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THE REFLUX OF THE ROMANIAN
LABOR FORCE
- SPECIFIC PATTERNS -

RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

The Romanian Government revealed interesting statistic data referring to the Romanian migration of the labor force. After an intense flux towards the Western Europe consequent to the fall of the Iron Curtain, in the present a reflux of this category of population can be observed. Considering the fact that 20 % of the Romanian labor force activates outside its borders, the Romanian Government is interested in developing a strategy to attract these migrants back, reporting some success in the attempt. With my study I intend to discover what determines that part of them to come back to Romania and enhance the reflux with an adequate strategy, based on the specific patterns of this social category. My research is to prove (using qualitative and quantitative methodology) that there are significant differences between the Romanian **migrating labor force** and the Romanian **labor force within the national territory** considering the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of their Social Representations regarding the concept of *returning back home* (which stands for a more difficult one, the *reflux*). Once established the specific patterns of the Romanian migrants, by the means of the SR Theory principles in cooperation with other suitable ones, I intend to develop a strategy in order to suit the needs of this important category of population and bring it back to “the nest”. This project presents high practical value to the Romanian Government and Economy, and also to the European Community, considering the fact that the large number of the Romanian migrants affects us all.

STRUCTURE (I)

- The research will consist in two parts, a **theoretical** and a **practical** one.
- The **theoretical part** will include chapters regarding
 - other works in the field^[1]
 - causes and effects of the phenomenon both individually and socially
 - explanatory theories discovered in the Psychological literature and other disciplines as well (Sociology, Economy, Anthropology, Political sciences) and the last but not the least
 - a chapter regarding the methodology, theoretically speaking, referring to the history of researching the migration phenomenon. This final chapter will emphasize upon the approach/-es that I have personally chosen in order to conduct my work.

^[1] *in the past few years, a boost of literature on Romanian migration can be observed, which straightens the need for more accuracy in exploring the phenomenon, in order to create an adequate strategy to attract these people back home*

STRUCTURE (II)

- The **practical part** will include two different, complementary approaches, a qualitative and a quantitative one.
- The **qualitative** methodology will focus on
 - *exploratory interviews*
 - *field observation*
 - *open questionnaires regarding the returning home of the Romanian migrants.*
- The qualitative data collection will lead to a series of studies regarding the **Social Representation of the Reflux** (operationalized as “**returning back home**”) of the Romanian migrating labor force, by comparison to the SRs of their families and workers who remained within the national territory, and also by comparison to the SRs of the regular Italian and Romanian people, who are not directly tied to the migration phenomenon.

STRUCTURE (III)

- The **quantitative** methodology will include (consequently to the qualitative investigation) a series of **experimental studies** meant both to *compare* distinct categories of subjects and *explore* different hypotheses.
- Both methodologies are intended to work together in order to reach the objectives of the research.
- At the end of each part, data will be analyzed and conclusions will be drawn.
- In the final chapter we will discuss the discoveries and the strategy/-ies derived from them.

OBJECTIVES (I)

My research is focused upon the Romanian migrating labor force in Italy (but other future works will consider also Spain, Germany, Greece and Israel), intending to reach the following objectives:

- 1. identify a psychological pattern (psycho-sociological profile) of the Romanian person working in Italy.
- 2. discovering the emotional and motivational triggers of the “returning home” of a significant part of them, in order to re-balance the labor force market and, most importantly, the family as an institution in Romania, considering the fact that the active labor force is very little comparing to the inactive population and, again the most important aspect, the fact that many children left behind are suffering the consequences of the lack of parenthood.
- 3. exploring the social representation of this dynamic concept which is the “returning home” of the Romanian migrating labor force, keeping in mind that the phenomenon is just beginning to take a fade shape (more in the mind of the population than in its actions).
- 4. investigating the delicate aspects of this phenomenon, as it is perceived by the ones in question and also by the others, Romanians and Italians.

OBJECTIVES (II)

These objectives can be reached (after the data collection) by the following means:

1. Field studies concerning the “*returning home*”^[2] of the Romanian workers (men and women) who activate in Italy. These studies (using both qualitative and quantitative methodology) will be conducted on:

- The families (on Romanian territory) of the ones who left in Italy to work
- The workers themselves (men or women)
 - located in Romania, who did not leave at all
 - located in Romania, “on a brake”
 - located in Italy
- Romanians about the ones who left
- Italians about the Romanian workers (men and women)
- The investigation will also consider the content analysis of Romanian and Italian written press.

^[2] operationalization of “*reflux*” – term used by the Romanian Prime-Minister in his public declaration

2. The investigation will also consider the content analysis of Romanian and Italian written press.

INSTRUMENTS

- ***Instrument A***, aiming for revealing the structure of the SR of the Romanian workers' "returning home" ("reflux"), including a *free association task* – first 5 words or expression, *ranking* of the associations, *quantitative analysis* (a 1-6 scale of "how important is this particular answer to you") and *justification* [3].
- ***Instrument B***, looking for a deeper search, exploring the **advantages and disadvantages** of the Romanian workers' "returning home" (minimum 3 of each kind), which will be evaluated on a 1-6 scale of "how important is this particular answer to you".
- ***Instrument C***, searching for the mute zone, inquiring the participants "What would other people say about the Romanians returning home?", evaluating the answers on a 1-6 scale of "how important is this particular answer to you" [4].
- ***Instrument D***, aiming for the specific target of the project, investigating "What would motivate them to come back to Romania?" (minimum 5 reasons, evaluated on a 1-6 scale of "how important is this particular answer to you").

This short design of the practical part of my doctoral research **does not include all the studies** that I intend to conduct to reach the objectives above; it is merely a sample of what this research's goals are.

- [3] There will be a parallel analysis of associations and justification, whose results should correspond, and reveal the same outcomes as the quantitative processing of the scale.
- [4] The question will be adapted to the population, therefore the Romanian participants will be asked "What would Romanians in general think about the Romanian workers from Italy returning home?", and the Italian participants - "What would Italians in general think about the Romanian workers from Italy returning home?"

PROGRESS

So far, I have been gathering some data using *qualitative* methodology:

- *field observation*
- a *few interviews* with different types of subjects: *members of the families* left home by the Romanian workers in Italy, the *Romanian workers in Italy* themselves, *Romanian workers “on a brake”*, *Romanian workers who never left the national territory* to work and regular *Italians* who do not have ties to the migrating phenomenon directly.
- *questionnaires* in order to explore the SR of the Romanian emigrant among different categories of Romanians, which lead to some very interesting conclusions. These results will be published as a first book on this subject and will not be revealed until then.

I have also read several books on Romanian migration, consisting of field studies or/and interviews, in order to complete my perspective upon this phenomenon.

The research is based mostly on field studies, so the progress of my work can not be properly assessed yet, due to the fact that I am still gathering data, both on the field and in the libraries.



Thank you for the attention
and good luck with your own
scientific projects !

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