

Ethnographic report: romanian immigrant essay



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The one-hour interview was conducted on July 17th 2013 of a middle-aged Romanian woman going by the pseudonym ' Rachel'. Her story is an interesting and exciting one where her and her husband are able to escape their country in order to find better opportunity elsewhere.

The mission for Rachel and her husband was to move to a country where their highly-specialized skill sets would be better appreciated. The country of Romania was under communist rule from 1947 till 1989 when the system eventually toppled under the dictatorship-like rule of the Ceausescu's. At the time of Rachel's immigration she had recently graduated a coveted study at a more prestigious university under the major of " Cybernetics". which was explained as more of an Economics Accountant, and her husband was a practicing physician. They lived together in the capital of Bucharest and her husband would work at near- by villages making house calls and taking care of the people of those smaller villages. Unlike in America where healthcare work is a guaranteed profitable occupation in Romania it was simpler at the time and the exchange of service was commonly meats, reciprocating service work, milk and cheeses, knit clothing, and other favors.

One of the reasons for this is that the villagers were generally poor people who simply didn't have the means of paying in money currency. At that time the country's richest individuals were those closest associated with the communist Party and they reaped the benefits much like the Caste System or being born of royal blood out of England or the Middle East. This meant that while the majority suffered from lack of resources the wealthy lived lavishly. Rachel and her husband, even with their degrees and careers, didn't

even own a vehicle. They mainly used trains, buses, or carpoled if someone within the group owned a vehicle.

The people of Romania apparently had fun in the same way that western cultured people do - they would go out into the city and visit discos, landmarks, cafes, movies, or theater shows. There wasn't and still isn't any type of restriction on how men and women should look and act due to religious rules, or cultural customs. The style eplicated that of the richer countries at the time such as Russia and America. The people of Romania speak the language known as Romanian. It's a Romance language dating back to the B. C. era. I'm told it's similar to Portugese, Italian, Spanish, French, and some other languages. The entire country basically communicates with the same language, varying a bit from region to region based on sayings and pronunciations.

Romanians took pride in their academic accomplishments above all else. The idea was that if you could prove to be one of the smartest and most capable then erhaps a person holding a position of power would invite you to work close to the Communist Party. This seemed like the only way, especially by the 1980s, for an individual to have a good life. Having fewer positions available after graduating high school a lot of young Romanians would go straight to work or were drafted by the military. It was expected to serve at least 1-2 years in the military unless you had a physical excuse or were a college student so to many it was very important to accomplish high grades in order to go to a University. Even with the expectations and assumptions of the general population when it came to career opportunity many Romanians,

including Rachel and her husband, found out that even with being highly educated a person would still make quite a low income and the wealth always ended up going to the people ruling the country.

This created the tough decision to bribe their way out of Romania (bribing is effective in that country) and into Greece for a few years until eventually being accepted VISA's to move to the United States. Leaving the family behind to maintain and care for one another the two independently moved to the Los Angeles district in 1990 and having already known the language from studying it in school quickly took whatever jobs were available to them. Rachel described the assimilation as being tough. The people of Romania had a notion of what America and its people were and that wasn't what Rachel and her husband came to find out. Having moved in an area being highly populated to Middle Eastern and Mexican immigrants it was difficult only having one another to communicate with and have that sense of belonging.

Romanians don't really move into an identified district when they migrate to America the way that Orientals, Russians, Persians, and Mexicans do so in turn they may have been the biggest minority in their new-found land. Back in Romania it wasn't always guaranteed that living quarters would have electricity, or proper maintenance but with American regulations and standards the two at least found some comfort in their new citizen rights. Capitalism was also an exciting opportunity since there wasn't necessarily a distribution of wealth assigned by the government but rather the opportunity to work as hard as you want or can in order to bring back as much as possible and eventually within the decade Rachel's husband was a practicing

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physician again but this time with all due respect from a system that considers the occupation with more entitlement due to the demands. So now, twenty plus years later and with American citizenship, Rachel no longer feels like a minority in the States and has all the freedom to pursue all the things that America has to offer without the worry that the government will interfere with her lifestyle. This is the story of the Romanian immigrant.