

The Socio-Cultural Consequences of the Migrations Phenomenon on the Romanian Emigrants

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Abstract

In this study, we conducted a research based on an open interview- focus group type, direct and online, on the Romanian emigrants from the main destination countries – Italy and Spain.

The conducted research shows us that, most of the times, the migration is seen as a final option for the ones involved, being seen less and less as a decision of the emigrant's individual investment. At a world level, the main determinants for the migrations' phenomena are: the economic and social climate associated with the emigrant's country of origin population increase, associated in some cases to the armed conflicts, religious persecution and xenophobic attacks.

Key words: interculturality, host country, ethical behavior, globalization.

J.E.L. classification: F22; J61; J62; J68.

1. Introduction

The causes that determined the interviewed people from the focus group research, were determinants of economic nature, these being conditioned, on their turn, by social, political and cultural factors. The social factors are the produce or result of the long term decisions taken by the interviewed Romanian emigrants. The long term decisions taken by the Romanian emigrants that are working abroad are reflected and have powerful reverberations on the left at home families.

A focus group scope is to listen and gather as many conclusive information as possible.

Qualitative research is a modality of better understanding of how they feel or what people's opinion on a certain analyzed problem is. The focus group in question must be small enough in order for everybody to share their own migration experience, but, at the same time big enough to offer a chance for expressing their own ideas, points of view regarding their experiences and feelings. (Budacia, A, E., 2009),

The scope of this research focused on the use of the open interview is represented by the identification of the economic and social causes of the Romanian migrations phenomenon.

2. Qualitative research of the Romanian migration focused on the focus group.

The qualitative research of focus group type represent a support for identifying and better knowing the Romanian emigrant's behavior. At the same time, we aimed to identify the perceptions regarding a series of economic, cultural social and religious aspects that characterize the immigrations actions, as well as a series of decisions taken by the emigrants in the host country. The size of the chosen group in the qualitative research is of 22 people, those being divided in smaller groups function of the chosen country (Italy and Spain) and in function of the town of origin or the town from the host country. (Cristian, E, R; Baragan, L, G, 2015)

The selected participants for the qualitative research have a series of common characteristics: they are Romanian emigrants established in Italy and Spain, they have a job considered as relatively stable on the labor market from the destination country, and they have qualifications and a few years of migration experience. It has been tried, for the interviews period of time, that no value judgements were issued nor the chosen group's answers to be influenced. All along the period of the interview, the Romanian emigrants had the possibility to share their own experience. The focus group in the interview was divided function of the chosen country of destination, but there was also focused on a small part of the members, relatives and their families (Romanian migrants gone to work to Italy and Spain, as well as the relatives and families of the migrants gone to work abroad). (Cristian, E, R; Baragan, L, G, 2015)

In order to have a clearer image of the investigated phenomena, interviews were conducted in mini-groups from the urban and rural environment from different zones and regions of Romania. In the research conducted the region of Moldova has been analyzed, due to the fact that the official statistics show that a lot of Romanian emigrants located in Italy and Spain are from this region, especially from the counties of: Iasi, Suceava, Botoşani, Bacau, Neamţ, Galati, Vaslui and Vrancea.

In total, 22 interviews were performed, the research being conducted within the period of June 2017 – August 2017; the interviewed people were split in two groups in function of the country of destination chosen: Italy and Spain. The first group comprised a number of 14 persons aged between 25 – 51 years old, from the urban and rural environment that chose Italy as country of destination and the last group formed of 8 persons from the urban environment, aged between 25 – 51 years old, established in Spain.

The interviews were focused on the scopes and motives of the decision to emigrate and work abroad, the way and integration degree of the emigrants, their relationship with the communities and the Romanian Diaspora, their intention to return to the country of origin, their perception on the different economic, political and social phenomena that take place in the country.

2.1 The Push & Pull factors that determined the interviewed person's migration

In order to form an overview image on the socio-cultural effects that strongly influence the life of Romanian emigrants from Italy and Spain; in the conducted research the starting point was from analyzing the Push&Pull type factors.

The Push&Pull type factors have a strong influence on the human behavior, determining and modifying the involved in the migrations process subject's behavior.

To all these determinants, we may add the psychological factors: mentality and culture that complete the full image of the foreign emigrant. Before deciding to emigrate, the immigrant must cross many borders: for some of these individuals, these are, most of the time real or imaginary; all these materializing into a palpable journey to another land, region and continent.

The Push&Pull factors are the ones that constraint a person, from various reasons to leave their domicile from a region and to move on to another country. The Pull factors are the ones considered attraction ones for the foreign emigrants that arrive to different countries, determining them to leave the country of birth for a period of time. (Gursharan,S, K.,2009)

The Push factors are considered stronger and more important for the emigrants in order for them to take a decision, unlike the Pull factors.

From the Push & Pull factors with socio-cultural impact on the Romanians migration were

Push Factors:

- Discrimination based on ethnical, sex or religion reasons
- Human rights infringement

Pull Factors:

- Family reuniting
- Forming of an emigrant's Diaspora
- Respect for individual liberty

3. The interculturality effect upon Romanian emigrants

Following the conducted interviews, we could observe that, generally speaking, part of the Romanians working abroad in Italy and Spain try to distance themselves from "the image of the Romanian abroad", who, many times, in the emigrants vision is "selfish, secretive, envious and thief in certain situations".

The opportunity to emigrate is given in first place by the life strategy options of the subjects, by the directions of the emigrant's that already live or intent to live and experiment in positive terms. Gradually the opportunity to emigrate is intercrossing with other biographic transitions that meet in a climax point that reinforces this decision: divorce, separation from the partner, layoffs, unemployment, facilitation of the migration experience by the close ones. Our co-nationals make efforts in order to better integrate themselves into the host country, integrating themselves into a collectivity, learning the language, tradition, costumes and culture. (Cristian, E, R; Pădurețu, E; Sorlescu, M., 2010),

The foreign immigrant in Antonio Perotti's opinion may be defined by his past, present and future. In the author's opinion, the immigrant may find itself and identify as it follows: (Perotti, A., 1996)

- By its past, the immigrant feels like being "unrooted", arriving in a new country, meeting a new culture. In this phase, he feels like a stranger in a new world, with a past of his own, and a stranger for the adoption country; in this situation the main reasons and causes (economic, political and social) that determined him to emigrate play a secondary role;
- By its present, "because he is a replanted one", resident for a certain time in a new country. In this phase, his interests come first and compete with the ones of the host population; having common interests and even similar to the local community ones from which he takes part and even shares the same interests with other foreign immigrants located in the same country as him;
- By its future, his "transient" situation will gradually change and in time; in an end coming to be completely integrated in the new collectivity, following to socializing and cultural and linguistic integration. In this phase his personality changes in a radical way, reaching an end whereas he adopts fully and completely customs and tradition from the host country; for some foreign immigrants this stage is synonymous with the situation in which his own and his parents origin condition is ignored.

The qualitative research conducted, based on the interviews, highlighted that migration's main cause is the poverty from many Romanian areas, the lack of jobs, of a salary (fix income), of an existing numerous family with many underage kids in care.

2.1. The socio – cultural integration of the Romanian emigrants in the host country

The answers to the interviews demonstrated that the main economic decisive factor in choosing the destination country is represented by the personal income increase and professional opportunities. At the same time, in the received answers some important discrepancies between Italy, Spain and Romania, for many of the emigrants the return to the country of origin being determined by:

- Life conditions from the country of origin;
- The drear reality from the country;
- The opportunities from finding a job well enough remunerated in order to give a financial situation;
- A decent way of living and a stable, sure income;
- The politicians attitude towards society;
- The socio-political changes surveyed in the country;

The qualitative research offered the opportunity to understand the amplitude of the migrations phenomenon by means of a direct contact with the Romanian emigrant and its family but also by means of the personal problems he is being confronted with.

The regions from where the Romanian emigrants come from do not know of an economic and social development on short and long term and the labor productivity from these areas being relatively small. For this areas and regions case, from where the Romanian emigrants come from the infrastructure improvement, local and regional development and investments to conduct to the number of jobs, are necessary, the increase of the personal consume (Cp) within families, by increasing of the salary incomes.

The conclusions that came following the interview answers demonstrated that the emigration was focused mainly on the acquaintances network system.

The research results led to the conclusion that the respondents are temporary migrants these returning in the country of origin only during the Easter and Christmas holidays and vacations. Also, the respondents admitted that they are confronted, from a psychological point of view, with states of mind marked by nostalgia and sometimes depression, generated by the situation of the ones left at home. As for the emigration advantages or its strong points, the respondents declared that their left at home family member's situation increased considerably since the time they left for working abroad.

The qualitative research has identified, in the case of the Romanians working abroad, in Italy and Spain, a mobility for the construction, agriculture, housekeeping services or medical care sectors.

Following the conducted interview, it has been ascertained that the actual economic-political context had repercussions over the Romanians from Italy and Spain, these reporting the worsening of their own situation form the "host" country: job loss, incomes considerably reducing, job insecurity.

Most of the nowadays "Western host societies" demand that the immigrants that enter in a new country, with a new culture, learn and adopt the new language and traditions. Since decades ago, due to the increase in the migrations phenomenon at a global level, researchers have investigated the efficient intercultural communication that is produced at the foreign immigrants-local community level. Their research focused on the personality and behavior traits, or on the social skills that influence the successful adapting to a new culture, traditions and idiom. (Selma. L., H; Jan Pieter van Oudenhoven; Marieke, T. 2008)

Between the migrants, the term *acculturation* is used more and more frequently, by this meaning a group of migrants from different countries, from different cultures that enter into a primary form of contact with the local population. As a result of this social contact, both cultures entwine and lend each other different basic elements: colloquial expressions, gestures, preferences, a taste for different types of service, products, bringing visible alterations in each and every participant's to this process behavior. It is frequently observed, among the migrants that after a long period of time they borrow or adopt in a natural way a new culture, a new language; making it impossible to appreciate how much it is borrowed from the country of adoption or how much the native culture of the emigrant represents. The preferred integration form by young people from Europe, especially by teenagers and adults aged until 35 years old, is the cultural one. (Bocancea, C., 2011)

From these personality and behavior traits that determine a better integration of the foreign immigrants into another country, we may mention:

- Empathy;
- Respect;
- Interest for the local culture;
- Migrants flexibility to assimilate quicker a large new information volume;
- Religious and ethnical tolerance,
- Technical skills,
- Openness to new professional and social visions,
- Being social,
- Positive self-image.

All these enumerated elements from above are also contributing to the creation and "polishing" of the newcomers into the host country personality.

For all those who arrived to a new "Promised land", the first feeling the emigrants had was probably of social marginalization, feeling or state that they are not yet fully accepted and that cannot assimilate the new environment, culture, language, prejudices that they were confronted with. For the emigrants, social integration into a new country is preceded by a cultural integration. The two processes, social and cultural integration are realized in a sort of long period of time. (Hein de Haas, 2008)

The ones who are specialized in a certain domain (construction, agriculture, housekeeping and child and elderly care services) easily find a job, unlike the abroad newcomers, unexperienced in a new. The interviewed subjects declared that they had relatives, acquaintances, friends that helped and influenced them regarding the arrival to a new foreign country and finding of a job; and them, at their turn, attracted or helped other acquaintances or relatives to go abroad, on the beaten path principle. (Cristian, E, R; Baragan, L, G., 2015)

The most common and handy transportation network for the potential Romanian emigrant remains, in the end, the family, close relatives and friendships developed in the country.

The interviewed Romanians have contradictory feelings regarding the host country inhabitants; some of the manifest a mild reticence for the locals and an extremely jovial attitude (of admiration, sustained by integration efforts among them for the case in which they do not intent to return to Romania in a near future), projecting their future in the new adoption country.

Beyond the small dissatisfactions present in the Romanian emigrant soul, the feeling for the host country, the attitude towards the locals but also the perception towards the society they live and work in are perceived.

Beyond regionalizing, the main tendency specific to the Romanian migrants regardless of the "foreign country corner" they might find themselves in:(Precupețu,I.,2001),:

- Romanian migrants get less involved in the internal origin community form the host country problems; migration uses especially social networks from the level of the belonging community;
- The Romanian relationships abroad are altered due to the human interaction frequency by breaking off the old relationships and new ones apparition;
- A certain reticence to the fellow nationals is being observed inside the community; even conflictual relations arise that most of the time generate physical and verbal violence among family members;
- The Romanian, once returning to his country is mostly preoccupied in showing off to the ones who remained at home;
- The Romanians working abroad are preoccupied in developing new friendship relations with different nationalities, employers or the national population from the host country.

From the conducted interviews, it has been observed the permanent tendency that the Romanian emigrant has to make permanent comparisons with Romania, stressing the strong contrast between the two countries. A certain reticence could be ascertained regarding a possible definitive return to the country. At the same time the subjects manifested a continuous in adaptation when they returned to Romania, in August, for the summer vacation.

On the opposite is situated the Romanian emigrant who does not unconsidered the destination country, the possibility to have a decent salary and employment opportunities, to live and work in a civilized country, with real possibilities. The Romanian is used to the hard way but also with the good one, a common lesson that he has learned a long time ago in his own country. Romanian emigrants become aware how difficult it is on foreign land and far away from home, but the financial advantages obtained into another country are much consistent for the time being, most of them having no other present option. The emigrants leave to work abroad "for money and safe earnings" and they come back in order to be close to their family and / or because they saved enough money to reach the objectives from their country. (Stănculescu, M; Stanciu,V; Alexe, I; Moțoc, L.,2012),

The emigrant's reasons for not returning home are diverse and are not only of financial considerate, some of them come back for visiting their relatives, sick elders, underage children remaining at home or in order to invest carefully the money they worked for and saved in the destination country.

But there are Romanian emigrants that did not achieve their objectives and that dream to definitively return home remains very far to reach for them; you listen to them and to their story and it ends, every time, with a "not yet". It is very important, especially for a foreign citizen that lives far from its country to overcome its own mentality and prejudices existent at an individual level; before choosing to distance themselves from the house, the family, the children, the community and social life in order to move to another land, country or continent for a better life.

3. Conclusions

The conducted research scope is focused on understanding the phenomena and the perception degree regarding the migration. An interesting identified aspect refers to the fact that the interviewed people were delighted to express openly and as objectively as possible their opinion. The research was exclusively conducted on the Romanian emigrant's residents of the Moldova region.

Sometime, somewhere, in another Romanian region you may find another Romanian emigrant who left to work abroad, with another story (or even a similar one). An emigrant who, at its turn, must finalize a life project (a house, an underage child, a numerous family, sick parents and grandparents without a considerable income that remained at home). The Romanian emigrants live in a foreign country with the hope for a better future for themselves and for the left at home family.

In this situation are the Romanians that do not intent to comeback home in the next 3-5 years; being willing to accept any job (either permanent or temporary), only to have enough income in order to send to the left at home ones. The mentality regarding migration is tightly connected to the valid information quantity and of which it has at disposal in connection with the chosen country and mainly, on the emigrant's education achieved in the country of origin. Many times, migration may create conflictual situations in the country of destination, this happens due to the lack of education, integration or an aggressive behavior of the emigrant.

It is difficult enough to produce a complete evaluation of all cultural elements borrowed by the emigrants, these depend on and are in a full accordance with the emigrant's age, gender, religious orientation, geographic area, social class or the profession that the individual has.

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