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**PhD Thesis**

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**Migration and Socio-Demographic Evolution of Romania in the context of COVID-19. Opportunities of Utilizing Human Capital**

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**SUMMARY**

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic, a global event that had a significant impact on economies and societies worldwide. This crisis consumed financial, health, and technical resources, but at the same time, it compelled economic agents to invest in human capital. The effects of these investments are already visible in the short term and will contribute to generating new opportunities in the medium and long term. Although the pandemic reduced migration phenomena and impacted socio-demographic developments, its long-term effects on these areas must be analyzed.

This paper proposes an analysis of the relationship between the positive externalities of the COVID-19 pandemic and migration, as well as birth rates, considering how human capital, cultural flexibility, and digitalization have contributed to economic adaptation. Additionally, social distancing measures and changes in the values of human capital, such as work flexibility and the use of digital tools, have generated new economic opportunities that could influence the socio-demographic evolution of Romania.

A key aspect of the research is the analysis of migration and socio-demographic trends in Romania and the European Union, comparing the pre-pandemic period with the crisis period induced by COVID-19. The empirical research focuses on testing hypotheses regarding how the population’s perceptions of digitalization, work flexibility, healthcare, education, and access to information can influence migration and birth rates in Romania.

Research Hypotheses:

H1: Perceptions of the level of digitalization in Romania, work flexibility, healthcare capabilities, education, and access to information inhibit the desire to emigrate from Romania.
H2: Perceptions of the level of digitalization in Romania, work flexibility, healthcare capabilities, education, and access to information promote birth rates.
H3: Perceptions of the level of digitalization in Romania, work flexibility, healthcare capabilities, education, and access to information facilitate immigration to Romania.

By validating these hypotheses, the research will propose ways to leverage the human capital tools developed during the pandemic to generate positive externalities for Romania's economy, including migration and birth rates. These proposals will offer policymakers solutions to balance the costs and benefits of the pandemic, contributing to economic development and adjusting migration and birth rate dynamics in Romania.