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SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, RELIGIOUS PRESENCE AND URBAN VISIBILITY THE CASE OF ROMANIAN MIGRANTS IN CATALONIA

Adriana Suiu¹

Abstract. When they decided to leave their homeland, the migrants prepare their luggage with everything they need in order to start a new life. They also take, without realizing, their culture, traditions, gastronomy, customs and religion.

The phenomenon of migration from Romania to Spain should be also analyzed from the cultural and religious point of view because migrants carry with them their own culture and religion. When they arrive in Spain, Romanians are interested to practice their own religion. They started to constitute a lot of churches in Spain. There are Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Neo-Protestant churches. The Neo-Protestant churches include: Baptist churches, Adventism, Pentecostalism, and Evangelism. The church managed to bring together the members of the Romanian community in Spain. Beside the Orthodox community, the Neo-Protestant community has had an important development in Romanian community.

The protagonists of this study are people who emigrated from Romania and have become quite a large community in Catalonia. The object of the study is the knowledge of socio-economic and religious activities and the evaluation of the urban visibility of the Romanian migrants who have settled in Catalonia. The authors also pay particular attention to the following issues as regards the visibility of Romanians in Catalonia: the symbiosis between the Romanian population and Catalan population (the linguistic similarity), the syncretism, the importance of the religious practice, the opening up spaces for practicing various activities, the preservation of national identity, the cultural contamination, the way the migrants keep in touch with their relatives from Romania, the gastronomic habits, the presence of Romanian institutions and organizations.

Keywords: socio-economic activities, religious presence, urban visibility, Romanian migrants, Catalonia

1. Introduction

The topic is one of interest in the context of current demographic changes and migration phenomenon recorded in the European space. Migration as human phenomenon is a constant of the historical evolution of mankind, and migration flows have been increasing along the history. They have diversified and expanded from the spatial distribution point of view and reached the highest levels after the World War II, along with the powerful affirmation of the long-distance transportation systems.

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After the fall of communism in 1989, migration from Romania has become a worrying phenomenon. The emigration of the Romanians to other EU countries is one of large-scale processes that Romania has known in the last two decades.

Among the European countries, Spain is preferred by the Romanian migrants because of similarities of language, culture, and because the Spanish market does not require highly skilled labor. There are 17 autonomous communities in Spain (Figure 1), and the most numerous Romanian migrants are present in three autonomous communities: Madrid, Valencia and Catalonia (Viruela 2008: 187).

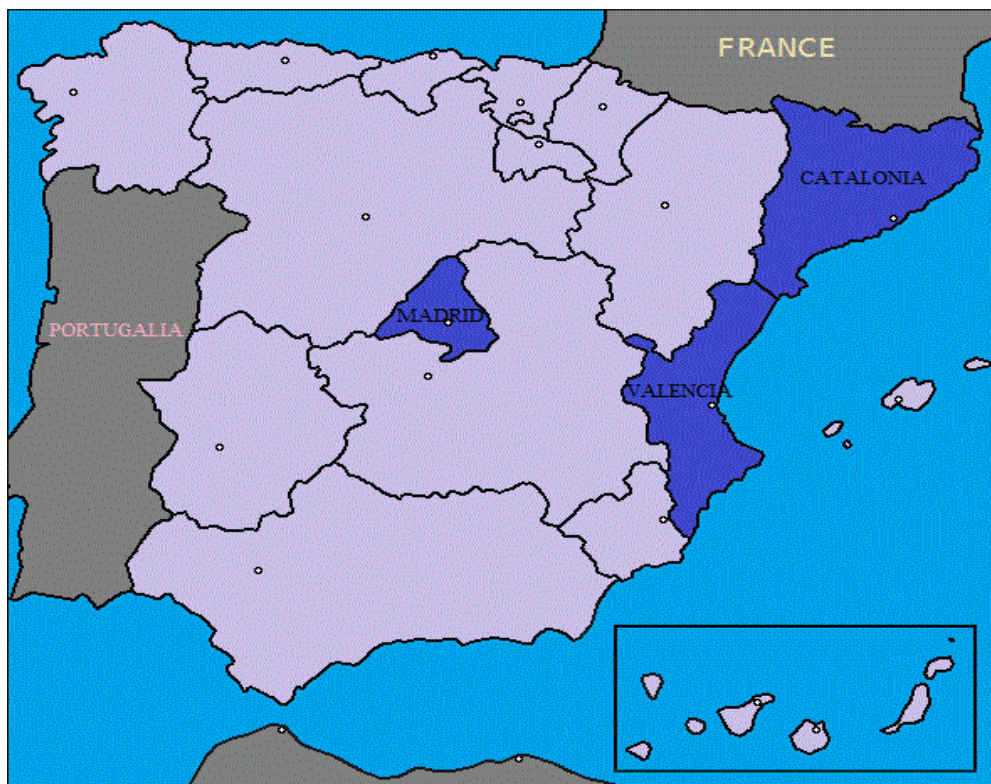


Figure 1 Spanish Autonomous Communities

"For that purpose, the migrants who incorporate themselves to a society, bring with them their own culture and they even try to forget it in order to incorporate into the new one. This is in contrast to the own principles of coexistence, respect and solidarity." (Cristea: 1). I chose as area of study, the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, because of the fact that this is the only area of Spain where the number of Romanian migrants has increased in the last years. The researches related to the knowledge of the socio-economic activities, the religious activities and the evaluation of urban visibility of Romanian migrants settled in Catalonia, are at the beginning and they are insignificant.

2. Methodology

For the choice of the territory research, I used statistical data from official websites of national statistical offices in Romania (www.insse.ro), Spain (www.ine.es) and Catalonia (www.idescat.cat). In the data processing I referred to the evolution of inhabitants in Romania, the evolution of the migrant population in Spain, the evolution of Romanian

migrants in Spain, the evolution of Romanian migrants in Catalonia and the weight of Romanian migrants in Catalonia.

The observation presumes a direct relationship with the studied environment. I have adapted to the social world I have researched. My personal involvement in dealing with the public and authorities to observe external features, location and dimensions of the migration phenomenon have had a very special importance. I attended meetings of the religious denominations and I conducted interviews to the parsons to find out the numerical size of the Romanians practitioners within these zones, but also the number of the places of worship. I studied the Catalan dictionary in order to discover the symbiosis between Romanian population and Catalan population (linguistic similarity).

I used fieldwork to know closely the activities of Romanian social-economic migrants, but also for the knowledge of the common values/close between Romanians and Catalans. I observed the Catalan typical gastronomy by consulting and tasting menus at the profile restaurants.

3. Why Catalonia?

The Census taken in 1992 indicated that Romanian population was the largest in Catalonia. Comparing 1992 Census data with 2011 Census data, I found out that the stable Romanian decreased with about 3.000.000 people (see fig. 1).

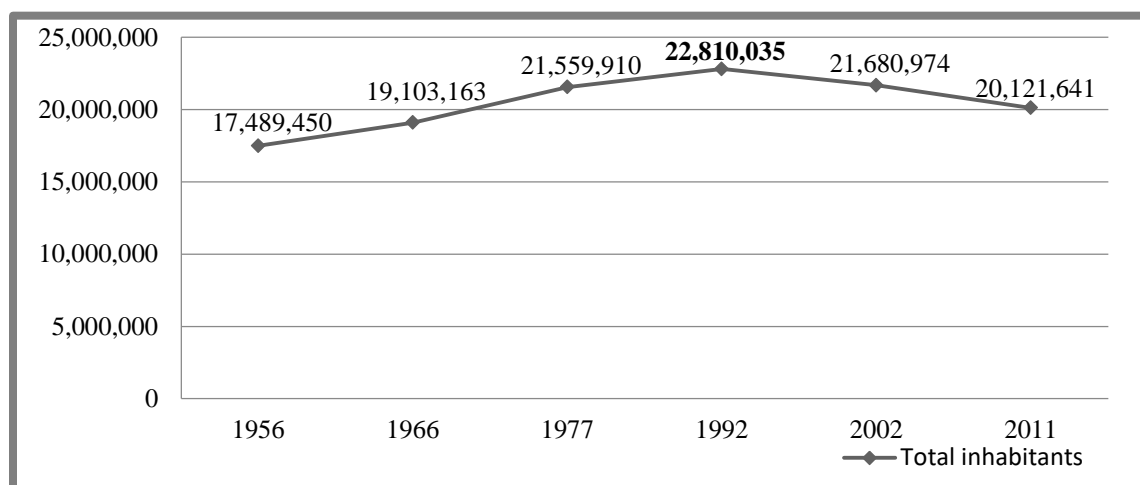


Figure 1 Residents in Romania (Source: www.insse.ro)

Analyzing the evolution of population of Spain (fig. 2), I noticed a growth to almost 7 million people, including the immigrant population (almost 5 million) between 1998 and 2014.

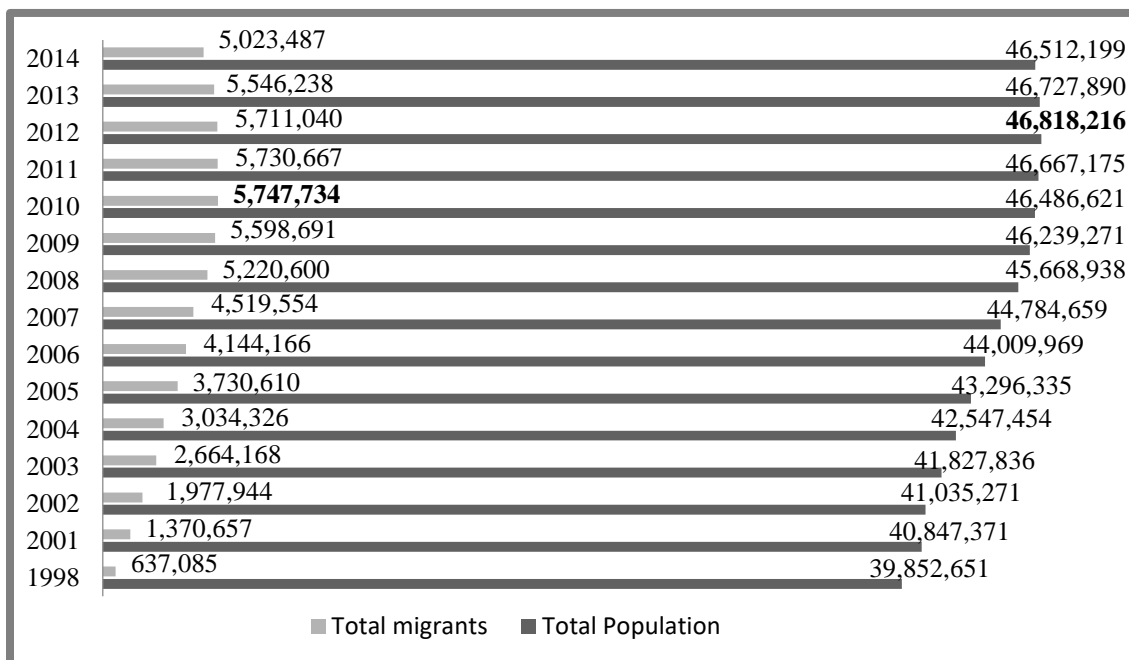


Figure 2 The evolution of indigenous and migrant population in Spain
(Source: www.ine.es)

Analyzing the evolution of Romanian migrants in Spain, I found out that their number has not ceased to grow until 2012. There is a decrease of the Romanian migrants after 2012 (fig. 3).

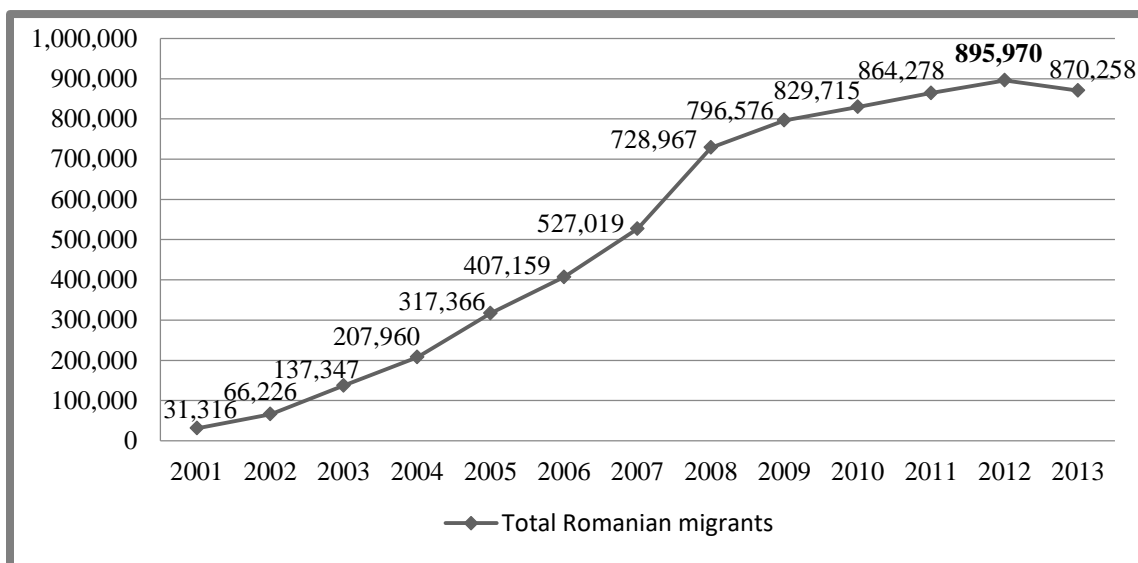


Figure 3 Evolution of Romanian migrants in Spain (Source: www.ine.es)

Even if the number of Romanian migrants in Spain has begun to decline starting 2012, especially after the crisis which has begun in Spain in 2008, the number of Romanian

migrants in the Province of Catalonia has tripled in a relatively short period of time from 28 087 in 2006 to 123 747 in 2014 (fig. 4).

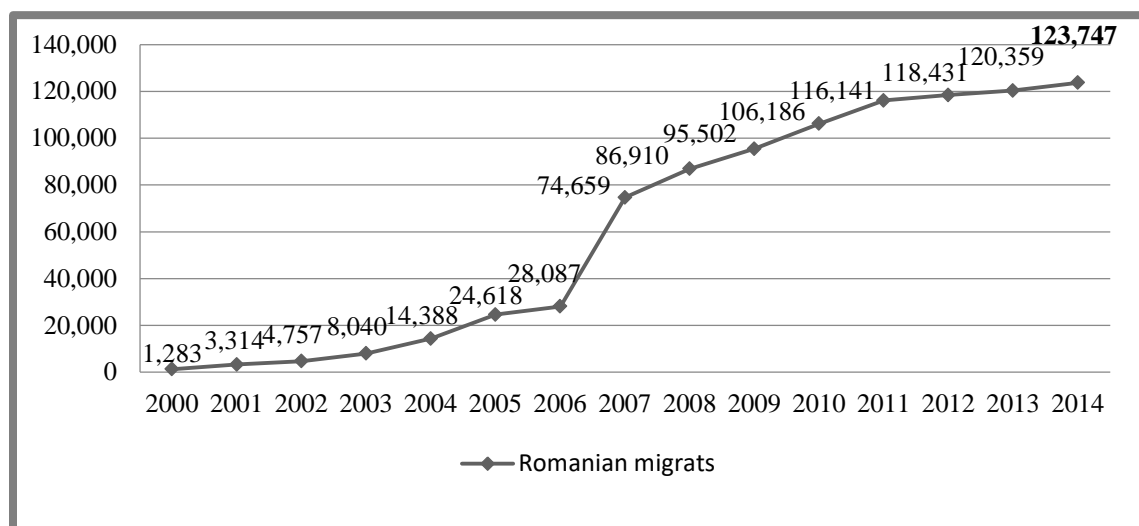


Figure 4 The evolution of Romanian migrants in Catalonia (Source: www.idescat.cat)

From the fourth provinces of Catalonia (Barcelona, Girona, Tarragona and Lleida), The Romanian migrants population is the largest in Barcelona. Romanian migrants number had increased from 684 in 2000 to 44 265 in 2014, by 43 000 within 14 years. The most Romanian migrants live in the capital city: Barcelona (see Table 5).

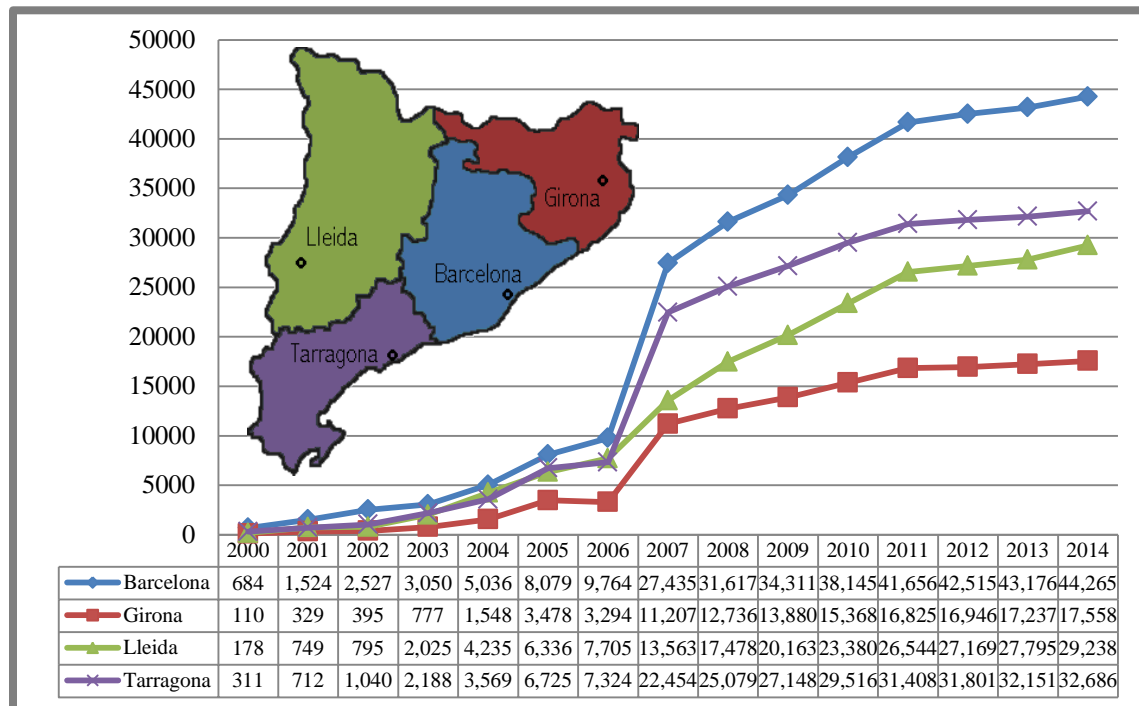


Figure 5 The evolution of Romanian migrants from the provinces of Catalonia (Source: www.idescat.cat)

4. Activities

The activities of Romanian migrants through associations, churches, shops, restaurants, radio and television programs are very numerous. This explains the extent of the urban visibility of the Romanian community urban community in Spain, unassailably Catalonia.

4.1. Social activities

There were created various Romanian associations, which seek to promote cooperation between Catalonia and Romania, Romanian cultural values, to support and organize cultural and educational activities. Among these associations, the most active one is the Romanian Association of Catalonia (ASOCROM) founded in 1999. (www.asocrom.org), Romanian-Spanish Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (COCITRE) founded in 2008 (www.cocitre.org) and Romanian Cultural Centre of Catalunya (CCR) founded in 2009 (<https://casaromania.wordpress.com/>).

4.2 Cultural activities

The cultural activities are represented by: photographic exhibitions (Romanian General Consulate in Barcelona organized with the support of other institutions of Spain a photographic exhibition "Romania Flashback" dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the end of the Communist era in Southeast Europe), Romanian language courses (organized on September 28, 2015 - December 10, 2015), festivals, art exhibitions, organizing various activities, translations from Romanian into Catalan.

The International Film Festival of Authors, held in Barcelona (2014) was represented by the Romanian community in the film "When Evening Falls on Bucharest or Metabolism" (translated in Spanish "Cae la noche en Bucarest") and the International Folklore Festival "Jornades Internacionals Folkloriques" from 24 September 2015 was represented by "Timișul" Folk Assembly.

The Romanian Orthodox Art and Architecture Exhibition "Martyrium" was an event that took place at the Exhibition Hall of Sant Pau del Camp Monastery in Barcelona during the period 12.04.2014 - 12.30.2014, commemorating the 300th anniversary of the martyrdom of Constantine Brâncoveanu and also the 25 years since the fall of the communism.

The Orthodox Church has been involved in various activities: The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Spain and Portugal in 2015 organized summer camps and Christmas carols concerts, The Romanian Orthodox Parish of Barcelona St. Gheorghe organized concerts with Gheorghe Zamfir (25 September 2011) and Tudor Gheorghe (3 December 2011) on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of its establishment and The Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Europe organized Christmas carols concerts with Stefan Hrușcă in Barcelona (12 December 2015).

Xavier Montoliu Pauli from Badalona (a city situated close to the metropolis Barcelona) and Corina Oproae translated from Romanian into Catalan the first anthology about one hundred poems (Table 2), written by the writer Marin Sorescu, published by Leonard Muntaner in 2013 in Barcelona.

Table 2 Example of the translated poems

Romanian	Catalan	English
<i>Am zărit lumina...</i>	<i>He albirat llum...</i>	<i>I saw the light...</i>
Am zărit lumina pe pământ	He albirat llum a la terra	I saw the light on Earth
Și m-am născut și eu	i jo també he nascut	And I was also born
Să văd ce mai faceți	per veure com esteu	To see how are you
Sănătoși? Voinici?	sans i estalvis?	Heathy? Sturdy?
Cum o mai duceți cu fericirea?	Com aneu de felicitat?	How happy are you?

4.3 Economic activities

Barcelona city is divided in 10 districts. The presence of Romanian economic activities is noticed mainly in the Eixample district. If we walk in the Eixample district, starting from Sants Station on Provença Street, to Sagrada Familia Cathedral, we see a lot of activities carried out by the Romanian community.

This location is in front of Modelo Prison in Barcelona so that it is not very expensive to rent a shopping. Atlassib was the first company that opened a branch in Provença no. 38, where Romanian migrants from different regions of Catalonia have been coming to buy bus tickets for Romania or to send packages to their family from Romania. This area is quite expensive so that Romanians do not afford to rent a house. Even this area actually is not inhabited by Romanian people, it is well known by *its economic presence that enjoys and involves* thousands of Romanian migrants. "In other words, Romanians are visible in these areas by their language and also by shops and service providers." (Sandu 2009: 14).

This influx of people made Valentin Radu to open a Dracula Restaurant, a Romanian typical restaurant, on Provença Street no. 18. These commercial areas on the ground floor of the blocks of flats situated in front of the Modelo Prison were gradually rented by Romanian entrepreneurs who have opened shops with typical products from Romania (Unirea - Provença Street no. 12, Mercatrom - Provença Street no. 40, The Taste of Home - Entença Street no. 153 at the corner of Provença Street no. 50), Broadcast television by satellite receiver MaxDSS (Provença street no. 25) and Restaurant Transilvania (Provença Street no. 99). The customers of the restaurants and shops are not only Romanian migrants, but the vast majorities of them are actually Spanish customers, who are attracted by the good taste of Romanian dishes.

The Farmec Company, the largest cosmetics manufacturer in Romania and one of the largest in Southeast Europe, (street Provença no. 42) opened the first store in Spain in September 19th 2015. This space is divided with The Romanian Cultural Center from Catalonia (CCR). The Bârsani Brothers Transport Company is situated very close to this area (Entença Street no. 149), even if they have a route for packages throughout the Province of Catalonia, for those who cannot come to Barcelona.

5. Religious presence

The members of the ethnic and religious minorities were among the first Romanian migrants. The communist regime could not annihilate Romanians' religious beliefs so that they have flourished over the years. The church is a place where people meet and socialize, exchange information, organize and talk about jobs, family, country and politics.

The Romanian Orthodox Church is represented by 103 churches throughout Spain, of which 12 churches are in the Province of Catalonia. The Romanians from all over the Province of Barcelona are coming at St. George Romanian Orthodox Parish in Barcelona (the current dwelling is rented). The first private church has been building by the Parish on a plot of 400 square meters starting 2007 (fig. 6).



Figure 6 The building of the first orthodox church - November 2015

The Baptist Church is represented by 16 Romanian churches throughout Spain, including 1 church located in the Province of Catalonia, with an attendance of approximately 600 people. Information was given by Pastor Nicholas Tureatca, who answers the following questions:

Have people become more religious in Spain? "...the believers had to be practical, to experience God's help, what they knew virtually had to apply in everyday life and this gives, strengthened the faith of everyone."

What was the tendency for the number of believers? "The number of the parishioners decreased in 2008-2010 because of the departure of some members, but many of them returned after 2011."

The Pentecostal Church is represented by 107 Romanian churches throughout Spain, of which 17 churches are in the Province of Catalonia, with an attendance of about 2,300 people. Information was given by Pastor Cornel Lupean, who answered the following questions:

Have people become more religious in Spain? "... Yes, they have. Their needs and especially the adaptation process have strengthened everyone's faith."

What was the tendency for the number of believers? "In recent years the number of members decreased because some of them (10-15%) moved to Germany, England or returned to Romania."

The Adventist Church is represented by 24 Romanian churches throughout Spain, of which one is located in the Province of Catalonia, with an attendance of about 200 people. Information was given by Pastor Vitali Viorica, who answered to the following questions:

Have people become more religious in Spain? "...faith is something personal ... I think some believers, have become more devoted, others less..."

What was the tendency for the number of believers? "In the last 5 years the number of believers decreased slightly. They went to Romania and other countries because of the economic crisis (2008-2010), but many of them returned after 2011."

From the statements of the ministers of the three religious communities in Barcelona resulting that most believers have come religious, because of the problems encountered in everyday life. The Romanian migrants belonging to those religious communities, who left Spain because of the crisis between 2008 and 2011, have returned to Catalonia.

6. Common/similar values

As Catalan and Romanian derived from Latin language, there are more than 300 common words and almost 3000 similar words according with internet website <http://www.diccionari.cat>. I identified 180 common words (Table 2). Many Romanian migrants have observed "the large number of common words that exist in Catalan and Romanian languages." (Pajares 2006: 168). Most of them found out this when they arrived in Catalonia. Other people say: "... I would have liked to learn Catalan first, because it is more similar to Romanian. I could not do this because everyone talked Castilian to me." (Pajares 2006: 380).

The languages derived from Latin are: Italian, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and Romanian. Catalan is spoken in four countries: Andorra (official), France (Roussillon - Southern France), Italy (Alghero - Sardinia), Spain: Catalonia, the Balearic Islands (Mallorquin), Valencia (Valencia), Murcia (region Carxe). "The Romanian case is quite special because they can learn easily Catalan and Castilian, although they initially choose the first one." (Pajares 2006: 377).

Table 2 Common words in Romanian and Catalan (Source <http://www.diccionari.cat>)

abdomen	barba	doctorand	lateral	pastor	suc
abdominal	bloc	document	legal	piscina	sud
absent	bou	dominant	lent	planeta	sufix
absolut	cadet	dur	literal	porc	suma
absurd	calcar	elefant	literatura	port	superior
accident	cangur	emigrant	manual	pot	talent
accidentat	cap	familiar	material	prefabricat	taxa
acord	carnaval	fascinant	matern	prefix	taxi
activ	cartografia	fatal	meu	prima	tegument
actor	cartoteca	figura	moneda	profund	telefonie
actual	casa	figurant	mort	pruna	telegrama
acumulat	cinema	filmoteca	mortal	radiat	tema
aeroport	cinematografia	foc	motor	radio	terminal
alfabet	circ	foca	nas	radioactiv	terminat
amant	clar	fum	natura	rampa	testament
ambulant	cobalt	fus	natural	recipient	tir
animal	complicat	gel	nord	regiment	tot
anormal	condiment	general	normal	restaurant	tractor
antena	considerat	geografia	nou	rima	trampa
antic	context	glacial	obligat	ritual	turc
apartament	corb	gol	ocupant	ruta	tutor
arc	curs	hotel	ocupat	sac	univers
arma	decapant	import	olimpiada	sauna	vaca
aroma	dement	indiferent	original	sec	vals
asfalt	departament	infantil	ornament	sergent	vapor
atac	detergent	infern	ou	servit	vas
atent	diagonal	insistent	parc	silueta	vertical
aval	diamant	instrument	par-impar	situat	viu

bac banana	doctor doctoral	integrat joc	parlament pasta	social soldat	zebra zero
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In sports, especially football (Figure 6), the similarity of colours yellow and red used by football teams in Timisoara and Barcelona, is due to Ferenc Plattkó (Hungarian origin), the first trainer of the "FC Ripensia Timișoara" football team. He played as a goalkeeper for FC Barcelona and later on he became the coach of the team. The shapes and colours of the both football teams Steaua Bucharest F.C. Barcelona and are very similar.

F.C.Barcelona



F.C.Ripensia



Steaua București



Figure 7 Football teams logos

In gastronomy, the Romanian sausages "cârnăciori" and Catalan "llonganissa" ("fuet") are very similar dishes. Another custom that exists in Catalonia is serving baked bread with oil and garlic, and baking peppers and eggplants, which cleans the skin and serve sliced, and in Romania is ripe eggplant salad with peppers. Cutting the pig is another habit that can still be found in many places in Catalonia.

7. Communication and information

Romanian General Consulate in Barcelona has jurisdiction over the following autonomous communities and provinces: Catalonia, Barcelona, Girona, Lerida, Tarragona and Balearic Islands. The Consulate is dealing with: information for Romanian citizens and foreigners, Romanian exports promotion and attracting Spanish investment.

Along the time various radio and television programmers were produced. News programmer in Romanian "Info Romania" broadcasted by Barcelona TV (the program was part of the "Info Idiomes" received the National Award for Culture for Media Communications, which is the most important prize of Catalonia. Unfortunately at the end of 2010 the programmer was not produced anymore.) "Punt 7 Radio" broadcasted "Romanians in Catalunya", was Romanian - Catalan bilingual programmer about culture, music, news, traditions and history (broadcasted every Thursday at 21:30 between 2008-2009). „Tertulia de guyris” TV programmer was broadcasted during the "Els Quatre Matins of bandes" programmer in Catalan and Spanish on RTVE Radio 4 . It was a programmer of social and political analysis with reference to Romanian, Eastern people and migrants, broadcasted between 2008-2009. Radio Estel broadcasted "Els Germans Orientals", a religious programmer that described spiritual realities of Romanians, every Thursday evening from 19:30. All these programmers stopped to broadcast because of the lack of funds.

Conclusions

The fact that Spain has one of the biggest Romanian communities has fostered the formation of some strong and large institutional networks, which supports and promotes the values of Romanian culture. Their associations, cultural, social and economic activities, religion and common/similar values (Latin origin of languages, cuisine celebrations) and

media, favored integration and knowledge of the culture, customs, religions and Romanian gastronomy.

Romanian migration to Spain should not be taken as a temporal phenomenon, because a quarter of this population consists of persons aged 0-14 years, which means that most were born in Spain. These children are "a second generation" of Romanian immigrants (Buitan: 11) who educates and will educate Spain. We have to offer to the new generation the possibility to know their roots, culture, customs, cuisine, religion, in order to distinguish between their own culture and the Spanish one.

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