TENDENCIES IN THE EXTERNAL MIGRATION OF ROMANIANS: MODELS OF MIGRATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOCIAL CAPITAL DURING THE PROCESS

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Abstract: Building on the conceptual frame of the temporary migration phenomenon and considering both the internal and the external migration, the research aims to analyze the models of migration of Romanians. The quantitative data used in analysis are the statistics on migration published by the National Institute of Statistics in Romania and the European international statistics. The second method applied was qualitative, an interview applied on a convenience sample of 20 permanent migrants, which investigated the types of social capital that Romanians use in their process of external migration. Results have shown several models of the process, starting from the marital and professional emigration to the migration based on academic studies. The factors which influence the success of the emigrant in the new context refer to the placement in a cohesive social network, to the level of his proffesional performance, and, not at last, to the cultural intelligence.

Keywords: migration; social capital; integration

1. INTRODUCTION

The migration phenomenon has historically been studied from two academic perspectives: the first had aimed the colonization model (settler model), where the migrants would progressively integrate the host society, and the second had referred to the temporary migration, where the migrants would inhabit the host country for a limited period of time, maintaining their affiliation with the county of origin (Castles, 2002). In the context of the migration systems, the locations (countries and regions) are connected by flows of people, by economic and political relations (Boyd, 1989), which gives a more complex perspective on the migration phenomenon. The more recent prospects on migration background focus on the collective elements in the emigration decision, such as the survival strategies of a family or the effects of parental migration on children (Antman, 2010).

The facilitating of migration between countries began to be increasingly supported by global policies by national and international institutions, in consideration of the fact that the transnational flow of money earned by migrants has become a leading global economic resource (Vertovec, 2007).

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Academic perspectives in the study of migration. In regards to the typology of migration, Castles (2002) identifies three such types: permanent migration, temporary labour migration and refugees' movements (or "forced migration", where refugees, forced by the context of the country of origin, seek shelter in other countries, making it difficult for authorities, which do not always properly distinguish between economic migrants and forced ones). Castles (2002) highlights the emergence of new types of migration: "astronaut migration" where entire families move for safety or lifestyle reasons, "retired persons" migration" or "posthumous migration" (*i.e.* some immigrants choose for their bodies to be buried in the country of origin).

Concerning the reasons to migrate, researchers have generally had two approaches: the individual one (which refers to the focus of individuals on opportunities as the investments in education, skills or health) and the structural perspective (which includes those external factors that somehow constrain the individual to make a decision, such as: the lack of jobs, the influence of international media or the population pressure)

(Stalker, 1994). Dustmann (1999) developed a model for the analysis of the investments in human capital and of the decisions to return to their country of origin, distinguishing between temporary migration, when the returning moment is undefined and the migrations, when such moment is chosen. Interest in the systems of migration is owed to the ties developed between nations which encourage, maintain or direct this phenomenon (Fawcett, 1989:673): ties between states, connections of the mass culture, family and personal networks, and activities of the migrants through agency. The integration of immigrants into the host society may take place through three paths: assimilation (learning the new language and adopting social practices), differential exclusion (temporary integration into workforce and rights) and multiculturalism (Castles, 2002:1155-1156). There are alternative methods of adaptation to the host society, which enable the immigrants to remain marginal to the social and cultural integration, without giving up their cultural identity (Portes *et al.*, 1999).

2.2 Theories of social capital. The importance of social capital as a concept has grown in the last decade, as effect of conceptualization of the network society (Castells, 2004). Putnam (1993) distinguishes between two forms of social capital: bridging social capital (resulting from social ties among individuals who are rather different) and bonding social capital (resulting from social ties among individuals with a high degree of similarity). Bourdieu (1996) understands social capital in relationship to field and habitus; the global social space is thus referred to as field of forces, where social actors constantly struggle to preserve or transform social forces, guided by a particular or collective interest to strengthen or improve their position. Thus, in Bourdieu's view, social capital is linked more with social status and social groups' characteristics: the capital that social actors possess, the power conferred by the capital and the relations with other positions in the field determines the performance of actors. In the view of Lin (2004), social capital is defined as a social asset that can be accessed by individuals through social networks and used for achieving desired ends. The success of actors is thus closely determined by the nature of social ties and interaction and the actors position in the network. Further, Lin *et al.* (2008) introduce a distinction between homophilous and heterophilous interaction, in order to express the means of producing social capital and to assess the utility of different instruments for purposive action. Therefore heterophilous interactions, even if they

require more effort from the social actors' sides, are more likely to bring higher benefits; in an opposite way, a homophilous interaction, while offering psychological comfort and asking for less effort will bring probably smaller benefits to social actors.

3. OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this research was to identify the recent tendencies in the permanent migration and some features of the phenomenon as: the reasons for migrating and to remain abroad, the strong and weak points in the new environment, difficulties in the adaptation process and, mostly, the type of social connection with the communities from abroad or from the mother country.

The research questions were:

1. What factors influence most the external permanent migration of Romanians?

2. What type of social capital is the most exploited during the process of permanent international migration of Romanians?

3. What potential effects have the present tendencies of migration on the Romanian social capital?

The topic is introduced by the analysis of current statistics on external migration in Romania. Further, the method used was the half-structured interview, with an interview guide with 12 questions on the current and past status of the migrant, the experience of migration, the perception of Romanian community from abroad and of own integration in several communities. The sample was one of convenience, 20 permanent migrants in 7 different countries (United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Italy) from three continents. In U.S. and Canada the respondents lived in at least three different cities (Vancouver, Edmonton and Toronto in Canada, and Washington D.C., Saint Louis and Burlington/ Vermont, respectively). The interviews were conducted by Skype/phone and transcribed afterwards, while coding the names of the respondents in order to offer them intimacy. Each interview lasted around an hour or more, in some cases.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Statistics analysis. In order to interprete the findings accordingly with the tendencies in the volume of external migration from Romania, we need first to examine the quantitative evolution after 2001. From the evolution of numbers, we can

see that from 2001 the external migration is twice and a half more intense (fig.1).
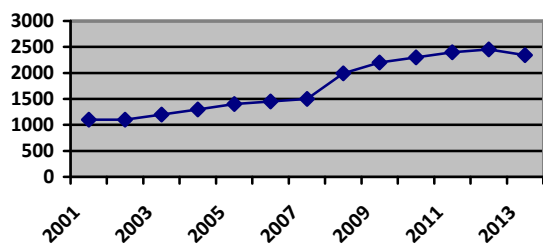

Fig.1. The increase of external migration (in absolute values) after 2001. Source of data: National Institute of Statistics, 2014:7.

The intensification of migration registered after 2007, with the start of the economic crisis, which had among the negative effects many work places eliminated from the market (companies reduced work places or did not survived).

During this phenomenon, the medium age of the migrants increased from 28,8 (in 2002) to 33,3 (in 2012) and the proportion of female gender almost equaled the proportion of the male gender (National Institute of Statistics, p.12). These tendencies show that migration developed in an unnatural direction (males migrate more naturally that women, and younger people migrate more frequently that the mature people). Also, during 1995-2005, the proportion of migrants with academic studies and medium studies increased constantly. But, it should be noted that these numbers refer to the general phenomenon of external migration (permanent and temporary migration). In order to see the proportion of the permanent migration in the total of external migration, we need to compare data (fig.2).

From this report whose numbers were converted in a graph, it is obvious that the greatest part of the increase in migration after 2007 represents the temporary migration in the European countries.
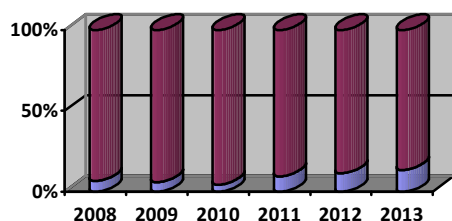

Fig.2. The proportion of the permanent migration from the total external migration Source of data: International Migration of Romania report, 2014:68-70.

The proportion of the permanent migration in the total of external migration is rather small, between 7% in 2008 and 15% in 2013. Also, the detailed data on countries of destinations demonstrate the constant trend of the permanent migration in spite of the increasing trend for temporary migration.

4.2 Interview results. The sample of interviewees included 6 men and 14 women, with ages mostly in the segment 40-55 (only one respondent was 33 years old, respectively 59 years old) and with high level of instruction (only three female respondents did not attend an university). 16 respondents were married or living in a stable relationship; from these cases, only in three cases the spouse was not a Romanian. The countries of migration of the respondents were: United States (8), Canada (4), Australia (1), Italy (2), Spain (2), France (1), United Kingdom (2). Mostly, the subjects of research migrated between 1992-2001 (only 3 cases in 2004-2005 and only other 2 cases in 2011 and in 2014, respectively). The occupations of respondents were varied, from housewife and housemaid (3), teachers/researchers and trainers (6), PR experts or consultants (3), administrator, accountant, project manager, engineer, entrepreneur (1 of each), or programmers (3). From the sample, only one returned definitively in Romania, in 2008. All the cases (excluding the two cases which migrated after 2010) were having the citizenship of the adoption country.

The status of respondents varied very much according to the initial qualification and to the way chosen for migration. The status and occupation changed in four cases (R1, R4, R7, R15), in comparison with the initial occupation and qualification in Romania, either because of the lack of recognition of studies, either because the profession was not requested on the job market. Also, although they did not change their occupation, four of the rest of respondents recalled several obstacles in finding and maintaining a job, either due to the lack of local qualification ("I was obliged by an important client to do a master program in communication in that country, on my own money", said R6, "me and my wife have done supplementary master programs in software management here" – R3) either to the lack of trust in Romanians and mutual bias of ethnic communities (R3), either, finally, to the lack of places to work (R15: "I am in a touristic area and there are not many choices, places and fields of work are limited"). Another category that met difficulties in working after settling abroad was the one of respondents with a low level of

qualification (without an academic degree): they rely either on their husbands ("I could not work first because of the children, and when the children were in school nobody hired me anymore" – R13; "I have some part-time arrangements with an NGO dealing with children with disabilities" – R2), either on low-status jobs (R16). Finally, the category that had the fewest obstacles met two conditions: qualification in a high-requested occupation on the work market, and arrangement for a place to work, made previous to the migration (R8, R17).

In regard with the personal circumstances of migration, they were varied: from marriage with a residing partner (in case of 4 women in the sample) to formal migration process, alongside with family (in 2 male cases and 2 woman cases), or for studies (2 males and 2 female case) to looking for a better job (in 3 cases) or for a better professional situation (3 cases). Most of the respondents (except two cases, R16 and R20) had children (from one/two usually to three in case of R3 and R1, or four children in case of R2) from which the majority (21 children) have been born after they left Romania (from the total of 25 residing abroad children of respondents).

The country of migration has been chosen in various ways: either it was a classic destination for emigrants (R2, R4, R9), either relatives or friends of the family migrated earlier (R1, R5, R12, R17, R16), either it was perceived as a more advanced society that offered greater chances for children (R10), better living and working standards (R7, R8) or just an appropriate destination for continuing academic studies (R6, R19). The case of previous relatives and friends deserves attention, because the respondents described the role of these personal networks in the final decision of migrating as being very strong (R1: "My brother-in-law came especially from Canada to persuade us to move there"). In some of the cases (migration for marriage or job transfers) the country was not elected at all, the respondent just accepted the opportunity (as R8). In some cases, the country was not preferred at all, as R15 witnesses: "The strange thing was that I was to go in Spain although I had no idea about the language and the culture, and all of my life I loved English-speaking countries, especially United States, in which I resided temporary and traveled a lot before". The decision to remain definitively in the adoption country was not fixed from the beginning, as some respondents recall: "I just left from my small town in a holiday after graduating college, in order to visit a friend who lived here from three-four years, and to see if I like the life

here. I came with only one coloured blouse in my bag and remained forever - got married and had a child in the next year." (R5); "I came at first on a determined period, to see if I can adapt to this society, but finally I liked it" (R8); "I was obliged to remain by having a conflict with my boss in a touristic tour – and being forced to remain in Italy without money in the beginning, in order to find a job or a way to go back in Romania." (R7); "I didn't intend to remain there for my entire life" (R6).

Concerning the strong and the weak points of the adoption environment, the most recalled positive element was (according to expectations) the higher standard of living and the democratic climate, the better functioning of institutions and of some systems (especially the better quality of the education system). In the order of frequency, another strong point was the possibility to find a better job in a similar occupation and develop professionally (R14, R8, R12, R19). Another strong feature (cultural and social this time) was the richness of opportunities and the lack of limitations. Other respondents described a preference for the new social environment, varying with the country (R4: "Americans in the 90ies were honest and sincere people, with who the contracts were signed with a shake of hand"; R5: "The social climate was very opened before September 2001 in U.S. After this, everything changed, people became fearful and suspicious"; R11: "Whatever they say to you, the Americans have a nice word and I smile, and this is something you cannot find to Romanians"; R7: "Spanish are nicer and very funny in comparison with Romanians, and with much more good sense").

The weak points in the adoption environment were identified in the lack of correct information and lack of support (R1, R5, R10), negative reputation of Romanians and the need to struggle for their new condition and status (R7, R16, R20). Some respondents recalled other weak points, residing in the cultural, geographical or economic characteristics: the loneliness and strangeness (R11), the hot geographical climate (R15) or, starting with 2008, the economic crisis (R7). Other weak points were specific to the socio-economic climate of the country: the weaknesses of the North-American health system (R10, R5: "In US people pay more for the health insurance than for rent"), or the frequency of non-desirable ethnic groups in case of France (R8).

While evaluating the difficulty of the adaptation process, some of the respondents recall the struggle for bringing their spouse or a relative: "I persuaded my host university to enrol my

husband in a research program for bringing him in U.S." (R19); "I was in a consensual relationship with my present wife and I had to marry formally for bringing her and my son here" (R10); "My husband left first in Italy and brought me and my two sisters, one by one" (R16). Spouses who accompanied the emigrants were described in some cases by having a limited adaptation (spouses of R10, R1, R6), while in other cases they were described as spouses who shared the same dreams and persistence (R3, R4, R12, R15, R16, R20). In three of the cases (R11, R17, R2) the husbands (which were not in the sample) were described as depressive and withdrawing from society, from a certain point forward, making the surviving very difficult for the family. However, the decision to stay in the adoption country, despite the difficulties, was not regretted even in the case of those who lost many advantages in Romania ("I prefer this situation in the place of not being respected as a Romanian citizen" – R1; "It doesn't matter what we dreamed for ourselves, now we have a better chance to our children and we have to sacrifice for them" – R4).

Findings revealed, as expected, that the speed of the cultural adaptation was directly proportional with the cultural intelligence and the capacity to acquire languages at a proficiency level. From lack of these capacities, some of respondents experienced difficulties (R10 with the limited use of English language, R15 with the unknown Spanish language). On the opposite, other respondents reported a strong interest in learning several languages and finding new information about the new culture (R7 who learned five languages outside Romanian: "I feel myself more Spanish than Romanian. A few years after residing in Spain, I was already dreaming in Spanish").

The great majority of respondents said that they maintained Romanian as language of addressing inside the house and while speaking to the children (having as advantage the fact that in 12 cases of the 14 couples, both partners were Romanians). Still, there was reported in the great part of answers, a massive loss of the Romanian language as current language in the children generation. In some cases children were described as understanding the Romanian language, but not being able to speak (children of R11, R1, R8, all of them born abroad). In other cases, children of respondents visited Romania with parents (R4) and were able to speak currently in Romanian.

Among other qualities mentioned in the process of cultural adaptation, perseverance and openness, availability to give up to fixed ideas were the most cited (R4, R10) or, on the same line,

"the determination (...) and the willingness to work hard, sometimes in difficult conditions" (R6, R20). Willingness to change personal views and beliefs was also mentioned (R1), alongside with networking capacity (R3, R6). From a different group of features, resistance to loneliness and foreign influences were also mentioned, mostly by the female respondents (R11, R17).

Connections with Romanians were recalled in all the 18 cases, but they were very different in nature and intensity. For almost a half of respondents the main connections with local Romanians were with the members of the family (especially parents or siblings) (R16, R17, R1, R11, R9, R8, R12, R18, R19, R20) while in other cases the connections included a variety of relationships (acquaintances or friends) (R6, R3, R4, R5, R10). Several respondents observed that their connection with the foreign community was simply better in comparison with the residing abroad Romanians (R7, R13, R1, R11, R2), while other emigrants might be totally isolated (R15). In a different situation were found the respondents who migrated in an academic or research position (R9, R19, R12, R14). They said that the opportunities to meet Romanians were poor and they made connections mostly with (South-) East-European migrants, in sharing together information and support during the adaptation process.

The climate of Romanian communities was characterized as "very limited, with a primitive perspective and marked of envy and meanness" (R11), "fragmented and fighting for their individual survival" (R5), "refusing to help", "very low and infractional" (R7 about Romanians from Spain) "reluctant to share information or gossiping" (R1), fragmented in many small associations or groups and needing help for common actions (R6).

The intensity of connections and the frequency of visits in Romania were different from one case to another. Naturally, the respondents from other continents were in a weaker connection with Romania, because of the distance and the high price of plane tickets. Some respondents said that "first time I visited Romania after 9 years, but other guys visited Romania after 14 years" (R4), or "I came first time after 5 years and after this I could not manage to be here in the next 10 years" (R1). The interviewees from Europe came more often in Romania, sometimes in every year (R8), although only for family reasons (R7, R16). The other connections with Romania were tied with the size of the family and the number of friends remained here, and was in a reverse proportion with the years spent abroad (R4, the oldest migrant

from the sample, had the fewest contacts and relatives in Romania). Still, all respondents reported an improving of their connections with Romania with the development of the internet/social media and the cheap phone lines. Starting from this point, the size of the personal network (both in terms of Romanian internal and external connections) depended very much on the sociability of the individual and to the availability to use the modern means of communication.

Asked what impression they had about Romania in the last visit, respondents gave different answers. Some of them said they were pleasantly surprised by the progresses in civilization made in the last years (R1 after a visit in 2013, R6 after one of his visits in 2008), or that they spent months or a whole year before 2008 and had at a certain moment the intention to return permanently in Romania (R4, R10, R11). Others said that, even if they heard and saw some improvements, the reintegration would be too difficult for them and would not be able to handle it (R5, R3) or that they do not like Romanians and they would not be interested at all in returning (R2, R7, R17, R20). Finally, a few respondents pointed a very relevant thought: they have been asked by a friend if they intend to die in the adoption country and they responded "no" even if they had a permanent situation and a stable job (R6, R9).

5. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Applying the perspective of Putnam, the life of an emigrant appears more like a balance between using bridging and bonding social capital: emigrants need to use the bridging capital for integration in the new society, but in the same time they need the bonding capital for conserving their own characteristic values. At the individual level, this preservation of the bonding capital is obtained either by family and personal network of friends built abroad, either by frequent visits in Romania.

Bourdieu considered the global social space as a field of forces, where social actors constantly struggle to preserve or transform social forces. In this view, the Romanian migrants are disadvantaged at least from the perspective of the group's social status, which will not place them in a positive position. On the other hand, the performance of actors in key occupations (as informatics and software development) may place them in better positioned networks than in Romania.

The findings are perfectly consonant with Lin's theory, because the social actors access a more favorable position when they use the resources of the network, and when their

occupation is a value in the new social space. Also, they need to establish especially heterophilous interactions (with the members of the new culture), even if they need more efforts in order to build these relationships – at the end they will be in a better position to access the assets that can bring them to the desired aims. Thus, the main factors which influence the participation of Romanian emigrants to the social capital are the personal networks (in which family is the most important resource) and

the previous experiences of emigration, which can provide correct information and an adequate planning of resources and expectations. However, the answers to interviews revealed a low social solidarity and a low level of cohesion inside the Romanian local networks, which limits very much the success of the Romanian networks in the new environment. Further, personal skills and availability to adaptation are diminished in role in this equation, because the main influence is played by networks, by types of interactions and by the position of groups inside the adoption society.

Thus, in order to emphasize the answer to the three research questions, some conclusions need to be formulated. The access to social capital in the adoption country appears to be stimulated by: the nature of personal network (resources and information), the rank of occupation and qualification on the job market, and the level of cultural intelligence. Both types of social capital (bridging and bonding) are used in the process of migration, in a permanently balance. On the other hand, even the migrants who cannot access the network resources or are modest in their performances still have a positive influence on the social capital of Romania, by facilitating experience exchanges and transferring different characteristics during the occasional interactions with the part of his network that remained in Romania.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the research was to identify recent tendencies in the evolution of the international permanent migration of Romanians, characteristics of the international migration models and forms of social capital used. The limitation of research consisted in the reduced size of the sample and in the selection from availability. From this formula resulted a sample with a high level of instruction (only three respondents did not attend higher education) which makes the research relevant more for this segment (migrants with middle or high level of education).

Results have shown several models of emigration, starting from the marital and professional emigration to the emigration based on continuing academic studies. The factors which influence the success of the emigrant in the new context refer to existence and placement in a cohesive social networks, to the level of his professional performance, and, not in the last row, the cultural intelligence. The brain drain phenomenon is visible, but the above analysis observed that the consequences of this phenomenon are not entirely negative.

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Table of respondents

Code	Age/ Gender	Occupation	Country	Migration year
R1	m., 55	Administrator	Canada	1999
R2	f., 33	Housewife	Canada	2000
R3	m., 56	Programmer	US	1995
R4	m., 59	Entrepreneur	US	1993
R5	f., 49	Accountant	US	1996
R6	m., 47	PR expert	Australia	2001
R7	f., 44	Trainer	Spain	1998
R8	f., 44	Programmer	France	2000
R9	f., 43	Professor	Canada	1997
R10	m., 54	Consultant	US	2004
R11	f., 42	PR expert	US	2008
R12	m., 45	Lecturer	US	2004
R13	f., 47	Housewife	Italy	1992
R14	f., 43	Project manager	UK	2014
R15	f., 40	Trainer	Spain	2011
R16	f., 43	Housemaid	Italy	1999
R17	f., 44	Engineer	Canada	2000
R18	f., 44	Programmer	UK	1998
R19	f., 42	Researcher	US	2002
R20	f., 43	Researcher	US	1995