
Cultural Distance and Migration Patterns in the EU: The Romanian Case

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Abstract:

Purpose: The main goal of this study is to explore the influence of cultural distance on migration flows in EU to see if there is a model/pattern of general behavior in this regard. Given the exploratory goal of this paper, the paper is focusing on the Romanian case, being the first one in a subsequent series of studies applied to all EU countries.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Employing World Bank data for the decades between 1960 and 2000 and a cultural distance based on the six cultural dimensions' model developed by Hofstede, a SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) methodology is applied using Smart-PLS software.

Findings: The results confirm a negative significant correlation between cultural distance and migration flows, suggesting that when cultural distance is increasing, migration flows decrease.

Practical Implications: The research has two management implications: firstly, the findings demonstrate that culture is crucial in decision-making and, acknowledging this fact, leads to better solutions to migration problems between various EU countries. Moreover, this research indicates that studying only the economic aspects of migration is not sufficient; there is also a need to grasp the complexity of cultural aspects. In this regard, culture is a powerful resource and can be instrumental in finding proper strategies to migration crisis and conflict management.

Originality/Value: The present research adds valuable input to the exiting literature due to several reasons: firstly, is focusing on an Eastern European country with a communist past and with an interesting democratic evolution. Secondly, most of the studies regarding the Romanian migration focuses mainly on its flows to specific countries, such as Italy, Spain, and Germany. Thirdly, this research demonstrates that culture really shapes human actions and it points out that human flows are part of an important cultural assimilation process.

Keywords: Migration flows, cultural distance, Romania, Hofstede.

JEL Classification: O15, Z13, J61.

Paper Type: Research study.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays there are more and more studies concerned with the impact of culture on economic behavior. Earlier empirical studies have shown that indicators of cultural proximity are as important as other determinants of migration patterns such as traditional economic variables (income level, standard of living, development level, etc.). Nevertheless, none of them focused only to the EU region, nor have had the aim of creating patterns of migration, starting from the cultural determinant. Trying to fill this gap in the literature, the main goal of this analysis is to explore the influence of cultural distance on migration flows in the EU area in order to see if there is a model/pattern of general behavior in this regard. The research question is what is the relationship between cultural distance and migration flows? and the main hypothesis is, when cultural distance is increasing, migration flows decrease.

This incursion starts by looking for the moment only at the Romanian case due to the following reasons: firstly, Romania has an impressive emigration history, which is categorized in three periods: before communism, when the first large-scale outflows (especially from Transylvania) occurred in the context of the wave of Eastern European migration to North America. Another period is the one during communist era, when, despite the harsh emigration policy, a relatively high amount of permanent, legal emigration took place under the regime. Lastly, in the period after 1990, the outflows reached historical peaks in the context of travel liberalization and economic transition (for more information regarding the Romanian emigration history see Horváth (2007) and István (2012)). Secondly, Romania is the country that has experienced the biggest increase in emigration among all EU countries since 1990. Due to this fact, Romanian migration represents a tremendous challenge not only for Romania, but also for the destination countries. As a continuum, the model that is applied only to Romania can be applied in the future to all EU countries to detect a migration pattern.

To achieve the research objective, a model is created representing the causal relationship between culture and migration. Within this model, the dependent variable is represented by the Romanian migration flows to 27-EU member states (MS) and the independent variable is represented by the cultural distance between Romania and each of these 27-EU's MS. The data for the migration flows was extracted from World Bank database (The World Bank, 2020) for the decades 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000. This exploratory analysis was applied only to this specific period due to data unavailability and because it may be considered a more stable period. In this way, the pre and post 2008 periods were excluded because it may have caused significant fluctuations of migration flows due to economic reasons. If this period had been included, the effect of cultural determinant would have been more difficult to be quantified and explained. Along with World Bank data, a cultural distance has been created based on the six cultural dimensions from Hofstede cultural model (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). The model employs a SEM methodology using Smart-PLS software.

The present research is relevant for at least three reasons: firstly, it enables our capacity to understand how perception and values influences behavior; in this regard, it looks more deeply into the influence of culture on migration decisions that, in the majority of the cases, are considered to be only of economic nature. Secondly, acknowledging the tremendous impact of culture on human decisions, this research argues that culture represents a powerful tool of managing efficiently migration flows. Moreover, facilitating specific cultural goods and services may change human perceptions and behavior that may lead to a more efficient way of managing human resources. Thirdly, exploring the impact of culture on human decisions (not only in the migration case) has policy-making implications, especially for a sustainable implementation of integration policies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Interplay between Culture and Migration

The vast literature regarding the interaction between culture and migration places culture as one of the most important determinants of people behavior. Within this literature, several lines of research can be identified; for instance, studies about the role of culture on the mobility of high-skilled workers and on the labor force participation rate, others studies focus on age and the role of family ties on mobility, and there are other studies concerned with the assimilation process of migrants (Thalassinos *et al.*, 2019). In the following paragraphs, several studies have been categorized according to their aim. This section's analysis offers valuable arguments to evaluate more thoroughly the impact of culture on migration.

For the first line of research, some examples are *Novo-Corti et al.'s* study (2019), *Picatoste et al.'s* research (2018), *Ruesga-Benito et al.'s* paper (2018) on sustainable development and *Polavieja et al.'s* analysis (2018). In particular, *Polavieja et al.'s* study (2018) is the first systematic cross-national analysis of migrants' selectivity on achievement-related motivational orientations. To measure orientations, they use a validated scale that combines orientations towards socio-economic success, risk, and money. Their analysis focuses on migrants from nine different origin countries sampled at different European destinations. Their findings contradict the common assumption of positive selectivity, the one stating that migrants, in general, come from the upper part of the skill distribution.

The intensified globalization and the mobility of capital lead to a vast research about the impact of organizational culture on the mobility of high-skilled workers. For instance, *Peixoto* (2001) describes the consequences of mobility of high-skilled workers and its constraints, stressing the fact that mobility depends on corporate culture. The results of their research indicate that the mobility of high-skilled workers is influenced by the following characteristics of corporate culture: the phase of company development, the investment orientation (export or domestic market), the technology type, the main type of economic activity (manufacturing/services).

Trying to answer the question “*how much does culture shapes people’s behavior?*” Polavieja’s research (2015) introduces a new quantitative method in order to estimate cultural effects. This method uses imputed traits (characteristics generated from non-migrating persons from the origin country) as instruments to estimate the causal effect of cultural traditionalism on women’s labor force participation. Moreover, Antecol’s research (Antecol, 2000) on cross-country differences regarding gender gaps in labor force participation rates across United States suggests that culture affects economic outcomes, being a permanent portable factor that is not captured by observed human capital measures. Following the same research line, Fernandez and Fogli (2005) have studied the effect of culture on important economic outcomes in order to examine the work capacity and fertility behavior of women in US, using 1970 Census. The results showed that cultural proxies (past female labor force participation and total fertility rates from the origin country) have positive and significant exploratory power for individual work and fertility outcomes.

As previously mentioned, there are often more important determinants of migration than traditional economic variables. More specifically, Belot and Ederveen’s study (2012) provides sound empirical evidence on the central impact of cultural distance on migration. They investigated the role of cultural barriers in migration for a panel of 22 OECD countries (only developed countries) over the period 1990-2003 by employing several cultural indicators. Some of these indicators were linguistic distance, religious distance, composite index of cultural distance based on the original four dimensions of Hofstede and an indicator of cultural distance created by Inglehart and Baker (2000) based on two dimensions, traditional versus secular-rational and survival versus self-expression values. Similar proxies of cultural distance developed by Belot and Hatton (2012) have been found to be important factors of educational selectivity in immigration.

With regard to the role of family on geographical mobility, Alesina and Giuliano (2010) showed that strong family ties determine increased home production, increased labor force participation of women and a lower geographical mobility. Therefore, the dichotomy between strong family ties (specific to Mediterranean countries) and weak family ties (specific to Scandinavian European countries) was demonstrated to have a significant influence on mobility. The same variable was applied by Giuliano (2007) in examining the role of culture in determining living arrangements in Western Europe.

Epstein and Gang (2010) have made a review on the interaction between migration and culture on three main groups: migrants, the families from the origin countries and the population from the destination country. The review analyzes the assimilation process of the migrants, dividing the study into five parts: enclaves and location choice; production, earnings, and competition; assimilation struggles; family issues, the effects of remittances and selection process, attitudes and public policy. Although their research is systematic, a limitation of their paper is the lack of a nucleus idea and the lack of the main conclusions regarding their analysis.

Lastly, the relationship between culture and migration may be analyzed from other perspectives, for instance, when considering the cultural consequences of migrants in the destination areas. In this regard, Hugo and Moren-Alegret's research (2008) presents several case studies about the key impact of mobility for the revival of rural areas from Spain, Greece and Portugal. From the same perspective, the cultural consequences of migration may be found in Meyers's research (2000) on theories of international immigration policy. With the aim of defining the main approaches in the field of immigration policy, he argues that the theories of domestic policies (compared with the ones of international relations) offer more information in understanding immigration policies by studying its enormous impact on sovereignty, culture and politics. Even though the paper is from 2000, Meyers makes two important observations related to this domain: firstly, the difficulty of creating sound immigration policy changes in response to different cultural environments and, secondly, the difficulty of quantifying culture.

2.2 "Culture of Migration" and the Stability Character of Culture

Special categories that kept open the debates in this area are studies about the "*culture of migration*" and the ones about the "stability" character of culture. Within the first category, Adrian Favell's study (2008) presents an overview of the importance of East-West migration in Europe associated with the EU enlargement process. Among the characteristics of the migration system in Europe, Favell speaks about a "*culture of migration*" and, in order to understand the migration decision, he compares between the pros and cons of local options and the pros and cons of migrating. Within the concept of "*culture of migration*", a great role is played by the conditions of the local economy, the pressure of family and peers, and the attraction of Western wealth. The same concept can be found in Horváth's research (2008) about the economic and cultural determinants of rural youth Romanian emigrants and in Van Mol et al.'s study (2018) about Ukrainian migration in EU.

Regarding the "*stability*" character of culture, recent macro indexes of cultural distance based on Hofstede cultural dimensions (Kaasa *et al.*, 2016) face critics regarding the time dimension. For example, Venturini and Lanati (2018) criticized the assumption of stability, stating that is unrealistic in a world of intensified cross-border information flows and globalized mass communication. Their study is the first analysis that explores the relationship between cultural distance and migration, accounting for the time varying and the asymmetric nature of culture. The model uses bilateral cultural trade as a proxy for cultural distance and the results suggest that positive changes in cultural distance fosters migration and, secondly, it is shown that striking changes in cultural distance have a stronger effect on culturally distant country pairs.

Other examples includes Pedersen *et al.*'s study (2008) which analyzed the effect of economic and social factors on migration flow from 129 countries to 22 OECD countries annually for the period 1990-2000. The central question of their research

was how much the pure economic factors explain migration behavior and how much is explained by other factors. Based on Zavodny's model of migration decision, Pedersen *et al.* (2008) developed a model composed by the costs of moving to a foreign country and the push and pull factors. Their model included the following dummy cultural variables: cultural similarity (denoted *Neighboring Country*), colony ties (denoted *Colony*) and a variable indicating if the countries have a common language. Another empirical study applied on a smaller scale is Mayda's study (2010) about the determinants of bilateral flows between 14 OECD countries during 1980-1995. Using a theoretical model based on supply factors (migrants' decisions to move) and demand factors (the demand for immigrants in the destination country), their study investigated four main determinants of migration flows: economic, geographic, cultural, and demographic. An updated version of Mayda's study is Ortega and Peri's research (2009) on the causes and effects of international migration.

Lastly, but not the least there is also a vast literature about the determinants of migration decision employing linguistic explanations, for instance, Adserà and Pytlikova's study (2012), Atabekova and Shoustikova, (2019), Udina and Stepanova, (2018). Usually, the role of language on migration is analyzed using the following indicators: linguistic proximity, widely spoken languages, linguistic communities, and language-based policy requirements at destination country. Collecting data on immigration flows and stocks for 30 OECD destination countries from all countries over the period 1980-2010, Adserà and Pytlikova's (2012) results showed that the effect of linguistic proximity is larger than the effects of sharing a common border or sharing historical parts. Moreover, Chiswick and Miller (2015) argue that immigrants with a proficiency level of destination language are more successful in adjusting to labor market conditions. Secondly, the authors encourage investments in language training, as the rate of return is higher not only to the individual, but also to the entire society. In general, the research on this matter demonstrates that the effect of linguistic proximity is smaller than the pull effect of income and ethnic networks in the destination region. Furthermore, the results stress out that linguistic proximity matters more for non-English speaking destinations and, that stricter linguistic requirements for naturalization deter migration flows.

As explained by Adserà (2015), five key findings may be found in the literature: firstly, the self-selection to more similar cultural destination countries boosts returns to human capital and improves integration. Secondly, large communities with the same language and culture in destination countries encourage mobility and decrease migration costs. Thirdly, acquiring language skills in the destination region is a human capital investment. Fourthly, knowing the most widely spoken languages (in particular, English) provides an additional advantage to migrants and lastly, historical ties decrease migration costs. In addition, scholars have emphasized several pitfalls when studying this issue, for example, the return to skills may be reduced by linguistic and cultural enclaves, the difficulty to measure fluency in second languages and the difficulty to understand their role in migration decisions.

3. Research Question and Model

3.1 Research Question and Objective

As stated in the introduction, the goal of this paper is to explore the influence of cultural distance on migration flows in the EU area in order to see if there is a model/pattern of general behavior in this regard. To enrich the EU literature on this subject, this research represents an important step in studying migration patterns within EU starting from a cultural perspective. Although the European region is formed by nations with quite similar cultures, there is no need to minimize the influence of culture on migration flows in this specific area.

The approaches presented in the above section indicated that different measures of linguistic distance have been considered appropriate in analyzing linguistic proximity between national languages. Therefore, the same approach has been employed in this paper for the case of culture, the concept of national cultural distance being used to measure the cultural proximity between nations. The construct of cultural distance is used as the independent variable and, if considering the content-analysis approach developed by Stahl and Tung (2015), it may be included in the category of mixed or positive results. Moreover, the concept of cultural distance used in this paper argues that the magnitude of interaction between different cultures does not lead necessarily to confrontation or conflicts (Luo and Shenkar, 2011), but they can constitute the basis for future agreements. Furthermore, taking into account the distance/dimensional typology created by Stahl and Tung (2018), when discussing about the use of culture in IB research, the concept of cultural distance exemplified in this paper pertains to the former type of approach.

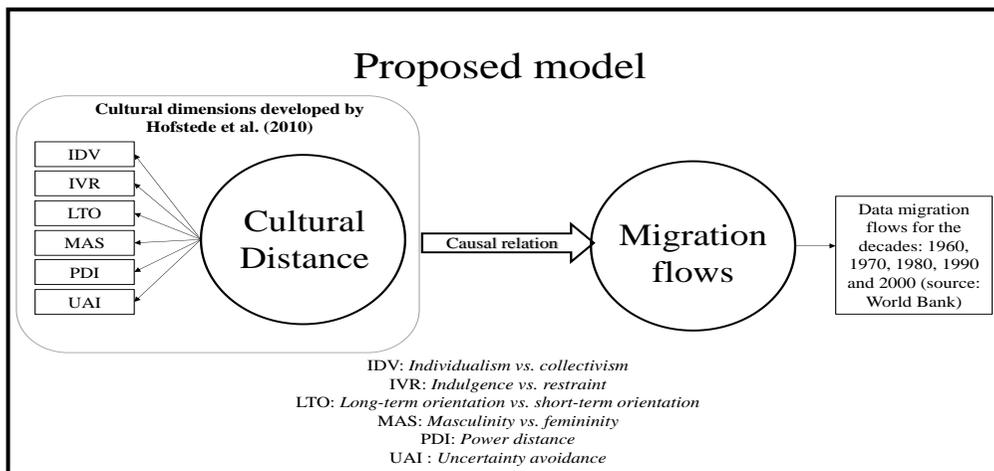
Although the use of abstract concepts supposes several limitations, such as the incapacity to adopt a multilevel approach, the lack of sufficient attention given to context or the failure to adopt a dynamic view, this analysis adopts Hofstede's definition, where culture is defined as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). The cultural dimensions employed in this paper are presented below, together with the model proposal.

3.2 Research Model

As mentioned before, the research question is what is the relationship between cultural distance and migration flows? (Figure 1) and, in answering this question, have been employed six dimensions of national culture from Hofstede *et al.*'s model (2010). The model proposes a causal relationship between cultural distance and migration flows, and it tests two hypotheses. The null hypothesis indicating no relationship between the cultural distance and migration flows and the alternative hypothesis stating that the higher the cultural distance, the lower the migration flows. The choice of using Hofstede *et al.*'s (2010) cultural model is justified by the fact that is the first

comprehensive and complete set of cultural measures and the data, although collected more than 40 years ago, has been updated in recent decades and reflects strongly embedded cultural beliefs. The model focuses exclusively on the definition of cultural dimensions developed by Hofstede, and, in order to maintain it as it is, it does not control for other variables, such as the influence of linguistic similarity or the “*attraction effect*” of previous migration flows. The following paragraphs describes thoroughly each cultural dimension.

Figure 1. Proposed model.



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

In 1970, trying to give an answer to the question, how can we understand the cultural differences? Hofstede (2001) initiated a large road of research which later constituted the cultural dimensions theory, an internationally recognized model through which 76 countries can be compared and analyzed. Initially, he identified four dimensions that could distinguish one culture from another. Later on, he added the fifth dimension, long-term orientations vs. short-term orientations, based on Bond's study (1988) and, in 2010, inspired by Minkov's research (2010), adds the sixth dimension indulgence versus self-restraint. Therefore, the last version of Hofstede model (2010) contains six cultural dimensions power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientations versus short-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint.

The first dimension is *power distance* (PDI) and it addresses the question of how a society handles inequalities among people. Power distance is the “*extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power distributed unequally*”. The key differences between small and large power-distance societies are general norms, family, and school. In societies with low power distance, people fight for equalizing the distribution of power, members view themselves as equals and people demand justifications for inequalities for power.

The second dimension is *individualism vs. collectivism* (IDV) which is measuring the degree of individualism and the strength between the ties created in a society. Individualism expresses the attitude of people who are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families, whereas collectivism is the opposite concept that reflects tightly relationships between individuals within families, assuming that all members of the family protect each other, having at the basis for their actions the unquestionable loyalty. It has to be noted that between collectivism and PDI exists a negative correlation; countries with higher scores on power distance index are likely to be more collectivist and countries with lower scores on power distance index are likely to be more individualist.

Masculinity versus femininity (MAS) is the third dimension, the masculinity side reflecting the preference in a society for achievements, heroism, material rewards for success, power, and strength, while the femininity side stands for cooperation, modesty, tenderness, caring for the weak and the quality of life.

The fourth-cultural dimension is *uncertainty avoidance* (UAI) and is related to the degree of anxiety that society members feel in uncertain or unknown situations. It indicates the extent to which a culture programs its members to feel comfortable/uncomfortable in unstructured situations. Countries with a high UAI degree establish rigid codes of beliefs and reflects intolerance with unorthodox ideas, while societies with low levels of UAI reflects a relaxed and tolerable attitude among different ideas, behaviors, and actions.

Long-term orientations vs. short-term orientations (LTO) represents another cultural dimension of Hofstede's model. This dimension was added in 1990s after analyzing several Asian countries that have a strong link with Confucian philosophy. This dimension answers the question of how a society maintains the links with the past while dealing with the present challenges. Societies that are prone to the preservation of traditions and are more reserved against societal change usually register high LTO scores, while those with low LTO scores are more pragmatic, being more open to future changes. The latter ones promote equality, high creativity, individualism, while the former promotes a strong work ethic, parents and men have more authority than young people and women and family are considered the basis of a society.

The last dimension is entitled *indulgence vs. restraint* (IVR) indulgence is specific for a society that promotes the relatively free satisfaction of natural human drives while restraint is more specific for a society that suppresses basic human needs by establishing strict social norms.

4. Methodology

To test the hypotheses, two latent variables are created: cultural distance (independent variable) and migration flows (dependent variable). The latter consists of five indicators, each indicator corresponds to each emigration flow from Romania to the

following EU countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, for the following decades: 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 (The World Bank, 2020). Although other databases (such as, Romanian National Institute of Statistics, United Nations database, Eurostat) may have had valuable data about Romanian emigration flows, they have been excluded due to limitations regarding the time span or years covered.

The former latent variable, the cultural distance, was considered a static variable for the following reasons: firstly, several studies (Inglehart and Baker, 2000) have demonstrated that cultural differences between nations remain quite stable over time. Secondly, the values remain constant not only for democratic countries, but also for the countries experiencing dramatic economic changes (for the case of Central and Eastern European countries, see Schwartz, Bardi, and Bianchi, 2000). Therefore, this exploratory analysis relies on the standard assumption from the literature (Tabellini, 2010), which states that culture is constant over time.

In order to measure the cultural distance, a distance matrix was created between the Romanian distances and the corresponding distances for each cultural dimension (PDI, IDV, MAS, UAI, LTO, and IVR) of the EU countries mentioned above. The distances from the matrix were calculated as the difference between the values specific for Romania and the values for the EU countries. The scale for each Hofstede's cultural dimensions runs from 0-100, with 50 as midlevel. Societies that have score levels under 50 are considered low in that specific rank and the ones that register levels over 50 are considered high. For example, Romania scores 90 on power distance, meaning that people accept easily hierarchical order; it scores 30 on individualism indicating a collectivistic society manifesting in a close long-term responsibility to the member 'group' (usually the group refers at a family). Furthermore, Romania scores 42 on masculinity, being a relatively Feminine society, where conflicts are solved through compromise and negotiation; Romania has a high score of 90 on uncertainty avoidance, indicating strong preference for avoiding uncertainty. On LTO, Romania has an intermediate score of 52 and on indulgence is has a very low score of 20, expressing that Romanian culture is one of restraint, having a habit toward cynicism and pessimism (Hofstede Insights, 2020).

The relationship between migration flows and cultural distance has been analyzed through the simple equation below:

$$\text{Migration}_{\text{Flows}} = \beta * \text{Cultural}_{\text{Distance}}$$

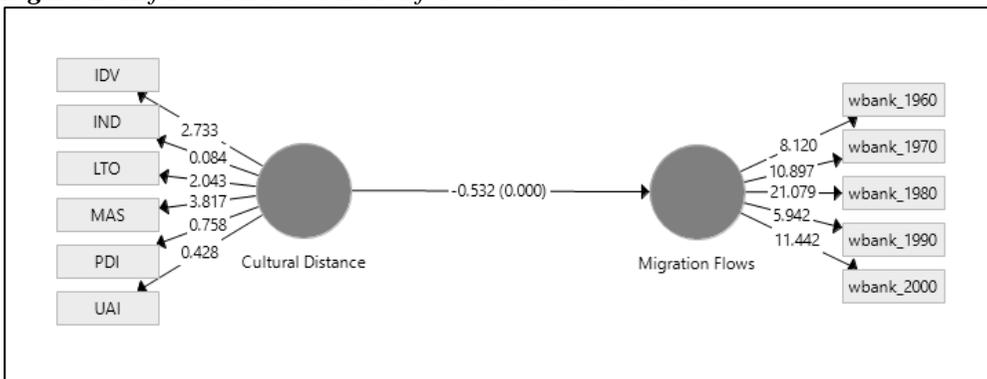
In this regard, structural equation modelling (SEM) was considered the appropriate analysis technique due to several reasons: firstly, because its methodology combines different types of quantitative analyses (factorial analysis and regression analysis) and allows the incorporation of different nuances that enriches this quantitative research

taking into account some information resulted from previous qualitative researches (through the construction of the unobservable variables). Secondly, another advantage of using structural equation modelling (Hoyle, 1995) is given by its tidiness in displaying data and by the fact that it produces results easy to interpret, even if the statistics behind the data are quite complex.

5. Results and Interpretation

After applying a reflective measurement model of the constructs in Smart PLS software (Ringle *et al.*, 2015), the results confirm a significant negative correlation between migration flows and cultural distance. In other words, an increase in cultural distance leads to a decrease in migration flows. The representation of the structural model, including the constructs and its indicators, is presented below.

Figure 2. Reflective measurements for both latent variables.



Source: Own representation applying Smart PLS software.

As expressed in Figure 2, the relationship between migration flows and cultural distance is statistically highly significant, with a p-value of 0.001, and the resulted equation has the below form:

$$\text{Migration}_{\text{Flows}} = -0.532 * \text{Cultural}_{\text{Distance}}$$

Following this result, the null hypothesis, stating that there is no relationship between cultural distance and migration flows, is rejected, and the level of marginal significance suggests stronger evidence to accept the alternative hypothesis, indicating that, as the cultural distance is increasing migration flows decrease. The coefficient of determination, R^2 , is 0.338, adjusted at 0.313, meaning that this model explains 31% of the variance in the dependent variable.

These exploratory results are in line with the ones of previous studies, such as Alesina and Giuliano (2010), Peixoto’s research (2001), Epstein, and Gang (2010), Favell (2008), and Adserà (2015), demonstrating that culture has a significant impact on

migration decision. Furthermore, the interpretation of the negative direction of this relationship, the higher the cultural distance between countries the lower the propensity to migrate, may be debatable. Although common sense may indicate that a person is more likely to migrate to a country similar in values and customs with the origin country, a distinction must be made between temporary and permanent migration. In other words, the economic determinant may be the most important one in the case of temporary migration, but the cultural determinant may be decisive in choosing between temporary and permanent migration.

6. Conclusions and Further Research

The results of this research reiterate the idea previously stated in the section with the literature review. More specifically, it demonstrates the fact that cultural variables, in this case cultural distance, have a significant impact on migration decisions. Although previous studies, such as Belot and Ederveen's research (2012), Antecol's research (2000), Fernandez and Fogli's study (2005), Giuliano's research (2007) have brought significant insights within this area, none of them has focused only to the EU region, nor had the aim of creating migration patterns, starting from the cultural determinant. Therefore, the paper fills this gap in the literature, the main goal being to explore the influence of cultural distance on migration flows in the EU region in order to see if there is a model/pattern of general behavior in this regard. The paper is focusing, for the moment, only to the Romanian case, being the first one in a subsequent series of studies applied to all EU countries.

To reach this objective, a model representing the causal relationship between culture and migration is created using structural equation modeling in Smart-PLS software. The model uses World Bank migration data for the decades between 1960 and 2000 and a cultural distance based on the six cultural dimensions' model developed by Hofstede *et al.* (2010). The results of this analysis confirm a significant negative correlation between migration flows and cultural distance in the Romanian case.

The present research adds valuable input to the exiting literature about the interaction between culture and migration, due to several reasons: firstly, is focusing on an Eastern European country with a communist past and with an interesting democratic evolution. Secondly, the majority of the studies regarding the Romanian migration focuses mainly on its flows to specific countries, such as Italy, Spain and Germany, whereas this research presents a wider perspective because is centered on the emigration flows to all EU countries. Thirdly, this research demonstrates that culture really shapes human actions and, it points out that human flows are part of an important cultural assimilation process. Furthermore, the paper has several management implications: firstly, the findings demonstrate that cultural aspects are essential in decision-making and, acknowledging this fact, may lead to better solutions to migration problems between various EU countries. Moreover, this research indicates that studying only the economic aspects of migration is not sufficient, there is also a need to grasp the complexity of cultural aspects and their consequences on

our lives. Therefore, culture is a powerful resource and can be instrumental in finding proper strategies to migration crisis and conflict management.

Lastly, this research presents some limitations through two possible criticizing paths: one from a conceptual point of view and, another one from a methodological point of view. Regarding the first one, the definitions of culture and migration may face critics and regarding the second one, the choice to apply this model only to Romania or the use of SEM may be criticized. Given the fact that this study is an exploratory analysis with preliminary results, exactly the paper's limitations constitute further lines of research. Firstly, the constructs may be revised; for instance, the construct of cultural distance may include other indicators such as linguistic distance, indexes of religiosity, freedom indices etc. Secondly, the model may be applied to all EU countries or maybe only to specific countries (Southern countries, Nordic countries, etc.). Afterwards, based on the type of correlations between cultural distance and migration flows in those cases, comparative analyses could be created between groups of countries. An extended version of this research may incorporate in the model periods that are more recent. Finally, this analysis serves as a base not only for studying the relationship between culture and migration, but also for studying relationships between other complex phenomena.

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