



# National Case Study “National Identity and the Media” (WP4)

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Romania

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## 1. Goal of Research. General Hypothesis

Any thorough study of migration and of the identity (re)construction that it entails should not ignore the representational power of the media in postmodern societies, which can contribute to creating, enforcing or, on the contrary, deconstructing images of the migrating (gendered) self in her/his own eyes as well as in the eyes of the other, with a significant influence on the migrant - host encounters. Essentially defined by subjectivity, media representations play an important part in shaping up mentalities, a process in the context of which cultural, national and gender differences are reconsidered, often subject to stereotype-engendering generalisations, with an impact on the (in)visibility of the 'Other' at various hierarchically-organised levels in the public sphere. Taken proper interest in, media representations of migration, gender and intercultural interactions, all with a direct impact on identity constructs, could draw attention upon the dynamics of auto-/hetero-image renegotiation in the framework of cultural encounters, warn against the dangers of oversimplification and abusive generalisation, and raise awareness of the need to better appreciate the benefits of mobility and cultural diversity in the present-day European societies.

Such a study could encompass a wide range of texts from within the constantly enlarging scope of media including print media (books, newspapers, magazines), electronic media (broadcasting for radio and television, film, different forms of audio and visual recording, etc.) and internet media (blogs, message boards, podcasts, video sharing). Keeping in mind that, for a high-quality, in-depth analysis of media discourse, the analysis should cover a relatively narrow category of texts which, nonetheless, would meet the requirements of relevance for the thematic research frame, availability and significant impact on the public at large, the Romanian researchers decided, in agreement with the partner teams, to focus on (feature and documentary) films and written press. Therefore, they set as their main goal that of delineating the main stereotypical/non-stereotypical patterns of representation of migration, gender and intercultural relations as they emerge in the Romanian media and, to some extent, in the media of the Romanian migrant-receiving societies, with a view to pointing out their impact on identity (re)shaping in both the sending and the receiving cultural spaces, revealing the mechanisms underlying them and, ultimately, proposing potential solutions for the improvement of representation policies in the sense of encouraging intercultural dialogue and a positive approach to migration aimed at the integration of migrant cultures into the construction of a European identity. To be more specific, making use of the methodological tools specific to imagology, textual analysis of film and critical discourse analysis (CDA), respectively, the Romanian researchers analysed their corpus of film and written press texts referring to migration from Romania, in general, and to Romanian women migrants, in particular, paying special attention to:

- the larger social and political context as well as the institutionalised frames in which filmic and/or journalistic texts were produced;
- the representational (non/stereotypical) patterns used in addressing gender and migration-related issues in the media, which could contribute

- to naturalising and legitimising power hierarchies and inequalities or, on the contrary, to challenging them;
- the mechanisms involved in the dialectical process of identity formation by means of imagotypical representations, i.e. auto- and hetero-images, which could influence the target audiences and, implicitly, the public policies aimed at causing media representations to become more sensitive to gender and cultural encounter issues.

The main lines along which the Romanian team carried out its investigation are reflected in the structure of this report which devotes special sections to the comments on *migration* and *gender in migration* as represented in media texts focusing on Romania as a migrant-sending country from a three-fold perspective aimed at:

- the identification of the socio-economic realities triggering or triggered by migration,
- the institutional and policy framework regulating such phenomena in both the home and the host societies, and
- the mental software underlying public reactions to different manifestations of otherness.

These dimensions eventually converged into a set of conclusions and policy recommendations that hopefully could contribute to “establish[ing] modes of public seeing and hearing” based on “normative schemes of intelligibility” that would encourage (women) migrants’ humanisation (Butler, 2006: 141-7), counterbalance sensationalism and combat the prejudiced reception of migration as a problem/threat.

## 2. Context Presentation

The status of post-communist Romania can be described as that of a sending, transit and receiving country at the same time. However, taking into account the fact that out-migration flows have been by far the most representative (See The National Institute of Statistics, <http://www.insse.ro/cms/rw/pages/anuarstatistic2008.en.do>) - hence, particularly reflected upon in media texts, whether they be products of the home or host cultures - the following brief re-mapping of migration in the Romanian context will focus on Romania as mainly a sending country.

The restoration of Romanian citizens’ freedom of movement across national borders, after the fall of the communist regime in 1989, caused significant changes in the reasons behind and the dynamics of migration flows from Romania. Some of the pre-1989 emigration trends continued to exist, yet their evolution took new turns, especially as emigration for political reasons was replaced by emigration for mainly economic reasons. Next to decreasing asylum-seeking (which largely lost its political connotations and came to be rather regarded as a ‘cover up’ for migration for labour - see Baldwin-Edwards, 2005: 10; Simina, 2005: 9, and Nicolescu and Constantin, 2005: 56), increasing migration for study, and moderate permanent migration based on marriage with

foreign citizens or the enrolment in special visa-granting programmes (stimulating the emigration of persons holding certain qualifications required in receiving countries like the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) (Nicolescu and Constantin, 2005: 56 and Simina, 2005: 9), permanent migration of ethnic minorities continued at highly increasing rates especially in the early 1990s. By far the most numerous Romanian citizens who migrated legally and settled their permanent residence abroad were, as indicated by the Romanian Institute of Statistics (2006: 2.30), the Saxons/Germans and the Székely/Hungarians from Transylvania. Their migration flow gradually decreased until more or less ceasing in the early 2000s, but it left visible marks at home: full Transylvanian villages, formerly inhabited by Saxons, were depopulated, while the Hungarian minority was reduced to under 1.5 million (i.e. 6.6% of the total population, according to the 2002 census). (Ethnobarometer, 2004: IV. 4 and Baldwin-Edwards, 2006: 6).

Nonetheless, in general terms, it was labour migration that gradually emerged as the main form of out-migration of the Romanians. As the process of transition from the communist regime to a free capitalist market in Romania turned out to be slow and difficult, resulting, among other things, in an increase in unemployment rates and, hence, precarious living conditions for many Romanian workers, emigration came to be regarded as the only hope for significant financial gain and a better life. Under the circumstances, depending on factors like age, education, gender, religion, etc., several labour migration trends - permanent/temporary, legal/illegal - developed in time.

At an early phase, i.e. 1990-1996, there were two major tendencies: on the one hand, especially in the case of high-education graduates, certain preference was shown for permanent emigration from Romania especially to the USA and Canada, but also to European countries like Germany (which marked the beginning of an on-going process of brain drain with severe long-term consequences for the Romanian economy); on the other hand, there was a slow but steady growth in illegal migration, which involved particularly semi- and unskilled Romanian workers, targeting Germany, France, Israel, and, to some extent, Turkey. (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005: 2-13, Horváth, 2007: 3) With Germany gradually increasing control over migrants and Israel becoming a less attractive market because of governmental restrictions, during the so-called second phase of emigration from Romania, i.e. 1996-2002, the favourite destinations for the mainly illegal migration of especially semi- and unskilled Romanian workers were Italy and Spain, which, in time, became hosts of the largest Romanian diasporas in Europe. (Simina, 2005: 8)

2002 was a cornerstone for Romanian emigration owing to significant changes in the institutional and policy framework regulating this phenomenon. For one thing, the endeavours of the Romanian authorities to provide opportunities for legal employment abroad materialised in the creation of the Office for Labour Migration, which, next to the bilateral agreements (with Germany, Spain, Portugal, etc.) and/or the private recruitment agencies, encouraged legal temporary labour migration. (However, despite these efforts, at least up to 2007, legal labour migration continued to take second place to illegal migration to various European destinations and not only.) Furthermore, the elimination, in the same year, of the Schengen visa requirement brought about a boom of circular (il/legal) migration. Thus, many Romanians left the country on

legal tourist visas to actually find work on the (black) European labour market; at the end of the three-month legal stay, some chose to remain in the country of their destination and assume the risks of their illegal status, while others travelled back home, being replaced, until they could return abroad for another period of three months, by (more often than not) friends and relatives who wanted to migrate. (That resulted in the creation of well-organised social networks based on “recommendation systems” that sometimes turned into powerful instruments of coercion and manipulation within the Romanian diaspora.)

In 2007, after Romania was granted the status of an EU member state, the Office for Labour Migration was dissolved and its functions were taken up by the National Employment Agency which joined the EURES (European Employment Services) network aimed at facilitating the free movement of workers within the European economic area (<http://eures.anofm.ro/index.php>). Apart from providing information and guidance with regard to social security policies as well as assistance in protecting the rights that Romanian migrant workers (legally employed) could benefit from, EURES Romania keeps an up-to-date record of the job offers coming from different EU employers and of the restrictions for employment in different EU countries which influence the access to legal employment of Romanian migrant workers. ([http://eures.anofm.ro/anunturi/restrictii\\_impuse\\_romaniei2.html](http://eures.anofm.ro/anunturi/restrictii_impuse_romaniei2.html)) That may account for the fact that, over the years that passed after Romania’s accession to the EU, a certain balance between legal (gaining ground) and illegal (decreasing in number) outflows could be said to have been reached in labour migration from Romania. (Colipcă and Stan, *WP8 National Report*, 2010: 8)

All in all, to summarise the presentation of the main labour migration trends after 1990, distinction should be made between four main ‘axes’: Italy – Spain – Portugal (mainly sought for by semi- and unskilled Romanian workers); Germany – Austria – Hungary and France – Belgium – the UK (attracting semi-skilled and skilled labour force, as well as a significant percentage of highly qualified professionals like IT specialists and physicians); and the USA – Australia – Canada (mostly targeted, as previously mentioned, by highly qualified labour force). (Cojocaru et al., 2006: 5; The National Employment Agency [http://www.anofm.ro/146\\_munca-in-strainatate](http://www.anofm.ro/146_munca-in-strainatate))

Further distinctions in the trends of emigration from Romania could be identified in gender terms: taking into account the feminisation of certain work sectors (e.g. cleaning and domestic work, nursing and care, agriculture, service sectors like hotels and restaurants, etc.) and the peculiarities of certain European labour markets, over the years, evidence of the feminisation of Romanian out-migration particularly towards such destinations as Italy and Spain, but not only, came to be statistically sustained. (Simina, 2005: 14; Constantin et al., 2004: 51; van den Anker, 2006: 170-1) (E.g. According to a statistical assessment of Romanian emigration in 2006, out of the millions of Romanians working abroad at that moment, almost two thirds were women, 50% having an upper secondary diploma and 17% a tertiary degree. – *UNFPA – State of World Population 2006. A Passage to Hope – Women and International Migration*, Fact Sheets: Migration by region – Europe, <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2006/presskit/index.htm>) In the Romanian society still dominated by patriarchal norms, the feminisation of Romanian emigration was

indissolubly connected to one of the negative consequences of the phenomenon in the home society, namely child abandonment.

Another explicit connection between gender and migration was made in the context of the policy framework for trafficking in human beings. Whether the purpose of trafficking be sexual exploitation, forced labour (in the domestic sector, agriculture, sex/entertainment industry, etc.), beggary and/or petty crime, it has been statistically proven that most of the victims are female (despite a significant growth in number of male victims trafficked especially for forced labour, over the last years). In their desperate attempts at fulfilling their dreams of a better life abroad, these victims often ignored the risks inherent in apparently attractive job offers, in living and working off the limits of the law, thus exposing themselves to different forms of exploitation. Steps have been taken at national level to prevent and combat trafficking (whether external or internal) by the improvement of the legal and institutional framework with a view to its harmonisation with the international and European legal and institutional requirements and recommendations. Statistics indicate the relative progress made by the implementation of anti-trafficking strategies and national plans that follow the trends in international and European frameworks. Yet, as the US State Department Report points out (June 2009 - <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/123357.pdf>), there is still a lot to be done in Romania in terms of the efforts to enforce laws against trafficking, to protect victims, and to prevent trafficking. (See Colipcă and Stan, *WP8 National Report*, 2010)

While having extolled the advantages of migration (improvement of the Romanian workers' knowledge, skills and living conditions, reduction of social pressure at home through lower unemployment rates, substantial remittances and brand new investments), Romanian mass media have equally reflected upon its disadvantages, repeatedly foregrounding, in this respect, the 'home alone' generation, depopulation (mainly of rural areas), negative work incentives created by remittances, tense family relations, loss of valuable human capital, and, last but not least, the risks of being illegal and an easy prey to different forms of violence, human trafficking in particular. The media texts selected by the Romanian team contain representations of many of the abovementioned out-migration flows with their positive and/or negative consequences, juxtaposing the home and the host societies' perspectives on them with an aim at not only informing the audiences on facts regarding the movement of Romanian migrants across national borders but also at drawing attention upon the renegotiation of the migrants' identity in the context of cross-cultural encounters.

### **3. Corpus Description**

#### **3.1. Film. Corpus structure and selection criteria**

Three criteria were mainly taken into account in the selection of the film corpus analysed by the Romanian team. Firstly, given the fact the study aimed at focusing on representations of Romanian identity after the turning point of



the 1989 revolution, when it was largely re-shaped by significant societal changes including emigration, interest was taken in feature films and documentaries produced between 1990 and 2009. Secondly, due attention was paid to the relevance of the productions for the specificity of the national case as well as for the main objective of this work package, namely to identify the ways in which dominant and mainstream conceptualizations about gender and migration as well as tensions and contradictions about 'us' and 'them' are reproduced in the filmic discourse. Thirdly, corpus selection was essentially determined by the availability of film copies on the film market. The still limited circulation/broadcasting of documentary films in Romania caused the members of the team to contact, in order to get free access to the documentaries of their choice, the organisers of by far the greatest festival of documentary film in Romania, i.e. *Astra Film Festival*.<sup>1</sup> With the help of its representatives to whom the members of the UDJG team are deeply indebted, a data base of contact addresses of both Romanian and foreign documentary directors, who showed interest in migration and gender-related issues, was created. Unfortunately, only some of the foreign directors chose to reply to the request for collaboration and kindly provided copies of the selected films.

Thus, on the one hand, reference was made to Romanian feature films representing Romanian migrants' identity from the perspective of the sending society: *Weekend cu mama (Weekend with my Mother, 2009)* - **WM**, *Schimb valutar (Exchange, 2008)* - **E**, *Legiunea străină (The Foreign Legion, 2008)* - **FL**, *Italiencele (The Italian Women, 2004)* - **I**, *Occident (Occident, 2002)* - **O**, and *Asfalt Tango (Asphalt Tango, 1996)* - **AT**. However, as all cultural encounters presuppose the clash of cultural spaces with different mental software, and therefore, different images of the foreign other, for a more comprehensive investigation of feature film images of Romanianness in the context of migration, international productions like *Il Resto della Notte (The Rest of the Night, 2008)* - **RN**, and *Je vous trouve très beau (I Find You Very Nice, 2005)* - **TB** were also considered.

On the other hand, due interest was taken in documentaries focusing on different aspects of migration from Romania, on factors that triggered migration, as well as on the consequences for the Romanians' sense of national identity of the experience of becoming the "other" in a foreign cultural environment. The list of analysed documentaries includes, for the aforementioned reasons, only the following titles: *Beyond the Forest (2007)* - **BF**, *Stella (2006)* - **S**, *Leaving Transylvania (2006)* - **LT**, *Inhuman Traffic (2006)* - **IT**, *The Last Peasants. Journeys (2003)* - **J**; *The Last Peasants. Temptation (2003)* - **T**; *The Last Peasants. A Good Wife (2003)* - **GW**.<sup>2</sup>

For a better understanding of the comments made in some of the subsequent sections of this report on the ways in which Romanian and foreign film directors chose to reflect upon Romanianness in the context of migration, the summaries of the analysed feature and documentary films are included below:

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<sup>1</sup> See the website of the festival: <http://www.astrafilm.ro/>

<sup>2</sup> The above mentioned abbreviations of the film titles have been used for practical purposes within the report in order to point out the films that the comments make reference to.

➤ **Feature films**

***Weekend cu mama (Weekend with my Mother, 2009) - WM***

When Luiza left Romania for Spain 15 years ago, she left her daughter Cristina behind, to be raised by her aunt, Elena. Luiza now has a new family and lives in comfort in Spain. She returns to Bucharest to be with Elena, who has suffered a stroke and is paralysed. Another reason for her return seems to be that of seeing her daughter once more. She ends up convincing reluctant Cristina to spend the weekend with her. The Cristina Luiza gradually discovers is metonymic and symptomatic for the situation focused upon. She has run away from home, accusing her stepfather of having molested and abused her (a relationship which has resulted in a child, now in an orphanage) and is living with Glonț (Bullet), taking high risk drugs, dealing and stealing for the money that presupposes. She rejects Luiza, refusing to get to know her, but is bribed into accepting to spend a few days with her, at her grandfather's, in the countryside. The weekend proper informs Luiza on the dark side of Cristina's existence and makes her do her best to salvage the last shreds of normality. Mother and daughter rebuild their relationship, Luiza invites Cristina to join her in Spain (together with her young daughter) and Cristina accepts to undergo detox treatment. All seems to go perfectly until Glonț shows up again asking for more money and kidnapping the little girl the two women had just taken out of the orphanage. Going after her daughter, Cristina discovers that she had been stolen by a network of human traffickers who sell children abroad to medical centres specialising in organ 'donations'. Her attempts to recuperate her child go wrong and she ends up at the morgue, where Luiza is summoned by the police to identify her.

***Schimb valutar (Exchange, 2008) - E***

Emil is a worker in a town in the Prahova region, supporting his wife and son from his wages. When he is left unemployed, he starts looking for jobs, tries to earn a living helping his father in law in agriculture, but everything is in vain. Eventually, after consultations with his wife, Ana, he decides to sell their flat, and goes to Bucharest to change the money into American dollars in view of emigrating. Cheated by Streche (who gives him worthless counterfeit money for the Romanian lei he got for the flat and furniture), Emil is ashamed to return home and decides to stay on in Bucharest to look for money while, all the time, he lies to his family that he is in Germany, doing well, earning reasonably and waiting to make something of himself before asking them to join him. Homeless and hungry, led on by the police, he finds daily jobs that are badly paid, but which help him survive. One day, he meets Lili (a law student living on prostitution money), who takes him in, helps and advises him as best she can. Emil gradually turns into a crook and a criminal who, having learnt the lesson the hard way, now ruthlessly cheats others out of their life savings. When he finally has enough or, better still, when he is afraid that he might be taken to prison, Emil bribes the police officer who had failed to help him, obtains fake passports for himself and his family and plans to emigrate illegally. He is about to get on the plane to freedom (that his wife and son are also booked for), when he is recognised by one of the men he has stolen from, his fortune is blown by the wind, his son's attention is caught, he is exposed but, deformed by money, he pretends not to know the people dear to him and embarks on his journey westward to the promised land.

***Legiunea străină (The Foreign Legion, 2008) - FL***

While bird flu is ravaging a small village in northern Moldavia, various lowlifes start thriving businesses: Maricel (an investor in scrap iron) - who makes a profit from frozen chicken imported from Holland, from bird flu disinfectant and from selling dreams (signing men in for the French Foreign Legion); Lilica (returned from Spain, where she had emigrated and allegedly made money from prostitution) - who participates in the Dutch chicken business alongside Maricel and who trains villagers at a profit to pick Spanish strawberries; the colonel of the military base nearby - who smuggles petrol and sells German chicken to the peasants left without their poultry. Three friends fall prey to Maricel's machinations, although very alert at the scams of others: Mitu - a soldier carrying out his military service in the village; Aurel - married, with a pregnant wife and no money to his name; Stelică - one of the local policemen. They plot to have Mitu steal the burial money that Stelică's grandmother has saved so as to make the 600 euro deposit (that Maricel's men collect), they work out to be fit for legionnaires, they dream of leading better lives abroad. When no news comes in of the Foreign Legion, Mitu decides to leave in advance. He makes it to Austria, where he is caught, imprisoned and shot trying to escape. Aurel is summoned to the post office in the neighbouring town, where he hopes to pick up some parcel that Mitu has sent, but discovers that he is given a coffin containing the remains of his friend. At the morgue, where he takes the dead man's body to, he is told that all of Mitu's organs have been removed. Affected, incapable of spreading the news, Aurel returns to the village, but instead of going home, goes for a swim and falls asleep, half naked, only to be found by someone next morning covered in leeches that have drained him of his blood.

***Italiencele (The Italian Women, 2004) - IW***

Set at the time of the Kosovo conflict, the film tells the story of two Romanian sisters, Jeni and Lenuța, who decide to leave their small village community in Oltenia, leaving behind an unrequited lover (Gigel) and a drunken uncaring father in order to go and work (illegally) in Spain as strawberry pickers. A year later, they return home with a victorious smile and a western attitude, having supposedly gone rich not in Spain, but working in Italy. However, the truth will come out when Jeni decides to stand up to Giovanni's (her former lover and escort to the girls on their way out of the country) attempt to run for the village Mayor's Office. As the villagers are gathered at the local hall and shown a porno film in which the two sisters are the recognisable protagonists, Lenuța bursts in with a terrible confession: a shocking denouement which lays bare a brutal and horrific experience. The two sisters were in fact trafficked and sold to be exploited as prostitutes in Kosovo by Giovanni and his companion, Fane, to be released only with the arrival of the American troops. The confession works like an exorcism of guilt and trauma, and the film ends on an image of hope: as the two sisters try to mend what has been left of their family goods, an American soldier drives through the village heading towards the house of the two. The main narrative related to the two sisters includes three related stories: the story of Gigel's desperate efforts to convince Jeni to give up the mirage of Spain and remain in the village, marry him and lead a poor but honest existence; the story of the girls' illegally migrating and its consequences; the story of the sisters' return to their native village and their attempts to

reintegrate in the community's life set against the background of the local fights for political power.

***Occident (Occident, 2002) - O***

*Occident* is a bitter comedy about the lure of emigration and the responses this triggers in those left behind. Its three parts tell basically the same unrequited tale by focusing on a different story. Nevertheless, the three happen at the same time, their plots intertwine, the same events are shown from different angles as main characters from one story are cast as secondary in another one, in order to prove how their actions unknowingly influence each other's destinies. A young couple, Luci and his fiancée, Sorina, are evicted from their home in the sordid outskirts of Bucharest. While in cemetery waiting for otherworldly guidance from Sorina's dead father, Luci is unexpectedly hit on the head with a flying bottle. The rest of the story focuses on the young man's desperate efforts to win back Sorina, who has moved in the meantime with Jerome, the Frenchman who helped hospitalize Luci. Being offered a shelter by Aunt Leana, the old frail mother of his former friend who left for Germany during the Communist times, Luci is forced to become underemployed as a beer bottle mascot, befriending Mihaela, his fellow telephone advertiser. Things precipitate when a policeman arrives unexpectedly with news that Nicu, Aunt Leana's long estranged son, has died in Germany, the old woman apparently dies in shock and Luci runs to tell Sorina that they can move back together in Aunt Leana's vacant apartment only to find that his fiancée has already left for France with the elder suitor. On the eve of her marriage, Mihaela, a romantic girl who thinks she has a gift for poetry, is deserted by the groom. Desperate to find a replacement, the mother opts for a foreign husband that will help her daughter establish not only a prosperous life abroad but also one unencumbered by the shameful incident at the wedding. While the mother visits a matrimonial agency and arranges blind dates for her daughter, Mihaela gets an employment with an advertising agency where she meets Luci. The two are drawn to and confide in each other as they are kindred spirits in their mutually wounded hearts. But the news come that an Italian suitor intends to visit them. In the midst of the excitement of the family's preparations there appears Luigi, who is young, handsome, well-to-do, a poetry-lover, but black and Mihaela's parents are desperate once again as their daughter voices her decision to leave with him, anyway. Mihaela's father, a retiring police officer with old Securitate-style attitudes and tactics, discovers his daughter's groom drunk in the nearby cemetery and scares the young man off both of his bottle and of the marriage. Afterwards he is reluctantly convinced by both his wife and his mistress that the only means of setting things well for his child is to consent to a foreign marriage. Then, he meets Nae, who has returned from Germany to bring the news of a friend's death to his mother and needs assistance in fulfilling his task. Shocked by the prospect of seeing his child leave with a Black Italian, the officer asks Nae to do him a counter favour and take Mihaela to Germany with him.

***Asfalt Tango (Asphalt Tango, 1996) - AT***

Set in the immediate post-communist decade, the film is a burlesque comedy involving a group of eleven beautiful Romanian girls who are persuaded by a French agent (Marion) and a dubious Romanian impresario (Gigi) to embark on a bus that would lead them to Paris and future glory as cabaret dancers. This East-West journey, which involves crossing Romania from

Bucharest, through Braşov, Cluj and Oradea, to reach the Hungarian border and beyond, is complicated by the desperate efforts made by Andrei, the husband of the opera ballet dancer Dora, to stop his wife from embarking on what he strongly believes to be a life of prostitution, and to persuade her to return home to the safety of their marriage. Within the framework of the group's journey through the winding (at times picturesque, but more often desolate and dusty) Romanian landscape, a number of stories are embedded: the story of Dora and Andrei's marriage set against the social and economic cleavages characterising post-revolutionary Romanian society; the story of Felicia, with a bourgeois background and cultural aspirations that collide with the aberrant behavioural codes of a society in transition; the story of Graziela, who has embarked on this trip as punishment to her Italian fiancé, who has ceased returning phone calls.

### ***Il resto della notte (The Rest of the Night, 2008) - RN***

After having been "ambushed" by what looked like Romanian gypsy beggars in the street, Silvana Boarin comes home determined to fire her maid, Maria - an immigrant from Romania (that they had, up to that point, considered as a member of the family). Accusing her of stealing a pair of expensive earrings (which actually proves to be true), the Boarins let her go, despite the opposition from their daughter, Anna, Maria's friend.

The constant fear (of immigrant intrusion/violence) Silvana is governed by is apparently nonsensical, but takes material shape in the events to follow. It determines, somewhat inexplicably, the film's tragic denouement, as if, through her intense feeling, she brought disaster upon her family. Two other Romanian immigrants, Ionuţ (the fiancé Maria had left to find a better life, through honest work, with the Boarins) and Victor (his teenage brother), live in poverty and promiscuity somewhere in a ghetto. While Victor earns his living by hard labour and daily employment, Ionuţ is after the easy life; although handsome and charming, he is a thief, a crook, a dealer. Together with the good-for-nothing Luca, his Italian mate, Ionuţ plans and carries out a burglary at the Boarin residence, based on the information unknowingly provided by Maria. Their action (that Victor witnesses) goes wrong, however. While her parents are away at a concert, Anna entertains a boyfriend, who accidentally gets shot by the burglars, as does her father, Giovanni, who surprises them by arriving early.

### ***Je vous trouve très beau (I Find You Very Nice, 2005) - TB***

Aymé, a balding middle-aged farmer who unexpectedly loses his wife in an accident, seeks a new wife to help him with work on the farm. Not having time to socialize, he goes to a marriage agency that arranges for him a trip to Romania, where numerous young women are eager to find a French husband and escape thus the hard, grim life at home. Growing more and more confused with each new candidate who thinks she would make the perfect match due to talents like acting, singing or dancing, Aymé is relieved to encounter Elena, a young, beautiful and clever woman who immediately understands what the Frenchman needs and pretends to be interested in farm work. The two leave for France, Elena hiding the fact that she leaves a 6-year old daughter at home whom she hopes to be able to help escape the misery in which they live with the money saved abroad. The comic arises out of the various (cultural, ethnic, gender, generational) clashes between the two main characters, who gradually learn to accommodate their obvious differences and start to care for each other. But despite Elena's charm and her openly displayed affection, Aymé continues

to pretend coldness and self-sufficiency, realising too late, after Elena has made her decision to return home, that he himself cares for the young woman as a person and not just a housekeeper. But to ensure the happy denouement, an accident makes Elena, who is now back in Bucharest where she runs a ballet school, realise that there were Aymé's savings that have enabled her return and the financial security of her present life and the film ends back in the French fields where a changed Aymé comes across Elena and her young daughter who have returned to be reunited into a happy family.

➤ **Documentaries**

***Beyond the Forest* (2007) - BF**

Two symptomatic cases are under focus: one of the last Saxons (Johann Schuff) and one of the last Landlers (Maria Huber) in Transylvania, Romania. Both protagonists are humorous, broken people, having witnessed the extinction of their cultures. Now they are old, alone in the world, and their only wish seems to be that of dying (Johann - close to the earth, to be eaten by dogs and reintegrated in the universe; Maria - naturally and be buried in the tomb she has inscribed with the actual date of her death, already five years in the past). However, they are now willing to retell their tragic experiences: Johann's fall, together with the fall of Hitler (that he is still nostalgic for); Maria's deportation to a Siberian labour camp and her subsequent solitary life, having refused to marry a Romanian.

***Leaving Transylvania* (2006) - LT**

An elderly Saxon couple, Hans and Maria Kenzel are central to the film. Although in their sixties, they decide to migrate to Germany where the Saxons had come from a long time ago. (Part of their family already migrated to Augsburg, so they intend to join them.) Over the years, they played an important role in the life of the local Saxon community (they took care of the old Saxon church and cemetery) and contributed to the preservation of the Saxon traditions and way of life. Their life story is constantly interrupted and completed by interviews with other Saxons from the village of Arbegen, all of whom speak highly of the Kenzels (Jutzi Stuehler - a very close friend, who helps Hans and Maria fill in the papers to submit in order to get a passport and who is also to migrate too, a few months later, in December 2001; Jirk Schneider - a close friend of Hans, who helps him with looking after the church and the cemetery; Inge Petru, Maria and Misch Wolf - young and old neighbours and members of the community; Hans Hatt - a clergyman who comes occasionally to take the local priest's place, when the latter is ill or cannot organise the religious service).

***Stella* (2006) - S**

The film presents only one case: Stela Margean's. A Romanian former waitress and worker in a local biscuit factory, Stela and her gypsy husband Marcel migrate to France to solve a medical problem that the latter has. Once in France, they try to find jobs and to live in decent conditions. However, since they are illegal migrants, they live in a decrepit ghetto, have no resident permits and constantly fear that they might be arrested by the police and deported. To provide for themselves, Stela and Gabi, her sister, are forced to beg. Such precarious living conditions gradually cause Stela's health to decline:

she's got bad teeth and suffers from hernia. Eventually discovered by Vanina Vignal and helped along with their medical issues, Stela, Gabi and Marcel return home, to Brăila and attempt reintegration.

### ***Inhuman Traffic* (2006) - IT**

Two case studies are presented: Anna's and Tatiana's. Offered a job in Greece by a friend she trusts, Anna (Romanian) leaves her young daughter behind, but is trafficked by Luan Plakici; sold to a pimp, she is taken by car to a deserted house full of young women that turns out to be in Serbia, not Greece; she is later taken to Macedonia and sold regularly on the human meat market (two men every half hour...). She spends two and a half years trafficked and is freed during an accidental police raid. Blindly in love, Tatiana (Moldovan) accompanies her boyfriend of 6 months to Holland; she is not interested in her parents' warnings and advice, and ends up sold at the train station to a pimp, spending six months as a sex labourer in Amsterdam, while her family is continuously threatened. In an attempt at providing a full picture of the trafficking chain, the two main narrative lines are closely intertwined with other embedded stories by: potential victims (Ludmila, a Moldovan girl), clients and 'employers' of trafficked girls (Giovani, a Dutch client; Steve, the owner of a strip club in Prague), as well as representatives of institutions involved in protecting the victims and combating trafficking (Stefano, an undercover officer from a UN Centre for Trafficking Unit - Kosovo, Serbia; Maria, a Romanian anti-trafficking activist; Alina, a Moldovan counsellor of the *La Strada* NGO).

### ***The Last Peasants. Journeys* (2003) - J**

The film focuses on the Damian family from the village of Budești, Maramureș. Vasile Damian has two sons, Petru and Ion, and they both seem to have grown obsessed with the idea of migrating to Western Europe. More determined, Petru made the first step to fulfil his dream and, together with his wife, Maria, and son, Adrian, left for France. Soon after Petru, Maria and Adrian reach Paris, Petru is arrested as an illegal migrant, but somehow manages to escape and makes it to Ireland. Separated from his wife and son, Petru lives a lonely life as a migrant in Dublin, while Maria remains in Paris, together with their son. This storyline is closely interwoven with that centred on Petru's brother, Ion. He and his wife Maria still live with their two children, Vasile and Măriuca, in Budești, but all they dream of is joining Petru or Maria abroad. After surmounting difficulties, Ion and two younger men from the village set out with a guide who promises to get them to Italy. They travel across Hungary under the train and reach Vienna, but the guide abandons them there and steals their luggage. They set out for Paris on their own, but do not make it, being caught, imprisoned and deported. Disappointed by Ion's failure, his wife Maria decides she should try her luck and leave abroad. The more she wants to leave and reproaches her husband for his weakness, the more they get estranged. Maria borrows the equivalent of 2 years' income to buy false travel papers from a local middleman. As she is to pose as a business woman, she buys make-up and tries to change her look. But she is not lucky either: a week later, she is told that the man arranging for her passport was arrested. So, heavily in debt, she has to get used to the idea of going on with her life in the village, next to her husband and her children.

### ***The Last Peasants. Temptation* (2003) - T**

Two families from the village of Budești - Opriș and Bud - are presented as torn apart by the conflict between generations and by the realities of migration. Both sons of Gheorghe and Irina Opriș choose to migrate and do not take interest in the family business, despite the fact that it has prospered over the years and has significantly contributed to their status as a well-off, hard-working, respectable family. After the eldest son settles in the USA, the youngest son, Laurențiu, wishes to follow in his footsteps and to make his own way in life, either as the manager of his own business or as an illegal migrant. The failure of his attempts at doing business at local level eventually makes him more determined to migrate. He is supported in his decision by his girlfriend from the small town nearby and will pursue it even if that brings about an irremediable break with his parents. Similarly, Florica and Lorinț Bud prefer to migrate rather than to work at the family mill, even if the jobs they have access to are not intellectually and financially rewarding. Lorinț makes it to London as an illegal migrant and he intends to stay there for at least two years to make good money. Under the circumstances, Florica is supposed to continue the family tradition, getting married in the village and settling at the mill. Yet, she has other plans too: she wants to get married abroad, or at least to find a well-paid job there. For her, in particular, migrating is a matter of emancipation, of gaining independence from a male-dominated, 'closed' kind of community. Unfortunately, she fails in all her attempts at migrating either illegally or legally: the fake visa provider is not trustworthy, and, though she goes to Bucharest to attend an interview for a job in Belgium, she is not selected because she lacks the required skills. So, Florica returns home very disappointed and tries to cope with the frustrations that life in the countryside presupposes. The two stories somewhat intersect only once, at the end of the film, when the entire village community (including Gheorghe and Irina Opriș, on the one hand, and Florica Bud, on the other) attends the public performance of a Nativity play acted out by the very few young people left in the village.

### ***The Last Peasants. A Good Wife* (2003) - GW**

Two more families from Budești are presented here. The Maricas, whose son Vasile has not managed to emigrate, miss his "good wife" Mihaela who, having left on a tourist passport, is now in Paris, working as a cleaning woman, living in terrible conditions in a ruined warehouse (together with her sister Mariana and brother-in-law Ion) and sending the little money she makes back home. Despite the fact that he is supported by his parents, Vasile finds it more and more difficult to cope with the situation especially after Mariana and Ion return to Budești, leaving Mihaela on her own. Torn apart between his worries for Mihaela's safety (especially after having seen on tape the miserable place where she lives) and his doubts about her faithfulness (fuelled by the stings of the neighbours and friends in the village), he insists that she should come home, but Mihaela refuses because she hopes to make more money to help the family. On the other hand, lumber merchant Radu Bud is one of those young men who, not daring to upset his father and lose the family inheritance, stays behind in the village and takes the traditional road to a marriage that celebrates a centuries-old way of life that the fall of communism, democracy and migration are tearing apart. He is shown vacillating between Liliana, whom he has a crush on, but whom his parents would not accept because she does not rise up to their expectations, and Anuța, the bride of his parents' choice. Eventually he bends to his parents' wishes and marries Anuța, though he feels for her rather



friendship than love. These human stories reflect back on both a world of the past, of horses, carts and medieval beliefs, and on its present agonising counterpart which, after half a century of communism, is on the verge of collapsing under the burden of democracy.

### **3.2. Written press. Corpus structure and selection criteria**

The other major dimension of media text study in the Romanian report is given by comments on the ways in which the written press in Romania, and, to some extent, in the receiving countries (in particular in Italy), constructs the images of Romanian migrants, laying more or less stress on the intersection of gender and migration in the home/host cultural spaces. Starting from the distinctions between types of discourse that require special attention in the examination of the ways in which cultural and ethnic identities, differences, conflicts and inequalities are expressed and reproduced by the text, the samples of written press discourse analysed by the Romanian team were selected so as to reflect both intra- and inter-group discourse characteristics, concerning both self- and other-presentation.

Valuable material in this respect was extracted, above all, from two of the most popular and influential high-quality newspapers of the post-communist Romania, namely, i.e. *Adevărul* and *Cotidianul*.

To present in a few words the 'life-story' of this enduring Romanian newspaper that is *Adevărul*, it is worth mentioning that, founded as early as 1871 and re-established in 1888, it was, for many decades, the main left-wing press venue in the Romanian Kingdom, adopting an independent pro-democratic position, advocating land reform and universal suffrage. By the 1930s, the anti-fascism and the Jewish ethnicity of its owners made it the target of negative campaigns in the far right press, which led to its banning down in 1937. *Adevărul* was revived after World War II only to be closed down again in 1951 due to its being targeted by the Communist censorship apparatus. Finally, revived within days after the Romanian revolution in 1989, it replaced *Scînteia*, the newspaper of the Romanian Communist Party. After a few controversial years, *Adevărul* became an independent publication under the editors Dumitru Tinu and Cristian Tudor Popescu, turning into one of the most popular and trusted Romanian press venues. It nevertheless remained involved in scandals over alleged or confirmed political and commercial dealings, culminating in the 2005 conflict which saw the departure of Cristian Tudor Popescu and of several important columnists, and the creation of the rival newspaper *Gândul*. Since 2006, *Adevărul* is the property of Dinu Patriciu, a prominent Romanian businessman and a Liberal Party politician. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adev%C4%83rul>)

In spite of these controversies and of the editorial and administrative changes, *Adevărul* has remained one of most appreciated high-quality newspapers in Romania, appealing especially to middle- and old-aged readership through a prominent and constant concern with mainly socio-cultural issues. Regarded as "the most successful, and arguably the best Romanian daily" (Ulmanu, 2002: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adev%C4%83rul>), it has

produced a “less warlike” discourse than other dailies, and therefore has appealed to a wider audience. It has maintained a “balance between a reconciliatory but well-documented discourse, on the one hand, and, on the other, the observance of journalistic norms and resistance to the temptation to make compromises” (Petcu, 2004: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adev%C4%83rul>). Throughout a long process of transition, *Adevărul* has made it a tradition to keep an agenda in favour of social justice, social security and “fast privatisation that would avoid massive unemployment” (Petcu, 2004: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adev%C4%83rul>). It is in the framework of this socially-oriented agenda that, over the last few years, the newspaper started devoting special pages to Romanian migrants (“Români în Italia [Romanians in Italy]” and “Români în Spania [Romanians in Spain]”) and has recently founded two electronic versions available for the Romanian diaspora in Italy ([www.adevarul.it](http://www.adevarul.it)) and Spain ([www.adevarul.es](http://www.adevarul.es)).

As for *Cotidianul* ([www.cotidianul.ro](http://www.cotidianul.ro)), it was initially founded in 1927, and re-founded, after the fall of communism, by the right-wing politician Ion Rațiu, publishing its first issue on May 10, 1991. During approximately two decades of constant publication, *Cotidianul* has gained large readership, mostly represented by younger people, due, on the one hand, to its witty and slightly aggressive approach to the events presented, and, on the other hand, to the regular collaboration with representatives of the Romanian cultural elite (especially for opinion articles). It temporarily ceased publication on December, 22nd /23rd 2009, but it was back on the Romanian written press market at the beginning of 2010 when it was taken over by Academia Cațavencu and Regent House. (See also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cotidianul>)

The articles devoted to Romanian emigration published in these two newspapers cover many aspects of this phenomenon, stress being laid especially on labour and crime-related events. Among the larger category of Romanian migrant workers, the “strawberry pickers” are seen as a distinctive category directly facing the tremendous impact of migration to Spain in particular, but not limited to this EU country. The written press corpus taken into account for the analysis of this newly-emerged stereotype of Romanian migrant workers is made up of 51 articles from *Cotidianul* and *Adevărul*, covering the period 2007-2009. The facts and figures presented in these articles reveal that the effects of the worldwide economic crisis upon Romanian labour migration are more significant later in that period, therefore the articles concerning Romanian strawberry pickers’ returning home are better sustained for the year 2009. Mention should be made that the multifarious facets of the “strawberry picker” stereotype were focused on particularly in articles announcing the topic from their headlines. However, in most of the cases, the critical analysis of the journalistic discourse took into account all the relevant structural elements of the articles in focus.

Regarding the association of migration and crime in a security-related framework in certain EU spaces, special attention was devoted to the cases associated with Romanian migration in Italy, given the crisis that, in the recent years, particularly marked the interactions between the Romanian migrants and the Italian receiving society. The Romanian researchers considered it necessary and useful firstly to identify the various representations of Romanian migration

in Italy between 2007 and 2009 in the Romanian newspapers *Cotidianul* and *Adevărul*, and secondly to draw a parallel between the ways in which a specific crisis-engendering event that brought about increased tension between the Romanian migrants and the Italian host community, i.e. the crime committed by the Romanian migrant Nicolae Mailat against the Italian Giovanna Reggiani, was approached in the two Romanian newspapers and in the Italian sources cited by these newspapers, respectively. As a result, the general aspects identified in the analysis of Romanian migration in Italy and of its connection to gender-related issues were further investigated in relation to this highly mediated case of Romanian migrant violence against an Italian citizen. The aim of this approach was, on the one hand, to analyse the perspective and attitudes of the sending and receiving communities, and, on the other hand, to detect the similarities and dissimilarities in the approach of the Romanian and Italian journalists reporting on the same migration-related issues.

At a first stage of the research on representations of Romanian emigration as related to crime, the corpus from the two Romanian newspapers was represented by 28 articles devoted to the Mailat case. 22 of these articles were selected from *Cotidianul* (14 written by male and/or female journalists, 8 with unspecified author) and covered the period 14 November 2007 - 30 July 2009, containing Italian and Romanian sources mentioned or cited, interviews with Italian and Romanian personalities, etc. The remaining 6 articles selected from *Adevărul*, that covered the period 9 July - 13 October 2009, were more heterogeneous, both from the point of view of the authors (4 male authors, 2 female authors; the same author(s) devoting more articles to the issue of migration) and of the attitude adopted by these authors in describing the events. This corpus was subsequently developed so as to include further articles reflecting on attitudes towards the Romanian migrants before, during and after the Mailat case. Out of the three online versions of *Adevărul*, the ones addressing the Romanian readership at home and the Romanian diaspora in Italy were consulted so as to support the corpus analysis. Similarly to the articles in *Cotidianul*, the articles selected from *Adevărul* use and cite Italian sources (the Italian NGO *EveryOne*, the newspaper *Il Manifesto*), but they seem to focus less on the case of Nicolae Mailat.

Since *Adevărul* and *Cotidianul* devoted a substantial number of articles to the phenomenon of Romanian emigration, especially in Spain and Italy, the general corpus on migration was significantly enlarged in the second stage of research, eventually amounting to:

- *Adevărul* : 2007 - 369 articles, 2008 - 365 articles, 2009 - 38 articles<sup>3</sup> ;
- *Cotidianul* : 2007 - 76 articles, 2008 - 287 articles, 2009 - 338 articles.

The articles were grouped according to several relevant criteria, as shown in the table below:

Selection Criteria	<i>Adevăru</i> / 2007	<i>Adevăr</i> <i>ul</i> 2008	<i>Adevăr</i> <i>ul</i> 2009	<i>Cotidianul</i> 2007	<i>Cotidianul</i> 2008	<i>Cotidianu</i> / 2009
<b>Articles dealing</b>	53	175	-	39	111	140

<sup>3</sup> This small number of articles is due to the fact that there have been changes in the electronic archive of *Adevărul* which prevented the Romanian researchers from accessing all the articles on migration-related topics published in 2009.

<b>with migration : the word <i>immigrants</i> in the headline</b>						
<b>Articles dealing with migration :the word <i>emigrants</i> in the headlines</b>	74	25	-	4	6	7
<b>Migrants' ethnic origin: Romanians</b>	288	342	-	68	236	319
<b>Migrants' ethnic origin: Roma</b>	81	23	-	8	51	19
<b>Men-related topics</b>	208	56	6	11	55	102
<b>Women-related topics</b>	39	37	-	6	14	43
<b>Generic topics</b>	122	272	-	59	218	193
<b>Qualified labour force</b>	12	8	-	11	18	25
<b>Unqualified labour force</b>	82	24	23	10	22	10
<b>Crime</b>	126	63	6	8	59	79
<b>Women workers</b>	5	1	9	3	3	5
<b>Women as victims</b>	27	5	1	1	-	5
<b>Women as aggressors</b>	7	16	-	-	3	1
<b>Art/ culture</b>	-	26	-	9	19	66

To be more specific and detail the main lines along which the corpus selection was actually carried out (as schematically indicated in the table), due mention should be made of the following aspects:

- Given the fact that in journalistic discourse headlines are a catchy clue given to the readership in relation to the topic to be enlarged, a first criterion of selection envisaged the occurrence of the words “immigrant” and “emigrant”, respectively, to point to the perspective from which migration-related issues were reflected upon, i.e., of the receiving or the sending society.
- Further distinctions focused on ethnic differences among the Romanian migrants as conditioned by the significant ethnic groups migrating to EU countries after 2007, in particular. Ethnically-defined migration was indeed a characteristic of Romanian emigration over the last decade of the twentieth century with numerous Saxon, Hungarian and Jewish Romanian citizens leaving the country. Yet, as shown in a previous section, such flows decreased almost to zero at the beginning of the new millennium ‘leaving the stage’ mainly for Romanian and Roma migrants.
- As migration was essentially motivated by the precarious economic and living conditions in post-1989 Romania, special attention was devoted to articles dwelling on labour-related issues with reference to the statistically proven differences in emigration flows conditioned by the migrants’ gender, as well as by their education and qualification.
- In the mental software of many receiving EU countries, the phenomenon of migration still seems to be regarded as a threat to their welfare and security. Consequently, the issue of crime in relation to migration proved

to be well represented in the written press of both the sending and receiving countries, which explains the interest in its representations, as well.

- The gender component of the research made it necessary to analyse particularly the images of Romanian women as migrants in both labour and crime-related contexts.
- Ultimately, starting from the premise that migration should not be strictly looked upon in negative terms, the Romanian team considered it relevant to approach articles that emphasise the contribution of Romanian migrants to the development of a multicultural European space.

As the table also indicates it, there are significant differences between the two Romanian newspapers *Adevărul* and *Cotidianul*, in their stress on certain perspectives on migration – home/host; Romanian/Roma; male/female; labour and culture/crime. *Adevărul* devotes more articles to the issue of Romanian emigration in EU countries (with special emphasis on Italy and Spain) and seems to treat this topic in extensive and well-written articles which avoid, as much as possible, stereotyping and accusatory attitudes (though there have been occasional accusations of discriminatory attitudes towards the Roma migrants). This is not the case with *Cotidianul* which plays with stereotyping the Romanian migrants by using incriminating words from 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. However, one common element for the two Romanian newspapers is constant authorship, which favours a more professional approach to the issue of migration and suggests an improvement in the quality of Romanian journalism.

Having sought for significant traces of intertextuality in the Romanian press, the Romanian researchers eventually decided to check, at least with regard to the crisis-engendering event centred on Nicolae Mailat and to its echoes, some of the Italian sources mentioned in the two Romanian newspapers *Cotidianul* and *Adevărul*, in order to see whether the approach and the media discourse varies significantly in the two cultural spaces. In this respect, the initial corpus of 5 articles selected from *Corriere della sera* (2 articles - 1 November 2007 and 3 articles - 2 November 2007) was subsequently enlarged with 73 more articles selected from other Italian sources cited by *Cotidianul* and *Adevărul*, namely: *La Repubblica* (61 articles: 1 November 2007 - 14 October 2009), *Rainews 24* (7 articles: 4 November 2007 - 9 July 2009), and *ANSA* (5 articles: 13 May 2009 - 9 July 2009).

## **4. Corpus Analysis**

### **4.1. Migration**

#### **4.1.1. Society**

##### **4.1.1.1 Film**

As mentioned in section 2 (pp. 6-9) as well, after the fall of communism (1989) and, later on, with Romania's becoming a member state of the European Union (2007), societal changes increased in number and impact on the common Romanian. To be more specific, the state sector, which had previously taken 100% of the country's work force, lost many of its employees to the private sector, where wages were higher and working conditions better. Great parts of the private sector became owned by foreign investors who tended to direct their capital into the areas that provided the most politically favourable conditions, intensifying thus the economic gap between the different regions of Romania - with Bucharest, the capital, the west of the country (Timișoara and Arad) and its centre (Brașov, Sibiu, Cluj) being favoured over its northern, eastern and southern parts. The employment policies, however, grew more restrictive and elitist, leaving many on the outside, either through dismissal or failure to provide sponsored professional training for job mobility into other domains. As a result, unemployment coupled with social marginalisation and impoverishment (mainly affecting elderly people and women) became a factor characteristic of towns. With the loss of work places, the increasing living costs, an atmosphere of insecurity and the lack of career possibilities, some considered the return to the countryside as a means of survival, reversing the pattern prevalent during the communist period. That does not mean that the rural communities escaped poverty or that the pattern of internal migration from countryside to town suddenly ceased to exist. On the contrary, the decline of agriculture made life in the Romanian countryside all the more difficult, with disastrous effects on the education and prospects of the younger generations still drawn by the mirage of town life (though they often ended up disappointed, joining the already large crowds of unemployed workers in towns.) Under the circumstances, more and more Romanians (whether from town or countryside, especially the young people and women) started looking for job opportunities abroad (also very attractive due to the psychological factor of the closed frontiers of past years), thus becoming migrants.

##### **4.1.1.1.1 Feature Films**

This situation is both reflected and mocked at in the films selected for research purposes by the Romanian team, which were produced between 1990 and 2009. Their metonymical characters (Luiza - in *WM*; Emil - in *E*; Mitu and Lilica, Aurel and Stelică - in *FL*; Maria, Victor and Ionuț - in *RN*; Nicu and Nae, as well as Sorina and Mihaela - in *O*; the collective feminine character of the eleven Romanian girls fleeing Romania in a bus - in *AT*; Elena, as well as the parade of girls at the hotel trading their good looks in return of a foreign husband - in *TB*; Jeni and Lenuța, the simple sisters from a backward southern

Romanian village – in *IW*) all have left, leave or dream of leaving Romania in search of a better life for themselves and those at home.

At this point, it is also interesting to mention that two of the films chosen for analysis (*O* and *E*) hint at other dimensions of the Romanian migrants' experience, namely the illegal emigration characteristic for the communist regime (Nicu and Nae's perilous escape across Danube's waters in *O*) and the focus on Romania as host/receiving country for people coming from The Republic of Moldova (Lili, the student who makes a living as a prostitute in *E*).

The iconography of the films foregrounds an urban, conflict-ridden setting epitomised by Bucharest standing for a society in transition, that uneasily gears its way between the local and the global and, in so doing, producing fissures in its economic fabric. One recurring image is that of the suburban with typical Romanian cultural implications of rural-urban contamination as opposed to its traditional Western significance.

Only two films (*IW* and *FL*) are set in rural communities which, nevertheless, show signs of colonisation by an urban ethics, similarly displaying disjunctions at the heart of traditional constructions of the Romanian village. The odd out is *AT* which employs the motif of the journey to fluidise the borders between an urban and a rural Romania, yet highlighting fractures along economic and social lines in both.

Spain, Australia, Austria, France and Italy are the host countries or the countries of destination in the films mentioned above. With two exceptions (*RN* and *TB*), they are backgrounded, with Romanians either intending to set out for or returning from them. Italy, however, is foregrounded (in *RM*), showing the Romanians as occupying a secondary, if not tertiary position in society and revealing all possible relationships: the natives are reluctant or outright opposed to the immigrants (Silvana Boarin vs. the Romanian gypsy beggars, Silvana vs. Maria), only few cases of friendship between the two sides being possible (Ana Boarin and Maria); the migrants themselves do not seem to get along or have similar life principles (Maria and Victor vs. Ionuț). In *TB* it is France that becomes the main partner in the dialogue on migration, but with a reversal of its traditional encoding as an urban space in the West-ist cultural map-making. Elena sets on an East-West journey which is typically perceived as progressive, while, at the same time, she exchanges an urban with a rural space – generally perceived as a regressive cultural trajectory, which she, nonetheless, accepts as the only alternative to her home situation. The film does not aim to critically analyse the emigrant's experience in the host society, as Elena's relationships with the villagers are construed along stereotypical patterns of interaction.

#### **4.1.1.1.2 Documentaries**

Several social aspects of the home country are dealt with in the documentaries chosen for analysis. Thus, Angus Macqueen's trilogy, *The Last Peasants*, systematically foregrounds the generation gap, which deepens the precipice of expectations with regard to money, career and status; the idealistic, rebellious youth fight back the inertia of their parents and undo the ties with the

land and the community. For instance, Petru Damian (*J*) does not hesitate to migrate and leave behind his ill father whom he should have stood by; an illegal migrant who cannot travel back home for fear that he might be seized and prevented from returning to Ireland, he does not even attend his father's funeral; he is consumed by remorse as he watches the funeral ceremony on a tape sent by his brother Ion (who happened to be home just because he failed in his attempts at illegally migrating), but it is too late anyway and the bitter irony of the situation is particularly emphasised by the scene of his father's 'will' reading in which the old man thanked his sons for all the help they gave him in life and apologised if he wronged them in any way. *GW* provides a more subtle representation of the different mental software of different generations in the opposition between the old Maricas, Vasile's parents, and the young ones, Vasile and Mihaela: whereas the former remain together "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health," the latter are doomed to be consumed by doubts and loneliness as they sacrifice their relationship for the sake of financial gains which are not even satisfactory enough. *T* offers by far the most violent image of the generation gap in the cases of Laurențiu Opreș and Florica Bud. Laurențiu, especially, would do anything just to assert his independence: he starts a business that he is unable to properly manage (and his father has to pay for his debts and save him from prison); he leaves for the small town nearby, intends to marry a woman his parents do not approve of and would do anything to migrate to Western Europe or to the USA (like his brother). His relationship with his parents actually becomes so tense that he avoids visiting or inviting them for Christmas, because, every time they meet, they end up offending each other. (Laurențiu wishes they would die sooner, while Gheorghe and Irina threaten to disinherit him and to adopt a child who would cherish and preserve their values.)

All the documentaries tackle, from various perspectives, the more delicate question of Romanian history and of the consequences of transition from one regime to another. Thus, the country's apparent social involution and economic downfall after the 1989 revolution is foregrounded in *J*, *T*, *GW*, *LT* and *S* in several dialogic sequences, chief among which Ion Damian's conversation on political issues and economic transformations with some fellow peasants from Budești (*J*), or the interviews with Stela Margean (*S*), Hans and Maria Kenzel (*LT*). As in a chain reaction, other issues of concern on the social level directly related to the hardships that the Romanian society in transition from the communist to the capitalist market goes through also come in focus: the problems in the medical system at home (*S* - Stela and Marcel Margean's initial reason for migration was the desire to find proper treatment for Marcel's illness, which they did not expect to benefit from at home, given their precarious financial status as unemployed); nostalgia for the communist age before 1989 (perhaps best epitomised in Stela's melancholy contemplation of her family's photos at a time when they could still afford to spend their summer holidays at the seaside).

Another particular dimension of some documentaries relates to the multiculturalism characterising the Romanian society, hence, in a few cases, inter-ethnic relations are particularly insisted upon. Two of the documentaries, *S* and *BF*, deal, among other things, with the Romanian/Roma confusion and cultural myth-making prejudice, while the German ethnic minority problematics



- from integration to disintegration and reintegration - is more explicitly tackled in *BF* and *LT*.

As for the hosts, their social and economic situations are portrayed as: difficult but still providing low paid employment for the immigrant (Ireland, France - in *J*, *T*, *GW*); flourishing and excluding foreign illegal labour (France in *S*); offering opportunities for decent survival (Germany in *LT*); having a dangerously black component (Serbia, Macedonia, the Netherlands - in *IT*) and incredibly primitive and worthy of contempt (Romania itself - for the old people in *BF*).

The most effective in this respect, perhaps because of the significant visual impact on the audiences, are the iconographic representations of dichotomically conceived spatial frames: rural versus urban and East versus West. In *J*, *T*, *GW*, the rural, idyllic, though somewhat primitive landscape of the Maramureş countryside, which nonetheless provides but little opportunities to its inhabitants, is contrasted with the urban scenery that bears the marks of globalising civilisation (blocks of flats, trains and railway tracks, busy traffic, hotels, public phone booths, eye-catching shop boards and windows) in cities like London, Dublin, Paris or Vienna, which Romanian migrants have but little access to (they are shown travelling under the train, living in small, poorly-furnished flats or even worse, in decaying warehouses); in *LT*, the natural landscape, almost idyllic in autumn and generous with the people who work hard and who are rewarded with rich crops, is set in opposition with the desolate look of the houses abandoned by the Saxons, of the old Saxon church and of the bad road that connects Arbegen with the neighbouring villages, on the one hand, and with the comfortable, well-lit and modernised living spaces provided by the Austrian town of Augsburg where the *Kenzels* migrate, on the other; in *S*, there is an utter disparity between the bumpy roads, crumbling houses, small flats in Romania, as well as the rough and rusty shantytown, the desolate image of the dump behind improvised dwellings, and camp-like confinement of the Romanian migrants to Paris, and the trains, crowded tube stations with glamorous advertisements, excellent highways and beautiful landscapes of the Western civilisation.

#### **4.1.1.2 Written press**

Generally speaking, the Romanian written press indicates low income and high unemployment rates as the top incentives to Romanian emigration, hence the most important “push factor” is the wish to achieve economic well-being, which has significant social and emotional consequences.

Labour migration is most often discussed in relation to Spain and Italy, which host the largest groups of Romanian migrants in Europe. Variation in the migrants’ preferences for one destination or the other is mainly shown as depending upon the number of jobs available and the salaries paid.

Another important factor is the development of the European economy which has lead to major changes on the European labour markets directly influencing the phenomenon of migration in all its aspects. Thus, as early as

2007, Romanian newspapers signalled (more or less significant) modifications in the Romanian migrant profile as well. Regarding the age and social status of Romanian labour migrants, a study implemented by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) and briefly presented in an article from *Cotidianul* entitled “Noii ‘căpșunari’: tineri cu școală pleacă în Marea Britanie” (“A New ‘Strawberry Picker’ Generation: Educated Young People Migrate to Great Britain” - 11 July 2007) states that, in the period March-April 2007, the Romanian (“strawberry picker”) migrant profile manifested 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 better said, joined by young graduates, with average income, who went to work in Great Britain. As the article mentions, this new category of labour migrants is represented by young people of 22-30 years, 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 more than the national media, having even their own business in Romania. The article also referred to the preferred destination countries mentioned in the study. The newly-made Romanian “strawberry pickers” added Great Britain as a third top destination country after Italy and Spain, instead of Germany. The study also ranked the Romanian “strawberry pickers” starting off regions in the following order: Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania. Companies and agencies specialized in recruiting workers are still successful in some of these regions of Romania (“Recrutări de ‘căpșunari’ la Târgu-Mureș” - “‘Strawberry Picker’ Recruitments in Târgu-Mureș”, *Adevărul*, 19 March 2009)

Various articles selected from the Romanian newspapers *Adevărul* and *Cotidianul* point out the fact that Romanian labour migration should not be seen as a mere means of individual financial gain. The foreign currency brought to Romania by a large category of Romanian labour migrants, referred to more or less fairly as “strawberry pickers”, has been a vital support for the national economy, remittances being a form of partial “recovery” of the possible losses caused by outgoing migration. Migrant remittances amounted to 7.16 billion euros in 2007 as compared to only 5.53 billion euros in 2006. For the period covered by this study of Romanian written press, the Romanian labour migrants’ financial contribution to Romania’s budget, as recorded in various articles, went up to:

	2007	7.16 billion euros
	2008	8.7 billion euros
Newspaper headlines draw the	2009	3.3 billion euros

attention upon the large amounts sent home by Romanian migrants in 2007 and 2008: “Românii, printre cei mai generoși căpșunari” (“The Romanians, the Most Generous Strawberry Pickers”), *Cotidianul*, 29 October 2007; “Două miliarde de euro în plus de la căpșunari” (“Extra 2 Billion Euros from the Strawberry Pickers”), *Cotidianul*, 2 January 2008; “Căpșunarii au trimis acasă 7 miliarde de euro în 2007” (“Strawberry Pickers Contributed 7 Billion Euros to Romania’s Budget in 2007”), *Cotidianul*, 14 February 2008. In spite of an obvious abrupt decrease in remittances revealed by official statistics in 2009 (“Românii din străinătate trimit tot mai puțini bani” - “Romanians Working Abroad Send Less and Less Money

Home”, *Adevărul*, 14 October 2009), the same newspapers generally continue to maintain an optimistic perspective on Romanian migrants’ financial contribution to the Romanian economy (“Căpșunarii au ajuns principalii investitori în economia României” - “Strawberry Pickers, Main Romania’s Investors”, *Cotidianul*, 14 July 2009).

In this light, the advantages of many Romanian migrant workers’ temporary stay home appear as numerous and have a significant impact not only on their private lives - enjoying the sweet home feeling, being reunited with their families, giving spiritual and material support to their children, improving their living and healthcare conditions - but also on the local/national economy, as some of them invest in companies and associations. Thus, as several articles from *Adevărul* show, the individual gains of the Romanians working abroad were invested in private businesses such as companies and construction sites (“Hunedoara: Căpșunarii cheltuie mai mult ca firmele” - “Hunedoara: Strawberry Pickers Spend More than the Construction Companies”, *Adevărul*, 17 August 2009) or used to purchase houses (“Vânzările din Obcini, revigorate de ‘căpșunari’” - “House Sales in Obcini, Revived by Strawberry Pickers”, *Adevărul*, 20 October 2009) which made them feel secure about their families’ future. Moreover, during their temporary stay at home, Romanian migrants invested much money in health services, their contribution rising to more than 85% of the local dentists’ profit. (“ ‘Căpșunarii’ dau bani grei pe dantură” - “ ‘Strawberry Pickers’ Pay Hard for Their Teeth Medical Care”, *Adevărul*, 21 February 2009).

In the case of the Romanian-Italian economic cooperation, the financial contribution of the Romanian migrants in both the sending and receiving countries is an important aspect extensively discussed in some articles from *Cotidianul* and *Adevărul*, but hardly, if ever, mentioned in the Italian press. For example, *Cotidianul* makes reference to the fact that the commercial exchanges between Romania and Italy amount to 10 billion euros for Italy (“Romania partener de 10 miliarde euro pentru Italia” - “Romania: a 10 billion euro partner for Italy”, *Cotidianul*, 10 December 2007). In fact, Italy has a negative perception of the Romanian migrant workers. The Romanian press explicitly refers to the fact that Romanian workforce is preferred in Italy because of their being hardworking people and because of the low salaries that Italian employers pay to them, most often outside the legal framework. (“ ‘Romeni di merda’ produc 11 miliarde de euro pe an în Italia” - “ ‘F\*\* Romanians’ produce 11 billion euros a year for Italy”, *Cotidianul*, 5 November 2007; “Românii din Italia trimit anual 777 milioane de euro” - “Romanian Migrants in Italy Send Home 777 Million Euros Every Year”, *Cotidianul*, 31 October 2007). This invasion is seen as a threat by the host population who consider that migrants steal their own jobs. Such a view becomes even more discriminating when Romanian migration is equalled to criminal acts and violence against the host population.

The presentation of such advantages as impressive remittances for the Romanian budget and the contribution of the Romanian migrants to the development of local economy by different types of investment are, however, counterbalanced in the same newspapers by the discussion of the disadvantages of labour migration for the home/sending society. One of them is the loss of workforce at the national level, which the government tried to eradicate by offering jobs to the Romanian migrants willing to return. However,

the offer seems to have appeared unattractive to the Romanian migrant workers who refused to come back home: the proposed salaries were less than an average of 1,300-1,500 euros, which they gained abroad. ("700 de căpșunari ar munci în România" - "700 Strawberry Pickers Could Work in Romania", *Cotidianul*, 24 February 2008) Even in the context of the more and more severe economic crisis in the European countries causing alarming unemployment rates, many Romanian migrants postponed the moment of their return home and preferred to live in their host countries off satisfactory unemployment assistance (approximately 850 euros a month):

"As they lost their jobs abroad, about 350 Romanian migrants returned this year in Satu Mare. Other Romanian migrants are expected to return in autumn. Their losing the jobs they had in the West because of the current economic crisis determined some of the "strawberry pickers" from this county to return home for good. According to unofficial records, about 350 Romanian migrants who worked abroad returned to Satu Mare this year. They could have been more numerous, but many Romanian migrants benefit from the unemployment assistance of about 850 euros in the receiving country and must stay there to avoid losing it too." ("Satu Mare: Criza întoarce căpșunarii acasă" - "Satu Mare: The Economic Crisis Makes Romanian Strawberry Pickers Come back Home", *Adevărul*, 8 May 2009)

Only when forced by the circumstances, i.e., by the loss of job and all kind of income, did some of the Romanian migrant workers return: "Cluj: Invazia căpșunarilor" ("Cluj: Strawberry Pickers' Invasion"), *Adevărul*, 17 July 2009.

In relation to the loss of workforce, an additional danger linked to economic migration repeatedly insisted upon in the two newspapers is child abandonment, with special reference to the difficulties faced by the "home alone generation" left behind by the migrant parents ("350.000 de copii au rămas singuri acasă după valul de români emigranți" - "350,000 Children Home Alone after Romanian Migrants' Exodus", *Cotidianul*, 16 April 2008, "Căpșunarii au abandonat 2.700 de copii" - "Strawberry Pickers Abandon 2,700 Children", *Cotidianul*, 26 April 2007, "Jucăriile și laptopurile alină dorul de părinți" - "Toys and Laptops to Comfort Children Longing for Their Parents", *Adevărul*, 2 May 2008, "Copii 'orfani' de muncă" - "Children 'Orphaned' by Labour Migration", *Adevărul*, 26 May 2008 - according to this last mentioned article, the number of children having one or both parents working abroad went up to 300,000 until 2008).

When it comes to Romanian migrants' return home, several aspects must be taken into consideration:

"On the whole, the issues related to the reintegration of the Romanians who come back to their home country vary according to the educational level, their qualification, family status, duration of their stay abroad etc., complex social and psychological-aid oriented programmes being necessary, so that re-emigration be not the sole solution to such people." (Lăzăroiu, 2002 in Nicolescu and Constantin, 2005: 61)

An analysis of the articles on this topic emphasises the means and ways through which returning Romanian migrants try to reintegrate and readapt to the economic and social conditions of their native country. The tendency is, yet, to stress out the disadvantages which Romanian migrants have to cope with upon their return home. Mention can be made to the labour migrants' facing unemployment and a higher cost of living, as well as to their feeling insecure about the future or needing time to reintegrate in the home society, hence their ultimate decision to migrate again ("A început exodul imigranților spre Peninsulă" - "Strawberry Pickers' Exodus towards Italy Has Started", *Adevărul*, 25 August 2009). Bureaucracy is another phenomenon that Romanian migrants have a hard time with on their home coming. ("Căpșunarii stau la cozi pentru a-și schimba buletinul" - "Strawberry Pickers Queue for Their Identity Cards", *Adevărul*, 19 August 2009) Last, but not least, they often have to face robbery acts committed by marginal social categories living in their home country ("Hunedoara: Se întorc căpșunarii, crește rata furturilor" - "Hunedoara: Strawberry Pickers Come Back, Theft Rate Goes up", *Adevărul*, 25 May 2009).

Although visible in different EU spaces, the issue of migration and crime and its relation to the sending and receiving societies was considered, due to its relevance, especially against the background of Romanian migration in Italy. This is due, on the one hand, to the fact that the crimes attributed to Romanian migrants living in Spain are approached in a more moderate manner, especially by the representatives of the host country and, on the other, to the fact that the more friendly attitude of the population living in Spain favoured lower crime rates in this EU country. (See the references to the policies of integration of the Romanian migrants as presented in section 4.1.2.2, pp. 37-8)

As regards the issue of migration and crime in Italy, the event which marked dramatically a climax of tension between the receiving society, Italy, and the Romanian migrants, is the murder of an Italian woman, Giovanna Reggiani, by a Romanian migrant of Roma origin, Nicolae Romulus Mailat, on October 31, 2007, in Rome. The context in which this crime happened can be inferred from the headlines of the articles published in *Adevărul* (most of them) and *Cotidianul* (significantly fewer) before October 31, 2007: "Revoltă în tabăra țiganilor din Milano" - "Riots in the Roma Camp in Milano", *Cotidianul*, 22 June 2007, "Bătăi între romi și poliția din Milano" - "Milano: Fights between Roma People and Police", *Adevărul*, 23 June 2007; "Roma ne trimite romii acasă" - "Roma Compels Roma People to Go Home", *Adevărul*, 26 June 2007; "Românii din Italia, amenințați cu expulzarea" - "Italy: Romanians Threatened with Expulsion", *Adevărul*, 18 July 2007; "Italianii pregătesc marea expulzare a romilor din Peninsulă" - "Italians Prepare the Great Expulsion of Roma Migrants from Italy", *Adevărul*, 27 September 2007; "Infractorii români au speriat Italia" - "Romanian Delinquents Frighten Italy", *Adevărul*, 5 October 2007; "Românii din Italia, amenințați cu atacuri și bombe" - "Romanian Migrants in Italy Threatened with Assaults and Bombs", *Adevărul*, 7 October 2007; "Romii români din Italia, 'bomba cu ceas' a Europei" - "Romanian Roma Migrants in Italy, the 'Time Bomb' of Europe", *Adevărul*, 9 October 2007. As it can be noticed, the Italian authorities were preparing the expulsion of Roma migrants from Italy and there was increasing tension between Italian natives and Romanian migrants.

The number of articles relating to the evolution of this situation increased immediately after Nicolae Mailat's murder of Giovanna Reggiani. It is interesting to notice that the description of individual, concrete happenings was replaced by a representation which formulated these happenings in terms of a more general and large-scale classification: "Mesaj din Italia: 'Înainte de aderarea României la UE, Roma era cel mai sigur oraș din lume'" - "Message from Italy: 'Before Romania's accession to the EU, Rome was the safest city in the world'", *Adevărul*, 31 October 2007; "Italia ne urăște" - "Italy Hates Us", *Cotidianul*, 2 November 2007; "Italia declară război infractorilor români" - "Italy Declares War to Romanian Delinquents", *Adevărul*, 1 November 2007; "Roma amenință România cu judecata" - "Rome threatens Romania with trial", *Adevărul*, 1 November 2007. Such overgeneralised formulations were most likely meant to shock readership, having a strong impact on the development of their general opinions, attitudes and ideologies.

This might be one of the reasons why the representation of 'otherness' in approaching Nicolae Mailat's crime and its consequences for the Romanian-Italian relations is highly explicit and often insisted on. The opposition between US and THEM is emphasised in numerous articles in *Adevărul* and *Cotidianul*, but the same separation is even more obvious in the Italian sources cited by these Romanian newspapers. From a home-country perspective, the polarization between US and THEM is more evident in articles published in periods of tension, determined by crimes and conflicts - "Infractorii din Italia: vina noastră dar și vina italienilor" - "Delinquents in Italy: OUR Fault but also Italians", *Adevărul*, 2 November 2007; "Copiii pe care Italia nu vrea să ni-i dea înapoi" - "Children Italy Won't Send US Back", *Cotidianul*, 5 June 2008; "Italia ne repatriază copiii după trei ani" - "Italy Sends OUR Children Back After 3 Years", *Cotidianul*, 9 June 2008 - whereas this opposition seems to be constantly revisited and brought to the fore by the press in the host country.

Although the general opinion made explicit by both Romanian and Italian newspapers is that many Romanians' status of legal/illegal migrants favours their criminal attitudes against the population of the host country, the migrants' criminal actions seem to be influenced, to a great extent, by the discriminating attitude of the people living in both the sending and receiving countries. In the sending country more violent reactions are traceable in relation to Roma migrants, in particular.

The approach adopted by the journalists (sometimes men or women, some other times joint authorship including men and women, either only Romanian, or Romanian and Italian) of the Romanian newspaper *Cotidianul* in presenting the case of Nicolae Mailat is made using different strategies, confronting their readers directly and indirectly, with both personal opinions of the people involved and of their own as mediating agents, and with official positions - quotations or full interviews - with regard to the events/people/institutions involved. Irrespective of the author and of the direct or indirect reference to the case of Nicolae Mailat, the articles selected from *Cotidianul* point out, quite often, the fact that the violent actions of the Roma man Nicolae Mailat, who raped and killed an Italian woman in November 2007, have resulted in a series of debates regarding the safety of the Italians in their own country, the necessity to exclude Romanian migrants (especially men) from Italy, as well

as in an unbalancing of the Romanian - Italian relations visible in the reactions and attitudes of different political representatives of both countries. (“Decretul italienilor are fisuri” - “Flaws in the Italian Ordinance”, *Cotidianul*, 4 November 2007; “Invitație la pogrom?” - “Invitation to pogrom?”, *Cotidianul*, 5 November 2007; “Românii - evrei ai Europei” - “Romanians - Europe’s Jews”, *Cotidianul*, 9 December 2007; “Cazul Mailat - de la crimă la criză” - “The Mailat Case - from Crime to Crisis”, *Cotidianul*, 21 February 2008; “Românii ocupă locul al treilea în topul celor mai antipatici străini din Italia” - “Romanians Ranked Third among the Most Despicable Immigrants in Italy”, *Cotidianul*, 6 September 2008; etc.) Nevertheless, in spite of the predominantly negative reactions of most Italian population and politicians, some of the Italian officials interviewed or quoted in *Cotidianul* clearly stated their disagreement to the social marginalization that Romanian and Roma migrants living in Rome and in other Italian cities have to face, and to the fact that the Italian government had not done enough to support Roma migrants by implementing specific social projects financed by European Institutions. (“Furia italienilor trebuie îndreptată împotriva politicianilor, nu a imigranților” - “Italians Should Rage Against the Politicians, not Against the Immigrants”, *Cotidianul*, 4 November 2007) As a matter of fact, such opinions are presented in the larger framework of a political ‘storm’ created by the Mailat case within the Italian political circles, between the Italian and the Romanian governments and, altogether, at the European level. (For more comments on this aspect, see the section on 4.1.2.2.)

Different from *Cotidianul*, the approach to the Mailat case in *Adevărul* is based on a synthetic representation of the case details, with an obvious interest in the consequences at the social level. Thus, the articles published immediately after the crime of Nicolae Mailat describe Italians’ reactions against Romanian migrants either in the form of discriminating migration-related policies and actions (“Italia declară război infractorilor români” - “Italy Declares War on Romanian Delinquents”, *Adevărul*, 1 November 2007, “Italienii pregătesc primele expulzări” - “Italians Preparing First Expulsions”, *Adevărul*, 3 November 2007, “Primii români expulzați din Italia au ajuns acasă” - “First Romanians Expelled from Italy Get Home”, *Adevărul*, 3 November 2007) or in the form of acts of violence directed at Romanian migrants, irrespective of their legal/illegal status or ethnic origin (“4 români atacați într-o parcare din Roma” - “4 Romanians Attacked in Parking Place in Rome”, *Adevărul*, 3 November 2007, “Români atacați de extremiști la Roma” - “Romanians Attacked by Extremists in Rome”, *Adevărul*, 4 November 2007, “Italieni arestați pentru incendierea casei unor romani” - “Italians Arrested for Setting Fire to Romanians’ House”, *Adevărul*, 16 November 2007, etc.). The number of articles devoted strictly to the Mailat case decreased over the days following the crime, further reference to it being made occasionally, only to draw attention upon the prosecution of the case; yet, the number of articles on the Romanian -Italian tensions remained relatively significant, as Romanian journalists kept the record of ‘sensationalist’ criminal acts on both sides (i.e., Romanian migrants and hosts), but equally tried to counterbalance images of violence (whether physical, in the form of attacks, or verbal, in political conflicts) with positive calls for tolerance and acceptance of national differences (e.g. “Intelectualii români fac apel la rațiune față de expulzarea emigranților” - “Romanian Intellectuals Appeal to Reason in Dealing with the Migrant Expulsion Issue”, *Adevărul*, 20 November

2007; “Un editorialist italian ia apărarea românilor din Italia” - “Italian Editor Defends Romanian Migrants in Italy”, *Adevărul*, 27 November 2007.)

As regards the case of Nicolae Mailat, specifically associated with Romanian migration and crime in Italy, the articles from *Corriere della sera* used as a starting point in the Romanian team’s research, present significantly different opinions related to migration and crime and their authors adopt various strategies in approaching the event under focus. They confront their readers, directly and indirectly, with both personal opinions (of the people involved and of their own as mediating agents) and with official positions regarding the event, the victim or the accused, and their relatives. Such aspects prove indeed relevant in analysing and discussing the ways in which the multifaceted nature of migration is reflected at the level of discourse. In considering Nicolae Mailat’s case, the fact could be noticed that male journalists writing for *Corriere della sera* seem to have a more violent attitude towards the Roma rapist and murderer. They consider Mailat a criminal who escaped from Romania and invaded their national space, destroying the serenity of Rome and, what is more important, of a well-organized and honourable Italian family. (e.g. “Il manovale della Transilvania fuggito dopo due condanne per furto: Nicolae Mailat deve ancora scontare tre anni nel suo Paese. Da ragazzino è stato in riformatorio. La madre: ha sbagliato” - “Unskilled Worker from Transylvania Fleeing after Twice Convicted for Theft: Nicolae Mailat has three more years to serve in his home country. As a boy, he was sent to a correction school. His mother states: ‘He made a mistake.’”, *Corriere della sera*, 1 November 2007; “Morta la donna aggredita, blitz al campo rom: La vittima aveva tentato di difendersi dal suo assassino. Si cerca un complice” - “Attacked Woman Dead, Roma Camp Blitzed: The victim had tried to defend herself from the killer. An accomplice is sought for.”, *Corriere della sera*, 2 November 2007). Details are provided about the living conditions of Mailat and of other Roma and Romanian people who migrated from Romania in search of a better life and of better working conditions. In spite of the obvious violent reactions coming from the Italian population, the authors of these articles chose, nonetheless, to mention that not all Italians agree with the social marginalization that Romanian and Roma migrants living in Rome and in other Italian cities have to face.

The fact should also be mentioned that, in spite of presenting certain negative aspects regarding Nicolae Mailat, the Italian journalists writing for *Corriere della sera* are politically correct, trying to balance the tragic nature of the event with glimpses of Mailat’s human side and with certain aspects from his past which may have favoured his actions, his evolution as an individual and his social position both in his home country and in Italy.

It is true that, in connecting the events presented with various acts of violence committed in Italy, Italian journalists writing in *Corriere della sera*, *La Repubblica*, *ANSA*, etc., whose articles are used as sources by the Romanian journalists, make reference mainly to Nicolae Mailat and hardly ever to people of other nationalities, who, in spite of being known for their criminal behaviour, are not regarded as potentially dangerous. In other words, this way of presenting the events induces the idea that most problems in Italy are often due to the migration of Romanians, and of Roma people (coming especially from Romania but also from other countries) and only occasionally to the



migration of people of different other origins (Albanians, Germans, etc.) . But being aware of the imperfect nature of contemporary societies and of the existence of socio-political limitations, some authors of the articles published in the Italian sources bring arguments for and against the migrants' status in both the sending and receiving countries. For example, in an attempt to balance the reactions of Italian citizens and politicians against Romanian migration in this EU state, certain authors refer back to the social, political and economic problems that Romanians and Roma people living in Romania had to cope with during Ceaușescu's regime, in particular, but also during the transition years following the 1989 Revolution ("Il codice perduto della civiltà" - "The Lost Code of Civilisation", *La Repubblica*, 2 November 2007). In addition, the fact is pointed out that, although some Romanians living in poverty in post-1989 Romania left their country hoping to find a solution to their problems in other European countries, many of them sadly discovered that they had chosen a country where their living conditions were even worse than in their native country. Moreover, the most problematic aspect that these people had to cope with was their obvious marginalisation by the receiving societies. This is also the case of many Romanians coming to Italy, who, in spite of striving for a better life, found themselves in the position of living in uncivilised and marginalised campsites placed on the outskirts of the "civilised" world. Difficult as it might be to accept, some very poor Italians are also inhabitants of these campsites and, in this position, they have to face the same marginalisation and, up to a point, discrimination, that migrant people do.

The surprising fact, the Italian journalists imply, is that Romanian migrants living in Italy seem to be discriminated not only by the population of the host country, but also by their co-nationals back home. In fact, it is this discrimination and the scarcity of opportunities available in the native country that force many Romanians to migrate to various EU countries (Italy and Spain in particular). Illustrative in this respect could be the article "Il suo villaggio ripudia l'assassino. Nicolau è una bestia, stia lontano" - "His village repudiates the killer. 'Nicolau is a beast. Keep him away from here.'" published in *La Repubblica*, 5 November 2007, in which the Romanians living in Nicolae Mailat's native village express their opinion regarding the act of violence committed by their co-national. From the words of the people interviewed, the Italian readership may easily grasp a discriminating attitude conditioned by ethnic, socio-economic and cultural aspects. Reference is made to Mailat's large family (specific to Roma population), to his previous 'crimes' punished by the Romanian law, as well as to the fact that one like him could be 'no good' for the local community.

Although rather isolated, certain articles written by Italian journalists stress the fact that whether or not of Roma origin, many Romanian migrants living in Italy are ordinary people who strive for their families ("Ghico e i fratelli delle baracche" - "Ghico and the Brothers of the Barracks", *La Repubblica*, 3 November 2007) and who are capable of proving their humane side and strong character in critical situations in which other people might fail to react appropriately. Nicolae Mailat's aunt, the famous Emilia, is a case in point. Immediately after the crime she is referred to as the 'heroine' who proved not only her courage, but also her moral integrity when turning in her nephew to the

Italian police (“Ha denunciato il killer, ora e sotto protezione” - “Denouncer of the killer. Now under protection”, *La Repubblica*, 2 November 2007).

#### **4.1.2. Institutions**

##### **4.1.2.1 Film**

Some of the Romanians wishing to emigrate do so legally, either by applying for jobs abroad (especially in the case of highly experienced professionals) or through employment programmes organised by the government/NGOs. Others (the majority unfortunately) choose to assume the status of illegal immigrants. Of these, a small number manage to obtain foreign citizenship through marriage or prolonged residency, the rest continuing to stay illegally in the receiving countries.

##### **4.1.2.1.1 Feature Films**

The films chosen for analysis present the latter types: though the film is not explicit with regard to the circumstances of her departure, Luiza marries into Spanish citizenship in *WM*; Elena is about to do the same at the end of *TB*; Sorina and Mihaela can only hope that this will be their case as they leave together with potential partners in *O*; Emil (in *E*), Jeni and Lenuța (in *IW*), Lilica and Mitu (in *FL*), and Maria, Victor, Ionuț (in *RM*) - all decide to break all laws and try their luck away from home. More details are offered with regard to Emil, who gets on a plane for Australia with a fake tourist passport (he has also provided false passports for his wife and son and pretends not to know them) and to Mitu (who dies a terrible death in an Austrian prison while trying to escape, and whose organs are subsequently stolen) - emphasising the flaws in the current legislation worldwide. The two sisters in *IW* are not only illegally taken out of the country, but trafficked and sold to be exploited as prostitutes in Kosovo, until saved by the American forces entering the area.

Furthermore, businesses flourish as a result of the immigration mania. Entrepreneurs ‘our’ side and ‘their’ side of the border promptly seize the opportunity and trade dreams at a profit. This is the case of both Marion, the French agent, and Gigi, the Romanian impresario in *AT*. The schoolmistress in *O* facilitates dubious adoptions of Romanian orphans under the institutional cover of international child-care foundations represented by a seemingly respectable Dutch citizen. Moreover, matrimonial agencies proliferate locally and across borders (in *TB* and *O*). In Emil’s case, he is duped by a Romanian petty mobster while exchanging money to go to Australia in *E*. Maricel sells tickets to freedom and enrolment in the Foreign Legion in *FL*. Lilica instructs villagers on how to pick strawberries in Spain by a grotesque pantomime involving fastfood debris in *FL*, while Giovanni makes a fortune that propels him to the mayor’s office by exporting native women in *IW*. The police are helpless, useless, easily bribed (in *E*, *IW* and *AT*) or made to join the conning (in *FL* and *O*).

In the films above, the host/destination countries are in need of cheap work force from Eastern Europe and: allow free passage (Spain, Italy);

encourage centuries old trans-migratory routes (France); open their frontiers for highly qualified individuals, preferably with solid family life and background (Australia); have strict regulations regarding illegal immigration or transit (Austria). All offer citizenship on marriage with a national.

Luiza (in *WM*) is now married in Spain and has Spanish citizenship, and so is Lilica (in *FL*), apparently; Jeni and Lenuța hope to join the Romanian exodus of strawberry-pickers to Spain only to find themselves stranded in Italy which similarly offers job opportunities for unskilled workers; French institutions (matrimonial, as in *TB*, or entertainment, as in *AT*) also prosper on and facilitate migration; Emil (in *E*) sets off for Australia in the hope of becoming an Australian one day; Mitu (in *FL*) ends up in Austria (caught and imprisoned by the local police), although his destination was France; Maria, Victor and Ionuț (in *RM*) are still struggling to make it in Italy; the ghetto they live in builds a powerful image of the migrant as other.

#### **4.1.2.1.2 Documentaries**

Interaction with the institutions is avoided, and thus they are more than criticised in *J*, *T*, *GW*. The scarcity of opportunities of migrating legally within the framework of bilateral agreements or of collective labour contracts negotiated by Romanian employment agencies causes those who do not have either the advanced skills required (like Florica Bud in *T*) or the time to wait until they could find a proper job abroad through a Romanian employment agency to assume the risks of illegal migration. Hence, people tend to appeal to representatives of the underworld or to 'informal networks' of migrant relatives and friends to travel and to find jobs abroad: both Ion and Maria Damian in *J* borrow large sums of money to buy the anyway unreliable services of guides to illegally take them abroad or to provide them with fake visas; so do Laurențiu Opreș, Lorinț and Florica Bud in *T*; Mihaela Marinca in *GW* travels on a tourist visa to Paris supported by her sister Mariana and her brother-in-law Ion; Stela and Gabi in *S* support each other; in *IT*, Anna hopes to get a job in Greece with a friend's help, but ends up trafficked, while Tatiana is enticed into migrating by her boyfriend who eventually sells her in Amsterdam to a trafficking network. Once they get there, many start the battle for work permits and citizenship, never actually conferred. A special situation is that of *IT*, where illegal labour emigration functions as a cover for human trafficking. In the case of *LT*, however, emigrating is done by the book, with the implication of the mayor's office, the police, the foreign embassy.

The home and especially the host police forces are recurrently mentioned and feared for imposing the law (systematically broken because no opportunities are offered, no rights guaranteed) (*J*, *T*, *GW*, *S*, *IT*). A good case in point in this respect is provided by *J*: on the one hand, when sent back to Romania, Ion Damian tells how he was misjudged by the German policemen who abusively generalised in calling him and his companion "criminals"; on the other hand, though no reference to the Irish police is made in the spoken text, visual symbolism subtly suggests in the film the illegal migrant's fear of police harassment and deportation as, among the chocolate boxes and Irish symbols on Petru Damian's table, there is the small clay figurine of a policeman, meant

to remind him all the time of his being an illegal migrant who has to keep a low profile to avoid being arrested and repatriated. 'Caught in a no-rights zone', Romanian migrants would rather endure victimization, sometimes by their own co-nationals, (e.g. the attack on the Parisian warehouse where Mihaela Marianca lives together with many other illegal migrants by a violent group of Moldovans who try to force them into paying them for 'protection', in *GM*) than go to the police, who, nonetheless, turn a blind eye to such manifestations of violence that migrants are subject to.

Only one documentary, *IT*, stands apart inviting the public at large to address the police, the prosecution, various other institutions and NGOs with a view to helping with combating trafficking and providing assistance to the victims.

*BF* makes no particular reference to present-day institutions, as its narrative flashbacks bring to light older patterns of authority: the extreme communism of the Siberian labour camps or the closely knitted system of the Nazi dictatorship.

#### **4.1.2.2 Written press**

More than films, written press foregrounds the involvement of various institutions in monitoring the migration phenomenon in Romania at the national and/or international level. 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 organise supportive actions for the labour migrants' families. In Romania, due mention should be made of private companies, the local offices of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and of the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Foundation of the Romanian National Council for Refugees, the Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants, UNIDEA, SOROS, the Association *Social Alternatives* (ASA), etc. The Romanian written press cooperates with all these institutions in conveying information concerning the migratory phenomenon in Romania to the public, and concentrates on the actions taken by these institutions, as well as on the attitudes they manifest towards Romanian migrants. In the case of Romanian legal labour migrants, 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. As for the Romanian migrants involved in various violent or criminal acts, the predominantly negative attitudes are sometimes balanced by supportive messages addressed to the Romanian diaspora (unjustly) suffering the consequences of some of its members' deeds, especially from the sending country, but occasionally from the host countries, too.

The concept of integration is understood as the process of inclusion of migrants in the core institutions, relations and statuses of the receiving society (see *Integration of Migrants: Contribution of Local and Regional Authorities*, European Foundation for

the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2006: <http://eurofound.test.reggiani.eu/pubdocs/2006/22/en/1/ef0622en.pdf>) In other words, 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, EU representative for Romania in 2008, who underlined the idea that migrant workers should learn the language and culture of the host country so as to increase intercultural interaction in the process of migration (“Căpșunarii ar putea învăța ‘a doua limbă maternă’” - “Romanian Strawberry Pickers Could Learn a ‘Second Mother Tongue’”, *Cotidianul*, 31 January 2008).

In fact, linguistic and cultural proximity are so important a gain as the economic profit for all 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.

At least up to 2007, Romania did not have a very well-defined labour migration policy, and, for all the efforts of the Romanian Office for Labour Migration, the rates of illegal/circular migration remained relatively high. The local authorities implemented actions to prevent the negative social effects of excessive migration in some regions with high migration rates. At the national level, bilateral agreements with host countries in managing migration networks were, in certain cases, implemented by the Romanian authorities, whereas in others were initiated by the foreign partners and jointly implemented. In 2007, with Romania becoming an EU member state, the National Employment Agency joined the EURES (European Employment Services) network aimed at facilitating the free movement of workers within the European economic area; hence, the significant improvement in the process of state-mediated legal migration for the Romanians who wanted to work abroad, irrespective of their qualifications (as the advertised jobs vary from unskilled to highly qualified work). That may also account for the fact that, from 2007 on, the articles in the Romanian newspapers regarding vacancies abroad and policies of employment initiated by the National Employment Agency and EURES gradually increased in number. To give but a few examples: “Șomer român, caut de lucru în Uniunea Europeană” - “Unemployed Romanian Seeking Job in EU”, *Adevărul*, 21 February 2007; “Asistente în UE cu 4.000 de euro” - “Nurses in EU for 4,000 euros”, *Cotidianul*, 22 July 2007; “Elveția oferă cele mai mari salarii pentru ‘căpșunari’” - “Switzerland: The Highest Wages for Romanian ‘Strawberry Pickers’”, *Cotidianul*, 4 November 2007; “Cehii plătesc al 14-lea salariu ca să recruteze programatori români” - “Czechs Pay Fourteenth Salary to Recruit Romanian Programmers”, *Cotidianul*, 13 January 2008; “Încă trei state UE primesc români calificați” - “Three More EU States Hire Qualified Romanian Workers”, *Cotidianul*, 29 January 2008; “Europa își prezintă oferta de primăvară-vară pentru românii cu școală” - “Europe Presents Its Spring-Summer Offer for Romanian Graduates”, *Cotidianul*, 19 March 2008; “Românii care vor să lucreze în sectorul agricol din Danemarca pot aplica online, până pe 17 martie” - “Romanians who Wish to Work in Agriculture in Denmark Can Apply Online

until March 17", *Cotidianul* and *Adevărul*, 28 January 2009; "Cetățenii UE cu studii superioare nu au restricții pe piața muncii din Germania" - "No Restrictions for EU University Graduates on German Labour Market", *Cotidianul*, 26 February 2009; "Burse pentru exportat șomeri români" - "Job Fairs to Export Unemployed Romanians", *Cotidianul*, 18 March 2009; "Se caută 50 de agricultori pentru Anglia" - "50 Vacant Jobs in Agriculture in the UK", *Adevărul*, 4 December 2009; "Locuri de muncă în Germania pentru studenții băimăreni" - "Jobs in Germany for Graduates from Baia Mare", *Adevărul*, 18 December 2009. The same collaboration between the National Employment Agency and EURES is shown to have provided better assistance with regard to Romanian migrant workers' duties and security rights ("Ajutoare între 500 și 1.200 de euro pentru șomerii căpșunari" - "Unemployment Benefits of 500 to 1,200 euros for Unemployed Strawberry Pickers", *Cotidianul*, 8 July 2008; "Românii care vor să se înregistreze ca medici în Anglia vor plăti 410 lire sterline de la 1 aprilie" - "Romanians Physicians who Wish to Register in the UK Will Pay £410 Starting from April 1", *Cotidianul*, 13 March 2009) as well as to have taken steps to prevent trafficking for forced labour ("Amenzi dure și ridicarea licenței pentru firmele care păcălesc emigranții" - "High Fines and Licenses Annulled for Companies Deceiving Migrants", *Cotidianul*, 13 May 2008).

The Romanian government has had a supportive attitude towards Romanian migrant workers/"strawberry pickers" coming back home, welcoming the transfer of European funds for their reintegration. Accordingly, the National Employment Agency launched in 2007 the MEDIT project of an investment of 10,000 RON joining the Italian project LAVORO addressing Romanian migrants working in Italy willing to go back home. Unfortunately, this joint attempt at encouraging return of labour force to Romania failed: the migrants rejected the offer "since the proposed salaries [were] less than 1,300-1,500 euros" and "life in Romania is the same as in Italy when prices are concerned" ("Elveția oferă cele mai mari salarii pentru 'căpșunari'" - "Switzerland: The Highest Wages for Romanian 'Strawberry Pickers'", *Cotidianul*, 4 November 2007; "Proiectul pentru aducerea acasă a 'căpșunarilor' ar putea avea efect contrar" - "The Project to Bring Strawberry Pickers back Home Could Have an Opposite Effect", *Adevărul*, 28 October 2009; "Un proiect de 10 milioane de lei: Statul român dă cu pliante în căpșunari" - "10 Million Lei Project: Romanian Government Throws Leaflets at Strawberry Pickers", *Cotidianul*, 28 October 2009).

Several other state or private institutions initiated different programmes aimed either at the migrants' reintegration at home or at supporting them in adapting to their host environment. For instance, the Romanian Ministry of Education facilitated the reintegration within the Romanian system of education of a great number of Romanian migrants' children who returned home in various regions of the country: "Galați: Copiii căpșunarilor revin la școlile de acasă" - "Galați: Strawberry Pickers' Children back to School at Home", *Adevărul*, 2 October 2009; "Slatina: Copiii căpșunarilor se întorc acasă" - "Slatina: Strawberry Pickers' Children Come back Home", *Adevărul*, 23 October 2009.

The branches of "Spiru Haret" Private University in Bucharest and Cluj opened centres of distance learning for Romanian migrants wishing to purchase a status leap, in such countries as Spain - Madrid with 2000 students, and Italy -

Rome, 820 students (“Spiru Haret seduce căpșunarii: examene pe e-mail și pe webcam” - “Spiru Haret Seduces Strawberry Pickers: Exams on Email and Webcam”, *Cotidianul*, 16 July 2009).

As the representative of a non-governmental institution, the Patriarch of the Romanian Church proclaimed the 16<sup>th</sup> of August *Romanian Migrant's Day* when prayers are said to help the families of those working far from their country (“Patriarhul Daniel către căpșunari: ‘Păstrați credința ortodoxă și identitatea românească’” - “Daniel, the Patriarch of the Romanian Church, to Strawberry Pickers: ‘Keep Your Orthodox Faith and Romanian Identity’”, *Cotidianul*, 13 August 2009).

Various non-governmental associations (e.g. UNIDEA) made important investments in order to counter one of the worst effects of massive labour emigration and to provide material support for home alone children left behind by the “strawberry pickers”. The Romanian written press saluted these initiatives: for instance, an article on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2008 presented the supportive actions sponsored by the Romanian Oil Company Petrom and undertaken by Romanian media representatives and men of culture in order to provide some of these children with necessary funds (“Copiii de căpșunari luptă pentru 150.000 de euro” - “Strawberry Pickers Children Fight for 150,000 Euros”, *Cotidianul*, 14 February 2008; a similarly supportive initiative was also mentioned in another, more recent article: “Program pentru copiii căpșunarilor” - “Support for Strawberry Pickers’ Home Alone Children”, *Cotidianul*, 22 April 2009).

Important as migrants’ integration may be, this process is achieved in significantly different ways and at different levels in the host countries. Spain has become conscious of the new immigration situation and of the need for a strategic integration plan, with overall objectives and concrete integration measures. Spain negotiated bilateral agreements in good time and has developed flexible policies to accommodate Romanian migrants on its territory. In doing that, Spanish institutions have shown a rational and coherent approach to the migration phenomenon preventing, or at least reducing, social and economic negative effects such as human trafficking, shadow economy, violence, ethnic conflicts, radical attitudes, effects upon the social security system etc. Numerous Romanian articles, especially from *Adevărul*, kept an almost regular record of the policies for the integration of Romanian migrants introduced by the Spanish government, stressing out the tolerance towards and cooperation of Spanish local and national administration with Romanian migrants: e.g. “Mai lesne la muncă în Spania” - “Easier to Migrate for Labour in Spain”, *Adevărul*, 27 January 2007; “Primul ghid destinat imigranților care doresc să își deschidă propria afacere” - “First Guidelines for Migrants who Want to Set up in Business”, *Adevărul*, 1 November 2007; “Autoritățile spaniole încearcă integrarea românilor” - “Spanish Authorities Endeavour to Integrate Romanian Migrants”, *Adevărul*, 15 November 2007; “Reîntregirea familiei în Spania, mai simplă” - “Simpler Procedures for Family Reunification in Spain”, *Adevărul*, 27 December 2007; “Camera de comerț din Spania ajută imigranții să-și facă firme” - “Spanish Chamber of Commerce Helps Immigrants to Create Their Own Companies”, *Adevărul*, 31 January 2008, etc.

To briefly digress on the attitudes and policies related to the first Romanian migrants setting a strong emigration trend to Spain, i.e., the Romanian strawberry pickers, due mention must be made of the fact that, as a special category of Romanian labour migrants, they were positively perceived since they ranked first on the list of the most hard working employees, willing to work extra hours for modest salaries. And this was not the case only in Spain. In addition, the British farmers 'craved' for Romanian and Bulgarian migrant workers: in an attempt at avoiding a disastrous situation for their farms, since there was nobody to pick their strawberries and raspberries, British farmers demanded the government in London to relax its immigration policies so that the Europe-famous Romanian and Bulgarian 'strawberry pickers' could work in their area, too. ("Criză de căpșunari în Marea Britanie" - "Shortage of Strawberry Pickers in the UK", *Cotidianul*, 5 July 2007). Britain offered 16,250 jobs in agriculture, as quoted by ANOFM ("Britanicii vor căpșunari români" - "The British 'Crave' for Romanian Strawberry Pickers", *Cotidianul*, 3 January 2008). Moreover, Romanian strawberry pickers were highly appreciated for their work by the Germans, as well. The latter offered them good living conditions and 800 euros for their work, as the German newspaper *Schaumburger Nachrichten* mentioned. It was the case of several workers from Sibiu and Mediaș who found their jobs through the National Employment Agency ("Nemții mulțumiți de căpșunarii sibieni" - "Germans Praise Romanian Strawberry Pickers from Sibiu", *Adevărul*, 31 August 2009).

The economic crisis has not changed the general positive perception of the Romanian strawberry pickers, but the situation has grown more difficult for the locals since local employers have come to prefer migrants because they are more experienced in agriculture, which has led to 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 ("Viitorul căpșunarilor, amenințat de șomerii spanioli" - "Strawberry Pickers' Future Threatened by Spanish Unemployed", *Cotidianul*, 17 March 2009; "Spaniolii vor să fie 'căpșunari'" - "The Spanish Want to be 'Strawberry Pickers'", *Adevărul*, 21 September 2009). An interesting aspect emphasised by some articles in the 2009 corpus is that even locals, such as the Spanish, became migrants themselves. Almost 13,500 were expected to leave for France. This situation seemed to be the direct result of the economic problems which had their implications over the Spanish labour market resulting in a high rate of unemployment, especially in the constructions sector. That is why many Spanish workers found themselves in the position of seeking jobs in France. As *Cotidianul* states, this situation reminds of the massive Spanish migration in 1972 when almost 92,000 Spaniards went to France to pick grapes and become "grape pickers" ("Spaniolii devin 'strugurari' din cauza crizei" - "The Spanish Become 'Grape Pickers' Because of the Economic Crisis", *Cotidianul*, 3 August 2009).

To finally resume the comments on the Spanish policies for the integration of the Romanian migrants, reference must be made to the fact that, despite certain (unavoidable) tensions occasioned by situations like the one mentioned above (i.e., the 'competition' for jobs in the context of the economic crisis) or by some Romanian migrants' involvement in criminal acts, the general attitude was one of positive, not only social and economic, but also cultural



integration (e.g. “Cultura românească promovată la Madrid” - “Romanian Culture Promoted in Madrid”, *Adevărul*, 17 December 2007), showing respect for the Romanian migrants’ cultural identity. For instance, certain Spanish institutions offered Romanian migrants the possibility to attend courses of Romanian language, culture and civilisation: “Elevii români din Spania vor învăța limba, cultura și civilizația română la școală” - “Spain: Romanian Pupils to Study Romanian Language, Culture and Civilisation in School”, *Adevărul*, 17 May 2007; “Școală pentru românii din Spania” - “Spain: Education for Romanians”, *Adevărul*, 12 October 2007. Equally beneficial to both the sense of identity of the Romanian diaspora and to the cultural diversity in the Spanish media was the issuing of free publications for Romanian migrants: “Românii din Spania au ziarele lor” - “Spain: Romanians Have Their Own Newspapers”, *Adevărul*, 11 July 2007.

Different from Spain, Italy seems to lack national consistent integration policies towards migrants. As Italy attracted illegal immigration more than other European countries due to the difficulty of controlling such extensive borders and, above all, because of the size of its informal economy, integration measures were taken rather sporadically. As a matter of fact, the intervention of the institutions responsible with solving the problems of Romanian migrants, in general, and Romanian Roma migrants, in particular, was not always visible either in the receiving or the sending country.

Considering the Romanian Roma migrants living in Italy, some Italian politicians cited in the analysed corpus stressed the fact that Italian state institutions did not use the EU funds made available for projects devoted to them. For example, the housing problem was seriously approached only in cases of emergency, when the living conditions of some migrants were found to be one of the causes leading to criminality. It seems that it was not before Italians became victims of violent acts committed by migrants that Italian state institutions (town halls) and political parties seriously considered the necessity of filling in certain “gaps”. This is one of the aspects often referred to in relation to Nicolae Mailat’s act of violence against Giovanna Reggiani. In an attempt at finding an answer to the question who was to blame for Giovanna Reggiani’s death, Italian sources claimed that, if the local state institutions had done something for the safety of the host population living close to the campsite of mostly Romanian migrants (e.g. better street lighting and closer surveillance of the area - “Sara illuminato tutto il viale della stazione” - “The Whole Station Street Will Be Lit”, *La Repubblica*, 12 January 2008), the tragedy of Giovanna Reggiani, and perhaps of other Italian people, could have been avoided.

However, the Italian authorities’ ‘indifference’ towards certain obvious problems in the Italian society was more persistently brought to light only after Nicolae Mailat’s act of violence. Initially, the blame was mainly put on the problems created by the Romanian migrants’ presence on the Italian territory and by the violent acts committed by some of them, but, in time, the inefficient administration of the socio-economic problems characterising the Italian society was also incriminated. For instance, it is interesting to notice that the Italian’s accusations, as mentioned in *Corriere della Sera*, were addressed not only to the large community of Romanian (whether of Roma ethnic origins or not) migrants living in Italy, but also to the Italian government, which seemed to

have failed to implement projects and programmes regarding migration in Italy after Romania's accession to the EU:

"Italy takes steps, but is harshly criticised by the European Union because 'it's been months since Italy was required to implement the directive of January 2006 which extends the right of free movement to all EU citizens, but allows each member state the possibility to expel EU citizens if any problems related to public health, security and order should arise.' Therefore, the ordinance is considered 'efficient, but belated.' The debate is open." (" 'Pronto il piano per migliaia di espulsioni': Manganelli: controlli in tutta Italia. Critiche UE: decreto tardivo" - " 'The plan for thousands of expulsions is ready': Manganelli: raids in the whole Italy. Critique from UE: belated ordinance", *Corriere della sera*, 2 November 2007)

In this context, many political reactions in the days immediately following the Mailat case were mainly aimed to provide a quick solution to the violent migrants' problem and thus answer (or rather further fuel?) the crisis. *Adevărul* journalists, in particular, followed very thoroughly the political and legal debate that the Mailat case triggered, not only at the Italian, but also at the European level. The political decision of forcefully implementing an Italian government ordinance, which, while seemingly observing the stipulations of an EU Directive, risked to degenerate into abusive expulsions in the name of national security was differently reacted to in the Italian political circles, and *Adevărul*, citing Italian sources, reflected them in a long series of articles. Thus, the largest number of articles devoted to the crisis triggered by the Mailat case in this newspaper drew the attention upon the fact that many Italian politicians were hardly willing to do anything to support the Romanian migrant community, or to take actions to constructively solve the various problems that Romanian migrants faced in their receiving country: "Roma amenință România cu judecata" - "Rome Threatens Romania with Lawsuit", *Adevărul*, 2 November 2007; "Prefectul de Milano a semnat primele decizii de expulzare a românilor" - "The Prefect of Milan Signs the First Orders for Romanian Migrants' Expulsion", *Adevărul*, 2 November 2007; "Italienii pregătesc primele expulzări" - "Italians Prepare the First Expulsions", *Adevărul*, 3 November 2007; "Vicepreședintele Senatului italian cere închiderea frontierelor" - "The Vice-President of the Italian Senate Requires that State Borders Be Closed", *Adevărul*, 4 November 2007; "Guvernul italian cere prefecturilor să controleze regulat imigranții în vederea expulzării" - "The Italian Government Asks Prefects' Offices to Regularly Monitor Migrants for Expulsion", *Adevărul*, 5 November 2007. As if anticipating the international reactions to such political decisions in Italy, an article published in *Adevărul* on November 2, 2007 combined a 'nostra culpa' argument with virulent critique of the Italian administration:

"Regarding the camps inhabited by thousands of Roma Romanian migrants, why haven't they appeared in Germany, the UK or Austria, for example? It is obvious that these camps appeared and extended partly because of the negligence and indulgence of the Italian authorities too. The cases of illegal Romanian migrants in Italy are so numerous also because this country has not yet developed any special programmes to absorb labour force from Romania, as it actually happened in the case of migration for seasonal work in the UK or in Spain, for instance."

(“Infractorii români din Italia: vina noastră, dar și vina italienilor!” – “Romanian Delinquents in Italy: Our Fault, but also the Italians’!”, *Adevărul*, 2 November 2007)

A similar argument was later taken up in an article devoted to the presentation of José Manuel Barroso’s opinion (cited from *La Repubblica*) concerning the way the Italian authorities had managed the issue of the Roma migrants’ integration, contrasted with the more efficient action taken by countries like Bulgaria, Spain or Poland that participated in European funding programmes meant to facilitate Roma minority integration. (“Italia nu s-a implicat în problema rromilor” – “Italy did not get involved in managing the Roma migrants’ issue”, *Adevărul*, 12 November 2007)

Moreover, both Romanian and Italian newspapers pointed at the ‘initiatives’ of certain Italian politicians which seemed to raise many more tensions among the migrants and the host population. For example, the visit of an Italian politician to the prison where Nicolae Mailat was taken immediately after the death of Giovanna Reggiani with the explicit purpose “to see what kind of a person could have committed such a violent act”, and his including Nicolae Mailat in a sort of “sub-race”, incapable to adapt to the Italian civilised world, favoured a negative attitude on the part of the host population and encouraged further discriminatory acts against the Romanian migrant population. This explains, up to a point, the later banning of Romanian migrants from many campsites abusively demolished by Italian authorities (and it was only then that representatives of the town hall of Rome analysed the possibility of offering shelter to Romanian women and children who thus became homeless: “E lungo le sponde del Tevere sgomberi e fermi nelle favelas” – “Evictions and Arrests in the Favelas along the Bank of the Tiber”, *La Repubblica*, 3 November 2007) and the ‘innocent’ acts of aggression that Romanian children living in Italy with their families had to endure from their Italian fellows (“Copii români insultați de colegii lor italieni” – “Romanian Children Insulted by Their Italian Classmates”, *Adevărul*, 12 November 2007, “I nostri bimbi romeni insultati a scuola” – “Our Romanian Children Insulted at School”, *La Repubblica*, 12 November 2007).

On the other hand, even though Italian institutions and politicians were accused of hardly being able to cope with migration-related issues, Romanian institutions did not escape criticism either. In this respect, Italian articles accused Romanian authorities of doing but little to reduce the causes of emigration towards EU countries, in general, and towards Italy, in particular. Some even signalled the existence of cases in which Romanian citizens went through the customs without always having legal documents (“Così, con il furgone porto in Italia i criminali” – “Thus, They Bring Criminals in Italy with a Van”, *La Repubblica*, 4 November 2007). In their turn, the Romanian articles, especially those from *Cotidianul*, stressed mostly the failures of Romanian foreign policy and diplomacy in handling the negotiations with the Italian government in full social and political crisis: “Cioroianu vrea să le dea italienilor în cap cu Cioran” – “Cioroianu Wants to Knock Italians Out with Cioran”, *Cotidianul*, 4 November 2007; “Uraganul românesc Mailat și guvernul european Tăriceanu” – “The Romanian Mailat Hurricane and Tăriceanu’s European Government”, *Cotidianul*, 5 November 2007; “Editorial: Cioroianu - șef de campanie al lui Veltroni” – “Editorial: Cioroianu, Veltroni’s Campaign Chief”,

*Cotidianul*, 5 November 2007; "Italienii ne vânează, noi ripostăm cu Cioran și Eliade" - "Italians Hunt Us Down, We Reply with Cioran and Eliade", *Cotidianul*, 5 November 2007; "Editorial: Cioroianu e român, deci e un pic țiganofob" - "Editorial: Cioroianu is Romanian, so a bit Roma-phobic", *Cotidianul*, 7 November 2007; "Massimo d'Alema: Cioroianu nu a cerut colaborarea Romei" - "Massimo d'Alema: Cioroianu did not ask Rome to collaborate", *Cotidianul*, 12 November 2007; "Diplomația mucles" - "Romanian Diplomacy Keeps Mum", *Cotidianul*, 13 November 2007. (*Adevărul* mostly refrained from critical comments on the actions of Romanian authorities, referring in just one article to the fact that bureaucratic procedures at the Romanian Consulate in Rome had prevented Mailat from receiving the official approval to come back home only four weeks before he committed the crime against Giovanna Reggiani: "Mailat a vrut să se întoarcă în țară acum o lună" - "Mailat Wanted to Return Home a Month Ago", *Adevărul*, 6 November 2007).

Eventually, the political crisis which neither the Italian nor the Romanian authorities managed to successfully solve was brought to the attention of the European institutions. The latter's intervention ("Decretul italian de expulzare va fi analizat astăzi de Parlamentul European" - "The Expulsion Decision to Be Analysed Today by the European Parliament", *Adevărul*, 12 November 2007) contributed to effectively keeping the situation under control, preventing Italy from legally expelling Romanian migrants and encouraging joint - Italian-Romanian - involvement in programmes for Roma minority integration: "La UE avverte: no a espulsioni di massa" - "EU Warns: No to Mass Expulsions", *La Repubblica*, 6 November 2007; "Frattini: UE este dispusă să finanțeze o strategie italo-română pentru romi" - "Frattini: EU is willing to financially support an Italian-Romanian strategy for the Roma people", *Adevărul*, 9 November 2007; "Parlamentul European ia atitudine față de expulzarea imigranților" - "European Parliament Against Immigrants' Expulsion", *Adevărul*, 15 November 2007.

Such a decision seemed to be in line with the statements of certain Italian politicians who, before, during and after the days/months closely following the Mailat case, showed support for the Romanian migrants and tried to counter, at least in their discourse, all tendencies to abusive generalisation and negative stereotyping: "Giancarlo Germani în favoarea românilor" - "Giancarlo Germani in Favour of Romanians", *Adevărul*, 2 October 2007; "Franco Frattini: Ecuatia români egal criminali trebuie respinsă" - "Franco Frattini: Equating Romanians with Criminals to Be Rejected", *Adevărul*, 2 November 2007; "Furia italienilor trebuie îndreptată împotriva politicianilor, nu a imigranților" - "Italians Should Rage Against Politicians, not Immigrants", *Cotidianul*, 4 November 2007; "Napolitano: 'Românii nu sunt răul'" - "Napolitano: 'Romanians are not the evil'", *Adevărul*, 19 November 2007; "Președintele provinciei Milano: 'Trebuie să angajăm imigranți români în poliția locală'" - "President of the Milan County: 'We have to hire Romanian migrants in the local police'", *Adevărul*, 7 March 2008.

As for the Italian judicial system, its actions were referred to in relation to, on the one hand, the above mentioned Italian government ordinance regarding the expulsion of Romanian migrants, and on the other hand, the judicial procedures implied in Nicolae Mailat's trial. Therefore, in the former

case, reference was made to the members of the Italian Criminal Bar Association who criticised the provisions of the envisaged expulsion ordinance, pointing out that it enclosed provisions abusively infringing upon human rights and European legislation (“Decretul italienilor are fisuri” - “Flaws in the Italian Ordinance”, *Cotidianul*, 4 November 2007). In the latter case, in certain articles, especially in those issued in 2008 and 2009, readers can grasp a general attitude of support towards Nicolae Mailat on the part of certain Italian citizens and of disagreement with the Italian judicial system, which is considered to have accused Mailat of rape and murder in the absence of relevant evidence: “Romulus Mailat va fi judecat și pentru violență sexuală. Mari controverse în cazul „Mailat”” - “Romulus Mailat will Be Tried for Sexual Violence. Great Controversies in the “Mailat” Case”, *Adevărul*, 21 February 2008; “Dosarul Mailat. Tot mai șubred” - “The Mailat Case: More and More Debatable”, *Adevărul*, 11 March 2008; “Ancheta în cazul Mailat a fost superficială și va fi reluată” - “Perfunctory Inquiry in the Mailat Case. Investigation to Be Resumed”, *Adevărul*, 9 October 2009; “EveryOne: ‘Justiția italiană se întoarce în Evul Mediu’” - “EveryOne: ‘The Italian justice system regresses to the Middle Ages’”, *Adevărul*, 13 October 2009.

Nonetheless, apart from the above mentioned tensions that marked Italian - Romanian relations at the the social and political levels, especially after the crisis-engendering Mailat case, efforts have been made on both sides to promote policies of cultural integration of the Romanian migrants. For instance, the Romanian Research Institute for Culture and Humanities in Venice and Villa Amoretti Library are two of the Italian cultural institutions which supported the cultural events organised for the Romanian diaspora in Italy: literary meetings, book presentations, theatrical performances (“Torino: Literatura română a diasporei” - “Torino: Literature of the Romanian Diaspora”, *Adevărul*, 1 May 2008). Other Italian institutions have also also got involved in cultural activities: “Primaria Romei a premiat un scriitor roman” - “The Town Hall of Rome Awarded a Romanian Writer”, *Adevărul*, 30 November 2007; “Cărți românești în bibliotecile din Roma” - “Romanian Books in Libraries in Rome”, *Adevărul*, 24 December 2007. Last but not least, the Italian Catholic Church welcomed the first Romanian diocese in Italy established in Lucca under the patronage of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The article “Prima dioceză românească din Italia” - “The First Romanian Diocese in Italy” cites in this respect the statement of the Italian Catholic Archbishop Italo Castellani: “I’m sure that this token of brotherhood will contribute to the social integration of the large Romanian community in Italy.” (*Adevărul*, 5 May 2008)

### **4.1.3. Culture**

#### **4.1.3.1 Film**

Cultural texts (films included) are embedded in a social matrix, have consequences in the world, playing an important role in building imaginative geographies. The kind of kaleidoscopic cartography that film contributes to leaves invisible but permanent traces which, in turn, determine the way we perceive others and are perceived as others.

Through the visual representations they transmit and mediate, films become texts able to highlight the dynamics of cross-cultural image-making unravelling at the intersection between linguistic (aesthetic/rhetorical) and historical (ideological/socio-cultural) aspects of discourse. Visual images carry 'mental' schemata that underpin the interplay between perception of the other and self-perception, constructing or deconstructing the 'maps' of meaning through which a particular group of people makes sense of everyday practices and experience. From the body of filmic texts chosen for analysis there becomes evident that the conceptualisation of migration and the migrant's experience constitute themselves into a significant imagined space that tries to figure or reconfigure an actual cultural terrain where the migrant transgresses embedded hierarchies established between self and other, native and foreign, home and deterritorialisation, centre and periphery, West and East.

#### **4.1.3.1.1 Feature Films**

Placed in the perspectival context of the representing text, a major distinction should be drawn between the form and function of the images mediated by the Romanian films and those favoured by the foreign ones, as this provides different articulations for the above-mentioned binaries.

Thus the initial corpus of films lends itself to subdivisions that include: five Romanian productions (*I, O, WM, E, FL*), two foreign ones (*TB, RM*) and an in-between category exemplified by *AT*, which is a joint Romanian-French production.

The films in the first sub-category foreground migration as an in-group experience, focusing more on the interplay between notions of home and the mirage of the West in order to probe the migrant's 'stay-or-leave' dilemma. In all of them 'home' emerges as an un-idealised landscape of contrasts between traditional certainties (community ties and the knowledge of place) and the unforeseeable pressures of modern-day existence. This applies both to the cityscapes of *O, WM, E* in which the transition from a collectivist to an individualist society is visualised through an abrupt juxtaposition of shots of communist-style squalid tenements and fancy urban developments (ironically, the name of the city store in *O* is "More and More: A Life Philosophy"), as well as to the rural ones in *IW* and *FL* in which the peasant culture has become a mere commodity, being commercialised like folklore (the "călușarii" dance in *IW*) and the traditional communal activities have been replaced by training in Spanish or strawberry-picking (in *FL*). Characteristically the atmosphere is permeated by desperation, and the films' protagonists find themselves displaced at home and morally-frustrated in a society in which traditional concepts of normality and deviance seem to have become confused. It is significant that it is the "deviant" ones (the bullying, the deceitful, the corrupted, the delinquent) that know how to make their way through this uneasy landscape, while the "normal" ones are either forced to leave, led astray or left behind, chained to a home that has lost its substance. In all the films the metaphor of death is employed to refer to the loss of traditional meanings of home. In *O* the protagonists' paths intersect in a cemetery and it is the news of a death that precipitates the denouement of the stories. In *IW* the death of the father marks the end of the village life as it was

known to the sisters. In *WM* the death of the daughter and the disappearance of her child disintegrate the meaning of home. In *E*, the notion of home dies with the murder of Streche. In *FL* Mitu's death abroad induces Aurel's at home.

Of the two foreign films included in the corpus, only *TB* localises Romania as "home" in its vacillating setting. Nevertheless, here it is a Western perceiving eye through which the realities of present-day Bucharest are captured by the camera. From Aymé's descent from the plane, the city is assembled in photographic snapshots that fit into his tourist's album: the embankment of the Dâmbovița river, Ceaușescu's palace, the urban monster that, from a futile communist undertaking has been turned into a trademark of the city, a wooden bench surrounded by carefully trimmed trees, a fancy restaurant which serves not only traditional Romanian food, but also traditional dances in which today's youngsters [sic] readily join. Even the two scenes that do not conform to this sanitised view of a "Romanian" home (the hotel lobby in which the girls parade in front of the foreigner who offers them the dream of a life abroad and the melodramatic one in which Elena hardly finds her way to the curtained bed of her and her young daughter through the squalid and overcrowded one-room apartment that hosts the entire family) are in accordance to Western stereotypes regarding the readiness of Romanian women to sell their looks in return for a passport to happiness and the poverty characteristic of East-Europeans.

*AT*, as joint Romanian-French production, correspondingly draws on both sets of representations, as 'home' glimpsed through the bus windows fluidises the scenery otherwise made up of disparate oppositional pairs (the picturesque versus the derelict, the urban versus the suburban, the urban versus the rural, the new versus the old) suggesting the social and economic cleavages in the local culture and inviting at the reconsideration of Romania's margins and Romania as margin.

The West as constructed by the migrant's imagination is justified by the power of the cultural myth. As sets of signs which imply extremely familiar and influential structures of thinking, or naturalised codes of social meanings and values, or sets of beliefs and attitudes that the viewer is invited to accept as true and natural, myths reflect normality. All the feature films start from this premise, but gradually revisit the myth of the rich, almighty West, a land of all possibilities. The pursuit of a distant idealised West looms large over the characters' decisions to emigrate (in *AT*, *O*, *I*, *TB*, *E* and *FL*). However, while *TB* sustains the myth in its fairy-tale resolution and *WM* adheres to it through suggestions of an accomplished life abroad, the open endings of *AT*, *O* and *E*, though not overtly reversing it, cast doubt on its truth-value. *IW* and *FL* tear it apart by the tragic outcome of the migrant's dream. By focusing on the actual migrant experience in the destination culture, *RN* deconstructs and reconstructs the myth from the point of view of the West itself.

The construction of the subject is not only highly dependable on media (filmic) representations, but it is usually carried out in terms of difference, in a permanent negotiation between material conditions, ideological discourses and social axes of stratification based on class, race, gender, age, locale, sexual orientation, national origin. A migrant's identity is built at the intersection of

these coordinates. Nevertheless, public perception seems to resume it in order to fit preconceived frames which often negate each other. To the traditional types used to subsume a migrant's identity (the adventurer vs. the exile - in the home culture; the adapter versus the alien - in the destination culture) other types have been identified of late: the prodigal son/daughter (in the home culture); the illegal worker, the criminal and the woman trafficked for sexual exploitation (in the destination culture).

The Romanian migrant's identity which results from the films chosen is constructed in a more complex way that both abides by the general conceptions and subtly dismantles them by trespassing their typological and cultural borders: the feminine character as adventurer and victim of trafficking in *AT*; Elena, as exile and adapter at the same time in *TB*; Mihaela and Sorina in *O* and Emil in *E* as adventurer-exiles; the illegal worker-adventurer and trafficked sisters in *IW*; Luiza as the prodigal exile in *WM*; Mitu as adventurer-victim and Lilica as prodigal-criminal in *FL*; Ionuț and Maria, the criminal illegal workers and Victor as the illegal-worker exile in *RN*. In addition, Romanians are presented as: having succeeded abroad and either forgetting about family at home (Nicu in *O*), returning too late (Luiza - in *WM*) or only to exploit the unknowing, unsuspecting native communities (Lilica - in *FL*); gullible, honest turned dishonest to attain the goal of emigrating (Emil - in *E* or Mitu, Aurel, Stelică - in *FL*); crooks, thieves, lowlifes (Ionuț - in *RN*) or cheap work force (Jeni and Lenuța in *IW*; Maria, Victor - in *RN*).

#### **4.1.3.1.2 Documentaries**

Bringing cultural heterogeneity into a single paradigm presupposes power structures which enforce a centrist perspective on the narration and reception of individual cultures - one that may be observed in the mediation carried out by filmic texts. Multiculturalism exposes all this through focusing on the issue of Eurocentrism, whose main premise is that the entire world gravitates around Europe (generative of a unique source of meaning), which involves a complex, contradictory and historically unstable discourse, and relates oppressively to both its external and internal others. Furthermore, polycentric multiculturalism aims at restructuring intercommunal relations within and beyond the nation-state in keeping with the inner dynamics and outspoken ideals of diverse communities. Power, energy and struggle are brought to the fore, in an attempt at revealing the untruth of the consideration of cultural identity as a consolidated set of practices, meanings and experiences, and at approaching it as multiple, historically determined and constantly in the making.

The analysis of images and stereotypes (dominant in film), together with their transgression, consequently needs to be achieved through the lens of polycentric multiculturalism so as to avoid essentialist, reductionist interpretations that reproduce the very racism they were designed to counter. In other words, the decoding of stereotypes has to have in view their principal roles and functions: indicating patterns of prejudice in apparently random choices and phenomena; inflicting psychic devastation or stirring intercultural conflict through their internalisation as defining traits or the negative impact of



their dissemination; underlining the fact that they result from social control rather than from errors of perception.

The documentaries forming the corpus of the discussion illustrate the mechanisms of centrist positions through zooming in on symptomatic cases of migration or would-be migration, of written and misread otherness.

*The Last Peasants* trilogy (*J*, *T*, *GW*) looks into representations of the Romanian peasant and the idyllic countryside in Maramureş – anachronous and opposed to the bustling, moneyed urban (Eastern/Western) life. Visually defined not only by the aforementioned settings, but also by the traditional costumes and customs that this series of ethnographic documentaries reverently invites an anthropological gaze upon (a Nativity performance for Christmas in *T*, the funeral of Ion Damian's father in *J*, the Easter religious service, wooing and wedding customs in *GW*), as well as by the folk music specific to the Maramureş area (varying in tone, from gay and vivid dance music, to rather melancholic clarinet alternating with tense and alert dulcimer-dominated tunes, or, ultimately to sad, lamenting songs), the Romanian peasants' identity is revealed as gradually 'contaminated' by colonising/globalising urban influences; hence, the hybridity of many young peasants' costumes (dressed in more casual clothes and/or leather jackets, but still wearing the traditional 'clop' for men/hair-covering 'scarf' for women), or the shocking incongruity of the juxtaposition of folk dance movements with rap music in the Budeşti pub (in *GW*). Against this background, Angus Macqueen's films foreground one of the destructive forces within this national other: the attraction of the West beyond the country's frontiers (summing up the distrust in the home country's possibility to provide for its own).

*BF* is also set in the beautiful Transylvanian countryside, where Saxons and Landlers settled centuries ago, allowing for the encounter of two cultures in which the margin had become the centre and is now facing extinction. The testimonies of the survivors – Johann Schuff and Maria Huber – point in divergent directions: one is that of violent denial and resistance to assimilation by the Romanian majority, the other – of belated, though good-humoured, acceptance. Both interviewees define their identity in relation to their German cultural roots which they remain strongly attached to (though they condemn the exodus of their Saxon and Landler co-nationals to Germany in the 1990s that left entire villages deserted) and in terms of their cultural differences from the Romanian and Roma others that they have to share their space with. (Johann Schuff, in particular, is a grotesquely strange mixture of atheism, Nazi ideology, misogyny and misanthropy: he harbours a definitely segregating attitude towards his Romanian and Roma neighbours, but not without getting entangled in contradictions: on the one hand, he lets the children of his Roma neighbours enter the house, call him uncle Hans, and he gives them food or repairs their bicycles; on the other hand, he describes them as an inferior race and handicapped. They will inherit his farmstead, but only if they bury him according to his own wishes, which is not that easy, especially since the burial he wishes for is unlawful.)

*LT* is similar to *BF* in that it focuses on the few remaining Saxon ethnics in Romania but, unlike the latter, shows late life dynamism and the paradoxical,

reluctantly accepted idea of returning home by leaving home. The film thus discusses the juxtaposition of perceptions of self and other, and the cultural contamination which has left whole communities trapped in between. As in the case of *BF*, the span of historical changes referred to is significantly larger so as to encompass major events which affected Romanian - Saxon relations (with a stress on World War II and the early years of the rise in power of the communist regime) and, in the long run, determined (more or less) various attitudes towards migration. For many of the older generation (Maria and Misch Wolf, Maria and Hans Kenzel, Jirk Schneider) who survived the war and endured persecution on account of their German otherness (deported to Ukraine to redeem by working their 'German guilt' and/or having their lands and fortunes confiscated by the communists after 1945), migration from Romania after 1989 was, though regretful, totally justified as the Romanian policy of restitution of property confiscated by the Communists did not help them recover their lands. Sinking in bitter resignation and refusal to mingle with the Romanian out-group, some of them like Maria and Hans Kenzel or their friend Jutzi Stuehler have come to see migration as a 'solution' to multiple problems: economic hardships that they have a hard time coping with in their old age, family reunification, and a strong sense of cultural identity that determines them to set out, leaving behind the place they called home their entire life, just because there is almost no Saxon left to visit and to socialize with in Arbegen. At the opposite pole, the film reveals as only marginal the attitudes of Saxons for whom identity is defined in terms of belonging to a community whose spiritual unity, built over the centuries, must be maintained in spite of all changes at the social and political level (Hans Hatt).

*S* differs from the previous documentaries in that it is set abroad and that it presents a cross-cultural (Romanian-French) and subcultural (Romanian - Roma) odyssey: from the in-group to the out-group, the national margin, the inter-national fringe and back (but always an outsider). Otherness is revisited here in so many ways that it eventually stops signifying, though not for the film's protagonists (Stela and Marcel Margean, and Stela's sister Gabi), whose distance from "home" keeps lengthening, even on their return.

*IT* tackles taboo in the face, while at the same time presenting a global phenomenon stemming from the attraction of the west and the desire to migrate at all costs - one with poignant social and political connotations. The international (American, Romanian, Moldovan, Dutch, Czech and Serbian) effort and collaboration advertised for is purposefully intersectional and indiscriminative.

#### **4.1.3.2 Written Press**

The socio-cultural dimension of the current migration phenomenon in Romania involves "the elaboration and adoption of laws, the creation of institutions, the development of corresponding strategies and policies [...], but their success cannot be separated from the manner in which the involved actors-governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, mass-media, communities, individuals - respond to the so-called 'behavioural challenges',

related to participation, communication, mentalities and attitudes” (Constantin and Nicolescu, 2005).

Looked upon from a cultural perspective, the articles included in the written press corpus hint at the ‘superiority’ of the host/receiving community as compared with the ‘inferiority’ of the home/sending community. This opposition is visible in the approach to different aspects of life (social, economic, political, etc.) and, although countered by certain more friendly comments, it remains constant in many of the articles of the corpus.

Romanian migrants’ transgression from their home country to host countries such as Spain and Italy is a process most often involving problems of cultural adaptation and attitudinal change. Thus, migrants tend to create their own spaces where they can feel at home. TV programmes, online magazines and blogs ([www.capsunar.ro](http://www.capsunar.ro), [www.locknet.ro](http://www.locknet.ro), [www.adevarul.it](http://www.adevarul.it), [www.adevarul.es](http://www.adevarul.es)) that Romanian migrants have designed in order to express themselves openly, on the one hand, and the Romanian books donated by Romanians from home (“Pachet cu fotbal de acasă pentru ‘căpșunari’” – “TV Programme Package with Football Matches from Home for Strawberry Pickers”, *Cotidianul*, 16 July 2007; “Spania: România văzută de pe blogurile conaționalilor” – “Spain: Romania as Seen on the Romanian Migrants’ Blogs”, *Adevărul*, 6 September 2009; “2.500 de cărți pentru imigranți” – “2,500 Books for Immigrants”, *Adevărul*, 23 September 2009; etc.) on the other, are used to alleviate homesickness.

As many of the articles analysed have already revealed, the representations of emigration for labour from Romania resulted, among other things, in the emergence of a new stereotype in the Romanian press. The ‘strawberry picker’ national stereotype has got its roots in denominating the first labour migrants heading for Spain to work in agriculture (as early as the year 2000). In time, used as an informal label in the Romanian written press news reports, ‘strawberry picker’ has come to embrace all categories of both unqualified workers in the sectors of agriculture, domestic work and care, services, constructions, etc., 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 label ‘strawberry picker’ is particularly used in almost a quarter of the total number of the articles selected from *Cotidianul*, whereas, in *Adevărul*, it is seldom used, the journalists preferring the terms “immigrant”, “emigrant” and “worker”. As a matter of fact, it seems that the general reaction towards ‘strawberry picker’ as a denomination for Romanian labour migrants working abroad, especially in Spain, is one of rejection. For instance, Miguel Fonda Ștefănescu, the president of FEDROM (The Federation of Romanian Associations in Spain) considered that Romanians should treat their compatriots with much more respect and elaborated a plan which should facilitate the Romanian strawberry pickers’ reintegration. The same official was against other denominations attributed to Romanian ‘strawberry pickers’, such as “traitors” or “criminals” (“Compatrioții nu mai vor să fie numiți căpșunari” – “Our Compatriots Hate Being Called Strawberry Pickers”, *Adevărul. es*, 18 May 2009). According to Constantin et al. (2004), “this perception could be set right

by means of joint, coherent efforts of mass media, public administration and civil society.”

To briefly refer to the discursive features of the articles devoted to representations of Romanian labour migration, 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. Their length varies according to the topic launched: they are longer if they contain elements of interdiscursivity, e.g., the articles containing interviews, or intertextuality where strawberry pickers (in the denotative or connotative sense) are slightly but purposefully referred to; yet, they are shorter, briefly announcing the topic of extended articles, when fitting the pattern ‘In Brief’ (see “Presa despre emigranți” - “News about emigrants” - section in *Adevărul*, “Pe scurt” - “In Brief” - section in *Cotidianul*). The message is partly informative and partly meant to appeal to the public opinion. The traces of the writer’s subjective presentation of the events is clearly spotted out in the way (s)he handles the topic. More often than not, (s)he mentions “strawberry pickers” in between inverted commas (especially in cases of intertextuality) raising people to indignation, both in Romania as a sending country and in the host countries. Over the years, it seems that Romanian journalism has encouraged journalists to specialise in writing about certain topics, hence examples of experienced reporters in ‘strawberry pickers’ matters could be plainly given, chief among whom Oana Crăciun and Șerban Buscu from *Cotidianul*.

As for representations that connect migration and crime, the stereotype most often traceable in the articles, especially when referring to Romanian migration in Italy, is that of ‘savage invader’ illegally penetrating a ‘civilised space’. (e.g. “Italia, cotropită de 105.000 de români și bulgari” - “105,000 Romanians and Bulgarians Invade Italy”, *Adevărul*, 4 January 2007) The host/receiving country, in our case Italy, is most often presented as a victim of Romanian invasion (both in the sending and receiving countries press) after January 1, 2007.

In considering the Romanian-Italian parallel, many articles from Romanian and Italian sources highlight the problematic nature of Romanian migration in Italy, whereas certain others (less numerous) bring to the fore the fact that the Italians themselves were migrants to other countries (the United States), and that in this position some of them committed crimes and acts of violence against their hosts, as well.

In presenting the tension between the Romanian migrants and the Italian hosts, both the Romanian and the Italian press seem to dwell on the dichotomic pairs US/THEM and EAST/WEST, as well as on the opposition between national identity and ethnic identity, especially when they have been merged and there have been generalizations ranging from an individual case to a whole ethnic minority and from a group of migrants to a whole nation. Their interpretation changes, of course, depending on the perspective adopted, i.e. of the sending or receiving society. Thus, the Romanian newspapers *Adevărul* and *Cotidianul* generally denounce the dangerous effects of generalisations - Mailat → Roma migrants → Romanian migrants - eventually resulting in xenophobically equating Romanians with criminals.

As far as the articles available in some of the Italian sources (*La Repubblica*, *ANSA*, *Rainews*) cited by the Romanian newspapers *Adevărul* and *Cotidianul* are concerned, they often make explicit the opposition between the 'self' ('we', 'our country', 'our community') and 'the other' ('they', 'the invaders of our country', 'the foreigners') emphasising the humanity of the host population, and the criminal and extremely violent nature of the migrants invading their space (especially those coming from Romania and those of Roma origin). In nuancing this opposition, reference is also made to the "civilised" nature of the host population and the highly uncivilised nature of the migrant population which is obvious not only in the behaviour of its representatives, but also in the living conditions these migrants cope with not only in their home country, but especially in the receiving country: "La Roma dello zingaro Mailat e quella della signora Giovanna erano due città incommensurabilmente distanti." ["The Rome of the gypsy Mailat and that of Mrs. Giovanna were two cities significantly different."] ("Se l'uomo topo diventa il signore della paura" - "When Rat Man Becomes Lord of Fear", *La Repubblica*, 7 November 2007) Due to their social status, Roma migrants in Italy are rejected by most citizens and politicians of the host country who often have a highly discriminating attitude:

"Can't you see that Roma people are 'naturally born' criminals? The stereotype of this people of a threatening 'nature' favours a stream of underground violence which permeates our society." ("Il codice perduto della civiltà" - "The Lost Code of Civilisation", *La Repubblica*, 2 November 2007)

Although the articles selected from the Italian sources attach a great importance to the phenomenon of violence associated with Romanian migration in Italy, reference is also made to some historical waves of migration (Barbarians, Asian invasions) and to more recent ones (Serbs, Croats, Bosnians) which were extremely violent, not only against the 'invaded' populations, but also against the members of the 'invading' communities. Concerning the migrants to Italy nowadays, the Romanians seem to be the most numerous and 'trouble-makers', but in certain articles reference is also made to migrants originating in Moldova, Hungary, Somalia, Albania, Serbia and other countries.

The opposition 'Romanian/Eastern invaders' vs. Italian/Western 'invaded' is reversed in the Romanian press which refers to US as the 'discriminated' and 'abused' and to THEM as 'discriminating', using US to serve their interests but ready to eliminate US from their territories as soon as their failure to integrate US results in series of criminal acts against THEIR population. (See the already analysed articles on the Mailat case) Moreover, in an attempt at 'fighting back' the negative stereotyping of Romanian migrants, numerous articles are devoted in the Romanian newspapers, especially in *Adevărul*, to the 'good side' of Romanian migration in Italy (e.g. "Românii din Italia promovează donarea de sânge" - "Romanians Living in Italy Promote Blood Donation", *Adevărul*, 23 November 2007; "Italia: O româncă donează organele fiicei ei" - "Italy: Romanian Woman Donates Her Daughter's Organs", *Adevărul*, November 2007; "Un român a salvat 2 bătrâni italieni după o explozie" - "Romanian Saves Two Elderly Italians After Explosion", *Adevărul*, 25 February 2008; etc.) which is hardly, if ever, the case with the articles selected from the Italian sources.

## **4.2. Gender in Migration**

### **4.2.1. Society**

#### **4.2.1.1 Film**

The same post-communist, post-integration realities presented in the *Context presentation* section (pp. 5-8) apply to women, only more poignantly so, since many of them have been taught to accept second rate jobs and to dream half-dreams about their future. The fact that during the last decades the number of women leaving the country has tended to increase constantly is an indicator that emigration is also an answer to the persistence of forms of patriarchy and a mentality that continues to limit women's opportunities in the process of neo-accumulation and the public sphere.

##### **4.2.1.1.1 Feature films**

This increased feminisation of migration is reflected in the entire corpus of films under analysis. Both the Romanian and the foreign productions foreground the figure of the woman migrant as a product of the post-communist realities of Romania, insisting on Romanian migrant women's role as victims of a range of grave social, economic and cultural problems such as unemployment, poverty, limited child-care options and the continuing domination of male-centred values and hierarchies at both domestic and public levels. All the women in the films selected are, in one way or another, victimised and pushed off to the margins of society: Luiza (in *WM*) and Lilica (in *FL*) leave home driven by poverty and/or unwanted pregnancies (Cristina, Luiza's daughter - left behind and half forgotten, looking for solace in drugs and promiscuity after a teen pregnancy and a child put up for adoption); Ana (in *E*) agrees to stand by her husband and go with him to the other end of the earth, although she knows she will only be his maid there; Maria (in *RM*) also leaves to escape poverty, but she accompanies her love, Ionuț, whom she later separates from, choosing a badly paid but decent way of life as a maid with the Boarins, while he becomes part of a dangerous group of thieves, drug dealers, criminals. The two sisters in *IW* are doubly victimised: by the lack of opportunities that the village (a microcosm of Romania's rural margins characterised by economic stagnation and pre-modern standards of living) entails, as well as by the perpetration of a patriarchal system (represented through the figures of an inefficient, continually drunk and unexpectedly violent father and the macho petty crook, Giovanni, both women trafficker and rapist) which oppresses, brutalises and, consequently, turns women into ceaseless victims. Even the films that couch the female migrant experience under the romantic guise of the search for personal fulfilment - be it in terms of glamorous careers (such as the eleven girls in *AT* dream of) or finding the 'perfect' spouse (as is the case with Elena in *TB*, or Sorina and Mihaela in *O*), still anchor themselves in the same post-communist Romanian social landscape where poverty, lack of child-care options, homelessness and aberrant patriarchal behavioural codes collide with the characters' aspirations.

In the case of the Romanian films, there are two strategies at work used to represent the host societies. One means is oblique, decentring their assumed hierarchical positioning by dispersing their representations in the stories within

the stories that the films tell: Luiza's husband (in *WM*) keeps calling her asking when she will be back (assumed is a civilised marriage and relationship); Lilica's Spain (in *FL*) seems to have helped her become richer than anyone else in her village (but people know the source of her well being: prostitution); Lili too (in *E*) earns more than most from prostitution in Romania as host country. Another strategy is to elaborate on the destination society through metonymical characters: Marion, the self-possessed, elegant and sophisticated business-woman, embodies both the civilised and the mercantile aspects of the French society (in *AT*); *O* sketches a larger European map which both validates traditional assumptions about West-East hierarchical positioning (Jerome, the French 'benefactor', and Van Horn, the Dutch 'official') and points to composite hierarchies within Europe itself in order to conceptualise articulation of what is European from below (Nae, the Romanian illegal migrant turned 'German' and Luigi, the Italian of African origin).

Host societies are central to the iconography of the two foreign films here referred to. If *TB* focuses on the emotional trajectory of Elena's integration within the provincial French farming community, playing upon traditional assumptions of the 'rich' Western Europeans vs. their 'poor' Eastern neighbours but balancing the two in its Cinderella-type plot, in *RN*, Italy as host is omnipresent. Memorable dichotomic images re-inscribe traditional West-East hierarchies of power in gender terms: Maria cooking in the kitchen upstairs/Silvana putting on her jewels in front of the mirror upstairs; Romanian gypsy girls begging in the pouring rain/Silvana, scared but comfortable in her expensive car. Furthermore, Silvana's premonition and sudden fear of Maria holds the filmic narrative together.

#### **4.2.1.1.2 Documentaries**

For the home country, the basic dichotomies of the social (and economic) environment are rural/urban and old/young. The old women in the Romanian countryside carry the traces of patriarchy and seem to be comfortable with their status of subordination (*J*, *T*, *GW*): always faithful to the traditional folk costume and to the gender norms of the large-power distance, collectivist community (Hofstede, 1991 and Gavrilu, 2002) in which they lived their entire life, Irina Opriş, Florica Bud's mother and grandmother (*T*) or Vasile Marinca's mother (*GW*) repeatedly stress out, through their attitudes and discourse, their attachment to a way of life that endured in time and therefore, appears most appropriate to them. On the other hand, young women from towns and cities of Romania (Anna in *IT*) aspire to freedom from all ties, yet, significantly, end up even worse. In between these extremes, there is the category of young women who belong to the rural world but who, like their town-dwelling peers, choose to evade traditional gender patterns: Florica Bud (*T*), Maria, Ion Damian's wife (*J*), and Mihaela Marinca (*GW*) conceive emigration as the only opportunity to get more independence and to break through the constraining roles that the rigid patriarchal pattern of the rural community imposes on them. But, like the women migrants from the Romanian urban areas, they are doomed to fail: despite all their efforts, Florica (*T*) and Maria (*J*) do not manage to find - legally and/or illegally - a way out of the country; Mihaela (*GW*) is the only to succeed in migrating, but then miserable living and working conditions, psychological pressure and violence in the host society, and

the stigma of bad reputation at home make it impossible for her to 'enjoy her success.'

The same interest in the consequences, on the social level, of women's migration causes some of the documentaries to focus on representations of motherhood as well. The social reality of massive child abandonment finds its symbolic illustration in the cases of Maria, Ion Damian's wife (*J*) and Mariana, Mihaela Marinca's sister (*GW*). Another mother figure, Maria, Petru Damian's wife in *J* stands apart because she takes her son Adrian with her and does her best to help him integrate in the educational system of the country of destination (France).

In the host country, whether they come from towns or the countryside, Romanian women migrants are discriminated twice: for being women and for being foreigners. Discrimination takes many forms (from underpaid domestic work and beggary - *GW*, *S* - to sexual exploitation - *IT*) - all due to a money-oriented society, whose empowered patriarchal centre governs the female fringes and manipulates their constitutional and international rights.

Whether at home or abroad, women are crushed by the socially constructed myth of superwoman which, unlike that of superman, does not have positive connotations. Wives, mothers, lovers, cooks, working women, etc., they all do their best to fit prefabricated models, but fail and suffer in the process.

#### **4.2.1.2 Written press**

In considering the gender-oriented perspective, reference should be made that the Romanian and Italian newspapers mirror this issue in significantly different ways. In the case of the selected Romanian dailies, reference should be made to the fact that, unlike *Cotidianul*, *Adevărul* focuses more explicitly on gender-related aspects of Romanian emigration, that is why most of the examples are taken from this newspaper.

The relation between gender, migration and society is quite complex. Socio-economic aspects have to be combined, on the one hand, with the distinction in terms of men and women's migration, and with the status of these migrants in two distinct referential/geographical spaces, i.e. the home/sending country and the host/receiving country, on the other.

The Romanian written press presents the phenomenon of Romanian labour migration within a cause-effect relationship and from a dual perspective, i.e. of the home/sending country and host/receiving countries. In this context, canonical patterns of gender representation have witnessed significant changes.

The post-communist transition has made a large number of Romanians look for new opportunities abroad. Their mobility reflects a newly-acquired or rediscovered freedom of movement. In the process of economic restructuring, women were first to lose their jobs and become would-be migrants, ready to



respond to the demand in destination countries. Having little access to regular employment in the West and to training schemes adapted to the labour market demand, many Romanian migrant women are presented by the press as either turning especially to the informal sector (domestic helpers/ caretakers) or engaging in prostitution/ sex work. Irrespective of the labour sector Romanian women are engaged in, their illegal status and social marginalization make them prone to becoming victims of different forms of violence, ranging from discrimination to rape and even murder. The press lays particular stress on manifestations of extreme violence which fit the sensationalist tendency in news reporting.

Numerous articles point to the types of jobs Romanian women migrants have in the host countries and to the quality of the services Romanian migrant women provide. The articles analysed present migrant women mainly involved in the following jobs:

- domestic work and babysitting (“Povestea de succes a unei fost menajere” - “The Story of an Ex-Domestic Worker’s Success”, *Adevărul*, 12 April 2007; “Bonele române: ‘Copiii italieni sunt prost crescuți’” - “Romanian Babysitters: ‘Italian children are ill bred’”, *Adevărul*, 11 February 2008; “Presa despre emigranți: Imigranții iau locul bunicilor” - “Press on Emigrants: Immigrants Replace Grannies”, *Adevărul*, 26 April 2008; “Milano: Provincia va ajuta financiar familiile care vor angaja menajere imigrante” - “Milan: County Authorities will Financially Support Families Hiring Immigrants as Domestic Workers”, *Adevărul*, 9 June 2008; “Roma: Primul birou de plasament profesional pentru menajere” - “Rome: The First Professional Employment Office for Domestic Workers”, *Adevărul*, 23 July 2008; “Drepturi pentru menajere” - “Rights for Domestic Workers”, *Adevărul*, 21 October 2008; “Schimbă pampersii la Roma” - “Changing Diapers in Rome”, *Cotidianul*, 15 October 2009)
- health care (“Italia, destinația preferată de asistenții români” - “Italy, the Favourite Destination of Romanian Nurses”, *Adevărul*, 23 June 2007);
- strawberry picking (“Românele, preferate ‘la căpșuni’” - “Romanian Women, Preferred in ‘Strawberry Picking’”, *Adevărul*, 28 December 2007);
- weaving (“Țesătoarele române, la mare căutare în Spania” - “Romanian Weavers, Sought after in Spain”, *Adevărul*, 1 May 2008);
- tourism and catering (“Certificat de calitate pentru o patroană româncă” - “Quality Certificate for Romanian Owner”, *Adevărul*, 22 March 2008 ).

Part of the articles devoted to Romanian women’s migration for labour in feminised sectors of different European economic markets (particularly as domestic workers) also stress out that, in their desire to escape unemployment and poverty at home, many accept jobs for which they are overqualified (“Peste 33% din menajere au absolvit o facultate” - “Over 33% of Domestic Workers Are University Graduates”, *Adevărul*, 25 April 2008) and that may, in some cases, expose them to the risk of humiliation and the experience of violence (“Țara Bascilor: Jumătate din imigrantele menajere au fost hărțuite sexual” - “Basque Country: Half of the Migrant Domestic Workers Sexually Harassed”, *Adevărul*, 11 March 2008).

Though relatively few, there are articles which refer to the initiative and ability of women to develop successful lives in the host society. This implies a shift of perspective in the treatment of migrant women, from the traditional, passive, dependent model to the modern, active, independent and successful model as it is the case in: “Florina din Bacău a fost admisă cu bursă de merit în clubul exclusivist al Universității Bocconi din Milano” - “Florina from Bacău Was Awarded a Merit Scholarship to the Exclusive Club of Bocconi University in Milan”, *Adevărul*, 29 January 2007; “Superprofesoara” - “The Super Teacher”, *Adevărul*, 5 December 2007; “O româncă pe urmele lui Nicole Kidman” - “Romanian Woman Walks Down the Same Path as Nicole Kidman”, *Cotidianul*, 3 April 2007. Some successful Romanian migrant women have overcome the difficulties of integrating into the host country by occupying top social and political positions. In 2008 in Spain, out of the 285,000 Romanian migrant women, 22% had their own business as reported by La Caixa Bank (“Româncele au firme de succes” - “Romanian Women Run Successful Business”, *Adevărul*, 8 March 2008).

Women’s charitable disposition makes them get involved in activities meant to support children and the poor in the home country (“Jucării și haine pentru copiii din România” - “Toys and Clothes for Children in Romania”, *Adevărul*, 9 January 2008) and in the host country (“Fostă Miss România ajută copiii cu probleme din Peninsula” - “Former Miss Romania Helps Disadvantaged Children in Italy”, *Adevărul*, 30 January 2008; “Ramona Bădescu strânge bani și pentru săracii italieni” - “Ramona Bădescu Collects Money for Poor Italians”, *Adevărul*, 18 April 2008).

However, the Romanian press tends to see the negative effects of Romanian women’s migration blaming them for disrupting the social and gender order and for the social costs of migration, chief among which child abandonment. Written press data confirms the existence of a significant association between the absence of both parents or just of the mother and the frequency of depression symptoms in children. (e.g. “A încercat să-și curme viața de dorul părinților” - “He Tried to Commit Suicide Because He Missed His Parents Too Much”, *Adevărul*, 7 November 2007; “Nu-i spunem Moșului că părinții sunt departe” - “We Don’t Tell Santa that Our Parents Are Away”, *Adevărul*, 21 December 2007, etc.)

As many Romanian women act more and more often as the main economic providers for the family, they seem to have a hard time coming to terms with the contradictions of “good mother provider” and “bad absent mother” (Morokvasic 2007: 75). Several articles reveal the fact that chats on the internet and talks on the phone are the most common means used by migrant women as mothers in order to compensate for their absence. Words of encouragement and good promises make, in the most fortunate cases, children feel good and face the hardships of separation from their parents, but unfortunately their education is made from a distance (“Fetița mea mă cunoaște mai mult din poze” - “My daughter knows me mostly from photos”, *Adevărul*, 27 December 2007; “Românii din Spania le fac educație copiilor prin telefon” - “Romanians from Spain Educate their Children while Talking on the Phone”, *Adevărul*, 29 April 2008). At its worst, separation from migrant mothers

results in home alone children suffering from depression and attempting to commit suicide.

Another dimension of Romanian women's labour migration that is reduced to bad motherhood and even criminality is reflected in the articles on newly-born child abandonment ("O româncă din Almeria și-a aruncat copilul la gunoi" - "Almeria: Romanian Woman Abandons Baby at Dumpster", *Adevărul*, 9 January 2008; "Italia: o româncă și-a părăsit copilul la locul de muncă" - "Italy: Romanian Woman Abandons Baby at Work Place", *Adevarul*, 9 January 2008). Statistics show that in 2007, 150 children were abandoned by their Romanian migrant mothers ("Româncele au abandonat 150 de copii în 2007" - "Romanian Migrant Women Abandoned 150 Children in 2007", *Adevărul*, 4 March 2008). In reaction to such cases, representatives of several Italian medical institutions declared that the lack of education, of a secure life, including a partner, a job and good living conditions are among the most common factors that contribute to the development of such a phenomenon. The measures taken by the Family Planning Centre from the Hospital San Carlo and the Madre Segreta departments from the towns councils show the supportive attitudes that these institutions manifest in helping the would-be mothers acquire useful information about sex life.

Marriage with a foreign citizen aimed at facilitating legal emigration and access to better living conditions has also remained, over the years, one of the gender issues tackled by the Romanian press. For instance, in a 2008 report of the Italian Minister of Internal Affairs presented by *Adevărul*, Italians prefer migrant women in the following order: German 7.1%, French 7%, Romanian 6.1%, Polish 5.3%, Brazilian 5%. In such mixed marriages between Italian men and Romanian migrant women, the age difference is about 10 years, men preferring much younger wives ("Dintre imigrante, italienii le preferă pe romance" - "From among Migrants, Italian Men Prefer Romanian Women", *Adevărul*, 17 March 2008; "Alarmă în Italia: 30.000 de octogenari s-au căsătorit cu tinerele lor menajere" - "Alert in Italy: 30,000 Elderly Men in Their Eighties Marry Their Young Domestic Workers", *Adevărul*, 27 April 2008; "6% din căsătoriile mixte se oficiază între italieni și romance" - "6% of Mixed Marriages Officiated between Italian Men and Romanian Women", *Adevărul*, 1 May 2008).

Last but not least, in the series of articles tackling the negative effects of Romanian women's migration, there are numerous examples (in the Romanian press - mainly in *Adevărul*, less in *Cotidianul* - and in the Italian one only briefly mentioned) which reveal Romanian women migrants as subject to violence in the receiving countries. The scope of circumstances which lead to Romanian migrant women's victimisation (either by their own co-nationals or by men in the host society) is large and covers:

- human trafficking and sex work ("O româncă a salvat câteva sute de femei din sclavia sexuală" - "Hundreds of Women Saved from Sex Slavery by a Romanian Woman", *Adevărul*, 29 January 2007; "Tinerele până în 25 de ani, principalele victime ale traficului de carne vie" - "Young Girls, up to 25 the Main Victims of Trafficking in Women", *Adevărul*, 9 August 2007; "Roma: Prostitue cu forța" - "Roma: Forced

Prostitution”, *Adevărul*, 31 January 2008; “Am fost vândută unor proxeneți în Italia chiar de cumnatul meu” - “My Own Brother-in-law Sold Me to Pimps in Italy” *Adevărul*, 23 February 2008; “Prostituată româncă de 19 ani ucisă de un Italian” - “Romanian Prostitute, 19, Killed by Italian”, *Adevărul*, 5 May 2008);

- domestic violence (“O tânără româncă ucisă de concubinul italian” - “Young Romanian Woman Killed by her Italian Lover”, *Adevărul*, 31 December 2007; “Italia: Româncă ucisă din gelozie” - “Italy: Romanian Woman Killed out of Jealousy”, *Adevărul*, 31 January 2008; “Controverse în cazul unei românce împuşcate de un italian” - “Controversies over Italian Shooting Romanian Woman”, *Adevărul*, 6 February 2008; “Imigrantele, de cinci ori mai vulnerabile la violență domestică” - “Migrant Women, Five Times More Vulnerable to Domestic Violence”, *Adevărul*, 4 March 2008);
- violence at the working place (“Țara Bascilor: Jumătate din imigrantele menajere au fost hărțuite sexual” - “Basque Country : Half of Migrant Women Employed as Domestic Workers Sexually Harassed”, *Adevărul*, 11 March 2008; “Româncă sechestrată în Italia de bătrânică pentru care lucra” - “Italy: Romanian Woman Locked by Old Woman She Worked for”, *Cotidianul*, 25 May 2008).

## 4.2.2. Institutions

### 4.2.2.1 Film

#### 4.2.2.1.1 Feature films

The films feature women who: go abroad to look after the old or to do the cleaning about people’s houses (Maria in *RM*); escape their condition of second-rate citizens by getting married (Elena in *TB*, Mihaela in *O*), but even so continue to be “accepted” with difficulty (Luiza in *WM*, Lilica - in *FL*); become covert (the girls in *AT*) or overt victims of human trafficking (the sisters in *IW*); obediently do what they are told and emigrate blindly, even when their own future and that of their children are at stake (Emil’s wife, Ana - in *E*); do the aggressive begging at extremely early ages (in the opening of *RM*). Lili, on the other hand (in *E*), practices prostitution for a noble cause: to make the money necessary for her studies: she is a law student in Bucharest.

An interesting case is that of Cristina (in *WM*), in whom the results of migration are identified via hyperbolisation - to serve a moralising purpose: the abandoned child left behind by a mother who goes to Spain in search of work, abused by her family, raped by her uncle, forced to leave school and rebel through drugs and prostitution.

No action is taken by the state. Women have to take their fate into their own hands and survive as best they can: Cristina recuperating her stolen child (a little girl) from people meaning to sell her for her organs abroad; grandmother Vergina’s rape and robbery unsolved, helped along by the police (Stelică is her grandson).

Acceptance, recognition and citizenship are actually denied to the women except for those who marry or say they marry in the host country: Elena (in *TB*), Luiza (in *WM*) and Lilica (in *FL*). Maria (in *RM*) has no chance: at first, she is treated like a member of the family by the Boarins (and she deserves to be), but only indoors; otherwise she remains an outsider, that they have no real hard time in sending away. Forced to find retreat with Ionuț and his brother in the ghetto, she assumes the role and status of migrant, of potential danger.

#### **4.2.2.1.2 Documentaries**

Women as second-rate citizens is the leitmotif of most of the documentaries. Treated as criminals where the breaking of patriarchal law is concerned, they are prone to the freedom of victims of lawlessness, which they can hardly enjoy as they live under the constant pressure of the awareness of being illegal migrants. Stela Margean in *S*, Maria, Petru Damian's wife in *J*, Mihaela Marinca in *GW* have to constantly live with the fear of being arrested by the police because they do not have valid residence permits; in particular, in Maria and Mihaela's case, the vulnerability that goes hand in hand with their illegal status exposes them to the risk of becoming victims of violence (Maria tells some of her friends how she was attacked, robbed and brutally beaten in an underground station, while Mihaela is deprived of all she had managed to gather by hard work in her small miserable room when a gang of violent migrants attacks the colony in the warehouse). Silences, close-ups on blank staring or tear-shedding eyes sustain, at the level of the filmic discourse, the representation of these women's vulnerability and suffering.

Actually, all the documentaries that tackle gender-related issues present women as subject to multiple victimisation: trapped within the institution of marriage (*T*, *J*, *GW*, *S*) or entrusting themselves to devious male characters, under the spell of potential future marriages (*IT*), stigmatised by their profoundly patriarchal environment at home (*T*, *J*, *GW*), doomed to humiliation and loss of status, hard work and low payment (*J*, *GW*, *S*), or to sexual exploitation (*IT*), vulnerable to violent attacks (*J*, *GW*, *IT*) as well as to police harassment and deportation (*J*, *S*).

The very existence of associations, foundations, NGOs dedicated to the protection and instruction of women (especially mentioned in *S* - the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital and the group of volunteers teaching Romanian migrants French - and in *IT* - a Romanian anti-trafficking NGO and the Moldovan branch of the *La Strada* NGO) tells the sad tale of their condition, inescapable as long as domination will stay focused on gender and cultural differences and as long as women migrants will accept the yoke.

#### **4.2.2.2 Written press**

Romanian migrant women are often seen as survivors to poor and harsh living conditions described against the background of permanent threatening by the Italian police. One of the examples quoted by *Adevărul* is relevant in this respect: Laura works as a housekeeper in Florence. She gains 750 euros per

month and she lives in a deserted barracks together with her husband and their two sons. She is satisfied with her work but she fears evacuation even if together with the rest of the Romanians living there she keeps the place clean. She first thinks of her sons and is ready to sacrifice for them (“Italia: Un pianist roman locuiește într-o cazarmă părăsită” – “Italy: Romanian Pianist Lives in a Deserted Barracks”, *Adevărul*, 30 April 2008).

However, Romanian migrant women can be initiators of political actions, and can even influence the actions of other people as some articles suggest when referring to migrant women involved in politics in the host country: “Româncă a fost aleasă pentru prima dată în Consiliul local din Padova” – “Padova: Romanian Woman, First Time Elected in Local Council”, *Cotidianul*, 25 June 2009; “Italia: O româncă, susținută politic de partidul lui Veltroni, primarul Romei” – “Rome: Romanian Woman, supported by Mayor’s Political Party”, *Adevarul*, 5 March 2008).

### **4.2.3. Culture**

#### **4.2.3.1 Film**

##### **4.2.3.1.1 Feature films**

With one exception (Isabelle Mergault’s *TB*), the corpus of feature films referred to here reflects the assumed male dominance of the cultural field, as they are male directed, scripted and produced. Though, to a greater or lesser extent, all of them focus on the differential experience of migrant women and men in the context of a gendered world, they still tend to comply with traditional encodings of masculinity and femininity which conform to societal expectations fostered by their respective cultural and historical location.

The Romanian productions (to which *AT*, written and directed by the Romanian Nae Caranfil is here conveniently included) construe the subjectivities of their protagonists in accordance to societal role models which change within the 13 year span that the films cover, but are in fact variations on general gender stereotypes, becoming thus sub-stereotypes in themselves. From *AT* (produced in 1996) to the most recent *WM* (2009), the woman migrant has been represented as: young and beautiful, ready to sell her looks/talents in the promise of material fulfilment in the West (the girls in *AT*; Sorina and Mihaela in *O*); young and innocent, the victim of malevolent traffickers who lure them into migrating abroad (the sisters in *IW*); the supporting, credulous and caring wife, passively acquiescing her husband’s wish to migrate (Ana in *E*); the professional prostitute (Lilica in *FL* and Lili, the Moldavian student in *E*); the mother who has abandoned her child in search of material fulfilment abroad (Luiza in *WM*). Such images tend to place the characters within the traditional representation of womanhood that equates the feminine with the passive object, victimhood, sexuality, domesticity and motherhood. The films’ narratives are generally convergent with the representation of femininity as devoid of agency, because male figures invested with patriarchal authority either set in motion, deceive into or direct a woman migrant’s journey. Bullying fathers (in *IW* and *O*), husbands (in *AT* and *E*) or imperfect lovers (in *O*, *WM*) more or less openly

instigate the plot; public agencies (fake impresarios in *AT* and matrimonial agents in *O*) or individuals (human traffickers in *IW*, a delinquent husband in *E*) forward and supervise it, while other male figures ordain its resolution: the last shots of *IW* focus on the American soldier, arrived by car in the remote southern Romanian village to look for the girls he saved in Kosovo, with the implication that he would perform the role of the rescuer once more, taking the sisters to a more distant (and 'respectable') West; the male-dominated interloper world to which both her daughter and her granddaughter fall prey set the course of Luiza renewed departure to the west, the only route that allows an escape from home as entrapment and vicious circle.

As far as the films attempt representations of the male migrant's experience (in *O*, *E* and *FL*), their narratives are more ambiguous in the codification of masculinity, because here, both in the characters of Nae and Nicu, the pre-1989 illegal migrants from *O*, as well as in those of Mitu, the soldier who dreams to serve in the Foreign Legion from *FL* and Emil, the unemployed set to depart to Australia from *E*, the boundaries of their masculinity are transgressed by having them cast in the feminine role of victims: victimised by the communist regime and its Securitate male authoritarian figures (Nae's reminiscences of colonel Visoiu's brutal interrogatories in *O*), victimised by devious crooks at home (Emil being cheated out of his money by Streche in *E* and Mitu, Aurel and Stelică falling prey to Maricel's machinations in *FL*), or victimised by the very West that they covet (Maricel's imprisonment and death in an Austrian prison in *FL*). Nevertheless, the male narrative of victimhood is interwoven with a narrative on criminality (Emil's transformation into a dishonest, adulterous delinquent and a criminal by chance in *E*; likewise, the three friends in *FL* steal an old woman's burial money to be able to pay off their dream) that confirms Western stereotypes about the Eastern European migrants.

The two foreign films remain tributary to the same gendered boundaries of the migrant's construction. *TB*, the only woman-authored film included here, adheres to the traditional mapping of migration in the gendered dichotomy of the masculine West (Aymé and the patriarchal French community) and the feminine East (Elena and, beyond, an almost exclusively feminine cast in which Romanian-ness is embodied), but inverts in order to subvert correlated oppositional terms by having Elena move from the urban centre of a culture to the peasant periphery of another. Nevertheless, the Romanian woman's migrant experience is captured within stereotypical representations of femininity related to sexuality, domesticity and motherhood. *RN*, on the other hand, counterpoises a feminine West (Italy as metonymically foregrounded through the upper-class and highly refined Silvana Boarin) against an anthropomorphous East in which gender (Maria vs. Ionuț), ethnic (Romanians vs. Roma) and class distinctions (workers vs. lowlifes) are effaced in the stereotype of the threatening and criminal Romanian Other. This strategy metaphorically associates the different assault's on Silvana's body (and, by extension family and household) with images of rape, treated both within the discourse on gender - the West as innocent victim of an exploitative, devious and violent East, and the wider one on home, territory and belonging, because rape is also another dimension of issues related to power and dominance.

#### **4.2.3.1.2 Documentaries**

Gender stereotyping has frequently been associated with patriarchal power politics and with social and cultural constructions of femininity and masculinity. The canonical narratives on gender identity need to be exposed, defamiliarised for oppressing, displacing or repressing manifestations and representations of the complexity of gender.

In short therefore, the biological factor aside, the social has constantly influenced the development of gender identity. In the case of women, a number of recurrent issues have been brought up: the revaluation of their experiences; the challenging of their representations as “other”, “lack” or part of “nature”; the examination of power relations and reading for political purposes, to show the extent of patriarchy; the recognition of the role of language in making the social and constructed seem transparent and natural; the questioning of the popular notion of the death of the author/authority and discussing the subject positions constructed in discourse; the clarification of the ideological base of supposedly ‘neutral’ or ‘mainstream’ interpretations of gender roles.

Replacing (his)story with her story seems a difficult enterprise, yet exposing the manipulative strategies in building memorable characters and events which portray woman as secondary or as margin will eventually contribute to doing just that.

Our selection of documentary films shows classic cases of gender discrimination, deepened by the overlapping discriminatory practices fuelled by race, nationality, ethnicity, language and history.

The two Marias in *J* (in Romanian culture, a symbolical name for the prototype of the patriarchally constructed obedient, hard-working woman from the countryside - a species facing extinction nowadays) oppose the inertia of outmoded patterns of thought and, aware of the futility of their present lives, decide to emigrate. Both, however, are significantly punished for their daring attitudes (one faces tremendous difficulties in Paris as an immigrant and single mother, the other loses everything she owns in her attempts at illegal emigration and has to return to the centuries-old routine of life in a small village). Beyond these similarities, there are, yet, significant differences between their attitudes as wives and mothers.

To be more specific, Maria, Petru Damian’s wife, is not the type of migrant who crosses national borders out of the desire to challenge the gender role system in the Romanian patriarchal society, besides that of improving her financial status. As a matter of fact, throughout her long stay in Paris, she remains faithful to her husband, though he is away in Dublin, and behaves according to the principles of the large power-distance society, showing her elderly in-laws due respect. Moreover, she actually appears as the perfect illustration of the good mother type. If she reacts against the established norms of her community, refusing to send her son to work, she is entirely motivated by motherly love: after the forced separation from Petru, her entire life revolves around her son Adrian. It is her desire to offer him a better life and education



that keeps her going on, even when, as a migrant, she has to assume the risk of experiencing humiliation and violence. Enjoying her independence is something she learns in time, after five years of separation from her husband, when she finally finds the courage to challenge his authority as the head of the family: she is outraged that Petru will not join her and Adrian in Paris, and that, given the circumstances, she is the one gossiped about back home, forced into a new stereotypical frame, that of the easy woman (she is rumoured to have filed for divorce). She is supported in liberating herself from a marriage that has not brought her much satisfaction by her friends in Paris, who encourage her to divorce Petru and get on with her life, and in whose families the distribution of the gender roles has undergone transformations that ensure the balance in the domestic sphere. (The husband of one of Maria's friends takes care of the children while the women chat on the balcony.) But, through all the hardships that her life as an illegal migrant and ultimately as a woman challenging traditional behavioural patterns, she maintains the epitome of the good mother, holding a strong emotional bond with Adrian as the final scene of the film shows.

On the other hand, the other Maria, Ion Damian's wife, has the full potential to become the bad wife and mother. There is a growing sense of 'trouble in paradise' in this narrative line of the film as Maria, more ambitious and prone to challenge established patterns and to embrace individualism, grows disappointed with her husband and blames him for not being as determined as his brother Petru. Marital tension reaches a climax when, upon Ion's forced return home (after being caught in Germany and having spent 6 days in jail), instead of pitying and supporting him, she dares him, mocking at his manliness and reproaching him that he was arrested simply because he acted without thinking first. She simply cannot accept that Ion has given up the idea of emigrating and plans to stay home to work. Though the family is already heavily in debt, she does not seem to care and borrows the equivalent of 2 years' income to buy false travel papers. Unlike Petru's Maria, who despite the tense relation with her husband, remains a good mother and works hard to provide for her son, Ion's Maria seems to get carried away with the dreams of self-fulfilment and disruption of gender hierarchies to the point that she becomes a bad mother. The sequence that shows Maria putting on her make-up - as she is supposed to pose as a Western business woman - prefigures the extent to which she will change, provided she manages to get abroad. Almost ignoring her husband, who watches her sadly but silently, Maria carefully applies the make-up, mimicking TV show hosts, and she is so taken with her own artificial beauty that she cannot even stand the children next to her; their naïve questions about the use of make-up bother her and she goes as far as to brutally push away her daughter when, curious about the small boxes and lipsticks she has never seen before, she tries to touch her mother's stuff or interposes between her mother and the mirror. Maria's rejection triggers the children's defensively scornful reaction - her son asks if they will put her as a scarecrow in the field - which Ion shares completely (they all laugh at her) and which she chooses to ignore, as she is too busy wondering whether she looks like 'a real woman'. However, she will not be spared the punishment for ambitious transgression of the traditional roles (wife and mother): after the man arranging for her passport is arrested, she is shown back in her countryside-specific clothes, her hair covered by a scarf, paying for her sin, working in

silence on the hill, in the company of another woman, to gather the fallen apples from the orchard and to provide for her family.

Florica Bud in *T* also looks on emigration as the only liberating choice she has, as the unique way out of a male-dominated society, that has been preserved in the Romanian countryside, even better (or worse!?) than in the more flexible urban environment. Forced by the patriarchal order that dominates life in her rural community to move exclusively within the domestic sphere as a would-be peasant's wife, Florica hopes that crossing borders (to town/abroad) for work will be empowering and will offer her opportunities to challenge the established gender norms. What she does not seem to be aware of is that finding employment in precarious, low paid jobs - like housekeeping or care - which are "often not visible or not recognised as 'work' especially if they are performed outside the legal framework" (Morokvasic, 2007: 68) will not lead to a full disruption of gender hierarchies, but, on the contrary, to reproducing and even intensifying them. Somewhat luckily, she does not get to experience reinforced gender inequalities as an (il)legal migrant, but her attempts at re-shaping her identity are doomed to end in frustration and taxed, at the level of the local community, by the stigma of shame and marginalisation.

The *GW* juxtaposes two patterns of behaviour related to Romanian peasant women's identity with an aim at providing the answer to the question: what makes a good wife. Reversing the general trend, Mihaela Marinca migrates to Paris and puts up with humiliating living and working conditions to provide for her family and unemployed husband back home. The image of the emasculated Mihaela reinforces the misogynist myth of the Medusa to a certain extent, as she is portrayed as strong and independent on the one hand, and as broken by a society in which women (especially migrants) are only offered secondary roles as domestic labourers in a man's urban world. In addition, though she attains more autonomy, she cannot escape the 'long arm' of the patriarchal 'monster' from back home, as she is confronted with oblique, stigmatising suspicions of misbehaviour that diminish the importance of her success as a hard-working economic provider. Under the circumstances, her return to nature and local patriarchy becomes a highly desired alternative, especially for her husband, which, nonetheless, she continues to resist. On the other hand, the story of Radu Bud's quest for a wife in the village, which is ultimately determined by the family patriarch's choice in favour of 100% countryside-bred bride (*Anuța*), with relatively little education but with a submissive attitude towards the husband, ends up forcing him into a 'perfect' match by the rules of the large-power distance rural society, but hardly satisfying in terms of individual freedom of choice (for both bride and groom). The image of the empty hall after the wedding which concludes the film, skilfully associated with an abrupt shift from loud folk music to silence and sad clarinet tune, hints at the emptiness of the newly-weds' life and raises questions as to how happy a marriage based not on feelings and personal choices, but exclusively on duty and obedience to the patriarchal norms, could ultimately be.

The male/female perspective on migration eastwards and on the centre-margin metamorphosis makes *BF* especially intriguing. The Saxon Johann and the Landler Maria have spent most of their lives in Romania, but their constantly activated fatherlands, like their mother tongues, mark them as different and

keep them at the imaginative centre that keeps the Romanians outside. In contrast with Johann, however (who still flirts with the fascist ideology, especially when it comes to the gypsies next door), Maria is more tolerant and open to cultural otherness, although she too keeps her distance from the Romanians around in fear of amalgamation, of losing her cultural specificity - now forever lost.

A case of leaving to return, symptomatic for the current Romanian situation, is presented in *LT*, with Hans and Maria, ethnic Saxons having lived in Romania for ages, now deciding it is time to return to Germany (Augsburg). With regard to women and womanhood, the documentary paints a universal, cross-cultural picture: Maria and her female friends (Jutzi Stuehler, Inge Petru, etc.) seem to spend most of their time in the kitchen, canteen... close to ovens and stoves (when not helping men in the fields or tending to the poultry, pigs, cattle, etc.). All this is set against a Romanian setting, however. In Germany, on the other hand, Maria (true, retired in her old age) is glimpsed at as doing nothing much, sitting about eating sweets, enjoying the good life. Her dress and appearance have also changed: no more dirt under the nails, no more sun burnt face, no more scarves, long skirts, baggy jackets or rubber boots.

Another “good wife”, Stela is the breadwinner of the family, spoiling her husband Marcel by tending to his every marital, medical or culinary need. Not a gypsy herself, she takes on the gypsy look expected by the French, thus exploiting a cultural stereotype to attain her goal: that of earning enough to survive by begging in the streets of Paris. At the same time, she does not seem to forget to paint her nails, or do her hair, or smoke for that matter - transformations she can only afford inside their humble abode in the ghetto. Stela (and Gabi, her sister) manages to adjust to various external and cultural circumstances that she has inflicted on herself and that she needs to cope with, but remains nostalgic after her previous life back home (see the many photographs of her younger self she keeps looking at), despite the fact that it was one of a margin due to her marrying into the Roma community, but a better tolerated margin than the one she is currently exiled to in France. (Motherhood is only briefly alluded to in *S* because, as the protagonist confesses, she lost her only child - a daughter from a previous marriage - at a very tender age. A good mother, Stela still mourns her daughter’s untimely death, hence the long silences that accompany her melancholy contemplation of the photos from the funeral, actually the only things she has still got from her child.)

Women as merchandise are focused on in *IT* as part of an international campaign against human trafficking. The Romanian Ana and the Moldovan Tatiana may very well have had any other nationality, but the reason for their having been chosen as protagonists, although not made explicit, seems to make a cultural statement also, besides the one on gender (the film is in English, presented by Angelina Jolie - famous worldwide, therefore addressing a wider audience than the strictly Romanian one). The trafficking chain dismantled includes many male figures empowered by hereditary positions of authority and feeding on the similarly traditional discriminatory practices towards women. The naïve, uneducated Ana and Tatiana entrust themselves to men and end up as victims of a system which thrives on the further exploitation

of the already under-privileged. The critique is eventually directed towards men and women alike: if the former are bluntly accused of illegal activities, the latter are more subtly blamed for passivity with regard to a situation they have not created, but readily accepted as the norm.

#### **4.2.3.2 Written press**

Culture-related issues on gender and migration cover particularly the specific stereotypes associated with migrant men and women as seen in the sending and the receiving countries.

Seen from the perspective of the home/sending country, gender roles are still governed by the rules of a patriarchal society in which men are supposed to work and to be the providers for their families, while women are responsible for the housework and the children. As heads of their families, men are allowed to be violent to their wives and children, and may go abroad to work without being suspected of infidelity towards their wives. This is not the case with women who are easily stereotyped as 'bad mothers' (see the examples on pp. 54-5) or 'prostitutes' if they choose to migrate in order to provide for their families. Many Romanian migrant women have aspired to emancipation in western societies in which men and women are regarded as individuals with equal rights and duties, free to decide their own destiny. That may account for their transition from dedicated wives and mothers to women who are more concerned with their professional status and financial independence. However, things are not always so clearly delineated, because socio-economic and political factors prevent them from achieving either a good professional position, or financial independence. Under the circumstances, they have either the option of finding men to provide for them ("maschio italiano cliente 'ricco' e donna straniera prostituta povera" in "Se l'uomo topo diventa signore della paura" - "When Rat Man Becomes Lord of Fear", *La Repubblica*, 7 November 2007), or of making risky choices in an attempt to obtain their 'independence'. Such choices seem to have been the basis of Romanian women's migration in countries such as Italy and Spain and the cause of numerous acts of violence against Romanian migrant women. However, such cases in which Romanian migrant women are victims of violence are presented at large by the Romanian press, whereas the Italian newspapers choose to briefly mention such cases.

The Romanian prostitute stereotype is used and abused by the written press, as the analysis of the corpus shows. The overuse of terms such as "prostitute", "prostitution" may generate sexist opinions and attitudes, reinforcing the image of a patriarchal society which confines women to either the domestic or the sexual sphere. Comparing the articles published in the two Romanian newspapers, the fact can be noticed that Romanian journalists writing for *Adevărul* use the term "prostitute" more often than those writing for *Cotidianul*. For example, the word "prostitute" appears in 4 out of 27 articles published in *Adevărul* in 2007 on the subject of Romanian women's migration, and in 10 out of 36 articles published in 2008. The use of the term may be related to the journalists' desire to attract the consumerist reader by sensationalist stories rather than to a real increase in the number of women migrants engaged in prostitution. Nevertheless, journalists should be more

cautious in relation to the labels they attach, as the frequent use of offending words such as “prostitute” may lead to the stereotypical representation of the Romanian women migrants as promiscuous. An example of the negative influence of such stereotyping and of prejudices on migration and employment policies is provided by the story of a highly-qualified Romanian woman migrant who sued her employer for discrimination. (“Românca în proces cu PwC la Londra a obținut daune de numai 750 de lire sterline” – “Romanian Woman Suing PwC in London Gets Damages of Only £750”, *Cotidianul*, 25 September 2009).

In such a context of negative stereotyping, objectification, victimhood and sexuality often combine in the representations of Romanian women migrants’ victimisation by various male figures, whether pertaining to the host community (e.g. “Italian arestat pentru tentativă de sechestrare a unei romance” – “Italian Arrested for Attempted Seizure of Romanian Migrant Woman”, *Adevărul*, 31 December 2007; “După ce și-a bătut soția româncă, un italian a dat foc la casă” – “After Beating Romanian Wife, Italian Husband Sets Home on Fire”, *Adevărul*, 13 February 2008; “Sataniști italieni, cercetați pentru uciderea unor prostituate românce” – “Italian Satanists, Investigated for Murder of Romanian Prostitutes”, *Adevărul*, 23 April 2008; etc.) or to the migrants’ in-group (“Italia: un român și-a ucis soția în mașină” – “Italy: Romanian Kills Wife in Their Car”, *Adevărul*, 10 December 2007; “Italia: român arestat pentru că își obliga soția să se prostitueze” – “Italy: Romanian Arrested for Forcing Wife into Prostitution”, *Adevărul*, 31 December 2007; “Italia: Un român își obliga soția minoră să se prostitueze” – “Italy: Romanian Forces Underage Wife into Prostitution”, *Adevărul*, 4 January 2008; etc.). What is also interesting to remark in this respect is that, nonetheless, a large number of articles show a certain preference for agentless, mostly passive, constructions that leave the aggressor unidentified (at least in terms of nationality, because, otherwise, the aggressor is stereotypically understood as male): “O româncă a fost ucisă în Spania” – “Romanian Woman Killed in Spain”, *Adevărul*, 21 June 2007; “Româncă găsită moartă la Milano, prezentând semne de agresiune” – “Milan: Aggressed Romanian Woman Found Dead”, *Adevărul*, 10 November 2007; “Roma: o româncă a murit într-un incendiu” – “Rome: Romanian Woman Dies in a Fire”, *Adevărul*, 17 December 2007; “Italia: O româncă a fost bătută, legată și aruncată dintr-o mașină” – “Italy: Romanian Woman Beaten, Tied Up and Thrown from Car”, *Adevărul*, 21 December 2007; “Au aflat din presă că fata lor a fost arsă de vie” – “They Found out in Press Their Daughter Was Burnt Alive”, *Adevărul*, 7 February 2008; “Italia: minore românce sechestrate și obligate să se prostitueze” – “Italy: Underage Romanian Girls Seized and Forced into Prostitution”, *Adevărul*, 15 February 2008.

Yet, when the victims are women or girls from the destination country, for example Italy, the aggressor is explicitly mentioned as in the examples below: “O bandă de hoți care vorbeau românește au luat ostatică fata unui om de afaceri italian” – “Gang of Thieves Speaking Romanian Take Hostage Italian Businessman’s Daughter”, *Adevărul*, 8 January 2008; “Doi români suspecți de violarea unei italience” – “Two Romanians Suspected of Italian Woman’s Rape”, *Cotidianul*, 15 January 2009; “Bărbații care au violat o fată de 14 ani la Roma sunt români” – “Rome: Men Raping Girl, 14, are Romanians”, *Cotidianul*, 16 February 2009; “Un român a violat o bătrână oarbă de 83 de ani din Italia” –

“Italy: Romanian Rapes Blind Old Woman, 83”, *Cotidianul*, 17 February 2009; “Bătrâna violată de un român în Italia a decedat în spital” - “Old Woman Raped by Romanian in Italy Dies in Hospital”, *Cotidianul*, 23 February 2009; “Doi români sunt suspecți că au violat o italiancă în vîrstă de 12 ani” - “Two Romanians Suspected of Raping Italian, 12”, *Cotidianul*, 2 March 2009.

If reference is made to the Italian woman as a victim of migrants’ violent acts, she is referred to as a “good wife and mother”, “decent person” different from the Romanian migrant woman who is a “bad mother” and/or “prostitute”. The articles devoted to the victimization of Italian women are largely exploited by the Italian press (e.g. representations of Giovanna Reggiani in the articles on the Mailat case - wife of an Italian Navy official, involved in charity and humanitarian assistance), which is not the case with the victimization of the Romanian migrant women.

Though most of the articles present Romanian migrant women as victims, there are also articles which, by effacing gender role distinctions, subsume their representations to the stereotype of the criminal Romanian Other. The image of Romanian women as aggressors appears in a few articles, reference being most often made to Romanian migrant women in Italy (“O româncă este cercetată pentru uciderea unei bătrâne” - “Romanian Woman Investigated for Old Woman’s Murder”, *Adevărul*, 8 January 2008; “Roma: În cazul ‘Umbrela ucigașă’, Doina Matei este acuzată de omor fără intenție” - Rome: In ‘Deadly Umbrella’ Case, Doina Matei Accused of Unintentional Murder”, *Adevărul*, 20 February 2008). Only rarely are women representing the host country presented as aggressors (“Româncă sechestrată în Italia de bătrânică pentru care lucra” - “Italy: Romanian Woman Locked by Old Woman She Worked for”, *Cotidianul*, 25 May 2008).

As regards the Romanian migrant man, he is generally associated with labour (especially in constructions), or crime (thief, trafficker, rapist, murderer), an individual who is violent to his family and who often commits acts of violence and crimes against the host population he shares a geographic and cultural space with. The stereotype of the host-country victim usually goes hand in hand with the discriminating stereotype of the Romanian migrant as an aggressor. The result is a tendency towards gender (men’s) discrimination in the host country which is obvious particularly in some articles (“Acasă toți românii din Italia. Să vină româncele” - “Send Home All Romanian Men. Let Romanian Women Come”, *Adevărul*, 23 April 2008), chief among which those presenting the personal opinion of Italian personalities like Alessandra Mussolini suggesting that men coming from Romania should be forbidden to enter the Italian territory (“Alessandra Mussolini: ‘Bărbații români să nu mai fie primiți în Italia’” - “Alessandra Mussolini: ‘Romanian Men Should Be Forbidden to Enter Italy’”, *Cotidianul*, 22 February 2009); abandoned Romanian children, on the other hand, should be given to adoption and granted Italian citizenship (“Nepoata lui Mussolini cere liber la adopții internaționale pentru copiii români” - “Mussolini’s Grand-Daughter Requires Free International Adoption for Romanian Children”, *Cotidianul*, 17 July 2009).

## 5. Conclusions

The main focus of the surveyed corpus – films and written press – has been on Romania as a migrant-sending society, though films (both feature and documentaries) have touched at times upon its different status as a destination or transit society primarily for citizens from the Republic of Moldova, as well. With the exception of *O*, the one feature film that juxtaposed pre- and post-1989 migration patterns, the rest of the analysed texts registered in their discursive fabric major post-communist and post-integration Romanian migratory trends, i.e. (il)legal (circular) labour migration, migration through marriage, ethnic migration, human trafficking, and foregrounded, in the wider context of communicated concepts and interpretations on migration, topical issues pertinent to these trends such as the depopulation of Romanian villages and the extinction of local cultures through emigration (documentaries), the risks and costs of illegal migration (feature films, documentaries and written press), especially for the Romanian ‘strawberry pickers’ (written press), child-abandonment (feature films and written press), Roma/Romanian criminality (feature films and written press).

Considering the texts’ politics of representation related to the differential experiences of migrant women and men in a gendered world, one major difference can be established between the feature films (which, through a predominantly feminine cast of migrant characters, suggest the increased feminisation of migratory trends) and the written press articles (which generally build up a gender-neutral profile of the Romanian migrant, or, in the few cases in which they adopt a gender-oriented perspective, they still tend to under-represent women issues), with the documentaries (which focus either on married couples, or devote equal attention to men and women migrants, offering thus a gender-balanced view of migration) placed in-between.

Placed in the perspectival context of the representing text (home vs. host) in order to highlight the interplay of socio-political and cultural specificities, the analysed corpus reveals itself as multi-accentual, conflicted and conflicting with discourses on migration privileged in a particular milieu.

To be more specific, the films always portray home as a society on the point of transition (communism vs. capitalism, collectivism vs. individualism, localism vs. globalisation, rural vs. urban) and fractured along economic, social, spatial, ethnic and generational lines. The newspaper articles insist on the economic dimension, persistently characterising it as an unattractive labour market with severe consequences at the social level (unemployment, marginalisation and impoverishment) and eager to benefit from migrant remittances. While the ethnic dimension is under-represented in films (only a few documentaries tackle issues related to Romanian Saxons’ migration in the early 1990s), the press draws a clear distinction between the Romanian and the Roma ethnic minority. Host societies (Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Austria, England, Ireland, or the more distant Australia) are backgrounded in the Romanian feature films, but emerge as dominant in the foreign ones – either as rural, tradition-bound but aging (the French community in *TB*) or, conversely, as urban, prosperous but class-ridden (the Italian family in *RM*). Though present in

all documentaries, the destination cultures remain silent, for the migrants remain confined to diasporic groups, not shown in inter-cultural interaction. Only in *IT* the host country resurfaces as a mercantile, profit-obsessed and consumerist society. Conversely, the press insists once more on the economic aspect, as host societies are always defined as attractive in financial terms, though differentiated between a more socially tolerant and permissive towards migrants Spain, or an Italy vacillating between hostility and moderation.

The same post-communist realities apply to women only more poignantly so, hence the increased feminisation of emigration against the background of persistent forms of patriarchy limiting women's opportunities. Consequently, both the Romanian and foreign films textualise the figure of the woman migrant as a victim of grave economic and social problems: unemployment, poverty, generation gap, limited child-care options, and the continuing domination of male-centred values and hierarchies at both domestic and public levels. Otherwise, most of the films, either obliquely or explicitly, reveal migrant women as being positioned on the margin of the host society, with limited options: underpaid feminised sectors of the labour market (cleaning and caring, agriculture, entertainment) or morally-questionable activities like beggary and prostitution, often pushed to the extreme form of human trafficking. As said before, women migrant experiences tend to remain under-represented in the written press. When they emerge as dominant, the Romanian newspapers mostly focus on the domestic sphere, particular stress being laid on child-abandonment as a social consequence of women's migration. In a few cases, they also draw attention to the broader social and economic context of the phenomenon. With reference to their encounters with the host societies, only a few Romanian articles popularize cases of successful migrant women, the rest witnessing to the limited range of jobs (domestic work, health care, agriculture, weaving, tourism) available to them. Otherwise, they are presented either as promiscuous or as victims (of trafficking, rape, murder), and more rarely as aggressors (mostly in the Italian press.)

The institutional context is obliquely touched upon in the feature films, which, nevertheless acknowledge that opportunities for legal migration are extremely few and not always reliable. Moreover, the Romanian productions insist on the fact that businesses (both home and abroad) thrive on Romanian dreams to migrate, while the police are helpless, useless and/or easily bribed. The opposite is the case in the documentaries, where institutions receive a much clearer representation: state emigration authorities facilitating ethnic migration; employment agencies mediating legal work contracts; GOs and NGOs involved in combating human trafficking. Nevertheless, even here the protagonists are shown to assume the risks of illegal migration through fake visas, work and residence permits, or migrant smuggling. In the host societies, police is recurrently mentioned and felt as a constant threat by illegal migrants. Deprived of citizenship, the latter cannot claim any rights. Only NGOs try to alleviate their condition. Likewise, the Romanian newspapers tend to agree on the fact that there is no well-defined labour migration policy at home, but praise the actions of both governmental and non-governmental institutions geared either towards the cultural (re)integration of migrants, or providing support to "home alone" children. Similarly, the articles dealing with the Romanian 'strawberry pickers' lay their emphasis on those Spanish institutions that



support the migrants' integration. Another standpoint is adopted by the journalists reporting on the Roma/Romanian criminality in Italy, where the institutional framework is correspondingly embodied by judicial, administrative and political structures that attempt (though not always successfully) to regulate migration.

As far as women are concerned, both films and written press acknowledge the fact that there exists an under-representation of policies and institutions concerned with their rights. While in all the feature films the feminine characters appear as deprived of any official support at home, having to take their fate into their own hands and survive as best as they can, *IT* is the only documentary to cite the chain of Romanian GOs and NGOs involved in combating trafficking and offering assistance to the victims. The same holds true for the host societies, in which acceptance, recognition and citizenship are actually denied to the women migrants, except for those that acquire it through the institution of marriage. Moreover, the documentaries insist in showing that women are more vulnerable with respect to their illegal status, obsessively fearing the police and deportation. Only the press makes very scarce references to supportive actions undertaken on behalf of migrant women involved in politics in the host country.

As cultural texts, films as well as newspaper articles remain embedded in a recognizable social matrix, in keeping with the inner dynamics and outspoken ideals of the given communities. Through the visual and textual representations they transmit and mediate, all media texts carry 'mental' schemata that underpin the interplay between perception of the other and self-perception, best revealed by an analysis of images and stereotypes through which they attempt a conceptualisation of migration and the migrant's experience. As such, in the more poetically-ruled and (non)fictional-narrative media of film, a pervading sense of desperation, displacement, moral confusion and loss of tradition (as the recurring metaphor of death suggests) loom large over the meanings of home. Otherwise, 'home' vacillates between Western stereotypes of Romania/The East as exotic tourist attraction, idyllic, but primitive Eden, or land of poverty and moral compromise (in *TB* and *J, T, GW*). At the opposite end, the imagined cartography of the films situates the myth of the rich and mighty West. Ironically, this is sustained only by *TB* and *WM*, while all the other films cast it into doubt or bluntly deny it. Placed in-between, the migrant's construction largely abides by the traditional stereotypes of "adventurer", "exile", "prodigal son/daughter" (in the home culture), "adapter"/"alien" or the more recent "illegal worker", "criminal" and "prostitute" (in the destination culture), but also slightly destabilises them by trespassing or conjoining their typological and cultural borders. In the more factual journalistic discourse, the emphasis is laid upon two recent cultural stereotypes related to (il)legal labour migration: the "strawberry picker" and the "criminal Roma/Romanian". As the analysis of Romanian newspaper articles reveals, in the destination cultures the former is only circulated among members of the Romanian diaspora and is rejected on its assumed pejorative connotations, while the latter is generalised so as to erase ethnic differences in the stereotype of the Romanian criminal Other.

Though, to a greater or lesser extent, all texts focus on the differential experience of migrant women and men in the context of a gendered world, they still tend to comply with traditional encodings of masculinity and femininity which conform to societal expectations fostered by their respective cultural and historical location. The films consistently represent womanhood in terms of sexuality, domesticity, motherhood and victimhood; Romanian women migrants are thus mostly reduced to passive objects devoid of agency, as male figures invested with patriarchal authority either set in motion, deceive into, direct or bring to an end their journeys. The codification of masculinity is more ambiguous, conflating the roles of victimiser and victim, the latter dominating men migrants' narratives. The traditional mapping of migration in the gendered dichotomy of the masculine West and the feminine East is sustained by *TB* and *IT*, but reversed in *RN* to foreground the stereotype of the threatening and criminal Romanian "Other" that assaults a civilised but defenseless feminine West. The written press goes even further in its compliance with the traditional encodings of femininity. By focusing on women migrant's transgression of traditional roles as wives and mothers (e.g. the 'home alone' children campaign), Romanian articles foster the stereotypes of "bad mother" and "easy woman". Otherwise, many focus on sensationalist news in which "victimhood" is equated with the image of the Romanian woman migrant. As for the foreign articles included in the analysed corpus, it seems that the image of the Romanian woman migrant is most often associated with victimhood, prostitution, or criminality to the extreme, conflating stereotypical constructions of femininity (victims) and masculinity (criminals) of eastern European migrants.

## 6. Policy recommendations

Although migration inevitably brings about unsettling experiences, it is a fact that it has become, for many Romanians, a way of life. Therefore the media, by underwriting their trajectories to other cultures and societies, should empower the migrants to integrate and overcome marginalisation by highlighting their potential contribution to the wholesomeness of the European heritage.

Since in today's world, images tend to carry more persuasive weight than writings, filmic texts registering the dynamic interplay of cross-cultural perceptions which migration entails should reach out to a wider public through:

- the organisation of thematic festivals (or sections within festivals);
- broader television broadcasting;
- the issuing of good quality multi-language subtitled copies of the most representative productions to be disseminated at home and abroad;
- the creation of libraries (or archives) of migration-related films to support research into the field.

Because the press has a crucial role in mentality formation and manipulation, its representational power should be used to encourage positive cross-cultural dialogue by:

- avoiding abusive generalisations likely to evolve into negative stereotypes;
- avoiding the trap of easy sensationalism and offering their readership a more balanced presentation of (gender in) migration topics, that would allow for a more comprehensive view on them;
- even with controversial issues, trying to cast a more inquisitive look at the larger context to which their subjects belong, encouraging an investigative rather than informative type of reporting;
- receiving professional training that would do out with plagiarism or distortion of original sources.

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## 8. Appendix: Film Overviews

### 8.1. Feature Films

1. ***Weekend cu mama (Weekend with my Mother)* - WM**
  - director: Stere Gulea
  - producer: Andrei Boncea
  - release date: 2009
  - genre: drama
  - duration: 90 minutes
  - language: Romanian
  - setting: Bucharest and the countryside
  - Cast: Medeea Marinescu (Luiza), Adela Popescu (Cristina), Tudor Aaron Istodor (Glont), Gheorghe Dinică (stepfather), Ecaterina Nazare (Elena).
  - Awards: Best Film at the Independent Producers' International Film Festival - IPIFF, Constanța (2009).
  
2. ***Schimb valutar (Exchange)* - E**
  - director: Nicolae Mărgineanu
  - script: Tudor Voican
  - release date: 2008
  - genre: drama
  - duration: 100 minutes

- language: Romanian
- setting: Bucharest and the provinces
- Cast: Cosmin Selesi (Emil), Aliona Munteanu (Lili), Rodica Ionescu (Ana), Valentin Uritescu (father in law), Andi Vasluianu (Streche).
- Awards: 4 nominations (Best Actor in a Leading Role- Cosmin Selesi, Best Script - Tudor Voican, Best Actress in a Supporting Role - Aliona Munteanu, Best Original Music Score- Petru Margineanu) at the GOPO Film Festival (2009).

3. ***Legiunea străină (The Foreign Legion) - FL***

- director: Mircea Daneliuc
- script: Mircea Daneliuc
- release date: 2008
- genre: drama + comedy
- duration: 97 minutes
- language: Romanian
- setting: a small village in the mountains
- Cast: Oana Piecnița (Lilica), Cătălin Paraschiv (Aurel), Radu Ciobănașu (Stelica), Mircea Radu Iacoban (Mitu), Rică Răducanu (Maricel), Despina Stănescu (grandmother Vergina), Toma Cuzin (policeman 1), Oxana Moravec (doctor), Nicodim Ungureanu (colonel), Mircea Teodorescu (businessman 1).

4. ***Italiencele (The Italian Women) - IW***

- Director: Napoleon Helmis
- Writer: Napoleon Helmis
- Producer: Ion Mititelu
- Release date: 2004
- Genre: comedy
- Duration: 82 min
- Language: Romanian and French
- Setting: a village in Oltenia
- Cast: Mara Nicolescu (Jeni), Ana Ularu (Lenuța), Valentin Popescu (the father), Vlad Zamfirescu (Giovani), Emil Hoștină (Fane), Costel Cașcaval (Gigel), Ion Cocieru (the railway station chief).

5. ***Occident (Occident) - O***

- Director: Cristian Mungiu
- Writer: Cristian Mungiu
- Producer: Dan Badea
- Release date: 2002
- Genre: comedy
- Duration: 110 min
- Language: Romanian, French, Italian, English
- Setting: Bucharest
- Cast: Alexandru Papadopol (Luci), Anca-Ioana Androne (Sorina), Tania Popa (Mihaela), Dorel Vișan (Mihaela's father), Coca Bloos (Mihaela's mother), Eugenia Bosânceanu (Aunt Leana), Ioan Gyuri Pascu (Gica), Tora Vasilescu (the school-mistress), Samuel Tastet (Jerome), Michael Beck (The Dutchman), Jérôme Bounkazi (The Italian).

- Awards: Best new Director Award, Leeds (2002); Nova Prize, Monpellier (2002); Audience Award, Thessaloniki (2002); Great Prize for Best Picture, Annonay (2003); "Quinzaine des Réalisateurs", Cannes (2002).

6. ***Asfalt Tango (Asphalt Tango) - AT***

- Director: Nae Caranfil
- Writers: Nae Caranfil and Stéphane Lépine
- Producers: Marc Ruscart, Cristian Ciorneagă
- Release date: 1996
- Genre: comedy
- Duration: 100 min
- Language: Romanian and French
- Setting: Bucharest and the provinces
- Cast: Charlotte Rampling (Marion), Mircea Diaconu (Andrei), Florin Călinescu (Gigi), Constantin Cotimanis (the driver), Cătălina Răhăianu (Dora), Marthe Felten (Felicia), Adina Cartianu (Graziela)
- Awards: UCIN (Romanian Filmmakers' Association) - Best Director (1996-1997).

7. ***Il resto della notte (The Rest of the Night) - RN***

- Director: Francesco Munzi
- Writer: Francesco Munzi
- Release Date: 2008 (Italy)
- Genre: Drama
- Language: Italian and Romanian
- Setting: Brescia, Italy
- Cast: Sandra Ceccarelli (Silvana Boarin), Aurelien Recoing (Giovanni Boarin), Stefano Casseti (Marco Rancalli), Laura Vasiliu (Maria), Victor Cosma (Victor), Constantin Lupescu (Ionuț), Veronica Besa (Anna Boarin), Valentina Cervi (Francesca), Ditta Teresa Acerbis (Eusebia), Susy Laude (Mara), Bruno Festo (Luca), Corrado Invernizzi (Driver), Giovanni Morina (Davide), Maurizio Tabani (Vincenzo), Simonetta Benozzo (Operator)
- Awards: Premiered at "Quinzaine des Réalisateurs" at Cannes Film Festival; [Italian Film Festival - Cinema Miracolo](#) - Jury Award (2008).

8. ***Je vous trouve très beau (I Find You Very Nice) - TB***

- Producer: Jean- Louis Livi
- Director: Isabelle Mergault
- Writer: Isabelle Mergault
- Production company: Gaumont & France\_2 Cinéma
- Cast: Michel Blanc (Aymé Pigrenet), Medeea Marinescu (Elena), Wladimir Yordanoff (Roland Blanchot), Benoît Turjman (Antoine), Eva Darlan (Mme Marais), Elisabeth Commelin (Françoise), Valérie Bonneton (Maître Labaume), Julien Cafaro (Thierry), Valentin Traversi (Jean-Paul), Raphaël Dufour (Nicolas)
- Release Date:
  - 11 January 2006 (France)
  - 18 January 2006 (Belgium)
  - 27 April 2006 (Italy)

- 14 June 2006 (USA)
- 15 June 2006 (Israel)
- 23 September 2006 (Serbia)
- 6 December 2006 (Romania)
- 8 February 2007 (Germany)
- 21 September 2007 (South Korea)
- 4 April 2008 (Mexico)
- Awards: César Best First Work (Isabelle Mergault) (2007); "Love is Folly" International Film Festival, Bulgaria - Best Actor (Michel Blanc) (2007).

## 8.2. Documentaries

### 1. *Beyond the Forest* - BF

- Genre: interactive or participatory documentary
- Production: Golden Girls Filmproduktion
- Director: Gerald Igor Hauzenberger
- Screenplay: Gerald Igor Hauzenberger
- Language: German, with Romanian subtitles
- Duration: 75 min
- Release: 2007
- Setting: Transylvania, Romania
- Characters: an old man (Johann Schuff), an old woman (Maria Huber)
- Awards: FIPRESCI Award at Transylvania International Film Festival (2007); Erasmus EUROMEDIA Sponsorship Award (2007); Best film at Saratov Sufferings Film Festival, Russia (2007).

### 2. *Leaving Transylvania* - LT

- Genre: interactive or participatory documentary
- Director: Dieter Auner (a Saxon-Romanian who migrated in Germany to eventually settle in Ireland)
- Language: Saxon-German, Romanian
- Duration: 52 min
- Release: 2006
- Setting: Arbegen, a small village in Transylvania; Augsburg, Germany
- Characters: an elderly Saxon couple Hans Kenzel and Maria Kenzel.

### 3. *Stella* - S

- Genre: interactive or participatory documentary (part of a trilogy on Romanian women)
- Director: Vanina Vignal
- Languages: Romanian and French
- Duration: 77 min
- Release: 2006
- Settings: Paris, France and Braila, Romania
- Characters: Stela Margean, Marcel Margean (husband), Gabi (Stela's sister)
- Awards: Cinéma du réel, International Documentary Film Festival, Paris - Patrimony award (2007).

### 4. *Inhuman Traffic* -IT



- Genre: TV documentary
- Produced by: MTV - An MTV Exit Special as part of the campaign "Exit - to end exploitation and trafficking" (launched in July 2004 at the EXIT Festival in Novi Sad, Serbia & Montenegro and broadcasted in Romania on a national television channel, TVR2; for the show "Lumea de aproape" /"The World under the Lens")
- Duration: 30 min
- Release: 2005
- Presenter: Angelina Jolie
- Languages: English, Dutch, Check, Romanian;
- Subtitles: Romanian
- Character list: Anna - Romanian victim of trafficking; Ludmila - potential victim; from Moldova; Giovanni - client of sex with prostitutes; Dutch; Steve - owner of strip club in Prague; Luan Plakici - Albanian trafficker; Stefano - works for a UN Centre for Trafficking Unit - Kosovo, Serbia; fights to prevent the phenomenon from spreading; saves victims and prosecutes traffickers; Maria - Romanian anti-trafficking activist; rescues, offers protection from traffickers; runs a safe house for victims; Tatiana - Moldovan victim of trafficking; Alina - counsellor for women seeking work abroad; works for the "La Strada" anti trafficking organisation; Moldovan.

#### **5. *The Last Peasants. Journeys - J***

- Genre: observational documentary (first part of the trilogy)
- Production company: October Films
- Producer: Angus MacQueen
- Script: Angus MacQueen
- Language: Romanian and English
- Narration: Tom Wilkinson
- Cinematography: Roger Chapman
- Duration: 50 min
- Release: 2003
- Setting: Budești, Maramureș (North-Western Romania); Dublin; Paris; Vienna.
- Characters: Vasile Damian (father), Petru Damian (son), Ion Damian (son), Maria (Petru's wife), Maria (Ion's wife).

#### **6. *The Last Peasants. Temptation - T***

- Genre: observational documentary (second part of the trilogy)
- Production company: October Films
- Producer: Angus MacQueen
- Script: Angus MacQueen
- Languages: English and Romanian
- Narration: Tom Wilkinson
- Cinematography: Roger Chapman
- Duration: 58 min
- Release: 2003
- Setting: Budești, Maramureș (North-Western Romania); Bucharest; London
- Characters: Gheorghe Opreș and his wife, Irina; their son Laurențiu and his girlfriend from town; the old generation of the Bud family (father, mother,

grandmother); the new generation of the Buds (Florica and Lorinț, daughter and son).

### **7. *The Last Peasants. A Good Wife - GW***

- Genre: observational documentary (third part of the trilogy)
- Production company: October Films
- Producer: Angus MacQueen
- Script: Angus MacQueen
- Languages: English and Romanian
- Duration: 48 min
- Release: 2003
- Setting: Budești, Maramureș (North-Western Romania); Paris
- Characters: Radu Bud, Vasile and Mihaela Marinca (the “good wife”), Mariana (Mihaela’s sister), Ion (Mariana’s husband), Anuța (Radu Bud’s “good bride”)
- Series Awards: Prix Europa IRIS (TV Non-fiction), Berlin (2003); BFI Grierson Best Documentary Series Award (2003); Kodak Award (2003); Royal Television Society Awards for Photography, Editing and Team - Best Documentary Series (2003); First Annual Directors Guild of Great Britain (DGGB) Awards - Best Documentary for *The Last Peasants. A Good Wife* (2004); Astra Film Festival Special Jury Prize, Sibiu (2004).