

**The Europeanisation of Everyday Life:  
Cross-Border Practices and Transnational Identifications  
Among EU and Third-Country Citizens**

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Romanians' Social Transnationalism in the Making

**Alin Croitoru, Dumitru Sandu, Elena Tudor**

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## Executive summary

*Transnational migration fields* emerged in social research as a result of a tentative criticism of *methodological nationalism* with its focus on the national space as a homogeneous container of all the forms of social life. The new approach of methodological transnationalism is targeted to locate some sociocultural phenomena and processes in the framework of interactions among several societies. Cross-border practices, links and identities in this new approach put in relation not only nation-states but non-state actors that are structured at group, community and regional level.

The three chapters of the working paper address the emerging social transnationalism (Mau, 2012) of Romanians by focusing on transnational fields, perceptions of the first trips abroad and the habitus of emigrants in relation with return intentions. Temporary or indefinite time emigration of Romanians abroad for work started, mainly, during the economic recession that hit Romania in 1997-1999. In spite of its young age, it largely contributed to the structuring of a social transnationalism by fields, actors and layers. EUCROSS and non-EUCROSS data at individual or aggregated level, of quantitative and qualitative nature are put to work for capturing the complexity of the Romanian transnationalism in the making.

The key idea of the first chapter is that regions at different levels, at origin and at destination, function as relevant frames in structuring migration fields. Transnational fields are not only dense interactions between pairs of societies having Romania as origin, but a configuration of interactions among clusters of sending microregions in Romania and receiving macroregions, formed by clusters of receiving countries. Changing the unit of analysis from national societies to regions at different levels allows for a dynamic picture of multisited and multilevel regionalism in understanding transnational migration. Survey and census data are aggregated to reach this picture. The multiregional model of transnationalism is developed by four axes or layers on migration streams, cross-border networks, transnational habitus and migration experiences at individual and family levels. This comprehensive, multilayer approach requires the use of multiple data sets (the EUCROSS survey on Romanian natives, the Romanian census data from 2011 and the Romanian subsample from the Eurobarometer 73.3 on *New Europeans*) that are able to capture the complexity of the model.

The chapter “First trip abroad: expectations, experiences and stories of transnational Romanians” analyses transnational Romanians’ stories about their first trip abroad using the EUMEAN dataset. The concept of physical mobility is seen as a broader framework for understanding transnational and cosmopolitan behaviours as well as international migration. In order to distinguish between different types of travelling for the first trip abroad, the chapter is constructed keeping in mind the structural changes and constraints regarding physical mobility for Romanian citizens. During the transition from a communist country to a EU member state, Romanian citizens’ stories about travelling abroad for the first time fundamentally changed. Labour migrants, asylum seekers, business travellers, students or tourists left the country with different expectations and faced different problems at destination. Their attitudes toward origin and destination framed their images about the first trip abroad. Using a qualitative approach and samples of Romanians who live in Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom, the analysis emphasizes certain differences between different types of travelling for the first time abroad and reconstructs how Romanians started their transnational careers.

Romanian migration has a temporary and circulatory character: on the one hand, people are moving back and forth to and from a destination and, on the other hand, there are migrants who either resettle in Romania, come back in the home country and then emigrate to a different destination than the initial one or move to a new destination after spending time abroad without returning to Romania. The third chapter is concerned with the factors that shape these distinct possible strategies and types of mobility, with a special interest towards intentions and plans for return. In doing so, we look at the bonds Romanian migrants maintain with their home country and explore the different typologies and categories of migrants as moulded by their experiences, opinions and attitudes towards the country of origin. The main questions of interest concern how the experience of migration shapes the attitude towards the home country and the intention to return, how did the crisis influence such aspects (if it did) and what the main factors that appear as significant to one category of migrants or another from this point of view are. For this purpose, we use fifty one of the sixty one in-depth interviews realized with Romanians as part of the EUCROSS project in Denmark, UK, Spain, Italy and Germany (EUMEAN dataset).

## Romanian migration as multiregional building of transnational fields

Dumitru Sandu

Transnationalism in migration studies is intended to shift the approach from one- to multi-sited approaches, from container national spaces of methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002: XV, 7) to societies interrelated by complex networks or fields (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Individuals, families, communities and societies are the main units of analysis in transnational studies. Currently, regions are less employed as a ground for research in transnational migration. Regions as transnational agents are mentioned especially for large countries as Brazil or India and only under the aspect of sub-state policies (Levitt & Schiller, 2004) to sustain regional identities. Even if regions are identified as significant in structuring transnational migration fields (Sandu, 2005), the process of building regional transnational spaces is less often assumed as a research target. The present chapter is devoted to reconstituting such a building process by considering a multiregional perspective on Romanian transnational social fields. The analysis framework involves a multilevel and a multisited approach with different types of origin and destination regions. The first part of the paper presents the key ideas in the regional study of transnational fields. A second section of methodology introduces the hypotheses, the data sets and the main indicators for data analysis. The third part presents the findings by two subsections: a) configuration of the main transnational migration fields (TMF) as identified by clusters of origin microregions and destination countries or clusters of clusters; b) profiles of TMF as frames for specific *ways of being* and *ways of belonging* (Levitt & Schiller, 2004), starting from survey data. The fourth part of the chapter brings forth the conclusions. The chapter as a whole is in the series of social transnationalism approaches (Mau, 2012) by its interest for the way average citizen of the country, migrant abroad, former migrant or non-migrant are making specific transnational fields with specific origin and destination or attachment regions.

### *Regional level in transnational studies*

Going beyond the container space view of methodological nationalism implies not only "adopting a transnational social field approach to the study of social life that distinguishes between the existence of transnational social networks and the consciousness of being embedded in them" (Levitt & Schiller, 2004: 1006). Transnational networks that are essential for any transnational field establish bridges not only and, frequently, not essentially, between national societies. They connect different actors not only beyond national borders but also beyond cumulative borders that are either national & local or national & regional. Communities and regions are frequently used as data collection units for transnational studies. The specific meaning of connecting communities beyond national borders is explicitly recognised by concepts such as *translocality* (Appadurai, 1996) as a local formation that is moulded by local and global forces.

Regions are less often mentioned as places to build transnational fields. *Regional transnationalism* is a rightly supported perspective but the focus in research practice is mainly on the macro-regional level (Alisdair Rogers, 2004). Transnational networks are structures that are usually built at regional level at origin and at destination. The scales of the regions could be very different: micro-/mezo/macro. The TMF could emerge in asymmetric multiregional spaces, with microregions at origin (Yuva as a pseudonym for Giresun in Turkey, for example) and regions or macroregions at destinations (New Yuva in

USA), or micro/mezo regions on both sides of the migration field (DiCarlo, 2008). Embedding a multiregional perspective in transnational studies could be a significant step in passing from a container view to a matrix view of space. The process could contribute also to a better structuring of quantitative approaches in transnational studies. Currently, there is a challenge in this research area arising from the fact that the basic concepts and views originating from the analysis of transnational migration are borrowed from anthropology (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994), favouring approaches in terms of transnational communities and networks. Adding regions as a framework of data collection and analysis to communities and nation-states could also favour the quantitative and mixed methods approach to transnationalism. An emerging trend to complement immigration transnationalism with transnationalism of return migrants or of non-migrants in origin societies is also asking for theoretical and methodological elaborations on regional transnationalism. This is because origins of migration fields are of a smaller scale compared to areas of destination. And last, but not least, *regional transnationalism* works with the awareness of the fact that linking regions across national borders is more than crossing only national borders.

### Methodology

The approach of a multi-sited and multilevel regionalism in the analysis of transmigration fields is applied for Romanian migration. Transnational fields of Romanian migration are analysed by four axes or perspectives: migration streams, transnational networks, *transnational habitus* (Guarnizo, 1997) and migration experience (see Table 1). Microregions, regions, and Romania as a whole country, and destination countries are the spatial levels to measure the indicators for the mentioned dimensions. All the measures that are origin based come from census data or from survey data. The EUCROSS survey on Romanian natives provides information only at the national level without any regional specification. Data from the Eurobarometer 73.3 on *New Europeans* could be specified at the level of the eight NUTS 2 regions. The highest territorial specification is at the NUTS 3 level (*județe/* counties) as administrative microregions and this is available only in the census data.

*Table 1. Data sources for the analysis by measurement levels and perspectives*

Measurement level at origin	Perspectives on transnational migration fields				
	Volume of emigration streams by destination countries	Transnational networks by foreign countries	Transnational habitus		Migration experience at personal and family level
			Attachment to foreign countries	Multilevel space identification	
Microregions (NUTS 3)	NIS				
Regions (NUTS 2)			EB73.3	EB73.3	EB73.3
Country		EUCROSS		EUCROSS	EUCROSS

Data sources: NIS – National Institute of Statistics, Romania 2011, Special Eurobarometer 346 *New Europeans*, part of EB 73.3, March- April 2010, EUCROSS survey on 1000 native Romanians, 2013.

The use of different data sources is necessary so as to capture all the four key dimensions of the transnational fields of migration. The research strategy was to delineate the transnational fields by the microregional census data on streams of emigration from each of the counties to a set of 16 countries. Each field of migration is determined by a cluster of similar and/or neighbouring countries of destination and by clusters of neighbouring counties as origin for the emigration towards those destinations. The degree of structuring of migration fields is tested, first of all, using the EUCROSS survey data on transnational networks. Their spatial specification is only possible at the national level, but it provides very good mappings of the transnational networks the interviewed persons have with close friends and relatives abroad. The clusters of destination countries with common origins in Romanian counties (NIS census data) are compared with the clusters of interrelated networks Romanians have abroad (EUCROSS data). A mapping of emigration streams (Figure 1) is compared to a mapping of transnational networks (Figure 3). Native Romanians that worked/ lived abroad or not are expected to have transnational networks that are structured by foreign countries in a similar way the emigration streams cluster by origin counties and destination countries.

The Romanian Census of October 2011 severely under-recorded the number of temporary emigrants. It indicated only approximately 728 thousand long term temporary emigrants (with the duration of migration of more than one year) and 386 thousand short term temporary emigrants (with the duration of migration of less than one year). It was only in Italy and Spain that the official number of Romanian immigrants was close to 2 million (1.9 million according to EUROSTAT data for 2012).<sup>1</sup> The under-recording for long-term emigrants could be related to several reasons, ranging from poor public memory about those who left communities a long time ago to weaknesses in data collection. Short-term data on emigrants seems to be of better quality than the long term one. In spite of these shortcomings, census data on temporary emigration functions as a good large sample in order to map out the transnational migration fields by origin counties and destination countries. The rate of temporary emigration abroad, as computed on the 2011 census data, is a significant predictor of a human development index at locality level, keeping several other factors under control.<sup>2</sup> The criterion validity (Babbie, 2010) of the temporary emigration rate is supported by this equation.

The EUCROSS survey data on native Romanians were collected by mobile telephone interviews on 1000 adult persons. The sample was weighted in order to achieve representativeness by using information from the EUROBAROMETER survey from fall 2012.<sup>3</sup> Microdata from the EUCROSS national survey in Romania and from the Eurobarometer 73.3 provide empirical evidence on ways of being and ways of belonging (Levitt & Schiller, 2004) for different migration fields.

The first hypothesis (H1) supports the idea that transmigration fields towards clusters of countries emerge from clusters of similar and neighbouring microregions (the hypothesis of microregion selectivity). Its falsification involves the rejection of the alternative hypothesis that there is a lack of selectivity in emigration towards macroregions abroad, function of non-contiguous microregions. Having empirical ground to rejecting the alternative hypothesis would bring support for H1. The hypothesis is in line with methodological transnationalism considering national spaces not as containers but as matrices (Gottdiener, 1994: XV, 7) with relevant configurations for the reference phenomenon. Testing it involves the use of census data at county level specifying microregional profiles by destination countries.



The second hypothesis (H2) formulates the expectation that transnational networks are regionally structured, by origins and destination, in a consistent way with transnational fields of migration (network hypothesis). Cross-border relations of native Romanians, with or without migration experience, are very likely to follow the regional configuration of TMF with friends and relatives. The validity of this second hypothesis is conditioned by the validity of the first one. Cross-border networks are expected to be regionalised at origin and at destination to the degree the migration fields are also regionalised.

The mapping of destination countries with similar profiles of origin microregions is expected to be consistent with the way transnational network capital is structured at individual level. Having clusters of counties that provide emigration towards Italy and Spain, for example, should provide a significant statistical relation between having personal connections in Italy and Spain, at the same time. Validation of this hypothesis could also be relevant for the fact that transnationalism at regional level is consistent, manifest as a way of being<sup>4</sup>. This is a hypothesis that will involve the use of the EUCROSS aggregated microdata on close connections native Romanians have abroad in comparison with the mapping of TMF resulting from census data.

The third hypothesis (H3) brings the expectation that transnational habitus as bifocality (Vertovec, 2004) in the frame of reference of the people is differentiated by transnational fields of migration with their characteristics of origin and destination places (transnational habitus hypothesis). Different TMF are marked by a differentiation in the configuration of spatial ways of belonging. Its validation is tested by measuring the role of origin and destination characteristics of transnational fields on the qualitative variation of space identification.

All hypotheses, if validated, would indicate that transnationalism is structured not only between pairs of countries but also at multiregional level, between clusters of microregions at origin and clusters of macroregions at destination.

Migration networks that facilitate to a large degree Romanian migration abroad are the effect of the agency of migrants abroad, returned migrants at home in Romania, non-migrants in Romania and natives in potential destination countries. Similar neighbouring microregions in Romania are an environment to facilitate emergence and reproduction of networks among returned migrants, emigrants from those regions abroad and nonmigrants in the origin country. At the empirical level, counties in Romania having similar emigration profiles are expected to be in neighbouring spaces and/or similar from the point of view of their ethnic composition or previous migration experiences. This could be a new form of transnationalism having as agents or terms not national societies in interaction, not countries at origin and macroregions (like European Union) at destination but clusters of regions of different levels.

Testing the first hypothesis involved the construction of origin profiles for main streams of temporary emigration from Romania according to the 2011 census data, produced by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS). Each profile is constituted by a set of 126 values of emigration streams (logarithmic transformation) from each of the 42 counties (microregions) of Romania multiplied by three types of measurement (less than one year emigrants, more than one year emigrants and total number of emigrants towards the reference country; see the structure of the input data in Table A 1).

For each of 16 main destinations countries or clusters of countries (Italy, Spain, Greece & Cyprus, Belgium, France, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark & Norway & Sweden, United Kingdom, Ireland, USA & Canada) the microregions emigration profiles are determined. The German field of emigration from

Romania, for example, has an origin profile of maximum similarity with the Austrian field (the correlation between the two profiles is high:  $r = 0.82$ ) and, to a lower degree, with the fields of emigration towards North America ( $r = 0.79$ ) and towards Scandinavian countries ( $r = 0.77$ ). Counties of prevalent emigration towards these countries have a high profile German culture (Brasov, Sibiu, Timiș, Caraș-Severin, Arad, Alba, Suceava etc.). The finding is entirely consistent with historical information providing a kind of face validity (Babbie, 2010).

The network capital of migrants is tested by using the native Romanians' subsample from the EUCROSS data. The hierarchy of the stocks of network capital Romanians (with and without migration experiences) have in different countries, generated from the EUCROSS survey, is consistent with the hierarchy for Romanian immigration in the reference destination (see Table 2).

*Table 2. Main streams of temporary emigration from Romania and the network capital Romanians have in relation to their destinations*

	Immigration country								
	Italy	Spain	Germany	France***	United Kingdom	Belgium	Portugal	Austria	Ireland
Immigrants from Romania (thou), 2012*	1.072	866	171		95	43	37	32	18
% interviewed persons** declaring having close relatives and friends from Romania in..	43	29	25****	12	7	4	1	6	1
% interviewed persons** declaring having close relatives and friends, non-Romanians, in..	8	6	4	2	1	1	1	2	0
* EUROSTAT			** EUCROSS survey in Romania, 2013, weighted data						

\*\*\* France does not report to EUROSTAT data on nationality of immigrants. Data countries with small number of immigrants from Romania are not included in the table. \*\*\*\* The share of Romanians having close connections in Germany are much higher than the share of Romanian temporary emigrants in Germany (Table 3). For the case of Italy and Spain there is no such an inconsistency. The fact deserves further analysis to see if it is related to sampling (see table A4 and note 2) or non-sampling factors. It is hard to support the hypothesis that a community of immigrants as Romanians in Germany, five times smaller than the Romanian community in Spain, brings a network transnational capital that is rather equal with that of Romanians in Spain. The exodus of the Saxons from Romania in the 1990s contributed to an increase of the referred stock but this is valid only for rather small sub-regions of Romania (Sibiu, Brasov and Banat).

The highest stocks of personal networks of Romanians are in Italy, Spain, and Germany, the countries where there are also the highest concentrations of Romanian immigration (see Table 3). The densities of the networks Romanians have abroad are much higher with Romanian emigrants than with non-Romanians. The share of Romanians having close connections with other Romanians living as immigrants in Spain is five times higher than the corresponding share with non-Romanians from Spain. Similar ratios are encountered for the networks in Italy, Germany, and France. This is a profile that is specific for a recent emigration country. The ratios between the same types of networks are much lower in immigration countries like Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, and Germany. Native Italians, for example, are having the largest share of close connections in Germany but the commented ratio is of 13% (with Italians in Germany) to 7% (with non-Italians in Germany).

Transnational habitus is measured by a nominal variable of space identification combining information on maximum identification ("very attached") with Europe, own nation, other nation and locality & region of residence. The first three variables constitute a *property space* of  $2*2*2 = 8$  cells or identification types. The final typology is the result of two operations of *reduction* (Barton, 1955) or collapsing neighbouring categories of low frequency and the split of no attachment category function of identification with the

locality. The outcome is an exploratory typology of six categories of space identification (see Table 7): European & own country, residence country, non-residence country, residence & non-residence countries/nations (transnationalism), localistic and uprooted (without any space identification). The classification partially overlaps with the one proposed by (Rother & Nebe, 2009), due to the differences in the criteria for analysis and, also, to the fact that I used a dichotomy between "very attached" and "lower attachment" and not the dichotomy between "attached" and "non attached".

### *Transnational fields of Romanian migration*

The major transnational field of Romanian migration could be identified by destination countries having specific microregional origins in Romania (see Figure 1). Their identification resulted from a data mining procedure that looked at the patterns of similarity of temporary emigration streams function of the microregional profiles at origin (see Figure 1 and Table A2). The German field, for example, is constituted by temporary emigration towards Germany and Austria. Origin of this field is located mainly in the Western part of the country (Timiș, Caraș-Severin and Arad counties) with an extension in the Central part with Sibiu (see Figure 2). All four counties are by tradition spaces of German culture in Romania. The share of emigration (see Table 3) within this field seems to be an increasing one, with 10% in recent emigration (in the last year before the 2011 census) compared to about 6% in total older temporary emigration (of more than one year at the census moment). Not all the emigration from the four counties goes towards Germany and Austria. It is only one third of emigration that is making the connection between German cultural areas from Romania and the German field. The other preferred destinations from the same areas are Italy (26%) and Spain (18%).

The origins of emigration to UK are largely overlapping with the origins of emigration to Ireland and North America (Canada and the US). These are, on the one hand, in areas of university centres such as Bucharest, Cluj, Iași, or Brasov and in areas with a high mobility tradition, in the North-West parts of the country (Maramureș and Satu Mare) or, harder to explain in a few words, in Suceava and Bacău counties.

There are five major migration fields from Romania, with a share of more than 5% out of the total emigration (see Table 3). They are oriented towards Italy, the Mediterranean field (Spain, Greece, and Cyprus), the German field (Germany and Austria), the French field (France, Belgium, and Portugal) and the British-American one (UK, Ireland, USA, and Canada). The minor ones, with less than 5% out of the total emigration are towards Hungary and Northern Europe (Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, and Switzerland).

*Table 3. Recent and older migration streams by transnational fields of migration destination*

	Transnational fields of Romanian migration by destination (%)								
	Major fields					Minor fields		Other	
	Italian	Mediterranean	German	French	British-American	Hungarian	North Europe		
older migration	47	27	6	6	9	1	2	2	100
recent migration	44	22	10	9	7	4	2	2	100

Data source: NIS, census, 2011. All persons that left the country for more than one year at the census moment (October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011) are considered to be older migrants. They are considered to be „recent” if they left the country for less than one year. This second category is included into the resident population according to EUROSTAT rules.

The South macrofield, with Italy and Spain as the main attractors or sub-fields, covers about two thirds from Romanian recent emigration. The importance of the European South in the Romanian migration system continues to be overwhelming but is declining in favour of the German, French, and Hungarian fields.

It is not only by destinations that the Romanian migration fields are rather concentrated. Territorial concentration or specification is also obvious if one looks at the origins of the fields (see Figure 2): the German field, for example, is mainly concentrated in the West part of the country and Sibiu county in the Centre; the Hungarian field originates mainly in the Central part of the country, in the neighbouring counties of Covasna-Harghita and Mureș, with a high share of ethnic Hungarians; the Italian destination field is segmented in four origin regions, each of them with specific profiles; the Mediterranean (mainly Spanish) emigration starts essentially from the South of the country (especially from Teleorman, Călărași, and Dâmbovița counties). All this data is consistent with the expectations of the first hypothesis that temporary emigration has a high regional selectivity by microregions of origin.

A special type of regionalisation is for the case of the British-American transnational field. It originates mainly in areas that are influenced by the dynamics of the large and developed urban centres of București, Brasov, Cluj (with its neighbouring county of Sălaj), and Constanța.

The fact is not a result of the dynamics of the migration process but a long lasting feature of it in Romania. An older map of rural TMF, based on entirely different data, for rural Romania 2001, brings forth the same image of high regional selectivity of temporary emigration (Sandu, 2000, 2005). In spite of variation in the borders of origin fields, their nuclei remained at the same locations for the German, Hungarian, French, and Mediterranean fields. The main changes are related to the expansion of the Italian field out of the Moldavian historical region in Romania, the contraction of the German and Hungarian fields to a smaller number of origin counties, and the quasi-disappearance of a Turkish field that was located in the South-East of the country.

The emigration regions that are formed by clusters of counties with similar profiles of external migration (see Figure 2) are, to a large degree, approximated by the development regions of the country (see Figure3). The finding could be explained by the fact that development regions (that do not have an administrative status but function as NUTS 2 in Romania) are highly structured as subregions of historical regions and as functional regions. Internal migration streams prove this fact convincingly (Sandu, 2013a) . Both Eastern regions – the North-East and the South-East – are mainly oriented toward migration to Italy. The typical Italian-Spanish field is located in Oltenia (the South-West region) and, close to it, is the typical Spanish-Italian Region of South Muntenia. The highest diversity of emigration streams is for the most developed regions of the country, namely Bucharest, the Centre, the West and the North-West.

Table 4. Recent emigrants from development regions of Romania by destination fields

Development regions	Development level 2008*	Main destinations for recent emigration streams (%)							
		Italian	Spanish	German	Hungarian	British-Amer.	French	other	
Bucharest-Ifov	96,5	19	17	12	0	20	10	22	100
Center (Central Transilvania)	76,0	22	16	22	22	7	5	6	100
West	73,8	31	18	28	1	7	11	4	100
North-West	71,5	43	18	8	3	8	16	4	100
South-East (Low Danube)	67,3	61	18	5	0	5	5	6	100
South-West (Oltenia)	64,0	48	30	6	0	5	9	2	100
South-Muntenia	63,7	29	47	6	0	6	8	4	100
North-East	63,6	60	15	6	1	7	7	4	100

Data source: NIS, 2011 census. \* Weighted average of a locality social development index (SDI), which is a factor score multiplied by 100 for seven indicators of human capital, vital capital, material capital, size-residential status of locality (Sandu, 2011). The high regionalisation by NUTS2 for migration abroad is grounds to expect that European identity building and, more generally, spatial identity are embedded into regional patterns.

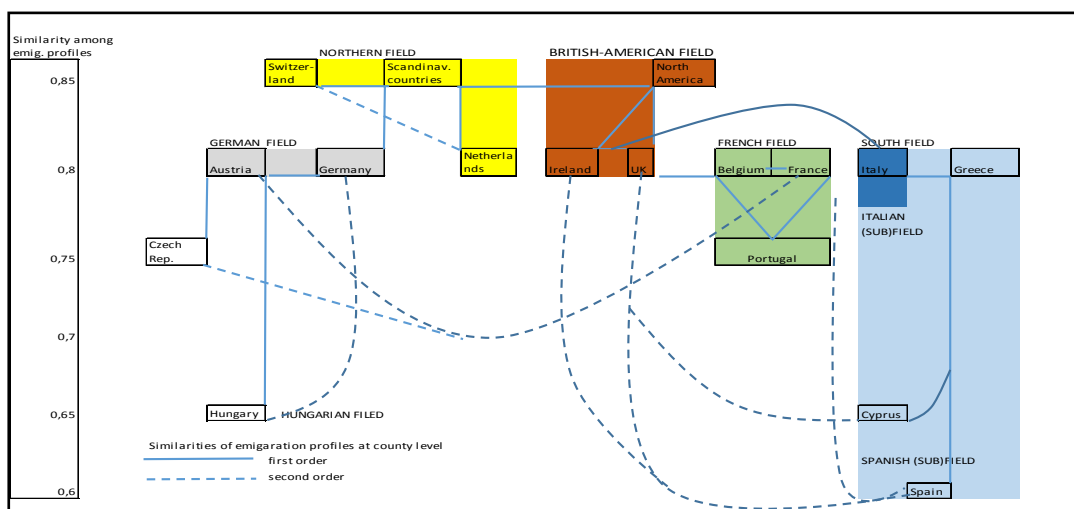


Figure 1.

Degree of similarity among microregional emigration profiles for Romanian transnational fields (macroregional level)

Data source: NIS, 2011 census data. Migration fields are labelled by destination countries/macroregions put in rectangles. Each destination country has an origin profile as given by the volume of emigration streams at county (microregion) level. The degree of similarity between two connected profiles is indicated by the position of the horizontal connector on the left hand scale or the lowest end of the connector on the same scale. Reading example: the profile of the Austrian field of emigration from Romanian microregions is similar to the profile of the German field of emigration from Romania to the level of 0.80 and to the level of 0.75 with the profile of the field towards the Czech Republic. The diagram is constructed on the basis of a technique of pattern recognition.<sup>5</sup>

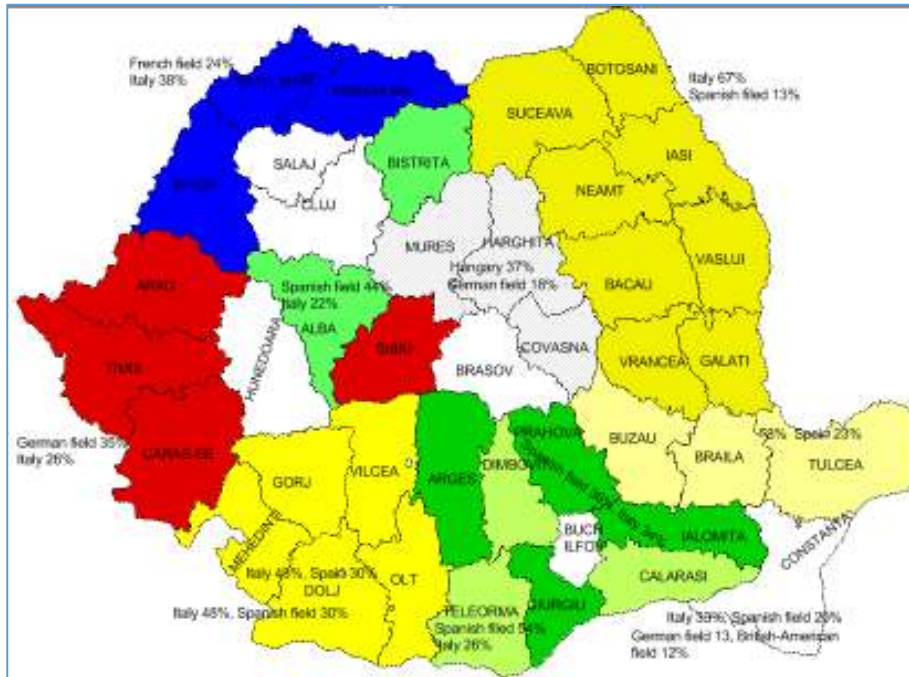


Figure 2. Transnational migration fields of Romania by origin microregions and destination macroregions

Data source: National Institute of Statistics (NIS), census 2011, Migrants with less than one year since they left the country. Capital letters are for the origin county. Percentages indicate the share of emigrants from a certain cluster of counties towards a certain European destination. Map design and data computations – D. Sandu.



Figure 3. Key destinations of recent emigration by development regions

Data source: National Institute of Statistics (NIS), census 2011, Migrants with less than one year since they left the country. Percentages indicate the share of emigrants from a certain development region towards a certain European destination. Map design and data computations – D. Sandu.

### *Networks structuring by transnational fields*

The second hypothesis of the paper formulates the expectation that transnational migration fields originating in Romania are also fields of network transnationalism (Dahinden, 2009) that are regionally structured. The first testing of it is done using EUCROSS survey data. This data is significant for cross-border networks connecting Romanians, without specification of the micro or meso-regions, to people from other countries. The survey questions in this case are about „family members, in-laws, and friends who live in other countries”. A comparison between the cross-border networking revealed by the EUCROSS data and the migration fields revealed by the census could only be done by destination country. The EUCROSS survey does not provide any spatial data on region of residence or type of residence (urban or rural). This is why I developed, first of all, a comparison of migration and networks fields only by destination, as specified by the EUCROSS data. Secondly, I focused on networks that are specified by regional origins and destination in the framework of the Eurobarometer data.

The list of possible relations with friends and relatives abroad included 50 countries in the EUCROSS survey. In order to compare the mapping out of emigration streams with the mapping of cross-border networks I used the same set of 20 foreign countries of connections by migration streams or by interpersonal networks, selecting only those twenty that are most relevant for the migration streams, as presented in the national census from 2011.

The procedure to identify connected networks abroad is exactly the same as for reconstructing the image of connected streams of migration. The pair of countries where Romanians have the highest number of cumulative connections are, according to the EUCROSS survey, Italy and Spain (see figure 4). Only in that case, 22% out of the total number of interviewees had connections in both countries. The basic finding from the comparison of Figures 1 and 4 is that countries of destinations with a high overlap in microregional origins of migration streams are also countries where cross border interpersonal networks overlap. This is especially the case for Italy-Spain, Scandinavian countries-Switzerland-Netherlands, Belgium-Portugal, Germany-Austria-Hungary-the Czech Republic, and North America-Ireland. Common origins for migration fields of different destinations lead to fields of interconnected networks. It is as if living in regions that send migrants to different destinations contributes to opening access to multiple transnational networks for people in those origin regions. The finding is crucial for a sociology of transnational fields that incorporate migration origin as a frame of reference. It could complement the mainstream approach that considers transnational fields mainly from the point of view of immigration countries.

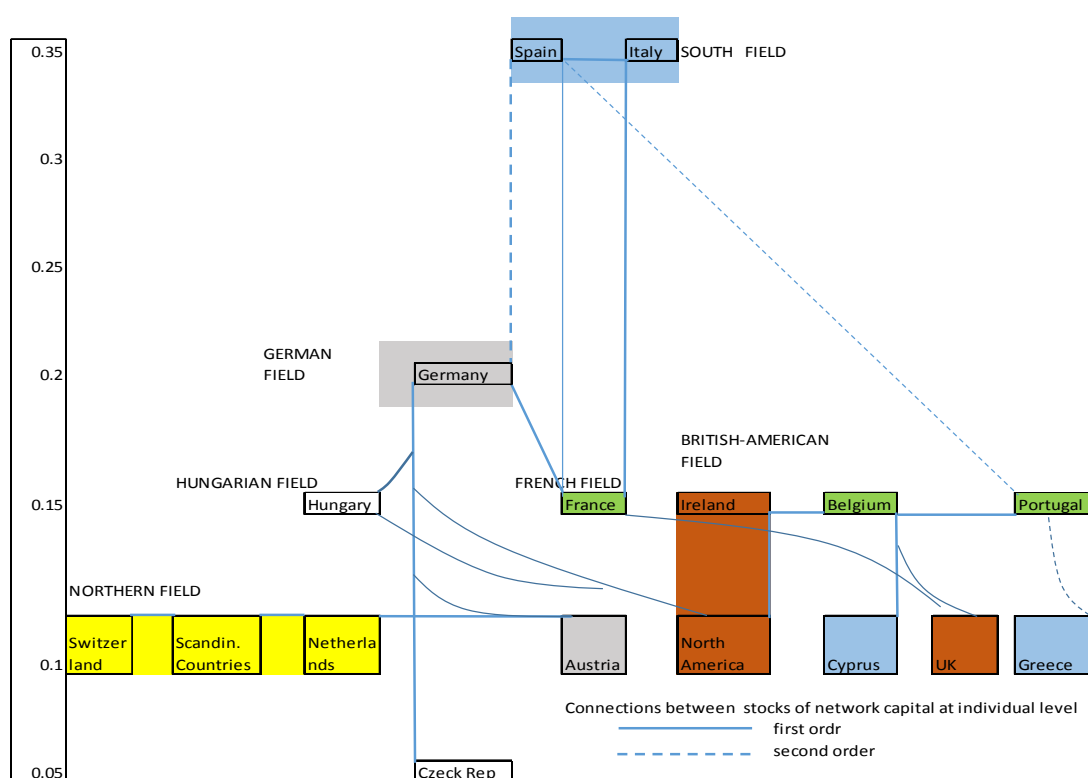
The mapping out of interconnected cross-border networks is also different from the mapping of migration fields (compare figures 1 and 4). Migration fields having the highest interconnections by common origin are, first of all, those of the Northern countries, secondly, those of the British-American field, and thirdly, the field including Germany and Austria. All these fields are less structured in the analysis of networks. Italy and Spain streams of migration are connected by common origins mainly in the South-Muntenia region, which is close to Bucharest, and in two counties that are close to Cluj city, another large and developed city.<sup>6</sup> The fact that the Spain and Italy fields are so highly correlated by overlapping networks at personal level could be explained, very likely, mainly by the

selection procedure for the EUCROSS sample with over-representation of areas of common origin for Italian and Spanish emigration.

*Table 5. Transnational capital of native Romanians by residence regions*

Regions of residence in Romania	Central	North-East	West	South-East	Bucharest	North-West	South	South-West	Total
Main attraction (+) or avoided (-) fields (countries) for identification in the region	+Hungarian -French -North Eur.	+Italian -Hungarian -German	+German	-French -Hungarian	+French -Hungarian	none	+Spanish -Hungarian	-Italian -Hungarian	
% having friends abroad	58	48	47	41	41	41	36	32	43
% having relatives abroad	44	50	39	36	24	43	27	23	36
% having friends in Romania, coming from abroad	19	11	16	10	27	16	11	7	14

Data source: Eurobarometer 73.3. The most attractive and the most avoided countries for identification are specified for each region. The questionnaire asked about the attachment of the person to one or two foreign countries. The preferred country of attachment was cross-tabulated with the region of residence in Romania and adjusted standardised residuals were computed for preferred or rejected countries on personal attachment. Reading example: the West region is the specific location of the persons that are mostly attached to Germany and Austria (German field); it is also in that region that 47% of the interviewed people declared that Germany or Austria are their maximum attachment countries.



*Figure 4. Connections among stocks of network capital abroad for Romanian natives*

Data source: EUCROSS, survey on native Romanians, 1010 weighted cases. Each country name is a name for the variable measuring if the interviewed person in Romania has close connections (relatives or friends, born or not in Romania) in the reference country. If the person has no connection in the reference foreign country s/he gets a 0 score, a 1 score for having either connections born in Romania or connections that are not born in Romania, and a 2 score for having both types of connections in the specified foreign country. The level of correlation between paired variables is indicated by the position of horizontal lines versus the left hand scale or, in the case of non-horizontal lines, by the position of the lowest end of the segment on the correlation coefficient scale. The pattern recognition procedure is the same as for Figure 1. Reading example: for resident Romanians, having close connections in Italy is significantly associated with having close connections in Spain at a level of  $r=0.35$ .



An identification of the factors favouring the networking of native Romanians with friends abroad is a way to understand how network transnationalism (Dahinden, 2009) is built and the way identification processes (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) work. The Centre, West and North-East regions of Romania are the richest ones in transnational network capital and the South and South-West ones are the poorest from that point of view (see Table 5).

Even if one controls for measures of human and material capital, for relatives abroad and for personal experience abroad, regional location also counts significantly in Romania for the friendship human capital abroad (see Table 6). People in the Centre (or Central Transilvania) region have a significant propensity for being in touch with friends abroad, irrespective of many other factors related to age, gender, education, or migration experience. At a lower level, the tendency is also present for people in the West region. Both of these regions are multi-ethnic, multi-religion and developed regions. This could explain their high stocks of transnational network capital of friendship. It is not so clear why living in the rather poor North-East region, with a low percentage of ethnic minorities, the network capital abroad is also high. A longer time experience of temporary living abroad for people of this region could be an explaining factor.

The causal pattern of factors influencing network capital abroad for native Romanians is closer to the pattern in other New Member States (NMS) than to the pattern of citizens from EU15. NMS people, including Romanians, have the tendency to develop cross border friendship relations, more than the EU15 citizens, as a result of speaking foreign languages and living into urban areas (see Table 6).

*Table 6. Predictors of having friends abroad: natives of Romania, EU15 and MNS*

		Model EU15		Model NMS11		Model Romania1		Model Romania2	
		Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.
	age	0,998	0,479	0,986	0,005	0,976	0,000	0,975	0,000
	man	0,939	0,101	0,934	0,431	1,030	0,850	1,012	0,939
	urban residence	1,112	0,202	1,210	0,003	1,607	0,007	1,698	0,005
human capital	higher education	1,224	0,023	1,347	0,003	1,325	0,152	1,367	0,116
	speaks fluently a foreign language	1,708	0,000	1,870	0,000	2,214	0,000	2,047	0,001
	access to internet	1,131	0,096	1,204	0,005	0,659	0,081	0,652	0,077
	follow news from another country	1,712	0,000	1,492	0,000	1,589	0,020	1,592	0,023
material capital	index of goods in hhd	1,114	0,000	1,054	0,027	1,271	0,000	1,277	0,000
experience abroad	relatives abroad	3,838	0,000	3,309	0,000	6,055	0,000	5,842	0,000
	worked abroad	2,103	0,000	2,620	0,000	1,979	0,056	1,954	0,064
	lived abroad for other reasons than work or study	1,828	0,000	1,457	0,015	14,346	0,011	14,177	0,012
	studied abroad	2,031	0,000	1,370	0,102	0,699	0,769	0,687	0,759
	spend holidays abroad	1,459	0,000	1,338	0,101	2,588	0,073	2,787	0,055
Residence region in Romania	North East							1,502	0,141
	South_East							1,158	0,598
	South							1,056	0,851
	West							1,518	0,191
	North_West							0,834	0,542
	Center							2,121	0,017
	Constant	0,143	0,000	0,435	0,012	0,422	0,007	0,364	0,006
	N=	15459		10101		1022		1022	
	Pseudo R2=	0,220		0,170		0,270		,280	

Data source: Eurobarometer 73.3. Logistic regression models.

Having lived abroad before for reasons other than work or education seems to be a specific factor for transnational friendships of Romanians, with a much higher impact than that in

the EU15 or the NMS11 countries. Studying abroad is less frequent for the NMS citizens and, consequently, has a non significant impact on their friendship cross-border capital.

The role of higher education to bring higher values of transnational network capital is visible especially for major immigration countries in the EU, for UK, Italy, Spain, France, and Germany. Poland is the only country where higher education has a significant positive impact on having friends abroad. The same model seems to be valid for Romania if one works with a better specified model by including regional location variables.<sup>7</sup> It can be hypothesized that education becomes a glue for forming friendship transnational capital, especially for large immigration countries and for emigration countries of longue durée experience. Gender does not impact on cross-border friendship in the NMS. Aggregated data suggest that, for the EU15 population, women are more inclined to develop friendship relations abroad. If one takes a closer look at the data, country by country, one realizes that the relationship is valid only for Germany in the West and for the Czech Republic in the East. It is not clear why these two are the exceptions. It is likely that a better specification of friendship regression models would make the gender effect for those two countries disappear.

### *High spatial identifications by multiregional and personal spaces*

The previous chapters of the analysis brought forth migration streams, networks and migration experiences as layers in the regional structuring of transnational fields for Romanians. Another layer announced by the third hypothesis is related to the configuration of space identification with the local community, the region, one's own country, another country, or Europe. The hypothesis advances the expectation that space identifications, in their multilevel combinations, are significantly differentiated in Romania by transnational fields.

The focus in this section is on strong identifications. As mentioned in the methodological section, survey subjects were asked about their attachment to their locality, region, own country, another country, and Europe, with possible answers on four-point scales from *very attached* to *not at all attached*. A classification resulted from cross-tabulating the variables before their dichotomisation, opposing those who were *very attached* to the other three categories of attachment. Social desirability effects are, most likely, more highly concentrated in the *attached* category, at least in the case of identification with the European Union (the percentage of answers in this category is 42% in Romania, 46% in NMS11, and 41% in UE15). Due to this, and in order to capture highly structured opinions, the identification typology looks at the *very attached* category versus the rest of the categories.

The space identity profile of Romanians in the European context is closer (see Table 7) to the NMS from Central Europe than to the profile of the extreme East macro region of the European Union (the Baltic countries, Bulgaria, and Romania). Their specific categories in Romania and in Central-Eastern countries are persons attached to their own country and persons with no spatial attachments.

Transnationalism as a bifocal attachment to one's own country and to another country is specific to people from Western and Northern Europe. Attachment to one's own country and to the European Union is specific to people from the Southern countries of the European Union.

A very high attachment to Europe is a kind of fringe identification. It only appears in association with the identification with one's own country and a country other than the country of residence.

*Table 7. Space identification in Romania and in macroregions of the EU (%)*

Macroregions of EU and Romania	Space identification						Total
	uprooted	localistic	residence country	non-residence country	residence & other country (transnationalism)	own/other country & Europe	
Romania	26	6	37	12	10	9	100
Baltic countries and Bulgaria	14	5	51	7	12	11	100
Centra-East Europe NMS	23	6	39	9	11	12	100
South EU	19	10	35	9	10	17	100
West EU	21	6	23	21	17	11	100
North EU	20	7	32	17	19	5	100

Data source: Eurobarometer 73.3. Highlighted cells mark significant positive associations according to adjusted standardised residuals, for  $p=0.05$ . For the classification of the EU countries by macroregions see (Sandu, 2013b).

The type of identity that is better rooted in multiregional fields and migration experiences of native Romanians is that of transnationalism, of double attachment to one's own country of residence and to a country other than the residence country. The most transnational Romanians are living in the West region (with the Banat historical region as a nucleus) and the lowest degree of transnationalism is recorded into the South-East region. The former is more economically developed and known by tradition to be multi-ethnic and tolerant. It is not only the microregion that counts in Romania, but also the foreign poles of the transnational fields the residents are involved in, irrespective of their migration experience. It is only living in Romanian counties associated to the Italian field that does not have a significant impact on transnationalism. All of the other fields – the Spanish, German, French, and Hungarian – favour bifocal or transnational orientations of the population. It is not clear, with the available data, why Italian field does not impact significantly on building Romanian transnationalism. Answers to several questions could lead to an answer: is Italian environment for Romanians more favourable to either stay there for long term or returning home; is it an effect of the fact that transnational orientations are very weak in the specific origins for emigration from Romania to Italy (Table 8).

The reasons to adopt different types of identifications vary. Some of the reasons are self-declared as an answer to the question "what are the reasons you feel attached to... (COUNTRY NAME)?" There are three patterns of reasons for attachment to another nation, the EU or to one's own & another nation: having friends in another country, without relatives there, favours national & European identification; having relatives abroad, without friends there is the typical case for other nation attachment or bi-national attachment; transnationalism as attachment to own and another nation is a matter of return migration

experience and of cultural options. Culture, networks and migration experience combine in different ways so as to give the type of identifications at the national and European levels. All of the above reasons fall in a series of "in-order-to motives" (Schutz & Embree, 2011). There are also reasons for territorial attachment that could be assigned ("because reasons" in Schutz's terminology) on the basis of the observed relationships in Table 8. A high identification with another nation or with one's own & another nation is favoured by economic reasons, by the fact that the nations of high identification are, generally, better-off, with a higher GDP per capita. Transnationalism and identification with a non-residence nation is not only a matter of culture, friendship, relatives and migration experience. It is also the valuation of a better-off society, compared to the Romanian one.

Romanians with local identities (i.e., mainly attached to their region and city or village) are poorly specified by the fact that only few predictors are significant for this category: they did not live in another country, are rather old aged, in high subjective social class and in a region that is different from South-East Romania. Those with a strong attachment exclusively to Romania are also older age persons from other regions than the South-East. Specifically and with a nationalistic note, they do not mention Hungary on the list of other countries they are attached to.

Table 8. Predictors of the main space identifications of Romanians

		Type of main space identification **											
		unrooted		localistic		residence country		non-residence country		residence & other country (transnationalism)		own/other country & Europe	
		coef	p	coef	p	coef	p	coef	p	coef	p	coef	p
social status variables	age	<b>0.020</b>	<b>0.091</b>	<b>0.026</b>	<b>0.000</b>	0.012	0.251	<b>0.046</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.036</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
	man*	0.382	0.239	-0.028	0.881	0.045	0.882	-0.145	0.657	0.104	0.711		
	urban*	0.277	0.485	-0.296	0.158	0.042	0.901	<b>-0.987</b>	<b>0.015</b>	<b>-0.677</b>	<b>0.042</b>		
	index of material goods	-0.165	0.180	0.056	0.440	0.068	0.570	0.160	0.211	<b>0.173</b>	<b>0.103</b>		
	subjective social class	<b>0.293</b>	<b>0.085</b>	-0.040	0.666	<b>0.571</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.402</b>	<b>0.010</b>	0.203	0.118		
human and cultural capital	speaks a foreign language	0.228	0.565	-0.171	0.499	0.263	0.473	-0.478	0.221	0.252	0.422		
	follows news from another country	0.237	0.603	0.130	0.646	<b>0.820</b>	<b>0.023</b>	0.021	0.957	<b>1.090</b>	<b>0.002</b>		
reasons for attachment to another country	relatives	<b>0.983</b>	<b>0.108</b>	-0.314	0.437	<b>0.800</b>	<b>0.043</b>	<b>1.264</b>	<b>0.002</b>	0.210	0.645		
	friends	<b>1.017</b>	<b>0.085</b>	0.402	0.342	<b>0.750</b>	<b>0.075</b>	0.683	0.123	<b>1.168</b>	<b>0.006</b>		
	lived in the country	<b>-12.623</b>	<b>0.000</b>	0.776	0.395	0.939	0.264	<b>2.179</b>	<b>0.008</b>	0.190	0.846		
	cultural ones	0.643	0.488	0.999	0.118	<b>1.042</b>	<b>0.063</b>	<b>1.399</b>	<b>0.014</b>	0.437	0.516		
region of residence in Romania	North East	-0.548	0.266	-0.336	0.217	-0.047	0.925	-0.839	0.118	0.423	0.314		
	South East	<b>-1.387</b>	<b>0.009</b>	<b>-1.337</b>	<b>0.000</b>	-0.732	0.155	<b>-1.364</b>	<b>0.012</b>	<b>-1.411</b>	<b>0.016</b>		
	South	0.274	0.597	0.020	0.947	-0.243	0.630	-0.950	0.112	0.644	0.137		
	West	0.070	0.928	0.430	0.340	<b>1.218</b>	<b>0.060</b>	<b>1.294</b>	<b>0.047</b>	0.922	0.156		
	Center	-0.773	0.274	-0.018	0.963	-0.549	0.361	-0.861	0.146	-0.586	0.358		
country or region of attachment*	Italy	-0.442	0.575	-0.255	0.607	0.706	0.215	0.855	0.163	0.353	0.524		
	Spain	-0.479	0.531	-0.118	0.821	<b>1.589</b>	<b>0.007</b>	<b>1.542</b>	<b>0.022</b>	-0.930	0.179		
	Germany and Austria	0.234	0.836	0.590	0.383	<b>1.203</b>	<b>0.058</b>	<b>1.385</b>	<b>0.051</b>	0.729	0.315		
	France, Belgium, Portugal	-0.565	0.665	0.282	0.655	<b>1.611</b>	<b>0.015</b>	<b>2.244</b>	<b>0.001</b>	0.769	0.238		
	Hungary	-0.758	0.460	<b>-2.310</b>	<b>0.003</b>	<b>3.585</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>3.653</b>	<b>0.000</b>	-0.748	0.422		
develop.level for country of attachment	GDP per capita as % of EU mean for country of attachment	-0.008	0.514	<b>-0.011</b>	<b>0.084</b>	<b>0.045</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.048</b>	<b>0.000</b>	0.006	0.441		
	constante	-2.419	0.022	0.389	0.499	-8.767	0.000	-9.558	0.000	-4.247	0.000		

Data source: EB 73.3, N=912, Pseudo R2=0.25. Multinomial logistic regression. Use of robust standard errors and data weightings for computations in STATA 13. \* Reference category - British-American field and other. \*\* Reference category: unrooted or without any spatial identification persons.

## Conclusions

The analysis supports the idea that Romania is a highly regionalised country by transnational fields. These are well structured by the line forces of temporary migration abroad, transnational networks and habitus, and by migration experiences. These transnational social fields are structured at multiple levels, with specific microregions or regions in Romania and macroregions as clusters of countries in Europe and North-America. Survey microdata from the EUCROSS and the Eurobarometer and national census data from Romania 2011 (at county level) support each other in creating a coherent image of a country that is connected to Europe and North-America by complex transnational fields. These fields are practically the basic grid to understanding that ways of being (networks) and ways of belonging develop not in a container national space but in transnational interactions involving multiple regions here and there.

Transnational identity of Romanians as a bifocal attachment to their own country and another one is at the same level as in the NMS and the South of Europe (see Table 7). Its causal profile (see Table 5) for native Romanians is markedly differentiated from space identification in the categories of nationals & Europeans, other nation, own nation and localistic<sup>8</sup>. Transnationalists from Romania are attached to another country because they lived and have relatives there, by explicit cultural reasons. They are particularly located in the Western development region (and very few in the South-East) and live in transnational fields having foreign attraction poles in the Spanish, French, German, and Hungarian fields (and very few within the Italian field).

A strong European identification is a fringe one (Table 8), being intensely associated with a strong national /country identification. Transnational friends (not relatives) and consumption of news from abroad are a strong support for this type of multicultural and multilevel identification. Older persons from rural areas are more inclined to adopt this European-national identification. More data and analysis is needed to clarify the reason for this pattern. As a hypothesis one could state that the degree of relative frustration is higher for rural than for urban Romanians. Consequently, the most frustrated, under *ceteris paribus* conditions, would be more inclined to see their future in a bi-dimensional milieu, with Romania and Europe as best frame s for identification.

Identification with a country other than Romania is specific for people living in the Spanish, French and Hungarian fields and having relatives in the reference foreign country.

Those with local and national identity orientations have rather sparse territorial roots or social ground giving them specificity. For those with local identities, for example, the only profile traits that are highly visible is that they did not live abroad and are not from a particular region in the country (the South-East).

The density of transnational networks measured by the EUCROSS survey in Romania follows, generally, the intensity of temporary transnational migration as measured by the 2011 national census. The two main attraction centres for Romanian indefinite time migration abroad (over 70% of long time emigration) are Italy – first, and Spain – second. The density of close connections abroad is also high for these two countries and fields they represent. Germany and Austria are the third attraction macroregion for Romanians (about 6% out of the total long term temporary emigration). It is not yet clear why the density of transnational connection of Romanians in this field is so high (over 25%).

A very important social glue in the development of transnational social fields are interactions taking place in microregions that are at the origin of different migration fields. The simple fact of living in areas where streams of migrants or mobile persons to different

destination countries emerge from contributes to the development of interconnected transnational networks. This is the case, for example, of the South Muntenia region, close to Bucharest, as a common origin for Italian and Spanish migratory movements of population. Similarly, Covasna - Harghita - Mureş counties are common origins for migratory or mobility movements towards Hungary, Germany, and Austria. This is the basis for interconnected networks of communication and, possibly, for the creation of similar spatial identity patterns.

In the area of methodological lessons of the analysis, the key finding is that a multiregional perspective<sup>9</sup> in transnationalism requires the use of multiple data sets that are compatible. Maps that were generated from census county data were very useful to set frames for the spatial analysis of microdata provided by surveys. Romanian census data on temporary migration severely underestimates the size of the phenomenon. The EUCROSS survey data on native Romanians severely overestimates the share of higher educated people, being a closer approximation of the situation in Bucharest and Cluj areas, rather than reflecting the general situation in the entire country. But putting together micro and macro data in multivariate analyses increases their relevance substantially.

## Appendix

**Table A 1.** The structure of the data matrix for the regional analysis of transnational streams of temporary emigration ( $f_{kij}$ )

regional profiles at origin		Destinations countries (j=1 to 16)				
Type of emigration stream (k=1 to 3))	counties (județe) (i=1 to 42)	Country1	..	Country 14	USA& Canada	Scandinavian countries
last wave emigrants (less than one year) from county i to country j	county 1 (Alba)					
	county 2 (Arad)					
	..					
	county 41					
	Bucuresti					
earlier wave emigrants (more than one year)	county 1 (Alba)					
	county 2 (Arad)					
	..					
	county 41					
	Bucuresti					
total number of emigrants	county 1 (Alba)					
	county 2 (Arad)					
	..					
	county 41					
	Bucuresti					

Data source for the matrix: NIS census data, 2011. Each figure in the table is a measure of the number of emigrants of type k from county i to country j stream of migration  $f_{kij}$ . Effective computations in factors analysis converted absolute frequencies by natural logarithm transformation, so as to reduce the influence of outliers.

Table A 2. Clustering of destination fields function of similarities of their micro-regional origin profiles

	Macro-fields of migration as latent variables		
	NORTHERN EUROPE	CENTRAL WESTERN EUROPE	SOUTHERN EUROPE
Switzerland	.900	.160	.259
Scandinavian countries	.827	.301	.338
USA+Canada	.800	.424	.243
Germany	.759	.495	.049
Netherlands	.726	.255	.483
Portugal	.111	.853	.352
Austria	.547	.786	-.105
France	.329	.768	.294
Belgium	.462	.681	.396
Czech Rep.	.450	.677	.164
Ireland	.533	.597	.327
Greece	.106	.296	.855
Cyprus	.358	-.274	.829
Italy	.198	.451	.763
Spain	.207	.382	.624
<u>UK</u>	.515	.453	.619

Data source: NIS. The table presents factor loadings after PCA extraction and Varimax rotation. N=126. KMO=0.882. The three factors (latent variables) explain 82% of the variation in data matrix, with 30% explained by the Northern Europe and North America factor, 28% by the Central-Europe factor and 23% by the third one.

One generates migration fields by reading the results of a factor analysis on 16 country profiles of emigration by microregions. There are three large multi-country transnational fields of Romanian migration abroad: towards Northern Europe and North America, towards Central-Western Europe, and towards Southern Europe. There are also some countries that belong to two or three fields. The UK is the only country belonging to all the three macrofields of Northern, Central-Western and Southern Europe.<sup>10</sup> People going to the UK from Romania are coming from counties where the temporary emigration towards the Northern, Southern and Central Europe is also high. Emigration to the UK has overlapping sources of microregional emigration with emigration to Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Canada.<sup>11</sup>

Table A 3. Fields of recent migration abroad by origin and destination

Fields by destination and regional origin	Fields by county origin (judet)	Destination fields (%)							
		ITALIAN	SPANISH (Spain, Greece, Cyprus)	GERMAN (Germany, Austria)	BRITISH-AMERICAN (UK, Ireland, USA, Canada)	FRENCH (France, Belgium, Portugal)	HUNGARIAN	NORTH EUROPEAN (Scand. countr., Netherlands, Switherlans)	Other destinat.
ITALIAN field from MOLDOVA	VRANCEA	87	6	1	3	1	0	1	1
	NEAMT	77	12	3	5	3	0	1	1
	SUCEAVA	54	12	9	11	11	0	1	2
	BOTOSANI	68	18	5	3	4	0	1	1
	VASLUI	54	23	6	7	7	0	1	2
	BACAU	68	10	5	7	4	3	2	1
	IASI	67	16	5	5	4	0	2	1
ITALIAN field from LOW DANUBE region	GALATI	67	16	3	4	5	0	2	3
	BRAILA	46	25	9	7	7	0	2	4
	BUZAU	44	34	4	4	9	0	1	4
	TULCEA	59	26	4	3	3	0	2	3
ITALIAN field from OLTENIA	GORJ	52	21	7	4	11	0	3	2
	VALCEA	52	25	6	9	4	0	1	3
	OLT	45	39	5	3	5	0	1	2
	DOLJ	49	33	4	4	7	0	1	2
	MEHEDINTI	41	21	9	2	23	0	2	2
SPANISH-ITALIAN field from MUNTENIA	PRAHOVA	33	35	8	6	9	0	3	6
	ARGES	37	35	9	5	8	0	2	4
	GIURGIU	33	39	13	3	7	0	3	2
	IALOMITA	32	35	7	8	13	0	2	3
SPANISH field from MUNTENIA	TELEORMAN	9	77	3	3	7	0	0	1
	CALARASI	27	57	4	4	3	0	1	4
	DAMBOVITA	30	49	5	7	7	0	1	1
SPANISH field from TRANSILVANIA	BISTR.-NASA.	23	47	13	6	5	2	2	2
	ALBA	20	39	19	7	9	2	2	2
GERMAN field from BANAT and TRANSILVANIA	SIBIU	13	19	51	5	5	1	3	3
	ARAD	20	18	27	11	16	2	2	4
	TIMIS	29	16	33	6	12	1	2	1
	CARAS-SEVERIN	38	18	32	2	6	0	1	3
FRENCH - ITALIAN field from CRISANA-MARAMURES	MARAMURES	48	21	6	7	16	1	1	0
	BIHOR	21	18	12	10	18	12	2	7
	SATU MARE	29	4	10	11	40	5	0	1
HUNGARIAN field from TRANSILVANIA	HARGHITA	10	4	15	7	3	52	7	2
	COVASNA	16	5	16	5	2	47	4	5
	MURES	18	21	20	6	5	24	3	3
MULTIPLE DESTINATIONS field from developed areas (large municipalities fields)	BUCURESTI	18	15	13	20	10	0	6	18
	ILFOV	26	25	11	13	10	0	5	10
	CLUJ	24	27	10	16	8	7	3	5
	SALAJ	36	22	11	5	9	14	2	1
	BRASOV	47	11	17	11	6	3	3	2
	HUNEDOARA	39	21	16	9	8	1	2	4
	CONSTANTA	33	22	9	9	6	0	6	15

Data source: NIS, 2011 census



Table A 4. Weighting the survey on Romanian natives by education

	Census data 2011	Eucross	education weights
Higher education	15.9	36.1	0.4
post-high school and foreman education	3.5	7.4	0.5
high school	27.0	31.6	0.9
vocational education	15.3	13.5	1.1
gymnasium	25.8	5.4	4.8
primary	10.4	5.1	2.0
without primary	2.0	.9	2.2
	100.0	100	1

Census data are from NIS, population of 18 years old and over in 2011.

Table A4 clearly reveals the fact that the Romanian natives survey, EUCROSS 2013, overestimates the share of high-school and higher educated people. The impact of this overestimation is obvious for the way in which the survey measures transnational capital. It is only the capital city of the country that has a share of 36% higher educated people out of the total population, 18 years old and older. The share of Romanians having no close connections abroad is of 26% for the unweighted sample. Using education weights resulting from the table above increases this percentage to 30%.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> EUROSTAT figures of Romanian immigrants are, very likely, an overestimation due to the fact that some of the immigrants continue to be into the local records of the receiving country even after their re-migration by an inertia effect.

<sup>2</sup> The multiple regression analysis was done on the 2011 census data, for almost all the communes of the country (2400 out of 2681 communes) using the OLS method:

$$\text{LHDI} = -4,53 + 0.402 * \text{URBAN\_COMMUTING} + 0.084 * \text{RURAL\_COMMUTING} + 0.328 * \text{RATE\_SALARIED\_PEOPLE} + 0.325 * \text{DEMOGRAPHIC\_SIZE\_OF\_COMMUNE} + 0.168 * \text{RATE\_PEOPLE\_WORKING\_ABROAD\_LONG\_TERM} + 0.115 * \text{RATE\_TEMPORARY\_EMIGRATION\_ABROAD} + 0.061 * \text{URBAN\_CONNECTIVITY} - 0.028 * \text{GENERAL\_FERTILITY\_RATE} + 0.06 * \text{URBAN\_LOCALITY}, R^2=0.689.$$

All the regression coefficients are statistically significant for  $p=0.05$ .

<sup>3</sup> The EUCROSS sample distributions on age, gender and education were tested against standard EUROSTAT survey data from fall 2012. The EB data was considered to be closer to parameters in the population due to the fact that the survey is repeated two times a year and the data is collected by random route selection and face-to-face interviews. The resulting data is weighted by using national statistics data.

EB distributions were computed, by country, only for the population of 18+ years old, having mobile phones or landlines, so as to make them comparable with EUCROSS frame (for the Romanian case, the percentage of adult population without a phone is of at least 7%). The weighting variable that brings native samples closer to population parameters was constructed by using EB data on gender, four age categories (see table below) and education (only primary versus higher levels). The ways in which education is coded in the EB and EUCROSS natives' survey are very different. Dichotomising, function of primary education, was the only way to achieve comparability. The new weighting variable is in the SPSS weighting file.

The main reasons for which we propose the use of this variable for weighting are related, first of all, to the fact that the bias of the EUCROSS data, compared to the EB tested data, is consistent. Comparative analysis of weighted and unweighted data shows extreme cases of overrepresentation of primary education in Denmark,

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underrepresentation of 25-29 years old persons and of more educated persons in Germany, overrepresentation of aged persons in UK and of 40-54 old persons in Italy, Romania and Spain.

The data in table A4 show that the EUCROSS sample of native Romanians severely overestimates the population with higher education. The country's educational structure was only reproduced in the subsample for the capital, Bucharest. The analysis of the transnational capital based on sample data (see Figure 4), with a very high association of close connections in Italy and Spain, is specific only to the areas surrounding Bucharest and Cluj.

<sup>4</sup> "Ways of being refers to the actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in rather than to the identities associated with their actions... In contrast, ways of belonging refers to practices that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group" (Levitt & Schiller, 2004: 1010).

<sup>5</sup> Input data is a correlation matrix for the similarity among all the emigration profiles (those named in table 2 plus the field for Hungary as destination). For each destination country (or group of countries) are kept for graphic representation only the first two correlation coefficients as measures of similarity. The profile of Austrian emigration, for example, is similar, first of all, to the profile of emigration toward Germany at the level  $r=0.80$  and secondly, to the profile of emigration towards Czech Republic ( $r=0.75$ ). The links of similarity are represented in Figure 1 according to the rules at the bottom of the table. The technique is similar to the method of nearest neighbour in cluster analysis but it operates with first two highest correlations for each object of classification (not with only one as in the clustering method) and is oriented not on generating clusters but networks of highest similarities among a set of objects. It was used designed and used under the name of "structural analysis of correlations" (Sandu, 1988). The method is in fact a data mining one allowing for identification of networks of similarity among the profiles of a reduced set of objects.

<sup>6</sup> The findings in this paragraph, together with data from table A4 are grounds to consider that the EUCROSS sample of natives for Romania is mainly representative for the urban population of large cities, with high education, and for the areas surrounding them and characterised by a common origin for emigrations towards Italy and Spain. The data collection procedure using phone calls on mobile phones favoured such a result.

<sup>7</sup> Comments in the paragraph are based on results of running multiple regression models for each of the EU countries (model 1 for Romania).

<sup>8</sup> "Localite" as an influential in media communication "largely confines his interests to this community. Rovere is essentially his world. Devoting little thought or energy to the Great Society, he is preoccupied with local problems, to the virtual exclusion of the national and international scene. He is, strictly speaking, parochial" (Merton, 1968: 447). Like localite influentials, persons of localist identification are mainly interested in local topics, are parochial.

<sup>9</sup> Similar, to a significant degree, with the logic of multiregional demography (Andrei Rogers et al., 1986)

<sup>10</sup> The country profile for the UK has high loadings on all the three factors giving the major fields of Romanian migration abroad (0.62 for Southern, 0.51 for Northern and 0.45 for Central-Western Europe).

<sup>11</sup> The correlation coefficient for the emigration profiles for the UK and Belgium is  $r = 0.81$ . The UK emigration profile also correlates very highly with the profiles for Italy ( $r = 0.80$ ), the Netherlands ( $r = 0.77$ ), Ireland ( $r = 0.79$ ), and Canada ( $r = 0.81$ ) (Sandu, 1988).

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## First trip abroad: expectations, experiences and stories of transnational Romanians

Alin Croitoru

### **Introduction**

Several EUCROSS working papers proposed 'cross-border practices' as the main concept for analysing physical and non-physical mobility (Favell et al., 2011; Hanquinet and Savage, 2013; Salamońska et al., 2013). This concept is seen as a broader framework for understanding transnational and cosmopolitan behaviours as well as international migration. The conceptual tool proved to be useful in distinguishing between certain dimensions of daily and extraordinary practices: "less permanent and more hybrid forms of border-crossing have been on the rise in the last decades: physical mobility such as transnational commuting, cross-border business and shopping, or split location lifestyles, and non-physical mobility such as the movement of money and savings, the consumption of international media, participation in virtual communities formed by people of different nationalities" (Favell et al., 2011: 24). On this basis we should mention that our paper deals only with practices of physical mobility and from this perspective it distinguishes between different types of travelling for the first time abroad.

The exploratory analysis of the first trip abroad is constructed on the hypothesis that *structural changes and constraints in Romania influenced individual representations of countries they visited*. The significant transformations which occurred in this country during the last decades create a fertile ground for this type of research because before 1989 the Romanian society was isolated and its borders were highly controlled, and now millions of Romanians live abroad. The short time in which this process has taken place and the variety of travel experiences allow us to differentiate between certain categories of people. The main dimensions that we keep in mind for this particular study are the historical period during which they left for their first trip abroad, how much time they spent there and last but not least the reason for their trip. Additionally, the qualitative approach as well as a large number of interviews (sixty) conducted with Romanians who live in six European countries gives us the ability to go in depth regarding their experiences. The paper argues that beside the duration of the first trip, the destination and the reason for travelling are important components of this experience; however, the historical context is of greater importance. Thus, the main structural changes regarding Romanians' experiences of travelling abroad will be analysed between the years 1989 and 2007, and further broken down into three distinct periods of time. Two main events are taken into consideration as thresholds: firstly, there was the anti-communist revolution and its direct impact on the process of border liberalization; secondly, in 2007 Romania became part of the EU and its citizens received the right to travel within EU borders. To sum up, the analysis draws a clear distinction between people who travelled abroad before the communist regime crumbled, those who took their first trip abroad during a period of limited openness (1990-2006), and the last group is made up of people who travelled abroad after 2007.

The selection of the first experience abroad was motivated by the fact that at this specific moment individuals naturally compare what they see with their own country. From this perspective, we can explore the idea that the subjective representations contain an important component rooted in the reality of where the visitor came from (Glick Schiller et al., 2006 [1992]: 8). To be more specific, individuals' expectations are based on the political,

economic and social reality of Romania and this implies that in order to understand how these stories are formed one has to contextualize Romania during each of these three periods. For the time before 1989, the key concept of the first trip is *freedom* even if the destination countries were also communist. The images of countries visited during the first few years after the Romanian revolution (1990-1995) seem to revolve around the concept of *diversity*, specifically of goods and services, as well as cultural diversity. After this period, Romanians' stories about crossing borders are gradually more about the different ways in which work is rewarded. Historically, during this period from 1996 to 2006 Romanian flows of migration to Italy and Spain are strengthened and consolidated (Sandu, 2010). After Romanian integration into the EU a new set of motives for travelling arose. Work is still the main driver of migration, but leisure or educational trips are often mentioned as motivations for first trip abroad. This puzzle of time, destination and motives reconstructs the way in which Romanians started their transnational careers and gives us an insight into the individuals' framing process of travelling abroad during different periods. In a few cases the first trip abroad took place when the person was a child – these people were not excluded from our sample but we took into consideration their first trip abroad as adults (individual trips or in groups without their parents).

## Methodology

The EUCROSS project is based on a mix-mode methodology and had two distinct research phases: firstly, a phone survey was conducted with representative samples for the native population in Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom; in addition there were two samples of Romanian and Turkish migrants, each sample consisted of 250 people; secondly, there was a qualitative approach focused on interviewing people with a high level of transnationalism. This paper is based on forty-eight interviews conducted with Romanian citizens who live in previously mentioned European countries. From each of these samples, ten Romanian citizens were chosen on the basis of their answers to the phone survey<sup>1</sup> in each of these countries and in the summer of 2013, they were interviewed *face-to-face*.<sup>2</sup> The EUCROSS research design allowed for each of these samples to include eight people with a high level of transnationalism and two with a low level of transnationalism. Complementary, these respondents were selected, taking into account their gender and level of education (see table 1 for the distribution of the sample). For this paper we selected only the interviews with people with a high level of transnationalism (forty-eight interviews). Focusing the research on the transnational people, our perspective is not representative for the Romanian migration as a whole.

*Table 1.* Sample distribution by level of transnationalism, gender and level of education

Level of transnationalism	Level of education	Gender	Denmark	Germany	Italy	Romania	Spain	United Kingdom
High	High	Women	2	2	2	2	2	2
		Men	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Low	Women	2	2	2	2	2	2
		Men	2	2	2	2	2	2
Low	Women	1	1	1	1	1	1	
	Men	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Total			10	10	10	10	10	10

Another important aspect taken into account in the selection process was linked to the respondents' region of residence. Thus, care was taken to ensure that a good level of regional diversity was reflected in the findings (see table 2).

*Table 2. The geographical distribution of the Romanians sample by country*

Denmark	Germany	Italy	Romania	Spain	United Kingdom
Copenhagen	Munich	Rome	Bucharest	Madrid	London
Aarhus	Cologne	Milano	Buzau	Barcelona	Manchester
Aalborg	Mannheim	Modena	Calarasi	Guadalajara	Romford
Glostrup	Stuttgart	Viareggio	Timisoara	Toledo	High Wycombe
	Murrhardt	Lecco	Prahova	Tarragona	
		Vicenza			
		Padova			
		Lucca			

There are certain limits generated by this type of methodological approach. Firstly, only a part of the sample accepted and provided a telephone number to be contacted for a face-to-face interview. Thus, self-selection influenced the content of the sample interviewed in the second phase of the project. Secondly, there were significant differences between Romanian immigrants depending on the country where they live. On the one hand, the field research in Germany and Denmark was conducted smoothly (people accepted quite easily to settle a face-to-face interview and as a result the number of refusals was low). On the other hand, the interviews in Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom were more difficult to be conducted (in these countries the number of people who refused or cancelled the interview was considerable – for example, in Italy and the UK there were several cases when I scheduled the interview and the respondent never came at the meeting point and did not answer to the phone anymore). Even people who accepted the interview expressed their lack of trust in unknown Romanians who call them. As a consequence, there is a possibility that people who accept the interview to be quite different regarding their home orientation, transnational practices or attitudes towards Romania.

The interview focused on different dimensions of transnationalism and was structured in four main sections. Firstly, the discussion centred around the subject's experience of travelling abroad (a distinction was made between the first trip abroad, the first trip abroad as an adult, the most memorable trip and places where the subject would and would not like to go to). Secondly, questions were asked about the social circle and interaction with foreign citizens (this section was focused on international friendships, communication via the internet as well as on the subjects' opinions about the country where they live). The final part of the interview was concerned with the experiences of work, the economic crisis and EU issues. As we already mentioned, this paper only deals with the first part of the interview, but this first trip is seen in a broader context, a fact ensured by the interview's complementary topics.

## **Results**

### *The period of closed borders: first trip abroad before 1989*

Very few Romanians had the opportunity to go abroad during this historical period in which the communist regime had a very restrictive policy regarding travelling or communication. There were some destinations which were allowed for Romanians at that

time, and many of them were other communist countries. These kinds of trips allow us to see people's *expectations* and can be used as a primary framework in which the countries visited are perceived. Additionally they create the opportunity to better understand the implications that the first trip abroad had for these people. It should be mentioned that going abroad was among the few chances for a Romanian to have direct contact with people from other countries and cultures, or in the words of one of our interviewees<sup>3</sup>:

*In the 1970s I don't think there were any foreigners; there wasn't even the notion of foreigners coming to Romania (...) It was a closed-off country that started to have a lot of problems when it came to... simple things that you need to survive (Radu, 60, men, resident in Germany).*

Radu is a Romanian citizen who left the country for good in the 1970s at the age of 17 with his parents, he had this opportunity only because his father was Jewish and they received the right to move to Israel. After a year spent in Israel they decided to move to Germany and he still lives there. This type of departure is interesting because in this case, a gap emerged between the individual and his native country:

*You're already on the road. It doesn't matter! I mean, it's the same thing, I could've gone to a different country every two years (...). It is something you learn down the road. Because you don't have a country anymore, you have places where you say, OK, I was there and it was beautiful and I could go there again. But more than that no, you're not tied down, you're not connected to... (Radu, 60, men, resident in Germany).*

This case of 'forced migration' cut the individual's national roots and transformed him into a cosmopolitan person. Certainly, this discourse about identity and belonging is different from the main narrative discourse of transnational Romanians. Asked how this dislocation occurred, Radu pointed out the importance of the first trip and he said that "*the first rupture is the hardest*". The period when this trip took place and the fact that it caused the total separation between the individual and Romania highlights new elements in the understanding of the first trip abroad and its consequences for the individual's identity.

Cristian is a Romanian migrant in Germany and his case is interesting for us because during the communist period he was allowed to go abroad. In the early 1970s along with ten colleagues he was sent to East Germany to work for about 14 months in a power station. A few years later, in 1988, this person was able to move abroad before the fall of communism. Asked about his feelings during his first trip he said:

*Of course I was feeling extraordinary. I mean, this air I felt, I mean it doesn't have, what may I tell you? This soul and body freedom, I felt it of course then and when I went to Germany the second time. I don't feel it now. I tried to awake that feeling so many times, but I can't. So, there are only a few moments when you are inclined to feel some... special feelings. It's the same as with love; it doesn't come to everyone and anytime. There are unique moments, those two I felt then for the first time, when I arrived in Germany and I was there in... I felt like I was floating, I had the impression that it was a different air, another society, as if I wasn't standing on earth (Cristian, 71, men, resident in Germany).*

It is interesting to keep in mind the uniqueness associated with this first trip abroad during that time because as it was said, this feeling is directly linked to that of freedom. A similar



example is provided by Marian, a Romanian citizen who has been living in Aarhus (Denmark) since 1988. His move from Romania to Denmark was his first trip abroad; his family had left for Denmark some time previously. One of the main differences experienced by Marian when he arrived in Denmark is described below:

*The freedom was different. Everything was free, everything (...) During that time you didn't have the freedom to travel, to express yourself, there were a lot of things you couldn't find in Romania; many were forbidden (Marian, 45, men, resident in Denmark).*

These two people construct their image based on the reality they left behind. The lack of freedom in Romania is seen in a new light when they have a point of comparison, and in this way crossing-borders provided a path to liberty and freedom.

Ana is a Romanian woman who now lives in London and who visited East Germany before 1989. She was part of a program organized by the communist authorities in the 1970s in which people who worked in the tourist industry were sent to Germany for about 5 months to acquire new skills. This trip was an opportunity for her to see differences between Romania and other countries. For example, she was amazed by the German way of behaving and she decided at that time that

*When I'll get married, I'll raise my children in the German way, and I did. And they emigrated; I didn't have to remind them ten times. I educated them since they were small, how to behave, what to do, to stay away from people that don't show a certain [way of behaving]... if they don't behave, move aside... (Ana, 55, women, the United Kingdom).*

Her story about East Germany is built around ideas such as civilization, punctuality and cleanliness. Her experience is an interesting example of a case in which direct contact with another country influences people to import social and cultural values into their own lives. Additionally, Ana is an example for the category of people encouraged to emigrate by their previous positive experiences.

Even if during the communist period Romania was isolated, there were few people who were able to go abroad and their stories allow us to identify some of the important starting points for a 'transnational career' analysis. On the one hand, we have cases of Romanians who left for good, mainly because they had opposing political views and many of these departures were directly or indirectly forced by the communist authorities. On the other hand, that historical period gave rise to certain opportunities of going abroad, namely trips organized by the communist authorities. This second type could be unpacked on the basis of stories briefly discussed above. These people saw in the 1970s that there are other possible ways of living and they noticed important economic, social, cultural and political differences between Romania and other countries. The distorted image intensively promoted by the communist authorities could be questioned and this was the result of going abroad and seeing other systems. This specific type of crossing borders during the communist period has some distinctive features. Firstly, these people were carefully selected by the authorities and their chances to go abroad were influenced by certain characteristics such as having a family who remained at home, having a 'clean political record' and being considered eligible by the Romanian Security Department. Secondly, an important role in organizing these trips abroad could be linked to the idea of group departures; this was significant because in this situation individuals knew that the system still had the power to supervise them. Other

members of the group would be responsible for supervising the entire group and to prevent attempts to defect.

### *The period of limited mobility (1990-2006)*

After the communist regimes collapsed a new period began for Romania: people were free to leave the country as they wished, however this did not mean complete freedom to travel as visa restrictions were imposed by most of the countries – this is why we are referring to this period of Romanian migration abroad in terms of limited mobility. New destinations and new motives began to spread and the first trip abroad receives a new meaning. Their expectations changed and as a result, the stories told by transnational Romanians are not merely constructed around the feeling of ‘freedom’ or ‘escape’ because gradually the economic motivations grew in significance.

During the first few years of openness we should draw a clear distinction regarding practices of cross-bordering. Firstly there was consistent emigration of Romanian citizens with German and Hungarian ethnic origins towards these two countries (Sandu, 2010: 39). These flows of long term migration play an important role because some of the people who emigrated in the early 1990s provided information, opportunities and networks for Romanian temporarily migrants (Sandu, 2010: 79). Secondly our interviews with transnational Romanians bring to the light a less explored category of first trip abroad, namely those travelling to Turkey. These trips to Turkey focus mainly on entrepreneurial opportunities. The process of economic reconfiguration of the Romanian market generated business incentives for people eager to go abroad (for trade). This ‘Turkey boom’ was possible because it was an accessible destination geographically and economically. Gradually, Romanians abandoned Turkey as a destination and they began to explore new destinations, mainly EU countries (Sandu et al., 2006; Sandu, 2010). Furthermore, travelling abroad evolved into more medium or long term fixed employment either within or outside of the regulated system, and this became the key element of their stories. In order to distinguish between the first trips abroad in this period of ‘limited mobility’ it is useful to take into account the duration, their expectations, experiences and images of these destinations and remember that they are directly related to how much time they spent abroad.

In some ways, Turkey was a path to diversity and richness in terms of goods and services, and this destination represented an opened door to social diversity (in terms of social stratification) and cultural diversity (taking into account the differences regarding familial and religious values). In general, trips to Turkey had an entrepreneurial basis because in Romania at that time there was a scarcity of goods and many Romanians transformed suddenly into merchants and traders. The relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and travelling for the first time abroad generate a specific category of experiences. These individuals *discovered* opportunities on the goods market (Kirzner, 1973; Kirzner, 1990) and for taking advantage of these they had to go abroad. From an economic perspective these people assume a status of ‘arbitrageurs’ (White, 1990) because they link two markets, but their experience contains also an important socio-cultural component. Analytically, these aspects of the trip have higher importance in cases of countries that had a period of relative isolation. The language barriers were significant, but the Turkish seller’s skill is still alive in these stories. It should be mentioned that Turkey is the main destination linked to entrepreneurial motives, but there are other destinations mentioned for this kind of first trip abroad such as Hungary and the Czech Republic. This type of entrepreneurs has a

distinct profile compared to the transnational entrepreneurs analysed by Portes et al. (2002) mainly because the last category includes migrants who develop entrepreneurial behaviours in the destination context.

Mihnea lives close to Bucharest and he is one of the people who visited Turkey a few months after the Romanian revolution. He described his first short trip to Istanbul in these terms:

*Everything seemed fascinating – first of all, as far as I remember, I bought sweets. Then I remember buying a pair of trousers, each one of us bought blue jeans (...) In fact, you couldn't find sweets [in Romania]. You just couldn't. After a while, they began to sell sweets, but in the first year, in 1990, not really. No. The only sweets were coming from this area, from Turkey. Those which you could find in Romania weren't that tasty. The Turks would wrap them very nice and colourful. They had those dyes we're trying to avoid right now; they had been using dyes for a long time. We couldn't figure it out; we were impressed by colourful things. We were also fascinated by street lightning. We didn't know what all these things represented, but now we understand one has to be reserved when it comes to vivid colours and sugared flavours (Mihnea, 56, men, resident in Romania).*

Additionally, we can look at Flavius' story who describes this kind of trip in the terms of an adventure. He is a Romanian who lives in the Northern part of Italy and he recalls that he was surprised during his first trip to Turkey. To better understand the Romanian scarcity of goods in the early 1990s we can use his example of things that shocked him during this trip to Turkey. Firstly, there were little differences and small things which shocked him:

*When I got to Turkey, the first time in my life, in Turkey... I remember I got off at the train station. The first time I went by train, not by car, in Turkey, and I saw Rexona soap at the spring that was for everyone. That was something that wouldn't have happened in Romania. And this thing... it also shocked me, but it also made me sad..." Secondly, he was amazed by their way of selling goods because "dozens of kilos of gold were in the window shops. The liberty they had. After communism, going to a kind of free country like Turkey... The liberty, the shops, these things were blinding you. The fact that you went to buy something, or you went to eat, they served you with coffee or tea, without paying for it. There were things we weren't used to (Flavius, 40, men, resident in Italy).*

Another interviewee told us that in Turkey he saw for the first time bottles of cooking oil of different shapes and sizes as well as the fact that people drank bottled water. The social and cultural differences between Romania and Turkey were discovered during these trips. Anca, a Romanian woman who is now dividing her life between Italy and Spain (she works a few months a year in Spain, but most of the time lives and works in Italy) recalls that during her first trip abroad to Turkey she saw a lot of differences:

*Their way of dressing and their way of behaving... In the 1990s there was still a time when women were more in the house. I understand that things have changed a lot now, in Turkey as well. You didn't really see them on the street dressed as us, as Europeans. Then their warm way of... The way they sell their products, they present their products, their hospitality – things we weren't used to. Well, being the first time outside Romania's*

*borders, it seemed something extraordinary. They weren't all dressed almost the same (Anca, 45, women, resident in Italy).*

All these examples emphasize how illuminating the first trip abroad could be during the early 1990s, even if Turkey was not one of the richest countries of the world. The economic gap between countries was perceived by all these people and they returned to Romania aware of economic, social and cultural differences between Romania and other countries. Travelling to Turkey proved to be one of the most accessible paths for experiencing other countries during that period. The main elements that these trips had in common were their very short duration (measurable in days), their entrepreneurial motives, and probably one of the most notable consequence of these stories is linked to a deeper understanding of the idea of diversity.

During the same period of time another type of travelling for the first time abroad is made by people who left Romania seeking asylum. These stories are *emotionally charged*, which distinguishes them from other types of trips. People disappointed with Romania left illegally and tried to gain the right to stay for good in a new country. In some cases they have a settled destination or in other cases such as Gabriel's:

*I did not know I will leave permanently, for the reason that we could not know for sure if we succeeded, but my intention was to leave and to settle somewhere, in another place than my own country. I was much too disappointed (Gabriel, 51, men, resident In Denmark).*

In this case more than in the others, crossing borders gets a new meaning because it involves a higher risk and a 'marginal status' in the destination country. Cristina is a Romanian who now lives in Germany but her experience of seeking asylum in Germany during the early 1990s was a negative one: *"I'll remember for the rest of my life that moment because of the fear and horror."* After she succeeded to get into Germany she tried to obtain the right to stay but one year later she was sent home by the police. After experiencing some terrible hardships during the journey from Romania to their destinations (in our cases, Germany and Denmark) these people had contact with a different world. Coming back to Gabriel's story, he pointed out that

*The endpoint was in Denmark. Today Denmark does not look that well, but then we were astonished at the German highways and roads and we were seeing how the car rolled, as if flying. When we got here, we thought that if Germany seemed a good place, than Denmark was perfect (Gabriel, 51, men, resident In Denmark).*

The negative feelings towards their native country, the danger of this trip and the welfare system encountered left an indelible imprint of these countries seen by Romanians at that specific time.

During this period of limited mobility, Romanians explored existing opportunities and collected information about different destinations (Sandu et al., 2006: 24). These changes were the result of the fact that more Romanians decided to take advantage of better labour opportunities located in other countries. As a consequence, the duration of these first trips abroad changed and therefore it is useful to distinguish between *circular labour migrants* and *semi-permanent labour migrants*. The first category includes people who left abroad for the first time usually for a period of three months and returned to Romania and they were

engaged repeatedly in this type of labour migration. The second category is formed mainly by those people who left Romania around 2000 and who assumed an illegal status for years in the destination country (Italy and Spain became the main destinations).

Circular migration is a broad topic in migration studies and covers different types of repeated cross-bordering movements. Depending on the context encountered at destination, these types of circular labour migrants could become permanent migrants (Constan and Zimmermann, 2011). In our paper, the destination is seen by Romanian migrants as a means of securing a better life and mainly as a possible path for improving the economic level of individuals or families (Potot, 2010). This context creates situations in which people assume their temporarily marginal status because they have a clear goal, namely to raise a certain amount of money and return home.<sup>4</sup> Bogdana is a transnational Romanian woman who is now dividing her life between two countries – she lives and works two months in Austria and two months in Romania (in Austria she takes care of an older person in Graz, and in Romania she works in a Italian shoe factory). Her first trip abroad was in 2005 to Italy and in her case the economic nature of the trip is obvious: *well, I would go to pay my debts, I had the bank, the mortgage, and you know it's very hard (Bogdana, 43, women, resident in Romania)*. Her first trip abroad taught her simultaneously two lessons. Firstly, she found out how hard it is to work in the low paid job sector in another country, and secondly, she experienced the financial difference working abroad could make. The second lesson convinced her to become a circular migrant and to search the labour market for better opportunities; as a consequence, over time her destination changed from Italy to Austria. For a better understanding of Romanians' expectations of this specific type of trip we can take a short look at Cornelia's story. Cornelia was involved for a while in circular migration between Romania and Germany and now she lives in Germany. Her first motivation for experiencing other countries is expressed in the following line of thought:

*I was motivated, there was more money involved than I was making beforehand, I was getting around 300 euro or 250 in Romania and in Germany I was getting 900 euro per month and I was motivated because of the money involved. That's why I come here (Cornelia, 40, women, resident in Germany).*

Roxana is a Romanian woman who lives near London and who took her first trip abroad in 1995. She and her husband were part in a program which allowed Romanian students to work for a few months on farms in the UK. Talking about the differences between Romanians and British people she emphasizes that

*The farmers who were simple farmers had such arrogance in them, superiority toward us who were his employees, some poor fellows. We were students from all the countries, especially from the poor ones. We were not only Romanians, but there were also Polish people, there were all kinds of people from the Eastern Europe countries (Roxana, 41, women, resident in the United Kingdom).*

Roxana's case shows us the importance of money earned during these kinds of trips. After almost 20 years she remembers that

*We liked the freedom that money gives you. At that time when we were students, we could not afford to buy bananas. When we came to the UK, I bought bananas, put me to*

*bed, I woke up at night, ate a banana and went back to sleep. So we liked that freedom that money gives you (Roxana, 41, women, resident in the United Kingdom).*

Even if people accepted low paid jobs, they were able to experience the feeling of relative wealth (their social status improved at origin). These trips generated a mixture of emotions, the conflict between social frustration and economic satisfactions. Crossing-borders as a labour migrant for a limited period of time seems to have as main features the economic motivation for travelling abroad and the ambiguity felt by these people. In such cases the first trip abroad stimulated the desire for higher wages and also proved them that circular migration could be a way to acquire what they desired.

The final part of this section is concerned with Romanians who began their transnational careers as *semi-permanent labour migrants*. This label is used for delimitating a group of people who left Romania mainly around the year 2000 without a clear intention to come back. Their first trip abroad was linked to their desire to start a new life in a new country. Synchronically, during that period of time the irregular status of this type of migration tied them to the destination countries for years. Their expectations related to the destination country were different from the ones presented above and their experiences bring to light new images of how the first trip abroad took place. In this case we deal with “people who live in and create a new social and cultural space which calls for a new awareness of who they are, a new consciousness, and new identities” (Glick Schiller et al., 2006 [1992]: 14).

Rareş has been living in the UK since 2004. He points out from the beginning of his story that “it was his dream to live abroad” and this fact distinguishes him from other people who were part of the program that allowed Romanians to work in farms from the UK:

*We were split in half, the ones who came there to stay in this country, the ones who were just for the holiday, students, like I was, in my fourth year to top it off. I put my college on halt, I finished it in 2012, twelve years after I started it, in 2000, but half the students were there just to go back home. To earn some money, two months, money to support themselves through college. I didn't think like that, I wanted more, I felt that the college won't help me later in life (Rareş, 33, men, resident in the United Kingdom).*

A short look at Andrei's story adds valuable information about migrants' way of thinking. He left Romania in 2001 with a touristic visa to Germany, but his real destination was Spain *it was a planned trip, with the intention to stay here, if things went well*, and in his case the first trip abroad lasted 4 years and a half.

Alexandra has been living in Spain since 2001. She left the country at the age of 21, decided to settle down in a new country and the fact that she had some friends in the Madrid area influenced her to choose this destination. Talking about her first trip abroad, she confesses that: *I had illusions. I'm going to another country; I'm starting again no matter the consequences*. During the first months she succeeded in finding a job, a place to stay and began to overcome the language barriers and this was the moment when Spain received a new meaning for her *because I saw there was hope for the future. You have same rights and as woman you were respected, you had your rights as individual (Alexandra, 34, women, resident in Spain)*.

Alexandra's case is an example of a Romanian migrant decided to adapt at the new environment mostly because she perceived better life opportunities there in comparison with Romania. As we can see, these types of first trip abroad were animated by different individuals' expectations and as a result migrants were concerned from the beginning with

finding a job and investing in acquiring useful knowledge about destinations. Numerous interviewees point out the help received in the period of accommodation because for this category of labour migrants the kinship networks played a significant role (Şerban and Grigoraş, 2000; Anghel, 2008; Şerban and Voicu, 2010).

Florin decided to move to Italy in 2005, having an uncle already there who offered to help him with a place to stay and a job. His first return in Romania was in 2011, even if he mentions that he had numerous problems in adapting to Italian society. When he left Romania, his goal was to raise money for buying a car, but he decided to stay in Italy and in his words:

*You like living abroad because you can live a better life than back home". On the other hand, as many migrants know, living abroad is not easy at all: "many times I regret coming here, that I chose this path, but now it's too late anyway for going back, I mean I couldn't reintegrate back in the country, I couldn't do anything anymore. And sometimes I'm sorry because I've isolated myself here a lot, I mean I don't have friends anymore, I don't have anything, nothing (Florin, 33, men, resident in Italy).*

This separation of the friends left behind was analysed by Moroşanu (2013a); (2013b) in the case of Romanians who live in London.

The first trip abroad as a semi-permanent migrant reconstructed from these stories emphasizes certain distinguishing elements. Firstly, in many cases, it is seen as a one-way trip because the first return to Romania took place after years. Secondly, these migrants were decided to settle down in a new country and to do the necessary things to remain there. Many of them already had relatives, friends or acquaintances at destinations and benefited from their help and "it can be argued that border-crossing financing had a considerable impact on cutting the costs of labour migration, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the January 2002 visa waiver" (Ban, 2009: 139). Expectations from the destination country were linked to the idea of a better life and the image of the first trip abroad is drawn in the lines of the adaptation/integration process. The stringent need for a place to stay, a job and language barriers confronted this type of irregular labour migrant with a harsh reality.

Summarizing, the period of time between 1990 and 2006 is not unitary at all. Analysing this interval of time of limited mobility we distinguished between four main categories of people going abroad for the first time. The first one was constructed around the idea of entrepreneurial orientation. The second type allowed us to see how the first contact with another economic, social and cultural reality was seen by the asylum seekers. The third category was constructed on the basis of circular migration practices and probably the most important in terms of Romanian migration system and the last one contains those people who left Romania with the desire to settle down in a new country for an undefined period of time.

#### *The period of free intra-European mobility (after 2007)*

Since 2007 Romania has become a member state of the European Union and this represents the second crucial moment for understanding how Romanians' physical mobility developed through the last decades. The main feature of the period can be linked to the fact that the composition of migrant population is more diverse and there are no longer dominant characteristics we can speak of. Labour, educational and touristic motives are

equally important for analysing the period of free intra-European mobility. The category of people who are likely to go abroad became larger to include many other kinds of migrants and motivations. Travelling abroad became easier and low-cost flights become popular solutions for going abroad (Favell et al., 2011). Labour migration flows were affected by the actual economic crisis and as a result Romanians were spurred to look at new destinations inside the EU and from this point of view our research brings to the light the importance of the UK and Denmark. Leisure activities and touristic trips as acts of 'mundane activities' (Pötzschke, 2012: 18) are significantly increasing their weight in the total amount of departures. In order to distinguish between experiencing other countries after 2007, the paper focuses on people's expectations correlated with their motives for going abroad.

Labour migration continues to be important for understanding why Romanians go abroad for the first time. Certainly, there are many Romanians who expected to be allowed to work abroad and who emigrated after 2007, but in our sample of forty-eight transnational Romanians there were no cases of persons who took the first trip abroad after 2007 as a labour migrant. Their chances to be among the transnational Romanians are not so high because they emigrated recently and they have fewer international friends, they travelled less abroad and their probability to still be rooted to the Romanian culture is higher. As a consequence, we analyse a specific type of migrants, namely those people who left the country for studying abroad and after a while they got a job. This category of people is different from the previous category of labour migrants because the period of accommodation spent at destination as students gave them the opportunity to acquire skills and to develop social networks needed for accessing better jobs on the labour market.

Educational trips have become an important practice that allowed young Romanians to experience other countries. From this point of view we can distinguish between those cases of going abroad for a short time during high-school or college and situations when people are enrolled in an educational system in another country – Denmark and the UK provide us some examples in this sense. There are significant differences between these two types of educational trips because one has different expectations depending on the time spent abroad.

Daniel is an eighteen year old man who lives in a Romanian city, and who left for a short educational trip in Spain in 2013. His school was part in an exchange students program. The week spent abroad in an international environment with teachers and students from eight countries fascinated him. Friendly people, Spanish cuisine and a relaxed urban look were the main memories from this trip. Such short experiences abroad seem to be an opportunity to directly experience one of the most pleasant faces of other countries. The social interaction eased by the school umbrella and the accommodation in another student house helped Daniel to develop some friendships and determined him to visit Spain next summer again. Another interesting example about the experience of going abroad through short-time educational programs is offered by Valentin. At the interview time he was one of the Romanian students enrolled in the Denmark system and in high-school he spent a month in Germany together with a group of schoolmates. This trip was for him an incentive for going abroad for a longer period:

*Let's say that it was the experience that made me believe that western European life is better than living in Romania. I saw that people were already stable here, I understood that. I saw that the young people who want to buy a particular chocolate just buy it. And I didn't have money. I think it was the first time I had some money because it was funded*



*by the European Union and I got money every day so I can do my schoolwork, so I can buy a Coke, for example, during the job (Valentin, 21, men, resident in Denmark).*

This category of people is different from the others previously described because they receive a privileged treatment from the host schools, they see friendly faces, they do not worry about money or accommodation, and someone supports them during the entire visit. First time abroad as an exchange student in a short-time program has increased chances to be perceived as a very positive experience.

The second category of educational trips analysed includes people who left Romania for studying abroad and is concerned with medium and long term educational trips. This pattern of going abroad increased in popularity after the Romanian admission in the EU. Romanian students enrolled in universities from abroad perceived differently the first trip abroad mainly because they have different expectations compared with the other categories of people mentioned so far. Eduard is a Romanian who left Romania for studying at a University in Denmark. His case is interesting because it gives us a short insight in the early phase of adapting to a new country as a foreign student. Asked how he felt, he pointed out:

*Interesting, everything was new. The first two months were pretty cool because everything was new and everything was discover, discover, discover... new experiences, new people" (Eduard, 23, men, resident in Denmark).*

Additionally, his case gave us an insight into the relationship between natives and foreign students:

*The first time I kept my distance from the Danish because they seemed pretty cold and I didn't really have anything in common with them. And the fact that I wasn't attracted to the language to learn it from the first year here; I didn't really have an interest. And if you don't speak Danish, you can't really fit into their groups. And how we were mostly foreigners, we didn't really have time for the Danish. We simply have our community of foreigners, all sorts of foreigners. We have our parties, our events... We don't really have moments when we interact with Danish people (Eduard, 23, men, resident in Denmark).*

He mentions that after a while he succeeded in building friendships with Danish people. The educational trip is a good means to acquire knowledge about other lifestyles and cultural patterns. However, Sigalas (2010) pointed out the limited nature of experiencing other countries during ERASMUS mobility. The second example from this section is provided by Cristina, a young Romanian who now lives in London and who took her first trip abroad in 2011 to the USA for a period of five months. The international environment in New York and in the University was a key issue for understanding her experience mainly because this offered her a comfortable position:

*it was a program in which people came from other states and they came for this program and we all needed each other, like, even if all of my colleagues were American, they weren't from New York and some, also, have never been to New York and we were looking for each other (Cristina, 26, women, resident in the United Kingdom).*

Medium and long term educational trips differ from the short term trips because people have the opportunity to better understand the culture and the lifestyle in the destination country and also they experience the process of adaptation to a new reality. Another important distinction between these is provided by the fact that usually short time educational trips during high-school time are organized in groups while medium and long term enrolment in another country is an individual process. Complementarily, students have access to a different social life in comparison with labour migrants or refugees and this aspect changes their perspective on the destination country.

The last category of first trip abroad discussed in this paper can be linked to the 'tourist gaze' (Urry and Larsen, 2011). Since 2007 going abroad for a vacation or a city-break has become a significant way to experience other countries for Romanians. These types of encounters are usually with people who are friendly in a commercialized fashion (Hochschild, 2003). In numerous cases the combination between the little time spent at destination and a 'fake' image linked to the touristic area do not offer people a real contact with the destination country. Our sample of transnational Romanians with a large percent of Romanian migrants who live in other European countries allows us to see how a first touristic trip abroad could transform after a while in a decision to emigrate.

Raluca is a 26 years old Romanian woman who lives in Copenhagen and her first trip abroad was a touristic visit to Spain in 2007. Her uncle lived there for a while and she paid him a visit: *"it was just relaxing, having fun and I didn't work"* – according to Faist et al. (2013: 104) she already had been part of a transnational space because she was in touch with her uncle. In fact, the next year she took a new trip to Spain and that time she took a job for a couple of months. When her uncle decided to move from Spain to Denmark she decided to emigrate and asked him for a job. A different example is provided by Ruxandra. She lives in London and her first trip abroad was a touristic visit to Greece a few years ago. Her story offers us a new argument in this line. She mentions that she had a very pleasant time during this trip and adds that *"I was in Greece I thought to myself "how would it be if I were to move to another country? I wonder how it would be"* (Ruxandra, 23, women, resident in the United Kingdom). These two examples show how a first touristic trip can transform into a starting point for a transnational life. Positive experiences with other countries give people direct access to information about other countries and motivate them to go again abroad for longer periods.

### *Conclusions and discussion*

The Romanians' stories about their first experiences abroad allow us to see how the perception on destinations fundamentally changed in only two decades. During different periods of time people who took their first trip abroad have had different expectations and framed their experiences in different terms. The nation-state and its clear borders decreased in importance and European countries are often visited for a new set of motives. There are important transformations regarding people's knowledge about their destinations because in numerous cases people are already involved in transnational spaces. During the communist period and the early 1990s people who were abroad had limited knowledge about destinations. Starting with the second half of the 1990s and especially after 2007 Romanians who took their first trip abroad had already an indirect knowledge about other countries through their relatives or friends who live there and through mass-media, since the migration phenomenon became increasingly present in the public debate.

Transnational Romanians' stories regarding their first trip abroad allowed us to differentiate between certain types of migrants (asylum seekers, circular migrants and semi-permanent migrants) and other kinds of travellers such as entrepreneurs, students and tourists. The first experience with another country took different forms during the last decades and each of them is a key element for understanding people's expectations with regards to destinations. It does not mean that a person who took the first trip abroad during the communist period noticed only differences in terms of people's freedom; it is more about elements stressed in their stories.

The sample allows us to distinguish two main categories of the first trip abroad during the communist period, namely people who left for a definite period of time with the 'blessing' of the communist authorities and the category of people who left for an indefinite period of time and lost their contacts with Romania. A broader typology for this period of time should include other categories of people unrepresented in our sample, respectively the people who left Romania illegally and established in a new country (maybe this segment of people applied for citizenship in the destination countries and this is one of the reasons for not being in our sample); secondly there are people who left Romania during the communist time because they had different political opinions and this fact strengthened their Romanian identity (there is a chance for this kind of people to be out of our sample because they do not have a high level of transnationalism in the sense used in this paper, regardless of the long period of time spent abroad).

For the period of limited mobility between 1990 and 2006 we distinguished between four main categories of people. Firstly, we looked at asylum seekers and their stories about fears and motives to emigrate. Secondly, we pointed out the entrepreneurial orientation of a large category of people and how they experienced diversity through short time visits to Turkey. Thirdly, we unpacked the experience of going for the first time abroad as a labour migrant and from this perspective we draw a distinction between the ones who started their careers of circular migrants and the ones who assumed a status of irregular migrants and were linked to the destination country for a long period of time.

The free intra-European mobility that started in 2007 led to the intensification of certain ways of experiencing other countries for the first time such as the educational and the touristic trips. Even if labour migration continues to represent one of the significant drivers for travelling to another country for the first time, our sample of forty-eight transnational Romanians allowed us to see how these educational and touristic trips can motivate people to go abroad again for longer periods of time.

Romanians started their transnational careers in different fashions and this is an argument for the heterogeneity of the Romanian Diaspora. We found numerous reasons for going abroad during the specified periods of time. Our typology lead to the selection of certain key elements for each of these periods of time without claiming to be an exhaustive exposition and the differences emphasized in the transnational Romanians' stories about their first trip abroad should not be seen in objective terms, but rather in subjective terms. Transnational Romanians pointed out different aspects during each historical period of time and the combination of *duration*, *motives* and *destination* allows a deeper understanding of the first trip abroad of transnational Romanians.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The level of transnationalism was measured on the basis on an index constructed in the EUCROSS Project and its main dimensions were linked to *cross-border practices* (physical and virtual mobility, cosmopolitan consumption and competencies) and *transnational background and private network* (Pötzschke, 2012: 16).

<sup>2</sup> The interviews were conducted by two different scholars of the University of Bucharest. The author of this paper conducted forty interviews in Denmark, Italy, Romania and the United Kingdom. The interviews in Germany and Spain were conducted by Monica Șerban.

<sup>3</sup> All names used in this text are not the interviewees' real names. During the interview these persons were assured by their anonymity.

<sup>4</sup> Rostas and Stoica (2007) illustrate the marginal status assumed by Romanian migrants. Some people tell about how they live under bridges or in improvised places for a while and others considered that working abroad as an irregular Romanian migrant makes you a slave. As a result, many people had a limited contact with the host society or in one of the immigrants' words: "My wife took care of an old woman. (...) I had no direct contact with the Italians, with their habits. I saw Italy from the blocks that we built and she through the window of the house" (Rostas and Stoica, 2007: 344).

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**Romanian migrants between origin and destination:  
Attachment to Romania and views on return**

Elena Tudor

***Introduction***

Romanian migration has a temporary and circulatory character: on the one hand, people are moving back and forth to and from a destination and on the other hand, there are migrants who either resettle in Romania, come back in the home country and then emigrate to a different destination than the initial one or move to a new destination after spending time abroad without returning in Romania. This paper underlines the factors that shape these distinct possible strategies<sup>1</sup> and types of mobility, with a special interest towards intentions and plans for return. In doing so, we look at the bonds Romanian migrants maintain with their home country and explore the different typologies and categories of migrants as moulded by their experiences, opinions and attitudes towards the origin country.

The main questions of interest concern how the experience of migration shapes the attitude towards the home country and the intention to return, how did the crisis influence such aspects (if it did) and what the main factors that appear as significant to one category of migrants or another from this point of view are. The EUCROSS qualitative interviews did not include a specific category of questions concerning attachment to the home country or how return is thought of by migrants, but related ideas are present in most of the respondents' stories – whether they speak about themselves or about the situation of other Romanians they know of or they have heard of.

Some of the important dimensions of the connection with the origin country are the visits they make or the visits they receive from home – what is referred to in the working papers of the EUCROSS project as physical mobility (Favell, 2001), family members they have in Romania, their orientation in tastes and consumption towards destination or origin (food, movies, music), the relations they have with Romanians at destination or at origin, the view they have on Romania and Romanians.

In this sense, we focus on concepts such as transnationalism, home orientation (Sandu, 2010b), return intentions and projects while keeping in mind the heterogeneity of Romanian international migration in terms of individuals' characteristics, motivations for departure and return, destinations and wave of migration.

For this purpose, we use fifty one of the sixty one interviews realized with Romanians as part of the EUCROSS project in Denmark, UK, Spain, Italy and Germany. It is important to specify that most of the respondents (41) selected for the interviews are persons with a 'high transnationalism level': an index for the level of transnationalism was created by GESIS team in EUCROSS specifically for this study (Pötzschke, 2012), and this was the criterion used in the selection of the interviewees.

## ***Theoretical background***

Return migration is a topic that attracts increasing interest since understanding it through the explanation of factors that contribute in the process allows a better comprehension of the migration phenomenon overall and the evaluation of its impact at origin, with influence on the migration policy (Adda, Dustmann and Mesters, 2006). Scholars are mainly concerned with the development stimulated by returnees' investments, the social remittances they bring with them and their reintegration in their home country. Due to the complexity of the matter, it raises significant challenges for definition and operationalization. While the literature agrees that return encompasses travels to the origin country, there are different options scholars choose in making the distinction between various types of going home. However, everyone agrees that, in line with the migration process overall, the decision to return is never definitive, but one that is considered and reconsidered by the individuals during their migratory experiences (Sandu, 2010a: 90). To some, return is only considered in terms of permanence of resettling at home – for example, Bovenkerk chooses the terminology of return migration only for the first return of the migrant, and when more than one return happens, he speaks of circulatory migration (Bovenkerk, 1974: 6). Current approaches to return migration view it more as a reversible step in the migratory process thus including it as part of a circulatory mobility of individuals. While some scholars include regular visits under this term (King and Kristou, 2011: 452), we only refer to return in terms of temporary or definitive resettlement at origin and discuss visits separately – as factors that can influence the predisposition of return rather than as forms of actual return. In doing so, we will discuss intentions and plans to return, the relation of individuals with Romania, family aspects and elements of adaptation at the destination as factors which allow us to draw the picture of the migrants' potential return. The discussion takes into account differences between individuals' intentions and how structured their plans to return are, while keeping in mind that intentions are modified under the influence of different factors throughout the migration experience (Sandu, 2010a: 90).

## ***Methodology***

The analysis of this paper is based mainly on qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews<sup>2</sup> with fifty one Romanian migrants in Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain and UK during the second phase of the EUCROSS project. Also, in order to place the respondents in the broader picture of Romanians' migration experiences in these countries, quantitative data resulted in the first phase of the project<sup>3</sup> were used. The interviewees were selected on the basis of a transnationalism score<sup>4</sup> so that for each country there are eight persons characterized by high transnationalism and two of low transnationalism. Five women and five men were interviewed in each country.

There are various limitations involved in using and interpreting the data. Firstly, interviewees' selection was highly influenced by their availability both in terms of time and in terms of attitudes towards the study. Secondly, the interview guide does not include specific questions on return intentions and plans. However, in the case of Spain and Germany the topic was brought up in each discussion, which allows us to differentiate between potential returnees and migrants who would rather either stay in their current destination or move to a different country than Romania. While respondents in Italy,

Denmark and UK were not directly asked whether they would like to return or not, it is interesting to note that for some, the topic was more or less spontaneously raised by them during the discussions. For this reason, the analysis relies on an interpretation of the migrants' narratives about their home country<sup>5</sup> for all the five destinations, which are more important than actual expressed intentions regarding return for interviews taken in the latter three countries.

The interview was mainly oriented towards issues related to physical and virtual mobility, travel and transnational practices and attitudes towards the crisis and the EU. For the purpose of this paper, we mostly considered the information that respondents offered in relation to:

- Past experiences abroad
- Preference for foreign or Romanian tastes in films, music and cuisine
- Social circle at the destination (natives, other immigrants, Romanians) and connections maintained at home through telephone, internet and visits with friends and family
- Comparisons between Romania and other countries
- Return intentions and plans
- Attitudes towards the home country and Romanians
- Attitudes towards the crisis and the EU

In order to place the fifty five respondents discussed here in the overall sample of the EUCROSS survey, characteristics of the 1250 migrants surveyed in the five countries are referenced throughout the paper.

### *General characteristics of interview respondents*

There are different patterns that can be identified in terms of destinations, each country having its specificity. While part of the characteristics of the individuals depend on the methodology of choosing them, they are surely mirroring at least some of the particular „ways of migrating” into each of the five countries.

In Spain, departures happened between 1998 and 2006 with seven of the eleven interviewees (aged between 32 and 56) having the experience of at least one trip abroad before that. It's noteworthy that eleven interviewees in Spain have the lowest level of education on average. While in all the five countries both individuals of low and high education were selected, there are more students or persons having completed high school in this category for the other countries than they are in Spain. In terms of return, seven of the respondents would like to come back to Romania, whether they have structured plans or not – some would go as soon as possible if they had the opportunity of good jobs at home, while others plan to go to spend their pension there or wait to gain more money for their house and investments in Romania.

In Italy, respondents left between 1993-2006 (very similar to Spain, except for a 40 year old man whose father is Italian), five of them having left Romania at least once before, with ages between 19 and 48, overall younger than in the case of Spain and similar to those in the UK, having completed either high school or faculty. Only one of the ten interviewees stated that *our life is now here so I don't think of Romania in... Yes, maybe I will return, but for the moment I live here.*

In Denmark, the Romanian migrants interviewed are between 22 and 50 year old – they are younger than both in the UK and Italy, and more of the respondents than in the other countries are students there or have studied at some point and continued working in the



field. Departures for Denmark happened between 1988 and 2011 (with students having left after 2007) and, except for two of them, similarly to those in the UK, all visited another country before Denmark either for work, studying or tourism. Similar to Italy, only one person considers going back to Romania, but doesn't think it will happen too soon considering the „situation” there – the respondent is not only referring to the impact of the crisis in Romania, but to the problems concerning better living conditions which she perceives.

In Germany, the respondents are between 22 and 70 year old and went to their current state of destination between 1971 and 2010 – the most inclusive country from these points of view. Seven of the Romanians interviewed in Germany have a previous experience of going abroad before settling in Germany. With regards to education, five of them have at least completed faculty and another two are currently undergraduate students. Five of the respondents mention intention to return.

In the UK, departures took place more recently, between 2004 and 2011, and the respondents are younger (23 and 55), except for one, all having travelled abroad before. With the exception of three persons, those in the UK don't consider returning to Romania: one who will return shortly, having finished her studies here (with the possibility of the return only being temporary since her description of her experiences suggest a potential desire to migrate again), a woman who has no organized plans, but mentions that she *would come back tomorrow if she could*, and one who already invested in a house and land in Romania and postpones the return in order to gain more money in the UK.

While most of the interviewees mention at least one instance when they felt discriminated against at the current (or past) destination, for some, the increased number of Romanians and immigrants in general has a negative impact where benefits in the social system and poor integration are concerned. Especially in Denmark, Germany and the UK, respondents think that not being able or willing to learn the language and to become integrated should not be an option for newcomers. It should be noted that, especially those in the UK, often mention the natives' fear of a Romanian invasion. Also, with regards to how Romanian migrants perceive the natives, they consider them colder and less friendly in Germany, Denmark and UK, often viewing the Italian and the Spanish “warmer” and more similar to Romanians, culturally speaking. Most of the migration experiences of respondents from Denmark and UK are related to studies abroad in these countries for bachelor or master programmes. For those interviewed in Italy and Spain the average level of education is lower than in the other three countries.<sup>6</sup>

Migration to Germany has a stronger ethnic particularity<sup>7</sup> than the rest of the countries and also includes more situations where leave was mediated by a working contract at the destination, whether before 1989 (the overall sample includes six persons with travel experiences before the fall of communism, two of them in Germany) or after. Also, Germany is linked to the strategy of seeking asylum both during the communist era and soon after 1989 and is also mentioned as a country where obtaining papers was easier. There are situations where Romanians planned to go to a different country, but chose to pass through Germany in order to obtain papers. This is similar to how Denmark was used as a transit country shortly after 1989, as Gabriel, a 50 year old man from Denmark mentions:

*Well, I have been living here [in Denmark] since 1990. I left, I should have left for Canada as a matter of fact, it was much easier to leave for Canada from Denmark. If you stayed in Denmark, the Canadian Embassy would mind your documents more rapidly. I began doing my emigration documents in Canada and after that you could not work here anymore.*

*Nobody gave you... how do they call it? (...) A work visa, and because of that I went to Switzerland. I worked in Switzerland for about a year, after which I came back, I met a Danish girl in the meantime, I married her and I gave up my idea to leave for Canada, I remained here.*

It should also be noted that many of the interviewees have the experience of multiple migration, which “underlines the trial-and-error character of migration as well as the exploration of various destinations depending on emerging opportunities” (Ciobanu, 2013: 1). Among the fifty one respondents, besides tourism, there are three main categories of encountering more destinations: those who went to countries such as Turkey and Hungary right after 1990 for petty trade, those who worked in a different country previously for spells ranging from months to years and those who visited at least one other country as part of a study program abroad. Almost all of the interviewees from Denmark and UK had a previous trip abroad before their current destination, which is closely related to the educational profile of these two countries – since here we have more MA students or people who have graduated postdoctoral programmes.

### ***How does return appear in the discourse of Romanians abroad?***

With the exception of a few cases, most do not have really structured plans<sup>8</sup> to resettle to Romania, most of the respondents only considering it as a vacation and family and friends visiting destination. In the following part of the paper we will discuss the respondents in depending on the certainty of their return, as it is revealed by the interviews. There are only few situations where individuals declared their wish to return while at the same time we could identify *actual behaviour oriented towards this decision*. Alexandru, male, 24, lives in Germany and has very well organized plans for return: he came to Munchen to study and following the completion of his MA he will come back to Romania to take charge of the family business. In the meantime, he visits Romania regularly two times a month to see his family and friends. With a very different background, Ana is a 55 year old woman who lives in UK with her husband. She has a long experience of working abroad before coming to UK, especially since she was one of the few to be able to cross the border before 1989 for a work exchange opportunity in Germany in the field of tourism for a few months and later worked for eight years in Greece, where she went illegally in 2000. While she thinks the British weren't that affected by the crisis, she mentions that *the crisis affected me more because everything we earn here we invest in Romania. Well, in Romania, everyday things get more expensive and so... I said to myself to go home after three years, and five years have passed, because it's more expensive...* Ana invested in land and a house in Romania and is one of the persons who *postpone the return* in order to complete the building of the house. Elena is a low skilled migrant who has been living in Spain since 2003. In spite of the prolonged period of stay there, she is very connected to Romania (but this doesn't imply a lack of adaptation in Spain) watches Romanian TV stations, she buys products from Romanian shops in Spain, cooks Romanian food and visits the country frequently. As with Ana, Elena's return is also delayed by the need to raise more money to invest at home:

*As long as I have a job, I will stay in Spain. Afterwards, I'll go to Romania anyway, I won't stay here forever, but as long as I have work... I'm thinking of building a house, that was my dream when I came to Spain, but... Since I had the kids in college... more expenses.*

*Now I'm hoping to... since they're having an income (...) I would like to move to Romania sooner, but as long as I have the chance to work here, to... Well, since I've been here for so long already...*

The same is with Alin, who came to Spain in 1998 with the intention to gain money in order to start a business at home. While he and his wife are sure to return in a few years, their *initial plans for swift return have changed*: they postpone the moment and visit Romania frequently for business purposes – he has a constructions business in Spain and collaborates with firms from other countries, including Romania. Also from Spain, Sorin wanted to return to Romania ever since he first left and now his plans are about to materialize and he intends to return this year. He visits Romania four times a year, has invested in a house there and even though his brothers and sisters are all abroad (in Spain and USA), and has a partner who will remain in Spain, he is adamant about his imminent return and can't wait for the day:

*And now that I have in mind to return home, the week passes so hard. When I was in the army, the last months passed as difficult as these (...) [Do you want to return home?] Yes, anytime this year I want to return home. [For good?] Yes (...) [You say that you like it here and you would take this whole village in Romania, but are you still thinking of returning?] Yes. [As beautiful as it is here, does nothing convince you?] No.*

Cristina also has clear return *plans for retirement*, she and her husband investing in a house there. However, they have differences regarding this issue, since she is not that sure of the desirability of this solution, both because she is well adapted in Germany and because she is worried about uncertainties at home:

*I would come back to Romania... in the evening of my life! Because we have an apartment, we've built a house which is not ready yet, but... I don't know, sometimes when I see all those things on television, I am disappointed and say: why have I worked and made so many things with my husband? Only to work, save and make something for Romania. [And the idea is that you are going to Romania in the end?] Yes, this is my husband's idea. Mine... no longer 100% because... but there's also N. and N. is already 8 year old and loves to go to Romania, she loves Romania.*

Cristina is a good example for the *familial nature of return decisions*: while in general, migrants want to return to members of the family left at home (Sandu, 2010a), her case proves that the opposite is not true – despite having their family there, migrants do not necessarily intend to permanently resettle abroad.

Romanian migrants also have thoughts of coming back home which do not seem to materialize in the near future and are *under question*. In many cases, it is a *longing for the country* and the *prospect of spending retirement in Romania*.

Maria is an interesting example of a person who wants to return and is trying to find a solution in order to do it sooner. Her husband wants to remain in Spain, since he is afraid they will not find work in Romania at their age – Maria is 51 year old. However, she is very bent on coming back and struggles to find something at home for this possibility to materialize:

*[Are you searching in Romania for this possibility?] I still talk with my friends, I talk a lot, a lot with my friends in Romania and with my family and all that. 'Let me find it for you', that's what someone told me last winter, 'let me find you a place to work as a chef.' Oh, dear me... chef, wonderful, for... God knows how much?*

Maria is one of the migrants who have to deal, as she says, with *a battle between staying and not staying*, but she's strongly determined to come back some time in the future:

*[How will it turn out in the end? Will it be Romania, will it be Spain, Spain for good?] Not Spain for good. No, no, no. [But what if the husband doesn't want to, how will it turn out?] No, Spain for good will never happen. [You're not giving up?] No, no.*

For Ioana, a highly educated 37 year old woman who is married with a Romanian of German ethnicity, Romania remains the country where she feels most at home. Even if she sometimes considers going back, her husband is not of the same opinion and they both agree that living conditions there are not an option when compared to remaining abroad. Roxana is highly attached to her home country and while the possibility of resettling there is very distant, for her,

*Romania is a country where I feel great every time I go there. This is why we go to Romania all the time. It is the land of my heart and it will remain so, it is my country! It is the country in which I have spent 28 years of my life, where I went to school, where I met my husband, it is the land of my soul! So for me Romania is the country where I would go back anytime, even tomorrow.*

Anca has been living in Italy since 2005 when she followed her husband who had already been working there for five years – *we had to choose: either for him to come back home or for us [their child and her] to come here. I chose to come here.* While return is ruled out of their plans for the moment, it appears to her as a vague possibility in the distant future: *Our life now is here, I don't think of Romania as... Yes, maybe I'll go back, but now I live here.* There are many situations where return was initially planned, but it is no longer desirable or seems farther and farther away for the migrants. Sorina first left the country in 2003 when she went to Spain and she initially missed home and planned to return. However, her case offers a good illustration for how *even structured projects for return that begin to be put into practice can change.* She invested in a house in Romania, but currently plans to sell what she owns there and buy a house in Spain. She keeps up-to-date with what happens in Romania through press and television, she still misses her home country, but considers Spain as a better option in terms of living conditions and incomes. She visits the country rarely – once every two years – and is decided to settle in Spain permanently:

*I don't think about coming back. I don't think, I'd like to buy a house here, and sell what I have in Romania. My husband doesn't even want to go there on holidays. We go every two years, because he doesn't want to, but I sometimes even go alone, to see my folks, to take care of our business there. We're still in touch, but most of our roots are here, because we've built a life here, a family, everything.*

Cristian is a 33 year old carpenter who has been living in Spain with his wife since 2005. They came here with the intention to raise some money and come back and continued to

long for *life as it is at home*. However confident they are about their return, the couple expects a baby and already take into consideration that this will probably at least delay their plan:

*[So there is no doubt that you will go home?] Yes. Not now for sure... But... yes. [Do you have children?] No, we are going to have a child, that's why I said that tomorrow nine months would have passed. It's about to happen anytime soon. [So she will give birth in Spain? And you will come back with the baby? Do you think that the baby has anything to do with your decision to leave Spain?] Well, I do not know that... if the child manages to go to school, it's very hard to... it depends on how the children put up with... But we... I don't like it [in Spain], but whatever happens, happens anyway.*

Children raised in the destination country<sup>9</sup> or the prospect of this happening may lead to the reconsideration of the initial plans to go back to Romania. Alina is a young woman married in Germany who already thinks of returning to Romania for her retirement. However, she and her husband are not decided whether to start building a house and to actually move there in the future since they are already taking into consideration the possibility of difficulties that could come across on the long term if they have children.

*I used to want to move back [to Romania] and my husband told me that he doesn't want to, if I do... he said that I chose to stay here and if I want to go by myself, he won't come with me (laughs). He said that everyone is running away from Romania, and I'm the only one who wants to go back. The truth is that if you want kids and we want a lot of kids and if you think about their future, then Germany is the country where you can make a career for yourself and you get paid well unlike Romania, because people here have very good jobs, they have very good salaries.*

Mihai is an interesting example of a young Romanian who already has a long experience of travelling abroad since he was 14 year old. His family is Pentecostal<sup>10</sup> and they all left the country in 2006 when they joined his aunt in Spain. In 2008 they decided to go to England, but ended up in Germany and they first visited Romania as late as 2009. However, the 22 year old man visits Romania as often as possible and, in spite of spending many years abroad, he would return if offered a good salary:

*[Do you miss Romania?] Yes! [Is Romania still home for you?] Yes, it still is. It is and it will always be. I always gladly come back to it. And I always say that if the system would be better, if my wage were not as high as 2000 euros, but 1000 euros in Romania – which is here a very small wage... So if my wage were 1000 euros I would not hesitate to go back there.*

What keeps these migrants abroad – whether they plan to remain in their current country of residence or also think of a different destination – varies from the economic realm, including better job opportunities and higher living conditions, to family reasons, such as the indecision of the life partner or dependence of their plans on their children's future. At the same time, they either think of an indistinct possibility of return with an indefinite placement in time or about retirement plans.

### ***Who would rather stay abroad or have no desire to return?***

In the case of Germany, as expected, those who have been settled there for a longer period of time – who came before 1989 or soon after – do not plan to return, even if they considered it at some point in their migratory trajectory. In Spain, those with higher education prefer their current location abroad or even think of new destination countries, such as Italy or Canada. Most of the respondents in Italy are rather focused on their life there, as is the case of Gheorghe, who says that after a few weeks in Romania he already wants to return to Italy, which he sees as his home; Sorina, who has children in school there; and Marinela, whose husband has a business there, they bought a house and her children go to the university in Italy. The same is the case in Denmark and UK, which can be explained by the fact that younger, on average more educated persons are among the interviewees.

The younger and more educated individuals usually link their future to staying abroad since they find more *professional opportunities* there than at home. 28 year old Nicolae, who used to work in IT in Romania and has now completed acting studies and works both within and outside the field, describes this clearly:

*Well, I can give you many reasons to why I left the country. What was offered to me here and what I managed to do in three years, Alin, I swear, in my entire life, I didn't think it was possible (...) I don't know... there is absolutely no comparison! My effect here cannot be compared with anything I ever had in Romania.*

As with profession, the same is the case with *education opportunities*, which are openly embraced by young individuals.

Next to these, better living conditions and higher wages are the main reasons that determine Romanians to migrate abroad and to consider staying rather than going back home. Persons in this category usually reach a point where they feel more secure abroad and grow more and more *disappointed with Romania*, especially when comparing the two spaces of opportunities. For Geanina, 34 year old highly educated woman from UK who travelled a lot, her initial feelings of homesickness turned into the other extreme:

*To be honest, I am so disgusted that I don't think... I am not thinking about a return to Romania... (...) I feel disgusted about what happens in Romania, I am very disgusted and I... I don't know, maybe now I still have reasons to go to Romania, my father is still alive... or after some years I will go and light a candle in the memory of my mother, but this is all. I don't even like the thought of spending the holidays there.*

43 year old Horia, also currently living in UK, is more attached to his home country than Geanina, but similarly discontent with the situation there, having gone through many failure experiences:

*Because it [England] gave me a different perspective, because it gave me security to not worry about the next day, because I finally managed to not lose in a fleeting moment everything I've worked so hard for. I started three faculties back in Romania, I didn't manage to finish any of them, because I had to work. I started about 6-7 businesses, but I lost all of them. Because of the people and because of the system.*

In terms of professional and income security abroad, many choose to prolong their stay outside Romania, which sometimes makes it permanent, because of *higher employment chances abroad* for certain ages and qualifications. People of ages above 50 and those who are already retired have difficulties in finding work in Romania, but it is easier to do so abroad, in cleaning and child care for women and as construction workers for men. Similarly, when it comes to jobs for the highly qualified, people often perceive better opportunities abroad than at home. Even if this category of persons are not at risk of remaining unemployed in Romania as is the case with the low qualified, they are often motivated by wages and working conditions abroad.

However, these are not usually sufficient reasons for ruling out return: while most persons presented in the first part of the section left for the same reason and postpone resettlement in Romania in order to gain more money, there are others who are not attached to their home country anymore, such as Geanina. Among them, we can make the distinction between those well integrated who have developed a certain level of *attachment to the destination* and those who feel as “citizens of the world” rather than belonging to one country or the other. In Radu’s words, once you leave the country,

*you’ll always be on the road and a stranger. Wherever you are, always a stranger. [Do you still feel like that, do you still have these feelings?] Yes, yes, still do, you stay your whole life like that and the idea of being a foreigner I even passed on to my children because, in a way, we moved within Germany too, for example here, three times and they haven’t had a place they could describe like: I was born there and I want to go back to that town. In their heads it’s just: we live where we live, we’re on the streets.*

Radu is “on the road” since 1970, when he was 16 year old – he travelled with his father and mother as Israeli citizens – and never considered resettling in Romania throughout his life. More than that, this was instilled in his children as well. Schutz discusses the condition of the stranger as a social actor who perceives and experiences the world in terms of “relevance to his actions” (Schutz, 1944: 501), meaning possibilities for and limits to his activities. In the case of Radu and other migrants, the country of residence is not a location they are attached to, but one where they can meet their goals in terms of living conditions and lifestyles. They can live anywhere, as long as opportunities allow them to and context brings them there. In these situations, the *lack of attachment* itself plays another major role in encouraging a higher mobility for migrants.

Depending on opportunities, the economic crisis context and the availability of useful social networks in other countries (Ciobanu, 2014: 5), Romanian migrants are also thinking of *moving to a different country*:

*[Would you leave Spain?] If I had a different offer, yes. [Where?] Somewhere where I’d have work, I don’t care. [But if this work place would be in Romania, would you go to Romania?] No. [But if you wouldn’t have this job, would you go back to Romania?] No. [So you see yourself on the long term in Spain?] Yes.*

Mihaela has been in Spain since 2000, had also worked in Germany for some years before and says she wouldn’t come back to Romania not even during the current crisis conditions, not even if she could find a place to work there. Mircea has been in Denmark since 1990 and while return is not an option, he and his wife are negotiating between moving to Australia

and another country: *we were thinking about moving from Denmark to Australia, so that is a destination, but being so far it's tough. The wife can't break away from Europe that easily. We need to be somewhere close, to communicate with her family, and so that mom could come and help and visit...* Migrants in this category usually mention that they would not choose to resettle in Romania even if they got a better job and a good wage there.

*Reintegration in the origin country* is another problem faced by those who would consider resettling in Romania. Lack of friends and family there, as well as not being used to the life style and system back home discourage thinking of Romania this way, as is the case of Cosmin, a 33 year old man who has been in Italy since 2005 and only started visiting the country after 2011:

*Many times I regret coming here, that I chose this path, but now it's too late anyway for going back, I mean I couldn't reintegrate back in the country, I couldn't do anything anymore. And sometimes I'm sorry because I've isolated myself here a lot, I mean I don't have friends anymore, I don't have anything... nothing, nothing.*

Disconnecting from life in Romania, not keeping in touch with the situation in the country, becoming distanced from acquaintances and having less friends there can lead to migrants' remaining in an isolated state, as Cosmin says, from themselves, from the origin country and from the country of destination. While in the literature on migration, alienation is often discussed with focus on how it first materializes in the origin country, before migrating, and as an incentive for this (Modarres, 2005), in Cosmin's case, his perceived alienation occurred after moving abroad.

*Homesickness* is also frequently mentioned both by those who want to return and by those who see their future on the long term outside Romania. The distinction is that for some it lasts while for others it slowly fades away. This usually happens as time goes by, once they find a job and start working and interacting with their colleagues and after members of the family come abroad. This is the case of Alina:

*[Do you miss Romania?] Yes. [Did it stop being that painful?] I would say it kind of stopped being that painful. [Since when, would you say?] Well, I would say, for about two years now. By next year it will have already been eight years since I first got here [in Germany] and you get used to it. It used to be very difficult at first because I wasn't working, but when you're working and going home, and going shopping and cooking and cleaning and taking a shower and the day has gone by, you don't have that much time to think 'Oh! I want to go home! I want to go home!'*

Even if homesickness is strong in the beginning and it causes people to think about returning after saving money, in time they get to increasingly value their lifestyle abroad and actually feel good there, and the need or desire to frequently visit Romania weakens, and routine helps in the process. This is the example of Alexandra who has been in Spain since 2001 and has only visited the country three times although she really missed home in the beginning.

An often mentioned "solution" to appease feelings of homesickness is *frequent visits* migrants can make home (and receive from relatives and friends) and the perceived "availability" of Romania. Even if before 2000 and in the following years Romanians had difficulties visiting their home country because of their undocumented status, as regularizations became available and more of them obtained required papers for work and stay in their destination countries, going home got simpler. As Ana puts it:



*No I didn't [miss home] Why?! Maybe the kids, I missed the kids, but generally speaking, I didn't really miss home... I earned money, the distance was short, I mean, let's say that in one day and a half I would be back home and the thing was that, at any given time, after a year, I had papers and I could go back home, in Romania. So, the conclusion is that nowadays it's easy to travel around Europe, you miss home, you take a few days off and you go home, if you have a family and you want to see them.*

The reasons for visiting Romania range from going for papers and for business purposes, seeing friends and members of the family home, to tourism escapades. It was very interesting to find that in migrants' discourse, Romania often appears in an enumeration of countries where they spent their vacations and as a touristic destination as any other. Roxana, among others who do the same, recounts countries she has been to:

*In Europe we have visited... We live in Britain, we were in France, we were in Spain, we were in Italy, we were in Monaco, we were in Switzerland, in Austria, in Germany. Not to mention Luxembourg, Belgium... We did not reach Poland, Romania of course, we were in Bulgaria, we were in Turkey a couple of times. We did not visit Greece yet<sup>11</sup>.*

Another tendency encountered among some of our respondents was the *more pronounced preference for Romanian movies, music and food* since they left their country. Sorin thinks that this is something that often happens with Romanians "here":

*[What kind of music are you listening to?] Now, when I'm far from home, Transylvanian folk music. [Were you listening to folk music before coming to Spain?] I was listening, but not as much as now. (...) But I think all Romanians who left the country started listening to that kind of music.*

Gheorghe, from Italy, mentions similarly that *Oh, I think of manele when they started in '91. Being in Germany, when you heard one, being away from home, I think any Romanian that stays abroad and lives outside and missing home, Romania, friends, mother, father, everything, it touches their soul a bit.* Next to spending time with Romanians, listening to Romanian music, eating Romanian food, buying Romanian products from specialized shops available at the destination and receiving packages from home remains one way of softening their homesickness.

All these elements create a larger picture of the world of "returning or not returning" of migrants, a world of "home orientation" (Sandu, 2010b) or of an ambivalent location between more countries, which can be conceptualized as a bi-local transnational space. The freedom of mobility that was allowed to Romanians by migration policies throughout the years makes them both closer to their home country and farther from it, permitting them to visit Romania easier and at the same time facilitating search through multiple destinations for better job opportunities and living conditions. In these situations, often, Romania remains a point of reference only as a vacation destination or as the country to spend retirement in.

### ***Where does the crisis stand in the story?***

Two macro factors that can influence the decision/intention to return are the economic crisis and the fact that while years ago migrants had to deal with problems related to their documents upon leaving the destination (difficulties in obtaining papers to re-enter the destination country) this is not so much the case anymore. However, it is interesting to note that in the case of our respondents the crisis does not seem to play a major role. Regarding this, while most of the fifty one Romanian migrants interviewed in 2013 as part of the EUCROSS research discuss problems that themselves or their acquaintances had because of the crisis (among others, most often they mentioned loss of job and difficulty in re-employment, more or less significant decreases in salaries, inability to continue paying rates for their houses at destination), they do not consider return for this reason. Family reasons, better job and business opportunities at home and attachment to the country seem to be the most important reasons for planning to return. Among the persons who mention their intention to come back to Romania, only few of them specify that they or their families were affected by the economic crisis and none of them directly linked this intention to the crisis. As for the second factor, more freedom of international mobility due to rights ensured by the EU and the destination countries does not seem to be an incentive for return in the case of our respondents, but only to allow them to more securely visit their home country more often than they could especially before 2000, in some countries (such as Italy and Spain, where regularizations for illegal immigrants were available in 2002 and 2005), and also before 2007 for other destinations where the EU accession was essential<sup>12</sup>.

Times of economic crisis ask for strategies to cope with this situation and, depending on its effects in different countries, people may think of relocation or return. In the case of our migrants, the crisis is frequently described as imaginary or as having little effect on them and their families at home. To some, as Marian from Denmark puts it, *There was only an economic crisis on paper, but there really wasn't one*. The crisis had fewer perceived negative effects on those who are more qualified and more educated, as well as on those who have a longer experience of working abroad.

In some cases, the crisis is associated by Romanians abroad with lower wages, the loss of jobs and difficulties in finding new ones. Such problems that are directly influenced by the crisis in the respondents' view are especially noticeable for those working in constructions, for business owners, as well as for persons working in domestic services who have less "households" and hours to work, since the natives "cut their costs". However, this case is not as frequent as might have been expected, and many times stories revolve around trying and succeeding in finding work at a different destination – among other reasons, this was also mentioned by some respondents as the reason for relocating to their current destination. More often in the discussions we encounter stories of friends, acquaintances or people they "hear of" who are either considering return, have already returned and either stayed in Romania or came back abroad or are orientated towards other destinations.

Elena is one of the migrants who, during the discussion about the crisis, mentions such stories:

*Actually currently there's a family from Romania, they're leaving for Romania at the end of the month. [For good?] Yes. [Do you know anyone else?] Others... There are others who went back to Romania, stayed there for a year, didn't make it, came back to Spain... I know some like this. The same with Sorin, who says about how the crisis affected friends of his: The ones working in the constructions field were stricken; almost all of them were*

*(...) They left. Those who managed to find something else, but... many went to England, or where they could, in Italy.*

We should also note that the perception of some migrants of the effects of the crisis can be influenced by the fact that, while they had problems at some point, that spell is already a past one and one that they could manage.

### ***Transnationalism and return***

The transnational migrant is a person “living” at the origin and at the destination at the same time (Glick Schiller et al., 1995). People often live in a “transnational space” among others, by means of following the news about the origin and settlement countries, of keeping in touch with members of the family and friends and being visited by them, of opening businesses in both countries or planning to return. Respondents commonly talk about their life as being both “here and there”, both at their current destination and in Romania. They also refer to themselves not necessarily as English, Spanish or Italian and so on, but as living as the English or Spanish do. Transnational practices and identities allow them to move easier between different countries and access resources that are useful to their mobility in terms of finding jobs and studying opportunities.

Unfortunately, the data at hand does not allow us to draw conclusions as to what is the difference between those of lower or higher transnationalism since only two persons of low transnationalism were interviewed in each country and, subsequently, the sample is too disproportionate for this specific comparison.<sup>13</sup> However, there are some aspects that can be emphasized based on the transnational dimension.

While in the case of the Romanians who became detached from their origin country and slowly “burnt their bridges” with Romania return is not considered, in the case of transnational migrants we have a different type of attitude towards return. Although they do not necessarily plan to return on the short term or long term, there are two ways in which they continue to “be present in Romania”. This is exemplified by the cases discussed in the section above, where individuals start seeing Romania rather as a vacation destination than an option for relocation. Moreover, once transnational migrants build stronger links to other countries, and are also keeping in touch with life in Romania, physical return in their home country is no longer perceived as necessary: virtual communication possibilities next to frequent visits are enough for them to live both in Romania and abroad. To summarize, living in a transnational space allows migrants to be present both at the destination and origin (or even multiple countries) without demanding physical (re)settlement in either place.

Transnationalism is often discussed in terms of new identities that migrants develop as a consequence of contact with the destination, so-called “double identities” (Cassarino, 2004: 8). Next to this, there are other identification patterns that can be observed among our respondents which are confounding with the categories built in the EUCROSS project: Romanian migrants sometimes state that they “feel” or “are” European (Recchi, 2012). Others see themselves as Romanians, as both Romanians and Europeans or as “citizens of the world”, as is the case with people who have a long experience of migration, often since they were children. Return is rather taken into consideration by those who are closer to Romania both in terms of identity and transnational practices.

## ***Conclusion and discussion***

Romanian migrants are oscillating between staying, returning or moving to a different country. Below are some of the patterns of attitudes and intentions regarding return for those interviewed as part of the EUCROSS project.

- Some respondents mention that either they or their partner does not want to return, and prolonging the stay at the destination or becoming permanent residents there often seems to be the adopted strategy in such cases.
- Both for those who have more structured plans to return and/or want to gain more money for investments in Romania or simply because of their temporary satisfaction with their life there, the return, although desired, is postponed.
- Having children at the destination – either born there or raised there – makes migrants reconsider their plans to return. Our respondents confirm that return decisions are highly familial in nature and that females are more prone to be oriented towards coming back to Romania (for a discussion on the distinction between males and females with regards to return see Sandu, 2010a).
- The lack of a higher level of security at origin in terms of income, job opportunities, bureaucracy, social system, studying opportunities, business possibilities, as well as the difficulty of being hired at origin after a certain age compared to the possibilities encountered abroad determines Romanian migrants to continue living and working outside Romania.
- Many Romanians want to return for their retirement or for opening a business at home with the money obtained by working abroad.
- Reintegration is another concern for people who have lost contact with friends and family in Romania, do not follow the news and have not visited the country frequently.
- Higher transnationalism levels allow the accumulation of more resources and thus increases mobility further. This is why migrants are more inclined towards moving to countries they have already lived in or new countries than returning to Romania, as a result of comparison between different locations.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> For discussions on migration as a “life strategy” see Sandu, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> The interviews were conducted by Alin Croitoru in Italy, Denmark and UK and Monica Șerban in Germany and Spain – where eleven instead of ten respondents were interviewed.

<sup>3</sup> The first part of the EUCROSS project consisted in a quantitative survey of natives and migrants – five data basis including 250 Romanians in each of the five destinations were obtained.

<sup>4</sup> The transnationalism index was built using variables related to trips abroad, communication with family and friends outside the country, knowledge of foreign languages, interaction with foreigners, and sending or receiving money from abroad (Pöttschke, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Again, it is interesting to note how frequent Romania appeared – mostly brought up by respondents – during the discussions besides the direct questions related to comparisons between Romania and countries they visited were they settled in.

<sup>6</sup> The interviews were conducted with five persons from the low category and five from the high category of education, the criterion of the distinction being the graduation of high school.

<sup>7</sup> This is mainly explained by the migration of Transylvanian Saxons after the Romanian revolution.

<sup>8</sup> Which is related to the concept of “level of preparedness” (Cassarino, 2004) or, in other words, the “structured plans to return” (Sandu, 2010a: 78).

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<sup>9</sup> This terminology, despite the academic tradition and use, seems at times outdated or inappropriate, as for the migrants this country becomes the new “home” country. Labelling it as a destination implies an uncertain statute: it allots this country a temporary or process-like dimension, which is not necessarily the case as the trajectory between countries is reversed: the so-called “destination” often becomes the new “starting point” for further mobility. This observation was suggested to me by a colleague who preferred to remain anonymous, whom I thank.

<sup>10</sup> I mention the religious confession of the individual and his family, since it explains the particularity of the example: a family of nine persons went abroad in search of a better life after selling everything they had in Romania and bought a trailer for their exploration of those new countries where they had contacts.

<sup>11</sup> In reinforcing our questioning of the “destination country” label, this quote provides further evidence of how the current residence country serves as a primary reference point regarding not only future but past mobility as well.

<sup>12</sup> Romanian migration abroad for economic reasons knows three main stages between 1989 and 2006: the incipient period of “individual exploration” between 1990 and 1995, the “collective” exploratory stage until 2001-2002, and the period before 2006, when the number of departures increased as a consequence of the liberalization of Romanians’ circulation inside the Schengen area (Sandu 2010a, 7). Each of the three periods knew specific elements regarding the composition of the population, the destinations, and the strategy used by the people in the process. Subsequently, the 2007 EU integration and the financial crisis which became manifest in Romania around 2008-2009 also influenced the dynamics of the Romanians’ departures for work abroad, with impact on migration selectivity, the orientation towards specific destinations and the occupational status abroad.

<sup>13</sup> This is by no means a shortcoming of the study but is related to the EUCROSS’ project initial stated purposes.

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