The Romanian diaspora

Media use and dual identity

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ABSTRACT

In the transition from communism to democracy, the Romanian nation battled corruption, de-industrialisation, and inflation upwards of 200%. In such dire living conditions, 4 million people were lost to westward emigration. The Romanian exodus was exacerbated in 2007 when Romania joined the European Union, and thus Romanians gained the right to work anywhere in the European Union. Better work opportunities were found, and Romanians integrated well: two million live in Italy, one million in Spain, and the rest primarily in the United Kingdom and Germany. Migration of such dimensions is bound to affect the family structure, the culture, the economy, and education, to say the least. In this context, the present research tackles the following research question: how does the Romanian diaspora construct their identity and belonging to the national culture in and through media? The main theory guiding the research is Anderson's (1983) imagined communities, with media use in transnational communities as theoretical background, among others. The methodology is qualitative in nature, with in-depth interviews as data collection method. Italy was chosen as country of residence for the sample because it hosts the biggest community of Romanians and has been doing so for the longest time compared to other countries that host Romanian communities. There are eleven interviews with members of the Romanian diaspora of Italy. The interviews are semi-structured discussions about migration experiences, media habits, and integration in the host country. The sample is composed of people who emigrated for labour-related reasons and who have been living in Italy for one to nineteen years. The interview data was transcribed and coded using thematic analysis. The results of each theme mirrored a Romanian identity constantly under negotiation, with varying degrees in each participant. Lengthy negative media coverage of the Romanian diaspora led to an underlying awareness that life abroad is difficult and that co-nationals generally struggle, although there is a trend of improvement on the fairness of representation. Furthermore, social media is an essential tool of the migrant, reflecting findings of other academic works. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Romanian media consumption is found to be a reflection of Romanian identity, thus mirroring but not driving one's cultural closeness. Romanians abroad access plenty of Romanian media resources, especially at the beginning of their migration experience, with forums and online communities as staples of the economic migrant's life. They find and help each other via connections made online. In terms of mass media, television habits are found to be determined by family situation: Romanians who live with other Romanians have a stronger tendency to watch Romanian content, whereas Romanians who live with Italian partners are instead more likely to follow Romanian content on their mobile devices for ease of access. Finally, there was a general sense of contentment regarding integration and wellbeing in Italy, the host country, with people feeling lucky to have succeeded in migrating.

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1. Introduction

"But I was lucky. Other people have not been so lucky".

The given right to all European citizens to migrate and work in any European country without needing a visa or a work permit has been a blessing, especially for the more economically diverse countries that joined the European Union in 2007 (Dobson, 2009). Citizens from Eastern Europe formed a sizable working army that emigrated to the Western European countries looking for reliable, well-paid work. This geographic displacement motivated by economic reasons results in tremendous investment in Eastern countries made by the diaspora, and it also comes with unintended consequences. The Romanian state television now has a channel dedicated to the diaspora that broadcasts in many Western countries including New Zealand, and Romanian supermarkets appeared in numerous European cities. Many children grew up without parents because they were working abroad, while many parents travel to Western countries in their old age to meet their grandchildren with whom they speak in English or another highly circulated European language.

The reality of migration within the European Union is nowhere near as culturally shocking as migrating from a continent to another. One of the many slogans of the EU boasts about being united in diversity, implying tolerance and acceptance of cultural difference (EuropeanUnion.eu, 2020). This study sets out to explore experiences of members of the Romanian diaspora in Italy shedding light on how they relate to Romanianness from a media perspective. The purpose is to explore how they relate to media to present themselves, maintain Romanian identity, and recreate a sense of belonging. Within this project, in-depth interviews are the research tool of uncovering raw and unfiltered experience – the good, the bad, and the mediatic scandal that affected life as a migrant.

Studying Romanian migrants and their media habits requires a sizable population that lives abroad. According to Statista (2021), there are almost 5 million Romanians living outside the border of their country, with two million in Italy, one million in Spain, one million in the United Kingdom, half of a million in Germany, and the rest elsewhere in the world (ibid). From a country with only 19 million people, having five million working abroad has long-lasting consequences, including but not limited to social, political, economic, and cultural. Since the biggest Romanian diaspora is in Italy, and since that is also where Romanians first settled and created small communities, this study features only interviews undertaken with residents of Italy. Respondents are asked about their media habits, and these are then related to their cultural

closeness with their home culture, to assess how media tools come into the interplay of national identity, integration, and cultural belonging.

The literature review offers a comprehensive overview of the historical context that led to mass migration of Romanians to Western countries. In order to understand nations and the idea of national belonging, Anderson's (1983) theory of imagined communities is employed. The nation-building role of the media is taken into consideration, alongside the creation and recreation of national discourse on television. After that, specifics of the Romanian diaspora are displayed, such as how this migration was covered by Western media. After reviewing relevant literary works, the methodology is explained, which later leads to an overview of results and analysis thereof.

The data were analysed using thematic analysis. Several themes emerged, one of them representing the starting quote of this thesis: "But I was lucky. Other people have not been so lucky". To explain the quote, there was an overarching theme of "feeling lucky" among the participants. Some of them felt lucky to have integrated so well in Italy – perhaps because they learned to speak the language quickly and without a regional accent, or perhaps they feel they have met friendly and welcoming people. The emphasis is put on "other people" here – others have not been so lucky, with the lucky ones feeling grateful for the chances they have been given. Paradoxically, almost all respondents felt lucky in one way or another, even if they have also had negative experiences as immigrants in Italy. However, there is a subconscious knowledge that life is rough for other Romanians abroad. The media carries part of the blame for this effect, as will be explained later in the literature review.

1.1.   Research question

This study examined the diaspora's consumption of media from their home country. The interest was on how media consumption portrays and represents the Romanian identity of the respondents. Does the media consumed by the diaspora represent diverse levels of Romanianness? Do long-term immigrants still feel a sense of belonging to their home country? What affects the type of media consumed? Has the internet inherently changed the perception of home and the accessibility of media resources originating from the home country? All of these questions lead to the overarching research question of the present study:

"How does the Romanian diaspora construct identity and belonging through and in media?"

The question has been with me for a few years, as I was also negotiating my own identity abroad and in Romania upon my return. I have encountered different categories of immigrants, but the

present study has given me an opportunity to better understand how categories of migration drive the media consumption, and how the situation has changed over the years. The interviewees that enabled the analysis of my research topic come from all walks of life and thus offered a comprehensive overview of life as a Romanian abroad. The research question opened a discussion on time spent abroad, accessibility of media resources to tap into the ever-evolving culture of the home country, and future generations of Romanians raised abroad in multicultural and ethnically heterogeneous environments.

1.2.   Societal and scientific relevance

The results of this research project have the potential to contribute to understanding European diasporas and how their identity is construed using media. Findings shed light on how to improve traditional media content designed for and about the diaspora, while also uncovering how the diaspora reads about itself and relates to coverage written by foreign media outlets. A pulse of the real level of tolerance in European countries is taken, as respondents are asked to reflect on how media coverage has, or has not, changed with regards to writing stories about immigration. As immigration becomes increasingly more common and people live, work, and move considerably more often than in the past, a research project written in this niche has great potential of improving social services, national television channels, facilitating integration of Europeans, and so much more.

Romanian migration, though a relatively new phenomenon (started in 1990), has already been academically researched by scholars (e.g., Macri, 2013; Puslenghea, 2014; Trandafoiu, 2013). Studying the diasporas in not a new venture, as numerous other researchers have accepted this challenge. For instance, Jones-Gailani (2017) wrote about Iraqi women living in the diaspora; Budarick (2011) about the Iranian diaspora in Australia; and Valverde (2012) about the Vietnamese diaspora. The Romanian diaspora has its specific characteristics, given its identity as post-communist country intersecting with Western values via the people who move abroad and bring back Western values, as well as via a multitude of media tools that propagate and thus inherently change society from within. This study sets out to analyse how these media tools construct and maintain a Romanian identity while living abroad. As such, the role of the media is analysed from an identity negotiation perspective in light of the literature reviewed in the theoretical framework section.

In order to understand Romanian migration, it is first necessary to understand the Romanian national sentiment. This is why the literature review first delves into explaining concepts such as the imagined communities (Anderson, 1983), and also building an overview of how Romania and

the Romanians came into existence, while also explaining how they relate in the broader European context (Hitchins, 2014). To briefly introduce this chapter of the literature review, the territory that now represents Romania has been under Ottoman rule, before enjoying a brief period of independence when the national sentiment was created, a sentiment which was maintained and exacerbated by the Communist rule of 1947 – 1989 (Hitchins, 2014). For as long as communism was the rule, emigration was unlikely if not impossible. Upon the revolution of 1989, the exodus of Romanians started, as living and working abroad became increasingly easier, facilitated by European-wide policies and foreign investments into the country.

The media played a special role in the process of migration, integration, and tolerance for the Romanian diaspora. Respondents reminisced of the days when calling family was expensive, with WhatsApp's free internet calls not being taken for granted. Online media plays a role not only in the personal life of Romanian migrant, but also in their representation abroad. Representing nations and personal stories is extensively reviewed in the theoretical framework, with the nation-building role of the media at the forefront. More specifically, the media has played significant roles in constructing nationalism in many countries (for instance, Bornman, 2013; Kumar, 2012; Ogola, 2011).

2. Literature review

This chapter describes in detail the previous research on diasporas, nationalism, and the historical context of Romanians. The two theories informing the present study are nationalism and the nation-building role of the media, in particular for diasporic communities. Firstly, after a brief historical context of Romania and Romanian nationalism, I present the building blocks of nationalism as explained by Anderson (1983). Then it is necessary to link nationalism with the pervasiveness of media in the 21st century. Consequently, the first subchapter is about the imagined communities in general, followed by the national sentiment in Romania. After that, I present the effects of media on nation building, applied directly to the relevant context. Finally, media representation of diasporic communities is exposed from a political and representational perspective. The purpose is to thoroughly analyse both media and nations conceptually, so that the analysis brings light over the main building blocks of the present research question. To go into detail, in order to understand national identity built using the media by a member of a diaspora, the concepts are broken down by various academic works on these topics. Further, upon concluding my academic analysis of past works, I will be able to answer the research question with a combination of both theory and the data extracted from interviews.

2.1.   Historical context

Hitchins (2014) wrote a comprehensive history of the Romanians in present-day Romania. It starts with the unification of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1859. 1877 saw these two principalities declaring independence from the Ottoman Empire: thus, modern Romania came to life. To mark its independence and Western affinity, the country converted from the Cyrillic alphabet to the Latin one (Safran, 2008). At this time, many young people left the country to study in France and other Western European countries. Despite its late start as a European nation-state, 20th century Romania produced many philosophers, composers, playwrights, and historians (Hitchins, 2014).

After the First World War Romania gained territories previously occupied by the Austro-Hungarian Empire and thus almost doubled its territory. The Second World War started with neutrality until 1941, then fighting alongside Germany until 1944, and then turning against Germany. Being on the winning side of the war could not prevent the installation of the communist regime by the USSR, Romania's new ally. Communism imposed learning the Russian language in Romanian territories, but Romanian remained the national language throughout the period. Romanianness was maintained as an ideology because national identity was important to

reinforce the regime, but at the sacrifice of Romanian ethnic minorities who had to engage in Romanian traditions and customs.

The Iron Curtain fell in 1989 with a violent revolution in Romania that made space for democracy. Romania joined NATO in 2004, and the EU in 2007. Becoming part of these international organisations marked the beginning of mass immigration for Romanian citizens. Joining the European Union in particular was a pivotal point because living and working in European states was permitted.

The right to work in the European Union for citizens of any member states drove economic mobility in recent years. In 2004 ten new member states were accepted, with East to West migration being expected; however, the pattern of migration was surprising. According to Barrell et al. (2010) three member states, namely, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Sweden adopted a free movement migration policy. Naturally, this is where most of the migration was directed, with the UK and Ireland becoming top destinations given the linguistic aspect, in the context that English is widely spoken by Romanians (Marica, 2017). Furthermore, according to Dobson (2009), the EU expansion of 2004 was the most diverse because it encompassed economically disadvantaged states in the largest expansion in the history of the community. In fact, the same author states that it should not be surprising that such a high number of people moved to Western Europe when given the right to work in the EU, but we should be surprised that so few people did it. Moreover, in spite of economic predictions before 2004 when policymakers expected the poorest people of the poorest nations to emigrate to the West, it was in fact a majority of young, highly educated people that settled in the Western member states. A potential explanation is that language skills and financial resources are reliable predictors of successful European mobility. Further, another factor is comprised of diasporic communities which significantly contribute to the settlement and integration of new immigrants, as seen in the Polish diaspora of the 20th century that had already set up churches, community centres and job market aid for the new wave of Polish immigration that took place in 2004, when Poland joined the EU.

Another economic event that exacerbated European migration towards Western countries is the economic crisis of 2007-2008. According to Lafleur and Stanek (2017), geographic mobility has long been considered a coping method for economic hardship. The deterioration of living conditions in Eastern Europe resulted in continental moves for economic reasons. Generally speaking, during the economic crisis of 2007-2008, people from the Southern European states moved to countries where the job market remained attractive in spite of the crisis (for instance, Belgium, France, Germany, UK). Romanians' migration is also motivated by labour demands.

This characterisation of the Romanian diasporic community is easily proven by the fact that Romanian migration exploded after 2002, when visa-free travel was approved; and after having gained the right to work in the European Union in 2007 new waves of migrants left Romania (Favell, 2001).

More specifically to Romanian migration, I turn to the research conducted by Horváth and Anghel (2009), who present several distinct phases of Romanian migration after 1990. The first phase (1990-1993) is characterised by a significant number of asylum applications (Romanians were the second largest group applying for asylum, after citizens of the war-torn former Yugoslavia). Ethnic minorities, for instance Hungarians and Germans, moved away from Romania with support from the Hungarian and German governments. The second phase (1994-1996) saw stricter migration policies in EU countries; however, short term labour migration increased. The third phase (1997-2001) is once again characterised by an increase in westward migration, which now has a circular character, namely, "home stays alternating with migratory episodes" (ibid, p. 388). In the fourth phase (2002-2007) Romania's EU integration process starts, and Romanians no longer need a visa to enter EU countries. During this time Romanians engage in limited contact with other groups upon emigration, but, with time, local institutions and contact with local people are developed. The fifth and final phase of Romanian migration commences in 2007 upon entering the European Union when Romanians gain full membership and thus free economic mobility.

This section provided an overview on European and Romanian migration within the European space, explained in the context of the European Union and the relaxation of migration policies. The next section asks the question "what are nations?" and how can we understand them in the context of a united Europe. Understanding nations is a pivotal layover in the journey towards understanding media and migration, the focus of this paper.

2.2. Building a nation

2.2.1. Imagined communities

Anderson (1983) defines nations as *imagined* because members of even the smallest nations cannot possibly meet all of the nation's members, yet they identify as sharing a common past and vision for the future of the community that they see themselves as part of. In wake of the 19th century nation-building processes throughout Europe, the author affirms that "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist" (Anderson, 1983, p. 6). As for the future of nationalism, the author shares his view that "[t]he

reality is quite plain: the 'end of the era of nationalism', so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time". In order for nationalism to prevail, states draw on different tactics and tools. To mention a few, it is worth alluding to religion, education and textbooks, and the media. Flora et al. (2005) explain that there is a historical link between ethnicity and religion. Applied to the Romanian space, belonging to the Orthodox Eastern European Church was equivalent to Romanianness because ethnic minorities most often adhered to separate religious entities, namely, the Tatars and Turkish to Islam, the Germans to Catholicism or Protestantism, while the Hungarians adhered to Catholicism. Furthermore, both before and after the fall of the Soviet Union (but not during the Soviet era according to Gilberg, 1990), religion played a primary role in the creation and reinforcement of Romanian national identity. This section continues with developing the nationalism and imagined communities argument.

Nationalism should always be discussed concomitantly with the nation, ethnicity, and religion as they are too intimately linked (Hastings, 1997; Smith, 1978). Safran (2008) adds language to the interplay of these elements, affirming that "among the markers of ethnonational identity, language and religion have figured with equal prominence" (p. 171). Religion used to be the "essential matrix of ascriptive community identity" (p. 174), but nowadays in nation-building the interplay of factors is difficult to separate. However, history offers numerous teaching moments in what concerns the building of nations in the 20th century. For instance, Uddin (2006) argues that Islam is always "regionally informed" (p. 118), and that this regionalism is a source of conflict between East and West Pakistan. Further, to exemplify how language is used to differentiate between peoples, the Urdu language developed in Northern India is close to Hindi, but since the speakers are Muslim, they adopted an alphabet based on Arabic rather than the Sanskrit-based script (Safran, 2008).

Nowadays, the religion – language nexus is further complicated by consequences of colonialism. To go into detail, Safran (2008) theorises that the relationship to religion is weak for transethnic languages (e.g., French, English), and strong for languages tied to ethnic communities. The author further exemplifies this theory by reminding the reader that Romanians used the Cyrillic alphabet until 18th century, a fact which can still be witnessed in museums and in churches. But with the growth of ethnonationalism, Romania switched to the Latin script as the intention was to differentiate themselves from the neighbouring Slavs and to emphasise their Latin origins and cultural heritage. To make matters even more interesting, sometimes religious and linguistic identities are compartmentalised, as proven by the Saxons in Brasov (a major city

in the Transylvanian region of Romania) who speak Romanian at home, but who speak German when they attend their local Lutheran church (ibid). And sometimes language is symbolic of power, as seen in the requirement to have bilingual Hungarian and Romanian signs in cities where a significant Hungarian majority lives (ibid). At the same time, other nations identify more strongly with religion than with language, for example the Poles, whose slogan is "To be Polish is to be Catholic!" (ibid). Safran places religion as the "traditional bedrock of the nation" (ibid, p. 172). On the other hand, the religion argument becomes highly problematic when one switches their attention to another area of the globe; for instance, in the USA where the differentiation between ethnicity and nationality is complicated in the aftermath of the abolition of slavery (Smith, 1978). To conclude the argument about the importance of studying the nexus of religion, nationality, identity, and language, I would like to refer to the study conducted by Jafari et al. (2014), who gather that studying religion leads to relevant societal findings, such as the potentially negative influence of religioethnic prejudices on the well-being of the society, and the potential consumption behaviour change when people are influenced by religiosities and spiritualities.

From a media perspective, it is important to touch upon mediated religious practices. According to Hutchings (2011), religious practices are also affected by the global shift to online services. Online churches are internet-based communities in search of religious practices through computer mediated communication (ibid). As such, given the recent mediation of religion, this aspect is taken into account when analysing the life of the Romanian diaspora; religious aspects are mentioned in the interview guide, although they may well appear unscripted as religion continues to be a significant part of the average Romanian's life (Cultural Atlas, 2022).

This subchapter has focused on nations as imagined communities and on the ways in which the interplay of religion – language – ethnicity contribute to building a nation. In the specific case of Romania, certain political changes were undertaken in order to establish nationhood (e.g., switching to the Latin script); with latinity reinforced in education and school textbooks. Given this context and considering that the focus of this research paper is media use in national identity building, the next section is concentrated around the nation-building role of the media.

2.2.2. The nation-building role of the media

Media is taken not only from the conceptual perspective of modern-day media (e.g., television, radio, Instagram), but also from a more traditional perspective that encompasses differences between cultures. For instance, Kumar (2012) explains that in India modern mass media cannot reach all Indians; but folk media steps in where mass media is insufficient. Millions

of rural population are engaging in nation-building by transmitting folk media in their communities. This refers to art, jewellery, folk plays, songs, and rituals. From a political perspective, Ogola (2011) writes about Kenya's media and its entanglement in a complicated power structure, which renders news media as more trustworthy than government institutions. In fact, in the post-independence period, the media was seen as the government's partner in their shared political goal of nation-building. Even though the government is not regarded as trustworthy, it still has power to censor media content, not through governmental power, but through big business in the sense that it pays for advertising in presumed independent publications. Politics and independent media are uniquely entangled in all nation-states, and it remains the responsibility of researchers to uncover societal views thereof.

From an ethnic perspective, Bornman (2013) informs that it is "not possible for a civic nation to achieve ethnic neutrality" (p. 437); explaining that states can assume an irreligious position, but they cannot avoid hosting a dominant culture as they must choose an official language for institutional purposes. In fact, "in so far as a single language is used in government communication, the state cannot proclaim to have a neutral political culture" (p. 436). Consequently, governments make conscious choices about which cultures, ethnicities, and languages to represent and to promote as the dominant, true culture characteristic of the respective territory. This choice is reflected in media, for example in the language of broadcast, and in the language of publishing books as well as educational textbooks.

The nation-building role of the media is excellently portrayed by the case of Turkmenistan. Kuru (2002) writes about how Turkmenistan became a nation under Soviet rule, and how it later made attempts at de-russifying itself following the fall of the Iron Curtain. As initially posited by Anderson (1983), the capitalist printing press needs a common written language to convey messages and thus sell products, so the print press played a key role in establishing vernacular languages. In the case of Turkmen, "[t]he development of Turkmen as vernacular language-of-state is the main pillar of the Turkmen nation-building" (ibid, p. 74). After declaring independence, Turkmen was reinstated as official language after a period of linguistic degeneration caused by the Soviet rule in the country. Furthermore, the independent period witnessed increasingly less media content in Russian, although the majority of Turkmens fluently speak it, given the lengthy Soviet rule. Words have been artificially replaced with their Turkmen homologues in an effort to restore the language. Evidently, media played a pivotal role in rebuilding the Turkmen state, nation, and national pride. Propaganda is especially dependent on the media, as national pride is instated using media institutions. The author further explains that

"Turkmen nation building resembles Anderson's official nationalism model, which depends on central planning of political authority to maintain national homogeneity and solidarity" (p. 79).

2.2.3.   The creation and recreation of national discourse on television

Discourse promoted on television is highly representative of the discourse present in society. As Barker (2008) explains, researchers should utilise the active audience paradigm in analysing television and meaning interpretation. This paradigm states that audiences are not cultural dopes but active producers of meaning from within their own cultural context. This paradigm comes as a reaction to the assumption that watching television is passive and that meaning is consumed unproblematically by viewers. It is suggested instead that watching TV is a socially and culturally informed activity that is centrally concerned with *meaning*. It is further argued that audiences are carriers of meaning and they are themselves polysemic. Mustata (2012) studied post-Communist Romanian television and affirmed that previous studies on television follow a politically reductionist trend, which rendered television to be studied from a political submissiveness standpoint. In accordance with Barker (2008), the two authors understand that audiences create and recreate discourse through television. In the context of this research study, television is a useful tool in understanding national identity: what programmes people watch, and what they think of them, are highly likely to offer a reliable window into their Romanian identities abroad. To represent this standpoint, I turn to the research study conducted by Schneeweis (2012) about the show "Garantat 100%" which tackled socio-political, patriotic issues specific to the Romanians. The study is an attempt at answering the following research question: "what type of national cohesion does 'Garantat 100%' represent?". For context, this television programme is "a signifier of the Romanian post-communist media landscape" (ibid, p. 141) and it is oriented towards Western democratisation, but also towards promoting local values and the average Romanian. The program heavily contributed to public discourse, as it initially tried to distance itself from the Romanianness promoted by the Soviets as part of the propaganda, and later found and promoted stories of the average Romanian and frequently utilised nationalistic wording such as "our compatriots", "this nation", "the Romanian", etc. The show "brings in celebratory patriotism to introduce fresh excitement about being Romanian" (ibid, p. 145), while also stating that the national target should be to join NATO and the EU. On a local level, the show also wished to find solutions for general struggles of the Romanians in the transition to democracy. To sum up, patriotic discourse in this show is "a sum of strategies that shapes and defines a Romanian to be celebrated, promoted and aspired to" (ibid, p. 153). Furthermore, this point is also applied from the point of view of online media, assuming that the diaspora watches

television content on YouTube, or downloads Romanian media content from online services. There is a growing online television industry, and its success is partly accredited to ease of access from anywhere in the world, as explained by Waterman et al. (2013).

To conclude this subchapter, its purpose was to highlight the essential role of the media played in nation-building. Considering that the purpose of this research project is to uncover people's experiences with relation to media, identity, and national belonging, this subchapter has brought a thorough understanding of how the media shapes national belonging in various ways, from politics to language.

2.3. The Romanian diaspora in the media

The media holds power over the representation of nations in international press and thus shapes international opinion on an individual and institutional level. This chapter offers an overview of how the Romanian diaspora is represented in foreign media. Firstly, the discussion begins with voting patterns and political participation of the Romanian diaspora, namely, which political stance they favour, and which issues strike a chord with their interests; secondly, I mention a few media stories about the Romanian diaspora in the European press, while also discussing representation and issues thereof; finally, I turn to academic works to explain how migrants themselves use media to challenge negative media frames in order to reach a thorough argumentation about the role of media in shaping negative public views of migrants.

2.3.1. Political voting patterns of the Romanian diaspora

The Romanian diaspora, as already mentioned before, has been growing constantly since borders opened after the fall of the Soviet Union. Consequently, the diaspora political vote has become more and more precious to political candidates, with electoral campaigns mentioning the diaspora's needs and launching promises that would make their lives better and potentially have them return to the home country. At the other side of the political spectrum, the diaspora has been impeded to vote so that they would not have the chance to tip the political balance to the liberal side. This interplay of factors is explained in this subsection with the purpose of having the reader understand the intricacies of the Romanian diaspora with regards to politics, which later plays a significant role in designing the topic list in an inclusive manner that will enable participants to share their experiences. To explain further, although a complete explanation is presented in the positionality subsection of the methodology, given my own background as a privileged migrant who moved to the West for education, there are certain aspects about political life that have the potential to land me in a biased position. As such, to ensure that the topic list is

not loaded with personal biases (e.g., leading questions about voting patterns asked from a position of privilege), this section has the purpose of ensuring a qualitative understanding of different political participation by the Romanian diaspora.

To exemplify the diaspora turnout at the Romanian legislative elections, I take the elections of December 2020 as representative. Firstly, the voter turnout was historically low, namely, 32%, partially due to the pandemic (Digi24, 2020). As for the diaspora, this election was the first one that was well organised in a way that enabled all of the voting population to express their vote. The previous elections were covered by both Romanian and foreign press as the queues in front of Romanian embassies and consulates were long and standing still (Hațeg, 2019; Pricopie, 2014; Romania Insider, 2019). The diaspora may have been intentionally impeded in expressing their vote, as they tend to vote for liberal, progressive parties in line with the values of the Western countries in which they predominantly reside. However, the game became significantly more interesting when in 2020 a small political party rapidly rose to power and won the hearts of 23% of the diaspora voting population by addressing their pain points and propagating traditional views such as the return to Christian values, nationalistic tendencies, communist nostalgia, and anti-pandemic-related restrictions demands (Recorder, 2020). This political party named AUR (Alliance for the Union of all Romanians) used Facebook targeted advertisements to reach the Romanian diaspora and organise rallies, spread their word, and win a significant margin, quickly becoming the fourth largest force in the Romanian parliament (ibid). To go into detail, Iordache (2020) explains in an interview with the Italian representative of AUR that not all Romanians living in the West identify themselves with Western values; on the contrary, a significant proportion find themselves nostalgic about the traditional, Christian way of life and found themselves strongly relating to what AUR represents. Consequently, although the diaspora strongly voted for pro-European parties that would simplify their lives abroad, there is now a compelling subgroup of the diaspora that feels closer to anti-European, traditional parties that promise a better life for Romanians only, propagating strong nationalistic views. This division of the diasporic groups has significant consequences on the present research study, as the interview design is affected by opposing political views in an attempt to take a non-offensive stance.

2.3.2. Media coverage of the Romanian diaspora

As migration impacts daily life and the political landscape, the media does not shy from coverage of migration and its effects. In fact, considerable academic attention has been paid to the way migration is covered, and the effects of its portrayal (for example, Geissler & Pöttker, 2009). From a news media perspective, the Romanian press covers stories about the more than 4

million people living abroad. Journalists from countries which host a significant number of Romanians publish stories from their point of view, while other European nations also sometimes get involved in the stories. These stories will be covered in this section.

Press agencies from different countries are in the habit of responding to each other's stories, as explained by Cheregi (2015): the British tabloids were informing that the Romanians and the Bulgarians were travelling in fully booked planes and buses to the UK. Romanian newspaper "Gandul" retaliated with a story in which a big part of the tabloid was debunked, and fact-checked information was given instead. Newspaper "Gandul" played a mediating role, attempting to spin the British people's negative view on Romanian immigration with campaigns such as "Let's change the story", launched as a response to the anti-immigration campaign.

Generally speaking, migrant stories covered by mass media share a few characteristics, regardless of country and of migratory population. According to Gemi et al. (2013), migrants' opinions are intentionally ignored or considered less newsworthy. In order to become news, pieces about migrants must be spectacular; otherwise, they are routinely overlooked. Moreover, a migrant story must have the potential to touch the majority population in a way that is relevant to them, so news must be shocking. Given this context, it makes sense that migrants are portrayed as destabilisers of economies and of labour markets, and that migration is seen as a security threat. Alarmism is an efficient way of selling titles (ibid). Further, although this is an extremist perspective, the other side of the coin is no less extremist in attempting to portray migration in a positive light. The positive light becomes tokenistic, in that only the highlight reel of migration becomes printed story, thus without acknowledging public discourse and societal fears. Overall, there is a general tendency to present migrant events from a normative perspective, so migrant voices do not reach the general population directly. The normative perspective refers to news media writing stories from the point of view of the average citizen, while invalidating a migrant perspective.

The Romanian diaspora is extensively covered by national and international publications. In order to give an overview of what has been printing about the diaspora, I refer to three academic works which reviewed newspapers' coverage of Romanians over the years. Let us begin with Vicol and Allen (2014) who analysed articles printed in tabloids in the UK which mentioned Bulgarians and Romanians. The results show that these two national groups were heavily characterised by migration issues, with a significant portion of the discussion being geared towards these national groups coming in to work in the UK. The authors found that the "language used by tabloid newspapers to describe and discuss Romanians as a single group was

often focused on crime and anti-social behavior [sic] (gang, criminal, beggar, thief, squatter)" (p. 2). When mentioned by themselves, Romanians were linked to criminality and economic poverty.

Secondly, an article written by Balch and Balabanova (2016) which is about public debates over intra-EU migration is an extensive analysis of newspapers in the UK. The researchers find "an almost complete dominance of communitarian justifications, mainly based on welfare chauvinism, but a notable increase in security-related arguments and a decrease in economic nationalist ideas" (ibid, p. 19). Furthermore, Puslenghea (2014) has presented an overview of the Italian mediascape with reference to Romanian migrants. The author found that Italian television is subject to a duopoly with 76% of the market owned by two media companies in 2011. Subject to electoral campaigns in which Romanian migration was used as a scarecrow, extensive negative representation has affected the reputation of Romanians throughout the years following EU integration, converting Romanian criminality into "a virtual dog whistle" (ibid, p. 2).

Finally, a paper written by Wemyss and Cassidy (2017) analyses how Romanians intentionally distance themselves from the Roma, not wanting to be associated with this ethnic group. The paper sets out to "explore how this homogenizing, bordering discourse was experienced and contested from differently situated perspectives of Roma and non-Roma social actors from established communities" (p. 1132). These authors analyse anti-Roma discourse by Romanian individuals experiencing life in multicultural Britain, in a context in which they already feel that their place in the EU is being threatened due to negative media coverage. To give context to this issue, the Romani people have been living in Romania for centuries and have been oppressed by racist policies for just as long (Willems, 1998). Being part of this community is highly associated with criminality and low education, as a result of centuries of discriminatory policies. In essence, the conclusion presented by Wemyss and Cassidy (2017) remains relevant and is expected to appear in the results section of the present study.

Although the media portrays migrants in selfish and self-serving ways from an average citizen's perspective, there are solutions for the migrants to challenge these negative media frames. In fact, migrants are empowered to reclaim their agency to circumvent negative media portrayals, as explained in the following subchapter.

2.3.3.   Challenging negative media coverage of migration

Migrants have been taking active roles in challenging the negative media coverage that they oftentimes receive by anti-immigration publications. This subchapter offers a few examples of grassroots campaigns that set out and succeeded in tackling negative media coverage of

migration and immigrants. Negative media coverage encompasses instances when migrants are unfairly represented in mass media, thus creating an inhospitable mentality for immigration in the sense that the majority population is likely to rely on stereotypes forwarded in the media, rather than judge every individual person. In this context, there are proactive reactions specific of migrant communities in which they challenge the negative media frames in an attempt to change the local mentality in their favour. For example, Hsia (2009) writes about the migrant workers from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal, Sri Lanka who worked together across nation-state, racial, and gender boundaries. The organisation is called AMCB (Asian migrants coordination body); it achieved civil and social protection for all migrant workers abroad. To go into detail, these workers united across national borders and protested when the legislation was against them, or when an injustice had been done against a member of the organisation. Theirs is a wonderful lesson of grassroots transnationalism which could be useful for the Romanian diaspora as well, considering this diaspora is active in a large array of European countries. The author further differentiates between NGOs who speak on behalf of migrants, thus stealing their voice, and migrant grassroots organisations which enable migrants to voice their concerns and thus give them agency. Although NGOs have access to bigger budgets and thus gain more visibility, grassroots organisations perform more groundwork especially in a transnational migrant context (ibid).

A second example of grassroots mobilisation to the benefit of migrants is described by Lambert and Swerts (2019): in the city of Liège, Belgium, radical activists demanded the social inclusion of illegal migrants, but later this movement was co-opted by the migrant grassroots mobilisation. This led to the government taking action in a way that depicted Liège as a welcoming city, stripping itself of the sanctuary image. As such, the image of "Fortress Europe" was abandoned, while migrants benefited from a mindset shift and legislation geared to their wellbeing.

Two final examples are about grassroots organisations that enable migrants to integrate in their host countries. For instance, Escala-Rabadán et al. (2006) describe how migrant workers from Mexico in the United States participate civically in their US towns thanks to grassroots mobilisation that give them a place to exist and express themselves. Finally, Horta (2006) presents how migrants at the periphery of Lisbon fought for their space and for belonging by challenging discourse and norms, and how they were supported by local grassroots mobilisers.

2.4. Media use in transnational communities

According to Safran (1991) whose definition is widely regarded as the most accurate, the definition of diaspora implies dispersal from an original place, a collective memory and a vision for the homeland, and a feeling that integration in the host country is unattainable. Moreover, diaspora members contemplate the return to their home country and feel a strong ethnic group consciousness as a result of shared history, culture, and values. A more sceptic definition of the diaspora is offered by Budarick (2014), namely that diasporas are "a form of imagined transnational community" (p. 140). To be part of a diaspora implies an "exchange and consumption of mediated and unmediated symbols, ideas, and materials" (p. 143). In the specific case of Eastern European migration, Favell (2001) notes that Eastern Europeans are "free movers", rather than "immigrants", because the character of their migration is temporary and circular, and because they are European citizens by passport right.

Contrary to traditional assimilation theory which posits that immigrants who stay longer in a host country are less likely to become involved with media from their home country, media scholars suggest that in fact the opposite is true (Hickerson, 2013). The relationship between media and political participation in transnational communities is nuanced, with many variables taken into account in the study conducted by Hickerson (2013). However, the conclusion reached is that "no media variable related consistently to either of the main dependent variables" (p. 159), which means that people use media tools inherently differently and unpredictably. Moreover, Robins and Aksoy (2005) explain that it is already clear that media consumed in one's native language is an indicator of feeling a stronger sense of belonging to the home country than migrants who distance themselves from native content. At the same time, the authors state that "the inquiry is brought to a premature halt" (p. 44) when researchers ignore the differences between migrants, placing them in the same "conventional and conforming categories members of diasporic communities" (p. 44). In their study about the transnational media consumption of the Turkish community in London, they find that the engagement with Turkish television is not ethno-cultural in its motivation, but "entirely social" (p. 53). In this sense, Turkish migrants cannot consume media innocently, as if they do not have any contact with a foreign culture; consequently, media is consumed while constantly being compared and contrasted with British media, in this case. Turks in London may feel alienated with Turkey more and more, as cultural differences become striking, or they might feel that Turkey is not accurately portrayed abroad, with the country ever evolving, but cultural values stagnating in the life of migrants (ibid). Applying this finding to the present research study, it leads to more attention paid while

analysing respondents' accounts on how, why, and when they watch Romanian television content.

Migration research on the internet communities has uncovered essential traits of the diaspora, as well as produced new diasporic theories. Macri (2013) studied Romanian diasporic communities in an online community in Ireland and found that the Irish forum acted as a glue that constructed the community. The goal of the study was to understand how Romanianness was maintained and propagated using an online forum, so the researcher opted for a netnography (ethnography of online spaces), as she considered that interviewing participants does not account for identities interacting with each other, as members would expose their experiences individually. Consequently, the forum dedicated to the Romanian diaspora in Ireland was discovered to be a source of Romanianness, and a place where members could express their love/hate relationship with the home country. These findings were benchmarked against Safran's (1991) definition of the diaspora; the conclusion was that online diasporic communities share the same characteristics with offline diasporic communities. For example, one way in which the online and offline diasporic communities share characteristics is language: speaking in Romanian to fellow co-nationals creates a special bond between interlocutors, driving them closer together, while they both also feel closer to their home country (Macri, 2013). Further, people also connect to each other when discussing integrating in their new country, considering that they most likely face the same challenges and find similar solutions; bearing in mind that they share cultural frames of reference, issues and solutions thereof are facilitated by discussion in a mother tongue (ibid). To apply this finding to the present study, I assume a position that highlights the importance of maintaining contact with Romanian language speakers, as a consequence of being part of a Romanian diasporic community abroad.

In transnational communities, social media is increasingly more important in strengthening networks of co-nationals (Mitra & Evansluong, 2019). This conclusion is also supported by Lim and Pham (2016) who studied social media patterns of migrant students and how social networks enabled them to find each other and to create a diasporic community. A stronger sense of engagement with their community and with their home countries is found among migrants who are active within an online community representative of their home country (Mitra & Evansluong, 2019).

Leurs and Smets (2018) explain that migrant media usage encompasses letters, audiocassettes, diaspora newspapers, transnational radio stations, reaching to today's smartphone use among refugees, all of which have been the target of anti-immigration discourse. Digital

media tools are essential in maintaining transnational social networks, and also enabling active participation in the host country, as explained by Kutscher and Kreß (2018) who researched refugees' media use. There is an abundance of research on diasporas; for example, Carter (2005) discusses the Croatian diaspora in the United States and concludes that events in Croatia triggered transnationality of thoughts, emotions, and practices, regardless of territoriality, while ethnic politics happen everywhere. Ogunyemi (2015) further develops the notion of the "diasporic media", while Clifford (1994) and Gilroy (1994) have published seminal works on the diasporas of the world. The present study adds insights that could potentially contribute to understanding the Romanian diaspora and the role that media plays in negotiating transnational belonging and identity.

3. Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used to answer the research question *"How does the Romanian diaspora construct identity and belonging through and in media?"*. The chapter begins with an overview of the methods used, and then offers details into how the data collection was performed (operationalisation of the concepts outlined in the literature review, justification of in-depth interviews, recruitment and sample, and the interview process. Later in the chapter the data analysis procedure with thematic analysis at the forefront are described. Finally, the positionality and limitations of the study are discussed.

The research question is answered using qualitative research, namely, 11 in-depth interviews which were transcribed, coded, and analysed using thematic analysis. Some participants were found on Facebook groups dedicated to the Romanian diaspora (e.g., "Romanians in Milan"). These groups exist with the purpose of offering a platform to Romanians abroad to help each other and share useful information. Recruiting on Facebook did not facilitate a large enough sample, so some interviewees were recruited by using my own social connections and asking respondents to refer me to other members of the Romanian diaspora in Italy. Although the recruitment process runs the risk of not representing social classes equally, there was special attention paid to ensuring that interviewees come from different social backgrounds, different regions of Romania, and different communities in Italy. Demographic data about participants can be found in Appendix A which contains details about each participant, namely, city of residence in Italy, age, work field, and years spent in the diaspora, with mentions of whether all years were spent in Italy, or there were also some years spent elsewhere in the EU.

In terms of the geography of the Romanian diaspora, a methodological decision is taken to interview people in Italy. Firstly, country of residence matters in terms of migrant experiences, with legislation, integration, and tolerance levels differing from country to country. Italy hosts the largest community of Romanian migrants (Statista, 2021), so it makes sense to tap into the experiences of the longest-standing and largest Romanian community abroad. Furthermore, considering that the largest minority of Italy consists of Romanians, and that it is also a long-established diaspora, with migration having started even before Romania joined the EU, Italy is a suitable choice for participant recruitment.

Considering that the research question intuitively leads to storytelling, namely, a personal history of how people choose to emigrate, and stories about why they choose to stay or to eventually leave, qualitative research is a suitable choice for this project. The following

subchapters justify various choices made during the course of this project with references to theory.

3.1. Data collection

This subsection is concerned with the justification of interviewing participation as a data collection method, the reliability of the interview questions, the operationalisation of the concepts reviewed in the theoretical framework, the validity of this research, the sample, the recruitment, and the interview process.

3.1.1. In-depth interviews

All interviews were informed by the same interview guide, which can be found in Appendix B. The interview guide was based on the theoretical framework and thus operationalised as described later in this section. The interview guide was first tested in a pilot interview; immediately after, some minor changes to the topic list were made in order to improve it, following feedback from the first (pilot) participant. The interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes, with two exceptions of interviewees who had been interrupted during the phone call and could not continue at a later time. The interview guide consisted of some prompting techniques created as a contingency plan in case the interviews ran short. For example, the list of questions features a few sub-questions to be used in case the first phrasing does not elicit the interviewee to reveal enough information. Although it was not the case, but if the interviewee refused to answer some or most of the questions, as is their right to do, the interview would have ended early, if it became obvious that the interviewee had no interest to participate in a meaningful way. For participants that seemed at a loss of words, I attempted to rephrase. In any case, the interview was not based on leading questions as to not influence the perception of the interviewee in any way (Cairns-Lee et al., 2021).

This research project employs interviewing as the data collection method. According to Wang and Yan (2014), the interview question and the power relations that it entails is a crucial aspect of the interview process. Consequently, this subsection is concerned with justifying the choice of interviewing the research participants. According to Boeije (2010), interviews enable participants to tell their story in their own words, while the interviewer is an instrument of data collection. The researcher must build rapport with the participants, so that they feel comfortable sharing their experiences. The researcher should establish a trust relationship, so that the information given is factual and sincere. In order to uncover experiences related to diaspora life, I employ the methodology explained by Riessman (2015) who states that narrative inquiry uses

the story itself as object of investigation, and is suited for social movements, disruptive life events, and political change. Stories tend to create communities around them: from the point of view of diaspora storytelling, it is suitable for this research project to gather migration stories and find common themes among them. Moreover, according to a researcher studying the Irish diaspora, interviewing participants is grounded in reality without the bias of aiming for generalisation and is associated with exploration of life experience, rather than determining or testing theory (Hughes & Allen, 2010).

Although in-depth interviews are highly time-consuming, from scheduling and running the interviews, to transcribing and coding the data, they are still the most suitable choice of data collection method for the purposes of this project. To begin with, in-depth interviewing "seeks deep information and understanding" (Johnson & Rowlands, 2014, p. 102). In order to uncover the experiences of the Romanian diaspora with relation to media, the analysis requires a thorough understanding of the data, and thus a reliable data collection method. Further, I expect the informant to be a teacher, while I would take on the role of a student, attempting to learn about their experience and thus creating meaning out of the data that I collect (ibid). This kind of understanding requires human connection in ways that a survey, or ethnography would not suffice. Although in-depth interviewing elicits a particular power dynamic in which the interviewer holds the control over the flow, topic, and tone of the conversation, it is still a suitable environment for participants to reveal true stories about their experiences. In fact, it happened numerous times in interviews that I took on different personalities as to suit my participant's conversational style. To exemplify, for religious people I emphasised questions relating to attending Romanian Churches abroad, while for people of the younger generation I skipped follow-up questions when prompted with laughter related to my inquiring of them celebrating religious events. Additionally, the interviews do not tackle subjects that may be considered too sensitive by participants, so they contributed freely and disclosed as much information as they felt comfortable. Protecting subjects is evidently an important issue; an overview of subject and community protection can be found in the ethics section of this paper.

The interviews were held online on Zoom, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp calls, according to the choice of the participant. Firstly, online interviews facilitated the contact with communities which would otherwise be difficult due to pandemic-related travel restrictions, and planning-related difficulties as a face-to-face interview would require a significant amount of travelling to and from interview locations. Secondly, online interviews are gaining more and more researcher trust, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic when many interviews were held

virtually regardless of location (Foley, 2021; Nehls et al., 2015; Tuttas, 2015). Nowadays video-conferencing tools offer reliable real-time video and audio connection, enabling both rapport-building and viable data collection (Nehls et al., 2015). Video-conferencing environments are a great solution for researchers that are not physically in the same space as their targeted population (ibid). In comparison to phone interviews, video interviews are found to be more reliable for rapport building according to a number of studies (for example, Nehls et al., 2015; Tuttas, 2015; Weller, 2017).

3.1.2. Operationalisation

The interview guide breaks the topics into six sections, of which only four are operationalised concepts, the first and last representing questions aimed at familiarising the interviewer with the interviewee (and vice versa) and ending the interview.

Firstly, Romanian culture is operationalised from a multitude of perspectives. After the interviewee offers an extensive personal history prompted by questions from the interview guide, such as where they grew up, what made them decide to move abroad, and if they still have family in Romania, etc; the interviewer continues with questions about how the interviewee keeps in touch with Romanian culture. However, the relationship with the home culture is revealed during both the personal history part, and the keeping in touch part. As people give away their life's circumstances for moving, they also reveal perspective, opinion, effects, and consequences of moving abroad. As such, one can easily make sense of the intricate belonging question, as people describe varying degrees of internalised Romanianness. For instance, owning traditional Romanian memorabilia, and reading books in Romanian would indicate likelihood that the respondent still feels culturally close to their native country. To go into detail, Romanian culture, an otherwise very broad notion, is operationalised into daily habits and general lifestyle questions, such as whether the participant celebrates Romania's Independence Day (the 1st of December), whether they are up to date with current affairs, how they feel upon meeting another Romanian abroad, and so on.

Secondly, integrating in their host country is operationalised with a number of practical questions from the interview guide. Friendships and relationships with Italians, opinions about the Italian culture, and experiences lived abroad as an immigrant offer the opportunity for the respondent to reveal if and how integrated they are in their host country. For instance, speaking Italian perfectly and taking pride in the fact that locals assume that the respondent is also part of the local population is a suitable indicator that the respective respondent is content with their integration level. Furthermore, respondents are also given the opportunity to directly describe

how and why they do or do not feel integrated in Italy. Nevertheless, integration is also a matter of feeling accepted by Italian society, so there are questions that prompt the interviewee to offer their perspective on what the Italians think of the Romanian migrants, both on a personal level and on a mass-produced media editorial level.

Thirdly, media use is operationalised in exhaustive and inclusive ways so that it is understood in relation to national identity. As such, there is extensive inquiry with regards to the source of news that the respondents follow (Romanian, Italian, international, or all?). The formation of online Romanian communities is also a great way to explore social media for national cohesion abroad. With regards to social media, the interview guide does not presuppose that all respondents are users of social media platforms, as respondents are highly diverse from an age perspective. However, it was indeed the case that all respondents used social media to maintain their relationships. In terms of media content, the operationalisation is designed to differentiate between online television, cable television, pirated content, and other types of content that the respondents might mention.

3.1.3. Sample and sampling relevance

The sample is composed of 11 Romanians who migrated for economic and labour-related reasons to Italy. The number of participants is guided by Ritchie et al., (2013) who advise on recruiting at least 11 participants in order to reach saturation for in-depth interviews. The sampling strategy is nonprobability convenience sampling, as this is a relatively small-scale project. I employ Facebook groups to contact members of the Romanian diaspora in Italy. As the required number of participants could not be reached using only this method, I have also employed my own connections as a Romanian with acquaintances who moved to Italy. Although the risk of an inaccurate sample runs high because of this, in reality the sample is a reasonably accurate representation of Romanians abroad. As explained in the results section, there are two types of Romanians who live in Italy, namely those who emigrated before Romania joined the EU, and those who emigrated after this moment in time. The sample of this research project features people who spent between one and nineteen years abroad, with a representative split between the two groups. Further, the sample represents people of different social categories, from caregiver for the elderly, to automotive engineer.

This sample fails in one respect. It is likely that there is a subgroup of Romanian immigrants who are not tied to Romania at all anymore, thus rendering it impossible for the researcher to reach them, without them being part of online Romanian communities or maintaining relationships with people from the home country that could refer them for this

study. Another interesting subgroup that is difficult to study would be those who were born and raised in Italy, and who do not speak Romanian. However, for the purpose of this study, sufficient data has been collected from the Romanians who are integrated in Italy as well as maintaining a Romanian identity in the sense that they still speak the language and remain in contact with friends and family at home.

3.1.4. Recruitment

I approached a few members of Facebook groups and also made a Facebook post prompting people to approach me in case they were willing to participate in my research. One of the recruitment sources is Facebook groups dedicated to the Romanian diaspora, and there is an abundance of these for various cities in Italy. The other recruitment source is a snowball sample of personal acquaintances and their acquaintances who are Romanian and live in Italy. A total of 25 people were contacted, but only 11 interviews actually happened. Potential respondents were approached by being given a short description of the purpose of this study, inviting them to a friendly conversation about their experiences in Italy. Many potential respondents appeared enthusiastic to be speaking about life in Italy and were then ready to disclose at times highly intimate details about their lives. Others, not so enthusiastic, left it to an assumption that they would not participate by not responding any longer.

3.1.5. Interview process

Upon agreeing to participate in my research project, participants were sent an informed consent form which described the interview procedure and explains potential risks, as well as reassures them of their voluntary participation and confidentiality. Participants were asked to sign the informed consent form, which can be found in Appendix F. This form was translated into Romanian to facilitate discussion. For practical reasons, respondents confirmed their consent during the interviews, without sending a physical signature.

In order to obtain the information needed to answer the research questions, a topic list was prepared for the interviews. According to Boeije (2010), the topic list reduces the amount of instant improvisation and is used as a guide in case the researcher loses track of the questions. Interviews are semi-structured, inviting the participants to share as much relevant information as possible. To facilitate analysis, interviews were recorded and transcribed. The recording was made on my personal phone, while the online interview was taking place on my computer. The transcription is done using the otranscribe.com software. This software is suitable for the present research project because it allows the researcher to pause, type, and reflect. Considering that the interviews are conducted in Romanian, there is no automatic transcription software available as

of the time of writing. The reason for conducting interviews in Romanian is that participants feel more at ease sharing personal life experiences in their native language. As discussed in an earlier section, this choice excludes the Romanians who were raised abroad and who do not master the language natively.

The topic list is inspired by other scholars conducting research on diasporas, and by the extensive literature review (for example, Budarick, 2011; Jones-Gailani, 2017; Valverde, 2012). The themes that are addressed in my study are the following: the types and sources of media used by participants in day-to-day life, their choice in following (or not) Romanian news channels, the trust placed in Romanian media sources versus foreign media sources, the ways in which they keep in contact with family and friends from home, their opinion on the representation of Romanian migration, with probing articles that would be shared beforehand, and the day-to-day media habits that make them feel a sense of belonging to their country.

The interview guide is divided in six sections. After the researcher offers an overview about the purpose of the study and assures the interviewee of their entitlement to anonymity and confidentiality, the discussion begins by asking the participant to give on overview on their personal story of immigration: when and why they moved, where they work, if they generally like living abroad. The second section moves into their ways to keep in touch with Romanian culture. The third section opens a discussion about how and why they do or do not feel integrated in Italy. The fourth section prompts the participant to talk about their media consumption habits, while relating to questions from the fifth section that is about national and individual identity. The sixth section is an ending sequence of the interview, thanking the participant for their time and asking if they are curious to learn about the results when the study is ready. After finalising the study, a short summary with interesting highlights is sent to the participants who specifically asked to know what life in Italy is like for other Romanians. This summary is written in Romanian and is an informal account of the present dissertation.

After building the interview guide in Romanian, I tested it with a pilot participant. The interview ran short, so this was a suitable opportunity to improve the way questions are asked and the way respondents are invited to speak. Throughout the interviews, there was a trend that respondents share more about themselves when the interviewer also shares personal stories and thus making the conversation more fluid. Special attention was paid to these casual conversation instances as to not influence the respondent in unintended ways. Generally, I capitalised on their interests and encouraged them to speak more about sensitive topics, as long as they felt comfortable sharing. For instance, one interviewee was visibly upset about not being able to find

work in Romania and thus was forced to emigrate. This professional shortfall would make one feel as if they failed and is generally a sensitive topic. I shared a story about how my father went through a similar event when he turned 40, and thus the participant felt she was in a safe space and continued to describe her experiences.

The interview dates and times were intended to be scheduled in accordance with the respondent's availability, but after a few instances when they responded along the lines of "whenever you want", I started offering two or three timeslots when I would be available and left them at liberty to choose. In general, respondents did not forget about the interviews, although sometimes unexpected events occurred, and the interview was rescheduled. All interviews took place from 6th May to 18th May.

Participants were aware they are being recorded as this information is part of the opening sequence; considering that in face-to-face interviews the participants can see the recorder, but in online interviews the interviewer must make the respondents aware of this aspect. Respondents did not have an issue with being recorded, but some of them expressed their wish to be recorded only audio, excluding a video recording. This was not an issue as a video recording was not required for my research purpose.

Ending the interview is another matter that was carefully planned. According to Warren (2014), interviews should not exceed 90 minutes even if the participant seems to be willing to continue speaking, as the researcher is also subject to fatigue. Further, although the interview is announced to have ended, the interaction might well continue after the recorder has been turned off. To avoid long silences at the planned end of the interview, the topic list features an ending sequence with details of what happens next and feelings of gratitude towards the participant for having accepted to partake in the study. Even while taking these precautions, several conversations ended well after the ending sequence, with some interviewees willing to continue the interview into a friendly conversation. The transcripts contain only the parts relevant to the research.

3.2. Data analysis

3.2.1. Thematic analysis

Considering that the interview data was analysed through thematic analysis, this subchapter is a detailed account of how this data analysis method was used in order to uncover the results presented in the next chapter. Although most qualitative approaches involve thematic analysis in some way, thematic analysis is not a specific analytic approach, but rather a meta-

analytic technique (Terry et al., 2017). It is flexible, so that it can be used with most theoretical frameworks, unlike grounded theory, or critical discourse analysis, but without implying that thematic analysis atheoretical – it does need a theoretical underpinning (ibid). Data is expected to complement the theory, with codes and themes deriving from concepts and ideas presented in the literature review (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Keeping in mind that no study is purely inductive nor deductive, but all exist on a continuum, this research leans on the inductive side as data is coded in a way that does not override the participants' experiences. However, the research is also deductive because I employ the theoretical constructs presented in the literature review. These theoretical constructs influence the analysis of the data, as they are analysed from the perspective of a scholar aware of theories such as imagined communities (Anderson, 1983), the tremendous influence of media in nation-building (Bornman, 2013; Kumar, 2012; Ogola, 2011), and the role of media use within migrant communities (Macri, 2013; Safran, 1991; Trandafoiu, 2013).

The research question *"How does the Romanian diaspora construct identity and belonging through and in media?"* is experiential and exploratory, with a contextualist framework, which presupposes that truth can be uncovered through language, while experiences must be socially mediated (Madill et al., 2000). Thematic analysis is suitable for this contextualist framework in the sense that it is more flexible than critical discourse analysis which requires a thorough understanding of language to be able to analyse and spot intricacies in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Further, thematic analysis enables the researcher to focus on analysing meaning across the dataset, with a possibility to report both obvious and latent meanings (ibid). In this respect, I follow the advice of Braun and Clarke (2012) who do not recommend cleaning up the data, as hesitations, pauses, vocal emphasis are all part of the meaning-making process and can thus influence the analysis of latent meaning.

The quality of thematic analysis in this project follows the framework instilled by Braun and Clarke (2006). Firstly, thematic analysis in this project is facilitated by following the phases proposed by the authors, namely (1) familiarising yourself with the data; (2) generating codes; (3) constructing themes; (4) reviewing potential themes; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) producing the report. Moreover, this project commences from an informed standpoint, with potential pitfalls and the criteria of good thematic analysis in mind. To go into detail, meaning making is performed by avoiding anecdotalism, misrepresentation of instances into themes, or mismatching between the data and analytic claims. Good thematic analysis ensures that interpretations of the data are consistent with the theory, that the approach is systematic, and flexible, with clarity and explicitness at the forefront of the report (ibid).

The emergence of themes and the saturation point were reached by the 11th interview, as explained by Ritchie et al. (2013). Proper data management is instilled by Boeije (2010) whose theory states that data management contributes to transparency and facilitates the path for other researchers to arrive at similar conclusions. Although this project does not aim to generalise findings, it is important to ensure transparency and reliability of the research method.

3.2.2. Performing thematic analysis

Each interview was transcribed immediately or at most one day after its occurrence in order to facilitate the transcription as the discussion remained active in the interviewer's memory. Transcriptions feature pauses, bursts of laughter, emotions shown (for example, if an interviewee displays strong emotions only visible through the video call, the transcription will contain a parenthesis such as "[strong emotions, wipes tears from eyes]". This is done to facilitate the analysis. Some parts were edited for brevity, as the conversation turned friendly and did not satisfy the research purpose at times. However, anything that could potentially be judged as misleading is included in the transcript to ensure transparency on the part of the interviewer. Further, all interview transcripts begin with a summary in English which contains a general emotional perspective on how the interview developed. For the results section, quotes taken from the interviews were directly translated in English, including expletives, pauses, laughter, displays of emotions.

3.3. Limitations and positionality

My position as a researcher and a Romanian in the diaspora might have impacted the results of this study, considering that participants might consider us as part of the same social stratum; this effect was present in a similar study conducted by Bota (2017). The research began with a strong awareness of my own positionality and its potential effects. For instance, because I was speaking with members of different social classes, I made myself approachable in individualised manners for each respondent. One respondent confessed only having graduated primary school, and, while being aware that I study abroad in a Western country, felt the need to convince me that being uneducated should not automatically imply poverty; everyone deserves to earn a liveable wage. It was instances similar to this one that reinforced my awareness of privilege. Furthermore, it is likely that invitations for interviews were refused on account of a perceived lack of understanding by a junior researcher in what concerns life abroad; potential respondents might feel they would need to explain too much in order to share the unadulterated truth.

Researcher bias runs a high risk of limiting the results of this study. As a Romanian who migrated for educational reasons, my motivation and life story are inherently different to those

of people who migrated for economic reasons or those who felt forced to migrate. The topic list enables participants to share as much as they feel comfortable, and to keep the core of the discussion around real, unfiltered experience, which makes the researcher and the interviewee close the gap between them, as they both share experience from abroad. Another limitation is the mediation of interviews, as they were conducted online and thus rapport-building could be perceived as cumbersome. However, bearing in mind that the language of the interview is the native language of the interviewee, and that the researcher and the participant share the experience of living abroad, rapport building is still possible. Moreover, according to recent research, online interviews are becoming more common, having gained the researchers' trust (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Irvine, 2011).

4. Results

The first section of this chapter contextualises the experiences of the diaspora: backgrounds and motivations for moving abroad, the process of integration in Italy, and the ways in which they express Romanianness in Italy, while also touching upon the potential return to Romania. The second section directly answers the research question, in that it describes and analyses the role of media in constructing and maintaining Romanianness abroad. The two sections complement each other in the sense that the type of media consumed is oftentimes a reflection of perceived Romanian identity. This section is an attempt at answering the research question by describing the results in themes and subthemes. The next chapter offers concluding remarks of this research project.

4.1. The national identity of the Romanian diaspora

Being Romanian has been outlined in the theoretical framework, but the definition of Romanianness abroad is still a work in progress, defined by millions of individual circumstances. This section is an attempt at defining Romanianness abroad, taking into account themes such as work, integration, community, and language. Several subthemes are discussed with reflection to the literature reviewed earlier, at times drawing conclusions, and at times directing potential future research in the field of migration and media.

4.1.1. The Western-European Road to well-paid work

After the fall of the communist regime in Romania, it became increasingly difficult for a large number of Romanians to find reliable and relatively well-paid work in the country, an issue that became the main motivation for moving abroad and thus creating the Romanian diaspora (Lafleur & Stanek, 2017). The respondents of the present research study outlined eerily similar reasons for their geographic displacement. Three respondents moved abroad for education, and later stayed abroad for work, while others emigrated for low-status jobs, but found social mobility and are thus supporting children in university abroad. Emigration is portrayed as a solution to national economic issues. In the transition to democracy, numerous factories and communist-owned businesses closed, rendering thousands of people jobless and without any economic opportunities (Moldovan, 2015). For example, one of the female respondents was raising two daughters alone, after their father had died. The factory where she used to work closed, and not only did she not find any work opportunities in her area, but she was told by employers that she is "too old" to ever find work again. At only 40 years old, she moved to Italy to take care of the elderly and she has not had one day without work. The transition from

communism to democracy had long-lasting societal effects, with mass immigration the primary focus of this study. Respondents oftentimes mentioned they never intended to emigrate but felt left without a choice in the matter. Moreover, respondents who emigrated after 2007 when Romania had joined the European Union already had a significant proportion of their family and friends living and thriving abroad, while they were struggling in Romania. This is consistent with findings outlined by Favell (2001), and Horváth and Anghel (2009), who exposed the motivations and context of moving abroad in the case of Eastern Europeans. Romanians at home then felt encouraged to move for a short amount of time so they could better support their families, seeing the economic prosperity brought about by their counterparts who chose to emigrate and send remittances home. None of the respondents regret moving, but most of them feel a longing for Romania, with some of them dreaming of retiring "at home". Another subtheme emerged which covered the exact date of immigration: without being prompted to do so, many respondents disclosed the exact date of their moving away from Romania. This section goes on to explain individual circumstances of migration and their effects on Romanian media content consumption.

4.1.2. Romanianness and integration

Regardless of circumstances of moving abroad, whether the motivation was education, work, or love, there are varying degrees of integration among the respondents. Some respondents would ideally never return to Romania, while others are actively making retirement plans in the home country. Some respondents apologised to me for not speaking Romanian fluently anymore, with one of them having distanced herself so much from Romanianness that not only does she not follow any Romanian media, but she also converted to a different church giving up on Orthodoxy, which has historically been a pillar of Romanianness (Flora et al., 2005; Jafari et al., 2014). Living abroad, Romanians are hardworking and generally accepted in Italian society; starting off as the pariahs of society, Romanians have been gradually gaining the respect of the locals by working hard, learning the language well, and following local rules and laws to the best of their abilities. Many respondents felt lucky in their positions "I was lucky to be able to integrate so well. This is also thanks to my [Italian] husband", "I am lucky that coming from Dobrudja [region in Southern Romania], so I do not have an accent in Italian", or "I live in a beautiful area. I was lucky to arrive here. I don't think it is always the case for other Romanians living in Italy. I feel very welcome here". Respondents expressed gratitude for feeling welcome in Italy, and they expressed varying degrees of integration and, consequently, of maintaining Romanianness.

A surprising finding is that some respondents have very few positive things to say about Romania, being extremely discontent with the country's bureaucracy, low economic development, and corruption. At the same time, the same respondents with a negativistic mindset actively planned for retirement in Romania. What connected the two seemingly oxymoronic findings is family. Members of the Romanian diaspora who are married with Italians, who raised children in Italy, and who have other family members living in Italy are not planning a return to Romania. On the other hand, members of the Romanian diaspora whose children live in Romania are dreaming of retiring there and are visiting home regularly. For instance, Interviewee 7 was speaking extremely negatively of Romania, having felt forced to leave by the inability of finding work:

> I was desperate, so I decided to leave. But I left heartbroken. I am very content living in Italy, but there is one huge aspect that is missing: my daughters. In Romania there is nothing else left for me. They took away my dignity.

Italy was the place where she could find reliable work and was thus able to support her daughters through schooling. She has felt respected and valued in Italy, while stripping away Romanian habits and media consumption, as she was distancing herself from her origins. Having only Italian friends, not watching any type of Romanian media, and not voting are indicators of her distance from her original culture. Given her context of leaving, it is highly understandable. However, she is planning to retire in Romania. Romania has very strong family ties: with heightened awareness on behalf of the respondents that we come from the same cultural background, they assumed my familiarity and thus ability to understand such seemingly oxymoronic decisions. Interviewee 7 in particular was highly apologetic of her negative words regarding Romania, until she realised that I have also emigrated to study. The finding regarding working in Western Europe is once again consistent with works reviewed in the literature, for instance, Favell (2001), Horváth and Anghel (2009), and Lafleur and Stanek (2017). While consistent with other academic works, the present study offers additional context by localising the reality of Eastern European migration as consequences of de-industrialisation (Moldovan, 2015), and the arduous transition to democracy.

In terms of integration, several subthemes emerged. Firstly, integration was facilitated by the fact that many respondents already had family members or friends who were living abroad and were thus able to help them with documentation, settling in, and general cultural knowledge. For instance, Interviewee 2 said "I had brothers and sisters living in Italy who eventually convinced me to give it a try". Interviewee 5 helped her aunt move to Italy, while also having all of her

siblings (3) living in Italy. Interviewee 7 reminisces of the friendships she used to have in Romania, with her oldest friends having emigrated to Germany, Spain, and Italy. Interviewee 11 had a corruption-related incident, which rendered her to call her friend who lived in Italy and ask for help with moving there. Getting there was easy, especially after EU integration, with respondents being generally proud of their Italian language skills and subsequent perceived integration level. Regardless of education level, Romanian migrants made active efforts to master the language: "I learned Italian by myself in one year"; "at this point I dream in Italian, I think in Italian…". Speaking Italian regularly and fluently has unintended consequences on the respondents' Romanian language level. In fact, one respondent mentioned that she is often asked where she is from, when she goes back home in Romania, because people pick up on the Italian accent while she is speaking Romanian. Another respondent said she has been "Italianised" to 98% and asked me to forgive her for mixing the two languages in her speech.

Some respondents felt welcome in Italy and affirmed that they have integrated well, with only two outliers who did not aim to integrate at all. Interviewee 10 said: "I do not feel like I belong here in Italy, but that is not what I want anyway. I don't belong anywhere". Interviewee 11 said:

> I do not feel that I belong here, and I did not feel welcome upon arrival. However, this does not matter at all. What matters to me is my family, my friends, and the ability to maintain my traditions, my language, my customs. I don't care about other things.

Romanianness in Italy is observed in various ways. Firstly, interviewees affirmed that they are proud of being Romanian, with some of them hosting an array of Romanian memorabilia in their homes "my sisters bring me books from Romania" (interview 2), "I have a Romanian corner in my home… we live the Romanian way" (interview 3), and "I have tried to introduce small Romanian things in our daily habits. For example, I taught my children to play Rummy [a board game commonly played in Romania]" (interview 5). Respondents who feel culturally close to Romania are still finding ways to watch Romanian content, whether it is pirated content, snippets from a favourite TV show on YouTube, or they have a cable TV subscription from a Romanian provider who ensures transmission of all Romanian television channels abroad.

With regards to how Italians view Romanians abroad, the discussion unfolds into two categories: the relationship with individuals in Italy, and views on how mass media portrays Romanian immigration. The former is discussed in this subsection, with the latter being discussed in a subsequent subchapter (4.2.2.). There are instances where Romanians working

minimum wage jobs were treated unfairly, when they were not allowed to take medical leave, or when they were not allowed to touch their employer's children. However, Romanians who have been living in Italy for more than ten years unanimously mentioned that nowadays Romanians are judged more fairly than in the early days of immigration. From the individual's perspective to mass media, the discourse around Romanians has changed significantly for the better: "generally nowadays they don't attack us like they used to ten years ago" (interview 5); "Romanian migration was used as a scarecrow for political gain which created a mentality that will be difficult to change" (interview 9). In direct relation with Italians, some respondents took offense on the Italians' lack of general knowledge of Romania: "I've been asked – do Romanians sleep in beds, like us? Do you have automatic washing machines there?" (Interview 3), "they don't even know where Romania is on a map. You don't expect that from people who graduated high school" (interview 4).

There are good and bad Romanians, with this subtheme emerging in several interviews. The Romanian diaspora is aware that *some* Romanians reinforce the negative stereotypes held by the Italians. For instance, Interviewee 4 berates the Romanians who have been living and working in Italy for 10-15 years who still have not mastered Italian, and Interviewee 7 loathes being associated with the Romanians who drink too much alcohol and do not respect the Italian law. There was a trend of mentioning that there are good and bad Romanians, and that some Italians are aware of this distinction, thus they do not judge all Romanians in light of a few negative interactions with Romanian seasonal immigrants.

Respondents varied in how close to Romanian culture they felt. For instance, Interviewee 5 acknowledged that she is part of a category of immigrants who gave up her national identity "up to 98%", who prefer to travel the world instead of spending holidays "at home". Interviewee 6 lived most of her adult life in Italy, so she feels intimidated at the thought of having to interact with Romanian institutions and public services, not knowing how bureaucracy works over there. Interviewee 8 mentions not having close family in Romania, thus gradually distancing herself from the culture with every year spent abroad. All of these respondents are distanced from the national identity, with media consumption directly reflecting this distance. They do not feel any differently when they meet another Romanian abroad, saying that "they are just like any other person; I like people who have the same values, not necessarily who come from the same country as me" (Interviewee 10). They do not celebrate typical Romanian holidays anymore, but this is also a result of not being part of a local Romanian community.

The return to Romania is a "hot topic". Many respondents travel home regularly, and even if they speak negatively of Romania, they still want to spend a significant amount of time on holiday there. Interviewee 3, for example, is highly content with her life in Italy, yet she is still excited at the thought of spending two months in Romania "this year I'm really pushing it!". There is a general feeling of in-betweenness in the sense that respondents feel at home in Italy while missing specific characteristics of Romania ("I miss the smell of Romania" – Interviewee 4), while also not feeling that they belong anymore when they travel there "I would have to get reaccustomed to the mentality of Romanians" (Interviewee 6). Respondents also view a potential return to Romania as *stressful*. They often must deal with cumbersome Romanian bureaucracy in getting their passports renewed. There is an apparent sadness, stress, and sorrow that the diaspora notices upon their return. Life seems more difficult due to inefficient institutions and a perceived lack of kindness and politeness among their co-nationals.

4.1.3.   Maintenance of a Romanian community

In terms of community, respondents confirmed all of the habitual sources of Romanianness which had been laid out in the literature review, namely, the church (Jafari et al., 2014), the traditional community of immigrants (Macri, 2013), and friendship groups that form naturally. What did not appear in the literature review is the Romanian supermarket. The Romanian supermarket is a source of influence, of information, and a place where the community is formed. In fact, all respondents were aware of the existence of Romanian supermarkets, and whether they visited it was a function of the varying degree of Romanian identity that they maintained. The Romanian supermarket is not simply a place where one buys traditional pies and sausages, but it is, as Interviewee 5 calls it, using Italian words in Romanian, "punto di riferimento… a reference point". The Romanian supermarket is the place where one meets other Romanians who can help you solve various administrative issues, get integrated, join the local Romanian community, and even set up a fundraiser for Romanians who need it (Interviewee 11 describes how she makes connections between people in need of a job and people in need of employees, and how she helps Romanians speak to the Embassy in case their Italian skills have not yet been perfected). Furthermore, the Romanian supermarket also has an online presence, with Interviewee 9 describing being part of a WhatsApp group chat where the owners regularly send updates regarding fresh produce and ingredients.

4.1.4.   Language as indicator of national belonging

In terms of language spoken in the home, the Romanian language survives only for interviewees who are living with Romanians. This characteristic of the diaspora is consistent with

the theory presented by Safran (2008) and Uddin (2006), who explained that language is a marker of national identity as much as religion and ethnicity. Upon mixing languages and living in a diverse religio-ethnic location, the effect is that Romanian is used less and less. Respondents who are married or in a civil partnership with an Italian person see their language skills dwindling, with children either understanding Romanian, but not being able to speak it (Interviewee 6), and children who do not understand Romanian at all due to their Italian upbringing. Language is a direct reflection of Romanian media consumption, with children who sometimes watch cartoons or listen to Romanian kindergarten songs being more likely to understand Romanian. There is a scarcity of academic works regarding second generation immigrants who learn and maintain their native language by consuming media transmitted by their home country; this is more extensively covered in the section regarding directions for future research.

4.2. Media Role in constructing and maintaining Romanianness in Italy

This subsection is concerned with the role played by the media in the Romanian migrant's identity. As outlined in the literature review, media is operationalised in ways that encompass social media use, media coverage of migration, television habits, etc. These angles are then compared and related to one's national identity. As such, three subthemes are analysed here: Romanian media consumption with effects and background, the evolution of media representation of Romanian migration, and social media use, which was found ubiquitous across all age and social categories in order to keep in touch with family and friends.

4.2.1. Romanian media consumption

Romanian media was operationalised in the interviews by inquiring about Romanian television watching habits, reading Romanian news, being part of online Romanian communities, and generally keeping in touch with the news in the home country, among others. As such, respondents were prompted to discuss how, why, and when they do or do not follow Romanian content. Multiple questions led to the disclosure of media habits, and to an overall conclusion that the consumption of Romanian media content is a reflection of one's feeling of national belonging.

Online sources have a particularly interesting position in the migrant's life, as they do not require effort to be accessed; this finding is in accordance with the theory outlined by Waterman et al., (2013). The Romanian diaspora of Italy, as long-established as it is, has utilised various forms of media, ranging from the most traditional, to the newest social media platforms. To go into detail, Interviewee 2 used to buy Romanian newspapers in Turin, while Interviewee 6

benefited from a considerable amount of help given by the online Romanian community hosted on a forum. Although the interview guide prompted questions with regards to Facebook groups, respondents reminisced of the olden days of forums "Florin, the administrator of the Romanian forum, was very good at gluing the Romanian community together. They still organise events in Milan where the community is bigger". The power of the online community of diasporas is not at all surprising, considering that much of academic research has reached the same conclusion; for instance, Leurs and Smets (2018); Macri (2013); Robins and Aksoy (2005).

Although this is not a quantitative study and thus does not measure correlation nor causation, it was both interesting and intuitively easy to guess that the Romanians who are married (or in civil partnerships) with Italian citizens are significantly less likely to consume Romanian media content. Robins and Aksoy (2005) explained a similar phenomenon: in their research, watching Turkish television was a family evening activity undertaken when all members of a household held enough cultural and linguistic knowledge to find Turkish content interesting and/or relevant for them. Although the previously mentioned authors do not differentiate between mixed households and ethnically homogenous households, the finding that Romanian media content is more likely to be watched in homogenous households is an interesting avenue for future research; this is more extensively covered in the conclusion section of this paper. In the case of members of the Romanian diaspora who are married to Italians, the television set is almost always on Italian channels, as best explained by Interviewee 2:

> Since I live with an Italian man, I obviously watch Italian television. TVR International [Romanian television channel created for the diaspora] is featured on my channel list - I watch it from time to time. But on Facebook and Google I search and read the [Romanian] news. However, my sisters [married to Romanian husbands] have installed Romanian television in their homes. They only watch Romanian television. Very rarely do they stumble upon an Italian channel.

Contrasting this finding with Robins and Aksoy (2005), spending time on social media and reading news on one's phone seems to be more of a solitary activity than watching television in the evenings as a family; thus phones, tablets, and other mobile devices become the source of Romanianness for those who live in multi-national households. This finding potentially ranks new media higher on the degree of importance given to sources of Romanian media content. However, upon further analysis of the finding and during the construction of a bird's eye view on sources of Romanianness, the reality is that Romanian media consumption reflects but does not determine one's national identity. In other words,

it was possible to observe that when a member of the Romanian diaspora is mentally and culturally distanced from the home country, they will not seek out opportunities to keep in touch via traditional media. Installing Romanian cable channels requires an extra effort that not everyone is willing to make. However, considering that the Romanian national channel has an international version which is almost always featured on European default cable channels (TVR International), it is likely that when stumbling upon it unintentionally, one wanders for a bit; at least for nostalgia if not for anything else. This is the case for Interviewees 2 and 8, who confess that they do not have cable television at all in their home in Italy, but whenever they visits Romania, they "lose themselves watching the news in an attempt to make up for lost time".

4.2.2. Media representation of Romanian migrants

The Romanian diaspora has long been faced with unfair media representation. As the literature has already revealed, this is verified by the results of the interviews undertaken for this research project. Numerous times have the interviewees mentioned that the Italian press capitalised on scandalous events facilitated by the presence of an increasingly vast Romanian migrant community. Interviewee 9 reveals that migration is not a new phenomenon, but the Romanians were the first sizable group that chose to settle in Italy for economic gain. In the face of such massive migration, politicians used this sudden phenomenon as a means of attaining political goals. Thus, a mass mentality was created, and Italians became accustomed to reading about the "Romanians who steal jobs" (Balch & Balabanova, 2016; Cheregi, 2015; Vicol & Allen, 2014; Puslenghea, 2014). This mentality sedimented into the psyche of the majority Italian population; visible effects of this mentality were uncovered by the respondents. For instance, Interviewee 4 said that "they see more of what the bad Romanians are doing", with Interviewee 6 saying that "they write about us like we are the black sheep". This finding is in line with the aforementioned literature.

A phenomenon which was not covered by the literature at all is that the Romanian diaspora noticed that they are being represented increasingly more fairly, with Italian society becoming accustomed to a permanent Romanian presence. More and more Italian people had the opportunity to work alongside Romanians and understand that while there have indeed been incidents provoked by Romanians, there is a bigger subgroup of the migratory population that strives to integrate and to make a living in their country. Interviewee 3 reported that

> Anything bad that happened in a region of Italy, it was always a Romanian that
> provoked it. It wasn't a Romani person; it was always a Romanian. Nowadays, after a

former prime minister's highly offensive statement against the Romanians, who said that there are only gypsies [sic] coming in from Romania, the press is considerably fairer towards us. Nowadays when something bad happens, they always mention the correct national origin of the perpetrator – maybe they are from Moldova, Bulgaria, or a Romani person from Romania.

This exact type of discourse is perfectly aligned with the knowledge outlined by Wemyss and Cassidy (2017), namely the intentional distancing of the Romanians from the Romani; an intentional disassociation with the minority oppressed population from the home country (Willems, 1998). The Romani people, also known as Roma, are a minority living in Romania, originally coming from the Indian subcontinent; a nomadic population who settled in many places in Europe, including Romania (ibid). The linguistic similarity of cognates "Romanian" and "Romani" renders the average Western-European reader to confuse the two ethnicities, especially when people representing the Romani and the Romanians come from the same country: Romania. Aware of this confusion and under the influence of centuries of racism directed towards the Roma, the Romanians are especially sensitive to comparisons with the Roma, as the above quote illustrates.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of praising Italian mass media for fair representation of Romanian migrants is exacerbated in the younger generation. Younger respondents who left the country when the Romanian diaspora was already well-established generally do not make mentions of unfair media representation abroad. Interviewee 1 perceives foreign press as "fair play" and "unbiased". Other respondents are simply not affected at all by negative foreign press, with Interviewee 7 saying "I read neither the Romanian press nor the Italian press. I only believe in the word of God, so it does not matter what anyone is printing. Only God tells the truth". Interviewee 11 says "the truth is always two-sided. I mind my own business and move on". Once again, this finding is not yet covered by existing academic research. Previous studies have focused on unfair representation – perhaps this coverage has been effective in demanding fairness for migrants, perhaps the change occurred naturally. Nonetheless, the generational divide remains stark.

Having presented findings regarding media representation of the Romanian diaspora, the analysis in light of the research question is varied. Respondents have very different perceptions of media representation, with varying degrees of importance given to it. Considering each migration context, it appears that there is a defined difference between

people who emigrated before and after Romania had joined the European Union. The EU integration and acculturation brought about tremendous social change in terms of tolerance, social mobility, and migratory patterns.

4.2.3. Social media

Social media and a ubiquitous internet presence serve two functions: keeping in touch with family and friends and meeting new people via online platforms. The two uses are described in this subchapter, starting with maintaining friendships, family ties, and consequently, Romanianness. Social media is unanimously found to be the tool used for keeping in touch with friends and family while members of the diaspora are abroad. Interviewee 6 reminisced of the days before social media, when she had to "input the Italian country code before calling and top up her SIM card with international privileges". Nowadays keeping in touch every day is easy. Regardless of age, economic or educational background, as the sample was reasonably varied in these respects, social media is an essential and extensively used tool of the diaspora. WhatsApp group chats with the extended family are common, with video calls a regular occurrence. For important family celebrations and national events (e.g., Mother's Day or Easter), the video calls are a consistent source of Romanianness. For Interviewee 4, video calls with the entire family are bittersweet:

> "On Easter all of my siblings were celebrating in my mother's village. I saw all of my nephews, nieces, aunts, uncles… and my mother who is now 90 years old. They were all there. Ooo… that's the time of the year when I suffer the most".

Social media and fast internet quickly turned into an essential tool of the diaspora, as anyone who has lived abroad surely knows. However, social media also enables the possibility to live a double life. Bearing in mind how easy it has become to fly from one country to another, and to move back and forth without needing a visa or any travel document except a national identification card, Interviewee 5 describes the double life very well:

> "My sister lives with one foot here in Italy, and with the other foot there in Romania. She is not well neither here nor there. She keeps going back and forth. This is a big inner conflict because now we cannot find our place anywhere. […] Unfortunately, this is the effect of the Italianised Romanian, who does not belong anywhere."

Secondly, in terms of online Romanian communities, social media has evolved tremendously over the years during which the Romanian diaspora was formed. From online forums to Facebook groups, to present-day WhatsApp groups, online Romanian communities have always played an important role. Respondents are commonly part of online Facebook groups where they see nostalgic photos of their hometown, political discussions, and advice sections for the diaspora. There are two types of Facebook groups under discussion, namely, groups dedicated to the Romanian diaspora, e.g., "Romanians in Milan", "Romanians in Turin", and groups dedicated to residents of the same Romanian city, e.g., "Techirghiol", "Bucharest District 4" and so on. Members of the Romanian diaspora remain part of the latter, while also joining the former upon moving abroad. The first type of Facebook group becomes a support system for the newly arrived Romanian. Interviewee 6, who moved to Italy for love, utilised the Romanian forum to meet people and ask for help. She received "a lot of help" and even maintained contact with two friends she met years ago on this forum. After integrating in Italy, she needed help from the Romanian community less and less, so she started to offer it instead. Nowadays, Interviewee 6 mentioned another unexpected online Romanian community: the Romanian church-goers group chat. "Every week the priest Vasile from Alessandria who has a WhatsApp business account texts the group chat: 'Dear believers… here are the community events of this week'". This is how church goers find out about confession times, Sunday services, baptisms, weddings, and funerals of members of the community.

Concluding that social media plays a pivotal role in the Romanian diaspora's integration experience is perhaps insufficient. The findings above are a reflection of other academic research, such as Lim and Pham (2016) and Mitra and Evansluong (2019). A logical conclusion might be that social media has become the migrant's best friend, enabling both integration and maintenance of national identity by virtue of connecting people across the globe.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to shed light on how members of the Romanian diaspora of Italy construct and maintain their national identity in and through media. The Romanian diaspora has been constantly growing, while media tools have been steadily diversifying, from the diaspora's imported newspaper to the modern migrant's video call. The research question *"How does the Romanian diaspora construct identity and belonging through and in media?"* is placed in a middle ground between experiential and exploratory, given a contextualist framework that confers the notion that truth can be discovered through language, while experiences must be socially mediated (Madill et al., 2000). The population is the Romanian diaspora of Italy because it is numerous, long-established, and oftentimes dissected in mass media. The operationalisation of the research question takes into account individual differences, with the analysis process not attempting to generalise findings, as it remains in the realm of qualitative research. As such, the interview guide covers topics such as belonging, integration, political participation, relation with other Romanians, and transmission of the national identity to the future generation who is or will be raised abroad. Multiple theories have been used to prepare an informed interview guide, analyse findings, and draw conclusions. The imagined communities theory posited by Anderson constructs nationalism as an invention of the 20th century, with migratory patterns specific to the European Union as an especially interesting phenomenon worthy of analysis.

Other academic works in the realm of media and diasporas are available. A few examples specific to the media used by the Romanian diaspora would be Macri (2013), Trandafoiu (2013), and Puslenghea (2014), with the latter being written specifically about the Romanian diaspora of Italy. What sets apart these studies from the present research project is timeliness: the migrant experience has changed considerably. As presented in the results section, the use of social media has diversified into maintaining relationships, posting political memes, and reading the news. Further, although the Romanian diaspora has historically been portrayed as the black sheep of Europe (Balch & Balabanova, 2016; Cheregi, 2015; Vicol & Allen, 2014), it seems that times have changed, at least according to the participants of this project. Respondents have noticed a tidal shift in representation of Romanian migrants, in the sense that fairness is perceived across Italy. Moreover, this shift is represented in personal relationships, too, with Romanian migrants speaking of their friendships and good relations with Italians. At the beginning of Romanian migration to Italy, Romanians had to fight for their right to exist in Italian society, but nowadays and especially after EU integration, Romanian presence is not contested anymore, at least according to the respondents' personal accounts.

In terms of methodology, this study is qualitative, contextual, and gives voice directly to migrants by having interviewed 11 members of the Romanian diaspora in Italy. In-depth interviews guided by a topic list ensured accurate and relevant data collection, with interviewees ranging from 25 to 62 years old, from all walks of life. The data collected during interviews was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. This led to the emergence of themes and to finally answering the research question:

"How does the Romanian diaspora construct identity and belonging through and in media?"

The type of media consumed is found to be a reflection of Romanianness, rather than a determinant of national identity. In other words, people who culturally and socially identify with the specific mentality of Romanians will still consume Romanian media wherever they live and with whomever they live; but people who are distanced and feel no special social connection to other Romanians will gladly consume any type of media available, without putting in an effort of accessing the Romanian news channels, for instance. Romanians who are married or in civil partnerships with Italians are considerably less likely to watch Romanian television, as television remains a collective activity (Robins & Aksoy, 2005). There is an exception found for online news as mobile device are commonly used during solitary times of one's day, thus enabling respondents to simply access any kind of news, without having to think about respecting other people's linguistic requirements, as is the case when watching television with a group of people whose first language is not the same, i.e., Romanian.

In light of the results, media in general can be considered a consequence of national identity, with the type of media consumed reflecting one's desire or lack thereof to keep in touch with the home culture. Plenty of individualised contexts come into the interplay, but common ground is still established in the diaspora's trauma of a corrupt state that could not handle the transition to democracy without losing a significant part of the population to immigration towards the West. Social services and the education level of Romanians were berated as causes of their migration, with these aspects reaching satisfaction when the same services are accessed in the West. However, thanks to the European Union and foreign investment, some respondents acknowledge that the situation in the home country has changed for the better. Others, who have not returned too often, remain with a dated image of Romania in the early 2000s. The main differentiator between these perspectives is the time of immigration: before and after 2007 (when Romania joined the EU).

To answer the research question, identity and belonging are constructed through and in media in more than one manner, with media also reflecting Romanian identity and belonging to

the culture. During analysis, it was easy to trace the lines between media consumption and national identity, with a main determinant factor: family. Romania has a strong family culture, which results in either the desire to integrate in the host culture, or to maintain a Romanian identity using media tools. This family culture also results in leading a double life, with respondents who are "Italianised", who raise their children in Italian and sometimes read books in Romanian, and, on the opposite end of the spectrum, respondents who always have the television on Romanian international channels and who maintain a life in the home country as well as in the host country, whose goal is not to integrate, but to live well.

5.1.   Practical implications of findings

The national Romanian cable news network (TVR) is state-sponsored and has five channels: TVR 1, TVR 2, TVR 3, TVR International, and TVR Moldova (TVR Plus, 2022). In light of the findings of this research project, it appears that TVR International (already broadcast by default in all European countries, Canada, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand), has great potential of expanding their content in order to fit the modern diaspora's needs. The amount of content already available for the diaspora is abundant, but perhaps the accessibility to TVR International could be improved, in terms of ensuring that it is a default cable channel in countries with a significant Romanian presence. Furthermore, given the preference towards online media for migrants who integrated fully, this content could also be uploaded online to ensure inclusivity for migrants from different contexts.

DOR Magazine has also been found to be "a wire of connection back to Romania" (Bota, 2017, p. 54) and an important player in the construction of hybrid identities of the Romanian diaspora (ibid). In this sense, it would be interesting to keep exploring how DOR Magazine caters their content to Romanians from everywhere, and how they ensure that their content stays relevant across national borders. The publishers of the magazine already offer international shipping of their cultural product, with digital subscriptions also available. This magazine has become a pillar of Romanianness from within and from outside the country's borders, telling stories and striving to modernise the country to the best of their abilities. The Romanian diaspora could benefit from including the magazine into their media consumption as it is already demonstrated to maintain national identity (ibid), but marketing abroad has not yet been a target of the publishers.

As Safran (2008) explained and as the results of Bota (2017) and of the present study pointed, language is essential in maintaining national identity. Having access to media conceived in the Romanian language is a contributor to maintaining national identity. However, in the case

of children raised in the diaspora, sometimes Romanian language classes are necessary to upkeep a functional level of a language not used on a daily basis. As such, there already are Romanian language classes in countries with a sizable Romanian community, as promoted by the Romanian language institute. These academic works further reinforce the importance of this learning opportunity abroad.

5.2. Limitations

This research project is limited by the small sample – 11 migrants offered their accounts of life abroad. Although the data was sufficient for the emergence of themes, the results are not generalisable and cannot be applied to the entirety of the diaspora. Further research is needed in order to gain a better understanding of media use in maintaining national identity for the Romanian diaspora. Directions for further research are detailed in the next subchapter.

Secondly, the study is a product of its time. In 2022 when the interviews took place, after a global pandemic and war ensuing over the European continent, some of the data collected was affected by mentions of both events, although respondents were not directly prompted to relate to them. A proportion of the Romanian diaspora in Italy returned home when the pandemic started, upon losing their work abroad; this is especially more relevant for temporary migrants who were not part of the sample of this research. Returning to Italy became increasingly more difficult for all migrants because of travel restrictions, vaccine mandates, and, later, expensive fares for travelling due to the rising cost of gas. The present study does not take into account differences of before and after the pandemic, or before and after other historical events.

5.3. Directions for future research

An interesting avenue of research in the future would be to run a quantitative content analysis study that would review the more recent articles written about the Romanian diaspora. In light of the findings of this research, it is necessary to verify that the personal accounts of the respondents are also reflected in reality, in the sense that some respondents mentioned that mass media coverage of the diaspora has changed for the better in recent years. It would be interesting to know why the Romanians abroad are not portrayed as the black sheep of Europe anymore, and perhaps whether or not they have been replaced with another ethnic group. From a more optimistic standpoint, perhaps racist mentalities remain in the past and European Union policies regarding tolerance and promotion of diversity have been effective.

Secondly, a television research study on TVR International would have profitable implications when researching how efficient and appreciated the content dedicated to the diaspora is. Drawing a parallel between the size of the diaspora and the size of TVR

International watchers would help in drawing conclusions in how suitable the content is, and whether the diaspora enjoys participating in the creation of content for the Romanian mediascape. The same is applicable for DOR Magazine; both media producers have the potential to expand their viewership and readership by promoting their content abroad and by ensuring fair representation of the diaspora. Furthermore, considering that one of the findings of this study is that Romanians who live in Italy and are married to Italians are less likely to watch television content in Romanian, it would be a suitable avenue of development to ensure that television content is always accompanied by subtitles in the language of the country where it is broadcast. This would maintain television as an evening family activity, while not excluding people who are not familiar with the language. This is also a solution to promoting Romanian culture abroad and to ensuring that foreigners have an accurate perception of Romanians, understanding their culture more and more. TVR International also has the potential to broadcast Romanian language lessons for partners and for children of the diaspora who are not familiar with the language: it would be a unique opportunity to expand cultural knowledge and to maintain ties with the home country in a ludic and enjoyable manner. All of these suggestions are potential attempts to maintain the national identity of Romanians abroad that the Romanian government could support.

Thirdly, there is a scarcity of academic work regarding second generation immigrants who learn and maintain their native language by consuming media transmitted by their home country. In-depth interviews and surveys would be a suitable way to find how children of the diaspora keep in contact with their native culture, and how culturally close they feel to either of the countries (host and home). As language is demonstrated to be a strong indicator of national identity (Safran, 2008), this avenue of research would be a reliable way of gauging the interrelation between language level and cultural belonging in second generation migrants.

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Appendix A

Demographic data about the participants

	City	Age	Work field	Years diaspora	Date of interview
1	Toscana	54	Caregiver for the elderly	13	07/05/2022
2	Aosta	51	Home renovation – family business	11	07/05/2022
3	Piombino	41	Owner of a tobacco shop, former caregiver for the elderly	19	08/05/2022
4	Milan	62	Home caretaker	16	08/05/2022
5	Valenza	38	Stay at home mom, former young professional	14	09/05/2022
6	Palermo	45	Stay at home mom	15	13/05/2022
7	Ispra	40	Researcher	11	17/05/2022
8	Milan	25	Young professional	7	13/05/2022
9	Emilia Romagna	60	Caregiver for the elderly	20	13/05/2022
10	Milan	30	Banking	3	17/05/2022
11	Torino	26	Engineer in the automotive industry	7 years, of which 1 in Italy	15/05/2022
12	Piombino	47	Owner of a Romanian supermarket and local councillor	16	18/05/2022

Appendix B

The interview guide in English

Introduction

Hello and thank you so much for your time!

As I mentioned in my email/messenger text/WhatsApp text/call, this discussion should last 40 to 50 minutes, so I expect it to end at X (hour/time). The main topic of discussion is our home country, and how we keep close to it.

I have to mention that this interview will be recorded because I will need to transcribe and use the text for my research. I can assure that your name or personal details that would divulge your identity will not appear anywhere, and also your privacy is fully protected. I am very grateful that you responded to my call for participants, and I do not take this participation for granted. Consequently, if you do not want to answer any of the questions, just tell me and we will skip it. If you don't understand what a question is referring to, feel free to ask me to rephrase it.

1. **Personal history**
   a. Where are you from?
   b. When did you leave Romania? What were the circumstances of your leaving?
   c. How did you decide to leave?
   d. How long have you lived abroad? Which cities have you lived in? where do you live now?
   e. How was your first year abroad?
   f. What is your occupation?
   g. Do you enjoy your work?
   h. What do you like best about your work? Or dislike?
2. **Keeping in touch with Romanian culture**
   a. I would like to now switch the subject and discuss how you are keeping in touch with Romania.
   b. What news do you read? From which outlets?
   c. Do you watch TV in Romanian? Do you watch TV series, reality shows, and other Romanian-produced media content?
   d. Are you up to date with current affairs?
   e. Do you vote in the Romanian elections?
   f. How do you keep in touch with friends or family who live in Romania?
   g. How did the pandemic restrictions affect you in keeping in touch with your friends and family in Romania?
   h. Do you know of a Romanian supermarket in your area?
3. **Getting in touch with various issues in the country of residence**
   a. Do you feel you belong in your country of residence? Why do you feel this way?
   b. Do you have Italian friends?
   c. How is your Italian language skill?
   d. If you have kids – do they speak Romanian? Potentially, would it be important for you that your kids know Romanian?
   e. How often do you go home?
   f. How do you communicate with the people at home?

4. **Media consumption**
   a. If you watch Romanian media content, why do you watch it?
   b. Do you discuss it with your Romanian friends?
   c. Do you discuss it with your Italian friends?
   d. How do you watch Romanian media content?
   e. How do you choose what to watch?
   f. Online: do you follow Romanian memes content?
   g. Do you use social media? How often? For what purposes? What motivates you to engage with social media? What is favourite social media platform? In what language do you often post on social media?
   h. How is the Italian media covering the presence of Romanians in Italy?
   i. Do you feel represented in the Italian media? Is this representation fair or a deception from your perspective?
   j. What would you change about the Romanian diaspora coverage in Italy?
   k. Do you think Italians have a fair perception of us?
   l. How do Italians think of the Romanians in Italy? Why do they think that way about us?
   m. Do you have an example of a good news article that covered Romanian affairs? And a negative example?
   n. Are you familiar of any Romanian film festivals/media events?
   o. Are you part of Romanian communities online? WhatsApp groups etc.

5. **National/ individual identity**
   a. How is it when you meet someone, and you find out that they are also Romanian?
   b. Are you aware of a Romanian community in the city where you live? Do you spend time with them? What kind of activities are organised?
   c. Do you vote? Romanian and/or Italian elections?
   d. Do you trust Romanians abroad?
   e. Do you think Romania has been changing for the better in the past few years?
   f. Do you think Italians' opinion of Romanians has been changing for the better in the past few years?
   g. How do you identify Romanian identity?
   h. Do you identify yourself as a Romanian? What do Romanians look like? What do they often celebrate? How do they behave outside of their homeland?
   i. Where do you see yourself in the future? Do you think you will always live abroad?
   j. How do you envision a return to Romania? Feel free to imagine any scenario.

6. **Ending the interview.**
   a. What happens next: I will transcribe and code our discussion, which is then analysed next to my other interviews. After my thesis is written and submitted, I can send out a summary of my results to the participant that are interested in knowing them. Otherwise, I would like to profusely thank you for your time and patience. Good luck with your affairs and hope you enjoyed our conversation as much as I did!

Appendix C

Interview guide in Romanian

Introducere

Bună ziua! În primul rând vă mulțumesc că ați fost de acord să participați în proiectul meu. Eu aș vrea să vă spun de la început că interviul ar trebui să dureze între 30 și 50 de minute, deci ar trebui să finalizam la ora X. Principalul subiect care va fi discutat este viața de român în Italia.

Trebuie să vă mai spun că interviul va fi înregistrat și apoi transcris. Înregistrarea nu va fi publicată nicăieri. Numele dumneavoastră și detaliile personale nu vor apărea nicăieri, iar cnofidențialitatea dumneavoastră este protejată. Eu sunt foarte recunoscătoare că ați fost de acord să participați, dar desigur dacă nu vă place o întrebare, sau nu vreți să răspundeți, nu există niciun fel de obligație. Dacă nu înțelegeți vreo întrebare, o putem reformula fără probleme.

Începem cu un scurt istoric personal.

1. **Istoric personal**
   a. De unde ești/sunteți?
   b. Când ați plecat din România? Care au fost circumstanțele plecării?
   c. Cum v-ați decis să plecați din țară?
   d. De cât timp locuiți în străinătate? În ce orașe ați locuit? Unde locuiți acum?
   e. Cum a fost primul an în străinătate?
   f. Care este ocupația dumneavoastră?
   g. Vă place munca aceasta? Ce vă place cel mai mult la munca dumneavoastră? Ce nu vă place?

2. **Legătura cu cultura românească**
   a. Acum aș vrea să schimbăm subiectul și să discutăm modurile în care țineți legătura cu cultura românească.
   b. Ce știri citiți? Ce publicații citiți? Ce canale de televiziune urmăriți?
   c. Urmăriți știri în română? Dar seriale TV, reality show-uri, și alte produse media românești?
   d. Urmăriți evenimentele din România?
   e. Votați atunci când sunt alegeri în România?
   f. Cum păstrați contactul cu prietenii și familia care locuiesc în România?
   g. Cum v-au afectat restricțiile din timpul pandemiei în păstrarea contactului cu prietenii și familia din România?

3. **Probleme din țara de reședință**
   a. Simțiți că aparțineți în țara de reședință? De ce?
   b. Aveți prieteni italieni?
   c. Cât de bine vorbiți italiana?
   d. Dacă aveți copii – i-ați învățat să vorbească în română? Sau la modul teoretic, dacă ați avea copii, ar fi important pentru dvs. ca ei să vorbească română?
   e. Cât de des mergeți acasă în România?
   f. Cum comunicați cu oamenii de acasă atunci când sunteți în țară? Dar atunci cand sunteți în Italia?

4. **Consum media**
   a. Urmăriți televiziunea românească? De ce, de ce nu?
   b. Discutați despre evenimente sau emisiuni românești cu prietenii dumneavoastră?
   c. Discutați și cu prietenii italieni despre evenimentele sau emisiunile românești?

d. Cum urmăriți televiziunea românească?

e. Cum decideți ce serial, emisiune, film, știre să urmăriți?

f. În mediul online, sunteți la current cu memele și glumele din spațiul online românesc?

g. Sunteți activ pe social media, de exemplu pe Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp? Cât de des folosiți social media? Ce vă motivează să fiți activ pe social media? În ce limbă postați atunci când postați online?

h. Ce părere aveți despre presa italiană și modul în care se scrie despre românii din diaspora? Credeți că această reprezentare e corectă sau nu? Din perspectiva dvs. personala

i. Ce ați schimba când vine vorba de presa italiană și articolele despre români?

j. Credeți că italienii au o părere corectă despre noi?

k. Ce cred italienii despre români? De ce au această părere?

l. Îmi puteți da un exemplu cu un articol bun, scris de presa italiană despre români? Și un exemplu negativ?

m. Ați auzit de vreun festival de film românesc, sau alte festivale cu muzică româneasca, etc?

n. Faceți parte din vreo comunitate de români online? Inclusiv grupuri de WhatsApp.

5. Identitate națională și individuală

a. Cum vă simțiți atunci când faceți cunoștință cu cineva și aflați că și această persoană vine din România?

b. Magazinul romanesc

c. Faceți parte dintr-o comunitate de români în orașul în care locuiți? Organizați activități împreună? Ce fel de activități?

d. Votați? În alegerile din România și/sau din Italia?

e. Aveți încredere în românii din străinătate?

f. Credeți că România s-a schimbat în bine în ultimii ani?

g. Credeți că părerea italienilor despre români s-a schimbat în bine în ultimii ani?

h. Ce înseamnă pentru dvs. identitatea de român?

i. Cum arată românii pentru dvs? Ce ocazii sărbătoresc românii din Italia? Cum se comportă în afara României?

j. Gândindu-vă la viitorul dvs. personal, unde vă vizualizați? Credeți că veți rămâne în diaspora?

k. Cum credeți că ar fi dacă v-ați întoarce în România? Acum ar fi momentul să vă imaginați orice scenariu.

6. Finalul interviului

a. În cele ce urmează, eu voi transcrie interviul nostru și apoi în voi analiza în cadrul disertației mele, pe lângă celelalte interviuri pe care le voi ține. După ce teza mea va fi scrisă și trimisă, vă pot trimite un rezumat al rezultatelor descoperite – doar dacă sunteți interesat/ă, desigur. În final, aș vrea să vă mulțumesc pentru timpul și răbdarea acordate. Vă doresc o zi minunată, succese, și sper că discuția noastră v-a făcut aproape la fel de multă plăcere ca și mie.

Appendix D

Recruitment message

Bună ziua! Vă contactez de pe grupul Românii din Italia. Numele meu este Adèle Acmola și sunt studentă la Universitatea Erasmus din Rotterdam, unde momentan fac o cercetare despre românii din Italia și modul în care își păstrează identitatea românească trăind în străinătate.

Citind postările dvs. din acest grup, aș vrea să vă invit să participați în cercetarea mea. Participarea dvs. ar însemna să îmi acordați o oră în care am discuta (online) despre experiența ca român în diaspora, despre cum sunteți priviți de către italieni. Întrebările mele nu deschid subiecte intime, dar dacă nu veți dori să răspundeți la unele dintre întrebări, nu este nicio problemă.

Dacă sunteți interesat să participați vă rog să răspundeți la acest mesaj și vă voi răspunde la orice întrebări aveți despre cercetare😊. Vă mulțumesc și sper să ne auzim curând!

Appendix E

Coding tree

THEMES	subthemes	representative quotes
experiences abroad		
I - context of moving and migration experience	reason to move	[1] "mi-am dorit sa studiez in afara tarii, iar apoi am ales Italia" [2] "banii m-au determinat sa ajung in Italia"; "inainte de a veni in tara am trecut printr-un somaj. stiu cum e sa nu gasesti loc de munca" [3] "cand am vrut sa ma reintorc la munca am descoperit cu stupoare ca eram prea batrana." [5] "am decis sa vin in Italia cu ideea de a sta 1-2 ani sa pun bani deoparte pt a cumpara un apartament." [7] "cel mai greu moment a fost cand un director mi-a spus ca la varsta mea ar trebui sa ma duc sa ma culc, ca nu mai am ce face. du-te in pat a zis, cand a aflat cati ani am. la disperare am decis sa plec. am plecat cu durere in suflet"; "banii nu aveau cum sa-mi ajunga. am plecat de nevoie, nu gaseam niciun fel de loc de munca in zona noastra sa pot sta acasa cu fetele." [9] "timp imi cautam loc de munca si in afara tarii pt ca mi-au placut experientele ca student Erasmus si ca student Leonardo in afara tarii."
	noroc	[4] "eu am avut noroc vreau sa spun ca m-am integrat foarte bine. datorita si lui [alessandro]" [6] "eu am fost norocoasa, vin din Dobrogea, nu avem accentul ala." [7] "e o zona extraordinara. eu am avut noroc sa ajung aici. nu stiu daca e mereu asa pentru romanii plecati in Italia. eu ma simt foarte bine aici."
	would ideally never return to Romania permanently	[1] "o sa fiu 100% in strainatate"; "pur si simplu nu cred ca .... este un... o alegere potrivita.... pentru generatia urmatoare pe care eu as creste-o. cred ca in alte locuri am avea oportunitati mai bune, trai mai bun, salarii mai

		mari, si efectiv conditii de trai mai bune"; "cred ca as cadea intr-o depresie foarte foarte mare [daca m-as intoarce in Romania]" [8] "nu cred ca ma voi intoarce prea curand in Romania, asta e sigur. imi place Italia super mult" [10] "toate drumurile duceau catre asta in sensul ca ma saturasem de tot ce se intampla in Romania. si ca job, imi doream sa plec."
	remembering the exact date of immigration	[2] "am plecat din Romania pe 6 octombrie 2006" [4] "am venit aici in 2009 pe 29 noiembrie" [6] "am ajuns aici cu niste cunostinte de baza pe 27 martie 2008"
II - integration	already having family members/friends abroad	[2] "M-am hotarat sa ajung in Italia datorita faptului ca aveam surorile mele si fratii mei in Italia m-au convins sa vin aici." [5] "am ajutat-o si pe matusa mea sa vina aici."; "am fratele meu, noi suntem 3 frati, sora mea este jos in sicilia. fratele meu a fost 20 de ani in Spania." [7] "in Romania mi-am pierdut toti prietenii, toate cunostintele. ne-am imprastiat peste tot. toate prietennele mele vechi sunt in Spania, Germania, suntem refugitati pe tot pamantul." [11] "am sunat-o pe o prietena de-a mea care era aici [in Italia] si i-am spus ca eu sunt asa si nu mai pot suporta regimul asta."
	proud of integrating well in Italy and learning Italian	[2] "am invatat italiana singura intr-un an" [4] "eu m-am integrat foarte bine vreau sa spun ca majoritatea prietenilor nostri de familie sunt italieni. majoritatea. am prieteni si familie romani. dar romanii cel putin aici in orasul asta nu prea sunt uniti cum sunt aia din Torino"; "te integrezi pt ca ajungi esti respectata eu nu vreau sa ma laud dar sunt tipul care ma cauta... pentru un loc de munca"

		[5] "din 2003 . 19 ani. fac parte din categoria de romani care s-au integrat la 98%. am pierdut foarte mult din partea romaneasca a mea. jumatate din viata mea am trait aici. am venit, eram tanara, am reusit, m-am adaptat imediat la viata de aici si la modul de a trai de aici." [6] "dar n-am avut niciodata chestia aia a esti romanca... nu. sa te vada lumea un pic asa... chiar deloc. poate m-a ajutat si faptul ca am invatat italiana bine si nu am accent." [7] "acum am 60 de ani si nu am stat nicio zi fara munca, de 20 de ani in Italia. cand am venit in 2003 nu erau posibilitati ca acum..."; "cum oare as putea sa nu ii respect si iubesc pe italieni? acum ei s-au dus la casa de la mare sa faca curatenie pt mihaela. ei nici nu o cunosc pe Mihaela!"
	feeling at home in Italy + feeling welcome because Italians have a positive perception of Romanians	[1] "Si da ... si nu. Intr-un fel da, din punct de vedere profesional simt ca apartin aici si ca mi-am gasit nisa in care sa activez profesional. Si in materie de prietenii... viata personala, ma simt foarte ok aici. Insa nu stiu daca m-as vedea aici mereu." [2] "am intalnit persoane foarte bune. stiti cum ma numeau, nu-mi spuneau ca sunt badanta, imi spunea ca sunt fiica ei"; "cu adevarat ei sunt un popor curios, care vrea sa cunoasca cultura romaneasca, vrea sa cunoasca traditiile romanesti. asta ma bucura tare mult."; "oamenii din Sardegna eu ma gasesc foarte bine cu ei. suntem de acord, foarte bine ne intelegem. eu ca romanca am fost primita cu bratele deschise intre prietenii nostri, care sunt italieni. eu ma simt foarte bine, sunt oameni extraordinari, oameni care iubesc Romania, au cunoscut si alti romani si vorbesc foarte frumos despre Romania si despre romanii nostri. oricum si-au schimbat parerea ca am demonstrat ca suntem persoane care avem demnitate, orgoliul nostru." [4] "da sigur ca am incredere [in romani]... eu n-am avut probleme nici

		cu romanii nici cu italienii" [5] "s-a schimbat foarte mult situatia din momentul in care am plecat de la Roma. acolo eram vazuti nu foarte bine noi romanii. cand am venit in Toscana am gasit o zona in care persoanele sunt foarte cum se spune... socievile... ai ai ai am probleme cu romana. am fost primita foarte bine aici m-am simtit ca acasa. persoanele foarte solare, au vrut sa ma ajute de la inceput." [6] "pe mine m-au tratat chiar foarte bine. conteaza foarte mult mediul in care lucrezi, educatia pe care o ai. trebuie sa fii educat si respectuos. ti se raspunde cu aceeasi moneda. pe mine m-a ajutat ca am invatat foarte repede italiana. si faptul ca nu am accent. mi s-a intamplat sapt trecuta sa ma intrebe daca sunt din abruzzo." [8] "acum de aici totul e mai familiar. romania e la 2 ore de zbor."
	feeling shame for not speaking Romanian so well anymore + using Italian words in Romanian conversation	[2] "imi pare rau ca nu-mi gasesc cuvintele"; "ma straduiesc ca mi-e frica sa nu... fata mea uneori ma corecteaza si are dreptate. fara sa vreau gresesc. ca daca eu vorbesc in permanenta italiana in casa, va dati seama ca-mi vine greu. e o rusine sa nu stii romaneste."; "daca nu citesc, pierd limba" [3] "am si facut un pact de la inceput sa delimitam foarte bine cele doua limbi pentru ca e oribil cand auzi pe cineva ca incepe sa vorbeasca in hibridul ala de vorbe amestecate. mai e accentul cateodata bata-l vina..ca ma simt aiurea cand vin in tara ma intreaba cineva dar de unde veniti?" [4] "mai scap si vorbe in italiana" [5] "vreau sa ma scuzi pentru ca cu siguranta o sa amestec un pic italiana cu romana."; "gandesc in italiana, visez in italiana.. stiu ca am gresit"
	feeling in-between after migration; never at home;	[4] "anul asta vin obligat. dar ajung acolo stau o zi 2 3 4 5 . si dupa imi pierd rabdarea. ii vad pe toti, frati, cumnati, surori, nepoti. si vreau sa ma

	missing family; no special connection meeting other Romanians abroad	intorc inapoi aici, dar de ce nu stiu." [5] "cititi stirile din romania? putin putin foarte putin. eu am aici in piombino avem un magazin de produse romanesti. sunt foarte legata cu proprietara. ea ma mai tine la curent cu noutatile din Romania. ea frecventeaza o scoala de infiermeristica in Romania. ea ma tine la curent cu informatii din Romania. mama ma mai tine la curent si ea cand vorbim la telefon. din pacate m-am italienizat la 98%."; "sora mea este cu un picior aici, cu un picior acolo. nu reuseste sa stea bine nici aici, dar si cand se duce acasa nu reuseste. si ea de 18 ani este in Italia. a incercat de 2-3 ori sa se intoarca definitiv in Romania. dar suntem intr-o faza conflictuala pt ca nu reusesti sa-ti gasesti locul acolo, dar nici aici nu-si gaseste locul."
III - Romanianness in Italy	proud of being Romanian; memorabilia	[2] "mi-am adus carti noi din romania. trebuie sa le citesc! [rade] Eminescu, Creanga, este drapelul meu. cum sa ma exprim... eu le am cu mine. le am sub forma de magnet. sunt mandria si orgoliul meu."; "Am drapelul romanesc. Am Eminescu, am Creanga, am discuri, George Enescu, tablouri romanesti. Am cunoscut o pictorita ro care traieste in italia de 50 de ani, casatorita, este Lidia Mocanu, o pictorita renumita, are toate premiile pe care poate sa le primeasca un pictor. Este foarte bine cotata si respectata in Italia. Chiar face expozitii. Are mostra ei de pictura. Avem romani foarte valorosi care fac cinste Romaniei." [3] "am coltisorul meu cu vas de lemn sculptat, cu un clop, cu icoane si alte chestii. coltisorul meu romanesc. si oricum toata casa e... traim romaneste." [4] "da mergem dar trebuie sa mergem [la vot]... pt ca aici nu pun urna. deci facem cardul de masini si mergem la

		Rossetto la votat" [5] "am incercat sa introduc mici lucruri de ale noastre, de exemplu sa jucam remi. aici nu exista remi." [11] "sunt consilier in consiliul local. incercam sa luptam pentru a ne pastra cat de cat traditiile, modul de viata, integrarea"
	language spoken at home	[1] "mi-as dori (ca romana) sa fie una dintre limbile pe care le-ar sti copiii mei." [6] "Lucia are 3 ani si 7 luni, vorbeste bine, ii vorbesc in amandoua limbile. ea intelege foarte bine totul in romaneste, totul, uhmmmm, iti raspunde in italiana" [9] "acasa vorbim numai italiana. eu cu Liza [fiica] vorbesc in romana. doar in romana. 99%. uneori imi mai scapa italiana dar ma corectez." [11] "nu acceptam sub nicio forma sa se uite romana."
	discrimination based on Romanianness	[4] "eram aproape de dus la spital era o raceala din aia eu am un pic de probleme la plamani s-o agravat si vreau sa spun ca fata la o doamna pe care o ingrijeam eu o zic ca da cuuum ai racit da nu se poate si eu ce fac acuma? cum zic ei arrangiati... i-am zis si eu arrangiati.. aranjeaza-te. am stat in concediu medical 8 zile. cummm caaa mmmmm dupa aia m-au chemat la telefon si au zis ca ce faci, vii eu am gasit pe alta. intelegi. nu conteaza ca eu sunt pe langa faptul ca iti ingrijesc mama iti ingrijesc casa iti gatesc ca la un moment dat ajungi sa faci tu tot intelegi. deci nu conteaza. daca te-ai imbolnavit poti sa ai probleme pot sa iti desfaca contractul de munca. in fine. sunt si asa... sunt si care te inteleg. sunt si asa." [5] "am nimerit intr-o familie in care erau cam rasisti. eram considerata ca o sclava nu eram nici macar chemata pe nume"; "ma simt foarte rau cand vad ca se intampla cate ceva provocat de romani. dar in general in ultima perioada nu ne mai ataca cum ne

		atacau acum vreo 10 ani" [8] "cand am spus de unde sunt, un englez a spus din prima, aa gypsy right? atunci a trebuit sa explic diferenta dintre rom si romani."; "pare ca toata lumea e satula de romani oriunde mergem. la fel la munca francezi, nemti, toti tin sa mentioneze ca sunteti peste tot! [rade]. deci, na."; "uite colegii italieni majoritatea au fost ok cu romanii. mai degraba au fost francezii sau nemtii care au tinut sa faca anumite afirmatii despre romani."
	ignorant Italians	[3] "dar italienii deloc cu engleza. si daca vorbesc engleza oricum inteleg numai ei ce spun. [rade]."; "poti sa vii aici cu 3 facultati in momentul in care vor auzi ca esti romanca o sa-ti spuna stii, voi sunteti foarte practice, eu am ceva ferestre de sters si as avea nevoie de ceva ajutor..."; "voi acasa aveti paturi, dormiti in pat ca noi? ati vazut masina de spalat pana acum? plus de asta aici totul este tradus in italiana. cum si in franta e totul dublat in franceza... oamenii tineretul nu are urechea antrenata ca noi sa iti dai seama ce limba vorbeste interlocutorul tau. pt faptul ca noi spunem da pt ei e suficient deci vorbim ruseste [rade]. dar nu se poate ca tu sa ne auzi vorbind si nu gasesti nici macar vreo asemanare intre cuvintele romanesti si cuvintele italiene.. voi cum credeti ca noi invatam italiana?" [4] "dar ignoranta e mare. pt ca nu stiu nici macar unde e Romania pe harta. si nu te astepti la persoane care au facut un liceu aici sa spuna da' unde e Romania?"
	special connection due to shared Romanianness	[1] "mi se pare ca ne conectam instant si avem un punct de plecare mai usor. mai apoi schimbam limba, schimbam tonul, schimbam tot."; [3] "nu ma simt in niciun fel. e o persoana normala [romanul]; "sa stii ca cel mai mare dusman al romanului e tot romanul." [6] "la Roma, da , mi-a facut placere.

		chiar am avut legaturi, dar s-au pierdut, am avut o cunostinta o romanca casatorita cu un roman, lucrau, ea facea curatenie. am chemat-o si la mine. chiar imi placea eram mult mai usurata ca am gasit pe cineva sa ma ajute si era roman de-al meu. sau fetele pe care le-am cunoscut pe grup am reusit sa facem si pastele impreuna cu una dintre fete, cu sotul ei, am fost impreuna la biserica, mi-a placut. normal." [8] "nu ma simt diferit [cand intalnesc un roman]. e doar un om. vorbesc la fel cu oricine. ma bucura, nu stiu. dar e tot aia. nu m-as simti diferit."
	hardworking Romanian abroad	[4] "trebuie sa ai tarie de caracter sa poti sa faci meseria asta" [5] "am muncit si 14 ore pe zi ca sa pot sa aduc un salariu in casa."; "oamenii de aici sunt persoane foarte de treaba, muncesc foarte mult. noi suntem apreciati. parerea italienilor de aici despre noi e ca suntem persoane muncitoare, umile."
	no desire to integrate	[10] "nu. nu simt ca apartin. dar dar nu ma intereseaza, nu asta imi doresc. nu simt ca apartin de nimeni" [11] "in Italia, simti ca apartii? a , nu. nu. categoric nu."; "te-ai simtit bine venita in Italia de-a lungul anilor? nu. absolut nu. dar nu asta ma intereseaza. importanta e familia mea, cum stau eu, prietenii mei sunt prietenii mei, eu imi pastrez traditiile, limba, obiceiurile, nu m-am bagat in altceva."
	Romanian community abroad - events, church, supermarket, helping each other, traditions, transmitting culture	[2] "in comunitate ne ducem la botezuri si la nunti."; "1 decembrie. ziua romaniei"; [5] "magazinul ei este un punct de de cum se spune referiment in italiana in romaneste este punctul nostru de de de forta unde ne intalnim avem probleme ea se ocupa de acte, se ocupa si de un preot care vine in Piombino o data pe luna si face slujba." [6] "la mine magazinul romanesc e o sursa de stiri, un loc de intalnire. e un

		fel de a te simti mai aproape de Romania. eu il am intr-un oras langa noi la 14km. am fost de cateva ori. am luat foi de placinta, iaurt, telemea, am facut placinta. cabanosi. din astea. da exista. e adevarat ca e un loc unde mai vorbesti cu romani."; "si biserica e un loc unde intalnesti romani si schimbi 2 vorbe. la Roma si la Trani mergeam la biserica"; "cand s-a votat presedintele. chiar s-a organizat de catre biserica. enoriasii s-au pus de comun acord. au inchiriat o camera langa biserica si am recunoscut la vot anumite fete pe care le stiam de la biserica. anuntul unde se va vota, cum se va vota l-am primit pe grupul enoriasilor bisericii. preotul vasile aici in Alessandria are un account business si iti trimite in fiecare saptamana "stimati credinciosi..."" [9] "ne vedeam si de 1 dec. mergeam la restaurant la petreceri romanesti"; "sunt inca inscris, nu stiu cum sa ies din grup. nici nu mai locuiesc in orasul asta [din italia]. si trimit tot felul de poze! carnati, mici, am primit dovlecei. e pe WhatsApp. anunta ce marfa primesc. am primit ardei, castraveti, 50 de fotografii cu tot felul de alimente. [rade mult]. ma duceam din cand in cand. pe vremea covid ei veneau si acasa aduceau o tava de mici." [11] "ne intalnim, chemam copiii familiilor de romani. ii invatam sa colinde, sa ure, sa-i invatam cum e martisorul, sa transmita si la scoala ce inseamna martisorul. facem sarbatorile importante. ne imbracam in straie romanesti."; "este un loc de intalnire, e un loc mesager in care se afla despre locuri de munca, anumite persoane care te pot ajuta, sau daca au nevoie de contact cu ambasada. multe functii are. e exact ca in Romania. toti stim unii de altii."
	good and bad Romanians	[3] "prima teapa mi-am luat-o de la un roman, ca de!"; "dar dupa stii tu tipic romanesc aaa nu ma mai duc la ea, are caine si pisica. [rade] in mizeria mea, eu ti-am deschis usa. daca eram pe

| | | strada in ro tu mi deschideai usa? e altceva! nu, nu e altceva. este exact acelasi lucru. si este foarte greu sa explici unui om care refuza sa inteleaga chestia asta."; "sunt cei care sunt de 20 de ani in italia care au impresia ca au doi neuroni in plus fata de tine. eu sunt doar de 11 ani, mai am de crescut. si oricum ei vor fi mai mari ca mine, deci nu. nu e usor."
[4] "femeile care vin din mediul rural ca sa faca badante aici au asa 15 ani 20 de ani de cand stau aici dar vorbesc rau. rau. italiana. foarte rau."; "stii tu faima romanilor barbati. e de ajuns sa fii o data pe luna sa puna oleaca de muzica si deja suntem condamnati. acuma recent au arestat o banda de romi si romani care furau de prin case."
[6] "fura, dar nu toti. ca in orice padure sunt si uscaturi"
[7] "in acea seara am intalnit impreuna un grup de romani intr-o situatie dezastruoasa. in acel moment femeia si-a pus mainile pe volan si a inceput sa planga si a zis Didina... de ce beti atat de mult? de ce beti, deci eram si eu pusa in aceasta categorie."; "ceea ce am apreciat mereu la italieni a fost ca nu au judecat oamenii ca popor intreg. cum spun ei stai linistita ca mai sunt si pe la noi oameni rai... nu or fi toti romanii rai. uite eu am romani care lucreaza cu mine si sunt asa de treaba. nu au prejudecati. daca a gresit unul, nu ii eticheteaza pe toti. de aceea ii respect foarte mult pe italieni. m-am simtit ca acasa."
[10] "ideea e ca nu stiu ce reprezinta o parere corecta pt ca e o generalizare. nu toti romanii sunt la fel" |
| | distancing oneself from Romanianness | [5] "sunt dintre cele care a pierdut f mult din traditii din tot ce facea parte de a fi roman."; "din pacate nu am reusit sa ii invat pe copiiii mei sa vorbeasca romaneste. din pacate sunt in faza in care gandesc in italiana, visez in italiana, si imi pare foarte rau pt ca face parte din originle lor si ar trebui |

		sa resuesc sa ma sfortez dar este foarte greu nu reusesc"; "la sarbatori cand se mai fac reuniuni adunari intre ei"; "din pacate pentru Romania nu am reusit sa votez deloc. este f departe pt mine"; "noi suntem impartiti aici. categoria de romani care nu mai au nimic nimic nimic, ca mine, care s-au italienizat prea mult, si romanii care continua sa traiasca oricum in italia dar cu mentalitatea romaneasca si orice moment liber au se duc in Romania , cum sa ma exprim... m-am blocat. in Romania vor sa stea. suntem impartiti in 2 categorii. aia care nu ne intereseaza, nu ca nu ne intereseaza, dar prefer sa ma duc sa vizitez lumea o data la 2-3 ani ma duc acasa sa vad rudele. pt ca .... acasa pt mine este foarte obositor pt ca trebuie sa vizitez toata familia. nu am timp de nimic, nu am timp sa vad nimic, nu este un concediu. eu dupa un an de zile de munca intensa am nevoie sa ma relaxez. si mental si fizic. in Romania este foarte mult de umblat, de stat la cioace cu toata familia, sa vezi pe toata lumea, e o fuga continua si e stresant."; "no. no. nu as mai reusi. din pacate nu ma atrage deloc ideea. copiii mei sunt nascuti aici, copiii merg la scoala aici. viata mea este aici. eu am totul aici, am activitatea mea, am casa mea, nu am nimic care sa ma traga acolo."
		[6] "ma descurc in Italia. daca ma duc la o primarie, la un spital, la un doctor, ma descurc repede. in Romania nu stiu. vin de atatia ani doar in vacanta. dar nu stiu daca as veni inapoi cum m-as putea descurca. mi se pare ca mi-ar fi greu la inceput. pt ca toata viata mea de adult am fost aici. pana la 24 de ani nu am avut nevoie de serviciile din Romania, de institutii. acum nu as sti cum sa propun cu aceste institutii. m-as simti cam, nu stiu"
		[7]"imi pare rau ca trebuie sa vorbesc asa de urat de Romania."; "inima mea este aici in Italia, este aici la poporul

		acesta. atat de mult m-au ajutat si m-au primit foarte bine! eu iubesc Italia. imi pare rau ca zic asta. imi pare foarte rau ca romanii mei m-au dat afara din tara. mi-a fost tare greu."; "eu merg la biserica si cu romani si cu italieni. cred doar in biserica adventista, este singura care asteapta venirea lui Hristos. eu m-am distantat de biserica ortodoxa fiindca nu se aliniaza cu valorile mele."; [8] "am observat lucrul asta. si cand eram in Anglia faptul ca nu ascultam muzica ro si nu urmaream ce se intampla in Romania prea mult. [liniste] mereu m-am intrebat dc oare nu sunt asa apropiata. fiind singura la parinti, cu parinti divortati. avand-o doar pe mama foarte apropiata. nu suntem o familie mare. nu am avut niciodata conceptul asta de a fi departe de casa. mereu m-am simtit conectata cu mama. cu familia prin social media [rade]. acum posibilitatea asta de a vorbi oricand oriunde. mmmm. [liniste]. da. ce ma conecteaza de acasa de romania e doar mama."; "stiu ca nu sunt prea conectata de romania" [10] "nu sunt apropiata de o persoana pt ca e romanca. ma apropii de o persoana daca se apropie de valorile mele. nu cred ca conteaza nationalitatea. am cunoscut si alte nationalitati cu care m-am imprietenit sa spun asa dar v-am spus nu am atat de multi prieteni dar am socializat"; "magazin alimentar? da poate sa fie dar nu stiu. nu m-a interesat sa il caut."; "nu. din pacate 1 decembrie nici macar nu este sarbatoare aici deci nu simt ca este sarbatoare atunci.";
IV - the return home	desire to return to Romania	[2] "dar acum de cand cu pandemia am 2 ani jumatate de cand nu mi-am vazut tara si parintii care mi-au lipsit foarte mult."; "trebuie sa vin in tara mea, nu o sa parasesc tara niciodata." [4] "tanjesti dupa Romania, chiar daca te integrezi. iti lipsesc anumite chestii."

		[6] "cred ca ar fi greu la inceput. greu. mi-ar placea. dar mi-ar fi greu sa ma reobisnuiesc cu mentalitatea. aici e mult mai liber totul. aici poti sa mergi imbracat oricum ca nu zice nimeni nimic, sunt toti mult mai amabili, mai disponibili, functioneaza totul mai bine. ar fi greu sa ma readaptez. dar bineinteles ca m-as readapta. e tara mea. dar cred ca mentalitatea romanilor mi-ar da un pic de furca la inceput." [8] "mi-as dori f mult sa fiu acasa dar nu as putea sa am posibilitatile pe care le-am avut in afara." [9] "in Romania? [rade] imposibil. Monica nu vrea sa auda asa ceva. Romania nu e pe lista ei de prioritati. cel mai probabil ne intoarcem in Italia, daca e sa ne intoarcem undeva"; "eu incerc sa merg. sa cumpar cat mai multe bilete spre Romania. o data de 2 ori pe an. au venit si ai mei. au venit aici in martie 2 sapt. le-am spus sa vina si in iunie iulie. le-a placut."
	Romanian societal progress	[1] "face o gramada de lucruri bune pentru Romania. face spitale publice din bani privati... sunt foarte multe initiative care sunt tare bune"; [2] "acum vreo 10 ani am fost la teatrul din Iasi dar am ramas foarte impresionata de acest teatru, de spectacolul vazut. un balet romanesc. a fost extraordinar de frumos. chiar Maurizio [partenerul ei] a spus ca asa a mai vazut doar in Paris. eu am fost foarte bucuroasa." [8] "poate ca si diaspora cand se intoarce acasa incearca sa mai introduca anumite schimbari, obiceiuri din afara." [9] "uitandu-ma la statistica asta zic Romania merge foarte bine. e foarte bine ca e pro-Europa."
	retirement in Romania	[4] "eu am ani de munca in Romania. si cu anii astia.. ma gandeam la pensie. sa vin sa stau sa ma intorc in Romania sa stau acolo. dar ar fi dificil cu barbatu pe care-l am pentru ca astia

		tanjesc dupa pamantul lor dupa mare" [7] "gandul meu sa spun sincer este sa ies la pensie in Romania" [11] "pt ca am inceput aici o viata, am copilul care termina acum liceul, trebuie sa-l sprijin, nu neaparat material, dar moral sa fiu aici langa ea. eu am de terminat o cariera, sa termin si eu ceva sa ma pot retrage in Romania. la pensie ma intorc in Romania"
	regular trip home	[2] "eu vreau sa stau o luna [in Romania]" [3] "in fiecare an, daca pot si de 2 ori, de 3 ori, depinde. in fiecare an obligatoriu. mai ales in luna august cand in Italia este totul inchis "; "eu merg pe 15 iulie anul asta si stau 2 luni! anul asta exagerez, trebuie." [5] "nu mi-a placut foarte mult in birourile cand a trebuit sa rezolv pt acte. eu fiind cetatean roman cu resedinta fixa in italia eu nu am nevoie de buletin de identitate romanesc. am nevoie doar de pasaport romanesc pt cetateni cu resedinta fixa in Italia. m-am dus la biroul de la politie, m-au impins de la un birou la altul, nimeni nu reusea sa-mi dea un raspuns corect. am fost tratata cu dispret si nu mi-a placut pt ca stii italianca o venit din Italia si vine aici sa ... ce? ceva de genul asta."; "acasa pt mine este foarte obositor pt ca trebuie sa vizitez toata familia" [8] "acum in ultimele 10 luni am mers de 4 ori acasa! pe cand din Anglia in ultimii 5 ani nu stiu daca am fost de 4 ori acasa. ajuta destul de mult ca acum sunt in Italia." [9] "de obicei cel putin o data pe an. in ultimul timp ultimii 3 ani doar anul trecut am fost. dar vreau o data pe an, de Craciun sau Pasti, sau in august, cate o saptamana." [11] "vin cam des. cam in fiecare luna."
	life in Romania is stressful	[3] "oamenii mi se par tristi"; "mai nu cred. nu pentru ca eu nu as vrea

		sincera sa fiu. dar sora mea a locuit mai mult de 15 ani in Canada. si s-a intors anul asta in Romania. si de cand sotul meu si cu fiul meu au auzit incearca sa ma convinga sa ne intoarcem si noi [emotii puternice, se sterge la ochi] sincer pe mine nu ma trage sufletul. nu pentru ca nu iubesc Romania. dar pentru ca viata mi se pare mai complicata. mai stresanta." [5] "in Romania trebuie sa umblu prin birouri sa rezolv cu documentele expirate. birocratia este o chestie cea mai urata chestie si in toate tarile cred, nu numai in Romania, si in Italia si peste tot. cand se vorbeste de documente... ai de umblat, de fugit si des nu reusesti sa rezolvi nimic. umbli la 10 birouri si n-ai rezolvat nimic" [6] "in Romania mi se pare ca dureaza prea mult, te enervezi prea mullt, lumea de la ghiseu e... nu stiu..."; "tata tot imi povesteste de birocratie care pune la pamant toti oamenii. mama imi povestea cum sunt tratati oamenii in spitale. am vazut o degradare. din ce imi povesteste tata cu primaria si notarii si avocatii. o degradare." [7] "dar nu stiu daca ma voi putea obisnui dupa 20 de ani in Italia"
media role in constructing and maintaining Romanianness		
I - traditional media	Romanian media consumption	direct reflection of Romanianness [1] "recent am inceput sa ma uit la un reality show... in rest aaa... da, nu prea interactionez direct cu media din tara natala. Acum am inceput de 3 zile insula iubirii [...] eu cu prietena mea care este in Danemarca, Corina, ne uitam impreuna in acelasi timp pe click sud si facem comentariu in acelasi timp. stam amandoua pe laptopuri, pe click sud, ne uitam in acelasi timp in acelasi minut." [2] "Daca eu stau cu un italian, va dati seama ca ma uit mai mult la televiziunea italiana. Prind TVR international. ma uit cand si cand. Sau

		pe Facebook, Google. Intru pe Google si vad stirile. Dar surorile mele au cablu romanesc. Ele se uita numai la televiziunea romaneasca, foarte rar la televiziunea italiana."; "seriale romanesti cand si cand, ce vad la tvr international. eu nu am cablu tv romanesc."; "acum 10 ani aduceau ziare in romana. cumparam ziare romanesti. dar nu stiu daca le mai am. dar le cautam special si le cumparam. cred ca romanii se ocupau sa le editeze si sa le transporte pentru noi in italia. am fost surprinsa sa gasesc. cei care nu au cablu romanesc in casa ei intra direct pe twitter pe youtube pe mass media si gasesc informatii despre Romania" [3] "ma uit la toate stirile romanesti pentru ca avem sotul meu e un impatimit al internetului. avem toate aplicatiile toate canalele de televiziune" [5] "pentru ca atunci cand eram in Romania in masina ascultam radio romanesc si ii vedeam [pe copii] ca intelegeau. seara vedeau la tv programe in romana. erau inca mici. le puneam desene animate ori filme pentru copii. incepeau sa inteleaga romana astfel." [8] "la televiziunea romaneasca nu ma uit deloc, nici stiri nu urmaresc. poate foarte rar. dar cand ma intorc acasa chiar stau cu gura cascata la televizor. recuperez. nu sunt asa conectata de ce se intampla acasa. poate ma mai uit la emisiuni romanesti la highlights la iUmor pe youtube." [9]" in fiecare zi! doar stiri. stiri online. adevarul evenimentul zilei sport.ro. asa imi incep fiecare zi. intru pe site si citesc dimineata pe paginile online" [10] "in rest nu prea urmaresc. tot ce inseamna politica m-am deconectat, nici nu vreau sa mai aud de politica romaneasca. cam atat. stirile de la ora 5, nu mi-e dor, nu-mi doresc sa le vad." [11] "numai in romana. fetita mea vorbeste romana foarte bine. la noi in

		casa nu se accepta italiana. vorbim doar in romana. suntem romani. ne uitam la televizor doar in romana"; "noi am facut prin digi. avem antena parabolica si prindem toate posturile tv. avem telefonie in romania."
	media representation of Romanian migrants	positive perception of Italian press writing about Romanian migrants; Italians' negative perception of Romanian immigrants [1] "Sincer nu urmaresc. Mi se pare ca toata lumea este fair play si nimeni nu tine cont neaparat de unde esti... Nu toata lumea stie ca prima mea limba nu este engleza. Nu mi se pare ca exista un anumit discurs/dialog despre romanii din diaspora. Cred ca lumea este destul de unbiased. Destul de obiectiva." [3] "te lovesti de preconceptii, de rasism cateodata, de discriminari si trebuie sa te obisnuiesti cu toate incet incet. am trecut peste."; "aici s-a intamplat o chestie foarte foarte misto de vreo 2-3 ani. pana acum 2-3 ani indiferent ce se intampla in Italia... si italienii au tiganii lor. dar mai nou acum sunt toti romi. nu mai exista tigani, romani, sunt si ei pe categorii. au mai multe ramuri. oricum, orice se intampla in Italia in orice zona si era implicat un rom. nu era rom, era roman. dupa aia a fost o declaratie a primului ministru pe vremea aia [...numele di maio?] care e destul de extremist si a facut o remarca intr-un interviu a zis ca din Romania vin doar tigani. dupa declaratia aia vreau sa spun ca in momentul in care se intampla o nebunie si e moldovean din Republica Moldova se specifica, ca este rom din Romania, din Bulgaria, din Italia - se specifica. asta nu se facea inainte." [4] "ei in general vad mai mult ce au facut rau romanii." [5] dar in general in ultima perioada nu ne mai ataca cum ne atacau acum vreo 10 ani. erau mult mai impotriva

		noastra. eu cred ca e si datorita faptului ca ne-am integrat destul de bine in viata in Italia" [6] "au scris despre noi ca oile negre. eu cred ca foarte multi au venit aici, au facut anumite chestii" [7] "sincer sa spun eu nu prea urmaresc. eu imi vad de treaba mea. nu citesc nici ce spun cei din Romania, nici ce spun cei din Italia. eu cred doar in ce spune Dumnezeu, nu ma intereseaza presa de nicaieri. doar Dumnezeu spune adevarul." [8] "nu stiu bine italiana. nu as putea da un raspuns relevant. banuiesc ca sunt satui de noi."; "marele titlul cu romanii care fura joburile." [9] "in 2008 2009 in Italia erau alegeri era Berlusconi care ii folosea pe romani ca sperietoare. votati-ne pe noi ca uitati ce ne fac astia romanii. dar cu timpul... am avut multe experiente in momentul ala. dar cu timpul cei care au vrut sa inteleaga au inteles ca astfel de atitudini sunt doar pt moment si doar ca sa castige cineva. asta e media. dar sunt italieni de toate felurile, normal."; "in italia a fost o campanie foarte violenta asupra romanilor la inceput. pt castig electoral. s-a creat deja o mentalitate cu timpul. o sa fie greu de schimbat, dar cu timpul se schimba" [11] "citesti si presa italiana? nu citesc dar informatiile vin oricum. ma uit uneori, dar n-am avut un exemplu. nu sunt o persoana carcotasa. fiecare dintre noi. important e sa vedem lungul nasului. eu imi vad de treaba. adevarul e mereu de 2 parti. nu se stie realitatea. depinde pe cine crezi.important e sa respectam legile, oamenii din jurul nostru, regulile din societate. face parte si din educatie. cand uitam cine suntem, nu-i respectam nici pe ceilalti, pt ca nu stim ce vrem noi, dapai ce vor ceilalti? asta e ideea mea. eu ii respect pe toti. in mom in care ma simt nerespectata ma retrag imi vad de treaba mea."

II - new media	online news to stay in touch with Romania	[4] "eu sa-ti spun sincer toate vestile din Romania le iau de pe internet. la televizor nu am antena sa vad toate programele. se vede doar televiziunea nationala si cum ar veni TVR1. nu prea ma uit la televizor dar pe internet citesc toate notitele din ziare"; "de obicei dimineata ma scol citesc pe google citesc articole din ziare romanesti, italiene"
	political participation (online)	[1] "Politica nu urmaresc. Asa mai aflu cate o stire, dar nu o aflu direct, este mai mult word of mouth de la alti prieteni, familie." [2] "in romania nu am fost sa votez pt ca nu locuiesc pe teritoriul romaniei. cand se voteaza, nu am fost nici aici in italia. sa ma gandesc de ce. in romania sa spun drept eu nu urmaresc politica. nu pot sa votez, nu cunosc programul lor electoral. nu pot sa fac un bine sau un rau daca nu stiu."
	social media to stay in touch	all participants mentioned social media for staying in touch with people at home [1] "Sincer este platforma pe care o folosesc mai mult decat WhatsAppul. Deci pe Instagram este platforma sociala pe care o aleg sa comunic cu prietenii, cunostintele" [2] "cu fratii cu surorile avem un grup pe WhatsApp. ne vedem cat de des, foarte des. cu parintii mai putin pt ca ei nu au semnal. cand se duce sora mea reusim sa vorbim asa. astia din Italia sa vorbim cu parintii sa-i vedem online. vorbim cat de des, cat de des."; "ascult pe Facebook. pe Google. daca vreau sa intru pe YouTube. ascult foarte mult. dvs nu ati fost crescuta cu Irina Loghin, Benone [..], Maria Ciobanu," [4] "pai sunt inscrisa pe un grup din Iasi, dupa aia unul din Suceava, mai fac parte din sindicatul romanilor tot pe Facebook. acolo sunt care posteaza din Romania"; "da video chemata cum am facut acum la Pasti toti fratii erau

		acasa la mama in sat. acolo ii vad pe toti nepotii, stranepoti, mama mea de 90 de ani. se duc toti acolo. eeee perioada din an cand eu sufar cel mai mult."; "deci totul este pe Facebook. pun in general de la magazinul romanesc suntem toti pune anunt a murit ala hai sa-l ajutam. s-o intamplat si cu o doamna saraca care a murit la fel si nu avea familia bani. atunci se duc toti si dau. din putinul lor pt ca vreau sa spun ca nu-i cum zic aici ca sunt cainii cu colaci in coada. e greu. si pentru familiile romanesti." [5] "din cand in cand la magazin pun pe YouTube muzica romaneasca noile hituri. ca sa ma mai tin la curent cu noutatile romanesti." [6] "totul a fost prin telefon, pe vremea aia nu exista WhatsApp, Messenger, era totul pe cartela. vorbeam de pe telefonul fix, puneam prefix de Italia." [9] "cu mama vorbesc in fiecare zi pe WhatsApp"
	online Romanian community	[3] "felicitari din Techirghiol, din Dobrogea si dobrogeni, mai e un grup imi lipseste numele.. in orice caz legat de Plopeni. Plopeni e satul de unde sunt parintii mei. multe multe grupuri din Constanta. Grupuri cu romani din Italia"; [5] "da, sunt inscrisa pe Facebook la romanii din Iasi. e un profil unde se cer ajutoare umanitare, probleme din Iasi. aici in Piombino avem un profil romanii din Piombino. ne ajutam intre noi cand are cineva nevoie de loc de munca. la sarbatori cand se mai fac reuniuni adunari intre ei. incearca sa mentina sarbatorile sa se adune prietenii. inchiriaza spatii unde fac cate o petrecere la o sarbatoare mai mari. la 1 decembrie avem in piata aici se fac tarabe cu produse romanesti, cu articole traditionale romanesti, fetele se imbraca in costume traditionale. este frumos, este interesant. le place sa mentina cat de cat, sa ne tina uniti cu miscari din astea.

		[6] "doar pe telefon stiri in romaneste. pe Facebook sunt pe toate grupurile, Techirghiol, Dobrogea."; "eu cand am venit in Italia am intrat pe forumul romanilor din Italia. eram foarte activa. m-au ajutat foarte mult. foarte mult. chiar am ramas in legatura cu cateva fete de pe grupul acesta. ne-am intalnit la Roma cand am ajuns in Italia. mi-au explicat foarte multe treburi, cum se face cu documentele, etc. am fost membru activ 6-7 ani, dar incet incet stii cum e, munca , nu mai ai timp. dar am ramas in legatura cu 2 dintre fete. cu altii sunt prietena pe Facebook"; "Florin administratorul grupului era foarte bun in a tine legati romanii din zona. fac foarte multe intalniri in Italia la Milano unde sunt mai multi."; "preotul Vasile aici in Alessandria are un account business si iti trimite in fiecare saptamana "stimati credinciosi..."";

Appendix E

Informed consent form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title and version	Research into the Romanian diaspora's media use
Name of Principal Investigator	Adèle Acmola
Name of Organisation	Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication Erasmus University Rotterdam
Name of Sponsor	-
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted to find out more about the media use of the Romanian diaspora
Procedures	You will participate in an interview lasting approximately 40 minutes. Overall, you are asked for around 60 minutes of your time, including an introduction to the interview. You will be asked questions about how you emigrated to Italy, what media you consume, and how you relate to Romania and Romanians. You must be a Romanian national of at least 18 years old who lives and works in Italy.
Potential and anticipated Risks and Discomforts	There are no obvious physical, legal, or economic risks associated with participating in this study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to discontinue your participation at any time.
Potential Benefits	Participation in this study does not guarantee any beneficial results to you. As a result of participating, you may better understand your own immigration context and how it affects your media consumption.
Sharing the results	The interview will be recorded and transcribed word by word. The analysed results from this interview will be shared in the researcher's master's thesis. All names and other identifying information will be anonymised so that it will be impossible to identify you as the respondent.

Confidentiality	Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. No personally identifiable information will be reported in any research product. Moreover, only trained research staff will have access to your responses. Within these restrictions, results of this study will be made available to you upon request. As indicated above, this research project involves making audio recordings of interviews with you. Transcribed segments from the audio recordings may be used in published forms (e.g., journal articles and book chapters). In the case of publication, pseudonyms will be used. The audio recordings, forms, and other documents created or collected as part of this study will be stored in a secure location in the researchers' offices or on the researchers' password-protected computers and will be destroyed within ten years of the initiation of the study.
Compensation	There will be no (financial) compensation for participation in this study.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalised or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the primary investigator: **Adele Acmola** 601082aa@eur.nl
Statement of Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree that you will participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form. For research problems or any other question regarding the re-search project, the Data Protection Officer of Erasmus University, Marlon Domingus, MA (fg@eur.nl) If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.
Audio recording	I consent to have my interview audio recorded 　　　yes 　　　no

Secondary use	I consent to have the anonymised data be used for secondary analysis
	          yes
	          no	

Signature and Date	**NAME PARTICIPANT**	**NAME PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**
	SIGNATURE	**SIGNATURE**
	DATE	**DATE**

Appendix F

Informed consent form in Romanian

Formular de consimţământ informat

Titlul proiectului	Cercetare despre diaspora română şi relaţia cu media
Numele cercetătorului	Adèle Acmola
Numele organizaţiei	Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication Erasmus University Rotterdam
Numele sponsorului	-
Scopul cercetării	Această cercetare are loc cu scopul de a afla informaţii despre modul în care românii din diaspora folosesc media
Desfăşurarea interviului	Veţi participa la un interviu care va dura aproximativ 40 de minute. În total, interacţiunea va dura 60 de minute, incluzând introducerea si finalizarea interviului. Veţi fi întrebat/ă despre circumstanţele în care aţi emigrat în Italia, ce fel de media consumaţi, si cum relaţionaţi faţă de România şi de români. Pentru a putea participa, trebuie să fi împlinit vârsta de 18 ani şi să locuiţi şi să munciţi în Italia.
Potenţiale riscuri şi discomforturi	Nu există riscuri fizice, legale, sau economice associate cu participarea în acest studio. Dacă nu doriţi să răspundeţi la vreuna dintre întrebări, nu sunteţi în niciun fel obligat/ă. Participarea dumneavoastră este voluntară şi sunteţi liber/ă să încheiaţi interviul oricând doriţi.
Potenţiale beneficia	Participarea în acest studio nu vă aduce beneficii directe. Ca urmare a participării, aţi putea să înţelegeţi mai bine propriile circumstanţe şi efecte ale emigrării dumneavoastră spre Italia, şi cum acestea vă afecteaza consumul media.
Rezultatele	Interviul va fi înregistrat şi apoi transcris cuvânt cu cuvânt. Rezultatele vor fi

studiului	analizate şi folosite pentru teza mea de masterat. Toate numele şi alte informaţii care vă pot identifica vor fi anonimizate în aşa fel încât ar fi imposibil pentru cineva să facă conexiunea între dumneavoastră si datele din studiul meu.
Confidenţialitate	Confidenţialitatea dumneavoastră va fi întotdeauna protejată. Nicio informaţie care v-ar putea identifica nu va apărea în cadrul studiului meu. Mai mult, doar cercetători profesionişti vor avea access la datele furnizate de dumneavoastră. Având în vedere aceste restricţii, rezultatele studiului meu vă pot fi furnizate dacă doriţi. Aşa cum am spus mai sus, participarea dumneavoastră înseamnă că veţi fi înregistrat în timpul interviului şi că vorbele dumneavoastră transcrise pot fi folosite în cadrul cercetării. În cazul publicării, un pseudonim va fi folosit. Înregistrările vor fi colectate şi stocate într-o locaţie sigură şi în fişiere protejate, iar apoi vor fi distruse 10 ani după iniţierea acestui studiu.
Compensare	Nu veţi fi compensat/ă financiar pentru participare.
Dreptul de a vă retrage. Întrebări.	Participarea dumneavoastră este complet voluntară. Puteţi opta să nu participaţi deloc. Dacă totuşi decideţi să participaţi în această cercetare, vă puteţi opri în orice moment fără să fiţi penalizaţi în niciun fel. Dacă decideţi să vă retrageţi, sau dacă aveţi întrebări cu privire la participarea dumneavoastră, sau plângeri la adresa cercetătorului, vă rog să mi le adresaţi la adresa de email de mai jos. **Adèle Acmola** 601082aa@eur.nl
Consimţământ	Semnătura dumneavoastră indică că aţi împlinit vârsta de 18 ani şi că aţi citit acest formular (sau că altcineva vi l-a citit), că întrebările dumneavoastră au primit un răspuns satisfăcător, şi că sunteţi de acord să participaţi în acest studiu. Veţi primi o copie a acestui document. În caz că aţi avut probleme, sau aveţi alte întrebări cu privire la această cercetare, vă sugerăm să le adresaţi ofiţerului de protecţia datelor din cadrul universităţii Erasmus. Marlon Domingus, MA (fg@eur.nl) Dacă doriţi să participaţi, vă invităm să semnaţi mai jos.

Înregistrare audio	Sunt de acord să fiu înregistrat audio. ☐ da ☐ nu
Folosirea datelor	Sunt de acord ca informațiile oferite de mine să fie folosite în cadrul unei cercetări academice în mod anonim. ☐ yes ☐ no

Semnătura și data	**Numele participantului**	**Numele cercetătorului** Adèle Acmola
	SIGNATURE	**SIGNATURE**
	DATE	**DATE**