

THE NEW MIGRATION PATTERNS OF EDUCATED ROMANIANS TO THE EU: WHAT CHALLENGES FOR THE INDIVIDUALS AND FOR THE NATION-STATE?

Raluca Prelipceanu*

Abstract.** *Romanians, together with other Eastern Europeans, endured under communism confinement to the communist space, often described in terms of a geographic prison. The fall of communism brought Eastern Europeans the possibility of free movement. However, most Western states adopted restrictive admission policies towards the low-skilled and selective policies that favour the highly-skilled ones. Romanian skilled migrants resorted to a wide range of strategies in order to move around in the European space. In this paper, the case study on the Romanian community in France provides an insight into the life of the recent wave of Romanian skilled migrants to France: from the reasons to leave the country and the strategies adopted, to problems of professional and social integration. But, the physical absence does not mean that all the ties with the home country have been cut. Due to the development of information and communication technologies and price drop of means of transport, the ties with the home community are easily maintained. The virtual and real contacts create a flow of values, information and ideas generating a culture of networks that could play an important role in the process of convergence to the European values and institutions. The challenge facing the Romanian state is how to encourage this process, and, at the same time, how to help spread these flows at the level of the entire economy.*

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Introduction.

The evolution of policies regarding the highly-skilled around the world

The unique development of a globalised economy based on knowledge as main production factor has led to an accrued competition on behalf of the states for attracting highly-skilled labour. As a consequence, highly-skilled labour has

become one of the most valuable resources on the global market. In order to attract the better educated and the highly-skilled labour, some of the developed states have implemented specific policies that range from facilitating access to high-level education, to

* **Raluca Prelipceanu** is a PhD student at the Sorbonne Centre for Economics and a Marie Curie early stage researcher at Centro Studi Luca d'Agliano. E-mail: Raluca.Prelipceanu@malix.univ-paris1.fr

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substantial material advantages once in the labour market. Both traditional and new countries of immigration are changing their policies in favour of highly-skilled migration. Amongst the first countries who adopted selective immigration policies, USA, Canada, and Australia are habitually regarded as highly-skilled labour destination countries. At European level, Western European countries have begun to build more and more barriers for low-skilled migration, but, at the same time, are designing policies that target the highly-skilled labour. Sweden and Norway, followed by the UK and the Netherlands (Lowell 2006) have been the most aggressive among the European countries that have implemented brain drain risk policies (Lowell, 2006). Nevertheless, recent policies adopted in Belgium and France during the last years, show their determination to catch up with the above mentioned countries. This raises the question whether there will be a convergence between the European countries in terms of policies targeting highly-skilled migration. This is a delicate issue as intra-European migration and particularly East-West migration accounts for an important part of these flows.

Developing countries have also become aware of the danger of losing their 'best and brightest', a loss whose remittances received do not seem to be able to compensate for. Certain professions such as the doctors and high-tech specialists seem to be particularly affected by this 'brain drain' process. This is also in accordance with the labour demand in the receiving countries. The depleting of specialists in some strategic sectors for development like healthcare has begun to raise concerns in the origin countries. At European level, the Eastern European countries have begun to experience labour market shortages in some sectors and to recur to immigration in order to cover these shortages. Moreover, most of these countries

are nowadays confronted to negative demographic balances or are likely to be in the near future. In this context, home countries try more and more to implement policies meant to retain their highly-skilled labour force or to encourage the returns. These policies have proved to be more or less successful depending on the home country, but equally on the differential of development and finally on each individual's personal history and preferences.

Romania is the Eastern European country most affected by this phenomenon; although the recent period following the accession to the European Union seems to have encouraged some flows of return migration, due to the economic conditions improvement, Romania has equally seen an increase in the outflows of highly-skilled migrants and a shift in the overall composition of out-migration flows in favour of the better educated migrants. This raises important concerns regarding brain drain for the Romanian state.

A picture of the Romanian highly-skilled migration during and after communism

The collapse of communism brought about sweeping changes in the migratory pattern of the Eastern Europeans. The beginning of the 1990s saw an upsurge of mobility forms in Eastern Europe. Some of these were new, others were merely the augmentation of forms already present in the Eastern migratory space during communism. Many studies on Romanian migration emphasize the mobility of the low skilled, which often occurred illegally, and made the headlines of European newspapers, whereas the mobility of the educated migrants is often cast into shadow. In reality, highly-skilled migration flows developed in parallel with low skilled flows.

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Even if this form of mobility has seen an important upsurge in recent years, Romania faced brain drain at a smaller rate even during the communist period. As part of the ethnic migration agreements concluded with Israel, Hungary and Germany and also part of an agreement concluded with the US, almost 300,000 persons left Romania during the decade of the 1980s (Gheorghiu, 1996). An important part of these persons had a tertiary education level acquired in Romania. Besides these countries, the Romanian Ministry of Home Affairs also acknowledged flows to France, Canada and Australia of qualified Romanians (Nedelcu, 2005). Thus, brain drain is not a new form of mobility, but one which, under new conditions, has experienced important transformations and developments.

In 2000, Romania ranked among the first thirty countries of origin in terms of stock of highly-skilled persons, with a total of 176,393 persons living outside Romanian borders (Docquier and Marfouk, 2006). About 54.3 per cent of highly-skilled Romanians lived in North America, only 29.3 per cent in the European Union, and another 12.3 per cent in other European countries. But even considering the preference for North America, Romania still ranked among the first twenty-five countries in terms of stock of highly-skilled migrants to EU-15 (Docquier, Lohest and Marfouk, 2005).

As the development of this form of mobility became particularly clear in the recent years, the study of the flows allows for an even more interesting analysis. According to the OECD, out of 13,000 permanent emigrants from Romania in 2004, more than half were skilled emigrants, of whom 50 per cent had completed a secondary education and 13 per cent were college graduates.

In 2005, more than a quarter of the Romanian emigrants were highly-skilled, the rate being slightly higher in the case of men (28.5 per cent) than in that of women (25.1

per cent), as reported by the National Institute of Statistics (2005). However, the data provided by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics shows, from 1990 onwards, a steady increase in the percentage of women in the Romanian migratory flows from 51.63 per cent in 1992, to 64 per cent in 2005, meaning that actually, overall, more educated women leave the country than educated men. According to the Docquier, Marfouk and Lowell database (2007), in 2000 from the total stock of highly-skilled migrants from Romania 49.6 per cent were women. Whereas the US and Canada are the main destinations for highly-skilled Romanians, Romania, along with Turkey, also ranks first as country of origin for highly-skilled foreign residents in an enlarged Europe (which includes also ex-USSR and ex-Yugoslav countries and Turkey) (OECD, 2006). There are several Western European countries in which Romania ranks among the first ten countries of origin of highly-skilled migrants. This is the case of Belgium, Germany, the Czech Republic, Spain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Slovak Republic and Sweden. Furthermore, concerning migration to Hungary and Austria, Romania is the first country of origin for highly-skilled migrants.

At the EU-15 level, in the early 1990s, most highly-skilled Romanians went to Germany (Straubhaar, 2000), but this no longer held true in 2000. With the start of the new millennium, there has been a diversification concerning the destinations of highly-skilled Romanians in the EU-15. Radu (2003) shows that the countries with the highest selectivity rate for Romanian migrants among the EU-15 are France and the United Kingdom, whereas Germany comes third, with a rate of selectivity just slightly exceeding the EU-15 average. In the light of the recent developments of the endogenous growth theories, these countries have all adopted

migration policies targeting the highly-skilled. For instance, Germany implemented in 2000 the Green Card, a programme quite similar to the US H-1B visa, enabling companies to employ some 20,000 IT experts from non-EU countries. The requirements were either a university or technical college degree, or a guaranteed gross annual salary of at least € 51,000. The Green Card could be obtained by international ICT students, enabling them to sign a labour contract in Germany immediately after their graduation. In this way, they were spared a lengthy process to obtain a residence permit. This programme granted a limited work permit of up to five years and, for spouses and minors the right to reside during this period. From August 2000 to July 2003, 14,876 work permits were issued on the basis of the Green Card regulation and most of them went to Indian and Eastern European specialists, Romanians ranking third.

Most of the ones involved in this type of mobility are young persons. A study, conducted by the Open Society Foundation, showed that for the last six years more than 15,000 young people left Romania every year when finished their studies, and a quarter of high-school pupils intend to leave during their undergraduate studies or after. Highly-skilled migration seems to affect especially high-tech specialists. At the beginning of the new millennium it is estimated that around 5,000 high-tech specialists were leaving the country each year after having graduated, most of them heading for North America. Another highly-skilled sector affected by migration is that of doctors. According to OECD (2007) Romania ranked eighteen as a source country for doctors in the OECD countries with an expatriation rate of 10.9 per cent in 2000.

According to the Romanian Passport Department and the Border Police the return rate for those who leave to study abroad is merely 10 per cent.

The Romanian community in France

According to OECD (2006) estimates, there are about 10,000 highly-skilled Romanians in France; this represents a quarter of Romanians living in France, out of which another 10,000 being in an illegal situation before Romania joined the EU. However, nobody can really estimate the number of Romanians in France. Whereas the Romanian authorities place it at around 60,000, informal sources often speak of 100,000. About 40,000 would be living, according to these sources, in Paris and Ile-de-France, whereas the rest is spread all over the French territory. The most important poles of Romanian communities can be found near Strasbourg, Lille, Lyon (with an important Roma community), Marseille, Montpellier and Bordeaux (Michaud, 2003).

France is one of the traditional destinations for Romanian migrants. Throughout the Romanian history France represented a model for Romania and the ties established with the French were particularly strong. Nowadays, we can identify several waves in the Romanian highly-skilled migration to France. First of all, a wave of Romanian intellectuals and aristocrats which exiled themselves to France during the early days of the communist regime in Romania, between 1946 and 1948. Even at the end of the 1950s we can still identify some Romanian intellectuals who managed to arrive in France either as tourists, or simply because the communist system thought best to get rid of persons perceived as a threat to the new regime and granted them the right to join their family already in France. In turn, their families established in France did their best to ensure their departure. These Romanians never recognized the authority of the newly set up regime in Romania and organized themselves around some remarkable Romanian intellectuals

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and established a Romanian government in exile.

Another wave had its origin in the labour migration from Romania during the 1960s when, under specific labour agreements, some Romanian specialists went to work in the North African countries. Once their contracts ended, some of these specialists, mostly scientists, never returned to Romania, but instead went to France and obtained the political refugee status.

During the 1990s, with the dismantling of political frontiers, a lot of intellectuals fled abroad, some of them choosing France. It is estimated that 5,000 Romanian students left the country after the miners' invasion in Bucharest in the summer of 1990, following a sign of possible political instability. The departures continued throughout the 1990s with many Romanians leaving during their undergraduate studies. As the status of political refugee became more and more difficult to acquire and the labour contracts favoured only some very specific domains such as the high-tech, this strategy was adopted by a wider range of highly-skilled persons coming from other fields in order to later gain access to the foreign labour market. With the emergence of a network of student exchange programmes, France became rapidly one of the main destinations for this type of migration for study (Lagrave, 1998). However, this proved to be a mere strategy for leaving the country, many never coming back. In fact, the rate of return was so small that France has reconsidered its policies in this field, and tried to develop joint programmes that could encourage Romanian students to return home once their studies were finished.

The further development of this programmes, in the light of the future accession to the EU, led to an important increase in the number of those who left the

country in early 2000. With a focus on Romanians, who came to France in the last ten years, the study is mostly concerned with the fourth and last wave of Romanian migration. It must be emphasized that the conditions under which this wave developed are very different from those concerning the former three. In this case, the accession to the EU was clearly in view and political conditions could no longer be considered unstable. The rate of growth in the Romanian economy was on a constant upturn and foreign enterprises were investing in highly-skilled intensive sectors of the Romanian economy, creating opportunities for well-paid jobs. For the first two waves which took place during communism there was no possibility of return and all ties with the country of origin and with those left behind were cut for what seemed forever. The third wave developed under the difficult conditions of the Romanian transition, with no economic opportunities and the worsening of living conditions. Compared to the former waves for which the future seemed clearly defined and concerned mostly the country of destination, the future prospects of this last wave can be considered to be open ended.

Case study: Romanian highly-skilled migrants in France in the last ten years

The case study relies on twenty exploratory interviews conducted in France during March and April 2006. The study team draw up a questionnaire further filled in by 125 persons. The sample can be described as follows: as previously mentioned, this form of mobility concerns mostly the youth; 48% of the sample is aged between 26 and 30. All these persons had a tertiary education acquired either in Romania or in France. The average time already spent in France by these people varied between two and five years.

Two thirds of the sample population consisted of women. This is in accordance with the statistics issued by EduFrance that acknowledges the female dominance of the student flows for recent years.

Since the history of migrants begins in their country of origin, we will first investigate who these persons were before their departure from Romania. First, they came from all eight NUTS II level regions and from 33 of the 41 Romanian counties. With regard to the region of origin, the capital Bucharest-Ifov ranked first with 27.2 per cent of the migrants. Another 16.8 per cent came from the Northeastern region, while 14.4 per cent from the South-Muntenia region. As far as universities are concerned, universities in Bucharest rank 1st, as: 54.4 per cent of the sample has studied there. Bucharest is followed by the universities of Cluj and Iasi.

One can thus identify a "capital" effect, with Bucharest attracting an important number of Romanian students, due to the quality and the diversity of the studies offered and to the availability of better job opportunities after having graduated.

In terms of fields of specialization among men, one identifies mostly high-tech specialists (32.6 per cent) and economists (30.4 per cent), followed by mathematicians, while among women we identify mostly economists (34.2 per cent) and philologists (15.2 per cent). The diversity of fields is larger in the case of women. Six persons had a double degree and nine had completed their whole college education in France.

The main advantage that this population obviously has, resides in the skills acquired. Most of them had a previous migratory experience generally linked to their studies. Should one consider former internal mobility (which is the case of sixty-two persons from the sample) or that of an international mobility (eight persons), or even both (four persons),

one can identify the existence of a mobility experience which has an important role in their subsequent decision to leave the country and in the way they fare afterwards. There are even cases in which the whole family stands as an example of the development of a "culture of mobility" with several members living in other countries or having spent significant time abroad.

Even if generally, these persons arrived in France as international students, this is often a step preceding the entry to the labour market of the destination country. Meyer and Hernandez (2004) acknowledge that two thirds of R&D experts at world level had entered the destination country as students. Steven Vertovec (2002) underlines "the experience of being a foreign student significantly increases the likelihood of being a skilled migrant at a later stage". The networks developed by the students helped to provide opportunities for other fellows from their country of origin.

Reasons for departure and the main strategies engaged

The most important reason seems to be the desire to pursue internationally recognized studies leading to the acquisition of an internationally recognized diploma. The second reason is the search for better job opportunities and the desire to acquire a better social status. However, these two reasons are not divergent, as the diploma recognized all over the world seems to be the element that facilitates the mobility. Once the diploma is acquired these migrants can leave wherever they find the best job opportunities. Another element that determines the departure resides in their discontent with the Romanian society as many consider that even though the communist regime is gone, the change in mentalities has lagged behind.

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Some of them said that they left in search of a freedom perceived as still difficult to find in the Romanian society, whereas the desire for an experience of another culture also plays a significant part. Man's exploratory nature has never faded away even in modern times.

Amongst the strategies engaged in order to leave Romania, migration for studying plays, as expected, the most important part. France is the country which receives the greatest number of Romanian students each year. In 2004, the number of Romanian students attending courses in French universities stood for 4,839 persons. Almost 70 per cent of the sample population left the country as international students, whereas a few persons left with a work contract (it is merely the case of high tech professionals) or for family reunion (in the case of women). Some of these strategies account for a well-organized plan, as in order to become an international student one needs to have very good results and to prepare for obtaining them several years in advance.

Sometimes, the strategies designed before the departures foresee the change of status, for example from international students to highly-skilled workers, or from tourists to international students. The differences between categories no longer seem to matter, as one can very easily pass from one category to another.

Destination choice and performance in the labour market

What determines the choice of the destination country? In the majority of cases, the geography of mobility seems to be shaped by the exchange programmes concluded by the universities in the countries of origin and destination. Formal networks are the main channels to enable the mobility of the highly-skilled as described by Faist (1999). Also, the

French soft power¹ seems to play an important part in that matter, as the knowledge of the French language and the attraction exerted by the French culture, represent together one of the most important elements to enable this choice. France has even developed an entire strategy for this purpose, seeing that the importance of student mobility in attracting highly-skilled labour has been officially recognized (Economic and Social Council, 2005). The French soft power is very important in the Romanian case, as the mobility of Romanian students to France started to develop from the end of the 18th century, and had even become a tradition during the following century, when the aristocratic families sent their children to be educated in France. At the end of the 19th century, Romania and Russia were the first source countries in Europe for international students in France (Pastre, 2003). This tradition was thoroughly respected until the outbreak of World War II and the installation of communism. Consequently, in what concerns the history of French-Romanian relations, we feel the need to emphasize the existence of a circulation not only of people, but also of ideas, practices and symbols, which was only interrupted by the communist period.

Another factor that seems to have influenced the choice of destination is the existence of informal networks of kin or friends. About a third of the sample members mentioned before in the study admitted the importance of informal networks in their destination choice. The development of new ICTs during the last years facilitated the contact inside the networks, allowing for a virtual projection of the future space of

¹ "Soft power" is a concept according to which knowledge and culture are viewed as instruments of power, a power to entice the hearts and souls at least as important as that of weapons (Nye, 2004).

mobility. Friends and kin already in the country of destination send information via virtual channels to future migrants in the home country. Moreover, migrants can do their own virtual search and gather information (including visual images) on their destinations. In this way migrants can get accustomed to their future destination even before having a physical contact with the space of destination. In other cases, following the significant decrease in transportation costs, many migrants had already been to the destination country to visit relatives and friends. The visits paid as tourists were just a first step to becoming a migrant and were part of a learning process that was very important for the future mobility of the migrants.

Focusing this time on the destination country, one would like to know why these students stayed on, once their study period ended. Some of the respondents admitted that they stayed on in order to complete their qualification, whereas the majority considered that they would have better career opportunities if they stayed in France.

In the case of researchers, the lack of possibilities to conduct research at international level in Romania, as well as the low rate of investment in the R&D activities, both in the public and private sectors, seemed to encourage them to stay on in France. A possible return to the home country is perceived as leading to brain waste.

For others, their stay was mainly due to changes that took place in their lives. Some of them built a family in France, others simply considered that they had created their own lives there and that coming back would mean starting all over again.

How do these migrants fare in their destination country? At the professional level, the difficulties emerge with the passage from one status to another, for instance from international student to highly-skilled worker.

Many of them admitted to have had difficulties in finding an appropriate job according to their qualification. The success also varied with the profession held, and, thus with the labour market demand. If the economists and the high-tech specialists seemed to face fewer difficulties in finding a job, this was not the case of the persons holding a degree in the field of humanities. Most of the migrants blamed this state of fact on the discrimination against foreigners in the French labour market. Indeed, the unemployment rate stood in 2002 at 5 per cent for the natives, 7.2 per cent for EU-15 nationals on the French labour market, 11 per cent for foreigners having acquired the French nationality and at 18 per cent for foreigners coming from countries other than EU-15. This accounts for a rate almost three and a half times greater than in the case of the natives (Economic and Social Council, 2002).

Reshaping belonging and identity

If professional integration can be difficult, how is social integration? Among the factors that can facilitate social integration is the acquisition of French citizenship, which ensures equal judicial rights as the natives, the knowledge of the French language, marriage with a French citizen, kin, and friendship networks that can ease the contact with communities in which they find themselves. The ties developed with colleagues at university or at work as they introduces the migrants to the common practices and act as their best teachers play the most important part.

The outcome of the analysis of the interviews made, was that the traditional discourse in terms of social integration, assimilation and identity does no longer correspond to these migrants' experiences, as they live in a world of multiple allegiances.

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These allegiances concern the home society, the destination society and above all a multitude of communities (Kastoryano, 1998).

One indeed notices that these migrants develop competing, but not exclusive attachments to more than one community at the same time. We can identify a wide range of communities to which these migrants belong: family communities, professional communities, student communities, ethnic communities, religious communities, political communities. Thus, these migrants are part of a range of overlapping communities, both in real and in symbolic terms. They can actually belong to more than one type of community, and even to more than one community of the same type. Rainer Bauböck (2001) notes "multiple citizenship is the most visible illustration of overlapping membership in political communities".

In these communities migrants very often develop ties which go beyond borders, creating a culture of networks, as most of them admit to having friends or relatives in other EU countries. Van Hear (1998) identifies three types of factors which favour the development of cross-border ties: communication facilities, transportation development and socio-cultural competences. These cross-border ties ensure the access of migrants to information and events that occur in more than one place at the same time. The nature of these ties can be either virtual in which case the contact inside the network is facilitated by internet, the mobile or fixed phones or it can be real. Migrants can be virtually present in more places at the same time. With the fall in the costs of transportation, migrants can easily circulate between the physical spaces which support the network. Identity itself is rebuilt inside these networks. Multiple allegiances to different communities are at the origin of the shift from a "territorial identity to a network

identity" (Badie, 1995). Identities, in consequence, tend to be more situational. They are overlapping and flexible in order to allow individuals to adapt to their new condition of circulatory migrants and to take advantage of the best opportunities they can come across.

Contacts and relations with the home country

Network expansion usually precedes territorial expansion. The circulation within the network of material and immaterial flows ensures the transmission of goods and services, as well as of social and economic information. The information received about better career opportunities often determines the departure of migrants to another country. Social networks usually guide migrants into or through specific places and occupations. They are often crucial for finding jobs and accommodation (Vertovec, 2002). Multiple presences allow migrants to take advantage of better career opportunities no matter where they may appear. Migrants do not circulate only between their home country and their destination country; they actually have multiple destinations; and what determines their mobility is the search for a better social status and better career opportunities. Should these opportunities arise in the home country, these migrants might return, if not, they are likely to choose another destination. With the accession to the EU, some seem convinced that better opportunities could arise in Romania. But even if they return, they are no longer confined to a certain space and they can go mobile again whenever they choose.

This space of flows is the source of their power as it provides them with access to knowledge and information, which are only available to individuals who are part of the network. One can actually identify the

emergence of a culture of networks built by these migrants, but which does not exclude friends and relatives who are still sedentary; differences between different categories tend to fade away and immobile individuals exposed to this network culture can easily become mobile, as mobile individuals can also choose for a period to become sedentary. In this case, some specific effects for the country of origin come not only from the networks established with their families and friends, but also from other professionals left behind. It is on these immaterial effects that this study focuses on. These long-distance networks can provide very important channels for flows of capital, skill and information.

In this study, one tries to assess the existence of a permanent contact with families and friends back in the home country. For almost 40 per cent of the migrants these contacts take place weekly, whereas for almost 50 per cent of these contacts are even more frequent, occurring daily or several times a week. The preferred means of communication is the telephone in about 45 per cent of the cases and the internet in 32 per cent. The rest of the migrants use both means with the same frequency. The telephone remains the means of communication mostly used in spite of the growth of the internet.

The decrease in the price of communications allows migrants to maintain the contact and to actively take part in the real lives of those left behind. It is a way of living together and apart at the same time. The contact can be very important. Recent interviews conducted with the friends and families of the migrants, make us realize that these flows lead to a learning process of those left in the home country. However, the existence of the contact is not enough for the success of transfers. The family and friends back home need to have an absorption capacity which could allow them to correctly

decrypt the messages received. In order to facilitate the contact and to ensure the right decryption of the messages, family members take up practices they were not accustomed to before.

Migrants, the state and Europe

This form of highly-skilled mobility, which involves a lot of circulation between more than two countries, can no longer be classified as brain drain. If during the communist period the highly-skilled migration from Romania could be indeed termed as brain drain, nowadays the strong ties with the home country and the development of contacts with the home society positively affecting its evolution, makes the term of brain drain no longer appropriate. The networks developed ensure the flow of financial capital, knowledge and information. The individuals involved in these networks are at the basis of the emergence of a culture of networks which relies on both material and immaterial flows.

What implications does this culture have for the state of origin? In order to take best advantages of the mobility of its citizens, the state has to shift its orientation in its policy designing from a static one to a more mobile one. The migrants can represent for the state of origin a source of social, financial, cultural and political capital (Dufoix and Diminescu, 2006). They are in the best position to promote their home country's values worldwide, acting as informal ambassadors of their state of origin (Nedelcu, 2003). The migrants can actively act in the space of destination and in the space of origin at the same time. They allow the state to expand beyond its limited local resources.

The emphasis must be laid in this context on the reciprocity of the relation between the state and the migrants. The state must develop an active policy in relation to its

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migrant citizens, as it is in the best position to intervene in order to defend their rights in the framework of the agreements concluded with the destination states. But, if the state can ensure that the rights of its migrant citizens are observed outside its borders, it has to do the same thing on its national territory, by not forgetting that these individuals who live beyond its borders are still Romanian citizens, and also by taking care that their rights are observed on the Romanian territory as well.

Citizen mobility beyond state borders must not be regarded in terms of a threat to the states' power. The territory of the nation state can be nowadays thought of being made of two components: a real one and a virtual one. By building bridges with its migrant citizens, the state is no longer confined to its limited political borders, it is present everywhere one can find its citizens.

Romanian citizens abroad might actually play a very important part in the process of European integration, as integration means not only economic convergence, but also convergence to a system of values promoted by the European countries. Through the immaterial flows that take place inside the networks, Romanian migrants can act as important catalysts for the transformation of the Romanian society and for the convergence of Romanian values and lifestyles towards European ones. This kind of convergence could be vital for the Romanian society, as informal institutions have been acknowledged to have played a major role in the transition. The convergence of informal institutions seems to be in this case even more important than the economic convergence. The persistence of behaviours inherited from the communist regime, such as

the generalized corruption and clientelist networks, has created major drawbacks to a successful transformation in Romania. Without informal institutions that could legitimize economic reforms and sustain these reforms, economic convergence is unlikely to be reached easily. In the case where migration networks through the flows of values and information act in favour of this informal institutional convergence, this process can be considered as a sort of transformation from below (imposed by migrants and their family and friends), and not something that is imposed by the Romanian state. But, both the state and the individuals have an important part to play and must work together in order to ensure the success of this transformation.

Conclusion

Migration is a complex phenomenon that involves different kinds of actors: from the individual and the household to nation states, and to regional blocks and international organizations. These actors might have different and even competing interests and objectives. In order to optimize the outcomes of this phenomenon for all the parties involved, all the actors must work together. States must become more flexible in their approach towards citizen mobility and must acknowledge that nowadays it is very easy to pass from one category to another: students might turn later into highly-skilled workers by simply changing their status; and in the same manner sedentary people might decide one day to go mobile or migrants might choose to turn sedentary. All these people involve and follow new mobility patterns that have become very difficult to distinguish and thus to control.

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