

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES IN A EUROPE UNDER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CRISIS CASE STUDY: CRIMEAN TURK-TATARS OF ROMANIA

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Abstract

This paper gives an outlook on social issues with the Crimean Turk-Tatar community and their social and educational challenges in a Europe under social and economic crisis. This research attempts to focus on Crimean Turk-Tatars social issues rather than on historical and political environment, but they cannot be separated.

The aim of my research is to identify the influence of indicators as - historical and political environment, to underline social issues, and how they influenced community's day-to-day life.

This study is based on face-to-face interviews conducted in February, July and August 2016, participant observation and content analysis of documents with the National Archives of Romania, Constanța County District and Constanța County Library "Ioan N. Roman".

Case study of this paper is the ethnic minority of Crimean Turk-Tatars and some of their social and educational issues.

The body of the paper is based on a study done by All Minorities at Risk (AMAR), which qualifies Crimean Turk-Tatars as an ethnic minority at risk, and on the chart provided by UNESCO, which identifies socio-linguistics aspects of endangered languages qualifies the Crimean Tatar language as one of the severely endangered languages. Also, I identified the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages and its educational policies.

Finally, my paper shows the community challenges in building communicational bridges based on mutual respect of differences.

Key words: social and educational issues, face-to-face interviews, Crimean Turk-Tatars, grassroots, European educational policies.

1.Introduction

1.1. Evidence in literature

There are some researches about Crimean Turk-Tatars of Dobrodja, but only two main books: Müstecib Ülküsal's work *Dobruca ve Türkler* published in 1966, and Mehmet Ali Ekrem's work *Din istoria turcilor dobrogeni* published in 1997.

However there are a small number of empirical studies on this topic. Lack of evidence indicates that further research is needed into this issue, which is encouraging for our approach. Both works provide general information about Crimean Turk-Tatars of Dobrodja, but nothing about voiceless people, "grass root" people.

This research tends to focus on grass root people of the ethnic community rather than on the general image of the community. Unlike other ethnic minorities, their mother tongue is spoken only on restricted area, by a small number of people. They are categorized by the All Minorities at Risk (AMAR)² as "socially relevant ethnic group", and UNESCO identified their language as one of the severely endangered languages³. In addition, one of the most severe issue except erroneous historical perception and image of the enemy, are the risk factors inside the community, which include social and cultural cleavages that are manipulated by the elite governing the organization of the ethnic community.

Based on my own experience as an ethnic minority and learning from previous years I began thinking about how to respond better to changes and needs of the Crimean Turk-

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² http://www.mar.umd.edu/amar_project.asp, accessed on 30 sept. 2016

³ <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php>, accessed on 30 sept. 2016

Tatars ethnic minority. I agreed that there was a need to redesign the approach and identify ways of being more deeply involved in community's social issues through my studies, and to reach out to the members of the community at large.

1.2. Methods related to research

The case study of this paper is the ethnic minority of Crimean Turk-Tatars. Collecting data for this project was done at regional level. This project is in progress and until now its development was carried out in two stages. The study was conducted entirely through my own financial efforts, during the holidays between semesters.

The most important source of this work is based on face-to-face interviews and content analysis of documents with the National Archives of Romania, Constanța County District and Constanța County Library "Ioan N. Roman". The interviews were conducted in Constanța, and in villages: Amzacea and Tătaru, with some members of my family, but also with people that I never met before this survey. Each question format was drawn based on previous studies and was selected to be illustrative for one approach: age, social status, education and culture. All interviews were conducted from family to family, talking to each member of the family. The interviewer introduced himself/herself and stated his/her age, education and financial status. They were asked about their social status and their position inside the community, family, day-to-day life, mother tongue, Crimea, Turkic world, endangered languages and traditions. Actual data about social status and culture were available for all the interviewed individuals. Therefore, following the completion of an interview it was possible to compare and report an individual's answers with the others.

The purpose of my field survey is to discover the thorough knowledge of information hold by the members of the community, knowledge that I grouped as follows: education, financial income, social status, day-to-day life, ethnicity, culture and traditions. I am dealing also with a significant social impact on day-to-day life of the community's members.

In this study I will analyze only social and educational issues because they have a major influence on community's day-to-day life in the current European context.

1.3. A short overview about the Crimean Turk-Tatars of Romania

The decisive stage in the process of ethnogenesis of Tatar people was the foundation of the Golden Horde in the 1243, and the splitting of the northwest part of the Empire of Genghis Khan. Taking into consideration the Tatar language and its spiritual tradition, within the Turkic world is certain that the Turkic element was decisive to their formation as nation (Fisher 1987: 57).

In the early fifteenth century, it was formed and developed the Crimean Khanate having all the characteristics of a pre-modern state fully developed. The Crimean Khanate claimed its Genghis Khan origin, but in terms of ethnogenesis "Tatars" as they were called in history were formed after their assimilation and integration by the indigenous communities and by European groups existing in the peninsula. The Crimean Tatars were organized within their own state. Crimean Tatars variant was formed totally different from the other Tatars people of Kazakhstan, Astrakhan and Bashkortostan. (Uehling 2004: 28)

The Ottoman state protected them, and they maintained-closed relations with the Turkic world, by the means of language and people. During Czarist Russia after the occupation of the peninsula, followed by Crimean Wars and the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878 led to mass migration of Turk-Tatar population and their departure towards the territories of the Ottoman state. Many of the Turk-Tatars living on today Dobrudja, Romania migrated from Crimea after the annexation of peninsula in 1783 "*The Crimean*

Tatars began leaving their homeland in 1772, when their Khans lost effective political control, and the Russians began intervening forcefully in Crimean internal affairs. The exodus proceeded unabated until 1789, when the Treaty of Jassy cemented Russian control of the peninsula and the steppe to the north of the Black Sea. [...]. This early Tatar emigration played an important role in the subsequent, more extensive exodus, for it provides the opportunity, indeed necessity, for an immigration of Slavic peasants and landowners which would momentum as the century progressed” (Fisher, 1999: 172).

Historical migrations are marked mainly by military condition, and by economic, social and political situation. Human nature try to find better living conditions naturally in regions that offer military and political security and attract population from parts of the world where are not under military conflict. Migration process involves a subject - the immigrant, at least two countries (country of origin and country of destination) and the intention of finding a place in which the immigrant can establish, the country of destination. As, my great-grand father *Hacı İzzet İsmail* and his family left Crimea, Kerç, which was under military conflict, probably around 1875-1877. Their son, my grand father from my father, *Hatip Suleyman Abduraman* son of *Hacı İzzet İsmail*, was born in Crimea, or more probably on their way from peninsula to Ottoman lands (country of destination) and, they came ashore, they did not use waterway. My great-grand father from my mother, *Safadin Semetula*’s parents left peninsula probably after the Crimean War (1853-1856), or may be earlier, and my great-great grand father from my mother, *Reşit Ağa*’s parents left Crimea before the Crimean War.

2. Regional legal standards and policies

2.1. Minorities in Romania

According to the definition provided in 1977 by Francesco Capotorti Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, a minority is: A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members - being nationals of the State - possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language¹.

The experiences of minorities across Europe vary widely. While variations exist between countries, different minorities in one and the same country often experience very different degrees of access to education. A crucial difference is between minorities, which can look back to a long history of minority rights protection (as it happens in western countries) to those who were either recognized only recently or have lacked adequate state policies to protect their rights (as it happened in South-East European countries). Minorities in Romania can be divided into three categories, mainly taking the size of the minority group into consideration:

- a) Hungarians, the larger group and well organized;
- b) Roma group, the second most numerous with several political organizations;
- c) 18 other groups with at least one political organization per group (see Table no.1, *The Ethnical structure of Romania’s population, 2011*). The large number of ethnic minorities parties competing for the votes of their own ethnic communities has created a public perception that organizations representing minorities are responsible for the needs and demands of the minority groups. All ethnic groups have at least one political party standing for their representation. Also, there are questions about the problematic legitimacy of reserved seats, and the low vote is regarded as non-democratic and a source of abuse due to

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/Pages/internationallaw.aspx>, accessed on 5 oct. 2016

the ability of entrepreneurial candidates to negotiate votes in support of their candidacy from groups not related to the minority group. (Oleh, P., 2008:12).

2.2. The Ethnical structure of Romania's population

This part of my study takes a brief look at one of the eighteen groups, the Crimean Turk-Tatars.

As can be seen from Table no.1, *The Ethnical structure of Romania's population, 2011* data from the census population give the following: Romanians, Hungarians, Roma (Gypsies), Germans, Ukrainians, Lippovan-Russians, Turks, Tatars, Serbs (see Table no.1). It is obvious that the minorities represent approximately 10% of Romania's population, their linguistic diversity, and territorial distribution raise specific problems to be solved. Romania officially recognizes 18 minorities, as seen in the above table.

The Ethnical structure of Romania's population, 2011

Table no. 1

Year	1930	1956	1966	1977	1992	2002	2011
Total Inhabitants	14,280,729	17,489,450	19,103,163	21,559,910	22,810,035	21,680,974	20,121,641
Romanians	11,118,170	14,996,114	16,746,510	18,999,565	20,408,542	19,399,597	16,792,868
Hungarians	1,423,459	1,587,675	1,619,592	1,713,928	1,624,959	1,531,807	1,227,623
Roma (Gypsies)	242,656	104,216	64,197	227,398	401,087	535,140	621,573
Germans	633,488	384,708	382,595	359,109	119,462	59,764	36,042
Lippovan-Russians	50,725	38,731	39,483	32,696	38,606	35,791	23,487
Ukrainians	45,875	60,479	54,705	55,510	65,472	61,098	50,920
Turks	26,080	14,329	18,040	23,422	29,832	32,098	27,698
Tatars	15,580	20,469	22,151	23,369	24,596	23,935	20,282
Serbs	50,310	46,517	44,236	43,180	33,769	29,570	

Source: Recensământul Populației și al Locuințelor, Institutul Național de Statistică, 2011 (*The Census of the Population and Dwellings, The National Institute of Statistics*)¹

As it is shown by the 1930 census, in the interwar period, figures corresponding to the number of community's members are very low due to a new wave of emigration towards Turkey. The fact is proven by a high number of passports requested by the community's members. Documents with *The National Archives of Romania, Constanta County District, fund Prefecture Constanta County*² stand for the community's emigration to Turkey. After 1992, it is noted that the demographic evolution with the ethnic minority of the Crimean Turk-Tatars was influenced by a number of factors, among which stands out: freedom of couples to decide on desired number of children, the high level of economic and social costs sustained by the population in the period of transition, lack of housing and limited access of young people to their own dwelling, changes in population's behavior on the formation and division of family, social instability, unemployment. Figures of the table underlines that in today's Dobrudja there are many minorities as Roma people, Lippovan-Russians, Tartars, Turks and Ukrainians sharing together in good will and peace the same territory (Ismail, 2015b: 490).

3. Regional challenges

3.1. Challenges of diversity

If there is one thing that stands out above all else in Dobrudja is its diversity. Each ethnic group living in the area is like a colorful patchwork of language, religion and culture. Every ethnic minority has its own layers of more or less painful memories,

¹ <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2/> accessed on 22 sept. 2016

² <http://www.arhivelenationale.ro/index.php?lan=0&page=145>, accessed on 03 oct. 2016

including the period during the communist regime, when “equality” was translated in various ways, but usually with the result of suppressing diversity. Over the last decades the ethnic minorities of Romania have been striving to redefine their political, social, educational and economic environments.

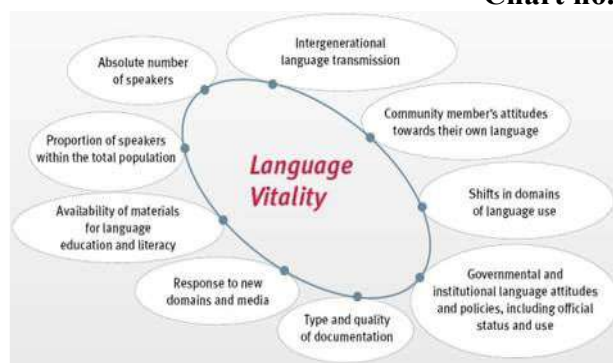
3.2. Social and educational issues

Almost all Crimean Turk-Tatars are descendants of peoples who emigrated from Crimean peninsula over time, since 1783 the annexation of peninsula. Unlike other ethnic minorities of Romania, Crimean Turk-Tatars have no other homeland than Crimea and their native language is not spoken anywhere else than in Crimea (Ismail, 2015: 154). In accordance with All Minorities at Risk (AMAR) project the ethnic minority of Crimean Turk-Tatars is categorized as “social relevant”. The ethnic group is based on members that share the same distinguishing cultural features: common language, religion, and customs, and they constitute one percent of Romania’s population (see Table no.1 *The ethnical structure of Romania’s population, 2011*).

In 2003 an Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages of UNESCO elaborated a framework concept entitled “Language Vitality and Endangerment”. In accordance with the nine criteria (see Chart no.1) established by them we can determine the vitality of a language and identify necessary needs to safeguarding the language (Izmirli, 2012: 5).

Language vitality and endangerment

Chart no.1



Source: UNESCO – language vitality and endangerment¹

In accordance with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) the Crimean Tatar language is qualified as severely endangered language “A language is considered endangered “when it is on a path toward extinction. Without adequate documentation, a language that is extinct can never be revived. This may be the result of *external* forces such as military, economic, religious, cultural or educational subjugation, or it may be caused by *internal* forces, such as a community’s negative attitude towards its own language. Internal pressures often have their source in external ones, and both halt the intergenerational transmission of linguistic and cultural traditions. Many indigenous peoples, associating their disadvantaged social position with their culture, have come to believe that their languages are not worth retaining. They abandon their languages and cultures in hopes of overcoming discrimination, to secure a livelihood and enhance social mobility or to assimilate to the global marketplace²”.

Interviews with the members of the Crimean Turk-Tatars of Romania provided that many members of the community, in special young generation, abandoned their native language because they have no other alternative (the official educational system is in Romanian language). They do not

¹ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/language-vitality/>, accessed on 28 sept. 2016

² <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php>, accessed on 02 Oct. 2016

understand the long-term consequences of their choice. Many of my interviewers even the older, when they were being interviewed they began talking in Crimean Tatar, and in the middle of a conversation without even being aware of having done so they switched to Romanian language. Linguists define this type of hybrid usage as “code-switching” (alternating or switching between languages in the same stretch of discourse by a bilingual speaker), which is quite normal in bilingual speaking communities (Eker, 2012: 226). Sureya OMER graduated “Kemal Atatürk” The Muslim Theological and Pedagogic Highschool of Medgidia, Constanta County. She is a teacher of Muslim Religion, but currently has no job¹. There is also a very difficult situation for the members of the community when they seek for a job, as in order to get a job people have no other choice than to switch to Romanian language. In fact, maintaining and using both languages should allow them better chances in life, but in reality they cannot get a job in their native language.

4. Educational policies and European Charter for Regional or Minority languages

4.1. European Charter for Regional or Minority languages

Although considerable research has been devoted to minorities, rather less attention has been paid to their native languages.

The heart of a symbolic system is language, which not only allows people to communicate with one another, but is also a tool for cultural transmission from generation to generation through symbolic learning.

This paper provides results of the Council of Europe, which recognizes the value of regional and minority languages as part of the European cultural heritage and therefore adopted on June 25, 1992 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which entered into force on 1st, May, 1998 (Călușer, 2009: 7).

The Charter is the first international treaty dealing with linguistic diversity and aims to protect minority languages from extinction and to promote them, their use in education, media, justice, administration, cultural, economic and social. The Charter aims to prevent the extinction of regional or minority languages that are increasingly less used and in this context it has established a set of objectives and principles that states undertake to use all minority or regional languages on their territory.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages has been drafted in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of the United Nations Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and fundamental freedom of the governing board of Europe which supports the importance of knowing the official language of the state and protect regional or minority languages. Charter is organized into five parts and a preamble.

In Part I, the Charter defines the geographic area in which a regional or minority language is used and this language is the mode of expression of a number of people justifying the adoption of the various protective and promotional measures that are set out in the Charter, but it does not specify the principles appropriate measures. It notifies only that the application of the Charter is required where the number of speakers of a minority language justifies its application.

Part II presents general principles that are applied to all regional or minority languages in the territory.

Part III, by Articles 8 to 14 contain provisions in the areas of education, justice, administrative, public service, media, cultural, economic and social life and cross-border exchanges. Article 8 relates to the education system, from kindergarten to university and adult education. By Article 12 it shall ensure the existence and accessibility of cultural activities in regional or minority language.

¹ Interview with Sureya OMER, Amzacea; she is a teacher of Muslim Religion, but jobless in the last years.

Part IV refers to the process of monitoring the implementation of the Charter. Part V includes the final provisions on signature, ratification and entry into force of the document.

4.2. Supporting and developing educational policy

Education is about preserving group identity, but also changing group's perceptions of each other. When we say education we think about supporting difference, but also creating bridges of communication and contact. By education a minority group helps the maintenance of its identity, but it should not reduce the minority identity to folk dance and traditions. Education has the advantage to put together the challenges in addressing the need for a diverse society to accommodate difference without making the difference as the only and most important characteristic of identity.

Minority issues in education should be a part of mainstream educational system, but it has often been as an "add-on" to an insufficiently reformed educational system, leaving the fundamental challenges unresolved. Education for minorities cannot be viewed as a separate piece of the puzzle. Minority language might be a small extra subject focusing on the traditions and culture of the minority, but not the really facilitating the general learning process through teaching general subjects in the minority language.

As Romania signed and ratified the convention¹ there is be the legal framework for educational system in native language - Crimean Tatar language from kindergarden to university. In the educational sector, at the local community level over the past several years many organizations have been working to develop language education programs, and they are engaged in implementing increasingly popular mother tongue education programs.

Since October 2014, the Democratic Union of the Muslim Turk Tatars of Romania started courses of Tatar language in Constanta, Medgidia, Techirghiol, Eforie Nord, Mangalia and in the country side Valea Dacilor, Cobadin, Tuzla, Agigea, Valu lui Traian, Ovidiu, Lumina, Mihail Kogalniceanu. In Constanta, courses are delivered in weekend, between 10,00-12,00 a.m., at the headquarters of the Democratic Union of the Muslim Turk Tatars of Romania². In practice, there is a very different situation, for example, in Amzacea village. My interviewers from Amzacea agreed "At home, we teach Tatar language to our children³", and his daughter in law added, "Last year there was a young lady coming from Constanta and tried to teach Tatar language, but it was a failure. It worked only for a few weeks, and then she stopped coming to our village⁴". Obviously, children living in small villages do not have access to education through the ability of their mother tongue, as is our case in Amzacea, a small village near to Constanta.

A severely endangered language is a language spoken only by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may still understand the language, they typically do not speak it to their children⁵. As noticed from the examples with the ethnic community of the Crimean Turk-Tatars, it is next to impossible to transfer their native language to younger generations, as they do not have schools and trained teachers. In villages, the Crimean Turk-Tatars do not have access to literary works, newspapers or visual media in their native language, and as regarding education in Crimean-Tatar language there is also a personnel training issue for someone who would like to be a Crimean Tatar language teacher. In Romania, there is no institution to train teachers for Crimean Tatar language.

At home, only the members of the older generations (who were children, teenagers or

¹ http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/148/signatures?p_auth=GO9UwWZ5, accessed 15 oct. 2016

² Qaradeniz Mecmuasi (Qaradeniz Magazine), Yıl XXV, Sayı 257/10, Ekim, 2014, p.12

³ Sebat OMER, born in 1947, Edlikoy (Miristea)

⁴ Sureya OMER, born in 1982, Amzacea, mother of two children

⁵ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001836/183699E.pdf> accessed on 24 oct.2016

young adults at the time when their schools were closed, in between 1953-1954) were able to speak their mother tongue. Since the younger generations who were born after 1954 were educated in Romanian language schools and were forbidden to speak their native tongue in public places, language transmission was severely restricted among the ethnic minority of the Crimean Turk-Tatars.

There are still many things to do, as education is crucial in reproducing (and re-creating) the identity of an ethnic minority group. However, understanding how these processes will influence community's life remains a major challenge.

4.3. Implementing European Charter for Regional or Minority languages

According to art. 2 of Law no. 282 Charter applies to the following 20 minority languages used in Romania: Albanian; Armenian; Bulgarian language; Czech language; Croat; German language; Greek language; Italian; Yiddish; Macedonian language; Hungarian language; Polish language; Romani; Russian; Ruthenian language; Serbian; Slovakian language; Tatar language; Turkish language; Ukrainian language. Also, the law identifies minority languages covered by different parts of the Charter. As a result, Art. 5 of Law no. 282 states that the provisions stipulated in Part III of the Charter applies to minority languages, which reduces the purpose of applying to a number of ten languages: Bulgarian language; Czech language; Croat; German language; Hungarian language; Russian; Serbian; Slovakian language; Turkish language; Ukrainian language. According to art. 4 of the Law, the other ten regional or minority languages only apply the provisions of Part II of the Charter. Without a clearly defined territory for each of the 10 languages the principle used in Romania's case is the minimal percentage of the local population. Thus, in areas where territorial delimitation is required, the Charter is applied if the percentage of the minority population of a territorial unit is at least 20% (Călușer, 2006: 11).

To monitor education were conducted interviews with inspectors of those counties where there is education in one of the 10 minority languages, in addition were conducted a series of interviews with members of the national minority organizations. Of the indicators are: number of groups, classes, study lines, schools teaching in minority languages; number of requests (accepted and rejected) regarding the deployment of a part of education in minority languages; training opportunities for teachers in minority's language (Kovacs, 2006: 15).

4.4. Romanian legal framework regarding the right to education in minority languages

Article 32, paragraph 3 of the Romanian Constitution guarantees "the right of persons belonging to national minorities to learn their mother tongue and the right to be educated in that language" specifying that, "the ways to exercise these rights are established by law". Article 8, paragraph 2, of the Education Law no. 84 of 1995 strengthens the right guaranteed by the Constitution, stipulating: In every village is organized and operates schools or study center teaching in Romanian and, where appropriate, with teaching in minority languages or schooling in the mother tongue in the nearest village as possible". Fifteen articles of the Education Law make explicit reference to education of national minorities, most of which (Articles 118-126) are included in Chapter XII, entitled Education for persons belonging to national minorities (Kovacs; 2006: 15).

Conclusions

Within the context of today's Europe, investment and improving ethnic minorities relations is a long-term development assistance to help cultivate the practices of dialogue and understanding, as well as changes in attitudes within institutions and society at large. As regarding educational practices on ensuring the right to education in their mother tongue, there is still a lot of work to do. No single factor is sufficient to assess the state of a community's language. However, taken together, all factors can determine the viability of

social and educational policies, their function in society and the type of measures required for maintenance or revitalization.

The conclusions above, give rise to a series of external influences on economic issues. The most important effects are related to the multitude of dysfunctions in implementing educational policies, as well as a significant social impact on day-to-day life of the ethnic minorities. As regarding the revival of language and culture progress can be achieved if the use of the endangered language of the ethnic minority group is controlled by governing agencies via the provision of educational opportunities in the ethnic minority language.

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Interviewers

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Sureya OMER, Amzacea, born in 1982

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