



THE OTHER HOME. ROMANIAN MIGRANTS IN SPAIN

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Biographical notes

Romana Emilia Cucuruzan is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of European Studies Babes Bolyai University, Cluj Napoca. Since September 2008, she holds a PhD in Economics. Her main scientific fields of interest are: international migration, especially labour migration¹ and return migration, the process of European economic integration, as well as the innovation processes within Romanian SMEs. She published more than 10 articles in the above mentioned fields, as main author or co-author.

Valentina Vasilache is currently finishing her BA in Management at the Faculty of European Studies. In 2008 she benefited from an Erasmus scholarship, having studied at Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Facultad de Administración y Dirección de Empresas.

Abstract

Nowadays, the circulatory labour migration represents the main form of Romanian migration, with Italy and Spain as first destination countries for Romanians seeking better job and life opportunities. The present article focuses on the case of the Romanian migrants working and living in Spain. Firstly, we will briefly present the evolution of the migration history in Spain, stressing the important change of migration status: from emigration to immigration country. Then, the analysis will focus on the most important migrant group coming from an EU member state: from official

¹ The doctoral thesis title: "The migration and the mobility of the Romanian labour force in the context of European Integration";

statistic data provided by Spanish institutions, to researches carried out in the field of Romanian migrants' experience in Spain. Our main contribution will consist of a micro exploratory study designed to investigate the situation of the Romanians working in one of the most dynamic economies of EU. The field study was carried out in the region of Valencia, in the spring of 2008². Finally, several conclusions will be drawn, without the aim of generalizing the main findings, but of complementing the research developments in this particular field.

Keywords: *labour migration, migration networks, immigrant workers.*

JEL Classification: F22, J61.

Introduction

The history of Europe has been significantly influenced by the migration phenomenon. In the second half of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century, Europe lost important young cohorts, who left mainly for North America (USA benefited from almost 60% of the total outflows), South America, Australia or New Zealand (Hoerder & Moch, 1996, p.124). Moreover, almost ¾ of the emigrants never returned to their countries of origin (Hoerder & Moch, 1996, p.125), causing Europe a dramatic “youth drain”. Then, the interwar period was dominated by intra-European migration. After the II WW, USA played again the role of the main pole of attraction: in the 1950s, Europe registered a total stock of out-migrants of more than 3 million persons.

As far as the intra-European migration is concerned, we may distinguish 3 main periods:

1. **The 1950s – first part of the 1960s period: the South–North migration**, a form of well organized migration, highly restricted by the so called *guest worker*³ programmes launched by the industrialized countries of the Western Europe (Germany, France, and the Netherlands). Those programmes were designed for the low qualified workers, originating from the poor Mediterranean areas (Greece, Italy, and Spain) willing to accept the *3D jobs*⁴ with low status, poorly paid, rejected by the domestic workers, especially in the constructions field. Due to the energy crises and economic recession, the industrialized countries stopped those programmes (at that time, about 10 million migrants were living in Western countries).

2. **The second part of the 1960s - 1970s period: the family reunification period.** The family members of the migrants who left for work in the previous decade were joining them in the countries of destination. The temporary labour migration was starting to transform in a permanent one, with important consequences on both source and receiving countries.

² The field study was carried out by Valentina Vasilache, who is currently finishing her BA in European Studies, at the Faculty of European Studies, Cluj Napoca. Her dedication to the realisation of the semi-structured interviews in Spain is highly appreciated.

³ (German) – *Gastarbeiter*;

⁴ dirty, difficult, dangerous.

3. **The 1980s: traditional source countries become important destination countries** (the case of Italy and Spain). That period registered important changes in terms of migration status: the outflows of Spanish and Italian workers were strongly counterbalanced by the inflows of temporary workers coming from CEECs. Those two EU countries were confronting with a new situation, which claimed for a new approach of the immigration policy.

Between 1991 and 2001, the foreign born population stock in the European Economic Area increased from 4.8% out of the total population, to 5.7% out of the total population, with a great majority originating from non-European countries.

While analysing the intra-European migration flows from the economic conditions perspective of the receiving countries, we may identify two distinct stages:

Table 1. Migration waves: socio-economic conditions in Western Europe

1960-1973	1990-2004
1. Economic <i>boom</i> 2. Need for labour in almost all sectors 3. European social model insufficiently developed	1. Relatively low economic growth 2. High unemployment 3. Labour shortages in certain sectors (low and high skilled) 4. Ageing process 5. European social model with costly rules for the budget and labour market, as well

Source: Bîrsan, M., R. Cramarencu (2005), p.61

While the first migration wave developed in the context of an economic boom, with high consumption rates and consolidated trade relations, the second one was influenced by a lower economic growth rate⁵, and important disequilibria on the labour market: labour shortages coexisting with high youth and female unemployment rate. The growing dependency rate alarmed the authorities and led to a strong criticism of the generous social security system.

One of the European countries with an important role in the migration phenomenon was Spain, its interesting history being briefly presented in the following section of this paper.

I. Spain – from emigration to immigration country

Spain has a long migration history (more than 500 years), having experiencing lately an important status change: from an emigration to an immigration country. Starting with 1995, the

⁵ For that interval, according to Eurostat, the growth economic rate in EU 15 registered less than 2%;

outflows of Spanish people were significantly counterbalanced, and even surpassed, by the inflows of migrants coming from the CEECs (Serra et al, 2005, p.1).

Traditionally, Spain “exported” labour, especially from the rural areas confronted with a severe agricultural crisis triggered by the strong competition of American agro-products, to countries like Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Cuba or Venezuela. Thus, in the first decade of the 20th century, a total stock of 1.5 million Spaniards were working and living in Latin America (Focus Migration, 2008, p. 2). 40 years later, Western Europe replaced Latin America as main pole of attraction for Spanish workers.

In the 1960s, the special recruitment programmes launched by Germany, France and Switzerland attracted many Spanish workers to leave the Spanish labour market characterized by excessive supply, an estimation of annual outflows of 100,000 workers being made (Bover & Velilla, 2001, p. 9). The “guest worker” programmes represented another proof of the selectivity theory⁶ and a clear indicator of the industrialized countries strategy of controlling the migration flows by imposing strict rules for the admission of foreigners. After those programmes ceased, a new form of emigration resulted: the family reunification. In the next decade, Spaniards had started to head to other European countries, for seasonal work instead of long term contract based labour migration. Until Spain became an EU member state, “approximately 15,000 people per year went to other European countries (Switzerland and France) through Spain’s controlled emigration programme” (Focus Migration, 2008, p.3). As the EU feared the *flood* of cheap labour coming from Latin America and Maghreb and using the Spanish territory as a *buffer zone*, Spain decided to launch an immigration policy that imposed restrictions for non-European citizens⁷.

Due to the instability of the labour market, several EU member states decided to impose *transitional arrangements*⁸ to Spain.

What is important to emphasize is that the Spanish outflows were accompanied by important waves of return migration: “1.5 million persons, out of the total outflows of 2 million persons registered between 1962 and 1979 returned to Spain” (Focus Migration, 2008, p.4), the phenomena being in depth researched by Spanish authors, like Rhoades (1978), Bover & Velilla (2001), Rodriguez et al (2002). According to Bover & Veilla (2001), in the same period, Spain witnessed a high internal migration rate, people moving in search for better employment opportunities. That

⁶ According to the *selectivity theory*, migration is a positively selected process : the younger, bolder and entrepreneurial try to find alternatives to the hardships at home, being more receptive to the pull factors operating in the countries of destination (among the theoreticians of the selectivity approach we mention Ravenstein, Lee and Massey);

⁷ Despite its historical experience, at the moment of EU accession, Spain was the only EU member state without immigration policy!

⁸ The so-called Schröder formula establishes a maximum of 7 years of restricted access for new member states. Despite the fears of massive inflows of Spanish and Portuguese workers, the out migration has reduced dramatically. As a response, the old EU members decided to lift the restrictions 1 year earlier.

inter-regional mobility reduced consistently in the following decades, the import of foreign labour becoming an appropriate alternative to reduce labour deficits.

Since the first part of the 1980s, Spain's foreign population has increased steadily. At the beginning, most of the new comers were retired persons from Western countries, in search for a better climate. After the fall of communism in CEECs, important waves of refugees and economic migrants started to choose Spain as main country of destination. Still, the most important migrant groups were coming from Northern Africa and Latin America, the latter being dominated by authoritarian regimes. Several factors contributed to the transformation of Spain, along with other Mediterranean countries, into a country of destination (Perez, 2003, p. 2; Focus Migration, 2008, p.3):

- The end of the *guest worker* programs;
- The restrictive immigration regime imposed by the traditional receiving countries, such as Germany, Switzerland, and France;
- The proximity to the source countries of Maghreb;
- The poor performance of the labour markets in the sending countries pushed people away, while the labour shortages in certain sectors, especially in agriculture, pulled them to Spain ;
- The development of the Spanish informal economy created job opportunities for immigrants, willing to accept the unsafe, poorly paid and low status jobs rejected by domestic workers;
- The relatively continuous economic growth, after Spain's accession into EU, made it an attractive destination;
- The low entry barriers, due to the lack of clear immigration policies and high social tolerance to immigrants, compared to other receiving countries.

1.1. Migration statistics

According to Padron Municipal data, Spain registered a spectacular increase of the foreign population from approximately 200,000 persons in 1975 to 1,000,000 persons in 2000 (without counting the illegal migrants).

The following figure illustrates the evolution of the resident foreign population in Spain:

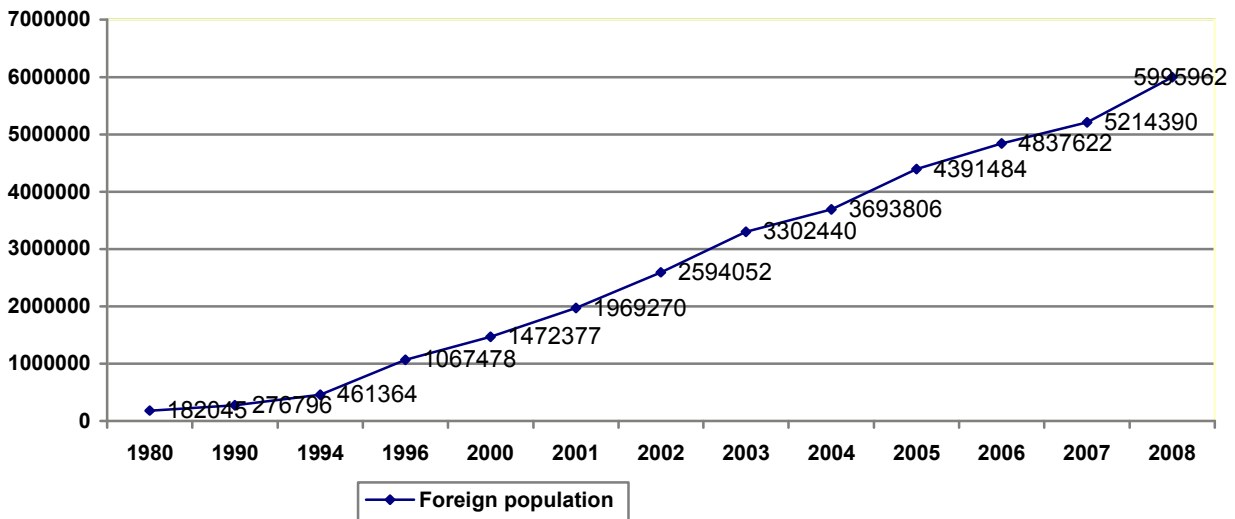


Figure 1 The evolution of the foreign population in Spain (1980-2008)

Source: Gonzales-Enriquez (2009), pp. 4-5

Figure 1 reveals the continuous growth of the foreign population in Spain. It is important to mention that up to 1994, the Spanish statistics registered the legal residents, while after the 2000 Aliens Act the statistics included not only the foreigners with legal status in Spain⁹. While comparing the evolution of foreign population stock in Spain to other EU countries, we notice that, starting with 2000, “Spain received about 1/3 of the total number of immigrants reaching EU” (Gonzales-Enriquez, 2009, p.5).

Luckily, between 1996 and 2005 the Spanish labour market created almost 6 million jobs. Thus, the immigrants weren’t competing with the native labour force for good jobs, but were absorbed in economic sectors offering low paid, long hours and low social prestige jobs. Nevertheless, the continuous growth of foreign population changed the local communities in terms of ethnic diversity, requiring for new integration programmes.

According to the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística) in 2008 the foreign population distribution by country of origin was as presented in the following figure:

⁹ The 2000 Aliens Act granted foreigners access to medical assistance under the sole condition of being registered in the municipal population database.

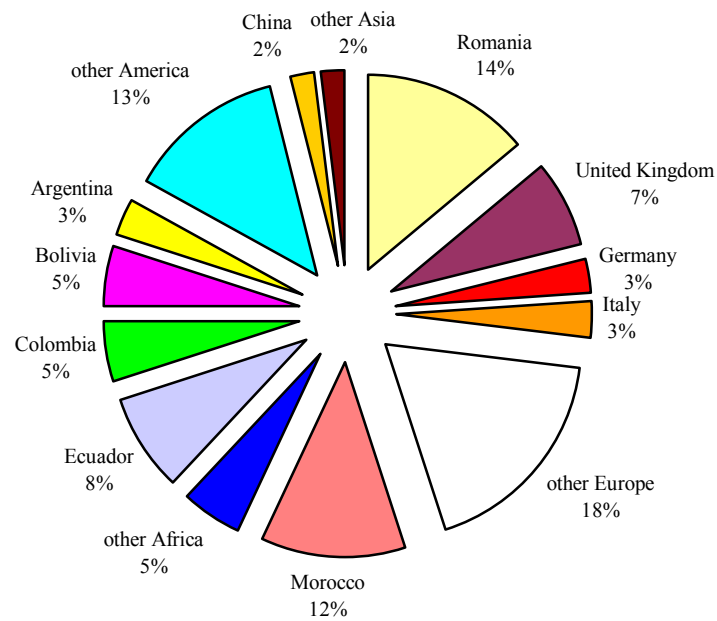


Figure 2: Foreign population by countries of origin (2008)

Source: INE

From the figure above, we notice the presence of the Romanian migrants, who, in the last years, became one of the strongest ethnic groups, progressively outnumbering the Moroccans. Romanians are the EU's citizens most largely represented, their number having been continuously growing since the last decade of the 1990s.

As far as the regions of destinations are concerned, the following ones registered foreign population rates above the national average of 11.3%: the Balearics (20.8%), Valencia (16.7%), Madrid (15.9%), Murcia (15.7%), Catalonia (17.9%) and the Canary Islands (13.6%).

1.2. Politico-legal developments of the immigration policy

Traditionally, Spain proved to be more reactive, than pro-active in terms of its immigration policy, trying to keep pace with the labour market evolution and EU's regulations. Nevertheless, we may consider Spain an active player in the international migration debate, the politico-legal initiatives being both highly appreciated or criticized. Table 2 synthesizes the most relevant legal developments of the Spanish immigration policy:

Table 2. Legal developments of the Spanish migration policy

Year	Document title	Brief description
1985	Law on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners in Spain (Ley de Extranjeria)	- immigration is approached as a temporary phenomenon, while immigrants were considered workers in need for regulation granted by the Ministry of Labour.
1996	Aliens Act	- special attention given to regularization based on intercessions in the following areas: entry regulations, border security, permanent work permits, asylum regime.
2000	Law Concerning the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners and their Social Integration (Ley Organica 4/2000) ¹⁰	- the immigration policy focused on creating efficient mechanism to facilitate legal immigration and social integration.
2001	The Greco Plan	- a greater responsibility assigned to local levels for the development and implementation of integration programmes; - The Plan addressed the following issues: a). immigration policy design based on immigration perceived as a desirable phenomenon for Spain; b). integration programmes for foreign residents and their families as active contributors to the growth of Spain; c). admission regulation; d). support for refugees and displaced persons.
2005	New immigration policy based on regularization	- more flexible conditions for family reunification; - several regularization campaigns, promoted as a form of “normalisation” and not “legalisation”. As a result of this process, out of a total of 691.655 applications 578.375 were accepted; - 2005-2007: a 502 million euros integration fund granted to local authorities for the development of integration programmes; - the 2005 regularization was based on the slogan: “You are welcome in Spain”

Source: synthesis based on the following studies: *Focus Migration Country Profile– Spain (2008)*, Bovar&Velilla (2001), Pérez, N.O. (2003) *Gonzales-Enriquez, C. (2009)*.

2. Romanian migrants in Spain

In the international migration system Romania is known especially as a source and transit country¹¹. Under the communist regime, the outflows were severely restricted and ethnic or political based, due to the bilateral agreements which allowed ethnic Germans and Jews to repatriate. After the collapse of communism, temporary forms of labour migration emerged and developed at a more

¹⁰ Under the governance of the Popular Party, this law was severely changed, in order to reduce the illegal migration. Family reunification rules also changed, becoming more restrictive.

¹¹ International organisations like IOM, ILO or OECD officially recognized Romania as a source country, due to the evolution of outflows clearly outnumbering the inflows of migrants;

accelerating pace than permanent migration¹². The estimation of the circulatory labour migration is quite difficult¹³ and it is based on the researches made on representative samples, the most comprehensive ones being carried out by the team coordinated by Dumitru Sandu (2006) and by the National Association of Counselling Bureaus for Citizens (2007).

In Romania, the circulatory labour migration developed in 3 main stages (Sandu in RNDU, 2007, p.106).

- A. **Stage 1 (1990-1995):** 3‰ migration rate, with the following profile of the Romanian migrant: young, man, from the urban area, with general education, leaving from Moldavia, Muntenia and Transylvania to work in countries like Israel, Turkey, Italy, Hungary and Germany;
- B. **Stage 2 (1996-2001):** 7 ‰ migration rate, with the following features of migration: men and women equally represented, urban and rural areas equally represented. The migrants leave mainly from Moldavia to work in countries like: Spain, USA and Canada;
- C. **Stage 3 (2002- 2006)** is characterized by a significant increase of the migration rate up to 28‰, preserving the migration features of stage 2, except for the changes in terms of host countries: Italy, Spain, Germany, Israel and Hungary.

Spain has become a preferred destination since 1996, especially for Romanians leaving the rural areas of Muntenia, Moldavia and Oltenia. Coincidentally or not, in the very same year a bilateral agreement between Romania and Spain was signed (29th of April, 1996).

As far as the evolution of the Romanian migrants in Spain is concerned, the data provided by the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Immigration reveal the following dynamic:

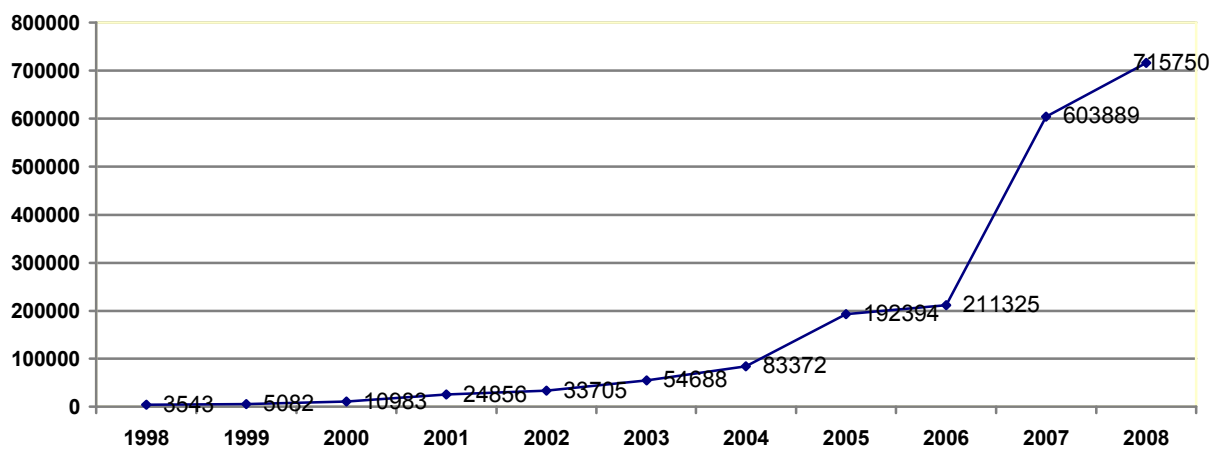


Figure 3. The evolution of the number of Romanian registered in the Padrones Municipales (1998-2008)

Source: *Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigracion*

[<http://extranjeros.mtin.es/es/InformacionEstadistica/Anuarios/Anuario2007.html>]

¹² From a total outflow of 44.160 persons registered in 1991, to 14.197 in 2006 (INS);

¹³ The National Institute of Statistics lacks methodological tools to measure other forms of migration than the permanent one. Thus, the circulatory migration and its dynamic or return migration data are missing from official statistics.

The figure above indicates a continuous increase of the number of the Romanian migrants in Spain, the 2 years after Romania's accession into EU registering an impressive growth. In 2007, the data provided by the Ministry of Labour and Immigration indicated the first 5 regions registering the highest concentration of Romanians were: Madrid (140.333), Com. Valenciana (87.156), Andalucia (78.528), Cataluna (74.659) and Castilla-La Mancha (65.099).

Spain is considered an attractive destination by Romanian workers due to several factors like: "language and culture similarities, rather friendly attitude from Spanish people, networking, job opportunities, etc."(Birsan & Cucuruzan, 2007, p. 5).

The study of Romanian communities in Spain has developed in the recent years, most of them being qualitative ones, focused on the communities at home - the *role of migration networks* in Constantinescu (2003); different *migration strategies and experiences* in Serban & Grigoras (2001); *the migration-development nexus* in Cucuruzan (2009) or on the migrants in Spain - the *role of networking* in Bleahu (2004); *the Romanian migrant profile* in Birsan & Cucuruzan (2007), Campbell et al (2007). We also notice the complex study coordinated by Dumitru Sandu, with the support of Soros Foundation, a study which combined both quantitative and qualitative analyses: "Romanian communities in Spain" (2009). Therefore, our micro study aims to complement those analyses by revealing the migration experiences of several Romanians working and living in Valencia region.

3. The journey to another home. Romanian workers in Valencia region

According to the official statistics, the Valencia region is the second largest area of destination for Romanian workers. In 2008, we carried out a micro exploratory study in this region. The qualitative data collected through 21 semi-structured interviews revealed unique experiences, as well as commonalities among respondents¹⁴. Our field work was focused on the following aspects:

- the main reasons for migration (*the pull factors analysis*);
- migration strategies;
- the main reasons for internal migration in Spain;
- the nature of the work performed in Spain (potential de-professionalisation, the legal status, etc.);
- remittances;
- potential return to Romania.

¹⁴ Therefore, we express our gratitude to the respondents for their support and willingness to share their personal experiences with us;

In order to identify the potential interviewees, we used the *snowball technique* and then, we chose the most convenient places for interviews: at church, after the religious service, at migrants' home or in cafes.

The respondents' main characteristics are: majority up to the age of 39 (almost 81% out of the respondents), relatively equally gender represented (47.62% women), majority with medium education (more than 60%).¹⁵ As far as the duration of stay is concerned, most of the respondents (except for 2 of them) left Romania at least 1 year ago, while 9 of them had been living in Spain for more than 6 years.

Coming to Spain

The motivations and explanatory factors of migration are fuelled by both push factors operating in the source country and pull factors, attracting migrants to certain destinations. There is a vast literature on migration motivations (from *macro* studies - Lee, 1966; Shaw, 1975; Massey et al, 1998 - to *micro* analysis - Stark, 1999, Portes, 1997), attempting to identify what triggers people to abandon their countries in favour of other destinations.

Our respondents referred mainly to economic reasons and family reasons, as main incentives for leaving Romania:

Table 3. Main reasons for leaving the country

Motivation for leaving the country	Frequency	Statement
Low level of living standards	7	<p>“What I was earning in Romania was insufficient. I could hardly live”- <i>man, age 24</i></p> <p>„I couldn't find a job for a decent standard of living for me and my children. I wanted to provide a better future for my kids and I couldn't do it otherwise” <i>woman, age 30</i></p> <p>„I couldn't manage in Romania. With two children to raise, you need a job, money, a place to live” <i>woman, age 34</i></p> <p>„I came her for a better future... for the money I was hoping to earn (...) I wouldn't have succeeded in Romania” <i>man, age 25</i></p>
Unemployment or lack of job opportunities	6	<p>„I came to Spain in 2002 because I was fired from the glass factory (Boldești Scăieni). I had been working there since I've finished school. Nobody else hired me and I didn't have any property, so the only thing to do was to leave the country.” <i>man, age 34</i></p> <p>„I had been working for 20 years in metrology but I was fired and I couldn't find another job in Romania” <i>man, age 50</i></p> <p>„ what made me to come was the fact that I lost my job as an educator in an isolated village, a job I was supposed to keep until I was finishing the Faculty of Letters” <i>woman, age 28</i></p>

¹⁵ We mention that three interviewees dropped out university in Romania, with the intention to continue their studies in the next 5 years.

Low salary	5	„What I was earning back home was enough for me to live. I wasn't able to put aside. In Spain I'm very well paid. I receive 2000-2200 euro per month, depending on the number of working hours. In Romania, for the same job I would have received the equivalent of 300 euros.” <i>man, age 24</i>
The others' "success"	4	„I noticed that other people can and that things went well for them and I was convinced that I also can and that I deserved more than I had in Romania.“ <i>man, age 29</i> “Many friends had left and returned wealthy. I said why not trying” <i>man, age 27</i> “the fact that some of my friends had already left by homologating the diploma of medical assistant which I also had was probably the factor that helped me take this decision.” <i>woman, age 28</i>
Family reunification	4	“I came after my parents. I got here a year after them. They wanted to have something sure here first and after that they brought me.” <i>woman, age 21</i> “ My husband was already there and he made me hope that it would be better for our family if I leave the country.” <i>woman, age 44</i> “The most important reason was the family reunification. My parents came before me – firstly, my father and after that he brought my mother and later they called us, too” <i>woman, age 21</i>
Curiosity	3	“I chose to leave for a while to get to know new places and to explore a bit my possibilities.” <i>man, age 27</i>
Other opportunities	2	“I noticed that if you work the chances to earn are bigger than in Romania. This is also why I chose not to return.” <i>woman, age 29</i>

In order to reach Spain, our respondents used the migration networks, getting support from relatives or friends. After settling in Spain, they started to help other friends and relative, knowing their difficult situation back home. According to the network theory (among the most representative theoreticians we mention Castles & Miller, 2003; Massey et al, 1998), the migration phenomenon develops with the financial and non-financial support of the ones already established in the country of destination, easing the way for the new comers.

Table 4. Ways of coming to Spain

Ways of coming to Spain	Frequency	Statement
With the help of some friends	8	„I knew some guys who were working in Alcazar de San Juan (a village from Castilla - La Mancha). One of them was my neighbour. They helped me at the beginning. I've stayed with them in the apartment; I stayed there for free until I found a job. They explained me how things work there.” <i>man, age 34</i>
With the help of some relatives	12	“A cousin who was living in Madrid called me and offered to help me. This is how I got here.” <i>man, age 50</i>
Independently	1	„I left on my own, as a tourist, only with enough money to survive some weeks.” <i>man, age 27</i>

Working in Spain

As stated by respondents, the poor economic conditions were the main push factors forcing them to leave Romania for Spain. As far as the methods used for finding a job, the migration theory (O'Connell, 2002) identified the following two: the speculative or "try your luck" migration and the contract based migration. Most of our interviewees (15) used the relatives and friends' networks and the recommendation system:

„My two friends brought me at their work place, in constructions, I've started working as a beginner in the field and after a while the *encargado* gave me a chance” *man, age 25*

„I was simply asking the people I knew. This way I found an apartment and a job.” *man, age 50*

Others were determined from the very beginning to find a contract based job, therefore they used they used the employment agencies' services:

„I went to an agency that was looking for housekeepers. At the beginning I worked for the agency, they were sending me to clean. One day, the owner of a real estate agency proposed me to work part time only for her, at the office and also at home.” *woman, age 34*

Or, they used the local newspapers *job offer* section:

“Firstly, I tried to find a job on the internet, after that I searched for announcements posted on walls in *locutorios*, on pillars”, *woman age 30*

“I succeeded to get hired by searching the announcements published in newspapers or by giving personally some announcements” *man, age 27*

The legal status of the work performed abroad is a very sensitive issue for most of the respondents: at the beginning, they struggled for survival, so any kind of job was better than nothing.... As they became acquainted with the new society, they searched for more stable jobs, contract based. A great support was given by the governmental regularization initiatives, which offered migrants a great opportunity to legalise their status in Spain: 16 out of our respondents were working both illegally (at the beginning of their stay) and legally:

“In the first period I worked illegally. Later on, after a law was given, I obtained papers.” *man, age 27*, while 3 of them were lucky to find legal work:

„Legally, I have the papers for the right to work.” *woman, age 21*

As far as the profession is concerned, all the respondents changed it; most of them experiencing several different job re-orientations. The table below synthesizes those transformations:

Table 5. Professional transformation

Occupation in Romania	First occupations in Spain	Current occupation
Accountant	Waiter, house builder	House builder (own business)
Luthier	House builder	Truck driver
Carpenter	House builder	Public guardian
Teacher	Nurse	Nurse
Teacher	Housekeeper	Cashier
Expert in the science of commodities	Farm worker, welder	Welder chief
Sales agent	House builder	House builder
Bartender	Farm worker	Utilitarian pilot
Seller	Farm worker	Chef assistant
Unemployed	Farm worker	Real estate agent
Unemployed	Farm worker, housekeeper	Housekeeper
Teacher	Chef	Chef
Worker in a glass factory	House builder, farm worker, driver	Truck driver
Bartender	House builder, waiter, industrial cleaner	Chef assistant
Seller	Baby sitter	Waitress
Jeweller, worker in a bingo hall	House builder, farm worker	Commercials distributor
Seller	Farm worker, baby sitter	Caregiver
Teller	Baby sitter, housekeeper, caregiver, farm worker	Secretary
Unemployed	Waitress, model	Teacher
Unemployed	Waitress	Waitress
Undeclared occupation	Farm worker, house builder	Butcher

Table 5 reveals that several migrants had to accept jobs with lower social status than the one performed at home, so we may talk about a risk of de-professionalisation, a waste of their knowledge and experience obtained in Romania, but also as a form of migrants' adaptation to the Spanish labour market conditions.

During their stay in Spain, some of the respondents had to move from one region to another, the main reasons for internal migration being presented below:

Table 5. Reasons for internal migration

Reasons for internal migration	No.	Statement
Conflicts at work	2	“I had a fight with my boss and I moved with my family in Valencia. It was a hard decision, but I’m glad I took it.” <i>man, age 34</i>
Dependence on other people	2	“My friend helped me with everything. He had talked with the employer, he called me to work in his team, to live in his house, but when he had a fight with our boss, with Vincente, I had to leave with him.” <i>man, age 29</i>
Opportunity to get a better job	1	“I moved to Valencia because some months ago I came for an interview at a real estate agency “ <i>man, age 30</i>
Conflicts with owners	1	“I had the impression that people who rented me the apartment were trying to cheat. They were asking me too much for rent and I was having conflicts with them all the time. That’s why one day I packed and left.” <i>man, age 50</i>

Labour migration brings both tangible (financial remittances) and non-tangible (new skills, new work attitudes, best practices transfer, entrepreneurial behaviour, etc.) benefits for migrants as well as families and communities back home. We tried to find more about the use of remittances, and we identified two categories of migrant behaviour:

- a. *Altruistic behaviour* among migrants supporting the family members left behind [„I am helping those that remained in the country. I send money to my daughter, who doesn’t earn enough to get financially independent even if she finished psychology and works [...] I send money to my mother, which is old and ill and needs treatment.”] *woman, age 52*;
- b. *Less altruistic behaviour* among migrants concerned with their own wellbeing: [„I save for travelling (what remains after shopping). Until now I’ve been in the most important cities of Spain and also in Germany.” *woman, age 21*]

The altruism depends a great deal on the migrant’s age and civil status: the very young and single are more concerned to make the most of the Spanish experience, while the married and more experienced migrants are concerned with the financial wellbeing of the family living with them or in Romania:

“Since we have moved to Valencia we took a loan for a flat [...] I’d rather pay my credit than paying rent to somebody else. We bought a 3 room flat. We rented all of them. We have transformed the *comedor* and the balcony in a room where we live with our daughter.” *man, age 34*

„We have two loans for two flats, a credit for our car, another for my daughter’s laptop and for her dental appliance” *man, age 50*

“I send money to my parents every month. And other stuff, like sweets and coffee. Whatever my parents ask for”, *man, age 24*

Return migration

In order for labour migration to induce development in the communities of origin, three main elements are needed: *recruitment, remittances and return* (the so called “3Rs perspective” promoted mostly by Papademetriou and Martin, 1991 in Nyberg-Sorensen et al, 2002, p.7). Among our respondents we found several willing to return in the near future: [„I want to return to Romania, to graduate university. I have no intention to remain here”, *man, age 29*]. Others were still balancing between remaining for good in Spain and returning: [„If I don’t succeed to convince my parents to come in Spain I will return in Romania. The only reason why I would return is my family”, *woman, age 29*]; [My parents have an old house in Gornet. I want to make it bigger, to fix it, maybe I’ll move there if I return to Romania”, *man, age 24*], while a few have no intention to return: [Most probably I will remain in Spain. I have no good reason to go back to Romania. I go there for a visit every 2-3 years. But that’s all”, *woman, age 21*].

Concluding remarks

Labour migration has a great impact at *macro level* - in the international migration system countries are continuously changing their status, from emigration to transit or immigration countries and vice versa – and at *micro* and *meso* level – on the migrants’ and their families lives, as well as on the origin and destination communities. As a country of destination, Spain was constantly concerned with the immigration policy targeting the migrants and the Spanish people needs. Despite the controversies fuelled by various regularisation initiatives, Spain remains one of the most dynamic economies of the EU, officially acknowledging the migrants’ contribution to the country’s welfare.

In Romania, the circulatory labour migration has become the dominant form of out migration, more and more used by migrants as a strategy to escape difficult socio-economic conditions at home. Nowadays, the two main countries of destination are Spain and Italy. Our micro exploratory study focused on the former, where Romanian migrants have become one of the strongest ethnic groups, influencing the local communities and being influenced by them. Our analysis of the 21 semi-structured interviews revealed migration experiences, as shared by our respondents, with several common traits, but still unique. From eagerness to leave Romania, to the nostalgia of the birthplace or the plans for return, from illegal status and all the panic induced by it, to all the benefits of legality, from a life depending on the migration network support, to independent existence, providing welfare for them and their families.

Thus, we plead for more qualitative research, regardless the slightly increased number of them in the last years. The quantitative ones are also needed in order to keep track of the outflows, to measure their impact on the economy. Still, migrants remain people between places, transforming their lives and others' lives, creating visible, and most of the time, invisible links between *this* home and *that* home.

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