

## ASPECTS OF THE INTEGRATION OF ROMANIAN EMIGRANTS IN ITALY, TORINO AREA. QUESTIONNAIRE BASED SOCIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

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**Abstract.** *The article proposes a brief presentation of the theses included in the theoretical models of migration, based on which several hypotheses have been formulated, tested through their own research. Chapter two presents the methodological aspects and results of a sociological survey based on a randomly applied questionnaire to the parishioners of the Orthodox churches "40 Saints martyrs" from Sevastia from Moncalieri and "Sfânta Cruce" from Turin, Piemonte area, aiming to identify some characteristics of the integration of Romanian migrants. in the socio-cultural environment specific to the country of destination.*

**Keywords:** *causes of migration, integration of migrants; country of origin, country of destination, social networks*

### **Introducere**

The political events produced in post-communist Romania, in the context of the phenomenon of global globalization, have transformed the migration of Romanians into a process of a magnitude that is difficult to estimate even for the well-known researchers in the field. The aspiration for personal freedom and self-realization, limited by more than four decades by an oppressive regime, accompanied by objective factors generated by the transformations produced in the Romanian economy, which abolished jobs for millions of skilled workers in the jobs become obsolete in the new economic-social contexts. , the increasingly poor quality of the health system, education, pensions, lack of horizons for young people have increasingly motivated more Romanians to settle down and perform in other countries of the world.

A relatively recent study, commissioned by Romania during the presidency of the Council of the European Union shows that about 20% of Romanian citizens of active age, between 20 and 64 years old, live and work in a European state, that Romania has the highest percentage of citizens who work in a European state, 19.7%, in the context where the European average is 4%. For comparison, it is instructive that in other countries where the skilled population has migrated to another European state the percentages are much lower: Lithuania (14.8%), Croatia (13.9%) and Portugal (13.8%) . At the opposite end are Germany (1.0%), Great Britain (1.1%) and France (1.3%). (<http://www.ziare.com/diaspora/romani-munca/un-studiu-comandat-de-guvernul-dancila>); [https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/EU% 20Mobile% 20Workers.pdf](https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/EU%20Mobile%20Workers.pdf)

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The Statistical Yearbook of Italy shows that in 2017 the number of Romanian citizens living in Italy amounts to 1,190,091, Romanians representing the second population after Italians and the largest group of immigrants in Italy. <https://ro.sputnik.md/diaspora/20180821/21360>

The present study is motivated by the large extent of the phenomenon of migration of Romanians in Italy and by the opportunity given by the experience and the direct involvement of one of the authors, as doctoral student of the University of Oradea, in knowing the phenomenon.

Starting from this motivation from the introduction, the article is structured in two chapters, followed by conclusions. The first chapter proposes a brief overview of some theoretical models explaining the phenomenon of international migration, insisting on those theories that have provided us with hypotheses that have been tested through concrete research. The second chapter presents the methodological aspects and some conclusions drawn from his own research regarding the causes of the migration of Romanians to Italy and, in particular, how to integrate them in the new socio-cultural context offered by the country of destination.

### **1. Explanatory Theoretical models of the Phenomena of International Migration**

International migration, viewed as a constant in the history of social life, gaining new dimensions and structures in contemporary society, is a very complex phenomenon, conditioned by multiple factors, which are located at the multilevel level, both at the macro level, as well as at the mezo and micro level. . Although migration as a phenomenon appeared with the deepening of the social division of labor, the beginnings of the concerns for the study of migration were manifested since the 19th century, but “the construction of theories in this area is practically a problem of the 20th century and, in particular, of the last third from the 20th century”(Arango, 2000: 283).

We mention that in the present study we do not intend to carry out a critical analysis of the existing theories or the way of classifying them according to different criteria, but to highlight some theoretical orientations, based on which we have extracted some scientific hypotheses that have been tested in own research framework.

In both the order of their occurrence and the frequency with which they were used in the explanatory approach, economic theories have occupied and still play an important role.

Centered around the question "why?", Consisting in the privileging of the role of economic factors in explaining both migration flows (at the macro level), and in explaining the individual decision to migrate (at the micro level), the neoclassical economy theory or the new theory of migration take into account the differences in the ratio between the demand and supply of labor force, reflected in the difference between the level of wages in explaining the migration. (Arango, 2000: 284)

In countries and geographical areas characterized by a relative poverty of the capital, including low demand for labor compared to the supply, the wage will be lower compared to that of the countries or spaces where the situation is the reverse, which is why the labor force will take advantage of its mobile character and will move to the areas of maximizing the economic profit. According to the proponents of these theories, international migration flows become mechanisms for balancing internal deficiencies in the global labor market.

Regarding the motivation of the individual (micro-level analysis), the decision to migrate is a rational one, the individual calculates, evaluates the monetary benefits of his action, respectively the wage, the possibility of obtaining an acceptable job at the

destination, to which one it also adds the benefits related to the quality of the environment (natural, cultural and social), as well as the structure of the opportunities to which the migrant will have access through migration, comparing them with those that they would obtain if they remained immobile, in the country of origin. At the same time, the individual takes into account the costs of travel, materialized in the cost of travel, of survival in the country of destination until finding a job, the difficulty of adapting to the new job, to a new labor market, and the effort to learn a new language and to adapt to a new culture, the psychological cost of breaking old relationships and establishing new relationships, as well as the losses suffered by one's own household by leaving the migrant. The decision to migrate is positive if the result of the calculation made by the individual is positive and will be oriented to the destination that will offer the highest reward in relation to the abilities of the individual. Migration thus becomes - Arango appreciates - a form of investment in human capital (Arango, 2000: 285)

The new theory of migration concerns the individual and his intention to migrate, in the larger context, taking into account his family, his position in the social structure and the prestige of the community. Thus, families or households make the decision to migrate some members adopting strategies to minimize the risk at home, counting on the money sent home by migrants. Second, the new theory introduces in the explanation of the decision to report the income of the household to the distribution of income within the community of origin, by introducing the concept of relative deprivation. Through the migration, in the communities of origin imbalances occur between the families with migrants, compared to the families without migrants who cannot cope with the constantly rising prices, as well as other economic factors. Therefore the factor that triggers the migration is constituted by the position that a household occupies from the point of view of the income in the structure of the community of origin and not the absolute income of the household (Constantinescu, 2002: 98).

*The segmented (dual) labor market is the theory that introduces into the analysis a new concept*, namely the dual labor market. It includes a primary sector, consisting of good working and promotion conditions and a secondary sector, with unskilled and unstable jobs, difficult or dangerous working conditions and poor upward mobility possibilities. The domestic workers avoid the jobs in the secondary sector due to the mentioned disadvantages, mainly of the low wages, preferring the unemployment. In these conditions immigrants become the most attractive workforce from the perspective of the employer, who no longer has to choose the strategy of increasing the salary, with negative consequences on inflation.

The development of the ethnic immigrant communities and the studies that were dedicated to them led to the identification of a third segment of the labor market: the ethnic (economic) enclave, "associated with the immigrant property firms". According to the mentioned theory, the particularity of the enclave is the combination of the characteristics of the primary and secondary sector, which creates new mobility opportunities for immigrants, as well as the possibility of using the previous investment in human capital, features present in the primary sector but absent in the secondary sector. (Doors, Wilson, 1996: 315)

**The theory of migration networks and social capital** was developed especially at the end of the last century and to overcome the reductionist theoretical perspective regarding the atomized migrant, broken by the context and the environment of origin. The empirical evidence of kinship networks, those based on their common origin and their

role, including in integrating individuals into the new destination environment, while maintaining them in relation to the old environment, the extent of clandestine forms of migration, the importance of family reunification, as and the inability of political factors to control migration flows has brought to the fore the issue of migrant networks (Gurak, Caces, 1992: 153-154; Faist, 1997; Massey, 1988: 396; Anghel and Horvath, 2009: 36).

The role of social and symbolic relationships in the community of origin consists in the fact that through them the links are established, the information is provided regarding the possibility of emigration for the potential migrants. Support is also provided for finding the safest and cheapest arrangements for overcoming entry bans in the country of destination. In addition, support is provided in order to find a job and a home and to provide livelihoods for a period of beginning of searches, but also to provide emotional and social support.

A more recent perspective on the approach and explanation of migration is represented by transnational theory, according to which transnationalism is a process during which migrants build social networks, which creates a link between the country of origin and the destination, the result of which is a new social figure, a new social actor, namely the "trans-migrant". Its main characteristics are the simultaneous participation in the two poles of the network (the country of origin and the destination) and the pendulatory movement of immigrants between them (Gluck, Basch, Szanton, 1995). This is why in this context a reassessment of the term migration or emigrant is needed, and a review of the idea that the migration process necessarily implies a place of origin and a place of destination. The trans-migrant lives a dual or parallel reality, gets to speak and think in two different languages and has constant and simultaneous residence in the country of origin and destination (Portes and Landolt, 1999).

The transnational process strengthens the relationship between the macro and micro levels of analysis, establishing the network in the complex of links that connect different countries. Three sectors of transnational activity were delimited: one economic, one political and one socio-cultural, each of these sectors showing different degrees of institutionalization. For example, from the economic point of view, from the commercial operators to the offices opened by banks in the countries of origin (see Western Union, Schmit&Smith, the bank of San Paolo, in Romania), from the political point of view, from the participation and financial support of the places. of origin and the election of their candidates in the elections in the country of origin, socio-culturally, from the traditional ethnic and cultural events in collaboration with the embassies of the countries of origin, etc. (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, 1999; Ambrosini, 2008)

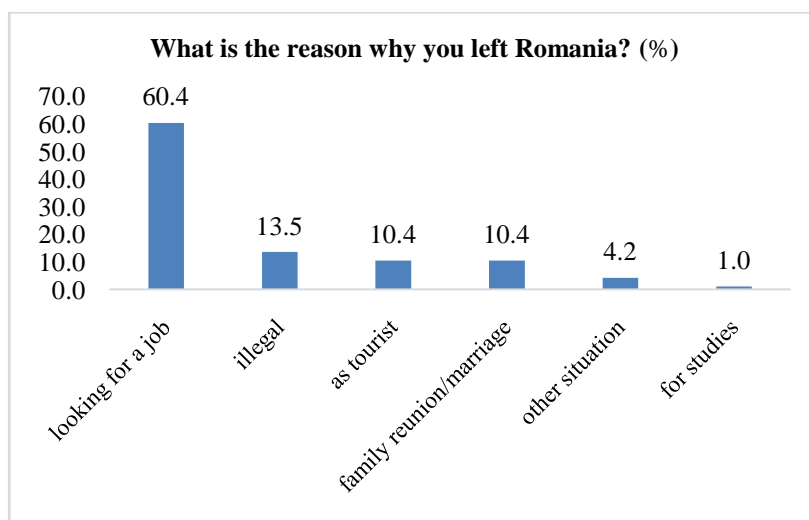
International migration is a complex process, which is modified and adapted to the changes that have taken place in all areas of society. Therefore, the process of analysis and explanation itself must be a dynamic one, none of the explanatory models developed at one point being sufficient for the explanation of a particularly complex and dynamic reality. However, each theoretical model introduces in the analysis certain concepts and perspectives that can be adapted to the concrete situations.

## **II. Sociological survey based on questionnaire applied in Turin, Italy**

We will present below some of the conclusions drawn from a sociological survey based on a questionnaire, applied in Italy, the Turin area, by cars administered by a number of 206 parishioners of the "40 Saints martyrs" churches from the Moncalieri Sevastia and " Holy Cross "from Turin, between January and June 2018.

Starting from the information we obtained by researching foreign and Romanian literature on the topic of international labor migration, we formulated several hypotheses regarding the causes of migration, characteristics evaluated positively by subjects in relation to the job in the country of destination, the social networks of migrants and the process of integrating them into the new socio-cultural environment, which we tested using statistical analysis and calculation of the correlation index through the chi square test.

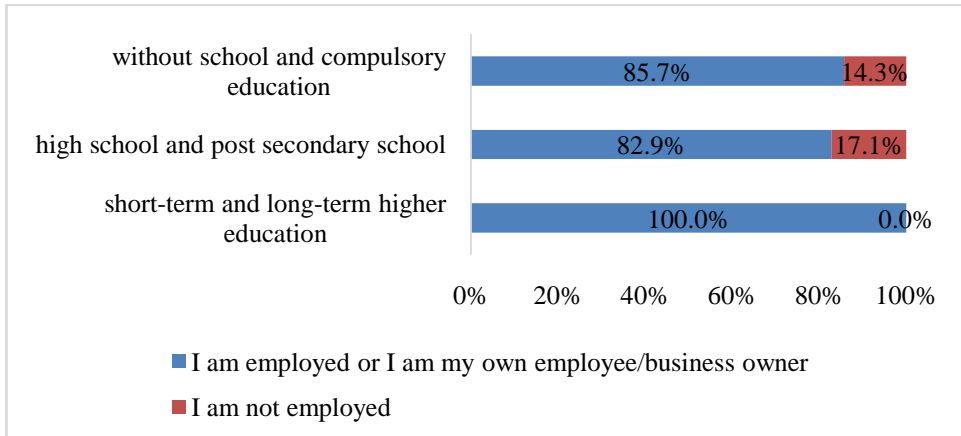
The first hypothesis, drawn in particular from the economic theories of migration, concerned the main cause that determined the migration of the investigated subjects. From this point of view the research data statistically confirmed the stated hypothesis, 60% of the investigated subjects stated that the main reason for their departure from the country was finding a job, followed, at a great distance by declaring other reasons (leaving as a tourist, for family reunification and, very few, for studies.



**Graph. no. 1.** Reasons for emigration

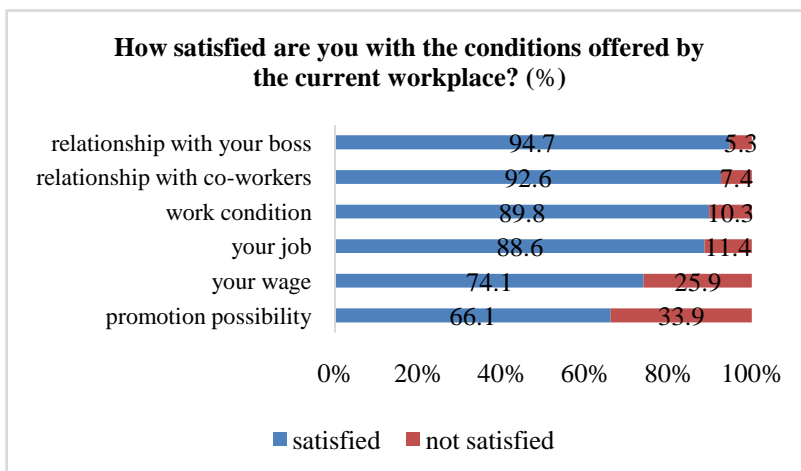
Hypothesis no. 2 which refers to the relationship between the type of job occupied by the migrant in the country of destination and the level of studies, starting from the assumption that people with longer-term studies will have the chance to occupy prestigious and better paid jobs, has not been statistically confirmed at the reference data level (Chi square = 0.66,  $p = 0.717$ ). On the other hand, the deeper analysis of the research data attests that the highest degree of employability (100%) is registered among the graduates of the general school and those without studies, and they are the ones who declare, in the highest proportion, they work several hours a week. It is possible that the high degree of employment, as well as the provision of overtime, can be explained by the occupation of this category of unskilled, poorly paid, unattractive jobs for domestic workers.

On the other hand, although the relationship tested is not statistically significant, (probably due to the relatively small number of subjects), all persons who declare that they are employers / own employees have higher education. We consider that the reported issues can confirm, even partially, a relationship of determination between the mentioned variables, respectively the level of education and the type of job occupied.



**Graph. no. 2.** The relationship between the level of education and occupational status

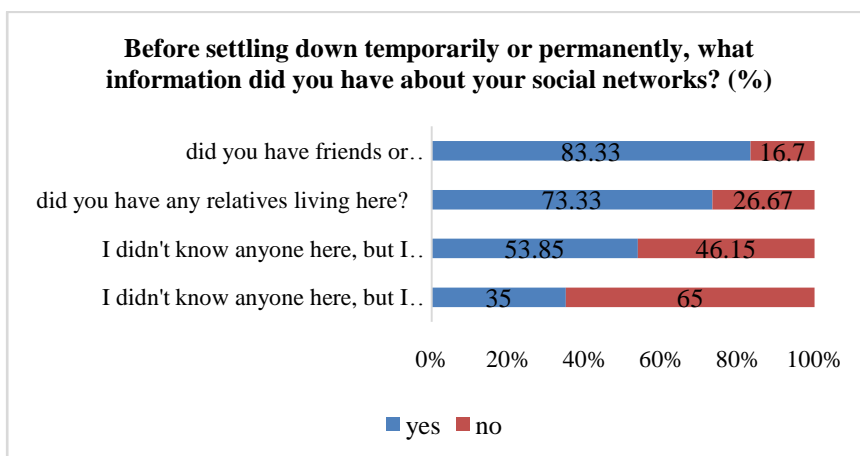
Another hypothesis suggested by the economic theories of labor migration and which places the higher profit obtained in the countries of destination compared to the one of the country of origin, as the main cause of the migration was invalidated in our research data. (Bekesi & Bekesi, 2017; Ștefănescu, Bekesi& Bekesi, 2017.) In this sense, it is noted that in the hierarchy of favorite attributes in relation to the occupied work place, the gain obtained and the possibility of promotion occupy the last two places, the first attributes valued higher by subjects being those regarding the friendly work environment, respectively good relations with the direct boss and with work colleagues, which suggests that one of the basic reasons for the migration of Romanians is precisely the dissatisfaction with the way in which the human being is valued in Romania, the defective management style promoted in the work groups, in general, the unfriendly atmosphere, with totalitarian perception of the people who decided to migrate from Romania. I think that from this point of view, the attitude of the Diaspora to the November 2019 presidential vote, which was a massive expression of the desire to change a certain style of governance and leadership, is generally symptomatic.



**Graph.no.3.** The degree of satisfaction in relation to the conditions offered by the workplace in Italy

An interesting hypothesis derived from the theory of social networks, regarding the essential role of family networks, of relatives and friends in the decision to migrate was confirmed by the research data.

The data suggest in this case that an important reason for the migration of the interviewed subjects is precisely the reunification of the family, since 74% of the subjects had, at the date of the migration, the respective spouse in the country of destination. In order, the brothers and sisters of the respondents (37%) were reasons but also an opportunity for migration, the last place (19%) being the parents of the respondents. It is possible that in this case the migration refers to a nearer period, the spouses, siblings or parents mentioned being those who already have at least one migration experience. The largest share of the respondents' friends is represented by friends of Romanian origin (over 85%). In the same sense, the most frequent interactions are made by subjects with relatives outside the household, friends, service colleagues (mostly Romanians, for the most part) or with those who attend the church.



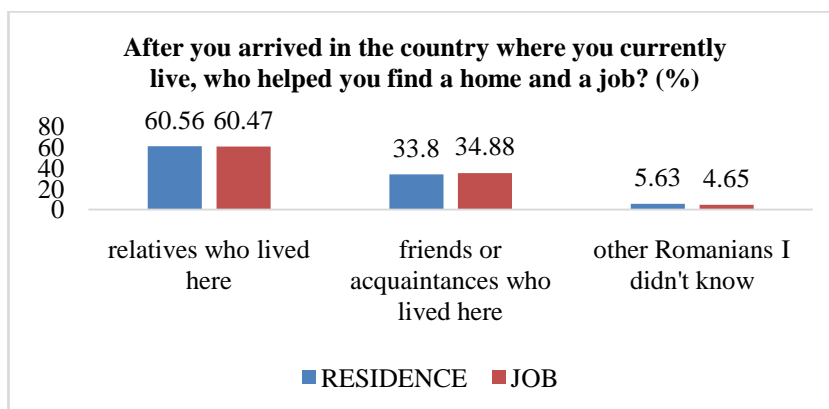
**Graph. no. 4.** Information on social networks in Italy, prior to migration

In the same theoretical framework of social networks theory, we formulated another hypothesis that was confirmed by the research data, regarding the support granted to Romanian migrants in Italy, the Turin area by family networks, relatives and friends of Romanian nationality. In this regard, most of the interviewed subjects (about 60%) stated that in finding a home and a job in the country of destination they were supported by relatives already established in Italy. On the second place in this support process to identify the home and a job are the friends and knowledge already established in Italy (invoked by about 33% of the subjects), on the last place (placed by 5-6% of the subjects) other Romanians who the subjects did not know in the country of origin, prior to the migration, were located.

The following hypotheses were initially formulated starting from the postulates of social capital theories, social system theories and transnational migration, targeting in particular the factors that favor the integration of migrants in the new socio-cultural contexts offered by the countries of destination, in the case of Italy, Turin area.

In this regard, we specify that we considered that the most relevant indicator for the expression of integration in the new community is the desire to remain permanently in the country of destination. Consequently, we will correlate the other variables, considered

as independent variables, with the expression of this intention, when we will test the hypotheses regarding the factors that contribute to the integration in the new community. In this regard, the research data showed that only a very small percentage of the subjects (6.06%) categorically express their intention to remain permanently in Italy. But if we add those who have not yet decided, the percentage increases to 27.27%, which is about one third. The other two thirds of the subjects express with certainty the intention to return to the country, in different time horizons (52.53%, yes, without knowing when; 14.14% - in, a few years and 6.06% in a few months)

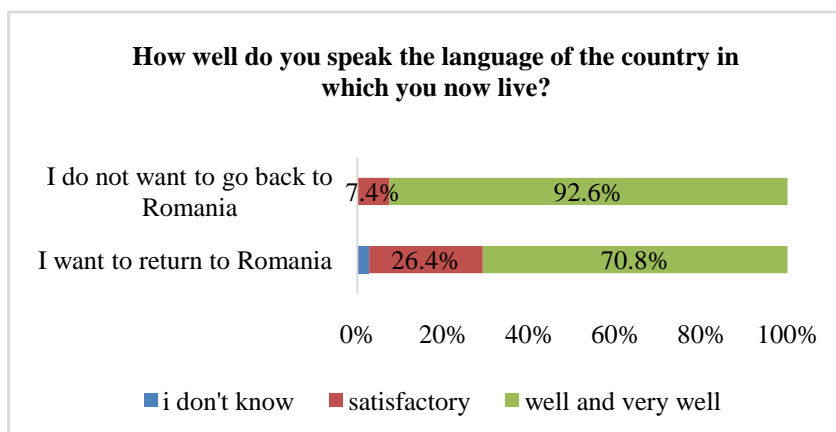


**Graph. no. 5.** Aid received in Italy for finding a home and a job

By formulating hypothesis number six we tested the relationship between the degree of mastery of the Italian language and the level of integration in the new socio-cultural context, measured by expressing the intention to stay in Italy. The responses of the subjects indicated firstly a high level of proficiency in the Italian language, materialized in the fact that 70% of the respondents know Italian and very well, without registering statistically significant differences between those who consider that they will return to Romania or not. (Chi square = 5.29,  $p = 0.071$ ). However, statistical measurements have shown that the share of those who know Italian and very well among those who have stated that they do not intend to return to Romania (a difference of over 20%) is higher; suggesting that concern to know the Italian language can be an important factor of integration in the new community.

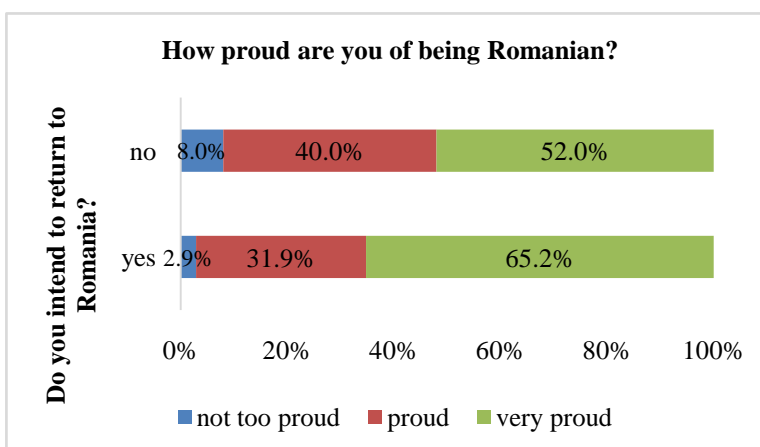
The theories of social capital and social networks postulate the relationship of strong determination, not only between the objective characteristics (such as the desire to earn and hope for a quieter life) and the intention to leave the country of origin and settle down permanently in one developed country, but also between certain subjective characteristics and making such a decision.





**Graph. no. 6.** Degree of knowledge of the Italian language

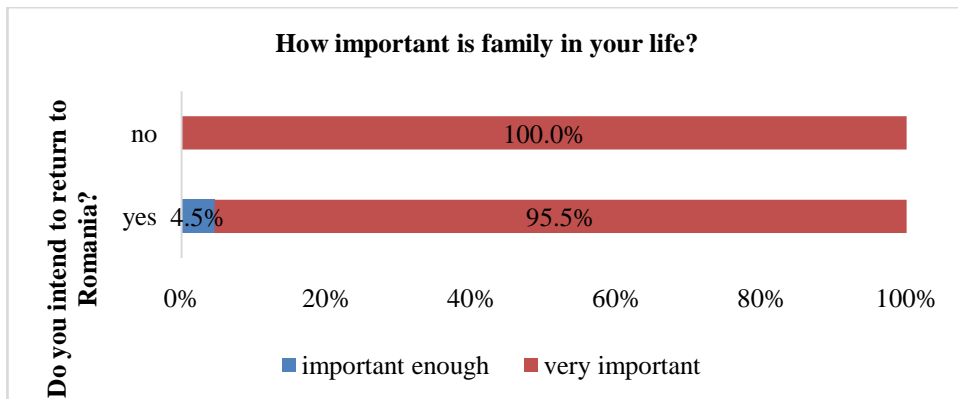
By hypothesis number seven we set out to test the relationship between the declared pride of being Romanian and the desire to remain permanently in Italy. Analysis of the data on this topic shows that regardless of whether or not they intend to remain in Italy, over 90% of the subjects express their feeling of satisfaction in relation to belonging to the Romanian ethnicity, although most of those who are very proud to be Romanians, are those who intend to return to Romania (the differences observed by about 10% are also preserved for those who are proud to be Romanian). There were no significant differences between those who intend to return to Romania and those who do not intend to evaluate the satisfaction of ethnicity (Chi square = 1.99,  $p = 0.368$ ). However, most of those who are very proud to be Romanian are those who intend to return to Romania.



**Graph. no. 7.** Expressing the pride of being Romanian and the intention to return to the country

Another hypothesis tested through the research data concerns the relationship between the values of the subjects and their intention to return or not to the country of origin, positing the idea that those who wish to return to the country would have more conservative values that is in their system of values the family and the orthodox religion. In this case, also, there were no statistically significant differences between the two variables in relation to the intention to return to the country. A large majority, over 90% of

the investigated subjects, place the family and the religion in the first place in their values system, the family even outpacing the religion by 4%, which is why, within the explanatory framework proposed by us, we could consider them conservative. On the other hand, even though the differences between those who intend to stay in Italy and those who wish to return to the country are not statistically significant, observational data show that those who want to stay in Italy are more attached to family values ( the differences being from 8.0 to 2.9%). The explanation of the phenomenon may derive, on the one hand from the relatively small number of subjects in the sample, as well as from the fact that all subjects are orthodox believers.



**Graph. no. 8.** The importance of the family and the desire to return to the country

By the last hypothesis, which was confirmed statistically, we tested the relationship between the intention to return to Romania and the well-being perceived in the environment offered by the country of destination. Testing the hypothesis first of all allowed us to ascertain the existence of a much higher material situation of the Romanian migrants from Italy compared to the Romanians from Romania, in the sense of placing them for the most part in a consistent medium blanket (64.56%), compared to those in Romania which are predominantly placed in the poor blanket (65%).

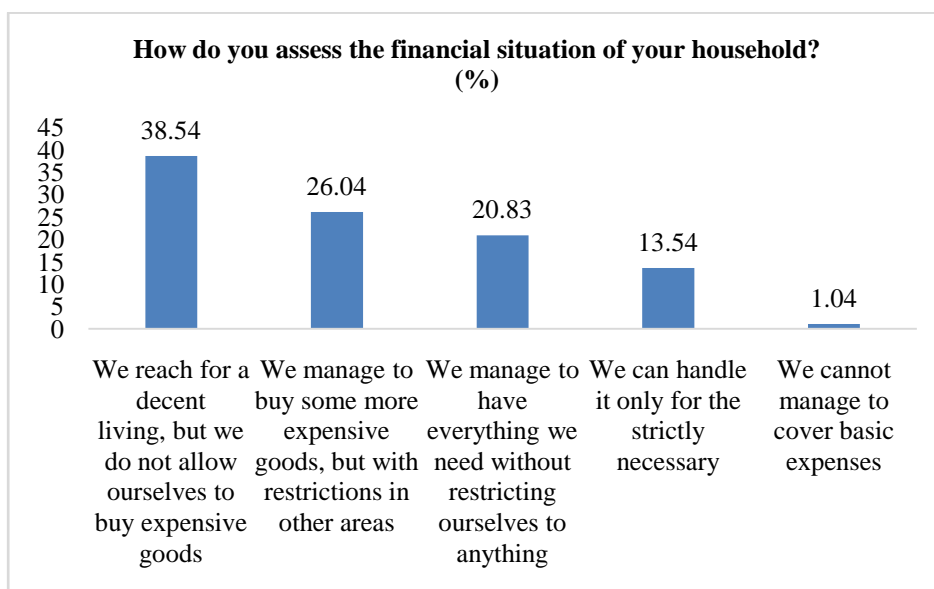
**Table no. 1.** Estimating family income in relation to daily needs: %

- \* **Poverty** (the money does not reach the strict requirements)
- \* **At the limit, with the risk of poverty** (the money comes only for the strictly necessary)
- \* **Decency, to the limit** (the money comes for a decent living, but it does not allow something more expensive) ..... 36
- \* **Prosperity with effort** (they manage to buy some more items expensive, but with effort)..... 9
- \* **Abundance** (they can get everything they need, without too much effort) ..... 1

*Source:* Mărginean,2010 .

On the other hand, the statistical data shows, confirming the initial hypothesis, that the subjects who express their intention to return with certainty to Romania are recruited from those with a lower material situation, which means that those who return are those who are not very satisfied with the welfare offered in the country of destination.

*The limits of the research consisted mainly of the relatively small number of subjects (206) whose answers were validated for processing, although initially 500 questionnaires were distributed. The main reason for submitting questionnaires derives from the self-administration completion process. It would be advisable to administer the questionnaires by the survey operators, using a statistical sampling step, which could be an essential condition for ensuring representativeness, including by completing the answers to all questions. On the other hand, the fact that all the subjects are parishioners of the two Orthodox churches means that the results of the research can be generalized only to this category of migrants. However, we consider that it is necessary that the research results be complemented by others obtained through qualitative studies (interviews or focus groups).*



**Graph. no.9.** Self-assessment of household financial situation

## Conclusions

Of the nine hypotheses tested in this case we find that only three have been statistically confirmed. This is first and foremost the main cause of migration, which is finding a job in the country of destination. It is interesting, however, that, although according to the theses of economic theories on migration, the main characteristic of the workplace agreed by migrants is the higher wage in the country of destination compared to that obtained in the country of origin. The interviewed subjects placed in the first places in their preferences regarding the attributes of the workplace over those related to the friendly atmosphere at the workplace, respectively the relationships with the direct boss and with the colleagues, which may indicate just a strong dissatisfaction of the migrants for the authoritarian style and the cool atmosphere at work.

- Another confirmed hypothesis refers to the important role of networks of relatives and friends both in facilitating the migration process and in integrating into the new community through the support of finding a home and a job.

- With regard to the relationship between perceived well-being and the desire to return to the country, a strong statistical relationship was highlighted, in the sense that the

vast majority of the subjects with reduced welfare in the country of destination express their desire to return to Romania.

- Although the other hypotheses were not confirmed statistically based on the reference data, trends were observed in the sense of the expectations formulated: all subjects occupying employer positions have higher education; the highest proportion of the subjects expressing the intention to stay in the country of destination know the language of the country well and very well; the family, considered a conservative value, is supported by all subjects who express their intention to remain in the country of destination; the feeling of satisfaction of being Romanian is more strongly expressed by the subjects who intend to return to the country.

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