

# **Trans Europeans**

*Class, immigration, transnationalism*

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## **I. Introduction**

Increases in communication and mobility of financial and human capital between countries makes it possible for immigrants to be grounded in two different places and thus, in two different social settings. This raises some important questions about the transformation of class. What kind of changes can this double grounding imply for their class status, consciousness and identity? How do they create and articulate class in their host and home country? To answer these questions recent academic studies have started to move away from the idea of class as a nationally constituted social structure, a more traditional approach to the study of class( e.g. Gilbert, 1998, 2002) . Instead they argue for the need to free the concept of class from bounded territorial spaces and analyze the way that class becomes interpreted and articulated within transnational spaces and through transnational processes ( e.g. . Lessinger, 1992; Ong, 1992).

The past ten years have witnessed a flourishing of the literature on class, migration and transnationalism. This research has proven that transnational networks are important carriers of class divisions (both in the host and in the home country) and also important means of class formation and redefinition. For example, as immigrants make use of the financial and material resources they gain in their host country, it is possible that they change their class status in their home country or they change the class status of their family at home (e.g. Ong, 1992; Rouse, 1992; Charles, 1992). Great part of the research on class, migration and transnationalism pertains to migrant groups (South American, Asians and Africans) in the United States. However, there is little if no research on class and class transformations that take place among Eastern European migrants in Western Europe. The reason behind this gap in the research might lie in the common perception that post-communist countries were and maybe still are as not as socially stratified (on issues of class) as Western democracies. Because of the years that they have spent under the communist regimes succeeded in flattening the differences between people it was difficult to think about class changes in these countries and among migrants leaving these countries. However, I believe that it is necessary to examine the creation, articulation and transformation of class in the context of the Eastern European immigration to the European Union.

This analysis is important for at least two reasons.

*First*, research of immigrant groups in other parts of the world (mostly United States and Latin America) has demonstrated that their transnational practices had an impact on immigrants' class transformation and re-articulation ( e.g. Conway and Cohen, 1998; Massey, Durand and Parrado, 1996). In many respects, the Eastern European immigrants' transnational practices do not differ from the ones of other immigrant groups in other parts of the world. Yet , starting maybe from the assumption that if these immigrants did not have a distinctive class consciousness or class identity to begin with, the impact that their transnational experiences and practices might have on their class articulation remains understudied.

As other immigrant groups Eastern European immigrants created a dynamic transnational space within the European Union. These immigrants forge and sustain a multitude of social relations (that can be economic, politic or cultural) that link together their societies of origin and settlement. For example, official statistics indicate that Eastern European immigrants have generated important remittances flows towards their countries of origin. According to IFAD (2006)<sup>1</sup>, Eastern European immigrants sent 51billion US dollars in remittances, which put them in the third place in the world, following Asian immigrants with 114 billion \$ and Latin American and Caribbean immigrants with 68 billion \$. Research has shown that the infusion of immigrant remittances has helped to change the way class was defined and conceptualized in Mexico( e.g. Portes and Hoffman, 2003; Bindford, 2003). Yet, the impact of remittances on class structures, identities and class relations has not yet been tackled in the case of Eastern European migration in the European Union.

As other immigrant groups, when migrating to Western Europe Eastern European migrants get inserted into a new system of social stratification (by class, ethnicity and race). The new social constructions do not always correspond with their notions of class, race or ethnicity. Much has been written on the ways the Latin American immigrants in the United States mediate between the notions of class in the host and home countries ( e.g Georges, 1992; Buchanan, 1983; Charles, 1992). Though, nothing has been yet said about the Eastern European immigrants' their re-articulation of class in the context of the European Union migration.

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<sup>1</sup> International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); <http://www.ifad.org/>

*Second*, Eastern European immigrants differ from the other types of immigrants (the “guest workers” from Europe; the Mexicans, Dominicans in United States e.g.) that have been studied so far in few aspects.

One, these immigrants come from countries that were communist for a long period of time. Their experience of class ascription and class divisions is different from the experience of other immigrants, thus their way of representing and operating with social class categories could be very different. For example, Eastern European immigrants might have a different perception of the social class markers. In communist societies there was very little correlation between the traditional delineators of social classes: wealth, property, education and occupation. Instead of these, political power and prestige were the ones who were placing and individual into a social class or another.

Also, Eastern European immigrants lived in societies where there was little if no friction between classes, as in the communist societies the economic capital and the general evolution of the society was regulated and decided by the impersonal face of the state( e.g. Lijphart and Crawford, 1995). Class membership was not perceived as a path for achieving economic or social interests, thus people did not develop a strong sense of class identity or class consciousness.

Two, most of Eastern European migration towards the Western Europe is taking place under the European Union umbrella. The European Union policies and regulations facilitate the travel and stay of Eastern European immigrants within the European Union. It is a lot easier for them to maintain constant and frequent linkages between their home and host countries, which may play a role in shaping their class identities or the class structures in their home and host communities. Through the two waves of enlargement, first wave in 2004 and the second in 2007, European Union welcomed all Eastern European countries in its politically and economically integrated space. Technically this meant that the Eastern European immigrants could benefit of the “freedom of movement” right, which allows every citizen in the European Union to work or reside on any of the countries within the European Union space(Article 18 (8a) ECT). However, “freedom of movement” happened gradually, as the “old” EU member states implemented restrictions for the access of the citizens of “new” member states to their labor markets<sup>2</sup>. Most of

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<sup>2</sup> In the case of the 10 member states that joined the European Union in May 2004(Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) the restrictions were lifted by all

the states have already lifted or relaxed immigrants' access to the labor market. Though, even in the countries that still have labor restrictions in place, Eastern European immigrants enjoy rights that immigrants from non-EU states do not have. For example, it is possible for the Eastern European immigrants to move to another member state as students, retired persons or as family members; they also have the right to establish a firm in any EU member state or to act as self-employed persons. Within the European Union, they are also given priority in the labor market over the non-EU immigrants. Overall, the European Union allows for an easiness of movement and integration of Eastern European immigrants within the European Union.

I think it will be important to factor these differences for the study of class in the context of transnational migration. If Eastern European immigrants operated with different social class delineators than the ones used in the Western democracies, what happens once they get settled in their host countries? How would they operate between the "old" and the "new" class markers to articulate their class identity? How will their transnational practices inform and help the articulation of their own class identity and class structures?

All these questions and more can be comprised under the umbrella of a larger question: how does transnational migration influences the class creation, articulation and transformation for the immigrants of the former communist countries. As a beginning in answering this question, my dissertation proposes to examine the creation, articulation and transformation of class in the context of the Romanian immigration to the European Union.

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EU-15 members, except Germany and Austria. Romanian and Bulgarian citizens wishing to work in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, United Kingdom still need a work permit to be able to work in these countries. However, if Romanians or Bulgarians would like to work in Cyprus, Greece, Finland, , Iceland, Sweden, Portugal, Spain, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, , Poland, , Slovakia, Slovenia there are no restrictions that would limit their access to these countries' labor market.

## **II. Literature review**

### ***A. Transnational migration***

Migration scholarship has undergone great transformations.

In the past, much of literature on migration was anchored in the old assimilationist models developed by the Chicago School of Sociology<sup>3</sup> that saw migration as a one-way process through which new immigrants will enter the host country and they will get assimilated into the cultural, political, social and economical context of that country. Subsequent scholarship continued along the same lines, though recognizing that the degree of assimilation, acculturation and integration varies by immigrants' characteristics and the social, political and economical context of the receiving and sending country. For example, some scholars suggested that immigrants' assimilation is determined by their color and their country of origin (Portes, 1995). Building his research on the immigrants in the United States Portes noticed that the white immigrants from relatively high income countries will assimilate into the white middle class, while the dark skinned immigrants coming from poorer countries will assimilate into the inner city underclass. Others stressed the importance of group characteristics and the use of ethnicity to integrate into the labor market ((Waldinger, 1994; Waldinger and Bozorghmer, 1996).

It was not until the late 1990's that migration scholars added a new perspective in the study of migration. Moving away from assimilation theory, the scholars started to emphasize more and more aspects of immigrants' social, cultural, political and economical life that took place across borders. Transnational migration<sup>4</sup> appeared as a new phenomenon, highlighting the multitude of cross border engagements of immigrants and their embeddedness in the host and home society at the same time (Guarnizo, 1997, 2000; Kyle, 2000; Levitt, 2001; Itzigsohn et al, 1999; Ferlman-Bianco. 1992; Landholt, Patricia, Lilian Autler and Sonia Baires, 1999; Portes, 2003;). The study of transnational migration "concentrates on the continuing relations between

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Park (1930); Milton Gordon (1964)

<sup>4</sup> Throughout my research I have found that sometimes transnational migration, transnationalism, transnational practices are used interchangeably. Since I do not want to operate with a fuzzy concept, I would like to clarify that within this research, transnational migration will refer to the flow of people, money and "social remittances" (ideas, norms, practices and identities) across borders. (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007)

immigrants and their places of origin and how this back-and-forth traffic builds complex social fields that straddle national borders”(Portes, Guarnizo and Haller, 2002).

Research took important steps in identifying the multitude of transnational attachments and practices that immigrants engage in, the types of social spaces, the social structures and transformations that produce and are produced by transnational migration (Faist, 2000,a,b; Levitt&Glick Schiller, 2004, Portes, 2003). The scholarship differentiated between three areas: political transnationalism( e.g. Faist 2000a, 1999, Kastoriano 2004), economic transnationalism (e.g. Portes 1996, Guarnizo 2003) and socio-cultural transnationalism( e.g. Olwig,2003).

*Political transnationalism* depicts immigrants as active political participants<sup>5</sup> in their home and host countries (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Smith, 1994; Graham, 1997, Goldring, 1996). Immigrants can use their economic power via remittances to influence home country’s elections (e.g. Richman, 1992) or to leverage home states for the expansion of citizenship and voting rights (Guarnizo 1998; Itzigsohn et al. 1999; Levitt 2001). They can also lobby the government of their host country to influence its policies toward their home country ( e.g. Landolt, Autler and Baires, 1999; Richman, 1992; Laguerre 1999; DeSipio et al, 2003). In the host countries, immigrants’ political activities are centered towards improving their social condition or legal status. In the past two decades we see more and more that different states make visible efforts to expand immigrants’ inclusion in their mainstream society, though it is not unusual that immigrants constitute a marginalized a segment of it. This is the reason why many immigrant groups have become very active in their host country’s political life by creating and supporting hometown associations, workers’ and civil rights organizations ( e.g. Rivera-Salgado, Bada and Escala-Rabadan, 2005; Baretto and Munoz, 2003). The increased immigrants’ political mobility across borders led to an overlapping in legal statuses and political identities. In order to cultivate immigrants’ allegiance many states redefined their conception of citizenship. Emigrant states decoupled the meaning of citizenship from the necessity of permanent territorial residence, while some of the immigrant states relaxed their *ius sanguinis* citizenship requirements to criteria that pertain to the length the stay of

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<sup>5</sup> Such as membership in political parties, electoral participation, funding of electoral campaigns

immigrants (and other specific criteria that pertain to their ability to adapt to the host society).<sup>6</sup> The relaxing of citizenship laws had the obvious consequence of the increase in dual citizenships (e.g. Sejersen, 2008; Faist, 2008).

*Economic transnationalism* can be explained by focusing on three central themes: immigrants' remittances, transnational entrepreneurship and the community development support.

Immigrant remittances are money<sup>7</sup> (or sometimes material goods) that immigrants send to their families or friends in their home countries. Remittances are mainly intended to help their kin and friends; for many immigrant households in the home countries these remittances are the only means of survival (e.g. Tevera and Chikanda, 2009). In the past decade the volume of immigrant remittances has grown considerably<sup>8</sup>. Research has found that remittances have positive effects on immigrants' life. Remittances improve immigrants' living conditions and upgrade their consumption habits and thus they constitute a mechanism of immigrants' upward social mobility (e.g. Itzigsohn 1995; Funkhouser, 1992).

Immigrants also use their money to develop transnational entrepreneurial activities in both their place of origin and also in their host countries (e.g. Durand, Parrado and Massey, 1996; Itzigsohn et al. 1999). These activities range from investing small businesses ( see the example of Mexicans in Guanajuato and In Michoacán presented by Durand, Parrado, and Massey, 1996) to creating partnerships with the local governments for larger scale investments ( see Smith, 2003). Besides having a positive effect on the economy of the host and home communities (see the case of Birmingham in McEwen et al, 2005; Rath, 2006), transnational economic activities link immigrant entrepreneurs with people outside their ethnic communities (e.g. suppliers, creditors). This helps immigrant entrepreneurs to construct bridges between themselves (and their

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<sup>6</sup> In Europe for example, only six of the EU-15(Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom) countries still require renunciation of the previous citizenship. Similarly, Latin American countries changed their citizenship laws to allow dual nationality. Before 1991 only four Latin American countries allowed dual citizenship<sup>6</sup>, though by late 2000 fifteen of the Latin American countries permitted their Diasporas to retain their citizenship after acquiring another one.

<sup>7</sup> Sometimes remittances can be nonmonetary, such as goods or services, though it is the monetary remittances that prevail

<sup>8</sup>Immigrant remittances increased from \$305 billion in 2008 to 325 billion \$ in 2010, which represents an increase of 8% in the past two years (World Bank) <http://econ.worldbank.org>

communities) and networks outside the inner circle, thus improving their chances of upward mobility (Kloosterman and Rath, 2003).

A third kind of transnational economic activism includes the collective transfer of resources to support public works or social service projects in the countries of origin (money sent by immigrants to support the development of their home country local community). Immigrants usually form “hometown associations” (HTA) that work cooperatively with local or regional governments. The amounts of money that are being sent through these HTA are significant<sup>9</sup>. Besides representing an important contribution to the local communities’ economic and social development, the HTA funds can give immigrants significant political leverage in their home communities. By deciding which project will receive their funding, the HTAs can force the local governments to take their wishes into account when making decisions about social or political aspects in the life of their communities ( Gammage et al, 2004).

*Socio-cultural transnationalism* discusses how immigrants’ double embeddedness in the home and host societies influence their constructions of social identities (class, race and gender). Transnational migration leads immigrants to navigate between two different social systems (with different categories or different norms of social identification). Rather than having a negative effect, travelling between two different social and cultural systems helps immigrants to learn understanding both of them and to make a use of this knowledge in better mediating and rearticulating their social and cultural identities. For example, very often immigrants find themselves placed in different social categories than the ones they belonged to in their home countries. Usually this happens because the norms of social categorization differ between the host and home country or because immigrants simply face a status downgrading when they settle in the host country. When faced with this situation, immigrants will try to mediate between the two social categories and will try to mold their identity in a way that will maximize their social recognition and also their upward social mobility. Such are the examples of the Haitian and Jamaican immigrants in United States. Haitian immigrants were coming from a society that took pride in the darkness of their skin (Fouron 1987; Laguerre 1984; Woldemikael, 1985). Once they have settled in United States, they entered into a society that stigmatized blacks (black immigrants) as a group with a low social status. They found themselves trapped in the category

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<sup>9</sup> in United States for example there is an estimated number of 2000 Mexican HTAs that contribute with up to 60 million \$ a year( Orzoco and Lapointe, 2004).

of “blacks”, an ascription that did not correspond at all with their own categorization of themselves (Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999). To mediate their social categorization in the United States, Haitian immigrants started to differentiate themselves from the Black Americans and to put accent on their ethnic identity (Basch et al.1994). The use of their ethnicity in defining themselves was a tactic of distancing themselves from the subordination status imposed on them by the American society. Similarly, Jamaicans in New York also cling on their “Jamaicaness” as a mean of resistance into the Black Americans, as they do not want to be perceived as part of a group with a low social status in the American society (Nancy Foner 1985, 1987).

Migratory experiences are different for all immigrant groups, as well as for the sending and receiving countries. For example, various immigrants groups might have different motifs of migration, they also might face different institutional constraints from the host or receiving country. Thus, in order to make a good assessment of types, scale and intensity of transnational practices as well as of the transformations that they might produce for the social and cultural realms of immigrants, host and home countries we must take into consideration all the contextual factors that a particular transnational migration takes place.

### ***B. Theories of class***

In the early years of class theory, the concept of class was a narrow one based upon economic criteria. The term of social class came into use in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to explain the transformations and the new kind of social stratification of the English and French societies ( Heberle, 1959). The concept of social class was very ambiguous and utilized in synonymy with terms such as “ranks, estates, station, status and interests” (Heberle, 1959, 19). It was the economists, especially Adam Smith (1776) and David Ricardo (1817), who were the first to explain social classes and the division of society into social classes based on the unequal distribution of rent, profit/interest and wages. Though, ideas such as the nature of social classes, their relationship to property, their relationship to political parties and their political role still remained at the at the level of axiomatic knowledge. It was not until Karl Marx and Max Weber that a more sophisticated and encompassing theory of class was developed.

Karl Marx and Max Weber laid the main foundations of class theory. While different in their approach to the study of class, both Marx (1959; 1964) and Weber (Weber 1968)

understood society in terms of class antagonisms and class struggle. Marx diagnosed that the crystallization and differentiation of classes is defined by the rights and powers individuals have over the means of production. He argued that the ownership over the means of production is polarizing the society in two hostile social classes: the bourgeoisie (who own the means of production) and the proletariat (who own their labor and who want to sell it for a wage). The bourgeoisie's income is based on the exploitation of the proletariat, who has little choice but to work in the factories owned by the bourgeoisie. Weber, who developed his analysis on class years after Marx, agrees with Marx's distinction between proletariat and bourgeoisie. However, he argues that the formation of classes does not solely depend on the ownership over the means of production. Instead, he explains that class formation is dependent on the "market situations", namely of the opportunities created when individuals sell their skills and abilities on the market in exchange for wages.

Marx and Weber's theories have been subject to numerous revisions and modifications (Giddens 1973; Scott 1996; Goldhorpe, 1980; Erikson and Goldhorpe, 1992; E.O. Wright, 2005). While Marx, Weber and their followers believed that the economic capital is the main factor of delineating and defining social classes, other theorists believed that there are other factors that lead society to be shaped into class structures. For example classical elite theorists (Mills, 1956; Mosca, 1939) argued that the class system rests purely on political power. They defined social class based on position or role in the society. Other theorists defined class and developed a class system based on status rank (Warner, 1960; Lenski, 1966) or even prestige (Barber, 1957).

More recent writings have broadened the scope of class analysis to understand class as "a diffuse organizing concept for the investigation of a wide range of issues associated with social inequality and social differentiation" (Crompton, 1998: 208). The traditional framework of class theory which was mostly centered on determining how and what are the factors that determine the stratification of society in social classes was enriched with new approaches. From these, most notable for the purpose of my research are the study of formation and changes in class identity, both at the individual and at the group level and the study of culture as a socially stratifying force and as a basis of formulation of social distinction (status) and the class based political behavior.

### *Class identity*

Class identity was defined as the feeling of solidarity between the members of a certain social class and as the possession of common political and economic interests among them. In 1945 Centers conducted the first major research on how individuals identify themselves with specific social classes (Centers, 1949). He found that class is a major source of group identity, as people identifying themselves with a certain social class had similar economic and political orientations. According to his research middle class members were individualistic and conservative while working class members were radical and collective on issues such as public versus private ownership, wages e.g. He also found that people from the same social class even studied at the same level on the occupational scale. Individuals that identified themselves with the middle class were business, professionals and white collar workers, while the manual workers identified with the working class (Centers, 1949). Since Centers there has been much research done on class identity. Despite the salience of other social identities (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender), class still remains a major source of group identity (Devine, 1992, Westergaard et al, 1989; Marshall et al, 1988).

The way class identity is shaped differs from a society to another. What is essential in the upbringing of this identity is a “common pattern of lived experiences” (Brenner 1989). Research carried in modern industrial capitalist societies presents shared experience in the labor process as a basis of emergence of class identity (Brenner 1989; Jenkins 1996). People with similar occupations perceive themselves as sharing similar attributes and values that set them apart from the rest of society. From steelworkers (Metzgar, 2000) to saleswomen and managers (Benson, 1986) individuals come to understand and collectively act upon their shared interests: protection of worker’s right, wage security e.g. (Burawoy, 1979; Kalb, 1997; Bronfenbrenner, Friedman, Hurd, Oswald and Seeber, 1998). In communist societies class identities were differently constructed. Here class identities’ roots were not based on groups’ militancy for their interests but they were rather ideologically inculcated. The communist ideology imposed a state-socialist hierarchy, composed by a dominant class (the party-state communist bureaucracy) and the rest of population. Political power (defined as the membership in the communist party ruling elite) was the main marker of social class. Political officials were the ones that stayed at the top because they held commanding positions in the government, administration e.g. and thus held greater political power (Connor, 1979).

*Culture as a socially stratifying force and as a basis of formulation of social distinction.*

The “cultural approach” places emphasis on culture as a basis of formulation of social distinction but also on the cultural capital as an important socially stratifying force.

The notion of cultural capital began to make its way in the social class literature through the work of the sociocultural class theorist Pierre Bourdieu(1984). Bourdieu broke the sociological canons that viewed culture solely as a source of collective expression, as a source of shared norms, beliefs and values. Instead, he maintained that culture can also have the same properties as the economic capital and that cultural “habits” and “cultural heritage” can generate advantages and “profits” for the individuals and social groups that possess them (Bourdieu,1984). He does not underestimate the power of the economic capital; in fact he maintains that the group with most economic capital constitutes the dominant class. However, he argues that cultural capital exists in conjunction with the economic and social capital and is also directly implicated in social stratification and thus social classes should be defined in relation with both economic and cultural capital. According to his view, capital and cultural capital in general cannot be understood in isolation from the other forms of capital. They are interconnected and they can transform into one another. For example, economic capital can transform into cultural capital and cultural capital be transformed into social capital (e.g. such as power, status). Together, cultural, social and economic capital, they channel individuals to mirror their social class origins.

Culture is also a basis of formulation of social distinction. Different ideologies instill in their societies different values and norms that are used to build social categories. Capitalist societies put value on economic capital and thus social stratification will mostly be based on economic factors (e.g. ownership of means of production, wealth would be the markers of social status; economic interests- such as the accumulation of economic capital- would define the class struggle and so on). Communist societies deployed an ideology based on political capital, defined as the membership and political closeness with the state political apparatus and the communist party (the one and only party of government in communist societies). Thus, social stratification on these societies would be based on political factors (e.g. political power-membership in the ruling elite of the communist party).

### *Class based political behavior*

The study of the political significance of social class has progressed well beyond our initial learning of class based political struggles from the Marxist theory. Starting with Marx to the latter Marxist accounts (e.g. Althusser, 1971 and Poulanzas, 1973) social class was defined in terms of economical and political power relations. Marx saw the structure of society in relation to its major classes: the bourgeoisie, the landowners and the proletariat. According to him, these classes were in a continuous struggle for dominance. Within this struggle, each social class develops class consciousness. As class consciousness increases, common interests become more imperative, policies are organized, and the use of and struggle for political power occurs. Althusser and Poulanzas add to the Marxist theory of social class struggle and argue that the dominant social class maintains its rule and legitimacy through the coercive agencies of the state, or though what Althusser(1971) calls “ the State Apparatus”. Subsequent research has uncovered strong linkages between the social class and political alignments (Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba et al., 1978). Numerous case studies and explorations have unveiled a class based polarization of the political parties and also a polarization of the voting behavior, depicted by researchers as an “institutionalized democratic class struggle” (Rose, 1974). As they differ in their interests, social classes rally around parties that secure benefits for themselves. In a very simplistic view we can say that lower and middle class organize parties that support redistribution policies and the expansion of social welfare benefits, while higher classes organize in parties that oppose redistributive policies. American politics, for example, was and is increasingly stratified by class. Low-income voters are more likely to align with the Democratic party and higher-income voters with the Republican party (Stonecash, Brewer, and Mariani, 2003; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). Similarly, in European countries research has found a significant association between class, political parties and electoral participation. Britain, Belgium, Italy France, Germany, Italy and the Scandinavian countries all have political parties organized across class lines and thus have also high levels of class voting( e.g. Hout et al, 1999; Nieuwbeerta and de Graaf, 1999; Nieuwbeerta P and Ultee W. 1999).

In the past decade there have been numerous discussions that argued that class based political parties and class voting are in decline because other primordial attachments( such as religion, ethnicity, gender) became more important and thus individuals started to rally politically around these rather than around their social class(Elff, 2004; Evans, 1999). Evidence of a downward trend

of class based voting and political parties' organization found in different countries (e.g. Germany and United States between 1945 and 1980: Lipset, 1981; in Western industrialized nations in 1970s and 1980s than in 1950s: Lane and Ersson, 1994) made some researchers conclude that "politics started to be less organized by class and more by other loyalties" ( Lipset and Clark, 2001). However, research also shows that while there might be changes in the intensity of political participation of social classes in different countries, class still has a very strong political relevance (Cainzon and Voces, 2010).

### *C. Class and transnational migration*

Class is a complicated, multi-dimensional category. Every society, every state ( e.g. USA, France, Romania), has its own specific class structures, culture and politics. These class structures, culture and politics are not static nor are they definite. They do change and evolve according to the context within these societies. When taking migration into account, the formation of class, class structures, class politics and culture becomes even more complicated. Why? Because contemporary globalization enables immigrants, who before were entangled only in the social system of their host country, to be grounded in two different places and thus grounded in possible two different social settings. Consequently, immigrants become the link through which class<sup>10</sup> (and everything that pertains to it) in one place is influenced by class in another place (in their host and home countries). Based on the variety of their transnational practices, I will consider three avenues through which immigrants link the class structures of their home and their host countries: the travelling of the economic and cultural capital; the integration of immigrant into the labor market.

#### *Travelling of economic capital*

As I presented in a previous section (theories of class; class identity) economic capital is crucial for the social stratification, as accumulation of economic capital and economic interests are leading the class struggle and thus they are the main factors of class identity formation. Also, in capitalist societies, economic assets (e.g. wealth, income) are the principal markers of social

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<sup>10</sup> Markers of social class travel from a society to another, class identity formations travel from a country to another e.g.

status. But travelling of economic capital is one of the main features of transnational migration. As I have discussed in another previous section (transnational migration; transnational migration and economics) transnational migration has spawned veritable remittance economies, by infusing the home countries with large volume of money (Hussain, 2005) and also generating investments from immigrants into the host countries (e.g. Ong, 1992). Thus what can we say about the travelling of economic capital for the social classes formations of the home and host countries? Although this questions has not been explored at large (the research is mostly centered on Latin American and Asian immigrants), I can identify at least three implications that travelling of economic capital could have on the social classes in the host and home countries.

First, through the remittance economy, immigrants might change the way class is defined and conceptualized in their home country. Such an example is the case of Mexican immigrants in United States who “dollarized the local economy, inflated the prices as the migrant families pay for goods with dollars and widened the class differences in such a way that class became defined by whether one has relatives in United States and how much money they earn and remit.”(Smith,2005, 50) according to Smith’s study, this produced a “remittance bourgeoisie” formed by the ones who received money from abroad and a “transnational underclass” formed by the ones who did not have relatives outside the country, they did not received any remittances but they had to pay now for a more expensive life.

Second, infusions of capital from home country might help immigrant communities in their class identity negotiation process in the host country. Infusions of capital can help immigrants bring changes in the meaning of their class identity, changes in their ascribed social status in the host country. Such is the example of immigrant Chinese entrepreneurs in San Francisco presented by Aihwa Ong( 1992). In United States the historical perception of the Asian-Americans is one associated with the members of the middle class, which are laundry or restaurant workers and which do not hold much political leverage. Not surprisingly, when coming into the Bay Area, the wealthy Hong Kong immigrant entrepreneurs found themselves viewed and ascribed to the social status of the Asian-Americans in the United States. Though, this was not in concordance with their high social status overseas, (as most of these immigrants are part of the upper class of Hong Kong). Thus, as class conscious subjects, the rich Hong Kong entrepreneurs embarked in a collective effort to change the image of the Asian-Americans. To demonstrate their importance for the San Francisco society they have invested their capital from

overseas and contributed to San Francisco's urban renewal: they have built malls, hotels and shops and they have created jobs for the city's population. In general, they used their economic power to climb the social ladder, to change the wide American view of Asian-American from "the old lady garment worker" to the "wealthy educated entrepreneur" (Ong, 1992, 140).

Third, remittances might help the immigrant and its family to change their class status in this home country. As literature points out, very often immigrants send remittances to their families in their home countries. They use these remittances to upgrade their consumption patterns, to gain new possessions or to invest in different businesses. Depending on the values on which class is defined in their home society (some consumption societies ascribe social class at birth, as nobility- such as in UK, or others with castes-Hindu societies, however in most societies class status is typically based on a person's income or wealth, occupation or education) this upgrade in the consumption patterns or increase of wealth could mean an upward movement in the class status for the immigrant and for its family.

### *Travelling of cultural capital*

The discussion of class formations becomes even more complicated when we introduce the idea of travelling of cultural capital. Migration leads to the establishment of ethnic communities. These communities are places of cross-cultural encounters of two meanings of class: the meaning of class in the home country and the one in the host country. The juxtaposition of these two meanings of class can influence differently the way that immigrants conceptualize and understand class, thus can have an effect on their class consciousness and class identity. Some immigrant groups might continue to understand class and behave in accordance with the class norms in their home societies, while others develop an awareness of the differences between the way class is constituted in the host and home country (Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999). The ones who perceive the differences in the meanings of class between the two societies will try to mold their class identity in a way that will maximize their social recognition and also their upward social mobility. Some of them might even shift between different social identities to put accent on the one who will offer them the highest social status. Such examples are provided by the cases of the Haitian and Jamaican immigrants in United States (Basch et al.1994, Nancy Foner 1985) that were discussed in the section on transnational migration and the social and cultural realm. These immigrants shifted their social identity

towards their ethnic identity, when they were ascribed to a lower social class than the ones they identified themselves with in their home country.

*Immigrant's integration into the labor market*

As the literature suggests (e.g. Massey et al 1994), migration (either if we talk about temporary or permanent migration) presupposes the fact that the immigrants will eventually become part of the labor market in the host country. When interpreted comparatively, we see that the access of immigrants to this new labor market implies challenges for immigrants' class identity and class structures in the host and home country. For example, as they access this new labor market they also access new opportunities to make use of their skills and education and thus new opportunities for social mobility. Literature has shown that ethnic minorities are often disadvantaged in the labor market in the sense that they cannot always access the occupations and higher-level jobs that their education level and skills qualify them for. Very often they are stuck in low wage, ethnic niche sectors of market (Waldinger, 1994; Waldinger and Bozorghmer, 1996) and thus, in the host country they are marked as being lower class. However, the economic benefits of their work might be much higher than the ones they could have obtained for a high-level job in their home country, thus they can perceive their move not as being one downward but as a movement up on the social scale. Thus, the way they integrate in the labor market of their host country can spawn contradictions in the way they constitute their class identity and the way immigrants' class identity is constituted by the host society.

There is another important issue that steams from the immigrants' integration into the labor market in the host country. For many years now literature has talked about the fact that immigration triggered the formation of chain migration networks that drawn immigrants from the home to the host country to work in same occupational sector, with similar jobs ( e.g. Shah and Menon, 1999; Caces, 1986). For many years researchers also talked about the importance of occupational communities in shaping class identities (Salaman , 1975, Strangleman 2001). Strangleman for example, in his study of coal miners in United Kingdom found that coalfields- that could be considered a classic example of occupational community- are "ideal-typical repositories of working-class life", a place where class is the most important factor in shaping the identities of individuals within these communities (Strangleman 2001, 265). But if we have immigrants that are drawn to the same place and have similar jobs, what can we say about their

occupational communities and their implication on their immigrants' identity? There are studies that emphasize immigrants' solidarity across different jobs (Ness, 2005; Das Gupta, 2006) as well as their political activism (Zolniski, 2006). But no connections have been made between these and immigrants' class identity.

We see thus that the immigrants' integration into the host labor market poses multiple challenges for their class identity. First there are challenges for the immigrant's class consciousness, as his projection of his class status might not correspond with his assigned class status by the society at large. Thus would be interesting to study the process of class identity negotiation between the immigrant and the main society. Second, there are challenges that arise from the creation of immigrants' occupational communities. Could these be the base of creation of an immigrant class identity?

But what can we say about Eastern European immigration to European Union? What are the implications of this immigration for the class transformations that take place along with the Eastern European migration to West Europe?

#### ***D. The Eastern Europe context- class and transnational migration in the post-communist European countries***

There are many studies that document the existence of high volumes of transnational migration between the Eastern European and the Western European countries (Favell and Hansen, 2002; Dietz, 2002; Smith, 2003) that developed and supports diverse transnational practices. For example research has found that Eastern European immigration has spawned veritable transnational networks that move immigrants from the home country to a common destination in the host country. Immigrants that are already established in their host country facilitate for their family members, friends (and other people that come in their circle of knowledge) room and board and placements in the labor market (e.g. Anghel, 2008; Nare, 2006). Many of these immigrant networks have lead to the creation of occupational communities (e.g. Potot, 2008) similar with the ones of Latin American (Wallace, 1986) and the Asian immigrants (Waldinger et al, 1990; Bozogmehr, 1989). Also official statistics indicate that Eastern European immigration to Western Europe has generated remittances flows towards their

countries of origin. According to IFAD (2006)<sup>11</sup>, Eastern European immigrants sent 51 billion US dollars in remittances, which put them in the third place in the world. A few small scale<sup>12</sup> studies demonstrate that there are strong cultural and emotional bonds that Eastern European immigrant populations developed with their home country (Burrell, 2003; Glorius and Fredrich, 2006).

We have seen that all these transnational practices (travelling of economic and cultural capital, immigrant integration in the host country labor market) have brought changes in the class formations of the home and host country, have challenged immigrant's class consciousness and class status, and have brought immigrants towards constructing a class identity for themselves. However, the literature does not make these kinds of connections in the case of Eastern European immigration. The literature did not yet started to grasp on the implications of the Eastern European migration and the class transformations that could be brought by it.

Research on class in Eastern Europe has generally maintained a domestic scope, focusing on the construction of class within communist nations. This research shows how the former communist societies were organized during communism and how they became socially stratified as a result of the internal transformations that took place inside the former communist states in the transition period (e.g. Cerami, 2009; Rose, 2009).

During communism, official communist documents presented Eastern Europe (and Russia) as having a homogenous egalitarian society. The working class was the only social strata within the socialist states. This was not quite accurate, as communist societies were stratified in separate groups (with different social and economic statuses. For example, the sociologist Jan Szczepanski(1970) distinguished four classes for the Polish society: 1. intelligentsia(political officials; highly educated professionals; economic managers; ordinary white-collar functionaries); 2. manual workers; 3. peasantry ( e.g. collective farmers, peasant white-collar employees); 4. private entrepreneurs( e.g. artisans, shopkeepers)”. The distribution of these social classes varied greatly across communist countries. In Hungary private entrepreneurs were in charge of most auxiliary activities in industry and services (only 25% of consumer services were conducted by state enterprises), a far cry from the much smaller proportional size of private business in Romania, Bulgaria and Russia ( Bručan, 1998, 59). In Czechoslovakia, Hungary and

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<sup>11</sup> International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); <http://www.ifad.org/>

<sup>12</sup> Studies that are carried on small Diaspora communities that are based on a small number of interviews(from 1 to 30 interviews) with immigrant men and women

Poland,<sup>13</sup> about 20-25% of the active population belonged to a powerful social stratum that enjoyed the standard of living characteristics of the middle class. However, such a social stratum was very small and practically insignificant in Romania, Bulgaria (each with 5% of population) and Russia (1% of population). What is more important for my study though, is not the variation in the distribution of these social classes but the understanding of the way social classes were created in communist times and what constituted the principal markers of social status during this time.

Two previous sections present discussions of class identity formation and social class markers in the communist societies (theories of class: class identity; culture as base of social distinction). In contrast with capitalist societies, in communist societies the economic capital was of minimal importance. All properties belonged to the state, so individuals will not have ownership over their apartments, houses or over any means of productions. Even the peasants did not have ownership of any agricultural fields. Also all people were employed by the state. The state was the one who decided how many political officials, how many doctors and engineers were needed and the state was also the one to decide on the wages and benefits that were paid for each kind of job. As the communist ideology purported social equality among the entire population, the communist state kept inequalities on a small scale and thus there were not high differences between the wages and social benefits received for each job. The minimum wage was of 125\$/month, but the difference between a doctor and a manual worker could be at the most 50%. What was of great importance through was the political power (political capital), which was highly institutionalized in the form of membership in the Communist Party. Political officials stayed at the top because they held commanding positions in the government, administration e.g. and thus they held greater political power. Prestige was also a factor of social class delineation, and again political officials enjoyed it because their closeness to the Communist Party but also highly educated professionals (e.g. engineers, doctors, economic managers) ranked at the top because they enjoyed the respect and the prestige of a highly educated group.

It was not until the fall of the communism and the transition towards a market economy that significant economic differences started to crystallize within the populations of the Eastern

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<sup>13</sup> This social stratum survived from the inter-war period, when these countries were pursuing a capitalist-industrial development strategy comparable to the one of the Western democracies.

European states. Literature on post-communist class transformations ( e.g. Eyal, Szelenyi and Townsley, 1998; Cerami, 2009) points out that political capital as a marker of social hierarchies started to be devaluated and economic capital became more important. A new social structure of capitalism started to take shape. The privatization of state property created opportunities for individuals connected with political leaders to take ownership of state enterprises at a very small price. These individuals, who currently represent the high class of the Eastern European societies, now enjoy tremendous wealth and have a great influence in state affairs. A new middle class of entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, commercial agents, managers, bankers started also to crystallize. Last, large segments of Eastern European societies remained at the bottom and formed the class of the poor: e.g. unskilled workers, unemployed, people living in large families in the country side, and retired elderly people.

While nationally bounded studies on post-communist class transformations are important in illuminating issues on how social classes are reproduced in times of economic change <sup>14</sup>(transition from communism to capitalism), a study of post-communist class transformations in the light of transnational immigration would open the gates in understanding these post-communist class transformations in a richer way.

First, we can analyze what is the effect of the travelling of economic capital towards the host country for the class formations in the home and host societies. Could this give rise to new class formations? Could immigrants negotiate new meanings of their class identity within the host or home society? Also could economic capital accumulation give immigrants more political leverage in the home or host country?

Second, as the immigrants get incorporated in the host country labor market what happens with their class consciousness? We did understand that sometimes immigrants do not succeed in getting jobs that reflect their skills and education and that many times this means a movement downwards on the social scale which puzzles immigrant's class consciousness. But these immigrants come from countries that did not experience strong class frictions in the first place. Thus their class consciousness might not be so prominent. So what can we say once they get embedded in the Western Societies, where social class is a strong factor in one's identity?

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<sup>14</sup> There is also a social change in these societies in the sense that the communist ideology is replaced by the capitalist one, thus a whole set of value and social norms would slowly be inculcated in these societies

Third, I also talked about the Eastern European migration networks and their potential of creating occupational communities. Research maintains that these communities could be places that cultivate class identities. Thus, what can we say about the Eastern European occupational communities and their potential of rally immigrants with a class interest? I know we are almost tempted to equate this immigrant interest with an ethnic interest, since immigrant occupational communities are in fact ethnic occupational communities. However, these occupational communities might facilitate their identification with a larger social group (within the same occupational sphere) and thus can guide them towards building a specific class identity. Fourth, there are the challenges that are brought by the fact that class markers were different in the communist societies than in the capitalist societies. From Bourdieu we know that “habitus” guides individuals to build and negotiate their class identity according to their inherited cultural values and norms (or the childhood –family inherited cultural capital). As Bourdieu says, “an individual habitus begins to form in early childhood, as they internalize their family in social space, their “class origin”. (Eyal, Szelenyi and Townsley, 1998; Cerami, 2009, 42). That means that it is possible that these immigrants<sup>15</sup>, which were born during communism and which mostly lived under communism would construct their class consciousness and class identity according with the markers learned under communism. In fact research on post-communist societies has already shown that the formation of a capitalist class remains a “contested terrain” and that ironically the fall of state socialism lead to the creation of “privatization bureaucracies” (Eyal, Szelenyi and Townsley, 1998; Cerami, 2009, 193) . That means that the “habitus” to manipulate political parties’ organizations (and thus political power and political capital) is still important in constructing class identities. So what happens with our immigrants’ construction of class (e.g. their class identity, consciousness) once they are inserted and live in the west capitalist societies? How will they define and negotiate their class identity and consciousness when faced with the juxtaposition of two different meanings of class ?

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<sup>15</sup> That is if we do not take in consideration the young generation; which are children of immigrants that were born in these new host countries, or that were born in the home country in the post-communist time. but here too we have a problem, as these children, according to Bourdieu’s theory will inherit part of their cultural capital from their parents.

### **III. The proposal**

#### **Project Outline**

This dissertation proposes to examine the creation, articulation and transformation of class in the context of Romanian immigration to the European Union.

The primary focus of this research will be the ways which Romanian immigrants create and transform their class understandings, identity and status in their home and host country. Even though this will not be a study of social stratification of the Eastern European societies, I am hoping that by looking at Romanian immigrants we could also draw some new/original conclusions on the way that social stratification and the class understandings have changed in this country and maybe draw some general conclusion on the post-communist class structure across the Eastern European countries.

By looking at immigrants' integration in the labor market and by studying their ethnic communities, in terms of their social, economical and political settings and also by looking at the transnational processes that immigrants within these communities engage in, I would like to propose a framework of analysis that will analyze immigrants' evolvement along three dimensions of class:

1. the articulation and transformations of immigrants' class identity:
  - a) Class identity construction: I want to analyze immigrants' class identity construction from two perspectives. First I would like to take a cultural approach that would be sensitive to the particularity of Romanian immigrants and their approach to class and class structures as decades-long members of a post-communist society. We still do not fully understand how the transition from communism to capitalism affected the way people articulated their new class identities. Many scenarios are possible. Based on the fact that class identity is constructed differently in different societies and based on Bourdieu's theory of "habitus" I would like to examine how individuals build and negotiate their class identity between their inherited cultural values and the new cultural values of the host society. Second, I would like to examine the idea of class identity formation within an occupational community, as many Romanians immigrate through chain

migration networks that draw immigrants from the home to the host country to work in same occupational sector.

- b) Negotiation of meanings of their social class category with the population at large in their host country; we saw that it is possible for immigrants to be placed in social class categories that not always correspond with their own categorization of themselves. Using the means that they have available (in the case I have presented immigrants made use of their economic capital) immigrants try to negotiate new meanings for their social class, meanings that will be closer to their own image of themselves. I would like to examine this issue in the case of the Romanian immigrants: see how they are placed in the social hierarchy in their host society and if they try to negotiate new class meanings for themselves by using their economic or even heir cultural capital.
  - c) New class identity formations in their home country: we saw that remittance economies created new class formations in other countries (the example I have discussed was the case of Mexico). Romanian immigration (similar with other European countries) has produced a large volume of remittances. I would like to examine if these remittances have produced in Romania class transformations similar with the ones in Mexico.
2. immigrant's class consciousness, defined here as his projection of his class status. We saw that immigration can set immigrants in motion on the social scale of their home and host societies. Integration in the labor market of their host country can sometime move them downwards, while economic capital (remittances mostly- that can be utilized for example for consumption, investments in their home countries which subsequently become sources of new capital) can move them upwards on the social scale of their home country. I would like to examine the process of transformation of immigrants' class consciousness in the case of Romanian immigrants. Where do they and their families situate themselves in the class structure in the home and host countries? Do they move upward or downward on the social scales in these countries? What

kind of expectations do they have about their class mobility (upon their departure from the home country and as time lapses in the host country) and how do they interpret their class mobility?

3. immigrants' political performance : we saw that in the case of other immigrant populations ( e.g. Haitians in United States) their economic capital gives them political leverage in their home country. I would like to examine thus if Romanian immigrants use their economic capital (in the form of remittances or any other kind of economic capital) to further their political interests in their home country. Also, having as example the efforts that Mexicans took to change the immigration reform in United States, I would like to examine if Romanian immigrants developed any kind of political actions in their host countries. I am sure that the magnitude of their political actions(and thus their influence) do not raise at the level of the Mexican one, however it will be interesting what are the issues ( if any) that Romanian immigrants are interested to politicize.

### **Case studies selection**

I have chosen to study the Romanians in Spain (Colsada) and the families of immigrants that remained in Romania (Nenciulesti).

There are several reasons behind this case selection.

First, it is hard to find an Eastern European country that would be representative in terms of its class structure system for all Eastern European countries. These countries all had differences between their pre-communist class structures and they also had different experiences during the communist times. I have chosen Romanian immigrants because they come from a country that was a more extreme case of communist class restructuring. Therefore the transformations of class structures would be most visible in this case and they cannot be attributed to the pre-communist class structures. Romania's class stratification is closer to the one of Bulgaria and Russia ( Brucan, 1998, 59). In these three countries the Communist Party established its hegemony forcefully. Pre-existent social classes were crushed and never quite recovered. Individuals' pre-

communist properties possessions were taken into state's possession. Everything was controlled and owned by the state; there was no private property and the economy, starting with the jobs (everybody was employed by the state) to the mechanisms that control the market was regulated by the state. Prices were fixed; there was no or very little inflation. In other words, economic differences between individuals were minimal, and thus economic capital had no influence in class differentiation. The clear markers of social delineation were political power, which was highly institutionalized through the membership in the Communist Party. However, this was not the case in countries like Hungary and Poland. The pre-communist Poland and Hungary were characterized by an endurance of feudal relations; landownership was the main source of wealth and social delineation. After communism assumed power in 1947 in Hungary and 1945 for Poland, the new communist governments tried to replace the old order with the new social structure as dictated by the communist ideology. However, these societies were in a continuous flux and unrest, and after the 1956 national revolts, the governments of these countries reduced their efforts of social engineering. The government of Hungary even made concessions towards a "second economy" where state employees were allowed to work after their official working hours. A new class of "part-time entrepreneurs" which earned significant incomes from their part-time activities started to contour (Eyal, Szelenyi and Townsley, 1998; Cerami, 2009). As this "market economy" grew, so did inflation, and social inequality. Though the political power and prestige were still important, economic capital became an important factor class-stratification. For these reasons, I do not consider Hungary and countries with similar situations an ideal example of class-socialist societies.

Second, I have chosen Romanian immigrants because according to statistics Romania is one of the top immigrants sending countries to Western Europe (Migration Information Source). The data on Eastern European immigration to West Europe is presented in Annex I. Romanian immigrants have settled immigrant communities all across Europe which are engaged in significant transnational activities. For example, in the table below is presented the volume of remittance inflows produced by Romanian immigration abroad.

#### **Romanian of remittances inflows**

Year	Remittance volume(in US million \$)
1997	16
1998	49
1999	96
2000	96
2001	116
2002	143
2003	124
2004	132
2005	4,733
2006	6,718
2007	8,533
2008	9,000

*Source: World Bank staff estimates based on the International Monetary Fund's Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook 2008.*

These remittances represent the major source of income for migrants household and in small villages and small cities these tend to develop an economy dependent on them (Oteanu, 2005; Stan, 2005). Immigrants have also developed entrepreneurial businesses abroad (e.g. such as small scale retail, services) or became small businessmen that mediate between foreign entrepreneurs and business opportunities in Romania (Angel, 2009). Also, Romanian immigrants residing abroad represent 10% of the Romania's electorate and politicians have already started to fight for their vote (Horvath and Anghel, 2009). Thus would be interesting to see if they organize politically to further their interests in Romania.

I have chosen Spain as a host country of the Romanian immigrants for two reasons.

First, Spain is the first destination country for the Romanian immigrants, followed by Italy and Germany. The migration data on principal destination countries for the Romanian immigration is presented in Annex I. According to the data provided by the

Spanish Ministry of Labor and Immigration, at the end of March 2008 Romanians immigrants are outnumbered only by the Moroccan immigrants and are the second immigrant nationality in Spain. (graphic presented in Annex II).

Romanian immigration to Spain started after 1990, after the Romanian December revolution. Romanians are present here in large numbers and they are not dispersed around the country. The largest communities of Romanians are centered around Madrid area, in four important municipalities: Alcalá de Henares, Coslada, Arganda del Rey and Torrejón de Ardoz. From brief interviews that I had with few Romanian immigrants from Madrid areas I understood that that the immigration of these Romanians was greatly helped by the presence of certain social networks that would bring immigrants from the same region in Romania to the same region in Madrid. The Romanian immigrants in Alcalá de Henares came from Alba Iulia, in Arganda del Rey from Bistrita and in Coslada from Teleorman. From these regions I have chose as the place for my research the Romanians from Coslada. They are the main immigrant group in the city, as they represent 19% of the population (INS, Romanian Institute of Statistics), which is approximately 17.000 persons. Besides Romanians there are other immigrant groups, such as the Latin Americans, Chinese, Vietnamese and Indians, however their number is much smaller than the ones of Romanians.

Second, Spain possesses a social class structure that resembles most of the Western European democracies. Spain has a long history of class struggle. Before the Second Republic (1931) Spain was monarchy and an agrarian country. It had a polarized society with a small group of land owners and capitalists at the top and the peasantry (small or landless agricultural laborers and an impoverished proletariat). Wealth (in the form of tenure of land and property and other forms of economic capital) was an important delineator of social class. Also, the individuals born in aristocratic families were endowed with high social standing and ranked at the top of the social pyramid. During the Second Republic most of the land was nationalized and a more egalitarian society was promoted. This did not last for a long time, since the Civil War ended with the establishment of the Francoist regime, which returned most of the nationalized land to its original owners and at the same time instituted a state economy based on self-sufficiency. This almost reinforced the old order; since the autarchic economy did not

stimulate economic growth, the main source of wealth remained landownership. However, starting with the Cold War, Spain became an United States (Franco signed an agreement with the US in 1953) ally and moved towards a capitalist economy. Spain's economy revived, the industrial production increased significantly. This economic expansion spawned a growing of the middle class formed by the well-paid industrial workers, people working in sales, service and office workers. Today's Spain class system resembles the West European and American class hierarchies. A survey carried by Armando de Miguel and Linz (1966) explained the distribution of Spanish social classes as : 9% upper and upper middle class, 57% middle class and 34% lower middle and working class. The criteria of social delineation are based on economic wealth but also on few other social markers. The aristocratic title still remains important (Franco's regime maintained a conservative appearance in regards with the importance of nobility and aristocratic families; the monarchy was restored in 1975; currently Spain is a constitutional monarchy) for the social hierachization. However, the barriers of access to this class that were base on the family origins were relaxed, and the aristocratic circles are widened with individuals who are endowed with social standing for their achievements in various fields (culture, business). Education also seems to be an important factor for social advancement, as this makes possible for young people with working class origins to aspire to higher paid occupations (Armando de Miguel and Linz, 1966).

Nenciulesti is a village in Romania with an approximate population of 2000 individuals. The rate of immigration from this village has increased tremendously over the years, from 13.6% for 1996-2001 to 86.4% for the time between 2002 and 2006 (Sandu, 2006). The majority of population is immigrating to Spain , to the Coslada region that I have chose for my research for the Romanian immigrants in Spain.

## **Methodology**

My topic of research, that transnational migration and class transformations, and the comparative approach I chose required data collection to be realized in multiple locations: In Coslada(Spain) and Romania(Nenciulesti). This will involve ethnographical analysis in these two different places. I will use direct observation, questionnaires, and interviews.

Instead of a prolonged fieldwork period, I will practice a steady come-and-go fieldwork. I have already started my fieldwork in Romania (Nenciulesti) by going there in May this year. I have mostly observed and I had a large number of informal talks with individuals that had (and that didn't have) family members that had left to Spain for work. However, I did not conduct any interviews and had no questionnaires yet. I plan to go back there in March for 2 months, time in which I plan to conduct interviews (structural but also no-structural interviews), have questionnaires and do more direct observation. I plan to conduct at least 40-50 interviews and have at least 200 questionnaires. My interview and questionnaires will be mostly directed towards households (families of immigrants but also families that do not have any family members in Spain), but I will also like to interview the local authorities on and ask them about the changes migration brought to the village and how do they react to these challenges.

I plan to go to Coslada in May for 1 month. During this time I will do 40 interviews and I will try to get as many questionnaires as possible, as the Romanian community there is very united and there is a well developed social network among these immigrants. I will use a snowball approach, which I hope that will bring a meaningful number of subjects. I also plan to talk to Romanian officials in Coslada( e.g. the head of Romanian Association ROMADRID Cultural Club, the priests of the two Romanian churches) and also the Spanish authorities of Coslada.

I will divide my interview with Romanian immigrants in Coslada in five sections:

1. Information about their migration strategies; this will allow me to capture the history of their immigration process. I will ask the following questions: "How were migration decisions taken?", "How was migration financed?", "How was migration realized?", "What sort of support relations did they use?"

2. information about their incorporation in general. I will ask the following questions: How did they find accommodation?“, “ “What was their first impression upon arriving at destination?”, “ What risks did they face there?”, “ what kind of social ties did they have(if any) at their destination?”, “Are they part of any cultural communities?”, “what kind of status-e.g.resident, citizen- do they have in Spain”?, “Do they own or rent their house or apartment?”

3. information about their transnational practices. I will ask the following questions: “Who remained at home after migration?”, “How often do they travel back?”, “Do or did they invest any money at home, and if yes what kind of investment?”, “How much do they remit?”

4. information about their incorporation in the labor market. I will ask the following questions: ” How did they access jobs?”, “ How much are they paid?”, “Are they happy with their job?”, “ Do they plan to change their job?”, “ “What job did they have when back in Romania?”

5. information on their political participation. “Do they vote in Spain or in Romania?”, “Are they member of any political party or of other political organization in Spain or Romania?”, “What are their political interests in Spain and Romania?”

6. socio-economic information. Age; Status: Married/Single/Divorced; highest education degree

7. information on how the Romanians perceive their class identity. I will ask the following questions:” what do they think it best describes the social hierarchy in Spain: money, properties (or other types of economic capital), political power, education, aristocratic birth”, “which class do they think they belong in Spain: Lower/Lower-Middle/Middle/Upper-Middle/Upper class?”, “which class did they think they lived in Romania?”, “which class do they think they belong in Romania now?”; if they report any changes between their social statuses I will ask them “Why do they think their status has changed?”

I believe I will tailor the interviews to be semi-structural interviews, because I would like to be able to leave room for their own comments and for their inputs other issues as well.

I will divide my interview with the families of Romanian immigrants in Nenculesti in five sections:

1. information on their family members abroad.” How many family members are abroad?”, “What is their relationship with these family members- e.g. son, daughter, sister?”

2. Information on their transnational practices. I will ask :” Do they receive remittances from their family members?”,” How often and how much?”, “How do they use these remittances?”, “Do they travel to see their relatives, or how often their relatives come to visit?”, “Did their immigrant family opened any business in Romania, or did they open any business in Romania in their name?”

3. Information on their past and present socio-economic status

#### **IV. Few theoretical implications for this study**

I believe that this research will have multiple theoretical implications, not only for a better understanding the post-communist social class transformations, but for the theory of class in general.

The post-communist social class transformations have not been studied at large and the all research has maintained a domestic scope. Most of the studies have concentrated on the challenges brought by the transition period towards full blown capitalist economies for the post-communist societies. The research revolved mostly around the use of the old political capital to build or be part of post-communist social networks. By opening the research on the post-communist class structure to the field of immigration and transnationalism I am placing its study in a global capitalist context. My research will contribute to the previous studies in at least three new ways.

First, by placing the old understandings of class (class identity, status, consciousness) in the capitalist settings of the western world we would be able to understand better the way class is differentiated in the post-communist societies. We will understand the transformations (or the substitution) of the previous markers of social class and their role differentiating new class hierarchies.

I also believe that the Romanian immigration and the transnational processes it generates constitute a great medium of expanding Bourdieu's theory of "habitus". This research will allow accounting for the importance of family and childhood learned understandings of class for one's class identity.

Second, this research will help in learning about the challenges brought by immigration to the post-communist class structures. Immigration between east and west Europe is massive and so are the transitional processes that it generates. In other parts of the world it has been found that immigration and transnationalism have reshaped class identities and have brought transformations in the class structures of the home countries. I believe that this research will help us uncover if immigration and transnationalism brings similar changes to Eastern Europe.

Third, it is possible that this research will bring some light on the connections that can be made between social immigrant networks, occupational communities, and class identity. Theories of social immigrant networks show that they move immigrants from the same region in the host to the home country to get jobs in the same occupational field. At the same time, theory also shows that occupational communities are typical repositories of working class<sup>16</sup> life; within these communities individuals develop class values and interests that make them part of the larger working class of their country. I do not know yet what the case of immigrants is, but it is possible that by settling these occupational communities' immigrants will start identify them with the larger class structures from the host society.

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<sup>16</sup> That is because studies have centered around working class occupational communities; but it is possible that this theory extends to other social strata as well.

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## ANNEX I

**Table 1: Inflows of eastern European immigrants for 2007 and 2008**

Country of origin Country of destination/Year	Romania		Bulgaria		Poland		Czech Republic		Hungary	
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
Spain	197.642	71.482	31.331	13.106	17.269	7.961	1.595	949	2.051	1.392
France	2.393	3.655	562	754	2.031	1.231	87	43	159	102
Germany	42.899	48.225	20.504	24.093	139.967	119.867	6.778	6.309	22.163	25.151
Hungary	6.735	9.987	25	91	34	177	44	54	-	-
Austria	9.273	9.265	2.172	2.466	5.285	4.393	1.247	1.321	4.492	5.195
Portugal	0.242	5.252	55	884	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sweden	2.587	2.544	1.159	962	7.525	6.971	207	325	776	1.018
Netherlands	2.345	2.411	4.908	5.231	9.236	13.277	516	661	975	1.721
Switzerland	689	808	158	349	2.052	2.437	58	698	734	1.061

Source: OECD, International Migration Statistics; International Migration Data Base

**Table 2: Stock of foreign born population by nationality, country of origin Romania**

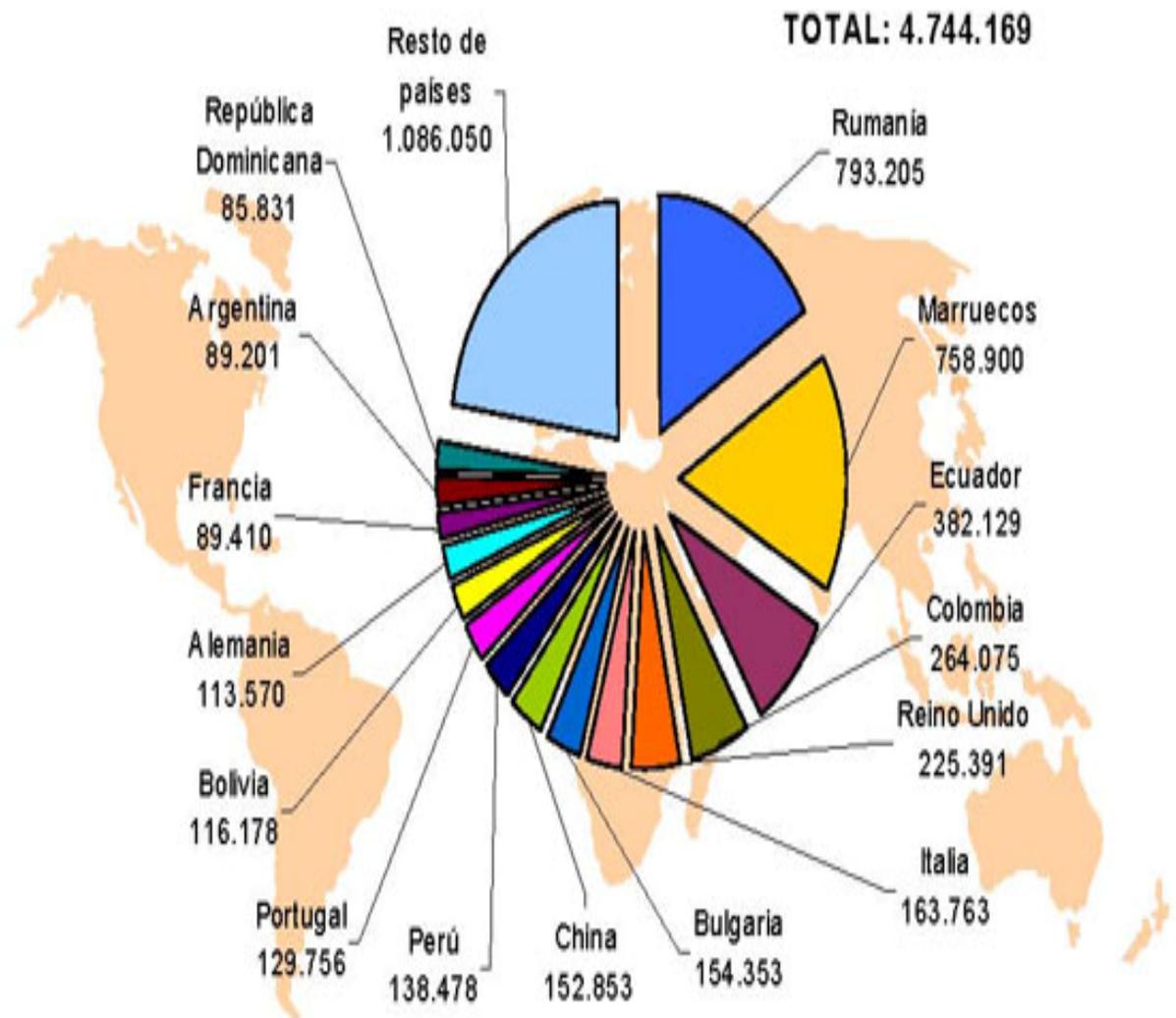
Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Country</b>										
Spain	6.41	31.641	67.279	137.347	207.96	317.366	407.159	527.019	731.806	796.576
Italy	61.212	69.999	82.985	95.039	177.812	248.849	297.57	342.2	625.278	796.477
Germany	87.504	90.094	88.102	88.679	89.104	73.365	73.043	73.353	84.584	94.326
Hungary	57.343	41.561	44.977	47.281	55.676	67.529	66.183	66.951	65.836	66.368
Greece	6.02	5.225	7.208	13.803	14.602	16.195	18.948	18.949	25.735	29.456
Portugal	0.223	0.36	8.355	11.32	12.031	12.468	11.05	12.035	19.389	27.41
Sweden	2.981	2.949	2.495	2.327	2.343	2.36	2.371	2.252	4.442	6.536
Netherlands	1.397	1.694	2.094	2.36	2.735	3.02	3.006	3.225	4.894	6.256
Switzerland	2.372	2.575	2.984	3.117	3.256	3.441	3.626	3.78	3.957	4.306

Source: OECD, International Migration Statistics; International Migration Data Base

## ANNEX II

### Spain, Distribution of foreign residents

#### Extranjeros con certificado de registro o tarjeta de residencia en vigor según nacionalidad. 30-06-2010



Source: Ministry of Work and Immigration ;

See <http://extranjeros.mtin.es/es/InformacionEstadistica/>