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Debating Migration as a Public Problem: Diasporic Stances in Media Discourse***

Abstract

This explorative study focuses on the construction of migration as a public problem through media discourse. Adopting Rogers Brubaker's suggestion to approach diaspora as "a idiom, stance and claim", we start from the assumption that journalists, when discussing migration, adopt diasporic stances, expressing loyalties and moral commitments and articulating them in the debate through practical arguments. Focusing on the media debates generated, in August 2010, by a declaration of Traian Băsescu, president of Romania, on the effects of migration, we identify three types of media discourse: the policy approach discourse, the professional accomplishment discourse and the citizen-as-victim discourse. We systematically relate these types of discourses with the arguments invoked for or against migration, and their subjacent loyalties. We conclude that through such diasporic stances, journalist engage diaspora in an instrumental manner, instituting a one-dimensional perspective on it, along the traditional view of the social-political victimization.

Key words: diasporic stance, migration, public problem, media debate

Rezumat

Acest studiu explorativ investighează construcția, prin discursul mediatic, a migrației ca problemă publică. Abordând, pe urmele lui Rogers Brubaker, diaspora drept „un idiom, o poziționare și o enunțare”, pornim de la asumția că jurnaliștii, atunci când discută migrația, adoptă poziționări diasporice, exprimând loialități și angajamente morale și articulându-le în dezbateri prin intermediul argumentelor practice. Concentrându-ne asupra dezbaterilor media generate, în August 2012, de declarațiile președintelui Traian Băsescu despre efectele migrației, identificăm trei tipuri de discursuri cu privire aceasta: discursul de evaluare a politicilor publice, discursul realizării profesionale și discursul cetățeanului-ca-victimă. Încercăm să stabilim conexiuni sistematice între aceste tipuri de discursuri și argumentele invocate, împreună cu loialitățile subiacente acestora, în favoarea sau împotriva migrării. Concluzionăm că prin asemenea poziționări diasporice jurnaliștii mobilizează o reprezentare a diasporei într-o logică a instrumentalizării, instituind o perspectivă unidimensională asupra acesteia, concordantă cu victimizarea socio-politică ce caracterizează viziunea tradițională asupra diasporei.

Cuvinte-cheie: poziționare diasporică, migrație, problemă publică, dezbateri mediatică

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1. Introduction

This paper approaches the role of Romanian media discourse in debating the theme of migration, in the broader context of the relation between migration and diaspora. We are interested in identifying how competing definitions of migration as a public problem lead to types of media discourses on migration and how the various arguments advanced in this debate allow journalists to adopt and make visible diasporic stances. The broader theoretical framework of our research relies on recent developments in cultural and media studies, investigating the configuration of civil sphere as a solidarity sphere, the relation between publicly expressed loyalties and moral commitments and civic engagement and political participation, and media responsibility towards their public.

The research starts from Rogers Brubaker's call to treat diaspora "not in substantialist terms, as a bounded entity, but rather as a idiom, a stance, a claim". (Brubaker 2005, p. 12). Looking at diaspora mainly as a category of practice (as opposed to treating it as an analytic category), Brubaker is interested in understanding how diasporic stances can be used to remake the world rather than merely describe it. Treating diaspora as "idiom, stance and claim" amounts to formulating identities and allegiances of a certain population in particular contexts, by making claims, articulating projects, mobilizing energies or appealing to loyalties. Those formulating such identities and allegiances might not necessarily be members of the diaspora, but this is irrelevant for the performativity of such discourses. Brubaker's remark that "those who do the formulating may themselves be part of the population in question; or they may be speaking in the name of the homeland state" (Brubaker, 2005, p. 12) opens thus a direction of investigation, adopted by this research, for cases where the constellations of allegiances are invoked in public debates and various participants (members of diaspora or not) adopt a diasporic stance (even temporary, hypothetically, provisionally) to make their discursive interventions effective. In discussing various public issues, allegiances towards an ethnic or national community might be counterbalanced by other individualistic, collectivistic or cosmopolitan loyalties. Consequently, this paper will survey and map the interaction between various types of loyalties invoked and various types of discourses generated in a media debate on professional migration in Romania, aiming at understanding how diasporic or emigrationist stances might be adopted by journalists and bloggers in evaluating various public policies.

The problem of the role of media in building a civil sphere is the broader theoretical context of our approach and, in this context we will highlight the relation between the discursive construction of public problems, which mobilizes loyalties and generates diasporic stances, and the role of civic journalism in a context of mobility and cosmopolitanism, since journalist participatory practices and interventions in the public arena cannot ignore the geo-cultural dynamics of the contemporary, globalised world. In our case, we are interested in understanding how various arguments regarding migration and diaspora emerge in the public sphere, as part of the process of defining a public problem (Gusfield, 1981). We aim to show that pointing to emigrational consequences as a strategy to evaluate and reject various policies or public initiatives on the one hand mobilizes multifarious allegiances of the journalists who thus perform a "symbolic work of division and classification" (Chouliaraki, 2006, p. 10), but on the other hand, as a side effect, generates a representation of the diaspora in the traditional logic of the social-political victimization.

Our analysis focuses on a media debate in August 2010, generated by a declaration of the President of Romania, Traian Băsescu, regarding the opportunities stemming from the migration of highly qualified doctors and nurses, but also from generalized forms of migration. Other events in the same month both intensified and extended the media debates on the topic of migration: France's decision to expel Roma migrants from Romania and Bulgaria, a tragic incident in a maternity ward in Bucharest revealing the shortcomings of the Romanian health system, and a governmental political decision regarding taxation of independent income that produced turmoil in Romanian media. The media corpus for this research follows the broader debate, being deliberately selected to include various journalistic practices and genres and thus to allow an insight into the complexity of how the problem is articulated in the public arena (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). Our aims are rather explorative than systematic, consequently the analysis aims at investigating and illustrating the consequences of certain methodological and analytical options rather than at an in-depth understanding of a single case of media debate.

In the context of Romanian media debates, understanding the diasporic phenomenon does not follow traditional approaches (such as those overviewed by Bruneau, 2010). Diaspora is seen mainly as the result of the massive migration occurring after the fall of communism, be it the migration of the unskilled labor force, benefiting preeminence both in media and public debates, or the migration of highly-skilled professionals, a phenomenon gaining more and more visibility over the last years. The theme of migration constantly features on the Romanian media agenda, albeit somehow in the background of the main discourse. It is usually brought forward by changes in host countries' policies regarding migrants or by incidents in the migrants' communities. The politicians seem to reactivate the migrants as a voting body during elections or use them as a living proof of misguided policies when they take a stand against foreign governments' decisions which affect the diaspora. The surge of profound social turmoil brought about by the economic crisis has triggered increased interest in the diaspora as a provider of money for families left behind and as a nurturing home for those who chose to emigrate in search of more felicitous living standards. While the early '90s witnessed political migration (with migrants seeking a way out of the instability of social and political life in a former Communist country) and the early 2000s, economically motivated migration, the latest wave of immigrants seems to be driven away from the country by very diverse factors, among which hope for professional improvement, disappointment in public policies and political life in general, and failure of the state to provide appropriate working environments for specialists. Following the liberalization of labour force movement in the EU, the habitual construction workers and domestic helps have been joined by highly professionalized immigrants, among which doctors and nurses cut a particularly striking figure.

It is against these recent developments that we set our analysis of the strategic use of the theme of professional migration in the Romanian media, part of a larger research project about media's discourse on diasporic identity.

2. The reconfiguration of civil society

Civil society defined as a 'solidarity sphere' implies the fact that rational, good-willed individuals trust other independent persons to build 'a particular kind of solidarity' fed by a variety of social values which are accepted as a foundation for public engagement through this

very understanding of individuals as trustworthy (Alexander, 2001, pp. 339-340). This civil society, 'exhibited and sustained by public opinion, deep cultural codes, distinctive organizations – legal, journalistic and associational – and such historically specific interactional practices as civility, criticism and mutual respect' (Alexander, 2006, p. 31) is defined in both moral and cultural terms (in opposition with the standard Habermasian approach, which tends to include cultural commitments in ethics, rather than morals). Various degrees of regulation and fragmentation characterize processes of in-group/out-group movements into the civil sphere, but they all project a vision of the dynamics of civil sphere and of the cultural and moral foundation needed for cohesion into this civil sphere (Kivisto & Faist, 2007, p. 46). Alexander also describes civil society as containing not only symbolic categories but also structures of feeling (among which, the idea of the public 'as it has inserted itself into social subjectivity' – Alexander, 2006, p. 72). The result is the pervasiveness of civil society discourse in a variety of social and political movements seeking validation ('The normative reference of the public sphere is a cultural structure, the discourse of civil society' – Alexander, 2006, p. 72). The focus on the cultural dimension of the civil sphere seems to encourage an analysis of political engagement as cultural practice and an understanding of the importance of moral commitments for community identity.

The dynamics of citizenship in nation-bound communities (caused in part by the fragmentation of public sphere and the individuals' pursuit of rights) is further complicated in transnational migrant communities, against the background of globalization. The downplay of nation-states together with the emergence of multiple actors of governance and the growing reality of cosmopolitanism are some of the factors leading to a new understanding of citizenship. If the state is no longer the single container of citizenship, we need to look at the implications of cultural citizenship as a 'crucial site of governmentality' (Miller, 2002, p. 242).

Given that identity is experienced beyond nation-based frames, we need to understand how this identity is governed and given a political expression. Understanding that virtue ethics is fundamental in the development of the citizen, it follows that 'if we are to have global rights and cosmopolitan citizenship, we need to evolve a language of obligation and virtue' to account for the moral commitments of cosmopolitan citizens (Isin & Turner, 2002, p. 8). Postnational and denationalised conceptions of citizenship need to charter the particularities of citizens' rights, obligations and practices (Sassen, 2002, p. 288). Since there is no global public sphere to gather the moral aspirations of citizens of the world, would the rise of cosmopolitan citizenship imply the death of the civil sphere through lack of participation in politics? One way to charter the civic involvement of the cosmopolitan citizen would be to allow for the existence of 'the sphere of cosmopolitan duty'; yet universalistic ethical commitments are hard to map; 'the sphere of cosmopolitan rights' would be a second; yet there arises the difficulty of enforcing such rights; finally, 'the sphere of cosmopolitan democracy' poses the problem of instruments for global governance and of their effect on the global distribution of power (Linklater, 2002). Yet another way is to imagine a return of citizens' allegiances towards their communities of origin, with this added value of cosmopolitan perspective. In this context we can understand the role played by 'transnational' or 'cosmopolitan' citizens in the national imagination.

3. The performative dimension of citizenship

The communitarian argument of culturally-derived citizenship (and, more generally, the normative view on citizenship as being bound in a consensual community) is challenged by theorists who regard citizenship in its social dynamics, and community, as “a highly relational concept” (Delanty, 2002, p. 159). An understanding of community as highly cohesive (and consequently, of parochial citizenship) is a negation of moral universalism in favour of dominant culture. In opposition, in a postmodern vein, we should assume the heterogeneity of communities; moreover, once Habermas looked at community as communication community, we need to look at critical debate in the public sphere (rules of discourse and forms of argumentation) to understand discursive democracy. The focus on the relational nature of community does not rule out the importance of cultural communities in favour of, for instance, political communities; rather it recognizes their importance for shaping political communities reflexively. Delanty argues for “a reflexive, internally differentiated and communicative understanding of community and citizenship that is more in tune with contemporary developments, allowing us to speak of a cosmopolitan institutionalization of communities of dissent” (Delanty, 2002, p. 160). Consequently, we are to look at developing social practices to understand the changing nature of citizenship.

Yet we cannot equate political engagement and participation with manifestations of a live civil society; the performative dimension of political participation and of individuals' role as civic agents is important. Acquiring civic identity is as much a cultural as a social action, and civic competence is developed equally through political engagement and interaction with other citizens. It follows that “to understand the origins of civic agency and competence, we need to look beyond the public sphere itself, into the terrain of the private – or, expressed alternatively, into the experiential domain of everyday life” (Dahlgren, 2009, p. 75). Those cultural experiences and practices (in Dahlgren's terms, civic cultures – “cultural patterns in which identities of citizenship, and the foundations for civic agency, are embedded” – 2009, 103) will be relevant for political participation and, more generally, for the functioning of the public sphere. Civic cultures are the normative framework in which civic engagement develops, feeding on knowledge, values, trust, spaces and identities (Dahlgren, 2009, p. 108). Civic competence supposes the development of an understanding of civil society; civic agency involves putting this knowledge to work in the interactions with other people.

An analysis of the performative dimension of citizenship must therefore focus on culturally significant practices forming a system of meanings. In discussing cosmopolitanism as ideology, Goodman insisted on the importance of systemic practices: “An analysis of global culture (...) requires the identification of a set of practices that constitute a cultural field” (Goodman, 2007, p. 335). The distinction remains valid about cultural practices of communities in general.

Political participation involves issues of ideology, power, legitimacy, representation. Political engagement is accompanied by political deliberation, which is, differences and nuances notwithstanding, an illustration of the interactional dimension of the public sphere. In this light, the role of the media in producing and hosting political deliberation needs to be considered from the perspective of the “discursive construction and representation of politics in action” (Wodak, 2009, p. 23), namely everyday politics. From the array of media evolutions in the last decades, of interest here is the transformation of media audiences into publics that are involved in deliberation and perform their civic identities through discourse (“Media au-

diences that coalesce into publics who talk about political issues – and begin to enact their civic identities and make use of their civic competencies – (...) manifest a transition from the private realm into the public one, making use of and further developing their cultures of citizenship” – Dahlgren, 2009, p. 74). In this way, communities build narratives which are not unlike those of imagined communities (Tsaliki, 2003).

Citizenship is building on these possibilities of direct engagement. The connection long established by Habermas between discourse and democracy is confirmed by participatory journalism and the participatory culture at large. The citizen is increasingly more than a socially involved agent; she is a “communicative agent” (Coleman, 2001, p. 111).

4. The role of the media in building a civil sphere

It is now time to develop the argument that the media can offer the scene needed for the build-up of a civil sphere. Two propositions derive from here: (i) that, by inviting debate, the media help highlight mutual interests by mediating between publics and (ii) in doing so, they create the possibility of public action.

The media have long been pinpointed as instrumental in negotiating and reflecting the meanings and ideological allegiances of individuals and communities. So long, that the complex relations of power between the media and their public have become clichéd (Curran, 2006, p. 139). Understanding the exchanges between media and the publics, the configuration of the knowledge circulated among the media and the public, the fields of action opened up to the publics thus empowered and the ethical implications of this interchange is, undoubtedly, one of the most fertile grounds to explore in future years (in the words of Couldry, “a new map of media studies” should include “two crucial landmarks (knowledge, agency) that, assuming media research still wants a critical edge, imply a third (ethics)” – Couldry, 2006, p. 187).

An overview of the evolution of the idea of media influence over civil society and political activism might prove effective. From the view of the media as reflecting and serving society to its more radical counterpart of media managing society, social theory moved towards acknowledging the relevance of the interpretive schema of the public. A version of liberal functionalism still allows for the media playing a leading role in society, but seeing them rather as agencies of social integration than agencies of influence. While traditional liberal analysis emphasizes media democratic functions (watchdog role, information and debate role, representation of people to authority), the radical functionalist approach takes this argument towards the idea of media actively producing consensus (which involves the notion of ideological agency).

In the age of increasing reflexivity, the media appropriate the reflective instruments needed to turn spectators into an active, conscientious public. If, along this reality, one goes a step further towards the ideal of an ethical public space, then the media should be seen as a moral force enabling and creating such representations. The permanent negotiation of meaning and opinion (the *contrapuntal* seen by Silverstone, 2007, as the mediating logic governing the mediapolis) allows the creation of a moral public life (“our media provide the most pervasive and persuasive perceptual frameworks, in an increasingly global society, for the way in which meanings, representations and relationships to the other are offered and defined” – Sil-

verstone, 2007, p. 101). We must allow for the media (as a communicative institution) to provide interpretations and define representations of the public.

In a skeptical account of the dynamics of media power, Curran and Seaton blame the optimists for hailing rejuvenation of civil society and new forms of political activism a little too soon: their stand “extrapolates from the technological potential of the net the view that a powerful engine of change is at work, and then fastens on to a few hopeful straws of evidence to confirm the advent of a brave new world.” (Curran & Seaton, 2003, p. 264) One such “straw of evidence” encouraging future media influence is the “many-to-many” communication that is well adapted for multiple audiences. Another is the growing representativeness of the users. In Curran’s view, two more objectives should be featured in the analysis of media-democracy relationship: “to facilitate the expression of conflict and difference” and “to assist social conciliation” (Curran, 2002, p. 239). The role of media as facilitator of civil society endeavours – as alternative, rather than prescriptive direction – might prove meaningful.

Media offer a battlefield for much political struggle for domination and a propitious stage for building identities and allowing them to manifest themselves. “[C]ontemporary media culture provides forms of ideological domination that help to reproduce the current relations of power, while also providing resources for the construction of identities and for empowerment, resistance, and struggle” (Kellner, 1995, p. 2). In building hegemony (by producing and selecting representations), the media discourses are not unlike political discourses. If we allow for a broader definition of ideology beyond the obvious statements in a text, to include “discourses and figures, concepts and images, theoretical positions and symbolic forms” (Kellner, 1995, p. 59), we are justified in attempting a critique of meanings and means in the journalistic discourse.

5. Defining public interest

Who are the public that the media address in discussing professional migration? As a mediator between different cultural spaces and social actors, the journalist should give a voice to each of them. The idea of a pluralistic, ‘fractured’ public, ‘a patchwork of co-existing and overlapping communities’ (Coleman & Ross, 2010, p. 123) implies that media diversify their perspectives and cannot use moral universalism as a frame of reference and explanation for events. The diaspora itself, seen as a category of practice, a fragmented community negotiating meanings between various cultures, is hard to capture as a uniform, constant, static public.

This difficulty adds to the more problematic definition of public interest. If the public is a plurality, public interest should accommodate this plurality. If social solidarity is produced in the public space through symbolic negotiation (see Calhoun, 2002), then journalists are expected to create this common space for debate, which in the long run will help create a civic culture. While the social responsibility of the journalist might be resisted as deterministic and illiberal, it cannot be ignored that the interpretive dimension of journalistic discourse results from a certain understanding of public space and the role of the journalist. In addressing public interest, the media cannot rule out the moral stance in favour of neutrality, since the journalists themselves are citizens, in need of protecting a democratic society. Standards like ‘the political and economic establishments, the morals of the nation and the state, the citizens’ basic rights, and the conceptions of good that guide society’ (Cohen-Almagor, 2005, p. 91) im-

bue codes of ethics and performance standards and make the case for normative and ethical reporting when covering issues of vital concern for a community.

The rise of fragmented publics and the accompanying question of media accountability pose problems as regards media policies: media should then present a 'story' that is true to every public and allows various publics to understand each other and still facilitates agreement and public action (Coleman & Ross, 2010, pp. 128-129). If such conditions are not met, then the public may fail to feel responsible for the 'other' (and the diaspora is quite liable to become the other, not only because of the geographical distance, but mainly because of its susceptibility to plural cultural allegiance). Once the self-reflexive public is given such empowering tools, the media cannot just stage deliberation, but reflect deliberation that is taking place among various publics. One solution to the issue of media morality (as discussed by Chouliaraki, 2006, and Silverstone, 2007) would be to allow imagination to play its part in designing new patterns of collective life (Appadurai, 1996) that would help communities not only imagine better worlds, but construct them. Within this frame, research of social build-ups would play the part of imagination going practical (Appadurai, 2000).

By encouraging reflexivity, media take a stand on inducing social change. One of its instruments is mediation, defined by Silverstone as the "dialectical process in which institutionalised media of communication are involved in the general circulation of symbols in social life" (Silverstone, 2007, p. 109). It is shaped towards the ideal foundation of the mediapolis by proper distance (which might be seen as the sensible approach of difference), trust (in the view the media take), complicity and collusion (in accepting the mediation of the media) and responsibility (for such shaping). A further step is to see mediation as a political process insofar as its potential to define public response and cosmopolitan traits in spectators (Chouliaraki, 2006, p. 18).

The dilemma is how to negotiate between the consequence of such mediation and public action. The ethical role of the media derives not only from responsibility to educate the public, but from the infinitely more difficult task of inviting public action in the name of the civic sensibility it has thus created. The moral issues involved by mediation derive from two transformations it brings about: immediacy and deterritorialization, both of which raise the issue of "rendering various moral horizons adequate" (Tomlinson, 2002, p. 252). In line with Tomlinson (who asks for taming moral issues from distant spaces, rather than require people to cover the "moral distance"), Chouliaraki tackles "the problematic of governmentality" associated with mediation, given its potential to influence the conduct of the public (Chouliaraki, 2006, p. 71). The long-standing issue of media power is thus reworded as the trickier problem of media responsibility.

6. The discursive construction of public issues

It is then of interest to see how political engagement is represented in the media and how political and civic identities are constructed and recontextualized in the media. Announcing the theme to a public, allowing definitions and interpretations of the theme by various social actors, including the theme on the media and political agenda, initiating debates on the various meanings and implications of the theme are stages in building the larger dimensions of the theme. Raising a theme to a public issue is a matter of policy; for instance, "the way in

which the press builds *public issues* around the European theme signals a certain positioning on the European agenda” (Beciu & Perpelea, 2011, p. 7).

One useful thread of analysis would be to understand whether the issue of migration is constructed as a public problem through public deliberation. One of the classic approaches to the sociology of public problems, which we take as the framework of our analysis, belongs to Joseph Gusfield. He asserts that cognitive and moral dimensions are essential for turning a phenomenon into a public problem. The moral dimension of a public problem “enables the situation to be seen as painful, ignoble, immoral. It is what makes alteration or eradication desirable or continuation valuable.” (Gusfield, 1981, p. 9). Cognitive dimensions regard the facticity of the problem, but also the beliefs regarding the alterability of the phenomena. In order to solve the issue of symbolic power and authority in defining the problem, Gusfield introduces the concepts of ownership and disownership. “The concept of ownership of public problems is derived from the recognition that in the arenas of public opinion and debate all groups do not have equal power, influence and authority to define the reality of the problem. The ability to create and influence the definition of a public problem is what I refer to as ownership” (Gusfield, 1981, p. 10). The avoidance of an alleged obligation to create or solve a problem is disownership. “The question of ownership and disownership is very much a matter of the power authority groups and institutions can muster to enter the public arena, to be kept from it or to prevent having to join” (Gusfield, 1981, p. 12). Two more concepts are needed to describe the content of the problem, causal responsibility (the facticity of a situation, what generates the problem), and political responsibility, which is a matter of policy (attributing guilt, solving problems), fed by a moral understanding of the situation. “The structure of public problems is then an arena of conflict in which a set of groups and institutions (...) compete and struggle over ownership and disownership, the acceptance of causal theories, and the fixation of responsibility” (Gusfield, 1981, p. 15). A consensus over the situation as such and over moral implications is then needed to treat a phenomenon as a problem. Following such an analytic framework, defining public interest is rather a process coextensive with the public debates and not a product of such debates, once adjudicated.

7. Context, research questions, methodological choices

On August, 4, 2010, in an interview on the national TV station, TVR, president Băsescu took up a theme lately cherished by the media, the migration of doctors and its consequences on the already crippled medical system. His declarations managed to inflame spirits: “Let us not make a drama out of the fact that we are going abroad. Romania’s grand objective was the liberalization of work force market. Our right to leave where we are better off. Where our work is correctly paid. At this moment, the Romanian state cannot pay its doctors, teachers, their worth, it cannot, that is reality.” Since the interview took place in the context of an IMF visit, many opinion articles made reference to the whole declaration, which stole some of the limelight from the topic under discussion here. Furthermore, editorialists and bloggers tend to use the problem of professional migration as a sub-theme in a broader debate about the challenges and missed opportunities in Romanian society development. For instance, a tragic incident taking place in a state-owned hospital several days after the declaration triggers a rippling effect, with the majority of journalists referring back to the chronic problems of the system, which fail to be addressed by authorities.

Such discussions on the national, government-funded TV station, TVR, are an opportunity for the president to pinpoint some issues circulated in the media on a public scene, free from the constraints of official declarations. In the days to follow, the press usually take over the most important points and discuss them in detail. The press structure their discourse to highlight the confirmation effect of the president's speeches (the clear-cut position of the president confirms the type of reactions the public expect from him), the reinforcement effect (the president's declaration resonates with the politicians' lack of interest in the individuals' fate) and the cumulative effect (this is just one of the many offences from politicians a citizen must take).

Because of the format and context of the interview, the general feel is that the president is presenting a definite, absolute version of the facts; the press constantly position themselves in a different perspective and build arguments to discuss the declarations made from this position of authority. On the one hand, we have a landmark of the state of affairs, and on the other, a detailed, well-grounded, expert-based analysis of the ideas in the discourse as such and of the implications of the president's assertions.

As we mentioned previously, the debates generated by Traian Băsescu's declarations regarding migration were further fueled by France's decision to reiterate its practice of expelling illegal Roma migrants back to Romania, and by a governmental decision regarding the taxation of independent incomes which generated bureaucratic chaos, feeding journalists' distrust in the government's competence and their desire to leave the country.

The corpus covers the debates on migration in August, 2010, and is deliberately constituted to reflect the heterogeneity of journalistic genres and practices, which allow journalist both to report and investigate (adopting allegedly neuter stances, for instance in pieces of news and interviews), and to adopt an explicit evaluative position, to engage in debate and express moral commitments (i.e. in opinion articles or blog posts). Consequently we selected the opinion articles published on *Vox Publica*, the blogging platform of the important news channel RealitateaTV, where prominent editorialists and journalists debate issues stemming from political actuality. A number of ten opinion articles published in august 2010 and relevant for the topic of migration have been retained. These opinion articles are examined in relation with pieces of news and opinion articles published by the generalist daily newspaper *Adevărul*, but also in relation with the articles on the topic published by *Pagina Medicală* (The Medical Page), a portal specialized in news for doctors' community.

Our analysis is structured by two research questions:

R.Q.1. What competing definitions of the public problem of migration are made visible through the media debate?

R.Q.2. What types of loyalties are invoked in this debate and what kind of arguments do they coalesce in relation with the topic of migration?

Methodologically, our approach amounts to a systematic reconstruction of the media debate through a theoretically motivated grid of analysis. Thus, the first research question employs Joseph Gusfield's framework for the analysis of public problems and aims at identifying how competing definitions of the problem of migrations are structured and what types of media discourses on migration are articulated around these definitions. The second research question starts from Brubaker's alternative view on studying diaspora, looking at the types of arguments invoked in the media debate for justifying or rejecting migration. Such arguments, frequently expressed from the putative condition of a person considering emigration,

can be treated as instances of practical reasoning where a claim for an action is justified by various types of premises. In a recent model on practical reasoning, the values play a constitutive role – they represent a type of premise in the argument, supporting the goals of the agent committed to them but also “informing the selection and description of relevant circumstances” (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 46). It is at this discursive level that Brubaker’s concept of loyalty will be operationalized, equating loyalties with expressed or implicit value commitments. Some media genres are more prone to allow engaged stances to journalists, loyalties being expressed as overt moral commitments in opinion articles and blogs, while others, of a more neuter stance, as news or life stories of immigrants, allow an indirect identification of loyalties via the presentation of the circumstances of migration. These loyalties will be groups in etic categories of analysis relying on the typology of arguments developed by Balabanova and Balch (2010) to discuss the ethical framing of intra-European migration. Through these methodological options we aim, in the second research question, at identifying the types of arguments structuring the media debate, and the corresponding constellations of loyalties in which diasporic stances are adopted.

8. Findings

R.Q.1 Three competing definitions of an ambiguous problem

In the particular debate analyzed, the ambiguous character of the problem lies in the fact that two types of migration are discussed simultaneously: the specialized / professional migration (doctors, nurses) and the general migration (unskilled labour-force, but also Roma migration). Further ambiguity is fed by the debate being triggered by three independent events. Moreover, journalists rarely approach these events in a unitary framework, even though they are discussed under the same denominator: “migration”. We will make an analytical distinction between the two types of migration as problems discussed by media. Our analytical choice is justified by the fact that they presuppose different types of causal responsibility, despite the fact that both Traian Băsescu’s declarations and the media discourses frequently tend to treat them as undifferentiated. The Roma people’s expulsion from France is a separate case with journalists and, at least in our corpus, is never discussed in relation with the migration of Romanians. While in the case of general migration, journalists assume the position of owners of the problem, sharing it with the state, in the case of professional migration ownership is shared with the medical community or professional organizations (The Romanian College of Physicians – from now on RCP), but only in specialized media (*Pagina Medicală*). Following Gusfield, to make ownership significant means to point to other possible owners of the problem that are yet absent in the public space, or, in our case, are not given a voice by journalists: the alternative private medical system, the western medical system – benefiting from professional migration, or the patients of the health system (yet, in this last case ownership is expressed through the journalist speaking in the name of the patients), etc. In the generalist media, more prominently in the opinion articles on *Vox Publica*, ownership of the problem is divided between state and journalists. It is only in the case of Roma expulsion that a wider ownership of the problem is elicited as such by journalists: European institutions, other states, European citizens.

8.1. Defining migration as a policy problem (the policy approach)

What we label as *the definition of migration as a policy problem* is in fact a definition resulting from framing the debate as a complex issue affecting the Romanian public system (public budget, public institutions and policies, large-scale consequences). It is mainly general migration that is discussed in these terms, and this definition of the problem stems from the way journalists give visibility to Traian Băsescu's declarations and reinterpret them. It is a contested definition, since journalists reject the president's view. The president's version of the problem, reconstructed by journalists, insists on the causal responsibility for migration: the job market liberalization in the European Union and the inability of the crisis-stricken Romanian State to provide enough jobs or social security for its unemployed citizens. In these circumstances, political responsibility is declined factually (the state can do nothing) and the decision to migrate, as an individual solution, is praised both for its positive effects on the public spending and for the remittances sent by the migrants back to Romania. Migration is downplayed as a public problem since it is the result of a deliberate effort of Romanian diplomacy towards liberalization of the job market and since Romania has a lot of things to win from migration in the context of the crisis. In Gusfield's terms, it is specifically the moral judgment – the condemnable state of affairs generating a public problem – that is contested by Traian Băsescu.

Within this policy framing, but running counter to the president's definition, journalists emphasize the moral judgment. Political responsibility of the problem is systematically attributed by journalists to the Romanian state, through pragmatic argumentation, in the form of cost-benefit analysis: "Even from this point of view Romania will lose, not win, as Traian Băsescu incorrectly claims. Because these migrants, as active persons, work and pay taxes that contribute to the social benefits offered by EU countries (and not Romania – *our emphasis*). And when those going abroad have higher education, Romania loses twice: first it loses the investment in their education, which will be recovered no more, secondly it loses contributors, a phenomenon which would lead to an increase in the already alarming disproportion between the active population and the assisted one in Romania." (Goțiu, 2010a). Yet the discussion doesn't move forward towards adjudication because journalists assume without arguing that remittances and the temporary benefits for the budget invoked by the president are outrun by their negative counterparts.

These conflicting definitions of the problem of migration in this policy framing, made visible in all media investigated, accommodate both the issue of general migration and professional, specialized migration. While the causal responsibilities are tacitly agreed upon by the two parties, it is the "problem" as such that is at stake. A particular case of the same conflict over the problematic character of the issue was discussed only in specialized media. Traian Băsescu's remark that, at least in the major Romanian hospitals, there is no doctors deficit (implicitly, less dramatic consequences if doctors go abroad), is countered by pointing either to the cognitive dimension of the problem or to the causal responsibility. For instance, in the first case, dr. Florin Chirculescu's declaration points out that if migration continues, patients cannot get the care they need because there won't be enough doctors in hospitals. An illustration for the second case would be a declaration of dr. Vasile Astărăstoie, president of the RCP, who points to the poor hiring policy which causes migration: "The president's message reveals a perspective of decision makers, who are not concerned with real health policies. This jeopardizes the proper functioning of the medical system within decent standards. Vacant positions cannot be filled because hiring is blocked. Actual regulations allow only one

in seven openings to be filled. This makes the functioning of the health system impossible.” (Ciornia, 2010)

Within the policy framing a separate case is represented by the older discussions of Roma migrants’ expulsion from France. This case is brought to the fore by the reiteration of this practice in France, and the subsequent reaction of a Hungarian philosopher, G. M. Tamas, interviewed by a prominent Romanian newspaper, *Evenimentul Zilei*. The case stands out because it mixes issues of migration with issues of minorities’ integration and because journalists attempt to ascribe a shared political responsibility among European countries, European Union, Romania, or even the responsibility of a cosmopolitan European citizen: “if there are no more borders, it means that this [the Roma population integration] is our problem, all Europeans’ problem, be they Romanian, French or Italian” (Cernahoschi, 2010).

8.2. Defining migration as material and professional accomplishment

A different definition of the problem of professional migration, made visible mainly in specialized media, establishes as causal responsibility of doctors’ migration their inability to achieve material and professional success in the Romanian health system. It is a definition partly agreed upon both by Traian Băsescu and the doctors interviewed by *Pagina Medicală*. The type of causal responsibility is different in this case: personal motivation rather than systemic causes or effects: “I know doctors aged 35 to 40 who don’t go abroad for material reasons, but because they don’t have career prospects, due to these ossified structures that don’t allow younger doctors to promote” (Traian Băsescu, quoted by Ciornia, 2010). Yet further causal responsibility for this state of affairs is no longer a subject of agreement. The president refers to the “ossified structures” – which in contemporary Romanian political language, is a conveniently ambiguous periphrasis pointing to the representation of a generational conflict where older members of a community or organization (doctors, professors) do not allow younger members to fill high profile positions – which linguistic option establishes political responsibilities with the community as such, not only with policies. The doctor interviewed by the specialized portal attributes further causal responsibility strictly to policies: “mid-career doctors cannot find professional fulfillment in the state system. Were there a budgetary infusion, they would reach accomplishment in their own country” (Ciornia, 2010). The tacit assimilation of the public health state-system with the opportunities for a career in the country renders this definition of the problem as a subcase of the previously labeled “policy problem”. In non-specialized media, causal responsibility of professional migration is not related only with professional accomplishment, but also with material achievement and social recognition of the status.

8.3. Defining migration as individual solution against politicians and bureaucracy

A third view of the problem emerges in opinion articles, when journalists renounce the position of policy evaluators and adopt the stance of the confessional or experiential journalists, developing an identitarian discourse on the relation between migration and community. When they focus on non-specialized migration, they ascribe causal responsibility to incompetent politicians and ineffective bureaucratic system, which leaves the citizen with no solution but migration. This type of journalist interventions was triggered by a decision of the government regarding the taxation of the income generated by independent activities of artists,

journalists, lawyers etc. Due to poor implementation of the decision, a bureaucratic nightmare broke loose, neither citizens nor public servants knowing what was to be done to accomplish the procedure. Migration is no longer discussed as a phenomenon affecting the *polity* but as the immediate solution against the absurdities of the *polity*: “I refuse to believe that it’s a matter of hate, I refuse to believe in a specially designed maneuver to harm the media, including collateral casualties such as artists, advertisers, lawyers and other professionals producing independent income. It can only be sheer imbecility. Yes, for the first time I want to emigrate. Never have I felt so bad in my own country, never have I felt so hopeless, never have I felt so crumbled, never has the rulers’ spit shriveled my cheek deeper” (Tache, 2010); ‘They [my friends] simply want to leave. As far as possible...It’s more than weariness, distrust and hopelessness altogether. Anger no longer exists. Just the wish to escape. To run away’ (Goțiu, 2010b).

To sum up, two separate migrations, the migration of the Roma and the migration of Romanians, are discussed as two different problems, the latter involving referring indiscriminately to either professional or general migration. Roma migration as a problem relies on different cognitive and moral judgments (they prejudice the image of Romanians abroad) and the causal responsibility for this migration, if discussed, is never articulated in relation with the causal responsibility of the other forms of migration. Competing definitions of the problem of migration emerging through the media debate generate complex, interconnected interpretations and representations which articulate three types of discourse. *Policy evaluation discourses* on migration discuss migration in relation with expedient institutional choices and consequences; *professional accomplishment discourses* discuss migration in relation with individual motivations for career and status and *citizen as victim discourses* discuss migration as a solution to citizen versus system confrontation.

R.Q. 2 Cosmopolitan vs. communitarian arguments on migration and subjacent loyalties

Having systematised the types of discourses on migration as a public problem, we want to see how loyalties are employed in the media debate, in what types of arguments they coalesce and how various media genres and journalistic stances allow for different types of arguments, loyalties and ethical framings. The typology of arguments that we devise to map loyalties invoked in this debate relies on the work of Balabanova and Balch (2010), who discuss communitarian and cosmopolitan arguments employed in the media debates on migration. Communitarian arguments will describe the problem of general and professional migration as catastrophic for the community, as a lessening of community strength and development potential. A frequently occurring subtype of the communitarian argument is the “domestic social justice” argument, employing considerations on “the best social and welfare conditions for citizens” (Balabanova & Balchs, 2010, p. 384). Cosmopolitan arguments will invoke the right of professionals to emigrate and be treated fairly from the perspective of the rights and privileges derived from the European citizenship. As a subcategory of the cosmopolitan arguments, universalist arguments will appeal to human rights imagery to discuss the individuals’ right to free movement; due to strong focus on individuals’ right to ‘pursue happiness’ and prosperity, we have coined these arguments as universalist-individualistic. Another prevalent subcategory is that of instrumental cosmopolitanism, which regards “immigration as a means to maximise total welfare” (Balabanove & Balch, 2010, p. 384).

One difficulty arising from this classification is that it presupposes a clear delineation and consistency of arguments in the journalists’ discourses; another is the fact that the complexity of the issue itself allows for a plurality of arguments; another, that cosmopolitan and uni-

versalist arguments overlap to a certain extent, since human right imagery informs cosmopolitan ideology; finally, it does not inexorably follow that the arguments always depict a certain moral commitment. However, we maintain that the justification behind various discourses will be consistent with the type of argument used in the discourse. For instance, Balabanova and Balch claim that 'media discourse on policy issues is framed by underlying ethical positions' (2010, p. 394). If we admit that Romanians' relation to an alleged European identity relies on civic, rather than cultural foundations (Frunzaru & Corbu, 2011, p. 46), then cosmopolitan arguments should be employed quite often. Yet the subjects which are relevant to the European construction are invariably treated from national perspectives, focusing on the guilt of various political actors for shortcomings (Bârgăoanu, 2011), which would favour pervasive communitarian arguments.

We further expect the moral framework created through argumentation to be different in the two instances of discourse (given the different accents placed on the individual-community relationship), which, in turn, will represent moral agency in very different perspectives. The social contract between the community and the authority representing and governing that community implies permanent negotiation; a breach of trust in the authorities' efficacy in representing the community's interests leads to a different perspective on moral commitments toward a mutual contract and on the responsibility for its infringement.

It is, consequently, possible to discuss moral agency and ethical implications of migration in this particular case from the perspective of a community representative. It follows that neuter stances are not the singular contexts for a meditation on moral implications and that a perspective from within the community can be emancipated from particular moral commitments towards a broader ethical frame.

Since the president's declaration touched upon individual destinies and perspectives but equally referred to the systemic problems of the economy, the press discourse is expected to follow two directions: to present cases of doctors and their life-stories as migrants and to invite reflection on the consequences of professional migration on the development perspectives of Romania. In general, articles in the written press follow this approach and, while presenting individual cases, constantly discuss implications for the common good.

When the journalist's stance towards the issue is neutral, individualistic arguments are used. Yet it is the migrants themselves who provide the arguments that build a moral justification for their act, and not the journalists. It is however relevant that the migrants are given a voice, are interviewed and quoted. The articles build the identity of migrants by accumulation of details, in an attempt to typify and simplify the experience of migration. The professional migrant is either young (a graduate or a resident with high expectations), or middle-aged and firmly established in her profession. Knowledge of the language, proper qualifications, professional competence ensure success abroad.

When migrants are quoted, they present typical, exemplary life-stories. Images of success are obviously preferred to images of failure (few, if any, doctors are worse off abroad). Success stories encourage migration and a positive image of migration as a moral act, serving the individual's interest, and not the common good. In the words of one interviewee, pushing a young professional to leave the country is unpatriotic (Ofițeru & Pădurean, 2010), but the articles tie in this implication with the overt encouragement from the president: since the president's discourse was cynical and depressing and discouragingly honest about the state's inability to pay its specialists, loyalty cannot be expected from ordinary citizens. We are a far

cry from Obama's mobilizing discourses encouraging Americans to fight the economic crisis (Pop, 2010).

Individuals' stories confirm the private morals of individuals serving their own interest. The neutral stance of the journalist cannot be equated with the position of speaker for the community, which might account for the fact that individualistic, rather than communitarian arguments are used. The same neuter stance builds a catastrophic image of consequences on the Romanian medical system. The reasons presented by migrants for leaving gather in strong criticism of this very system: hospitals have poor equipment and funding, and they lack resources. Doctors are forced to make do with poor work conditions, which leads to low self-esteem, undermined dignity, poor living standards and demotivation. Salaries are at an all-time low, the spectrum of massive lay-offs and impossibility to support families and cover debts looms large. The collapsing system is a danger to patients who cannot be treated properly, situation that makes doctors very doubtful of their ability to help them. The disillusion in poor government and political system at large add up to the list of discontent. While migration is presented as a good personal option, the effects of this phenomenon are bordering disaster. Professional migration is referred to as: "the great migration", "the exodus of white robes" (Pădurean, 2010), "unprecedented" phenomenon leading to catastrophe (Ofițeru & Pădurean, 2010). The systemic effect of definitive "temporary" migration of doctors is evident in the quote from BBC News: the system sits "on the edge of a precipice" (Costin & Bechir, 2010), there will be no doctors left in eleven years if the numbers of migrants stay the same. Romania loses doctors in favour of richer countries and feeds other medical systems (Ofițeru & Pădurean, 2010).

Just like in the case of migrants taking centre stage and building moral justifications in neuter articles, the image of a crippled health system, pervasive in the same articles, is suggestive for the moral universe created, without being directly suggestive for the allegiances of the journalist. Rather than communitarian arguments, it is the catastrophic imagery employed that speaks of the effects of professional migration on community.

The double standard used by the journalists in approaching the issue (the private, legitimate interest of the individual and the general interest of citizens and the country) comes partly from faulty use of resources, on the one hand, and from choice of formats, on the other. The figures are taken from studies of professional organization, studies of European organizations, the Ministry of Health, while the migrants' life-stories are obtained through interviews. The gathering of facts, statistics, data might mark a wish for the professionalization of talk on the issue. However, texts are largely informative and no involvement of journalists is evident, apart from the selection of themes and actors. The little interpretation of the data or of the phenomenon at large comes from sources: BBC News, Newsweek, a sociologist, even interviewees. The image of the medical system, for instance, is quite vivid, yet it is so by accumulation of detail, and not by discussion or analysis. Faults are always presented, but moral responsibility for shortcomings is attributed to nobody, however this might be a consequence of the generic trait of news articles.

Editorials and blogs, genres that are closer to civic journalism, open up the possibility of engagement with the issue, of consistency of this engagement over a length of time and, finally, of meditation, from broader perspectives (be they political, economic, or moral in general). When the journalist acknowledges herself as a representative of the community, individualistic arguments predominate ("Yes, for the first time I want to emigrate. Never have I felt so bad in my own country, never have I felt so hopeless, never have I felt so crumbled, never has the rulers' spit shrivelled my cheek deeper" (Tache, 2010).

Following the problem of loyalties, when the universalist-individualistic arguments were used in articles of non-committed journalists, their moral justification was very similar to that used by the authorities (in this case, President Băsescu): everybody has a right to pursue happiness. However, while the President's declaration implied that invoking this freedom irrespective of the impact on broader societal development was not a breach of social contract, the migrants using universalist-individualistic arguments maintain that it is this infringement that sets them free and morally justifies their migration.

In editorials and blogs communitarian arguments, when employed, reveal outspoken loyalties. For instance: "I won't leave. I won't leave because, somewhere in the Hunedoara County, in the wooded countryside, on Dobra Valey, there is a church. A church built by my grand grand ... grandparents, more than five hundred years ago. In 1458. This church, the roots – I can't fit them in my luggage. And in that village, in Roșcani, there is a school. (...) A school where my aunt still teaches. And since I don't want this school to look one day as the school from Roșia Montană, I won't leave yet. A school and a church are strong enough reasons to make it worth resisting". (Goțiu, 2010c). It is, consequently, possible to discuss moral agency and ethical implications of migration (in this particular case) from the perspective of a community representative. Neuter stances are not singular contexts for a meditation on moral implications. Yet, a perspective from within the community can be emancipated from particular moral commitments towards a broader ethical frame and civic engagement: "To turn back to the point: yes, I want to emigrate (...) For two days, in my house, there have been discussions on this topic. Serious discussions. Yet, until I emigrate, I have some jobs to finish. Friday, 27th August at 11 o'clock, in front of the Ministry of Finances, people will gather to protest. I will be there. I also want a fiscal strike. And the resignation of the government. After that, I can leave in peace." (Tache, 2010)

In conclusion, except for the articles on *Vox Publica* where individualistic loyalties leading to migration are counterbalanced either by identitarian (cultural traditions, history) or civic loyalties, the issue of migration is rendered mostly as unproblematic, depicting consistent (i. e. not clashing) constellations of values and no individual remorse or loyalties towards the community. As one would expect, communitarian arguments are used against migration and two subtypes can be distinguished: those appealing to identitarian loyalties (as in Goțiu 2010c) and those appealing to "domestic social justice" arguments which mobilize civic loyalties. Cosmopolitan arguments are used to justify migration and two main subtypes are invoked: universalist-individualistic arguments are offered as justification for the individual decision to go abroad, mobilizing individualistic loyalties regarding personal happiness and professional accomplishment, and instrumental-cosmopolitan arguments, invoked by Traian Băsescu (and rejected by the journalists), depicting migration as a means to support the state budget, which arguments mobilize civic loyalties.

Trying to systematically relate these findings with those from the first research question, the policy evaluation discourse on migration opposes instrumental cosmopolitanism to communitarian considerations regarding domestic social justice, but could find a source of possible consensus in the fact that both mobilize civic loyalties; the *professional accomplishment discourse* opposes cosmopolitan universalist-individualistic arguments to communitarian arguments relying on domestic social judgements considerations – consequently also opposing individualist loyalties to civic ones; the *citizen as victim discourse* opposes communitarian arguments mobilising identitarian and civic loyalties to the cosmopolitan universalist-individualistic arguments. These systematic correlations are presented synthetically in the table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the types of discourse on migration (RQ1) in relation with types of diasporic stances, arguments and loyalties (RQ2).

Descriptors of diasporic stance	Type of discourse		
	Policy approach	Professional accomplishment	Citizen as victim discourse
1. Argument for migration	Cosmopolitan: instrumental	Cosmopolitan: universalist-individualistic	Cosmopolitan: universalist-individualistic
1.1. Subjacent loyalty	Civic loyalty (the benefits for the social system)	Individual pursuit of professional accomplishment and social status	The individual pursuit of happiness
1.2. Genre, journalistic stance	Traian Băsescu's declaration, neuter stance	Generalist daily newspaper, Specialized media, neuter stances	Morally committed civic journalism: blogs & opinion articles
2. Argument against migration	Communitarian: domestic social justice	Individual cases discusses as exceptions	Communitarian: cultural protectionist
2.1. Subjacent loyalty	Civic loyalty (the benefits for the social system)	Individual maintenance of professional status	Identitarian loyalty: history, family
2.2. Genre, journalistic stance	Civic journalism: opinion articles	Specialized media, neuter stances	Morally committed civic journalism: blogs and opinion articles

The image thus resulted has to be treated with certain caution, since the research is explorative, the dimension of the corpus does not allow extrapolations or generalisations and in some type of discourses more than one type of arguments might occur, the table retaining the most prominent one. Moreover, the analytic distinction between the general and the professional migration is not rendered in the table, although we can roughly equate the citizen-as-victim discourse with the general migration, the professional accomplishment discourse with the professional one, while the policy discourse reflects both types of migrations. Finally, the media separation between Roma migration and Romanian's migration replicates in the absence of this form of migration in our analytic categories.

9. Conclusions

Throughout our analysis, it has become apparent that emigrationist and diasporic stances are made visible (in informative articles) and even appropriated (in opinion articles). They perform various functions, which are structured around multiple symbolic divisions and categorizations by the media discourse.

A first division is that between deficient policies and politicians, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the citizen as victim, who is constrained to go abroad because of these faulty policies. A second, less explicit division is between Romanians' migration and Roma people's migration. Although both groups benefit from the same social security system, it is only in

relation with Romanians that this system is depicted as inefficient and leading to migration. A third symbolic division, equally downplayed, is between journalists who decide to stay in Romania and speak for those remaining behind, and the citizens opting for migration – but this division is bridged by empathic attitude towards the potential migrant (as she is a potential reader of the article). Finally, the most significant symbolic division is that between the journalist and politicians. At this level either the migrant is given a voice, or the journalist adopts a (provisional) migration stance in order to evaluate the public policies and the politicians and thus reinforce her position. But the management of these symbolic divisions leads to engaging diaspora in an instrumental manner, and as a side effect, institutes and reinforces a one-dimensional representation of diaspora, along the traditional view of the social-political victimization, ignoring the dynamics of the “new diaspora” (Beciu, 2012a, 2012b).

While the identity of the intending migrants is clearly outlined, the journalists’ reflection on the identity of the changing *community* of migrants and especially the reflection on media’s identity as the locus of debate are very pale. There are slight attempts at expert discourses through data gathering; yet the refinement of research instruments or of the quality of the argumentative discourse, or the approval for a certain type of engagement for that matter (preserving objectivity throughout or emotional approach for rhetoric effects, generalization – integrating resulting ideas in a larger image of society and its development) are practically non-existent. Consequently, although we might allow for the efficacy of informative discourses as long as they endow the public with instruments for civic action, it is too early to discuss about the capacity of journalists in this particular media setting to raise issues. This also sheds some light on the importance of clearly defining public interest, of media’s positioning themselves in respect of this public interest and, more broadly, on the current state of affairs as regards media conscience of civic duties and moral implications of their choices.

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