Media and migration. Layers of knowledge in Romanian written press

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Abstract

This paper seeks to discuss the image that the media build around the phenomenon of migration in present-day Romanian society. I rely on a content analysis of newspaper articles on migration in order to explore layers of knowledge (understood as evidence which forms the basis of the representation about an issue) by identifying specific elements in each and every piece of news, such as: the current state of migration, the demographic profile of the migrant, geographical location, the orientation of the newspaper, the situation of migrants, the causes and effects of this phenomenon, and the policies implemented in the communities of origin and destination, respectively. All these elements are examined along the lines of emigration and immigration in order to reconstruct strategies of framing external migration within the journalistic discourse, and to identify the information which constitutes a reference point in shaping the attribute agenda on this topic. The discussion relies on the analysis of 473 articles in Romanian newspapers, published between 2007 and 2009, using as a sampling frame the archive of articles available on the website www.ziare.com.

Keywords

Migration, content analysis, attribute agenda, public agenda, framing, layers of knowledge

Experiencing migration

When studying migration we encounter a multi-faceted reality and we are challenged to understand outcomes of life strategies, personal options and demands, creating a world in which interactions are continuously reconfigured. In this dynamic field of flexible structures and motional ventures, the Romanians' permanent or temporary departure abroad and foreigners' settling in Romania are two issues that most people from the

country apprehend either directly, through their personal encounters, or indirectly, through media filters. In the second case, media information shapes parasocial relationships across formal boundaries and allows people to connect with social events from different places in the world. Media, as an intervening agency, have the potential to create the grounds in which migrants and non-migrants share a sense of belonging, thus enforcing communalities by allowing consumers to face migration with no spatial or temporal limits. Of course, in this case what people approach is a concept, not an action, but this type of experience with a particular topic allows individuals to form a representation about a phenomenon by acquiring information with personal relevance.

In the most common usage of the term, "experience" is conceived as a quality referring to an individual: one could talk about a person's experience in teaching lessons, a child's experience of snow and a mother's experience with her daughter. In a broader sense, this term is also referred to either as the loose aggregate of renewed details which are constantly put into practice or as the ingredient that has taught someone to adopt a proper behaviour in a situation (when saying that "someone has learned from experience"). Hence experience could be conceptualized as the imaginary developed around a particular subject or phenomenon on the basis of an immediate contact with various aspects of it. It constitutes an evolving framework of representation shaped by available knowledge that is interpreted with various degrees of emotional involvement. Media, as a distinctive informational source, functions as a powerful co-author of individual understanding of a social matter. The communicational flow, whether the main reference or the alternative appraisal of circumstances, embodies a narrativity which is a substitute of direct participation to an event.

In 2007 an estimated 2.7 million Romanians lived abroad (Sandu 2010: p.38). The mere realization of this situation creates a distinctive experience for Romanian observers. Therefore, it triggers a certain position not only with specialists in the field, but also with individuals who, facing a relatively complex phenomenon, adopt an attitude that is to a certain extent shaped by the information received through various sources. The orientation an individual develops in the flow of personal participation is continuously reconfigured by events and information available in the media. An understanding of the media approaches to the phenomenon of migration (based on references to its intensity, causes, effects and future evolution) is essential in order to create an accurate and coherent public image of an aspect that characterizes present-day Romanian society. The image that an individual forms with respect to migration, be it temporary work abroad or a permanent change of domicile, is probably shaped by the interpretation given to two significant elements, namely the demographic changes in Romania and the perceived degree of poverty in the country. Both may direct the attitude towards either a negative pole (for example, by taking into account the social problems caused by changes in the population structure), or a positive one (for example, by taking into account the money transfers from abroad which constitute an extra source of income). Given all these considerations, according to the data provided by the "Living Temporarily Abroad" (LTS) research conducted in 2006 under the aegis of the Open Society Foundation, it was found that over 50% of adults declare a positive

experience with migration, considering working abroad as being beneficial. To what extent did media contribute to supporting such a stance towards this phenomenon?

The aim of the present paper is to explore the image that the media build around external temporary migration. Granted that this image is not shared as such by individuals, who understand and interpret information in their own worldviews, the orientation of the articles that may be accessed as information sources plays a role in establishing a reference point that contributes to the creation of a potential Romanian public opinion regarding external migration. So, the present article explores the raw material that constitutes the basis of an indirect experience with migration. This type of information is produced in a journalistic logic which takes into consideration criteria of clarity of expression, actuality, compression of information, and accuracy, as well as spectacular discursive strategies used to attract public attention.

"Attribute agenda" and "framing strategies"

Public agenda is the set of problems and issues proposed to be of general interest in relation to the social situation of a specific time period. According to Sandu (2006), the issues that the public directs its attention to are a product of the interactions that occur on three levels of analysis: the personal space (which shapes the *individual agenda*), the interpersonal space (which shapes *group* and *public agenda*), and the institutional space (which shapes *media* and *policy agenda*). Therefore, the elements able to outline the main topics of interest arise at the intersection of several types of agendas, such as the ones listed above. Amongst them, the *media agenda* plays an important role as it structures debates, thus having the power to focus attention upon specific issues, while leaving or pushing others into oblivion.

The media in general and newspapers in particular exert considerable influence on the public opinion through the use of two interdependent mechanisms (McCombs 2004: p.87). On the one hand, through the intensive presentation of some aspects regarding a certain phenomenon, they instil a list of criteria according to which a social situation is to be judged. This list can be used by the public as a reference point in everyday-life discussions on a specific issue (*agenda setting*). While the *public agenda* is a hierarchy of topics for discussion, the *attribute agenda* is a hierarchy of themes through which these topics are brought to the attention of the receivers. On the other hand, a selective presentation of the details forges a widely accessible approach to a situation, which contributes to shaping a collective image about an event or a social phenomenon (*issue framing*). The media structures information in such a way as to display a specific problem within a plethora of meanings and significations, thus providing the public with a framework for interpretation. According to Entman (apud Scheufele 1999: p.107), "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation."

"Attribute agenda" and "framing strategies" are two procedures used to assemble "layers of knowledge" which I understand as interrelated strata of cumulative evidence forming the basis of the representation about an issue. In this specific case, the

phenomenon of migration is brought in public consciousness through the information disseminated in the media. Each media message on migration becomes a stimulus in the creation of a diffuse image perceived by the individual exposed to it, who gradually develops a cogent representation while the content of the message is amplified through repetition (attribute agenda) or representational backgrounds (framing strategies). Therefore, media reports about observable facts appear as a resource that individuals employ, thus creating their experiences. On one hand, a stratum identified by following the logic of an attribute agenda reveals a hierarchical distribution of knowledge in conceptual themes according to the visibility and the coverage of a phenomenon in a medium of representation. On the other hand, a stratum identified by considering framing strategies as a reference point is an array of rhetorical devices in which a subject is enveloped in the mediated discourse. Both types of topics shape representations while at the same time being a representation by themselves. It means that the aggregate layers of knowledge are a loosely shared imaginary developed through a negotiation of significant events between the media institutions functioning in a specific social context and the audience engaged in providing indirect permission through reception. Therefore, the layers of knowledge set up the overall message which is a product continuously juggled between the media and the public.

Table 1. Media, public, and message

	Media	Public
Representation *(assigned both to the media and the public)*	The media message is a representation about a phenomenon as soon as parts of it are reproduced in the informational flow. Therefore, message is representation.	The media message is one of the sources that the public uses to form a representation about a phenomenon. Therefore, public reception of the message is representation.
Experience *(assigned only to the public)*	The resorts used to build audience experience are embedded in the media message which creates the grounds for a collective exposure to an event.	The media message is the means by which the public, indirectly, experience (becomes familiar with and forms some emotional attitudes towards) a phenomenon.
Layers of knowledge *(assigned only to the media)*	The overall message is understood as the set of data about a particular subject (i.e. migration), available through a medium of communication. Each media reference to a phenomenon under study is a source of information, thus becoming evidence able to shape public representation. Similar types of evidence forms layers of knowledge which increase the awareness of a phenomenon, outlining public representation and experiences.	Even if the overall message is broadly available to the public, practically each member of the audience could access only parts of it, namely that evidence which is attainable in the context of reception. Therefore, there are certain layers of knowledge with the potential to have a strong impact on the public.

	Media	**Public**
Attribute agenda *(assigned only to the media)*	What media presents in relation to migration is a type of informative evidence.	The topics most frequently used are most probable to shape public representation.
Framing strategies *(assigned only to the media)*	How media presents the phenomenon of migration is a type of interpretative evidence.	The discursive strategies most usually employed are most probable to shape public representation.
Narrative trends *(assigned only to the media)*	Repeated observation of the same issue over periods of time is a type of longitudinal evidence.	A different distribution of articles in time creates the premises of changing public representation.

By using content analysis as a method of investigation, in the following sections I explore the informative layers of knowledge, i.e. an agenda of the main elements that are used to describe the migration phenomenon, the interpretative layers of knowledge, i.e. framing strategies of this phenomenon in Romanian newspapers, and the longitudinal layers of knowledge, i.e. a retrospective and observational exploration of migration-related articles over periods of time.

Research methodology

The sampling frame for this research is the list of articles archived on www.ziare.com. As this web portal includes news from various daily newspapers available on the Romanian market[2], this archive allows the reader and also the analyst to avoid a possible unidirectional approach instilled by the strict editorial policies of a specific media conglomerate. Therefore, through written means of communication, the reader has access to a comprehensive collection of data regarding the connections of Romanians with foreign countries. It is legitimate to consider this online archive as a representational space which may constitute both the basis of a public opinion and a substantive evidence of media expertise. While I focus on written media, the importance of visual media in constructing a point of view should not be neglected. Television, for example, creates information in a specific manner, thus being able to influence the public experiences of a certain subject by bringing to the fore, sometimes in a spectacular manner, details that are almost imperceptible when merely reading a text. All the same, exploring the main issues of interest, even in a single category of data (specifically textual data), highlights media resources used to build a specific public experience.

I used cluster sampling in order to select articles to be included in the analysis. Taking into account the fact that on the website considered as a reference frame the articles are grouped according to the publication date (www.ziare.com/arhiva/), I applied

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[2] Exemples: Adevărul, Click, Evenimentul zilei, Gardianul, Gândul, Libertatea, Jurnalul Naţional, România liberă, Ziua, and other national or local publications, including sports newspapers that do not feature articles on the object of the present study

a random selection procedure that allowed four days in each month to be explored[3]. The main limitation of this sampling method is the variability of articles between the selected clusters, but, given the purpose of the research, this fact can be relinquished to the background, as the most important factor is the saliency of the article. In other words, the more a subject is mentioned, the more salient it is, and thus any novelty in the evolution of an event is brought to the attention of the public. A topic that is discussed in the media for several days in a row is more likely to shape perception than an isolated case that can go virtually unnoticed. Therefore, I think it is safe to say that, by grouping the articles into weeks, I managed to include in the list the most salient information, which is relevant in shaping the layers of knowledge.

In order to be included in the analysis, the content conveyed by an article must meet two requirements: (1) to refer to people leaving the country or foreigners coming to Romania, and (2) to make explicit reference to the fact that the issue is connected to Romania. This connection can be made by presenting the situation of some Romanian citizens, by citing declarations that allude to the Romanian society, or by simply mentioning the name of the country in the text.

The focus of the analysis is on the content of the message, rather than on the context in which it appears. However the inquiry does not reduce the analysis to a linguistic interpretation of words, but it takes into consideration the semantics of the overall message. Qualitative operations of coding the text were performed in the first phase of the research as a preparatory stage. Then, after a stability of the overall message (found in half of the articles) was achieved through repetition of ideas and structural considerations, quantifying methods were implied in order to find trends of communicational objectives. Even if a number of variables and categories were developed *a propri*, others were added on an emerging process of codification and examination. The categories used for each variable meet the criteria of complete classification of the material taken into consideration.

The instrument used in the analysis is replicable with some additional adjustments to each material on the topic of migration, but it cannot be used for studying another phenomenon presented in the media. Even if the variables considered as descriptors of the articles are independent from each other, their categorical values are not always mutually exclusive being assigned to a label according to a rule-based approach. Although this method of selection has limitations in capturing multiple meanings, it

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[3] The articles were selected by applying several steps to each and every month. First, I divided the number of days in the month by four and left aside the remainder. Then, I extracted numbers from 1 to 4 and repeated the procedure depending on the result of the calculations made in the previous step. Thus, in the case of a thirty-day month I extracted two numbers from 1 to 4. These represented the number of categories to which one extra day was assigned during distribution. According to the example above, if numbers 2 and 3 were extracted, the distribution of days would have been as follows: the first category would have included the days from 1 to 7, the second – the days from 8 to 15, the third – the days from 16 to 23, and the fourth – the days from 24 to 30. On this basis, once I had established the four monthly categories, I randomly chose one day from each of them and analyzed all the articles on migration from that day available. In case one of the selected articles no longer existed in its full form on the site or if the link to the original article was incorrect, I went to the online archive of the respective newspaper or I searched for it on the internet by the keywords in the title.

allows comparing, whenever possible, data from systematic sociological research with those disseminated in the media. The reliability of the analysis is based on achieving an intra-rater agreement upon labelling the material in various phases of the research. Moreover, the analysis did not follow a chronological order of publication as to avoid a preconceived perspective upon articles which could have biased the results. Even if the tonality of the article was considered as a variable, the standard of evaluation was related to the manifest content, not to the latent structure of the material. The research design does not intend to test hypotheses, but to explore and describe the layers of knowledge used in newspaper representation of migration.

The research follows two lines: experience of emigration, which is commonly understood as being equivalent to the idea of "Romanians leaving the country", and experience of immigration, which refers to "foreigners coming to Romania". The content analysis aimed to identify specific elements as they are presented in each article (considered the unit of analysis), such as: the state of migration, the demographic profile of the migrant, geographic location, the orientation of the newspaper, causes and effects, the situation of migrants, and the policies implemented in the communities of origin and destination, respectively. Each time, all these are explored by taking into consideration the two lines of analysis (emigration and immigration) in order to grasp the overall picture of the connection with foreign countries, which may in fact represent an approximation of the public image formed around this topic.

The interpretation lies on the analysis of 473 articles published from 2007 to 2009. According to the classification proposed by Sandu (2010: p.64), this period represents the fifth stage of definitive migration after December 1989 – characterized by a very low level of departures – and the fourth stage of temporary migration – largely influenced by Romania's EU accession.

Informative layers of knowledge: visibility of migration-related topics

The layers of knowledge, assembled by taking into consideration the procedure of an attribute agenda setting, appear as a hierarchy of references to the migration phenomenon on the criterion of occurrence in the media. In the following section, I explore the issue attributes used in the written press to refer to migration phenomenon or to specific aspects of it. The aim is to find both the layers of knowledge used as a source of information in each piece of news (type of article) and those used in portraying the emigrant/immigrant (on the basis of socio-demographic characteristics).

An average of three articles per day tackle migration, one way or another, and this indicates that working outside one's country – be it by emigration or immigration – is a salient topic on the public agenda.

Media focus on migration

The type of articles referring to migration show that, in order to create a representation, especially about the Romanians abroad, the readers' main information sources, every year, are the details of an isolated case, the observations contained in the report being usually generalized to more than a specific circumstance. The fact that the number of

these articles increases over time is not indicative of a trend, since in 2009 a great number of them were published in January.

Table 2. Type of articles on migration (% of the total number)

	2007	2008	2009
Results of sociological studies	1	2	1
Attitudes of national or local authorities	7	6	2
Ads on jobs abroad	1	4	3
Migration regulations and policies	16	12	3
Personal opinions	3	2	5
Official data	5	4	6
Reports on the state of affairs	35	23	25
Isolated case related to migration	32	47	55
Total	100	100	100

Number of cases: 2007 – 190 articles, 2008 – 130 articles, 2009 – 153 articles

The observation according to which the media consistently takes in the results of sociological studies whenever they are published, without omitting relevant conclusions just to highlight some sensational aspects, is indicative of the fact that readers have extensive and systematic data available to them which can be used as an information source. Out of these, 37% (170 articles) mention the crimes committed by Romanian emigrants abroad, 7% (33 articles) describe an individual case without any mention of criminality, 30% (138 articles) present a state of affairs interesting enough to be showcased in the media, but without describing a shocking event just by referring to an isolated situation, 10% (48 articles) present the regulations in the field of migration, and approximately 7% (32 articles) provide statistics, official data or the conclusions of a sociological study. The entire distribution mentioned above represents the type of information which sketches the potential attribute agenda regarding the Romanian migration phenomenon. Although, by treating all articles together, it is criminality which is highlighted, readers have a wide variety of points of view and article categories available to them, which I think are enough to extract data that correspond to a general situation as it is reflected in the research and statistics provided by certified institutions. The representation that the public can form depends mainly on personal receptiveness than on the media focusing on a single type of subject.

The profile of the migrant

Regarding the current state of migration, the estimated number of Romanians working abroad, cited by various types of publications and brought under scrutiny in a series of articles, is in fact identical to the one put forth by experts. There is one peculiarity, however, in stating the exact number of emigrants when referring to a particular community in which Romanian citizens represent a significant ratio. In these cases, the numbers presented in the newspapers articles are in the thousands, tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands, which highlights the magnitude of the phenomenon, a piece of information that the reader might very well take for granted lacking any other reference point than a personal approximation. This happens because comparisons with

emigration rates in the past or future estimates are very scarce (less than 3% of the cases) and, even when such comparisons are made, the information is contradictory. On the one hand, specific references to a certain type of migration – such as migration for work in the medical field – suggest an amplification of the phenomenon over time, and, on the other hand, they indicate a decrease of the total number of departures, which is attributed to the financial crisis. A relevant fact is that in the articles which hint to the current state of emigration there are more explicit references to temporary work abroad than in articles dealing with other issues, such as criminality or political events. This is a significant detail for the accurate information of the public with respect to the nature of migration, but it is not clear just how visible those observations are to the reader since they are presented in a manner which lack sensationalism.

I could only construct the profile of the Romanian emigrant by aggregating information across multiple articles, as no single article included in the sample presents a distribution of migrants according to sex, age, residential environment, education, ethnicity, or religion. The results of my analysis show that, more often than not, the emigrant is a male aged 30 to 54, of Roma ethnicity and Orthodox religion, coming mainly from an urban area in Moldavia. The trend that emerges from the individual observations in the media in the period 2007 - 2009, when treated as a whole, is not far from the one observed in the data provided by the LTS survey for the period 2001-2006. With the exception of gender, where the newspaper article distribution is more heavily skewed towards men, the newspaper aggregated data correspond to the profile created through statistical methods. Of course, the analysis was made for the period 2007-2009, and the survey data are older. But it is possible that the pattern remained the same or the emigrants in 2001-2006 are the ones showcased in the articles from 2007-2009 as taking part in various events or presenting their life experiences.

Around 60% of the articles which contain necessary data for creating a profile of the emigrant report about various crimes committed by Romanian nationals abroad. The relatively high percentage also allows us to make a brief portrait of the reported emigrant criminal, who usually is a male under 29, most of the time underage. Articles that make explicit reference to Roma people refer in proportion of 30% to crimes committed in the destination community. Still, in articles that present crimes committed by Romanian citizens, without mentioning their ethnicity, photographs or names may become hints for the reader in attributing ethnic affiliation. Most articles in the sample that refer explicitly to Roma people tackle their difficulties when trying to integrate into the destination communities.

With respect to the employment field, 38% of the articles on emigrants' occupations present them as engaging in prostitution and mendicancy, which derives from the over-dramatization typical of the sensationalist approach. These unconventional jobs are followed by constructions, housework and agriculture, the last three of which correspond to the profile constructed in the sociological research. During this three-year period there are few mentions of education (four articles), religion (three articles) and the locality size (two articles). Education can be observed in a series of articles on occupation, religion in articles concerning the steps taken to build Orthodox churches in emigrant communities, whereas the rural or urban type of locality can only be inferred

from those articles which clearly mention where a certain individual comes from. Overall the salience of rural versus urban origin is very low in newspaper articles. The fact of leaving the country is usually seen as an individual decision, based on the benefits brought about by the higher wages obtained as a result of finding a job outside Romania. The effects that article authors associate with migration are few and ambivalent. On the one hand, the articles capture the negative effects on the children left behind with respect to education, on the other hand they present positive effects derived from the remittances which are used, in most articles, to cover current expenses, to build a house, or to start a business.

The authors of the newspaper articles appeal to topics of illegality in discussions of migration when referring to illicit employment and, to a smaller extent, with reference to the illicit cross of the border, phenomenon which has been reduced considerably as a result of European Union legislation on free movements of citizens. Another illegal practice associated with migration, namely human trafficking, has increased over the last three years according to newspaper reports, turning into a phenomenon that requires special attention.
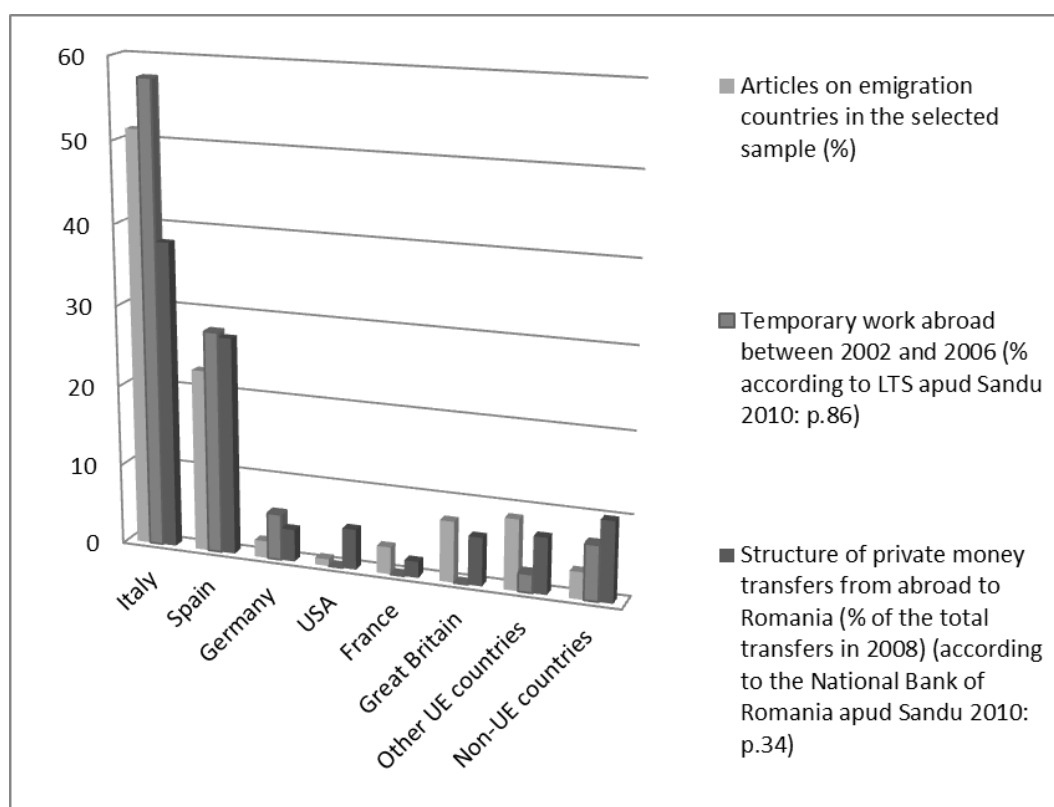

Figure 1. Preferred destination countries of Romanian emigrants

Italy and Spain enjoy high visibility in the articles on emigration. This coincides with the statistics which place the highest number of Romanian emigrants in this geographical area. Although in 2002-2006 the number of Romanian nationals in Great Britain was low,

probably as a result of labor market restrictions, after 2007 Great Britain appears in newspaper articles as the third migration destination, which is in keeping with the data according to which Great Britain was the third most important remittance source in 2008. Besides Germany, France, USA and Canada, Ireland, Belgium, Cyprus, Austria, Holland and the Czech Republic are the preferred countries of Romanian emigrants. Crimes committed by Romanian nationals are to be found mainly in Italy, Spain and Great Britain, and, as far as Italy is concerned, the articles on emigrants breaking the law represent over 50% of the total number of articles about this destination. This is probably the reason why most stereotypes about Romanian emigrants have been identified in Italy, where authorities have been forced to take steps in order to solve the situation created by events which led to conflicts among the inhabitants, magnified in the local press in the destination country.

The data analysis also reveals that leaving the country is not presented as a destructuration of national identity and the consequences of the migration experience on reshaping attitudes towards work, friendship, tolerance and lifestyles are not presented, although there are sociological results on this topic which could have been featured in the media (Romanian Communities in Spain, 2009). Of course, one has to keep in mind the fact that the limit of cluster sampling could also have eliminated some casual mentions of this subject.

Immigration, although less tackled, is not completely ignored. China and the Republic of Moldova are the main countries of origin for foreigners who come to Romania. This corresponds to the 2008 data provided by the Romanian Immigration Office, which show that 15% of the total number of immigrants in Romania came from the Republic of Moldova and 14% from China. The Chinese, although more salient in Romanian newspapers than Moldavian nationals, are presented as workforce in constructions and the textile industry. With respect to this aspect of migration, there is no mention of the fact that Romania may become an immigration country, with the above-mentioned countries as its main routes, and the approaches to immigration focus on a concrete, directly observable fact. None of the articles in the sample talk about Turkish immigrants, who, according to the above-mentioned statistics, rank third in the number of foreigners in Romania, with 13%. On the contrary, Italian immigrants, the fourth in line (7%), are presented as taking part in different events. I consider that this distribution corresponds to the statistical data, which shows that journalists have correct information on nationality, and the fact that Turkish immigrants are not mentioned could be a sampling effect which, corroborated with the low number of articles on immigration, leads to a modification of country ranking.

Interpretative layers of knowledge: rhetoric on migration

A systematic coverage of newspaper articles regarding a certain phenomenon contributes to setting an attribute agenda, and also becomes a resource for individuals to create a general view on the topic. While the setting of an attribute agenda provides a hierarchy of the characteristics that are used to describe a certain phenomenon, the layers of knowledge about the way in which issues of interest are brought to the public's

attention helps us understand the 'lens' used for their interpretation. Therefore, by studying coherence and content of newspaper articles' approach, one can understand not only the content, but also the ways of framing it.

I have studied the article as a whole in order to establish its main approach. However, if the content does not provide sufficient hints for identifying a certain orientation within one of the six proposed categories presented below, I decide its category based on the title's significance or the article conclusions. I have chosen these two elements as points of reference because, by synthesizing the information content that is conveyed, I consider them to be essential instruments directing the reading towards the reception of a certain piece of information or towards memorizing the main idea of the discourse. Therefore, based on the definition of the approach to migration that can be identified in the article, I concluded that half of the articles have a sensationalist viewpoint on the issue. More specifically, there is a certain tendency to generalize on the basis of one particular case which shocks the reader by its striking details. The social perspective is extended to any article that deals with issues such as the migrants' integration in the destination community, their return to the community of origin, or the activity of various non-governmental organizations, and to any article that identifies social problems associated to migration, including discrimination. The category of normative approach – as it is understood in this context – includes articles about migration policies and regulations; the economic approach, topics related to labor market; whereas the demographic approach, topics related to statistics and quantitative data. The narrative perspective deals mostly with descriptions of life stories or presentations focused on the family, such as children left behind or going back to school in Romania. The analysis results indicate a similar pattern between emigration and immigration, with an emphasis on the sensationalist approach, followed by the social one.

Table 3. The dominant approach in articles covering external migration
(number of articles on the topic of emigration/immigration)

	Emigration		Immigration	
	Frequency	Rank	Frequency	Rank
Narrative approach	14	6	1	5
Demographic approach	23	5	0	6
Economic approach	51	4	2	4
Normative approach	64	3	2	3
Social approach	96	2	3	2
Sensationalist approach	211	1	6	1

Note: n-emigration = 459; n-immigration = 14: when interpreting these results we must take into consideration the instability caused by the small number of cases concerning immigration

The dominant attitude in newspaper articles is rather negative, with the exception of references to wage earnings and social integration. The authors of the article associate the problems on the labor market to the economic crisis, and when emigrants are presented as having an undesirable situation, which is reflected in a negative attitude, they are usually portrayed as victims of abuses or aggressions. I have included

the accidents which led to the death of an emigrant in this category and maybe this is why the percentage is twice as high as in the other categories.

Table 4: Distribution of articles which tackle the emigrants' situation
(% articles on the topic of emigration)

	Negative attitude	Neutral attitude	Positive attitude
Migrant's social integration into the community	1	1	5
References to wage earnings	4	1	9
Reference to migrant's expulsion	11	0	0
Migrant's integration into the labor market	12	0	2
Migrant's social discrimination	17	1	0
Abuses and aggressions against a migrant	36	0	0

The fact that Romania is primarily an emigration country is very easily observable in the distribution of press articles: over 95% of those included in the analysis highlight the departures from, rather than arrivals in the country. Although the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics regarding permanent migration show a slight increase in the number of arrivals after 2007 (from 7714 immigrants to 9575), the media does not seem to pick up on this change: there still exists a strong tendency to emphasize temporary or permanent departures, rather than the increasing number of foreigners settling in Romania. This is probably due to the fact that, in the media discourse, there is no clear delineation between temporary and permanent migration. No explanation is provided as to differentiate between the two types in over 80% of the cases when an explicit reference to a certain type of migration was necessary to be done in order to increase the accuracy of the information. Therefore, by integrating the content in a different sphere of significance, it is disseminated a message with the potential for the public to misunderstand the main argument of the article. However, one must take into account the fact that, in some cases, the simple mention of migration for work (these articles account for 25% of the sample) suggests an orientation that does not directly lead to the idea of permanent migration abroad, but rather, at most, to temporary departure – with the purpose of finding work, which might eventually turn into permanent migration. Indirectly, the distinction between permanent and temporary migration is made through a series of specific terms used to refer to Romanians working abroad. Although used with the journalistic purpose of drawing attention, appellations such as „strawberry-pickers" („*căpşunari*"), „*stranieri*" or „Euro-commuters" („*euronavetişti*"), which contribute to narrowing down the field of interest by emphasizing either a certain type of occupation, or the purpose and duration of the experience, direct the approach towards a temporary phenomenon.

Moreover, the Romanian emigrant is presented as maintaining close relations with the community of origin. These are suggested either by the short visits to Romania especially in April, August and December, rendered in articles that describe "the congestion at the Custom office" or "the situation at the airports", or by the direct communication between them and their friends or the money transfers meant to cover the daily expenses of their families in Romania. Another method to underline the close

connection between the community of origin and the destination community involves covering politicians' visits to the emigrant communities, or the emigrants' involvement in the presidential or EU parliamentary elections. If these aspects refer exclusively to the content of the article, the fact that certain stories are taken from the foreign press and then brought to the attention of the Romanian public can be interpreted as reflection of the relationship that the Romanians living here establish indirectly with those who live abroad. The presentation of events or facts concerning the emigrants makes the readers feel closer – at least at the conceptual level – to what is happening abroad, broadening their horizon to a global dimension, most frequently with an European focus.

Longitudinal layers of knowledge: the reactive effect of the "Mailat case"

The analysis of the articles according to the publication year highlights that the topic of migration is included in the public agenda when an extraordinary event brings forward a situation involving a Romanian emigrant. Overall, on average, there are approximately 8 articles every four days, but when a remarkable event generates reactions in the media, this brings about other related topics, not necessarily shocking ones, which otherwise would probably not have been present in the list of articles available to the public. I have associated this observation to a reactive effect because it expresses a trend that becomes apparent each time a piece of news generates heated discussions, and I have called it the "Mailat effect" because this is the kind of subject able to change the focus on migration and maintain it for a week or even a month[4]. In other words, the representation of migration phenomenon (described by causes, consequences, policy of migrant integration in the community) starts from the reporting of a crime and comes back in the media discourse each time when a type of delinquency is presented, thus affecting the entire background in which the news is reproduced. As it can be seen in the graphs below, the peaks in each year correspond to such a case, although the first mention of the case was not always included in the sample, not even at the end of 2007, when the highest number of articles was obtained. But the effects were apparent in the interest towards other topics related to the Romanian abroad or to migration. The graphs below also show that in 2007 most articles talked about emigrants as workers in the destination community, whereas, starting with 2008, they were replaced by articles about crimes committed by Romanian nationals. In order to correctly interpret the data, it is important to specify that the proposed classification system does not include mutually exclusive categories, and therefore an article can be included in all the three types, provided that it tackles the respective topic. Examined from this perspective, the results show a fluctuation of the information contained in the articles which is the basis for an approach to the status of the Romanian emigrant in the destination community.

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[4] Nicolae Romulus Mailat is a Romanian emigrant who was accused, in the destination country, to have committed a crime against Giovanna Reggiani, an Italian citizen. The case received widespread media attention both in Italy and Romania.
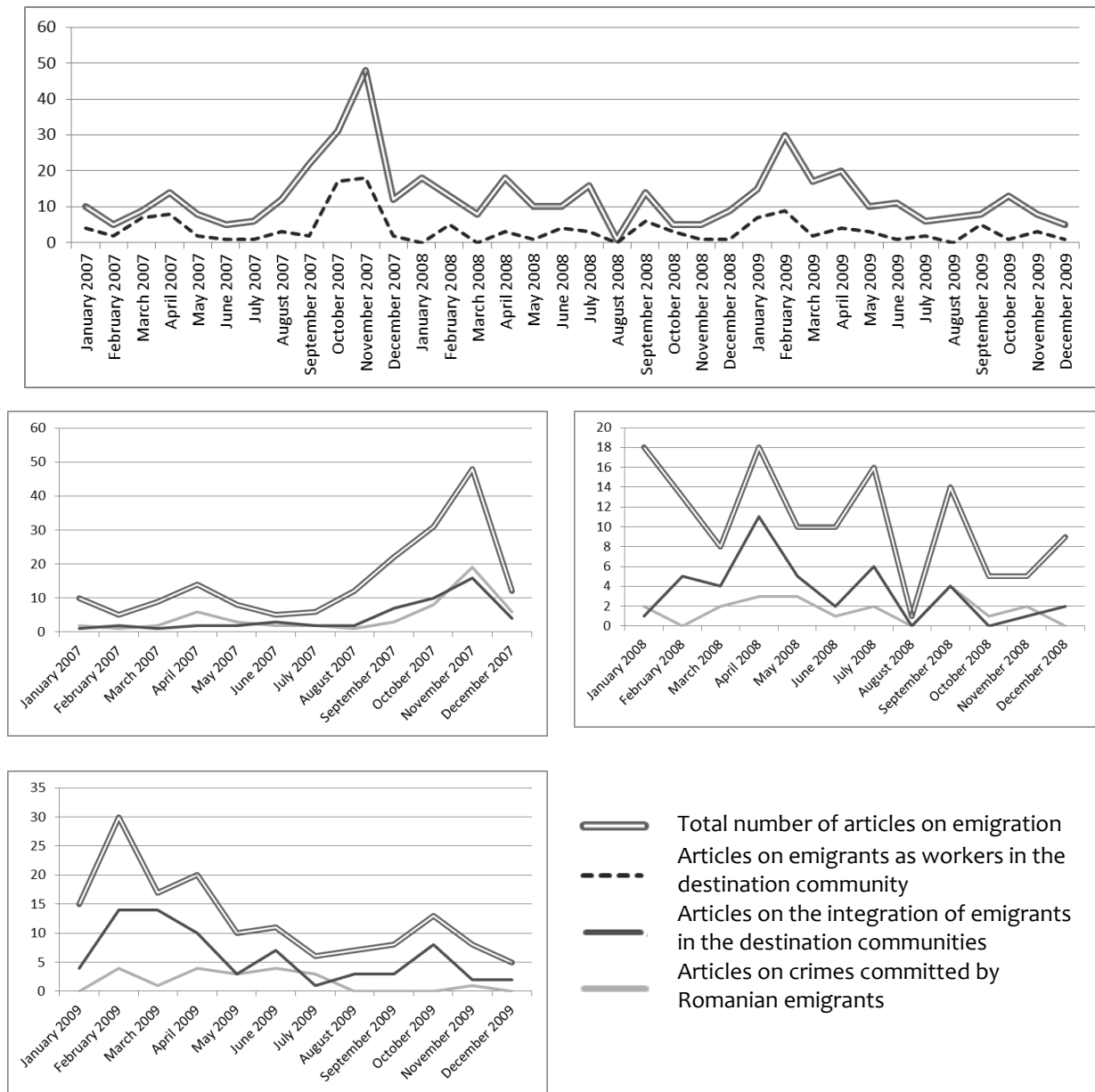
Figure 2. Distribution of articles on emigration (2007-2009)

The distribution of attributes assigned to the Romanian emigrant (workforce, integration or delinquency) according to the publication date and relative to the total number of articles on migration is a method of exploring the dynamics of media discourse about the subject under study. Therefore, the type of articles able to shape public representation should not only have an overall visibility, but also a consistency in time. This could be explored by observing the share of articles on a specific topic in comparison both with the total number of cases and with other references to the subject. Following this logic, it could be observed that, in 2007, the variable corresponding to the distribution pattern of the total number of articles is the one related to working abroad (half of the articles). In 2008 it is replaced by articles on crimes

and policies focused on emigrants in their destination communities whose share follows the same trend as the articles about the perceived criminality. In the last year, the main trend observed in 2008 is maintained, with a small deviation in March. These results suggest that, in the first phase under analysis, migration was represented in the media as a strategy used to integrate people on the labour force, thus creating the premises for pour and unskilled people to obtain gratifying financial outcomes. In the next phase, migration has started to be associated with delinquency. Moreover, the data presented in Figure 2 indicate that, in 2007 and 2008, illicit behaviour is associated with a non-integration of Romanian citizens in the community of destination, but in 2009 criminality becomes an independent phenomenon as soon as the two trends (variables of integration and criminality) follow a different line.

Conclusion

Based on a content analysis of newspaper articles in the period 2007 – 2009, I reached several conclusions concerning the attributes and issues available as resources to the public in constructing an image of migrants and migration. First of all, the newspaper articles on this topic contains a diversity of informative layers of knowledge (various types of articles and references to the profile of the migrant), but fewer interpretative ones (the attitude is rather negative and the discourse is most usually based on a spectacular approach). Media evidence is based on isolated cases, surrounded by certain sensationalism: the descriptive events of migration are brought to the attention of the readers in a succinct manner, often without presenting contextual information or details with a high degree of generality. Nevertheless, when aggregating bits and pieces of information about migrants from such particular accounts, the overall profile of the migrants unexpectedly corresponds with conclusions derived from systematic sociological studies. Specifically, the layers of knowledge corresponding to the aggregate emigrant's profile and geographical position of the destination countries are similar with statistical data resulting from official data. At the same time, the results of sociological research are correctly presented in the newspapers in the few articles that refer to them. Overall, general topics such as the social causes or consequences of migration, the effects of the experience abroad on the migrants themselves or the role of the community of origin and destination on structuring the process are not addressed. Last, but not least, knowledge is accumulated in interrelating layers, a piece of information having consequences in shaping the entire discursive routine of a period: the frequency distribution over the last three years highlights the sensitivity of migration related-topics topics to peculiar events (such as crimes or illicit acts). For example, references to migration as a social phenomenon appear in the sample of articles analysed once a delinquency (in which a Romanian migrant was involved) is reported.

Considering the ease of access to information through written press, the layers of knowledge which shape the discourse about migration could, ultimately, be seen as a reflection of common significance assigned to the subject. While household strategies used to maximize income and issues of economic development treated as a result of regulatory practices in the labor force represent a key element on the public agenda, the

idea of citizenship, human rights and informal social control appear as emergent subsidiary features associated with migration. Therefore, starting from the versantile bounderies between the community of origin and destination, further studies should consider a review of those articles about Romanian migration published in foreign countries in comparison with those that can be found in the autochthonous press. The media discourse about the phenomenon of migration provides not only a representation about ethnicity in an emigrant/immigrant society, but also it constitutes a first substantiation of a public level of engagement with the subject, relevant in depicting types of para-social relationships and mediated interactions characterizing present-day society[*].

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