

Migration and Cultural Landscape, a Romanian Perspective

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Abstract

We all have seen and we probably have in our computers or phones idyllic cultural landscapes with traditional villages either from rural areas of Austria, Germany or France or from any Asian country.

Unfortunately, in the case of Romania, we can no longer speak of fully authentic cultural landscapes, they still exist in Transylvania, Bucovina, Maramures or in extremely isolated areas, but for photographers it becomes increasingly difficult to take panoramic photos (wide frames), at most can be found groups of traditional houses but not villages or entire localities.

The traditional cultural landscape in Romania has been irreversibly profaned and the present paper aims to present the role of international migration in this case.

Key words: migration, cultural landscape, traditional villages, built patrimony

J.E.L. classification: F22, R23, Q01

1. Introduction

There is no doubt that Romania's presence within the European Union has positively influenced the economic and social development of our country. In the meantime it has changed the definition of migration also: we can no longer talk about immigrants and emigrants across the EU as long as it is a home for all its citizens. Today we cannot say that we emigrate or emigrate to the EU but just that we migrate. Practically we take a walk into a giant and multicultural familiar space.

The phenomenon of migration has expanded a lot over the last 30 years for Romania, the reason for leaving is mainly the financial gain that cannot be earned by the family in the country. Migration has resulted, globally, in the decrease of the population and the loss of a significant volume of labor, including highly qualified. Compared to January 1992 census data, the stable population of Romania declined by 14.41%, or 3286414 inhabitants; if in 1992 there were 22810035 persons, after ten years in 2002, there were 21852600 persons (Otovescu, 2005, pp. 293-299) and at the beginning of 2018 it reached 19523621 persons (INS, 2018, p. 1).

In addition to the declining population, the above forecast also shows that somewhere between 2050 and 2060 we will go below the psychological threshold of 15 million citizens residing in Romania.

Another interesting aspect related to the effects of international migration on the labor force comes from the selectivity of the phenomenon. Irrespective of the type of migration, young people are predominantly those who engage in international travel. From the countries of origin point of view, departures of this type are a loss. Migration makes the investment in long-term education of these young people a total loss for the state of origin (the one who pays part or all of the schooling), but a benefit for the state of destination. In the long run, departures of this type affect the development capacity of the home society, leaving it without of some of its most capable individuals (Cojocaru *et al*, 2006, p. 40). In this respect, remittances associated with migrant labor could be regarded as compensation for human capital outflows (Prelicean, 2009, p. 11). Although positive, these remittances complicate the situation in the country from the point of view of the cultural landscape, with migrants playing a key role in "building" the built patrimony from home,

although they are so far away.

A metaphoric image might be that of a child playing with a puzzle game chaotically arranging the pieces – practically creating remote worlds without being aware of the consequences of his arrangement.

This paper aims to analyze and present the role of international migration in the modification of cultural landscapes in rural areas of Romania, with a special emphasis on several villages in Bucovina representative of this phenomenon.

2. Literature review

As expected, there are many scientific papers dealing with migration issues as well as those related to cultural and traditional landscapes, but there are few works to treat the influence of migratory phenomena on traditional landscapes. Of the few works that fall within the scope of this paper, the vast majority refer to: landscaping changes in the destination area, with an emphasis on urban settlements and examples from Western Europe, Asia, Africa and America.

According to the Antrop's analysis (Antrop, 2005, pp. 21–34) of the landscape changes that took place in the last centuries, there are three main social forces responsible for landscape change: accessibility, urbanization and globalization. Other social factors, such as demographics; technology; economy; political and social institutions; attitudes, beliefs and behavior determined by culture, information and flow (Agarwal *et al*, 2003, p. 36) are also noted in the literature. Lambin (Lambin *et al*, 2001, pp. 261-269) that attempts to summarize the factors that affect landscape change, used the term „globalization” as a unifying theme, because it can increase or decrease the driving force by connecting people, places, markets and information around the world (Lambin *et al*, 2001, pp. 266). What illustrates the migration literature is that migratory flows are one of the expressions of globalization processes appearing at national and international levels and reflects the different economic and social policies of each country. While the link between migration and urbanization has been presented in the literature for certain areas, such as Spain (Zasada *et al*, 2010, 125-141), it is less clear how accessibility and globalization interact with migration.

Since the 16th century, demographic change in Europe has also served as a driving force for changing the landscape (Antrop, 2005, pp. 21–34). The impact of migration on host societies has been widely discussed, mainly in terms of social and economic effects, rather than landscape change, although, according to Greenwood and Hunt (Greenwood and Hunt 2003, p. 3), urbanization could have been responsible for raising the initial interest in the process of migration by academics. During the transition from the 19th century to the twentieth century, both in the United States and in Western Europe, urbanization has increased rapidly, mainly due to the population moving from rural areas to cities and by the number large of immigrants arriving in American cities.

Recently, many researchers have looked at this phenomenon from different perspectives, such as sociology, anthropology, politics and the economy, leading to a fragmentary view of migration (Borkert *et al*, 2006, pp. 282-288).

However, studies on the impact of migration on land use change are very limited (López *et al*, 2006, pp. 62-78), especially in the European context; Recent work by the authors of this paper has begun to remedy this imbalance by examining some of the migration hotspots, for example, for pension migration and the subsequent landscape changes. In addition, it is important to note that although much of the migration is from rural areas in urban areas and therefore the significant impact on land use tends to focus on urban areas, migration in rural areas has a profound effect on change land use. But, as we previously stated these effect is analysed for the destination areas and not for the home areas.

Strictly for Romania and the Bucovina area it is worth mentioning the brochure of the Suceava County Council - Bucovina Village as a tourist destination. How do we protect and promote it? (Suceava County Council, 2014), which presents the changes to the traditional landscape and heritage built in Bucovina, without necessarily placing them on the migration point of view.

3. Research methodology & Main findings

The research methodology consisted in making trips to different villages in Bucovina selected as representative for the existing cultural landscapes and for the modifications to the built heritage.

The selected villages/localities were: Cacica, Ciocănești, Dorna Candrenilor and Poiana Stampei. A series of meetings and discussions were held with the residents of these villages as well as representatives of the local public institutions (mayors) as well as photographic documentation of the houses in the selected areas.

Also, the research methodology involved a stage of documenting and studying specialized works in the following areas: migration phenomenon in Suceava County, traditional architecture, agricultural activities and rural development.

One of the limits of the research was the fact that migrants return to the country in the summer months (July and August in particular) this fact making it impossible to talk with those who effectively influenced the cultural landscape of the native village. In a future work it is also considered the investigation of their opinion and motivation to change the built heritage, based on questionnaires and interviews.

The results of the research revealed that the international migration phenomenon is an intense one in Suceava County, with rural areas being heavily affected. A simple and banal indicator of the intensity of this phenomenon is that in less than two years since the airport was reopened, Suceava County has a daily flight to London that maintains what it shows to be passengers in both directions.

Regarding the traditional Bucovina architecture, based on our field observations the following aspects can be mentioned:

- the traditional wooden house evolved from a one-room house and a tent, with a porch, to the house-room-room-room, as a gang and tower on the façade and the pantry on the back side;
- in addition to the four-sided („waters”) roof, specific to Bucovina architecture and perfectly adapted to the climatic conditions, it appeared the two-sided roof of the so-called German houses;
- types of joints for building a house, technical solutions for a comfortable living, wooden roofs and steep slopes for snow drip are just a few elements of authenticity of Bucovina;
- the height regime has evolved from one-level houses and roof (attic) to two-storey houses (ground floor), with a closed balcony (open less often due to weather) central or lateral and even with a cellar below the house - third level);
- it is interesting the different evolution of the concept of the traditional house in Bucovina: in the Dorna area for example, due to the economic and social development of the area, most of the old houses structured on a level were transformed after the 50s, in two-level houses using wood and wooden decoration. These houses are also traditional today even though they are "younger" than four-sided roof houses with one level. They became traditional with the passage of time, even though at their time those were considered modern houses.

Regarding the influence of migration on cultural landscapes, from the discussions and from the observation on the field, it is appreciated that the built heritage was unfortunately irreversibly influenced by a series of non-traditional ideas that can only have an origin outside the Romanian traditional space.

These ideas are coming also from the villages' migrants and their remittances remotely finance the renovation, construction and extension of homes in their home villages either for the remaining families, for their own families or even for businesses developed at home after the phenomenon of return migration.

The main observed changes to the built heritage are, unfortunately, mostly negative, irreversibly destroying the village's cultural landscape and its traditional features so beautiful and appreciated by tourists. The most common changes are:

- old houses are demolished because they are considered too old and unprofitable;
- the height regime changes, there are houses on three or even 4 levels that spoil and turn out negative in the landscape (the wide frame of the village);

- the traditional roofs (four or two-sided) are replaced with roofs with irregular and non-traditional forms;
- wood carpentry of doors and windows is replaced by metal or plastic windows with reflective glass or various applications on glass;
- window shape changes, triangular, round or oval windows appear;
- the roofs are made of materials that replace wood in often shady colors;
- the facades are covered with inappropriate materials such as plastic or metal, which also damage the thermal regime of the house and the colors used are unnatural and strident (pink, blue, orange, green, purple, yellow or even unpleasant color combinations)
- the decorative motifs that decorate the house are destroyed for „modernization” reasons.

A unique case in Romania is the one in the village of Ciocanesti. Since the 40s, the facades of the houses have begun to be decorated with a series of traditional elements that in time have become the main means of promoting the village.

The power of the example and the pride of the villagers made in time that all the houses in the village to be decorated with traditional models, including those of public institutions.

Starting a few years ago there is a local council decision obliging all owners of new homes to apply the traditional models on their houses within two years.

This is a way of transforming modern houses into traditional houses and placing them in the cultural landscape of the village (as pieces of a puzzle). Unfortunately, the regulation does not limit strident constructions and their height regime as long as the traditional models are applied.

Is Ciocănești village an undercover kitsch?

Figure no. 1. Ciocănești guest house



Source: the personal archive of the authors, date taken May 2019

Figure no. 2. Ciocănești pharmacy



Source: the personal archive of the authors, date taken May 2019

Figure no. 3. Ciocănești private house



Source: the personal archive of the authors, date taken May 2019

Figure no. 4. Ciocănești local shops



Source: the personal archive of the authors, date taken May 2019

We cannot respond to that question but we think that the pictures above can offer some answers.

4. Conclusions

The beauty of a village and its power to attract tourists do not lie only in the objectives around it (monasteries, natural attractions, recreation, etc.) but also in the village itself and in the built heritage.

Unfortunately, there are no signs that villagers are aware of this and migrants have not learned this in the destination countries, although it is such a simple and banal aspect that can attract tourists and revenue implicitly. The building has been chaotic, based on ideas from other countries, and today we can no longer talk about traditional villages but only, at best, about groups of traditional houses.

The preparation of this work was interesting precisely from the perspective of the field trips and the discussions with the locals. From the discussions and from the observation on the field, it is appreciated that the built heritage was unfortunately irreversibly influenced by a series of non-traditional ideas that can only have an origin outside the Romanian traditional space.

One of the limits of the research was the fact that migrants return to the country in the summer months this fact making it impossible to talk with those who effectively influenced the cultural landscape of the native village. In a future work it is also considered the investigation of their opinion and motivation to change the built heritage, based on questionnaires and interviews.

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