

# How do the Romanians Experience the Process of Transnationalism? Canada and the UK Compared

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**Abstract:** *The rapid improvement of technologies and communication has made it easier for migrants to maintain close links with their country of origin. Given the lack of empirical investigation on transnationalism, this comparative study argues that this process can be better understood by focusing on the experience of migrants. Using a sample of 27 participants from Canada and the UK, it has been found that transnationalism can be seen in terms of materiality and emotions. Factors such as length of stay, marital status and the national institutional context play an important role in the development and sustainability of transnationalism. However, they do not prevent the process from occurring, but rather change its practice. In that respect, the participants from Canada are likely to experience material transnationalism, while the participants from the UK tend to live the process of transnationalism in an affective form.*

**Keywords:** globalisation; diasporas; integration; transnationalism; cross-national comparative analysis.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** globalizare; diaspora; integrare; transnaționalism; analiză comparativă internațională.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In the process of globalisation, the rapid improvement of technologies and communications has made it easier for migrants to maintain close links with their home countries (Castels and Miller, 2009). This facilitates the process of transnationalism, which allows for migrants to be part of two worlds: the sending and the host country, which means that the migrant lives a 'double' life. Both countries are 'affected' and they have to take into consideration the double engagement of the migrant.

This study addressed the following question:

- How is the process of transnationalism experienced by the Romanians from Canada and the UK?

In order to answer this question, four sub-questions were dealt with:

- Are the Romanians transnational migrants or do they reject the process of transnationalism?
- Is the process of transnationalism likely to represent a barrier to the incorporation of Romanians in the host society?

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- What are the main factors which allow the development of transnationalism or leads to its rejection?
- Is distance a major impediment in the maintenance of transnational feelings?

The definition of transnationalism retained for this study was *'the connections and bonds migrants have with the sending country and which can take place either at an emotional level or at a material level and which trigger a feeling of 'in-betweeness' experienced by migrants, placing them between the sending and receiving country'*.

The experience migrants have of transnationalism was relevant for the study of migration because it is a process which involves and 'affects' both sending and receiving countries. This study acknowledged the fact that not all the migrants experienced sustainable material transnational practices with the sending country. However, they experienced those ties emotionally. While most of the literature focuses on the practice of transnationalism, this research also takes into account the importance of emotions. Indeed, a migrant can be transnational even if he/she does not return to the country of origin on a regular basis.

A key element in the process of transnationalism was the national institutional context, as the level of absorption into the host society determines its dimensions. This research focused on the process of transnationalism lived by 27 Romanians in Canada and the UK and the factors which contributed to its sustainability or its rejection, if any. The participants were represented by Romanians living in either Canada or the UK, mainly in Vancouver and London. The study presents the theoretical framework of transnationalism which provides the main elements for the empirical research. It then moves on to the institutional framework. The methodology of the study together with the analysis of the data and the main findings are dealt with. Finally, the conclusions and an evaluation of the study are presented.

Since different people experience different types of transnationalism, this study argues that this process could be better understood by looking at the experience of migrants. In that respect, some people may experience the process of transnationalism at an emotional level, while others at a practical level.

According to Glick Schiller *et al.* (1992), transnationalism is the "process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated "transmigrants". Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organisational, religious, and political that span borders. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously" (*ibid.*). This definition fails, however, to give an overview of the importance and intensity of transnational ties, which are at the core of the process of transmigration. Portes (1999) looks more into the intensity of transnational practices and he argues that they "(...) take place on a recurrent basis across national borders and that require a regular and significant commitment of time by participants (...)." Even if Faist (2000) argues that not all immigrants maintain transnational activities, it may only be a case of a different dimension of transnationalism which is shaped by the institutional context of the country the immigrant lives in. Building up on these interpretations of transnationalism, this study defines it to mean *'the connections and bonds migrants have with the sending country and which can take place either at an emotional level or at a material level and which trigger a feeling of 'in-betweeness' experienced by migrants, placing them between the sending and receiving country'*.

### Transnationalism – Literature review

While there are many different types of transnationalism which focus on local activities or global capital (Guarnizo and Smith, 2008), or the place of transnational activities (Levitt, 2001), this study focuses on the experience of participants of transnationalism. It differentiates between the materiality of transnationalism, which is represented by the practice of traditions, remittances and communication, and affective transnationalism, which focuses on the sense of belonging and the transformation of the self.

#### *Critique of transnationalism*

Guarnizo *et al.* (2003) state that the increase of the use of the term transnational has led to a loss of its meaning. In their view, ‘transnationalism’ cannot be properly defined by a precise definition. Indeed, each community presents its own transnational consciousness and behaviour. They also argue that transnationalism depends on social capital, which means that not all migrants maintain transnational practices, but only those with a high social status. However, a low financial status can trigger a different experience of transnationalism, which is achieved through emotions regarding the country of origin.

Yeoh *et al.* (2003) argue that “the field of transnational studies is still a fragmented one and no conceptual frame has emerged to define the shape of transnationality”. However, ‘transnationalism’ is itself a fragmented process, which implies that its definition must be segmented. What defines transnationalism is the ‘here and there’ physically and emotionally, but which can also be interpreted as a state of limbo and identity frustration. Transnationalism means physical and spiritual uncertainty and its living, and interpretation vary according to nationality, personal beliefs and country of immigration. The affective can be more

representative as it directly engages those who remained in the host country.

#### *Institutional context of transnationalism*

Institutional contexts play an important role in migrants’ practice and experience of transnationalism. Many scholars (Appadurai, 1990; Handlin, 1951; Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Faist, 2000) have argued that transnationalism could prevent people from economic and social ‘integration’, as they dedicate too much time to maintaining kinship relations with the country of origin. Nevertheless, building up on the Comparative Immigrant Entrepreneurship Project (CIEP) which provided data on Colombians, Dominicans and Salvadorans in five American cities, Portes *et al.* (2002) find that economic transnational activities accelerate the long-term ‘integration’ of immigrants. This may be due to family support, which pushes them to incorporate, in order to have the security of a job and earn more money.

Transnational practices differ between and within groups, according to the country of origin, gender, class, ethnicity, etc. As Vertovec (2010) puts it, “[b]elonging, loyalty and sense of attachment are not parts of a zero-sum game based on a single place”. That is, the ‘more transnational’ a person is does not automatically mean he or she is ‘less ‘integrated’’, and the ‘less ‘integrated’’ one is does not necessarily prompt or strengthen ‘more transnational’ patterns of association. It could be argued that an ‘integrated’ immigrant does not maintain transnational ties because he/she feels ‘at home’ in the host country. At the same time, a less ‘integrated’ immigrant, who can experience discrimination in the host country, chooses to look back at the home country. On the other hand, an ‘integrated’ immigrant could be more comfortable with his/her nationality and is willing to express and manifest his/ her national identity. Indeed, as Morawska (2003)

suggests, 'integration' and transnationalism often coexist. In countries where the state promotes a multiculturalist policy, 'integration' can be achieved by interaction between foreigners and natives, but also between foreigners themselves. In so doing, the policies are respected and the foreigners are incorporated into the mainstream culture. However, their presence is seen as 'threatening' the host country.

### ***Socio-economic challenges that transnationalism poses to host countries***

Guarnizo and Smith (2008) argue that the expansion of transnational practices has triggered nationalist 'frustrations' in both sending and receiving countries. In receiving countries, political movements are expanding in order to eliminate the presence of the culturally different 'others'. It is argued that the distinction between nationals and immigrants challenges the notion of loyalty and solidarity which stands at the basis of the nation-state. Additionally, unproductive migrants can 'free ride' the system of social security. This is expressed by 'welfare chauvinism'. In Canada, the presence of immigrants is not seen as a threat to the welfare state, whereas in the UK it is. This is due to migration regulation, which, in the Canadian case, is a 'win-win' process. Soysal (1994) argues that national citizenship has been challenged by local and regional dimensions. Rights are not enjoyed only by national citizens anymore, but by permanent residents who, as in the case of the participants from Canada and the UK, preserve elements of the country of origin, such as traditions. Given the double engagement of migrants, migration policies should have at their core the fact that migrants are citizens of two countries.

Sorensen (1996) argues that the levels of success of migrants in creating better livelihoods in the host country than in the

country of origin depend on the background of migrants before getting to the receiving society and on labour market constraints in the receiving country. Linda McDowell (2008) looks in the same direction when arguing "(...) different sets of opportunities related to economic development and relative income levels between regions and nation states are a key explanatory factor in the size and direction of economic migration flows". Also, different countries of immigration have various bilateral agreements with emigration countries, which only allow or make it easier for labour migrants from specific labour categories. Moreover, different immigration legislation offers different contexts of 'integration', which triggers distinct opportunities for the migrants to develop transnational practices.

### ***The practice of transnationalism***

The materiality of transnationalism is represented by the practices transnational communities are engaged in. Transnational networks are therefore important vectors which link transnational spaces. Transnational communities are the product of transnational networks which link two or more communities and the members within them. For Rouse (1991), the notion of community is not representative for the process of transnationalism because it involves a "functionalist dream" of equality and harmony in a world in which it is difficult to transform migrants into citizens. He gives the example of the US which do not achieve to integrate the Mexicans. He thinks a more suitable term is "transnational migrant circuit" which involve "the in-and-out flow" of immigrants (Garcia, 2002), and where transnational activities occur autonomously from the nation-state. My view is, however, that the state is important in the realisation of a community, in that it offers a physical identity to community-forming ties.

The relation between community and the state is often subject to disagreement between

scholars. While for Rodriguez (1996) the existence of community and transnational migration occur because the migrants do not respect the boundaries of nation-states, for R.C. Smith (2008) the state is the main actor, because it legitimises the creation of national identities where people are not discriminated against on the basis of their nationality. It is also an important actor because it offers a place for migrants to register demands and receive recognition (*ibid.*).

R.C. Smith (2008) argues that migrants have the possibility to create strong communities within a transnational context, by negotiating the limits to membership. The notion of membership is, therefore, central for a transnational community and the “betweenness” (Smith, 1994) that migrants experience. This challenges Brubaker’s (1989) definition of citizenship, where membership of a nation state and of a national political community are mutually exclusive due to the fact that one can only be a member of one state and a nation. However, this is called into question by dual citizenship, which is a way to ensure the preservation of the culture of the country of origin, on one hand, and assimilation into the receiving country, on the other. This happens mainly in the Canadian case, where the immigrants are expected to become Canadian citizens, in order to enjoy all the benefits of the society. Even if it is believed that transnationalism challenges the citizenship model of membership in a political community, the participants from Canada do not seem to experience a feeling of “betweenness”. They are both citizens and members of Canada, as their relationship with Romania only takes places at a material level, and not at an emotional level.

### ***Transnational spaces***

Transnational spaces, referred to mainly as translocalities (Guarnizo and Smith, 2008) or transnational social fields (Glick-Schiller *et al.*, 1992), are important in the process of

transnationalism, as they connect the migrants to both the sending and receiving country. Guarnizo *et al.* (2003) argue that transnational activities occur in two places at the same time, which means that the state is not deterritorialised. They also maintain that transnational practices do not undermine the process of ‘integration’ of immigrants into the host society.

Soja (1996), however, refers to transnational space by emphasising its perception as an imaginary deterritorialised third space. This interpretation is of a third space which is away from sending and receiving societies, whereas it may be better understood as a place between the other two, as often, the transmigrants live ‘here and there’. The creation of an imaginary half-way third space is represented by features which characterise either societies or localities the transmigrant is connected to. Transnational activities connect collectivities situated in various localities and are represented by social relations established by migrants, which take place in definite space and in a time frame. Guarnizo and Smith (2008) refer to these localities by emphasising their transnational behaviour and by calling them “translocalities”. The local is, therefore, a key element, because it links the migrants to the country of origin and the host country.

At the centre of this ‘power’ stands the idea that the local is the only entity that can shape societies. This can be explained by the emergence of ethnic neighbourhoods and ethnic shops. However, it can be argued that this would not be possible if the legal framework of the host country did not permit it. This calls into question, however, the extent to which incorporation is achieved. If migrants choose to live in ethnic neighbourhoods, they do not interact with native-born citizens, which undermines ‘integration’. This is to be found in the case of the participants from the UK. Most of them do not interact with native-born citizens and do not feel ‘at ease’ in the British context, which makes them to develop affective

transnationalism. In the Canadian case, however, since the state has a diversity-driven agenda, the interaction of the participants with native-born citizens and people of other nationalities is easier, which translates into the participants being and feeling part of Canada. However, various factors contribute to this, such as the length of stay and the presence of the family. Moreover, the interaction with individuals of other cultures is likely to take place if the migrants did not experience affective ties with the country of origin, because they would not seek to be surrounded by co-nationals.

***The role of emotions in the experience of transnationalism by migrants***

Affective transnationalism refers to both the relations the immigrants have with sending and receiving countries and the transformations that occur at a personal level through emotions. For some individuals this can be more representative, as it does not necessarily involve regular returns to the country of origin. The lack of 'material' investment should not undermine the transnational feelings migrants express. However, this complicates the relationship between various factors, such as the sense of belonging and identity (Soysal, 1994). Emotions are central to understanding transnational communities, because they link individuals to families (Skrbis, 2008). Emotions can bring people together, but can also "drive people apart" (Turner and Stets, 2005). This can take the form of a rejection of native-born citizens, on the grounds of cultural incompatibility, or even a rejection of co-nationalisms, because of denial of roots. The main components of the process of affective transnationalism are the notions of emotional labour, the sense of belonging and the transformation of the self.

Emotional labour refers to "(...) routinised performances of emotional work and emotional displays, and to spheres where

emotional gift exchanges are" (Hochschild, 1983), and is represented by the fact that families and friends care for each other, across time and space. Migrants invest time and effort in the 'emotional labour' necessary to maintain mutually beneficial reciprocal exchange relations and sustain a 'sense of family' across distance (Baldassar, 2007). However, the 'emotional labour' is likely to stop if the migrants are surrounded by their direct families in the host country. The "psychological and sentimental affiliation" of 'home' (Lynn, 2009) refers to the sense of belonging, which is often represented by the roots and the memories transmigrants have. This is enforced by various products the migrants take from or bring to the country of origin. As Svasek (2008) argues, the migrants take products from home because it is a way of engaging in a dialogue with the country of origin.

By focusing on the ties the migrant has with the country of origin, the literature seems to ignore the affective ties the migrant is likely to have with the host country. This study states that the self goes through a process of transformation when the individual lives in the host country. Emotions are therefore at the core of individuals' process of understanding the world they live in. Svasek (2008) argues "(...) the self (...) is regarded (...) as a multiple, relational being-in-the-world that is captured by his or her surroundings, engaging with past, present and future situations". In that respect, the transmigrant has hybrid identities. Rowe and Schelling (cited by Pieterse, 1995) refer to hybridisation as "the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices". This could be seen as a weakening of the nation-state, because of the gradual diminution of patriotism. Pieterse (1995) identifies the notion of 'cultural hybridity', which refers to interculturalism rather than multiculturalism and it is seen as a migration *mélange*. Since the notion of membership is

essential for community-formation, holding simultaneously two or more forms of membership and identity raises, in my view, the question of total 'integration'.

This depends on the capacity of the transmigrant to get incorporated in the host society and on the interpretation of 'the sense of belonging' he/she has. In that respect, the sense of belonging should be interpreted as referring to the definition the migrant has of 'home'. If it is seen as a physical place, a house (Gilman, 1980) or as a multiple-location (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002), then it can be anywhere. Belonging to more than one country is, therefore, possible. However, if it is seen in spiritual terms (Després, 1991), the notion of home is likely to undermine the sense of belonging to two societies, and therefore the social 'integration' in the host country. In that respect, transnationalism should be seen as separate from 'integration'. It should be referred to rather as 'transnational integration' or 'bi-integration'.

Transnationalism is a useful way of understanding the experience and practices of migrants. However, there are different dimensions which are important to analyse, in order to illuminate the possibilities of different transnational experiences among different migrants or groups of migrants. The comparative case of this research sheds light on two dimensions of transnationalism which apply to the participants of the study – emotional experience and materiality.

### **'Integration' policies in Canada and the United Kingdom**

#### ***Immigration and 'integration' Policies***

According to Hammar (1999), immigration policies represent a tool to control the arrival of migrants on the state's territory, and they are rarely followed up by policies to support 'integration'. 'Integration' policies are the features that influence the situation of migrants in the host country – legal rights, political and cultural participation

and social opportunities. This means that the 'integration' of migrants could represent a mechanism of control since 'integrated' individuals can be easily controlled. The control of migrants is external and/or internal. The Canadian immigration system is fully external, whereas the UK, whilst considered to be internal, also presents features of external control, represented by quotas, in the case of Romanian immigrants.

Building up on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (2007), this study interprets 'integration' to mean equal opportunities to all the individuals of a society. Therefore, the host society should act as a 'sponge' and incorporate the foreigners within its structures. In the process of 'integration' there are, therefore, two important actors: the immigrants who have to adapt to the new rules and the receiving society, and its reactions to newcomers (Penninx, 2004). This leads to the notion of acculturation, which refers to a bicultural competence and flexibility (Berry, cited in Remennick, 2003).

### ***Immigration Policies in Canada and the United Kingdom***

In order to understand 'integration' policies, the starting point will be an overview of the immigration policies in both Canada and the UK. Canada, as a settler society, passed its first Immigration Act in 1869, only two years after its founding, in order to limit emigration to the US. Between 1885 and 1905, because of the slow economic growth, many Europeans migrated to Canada. This was followed by two acts, from 1906 and 1910, which aimed at restricting immigration. The 1952 Immigration Act represented a 'gatekeeper' of the Canadian territory. This was reinforced by the legislation of the 1960s, which aimed at recruiting only skilled workers, in order to develop Canada's economy. The Points System (1967) introduced education as the most

important criterion when assessing an immigration application. However, the immigration policy directed to refugees was relatively open, especially concerning the Eastern Europeans who were fleeing Communism (Knowles, 2007). This explains the large number of Romanians who settled in Canada before or soon after the fall of communism. The 1970s were a period of both management of migration and multi-party consensus, in favour of multiculturalism (Banting and Kymlicka, 2003). After many years of restrictive policies, the 2001 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act aimed at “helping newcomers to integrate into Canadian society” (Knowles, 2007). This aims at finding a balance within the duties of Canadian society and immigrants. However, despite “the contribution of immigration to the nation building” (Li, 2003), Li (*ibid.*) argues that now Canada only sees immigration essential if it can economically benefit the country and it acts therefore as a ‘gatekeeper’ in specifying who and how many immigrants should be accepted.

The UK, or the “zero-immigration country” (Joppke, 1999), has been mainly inspired by North-America in developing its immigrant policies (Geddes, 2008). However, the EU has changed its migration patterns, as approximately 1.5 million have come from new EU member states, since 2004 (MIPI, 2009). The UK has been a country of immigration since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when refugees and displaced persons from Germany and Poland entered the country. A second source of immigration was represented by the guestworkers of the Commonwealth. Even if the British Nationality Act of 1948 granted the citizens of Commonwealth with special immigration status (Düvell, 2005), in 1962 controls to limit immigration were introduced through work voucher quotas. In 1965, the legislation around race began, but, as Joppke (1999) points out, these laws

were about the protection of public order, aiming to avoid the riots from 1958 being repeated. Initially, the first Race Relations Act was adopted in order to depoliticise the issue of “race” (Bertossi, 2007). However, the problem of race relations is that they reflect ‘differentialism’, allowing minorities to marginalise themselves. This can be seen in the case of the participants to the study, who do not interact with the mainstream. In the 1980s, the legislative framework was orientated in the direction of nationality and border controls. In 2002, the White Paper set out a plan for ‘managed migration’, highly skilled migrants being favoured. Nevertheless, external migration management has had internal implications on the lives of immigrants, including access to jobs, welfare services, access to citizenship and family reunification (Flynn, 2005).

### ***Socio-economic ‘integration’ in Canada and the United Kingdom***

The most important gaps faced by immigrants in the process of ‘social integration’ are the lack of opportunities to meet and integrate with existing population, and lack of understanding of other cultures (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008) mainly due to the fact that the immigrants live in areas where their community is settled, which guarantees isolation from the mainstream. In the UK, in 2004, 8% of British-born white population of working age were based in London, as opposed to 45% of foreign-born, whereas in Canada 90% of the immigrants are in four major towns (Knowles, 2007). Social ‘integration’ could be achieved by placing foreign families in native-born/foreigner populated areas, or by scattering the job seekers in different parts of the country. If dispersed, immigrants would interact with native-born citizens, which would enhance acculturation.

A 2002 report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) states that 'integration' is a two-way process, which involves adjustments from both immigrants and the receiving society. However, Li (2003) argues that Canadian immigration discourse sees 'integration' as a process in which only immigrants have to change, not Canadian society. For Li (2004), 'integration' means offering immigrants the same rights as native-born Canadians, which means that they can be nationals of both the sending and receiving countries, and therefore be involved in the process of transnationalism. Moreover, as shown by the Romanian participants to this study, 'integration' or 'non-integration' do not trigger 'less' or 'more' transnationalism, but it only changes its nature. Even if Canada is a "settler" nation, while the UK is a country of immigration, they are similar in the way they welcome immigrants. However, given their institutional framework and the way they tackle diversity, the immigrants live differently during the process of transnationalism.

### Methodology

The main question answered by this study was "How is the process of transnationalism experienced by the Romanians from Canada and the UK?". In that respect, four sub-questions were looked at:

- Are the Romanians transnational migrants or do they reject the process of transnationalism?
- Is the process of transnationalism likely to represent a barrier to the incorporation of Romanians in the host society?
- What are the main factors which allow the development of transnationalism or leads to its rejection?
- Is distance a major impediment in the maintenance of transnational feelings?

By answering these questions, this study analysed the experience of transnationalism by Romanians in Canada and the UK. The comparison of two liberal countries aimed to make sense of differences in the practice of transnationalism by the same group of immigrants.

The methodology employed is qualitative and phenomenological. The literature review on transnationalism generates data which is used to analyse the impact of transnational practices on the 'integration' of a particular national origin migration group (the Romanians) in Canada and the UK. The subjective experience of Romanians is dealt with in an institutional setting, by making their lives and experiences the prime focus of the study. The selection of Canada and the UK was based on the idea that they are part of the same model displaying a multiculturalist policy regarding immigrants, which is based on points system.

Even if secondary data was used in order to provide various perspectives of the topic of the research, primary data was preferred, in order to make sense of Romanians' transnational feelings. The two methods employed were semi-structured, face-to-face and Skype interviews and questionnaires. The sample of 27 participants was chosen to get representative views from a variety of actors (see Table 3 and 4). They all asked the same open-ended questions which required rich and detailed answers from the interviewees. The geographical restriction to two areas (Vancouver and London) means that this study does not provide a big picture of Romanian transnationalism, but an in-depth analysis of two geographical regions where the majority of the Romanian immigrants are located. A sample of eight interviews was achieved between the 13th of February and the 4th of August 2010, either at the interviewee's site or work place or via Skype. All the 19 questionnaires were sent and filled in between July and August 2010. The interviews for the UK case took

place in London, with the exception of one, which occurred via Skype. For the Canadian case, the interviews of the participants from Vancouver took place via Skype. The biggest challenge the researcher had to deal with was the low level of participants interested in being part

of the study. The researcher sent 137 emails to which she received no response. The possible participants were part of Romanian NGOs, Romanian church, or various people part of Romanian groups on Facebook. These persons either responded negatively or not at all.

*Table 3: Characteristics of the participants from the UK*

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Sex and Age</b> | <b>Profession</b>                       | <b>Family Status</b> | <b>Country of Destination</b> | <b>Length of time as a 'migrant'</b> |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Maria       | F, 27              | Hotel Room Attendant                    | In a Relationship    | UK                            | 5 years                              |
| Petru       | M, 34              | Teacher                                 | In a Relationship    | UK                            | 1 year                               |
| Constantin  | M, 30              | IT Engineer, self-employed              | In a Relationship    | UK                            | 3 years                              |
| Claudia     | F, 28              | Communication Executive                 | Single               | UK                            | 6 months                             |
| Adriana     | F, 39              | Clinical Support Worker<br>Higher Level | Divorced, one son    | UK                            | 4 years                              |
| Alina       | F, 34              | Factuary in Insurances                  | In a Relationship    | UK                            | 4 years                              |
| Ion         | M, 27              | Machine Operator in Building Industry   | Single               | UK                            | 6 years                              |
| Ioana       | F, 43              | Director of a Romanian Organisation     | Single               | UK                            | 11 years                             |
| Alin        | M, 39              | Lecturer                                | In a Relationship    | UK                            | 13 years                             |
| Cristina    | F, 27              | Financial Statements Officer            | Single               | UK                            | 2 years                              |
| Mihaela     | F, 32              | Supervisor in retail and student        | Divorced, one son    | UK                            | 10 years                             |
| Larisa      | F, 26              | Housemistress                           | Single               | UK                            | 2 years                              |
| Victor      | M, 30              | Romanian official                       | Single               | UK                            | 3 years                              |
| Doru        | M, 31              | Researcher                              | Married, 2 children  | UK                            | 2 years                              |

*Table 4: Characteristics of the participants from Canada*

| Name    | Sex and Age | Profession                                      | Family Status       | Country of Destination | Length of time as a 'migrant'                             |
|---------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Simina  | F, 39       | Doctor                                          | Married, 2 children | Canada                 | 5 years                                                   |
| Costel  | M, 42       | IT engineer                                     | Married, 2 children | Canada                 | 10 years                                                  |
| Vasile  | M, 35       | Credit Manager                                  | Married, 2 children | Canada                 | 14 years                                                  |
| Marius  | M, 33       | Lorry Driver                                    | Married, 2 children | Canada                 | 7 years                                                   |
| Sabina  | F, 53       | Bank Officer                                    | Married, 2 children | Canada                 | 17 years                                                  |
| Irina   | F, 31       | Accountant                                      | Single              | Canada                 | 2 years                                                   |
| Sandu   | M, 50       | Engineer                                        | Married, 2 children | Canada                 | 17 years                                                  |
| Roxana  | F, 36       | Nursing Attendant                               | Married             | Canada                 | 2 years                                                   |
| Oana    | F, 28       | Registered Animal Laboratory Technician         | Married, 1 child    | Canada                 | 7 years                                                   |
| Andreea | F, 33       | Used to work, student now                       | Single              | Canada                 | 4 years                                                   |
| Sorana  | F, 22       | Student and free lancer art and design industry | Single              | Canada                 | 4 years                                                   |
| Ciprian | M, unknown  | Food industry                                   | Unknown             | Canada                 | "Didn't spend too many [years]...yet, but I intend to..." |
| Cosmin  | M, 45       | Renovation, Self Employed                       | Divorced            | Canada                 | 12 years                                                  |

Most of the participants were approached using the 'relations in the field' method, whilst others through the 'snowball' method. The research strategy used was analytic induction which "makes universal statements that may need to be modified later if exceptions are discovered" (Znaniecki, 1934). Definitions of terms were considered hypotheses and they were

tested to represent the experience of the participants to the study. The strategy involved looking for patterns and themes, in order to group them together. The analysis explored three themes:

- The meaning of 'home'.
- The practice of transnationalism.
- Affective transnationalism.

This moved from the topics of the interviews to a thematic overview. Quotations from either interviews or questionnaires were introduced in order to back up or deny researcher's affirmations. Participants' experiences in the study were introduced when their testimonial was relevant rather than systematically compare the UK and the Canadian experiences, which might have been monotonous and repetitive.

### **Data analysis**

This study draws attention to a new dimension of transnationalism. The materiality of transnationalism refers to the way it is practiced, while affective transnationalism relies on its power to shape the self of the transmigrant and the relation he or she has with the sending and receiving countries. I argue, however, that both types often coexist or contradict each other.

#### ***What does 'home' mean for transnational migrants?***

The notion of 'home' is central to the notion of 'transnationalism', mainly because both concepts are dynamic, in the sense that they require flexibility and adaptation, and they refer to at least two different locations. Being born and educated in one country and one culture, living in another country and maintaining a web of relations in both sending and receiving societies makes the notion of 'home' controversial. It has different understandings for different people at different periods of their lives (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). Family, time and the policies of 'integration' play an important role in the meaning of 'home'. The study of the Romanian migrants in Canada and the UK reveals three meanings of 'home' which sometimes coexist – biological and familial, pluri-spatial and imagined and finally spiritual. This helps us to better understand where transmigrants position

themselves regarding the sending and receiving society, which is the main representation of transnational feelings.

#### ***Biological and familial 'home'***

Home means birth and familial ties, but they can also be interchangeable. Without the presence of the family, home is "only a house" (Gilman, 1980). However, Saunders and Williams (1988) state that the composition of the family changes because of migration. This is seen in the case of the participants to this study, whose families have been transformed into transnational families.

While Cristina (UK) sees 'home' only in terms of nationality, for most of the participants from the UK, home is "*in Romania, where my family is and because I've been born there and lived most of my life and got used to a certain lifestyle*" (Claudia, UK). Here, transnational feelings are expressed through emotions rather than through material facts, such as the desire to return. Nevertheless, even if the past is still important to them and they do not deny their Romanian roots, Adriana and Larisa, who are lone mothers in the UK see the host country as their 'home', as it is represented by their children who are born there. This contradicts the argument of Basch *et al.* (1994) which state that family reproduction in the host country maintains transnational activities. However, Sabina (Canada) calls 'home' Bucharest, because her parents are there, while most of the participants from Canada refer to Canada as being their home.

*"I've been here for most of my adult years, (...), I have built my life here, (...), I am doing and have things I probably could never have had were I still living in Romania."* (Oana, Canada). A familial setting in Canada, a better lifestyle and more opportunities make Oana to see Canada as her 'home'. In that respect, home "is always lived as a relationship, a tension" (Jackson, 1995) with the people

around us and the world we make part of. Most of the participants from Canada find it difficult to call Romania their home. Even if they do not deny their origins and they are still in touch with family and friends from Romania, for them, 'home' is Canada, because of the presence of the immediate family and the time spent in the host country. Moreover, when they came to Canada, they committed to become permanent residents, which meant that they would begin a new life in Canada. This is therefore mainly due to the institutional structures of Canadian immigration and 'integration' policies. Romania represents, in some cases, only the birth place. Considering Canada their home means, therefore, that they are incorporated in the Canadian society. The question which should be raised is, therefore, what the place of Romania is, and if they reject or not the process of transnationalism, which will be dealt with later on.

### ***Home between fragmentation, temporality and imagination***

For some Romanians from both Canada and the UK, 'home' is perceived purely in its geographical and temporal connotation, which means that they attach no sense of belonging to the place they live in. It represents "the most basic economic unit" (Saunders and Williams, 1988) which is at the basis of the relation between production and consumption. This can be explained by the reasons why they left Romania: adventure, to be with their partners or to make a living.

For Constantin (UK), 'home' is "*where I sleep every night*". Roxana (Canada) adds to the notion of temporality the importance of material achievements: "*[f]or now my home is here because I got a chance to do something, to have a decent life*". The disbelief in Romanian institutions makes her to drop their sense of belonging to their Romanian identity. However, this only affects affective transnationalism, but not

its materiality, as the next sections will show. For Alina (UK), home is a rather fragmented concept, temporal, as she sees it in terms of geography and time. Her former and spiritual home is Romania, while her geographical and temporary home is London. For her, the concept of 'home' is both age and desire of exploration related: "*I am now in a busy city, London. But when I'll be older I'll probably want to live somewhere in the country and teach maths*". However, she does not know where she will end up living for good. 'Home' is therefore future-related and it represents a journey, a discovery of the self (Ginsberg, 1999). The feeling of "being home" in multiple localities is mainly due to the growth of transport and electronic communications (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). The notion of distance is replaced by a desire to travel, which is triggered by the curiosity to see various cultures and the desire to find the ideal home.

Tucker (1994) argues that "most people spend their lives in search of home, at the gap between the natural home (conceived as the home environment conducive to human existence) and the particular ideal home, where they would be fully fulfilled". This permanent seek of a place one could call 'home' can trigger mixed feelings of lost time and space, but also confusion and nostalgia which are triggered by instability. These torn feelings are, in my view, the main characteristic of the process of transnationalism which can only be found within the participants from the UK, as in Alin's case, who argues that "*in Romania I have my mom, but I am very attached to my fiancée as well, and I like what I am doing*". Place is constituted by the particular social relations that occur in a specific location, the social effects that arise in the interrelations (...)" (Massey, 1994), which means that it can be anywhere. The ones from Canada seem less

nostalgic and more pragmatic vis-à-vis this aspect.

### ***Spiritual home***

As argued by Perkins and Thorns (2000), peoples' story is essential to their understanding of home. That means that their social status in the host country and their relations in the country of origin are crucial. The association of Romania with the spiritual home has to be seen in terms of the sense of belonging. As Petru (UK) puts it, "[t]hey say home is where your heart is. (...) Home is still in Romania". However, maintaining strong affective transnationalism could trigger the impossibility of adjusting to the British society. In Andreea (Canada)'s view, the time spent in the host country plays the most important role in the process of 'home finding'. "[i]t takes some time to adjust, but after that, you begin to consider Canada as your home. You call home the place where you feel good."

In the case of the UK-based participants to our survey, with the exception of the two lone mothers, everyone agreed that Romania was their home, even if it can also be 'everywhere', which points to the feeling of 'in-betweenness' experienced by migrants. The creation of a family decreases the chances of considering Romania as their home. The participants who left Romania for Canada consider the receiving society their home, even if they maintain ties with Romania, which translates into material transnationalism. This may be explained by the fact that they are surrounded by their immediate family. Nevertheless, even if they consider Canada to be their home, they reconstruct their country of origin through traditional objects, icons or books they bring back with them. In other words, Canada is their home only if Romania makes part of it. Also, another reason is represented by the fact that 'integration' into Canadian society

goes through a legal process where the immigrant is expected to get permanent residence and then apply for citizenship. The legal context pushes them to an 'all or nothing' situation.

In conclusion, sending-country and home-country are not interdependent for many of the Romanian immigrants from the UK, and for the majority of those from Canada. The participants from the UK are more likely than those from Canada to be exposed to a fragmented and imaginary sense of home. This may be explained by the fact that, since Romania is in the European Union, it makes it easier to settle in a different country. They are also geographically close to Romania, and return (irregularly) at least once a year, which strengthens the process of emotional transnationalism and the association of the notion of 'home' to the Romanian society. Nevertheless, if the sense of belonging to a physical place differs for all the participants, they all maintain material ties with the country of origin through the respect of Romanian traditions, the reconstitution of the Romanian setting through Romanian traditional objects or through transnational networks, as the next section shows.

### ***The materiality of transnationalism Traditions***

The Romanians from Canada and the UK who took part in the study celebrate Christmas, Easter, their birthdays and sometimes even name days within the Romanian community. Given the spatial proximity, some Romanians settled in the UK choose to go to their country of origin to fully experience Romanian way of celebrating. Celebrating these days in Romanian style is important because they recreate the Romanian atmosphere by having Romanian food and music. Moreover a 'Romanian-type' behaviour is adopted in order to fully recreate the same spirit which is to be found in Romania,

represented by the fact that “*You do not have to behave, as you do in England*” (Ion, UK). Romania becomes therefore timeless and spaceless, as it can be mentally and physically rebuilt for one moment. However, Ion’s acceptance of Romanian traditions is based on a rejection of British traditions. “*Why would we invite English people? They would not understand. They do not celebrate it the way we do it*”. Acculturation in the UK is therefore hard to be achieved, because there would always be aspects missing in the receiving society that can only be found in the sending society. In that respect, Turner and Stets (2005)’s finding that emotions present a ‘separation factor’ applies to most of the participants from the UK, as the host country is transformed into a familiar space (Louise Ryan, 2007) through the presence of a network of Romanian friends and the rejection of native-born citizens.

In the Canadian case, most of the participants celebrate holidays with Romanians, Canadians and foreign individuals. They therefore live the process of transnationalism, as they are anchored in two societies. This is due to the fact that Canada is an immigrant nation, which promotes the idea of diversity. Moreover, most of the Canada-based participants (Andreea, Sorana, Cosmin, Oana, Doru, Simina, Ciprian, Vasile, Roxana, Sandu) do not miss being in Romania for religious celebrations, which happens in the case of the participants from the UK. This means that they do not experience emotional transnationalism. There are two possible explanations for this – the presence of a family and the fact that they left Romania during the communist period or soon after, when the country was in a state of political, social and economic decay. This explains why they have decided to emotionally leave behind Romania, which translates into a less of an importance given to the Romanian atmosphere.

Within the participants based in the UK, while only four (Mihaela, Dan, Victor and Petru) go back to Romania on a regular basis and this for either Christmas and/or Easter or on holiday, most of them return when they have time or money. Those who earn above the average are likely to return twice a year. The participants from Canada, however, prefer to have their families over rather than going to Romania themselves, which means that they do not directly experience affective transnationalism towards the country of origin. However, even if they do not return to the country of origin, they recreate it using traditional Romanian objects or books, which means that they experience affective transnationalism indirectly. This points to the clash between actions and feelings and swings between rejection and acceptance of Romania.

### ***The recreation of Romania in a British/Canadian setting***

Romanian immigrants bring various products from Romania, such as food, traditional Romanian objects or various home appliances. This marks spatial closeness and proximity between Romania and the host country, but also the recreation of the country of origin in the host country. ‘Home’ becomes therefore “physical space (...) families inhabit and as the symbolic conceptualisation of home where one belongs” (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). Ioana (UK) takes back from Romania homemade bread, but also T-shirts or various products such as buckets or lamps. Most of the Romanians from the UK bring back for their Romanian, English or foreign friends honey, Poiana chocolate and Eugenia biscuits sweets which bring back nostalgia, as they mark the connection with the past. This marks a form of social incorporation, and it can also represent the conversion to British work culture, where colleagues returning from holiday bring a sweet from the place they have visited.

Both food and traditional products are important transmitters of emotion, maintain reciprocity and articulate identity. The importance the participants attach to Romanian food and, respectively, the recreation of a Romanian setting using Romanian products contrasts, however, with the sense in which they talk about Romania, as many of them reject transnationalism, since they do not watch Romanian TV or read Romanian press and do not return on a regular basis. The practice of transnationalism through products marks, however, the importance Romanian roots have in their lives. Appadurai (1990)'s argument concerning the reproduction of locality by migrants applies in the case of the participants from Canada, but not in the case of those from the UK, which can be due to spatial proximity. Moreover, the participants from Canada tend to recreate their country of origin in their Canadian homes. They bring from Romania products such as books, photos, icons and traditional objects. Books are a powerful representation of access to Romanian culture, history and language, which transcend time and space and can be passed on to future generations, while icons mark religious belonging. Photos are evocative, as they are an image of reality. The past and the memories play, therefore, an important role in the lives of the participants from Canada. The practice of transnationalism is therefore not stopped by distance. Given the distance, they are less likely than their co-nationals from the UK, to go to Romania, and they need to be able to have Romania close to them. In that respect, they want *"genuine Romanian objects, traditional objects or products with emotional value"* (Sorana, Canada). This is, however, to be contrasted with the lack of Romanian identity.

The fact that Romanian migrants bring products from Romania to their British or Canadian homes reflects the limits of technology. Even if they speak over the

phone to the ones who remained in Romania, read Romanian news, watch Romanian channels, they need a more powerful representation of their country of origin. In that respect, consumption ensures continuity. Continuity of Romanian culture is also conserved by oral history or the media, in order to stay in touch with politics from the country of origin. In that way, *"(...) images of the past are read again and idealised"* (Dorai, 2002). The present, on the other hand, is lived through transnational networks which connect the immigrants to the country of origin.

### ***Transnational networks***

Television is a way of keeping in touch with the country of origin. However, only Ion (UK) watches Romanian television, while all the participants to our study either read the press online occasionally or not at all. *"I read only the main news, since I do not want to go crazy, that's why I left"* (Andreea, Canada). Moreover, when asked whether she votes at Romanian elections, she replied *"No way. Are you kidding me?"*. Her answers point to her disillusionment in Romanian reality and the fact that she does not want to make part of it anymore. Nevertheless, even if most of the Romanians from either the UK or Canada refer to economic and political hopelessness from Romania, which prevents them from maintaining institutional transnationalism through Romanian news, at individual level, the 'amount' of transnationalism is materialised mainly through remittances sending. That means that individual practices are more important than societal connections. However, this might vary by reasons for migration or length of stay.

Individual practices are maintained through the process of money-sending in an aim of maintaining long distance ties. Levitt (2001)'s argument that remittances help the formation and maintenance of transnational communities applies to the

participants from Canada and the UK. Economic transactions tend to reshape the connections between the country of origin and the host country, by bringing them closer. Nevertheless, this can be seen as a threat of the economy of the host country, as the immigrants send the money they could have otherwise injected in the host country.

Moreover, remittances can also prevent the receiver to economically develop, as in Cosmin (Canada)'s family case, who argues that *"the people from Romania are only interested in my money"*. I agree therefore with (Castles and Miller, 2009)'s view regarding the fact that remittances do not always enhance economic development. However, giving money to family marks the commitment to the wellbeing of those in need and satisfaction that he/she can help the needy. This can be seen in Ion (UK)'s case, who argues that *"I am happy to be able to financially help my grandma"*.

Surprisingly, there is no connection between the time spent abroad, the social position the immigrant has and the process of remittances-sending. The participants send money to their families from Romania when their families ask for, or occasionally, or for different celebrations. It can also be a way of "overcompensating" (Parrenas, 2005) for their physical absence, or a way of maintaining affective transnational networks. Bringing closer the ones from the country of origin makes easier for the migrant to culturally survive in a new cultural context and the feelings of 'in-betweenness' he/she is exposed to.

Romanians migrants in Canada and the UK have kept transnational networks alive, despite the distance. Those who live in the UK talk to their families more often than those settled in Canada. *"We Skype our parents almost daily for hours"*, argues Alina (UK). She is convinced that *"distance brought us closer"*. In other words, transnationalism translates into closer and deeper relations which are made

possible, through the use of global communication infrastructure. Calling family and friends from Romania shows the commitment to them. In that respect, the dynamics of family ties have moved from a national scale to a global scale. The phone is not only used to stay in touch with family and friends and enrich the relationship, but also to influence decision-making or to supervise various acquisitions of migrants'. Ion (UK) bought a flat in the block his mom lives in, which he rents. Technology allows the participants to be part of two worlds, which translates into a mix of material and affective transnationalism. Indeed, transnational practices are a form of "emotional labour" (Hochschild, 1983), which maintain reciprocal exchange and family ties across time and space.

### *Affective transnationalism*

The process of affective transnationalism refers to the transformations the migrants experience in the host country. The cultural clash and the feeling of 'in-betweenness' impact therefore on the self.

### *Cultural clash and 'in-betweenness'*

*"At the beginning, everything was very different. From crossing over the street to human interaction"* (Alina, UK). This quotation summarizes the cultural clash most of the participants experienced when they arrived in the UK. Central to the ties transmigrants have with both sending and receiving countries are the emotions they express. Sentiments of both acceptance and rejection can, therefore, occur regarding both societies. When moving to a new country, one becomes aware of cultural differences. Most of the participants from the UK pointed to the fact that the people are distant and human connections are shallow. Alina (UK) argues that *"Here you do not have friends at work, there are emotional barriers"*. Cristina (UK) knows how to cope with the British way of life.

After work, she Skypes with her friends and family from Romania *“rather than wasting her time in pubs doing small talk”*. This can be explained by the fact that in Romania people are used to experience profound friendships, while in the UK the process of networking seems to be preferred over conversations about personal life. However, it might be argued that, when living in a host country, it is immigrants' duty to adjust to the cultural 'terms and conditions' of the receiving country. The feeling of 'in-betweeness' experienced by the participants from the UK is triggered by the fact that *“you can never fully understand the behaviour of English people”* (Alin, UK). A flexible behaviour is translated into incorporation within the British culture, as one cannot have the same expectations from a foreign culture as from their native culture.

While 13/14 participants settled in the UK pointed out the cultural differences they face, in Canada, Sorana is the only one who considers that there is an aspect of the Canadian which can be ameliorated, but this does not directly affect her. She accepts the others. *“I find people have many layers of self protection you need to break through to actually get to them here... But I don't think I have a problem with it, it's not my problem.”* Her acceptance of the others, even if she does not agree with some of the aspects of their culture, is the product of the diversity-based Canadian society. As Li (2003) puts it, *“(...) immigration has been an integral component in the nation building and social development of Canada”*. The Romanians from Canada have become Canadian citizens in a way that the Romanians from the UK could never become, mainly because of the guestworkers immigration history of the UK.

This can also be due to the fact that most of the Romanians from Canada have Canadian, Romanian and foreign friends, whereas in the British setting, except for

three respondents (Ioana, Alin, Petru), they do not have a considerable amount of number of friends outside the Romanian community. Having both natives and foreigners in one's group of friends is a way to become more tolerant and open minded. That helps the immigrant to accommodate in the host country. Also, the participants to our study based in Canada tend to have lived in the host country for more years than those from the UK. This is an important factor in the process of 'integration'. The Canadian institutional context which translates into permanent immigration, together with the long immigration history of the participants from Canada, make the process of incorporation smoother than in the case of the participants from the UK.

### ***The transformation of the self***

The transformation of the self is the main representation of the process of transnationalism. I agree therefore with Faist (2007)'s view that both national identity and national interest are flexible, because I argue that what is characteristic for a transmigrant is the feeling of being both 'here and there', a state of limbo which is representative for affective transnationalism. Even if most of the participants from the UK tend not to agree with the British individualist lifestyle, they have adjusted to the society they live in. *“I've become a bit British”* Ion (UK), thinking of the relationship with his father. Even if they live 20 minutes away, they only see each other once a week or even less, and they ring each other every other day. This is even more interesting since Ion does not spend his time with British people, as he finds them too distant. His argument is the same as Alina (UK)'s - *“[a] Romanian friendship involves too much interaction, everyone knows what you do, and she does.”* (Alina, UK). They prefer therefore more distant relationships. This points to the state of limbo they live in and

the transformation of the self, which is representative for the process of affective transnationalism. Besides the changes which occur in the behaviour of the immigrant, the participants from Canada agreed that their culinary tastes have changed, as they eat healthier. They experience, therefore, transformation of the self at a material level, while the Romanians based in the UK seems to experience it emotionally.

Changes in language have been pointed to by participants from both cultural settings. Daniela (UK) told me via Facebook “*You can use the 2<sup>nd</sup> person “you”, I’m not used to the polite “you” anymore*”. This is explained by the fact that in English there is no pronoun used to express politeness. She has therefore ‘Britishised’ her personality. However, one question is to be raised: “What are the Romanian ‘rules’ she still obeys?” In other words, to what extent should the immigrant incorporate in the host-society and keep the traditions of the sending-country, in order for the process to be called ‘transnationalism’? The same happened during interviews, which even if they were held in Romanian, English words like “paperwork”, “ups and downs” (Alina, UK), “pub owners” (Ioana, UK) or “pottery” (Alin, UK) were employed. This means that there are different realities that they associate with the sending and receiving society.

Within the sample of participants from the UK, only two people seem to feel at ease in the British setting, whilst maintaining transnational ties with Romania. Two participants, who have children in the UK, reject the country of origin. The role of the family is, therefore, crucial in the process of (rejection of) transnationalism. The remaining participants are somewhere between Romania and the UK, in an imaginary third place, characterised by a feeling of ‘in-betweenness’, a deterritorialised third space (Soja, 1996). ‘Home’ is Romania, but it only represents their identity, their past. The present is the UK. In the UK case,

multiculturalist policies tend to push most of the Romanians of our study towards isolation from the mainstream. This does not make them transnational, in the sense given by the literature – “(...) develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously” (Glick Schiller *et al.*, 1992) because they are not anchored in the British culture. However, given the fact that they experience the feeling of ‘in-betweenness’, and they still consider Romania to be their home, I consider them to experience affective transnationalism.

In the Canadian case, however, the process of acculturation seems more likely to have taken place because of various aspects such as institutional framework, presence of the family, long length of time on the Canadian soil and the period of immigration (before or soon after the fall of communism). Given these reasons, the Romanians from Canada are less likely to experience feelings of ‘in-betweenness’ and, therefore, affective transnationalism. Most of the participants from Canada attribute to the host country the meaning of ‘home’ and appreciate the fact that Canada has given them the opportunity to fulfil both their professional and personal lives. In that respect, they are nationals of Canada, in a way that the Romanians from the UK are not. This can also be explained by the fact that most of the Canada-based Romanians have Canadian citizenship, or are, at least, permanent citizens. This raises, however, the question of the existence of transnationalism, since they do not experience a feeling of ‘in-betweenness’. Nevertheless, it can be argued that they are transnational because they are Canadians from an institutional point of view and they do not reject the host society, while respecting Romanian traditions, even if they do not want to be in Romania for important national holidays. In that respect, they experience material transnationalism.

### ***Conclusion and avaluation***

This study has looked at the process of transnationalism and how it was lived by a sample of Romanian participants in Canada and the UK. Given the fact that both countries have a multiculturalist agenda regarding immigration, the public sphere has been influenced by policies which focus on the politicisation of the notion of 'people', by putting them in categories such as 'foreigners' or 'citizens'. Policies have not acknowledged the double commitment of migrants to both sending and receiving society. This research identified two dimensions of transnationalism – its materiality and its affective component. The practice of transnationalism referred to material facts, such as the importance of traditions, the reconstitution of a Romanian setting in the country of origin through Romanian traditional objects and the role of transnational networks. Affective transnationalism looked at the state of 'in-betweenness' and the transformation of the self. The findings of the study were as follows:

1. At the heart of the transnational debate stands the question of whether transnational practices help or hinder the process of social and economic 'integration'. This study has showed that transnationalism did not threaten the economic 'integration' of migrants in either Canada or the UK, as most of the participants had secure jobs and earned enough money (even if low-skilled).

2. The literature has stated that not all migrants experienced the process of transnationalism, only those with a high social status. However, this study has showed that transnationalism also means emotions, not only material practices. In that respect, social status did not undermine the process of transnationalism. However, more research should be carried on materiality and affectivity within different social classes. The findings could, probably, not

be representative for all social classes and gender status groups.

3. It has been found that, for most of the participants from Canada, the host-country is 'home', even if this contrasted with the recreation of a Romanian setting with various Romanian traditional products, icons or Romanian books. This is due to the Canadian institutional framework through which the immigrants have to apply for permanent citizenship. Other factors, such as the presence of family and the time spent in the country of origin, as well as the moment of emigration (before or soon after the fall of the communism), are additional reasons for considering the host country as 'home'. The incorporation of the participants in the Canadian society and their acculturation is translated into a material experience of transnationalism through the practice of traditions, the sending of remittances and through transnational networks. Distance was therefore not a barrier in the practice of transnationalism.

4. For the Romanians from the UK, on the other hand, 'home' was either represented by the country of origin, or by a pluri-spatial structure. Only those participants who have children in the UK identified the host country with their home. This is meaningful, since family is very important for the participants from Canada as well. The presence of the family in the receiving society prevented, therefore, the participants to maintain affective transnationalism, and, in some cases, even material transnationalism. This contradicted the argument of Basch *et al.* (1994) which stated that family reproduction in the host country maintained transnational activities. However, this calls into questions the findings of this study, which did not compare the interpretation of the notion of 'home' based on gender and family status.

5. Affective transnationalism and the attribution of the status of 'home' to Romania was likely to occur when the

participants did not feel at ease in the host country, as in the case of the participants settled in the UK. However, even if they were not anchored in British society, their self has been transformed in a 'British' way, in the sense that the participants adjusted to British cultural demands, such as professionalism at the work place or distant human connexions.

6. The main factors which allowed the development of transnationalism or led to its rejection were, in the case of the participants to this study, the length of stay in the host country, the moment of emigration (before or soon after the fall of the communism) and the presence of the family in the host country. Further research should, therefore, be carried on each of these factors in order to their impact on the dimensions of transnationalism identified by this study.

Provided that this study pointed at the possibility of migrants to experience more or less affective transnationalism in relation with the moment of departure, it would have been more relevant to deal with participants who have been in Canada and the UK for the same number of years. However, the low rates of participants would have been a major barrier. This research should have looked more in depth at the difference between institutional transnationalism represented by the relation the migrant has with the sending country, and individual transnationalism, meaning the social relations with the people who are in the country of origin. This would have triggered relevant information concerning the rejection of transnationalism at these

two levels. This research should have also dealt with Romanians who spent the same amount of time in receiving societies, as data can vary according to the level of stay. Nevertheless, this study answered the research question which aimed to identify the dimensions of transnationalism based on the experience of migrants. It also found that the level of absorption by the host country did not hinder the process of transnationalism, in the case of the participants from Canada and the UK; it only changed its interpretation. In conclusion, this study showed that the Romanian participants from both Canada and the UK were experiencing the process of transnationalism. While the participants from Canada were more likely to experience transnationalism materially because of their incorporation in the Canadian society, the participants from the UK were likely to live transnationalism in an affective way, as a state of 'in-betweeness'. Full transnationalism (both affective and material) is, however, hard to be achieved by the same person, but it can happen, as in the case of some UK-based participants.

#### Note

1. This comparative study was part of a wider research project which the author wrote as part of her Masters dissertation for the University of Bath (UK), where she did a Masters degree on 'Globalisation and International Policy Analysis', with focus on migration. The supervisor of the dissertation was Dr. Emma Carmel and it was marked with distinction by both examiners.

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