

## OVERVIEW

### 1. THE MAIN ISSUES AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA DISCOURSES IN ROMANIA.

The main discourses about the Romanian migrants working abroad are focused on:

- The image of the Romanian migrants;
- The profile of the Romanian migrants;
- The impact of migration on Romanian migrants' families left behind and the sending communities.

The image of the Romanian migrants is the main issue debated in the media "literature". A specific study based on content analysis on two national daily newspapers show that the press "defines" **diaspora** from a comparative perspective pointing out the positive (idealized) characters against negative characters. (Camelia Beciu, 2012).

On the one hand, the press talks about "heroes", the people who saved lives (from drowning, from injuries) and worked hard to gain a new social position like entrepreneurs (for instance the owners of shops) or entered the political life, mainly at the level of local government in the destination communities. It's about the success stories. On the other hand, the press shows the negative image of the Romanian migrants focusing on the criminal way of life based on violence, murders, robberies, prostitutions, begging, human trafficking. The negative image dominates regardless whether the Romanian migrants are the perpetrators of the crimes or victims. From negative perspectives the best situation is to name the Romanian migrants is to name them as a "strombering pickers" or "stranger" taking the information from the media of the destination countries.

The image of Romania migrants is related to the image of Romania and the press is shows its worry about the country brand.

Regarding the profile of the Romanian migrants worth mentioning that less than 10% of the press articles provide data or statistics about the current state of this category of population. These types of articles were provided mainly by sociologists. (Augustin Abraham and Ionela Sufaru, 2015).

It's about the number and channels of migration, the profile of Romanian migrants and their way of life in the countries of destination 38% of the articles on migrants show them engaging in prostitution and medicancy followed by constructions, housekeeping and agriculture (Stefania Matei, 2001).

The impact of the migration is analyzed mainly from the following perspectives: the brain drain phenomenon, mainly of the doctors and students, the problem of the children left behind (mainly the problems they face in schools, social integration etc.), the consequences of the remittances and the investments the migrants, mainly the returnees, made in sending communities etc.

## **2. ROMANIAN RESEARCH ON THE MIGRATION TO WORK ABROAD**

Research on migration for working abroad became significant in Romania after the accession of the country to the EU, especially after the year 2000. While in the first years after the fall of communism, countries like Israel, Turkey and Hungary were top destination countries for Romanian migrants, at the level of the year 2000, according to the NIS Census of 2002, the top destination countries changed to Germany, Italy, Hungary, Spain and Turkey. After 2000, the top destination countries appear to be Italy, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom and France.

Significant academic research has been conducted in Romania after the year 2000.

From theoretical perspectives, the migration process was approached by research, mainly from the theoretical paradigms which aim to explain the determinants of migration to work abroad, on the integration of the migrants in host communities and the impact of migration on the country of origin. For a broader perspective on the theories on migration (Constantinescu M. 2002).

More or less explicit, researchers used theories such as the “push-pull” paradigm of „neoclassical economics”, which focused on the role of income and variations in the proportion of demand-offer of working force on the job market, the analysis on the role of remittent and the impact of migration on the communities of origin.

Practically, in Romanian scientific research, migration is approached on two levels: national and local, respectively representative surveys at a national level and regional/community level (locality level).

From the point of view of conducted research categories, one can identify two types of research: on the one hand, quantitative research (surveys) regarding the situation in the localities of origin and quantitative research (surveys) regarding the situation of migrants in their destination countries. On the other hand, there is qualitative research regarding the situation of specific population groups of migrants: youth (in the UK, for example), women, doctors, vulnerable groups such as Roma etc.

In lack of official statistical data on migrants, the migration phenomenon is studied from the perspective of emigration, for which there is available data in the annual demographic reports of NIS. However, the official proportion of those who leave annually and change their formal residence is much lower, even insignificant, when compared to the millions of migrants who leave the country to work abroad.

### **Types of results based on quantitative research**

Quantitative estimations based on opinion polls conducted at the level of Romania and other destination countries.

Research on representative samples of population at the level of Romania which aim to estimate the volumes of those who left the country from their households to work abroad show that, at the level of years 2008-2010 (the date of the surveys), over 2,500,000 people were out of the country for work (meaning 20-25% of the total number of households in the country), with 1.5 people on average per household?. To these we add over 500,000 people who no longer had a household in Romania, which shows that the level of Romanians who left to work abroad was of 3-3.5 million (with their families/children included) (Abraham A. and Sufaru I. 2009). Practically, 20-25% of households had at least one of their members out of the country to work abroad. Moreover, approximately 20% of Romanians over 18 years old, thus respondents to the survey, have left the country, for shorter or longer periods of time, to work abroad, which confirms the circulatory feature of the migration for work (CURS 2013).

Other more recent surveys (2014) consider that 46% of households in Romania have at least one person out of the country for working abroad. This means there are over 4 million Romanians living abroad. (Dancu A., Orban M., Bageac I., 2015). The determination of the volumes of Romanian migrants working abroad in EU countries remains an open problem, with increases and declines. What is certain is the circulatory feature of this migration. (Stănculescu M.S. and Stoiciu V. 2012).

### **Profile of migrants who work abroad**

In general, leaving migrants represent an active population, with lower education and income, most of which are married and have children. So, more or less, most migrants represent a socially vulnerable population.

According to surveys carried out (by CURS, Metromedia Transilvania etc.) in the metropolitan areas of Madrid and Rome, the average age of Romanian migrants working abroad was of 34-37

years old, men representing 56% and women 44% of the surveyed population. The level of education was relatively low, the majority having high school and pre-high school education. However, 8-10% of the interviewed migrants graduated from university (Monica A., 2006). The majority of migrants from Spain and Italy come from rural areas of Romania.

### **Reasons for migration (based on surveys among migrants)**

As it comes out of sociological research in Romania, the main motivations of Romanians who leave the country to work in the EU area can be explained by the "push – pull" model.

Rejection factors are predominantly negative and refer to low levels of income, occupations with a low level of qualification, lack of resources to secure the future of their own children and families etc.

Attraction factors are predominantly positive and refer to higher income (compared to those earned in the country of origin), more diversified opportunities to find a job, increase of chances to secure a better standard of living for their children and families etc.

### **Recruitment practices/strategies or how Romanians migrated for working abroad**

On the whole, four channels of migration are used: social networks, employment agencies recruiting migrant workers (both private and public), direct contact with individuals or institutions from the destinations countries and ad-hoc solutions, some of whom at the edge of the Law.

The studies show that the decision to migrate is not made at random. The decision to migrate is in advanced planned and prepared, usually with the help of the networks. Prospective migrants usually have friends, members of the family, casual acquaintances or acquaintances from within the religious networks that promise them a sure-thing job, offer them temporarily shelters and, sometimes, lend them money. Three-thirds of the migrants do this preparation. Nevertheless, around one-third of those leaving to work overseas do nothing beforehand to prepare for the departure or they succeed to secure some money, at the most.

The social networks or the migration networks have been used (as recruitment practice) by the majority of the Romanian migrants and it seems that the relation with these networks strengthen once the migrants reached the destination countries. At the same time, the migrants stay in contact with the origin communities. The recruitment is thus based on a migration networks chain where friends are helping friends, relatives are helping relatives,

individuals from the same community are helping their fellow countrymen, people with some religious orientation, especially Adventism, Baptism and Pentecostalism branches, are helping people with same religious beliefs and those with some ethnic background are helping the fellows sharing same ethnic background. (Şerban M. and Voicu B. 2010). This type of social capital is used in the socialization process at the destination yet the contact with the origin community remains, while a kind of cross-border relationships is shaped.

The recruitment procedure of migrants through the employment agencies, public or private, weights little in the overall number of migrants, though it seems to increase lately. This dimension requires, however, in-depth research, being quite neglected up to date.

Lastly, there is a recruitment practice at the edge of the Law based on which some migrants succeed to gather working teams at the destination recruiting, on the short-term basis, usually for 2-3 weeks or for few months, workers to replace (shift) existing employees developing thus their working capacity for some ad-hoc projects.

To sum up, students' mobility and the decision of some of them to remain for work in the destination countries amplifies the migration for work phenomenon, specifically among those highly educated.

### **Migrants integration at the work place**

The way of living (living conditions) of the migrants in the destination countries has been quantitatively surveyed based on opinion polls conducted mainly in Spain and Italy. Data regarding occupation change (either beneath one's qualifications or high occupations), housing, leisure time spending and the role of networking based on friendship relations, participation in activities organized by religion communities, family relations, flow and role of the remittances etc. already exist.

### **Migration impact on country of origin**

Besides the immediate and direct effect of migration, meaning income and remittances spent in the destination country or sent in the country of origin, based on some surveys conducted in Romania, the desire of building a house and/or start-up a business in Romania with the income gained comes secondly leading to a development of the entrepreneurial behaviour. Most of the Romanian migrants want to return into the country of origin and many of them have already returned to Romania. Nevertheless, in a foreseeable period of time one-fifth of the Romanian

migrants do not want to return, they opt rather for a permanent migration. Overall, migration consequences are rather positive. (Dumitru S. 2010).

### **Types of qualitative research**

As per specific literature, the researches or the qualitative approaches on migration have been focused on various categories of migrants. The main categories of Romanian public surveyed on migration behaviour are females, young people and doctors.

For instance, women's migration for working abroad has been approached by case studies. The focus has been on analyzing the increased flow of the women that have been migrated in the last decade, their specific motivation, ways/practices of migration, behaviour, types of occupations, succeeding strategies. (Bîrsan, M. 2008)

In what the migration of young people concerns, a case study conducted among young Romanians in London seems to be relevant. It is focused on cross-border social ties of this population, mainly on the piratical issues of cross-borders and socialization between „here” and „there” and on the ethnicity maintained by transcriptional connections. (Morosanu L. 2012)

Migration of the doctors, approached by semi-structured interviews, focused on doctors' motivation to go overseas for work for at least one year and was mainly conducted when they returned to the country of origin. The main reason being „the doctors desire to specialize professionally under high-performance working conditions in western countries” the research unveiled. (Teodorescu C. 2011).

### **3. COMMENTS**

There are some methodology aspects regarding the guides interviews implementation and the analyze of the collected qualitative data.

One the one hand in the selection of the interviewers should take into account the particular situation of the country (this case is Romania).

We agreed that methodology suggested by the Project coordinator regarding the selection should be based on settled socio-demographic criteria (age, skill levels and sectors).

We think that the selection of the prospective migrants should be made from a City Career Fair by RDS and from other two rural communities (for instance from those who used to send migrants to work in Italy and Spain). The rural population of the Romania is 45% and the percents of migrants to work abroad from these areas is over 50% of the total Romanian migrants to work abroad. These respondents could be selected by CURS field interviewers from selected communities or from târguri de oferte de joburi.

The selection of the managers and staff employment of recruitment agencies (experts) we suggest to be made from the five main agencies, 3 state agencies and 2 private agencies.

Thus, two semi-structured interviews could be conducted in each selected unit.

The interviews will be identified and interviewed by CURS' experts included in the Project.

The Romanian migrants from abroad, in settled countries from EU will be selected by CURS experts and trained interviewers, using "snowball" method as was agreed at Oxford meeting.

On the other hand there are some theoretical issues regarding the limits of the qualitative research of the migration. The main issues regards the need to do a correlated analyze between the qualitative data collected in this prospect and quantitative data about the process of migration which can be find in formal statistics and surveys results. This analyze can be made by asking the migrants the questions by which could be assessed some statistical trends regarding motivations, channels of recruitment, the impact of migration and the future of the migrants.

Besides, quantitative research should explain some aspects which are not assessed by quantitative research such as the increasing role of Recruitment agencies, the feminization of the migration.

## **Themes to be included in the interview guides**

### **A. For migrants**

Motivation:

- personal meaning of migration (positive changes in their lives associated with migration);
- self-assessment of their chances to achieve those expected positive changes.

Decision making process:

- History of the decision to emigrate; preparatory actions, if any; (including life stories)

- Individual or collective (within core family, extended family, involving friends/peers, agencies);
- Sources of information used;
- Support factors relied upon;
- Selection of destination country/area;
- Option for short-term, circulatory, long-term, or permanent migration;
- Options regarding involvement of family members;
- Self-assessment of the own knowledge of the labour market environment in the destination country/area;
- Self-assessment of the own knowledge of the social environment in the destination country/area (social rules, customs, attitude towards immigrants, ethnical sensitivities, etc.);
- Estimated outcomes of migration (in terms of income, career advancement, social status, education and career opportunities for children);
- Main worries associated with migration.

#### Environment of departure:

- Professional career aims for her/himself, for her/his spouse, and for her/his children;
- Self-perceived chances to achieve the aimed professional career in the home country; main constraints;
- Self-assessment of the level of monthly income (individual and per household) required for a decent living in the home country;
- Self-assessment of social climate in her/his neighbourhood (social ties, mutual esteem, community support, education opportunities, leisure opportunities, social and cultural events, collective traditions etc.);
- Levels of trust in local, regional and national authorities;
- Self-assessment of the development perspective at local, regional and national levels in the home country;
- Conditions that would have changed their decision to emigrate (renounce, shorten planned duration, not involving family members, etc.);
- Main reasons for migrating (push factors).

#### Lived experience in the destination country:

- Gaps between expectations and actual experiences;
- Levels of incorporation – working according to the level of their skills;
- Any limitation of professional advancement due to social ties used for emigration (reproduction of professional statuses within immigrant communities); (including life stories)

- Climate of reception (community support, public support schemes, housing, access to education, leisure opportunities, public and media discourses regarding the immigrants, etc.);
- Perceptions of discrimination; (including life stories)
- Feelings of exclusion or belonging. (including life stories)

Plans for the future (including for family members):

- In the destination country;
- In the home country;
- In another country.

B. For managers and staff of recruitment agencies

Background information:

- Date (year?) of incorporation;
- Legal form;
- Public or private;
- Independent or subsidiary (of whom?);
- Whether it was established since the beginning as employment/labour mediation company or this area of activity was added afterwards (when?); in the last case, what where the initial main areas of activity;
- In case the employment/labour mediation activity was added afterwards, what had been the main reasons for doing so;
- In case the employment/labour mediation activity was added afterwards, have they had specialised personnel for this activity, provided existing personnel with additional training, or have employed new specialised personnel;
- Which are the other main areas of activity of the organisation;
- Participation in networks and/or consortia with other employment agencies, with employers/employers' associations, with NGOs and/or public agencies (details);
- Activity so far (quantitative and qualitative aspects).

Recruitment policy:

- Target group(s);
- Area(s) of recruitment;
- Methods of recruitment (direct and indirect; formal and informal);
- Countries of destination for migrants;
- Recruitment messages (advantages from using the organisation's services).

Business as usual:

- Services offered to prospective migrants (packages or separate or both; standardised or individualised or both);
- Services offered to prospective employers;
- Communication with beneficiaries (channels; continued or only until departure/employment);
- Any assistance with work permits, residence permits, visas, other formalities in the destination country);
- Follow-up policy, if any;
- Private versus public employment agencies (perceived advantages and disadvantages);
- Social networks versus employment agencies (perceived advantages and disadvantages);
- Whether and to what extent former beneficiary migrants re-apply to the services of the agency;
- Whether and to what extent former migrants having not benefited from their services apply to the services of the agency for subsequent migration;
- Feedback from the beneficiaries (including those who had previously migrated without their support), if any (details)

Factors that influence the performance of employment agencies:

- Legislative;
- Institutional;
- Other (formal or informal).

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