

THE IMPACT OF LABOUR MIGRATION ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT. THE ROMANIAN CASE

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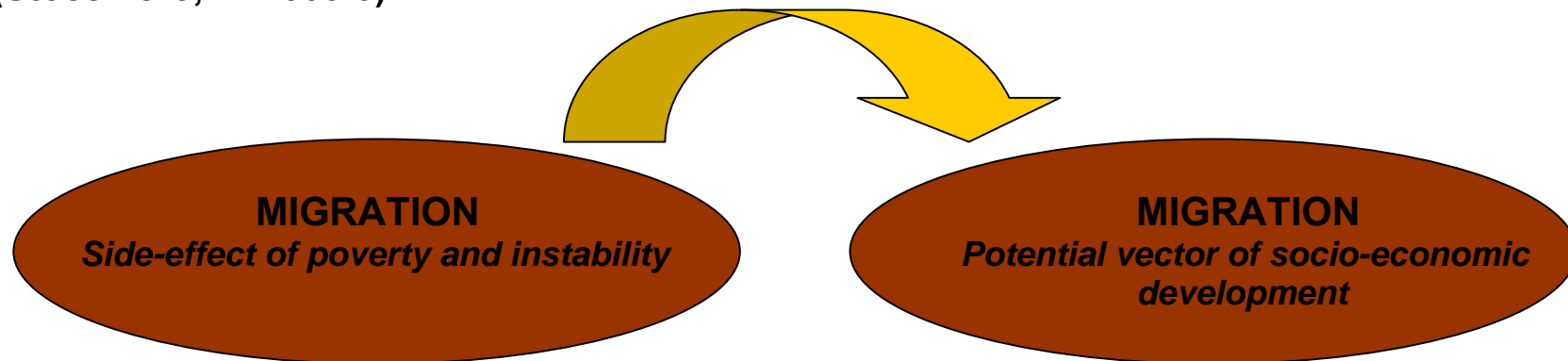
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In the era of globalization, we witness a high mobility for goods, services, information, capital and technologies, due to fewer and fewer barriers, but also a limited mobility of persons, moreover of the labour force, due to restrictive measures and individual limits. But, despite its obvious constraints, migration “offers the greatest potential for future gains” (Ranis, G. 2007:11), in the context of globalization.

The relationship between migration and development was for too a long period underestimated. Since 2002, European Union has supported an important *paradigm shift*. (Stocchiero, A. 2005:3)



Still,

There isn't an automatic link between migration and development. The policy makers hold the responsibility of setting up national and local agendas for the improvement of socio-economic environment in the immigrant-sending areas (Andrade-Eekhoff, 2005:4)

Labour migration (mainly short term, but not exclusively) has gained a high importance in the European debate on migration. This high interest has been supported by statistics: Europe is the home for approximately 9 millions economically active foreigners (Zoomers & van Naerssen, 2006:2).

However, the socio-economic impact of labour migration on local communities can be considered double edged:

Positive impact +	
Country of origin	Country of destination
Brain gain (return migrants successfully reintegrated)	Brain gain (highly skilled immigrants in top positions)
Remittances (income growth, increased consumption, long term investments)	3D jobs (immigrants- filling the gap)
“Export” of unemployment	Young immigrants – role in demographic change
Opportunity for financing community based projects	Increased number of tax payers (national/local budget)
Increased access to educational and health services for the migrants’ families	
Diaspora’s lobby	
Transfer of new work culture, best practices, knowledge	

Negative impact -	
Country of origin	Country of destination
Demographic impact (youth loss)	Pressure on the social system (new vulnerable groups)
Loss of young labour force (youth loss) →	Population fears' - immigrants as jobs' thieves, trouble makers, misfits...
Loss of qualified labour force (brain drain) →	
Cummulative causation (Myrdal, in Ma et all, 2004:5)	
Conflicting relationships within the community (new socio-economic inequalities due to status change)	Conflicting relationships within the local community (immigrants and natives)
"Ghost villages"- "Flying villages"	The integration programmes vs. assimilation strategies (how costly?)
Vulnerable family members left behind (elderly, women, children) - higher dependence on migrant's resources (substitutes and not complements to family income)	
Failure of reintegration programmes for returnees	

The macro perspective of East –West migration flows and micro perspective of the migrants and their networks must be completed by a medium scale perspective, the local community perspective. Investigating migration 'here and there' became a *must* of the interdisciplinary research initiatives focused on labour migration

In the Romania's case, labour migration has become the main form of migration, after 1989. The latest data reveal a number of over 2,500,000 persons working abroad, most of them on temporary basis (Sandu et all, 2007). The migration patterns shifted from permanent to temporary (*circular migration, back and forth*), becoming a "life strategy" (Sandu, 2005)

PROJECT PROPOSAL

aim

To examine the impact of labour migration on the local community. A particular attention will be given to the impact on families (family - an important unit for the migration analysis).

Objectives

- ❖ To identify the costs (financial and non-financial) of migration at community level and on family level
- ❖ To identify the benefits of migration at community level and on family level (migrant families, as well as non-migrant families)
- ❖ To identify the existing role of migrants and return migrants in the local development
- ❖ To design the potential role of emigrants and returnees in the local development
- ❖ To formulate policy recommendations for the local authorities in order to set up an agenda for the economic and social development of local communities.

Methodology

The field work will be carried out in 3 different locations in Romania, locations with high emigration rates. The empirical research will be based on interviews' guides (questionnaire with close and open questions) for in depth interviews.

Sample

Rural community 1 (village)

- ❖ 2 interviews with local authorities' representatives
- ❖ 10 interviews with migrant families (if possible, with return migrants)
- ❖ 10 interviews with non-migrant families (control group)

Rural community 2 (village)

- ❖ 2 interviews with local authorities' representatives
- ❖ 10 interviews with migrant families (if possible, with return migrants)
- ❖ 10 interviews with non-migrant families (control group)

Urban community (small town)

- ❖ 2 interviews with local authorities' representatives
- ❖ 10 interviews with migrant families (if possible, with return migrants)
- ❖ 10 interviews with non-migrant families (control group)

Outcomes

For each target community is intended a sketch of a “*community profile*”, revealing the peculiarities of these communities as resulted from the “migration experience”, the so-called “migration-related changes” (new socio-economic inequalities due to status change, changed family roles, social networking for migration, etc.)

The field work results will be processed and interpreted. The research results will contribute to the design of *policy recommendations* for the local authorities involved in the management of migration and local development.

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