global scale dedicated to international migration. For example, under the editorship of V. Agozino [5] a thematic collection dedicated to migration is published. A multidisciplinary and international group of scholars and researchers question and defend the theory and methods underlying migration studies. Their contributions are to: epistemological and conceptual issues; family and migration studies; socio-legal studies and migration studies; international relations and migration studies, etc. And the researcher of migration processes S. Gsir [6] argues that as a fundamental problem in society today, migration is undergoing a new dynamic transformation, requiring new policy approaches. These new dynamics are not yet clearly understood, let alone adequate policy responses for the “management” of these new migration processes and the consequences for receiving and sending societies. Thus, it makes a comprehensive review of migration research conducted in the European research network IMISCOE, analyzing the influx of different types of immigrants into Western Europe since the Second World War.

In order to support the theses that he will develop in his article, the author believes that they need to be based on existing, up-to-date statistics related to international migration. In this regard, however, one should take into account the writings of a team of authors who research these statistics. G. Solano, A. Yar, T. Bircan [7] who believe that Migration as a whole demographic phenomenon is particularly difficult to study. Registered data collected at international borders reflect documented (regular) migration and do not capture undocumented (irregular) migration, which can occur at any point/part of the border line other than official checkpoints. Thus, the available official statistics may not provide absolute numbers, as irregular migration is one of the most difficult types of international migration to record. They point out that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has about 480 offices in different regions and provides data for over 133 countries.

The World Development Report The World Bank's 2023 World Development Report [11] points to statistics that about 2.3% of the world's population – 184 million people, including 37 million refugees – live outside their country of citizenship. About 43% live in low- and middle-income

countries. Many countries, at all income levels, are both the origin and destination of migrants.

According to the report, there is growing demand for support from the World Bank at the national and global levels to help facilitate organized migration and protect migrants. The report's authors believe that, if managed well, migration can be a force for prosperity and can help achieve the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals. They point out that income disparities between countries are a powerful driver of migration. For many poor people whose only asset is their labor, migration to a richer country offers an opportunity to escape poverty. However, the poorest of the poor tend to migrate internally because they cannot afford the costs associated with moving abroad.

In the UN International Migrant Stock 2024 report [8] has important, up-to-date information about global migration processes. It is stated in the introduction that he [8, p. 1]: "...Presenting the latest United Nations estimates of the number and characteristics of international migrants worldwide. Covering the period from 1990 to 2024, the dataset includes estimates of the total number of international migrants by gender, as well as their places of origin and destination, for 233 countries and areas."

The following is a summary of the statistical data analyzed based on the information provided in the introduction. They are as follows:

- in 2024, only 3.7% of people globally were international migrants, up only modestly from 2.9% in 1990;
- Europe hosted more international migrants than any other region with 94 million in 2024. North America was home to the second-highest number at 61 million, followed by the North Africa and West Asia region at 54 million;
- Europe has seen the largest increase in the number of international migrants among the eight regions, adding 43 million between 1990 and 2024; the growth rate of the international migrant stock in Europe has increased since 2020; largely due to refugee flows from Ukraine. North America added 34 million international migrants between 1990 and 2024; however, the growth rate in this region has slowed over time; between 2020 and 2024, the number of international migrants in North America increased by an average of less than one percent per year, compared with average annual growth rates of 3.8% in 1990-2000 and 2.3% in 2000-2010;
- Thanks to international migration, the total population of Oceania increased by 46 million in 2024; international migrants make up 21% of its inhabitants; in terms of international migrants as a share of the total population, Oceania is followed by North America (16% of 385 million in 2024) and Europe (13% of 745 million in 2024).

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- The United States of America hosted more international migrants than any other country in 2024, with 52.4 million. Germany was the second leading destination for international migrants, hosting 16.8 million in 2024, followed by Saudi Arabia with 13.7 million, the United Kingdom with 11.8 million, France with 9.2 million, Spain with 8.9 million, Canada with 8.8 million, the United Arab Emirates with 8.2 million, Australia with 8.1 million, the Russian Federation with 7.6 million, Turkey with 7.1 million, and Italy with 6.6 million;

- In 2024, almost half (45%) of all international migrants worldwide lived in their region of origin, realizing regional clustering. Europe had the largest share of intra-regional migration, with 74% of all migrants born in Europe living in another European country or region;

- similarly, 73% of international migrants from Oceania lived in the region, and 64% of all migrants born in Sub-Saharan Africa lived in another country or region in 2024;

- in contrast, Central and South Asia had the largest share - 75% of their diaspora living outside the region;

- other regions with a large share of the transnational population living outside the region of origin are Latin America and the Caribbean - 71% and North America - 73%;

- Estimates of the international migrant stock in 2024 by region of origin and destination show that the largest interregional corridors include (a migration corridor is a territorial area, a gap located between state borders and serving as a buffer zone for crossing state borders): from Latin America to the Caribbean and from the Caribbean to North America (27 million people of Latin American and Caribbean origin resided in North America); from Central and South Asia to North Africa and West Asia (20 million); from North Africa and West Asia to Europe (13 million); from East and South-East Asia to North America (12 million); and from Central and South Asia to Europe (10 million). For each of the remaining interregional corridors, the size of the international migrant stock in 2024 was below 7 million;

- The number of refugees and asylum seekers who have been forced to flee across international borders due to persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations has increased to unprecedented levels - in mid-2024, there were nearly 38 million refugees in the world;

- A total of 51.7 million people – one in six international migrants worldwide – were forcibly displaced across international borders in 2024, the highest proportion recorded since the global refugee data series began in the 1950s.

- Since the publication of the last edition of the International Migrants Data Set in 2020, the

ongoing humanitarian crises in Afghanistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Syria, the crises in Sudan and Ukraine, among others, are leading to significant changes in the expected number of international migrants for some countries and regions;

- In 2024, just under half (48%) of all international migrants worldwide were women or girls; in Europe and North America, as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean, women and girls accounted for about half of all international migrants, and their share remained essentially unchanged between 1990 and 2024; however, globally, the number of male migrants has grown faster than the number of female migrants in recent decades, mainly due to the large inflow of male migrant workers to North Africa and West Asia [7, pp. 2-7].

According to the ILO Global Assessments 2019 report [9]. for international migrant workers, 93% of the world's workers have resided in countries with some form of COVID-19-related workplace closure measures.

In 2019, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that there were 169 million migrant workers worldwide. The vast majority (67.4%) were located in high-income countries, with significant concentrations in Northern, Southern and Western Europe, North America and the Arab States. The ILO believes that migrant workers are a vital force in the global labour market, contributing to economic growth and development in their destination countries. They also benefit their countries of origin through remittances to their families back home, as well as through the acquisition of new skills.

The problem **with international migration as a demographic issue** is that migration processes have a significant impact on the structure and dynamics of the population in both receiving and sending countries.

International migration is a complex and multifaceted process that has a significant impact on demographic processes in different countries. There are countries that have successfully overcome the demographic crisis and can serve as an example for others. These are the Scandinavian countries, where there is stable population growth. Japan, being a leader in the economy and technology, thus protects its sovereignty.

A detailed picture of **international migration related to Bulgaria** is given in his "Demography" (1999) by M. Minkov. Despite the fact that the data are old, dating back to before the new century, they present in great detail the trends of international migration in Bulgaria, which is why they cannot be ignored:

- 1901-1910 – Population losses are mainly due to the migration of Turks, which continued throughout the period of Liberation after 1979. A part of the Bulgarian migrants during this period headed

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to America and some European countries such as Hungary, Austria, Romania, Germany, etc. They contributed to the development of horticulture in Central Europe. with a large majority staying to live there forever.

- 1927-1945 – The loss of labor resources for Bulgaria is mainly due to the departure of the Turkish population from the country. At the same time, Turkish migrants are settling here. The total loss of population from the beginning of the century to the end of World War II in 1945 is estimated at 250 thousand people. Of these, the majority are men – about 70 percent and rural workers – 80 percent.

- 1948-1951 – Emigration was particularly intense during the period after World War II, when about 160 thousand Turks, 45 thousand Jews, and 5 thousand Armenians left the country during the specified period.

- 1989 – A huge wave of emigration in this year was associated with the so-called "great excursion" - the Revival process, in which 350 thousand Bulgarian Turks were included, of which a part - 132 thousand - returned again.

- 1990 – After the change of political regime from totalitarianism to democracy, migrant flows from Bulgaria were directed mainly to the USA, Canada, England, the Scandinavian countries, France, Austria [4, pp. 230-231].

According to a recent **representative study by the National Statistical Institute**, the state of migrant flows from Bulgaria is as follows: "Over the past few years, some countries have consistently emerged as destinations for Bulgarian emigration. The largest part of Bulgarian emigration is directed to Germany - 23%. Nearly one fifth (19%) of the emigration flow is directed to the USA. The relative share of potential emigrants who define them as countries of emigration to other countries is significantly smaller: Greece - 8%, Spain - 8%, Great Britain - 6%, Italy - 6%, Canada 5%, France - 4%, and others." [12].

The impact of international migration on countries of origin.

As M. Minkov writes: "Recently, international migration has increasingly been assessed from the perspective of the pressure it creates on labor in countries with intensive migration, which are losing their human and labor potential." [4, p. 231].

This impact is expressed mainly in a change in the demographic structure of the country. Reduction in the population size. The natural decline of the population increases if the migrants are people of reproductive age. The most active and able-bodied part of society leaves, leading to an aging population. In some cases, migration can cause an imbalance in the gender ratio, especially if it is mostly men who leave.

There are also some economic consequences. There is a shortage of labor in key sectors of the

economy, as the most sought-after labor force leaves the country. The reduction in the labor force leads to a decrease in production capacity and a slowdown in economic development.

Social and cultural aspects of international migration in countries of origin are expressed in Declining birth rate. A decline in the proportion of women and young people in a country can lead to a decline in the birth rate. Increased "brain drain" - the departure of qualified specialists undermines the scientific and educational potential of a country.

Impact of international migration on host countries.

The impact of migration on host countries is complex and contradictory. It has its pros and cons.

The advantages of this migration are mainly expressed in filling labor shortages. Migrants often fill vacant jobs that are unattractive to the local population, stimulating economic growth. The desire of migrants to increase their incomes can contribute to the introduction of innovations and scientific and technological progress. Change in tax revenues - with the right policy, tax revenues from migrants can exceed social welfare expenditures, increasing the budget. Thus, stimulating demand and supply Immigration increases both the demand and supply of goods and services in the economy.

The disadvantages of international migration for host countries include a potential increase in unemployment - a surplus of migrant workers can exacerbate the situation on the labor market. Pressure on public services - the influx of population can put additional pressure on social services such as health and education.

In general, the social and demographic aspects of international migration point to its positive and negative aspects:

The positive aspects lie in the demographic balance - migrants compensate for low birth rates and an aging population, maintaining the workforce and ensuring long-term demographic balance. A kind of cultural enrichment takes place - migrants facilitate cultural exchange, bringing new traditions and views, which enriches society. All of the above leads to improved international relations - migrants act as bridges between countries, strengthening diplomatic and trade ties.

The negative aspects are mostly related to difficulties with integration - there may be problems with the social and cultural integration of migrants into the new society. This, of course, raises the question of integrating these large groups of people into the societies in which migrants must continue to live, and this is not at all easy for them themselves. According to V. Ilieva: "Integration into society – these are the socially motivated social ties that arise between individuals when the attitude towards their social activity (value- or goal-oriented) is motivated primarily by the pursuit of a rational balance of

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interests or when the established relationship connects these interests.” [2, p. 10].

The integration of migrants into local communities is an issue of utmost importance for all countries. To a large extent, in Bulgaria this is carried out by local municipal authorities, which, according to B. Mehmed, are actively supported by their Public Councils. He believes that they provide [3, p. 63]: “...assistance and assistance in carrying out social assistance activities and exercise public control over their implementation.” With their help, migrants are successfully helped to fit into the new environment for them.

It is possible that in the integration process, social and ethnic conflicts - untimely reaction to migration processes can lead to ethno-political conflicts, to the emergence of a threat to national identity - high levels of migration can create risks for the formation of a country's national identity.

The presented content of this article allows the following generalizations and conclusions to be formulated:

1. International migration causes a change in the composition of the population - it leads to an increase or decrease in the population in different regions of the world, with a tendency for the total number of migrants to increase.

2. It definitely contributes to the rejuvenation of the population - countries with demographic aging gain a young working-age population, which contributes to the rejuvenation of the age structure and increases the birth rate.

3. Imbalances appear in countries of origin and destination - migration redistributes the population from densely populated or overpopulated regions to areas with labor shortages or new construction.

4. International migration has an impact on the economy - the influx of migrants influences the formation of demand and supply in the labor market, and remittances from migrants are an important source of income for countries of origin.

5. It definitely stimulates human development - migrants contribute to the increase of human capital, entrepreneurship and contribute to the economic development of destination countries.

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