FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON THE BRAIN DRAIN AND SOCIAL
REPRODUCTION IN TRANSITION ECONOMIES: ROMANIA'S
HIGHLY SKILLED POST-COMMUNIST MIGRATION TO CANADA

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Abstract

Starting with the 1990s, economies worldwide entered a knowledge-based phase of growth as part of the neoliberal project of development. In order to absorb the best well-trained workforce internationally, Canada re-organized its immigration programs. One of the products of this re-organization was a prioritization, enlargement and increased focus placed on the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP).

In my dissertation, I examine the effects and outcomes of the movement of highly skilled individuals on their origin developing and transition countries - Romania, in this case. Insofar as contextualizing Romania's post-communist transition to a capitalist market, the thesis contributes to the understanding of the transnational dimensions of social reproduction through Romanian mothers' investment in the migration of their children to Canada, as well as the gendered foundations of certain Canadian immigration policies that make such movements possible. While the existing feminist literature on social reproduction has not made visible enough how women's paid and unpaid work in transition states enables the migration of young people, the "brain-drain" migration scholarship misses out completely the social reproductive work from developing countries that makes such movements possible. By analyzing Canada's Federal Skilled Worker (FSWP) immigration program and Romanian mothers' investment in the migration of their children to Canada (mobility enabled by such programs), my aim is to fill in such gaps in the current literature, in an attempt to expand both the brain-drain migration and social-reproduction literature. In asking these questions, I hope to bring forward arguments about how Canadian neoliberal projects of growth and development are indirectly subsidized by Romanian

women's work, and how the overall processes accentuate and intensify inequalities in different parts of the world.

Dedication

To my darling parents, Lia and Victor Petrica, who in their lifetime in Romania experienced challenging historical transformations and different political regimes and courageously survived communism, switch and transition to capitalism, and capitalism itself. I can proudly call them communist and capitalist survivors. From them I learned about both resisting marginalizations and navigating confusions and instabilities while never giving up the fight for a better world. After all, since my childhood onwards they kept on reminding me that "Life is a struggle, so struggle, daughter!", and while I have considered their advice as too cynical, now more and more I am convinced of its fundamental optimism

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thoughts and who always stands beside me in my many existential struggles. My years in Canada and at York University would have been much harder and more challenging if it were not for her who provided me with a shoulder to cry on as well as her always ready desserts and glasses of sherry in times of crisis.

Along the same lines, I owe a great deal of material and emotional support to the Centre for Refugee Studies (CRS) at York University which welcomed me and gave me a chance. Even when English was not my first language and research interests were not primarily connected to refugees, the Centre provided a refuge for me while at York. Professors Susan McGrath and James Simeon as well as Michele Millard turned my graduate life into a joyful experience. Getting involved in their projects expanded both my knowledge and professional experiences. The result of trusting in me made it possible for me to travel to Uganda, India, etc. I am forever indebted for these multiple experiences that took me further away than any aircraft has taken me before.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Lia and Victor Petrica, who never stop believing in me and loving me across the ocean. Who would have thought that so much

physical and spatial distance between Romania and Canada would end up actually bringing

us closer!

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Introduction

The personal is political (Hanisch 1970)

Women must fight for their freedom themselves and until they are able to tell their pains directly,
any improvement of their fate will not be made.
(Calypso Botez 1919)

On a spring day, my family received the visit of an acquaintance who was on a short trip to Romania after migrating to Canada. Having left Romania for more than seven years at that point, this was his first trip back and he seemed eager to meet up with as many friends and relatives as possible. My family friend looked fabulous, dressed up in an elegant dark suit, wearing fashionable classic black shoes, and holding what looked like a brand-new suitcase. We cheered seeing him so dressed up and we were happy to notice him doing so well and looking so good after his stay in Canada. With what looked like a newly learned politeness and reserve, he accepted our compliments. We found out that, in contrast to Romania, it is very easy to be elegant in Canada. For example, one can walk to the office or to the local park during weekends and he does not have to wipe his shoes of dust for as long as a month. "Canadian streets are so clean, and so frequently wiped, and washed that there is hardly any dust anywhere", he told us. My parents, hospitable folks, prepared a copious lunch for the guest, and while they were trying to serve him homemade pork sausages and pork chops with homemade French fries, we were informed that he no longer ate fatty foods. In Canada, he told us, people are more focused on healthy food options, with less fat and made of natural ingredients. He declined a glass of Fanta juice that my family bought, informing us that it might not even contain any natural orange juice. In Canada people drink only juices freshly extracted from fruits. By this point, I started to be annoyed by his rudeness and

insensitivity towards my family's efforts to welcome him, but my parents kept on being nice and polite. Surprised by his stories, they were even asking for more details about life in Canada while making comparisons with Romania and blaming the corrupted Romanian politicians for not assuring the same good life that Canadians have. In this visit, we seemed to have found out that things are so transparent in the political life of Canada and people are so overwhelmingly and unflinchingly honest in their daily interactions that you do not have to count your change at any cashier. The change will always be the correct sum of money, and nothing less than that. Progressively amazed by what they were hearing, my Mum ended up asking, "how can you reach Canada?" What did you have to do, and what tests did you have to pass in order to reach what looked like a superior organization of social life from many points of view. To her question our family friend paused for a while and sighed, as an indication of the challenging probes and the difficulty of the process that one must pass through in order to reach such an advanced society. The long sighing was followed by a rather vague and short summary-reply of all the qualifications necessary to reach such a destination: "Ah, one must have a brain to reach Canada."

My exploration of brain drain, migration and women's rights was sparked by this visit in early 2000s. Of course, one must have brain ("brain" understood as intelligence and smartness) to pursue anything in life. In the 1990s and 2000s, in the context of an agonizing and difficult post-communist transition to the capitalist market, Romanians knew that Canada, Australia and United States were able to attract "the best and brightest" (McKenzie, Gibson 2010) and the most skilled workforce worldwide. The main assumption was that if you are smart and well educated, you cannot but succeed in these countries. For those aspiring Romanians who wanted to move to Canada, the focus was on getting more education, obtaining new certificates, training and acquiring new skills. Romanians invest all their efforts to prove that they are the efficient brains

that Canada wants them to be. Nonetheless, while young Romanians were trying to get the best out of their education and obtaining new credentials, another story was emerging in the background. The story was about the Romanian families' efforts and, particularly, the Romanian mothers' investments which were making it possible for their children to obtain their education and necessary qualifications in order to migrate to Canada. By Romanian women's investments, I am considering both their waged work and their unwaged domestic, emotional and intellectual work invested in raising and educating their children. Nevertheless, the story of the Romanians' highly-skilled migration would not be complete if it did not also bring to light the impact of their departure on the communities and families left behind that invested so much in them, only to see them go, in a context of challenging Eastern European post-communist transition to the capitalist market.

Through a focus on Romania, my contribution to the current debates is multi-fold: first of all, my dissertation points out the limits and shortcomings of the classical brain-drain migration scholarship (Michel Beine, Frédéric Docquier, Hillel Rapoport 2001; J Bhagwati, K Hamada 1974; Carrington and Detragiache 1998; Boeri, Brücker, Docquier, and Rapoport 2012), which cannot be separated from social reproduction and care economies; second, my analysis brings to light the need for the contextualization of the social-reproduction from a transition[1] and developing economy perspective and what this means for the Romanian mothers who invested so much paid and unpaid work in the education and creation of the highly skilled migrants to Canada. Third, I am looking at how Canada's projects of neoliberal development and growth deeply rely on

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1 The concept of transition economy refers to the countries of former Soviet Union, Eastern European bloc and China that in the late 1980s experienced a change on how their economies was organized: from a state and centrally planned economy under a communist rule to a market-based capitalist one (Burawoy 1999, Kornai 1992). The change meant a reduction of welfare structures, a privatization of formerly owned state resources and an economic liberalization of prices. The change also brought forward significant social costs in terms of massive job losses, lower incomes, increased inequality and greater poverty (Milanovic 1998).

transition and developing economies, in an equation of growth and marginalization that are co-constituted; fourth, by listening to Romanian women's voices my investigation uncovers not just the work that they do for their children, but also their critical awareness of the process as well as the possibilities of resistance to it through policy changes and transnational feminist solidarity action.

In critically looking at the migration of the highly skilled to Canada and Romanian mothers' private and public work that enables it, I hope to cover some of the existing gaps in both the literature of brain-drain migration as well as feminist political economy. Above all else, I am analyzing all this not from a "detached", "impersonal", "objective" position of a feminist outsider researcher on the topic, but from the position of a migrant to Canada, while acknowledging both waged and unwaged work that mothers such as mine invested in this outcome.

While Canada's immigration programs are focused on attracting the most skilled and talented workforce worldwide, there is much more that needs to be known concerning the question of whose efforts and through whose work these skills and talents are made possible. In the process of absorbing "the best and brightest" (McKenzie, Gibson 2010), the issue of who has previously supported and funded the development of the desired skills, talents and "brains" of the individuals is frequently left out of the current scholarship on migration. In this context, my argument is that it is particularly women's work that contributes to the creation of the highly skilled workers and professionals who migrate to Canada and that the current focus on migration policies of brain-absorption does not sufficiently acknowledge the care and social reproductive work largely associated with women that goes into the formation and maintenance of such talents and skills.

My choice for Romania's post-communist case study (after 1990) was due to the fact that the year 1990 meant the end of more than 40 years of communist regime in Romania and the

beginning of the transition to a capitalist market. Through my analysis of Romanian women's work toward the creation of highly skilled immigrants I hope to highlight a different story from the one that is usually trumpeted in immigrant programs of Canada. These programs which are meant to attract "the best and brightest" (McKenzie, Gibson 2010) and are promising a higher standard of living for those of the developing world not only do not always fulfill their promises, but also have damaging consequences for the origin countries. "Brain race" migration policies do not contextualize the costs that enter into the formation of highly skilled migrants, nor assess the effects that they have for the communities and families left behind. "Brain race" refers in this context to the effort of the governments or states' institutions (such as universities) from the Global North to recruit and attract well-educated persons and build knowledge-based economies. The underground assumption is that, when countries compete vehemently for the best minds, the whole world benefits of talents and skills that reach their largest potential and best development (Wildawski 2010; Altbach, Postiglione: 2015). Nevertheless, these stories of talent migration costs and benefits, production and reproduction, and similarly of neoliberal growth and transition economies are always intertwined and never separated, challenging in this way both the scholarship on brain-drain migration as well that on social reproduction.

In the introduction and first chapter of my dissertation, I analyze some of the aspects of the general brain gain vs. brain-drain migration literature. My analysis will include a feminist political economy critique of such processes (Michel Beine, Frédéric Docquier, Hillel Rapoport 2001; J Bhagwati, K Hamada 1974; Carrington and Detragiache 1998; Boeri, Brücker, Docquier, and Rapoport 2012). The feminist critique will underline how migration schemes concentrated on attracting "the best and brightest" (McKenzie, Gibson 2010) ultimately lead to hierarchical

gendered migration schemes. Such is the case of Canada's prestigious Federal Skilled Workers[2] immigration program, focused on the absorption of specialized skills and talents from developing countries while not equally considering both the vital social reproductive labour that supported the creation of such skills, as well as the ongoing care needs in order for such programs to be sustainable. This fact is evident not only in making invisible and unaccounted for women's waged and unwaged, social reproductive work in the formation of highly skilled migrants in transition Romania, but also in the way migration programs were structured in Canada.[3] While the Federal Skilled Worker program had as its goals attracting and retaining worldwide talent, namely the top skills, education, language competencies and work experience needed for Canada's modernization, performance and maximization of competitiveness, and while it raises the expectations for multiple rights such as skilled employment, benefits, and multicultural integration, the rest of the immigration programs focused on social reproductive needs did not. For example, the recently closed Live-in Caregivers program or the current Hire a Foreign In-Home Caregiver stream from the Temporary Foreign Worker program are feminized, directed at women, and deemed less important.[4] Similarly, in Canada's National Occupational Classification (NOC) the occupation of care providers is categorized as a skill level type C, and is not eligible for the country's skilled immigrant (Express Entry) main program (CIC 2017). My focusing on Romanian migration to Canada after 1990 allows me to highlight how the "brain races" or the production of several

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2 Please note that as of January 1, 2015 the Federal Skilled Worker (FSWP) applications are processed under the denomination of Express Entry Immigration Selection System

3 Please note that the current analysis covers Canada's immigration programs until the winter of 2017 (the year of finishing writing my doctoral thesis) and does not cover the latest CIC developments.

4 See Citizenship and Immigration Canada: Report on Plans and Priorities 2014-2015. Please note that the comparison was used only to highlight the difference between various immigration programs. However, Canada's immigration programs do not limit themselves to the three categories above-mentioned: while the Federal Skilled Worker (FSWP) program had the biggest quota in attracting migrants at the time of writing, Canada's immigration program also included several other categories such as Provincial Nominees, or Refugees as well as some new additions such as Canadian Experience Class, Federal Skilled Trades Program, Start-Up Visa or Self-Employed Persons Program (Canadian Citizenship and Immigration 2014).

discourses and norms around such practices does not happen in a vacuum, and how women's waged and social reproductive work in Romania's transition economy primarily contributes to the growth and development of a certain neoliberal project of Canada. Nevertheless, such neoliberal projects of growth and development ultimately lead to new hierarchies and inequalities between different parts of the world. This analysis is relevant for feminist literatures as well as future policy-making projects.

My second chapter engages with research methodology and methods. It provides a brief description of the qualitative methods needed to understand and explain Romanian migration to Canada as well as an account of autobiography as a necessary accompanying feminist tool in the process of writing. My qualitative methods consisted in interviewing 25 Romanian mothers who had at least one child who migrated to Canada. I specifically wanted to find out how the migration of their children to Canada impacted them, and what their sacrifices and investments (from social reproductive work to direct financial support) were in the process of their children's becoming highly skilled migrants. With that in mind, I wanted to analyze how big a role Romanian women's waged and unwaged work plays in the formation of highly skilled migrants as well as the effect their outward migration has on developing sending countries and their own lives. However, I was doing the interviews while disclosing my own status as a highly skilled migrant to Canada, and politicizing my own position in the process, thus disclosing the essential component of autobiography in any methodology endeavour.

My third and fourth chapters map the Romanian migration to Canada and describe Romanian women's private and waged work in the creation of highly skilled Romanian migrants to Canada. While the account of Romanian women's waged work is supported by a literature review and basic quantitative data, the full testimonies collected through interviews give voice to

what kind of work is needed domestically including the emotional and intellectual labour that goes into the formation and culmination of a subject as a highly skilled migrant. The chapters highlight the effects that the migration of the children has for Romanian mothers left behind in the context of post-communist transition, for women's rights in general in transition economies and as brought to light by the lucid critical analysis of the Romanian women themselves. It also gives a glimpse of how women's efforts and work in transition countries contribute to neoliberal projects of growth in Canada rather than to the development of their own home countries.

The fifth chapter highlights how the processes of neoliberal development in Canada are intrinsically connected with the transition status of economies in Eastern Europe and proposes possibilities for raising awareness regarding both the costs and consequences of migration for the communities left behind. Furthermore, it envisions changes to the current "brain drain" and "brain gain" migration phenomena (as exemplified by the Romanian highly skilled migration to Canada) in the form of transnational feminist alliances and solidarity actions. Stimulated by feminist advocacy movements at local and transnational levels on similar women's work-related issues, it also opens up the possibility of gender-based policy action at the government level to reverse the current patriarchal framing of immigration programs such as the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) as well as the harmful outcomes of such processes for the origin countries of migrants.

Chapter One: Theories and Analyses of Highly Skilled Migration and Social Reproduction

Section A: Theories and Analysis of Highly Skilled Migration: Brain Gain vs. Brain Drain Arguments

Some of the brain-drain vs. brain-gain debates in the migration literature argue that current economies' main resource of growth and development is achieved by the migration of very knowledgeable and well-talented skilled workers. For example, they argue that in order to reach new levels of growth and development, governments of the already developed West and North design migration policies to attract a very educated and highly skilled professional from the East and South. While developing countries are drained of "brains" and a knowledgeable workforce, the already developed countries of the North and West gain them (Boeri, Brücker, Docquier, and Rapoport 2012). However, this does not take into account the gender component of this transnational circuit of migration in both the sending and receiving country. In this chapter, I grapple with this brain-drain vs. brain-gain debate in the migration literature and show how such theoretical understandings lack an analysis of the social reproductive work that supports and is vital to these movements. My scholarly contribution consists in mapping specifically these gaps in the highly skilled migration literature that looks at the brain race processes independently of the care economies and the social reproductive work that make it possible. Moreover, I show that such arguments are constituted by and re-enforced by patriarchal practices. The fact that there is a competition among developed countries worldwide to attract highly skilled migrants, but not a specific race to get the care and social reproductive resources they equally need for a sustainable future despite the internal demands speaks already of a hierarchy and differentiation. Of course, some of the same countries of the Global North do import domestic/ care labour. However, as I

will further exemplify through the case of Canada's migration policies, the import of domestic/ care workers never reaches the quotes, importance and social prestige that the brain races migration policies aim to. Furthermore, they are always defined as either de-skilled or low skilled work, awarded much lower points, and considered less productive in the economy, reinforcing this way the patriarchal construction of women's less valuable private household work and men's more valuable public work (Abu-Laban 1998, Ahmad 2003, Yeates 2004).

Speaking broadly about Canada's immigration system, Yasmeen Abu-Laban (1998) and Sunera Thobani (2007) have already mentioned that the country's government has enacted migration policies that historically have encouraged the work of men and made less of a priority the work largely associated with women. For example, Yasmeen Abu-Laban argues that Canada's propensity for immigrants who are defined as able to provide economic contributions to the country has consistently advantaged some certain categories of immigrants to the detriment of others (1998: 76). Those categories are always differentiated in terms of class, gender, geographic location, ethnicity and race (Abu-Laban 1998). Similarly, Sunera Thobani argues that Canada's state policies have always "exalted" some subjects and some national qualities at the expense of others. The "exalted", glorified subjects distinguish themselves from "Others" or "Outsiders", marked by gender, class, racial and ethnic exploitations, who always end up in positions of either marginalization, perpetual estrangement, or conditional inclusions (1998: 6).

Worldwide migration policies of the developed countries focused on "brain gains" and attraction of highly skilled talents encourage work that is largely associated with male characteristics and values (rationality, intelligence, efficiency, and productivity). In this respect, work that is largely connected to male traits is favoured and prioritized, while the care work that goes into the sustenance of the highly skilled, and in the absence of which brains cannot even exist,

is de-prioritized and de-valued, as it is connected to women's work. Nevertheless, such separations in the migration literature are artificial and patriarchal, and the case study of the post-communist highly skilled migration of Romanians to Canada will further exemplify the co-existence of equal importance and value of production and reproduction economies, brains and bodies. The case study will further highlight such premises by pointing out how the formation and creation of talented migrants is indebted to Romanian women's waged and unwaged social reproductive work.

The idea of growth and development via a knowledge-based economy has been put forward in the countries of the Global North since the 1990s and early 2000s. Connecting development to a knowledge-based economy emerges out of the assessment that previous economic visions of growth and development via accumulation of material assets are no longer viable and profit-generating. While accumulating material resources and assets were the mainstream principles for economic progress and viability of the economy in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and the early 1990s, and continued the legacy of expropriating land and trading goods and services by leading colonial and financial powers of the nineteenth century (Piketty 2017), this insight was later replaced with new economic ideas of advancement that moved from the usual menial and blunt efforts to just amass wealth, to a more sophisticated alternative to generate surplus through knowledge economies. Peter Drucker coined the concept of "knowledge economy" in his book *The Age of Discontinuity* (1969). By "knowledge economy" the author means that societies' future resources of development will lie in having and training very knowledgeable and well-talented skilled workers. Yet, the concept spread and became popular only three decades later. It was only in 2005 that the US economist Tom Friedman picked up on Drucker's concept and expanded it, announcing that it was now the time of the "knowledge society" (Lingenfelter 2012). By that he meant that the

countries of the world's main focus of growth and development would be attracting and training a knowledgeable and highly trained workforce.

Without a doubt, during the 1990s and 2000s, the capacity to educate, use and produce knowledge as well as to have a well-trained and highly skilled workforce started to be considered as one of the most important engines in a country's development, growth, innovation and performance. Knowledge-driven economies are now presumed to be critical in assuring a country's competitive advantage on the global market (World Bank 2011).

Coupled with the transfer of manufacturing jobs to the Global South, advancement of trade and the failing of expected profits in the 1990s and 2000s, governments of the Global North responded to these new visions of economic advancement and progress. The idea was that the amassing of intelligence and skills would push these same governments of the Global North to generate the developmental conditions they desired. Such ideas led governments to generate various policies in order to attract, assimilate and retain high level skills and knowledge-driven capacities. Speaking during that time and wanting to underline the importance of knowledge in assuring a competitive edge, the economist Edith Penrose mentions that "a firm's rate of growth is limited by the growth of knowledge within it" (Penrose 1995: xvi-xvii). Coupled with the spread of technologies and improved communication systems, the expansion of trade and globalization patterns, it is not surprising that we find the governments of the most developed countries worldwide following these economic ideas, thereby pushing for importing knowledgeable workers.

Of course, the recipe of knowledge-based growth as promoted by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other international institutions is more nuanced than this, revealing particularly an interest in the knowledge of finance capital, and the continued expansion

transnationally of financial schemes and interests, as well as of the transnational corporate capital of the Global North (Harvey 2005). Nevertheless, in order to realize such expansions and various aspects of it (such as the technological aspect), governments of the Global North marked as a priority the acquisition of "innovative", "creative" skills. [5]

Taking into consideration that knowledge is not geographically bound and that skills are transferable, it did not take long for the governments of the developed world, such as, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States, to realize that they could not only train and educate local people in the best and most efficient way possible, but also increase the supply of local knowledge via immigration. Therefore, this knowledge-based phase of global economic development comes with policies that would attract highly skilled individuals from developing transition countries with economic insecurity through immigration programs. In this new scenario, it is exactly the young, highly educated, professional migrants who, through their talents and skills, are now perceived as adding value to the economy and increasing productivity rates. With the same impetus that developed governments used before to amass assets, they are now trying to attract a highly skilled workforce globally from the developing world. The highly trained skills are now perceived and framed in concrete terms as the most wanted economic resource that countries are in competition for internationally (Csedo 2009). Moreover, if governments fail to attract those high skills, World Bank warns, they will lose the global competition for economic advancement and will not be able to maintain the standards of living, comfort and well-being to which the population has been accustomed (World Bank 2011). Of course, World Bank is a global key promoter of a certain neoliberal capitalist policies and practices. For example, starting with the

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[5] While these assumptions stretch beyond the principal arguments of my current dissertation, further analytic inquiry is needed to describe exactly how the "knowledge-based" growth recipes and their immigration schemes focused on the acquisition of the highly skilled were promoted to actually support the expansion of the financial schemes of the Global North and the connecting transnational capital interests.

1980s and 1990s, World Bank representatives argued that poor and developing countries are in this situation due to their internal economic policies that impede market forces and an expansion of private capital (Standing 2000). Per World Bank's representatives' statements, the recipe and model for success for growth and development of all countries would consist in major transformations of institutions through elements such as: trade, financial and foreign capital liberalization, privatization and deregulation, fiscal discipline and diminished public spending, labour market flexibility and decentralized labour relations, cutbacks in protective and collective regulations, among others, as well as new mechanisms to generate social capital: the import of knowledge workers (Standing 2000). Ironically, while these recommendations aim to improve the economic conditions of the developing countries, they do not include any redistributive policies. So, under this cover, they actually end up promoting the expansion of the financial schemes of the Global North, the opening up and privatization of developing markets for transnational capital interests, and the accumulation of skilled workers worldwide to assure these processes of capital advancement (Standing 2000).

While the extent to which "knowledge" can assure these processes of capital advancement and economic growth of the Global North is probably difficult to quantify, and while there have certainly been critics of the premise of 'knowledge based growth', what is undeniable is the emphasis in migration policy, particularly since the 1990s and 2000s, on highly skilled workers, as well as the actual migration of those with high skills to countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Huws 2006, Stone 2013).

The scholarship on migration engaged at length with this idea of attracting highly skilled professionals through immigration policies. While acknowledging this phase of development as new, the scholarship on migration conceptualized it as "brain race" (when describing the

government policies to attract the highly skilled migrants), or "brain gain" (when connected to the destination locations). Furthermore, the literature within this field of study did not lose its critical grasp and did not fail to consider it as a process of "brain drain" as well (when related to the original home countries of the migrants) (Michel Beine, Frédéric Docquier, Hillel Rapoport 2001; J Bhagwati, K Hamada 1974; Carrington and Detragiache 1998). Most of the time the movement of highly skilled professionals channeled through different immigration policies is theorized comparatively as "brain drain" vs. "brain gain". For example, one of the most recent resources on the topic is the book by Tito Boeri, Herbert Brücker, Frédéric Docquier, and Hillel Rapoport (2012) titled *Brain Drain and Brain Gain: The Global Competition to Attract High-Skilled Migrants.* These authors argue that there exists a worldwide race between powers to attract the most skilled and talented immigrants, all fascinated by new economic explanations that describe new future levels of development and growth based on an ever-increasing collection of the world's highly educated skills and brain gains. Furthermore, in this competition, the same authors inform us that there is a worldwide victor at drawing in the most gifted universal workforce, and that is, the United States. The Unites States, the authors contend, is best for drawing in PhD graduates and experts from developing nations, as well as from the European Union. However, the so called "brain race" has been the focus of immigration strategies by an increasing number of various other developed countries of the Global North, for example, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Most of these immigration strategies have in place explicit criteria and standards in selecting the most talented immigration workforce, such as educational background, work experience, and language capacities of the candidates.

Part of the Global North, Canada adhered fully to the knowledge-based economic visions and principles of development and growth, thereby developing similar immigration programs.

Most of Canada's immigration programs have been based on gaining the necessary education and skills that will innovate and substantially improve the economy's current trend and performance and will ultimately translate into financial gains. In this sense, Citizenship and Immigration Canada reiterates frequently in its policies the need to continue the efforts to maintain Canada's ability "to compete globally for "the best and brightest" (McKenzie, Gibson 2010) by creating the optimal conditions to attract immigrants who can contribute fully to Canada's prosperity. A well-managed and efficient immigration system is critical to achieving this objective" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada: 2008).

The programs and policies that are currently in force for the acquisition of highly skilled professionals are based on "the point system" (Skeldon 2009). Introduced in 1967, it awarded applicants various points for their educational attainment, work experience, and language abilities. Since then it has been used as the core mechanism to determine which individuals will gain access to the country as skilled migrants. Later on, the government of Canada will further label them as "economic migrants", a separate category from the other 2 sets of migration streams, namely the "family" and "protected persons" category (Kelley and Trebilcock 1998). In 2015, for example, there were 170,384 individuals, respectively 62.6 per cent of the total, who were admitted in Canada under the category of economic migrants as either principal applicants or spouses and dependents (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2017), up from an average of around 50 per cent in early 1990s. Recently, in what was presented as an attempt to balance an aging demographics and a strengthening of the economy, the Canadian Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship released publicly a 3-year plan regarding immigration targets. According to the same ministry, Canada will gradually accept up to one million of newcomers in the next three years, 60 per cent of whom will be comprised of skilled economic class migrants. The projections for skilled and

economic migrants are higher than in the previous years and are as follows: 177,500 in 2018, 191,600 in 2019 and 195,800 in 2020 (CBC News 2017). Moving forward, the government expressed the wish that immigration levels expand even further after 2020 with projected new targets for the next decade of up to 450,000 newcomers every year (CBC News 2017). These increased numbers in Canada are not a surprise especially when compared to earlier years. The "economic migrants" and their high percentage of desirability by the government are seen as such due to their potential to significantly contribute to the economy and amplify its growth. Without it being mentioned explicitly as such, the category was also created in contrast to the family reunification and protected refugee immigration programs, seen as "unprofitable" to the economy of Canada, in equations that render the persons that apply for such programs, namely women, aged populations, and asylum seekers, and their jobs as not similarly contributing directly to the economy. It was only the "economic migrant" class that was specifically geared to further "Canada's social and economic interests" (CIC 2010: 24) while the family class of immigrants was meant to contribute to the reunification of families and the protected persons division was created to grant status on the basis of solid humanitarian and compassionate considerations. As my dissertation will point out, such divisions are problematic and never outside the economy and development of one's country.

Within the "economic stream," the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) has been historically one of the main strategies for the attraction of highly skilled migrants to Canada. Established in 2002, the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) continued to some extent the initial "Point System" of immigration to Canada by assessing specific factors according to which immigrants can settle as permanent residents. What was different from the initially designated "point system" was the government's preoccupation to increase the economic benefits and outputs

from the admission of newly immigrants. While parallelly, there have been some preoccupation with selecting immigrants based on occupational imbalances and labour shortage needs, the Federal Skilled Worker Program was launched with a focus to attract generally higher levels of human capital considered as fitting and meeting any market needs. The human capital model focused on characteristics (notably education) believed to lead to long term positive economic outcomes (Ferrer, Picot, Riddell 2014). The immigrants' capacity to settle and integrate in Canada was still assessed through six selection factors, labelled as thoroughly "objective and transparent" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2010: 1). However, in order to be considered for selection the candidates' education was one of the most outstanding factors. Other selection standards included: relevant work experience, language skills, adequate age, arranged employment in Canada, adaptability elements (such as partner's education, family relations in Canada, post-secondary study and work experience in Canada). Under this program, any candidate must meet a minimum number of points corresponding to the established selection criteria, or what was called as a "pass mark". In 2017, for example, that pass mark was set at 67 points (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2018)

Nevertheless, throughout the years, the program underwent various policy changes. For example, in 2013 the government of Canada added an eligibility criterion based on further higher education (studies in Canada towards a PhD) and work experience in specific fields (e.g., full-time paid work experience in the past decade in one of the 24 specified professions, which were later increased to 50 different professions)[6] (Jan Ali 2014). The desirable professions listed by the program include, but are not limited to, the following career specializations: senior managers in the finance section or trade, construction managers, financial auditors and accountants, civil and

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[6] To view the full list of desirable occupations, please click on the following link: http://www.canadavisa.com/new-instructions-federal-skilled-worker-applications.html

mechanical engineers etc. Since the program has been specifically geared to high-skilled immigrants, in 2013 the government launched a separate new program called the Federal Skilled Trade Program (FSTP) to address its needs for lower skilled migrants. The program was geared to immigrants with qualifications in specific trades or who have practical work experience rather than formalized education (Jan Ali 2014).

Throughout the years other immigration programs have been launched in order to address Canada's increasingly varied needs. However, none of the projects launched reached the extension, significance and spread of the Federal Skilled Worker Program (especially in terms of the number of persons admitted in this category as well as the government's arguments regarding the positive long term benefits of their arrival for the Canadian economy) that still accounted for the main circuit of arrival of permanent immigrants to Canada. For example, in the mid-1980s the governments of provinces wanted to have more power in the selection of migrants from abroad, so the Provincial Nominee Program was established (Jan Ali 2014). Similarly, in 1973 the Temporary Foreign Workers program was launched so that Canadian employers would have the opportunity of hiring foreign nationals on a short, temporary basis when faced with shortages in the workplace (House of Commons 2016). In order to identify foreign workers who were able to provide care for the young and the elderly, the government initiated in 1981 the Foreign Domestic Worker Movements program, in 1992 the Live-In Caregiver program and in 2015 the Hire a Foreign In-Home Caregiver under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Furthermore, with the explicit focus on attracting foreign investors and experienced business people to Canada, the government also launched briefly The Immigration Investment Program (IIP) and Federal Entrepreneur Program (FEP). Launched in 2014 and living a short life (the program ended in 2015), the program aimed at attracting long time businessmen and investors as a means of investing

in Canada and assuring the country's future growth. Having in view Canada's development and as an increasing recognition of the educational and work experience that people who already live in Canada possess, in 2008 the government launched the Canadian Experience Class. The Canadian Experience Class was developed for people who have Canadian work experience and education. It was considered that someone who had already studied and/or had been offered a job in Canada, had a better chance to integrate and settle in the country. Between 2014 and 2015, 8,000 applications were expected within this category (Jan Ali 2014). Nevertheless, as already mentioned, none of the recent developments of the immigration program from the economic stream reached the spread and prominence of FSWP. From 2002 to 2014 FSWPs (principal applicants, spouses and dependents) accounted for more than 80 per cent of the total economic class and more than half of the total number of immigrants who arrived in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014).

In 2015, the Federal Skilled Worker Program, together with the Federal Skilled Trades Program and the Canadian Experience Class, were grouped together under Canada's new Express Entry program (CIC 2015). The program was designed to put an emphasis on the skills of the immigrants, their ability to render them beneficial to the Canadian economy and to settle in the country. While the grouping is new, there is also a lot of continuity to the Federal Skilled Worker Program. For example, the criteria of selection are again numerical with the maximum score of 1200 and again based on skills, education, language ability, and work experience. What is new is the fact that Canadian degrees, diplomas and certificates, a valid job offer and a nomination from the territory or the province also give the candidate additional points. The skill selection criteria have special rankings and hierarchies, identified by different letters from the alphabet, such as Skill Type Level 0, A, B, C, D and E. However, only Skill Type 0 (zero), Skill Type Level A or B

are defined as "skilled jobs". While Skill Type 0 are Management jobs, Skill Level A is for professional jobs that are usually associated with a degree (doctors, dentists, architects), and Skill Level B is for technical jobs and skilled trades that usually require a college diploma or training. Despite the new grouping of programs, through their definition and hierarchy they still put indirect pressure on high skills, foreign language abilities, transferable talents at the international level, whether nurtured abroad or directly in Canada.

Nevertheless, the recent Canadian immigration focus only reflects what is happening at the international level. The demand for highly skilled migration and its subsequent increasing flow is reflected by a lot of statistics and data from other countries as well. Based on a study run by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the stock of highly skilled immigrants in the OECD countries has been estimated at about 20 million individuals in 2000/2001, with more than 50 per cent of those residing in the USA, and another 22 per cent in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand combined, which are four of the traditional countries that pursue highly selective immigration policies (Boeri, Brücker, Docquier, and Rapoport 2012). About 24 per cent reside in the EU and other Western European countries, most of those in the UK (6 per cent), Germany (5 per cent), and France (3 per cent). Not accidentally, the number of immigrants in the population with tertiary educational attainment is high in those countries that pursue a highly skilled selective immigration policy. According to recent statistics, the share of foreign born individuals in the population with tertiary education amounts to 43 per cent in Australia, 24 per cent in Canada, and 21 per cent in New Zealand (Boeri, Brücker, Docquier, and Rapoport 2012: 40). In the United States, out of the 13 per cent of the population that is foreign-born, 27 per cent of them have a bachelor's degree or higher. Such statistics show that in terms of education distribution, the proportion of the foreign born with at least a bachelor's degree matches

that of the native born in the United States (Kandel 2011). In Canada, the proportion of recent immigrants with a university degree is even higher than that of the native population, a gap that continues to widen across the years. If in 1994 the proportion of immigrants with a university degree was 20.8 per cent in 2001, that proportion rose to 45.6 per cent and remained at the same levels through 2009 (Kelley, Marcelino, Mulas citing Reitz, Curtis, and Elrick (2014).

However, the tackling of either the "brain drain" or "brain gain" issue has certain effects for feminist analysis. In this regard, there is not enough feminist literature to address the gendered effects and consequences of the worldwide governmental race for a high-skilled workforce and "brain races" through immigration policies together with their framing as such. For this reason, I am arguing that it is important to draw on feminist theories of migration and social reproduction (Abu-Laban 1998, Koc 1999, Peterson 2010, Raghuram 2009, Thobani 2007) to understand the "brain drain" phenomenon and its supposed gendered neutrality and blindness. With this in mind, I am asking from a feminist perspective: what are the implications of implementing "brain gain" policies such as Canada's Federal Skilled Worker (FSWP) immigration program? I am mostly asking these questions from a feminist perspective since one cannot have a "brain" extraction or absorption without considering the materiality of the "body" or knowledge economies without considering the contexts of immigration and movement within which economies and markets unfold. While Canada also added in 2014 a Federal Skilled Trade Program as one of its immigration targets (with a focus on acquiring particular manual and practical skills in the field of industrial, electrical and construction trades or supervisors and technical jobs in natural resources, agriculture and related production (electricians, plumbers, carpenters, painters, crane operators, etc.), and a Canadian Experience Class (with the goal of valuing the persons already studying and working here), the numbers were much smaller than through FSWP. For example, in 2014 the

Federal Skilled Trades class had a cap of 5,000 applications per year, the Canadian Experience Class of 8,000, whereas the Federal Skilled Worker Program had a much higher upper limit of 25,000 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2015). Additionally, traditionally the majority of Canada's economic immigrants since the 1960s onwards (up to 60 per cent throughout the 1990s and more than 55 per cent throughout the 2000s) were drawn to Canada through the absorption and retention of highly skilled university graduates who were born outside the country (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2013).

The dichotomies of "mind" vs. "body" or of "intellectual production" vs. "social reproduction", "culture" vs. "nature" have been critiqued by several feminists (Grosz 1994, Fausto-Sterling 1992, Luxton 1997). The feminist scholarship has argued that such dichotomizations are gendered strategies largely associated with one biological sex or another. For example, the opposition between mind and body has been largely associated with an opposition between male and female. The body and bodily functions were regarded as connected with women and labelled as inferior to the pursuits of the rational mind which were the attribute of men (Bordo 1987, Butler 1990, de Beauvoir 1949, Harding 1986). Similarly, intellectual production and cultural outputs have been traditionally considered male characteristics, whereas the body, the social reproduction and nature have been associated with the female gender. However, the most problematic part is not their connection and embeddedness in different gender regimes, but their hierarchical status in such equations, with one gender on the one side of the equation being perceived as more rational and superior while the other one is seen as feminized and inferior (Bordo 1987, Butler 1990, de Beauvoir 1984, Harding 1986). The situation is one of hierarchical ranking, with the male, masculine traits, characteristics and values triumphing over the same traits and characteristics connected with the feminine and women. However, for other feminists like

Catherine MacKinnon the relationship is as much about hierarchy as it is about power and domination, with men's forms of dominance subordinating women's condition, socially and economically (1989: 61).

When immigration policies focus on "brain drain", they are inevitably promoting a gendered division of migration, as the brain and the mind have historically been seen as the characteristics of men and men's labour, and as embodied in such professions as engineering, and computer programming, etc. They are automatically and indirectly endorsing a dualism between mind and body, with those subjects possessing minds and brains constructed as more rational and, thereby, deserving attention and importance, whereas those subjects concerned with bodily needs and lives are marginalized and de-prioritized. Such policies perpetuate a division of mind and body, and an unsustainable separatism and opposition between the two. One cannot have a body in the absence of a mind, just as one cannot possess a mind outside of a functional body. Such binaries are unsustainable since they do not take into consideration the material needs of the bodies that make the intellectual production possible. The material needs of these bodies (feeding, cleaning, etc.) are mostly satisfied by women's work (Armstrong 2003; Arat-Koc 2001; Besanzon 2006; Laslett and Brenner 1989; Luxton 2006; Waring 1988). Furthermore, the higher value and emphasis placed on "brain" and intellectual production does not happen in a vacuum: there is not a focus and a placement of value on brain without a subsequent devaluing of the care and social reproductive work performed by women to make possible the knowledge production of the brains (Bordo 1987, Butler 1990, de Beauvoir 1984, Harding 1986).

The government immigration programs such as that of Canada's "Federal Skilled Workers" program with its focus on "brain gain" and its goals to attract the most talented and highly skilled workers worldwide function in a system where the social reproductive work mostly performed by

women is subordinate. Any governmental prioritization on "brain gains" and race for highly skilled talents has real world consequences for women. It does so at the expense of women and women's work from transition countries, such as is the case for the Romanian women. As revealed through my example, this approach that ends up recruiting some from transition developing countries to do the work and others from already developed locations to benefit from it, is deeply inflected through gender, class and nationality. It leads to a devaluing of the work usually associated with and disproportionately performed by women: social reproductive work. Subsequently, this selection indirectly leads to a hierarchical subordination model for other immigration programs that favour women's work. In this sense, immigration programs such as Canada's "Federal Skilled Worker Program" imposes costs for, and negative consequences on other immigration programs outside its purview while perpetuating a patriarchal agenda and devaluing women's work worldwide. Immigration programs that are meant for attracting work that is highly associated with women are much smaller in quotas, labelled as less or low skilled and assessed as less valuable to the Canadian market (Ahmad 2013). Such it is the case of the now defunct Live-in Caregiver or Foreign Domestic Movements program. Launched in 1981 as the Foreign Domestic Movement Program (FDMP), only to be replaced by the Live-in Caregiver Program in 1992, and discontinued in 2015, the program allowed Canadian families to hire live-in caregivers from abroad to care for children, aging and elderly persons, and disabled individuals (Kelly, Park, de Leon, Priest 2009). For example, while the number of immigrants admitted under the Federal Skilled Worker FSWPs (principal applicants, spouses and dependents) accounted for 81 per cent of the total economic number class and 46 per cent of the total number of immigrants who arrived in Canada from 2002 to 2008, the arrivals under the LCP between 1993-2009 constituted only 2.1 per cent of all immigrant landings (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2010). Furthermore, the programs have

been historically envisioned as being outside the "point system", and thus not so worthy of the merit points, signaling a lesser worth and potential value to Canadian society (Arat-Koc 1997, Valiani 2009). By this analysis, it does not mean that women cannot participate in the highly skilled program, but that the real issue concerns the social reproductive work that is mostly done by women and that does not get equally recognized, prioritized or granted equal rights in the immigration selection process. Governments' programs that focus on "brain gains" participate in setting-up two different immigration standards, in a way which highly deprioritizes women's work, largely associated with social reproductive work, and over-emphasizes men's work, deemed as of higher value and importance. Indirectly, it creates women's work as second class and of lesser value, even though production and reproduction economies cannot exist without one another (Ferguson 1999; Luxton 2006; Laslett and Brenner 1999).

When our family friend who migrated to Canada was visiting us in Romania, he was emphasizing how Canada only selects brainy and incredibly intelligent immigrants. Nevertheless, his assumption, and that of so many immigration programs worldwide, does not consider the reproductive contributions that enable the program and make it possible.

Whenever Canada searches for "brainy" immigrants, feminist scholarship tells us that one cannot have a selection of brains and skilled talents without considering the reproduction and care economy that needs both to produce and daily sustain, feed and clean the bodies of these brains (Armstrong 2003; Luxton 2006; Waring 1988). In this sense, "brain" work becomes a code for all professional, highly skilled immigrant labour that renders invisible the production of such labour, as well as the context within which this happens, and the resources that go into it. While minds and bodies cannot but co-exist and function interdependently, separating and prioritizing immigration goals that focus on masculine traits ("minds") and jobs where men dominate, end up

subordinating women's social reproductive work (overwhelmingly connected with the function of the "bodies") in equations that are already patriarchal and unjust. This migration selection imbalance further creates hierarchies between genders and between different geographic parts of the world. In this regard, I will utilize the historical, political and economic circumstances of transition Romania to reveal certain theoretical effects and understandings, effects that are not necessarily accounted for in the circumstances themselves as well as in the feminist or brain-drain migration scholarship debates. This attempt, therefore, is not as much a history, as it is a theoretical analysis of a migration and social reproductive story unfolding where Romania is the site.

Section B: Theories and Analysis of Social Reproduction

Migration policies focused on brain gains and brain-absorption such as Canada's Federal Skilled Worker Program ignore reproductive costs while assuming artificial separations of knowledgeable skills and care components within a whole person. Nevertheless, in order to produce such knowledge-based outputs, one first has to have his/her social reproduction assured. In this sense, it is mostly the social-reproduction of women that makes possible the production of knowledge outputs. By social reproduction I mean "the social processes and human relations associated with the creation and maintenance of the communities upon which all production and exchange rest" (Bakker 2003: 40).

Kate Bedford and Shirin Rai analyzed the concept of social reproduction and identified it as consisting of: "first, biological reproduction, the production of future labour, and the provision of sexual, emotional, and affective services (such as are required to maintain family and intimate relationships); second, unpaid production of both goods and services in the home, particularly goods and services of care, as well as social provisioning (by which we mean voluntary work directed at meeting needs in the community); and, third, the reproduction of culture and ideology, which stabilizes dominant social relations" (Bedford and Rai 2010: 10).

Similarly, other scholars want to name social reproduction as the practices that are involved in maintaining people both on a daily and inter-generationally basis, and more specifically the series of activities and "attitudes, behaviours, feelings, responsibilities and interactions directly used for life maintenance, both in the everyday life, as in an intergenerational sense" (Laslett and Brenner 1989: 382). The process involves all manner of practices from caring- emotionally, morally, and physically- for children, older adults, other dependents and other family members, to

the provisioning of food and clothing, to acquiring and maintaining adequate shelter, to education and socialization, to the nurturing of kin and community relationships, to the managements of household budgets, and to other acts of love and responsibility (Stenning and Smith 2006). More concretely, some of the practices of social reproduction include cooking, cleaning, and clothing as well as a number of other auxiliary activities that involve less concrete, physical work, and more emotional labour, both deemed as absolutely necessary in the process of caring for the children, the disabled and the senior population. Consequently, the social reproduction process encompasses "manual, mental, emotional" forms of work that are considered necessary for the preservation of life and the perpetuation of new generations, from child bearing, rearing, nutrition and nurturance, child education and mentoring to senior caring and socialization (Laslett and Brenner 1989: 383).

By focusing on issues of social reproduction, feminist political economists wanted to reveal how gendered the actors are in these processes, and how the burden of social reproduction is placed disproportionately on women's shoulders. At the same time, women's disproportionate role in the perpetuation of new generations exemplifies how the local economies of production, consumption and exchange depend on households, as well as the reproduction of workers within families (Warring 1988). The great contrast comes if the issues of social reproduction are measured by the production of wealth and public output, which remains highly gendered, and leaves women's work unacknowledged, invisible, devalued, and unpaid (Armstrong 2001; Besanzon 2006; Luxton 2006; Waring 1988).

Feminist political economists have insisted on revaluing and reinterpreting the significance of social reproduction to the point that the concept is now foundational to our understanding of productive labour. Veronica Beechey (1979: 79) argued, for example, that "the inter-relationships between production and reproduction are a part of a single process" that changes over time and

place as opposed to two distinct processes. Anna M. Agathangelou notes that "the production economy is not outside the reproductive economy, and "reproduction is a productive economy" (Agathangelou 2004: i). J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006), Linda McDowell (2005), Cindi Katz (2001), Diane Elson (1994), Meg Luxton and Kate Bezanson (2006), Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill (2003) and others (Mackenzie 1999; Villneueve and Rose 1988) have explored the ways in which gender is mapped on the current neoliberal economy, demonstrating that gender is a social relation of power dependent for its meaning on an imagined dichotomy between productive and social reproductive economies, or the masculine and feminine. Exposing the interdependence with and connection to the realms of production and social reproduction is one of the most significant contributions that feminists have made to the study of the economy (Rose 1993). In particular, current economies are thought to depend on the separation of private and public realms where the home is understood as a private space in which no paid work occurs (Katz 2001: 712). Conversely, the public realm is thought to be the workplace, the place in which paid work is undertaken. In this case, despite being considered non-productive and non-profitable, "it is actually the social reproduction which 'produces' societal members who are able to function 'appropriately': as family and community members, workers, and citizens" (Peterson 2010: 271-304). Unfortunately, these different valorizations are created through a gender division of labour, and rendered useful and profitable or unimportant and unproductive depending on which gender (male or female) is performing them.

Of course, the issue is larger and more systemic than the work men and women do, and it mostly has to do with "a hierarchical codification of 'difference' that (over)values that which is associated with masculinity and devalues that which is associated with femininity. […] Long histories of social reproduction in hetero-patriarchal households have normalized this gender

coding — manifested in embodied identities and divisions of labour — with the corollary effect of coding 'women's work' as 'merely reproductive' (natural, unlearned, unskilled, voluntary) and thus not worth counting (being valued) economically" (Peterson 2010: 274). The devaluation of feminized labour does not reduce itself to households, but enters other "feminized" work spheres. Similarly, the practices of caregiving, services, maintenance, for example, are imbued and largely associated with women's household work, and are generating lower status and cheap wages (Peterson 2010). However, feminist Spike Peterson is not alone in believing that the sexual division of labour is caused by extensive successions of patriarchal heterosexual households. Other feminists suggest that it is exactly the parallel patriarchal construction of women as mothers and wives that perpetuates such binaries.

If feminists have already identified how the issues of home and women's work have been historically delegated to the "non-productive" and non-profitable sphere (Rowbotham 1993), it is equally important to notice how they made such critiques of patriarchal ideologies that construct women as wives and mothers. Such patriarchal identity constructions are done in order to justify capital imperatives for a cheap and unpaid labour force (Ward 1990). Paradoxically, it is exactly women's unpaid reproductive labour that produces the most central asset and commodity to capital, that is, the workforce (Agathangelou 2004). Of course, as mentioned before, much of the invisibility of social reproduction and its presumed autonomy from formal production has stemmed from the delineation of the public and private spheres. Feminist political economists have challenged the private/public dichotomy which has obscured the exploitation of unpaid gendered social reproductive labour (Ferguson 1999; Luxton 2006; Laslett and Brenner 1999).

The earliest feminist theorizations of social reproduction examined the separation of processes of production from reproduction in order to reveal how exploitation can occur in both

'formal' production and in the private appropriation of surplus unwaged reproductive labour in the

household (Dalla Costa and James 1972). Writing in the context of the 'Wages for Housework'

organizing in 1970s Italy, Mariarosa Dalla Costa problematizes the separation between the waged

work men undertake in the production of commodities and the non-waged reproductive labour

married working-class women undertake in their homes. She argues that women's unpaid labour

involved in social reproduction and in meeting the necessities of day-to-day life produce the very

conditions that make possible the reproduction of the labour force. Consequently, the separation

of waged and non-waged work is an artificial one, as it is premised on the notion that reproductive

labour is non-productive. The fact that external powers are able to command and exploit unpaid

reproductive labour in the home reveals the extent to which this labour subsidizes the wage paid

to male working-class labourers. Dalla Costa and James (1975 27-28) note:

> Since Marx, it has been clear that capital rules and develops through the wage, that   is,
> that the foundation of capitalist society was the wage labourer and his or her direct
> exploitation. What has been neither clear nor assumed by the organizations of the working-
> class movement is that precisely through the wage has the exploitation of the non-wage
> labourer been organized. This exploitation has been even more effective because the lack of
> a wage hid it. That is, the wage commanded a larger amount of labour than appeared in
> factory bargaining. Where women are concerned, their labour appears to be a personal
> service outside of capital.

Dalla Costa's and James's perspective stretches the Marxist conception of capitalist

production and exchange to include not only waged labour but also the unpaid labour of working-

class women.

Artificial separations between production and reproduction are imbued with gendered

relations. For example, feminist Diane Elson (1994) refers to the same gender division in the

economy as she speaks of a separation between production and reproduction understood as a

division between the monetary "productive" economy and the non-monetary "reproductive"

economy. "These non-monetary social relations are subordinate to money in the sense that they

cannot function and sustain themselves without an input of money; and they are reshaped in response to the power of money. Nevertheless, neither can the monetary economy sustain itself without an input of unpaid labour, an input shaped by the structures of gender relations" (Elson 1994: 40). Many assumptions about social reproduction and the subjects who are supposed to carry out this labour inform and shape divisions of labour as well as inequalities. A major assumption about subjects is that women are seen as their reproductive potential, as mothers and wives. Also, there is a tendency to use different strategies to ultimately inscribe women as racially and culturally different, while creating an economic and moral environment in which the appropriation of a woman's work, her children, as well as her childbearing potential, became rational and, indeed, natural (Elston 1994).

The more mothers and wives provide reproductive labour for free, the more it remains hidden from economic interactions. Pointing to the invisibility of sectors of economy associated with women's work, other feminists notice in turn that: "gender relations and inequalities are embedded in what might appear to be hidden economic interactions (Beneria et al. 2000: x)." In this sense, women's unpaid work makes possible not just the accumulation of capital, but also the extension and expansion of the capital in a process that classical economic theorists conceptualized as "globalization" and neoliberal development.

Section C: Neoliberalism, Migration and Social Reproduction

Of particular focus in the field of feminist political economy research is how women's unpaid social reproductive work stimulated the growth and advancement of economies in the Global North and their neoliberal expansion over national and local borders. Of course, the recent global neoliberal expansion resulted in various forms of transversal and intersectional inequality, including women's inequality. A considerable number of feminist scholars have made us aware of the specific ways in which gender relations are impacted by globalization and the advancement of neoliberal economies, and their analyses have already impacted scholarship debates (Bakker and Gill 2003; Bergeron 2001; Brooks 2007; Caraway 2007; Gibson-Graham 2002; Moghadam 2005; Mohanty 2003; Sassen 1998). Joan Acker contends that, before talking about impacts and consequences, gender must be understood as already embedded and intrinsic in globalizing capitalist processes. The author is supporting the argument that there cannot be a separation between capitalist production and human reproduction (Acker 2004). Furthermore, capitalism would not have been able to extend to the global dimension of today if it were not for this primary gendered division between a capitalist production and a private human reproductive sphere. Today's globalization and neoliberalism would not have been possible without a prior constitution of the male/masculine with production in the money economy and the identification of the female/feminine with reproduction and the domestic sphere (Acker 2004).

Initially theorized only by feminist political economists, the issue of domestic work or of so called "social reproduction" work becomes significant in understanding globalization (Armstrong 1999; Koc 2006; Besanzon 2006; Laslett and Brenner 1989; Luxton 2006; Warring

1988). By globalization, I mean "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens 1990: 64) as well as "the spatial reorganization of production across national borders and a vast acceleration in the global circulation of capital, goods, labour and ideas" (Freeman 2001: 1008). Furthermore, Bergeron describes the process of economic globalization as the transformation of the world into a singular economic space, or at least the supposition of a singular space, through which the internationalization of all types of markets occur (2001: 983). Harvey stretches this definition when engaging with and discussing neoliberalism. For him, globalization is a "time-space compression" mostly due to free-market capitalism and the onset of neoliberalism. Through a set of economic policies and practices, both Reagan and Thatcher initiated in the 1970s and 1980s in the UK and North America the idea of a self-regulatory market. Harvey's definition of neoliberalism as a system of "accumulation by dispossession," has four main pillars: 1) the "privatization and commodification" of public goods; 2) "financialization," in which any kind of good (or disaster) can be turned into an instrument of economic speculation; 3) the "management and manipulation of crises" (as above); and 4) "state redistribution," in which the state becomes an agent of the upward redistribution of wealth (Harvey 2005:159).

It is certain that the current processes of globalization and expansion of neoliberal capital could not have been done without a shrinking of the state and the increasing role and power of capital. Unfortunately, the restructuring of the state also translated into a reduction in social welfare programs, and an increasing privatization of public services (Bakker and Gill 2003). Such shifts end up in affecting women directly since the privatization of public services only means that these services are shifted from the paid work of women in the public sector to the unpaid labour of

women in the domestic sphere (Spike Peterson 2010, Bakker and Gill 2003). Government cuts of funding in public education, childcare and healthcare do not correspond to a lesser need of such services: the needs are still the same, and they still have to be met, with the difference that, where once it was the state assuring the fulfillment of such needs, now it is women's unpaid domestic work called up to fill in for their disappearance, or lack of affordability resulting from privatization, with the lack of sufficient affordable state funded childcare putting more pressure on women's domestic unpaid work to provide for it (Franzway and Fonow 2010).

Some of the results of the increasing privatization of public services meant supplementing "gaps" through women's unpaid work and intensifying their social reproductive work or their time dedicated to the "Second Shift" (Hochschild 1989). Rooted in 1970s feminist campaigns, the idea of a politics and theory of housework and social reproduction in Hochschild's classic study, *The Second Shift* (1989) brought to public awareness these issues by introducing the concept of "emotional labour", and the identification of providing care as labour (Folbre and Nelson 2000). The 1970s were an auspicious moment for analyzing the gendered division of labour, a concept by which feminists meant the material and emotional back-up that women provide for men and the raising of children. The second shift identifies the necessary work women do to sustain families, households, and communities (cooking, cleaning and maintaining the communities through social networking and voluntary work). While it is unpaid/unwaged, devalued, and invisible, it is also the type of work that is totally necessary in the reproduction of the worker, and worker's labour and it is done at the expense of women's full participation in the paid workforce and in political activism (Folbre and Nelson 2000).

However, starting with the 1980s, but more in the 1990s and 2000s, globalization and neoliberal expansion put pressure on more classical (and mostly Western European)

understandings of the second shifts and social reproduction (Bakker and Gill 2003). Specifically, the processes of social reproduction started to challenge more women's engagement with domestic work, but it also started offering the possibility of supplanting such shortages by finding care solutions beyond the regional boundaries of national economies. Such solutions meant an understanding of the fact that the domestic/social-reproduction does not have to be done locally: it can be done transnationally (Hondagneu-Sotello 2001, Nakano Glenn 1998).

An initial set of understandings of the transnational social reproductive work translated into the fact that women are migrating and crossing the border transnationally for housework, nursing, childcare or sex work (Agathangelou 2006 Hondagneu-Sotello 2001 Nakano Glenn 1998 Yeates 2004 Young 2003). Another understanding of the transnational reproductive work is the import of highly skilled adult migrants, whose training and skills were significantly contributed to in advance by women's work in transition countries, such as the case of the Romanian highly skilled migration.

As previously mentioned, starting with the late 1980s and 1990s the neoliberal shift translated into less government control over the economies and a global opening of markets for the ongoing expansion of capital. Such processes meant massive cuts in public services and massive state withdrawal from its welfare functions. Many of these state withdrawals were compensated for by migrants pouring in from poor countries to rich ones to perform healthcare and childcare work, domestic work, etc. For example, cuts in subsidized healthcare and education in France translated into an import of physicians and healthcare personnel from Romania (Sechet and Vasilcu 2015). Nevertheless, this import meant an extraction of an already trained pool of skills and talents from developing countries. Many times, the training and formation of skills and talents relied on the resources of the transition states.

Migrant workers from developing and transition countries such as Romania or the Philippines could be called on in order to fill in domestic and social reproductive work for the new emerging and reconfigured 'neoliberal' state's withdrawal from and diminishing capacity to provide for its own care. This way, what was initially a gendered female private vs. male public labour division has developed into what scholars now call "the international domestic labour division" (Bakker and Silvey 2008). By "international domestic labour division", Bakker and Silvey refer to the globalization, expansion and creation of new markets, the reduced expenditures on state services, and the privatization of former public services, with women's work transnationally replacing and compensating for the costs of the former state expenditures in healthcare, education, etc. Nevertheless, while the academic concept mostly refers to the transnational work done by migrating women, crossing the actual borders in order to compensate for the work previously ensured by the state, it also raises questions about the ways "sending" states prepare the conditions for this migration through their own extensive work and life's resources (i.e., the work and also their own life that goes into raising and educating young migrants) to prepare those who could be drawn upon to do work elsewhere.

Some of the literature that explains the new emerging configurations of gendered and racialized labour relations draws on concepts like the "new domestic world order" (Hondagneu-Sotello 2001), "the transnational economy of domestic labour" (Young 2003) or "the global care chains" (Yeates 2004) in order to connect immigrant domestic work, globalization/neoliberalism and social reproduction. While all these terms refer to the rapid increase in the number of immigrant women performing domestic work in developed countries, and the consequences of this situation for global inequality, they fail to notice or engage with how women's work also gets

outsourced and localized in particular ways, as is the case of Romanian mothers investing so much work in raising highly skilled children only to see them migrate as adults.

Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1998) discusses transnational gender relations that exist in providing domestic caring work, by providing the example of Filipina and Guatemalan women that migrate to the United States to become domestic workers for affluent women whose professional careers are facilitated in this way. Arlie Hochschild gives another example that shows the flows of care providers internationally without having any hesitations in naming the actual "global chain care" process as a "global care drain" phenomenon. "A common care chain typically involves an older daughter from a family whose income is pretty low and who cares for her siblings while her mother works as a nanny caring for the children of a migrating nanny who in turn cares for the child of a family in a rich country" (Hochschild cited in Yeates, 2004: 80). Similar, albeit occurring in different scenarios, Romanian women's social reproductive work toward the raising and bringing up of their children who may end up with professional careers is localized in other countries. Instead of understanding and explaining the kind of work and life circumstances that go into facilitating this development, Romanian women's labour and life are assumed as naturalized or even more problematically as 'localized', thereby erasing what such life and work make possible. More problematically, their work does not seem to generate mobility for them or any direct benefits other than the fact that their children are now making it elsewhere.

In this way, Romania has provided direct skilled work in Canada through the migration of professionals and indirect reproductive labour through the care in advance of those skilled workers. If in 1990 17 per cent of Romanians entered Canada through the Federal Skilled Worker, by 2004 this number raised to 84 per cent (Culic 2012).

The direct and indirect social reproductive work in the hands of Eastern European women is directly linked to neoliberal shifts in the economies, expansion of capital across borders, and the state's withdrawal from providing social welfare programs (education, childcare and healthcare, etc.). Such shifts impact women dramatically since the privatization of public services and State cuts in funding for public education, childcare, healthcare, etc. do not mean a lesser need of such services. On the contrary, it means that these provisions have to come from elsewhere: *international women's work.*

Under neoliberalism's withdrawal of state supported social programs, and increasing demand for child care, elder care, and other sources of women's unpaid labour, a large proportion of women are living in poverty, a situation that has been referred to as the "feminization of poverty" (Burn 2005:17) or the "feminization of survival" (Sassen 2000). As mentioned before, the feminization of work and poverty do not happen in a vacuum: they become mapped and feed into a particular neoliberal shift of the developed "Western" and "Northern" economies coupled with transition economies of "East" and "South" that, when combined, create push and pull factors of outward migration. These push-and-pull factors lead to a two-tiered system of international migration that is both co-constituted and part of the same process. On the one hand, we have the migration policies of highly skilled professionals associated with brain races and embedded in masculine characteristics and artificial patriarchal divisions (brain vs. body), and on the other hand, the feminization of social reproductive work, deemed as unskilled and de-prioritized by migration programs, is simply left behind as it is in the case of the highly skilled Romanian migration to Canada. By focusing on what has come to be identified as "brain gain" policies and attraction of high skills usually associated with men's work, such as engineering and software programming, governments such as Canada indirectly shape the mobility or lack of it for the social reproductive

work (largely associated with women's work) necessary to create the development and maintenance of the said brains. The move to attract highly skilled workers within interstate structures becomes a source of gender inequality that spills over to economically weaker nations through immigration programs. An example is Canada's Federal Skilled Worker Program. An egalitarian, just migration scheme would be one in which migration programs are not disproportionately focused on the attraction of brainy skills and talents, largely associated with masculine traits while separating them from other immigration programs, such as the caregivers or family sponsorship ones, conflated with women's traits, and considered of lesser value, importance, status, pay, and priority. It would also mean a contextual understanding of how and at whose cost these wanted skills and talents are developed, and, consequently, of the impact their pulling away has on the communities and countries that invested in their formation. Individuals and targeted immigrant groups cannot be understood as just skills and talents, but must be considered as whole persons. Similarly, migration processes cannot be viewed as a one-way independent phenomenon from one location to another, but must be viewed as a constant interdependent relationship with the countries of origin that contributed to the creation and production of the labourers.

The objective of many feminist theories has been to problematize and dismantle the segregation of the organization of labour in which unpaid feminized work occurs in the home and masculinized paid labour occurs in the market place. However, it is also important to notice how globalization, neoliberalism and the expansion of capital further subjugates this unpaid social reproductive work of women in certain homes in certain developing Eastern European or countries of the Global South while providing career mobility for certain skills and talents that occur in the public sphere that are traditionally associated with men's work. The economic implication of the

"brain gain" race has obvious complex gendered impacts on labour migration. The labour migration associated with women not only becomes de-prioritized but also de-valued and outsourced, increasing the gender inequality worldwide. This is not to say that women are excluded from applying to the Federal Skilled Worker Program, but that the way it is designed targets education and work experiences that are historically associated with men's work (engineers, computer professionals, etc.), and subsequently grants less rights and places less priority and value on the type of work usually associated with women, such as, the social reproductive care work. These separations between "brains" and "bodies", "intellectual production" and "material bodily needs", between "highly skilled labour" and "unskilled labour" are actually artificial, and no one can argue that they are separate in practice. The Canadian government's move to further attract highly skilled labour cannot function without the support and the gathering of social reproductive labour associated with women's domestic work within the household. Thus, economic competitiveness depends on both the attraction of 'brains', as well their formation and maintenance through social reproduction in households of the country of origin.

My research analyzes how Canada's migration policies that prioritize "brain gain", thereby draining other transition states' "brain" resources, constitute relations to social reproduction. Furthermore, I investigate how women's work in transition economies constitutes relations to migration and neoliberal development. Countries that have national and international policies on absorbing highly skilled migrants already assume a clear gendered division of labour with the brain (always presumed to be masculine) performing intellectual/professional work while the care and the material bodily needs are left to the responsibility of women. Immigration policies re-enforce such patriarchal divisions of labour while not acknowledging their interdependence and inter-relatedness. Such policies re-enact gendered divisions subordinating in the long run women's work

and the work largely associated with women's skills; there is no such a thing as a mind that only thinks without a body that needs to take care of himself, herself and make it reproduce.

The recent professionalization of migration patterns with the focus on brain gain has certain gendered implications for the labour that such migrants are expected to perform. Of course, we cannot speak of brains alone and in the abstract, as if brains do not have bodies and as if bodies are not subjects and do not produce competitive knowledge. Without considering the ways these brains are socially produced and reproduced, we miss how such artificial divisions end up constituting a hierarchical two-tier system of migration. The current analysis of highly skilled migration flows obscures the social reproductive labour that goes into constituting them. Even speaking of brains alone outside of bodies is a problem in itself that has serious implications in the organization of work and life. It allows, on one hand, for a masculinization of the highly skilled migration schemes, by associating the mind alone with knowledge production and, on the other hand, for a feminization and deprioritization of care work, by connecting the reproduction of the bodies with women's work. In this sense, the Romanian highly skilled migration to Canada sheds light on these unsustainable and unrealistic migration flows in which the nurturing of minds and bodies is separated from the development of skills and is left unrecognized and inadequately compensated. The relationship is embedded in gender differences and artificially and hierarchically segregated. Such relationships are also embedded in certain larger economic shifts, be it the neoliberal one in Western and Northern countries that cut the state expenditures for public services associated with women's social reproductive work but still need their productive highly skilled trained labour or be it the transition economies of the East and South that create insecure and precarious conditions and determine push migration factors for an already nurtured, fed, trained and skilled young workforce.

When discussing the reality of transnational movements of migrants, Fouron and Glenn Glick Schiller (2001: 54) argue that they can be defined as a set of "interlocking networks" that extend across the borders of two or more nation-states engaging the participants on a daily basis in activities of social reproduction. The authors envision a set of activities and relationships that connect individuals, and which go beyond the national borders. Particularly, migrants have a special location in such transnational connections, since they leave their country in pursuing work in another. Ties with their home countries are sustained as many of their family members and relatives do not migrate. Most of the current research on the topic engages with migrant women who take care of families in the North finding themselves participating in an "international sexual division of labour" (Laurie 2007). Such scholarship describes, for example, the situation of transnational migrants being forced to provide childcare and eldercare in the countries of arrival while they cannot provide the same care to their own children and the elderly who are left in the origin countries. A new emerging concept such as the "transnational family" (Parrenas 2001: 80) comes to replace the idea of normative unified family, and it is used to describe the relationships between family core-members that live in at least two different countries. In this respect, the way the transnational families have been usually understood is through the movement of women from the country of origin, and the abandonment of their children and family members. However, less attention has been paid to the way the movement of people localizes women's social reproductive work in particular ways or how women's paid and unpaid work in the sending transition countries enables the migration of their children. In this respect, it is important to trace how social reproductive work is done transnationally and transferred onto the shoulders of other women from developing and transition countries, as well as to how unacknowledged it remains at the level of government policies.

Small effort has been made to understand women's domestic and public work, which enables the creation of highly skilled immigrant professionals. Furthermore, not much has been written on the processes through which such individuals often become the targeted group by migration programs. Following the global shifts to neoliberalism and global expansion of capital, welfare services in the countries in the Global North diminished significantly (Bakker and Gill 2003; Bezanson 2006; Koc 1999). The collapse of government funded institutions and facilities left developed countries in dire need of private work done by families, and this vacuum was often filled by women's work (Bakker and Gill 2003). When local women's work is not readily available, it is other women's work that comes to replace it either through migration (the migration of nannies, and nurses) or through outsourcing it and subsidizing the development of already trained migrants (the case of Romania). My research explores what happens when such externalizations occur and what effects they have on the social relations and the social conditions of the people involved.

Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill (2003) point to the significance of new forms of social reproduction and the relationship between, on the one hand, mobile capital, and on the other, the nature of fixed production and reproduction of territorially based communities. They are also arguing that capital is less and less responsible for subsidizing any of the costs of social reproduction. Households and communities are increasingly absorbing the costs of social reproduction either locally or transnationally. States, as agents of the capital, through immigration programs tend to externalize the costs of social reproduction as well. Indeed, transnational social reproduction and externalized domestic work are considered a domain where the expansion of capital is undertaken at the expense of greater insecurity for those positioned at the margins of the global gender, class and racial hierarchies (Young 2003).

Migration stands out as a good example of how neoliberal development requires developed nations to externalize the costs of such processes. I suggest that Romanian migrants to Canada owe a lot of their success to both the paid and unpaid work of Romanian women. In addition to women's work there exists a continuous expansion and creation of new markets in conjunction with privatization of former state services which draws on other assets and resources from other countries' state budgets: for instance, a state may be able to reduce public services to education (for example) when it decides to import migrants that have been educated in their own exporting country. One government can always cut its costs to education and social reproduction, which does not mean that those needs will disappear. Its costs will just end up being transferred either as a burden for private families and households within the country (i.e., the case of nannies) or will be externalized onto the shoulders of other developing countries and their families as is the case with young Romanian highly skilled migrants. Recognizing these relationships and links highlights an asymmetry of costs and benefits. In cases where migrants are already educated, for instance in Romania, I explore whom these skills end up benefitting and the effects and consequences for their home countries. My research also seeks to see whom the many policies of international migration of the highly skilled migrants favour and benefit and the cost to developing transition countries and their economies.

Aihwa Ong (1999) underlines the centrality of gender in the processes of macropolitical economy and globalization and uses the concept of transnationalism to describe "the conditions of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space—which has been intensified under late capitalism"(1999: 4). Flexibility, mobility, and migration, she argues, still entail gendered expectations in basically all realms of life. "Family regimes that generally valorize mobile

masculinity and localized femininity shape strategies of flexible citizenship, gender division of labour, and relocation in different sites" (1999: 20).

Considering that little attention has been paid to how 'local' women's domestic and public work enables, directly and indirectly, border crossings and transnational mobility through the creation of highly skilled professionals who become eligible as Canadian migrants, I plan to focus on these entanglements and negotiations. My analysis shows the often-invisible hidden world of women's paid and unpaid work, its dynamics across regions, such as East and West, and points to the manner in which it enables the mobility of highly skilled Romanian migrants to Canada. While my analysis is subsumed in the neoliberal shift towards individualization, marketization and privatization and the state's reliance on women's social reproductive activities, it also makes visible struggles and contestations of such a global reconfiguration.

My project emphasizes the mobility of global capital that is based on specific localized gender relations and social reproductive work. By focusing on the condition of socially reproductive work in its transnational iterations, my project also hopes to highlight Romanian women's work and to make them more visible in the equation. It does so by revealing the way in which such neoliberal reconfigurations keep women's work in marginalized socioeconomic positions, being ascribed the unfortunate label of either "unskilled" or low-paid work. Drawing on interviews, my dissertation highlights how vital Romanian women's work is in the formation of highly skilled Romanian migrants to Canada. Mapping these sites in which women's work enables mobility and migration transnationally, and how it affects the lives of these women locally will bring to the fore the centrality of social reproduction labour in the formation of migration and the growth of neoliberal economies.

Highlighting how neoliberal economies and immigration schemes rely on Eastern Europe's transition economies, I draw on an analysis that allows me to focus on gender relations in what is considered a "post" communist transition site that enables the migration of Romanian highly skilled professionals to Canada. The assumption is that by linking the connections between different circuits of migration and women's work, it will be easier to trace how such movements depend on gendered processes of marginalization and oppression, and on a continuous cycle of reproducing interstate inequalities rather than international parallel development and growth. Through this dissertation, I plan to address another gap in the literature on immigration and women's rights in order to develop a contextual approach to globalization and neoliberalism that situates countries, movements, and people in a broader frame of injustice. Furthermore, I will show that the projects of growth and development in Canada are indirectly linked to processes of women's marginalization in developing countries.

The gendering of work is one of the many areas in which feminists have examined how women's work is drawn upon and shapes different location-specific relationships between "globalized" capital and "localized" labour. Carla Freeman (2000:3), for example, explored the interconnected "dialectics of globalization/localization, production/consumption, and gender/class" through the everyday lives of pink-collar informatics operators in Barbados. The author showed how the work process in informatics is imbued with notions of appropriate femininity and how dress and feminine image-making make workers' experiences simultaneously burdensome and pleasurable. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty (1997) illustrate how global processes of capitalism use and exploit various gendered identities. Naturalized assumptions about work and the worker are constructed around "notions of appropriate femininity, domesticity, (hetero) sexuality, and racial and cultural stereotypes" (Alexander and Mohanty 1997: 6). She

offers the example of Maria Mies' (1982) study of home-working lace makers in Narsapur to show how capitalists mobilized the ideology of women as housewives to define lace makers as nonworkers and to label their lace making for corporations as a leisure activity.

My study seeks to identify the often-invisible links between the development of various immigration programs such as Canada's Federal Skilled Worker program, focused on brain gains and skills accumulation, and women's waged and unpaid social reproductive work. I am continuing the work of other feminist scholars such as Silvia Federici, Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Isabella Bakker in pointing out how women's social reproductive labour makes the conditions for the waged work of the highly skilled professionals possible. I will add the theorizations of post-socialist feminist scholars (Ghoodsee 2005; Miroiu 1998) to women's waged work in Romania that contributes to the formation of the highly skilled migrants to Canada. Building on these theorizations, my thesis argues that the current immigration schemes are tiered and gendered, both enforcing and intensifying women's both paid and unpaid reproductive social work worldwide. In highlighting these often-hidden connections, my research is trying to show how the creation of a two-tiered immigration division leaves women's work invisible and unaccounted for, as well as prone to further exploitation and low wages. Focusing on the migration of highly skilled Romanians, my study highlights the contribution of Romanian women's paid and unpaid work in fostering highly skilled migration and mobility. First, I identify women's social reproductive work in the creation of highly skilled migrants, followed by a description of Romanian women's waged work in stimulating education mobility in what is configured and understood as a transition economy. While feminist scholarship has been largely focused on uncovering the social reproductive work that women do at the level of households, my research traces how emerging neoliberal configurations assemble aspects and subjects of Western and Northern economies and

how transition economies of South and East feed into a perpetuation of marginalization and oppression of women's work and cycles of uneven development between different parts of the world.

Various feminists have already shown how the home has always been a key site of capital accumulation resulting from women's unpaid social reproductive work (Federici 2006; Mies 1986). Through an analysis of the ways in which women's reproductive labour makes the conditions for waged work possible, early feminist historical materialist analyses revealed the fundamental role played by women's reproductive labour to capital accumulation processes (Picchio 1992; Dalla Costa and James 1972). More recent scholarship has emphasized how neoliberal shifts towards the expansion of markets and the privatization of classical state welfare functions have been predicated on the unpaid and hidden nature of women's reproductive activities (Bakker and Silvey, 2008; Bezanson and Luxton, 2006). Building on these theorizations, this study argues that under the expansion of markets and the embracing of mobility and various immigration programs, global capital has both intensified and has re-subordinated women's paid and unpaid reproductive labour locally. The highly skilled Romanian migration to Canada stands as an eloquent example of this as will be highlighted in the sections that follow.

Chapter Two: Autobigraphy and Methodological Approaches

Indeed, no woman writer can write 'too much'…

No woman has ever written enough. (bell hooks)

My own interest in Romanian migration to Canada is a result of my personal experience. In order to pursue my undergraduate degree, I moved from my small hometown in Romania to the university city 100 kilometers away. During all my undergraduate years, every weekend my peers and I would wait at the bus stations for cooked food packages prepared and sent by our mothers who now seemed to be worlds away. This practice of sending cooked food to their new university-going children was a wide spread phenomenon among Romanian mothers in the 1990s and early 2000s. While waiting for my cooked food packages, I could not refrain from acknowledging that, in addition to being a nutritional contribution, the packages were also a form of financial support toward completing my education. Once we graduated and were faced with little or no employment opportunities, my classmates and I realized that the maternal support provided to us during our years of study was vital in helping us graduate as well as excel. These same graduates, who were once waiting for the food packages sent by our mothers, found themselves collectively applying as federal skilled workers in Canada. The issue struck me as more important than just a life anecdote; I considered it relevant enough to pursue it as a research topic, hoping that writing about it would shed some light on how Canada's migration system and the Federal Skilled Workers program are gendered with gendered consequences.

In Romania, in the summers of 2009 and 2010, I interviewed 25 Romanian mothers in their 50s and 60s from my hometown, Zalau, who had at least one child who migrated to Canada. The method used was in depth, open-ended, semi-structured interviews, with most of the questions focusing on what they think of migration, how the migration of their children to Canada impacted them, and what their sacrifices and investments (from domestic/social reproductive work to explicit financial support) were in the process of their children becoming highly skilled migrants. Furthermore, I inquired as to whether they viewed their children's migration as an overall beneficial positive process that has enhanced their well-being and that of their adult children.

These questions regarding the effects of Canada's immigration policies on the migrants and their respective countries of origin as well as questions about the indirect accounts and costs of various immigration policies such as Canada's brain race in attracting highly skilled professional immigrants from developing countries are central to this project. In wanting to find out about the factors that make some migrants "highly skilled" and some not, I examined how significant the education credentials such as diplomas are in the evaluation and acceptance of Romanians as highly skilled migrants in Canada. Last but not least, I wanted to analyze how big a role Romanian women's waged and unwaged work played in the formation of the highly skilled migrants as well as the effect outward migration has on the developing sending country (in terms of gendered divisions) as well as on the lives of the women left behind.

I also sought to consider migration not as a one-way, closed process that once accomplished is over, but rather as a fluid, dynamic experience through which various processes are connected and linked in order to expose women's work investments. In this sense, the objective was to track down detailed data on the various elements in the process of migration. For example, we have data on the number of Romanian migrants that arrive each year in Canada and on some of the

remittances they send home. However, there is not much data on whose accounts and costs the level of skills of Romanian immigrants was created so that they come to be selected as highly skilled migrants in Canada. Nor do we know the impact of their leaving on their families left behind and on the general welfare and development of their home countries. My premise is that it is the mothers' work that contributes disproportionately to the creation of highly skilled migrants, and that it's the mothers' condition that is in general affected and negatively impacted in ways that have long-term effects both on their lives as well as some sectors of Romania. My research comes to identify women's role as essential in such processes, and connects situations that otherwise would have been left unexposed. Research data is usually collected and administered locally in one country and it is not compared, nor co-related and juxtaposed, with findings from other countries. For example, there is research on the Romanian outward migration conducted by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics just as there is research carried out by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada; however, there is a lack of research and analysis connecting the findings from the two countries. It is these types of gaps that my research is going to highlight, connecting facts and findings about phenomena that are otherwise treated in isolation and without accounting for the emerging reconfigurations in social relations, state relations, and ultimately possibilities for change toward justice.

Section A: The Feminist Methodology Scholarship: Resisting the Positivist Approaches

Listening to women's voices and giving voice to the silent is one of the long-standing feminist aims in social science research (Fonow and Cook 1991; Ribbens and Edwards 1998; Smith 1987). I am hoping to give voice to their perspectives, especially as it relates to their children's migration and their personal investments in that arduous process. I particularly wanted to trace the migration process in the capitalist transition, and the establishment of 'liberal' democracy and freedom of movement; the former communist political regime in Romania prohibited and criminalized any outward migration, and the persons who were leaving the country were considered refugees by the receiving countries.

When I conducted the interviews, I chose to disclose that I am a Romanian female migrant to Canada, a condition I was sharing with the adult children of the interviewed subjects. Making such information available to the participants was important for me since I anticipated that such disclosure would create a sense of identification with my interviewed subjects and encourage them to share more openly, sincerely and freely with me. Furthermore, I hoped that disclosing and politicizing my own gendered and ethnic migrant position would build a more solid sense of trust as well as allow me to have greater insight into my participants' lives and help me shed light on the common phenomena of gender subordination (Hartsock 1998). Indeed, belonging to the same ethnic group, being of the same gender, speaking the same language, and sharing the same immigrant condition led to more familiarity and an increased level of trust and a certain reliability in conducting the interviews. The issue of women interviewing other women was already tackled by feminist scholars who suggested that the act of women interviewing other women may lead to

an "opening up", managing the establishment of a connection that transcends the subject/object relationship between researcher and interviewee (Hartsock 1998).

Recent feminist scholarship has also argued that there cannot be a position of neutrality or objectivity from where the researcher speaks or writes. Feminists have critiqued positivist science and literature that required authors to present as neutral, as well as actively participating in reproducing all the norms of classical research and scholarship which calls for the writer's voice not to be heard in the text (Hartsock 1998). The dismissal of the pretense of neutrality of any scientific discourse that was leaving out the subjectivity of the writer was important. It opened up the space to think about power and the ways power informs and shapes research and the collection of data. This critique also problematizes positivism and its positivist agenda of research that assumed that truth came out of eliminating the role of interpretation and opinion. For the positivist researcher, subjectivity was seen as an obstacle to knowledge; the researcher's biography and lived experience had to be brushed aside in order to make room for an "objective" stance that is at best negotiable, but ultimately unachievable (Hartsock 1998).

One of the first critiques of the positivist epistemologies came from the feminist Nancy Hartsock. In 1998, Hartsock pioneered the idea of a standpoint, saying that there are different kinds of knowledge that are accessible from distinct backgrounds; for example, workers who have to sell their labour to capitalists develop a standpoint that leads to understanding work relations as a power struggle between those who dominate and those who are subordinate. They view their interaction as a relationship of domination, as in "power over". However, the author argues that the situation of domination is not fixed and can be reverted. The idea of power can also be understood as "power with" since there is the possibility of resistance and opposition to that power (Hartsock 1998).

Another feminist author who questions and critiques the premises of positivist epistemology is Donna Haraway. According to her, any vision of the world is embodied, and all information is influenced by one's senses (Haraway 1991). Positivist epistemology is, then, grounded in the materiality of people's bodies. Yet the author observes that positivism denies the influence of the body in making its claims to validity. The bodies of those dominating the production of knowledge, Haraway (1991) argues, have for the most part been in specific social locations in systems of race (white), class (privilege), gender (male), and nation (Western), and yet there is no consideration of how their observations might have been shaped by their social position. She uses the term "embodied vision" to emphasize that our vision is located in some specific social and physical place, that our knowledge is "situated", and thus partial (Haraway 1991: 43).

Feminist Dorothy Smith challenges further the premises of neutral, factual methods of research. She juxtaposes the discipline of sociology against everyday life. The author argues that the sex-based division of labour in our society has created an artificial separation of human experience; those who develop knowledge about society are separated from the actual practices that sustain our everyday life, and do so through a process that is described as "relations of ruling" (Smith 1990: 25). According to Smith, the men who dominate the conceptual realm of knowledge can choose almost to ignore their bodily existence in every sphere of their lives. This has been made possible only because women have been taking care of almost all the activities of social reproduction for them, namely providing for their human needs and for their children outside the workplace. The better these women are at their work, the more invisible that work is to the men who benefit from it. This fact allows men to take women's work for granted while they have their own authority and contribution strengthened in the process (Smith 1990).

Another author that challenges research's neutral, impartial, positivist assumptions is Patricia Hill-Collins. In her work, she does not only question positivist assumptions, but she also offers alternatives to it, namely, black feminist epistemology (Hill-Collins 1990). She analyzes how Black women's standpoint offers a distinctive basis for developing knowledge. First of all, Black women have the experience of oppression and an interest in struggling against it. Second, their work has brought them in contact with dominant groups, but in a marginalized way, for example, as domestics in the households of the affluent and, more recently, as outsiders within academy. This marginalization is an epistemic advantage because it distances Black women from hegemonic thought and practices, facilitating the development of a critical attitude (Hill-Collins 1990).

It was with these critiques in mind, and knowing that in feminist tradition there cannot be any purely "objective", "impartial" and "neutral" analysis, that I returned to my hometown Zalau to conduct my research.

Zalau is the capital city of Salaj county located in the province of Transylvania in the west-centre part of Romania. Although historically quite old, with its first attestation dating back to the 1500s, Zalau is a rather small town. In 2011, its population was estimated at around 56,000 in clear decline after the population peak at around 80,000 during the communist regime. Its demographic peak was reached in the 1960s and 1970s when the city became the regional industrial centre. During the communist regime, industrial factories producing large scale valves, fittings, circuit regulating valves, dynamic control fittings and thermostatic valves for installations in heating, air conditioning, sanitary and gas appliances or vast industrial factories producing steel pipes and tires, such as Armatura Zalau, Silcotub Zalau and Anvelope Zalau, needed thousands of workers which created a boom in terms of population increase. However, the communist regime's collapse

in 1989 and the more explicit capitalist transition meant a restructuring of the formerly large-scale factories which were considered unprofitable and were closed down. The closure of the factories brought high rates of unemployment and, consequently, high rates of outward migration. Some of the first destination cities of migration were neighbouring Western European cities (i.e., Vienna, Berlin, Madrid and Rome). However, the more developed Western European cities needed unskilled cheap labour force, so that the more skilled and educated population of the town started to orient itself towards different immigration programs such as Canada's or Australia's which were targeting this educated workforce. If under the communist regime times the city of Zalau knew a highly industrialized development peak that attracted thousands of workers, after the transition to the capitalist market, its population was baffled by the process. The transition translated into a closing down of most of the industrial factories and resulted in high rates of unemployment. From a source of initial inward internal migration, the city became in a short period of time a fountain of outward migration. The Romanian Institute of Statistics found Salaj county to have the highest rate of population decline in the 1990s and 2000s, registering a 2.7 per cent population decrease per year. Although there is not a record of the outward migration in terms of cities, the one provided for the North-West region of Romania that includes the city of Zalau indicates a substantial youthful outward migration (population aged 26-40) (Romanian National Institute of Statistics: 2007).

While some of my hometown and in general Romania's youth chose as migration destination places the Western and more European developed cities found in the geographical proximity, for the skilled and highly educated portion of its population one of the outward migration destination countries was Canada. The fact that Canada became one of the migration destination countries is given by the sheer reality experienced by my friends, university classmates

and myself. Graduated from university and facing scarce employment opportunities, we found ourselves checking the immigration requirements for countries such as Canada. We were not always open in wanting to leave our country or even sharing transparently such thoughts among ourselves, but the thoughts must have been there as every time the topic of migrating came up, each of us seemed to know so many things and so many details about the immigration programs to Canada that it was obvious that it must have been a clear preoccupation for all of us. It was the same for friends' parents and acquaintances that I interviewed about their children's migration to Canada. I relied on friends' and relatives' time and effort in sharing with me stories about their children's migration to Canada. My own mother was an invaluable resource in the process, as she was the one who collected full names, phone numbers and email addresses of various Romanian families whose children migrated to Canada. By the time I arrived in Romania to begin fieldwork, my mother had the preliminary fieldwork mapped: she had already contacted the families for an interview explaining my dissertation topic and made all the arrangements for the encounters.

Most of the interview questions were about the Romanian mothers' contributions to their children's learning and their seeking professional skills that made them eligible as immigrants to Canada. I also focused on how their children's migration to Canada affected them personally, how they came to terms with it, and if they considered their children's migration a good decision. I was particularly intrigued to identify their investments in the educational process and the creation of the highly skilled migrants in terms of both public and domestic work as well as explicit financial support. As a surprise in the process, I discovered Romanian's mothers' contribution to the intellectual formation of their children, and not just the usual classical social reproductive work. Through these interviews I was hoping to track and make visible *gendered investments* not only in an economic sense but also in a life sense (i.e., imagination, creativity and intellectual stimulation)

in the creation of desirable highly skilled professional migrants. As already mentioned, the interviews were designed to be in a familiar, friendly, open-ended and semi-structured form with each of them lasting from 45 minutes to two hours. They were conducted in Romanian and were almost all digitally recorded. At particular moments, when my interviewees asked me to stop recording while they were confessing issues that were considered sensitive to them (i.e., such as bribing the Graduate Program Assistants in order to receive their children's university transcripts faster), I took notes. Upon my return to Canada, I transcribed all the interviews. While I was conducting my fieldwork and was collecting the interviews, I kept a journal log with countless notes and observations. While looking back at them, I was surprised to see how many elaborate and rich in details notes I gathered in the process. My journal log was full of detailed and descriptive entries about the home of the particular interviewee, the decoration style of the apartment, the pictures at display in the house, the smell of the house and the dishes that were cooked that day, the information on display at a TV left on or muted in the background, the music that was played at radio, and even the sometimes loud conversations of the outside neighbours. I also found myself jotting down my own feelings in the process: the initial excitement of having the opportunity to take interviews, the conflicting views of bringing up delicate or painful topics, the disappointment when the interviewed subjects were reluctant and not sharing enough, the relief of finishing good interview sessions. It was upon my return to Canada when I realized that the interviews were not just about the interviewed persons and their valuable perspectives over the world. The interviews also contained my own intellectual and emotional production in the process. I found these interviews containing a lot of information about myself and being a trigger point of my own making as a feminist academic. Retrospectively, I am amazed to see how the fieldwork was from the beginning a process of continuous reciprocal and double investment (from my end

as a researcher and the interviewee's end), undoing the usual assumptions of "neutrality" or "distance".

Feminist scholars have chronicled challenges when conducting fieldwork and already rejected any claims to objectivity, impartiality and neutrality of the researcher (Haraway 1991, Hartsock 1998, Hill-Collins 1990, Smith 1990). Following up on this kind of feminist scholarship, I did not find myself being neutral, distant and impartial when collecting the interviews. Since the fieldwork town was my hometown and most of the interviews were taken from families either I or my mother knew personally, the interviews were inevitably characterized by closeness, familiarity and intimacy. There were several instances when the interviewed subjects did not elaborate or provide details on various topics such as the parents' feelings towards their adult children's migration, or how difficult the integration process is in the destination countries, as they were saying that my mother and I were fully aware of the situation and were experiencing them as much as they did. It was within the same regimen of closeness and shared understanding that they were opening up some of the drawers in the house that still contained their departed children's belongings as if waiting, perfectly aligned, for the absent persons to return. Within the same boundaries of intimacy, they were showing us Skype accounts set up on their computers for communications abroad and many framed pictures of their departed children that were on display in many of their bedrooms and living rooms while confessing that it is these Skype conversations and old pictures that many times kept them warm through long winters and even longer absences. The more pictures we were shown and the larger their frames were, the more my mother and I were feeling smaller and smaller for even bringing up such painful topics.

Since I knew my subjects' reality as much as they knew mine, I was relieved to make use of feminist methods of doing research that were not pressuring me for academic distance and

neutrality. On the contrary, they made room for disclosure of my gender and immigrant status and allowed to express my emotional and intellectual investments in the topic of my research. Being a migrant to Canada, and a highly skilled one resulting from the paid and unpaid contributions of my family and a state education system that contributed to my development as a professional, returning to my home country to do my research was, personally and methodologically, a real challenge. While I was fully convinced of the limits of the positivist androcentric methods of research and knew that the feminist methods are much better alternatives, I still struggled with the dimensions of certainty and stability regarding them. I kept on asking myself questions such as: are my methods of research the most recent and updated? Are they the most valid, legitimate and truthful in the field? Do they adequately and faithfully represent my interviewed subjects' views?

Other researchers have worked within this autobiographical methodological frame (Culic 2010, Pernes 2010). Similar to their case, one of the challenges of the methods used in their research consisted in holding onto any framework of analysis while knowing that the methods themselves are assuming a continuing process of (self)criticism and (self)reflexivity (Pernes 2010). In my turn, I found it hard to engage with the external world and do my research while knowing that my research tools are subject of constant criticism and reflection of the process, including my owns'.

Section B: Autobiography and Research Methods: Writing the Feminist Canadian Self

Returning to Romania for my fieldwork could not have happened sooner. I could not wait to head for it, and I was counting the days for my return home trip long in advance. Many of my colleagues in graduate studies were also heading abroad to do their own fieldwork. Some were travelling to remote areas of South America or East Asia. Nevertheless, I knew my fieldwork trip was different. While they were getting ready to travel to different countries and be away from contexts that developed them, I was travelling in reverse and getting closer to what I felt I really was and my original self. For me, fieldwork was my home, and the location could not have been more familiar and completely known. In Romania, I was visiting my family three years after migrating to Canada while at the same time doing research on how families such as mine had contributed to the creation of the highly skilled migrants that left for Canada. I knew the topic extensively and at the most personal level. Besides my extensive scholarly research, my own experience as an immigrant significantly added to my knowledge on the topic. The whole experience could have easily passed as a long-awaited family reunion if it were not for the interviews that I was planning to do. The terrain was very familiar and the people I interviewed had lived experiences that matched my own. Like my family, they had children who had migrated to Canada via the Federal Skilled Worker Program. While I was in Canada, I had to constantly struggle in order to integrate into a new country. Once back in Romania for my fieldwork, I could finally take a break from such integration and adaptation efforts and just be myself in a familiar environment. I returned home in the summers of 2009 and 2010 to do my fieldwork; after only 3 or 4 years of being away to pursue my studies, my hometown felt very safe and reliable to me.

While my interview questions were difficult and full of emotional turmoil, triggering a whole range of reactions (from nostalgia and sadness, to tears and rightful anger), I was sure that I would get them done since I knew how to navigate the community relations in my hometown. I was also speaking the same language (both literally and figuratively) as my interviewed persons, be it Romanian or sharing the same cultural references of openness, reciprocity, etc. Neither my documenting the migration process, nor my return to my hometown could be as difficult, alienating and unpredictable as my process of integration to Canada; from my point of view, Romania was the land of understanding and acceptance.

Among the field of social sciences, I consider feminists as among the few who get significantly close to politicizing the relationship between researcher and their subject and/or location of research, either by interrogating their own hierarchical position in the fieldwork or by investigating their own objectives and motives in the process. In that sense, I was a highly skilled immigrant from Romania in Canada studying the Romanian highly skilled immigrants in Canada and the consequences of their immigration for the families left behind. Following in the footsteps of some other scholars who have employed self-referentiality and autobiography as a research tool (e.g. Culic 2010, Pernes 2010), from the very beginning, I found that my interviewees and I shared many parallelisms and common reference points. I had lived and experienced the same realities that they did by living in Romania during the communist regime and the years of transition to the liberal market. Like them, my parents knew what it meant to have their adult children migrate to Canada, with the hope that better opportunities would open up for them.

However, my autobiography predated the actual fieldwork as I was already far away from my home country (highly skilled immigrant in Canada, doing my PhD in Women's Studies) when I decided that I wanted to do research on the Romanian families left behind by the highly skilled

immigrants that arrive in Canada. As mentioned before, the project was deeply personal, based on interviews with family members, relatives and family friends that many times were burying their discomfort in talking about sensitive topics in order to assist me with my research. It was crucial to hear their stories as I was trying to integrate into Canadian society, to do my PhD in Women's Studies and succeed as a feminist academic. Nevertheless, for an immigrant from the Eastern European bloc and a woman who was trying to succeed in North American academia and become a Canadian citizen while dealing with the guilt of leaving her family back home, taking up such research was embedded in all sorts of sentiments and challenges.

Without a doubt, the path reaching to this theme was sprinkled with a lot of indecision and self-doubt. Taking under consideration the career and integration goals that were at stake, I initially did not know how I should identify myself and what I should reveal in the process of doing the fieldwork. For example, prior to starting my fieldwork, noticing my excitement about doing my research in my home country (Romania), two different professors in graduate courses that I had taken at York University warned me that I might be too emotionally involved in my chosen location and topic of research, suggesting I would be unable to stay detached from my home country realities and impartial about it. As a word of caution, they advised me to choose another topic altogether as a way of creating a more dispassionate and "objective" self. I found the advice upsetting and problematic since I considered that we all carried certain histories, backgrounds and experiences that informed who we became in time and how we interpreted the world. There could not have been a more unattainable goal than the one meant to find research topics that would bring forward my rational "objective" self. Although well-intended, the recommendations made me even more aware how we were all enmeshed in fleshy ethnic backgrounds and consistently haunted by our histories. However, it did not deter me from exploring and researching this theme and in

Romania. As far as realizing that the maintenance of an impersonal, detached distance between the researcher and the interview subjects would be impossible for me and for anyone, for that matter, I am glad that I did not follow some of the advice given, and decided not to alienate myself, nor create an alienated and false distance between me and my interlocutors, namely my family or friends' parents whose children had migrated to Canada.

The first days of carrying out fieldwork at home, in Romania, consisted in familiarizing myself with the specific stories of my interviewees. Some of them I knew well and in detail already, some others faded away in the memory, so I was asking my family and friends to remind me of them and bring them to life. I was definitely conscious of my positionality as a community member and researcher. Nevertheless, I could not have lived and carried my research under the pretense that I was a theoretical researcher outside of my history and community of belonging. Such an abstraction of our work from the places and communities which we are part of may lead to further challenges and problems. A theorist or researcher must "prove" himself or herself to have a certain professional academic status while ignoring that he or she is also involved in the messiness of the national context or specific communities of belonging. It was as if researchers who wanted to be taken seriously were supposed to validate the seriousness of their scholarly inquiries with detachment and neutrality. Since I could not "prove" myself academically, if that meant hiding my national context and my community of belonging, I was looking forward to embracing methods of research that were compatible with disclosing the researchers' backgrounds and their own intellectual and emotional investments in the process. Furthermore, under the pretense of impartiality and neutrality, I did not want to create artificial boundaries and unsustainable divisions with my interviewees whom I shared so much familiarity, history and national context. At the same time, I was aiming to challenge them in order to obtain as much

depth as possible but more than that I aimed at recognizing their own story telling as theory itself. I wanted to not simply turn this vast and complex field of insight and knowledge that the Romanian women were sharing with me into something that merely comforts our academic sense of historical completeness and systematicity by adding one more case study to the mix of migration or social reproduction debate. In essence, the interviews were attempts to elucidate these uncanny processes of migration and social reproduction by expanding, disaggregating, and recomposing their insights. I did not want to assume them as my interview subjects who basically were going to provide me with as much information as possible about migration and their role in what is being reconfigured as global reproduction. Rather, as these were my family, relatives, neighbours, indeed, people of my community, I saw my fieldwork as an opportunity to mend the isolation that comes with one doing research, or with migration and social reproduction. Similar to such artificial boundaries between interviewer and interviewee, I also wanted to challenge the hierarchy of mind and body, or of the highly skilled and less skilled work by working to close this gap. I aimed at achieving that by spending time with the Romanian women I interviewed and understanding the changes in their lives, and by recognizing and working with them to think through ways of challenging these unsustainable binaries. The interviews themselves became collective moments of grappling together to devise creative ways of addressing these gaps.

Practicing a false pretense of distance and detachment conceals the relationship between the researcher and the subjects, ignoring the potential for rich analysis and findings that might get explored particularly due to their common ties and their shared understandings. Such structures are similar to body and mind division in the migration program that allow for exploitation and oppression that benefit some at the expense of the lives and life worlds of others. Furthermore, the methods also transform researchers into anonymous individuals. If anything, the fieldwork was a

means for me to confirm that we cannot hide from our histories, communities of belonging and national context. Through interviews with the Romanian women, the past was consistently re-enacted, my involvement in any type of research was anything but neutral and detached, and that we were much better off learning from such acknowledgements.

Scheper-Hughes argues that what connects the collection of data and writing are the people with whom we engage even when the boundaries are clearly delineated and hierarchically separated as a field and as academic space (2000). Both the field and the spaces of writing are connected even when we want to maintain academically that there is a boundary between the two. My fieldwork was not conducted in a remote, distant place to which I had no previous connection, but rather in my home country and in the city in which I was born and raised. I found nothing controversial or surprising in the stories and realities conveyed to me by my interviewed subjects as their lives mirrored mine in many aspects. However, having lived in Canada for several years, there were obviously glaring differences between me and my research subjects that had developed over time. What I found challenging, was my trying to reconcile the fact that I was attempting to integrate myself as a Canadian citizen and succeed as a feminist academic through such self-referential research projects. In that sense, I cannot deny that, whilst I was looking forward to developing knowledge about the processes of outward migration from Romania, I was becoming slowly aware that what I was studying related heavily to my own efforts to integrate myself as a citizen into a new country and at the same time establish myself as a feminist scholar. Therefore, looking for possibilities to analyze the creation of Romanian highly skilled migrants as well as advocating for fair, just, and less exploitative migration practices had a clear self-referential component. Nevertheless, my own involvement in the reality of my interviewees, my autobiography and life history influenced my decision to write about the struggles and challenges

of immigrants, similar to how the Romanian women's perspectives were marked by their adult

children's migration abroad.

Section C: Auto-ethnography: Undoing the researcher-interview subject/ reader-writer "fictive distance"

While there are many accounts of scholars researching the most suitable methods necessary in interviewing subjects, there is not much information on how factors such as autobiography and auto-ethnography can influence research and data. In some cases, autobiography and auto-ethnography can be seen as research methods.

When talking about research, Inayatullah introduces auto-ethnography as a more honest and substantial research tool that deconstructs the presumed anonymity of the researcher and her/his interviewed subjects while reducing what the author diagnoses to be a "fictive distance" (Inayatullah 2011) that all the academic writing presupposes. In this regard, "the writer presents herself/himself as absent, as distant, and as indifferent to the writing and ideas" with "ideas that are believed to speak for themselves while the writer serves as a vehicle for their expression (Inayatullah 2011: 5)."

In addition to the "undoing of the fictive distance" premise, I was also trying to undo the dichotomies of self and other, exactly as previous feminists have been trying to undo the divisions between public vs. private, mind vs. body, rationality vs. affect. These dichotomies reminded me of the same artificial line that separates other well-known dichotomies, "science and arts, objective and subjective knowledge's, the everyday and the exceptional, the personal and the political, and, most importantly, the ontological boundaries of 'you' and 'I'', as a reader who hears another's voice through the exclamation of an "I" can begin establishing social connections of empathy/sympathy, identification/difference, compassion and critique through the autobiographical text itself" (Imperial 2012). Regarding the cancellation of the fictive distance,

the premises of auto-ethnography consist in exactly writing a personal story that helps readers identify easier with the writer, after which they start reflecting on their own experiences and the construction of the social realities around them.

My interviews with Romanian mothers did not presuppose a conquering of differences since most of the persons I was interviewing had been part of my life already, as neighbours, relatives, and parents of my friends that migrated to Canada. We were also sharing the same political and socio-historical conditions (be it communism or transition neoliberalism), speaking the same language (Romanian) while being all connected by the experience of migration to Canada and separating oneself from the original family and network of friends. The many commonalities and similarities that we were sharing created an environment of familiarity and comfort as well as implicit knowledge.

Nevertheless, the drawback of such a familiar environment was that my subjects were not giving me as many detailed answers as I wanted. For example, in cases where I was asking about how they dealt with the hardships, and challenges faced after their children migrated to Canada, the answers given were short, basic, with minimal content. Phrases such as "you know how it is", "your parents lived through the same situation as well, they can tell you better", were repeated throughout the sessions. Even though our common implicit knowledge and shared life experience encouraged those I interviewed to tell their stories with a greater sense of trust, it also created an environment of silenced identification and parallelism which required no further evidence and proof, based on the assumption that I already knew all about the process of migration. Because of the assumed familiarity, I found myself asking my interviewees for more examples and specific situations that demonstrated the difficulties that arose due to their children's migration to Canada. This was done through a process where a sense of identification created an environment of trust as

well as, on my part, a higher degree of personal effort in getting that implicit knowledge to come out.

When talking about auto-ethnography, three of its leading methodological promoters Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner understand it as both a "process, and a product," since the researcher is analyzing and at the same time engaging with his/her personal experience in order to reach a certain understanding in cultural, political, social terms. According to the authors, it is an "approach which challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act" (Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner, 2011: 1).

The use of the autoethnographic method of research transformed me. If initially I was talking to those I interviewed about the experience of migration with easiness and confidence, later on, as I advanced in my research, I had to change my interview approach towards them. The experience of migration was more traumatic than I imagined; so, there was less predictability in the original planned familiarity of the fieldwork. My interview subjects had difficulty in talking about their children being overseas, and my initial assertion that they could not but feel proud about their children's accomplishments was immediately challenged. A sense of loss loomed over the discussion. In that regard, I remember that one of the questions to my interviewing subjects was framed as: "Do you think your children are planning to come back at some point in time, and re-settle again in Romania?" After two or three interviews including that question, I found that people were quite uncomfortable in addressing that question, and most of the time the response suggested that their children were not planning to come back. I was also surprised to see that they were not even evasive or ambiguous in their answers. Nor were they trying to avoid answering with a fast reply in the line of "I do not know what my children's plans are!" These parents

decisively knew their children would not come back, and they directly told me so. However, such story telling also made them self-reflective and sad, realizing that their children's migration was most likely permanent. Therefore, taking into consideration the pain and discouragement brought by my question, I decided to lighten up the conversation, and ask my interview subjects if they knew anything about their children's future plans, if they think of moving again, or re-settling elsewhere without forcing them to deal with whether their children might come back home.

As mentioned before, I knew that I would use this information for my research, as well as for personal career mobility. The interviews provided me with nuanced and in-depth insights that aided me in becoming a feminist and integrating myself as a migrant in Canada through a process of re-invention of my identity. It was weird that for my identity reinvention as a Canadian feminist I was not making use of new Canadian sources. On the contrary, I was returning to and making use of my social network in Romania, most specifically, my own family and relatives' connections. Retrospectively, it is interesting to see how I was trying to integrate into a new Canadian world and seek legitimacy in the academic feminist sphere by returning "home". In short, this research project, although it focused generally on the rights of Romanian women, was also conducted with a great degree of self-awareness and self-analysis.

What stood out in carrying out my research was that knowledge cannot be detached from the social conditions of its production, and I imagined that by just being aware of that, I could enlarge the spectrum of the research done so far on the Romanian migration to Canada. There was a strong bond between me and the subjects of my study, namely the community of friends and families whose children had migrated to Canada. I myself am one of those children. The process required a lot of sensitivity and empathy on my part while also forcing me to keep a safe distance in order not to be biased. My research work was strongly related to my own personal history, and

the interviewed persons were all people who played an integral part in my own life and being. The impersonal, detached role of a scientific researcher looking at the Romanian migration was impossible to play since I felt too much as if I were one of them (a Romanian migrant in Canada), and did not feel connected so much with how a Canadian researcher, for example, might analyze these phenomena. In this sense, my identity was first and foremost that of a female immigrant to Canada, and not so much of a Canadian expert-researcher. While listening to the stories of my subjects, I was also trying to sort out and make sense of my own feelings towards migration, without claiming to have the authority and legitimacy that I might know more than they do.

My mother's involvement in the research also informed the way I approached my interlocutors. She was the one preparing all my fieldwork contacts well before I reached Romania to start my research. While not taking over my own research agenda, she was actively asserting herself in it, by asking her own interview questions, evaluating the information given by subjects herself, asking for more details regarding once incident or another, or just by making sure that the recorder was on.

Again, her taking the initiative and leadership in arranging the interview contacts and setting up the meetings had me concerned that my role in pursuing the research was being marginalized. A teacher herself, my mother knew how to simplify some of my questions that were not easy to understand, and render them more accessible to my interview subjects. At the same time, she was very knowledgeable and aware of the future use of this research; for example, she always knew that I was doing feminist research, and for her that automatically meant asking for more evidence, examples and proofs from my interview subjects when giving accounts of women's work exploitation and subordination. For instance, when asking one of the participants to describe some of the domestic chores that she was doing while her children were pursuing their

undergraduate degree, she mentioned only the activity of cooking for them. This is one of the moments when my mother jumped in asking the interview subject (another mother) if she did not leave other activities unmentioned, such as washing or ironing clothes for her children. At that point, the interviewee realized that she left out quite a bit from her story. She also explained that the chores described could not be merely thought of as just specific work for her children since she was doing them for the whole family as well. Nevertheless, the incident speaks volumes of my mother's acute awareness about the answers that were being given, her active/agent role in requesting more details and examples especially as they related to Romanian women's work exploitation. It also underlines her efforts in supporting my feminist PhD and my struggles to integrate in Canada. With that in mind, I would also mention that interviews were rarely perceived as formal and private stances, conducted in closed spaces with rigid research objectives in mind. My subjects were opening up about the migration of their children while cooking or even having guests over.

I cannot recall any moment when my mother was not an active or pro-active element in the background of my research. If she was not by my side when taking the interviews, asking my interview subjects for more details and examples, she was cooking or preparing snacks for them when the interviews took place in our apartment. It is almost as if she was, at times, the one more in control of the research than I was. I can remember only one instant when she felt more vulnerable, and less in control of the situation. It was around my tenth or eleventh interview when I was asking one of the interviewed subjects about the future plans of her children to settle in Canada, if they planned to move more or just settle where they were. I was trying to reformulate a milder phrase for my usual "return" question when the interviewed person turned to my mother and asked her: "What about your daughter, Lia? She will never come back, will she?" It was the

only moment when I saw my mother getting sad and feeling vulnerable admitting that "Probably not!" The emotional moment was rapidly counteracted by my mother's claiming indifference, and the impossibility of being shaken up by my decisions: "Anyway, I don't care. It's her life!" However, nothing from her actions and especially around helping me carry out my research were a proof that she does not care or wants to remain uninvolved in my academic endeavours. On the contrary, her determination was proof that she cares quite a lot, and that she is really invested in having me succeed as a feminist and an immigrant to Canada.

When discussing the implications of authoethnography, Ellis, Adams and Boschener bring forward the idea of the relationality of such a method. In using personal experience, autoethnographers not only implicate themselves with their work, but also closely involve intimate others, as it is the case of my mother (Adams 2009; Etherington 2007). They argue that, for example, if a child recounts a story that involves his mom, she is enmeshed in what he says which implies that it is hard to hide his mom's presence without adjusting the importance and motivation behind the story. Indeed, a more prominent consideration should be given to the relationality characteristic of any analysis: we all live within social networks that include friends and family relatives, spouses, partners and children, colleagues and collaborators. Subsequently, when we investigate and write research pieces, we involve others in our work. Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) exemplifies the case of a researcher who studies the tobacco industry effects on health outcomes and ends up developing anti-smoking campaigns within her university. Due to this researcher's work and activism, tobacco companies may avoid from monetarily contributing and sponsoring the university; even though the researcher is conducting the investigation privately, the researcher may indirectly implicate others—in this case, the university.

Instead of making invisible and denying the relationality of my research topic and of all my interview questions, I choose to acknowledge it, and be constantly aware of it. From this point of view, the methods of autobiography created a space to analyze social relations that extended beyond the ones with my interviewed subjects, such as it is the case of my mother. Finally, it let me focus on my own personal experiences and personal transformations as they evolved and changed while resisting dominant hegemonic claims of scientific "objective" research.

Section D: Auto-ethnography as a Method of Challenging the Dominant, Hegemonic, English-Speaking Scholarship

When talking about auto-ethnography, Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner talk about the auto-ethnographic method as a modality to resist dominant Western English- speaking scholarship, and its mainstream study and traditional understandings of the "Other" (2011: 18). The same conditions apply to most of the research that has been carried out in Romania so far, and that consisted mostly in the critical analysis of Romanian realities and social relations by English-speaking "Western" scholars (Kligman: 1998; Verdery: 1996). Nevertheless, by claiming one's biographic and personal involvement in the research conducted, Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) argue that the autobiographic method can get closer to the indigenous/native ethnographies that are developed from colonized or economically subordinated people, and are used to address and disrupt power in research, particularly when it comes to the outside researcher's right and authority to study the "exotic" others. "Once at the service of the (White, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper-classed, Christian, able-bodied) ethnographer, indigenous/native ethnographers now work to construct their own personal and cultural stories; they no longer find (forced) subjugation excusable" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011: 3).

For me it was also important to write in order to resist the history of "Western" based research done on Romania which, in search for theoretical truths, decontextualizes the Romanian subject (Kligman: 1998; Verdery: 1996). Equally important for me was to challenge a tradition of classical research that perpetuates dominant, hegemonic views of doing research in Romania while

not bringing a level of analytic reflexivity on the researcher himself/herself. In contrast, I was trying to become a more analytic and self-conscious participant in the conversation, and more aware of the emotional connection that the researcher has with his/her subjects, as well as his/her effects and influences upon them. On another level, this engagement requires an awareness of the mutual influence the researcher and his/her interview informants exert on each other, while acknowledging that one's views might change after such interactions. This approach also means acknowledging the fact that the interviewer may have been heavily affected by the process of interviewing, and that he/she is part of the stories being told. The researcher also assumes a position of vulnerability and doubt by engaging in processes that might develop the knowledge of the self, but might also transform the researcher's own beliefs, actions and sense of self. Through writing an autobiography, the "expert" researcher comes to understand that she does not just develop knowledge from her subjects' stories, but that she might learn and even be transformed by the knowledge gained through interaction with others (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011).

I would not have imagined that my doing the fieldwork in Romania might change the way I feel about migrating to Canada. I was very hopeful about my migration and insertion into Canada, but became less motivated after finishing doing and transcribing all the interviews, seeing the consequences of migration for the families left behind, and their constant longing for their children to come back.

That is why I could not agree more with Cann and Demeulenaere's (2012) evaluation of auto-ethnography as a critical co-constructed process. I took it to mean acknowledging that my interview subjects and I share a history together (of migration, poverty, transition, etc.) and that the process of sharing stories with one another could influence us reciprocally. I had a story that my interlocutors shared with me, namely the migration to Canada, that brought me and my

interview subjects together. I was looking forward to the ways this reality would be constituted as a shared and common background. The thought that immigration to Canada might be a more challenging process than initially imagined came after the interaction with my interview participants, demonstrating the real transformative effects that such exchanges had on me.

In this regard, Tillmann-Healy (2003) takes into account the possibility of considering the formalized relationships that we develop in our fieldwork as lasting friendships. Requiring such a personal investment allows us to sustain a decolonizing project that destabilizes the traditional, colonial, exploitative research formerly done by Western researchers (Tillmann-Healy 2003: 150). Friendships formed during fieldwork are perceived as diminishing the exploitative side of research such as using the subjects for their information and knowledge without any reciprocation. Likewise, these friendships have the potential to effect change in society in order to confront and challenge dominant power structures. They also have the potential, particularly when they are friendships that extend across cultural boundaries (such as our own racial and ethnic differences), to create lasting alliances and solidarity amongst people (Tillmann-Healy 2003).

In conclusion, my whole project was enmeshed in relationality, co-constructed personal relationships, close connections and friendships. Auto-ethnography is one of the few research methodologies that allows me to acknowledge it as such, and allows me to question inadequate research methods that required unrealistic and unattainable objectivity. Therefore, what I needed most was a break from such a restrictive pattern of methodology and to explore my life and my life's stories with a less restrictive methodology. It is important to emphasize that to disrupt forms of discourse that render the author's identity unimportant is challenging. I deliberately chose to situate myself in a sphere separate from conventional research projects. Autoethnographic research acknowledges and validates my status as a Romanian immigrant to Canada as well as draws

attention to the marginalization and discrimination that Romanian immigrants to Canada, including myself, were subjected to. In opting for an autoethnographic method of research I wanted to explore how such a method could make use of one's own migration experience in order to look at the immigration process as a whole, and its significance for the whole community of Romanian migrants in Canada and their families. I wanted to connect individual lives with larger economic and social issues. I wanted my autoethnographical study to be a clear mix of autobiography, "story of one's own life", and ethnography, "the study of a particular social group" (Reed-Danahay 1997: 6). I was trying to make my research project more truthful and "alive," as Ellis states. "Autobiographical stories really make theory and history come alive, don't they?" (Ellis, 2004: 23)

I wanted to analyze the effects of highly skilled migration on the countries and families left behind. So what better way to study such processes than tracing back my own migration experience, the elements that made me a highly skilled migrant to Canada (from educational degrees to women's work), and the effects that my leaving had on my own family. Transnational feminism and feminist political-economic theories allow me to critique and analyze the consequences of migration on women's work, especially as it relates to the exploitation of these working women. Combining my personal history with my research is an effort to produce new forms of knowledge and understandings of what migration entails, the factors that shaped the process, and what the consequences are in terms of women's rights.

Following up on the work of feminists such as Dorothy Smith (1990), Nancy Hartsock (1998), Donna Haraway (1991), I seek to dislodge what many mainstream scholars consider "objective" and "impartial" methods by undergoing a deeper and more nuanced analysis of the migration process. Towards this end, my goal was to capture the nuanced ways in which women are oppressed in the migration process and how they talk about it. Concretely, my project was

also rupturing these ideas since I was focusing on migration which I myself have lived through various migratory struggles. As a result, I am both a witness to and a principal actor in the migration process while I aim to bring a greater understanding to immigration as a whole. My analysis also pushes me to be self-analytical and self-exploratory while I hope to help effect changes in the migration process to make it more socially just. I hope that my research analysis will shed light on the challenges and oppressions in the migration process. Auto-ethnography and self-analysis are a good place to start if the goal is to change unjust aspects of migration.

Given the above discussion, I used my own life experience and autobiography instead of a constant object of analysis as a point of departure for diverse theoretical discussions. The use of such methods is empowering especially as they challenge the dominant patriarchal research paradigms. At the same time, they provide an excellent basis in which to present new insights and perspectives from the position of a migrant in Canada, enabling me to challenge classical methods of research. Consequently, in using this research method I am able to counter dominant research tools that claim neutrality and impartiality. Another benefit from the use of autoethnograpy as a research method is that it allows my writing to act as a form of resistance against oppression (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). This method allowed me to speak and tell the story in a nuanced and sometimes messy manner to show the complexity of oppressive conditions of migration. Another component that legitimizes the use of autobiography is the centrality of the knowledge produced through the experience of migration. In this regard, auto-ethnography calls for the recognition of diverse forms of knowledge created by migrants through the experience of migration, as a way of challenging hegemonic forms of understanding the experience of migration. Similarly, as with other groups experiencing discrimination and marginalization various methods are used to describe and transmit their knowledge that include forms of "storytelling, family histories, biographies,

scenarios, parables, *cuentos*, *testimonios*, chronicles, and narratives" (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002: 26), I was envisioning a way of providing accounts of Romanian migration in Canada from both the point of view of the migrant and the researcher. In today's scholarship, it stands as implicit for the race theorists to call for the validation of these alternative ways of understanding the world as a form of resilience and resistance.

By grounding my work in autobiography this project problematizes the role current knowledge plays in explaining the migration process. Without the power of the first-person account and the role of experience in the process of migration, my ability to challenge dominant perspectives of the process would be limited. However, auto-ethnography, a marginalized research-methods approach, speaks of a marginalized immigrant position in a foreign country, doubles, parallels, and gives voice to a perspective that encircles my position from the margins. My perspective, generated from an oppressive situation, mixes with my desire for social justice while supporting the need to improve the conditions of migration. Consequently, auto-ethnography represents an alternative to the migrants' voices that are usually excluded from both representations in academia and in the society, they are migrating to. Furthermore, it provides a way to communicate the experiences and realities of the oppressed, and it configures itself as an initial step on the road to justice. Without the voices of the migrants, and of their own analysis of their situation, it is doubtful that we can build less oppressive conditions for the migration process.

Section E: Authoethnography and Autobiography: Research as Therapeutic Value

While I have talked already about the production of myself as a feminist academic, and a Canadian citizen through the research done in Romania, I should also include the idea of writing on this topic in order to better understand myself. What was positive about my research in Romania is that it was indeed conducted to improve migrants' conditions and women's rights, but it was also intended to help me make sense of my own life in the movement, my particular struggle for survival as an immigrant in a foreign country, my guilt of having my family left behind as well as my own career dreams and goals. Approaching and writing about migration from Romania to Canada and various experiences that shaped me as a highly skilled worker ended up having a therapeutic and healing value.

When writing about auto-ethnography, Ellis and Bochner argue that we should never be ashamed if our work has therapeutic or personal value. They even suggest that in such situations it is better to express the said vulnerability and subjectivity openly in the text rather than to hide it behind frameworks such as "social analysis" (Ellis and Bochner 2000: 747) and deny our own existence; our personal stories are already included in what we are researching. In this regard, positioning oneself in ethnographic research is crucial, and auto-ethnography acknowledges the researcher's influence in the text. This is a much better stance than assuming that such positionalities do not exist. It is also important to reveal that the research participants are not just alienated, impersonal subjects, but are often friends and family of the interviewer, or part of the same social network, and that we should not normally regard them as impersonal "subjects" only to be explored for data. Auto-ethnography also acknowledges that the researcher, by interacting with others, becomes a subject of research, blurring the distinctions of personal and social, self

and other (Ellis and Bochner 1996).

By revealing such positionalities, and by using auto-ethnography, the researcher becomes visible, and active in the text, changing the assumption that the person behind the research is a hidden, yet seemingly omniscient presence, in ethnographic texts. In this regard Leon Anderson argues that "a central feature of auto-ethnography is that the researcher's own feelings and experiences are incorporated into the story and considered as vital data for understanding the social world being observed" (Anderson 2006: 384). Leon Anderson also argues that by virtue of the auto-ethnographer's dual role as a member in the social world under study and as a researcher of that world, "auto-ethnography demands enhanced textual visibility of the researcher's self" (2006: 384). Interestingly, Leon Anderson notices how researchers do not just sit observantly on the sidelines during their research, and they are also involved in the construction of meaning and values in the social worlds they investigate, and are members of the community that they study (2006: 384). The author considers it significant for the analysts to affirm their presence in the text and reflexively evaluate the course in which their interest and participation replicates or transforms social understandings and relations (2006: 385).

One of the instances in which I felt that I was influencing the construction of meanings and social values of the persons around me was during one of the interviews when I asked about the maternal investment in their children's education in the form of social reproductive work (cooking, cleaning), and one of my respondents did not see it as necessarily work, but more like a "duty", and moreover a "woman's duty." "But does that not imply effort? Why is it so natural?" Suffice it is to say that at the end of our conversation, she started to consider her domestic tasks less as "women's roles", and more as effort and work.

By sharing an honest account of how I sought to do research on Romanian migration to Canada, I hoped to get other immigrants to make sense of themselves and of their own process of migration to Canada. At the same time, I was invested in doing research in Romania from a different standpoint than the mainstream superior Western Anglo-Saxon researchers whose works I have been reading about my country (Kligman 1998; Verdery 1996), in which different researchers enter Romanian culture, exploit the members of that culture for professional and financial gain, and then leave that country behind (Ellis 2007).

Writing about Romanian migration to Canada was truly therapeutic for me as it reinserted me once more into networks that provided me with comfort, familiarity and support. Other researchers know it already; while there is a story of physical migration and movement, there cannot be a similar matching story of separation and emotional removal from a life already lived, with its many personal experiences and memories. Perhaps this is because an immigrant never fully leaves his/her country of origin. He/she always keeps in contact with family, friends, and acquaintances, revisits them, and keeps in touch with them. In that regard, the field of auto-ethnography also allows the researcher to continue reliving his/her past in the home country so that the field continues to exist and is reconstructed discursively through writing after the end of the experience. And this is probably the most therapeutic part of autobiographies.

Chapter Three: Transition Economies and Neoliberal Development: Co-Constituting the Highly- Skilled Romanian Migrant

> *The question is not what is the problem, but according to whom is this a problem, and why [...] We are moved to interrogate the meaning and purpose of power: 'Whom does it benefit? Whom does it sacrifice?'* (Aganthangelou and Ling 2005)

While I have shown the neoliberal demand for acquiring highly skilled migrants as well as the cuts in social services that determine an externalization of social-reproduction, it is equally important to identify how transition economies are also push and pull migration factors. In the section below, I will describe the conditions of economic transition from Romania, the failed expectations after the arrival of the capitalist market that together with neoliberal demands and Canada's race for "the best and brightest" (McKenzie, Gibson 2010) worldwide end up co-constituting the highly skilled migrant. The purpose of the chapter is to show how the expansion of the capitalist market in Eastern Europe and the pursuit of relentless growth and accumulation of assets in the Global North co-create the phenomenon of highly-skilled migration.

In the past twenty years, Romania has experienced a large outward migration. The movement coincided with the collapse of the communist regime, and the spread of globalization, capitalism and "democracy" in Eastern Europe. Due to the authoritarian characteristics of the communist system and the absence of any right of free movement across the country's border, the nation faced insignificant levels of migration before 1989 (Culic 2012). It was only after the expansion of global capital and Romania's transition to a "liberal", "free" market economy, which started in 1990, that the numbers of outward migration grew exponentially reaching millions fast.

It is evaluated that 3 million Romanians left the country between 1989 and 2008 out of a population of 22 million and are currently working abroad (The Romanian Department for Labour Abroad (DMS) 2008).

The transition to a capitalist market resulted in a massive restructuring of the economy and a switch from state-centralized and state-ownership of factories to privatized, competitive, market-based enterprises (Burawoy 1999, Kornai 1992). The new directions meant an entire change of the components of goods generation, amassing and redistribution, with the state stopping to do its share of redistributing merchandise to the population. Moreover, the state stopped providing for free the educational projects, medical services and accommodation and lodging that it had given before. From a planned and state concentrated economy, with products collectively produced and redistributed, the switch involved an unconstrained formation of new capitalist markets, financial and banking frameworks, and stock trade. In this specific situation, it is not shocking that the extension of current globalization could not have occurred without an earlier fall of the Iron Curtain, and a full destruction of the past communist frameworks in Eastern Europe. The end of the communist frameworks in Eastern Europe converted into a "transition" to a capitalist period which also implied a lessening of state engagement, support and subsidizing in accommodating the welfare and prosperity of the population once so thoroughly guaranteed. Overall, the transition process had significant social impacts including destabilising the labour market and creating a new class of poor people (Gallagher 2009).

What is remarkably clear is that the so-called "transition" period from a communist state-centralized economy to a liberalised free-market economy did not improve either living or working conditions for the majority of Romanians (Gallagher 2009, Zaman 2007). In fact, these transformations led to rather high rates of economic and social instability in Romania. Major heavy

communist industries (automobile, mining, petroleum, chemical, and steel industries) were shut down with no development initiative to replace them, leading to high unemployment rates, up to 25-30 percent (Ruminska-Zimny 1997). The transition aimed for a radical restructuring and transformation of the former communist economy, mostly consisting in a mass deindustrialization or a privatization of all the state-owned companies, considered as inefficient and generating losses. Slashing jobs and firing people (in the rhetoric of the time making people "disposable" from Romanian "disponibilizat") were just auxiliary and secondary consequences of a large process of reinvention and rebirth of the economy as promised by the newly installed capitalist markets. The reinvention and rebirth of a newly installed economy is quite well documented, and scholars speak of an actual "tabula rasa" approach toward Eastern European realities and erasure of all the connections that existed before (Burawoy 2001). The assumption in many of these "transitions" was that there was nothing to be saved from the former communist state-planned regime and everything had to be recreated from scratch. Following up on such assumptions, everyone considered socialist economies so moribund and inefficient that the fact that self-regulating markets and privatizations could bring only economic improvement was unquestioned (Burawoy 2001). The desire was for a smooth change from communist totalitarianism to liberal democracy and from a planned economy to the free market. The fact that workers from former communist state-owned companies were made "disposable", therefore available for new and promising experiences, and were not simply "fired" speaks of the promising expectations about the new market-based regime. There was of course, a major assumption based on a linear understanding of time: the break with the communist past could only lead to an evolutionary ascent to a future capitalism (Burawoy 2001: 271).

Nevertheless, despite the hopeful "triumphalist" expectations of the announced free-market democracies (Verdery 1996), the whole transition episode was a rather painful period, with high social costs, including poverty, and conditions that led many people into worsening positions reducing their economic, social and political access to resources. Furthermore, the abrupt switch from the centrality of the state in the communist regime to a withdrawal of the state from any regulation of the market deprived people of necessary mechanisms of support and protection. For example, the restructuring of the mines that was carried out at the installation of a market-based liberal economy has left thousands of people unemployed. According to the Romanian agency of statistics Mediafax, nearly 60,000 miners—mostly from the Jiu Valley and Oltenia—were made redundant at once in September 1997 in one of the first and the biggest series of mass firings in transition Romania (Toma 2011). At the same time, the capitalist switch suggested an absolute incompatibility between the neoliberal recipes of reform and restructuring and the former communist organization which actually converted into a rushed dissolution and annihilation of the latter. The sudden capitalist conversion cancelled a lot of the communist states' allocation and redistribution capacity (in terms of housing, healthcare, education), its principles of labour organized collectively and its standards of collective support. As Michael Burawoy argues "the new was created by destroying the old", equation represented in this case by a disappearing state that unfortunately got replaced by a new domestic oligarchy colluding with global finance and corporate capital (Burawoy 2000: 17).

In this context, the scholarship on the topic speaks of "a poverty of magnitude" generated after the post-communist transition with severe setbacks in human development and rises in human poverty to an extent unprecedented in industrial countries during peace time (Ruminska-Zimny 1997; Izyumov 2009). Along the same lines, a 2001 United Nations Development Programme

document analyzing the transition in Romania in terms of human development speaks of "an explosive increase of poverty" with the minimum salary falling tragically from its 1989 level while the proportion of those earning the minimum salary or close to it had expanded sharply (Berthin 2001:11). In fact, increases in the percentage of the population living below the poverty line of $4 a day in transition countries like Romania or Bulgaria reached 40 per cent in the '90s (Ruminska-Zimny 1997, Izyumov 2009).

Following the demise of communist structures, the transition to a market economy in Romania has been marked by long recessive and negative effects. For example, the share of industry in Romania's GDP decreased from 46per cent in 1985 to less than 28per cent in 1999 (Berthin 2001). Throughout the decade, as a measure of inflation control and fiscal deficit reduction, the government was forced to decrease subsidies for key sectors of the economy (i.e., agriculture, mining, industry) and as a result there was a rapid decrease in real wages (40 per cent during the first 3 years of the transition). Moreover, in spite of the privatization measures taken, very little growth was registered and instead the debt and the budget deficit have continuously shown increasing rates. For example, the number of public-sector employees in the decade decreased by 44 per cent while the Romania electorate participation has been gradually declining. At the same time, after a moment of enthusiasm and excitement post the transition to the capitalist market, the instability and precariousness generated by the market reforms brought forward a depreciation of the political and economic ideals of capitalism and market-based development that the respective transition was supposed to lead to. Not accidentally, the new managerial and entrepreneurial approaches of the transition brought chaos, confusion, mistrust and doubt. In this context, it not surprising that, from 1992 (the latest census year) to 1999, the total population of Romania decreased substantially (Ruminska-Zimny 1997; Izyumov 2009). The most important

cause seems to be an increase in emigration together with a decline in the birthrate, and, last but not least, in an increased death rate (Ruminska-Zimny 1997; Bandelj and Mahutga 2010). At the same time, the average family size in Romania has shrunk: instead of the communist common households counting an average of 4 members, in transition Romania we found an increase of the number of smaller households formed of one or two people. Of major significance is the increase of non-remunerated unpaid family labourers, whose number grew eight times between 1992-1998, reaching 25 per cent percent of the population while the salaried employees decreased by 25 per cent in the '90s. Furthermore, the infrastructure conditions did not improve, and the urbanization of rural people did not increase substantially: from rates of 11.3 in 1990 to 12.3 per thousand inhabitants in 1998 (Ruminska-Zimny 1997, Bandelj and Mahutga 2010).

The transition has confirmed that economic, political and social transformation processes that Romania was undergoing in post-communism have downgraded living conditions, instead of improving much of the people's well-being. The promises of capitalism, development and democracy remained highly elusive and intangible and failed to be concretized and bring any substantial change in the quality of life of the majority of the population. On the contrary, their pursuit created a political and social chaos and a wreck that manifested itself as an increase of poverty, of unemployment, social stratification, as well as a reduction in people's ability to fulfill basic human needs (food, shelter, education, health). For example, the transition in Romania was accompanied by a dramatic rise of economic insecurity and deterioration of living standards. In 1989, an estimated 7 per cent of the population was poor. By 1994, the poverty rate ranged, according to the methodology employed, between 22 per cent- 39 per cent. A second wave of economic insecurity began in 1997 and by 1999 the poverty rate had reached 42 per cent (an increase of more than 60 per cent over the 1995 rate), while extreme poverty doubled over the

same period. Furthermore, during the first years of transition, income inequality rose by approximately 50 per cent above its 1989 level. The income differential between the richest 10 per cent of households and the poorest 10 per cent continued to rise; the incomes of the top 5 per cent on the average exceed those of the poorest by a factor of more than 15. In addition, the minimum wage pays, an essential certification of any employee welfare, has fallen significantly from its 1989 level, and the extent of those earning the minimum compensation or near it has expanded significantly (Ruminska-Zimny 1997, Bandelj and Mahutga 2010).

Similarly, when looking at the living standards in Romania the researchers Philip Martin and Thomas Straubhaar found that these standards fell dramatically during the 1990s, whereas in 2000 they were only a bit more than half of what they were at the end of the communist rule (Martin and Straubhaar 2000). Additionally, in the 1990s and 2000s 40 per cent of Romanians lived on less than $4 per day at a time when the economic development was much slower in Romania than in the rest of all the EU countries (for example the GDP in 2000 was at $34 billion, and per capita GDP was $1,600, one tenth of the EU average). In terms of demographics, there were about 30,000 more deaths (118 per 10,000) than births (105 per 10,000) each year in Romania and the country's population fell by about 750,000 between 1990 and 2000.The number of children younger than 15 in 2000 was only 50,000 higher than the number of people 60 years old and older (Martin and Straubhaar 2000).

It was the first time that the majority of Romanians have experienced a sense of insecurity and uncertainty about employment prospects. In terms of the human development index (HDI) used by United Nations Development Programme, transition Romania did not change much its index throughout the '90s and early 2000s (from 0.0770 to 0.0772), a number pointing to the lack of a substantial improvement to the quality of life and general well-being of people. In this sense,

the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) has been rather successful in serving as an alternative measure of development, supplementing economic indicators. It has three distinct components: indicators of longevity, education and income. As the UNDP Index demonstrates, the annulment of the state welfare rules and the launching of privatized endeavours and market-based private enterprises did not convert into Romanians having more beneficial, secure and better educated conditions in postcommunism (Berthin 2001). A 2006 broad survey about general fulfillment and life satisfaction in transition Romania concluded that Romanians' fulfillment is much lower than that of all the Western countries with around 74 percentage of the general population in the sample being not in any manner fulfilled or not exactly happy with their life (Andren and Martinsson 2006).

Such major shifts have pushed more and more Romanians to outward migration. With a shattered economy and such high unemployment rates, many Romanians left the country. Clearly, the first destination for migration were cities closest to Western Europe. Restrictions though on the movement of Romanian migrants and the imposition of entry visas by Western European countries forced migrant Romanians to find illegal contract work in construction (men), services and domestic work (women). Despite the precarious working conditions, the Romanian migrants found themselves in, economic insecurity and the lack of opportunity in their home country assured that outward Romanian migration continued to grow. At the same time, Western Europe of the 1990s was experiencing economic growth and development which drove labour migration from Eastern Europe. The extent to which Romania was generating substantial outward migration was shown in the fact that by 2003 approximately 900,000 Romanian households had at least one member working abroad (Chivu 2004).

In 2010, Romania was still a major stakeholder in the migration process contributing about 5 per cent of the migration flows to the OECD countries, together with countries such as India, and Poland (OECD 2012). While China remains the main country of origin of migration flows to the OECD, accounting for nearly one in ten migrants, Romania saw the largest increase in migration to the OECD compared with the situation in 2000. Romania is also the country with the largest migration in per-capita terms. In 2010, more than 1.3 per cent of its population migrated to OECD countries. The only other country for which such large outflows was recorded was Bulgaria, which also lost about 1per cent of its population. Both countries' large flows are mainly due to migration to other EU countries, following Bulgaria's and Romania's accession to the EU in 2007 (OECD 2012).

In 2003 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated approximately 1.7 millions of Romanians working abroad (IOM 2003) while another study conducted in 2008 provided new local estimates that speak of 3 million Romanian migrants, which represent 15 per cent of the entire population. A 2012 OECD report estimates that the number of Romanians working abroad in 2010 to be around 3 million persons. However, data on emigration of Romanian citizens or persons born in Romania is limited. Officially registered emigration captures only a small fraction of actual outflows. The number of newly registered permanent emigrants in 2010 was about 7,900, down 23 per cent from 2009. A better approximation of actual emigration is provided by the statistics of the main destination countries. For example, the Romanian population residing in Italy increased by around 80 000 (to a total of 969 000) in 2010, and the corresponding increase in Spain was 33 000 (to a total of almost 864 300) (OECD 2012).

The lifting of the European Schengen visa (2001-2006) registered another huge wave of Romanian outward migration at a rate of 28-30 immigrants per 1,000 inhabitants, the main

countries of destination being Italy (40 per cent of all labour migrants), Spain (18 per cent), Germany (5 per cent), Hungary (5 per cent), and Israel (6 per cent). The large increases in migrants from Romania, Poland, Germany and Lithuania are all associated with expansion of free mobility in European OECD countries. Romanians are the main nationality of new migrants in Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Linguistic proximity seems to explain the orientation of Romanian emigration to the latter three countries. In addition, Romanians were also the second most important group for Austria, Denmark and Germany (OECD 2012).

At the same time, Eurostats show that between 2002 and 2006 the number of Romanian emigrants almost doubled. The percentage of Romanians working in the EU reached almost 5 per cent of the total Romanian population of 21.5 million (source: National Statistics Institute 2008). Further analysis of the 2006 data finds that Romanians in the 26-40 age bracket constituted 57.74 per cent of the total number of emigrants. This points to how the most productive and relatively young part of the population was leaving the country. An OECD Report from 2012 stated that Romanian citizens accounted for almost a quarter of all new enrolments of foreign residents in Italy in 2010. Their number rose 9per cent compared with 2009 to reach 969 000 persons, currently comprising the main group of foreign residents in Italy (OECD 2012).

The majority of the Romanian migrants in Western Europe, regardless of their education and work experience, ended up employed in low-paid unstable and unskilled jobs. The International Organization for Migration gives evidence from a survey carried out by CURS in 2005 which highlights the occupational status of Romania migrants and points to the prevalence of their employment in agriculture 36 per cent, construction 28.1 per cent and private households 14.6 per cent. Similarly, various European statistical reports found the Romanian immigrants working as construction workers, unqualified workers in agriculture, menders for electrical equipment, au

pair, etc. with most of the positions being short term and unskilled. Data collected throughout the years by the Romanian sociologist Dumitru Sandu provides us with the following portrait of Romanian emigrants to Western Europe: it is the young people, rather than the mature or the older people, who have gone to work, and for the group of men aged 18 to 59, the most frequent departures have been from the rural area (Sandu 2006 cited by Suciu 2010). Another study of the migration of Romanians to Italy notes that they work in lower skilled positions with a significant proportion of the Romanian migrant women having jobs in the categories of "sales and services elementary job", "personal care and related workers" and "house-keeping and restaurant services" while Romanian men mostly work as "extraction and building trades workers", "drivers and mobile plant operators" and "metal, machinery and related trades workers" (Mara 2012).

Neoliberal growth, development and relaxation of visa restrictions by Western European countries and their stronger labour market provided opportunities for Romanian migrants to find jobs; however, it has meant low-paid, unskilled or unstable, insecure work opportunities that disregard Romanian migrants' education and skill levels. In contrast, countries such as Canada and Australia promised better and more dignified and stable opportunities for migration, thus attracting skilled, university-educated Romanians. For them, Western Europe's demand for unskilled, low-paid workers was not as appealing as the Canadian immigration system such as the Federal Skilled Worker (FSWP) which places emphasis on education credentials, work experience, and language proficiency. Canada was popular with the young highly educated urban Romanians, who searched for better labour market possibilities to realize their potential and set them above their peers struggling with unskilled and low-paid unstable insecure jobs in Western Europe.

Canada's immigration selection systems were seen as attractive for Romania's young educated population. Citizenship and Immigration Canada statistics showed a continuous increase

of the number of Romanians moving to Canada, and the migration rates reached 3,000-4,000 annually in the 2000s. As mentioned before, in contrast to the waves of Romanians who were migrating to Western Europe to perform unskilled or paying jobs with low entry qualifications, the categories of the Romanian population that applied for migrating to Canada were highly skilled professionals. Little did the highly-skilled applicants knew to what degree Canada's FSWP program would deliver on its promises and meet their expectations.

Section A: The Canadian Immigration System: The Point-System

While Western Europe opened itself to low-paid and unskilled immigrant work, countries like Canada and Australia had immigration programs that promised more dignified and more skilled opportunities for Romanians working abroad. A country of immigration like Australia and the United States, Canada has been built and founded by mass immigration (Gabriel and Abu-Laban 2002). However, utilizing a skill-based points system dedicated to targeting migrants and evaluating their human and labour capital, the Canadian state has been historically selective when regulating migration practices and repeatedly revisited the selection criteria.

After World War II, mass migration was believed to be the most efficient way of enabling economic growth and development. Initially, Canadian immigration officers were given a lot of discretion in deciding to whom to give entry to Canada as migrants. The basic regulations only required migrants to be individuals who by their education, training, skills or other special qualifications were likely to become successfully established in Canada. Nevertheless, Europeans were favoured and the system started to receive a lot of criticism for the discretionary and subjective power granted to immigration officers. In order to diminish the widespread criticism, starting in 1967 the selection process became more formalized and regulated, with the creation of a "point system" (Gabriel and Abu-Laban 2002). The "point system" assigned the prospective immigrant a score in the following categories: age, education, training, occupational skill in demand, knowledge of English or French; personal assessment made by an immigration official in an interview; relatives in Canada; arranged employment; and employment opportunities in the area of destination.

The presence of a number of different pre-established attributes, such as age, occupational demand, education, work experience, language ability, and adaptability together with removing national origin as an explicit criterion for selection were considered as a fairer and more democratic mechanism for selecting migrants than the previous more arbitrary and subjective system. If awarded a high enough score, individuals would be assigned a pass mark and granted entry (Walsh 2008). It is important to mention that at first there was no formal quota in the points' selection strategy; a quota was only later incorporated and is as of now still on the books. If an immigrant passed the points' criteria, he or she would be accepted to Canada, regardless of the number of migrants that Canada welcomed that year. Overall, the 1967 points' framework was thought to be more neutral, free of prejudice and non-biased determination criteria that diminished border officers' subjective choices. Additionally, it was thought to be an enhanced version of all past processes of selecting migrants and was considered to function outside the inherent prejudices and biases of the border assessors (Liston and Carens 2008).

However, two methods for adjusting an applicant's outcome remained from the previous system. First, under the "Personal Qualities" section of the required application form for immigration, up to fifteen points out of one hundred could be assigned by the interviewing officer based on "adaptability, motivation, initiative, resourcefulness, and other similar [subjective] qualities" (Kelley and Trebilcock 1998: 392). Second, an immigration official had the discretion, with the approval of a superior officer, to deny admission to applicants who had a 'pass' mark, and to admit those who otherwise failed. *The Globe and Mail* acknowledged that the new system could be criticized for dehumanizing applicants because of its mechanistic approach to evaluation (Kelley and Trebilcock 1998: 393).

The point system was intended to ensure admission of immigrants whose skills were needed in Canada. Over the years it particularly gave preference to immigrants who could fill occupational demands in the labour market. Nevertheless, in 1978 a "Canadians First" Policy was implemented to ensure that Canadian citizens were given first priority in all jobs. Similarly, in 1982, with the country mired in the depths of a recession, the "Canadians First" policy was amended to an even more extreme position: prior to immigration, all migrants had to have firm offers of jobs for which no Canadian or permanent resident was available (Kelley and Trebilcock 1998: 393).

The current system of immigration, organized in three different admission categories, was set up in 1976. It clearly delimits an independent or economic class, mostly comprised in the Federal Skilled Worker category and a small Business Class category, from the Family class (including family members' sponsorship) and refugees. The most important category is envisioned as that of the skilled workers seen as the category that will contribute most to the economic growth of the country while the rest of the categories are rather framed as burden and costs (Culic 2012). However, as mentioned before, such framings have various consequences for women's rights and the work largely associated with their gender.

One of the marked features of the period was the significant change in the country of origin. Prior to 1961, 90 per cent of all immigrants to Canada came from Europe and only 3 per cent originated from Asia and the Middle East. By the 1990s these figures had dramatically changed; European immigrants accounted for less than 25 per cent of the total while those from Asia and the Middle East represented over 50 per cent of all arrivals. Ontario and British Columbia attracted proportionately more immigrants than other provinces, with close to 70 per cent of the total going there compared to the remaining others settling in the rest of the country. By 1991 the proportion

of immigrants to total populations in the cities of Toronto and Vancouver was 38 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively. Some 46 per cent of Toronto's population in 2006 was foreign born, higher than in Miami (40 per cent), Sydney (31 per cent), Los Angeles (31 per cent) and New York (24 per cent). Near the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, one in five residents of Canada was foreign born (Kelley and Trebilock 1998: 419).

With the increasing rise in life expectancy coupling with falling birth rate (falling below the replacement rate), Canada targeted generally the young category of working immigrants for population growth and social reproduction (Gabriel and Abu-Laban 2002). At the same time, in congruence with the dismantling of the social-welfare system and a newly adopted neoliberal agenda that outsourced the manufacturing and heavy industry, the Canadian economy internally relied more and more on knowledge-based and service economies. The dismantling of the social-welfare system, of the neoliberal shift and of the care support usually associated with women's social reproductive work translated into a need to externalize that type of work and find alternatives to replace it. One type of externalization is through the acquisition of knowledge-based workers from countries that have already formed and trained them as such, as is the case of Romania. This fact also emphasized the need of the Canadian market to incorporate migrants of a certain educational and occupational background. Prior to 1996, the majority of immigrants (approximately 60-75 percent) entered Canada as either family members (part of the family reunification program) or as refugees (Walsh 2008). After that, state policies limited the access of these categories of immigrants, namely extended family and refugees, and favoured independent skilled immigrants such as well-educated physicians and engineers.

Skilled migration is currently considered an essential part of Canada's strategy of maintaining competitive position in a knowledge-based global economy (Citizenship and

Immigration Canada 2009). With most of its manufacturing, industrial and agricultural production moved abroad, and outsourced, Canadian immigration policies now also look abroad in order to target mostly the knowledge-based and highly specialized international professionals: computer programmers, engineers, accountants, managers, etc. (Gabriel and Abu-Laban 2002, Shields, Turegun, Lowe 2013). Rather than a previous focus on market labour demand, increasingly in the '90s and 2000s the Canadian immigration system emphasizes "knowledge-based" workers with flexibility and transferable skills, and it commits to a stable annual inflow of about one percent annually of the current population (Culic 2012).

In attracting the highly skilled professionals from developing countries, the Canadian migration policies fail to consider the gender implication of absorbing knowledge-based workers to the detriment of the social reproductive work that had been previously invested into the formation of these skills and the current care functions that migrants still need in order to function as such. Even though skilled immigrants can bring their spouses and children, there is less capacity to bring their extended families such as their parents and grandparents. While the immigration programs to Canada allow for a Family Class and family-reunification option, the numbers accepted are significantly lower than the number of economic migrants (CIC 2014). For example, while the percentage of economic migrants was at 63.4 in 2014, the family-class acceptance reached only 26.5. Furthermore, the programs do not consider the impact that the departure of knowledge workers might have on the sending countries and the home communities that invested substantially in their formation and specialization only to be left behind. In this sense, comprehensive migration policies probably should not be developed unilaterally, and the receiving countries should always evaluate and consider the impacts that their policies have on sending countries. The loss of skilled workers places the sending countries at a disadvantage (Skeldon

2009). The movement of so many professionals from developing countries cannot be but prejudicial to their development (Basch, Schiller and Blanc 1994; Bundred P. E. and Levitt C. 2000; Laurie, K. 2008; Keddie, A. 2010; Kaneff and Pine 2011; Piperno, F. 2007).

The targeted groups encompass precisely the most skilled and proficient individuals (engineers, physicians, and computer programmers) that are highly needed for growth and development in their own country. Furthermore, the education of these professionals is done at the expense of the home countries' families and state budget. It is ironic that these developing countries should, at their own expense and on their own budget, educate and prepare their most valuable young professionals just so they can leave for work abroad, in an unfortunate mismatch between educational and economic opportunities. However, this is not a new phenomenon and not specific to Romania alone. For example, "the basic cost of training of a British doctor in the mid-1960s was around £12,000 (about US$ 33,600 at 1965 exchange rates) that was 'lost' to Britain and 'gained' by the United States if that person decided to migrate across the Atlantic upon completion of his or her studies" (Skeldon citing Last 1969: 31). Furthermore, there is an unfortunate gender split between the extraction of those subjects as "brains" (classically associated with male characteristics) envisioned as highly productive, and the subjects associated with care for bodily needs (traditionally understood as female) that is deprioritized, considered unskilled and is left unaccounted for. In this sense, Romanian migration to Canada clearly shows how such disentanglements are impossible, and that migration stories were not ones of migrating brains, but also ones of the initial social reproduction of those "brains," largely performed by mothers' paid and unpaid work. This research is asking who benefits most from such social reproduction journeys and for whom it will be experienced as a loss.

Section B: Romanian Migration to Canada: Before and After 1989

Before 1989, most of Romania's immigrants who were forced to leave the country did so due to political repression as well as other punitive actions taken by the communist state. The conditions set for entering Western Europe and the US or Canada required Romanians to be political refugees and not economic migrants in order to be allowed into those countries. After the demise of the Iron Curtain, Romanian migration ceased to be considered in political terms and started to be regarded in economic terms. Thus, Romanians were no longer considered refugees but economic migrants. In this regard, one of the first laws that was enacted by the national government after the 1989 revolution in Romania was Article 25. According to it, the rewritten Romanian Constitution guaranteed the right to free movement of all Romanian nationals residing internally or abroad. The law stipulated that every citizen was warranted the right to settle or reside anywhere on the territory of Romania, as well as the right to emigrate, and to return. While the free movement act was celebrated as a triumph of liberalism and democracy, and consequently a defeat of communism in Romania, it quickly became the means to permanently immigrate outside the country. After years of authoritarian rule, coupled with a painful transition to an open capitalist market, Romanians were free to leave behind their home country, exactly at a point in time when the country was celebrated as newly liberalized, capitalistic and democratic. Ironically, the transition to the capitalist market did not generate a sufficient condition of economic well-being so that the Romanians had also the freedom to stay in their home countries. So, "free" to stay at home, but not having the employment opportunities and decent living conditions expected after the transition to the capitalist market, or "free" to move around and not have a home, or "free" to

move and not have the support of their extended families and communities, many young educated Romanians looked into the immigration possibilities offered by Canada.

Although undergoing changes, from 1967 to 2015 the Canadian immigration system had three main categories of permanent immigrants: family class (where Canadian citizens and permanent residents older than 18 could sponsor certain relatives who wished to immigrate to Canada); refugees (those people who, according to the United Nation's definition, had a well-founded fear of persecution); and independent migrants that included skilled workers and business migrants but there was more focus put on independent skilled workers (Abu-Laban, Gabriel 2002). While other categories of immigration, such as provincial nominees, live-in caregivers, and temporary foreign workers[7] accounted for the process, historically for the main bulk of the schemes of immigration to Canada consisted of the three categories already mentioned. For example, in 2008 out of a number of 247,243 immigrants, the Canadian Immigration System consisted of the following four Admissible Categories: economic (60.3 per cent), family (26.5 per cent), refugee (8.8 per cent) and other (2.6 per cent) (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008). Canada's Skilled Worker Class Immigration, often referred to as the Independent Immigration Class and Federal Skilled Worker category, consisted of those foreign nationals whose education and work experience would help them settle in Canada. The requirements for one to qualify as a skilled worker immigrant to Canada were the following: Education (PhD/Master's, Bachelor's, or Trade/Non-University certificate/diploma);Work Experience (1 - 4 years of work experience); Language Skills (Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing in English and/or French); Age (21 to 49 got the maximum points); Adaptability (education and/or employment in Canada, having a relative in Canada, spouse/common-law partner's education level); Arranged Employment in

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[7] Please see glossary for the definition of these terms.

Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Border Connections Assessment 2014). Some of the eligible occupations for the federal skilled worker program included civil, mechanical, chemical, mining, petroleum, etc. engineers, computer programmers, financial analysts, physicians, medical laboratory technologists, physiotherapists (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2014).

Skilled workers represented two thirds of the total number of permanent migrants. The "family" class represented about 26.5 per cent, and refugees and assisted relatives about 8.8 per cent, while the number of entrepreneurs, self-employed and investors are equally few. While recently there have been new additions to the usual streams of the immigration programs such as Provincial Nominees, Canadian Experience Class, Start-Up Visa or Self-Employed Persons Program (Canadian Citizenship and Immigration 2014), the bulk of the migrants under Canada's immigration programs consist of Federal Skilled Workers (FSWP), Family Sponsorship, and the Asylum Seekers Programs. Historically they had a long tradition of attracting immigrants to Canada (they were launched in the '60s) while being stable and consistent in their design and format throughout years. Furthermore, they particularly mapped and reflected the "work" vs. "care" understandings of the type of immigrant work needed. Of course, the gendered understandings of the type of immigrant work needed was also connected with different parallel similar understandings of their prestige and priority, number of admissions as well as access to rights and degrees of independence and autonomy (Yasmeen Abu-Laban 1998, Sunera Thobani 2007).

The point system in Canada has been quite problematic and critiqued by feminists such as Yasmeen Abu-Laban (1998) and Sunera Thobani (2007). This system favours the work typically performed by men and pushes immigrant women and their work to the margins. The point system,

Abu-Laban observes pertinently, reinforces the artificially constructed sexist difference between women's private household work and men's more valuable public work.

Official figures indicate that the percentage of university graduates leaving Romania permanently rose from 6 per cent in 1990 to 26 per cent in 2003, which is double the percentage of university graduates in the total adult population (almost 10 per cent of university graduates according to a study estimation). The trend increased slightly as 26.4 per cent of those emigrating in 2005 were university graduates (National Institute of Statistics Romania 2008). The statistics found emigration rates getting even higher for certain specializations: for example, Martin and Straubhaar found that about half of the 5,000 graduates of Romanian universities in computer science emigrate each year, and a March 2001 study found that up to 66 per cent of the Romanian students would emigrate if they could. (Martin and Straubhaar 2000: 81). When looking at the fate of Romanian job-seekers in Canada, Tudoroiu found that 2,386 persons destined for the labour force 1,044 (44 per cent) have qualifications in "natural sciences, engineering, and mathematics" (Tudoroiu 2007). The same researcher considers that Romania was the country of origin of the most important number of immigrant engineers to Canada in 1992 and 1993 and the third most important in 1994 and 1995 (Tudoroiu 2007). If in the 1990s, the Federal Skilled Worker class represented 17 per cent of all Romanian immigrants, with the rest distributed across family and refugee classes, its levels rose dramatically in the next decade to reach a percentage of 84 in 2004 (Culic 2012).

The Romanian annual immigration to Canada is small in relative terms and represents about 3 per cent of the total immigration to Canada. Nevertheless, between 1995 and 2004 Romanians were the group with the highest numbers of immigrants from Europe (Tudoroiu 2007).

Romanian migratory dispositions coupled with the labour needs of external markets remained a constant feature of the country during the '90s and 2000s. According to a 2006 survey in Romania, 9 per cent of the adult population still intended to work abroad, and 23 percent of the 18-24 age group (Horvath 2006).

Section C: Romanian Immigration to Canada: History and Socio-Demographic Elements

The first account of Romanian immigration to Canada dates from 1898 when Ichim Jurca from the village of Boian in Bukovina, together with his wife and daughter, settled in Alberta. Soon tens of other families joined them and a couple of years later they founded their own village named Boian, exactly like the one they left behind in Romania (Patterson 1999). According to Canada's Dominion Lands Act, the first Romanian peasants were given 160 acres of land to cultivate crops and build a residence. After WWI, we find accounts of almost 30,000 Romanians (mostly from Transylvania and Bukovina) having emigrated to the mid-West of Canada (Patterson 1999). Analyzing the waves of Romanians reaching Canada, sociologist Irina Culic actually identifies three distinct waves: the first wave of peasants in the late nineteenth century that settled in the prairies; the second one of Romanian refugees fleeing the communist regime; and the third wave of Romanian migrants, that belonged to the category of skilled workers, arrived in Canada after the fall of the communist regime (Culic 2012). The number of Romanian immigrants to Canada after the installation of the communist regime in Romania is estimated to be more than 38,000 (Culic 2012). During the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, both Canada and United States had in place special refugee programs in order to help Eastern European migrants fleeing communist regimes. For example, in the late '70s, Canada created the East European Self-Exiled Person program meant to attract Eastern Europeans fleeing communist regimes. Their arrival was also assisted by an interest-free Assisted Passage Loan Scheme that aimed to help immigrants from Europe with covering expenses that they could not afford, including their own transportation to Canada (Culic 2012).

However, the inflow of Romanian immigrants to Canada grew exponentially and became significant only after 1989, resulting from the relative opening of the borders that had occurred

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since the fall of the communist regime and the failure of the transition to the capitalist market to improve economic conditions for the majority of the population. Thousands of Romanians were now leaving the country, in an outward movement that was growing higher and higher, and which peaked in 2002 with a number of 5,688 persons registered that year in Canada. During the first years of the 2000s, Romania became the top European country to send immigrants to Canada (Culic 2012). Nevertheless, the rates started to decrease by 2005 to 4,964. Coupled with Romania's accession to the European Union, and relaxation of restrictive mobility in the European Union space, the figures of the following years up to the most recent one show a slow and steady decrease of Romanian immigration to Canada, from approximately 5,000 immigrants per year in early 2000 to fewer than 2,000 persons in 2011 (Culic 2012). (See Table 1 in Appendix 2. Title: Number of Landed Immigrants per Country of Origin: Romania[8])

According to the 2006 Canadian Census, there is a population of 153,905 over 15 years that identify themselves as being Romanians or as having a Romanian ethnic background. Out of a Canadian total population of 31,612,897 in 2006, that makes the Romanian presence in Canada number around 0.48 per cent out of the current total population at that time (Statistics Canada 2006). In addition, 54 per cent of Romanian migrants to Canada are legally married while only 31 per cent are single. Thus, the majority of them come in as rather conventional families. As landed immigrants, they shared an employment rate similar to that of other immigrant ethnic groups in Canada, a rate which averaged in 2006 57.4 percentage as compared to the rate of Canadian born (64.5 per cent) (see Table 3a. Title: Labour Force Survey Estimate (LFS), Employment Rate by Immigrant Status[9]).

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[8] Table 1 in the Appendix shows the number of landed immigrants in Canada per various years who have Romania as a country of origin, data collected by Census Canada 2006

[9] Table 3a. in the Appendix shows Labour Force Survey Estimate (LFS), Employment Rate by Immigrant Status, data collected by Statistics Canada 2017.

When compared with the employment rate of native born Canadians, the number of Romanian landed immigrants in Canada is predictably lower, of course. Once integrated into Canadian society, becoming citizens and living for several years here, the 2006 Canada Census shows the ethnic Romanians in Canada sharing an employment rate of 68.7 per cent with males that identify as ethnic Romanians having a higher employment rate (73.2 per cent) than females with the same ethnic background (64.5 per cent) (see Table 4 in the Appendix: Census Canada 2006 Survey, Employment rate by sex, and ethnic origin[10]). The statistical numbers are overall higher than the average employment rate of Canadians, and the higher numbers remain valid for both male and female rates (see Table 3b in the Appendix: Labour Force Survey Estimate (LFS), Employment rate by sex[11]).

The downside of the higher employment rate of ethnic Romanians is that we find them de-skilled (i.e., we find that most Romanians are working in the field of sales and service which is overall in contrast with their higher education rates). A main feature of the Romanian migrants in Canada is their high level of education. However, those who are employed in highly qualified jobs are very few which suggests that most of the Romanian migrants work in lower and de-skilled jobs, a situation shared with other migrants as well (Tudoroiu: 2007). Similarly, as it relates to their working field and specialization, we find the majority of immigrant Romanians working in manufacturing and retail trades, and less in the skilled jobs they were selected for in the immigration process. Furthermore, the same statistics data shows that Romanian migrants have a 13 per cent chance to be in the low income category in 2005 for working family members, and have a 31 per

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10 Table 4 in the Appendix shows Employment Rate by Sex and Ethnic Origin, data collected by Census Canada 2006.
11 Table 3b in the Appendix shows Labour Force Survey Estimate (LFS), Employment Rate by Sex, data collected by Statistics Canada 2017.

cent chance to be in the low income bracket in 2005 for persons who are not working family members, which means that one in every three Romanian immigrants in Canada living alone has a chance of being poor. The at-risk poverty rates of ethnic Romanians are higher than the average of the Canadian born residents with rates of 7.1 per cent for persons in working families, and 29.4 per cent for unattached individuals (Murphy, Zhang and Dion 2012). The fact that Canada through its "point system" immigration program selects highly skilled Romanians, for example, without valuing the said skills through high earnings, complicates the analysis further. However, suffice it to say that high skills and educated potential still render high profits. Since their skills are not valued enough through high wages, the profits resulting from their highly skilled work is even more retained by employers.

Ethnic Romanians in Canada specialize in the fields of architecture, engineering, and related technologies, with men outnumbering women in this specialization by 76 per cent (Census 2006). Taking into consideration such traditionally gendered specializations, it is evident that the bulk of the above-mentioned specializations belong to men who outnumber the highly skilled Romanian women (Census 2006). It is also men who outnumber women in the fields of mathematics, computer and information sciences although the gap is smaller, 58 per cent to 42 per cent. Women outnumber men in the domains of business, management, and public administration (65 per cent). We can also find them outnumbering men in the fields of social and behavioral sciences, law (62 per cent), and physical and life sciences and technologies (56 per cent). All health, parks, recreation and fitness diplomas are more likely to be held by Romanian immigrant women than by men, with a ratio of 77 per cent to 23 per cent. Predictably, the field of humanities is also saturated with women, with 65 per cent of Romanian immigrants graduating with a diploma in this field being female. When examined for gender parity, statistics show that both average

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employment income and median employment income is higher for Romanian men, a fact which may speak to Romania's patriarchy that one cannot escape even in Canada. While average employment income is $39,013, ethnic Romanian men make on average 12 per cent more than women do (Census 2006).

Regarding the educational characteristics of newcomers, the statistics show that immigrants to Canada are actually more educated than the Canadian born population. While persons born in Canada reach education levels of 28 per cent for university bachelor's degrees, the rate of immigrant holders of university degrees is, according to Statistics Canada and the 2006 Census, 58 per cent of male immigrants and 49 per cent of recent female immigrants (Galarneau, and Morissette 2006).

The employment rate of Romanian landed immigrants in Canada is significantly lower than that of the Canadian born and, once integrated, living in the country for several years and acquiring the Canadian citizenship, ethnic Romanians are de-skilled in their specializations and education which speaks both about the challenges and barriers that they face in Canada and also to a rather dysfunctional system that awards higher points for education and experience before and during the migration process, but does not value them as such after the migration process is finalized. In this sense, although the migration of highly skilled professionals still is the aim of Canada's migration programs, what statistics show is that they do not reach the employment opportunities and high-level earnings to which they aspired and which would match their educational background. This creates frustration and anguish in them as well as the families they left behind. [12] As the statistics point out, Romanians experience a relatively high degree of de-skilling and underemployment.

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[12] Please note that, while my dissertation focuses on the formation of highly skilled Romanian migrants through women's work, it is not within the scope of the present study to give a thorough investigation on the de-skilling and devaluing of all categories of migrants after arrival in their destination country.

De-skilling and under-employment are defined as processes through which an immigrant's education, employment skills, and career specializations, work experience and foreign language abilities, which are obtained in their country of origin, are not recognized once the persons reach Canada, so that immigrants are forced to enter low-paid and low-skilled jobs (Sethi 2014; Tariqul Islam 2014; Guo 2012). As noted above, the process is at odds with Canada's immigration system that actually values and encourages education and employment skills and awards them higher points *prior to* the immigration process, but that ceases to be valued as such *after* immigrants reach Canada. Their situation does align with the experiences of other groups of immigrants, and various scholarship resources have pointed out the historical structures of discrimination that determine the failure of immigrants' career specializations and educational attainments to translate into comparable occupational status and financial compensation (Teelucksingh and Galabuzi 2005). In 1999 the scholar Shahrzad Mojab wrote a case study about immigrant "knowledge workers"[13] in Canada with extensive professional experience and careers in their origin countries who were not facing an easy transition to the labour market they were recruited for through immigration policies: the knowledge market[14]. She argues that, contrarily to the expectations set up in the immigration policies, highly trained immigrant women remained either unemployed or pressured into low skilled jobs that required "the use of their hands, not of their minds" (Mojab 1999: 123). Gillian Creese and Brandy Wiebe (2012) have pointed out as well the gap between the recruitment of highly skilled migrants and their weak economic rendering of their sought-after jobs. Interviews with well-educated men and women from countries in Sub-Saharan Africa find them all

13 The concept of "knowledge workers" refers to the highly skilled and multi-skilled labour force that Canada attracts worldwide through its immigration policies (Mojab 1999).
14 The concept of "knowledge market" describes the transition from a production-based economy to an information and knowledge-based system which reflects also in the transformation of necessary labour: from physical and manual work to intellectual production of information and knowledge (Mojab 1999).

predominantly in "survival employment" jobs. Their findings point out to weak economic integration of highly skilled migrants, multiple barriers that result in de-skilling and the need for government policies and settlement services that enable a more equitable economic integration of migrants (Creese, Wiebe 2012). The migration experience places people in insecure, low-wage, precarious jobs usually reserved for the poorest and ill-educated citizens. It also deprives them of their social status as the survival employment jobs that they are getting require fewer skills, fewer credentials, and are rewarded less prestige, authority, and income (Creese, Wiebe 2012).

Subject to economic discrimination, Romanian immigrants to Canada are faced with the inability to have their human capital adequately recognized and compensated. This translates into a source of disappointment and dissatisfaction both for them and their families back home who invested so much in their success abroad. Despite what determined their immigration process, namely the desire to improve their lives and be dignified and productive contributors to an advanced economy, Romanian immigrants find themselves many times in precarious employment, low wave sectors, low skills job. They feel undermined in their trainings and education and mainly a source for low skilled customer service, retail, and manual positions. Similar to the cases of other groups of immigrants, there is real difficulty in converting the human capital investment supported by resources of their families and origin countries into adequate occupationally rewarding social standing and financial compensation. The case of highly skilled Romanian immigrants in Canada is one that exemplifies the systemic blockages, barriers and weak economic using of their actual skills when reaching Canada. Having families and state resources in origin developing countries invested in the building and creation of skills and credentials that are not valued and rendered useful once reaching the country of arrival seems like a drain of resources and a loss of potential and human capital. Recruiting immigrants for qualifications that more likely will not be used in

Canada also creates a mismatch with their own expectations and that of their families and communities back home, as well as their own confidence and self-worth. The next chapter will further detail some of the families' investments and expectation regarding their children's migration, their sacrifices to see them qualified and adequately trained as "highly skilled migrants", and their feelings towards the outcome of the process.

Section D: Social-Reproduction and the Making of a Highly Skilled Migrant for Canada

Migration would not be happening to me!... only to others!

As a migrant, I arrived in Canada through the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), leaving behind my family. I was constantly aware of the range of anxieties and fears that I was experiencing while interviewing Romanian mothers in Romania whose children have become migrants to Canada. While the bigger goal consisted in documenting Romanian women's work in creating highly skilled migrants for Canada, and the consequences it had for the families and states left behind, I recognize that, as the metaphor of brain made invisible, how my own migration journey was not just one of a subject with a detached brain that moves trans-continentally, but also and equally a body and mind that were previously nurtured, educated, fed, and cleaned predominantly by my mother's work. My own biography reveals how unsustainable and unrealistic the dichotomies of migration are planned in terms of how deeply entrenched in gender divisions of labour they end up to be. Furthermore, migration policies such as Canada's Federal Skilled Worker (FSWP) unnecessarily focus on attracting high skills, brains and talents (usually associated with male characteristics and male labour) while not equally considering how those skills were formed and nurtured, and indirectly ignoring and not similarly prioritizing the care work (usually associated with women). This reveals not only that minds do not operate outside bodies, but also that bodies and the social reproductive work that sustains them are invested in knowledge production and immigration processes as well. In this sense, Romanian women are not just assuring the social reproduction of their children, they are also invested in supporting Canada's current immigration schemes, focused on the attraction of the highly skilled workers. However,

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they are not just the repositories of nurture and care for the Canadian immigration workforce, but, as my interviews show, also knowledge generators and sharp critical thinkers themselves.

In this sense, through my interviews I asked a series of simple questions meant to engage with the investments and effects of the children's migration process for the families left behind: i.e., what do Romanian parents think about the reasons their children migrated, and what were some of the factors that triggered such a decision? What were their investments in the process of raising and educating them? What do they think of migration in general? Are they satisfied with the choice of their children to migrate abroad? What are the effects of migration for the parents left behind?

As somehow expected, the breakdown revealed that Romanian parents list the transition and economic motives as the main drivers of migration of their children. In particular, the motive to "look for work/find a job" was the reason that had the highest frequency in my interviews. Other motives such as "earn more money", "better career prospects", "better standard of living", "study purposes", "lack of seriousness and sufficient discipline in the home country" and the "long transition" are listed among the driving factors but seem to be less relevant. It is important to notice that none of my interviewees listed the possibility of moving abroad in order to "take a specific job offer" particularly, suggesting that migration happens in an area of career vagueness and uncertainty of future employment status and it is not as specific and concrete as the category of "skilled worker" might suggest. Furthermore, only one of the interviewed persons listed emotional, affective motives as one of the drivers of migration: i.e., migrate to "be close to someone (a relative, a family member)" suggesting that such movements occur less in wider family contexts, and are outside of networks of support. While they have friends already established in Canada, the migration decision seems to be taken individually, and in isolation of potential family support

networks. In this regard, the replies of my interviewees seemed to contradict the network effect on the mobility of Romanians to Canada which argues that an existing social network is always a critical factor in the location choice, settling down in a new country and finding new employment for immigrants. The interviewees described a rather vague, arbitrary, and lonely migration journey with no specific job offers in mind and outside of social networks of support in the receiving country.

However, not all mothers disclosed economic insecurity and precariousness as a factor of migration. Due to the negative stereotypes associated with poverty and challenging financial circumstances, such topics were many times difficult and socially embarrassing for my interviewees. Admitting that one's child's migration is based on precarious economic situation is difficult. Thus, some of my interviewees spoke more of a re-invention of the self or experiencing an alternative life-style rather than the fear and anxiety and insecurity that came with the changing conditions in Romania especially with the restructuring of the welfare state and employment system. This is not to say that there are not highly skilled migrants that experience it this way, but witnessing and sharing the same socio-economic context of transition Romania with my interviewees, as well as hearing other parts of their interviews regarding their economic needs and financial shortages, it led me to believe that such claims were sometimes a tactic and a cover up. Migration as a desire for an alternative life-style sometimes camouflages the inevitable stereotype of shame that the conditions of poverty and economic hardships carry for migrants.

For example, Rodica, sixty-eight, a retired farmer with one child who migrated to Canada, thought that her daughter "did not need to migrate". Her daughter always complained about not having enough money, but her daughter and her family "had good lives in Romania too, working in the court and in the city hall". It is interesting to see how vital and urgent for one's subsistence

and survival the process of migration to Canada is habitually perceived, in the sense that in this case the migration to Canada was not "needed" as we need water, food, and air to breathe. With pride in her voice, Rodica was basically telling me that, if her daughter had stayed in Romania, it would not have been problematic for her and her family. Not only would it not have been dramatic for her to stay, but she might have had fewer conditions of hard work than in Canada, and maybe even a more comfortable lifestyle: "if they stayed here, they would not have had to work so hard, they would have been both a gentleman and a lady". While the description of gentleman and lady make suggestions of upper-middle class positions, they also describe the lack of achieving a desired status in the country of migration, and their downward career mobility, outcomes that problematize such departures.

For the mother Sorana, physician, fifty-five, migrating to Canada was not described as a desperate economic action as more a way of avoiding experiencing the hardships of transition, with a market economy privatized in the hands of "unscrupulous greedy persons" with no education. In the mother's words, "Here they have privatized everything, and now you see wealthy company managers for whom all literature is a mystery for example (allusion that they do not habitually read, hence not cultivated)." The mother here expresses the view that migration acts as a protective cautionary measure against a potential public humiliation and shame that might translate into a cancellation of one's years and years of education and training. This neutralization of one's education was clearly perceived by the migrants and their mothers. For them, it was possible that life in Romania was not going to allow them career mobility and the chance to move up in class. In the current context, one graduates with a solid specialization and certain well-defined skills only to be employed "at the hands of illiterate, and unscrupulous wealth generators" of the transition's managers and business owners that are planning to not even value or make use

of such an education:

> I did not want my daughter with her university degree to be jobless here. Or worse, to be so educated and to end up driving Mercedes cars for employers who cannot get their own driving licence because they do not know how to read and write. There is nothing more dreadful than to go to a workplace that you dread, working for bosses who do not have education or an understanding of a person's psychology, and who make themselves tobacco from banknotes and smoke them in front of their employees (Sorana, fifty-five, physician).

Sorana had a certain vision about her daughter and a certain uplifting life trajectory. She did not want her to stay behind and serve employers who themselves had no writing or reading skills just because they are making it through the transition as wealth holders. Clearly, this mother believed and said that working for those who do not understand people, and use banknotes to make their cigarettes, is telling of one's disproportionate ability to use, value, and so devalue people's work and gains depending on their personal desires. Smoking banknotes seems to be a determining factor in how this employer will, irresponsibly, both use the banknotes and gains out of the business and how he will be treating the employees (since the gains are not used for benefitting others, but rather for ostentatious individual consumption). The mother Sorana seems to be suggesting that smoking is a whimsical habit made possible only by disproportionate wealth imbalances generated by the transition to the capitalist market, together with the desire to publicly flaunt and legitimize such new gains. It is as if this mother is pointing to the fact that education in transition Romania does not translate into upward mobility and gains, but that it is rather the uneducated and unscrupulous new business owners that reap all the benefits and do not even make good and reasonable use of it, hence the smoking of banknotes. Sorana makes an allusion again to the transition and the newly rich business owners who are despised and have their leadership authority

contested because they do not seem to fit the class image that this mother has of the rich. Moreover, this mother goes far enough to argue that these "uncultured and uneducated" rich are exhibiting ostentatious, new, consuming behaviour (i.e., "making themselves tobacco from banknotes"). Indeed, they are destroying the major element of what makes them possible: money and banknotes revealing that they are not even "good capitalists" as we know them in North America.

Leaving for Canada seems like the best precautionary recipe against finding oneself working under the auspices of such "undesirable" potential employers, the new agents of the transition. However, when asked why only one of her two children left for Canada instead of both of her children, her response seems to be in tension with the first response if not outright contradictory. She told me, that her younger child, her son, did not leave the home country as he has "his integrity and does not like to be looked at with superiority". Both mother and son seemed to be aware of the marginalization and hardships that immigrants face when starting that journey and they were not idealizing the conditions that awaited them at the end of the journey. Furthermore, it seems that, from what this mother was saying, her son recognized that migration might not necessarily protect him from social humiliation and community shame either (without finding oneself in the hands of similar unscrupulous and illiterate business owners in the country of destination as the ones in the country of departure), despite the fact that one takes this long physical and emotional migration journey as an attempt to escape it and to live a better life.

For Simona, sixty-two, a retired teacher whose two children migrated to North America (the boy to Canada, the daughter to United States), the departure was at first sight less connected with dramatic material shortages, elements of the transition in Romania. Instead, Simona told me that their migration was more about their aspirations, a desire to move up economically and socially, a move that could not materialize geographically in parts other than North-America. Most likely this

looks like a process of self-reinvention and self-transformation that only radical cultural difference can trigger: "they wanted to see a world they had never had access to it if they had stayed here*".* The migration departure for Simona's children is explained as not connected to economic conditions or situations. Rather for her, the migration was an attempt to create an entirely different world as well as an entirely different self that could not be actualized in the home country. Simona seemed to be pointing to a desire to de-materialize the usual concrete economic factors of and for migration. She wanted rather to speak to this decision as if it were an individual aspiration that emerged amaterially and without any forces effecting the decision or the ability to leave. Nevertheless, Simona wanted and managed to tell a "success story." Both of her children's dreams materialized in Canada: they were able to pragmatically and financially achieve their goals by buying a car and a house that they could not have otherwise afforded if they stayed in Romania.

Cook Vasilica's (fifty-seven years old) three children migrated to Canada. According to Vasilica their decision was informed and shaped by the connections that they made in Canada and what they thought was possible there. She said the following about one of her sons, "He got attached to a family over there and he felt he would succeed there better than here".

At first, I was surprised and puzzled by what she meant with his attachment to a "Canadian family". The interviewee explained to me what she actually meant. He found a wife and a soul mate, a Romanian-Canadian girl. The couple met at a church while the Romanian-Canadian girl was on vacation in Romania. Brought together by the same church-going practice and affinity for the same religion, the confession brought forward less an individualistic love story, and more a falling in love with the collective family of the girl, and an attachment that surpasses the focus on one particular person. In this sense "to get attached to an entire family" targets probably a common and larger aspirational Western/Canadian middle-class status that is shared among the family

members. One does not fall in love with another person anymore, but with the whole family of that person and, presumably, the entire family's Western/Canadian culture, superior values and class.

Brick factory worker Anamaria, fifty-eight, mother of two children (of which one left for Canada) did not mention either as a push factor for migration economic hardships and precarious material conditions. She mentioned only that it was a journey whose success depends on the individual temperament that is passed down inter-generationally. In her words, "all depends on the character of the migrating person, on the person's resilience of character, on a person's strength, and the capacity to fight and believe: I have always been a fighter, and so is my daughter".

The migrating and leaving behind one's home country is a psychological journey and a character-building story whose motives and reasons are not disclosed: a fighter for what, and why? Resilience to reach what exactly and again why? Anamaria seemed to want to map this journey and articulates it as an abstract fight with oneself, for overcoming weaknesses and vulnerabilities that otherwise would make one a victim if he or she stayed at home. Similarly, interesting is how much tension and conflict-ridden such journeys are; Anamaria insisted it was a fight for which a lot of tenacity and patience is required. And from Anamaria's story we never come to know the adversarial objects or subjects in this fight, whether they were in Romania or Canada, or internal to one's self.

Throughout the interview, I also found out that it was actually Maria, her daughter, and Liviu, her son-in-law, who had changed her initial views on migration and that now she "accepts" and understands migration as the process through which people come to learn and understand the world more fully. She told me, "through immigration people know the world, accumulate knowledge they learned more than if they stayed in their home countries".

Of course, what is said is also equally relevant for what is not said. The fact that one learned to "accept" and "tolerate" migration is a manifestation of a burdening process that one cannot cope with naturally, but only through effort and even at times with persuasive arguments to one's self, others or even the researcher about this act of migration and its effects. Most of the interviews confirmed my initial assumption that Romanian parents are not always satisfied with the decision of their children to migrate. In Romania, the general sense of disillusionment is connected less with the decision of migration and more with the lack of economic opportunities and general social insecurity which determines it. Despite the stories being full of tension and contradiction, many of the women wanted to reiterate also that migration decisions are influenced by the circumstances in Romania. A lack of opportunities at home, particularly fulfilling employment possibilities, are major factors in such a decision: "I don't like it […] It's actually painful to see that kids now finish degrees and can't survive (especially when they're in the education and pedagogical field); they can't find a job" (Adina, fifty-five, teacher).

Most of the mothers spoke of the stakes in this decision to migrate. For them, the greatest frustration is their children's not finding a job in their countries of origin after graduating with degrees that are considered essential and in continuous demand in the labour market, such as the education field.

Faced with these challenges, Romanian parents console themselves in different ways. They speak of how their suffering and longing for their children is more bearable than witnessing the suffering and pain of their children who chose to stay in Romania without being able to make a living and move up in positions that could enhance their well-being. Listen to what Gabriela, a sixty-seven-year-old, retired nurse had to say about this tension:

I don't like migration but to see my children suffer, jobless and in pain

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here, it's better for them to leave, and for us to keep missing them here.

It seems that this kind of emotional labour is supposed to be carried out by parents and more concretely by mothers. If transition Romania demands the sacrifice of one's professional future and well-being, the migration process demands that the parents sacrifice their own happiness and even feel the pain of not having the family members around, in an equation that does not have winners, only shared losses. Furthermore, the departure through migration is never anticipated as such, and while parents are prepared for temporary absences, they are not ready for departure of their children for good. This is not perceived as the most obvious and linear development of one's family future and disrupts one family's sense of unity and cohesion. It contradicts the popular understandings of family and future, bringing on the anomalous and the chaotic into one's fundamentals of existence, or as Gabriela says it:

> I had three children and I thought that when they grow up I will have such a large family, and now they are all gone. The first child left in 1998, and another one in 2001. The second one came to me and asked for permission to leave: will you let me go? And I responded to him that if he thought it would be better in Canada, then he should go.

The children's departure through immigration brings to the fore tensions and even implicit assumptions and expectations of the reasons people have about their role, present and future, in the household. While this woman thought that her three children were going to have their own children thereby making possible a "big family", all of them migrated to Canada leaving her behind and without the possibility of having them in proximity for support. The son asked her for permission to leave to Canada setting up this dichotomy of future well-being between Canada and Romania. Of the two, Canada is invested with future well-being, thus the departure.

The decision to migrate is not always passively accepted by Romanian parents. In several

instances, the Romanian mothers complained that having invested so much of their time, dedication and focus into raising their children, they were left with no returns or benefits for their life's worth and investments. Gabriela, sixty-two, retired teacher, does not hesitate in describing her children's education and career accomplishments as in fact her own:

I struggled so much to see my boy and my daughter educated, and they both ended up going

to the medical university and the technical university. It was very hard, but I didn't give up.

In highlighting that there was a lot of work in making sure that her children went to the University, Gabriella points to how the children's education and career specialization do not only belong to them, but also to their parents whose efforts and hard work made it possible. Nevertheless, migration is also a great re-configuration of relations and international power dynamics. The same parents attach new significance to their contributions as well as demand some sort of active compensation and retribution for their work, in the name of reciprocity. Or as Gabriela sums it up: "Now that I am old I have the expectation to receive something back: you cannot give and give to your kids without expecting anything in return".

Florica, the nurse with one child in Canada, echoes exactly Gabriela's thoughts. For her it was terribly expensive to support her children through university as it must have been for many other families in the country. Even though the children went to public universities and the education was free-of-charge (private universities appeared in the 2000s and were not particularly in demand, nor popular), both the costs and work associated with their being able to complete their university studies were high. However, the problem was not the efforts and the financial investments in the education process, but the fact that there was no recognition and compensation for such contributions. "Honestly speaking, I don't see migration as a positive process; I think people should remain in the country and all our values should not leave the country. They should

stay and work in the countries that train them and form them as people".

Similarly, Anca, sixty-two-year-old, retired teacher whose two children migrated to Canada informed me of her hard work and suffering in order to secure an education for her children. She told me that "only my back knows the hard work I put to get my children to university". However, in her turn she was also re-considering the value of her "investments," and the possibility of looking at them as wasteful and absurd, as she asked herself rhetorically: "So much work, for what? Only not to have my children right beside me? To notice these empty streets in the city? Not to sleep at night and wake up at 4 a.m. and just look outside the window as if they were even coming back?"

The biggest contrast was between her determination and investment of effort to see her children succeed that many times left her back in pain and their heartbreaking absence. The emotional vacuum left by their departure was also represented in her describing her city as one of "empty streets".

Similarly, interesting is how migration phenomenon is described in all its inherent contradictions, sometimes as both a negative and positive phenomenon. For Florica, fifty-seven, retired nurse with one child out of two in Canada, migration was "a positive phenomenon, people experience countries where there is more work discipline, and work seriousness, but the problem is that they never come back." In principle, the migration process had advantages and benefits. Living in a different environment and working in settings of higher ethics and discipline, my interviews recounted in theory, brings forth positive and negative aspects. However, when it actually happened, such a process lost the potential benefits and Florica got literarily sick and upset after Iuliana, her daughter, left Romania: "This distance towards your child…arghhh, it is very bad, unhealthy, and very hard to handle. I thought I raised a good obedient child and then she took

this decision to leave".

The issue of her daughter's departure was seen as a parental responsibility, and more so, as a failure of a good parental pedagogy. Moreover, it rather contradicted the mother's self-image as a good educator. Migration as a phenomenon of positive aspects seemed to lose its luster as the consequences for the family left behind are many ranging from emotional burden to loneliness. Hearing the parents speak of their anxiety and loneliness as well as the self-criticisms and self-reproaches of not being good educators and parents revealed to me the violence and trauma that comes with migration. Furthermore, Romanian parents' proclivity to assume the children's migration as their own fault did not match the rest of their interview statements, which point to the poverty and economic shortages of Romania's transition as clear triggers of outward migration. The fact that many Romanian parents tended to blame themselves for the migration of their children and the prevalence of parental guilt speaks of the internalization of negative external situations, outside one's control of them. It also speaks of the neoliberal transition that generate both such unfavourable situations as well as their subsequent internalization. Namely, the mothers seemed well aware of the neoliberal forces in work and education.

While neoliberalism incorporates a motivation for individual achievement and encourages people to seek fulfilling jobs for themselves, in my interviews I found out that the role of parents is significant in this process. They take a lead in their children's career quest and journey, sometimes finding out that children are working in professions and specializations chosen explicitly by their parents. The range of occupations with its fulfilling or soul-destroying part is again assumed by the parents, together with any retroactive corrective measures. Lucia, a sixty-eight-year, retired statistician, with two daughters abroad (one in Canada and the other one in Germany) expressed the reassessment that she has made about the migration circumstances. She

told me that, if she were a parent again, she would follow very different steps to make sure that her children did not migrate. Clearly, she has rethought and reflected extensively on her new family circumstance recognizing also that she may never have a chance to parent her children differently. In a wistful manner she told me:

> If only I were their parent again…If I were parent again, I would encourage them more and help them choose a better career which would lead to a healthier road (I would invest more money in them, more tutoring, etc.); I would encourage them to be more practical technical girls, and I would help them find a job that doesn't require them to leave this country, like bankers, for example.

Overly dedicated and invested in their children's future, Romanian mothers seem to put a lot of zeal and devotion into educating their children, in an equation where children seem sometimes less free to choose their career and professional paths, and the determination to succeed in life is more connected to their parents' ambitions. However, if they fail to set their children on a successful career path, and do not manage to significantly improve their children's life conditions, they internalize such "failure" as their own. Leaving for Canada, for instance, comes to be interpreted by some parents as a punishment for their over-involvement in their children's lives and their protectionism. They believe that restricting the decision-making space and freedom of their children was one factor in the responses they receive from their children: *"*Whenever I call them, my daughters think I check on them, and tell me to leave them in peace. Maybe Adina left for Canada to escape all this and be more independent from me; even today I still want to know what they do and where they go, and on what pavements they walk on, etc. "(Adina, fifty-five, teacher).

Of course, Romanian mothers want to keep connection with their own children, and that translates in maintaining both emotional and spatial bondings. Nevertheless, the family separations and ruptures are real, with few consolations and compensative mechanisms. When carrying out the interviews I felt the powerful affects that the mothers were expressing. It seemed that even those mothers whose children succeeded in "making it" in the North felt that nothing could mend the 'lost' community. While there is opportunity to talk on the phone or occasionally visit, these acts are not substantial and sufficiently meaningful alternatives to the feelings of isolation and abandonment. Or as Mariana articulates it: "instead of talking in person, now we just hear each other's voices when we talk on the phone, and on the internet, Skype, but this way we just miss each other more".

Camelia, the teacher with the only child in Canada, expresses the same feelings: "As a parent you remain with the thought of your child and nothing of what you live and experience from that moment after can replace the absence and missing of your own child". The same Romanian mother talked about always externalizing and distancing herself from the idea of migration until her daughter finally left for Canada: "I have never imagined that migration would be happening to me! I thought it would only happen to others!" Such externalizations and attitudes describe the idea of migration as a rather traumatic, tragic, painful event that happens abruptly and unexpectedly and that is more closely connected with the occurrence of natural disasters and other climatic catastrophes than with a casual surprise about finding that her daughter is leaving. However, she notes that the only thing limiting the drama of her daughter's departure consists in assuming the parental duty and responsibility to provide the children with the freedom and generosity to leave if this is something they want to do: "I can't be that selfish to keep my children close to me if they don't want it" (Camelia, fifty-eight, high-school teacher). Nevertheless, the

presumed selfishness is assumed to exist only in one way, on the part of the parents, but it is not critiqued as an equal, reciprocal situation that should also characterize children who leave. In this case, the only paternal critique restricts itself to their children's idealism, and presumably age difference: "The migrated kid really liked literature. She was a bit idealist, and naïve, young, and unaware of the actual reality."

Similarly, another mother expressed her frustration with her child's decision to migrate. She found the idea of migration as unfair and unjust to the internal Romanian labour market which struggled with significant and continuous loss of skills and talents after years of continuous investment in education: "I don't see migration as a positive process: children should stay here; the valuable people should stay and work here where they received their education" (Gabriela, fifty-seven, teacher). The decision to migrate after receiving a higher education in one's home country was considered nothing less than an "abnormality", a deviance and a "pathology" in the course of one's life development. "It is abnormal for educated individuals not to stay here; although, if conditions aren't good here, the impulse to leave is understandable" (Gabriela, fifty-seven, teacher).

In the same sense, another interviewee opines that migration cannot be but a negative process since it reflects the poor living and economic conditions of the country one is departing from: "When the material conditions are good and you have a good life, you don't migrate [….] you go on vacations, on boat cruises" (Corina, fifty-eight, nurse). People having a decent material well-being only travel abroad and experience the foreign world temporarily, during vacations: it is the poor people and in precarious economic positions that migrate and end up living uprooted lives. At the same time, she notes that: "Patriotism is something beautiful and very necessary…one shouldn't be put in the position to depart oneself from your roots" (Corina, fifty-eight, nurse).

When asked what determined the current precarious material conditions that triggered people to leave the country, it was suggested by several interviewees that the determining factor was actually an "insufficiency of capitalism." The fact that so much of the social reproduction of migrants is done at the mothers' expense is considered a regrettable outcome of transition and, ultimately, a deficiency of capitalism. A fully implemented capitalist system it would never let this happen, pointing to the positive views that some of my interviewees held of capitalism. Along with other respondents, Corina believed that Romania was still in transition, fictitiously capitalist, capitalist on paper, but not for real, a country that underwent reforms and changes only half-heartedly. The characterization was made in sheer contrast to other developed Western nations where "capitalism is fully implemented and old, and where capitalism fully manifests itself as capitalism." The issue of the authenticity and truthfulness of free market capitalism that was implemented in Romania came up very often in my respondents' testimonies: the problem never lies in the actual capitalist system, but in its application or in the insufficiency of sincerity and truthfulness in those implementing it. Unsurprisingly, there was hope or belief that the future of Romania lay in the success of capitalism that would trump over poverty and other material restraints. They have a vision that is not consistent with the reality of capitalism for the majority of population in most countries.

Nevertheless, in another context my respondents challenged the idea that their children left the country out of neediness and material restraints: "I don't know what to say about migration. My kids didn't need migration: they did well in Romania, they had good respectable jobs here, working for the court of justice. I'm not sure why they went abroad. They wanted to go and they went. Maybe they thought that Canada was a rich luxurious place, full of privileged people leading good lives full of leisure ("o tara unde umbla caini cu colaci in coada"- in Romanian). They were

of good standing here, and now there they have to work so much. My daughter Ica was working in the court of justice and now cooks for a catering company" (Rodica, sixty-eight, farmer).

Rodica wondered about the reasons for her kids to migrate. Not only did they have good jobs in the city hall and the court of justice, but they were also of "good standing" in society. Rodica highlighted that her daughter moved from her good job in Romania to turn into a cook in Canada working for a catering company. Contrasting the jobs, Rodica seemed to not understand her daughter's decision to migrate, as if she was saying her situation was not any better in Canada. How come she went? Rodica further pointed to the unjustifiable expectations that their children who were migrating to Canada had, expectations that did not become a reality. Rather these highly skilled workers were now settling for situations that looked like de-skilling and downward career mobility. The case is not unique, nor an isolated one: the example belongs to a massive pattern of migrants to Canada experiencing de-skilling. In this sense, the literature shows how only five to ten percent of university-educated Romanian immigrants (mostly computer programmers or engineers specialized in computer-related fields) find a job in accordance with their qualifications (Tudoroiu 2007). The same scholar believes that actually the great majority of university-educated Romanian immigrants became low skilled workers or shop assistants. According to Tudoroiu (2007: 212), a Romanian engineer and landed immigrant in Canada was hired as a low skilled industrial worker in the field in which he had earned a university degree. Sometimes if one is fortunate, he is promoted and becomes a technician but the chances of him working as a fully specialized engineer are actually low. The fact is that in Montreal many Romanian engineers were de-skilled to the level of concierge in Canada. Concierge is a building administrator, janitor and plumber whose wage is lower than that of a low skilled industrial worker (Tudoroiu 2007: 212).

Another respondent mentioned that when her children decided to migrate to Canada she felt bitter, angry and in a poor emotional state. "My life changed after my children's migration. It left my husband and me sadder and angrier. I, for one, could never abandon my country and my people. I could never separate myself from the country mostly because I love my parents too much" (Liliana, fifty-six, engineer).

Leaving one's country behind was seen in this case as the ultimate betrayal of the parents' love. Conversely, staying in the country was matched with specific family responsibilities and obligations, understood as loving one's parents. In this sense, the interviewee alluded also to the disappearance of the values for new generations while being replaced by different stories of family relationships, parallel to the new capitalist conditions.

Section E: "What will happen to this country?"

Affective expressions of anger and resentment are found throughout the testimonies of multiple respondents. The focus on intergenerational changes and the social reproductive work that women do for young people who migrate and leave their families and communities behind was also understood to have serious implications for Romania as a country: "What will happen to this country?" Ana's expression captures the anxiety and fear for the country itself. Romania's loss of all of its most highly skilled people who acquired their skills at the country's expense is leading to the change and even the "loss" of the country itself: "I don't see migration as a positive process at all. Not for this country, for this people and its future. What is this? To educate engineers, physicians, etc. only to have them leave the country? What will happen to this country? Only the old and uneducated ones will stay behind, the ones without specialization: all the good and prepared ones leave (I don't want to offend the ones who stay here)" (Ana, fifty-eight, statistician). The questions here were addressed rhetorically, although they also underlined general anguish over possible political and economic consequences for the country as a whole: "What will happen to this country?"

Another respondent focused on how angry she was in relation to her children's departure: "We were mad'. Why? "Democracy wasn't correctly understood and properly applied. It was misinterpreted" (Mariana, sixty-two-year-old, nurse). As mentioned before, in my interviews I heard a lot of explanations for children's departure, speaking to how "democracy", "capitalism", or "freedom" were misunderstood and mis-interpreted. The assumption is that there is nothing wrong with the processes themselves but rather with the attempts to apply them adequately and put them in practice.

Other respondents spoke to how they considered leaving the country to go abroad for a short time. They wanted to seek better career opportunities and professional contacts. They did not want to leave Romania for good though: "When you're younger, if you have the possibility to work and make some money in the West, it's great. You should not remain there for good though. I don't agree with forgetting where you've come from, or forgetting your native language. It's okay if you can go there to learn a new language, a new specialization; if you can accomplish yourself as a personality; as a human, but to ultimately return (after 10-20 years) back home and to keep the connection with your home country, as well as to fly here frequently for visits because no one will respect you there as you're respected here, in your home country" (Sorana, fifty-five, physician).

The issue of respect came up often during my interviews, both in the origin and the host country of migration. While some parents described the humiliation of not finding good jobs and career prospects in Romania, others noted the lack of appreciation and respect that one got as a migrant, and the lack of opportunities in the host country of migration: "Wherever you go, one remains a migrant, and you're treated with contempt, till the end of your days. Doroftei (Olympic athlete in boxing), for example, lived in Canada for many years, but only here, in the home country, in Romania is he welcomed and appreciated as a god". A reflection of the same lack of respect and recognition came in the following account about the situation of Romanian immigrant engineers in Canada. "Our engineers are well prepared, but not sufficiently appreciated there. Our engineers, teachers and physicians are much more qualified than all the local ones, but at interviews the immigrants are not put through a serious screening process, and they are asked inconsequential, soft-ball or rhetorical questions, such as: "Isn't it true that the earth moves around the sun?" (Sorana, fifty-five, physician). It seemed also that this lack of appreciation points to the

devaluation of the Romanians in Canada. Romanians, who were highly educated, were being asked simple questions to confirm their migration status rather than whether they have a wealth of knowledge and expertise. While the mothers of the Romanian migrants in Canada spoke of a lack of respect and appreciation, one could wonder what these parents were trying to nuance and point to when they were speaking about this lack. Also, what kind of critique of both transition and neoliberal development they are making when they are doing so?

Speaking up about the lack of both respect and appreciation is an expression of the isolation and marginalization of the Romanian immigrants in Canada and in the labour market. The freedom to migrate and experience another setting is not a freedom from experiencing the hardships of the labour market, or of not receiving appropriate rewards after the years of education that the Romanian parents were so invested in. While transition Romania 'failed' highly skilled university youth, and pushed them to leave the country, the transition of migration to Canada similarly pressured them for the same struggles of fighting for material and economic dignity, in a process that mirrored the conditions of the home country left behind. The interviewees' reflection that Romanian migrants are not respected, or appreciated in Canada might suggest the hypothesis that they are still on a long road to economic dignity and material security, despite their transition and departure from transition Romania with that explicit goal in mind.

When talking about integrating into a new country, and adapting to a new environment, most of my respondents said that their children were not well integrated, and that their environment consisted of other Romanians and their families. "The circles they run in are still predominantly composed of Romanians, or of Canadians married to Romanians" (Geanina, sixty-four, retired teacher). While it is great to hear about the Romanian circles that the immigrants share when

reaching Canada, my interviewee was also aware of the struggle to fit into the sea of diversity that the host country is celebrated for as well as to be accepted outside one's ethnic circles.

The Romanian mothers acutely noticed the discrepancy between the initial dreams of migration of their children and actual daily life in Canada. "My daughter told me she would create a different story and a different future for her and her family, but what kind of future is she living now? She finished with Law Degree here and she has now a small catering business in Kitchener while Romania does not have good lawyers to defend it against so many injustices" (Rodica, sixty-eight).

What is striking is the feeling of regret reflected in the accounts provided by my respondents. These parents felt powerless about their inability to help and be supportive of their children living abroad. What is even more striking is the fact that they perceived their grown-up children as still in need of their support without considering their own life-world including their own increasing vulnerability and powerlessness: "We cannot help them at all when they are abroad, not even with a piece of advice: the customs and rules that we have here are not the same ones they have there" (Geanina, sixty-four, retired teacher). The fact that the Romanian parents considered that their advice that ought to have some universal value and use, in virtue of their age and experience, could not be applied to Canada, spoke thousands of how different and alienating they think of their children's host country and how their children's residence and stay did not make it a bit more familiar and humanized place. Furthermore, it is also important to notice that Canada was exoticized and portrayed as a completely different location, functioning and governed by a different set of rules. From my interview accounts, Canada was constructed as a space of alterity and the descriptive epithet "different" comes up very often. For example, "Canada is very different. Canadians are more oriented towards their homes, towards quiet and private places, they aren't

into parties and partying, etc" (Mihaela, fifty-five, architect). However, the difference between Canada and Romania was always played out in order to relate to a social reality with which immigrants have few elements of connection and identification. The difference was many times constructed as a positive one (i.e., "Canada is very clean: you can drink water safely from the rivers over there"; "Canada is very correct: you don't have to count the change you get from your grocery store as it is always correct, etc.") although sometimes it was also constructed as a negative incongruity (i.e., "people are not so open, more private"; "people are not so welcoming to immigrants and they perceive them as competition"). Nevertheless, the fact that Canada appeared to be constructed as an either a positive or negative different space ultimately spoke of the need of boundary-making as well as the lack of identification and commonality with the host country of migration, leaving us in the end with the proof of the solitary experience of the migrant created by one's overly articulated and claimed "difference."

When asked about what leads to outward migration, another interview respondent thinks that it is clearly financial and economic hardships that determine it. However, my interviewee notices a positive side to the process of migration, suggesting that it also reflects well on Romania. It does so by arguing that migration is also a result of the great education that Romania provides its youth with and which equips future migrants with the necessary skills and knowledge to qualify for the point-system selection process of migration to Canada. "In Canada, they use skills and knowledge acquired here which says a lot about what a good school we have here; what good education we provide. For example, I know from reliable sources that the man responsible for the Olympic contests in Mathematics in Canada is a Romanian" (Simona sixty-two, retired high-school teacher). The social reproductive work of Romanian mothers together with the Romanian education system which, combined, help young Romanians acquire the skills they need in order to

live abroad (i.e., the wanted professional occupations, foreign languages, etc.) is a sign of pride for Simona. Nevertheless, the good educational system and great amounts of women's social reproductive work do not necessarily improve the precarious economic conditions of the country. Thus, the overall economic hardships are still seen as the main cause of migration and push people to leave the country.

Another interviewee elaborated on the poor education system in Romania and considers that higher-education was actually better in Canada. For example, universities in Canada draw people from all over the world to their campuses, especially through fellowships. The education system was seen as superior, and is idealized as different and more practical; thus, a source of attraction for future immigrants.

"In my opinion, migration is a so-so phenomenon. What is great is that foreign universities through fellowships offer Romanian students the possibility to go and study abroad. Of course, after they're exposed to a different learning environment, to a different education system (more practical, more anchored into the daily realities) some of them decide to leave their home countries altogether and immigrate. This way, many intelligent and valuable students leave for the countries where they are appreciated and paid accordingly while here we are left to be governed by rich mediocre and under-mediocre people" (Lavinia, fifty-seven, high-school teacher).

Through interviews, my respondents become more conscious not just about presenting their children's migration to Canada, but also the situation in Romania, in ways and manners that they were never aware before. One description completely mirrors the other one. For example, my respondents have conflicting views about the education system in Romania: while some consider it as underfunded and impractical, others consider it of very good quality and proficient. The pride in the local higher education system is in some of these cases connected to a form of patriotism

and loyalty: "I have accepted the fact that the youth should get to know the world outside their country. They should know the world, and they should accumulate more knowledge (more than they would have if they stayed locally), but in the end, I want them to return to their country of origin, to their parents, families, etc. …. I'm patriotic" (Alina, fifty-six, retail salesperson).

On the same note, another interviewee pointed out to how difficult it was for her to separate all of a sudden from her children especially after investing so much effort in helping them obtain a university education. Her narrative reached a painful peak when she related her story: "It was very difficult not to see them, talk to them, do things together. For me this separation was terrible. It was like a death" (Simona, fifty-seven, nurse). In order to prevent such separations, she confessed resorting to childlike tricks, almost switching parental roles: "I knew they were applying for immigration, and when the envelope containing the results arrived in the mail, I hid it from them" (Simona, fifty-seven, nurse).

Other interviewed persons had a more relaxed opinion regarding migration. "Things aren't black and white with migration: they're in the middle. Seeing other countries is great, but it's difficult to adapt to a totally different civilization, different working environment, different culture, different way of living, so different that you can't imagine how it is until you're there. For my children, it was hard in Canada till they entered some circles, till they met other Romanians. Contrary to popular opinion, Romanians are helping each other over there" (Gabriela, sixty-two, retired teacher).

The issue of trust/distrust between different Romanian immigrants in Canada came up many times in my interviews. The most common cultural stereotype was that Romanians distrust each other, and that they were prone to causing harm to one another rather than supporting and helping each other out in times of crisis. However, from the accounts of my interviewees, the

conflictive, tense issue was rather dismissed, and my respondents pointed to the support that Romanians provide to each other abroad. This support was expressed either directly or indirectly, as in "they were waited for the airport by other Romanians" or "they always have a Romanian neighbour around to help them out."

Sometimes my respondents wrapped up critical remarks about migration with apparently positive lines. "Migration is a great process for those who can manage. My children didn't manage so well in Canada, but I know kids from other families who succeeded professionally in Canada. I'm not ashamed to say that I'm helping them out from Romania and send them money: last year I sent them $1,300 and this year $450 so far" (Vasilica, fifty-seven, kindergarten cook). It was implied that migration to Canada should be about fulfilling one's potential, skills and abilities. If they were unsuccessful, individuals were blamed for their own failure and the guilt is personalized, as in the case of my above respondent. What was apparent is that success stories of migration were externalized and celebrated as great examples of the Canadian point system migration process. Close scrutiny or critique was never paid to such systems in case of failure.

While the successful stories of migration are easily popularized and spread in the countries of origin of migrants, less is known in the home communities about the struggles and the challenges immigrants are facing in Canada. The fact that families in transition developing countries send them financial help despite their newly achieved position in an advanced developed country like Canada is a sign of these struggles. They all point to the lower levels of income of immigrants, weak economic integration and de-skilling despite having the credentials, experience and language abilities to succeed.

In terms of how the migration of their children impacted them, I found Romanian parents confessing to being angrier, and lonelier, but also more in touch with technology and the digital devices. For example, parents spent a lot of time now on the Internet or on the phone, they learned how to type and use computers, learn English or even travel more abroad. Nevertheless, even when they affirmed that their children were professionally successful in Canada, they still considered that migration did not bring them any substantial joy, and that the children were too far from them to really be happy and celebrate their successes. A long-distance career success together with the hours spent on the phone and Internet did not make up for the proximity of the children's physical presence. Furthermore, they also considered that it was always the valuable and intelligent people who left Romania whereas the country and its people remained to be run by mediocre, and moreover the "rich mediocre others" (Florica, fifty-seven, nurse).

Section F: "They Won't Recognize Their Country Anymore If They Return"

When asked about their children's intentions of returning to the home country, parents were rather skeptical about it, and in most of the cases they saw the migration of their children as permanent. They also seemed to guess that the longer their stay in Canada, the harder it would be for them to return. "They're in Canada for ten years now: they bought a house over there; their children go to school in Canada. They became detached from their friends in Romania. To what to return over here? They won't recognize this country anymore if they return here" (Mariana, fifty-eight, physician). While not fully integrated in Canada, the return to Romania as a solution also seemed complicated since the initial community ties and social connections in the home country had diminished throughout the years of migration and struggling for economic emancipation and acceptance elsewhere. The distance in time and cultural changes seemed so big that the interviewee wondered if there was anything they might recognize as Romanian and familiar if they did come back. Always changing, always fluid, impossible to be loyal and not betraying oneself culturally, the migration movement seems impossible to grasp: caught in the middle of not being accepted in the host country as well as losing irreversibly the roots and nuances of being Romanian yourself while doing so. This speaks relevantly of the indirect circulation and movement of social reproduction work as well.

While it is difficult and takes a lot of time to integrate in the countries of arrival, immigrants also become disconnected and separated from the development of their own origin countries. Their sense of belonging was challenged as they could not fully trust and identify with their new home and they lost their sense of place and community connections with the country of origin, inhabiting an "in-between" zone.

Occasionally I did find testimonies of intentions to come back if not directly to Romania, then to wider Western Europe. Such intentions were connected less with individual desires, and were more triggered by wider family needs, such as raising and educating their own children in Romania. Nevertheless, such return stories were told rather easily without probably delving further how a possible story of return might be as challenging as the story of leaving for Canada and becoming Canadian. "Sorana and Mihai want to have a child, and they want Romanian education for him/ her. They don't like the Canadian system of education: Canada does not have culture very much and it is not very safe to raise your children over there!" (Liliana, 57, architect).

The fact that the migration of Romanians is more permanent rather than fluid is also proven when considering the issue of remittances. From my ethnographic interviews and from their mothers' perspectives, Romanian migrants to Canada do not seem to be wanting to return to Romania, despite the struggles for survival, de-skilling and acceptance in a new place. When analyzing remittances, the scholarship shows that it is rather migrants who plan short-term stays that send high proportions of remittances back home whereas the ones who intend to move permanently, they invest much less in their home countries (Mara 2012). In this sense, my interviewed parents do not mention substantial or regular remittances from their children other than the occasional gifts, another hint to suggest at their rather long term stay in Canada.

With the socio-economic conditions in transition Romania that triggered the migration to Canada post 1989, rather than bringing growth and development, democracy and liberalism so much hoped for, Romania's post-communist transition to capitalism led actually to mass unemployment and massive outward migration. In this sense, I tried to show how migration to Canada was an overwhelmingly highly skilled movement initiated by publicly budgeted university graduates who were looking for better career opportunities than the low-skilled and unskilled

alternatives offered by the Western European labour market. The same movement was also triggered by Canada's changing immigration selection process and switch to a neoliberal phase of economy, with a more intense focus on knowledge-based economies after cutting the welfare support to create them, thus the need "to import" university-educated migrants under the category of the Federal Skilled Worker (FSWP). The Canadian government's migration policies, focused as they are on brain-absorption worldwide, indirectly assume a hierarchical gender division of minds and bodies where labour associated with male characteristics (highly rational and technical skills) are more prioritized and desired than the social reproductive labour of the bodies that equally produce the high skills, but are more connected with women's work. However, my interviews with Romanian mothers about their children's migration focused on the effects of their departure. The mothers revealed the movement of professionals across borders is made possible and maintained through women's social reproductive work. They pointed out that transnational migration depends on both the labour of professionals but also their own labour, their families and the states of origin. By arguing this, the interviewed mothers prove to be more than passive subjects of research, but actually active intelligent thinkers and critical knowledge producers in their own turn. Their understanding and critical awareness of how the circulation of social reproductive work contributes to the accumulation of global capital stretches the debates about social reproduction. Their intelligence and acute sense of reality is seen in the way they grasp the drama and trauma of migration as well as the endless challenges of both capitalism and communism: while the trauma of a communist regime consisted in, primarily, food shortages, the new drama of capitalism and transition is played out in the loneliness and loss of not having their communities and family members close by, a lost due to migration. However, despite the difficulties and complexities that come with migration, the interviewees tell a story of resilience and stubbornness, continuously

adapting and changing, looking for new ways of legitimation and self-preservation, falling short of what they aspired their conditions would be, but nevertheless rebounding in many contexts of defeat and marginalization.

Additionally, I presented a brief history of the Romanian migration to Canada, together with an analysis of the socio-economic demographic of the Romanian migrants living there. According to it, the Romanian migration to Canada is led by highly skilled university professionals who, despite having the necessary qualifications and skills, are neither equally compensated for them, nor reaching the wages and employment rates of native Canadians once they reach and settle in their destination countries. While such de-skilling might look incongruent with the declared objectives of the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), it is actually perfectly consistent with the neoliberal demands of the economy, with its requirement of constant rates of profit and innovation without a parallel rewarding of the work for it, thus the need to keep it cheap. Nevertheless, such programs already require social reproductive efforts and investments in education, training, etc. that take place in developing countries and are done before arrival in Canada. Furthermore, I described the relative vagueness, loneliness and insecurity in which the migration happens (without concrete job offers given in advance and less supported by social networks of family, friends, and relatives as it is usually assumed) and the sadness or anger of the parents left behind as well as their sense of unfairness and injustice for losing in this way their families and communities that they have raised and nurtured. Last but not least, I wanted to deconstruct the mind vs. bodies dichotomy through which migration policies operate and show Romanian mothers' intelligent opinions on the migration of their children, how they cope with transition and dismemberment of their families' effects, and what some of the impacts of their children's migration to Canada are. More importantly, I describe how the Romanian mothers

pointed and spoke to the ways they have enabled their children's brain migration, and show that they are not any less smart and smart and strong. Where migration policies focus so much on "brain" and skills accumulation, making invisible the reproductive labour (usually associated with women's work) that goes into the production of such brains and skills, I wanted to reveal their feelings and their thinking on the processes, their political active being where they are imagined as passive undesirable bodies. Of course, the migration of highly skilled workers is not a success story as many countries of the Global North present it and speak of it. The Romanian mothers provided more nuance to some of the negative consequences of post-communist transition as well as illuminated the problematic effects and short sightedness of the immigration point schemes such as Canada's Federal Skilled Worker program. I also wanted to speak of the migration world through my own experiences as a migrant and the perspicacious eyes of the Romanian mothers, so involved in the process but also so socially and politically aware of all the hot academic topics such as capitalist transition, gender discrimination, de-skilled migration, global inequality, etc. without conceptualizing them as such. While they have invested so much in the highly skilled migration of their children, it is the stories of the Romanian mothers that educate us the most about transition Romania's and Canada's migration programs, proving the lucidity and roundedness of their insights in their analysis over the world. The most striking of them all is their desire to re-build their identities beyond that of their families and parents in a world of migration and transition that supposedly has moved on without them. In this sense, I wanted my project to take the readers inside Romania pointing to what this transition means. This transition is directly linked to both the transnational movement of high skilled professionals with their parents and specifically their mothers specifically localized. Second, this division of high-skilled brains from bodies is also a discourse that makes invisible the dependence of these migrants on the North on both the social

reproduction (i.e., educational resources; household labour) of the state and the household of these migrants.

While so many projects focus on the challenges and hardships of immigrants in new countries, less is known about the havoc and ruptures in the social fabric that their departure can entail in the home countries. With that in mind, it was interesting to see what their investments were in the process, what their lives are in the absence of their children, what expectations they have now and what choices they have as well as what choices they do not have. Their stories revealed the difficulty of belonging in a new space and of re-settling, or of settling and finding stability in anything, and the impossibility of cohesive and united family stories. `

As it relates to their reflections on the investments in the process of migration, especially in terms of social reproduction, another chapter will exemplify the different types of work that parents, and especially mothers, engage in, so that their children become qualified as Federal Skilled Workers in Canada.

Chapter Four: Migrants in Canada and Women's Paid and Unpaid Work in "Transition" Romania

> *Love is an action, never simply a feeling*
>
> (bell hooks 2000:46)

Since I was studying a degree in English and Spanish, women's paid and unpaid work in Romania is not a topic that I engaged in my undergraduate courses at the university though it was something that was happening within my world of daily reference during the 1990s. The possibility of my writing about it acknowledges and highlights Romanian women's work as well as my own lived experience of migration. As an academic feminist in Canada my research objectives were to bring to light some of the hard-working and physically exhausting labour days of the mothers who were investing themselves emotionally, intellectually, and practically in raising the current generation of highly skilled Romanian migrants to Canada. By their investment, I mean both their social reproductive activities (cooking, cleaning, etc.), and their intellectual efforts in framing the future adult minds of their children in Romania's transition economy. My research objectives also aimed to highlight some of their struggles in raising their children within different changing regimes and the inherent patriarchal oppressions embedded in both of these regimes (be it standing in line, struggling to obtain food and basic meat packages, and fighting for gas cylinders or waking up and cooking in the middle of the night, etc.). However, the most important aim lies in highlighting how the migration policies of the developed neoliberal economies such as Canada's that attract "the best and brightest" (McKenzie, Gibson 2010) of migrants heavily relies on women's work from the developing transition world of Romania. In this sense, the purpose of this

chapter is to nuance how neoliberal Canadian growth and development are subsidized in part by Romanian women's work, both social reproductive and waged. This is an equation that, rather than reducing and diminishing the inequalities in different parts of the world, accentuates and intensifies them. If the social reproductive work had been previously presented, in the current chapter the aim was to underline's women's waged work in creating highly skilled migrants to Canada.

Feminist political economists have tackled the issues of social reproduction (Armstrong 2003; Arat-Koc 2001; Besanzon 2006; Laslett and Brenner 1989; Luxton 2006; Waring 1988). Beginning in the 1970s, they identified that there are critical areas left out of conventional political economy analyses, and the issue of "social reproduction" was one of them. In this sense, feminist political economists are the first to highlight the existence of two different types of work: one done in the public sphere, paid and visible, and the other one in the private sphere, unpaid and invisible. The separation corresponds perfectly to the gender division, one comprised mostly of men (the public sphere) and the latter containing mostly women (the private domain). Thus, while the work done in the public sphere is masculinized, the one done in the households is feminized.

Challenging conventional assumptions about production and reproduction economies, Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill argue that no economic system can be sustained without social reproductive labour of which there are three varieties: that of biological reproduction; the work required to reproduce the labour force; and the labour required to provision and care for members of society. "Social reproduction provides the cultural, social and economic values that support productive labour, that is, labour for which there is more often remuneration and a tangible outcome that is accorded a market value. Whether or not it is remunerated, social reproductive labour is a requirement of the social and material processes through which humanity is constituted and cannot be ignored in the theorization of the market" (Bakker and Gill 2003: 23).

The underlying oppression of women created by the burden of social reproduction is not particularly a "Western" or capitalist concern. This oppression exists in Eastern European countries and it was a prevalent feature during the communist regimes as well. In this sense, the installation of communist regimes in Eastern Europe post WWII and their rhetoric promised a couple of egalitarian gender policies. Undoubtedly, the communist state's promises of emancipation of women greatly increased women's literacy and rates of enrolment in schools and universities, allowing them access to conventionally considered male fields and disciplines (math, physics, engineering, etc.). However, despite the former communist states' promotion of women's "emancipation" and support for egalitarian gender policies, the actual policies enacted by these governments did not effectively work towards a meaningful advancement of women's rights, resulting instead in a "false emancipation" of women (Einhorn 1993). For example, the policies of the communist state aimed at "emancipating" women did not target issues of social reproduction, and in everyday life, all the household work duties were left to be done by women alone (Ashwin 2000, Einhorn 1993, Gal and Kligman 2000). In this respect, there is unanimous agreement among feminists that Eastern European women were not empowered by the former communist system in the domestic sphere. Therefore, it was women who carried the "double burden" of work and family care during communism (Ashwin 2000, Einhorn 1993, Gal and Kligman 2000a, 2000b, Saxonberg and Sirovatka 2006).

While analyzing women's situation during the communist regime, the renowned feminist critic Barbara Einhorn actually talks about the existence of a "triple burden" set for Eastern European women during communist times, the outcome of the so-called "emancipation" policies having them simultaneously perform the roles of mothers, wives, and workers (Einhorn 1993). Furthermore, the superficial and scarce results of the Communist Party's emancipation of women are also

demonstrated by the maintenance of a gender division of labour and a clear employment hierarchy. During communism, women were inclined to be employed in the less prestigious economic sectors (education, light industry, and textiles) while men were occupying positions in the more respectable and better paid industrial economy (iron, coal, steel, mining industry). Moreover, as mentioned before, women's responsibility for the work in the private sphere was never challenged, and the policies were massively silent about women being left in charge of all the domestic and childrearing chores in the private sphere.

In this sense, some of the feminist scholars think that the Communist State Party did not have any real interest in women's emancipation, and their only support of such egalitarian agendas was articulated as long as women could be used and exploited as labour force once "liberated" as workers. As any nationalist scheme the so-called "emancipation" of women was stimulated as long as the female subjects were needed in economic production (Einhorn 1993, Magyari-Vincze 2002, Verdery 1996). Consequently, women in Eastern Europe were often categorized as either "workers" or "mothers" according to the Communist Party ideological agenda of priorities (Fodor 2004, Haney 1997). In this sense, the promotion of women's rights was part of the communist political ideology that defined women's subject position as equally subordinated as men were to the projects of a national "paternalist" state (Verdery 1996).

Additionally, it is important to underline that acquiring these rights did not result from women's liberation and emancipation movements. They were just legislated as such by the Party. Therefore, the communist state's egalitarian policies did not promote a pro-feminist mentality, nor a formal acknowledgement of women's oppression in the private realm. This determined many of the Eastern European scholars to claim that, under the acclaimed "emancipation of women", the

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communist states actually enforced and perpetuated a patriarchal regime (Einhorn 1993, Gal and Kligman 2000, Kligman 1998, Magyari-Vincze 2001, Miroiu 1998, 2004, Verdery 1996).

Overall, what seems to be a common agreement among feminist scholars is the fact that the socialist states did not emancipate women, nor stimulate their personal autonomy, nor impose their social status (Einhorn 1993, Gal and Kligman 2000, Kligman 1998, Magyari-Vincze 2001, Miroiu 1998, Verdery 1996, 2000).

If the communist regime is analyzed as too patriarchal and paternalist to meaningfully emancipate women, the collective desire was for the long-awaited transition to a capitalist market and the installation of democracy to bring better outcomes and more liberating conditions for everyone. The hope was that freedom from the authoritarian communist rule would also translate into individual freedom of women. Nevertheless, such long awaited outcomes and conditions failed to arrive, while the post-communist Eastern European countries also faced a rather fast dissolution of former safety nets.

To begin with, the socio-economic transformations that the capitalist transition brought about in Eastern Europe (privatization, and marketization) meant a withdrawal of the state from providing for its citizens and a dissolution of the former communist state's welfare structures (Burawoy 2001). The newly introduced idea of the self-regulating market dismissed the former premise of a centrality of the state which used to assure much protectionism and security for the citizens. Furthermore, it immediately reduced the communist states' allocation and redistribution capacity in terms of employment, healthcare, education, and housing.

Feminists have already mentioned that every time the state reduces its budgets from its welfare institutions, it is women's domestic work that is needed in order to supplement the losses (Bezanson and Luxton 2006). The dismissal of former communist state organization and structures

was, paradoxically, made up for by a catching up with Western advanced capitalist economies and through a return to previous and pre-communist forms of social organizations and political gender order, "a return to what is natural: to Europe, to private property, to hierarchy between the sexes" (True 2003: 22). Jacqui True argues that various oppressive features of a pre-communist past were deployed in Eastern European postcommunism: unequal pay, employment discrimination, sexual harassment at work, sexist advertising, domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse, the feminization of poverty, lack of publicly funded childcare and cult of domesticity (True 2003). Additionally, the rejection of former communist regimes also came with a dismissal of the communist party's political promise and agenda for women's equality. Although women's equality never really happened during state socialism (Einhorn 1993; Kligman 1998; Verdery 1996; Johnson and Robinson 2007), the denial and lack of legitimacy for voicing political claims for gender equality and justice (due to the contamination by former communist party propaganda) did not generate the spaces for post-communist women in making claims and acquiring more rights and gender-based justice.

In this sense, various scholars point to post-communist women's disproportionate social reproductive role (Einhorn 1993, True 2003, Verdery 1996). In fact, after the transition to the capitalist market, we find Eastern European women still performing the same disproportionate domestic work as during communist times. It seems that the sudden injection of liberal democracy did not make a difference in terms of their workload, nor did it release them from the double shift of work and family care. While making some room for acknowledging issues of domestic violence and reproductive rights (for example abolishing the illegality of abortion), post-communist governments did nothing to address the unjust social reproduction distribution. On the contrary, the capitalist transition dissolved many of the public state budgeted methods of collective care and

support (i.e., free kindergartens) which now relied on women's private work to be fulfilled. Later on, the integration into the European Union in 2007, again certified that women's rights were to be upheld in Romania, and that they were to be democratically respected when they actually were not (Miroiu 2010).

The Romanian communist state claimed that women's liberation and equality were achieved with the arrival of communism. This ended the official discussion of the need for political struggle for gender equality. Romania's transition to a capitalist market, and later its integration (also part of this transition) into the European Union (entrance in 2007) reinforced that women's rights and the issues of women equality were again achieved. Women's problems, if any, were often considered to be a residual of the old society. Both the communist and the capitalist state bureaucracy upheld the banner of women's liberation, saying that they were serving both the state and women's interests simultaneously without this being the case. In the next section I will show how the goal of women's equality was never achieved during communism or transition, capitalist times, and how the current migration of highly skilled professionals advances an agenda of gender inequality and injustice. More than the issue of different political systems such as communism or capitalism, my interviewed women acknowledge that both systems intensified their childrearing responsibilities and household work, in various ways. They also describe in detail their extensive social reproductive work in raising a new generation of highly skilled migrants, and problematize the migration flows to Canada.

Section A: Romanian Women's Double-Burden and the Making of the Highly Skilled Migrants

The issue of patriarchy and the social reproduction roles being unfairly gendered, leaving the burden of childrearing and household work to be done by women alone, is highly acknowledged in my interviews with Romanian mothers whose adult children migrated to Canada. In this sense, despite not being targeted by Canada's migration policies focused on brain gains, for the mothers in Romania, who spoke about different political regimes, capitalist transition and migration proved to be not just social reproduction resources, but cutting-edge repositories of sagacity, insight, and a certain value as well. Furthermore, the social reproductive work of mothers demonstrates that the distinction between care labour and trained, skilled labour, between highly skilled immigrants and all the social reproductive work that is necessary for both the formation and continuous function of such talents is more connected than acknowledged in the government immigration policies (Grosz 1994, Fausto-Sterling 1992, Luxton 1997).

Eastern European communist economies were "economies of shortage" (Kornai 1992), of scarcity of resources available for consumption, so that women's experiences of social reproduction were inevitably burdensome and difficult. First off, Romanian mothers' social reproductive work was difficult and challenging since they did not have access to different consumption products and accessories, such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and detergent, to support their household work. Second, preparing and cooking food, for example, acquired particular characteristics specific to a shortage economy and did not consist of simply or directly shopping for food. In communist Romania due to shortages of food and resources, the simple act of buying milk or bread in order to feed one's family often required standing in line for hours in order to obtain these products. Many of the women I interviewed revealed the creativity that had

to go into this process. Such creative acts, though, do not register formally as part of social reproduction. And yet, they are. Much of the way in which the current feminist scholarship goes about describing or explaining social reproduction, for transition Romania, evades the complex creative process that women undergo to constitute it. The Romanian mothers I interviewed expressed this nuance, but more so, brought to the fore the complexity of social relations that went into the social reproductive work, ranging from the sexual division of labour, sexual flirting, the responsibility of shortages of time, etc.

As one interviewee confirms, it was the wives and mothers who would find themselves standing in line. "As a mother, it was more difficult for me to raise kids in communism. For example, I was the only one in the family who was queuing for food" (Simona, fifty-seven, nurse). These challenges and inconveniences were sometimes avoided by making use of other strategies, such as "flirting for food," reflecting gendered agency, refusal of a passive victimizing process, and using alternative creative ways for survival. Therefore, one Romanian mother reflected proudly on using her own charisma and charm in order to bypass standing in line so that she procured the necessary resources to feed her family. "In my family, I was the one who became friends with the butcher and the cashier. Many times, I was flirting with them. I was entering the butcher's store, flirting a bit with him, after which he would give me a sign that it's not the time yet to pass by the store. I would leave and return an hour or two later for him to, discreetly, hand me two kilos of meat" (Simona).

Although the communist systems were historically known for their food shortages (Kornai 1992, Einhorn 1993, Verdery 1996), interviews in Romania with mothers of migrants pointed to the fact that the processes that make social reproduction are more nuanced than usually accounted for and also ridden with tension and emotional havoc due to other deprivations as well: "We didn't

have heat, water, even potable tap water; we were going to a fountain and staying in line for hours to carry it home in canisters. Heat and hot water are always present now, but I work much more now, much much more…" (Anamaria, fifty-eight-year-old, brick factory worker). When mentioning the hardships that materialized with the capitalist transition, Anamaria highlights how hard she had to work and how much more difficult and intense this process was and in comparison, with employment conditions during communism. Another Romanian mother Gabriela, sixty-two years old, retired teacher recollected: "There were problems with the running water (it was available usually for only two hours in the evening). Heat too. The butter was rationed (reduced to half a package per month per family member). We were four in the family, so we got two packages a month, and it wasn't enough". Furthermore, they mention that such activities were more burdensome since they were performing them alone and, if they got some company, it was rather a negative, unhelpful one in the form of the critical judgements of their husbands. "My husband used to reproach me: don't use the gas time so much, don't cook so much! But what did he know? It's not like he was the one ever cooking" (Florica, fifty-seven, nurse).

The mothers highlighted how the process of social reproduction during the communist regime was full of challenges. They spoke much about a gendered division of labour with regard to the raising of the children and the activities that sustain a household, ranging from shopping, to cooking to heating up the house. More intensely, for them they even had to go so far to keep schedules and be ultimately responsible with what they call *shortages of the time*.

Many mothers highlighted that much of their life was strained resulting from a shortage of time. The demands on them ranged from ensuring food on the table to warming up the house. For example, back then, there were not any mechanisms of central heating in the apartments, and the people had to obtain their own gas cylinders for cooking and heating. "Sometimes I had to wake

up at three or four in the morning to queue for gas cylinders. When it was winter and freezing outside, we agreed to leave just the cylinder taps in queues as our substitutes and return later in the morning to avoid the cold" (Mariana, sixty-two years old, nurse). For instance, the daily chore of queuing up in order to purchase gas cylinders added to the hardships women had to endure, making their activities of social reproduction quite intense and difficult. Women felt that this process of ensuring their households' survival and well-being was quite oppressive, and more for them than their husbands: "The queues, this is what I hated it most, for an egg, for 100 grams of butter, meat, gas cylinders…. When I think about it I realize we weren't that hungry: families were storing kilograms of salami in the fridge, but it wasn't so much hunger as it was the fear of not having them tomorrow…" (Mariana, sixty-two years old, nurse).

The retellings and memories about their activities to do with social reproduction during the communist regime and the processes that constitutes capitalist transition were sometimes wrapped up in feelings of nostalgia. Such affects were connected less to the hardships they had to endure and more with the fact that people were young at that time. Recollecting glimpses of the household chores and the raising of children reminded them of their youth with all the advantages and benefits that such a phase of life brought forward:

> It was very beautiful back then when the kids were small. I was lucky to have my parents living in the countryside, and they were helping me out with milk, chicken, pork, etc. We were standing in lines, it is true. Even my daughter remembers how if she saw people queuing at the stores when she was returning home from school, she knew she had to line up automatically without knowing what for. She would find out later what they were all about (meat, eggs, etc.) but still it was nice back then when our daughter was a kid and we were young (Lucia, sixty-eight years old, retired statistician).

While most of my respondents acknowledged that they were doing most of the childrearing and household work, in one or two cases the Romanian mothers suggested that the chores were being rather fairly distributed between the partners. However, after a moment of pause and some reflection, a different portrait was revealed. "My husband helped me with the household chores. It wasn't easy for either of the two genders to raise kids during communism…. or, oh wait, maybe women had it harder with the household, caring for the children, cooking, etc. It was harder for women, I think" (Ana, fifty-nine years old, high-school teacher).

In other cases, when asked about their partner's input in raising the children, these women described them as being absent for most of the time for a variety of reasons. One common justification for his absence was his career mobility and professional development as in, "I was in charge of the raising of the children. He was always away, busy with his work" (Melania, sixty-five years old, administrative staff). Other times the justification for the husband's absence relates to adherence to gendered social conventions and norms: "My husband thinks that the household activities are women's jobs. Whatever there is to do in the kitchen, it is to be done by women. It is their obligation, it dignifies them. The man has other chores and responsibilities. For example, my husband wouldn't change diapers. Even today, in modern times, if we would decide to have another child, he wouldn't see it as fit to change the diapers. It's beneath his dignity. He is not a metrosexual[15] to do his nails, and to do what women do" (Sorana, fifty-five-year-old, physician).

The process of sharing household work such as cooking, cleaning, and raising children was perceived as dangerous and threatening for men's gender identity. This way, the male and female binaries were seen as mutually exclusive: one cannot perform the duties traditionally relegated to

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[15] The expression of metrosexual is used to define an urban man who is careful about his looks and appearance and who usually spends a lot of time and resources to maintain them; the expression is also used in connection to queerness and homosexuality

the opposite gender identity without transgressing and transforming himself or herself into the other identity. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that many interviewed Romanian mothers did not necessarily define their partner's lack of contribution to household chores as particularly gender exploitation and oppression. His lack of involvement in the household duties was sometimes culturalized and ethnicized: "We are a Balkan country, with influences from the East; in our traditional society, we still have a conventional family division with men who work and women who take care more of children" (Mariana, fifty-eight, physician). In the above-mentioned example, the partner's lack of responsibility in household reproduction is rather a cultural coordinate, of "the Balkan influences", passively accepted and resigned to.

The man's absence, some interviewees pointed out, is generally accepted by the wife as she understands that he is alternatively engaging in other duties, the so-called "garage and car" duties as one of my respondents put it to me. However, the husband might be stretching the limits of household work tolerance and fairness when he sometimes expects to receive the same amounts of care as the children do:

> My home was always full of stress and anxiety: cook, clean, supervise the kids to and do their lessons. Besides that, I am a teacher of mathematics, and I was preparing so much the Math classes for next day that my husband was saying: don't you know Math already? Why are you studying it so much? […] I was a loving wife, but when he was asking me: 'please do that and that for me', referring to household chores, I was more like 'no, I can't! I'm tired', and he was like: "And if your kids were asking you for the same favour, you wouldn't reply the same to them, right?' He was right, but I always believed that "One can't compare what a mother can do for her kids with what she's willing to do for her husband" (Lavinia, sixty-six years old, retired teacher).

Lavinia highlighted the same asymmetrical division of labour as well as the affective and emotional economy that came with the investment in social reproduction. The demands made on her are many without any discussion about sharing household chores. On the contrary, despite being an adult, the husband asked to be treated like a child, adding on to his wife's burden rather than helping out. In other occasions the lack of equal distribution of household chores was still acknowledged, although in a softer, non-conflictive way, and it was referenced as "men's protection": "Men live the transformations easier…They weren't that marked during communism either as they were more protected in the household" (Mariana, sixty-two years old, nurse). In other households, the women excused their lack of involvement by taking the blame onto themselves and saying that it was they who did not teach them how to clean or cook for themselves: "My husband doesn't even remove his plate after eating; my kids say that I have taught my husband this behaviour, and being lazy, and maybe they are right; only my back knows the hard work I put to maintain them through university" (Ana, fifty-nine, teacher).

Nevertheless, as mentioned before, Romanian mothers did not necessarily see the unequal distribution of the household chores as oppressive. The chores and duties involved in the social reproduction of the respective family are acknowledged as something vital and necessary for the maintenance of the family, and legitimized as gendered and relegated to women's duties and responsibilities in connection to a temporal, unfixed, remote practice of 'tradition.' Cooking was such an example, as it was seen as a continuity of a long, well-established convention as well as stable, well-defined conventional gender roles. "Here in Romania we have a tradition of cooking. For a lot of time now, women are the actual pillars in the house, and, therefore, they have to cook, take care of kids, and sometimes even of husbands" (Gabriela, sixty-seven, retired nurse). On other

occasions, the social reproduction was part of maternal identity, and embraced as maternal love, especially when the outcome of it seems to be well-raised, studious and serious children:

I was coming from work and was not even changing my clothes and immediately turning the stove on and putting the pot on for soup. But I loved doing that, especially when I was looking in the apartment and noticing that all my three boys were studying. It's not like now when I come home and my nephew is just playing games on computers; they themselves really believed that one needs to study in order to be someone (Lucia, sixty-eight, retired statistician).

As Lucia points to above, social reproduction was predominantly articulated as a burden. Nevertheless, there were also occasions when it is described as providing in mothers a sense of satisfaction and pride. The family quality of care was also seen as a badge of honour: "My pleasure was to see my husband and my children cleaned, well-fed and well-dressed; they were my pride" (Anca, sixty-two-year-old, retired teacher).

With respect to the challenges of social reproduction and the way it materialized in transition Romania, one particularly noticeable difference between the communist regime and the capitalist transition came up in the reflections of my interviewees. They said that under communism the processes of social reproduction, particularly raising and providing education of children, could have been done from the income of one family member. However, with the transition to the capitalist market system, most of a family's income was redirected toward the rearing and education of the children. Such an observation might sound unusual, especially since the costs were not related to the actual tuition fees for education (which were still free-of-charge), but to supporting the children financially while they were students and otherwise unemployed. "From an average income, even one per household, one could raise a kid back then, in communist times. However, when our daughters reached university after the transition to the capitalist market, the entirety of the family

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income went towards supporting them in their studies and paying their living expenses, and it was still insufficient" (Mihaela, fifty-five years old, architect). Similarly, in another context, one of the Romanian mothers confessed sacrificing and abandoning the entire family's material aspirations and lifestyle comfort so that their children could reach higher education and presumably future career mobility. "Any sacrifice that we were making as parents, was done for the children's sake. We gave up on buying a car so that we can support their university education" (Mihaela, fifty-five-year-old, architect).

What was interesting to notice was that the Romanian maternal investment in the process of social reproduction continued when the children finished high-school and entered university. Moreover, the maternal investments continue despite the children's growing up, changing residences, and ceasing to live with their parents. Some of my interviewees expressed that they were hoping that nurturing for their child would end when the child moved out of the parents' place and reached adulthood. However, it was not the case for Romanian children: "We were sending them food by buses. I continued cooking for both of my university children during all their university years. I was cooking, and my husband was taking the package to the bus" (Gabriela, sixty-two years old, retired teacher). While there is a partner's input in such activities (i.e., taking the food packages to the bus) it is evident that his support takes less time than the activity of cooking and most likely less physical effort. Another mother recollects the ritual of preparing cakes, and how that cooking activity was children-centralized and massively children-dedicated: "I remember how I was preparing a cake every Sunday, and my husband and I were only eating the margins of the cake, and sent the best of it to children" (Liliana, fifty-five, engineer). Similarly, another mother confessed how the priority in nurturing and caring was always her children, and only secondarily her own needs: "For example, many times I never had time to cook for myself or even prepare sandwiches

for me, but I always had for my children" (Vasilica, fifty-seven, cook). Sometimes, the number of the social reproduction activities took gargantuan proportions, on the border of the comic: "The problem was not that I was cooking every day. The real burden was the quantities of cooking. My three boys were eating a pot of ten litres of soup per day, and a bag of bread. I was buying old bread so that they don't eat it so fast" (Gabriela, sixty-seven, nurse).

However, cooking was not the only activity that demanded maternal labour and investment in terms of time and effort in children's lives and education. Mothers often recollect cleaning their children's new university residence apartments or washing their clothes. "Every two weeks my children were bringing home their dirty clothes to be washed" (Gabriela, sixty-two years old, retired nurse). Or, "At the beginning of each university year, I was cleaning their university residence apartment, and even dyeing the walls. I had a great satisfaction to see my children's university residence apartment clean, and found the work rewarding" (Anamaria, fifty-eight years old, brick factory worker).

In contrast to men's household and childrearing work, women's unequal contributions and investments into social reproduction are more or less universal. According to some of the interviews taken, what made the situation more difficult and burdensome was when the processes of social reproduction prolonged themselves, and the children were actually old enough to be able to do both the household work, and also study for their courses at university. In this case, although the children could access free-of-charge public institutions of higher education, their education still ended up in being supported by a disproportionate maternal investment (for example, cooking for adult university children). When discussing family investments into education, the maternal investment is also shared to some degree with the fathers' contribution. However, it is my argument that mothers' efforts and investment are critical in covering such costs, first, due to the social

reproductive and care work that mostly women do and for which my interviews provide testimony for, and, second, due to their wages. With respect to the latter, some of the post-socialist scholars argue, that in the post-communist transition, it was women's jobs (in the retail, manufacturing, customer service, tourism, food and entertainment industries, etc.) rather than men's jobs that converted much faster and more successfully to the market economy (Ghoodsee 2005 Gheaus 2008 Pasti 2003), a hypothesis that I will develop further on in the chapter.

With respect to students acquiring a university education, and obtaining a diploma, there is little research on funding providers and different types of support that made that education possible. The research on state investments in education or on family contributions to educating the next generation seems to over-look how mothers' both public and private work fully support such endeavours. While my mothers' testimonies are relevant for the maternal investment in the social reproduction of their children and the acquisition of diplomas, little is known about women's public work and their contribution to the creation of university educated individuals via taxes on their wages.

In a world of neoliberal economies where governments worldwide believe that a well-educated workforce is the source of growth and development but have undergone cuts to all the welfare structures that create it, highly skilled professionals become the target of various immigration strategies. Canada's government is one example. Under the immigration category of the Federal Skilled Workers (FSWP) it is university-educated individuals who are the primary target of such immigration programs (Sachar 2006; Doomernik, Koslowski, Thranhardt 2009; O'Shea 2009). Nevertheless, when examining such categories, the current scholarship looks monolithically at the state's investment in the creation of university educated individuals and/or describes private families' allowance towards that end (Psacharopoulos 1994, Tilak 1991). Nevertheless, beneath the

vague unclear notion of state and the indistinguishable notion of family it is more about the neoliberal state and, as my research and my findings from interviews show, women's both public and private work that contributes towards the education of the highly skilled professionals. In this sense, the Canadian neoliberal market indirectly and less obviously uses women's work outside its borders, and in the context of transition insecure economies.

Section B: Women's Work and Higher Education in Romania

Romanian men and women relate differently to the new political and economic realities that have changed dramatically through a "transition" of both production and reproduction relations (Miroiu 2004). This new development also re-shaped the Romanian economy. As the country's once massive industrial sector collapsed, new fields of economy (i.e., textile manufacturing, retail sector, communication and customer services, tourism, food and entertainment industries) emerged as engines in the new post-communist transition. With the marketization and privatization switch in Romania, it is these sectors that continued to expand while the former industrial economies broke apart. Manufacturing, retail, and communication and customer service fields are all labour intensive, so that, at a time of massive lay-offs in the heavy industry, employment in these sectors grew. Yet, despite high unemployment rates for men, Romanian women continued to dominate these new sectors of economy (Miroiu 2004, Ghoodsee 2005, Gheaus 2008).

"The Last Inequality", written by Vladimir Pasti, gives a thorough description of the transformations in the gender relations during the economic transition in post-communist Romania. Pasti (2003), a Romanian scholar, shows that women's jobs in communist Romania were performed in the "easy," "lower-paid" and 'lower prestigious" sectors (textile and food industry, education, healthcare, and tourism) while men went into the 'hard' and most respected divisions such as extractive industries, or the sector of steel, coal, aluminum, and chemical items, the production of energy, petrol, transportation industries. Undoubtedly, "the division between 'easy' and 'hard', which was based both on physical difficulty and on social contribution, also meant that women had lower salaries and less prestige (Gheaus 2008: 190)". Nevertheless, the challenging hypothesis by Pasti (2003) was later on supported by other international scholars such as Miroiu (2004) Ghoodsee

(2005) and Gheaus (2008). They all posit that, as the Romanian or Bulgarian economy restructured after the communist collapse, it was women's jobs in the textile manufacturing, retail sector, communication and customer services, tourism, and food and entertainment industries that were sources of major profits and profitable industries for the market. Thus, ironically, the transition from communism to capitalism resulted in the formerly lower-paid and lower-prestige women's jobs to being more easily privatized and rendered productive, while men's jobs, from heavy industry and extractive industries, were considered unproductive and ineffective and were closed down.

Pasti's as well as Ghoodsee's and Gheaus's arguments do not stop at just describing women's work conversion during the transition. Pasti also argues that the reform of the economy after the fall of communism (i.e., privatization and the shutting down of a great part of the industries) gave women an opportunity to renegotiate their status in the labour market and reach higher rates of autonomy and independence. This chance, however, was expansively missed because of the predominance of patriarchal conditions in the country and because of women's lack of organizing themselves and being more activist in claiming their rights. Nevertheless, despite not reaching the rates of autonomy and empowerment that the new rearrangement of gender economic relationships could have led to, a group of scholars argues that it was predominantly women's work that assured the transition to a functional labour market (see Table 3 in the Appendix Title: Male/Female Unemployment Rates by Sex and Country (Romania).

According to the Eurostats statistics the unemployment rate of the male population age 15 to 74 in Romania was reported at 5.5 per cent in 1998 while women's unemployment rates were only at 5.3 per cent. The percentage increased dramatically from the communist times in the 1980s when unemployment was actually prohibited by law. The unemployment gap between men and women stayed high in transition Romania, with women less likely to be unemployed than men.

The World Bank offers the same unemployment rates and unemployment gender gap in Romania. (see Table 5 and 6 in the Appendix. Title: Male-Female Unemployment Romania, Gender Statistics)

Similarly, according to a Gender and Development Study done by the Institute of the National Economy in Romania in 2007, the jobs held mostly by women prevailed in health and social security (77.1 per cent), education (73.3 per cent), hotels and restaurants (65.4 per cent), financial transactions (64.7 per cent), and commerce (54.1 per cent) (Ciutacu 2007).

While women were hired in these jobs, scholars argue that the Romanian wage-earning women became actually the main taxpayers, making the Romanian state budget directly dependent on women's jobs and their earnings. In this sense, political economists of Eastern Europe largely argue that post-socialist countries have "feminized" state budgets (Pasti 2003, Gheaus 2008). Obviously, such capture of the pie of women's labour and the "feminization" is the result of women's jobs being more easily converted to the labour market during the transition from a communist system to a liberal economic regime and their wages contributing more to the state budget via taxes. By being more easily converted to capitalist market, women's jobs and earnings through their taxes predominate in forming state budgets (Pasti 2003). At the same time, Romania inherited from the communist regime a massive welfare state, whose institutions were supposed to provide, for example, a large scale free education, health services, support for the elderly and for parents of small children. Such institutions (higher education, health services, etc.) are still heavily subsidized by state budgets, and therefore rely on women's earnings (Pasti 2003).

Nevertheless, while women become a more employable force during transition, it is their wages and income that count towards the taxes. While statistics that break down the tax revenue by gender are not available, there is scholarship in the field that points to a remarkably reduced male-

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female wage gap before and during the first years of transition (Andren and Andren 2015). The authors argue that since the communist regime centralized the economy, it also controlled workers' wages which were established according to a pre-established grid. Due to these pre-established centralized wage grids, women's wages did not differ from men's. Despite the fact that transition disrupted the carefully planned and centralized wages, the scholarship still points to a wage gap decrease during the first years of the change. This is due to diminishing of the employment of low wage female earners (Hunt 2002), and, as already mentioned, the expansion of the high wage service sector (Giddings 2002) which was female-dominated. With the expansion of the service sector, there was also an expansion of employment in the area where women predominantly occupied the positions, and, consequently, an increase in the taxes they contributed to the budget.

Since women's contribution through their taxes is critical to state budgets, it is important in guiding an examination of how the welfare state budget is spent and which branches of government and institutions are prioritized. The case of higher education is relevant here since it is mostly state-budgeted in offering access to free education.

With a history of higher education that started in the nineteenth century (the first university was founded in Iasi in 1860), and a population of approximately 22 million people, Romania has approximately fifteen public universities. The communist regime installed in 1945 stipulated by law that education was a public, free-of-charge right. At the capitalist switch in 1990, a number of private universities were created, although the Romanian state continued to provide free higher education in its public universities. By early 2000s, the public universities started to offer a number of so-called "charged admissions' and university places for which one had to pay (the Romanian equivalent is "locuri cu plata"). The "charged admissions" were meant as an answer to an increasing number of university applicants and openings while the university funding stayed the

same. Not surprisingly, the number of "charged admissions" increased in the last years although the majority of university positions were still left free of any charge (Ministry of the Regional Development and Public Administration of Romania 2014; see Table 9 in Appendix, Title: Number of Students in Higher Education Per Year and Form of Tuition Financing).

Despite a demographic recession and a decline in the total number of young people, Romania experienced higher enrolment rates in the higher education system during the 1990s and 2000s (Eurostats, data extracted 2013). For example, during the period 2000-2009, in Romania, the student population in tertiary education doubled (Eurostats, data extracted 2013). Moreover, a third of all the 20-22-year old are in tertiary education, with the women outnumbering men. The majority of the students in Romania (around 98per cent) are enrolled in public institutions of tertiary education, and although private universities exist, the enrolment rate of students in them are marginal (see Table 7 in the Appendix, Title: Tertiary Education Enrolment Rate by Gender, Romania).

The proportion of Romania's total public expenditure on education was around 4 per cent of GDP in the late 2000s and around 3 per cent of GDP in the '90s. Expenditure per pupil increased also with the level of education. In Romania, the average annual cost per secondary school pupil is higher than that of primary school pupils. Similarly, the average cost per student in tertiary education in the European Union was almost twice as high as for primary pupils (Eurostats 2011) Almost all the education expenditures are financed through public funding, specifically through the state budget and private funding (in terms of loans to cover student costs) remain marginal. The public funding rates match other larger statistics. For example, in 2007 for European Union countries public financing accounted for almost 90 per cent (86.6 in 2008) of all the higher education expenditures. Nevertheless, it seems that the financing for higher education pays off:

statistics of the European Union show that holding higher education qualifications are more conducive to being employed. In addition, the tertiary education graduates find their jobs two times faster (Eurostats 2011). Nevertheless, despite such predicted outcomes of statistics at the European Union level, about half of the 5,000 graduates of Romanian universities in computer science end up emigrating each year and a March 2001 poll found that 66 per cent of the Romanian students would emigrate if they could. (Martin and Straubhaar 2002 :81)

If the common rhetoric is that it is the state that finances free tertiary education, in transition Romania - women's waged work is critical for such contributions (Pasti 2003, Gheaus 2008). This fact renders evident how women's work facilitates the formation of capacities and skills through education, women's paid work and the female labour participation being added to their common gendered social reproductions roles.

Therefore, when different immigration systems, like the Canadian or Australian ones, favour highly skilled and university educated young migrants, their migrant desirability and mobility relies indirectly on both Romania's women's waged and unwaged work: waged work due to their earnings that substantially form the post-socialist state budgets that subsidize higher education, and unwaged/ unpaid work due to their heavily domestic labour that goes into the daily and generational maintenance of the population, a process also conceptualized as 'social reproduction'. Thus, it is at the expense of a country of relative poverty (Romania) and its population that is already disenfranchised that the creation of highly skilled immigrants becomes possible. What comes to define the Romanian migrant as "highly skilled" and desirable by neoliberal economies such as Canada's are substantially produced through Romanian women's paid and unpaid work, respectively public and private work. As my Romanian mothers revealed in the interviews taken, they all pointed to a gross unbalance and injustice between efforts and

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rewards distributed unevenly at both family and state level: "We raised kids, and made so many sacrifices to educate them only to see their skills benefitting other countries" (Mariana, sixty-two, nurse); "we raised children to have tomorrow's safety assured not to see other countries' future guaranteed" (Sorana, fifty-five, physician); "to educate from our resources engineers, physicians, teachers, etc. and to leave the country? How unfair is that?" (Geanina, sixty-four, retired teacher); "I could come at peace with the idea that they leave their countries and families temporarily to acquire more learning, but not for good after I worked so much and invested so much effort into their education" (Mihaela, fifty-five, architect).

In this scenario, it is exactly women's work that enters into the creation of the highly skilled desirable migrant, by taking into consideration their social reproductive work, but also their substantial contribution to the state budgets that further subsidize most of the higher education systems in the post-communist Romania.

At the same time, as mentioned before, the access to free higher education and processes of outward migration become very problematic when such public state budgeted services do not usually end up providing benefits for the people who actually pay for it. If women's work is critical in the support and maintenance of the higher education of the future engineers, physicians, and technicians, they are also entitled to benefit from the services that such professionals might provide when entering the labour market. Nevertheless, when these trained professionals leave for Canada identified as highly skilled workers, the country is drained of its own expertise. The constitution of the highly skilled immigrants and the role of mothers who actively involve themselves in social reproduction may not be standing in a causal relationship, but clearly their work does much to generate the conditions and possibilities for such a mobility. Thus, what is important here, and as many of the mothers brought up, is the material loss they feel once their children do not come back

or are not available to support them and use their skills toward the development of their state.

As this segregation of social reproduction and expertise takes place in different locations and countries, presuming a division of minds and bodies in terms of work, it makes it difficult to make claims about compensation and redressing inequality. Despite the fact that my case study connects the social reproductive capacities of women in Romania with the highly skilled workers imported by Canada, an agenda of equal and fair redistribution of women's initial investments, realistically speaking, might be out of reach. Nevertheless, Canada's selective immigration policies and the attraction of highly skilled workers from Romania impede mothers later in life from enjoying the full benefits of their efforts. To draw on a very capitalist language what takes place is that many mothers substantially "invested" in their children without experiencing any future "return on their investment" (Mihaela, fifty-five-year-old, architect). Moreover, while investing so much emotionally and intellectually, they do not get to enjoy their families close by, neither their communities and networks of support and belong in an unbalanced equation of work and reward, efforts and benefits.

Section C: "Sacrificing everything just to see my daughter educated and in line with her peers"

Some of the Romanian mothers were quite aware that it was particularly the university education that their children pursued that made them desirable as immigrants in Canada: "I think my two daughters were qualified for immigration to Canada because they had good matching diplomas: one has a BA diploma with an English Major and Romanian Minor, and the other one in Economics. Their university education was state-budgeted, and we didn't have to pay tuition (the young one even had scholarships)" (Simona, fifty-seven years old, nurse). Whereas during communism free education was perceived as something "natural," and an opportunity that everyone deserves, in the transition period to capitalism with every service starting to cost money, one of my interviewers described receiving free education as a matter of "luck." "She was lucky: she followed high-school, university, nursing degree free-of-charge" (Gabriela, fifty-seven, teacher).

Nevertheless, higher education in public and state-budgeted institutions is perceived not only as being free-of-charge, but also as being of higher quality: "My son enrolled in engineering school where he even managed to obtain scholarships. At public universities, the lectures are rigorous and involving, not like in private universities where there is too much entertainment, too little work, and not enough seriousness" (Florica, fifty-nine, retired accountant). Despite government funding of education, Romanian parents talked abundantly about their own efforts and financial burdens in providing for their children during their university years, shedding light on the multiple investments necessary in order to obtain a degree: "For us it was so painful to see all our children leave. We struggled so much for them to pursue an education. We were giving them monthly family

allowances which strained our finances. One child graduated from aerospace engineering, but he could not find any job in Romania afterwards" (Simona, sixty-two, retired teacher).

Nevertheless, mothers were relatively aware of how critical their waged work contribution was to their children's education beyond the household engendered investment in the process of social reproduction. For example, in my interviews they talked a lot of how it was them and their work that succeeded in the transition whereas men "got lost" in the painful process. Furthermore, they are aware how the skills they helped nurture in their children ended up assuring the mobility of their children and their immigration to Canada.

In their book *Mothering for Schooling* (2005) Dorothy Smith and Alison I. Griffith argue that mothers engage in innumerable, hidden, seemingly mundane tasks like getting children ready for school, helping with homework which has profound effects on social reproduction and the production of middle-class positions. The authors analyze how women's middle-class position and their time availability for school-related types of work reproduces inter-generationally their economic status and, with it, the inequalities in the available educational opportunities. While education has been classically seen as a recipe for reducing inequalities between generations, the scholars argues that there are other factors external to it that affects outcomes such as women's reproductive work and the disposability of their time for extra-curricular and school-related activities.

However, while their emphasis is on the amount of unpaid work that North-American housewives contribute and that ends up reproducing inequalities in educational opportunities and perpetuating global class structures, my analysis is rather centered on how Romanian women's work in a transition economy enables the creation of highly skilled subjects within a neoliberal market and their mobility as highly skilled migrants. Whereas the two scholars looked particularly

at the middle-class North-American women's educational supplementary work in organizing family routines and schedules in order to prepare children for the school schedule, my focus is an extension of the literature of the two scholars since it shows that such work is not contained within one's national sovereign boundaries. It is on this rupture that I focus my inquiry, highlighting a preparation of subjects whose immigration halts the development of aspects of a transition economy that make a country competitive on a global level. Nevertheless, although their main focus was on explaining how class inequalities become reproduced, the authors also described how the social reproductive work done by women contributed to their children's opportunities for social mobility albeit not integrated in migration frameworks.

Despite such accounts, Canadian immigration systems keep on framing women's reproductive work as of lesser importance and value than highly trained and educated skills (Hodge 2006). The process is parallel to how impossible it is to separate social reproductive work from intellectual work and the absorption of highly skilled savvy migrants without a reproduction of their daily bodily needs. Through such programs, Canadian government benefits from economic inequalities worldwide, while causing a deepening of their marginalization and the devaluation of their domestic work.

Nevertheless, Romanian mothers are still very keen on their children's acquiring a university education, and they are willing to sacrifice for such an outcome. Or rather their lives at the forefront of "transition economies" are organized in such a manner that they have no other choice but to assume this work for the education and social reproduction of their children despite the high cost to themselves and their own well-being and comfort. "I don't regret having sacrificed so much of the family's income for my girl's education. I would have sacrificed everything just to see my daughter educated and in line with her peers" (Florica, fifty-nine, retired accountant).

Romanian mothers spoke of how they fostered in their children motivation and enthusiasm for acquiring a university degree, all the while instilling an acceptance of not having any benefits solidly secured and assured once they graduated. It was similarly surprising to see how they made sense of different and contradictory worldviews: on the one hand, they were trying to nurture the educational aspirations in children for uncertain and improbable outcomes, while, on the other hand, they themselves had once been motivated and raised by the socialist state and assured of government guaranteed advantages, such as stable employment, secure housing, etc.

Access to higher education in Eastern European communist countries would not necessarily assure employment opportunities, secure housing, and healthcare coverage as these benefits were already and in advance freely, publicly, and collectively state offered and secured. The transition to neoliberal market changed such premises, and getting higher education was considered fundamental for accessing more employment opportunities, career mobility and secure housing. Many of the aspirations for a university education were embedded in family relations, and gender was a key element in creating such expectations. Next to the mothers' concrete investments and contributions (in terms of domestic work, financial assistance, etc.) in making their children highly skilled migrants, my interview testimonies also highlight their efforts in stimulating and encouraging their children to pursue higher education.

Taking into consideration that the decision to pursue higher education is made at a relatively young age (i.e., when finishing high school), the mothering investments in this process begins quite early. In this sense, the social-reproductive work performed by Romanian mothers is a key factor in motivating their children to follow higher education pursuits. Nevertheless, in Romania there is a generation of parents who never themselves faced the liberal market ideas of competition, individualism, and self-sufficiency, and who are now challenged in nurturing these principles in

their offspring while themselves never having been subjected to such nurturing when growing up. Also, the parents were raised and educated with state-assured advantages, and never felt insecure or in danger of not obtaining them. So, they motivate their children for the pursuit of higher education taking into consideration that they do not know the outcomes and economic benefits of obtaining it (i.e., if their children will have a good stable job, or a house, as they used to have under communism). They also seem to be aware that, if their children's expectations are not met, there is the possibility of them migrating abroad.

The mothers I interviewed are substantially invested in their children's education, regardless of uncertain outcomes and long-term benefits. They did encourage and motivate their children to pursue a higher education, and assumed it was their own fault if, after encouraging their children to pursue certain university specializations, the latter could not find job positions in the local labour market. "I wish I knew to suggest my son better and more profitable career options. He went into Engineering, but he could have been any time a good accountant, and with such a job one doesn't have to leave the country. What can we do? We were raised, educated in one way, and we didn't know other and better ways to raise our children" (Melania, sixty-five administrative staff). What she was expressing there was anxiety over having supported less profitable career options (i.e., engineering) and at the same time frustration with new neoliberal demands that required more pragmatic specializations, such as the one of accountant. Similarly, another respondent offered the view that: "We didn't do enough for our children, and for their education. We didn't do more because we didn't know more, and we were not taught to know more by the communist system" (Camelia, fifty-eight, teacher).

These interviews are about the transition and what it means to be confronted with this change as a parent. The Romanian mothers I interviewed experienced personal guilt when they

realized that the careers and educational specializations they were suggesting to their children made them unemployable, and the only plausible opportunity left for them was migration. "If only I were given another chance to raise my kids. I would support them more and would help them choose a better career (i.e., economists, etc.). I would pay for more tutorials, help them more, etc. It's good some people leave their shell and venture abroad, but for me this migration isn't any joy: I don't have my children near me!" (Adina, fifty-five, teacher). In this sense, the Romanian women noticed that their children were part of a social community that was still needed in the context of the diminishing of the communist welfare system and the onset of new capitalist rules.

The social-economic lack of perspectives of young graduates was again articulated as being a result of the pedagogical actions of the mothers including their ignorance or not knowing enough in the field of education. Moreover, the lack of employment possibilities was understood as their own fault and particularly a mother's fault: "I regret that she went to Canada. Instead of talking live to each other, we're now talking on the phone, and we miss each other. We stay a lot on the phone, on the Internet. I wish I encouraged her to follow other careers. As a mother I could have done more for her" (Ana, fifty-eight, statistician). In this context, migration is seen as a result of a maternal erroneous or deficient pedagogical knowledge. "There weren't so many programs in child education when I raised my child; there wasn't this freedom, nor the Internet. If they were available, she would not be there [in Canada]" (Gabriela, fifty-seven-year-old, teacher).

In the above testimonies, Romanian mothers never blamed their governments, nor Romania's transition market for the lack of employment possibilities or good working conditions for their university graduated children. While there was a unanimous proclivity for parents' self-blame and self-guilt, it was harder to accept and believe it, considering the context of the shortages of the transition and the rest of their other statements regarding economic hardships. Nevertheless,

it is surprising how individualized and personalized the failure to find adequate employment was, and how little responsibility was put on the shoulders of the government and neoliberal demands to provide such opportunities for all its citizens. The mothering in this case remains in the hands of the women, but in very narrowly punctuated way they end up feeling responsible for the failures of the state or social actors who are redirecting the resources to projects that may not be viable in the long term. The issue was even more striking since the generation of the interviewed Romanian mothers was raised with a set of expectations in which the communist state would provide them automatically with employment and job opportunities. Now that the switch to a capitalist state had happened, all the previous protective functions of the welfare state were no longer in place and the only accountable actors in the process were themselves.

It is also important to notice how, although freedom was one of the elements desired during the communist regime, the current possibility of migrating and leaving the country was not conceptualized as necessarily "freedom" of mobility. On the contrary, a situation that was once so much wanted, ended up leading to something that Romanian mothers mostly disfavoured, that was, their children's leaving them. Additionally, they challenge the concept of freedom if their children can experience the freedom to live abroad, but not the freedom to choose to stay in their own home country. "We wanted so much this freedom, to go outside the country, to visit abroad, etc. I don't see migration as a positive process, not at all, for this country, for this people and its future. Now you're free to leave your country, but you can't stay in your country. What kind of freedom is this? " (Simona, sixty-two, retired teacher).

My chapter engaged with women's work as an essential element in the creation of the highly skilled Romanian immigrants to Canada. By that I mean the multiple efforts that mothers invest (in terms of waged and unwaged reproductive work) so that their children are qualified for

immigration programs such as the Federal Skilled Worker (FSWP). Since the efforts are indirect, and less visible at first sight, they are labelled as invisible. Equally crucial was to report Romanian mothers' own voices and intellectual insights on social reproduction, education, transition and migration. By showing their intelligent testimonies, and sharp analysis of reality, they challenge the current focus of immigration programs, centred disproportionally on formal university-legitimated high skills.

When identifying women's work, my analysis made a distinction between women's waged (public) and women's unwaged (domestic, private) work. Nevertheless, my analysis concluded that both types of female work contribute to the creation of university educated Romanian professionals and their reproduction as highly skilled subjects with the capability to migrate. As it relates to women's waged work, my analysis followed up the work of various international political economists who argued that during the transition from communism in Eastern Europe it was rather women's work that ended up being more easily convertible and valued in the capitalist market. Despite claims of "emancipation" and empowerment of women, communist policies maintained a gender division of labour. Nevertheless, the fact that women dominated the "soft", "easy" communist industries advantaged them at in the switch to a capitalist market and made their skills more easily employable while men were massively laid off from their traditionally held occupations in the "heavy" industries. Such transformations induced by women's higher employment rates impacted state budgets that were now collecting a lot of taxes from women's waged work. However, the new conditions meant that various welfare support structures (such as education, healthcare, etc.) were now funded substantially also by women's wages. With an increasing number of enrolments in education and especially in the education's most expensive category (higher education), and a continuous reliance on state budgets and public finances for

their running, more attention should be paid to how such developments rely on women's work and their contributions. The context becomes even more problematic and complicated when statistics inform us of massive outward migration rates and surveys share findings about the intentions of 66 per cent of Romanian university graduates to leave the country.

However, women's waged work is just one angle of a two-fold analysis. The other angle is given by Romanian women's unwaged, domestic work. This work is pivotal in the formation of highly skilled immigrants. In this sense, scholarship that lacks a portrayal of women's domestic work does not provide the resources to understand the implications of gender in the context of transition economies and neoliberal development. My interviews provide great insight into how Romanian women's domestic work during communism and capitalist transition is pivotal both in the movement of migrant professional workers to a well-formed capitalist economy and the further development of the latter. They also render evident mothers' manual, emotional, and intellectual work in fostering education and skills in their children.

Beyond a description of their role in fostering the education of their children that frequently come to qualify as highly skilled workers in Canada, I also wanted to show how they deal with the process of migration and how they respond to it. In this sense, I found that Romanian mothers mostly blame themselves for the migration of their children, revealing in this way how neoliberal economic transitions and shortages are individualized instead of being adequately externalized. It is through women who take the responsibility for the migration of their children that dramatic neoliberal conditions such as, lack of jobs and perspectives, are normalized and naturalized, and it is through a transfer of the former communist state supported mechanisms onto the mothers in the form of guilt that such ideologies are perpetuated. Similarly, I wanted to underline how the mothers themselves are aware of different contradicting and sometimes opposing views ("free" liberal

regime vs. unfree, suppressed communist regime; the way they're raising and socializing their children, and for what kind of insecure career opportunities post-graduation vs. the way they were raised and socialized and for what kind of stable employment opportunities, etc.). Examining the gender relationships that shape the migration to Canada was important with regards to the complex relationships that are triggered between different countries and various categories invested in the process. Women's role and reproductive labour is one part of the question. Another part of the question is the ways transition states take no responsibility for ensuring employment opportunities, and good living standards for university graduates whereas economies of the Global North capitalize on these shortcomings for their own development. Shifting the blame, personalizing and domesticating the factors of migration diminish the responsibility of the actual state for the well-being of its citizens. And it is not just the Romanian state, but also the Canadian one, for which the Romanian mothers' self-blaming makes invisible the role of the host state in providing good living conditions for its newcomers and migrants. Last but not least, in attracting highly skilled professionals from developing countries Canadian migration policies fail to consider the impact that their policies might have on the sending countries, especially as they relate to discussions of migration and development. In this sense, the loss of skilled workers places the sending countries at a disadvantage (Skeldon 2009). The movement of so many professionals from developing countries cannot be but a loss to and prejudicial for the growth and development of origin countries since it is the engineers, physicians, and computer programmers that are needed. The current scholarship shows that it is the state budget of the origin country that pays for the education of such professionals who leave for work abroad, and that the issue is not even particularly recent.

The premise is that the cost of training is indeed supported by the country of origin, but little is known about how women's work is contributing through it (via their wages or their

investment in processes of social reproduction. At the same time other scholars argue that, since education has become increasingly privatized, its cost is now being covered by the family (Skeldon 2009). What is important to observe is that the element of the 'family' contribution is not equally distributed between its members, and, if we are looking at some of the Eastern European states, for example, it is also heavily gendered with women's work contributing more substantially to the creation of highly skilled workers. Taking in consideration that the domestic work in households as well as the raising of children is still heavy gendered in Romania, and disproportionately done by women, their work contributes significantly to the formation of highly skilled immigrants to Canada. Additionally, after the transition to the capitalist market, Romanian women's work contributed significantly to the Romanian state budget, assuring indirectly the higher education and the specialized skills for the future immigration candidates. Consequently, the formation of highly skilled young Romanian professionals who leave the country and migrate to Canada is indebted to both the domestic and public work of Romania's women.

The interviews with Romanian mothers mainly document women's domestic work contributions in the formation of highly skilled migrants, namely cooking, cleaning, etc., for their children while they are pursuing university degrees. At the same time, as already demonstrated, the situation points to women's work as critically forming state budgets and, therefore, contributing more to the state's free provision of higher education. As mentioned before, the problem exists when so much of women's work (public and private) gets invested in developing skills and specializations that end up being capitalized elsewhere by leaving the country for Canada.

In this regard, there is clearly a need for much more analysis of the interaction between different actors involved in the process of migration (governments, NGO communities, etc.) and

for a change of perspective on migration goals, but also for addressing global economic inequalities (North, South; East, West). There is also a need to question programs (such as some of the "brain races" migration programs) which capitalize on these global inequalities and deepen the devaluation of social reproductive work.

Without a doubt, the Romanian case is particularly interesting as it provides an insight into the indirect costs and benefits, effects and consequences of migration flows as well as links to different countries and demographic categories. What is particularly interesting about Romania is how significant the gender component is in such migration stories. When so much of the work is gendered (due to the disproportionate input of women into processes of social reproduction), then the Canadian model of migration entails layers of oppression and disadvantage. For example, welfare systems in the Eastern European countries that were supposed to help and benefit the local citizens end up contributing to the accumulation of capital in the North and West. Similarly, skills, talents, capacities are formed at the expense of women's work (as they contribute to the state budgets with disproportionate roles in social reproduction) and without them benefitting from their input. In this scenario, economically privileged nations end up reinforcing their already achieved advantage and status by deepening the marginalization of already marginalized countries. Gender becomes a determinant of the migration flow, with greater demand for skilled labour in developed countries, assuring a continuous nurturing and tending of those needs in the developing countries. This unfairness and injustice definitely contribute further to women's subordination and exploits gender division of labour. With that in mind, it would be good to find possibilities for transnational feminist responses and solutions to such problems.

Chapter Five: Feminist Critiques of Proposed Solutions to Counter-Balance the Highly Skilled Migration Movement. Possibilities for Transnational Feminist Solidarity

It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize,

accept, and celebrate those differences.

(Audre Lorde 1994:52)

While in the previous chapters I have highlighted the harmful effects that certain migration schemes have for women's rights and developing countries, in this section I am describing how some of the solutions and recommendations (i.e. remittances, policies of return and re-engagement, etc.) suggested by the literature in the field to counter-balance the departure of highly-skilled migrants do not end up having a meaningful long-lasting impact, nor do they restore the justice to the communities left behind. Due to these failures, I am also looking at possibilities of highly-skilled migration policy reforms and reviews, through a gender focus. Furthermore, I am mapping the possibilities for transnational feminist alliances and grassroots ground work for raising awareness and building resistance regarding some of the negative outcomes of such migrations and the failure of the current measures to offset it. Possibilities of policy reforms and feminist activism are highlighted as a means of undoing this type of gender unbalance and injustice as well as to address the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries.

My own journey as a Federal Skilled Worker in Canada is one that informs and shapes this project. I was raised and educated in Romania mostly through Romanian women's paid and unpaid social reproductive work. In this dissertation, I have demonstrated how some of the production and reproduction of the neoliberal economy of Canada relies indirectly on women's work, much

of it through international migration. Such processes happen in a context of transition insecure economies that end up co-constituting such movements, as it is the case of Romania. While I cannot draw a causal connection between Canada's economic advancement and the social reproduction and the public work of Romanian women, it is vital that we recognize that the connection is there even if it does not map easily and linearly on Canada's development of both the body politic and also its economy. Most of the mothers I interviewed highlighted exactly these connections in arguing that the neoliberal development of countries such as Canada is subsidized by developing transition countries, in an equation that deepens global inequalities in the world. They also acknowledge the conditions of precarious economies and lack of fulfilling opportunities as a push-and-pull factor of migration. Nevertheless, women's labour and their affective, social, creative investments in the formation of crucial capacities and talents are not marginal. Many of the mothers' discourses orient us to problematize easy answers to questions of development and social reproduction even when one thinks of their knowledge as ideologically informed and shaped by the structures within which they find themselves including the household. For them, there is a clear connection between the work they do, the children they raise and the professionals they participate in constituting: the highly skilled migrants to Canada who end up growing the economy of Canada. For them, their labour not only serves Romania but also the development and growth of already developed Western countries such as Canada. It is a negative cumulative effect that does not reduce global regional disparities and only deepens the precarious economic status of the origin countries. Furthermore, I wanted to show how the costs of social reproduction in neoliberal economies have transferred more work on women's shoulders inside and outside Canada's border. For example, while Canadian privileged women entered workforce, the childcare work that they had been doing as housewives was shifted to the work of live-in caregiver migrants. It also

translated into an increased absorption and selection of highly skilled migrants, trained at other countries' expense and through other women's work investments, as in the case of Romania. Nevertheless, despite the race of developed governments to collect particularly skills and talents through their immigration policies, I have shown how the discourses that divide skills and brains cannot be understood outside the discourses about bodies, care and the social reproductive work of women. My own biography is deeply marked by these migration processes, thereby informing my interest in this project. From this point of identification, I showed how migration programs, which focus on brain gains and acquisition of talents, rely on patriarchal divisions of labour and gender hierarchy, and are always subsidized through the work performed elsewhere. In this gendered hierarchy, minds are considered superior, and of higher value than bodies just as, women's work, largely associated with the social reproduction of the said minds, is not equally prioritized and valued. I wanted to show that such divisions are unrealistic and sexist, because as feminist scholarship points out, such segregation is problematic, and it serves to perpetuate the exploitation and oppression of women who come to be identified with their bodies. It benefits gendered male subjects who are identified with their minds. Minds and bodies coexist, processes of production and reproduction are equally interdependent, and the Romanian highly skilled migration to Canada is an example of it.

As mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation, in the 1990s and 2000s a new neoliberal idea was put forward which suggested that economies particularly need a knowledge-based workforce in order to reach new levels of growth and development (Boeri, Brücker, Docquier, and Rapoport 2012). The capacity to train either such a young workforce or to encourage its migration was seen as essential to ensure one country's performance as a viable economic, social and political power internationally. It was at this point in economic history that governments of developed

countries such as Canada, United States and Australia entered a global brain race and focused on immigration programs that stimulated and attracted young, and highly-educated professional migrants. The assumption was that it was particularly migrants with such training and knowledge that would bring their new countries to a new level of development and performance (Parrenas 2001; Piperno 2007; Sassen 1998; Walby 2009). However, at the same time the said economies entered a neoliberal phase of development when, in the name of efficiency and cost-saving, crucial welfare services are cut (Parrenas 2001; Esping Andersen 1997). Feminists have noticed that whenever state assured public welfare services are dismantled, it is private families that are required to cover that need, formerly provided by the state, and within the said families, it is actually women's work which is called for to meet that need (Arat-Koc 1999). In "Whose Social Reproduction? Transnational Motherhood and Challenges to Feminist Political Economy", Sedef Arat-Koc shows exactly these linkages between the accumulation of capital and new rates of profit and growth of the Global North, on one hand, and its own social-reproduction that is done by immigrant nannies in Canada, on the other hand. The immigrant nannies' work in Canada mediates this capital accumulation through a process of undervaluation of their work as it is cheaply paid for and is subject to a lot of scrutiny and surveillance. Nevertheless, such work should be highly valued as it replaces the usual state welfare function to provide for its citizens the necessary care (including childcare) within its sovereign boundaries. However, the unfolding of neoliberal economies relies increasingly on transnational women's work outside their country's borders, as is also the case for Romania and its highly skilled migration to Canada.

Of course, in the competitive global search for brainpower, the assumption that countries which already have a lot of resources will be in the position to attract and gain the most valuable and beneficial skills is implicit. Therefore, "the global quest for talent will be won by countries

that are already prosperous which will widen the economic gaps that spur migration" (Kupstch and Fong 2006: 1). In this sense, the countries that are considered already developed and competitive will attract migrants with the most talented and competitive set of skills which will lead to another cycle of growth and development. While I have already shown how such brain races place the social reproductive work that is mostly associated with women in a deprioritized and less valued position, it is equally important to notice how this set of highly valued and beneficial skills are extracted from countries that are less developed and that actually need these skills the most to overcome the problems of the developing phase. If already developed countries manage to attract talents and skills and absorb them from poor and developing countries, the economic gap perpetuates itself: the already developed countries experience new outcomes of growth and development and the developing countries, in the absence of this highly skilled workforce, fail to record any advancement and face just more stagnation and underdevelopment (Parrenas 2001; Piperno, 2007; Laurie 2008; Skeldon 2009).

Talking about "global cities", Saskia Sassen argues that globalization, trade and neoliberal development enabled a geographic expansion of the economic activities that transformed some of the cities of the global North into an agglomeration of headquarters of highly specialized service firms, such as accounting, legal services, public relations, programming, telecommunications, etc., whereas manufacturing and industry gets particularly produced and territorialized in the global South (Sassen 2005). Similarly, we can argue that, while the absorption and retention of highly skilled migration happens in the developed cities of the North and West, the production of this workforce, through women's labour, occurs in the South and East. Nevertheless, in the equation of costs vs. benefits in the production and utilization of this workforce, it is the latter countries that mostly bear the burden and brunt of it, as it is the case of Romania.

There is a substantial scholarship that considers the highly skilled knowledge migration from one economy to another as a net loss of contributions and investments by one state to the advantage of another state that harvests the profit by deploying these skills within their economy (Bhagwati and Hamada 1973; Bundred and Levitt 2000). However, there are not too many studies that engage systematically with how women's paid and unpaid work from developing transition countries feeds into these cycles of uneven development. It is with this idea in mind that I proceeded with this project.

Writing on the brain drain phenomenon, Docquier and Rapoport (2004) estimate that overall migration rates increased at a much higher rate for the highly trained specialists. The two North American countries of migration, the US and Canada together, represented as much as 70 percent of the receiving of skilled immigrants (Docquier and Rapoport 2004).

The source locations of the skilled immigrants are indeed the developing countries. For example, one study of 55 developing countries provided evidence that a third of them lost more than 15 per cent of their tertiary educated populations through migration (Lowell et al, 2004). "Extreme examples include countries such as Turkey and Morocco that already lost 40 per cent of their highly skilled force while in the Caribbean economies it is approximated that a half of all the tertiary educated adults have already left" (Findlay 2006: 70). Furthermore, according to Hanson (2010: 4364), the proportion of the highly skilled in the migrant population to North America is the predominant one. In this sense, North America attracts only 35 per cent of immigrants with a primary education, while the rest of the 66 per cent of immigrants have secondary and tertiary education.

Encouraging educational attainment and educational participation has been on the agenda of governments long before the brain race migration policies existed. Such interest is automatically

justified when one looks at the many advantages and benefits that follow after governments enact policies regarding the acquisition of migrants with highly valuable skills. For example, various statistics demonstrate that having more education helps individuals get more accessible and better employment prospects. A recent OECD examination of the issue demonstrates that, between the start of the 2008 and 2010 on an average, joblessness rates bounced from a high 8.8 per cent to 12.5 per cent for individuals without a secondary education. Interestingly, unemployment rates for individuals with higher education stayed much lower, moving by less than 1.5 per cent (from 3.3 per cent to 4.7 per cent) during the same period (OECD 2012). In the meantime, it is those with higher education that keep on receiving higher earnings. It might be banal information, but earnings tend to rise in line with one's level of education. Additionally, rising salary compensation levels are paralleled with a progressively higher gap with the individuals who received lower levels of training. For instance, in 2008, on average across OECD nations, a man with higher education might foresee to gain 58 per cent more than his counterpart without similar training and instructions. By 2010, this difference increased to 67 per cent. In this way, in light of the fact that societies need extensive amounts of workers with skills and talents, it is likely that the advantages for workers of having advanced a higher education will stay solid not simply for the time being, but rather over the long haul also. For example, all things considered over the 28 OECD countries, in 2012 the monetary benefit of securing a university degree rather than secondary degree, excluding the related expenses, is over $160 000 for men and around $110 000 for women (OECD 2012).

Nevertheless, the monetary and social returns on public funds that are utilized to help individuals acquire higher training are also high as there are various returns in increased income tax payments and different savings for every person that is supported in higher instruction. It is

estimated that the returns represent on average four times the sum of the public investment from the budget (OECD 2012).

Obviously, the public and private benefits of higher education go beyond perfect financial measurements. Above all, larger amounts of training are connected with a longer life expectancy, increased voting rates, and more supportive attitudes towards equal rights, gender, racial and ethnic justice, etc. In this sense, putting resources into higher education yields great profits both for people and societies, as noted in the Education at a Glance document released by OECD in 2012 (OECD 2012).

As mentioned in the OECD analysis, it is interesting to see how the investment gains of higher education benefit not just individual people, but the society at large through the extra revenues obtained via taxes that the university educated individuals pay once they enter in the labour market. In the context of outward migration, it is equally interesting to see how such gains of higher education are not spreading their benefits on the society that made those initial investments, as it is clearly the case of Romanian migration to Canada.

According to the 2012 OECD study, some of the benefits that might improve the society at large include earnings, taxes, and larger social contributions as "social transfers" (OECD 2012: 111). Conceptualized as social transfers are the consumption rates of goods and services that are higher if wages increase with acquiring new levels of education. This means that individuals with higher levels of education typically consume more goods and services. Furthermore, persons with higher earnings typically also contribute more into their pensions which all means that their education accomplishments will give rise to a complex set of effects beyond the mere financial ones taken into account here.

Nevertheless, if university educated individuals migrate as is the case of Romanian migrants to Canada, their departure leaves empty the consequent reward structures for the country's initial investments. Moreover, future social transfers are vanishing from the scheme and more critical research must be done to identify when they are about to happen. In countries where university educated individuals stay, and obtain low or no tuition fees, these people typically pay back public subsidies later in life through progressive tax systems.

This is not the case of highly skilled university educated Romanians that leave for Canada. The public and private benefits and returns cannot be measured in the same way in their case. For example, their educational accomplishments do not lead to local higher earnings that via higher taxes might compensate more the public budget for its initial investments. Similarly, they do not attempt to consume more goods and services in their home countries so that they can render their local economies more dynamic. Furthermore, they do not contribute to the pension plans and future welfare of others, nor they do end up creating a better society with progressive values (longer life expectancy, increased voting rates, more supportive attitudes towards equal rights, and gender, ethnic and racial justice).

Some of the literature has unsuccessfully argued that remittances can be quantified as social transfers that result from the migration of the highly skilled. Defined as the money sent home by migrants, remittances are believed to reduce the level and intensity of poverty in the developing countries (World Bank 2013). Nevertheless, leaving aside the continent of Africa, the remittance rates sent elsewhere in the developing world has fallen steadily in the past years while there is not enough evidence that it might generate long term sustainable development (Mara 2010). Additionally, the more long-term the immigration is planned, as it is the case of the Romanian immigrants to Canada who plan to stay and become Canadians, the smaller are the remittances

(Mara 2010). Needless to say, the remittances are channeled into private families rather than into community development or investments, and therefore they escape government regulation and use for collective purposes. Since the remittances happen outside the public sphere, they are not regulated by the government and cannot be used for purposes such as improving local infrastructure or for investments in health and education (Findlay 2006). Since these procedures are individualized and personalized as they happen between specific individuals, remittances do not address the general and social collective well-being, nor are able to lead to a unified national development strategy (de Haas 2007). That is probably one of the reasons why the current scholarship labels them as "short term success for long term problems" (Kaneff and Pine 2011: 27), therefore not enough to balance the loss of skilled workers through migration. While some remittances might qualify as part of the equation of reward structures, in this case it is certain that, due to their arbitrary and unsystematic nature, they do not adequately compensate for the loss of highly educated individuals who immigrate to countries where they would have higher earnings potentials.

When evaluating the gains and losses through migration or education though, many analyses assume very stable contexts (Birrell, Dobson, Rapson, Smith 2001). It must be in one of these stable contexts where one person's acquisition of higher education leads to greater job prospects and promising wages which automatically and undisturbingly produced social transfers. These analogies do not take into consideration "transition" economic contexts or dramatic challenges that bring disruption to hypothetical social transfers to a local state budget as well as to private families (such as in the case of outward migration). Neither do they pay attention to the possible circulation of one's labour and knowledge power, or to how the two categories can be

divided, with one's knowledge power produced at the expense of one's country and one's labour extracted in another country as it is the case of the Romanian immigrants to Canada.

When mentioning the skills that particularly Eastern European professionals possess, the feminist anthropologist Frances Pine makes use of metaphors and considers that "many East European households are rich in particular assets but cash poor" (Kaneff and Pine 2011: 8). The situation in itself is a bit different from other people's in poor or developing countries. Furthermore, she claims that many of the concrete forms of social security provided by the former socialist states- such as free education, housing, healthcare- are the origin of current resources that have considerable potential transferable value on the labour market. Some of the examples of such skills developed in a former communist setting include the foundation of solid interpersonal networks (coming about because of the consumer goods shortages in the communist period), home ownership, educational skills/qualifications and good health condition; all are assets in the present that distinguish the post-socialist poor from other poor individuals in different developing countries. For example, she cites the importance of home ownership in the cities as an asset (renting out a room and thus converting housing assets accumulated in the socialist period into an income in the present). At the same time, while some of these assets so easily acquired in the socialist period are devalued in time (industrial skills, Russian language knowledge), multiple others have increased their potential to be converted on the labour market (English language, and computer skills). She concludes that it is those economically marginalized Eastern European "new poor" holding a variety of non-material assets (educational qualifications, computer, bureaucratic skills) who are among the best placed to move out of impoverished positions through migration. The fact that they possess such skills and non-material assets makes them more desirable especially in countries that have brain power migration policies, such as Canada's Federal Skilled Worker

program. The greater their non-material assets, the higher their migration rate and their loss for the country of origin.

Over all, their departure definitely prompts a diminishing, if not a serious disintegration of tax structures and government revenues which are crucial to fund social programs and welfare structures. In this sense, the migration of Romanians to Canada seems to fit more and more into global patterns where destination countries receive workers who have been raised, educated, trained and provided for in their country of origin which bore the costs of that upbringing. In effect, the receiving richer countries are benefiting from the investment made by poorer countries in the development of their citizens (Berger and Mohr 1975; Castles and Miller 2009: 58, 63-67).

Regarding the migration of highly skilled workers, and their losses for the country of origin, Skeldon gives good examples of how such a departure affects the general well-being of the population. "In terms of skilled workers, the agronomists who work to increase agricultural yields to improve the nutrition that will combat disease, the water engineers who work to supply safe drinking water, the sanitary engineers who build the sewerage systems, the transport engineers who improve communications that allow food to be taken from point of supply to where it is needed, and so on, are as critical as any skilled doctor in improving the health status of a population" (Skeldon 2009: 17). Therefore, the migration of highly skilled workers clearly intersects with the right to health, education, and technological development for the people left behind. In this form, this kind of mobility represents a transfer of knowledge and skills resources from those who do not have them or who have very little of them to those who already have them.

It is important to notice that one cannot have a migration of the highly skilled for the growth and development of one country without having the sending country being marginalized. While the migration of highly skilled professionals will add to the growth and competitiveness of the

destination country, it will also imply direct costs and losses for the countries of origin. Namely, some of these losses are associated with public subsidies to education or losses from forgone tax revenues (Mattei and Fondazzione 2009). Or, as another researcher puts it: "states that subsidize the educations of many of their citizens would be deprived of the tax contributions that those citizens who emigrated would have made to offset the cost of their schooling" (McHale 2007: 27). Without a doubt, the loss of skilled migrants negatively affects state budgets of the sending countries through a lack of future contributions as well as investments in the infrastructure. These lost contributions could have been in part the returns on public investment in the education of the now- migrating workers, who, after migration, get to richer and more powerful destination countries.

The movement of professionals from East to West, alongside similar flows of professionals from South to North America, means that such migration processes raise important ethical questions in terms of equality, fairness and justice. In this sense, it has been already demonstrated that the migration of healthcare professionals leads to an erosion of human capital that has a direct impact on the provision of welfare and knowledge for the population left behind. Such erosions in the provision of welfare and knowledge can be measured in falling health indicators (Stillwell 2004). Therefore, the migration of health workers can lead to the loss of health know-how, to generally poorer health and even higher mortality rates for the people in the country left behind (Raghuram 2011). The cost of training is being borne by the poorer countries to the advantage of the richer ones, leading to ever-widening gaps in services provided and new inequalities. Without a doubt, the new cycles of uneven development and growing gaps contribute to further migration and instead of diminishing in time, they end up creating more migration flows. While highly skilled and more resourceful professionals depart, they leave behind people with fewer skills and fewer

resources. Those who are left behind become targets for receiving assistance and help from a state, already eroded in its ability to adequately support the population by the departure of the highly-skilled professionals.

In Eastern Europe, the transition to privatization and marketization after the fall of communism meant a state withdrawal in assistance and support for the less advantaged categories of population. A more general withdrawal of the former communist state support translated into serious cuts in social services and benefits. With an aging population, an increase of social fragmentation and dismemberment of communities, due to migration, the departure of the highly skilled, coupled with state withdrawal from providing social services resulted into a diminishing of the standard of living and well-being of the people left behind as well as impoverishment of the poor and an intensified vulnerability of the ones already vulnerable (Abella 2006; Papademetriou 1985; Papademetriou and Martin 1991).

In this context, the highly skilled professionals should be seen as crucial to achieving basic welfare objectives while their departure could seriously jeopardize the provision of decent welfare services in the countries of origin (for example, the migration of healthcare professionals impacts the quality of healthcare that the citizens receive; the migration of teachers and trainers impacts the quality of education that the citizens obtain, etc.)

Thus, the depletion of the most trained, young and productive skilled force aggravates the developing conditions of transition economies. While private individuals and families seek flight from their developing conditions and imagine finding a solution through migration, their departure also exacerbates the negative economic context they are leaving behind. Depriving communities of their most valuable workforce undermines local developing economies which are now exploited for the benefit of the industrialized developed nations, in a vicious cycle of accelerated growth, on

one side, and aggravated poverty, on the other. These cycles only foster more outward migration, in equations of uneven development and dependency that perpetuate themselves (Reichert 1981; Rubenstein 1992). The negative feedback mechanisms of outward migration and the deepening of inequalities between sending and receiving countries end up reinforcing international economic polarizations.

In looking to pull out and absorb the world's ''best and brightest'' (McKenzie, Gibson 2010), developed countries rarely examine the costs and possible consequences that their policies might have on the countries of origin. Indeed, as the migration scholarship points out, the loss of the highly skilled workers not only affects growth and development, but it is also prejudicial to the health, education, and well-being of the status of populations of origin (Skeldon 2009). Furthermore, a pulling out of the highly skilled by destination countries leaves the origin society with a majority pool of lower quality, or less experienced skilled (Commander et al., 2004). The scenario resembles an inverted U-shaped relationship between migration and wealth, "consistent with low-wealth individuals being too poor to afford to migrate and high-wealth individuals having an incentive not to leave" (Hanson 2010: 244). Migrants thus tend to be drawn from the middle of the wealth distribution, leading to increased inequality (Hanson 2010: 247). It also leads to greater gender inequality and gender injustice, as I will further demonstrate.

What is important to note is how both the state and family contributions to the education of highly skilled workers are usually assumed as neutral and equally shared between both the citizens of a state and the members of a family. However, the example of the Romanian highly skilled professionals teaches us otherwise and shows how such contributions are gendered, with women providing much more work for the creation of highly skilled migrants. At the same time, while the inputs are gendered, the returns are either insignificant or non-existent. Once the

Romanian highly skilled decide to leave, the returns in social transfers are disproportionately too low (via remittances) in comparison to initial contributions, or none at all, leaving the primary investments with a loss. In this sense, the migration process has both economic and social costs and requires would-be migrants to use local resources and women's work that the poorer countries have to offer in exchange for no equal returns. Therefore, migration means a loss to the economy, providing other developed countries with "instant adults" reared of the expenses of developing nations (Sobel 2009).

Talking about brain-drain migration, researcher Allan Findlay considers that Australia, for example, needs an international migration policy which "embraces not only immigration, but also emigration and especially circulation" (Findlay 2006: 144). By emigration and circulation policies, the researcher means that the countries which have a sustained record of recruiting the highly skilled must provide associated policies that recompense in some form the origin area (even if we are not talking about explicit financial compensations). At the same time sending countries should envision "return" and "re-engagement" migration policies (Findlay 2006: 150). The premise is in this case that there is a lot to gain by just acquiring experience, knowledge, and connections in foreign nations as well as the ways in which the expertise, experience, and contacts of the Diaspora can be harnessed to benefit highly skilled recruiting countries in a rapidly interconnected world (Findlay 2006: 150). Similarly, sending countries should create a good domestic environment to attract migrants back or enact government policies aimed at retaining skilled workers so that the countries can recover some of the government finances spent on training and education. Of course, the best way to create a good domestic environment to retain skilled workers or attract them back is an amelioration of the economic conditions and an improvement of livelihoods. As one researcher sums it up: "emigration falls as average income rises" (Hanson 2010: 236). In the

following section I will discuss why such government measures, despite their good faith and intentions, fail to restore the initial equilibrium and a sense of justice to the communities left behind.

Section A: Feminist Critiques of Policies for Circulation, Return and Re-Engagement of Highly Skilled Migrants

In order to balance the brain drain phenomenon, the current scholarships argues that policies of emigration and circulation, respectively return and re-engagement, are necessary (Findlay 2006, Hanson 2010). Following this argument, governments of the Global North can address the losses and the lack of social transfers that the process of migration develops in sending countries, by setting up corrective migration policies of circulation and re-engagement. Nevertheless, the set of proposed corrective policies continues to fail to address the costs and damages of such phenomena from a gender perspective. The policy measures for return and reward gains that are advocated for fail to formulate or incorporate a gender perspective.

The current literature argues that it will be beneficial if governments of Global North start thinking about policies of emigration as well as immigration (Findlay 2006, Hanson 2010). Taking into consideration Canada's example and the fact that, through its migration policies, the country collects highly skilled professionals from developing parts of the world, the government could consider enacting policies to compensate for the losses that such absorption initiatives cause in the origin countries. With that in mind, if Canada's immigration system affects the skills base as well as the provision of education, healthcare, and technological development in the origin country, said immigration policies could be accompanied by investments and parallel transfers of expenditures to the educational, healthcare, etc. sectors of the home countries of the immigrants. In this respect, Canada's immigration policies could aim at improving the welfare and well-being of the people left behind, and increase the social security and the provision of good nationwide public services so that the emigration of "the best and brightest" (McKenzie, Gibson 2010) would

not leave a migrant's country in safety-net collapse. As problematic as they are, various scholars argue that foreign direct investments and development aid could act as a stable reliable insurance that protects people from income increasing disparities and economic downturns while maintaining the welfare, education, health, and living conditions in the countries of origin of the highly skilled migrants. In this way the migration of "the best and brightest" (McKenzie, Gibson 2010) would not jeopardize the living conditions and well-being of the populations left behind (Basch, Schiller and Blanc: 1994; de Haas: 2007).

Nevertheless, such policies fail to address women's greater contribution to the provision and funding of the welfare structures as well as women's greater investments in the formation of the highly skilled migrants. In contrast to current migration policies that impoverish countries and deepen the inequalities, a responsible immigration policy could not envision reducing the socio-economic differences between countries without also reducing gender disparities.

In their own turn, the scholarship argues, sending countries could be more focused in retaining highly skilled migrants and creating better work opportunities for them within their countries (Findlay 2006, Hanson 2010). One such option, for example, could consist in increasing a minimum wage. This measure alone could drive wages upward for all labour categories. Or, similarly, they could reduce working hours in line with business productivity; or encourage flexible working options, and so on. If the migration of highly skilled professionals is detrimental to developing countries, the assumption is that governments could consider policies that protect them from the draining of their best skilled labour. Nevertheless, the same policies are not identifying how women's social reproductive work in the private households is still unpaid, and therefore any minimum wage increases would not apply to them. Any minimum wage increase would not address, nor decrease the disparities between the private social reproductive work

associated with women and the public work associated with men. In this sense, few acclaimed benefits of emigration (such as irregular, temporary and unstable individualized remittances) cannot overshadow the many long term negative side effects of such movements, namely the perpetuation of the developing phase of the economy, and the widening of global inequalities.

In addition, the literature argues that sending government countries could develop policies of return migration and re-engagement for those who have left in order to recover some of the public funds invested in the education of highly skilled professional migrants (Findlay 2006, Hanson 2010). While recently there have been some initiatives to attract Romanians living abroad back in their origin countries as investors, such as the proposal to match diasporic Romanians' investment money with government funds (Stan 2016), little has been done for the majority of Romanian immigrants who do not fit the entrepreneur, business class description of government policies, nor have the resources for investments. Of course, one of the best return and re-engagement methods consists in a nationwide improvement of general livelihoods. Securing and improving livelihoods, as well as overcoming social, economic and institutional development constraints, could also act as a deterrent of long term outward migration and reduce the income disparities between developed and developing countries. Another outcome that might stimulate the development of return and re-engagement migration policies is the fact that attracting highly skilled migration back would also mean recovering some of the public funds invested in the education. This way, holders of the highly skilled capital, who previously enjoyed the benefits of the social welfare state in acquiring it, could finally contribute to and share the costs for the maintenance of decent livelihoods and the necessary social safety nets for the current population in need. Similarly, a government interest in re-engaging its highly skilled professional migrants abroad would also act as a way of maintaining a transnational connection and bond, especially

since studies already have already shown that the longer the time period of migration, the more the migrants get settled and are less involved in preserving transnational and community ties (de Haas 2007). Emigrants can be a source of increasing trade, investment, and financial flows, but also of transfer of knowledge in the form of new ideas, practices, and technologies (Kapur 2010). Furthermore, taking into consideration the high rates of sexism and women's structural marginalization as well as the gender gap, the policies of retention and re-engagement of the potential highly skilled migrants could not leave outside a gender equity agenda. Career opportunities with parental leaves and affordable child care facilities, for example, are never included in return and re-engagement migration policies.

However, potential gender-based emigration policies are complex and multifaceted, and need more government attention and acknowledgement from both the receiving and sending countries. Until they can calculate the gendered investments in the formation of the highly skilled migrants, governments need to look into the current devaluation and underpayment of women's work. For example, women's domestic work contribution and social reproductive work are lacking any visibility and recognition in both Canada and Romania.

In this sense, for example, the historic idea of wages for housework and domestic work has been a feminist ideal since the 1970s. Cox and Federici have long argued that, since housework and childcare are socially vital, housewives should be paid for their work as any other workers (Cox and Federici 1975). Furthermore, when women end up being paid for their household labour, the status of the occupation might climb. Since job status is influenced by wage rates, consequently there would be more and more public acceptance and acknowledgement of the fact that what women did in the home is important and relevant work. Together with this strategy of assigning economic remuneration for women's domestic work, governments should increase awareness

levels of communities and develop educational campaigns for making it everyone's responsibility for doing the care work regardless of gender. Similarly, governments should start enforcing for equal opportunity in the workplace and pay equity for everyone. With that in mind, although Canada and Romania are signatories of the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), these pledges are still to be lived up to. For example, while in Canada women's employment rate increased significantly in the last two decades, their share of market incomes did not increase proportionately. Women in Canada still get lower than average incomes and have disproportionately large shares of part-time, low-paid, non-standard and unpaid work (Lahey and de Villota 2013). Similarly, in Romania, while the communist government established and enforced official state policies of gender equality for more than 40 years, after its fall, the promotion of equal opportunities for women was not a priority for subsequent governments. For example, communism ensured a stable quota of women in government positions; however, such quotas were not in place afterwards, and women's participation diminished progressively as years went by. In 2016 Romanian women constituted only 14 per cent of the Upper House or Senate, respectively 20.7 per cent of the Lower House (IPU 2016).

The migration of the young highly skilled university educated Romanian professionals, leaving behind their aging parents, creates a skill vacuum in the sphere of work that is largely associated with women, namely the care work. In Romania, it is still assumed that it is the young generation's duty to provide for the care of aging parents.

Faced with a state that does not provide sufficient facilities for the care of the elderly and an ageing demographics, the migration of young highly skilled workers also means an underlying care shortage. Since women act as the primary caregivers for the aged, their loss is even greater

for the care resources of the origin country while putting more pressure on the women left behind to perform more care work. If we assess such processes from a gender perspective, it appears that the migration of highly skilled professionals creates both brain and care precariousness and vulnerability with respect to the general welfare system. Putting more pressure on welfare facilities, migration drains the care resources from countries of origin, leaving local welfare systems and private families to deal on their own with the consequences of such departures (Piperno 2007).

The negative effects of the departure of the highly skilled for the people left behind is gendered. The departure of highly skilled Romanian migrants to Canada started at a time when all the post-socialist Eastern European countries were restructuring their economies and were transitioning from a communist government. Thus, many of the welfare support structures disappeared making room for increasing privatization and marketization of social services. However, the end of the welfare communist state and of the means of collective care also meant more burden put on the family's shoulders and more dependency on family members. It was in these times of Romania's massive restructuring of the economy and the welfare state that the outward migration of highly skilled Romanians happened, intensifying the effects that their departure had on the families left behind. The end of the welfare state coupled with massive outward migration, and demographic challenges such as a relatively low birth rate and a rapidly aging population, meant less social security and increasing, burdening care work on the women left behind (Abella 2006, Papademetriou and Martin 1991, Reichert 1981, Rubenstein 1992).

Consequently, in addition to the inevitable challenges that the departure of immigrants places on the families left behind, women are likely to be more negatively affected. First, as the Romanian highly skilled migration happens, it will leave the country behind with a shortage of

both the knowledge and expertise to address the care needed for the aging women that raised the generation of highly skilled migrants. Second, since this migration happens in the middle of restructurings of the post-communist welfare state, with fewer and fewer means for social security and collective well-being, it meant that the people left behind were increasingly vulnerable and particularly the women left behind had to intensify their domestic work and had to perform more unpaid care work. Other scholars have already noticed that welfare cuts instituted by neoliberal governments are justified by pointing towards an emphasis on self-sufficiency and individual responsibility. Nevertheless, in reality, these cuts most often result in an increase of women's domestic unpaid labour (Arat-Koc 1999). This is due to the fact that the ideas of self-sufficiency and individual autonomy are overvalued and overestimated: the elderly still require care and support, the children still need education, etc. If there is no state budgeted support, nor affordable private institutions to provide this care, the burden falls on the shoulders of the women of a household.

In other words, reducing welfare spending means that women, who do the vast majority of the private caregiving work in society, need to raise their working hours in the home in order to make up for the absence of state funded programs. Furthermore, even though women may be doing more caregiving work in the private sphere, their domestic work is less likely to be acknowledged or financially rewarded. Since it is not recognized, the end results of welfare cuts are that they make women financially more insecure and poorer. Additionally, Romanian migrants that are leaving for Canada are the most skilled and educated professionals, depriving their own country of their skills and potential contribution to society in maintaining the welfare of the general population.

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In analyzing the effects of migration on both the host and the country of origin, sending and receiving countries ought to work to secure a fairer and more balanced exchange. As my research points out, very often the migration of highly skilled professionals benefits disproportionately one country at the expense of the other. Therefore, the developed countries which absorb the highly skilled immigrants should share with the host country and redistribute the benefits that result from the migration process. This could be achieved by thinking up and creating policies at global and transnational levels, moving beyond a focus on the national level. Envisioning a broader picture and a sense of responsibility that goes beyond one's country could help in enabling such policies. Similarly, giving back to the community enables self-esteem, pride, and a sense of protection of the global environment and conditions we live in (Edmondson, Carrie 1999). It could also produce similar outcomes for the promoters of such policies. Moving from a neoliberal competitive "win-lose" algorithm to one that acknowledges our global interconnectedness, the better alternative to a "win-win" situation might also be a stimulant for such development. Otherwise, if the situation stays the same, the net effect of current immigration policies will keep developing countries stagnant and struggling, with people having less access to good quality healthcare, education, and infrastructure, while already developed countries reach new levels of development, reaping all the benefits.

Faced with this imbalance resulting from the current migration system, countries need to work more closely with one another in managing the flow of immigrants. Currently, the approach is rather decontextualized and detached from the realities on the ground. The process must be more personalized and humanized in order to reduce the significant social distance between the states managing migration flows. For example, there is a need to highlight the connection between the skilled immigrant workers and the people who nurtured and contributed to the development of

these skills. As demonstrated throughout this dissertation, in the case of the Romanian migration to Canada, it is the Romanian mothers who nurtured and contributed most to the development of their children's skills and talents. Furthermore, there is the need to understand and reduce the difference between the people at whose expense are such skills produced and the ones reaping the benefits of these skills and talents.

The isolated, decontextualized and non-relational way in which government policies on migration are enacted must be understood in connection with women's work. Perhaps, making this connection has the potential to be a strategy and a mechanism for addressing the formation of transnational asymmetries thus sustaining in place the inequalities that already exist among nation-states. However, in order to comprehend such processes and propose solutions we must fully expose the invisibility of Romanian women's work that together with the Canadian immigrant programs produce benefits for the developed neoliberal countries at the expense of developing transition countries.

While I personally argue for collaborations on policies of migration between countries and raising awareness regarding such issues, there are scholars who hold stronger positions in the benefits vs. costs debate of migration field. For example, for some scholars, there is the need for both reparation and restitution. In this sense, restitution "encompasses financial compensation but carries additional meanings of repair, restoration and the righting of ethical wrongs" (Mackintosh et al., 2006: 763). They argue for a system in which the advantages of skilled migration for destination countries would be appropriately calculated and a corresponding compensation paid to the countries which migrants left. Such policies argue for inter-state mutually shared responsibility to care for and manage migration.

The Canadian government wants to select "the best and brightest" (McKenzie, Gibson 2010) from the large pool of migrants aiming to settle in Canada in its move to constitute its power as a global actor in the world. Nevertheless, Canada reaps most of the benefits from such selection processes, it does so at the expense of developing transition countries. Without appropriate compensation for the developing countries, Canada's absorbing the highly skilled professionals from these places can only lead to a perpetuation of inequality and disparity as well as the constituting of developing and developed countries on a power matrix that depends on exploitation and oppression. While the Western and Northern countries become richer and richer, underdeveloped nations become poorer and poorer, producing a continuous cycle that is intensified from generation to generation (Parrenas 2001; Piperno 2007; Sassen 1998; Walby 2009).

In this regard, the massive migration of highly skilled migrants from Romania, adversely affects the welfare and social services in country. This is due to the fact that highly skilled migrants would, potentially, have had high earnings that, through taxes, could have benefitted the local budget. The taxes on these incomes would have been used to fund social services in Romania. Thus, what is called for is raising awareness regarding the losses of the Romanian state due to migration through investment in the country's education, healthcare, infrastructure, etc. These institutions end up being underfunded due to the massive departure of highly skilled migrants leaving the rest of the population with poor public and social services.

Of course, as the number of public social services decreases, more and more pressure is exerted on families who cannot afford to pay for them. Since families cannot afford to pay for them, they make up the difference through unpaid labour (Luxton 1997). As mentioned before, this unpaid labour is not shared equally among family members, but is disproportionately done by the women in the families. This basically means more work and burden for Romanian women to

make up for insufficiently funded welfare services. Many of these social services are underfunded due to the migration of highly skilled professionals who, if they remained in the country and were able to get jobs, would have, through taxes, been the main funders of the state budget. Since they leave, fewer public services are made available to families in need, and therefore resulting in a bigger burden put on the shoulder of women. Over the long term, an increased burden added to women's domestic work results in fewer opportunities for women, leading to their oppression and marginalization in the public sphere. Therefore, the migration of the highly skilled Romanian professionals to Canada translates into an increasing oppression for the women left behind as well as a decrease in the overall quality of the social services in the country. On a personal level, if nothing else, this means that Romanian parents lose to Canada their adult children who might have cared for them in their old age and who would have also contributed to improving social services and infrastructure through their knowledge and taxes.

Section B: Transnational Global Migration Frameworks and Feminist Possibilities for Resistance

Since worldwide migration is so spread out, it is interesting to notice how the phenomenon lacks any unified, coherent global policies. The fact is even more surprising taking into consideration the quick expansion of the process and the high rates of worldwide migration: for example, only between 1970 to 2015, the number of global migrants expanded from 82 million to approximately 244 million (IOM 2015). However, despite the growing expansion of the phenomenon there are no official transnational institutions or international policies to deal with states' reactions to migration. As Alexander Betts points out, there is no United Nations Migration Organization and no international migration policies. It translates into sovereign states retaining full control in deciding their migration policies (Betts 2011). Nevertheless, the sovereignty of one state in decision-making with regard to migration policies impacts on other states. Hence such decisions are always international, and their outcomes intersect and interconnect states. Policies on migration cannot be taken in isolation, and the effects of one government's decisions on migration spill over the boundaries of other states, challenging the sovereignty premise of the countries involved. For example, one state's policy on highly skilled migration immediately constrains the behaviour of various other states.

However, their relationship is not equal. Alexander Betts states: "migrant-receiving states are generally able to determine their own migration policies in accordance with their own interests. Powerful migrant-receiving states are able to take the migrants they want and leave the migrants they do not want. Migrant-sending states are generally unable to influence the policy choices of receiving states. In that sense, in the absence of formal regulation, receiving states are the implicit

'makers' of migration governance and sending states are 'takers' of migration governance" (Betts 2011: 22). Transnational multilateral regulations are necessary in order to balance the power of the states involved in the process of migration: on the one hand, the potential power abuse of the state decision maker on migration, and, on the other hand, the possible vulnerability of the state decision taker. Furthermore, transnational multilateral frameworks are also needed in order to balance and share more fairly the benefits as well as the costs of different types of migration. An equity approach to migration might also lead to a maximization of the benefits of international migration, followed up by a redistribution of these benefits in ways that made everyone better off (Betts 2011: 26).

The reality is that the control over the process of international migration is more in the hands of the receiving countries. The issue of highly skilled professionals that flow between rich and poor nations tend to be unidirectional, from the poor to the rich. As noticed by other researchers, "because high-income countries are able to set global migration policy unilaterally, they have little incentive to address sending-country concerns" (Hanson 2010: 231).

Since the control over the process of international migration is in the hands of the receiving, more powerful countries, and since such movements lead to great gender imbalances and gender-based injustices, transnational feminist responses and alliances from both sending and receiving migrant countries are needed.

Transnational feminist alliances are needed for women to support one another to counteract injustices in migration movements that use women's work to make up for the welfare cuts of the neoliberal economies. It is only through a collective transnational solidarity that they can demand fairer migration policies, international acknowledgement of women's work as subsidizing neoliberal economies and more egalitarian redistribution of resources worldwide. For example,

they can collaborate in raising awareness regarding the care-giving and domestic work performed disproportionately by women. The awareness of the social reproductive work can be followed up by transnational advocacy campaigns for a more gender egalitarian redistribution of the care work in society and a reduction of women's burden in the private sphere through supporting the increase of collective public services such as day care centres, healthcare centres, care services for the elderly, kindergartens, schools, etc.

Furthermore, a common transnational feminist agenda could consist in again raising awareness regarding the unfair international distribution of social costs and benefits in highly skilled migration movements. In particular, there should be provision of benefits that match previous investments by the sending country. A gendered fair world would be able to provide the appropriate benefits (in terms of adequate healthcare, for example) to the women that previously supported such care structures. Therefore, transnational feminist alliances could oppose together and work more effectively on projects of migration that reduce the burdening of women's social reproductive work, as shown by the Romanian example.

Additionally, transnational feminist alliances could inquire into and scrutinize neoliberal developments and configurations that heavily rely on forms of gender-based oppression and exploitation locally and internationally. Even though the experiences of neoliberalism are "not all the same and equal" and the configurations of such practices are "varied and historically specific" (Grewal and Kaplan 2005: 10), a joint and combined transnational feminist effort in exploring and analyzing these issues is still necessary. Furthermore, they can promote more forcefully together the idea of public-collective values and shared responsibility while resisting the idea of individualism and individual reliance for one's basic education, health, and welfare. Although some of the processes of neoliberalism are locally constituted, taking in consideration similar

processes (i.e., withdrawal of the state and state support) transnational feminist alliances can argue together for more state protection and support in its efforts to manage the personal welfare of its constituents.

The spread of globalization and migration flows has multiple and overwhelming disadvantages, but also can lead to a few opportunities. The possibility of increased contact and communication between different feminist activists and community organizers is one of them. As Amanda Keddie points out: "while the global neo-liberal agenda has increased the impoverishment and marginalization of many women, it has also created possibilities for pursuing gender justice" (Keddie 2010: 139). Therefore, recent movements between different settings and locations can lead more easily to the creation of new spaces for feminist dialogue, involvement and activism.

 Transnational feminists have now the opportunity to find out or even witness the effects of the current neoliberal migration flows (such as brain and care drain from developing countries) while organizing for gender justice. Taking into consideration that one of the neoliberal main premises revolves around individualism and individual responsibility, transnational feminists can resist it, just by organizing themselves and pressuring together for government social responsibility and justice. In this sense, even a form of solidarity between women and an international organizing around common equity agendas is in itself an opposition to the neoliberal regime that makes possible the migration of the highly skilled.

Some of the forms that the neoliberal system manifests itself in, such as the brain drain via migration, harms women's social and economic well-being and livelihood. In Romania's case, the departure of highly skilled migrants to Canada amplified rather than reduced gender inequities within the country. In this context, there is a requirement for transnational solidarity and global women's activism to counteract and dispute the ways in which neoliberalism reveals itself (i.e., the

migration and pulling out of the highly skilled pool of candidates from developed countries without any understanding of all the social reproductive care work that went in the formation of those talents). Feminist action can also seek to limit the economic powers that create such oppressive structures. It is sure that only a mutual comprehension of the highly skilled migration conditions and outcomes can prompt a joint coordination for reducing the negative impacts on women of such movements and together propose and call out governments for a better process and a more democratic framework for development and growth.

In this sense, networks and coalitions of feminist resistance and solidarity are a must, and the more international they are, the more effective and powerful their impact might be. Of course, these cross-border movements of feminist solidarity must also bring forward a larger and deeper awareness of gender justice within and beyond their countries. In this sense, the collective act of feminist resistance must bear in mind that gender equity agendas must be pushed from a national to an international agenda, pressuring the governments for accountability and redistribution of wealth at both the local and global level. Similarly, they should push for an understanding of gender equity concerns and responsibilities at the international level while encouraging and pressuring for more dialogues between governments and alliances between civil society organizations. Government accountability, protection of equity goals and corrective actions for gender based justice must be assumed beyond local state levels. Thus, transnational feminist solidarities might be the needed equation and opportunity through which a more inclusive and egalitarian international action is promoted. They can also provide a stronger alternative for creating awareness about gender-based injustices and women's marginalization worldwide. In this sense, women's collective activism can promote new possibilities for gender-based justice knowledge and practice while demanding collective global responsibility, gender-based fairness

and international justice. By highlighting the global neoliberal configurations and processes that lead to women's oppression, they can pressure together for a feminist reform of government agendas, new gender-based social policies and pieces of legislation that protect women's rights. Basically, there are new possibilities for pursuing gender equity agendas through a strong transnational movement of resistance and action. Only through such movements can the issues of inequity arising from global migration processes be reversed as well as women's economic situation and well-being can be improved.

It is only through transnational feminist alliances and community organizing that aspirations of growth and development can be envisioned beyond one country's border and as improving collective transnational well-being. The economic productivity of one country cannot be achieved at the expense of women's rights from a different country or when it results in their marginalization and oppression, and there are no better voices to raise that issue than an international feminist collective. Conceptualizing gender justice must cross local borders in order to envision women's freedom and autonomy, especially with respect to women's work, particularly women's social reproductive work. A transnational effective feminist mobilization must take in consideration the unequal power relations, between different women in different countries, their unequal access to economic resources and the intersection of the various divisive factors of age, ethnicity, sexuality and ability.

Broader contextual frameworks are needed for us to understand Romania's women economic and social location and their increased marginalization and oppression by migration processes as well as Canadian women's position and their possibilities for supporting international gender-based justice. While there are a few Romanian NGOs that deal with women's

discrimination such as ANASAF [16] (Ana Society for Feminist Research), an NGO that is particularly focused on feminist analyses and theoretical approaches to gender equality and A.L.E.G. (Society for Freedom and Gender Equality)[17] dedicated particularly to preventing and reducing the gender based discrimination and violence, or FILIA[18] Center that fights for gender equality through activism, advocacy and research, the focus is predominantly on gender violence and sexual violence. They are also focused on co-lateral themes to gender and sexual violence such as access to justice for victims of discrimination as well as guidelines for preventing women entering trafficking rings in international contexts. There are no particularly not for profit organizations or feminist movements focused on women's public or social reproductive work nor on women and migration (aside from sexual trafficking). Furthermore, there does not seem to be a particularly feminist unifying advocacy movement opposing neoliberalism per se, and feminist NGOs in Romania do not have a strategy of resistance regarding that. However, the women I interviewed were very thoughtful about and critical of this situation and aware of the damaging effects that neoliberal development and outward migration have for them and their families, their communities at large and for their countries. They frequently mentioned that, at national level, all the "good" competent skilled people leave, and Romania is left with an aged and unskilled population. The perception was that while developed economies have the best of the productive working forces from the transition countries, a more complicated and darker story was written for the countries left behind. Furthermore, while the governments of the Global North attended to their own skill and economic needs through migration programs focused on highly skilled immigrants, they failed to tackle the needs of the developing transition countries as well as of the communities

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[16] ANASAF Ana Society for Feminist Analysis. Link available at: http://www.anasaf.ro/ro/index.html
[17] ALEG Society for Freedom and Gender Equality. Link available at: http://aleg-romania.eu/en
[18] FILIA Centre. Link available at: http://centrulfilia.ro/

and families left behind. Entire cities were seen by my interviewees as complete "nursing homes" for the elderly in the absence of the migrant youth and the demographic unbalance that their departure determined. The costs were clearly summed up in their collective lives, in terms of not having the highly skilled professionals that they needed, but also no or few members of their families living close by. However, their departure was merged with tensions and contradictions since their staying in the country was also not an option. As one mother summed it up: "if we as parents want them to stay in the country, they don't have opportunities. If they go abroad, we remain alone" (Adina, fifty-five, teacher). At the community and family level, immigration is perceived as a rupture with the family projections that these families once had. "We thought we would have our children close by when we grow old. Nothing can replace that" (Simona, fifty-seven, nurse). During my fieldwork, I was not offered airbrushed, sanitized versions of these family breaks and ruptures through migration. All the disappointments and dissatisfactions were openly shared with me, probably in an attempt to also create the need of intimacy and closeness with someone that resembled their departed children. Their sometimes painful disclosures were not made in order to look for compassion but to create a space of shared vulnerability and also shared resistance with persons like my mother and me who have been experiencing the same journey. Due to the similarity and parallels between migration journeys, I also felt that, through me, they were living and talking to their own children who had left for Canada. For example, if I was confirming their sayings, they would many times re-assure me, saying: "My daughter would say the same about X, Y, Z topics!" Nevertheless, the distressing topic of migration was also faced with rage and fury especially in arguments that blame Canada for taking members of their families and for rupturing local communities, costs that were left unaccounted for. When discussing this topic, I was surprised to hear mothers talking even about their children being "abducted" by

Canada or that they were "held hostage" in a situation of criminality and illegality that only mirrors the feelings about their perception of life's most distressing and traumatic experiences. Situations such as the above revealed migration as an appalling macabre event that had victims and perpetrators, and that it was fueled by injustice. For such situations, there did not seem to be consoling calming alternatives and the fact that sometimes the children who left sometimes visit them or that they visited them in their turn could not compensate for the initial injustice. It was in the unfolding of such scenes that more connections needed to be made to render visible the impact of migration processes on the families and communities left behind. Such projects ought to highlight and give voice to the intellectual contributions and reflections of the Romanian mothers, a step necessary in any demand for a transnational activist approach.

While such feminist movements are non-existent in Romania, I can imagine them being like the ones feminist scholars Moghadam (1999) and Thayer (2009) mention as spreading in Latin America where working women organize and resist together in a solid, strong anti-globalization movement. They argue that the emergence of transnational feminist networks is a result of changes in global relations (i.e., what has come to be known as globalization) which amplify the 'universal' reality of gender inequality (Moghadam 1999). Facilitated by four world conferences on women (between 1975 and 1995), women's groups have come to recognize that, while local experiences of marginalization are important in designing solidarity projects, overall strategies of resistance have much in common with each other, thereby necessitating transnational movements that challenge these systems of exploitation and oppression. In their desire to oppose the financial policies that the supranational institutions such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund imposed on developing countries, women decided that their transnational solidarity was crucial. In this way, transnational feminist networks became organizational forms that crossed

geographical, political, and cultural boundaries in order to advance a gender justice and resistance movement.

In terms of perspectives on a global justice movement, Moghadam notes that transnational feminist networks contribute to a "call for gender justice as well as economic justice, and for an alternative macroeconomic framework that takes gender relations seriously as a concept and social fact (Moghadam 2005a: 354)." Despite differences between women across the globe such as ethnicity, race, class and sexual orientation, feminists can still organize themselves in order to resist their increased work conditions under globalization. For example, one such mobilization was that of caregivers in Canada, regarding, first, the abolishing of the "live-in" condition of the program through which they arrived in Canada, and, later, the whole termination of a program with such a name[19]. Initiated in 1992 the program had mandatory "live-in" requirements for caregivers and made them often vulnerable to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and exploitation by their employer (Hodge 2006). If it were not for the ongoing community outreach, feminist grassroots mobilization and the increasing awareness, solidarity and local and transnational resistance of the caregivers themselves, such harmful, devaluating and sexist policies for the conditions of women would still be in effect. Two of the Canadian grassroots migrant organizations that have been involved in these mobilizing efforts are Gabriela Ontario and Migrante Canada. Founded in 2012, Gabriela Ontario is organized around the theme of forging women's collective energy and resources together to create better social, economic and political conditions for all. Started as a means of creating unity among particularly Filipina live-in caregivers women in Canada, their larger agenda also covers asserting women's rights and promoting their welfare in general, as well as effecting a reconsideration of women's work that is

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[19] While caregivers can still reach Canada, their processing is done under the Temporary Foreign Worker program and subject to scrutiny and regulations.

often "too simplified and devalued" (Gabriela Ontario 2017). Migrante-Canada is another grassroots migrant organization set up in 2010 to protect the rights and promote the welfare of Filipino and Filipina migrants. Similar to Gabriela Ontario, their mission consists in doing a lot of education, organization and mobilization of members, family, friends and society at large to create better conditions for all migrants in Canada. While the organization does not have a particular gender focus, it does include strategies of building solidarities with all migrants of all nationalities in Canada as well as anyone who supports social equity and justice, fair wages and work recognition and is against any policies that cause widespread poverty and injustice (Migrante Canada).

Other feminists notice that, while globalization affects women dramatically, it also plays a significant role in shaping local, regional, and transnational political mobilization (Hawkesworth 2006; Naples and Desai 2002; Walby 2002a). They argue that although the imbalance of power between different types of women workers in different countries are exacerbated by neoliberal regimes and globalization, the same processes create continuities that can become the grounds for mobilizing transnationally. For example, the global financial crisis poses similar threats to the status of women in different parts of the world, which in turn elicit parallel responses of resistance. Furthermore, feminists argue, they can address differences among themselves while simultaneously campaigning for justice and equality for all women.

This optimism about a substantive solidarity among women of different classes, races, ethnicities, ages and sexual orientation emerges out of the idea that current structures of work can be used as sites for mobilizing resources for effective political campaigns and for building transnational solidarity for women (Fonow 2005: 3).

When discussing globalization, feminist Sylvia Walby does not see it as a single "unified force", but rather as a formation that is constituted by "diverse global processes" involving flows of power and transnational networks of resistance (Walby 2009b: 444). As author Millie Thayer puts it, ''globalization may accelerate some forms of domination, but it also facilitates the linking and empowering of once-disconnected oppositional forces'' (Thayer 2009: 8). This outlook reveals the contradictions, tensions, and appropriations, as well as the emancipatory possibilities that figure in transnational feminist alliances and solidarities.

In her book *Making Transnational Feminism: Rural Women, NGO Activists, and Northern Donors in Brazil* (2009*),* Millie Thayer makes use of participant observation and in-depth interviews to chart how two women's organizations in Northeastern Brazil emerged, developed, and changed in the context of a globalizing world. The organizations are SOS Corpo (a feminist NGO concerned with women's bodies and health) and Movimento de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais (MMTR, a grassroots women's organization of rural workers). Both of these organizations challenge gender injustice and are part of overlapping ''counterpublics'' (Thayer 2009: 56). They differ though along various axes of inequality. SOS Corpo is composed of urban, middle-class feminists and has extensive international linkages, and MMTR is a working-class organization from the rural region, associated with the labour movement within Brazil, but largely cut off from global ties. Thayer shows how these organizations collaborated and navigated their power differences, while also negotiating inequalities and exercising various kinds of leverage in relation to various domestic and international social actors. In tracing these relationships, Thayer finds that ''global flows passed through and between the two movement sites as well as across national boundaries'' (Thayer 2009: 19). She also suggests possibilities for solidarity across different social

locations, without idealizing the situation and while admitting that this does not necessarily undo the actual locations.

Such transnational feminist alliances make visible some of the previously hidden effects of gender injustices of neoliberalism and migration and render vocal some of the new challenges that feminists now face. Recent migration developments will definitely demand that transnational feminists pursue international campaigns for awareness of gender injustice and pressure for global equity mandates, creating in this way a more solid movement of resistance and activism.

Moreover, collective organizing and feminist solidarity are needed to oppose not only the core principles of neoliberalism, but also its mechanisms that produce devastating effects, in terms of growing gender inequalities between countries as well as expansion of unequal distribution of resources or of the costs and benefits in using them. For example, we already know that women's labour increases when the state withdraws itself from providing the necessary welfare for its citizens and that the unwaged labour increases as a consequences of state budget cuts (see Mohanty 2003). Further drawbacks for many women have been the encouraging of brain drain migration policies which draw migrants from developing Eastern European and Southern countries to developed countries of North and West. Therefore, while enabling career mobility, such migration downloads its costs even more on women due to neoliberal economies cutting their budgets for welfare, privatizations, etc.

The freedom of the movement of the highly skilled professionals should not be stopped. However, when such movements happen at the expense of vulnerable and marginalized others (such as it is the case of Romanian women and communities) there should be more awareness and acknowledgement of the costs of such migration policies for the home country and for increasing

global inequalities. Only with that acknowledgement and awareness in mind, will feminist solidarities be able to forge connections based on women's work internationally.

Focusing on Romania has allowed me to point to the many historically particular and geographically uneven injustices that some current global migration poses for women in neoliberal context. Based on that, transnational feminist solidarities have the potential to fully recognize the way in which neoliberal economies such as Canada rely on Romanian women's work and developing transition countries that contribute in preparing its skilled labour pool.

<center>**Conclusion**</center>

The switch to a neoliberal phase of economy and emphasis on knowledge-based economies has increased the global demand for highly skilled workers. In line with the global trends, in 2017 Canada has increased its quotas for highly skilled migrants for the next three years, and these quotas are exceptionally higher than they have ever been (CBC News 2017). My argument is that the massive welfare cuts brought by the neoliberal phase of the economy of the Global North (Parrenas 2001, Andersen 1997), pushed Canada to look outside its borders for skills and talents that it stopped or reduced reproducing and caring for internally: the case of highly skilled Romanian migrants to Canada. However, Canada is attracting skills and talents from countries and regions that face even more of a destructuring and disruption of public structures, as in the example of Eastern European transition post-communist economies. In their turn, faced with a massive post-communist transition restructuring of the Romanian economy and drawn by Canada's migration policies, a large number of highly skilled, educated Romanians migrate to Canada. My dissertation focuses on one of Canada's immigration and settlement policies, namely the category of the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), and its impact on women and immigrant families in Romania in the 1990s and 2000s at a time when Romania was experiencing a fast transition to the capitalist market economy from the post-communist regime. At the beginning of my dissertation, I focused on patriarchal segregations of immigration schemes into "brain" and "care"/social reproductive categories and showed how Romanian women's paid and unpaid work contributed to the creation of highly skilled workers. In the second part of my work, I pointed out that the departure of Romanian migrants happened at a time when post-socialist economies in Eastern Europe entered a transition into a capitalism phase. However, this transition translated into

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a disappearance of welfare support structures and insecure economies, as well as a perpetuation of an eternally developing phase for the origin sending countries. The withdrawal of the state and of the means of collective care also meant more burden put on the family's shoulders and more dependency on family members. It was in these times of Romania's restructuring of the economy and the welfare state that the outward migration of Romanians happened, intensifying the effects that their departure had on the families left behind. In this case, it was women left behind who had to provide the necessities for their families in the absence of their migrating adult children; this situation translated into an intensification of their domestic responsibilities and burdens. The withdrawal of the welfare state coupled with massive outward migration, and demographic challenges such as a relatively low birth rate and a rapidly aging population, meant less social security for the people left behind. In addition to the inevitable challenges that the departure of immigrants placed on the families left behind, I argue, women were likely to be more negatively affected. First, this departure was skills and knowledge-driven. It left behind a country that experienced a knowledge shortage in terms of not having the best engineers, physicians, and technicians to the training of whom women's work contributed so much and for which contribution the women cannot ever benefit directly or indirectly. Second, since this migration happened in the middle of restructurings of the post-communist transition welfare state, with fewer and fewer means of social security and collective well-being, the people in the origin countries were increasingly vulnerable. Further, the women left behind had to intensify their domestic labour and had to perform more social reproductive work. To counteract the oppression of women that resulted from the migration of highly skilled professionals, as well as patriarchal immigration divisions that created worldwide immigration programs focused on "brain races" and parallel care shortages, transnational feminist alliances and solidarities are called for as a solution. These are

seen as the most effective way to raise awareness and pressure for government international responsibility and inter-state justice in the management of highly skilled migration flows as well as increase awareness of the negative outcomes of neoliberal development and globalization.

Researchers have already mentioned that while neoliberal development and globalization came with free trade agreements and the flow of economic trades across borders, the situation is not the same for the movement of people across countries (Sassen 1998). These latter connections are illusive because these economic organizations do not come with changes in restrictive immigration policies. Thus, the transnational mobility of capital and relatively border-free economies are not sustained by paralleled the border-free circulation of people. On the contrary, immigration policies and border controls have progressively been restricted, renationalizing in this way only the movement of bodies. This lack of symmetry between a denationalized capital and a renationalized and restricted movement of persons is not without its own logic or benefit, and it is one of the venues for wealth concentration in developed countries as well as one of the factors in worldwide inequality.

After the collapse of the communist system in Eastern Europe, Romanian highly skilled migration to Canada demonstrates that the onset of privatization, the spread of globalization and the beginning of neoliberal economies, accompany a few favorable circumstances for transnational movement. However, such migration schemes (like the Canadian Federal Skilled Worker Program) create an artificial and unsustainable division between highly skilled knowledge producing migrants and not equally valued social reproductive work that makes the realization of that knowledge possible. Of course, such divisions are gendered and hierarchical: since through their immigration programs governments promote agendas of attracting highly-skilled migrants, they also indirectly promote a patriarchal understanding of certain skills and talents as superior by

failing to recognize the daily social-reproduction mostly performed by women that such brains need in order to exist. If one considers that brains cannot produce competitive knowledge outputs without having someone produce the social reproduction of those brains, my case-study on the Romanian migration to Canada highlights how women's work is rendered invisible, and inferior in the process, de-prioritized and devalued in migration schemes, while potentially justifying women's low-wages and ongoing marginalization.

Furthermore, while the mobility of highly skilled Romanian migrants promises new levels of growth and development for the destination countries, it does not assure growth and development for the country of origin responsible for their nurturance and education. In fact, this mobility is made possible only by their embracing the Canadian neoliberal economy which is based on accumulation and control of neoliberal capital that in its turn gives little back to the country of origin. Economic growth obtained due to the migration of highly skilled professionals is preserved and increased in Canada but not shared with or redistributed back to Romania[20]. In fact, this process contributes to creating an even wider gap between developing and developed nations. This means that the accumulation and control of capital in neoliberal Canada resulting from the migration of highly skilled Romanians is connected to the disenfranchisement and impoverishment of already destitute Romania. This fact points out how the transition to a capitalist economy failed to improve the overall life quality of Romanians. Instead it led only to an increased accumulation of, in this case, Canadian capital at the expense of the general welfare of Romanians. The growth and development of the Canadian state corresponds with the socio-economic marginalization of Romania, and with the oppression of Romanian women. In this sense, it seems that the Canadian capital accumulation and the mobility of selective highly skilled migrants lead

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[20] By wealth accumulated in Canada, I mean wealth massively unevenly distributed in Canada as well, and largely owned by the upper middle classes and the to one percent.

to increased socio-economic hardships for Romanians. Furthermore, while the benefits are reaped by Canada, the costs of developing highly skilled migrants are borne primarily by the Romanian state and secondly by the Romanian families.

Upon closer inspection of the education system in Romania, I found that the foundation behind the support provided by the state and the family for an individual's education is actually the public and domestic work of women. This is so because, compared to male dominated jobs, women's work underwent a faster transition to the capitalist market in the post-communist age. As women's work transitioned faster to capitalism and became more likely to be used in capitalist structures, the taxes on their wages ended up contributing more to the state budget. This new development makes women's work contribution to budgets as critical for transition economies (Pasti 2003 Ghoodsee 2005 Gheaus 2008). Thus, many state programs and initiatives were substantially funded by the work of women, including, for example, the education system which to this day is almost exclusively provided by the state free-of-charge. Furthermore, besides these income contributions via taxes, the family pressure for the education of individuals is again gendered, due to the disproportionate work of women in the private sphere; by this I mean the household work that women perform in order to care for the upbringing of their children including the support they need in order to obtain the necessary tertiary education and diploma credentials.

Once these persons obtain their education, they are considered desirable migrants by various foreign countries such as Canada. Since Canada's immigration program targets highly skilled professionals (i.e., the Federal Skilled Worker program), this means that Romanian women's work both public and private contributes substantially to the development of these migrants. In this way the welfare structures (i.e., free-of-charge tertiary education) in Romania are not created to benefit the local citizens, but the accumulation of profit in neoliberal Canada. Based on the contribution

of women, Romania educates individuals who, once migrated, have their labour extracted in Canada. Valuable skills, talents, and capacities, etc., are formed as the result of the hard work of women (as they contribute more to state budgets that fund education and as they hold disproportionate roles in the social reproduction of their children); however, women essentially benefit little from their investment. While not getting something in exchange for what they contribute, many Romanian women remain disenfranchised and marginalized in such processes. Furthermore, despite their vital role in maintaining the social reproduction and welfare funding of the state, these women are basically left with few rewards either for themselves or for the general population of the country. Many highly skilled engineers, physicians, IT professionals, etc. end up migrating abroad utilizing the skills elsewhere instead of their home country where the population is in dire need of their help. As mentioned before, in my opinion the people most negatively affected and hit hardest by the process of the Romanian migration to Canada are Romanian women. Indirectly, some of the costs of the Romanian migration are laid squarely on their shoulders. This burden contributes further to women's subordination and oppression to the point of us asking ourselves what the possibilities for transnational feminist responses and resistances to such situations are.

In this respect, transnational feminists acknowledge that global forces such as colonialism, capitalism, migration, and imperialism end up locating women in unequal oppressive positions within larger power structures (Grewal and Kaplan 1994). Their transnational feminist theoretical lenses of analysis can be easily applied to global power formations and processes such as global capitalism and transnational migration that challenge Romanian women's rights and general assumptions of gender justice. My case-study on the Romanian migration to Canada sheds light

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on such theoretical investigations, while providing the necessary grounds for transnational activism and international feminist awareness.

By looking at Romanian women's work, we can hear and also recognize how it contributes to the formation of highly skilled professionals who benefit the growth and development of Canada, making Canada a transnationally powerful actor in the interstate system. This is done at the expense of Romanian women's own welfare and well-being and at the atomization of their communities. And while it does have some benefits in terms of remittances, they are infinitely little in contrast to the costs of such processes, especially for the women left behind. Transnational feminist inquiries can help provide another insight for the inequities brought by the spread of liberalism and "democracy" after collapse of the communist bloc in Eastern Europe, and beyond the way neoliberalism is envisioned in North America. As I mentioned before, feminist coalitions and resistance movements are needed internationally in order to raise awareness regarding the gender-based oppressions and marginalization brought about by these processes.

Additionally, through women's work the Romanian state pays for the education of individuals, but it does not appear to offer significant benefits to Romania. In this way, the large investment in nurturing advanced education and highly skilled knowledge is a process that inadvertently undermines the logic for a liberal economy of profit: the post-communist transition developing states are creating a knowledgeable and highly skilled young workforce who leave the country. It does not mean that they should be forced to stay, but that real alternatives should be created to classical outward migration as well as better and gender egalitarian international policies being forged so that the brain movement is accompanied by care as well.

Such a process warrants that the state-funded university knowledge will not be used to transform a developing country into a developed one, but rather to perpetuate its precarious phase.

Furthermore, women's work seems to contribute disproportionately to state structures that, in the long run, do not support the security and welfare of its own citizens. For example, when the state budget funds a free-of-charge higher education, that education is used for some young university students who will eventually become the pool of future migrants. Then, instead of aiding and giving back to their own country, they become the workforce necessary for the preservation and development of the already developed neoliberal Canada.

Although there is a growing literature on migration, there is little recognition of the multiple ways in which migrants' skills are produced and which particular elements foster their movement. Little do we know about the contexts in which these abilities are fostered as well as who bears the costs of their university education. Usually, it is considered that it is the state and families that support the acquisition of such skills (Psacharopoulos 1994, Tilak 1991). Nevertheless, Romanian migration to Canada reveals how the formation of the highly skilled that makes them eligible migrants is indebted substantially to Romanian women's private and public work.

The issue is striking since Romania is one of the Eastern European sites where, after the 1989 communist collapse and years of authoritarian regime, the switch to a liberal market economy promised democracy, freedom, human and women's rights, etc. In this case, the Romanian migration to Canada is relevant in pointing out how the spread of democracy, liberalism, globalization, and mobility in post-communist Romania resulted in disadvantaging and marginalizing women. Similarly, it is an eloquent case study that shows how the well awaited process of transition to capitalism created insecure economies and dismantles the Romanian families while enforcing new forms of inequality between the East and West. This is the moment when transnational feminist alliances and responses are necessary in order to expose the ways in

which the spread of "democracy", "freedom", and globalization exploit women differently and geographically unevenly. It is also a good opportunity for joint efforts of transnational feminist resistance to such situations.

Romanian work contribution should support, first and foremost, the generational benefit of Romanian citizens, and less the extraction of labour for economic growth in Canada. Moreover, if, at the transition to a capitalist market, public services remain public and free due to a lot of women's work efforts, such a contribution should be at least acknowledged, and it should primarily benefit them. Otherwise we will reach an economic exploitation of women, where they are the first to be privatized, and made easily profitable and exploitable, and the last ones to receive adequate recognition and compensation. In this sense, the idea of working for free comes from a tradition of gendered subordination and self-erasure, and can lead to only an even greater gender subordination and exploitation.

Tracing the Romanian migration to Canada has made apparent the many geographical unfairnesses and injustices that current globalization and certain highly skilled immigration programs pose for women in the transnational frame. Based on that, the potential to fully recognize the contribution of Romanian women's private and public work in fostering the further development of already developed countries like Canada remains a solid cause for feminist transnational solidarities and alliances. It is only through insisting on a full acknowledgement and accountability of Romanian women's work, we can hope that the current informal conversations about Canada's migration goals and future immigration policies will include not just methods of attracting the best of brains and skills worldwide (brains and skills mostly associated with men's work), but also the care and all the input of social reproduction necessary for all these brains to exist (care and socially reproductive work mostly associated with women's work).

A series of injustices and dramas that take place globally when transitions to capitalism occur and neoliberal premises are set in place, such as the ones that emphasize the knowledge production occur to the detriment of women, through an indirect devaluation and marginalization of the care work overwhelmingly done by women. First, there is the Eastern European drama of transition to democracy and capitalism after fifty years of communism and an authoritarian regime where the long-awaited dreams of capitalist prosperity, progress and well-being fail to materialize for the majority of the Romanian population. Second, the precarious economic conditions of a transition context and the Canadian policies of knowledge migration generated a constant wave of young adult highly skilled Romanian migration. Third, there is the drama of neoliberal economies such as Canada's that does not necessarily provide all the support that its labour force needs and start importing skills and talents already nurtured and formed by other countries and other women's work. Fourth, there is the contribution of Romanian women and mothers, in particular, to the formation of these highly skilled migrants to Canada and, in turn, the consequences of their migration for the communities left behind. In this transnational labour relation, women's and particularly mothers' work is central in managing the survival of their families during the painful transition to capitalism as well as ensuring the upbringing of highly skilled young adults. However, while they manage to do that, the human costs of their efforts and investments are very high, for themselves, for their communities and their countries. In this case, all these families, states, and investment of resources made possible the career mobility and migration of these professionals. Their families cannot enjoy time with their children and their absence impacts their health and well-being. In this sense, all the waged and social reproductive work performed by these women in the creation of the young highly skilled migrants to Canada largely remains hidden and insufficiently accounted for. Similarly, it remains unaccounted for the way in which neoliberal

projects in Canada directly feed off women's labour in Romania and cannot exist outside the different power relations between developing transition economies and advanced and already developed countries. A clear manifestation of that is visible in the current immigration plans that do not recognize the equal status of care and social reproductive work that predominantly women perform. Awareness of these issues is key in undoing these injustices and forging renewed transnational feminist solidarities. My dissertation is in this sense part of such a "negative" project by exposing both less visible and direct links through which women's hard work enables growth and development in parts of the world that do not include them and that do not acknowledge their contribution. While managing to maintain prosperous rates of economic security and well-being in different parts of the world, they cannot do that for themselves. My dissertation reveals such painful linkages with the hope that it is a necessary step through which fairness can be achieved and healing can be reached, in a story that is bigger than my own personal biographical account.

Epilogue: "If You Have a Choice, Better to Sleep at Night in Dignity in Your Own Country"

As years go by, my own personal story with my community and family in Romania keeps on being written and re-written and runs along and is one of my very difficult and strenuous integration into Canada. Without being able to finish my PhD dissertation in Canada, let alone succeed as a feminist academic or a champion of human rights, the last couple of years have been a constant longing for "back home" realities, coupled, not accidentally, with the challenging journey of blending in and trying to integrate myself into my new country. The more difficult the second component turned out to be, the more intense was the longing and nostalgia for Romania, with its familiarities and sense of sharing the same meanings about the world and its priorities. One element of the comparison was always compensating for the other, in equations of oppositions that I knew how to interpret and deconstruct at a critical level, but that nonetheless were lived as more powerful than my own intelectualizations of them.

One such instance of compensations was when I entered the Canadian job market. Needless to say, my parents, and in particular my mother, were again beside me, always eager to help me navigate what they kept on calling "the new world". My mother kept on calling Canada "the new world" even after ten years of my migration to Canada, and after a time when the "new" component should have probably worn out. Interestingly enough, she had a reason for never removing such a label and we will see why.

As a strategy, together with my mother I thought that, after so many years of teaching and since I had a Bachelor of Education from Romania, maybe it would be great to have my credentials recognized in Canada, follow my original professional designation and become a teacher in

Canada. We went through a lot of effort and mailing back and forth to put all the diplomas and grades transcripts with the proper seal, in original format and adequate English translation for the review of the Ontario College of Teachers. For their review, I also included the graduate courses taken at York University. To my disappointment when the OCT written review arrived by mail, out of four years of Bachelor of Arts program, one year of a concurrent Bachelor of Education, one year of a Master of Arts, in Romania as well as six years of graduate courses at York University, the Toronto District School Board was willing to recognize only two years towards my training to be a teacher in Canada. That meant that, if I had chosen that path, I would have had to enroll in courses for at least four more years full-time (two years of undergraduate courses followed up by an additional two years of a Bachelor of Education). Needless to say, I did not have the financial and material resources to engage in such a costly endeavour of yet another four years of schooling, on top of the twenty-four years of education done already. I started applying for jobs.

The lack of credential recognition by Canadian institutions would be improved on by the more pragmatic and practical approach of the market. I hoped that if I was hard-working and responsible, that would be appreciated on the market, and regardless of accreditations and credentials, that would stand out. My first insight was to approach employment from the fields that I had already been trained for in Canada itself and by its own education systems such as women's rights. I cannot count the hundreds of emails sent to Charity Village online (a well-known website that posts job "opportunities" in the NGO field) on the few occasions where jobs on women's rights were posted. The applications aimed at the beginning at high level policy development positions and project management or analytics, and gradually, in the absence of any call and feedback, moved to lower positions such as administration, data entry, or basic office coordination. Needless to say, none of them came even close to a single interview call; so, as time flew by I

started to apply for different positions, outside the NGO range. Again, my initial aspirations in the corporate/business world aimed at matching my experience and education. Without any calls back or email replies, my options again leveled down from the more advanced, more skilled, and better financially rewarded positions of project managers, etc. to mere entry level positions that did not require much skill or training and with lower wages. After a few months of unemployment, a recruiting company found me a temporary contract, paying a minimum wage scale for a market-based position as a Data Entry Coordinator. The label does sound better than the actual job functions which merely implied manual, repetitive work of looking at power point reports and checking that the numbers inside them matched the data files they were extracted from. If the sequence 24-55-64-77 from the data file matched the same row in the Power Point reports, it meant a "good" day at work. Nevertheless, I was not discouraged by the level of de-skilling of the work and I was hoping that in time I could be promoted and get to do more interesting and more rewarding work. That reward came actually shortly. After six months of numbing data verifications work daily for eight hours a day, I got promoted to Associate Program Manager. It felt as if the cliché immigrant resilience paid off, and that finally I could make use of some of my skills and training now that the job level was more advanced and implied more complex procedures than simple data checks.

Nevertheless, this was also the occasion when I realized that workplaces are less about work and skills, putting many hours and proving oneself, and more about personal connections and how well one integrates with the environment, and particularly how well one gets along with one's direct manager. My initial manager and I shared a similar immigrant background. She had reached Canada more than twenty years ago from Cuba, so that there was a lot of identification and mutual understanding between us. She had also graduated from university, spoke three

different languages and had worked on two different continents, facts which made her broadly knowledgeable in terms of life itself. There were good months of work satisfactions and of memories that I still cherish since I know how rarely they happen.

The career bliss would not last for long, as to my disadvantage, after a year together, my Cuban-Canadian manager was promoted to a different department and I was switched to the supervision of a different manager whom, I was already warned did not like me. Needless to say, in two months, things escalated quickly, and from top employee (according the yearly performance review), under the new manager I was considered the least desirable employee and fired. This is how I learned about firings in Canada. I was never fired in Romania, but I knew from people's accounts around me that it was a difficult decision to make, with serious allegations at stake to determine such a measure. Nevertheless, my original country also had a communist past with a lot of protection of the worker. Contrary to my Romanian experience, I discovered that it is very easy to get fired in Canada, and one can be fired on no grounds whatsoever. Moreover, it is actually advisable and desirable to be fired "without cause" in order to qualify for Employment Insurance. One would think why even firing someone without any cause whatsoever, and how fair and unjust that would be to this person, but this is not the first situation in Canada that defies logic and justice.

While I was grateful for the existence of the government support when unemployed, in the form of Employment Insurance, it only left me with $200 after I paid my rent and utilities so that I felt really pressured to find a job. This is how I reached working in a call centre as a bilingual customer service representative for one of the oldest and well-known financial institutions in the city. If one thinks one can get an unskilled job easily in a call centre, one should think twice, because I got mine through a "connection" who recommended me for the job. A Romanian-Canadian friend of mine who had been working in the company for many years recommended me

for the position and I ended up being offered the job. When I reached the training facility and got to know my new colleagues, I realized that all the eight new hires were done through "connections" and at friends' and families' recommendations who had been already working in the company. This made me think about how literally impossible the selection must be for newcomers and permanent immigrants who have recently arrived in the country or who randomly apply online, outside these networking circles. While the training period of two months was good, hitting the call centre floor was painful. The problem was less the customers who were, the majority of them, in a distressful situation (running from mildly annoyed to moderate frustration and high anger) but the dysfunctional management of the place: very strict, run under tortuous supervision and "metrics", with Service Level Agreements (SLA) impossible to meet (such as picking up the call at the first ring, to answering and solving the caller problem's in under five minutes, answering at least ten calls per hour, etc.). Whenever one representative was taking too long to solve a problem for a client regarding its complexity, one was lectured by one's team leader, similarly if one was too long on the phone. The scrutiny went as far as getting absurd reprisals for being forty seconds more on a break or logging in back to one's computer thirty seconds later. It was, by far, the most depressing and disheartening environment I ever worked in. So, at night I was constantly applying for new jobs and changing shifts at work to get interviews done. One of the interviews, with a small and new market research company in North York, went pretty well and I got a job offer. The positioned secured was more senior, required more skills and training, and it also allowed for more freedom and autonomy which felt like a liberation after the months of intense scrutiny, monitoring and metrics at the call centre. When I was introduced to the position, it seemed very decent and reasonable: a client position that was supposed to service and assist with the delivery of reports and data analytics for one main United States client. However, when starting to work in the actual

role, the expectations were much higher than the job descriptions indicated and so was the workload. This was the moment when I realized that the new company was less a market research company on its own and with its own research products, but more of a vendor and outsourcing resource for other big market research companies. The vendor condition meant competition with other small vendors, and an embrace of the practice of outsourcing: while we were just a handful of people in the Toronto office, the bulk of the company of the team was in New Delhi. While the company prices were already low to the point that internally we were calling the place "The Dollarama of Market Research", the clients were constantly pressuring us to lower them even more while maintaining the quality of products and speed of delivery. Needless to say, the constant lowering of prices was making it impossible to achieve the desired outputs, so the frustration and dissatisfaction of the client and upper management were always high, blaming either timelines or the quality of products. However, for me the real culprit were the actual low prices that made the teams overworked and did not secure enough profit for the business owner. The cheap prices were also a venue for clients to have disrespectful and demeaning attitudes towards us as vendors, as the idea of "cheap" was easily conflated with that of "not valuable" or "not worthy" enough and that transferred from the company's products to the people working there. Raising the issue of clients' abuse with the upper management did not help as they assumed that the clients are the ones who are not protected enough and that the internal working teams should be actually pushed even more. The discourse turned quickly to accusations of my "caring too much" for the internal teams, and "not caring enough" for the client. My suggestions to move beyond such rather ineffective oppositional schemes and ask ourselves why this happens and how we can move forward from this issue was met with even more hostility from the upper management of the company. "Why do you even care?" type of questions quickly turned into threats such as "You

have an attitude and we will address this on Monday." "Addressing the issue" really meant firing; so currently I am again unemployed, and on Employment Insurance. As statistical data always shows us, we are always part of a larger sample and my story of immigrant deskilling, precariousness and blocking of career opportunities reflects more probably the ones of the other highly skilled migrants in similar contexts.

While Canada now has a liberal pro-immigration government, and one that discursively is open and celebrates diversity and multiculturalism, at the de facto level, and at the level of career opportunity, integration and making the best of one migrant's skills, it still remains much closed and very gate-keeping for the thousands of people that arrive here. So many trained skills and talents become a waste in the absence of meaningful credentials recognition as well as anti-oppressive, non-discriminatory hirings and workers' protection. When talking to my mother on the phone she sometimes tells me how much she pities me and shows compassion for the thousands and thousands of other people in the same situation. She also reminds me how my life could have taken a different scenario if I remained in Romania. I might have had less resources than I am probably able to access now, but more likely I would have turned into a respected teacher in my small town and would have "slept in dignity at night". Thus, the parental lesson and its conclusion after noticing the experiences of their daughter abroad: "if you have a choice, better to sleep in dignity at night in your own country than to be humiliated and abused abroad."

It is fair to say that I have always had the support of my mother and some of my Romanian and Canadian friends, many of which are in the same situations, solidarities and agencies with other women outside the safe circle of family and friends are probably still possible, albeit not the easiest thing to achieve. The increasing gaps in terms of class, race, ethnicity, immigrant status, etc., coupled with the neoliberal rhetoric of competition, pose their challenges to feminist

solidarities, especially in the environments in which I ended up working. For example, at my last workplace I could find more of a sense of identification, understanding and solace in the Latina staff who were cleaning our offices at night than in the Canadian born, privileged, upper class female Director of Operations. Part of the male leadership, the female Director of Operations was always playing a "tough" card, arguing that the workplace needed more authority and discipline and even threatening to bring in other managers who, like her, would "crack the whip". As feminist literature shows us, "tough cards" are always tremendously insecure cards. The leadership position probably determined her to over-compensate the "caring" and "softer" traits usually associated with women by being an even harsher, tougher and crueler boss.

Nevertheless, the experience did solidify inside me feelings of alliance and even of kinship with other immigrants and female immigrants in Canada who are in the same position as I am or in even more vulnerable and precarious situations, like the South-American cleaning staff. When I wake up feeling optimist about the world and in upbeat spirit, I dream of organizing migrant resistance groups and feminist and anti-racist cooperatives in Canada. In such moments, I envision a future with unified struggles, or at least a future of writing so much and so well about these injustices that the government and powerful decision-makers will start paying attention to these plights. There are also the days when I do not wake up energized by such perspectives of fairness and justice, where I surrender to bleaker perspectives over the world and regret even attempting to have looked for brighter lights, jobs and life paths. There are moments of shame and guilt, that are also lived with a sense of loss, followed up the by ones where I feel I am winning at this neoliberal game by just being resilient and determined through all these challenges. And those are the moments that make me smile widely and genuinely and keep me going.

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Appendix A

Summary of the research sample of 25 mothers by assigned name, their occupational or

educational background, number of their children and when their children left for Canada

1.   Adina- 55- teacher- 2 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 2001

2.   Camelia- 58- teacher- 1 child- migrated to Canada in 1999

3.   Gabriela- 57- teacher- 3 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 2003

4.   Corina- 58- nurse- 2 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 1999

5.   Rodica- 68- retired farmer- 3 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 1996

6.   Liliana- 56- engineer- 2 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 2002

7.   Ana- 58- statistician- 3 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 1994

8.   Mariana- 62- nurse- 1 child- migrated to Canada in 2004

9.   Sorana- 55- physician- 2 children- migrated to Canada in 2005

10.   Geanina- 64- retired teacher- 1 child- migrated to Canada in 1998

11.   Mihaela- 55- architect- 2 children- 2 migrated to Canada in 1994

12.   Simona- 62- retired teacher- 2 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 2001

13.   Lavinia- 57- teacher- 1 child- migrated to Canada in 1997

14.   Simona- 57- nurse- 2 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 2006

15.   Anca- 62- retired teacher- 2 children- 2 migrated to Canada in 1996 and 1999

16.   Vasilica- 57- cook- 3 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 2001

17.   Florica- 57- nurse- 2 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 1997

18.   Mariana- 58- physician- 2 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 2004

19.   Liliana- 57- architect- 1 child- migrated to Canada in 2005

20.   Anamaria- 58- brick factory worker- 2 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 2007

21.   Lucia- 68- retired statistician- 2 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 1998

22.   Ana- 59- teacher- 2 children- 1 migrated to Canada in 2002

23.   Melania- 65- administrative staff- 1 child- migrated to Canada in 2004

24.   Gabriela- 67- retired nurse- 3 children- 2 migrated to Canada in 2001 and 2005

25.   Florica- 59- retired accountant- 1 child- migrated to Canada in 2006

Table 1. Title: Number of Permanent Immigrants by Source Country: Romania

Source country	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Romania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,977	3,851	3,670	3,916
Source country	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**
Romania	2,976	3,463	4,426	5,588	5,689	5,466	5,755	5,048
Source country	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Romania	4,468	3,834	2,837	2,076	1,922	1,776	1,588	1,512
Source country	**2014**	**2015**						
Romania	1,553	1,183						

Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Release Topics: Immigration and Citizenship

Table 2a. Title: Labour force survey estimates, Participation rate by sex

Labour force characteristics	Sex	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Participation rate	Both sexes	67	67.4	67.6	67.1	66.9	66.7	66.5	66.5	66.0	65.8	65.7
Males		72.3	72.5	72.7	71.9	71.6	71.4	71	70.9	70.6	70.6	70.3	
Females		61.9	62.5	62.6	62.4	62.4	62.2	62.1	62.2	61.6	61.2	61.3	

Table 2b. Title: Labour force survey estimates, Participation rate by immigrant status

Participation rate	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total population	67	67.4	67.6	67.1	66.9	66.7	66.5	66.5	66	65.8	65.7
Landed immigrants	61.7	62.2	62	62.1	62.4	61.9	62.6	62.3	61.6	62.5	63
Born in Canada	**68.7**	**69.1**	**69.3**	**68.6**	**68.3**	**68.2**	**67.8**	**67.8**	**67.4**	**67**	**66**

Source: Statistics Canada 2017, data extracted
http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?id=2820087

Table 3a. Title: Labour force survey estimate (LFS), Employment rate by immigrant status

Geography = Canada											
Employment rate											
Age group = 15 years and over											
Immigrant status	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Total population	62.8	63.4	63.4	61.5	61.5	61.7	61.7	61.8	61.4	61.3	61.1
Landed immigrants	57.4	57.9	57.6	55.9	56.3	56.5	57.4	57.3	56.8	57.9	58.3
Born in Canada	64.5	65.1	65.3	63.2	63.2	63.3	63	63.2	63	62.5	62.2

Source: Statistics Canada 2017, data extracted from http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a47

Table 3b. Labour Force Survey Estimate (LFS), Employment rate by sex

Geography = Canada											
Employment rate											
Age group = 15 years and over											
Sex	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Both sexes	62.8	63.4	63.4	61.5	61.5	61.7	61.7	61.8	61.4	61.3	61.1
Males	67.6	67.9	68	65.1	65.3	65.7	65.5	65.6	65.4	65.3	64.9
Females	58.1	59	59	58	57.9	57.8	57.9	58.1	57.6	57.4	57.5

Source: Statistics Canada 2017

Table 4. Census Canada 2006 Survey, Employment rate by sex, and ethnic origin

Ethnic origin (	Romanian	Age groups (8	Total - Age gr
Geography	Canada (01)	20000	
Sex (3)	Total - Sex	Male	Female
Selected demogr			
Employment rate	68.7	73.2	64.5

Source: Statistics Canada 2008, 2006 Census Findings

Table 5. Title: Male/Female Unemployment Rates by Sex and Country (Romania)

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Fem. Unempl.	5.3	5.6	6.3	6.2	7.1	6.3	6.9	6.4	6.1	5.4	4.7	5.8	6.5	6.8	6.4
Male Unempl	5.5	6.8	7.2	6.9	7.8	7.2	9	7.7	8.2	7.2	6.7	7.7	7.9	7.9	7.6

Source: Eurostats 2013

Table 6. Title: Male-Female Unemployment Romania, Gender Statistics
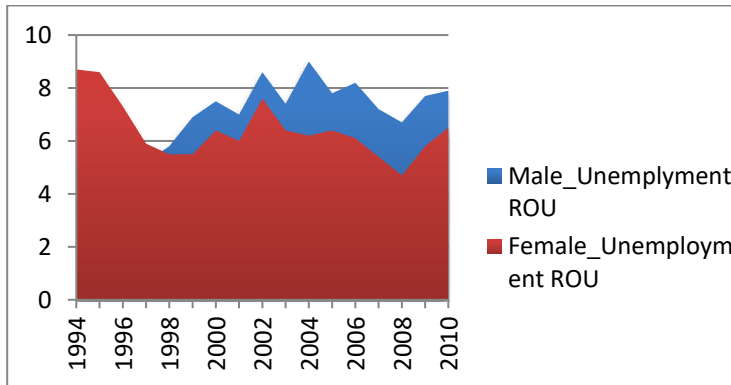
Source: The World Bank 2013 (data extracted from: http://data.worldbank.org)

Table 7. Title: Tertiary Education Enrolment Rate by Gender, Romania

Source: Eurostats 2011

Table 8: Facts and Figures 2015- Immigration Overview: Permanent Residents-Females Percentage

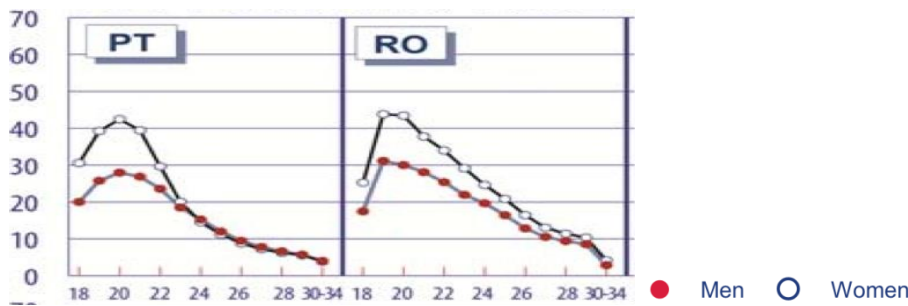| Category	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Canadian Experience	0	0	0	0.9	1.3	2.2	3.4	2.6	8.2	6.6
Caregiver	3.5	3.4	5.6	6.2	6.5	5.4	4	4.5	9.6	11.6
Skilled Trade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.6
Skilled Worker	38.4	37.6	38.4	35.1	39.5	33.3	33.3	29.7	23.9	23.9
Entrepreneur	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Investor	3	2.9	3.9	3.8	4	4.1	3.5	3.1	2.6	1.9
Self-Employed	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Start-up Business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Provincial Nominee Program	4.9	6.6	8.3	11.1	12.3	14.5	15	14	16.6	15.2
Economic	**51.3**	**51.6**	**57**	**57.8**	**64**	**59.9**	**59.4**	**54.1**	**61.4**	**60.2**

Facts and Figures 2015- Immigration Overview: Permanent Residents- Males Percentage

Category	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Canadian Experience	0	0	0	1.1	1.5	2.6	3.9	3	10.1	8.2
Caregiver	1.9	1.7	2.8	3.6	3.4	3.6	2.9	2.2	3.7	8.3
Skilled Trade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.9
Skilled Worker	46.1	45.3	45.8	41.2	45.7	38.2	37.8	34.7	28.2	27.8
Entrepreneur	1.4	1	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Investor	3.4	3.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5	3.8	3.4	3.1	2.1
Self-Employed	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
Start-up Business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Provincial Nominee Program	5.7	7.8	9.9	13.1	13.7	16.4	16.8	16.9	20.2	17.7
Economic	**58.9**	**59.5**	**63.9**	**64.1**	**69.3**	**65.7**	**65.5**	**60.6**	**65.8**	**65.4**

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2015 (source available at:
http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/2fbb56bd-eae7-4582-af7d-a197d185fc93?_ga=2.18642237.587794557.1501605462-1226141306.1501605462)

Table 9: Number of Students in Higher Education in Romania per Year and Form of Financing

Year	2001	20012	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total No. Stud	485823	485823	484217	523528	556818	581460	607676	626069	638825	612809	603604	560592
Gov. Budgeted	303133	303133	301514	304807	304203	294320	283740	283637	355923	279329	276386	281397
Charged Tuitic	182690	182690	182703	218721	252615	287140	323936	342432	282902	333480	327218	279195

Year	2001	20012	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Gov. Budgeted	62.40%	62.40%	62.27%	58.22%	54.63%	50.62%	46.69%	45.30%	55.72%	45.58%	45.79%	50.20%
Charged Tuitic	37.60%	37.60%	37.73%	41.78%	45.37%	49.38%	53.31%	54.70%	44.28%	54.42%	54.21%	49.80%

Source: Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Government of Romania 2014

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Canadian Experience Class (CEC)- one of Canada's immigration programs launched in 2008, with fluctuating quotas ranging from 2,500 admissions in 2009 to 7,000 in 2012 aimed at attracting immigrants who already have Canadian work experience and/or education. As of January 2014, the program was incorporated and subsumed within the Canada Express Entry category.

Economic Immigrants Category/Class- Canada's historic main category of immigration. It includes various immigration programs where applicants are selected on the basis of their ability to become economically established in Canada. The economic category is used in comparison to the non-economic category that cover family reunification and sponsorship class, adoptions, humanitarian and compassionate consideration, protected persons, and temporary resident permit holders.

Express Entry Program (EEP)- Canada's main immigration program, launched in January 2014. It allows the creation of a pool of candidates who may be eligible to immigrate to Canada permanently. From this pool, the applicants will be selected to apply for permanent residence based on a comprehensive ranking system and on factors such as skills, education, language ability, work experience, etc. Within the Express Entry program and in order to be eligible for it, the applicants must apply for one of the following 4 immigration sub-programs: The Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), the Federal Skilled Trade Program (FSTP), the Canadian Experience Class (CEC), and a certain portion of the Provincial Nominee Program.

Federal Entrepreneur Program (FEP)- one of Canada's smaller immigration programs launched in 2014 and living a short life (the program ended in 2015). The program aimed at attracting long-time businessmen and investors as a means of investing in Canada and assuring the country's future growth.

Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP)- one of Canada's larger immigration program that was launched in 2002 and continued the initial "Point System" of immigration to the country by assessing specific factors, especially as they are related to education, language skills, work experience, age, etc. and according to which immigrants can settle as permanent residents. As of January 2014, the program was incorporated and subsumed within the Canada Express Entry category.

Federal Skilled Trade Program (FSTP)- one of Canada's smaller immigration program launched in 2013, with a quota of 3,000 admissions, aimed at addressing its needs of lower skilled migrants. The program was geared for immigrants with qualifications in specific trades or who have practical work experience rather than formalized education. As of January 2014, the program was incorporated and subsumed within the Canada Express Entry category.

Immigration Investment Program (IIP)- one of Canada's smaller immigration programs launched in 2014 and living a short life (the program ended in 2015). The program aimed at attracting long-time businessmen and investors as a means of investing in Canada and assuring the country's future growth.

Live-in Caregivers (LIC)- Canadian immigration program until November 2014 and defined by Section 2 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations ("IRPR") as "a person who resides in and provides child care, senior home support care or care of the disabled without supervision in the private household in Canada where the person being cared for resides".

Post-communism/Post-socialism (also spelled "postcommunism" and "postsocialism")- the concepts cover the period of political and economic changes and "transitions" after the fall of communist regimes in countries of Eastern Europe and Asia. It is also the period in which new governments try to switch to different economies and, in particular, create capitalist markets.

Provincial Nominees (PN)- Canadian immigration program where provinces and territories within Canada can nominate and select their own stream of selection of immigrants based on their needs

Temporary foreign workers- Canadian immigration program that allows employers to Canada to hire foreign nationals to fill temporary labour and skill shortages only when trained Canadian citizens or permanent residents are not available to fill in that need.