

THE ROMANIAN MIGRATION TO CANADA

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Abstract: *The migration of the population is a complex process, influenced by many facts that determine the intensity of the migration flows, that lead to multiple effects , most likely unwanted , on that certain population. After the falling of communism, Romania and Poland were the biggest providers of migrants. In this more than twenty years after, Romanian migration has become a mass phenomenon, with huge involvements at the Romanian society level. Romanian migration knows different European directions, but also non-European ones. In Europe, Romanians first turned towards countries like Turkey, Israel, Hungary and Germany, then Italy and Spain. Non European countries that Romanians constantly oriented to are the United States of America and Canada. The study follows a presentation of the Romanian migration process in general, focusing on the migration to Canada, from a social wiew. Romanian migration is various and highlighted. If in the beginning it was predominant male, it now reaches the equality of the gender categories. There is also a orientation on activity fields. Men in building, agriculture and industry, women in taking care of people, housekeeping, agriculture and accommodation services. The reviews on the Romanian migrants start to appear after 2007.*

Key words: *Romanian migration; Canada; Romania; Romanian immigrants.*

America has always been seen as the promised land, where freedom and equality of chances were offering everyone the shelter they needed after the oppressive regimes (between 1871-1915 nearly 40 million people left the continent). America was the chance of a new beginning. The migration to America was a strong influenced phenomenon by the demographic, economical and political conditions of everyday life Balcan inhabitant, situated at the crossroad of the great empires.

The study shows the migration phenomenon to Canada , starting to define the used concepts , like "migration" and "immigrant" and continuing with the exposure of the identified steps , the numbers and directions. I will use observation in my study, historical method and comparison methods .

Migration is usually defined by the movement of a person or a group of persons from a geographic location to another administrative and politic border. They want to establish either temporary or permanent to another place beside the original one. Keeping in mind that the movement between two geographic locations does not have to appear directly, we can distinguish the welcoming region (OIM, 2003: 8). The movements inside a country are usually defined as internal migration, therefore, the ones across

the borders are named international migration. For this reason we are focusing only on the international migration.

The immigrants are the people that leave their birth places for economic reasons , seeking new better paid jobs or just to get rid of poverty. Of course, many others migrate as a result of political reasons . Eitherway, from all the facts that influence the migration flow the economic one remains the main: hunger, unemployment, lack of farmlands. It is understood that this flows are, by their nature, voluntary ones . But there also are involuntary, like the ones caused by wars , natural disasters etc.

The time period 2002-2006 points a change in the economic Romanian migration in a mass phenomenon, one that lasts in time.

In Canada, the first Romanian immigrants arrived in the last two decades of the XIX century. In the beginning they were in small numbers, but after the year 1900 the number becomes significant . We can remember that here, in 1898 two Romanians, Iachim Yurko and Elie Ravliuk from Boian, Bucovina bought land in the North East of Edmonton and built houses and farms. Until the beginning of the year 1901, more than 100 families established there.

From the statistics of that time regarding Romanian immigration to Canada we can see that in the year 1914 their number was 8.013 and in the year 1921 it reaches the number of 29.056. Most of them came from Bucovina, but in small numbers also from Transylvania, Banat and Dobrogea. Moving across Europe they reached Hamburg or other harbors from which they embarked in ships that were going to Halifax, St.John, Montreal or New York. From here they went to Saskatchewan and Alberta, where the land was cheap and in some areas even free.

The Canadian Government supported the immigration, having as a law document the "Dominion of Canada Policy". Each immigrant was offered 160 acres that means 65 hectares, for which they paid a tax of ten dollars. The obligation was to build a house and seed the land. After three years he became the so named homesteader. The arrival of Romanian immigrants in Canada was made of successive waves. The first one arrived in the new world before World War one, between the years 1907-1913, for economic reasons. Some of them migrated to Canada to establish there forever. They were given free land from the Canadian Government and their main choir was agriculture, same as home, in Bucovina, establishing in the region of the Saskatchewan fields, Alberta and Manitoba. They cut down forests, expanding the farmland region, they built roads, houses.

The period of the migration to North America happened at the end of the XIX century. The parts of the country that provided the first waves of immigrants to the USA and Canada are Bucovina and Transylvania (for Canada also adding Dobrogea). The reason for leaving was economic or demographic: poverty, lack of farmland. The new information about the new world made it soon a land of the promises. Romanians arrived in Canada were taken to the uninhabited areas that were going to be the biggest agricultural areas: Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba. As pioneers of the East

European migration, the Romanians had a role in populating and civilization of central Canadian regions, that later became their properties. Another category of immigrants came to Canada in the hope of making money and then returning home, where they could buy land and live a better life, together with their families. They went to industrial centers such as Montreal, Hamilton, Windsor or Regina, where they could work in factories or in the Ontario mines. The war in 1914 stopped many of them from returning home ; after peace was made, some got used to life in Canada and they decided to stay here forever, but some returned to Romania. Between 1920-1922 a big number of people arrived in Canada, mostly to reunite with their families.

The Romanian community, composed by the first and the second wave of immigrants was made up in 1931 by 30.000 people. The Government then stopped the immigration and the number dropped in 1941 to about 25.000 people.

The ending of the second world war means also the beginning of a third wave of immigrants (1945-1955). Most of them had good school training, they were from the city and at first they were ready to take any job that was given to them and then to try and work in the fields they studied and also had experience. Their motivation was politic. If in the year 1925-1926 only in Canada emigrated 3652 people (some of which Romanian national minorities) But, for all the period between the two world wars , the number of Romanians that left to the two Americas did not go over 20000.

The first wave of immigrants after the second world war strenghten the basis of the first ones and also made them a part of the new Canadian society, multiplied the activity of the Romanian communities, making the conscions more aware of the reality drama in Romania. After "defreezing" period after Stalin, the comunist regim in Romania intensified, again, the oppressive side so, after 1970 (even to the end of the next decade) a new Romanian immigrants flow was noticed. Many of them had access to schools and were well informed of what was going on in the world. Persecuted if they dared to reach with their critics the official propaganda, they choose the exile way and the refugeee.

The number of Canadians with Romanian roots is discusable. After official statistics in 1980 there were only 45000 Canadian-Romanians, in the following cities: Regina, Windsor, Montreal, Toronto, Kitchener, Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Calgary etc. After the events in december 1989, when the revolution wasn't able to remove the scars of the communism, we notice another wave of Romanian immigrants in Canada. The main feature is the diversity and heterogenity on ages 20-70 years old and jobs, most intelectual, but also some related to other fields. The impact of this las immigrant wave was still politics, but was also doubled by an economic one. Romania in crossing a great economic, socilal, political crisis.

Therefore a big part of the intellectuals, disapointed by the revolution's failure is trying to find another mother country and the feeling of freedom, which they did't knew before, not even after the communism. Nowadays, the Romanian Canadian centers can be cities like: Montreal,

Toronto, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton. Reviewing the general context of Romanian emigration to Canada we notice that, if the first wave had peasants from Transilvania, Bucovina or Dobrogea, the last ones had Romanians from all over the country, in particular from the Old Kingdom.

The first immigrants established in Canada; the ones that came after the war, were accepted as political refugees. From a personal point of view, the ones from the first two waves were very fond of their country, a very strange thing given their social nature, that was making them live a ghetto life, but they always intended to return to Romania as soon as they raised enough money. A special category is represented by those who don't care about the country, Romania or Romanians, people without a God, strays.

From the year 2001, thousands of Romanians decided to leave Romania, to countries from South Europe and West, searching for a better life. Given that a number of 1.5 mil is brought up, we can speak about a national phenomenon. This phenomenon led to the avoiding of a social crisis with serious follow ups on the society and a negative effect on Romania becoming part of the European Union.

The migration of workforce, was the foundation of social transformations in Romania. Working abroad means for most Romanians a temporary strategy, most of them choosing to come back to Romania. The national law regarding migration led to the rising of the illegal migration and exposure of people to the risk of violating the human rights. Until the year 2002 the main destinations for Romanians were Germany (half of the total immigrants), Hungary, Italy, Spain, USA and Canada.

If in 2003 most of the immigrants choose USA and Canada, In the year 2004 they choose central European countries and North America. In the year 2004 the permanent migration phenomenon from the beginning of the year 1990 was replaced with a temporary external migration, without the residence changing and based only on economic reasons.

The new arrived has no free time. In fact his staying is only based on work and he doesn't see it as a new lifestyle. That is why the notion of migration for work seems to suit this area of population that is established abroad only for a limited time. They do not come to stay (even though 55% will remain). (Badescu, I., 2014: 56)

Romania has another problem with the so called phenomenon of "migration of the brains", over a quarter of the emigrant workforce has university studies. The most common were workers, medical assistants, doctors, engineers, architects and IT specialists. (Tuglui, M., 2009: 467)

In the year 1920 the first immigrants number from Quebec, Alberta, Saskatchewan is getting bigger until the third decade, during the second World War and in particular after 1947 and the beginning of the 50, but also in the 60 and 70 we can talk about a second big wave. After December 1989, when emigration became legal, Canada became an accessible destination both for the ones that were disillusioned by the changes in Romania and for the ones that left the country because they had economic issues or other personal reasons.

Unlike the USA that applies the so called politics of the melting pot, in which all the cultures of the immigrants merge, and the only mother language is English, Canada recognizes English and French, without limiting the liberty of using the mother language, no matter what that is. In the Canadian view, control is better exercised upon certain group identities, than individual varied identities, that are flexible, slippery and open to random changes. According to the 2011 census, the number of Canadian citizens and permanent residents that had Romanian origins was somewhere around 204.625(Romanians in North America (aprox. 7500000), and the one in Canada was the second from North America, after the one in SUA (aprox. 1 million) (Otovescu, 2013: 24-28).

Conclusions

A part of the Romanian emigrants from North America came back between the World Wars. With the money they saved up they bought land, cereal mills, they invested in local industry. Most of them, did not come back and reunited their families. Their followers today barely can imagine what hard times their ancestors had to endure living the American dream on the promised land. Some of them made it, some didn't, but for sure Romanians are a part of the North American mosaic. The number of the ones that reached Canada is 120.000. It is hard to tell how many live in North America.

In the first part of the XX century Romanian immigrants established in field areas, after the second World War they moved to Ontario and Montreal.

After the second World War immigrants from Canada divide in three categories: those from the year 1948, the new comers before 1989 and the ones after 1989. From the first category are the war victims that came from refugees camps in Western Europe. Another part left Romania illegally at the same time. Most of them were against communism and Romanian government.

Romanians played a great role in the development of Canada as a multicultural society . And even if the road was long and hard, the refugees brought with them their customs and traditions, giving them as a gift to the foster state, For example in Willington, the houses have the same style as in Bucovina, some of them making it in time to our days.

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