

## **Project: Romanian Ageing Migrants in the Welfare State (RAMWEL)**

### **Key words**

Ageing migrants  
Romanians  
Transnationalism  
Welfare State  
Welfare Strategies

### **Project outline**

The project's **scope is to improve the scientific knowledge in the area of ageing migrants and local welfare regimes**. The project focuses on four dimensions: 1) ageing migrants' bottom-up strategies of access to welfare; 2) ageing migrants' transnational ties, 3) informal and voluntary provisions by ageing migrants and 4) local welfare policies towards ageing migrants. The results would serve to expand the knowledge base of welfare provisions, whether formal, informal or voluntary, capable to contribute to the well-being of ageing migrants.

Recently there has been increasing awareness that some migrants are reaching the retirement age in the country of destination and some people choose to migrate after retirement. Like in many other European countries, in Switzerland, occurs a rapid ageing of the migrant population. Most of the literature on ageing migrants in Switzerland focuses on Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, former Yugoslavians or Turks. These groups capture mainly the migrants who arrived in Switzerland in the 1960s and 1970s as guest workers. They are very significant given the large number of migrants living in Switzerland.

A migrant group that has received less recognition from researchers is that of Romanians. The Romanian population in Switzerland is very heterogeneous. There is a group of Romanians who arrived in Switzerland as political refugees during the communist regime in Eastern Europe. Following the fall of the Iron curtain, a new group of Romanians migrated to Switzerland, mainly for economic reasons. This second flow of migration was followed by another group of migrants; i.e. the ageing parents who came through family reunification. Another category refers to the temporary visitors who come to Switzerland for less than 3 months in order to provide care for their grandchildren.

Thus, studying Romanian migrants would allow comparing persons who have arrived in Switzerland in different socio-economic contexts and who are different with respect to their statuses, levels of education, participation on the labour market, rights in relation to the welfare state, strategies developed to access welfare provisions and ties to the country of

origin. In spite of being part of the same national group, we expect to encounter a variety of situations that would allow us to understand the process behind the strategies developed by migrants in accessing welfare regimes and the role of the ageing migrants for the informal welfare provisions in their families, communities and in transnational spaces.

The project thus starts with two research questions:

1. What are the formal and informal strategies used by the different groups of Romanian migrants to fulfil their welfare needs?
2. What is the role of Romanian ageing migrants in the provision of informal, voluntary welfare provisions in the country of origin and at the destination?

The project is located at the intersection of different disciplines: international migration, sociology, social policy, gerontology and so on.

### **Research methodology**

The project will employ **mixed-methods**, combining **qualitative and quantitative methods**. There will be done a quantitative analysis of the Romanian migrant population in Switzerland using secondary data from the Federal Statistical Office of Switzerland and the Federal Office of Migrations.

The qualitative analysis will consist in in-depth interviews with ageing migrants and local stakeholders in the welfare provisions. The analysis will be focused on two selected cantons in Switzerland: Geneva and Vaud. There will be done a policy analysis of local policies towards ageing migrants. The in-depth interviews with ageing migrants will focus on the strategies migrants develop to access welfare and their informal and voluntary welfare provisions in the country of origin and at the destination. The respondents will be asked to introduce us with family members and friends who returned to Romania. The return migrants will be interviewed by the Romanian team.

To complement the qualitative data, the respondents will be asked to fill in two time-use questionnaires. These will provide important information on the contributions by ageing migrants.

The project conducts several comparisons – between different groups of Romanian ageing migrant and between cantons. The comparisons will bring forward differences and similarities, and explore the causalities leading to these outcomes.

The expected results would be to 1) develop conceptual framework for analysing the evolving notion of welfare by focusing on the dynamics between public, private and third sector; 2) underline the contribution of ageing migrants through the provision of welfare services and 3) advance the state-of-the-art research in the area of ageing migrants and local welfare regimes.

## Objectives

### *Over-arching objectives*

1. Improve the scientific knowledge in the area of ageing migrants and local welfare regimes
2. Expand the knowledge base of welfare provisions, whether formal, informal or voluntary, capable to contribute to the well-being of ageing migrants.

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### *Concrete objectives*

3. Understand ageing migrants' bottom-up strategies of access to welfare;
4. Study ageing migrants' transnational ties,
5. Explore the informal and voluntary provisions by ageing migrants
6. Investigate the local welfare policies towards ageing migrants.