

International Migration of Youth from Romania



Culture

KEYWORDS : international migration, east-european societies, migration destinations

Pescaru Maria

Strada Turcesti, nr. 45, oraș Pitești, județul Argeș, Romania, cod poștal 110221

ABSTRACT

Outlining the Romanian immigrant profile, along with studying and understanding the multiple implications of migration, should be a milestone in the development of the national policies on migration. We must start from the idea that if migration is beneficial to be stimulated, and if it produces negative effects, it must be reduced, stopped. Migration should be seen literally in terms of costs and benefits, stimulating certain segments or types of migration, others are desirable to be reduced. Because migration has become a social phenomenon, the young people are familiar with the various aspects of migration that they know in detail. This knowledge is shared to the younger generations also, which will soon be on the labor market, regarding aspects of the migrant's lives or migration destinations, ranking the profitable countries on migration, the revenue that can be obtained and the risks they may face in different countries.

Migration has become a familiar pattern for young people, this familiarity implying a desirability to this context of life. This is typically a risky and difficult enterprise in which the material success is not granted and that represents the real danger of overwork. The typical Romanian migrant is a person who works more than in his country and much more than the typical workers in host societies, as related to the interviews with young people who left Romania (we used pseudonyms):

„Here at home, an acquaintance of mine was a tractor driver and he did not win anything. In Belgium, he cares for animals on a farm all day long and sometimes he gets even close to ... 1100 euro ... Wow! Lot of money, but it is a very hard work! ... Certainly I'd think a little before taking his place” (George)

The young people interviewed mentioned that the reality of the migrant labor is physically tiring and it consists in disgusting activities, sometimes being considered and treated (by the authorities and the host society) as foreign, being often the subject of discrimination. However, the excessive labor, hardship and their discrimination seem to be acceptable in terms of migration well known economic fundamentals and to which the young people agree with. The more enhanced the income gap between the origin and the host society, the greater the consumption power is in the origin society. Migration is the effective operation of this mechanism.

„For example, here, in Romania, you work a month ...and maybe you get a salary of 7 million lei (almost 200 euros). In Belgium you work a month.... and you get (in euros) at least 30 million lei (about 850 euros). There.... you are a poor man, but when you come home you can live well for about three months with this money.” (Marton)

The young people know the differences in economic and social terms of the European space, the utility of various possible destinations of migration in terms of access, risks and revenues. For example, Germany is a country with high income sources, but it is difficult to get a job. Spain is characterized by the facial access but with relatively low earnings, difficult employment relationships, sometimes abusive and dishonest. In Belgium one may easily reach, it is possible to work in the less physically demanding services and there are opportunities to earn a high income. Here, however, the labor market is saturated, “There are many Romanians who only help their villagers.” (George) In Hungary, the labor market is relatively accessible due to the functional networks in which people are involved and provides easy cultural accommodation.

The young people are part of a community culture where migration is commonly practiced, proving that they have knowledge of the labor migration and have access to the migration contexts. However, there are various interpretations, reporting attitudes towards migration and migrants.

It is obvious the status marginality in which the migrants are

seen and aware of. The awareness of the migrants' marginal position in host societies causes the undesirable and difficult access to employment and evaluation of this position on the labor market affects how immigrants are viewed as individuals. The marginality is profitable in terms of power consumption in the home society, and young people are not too sensitive to the problems created by immigration status. These positions are not associated with negative connotations, even in situations that represent a clear case of “migration revoking the status” compared to their original status or status with general aspirations. In the host countries, the young people provide everything for any significant benefit. Conversely, in the countries of origin, the quality employment and labor relations is a sensitive issue, considering it degrading to work illegal as a skilled worker or being detrimental to their social identity, assessment is shared by the community in which they live. Here's how a migrant who returned to the country after almost ten years of working in different countries of Europe, expresses differential sensitivity to the issue of status (as a migrant and as an employee in the country):

„Here people would make fun of me if they saw me washing dishes, peering potatoes or washing the floors of a motel (nearby) There (abroad), it was ok ... (But what kind of work would be acceptable for you here at the motel?).... I do not know! ... A waiter or a bartender maybe?” (Andrei)

The social distance and the differences mentioned and emphasized between the society of origin and that of destination leads the migrants to accept marginal positions of the foreign labor market. (Stark & Taylor, 1991, p. 1163) However, the experience of marginality (individual and community) on the foreign labor market status does not lead to acceptance of low labor, informal and unstable work at home. The marginality is acceptable given the higher revenues and if it is long-term employment guaranteed and on a socially recognized position as appropriate.

To analyze the attitudes of individuals in the migration context, there should be considered the norms and the ideologies that assess the stability and the migration and which consider the migrants people who take advantage of mobility opportunities. Thus, in the early 1990s, the early migrants were seen in ambiguous terms. Their participation in the labor market was considered foreign, sometimes degrading and the illegal nature of their resistance was a dubious situation. Here is what a migrant for employment tells:

In 1990-1991 I thought about those who have left to work abroad that are blockheads, some slackers ... But in a year or two I started to ask advice on how to find a job abroad” (Mihai)

Currently, the migration has become a regular source of generating resource practices: the younger generations do not think that migration would lead to moral dilemmas or major prestige. The problem-situation sociologically arises in the context of

inter-generational migration. The parents, based on community experiences, consider the labor migration as a risk factor on the final departure of children. For them, migration represent a potential threat to the reproductive model where members of their extended family live in a geographically background below a certain level of control exercised by the elders.(Turai, 1991, p. 45) Here is how to carry out an exchange of words extracted from a focus group in this respect:

„My brother definitely wanted to leave but.... Mom did not want to hear. She already has (a daughter and) three grandchildren who live abroad. And they do not even want to come to visit: they are not interested at all to see her” (Andrei)

„But elders are afraid that they will stay here without any support?” (Mihai)

Even if some parents are reconciled with the idea of having children abroad to “try their luck”, though there are ambivalent attitudes with regard to migration. Mobility breaks the chain of intergenerational solidarity, even if gives children chances of acquiring social positions. On the other hand, in the origin society there is a form of moral responsibility.(Magyari, 1991, p. 110) Even if, however, it shows some empathy for requests on family responsibilities, they take a distant attitude towards this ideology. Here are some other typical responses from a focus group:

„Elders said that those... (permanently leave) are ... traitors”(Mihai)

„The communists also think like that.....”(Vali)

„Maybe they are envious. They did not have the opportunity (to go), maybe this is why they are envious.”(Alexandru)

„I think that everybody wants the best for its living.”(Matei)

Migration: norms and plans

Most often the permanent or indefinite leaving is viewed with some reservation, but at the same time, there are limits on the acceptable length of staying abroad or preconceptions about the optimal period of staying. An event that can cause a change in the assessment of the migration phenomenon is the foundation of a family.

The post-marriage migration seems to be governed by the rules and limited to the objectives and planned duration of mobility. Among those surveyed, the majority felt that before marriage there is no limit on the length of staying abroad or of the targets the migrants wanted to reach or attain. However, after marriage, the labor migration is considered suitable for achieving well-defined goals: resolving financial crises, generating resources for major investments in the household. Migration during the marriage is considered to be useful for limited periods of time, usually two or three months.

Generally, the labor migration is a typical and acceptable practice in the transition of leaving school to become an adult. The transition period is now much longer than for parents. This process is characteristic of most inter-central and east European companies.(Gabor, 2001, p. 9)

In Romania, it has changed not only the age at which the events of transition take place, but there is a configuration transformation of the path to an adult status. In the years 1980-1990, to become an adult involved the fact that the young had to engage. Today, in the context of young people's transition to the adult status, education is institutionally central. At the end of 1989, in Romania, one in ten young people aged 18-25 were enrolled in a college, and since 2000 more than a third of young people followed a form of tertiary education. In 2003, youth participation in this form of education was more than 40%.(Horvalth, 2004, p. 59) The access to higher education is different for young people in rural areas and those in urban areas. Rural youth are less interested in attending the university, have fewer opportunities to be admitted, and their transition to adult status is through

employment. These issues influence their perceptions about the internal and external labor. Even if informal employment practices are short in both markets, the differences between them are found in terms of salaries and associated employment status. Going abroad is not just to get lower wages, but to avoid social stigma work.

If employment is made to a different place, it is more acceptable to be financially profitable, to be away from the social context in which their position on the labor market is important for establishing the status of individuals in the origin society.

Migration as a state of transition to adult status

In the modern industrial societies the organization of the transition to adult status occurs in two major contexts: education and work. They should be understood as providing institutional commitments, and restrict opportunities, leading young people from different social position, attributing them to different positions in the social system, along with this trajectory. Young people who acquire tertiary education have narrow employment opportunities, less desirable in economic terms and fewer opportunities to acquire a status. Future job security is one of the most vague aspects of their biographical planned or hoped trajectories. Young people have few prospects regarding getting a domestic job, perceive poor chance of finding a stable job and anticipates a floating status on the labor market in the future.

This uncertainty does not face the general impression in modern industrial societies that young people are first confronted with job instability and moving progressively towards a stable position on the labor market, but rather depends on the social organization of the work described above, which is particularly pronounced in Romania. In particular, young people living in rural areas have little chance of access to formal and stable job.

Migration appears to be appreciated by young people, as a result, a high potential economic context, but it is overshadowed by the negative reviews regarding the type of work performed and the status of employment involved. There is the appreciation that young people regularly migrate not because the option that represents a normative trajectory imposed culturally, but because of internal labor market which offers significant and motivating opportunities. The migration of young people is not considered a fulfillment or a desirable situation, but I see a migration path to avoid or alleviate a prolonged socioeconomic, uncertain status that the home companies might confront to.

The evaluation of migration must be understood contextually. This is a preferred alternative due to the difference of income and employment caused by the precarious nature of domestic jobs. Migration of young people does not meet the major cultural function in order to prove characteristic adult skills and it is not the preferred path to achieve material satisfaction. It is, rather, a determined context in which the uncertainties of a prolonged transition to adult status can be negotiated. Young people, in particular, migrate to provide a limited range of acceptable trajectories to become adults which continue to shrink.

Conclusions:

Migration provides positive and negative life experiences. The positive elements consist of cultural, intercultural aspects, experience to travel, experience of working in the new medium, the improvement, perhaps, of personal life. Negative elements of migration refer to the bitter taste of it: in the interpretation of the new context of life according to the critical information and tools necessary, due to the need to cope with the new circumstances of life. Migrants are exposed to cultural and linguistic adjustment, isolation from family and community of origin, social and professional integration challenges.

Migration is a response to disparities in political, security and the demographic situation systems and a response to economic conditions. The international migration is rooted in structural realities of the international economic system. Well managed, migration can become a tool for development, and the development can influence the dynamics and the structure of migration.

Migration management requires coordinated interventions at global and regional levels. The existence of different types of migration requires flexible policy approach. For the countries of origin of the migration it is important to watch how migration can reduce poverty and contribute to their development, how the effects of migration of skilled labor can be offset or mitigated, how the diaspora can be better harnessed.

REFERENCE

1. Stark, O., Taylor, L. E., (1991), Migration incentives, migration types; the role of relative deprivation, *The Economic Journal*, 101 (408), pp. 1163-1178 | 2. Turai, T., (1991), Ácsaladszerkezet változása a szocializmus esztizedeiben a Szélségységben, *Erdélyi Társadalom*, 1(2), pp. 45-72 | 3. Magyari, N., L., (1991), Marasztalnak, tehát megyünk, *Gondolatok válság(ok)ról és elsandorlásról*, *Regio*, 4, pp.110-120 | 4. Gabor, K., (2004), Mostaitk 2001: A preferenciáról a centrumba. Tezisek a határon túli magyar fiatalok helyzetének az értelmezéshez, *Erdélyi Társadalom*, , pp. 9-23 | 5. Horváth, I., (2004), Az erdélyi magyar fiatalok Magyarországi irangyú tanulási migrációja: 1990-2000, *Erdélyi Társadalom*, 2(2), pp. 59-84