

Abstract: *Studiul de față are ca punct de plecare un articol apărut în The Economist, volumul 367, numărul 8330, din 28 iunie – 4 iulie 2003, număr special la a 160-a apariție, pag 59-60. Titlul materialului este Wakey wakey! și abordează deliata problemă a crimei naționale, o problemă cu care s-a confruntat timp de câțiva zeci de ani guvernul mexican.*
Keywords: *official discourse, law, crime, reform.*

In 2003, as elections were looming in Mexico, prospective politicians were finding that people care most about crime. "Despite the endless proliferation of shiny new specialist police forces, each supposedly less corrupt than the last, the truth is that things are getting no better."¹

So low is the Mexicans' faith in the ability of the criminal-justice system to bring any criminal to justice – according to a poll done for a specialist institute of criminology last year – that about four-fifths of victims do not even bother to report the crime. "Some 44% of those interviewed said they lived in an atmosphere of some, of great insecurity, a figure that rises to 83% in Mexico City."² This is not only a disastrous state of affairs for the average Mexican, but a big disincentive to foreign investment. The cost of security, especially against kidnapping (a real threat), can be prohibitive.

The author states that, since the tinkering of the past ten years has plainly not worked, the government is now proposing, in one package, an unprecedented reform of the whole criminal justice system, from the police, through the courts and prisons, to the lawyers themselves. Officials at Los Pinos, the president's office, say that the package is already about 70% complete, and will be ready to present to Congress before the country's legislators begin their new session in September. The aim is to professionalise and speed up the system, as well as to make it more humane and accountable, and thus squeeze out the endemic corruption.

"The country's notoriously venal and ineffective police are the first to face the chill winds of modernisation."³ At the moment, for historical reasons, the police are divided by function. Most belong to the Ministry for Public Security (SSP). Their job is only to "prevent" crime; they cannot investigate it or bring prosecutions. Only the police in another ministry, the procurator-general's office (PGR), can investigate crime and assemble cases against suspects. The division of responsibility at the federal level is then replicated through the country's 32 states.

"Reformers argue that, at present, the country's almost 300,000 preventive police are little more than security guards, under-motivated, under-employed and under-paid. The 54,000 investigative police, on the other hand, are overwhelmed by work."⁴ Far better to combine the two functions in one police force, thus raising the number of policemen who can work on criminal cases.

All the police functions will be brought into a new Interior Ministry, which would also be responsible for prisons, immigration and other areas. The PGR would become an attorney-general's office, containing only the prosecutors. "Reformers hope that to shut down one ministry, in effect, will then release funds for the Interior Ministry to professionalise the new police force. This would include better (and regular) training, and higher pay for greater responsibilities. More money would, in turn, help to end the widespread practice of topping up meagre salaries with bribes."⁵

¹ *The Economist*, vol. 367, no. 8330, June 28th – July 4th 2003, p. 59.

² *Ibid.*

³ *The Economist*, vol. 367, no. 8330, June 28th – July 4th 2003, p. 59.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

The other force to be professionalised will be lawyers. "At present, the approximative 300 law schools in Mexico can set their own exams, and once a student has passed the five-year course he is, in effect, beyond scrutiny for the rest of his career."⁶ Government officials argue that only about 50 of these schools are any good, and the rest "really bad". The government therefore wants to bring in a national examination, independent of the schools. It also wants to set up a National Council of Law to oversee professional careers and to monitor ethical standards.

As well as the police and the lawyers, court proceedings and sentencing will be reformed. "Currently, only 15% of cases are heard in open court, and the adversarial system barely exists. So skewed is the system in favour of the prosecution that, as one expert on Latin American law, Jan Perlin, puts it, "once the prosecutor brings you in front of the judge, there's a strong presumption of guilt."⁷

The government wants to shift to more oral proceedings, to make the system less prone to corruption. The defence will be strengthened, and defence lawyers will be expected to accompany a suspect or witness at the first interrogation (a recent study suggested that they do so now in barely half of cases). This, it is hoped, will also give more weight to the human rights of the accused. Too often, cases have been based on forced confession and torture, which is why so many avoid getting involved in the system altogether.

The government also wants to introduce greater flexibility and discretion in sentencing. "At the moment, the weakest and poorest always go to prison for the pettiest of crimes, sent there by judges wedded to an authoritarian, inflexible interpretation of a convoluted penal code."⁸ One proposal, therefore, is to introduce plea-bargaining. Judges will also be given alternatives to prison, such as community service, as a punishment for minor infractions. Reformers hope that this alone will reduce the prison population by about 35%, and prevent jails becoming universities of crime for the merely wayward.

Economist correspondent ends: "Nobody is deluding themselves that these reforms will happen overnight. They touch on too many entrenched interests for that. Legal experts point out that Chile has set itself eight years for similar reforms. And to stand any chance of success, they will have to have proper financing behind them. But if Vicente Fox's government can make a start, these reforms could be one of his most important legacies."⁹

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⁷ *The Economist*, vol. 367, no. 8330, June 28th – July 4th 2003, p. 59.

⁸ Ibid., p. 60.

⁹ Ibid.

Globalization and Romanian Labour Migration

Seen from the Perspective of the Written Press Analysis

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Rezumat: Analiza presei scrise reprezentate de ziarul național „Cotidianul” și „Adevărul” în perioada 2007-2009 cu referire la fenomenul migraționist din România relevă aspecte importante legate de portretul „căpșunarului” român, al românului emigrant, rezultat direct al aderării României la Uniunea Europeană și implicit al globalizării.

Cercetarea efectuată în perioada amintită este centrată pe trei coordonate: social-ideologică, instituțională și culturală, considerate atât din prisma țării de origine, cât și a țării de destinație. Discursul mediatic este analizat stereotipic, cu evidențierea elementelor de intertextualitate.

Lucrarea a fost elaborată pe baza activității de cercetare din cadrul proiectului internațional FP7, GeMIC (Gender, Migration and Intercultural Interactions in the Mediterranean and South-East Europe: an interdisciplinary perspective) perioada 2008-2011.

Cuvinte-cheie: fenomenul migraționist, globalizare, discursul mediatic, intertextualitate

1. The Background

Migration as a research topic in the written press is a quite demanding enterprise, a complex phenomenon whose essence is hard to grasp unless the focus is laid upon an interdisciplinary approach that should include: a sociological-ideological dimension, an institutional-legislative dimension, and a cultural dimension, each one having its distinctive role, since each in turn particularly contributes to the identification of the possible and necessary objectives of migration policies as the ultimate goal.

Following Romania's accession to the European Union, the steady influx of Romanian migrant workers has caused great changes in the latter's mentality on work, having a different perspective on life, thinking more freely and positively.

Worldwide economic crisis has also had a great impact upon labour migration due to the financial collapse of both big and small companies, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate in all countries, and in a shift of workers both from the East towards the West and from the West towards the East. New phenomena have been taking place, such as that of conflicts appearing between the immigrants and natives in host countries. While for Romania emigrants represent a net loss, as a proof of the still reduced capacity of the economy and of the society to generate proper labour and remuneration opportunities, for the destination/host countries they are labour force that can accomplish either tough work or high performance.

In the outlined context, this paper concentrates upon the key issues of labour migration in some of its manifestations as revealed by the Romanian national newspapers *Cotidianul* and *Adevarul* in 2007-2009.

1.1. Romanian Labour Migration. The Strawberry Picker Case.

In the larger frame of migration, Romania stands out as a sending country, with a labour market less attractive to the immigrants, being more interesting in terms of transit possibilities to the developed countries (more 'Out' than 'In' at the 'crossroads between Europe and Balkans', Lazaroiu 2003); "Romania is primarily a country of origin, with considerable numbers of Romanian migrant workers travelling to Western Europe every year. Romania is also a country of transit and likely to become an attractive destination for migrants from outside the European Union." (<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/activities/Europe/central-europe/rom>).

The factors that have enabled Romanian people to migrate are: a low income in the home country, the risk of unemployment or their status of unemployed people; previous experiences abroad and/or the optimistic nature, favouring risky departures in numerous cases. The most important 'push factor' is obviously the wish to achieve economic well-being for themselves and for their families, a fact which also implies a strong emotional motivation. The Romanian strawberry pickers are seen as a distinctive labour migrant

category directly facing the tremendous impact of migration to Spain in particular, but not limited to this EU country, as the analysis of the Romanian written press shows.

2. The Written Press Corpus on the ‘Strawberry Picker’

The written press corpus selected for the analysis of the Romanian ‘strawberry picker’ stereotype is made up of 41 articles from two national newspapers, *Cotidianul* and *Adevarul*, and covering 2007-2009. The facts and figures presented reveal that the effects of the worldwide economic crisis upon Romanian labour migration are more significant in the second half of the period, therefore the articles concerning Romanian strawberry pickers’ returning home are better sustained for the year 2009. Mention should be made that we have focused on presenting the multifarious facets of the strawberry picker stereotype against the background of the articles announcing the topic from their headlines. This strategy has given much more relevance to the development of the research.

2.1. Corpus Analysis Coordinates

The ‘strawberry picker’ national stereotype has its roots in denominating the first labour migrants heading for Spain to work in agriculture (as early as 2000). It is an informal term, used in Romanian written press news reports. It has come to embrace all categories of both unqualified workers in the sectors of health care, personal social services, constructions, and graduates. The title usage refers either to ‘authentic’ strawberry pickers or to other categories of migrant workers.

In a comparative - contrastive approach between the two Romanian newspapers under analysis, the word ‘strawberry picker’ is particularly used in almost a quarter of the total number of the articles from *Cotidianul*, whereas *Adevarul* favours the terms “immigrant”, “emigrant” and “worker”. Journalists from *Adevarul* do not seem very prone on using this label too often.

The perception of the Romanian strawberry picker as denomination for Romanian labour migrants working abroad, especially in Spain is one of rejection. Miguel Fonda Stefanescu, the president of FEDROM (The Federation of Romanian Associations from Spain) considered that Romanians should treat their compatriots with much more respect; in view of that, he elaborated a plan which should facilitate the Romanian Strawberry Pickers reintegration. The same official is also against the other denominations attributed to Romanian strawberry pickers, those of ‘traitor’, ‘criminal’ (Our Compatriots Hate Being Called Strawberry Pickers, *Adevarul*, 17 May 2009). According to Constantin et al, “This perception could be set right by means of joint, coherent efforts of mass media, public administration and civil society.”(2004)

The analysis of the articles proper has shown a rather homogeneous structure similar to the canonical layout of a récit, but with the marked specificity of a press article. The length of the articles varies according to the topic launched: they are longer if they contain elements of interdiscursivity, e.g. the articles containing interviews, or intertextuality makers where strawberry pickers are slightly but purposefully referred to. The message is placed somewhat in between being informative and an appeal to public opinion. The writer’s interference is clearly spotted out in the way he or she handles the topic. More often than not, (s)he mentions ‘strawberry pickers’ between inverted commas (especially in cases of intertextuality), raising people to contradictory reactions, both in Romania as a sending country and in the host countries. Among the most experienced reporters in ‘strawberry picker matters’ we can mention Oana Craciun, and Serban Buscu who have been signing articles in *Cotidianul* beginning with the year 2007.

Figures are used to indicate statistics concerning:

- the amount of money sent by the strawberry pickers to Romanian banks and their contribution to raising the Romanian budget;
- the shortage of workers in the sending country;

- the number of homeless children in the sending country;
- the rate of unemployment.

These discourse characteristics are retrieved into the thematic analysis of the articles in the following chapter where the sociological-ideological dimension, the institutional-legislative dimension, and the cultural dimension overlap providing a complex description of the Romanian labour migration seen from the perspective of the written press.

3. Thematic Analysis of the ‘Strawberry Picker’ Stereotype in *Cotidianul* and *Adevărul*

3.1. Institutions

Various institutions are involved in monitoring the migration phenomenon in Romania. These can work at the national or international levels such as IOM (The International Organization for Migration); ILO (International Labour Organization); UNCHR (United Nation High Commissioner for Human Rights).

The national institutions concerned with migration are both governmental and non-governmental. The main governmental institutions are the Ministry of Administration and Interior, the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research. Non-governmental institutions gather information on migration, mediate labour contracts abroad, or have supportive actions for the labour migrants’ families. In Romania there are also private companies, the local office of the International Organization for Migration in Romania, the representative office of the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees in Romania, the Foundation of the Romanian National Council for Refugees, the Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants, NGO’s, UNIDEA, SOROS, ASA, etc.

The written press cooperates with all these institutions in conveying the information concerning the migratory phenomenon in Romania to the public, and concentrates on the actions taken by these institutions as well as on their attitudes towards Romanian migrants. In the case of Romanian strawberry pickers, these attitudes are generally of positive appreciation and support and come from various directions: the government and governmental institutions; non-governmental associations; the press; the political parties; the public opinion, both in Romania as a sending country and in the host countries.

3.2. Integration Supported by Romanian Institutions

The concept of integration is understood as the process of inclusion of migrants in the core institutions, relations and statuses of the receiving society (cf. the report, *Integration of migrants: Contribution of local and regional authorities*, published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions)

For the migrants, integration means a process of learning a new culture, acquiring rights, accessing position and status, building personal relations with members of the receiving society. For the receiving society, integration means opening up institutions and giving migrants equal opportunities.

This conforms to the message transmitted by Leonard Orban, the EU representative for Romania, who stressed the idea that migrant workers should learn the host country language and culture so as to increase intercultural interaction in the process of migration (Romanian Strawberry Pickers Could Learn a ‘Second’ Mother Tongue, *Cotidianul*, 31 January 2008).

As the analysis of the specified written press corpus shows, Romania does not have a well-defined labor migration integration policy. The local authorities have implemented some actions to prevent the negative social effects of excessive migration in some regions with a high migration rate. At the national level, bi-lateral agreements with host/destination countries in managing the migration networks are in certain cases implemented by the Romanian authorities, whereas in others they are initiated and jointly implemented by the foreign partners.

The Romanian government has had a supportive attitude towards strawberry pickers' coming back home, agreeing with the transfer of European funds. Accordingly, the governmental institution ANOFM launched in 2007 the MEDIT project of an investment of 10,000 RON joining the Italian project LAVORO urging Romanian migrants working in Italy to go back home. The migrants rejected the proposal "since the proposed salaries are less than 1,300-1,500 euros" and "life in Romania is the same as in Italy where prices are concerned" (Higher Salaries for Strawberry Pickers, *Cotidianul*, 4 November, 2007; 700 Jobs Offered by the Romanian Government to Strawberry Pickers, *Cotidianul*, 15 January 2008; The Project for Bringing Strawberry Pickers back Home Could Have an Opposite Effect, *Adevarul*, 28 October 2009; A 10 Million Lei Project: The Romanian Government Throws Leaflets at the Strawberry Pickers, *Cotidianul*, 28 October 2009).

The Ministry of Education has facilitated the reintegration within the Romanian system of education of a great number of Romanian strawberry pickers' children returning home in various regions of the country (Galati: Strawberry Pickers' Children back to School again, *Adevarul*, 2 October, 2009; Slatina: Strawberry Pickers' Children Come back Home, *Adevarul*, 23 October, 2009).

The branches of "Spiru Haret" Private University in Bucharest and Cluj have opened distance learning centres for Romanian migrants wishing to purchase a status leap, in such countries as Spain – Madrid with 2,000 students, Italy-Rome, 820 students (Spiru Haret, a Status Leap for Strawberry Pickers, *Cotidianul*, 16 July 2009).

Various non-governmental associations (e.g. UNIDEA) have made important investments in order to provide material support for home alone children, left at home by the strawberry pickers. The Romanian written press salute these initiatives (2,700 Children Left Alone by Strawberry Pickers, *Cotidianul*, 26 April 2007; Support for Strawberry Pickers' Home Alone Children, *Cotidianul*, 22 April 2009).

As the representative of a non-governmental institution, the Patriarch of the Romanian Church has proclaimed the day of 16 August the Romanian Migrant's Day, when prayers are said to help the families of those working far from their country (Daniel, the Patriarch of the Romanian Church, Addresses the Strawberry Pickers: 'Keep Your National Identity and Work in Peace with Everybody', *Cotidianul*, 13 August 2009).

3.2.1. The Romanian Strawberry Picker's Profile

According to a study implemented by the National Citizen Counsellor Offices Association (ANBCC) and briefly presented in a *Cotidianul* article entitled "A New Strawberry Pickers' Wave: Educated Young People Migrate to Great Britain in March-April 2007," the Romanian strawberry pickers' migrant profile went through a major change: people over fifty and with poor education level were still attracted to work in Spain and Italy, but they were replaced, or we should better say, joined by young graduates, with average incomes, who left their country to work in Great Britain. As the article says, this new category of labour migrants were young people of 22-30, unmarried, highly educated, and with an average family income over the national ratio, very active on the Romanian labour market. Another important aspect which ensured material security for both coming and going migrants was the fact that they were legally employed, with salaries above the national income rate, having even their own businesses in Romania. The article also referred to the preferred destination countries. The newly-made Romanian strawberry pickers added Great Britain as a third top destination country after Italy and Spain and preceding Germany. The study also ranked the Romanian strawberry pickers' starting off regions in the following order: Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania. (A New Strawberry Pickers Wave: Educated Young People Migrate to Great Britain, *Cotidianul*, 11 July 2007).

3.3. Integration Supported by the Host Country Institutions

Migrants' integration is achieved in significantly different ways and at different levels in the host countries.

A synthesis of the written press corpus devoted to Romanian strawberry pickers' integration shows that there was a major change in the relationships among migrants in 2007-2009 in the sense of their degenerating into conflicts, due to the world economic crisis.

Some of the articles published in 2007 focused on the tolerance for and cooperation of Spanish locals with Romanian strawberry pickers working in agriculture. This special category of Romanian migrants are positively perceived abroad since they rank first on the list of most hard-working employees, willing to work extra hours for modest salaries. This is not the case for Spain only. The British farmers 'craved' (to quote *The Times*) for Romanian and Bulgarian migrant workers: "Strawberries and raspberries fields in Britain will be left to rot in the field because there's nobody to pick them, British farmers quoted by *The Times* warn. They demand the Government in London to relax its immigration policies so that the Europe famous Romanian and Bulgarian 'strawberry pickers' can work in their area, too." (Shortage of Strawberry Pickers in Great Britain, *Cotidianul*, 5 July 2007), Britain offering 16,250 jobs in agriculture, as quoted by ANOFM (The British 'Crave' for Romanian Strawberry Pickers, *Cotidianul*, 3 January 2008).

The world economic crisis has lowered the balance for the local workers, a fact which has lead to powerful conflicts between the employers in the host country, on the one hand, and their compatriots left without jobs and the migrants, on the other. Reference is made here to Spain as a host country (The Strawberry Pickers' Future Threatened by the Unemployed Spanish, *Cotidianul*, 17 March 2009; The Spanish Want to Be Strawberry Pickers, *Adevarul*, 21 September 2009).

The problem of permanent and temporary stay in the host country is still governed by the money earned. Settling in host countries is due, in the majority of cases, to the satisfactory unemployment tax (approximately 850 Euros) that the Romanian strawberry pickers receive from the host country government. Thus, they prefer staying in Italy or Spain during the summer instead of coming back home (Satu-Mare: Economic Crisis Makes Romanian Strawberry Pickers Come back Home, *Adevarul*, 8 May 2009; Arad: Strawberry Pickers Won't Come Home for Lack of Money, *Adevarul*, 10 August, 2009). The world economic crisis had a negative impact upon raising Romania's budget through the remittances provided by the Romanian strawberry pickers. In 2009, the figure amounted to 2.8 billion, 1 billion Euros less than in 2008 (Romanians Working Abroad Send Less and Less Money from Spain and Italy, *Adevarul*, 14 October 2009).

Spanish/Italian institutions and Romanian institutions functioning in Spain and Italy cooperate in order to carry out various supportive actions for the Romanian migrants living in these two EU countries.

The Romanian Research Institute for Culture and Humanities in Venice and Villa Amoretti Library are two of the Italian cultural institutions which support the cultural events organized for the Romanian diaspora in Italy: literary meetings, book presentations, theatrical performances. (Torino: Romanian Literature for the Romanian Diaspora, *Adevarul*, 1st May 2008).

The Italian Catholic Church in Lucca region welcomed the first Romanian diocese in Italy established under the patronage of the Romanian Orthodox Church: "I'm sure that this token of brotherhood will contribute to the social integration of the numerous Romanian community in Italy," said the Archbishop Castellani (Welcome to the First Romanian Diocese in Italy, *Adevarul*, 5 May 2008).

4. Conclusions

The data obtained after analyzing the written press corpus indicate that migration has both positive and negative effects when considering mentalities and social aspects both in the host and home countries. In such transition societies as the Romanian one is, the process of changing mentalities is very slow, hampering the institutional change. Through migration, the frequent contact of the immigrants with foreign societies, even for a short period, may accelerate the mentality changing process.

Among the positive effects of migration in the host countries we can include local economic development, an increase in the number of young population, entrepreneurial attitude, and increasing tolerance within countries with high migration rates such as Italy and Spain.

Some of the positive aspects traceable in the sending country include: the increase in Romania's budget through remittances and the slight development of certain regions due to the buildings raised by Romanian migrants back home.

Negative aspects manifested in the host countries include fewer work opportunities for the host population, whereas the negative aspects manifested in the home country include loss of work force, an aging, decreasing population, and the phenomenon of abandoned children.

Significant differences in their attitude may be noticed between the two Romanian newspapers *Adevarul* and *Cotidianul*. *Adevarul* devotes more articles to the issue of Romanian migration to EU countries (with special emphasis on Italy and Spain) and deals with this topic in extensive and well-written articles, avoiding stereotyping as much as possible. This is not the case with *Cotidianul*, which plays with stereotyping the Romanian migrants in the very headlines of the articles. Such choices are likely to influence the general opinion of the Romanian readership that is not familiar with the real situation that Romanian migrants have to cope with abroad.

The common element for the two Romanian newspapers is the constant authorship, a fact which favours an objective approach to the issue of migration and proves an improvement in the quality of Romanian journalism.

The analysis of the written press corpus in 2007-2009 underlines also the fact that linguistic and cultural proximity is as important as the economic profit for all Romanian labour migrants. Destination countries should remain attractive for economic, cultural, linguistic and historical reasons; migrant workers of all levels should integrate in the host country and then return home, having achieved two goals: change in mentality and acquisition of material and cultural values.

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