

## TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE ROMANIAN MIGRATION IN SPAIN AND ITALY AFTER 1990

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### **Abstract:**

*After the fall of the communist regime, the opening of the frontiers, the passage to market economy and the début of economic reforms, the phenomenon of migration, in which regards the Romanians, suffered a substantial change both in the dynamics of internal migration, and in the early stages of external migration. This article engages an analysis of the phenomenon of Romanian migration for work purposes in Spain and Italy, from the perspective of the theories of trans-nationalism, by taking into account essential aspects regarding the circulatory migration, be it seasonal, temporary, periodical or not periodical, but also other forms in which migration presents itself such as transit, definitive or return migration.*

**Keywords:** circular migration, transnational space, probable transnational community, migration regions and fields, community capital

### **1. Transnationalism. Concept, approach, methodology**

Transnationalism, as a global phenomenon, generates new models of dual life, incorporating, in transnational spaces both the origin and the destination values<sup>1</sup>. Similar opinions, such as those of Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc, define it as a „process by which immigrants move slowly but constantly and have multiple simultaneous social relationships which link the origin society to the destination society”<sup>2</sup>, while Vertotec relates it to different cultures, having as basis

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<sup>1</sup> Alejandro Portes, „Introduction. The debates and significance of immigrant transnationalism” in *Global Networks*, 3, 2001, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Nina Glick-Schiller, Linda Basch, Christina Szanton Blanc (1999), “From immigrant to transmigrant: theorizing transnational migration”, in Ludger Pries, *Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*, Vermont: Ashgate PC, 1999, p. 74.

the actions of non institutional actors, which develop on several levels: social, economical, cultural and political<sup>3</sup>. This is why the transnational approach to the migration phenomenon allows besides the analysis of classical aspects regarding migration (socio-demographic events, collaboration with the state institutions etc.), also the deep understanding of the non-institutionalized processes and dynamics initiated by the migrants transgressing frontiers.

Spain and Italy are the European states which attracted the bigger number of Romanian migrants after 1990, the Romanians being also the most numerous foreign community with the highest migration rate increase, from the above mentioned states. The transnational perspective of the approach to the phenomenon of migration fluctuations<sup>4</sup> focuses on defining the permanent relationships developed by the migrants with the people from the country of origin, thus allowing the shaping of organization, mobilization and interaction peculiarities with the destination society (Spain, Italy), and the origin society, as well as the identification of own traits in contrast with other types of migrants.

Between the traditions from home and the practices of the new social and cultural life assumed in Spain or Italy for over two decades, the Romanian migrants are actors in search of equilibrium between the old and the new identity structure, thus, relating to their daily, institutional or philosophical dimension, becomes of capital importance.

The purpose of the current study is to analyse comparatively the characteristics of the Romanian migration in Spain and Italy, to identify the psychological, social and cultural traits of the Romanian migrants found under the influence of trans-nationalism, to observe new behavioural patterns resulting from the preservation or reconfiguration of some individual or collective identity values, as well as from assuming other cultural values, belonging to the destination countries. It is thus compulsory to attentively reflect upon some elements of collective imaginary but also of real society, such as solidarity, entrepreneurship, spirit of criticism, work cult, the attitude towards family, health and spare time, preoccupation towards education and instruction, the civic spirit,

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<sup>3</sup> Steven Vertotec, "Conceiving and researching transnationalism" in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2, pp. 1-25, 1999, p. 3  
[<http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/conceiving.PDF>], 20.06.2016.

<sup>4</sup> The migration fluxes refer to the number of entrances and exits from a state, being a parameter which is frequently used in the statistics regarding international migration, along with the migratory stocks (the number of emigrants registered at a given moment in a given state).

the non-institutionalized organizations, attitude towards institutions, the new philosophy of life. Other points of interest of the analyses shaping more clearly the Romanian migration phenomenon in the two Neo-Latin countries are: the migration routes, the attitude to the political, legislative, economic or cultural conditions of the two countries, the causes of main interest addressed to such countries, the Romanian model of migrating.

The debate about trans-nationalism refers to the medium and long-term extent of the migration process, that is the phenomenon of establishment of the Romanian migrants in the destination countries as residents or non residents, including the process of becoming citizens of those countries for a longer period of time which could become permanent, but with a frequent relating, directly or indirectly, spiritual or material, to the origin country. The relevant terms to be used in such cases are: circulatory migration (come and go), temporary habitation abroad and, of course, definitive settling. The return migration is another stage of trans-nationalism, supposing the return home of some migrants, undoubtedly transformed spiritually, materially, socially and from the point of view of behaviour, which could in time be followed by other stages, such as migration in steps. Trans-nationalism, considered as “a socially spontaneous form of post-December Romanian transition”<sup>5</sup>, can be also understood by relating it to the urban and rural space. In which regards this last aspect, Dumitru Sandu believes that villages with high rates of temporary emigration abroad, that is the villages in the North-East of Transylvania and the West of Moldova, had in the '90s a distinct well shaped profile. Their main characteristic was the preminance of ethnic and religious minorities, with high education level, located in areas with high possibility of communication with the global society<sup>6</sup>.

Methodologically speaking, such a subject, with social, cultural or economic significations required a multi-disciplinary approach, which used quantitative methods, exemplified by the method of analysis of official statistics, especially census, offered by the specialized institutions: the Romanian Office for Immigration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – the Western Europe-Central

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<sup>5</sup> Dumitru Sandu, *Viața socială în România urbană*, Iasi: Polirom, 2006, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Dumitru Sandu, “Cultura și experiența de migrație în satele României”, lucrare susținută la simpozionul *Probleme ale migrației și drepturile minorităților*, Bucharest, Institutul Goethe 1-22, Bucharest, 2004, p. 5

[[http://www.mentality.ro/content\\_docs/exploring\\_mentality/research\\_papers/DumitruSandupd](http://www.mentality.ro/content_docs/exploring_mentality/research_papers/DumitruSandupd)], 20.06.2016.

Europe Direction, the National Institute of Statistics, in Romania; respectively: Instituto Nacional de Estadística-INE, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, in Spain; and respectively: Istituto Nazionale di Statistica-ISTAT, Caritas Migrantes, Caritas from Rome, in Italy; as well as: *EUROSTAT*, the International Organization for Migration - IOM. The trends in migration research and migration fluxes tend more and more to refer to the opportunity of using qualitative methods, appealing to instruments belonging to the field of anthropology, sociology or ethnography, which may highlight the different peculiarities of the phenomenon. That is why, the present study focuses on correlating the analysis of statistical data allowing us to follow closely the scenarios of migration fluxes increases, as well as the demographical, cultural or educational aspects with the results of some empirical investigations (interviews, enquiries), realized in the territory of Romania, Spain or Italy, which offer a large array of information regarding occupational aspects, economic objectives, perspectives of integration, representation or identity image of the Romanian migrants. The historicist perspective illustrates the recent history of Romanian migration, the bilateral relationships and the tradition of collaboration with the states taken under observation.

## 2. The transnational dimension of the Romanian migration in Spain

The deep relationships between Romania and Spain were built, in the last two decades, by consolidating the diplomatic liaisons which were initiated in 1967 by the Paris agreement, by the economic or cultural partnerships, but also by the district cooperation in justice and internal affairs. From the point of view of Romanian-Spanish commercial exchange, its total volume reached in 2012 over 2190 million Euro, Spain detaining, despite the progressive increase of commercial values over the last years, only 2,36% of the external commerce of Romania, that is occupying the 9th place as commercial partner<sup>7</sup>. Spanish direct investments were situated on the 12<sup>th</sup> place in the total of foreign investments present in Romania in 2012, descending from the 10<sup>th</sup> place it occupied a year before<sup>8</sup>.

The presence of a numerous community of Romanians in Spain, but also the presence of Spanish businessmen in Romania confer the bilateral relations

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Bilateral Relations, Kingdom of Spain* [[www.mae.ro/bilateral-relations](http://www.mae.ro/bilateral-relations)], 20.05.2016.

<sup>8</sup> The National Bank of Romania, *Direct Foreign Investments in Romania* [<http://www.bnr.ro/Investitiile-straine-directe-%28ISD%29-in-Romania-3174.aspx>], 20.05.2016.

between the two countries an extremely important social and economic dimension. In 2002, the Romanian and the Spanish government signed an agreement for the work-force recruitment.

The intensity of migratory fluxes between Romania and Spain should be considered both from the perspective of the Romanian socio-economic reality after the fall of the communist regime, but also from the point of view of the politics of integration of the migrants. Conform to the most recent theories, the selection of migration destinations depends on the politics of immigration but also on the role of the migration networks<sup>9</sup>. Regarding the first aspect, it is well known that the West Mediterranean countries, Spain, Italy and Portugal are much closer to the European model of good practice in respect to the integration of the immigrants in the destination countries, especially by granting access to the workforce market but also to long-stay permits or family reunification.

Since the selection factors often depend on the opportunities identified by the migration networks, especially on the workforce market, we can speak, in the case of most of the Romanians who have chosen Spain (at least in the first three stages), of options which suited best their professional qualifications, which, in most of the cases, were under the average in Romania. We are talking about unqualified or under qualified migrants (professional schools graduates) or holding mid-qualifications (high school graduates). Another aspect to be taken into consideration is the openings on the Spain workforce market, starting from its economy. In 2001, Spain was offering 64% workplaces in the service sector, 11.7% in the construction sector and the rest in the manufacturing, tourism hotel services and agriculture sectors<sup>10</sup>. Many of the workplaces available on the workforce market, unaccepted by the locals, were in constructions, a sector which consecrated the excellence of the Romanians the way the Polish gained fame as excellent electricians, or in agriculture, domain much familiar to many of the Romanian migrants. To this was added the permissive Spanish legislative context, which favoured the entrance of the Romanians on the territory of Spain, their accommodation, work and finally obtaining a legal statute. Last but not least, the cultural and language similarities favoured the decision of migrating, but also the integration of the Romanians in the Iberian space.

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<sup>9</sup> Dana Diminescu, Sebastian Lăzăroiu, *Migrația circulatorie a românilor după 1990*, Bucharest: OIM, 2002, passim.

<sup>10</sup> *Instituto Nacional de Estadística-INE*, Censo di Población, 2001 [[www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es)], 25.05.2016.

In the long process of shaping new social and economic traits linking the origin societies to the destination societies, the transnational actors go through an entire series of steps, starting from creating the social networks to the development of social capital, economic and social integration and, last but not least, a new identity<sup>11</sup>. The phases of the recent Romanian migration to Spain, similar, in which regards its periodicity with the Romanian migration to Italy, highlight the similar profiles of migrants communities. Thus we can speak about the period in between 1990-1992, as a period of creation of networks, development of the social capital, respectively sedimentation of economic resources. Years 2002-2006 represented a period of sedimentation of transnational behaviours; while the period after 2007 introduced a period of maturity of the new identity valences. The first three periods were characterized by circulatory migration, but after 2007 the forms of permanent migration or of return migration became more and more visible.

In the '90s, the migration of the Romanians to Spain proved to be temporary, on short or medium term, periodical or non periodical; all these types of migration, including seasonal working (of up to three months) being forms of circulatory migration. The true solitary individual entrance attempts of the first migrants have paved the way in constructing the clandestine migration routes to Spain. Although it had signed the Schengen Agreement in 1991, thus securing its borders, the Romanians preferred Spain to other European destinations. The preference of the Romanians is due partially to the fact that Spain is a Neo-Latin country with an ascending economy, but also to the fact that it had a permissive reception context, which allowed the development of migratory fluxes. The Spanish state manifested a certain institutional tolerance towards the immigration of citizens from the ex-communist states, an immigration which could solve the workforce deficit in some domains of economy or social assistance system. Such tolerance was translated in the fact that a migrant declared (*empadronad*) at the city hall of a locality was still clandestine, but was no longer in danger of being ousted. In the first years after the 1990, the solution to legal entrance in Spain was occasioned by the tourism tours and by the commerce with transit visas, obtained for countries such as France, it being a state with a system which was less favourable to migrants and with more evidently selective policies. Finally, in

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<sup>11</sup> Jan Niessen, Thomas Huddleston, Laura Citron, *Migrant Integration Policy Index*, Brussels: British Council and Migration Policy Group, 2007, *passim*.

numerous cases, the political asylum requests insured the passing to legality. Thus, transit migration functioned, in the case of Romanians, from other countries to Spain and less from Spain to other countries.

The creation, up to the late '90s of the migration networks, had strong religious connotation. An anthropological research evaluating the connection between the origin area Nenciulești, Teleorman and the destination area, Madrid, highlighted the importance of the networks built around the 7<sup>th</sup> day Adventist Church<sup>12</sup>. In fact, the first large Romanian migration flux to Spain, occurring in between 1996-2000 registered an increase of 260% of the migrants, being characterized also by a religious component<sup>13</sup>. The Adventist communities, explorers of the Spanish space since 1990, were constituting, at the end of the decade, the majority Romanian migrating population from Castellón, Corredor del Henares and Comunidad de Madrid; despite the fact that they represented, at that time, only 0,37% of the population from Romania<sup>14</sup>. Defined by a horizontal organizational architecture, moral and material aid or clear rules of mutual aid and resource redistribution within the community, these neo-protestant structures were capable to activate very efficiently the solidarity mechanisms. In fact, the post-national, or better said the global dimension (in contrast of course with the Orthodox Church which was national by definition), the predominance of external financing, especially American, and help coming from the communities of Adventist migrants towards the communities of Adventists of the origin country needing help, confer to the Adventist Church an obvious transnational dimension. The trans-nationality of the Adventist communities from Spain is also given by the moral and economic liaisons with the members which remained in the origin country.

The pattern of the Romanian migrant in the first two stages of the migration towards Spain was that of the male in working in the constructions sector and of the female working in the household sector, both unqualified, little or medium qualified, arriving from the rural space. An increasing number of Romanians begin to be employed in agriculture or industry, some of them being high school graduates. Gradually there appears the phenomenon of the

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<sup>12</sup> Monica Șerban, "Trasee de migrație internațională către Spania", in Dumitru Sandu, *Locuirea temporară în străinătate. Migrația economică a românilor: 1990-2006*, Bucharest: Fundația pt o Societate Deschisă, 2006, p. 120.

<sup>13</sup> Data elaborated by Padrón Municipal, 2009 [[www.psoe.es/source-media pdf](http://www.psoe.es/source-media pdf)], 25.05.2016.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

Romanian free lancers, who create small companies, especially in the constructions sector, where they employ their own co-nationals belonging, usually, to the same religion or ethnic group. The phenomenon was quite largely met in the neo-protestant churches and less known in the Orthodox church, where the communitarian relationships are quite sporadic. Transnational working practices of the migrants were also marked by transnational entrepreneurship: commerce with products based on periodical travels, tourism related businesses, shops offering Romanian products which were opened in Spain, or investments in similar businesses when returning to the country of origin.

The favourable context of the third migration wave was created by the European Commission CE 2414/2001, known also by the name of the *Schengen White List*, which regulated the annulment of the visa request for the non communitarian citizens found for a shorter than 3months period of time in a European Union country. The new legislative frame was exploited by many Romanian migrants, the so called „turistas-trabajadores”, to the advantage of working under the pretext of tourism activities<sup>15</sup>. It is a known fact that the number of Romanian migrants in Spain knew in between 2000-2004 an unprecedented increase of 3.103%, out of which 3.136% men and 3.062% women<sup>16</sup>. One of the characteristics of the architecture of Romanian migration was its concentration in the medium sized towns of in the rural municipalities (of under 2000 inhabitants) such as Castellón (61% of the foreign residents in 2001) or Coslada (72%) and less in the big cities such as Madrid (6,5%) or Barcelona (1,8%)<sup>17</sup>. Having as reference the domains of activity, in 2001, most of the Romanian migrants were working in constructions (27,1%), agriculture (15%), manufacture industry (14%), and the rest in the domestic (12%), hotel (8,5%) and commerce (8%) domain<sup>18</sup>.

From the point of view of migration networks, we must say that while the process of spreading the social innovation of finding work abroad continues to progress, more and more mechanisms of social contamination begin to be

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<sup>15</sup> Rafael Viruela Martínez, “Inmigrantes rumanos en España: aspectos territoriales y procesos desustitución laboral” in *Scripta Nova. Revista electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, 222, 2006, p. 6 [http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-222.htm], 20.06.2016.

<sup>16</sup> Data elaborated by Padrón Municipal, 2009 [www.psoe.es/source-media pdf], 20.06.2016.

<sup>17</sup> Rafael Viruela Martínez, “Inmigrantes rumanos en España: aspectos territoriales y procesos desustitución laboral” in *Scripta Nova. Revista electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, 222, 2006, p. 11 [http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-222.htm], 20.06.2016.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.



activated, so that the Romanians find work abroad through members of their families, through the church, but also through publicity on the Internet or organisms and public services such as Ayuntamientos, Empresas de Empleo Temporal etc.

Nevertheless, the Romanian adherence to the European Union and implicitly the new gained statute of communitarian citizens (2007) did not lead to a major migration flux towards Spain, a country limiting by moratorium, in 2007, and then by law, in 2012, the free circulation of Romanian workers, who were thus forced to detain a work permit (*permiso de trabajo*). The fact that the Romanian migrants continued the actions towards an autonomous regime tuned out to be a suitable way for obtaining the work permit. In 2008, 41.880 of the Romanian migrants were performing independent activities; that is 18% out of the total number of foreign migrants in Spain<sup>19</sup>.

The statistical data indicate that in between 2008 and 2009 the number of the Romanians from Spain increased with only 7,95%, the situation of the small number of entrances being given not only by the legislative climate regarding the workforce market, but also by the effects of the crisis in economy, felt in Romania as well as in Spain<sup>20</sup>. Besides, the number of entrances of male migrants increased in the same years with only 7,2% because of the depression in the constructions industry, in comparison with the female entrances, which increased with 9 %<sup>21</sup>.

The last six years of Romanian presence in the Spanish space lead not only to an increase in their number, from 527.019 in 2007 to over 900.000 in 2013<sup>22</sup> but also to the sedimentation of the social and economic integration process. The acceptance respectively the integration of migrants is directly conditioned by the degree of institutional permissiveness, in the case of Spanish public authorities, cultural and social, in the case of the members of the destination society. The Spanish policies in matters of migrants integration applies the European model of good practice to all the levels of permissiveness: access to the workforce market, family reunification, granting long time residence, political participation and access to nationality<sup>23</sup>. Thus, Spain offered the Romanians criteria of eligibility in similar conditions to those required to the Spanish themselves, allows integration

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<sup>19</sup> Data elaborated by Padrón Municipal, 2009 [www.psoe.es/source-media pdf], 25.05.2016.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), Censo di Población, 2001 [www.ine.es], 21.05.2016.

<sup>23</sup> Jan Niessen, Thomas Huddleston, Laura Citron, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-19.

to the workforce market without requiring language or acquired labour skills, due to the fact that most of the available work offers require a relatively low qualification level. It also offered similar opportunities to the family of the migrant, thus favouring family reunification. Reporting to the family from the country of origin or taking the family to Spain are two transnational coordinates of Romanian migration. The Spanish specialized literature attributes it a strong individualism, due to the reduced relationships with other communities, favouring the pure nucleus family, since over 60% of the Romanian families had family members in Spain<sup>24</sup>.

For the Romanians, who in 2012 represented 17,35% of the total number of foreigners registered in Spain, the political participation and the access to nationality took different forms: over 100 Romanian associations, quite scattered in fact, two federations, 60 orthodox congregations, as well as representatives of the neo-protestant churches. In Observatorio Permanente Inmigración, the Romanian and Ecuadorian associations from Spain are considered to have at their bases the “étnicas”<sup>25</sup>. Of course, the coherence of a community of migrants, the representativeness at the level of the central and local administration, or the exercise of the lobby phenomenon towards the authorities of the adoption state are directly proportional not only with the capacity of solidarity and promotion in matters of *branding* but also with its seniority or persistence. Responsible, efficient and with a high degree of professional experience which shape a true „marca de origen”, the Romanian migrants undergo a progressive “rumanización” of immigration in most of the Spanish territory<sup>26</sup>.

The trans-nationality of the Romanian migrants from Spain is defined by two essential values: labour as reason for migrating and family as existential landmark. That is why the means of transmitting social remittance are materialized around the periodical, annual or biannual visits to the origin community or around the voyages or vacations of the members of the families in Spain, or of the Spanish colleagues’ travels to Romania, or around the sending of money and other goods. The consequences of migration can be analyzed both

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<sup>24</sup> Rosa Aparicio, Andrés Tornos, *Las redes sociales de los inmigrantes extranjeros en España. Uno estudio sobre el terreno*, Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales y Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración, 2005, p. 108.

<sup>25</sup> *Idem*, *Las asociaciones de inmigrantes en España. Una visión de conjunto*, Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración y Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración, 2010, p. 99.

<sup>26</sup> Rafael Viruela Martínez, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

from the perspective of modifying the identity valences of the migrants at the destination but also from the point of view of the impact that the permanence in Spain has upon the family from home. Much more, the influence of the transnationality phenomenon shaped, in the last years, a possible wave of returns of the migrants to the origin community. In the case of return migration, the motivation as well as the period after which the mobility is accomplished is quite essential. In Spain as well as in Italy, the returns are mainly due to the exits from the workforce markets or to the desire to reunify the family or to the intention of origin renovation.

The architecture of the new behavioural patterns of the migrants at the destination refers to the new work culture, based on rigor and quantity, private initiative, modernization of the life style and increase of the living standards, care for preserving health and hygiene, promotion of a new type of social and civic attitude, based on involvement and critical spirit. The money earned in Spain is used in entrepreneurship activities, buying houses, terrains or other goods, or insuring progress in the education level (school, university), investments in the benefit of the local or religious community.

Multiple influences are also exercised by the migrants upon the communities from home. Thus the migrants who returned home or the community from home are inevitably exposed to a modernity process, which in its turn is reflected upon the modernity of the state or of the area. Besides the alteration of traditions and the fact that children are often left in the care of grandparents or third persons represent two of the negative consequences of the migration experience. The data obtained by the Pool of the Romanian Community from Spain (CRS) indicated the fact that the orthodox family generally holds on less to the shocks imposed by the temporary separations caused by migration<sup>27</sup>.

### **3. The transnational migration of the Romanians in Italy**

The signing of bilateral economic cooperation agreements<sup>28</sup>, as well as the complementariness between the Romanian and the Italian economy, lead to an intense economic convergence: for a decade, 1997-2007, Italy became the main

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<sup>27</sup> Dumitru Sandu, *Lumi sociale ale migrației românești în străinătate*, Iași: Polirom, 2010, p. 122.

<sup>28</sup> The economic bilateral agreements signed by Romania and Italy after 1989 were: The Agreement regarding the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments (1990), The Agreement regarding Financial Assistance (1992), the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Cooperation of Small and Middle Enterprises (2002).

commercial partner of Romania, while as Romania became the 16<sup>th</sup> commercial partner of Italy. In between 2008-2012, Italy was surpassed by Germany, which then became the main commercial partner of Romania. The particular character of bilateral relations was highlighted by the migration phenomenon: Italian citizens in Romania, Romanian citizens in Italy. The number of small and medium firms with Italian capital from Romania arrived in 2012 to over 32.000, and the number of Romanian firms from Italy amounted to approximately 50.000<sup>29</sup>. In macroeconomic terms, the Italian capital contributed in the last years to Romania's IBP with approximately 8%, while as the Romanian migrants from Italy contributed with about 1% to Italy's IBP<sup>30</sup>.

The Romanians' preference for Italy was partly due to cultural and linguistic affinities, which facilitated the process of adaptation and integration in the peninsula, and partly due to the Italian legislative climate, favourable to migration. Italy itself a state with a strong migration tradition in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, became, after the '70s an immigration country, fully developed in matters of economy. Based on a mostly traditional industry, with big workforce needs requirements, Italy proved to have in the '90s much more permissive laws in matter of migration and delinquency in comparison with other European countries. In fact, the first law regarding immigration was adopted in 1986 - Law nr. 943/1986 – up until then, the state hardly interfered in the dynamics of migration fluxes: the Turco-Napolitano law of 1998 facilitated the granting of long term stay permits for foreigners, based on quota, with the obligation of the immigrants to have an actual working contract<sup>31</sup>. Despite the fact that the ascension of nationalist formations, such as the North League and Forza Italia, led to the implementation of more restrictive policies in matters of immigration (the Bossi-Fini law<sup>32</sup>; the Decree of expulsion of the immigrants of 2008) Italy continued to manifest a certain institutional tolerance regarding the immigration of citizens from the ex-communist countries, who would compensate the deficit of workforce in some domains of economy. The matter of controlling immigration and implicitly the integration of the immigrants constitutes nowadays in Italy an important issue in political debates, in the operative intervention

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<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Bilateral Relations, Republic of Italy* [<http://www.mae.ro/bilateral-relations>], 201. 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Anca Stângaciu, *România și dimensiunea sa europeană*, Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2011, p. 50.

<sup>31</sup> Sabin Drăgulin, "Fluxul migrațional din perspectivă istorică. Studiu de caz: Românii din Italia (1990-2010)" in *Sfera Politicii*, 166, p. 102 [[www.sferapoliticii.ro/sfera/166/art20](http://www.sferapoliticii.ro/sfera/166/art20)], 20.06.2016

<sup>32</sup> The Bossi-Fini law was supposed to be a solution to clandestine immigration, its main provisions referring to the immediate extrusion of clandestine immigrants, but also to the maintaining of the residency permit for those who demonstrated they had a place of work.

of the government, of local administration and of the non-governmental organizations<sup>33</sup>.

The conclusions of an anthropological investigation realized in 2006-2007 among the Romanian communities of Marginea (Suceava, Bucovina) and Torino (Piemonte) show that the Romanian migrants perceive the Italian state institutions as fragile, their vulnerability deriving, as in the case of the Romanian institutions from the faulty implementation of norms. Thus Romanians found in Italy many of the imperfections of Romanian public or institutional life, such as the evasive relationship between citizens and institutions, high tolerance to black market labour, flexible interpretation of rules<sup>34</sup>.

In the Italian space, the Romanian migrants' trans-nationality was defined in a few stages: 1990-1995, the period of firsthand exploration of the Italian space; 1996-2001, the period of consolidation of the emigrant network; 2002-2006, the years shaping the memory of mobility, respectively the period after January 2007, when the phenomenon matured, gaining strong transnational traits. We must state the fact that although in the '90s the seasonal migration constituted the beginning of the Romanian migration phenomenon, its trans-nationality gained visibility by the later circulatory temporary migration, definitive migration or, sometimes, by the return migration.

In between 1990 and 1995, years in which the Romanian space was getting acquainted with democratization, the number of Romanians legally or illegally settled in the peninsula increased little over 8.000<sup>35</sup>. The prototype of the migrant was that of the single man, with medium studies willing to experience economic gain but without benefitting from the migrant community's help. This was a period in which we could not speak about the identity of the Romanians from Italy, since the stay used to be usually short, repetitive or not in nature and motivated by work or study purposes.

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<sup>33</sup> Paula Benevene, Roberta Rondini, Oliviero Forti, Calogero Iacolino, „Il lavoro come agente di integrazione: indagine su un gruppo di immigranti romeni in Italia”, in Antonio Ricci, *Caritas Italiana, Romania-Immigrazione e lavoro in Italia. Statistiche, problemi e prospettive*, Roma: Idos, 2008, p. 192.

<sup>34</sup> Pietro Cingolani, „Prin forțe proprii. Vieți transnaționale ale emigranților români în Italia”, in Remus Anghel, István Horvãth, *Sociologia emigrației. Teorii și studii de caz românești*, Iasi: Polirom, 2009, pp. 183-184.

<sup>35</sup> *Caritas Italiana-Fondazione Migrantes-Caritas diocesana di Roma*, Rome, 2008.

After 1995, when Romania formally requested integration to the European Union, a new dynamism of the migration phenomenon was felt, being reflected in the significant increase of departures (the legal departures arriving in 2001 to 75.000)<sup>36</sup>, the increase in the female participation and the balancing of the gender statistical proportions leading also to the creation of personal and familial networks. The statistical data show that „in this period, over 40% of those who emigrated received help”, that is they used the migration networks, based on either familial or friendship, or religious ties, with predilection Neo-Protestant<sup>37</sup>. In the context of a developed horizontal migration mobility of unqualified or medium qualified workers, with high school or technical professional school graduates, male preferring constructions, female hotel or domestic services, work became the main vehicle of social integration, even if, in the background, the problem of family reunification remained<sup>38</sup>.

The third stage is the most relevant in the process of emigration towards Italy, because it is the stage in which the phenomenon becomes a mass phenomenon, gaining consistency, growing through a process of feminisation and becoming more and more transnational. The obtaining of the short-term stay permit in the Schengen space lead to the shaping of a new stage in the Romanian migration, which was defined by a change in structure, a new migration strategy and new social and cultural connotations. The number of Romanians living legally in Italy increased from 95.039 in 2002 to 342.200 in 2006, which in percentage means an increase of 260%<sup>39</sup>.

The possibility to perform work activities legally, on a period of maximum 3 months, favoured the consolidation of the circulatory migration tendencies, by departures and returns, in the same domains already assumed by the communities of Romanians: constructions and domestic assistance (*baby sitter* and *old sitter*). In other words, the work related penetration occurred in sectors which required less qualified workforce in which the Romanian often performed activities which were much lower than their level of education. The need to emigrate was so evident in many of the Romanian families, that it shaped a true “memory of mobility”<sup>40</sup>. Nevertheless, we assist to a process of feminization of the Romanian migration, in the sense that

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<sup>36</sup> Istituto Nazionale di Statistica-ISTAT [[www.istat.it](http://www.istat.it)], 28.05.2016; Caritas Italiana-Fondazione Migrantes-Caritas diocesana di Roma, Rome, 2008.

<sup>37</sup> Pietro Cingolani, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-189.

<sup>38</sup> Maria Macioti, “Senza di loro l’Italia starebbe peggio”, in Antonio Ricci, *Caritas Italiana, Romania-Immigrazione e lavoro in Italia. Statistiche, problemi e prospettive*, Rome: Idos, 2009, p. 167.

<sup>39</sup> [[www.hotnews.ro/stiri-diaspora](http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-diaspora)], 10.05.2016.

<sup>40</sup> Pietro Cingolani, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

women represent between 50-55% of the total of Romanian migrants, which proves to be still, predominantly individual and not familiar in nature<sup>41</sup>. The statute of extracommunitarians, the limited rights and the effective costs of the stay determined the option of transferring the entire family to the destination country to be only at a starting point<sup>42</sup>

Found among the traditions and customs of the new social structure, the social and cultural life of the Romanian migrants gained, before, but especially after Romania's adherence to the European Union, a transnational dimension. The starting point of trans-nationalism was circularity in its complexity, it being focused on the characteristics of continuous and particular relationships of the ones abroad with the origin country.

Year 2007 proved to be a decisive year for the trajectory and quality of Romanian migration from the Italic peninsula. In which regards the Romanian-Italian bilateral relations the political and diplomatic crises between Bucharest and Rome, triggered by the largely mediatised Mailat case, which became even more acute along 2008, lead to the emergence of an anti-Romanian trend, both at a political level and at the level of the Italian collective mentality. The Italian politicians approached the issue of Romanian immigration as a national security issue, and thus asked that some restrictive measures be applied; some of them even contradicting European norms<sup>43</sup>. Paradoxically, the same political class recognized the Romanian immigrants' contribution to the economic development of Italy. At a macro group level, the anti-Romanian feelings grew even more acute among the traditionally conservative social categories (elder people, people with a medium or even under medium education level) and among the unoccupied persons (the unemployed, the housewives the retired); but they started to appear even among the younger people or people with over average education<sup>44</sup>. The elitist categories and generally speaking the intellectuals reacted positively in the sense of dissipating the Romanian-Italian crisis. Manifest-type reactions had also the Italian investors from Romania, as category directly interested

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<sup>41</sup> Andreea Raluca Torre, "Integrazione sociale e lavorativa. Il punto di vista della colettività romena in Italia", in Antonio Ricci, *Caritas Italiana, Romania-Immigrazione e lavoro in Italia. Statistiche, problemi e prospettive*, Rome: Idos, 2008, p. 170.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 174.

<sup>43</sup> Stefano Braghiroli, "România și Italia: Povestea unei logodne lipsite de dragoste, dar de conveniență reciprocă", in Ovidiu Pecican, *România în UE: Trei ani de la aderare*, Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2010, pp. 40-73.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 62-71.

in maintaining the Italian-Romanian collaboration. Statistically speaking the number of the Romanians from Italy increased with 15% after the Mailat case, sign that this highly politicized episode did not have a negative impact upon the mobility of the Romanians on the workforce market in the peninsula, but still it prejudiced their image<sup>45</sup>. On January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010, the number of the Romanians established in Italy was appreciated at approximately 953.000 people (according to ISTAT data) or around 1.165.000 people (according to the Caritas/Migrantes organization data)<sup>46</sup>; their working activity producing approximately 1% of Italy's IBP. In January 2011, in Italy there were 4.570.000 foreign residents, that is 7,9% of the country's total population 1.200.000, percentage out of which 21,2% being represented by the Romanians, which was the most numerous foreign community in the peninsula<sup>47</sup>. Still we must state the fact that the ISTAT data regarding Romanian immigration from the last years do not correspond to the Caritas Migrantes data, according to which the Romanians represented 21,5% of the foreign population from Italy since 2008.

The Romanian emigration in Italy received after 2007 more and more transnational traits, reflected in the progressive widening of the temporal perspective. In fact, the same three types of departures occurred, except that the long-stay type gained consistency: the seasonal emigration, really small in proportion, the temporary one, which is characterized by the fact that the years spent in Italy or in other transfer countries (i.e. Germania, Anglia) alternate with returns in Romania respectively the definitive one, characterized by the sporadic return home during vacations or holydays.

After 2007 the architecture of the Romanian community was rather gender unbalanced, being characterized by a predominance of men, who enjoyed a better occupation on the workforce market, that is 71,9% out of the total migrants from Italy, but also brought a higher level of professional skills, 72,3 of them owning a diploma<sup>48</sup>. Regarding this last aspect, we must say that academic recognition of studies diplomas achieved in Romania lead to a vertical development of migration, in the sense that it gradually, became visibly ranked; the new pyramidal form being: unqualified workers, medium qualified ones, qualified ones and last but not least university

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<sup>45</sup> *Gândul*, Bucharest, 12 March 2009, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bilateral Relations, Republic of Italy* <http://www.mae.ro/bilateral-relations>, 20.05.2016.

<sup>47</sup> ISTAT, *La popolazione straniera residente in Italia* [www.istat.it], 28.05.2016.

<sup>48</sup> *Rapporto sugli immigranti in Italia, December 2007* [[http://www.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/15/0673\\_Rapporto\\_immigrazione](http://www.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/15/0673_Rapporto_immigrazione)], 12.05.2016.



graduates, who were overqualified most of the time by masters and PhDs. Even the domains in which the Romanians find interest broaden by migration of specialists which are recognized for their competence and performance in constructions, health, IT, tourism. Italy did not promote selective migration politics, unlike other states such as France, the Scandinavian countries or Great Britain, which developed, in the last years, politics in order to attract specialists. As a consequence, the Romanians were occupied in the sub-medium or medium qualified Italian workforce market, where the request was high. In 2007, 47,4% of the Romanian migrants were working in industry, especially in constructions, based on gender the male being hired in a percentage of 67% in industry while women 38,9% in domestic services<sup>49</sup>.

The familial component started gradually to be the second reason, after work, for identity reconfiguration. The increase in the number of children, born in Italy or schooled in Italian schools, shows clearly the Romanian's wish to permanently settle and integrate into the Italian society. Shortly after Romania's integration, 53% of the employed Romanian women had their children with them in Italy, in comparison, the Ukrainian women succeeded in that in a percentage of 59,6%<sup>50</sup>. The statistical data show the fact that the number of Romanians present in Italy out of familial reasons is a lot smaller than in the case of other categories of migrants. In 2007, 68% of the Romanians were in Italy for work purposes and only 28% for familial reasons, while as in the case of Albanian families, for example, the familial motivation was of 42,5%, and in the case of Serbians of 35%<sup>51</sup>. That means that the Romanian migrants still deal with the challenge of meeting the professional and the emotional life by family reunification in Italy. It is possible that some migrants not be able to gain a stabile, definitive identity in Italy, feeling and thinking in terms of precise sequences of time, or projecting on long terms a new social life. The fact that essential autonomy does not always coincide with gaining social or economic independence makes it that part of the migrants live in a "permanent make-do"<sup>52</sup>. Some specialists in migration consider nevertheless that the trans-nationalism of emigrant actors occurs around the family which, most of the time, remains in the origin country. This explains the fact that for most of the Romanians from Italy the priority of transnational investments is buying a house, meaning an existential reference.

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>51</sup> ISTAT [www.istat.it], 28.05.2016.

<sup>52</sup> Pietro Cingolani, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

Another mechanism of strong solidarity is realized by means of the transnational church, it having a strong identity charge. The Church creates moral bridges between the origin society and the new one, links which are less evident in the Orthodox communities, but really deep among the neo-protestant communities. In Italy, Torino, for example, trans-nationality is strongly sustained by the Pentecostal Church where transnational links are spiritual but also economic: the ministers from Romania keep in touch with the Torino migrant believers in order to maintain order in a dismantled community. They use the recommendation letters thus granting for the good behaviour of the believers willing to migrate. The representatives of the Pentecostal communities from Italy periodically organize visits in Romania and fundraising meant for the sustainment of social projects for the Pentecostal communities from Romania, sustaining also the renovation of cult places<sup>53</sup>.

The Romanian migration in the Italian space by its depth, length and substance confers a special note to the particularity of the relationships between the two countries. Although they still show insufficient solidarity by scattering into more than 73 de associations, the Romanian migrants from the peninsula undergo a process of identity maturity, trans-nationality but also social and cultural integration in the Italian space.

#### **4. The Romanian migrants from Spain and Italy, similar destinies**

After the fall of the communist regime, the main form of migration for work purposes of the Romanians towards Spain or Italy was circulatory migration, which knew a spectacular growth after 2002, to which was added the definitive migration, which was relatively low in between 2000-2007 (approximately 11.000 persons/year) and more visible after Romania's adherence to the European Union<sup>54</sup>. The world economic crisis, the new economic reality from the destination countries, the potential of the migrants (economic, social capital) or the social and economic perspectives from the origin communities have shaped after 2007 the trend of return migration, which is still hard to estimate. The phenomenon of the returns was not significant though, because the Romanians succeeded in identifying adaptation strategies, becoming unemployed or migrating intra-sectors or intra-territory.

The structure of temporary migration from the '90s is characterised by selectiveness. Thus we notice the predominance of men in respect of women, of Moldavians and Transylvanians in respect of individuals from the southern district of

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 87-89.

<sup>54</sup> Dumitru Sandu, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

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Olt or the highlanders, of high school or professional technical school graduates in respect of university or post-university graduates. It can also be observed the predominance of job openings in constructions (jobs opened for men) and in the domestic sector (jobs opened for women), in respect of liberal or autonomous occupations. The structure of migration became more homogenous after 2000; while as beginning with 2007 it tended to have a much more vertical direction, by the increase in number of the specialized or even overspecialized migrants (medical students, physicians, computer engineers, engineers), especially in Italy.

Both in Spain and in Italy the maximum intensity period of temporary leaves had been registered in between 2001-2006, when the Romanians earned the right of free movement in the Shangen space, and the mass migratory fluxes resulted to be religious in nature (most of the migrants being from amongst the Pentecostal, Baptist or Adventist confessions) but also ethnic in nature (Hungarians, Romanians) and then familial in nature, in the networks perpetrating family reunification. The settlement of the Romanians in the areas of Rome, Milan, Torino, but especially in the Madrid area, had a familial character, the politics of integration of the migrants at the destination, applied by the Italian and especially by the Spanish state, stimulating family unification, granting similar conditions for the members of the families coming from Romania, free schooling and integration in the system for the children, according to the communitarian model of good practice in the domain. The Romanian preference for the two states depended much on the favourable legislation, on the type of request from the workforce market, not qualified, medium qualified and little overqualified, on social and cultural tolerance and on the Neo-Latin languages spoken there.

The identity related feelings such as attachment towards the family, the origin locality or the origin region can be seen in the migrants intending to return to Romania and are affectionately linked to it, in the migrants who intend to remain in Spain or in Italy, being, at the same time, attached to the origin community, but also at the ones who are oriented both towards the country of destination and towards the country of origin, and, last but not least, at the ones which are little linked both to Romania and Spain or Italy (the eradicated). One can clearly notice the four types of identity orientation of the Romanian migrant, which is also equivalent to the four types of traditionalism. The fact that there are Romanians, who do not wish to return home, but live with the constant idea of opening businesses in Romania, is the

strongest sign of trans-nationalism associated with migration<sup>55</sup>. Buying a house in Romania despite the decision of remaining in Spain cannot mean but that one is still deeply attached to the origin community. The trans-nationalism of Romanian migration is mostly given by its mainly familial nature. Over 70% of the Romanians living in the Madrid area have at least one other member of the family with them in Spain<sup>56</sup>. Much more, giving birth to Romanian babies abroad, in Italy but also in Spain, determined in the last years, the migration of the grandparents to the destination countries. Both the Romanians in Spain and the ones in Italy actually live a partially trans-nationally charged daily life: some of them have shops where they sell specifically Romanian products and use Romanian raw materials brought from the native country, they are organized in associations or federations or benefit from the services of some Romanian professionals (lawyers, hair dressers, teachers).

The quantitative studies upon migration indicate that the Romanian experience of living abroad makes Romanians richer, but also changes some mentalities in the sense that they change their way of thinking, being much more optimistic and trusting, gaining a broader perspective upon life, becoming more responsible, more organized, thinking more constructively, and gaining also a different type of work cult, based on efficiency, punctuality and seriousness. They also tend to show more interest in their spare time, considering friends as being very important in their life, but they also tend to get divorced quicker pleading for a more restricted family demography, and they develop a more pronounced civic spirit and interest for the political live and promoting also the entrepreneurship spirit.<sup>57</sup> The migrants returned home or members of the origin community suffered, in their turn, an inevitable process of modernity, which then was reflected on the modernity of the village or town or area. The new behavioural patterns of the migrants returned home or of the families which remained home refer to the care for health keeping, hygiene and external aspect, to the lifestyle changing and increase of living level, as well to the care and attention dedicated to the education of their children, and then to the increase of the degree of civic involvement and interest in investments and businesses.

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<sup>55</sup> Data resulting from the Pool of the Romanian Community from Spain (CRS), September 2008, interviewed a lot of 832 Romanian immigrants from the Autonomous Region Madrid, data taken from Dumitru Sandu, *op. cit.* p. 129.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 131.

<sup>57</sup> Data resulting from the Pool Locuirea temporară în străinătate (*Temporarily living abroad*) (LTS / TLA), 2006, performed in Italy, Rome and in Spain, Madrid, data taken from Dumitru Sandu, *Locuirea temporară în străinătate. Migrația economică a românilor: 1990-2006*, Bucharest: Fundația pt o Societate Deschisă, 2006, pp. 181-185.

For the Romanians from Spain and Italy, for those who have returned home for “missing home too much and feeling estranged from home”, or for the families remaining in Romania, remittance becomes the most relevant factor of transnationality, contributing to the development of individual, familial or small community from Romania life strategies. The money sent as remittances by the Romanians from Spain, the situation being similar in the case of the Romanians from Italy, are used for current expenses, to pay debts, to finance businesses in constructions, to improve, build or buy new houses, to buy goods for the family or as investments in the children’s education<sup>58</sup>.

To conclude, we can affirm that both in Spain and in Italy, the individual or collective histories of migrants prove to be profoundly marked by trans-nationality, such transformations being translated by equilibrium in adaptation, by appealing to traditions, customs, cultural or personal values, but also by acquiring some Western social and cultural values. From the perspective of shaping new destinies and identities, the Romanian migrants are, knowingly or not, responsible for promoting the image of the origin country. Last but not least, the influences brought by the migrants upon the communities from Romania are evident, from the spreading of new behavioural patterns to the spreading new ideas and practices at an individual or micro-group level to the encouraging the civic spirit or to the modernizing of the macro-space, be it urban or rural.

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 132-133.

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