



ROMANIAN MIGRATION TO SPAIN. NEW METHODS OF ANALYSIS (FACEBOOK)

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Abstract: *Started in the 19th century, the Romanians' migration has never stopped. But over the last two decades, continued to grow in intensity every year, as it can be said that part of Romania has moved abroad. The networks created by Romanian migrants have led to the formation of demographic enclaves found in different parts of Europe.*

Key words: *Migration of Romanians, migration networks, demographic enclaves, Romanian diaspora, Facebook, Romanians in Coslada, Romanians in Roquetas*

1. INTRODUCTION

The migration of Romanians to other lands is not a new phenomenon, quite the contrary it has increased over time. Between the years 1899 and 1989 (during 90 years) around 1.2 million Romanians have left Romania legally or illegally. The ONU data show that in 2016 (1th January), 3.4 million Romanian migrants lived legally abroad. Therefore, in only 26 years (1990-2016), the number of Romanians who are legally registered in other countries has tripled compared to the previous period. However, we should keep in mind that this number refers only to legal migrants, estimated that there are many more Romanians migrants living around the world, which is equivalent to almost a quarter of the Romanian population. Migratory itinerary and social networks argue the existence of the social capital needed to achieve the migration project. Many authors show that some regions in Romania had their own migration network, forming demographic enclaves. Therefore, due to the relationships that have been created over time, the geographical spread of Romanian migrants has concentrated in certain areas, leading to the formation of "demographic enclaves" (people who have the same country of origin and who have concentrated on a specific geographical area in the destination country), as follows: Negrești Oaş - Paris (Diminescu, 1998); Târgoviște - Castellón (Potot, 2000; Viruela, 2002; Bucur, 2011); Dobrotești - Madrid (Șerban and Grigoraș,



2001); Vultur - Roma (Vlase, 2006); Marginea - Torino (Cingolani, 2009); Alba-Alcalá de Henares (Sandu, 2009); Borș - Milan (Anghel, 2013); Timișoara - Nürnberg (Anghel, 2015); or even an analysis of broader East-Europeans, including the Romanians, who migrated to Sweden (Crețan, 2003).

Using the Facebook social network, I noticed that there are many Romanian groups living in diaspora; these groups were created to relate each other. To exploit the potential offered by existing Facebook information, I used a methodology based on Facebook social group content analysis and in-depth interviews. The main objective is to find out the origin of the Romanians living in Coslada and Roquetas de Mar (Spain).

2. METHODOLOGY

Research methodology and data collection have been varied and involved bibliographic documentation (bibliographic research), quantitative methods (statistical analysis), qualitative methods (observation, case study and interview) and exploration of social networks (Facebook). The qualitative research method is a collection of information based on observation (participatory or non-participatory), interviews and case studies. The observation has involved participation in a variety of activities that allowed me to observe the daily lives of certain people and also participate in their activities to facilitate a better understanding of their behaviours. This process involved getting access to the community, selecting key informants, taking part in as many activities as possible, conducting formal interviews and informal conversations. I conducted two case studies during 2016 in the following locations: Roquetas de Mar from 9 to 16 March and Coslada from 24 to 31 August. Because the people who I knew personally, did not represent a significant number to validate the formation of demographic enclaves in some areas of Spain, I had to use a new methodology and I tried to meet other people through Facebook groups (Români în Coslada [Romanians in Coslada] - Români în Roquetas [Romanians in Roquetas]).

3. EVOLUTION OF MIGRATION IN ROMANIA

The evolution of Romanian migration, before 1944, was represented by a single major wave, launched in the second half of the 19th century; known as the migration of the Transylvanian Romanian peasants to "New World" (social-economic migration) and many Romanians walked or went by carriage to the ports where they boarded to North America. A lot of these migrants returned to Romania after saving some money. In the US censuses carried in 2011, 367.000 Americans declared their Romanian origin, but in the Canadian censuses carried during the same year, the number of Romanian migrants reached almost 205.000 people. The process of Romanians migration to Canada began at the end of the 19th century and increased in the first decade of the 20th century. The area origin of Romanian migrants from Canada (before 1914) was represented, in absolute proportion, by peasants from Bucovina (Predoiu, 2012). The evolution of Romanian migration between 1944-1989 involved thousands of Romanians who requested political asylum to other states, tourism and cultural migration, hiding in the freight trains, crossed illegally the borders, especially the Danube (swimming), to arrive

in Serbia or Hungary, from where, after a temporary stay, hoped to go to a capitalist country. In this sense (Zotic, 2010, p.153) recalls the "sale" by the communist regime of ethnic Germans and Jews to West Germany and Israel, respectively. This sale was, in fact, the payment by the receiving country of the costs for the professional training that Romania made for free. Therefore, the higher was the training, the higher was the price. The negotiations between Romania and Germany during 1962 - 1989 with this "sale" have helped to leave the country to a significant number (230,000 people) of ethnic Germans (Banu, 2011), since the initiative coming from Germany. Between the years 1957 and 1989, a total of 565,161 persons emigrated legally from Romania (Figure 1).

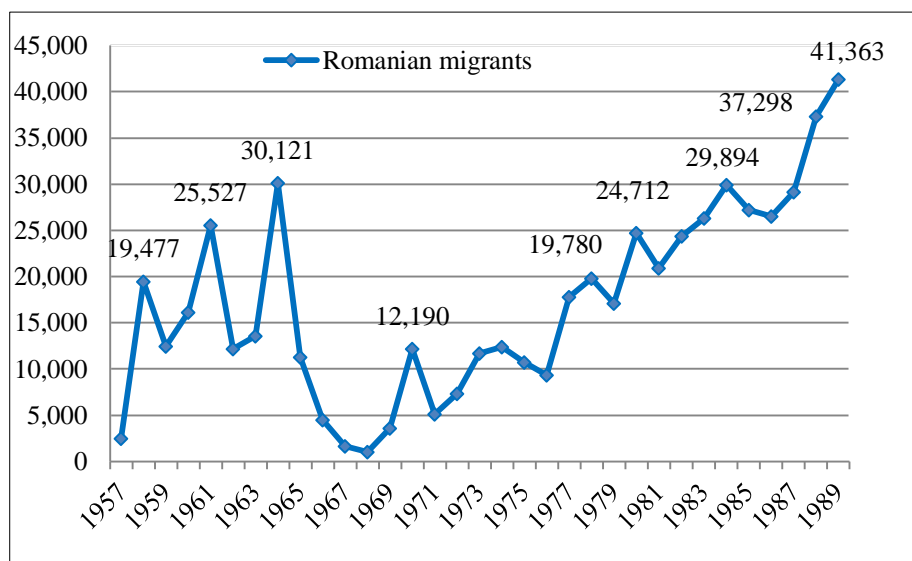


Figure 1. Romanian migrants legally during 1957 – 1989
(Source: SOPEMI, 1994)

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in Germany (9th November 1989) and the fall of Romania's communist regime (22nd December 1989) some 325.900 Romanian citizens applied for political asylum in several European states, most of which addressed to Germany. During 1990 - 1994 there were two favourite destinations: Germany and Hungary. After 1995, Romanian migrants began to go to Italy and Spain (Dida, 2013), because in Germany it was very difficult to obtain a visa. After 1990, the most used strategies were: request for political asylum, the purchase of a visa, family reunification. After 2002, when visas for entry into the Schengen area were lifted, there were only two strategies: labour contract or free movement. The Romanians migration to Spain began in the 1990s, when the first Romanians Adventist arrived in Coslada (Madrid) and Castellon (Valencia). Initially, the routes were developed from the networks of migrants, especially in neo-Protestant communities; but after 2002, a bilateral agreement was signed between Romania and Spain, which facilitated the contracting of Romanians in origin. Thus, members of the Orthodox community also arrived in Spain. After the crisis started in 2008, new poles of attraction began to emerge, and Germany again became an attraction area; this destination was also based on the networks that migrants had before the emigration from Romania; links that have been consolidated over time, because many of the Germans who left Romania in the 1990s have maintained links with their friends and neighbours from Romania; this has facilitated the remigration of Romanians from

other countries (Spain, Italy, Greece) to Germany. If we compare the Romanian censuses carried from 1992 with those of the census carried from 2011, we can see that the Romanian population has decreased by almost 3 million inhabitants (Figure 2). The numerical decrease of Romania population after 1992 is mainly due to the fact that Romanians have free circulation in the European Union countries, but also the low birth rate.

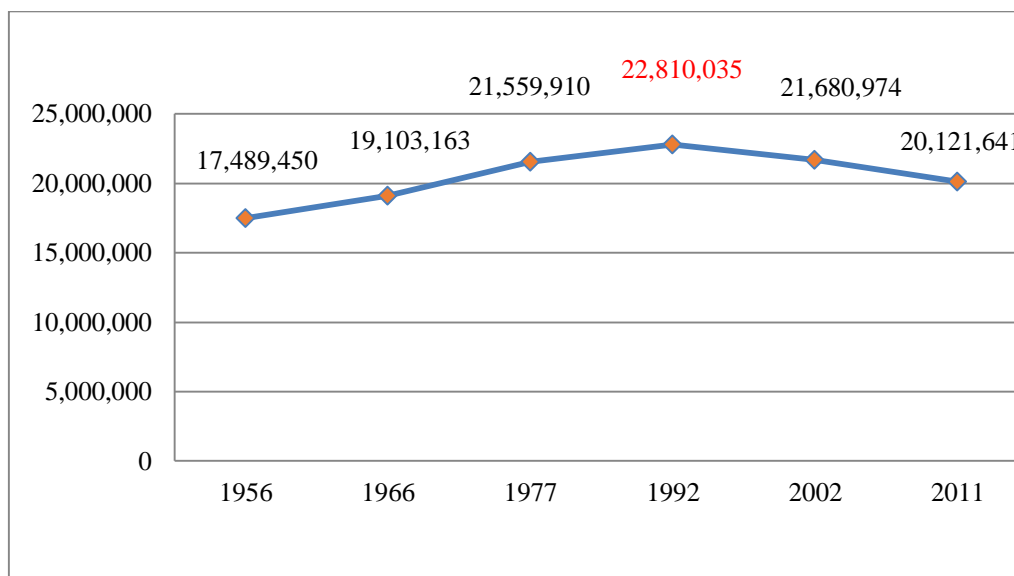


Figure 2. Evolution of Romanian total number of inhabitants during 1956-2011
(Source: www.insse.ro)

4. THE MOTIVATIONS OF ROMANIANS MIGRATION

At the end of the 19th century, Romanian migrants, regardless of whether they were ethnic Jews, Germans, Hungarians, Gypsies or Romanians, have always found the best solution to leave the country. The motivations of Romanian migration (social, economic, political) were varied, depending on the period when they left. Maslow's theory, considered the theory of human motivation, shows that people tends to satisfy, from the basic needs (physiological and safety) to higher (belonging, recognition and self-realization). Therefore, if these needs are not met, some people feel uncomfortable and tend to migrate to other destinations that can offer them better employment opportunities with an adequate salary (appreciation at work), safety and continuity work, an adequate system of health and pension system, economic and political security. The motivations of migration level micro (individual) and macro (place of origin, place of destination) depend on several factors (economic, political and social). At the micro level, it increases the standard of life, self-confidence and self-esteem; at the macro level, migration can unbalance the labour market. The motivations of Romanians migration between the years 2002 and 2006 were the facilities that existed on the European labour market in some countries (Italy, Spain), but also because they heard that work was better paid than in Romania. After 2002, due to the fact that in agriculture was a high demand for work, certain areas in Spain (Zaragoza, Huelva, Almeria, Valencia and Ciudad Real) became of interest to Romanian migrants.

5. ROMANIANS FROM ROQUETAS DE MAR

Many Romanians who working in agriculture in Southern Spain practice a seasonal migration. For example, Romanian migrants living in Roquetas de Mar (a town on the Mediterranean coast of Almeria County, where more than 40% of the population represents the migrant population) said they live in Roquetas only during the period when they have work (picking tomatoes, peppers, zucchini and other vegetables), the rest of the year they return to Romania, so they don't have to pay a rent for the whole year. Most Romanian migrants from Roquetas de Mar come from Bistrița County and they have arrived in this area between 2002 - 2005, with a origin labour contract. There were 11,723 Romanian migrants with a residence permit, in 2015. This city is also an important tourist centre, and during the summer many Romanians work in the tourism field (restaurants and hotels). During 9th to 16th March 2016, I visited Roquetas de Mar and I participated in various religious services in the newly built Orthodox Church (see Figures 3 & 4). "Plasticulture" (see Figure 5) refers to the use of plastics materials in agricultural applications. This is visible in the plains and valleys of Almeria County, where about 20.000 hectares are covered by these greenhouses structures. This area is also known as "El Mar de Plástico" [Plastic Sea].



Figure 3. The new Orthodox Church in Roquetas de Mar
(*Personal Album*)

"The first time I came to Roquetas in 2003 with a contract from Romania. Then, in 2004, came my husband and my boy. The boy, when he grew up, married a Spanish girl from Almeria... We have a home in Bistrița... My husband had a disability pension... Over two years I'll be 55 years old and I'll go to Romania, because I can ask here a kind of retirement... and so I only come here when I have work in greenhouses... it will very hard for me, because my son and my nephews are here, but I my mother and my husband need me" (Silvia, 53 years old, Roquetas de Mar - fragments interview, 13th March 2016).

"My parents came in 2002 and they worked in greenhouses for several years. They come back to Bistrița but they get a small pension from Spain. They brought me to Spain in 2005...now I work here in a restaurant, I have a fixed contract...I like living here and I don't think to come back to Romania..." (Adriana, 28 years old, Roquetas de Mar - fragments interview, 14th March 2016).



Figure 4. The new Orthodox Church in Roquetas de Mar (Avenida Asturias)
(Source: Google Maps)



Figure 5. "El Mar de Plástico" - Greenhouses in Almería County.
(Source: Taringa, 2016)

Through the Facebook group "Români din Roquetas de Mar" [Romanians in Roquetas de Mar], where there are about 3.000 members, I was able to meet many people who said the following:

"I came in Roquetas in 2004... I couldn't believe that most of the Romanians were from Bistrița" (Flori, 36 years old, Roquetas de Mar - fragments interview, 24th May 2016).

"I heard a friend say that in Bistrița employment agency selecting people to work in agriculture in Spain. I went to the interview, I was lucky and they accepted me, they made me a contract for a greenhouse in Roquetas de Mar. I didn't know where it was... on the trip, I met many people from Bistrița who also went to Roquetas... When I arrived I was pleasantly surprised to see that most of the Romanians were from Bistrița... This is the most beautiful place...I'm never going to leave here "(Manuela, 40 years old, Roquetas de Mar - fragments interview, 20th May 2016).

6. ROMANIANS FROM COSLADA

Adventists have managed to consolidate an important religious centre in Coslada, which in turn has generated a network support for Romanian migrants (Viruela, 2001). Currently (2015) in Coslada are more than 90.000 inhabitants, of which 16.500 (19.51%) represent Romanian migrants. During 24th to 31st August, 2016, I visited Coslada and I participated in various religious services in the Adventist Church.

"I arrived in Coslada in 1998 ... I heard about working opportunities in Spain of a "brother" from the Sibiu Adventist Church, that person was from Teleorman ... when I arrived in Coslada, I was surprised to see that most of Romanians were from Teleorman, especially from Alexandria ... At that time the Adventist Church rented a cinema hall where the sermons were held ... I think there were around 80 members, 80% of whom were from Teleorman"(Paula, 41 years old, Coslada - fragments interview, 25th August 2016).

"In 1999, I arrived with new hopes to Coslada, to my sister-s house, which had already arrived one year ago... I was helped from the beginning to find a job by the "brothers" of the Adventist Church ... most of them came from the same area as and me and my sister, Teleorman"(Carmen, 51, Coslada - fragments interview, 26th August 2016).

Through the Facebook group "Rumanos en Coslada {MADRID", [Romanians in Coslada], where there are about 4.800 members, I was able to meet many people who said the following:

"It was very difficult...I arrived with my husband on 4th July 1998, to Chamartin station (Madrid), with the certainty that an Adventist "brother" would come for us...We have waited a week in the station...then, on Saturday we decided to look for the Adventist Church in Madrid, because we heard from Romania that there is a Romanian Adventist Church...I didn't know Spanish, just a little French...from the station point information we received the address of the Adventist Church...We also arrived there, but no one spoke Romanian language...after a while, a woman approached us and she said that she was Romanian and advised us that the best is if we returned to Romania, since in Spain it is very difficult and we will not survive...I asked her where is the Romanian Adventist Church and she told us she didn't know, but another Spanish woman who

listened our conversation, said "Carlenda"...we went very deception...then I said - Let's look "Carlenda"...We looked at the Metro plane and we didn't see any station with this name...we went back to Chamartin station...and accidentally saw the map of the regional trains, there we saw the Coslada station and I said - Maybe Coslada said and we understood "Carlenda"...Let's go there ... In train I saw three women who were dressed with long skirts and were not painted or had earring, I thought they might be Adventists...so we followed them and saw that they really went down in Coslada train station...we went down also.. we followed them and after about five minutes we saw that they entered into a cinema hall...we thought that once again we had made a mistake, but we stayed in the area to see who was leaving the cinema...at 12 o'clock a group of people dressed like the ones who go to the Adventist church in Romania... we entered in the cinema hall and we found that everyone spoke Romanian...We could not believe that we found the Adventist Church of Madrid just in Coslada...a family saw us very tired and they took us to their flat...they were from Teleorman...in fact, most of the Adventist members were from Teleorman and they asked how we came from Sibiu to Coslada"(Ana, 41, Coslada - fragments interview, 4th September 2016).

7. CONCLUSIONS

Most researchers have noted that the geographical distribution of immigrants has been linked to work, but also to the presence of family, friends or fellow citizens who offer help to the newcomer in the social inclusion process (Viruela, 2008). In the two examples, we can see the differences between the Romanians in Coslada and Roquetas. While in Coslada the Romanians arrived through the networks of the Adventist Church, in Roquetas came through the involvement of the Romanian state that facilitated contracts for work in agriculture. In both cases, the starting point was a specific area in Romania, those of Teleorman went to Coslada, and those of Bistrita went to Roquetas de Mar. For those who don't know what migrant life means, it's very difficult to understand the migrants, their feelings about Romania, the memories of their native places and not least, the difficulties that they were overcome and the reasons why they are still in Spain.

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