

**New Emerging Patterns of Romanian Highly-Skilled  
Migration and their Implications for Romania's EU  
Integration**

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## **Introduction**

Romanians, as other Eastern European populations had endured during communism a confinement to the communist space, often described in terms of a geographic prison. The only forms of international migration allowed during communism were ethnic migration and some very restricted labour migration towards the COMECON countries and certain Western countries. Under these conditions, the fall of communism brought along the possibility of free movement for Eastern Europeans and at the same time the availability of these countries to receive migrants, including this area in the international geography of mobility. A new space of mobility opened its gates to the world.

The first part of the paper presents the evolution of economic thought on the brain drain, whereas the second part is an attempt to assess the importance of this phenomenon during both communist and post-communist periods and the main strategies employed by Romanian brains in order to circulate in the European space with a special highlight on the case of the Romanian community in France.

Furthermore we proceed with a case study on highly-skilled Romanians in France. First of all we describe the sample used. We then try to shed light on the departure reasons and on the destination choice as well as on the strategies employed in order to get to France. Migrants' performance on the French labour markets and issues of social integration and identity will be addressed further on. In the last part of our paper, we study the contacts developed with the home society and with other communities in the light of the technological revolution and we analyze the emergence of a network culture as result of this web of new social ties. We conclude by taking into account how changes brought by the evolution of this form of mobility and by this network currently affect the relation between states and their migrant citizens.

## **A Review of Highly-Skilled Migration Theories**

We identify four major strands in the economic literature on brain drain. The first strand was developed during the 60's in the studies of Grubel and Scott (1966), Adams (1968) and Barry and Soligo (1969). It does not deliver a positive theory on highly-skilled migration. Its attempt is rather to assess the importance of the phenomenon than to formulate an explanation for it. These studies consider that the overall effect of highly-skilled migration is neither good nor bad, as it indeed represents a loss of human capital for the country of origin in terms of

labour force, but this loss is compensated by the resources that the migrants leave behind (Grubel and Scott 1966) or by the remittances sent (Barry and Soligo 1969).

During the following decade, a second strand of the literature emphasizes the negative effect of brain drain on the country of origin (Bhagwati and Hamada 1974, Hamada and Bhagwati 1975, Bhagwati and Rodriguez 1975, Rodriguez 1975, McCullen and Yellen 1977). Brain drain reinforces global inequalities by helping rich countries get even richer, while poor countries are depleted by one of their most important resources. As the education of these migrants is paid for by the state of origin, by the taxes levied from all its citizens, brain drain represents a negative externality and a collective loss. As reparation for those left behind, Bhagwati and Dellafar 1973, McCullen and Yellen 1974 and Bhagwati 1975 propose the introduction of a tax which should be paid by migrants, that later came to be called the 'Bhagwati tax'. This view on the negative effects of brain drain was dominant all through the 80's with more studies developed in this spirit by Bhagwati 1982 and Bhagwati and Wilson 1989.

With the development of the theories on endogenous growth during the first half of the 90's emphasizing the importance of human capital in generating long-run economic growth the negative effects of brain drain became even more obvious. Several papers by Miyagiwa 1991, Haque et Kim 1995, Reichlin et Rustichini 1998 et Wong et Yip 1999 approached the relations between the education level, migration, increasing returns to scale and economic growth in the light of the newly developed models. These papers focus on the part played by human capital in generating increasing returns to scale. The existence of high levels of skilled human capital in a certain location determines the accumulation of skilled human capital in that precise location. In this sense, positive externalities induced by skilled human capital are not evenly spread but are subject to a lock-in effect, benefiting with only a few areas.

This vision was challenged in the second half of the 90's in a set of papers which put forward possible beneficial effects of the highly-skilled migration. We identify several channels that can trigger these effects.

The first type of mechanisms is represented by return migration, which under the hypothesis of imperfect information can generate positive effects (Stark, Helmerstein et Prskawetz 1997), as firms will consider as signal upon hiring the education acquired abroad and the migrants will have an advantage when entering the labour market of their home country and will be more inclined to return. Another set of studies takes into account the possibility of technological transfers which take place following return migration and which obviously generate important positive externalities (Dos Santos and Postel-Vinay 2003).

A second type of mechanism relies on the hypothesis of the uncertainty of migration. As highly-skilled individuals have more chances to migrate and to gain more abroad, everybody will have the incentive to acquire a higher level of education which allows them to migrate, but only a proportion of these individuals would eventually migrate while the others would stay behind. Studies on this matter have been developed by Mountford (1997), Stark, Helmerstein et Prskawetz (1998), Reichling (2001), Beine, Docquier et Rapoport (2001). These studies consider that in the home economy as returns to education are low, there are no incentives to acquire a high level of education. By producing the right incentive for education migration generates a positive externality. But in order to generate a positive externality, migration must not surpass a certain threshold as shown by Beine, Docquier and Rapoport 2001, 2003. Beyond this threshold the externality becomes negative.

Other studies highlight the indirect effects of highly-skilled migration (Lowell and Findlay 2003) as remittances, diaspora effects and technology transfers in the absence of return migration. Remittances are considered to play a very important part in financing the home economies. But studies concerning migrant remittances acknowledge mitigated results. For example, Sander (2003) shows that remittances are spent mostly on consumer goods and thus can generate inflationary pressures. On the contrary, a study by Alderman and Taylor (1995) finds that remittances have a multiplier effect on the GNP. One of the major fallacies of this type of studies is that they seldom take into account the education level of the migrants. Highly-skilled workers generally gain more than low-skilled which enables them to send higher remittances. A study by Lowell and de la Garza (2000) shows however that each supplementary year of education reduces the propensity to remit by 7%.

Another strand of literature considers positive externalities generated by diasporas as diaspora members are in the best position to invest in their home country. It is known for instance that investments made by Indian migrants working in Silicon Valley have helped boost the Indian economy (Saxenian 1999).

A recent set of studies show that migrant networks can influence trade flows by triggering a demand for products from the home country and by reducing transaction costs (Rauch and Trinidad 2002, Rauch 2003). Furthermore, Head and Ries (1999) find that migrants' influence on trade flows rises with the education level.

Lucas (2004) looks upon transnational networks as the most important mechanisms of diasporas. He acknowledges that the density of the network as well as the frequency and the quality of relations developed between the members of the network can play an important part in triggering a knowledge and business practices transfer process.

But transnational networks can be at the basis of even another set of positive externalities as shown by Meyer (2001) as the knowledge transfer generated by these networks can positively affect the investment climate and can induce a job-creation process.

### **A Picture of the Romanian Highly Skilled Migration during and after Communism**

The collapse of communism brought about sweeping changes in the migratory pattern of the Eastern Europeans. The beginning of the 90's saw an upsurge of forms of mobility in Eastern Europe. Some of them were new others were merely the amplification of forms already present in the Eastern migratory space during communism. This development accounts for a transition in migratory behaviour (Kaczmarczyk and Okolski 2005) of the former communist populations. All these flows are part of a new dynamics of movement and can thus no longer be considered in terms of migration but of mobility (Morokvasic 2002). The main flows of mobility in the early 1990's were made up of asylum seekers and "suitcase tourists" and made the Western countries fear a possible invasion of "the poor from the East", invasion which actually never took place. Later on, due to the harshening of economic and social conditions during the transition period which led to an underdevelopment of the countries of the former communist bloc, many were forced to go abroad in search for work. This period is mostly conceived as lying under the sign of the development of an incomplete type of migration (Okolski 2001) made up of circular movements between the country or region of origin and that of destination. In this context, many studies on Romanian migration emphasize the mobility of the low skilled, which often taking place under illegal conditions makes the headlines of European journals, whereas the mobility of highly-skilled is often cast into shadow. In reality, highly-skilled migration flows developed in parallel with low skilled flows. Unemployment was high both in the ranks of low and highly-skilled persons. The closing down of many enterprises and the collapse of R&D activities, put the latter in the position to choose between staying in the country and accepting jobs for which they were overqualified and thus brain waste or leave to more developed countries. These were the conditions under which the migration of the highly-skilled developed during the first decade following the collapse of the communist regime.

But even if this form of mobility, most often coined by traditional migration literature as brain drain has seen an important upsurge in recent years, Romania faced brain drain at a smaller rate even during the communist period. As part of the ethnic migration agreements concluded with Israel, Hungary and Germany and also of an agreement concluded with the US, almost 300.000 persons left Romania during the 1980 decade. An important part of these persons had

a tertiary education level acquired in Romania. We know for example that out of those who migrated to the US, 20% had a college degree. Besides these countries, the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs also acknowledged flows of qualified Romanians to France, Canada and Australia. The Romanian communist state became increasingly worried so that in 1983 it decided to ask for the reimbursement of the education costs from the part of the migrants (Gheorghiu 1996). Brain drain is thus not a new form of mobility, but a form which under new conditions has suffered important transformations and developments.

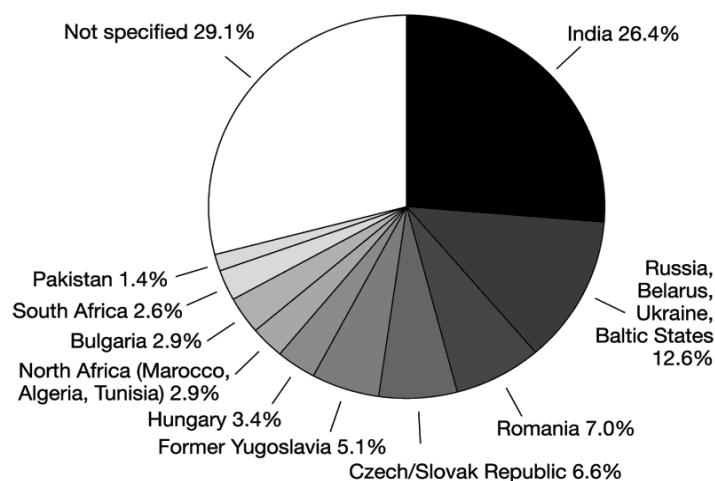
Cohen and Soto database (2001) registers an emigration rate of highly-skilled Romanians of 8.78%, whereas the Docquier and Marfouk database (2006) shows even a higher rate of 11.8%, for the year 2000 with an important increase in comparison with the 1990 rate of 9.1%. According to this database, the selectivity rate of Romanian emigrants also increased in the last ten years from 29% in the 90s to 31.3% in 2000. Romania ranked among the first thirty countries of origin in terms of stock of highly-skilled persons in 2000, with a total of 176.393 persons, living outside Romanian borders. The majority of highly-skilled Romanians lived in the US and Canada, their number being according to Docquier and Marfouk (2006) almost twice more important than that of highly-skilled Romanians in EU 15. About 54.3% of highly-skilled Romanians lived in North America, only 29.3% in EU countries and another 12.3% in other European countries. But even considering the preference for North America, Romania still ranked among the first twenty-five countries in terms of stock of highly-skilled migrants to EU-15 (Docquier, Lohest and Marfouk 2005).

As the development of this form of mobility became particularly obvious in the last years, the study of recent flows allows for an analysis which is even more interesting. According to the OECD, out of 13,000 permanent emigrants in 2004, more than half were skilled emigrants, of whom 50% had completed a secondary degree education and 13% were college graduates. As regards emigrants to the US and Canada are concerned more than half of them were highly-skilled, due mainly to the policy promoted by these countries, aimed at attracting the highly-skilled. In 2005, more than a quarter of Romanian emigrants were highly-skilled, the rate being slightly higher in the case of men (28.5%) than in that of women (25.1%) as reported by the National Institute of Statistics (2005). Whereas the US and Canada are the main destinations for highly-skilled Romanians, Romania along with Turkey also ranks first as country of origin for highly-skilled foreign residents in an enlarged Europe (which includes also ex-URSS and ex-Yugoslav countries and Turkey) (OECD 2006). There are several Western European countries in which Romania ranks among the first ten countries of origin of highly-skilled migrants. This is the case of Hungary and Austria (where highly-skilled

Romanians rank first), Belgium, Germany, the Czech Republic, Spain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Slovak Republic and Sweden.

At the EU-15 level, if in early 90's most highly-skilled Romanians went to Germany, also due to ethnic migration and network ties which henceforth developed as acknowledged by Straubhaar (2000), this no longer holds true in 2000. What we notice at present is a diversification of the destinations of highly-skilled Romanians in EU-15. Radu (2003) shows that the countries with the highest selectivity rate for Romanian emigrants among the EU-15 are France and Great Britain, whereas Germany comes third with a rate of selectivity slightly surpassing the EU-15 average. In the light of the recent developments of the endogenous growth theories, these countries have been among the first European countries to adopt migration policies targeting the highly-skilled. For instance, Germany implemented in 2000 the Green Card, a programme quite similar to the US H-1B visa, enabling companies to employ some 20,000 IT experts from non-EU countries. A university or technical college degree or a guaranteed gross annual salary of at least € 51,000 was required. The Green Card could be obtained by international ICT students, enabling them to sign a labour contract in Germany immediately after their graduation. In this way, they were spared a lengthy process to obtain a residence permit. This programme granted a limited work permit of up to five years and the right to residence during this period for spouses and minors. From August 2000 to July 2003, 14,876 work permits were issued on the basis of the Green Card regulation and most of them went to Indian and Eastern European specialists, Romanians ranking third.

*The distribution by nationality of workers in the German Green Card programme*



Source: German Federal Employment Agency, Bundesagentur für Arbeit

## Permits by nationality issued in the Green Card Programme

Nationality	In %	Total	Companies with ..... employees		
			< than 100	100 to 500	> than 500
India	26.4	3,926	2,478	866	581
Russia/Belarus/Ukraine/ Baltic States	12.6	1,874	1,237	268	370
Romania	7.0	1,039	624	195	220
Czech/Slovak Republic	6.6	983	169	659	151
Ex-Yugoslavia	5.1	756	434	105	217
Hungary	3.4	510	322	79	109
North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia)	2.9	432	26	227	72
Bulgaria	2.9	431	293	46	92
South Africa	2.6	389	183	68	138
Pakistan	1.4	211	136	21	54
Not specified	29.1	4,325	2,212	692	1,421
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,876</b>	<b>8,805</b>	<b>2,563</b>	<b>3,508</b>
		100%	59.2%	17.2%	23.6%

Source: German Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit)

The persons involved in this type of mobility are mostly young. A study conducted by the Open Society Foundation shows that more than 15.000 young people have been leaving Romania every year for the last six years once they finished their studies and a quarter of high-school students intend to leave during their undergraduate studies or after. About 3% of young urban residents according to the Public Opinion Barometer developed by the Open Society Foundation would like to leave the country either during their studies or afterwards. The preferred destinations for those who would like to continue their studies abroad are: the US (for 14%), France (for 13%), Germany (for 11%) and Great Britain (for 10%). The rate of return for those who leave to study abroad is according to the Romanian Passport Department and the Frontier Police of a mere 10%.

This is why nowadays brain drain has become a real threat for Romanian society and authorities. But the question we raise in our study and which we shall try to answer by analyzing the migration pattern of young highly-skilled Romanians in France is if this fear is justified or not. Is this form of mobility really a brain drain, or would other terms be more appropriate in order to classify it?

According to OECD estimates, there are about 10.000 highly-skilled Romanians in France, this would represent a quarter of Romanians living in France, out of which another 10.000 were in an illegal situation before Romania joined the EU. But nobody can really estimate the number of Romanians in France. Whereas the Romanian authorities place it at around 60.000, informal sources often speak of 100.000. About 40.000 would be living according to these sources in Paris and Ile-de-France, whereas the rest is spread all over the French territory. The



most important poles of Romanian communities can be found near Strasbourg, Lille, Lyon (with an important Roma community), Marseille, Montpellier and Bordeaux (Michaud 2003).

### **The Romanian Community in France**

France is one of the traditional destinations of Romanian emigrants. Throughout Romanian history France represented a model for Romania and the ties established with this country were particularly strong. Nowadays, we can identify several waves in the Romanian highly-skilled migration to France. First of all, a wave of Romanian intellectuals and aristocrats exiled themselves in France during the early days of the communist regime in Romania between '46 and '48. They were flying to safety from the communist repression. Even at the end of the 50s we can still identify some Romanian intellectuals who manage to arrive in France either as tourists, or simply because the communist system thought best to get rid of persons perceived as a threat to the new regime and granted them the right to join family already in France. In turn, their family in France also made its best to assure their departure. These Romanians never recognized the authority of the newly set up regime in Romania and their loyalty continued to be placed with the late Romanian monarchy. They organized themselves around some remarkable Romanian intellectuals and established a Romanian government in exile.

Another wave has its origin in the labour migration from Romania during the sixties when under specific labour agreements, some Romanian specialists went to work in the Maghreb countries. Once their contracts ended, some of these people, mostly the scientists never came back, but instead went to France and obtained the political refugee statute.

During the nineties with the dismantling of political frontiers, a lot of intellectuals fled abroad, some of them choosing France. After the episode of the invasion of Bucharest by miners in the summer of 1990, sign of a possible political instability to follow, it is estimated that 5000 Romanian students left the country. The departures continued during the 90 decade with many Romanians leaving during their undergraduate studies. As the statute of political refugee became more and more difficult to acquire and the work contracts favoured only some very precise domains as the high tech, this strategy was adopted by a wider range of highly-skilled persons. With the emergence of a network of student exchange programmes, France became rapidly one of the main destinations for this type of migration for study (Lagrange 1998). However, this proved to be a mere strategy in order to leave the country, with many of them never coming back. In fact, the rate of return was so small that lately France

reconsidered its politics in this field, trying to encourage joint programmes which could determine Romanian students to return home once their studies in France finished.

The further development of this programmes in the light of the future accession to the EU, led to an important increase in the number of those who left the country in early 2000. With a focus on Romanians who came to France in the last ten years, our study concerns mostly this fourth and last wave of Romanian migration. We must emphasize that the conditions under which this wave developed are very different from those concerning the former three. In this case, the accession to the EU was clearly in view and political conditions could no longer be considered unstable. The rate of growth of the Romanian economy was on a constant upturn and foreign enterprises were investing in highly-skilled intensive sectors of the Romanian economy, creating the opportunity for well-paid jobs. For the first two waves which took place during communism there was no possibility of return and all ties with the country of origin and with those left behind were cut for what seemed forever. The third wave developed under the difficult conditions of the Romanian transition, with no economic opportunities and the worsening of the living conditions. Compared to the former waves for which the future seemed clearly defined and concerned mostly the country of destination, we can consider the future prospects of this last wave as being open ended.

## **Case study**

### **Romanian highly-skilled migration in France in the last ten years**

#### **Description of the sample**

Our case study relies on twenty exploratory interviews that we conducted in France during March and April 2006. We have then drawn a questionnaire that was filled in by 125 persons. We shall further on proceed at a brief description of our sample. As we have previously mentioned this form of mobility concerns mostly the youth. The age average of our sample lies in the interval 26-30 years (48%). All these persons have a tertiary degree education acquired either in Romania or in France. The average time already spent in France by these people varies between two and five years. Two thirds of our sample population are women, which is in accordance with the statistics issued by EduFrance that acknowledges women dominance of the student flows for the last years and also with the data provided by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics which show from 1990 onwards a steady increase in the percentage of women in the Romanian migratory flows.

As the history of migrants begins in their country of origin, we shall first investigate who these persons were before their departure from Romania. First of all, they were among the best and brightest Romanian students. They come from all eight NUTS II regions and from 33 out of the 41 Romanian counties. As region of origin, the capital Bucharest-Ilfov ranks first with 27.2% of the migrants coming from Bucharest. Another 16.8% come from the North-Eastern region and 14.4% from the South-Muntenia region. In what universities are concerned, we acknowledge the primacy of the universities of Bucharest with 54.4% of our sample having studied in Bucharest. Bucharest is followed by the universities of Cluj and Iasi. We can thus identify a capital effect, with Bucharest attracting an important number of Romanian students due to the quality and the diversity of the studies proposed and also to better job opportunities after having graduated.

In what concerns the distribution according to the fields of specialization, in the ranks of men we identify most high tech specialists (32.6%) and economists (30.4%), followed by mathematicians, while among women we identify most economists (34.2%) and philologists (15.2%). The diversity of fields is greater in the case of women. Six persons have a double degree and nine have completed their whole college education in France.

The main advantage of this population obviously resides in the skills acquired, still most of them had a previous migratory experience generally linked to their studies. Should we consider the case of a former internal mobility experience (which is the case of sixty-two persons in our sample) or that of an international one (eight persons), or even of both (four persons) we can identify from the start the existence of a mobility experience which has an important role in their departure decision and in the way they fare afterwards. There are even cases in which the whole family stands for an example of development of a culture of mobility with several members living in other countries or having spent significant time abroad.

Even if, these persons generally arrive in France as international students, this is often a step preceding the entry on the labour market of the destination country. Meyer and Hernandez (2004) acknowledge that two thirds of R&D experts at world level have entered the destination country as students. As Steven Vertovec (2002) underlines “the experience of being a foreign student significantly increases the likelihood of being a skilled migrant at a later stage”. The networks developed by the students help to provide opportunities for other fellows from the country of origin.

## **Reasons for Departure and the Main Strategies Employed**

We shall further on focus on the departure reasons indicated by the migrants in our sample. The most important reason seems to be the desire to pursue internationally recognized studies leading to the acquisition of an internationally recognized diploma. The second reason is the search for better job opportunities and the desire to acquire a better social status. These two reasons however are not as it may seem at first sight divergent, as the diploma recognized all over the world seems to be the element which facilitates the mobility. Once the diploma acquired they can leave wherever they find the best job opportunities. Another element that determines the departure resides in their discontent with the Romanian society as many consider that even though the communist regime is gone, the change in mentalities has lagged behind. Some of them testify to have left in search of a freedom perceived as still difficult to find in the Romanian society, whereas the thrust for an experience of another culture also plays a significant part. Man's exploratory nature has never faded away even in modern times.

Amongst the strategies employed in order to leave Romania, migration for study plays, as expected the most important part. Almost 70% of our sample population have left the country as international students, whereas a few persons left with a work contract (it is merely the case of high tech professionals) or for family reunion (in the case of women). Some of these strategies account for a well-organized plan, as in order to become an international student one needs to have very good results and to work for them several years in advance. Sometimes, the strategies designed before the departure foresee the change of statute, for example from international students to highly-skilled workers or from tourists to international students. The differences between qualities no longer seem to matter, as one can very easily pass from one quality to another.

France is the country which receives the greatest number of Romanian students each year. In 2004 the number of Romanian students attending courses in French universities stood at 4839 persons. The number of Romanian and Bulgarian students in French universities has been increasing constantly since the mid 1990's. These countries have known the most spectacular evolution in terms of countries of origin of international students during the period 1980-2001. This is also due to the fact that during communism (with the exception of children of former nomenklatura) this kind of migration was very limited.

## **Destination Choice and Performance on the Labour Market**

What determines the choice of the destination country? In the majority of cases, the geography of mobility seems to be shaped by the exchange programmes concluded by the

universities in the countries of origin and destination. Formal networks are the main channel to enable the mobility of the highly-skilled as described by Faist (1999). Also, French softpower seems to play an important part in that matter, as the knowledge of the French language and the attraction exercised by the French culture, represent together one of the most important elements to enable this choice. France has even developed an entire strategy for this purpose as the importance of student mobility in attracting highly-skilled labour has been officially recognized in the report presented by the Economic and Social Council in 2005. This report emphasizes the need for France to adopt a politics concerning international students which allows her to compete with the US, Canada and the UK and also acknowledges the importance of student mobility for the spread of French softpower. The French softpower is very important in the Romanian case, as the mobility of Romanian students to France started to develop from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and had even become a tradition during the following century when aristocratic families sent their children to be educated in France. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Romania and Russia were the first source countries in Europe for international students in France. This tradition was thoroughly respected until the outbreak of World War II and the instauration of communism. Consequently, in what concerns the history of French-Romanian relations we feel the need to emphasize the existence of a circulation not only of people, but also of ideas, practices and symbols, which was interrupted only by the communist period.

Another element which seems to influence the destination choice resides in the existence of informal networks, this is kin or friends established networks. About a third of our sample members admit the importance of informal networks in their destination choice. The development of new ICTs during the last years facilitated the contact inside the networks allowing for a virtual projection of the future space of mobility. The migrants can in this way get accustomed to their future destination even before having a physical contact with this space. In other cases, following the significant decrease in transportation costs, many migrants have already been to their destination country to visit relatives and friends. The visits paid as tourists are just a first step on becoming a migrant and are often part of a learning process which is very important for the future mobility of these migrants.

Focusing this time on the destination country, we would like to know why these students stayed on, once their study period ended. Some of the persons admit to have stayed on in order to complete their qualification, whereas the majority seems to think that they have better career opportunities in France.

In the case of researchers, the lack of possibilities to conduct research at the international level in Romania and the low rate of investment in the R&D activities both from the public and the private sector seem to encourage them to stay on. A possible return to the home country is perceived as leading to brain waste.

For others their stay is mainly due to the changes which took place in their lives. Some of them have built a family in France, others simply consider that they have created their own lives there and that coming back would mean starting all over again.

How do these migrants fare in their destination country? At the professional level, the difficulties emerge with the passage from one quality to another, for instance from international student to highly-skilled worker. Many of them admit to have had difficulties in finding a job according to their qualification. The success varies also in accordance to the professions held and thus to the labour market demand. If the economists and the high tech specialists seem to face fewer difficulties in finding a job, this is not the case for the persons holding a degree in the field of humanities. Most of the migrants blame this state of affairs on discrimination against foreigners on the French labour market. Indeed, the unemployment rate stood in 2002 at 5% for the natives, 7.2% for EU-15 nationals on the French labour market, 11% for foreigners having acquired the French nationality and at 18% for foreigners coming from countries other than EU- 15, which accounts for a rate almost three and a half times greater than in the case of the natives (Economic and Social Council 2002).

### **Multiple Allegiances and Identity**

If the professional integration seems difficult, what about social integration? Among the factors that could eventually facilitate social integration are the acquisition of the French citizenship which ensures equal judicial rights as the natives, the knowledge of the French language, mixed marriages and kin and friends networks which could ease the contact with communities of which they are already members. The most important part is played by the ties developed with colleagues at the university or at work as they introduce the migrants to the common practices acting as their best teachers.

Upon analyzing the interviews made, we realize that the traditional discourse in terms of social integration, assimilation and identity does no longer correspond to these migrants' experience as they live in a world of multiple allegiances. These allegiances concern the home society, the destination society and above all a multitude of communities (Kastoryano 1998). We indeed notice that these migrants develop competing but not exclusive attachments to more than one community at the same time. We can identify a wide range of communities to

which these migrants belong: family communities, professional communities, student communities, ethnic communities, religious communities, political communities. These migrants are thus part of a range of overlapping communities both in real and in symbolic terms. They can actually belong to more than one type of community, and even to more than one community of the same type. As Rainer Bauböck (2001) notes “Multiple citizenship is the most visible illustration of overlapping membership in political communities”.

In these communities migrants very often develop ties which go beyond borders, creating a network culture, as most of them admit to having friends or relatives in other EU countries. N. van Hear (1998) identifies three types of factors which favour the development of cross-border ties: communication facilities, transportation development and socio-cultural competences. According to F. Ascher (2006), “these new social ties are probably weaker, less polyvalent, but a lot more numerous and changing: they grant mobility a new social status and allow individuals to lead a life of n dimensions.” These cross-border ties ensure the presence of the migrants in more than one place. The nature of these ties can be either virtual in which case the contact inside the network is ensured by the means of Internet or of the mobile or fixed phones or it can be real. With the fall in the transportation cost, migrants can easily circulate between the physical spaces which support the network. Identity itself is rebuilt inside these networks. Multiple allegiances to different communities are at the origin of the shift from a “territorial identity to a network identity” (Badie 1995). In this context, “identity is also, inescapably, about displacement and relocation, the experience of sustaining and mediating complex affiliations, multiple attachments” (Clifford 1998). Identities, in consequence, tend to be more situational. They are overlapping and flexible in order to allow individuals to adapt to their new condition of circulatory migrants and to take advantage of the best opportunities they can come across.

### **Contacts and Emergence of a Network Culture**

Network expansion usually precedes territorial expansion. Within the network material and immaterial flows circulate ensuring the transmission of goods and services, as well as of social and economic information. The information received about better career opportunities often determines the departure of migrants to another country. Social networks usually guide migrants into or through specific places and occupations. They are often crucial for finding jobs and accommodation (Vertovec 2002). Multiple presences allow migrants to take advantage of better career opportunities no matter where they may appear. Migrants do not circulate only between their home country and their destination country, they actually have

multiple destinations and what determines their mobility is the search for a better social status and better career opportunities. Should these opportunities arise in the home country, these migrants would come back, if not they are likely to choose another destination. With Romania's accession to the EU, indeed some seem convinced that better opportunities could arise in Romania. But even if they return, they are no longer confined to a certain space and they can go mobile again whenever they choose. Their skills, which are internationally recognized allow them to go anywhere in the world, they are not tied to a specific country or place anymore. They have become free riders.

This space of flows is the source of their power as it provides them with access to knowledge and information which are only available to individuals who are part of the network. We can actually identify the emergence of a network culture built by these migrants, but which does not exclude friends and relatives who are still sedentary as differences between different categories tend to fade away and immobile individuals exposed to this network culture can easily become mobile as mobile individuals can also choose for a period to become sedentary.

In this case, some specific effects for the country of origin come from the networks established with family and friends but also with other professionals left behind. It is on these immaterial effects that we have chosen to focus on in our study.

Mobility and distance do not affect only people involved in transnational movements but also their environment in the home country. Family and friends back home equally become part of this world of movement and of the transnational social spaces that are being built between the home country and the countries of destination. The way in which the life of the migrants changes due to mobility has been at the core of many studies, whereas the effects on the family and friends back home have been less looked upon. Even when studies have tried to shed light on these effects, they have done so by focusing separately on the migrants and on the family back home. The relationship was never conceived as a continuous, as something that takes place in several spaces at the same time, but on two separate and clearly cut dimensions. On one hand the migrants with their lives at destination, on the other hand the families back home, a sedentary people left behind who has to suffer the consequences of migration without being an active part of the process.

Long-distance networks can provide very important channels for flows of capital, skill and information. We try to assess the existence of a permanent contact with family and friends back in the home country. For almost 40% of the migrants these contacts take place weekly, whereas for almost 50% these contacts are even more frequent occurring daily or several times a week. The preferred communication means is the telephone in about 45% of the cases



and the Internet in 32%. The rest of the migrants use both means at the same frequency. The telephone remains still the means of communication which is most often used in spite of the accrued concurrence of the Internet. This concurrence has resulted in the transformation of these 'objects of connection', so that they have come to include each other's function. The mobile phone allows one to connect to the Internet, whereas on the Internet we see the emergence of a line of services, like Skype and Messenger with voice performing functions similar to the phone's. There is no clear distinction anymore between these objects and by using one of them, the customer can actually be using the other at the same time.

The decrease in the price of communications allows migrants to maintain the contact and to actively take part in the real life of those left behind. It is a way of living together and apart at the same time. The webcam attached to the computer makes possible the eye-to-eye contact even in the case of the virtual communication, reinforcing the impression of the reality of presence. The migrant is no longer absent from his space of origin and his presence is ensured by the constant contact facilitated by the development of these means of communication. The eye is the "most direct and purest interaction that exists" (Simmel 1997). It generates "the most complete reciprocity; of person to person, face to face". In this way the eye affects the connection and interaction of individuals.

At the same time, the increased accessibility and velocity of the transportation means facilitate the 'real' contact, as migrants come back to the home country several times a year and in turn their family and friends visit them in the destination country.

For a long time Romanians could not freely circulate. People who lived during communism did not have the opportunities that are available for new generations. The lust of freedom and a certain thirst for mobility, for meeting other people and other cultures motivate the parents to sustain the mobility of their offsprings. At times, this support takes the form of financial backing on behalf of the family back in Romania during the studies or until the offsprings are ready to take life in their hands. These financial transfers are very often one-way flows. Parents see their dreams being fulfilled by their children and this is their main source of repayment. At the same time the young migrants seem to be aware about the transfer of dreams and of hopes which is more important than that of money. This is a supplementary motivation for them to succeed in forging their own path so when they talk to their family or when they visit them they can reassure that the hopes have not been scattered. They bring back along with gifts the fulfilment of dreams of another generation.

The flows of social capital determined by the contact can be very important. Recent interviews conducted with the friends and families of the migrants, make us realize that these

flows lead to a learning process of those left in the home country. But, the existence of the contact is not enough to ensure the success of transfers. The family and friends back home need to have an absorption capacity which could allow them to correctly decrypt the messages received. In order to facilitate the contact and to ensure the right decryption of the messages, family members take up practices they were not accustomed to before.

The absence and the presence can no longer be thought of as being in opposition, as migrants can nowadays be absent and present at the same time. Their presence is ensured by the development of network ties and the existence of the contact- either virtual or real.

### **Conclusions**

This form of highly-skilled mobility which involves a lot of circulation between more than two countries can no longer be classified as brain drain. If, during the communist period the highly-skilled migration from Romania could be indeed termed as brain drain, nowadays the strong ties with the home country and the development of contacts with the home society positively affecting its evolution makes the term of brain drain no longer appropriate. The networks developed ensure the flow of financial capital, knowledge and information. The individuals involved in these networks are at the basis of the emergence of a network culture which relies on both material and immaterial flows.

In order to take best advantages of the mobility of its citizens, the state has to shift its orientation in its policy designing from a static one to a more mobile one. The migrants can represent for the state of origin a source of social, financial, cultural and political capital (Dufoix and Diminescu 2006). They are in the best position to promote their home country's values worldwide, acting as informal ambassadors of their state of origin (Nedelcu 2003). The migrants can actively act in the space of destination and in the space of origin at the same time. They allow the state to expand beyond its limited local resources. Multiple allegiances however confer migrants a certain bargaining power which can be achieved by playing on the line between belonging and non-belonging (Favell 1998).

The emphasis must be laid in this context on the reciprocity of the relation between the state and the migrants. The state must develop an active policy in relation to its migrant citizens as it is in the best position to intervene in order to defend their rights in the framework of the agreements concluded with the destination states. But, if the state can ensure that the rights of its migrant citizens are observed outside its borders it has to do the same thing on its national territory, by not forgetting that these individuals who live beyond its borders are still

Romanian citizens and by taking care that their rights are observed on the Romanian territory as well.

Citizen mobility beyond state borders must not be regarded in terms of a threat to the states' power. The territory of the nation state can be nowadays thought of being made of two components: a real one and a virtual one. By building bridges with its migrant citizens, the state is no longer confined to its limited political borders, it is present everywhere one can find its citizens.

Romanian citizens abroad might actually play a very important part in the process of European integration as integration means not only economic convergence but also convergence to a value system promoted by European countries. Through the immaterial flows that take place inside the networks, Romanian migrants can act as important catalysts of the transformation of the Romanian society and for the convergence of Romanian values and lifestyles towards European values and lifestyles. This kind of convergence could be vital for the Romanian society as informal institutions have been acknowledged to have played a major role in transition. The convergence of informal institutions seems to be in this case even more important than economic convergence. Persistence of behaviours inherited from the communist regime like generalized corruption and networks have constituted major drawbacks to a successful transformation in Romania. Without informal institutions that could legitimize economic reforms and sustain these reforms, economic convergence is unlikely to be reached easily. In the case where migration networks through the flows of act in favour of this informal institutional convergence, we could consider this transformation to be a sort of transformation from below (imposed by migrants and their family and friends) and not something that is imposed by the Romanian state.

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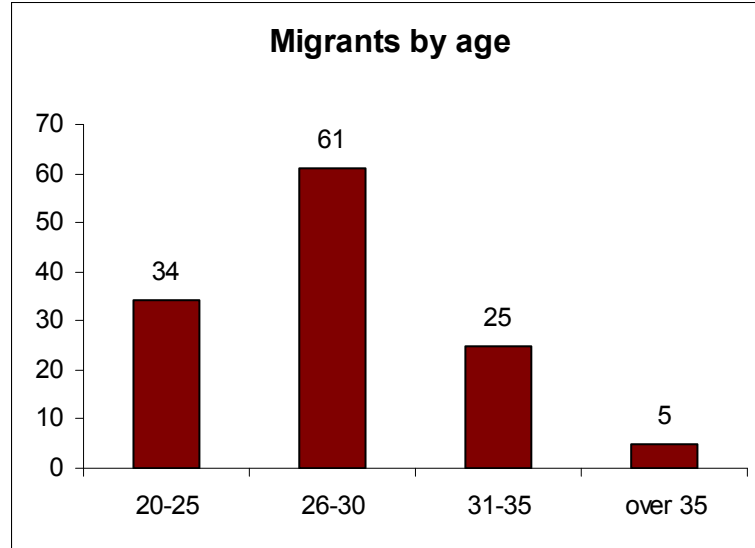
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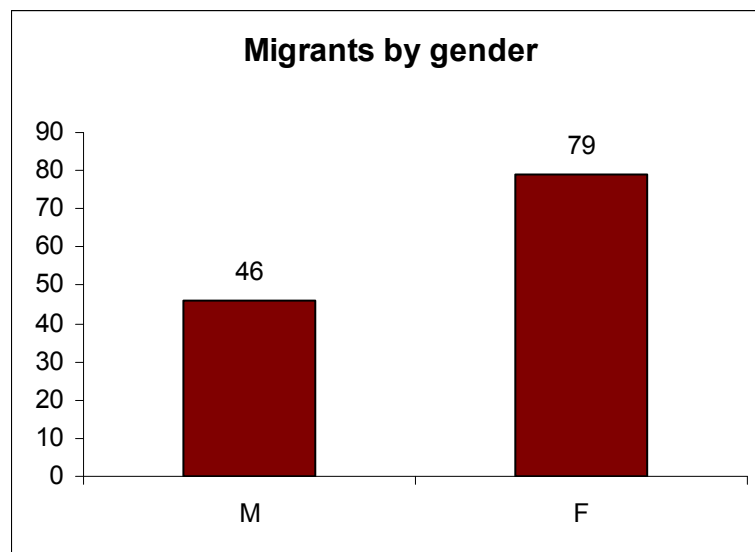
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## Appendix

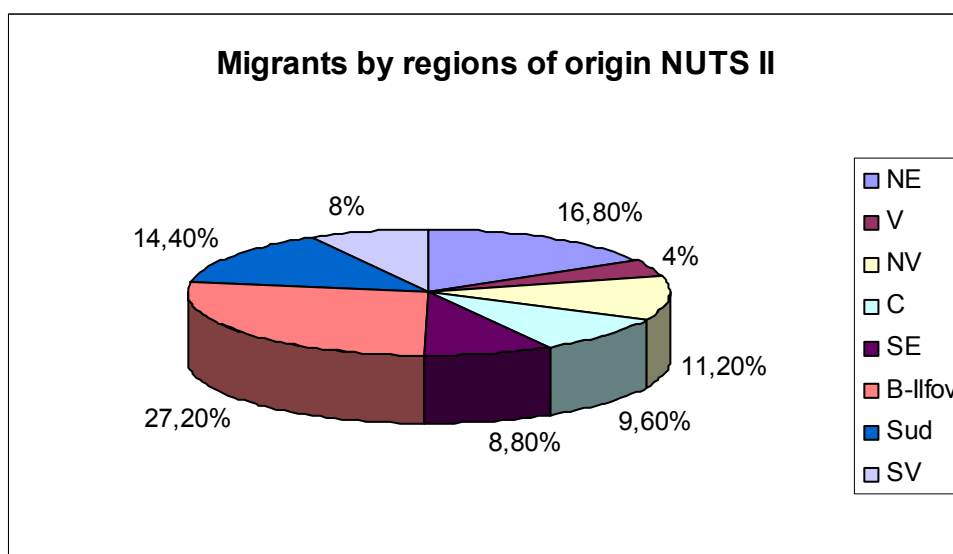
*Figure 1*



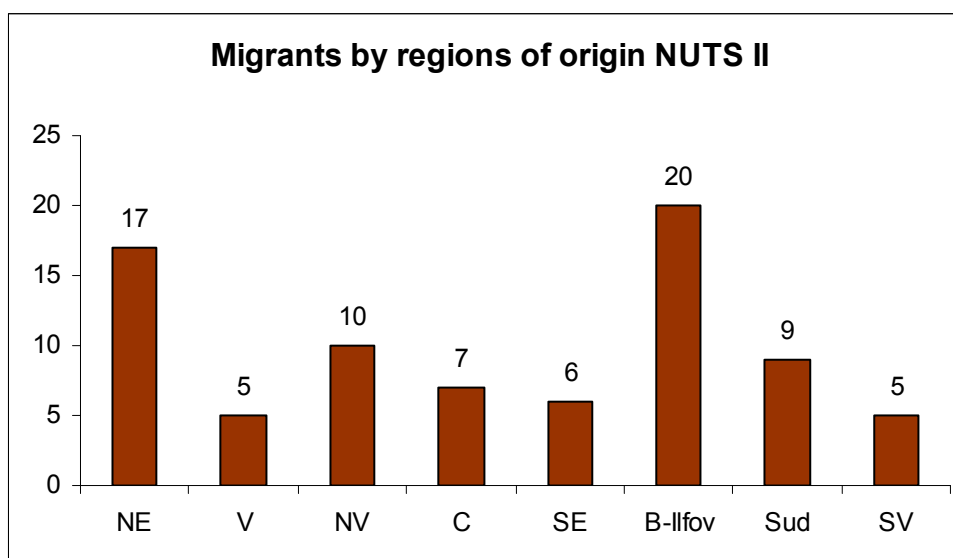
*Figure 2*



*Figure 3*

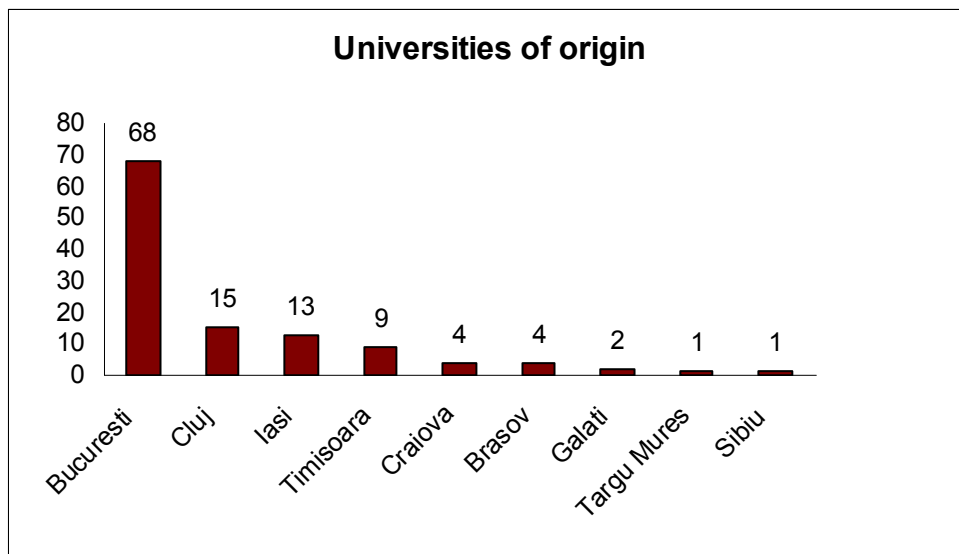


*Figure 4*

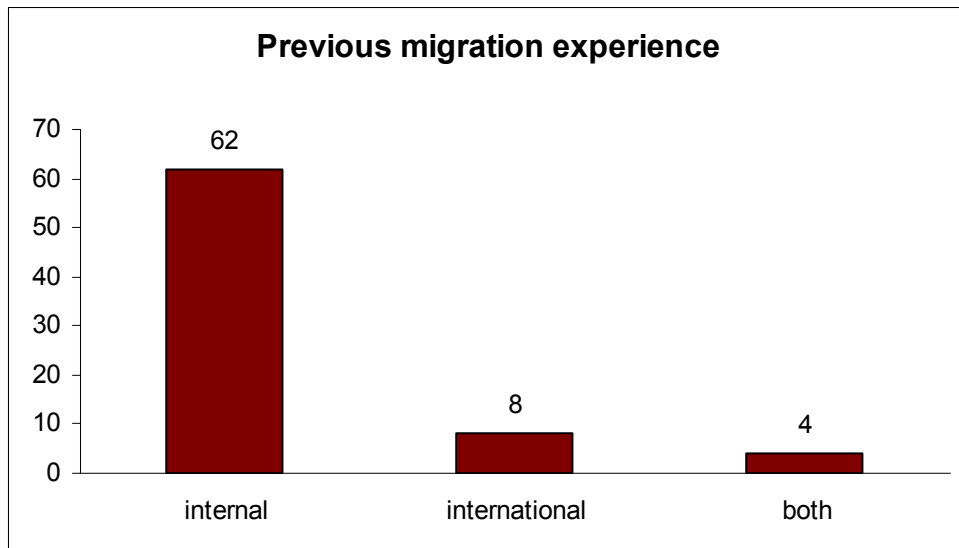




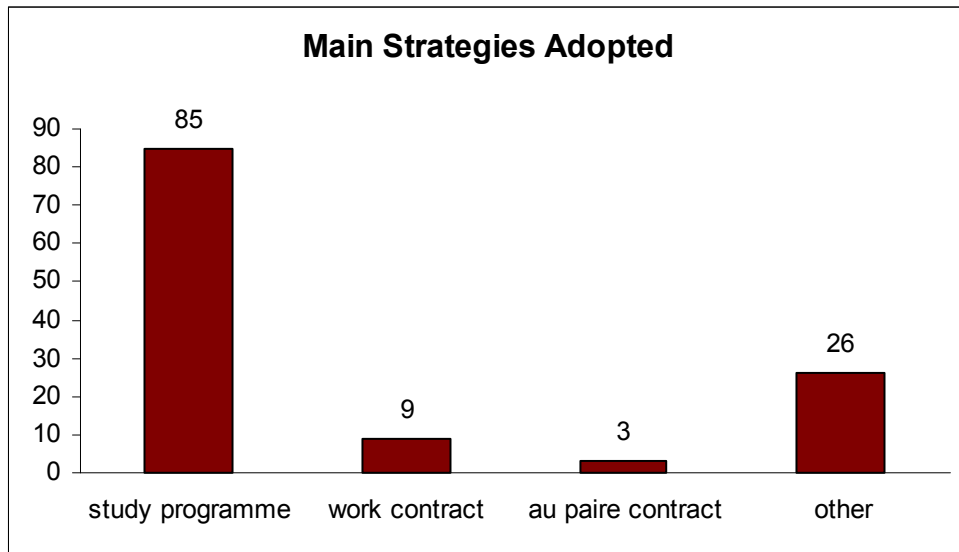
**Figure 5**



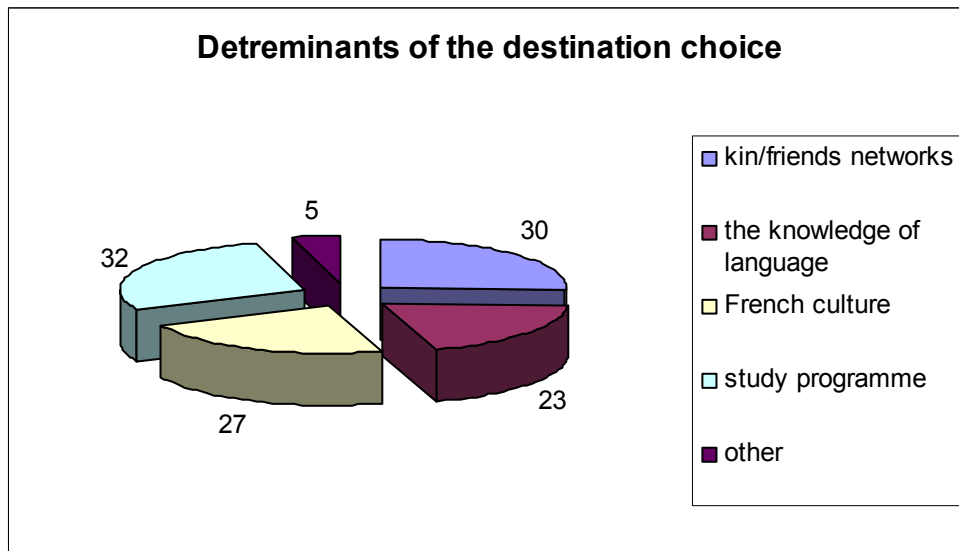
**Figure 6**



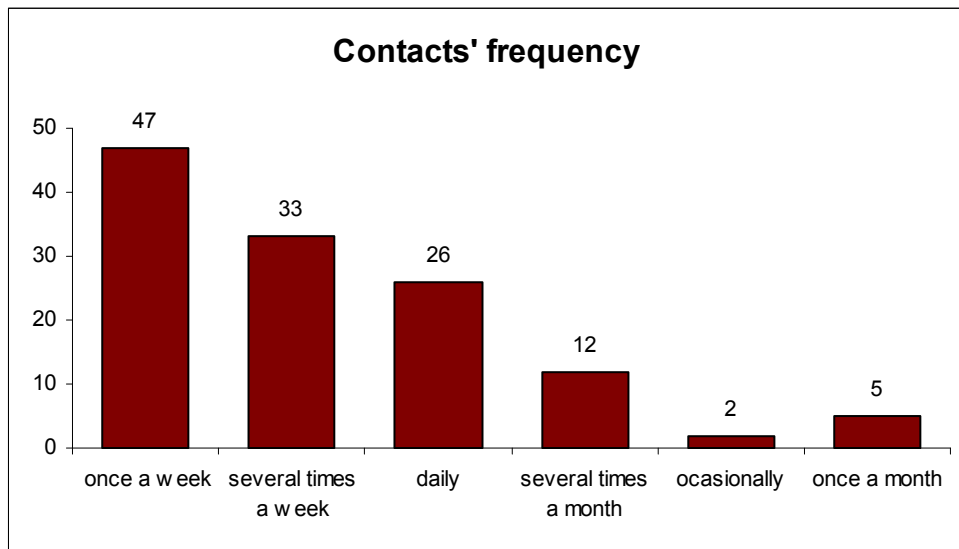
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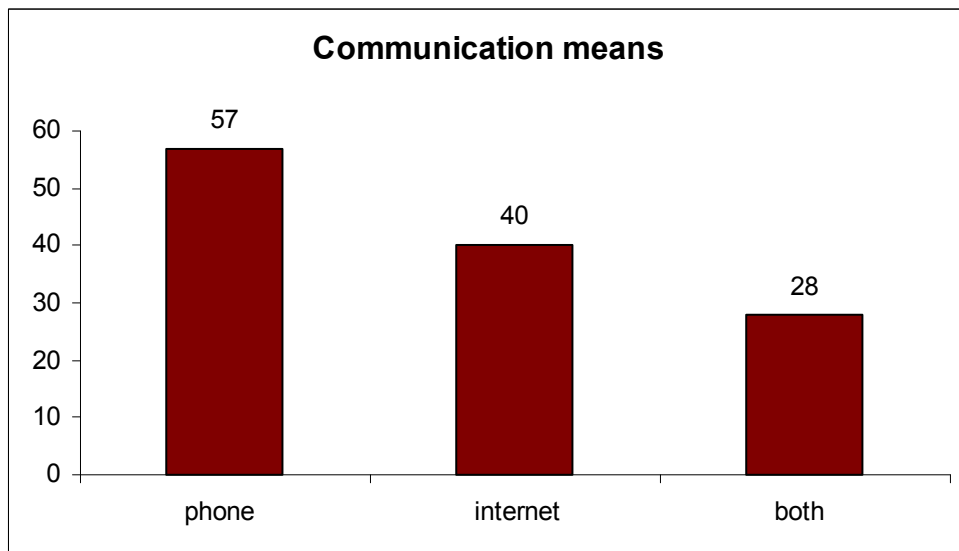
**Figure 8**



**Figure 9**



**Figure 10**



*Figure 11*

