



Department of Sociology

SOC 453 Globalization and Transformation in a Comparative Perspective

**Work, Family and Education in
Post-communist Romania. Gender Issues and Transformations
Accompanying the Globalization Process**

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Motto

“A woman is like a teabag. You never know her strength until you drop her in hot water.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the teachers at the Department of Sociology, Lund University, and especially to Associate Prof. Ingrid Jönsson, my supervisor, for guiding me during the whole year and for supporting me with materials and so much wisdom when writing my term papers and my final thesis.

I am equally thankful to Mrs. Liliana Pagu, President of the Romanian Women's Association, who helped me find relevant information and data about women's roles and statuses in Romania.

I would like to give my gratefulness to my loving family - my mother and my grandmother, for their moral and heartened support, for always being near me, carrying, understanding, criticizing when necessary, and loving me.

Last, but not least, thank you, Mihai, for making my life so very beautiful and for your constant support. Without your love, I couldn't make it here.

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Course: SOC 453 Globalization and Transformation in a Comparative Perspective

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Abstract

The thesis identifies past and present mechanisms that contributed to the change in the roles and statuses of the Romanian women as workers, mothers and students actively involved in educational programs. Sweden was chosen as term for comparison, because both Romanian and Sweden have social democratic welfare state regimes, but still promote different social policies, generally speaking, and, in particular, different policies regarding women. This approach allows me to emphasize the similarities, the differences and the effects of these policies, as well as to describe in a suggestive manner women's roles and statuses, taking also into consideration societal characteristics, the present context and former events and policies that have significantly influenced women's image and place in the society. In the first part of the thesis I considered a broader approach from the theoretical point of view, while in the second part I have restricted the discussion to those dimensions I considered of a greater importance for a relevant description and analysis of the contexts and the particularities specific for the two countries.

All these comparisons, discussions and analyses are related to the globalization and transformation process in recent years, in an attempt to understand the social process of change and its implications for women. While in Sweden the dominance of economic globalization allowed social democracy to play an important part, having as consequence women's release from the male breadwinner model, in Romania the situation is different. Especially because of the communist legacy and supranational financial bodies' influence, a new mixed breadwinner model appeared and women have been forced towards decisions that weakened their position in the society.

Secondary analysis was used as method for research; the greatest difficulty encountered was that of harmonizing the data when comparing the same dimension/variable for the two countries taken into consideration.

Key words: social policy, globalization, transformation, gender differentials, male breadwinner model, double burden, labour market, people's mentality, the IMF, the WB.

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List of Abbreviations

AOAR	-	Asociatia Oamenilor de Afaceri din Romania (Romanian Businessmen Association)
COE	-	Council of Europe
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	-	Gross National Product
ICT	-	Information and Communication and Technologies
IFIPA	-	Institute for International Policy Analysis
OECD	-	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SAL	-	Structural Adjustment Loan
SAP	-	Structural Adjustment Program
The EU	-	The European Union
The ILO	-	The International Labour Organization
The IMF	-	The International Monetary Fund
The WB	-	The World Bank
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	-	United States Dollars

1. Introduction

1.1. To be Woman in the Contemporary Society

Women's position in the society has been in detail nationally and internationally discussed during the last decades. Even if, when it comes to the Eastern European women, one could say that their rights are highly respected compared for example to African or Arab women, they also confront with sharp problems. Many Eastern European women live today a growing daily insecurity, with unpredictability in their labour contracts and "mechanisms of retention, promotion, remuneration and working time. In the face of such mechanisms, often the only option for defence, claim or resistance is to quit. To a great extent, these options explain their labour trajectories, marked by a notorious instability and horizontal mobility... This limits the possibility to settle in any labour community and therefore the possibility to establish a social and political presence" (Kruse, 2000 in Beneria, 2001, 12). Many of them have also a weak position inside their own families or as students actively involved in the educational system. Consequently, sometimes their options are what we do delimitate through the term of "counter-geographies of globalization" (Sassen, 2002, 255), those circuits that bring women into low-status activities like prostitution, illegal work, nursing, domestic servants, selling themselves as brides and so on.

1.2. Women in Romania

In Romania women's situation is special, because of the contextual particularities. During the 45 years of communism the universalistic welfare state regime was dominant and Romanian male breadwinner family was challenged by state policy; consequently, a mixture between male and dual breadwinner models occurred. In the present Romanian context, characterized among other things by ageing population and reduction of public commitments, a change appeared in the effects of the communist party policies, but the mixture still remains. Romanians' mentality and the social policies implemented during the last years of transition to the market economy, together with Romania's major efforts to integrate in the Euro-Atlantic structures and other factors, have influenced to a great extent the continuity of this mixture. Consequently, Romanian women are confronted with new situations that have changed their roles and statuses.

Swedish women's situation is considered as term for comparison. Sweden is classified as belonging to the social democratic welfare regime, with an accentuated trend towards dual breadwinner families (with both husbands/partners being actively involved in the labour

market); this weak male breadwinner regime developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, encouraging a rapid rise of women's labour market participation through changes in taxation policy, child care provision and support for parental leave. In Romania, the combination between social democracy and liberal social policies has estranged women's roles and statuses from the roles and statuses that should have been gained under a veritable social democracy, as in Sweden. The reasons of this difference are elaborated here, in connection with the globalization and transformation processes and their effects, which induced major changes in the lives of people from countries in transition.

1.3. The Aim of the Thesis

The aim of this thesis is to identify past and present mechanisms that are contributing to the contemporary situation of Romanian women.

I have chosen to restrict the discussion by taking into account Jane Lewis' theory (1992 in Williams, 2001), who argues for the need to understand welfare regimes in terms of their relation to traditional family structures of male breadwinner/female dependant, but also to enrich this model of analysis by considering other approaches and emphasizing the ideas drawn by the feminist critiques. Thus, I will analyze welfare state regime's impact on gender by reference to women's roles in society, as partners/wives, carers/providers, paid employees, mothers and policymakers/citizens (Pascall and Manning, 2000). It is important to include a discussion on the state-market-family relations, and especially on the impact of the state provision on gender relations, in particular the treatment of paid and unpaid labour, social citizenship, access to paid work and capacity to form and maintain an autonomous household. In addition, I will also focus on women's educational levels and their degree of involvement in educational programs, the role of peoples' mentality in determining women's roles/statuses and the consequences of IMF and WB programs for women's situation in society.

I will closely follow the directions of discussion opened by Gillian Pascal and Nick Manning (2000) and Diane Sainsbury (2001) regarding the ways in which the policies for women do affect the terms on which they take part in families; the way and the extent to what women's roles are sources of entitlement to welfare provision and how does this affect women's relation to the family; how do the levels and the quality of the provision and changes in these affect women's position in the family, their unpaid care work, their statuses on the labour market, their possibilities to improve their educational baggage, and their ability to negotiate changes in these roles and their ability to live outside families.

The discussion will be accompanied by references to globalization, transformation and

modernization processes taking place during the last years. Under the influence of these global trends, all spheres of society throughout the world are being transformed. Globalization means worldwide markets, large transnational corporations, intense competition, the emergence of global labour markets and transition processes from plain economy to market economy for Eastern European countries. But apart from economic and technological globalization, political and cultural globalization also increases their influence.

2. A Theoretical Framework

2.1. Global and Local Contexts at the End of the 20th Century

The globalization process, that has begun to expand its mechanisms and effects towards the end of the 20th century, has significantly influenced many nations all over the world, but especially the countries which suffered from special contexts, like austerity regimes, communist regimes, military dictatorships and so on.

In Eastern Europe, immediately after abolishing the communist regimes and becoming aware that the direction to take was to the West, governments became concerned with economic, legal and political institutional reforms and not with social institutional reforms. Matters of national identity and property privatization have very fast taken precedence, and a myth that the market place would solve all the problems has grown up alongside a clear rejection of all things social as being essentially socialist and part of the past to be forgotten (Deacon, Hulse, Stubbs, 1997).

This is the context when the international organizations appeared. "Concern to stabilize the process of market reform and prevent its slowing down, with appropriate attention to the social costs of transition, thus characterized the motivation for intervention by all these agencies" (ibid, 93). The WB, the IMF and the ILO in particular have had a much "sustained" activity in this region, through a series of instruments aimed at helping the countries to solve the problems occurred with freedom, free market instalment, and the opening to the global contexts (Appendix A). Of all these instruments, the loans with social and economic conditionality have had the most direct and the deepest impact on social policies. According to Deacon, Hulse and Stubbs (1997, 103), these agencies did not interact, rather "jockeying and lobbying for positions of influence and authority in their parallel interventions". Secondly, for most agencies there were noticed some internal disagreements about policy description, by variability in policy perception and shifting policy thinking over time (ibid). Such discrepancies in policy strategies had severe impacts on the transition countries. They

have created part of the legislative “chaos” and internal discrepancies in social policies and the way they are understood by different social actors. The disagreement over policy ideas and prescription was most evident in the WB. Two main trends are identified by Deacon, Hulse and Stubbs: one associated with European wage related state funded social security systems and another associated with flat-rate-possibly means and assets tested-residual pension policy. “The presence of the Bank is everywhere and its tenacity is noteworthy” (ibid, 148). Meanwhile, the IMF’s impact on and policy towards the poor consisted in stabilization programs liable to have appreciable and complex effects on the distribution of income. Thus, groups of poor are indeed among losers, with the urban working class particularly at risk. However, governments adopting IMF’s programs are free to adopt measures to protect vulnerable groups, although there may be hard negotiations with the Fund (Killick and Malik, 1991 in Deacon, Hulse and Stubbs, 1997).

Consequently, the particular challenge in these countries consists in providing cost effective social insurance schemes for old age, health care, and unemployment, as well as social assistance for low income families. Even the IMF recognizes that there might be problems with the strategies it imposes and tries to define a set of solutions, but they have not yet proved their effectiveness in some of the countries, and will not, as long as welfare will be regarded as burden, workfare or safety net, as the IMF historically does regard it, and not as entitlement, as, for example, the Council of Europe regards it.

The conclusion is that major international organizations are involved in shaping post-communist social policy with varying degrees of impact, that the advice of different agencies often pulls in opposite directions, that there are even conflicts between the ideas and strategies remitted by different agencies (reflected sometimes in internal conflicts within countries) and that the encounter with the social guarantees of communism has heightened debate and discord within and between several of the international organizations. It is also obvious that the nature of the decisions lying behind the WB and the IMF’s economic advice to governments is contested (Deacon, Hulse, Stubbs, 1997).

2.2. Gösta Esping-Andersen's Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism

As I have showed above, social policies have had a central role to play in people’s lives at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Gösta Esping-Andersen (1990) describes three different arrangements between state, market and the family, by identifying three “worlds” of welfare capitalism. Firstly, the liberal welfare state, which is characterized by means-tested assistance, modest universal transfers and social insurance plans. Benefits

are typically modest and cater mainly to a clientele of low income, usually working class, state dependents. Entitlement rules are strict and often associated with stigma. Market mechanisms are reinforced and entitlements are tied to market participation. The expenditure on childcare is very little, also the maternity leave and the parental insurance. Consequently, market liberal welfare states register high levels of female unemployment and fertility unevenness. The archetypical examples of this model are the United States, Canada and Australia. Secondly, there is the corporatist-statist welfare state. Here the preservation of status differentials predominates; therefore, rights are attached to class and status. The influence of the Church is strong, as well as the conception of the need for preservation of traditional familyhood. Social insurance typically consists in husbands' occupational insurance schemes and family benefits encourage motherhood. Family services like daycare are underdeveloped, parental leave is not generous and sometimes even unpaid after maternity leave. Consequently, women's participation on the labour market is low and in many areas are registered sharp fertility crises. This kind of regime is typical for Austria, France, Germany and Italy. Thirdly, there is the social democratic regime based on the principles of universalism and de-commodification of social rights. It promotes an equality of higher standards, and not an equality of minimal needs. It is a more gender-neutral welfare regime in terms of its effects on female employment, distribution of tasks in the household and so on. Based on separate taxation for married and according no tax relief for children, it also sustains parental insurance, joint expansion of daycare services and insurance and public responsibility for child daycare, available for all. It is typical for the Scandinavian countries, where it was registered a fertility crisis only in the 1990s, but not before. This model addresses both the market and the traditional family. In contrast to the corporatist continental one, its principle is not to wait until the family's capacity to aid is exhausted, but to preemptively socialize the costs of familyhood, in an attempt to maximize not the dependence on the family, but the capacities for individual independence. This is the model I have situated my study within.

Gösta Esping-Andersen's approach has often been subject to a whole catalogue of criticisms: because it wrongly conceptualizes the regimes of specific countries, it focuses on income maintenance and employment to the neglect of health and social services, and it neglects the role of religion, status and ethnicity in explaining cross-national regime variation. But it was also criticized for ignoring the role of gender, the family and reproductive work (Williams, 2001; Sainsbury 2001). Taking into consideration some of the critiques, Esping-Andersen has revised later his theory in an attempt to incorporate certain

feminist ideas in a concluding discussion upon welfare states regimes. Thus, he analyzes the position of the family in the overall infrastructure of welfare production and consumption. “What happens to our political economy models of welfare regimes when we insert the family? What are the effects of family change on welfare states and, ultimately, on postindustrial change? Since household-welfare production is largely – but far from exclusively – based on women’s unpaid labour, gender differentiation in the family-welfare nexus must clearly be addressed” (Esping-Andersen, 2000, 50). He agrees upon the fact that employment-based entitlement systems, such as social insurance or occupational benefit schemes, implicitly favor the male breadwinner. Because women are less involved in paid activities, in such systems their social entitlements tend to be derivative of the husband. As a consequence, when the marriage becomes less stable, women’s access to social protection may suffer. This way, single-mother families or women with interrupted careers, will easily find themselves in a “welfare gap” (Gornick et al, 1997 in Esping-Andersen, 2000, 50). Individualized benefit systems (especially if they are citizenship-based) are more likely to grant women some economic independence, especially if transfers are coupled with affordable child-care (Esping-Andersen, 2000; Sainsbury, 2001). What matters most of all is the degree to which social policy frees women from the burden of family obligations.

Esping-Andersen also takes into consideration the concepts of familiarism and de-familiarization, as referring to “the degree to which household’s welfare and caring responsibilities are relaxed, either via welfare state provision, or via market provision” (Esping-Andersen, 2000, 51). Familiarism is “a system in which public policy assumes that households must carry the principal responsibility for their members’ welfare”. By opposition, de-familiarization refers to “a system that seeks to unburden the household and diminish individual’s welfare dependence on kinship”. The two notions are parallel with the concepts of commodification/de-commodification and are used in his analysis as replacement for the male breadwinner differentiations (ibid), which Esping-Andersen seems not to agree too much with. Measuring welfare-family interrelations is difficult, he says, but it can be done especially by considering time-budget data, which do allow some estimation of the relative intensity of self-servicing. It can also be done by using indirect measures – as data on three-generational cohabitation (assuming that co-resident elderly are cared for by their children and vice-versa), or as welfare state or market non-provision i.e. the inexistence of child-care or service provision for elderly. I have applied his last method to emphasize the present situation in Romania.

2.3. A Feminist Approach to Women and the Welfare State

2.3.1. Globalization and Women's Changing Position in the Labour Market

Global cities have become strategic sites for the specialized servicing, financing and management of global economic processes. They are also sites for the incorporation of large numbers of women and immigrants in activities that service strategic sectors in both shadow and formal economic activities. Here a gap has been created between the workers and the opportunity to become part of the "labour aristocracy"; women have entered jobs which represent a prolongation of the household tasks and which have a low status on the labour market, thus being disregarded. Furthermore, "the demands placed on the top-level professional and managerial workforce in global cities are such that the usual models of handling household tasks and lifestyle are inadequate. As a consequence, we are witnessing the return of the so-called 'serving class' in the globalized cities all around the world, composed largely of immigrant and migrant women" (Sassen, 2002, 262).

Fiona Williams (2001, 156) states that by the 1980s most welfare regimes "found themselves faced with major shifts in the organization, conditions, and social relations caught up in family, nation, and work". Firstly, the globalization of capital and the search for new forms of capital accumulation have created new working conditions for which the old social insurance systems are no longer adequate. Secondly, the rising costs and demands for welfare provision, the limited potential for full continuous employment and the associated fragmentation of the working class have undermined the possibility of the sort of class compromises represented by the Keynesian welfare settlement. Changing patterns of women's paid employment and changing households' patterns particularities especially in relation to marriage and parenthood have challenged family's relationship to the needs, demands, and support for social policies. Furthermore, the globalization of capital, of communications, production and dissemination of knowledge, the shifting of national boundaries, the emergence of supranational political institutions and economic communities, the change in the pace of migrations, the increase in permanent settlement and ethnic diversity, and the increase in movements around transnational ethnic, religious, and political identities, have all threatened the viability of the concept of "sovereignty" itself. Changes in household forms have not liberated the majority of women from economic inequalities of the major responsibilities for domestic and care-giving work (ibid).

All these shifts demand new welfare policies and often increase the existing inequities, especially the ones faced by black, migrant or female workers (ibid).

The impact is even deeper, when we look into detail. The creation of the Single European

Market is likely to have profound economic, political and social effects. As Avtar Brah (2001) demonstrates, today parts of a product can be produced in different locations over the world. General purpose machinery and adaptable labour can be used to produce semi-customized goods to suit different markets. As a consequence, labour has become decentralized and a new gender division of labour has emerged - in which women have been attracted as cheap and semi-casualized labour (Mitter, 1986 in Brah, 2001).

Furthermore, gender issues are strongly interconnected with other issues, as social policy both constitutes and is constituted by complex and interrelated inequalities of class, gender and race (Fink, 2001). These concepts and processes are all articulated (i.e. women as bearers of children and as reproducers of the culture of a certain class) and can be connected with the ideals of nationhood and nation-building: "motherhood, as duty, desire, destiny, and just reward, stands at the intersection of the organizations of nationhood, family life, and production, its discourses shaping and being shaped by developing welfare states" (Williams, 2001, 151).

Many feminists have been profoundly suspicious of both the state (seeing it as an instrument of repression and of maintaining a patriarchal society) and the welfare state (as reproducing the traditional social division of labour between sexes) (Sainsbury, 2001). The idea is that simplifying is not good; instead, analysis is needed, being open and, most of all, considering contexts.

2.3.2. A Feminist Critique of Gösta Esping-Andersen's Typology of Welfare Regimes

The researchers at IFIPA (2002) considered that Gösta Esping-Andersen's model would be an excellent guide for research, if enriched with four dimensions: 1. the household structure, community and related forms of self-help provision; 2. a wider range of state policies embraced (as policies affecting access to work, capital, land, self-employment and so on); 3. norms and values; 4. non-monetary and other measures of welfare.

Jane Lewis (1992 in Williams, 2001) makes four points about the importance of taking the gender relationship into account. Firstly, in most of the modern welfare states women have historically received benefits and provisions as wives and mothers (i.e. as unpaid workers). Secondly, most welfare states emerged at a time when the boundaries between the public and the private spheres were evidently marked, especially in the social, cultural, and political discourse. Thirdly, the model of the male breadwinner with a dependent wife and children has been the basis of all modern welfare states but one that has been modified in different ways in different countries. Fourthly, the social insurance/social assistance programs tend to

operate as a gendered system, with men being the main beneficiaries of the social insurance.

Ann Shola Orloff (1993 in Williams, 2001, 139) successfully incorporates gender into Gösta Esping-Andersen's initial model, introducing the concept of "gendering of dimensions". This concept is explained through a series of sub-concepts. Firstly, state-market family relations, which are to be understood as "the extent and the ways in which state policies free women or redistribute domestic responsibilities more equally within the home, and the impact of domestic responsibilities on patterns of female employment". Secondly, the notion of stratification, as "the relationship between social provision and class differences and the ways in which the state mitigates or reproduces gender differences or inequalities (i.e. as regards the social security systems, men's claims are based on paid work and women's claims upon their familial and marital roles)". Thirdly, social citizenship rights/de-commodification, "the extent to which states guarantee women access to paid employment and services that enable them to balance home and work responsibilities, and the mechanisms and institutions that implement these guarantees". Fourthly, the degree of women's access to paid work, as "the degree state provisions encourage or discourage women's access to paid employment, their right to be commodified". Last, but not least, the capacity to form and maintain an autonomous household, as "the extent to which welfare states provide women with freedom from the compulsion to enter marriages/partnerships in order to get financial support" (ibid).

In a similar attempt to emphasize the lacunas of the key mainstream conceptions of the welfare states, Diane Sainsbury (2001) has also underlined some weaknesses of these "classical" conceptions in "male-stream" welfare research. The traditional division of labour between men as earners and women as carers produces a gender differentiation of social rights and benefits levels. Then, key mainstream assumptions are gendered in the sense that they are primarily rooted in the experiences of men, i.e. Esping-Andersen's concept of de-commodification. But "men's capacity for commodification and de-commodification, i.e. their ability to sell their labour and their capacity, through social rights, not to wholly depend upon this, is made possible by women's unpaid work in the home. By the same token, women may need to struggle to become commodified in the first place and "any subsequent freedom through de-commodification will be modified by their existing domestic commitments" (Williams, 2001, 135). Mainstream assumptions have also stressed economic processes as a crucial determinant in the formation of welfare state, while feminists try to emphasize the interrelationship between family, state and market. Furthermore, mainstream analysis was focused on redistribution as it affects classes, occupational groups, generations or other

categories, while feminist studies seek to analyze the distributional effects of the welfare state with respect to women and men, or “the feminization of poverty” in the 1980s because of the increasing number of families headed by single women, and the overrepresentation of women among the elderly and especially among the very old (Sainsbury, 2001, 120).

Like Ann Shola Orloff (1993 in Williams, 2001), Diane Sainsbury (2001) emphasizes that feminist critiques must in the first place focus on the analysis of women’s relationship to the welfare states, as women have been invisible in so much of the mainstream writing on the welfare state. Thus, women must be regarded as: 1. objects of policy, “policy takers” or recipients; consequently, their relationship to the welfare state must primarily be analyzed in terms of dependency and social control, including discussions on how welfare state policies have reinforced the position of married women as dependants on their husbands; 2. claimants; 3. citizens, employees and clients, in terms of women influencing decisions and holding positions of power, employees with the state as a major employer and clients in their role as mothers and a large proportion of the elderly and sick (Hernes, 1987 in Sainsbury, 2001); 4. consumers of public services; 5. mothers.

To eliminate these problematic aspects of mainstream constructs it is necessary to re-conceptualize the assumptions so that they are applicable to both women and men. Diane Sainsbury formulates the essential points in these criticisms as “gender relevant dimensions of variation” (Sainsbury, 2001, 124). These dimensions are presented as contrasting ideal types: the male breadwinner and the individual models of social policy, as showed in Table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions of variation of the male breadwinner and the individual models of social policy

Dimension	Male breadwinner model	Individual model
Familial ideology	Celebration of marriage	No preferred family form
	Strict division of labour	Shared roles
	Husband=earner; Wife=carer	Father and mother=earner/carers;
Entitlement	Differentiated among spouses	Uniform
Basis of entitlement	Breadwinner	Citizenship or residence
Recipient of benefits	Head of household	Individual
Unit of benefit	Household or family	Individual
Unit of contributions	Household	Individual
Taxation	Joint taxation	Separate taxation
	Deduction for dependants	Equal tax relief
Employment and wage policies	Priority to men	Aimed at both sexes
Sphere of care	Primarily private	Strong state involvement
Caring work	Unpaid	Paid component

Source: Sainsbury, 2001.

The advantage of this type of analysis is that the dimensions of variations are clearly specified. Earlier discussions, like Jane Lewis' (1992 in Williams, 2001), were based on a unique dimension - the strength of a male breadwinner model in terms of the traditional division of labour between the sexes and its implications for the social entitlements (Sainsbury, 2001), resulting in a typology of strong, modified and weak male breadwinner states. It could be possible to depict three dimensions of variation in this model (married women's entitlements via their husbands' social rights, married women's employment, and the availability of childcare services and generous benefits such as maternity pay), "but this typology tends to conflate cause and effect" (Hobson, 1994 in Sainsbury, 2001, 125).

The basis for entitlement constitutes a crucial factor in determining whether the social benefits and services contribute to women's autonomy or reinforce their dependence. In the liberal welfare state regime of Esping-Andersen's typology, the basis for entitlement is the need caused by inadequate economic and/or personal resources; in the corporatist welfare state regime, entitlement derives from the labour market status; in the social democratic regime, the criterion is the citizenship and the residence (Sainsbury, 2001). Feminists have emphasized that these criteria do not exhaust the bases of entitlement in the case of women. Instead, their entitlement has derived from their status as mothers and wives. Parenthood provides a basis for entitlement, but welfare states are divided upon the fact that they accord benefits on the basis of the principle of care or of maintenance - to the mother or to the father. It is thus of a great importance the extent to which a married woman's entitlement to benefits is via her husband or is influenced by her husband's benefits. Diane Sainsbury (2001) underlines the fact that feminist scholarship has often defined a limited number of conditions of eligibility, as in the case of mainstream research - breadwinner/earner or dependant of a breadwinner; universal breadwinner model promoting women's employment or a caregiver parity model providing care allowances; entitlements connected to work/need/parenting and so on. Citizenship/residence-based entitlements are of major importance because they are not affected by the marital status, make no distinction between paid work and unpaid work and undermine the principle of maintenance and the family wage ideal.

Fiona Williams (2001) argues that, even if there are a number of important path-breaking strengths in Esping-Andersen's work on welfare state regimes, there is also dissonance between the direction of his analysis and the issues that have come to discussion at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. The critiques made from a gender perspective are by now very well documented. The most important omissions, the author says, seem to be those related to race, ethnicity, migration and gender as both separate and interrelated issues.

2.3.3. The Counter-geographies of Globalization

2.3.3.1. The Counter-geographies of Globalization as Cross Border Circuits

One of the most important concepts taken into consideration in the thesis is the one of globalization. The globalization process plays a specific role in a country's history, by both contributing to the formation of links between "sending" and "receiving" countries and by enabling local and regional practices to become global in scale.

Gender and the globalization process were brought together by Saskia Sassen, who introduced in the scientific literature the term "counter-geographies of globalization". They are cross border circuits (in which increasing presence of women has been noted) that have become a source for livelihood, profit making and the accrual of foreign currency; among these cross border activities are the illegal trafficking in women for prostituting and for regular work or the organized export of women as brides, nurses and domestic servants (Sassen, 2002). These circuits are directly or indirectly associated with some key programs and conditions that are at the heart of the global economy, but they are not typically represented or seen as connected to globalization, and often operate outside of laws and treaties. They have strengthened, at the same time, that economic globalization has had a significant impact on developing countries, which had to implement new policies and to accommodate new conditions associated with globalization. Usually, these new conditions are connected to Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), the elimination of multiple state subsidies, opening economies to foreign firms, financial crisis and the accompanying IMF's programs, which have already come to discussion in the chapter 2.1. The effects of these newly occurred conditions have been the creation of enormous costs for certain sectors of the economy and especially of social costs, while not reducing the governmental debts.

Saskia Sassen (2002) therefore explains how the "macro" level does influence the "micro" level and the individuals - women, in our particular case, as their roles/statuses constitute the central point for discussion in this thesis. That is, how the global and national situation, and, in particular, the governmental debts, have led (especially in the developing countries) to the occurrence of above described alternative circuits for survival. I will on shortly follow her demonstration, as it is important for the understanding of the present situation in Romania, which will be discussed in the following chapters.

2.3.3.2. The Appearance of Counter-geographies of Globalization and Their Effects on Women's Situation in Countries in Transition

As I have already showed before, in most of the developing countries, the globalization

process has brought significant costs: the shrinking opportunities for male employment and for traditional forms of profit making, as the foreign firms are increasingly accepted in a widening range of economic sectors and are pressured to develop export industries; growing unemployment; the closure of many firms in often traditional sectors oriented to the local or national market; the promotion of export oriented cash crops, which have increasingly replaced survival agriculture and food production for local and national markets; the heavy burden of government debt and the fall of the government revenue.

All these effects have contributed to raise the importance of finding alternative means for making a living, making a profit and securing the government revenue.

These costs have further effects on the economic and social systems and are strongly interconnected. Government debts have detrimental effects on governmental programs for women and children, notably education, health care, and social programs. International agencies usually “suggest” austerity and adjustment programs to address government debt, which are also associated with increased unemployment (Sassen, 2002). The IMF and the WB played a special role through their SAPs and SALs promoted over the last two decades (chapter 2.1. and Appendix A). The purpose of such programs is to increase state’s competitiveness, which typically means sharp cuts in social programs and putting on economic reforms with accompanying increased rates of unemployment and bankruptcy of many smaller, national market-oriented firms. It is likely that, under the current conditions, most of the countries will not be able to pay their debts in full. Yet, as Saskia Sassen (2002) observes, these countries have been paying a significant share of their total revenue to service their debt¹.

Unemployment and poverty have increased the pressure on women to find ways of ensuring household survival. The effects were, as stated before, a considerable increase in trafficking in women, organized export of women² as brides, nurses and domestic servants,

¹ Saskia Sassen (2002) shows that thirty-three of the forty-one Highly Indebted Countries paid three USD in debt service payments for every one USD in development assistance. Many of these countries pay over 50 per cent of their government revenue as debt, or 20 to 25 per cent of their export earnings, with large repercussion on state spending; primary education, social expenses or health care have been clearly disadvantaged as compared to the debt payment amounts. One example in Zambia is more than relevant - the amount of USD paid as debt in 1994 was 35 times higher than the amount of money spent for primary education. In many of these countries, debt service to GNP ratios exceeds sustainable limits. Meanwhile, it creates a vicious circle, by raising the debt dependence of countries. It is certain though that, together with other variables, SAPs have contributed to an increase in unemployment and in poverty and the loans served to compensate more the losses of foreign institutional investors, rather than to solve the poverty and unemployment problems, which affected so many people.

² Saskia Sassen (2002, 266) further insists upon trafficking in women, a phenomenon that “involves the forced recruitment and movement of people both within and across state boundaries for work or other services through a variety of forms, all including coercion” and being primarily related to the sex market, to labour markets and

and the remittances of an increasingly female emigrant workforce, together with the increased number of women working in poor jobs in their national countries, sometimes in the “underground” or “shadow” economy, in a desperate attempt to ensure a decent income for their families’ survival (Sassen, 2002).

Furthermore, directions of development promoted by the IMF and the WB indirectly support sex trade. For example, in developing countries where manufacturing and agriculture can no longer function as sources of employment, profits and government revenue, other sources of earnings/profits/revenues become important ones. For instance, tourism has been seen by the IMF and the WB as a solution of the growth challenges in poor countries and they have proceeded to provide loans for tourism development, but, by doing this, they have also been contributing to the expansion of the entertainment industry, which may indirectly support sex trade.

The counter-geographies of globalization overlap with the formation of global markets, the intensification of transnational and trans-local networks and the development of communication technologies, which easily escape conventional surveillance practices; they are also indicators of “the feminization of survival, because it is increasingly on the backs of the women that these forms of making a living, earning a profit and securing government revenue are realized” (Sassen, 2002, 258). Households and communities, but also governments, seem to be dependant on women’s earnings, as well as companies where profit making exists at the margins of the “licit” economy and of illegal enterprises, as Saskia Sassen affirms (*ibid*).

The counter-geographies of globalization are effects of the heavy and raising burden of government debt, the growth in unemployment rates, sharp cuts in governmental social expenditure, the closure of a large number of firms in often traditional sector oriented to the local or national market and the promotion of export-oriented growth. They represent forms of survival, but it is on the backs of women that they operate. If we also consider the additional government savings attributed to severe cuts in health care and especially in social programs and education, we can say that women’s position in society is very much jeopardized.

The effects on women’s roles/statuses in society are much wider, as the inclusion in these

to illegal migration. Some researches (*ibid*) indicate that economic need is fundamental to entry into prostitution, two of the main causal variables being the poverty of women’s households/parents and the increased unemployment rate. Prostitution is forbidden for foreign women in some countries, and it is tolerated in other countries while regular market jobs are less so. Sometimes legislation makes women more vulnerable, especially where they are treated as violators of the law as they have violated entry, residence and work laws (they are often considered so if being undocumented, which is likely).

circuits automatically excludes women from other circuits and systems - like educational programs, career possibilities in high-status jobs, and so on - and have a negative impact on women's position in the society.

3. Brief Discussion on the Methodology

As sociological method for research I will use secondary analysis of recent censuses and social surveys, as well as data from the statistical yearbooks and other public sources such as series of macro-level demographic and economic indicators, quantitative data, time series, micro-level data from specific surveys, and register data in a comparative perspective.

I will use comparisons of longitudinal data, a method which is non-obtrusive (not implying the interaction between the researcher and the subject) (Marginean, 2000), non-interactive and mainly quantitative.

It is also my intention to relate the empirical data to the theoretical framework in such a manner that the thesis should not end up in just a comparative description of the two systems, but also in explaining and understanding the phenomena.

Using numeric documents in a sociological research has its weak and forte points. Firstly, numeric documents offer a correct image of the social investigated processes and phenomena only if they are real, complete and without registration errors. Otherwise, the analysis is biased from the start. Data from many sources must be corroborated, because the systems for collecting data may induce certain distortions. The visibility of the registered facts, phenomena and processes impacts on the validity of the social statistics. The more the visibility of the social phenomena is accentuated, the bigger is the value of the respective documents because they are easily verifiable. This is a strong point for my research, as I will use mainly demographic data and data concerning women's involvement in educational programs, which are easy verifiable. The real quantitative aspect of the phenomena must be estimated by taking as starting point the registered statistical data, and including or diminishing them by the "hidden phenomena". The statistical unit must be defined in the same way; otherwise the comparison is not valid (Chelcea, 2001).

Even if censuses have improved lately from a methodological point of view they have, like other sources of numerical data, some deficiencies; e.g. there is an accentuated attraction to round off the numbers when declaring them, and to induce errors this way (for example, when declaring age); sometimes census data are on purpose modified. Furthermore, precise data are not always exact data and the results are only valid for the very moment they are

registered. This is the “statistical” character of censuses and surveys - differences occur as compared to the registered data as we move away in time from the moment the census/survey was realized (ibid).

Apart from these aspects connected more with the technical side of the research, secondary analysis as the main method of study might mean a potential for creativity, since new variables and definitions can be derived when combining categories. It is also a relatively inexpensive method, time-saving and exceptionally useful when carrying out analysis of sub-populations or when making comparisons over time. Judith Glover (1996) has fruitfully discussed the problems associated with secondary analysis, categorizing them into three groups: technical problems, institutional problems (including the degree of familiarity the researcher has with the data, the level of documentation available, access to data) and epistemological issues, which are the most acute. These are centered on the given nature of the data – the fact that the primary data were produced within a particular view of what constituted the knowledge and in terms of a specific perspective, and that they were related to a specific, historically located conception of what is politically feasible and acceptable. It may be difficult for the researcher to grasp the variations in definitions. It may also be difficult for the non-national researcher to grasp the set of circumstances and ideologies within which the data were produced. But this might also be turned to advantage, by questioning what is ordinary and taken-for-granted by the indigenous researcher.

Some techniques and methods were used in order to diminish the negative effects of the issues considered above. In the first place, to eliminate the difficulty of getting hold of the documentation, I have looked for organizations and agencies that allowed non-national researchers to get access to national data. Secondly, an investment in time was needed in order to understand the structure of the data, the definitions used and the theoretical underpinnings of the research, as well as knowledge about the ideological context operating at the time when the data were collected. I have tried to harmonize the data when discussing the similarities and differences between national contexts. Last, but not least, the data were used with circumspection, taking into account the fact that universalisation of techniques is to be set against specificity of national traditions. Harmonization of data undermines reliability, and so do other variables such as political issues. The analysis of the context, of the social, political and cultural details for each country involved, together with the sociological ethic, might be the sources for an accurate and objective study. “It is more important to have imperfect measures of a consistent conceptual definition than a perfect measure of different or inappropriate conceptual definitions” (Cheshire et al, 1991, in Dex, 1996, 15). I especially

encountered difficulties in finding similar data from the two countries for the same period of time. However, I tried to find the most relevant data related with the discussed issues, and data which were best fitted for analysis and comparison.

4. Factors Influencing the Gender Division of Work, Family and Education in Romania and Sweden

4.1. The Legacy of the Past in Romania and the Shift of the Last Decade

Romania was traditionally an agricultural economy, with low industrial development, until the take-over in 1945 by the communist regime. Since then an extensive industrial basis was developed with the intention to provide workers with better living standards than was possible under the former capitalist system. According to Makkai (1994), it was based on two main principles: all people, regardless of sex and race, were equal politically, economically and socially and all those capable of working in the paid labour market should do so. All major forms of entitlements and rewards in society became related to active participation on the labour market.

Apart from the hidden privileges available to the nomenklatura that breached the essential contract of the communist ideology (Deacon, 2000), the social welfare regime in Romania can be characterized as universalistic until the beginning of the 1990s. The contract between the party-state apparatus and the people consisted of the provision of highly subsidized prices in food, for all people, regardless their income, also for housing, transport and basic necessities, guaranteed employment, adequate health and educational provisions and small wage differentials in return for political quietude of the population. During their 1980s, all Eastern European countries spent over one fifth of their GDP on social programs and on the subsidization of goods and services (Makkai, 1994).

The official constitutional position of women under the communist regime was consequently that of equality with men. Marriage and family were liberalized, sexually exploitative images and writing were prohibited and equal educational opportunities for women were promoted. Services were targeted primarily to enable women to be in the labour force. A bridge of social investment in childcare and other services supported women's place in the labour market. High labour participation was achieved, with women spending most of their adult lives in paid work and at younger ages than in Western countries.

Despite of all these measures, the communist conception established difference rather than equality. First, with the occurrence and rapid development of the pro-natalist policies, the

duty to work found itself in competition with the maternal ideology. Social policies' challenge to traditional female roles had indeed large impact on women's participation in paid employment, but, at the same time, traditional motherhood was idealized and sustained. It was considered as women's responsibility to bear and to raise children. Thus, the regime could be characterized as promoting women's roles as both mothers and workers. Public policies for women's paid employment mixed with an unreconstructed domestic division of labour resulted in women's "double's burden". Labour markets became segregated and women's earnings were lower than those of men. A law interdicting abortions was introduced in 1966. So women's range of choices was very much restricted in all aspects of life. In practice they became subordinated to their husbands/partners as well as to the state.

After the 1989 Revolution, the one party political system was replaced by a democratic political system and the centralized command economy was replaced by an economy governed by the rules of the market. The political change was not that difficult, as in Romania a few parties (the Romanian "historical" parties) were still active, but interdicted - as illegal - by the communists. The transformation was accompanied by the globalization process, which started with the opening of the borders and the appearance of foreign investors. Both processes had important effects on women's lives and choices.

The globalization process in Romania has been understood in all its aspects: as technological globalization, the globalization of economy by trends in all kinds of markets (financial, of consumer goods and services, of labour force, etc.), globalization of politics and globalization of culture (Genov, 2002). Globalization has also meant, to a certain extent, de-nationalization, the convergence of macro-economic trends, the openness of frontiers, international cooperation, the increase of free trade and commercial exchanges, but also an internal tendency to protect the autochthonous values (Glatzer and Langlois, 2000), as a reaction to this total openness.

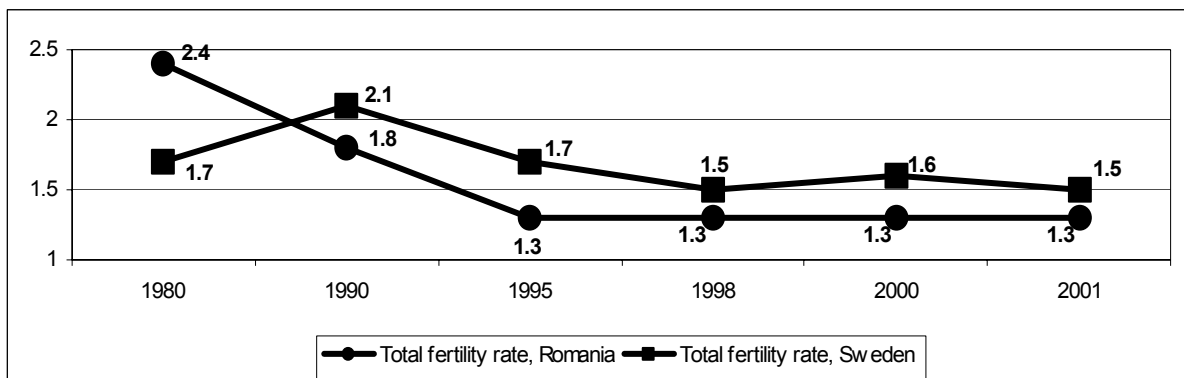
The breakdown of the state socialist order and the move towards a market economy has resulted in an "institutional vacuum" (Stark, 1992, in Makkai, 1994, 188) where the social policy transformed from a "monistic" to a "pluralistic" system (Misra, 1990, in Makkai, 1994, 188). Many benefits were changed from being universalistic to means-tested, new social-security funds emerged, and previously non-existent benefits were introduced i.e. the unemployment benefit. Unemployment was thus made explicit whereas it previously had been hidden.

Discrepancies and gaps appeared as compared to the Western countries because of certain particular aspects of the Romanian society. The globalization of values and norms related to

the transformation process is slower in Romania and consequently the four forms of globalization described by Nikolai Genov (2002) and enumerated above do not equally and simultaneously develop; the old values and norms are thus confronted with new technologies, economic trends and values which they cannot adequately and immediately respond to. For example, previously people were used to fixed prices and only slightly differentiated wages, which fundamentally changed with the market economy. On the other hand, the democratic procedures of decision-making are slow and very often focused on a short time perspective since they have the electoral cycle as general orientation system (even the most democratic political parties show tendencies towards bureaucratization and clientelism).

Women's lives were dramatically affected by the transformation process. The new social policies designed to support compatibility of family life with labour market careers were inconsistent and together with the liberalization of abortion, they constituted the main cause of the sharp decrease in fertility (Figure 1). The effects will be seen in 20-30 years' time, when the dependence rate will increase sharply. Secondly, the fast industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture during the communist period were followed by an attempt of re-agrarizing the economy, with consequences similar to a de-modernization process. The change of property relations often took destructive forms of division of plots which did not support an effective production. Thirdly, the weakening of the state institutions gave impetus to a crime-wave. The introduction of liberal policies and criminalization of the economy led to fast economic differentiation. All these aspects affected Romanian women's lives, by reducing their capacity to be mothers and breadwinners, or mothers and students at the same time.

Figure 1. Total fertility rates for Romania and Sweden, selected years



Data source: The World Bank, 2003.

4.2. “The Swedish Model”. Context and Characteristics

The traditional “Swedish Model” is based on a stringent macroeconomic policy, a supply-

side market policy, an innovation support through measures such as corporate taxation and technology procurement, which led to high growth, low unemployment and the development of a robust industrial structure, firmly based on the political dominance of social democracy (Benner, 2001).

During the last decade, there were registered significant changes, as the employers have been seeking to introduce a neo-liberal model after 1990 (together with the internationalization of the Swedish companies), which subsequently led to the co-existence of the accumulation regime (based on flexible mass-production with large companies oriented to international markets and with national-supplier networks in the context of the rapid growing of the ICT sector) and a mode of regulation combining macroeconomic stability with attempts to limit the social consequences of unemployment and to maintain a redistributive social policy, which is still dominating (*ibid*).

One of the effects of the social democratic policies in Sweden was the rise of fertility rates in the beginning of the 1990s. This was explained by the development of a comprehensive social insurance system in which benefits are income-based and cover a large part of gross income, but also by the increasing female-to-male relative wages, woman-friendly working conditions, improved real economic conditions, together with the development from a male breadwinner model into a strongly supported by the state dual breadwinner model (Stanfors, 2003). The subsequent decrease was explained by the convergence of certain factors: the expansion of mass education of women, the development of women's labour market participation, sustained by the tax reform in 1991, which reduced marginal tax rates and made it more economically rational for women to work full-time. Women also changed their productive and reproductive behaviour. They increased their involvement in educational programs and on the labour market and consequently postponed childbearing and reduced the intervals between births (*ibid*).

In Romania social democracy has also been the leading ideology since 1989, even during 1996-2000, when President was a member of The National Peasant Christian Democrat Party. Unlike social democrats in Sweden, it is very young as an active ideology in Romania and was confronted with huge budgetary holes inherited from the communist regime, the intrusion of global markets and with other problems which it could not manage alone. Because of that it could not develop as pure social democracy, but had to accept the neo-liberal influences from the part of the IMF and the BM.

4.3. A Discussion of Women's Roles in Past and Present Society

The most important female roles in the contemporary society are those of women as paid workers, of women as social, civil and political actors and of women as mothers and lone mothers (Pascall and Manning, 2000). They are, evidently, interconnected, and also have essential links with the roles of women as providers of care, health, and education and as partners/wives. But because of the aim of my thesis, the focus here will be placed on the first three aspects. In addition, I will discuss women's places/roles in the educational system, mainly as subjects of learning, and the impact of their involvement in learning programs on their status in different societal subsystems.

4.3.1. Women as Workers under the Communist Regime in Romania

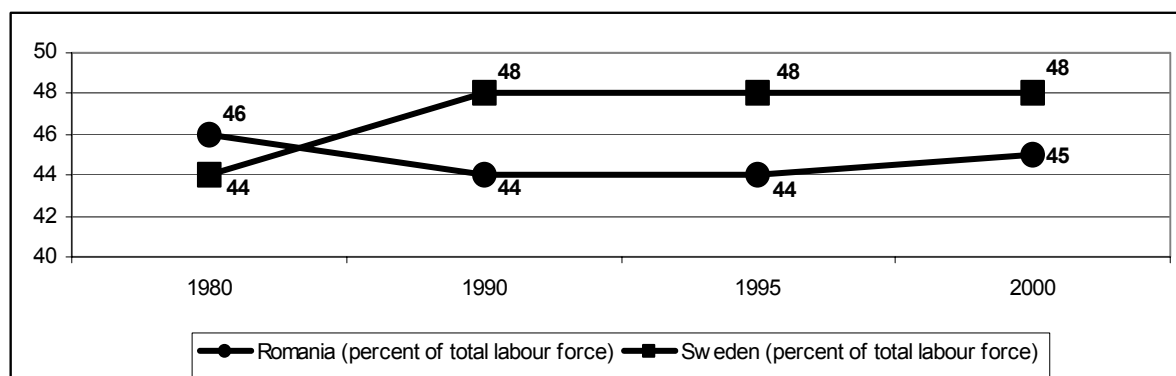
As Pascall and Manning (2000) affirm, occupational welfare was a key source of entitlement under state socialism. Work was, for women, as well as for men, both moral obligation and an essential welfare "passport", because only working persons were entitled to certain benefits. A significant rate of the housing stock was controlled by enterprises and not by the local governments. Holidays, transportation to work, food and other consumer items were provided by employers and unions, which also managed social security. Health care and childcare were also available at work. A work unit became an "all-encompassing" welfare institution (Zheng, 2000).

As it can be easily noticed, the system had advantages and shortcomings. Thus, the advantage of job security for many did not counter the absence of the unemployment benefit. Secondly, in spite of official low wage differentials between occupations and sexes, the party and state bureaucrats benefited from hidden privileges, not unknown to the masses. Workingwomen received favorable treatment, such as one-year childcare grants and the right to resume previous employment. However, there was an obligation for women not only to work, but also to remain responsible for family care, so the division of labour remained sexist (Deacon, 2000). The double burden of work and care was not shifted, in spite of the availability of both work and welfare provision, in cash and kind, to facilitate childcare, mainly because of two reasons. Firstly, the quality of the childcare services was much lower than it should have been; secondly, the mentality of people was under the influence of the traditionalist model that states that women should raise the children as a first priority, leaving education, work, careers as secondary and tertiary options. Occupational segregation was high despite the rhetoric about equality (ibid).

4.3.2. Workingwomen under the Transition to Market Economy in Romania

The 1989 Revolution brought a decrease in the number of females in the total labour force in Romania, while in Sweden the trend was ascending and subsequently constant (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Females of the total labour force in Romania and Sweden, selected years



Data source: The World Bank, 2003.

The transition to market economy was hampered by the previous legislation and private companies regarded it as a burden. Many reduced their demand on women's labour. Investors and private entrepreneurs did not agree, for example, paying maternity leave for two years for female employees. However, a very recent governmental decision (Codul Muncii, 2003) constitutes an attempt to protect women's rights as workers. According to this decision, dismissal of pregnant employees is forbidden.

The double burden of work and care is still present because gender relations in the households remained, for the most part, unchanged and because of the present situations of the kindergartens. Public kindergartens do not offer high quality care. Private kindergartens are mostly too expensive for a family with an average salary³.

This is an interesting phenomenon happening in the last decade of the 20th century. On one hand, social support that enables women to reconcile paid and unpaid work was drastically reduced and as a consequence the double burden increased. Besides, the social support provided by the workplace or by state institutions was of poor quality. On the other hand, the idea of women's high labour market participation induced in the communist regime era is deeply grounded in people's minds and has become even stronger today, because values do not change quickly, as they are deeply rooted in people's personality system. The effect was the decrease of women's dependency on family relationship. But the reduced social support

³ Private institutions demand for high fees – the fee in a private kindergarten in Bucharest, the Capital, is of approximately 200 USD, when the minimum salary is of approximately 75 USD and the medium salary is of approximately 130 USD.

for women counterbalance this effect, proving to be a serious constraint to bachelor's life, separation or divorce. Housing access, for example, is restrained for single persons because steep and continuously rising prices, and because of the gender pay gap. Gender differentials in income are accompanied by the fact that the real incomes are sometimes too low for a person to afford independent housing, and also too low for single mothers to escape poverty. The gender pay ratios (computed as female monthly wages as a percent of male monthly wages) point to women's necessity for reliance on men, as they are decreasing from 78.6 percent for Romania in 1994 to 76.2 percent in 1997 (Pascall and Manning, 2000).

Furthermore, increased women's labour force participation means that any restructuring of the economy and social policy will have a differentiated impact on them as workers and as consumers. Many health and recreational facilities provided by enterprises for their employees were abolished and converted into local community or private facilities. Initially generous unemployment benefits were scaled back after a few years, in the liberal belief that this measure would lead to reemployment. But it did not, as shows Table 2. The conclusion to be drawn is that the reduction was introduced primarily as a budgetary rather as a labour market measure (Deacon, 2000).

Table 2. Total unemployment rate and female unemployment rate (percent of female labour force) in Romania and Sweden, selected years

Unemployment rate	'80	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02
Total unemployment rate, Romania	0	3.0	3.0	8.2	10.4	10.9	9.5	6.6	8.9	10.4	11.8	10.5	*	*
Female unemployment, Romania	0	4.0	4.0	10.3	12.9	12.9	11.4	7.5	9.3	10.4	11.6	10.1	*	*
Total unemployment rate, Sweden	2.2	1.8	*	1.3	7.5	8.8	8.2	8.1	8.8	7.4	6.2	5.7	4.4	4.5
Female unemployment, Sweden	2.6	1.8	*	*	*	*	8.2	*	*	6.0	5.2	4.3	3.6	3.6

* No data.

Data source: The World Bank, 2003; Statistics Sweden, 2003.

With the exception of the last years of the 20th century, in Romania female unemployment rates exceed total unemployment rates, which had a strong negative impact on decisions about having children, living alone or challenging the male breadwinner model. Another immediate impact was women's increasing participation in education attainment, as will be discussed below.

In 1990, the retirement age in Romania was 50 years for women and 55 years for men. By the mid 1990s, the IMF, the WB and the ILO put pressure on the government to rise the age of retirement in small steps over the next years. A considerable number of early retirements

as an alternative to unemployment put pressure on the pension system. The increase of the retirement age had considerable effects on women, as middle-aged women no longer were available to take care of children and of elderly family members.

In 1990, the dependency ratio amounted to 3.42. After 1990, the number of retirements rapidly increased especially as early retirement was regarded as an alternative the problems produced by the transition to a market economy. By the end of the 20th century, the number of people on benefits overlapped the number of the active population. A higher dependency ratio means higher budgetary pressure and the need to reduce spending. The effect was seen in lower amounts of money allocated to public services and education, with direct effects on women's lives, especially if they have children. As female unemployment for a long period of time exceeded that of men, reduced unemployment benefits were in the first place a blow to women. All these circumstances restricted women's choices with regard to education, labour market participation, maternity or lifestyles. They also made women dependent both on the state and on their husbands/partners. Even if they are actively participating in the labour market, they are still living according to a very modified male breadwinner model – in the sense that the females have to accept a role that practically do not differentiate much from that of a traditional housewife.

4.3.3. Gender Differences in the Romanian Labour Market

The easiest way for employers to explain their decisions to dismiss especially women when restructuring their companies was that because women's physical characteristics made them less adaptable to various job requirements and that excessive employment of women reduces the efficiency of the enterprises (Zheng, 2000). They also added maternity as an argument and the fact that women have less technical qualifications. As women more often are employed in auxiliary and service positions, they are usually also the first ones to be laid off in restructuring a productive enterprise. This is valid for China, but also for Romania. But how come that women are engaged only in these kinds of activities, and why, once they reach a managerial position, do not change these rules that stand to reason? Lourdes Beneria (2001) has made some observations with regard to this. Firstly, she argues that feminization of the labour force during the past three decades has intensified the reliance of many women on informalized employment. By feminization of the labour force it is understood both an increase in the number of employed women and the deterioration of working conditions in previously male dominated jobs (Anker, 1998; Standing, 1999 in Beneria, 2001). Subcontracted work and home-based production illustrate many of the problems associated

with women's informal employment. Secondly, the decentralization of production has meant more informal labour contracts, many of which have gone underground. Women are concentrated at lower levels of production, layoffs are gendered, and gendered differences occur also in income loss. Thirdly, women's primary involvement in domestic and child care responsibilities continues to be a source of vulnerability, not only because it represents unpaid work, but also because it diminishes women's mobility and autonomy to design their labour market strategies. However, women's associations have started to take up actions at national and international level, but they are still weak and hardly have any influence at the decision-making level.

When talking about gender differentials I must necessarily stress two important points: the problem of the glass ceiling, sticky floors and the issue of tokenism. Glass ceilings or glass walls are metaphors used to express factors that stop women's careers at middle-level management or expert positions. When women are just likely as men to be promoted, but they get much lower salaries than men for the new grade we are talking about sticky floors (Booth, Francesconi, Frank, 1998). The so-called "tokens" are defined as women and men in non-traditional work roles i.e. where they constitute a minority (Melkas and Anker, 1998). During the former Romanian regime, the glass ceiling was present, but less frequent than today. But one could easily encounter welder-women, women working in the construction sector, women on cranes and so on. The reappearance of the "tokens" after 1989 shows that the influences from Western countries appeared along with the globalization process.

In the Romanian legislation of 2001 there are only few documents regulating equality between men and women. The law 210/1999 concerning paternal leave allows fathers five days leave at the birth of a child and subsequently, ten days of supplementary leave, provided that they follow a puericulture course. Another document is the governmental ordinance 137/2000, which defines the notion of discrimination. It contains stipulated contraventional and even penal sanctions for persons who do not respect the regulations. In 2001 the Ministry of Work and Social Protection formulated the law regarding the equality of chances between women and men in work, education, health, culture, information and participation in the decision-making process. The aim was to protect women especially with regard to discrimination at hiring, promotion, remuneration and layoff, and sexual harassment. Besides, women were not any longer obliged, when applying for a job, to submit a certificate containing the result of a pregnancy test, as some of the companies requested. The law is welcome, but the sanctions proved to be not significant⁴. Another impediment is that the

⁴ The sanctions consist in fines of 1.5 to 15 million Romanian Lei, approximately 45 to 459 USD, according to

complaint may be only solved by trade unions or law courts. Trade unions are in many cases underdeveloped, inactive or do not have an important role to play because of the authoritarian formal leaders. Law courts require an action that request time, money and the abolition of corruption. The new Labour Code published in 2003 contains measures regarding women's protection against gender discrimination, already mentioned above (page 28).

4.3.4. Differences between Swedish and Romanian Women's Position in the Labour Market

Even if during the 20th century Swedish women's position on the labour market was oscillatory, today they have a firm role and status, which differs from the Romanian situation, the dual breadwinner model has strengthened, and a slight increase is noticed in the total fertility rate.

A comparison of the rate of real wages and the total fertility rate over time improves our understanding of the relationship between income and fertility in Sweden. They both have a similar wave-like pattern, as fertility increases during periods of increasing growth in real wages and decreases in years when the growth rate in real wages is falling. Maria Stanfors (2003) studied this relationship in detail. She concluded that female-to-male relative wage shows a strong trend of improvement. In 1913, the average hourly wage of female blue-collar workers was 58 per cent of the corresponding male wage. By 1995, it had reached 90 per cent. The author also argues that from around 1980 and onwards, notably in the 1990s, wage differentials increased within occupational groups. This was balanced by a redistribution of women to higher positions within the employment structure. This general equalization of wages can be explained by ideological and political factors, especially the solidarity wage policy and equal opportunity legislation. In 1974, Sweden became a forerunner regarding equal employment opportunities by implementing the "equal pay for equal work", followed by similar agreements and laws in the subsequent years. Another explanation might be the model of price determination in the labour market – the rapid and continuous rise in relative wages which was triggered by a dynamic shortage of female labour in periods of economic change, and extensive rationalization of production processes as well as the expansion of the public service sector as from the 1960s (ibid).

Even if the social democratic regime has existed in both countries for some time now, there are discrepancies in the effects of the policies because of the particular context in each country. It should be noted that in Romania the social democratic regime has been leading

since 1989, with a short break between 1996 and 2000, while in Sweden we are talking about 40-50 years of social democracy. Unemployment is a good example to mirror the differences. During the last decade unemployment rates have been oscillatory at high values in Romania (Table 2) and women's unemployment rates are higher or at least equal to total unemployment rates, slightly decreasing during the last few years. In Sweden the situation is more stable; total unemployment rates are decreasing; females' unemployment rates are also decreasing, under the general rate. But the situation is similar in the two countries when taking into consideration gender segregation on the labour market. In both countries, women are to a larger extent than men involved in education, health, social welfare, activities in hotels and restaurants, textile industry, banking and insurance activities, and less in constructions and the industrial sectors. Their participation as employees in communication sectors is almost equal to that of men, as well as in trade and commerce and electric machinery and appliances (Institutul National de Sociologie, 2002; Svensson, 1995 in Stanfors, 2003). Gender segregation on the labour market is obvious and is primarily rooted in the educational segregation. The model of female and male jobs was to a certain extent imported after the 1989 Revolution from Western societies (Sweden being one of them), where it is still strong, regardless positive discrimination actions promoted not only by women's associations, but also by governments. Women's jobs are often part-time and are related to lower incomes, and consequently related to a lower status on the labour market. The direct effect is on women's statuses as wives, partners and mothers, in terms of inequality when compared to men's statuses. Men hold full time jobs and higher salaries, and thus are considered bearers of a higher degree of security for the household.

Furthermore, because of this situation some of the women were pushed of economic reasons to accept take up prostitution and to be illegally trafficked as prostitutes⁵.

4.3.5. Women in the Educational System

Education has a major impact on women's labour market participation, their roles/statuses, mentality and their general choices.

According to Bob Deacon (2000), in the communist era the educational system "was geared too much towards production of academically and professionally qualified people and too little to the needs of the industry, so that many graduates found themselves in jobs for which they were overqualified". With a commitment to universal benefits, education (as well

⁵ 318 persons were investigated in 1996 for prostitution-connected infractions, 263 in 1997, while only in the first 8 months of 2001 the number was of 325; more than half of this cases are connected to cross-border prostitution and trafficking in women (Chirila, Gavrila, Badescu, 2002).

as health services) was on the whole freely provided. Those provisions were seen as being more equitable than cash benefits, and they supplemented low wages. Because wage differentials were low and everybody was obliged to work, people were not motivated to get involved in educational programs, other than the compulsory ones.

Women in communist Romania pursued many educational opportunities available to them, maintaining one of the world's highest levels of women's education, including fields considered non-traditional for women in other countries. Today the pressure of market forces on the educational sector and the emergence of diverse cultural values with regard to women's education have changed the landscape of education.

Two recent trends in female educational behaviour are noticed. Women have stepped out of the traditional male educational fields and have begun to perceive education as an alternative to unemployment and thus to get involved to a higher extent in educational programs of all levels. The perception is, in fact, generalized for the total population (Table 3 and 4). Educational segregation is also supported by traditionalism in rural areas, where 85 percent of the country's primary and secondary schools are situated. Jönsson (1999) finds a similar increase in women's education in Sweden.

Table 3. Degrees obtained by women and men (percent of the total population) in Romania and Sweden, 1997

Field	Women		Men	
	Romania	Sweden	Romania	Sweden
Degrees in Education	78	61	22	39
Degrees in Engineering	22	28	78	72
Degrees in Law	56	55	44	45

Data source: The World Bank, 2001.

Table 4. Employment structure by training level (percent in columns) in Romania, 2000

Training level	Total employment	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	65 + years
Higher education	9.1	2.7	10.8	12.1	9.5	1.0
Specialty Post High School or Technical Foremen education	4.4	2.6	4.2	5.6	5.7	0.5
High School	29.1	32.1	48.0	32.6	9.6	1.5
Vocational, complementary or apprenticeship	21.6	23.9	25.3	28.2	13.6	2.0
Secondary school	21.6	32.7	10.0	18.2	32.9	28.5
Primary or without graduated school	14.2	6.0	1.7	3.3	28.7	66.5

Data source: Institutul National de Sociologie, 2002.

In addition to desecularization of education and pluralization of control over schools, the 1989 Revolution also to a certain extent meant privatization of education. This process is mainly concentrated to the tertiary level. In 1990 there were practically no students enrolled privately at any level, but in later years the number boosted at 30.7 percent of the tertiary pupils in private universities⁶. Generalized subsidies were replaced by targeted subsidies, so that fees were beginning to be charged (with rebates and grants for the meritorious and the needy) (Dima, 2002).

Higher education in state institutions in Romania is financed by the state. In Sweden, in 1995, 98.3 percent of all educational institutions were publicly funded and only 1.7 percent privately funded; in 1999, 97.0 percent of them were funded by public sources and 3.0 percent by private sources. When talking only about tertiary education, in 1995, 93.6 percent of the institutions were funded by public sources and 6.4 percent by private funds; in 1999 the numbers were of 88.4 and 11.6 percent respectively (OECD, 2002). The occurrence of the private institutions for higher education in Romania is explained by the incapacity of the state educational institutions to receive the increased number of people wishing to obtain a higher education degree (Dima, 2002). Secondly, Romanian population has started to regard higher education as a mean to fight unemployment and low quality of life. The massive demand for competencies in certain domains, such as management or law, and the lacunose legislation in the domain of setting up and managing private higher education institutions also contributed to the rise of the number of Romanian private institutions for higher education. The last decisive factor was the introduction of a system of academic accreditation and evaluation, especially because the exclusive financing from the students' fees raised question marks upon the quality of the academic services.

Social support such as free meals provided in schools was hardly known even during the communist regime; children were taken care of in the poor daycare centers or by the elderly. After 1989 they were introduced in some of the schools as a measure to help parents who wanted to continue to work full-time⁷. Very recently the Romanian Government also decided that parents who do not enroll their 6 years old children in primary schools will be charged consistent fines. By this decision, the authorities have proved that they became more aware of the importance of education and that they have decided to act consequently and also increase

⁶ The number of students enrolled in private higher education institutions raised from 85 000 in the academic year 1992-1993 to 130 054 in the academic year 1998-1999 (Dima, 2002).

⁷ In the autumn of 2002, the Romanian government decided that all pupils from the primary schools would receive daily a horn-shaped roll and a glass of milk paid by the state budget; the measure will expand from the academic year 2003/2004 for the children in kindergartens. Despite of all discussions and accusations that this is only an electoral measure, it seems a welcome measure especially for the poor families. It is a universal

the awareness of the population. This is important because it was registered a slight decrease in the number of children enrolled in schools and high schools, from 3 850 000 in the academic year 1990/1991 to 3 311 635 in the academic year 2000/2001 (Institutul National de Sociologie, 2002). The decrease is due to both declining nativity after 1989, with consequences for the number of school-children at the end of the century and poverty, which determines, especially in the rural areas, giving up school for work in poor jobs or simply giving up school because of the lack of money for food, clothes, books, and other materials necessary for study.

4.3.6. Women as Mothers

Castells (1997) claims that the high rates of women's participation in the labour market, increased use of contraceptives, women's claims for gender equality and the rapid distribution of new conceptions in the contemporary society because of globalization, have all led to a profound crisis of the patriarchal family. Pascall and Manning (2000) argue that while social policies in Western Europe have often been seen as keeping women at home as housewives or mothers, those in transition countries have played a major role in sustaining women as workers. I do not agree with the two authors upon this point, as in Sweden by law families with children or single mothers with children are strongly supported by the state (through consistent parental benefits, child benefits, child care allowances, nursery/kindergarten provisions and so on (The National Social Insurance Office, 2001)). In Romania the policies regarding women as mothers and workers were contradictory during the communist regime. On the hand, a 100 percent active population policy was promoted, while on the other, fertility was encouraged by the ordinance 770 from September 29, 1966, which interdicted abortions. Abortion was made punishable with 1 to 3 years of detention or correctional interdiction of 1 to 3 months, in a time when contraceptives were practically inexistent on the market or in sanitary institutions (Asociatia Primul Pas, 2001). Consequently, women's possibility of choosing was extremely reduced, as many of them were passing from a maternity leave to another.

As protection and support for children, the Romanian government in power nowadays has instituted a series of provisions as universal material support for families with children⁸.

measure, as all children, regardless their parents' income, receive this provisions.

⁸ Among these universal provisions are: children allowances until the age of 18, cut of income taxes, gratuities; free education and support for school attendance (free manuals, scholarships); free medical assistance (for maternity, for mothers and children); social protection for children with special needs: disabled children, delinquent children. But the major problem is that the amount of money in the allowances is very low and very slight increasing because of the inflationary process. In January 2002 the child allowance was of 150 000

However, only unpaid parental leave for taking care of the sick children is available. Furthermore, child services are of a bad quality (especially pre-primary, maternity and child care services), so the growing need for child support is not fulfilled. In the context of high unemployment rate, increasing wage inequalities, rising costs and growing poverty, the actual form of the applied measures seems not good enough. Because of a decrease of the GDP out of public revenues as well as increased market pressure (instituted especially by the policies induced by the IMF and the WB), the provisions are harder and harder to sustain. Often entitlements are not paid and parental leave is shortened to minimum because of job insecurity and the fear of losing one's job. The consequences might be tragic and during the next years it might become possible to notice a decrease in the rate of enrollment in pre-school facilities, a decrease in the number of mothers on the labour market, a decrease in women's involvement in educational programs, a decrease in women's general participation in social life, a parallel increase of women's dependence on personal relationships and a growing assertion of patriarchal family practices.

Scholars are posing the question whether women are still forced, because of the given situation, to accept traditional burdens as such, without challenging them, or if this might be question of mentality. This will be discussed later. The current situation might lead to conflicts between work and family life. Work-family conflicts occur when efforts to fulfill work role demands interfere with one's ability to fulfill family demands and vice versa. Frone, Barnes and Farrell (1994) concluded that this kind of conflict is indirectly related to negative effects of heavy alcohol use and tobacco use, and that it is a stressor because it represents a threat or impediment to self-identification. State authorities are trying to meet all these problems⁹. Among state decisions, the right to maternal leave while keeping the job has played a major role, especially for women working in private companies. During the communist period keeping the job during the maternity leave was "taken for granted".

Romanian Lei (4.7 USD), in July 2002, of 180 000 Romanian Lei (5.13 USD) and as beginning with 2003 it is of 210 000 Romanian Lei, equivalent to 6.5 USD (when in Sweden is of 950 SEK a month (The Swedish Institute, 2001), approximately 112 USD) – for transformations, I have used the currencies from every indicated period.

⁹ An example is the recently adopted governmental ordinance 9/2003 for the change of the law 19/2000. The ordinance states that the allowance accorded to every mother for raising the children who are not two years old yet would be of 4 212 600 Romanian Lei (approximately 130 USD, at the currency in May 2003), regardless of the mother's income, so of the amount of money paid monthly from the salary as contribution to the social insurance system. According to the specialists, this would determine an even sharper decrease of the fertility rate, at a time when pro-natalist measures are needed. The governants replied that this is a pro-natalist decision, as it is universalistic, favors those women who have low salaries and it was grounded in the idea that all women need the same amount of money to raise a child to the age of two. But I would say that, apart of the fact that it is a total absence of respect for women's right to receive adequate pay for their work, there is another aspect to be discussed: women with medium or high incomes have higher expectations and they would have to renounce at these expectations in order to have a child, which is frustrating and usually provokes the postponing or even the

4.3.7. Women in Social, Civil and Political Action

Women's participation in social, civil and political action is mainly characterized by vertical segregation. In Romania, women's participation in political life before 1989 was high. In 1987, 34 percent of the old legislative Romanian forum, The Great General Assembly of Romania, was made up by women. Five women out of 40 detained governmental functions. However, in 1987 in the Executive Political Bureau, the highest political decision-making forum, only two out of 21 members were women. Even if present in these leading forums, women's roles were more or less "decorative" tokens (Dima, 2002). After 1989, as a result of the abolishment of the quota system, women's political participation decrease sharply; only during the last years a slightly increase is noticed.

Table 5. Women in government and parliament in Romania and Sweden, 1996/2000, percent.

Country	Ministerial level, 1996	Sub-ministerial level, 1996	Total, 1996	Seats in Parliament, 1999
Romania	0 (20.0 in 2000)	4.1	3.3	10.7
Sweden	38.1 (55.0 in 2000)	27.3	30.8	42.7

Data source: UN, 1996; UNDP, 2002.

Table 5 shows women's participation in state-leading positions and points to substantial difference between the two countries. One part of explanation could be differences in women's habitual involvement in political affairs. In 1921, Swedish women received the right to vote (after a partial recognition in 1861) and also the right to stand for election (after a partial recognition in 1907). In Romania, they received both the right to vote and the right to stand for election only in 1946 (after a partial recognition in 1929). A more important factor contributing to this situation, I would claim, is the conception that kitchen, care and children must be women's priorities and that politics is not for women. The problem is that a vicious circle is created: because women do not get involved in the decision-making process, horizontal and vertical segregation are not challenged and women's position remains weak.

Traditionally gender issues are state-imposed and the influence from women's movements is limited. ANA Organization, The Romanian Women's Association, Equal Chances for Women's Foundation, The Center of Partnership for Equality are example of the independent women's organizations in Romania. There are also governmental institutions aimed at protecting women's rights, as The Direction for Chances Equality within the Ministry of Work and Social Protection, or The Sub-commission for Equal Opportunities, subordinated directly to the Romanian Parliament, but they are dependent on the state ideology, so they

can not be taken into consideration without necessary restrictions.

However, policies to promote equal chances for men and women have been defined: equal treatment (considering men and women without taking into account any gender differences), positive discrimination (affirmative action) and positive action – such as special courses for women, access to evening courses for women with children, flexible working program. The reverted discrimination is also discussed by feminists, as favorizing women in the competition for a rare resource. Gender-differentiated reporting of population figures constitutes an appropriate method for a more reliable grasping of the living situation for men and women and for the evaluation of effects of policies designed for women. In the 1980s, Sweden was the first country ever to establish statistics divided by gender (Voicu, 2002).

4.3.8. Romanian People's Mentality Regarding Women's Place in the Present Society

The mentality of contemporary Romanian people was the main reason for me to start thinking about realizing this study. The census effected at the beginning of 2002 pointed out that the Romanian population amounted to 21 698 181 persons, of which 48.8 percent are women and 51.2 percent are men (Institutul National de Statistica, 2002). Of the total population, 52.7 percent live in urban areas, while 47.3 percent live in rural areas. As I have previously stated, Romania was at the beginning of the 20th century predominantly an agricultural country, with wide segments of the population living in rural areas, characterized by a so called “rural” mentality. As expected, mentality remained over the years and is even today difficult to be changed. By mentality I mean convictions, ideals, values, norms, stereotypes, which are deeply rooted in traditions, thus resisting change even in times of rapid transformations caused by globalization. They determine people's choices, generally speaking, and in particular, their participation in educational programs and in the labour market, thus having an indirect, but strong impact on their roles/statuses. They also affect the decision-making process with regard to social policies, thus doubling the impact on people's roles/statuses. This is especially applicable for women.

Data from the survey realized in August 2000 by the Open Society Foundation and The Gallup Organization support my ideas about the mentality of the Romanian people regarding the place and the role women have and/or should have in the Romanian society and they also very well synthesize the issues discussed in this thesis¹⁰. Table 6 illustrates some of the results.

¹⁰ The survey was realized on a 1839 persons aged 18 and over sample; the sample was stratified, probabilistic and tri-stadial and the results are representative for the adult population over 18 years old, with a sampling error of $\pm 2,3\%$.

Table 6. The perception among the Romanian people of gender relations, selected questions

Question	Yes (%)	Depends (%)	No (%)	Don't know/ don't answer (%)
Is it women's duty more than men's to undertake the housework?	63	*	30	7
Is it men's duty more than women's to be the main breadwinners of the household?	70	*	23	7
In your opinion, does a woman need to follow her man?	78	15	6	1
Are men as capable as women in raising children?	26	19	53	2
Is the man the head of the family?	83	8	8	1
Do you agree that domestic work should be paid as any other type of labour?	51	14**	29	6
Does there exist a real equality of rights between women and men in Romania?	36	*	50	14

* for these questions, "Depends" do not appear as answering variant.

** the corresponding variant for answer is "I did not think".

Data source: Open Society Foundation and The Gallup Organization, 2000.

Furthermore, as compared to men, women are perceived as more sensitive, more caring than men, as smart/clever as men, but less concerned by local/national affairs. Generally speaking, household works like cooking, cleaning, washing the clothes, doing the dishes, doing the ironing, looking daily after the children, supervising children's homework and spare time, going with the children to the doctor or collecting the children from school are performed exclusively by women, even if domestic work is not regarded as the easiest of all types of work and such work is also perceived as women's work.

The answers to these questions strongly point to a traditionalist way of thinking lingering since the dominance of the agrarian system, being more or less unchanged during the communist regime. Especially housewives, retired and unemployed, with no more than primary education and predominantly living in communes/villages agree that it is more women's duty more than men's to undertake the housework. On the other hand, students, people with higher education, and people living in cities do not share such ideas. The same differentiations are observed for peoples' opinion regarding men's duty to be the breadwinners in the household, to provide money for family, and the opinion that man is the head of the family.

These still strong influences from rural areas supporting the traditionalist model of the family promoted for many centuries especially in rural zones are underlined by the negative attitudes towards single women with children. The general opinion is that both parents should

raise the children in a family. As a comparison, the answers given by respondents of similar surveys in Sweden point to different attitudes: 57 percent of the total population, in 1977, and 39 percent in 1987 think that women should work together and fight for equality; only 22 percent (in 1987) agree upon the fact that fighting for equality is old-fashioned; 74 percent (in 1987) agree that if a woman has better job opportunities, the man should stay at home; and only 19 percent (on 1977) and 14 percent (in 1987) consider that at times of high unemployment it should be the woman who loses her job first (Söderstrom, no data).

When studying them carefully, all these nuances in answers also suggest the fact that a change is about to happen. Data indicate that changes of attitudes are noticed among three groups: among young people, who did not experienced the communist regime with its obtrusive regulations, among highly educated people, who are achieving supplementary information and knowledge that open their minds and free them from preconceived ideas and stereotypes, and among people living in urban areas, because they are exposed to external influences and they have more opportunities, choices and possibilities to get out of the traditionalist umbrella. This also points the domains necessary for investment and actions for the political actors, to achieve increased gender equality – the investment in youth, in higher education and in the development of the urban areas.

4.3.9. The Role the IMF and the WB Have Played in Creating the Present Situation in Romania

Economic conditions and the budgetary restraints in Romania have had negative impact especially on women as mothers, women in learning programs, as civil and political actors and as employees/unemployed. Later 20th century theories have claimed - and I agree - that the impact of political globalization is more direct and visible on social policies in Romania and, generally speaking, in the region, than economic globalization (Deacon, 2000). The latter only recently had an impact on social welfare possibilities, in a country that has been subject to short-term currency speculation. Changes in social policy are partially a result of the global economic competition. The increase of direct foreign investment, the freeing of trade, changes in technology and other features of global capitalism determined countries in transition to reduce their welfare commitments (ibid), with immediate impact on women's participation in educational programs and on the labour market, as active employees.

But economic competition was forcing to a less extent a certain course of action than global actors such as the IMF and the WB, which have promulgated for a few years now, for ideological reasons, a particular view of desirable social policy. Apart from the short-term

speculative capital flows and the long-term foreign direct investment linked to incorporation in the global production system, the effects of their intervention are the privatization of pensions, low wages and high rates of unemployment (as direct effect of the privatization of national companies and the exposure to Western goods, which has challenged the autochthon producers of unattractive consumer goods), and lowering of the barriers to trade in social insurance, health provision and social services (ibid).

The involvement of the IMF and the WB in the national economies have been often criticized and considered improper. The IMF and the WB were considered by some authors as “first order instruments of the globalization process” (Stanciu and Ionescu, 2002, para. 5), but negatively affecting the countries in transition (Chossudovsky, 1998; World Bank Guilty of Genocide in Africa, 1996).

The effects of the IMF and the WB policies are visible today. Romania imports more than it exports. The agriculture, which in the past covered by far the demands of the internal market, is today devalued, the internal production is far under the demands, while large arable areas are not cultivated. The industrial sector has also known a rapid decline, together with the selling for almost nothing of important companies, assets, and riches¹¹. The middle class, who constitutes a country’s engine for economic development, constituted only 9-10 percent of the total population (AOAR, 1999).

It was said that the developing countries cannot bear from the beginning of their transformation the shocks of the permanently changing market law. It was also said that these negative effects were the result of the fact that neither the IMF, nor the WB have any common goals with the countries they lend and also because they do not have to report their actions to anybody (Lumea ca o piata, 2002). This situation is the effect of the fact that the industrial production of the great concerns from the West was redirected towards the “periphery”, in searching for increased profits and under the pressure of the environmental Western legislation. In the developing countries, work hand is cheap and the legislation is permissive; but by this movement the local initiative is totally suffocated (Stanciu and Ionescu, 2002). How is it known that these are exactly the effects of the FMI and the WB intervention (which, evidently, they constantly deny)? Quite simple: the countries that “refused” their aid (China, India) have known a constant increase during the last years

¹¹ Furthermore, the corruption flourished especially through the privatization of key economic sectors, thrown on the hand of local oligarchies, which could buy whole industries for nothing. In 1999, the GDP was 76 percent of the real level of the GDP in 1989, the quality of life was following an descending trend, the average annual level of the inflation rate was of 154.7 percent in 1997 and of 59.1 percent in 1998, the budgetary deficit was both in 1997 and in 1998 of minus 3.6 percent, while the external debt was of 8444,7 million USD at December 31, 1997 and of 8967,6 million USD as to December 31, 1999 (AOAR, 1999).

(Chossudovsky, 1998). This discussion is important because the effects underlined above do apply also in the particular case of women and their choices – unemployment influences their choices relative to the family type to live in, the number of children and so on; the trend of increasing prices means increasing poverty; cuts in budgets mean cuts in social programs and in family benefits, which influence women's choices both on the labour market and their involvement in educational programs. This strong influence of the main international financial bodies has begun to be counteracted by the European Union ideologies.

5. Summary

In this thesis I have tried to identify, to explain and to understand past and present mechanisms that influence the situation of contemporary Romanian women. Many of them are today dependant both on their husbands/partners and on the state.

The 1989 Revolution signifies the abolishment of the communist regime and the beginning of the transformation process, which was accompanied and in the same time determined by globalization. The change to market economy was strongly influenced by supranational bodies, especially the IMF and the WB. All these changes had a strong impact on women's situation and weakened their roles/statuses and choices as mothers, employees and students.

One of the most important element of the legacy of communism is the mixture of the male and the dual breadwinner model, determined by the interconnection between the promotion of equality between men and women and the "rural" mentality implying that men is the head of the family (which has started to change lately). Furthermore, a reduced horizontal segregation both in education and in the labour market had a positive impact on women's position in society and it was strengthened by the conception that education is for all.

The transition to market economy was characterized by privatization of previously state-owned companies. Consequently, women were marginalized; their unemployment rates increased and so did women-men wage differentials. These effects were the result of the policies imposed by the IMF and the WB in change of their loans; they also influenced the occurrence of a mixture between social democracy and liberalism in social policy making, characterized by universal but poor provisions. This also weakened women's position in society. Romanian women entered vicious circles; the rapid deterioration in the quality of life, together with the insufficient social protection measures forced their choices to postpone having children. Sometimes they give up education for work, to support themselves or their

families. The prevalence of work as a source of welfare entitlement made labour market part more compulsory for women in Romania than in Sweden, but because of certain characteristics and the mentality of people, men are still the heads of almost any family. Meanwhile, a veritable social democracy leading for many decades strengthened Swedish women's situation so that today their presence is visible at all levels and even on the political arena, being involved in the decision-making process.

However, changes are beginning to occur in Romania. Women have realized that education is a must (even if horizontal segregation is still evident) and governmental actions to protect women's rights are appearing.

A shift is expected in Romania during the years to come. The question that still has no answer is when and what will produce the determinant shift in the Romanian society towards what it is called as a developed country, from all points of view. Is it the European Union? Some think so. But only time will tell.

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Appendix A

Social policy instruments used by supranational bodies

Instrument	Application
Loans with social conditionality	World Bank lending on condition of social policy change
Loans with economic conditionality	IMF lending on condition of economic policy change (with social policy implication)
Additional incentive	EU provision of grant matched to local resources
Legal regulation	COE powers to report shortcomings in member country social policy where party to COE Social Charter; similarly are ILO where countries have ratified ILO policy
Technical assistance training	ILO, EU, World Bank, OECD, UNICEF, UNDP etc. Provisions or technical advice and training sessions
Political agreement	EU agreements with associated states
Resource distribution (not on loan basis)	Social Development Fund; UNICEF/UNDP grant aided projects
Co-ordination conferences and associated publications	Open to all to be used to influence climate of opinion among organizations
Hosting and underpinning	UNDP, while not directly engaged, might house and/or finance the work of say the ILO

Source: Deacon, Bob (2000) "Eastern European Welfare States: the Impact of the Politics of Globalization", in *Journal of European Social Policy*, 10(2): 96.