

The Eastern European experience: Exploring stereotypes from East to West.



PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

EASTERN EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION AFTER THE FALL OF COMMUNISM HAS GIVEN SOME EYE OPENING REALISATIONS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF A HARSH DICTATORSHIP. EASTERN EUROPE IS OFTEN MISREPRESENTED POLITICALLY AND SOCIALLY. I BELIEVE THAT THE EDUCATION PROVIDED BY COMMUNISM HAD A HUGE IMPACT ON THEIR MINDSET. AS WE STAND IN THE PRESENT, AFTER MORE THAN 30 YEARS, EASTERN EUROPE IS STILL REGARDED AS AN UNKNOWN AND UNIMPORTANT PART OF EUROPE ON A GLOBAL SCALE.

- THE LACK OF PRIDE OF ONE'S CULTURE, IS A HUGE INDICATION TO HOW A COUNTRY IS GOVERNED AND HOW TRAUMATIC EVENTS HAVE SHAPED MINDS OPINIONS. I BELIEVE ITS INTEGRAL TO UNDERSTAND PARTS OF THE WORLD WHERE NOT MUCH ATTENTION HAS BEEN GIVEN AND WHERE TRACES OF HARSH REGIMES HAVE WHIPPED A SENSE OF ANXIETY FROM ITS PEOPLE.

real anti-communist leaflet



Overall Observations

After holding several interviews with both selected groups, noticeable patterns emerged from the accounts of the participants along with literature understanding:

- The attitudes amongst 1st generation Eastern Europeans are still unclear, as some participants have experienced more discrimination than other as the stereotyping is more likely to occur to someone who does not have a British accent for example. - further research is needed.
- Eastern European immigrants feel that they do not belong anywhere, that being their mother country or their new adoptive country. This is caused by Eastern politician's inconsideration of the diaspora and a lack of national pride being promoted. The other side is held by the Western ignorance and self-interest which perpetuates stereotypes for their own gain.
- The interviews support the hypothesis but more literature will add historical and contextual nuances to add to the results.

METHODOLOGY

Purposive sampling is key as it would be used to select participants who have a personal connection to the research question, choosing participants who have experienced different levels of discrimination and stereotypes based on their identity adds to the diversity and depth of the results.

TWO GROUPS ARE SELECTED:

-Eastern European immigrants which have lived through communism and have immigrated or have been affected by immigration in their family

-1st generation Eastern Europeans who have experienced stereotypes and are fully part of their adopted country.

Semi-structured interviews are the best option to explore a complex and sensitive topic - The traumas of communism are still strongly felt within the Eastern European community. The semi-structured interview allow flexible and open-ended conversations to elicit details and nuances from the participants which is key to answer the research question.

Hypothesis

THE HYPOTHESIS SUGGESTS THAT THE LEGACY OF COMMUNISM HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE FORMATION OF STEREOTYPES AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT EASTERN EUROPEAN IN THE WESTERN WORLD.

THE HYPOTHESIS SEES TO PROVE THE FOLLOWING:

- HOW THE LEGACY OF COMMUNISM HAS AFFECTED THE MENTALITY AND BEHAVIOUR OF EASTERN EUROPEAN.
- THE IGNORANCE OF WESTERN POLITICIANS TOWARDS EASTERN EUROPE AS A WHOLE AND THE PERPETUATION OF STEREOTYPES TO CREATE A US VS THEM NARRATIVE.
- HOW HIGH LEVELS OF CORRUPTION IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THEIR EFFECT ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

ABSTRACT

The portrayal of Eastern Europeans in the West has not been a positive one, the differences in mentality and way of life have created hostile stereotypes aimed at Eastern Europeans. Although West and Eastern Europe are on the same continent, the stories of the people are vastly different, one side thrives in democratic ideology and the other side is still trying to recover from its traumatic communist past. My research will be led by the question 'How do Eastern European experience stereotypes and how does the legacy of communism affect 1st and 2nd generation Eastern Europeans in the diaspora?' This research, based on interviews with the Eastern European community in the diaspora, will seek to understand how the traumas experienced in a Communist regime have shaped the people they are today to a certain extent. The interviews will be an essential part of the research, along with findings in popular media such as political speeches and representation of stereotypes in films, in order to gauge a more well-rounded timeline of stereotypes towards the Eastern European community in the diaspora.

ALL OF MY CHILDREN IMMIGRATED AFTER THE FALL OF THE REGIME - IT AFFECTED NOT ONLY OUR FAMILY BUT THE WHOLE ROMANIAN POPULATION, COMMUNISM BROKE THE WHOLE NATION!

AFTER THE FALL OF COMMUNISM DEMOCRACY WAS CONFUSED FOR ANARCHY - WE LIVED IN A STATE OF CHAOS AND WE ARE STILL RECOVERING FROM THAT

OUR EVERY MOVE WAS WATCHED AND FOLLOWED, MISTRUST GREW FROM THIS

I AM HESITANT TO TELL PEOPLE WHERE I AM FROM INITIALLY!

I THINK ROMANIAN POLITICIANS WOULD SELL THEIR NATION QUICKER THAN BRITISH POLITICIANS

Down with Ceausescu!

BETTER DEAD THAN ENCL

FREEDOM

